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In this month's issue . . .

Welcome to the May/June issue of *The Language Teacher*. We hope your new school year has gotten off to an auspicious start.

This issue begins with two Readers' Forum pieces. The first is from **Glenn Davies**, who advocates collaborative testing as a more authentic means of assessing the types of communicative activities that actually take place inside and outside the language classroom. The second is from **James Bury**, who presents a model for conducting practitioner research and suggests a practical approach to gradually building relevant support groups.

In addition to these two articles, the issue includes a special JALT Focus Feature: an informative report on the 2021 JALT Membership Survey, prepared by past and present JALT National Membership Committee members Melodie Cook, Fred Carruth, Emily Choong, and Karmen Siew.

As usual, this issue also includes two interviews: one with **Jim McKinley** by **Shuji Kojima** and another with **Ryoko Tsuneyoshi** by **Chie Ogawa**. Please be sure to check out our many regular JALT Praxis columns as well.

In closing, as always, I would like to thank the content authors, reviewers, copyeditors, proofreaders, translators, and all the many other *TLT* volunteer contributors, without whose untold time and energy this publication would not be possible. Finally, to all our readers, I hope you enjoy the issue and find it useful.

— Paul Lyddon, TLT *Co-editor*

The Language Teacher の5/6月号へようこそ。皆様が幸先の良い新学期のスタートを切られたことを願っております。

本号では、まず2つのReaders' Forumをご紹介します。1つ目はGlenn Daviesによるもので、語学授業内外で実際に行われているコミュニケーション活動を評価するためのより実践的な方法として、協働テストの実施を提唱しています。もう一つは、James Buryによるもので、実践者研究を行うためのモデルを提示し、関連のあるサポートグループを徐々に構築するための実践的なアプローチを提案しています。

Continued over



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

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この2つの論文に加え、本号ではJALT Focus Feature特別企画として、JALT National Membership Committeeの元・現職会員であるMelodie Cook, Fred Carruth, Emily Choong, Karmen Siewによる、2021年JALT会員調査に関する有益な報告書が掲載されています。

また、毎回お届けしているインタビュー記事として、本号ではShuji KojimaによるJim McKinleyへのインタビューと、Chie OgawaによるRyoko Tsuneyoshiへのインタビューの2本を掲載しています。その他、JALT Praxisの連載コラムも多数掲載していますので、皆様ぜひご覧ください。

終わりに、本誌の執筆者、校閲者、編集者、校正者、翻訳者、その他多くの*TLT*ボランティアの方々に変わらぬ感謝を申し上げます。彼らの膨大な時間と労力なくして、本誌の発行は成り立ちません。最後になりましたが、読者の皆様が本号を楽しみ、お役に立てていただければと願っております。

— Paul Lyddon, *TLT* 共同編集者

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Using Collaborative Testing to Better Evaluate L2 Classroom Learning

Glenn Davies
Temple University, Japan Campus

Although collaborative learning activities are now common in contemporary second-language classrooms, they are often accompanied by traditional assessment methods, such as eliciting knowledge and skills from students individually. These assessment methods, however, are inadequate as they provide an incomplete picture of learner abilities and ignore some of the essential communication skills that teachers actually focus on in their teaching. This article looks at the L2 classroom use of collaborative testing. It argues for greater use of this alternative testing method and suggests ways in which it could be introduced to complement current approaches to classroom assessment.

現在の第二言語学習の授業では、協働学習が一般的になっているが、その際には、個々の学生の知識や技能を問うような、従来の評価方法が用いられることが多い。しかし、この評価方法では、学習者の能力を完全には把握できず、教師が実際に教える際に重視する本質的なコミュニケーション能力を測れないため、評価方法としては不十分なものである。本論では、L2クラスでの協働テスト実施について考察している。また、この評価方法を、これまでの方法に替わるものとしてさらに活用するべきであり、現在の授業評価をさらに補完するために導入するべきだと提案している。

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Testing is an essential part of any educational program. When used before, during, or at the end of a course, tests "measure individual competence of students in their thinking skills and subject-matter knowledge and expertise" (Webb, 1995, p. 240). Despite the multitude of possible individual and institutional differences in the goals of testing, its basic purpose remains the same: the measurement of relevant knowledge and skills. However, it is important that the tests in use sample their entire domain. Applying this principle to the testing of L2 learning, our assessments must be connected to the communication skills currently being taught in our classes.

Research on teaching tasks and techniques shows not only that group work in the classroom has become commonplace, but that facilitating learning and working as part of a team is also now essential (Cheng & Warren, 2000). One common pedagogical approach to group work is the use of collaborative learning activities. Collaborative learning (CL) has been defined as "group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners" (Candlin et al., 2003, p. 339). Perhaps directly born from Vygotsky's ideas of learner development and cooperative learning (Cole et al., 1978), collaborative tasks enable students with different abilities to work together toward group goals or to engage in activities where individual success influences group success and learning occurs through interaction in a social context (Hassanien, 2006).

Once collaborative learning tasks are in place, the next logical step would be to implement collaborative testing to measure their associated outcomes. Also referred to as group testing, double testing, paired testing, cooperative testing, and dyad testing (Akioyamen et al., 2017), collaborative testing is a student-centered, active learning approach to assessment, in which students are tested in groups. The skills targeted by this approach (and those that later should be tested) include noticing, self-correction, rephrasing, increased exposure to the language being practiced, improved vocabulary growth, improved written or spoken output based on shared input, and an overall increase in student confidence with what is being learned. If we accept that testing in general should seek to measure acquisition of knowledge with some meaningful, real-world application beyond the classroom, individual student answering of multiple-choice questions alone seems unlikely to achieve this objective. By contrast, a shift in focus to L2 communicative production reveals the potential of group work, or collaborative tasks, as an authentic means of assessing learners' capacity for later language use (Davies, 2009).

Literature Review

The use of collaborative learning and testing tasks has shown benefits in numerous subject areas, ranging from chemistry, biology, and math, to atmospheric and computer sciences, forestry, and food systems (Clarkston & Gilley, 2014). For instance, Heller and Hollabaugh (1992) utilized cooperative grouping in physics classes to teach and test problem-solving abilities. They found the use of group

tasks to be an effective means of solving problems, with 72% of the participants reporting that group discussions helped them understand the course material. Moreover, research by Heiner and Rieger (2014) concluded that collaborative exams were not only easy to set up, but that they also resulted in deeper learner engagement and promoted more effective support for and evaluation of learning.

Research on collaborative testing methods evidences how they can positively impact various aspects of learning. For instance, students have been shown to demonstrate significantly greater improvement on subsequent individual testing after having been tested in groups as opposed to having been initially tested only as individuals (Clarkston & Gilley, 2014). Moreover, in an investigation of problem-based learning (PBL) in which students collaboratively activated their knowledge to complete group tasks, Mennin (2007) concluded that "students [found] PBL to be challenging, satisfying, and motivating" (p. 305). Thus, having learners engage and perform in these types of activities elicits not only their knowledge, but also their actual communication skills.

Possible Approaches

One approach to collaborative testing is the use of two-stage exams in which students first complete and submit an exam individually and then work in small groups to answer the same exam questions again. During the group work stage, students receive immediate, targeted feedback on their solutions from their classmates while becoming aware of other ways of looking at the problems (Clarkston & Gilley, 2014). This approach is perhaps the most logical and balanced as it allows the teacher to get a sense of a student's abilities both as an individual and as a social actor. Although developing two-stage exams creates an additional burden for teachers and institutions, the fuller picture of learner abilities that this type of exam potentially provides is arguably worth the extra effort. Moreover, the initial set-up and administration time may not be so different from most current practices, the main additional consideration perhaps being how to reliably elicit representative participation from each member during the group stage.

A second, and quite common, approach to collaborative testing is the use of pair-to-group-to-class activities, in which exam topics or questions are first shared and discussed in pairs, then in ever-increasingly numerous groups, from 4 to 6 to 8 and so on, until the entire class is involved in the same discussion. This type of activity allows students to confirm or correct their understanding of the content on which they have just been tested. This approach can positively influence the motivation level of each group member through success with the activity as well as ensure that everyone has learned the material and is motivated to teach the others (Slavin, 1996).

A third alternative to traditional individual testing is the use of self, peer, and collaborative assessment tasks (Falchikov, 1986). These tasks allow for three stages of assessment, namely self-evaluation, then peer discussion, and finally small group discussion of the correct and incorrect answers to questions on tests taken individually. The idea here is to focus on learners' ability to explain their positions or thought processes on answers given during individual testing. This approach is particularly useful in the analysis of incorrect multiple-choice answers. It also enables the teacher to better understand student reasoning for choosing specific answers and may even justify the awarding of partial test credit. Most importantly, this three-stage testing approach provides a clearer picture of learners' overall abilities, the weighting of each depenfing on the priorities of each individual practitioner or institution. However, Davies (2009) suggests useful scoring techniques for each stage, ranging from evaluation packs including self-evaluation components and numerical scores to one-off peer evaluations with rankings of team members.

As a final suggested collaborative approach to classroom assessment, debate activities based on topics from exam readings or semester-specific tasks can be used to elicit a wide range of communication skills. Although not a new idea, the addition of these types of activities to the established assessment regimen provides a look at actual linguistic performance, as opposed to the mere knowledge that is typically measured by simple quizzes or multiple-choice tests. As with the previously suggested collaborative tasks, the benefits of these types of activities include "a potentially less stressful environment for new, international or less social students to interact with their peers, and a better quality of work that can be produced" (Davidson et al., 2014, p. 117). Furthermore, as Slavin (1996) notes, "students will learn from one another because … cognitive conflicts will arise, inadequate reasoning will be exposed, disequilibration will occur, and higher quality understandings will emerge" (p. 49). In short, even though the target of these types of assessment activities remains that of collectively testing current learner abilities, this approach entails the additional advantage of the social learning that takes place in the process.

Conclusion

As it is generally agreed that students learn well when they work together, collaborative learning is now a staple of many classrooms. Collaborative learning enables students to work together to achieve group goals and promotes individual success through interaction. However, traditional testing methods are often mismatched with these learning outcomes. As an alternative approach to assessment, collaborative testing more realistically mirrors not only what learners do in the classroom but also what they will be expected to do in the world beyond. Although care is necessary to ensure reliable measurement of individual learner abilities in group settings, by expanding our testing repertoire to include collaborative activities, we can hope to ensure that we are assessing our learners' abilities in a way that more accurately represents what it is that they are truly learning.

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Conducting and Sharing Practitioner Research: Why and How

James Bury
Shumei University

Teachers often feel frustrated when engaging with research that seems sanitized, decontextualized, and detached from the problems and realities of their everyday practice (Rose & McKinley, 2017). This frustration can lead many to question the relevance of current academic research to real-life teaching environments, asking, "So what?" One way to remedy this situation would be for teachers to conduct and share their own practitioner research. To facilitate and support this endeavor, I present a model illustrating a cycle of practitioner research and suggest ways of developing collectivities or communities of practice. I hope that teachers reading this piece will be encouraged to examine their own teaching approaches, engage in practice-based investigations, and share their findings with each other within collectivities or communities of practice, thus benefiting educators, schools and universities, the overall field of TESOL, and most importantly, students.

教師たちは、不適切と思われる部分が取り除かれ、現場の状況が考慮されておらず、日々の業務で起こる問題や現実から切り離された研究に関わると、しばしばフラストレーションを感じる（Rose＆McKinley,2017）。このフラストレーションによって、多くの教師が実際の教育環境と最近の学術的研究との関連性を疑い、「だから何？」という疑問を抱いてしまうのだ。このような状況を改善する一つの方法として、教師が実践者研究を行い、それを共有するというものがある。この試みを促進し支援するため、本研究では実践者研究の一連のモデルを提示し、実践の場としての共同体やコミュニティを発展させていく方法について論じる。本論は、教師たちが自身の指導方法を検討し、実践に基づいた調査を行い、その実践共同体やコミュニティの中での気づきを互いに共有することを促すものとなることを期待する。これにより、教育者、学校、大学、TESOL分野全体、そして最も重要な、学生たちに大きな利益をもたらすことを期待する。

https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTLT47.3-2

Like many other readers of *The Language Teacher* (*TLT*), I have attended a variety of presentations, workshops, and seminars, ranging from small, local colloquiums to large, international conferences. Each one has provided a different takeaway. One of the most impactful takeaways I have ever had—and the inspiration for this short article—came in the form of this simple question: "So what?" Although the topic of the conference was not language teaching but event management, and the emphasis was on practical, evidence-based research that could be applied in real-life contexts—which might explain the reason for such a question—the direct, stark simplicity of the query was still shocking to me. At first, I thought the questioner was being antagonistic, but on reflection I came to realize that the question perfectly embodied the frustrations many teachers feel when engaging with research that can appear sanitized, decontextualized, and detached from the problems and realities of their practice (Rose & McKinley, 2017).

One criticism of much TESOL research is that it is conducted within an isolated academic community that is disconnected from the majority of teachers and which places greater emphasis on research-informed teaching than on teaching-informed research (Rose, 2019). This top-down approach produces a unidirectional flow of information, which then results in a lack of teacher engagement, a questioning of the relevance of current academic research to real-life teaching practices, and a large divide between the aims and objectives of those involved solely in either publishing or teaching.

While the importance of linking theory to practice is widely acknowledged, Cordingley (2015) asserts that the desired interconnection is not being effectively achieved and that there remains a need for complex notions to be shared in a way that makes them more accessible to, and valued by, practitioners. This issue has recently become amplified as teachers and institutions have been forced to find new ways of providing effective instruction throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this article, I address the problems of the unidirectional movement of information from researchers to teachers and the divergence of theory and practice in two ways. First, I introduce a cycle of practitioner research, outlining a procedure for actively conducting research in classroom contexts. Then, I argue that in order for findings to be effectively disseminated so that they can be trialed in different contexts and, thus, strengthen generalizability and ecological validity, educators and researchers should develop collectivities and communities of practice.

Engaging in Practitioner Research

Engaging in practitioner research has a range of benefits for teachers, schools and universities, students, and the overall field of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). By developing their research skills, teachers can move toward becoming "holistic TESOL professionals" (McKinley, 2019, p. 879), academic "all-rounders" (Macfarlane, 2011, p. 60), and "unbounded professionals" (Whitchurch, 2008, p. 383). Practitioner research also encourages educators to differentiate their teaching methods, experiment with new approaches, and diversify their in-class activities (Bell et al., 2010), all of which promote effective teaching practice and can permeate the learning environment, thus enhancing students' learning experiences. Furthermore, practitioner research challenges the culture of accepting prescribed codes and structures such as published lists of recommended practices or professional competences without question and without taking teachers' own values and personalities into consideration.

Actively investigating how to improve their practice in a way that fully incorporates their values enables practitioner researchers to increase their awareness of the motivations and principles that drive their work, thus allowing them to construct their own living educational theory, which may then be validated by peers and contribute to the wider knowledge base within the field (Whitehead, 1993). Focusing on the real-life issues that affect teachers via practitioner research can also enable the linking of theory and practice and lead to the development of more robust and ecologically valid research with clear practical applications, thus answering the "so what" question. However, starting this process and conducting research alone and without guidance or support can be difficult and daunting.

Teacher hesitancy to engage in practitioner research can be due to any of a range of factors, which include time constraints, lack of confidence in one's research skills, and a view of the possible benefits of implementing change as not being worth the required effort (Kavanagh, 2012). In view of these barriers, this paper presents an adaptation of Bury's (2022) 13-step cycle of practitioner research, which illustrates the reiterative nature of the endeavor (see Figure 1). For a more detailed treatment of each step in the model, the process exemplified in Bury (2019) has been included in the Appendix.

Step 1 in the cycle of practitioner research is to critically reflect on current teaching practice. Critical reflection on our own classroom behaviors is essential to practitioner research as it is this reflective process that enables the identification of practice-based issues. Furthermore, the ongoing process of critically examining our current and past skills and competencies—which many teachers tend to do instinctively—promotes the improvement of future practices. It also leads to Step 2, which is to identify potential research questions.

Once research questions have been formulated, Step 3 involves a review of the previous research connected to the issue or area of inquiry. This step is crucial as key knowledge comes not only from our own experiences and observations, but also from formal knowledge gained through theory and research and each of these two knowledge sources informs the other.

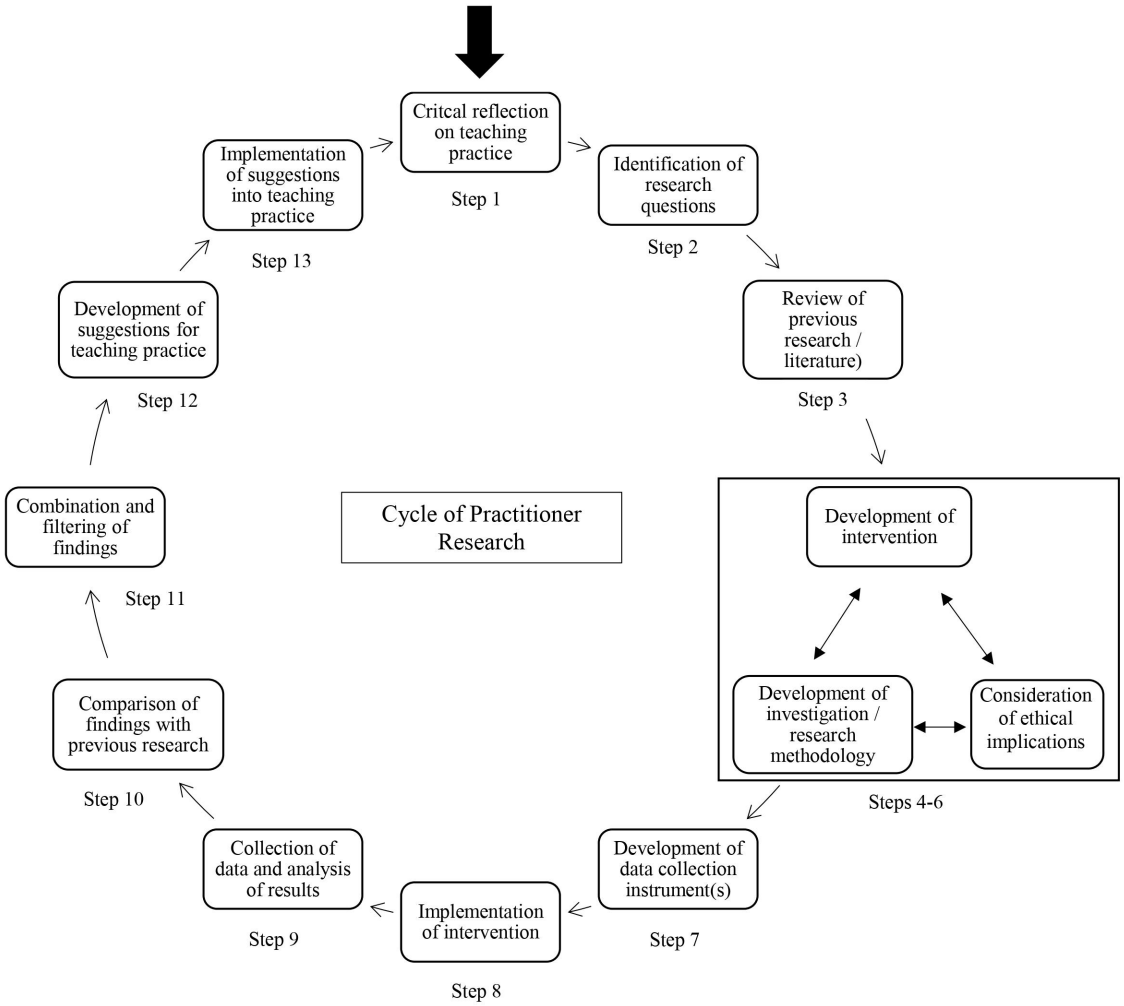
This gathering of information and contextual knowledge leads to an iterative loop (Steps 4 through 6), which involves not only the development of interventions and their associated investigations and research methodologies, but also a consideration of the many ethical implications of our actions and potential biases that can affect findings, such as power relationships and existing perceptions. Following the development of a data collection instrument (or instruments) in Step 7, the intervention can be implemented in Step 8, and data are collected and analyzed in Step 9.

In Step 10, the findings from this analysis are compared with those from previous research on similar topics and in similar contexts. This comparison, analysis, and engagement with prior knowledge offers the opportunity to gain valuable insights. Then, in Step 11, the findings need to be filtered, checked, and consolidated to provide a basis for Step 12, which is to develop suggestions for teaching practice. The resulting suggestions can then be implemented and critically reflected upon in Step 13, at which point the cycle is complete and the process starts over again.

Although the explanation provided here omits many of the details as well as issues that can be encountered at each step, the goal of this article is simply to provide an overview of the general process. It is also worth noting that while following the steps in the model might seem to take substantial time and effort, many educators are already doing some of them just by thinking about their teaching practice, trying to find ways of improving their approaches and methods, and reading publications like this one.

Figure 1

Cycle of Practitioner Research



Note. Adapted from the author's dissertation thesis (Bury, 2022, p. 196).

Building Collectivities and Communities of Practice

While conference keynote and plenary speeches can be inspirational and can present findings that are relevant and relatable, oftentimes the most interesting and useful takeaways are those gained from conversations with, and presentations given by, educators in similar contexts to our own. Comfort can be gained from speaking to others who are experiencing similar issues in their own teaching environments, and it is refreshing and encouraging to hear of others' attempts to solve those issues. However, despite the efforts of organizations like *JALT* and publications like *TLT*, opportunities to engage in such discourse can still be limited.

One way of multiplying such opportunities is by creating communities of practice (Buysse et al., 2003). However, the creation of such communities takes time, effort, negotiation, and shared enterprise. Consequently, I argue that educators should first aim to establish *collectivities* of practice (Lindkvist, 2005), which can then be developed into more permanent, structured communities. Although still no small task, it is at least a more achievable one.

In contrast to communities of practice, collectivities of practice are generally smaller in scale and rely more on individual knowledge, agency, and goal-directed interaction. Furthermore, they can be created in many forms, ranging from groups of students trying to improve study skills to teachers

trialling new approaches in their classrooms, but they most commonly arise quickly and comprise members that embrace a collective goal (Lindkvist, 2005). Consequently, they are more manageable and easier to organize and can thus act as stepping stones or building blocks to the establishment of communities of practice.

In practical, real-life terms, setting up collectivities of practice can be as simple as asking the teachers around you their opinions on an issue or problem and discussing ideas. This small step can then lead to a wider discourse involving greater numbers of participants. An example of this process can be seen at a private high school where I once worked: Teachers would identify issues important to them, investigate ways of addressing those issues, make short presentations on them to each other in a workshop environment, and then discuss ideas.

The initial creation of collectivities of practice, such as in the example above, enables members to share good practice, highlight the positive outcomes that can be gained from conducting practitioner research, support others in similar situations, and engage in the communal co-construction of knowledge around shared interests. Furthermore, participating in collectivities or communities of practice promotes both professional and self-development as a consequence of engaging in regular reflection and dialogue with people who have varying levels of expertise (Barab & Duffy, 2000). It also lets teachers fulfil their responsibility to engage in analysis of each other's experiences and observations as a way to continually refine practice and ultimately contribute to the formal knowledge base (Wesley & Buysse, 2001).

Once collectivities of practice have been set up, the main focus should be reflection on experience, with the aim of producing outcomes with practical and relevant applications. This reflection can manifest itself as documenting experiences and our interpretations of them, sharing personal narratives and observations, engaging in discourse with peers, analyzing shared issues, and participating in collaborative research. This focus would instantiate the two central tenets of communities of practice outlined by Buysse et al. (2003), namely that knowledge is situated in experience and that experience is understood through critical reflection with others who share this experience.

As these collectivities of practice evolve over time and via mutual engagement, the development of group norms, shared understanding, and a repertoire of communal resources—all of which are dimensions of coherent, productive communities of practice—can be promoted (Wenger, 1998). This development is crucial as, despite issues relating to power, trust, and external manipulation, communities of practice are important places of negotiation, learning, meaning, and identity (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Conclusions

Having recovered from my surprise at hearing "So what?" at the conference mentioned above, I now understand and support what I feel were the intentions behind the question. Although it is not possible in every case, I believe that research and theory should have practical applications and that they should be used to effect real change.

Questioning our own approaches to teaching and learning, conducting our own practice-based investigations, and then sharing our findings with each other within collectivities or communities of practice based around collaborative research that focuses on the issues affecting real-life language teaching is advantageous for the educators involved, the institutions where they work, the overall field of TESOL, and most importantly, students. It is hoped that both the cycle of practitioner research and the discussion on collectivities and communities of practice in this short article will encourage teachers to engage in this endeavor.

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Appendix

Steps of the Cycle of Practitioner Research as Exemplified in Bury (2019)

Step(s)	Example(s)
1: Critical reflection on teaching practice	Identified the issue of classroom interactions and model dialogues in EFL materials being very formulaic, unnatural, and rigidly structured.
2: Identification of research questions	Developed a list of research questions focused on the main investigation of how more natural, expansive interactions could be encouraged in classrooms.
3: Review of previous research/literature	Read a wide range of articles and research on the topics of encouraging student output, classroom discourse, and developing natural, authentic interactions. Decided to focus on the use of varied discourse moves.
4-6: Development of intervention	Selected ten discourse moves that could be used in classes, particularly in the third move of Initiation-Response-Evaluation/Feedback (IRE/F) interactions.
4-6: Development of investigation/research methodology	Decided to analyze student output following teacher use of the different discourse moves. Also decided to interview the participating teachers to gauge their reaction to the implementation of the discourse moves.
4-6: Consideration of ethical implications	Applied for permission to conduct the research through the university ethics board, gained informed consent from students, ensured anonymity in data collection and reporting, and aimed to minimize intrusion in classes.
7: Development of data collection instrument(s)	Decided on a method to transcribe recorded classroom discourse. Also developed and trialed the teacher interview questions.
8: Implementation of intervention	Implemented the intervention with the participating teachers in classes in which the students had all given their informed consent.

Step(s)	Example(s)
9: Collection of data and analysis of results	Recorded and transcribed 10-minute samples from a range of classes. Counted the words in each student response in relation to the discourse moves used by teachers for quantitative data and analyzed the content of the responses for qualitative data. Also conducted interviews with the participating teachers and analyzed the responses looking for common themes.
10: Comparison of findings with previous results	Compared the findings gained from the data collection to the findings presented in previous research connected with the use of discourse moves and speech acts.
11: Combination and filtering of findings	Combined and filtered the findings gained from the comparison conducted in the previous stage to identify common and generalizable themes.
12: Development of suggestions for teaching practice	Developed suggestions on ways of introducing the discourse moves that encouraged the most student output into classroom interactions.
13: Implementation of suggestions into teaching practice	Implemented the methods suggested in the previous stage and began to critically reflect on the outcomes to restart the cycle.

[JALT FOCUS] 2021 JALT MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Malcolm Swanson

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

Email: jaltpubs.tlt.focus@jalt.org • Web: https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/jalt-focus

Report on the 2021 JALT Membership Survey

Melodie Cook
Past Director of Membership
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Emily Choong
Membership Liaison
Karmen Siew
Membership Committee

This report presents the results of a survey conducted by the JALT Membership Committee in 2021 for the purpose of discovering who our members are, how they engage with JALT, what they want from JALT, and how JALT can better serve them. Adapted from a previous, informal survey conducted in 2016, this 41-item questionnaire (see Appendix) was formulated by the Membership Committee under the supervision of the Board of Directors and made available via Google Forms for a period of one month after the June 2021 Executive Board Meeting. The respondents were 442 then-active JALT members (20% of the total membership at that time).

This report is divided into six major subsections:

- Demographic Information
- Engagement with JALT Events
- Engagement with JALT Publications
- Use of JALT Services
- Engagement with JALT as a Volunteer
- Perceived Issues with JALT as an Organization

Demographic Information

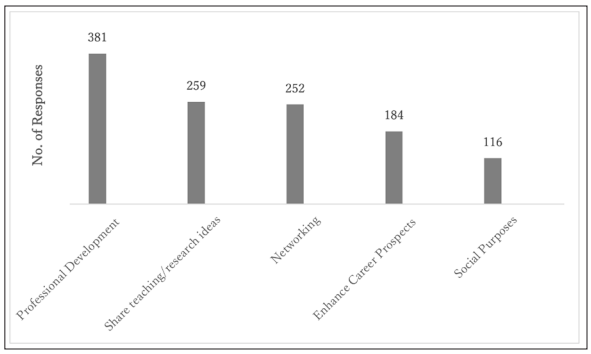
On the question of gender, 245 (55.7%) of the survey respondents identified themselves as male, 185 (41.9%) as female, and 3 (0.7%) as nonbinary, with the remaining 6 (1.4%) indicating a preference not to answer. As for age, 85 (19%) reported being between the ages of 51 and 55. On the question of national origin, nearly half (*n* = 48; 49%) of all those who answered this question belonged to BANA (Britain, Australasian, North American) countries. As for current employment status, 369 (84%) reported working in universities or colleges; 118 (27%) of which as lecturers; 205 (46%) as full-time, tenured professors; and 85 (24%) as graduate students. A slight majority (*n* = 236; 53%) of respondents reported having institutional research support. Finally, many respondents reported also belonging to other professional organizations besides JALT, the top two most common being JACET (*n* = 97; 37%) and TESOL (*n* = 71; 22%).

Engagement with JALT Events

After providing their demographic information, respondents were asked to indicate their reason or reasons for attending JALT events. The main categories of their responses are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Reasons for Attending JALT Events



Other individual responses included "the thing to do," "short holiday from the family," "had to present on a textbook I authored," "recommended to me by my professor," "to support my friend," "many of my students will become language teachers," "to mentor teachers at early stages in their careers," "to continue my involvement in a SIG," and "publication opportunities."

Conferences

The numbers of respondents saying they had attended 1 to 5, 6 to 10, and 11 or more JALT conferences were 158 (36%), 109 (25%), and 103 (23%), respectively. Only 55 (12%) of the survey participants said that they had never attended a JALT conference. The most frequently given reasons for non-attendance were timing (*n* = 39; 57%), location (*n* = 16; 24%), cost (*n* = 15; 22%), topic irrelevance (*n* = 8; 12%), and need for childcare assistance (*n* = 7; 10%). Other individual reasons included "haven't got around to it," "can't attend if not presenting," "too busy," "just became a member recently," "no research budget provided by employer," and "environmental impact of international travel."

Local Chapter Events

With regard to number of local chapter events attended, the respondents answered as follows: 1 to 5 (*n* = 289; 65%), 6 to 10 (*n* = 61; 14%), 11 or more (*n* = 18; 4%), and none (*n* = 70; 16%), with another 4 persons (1%) indicating that they could not remember. The most frequently given reasons for non-attendance at local chapter events were timing (*n* = 15; 66%), topic irrelevance (*n* = 13; 12%), location (*n* = 12; 16%), cost (*n* = 10; 13%), and need for childcare assistance (*n* = 8; 11%). Other individual responses included "native speakers not friendly," "don't know the speaker," "too tired," "can only go if I present," "too busy," "too much work at uni," and "did not know there were events organized by JALT."

In the interest of promoting greater attendance at JALT events, Table 1 presents possible solutions to the issues that were raised.

Table 1

Suggested Measures Against Barriers to JALT Event Participation

Issue	Possible Solution
Timing	When possible, hold events at various times.
Topics	Poll members to find out what they want to learn about at events.
Location	Rotate locations if possible.
Cost	Remind members that local chapter events are free.
Childcare	Provide childcare, if possible.
Friendliness	Formally welcome new members at events.

Issue	Possible Solution
Awareness	Ensure that members know about events through multiple media platforms.

PanSIG

With regard to PanSIG attendance, the responses were as follows: 1 to 5 events (*n* = 237; 54%), 6 to 10 events (*n* = 32; 7%), 11 or more events (*n* = 9; 2%), and none (*n* = 159; 36%), and "can't remember" (*n* = 5; 1%)." The most frequently given reasons for non-attendance were timing (*n* = 85; 56%), location (*n* = 45; 29%), topic irrrelevance (*n* = 18; 12%), cost (*n* = 16; 11%), and need for childcare assistance (*n* = 10; 7%). Other individual answers included "too tired," "not a priority," "haven't got round to it," "can only go if I present," "don't work weekends," "live in the US," "feel overloaded with information," "joined only recently," "not interested," "don't know what that is," and "don't know the difference between this conference and the international JALT one."

Through the respondents' remarks, three main themes emerged, namely inclusivity and diversity, oversight and communication, and cost. Below are some of their comments in their own words.

Inclusion and Diversity

- "It is starting to appear cliquish, so for these reasons, I did not submit a proposal this year for the first time ever."
- "There is speculation among colleagues and friends that PhD holders are being rejected from the International Conference at consistently high rates and that they have had their abstracts rejected in favour of less qualified/less experienced presenters. It feels like we are no longer provided with a platform to share our knowledge which would be more beneficial to conference participants and their professional development."
- "It's hard for non-university teachers to feel like they belong or have anything to contribute."
- "Not enough diversity in members."
- "Depending on who the international conference speakers are, I see a striking difference in the overall diversity of invited speakers and conference themes."

Oversight and Communication

- "PanSIG needs stronger national oversight and control."
- "I feel that promotion of bigger events such as PanSIG is getting worse in recent years. Information about deadlines, etc., should be given to all members much earlier."
- "I'm a big fan of PanSIG, but I'd hate to see it get any bigger. It was the perfect size and the focused threads of presentations that really made it worthwhile."
- "Needs better and clearer communication on when and how and where the events are happening. Zoom? Schedules? Times? Replays?"

Cost

- "Generally, I feel that JALT can be quite expensive compared to other organizations. The cost is high. Lower the registration cost."
- "OTJ is now doing many of the same things at no cost and there are many webinars which are also free."
- "There is very little that JALT can do to improve membership while universities refuse junior staff research funding. JALT has many members who are tenured and have influence in faculty meetings: Perhaps it is time JALT started to lobby universities to better support language teachers."

Note that these are the impressions of but a few JALT members and that, while important, they may not reflect the views of the majority. Nevertheless, personal perceptions do influence the ways in which members engage with JALT. Thus, in the interest of resolving some of the issues we encountered, Table 2 provides a number of recommendations to PanSIG organizers going forward.

Table 2

Recommended Measures for Improving PanSIG Conferences

Issue	Possible Solution
Awareness	Make differences between PanSIG and the JALT National Conference clearer.
Cost	Remind members that they can apply for grants to attend conferences.
Inclusivity	Ensure diversity where possible (although doing this with blind review may be difficult).

Issue	Possible Solution
Quality of abstracts	Explain the blind peer review process when the call comes out and perhaps again when acceptances/rejections are sent.
Cliquishness	Incorporate measures for identifying and welcoming new presenters/attendees.

Online vs. Face-to-Face Conferences

At the time of this survey, the world was very much changed by COVID-19, and conference goers were, on the whole, relegated to online events as large face-to-face gatherings did not resume until the 2022 PanSIG conference. When asked about these online events, the majority of participants indicated favoring them for reasons of living in remote locations, lacking travel budgets, or suffering from chronic illnesses. These respondents expressed a wish for all conferences to include an online component. By contrast, others expressed a desire to return to face-to-face-only formats because they missed the camaraderie, had young children at home, felt a loss of human connection, or suffered from eyestrain.

Overall Comments About JALT Events

The following are comments respondents made about events in general:

Wishes

- "I think that a two-day registration option should be offered. I don't want to pay for three days when I can attend only two."
- "I wish there were more meaningful professional development events that would aid with job searches for university."
- "Fewer presentations at the same time. Too little audience split across too many seminars."
- "The national conference is way too big."
- "I'd love to see events held at a variety of times to reach more people."
- "I'd like to see more presentations/workshops that focus on non-university teaching contexts."

Praise

- "They are always well organized."
- "I would not be teaching at my universities if it were not for JALT."
- "The diversity of each local chapter and SIG gives various opportunities for participation."
- "They're really cool. I'm digging the scene."
- "The quality is satisfactorily high, and the networking/socializing is good."
- "The dedication of all is so impressive."
- "The people are really great. I have learned a lot from the conferences that I have attended."
- "They are always helpful and interesting (*sic*) and I'm grateful for all the hard-working volunteers who make these events happen."

One member summed up the differences in perceptions of JALT events particularly well:

> I think JALT events are important to many members, but the work at these events tends to be spread across the same group of dedicated people. The tireless, and often thankless, work that goes into JALT events is often met with comments from people who do not attend the event about how useless the events are. I feel like rumour and previous experiences have run their course for some reason. Most members I interact with feel that JALT is broken and serves very few of its members well. I don't agree, but I can see their point.

To conclude this section, in the interest of changing negative perceptions fo JALT events, Table 3 lists a number of recommendations to all Chapters and SIGs.

Table 3

Recommended Measures for Improving Perceptions of JALT Events

Issue	Possible Solution
Communication	Keep in regular touch with our membership.
Community	Help members feel like they are a part of JALT.
Transparency	Explain how decisions are made.
Openness	Listen to various opinions of the membership (e.g., by conducting regular membership surveys).
Truth	Disabuse members of incorrect assumptions or ideas.

Engagement with JALT Publications

Figure 2, showing the numbers of JALT publications readers by title or type, reveals *The Language Teacher* to be the most widely read. For those who indicated not reading any of the various JALT publications, the most frequently given reasons were "no time" (*n* = 13; 43%), "too academic" (*n* = 9; 30%), "not relevant" (*n* = 5; 17%), and "not academic enough" (*n* = 2; 7%). Other individual reasons included "new member," "group membership" (doesn't receive paper copies), "retired," "need help accessing online articles," and "not interested."

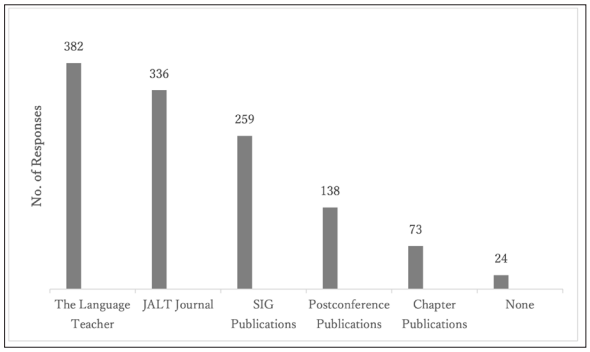


Figure 2

JALT Publications Readers

Figure 3 shows the numbers of respondents who reported having had successful submissions to JALT publications by title and type. As the figure indicates, the greatest number of respondents who have published work with JALT have done so through SIG publications, followed by the *Post-Conference Publication* and *The Language Teacher*. Smaller numbers reported contributing their work to *JALT Journal* and to chapter publications. The most frequently given reasons for not contributing were "no time" (*n* = 47; 34%), "not qualified" (*n* = 47; 34%), "not interested" (*n* = 18; 13%), and "publications not ranked highly enough" (*n* = 11; 8%). Other individual comments included "sent an article once, but received a scathing review," "no research results to share," "no resources to do research," "busy or lazy or both," "contribute to other journals," "teaching context doesn't contribute to the main readership," "haven't tried to write; don't know where to start," "they are not looking to publish articles that are directly related to language education," and "don't have anyone to ask for guidance."

Figure 3

JALT Publications Manuscript Contributors

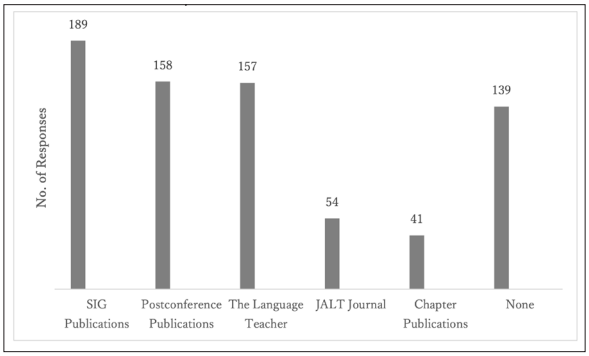
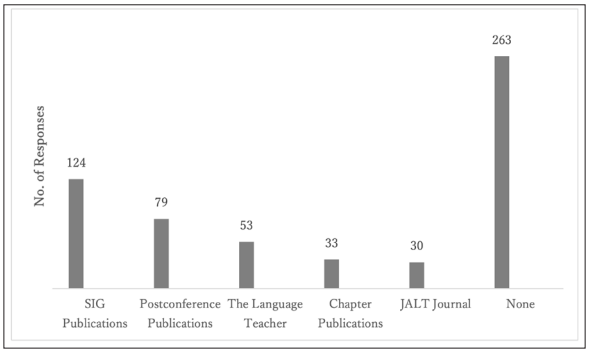


Figure 4 shows the numbers of respondents who reported volunteering their services to the various JALT publications. As the figure shows, around half of the 442 total respondents reported not providing any kind of service to publications. The most frequently given reasons were "no time" (*n* = 122; 88%), "no training" (*n* = 76; 55%), "don't know how to offer services" (*n* = 43; 31%), and "already provide services to other journals" (*n* = 37; 27%). Other individual responses included "not been asked for/never heard of an opportunity to do so," "busy or lazy or both," "have managed to escape the task," "not interested in doing such work," "more than happy to help!," "inquired about getting involved but was flatly told 'no thanks,'" "just joined," "my spelling is awful," and "not my goal at the moment."

Figure 4

Service to JALT Publications



Online vs. Paper Publications

Respondents were not specifically asked about online or paper publications, but many expressed a wish for only online versions. However, one person said that should publications be made available only online they would refuse to read them:

I read them when I get them on paper. If I have to track it down online, I won't. Paper might seem redundant, but it is the most efficient way to get a lot of information in a short time.

Commonly Mentioned Issues: Consistency, Confusion, and Clarity

The following are some respondent comments on the issues of consistency, confusion, and clarity:

- "*TLT* editorial quality seems inconsistent."
- "The *TLT* has fallen in quality and is no longer very interesting."
- "I sent an email to the *TLT* editor but to this day I still haven't received a reply."
- "I can't understand why, with more people looking to publish, the *TLT* comes out every two months and for some time now seems to have fewer articles and readers forum pieces than before when it was monthly. Maybe people are publishing internationally more, maybe there are more and better SIG and Chapter publication options available... but it is a bit of a mystery. There also seems to be a real disparity in the publications by SIGs."
- "It is not easy to publish in JALT compared to other similar organizations."
- "I feel a barrier about *TLT* and *JALT Journal*."
- "As a researcher, I've found that the review and editing process can be really hit or miss. I've had some great reviewers/editors, and I've had some bad ones that clearly didn't understand the topic and gave misinformed opinions because of that."
- "I've submitted to the *Post-Conference Publication* every year for the past six. While I very much appreciate the work of the reviewers, I've found the content and rigorousness of the suggested revisions to be quite variable each time. I don't consider myself to be a strong academic writer but the paper I submitted for this year's *PCP* was one that I was confident in, so I was surprised when it was rejected. Some of the reviewers' comments reflected an incomplete reading of the text, or a rejection of points that were accepted without issue on my previous submissions. I was disappointed with the process and wish I had a chance to state my case for the paper's potential. At the very least, there needs to be more consistency in the reviewers' approaches so that regular contributors like myself can reliably learn and grow through each submission, even if it is ultimately rejected."
- "I come across a lot of rude, unqualified reviewers."
- "Both *JALT Journal* and *The Language Teacher* are getting thinner and thinner. I also believe that both journals (particularly *JALT Journal*) need to try harder to compete with more fancied academic publications. Moving over to creating DOIs for articles in 2020 was a good move, but still, neither journal is ranked on important journal indices, for example, Scimago (https://www.scimagojr.com/0). If one was to use the Scimago scale as a measurement, *The JALT CALL Journal* is the most highly rated JALT publication."
- "More consistent reviewer guidelines are necessary."

Respondents also expressed a number of wishes with regard to JALT Publications:

- "I wish there were publications for proposing ideas, as opposed to reporting on research results."
- "The assumption seems to be in many cases that teachers are up and running with their linguistic knowledge, it is just the teaching that needs attention. I'd like to see some more papers dealing with bread-and-butter linguistic issues. Basically 'what to teach' as well as 'how to teach.'"
- "More articles/resources on adult/senior language education (recreational, non-ESP) would be helpful to language school instructors like me."
- "I wish more JALT members would help out with reviewing and copy editing these publications, but I don't think members see the benefits of helping. It's not just to spread the work, but to see what's current in the verve of research in the Japan contexts. It's about making a network of research colleagues. Despite our efforts, the members just don't flock to the JALT Pubs Board presentation at JALT National."
- "There should be more acceptance of non-academic articles by non-university teachers. These have value, too."
- "More focus on other foreign languages than only English."
- "It would be helpful if the review process was faster and more transparent. Many teaching positions in Japan require publications to be considered for the position. The amount of time some of the JALT publications take to determine whether or not an article will be

reviewed seems excessive when compared to other journals of similar quality. I submitted an article over 2 months ago and have yet to even be informed if the review process has started."

- "Very intimidating process. You could have a 'new author's section' for people who haven't published in proper journals. Young researchers would feel more confident in applying."
- "I'd like to publish in the *JALT Journal*, but it feels inaccessible."

In the interest of improving JALT publications, Table 4 provides a number of recommendations to the JALT Publications Board.

Table 4

Recommended Measures for Improving JALT Publications

Issue	Possible Solution
Training	Make members aware of the existence of the Writers' Peer Support Group.
Reviewing	Make the review process transparent to writers.
Publications Beyond the "Big 3"	Make members aware of the variety of places they can publish, including SIG publications, newsletters, and non-JALT publications.
Communication	Ensure that the membership knows about changes to communication methods, such as when switching to Basecamp or other platforms.
Openness	Invite people personally to become more involved in the reviewing, editing, and proofreading, process, and let them know that training is available.

To conclude this section on a positive note, here are some respondent comments expressing appreciation of the value of JALT publications:

- "I highly respect all the writers who give us great ideas."
- "JALT publications are a strength of the organization in that they are a venue for members for professional development, both as readers and authors."
- "I look forward to receiving my SIG publications."
- "Before I joined JALT, publishing seemed like something reserved for just world-famous researchers and authors. JALT has helped me to better understand what I read (especially Greg Sholdt's QRTP), and to feel that research and publishing is something that I too can do."
- "I submitted an article to *TLT* recently. Although it wasn't accepted, I really appreciate the advice I got, and I hope to resubmit it when I feel it is good enough."
- "*JALT Journal* contributes to research worldwide. An excellent team."
- "Keep up the great work."
- "Very good and applicable to my situation."
- "I think they perform an important service in professional development of teachers. I am very grateful to all the volunteers who have dedicated time to review and edit for these publications."
- "Love them—the MindBrainEd+ newsletter is immensely valuable to me—exposing me to aspects of teaching that I had never even considered before."
- "They're useful."
- "頑張れ![Do your best!]"
- "This group has been like a family to me in JALT ever since I joined, in the late 1990s."
- "You seem like a great community. Keep up the good work and thank you."
- "An incredible range for one association."
- "They are generally of extremely high quality."
- "The publications are insightful, enlightening and informative."
- "The heart of JALT! The one tangible thing that every member receives."
- "Fantastic, dedicated, talented folks working hard to produce quality publications."
- "They've been very useful to me in my own professional growth and as a way to share research and innovations with others."

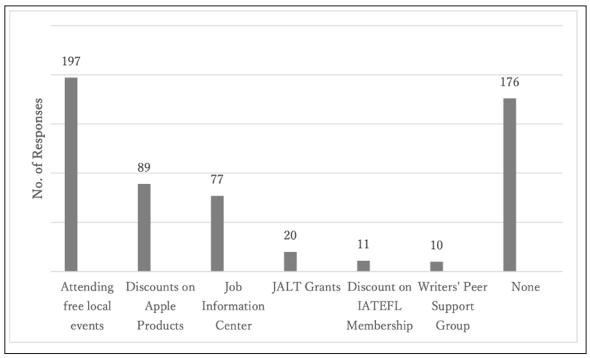
Use of JALT Services

Figure 5 shows the numbers of respondents who reported having availed themselves of various JALT services, including JALT-sponsored events, Apple product discounts, the Job Information Center, JALT grants, IATEFL membership discounts, and the Writers' Peer Support Group. As the graph illustrates, other than attending free local events, the respondents took relatively little advantage of the variety of services on offer. In fact, approximately 176 (40%) made use of no JALT services at all. When

asked their reasons, 94 respondents (53%) said that they did not need them, and 89 respondents (50%) said that they did not know about them.

Figure 5

Use of JALT Services



Some comments about JALT services were as follows:

- "I don't live in Japan."
- "I just joined."
- "I applied for a grant, but I didn't succeed."
- "JALT Grants are for those who have no funding. This is ridiculous. Faculty with funding doesn't have unlimited funding and can only use funding for a certain project. JALT grants need to be open to all JALT members and all submissions need to be judged on academic merit, not need."

To help members better understand JALT services and take better advantage of them, Table 5 lists a few recommendations.

Table 5

Recommended Measures for Promoting Greater Understanding and Use of JALT Services

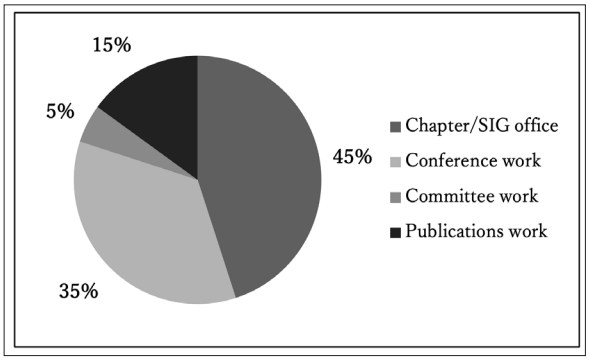
Issue	Possible Solution
Awareness	Make sure that members know about JALT services. Perhaps use publications to highlight different services in each issue.
Funding	Provide transparency about how grants are allocated to members. Invite members to join the grants committee if they wish for change.

Engagement with JALT as a Volunteer

Figure 6 illustrates the proportions of the areas in which respondents said they had done JALT volunteer work. As the figure shows, the largest number of respondents indicated having served as chapter or SIG officers, followed by having done work on conferences, publications, and committees.

Figure 6

Areas of JALT Volunteer Work Performed



One tendency that became clear from the data was that some very dedicated JALT members have fulfilled a multiplicity of roles over many years. While such dedication is laudable, JALT cannot rely solely on a small few and must encourage greater numbers to become involved. A follow-up interview with one survey respondent suggested that many people are waiting to be asked to volunteer. To provide a more personal touch, Chapters and SIGs are encouraged simply to ask certain individuals to take on new roles.

Perceived Issues with JALT as an Organization

On this topic, the respondents' comments suggested issues in three main areas, namely equity (including toxicity, selection process, political reviews, diversity, and non-university representation), publications, and cost. Below are examples in the respondents' own words.

Equity issues

Toxicity

- "JALT has been an extremely sexist organization in the past. Efforts to change that are being made and that is appreciated. Please promote the Code of Conduct as a way to deal with racist, [*sic*] sexist individuals who poison the atmosphere at conferences and in SIGs. If those toxic

individuals know that the Code of Conduct exists and that their comments are designated as offensive, such unpleasant incidents will decrease. In addition, more representative panels and awareness of hiring practices are needed to create opportunities for all JALT members."

Selection Process

- "JALT has been disappointing to both me and multiple colleagues and friends I have spoken to recently, especially when it comes to feeling discriminated against for having the title Dr. in front of our names, when it comes to being rejected from being selected as a presenter at the international conference, and having submitted papers rejected from JALT publications only to then be published in higher-level journals with no changes. Something is wrong here. Multiple people I have spoken to have voiced the same concerns and I feel this is something that needs to be addressed."

Political Views

- "I feel JALT, as an academic society has been too focused on social issues recently. I want to learn about research methods, improvements in our field, and data analysis. Get away from social issues and move back towards academia."
- "Also, certain members within JALT constantly try to take the 'ethical high ground.' If anyone disagrees with their view, they are loud in opposition and approach it as if they are 'ethically' correct.... As a conservative, sometimes I don't feel welcome in JALT."

Diversity

- "I appreciate the support that JALT gives to those in the education community but JALT could work more on (other) languages, not only ELT, more leaning towards Japanese-speaking teachers... recently there was a successful event with teachers from the Philippines, but I heard a comment from Russian teachers... who feel not comfortable, welcome in JALT.... JALT is so much US-oriented (TESOL), some eyes on World Englishes would be good, too. I don't know why JALT is looking so much to this and that XYZesol."

Non-University Representation

- "JALT has come a long way towards acceptance of teachers of children, but there is still more work to be done with accepting non-university teachers. We are accepted if we come in and conform to university academic norms, but if we don't, it is viewed that we have nothing of value to contribute. I know this has been changing a bit, like the new SIG point system that doesn't rely so much on published journals."
- "Many high school and junior high school teachers don't know about JALT. It should have some ways to reach them in order to increase its membership."
- "Eikaiwa teachers work on a different schedule. We're most busy when university teachers are off, as in the evenings and in January to March."

To better inform member perceptions in these areas, Table 6 provides a number of recommendations.

Table 6

Recommended Measures for Better Informing Member Perceptions of Equity in JALT

Issue	Possible Solution
Toxicity	Ensure that the Code of Conduct is always prominently displayed and used for all JALT-related events. Make transparent to the membership the consequences of violations.
Selection process	Invite more people to participate in the vetting process. Make selection processes transparent to the membership.
Political views	Explain clearly to the membership why JALT aims to be a more aware, diverse, and equitable organization and how it is doing so.
Diversity	Invite all kinds of teachers to join JALT and ask them to participate actively. Invite newcomers from all backgrounds to present, join executives, etc. Use all kinds of teachers' pictures for public relations.
Non-university representation	Make sure that teachers from many teaching situations are represented. Look at individual SIGs and modify requirements accordingly. Reach out to teachers from all types of institutions and invite them to join, present, and feel a part of the JALT community.

Publications

- "I know that reviewers are volunteers and that the papers they get to review are sometimes not best matched to their area of expertise, but I've had reviewers who seem to be trying to get me to write the paper they want and not the paper I have just written."
- "Is it possible to lower price and not receive paper publications? I do not want to receive publications I can access online."

To better inform member perceptions in this area, Table 7 provides a number of recommendations.

Table 7

Recommended Measures for Better Informing Member Perceptions of JALT Publications

Issue	Possible Solution
Reviewing	Be transparent about how papers are reviewed. Encourage members to become reviewers and provide them with appropriate training.
Price	Explain that JALT is required to print publications and that it is cost-effective to print in bulk.

Cost

- "The annual fee is too expensive compared to other similar organizations which help and give us many opportunities to publish our papers. I would rather pay my money for something I can benefit from for my work professional accomplishments. As my research fund is decreasing every year, I will eventually need to carefully consider whether I will renew or not."
- "I am a member of several other professional organizations (both language related and not) both in Japan and overseas which publish journals regularly and put on annual conferences. In all cases, the membership and conference fees are considerably less than JALT. The value for money equation for JALT is heavily skewed and I would be very appreciative if the BoD would do something about it. I am lucky that my workplace provides research funds I can use to maintain my membership. I doubt I would prioritize JALT if that wasn't the case."

It seems to be a common perception that JALT membership and conference fees are expensive. As Table 8 illustrates, however, comparisons with other organizations suggest that this widespread impression is not necessarily true. Moreover, sharing these comparisons with others might help them see that JALT membership fees are competitive and that JALT conference fees are actually quite a bit lower than those of other large and well-known organizations.

Table 8

Organization Membership and Conference Fees Comparison

Organization	Regular Membership Fee (JPY)	Regular Member Conference Fee (JPY)[a]
Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)	13,000	10,000
Japan Association for College English Teachers (JACET)	10,000	3,000
International Academic Forum (IAFOR)	12,947	17,500
International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL)	11,403	37,467[b]
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL)	13,595	23,952
American Association of Applied Linguistics	K-12 Educators: 9,000 Univ.-level: 14,000	K-12 Educators: 22,000[b] Univ.-level: 29,000[b]

[a]In 2021 unless otherwise noted.
[b]In 2022.

Ending on a High Note

Although many of the preceding comments and perceptions call for action, it should be noted that, overall, the responses were overwhelmingly in praise of JALT and demonstrated a clear understanding that volunteers are working hard to make JALT a successful and cohesive organization. Here are just a few of them:

- "Thanks for the great work you all do. JALT without question changed the trajectory of my career in Japan."
- "Thank you for caring what the JALT members think and doing this survey."
- "Thank you for all your hard work. JALT people do a lot to support the language teaching com-

munity and people appreciate that!"

- "Keep up the good work and always keep looking for new ways to serve teaching and learning language."
- "Thank you so much for all the volunteers across the various parts of JALT. They don't get enough recognition, I think."
- "Honestly, I think you're all working really hard. Throw yourselves a pizza party or something."
- "I am incredibly thankful for JALT, because I have made so many connections and really, JALT has helped me develop as a teacher."

Finally, in closing, the authors of this report simply wish to say that it has been a pleasure and a privilege for all of us who worked on this survey. We hope that another will be conducted in five years' time and that we will see some improvement thanks to those who took the time to answer the survey and share their thoughts and feelings with us.

Appendix

2021 JALT Membership Survey

Demographic Information

1. What is your name (optional)?
2. Regarding gender, how do you identify?
   - Female
   - Male
   - Non-binary
   - I prefer not to say
   - Other
3. What is your age range?
   - 20-25
   - 26-30
   - 31-35
   - 36-40
   - 41-45
   - 46-50
   - 51-55
   - 56-60
   - 61-65
   - 66-70
   - 71+
   - I prefer not to say
4. Which other professional organizations do you belong to besides JALT? Choose as many as applicable.
   - TESOL
   - JACET
   - AAAL
   - IATEFL
   - IAFOR
   - KOTESOL
   - ETA-ROC
   - FEELTA
   - PALT
   - Thai TESOL
   - BELTA
   - Linguapax Asia
   - MELTA
   - NELTA
   - TEFLIN
   - JASFL
   - JERA
   - None
   - Other
5. Which other professional conferences do you attend besides the JALT International Conference? Choose as many as applicable.
   - TESOL
   - JACET
   - AAAL
   - IATEFL
   - IAFOR
   - KOTESOL
   - ETA-ROC
   - FEELTA
   - PALT
   - Thai TESOL
   - BELTA
   - Linguapax Asia
   - MELTA
   - NELTA
   - TEFLIN
   - JASFL
   - JERA
   - None
   - Other
6. To which chapter do you belong?
   - Akita
   - East Shikokou
   - Fukui
   - Fukuoka
   - Gifu
   - Gunma
   - Hamamatsu
   - Hiroshima
   - Hokkaido
   - Ibaraki
   - Iwate
   - Kitakyushu
   - Kobe
   - Kyoto
   - Matsuyama
   - Nagano
   - Nagoya
   - Nankyu
   - Nara
   - Niigata
   - Oita
   - Okayama
   - Osaka
   - Saitama
   - Sendai
   - Shizuoka
   - Tokyo
   - Tottori
   - Toyohashi
   - West Tokyo
   - Yamgata
   - Yokohama
   - X- No chapter
7. To which Special Interest Groups (SIGs) do you belong? Please check all those that are applicable.
   - Accessibility in Language Learning
   - Bilingualism
   - Business Communication
   - CEFR and Language Portfolio
   - College and University Education
   - Computer Assisted Language Learning
   - Critical Thinking
   - Extensive Reading
   - Gender Awareness in Language Education
   - Global Issues in Language Education
   - Intercultural Communication in Language Education
   - Japanese as a Second Language
   - Learner Development
   - Lifelong Language Learning
   - Listening
   - Literature in Language Teaching
   - Materials Writers
   - Mind, Brain, and Education
   - Mixed, Augmented, and Virtual Realities
   - Other Language Educators
   - Performance in Education
   - Pragmatics

- School Owners
- Study Abroad
- Tasked-based Learning
- Teacher Development
- Teachers Helping Teachers
- Teaching Young Learners
- Testing and Evaluation
- Vocabulary
- X – No SIG

8. How do you identify yourself in JALT?
   - Primarily as a chapter member
   - Primarily as a SIG member
   - As both a chapter and SIG member
   - Other
9. What is your Nationality?
10. Where are you employed? Check all that apply.
    - Elementary School
    - Junior High School
    - High School
    - College/University
    - Language School
    - Corporation
    - Cram School (Juku)
    - Private Tutor (Katei Kyoushi)
    - Online teacher
    - Retired
    - Student
    - Other
11. What is your position title? Please choose all that are applicable.
    - Assistant language teacher (ALT)
    - Teacher
    - School Owner
    - Lecturer
    - Assistant Professor
    - Associate Professor
    - Professor
    - Student
    - Retired
    - Other
12. Are you a graduate student?
    - No
    - Yes
13. What is the nature of your occupation? Please choose all that are applicable.
    - Part-time (contract) instructor
    - Part-time (tenured) instructor
    - Full-time (contract) instructor
    - Full-time (tenured) instructor
    - Freelance instructor
    - Business owner
    - Retired
    - Student
    - Other
14. What is your annual salary approximately? (optional – we are asking this to better serve AMs and all members, including more grant offerings if necessary).
15. Are you supported by research subsidies (研究費) from your institution?
    - Yes
    - Partially
    - No

Attendance at JALT Events

16. What was your initial reason for joining JALT? Please check more than one box if applicable.
    - For professional development purposes.
    - For networking purposes.
    - To enhance my career prospects.
    - To share teaching/research ideas.
    - For social purposes.
    - Other
17. What is your reason for renewing your JALT membership? Please check more than one box if applicable.
    - For professional development purposes.
    - For networking purposes.
    - To enhance my career prospects.
    - To share teaching/research ideas.
    - For social purposes.
    - Other
18. How many JALT International Conferences have you attended?
    - None
    - 1-5
    - 6-10
    - 11+
    - I can't remember.
19. If you chose *none* for the previous question, please explain why. Please check as many boxes as applicable.
    - The cost is too high.
    - The timing of events is not compatible with my work schedule.
    - The location of events is difficult for me to reach.

- The topics of events are not related to my work.
- I would need assistance with childcare or other caretaking in order to be able to attend.
- Other

20. About how many JALT events do you attend in an average year (excluding the JALT International Conference)?
    - None
    - 1-5
    - 6-10
    - 11+
    - I can't remember.
21. If you chose *none* for the previous question, please explain why. Please check as many boxes as applicable.
    - The cost is too high.
    - The timing of events is not compatible with my work schedule.
    - The location of events is difficult for me to reach.
    - The topics of events are not related to my work.
    - I would need assistance with childcare or other caretaking in order to be able to attend.
    - Other
22. How many PanSIG events have you attended?
    - None
    - 1-5
    - 6-10
    - 11+
    - I can't remember.
23. If you chose *none* for the previous question, please explain why. Please check as many boxes as applicable.
    - The cost is too high.
    - The timing of events is not compatible with my work schedule.
    - The location of events is difficult for me to reach.
    - The topics of events are not related to my work.
    - I would need assistance with childcare or other caretaking in order to be able to attend.
    - Other
24. If you are a graduate student, we have a new committee for you called the Student Peer Interaction Network (SPIN)—under the Graduate Student Subcommittee umbrella. We encourage you to join. If you are interested, please enter your name and email address.
25. Do you have any comments about JALT events?

JALT Publications

26. Which of the following publications do you read? Please check all that are applicable.
    - Postconference Publications (JALT International, PanSIG)
    - *The Language Teacher* (*TLT*)
    - *JALT Journal*
    - Chapter publications (if any)
    - SIG publications
    - None of the above
27. If you answered *none of the above" to the previous question, please explain why. Check as many boxes as applicable.
    - The articles are not relevant to my work.
    - I have no time to read them.
    - They are too academic/not practical for me.
    - They are not academic enough for me.,
    - Other
28. Which of the following publications have you contributed articles to? Please check all that are applicable.
    - Postconference Publications (JALT International, PanSIG
    - *The Language Teacher* (*TLT*)
    - *JALT Journal*
    - Chapter publications (if any)
    - SIG publications
    - None of the above
29. If you answered "none of the above" to the previous question, please explain why. Check as many boxes as applicable.
    - I don't have time to write articles.
    - I feel I am not qualified to write articles.
    - The publications are not ranked highly enough.
    - I am not interested in writing or publishing.
    - Other
30. Which of the following publications have you provided editorial, reviewing, proofreading, or other services to? Please check all that are applicable.
    - Postconference Publications (JALT International, PanSIG
    - *The Language Teacher* (*TLT*)
    - *JALT Journal*
    - Chapter publications (if any)
    - SIG publications

- None of the above

31. If you answered "none of the above" to the previous question, please explain why. Check as many boxes as applicable.
    - I don't have time.
    - I feel I am not trained to do those things.
    - I don't know how I can reach publications to offer my services.
    - I edit/review/proofread/other for other journals.
    - Other
32. Do you have any comments about JALT publications?

Use of JALT Services

33. Please check off the service(s) you have used in the past or are using now.
    - Writers' Peer Support Group (PSG)
    - Job Information Center (JIC)
    - Discounts on Apple Products
    - Special Discount on IATEFL Membership
    - JALT Grants
    - Attending local JALT events anywhere in Japan for free (excluding conferences)
    - None of the above
34. If you answered "None of the above" to the previous question, please tell us why. Check as many boxes as applicable.
    - I haven't needed them.
    - I didn't know about them.
    - Other.
35. If you have done any volunteer work for JALT, please list it here.
36. Do you have any comments about JALT services?

Opinions about JALT

37. What does JALT do well?
38. How can JALT improve services to its members?
39. If you would be willing to join a JALT committee in the future, please enter your name and email address below.
40. If you would be willing to discuss your answers in more depth, please type your email address in the space below.
41. Other comments.

[JALT PRAXIS] TLT INTERVIEWS

Torrin Shimono & James Nobis

TLT *Interviews brings you direct insights from leaders in the field of language learning, teaching, and education—and you are invited to be an interviewer! If you have a pertinent issue you would like to explore and have access to an expert or specialist, please make a submission of 2,000 words or less.*

Email: jaltpubs.tlt.interviews@jalt.org

Welcome to the May/June edition of TLT Interviews! For this issue, we have a double header for you—two insightful interviews. The first is with Dr. Jim McKinley, a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and associate professor of applied linguistics and TESOL at UCL Institute of Education, University of London. Dr. McKinley has taught in higher education in the UK, Japan, Australia, and Uganda, as well as schools in the US. His research focuses on the intersection of applied linguistics and the internationalization of higher education, targeting implications of globalization for second language (academic and scholarly) writing, English-medium instruction, and the teaching-research nexus in higher education. Dr. McKinley has published in many leading journals in applied linguistics and higher education, and he is an editor and author of several books on research methods in applied linguistics. He is also an Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of Education in the University of Oxford, the current co-editor-in-chief of the journal System*, and co-editor of the Language Teaching entry in the* Cambridge Elements *series (published by Cambridge University Press). Dr. McKinley was interviewed by Dr. Shuji Kojima, an English teacher in Kwansei Gakuin High School. Dr. Kojima has an M.A. in TESOL from the University of Melbourne and a Ph.D. from Temple University. His current research interests include professional development for English teachers, teacher education/training, and genre-based instruction. So, without further ado, to our first interview!*

Discussing the Teaching-Research Nexus: An Interview With Jim McKinley

Shuji Kojima
Kwansei Gakuin High School

Shuji Kojima: *Thank you so much for spending some time with me today. I'm glad that I could hear a lot about the current trend of a teaching and research nexus from you and deliver it to the readers of TLT. First and foremost, would be this question: "May I ask for your credentials, please?" This question is directly referred to from your latest article in the Modern Language Journal (Rose & McKinley, 2022). How do you describe yourself as an educator?*

Jim McKinley: This is such a good question because it's about the identity that we form, but it's also about the identity that we claim to have or to use and descriptions of ourselves. For me, I am a language teaching researcher, for sure. I am no longer a language teacher. And that divide, I think, is the part that has worried me the most because I suppose I was always interested in the teaching. I think that was the part that interested me the most. I don't have any teaching certifications that say: "Jim has learned these methodologies and has applied them in this way." I often had people visiting the campus to see my classes because I was one of the few people who was always willing to share, but none of that was ever a part of a formal evaluation system or certification or anything. I was teaching a little bit, not language teaching, but I was teaching in a junior high school in the United States before I left for Japan. I knew about classrooms and classroom management and the language teaching that I was doing, but I wanted to be perfectly honest. I didn't know what I was doing. I was having a good time. Students seemed to have a good time. They did comment quite a lot on this point that I made them comfortable about making mistakes, and I did regularly enforce their interest in learning from mistakes. I knew that there was this whole area that I wanted to investigate further. When I did my master's, I was able to do some of that. And then, the first book that I edited focused on learning from the messiness of doing research, in that case, applied linguistics research, but it's all related to that point. I wasn't going to do a Ph.D. right away. So, I finished my master's, and I stayed on teaching at the University of Sydney. But it was actually in that teaching process and working with other people in the university that I realized: "Okay, now, what's the next step?" If I'm going to answer these next questions, I need this next level. And so that's how that all went. I have a fairly standard researcher trajectory as far as credentials go. It wasn't until I got to the UK that I did a Higher Education Academy senior fellowship certification. I had to provide reflective case studies, and I had to have some letters of reference to support so there's that kind of credential for teaching at university in that way. And then that's it, nothing beyond that. All of my degrees are in applied linguistics; none of them are in education. And I teach these students, so I do feel a little bit like a fraud.

In your plenary speech and your recent articles (McKinley, 2019, 2022a; McKinley et al., 2021), you have discussed the divide between the language teaching researchers and the language teaching practitioners, could you explain the current situation regarding that topic?

I think the biggest issue for that divide is language teachers don't have the encouragement to publish. There aren't support structures in place to publish, and there isn't enough emphasis on the value of even using published research. I think one of the things I mentioned in the plenary was getting these ideas from the research where people have discovered that language teachers aren't accessing the research in these journals. I think this is a point that probably language teachers need to be guided toward. There needs to be some form of professional development that helps to support engagement with that research. From there, we then might see more language teaching publications. I think the other really big problem is, for somebody like me, I wanted those research things, so I was doing that in my own time. I mean, the Ph.D. was in my

own time, right? This is something we decided to do. And all with my own money, my own energy, this was a goal that I had—but that was a personal, individual goal to achieve that. The publishing that came with it was more around having the opportunity, having engaged with research at that level, doing the master's and Ph.D. I then could say: "Okay, I can contribute to these discussions, ongoing academic discussions in this way, by publishing my own research." But without that experience, I don't see that happening. Even when I finished my master's, I wasn't publishing for my master's. I was a language teacher, and I had a master's to understand it. And I thought that was fine. But engaging in a Ph.D., I thought there was this other world of academic discussion, and that happens, but it's separated. That's the problem, right? Being involved in that and engaging in that in a space that engages with scholarly publications regularly, completely separates me from the language teaching. Yeah, that's a problem.

Is the divide growing or do you think it has just always been this way?

This is a really good question because I know they've been talking about this divide for a really long time. I do believe that it may not necessarily be getting bigger, but I think it's becoming more ingrained. I think it's becoming potentially more difficult to bring them back together. I think that it's because of some of the structures in place. The incentives like promotion pathways, and just our culture—the ways that we engage with this. The language teachers just don't engage with research like that and aren't expected to and aren't given any time or space or support to do it. So, it's left to those in the area where research does happen, which is you and me!

How would it be possible for both researchers and practitioners to work together for learners and students? Sato and Loewen (2022) posed the following four categories: (a) collaborative mindset, (b) the nature of research, (c) venues for dialogue, and (d) institutional support? I would like to hear your comments about these four categories.

Based on my perspective on all of that, I appreciate all of it. I think it is definitely headed in the right direction. It addresses that solidifying of the bifurcation. So, I think in that way, we see them as two separate parts, but those efforts that they're talking about are sewing them together. The thing for me is, ideally, I would actually like to see these two things grow together. So, I do think it is like a wound. This cut down the middle into two sides and stitching it together with these kinds of initiatives can help them ultimately come together. I think this is the development that I want to see. I like these initiatives, I think collaboration between language instructors and content instructors, for example, the professional development efforts—all of this is really good, but I want to see it have a clear objective of creating holistic individuals. I think that is the part of the discussion that seems to fall a bit short. However, I recognize that within an institution or program, having every individual in that program to be a balanced holistic academic, is just kind of unrealistic. By using the full collection of faculty members to balance that out does make more sense, I get that. But even if these initiatives—these kinds of stitching initiatives to create this objective of a healed, reunification of a holistic academic—if that's there, some kind of goal, I think it would help if there is recognition of such initiatives. But I'd kind of put that out there just as a way of thinking about it because I suppose practically speaking, it feels a bit unrealistic.

Who else could take the initiative to solve the big problem?

I think it is interesting to me how whenever I speak with Masatoshi Sato and Shawn Loewen, or with Heath Rose, I think we recognize that we're really only coming at this problem from the same perspective. These are people who understand where the debate comes from and understand that it's a series of reasons for the divide. It's not just one thing, but we're all in kind of full agreement about that. I think that's not going to help us to get there. We can raise awareness about the discussion and get people to think about it from these different perspectives. But, we need people coming from more diverse contexts and different experiences to help to clarify what it means to work towards supporting a nexus because there are plenty of people who will say: "What's the point?" Honestly, in the study that we did, we had such opinions. In the open-ended comments in the survey, the authors, almost unanimously, were saying these things are separate. But these are all people engaging with research at that level, right? So, it's only those journals. We probably really should do the study again in other journals, like *The Language Teacher*, and look at some of these other journals to see what about the journals where there are practitioners publishing their work. I know they're kind of hard to find, but would they be something different if we did a survey with those authors? That's the perspective I think that we're missing. We're focused far too much on the highest impact factor journals and the authors with the re-

search credentials to tell us and that's relying on the research to follow. I would want to see now some more raising of value of people's opinions and ideas about this coming from more of a kind of practitioner-based context.

Now I'd like to ask some questions about language teacher identity. In your article Rose and McKinley (2022), you explored language teachers' and researchers' identities. Could you briefly explain the research question and the findings?

The research question was based on our own thoughts reading about author bios. Hyland and Tse, I think it was 2012, we used their analysis of the bio genre to inform our understanding of what a bio is, and how an identity gets constructed in a bio, to look for where in the language-teaching research do language teaching researchers talk about themselves or identify themselves as teachers. Just based on our own bios, and looking at just a few others, we realized we hadn't mentioned all of our teaching experience, and we have a lot of it. Then looking at others, we think we assume that they are teachers because the way that they write about this, and then I also thought about the kind of work that's being published. I feel like my language teaching research based on language teaching itself, that data, that was in the past. I don't have any more of that. I think the last of it really came out of my Ph.D. research. I did some other small things based on a bit of the last data that I collected before I left Japan, but since then, I've been writing about all this other stuff. So, does that change my bio or do I change my identity as a teacher because I am no longer a language teacher? It doesn't seem right. The history is important. So, I do try to explain that I did teach in US schools, and I taught in Australia and Japan, and I even added Uganda because I was there for one semester. It shows that there's a diversity of places. I was teaching ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) in these places, but then I'm teaching in higher education in these places. I try to get all of that in there just to paint a picture so that people understand who I am as an educator and my identities as an educator. That's the big thing that we looked for in that study. And in the one space where we knew we should be able to find it and then often find it.

I was fascinated by your homepage (McKinley, 2022b). I want to introduce your homepage to the readers of this journal. Is that one ideal way to show the nexus of research and teaching to the people in the TESOL field?

Thank you. I'm glad because you got it. I thought, "How I could possibly have somewhere that I could refer to so that people could kind of get a more comprehensive idea of my background and who I am and the directions that I go in my own educational philosophy?" It's my space that I control so I can put those things in there. I think because that's all part of who I am, and that's what I want to portray to make sure that it's kind of a comprehensive space. But can I say a couple of things? One is I'm a little bit horrified in my efforts to become a holistic academic that my research and teaching are separated categories as well as the roles! So, there's the management of that. It is unbundled and completely separated. I don't know, I need to figure that out. The other thing is I've always meant to, and I can't believe I never did it—because now I'd have to kind of go back and try to make up for it—keep a *CV of failures* that people can see because that website is a website of achievements. Look at all these presentations and publications. Isn't this great all these successes? Nowhere in there is any like, "What about the applications for funding and the papers that were rejected? The jobs that I went for but didn't get." There's none of that information in there. I really wanted to do that, to create a *CV of failures*, to say these are the things I grew from. I do still intend to do that at some point. I'm just a little bit nervous. I think there's a sense to where, and I've heard this with people about a CV of failures, that you kind of don't do it until you get to where you need to be. And then it's okay. But I should still do it.

What you have discussed about the nexus between practitioners and researchers is mainly targeting higher education levels. Could you tell us your insights and opinions about a teaching-research nexus at the middle school level?

I'm really glad you asked that because I do focus mainly on higher education because I'm looking at a number of elements in terms of contractual things. The contracts that have been in higher education are so different from the teacher contracts in secondary or middle school education. For high school, I think more and more we're seeing professional development opportunities for people to engage with research to an extent or at least kind of having a certain appreciation for it. Middle school and primary school seem to be, for whatever reason, somewhat neglected. I think probably the biggest problem there is it is impossible given the structures in place in a middle school; for example, for people to engage in the kind of research that gets involved with learners in that age group. So, you're going to teach young learners English and all these different areas, early education, that we don't see in the journals, right, those researchers are so removed from the schools, yet they visit the schools, they spend time with the schools,

and have relationships with the schools. That's where there's a really big divide that happens. But there I think are opportunities because those researchers are visiting the schools, and they are talking to the teachers, and they are collecting data in classrooms where they are getting that stuff, but they need to be doing it in collaboration with the teachers. So, until the schools at that level—because I think in high school they do know—there's recognition of the benefits of that kind of collaboration between teachers and researchers. It's in the middle school that it needs to be brought in there as well because that's a whole different area of research that isn't being touched enough. I mean it is in some places, but whether or not the teachers are just providing the data or actually engaging as teacher-researchers are two very different things.

Could you give the readers who want to find a meaningful teaching-research nexus some possible and prospective research themes or topics?

This is probably the way I should have concluded the *TESOL Quarterly* paper, with some kind of concrete recommendation. This is the kind of thing where people engaged solely in research miss out. I suppose there are kinds of themes that would be worth pursuing that might help to capture the nexus a bit more. I always think about exploratory practice. Action research and case studies, in particular, are research designs that are effective. The themes that would fit with those are definitely problem-based. I suppose that there'd be good opportunities because they're so structured, and they're also negotiated between teachers and students. And all of that is informed by practice, which is great. It's problem-based practice-informed research. So, task-based and problem-based projects that can be conducted through case study or action research designs would best achieve the thing closest to a nexus, I think, and then certainly the appreciation for it.

Now, you mentioned action research and research design. Your book, The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods, Applied Linguistics (McKinley & Rose, 2019) carefully describes how research should be implemented. What should novice language teacher researchers read and learn when implementing research?

The introduction chapter to that book would be a fantastic start! Because we do actually talk about doing case studies and doing action research and what's involved with those in a very introductory way. But in terms of what could be learned about, that kind of systematic approach as far as collecting data, is the important part. Because I think the idea of teachers thinking problem-based—trying some things out and seeing how they go—that's pretty natural, and it makes sense as a teacher. They don't think of that as research. This is just a process that they go through and maybe even by the end of the lesson, they found some kind of solution that works. But where there are ways of understanding, appreciating the research, are these more structured ways I think that's being able to learn something about some of the more systematic approaches to that kind of problem-solution effort that teachers make, by thinking about how to set up a research project to respond to a particular problem rather than just trying to address it as you go. You're actually setting up a project for the class. It's the best thing they could do, and they don't need to be big. I think when you look at the published research, these enormous, these three, four year-long studies with six classes and four teachers, and it's all this stuff—and I'm guilty of it myself—I thought I could use one of my own studies as an example, and I looked at it and thought: This is inaccessible. I think this is the thing that can be off-putting for teachers for accessing that stuff. And being able to focus on just a single case study in their own class, for example, or an action researcher recognizing that, okay, here's a problem. I have an intervention I can come up with, let me understand how action research works to introduce this intervention so that I have an understanding of what these students are experiencing before the intervention and after and can go from there because that's the part that often gets missed. I think teachers, they think of this intervention, they introduce it, and then they have outcomes of it, but they never collected any data before. So, it doesn't end up working, and it's not published. I think that's the kind of thing if they have a better, clearer idea of how a systematic approach to doing the things that they would normally regularly do and turn it into an actual project that doesn't have to be big. It can be really very small. It still needs to be rigorous; then it would work.

I want you to give the readers some comments or encouragement, who would like to pursue teaching-research nexus.

Definitely. Don't be intimidated by the size of the studies that you see out there. Certainly, decades ago, people did have much more focused single case studies that provided such big contributions to understanding. That's the point. I think, maybe don't focus on having a research project that the objective is a solution. Have a research project where the objective is to develop an understanding. I think that's an important distinction. If we can recognize that developing an understanding of it has achieved

the outcome, it's a much more rewarding experience doing that research. Otherwise, you feel like I've gone through this whole process, but I made some mistakes along the way. So, the solution doesn't work. Don't worry about that. All those mistakes you made along the way you learn from. As you have developed an understanding by doing that, maybe the next time you do that research project, right, you'll change it. But for me, I think this is the thing about then disseminating these things and sharing them, and I hope that people will contribute to journals like *The Language Teacher* about some of these experiences. If it went wrong, that's even more reason to share. Tell us what went wrong. Why did it go wrong in this way? If it was, "I just didn't understand how research works," then say that and think about what that means. No, people may not necessarily want to publish that. But it's still an important experience for you to do that and submit it to a journal. You'll get potentially hopefully some feedback on that to say this is an incomplete study or this doesn't do this. If the study is going to be how you learn from your mistakes, please clarify that right from the beginning. It's about this kind of consistency of reporting, rather than worrying too much about the structures in place and in the research that you might conduct in your own classroom. At the same time, you're getting some basics about actually researching conducting case studies.

Thank you very much. Dr. McKinley for taking the time to provide your insights about teaching-researching nexus for TLT readers.

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*For our second interview, we have an opportunity to share a wonderful discussion with Ryoko Tsuneyoshi, the vice president and specially appointed professor at Bunkyo Gakuin University, and formerly a professor of Comparative Education at the University of Tokyo, Graduate School of Education (2000-2021). She is presently the executive board member of the Intercultural Education Society of Japan, the Japan Educational Research Association, and the Japan Association for the Study of Extraclass Activities (*Nihon Tokubetsu Katsudo Gakkai*). She has earned a Ph.D. from Princeton University in sociology. Her books include* Tokkatsu: The Japanese Model of Holistic Education *(2019),* Minorities and Education in Multicultural Japan *(2010), and* The Japanese Model of Schooling: Comparisons with the United States *(2013). She was interviewed by Chie Ogawa, an associate professor at Faculty of Cultural Studies in Kyoto Sangyo University. She has a Ph.D. in applied linguistics from Temple University. She currently teaches English for Academic Purposes (EAP), Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and English pedagogy. Now, to the second interview!*

An Interview with Ryoko Tsuneyoshi

Chie Ogawa

Kyoto Sangyo University

Chie Ogawa: *Could you begin by telling us a little bit about your educational background, and why you wanted to be a scholar in sociology and comparative education?*

Ryoko Tsuneyoshi: My parents went to the United States when I was four. Both of my parents had studied in the US, and they went back again with me. I started kindergarten in the US, returned to Japan for a time, and then went to the US again. I came back (to Japan) again when I was 11. Then I went back to the US for graduate school at Princeton.

I think I've always had, because of my background maybe, an interest in how societies work, how differences emerge in societies, and how that affects people, especially with respect to the education of children. I think that was part of why I was interested in sociology. I debated between anthropology and sociology but eventually chose sociology. I went to the sociology department at Princeton. I think that that's where I got interested in minority schools because I started visiting schools in the United States. I started going to schools, observing them, and trying to form questions. I also started going to the minority schools. There, you see what schools can do and where the challenges are. I think you see it much more clearly than in the middle-class schools because the children bring in a lot of difficulties from the community because the communities and the families are struggling. That's where I started thinking that if education can succeed there, despite the difficulties or environment, then you can see educational success. I did a comparison of Japan and the United States, but I did it in various schools to see differences in racial and social classes between Japan and the United States (Tsuneyoshi, 1992). But it's just not clear-cut—Japan and the US. For example, you can see the variations in Japan as well as in American schools. You can also see the multitude of factors that led to those variations. Since then, I've always been interested in comparative field work—going to schools, going in and talking to people, looking at not just the classes but out of them, and looking at the community. So, sociology is usually macro, but for sociologists including myself and my students, we tend to go into a specific field.

In your plenary speech, you mentioned the idea that English is often associated with "global" and "global qualities," but the image of "foreigners" usually refers to foreigners abroad, not the foreigners within, who are also non-English speakers. Also, you will give another presentation on strengths and weakness of Japanese education models. Could you tell us a bit more about your current research projects?

Right now, there are several things. One thing that is related to today's talk (Plenary speech title: "The problematic role of 'English' in the internationalization of Japanese education"). That is trying to help teachers develop students' link to the multicultural in the society, the perspective of diversity in the society with "global." I think in the Japanese case, the emphasis on global is outside—without linking that to what is happening right around you. I think that's a problem. I think that's one of the reasons that issues in the world become so distant. Even with something that is happening around you but if you don't see it, it becomes nonexistent. If the problem is outside, it looks like a very distant problem. If you can link it to what is near you, then it hits home—*jibungoto* (*think as it is for yourself*).

Also, I'm writing a textbook with the global perspective and the multicultural perspective for teachers. It's not that easy. I find that lots of people are interested in global—and what they consider as global is helping out other countries such as making international donations or international development in other countries. But that does not come down to the realization that there is Asia inside, or communities of minority people in Japan. Hence, global becomes so distant. I think this is one of the reasons for the naivety that I was talking about in my speech. But it's not even the fault of the students. It's the social structure. Teachers do not have that perspective because they were brought up in Japan. If the teachers don't have that perspective, it can't be passed down to their students.

In other OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) member countries, it's very common to find the term global such as globalization and global competence as part of 21st century. But in Japan, "global" is very rare and almost non-existent. It is not an immigrant country, like your grandfather came from somewhere for a lot of people. I think it's very hard for the students and even the teachers to feel that such issues, global diversity issues, are things that are very relevant to them.

How can teachers make diversity visible in schools?

I'm doing a project of trying to overcome the challenges and the problems of Japanese education through its strengths. For example, in the *han* (small groups), it's heterogeneous by including various types of children. Teachers don't think of heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity, but they're certainly thinking about heterogeneity in terms of personality, achievement, and gender. It's just one more step to include ethnicity, race, and religion, etc. Right now, the Japanese education model is trying to develop children holistically; that's one of the strengths of Japanese education. If they can bring in the factors of diversity, not just the ones they have, but opening themselves to racial, ethnic, or religious diversity, that will be ideal. I think this is happening in some districts. Because the educational structure is holistic, it will allow teachers to address the whole child. If you're talking about the whole child in class and its heterogeneous small groups, which they already think of anyway, then just add to that.

You also write about holistic education in Japan such as Special Activities: Tokubetsu Katsudo (*in short, Tokkatsu), in which students engage in non-subject activities such as kyushoku (school lunch), cleaning of their own classrooms, club activities, and student councils (e.g., Tsuneyoshi et al., 2019). Could you explain a bit more about the strengths of Japanese educational models?*

OK, usually in the Western education model, there's a lot of emphasis on cognitive learning, which come from the subjects. But in the Japanese curriculum, you have not only the subjects but also learning hours outside the subjects. You have hours like *tokubetsu katsudo* and *sogo teki na gakushuno jikan* (the period for integrated studies), which are outside of the subjects but they're in the curriculum. The idea is that you are balancing basically non-cognitive with cognitive and integrating them. I think doing that inside of the curriculum is very rare. That holistic model linking with non-cognitive areas, such as life skills, social and emotional skills, character education, citizenship education, are all put together. Career education is also one of them. Integrating non-cognitive areas with subjects is the real strength of Japanese education.

That could also apply to minorities and what they call foreigners. The problem which I observe is that when you say *gaikokujin* (foreigners), which they do, it means that it's like "*gaikokujin* are different." So, very often, I observed in the classrooms with *nikkei* Brazilian children (Brazilian of Japanese descent) in elementary schools is they do not have a recorder—they do not know how to use the recorder which every school in Japan uses for a music instrument. In the holistic way, if they can diversify, they will be able to bring in the things that the minority children experience, and what they are good at.

You have this category of *gaikokujin,* who is someone outside, a guest, who comes and goes, so they don't have to do the same thing as everyone else. But the problem is that they stay. In the beginning of their stay, even the minority children's parents thought they were going to leave the country soon. They were saying to the teacher that they don't have to teach *kanji* that much because will be leaving, but they don't. Japanese teachers are not used to that, like in other countries that are used to the phenomenon of immigration. These children would be considered immigrants but in Japan, it's still the *gaikokujin* categories.

How should the teachers emphasize that inclusiveness of those racial ethnic minorities in the classroom. Do you have any suggestions to teachers?

What I'm trying to do is use the strength of the Japanese education system. As I said, because small groups are heterogeneous anyway, a different kind of heterogeneousness needs to be recognized. Realizing that Japan actually has diverse peoples coming in is important. I think if you don't see it, then you can't address it. There is inclusiveness for disabilities, aging, or gender. Seeing and recognizing that *it's there* is important. I do think English teachers have a role in that because English is the language that is somehow associated to international or global issues in Japan.

Your projects also involve lesson study. *What is* lesson study *and how do Japanese teachers incorporate it in their education model?*

Lesson study is a collaborative teacher learning model. Teachers observe a certain lesson, and then they focus on the learning of the children. There are certain techniques—you look at the learning of the child rather than the teaching and criticizing. So, it's a joint project of developing the children. It starts from questions such as, "What kind of child do we want?" or "What kind of society do we want?" In the *lesson study*, the teachers come together, they look at each other's lessons, and they try to make it better for the children to develop in their vision.

One strength of *lesson study* is that it does not only target cognitive sides, but it also targets non-cognitive areas. It's part of the holistic education such as *gakkyuukai* (classroom discussion) and school events. Regarding *lesson study* in international contexts, the cognitive part was taken. For example, math and science were emphasized so much. That was something that we brought up in September in the World Association of Lesson Studies (WALS) meetings (which was held in Kuala Lumpur from September 20-22, 2022). Japan has a very strong contribution they can make internationally. It brings the cognitive with the non-cognitive. Most traditional societies have both sides in their socialization of children. But in traditional societies, very often that holisticness goes together with a certain "we-ness"— a closed society excluding different people, people that are different from you, maybe linked with nationalism. In the Japanese case, I think it was like that before the war. But because of the democratization project after the war, that was when the non-cognitive was brought into the curriculum. So, the goals of holistic education are very clearly democratic such as listening to other students' opinions (*iken wo kiku*), empathy (*omoiyari*), cooperativeness, diligence, or life skills. In that sense, it can cross national borders. Those are the strengths, but it needs to incorporate diversity for

the perspective to be delivered. Because when there is a framework of teacher-learning in place, when teachers can become more aware of the diversity within, the different backgrounds and experiences of their students, those things will almost automatically come to be reflected into their teaching.

Thank you for your insightful talk.

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[JALT PRAXIS] MY SHARE


Lorraine Kipling & Heather Yoder

We welcome submissions for the My Share column. Submissions should be up to 600 words describing a successful technique or lesson plan you have used that can be replicated by readers, and should conform to the My Share format (see the guidelines on our website below).

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Welcome to My Share, the column where TLT readers share their classroom activities for the benefit of the JALT community. As you get into the middle of the semester, we hope you can use these activities to add some mid-semester liveliness to your classroom!

First up, Alexander Ito Maitland introduces a way to help your students give detailed answers to questions. Next, Ivy Santiago C. Liwa has an activity for elementary students to give a simple presentation as tourism officers. After that, Suzanne Kamata helps students create a personalized version of karuta. Finally, Aleksandr Gutkovskii teaches students emphatic adjectives using restaurant reviews.

I hope you can use some of these ideas to finish the Spring semester. Do you have an original activity that you are particularly proud of? If so, we always welcome contributions of useful and accessible activities from My Share veterans and newbies alike. Feel free to get in touch with us at jaltpubs.tlt.my.share@jalt.org.

—Best wishes, Heather

Communication Drill: Follow-up Questions and Giving Information

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Quick Guide

- Keywords: *Communication skills, follow-up questions, providing information*
- Learner English Level: *Intermediate and above*
- Learner Maturity: *High school and above*
- Preparation time: *0*
- Activity time: *10-20 minutes*
- Materials: *Digital or physical writing capability*

Many students are satisfied to give short answers when asked about something such as their vacation, for example, but this interactive speaking activity is an opportunity to show how much richer and natural a conversation can be when extra information is shared in an answer. That extra information can be volunteered, or obtained through asking follow-up questions; another important conversation skill which this activity focuses on.

The purpose of this activity is twofold: to warm up students with simple and guided speaking roles, and to improve some basic but natural communication skills, namely, providing more information than a short answer, and asking follow-up questions. It provides a good opportunity to stress the importance of these two skills and encourage their use more frequently.

Preparation

None

Procedure

Step 1: In a notebook or tablet, have each student write a simple sentence, for example, something they did during the vacation or the weekend. A simple sentence works well for this activity. Example: *I went shopping*.

Step 2: If this is the first time doing this activity, demonstrate the following process with a couple of volunteers.

Step 3: Arrange students into two standing lines facing each other. In the case of an uneven number, a teacher can easily participate.

Step 4: Have one student in each facing pair (S1) read their sentence to the student opposite them (S2).

Step 5: Tell S2 to ask a follow-up question. Example: *Did you buy something?*

Step 6: After S1 has answered the question verbally, get them to write that information after their initial sentence. Example: *I went shopping. I bought a phone case.*

Step 7: Switch and repeat, with S2 reading their sentence, S1 asking a follow-up question, and S2 responding while adding that answer to their original sentence in their notes.

Step 8: Rotate the students so everyone has a new partner.

Step 9: Repeat from step 2, except this time, S1 will read not only their original sentence, but also the additional sentence. In this way, the opening statements presented by each student will increase over time, and follow-up questions will become more specific.

For example, questions asked by new partners might include, "Did you go shopping by yourself?" "Where did you go shopping?" "What kind of phone case did you buy?" "Was the phone case expensive?" By the end of the activity, S1 might have something like: *I went shopping in Tokyo with my friend. I bought a clear phone case. It wasn't expensive.*

Variation

This activity can easily be done in a smaller group by taking turns to ask follow-up questions.

Conclusion

This is a simple activity which can fit in almost any communicative class. While it could be used simply as a filler for ten or fifteen minutes, there is a worthwhile opportunity for the instructor to stress the techniques used here for students' daily use to level up their own communicative ability, to encourage students to share more than just one short sentence as an answer to questions, and to ask follow-up questions from information shared with them.

I'm a Tourism Officer!

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Quick Guide

- Keywords: *Tourism officer, communication skills*
- Learner English Level: *Beginner/elementary*
- Learner Maturity Level: *Elementary*
- Preparation Time: *10 minutes*
- Activity Time: *60-90 minutes*
- Materials: *Tablet computer, a box and some slips of paper, worksheets and rating sheet (see Appendices).*

Japan is blessed with beautiful destinations, interesting festivals, and unique cuisines that attract tourists. Promoting Japan's tourism industry can be an excellent springboard for English language learning. This activity asks students to act as tourism officers who will introduce a Japanese prefecture following specific criteria. Then, students will test their ability to judge each other based on these criteria.

Preparation

Step 1: On separate pieces of paper, write the names of each Japanese prefecture. Fold each piece up and place in a box to draw lots during the activity.

Step 2: Prepare Worksheet A (Appendix A) with the target language and Worksheet B (Appendix B) to be filled out after every group presentation of five members.

Step 3: Make a Rating Sheet to be used by the students to judge each presenter (Appendix C).

Step 4: Create a set of presentation slide templates (Appendix D) for students to use on their tablet computers.

Procedure

Step 1: Let students warm up by talking in pairs about Japan's famous places, special delicacies, distinct events, and cultural celebrations. Let volunteers share their answers.

Step 2: Introduce the day's lesson and emphasize that each student will act as the tourism officer of a prefecture. Have students select their prefecture by drawing a piece of paper from the box.

Step 3: Distribute Worksheet A and check understanding of the target language. Direct students to search online about famous beauty spots, food specialties, and festivities of their assigned prefecture and use the information to complete the worksheet. Remind them about writing mechanics, namely: capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Step 4: After Worksheet A has been completed, let the students copy their answers onto the presentation slide templates provided on their tablet computers. Tell them to attach images found online into these templates.

Step 5: Explain important points when making presentations, such as speaking clearly and using hand gestures.

Step 6: Distribute the Rating Sheet and explain the criteria for rating.

Step 7: Allow students three to five minutes for individual and pair practice.

Step 8: Divide the class into groups of five.

Step 9: Ask Group 1 to present first. Ask the listeners to rate each presenter. Encourage them to write some remarks and choose one best presenter from the same group.

Step 10: After all members of Group 1 have presented, give the listeners time to fill out the first template on Worksheet B. Stress that answers must come from the presentations made by Group 1 members.

Step 11: After two minutes, let the listeners respond by asking where they want to go and why, as reflected on the first template of Worksheet B.

Step 12: Repeat steps 8 to 10 for the succeeding groups.

Step 13: Elicit feedback from the students focusing on the good points. Make a general summary of the presentation and provide suggestions on areas that need improvement.

Conclusion

Acting as tourism officers has multiple benefits for students. Not only does it increase their speaking skills and creativity, but also their knowledge of informative presentations. In addition, they will improve their research skills by using the internet and hone their objectivity by rating each other's presentations. Finally, students can become more interested in their country by learning about different prefectures.

Appendices

The appendices are available from the online version of this article at https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare

Hometown Karuta

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Quick Guide

- » Keywords: *communication, icebreaker, card game*
- » Learner English level: *Beginner to Advanced*
- » Learner maturity: *Junior High School, High School, University*
- » Preparation time: *15 minutes*
- » Activity time: *45 minutes*
- » Materials: *paper cut into card-size (20 pieces for each group), pens or pencils*

Karuta is a popular Japanese card game played in a small group. The cards are divided into two types—answer cards and hint cards. The latter set of cards is placed face up on a table or other surface. The players gather in a circle around the cards. One player reads the hints, and the others compete to be the first to pick up the corresponding cards. At the end of the game, the winner is the player with the most cards. Although traditionally this game involved matching extracts of classical Japanese poetry, versions with various themes have been created, especially to help children learn hiragana. Hometown Karuta is an English adaptation of karuta, which provides a chance for students to communicate with each other while learning more about one another's hometowns. Furthermore, it involves the four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Preparation

Step 1: Make a few example cards. On one handmade card, write a word related to your own hometown, such as "the Musical Fountain" or "blueberries." On another card, write a corresponding hint, such as "A popular tourist attraction featuring dancing water and colored lights" or "A fruit used in pancakes, pies, and jams."

Step 2: Prepare blank cards for the students to use. You should have 20 for each group.

Procedure

Step 1: Explain that the students will be playing karuta. Demonstrate how to play with your handmade cards, by putting the answer cards on a table, reading a hint, and having a volunteer choose the corresponding answer card.

Step 2: Divide the students into small groups of 3-5.

Step 3: Invite one student from each group to the head of the classroom to ask the teacher for paper to make cards. Hand out 20 pieces of paper to each student who approaches. For additional communicative opportunities, hand out an approximate number of pieces of paper and encourage students to ask for more if they don't have enough, or to return extra pieces.

Step 4: Tell the students to divide the pieces of paper more or less evenly amongst themselves in each group. Tell students that they will be writing a word or words related to their respective hometowns on ten pieces of paper, such as the name of a famous sightseeing spot, a sports team, an event, or regional food. On the other ten pieces of paper, they will write corresponding hints. Allow about 15-20 minutes.

Step 5: Ask the students to "test" their game in their group. If any of the hints are unclear, they should work together to clarify or write the correct answer in parentheses on the hint cards.

Step 6: Have students exchange cards with another group and play karuta. Repeat until each group has played several variations of the game.

Conclusion

This activity works well in lower-level university classes, where students often come from different parts of the country, or even different countries. Most Japanese students are familiar with this game, and the rules are quite simple, so it is easy for them to understand how to play. The emphasis should remain on communication, not accuracy in grammar and spelling.

Variation

For students coming from the same hometown, the theme could be changed to something else, such as animals, fruits, countries, or sports.

Teaching Emphatic Adjectives for Effective Presentations

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Quick Guide

- Keywords: *Presentations, adjectives, thesaurus, synonyms, autonomous learning*
- Learner English level: *Intermediate to advanced*
- Learner maturity: *High School and above*
- Preparation time: *20 minutes*
- Activity time: *30 minutes*
- Materials: *Presentation slides, blackboard, smartphones, thesaurus, dictionary*

Using emphatic vocabulary is one of the key aspects involved in creating an engaging presentation. However, our students might often choose to stick with the words that they are familiar with, thus limiting the expressive power of their presentations. In this discovery-driven activity, students will learn how to search for emphatic adjectives using a thesaurus.

Preparation

Step 1: Prepare slides that include an example of a restaurant review and reviews for two restaurants (see Appendix, slides 1 to 5). The only difference between the reviews is the adjectives used. The review for restaurant A should contain emphatic adjectives (amazing, magnificent), while the review for restaurant B should feature non-emphatic adjectives (good, fine).

Step 2: Add slides with pictures that illustrate the difference between emphatic and non-emphatic adjectives (See Appendix slides 6 and 7). Prepare a list of emphatic and non-emphatic adjectives and compose several sentences featuring non-emphatic adjectives (See Appendix slides 8 to 12).

Step 3: Prepare to demonstrate an online thesaurus/dictionary (https://www.thesaurus.com/).

Procedure

Step 1: Ask students to form groups of three to four people.

Step 2: Briefly introduce an example of a restaurant review using slides. Ask students if they check reviews before going to a restaurant.

Step 3: Show two restaurant reviews, one with emphatic adjectives (Restaurant A) and the other with their weaker counterparts (Restaurant B). Ask groups to guess how many stars were given to each restaurant by reviewers. Give groups two minutes to discuss their guesses and ask one person from each group to share with the class.

Step 4: Tell students that Restaurant A received five stars, while Restaurant B was given only three stars. Ask students what the difference between the reviews is. Give groups two minutes to think and discuss, and then elicit answers.

Step 5: Tell students that the difference is the use of adjectives and explain the concept of emphatic adjectives using your slides with pictures. Refer to the restaurant reviews and note that emphatic adjectives help make a stronger impression.

Step 6: Show students the slide with the list of adjectives, both emphatic and not. Draw a continuum on the board with one pole labeled as "weak" and the other one as "strong".

Step 7: Ask students to work in groups and write adjectives from the list on the continuum on the board.

Step 8: After students finish writing adjectives, check the continuum and give feedback.

Step 9: Introduce a thesaurus and demonstrate how to use it.

Step 10: Ask students to find synonyms for the word "good" and write them on the board.

Step 11: Ask students to cross-check the synonyms using a dictionary. Checking a dictionary helps students to rule out weak synonyms since the thesaurus does not distinguish non-emphatic synonyms from emphatic ones. Students should also check example sentences and pronunciation.

Step 12: Ask students to decide whether these synonyms are emphatic or not. Elicit answers and provide feedback if needed.

Step 13: Show students example sentences with non-emphatic adjectives and ask them to use a thesaurus and rewrite the sentences using emphatic adjectives. They cannot use adjectives from the previous steps. Ask one person from each group to share sentences.

Conclusion

By using a thesaurus to search for emphatic adjectives, students will widen their vocabulary and improve their presentation skills.

Appendix

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

Paul Raine

In this column, we discuss the latest developments in ed-tech, as well as tried and tested apps and platforms, and the integration between teaching and technology. We invite readers to submit articles on their areas of interest. Please contact the editor before submitting.

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Paul Raine has been a Japan-based teacher and coder since 2006. He has developed the web-based language teaching and learning platform *TeacherTools.Digital*, and many other web-based tools.

Implementing Input-based TBLT at Elementary Level Through 'Puzzle Rooms'

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Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is arguably an effective method of English teaching (Ellis et al., 2019). Students learning under a TLBT approach complete tasks that focus on meaning rather than grammatical form, and the goal is something more than just getting the right answer. However, the question of how to implement such meaning-focused tasks with students who are at a very low level has been difficult to answer. One possible solution is to focus on input-based tasks, where students focus on reading and listening in a meaning-focused way. The following activity (see Figure 1) is one idea that I have used to implement this sort of task in elementary classrooms using ICT facilities that are widely available in many schools.

Figure 1

An Example of a Finished Puzzle Room

Creating Your Puzzle Room

This task requires you to create a *puzzle room* with various English hints scattered around it that students can use to discover a secret code or password (see Figure 1). Students can use these to solve a puzzle to complete the task, such as for opening a treasure box. The puzzle rooms are built using various elements of the freely available *Google Suite*, in particular *Google Slides* and *Google Sites*. I made my first one by following a tutorial I found on YouTube (Dill, 2020). The tutorial is for making escape rooms, but the principle is very similar. The room is made using a single slide in Google Slides. You can find a picture that is licensed as free to use online, or take a photograph of a real room and use that as I did. This slide is then embedded on the homepage of a Google Site by clicking *embed* and adding the URL of the slide. An important point here is to change the word *edit* in the URL to "preview," as this ensures that the slide will be full screen when accessed.

Links to different pages on the same site are then attached to the various objects in the room (see Figure 2). These should contain clues to help students find the code to open the box. There can be other pictures inserted into the main one, or shapes that you insert to cover features in the picture, made clickable by using "*fill color*" and "*transparent*". You then click the *add link* button on the toolbar while these objects are selected, and these links will be inserted as additional pages on the Google Site that you have made (Figure 3).

Figure 2

Example Screen of Embedding Your Slide's URL

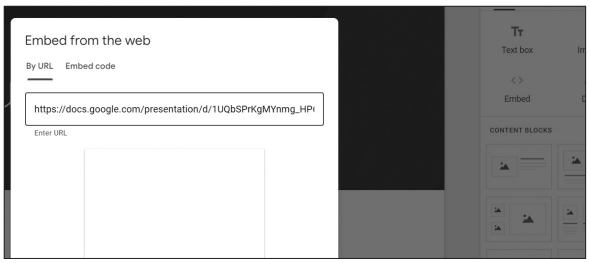


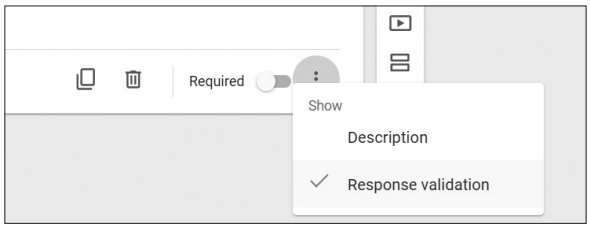
Figure 3

Fill Color and Add Link Buttons

You can also add sound files for listening hints. To do this, click *insert* and *audio* and upload your chosen file. Finally, entering the code to open the box requires a link to a Google Form set up to accept only one answer. To do this, make a form with only one question. You have to click on the three dots next to your question and select *response validation* (see Figure 4). This allows you to choose one correct answer. You then click *add section* and add another section with a victory message (and perhaps a picture of an opened treasure box), which students will automatically move to after entering the correct code.

Figure 4

Response Validation



The key difference from the YouTube tutorial referenced above is that you are making an EFL exercise—specifically, a task-based one. The exact hints you set will depend on your students' level, but they should not all practice a single grammar form. They should be varied and challenging for your students, requiring them to read or listen more than once and engage with the actual meaning of the hints for them to succeed. In this way, even though there is little in the way of meaningful output, the activity still qualifies as a true task according to generally accepted definitions (Ellis et al., 2019).

Implementation in Class

If you have a device for each student, they can work on it individually. However, the task works well in pairs or small groups. You can demonstrate the task by showing how to click on the box and entering a false code. You could also open a single hint to give them an idea of what they are looking for, but students should endeavor to discover things for themselves. For added motivation, you can also make the task competitive to see which student/pair/group finishes first. Those that have finished can then help any classmates that are struggling. While students are solving the puzzles, you can monitor them to see which hints students find the most challenging. Then, at the end of the task, you can focus on those hints and go through the form and meaning so that everyone understands.

Conclusion

I have found this method to be a very effective way of introducing task-based learning into a low-level, elementary school context. The students all seem to find the task highly enjoyable and engaging. When on task, they are clearly engaging with the hints in a meaning-focused way. As such, I believe it is very effective as part of their English learning.

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Using Microsoft Teams as an LMS: A Free LMS Option for Microsoft 365 Users

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Microsoft Teams can be used as a learning management system (LMS), but the application is not considered an LMS nor is it marketed as one. It is a collaboration app that is designed to keep people connected, and its core functions do not offer the features that educators expect of an LMS. Moreover, literature about using Teams as an LMS that is available online is limited. However, with some workarounds and if used in conjunction with other online learning resources and digital content creation tools, Teams can be manipulated to act like an LMS and be implemented in a language course.

Why Use Microsoft Teams as an LMS?

Pricing is a factor that institutions and educators consider when deciding on an LMS to use. Using Teams as an LMS is an economical option for institutions that provide Microsoft 365 accounts to their educators and students and for educators that are looking for an alternative and more cost-effective LMS.

How to Use Teams as an LMS

To use Teams as an LMS, it is necessary to be familiar with both Microsoft Teams and Microsoft OneNote. For anyone unfamiliar with Teams and how to create a team in the app, information can be found online (Microsoft Teams, n.d.). There are also websites with information about how to set up a OneNote Class Notebook and link it to Teams (Microsoft Education for Teams, n.d.). For those with little experience using Teams and OneNote, to make the following section of this article a little easier to follow, it is important to understand one of the ways in which the two apps integrate. Microsoft Teams and Microsoft OneNote are separate apps. However, when you create a Class Notebook within Teams, you are creating a OneNote Class Notebook. After a OneNote Class Notebook has been created in Teams, it can be accessed and modified in either of the apps, and changes made to a notebook in one app will be reflected in the other app. The OneNote app has more features, so after creation and initial set up of a Class Notebook in Teams, teachers should edit the notebook in the OneNote app rather than the Teams app. Students, however, need only to interact with class notebooks through Teams.

Making a Course Homepage

The course homepage is an essential element of an LMS, as it is where students get information about lessons and access to learning materials and activities. Microsoft Teams, however, does not have a course homepage. As of 2022, Teams does have a "home page," but functionality is limited (Microsoft Education Team, 2022). However, there is a workaround to this issue, and that is to use a OneNote Class Notebook as the course homepage. To illustrate how this is done, I will explain how I used a OneNote notebook in Teams as the course homepage for an English Communication class that I taught.

First, I created a team for my class in Teams, added the class's students to the team using the students' Microsoft 365 email addresses, set up a class OneNote class notebook, and then I took the following steps to set up the course homepage:

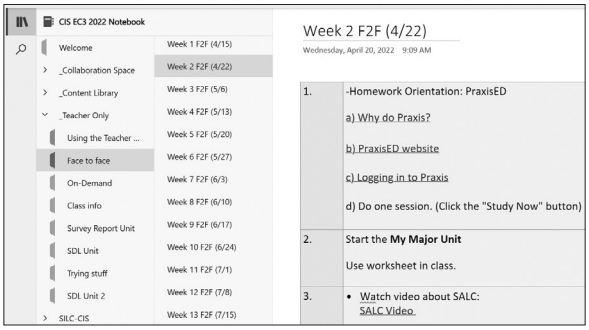
In the Teacher Only section of the notebook, I created 30 pages, one for each class of the semester. In each page, I created a table containing the materials and activities to be used in each of the classes (see Figure 1). Note that the Teacher Only section does not appear in the student view.

Before the start of a class, I copied the class's page from the Teacher Only section into the Content Library section. Students can access pages in the Content Library pages, but they cannot edit them.

In this way, it is possible for a teacher to plan out the whole semester in the Teacher Only section, and then make classes visible to students, when necessary, by copying them into the Content Library section, and it becomes the course homepage for students.

Figure 1

A Semester's Classes in the Teacher Only Section of the Class Notebook



How Students Access the Course Homepage

Figure 2 is a screenshot of what my course homepage looks like to students. The screenshot is of a (dummy) student that has accessed Week 5's face-to-face class. Using Figure 2 as a reference, I will explain the steps that a student would take to access the page, with each step progressing from the left side of the image to the right side:

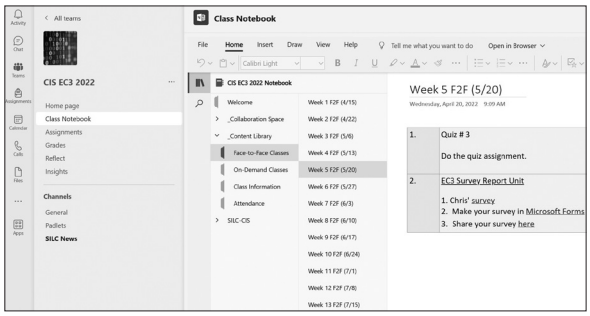
1. Sign into the Teams app. (I recommend students use the web version of the app over the desktop version of the app because there seem to be fewer syncing issues when using the web version.)
2. On the far-left side of the Teams window, click the Teams tab, which is highlighted in Figure 2. Though not visible here, a list of the student's teams would appear, and they would click on their English class's team, in this case the team titled CIS EC3 2022.
3. Click on Class Notebook.

4. Click on the icon of the three vertical books that is located above the magnifying glass icon. This step is important because clicking on the icon is what opens the OneNote Class Notebook within Teams.
5. Click on Content Library.
6. Click on the Face-to-Face Classes section.
7. Click on the page titled Week 5 F2F (5/20)

Having taken these steps, my students will see, on the right-hand side, a general breakdown of Week 5's class and what activities they will be doing, along with links for any external resources they will use. Though students need to do a fair bit of clicking to access a class page, the procedure is straightforward, and students get used to it quickly.

Figure 2

Student View of Course Homepage



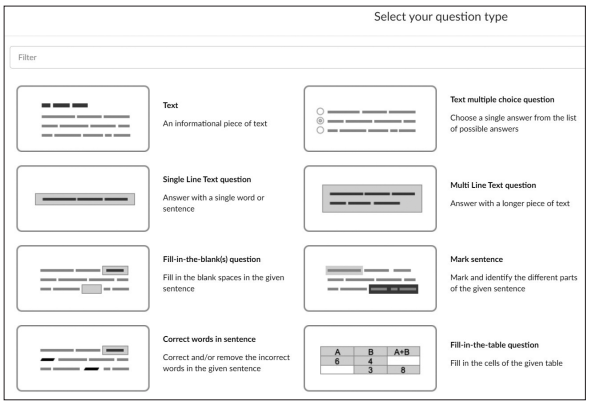
Using External Online Assignment Creation Tools

Microsoft Teams has few built-in assignment creation tools. The two primary options are Microsoft Forms quizzes, and Class Notebook pages in students' private sections, which are essentially Word documents that students can edit. This is a limited selection of activity types, especially when compared to an LMS such as Moodle. One solution to this issue is to use an external learning platform that integrates with Teams. In my course, I used Bookwidgets.

BookWidgets is an online platform for creating interactive educational content. The service offers a wide range of digital exercises, such as interactive quizzes, games, worksheets, and more. Figure 3 represents just a fraction of the available activity types. BookWidgets can be integrated with Teams (BookWidgets, 2022), and after activating integration, activities created in BookWidgets can be assigned to students in Teams, and grades for the activities will feed into Teams' gradebook. To activate integration, the administrator of Microsoft 365 at your institution must grant permission. BookWidgets pricing is very reasonable: I pay 49 USD a year, and the number of student users is unlimited.

Figure 3

Sample of BookWidgets' Activity Types



Benefits of Teams as an LMS

In addition to Teams being a free LMS option, it offers several other benefits. It has an easy to use and visible notification system. Students receive a hard-to-miss notification in the Activity section of Teams when teachers post announcements to the team, when an assignment has been assigned, and when work has been graded and returned. Also, the evaluation and feedback feature in Teams is transparent and user friendly. Students can easily access assignment grades, view teacher feedback, and even respond to teacher feedback.

Drawbacks of Teams as an LMS

There are several drawbacks to using Teams as an LMS. In Japan, student names appear in kanji in a team, and there is no way to edit the names to display in the Roman alphabet. A sorting feature is not offered to allow the ordering of names in the members name list to be changed. Two other issues are that Teams does not have an attendance module and that the gradebook is extremely basic and cannot be edited. A solution to the attendance and gradebook issues is to use an external platform. *Additio* in one such platform that has both attendance and gradebook features, and has integration with Teams (Martin, 2022). The administrator of Microsoft 365 at your institution must grant permission for Additio integration with Teams to be possible.

Conclusion

Teams is a viable LMS option, and it is free for Microsoft 365 users. Teams is not as robust as an LMS such as Moodle, but with the homepage workaround and external tools, a class can be successfully managed using it. Despite the almost complete lack of information and literature about using Teams as an LMS, you can be assured that it works quite well.

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[JALT PRAXIS] YOUNGER LEARNERS


Martin Sedaghat & Emily MacFarlane

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

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Adapting English Phonemic Awareness Instruction From L1 for Japanese Young Learners

Allison Murakami

If you think back to your preschool and kindergarten years, can you remember how your teachers reenforced language? There are likely infinite answers to this question. However, regardless of what the target language was, many will remember learning songs, chants, tongue twisters, clapping rhythms, or reading storybooks with catchy language. While there are many benefits to each of these activities, all of them support learning a crucial metalinguistic skill—phonemic awareness.

What is Phonemic Awareness?

Phonemic awareness, a subcategory of phonological awareness, is the understanding that oral language can be broken down into phonemes, the smallest units of sound in a language. Recognition of phonemes allows speakers to hear and identify the components that make words different. For example, if the phoneme /c/ in "cat" is replaced with /m/ the word becomes "mat" instead of "cat" (initial phoneme substitution). When young learners can say that the first sounds in the words "cat" and "mat" are different and can correlate them to other words, then they are developing one of the phonemic awareness skills. Such differences in phonemes may seem inherent to adults, but children learning language tend to learn words for meaning rather than sounds (Mason, 1980). Furthermore, it can be difficult to detect all the phonemes in a language because they are often blended together (coarticulated) in syllables (Cutler & Otake, 1994). Developing phonemic awareness requires a great deal of direct instruction for children to notice the phonemes in a word.

Why is Phonemic Awareness Important?

With one of the purposes of language being communication, it may not seem like a priority to teach children to scrutinize oral language into individual sounds if they know the meaning of the word as a whole. Indeed, children learning English can still use oral language even before they have a chance to learn phonemes. However, the ability to analyze words for their sounds, and then to manipulate

those sounds, is an indispensable skill for learning to read, spell, and improve elocution. Children learning English can have an advantage when they are taught phonics if they are aware of how phonemes combine to make words.

Phonemic Awareness vs. Phonics

One of the challenges of teaching phonemic awareness to young learners is the confusion with phonics. In English, phonics is learning letter-sound relationships so that one may read and write. Phonemic awareness is different from phonics in that it focuses only on the sounds of oral language. No print is used in teaching phonemic awareness. It may be tempting to teach phonemic awareness and phonics together, but ideally phonemic-awareness instruction should come first. Introducing letters too early may cause students to rely on visual discrimination between words rather than auditory discrimination (Ehri & Wilce, 1985). Furthermore, English has 44 phonemes but only 26 letters to represent these phonemes, which means letters and sounds do not map in a 1-to-1 correspondence. Teaching the phonemes earlier can help students when they later grapple with the logic of the alphabetic principle—that letters represent sounds and combine to make words (Castles et al., 2018).

The Phonemic Awareness Skills

In L1 contexts, direct phonemic-awareness instruction is typically introduced in preschool and developed throughout kindergarten and early elementary school. There are eight types of phonemic-awareness skills that children learning English as their L1 need to master. The first four typically develop first, with the last four taking longer to acquire. These skills should be taught without any use of printed words.

- Isolation: What is the first/last/middle sound in pig? (/p/ /i/ /g/ respectively)
- Identification: Which word has the same first sound as bus? sun, ball, map (ball)
- Blending: What word am I saying? /b/ /a/ /t/ (bat)
- Segmentation: How many sounds are in bat? (three) Say the sounds. (b-a-t)
- Categorization: Which word doesn't belong? bin, cat, cut (bin)
- Substitution: The word is cat. Change /c/ to /s/. (sat)
- Deletion: Say farm. Now take away the /f/. What word is it? (arm)
- Addition: Say top. Now add /s/ before top. What word is it? (stop)
  (Yopp, 1988; Adams, 1990)

While some children may be able to perform these tasks without instruction, research has shown that a majority of children do not instinctively notice individual phonemes nor are they able to perform these tasks without direct instruction and practice (Byrne & Fielding-Barnsley, 1989, 1990).

Phonemic Awareness with Young Japanese L2 Learners

When students learn any new language, they will eventually need to cope with discerning and producing sounds different from their L1's. Research suggests the more similarities there are between the L1 and L2, the more phonemic-awareness knowledge from the L1 can help the learner adapt to the L2 (Bruck et al, 1997). If a student's L1 has fewer phonemes than the L2, then it is anticipated that the learner may have less sensitivity to the new phonemes of the target language (Durgunoğlu, 2002).

The other primary factor in adapting English phonemic-awareness instruction, and possibly the most difficult factor to account for, is vocabulary. In L1 phonemic-awareness instruction, teaching vocabulary is usually not part of the process because most children have encountered the words prior to instruction. However, with young Japanese learners the situation is less straightforward. Some young learners may have learned English vocabulary through activities outside of school. Other students are learning English for the first time. With such a mix of English ability in a class, time must be dedicated to clarifying what words mean before phonemic awareness instruction begins. Without understanding the vocabulary, students may find the sounds arbitrary which will in turn become counterproductive for phonemic awareness.

Activities Using Phonemic Awareness for the L2 Classroom

There is always a lot of ground to cover in language learning, but phonemic-awareness instruction does not have to take a large portion of class time to practice. The following are examples of activities which can help students practice the basic phonemic awareness tasks, all of which I have used in my own classroom. As phonemic awareness is not an inherent skill, be sure to include sufficient modeling of an activity and vocabulary confirmation before requesting students to perform the activity themselves.

Activities for Phoneme Identification

Phoneme identification is commonly the first step in beginning the phonemic awareness journey. Start with CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words. Since phonemes are the focus, this means not only using words like /h/ /a/ /t/ but also words like /sh/ /i/ /p/. Once learners are comfortable with a number of English phonemes they can attempt segmenting and blending activities. Teach any vocabulary necessary for the activities beforehand.

- *Find the Phoneme*: Show students a number of cards with different pictures on them (e.g., sun, ball, bat, apple, ghost, wall). Ask the students to separate the cards showing pictures that start with /b/. Students can also be asked to separate cards based on the middle or final phonemes.
- *Phoneme Memory*: Normally, this game is played by having children place a number of cards face-down and turning cards over two at a time in search of a matching pair. This time, have no matching picture pairs among the cards. Students will turn over the cards two at a time, and if the initial phoneme matches, the child can collect the pair of cards for a point. For example, if a student turns over the cards 'bat' and 'ball,' these cards are a match because they both start with /b/. This game can also be played with middle or final phonemes.
- *5 in a Row*: This game takes after bingo. Select 5-8 phonemes to focus on in the game. Fill in a 5x5 grid with pictures of vocabulary the students know which begin (or end) with the selected phonemes. Make several versions of the bingo card with the pictures mixed up in different locations in the grid. Prepare a spinner with the phonemes found on the bingo card for the teacher's use. The teacher will spin the spinner and announce a phoneme. The students place a token on a picture starting with that phoneme on their bingo cards. Repeat until someone gets five in a row.

Activities for Segmenting and Blending

For young learners just starting out with English, segmenting and blending phonemes from the get-go may be daunting. Using phonological awareness (breaking sentences into words and chunks) can help transition into phonemic awareness. Develop students' abilities to hear the separate words in a sentence. Start with shorter sentences and build up to longer sentences. Once students are familiar with sentences, analyze individual words from the sentences for their phonemes. The teacher should spend ample time modeling the sentences before students can be expected to perform the activities themselves.

- *Step Up*: Have a few students stand in a line at the front of the room. Say a sentence. When the first word is read, the first student should step forward. When the second word is said, the second child should step forward, and so on. The student on the left should always start so that students can get used to reading sentences starting from the left. Gradually move towards individual phonemes the more confident the students become with the initial sentence.
- *Sound Circle*: Students stand or sit in a circle. Say a sentence. In turns, students should repeat the words of the sentence, in the correct order, passing a ball from one person to the next. When students acclimate to the sentence, choose single words for students to break down into phonemes using the same concept.
- *Phoneme Count*: Say a word. Have the children place tokens on their desks, or draw circles, for every phoneme they hear.
- *I Spy*: Prepare a picture showing a variety of items, or ask students to find things in the classroom. The teacher says, "I spy with my little eye a /m/ /ou/ /se/." Students can circle or point to the object in the picture, or go search for it in the classroom.

Activities for Categorization

- *Cover It Up*: The teacher can choose to play the game as a class with one set of cards for all, or to prepare a set of cards for each student individually. Show students pictures of four different things that they have learned. Three of the words should have the same phoneme with the last word being different. Check the vocabulary with the students before starting (e.g., horse, hammer, hat, apple). Ask the students to cover up the picture of the thing that does not start with /h/. The teacher can increase difficulty by asking students to identify middle or final phonemes instead of the first phoneme. Add more pictures to the challenge for older and experienced students.

Activities for Substitution, Deletion and Addition

The following activities can easily be interchanged to develop any of these three skills. Substitution, deletion, and addition are considered to be more advanced phonemic-awareness skills, and can be trained after students are confident in phoneme identification, segmenting and blending.

- *Traffic Lights*: Make three circle cards for each student—one red, one yellow and one green. Then, choose two CVC words differing by one phoneme (e.g., map, tap). The teacher asks, "Which sound changed?" If it is the first phoneme, the students hold up the red circle. If it is the second phoneme, they hold up the yellow card, and so on. After the students have held up their cards, check what phonemes changed (/m/ and /t/).
- *Phoneme B-I-N-G-O*: This activity takes after the B-I-N-G-O song. Show students a picture of something they learned in class. Check the meaning and have students say the phonemes found in the word. If the word is "leg," students should pronounce /l/ /e/ /g/. Now tell students to clap instead of saying /l/. They should say (clap) /e/ /g/. Ask them to identify the new word without /l/. Ask them to delete different phonemes, or multiple phonemes, with a clap to make this activity more difficult.
- *Letter Math*: Show a picture of something the students have learned (e.g., a nail). Check that the students remember what it is. Ask, "What if I add /s/ to the front?" The students should try to say "snail." Clarify the meaning of the new word. Then, ask students to add a phoneme of their choosing to the front of the word. Ask some students to share their new word and say their word with the class. It is ok if the students make nonsense words.

Conclusion

While phonemic-awareness instruction is more widespread in places where English is an L1, it can also be useful in L2 situations, as discussed above. Young L2 learners can develop their auditory discrimination skills, learn the fundamental sounds of oral speech in the L2, and how to manipulate these sounds to improve their speaking and listening abilities. Phonemic awareness can also help children understand the alphabetic principle when it comes time to learn phonics. With so many possible benefits, spending a little time teaching phonemic awareness in the young learner classroom seems like a sound idea.

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Allison Murakami is an English teacher with over 12 years of experience teaching young Japanese learners, from preschool to junior high school. She recently completed an MA TESOL through Birmingham University and is currently teaching English at primary school in Miyagi. Her research interests include phonological awareness, psycholinguistics, and social-emotional learning.

Recently Received

Julie Kimura & Derek Keever

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A list of texts and resource materials for language teachers is available for book reviews in *TLT* and *JALT Journal*. If none of the titles we have listed appeal to you or are not suitable for your teaching context, please feel free to contact us to suggest alternate titles. Publishers are invited to submit complete sets of materials to Julie Kimura at the Publishers' Review Copies Liaison postal address listed on the Staff page on the inside cover of *The Language Teacher*.

In this issue of *TLT*, I would like to warmly welcome my new coeditor, Derek Keever. I look forward to working with Derek in his new role to create a more informative column that brings value to JALT members. *Yoroshiku onegaishimasu*.

Recently Received Online

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

** = new listing; ! = final notice* — Final notice items will be removed on June 30. Please make queries by email to the appropriate JALT Publications contact.

Books for Students (reviews published in *TLT*)

Contact: Julie Kimura — jaltpubs.tlt.pub.review@jalt.org

** Bake sale*—Kamata, S. Gemma Open Door, 2022. [Laura Murata is a professor and a single mother. Kazu, the father of her daughter's friend, is also raising his son on his own. Laura and Kazu meet at a holiday bake sale and plan to go out for dinner on Christmas Eve. The Open Door series comprises of graded readers written for people who struggle to read. A lesson plan is available on the publisher's website.]

Penguin Readers—Penguin Books, 2019. [Penguin Readers is a series of classics, contemporary fiction, and non-fiction, written for learners of English.]

! A Christmas carol—Dickens, C. [Retold by K. Kovacs. Ebenezer Scrooge hates Christmas and is angry that people are not working. He meets the ghost of his former partner. Can Scrooge become a good person before it is too late? Level: 1, CEFR A1.]

! Private—Patterson, J., & Paetro, M. [Retold by N. Bullard. Jack Morgan has a company called Private. He helps people. Sometimes, he helps the police, too. Now, Jack's friend is dead, and Jack has to find the killer. Level 2, CEFR A1+.]

! The Great Gatsby—Fitzgerald, F. S. [Retold by A. Collins. Everybody wants to know Jay Gatsby. He is handsome and very rich. He owns a big house and has wonderful parties there. But does anyone really know who he is? Level 3, CEFR A2.]

! Women who changed the world—Leather, S. [This graded reader consists of ten chapters on some of the women who have fought to be equal to men as well as their achievements in education, science, sports, and politics. Level: 4, CEFR A2+.]

! The spy who came in from the cold—le Carré, J. [Retold by F. MacKenzie. Alec Leamas, a British spy, is worn out and ready to stop working, but he has to do one last job. His boss wants him to spread false information about an important man in East Germany. Can Alec retire and finally come in from the cold? Level: 6, CEFR: B1+.]

! What's that you say? Bright ideas for reading, writing, and discussing in the English classroom—David, J., Nan'un-do, 2023. [This book takes a student-centered approach and provides students with topics and activities designed to foster language learning and practical usage. There are 15 units in which students can engage in vocabulary and reading activities, as well as engaging follow-up activities, including trivia questions and famous quotations.]

Critical thinking—Hadley, G., & Boon, A., Routledge, 2022. [This resource book provides language teachers with a framework for fostering critical thinking skills in explicit and systematic ways. Critical Thinking can be used as a resource for teacher-directed classroom investigations as well as graduate school research projects.]

** Inside science*—Nozaki, Y., Matsumoto, K., & Graham-Marr, A., Kinseido, 2019. [Students watch and learn from 15 videos selected from the American Institute of Physics news service, *Inside Science*. A variety of vocabulary, listening, and composition exercises support students' learning. Teachers have access to vocabulary quizzes and reading comprehension questions. Students and teachers have access to online videos.]

** Inspiring voices: 15 interviews from NHK Direct Talk*—Kobayashi, M., Fujita, R., Collins, P. J. Kinseido, 2021. [Students watch 15 ten-minute interviews from the NHK program Direct Talk. Students can build fluency and develop critical thinking skills by exploring a range of global issues. Lessons include background reading, comprehension tasks, and scaffolded activities. Students have access to online videos, and teachers have access to audio data as well as to the teacher's manual.]

Life topics: Changing views—Berman, J., Nan'un-do, 2023. [This new addition to the Life Topics series provides advice on how Japanese EFL students can lead happy and meaningful lives. This coursebook contains 15 units and is adaptable for learners of various proficiencies but was written with lower proficiency students in mind. Additional resources include a teacher's manual and audio download. TOEIC 250-450.]

** Science at hand*—Miyamoto, K., Kinseido, 2020. [15 articles in a variety of fields, including the natural sciences, engineering, anthropology, and art, selected from the Smithsonian magazine. In addition to key phrases, reading, and dictation exercises, explanations are provided. The teacher's manual includes vocabulary quizzes.]

** The spy*—Kamata, S. Gemma Open Door, 2020. [Pearl Dubois is a Southern belle who wants to help the Allies in the Second World War. She convinces her boss to send her on a secret mission. The Open Door series comprises graded readers that are written for people who struggle to read.]

What do you think? 15 topics for discussion and conversation—Bossaer, A., Nan'un-do, 2023. [This coursebook was written for intermediate EFL learners and students to discuss their opinions with their partners or groups. In-class assessments based on these discussions provide students with opportunities to both demonstrate their understandings of the topic and reinforce the idea that our opinions can change when we are presented with new information.]

David McMurray

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

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This column offers an essay by an international graduate student. He was hired to work as a Teaching Assistant (TA) for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) language courses with content altered according to the needs of the learner and the requirements of their chosen profession. The TA contrasts his job description for a one semester-long Business English course with that of a 15-week Foreign Affairs course.

Job Description for a TA at a University in Japan

Zheng Huanhang

The International University of Kagoshima

In this essay, I will describe the job description I was given for working as a teaching assistant (TA). I will summarize my background and qualifications as well as the essential responsibilities, activities, and skills that I learned to carry out an appealing job that is responsible for helping teachers and students to complete daily tasks within a classroom environment.

I am an international student from China. My long term aim is to become a foreign language teacher in my home country. To achieve this career goal, I need an advanced degree in education from an overseas university. My primary purpose is to learn as much as I can in the university classrooms of Japan. As an undergraduate student at Osaka University of Economics and Law, I studied foreign languages. I also worked for four years as a part-time cashier at supermarkets and drugstores. That work experience gave me some exposure to accounting, inventory, and sales activities at companies in Japan. Interaction with co-workers and customers greatly improved my fluency in the Japanese language. I came to realize that extracurricular activities provide fruitful learning experiences. During the 2022 to 2023 academic year, I worked as a TA at a private university during my first year as a graduate student. Each semester, I had to gain 10 credits in five compulsory courses, so, I could only work as a TA in one class each semester. I applied to assist a professor to teach two courses that year. They were Business English and Foreign Affairs—two English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses with 50 second- and third-year students. These were required courses for undergraduate students hoping to get high school teaching certificates. This TA experience helped me to focus on my major in the field of English education (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Photograph of the Author Receiving Training for an English Teaching Position

My job description as a TA included three main roles:

- Assisting and supporting the instructor to create handouts and teaching materials
- Assisting and supporting the teacher to make class presentations and lectures
- Supporting international students to better understand the class content

I will now explain how I used this basic job description to provide support and assistance to individual students and small groups to help them

better understand the content of the Business English and the Foreign Affairs courses.

In the spring semester, I assisted in the teaching of Business English. My workflow was to help my supervisor prepare materials for his presentations. It was my job to help make class presentations and lectures, so the supervisor asked me to give a self-introduction in the first class. I was so nervous that I stood in silence for one minute in front of the 50 students. This moment was so embarrassing, but my supervisor supported me and encouraged me to never lose confidence. If I kept working at it, he assured me that I would eventually succeed. These warm words motivated me a lot and helped me to realize that it is crucial to be persistent in the process of becoming a language teacher. I also needed to think of different ideas to keep students motivated until the last of the 15 classes. Active learning and cooperative learning seemed to be appropriate methods. I suggested to the instructor in charge that we assign videos to be watched at home. I also suggested we divide the 50 students into 10 groups when they came to discuss those videos in class. This flipped learning approach seemed to maintain their concentration and motivation.

In the classroom, we followed Suzuki and Ishikawa's (2007) advice to talk to every group. Teachers and TAs were advised to take an interest in each of the students in a group, so we tried to learn more about them by talking to them individually as much as possible. When it came time for students to make a group presentation in front of the class, I was able to focus on every member. In addition to helping students with their delivery of presentations, I assisted them to acquire specialized vocabulary. As a TA, I was expected to teach translations of vocabulary related to the economy, finance, energy, and migration. A side benefit of carrying out this essential task helped me to improve my own TOEIC scores. My supervisor assigned videos to watch at home that included these keywords. As a warm-up during class time the instructor asked a particular group to write 26 keywords as well as a few sentences on the board using some of the words. Once all the words and sentences were up on the board, the group posed questions to individuals in the classroom. For example, if the word "refugee" was on the board, a member of the group might ask, "What is a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, famine, or drought?" This method kept the class constantly focused and encouraged student-presenters to express themselves in ways that kept the other groups attentive.

During the autumn semester, I was assigned to be a TA for the 15-week course, Foreign Affairs. In this class, although the general process was the same as for Business English, I tried to suggest new ideas for arranging the class. I printed handout sheets of specialized vocabulary lists. I also prepared lesson materials using PowerPoint for my supervisor one week in advance of his lessons. I recommended various foreign landscape pictures and maps for the instructor to use while presenting customs and vocabulary (Figure 2). For example, when the Canadian government was discussed in class, photos of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa were displayed (Chayamichi, 2023). The 50 student-cohort were divided into mixed groups of Chinese and Japanese students to exchange their experiences of living overseas. They were asked to share their information in English, something the Chinese students were not accustomed to doing in Japan. To help international students to better understand the class content, I attended to a number of questions from Chinese students, and I tried to motivate Japanese and Chinese students to participate in group conversations. I also helped students who were called upon to make statesmanlike presentations. When students gave a speech, I served as a time-keeper to keep each 90-minute class running smoothly and ending on time. I think the class format and content was effective and especially meaningful for students who have never gone abroad.

Figure 2

Photograph of the Author Working as a TA in a Foreign Affairs Class

Working as a TA was full of challenges. It was particularly hard to work with foreign students who asked me to speak about various business topics and Canada in English, Japanese, and Chinese. The job duties described for a TA do not seem too difficult until they are carried out in a live classroom full of different students. It is a hard job, but I quickly

learned to adapt to the teacher's style and to suggest additional teaching techniques. Having worked in a few university classrooms in Japan, I now feel closer to achieving my goal of becoming an English language teacher in China.

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[JALT PRAXIS] WRITERS' WORKSHOP


Jerry Talandis Jr. & Kinsella Valies

The Writers' Workshop is a collaborative endeavour of the JALT Writers' Peer Support Group (PSG). Articles in the column provide advice and support for novice writers, experienced writers, or nearly anyone who is looking to write for academic purposes. If you would like to submit a paper for consideration, please contact us.

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Peer Reviewing to Improve Your Writing

Kinsella Valies and Jerry Talandis Jr.

The first thing that came to mind when a colleague approached me to be a peer reviewer in the past was, "I can't do it!" Reasons for this gut response were plentiful: "I can't because I have no experience," "I don't know what to look for," and finally, "What do I get out of it?" Perhaps sensing my reticence, the colleague asked me if I had written anything for a publication or even written any academic papers at all, such as a thesis. Though I realized the aim of this question, I was still not quite convinced I could do the job. Yes, I had learned how to write academic papers and had completed quite a few by that point. When I reflected on my process, I realized that in addition to reading a lot before writing, the thing that helped most was the comments I received during the peer review stage. This feedback helped me see my writing from a new perspective. I was able to confirm areas of strength and address any weaknesses. Without that assistance, I would not have been as successful.

Recalling my successful writing experiences helped me overcome my reservations, and I was able to take up my colleague's offer and join up with the *Writers' Peer Support Group* (PSG), an independent committee within JALT dedicated to helping members improve their manuscripts pre-submission. Since then, I have been reminded of how peer review is a collegial, thus social process. Our main job is to help authors improve the presentation of their science (Starck, 2017). By working on a team with experienced writers, the knowledge and experience we gain from helping others improve their writing helps us improve our own (Talandis, 2021). Working with the PSG has been a powerful learning experience. Therefore, for this issue of *The Writer's Workshop*, I am going to pick up on this theme of helping others to help yourself and show how working as a peer reviewer can improve your own writing craft. If, by the end of this column, I have convinced you to join us at the PSG, then so much the better!

Peer Review: The Basics

A peer reviewer's basic job is to promote clarity and understandability. Even in low-stakes scenarios when a colleague asks you to informally look over their manuscript, this is still peer reviewing. How does the process work? Weller's (2001) overview of research in the field shows that 62% of reviewers across disciplines average 3.4 hours working on one manuscript. However, the total review time is spread over several weeks, as it takes time to digest, reread, and make comments. Typically, many reviewers also read for multiple journals. The golden rule for reviewing is similar to the rule for life choices: treat others as you would like to be treated. This means that words need to be carefully and consciously chosen, as the author is in an open and vulnerable state. Weller reports that although com-

ments do not always result in substantive changes, authors felt they did help with structuring conclusions, clarifying data, and improving the writing style. When reviewing manuscripts, peer reviewers are able to spot limitations and skips of logic, to suss out alternate interpretations of the data, and to identify any limitations of the conclusions.

Characteristics of a Successful Peer Reviewer

Salasche (1997) summarized the basic requirements of peer reviewing. Though a bit outdated, these principles still inform many reviewer guidelines used currently:

1. Expertise with the subject at hand
2. Willingness to be thorough and to spend whatever time is needed to complete a project
3. A basic desire to help and to improve papers
4. The ability to express informed and unbiased opinions

Though expertise tops the list, interest in a subject is also considered important and often sufficient. Expertise, after all, can be gained by reading more papers on a subject. A lack of expertise should therefore not be seen as a deterrent; it should be viewed as an opportunity to expand your knowledge. Secondly, the willingness to improve a paper indicates a basic need for personal reliability as a reviewer. In other words, can you be trusted to finish what you start? This also ties into giving feedback constructively on all aspects of a manuscript, from overall macro-level observations to the minute elements of sentence construction, word choice, and formatting advice. In the end, the purpose of a reviewer is not to reject "subpar" papers, but to improve manuscripts to a publishable level.

Feedback Format

Beaufait's (2013) and Salasche's (1997) principles coalesce to become the guidelines that PSG review-

Table 1

Principles of the Peer Review Process

Typical Review Structure (Paltridge, 2017)	Journal Peer Review (Salasche, 1997)	PSG Peer reading (Beaufait, 2013)
1. Summary on suitability 2. Outline of the article 3. Points of criticism 4. Conclusions and recommendations	1. Run-through read of manuscript 2. Identify main objective or hypothesis 3. Identify type of article and place it in a category 4. Reread manuscript as needed 5. Determine if the minimum objective was satisfied or the hypothesis proven 6. Determine if valid information was provided or if older material was successfully assimilated and clarified 7. Recommend acceptance or rejection 8. Determine ways the manuscript can be improved	**Pre-Review** 1. Decide on the most important areas to address **Writing the Review** 1. Write general remarks in letter style at the beginning of the paper 2. Check for: a. Topic choice/relevance b. Interest of the study, findings, etc. c. Writing style 3. Address areas you feel need: a. Clarification b. Expansion c. Reduction d. Additional research/sources 4. Provide models or examples: a. Write a sample outline b. Propose section headings c. Rewrite a passage; show improved writing style 5. Use in-text comments to indicate specific areas to focus on

ers are expected to follow when doing peer reading (Table 1). This workflow reflects a typical four-stage structure, in which reviewers typically (1) summarize the suitability of the manuscript, (2) provide an outline of the article, (3) offer constructive criticism, and (4) conclude with some final recommendations or advice (Paltridge, 2017). While looking over the information in Table 1, you should keep in mind that awareness of these ideas can also serve as guidelines for you when editing your own manuscripts. Self-awareness during the editing process is hard. That is why seeing "wrong" examples and thinking of ways to improve them is such a great exercise in improving one's own writing.

Feedback Language

According to Beaufait (2013), it is always important to start "with something positive. Writing is difficult and personal. Starting with the positive will put the writer at ease [*sic*] and make what you have to say later easier to swallow" (p. 1). Authors, similar to students, cannot act on what they do not understand. Feedback must be constructive, structured, exact (bolstered by examples), and clear. On the other hand, phrasing and consequently tone is also important. It is vital to use friendly and professional language. Beaufait et al. (2014) suggest the following advice for constructive criticism:

- Praise-criticism pairs
- Using modal verbs/frequency adverbs: *perhaps you could...more regularly*.
- Giving directions by offering suggestions: *I'd say...*
- Making clarification requests: *Could you...?*
- Hedging devices and question forms: *I hope that you will find my remarks...*

As an author, receiving feedback is a necessary aspect of the writing process. Being willing to look back at your work critically and objectively makes the editing process far less painful. Asking questions or asking for clarification are options at your disposal when submitting work and responding to feedback.

Summary

Becoming an expert reviewer and developing a keen eye for what makes an academic paper effective will have a positive impact on your own writing. As you go about helping fellow authors, you internalize the basic workflow. After a while, it becomes second nature. As you encounter typical problems again and again, you learn not to make them yourself. Therefore, peer review is not only a way to contribute to the academic community, but also a great way to update your own writing skills and widen your scope of interests. If all of this sounds interesting to you, please consider volunteering for the PSG today! You can contact us at (https://jalt-publications.org/contact). We would love to have you on board our team.

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Weller, A. C. (2001). *Editorial peer review: Its strengths and weaknesses*. Information Today.

Malcolm Swanson

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

Email: jaltpubs.tlt.focus@jalt.org • Web: https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/jalt-focus

2023年総会開催通知

Notice of the 2023 JALT Ordinary General Meeting (OGM)

日時:2023年6月24日(土)

Date: June 24, 2023 (Sunday)

時間:13:00 – 14:00

Time: 13:00 – 14:00

場所:〒700-0026 岡山県岡山市北区奉還町2-2-1, 岡山国際交流センター(8階イベントホール)/オンライン(ハイブリッドミーティング)

Location: Event Hall, 8F, Okayama International Center (2-2-1, Hokan-cho, Kita Ward, Okayama-shi, Okayama 700-0026) (hybrid meeting)

議案 / Agenda:

- 第1号議案 2022年度事業報告 / Item 1. Business Report (2022/04/01-2023/03/31)
- 第2号議案 2022年度決算報告 / Item 2. Financial Report (2022/04/01-2023/03/31)
- 第3号議案 2022年度監査報告 / Item 3. Audit Report (2022/04/01-2023/03/31)
- 第4号議案 2023年度事業計画 / Item 4. Business Plan (2023/04/01-2024/03/31)
- 第5号議案 2023年度予算 / Item 5. Budget (2023/04/01-2024/03/31)
- 第6号議案 2023年度全国選出役員選挙の結果 / Item 6. Results of the 2023 National Officer Elections
- 第7号議案 定款第55条の変更: 公告の方法 / Item 7. Amendment to Article 55 of the Constitution: Method of Public Notice

* 5月下旬に、会員の皆様に議案詳細、各報告書のリンク先、及び個別の不在者投票へのリンク先をEメールでご案内いたします。

*An email containing details of the agenda, including links to the various reports that will be presented, and a link to an individualized ballot will be sent to you at the end of May.

Eメールがお手元に届きましたら、不在投票の方法に従って投票をしてください。

本総会は、特定非営利活動法人(NPO)としての地位を保つ為に必要なもので、1/4以上の会員の皆様による出席(定足数)をもって、正式に開催することができます。

幸い当学会では、会員の皆様に向けて電子投票システムを提供させていただいており、不在投票をしていただくことで、本総会の出席者としてみなすことができます。

お手数をおかけいたしますが、ご支援とご協力のほどよろしくお願いします。

When you receive the email regarding the OGM, please follow the instructions on how to complete the absentee ballot. It is important for us to have a quarter of JALT members present at the OGM for it to be valid, and holding a valid OGM is necessary for us to maintain our status as a nonprofit organization (NPO). Fortunately, you can vote online by absentee ballot and be counted present for the meeting, as per the JALT Constitution.

Thank you very much for being a member of JALT and for your continued support.

— MW SIG SHOWCASE —

The MW SIG SHOWCASE is up and running! This website features textbooks and other teaching materials created by JALT members. If you are a JALT member and would like to showcase your materials, please visit the site and follow the submission guidelines.

https://sites.google.com/view/mwsigshowcase

JALT's Mission

JALT promotes excellence in language learning, teaching, and research by providing opportunities for those involved in language education to meet, share, and collaborate.

使命(ミッション・ステートメント)全国語学教育学会は言語教育関係者が交流・共有・協働する機会を提供し、言語学習、教育、及び調査研究の発展に寄与します。

JALT MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)

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

https://jalt.org

Annual International Conference

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

https://jalt.org/conference

JALT Publications

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

https://jalt-publications.org

JALT Community

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

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

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

https://jalt.org/main/groups

JALT Partners

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

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

Membership Categories

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

- Regular 一般会員: ¥13,000
- Student rate (FULL-TIME students of undergraduate/graduate universities and colleges in Japan) 学生会員(国内の全日制の大学または大学院の学生): ¥7,000
- Joint—for two persons sharing a mailing address, one set of publications ジョイント会員 (同じ住所で登録する個人2名を対象とし、JALT出版物は2名に1部): ¥21,000
- Senior rate (people aged 65 and over) シニア会員(65歳以上の方): ¥7,000
- Group (5 or more) ¥8,500/person—one set of publications for each five members グループ会員(5名以上を対象とし、JALT出版物は5名ごとに1部): 1名 ¥8,500

https://jalt.org/main/membership

Information

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

JALT Central Office

Level 20, Marunouchi Trust Tower—Main,
1-8-3 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0005 JAPAN

JALT事務局：〒100-0005東京都千代田区丸の内1-8-3
丸の内トラストタワー本館20階

Tel: 03-5288-5443; jco@jalt.org

Joining JALT

Use the attached *furikae* form at post offices ONLY. When payment is made through a bank using the *furikae*, the JALT Central Office receives only a name and the cash amount that was transferred. The lack of information (mailing address, chapter designation, etc.) prevents the JCO from successfully processing your membership application. Members are strongly encouraged to use the secure online sign-up page located at:

https://jalt.org/joining.

Scott Gardner *jaltpubs.tlt.old.gram@jalt.org*

My Apology

I'm not a quick wit. My conversational repartees come forward about as speedily as someone at a party stepping up to take responsibility for dropping a set of dentures in the punch bowl. One time at a conference, after I had finished a presentation, I was approached by a colleague who ripped me apart on a point of theory, and then before leaving said, "You're not very smart, are you." Three months later I gave him my riposte by email: "Well, you're not the brightest tool in the henhouse, either!"

I like detached, periodic writing such as this column, because I can compose my thoughts at my own slothful pace. When I consider an idea for a column, I give myself plenty of time to fluff up a few pillows on the sofa, open a bottle of wine, kindle a cozy fire, settle in with my paper and pencil, stare at the paper, scratch my nose with the pencil, spill the wine, remember suddenly that my apartment doesn't have a fireplace, run to the hallway for the extinguisher, clean up the mess, finish off the wine to calm my nerves, and finally—three weeks later—submit a few aimless paragraphs hours after *TLT*'s copyediting deadline has passed.

Ideally, my interactions with people would resemble those of the great philosophers. In short, I would take so long answering questions that everyone would have forgotten what they asked, and yet they would still respect me for it. One of the most brilliant people I've ever met was a man I used to sit with at a local park, who went by the name of Schopenhauer. On Saturday afternoons, we would meet by the pigeon pool and go on for hours deliberating topics great and small, all the while saying nary a word to each other. I learned so much from him. (I discovered some time later that Schopenhauer was a bronze sculpture.)

Here are a few observations on the world's deepest questions that Schopey and I teased out after months of quiet excogitation:

Q: How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?

A: It depends on which band is playing, and if they get a mosh pit going, forget about it.

Q: Do humans have free will?

A: Yes, but to remove ads they must pay a monthly fee.

Q: Is knowledge a creative force, or a destructive one?

A: Since we're even asking that question, then answering it equals adorning knowledge with a purpose, which could be seen as an act of creation. But answering the question obliterates the need to ask it, which is destructive. So...yes.

Q: Is there such a thing as a truly selfless act?

A: There are three: 1) giving your life anonymously to save another life; 2) donating the fruits of your effort to people unknown to you; 3) leaving a parking space with one hour left on the meter.

Q: Can one's deepest emotions be fully shared and understood by others?

A: For millennia this was impossible, but luckily in the era of emojis, it has become rather commonplace.

I can't parade a list of philosophical victories like this around without confessing that there are many questions which still evade me despite a lifetime of struggle, such as:

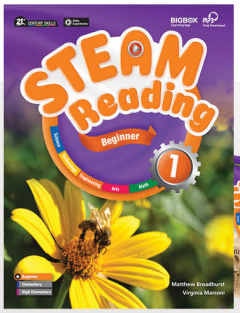
Q: How is it possible to start a sentence with "and"?

Q: Why does Velcro stop working after a while, whether you put it to use or not?

My college professor once told me, "Just knowing things does not make you wise." I remember saying to her, "That's very true. It's something we should all take to heart." She replied, "I don't mean 'you' in the sense of generic humanity; I mean *you*, Scott, in particular. Knowledge won't make *you* wise. You're a philosophical parrot, regurgitating ideas you heard 10 minutes ago as if you spent years contemplating them. You throw out axioms like spaghetti on a wall, hoping that something you say sticks." In an effort to emerge from the crushing weight of her reproach, I have made a hobby (i.e., this column) from my vice of "projectile philosophizing", as I call it. I don't mind if it's met here with the same indifferent silence that old Schopey used to give it.

STEAM Reading

Science Technology Engineering Arts Math



STEAM Reading preview QR

LEVEL A1 – A2+ Beginner – High Elementary

STEAM Reading is a three-level reading series for beginner to high elementary learners of English. Each level has three books that focus on improving student's reading skills through a STEAM approach to learning. Each book contains nonfiction and fiction passages covering all aspects of STEAM.

Features:

- Interesting reading passages that engage learners while teaching them about key concepts in STEAM areas
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- Live-action videos for each experiment can be easily accessed by scanning the handy QR codes throughout the books to demonstrate step-by-step for young learners and show them what to do
- Projects in each unit are specifically designed to build learners' 21st-Century skills (Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity)

The STEAM Reading series helps young learners develop their reading skills while learning about fascinating topics related to science, technology engineering, art, and math to increase their knowledge in these increasingly important areas.

Digital Support

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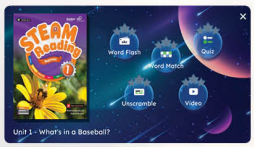
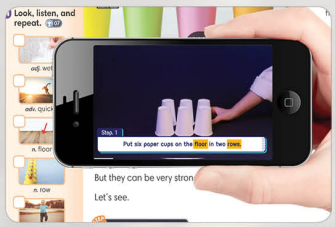


Videos



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Each experiment project has an accompanying video. Learners can scan the handy QR code with a mobile device and see step-by-step instructions explaining what they should do in the experiment.

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Answer Key, Word List, MP3 Audio, TESTS, Class Booster, Video, Additional Materials, Worksheets

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LOOKING FORWARD

Sustainable futures in language education

May 12-14, 2023, Kyoto Sangyo University

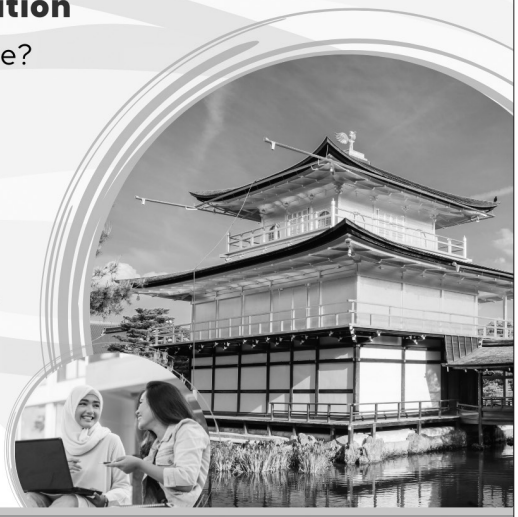
PanSIG

Building the future of language education

How will language learning communities evolve?
Let's get together and think it through,
in Kyoto, the cultural capital of Japan.

古都 京都で、語学教育の未来へ

言語学習コミュニティはどう進化するのでしょうか。
今こそ、皆と交流しながら考えましょう。



VISIT THE WEBSITE AND SNS FOR MORE INFO

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CALLING THE FUTURE JALTCALL 2023

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https://jaltcall.org/jaltcall2023/