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JALT2023 – Growth Mindset in Language Education

Tsukuba, IBARAKI

November 24~27, 2023

https://jalt.org/conference/

In this month's issue . . .

Dear readers, welcome to the July/August issue of *The Language Teacher*. I hope your semester is going smoothly and that you are enjoying the beauty of summer.

This issue contains three Feature Articles. The first is from **Kazuma Fujii**, who discusses the impact of paper vs. electronic book formats on university students' learning process and outcomes in an extensive reading English program. The second is from **Kieran Enright**, who investigated Information and Communication Technology use by English-speaking Assistant Language Teachers in Japanese schools. In the third piece, **Katsuhiro Yamauchi** explores the benefits of implementing multiple mini-bibliobattles in an extensive reading course at a Japanese university.

In addition to these three articles, the issue also includes two interviews: one with **Kensaku Yoshida**, by **Peter Ferguson**, and another with **John Creswell**, by **Michael Holsworth**. Please be sure to check out our many regular JALT Praxis columns as well.

In closing, as always, I would like to thank the many *TLT* contributors without whom this publication would not be possible and, of course, our dear readers for their continued support. I hope you enjoy the issue and find it useful.

—*Irina Kuznetcova,* TLT *Co-editor*

The Language Teacherの7/8月号へようこそ。皆さまの前期の授業が滞りなく進み、夏の美しさを楽しんでいらっしゃることを願っています。

本号は、Feature Articleが３つあります。1つ目は、Kazuma Fujiiによるもので、大学生の英語多読プログラムにおける学習プロセスと成果に対する紙の本と電子書籍という異なる媒体の影響について論じています。2つ目はKieran Enrightが、日本の学校での英語話者のALTによるITC（情報通信技術）の使用を調査しています。３つ目の論文では、Katsuhiro Yamauchiが大学の多読コースにおいて複合的なミニ・ビブリオバトルズ（知的書評合戦）の導入の利点を探索しています。

これら３つの論文に加えて、二つのインタビュー記事もあります。Peter FergusonによるKensaku YoshidaのインタビューとMichael

TLT Editors: Paul Lyddon, Irina Kuznetcova
TLT Japanese Language Editor: Mami Ueda

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JALT Board of Directors, 2023

Contact

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HolsworthによるJohn　Creswellのインタビューです。定期的に連載しているJALT Praxisコラムもぜひご覧ください。

　最後に、いつものように数多くのTLTの協力者の方々にお礼を申し上げます。皆さまのお力がなければ今月号はできなかったと思います。もちろん、読者の皆さまの変わらぬサポートにも感謝しています。皆さまが今月号をお楽しみいただき、お役に立てていただければ幸いです。

—*Irina Kuznetcova,* TLT 共同編集者

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Effects of Book Medium Preferences in Extensive Reading on Learners' Reading Volume, Vocabulary Size, and Reading Strategies: A Case Study From a Hybrid Class

Kazuma Fujii

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Extensive reading (ER) is an established instructional strategy in English classrooms. While previous studies explored the impact of ER on various learning outcomes, the mediating role of the book medium (paper vs. electronic formats) in the process remains understudied. The present study aimed to bridge this gap by examining the differences in Japanese university students' reading volume, increase in vocabulary size, and reading strategies in a semester-long ER program in a hybrid English course. Fifty-eight students from two English classes were classified into three groups based on their book medium preferences: those who read paper books only (PBO; $n = 32$), those who used electronic books (e-books) for more than half of their reading (EB>H; $n = 6$), and those who used e-books for less than half of their reading (EB<H; $n = 20$). The results indicated that book medium preferences did not significantly impact the reading volume and vocabulary size. However, PBO students were more likely to find a book interesting than those in the EB>H group, and students in the EB>H group were more likely to consult a dictionary if they encountered unknown words than those in the PBO group. The practical implications of these findings are discussed along with potential areas for further investigation.

多読（ER）は、英語の教室で確立された指導戦略である。従来の研究では、ERがさまざまな学習成果に及ぼす影響は調査されているが、その過程における書籍媒体（紙媒体か電子媒体）の介在的な役割については、依然として研究が不足している。本稿は、学生数58人を本の媒体の好みにより3グループに分けた1セメスターの多読指導において、紙の本のみで多読を行った学習者（PBO群：n = 32）と、電子図書を全読語数の50%以上利用した学習者（EB>H群：n = 6）、電子図書を全読語数の50%未満利用した学習者（EB<H群：n = 20）の間で、読語数や読冊数、受容語彙サイズの上昇値、英語の読み方に違いが生じたかを調査した事例研究である。本研究の結果、学習者の本の媒体の好みは、1セメスター間の読語数や読冊数、語彙サイズの上昇値に有意な差はもたらさなかった。しかし、PBO群の学習者は、EB>H群の学習者よりも面白い本と出会えたと回答した割合が有意に高く、また、EB>H群の学習者は、PBO群の学習者よりも未知語に出会った時に辞書で調べる傾向が有意に高いことが示された。これらの結果の実用的な意味と、さらなる研究の可能性を議論する。

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 at the author's university in 2021, a hybrid class format was adopted. This format was a combination of face-to-face and remote modes of instruction. In English classes that used this format, teachers brought computers to their classrooms, and connected the computers to Zoom, an online video conferencing tool. Some students attended these classes in person, and some through Zoom. Within the framework of an extensive reading (ER) program implemented in a hybrid English classroom setting, students were presented with two options for obtaining reading materials: paper books borrowed from the university library or electronic books (e-books) accessed through Maruzen eBook Library (MeL), an e-book distribution service developed and operated by Maruzen-Yushodo for academic and research institutions. To ensure accessibility for both in-person and remote students, the former group was advised to read paper books, whereas the latter was recommended to use e-books. However, students were allowed to use their preferred book medium regardless of their mode of participation.

A substantial portion of previous ER studies utilized print medium as their mode of reading (Fujii, 2020; Fujita & Noro, 2009; Powell, 2005). With the latest advances in technology and more readers switching to electronic reading sources, more studies have explored the use of e-books (Bui & Macalister, 2021; Chen et al., 2013), although this area of research has received significantly less attention compared to studies on paper books. There is a dearth of studies focusing on the impact of a hybrid ER program in which learners have the option to choose between print or electronic materials as their preferred reading medium. To address this gap in the research, this study aimed to examine the influence of each learner's preferred book medium on their reading volume, vocabulary size gains, and reading strategies within the context of a hybrid ER program in an English course.

Literature Review

The practice of ER involves individual silent reading of a large quantity of books that are at an appropriate level for each learner (Nation & Waring, 2019). This approach to reading has been widely adopted in educational institutions in Japan, and its benefits have been both theoretically and empirically established in the literature. Krashen (1985) postulated the significance of obtaining a large volume of comprehensible input through reading. Empirical studies have substantiated the effectiveness of ER in improving reading fluency (Fujita & Noro, 2009), fostering positive reading attitudes (Powell, 2005; Takase, 2010), and increasing vocabulary size (Chen et al., 2013; Day et al., 1991; Webb, 2007).

Research about the impact of ER on incidental vocabulary learning has shed light on various factors that contribute to the process, including frequency of exposure (Waring & Nation, 2004), contextual information (Webb, 2008), and reading strategies used to make sense of unfamiliar words, such as dictionary use (Nation & Waring, 2019) or selective attention to unknown words (Fujii, 2020). The choice of book medium should also be considered as a critical contributor to the learning process because the medium has the potential to influence reading strategies, which, in turn, may impact learners' reading volume and vocabulary acquisition. Mangen et al. (2013) found that print readers outperformed digital readers in terms of comprehension, and Hamdi (2015) demonstrated that electronic dictionaries were associated with increased frequency of word look-ups. These findings highlight the importance of examining the impact of book medium on reading volume and vocabulary acquisition in ER programs, as increased comprehension may lead to greater reading volume (Takase, 2010), and the use of ER dictionaries may improve vocabulary (Hulstijn et al., 1996). To comprehensively investigate the use of reading strategies by e-book readers, it is crucial to consider the functional attributes of e-book platforms, as they may substantially influence reader engagement and performance.

Previous studies on the impact of online materials on reading process and outcomes have been limited in scope, primarily examining only a select number of platforms such as specific websites (Bui & Macalister, 2021; Chen et al., 2013; Peterson, 2022), and the Xreading platform (Yamada, 2020). Despite the widespread use of the MeL in Japanese universities for electronic resource access, there has been a scarcity of research exploring the effects of utilizing this platform. Furthermore, prior studies have primarily focused on either paper or e-book formats and did not analyze the role of book medium preferences, with the exception of Peterson (2022) and Yamada (2020). Peterson investigated the effects of hybrid ER in Japanese on reading rate development by allowing learners to choose between print books and e-books accessed through a created database. Yamada employed Xreading to address limited student engagement with ER outside of class, offering students the choice of reading books in print or electronic formats. However, neither study explored the ratio of print book to electronic book usage and the potential impact of varying medium preferences.

The present study aimed to address these research gaps by investigating the relationship between each learner's preferred book medium in a hybrid English class and their reading volume, vocabulary acquisition, and reading strategies, with a focus on the MeL platform.

Method

Research Questions

This study explored the impact of different modes of ER in a semester-long ER program conducted in a hybrid English course at a Japanese university. Specifically, it examined learners' reading volume, vocabulary size, and reading strategies in relation to their use of either a print or digital book medium. This study was guided by three research questions (RQs):

RQ1. Did the preferred ER medium impact the number of words, books, and book types learners read?

It was hypothesized that students who read paper books would read more words, books, and book types. This hypothesis was grounded in the study by Mangen et al. (2013), which suggested that paper of might facilitate a deeper understanding of the text, thereby leading to a greater likelihood of continued reading.

RQ2. Did the preferred ER medium impact learners' reading strategies?

It was hypothesized that students who read e-books use a dictionary to look up unknown words more frequently, as indicated by Hamdi (2015).

RQ3. Did the preferred ER medium have an impact on the learners' vocabulary size?

It was hypothesized that students who read e-books would have greater increases in their vocabulary size. This was premised on the assumption that if e-book readers use dictionaries more frequently, as hypothesized in RQ2, it would positively impact their vocabulary learning, as suggested by Hulstijn et al. (1996).

Participants

In total, 58 Japanese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners from two English course sections participated in this study, all of whom were third- and fourth-year undergraduate students majoring in engineering at a national university in Japan. Only those students who participated in pre- and post-assessments of vocabulary size were eligible for inclusion in the study. Prior to the start of this study, students took the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) proficiency test. The results of this test indicated that the proficiency of the participants ranged from a Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) A1 to B1 level, and that the average proficiency was at the A2 level.

Procedures and Materials

The ER program was conducted in English classes for one semester from April to July 2021. In-class ER sessions were conducted 11 times during the semester and lasted between 15 and 20 minutes. The ER sessions comprised approximately one-fifth of the total English classes. The remaining portion of class time was primarily dedicated to intensive reading utilizing a university-level English textbook, which included a range of activities designed to reinforce vocabulary, knowledge, and grammar skills. Although ER was not assigned as homework, participants were encouraged to read autonomously outside of the class. The class was taught using a hybrid format, with approximately half of the participants attending in-person and the other half attending on Zoom.

Guidance on methods for engaging in ER and its expected benefits was provided before the start of the ER program. Participants were encouraged to start with easy books that suited their interests which did not require frequent dictionary use. However, they could look up unknown words in a dictionary as long as doing so did not negatively affect their reading time and volume.

Three types of books were available to the students. The first type was Graded Readers (GRs), books written specifically for EFL learners. GRs use a limited range of vocabulary and are designed to facilitate better comprehension. The second type was Leveled Readers (LRs), originally written to guide English-speaking children to increasingly difficult and complex texts through varying levels of syntactic structures and types of vocabulary. The third type was Children's Books (CBs), designed for English-speaking children, which include picture and chapter books as well as literature for young adults (Takase, 2010). Books and series that presumably suited the participants' tastes and levels were occasionally introduced during the semester to maintain their interest in ER.

Students who attended class in person were instructed to borrow several books from the university library, which holds more than 4,000 ER titles. Those attending classes via Zoom could read e-books on the MeL platform online. The MeL interface design offers basic functions such as book navigation through the table of contents and changing text size. However, it is not optimized for ER purposes, as it lacks essential features such as a built-in dictionary, text-to-speech, highlighting and note-taking (Figure 1).

Figure 1

MeL's Interface
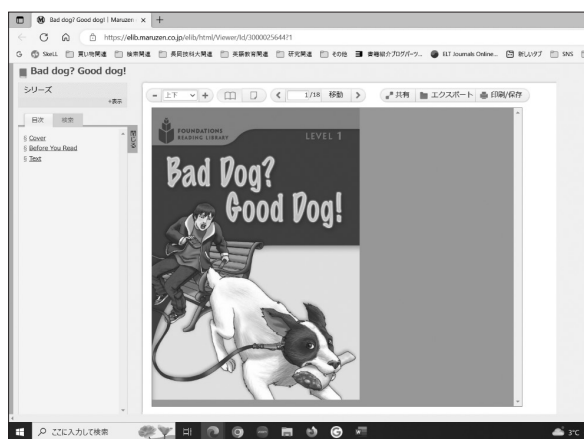
The following books were available on the MeL at the time of this study: 99 titles of *Macmillan Readers*, 42 titles of *Foundations Reading Library*, 50 titles of *Cengage Page Turners*, 25 titles of *Cambridge Discovery Readers*, and 16 titles of *Building Blocks of Math & Physical Science*. All the series are GR, except *Building Blocks of Math & Physical Science* which is CB. Although the number of e-books available on the MeL was limited compared to other online ER platforms (e.g., Xreading), it was chosen based on zero renewal costs once e-books were purchased and the variety of subject areas available to readers.

Instruments

Participants were instructed to maintain reading logs with the title and *Yomiyasusa Level* (YL) referring to the readability level for Japanese learners of English on a 100-point scale (YL 0.0 to 10.0, with 0.0 being the highest readability) (Takase, 2010). These logs included word count, series, and book

medium (i.e., paper or electronic) when the participants finished reading a book.

The Mochizuki test (Mochizuki, 1998) was used to gauge the difference in vocabulary size among participants. The test was developed for Japanese learners of English. It comprises seven levels ranging from 1,000 to 7,000 words. Test-takers choose English words corresponding to 26 Japanese words for each level. It is suitable for beginners because they are asked to select words that correspond to Japanese translations and definitions, unlike the format wherein the definitions are provided in English. There are three versions of the test, all with identical levels of difficulty. In this study, two versions of the Mochizuki test were used to assess a vocabulary size of up to 6,000 words, based on the assumption of the participants' proficiency level.

At the beginning of the ER program in April 2021, the Mochizuki test VST11 (Vocabulary Size Test, 1,000-word level, version 1) to VST61 (6,000-word level, version 1) was administered as a pre-test (Test 1). A different version, VST 12 (1,000-word level, version 2) to VST 62 (6,000-word level, version 2), was administered as a post-test at the end of the ER program in July 2021 (Test 2). To avoid the inaccurate measurement of vocabulary size due to correct answers being selected by chance, participants were instructed to leave a blank response if they had not encountered the word before. They were further informed that the test results would not count toward their grade, but that they should diligently observe their progress.

After Test 2, a revised version of a questionnaire from Fujii (2020) was administered. It is comprised of 22 questions that address reading strategies related to vocabulary acquisition and English learning motivation for the purpose of investigating potential factors that may influence these strategies. Participants responded to the questions (written in Japanese) on a five-point Likert scale with 5 = *strongly agree* and 1 = *strongly disagree* (see Table 4 for the questions). The research purpose was explained to the participants, and verbal consent was obtained from all of them.

Analysis

Among the 58 participants, 32 used only paper books and 26 used at least one e-book. Among the 26 who used at least one e-book, the amount of reading done on e-books ranged widely, from 4 to 100 percent. To investigate the differences in outcomes based on book medium preferences, the participants were classified into three groups: (1) the paper book only group (PBO), comprising 32 participants who exclusively used paper books; (2) the high e-book

use group (EB>H), consisting of six participants who used e-books for more than 50% of the total words read, with an average utilization rate of 89.7%; and (3) the low e-book use group (EB<H), comprising 20 participants who used e-books for less than 50% of the total words read, with an average utilization rate of 16.9%. The study avoided classifying participants into two distinct groups, i.e., paper-only versus mixed/electronic or mixed/paper versus electronic-only, due to the considerable variability observed in the ratio of e-books to paper books among participants who used at least one e-book (4 to 100%). Additionally, only one participant solely relied on e-books, rendering it unfeasible to categorize participants into only two separate groups.

For RQ1 and RQ3, the inter-group difference in the number of words and books learners read for each of the three book types, as well as the difference in the Mochizuki test results, were measured using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). For RQ2, questionnaire results were analyzed using the Kruskal-Wallis test. Mann-Whitney tests were performed for multiple comparisons, with Bonferroni's adjustment for the level of significance. The significance level chosen for this study was set at $p < .05$.

Results and Discussion

RQ1: The impact of book medium preference on the number of words, books, and book types read

Tables 1 and 2 present the results of a one-way ANOVA analysis of the number of words and books that the participants in each group read during the semester, including the breakdown of the three book types (GR, LR, CB).

Contrary to our hypothesis, the ANOVA results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences among the three groups with respect to the total number of words or the total number of books learners read for each of the three book types. Although the present study did not investigate the relationship between printed books and enhanced reading comprehension, the results suggest that both paper and electronic books were comparable in terms of participants' volume of reading in the context of this hybrid ER program.

RQ2: The impact of book medium preference on reading strategies

Table 3 presents the questionnaire results. The questions were in Japanese and translated into English by this manuscript's author.

Table 1

Number of Words Read

	Total	GR	LR	CB	Max	Min
		M (SD)				
EB>H	32,736	30,919	1,008	809	53,042	7,150
(n = 6)	(22,247)	(22,279)	(1,981)	(1,982)		
EB<H	36,451	23,363	8,274	4,963	61,299	5,455
(n = 20)	(18,601)	(19,938)	(8,915)	(11,880)		
PBO	33,703	21,970	8,281	3,330	101,500	3,089
(n = 32)	(22,359)	(20,296)	(12,698)	(10,455)		
F	0.13	0.48	1.22	0.39		
p	.88	.62	.30	.68		
η^2	.01	.02	.05	.02		

Table 2

Number of Books Read

	Total	GR	LR	CB	Max	Min
		M (SD)				
EB>H	15.2	11.3	2.5	1.3	22	9
(n = 6)	(5.4)	(5.9)	(4.3)	(3.3)		
EB<H	24.6	12.8	9.6	2.3	42	8
(n = 20)	(8.8)	(9.9)	(8.9)	(4.8)		
PBO	19.6	9.9	8.6	1.1	43	2
(n = 32)	(10.5)	(7.8)	(10.9)	(3.2)		
F	2.85	0.67	1.24	0.53		
p	.07	.51	.30	.59		
η^2	.10	.03	.05	.02		

Two question items (#3 and #16) showed significant differences among the three groups, indicating that the PBO group was more likely to find books interesting to them than the EB>H group, and that the EB>H group was more likely to consult a dictionary when encountering unknown words than PBO students.

A potential explanation for the result for item #3 may be the different number of titles available in print and electronic formats. The university library had more than 4,000 paper books, whereas MeL had approximately 230 e-books, most of which are also available in the library in print. This difference might have affected the probability of encountering books interesting to students, as indicated by the higher ratio of e-book usage leading to lower probability of finding an interesting book ([EB>H] <

[EB<H] < [PBO]). This difference suggests that a rich ER environment that gives access to varied books should be provided, in line with the argument made by Takase (2010). Books that participants find interesting play a key role in leading learners to long-term autonomous ER, since readers select books based on their level and interests. Another potential explanation of this difference might be the mode of participation in the ER program: Most students who chose to read paper books participated in in-person classes where they saw their classmates with many books and sometimes exchanged information about books that they found intriguing.

The result for item #16 supported our hypothesis: Students who read more e-books than paper books search for unfamiliar words in a dictionary more frequently. This may be because EB>H students

Table 3

Questionnaire Results (5 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree)

#	Question items	EB>H	EB<H	PBO	H	p
			M			
1	I like English.	2.67	2.55	2.88	1.18	.55
2	I want to improve my English.	4.33	4.35	4.28	0.48	.79
3	I encountered an interesting book.	3.17	3.40	3.97	7.68	.02* [PBO] > [EB>H]
4	I enjoyed ER.	3.80	3.80	4.09	1.57	.46
5	I think ER is a good way for me to learn English.	3.50	3.55	3.75	0.73	.70
6	I found a series that I liked.	3.50	3.55	3.78	1.47	.48
7	I read books that I could read fluently.	4.17	3.65	3.97	2.54	.28
8	I read books for content and meaning, rather than grammar and syntax.	3.67	3.90	3.81	0.49	.78
9	I read books in a specific series.	4.17	3.85	4.06	0.91	.64
10	I read books with specific readability (YL).	3.67	3.50	3.41	0.59	.75
11	I read books wherein I could understand more than 70% of the content.	4.17	4.05	4.28	1.64	.44
12	I was bothered when I encountered unknown words while reading.	4.50	4.40	4.16	2.05	.36
13	I did not feel comfortable skipping unknown words.	3.50	3.50	3.50	0.01	.99
14	I guessed the meaning of unknown words while reading.	4.17	4.00	3.88	0.55	.76
15	After guessing the meaning of unknown words, I checked if my guess was correct.	3.50	3.40	3.44	0.03	.99
16	I looked up the unknown words in a dictionary.	4.33	3.65	3.16	4.22	.04* [EB>H] > [PBO]
17	I tried to remember the words encountered while reading the book.	3.67	3.25	3.41	0.86	.65
18	I found interesting words or expressions in the book.	4.17	3.60	3.97	2.56	.28
19	I encountered many unknown words through ER.	4.50	4.05	4.09	1.81	.41
20	I made a list of words I wanted to remember in ER.	2.00	2.10	1.97	0.45	.80
21	I learned new usages of words that I already knew.	4.17	4.05	3.72	2.65	.27
22	I learned new vocabulary through ER.	4.50	4.15	3.94	3.70	.16

* $p < .05$

had easier access to a web dictionary when reading e-books. While our study did not examine the mode of dictionary usage, it is likely that students who utilized e-books relied heavily on online dictionaries, given that the MeL platform lacked an integrated dictionary function. The use of online dictionaries might have made the process of searching for unfamiliar words easier and more efficient. Conversely, PBO students would be required to temporarily interrupt their reading process to access either an online or paper dictionary for word clarification. This difference in accessibility may have led to the different frequencies of dictionary use. On average, more students agreed that they used a dictionary while reading in the EB>H group (mean = 4.33) than in the EB<H group (mean = 3.65).

RQ3: The impact of book medium preference on vocabulary size gains

The Mochizuki test revealed no statistically significant difference in vocabulary gain among the three groups (Table 4). Vocabulary size at the beginning and end of the ER program was not significantly different either. This finding contradicts our hypothesis that students who read predominantly e-books will show greater gains in vocabulary size. This may be due to the insufficient reading time and volume (approximately 35,000 words in a semester) in the ER program, which were below the recommended standards for ER programs in prior research (Nation & Waring, 2019; Takase, 2010).

Conclusion

The present study investigated the role of book medium preferences on reading volume, vocabulary size, and reading strategies in a hybrid ER program at a Japanese university. The results suggest that reading volume, book selection tendencies, and vocabulary gains did not differ significantly in the semester-long ER program based on students' book medium preferences. Learners were less likely to encounter books they found interesting in an online ER environment with a limited number of titles. Also, reading e-books increased the likelihood of readers looking up unknown words in a dictionary.

Pedagogically, these results confirm the importance of providing students with a wide variety of reading choices in ER programs. In situations where choice is limited (as was in case of the MeL platform), incorporating activities to share interesting books among students may help broaden the range of book selection and increase the likelihood of students discovering books that align with their reading level and taste. The lack of impact of book medium preferences on important outcomes such as vocabulary gains, reading volume, and reading strategies (apart from the use of dictionary) implies that using e-books in ER programs might be a viable alternative when paper books are not available.

The results of the present study should be considered in light of its limitations. First, improvements in vocabulary size must not be attributed purely to ER, since it is impossible to specify to what degree ER contributed to it in a semester-long ER program—especially because intensive reading instruction was part of the curriculum. It is possible that educational factors other than ER affected vocabulary gains to a certain extent. Second, the study was limited to a single platform (MeL) for accessing e-books. Further studies exploring other ER platforms are required to determine whether the results of this study can be generalized. Third, the study did not examine students' actual reading practices, including the mode of dictionary usage. Fourth, the program duration and reading volume may have been inadequate to permit meaningful differentiation between students with varying preferences for

Table 4

Mochizuki Test Results

	Test 1	Test 2	Gain
	M (SD)		
EB>H (*n* = 6)	3,301.3 (591.6)	3,871.8 (478.3)	570.5 (249.8)
EB<H (*n* = 20)	3,134.6 (557.4)	3,619.2 (552.0)	484.6 (364.3)
PBO (*n* = 32)	3,352.2 (652.0)	3,682.7 (688.3)	330.5 (473.2)
F	0.78	0.37	1.32
p	.47	.69	.28
η^2	.03	.01	.05

different book media. Further examination of these variables is necessary to enhance the implementation of hybrid ER programs in the future.

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The Use of ICT Tools by ALTs in Japanese Classrooms

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With the proliferation of electronic devices in daily use and the migration towards communicating online, the way languages are taught has changed dramatically in the last few decades. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has had a significant impact on English teaching classrooms, with tablet computers, presentation screens, and web-cameras gradually replacing pencils, textbooks, and blackboards. In Japan, that change has been somewhat delayed relative to some other developed countries. However, in recent years there has been a movement to modernize English teaching curriculums. Firstly, investment in ICT has steadily risen. Secondly, the number of first-language English-speaking Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) employed to help with communication skills has increased. Through a mixed-methods approach combining a digitally distributed survey and online interviews to investigate ICT use by ALTs, this study sought to determine how technology helps these often novice teachers increase the communicative skills of students in Japanese classrooms. The study concludes with some suggestions of how ICT implementation could be improved in the Japanese English education system.

電子デバイスの利用やオンライン通信などの増加にともない、この数十年間で語学教育の教え方は劇的に変化した。鉛筆、教科書と黒板は、タブレット端末、プロジェクターとウェブカメラに徐々に取って代わり、情報通信技術（ICT）は英語の授業に大きな影響をもたらした。日本では、その変革は他の先進国に比べるといくらか遅れたものの、この数年英語教育のカリキュラムを現代化する動きがある。ICTへの投資の急激な増加に伴い、生徒のコミュニケーション能力を上げるための外国語指導助手（ALT）の数も増えてきた。本研究では、電子媒体により配布した調査とオンラインインタビュー調査を組み合わせた混合研究方法を通じて、ALTのICT使用調査を行い、初心者のALTがどのようにテクノロジーを使って、日本の教室で生徒のコミュニケーション能力を向上させるかを調査した。最後に、日本の英語教育システムにおけるICT導入について改善点をいくつか論じて締めくくっている。

The arrival of information and communication technology (ICT) tools in the classroom in recent years has naturally led to changes in the way that languages are taught. Examples of ICT tools include hardware, such as data-projectors and mobile devices, as well as social media applications and video-conferencing software. These tools give learners more opportunities for genuine interaction with speakers of their target language than ever before. They also provide educators with a myriad of new resources for developing their teaching methods. Keeping pace with the capabilities of technology, however, requires teachers to pay attention to technological developments and to maintain a working knowledge of the tools at their disposal—a challenge that is arguably best suited to younger teachers who have themselves been educated with ICT.

Concomitant with the proliferation of ICT tools, another measure intended to foster greater communication in language lessons in Japanese classrooms has been an increased presence of Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs). Typically, young and often proficient with ICT, ALTs are thus well positioned to take the lead in their team-teaching partnerships as innovators in using technology in the classroom.

ICT in Japanese Education

Despite its image as a leader in information technology, in 2018, only 33% of secondary students in Japan reported using ICT tools in foreign language classes, the lowest figure among countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA], 2018). In recent years, however, there has been increased investment in ICT tools in the Japanese education system (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology [MEXT], 2020). Despite agreement that investment in ICT is necessary, critics such as Aoki (2010) and Lockley (2013) have argued that the increase in spending and the rhetoric behind the resulting curriculum shift have not been met with a clear plan and implementation strategy.

In its 2020 report on ICT progress, MEXT noted that 96.6% of Japanese classrooms had high-speed internet access, and 60% of classes had large electronic display screens. Moreover, 50% of Japanese teachers nationwide had attended school-sponsored ICT-specific training. Nevertheless, research by Joshi (2010) and Mitomo (2018) has shown teachers in Japan to lack confidence in their technology use, with the former suggesting that ICT training for teachers should be increased.

ICT and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Recognizing the advantages ICT presents to building communicative skills, MEXT (2011) outlined its plans to revise the national English education curriculum, including five proposed measures to "truly cultivate Japanese people with English abilities" (p. 2). Specifically, its third proposal was to "provide students with more opportunities to use English through effective utilization of ALTs, ICT and other means" (p.7). The Ministry suggested a host of affordances that ICT could offer English language classes, including the following:

- expanded opportunities for students to come across practical English in the course of team-teaching
- audio-visual and drill materials that can provide iterative learning
- digital textbooks and instructor-made teaching aids that can make lessons more comprehensible
- cooperative learning and international exchange activities that promote language learning outside the classroom
- deeper cultural understanding and higher student motivation through a broader variety of teaching methods (MEXT, 2011).

These measures not only recognize the vast potential that ICT has for language education but also present opportunities for greater ALT input, particularly in the areas of practical English, cultural understanding, and instructor-made teaching aids. However, effective utilization of these resources would require a curriculum shift to allow for this innovation. To achieve such a shift, professional development for both Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) and ALTs is essential.

Professional Development in ICT

Several studies have investigated the experiences of ALTs and have found widespread under-utilization of the significant cultural and linguistic resource that they represent (Ohtani, 2010; Kano, 2015; Reed, 2015). A recurrent theme in the literature is the recommendation that ALTs receive more training in team-teaching (Crooks, 2001; Kano, 2015), materials development (Birch, 2017), and lesson planning (Ohtani, 2010). The growing presence of educational technology in Japanese classrooms presents another area in which ALTs require training. However, technology itself offers several opportunities for ALTs both to develop their teaching skills and to increase the contribution they make to their team-teaching partnerships.

ICT offers teachers opportunities to collaborate on materials, obtain feedback on their teaching, share resources, and develop a more effective ICT pedagogy together (Romeu, 2015). The development of online communities in which teachers can learn from each other has also been shown to increase confidence in ICT implementation (Romeu, 2015). For ALTs, many of whom lack teaching experience and qualifications, online collaboration presents an invaluable outlet for developing professional skills and building confidence. Furthermore, ALTs' own educational experiences outside of Japan, often including ICT, position them to provide alternative approaches to established Japanese teaching methods.

The Present Study

MEXT clearly endorses ICT tools as an effective way to expand opportunities for students to interact in English. With as many as 20,000 ALTs working in Japanese schools (MEXT, 2019), ICT tools represent a significant resource for making English education more communicative, yet no studies to date have examined how ALTs make use of them in their classes.

This study aimed to investigate the experiences of ALTs using ICT tools and to determine the effectiveness of these tools in increasing CLT methods in Japanese classrooms. The study addressed the following research questions:

1. To what extent do ALTs in Japan have access to and make use of ICT tools and resources in their classes?
2. What are the perceived benefits to ALTs of using ICT tools in English classes in Japan?
3. What are the perceived challenges to ALTs that limit the successful implementation of ICT in English classes in Japan?

Methodology

The present study used a mixed-methods approach, combining a survey and semi-structured interviews. ALTs from around Japan were recruited through Facebook ALT groups, with 72 ALTs completing the survey. The survey generated a significant volume of open-ended responses, suggesting a need for additional, contextual data. Thus, to both illustrate and further explain the survey responses, 40-minute follow-up interviews were conducted with four randomly selected ALTs to explore some of the issues that they had raised.

Survey

Conducted on Google Forms, the survey (see Appendix) began with a short series of demographic questions and then followed with three main sections: 1) perceptions of ICT use, 2) advantages of technology use, and 3) barriers to technology use. Each section presented 7 to 10 statements to which the respondents were asked to agree, disagree, or indicate neutrality. Each section concluded with an open-ended question to provide respondents with an opportunity to qualify their answers.

Interviews

A semi-structured interview schedule was designed to further investigate open-ended responses from the survey, highlighting areas where ICT seemed to impact the role of the ALT. Issues particularly warranting attention included access to materials and affective concerns such as teacher confidence.

Interviews were conducted with four randomly selected current ALTs who were recruited as participants from Facebook groups after completing the survey: "Ken," a fifth-year ALT working at four high schools in Shiga prefecture; "Delwyn," a second-year ALT working at a high school in Tottori prefecture; "Rita," a third-year ALT working in a mixed junior and senior high school in Tokyo; and "Vera," a second-year ALT working at a junior high school and four elementary schools in the Kyoto area. The interviews were transcribed using Otter speech-to-text transcription software (Otter.ai, 2021). The interview data were then classified into three categories matching those of the survey data sections.

Results

Perceptions of ICT Use

The survey showed that the majority of ALTs had access to ICT tools in their classes, with digital projectors and presentation software being the most commonly used. A total of 57% of respondents reported that they regularly used presentation software (e.g., PowerPoint) in their classes, indicating that ALTs frequently create their own lesson content to supplement the curriculum.

In her follow-up interview, Delwyn said she felt that these tools were integral for conducting her lessons, explaining "without those PowerPoints, I couldn't really carry my lessons out how I would like to." She further said that, as a novice teacher, she initially found it difficult to maintain students' attention when using conventional tools such as the textbook and whiteboard, but she discovered some techniques to make the classes more appealing by experimenting with PowerPoint. Other respondents cited the engaging teaching materials, the diversity of teaching methods, and the reduction in lesson planning time as key reasons for using ICT in their classes.

Advantages of ICT Use
ALTs Leading Classes

Another key reason why ALTs used ICT in their lessons was to take a more active role in their team-teaching relationship. Rather than having the JTE translate the ALT's lesson instructions, the increased independence that ICT offered ALTs meant that activities and content could be presented primarily in English with visual guidance on the screen, thus reducing the need for Japanese language use in the class.

Figure 1

Survey Responses to the Statement "ICT tools are useful in helping me lead the class by myself."
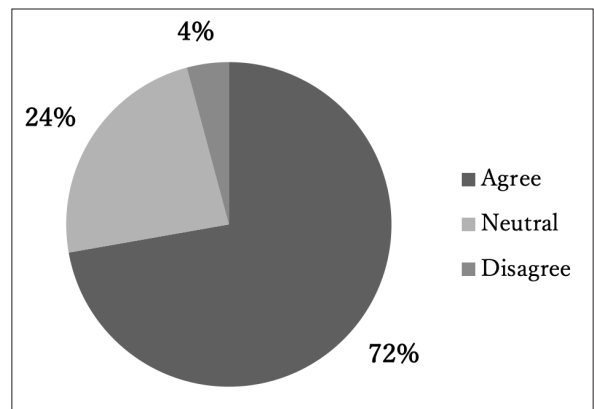
As Figure 1 shows, 72% of the survey respondents agreed that ICT helped them lead their classes. Ken was among those who agreed that ICT was useful for this purpose, and in his follow-up interview he was asked to explain why. He responded that by connecting his computer to the interactive whiteboard in his class, he was able to use presentation software to run his classes. "It helps me to introduce topics or vocabulary or give directions. I can model things quickly by animating things on the screen while the students follow along." By leveraging the technology to communicate instructions to the students rather than relying on his JTE to translate into Japanese, he claimed not only that his classes progressed more smoothly, but that ICT provided

him with more confidence in leading classroom activities as well.

Accessing Teaching Resources

Many of the survey respondents reported being challenged with an expectation to produce classroom games and practical communication activities on demand. Most ALTs relied on the internet for both ideas and activities, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Survey Responses to the Statement "Using technology makes it easier to access teaching materials."
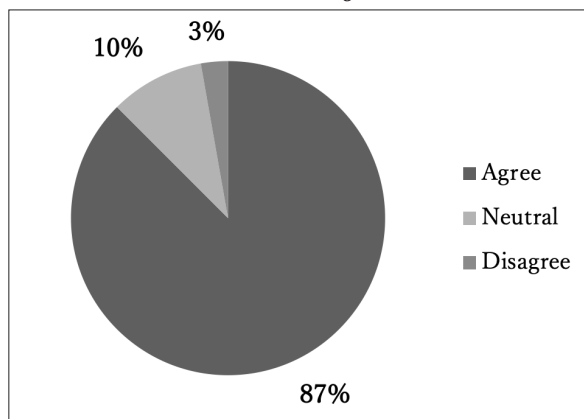
The data showed that 87% of respondents believed technology to be useful for accessing teaching materials, indicating that the practice of accessing teaching materials online is commonplace. Ken agreed with this statement, and in his follow-up interview he was asked to explain why. He shared that when he began as an ALT, he was overwhelmed with planning lessons, stating, "I used a few online resources, like [now defunct] 'Englipedia' was great, they had everything broken down by textbook level." He relied upon these websites for proven activities that were targeted at Japanese learners. Many other survey respondents indicated having searched for ideas across multiple different databases, Facebook groups, and websites.

Barriers to Technology Use

Security and Privacy Constraints

An issue that emerged from the data collection was the matter of security and privacy rules preventing access to ICT resources. Respondents reported trouble in accessing the internet, using hardware, and sharing materials with colleagues, which increased the difficulty of the lesson planning responsibilities they held.

Limitations on how ALTs could use the internet on their school computers prevented some respondents from completing simple lesson planning tasks. Vera was one of the survey respondents who reported trouble in this area, and in her interview, she explained her frustrations by saying, "I am not allowed to use my own USB drive to upload things onto the school computer. I can't even download pictures." This sentiment was echoed by the other interviewees, who all agreed that security measures were extremely strict.

Another security issue was the revocation of access to resource-sharing sites and cloud-sharing portals that ALTs used to share lesson ideas. Ken also reported trouble in gaining access to online teaching materials, and he was asked to clarify this issue further in his interview. He explained that in his prefecture, ALTs had uploaded their teaching materials to a cloud-sharing portal to help newcomers. After contributing several hundred lesson plans and activities, however, ALTs were blocked from accessing the platform because of the perceived threat that file-sharing could pose to network security.

Limited Training for ALTs in ICT Use

Many Japanese classrooms incorporate technological tools, which ALTs are in turn expected to use in their teaching. However, as Figure 3 illustrates, many ALTs had limited opportunities to learn how to do so.

Figure 3

Survey Responses to the Statement "Sufficient guidance and support is given to me from administration about how to make use of ICT tools."
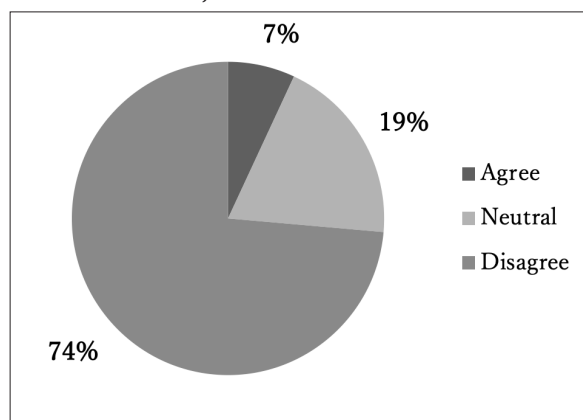
The survey data showed that only 7% of respondents found the guidance given to them about utilizing ICT to be sufficient. ICT tools are intended to help increase communication in English classes.

However, very few ALTs seemed to be aware of the connection between ICT and CLT.

Figure 4

Survey Responses to the Statement "Information has been provided to me explaining the opportunities ICT offers in teaching communicative English."
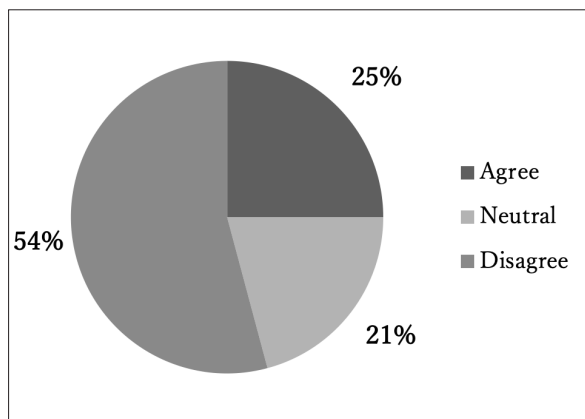
As Figure 4 shows, only a quarter of respondents indicated having received information about using ICT to teach communicatively. Although ICT is increasingly being used by ALTs in the classroom, some open-ended comments suggested concerns about the lack of training. One respondent stated, "As an ALT, I have received no training or support whatsoever in regard to ICT. My town's Board of Education seems to think that if you just put an iPad into each student's hands then they'll automatically learn more." These findings suggest that ALTs require more guidance from education authorities in incorporating ICT into their classes.

ALT Confidence in Incorporating ICT

Despite limited training in how to use technology in language teaching, 85% of survey respondents reported being confident in teaching with ICT tools (see Figure 5). Moreover, it appears that confidence and expertise in using ICT in general allowed them to make a unique contribution to their team-teaching partnerships. As one survey respondent stated, "Teachers don't know how to use ICT and are nervous to try. They often ask for ideas from their more ICT-savvy ALTs," suggesting that the practice of delegating technological tasks to ALTs is common.

Figure 5

Survey Responses to the Statement "I have confidence in teaching with ICT tools."
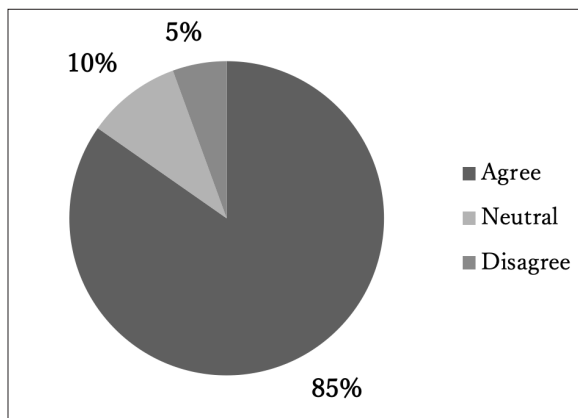
The interviewees were asked if they were entrusted by their JTEs to create ICT content and, if so, to provide some examples of how they did this. Rita explained that she was asked to locate videos and images to show at the start of her lessons to set an enjoyable tone for the class. Ken explained that his students loved playing interactive games he created using PowerPoint, and that his team-teaching partner liked the way that lower-level students who had previously often been uninterested in class were now actively trying to solve English problems to help their team win.

Vera described a problem-solving activity that she had created for her classes, where students worked in groups to exchange audio messages through their iPads. She explained, "You could see them excited and working together to complete [the activity]. It was great to see technology making learning more effective." She shared that her co-teachers were impressed to see that ICT tools could be used to stimulate greater communication between the students.

Discussion

Collaboration

One clear benefit of ICT apparent in the findings came not while actually teaching, but rather in class planning, as 87% of respondents used computer networks to share ideas and resources. This practice appears to be widespread, demonstrating that ALTs were active in locating diverse learning content and activities for students. The website that Ken described, on which ALTs in his prefecture share teaching materials, illustrates the potential of online databases to promote cooperation between ALTs, who are largely novices in the field of

teaching. The development of these communities corroborates Romeu's (2015) suggestion that online collaboration allows teachers to develop a more effective ICT pedagogy together. As ALTs essentially learn how to do their jobs as they go, working in tandem with others is crucial in helping them develop their teaching skills.

Training

Japanese teachers are offered training in teaching with technology. However, the study results showed very few respondents to have felt that they had received sufficient opportunities for professional development in using ICT. MEXT (2011) advocated that ICT should present opportunities for greater ALT input in practical English, cultural understanding, and instructor-made teaching aids, yet the study data here showed that ALTs were given very limited information about how to practically achieve those goals.

With the need for further ICT training for ALTs established, it is imperative to consider the content of the training. Although technical skill development and idea-sharing are valuable, theoretical principles of teaching with technology should also be communicated to maximize the potential of ICT. Many study participants described ICT use as simply displaying content on a screen. Glover and Miller (2003) describe this practice as didactic teaching, in which information is delivered to students who passively receive the lesson content. Although pedagogically accepted, this method of instruction is teacher-centric and does not radically change the way that classes are taught, meaning that classes are not necessarily becoming any more communicative.

Development of methods that make use of interactive practices will allow technology to have a greater impact on students' communicative abilities. An example of the theoretical perspectives in which teachers in Japan need further training is offered by Warschauer and Meskill (2000), who call for the use of more enhanced interactive methods, whereby students' cognitive and social development is stimulated.

Innovation

The study results showed that ALTs were regularly entrusted with providing teaching materials that used ICT tools. This responsibility gives ALTs the opportunity to introduce more innovative activities, which in some instances better fulfill the need for more enhanced interactive teaching methodologies.

Vera's example of using iPads to exchange audio messages between groups is a clear illustration of how technology can be used to facilitate interaction between students. It also demonstrates how ALTs can assume the role of technological activators, using their creativity and ICT-savvy status to introduce and spearhead activities that make better communicative use of the technological tools that are available.

Security

Cybersecurity in Japanese secondary schools is exceedingly strict, and for ALTs who are trying to create interesting lessons with content relevant to young English learners, not being able to access and share materials is particularly frustrating. One of the goals of the ALT role is to promote Japanese learners' cultural understanding, and an important pathway to achieve that goal is through displaying typical foreign educational practices, such as teaching with technology. The limits enforced in Japanese schools appear overly stringent and counterproductive for ALTs who want to create lessons with modern tools.

Recommendations

One recommendation is to offer ALTs training and basic information about using ICT in their classes. Many ALTs may be confident and skilled at using technology in creative ways, but this confidence does not mean that their methods are necessarily pedagogically sound. Many of the teaching examples that surfaced in the present study were representative of a didactic methodology, which is not the most conducive to the development of communicative competence. MEXT currently distributes training videos via YouTube for ALTs to promote recommended practices and examples for team-teaching, and similar videos could be produced for teaching with technology.

Another recommendation is to advocate and leverage online ALT collaboration and material sharing. A potential way to promote this collaboration would be to establish online portals on which ALTs can share content ideas and suggest improvements for existing teaching materials. As ALTs often work alone at their schools, communicating with ALT peers about teaching matters can help them become more adept and confident in their roles. Furthermore, as ALTs routinely use technology to access lesson ideas, websites have become indispensable for planning their classes. Providing online spaces specifically for ALTs would not only foster improved quality in their lesson content but also allow for sharing ideas that relate specifically to the familiar contexts that ALTs teach in. This

online collaboration would help to promote a more reflective and iterative pedagogy and contribute to a raising of the standard in teaching practices of ALTs.

A final recommendation is to make adjustments to the security systems within school networks to allow ALTs access to the resources necessary to plan and teach their classes. These changes do not require compromising security; rather, some of the technological capabilities that are already available to Japanese teachers (such as proxy servers) could simply be extended to ALTs.

Limitations of this Study

One limitation of this study is the small scale of the data collection, especially the number of participants in the follow-up interviews. Perhaps even more important, however, is the lack of any data regarding the opinions and experiences of JTEs. Further studies could include investigations of JTE–ALT pairs to give a more complete picture of how they negotiate ICT implementation in their lesson planning.

Concluding Remarks

Device use and online communication is a natural way that young learners interact with the world around them, so it is essential that language teaching methods adapt to the contexts that its learners experience. This research indicated that the shift towards ICT-integrated language learning is progressing in Japan, yet it also confirmed calls for further advancements by authorities as well as for additional professional development not only for ALTs but for all teachers using ICT.

Thanks to the valuable input from the participants in this study, it is clear that ALTs have an important role to play in influencing the way ICT is leveraged in classes in Japan. ICT offers the potential to make better use of the technological abilities and creativity that ALTs possess. Greater utilization of these assets could ultimately result in more communicative teaching methods being adopted and further justify the increase in ICT investment in Japanese education.

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ARTICLES

JALT PRAXIS

JALT FOCUS

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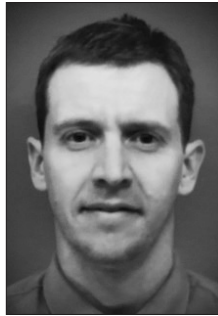
Appendix

Survey

I am currently doing a research project on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the classroom by ALTs in Japan.

With the growing influence of technology in education, I am interested in investigating how tools such as tablet computers, interactive whiteboards, and projectors are used in classes, and whether ALTs believe they are effective in promoting communication.

I am sending invitations to participate in this study to current ALTs working in Japan. You can participate by answering the questions in the survey. Doing so implies your consent.

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate you have the right to decline to answer any particular question.

Opening Questions

For how many years have you been working as an ALT?

- Less than 1
- Between 1 and 2
- Between 2 and 3
- Between 3 and 4
- Between 4 and 5
- Over 5

What school level do you teach at? (Select as many as apply.)

- Kindergarten
- Elementary school
- Junior High School
- High School

How would you rate your Japanese language skills?

- Little to none
- Basic conversational
- Daily conversational
- Relatively fluent

Do you have any teaching qualifications? (Select as many as apply.)

- TEFL Certificate
- CELTA certificate
- Bachelor's degree in education
- Master's degree in education
- Other: (Please specify)

Do you have your own computer at your base school (i.e., the school where you teach most frequently)?

- Yes, I do.
- No, but I have access to a shared computer.
- No, I don't.

Usage of Instructional Resources

Please indicate the frequency with which you use the following teaching tools:

- In almost every class
- Several times a week
- Around once a week
- Almost never
- Never

1. Whiteboard
2. Printed materials (worksheets, pictures, books)
3. Textbooks
4. Television/Video
5. CD Player
6. Digital Projector / TV screen
7. Presentation software (Powerpoint, Keynote)
8. Digital textbook (interactive software accompanying printed textbook)
9. Web camera
10. Interactive Whiteboard
11. Tablet computers
12. Other (Please specify):

Perceptions about the Use of ICT

Please indicate the extent to which you endorse the following statements:

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

1. I use other resources more than I use ICT. (such as books, worksheets etc.)

I am confident in teaching classes that use ICT materials.

2. I am confident in creating my own classroom presentations that make use of ICT tools. (Such as Powerpoint, YouTube etc.)
I want to use more ICT tools to teach English in the classroom.
The more I use ICT tools in class, the more competent I become in planning activities that use ICT.
3. I think that usage of ICT makes it easier to prepare course materials (activities, games etc.).
4. I think using ICT allows me to contribute more in class as an ALT.
5. ALTs should be provided with more training to make more use of ICT tools in class.
6. ALTs should be provided with more ICT materials and resources to teach classes.
7. ALTs should be provided with more online spaces for collaborating on resources.

Advantages of Technology Usage

Please indicate the extent to which you endorse the following statements:

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

1. I think the use of ICT increases the interest of students toward learning English.
2. I think that ICT tools are useful in presenting cultural information to the class.
3. I think that ICT tools are useful in presenting practical and real-life English to the class.
4. I think that ICT tools are useful in helping me lead the class by myself.
5. I think that ICT tools are useful in helping me explain difficult concepts to the students.
6. I think that ICT tools are useful in helping me give instructions to the students.
7. I think that technology supported teaching makes learning more effective.
8. I think that using technology makes it easier to access teaching materials.
9. I can address the different learning styles of my students by using ICT.
10. I am aware of the opportunities that ICT offers in teaching communicative English.

Please answer the following open-ended question or move on to the next section.

Are there any other ways in which ICT use in your class is useful or effective?

Barriers to Technology Usage

Please indicate the extent to which you endorse the following statements:

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

1. I have sufficient time to prepare materials that make use of ICT.
I have access to ICT hardware (computer, projector, interactive whiteboard etc.).
The ICT hardware available to me is modern and easy to use.
2. There is an adequate number of hardware units (computer, tablet etc.) for effective use of ICT.
3. The infrastructure and layout of ICT tools allow for teaching communicative classes.
4. The ICT software available to me is adequate for teaching communicative English classes.
5. I have sufficient guidance and support by administration about how to make use of ICT tools.
6. I have opportunities for professional development to gain knowledge and skills about using ICT in classes.
7. I have opportunities to see how other ALTs make use of ICT tools in class.
8. I have opportunities to share ideas and collaborate with other teachers on ICT resources.

Please answer the following open-ended question or move on to the next section.

Are there any other barriers you face to using ICT in your classes?

Final Question

Are there any other comments you would like to make in regard to ICT use in your classes?

This is the end of the survey. Thank you for your time and your valuable responses. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

ARTICLES

JALT PRAXIS

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NEW FRONTIERS

Blending Four-strand Theory & 21st Century Skills

Paul Nation's Four-strand Theory

- Language-focused learning
- Meaning-focused input
- Meaning-focused output
- Fluency development

New Frontiers preview QR
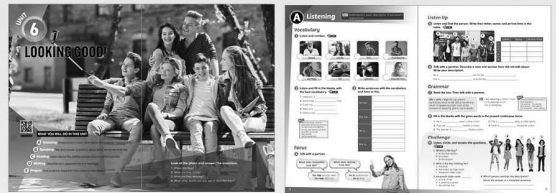
LEVEL **A1** – **B2** Beginner – Pre-Advanced

New Frontiers is an exciting new coursebook series for teenage and university learners!

Explore New Frontiers, a six-level series, to learn about English in the 21st century. The series is carefully designed to apply communicative, skill-based, and content-based learning methodologies. It also utilizes 21st-century skills and project-based learning techniques to ensure students are well equipped to succeed in the future.

Features:

- Bold, modern design with a clear focus on building CEFR competencies
- Progressive transference between multiple skills
- 10-unit structure of lessons connected by themes and goals
- Balance of input and output & all four language skills
- Thematically-linked 21st-Century Skills project in each unit
- Comics and animations to enhance learning in fun and creative ways

Student Book

Work Book
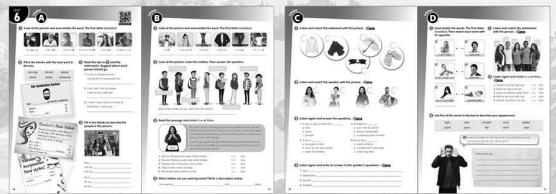
Digital Support

C COMPASS DIGITAL-TG **CLASSBOOSTER**

Free Downloadable Materials:

MP3 Audio Transcripts Answer Key

Teacher's Guides ETC TESTS
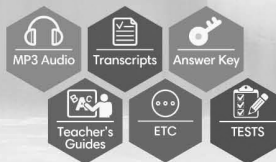
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Compass Publishing

The Benefits and Challenges of Multiple Mini-Bibliobattles in a Single Extensive Reading Course

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The popular book presentation contest Bibliobattle and its simplified version, Mini-Bibliobattle (MBB), has spread throughout Japan, but they are neither commonly implemented in extensive reading (ER) classes nor generally held more than once in a single course. This study explored the effects of multiple MBBs on university students' perceptions of successive presentations in an eight-week ER course. In their post-MBB survey responses, the students reported making their presentations more engaging for their audiences, altering their rate of speech, being more responsive to other presenters, and being more satisfied with their performance. They expressed an overall positive attitude toward MBBs and an inclination to read books introduced by other participants as well. However, they also suggested a need for sufficient preparation time and adequate feedback to ensure the quality of their experience. These findings highlight the potential benefits of implementing multiple MBBs in a single ER course and provide guidance for proceeding successfully.

気に入った本を紹介して競い合うビブリオバトルやその簡易版のミニビブリオバトル（MBB）は日本で広く普及しているが、多読授業で実施されることは少なく、また授業で複数回実施されることも一般的ではない。本研究では、8週間の多読授業において、複数回のMBBが大学生の発表に対する認識に与える影響を調査した。MBB後のアンケートでは、学生たちは、自分の発表が聴衆にとってより魅力的になった、話す速度を変えた、他の発表者に反応するようになった、自分の発表に対して満足度が上がった、と回答した。また、MBBに対して全体的に好意的であり、他者が紹介した本を読みたくなったと興味を示している。しかし、発表の質を高めるためには十分な準備期間と適切なフィードバックが必要であることも示唆された。これらの結果は、一つの多読授業内で複数のMBBを開催することの潜在的な利点を強調し、適切に進めるための指針を提供するものである。

According to Nation (2007), a well-balanced language course should include four strands: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development. Extensive reading (ER), a learning approach involving lots of easy material in the target language (Bamford & Day, 2004), can play an important role in developing such a well-balanced course as it provides second language learners with abundant content- and fluency-focused input enabling them to use what they already know (Nation & Waring,

2020). However, ER alone is insufficient for this purpose (Nation, 2007) as it fails to provide opportunities for language-focused learning and meaning-focused output, the value of which is often neglected in a typical ER course (Nation & Yamamoto, 2012). Although output naturally plays a minor role in ER itself, productive activities such as book reports can be introduced to link reading to speaking or writing (Nation & Waring, 2020), thus enabling learners to explore their understanding of and practice with language items encountered in their reading (Hyland, 2019). ER can also provide seeds for communication, namely interesting topics for learners to discuss afterward (Bamford & Day, 2004).

One way of leveraging ER to push learner output is through a book report game called Mini-Bibliobattle (MBB) (Fujii, 2018, 2020). Thus, this study investigated the effects of using MBB in an ER course.

Literature Review
Bibliobattle and Mini-Bibliobattle

Invented by Tadahiro Taniguchi in 2007, Bibliobattle is a book presentation contest that has since become highly popular in schools and libraries throughout Japan (Kimura & Kondo, 2021). The official contest rules, as established by the Bibliobattle committee, are as follows: Learners (1) come together with a favorite or interesting book, (2) introduce the book for five minutes, and (3) answer questions from other participants about the book for two to three minutes. After the presentations, (4) participants vote for a "Champion Book," meaning the one that they want to read the most. Bibliobattles allow participants to share book content, develop their speaking skills, discover new books of interest, and form a community (Taniguchi, 2013).

When using Bibliobattle in their classrooms, however, instructors must also take into account their learners' language proficiency levels (Fujii, 2020). Thus, with elementary school students or second language learners, a simplified version of Bibliobattle, known as Mini-Bibliobattle, or MBB, is usually adopted. MBB has the same rules as Biblio-

battle, except that the five-minute presentation is shortened to three minutes, and the three-minute Q&A discussion is reduced to one minute. Such shorter durations can lower barriers for presenters to continue talking (Taniguchi, 2013).

Bibliobattle and Language Learning

A number of studies have examined the effectiveness of Bibliobattles or MBBs in language learning. For instance, Kondo et al. (2015) held Bibliobattles for university students twice in a one-year period outside the classroom. Those who took part in both events indicated more positive attitudes toward Bibliobattles as well as an improvement in their language use on the second occasion. They also reported overcoming difficulties they had faced the first time, such as those related to time management and clear communication.

Other studies (e.g., Fujii, 2018; 2020) have employed MBBs in ER courses. In an investigation of their effects on students' attitudes toward reading, Fujii (2018) implemented MBBs once at the end of each of two semesters in a one-year ER course for technical college students and found that the participants read more carefully, selected a wider variety of books, and recognized the importance of MBBs for developing their productive skills. Fujii (2020) implemented an MBB in an ER course for university students, who judged the activity to be enjoyable and meaningful. They also indicated improved English presentation skills as a result of preparing their speeches, listening to others' presentations, and receiving feedback from other participants. In short, Fujii (2018, 2020) demonstrated the benefits of MBB implementation once per semester.

Although these previous studies have suggested the potential of Bibliobattles or MBBs for improving language use and presentation skills as well as attitudes toward reading, the effects of multiple MBB implementations on learners' perceptions of their own presentations in a single, short-term ER course are still unclear, which the current investigation sought to elucidate.

Research Questions

This study targeted the following three research questions:

RQ1. Do students' perceptions of their presentations change after participating in MBBs?

RQ2. What benefits and challenges do learners perceive throughout MBBs?

RQ3. What activities and materials do learners find useful in preparing for MBB presentations?

Method

Participants

The study participants were 35 students at a national university in Japan, all of whom were enrolled in an eight-week online ER course taught by the author on Zoom. Thirty-three of the students were sophomores majoring in informatics, and two were seniors, one majoring in literature and the other in engineering. Based on their TOEIC scores (M = 516, Mdn = 540, range: 270–765), their English proficiency could be characterized as lower intermediate.

Extensive Reading

The learners read e-books on the ER website Xreading (https://xreading.com), which contains over 1,000 titles and helps instructors monitor student progress. The course involved two lessons per week: one focusing on fluency development and the other on output activities in preparation for the MBBs, which provide the focus of this paper.

The learners were assigned to read 12,500 words per week, for a total of 100,000 words over the eight-week period. To maximize preparation time for the MBBs, all reading was completed outside of class. The learners had to read various books and list them with their comments in a forum on a learning management system, which later served as a reference for their MBB preparation. On average, they spent 12.5 hours reading 94,004 words in 23.5 books, or 10,500 words in 2.9 books over 1.5 hours per week.

Instruments

The data for this study were collected via two online surveys composed in Japanese in Microsoft Forms. The first survey, administered immediately after each of the three MBBs (Survey A), was a 15-item instrument designed to measure the students' perceptions of their MBB preparations and performance, with one to five items in each of five categories: presentation content, presentation manner, listening manner, self-satisfaction, and presentation timing (see Appendix A). With the exception of the single, three-option multiple-choice question in the final category, all of the items were statements to be endorsed on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree).

The second survey, conducted only after the final MBB (Survey B), was an 8-item instrument adapt-

ed from Fujii (2018, 2020) and designed to assess the learners' perceptions of the enjoyability and usefulness of MBB as well as their interests in the books presented by others and their motivation for reading (see Appendix B). The survey was divided into four sections: the first, on overall perceptions, containing five Likert-scale items similar in style to those on the previous survey; the second, on reading frequency, containing a single multiple-choice question; the third, on class activities, containing a single multiple-choice question allowing multiple responses; and the fourth, on benefits and challenges of MBBs, containing two open-ended questions.

General Procedure

The activities in each weekly lesson are summarized in Table 1. MBBs were assigned as a part of student evaluations in Weeks 5, 7, and 8. Throughout the course, every lesson started with the learners giving one-minute talks in pairs about their daily lives or favorite books. In Week 1, they were informed of the research methods and objectives and then asked for permission for the confidential use of their data. After providing informed consent, they received an orientation on ER. In Weeks 2 and 3, they experienced MBBs in Japanese to familiarize them with the rules and timings. Before each Japanese-language MBB, the learners completed a preparation sheet about their chosen book, discussing its content and sharing their opinions. To learn about MBBs, in Week 2 they also took a quiz, and in Week 3 they watched a YouTube video in Japanese by a university student who won the national Bibliobattle competition.

In Week 4, the learners began preparing for their first MBB in English. Weeks 4 and 6 were designated as preparation periods for the first and second MBB, which were held in Weeks 5 and 7, respectively. No in-class preparation time was allotted for the third MBB, which was held in Week 8. In the preparation weeks, the learners gave one-minute talks about their favorite books with three different partners in a book report format as described in Bamford and Day (2004). After the book reports, they prepared a presentation of at least 300 words, practiced reading it to their partner, and received feedback on its content and vocabulary from their partners. To encourage planning, and, thus support language learning, presentation scripts were allowed. However, as script use can result in a lack of expressiveness when describing a book's appeal, the learners were instructed to memorize their scripts and were prohibited from reading them during the actual MBBs.

Table 1

Lesson Schedule and Activities

Week	Lesson	Activities
Week 1	ER Orientation	1-Min. Talk (Life), ER Introduction, Xreading Registration
Week 2	Japanese MBB 1	1-Min. Talk (Life), Rule Quiz, Preparation Sheet, MBB
Week 3	Japanese MBB 2	1-Min. Talk (Life), Champion Video, Preparation Sheet, MBB
Week 4	MBB1 Preparation	1-Min. Talk (Book), Preparation Sheet, Draft Writing, Pair Practice
Week 5	English MBB1	1-Min. Talk (Life), Rehearsal, MBB1, Survey A
Week 6	MBB1 Feedback, MBB2 Preparation	1-Min. Talk (Life), Class Feedback, Champion Videos / 1-Min. Talk (Book), Draft Writing, Pair Practice
Week 7	English MBB2	1-Min. Talk (Life), Rehearsal, MBB2, Survey A
Week 8	English MBB3	Rehearsal, MBB3, Survey A, Survey B

Mini-Bibliobattle

Each MBB lesson began with rehearsals in pairs. The learners were given time to ensure that their presentations were under three minutes, followed by questions and feedback about the presentation from their partner.

After the rehearsals, MBBs began in groups of five or six students using Zoom's breakout function. The presenting students were told to watch their audience, and the audience members were told to respond by nodding or smiling. Each group then began their MBB and Champion Book selection, all of which they video recorded. Finally, the students submitted their presentation scripts and group videos through a learning management system and completed Survey A. Additionally, they completed a final, general survey (Survey B) in Week 8.

By the start of the lesson following each of the first two MBBs, the learners all received individualized instructor feedback regarding their English accuracy, book summary, and presentation structure. In Week 6, they were shown the survey results and

videos of two Champion Book presentations from the first MBB to help them improve their presentations in the next one.

Results

Effects of MBBs on Learner Perceptions of Their Own Presentations

Table 2 lists the mean scores for all of the Likert-scale items on all three administrations of Survey A and the raw differences between them. To answer the first research question ("Do students' perceptions of their presentations change after participating in MBBs?"), a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with an alpha level of .05 was performed on each survey item by survey administration, with a Bonferroni correction applied to each result to protect against alpha slippage from multiple comparisons.

In the area of presentation content, statistically significant differences were found on Items 1 and 5. Item 1 (My introduction engaged the audience) showed no difference between Administration Times 1 and 2 but an increase between Times 2 and 3, resulting in a statistically significant net increase from Time 1 to Time 3. Item 5 (I asked questions or included background knowledge) showed an increase from Time 1 to Time 2, but not from Time 2 to Time 3. Still, the net increase from Time 1 to Time 3 was statistically significant.

In the area of presentation manner, only Item 7 (The pace of my speech was appropriate) showed any difference of statistical significance: a net decrease from Time 1 to Time 3 despite the absences of any statistically significant differences between Times 1 and 2 or Times 2 and 3.

Table 2

Post-MBB Learner Self-Perceptions of Their Presentations

Survey Item	Mean			Change		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 2-Time 1	Time 3-Time 2	Time 3-Time1
Presentation Content						
1. My introduction engaged the audience.	3.63	3.83	4.23	0.20	0.40*	0.60**
2. I presented the story well.	3.86	4.17	4.03	0.31	-0.14	0.17
3. The presentation structure was clear.	3.89	3.89	3.83	0.00	-0.06	-0.06
4. The presentation included my opinions or ideas.	4.00	4.26	4.23	0.26	-0.03	0.23
5. I asked questions or included background knowledge.	3.23	3.80	3.80	0.57*	0.00	0.57*
Presentation Manner						
6. I used simple vocabulary or expressions.	4.23	4.26	4.26	0.03	0.00	0.03
7. The pace of my speech speed was appropriate.	4.31	4.14	3.89	-0.17	-0.25	-0.42*
8. Each sentence was short and simple.	3.77	4.06	4.06	0.29	0.00	0.29
9. I kept talking without any breaks.	3.40	3.57	3.46	0.17	-0.11	0.06
10. I kept watching the audience.	3.34	3.74	3.66	0.40	-0.08	0.32
Listening Manner						
11. I kept watching the presenter.	4.09	4.31	4.31	0.22	0.00	0.22
12. I kept nodding during the presentation.	2.91	3.46	3.94	0.55**	0.48	1.03**
13. I asked relevant questions.	3.91	4.17	4.34	0.26	0.17	0.43
Self-Satisfaction						
14. I was satisfied with my presentation.	3.11	3.86	3.40	0.75*	-0.46*	0.29

Note. n = 35, Max = 5, **p* < .05, ***p* < .01

In the area of listening manner, Item 12 (I kept nodding during the presentation) showed a statistically significant increase from Time 1 to Time 2 but not from Time 2 to Time 3. Still, the net increase from Time 1 to Time 3 was statistically significant.

Finally, Item 14 (I was satisfied with my presentation) demonstrated an inverted V-shaped change. Student satisfaction statistically significantly increased from Time 1 to Time 2 but then statistically significantly decreased from Time 2 to Time 3, for a net change of zero between Times 1 and 3.

Item 15 was about time management. As can be seen in Table 3, most students after all three MBBs reported finishing their presentations within 10 seconds of the prescribed 3 minutes. However, noticeably fewer students indicated finishing within the target time range in the third MBB, for which no immediately prior in-class preparation time was provided.

Table 3

MBB Conditions and Student Presentation Finishing Times

MBB (Week)	Preparation [a]	Feedback [b]	Finishing Time [c]		
			Early (< 2:50)	Within Range (2:51-3:09)	Late (> 3:10)
First (Week 5)	+	++	5	29	1
Second (Week 7)	+	+	2	30	3
Third (Week 8)	-	-	6	25	4

Note. [a] + = in-class preparation given, - = no in-class preparation time given. [b] ++ = class and individual feedback given, + = individual feedback given, - = no feedback given. [c] number of students.

Benefits and Challenges

In answer to the second research question ("What benefits and challenges do learners feel throughout the MBBs?"), Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the responses to Items 1 through 4 on Survey B. It shows that most learners claimed to have found the MBBs enjoyable and meaningful. They also expressed interest in the books presented by their classmates. Notably, nearly half of them indicated that they were strongly interested in other books. Additionally, more than two thirds indicated a motivation to read more books in the ER course.

Item 5 on Survey B asked about the frequency of reading books introduced by other participants. As Figure 2 shows, 86% of the participants claimed to have read at least one book introduced through their classmates' MBBs, and more than one third reported having read three or more. Only 14% (n = 5) indicated not having read any other books from the MBBs.

Yielding additional insights into the perceived benefits of MBBs are the open-ended responses to Item 7 of Survey B, categorized by the researcher and displayed in Table 4. The most frequently mentioned perceived benefits were in the area of presentation skills (n = 13), such as the ability to speak more slowly or to use simple English. The second most frequently cited benefit was confidence (n = 8), principally with regard to presenting without concern for making mistakes.

As to the challenges presented by MBBs, the open-ended responses to Item 8 of Survey B were likewise categorized by the researcher. As also shown in Table 4, the most frequently mentioned challenge was that of writing a script (n = 12). Some students specifically noted the considerable time and effort required to write 300 words three times

Figure 1

Overall Perceptions of MBBs
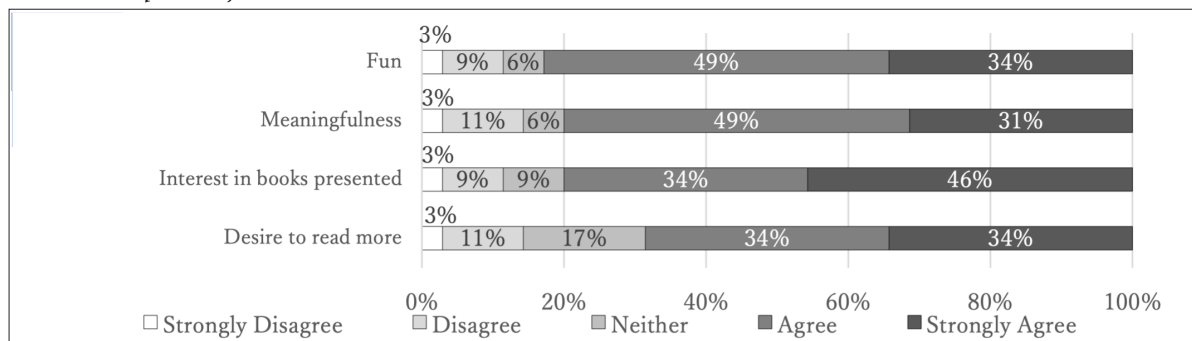
in just a few weeks. Another frequently cited challenge was actually presenting (n = 11). For instance, students mentioned the difficulties of speaking without reading a script, maintaining eye contact on camera, and summarizing their book within three minutes. Finally, multiple students indicated struggling with language issues, particularly English expressions (n = 8) and the answering of questions (n = 3).

Figure 2

Reading Books Introduced by Classmates
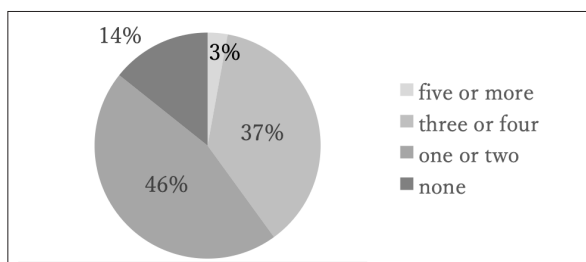
Table 4

Benefits and Challenges of MBBs

Benefits	n	Challenges	n
Presentation skills	13	Writing a script	12
Confidence	8	Presenting	11
Presentation Structure	4	English Expressions	8
Expressions	3	Answering questions	3
Enjoyment	2	Other	3
Pronunciation	2		
Summarizing	2		
Other	3		

Note. N = 35. Multiple answers allowed.

To answer the third research question ("What activities and materials do learners feel are useful in preparing for MBB?"), Item 6 of Survey B provided the students with a list of options allowing multiple answers. As shown in Figure 3, more than half of the students indicated appreciating the post-MBB teacher feedback (n =21) and their classmates' Champion Book videos (n =18) that were provided to encourage reflection on their performance. Approximately half of the students cited the pre-MBB preparation sheets (n = 17) and the one-minute talks about a favorite book (n = 18) or daily life (n = 16) that were implemented to help them prepare.

Around one third of the students selected Bibliobattle in L1 (n = 14) and Champion Video in L1 (n =11), both of which were executed near the very beginning of the course. Only eight students indicated perceiving any utility in peer feedback.

Figure 3

Helpful MBB Preparation Activities and Materials[a]
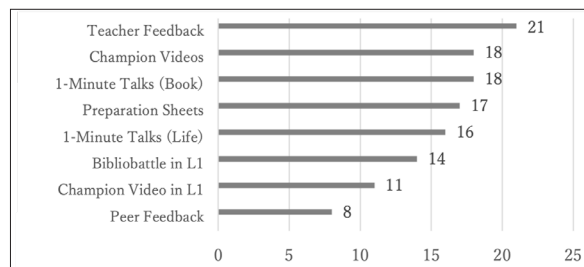
Note. [a] Multiple responses allowed.

Discussion

This study found that conducting multiple MBBs in a short ER course produced changes in learners' perceptions of their own presentations. For instance, the learners indicated including more questions and real-world connections in their presentations and making their introductions more engaging. One possible contributing factor in these changes is that these types of "hooks" are relatively easy to grasp and implement. Another possible contributor is the viewing of the Champion Book presenters' videos, for as Fujii (2020) notes, these effective presentation techniques can be observed more frequently in champion presentations. When watching the recordings after their first MBB, the learners may have noticed that the best presenters had used these techniques effectively and thus decided to try them themselves. In either case, in this respect, having multiple MBBs in a single course led to higher quality presentations than would have resulted in a course with only one MBB.

The learners also showed a noticeable change in their presentation delivery speed, especially from the second to the third MBB. Ten students were unable to finish presentations within the appropriate time range (i.e., between 2 minutes, 51 seconds, and 3 minutes, 9 seconds) in the third MBB, double the number in the second MBB (see Table 3). A possible cause for this backslide might have been inadequate self-directed rehearsal as no in-class preparation time was given prior to the third MBB. In short, the students might have focused most of their preparation time on content at the expense of the pacing of their delivery.

Furthermore, the study found that nodding increased among learners when listening to other presentations, perhaps because of being online. As video monitors restrict the visual field, thus making it more difficult to see others' body language online than in person, the audience may have needed to rely more heavily on nodding to demonstrate that they were listening.

Lastly, there was a significant change in learner satisfaction, increasing from Time 1 to Time 2 but then falling to near-initial levels again at Time 3. This reversal may be due to the lack of in-class preparation time and feedback provided after Time 2 as opposed to Time 1 (see Table 3).

Overall, the students reported a positive impression of MBBs as fun and meaningful. MBBs appeared to provide them with opportunities not only to interact with other students but also to prepare good speeches and to learn how to make good presentations, all of which may have contributed to their recognition of MBBs' enjoyability and learning potential. Additionally, many students signaled the role of MBBs in spurring their interest in other books and actually starting to read them. Thus, having multiple MBBs in a single course led students to read books they might not have in a course with only one MBB, especially since they were required to present on a different book for each MBB but allowed to use ones previously introduced by their classmates. Consistent with the findings of previous studies (Fujii, 2018, 2020; Kondo et al., 2015; Taniguchi, 2013), MBBs also appear to have helped learners improve their presentation skills, composition structure, and speaking confidence. Moreover, holding multiple MBBs in a single ER course stands to enhance these benefits by creating a virtuous cycle among learners: They read extensively, present a chosen book in MBB, obtain information and opinions about other interesting books from their classmates, and extensively read new books for another MBB.

In contrast to the benefits of MBBs, participants also experienced some difficulties in sustaining their efforts, most notably preparing scripts and presenting, perhaps because of the additional time requirement beyond their already substantial reading load. Two suggestions for easing this burden would be to allow sufficient preparation time and provide adequate feedback. Teacher feedback can help learners correct their script errors, and video recordings of earlier MBBs may serve as models of engaging presentations. Practicing with a one-minute talk activity and using a preparation sheet might also be beneficial.

Interesting to note is that relatively few students expressed appreciation of any of the activities or materials provided in Japanese (L1 Bibliobattle, Champion Video, and Peer Feedback). This finding may be explained by their purpose having been perceived as to introduce the students to the concept and rules of MBBs rather than to prepare them for their presentations. Although they indicated closely cooperating in pair activities (see Figure 1), the students also reported generally perceiving peer feedback as unhelpful, implying a possible need for additional instructor intervention.

These findings suggest several implications for an ER course. First, MBBs have the potential to accelerate learners' reading progress by introducing them to interesting new books while also serving as a social platform for enjoyably sharing their own current favorites. Second, they may contribute to a well-balanced language course by linking the receptive skill of reading to productive activities such as presenting a favorite book. Furthermore, MBBs should be implemented at least twice to allow students to benefit from presentation practice and boost their confidence. Subsequent presentations are likely to include more engaging introductions, questions, and background information to attract and hold the audience's attention.

It must also be noted that this study had a number of limitations. First, the book presentations may have been less expressive because they were held online and because script preparation was allowed. As such, future studies should replicate the process in face-to-face settings without scripts. Second, this study used only self-reported data; future studies should also include other means of data collection, such as transcriptions of actual presentations, to corroborate the findings. Third, the limited preparation time may have compromised the learners' book selections. Being required to choose a book even if they could not find an interesting one may have adversely affected their enthusiasm for presenting. Finally, the learners were shown the overall survey results after the first MBB as a means of prompting reflection and perhaps shaping their attitude toward future presentations. However, this measure could also have influenced the subsequent results as they may have been conscious of what would be asked.

Conclusion

This study explored the effectiveness of conducting multiple MBBs over the duration of an eight-week ER course. The results showed that multiple MBBs impacted students' perceptions of their own presen-

tation content, presentation manners, listening manners, and satisfaction. They also showed that learners found MBBs fun and meaningful and started to become interested in reading other books. However, they equally suggested that to optimize the learner experience, care must be taken to allow sufficient preparation time and provide adequate learner feedback. Hopefully, this study will lead more instructors to implement MBBs in their ER courses, more students to enjoy reading and presenting books, and more researchers to analyze its impact.

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Appendix A

Survey A[a]

(Administered three times, once after each MBB)

For items 1-14, please indicate the degree (1 to 5) to which you endorse each statement as follows[a]:

1. strongly disagree
2. disagree
3. neutral
4. agree
5. strongly agree

Presentation Content

1. My introduction attracted audiences.
2. I presented the story well.
3. The presentation structure was clear.
4. The presentation included my opinions or ideas.
5. I asked questions or conveyed background knowledge.

Presentation Manner

6. I used simple vocabulary or expressions.
7. The pace of my speech was appropriate.
8. Each sentence was short and simple.
9. I kept talking without any breaks.
10. I kept watching the audience.

Listening Manner

11. I kept watching the presenter.
12. I kept nodding during the presentation.
13. I asked relevant questions.

Self-Satisfaction

14. I was satisfied with my presentation.

Presentation Timing

15. Did you finish your presentation within 10 seconds of the required time? (Choose one.)
    a. Yes.
    b. No, more than 10 seconds later.
    c. No, more than 10 seconds earlier.

[a]Translated by the author from the original Japanese.

Appendix B

Survey B[a]

(Administered once, after the final MBB)

For items 1-4, please indicate the degree (1 to 5) to which you endorse each statement as follows[a]:

1. strongly disagree
2. disagree
3. neutral
4. agree
5. strongly agree

Overall Perceptions

1. The Mini-Bibliobattles were fun.
2. The Mini-Bibliobattles were meaningful for learning English.
3. I became interested in books introduced by other students.
4. Mini-Bibliobattles led me to read more books in Extensive Reading.

Reading of Books Presented by Classmates

5. How many of the books presented by your classmates did you read? (Choose one.)

a. five or more   b. three or four   c. one or two
d. none

Class Activities and Materials

6. What helped you prepare a better presentation? (Choose all that apply.)
   a. one-minute talks on favorite book
   b. one-minute talks on daily life
   c. preparation sheets
   d. classmates' champion videos
   e. Bibliobattle champion video in Japanese
   f. Bibliobattle in Japanese
   g. partner advice or comments
   h. teacher feedback after 1st and 2nd Mini-Bibliobattles

Benefits and Difficulties

7. What did you learn or gain throughout Mini-Bibliobattles?
8. What difficulties did you face in Mini-Bibliobattles?

[a]Translated by the author from the original Japanese.

[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 2023 July/August edition of TLT Interviews! For this issue, we are excited to bring you two fantastic interviews. The first is with Kensaku Yoshida, Professor Emeritus at Sophia University. Professor Yoshida was the Director of the Center for Language Education and Research, the former Director of the Sophia Linguistics Institute for International Communication, and the former Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Studies. Since his retirement in 2021, he has been the Honorary President of the Eiken Foundation of Japan. Professor Yoshida has worked on several national level government committees, such as the Planning Committee to Implement 4-Skills Tests at the National Center for University Entrance Examinations, and on the Foreign Language Committee of the Central Council of Education. Professor Yoshida was also Chairperson of the Committee of Specialists on Revision of English Education, which was responsible for creating the new 2020 Elementary School English Course of Study. Pro-fessor Yoshida was interviewed by Peter Ferguson, an associate professor in the Faculty of Economics at Kindai University. Dr. Ferguson has earned a PhD from Temple University and wrote his dissertation on language policy interpretation and implementation in Japanese elementary schools. His research interests include educational linguistics, language policies, EFL for young learners, and language teacher development. So, without further ado, to our first interview!

An Interview With Kensaku Yoshida

Peter Ferguson
Kindai University

Peter Ferguson*: I was really happy when I saw that you would be speaking at the JALT Conference and talking about the Course of Study because I think many people might not be familiar with that document. Could you please explain what is the Course of Study and why it's such an important document?*

Kensaku Yoshida: To begin with, the *Course of Study* is a legal document, and it is passed in the Diet. What that basically means is that all schools, which are recognized by the Ministry of Education, have to follow the Course of Study. There's a difference between public schools and private schools who have more freedom in how to implement it, but the basic principles have to be acknowledged and followed. So, it's an important document, not only for English, but in all subjects. There are certain things that relate to kindergarten, but it's basically from elementary school to senior high school. There's no *Course of Study* for university. So, you have to know the *Course of Study* if you want to teach in those grades or if you're interested in education in Japan.

I understand you were involved with the recent Course of Study that just came into effect around 2020. Could you please tell us your role and how the Course of Study is created?

Well, the Course of Study is revised every 10 years or so. About five years before the revisions actually happen and the document is released, a committee of specialists is convened by the Ministry of Education. I was asked to lead the discussion on the revision of English education. I was the head of the English division, and I was also the representative of the English teaching section in the more general committee, which included representatives from all the different subjects. This is the Central Council for Education (中央教育審議会 *chūō kyōiku shingikai*), which includes all the different subjects. I headed the first English education revision committee, and we had a lot of discussions with opinions flying all over the place.

Were these discussions about what direction English education should be going?

That's right. What were the problems with the Course of Study at that time and how should we change it? And everybody had their own opinion about it. There were a lot of heated debates. Then in our second meeting, we focused more on the basic principles of how the new curriculum should be developed. And again, we had a lot of heated discussions. But, it was during these two periods that we decided what should be the basic principles of how English education should be conducted.

What were those principles?

Well, we decided to move away from the earlier structural syllabus, which determines the elements that have to be taught at different grades, and those principles were based on the difficulty of structure. For example, we start with the present tense, then the present progressive. Then from the second year, you get to the past tense, in the third year you learn the present perfect, and so forth. This meant each grade was divided based on the difficulty of grammatical structures, and this was true for many years. But about one or two Course of Studies earlier, things began to change, and people started to question this and ask, "Is it really important to subdivide these structures into different grades?" Even in the first year of junior high school, students want to talk about the past, but if you say, "You can't talk about the past until you're in second year," well that doesn't make much sense. So, what happened is they changed it to a system where they said these are the structures that should be taught in the three years of junior high school. Where you taught them depended upon the writers of the textbooks and the publishing companies, but this was still based on grammar structure.

And the recent Course of Study is different?

We said, "let's get away from this idea of structure being the most important thing in English." Grammar structure is something that is very important, definitely, but it's something that helps people to communicate in the language—to use the language. What's more important is communicative ability. What kind of criteria do we need to actually get the students to use the language? And so, we had many discussions about that and adopted the so-called Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). CEFR refers to what you can do at certain levels of English proficiency. We felt that would be a lot more appropriate for getting the students to communicate in English. So, we changed the curriculum from being structure-based to being communication-based using the Can-Do Statements. Now, how objectively were these Can-Do Statements tested? I can't say for sure, but we know they were tested at different levels ranging from junior high to senior high school. Then what they came up with were the Japanese versions of the CEFR criteria. Whereas the original CEFR had only A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2 levels, it was found that in Japan you had to make subdivisions, such as A1-1, A1-2, A2-1, A2-2, and so forth. And, the Japanese version was subdivided even further to make sure that the can-do statements would fit the different grades in a more appropriate manner.

And was that done for the students' benefit or for the teachers benefit? Perhaps both?

Both. The teachers had to know what to teach, and they had to stipulate what they expected the students to be able to do at the end of the first year. As I said before, up to that time, it had been what do the students know at the end of the first year, but now it is what can the students do in English at the end of the first year. So, these Can-Do Statements underwent some changes from the original European Framework. That was obvious because they should change depending upon the environment. We adopted CEFR not 100%, but we relied on it when creating the new *Course of Study*.

This sounds like a very difficult and challenging job. How long did it take from start to finish? You mentioned before that the group first met several years earlier.

Let me think, we started in late 2013, or early 2014, and went all the way until the end of 2018. The elementary school Course of Study was released at the end of 2018 and later the junior and senior high school Course of Study in 2019, so that is about 5 years, I guess.

How many people were involved in creating the new Course of Study at the national level?

The discussion group at the beginning consisted of about 20 to 25 people. There were a lot of people. There were also people from testing companies because we had to deal, to a certain extent, with the entrance examinations. We were creating the contents from which the new entrance exams were supposed to be constructed. So, there were people from different test developing companies involved as well. After those discussions, we then broke up into smaller working groups. I was in charge of elementary school-English, and another person was in charge of junior high school and another person for high school-English. These groups were made from about 12 or 13 people each. It included actual teachers from schools, such as elementary school teachers and the curriculum specialists from the boards of education. These people were not part of the original discussion groups. But when we broke up into these working groups to start writing the Course of Study, these people were called on because they actually knew what was happening in the classrooms.

There have always been conversations among researchers and English teachers about the entrance examination system and how that might have a negative effect on how English teachers conduct their lessons. Do you think the entrance exams for English need to change?

I think there have been some changes that have already been implemented. One major setback was that MEXT was bent on including writing and speaking in the common university entrance examinations for high school students that is administered by the National Center for University Entrance Examinations, and this was supposed to happen in 2020. It didn't happen. Two weeks before the announcement, the Minister said, "No." And the main problem was because the National Center does not have the resources and the personnel to develop productive skills tests, especially speaking tests, which are extremely difficult to develop.

And to evaluate?

To evaluate and administer. The main idea that was followed from the earlier stages was to get the help of private testing organizations, like EIKEN, TOEFL, TOEIC, GTEC, and Cambridge, to use these tests, which had the four skills, as a measure for assessing speaking and writing. But of course, once you get into that area, then a lot of opposition comes in saying, "Why these private companies? They're there to make money. And it's too expensive. How are the students going to pay for this?" I mean TOEFL is very expensive. IELTS is expensive. It's not that expensive to take EIKEN and GTEC, and they can be administered nation-wide. But still, if we take the college entrance exams administered by the National Testing Center, all the national universities and many of the private universities provide the venues for the administration of these tests, and that amounts to over 800. Now, it is very difficult for the private companies to come up with this number of venues, ranging from Okinawa all the way up to Hokkaido, where the students can take these tests on an equal and fair level.

That's what always amazed me about this topic. If students are required to take some sort of speaking component for the entrance exam, how do you get raters so that they are doing everything equal for thousands and thousands of students? A tremendous logistical task and extremely expensive.

Yes expensive, but at least these private companies had already prepared for it. For example, EIKEN had hundreds of venues ready, and they had trained hundreds, maybe even more than a thousand raters. They were prepared and spent a lot of money. GTEC spent a lot of money. TOEFL didn't spend that much money. They just said, "If you want to take TOEFL, just come to us." And TOEIC basically said they couldn't do it and they left. The private companies were trying their best to accommodate the students' needs that were presented by MEXT,

but still there were problems. Obviously, are the results of these tests really equal? That was another very critical argument that people came up with. We tried to make sure that each test was correlated with the CEFR criteria to make sure which score related to which level of the CEFR. We didn't do it, but the companies did it themselves, and we trusted the companies. And I was in charge of this. I was at the top as far as the development of English tests were concerned. And when it went down the drain... Wow! So, no more speaking and writing.

Do you think it will come back?

I think that what will happen is that each individual university, as part of their admissions policy, will use the tests because they want students who are able to use English for communicative purposes, to use English for academic purposes because they have affiliations with foreign universities overseas. Maybe they have a lot foreign students coming to their campuses, and they're sending their students abroad. The assumption was that these schools would adopt these private tests as part of their admissions policy anyway. Naturally, there will be schools that'll say, "Ours is basically domestic, so we really don't need that kind of test." For these schools, maybe reading is important, but speaking is not that important. For those schools, the National Center for University Entrance Examinations has come up with a very good reading and listening test. It's all based on the CEFR criteria and the new senior high school English curriculum that we created. The content of the test is quite communicative. They're no longer just testing knowledge of grammar or knowledge of vocabulary. Now, it's all embedded within the context in order to see if the students really understand the structure and the vocabulary included in the text. And in order to answer the questions correctly, they have to know the grammar and structures. That's how the test has changed. Before, in the older university entrance examinations, there were questions that people called "indirect speaking questions" which were simply questions testing knowledge of pronunciation. And fill-in-the-blank questions, which was supposed to test writing. Now, that's all gone because those questions weren't really testing these abilities. But the listening and reading sections have been developed very well, so as long as these two areas are there, those basic abilities can be guaranteed.

Do you feel there will be a positive washback or a positive effect that will compel high school English teachers to change the way they're conducting their lessons?

I think it's already happening, but one of the major effects has been with the *jukus* or cram schools. These teachers, who are on their own, have been teaching their students to cope with the past entrance examinations—basically the old system. But, the system has changed, and the tests have changed. Now they don't know what to do. They can't teach the students how to cope and to understand the new test problems, so, the *juku* teachers are complaining.

Because they prefer the old style of grammar-translation?

That's right. As far as the schools are concerned, they're organizations so if the principal says, "We have to adapt to this ‚new system," then they will. But the individual *juku* teachers are having a difficult, time. But even there—in the *jukus*—I think things are changing.

In your plenary talk, you brought up many interesting points, but one thing that jumped out to me was you quoted some data from a survey conducted by MEXT. It had teachers ranking what they thought was important as they conducted English lessons. And even though 75% of teachers believed teaching in English was important, that was ranked seventh behind other factors that focused on students. So, what are your views on the policy of having teachers teaching in English?

I think the major change that is being implemented is not that it is simply using the language, which is of course important, but what to do with that language; what to talk about; what to write about; what to read. In other words, the content. The content is now a lot more important. I've been looking at the content and topics in the new textbooks. Many of these textbooks now include the SDGs, and there are topics and discussions about them. These points are in the textbooks, but how the teachers are including them in their lessons is a different problem. But still, the materials are changing quite a lot. It's a lot more global in perspective, and I think a lot more international. And, if the teachers are really aware of the kinds of changes that MEXT is trying to implement, then they should be able to understand why these topics are being included and what they should be doing about it. So, it's not simply conducting a class in English. That could be done by conducting 45 minutes of pattern practice. That's not going to bring about any positive effects. So, what do we do? Well, we talk about it. And as we saw from the questionnaire, the students are interested in these topics. That's why the students want to use English. That's the main impetus for teachers to really conduct classes using English: to try to meet the needs and the interests of the students.

I remember about 20 years ago when I was teaching at the public elementary schools and English education was just starting up there. I was at one of the MEXT-designated pilot schools, and at that time, one of the directives from MEXT was something like kodomo no kyōmi kanshin o sonchō suru (子どもの興味・関心を尊重する) *meaning respect the students' interests and incorporate that in our lessons and materials that we were developing. I think it's great this is finally going beyond elementary school and made its way into the junior and senior high school curriculum taking into account what the students want to do with the language.*

I think that came about because we changed the basic principles from the structural-based syllabus to a more communicative one. Because when we had structure as the basic goal, then people would be teaching structure. Teaching grammar and perfection in grammar was the one thing the teachers were interested in. But, once you start focusing on communication, then the teachers are going to say, "Communicate what? What do you mean by communicating?" Simply greeting each other, is that communication? Now that's not going to last 45 minutes, so, what are we going to do about that? Changing the basic principles has had a lot to do with the fact that the teachers now have to admit that they have to teach something that might be of interest to the students.

One interesting change for elementary and junior high school English is there are now more presentations being done. The new Course of Study explicitly introduced this point, and you mentioned in your talk how speaking is now divided into conversation and presentations. Students are talking more, and I think this is one positive change.

Yes, I think its increasing. It's definitely increasing.

But for elementary school teachers, who are new to teaching English, many have told me that they prefer doing presentations because it's easier for them to evaluate. Evaluating conversations is very hard.

Yes, elementary school teachers are having problems speaking English themselves in class, so it's very difficult for them to do that, but that is because they're focusing too much on the structure, the vocabulary and whether or not they're saying it correctly or not. But, once they start to focus on whether they can communicate with their students and talk to them and exchange ideas and so forth, then things begin to change.

When teachers—at any level—teach students phrases like: "I don't understand. Can you say that again? Could you please repeat that?" then communication can happen more in classrooms. If students can use these phrases and teachers can evaluate this skill is very important. Not evaluating what was said, but how the students are communicating.

I talk about this a lot in my lectures when I meet with teachers. I think there's a lot being done on teachers commenting on what the students are saying: "Oh, that's interesting. Very good." And students themselves commenting on each other's presentations and saying simple things like, "I love it," or "Me, too," or whatever. But, there is very little of what we call negotiation of meaning in classrooms concerning what you were talking about—things like, "Do you understand what I mean?" or "What do you mean by that?" These types of expressions that are needed for negotiation of meaning are still lacking. It's assumed that whenever somebody says something, everybody else will understand it, and that's why they comment on it. But if they don't understand, what are they going to do? That part is not really emphasized as much, but it is becoming more frequently emphasized at the higher levels, like in senior high school and even junior high school, but not really at the elementary school level. Elementary school basically has expressions like: I like, "I love it," Good," and "Wonderful."

That's true. Elementary school is great because the students don't have any inhibitions at all. It's really a wonderful age group. Do you think introducing foreign language education in the elementary schools and starting English earlier in Grade 3 is something positive?

I think it's very positive. And probably because they have a lot more ALTs (Assistant Language Teachers) now. The Japanese teachers are beginning to use English to teach the kids. The children are encouraged to use more English and to play with English in a sense—have fun with English. I think this is providing a very positive influence on the students to be more outgoing with English. Taking a more positive role and communicating with people.

Some people say one problem with foreign language education in Japan is that it only focuses on English and doesn't include other languages. Japan is diversifying and more people emigrate to Japan speaking other languages, such as Portuguese, Spanish, Vietnamese, plus Korean and Chinese. So, how do policymakers balance encouraging people to learn languages other than English while also trying to improve English education?

When the Course of Study was created after the Second World War, it wasn't just English; other foreign languages were included. For quite a long time, until about the 1990s, the curriculum and the actual

syllabus was introduced not just for English, but in a very similar way for French and German as well.

Each language had their own Course of Study then?

Yes, there was a German syllabus, a French syllabus, and an English syllabus, and they were basically well matched. The problem was, beyond that stage, people started to say that French and German aren't the only other foreign languages. "What are we going to do about Korean, Chinese, Spanish, and all these other languages?" Well, we can't create a syllabus for all the languages. So, what happened was they created the syllabus and curriculum for English and said the same principles apply to any other foreign language to be taught. The problem was they did not specify what languages, which suggested that these other languages were not that important to many people. That wasn't the original idea, but that was the unintentional message that was sent because none of these other languages were given space in the Course of Study with their own syllabi, and that is going on today. But at least at the present time, I think, if I remember correctly, there are over 100 senior high schools, where languages other than English are being taught. However, the percentage of Japanese high school students who are learning a language other than English is about 1.5%. In Korea, I think that number is 30%, which means that there are languages other than English being taught, but there are very few people in Japan learning them. Another reason why is there aren't any teachers. In other words, if you take a look at the curriculum at the universities, where they conduct pre-service teacher training programs, almost all universities have English teacher license programs. Many, but not all, have French and German, and now there are a few with Chinese. There are very few with Spanish, and very few with Korean, although Korean and Chinese are major languages as far as Japan is concerned. This means there are very few teachers being trained, so, what is happening in many cases is that the English teachers, who are licensed to teach English and who studied—for example, French, Chinese, or Korean as a second foreign language in university—are the ones who are teaching these other languages in high schools. But, at least they have a license to teach English, so they're official language teachers. Yet, they're not necessarily trained to teach that other language, but they learned it themselves. So, it's assumed that they have at least some ability to teach the language. This is probably true, but there's still no official program, and there just aren't enough teachers.

Are there any plans for such programs in the future?

For the past four years, MEXT has been providing research grants for major projects, some of which are still going on for people from universities, boards of education, and the high schools to come together to see what can be done with the teaching of second languages [other than English]. The main reason is because MEXT also wants to see how the teaching of these foreign languages, other than English, can be included in the Course of Study. I have been involved in that as well. I think they're doing a wonderful job, but after four years I don't see any conclusions yet. I was asked to write a short article on that earlier this year, and I said these projects are wonderful, they're collecting data from the high school students and from different teachers, and they're trying to give us a clear picture of what's happening in these classrooms and lessons. But in four years, it's still expanding, and I can't see the direction in which it is trying to go. So, I'm afraid that if this continues, the budget is going to be cut. But, at least for next year's budget, it's still there. I was happy to see that the Ministry still has it in their budget proposal for next year. But for how long it's going to continue, I don't know—if they don't come up with any conclusions. There has to be some closure somewhere.

Another issue with English, or foreign language education, is trying to get students to use and learn English outside the classroom. What do you think MEXT, the boards of education, and the schools can do to encourage students to engage with the language outside of English class, such as reading, watching videos, listening to music, and to try to use English to communicate outside the classroom?

I think things are being done in that area. One is the implementation of CLIL—content and language integrated learning—where teachers are becoming more aware of the need to include subject matter, like science or other subjects, to get the students to use English to study these other subjects. That's one way that changes are being implemented. The implementation of IT and technologies in classes I think is another one. There are cases where you now have very well-created software, and the students are able to use this software for discussion purposes. Students have tablets now, too.

Yes, elementary school students use tablets in English class now.

Right, sometimes they're using them in a very efficient manner. But, things are beginning to change, and I've also seen children in Japan communicating with people from other parts of the world, especially Australia and New Zealand, where there's not

much time difference, making it much easier. I've seen one school where the Japanese children were communicating with children in Australia. This was not part of the school curriculum, but it's an opportunity for them to see if they can use English. Now, they didn't really speak very much, but I think they were able to understand what the children in Australia were trying to say and at least there were teachers, the ALT and the Japanese teacher helping them communicate and understand. So, at least I think more opportunities are opening up. I think there will be a lot more of that as we go on.

I think those type of exchange programs or opportunities are really good because when you think about it, students are either speaking English to their classmates, who they know, or they're speaking to an adult. But, when we can provide opportunities for elementary school or junior high school students to talk to kids in New Zealand, for example, now they're talking to someone the same age, and that's really big and important for young leaners. That type of communication is very meaningful for students. You can see the excitement on their faces.

But the only problem is, as I said in my talk, that Japanese kids tend to be very quiet (*laughs*). So, it's going to take some time, but I think it's catching on a little bit at a time.

You had mentioned in your talk and just mentioned it again about CLIL, and English as a medium of instruction—so do you think that at the university level, rather than just teaching about English or teaching TOEIC classes, university language programs should be moving in that direction?

I think that at least the major universities are moving in that direction definitely, but I'm not saying that all universities are. There are close to 800 universities, and so you can't say that for everyone. But at least the top 100 or so are all moving in that direction. But, these institutions are also teaching TOEIC and TOEFL as well because these kids need English in order to find a good job or to go abroad and study. So that's still there, but at the same time, teaching content in English is something that has become a lot more popular now. And, I think it's not only at the universities where the teaching of content is being done. I've seen a lot of content lessons at the high school level and some at the junior high school as well, and as I introduced in my talk, a lot of things are being tried out in elementary schools, too.

Yes, I've seen science classes and cooking classes. They have the faculties. The home economics' room is right there, so let's go do a cooking class. The kids can learn

English while doing: wash, cut, turn over, how do you say, "kogete iru (焦げている)"? Oh, that's burnt. It's a lot of fun for the students.

Exactly. As I mentioned in my talk, experiential learning is very important. And communicating—kids learning to communicate and trying to communicate in English—is very important.

Regarding English education and foreign language education, what do you think needs to be done in the future or what still needs to be addressed until the next Course of Study?

The most immediate need that we have is to get the teachers to understand what we did and what were the changes. There's still very little knowledge and understanding of the actual changes and the actual meaning of the changes that were implemented in the new Course of Study, and that's one major thing that we've tried to do. And hopefully, if we can do this in the next four or five years, before the start of the discussions for the next curriculum begin, then I think we'll be moving in the right direction. If nothing happens within these four or five years, it's going to be very difficult to see how the next curriculum in the Course of Study is going to change because people are going to be looking at the data. MEXT comes up with data every year from the English Language Education Implementation Survey (英語教育実施状況調査 [*eigo kyōiku jisshi jōkyō chōsa*]) about how well the new Course of Study is being implemented by the schools. This comes out annually, so every year we see data, percentages, and numbers. If those [numbers] don't change, then it means we're not going anywhere. So, how are we going to make these changes and what do these numbers mean? That's another thing. Most teachers just look at it as a piece of data, but they really don't understand what it means. So, our job—and also the curriculum specialists in the boards of education, their job is to try to get the teachers to understand the meaning of these numbers: to see where the problems still are and to see where we are going and to find out what is making sense, and what is not making sense to the teachers. And then try to spread the word.

Policy oversight.

Yes, so, we can say, "let's move in that direction." And I think that's the most important thing. We've made the basic changes. Now let's see how we're implementing it. We have to start somewhere and keep moving.

Thank you very much for your time. It was wonderful to see you again.

You're welcome. It was my pleasure.

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For our second interview, we bring you a wonderful discussion with John Creswell, the senior research scientist in the Michigan Mixed Methods Program at the University of Michigan and a professor of family medicine. Dr. Creswell splits his time between Ashiya, Japan, and Honolulu, Hawaii, where he is currently an adjunct professor at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. He was interviewed by Michael Holsworth. Dr. Holsworth is an associate professor at Kyoto Sangyo University in the Institute of General Education, where he is a coordinator for the general communications program. Now, to the second interview!

An Interview With John Creswell
Michael Holsworth
Kyoto Sangyo University

Michael Holsworth: *Thank you very much for joining the interview today. Would you mind sharing a little bit of your background and how you got into SLA (Second Language Acquisition)?*

John Creswell: Right, well I started out in the field of education with my PhD, where I actually specialized in leadership studies, but while I was doing my doctoral work and leadership at the University of Iowa, I became very interested in research methodology within education, but especially within educational psychology, there's a very strong research methodology orientation. There were many outstanding faculty in that area, and I started talking to them, hanging around them, and taking courses from them, so early on I had that interest. When I came to the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, which was in 1978, I was asked to teach a research methods course which was helping doctoral students develop dissertation proposals. That was something that I thoroughly enjoyed.

At that time, and for the next decade, students were coming into the class and wanted to do quantitative projects, but some wanted to do qualitative projects, and I was literally going back and forth between the two. By 1985, I was teaching a qualitative research methods course. Qualitative research was around at that time and being discussed quite extensively as a new methodology, so I was kind of a second-generation research methodologist in qualitative research. Students in my class were going back and forth between quantitative and qualitative, and I would say, "OK, tonight we're going to talk about doing a research question. First, here's how we would design it quantitatively and then here's how we would design it qualitatively." It was around that time some students said, "You know, you should take your lecture notes and turn them into chapters." So, I started writing my book called *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Creswell, 1994), and by the late 1980s, I had my book pretty much worked up for publication. I had one chapter in there called Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Research, and at that time, I felt we could go back and forth between quantitative and qualitative, but maybe there's some advantage of bringing the two together.

That book came out in 1994, and it became the best-selling book in all the Sage Research Methods series. I think they sold 4,000 books in that year, which shocked me, and shocked Sage as well. But, really what it did was it launched my research methodology career full steam. At that time, with that type of response, other publishers were coming to me to write on research methods. Sage publication started mapping out new books for me to write. For example, in 1997, I wrote my first qualitative research book. You can see the progression here starting from education and leadership, which are very quantitative, moving to more qualitative by around 1985 when I was teaching the course, and by the early 90s moving into more mixed methods. Over the years, what's happened is that I've stayed primarily with qualitative and mixed methods research. I continued to help people with quantitative

projects, but I think my specialty has been qualitative and mixed methods. I've kind of renewed myself time and time again.

Another career renewal for me was after working in education and writing that research design book that was for the social sciences. By around 1998, I was being encouraged to work with the Health Science researchers, and so I linked them with the University of Michigan and became a consultant who worked with them extensively on Health Science projects. My trajectory has been across different disciplines, and I continue to work with Health Science. I'm actually in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Michigan right now. After mixed methods took off in the social sciences, it started taking off in the Health Sciences and there has been a trajectory across different discipline fields as well as methodology fields.

Thank you. I think people reading this know where you are coming from now. You have quite an extensive list of publications. I would like to know if there is one that really stands out in your mind and why?

Well, I would say there are two. If you count all my new editions as a separate book, I think I'm up to my 34th book now, so I'm continually working on new revisions. My colleague Mike Fetters of Michigan says, "You kick out books the way people kick out journal articles." I think two books really come to mind. One is that book called the *30 Essential Skills of the Qualitative Researcher* (Creswell & Creswell Báez, 2020). Unquestionably, that's the most applied book I've ever written. I felt there was a need for a good introductory qualitative book, so I brought my research assistant into my class, and he took notes on every question a student asked about the content of our class session. I designed that book so that there are 30 chapters, and a person could cover two chapters in every class for a typical 15-week semester class. I brought in a lot of my own research examples from my articles and my experiences working on projects, so I'm proud of the applied nature of that book.

The second one would be the concise introduction book (Creswell, 2021). That book really came out of my work at Harvard when I was a visiting professor in public health in the School of Medicine. During my time there, they asked me to teach a mixed methods course, and so I started designing a course that would be for health science researchers. They didn't have a lot of time to spend with a big 400-page book like my other book. I started writing out my notes and coming up with this concise introduction book. That book should be read in two to three hours by an English-speaking person.

I really wanted to focus on the key concepts and mixed methods research—you know, to get rid of a lot of the detail, and just pulling in what a person really needs to do mixed methods research. I was very interested in having a short book that could be translated into other languages, and it has been translated into many languages now. I'm proud that I came up with a very short book that is very inexpensive. I told my publisher the cost needs to be very low. I'm proud that it is a good overview for the beginning and international researcher because so much of my work, especially in the last 10 to 20 years, has been reaching out to different audiences in different countries around the world.

This leads into my next question based on your book the 30 Essential Skills for Qualitative Researcher. *Is there a specific skill that you think ranks at the top?*

I'm especially proud of a couple chapters. One of them is, "How do qualitative researchers think about their problem they're studying?" I talk about typical ways that qualitative researchers think that's quite different than quantitative researchers. Another chapter has an interview guide, a sample interview guide, and I came up with that after looking at hundreds of them over the years and really trying to put into that one guide my ideal format that a person could use. Additionally, there's a coding chapter where I take the reader through the steps I use when I code the data after I gather the information.

My next question is if you were to explain mixed methods research to someone very unfamiliar with the concept, like a junior researcher or a master's student, how would you explain it?

That's a great question, and I have given a lot of thought to that, and you know, the way I would explain it has certainly changed, developed, maybe improved over the years. I would explain it this way: If you're studying a research problem, you can study that problem quantitatively, where you send out a questionnaire and get scores on the questionnaire, and there are some advantages to that approach. You can generalize to a large sample; you can see how a lot of people respond to that survey. On the other hand, you may decide to do a qualitative project where you are going to interview some people and really get their detailed perspectives. That's an advantage too, to hear people really talk about a problem, so if you have a chance to gather both forms of data, you will realize that both have strengths and will give you important information. Now, you can get more information if you start putting the two databases together in

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what we call integration, where you can find new insights. A simple example would be a survey, and you get some results that you expected but some are unexpected, unusual responses. You could follow up qualitatively and talk to some of those participants to help understand what they meant by those unusual responses. This is mixed methods research: you're gathering quantitative data, you're gathering qualitative data, you're coming up with results with both. When you put the two together—having the qualitative explain the survey—you're going to come up with more information, and that's really the value. If you have a chance to collect both forms of data and can realize the strengths of each form of data, you can go one step further and do mixed methods research where you're bringing the two databases together. That's my simple definition, and I think that's the value that mixed methods brings— that ability to go beyond what you learn quantitatively and qualitatively, to gain additional insight by bringing the two databases together. I hope that an undergraduate or student would then say, "Oh, I can see what you mean."

Let me mention one more thing. In my presentation, I talked about mixed methods being very intuitive. Let's say, for example, you are standing on a street corner and watch an accident. Then the police come and start taking the measurements of the cars. They come up with the quantitative data, but by talking to people standing in the crowd, each person is sharing their story of what happened. The stories are important, and the police measurements are important, but when you put the two together you have mixed methods research. In everyday life, we see so many examples of mixed methods research being enacted.

What common mistake or mistakes do you see being made by new researchers to mixed methods research?

Well, new researchers need to take the time and learn this methodology. They need to read some books like introductory books on mixed methods, they need to look at mixed methods journal articles, and they could refer to my six major steps in doing a mixed methods project. Another thing is gathering quantitative and qualitative data and then bringing the two together. It's not rocket science, and beginning researchers make it all too complicated. You know, when I ask them to draw a diagram of their mixed methods design or procedure, they come up with an elaborate design where there's quantitative and qualitative data flowing in all different types of places. Really, mixed methods, at its core, is a very simple concept. It's gathering quantitative and qualitative data, bringing the two together, and then

coming up with some insights beyond what one would learn with just quantitative or qualitative. I see over and over these complicated designs, and this is when I take the researcher back to which one of these three core designs really is fundamental to what you're trying to accomplish in your project. I think keeping it simple and straightforward is my best advice. If you really think about it when you read a good journal article and it reads so quickly, we know the writers have streamlined. They've simplified the process of thinking to make it easy to read, and it's not overly complicated.

How would you defend mixed methods research to someone that was criticizing it for not being robust or purely qualitative or quantitative?

I think I would defend it by highlighting some of the new procedural developments that have occurred that make it very robust and sophisticated—for example, the various integration strategies that we talked about: the ways to integrate data; the complex mixed methods design, which even five years ago we weren't talking about much, and the use of joint displays, where you can display both databases together in one table to make meta-inferences. I think people might criticize it because they don't understand some of these foundational ideas. I would have to say, we've gotten a little bit better. I feel I've gotten better about explaining and simplifying mixed methods so it can be easily grasped by someone, and a critic might be able to see the value of it. There are people that are trained in quantitative research, and they stay as quantitative researchers their entire career. The same is true for qualitative researchers; there are some qualitative researchers that would never venture into quantitative research. Mixed methods people by and large are very creative people that want to keep the door open to many possibilities. I would encourage the critic to open up to the possibility of a new methodology coming along, try to attend a workshop or conference presentation on mixed methods, where they can learn a little bit about some of the fundamentals of it.

One more question about mixed methods in general. Where do you see mixed methods research going in the future, or where would you like it to be going in the future?

Actually, I've just co-authored a chapter on that topic. There's a new handbook on mixed methods research design coming out from Sage Publication. It's a huge book with maybe 40 chapters, authors writing from different international perspectives, and I had the privilege of writing the final chapter with a

couple of authors looking at the future mixed methods research. So, I have given some thought to that, and I think that the use of computers and computer programs and mixed methods is really coming along and being advanced. There are software programs now that have pulled down mixed methods menus that you can use. You can create these joint displays of quantitative and qualitative data using computer features. The whole technology area is expanding.

Something that I said in my plenary that I really think is something that's developing momentum, and that is that for many years mixed methods was a standalone methodology. Now, its' procedures are being used in other approaches, frameworks, and processes like an evaluation study, a participatory action research study, a social network study, a geographical system study, a neuroscience study, or a cardiology study. It's linking to these other fields, disciplines, and methodologies in very interesting ways. Of course, in my own work, I'm trying to promote an international understanding of mixed methods research, especially for people where English might be a second language. I am very curious, and I'm trying to follow up on this with some of my own my own research projects. I'm absolutely curious about how the Western style of mixed methods research, that really started in England and America, is being adapted in other countries. For example, here in Japan, qualitative research has been slow going. Japanese people are not willing to bare their soul to a stranger and speak openly, so qualitative has been slow [to catch on]. There's an adaptation here of how we go about doing mixed methods research in Japan. That's an area I really hope to get a large cross-cultural study going looking at the adaptation of mixed methods in different disciplines and cultures. That's a fascinating area for me. After all, I'm participating in the Japanese culture, and then in the summer and during the spring, I'm in the Hawaiian culture. I bring my Midwestern culture into the mix, and it's something that intrigues me quite a bit.

I've presented mixed methods research methodologies to new audiences in many countries: Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, China, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. You really start picking up how certain parts of the presentation need to be adjusted and made respectful of a given culture. I'm interested in how it's being adapted, and I've organized a global conference on mixed methods research which was last August. I organized the panel where a Japanese scholar talked about the adaptation of mixed methods in Japan, a South American scholar talked about the application of it in South America, a Caribbean scholar talked about it there too. I'm

continually trying to bring in these different voices into the mixed methods field to respect the cultural orientations of different cultures. Those are some of the future directions that are at the top of my list.

I'd like to ask a few questions about your plenary speech before we finish up. In the plenary you mentioned your simplified mixed methods research model with six steps. Among those steps, where do you find most researchers struggle?

Great question! I would say there are two parts, and both parts are relatively new discussions in the mixed methods field. The part on integration and what are the various integration strategies and how do these link to designs. Integration is now starting to appear in the mixed methods literature as a hot topic for discussion, especially in the last five years. A more recent one would be the meta inferences component where there's been very little discussed. I personally feel that the insight that one gains from doing mixed methods research is what's going to convince a new scholar, or an international scholar, to maybe try out this methodology if they can. They may come up with some conclusions, some interpretations and some insights, by taking their analysis of their data a little further. A book by my colleague at Michigan, Dr. Fetters, has a chapter on meta-inferences. This is a very new discussion for the mixed methods field.

Now to my final question. In the plenary, you mentioned the different types of design choices out there for mixed methods. You said one of them was explanatory sequential and that it was a good introduction to mixed methods research, a good design for introduction that might apply for SLA researchers here in Japan. Why do you feel that design is a good choice?

Well, I'll go back to those two authors that I mentioned that have done some work in applied linguistics. They were making the point that the field has tended to be quantitative, so, a new researcher deciding on what design to use in mixed methods might be more comfortable starting a project with quantitative, which is an explanatory sequential design, and then follow up qualitatively. That's one reason a lot of people that come over from the quantitative arena like this design. You're starting with a survey instrument or measurement that exists first; it becomes the primary first focus on the project. Another reason why that's valuable is it has two phases over time, so you're not trying to collect all the data at once. I think that is especially attractive to graduate students that are working on a project over time, and they can't gather everything at once such as in a convergent design. Those are

two factors that are propelling the explanatory sequential design forward.

Excellent, thank you very much for your time and for sharing your valuable insights about mixed methods researcher with the readers.

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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).
Email: jaltpubs.tlt.my.share@jalt.org • Web: https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare

Welcome to My Share, the column where TLT readers share their useful and creative activities for the benefit of our community!

For this summer issue of My Share, we have four simple, fun, and versatile activities that are very easy to use as warm-up activities, or to liven things up at any time. They're great to have on hand for the end or beginning of a semester!

First off, Jennifer Lee's activity gives a fun twist to vocabulary review by incorporating English flashcards to Hebi Janken. Next, My Share's own Heather Yoder offers a simple, but effective, speaking activity that uses visual prompts to support students' communication about emotions. After that, Pak Man Au provides a fun warm-up activity in which students practice non-verbal communication using gestures. And finally, Simon Bannister outlines an engaging way to practice writing and following a procedure through drawing simple pictures.

We hope that you find the above activities useful. As ever, if you have devised an enjoyable, useful, and original classroom activity that our readers might benefit from, please feel free to get in contact with us at jaltpubs.tlt.my.share@jalt.org. We welcome submissions from veteran My Share writers and newbies alike and look forward to supporting you to get your idea published!

— Have a great summer, Lorraine

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Rock Paper Scissors Snake: A Spin on a Classic Game to Boost Literacy in Class

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Quick Guide

- » **Keywords:** *Reading, game, sight words, vocabulary review*
- » **Learner English level:** *Elementary to Intermediate*
- » **Learner maturity:** *Elementary school and above*
- » **Preparation time:** *20 minutes*
- » **Activity time:** *15–30 minutes*
- » **Materials:** *Vocabulary flashcards (at least 20 in total), student desks*

Rock Paper Scissors Snake, known as *Hebi Janken* in Japanese, is a well-loved classroom game. The game involves two teams trying to cross a long, snaking "bridge" made with desks from opposite ends. A team wins when their representative successfully wins Rock Paper Scissors against the other teams' members and makes it across the bridge. The easy-to-understand yet competitive nature of the game makes it perfect for motivating students to participate in class. By simply adding English flashcards, this becomes a great activity which compels students to read aloud on their own. Give it a try!

Preparation

Step 1: Prepare cards of words you want students to be familiar with. If you don't have many cards, you can prepare two sets of the same cards to use in class.

Step 2: Put together desks to make a long line (see Appendix).

Step 3: Place on the desks two rows of cards. Each row should face opposite directions, so that you can read one of the two rows of cards when you're standing on opposite sides of the desks.

Procedure

Step 1: Make two teams and have each team queue up on the opposite end and side of the line of desks.

Step 2: At the count of three, the first representative in each team has to point to and read the card in front of them. If they read it successfully, they can move on to read the next card in line (See Appendix Figure A). If they are unsure of how to read it, they can ask their teacher, or teammates for help.

Step 3: As the team representatives read and proceed, they eventually meet each other in the line. When they meet, they have to stop reading their cards, and play Rock Paper Scissors (See Appendix Figure B).

Step 4: The winner continues reading the cards, while the loser returns to the back of their team's line. The next person in the loser's line becomes the new representative and begins reading cards down the line of desks. When they meet, the team representatives play Rock Paper Scissors again and the game continues (See Appendix Figure C).

Step 5: Whoever successfully goes through all the cards and makes it to the other side of the line wins a point for their team.

Variations

1. For learning past tense, first play the game with past tense cards. After the students become familiar with past tense, change the cards to present tense and have students point and say the past tense of the cards as they go down the line.

2. As students have to read the flashcards in sequential order, this game can also be helpful for learning the order of days of week or months, cardinal numbers, or other words that usually come in a set order.

Conclusion

Reading and writing practice tends to be dry. However, it doesn't have to be this way. Given the nature of this activity, training students to recognize and read sight words can become a fun process. When learning is fun, we can put language acquisition back into the hands of our students!

Appendix

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

Feelings Cards
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Quick Guide

- » **Keywords:** *Feelings, pictures*
- » **Learner English level:** *High beginner to low intermediate*
- » **Learner maturity:** *High school to university*
- » **Preparation time:** *10–15 minutes*
- » **Activity time:** *10–15 minutes*
- » **Materials:** *Picture cards (See Preparation)*

This simple mindfulness activity guides students in discussing their emotions as they choose pictures that reflect their emotions and talk about it with their classmates. It can be done as part of a unit on learning emotions or as a warmup activity for higher level students. This activity is a great way for students to get to know each other better, as well as practicing vocabulary related to emotions and comparison.

Preparation

Step 1: Create a variety of picture cards. You can do this by cutting pictures out of magazines or by downloading and printing free use pictures from the internet. Make sure to use many different pictures, such as countryside, city, nature, people, concerts, etc. In total, the number of pictures should be about double the number of students in your class, so that there is a good selection to choose from.

Procedure

Step 1: Spread the pictures out on a table at the front of the class.

Step 2: Put students in groups of three or four.

Step 3: Ask the students to choose a picture that represents how they feel right now.

Step 4: After students have selected their pictures, do a demonstration. Hold up a picture and explain how it is related to how you feel. For example, "I chose this picture of a concert. It represents my feelings because I have a lot of energy, like the people at a concert."

Step 5: Allow time for the students to think about how they will explain their picture. Depending on your students, you might ask them to write what they want to say, or just think about it silently.

Step 6: Ask students to share their pictures with each other. This should take about 5 minutes.

Step 7: (Optional) repeat over several class periods.

Extension

For lower-level students, you might review useful vocabulary before doing the activity, eliciting words related to feelings such as "tired," "sad," and "busy," as well as comparison phrases such as "similar to" or "like."

This activity can easily be extended by having students ask follow-up questions. You can brainstorm possible follow-up questions before the activity and write them on the board for students to reference if they aren't sure what to ask.

Students could also journal about their feelings using the pictures as a guide. This could be done after a discussion to help them develop their ideas, or on its own.

Variation

You can use the pictures to represent other things, such as "My ideal life" or "The perfect day."

Conclusion

This activity is great for talking about feelings and comparing things. It also helps students to notice their feelings and why they feel that way. Students may also notice through discussion with each other that they are facing similar challenges with their classes, parttime jobs, and daily life and be able to encourage each other. As a result, it can help to create good relationships amongst the students. The activity can also be adapted or extended in a variety of interesting ways to suit the needs of your students.

Gesturing Your Way
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Quick Guide

- » Keywords: *Gestures, phrases*
- » Learner English level: *High beginner to low intermediate*
- » Learner maturity: *Junior high school to university*
- » Preparation time: *10–15 minutes*
- » Activity time: *10–15 minutes*
- » Materials: *Handout (See Appendix)*

This simple warm-up activity helps students to practice one of the most common non-verbal cues in communication, gestures. It asks students to use gestures to describe short phrases commonly used in English. As non-verbal communication is often an underestimated part of conversation, this activity reinforces the importance of gestures as complementary cues for verbal communication. This activity uses existing English knowledge and gets students moving about, speaking, and having fun at the same time. Students in the author's classes enjoyed the "physical" aspect of this activity, as even those students who were more reserved had fun not only acting out the gestures but guessing what the other students were doing as well!

Preparation

Step 1: Create a handout of common phrases that go well with gestures (see Appendix).

Step 2: Prepare the classroom so that small groups can spread around the class easily.

Procedure

Step 1: Prior to the day of the activity, distribute the handout and have the students review it to become familiar with the phrases. This may be done as homework.

Step 2: Explain that students are going to act out the phrases on the handout, using appropriate gestures.

Step 3: Have students repeat the phrases on the handout in unison, then ask each student to read one phrase on their own.

Step 4: Conduct a demonstration for the class. Tell

the students to watch what you do and raise their hand if they know what gesture from the handout is being done. Choose one of the phrases from the handout and act it out. Choose a student to give the answer.

Step 5: Put students into small groups of 3 or 4.

Step 6: Have the students choose one member of the group to act out a phrase from the handout. As in the teacher-conducted demonstration, the other students will try to guess what phrase was being acted out.

Step 7: Once a student is finished doing their gesture, the other students will take turns acting out the phrases from the handout.

Step 8: After all the groups are finished, choose several students to come to the front of the class and act out one of the phrases from the handout. The other students in the class (except those in their activity group) will guess the gestures being done.

Step 9: At the end of the activity, have students repeat the phrases while gesturing at the same time, for a final review.

Variation

A variation of this activity is to have students write their own phrases, instead of the handout made by the teacher. This gives students a chance to be creative and to use interesting gestures appropriately to match their chosen phrases.

Conclusion

This activity increases students' understanding of non-verbal communication cues that are common in English communication by practicing using appropriate gestures with familiar phrases. In a variation of this activity, students can come up with their own ideas on what gestures could be appropriate for other phrases they may know of. This warm-up activity will have students in a jovial mood before the regular class begins.

Appendix

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

Procedural Picture Drawing
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Quick Guide

- » Keywords: *Procedure, imperatives, pictures*
- » Learner English Level: *Intermediate*
- » Learner Maturity: *High school, university*
- » Preparation Time: *5 minutes*
- » Activity Time: *1 hour*
- » Materials: *Writing document (see Appendix A), picture templates (see Appendix B), blindfolds (optional), drawing and writing materials*

This activity can be used to practice imperatives by following a procedure, and can be used to practice ordinal numbers, adverbs of sequence, prepositions, and shapes. Learners will first write a procedure on how to draw a rudimentary image and will then read their procedure to other students who must listen and draw the image as accurately as possible.

Preparation

Step 1: Make copies of the writing document (Appendix A) and the picture templates (Appendix B) and prepare drawing and writing materials if needed.

Step 2: Write an example procedure using one of the picture templates.

Procedure

Step 1: Pre-teach the necessary vocabulary such as shapes, prepositions, ordinal numbers and adverbs of sequence, and pre-teach the grammar about how to write imperative sentences.

Step 2: Depending on the size and level of the class, make small groups of learners. If their level is sufficient then they can work individually.

Step 3: Provide each learner with the writing document and one of the picture templates. Make sure that learners cannot see any of the other groups' templates.

Step 4: Choose one of the templates and read an example procedure to give learners an idea of useful language that they can use. Learners should draw the picture in one of the boxes on their worksheet.

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Step 5: Instruct each group to collectively (or individually if proficient enough) write a procedure for how to draw the picture on their template. They should use imperatives, prepositions, ordinal numbers, and adverbs of sequence (for example, *First, draw a circle; Next, draw two squares on top of the circle*). The procedures will have about seven or eight steps.

Step 6: When each group has finished, make new groups of learners. Organise the new groups so that each member has a different procedure.

Step 7: Learners take turns to read their procedure and the other learners must listen, follow the instructions, and attempt to draw the picture as accurately as possible. Learners should then guess what they think the image is.

Variation

A variation of the activity is to provide blindfolds for each learner when listening and drawing the picture which produced positive results according to a study by Harpia et al. (2020). This will enable learners to listen more carefully to instructions and improve their vocabulary retention and will also ensure that learners cannot see and copy the pictures drawn by other learners. The use of blindfolds also gives the activity an extra layer of enjoyment which often causes raucous reactions when learners remove their blindfolds and see the drawing that they have produced.

Conclusion

This activity provides an enjoyable way to practice multiple language skills through writing, reading, speaking, and listening. It is a quick and effective activity to prepare and will last for an entire class.

Reference

Harpia, Mujahidah, & Ahdar. (2020). The implementation of blindfold game to improve students' vocabulary mastery. *Inspiring: English Education Journal*, *3*(1), 37–48. https://doi.org/10.35905/inspiring.v3i1.1308

Appendices

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

[RESOURCES] *TLT* WIRED

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.

Enhancing the Functionality of YouTube and Netflix with Language Reactor
John Syquia

Teachers often recommend that students increase their exposure to native materials outside of the classroom using popular streaming sites such as YouTube and Netflix. Using these resources can be challenging, however, due to a number of factors such as the wide range of vocabulary, fast speaking speed, and unfamiliar pronunciation. As making the jump from textbook materials to native materials can be quite daunting, learners typically use a number of strategies, such as using dictionaries, watching a video multiple times, and viewing L1 subtitles. However, all of these strategies can be a bit cumbersome and impede learners from simply enjoying the materials. Fortunately, a solution to this dilemma is Language Reactor (https://www.languagereactor.com), a free plugin for the Google Chrome browser. After describing how to get started with Language Reactor, I will detail how it can help learners to improve their listening comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, and pronunciation.

Getting Started

After visiting the website, users are prompted to select, from over 50 choices, the language they are studying and their native language. Note that this plugin is only available for Google Chrome at this time, and is unavailable for mobile phones, tablets, and televisions. Although a number of resources are shown on the left side of the homepage, this article will primarily describe the functionality of Language Reactor within YouTube and Netflix (see Figure 1). After successfully installing the plugin, a small Language Reactor icon will appear in the upper-right corner of the browser window.

**Figure 1**

Language Reactor Homepage
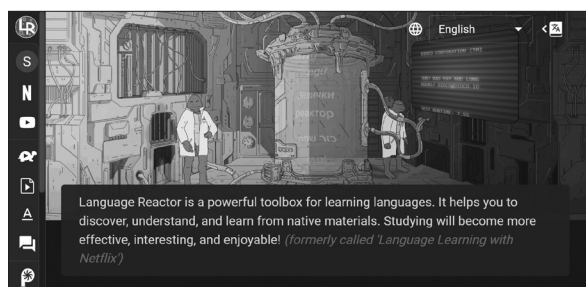
Listening Comprehension

Language Reactor aids listening comprehension by simultaneously displaying subtitles in both the L1 and L2. Additionally, a transcript in either the L1 or L2 can also be displayed on the right side of the screen (see Figure 2).

The dual subtitle function can help teachers accommodate classes of students who have different native languages. For example, a teacher could show an English video in class with subtitles in Japanese and Chinese to help students understand the main ideas. Then, the teacher shows the video again with only English subtitles in order to have students focus on the language used in the video. This function is also quite useful outside of the classroom, as well. For example, say two people want to watch *Squid Game* with the original Korean audio. However, neither of them speaks Korean: one person's native language is English, and the other person's native language is Japanese. Language Reactor offers the perfect solution to this predicament.

Figure 2

Displaying Dual Subtitles and the Transcript
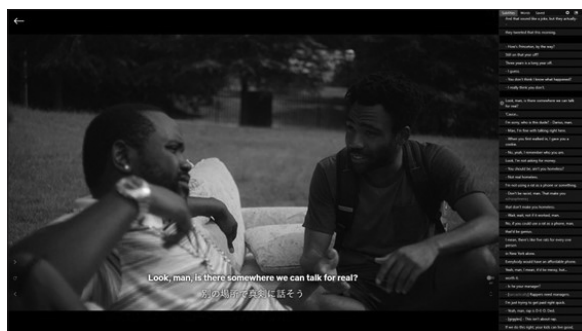
Vocabulary Knowledge

Language Reactor also contains several useful features for increasing vocabulary knowledge. The first of these is a pop-up dictionary. When users encounter an unknown word in the subtitles or transcript, they simply hover over it and an L1 definition appears. If they click on the word, the program pronounces the word, displays example sentences, and provides links to external dictionaries. Thus, Language Reactor simplifies looking up unknown words while watching videos. This is useful because research has found that lexical knowledge is one of the primary factors affecting listening comprehension, and estimates of necessary lexical coverage (i.e., percentage of known words) range from 90% (Giordano, 2021) to as high as 98% (Stæhr, 2009).

Learners can also set their relative vocabulary level, and the program will highlight words that they might not know. Another useful function is the ability to tag words in different colors, such as marking unknown words in yellow. Finally, if users upgrade to the Pro version (currently ¥800 per month), unknown words can be saved, added to Language Reactor's flashcard program, Phrase Pump, or exported to a text file for use with another vocabulary program such as Anki (https://apps.ankiweb.net). Like Anki, Phrase Pump also utilizes spaced repetition, although it is not as customizable.

Pronunciation

Yet another useful feature of Language Reactor is the auto-pause function where videos will pause after each line of speech. This feature makes it simple to practice shadowing, a pronunciation activity where learners mimic the rhythm, intonation, speed, and connected speech of natural language samples (Lambert, 1992). Without Language Reactor, line-by-line shadowing can be tedious

as it requires pausing the video precisely between speaker turns.

Limitations

As noted earlier, Language Reactor is only available for the Google Chrome browser on a PC and users of the free version cannot save or export lists of words they wish to study. In addition, most other functions are in beta. Finally, it is unclear what vocabulary list was used to create the frequency bands.

Conclusion

Language Reactor's enhanced functionality for YouTube and Netflix might not be necessary for the language classroom, but it can be particularly useful for self-study. Considering that students are familiar with YouTube and that many have Netflix accounts, the burden of having students adopt a new study method is greatly reduced. However, it is not readily apparent how to use Language Reactor, so teachers who wish to introduce the program to their students should spend a few minutes of class time showing its functions and settings. If teachers empower their students to self-study using resources such as Language Reactor, learners are more likely to make the leap from textbook to native materials, and therefore reap the benefits of increased exposure to the target language.

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Navigating the World of Big Tech's Teacher Education Certification Programmes: A Comparison of Apple, Google, and Microsoft's Offerings

Chris Hastings

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The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted worldwide information and communication technology (ICT) learning. Studies (e.g., Tejero, 2022) have shown that emergency online classes revealed a gap between teacher and student ICT literacy; however, the acquired ICT knowledge is currently used in face-to-face or hybrid learning environments. Additionally, other studies (Cendana & Winardi, 2021; Hassani, 2021) have revealed that due to the pandemic, language teachers have had to adapt to new methods of home-based online professional development and that language teacher education programmes need to consider more deeply the need for technology inclusion, development, and promotion in their curricula.

Considering these two points, it is an opportune time to revisit the various technology companies' teacher education offerings and accreditation programmes (Milliner, 2016). This article will compare the teacher education programmes offered by Apple, Google, and Microsoft, introduce the experience of a teacher who completed an advanced innovator programme, and finally give recommendations about choosing programmes and promoting one's qualifications to potential employers.

The Big Three

Apple, Google, and Microsoft all provide teacher education certification programmes that aim to provide educators with the knowledge and skills to effectively integrate the respective companies' technologies (both hardware and software) into their teaching practices in pedagogically appropriate ways. Each programme offers online, self-paced courses teachers can take to earn certifications and badges.

Apple Teacher

The Apple programme emphasises the ability to creatively use Apple products, such as iPads and Macs. To gain Apple's primary certification of Apple Teacher, visit the Apple Education Community (https://education.apple.com) and register using an active Apple ID. After doing this, you will be able to access the learning resources. First, choose a track (you can complete both if you wish), iPad or Mac (see Figure 1), and then complete eight badges: iPad or Mac, Pages, Keynote, Numbers, iMovie, Garage-Band, Productivity, and Creativity. Apple estimates it will take about two hours per badge. You must score at least 80% to gain certification.

Figure 1

Choose the iPad or Mac Path
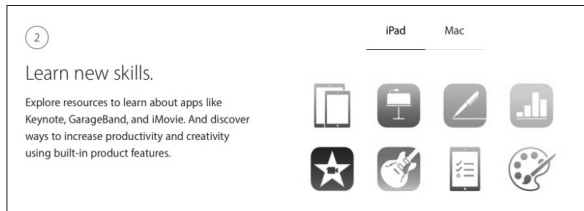
Google Certified Educator

You can access these learning materials through the Google for Education website (https://edu.google.com), but you will need a Google account to track your progress and ultimately get a certificate. The primary certification has two levels (see Figure 2), and, of the three companies' programmes, it is the most rigorous. Level 1 takes roughly twelve hours, and level 2 about ten hours. After completing the training, there is a three-hour online assessment for each level where you must turn on your webcam. There is also a $10 fee for the level 1 exam and a $25 fee for the level 2 exam. For the training and assessment, rather than multiple-choice questions, you will be required to practically demonstrate your knowledge of Google products, such as Gmail, Google Classroom, and YouTube, by responding to scenarios likely to arise in a classroom. Each certification also requires you to requalify every three years. The strength of the Google programme is that it will help teachers train learners to work collaboratively using various Google products.

Figure 2

Google Levels of Certification

Microsoft Innovative Educator

Microsoft has three primary programmes (see Figure 3), which you can access from the Microsoft Educator programme page (https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/training/educator-center/programs/microsoft-educator). You will need a personal or organisational Microsoft account to log in and access the learning materials. The initial Microsoft Educator badge comprises six modules and will take approximately five and a half hours to complete. The modules include the best strategies to use in hybrid, remote, inclusive, and blended learning environments, and for increasing accessibility, using Teams, doing flipped instruction with PowerPoint Recorder, and using OneNote. Each module comprises videos and text, with a final multiple-choice quiz at the end. One of the advantages of choosing Microsoft is that their programmes have existed in some form since the early 2000s, and they adequately prepare teachers to deliver hybrid and online learning.

Figure 3

Microsoft's Educator Programmes
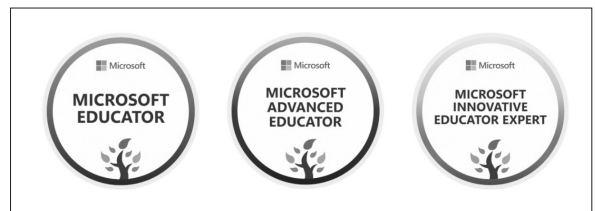
Choosing a Programme

When choosing a potential programme, there are several factors to consider: your institution's infrastructure, your workflow preferences, your pedagogical views, and how much time and money you are willing to invest.

With the advent of the GIGA School Program, more investment is now being made into school and university infrastructures (MEXT, 2020). Currently, Microsoft has the largest share of the market in Japan (Ishizaki, 2021). Few schools or universities have branded themselves as official Microsoft, Google, or Apple schools, but it should be evident if your employer has. It is more likely that your school simply has access to a company's suite of tools. To maximise your investment, you should research which company's tools your institution (or an institution you seek employment at) uses and choose accordingly.

Advanced Programmes

In addition to the entry-level programmes, each company also provides trainer and innovator courses. The innovator courses typically require you to develop and showcase a teaching project using one of the three companies' products. If you are someone who relishes a challenge and wishes to be seen as a change agent, you may wish to consider applying for one of these programmes. Here is a quote from a teacher (Anonymous, May 4, 2023) who completed the Apple Distinguished Educator (ADE) programme:

I applied for the ADE programme because it sounded perfectly tailored to me and my interests at the time (around 2012): I was fairly fluent in Apple technology and I was an educator. I was also excited about the hardware and software that was being released at the time: iPads and iBooks Author. The best part of the programme was meeting the talented educators from around the world who are using the technology, and not only Apple's, in interesting ways. I would recommend it to people who currently work in an Apple environment and are looking for new ideas and expanding their professional network.

As you can see, the opportunities for networking and collaborating with accomplished educators from around the world make taking one of the various innovator courses (see Figure 4) an attractive proposition. Additionally, here is another quote from a teacher (Anonymous, May 4, 2023) who completed the Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert programme:

I initially enrolled in the MIE Expert programme having done a lot of the Microsoft Learn courses when we were teaching online during the pandemic. I found the courses really helpful and engaging, and my digital skills have improved immensely. The MIE Expert programme had the extra motivation of being part of a community, although I have not involved myself in this much yet due to other time commitments. As a language acquisition teacher, I have found tools such as Immersive Reader, Read Aloud and Dictate particularly helpful, as well as integrating Flip into my teaching. Having followed the courses, these tools are now part of my everyday practice and the feedback from students is very positive.

This comment illustrates well the earlier point about Microsoft's strength in providing training for hybrid teaching and also the teacher found value in the motivation it gave them and the positive feedback from their students.

Figure 4

Certifications for School Leaders

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, by completing these certification programmes, teachers can better apply technology to their teaching and share this knowledge with their learners and colleagues. Furthermore, these certifications on a resume can help to distinguish candidates and demonstrate their commitment to professional development. The Japanese government has recently started to seriously invest in ICT development in schools for teachers and learners (MEXT, 2020), so it is a great time to explore the various companies' offerings and how they might benefit you professionally. Finally, be aware that prospective hiring committees may not be aware of the precise nature of these certifications. When listing certifications on your resume, I recommend briefly explaining what you are trained to do. Also, when interviewing, rather than simply mentioning your certification, show awareness of the institution's ICT infrastructure (e.g., their iPad programme or student Microsoft 365 accounts) and say precisely how your certificate will allow you to contribute to online, hybrid, and in-class learning using technology.

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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.

Email: jaltpubs.tlt.yl@jalt.org

Using LoiLoNote for Improving Lesson Flow and Student Engagement in Elementary English Lessons

Andrew Lankshear

This article introduces some of the main features of LoiLoNote School (hereafter, LoiLo) which I have found to be extremely useful in my young learners' classrooms. LoiLo is a cloud-based learning platform, created in 2014, that is used widely throughout Japan's compulsory education institutions. More than 2000 schools are currently subscribed to it (LoiLo, 2023). The students within my own private school in Koriyama, Fukushima prefecture have each had a tablet (iPad) since 2021 and we have used LoiLo since 2019. My students are now all adept at using it and I, too, with lots of guidance from my teacher colleagues (and some of the students!) have discovered how the paper-based things I used to do can now be done more efficiently on this digital platform.

So, what is LoiLo? It is a cloud-based desktop on which you save information within multimedia cards (Figure 1). The multimedia cards can store videos, website links, PDFs, audio, text, and/or images.

The cards can be stacked, connected, imported, resized, and moved freely both around the desktop and within other, larger cards. A desktop, with its stacks of cards, can be made for each separate class within separate folders, which helps me to easily store and retrieve materials for future use. I can also easily share those cards with students (and other teachers) who are exclusively registered to that class.

Figure 1
LoiLo Note Desktop
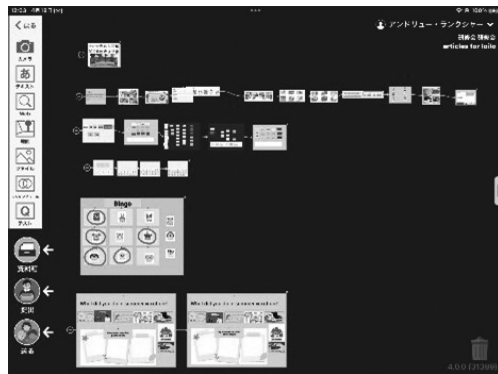
Given its ease of use and wide-spread uptake, research into LoiLo has been increasing with research topics ranging from the metacognitive development of students in mathematics (Tateishi, 2023), to facilitating the education of taste awareness (Kobayashi et al., 2022), which has been conducted

across all levels of education. When researching its efficacy in English lessons at elementary schools, Matsushita (2023, p.255) noted its usefulness for both creating and delivering activities, especially for the creation of digital presentations and the ease of sharing these with other students. Also, Yamazaki (2021) reported on how ICT, which included LoiLo applications, supported elementary school students in their learning of the four skills.

Much productive work has been done with LoiLo in schools and reported in Japanese, so I hope to be able to share some of the benefits of this very useful software with English-speaking readers as well. In this brief article, I wish to share the three key features which I think are the most important for my English classes. The first is the ability to sequence goals, resources, and activities to enhance lesson flow and to organize and store unit resources. The second feature, also known as the manipulation feature, is the ability to select, move, and arrange cards within larger cards so that students can easily complete information-gap activities or the like. Finally, the third is the ability to easily record and provide audio resources.

LoiLoNote and Unit Flow

LoiLo provides multimedia cards which can be easily shared wirelessly with students who have registered within a particular class. These cards can be linked and sequenced, thus providing a framework for a unit of learning. A typical unit of learning begins with the unit goals (Figure 2). An example is "I can say at least eight jobs in English to my teacher." At the end of the unit these goals are incorporated into a reflection card (Figure 3) for students to self-evaluate how well they believe they have achieved the unit goals. They submit this and any other unit work using the submission box function in the main desktop. With this function, I have been quickly able to pull up the unit goals at the start of each of my lessons and, as a result, I have shared them more readily and noted which ones we are working on during a particular lesson. I knew that this was helpful to my students' learning to do this (see Hattie, 2012) but I had sometimes failed to do it in the past consistently. By having it readily available I am doing it more often and thus providing better quality lessons.

Figure 2

Unit Goals Card
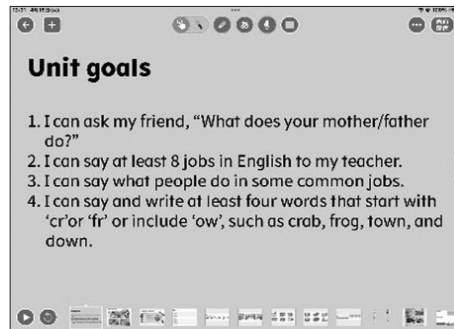
Figure 3

Reflection Card

The rest of the cards in my unit consist of activities informed by the presentation, practice (both controlled and free), and production (PPP) method. The first few sequenced cards provide the presentation stage of the unit—the unit dialogue, unit song, and unit vocabulary items. Each card has audio embedded. Most textbooks provide audio content which performs the same task. However, by collating all these resources into one place, the entire unit's work can be easily shared, and the students can seamlessly navigate through it. This enhances the flow of the lesson and reduces the amount of down time which is a welcome feature in what is already a time-poor teaching environment.

Information Gap Activities With LoiLoNote

The next feature is the manipulation functions of LoiLo. This is used within the practice stage of my PPP-informed units. An activity at this stage often consists of information gap activities which are either completed in pairs or by the whole class (a jigsaw information gap activity). For example, if the unit goal is for your students to be able to say which animals they like, you can create a controlled practice exercise with a LoiLo card that has the an-

imal vocabulary items (Figure 4). In this card, there is a picture of a zoo and students select five animals from the sixteen available to move into their zoo. They then interview each other, asking questions such as "What animals do you like?" and "I like dogs, pandas, sheep, giraffes, and hippos." If their speaking partner has the same animal in their own zoo, they get a point. They continue the activity for five to eight minutes, and the student with the most points at the end is the winner. Other speaking activities at this stage involve the students moving vocabulary items on their screens into categories or images that they then compare with another student to see if they have the same item in the same place.

Figure 4

Information Gap Activity Card

Bingo sheets can also be easily made by making a 3x3 grid in a card (Figure 5). I recommend importing about twelve images for a 3x3 board so there are a few images left over. Students choose nine of the images to move into the grid template and make up a Bingo board. When playing Bingo students use the digital drawing function to cross out word items. Ognib can also be played (Ognib is Bingo spelt backwards). In order to play, students first form pairs and each student makes up their Bingo board that they hide from their partner's line of sight. The students then take turns to say a vocabulary item which then both they and their partner cross out. The student who gets bingo first loses. The advantage of Ognib is that the students practice saying the vocabulary as opposed to just listening to it as in Bingo. In the past, I have played these games on paper, but I have found that doing them on LoiLo has the following advantages:

- Markings can be easily deleted with the press of a button to repeat the activity.
- Vocabulary items can be easily rearranged after each round.

- The digital version saves both time and money in reducing preparation time and foregoing any need for printing.

As a result of these advantages, students get to play more within the time given and they enjoy it more, while getting increased practice in the target language, which is a win-win for learning.
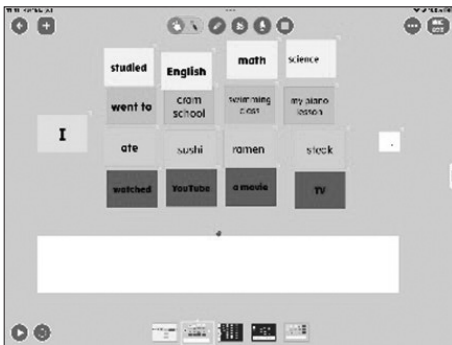
Figure 5

Bingo Card

Another activity similar to those above (i.e., the manipulation of language items) is sentence arranging (*narabikae* in Japanese). Sentence arranging is used within Eiken tests that are regularly offered in Japan so being able to practice this quickly and effortlessly on LoiLo is very useful. Essentially, words within a sentence are mixed up and the students need to arrange these words into the correct order. For this activity, you can create a card and place a few smaller cards within it. Then write one word on each card for a predetermined sentence and mix them up. Next, you share this activity with your students who then must move the cards into the correct order to construct the correct predetermined sentence (e.g., /brother/swimming/My/went/yesterday→My brother went swimming yesterday).

A related activity is question or sentence building (Figures 6 and 7). Students are given a selection of possible words to create a question or sentence. The teacher says a question or sentence in Japanese and their students must select from the words given to create the English equivalent. This resource can also be used later in fluency activities when students are encouraged to create original questions and/or sentences from those they have already learned. Other similar activities that can be done in this manner are cloze exercises, matching exercises, ranking or categorizing exercises, and dictogloss listening activities. Essentially, many of the activities that are offered in complementary workbooks for the main textbook can now be replicated in a digital format.
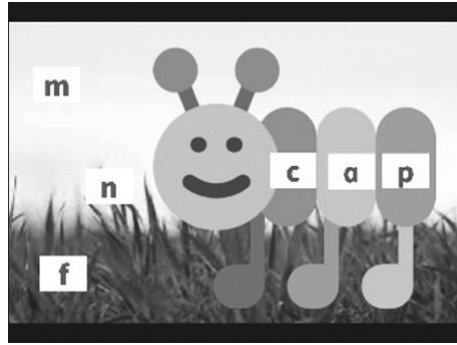
Figure 6

Question Building

Figure 7

Sentence Building

For lower grades, manipulation of items works well for creating phonics boards (Figure 8). When doing this with your students, you sound out the phonemes for a word (usually consonant-vowel -consonant words at first) and your students must select from the letters provided to create the word. I recommend standing at the rear of the class during this activity so you can clearly see each student's screen. This is an excellent way to quickly assess whether your students are learning how to identify and select individual phoneme sounds and make their first steps towards spelling out words. My students enjoy the simplicity of this exercise, and their feelings of achievement from having spelt out English words. This activity can gradually be made more difficult by increasing the number of letters to choose from and/or increasing the length of the words to spell. Once your students know how to write the alphabet, you can ask them to write the word out rather than arrange it on the screen. This activity is therefore an excellent bridge between the listening and saying stage of phonics instruction and the listening and writing stage.

Figure 8

Phonics Board

Audio with LoiLoNote

The third feature of LoiLo is its audio functions (Figure 9). There are two aspects to this, listening and recording. For listening, you can record the pronunciation of each word or text. Students can then listen to this and practice saying those words or the text. They can change the speed of the audio to make it faster or slower. For recording, students can record their own speaking and submit it. There is a feature in the recording function where you can set a time limit (the recording will be cut off if the text is not said in the allotted time). You can therefore dictate the time within which a text should be recited (I usually set this at the rate of two words per second but may make the time longer depending on the text and the level of my students). With these audio features you can assign pronunciation work or reading practice for homework and check their pronunciation, reading ability, and reading speed during your own office time.

Figure 9

Audio Functions

Conclusion

I have outlined how LoiLo has made my teaching job better and how it has expedited my students'

learning. I used to spend hours making paper-based resources for my lessons - flashcards, game cards, bingo sheets, and board games. Also, I needed time to store and then find those resources, and then get them ready for my lessons. LoiLo is a platform which stores all those activities in one digital place. I have found that it has helped me to create and deliver many common teaching and learning tasks in my language classroom, such as information gap activities, sentence-arranging activities, pronunciation practice, and phonics instruction more easily. While LoiLo is not the only platform which can perform some or all of these tasks, it is one of the most common, at least in Japan. It is possible to make information gap activities on Keynote, for example, but LoiLo makes the sharing and collating of these resources much more efficient. While I have introduced some of my favorite features about LoiLo there are still many other things you can do with it in your classroom. I therefore encourage curious readers to read more broadly on the platform and, if possible, to try it out for themselves. Hopefully, more of our students can have more expedited learning experiences by doing this!

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Andrew Lankshear has lived and taught in Fukushima, Japan since 1998, mostly within elementary schools. He is currently head English teacher at Koriyama Xaverio Gakuen Elementary School. Andrew has a master's in education from Massey University, New Zealand. He has provided teacher training seminars, co-authored both a 5-levelled skills book series for young learners published by Pearson Japan entitled English Language Booster, and a teacher training book for teachers of young learners published by 4C Publishing, Japan. Andrew's interests include using gestures in the classroom for younger learners, activity design, and a good story or yarn, preferably written.

Robert Taferner

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

Email: jaltpubs.tlt.reviews@jalt.org
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This month's column features Sammy Woldeab's review of Get by in English 1 <Starter>.

Get by in English 1: Starter

[Julyan Nutt, Michael Marshall, Yoko Kurahashi, & Manabu Miyata. Tokyo: Sanshusha, 2019. pp. vi + 116. ¥2,090. ISBN: 978-4-384-33491-3 C1082.]

Reviewed by Sammy Woldeab, Kanda University of International Studies

The current *Get by in English* series is composed of four textbooks (starter, elementary, pre-intermediate, and intermediate) designed specifically for non-English major Japanese university students. In the past, I have used *Get by in English* 1: *Starter* as the foundation of English communication courses for Japanese university students, most of whom were sports majors and had a limited command of conversational English. The first textbook in the series has proven to be a flexible and accessible refresher course for these students, as it covers familiar grammar such as simple present, adverbs of frequency, prepositions, and imperatives. Additionally, the authors use Japanese to clarify instructions and provide thorough explanations of grammar patterns. This feature promotes learner autonomy by allowing students to work through specific sections on their own. If used actively according to the aims of the authors, learners should greatly benefit from the contents of this series.

Get by in English 1: Starter begins with an introductory unit meant to set the tone for the course by helping students acclimate to classroom English. It is essentially a brief tutorial of how the teacher may choose to format and conduct the classes over 15 hours (or 10 90-minute classes), with several exercises geared toward general questions, asking for clarification, and teacher-student interaction. From there on, the textbook is organized into six main units, with a review unit placed between units three and four, and again after unit six. These review units conveniently include interview test questions that the teacher can use as a form of assessment. There are two glossaries available with both English and Japanese terms, one of which is a glossary for reception (understanding) and another for production (speaking). Audio files are also accessible online via streaming and downloads.

The textbook follows a functional approach to syllabus design, with clearly defined functions as the theme for each unit (e.g., introductions, describing family, asking for and giving directions). Each unit integrates the four basic language skills through activities such as model conversations, roleplays, grammar exercises, personalized speeches, pair dictations, and discussion. These activities work to consolidate each preceding section, highlighting a balanced presence of both interactional and transactional functions of practical, everyday English. Interactional functions are "concerned with maintaining social interaction," while transactional functions are about "carrying out real-world information-focused functions" (Richards, 2017, p. 204).

Each unit tends to be centered on conversations between students of similar social and cultural backgrounds, as well as on ways to convey information. Teachers who wish to strengthen students' intercultural communication skills should consider supplementing the textbook with other authentic materials. In my classroom experiences, this has been achieved by including media such as relevant video clips from YouTube or the participation of international students. Teachers can also approach the model conversations available in the textbook in a way that focuses on interactional competence. Barraja-Rohan's (2011) study of conversational analysis emphasizes the importance of understanding "how conversationalists achieve order and social organization" (p. 480) by focusing on aspects such as turn-taking. In particular, the students in the

study focused on the communicative aspects of their interactions, such as co-constructing, over accuracy. The model conversations and roleplay in the textbook are among some of the most useful exercises in conversational analysis, with the authors organizing conversations into basic patterns while providing a chart of substitutions that students can experiment with. Students in my classes appreciated the straightforward structure of these activities, which provided solid examples that often led to increasingly creative output as we progressed through the units.

When considering the nature of English language usage among the non-English major postsecondary students that I have taught, I would certainly define a majority of them as needing to study to get by communicatively. Many students are required to take English communication classes and build general interactional skills, while others may require specific skills for transactional purposes, such as short-term travel abroad. The textbook balances both interactional and transactional competencies with room for customization, which allows the content to reach a wider target audience.

If you are looking for a foundational text for a communicative English course, Get by in English 1: Starter would be an effective resource, which even includes opportunities for formative and summative assessment. Each unit gives students the chance to revisit key vocabulary and grammar, which allows for mastery of basic phrases. Although the content might be a bit simple for more advanced language learners, the openness of the selected topics and functions means that supplementary materials can be easily incorporated.

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JALT2023 – Growth Mindset in Language Education

Tsukuba, IBARAKI

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Recently Received
Julie Kimura & Derek Keever
jaltpubs.tlt.pub.review@jalt.org

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. We invite publishers 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*.

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* = *new listing; ! = final notice* — Final notice items will be removed on August 31. 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.]

! 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. However, it was written with lower proficiency students in mind. Additional

resources include a teacher's manual and audio download. This book is aimed towards those with a TOEIC score of 250-450.]

* *New frontiers*—Hong, T., Powell, G., Koe, T., & Scafaru, M. Compass Publishing, 2020. [This six-level course helps teenage students learn about English in the 21st century. Aimed towards students with a CEFR of A1-B2.]

* *On point (2nd ed.)*—Anderson, P., Foster, L., Robinson, S., & Hong, T. Compass Publishing, 2022. [This new edition includes new and updated readings on current topics. Students can participate in engaging activities to build specific reading and thinking skills, as well as guided writing tasks related to each topic. In addition, discussion activities help students form and support their opinions. Online materials available include audio files as well as other resources.]

Science at hand—Miyamoto, K. Kinseido, 2020. [This text is comprised of 15 articles selected from the Smithsonian magazine from a variety of fields, including the natural sciences, engineering, anthropology, and art. 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 is comprised of 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 understanding of the topic and reinforce the idea that our opinions can change when we are presented with new information.]

* *What is language?*—Kane-Hinohara, E. Perceptia Press, 2023. [What is Language? follows a CLIL approach. Each of the 15 units is scaffolded for learners, with a progression from lower- to higher-order thinking skills. There is a mix of communicative as well as focus on form tasks through explicit teaching of the Academic Word List and academic language skills. Productive tasks include pair work in scaffolded discussions and individual presentations. Audio tracks are available for download.]

[JALT PRAXIS] TEACHING ASSISTANCE

David McMurray

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

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This column offers a vibrant argument from an educator and recent MA graduate of English Literature in Taiwan. He suggests ways in which university students can be introduced to haiku, and English Language Haiku (ELH), in their classrooms. Students today are looking for content that is short, authentic, and that can be enjoyed immediately. Haiku—a genre which possesses those three attributes--could quench their thirst, he claims, if modern writers composed ELH in a way that remediates three areas of lack identified by the author.

This fascinating essay elucidates the researcher's thought process: starting from a spark of an idea that came from watching an online video, he kindled opinions from a newspaper column penned by a long dead poet. He then leaned on methodology based on the materiality of literature to analyze the way that haiku have been integrated in fictional and non-fictional texts. Further investigation on these materialities lead him to the formation of theoretical frameworks that he believes offer modern day readers a chance for greater engagement with ELH.

Integrating English Language Haiku Into Literature Teaching

Kyle Thomas Sullivan
National Kaohsiung Normal University

Reuters (2019) released a short video titled *The Z Factor*, which identified the prime content demands of Generation Z, the population cohort born between the late 1990s and early 2010s. According to the video, what Generation Z craves the most when it comes to content is that it be short, mobile, and really real, as well as provide a sense of authenticity and in-the-moment feeling that can be equated with the phenomena and impressions of presence. Literary theorist Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (2004) believes we are missing this content "in a world so saturated with meaning" (p. 105).

As both an educator and a composer of English Language Haiku (ELH), what struck me at the time was how, on the one hand, ELH, and haiku in general, manifest Z Factor qualities to a greater degree than their literary counterparts (namely the novel, the short story, and longer-form poetry) while on the other hand, the vast majority of ELH fall short when it comes to reaching the levels of critical engagement that their counterparts offer. This debate was formally presented to a class at National Kaohsiung Normal University (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Poster for One of the Author's Undergraduate English Literature Presentations at National Kaohsiung Normal University
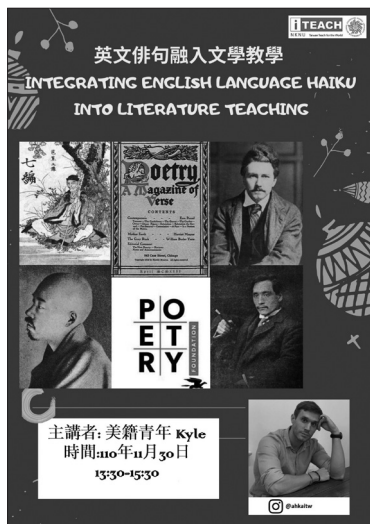
As such, this brought to mind Masaoka's (1899) belief that because haiku is a part of literature, and literature is a part of art, that the standard of literature be the standard of haiku. Thus, if one is able to comment on ELH from an equivalent standard, we can judge ELH as literature. However, from what I have observed, ELH criticism continues to be something quite different from the criticism of its literary counterparts, but this has less to do with academics (which, as far as I have observed, is very receptive to the inclusion of ELH under certain conditions), than it does with current approaches to ELH criticism and the characteristics of ELH themselves.

This led me to question how, then, current ELH could be composed (as well as what characteristics to look for) that could propel the genre towards the foreground of literary studies, where it is to be met by the hearts and minds of Generation Z students

that make up the majority of current undergraduate and postgraduate university students (Figure 2), as well as what theories and aspects of composition and engagement are currently missing and that may necessitate its overall growth.

Figure 2

Photograph Taken on November 30, 2021, During the Author's Presentation of Integrating English Language Haiku Into Literature Teaching

This absence is in line with the nature of lack and privation defined in the psychoanalytical paradigm of Jacques Lacan (Rabate, 2003). Absence compels the consideration of desire and hence a desire for being. What could be imagined as lacking has to do with the being of ELH itself, or in Žižek's (2000) terms, its *foundation*. Therefore, providing a justification for its absence in the academic environment of literary studies in the first place can assist ELH in taking its first steps towards greater academic recognition.

From an academic perspective, I was compelled by the notion of the word being to first substantiate the existence of ELH. I considered how ELH are being composed on ontological and phenomenological levels, relating back to matters concerning the materialities of the text. As such, in line with Gumbrecht's (2004) thinking, ELH would come to offer the academic environment of literary studies one possibility for reclaiming a lost vitality and aesthetic immediacy by first granting primacy to the lived experiencing of a text before giving way to the meaning components.

In this way, ELH finds itself in situations of lack that correspond to a real lack of theoretical frameworks to compose and engage with ELH on the level of lived experience, by way of the materialities of the text, as well as a real lack of a Western aesthetic

foundation to situate and conceptualize ELH. Furthermore, as a poetic, literary genre with multiple, written forms, its being and existence can be further substantiated by accounting for poetic, aesthetic, and technical expectations regarding composition, which provide a foundation from which to compose and critique ELH as an extension of the traditional haiku in Japan, not as imitation, but rather as an honoring, as well as from its arguable roots in Western Modernism. In this way, ELH finds itself in a situation of lack that corresponds to a real lack of precursory positions. Bloom (1997) suggests these precursors are necessary to set the aforementioned expectations.

Therefore, teaching ELH in a way that allows for critical engagement with primary texts becomes a process of acquainting students with the three areas of lack. The first area of lack involves establishing real precursory positions. To fill this hole, I suggest teaching the theories and certain poetry of the American poet Ezra Pound as well as the compositional poetics, aesthetics, and techniques of the Japanese poet Matsuo Basho's school of thought. These poets play a significant, relevant role in ELH composition and engagement. In this way, the movement towards the realization of a combined-precursory position comes to stand in the place of the poetic father-figure in Bloom's (1997) theoretical environment, providing a new foothold for judging ELH compositions, as well as establishing a foundation from which ELH poets can swerve.

Students acquainted with the first position of lack come to possess a greater knowledge of Pound and his poetics as well as Modernism and the movements of Imagism and Vorticism, while also developing greater familiarity with and an appreciation for haiku in Japanese as well as in English. Furthermore, certain expectations from which to judge and criticize current ELH are proposed. This will encourage students to become active participants who may come to possess the ability to shape the future of the ELH genre.

The second area of lack is the real lack of a Western aesthetic foundation to situate and conceptualize the genre and form. Students need to be provided with more haiku history from its starting verse (referred to as *hokku* in Japanese) and linked verse beginnings. Students need to be exposed to the controversial idea of the haiku moment, which comes to situate ELH in the Western philosophical traditions of ontology and phenomenology, adding a degree of eclecticism to their learning.

This then leads into the third area of lack, which is the real lack of theoretical frameworks to compose and engage with ELH on the level of lived experience, by way of the materialities of the text. This is supported by the belief in certain moments of intensity that can manifest through a compositional and formalistic ideal that derives from the lived experience produced by the text of the ELH itself. This ideal, as well as these moments of intensity, are associated with the concept of Presence (Gumbrecht, 2004).

Furthermore, additional components of traditional haiku provide a means to engage with the text of an ELH from a level first-removed from Presence. That level is the intermediate place of atmospheres, which can be produced by the seasonal components of a haiku (referred to as *kigo* in Japanese), as well as the emotional overtones (referred to as *yosei* in Japanese) linked to the use of certain aesthetics. The concept of atmospheres was further developed by Gumbrecht (2012).

Figure 3

Photograph of Students Participating in a Group Activity That Required Them to Determine the Season of an ELH (Referred to as Kigo in Japanese)

In conclusion, I suggest familiarizing students with the concepts of Presence and Atmospheres. I recommend connecting to what Rauh (2019) states as being of aesthetic importance in the world today: "namely the quality of the impression that emanates from things" (p. 149). In this way, the three positions of lack explained above can provide students with a number of critical tools to analyze ELH, while at the same time retaining all the other means of engaging with texts that one would find in the academic environment of literary studies. In Figure 3, students can be seen participating in a group activity that required them to determine the seasonality of a verse based on the use of a seasonal element. This discovery was then used to discuss atmospheres,

and how the emotional and physical components of atmospheres (as a felt thing akin to weather) can affect one's interpretation of an ELH. As such, if an ELH does not reach the level of critical engagement students may come to expect and even demand from it, it is not a problem of the student, but rather a problem of the ELH, putting the entirety of the burden, as well as the future of the genre, on those that compose it.

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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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Practical Tips for Developing Your Academic Writing Voice

Jerry Talandis Jr.

As a language teacher, you are no doubt familiar with the concept of "voice" in writing. If you have taught the subject, perhaps you've enjoyed the pleasure of helping students find their own unique way of expressing themselves via writing in another language. However, when it comes to crafting professional prose to advance our careers, finding our voice can be quite a challenge. After all, academic writing is not about personal expression per se; rather, the primary aim is to communicate complex ideas and research findings clearly, accurately, and precisely to a scholarly audience (American Psychological Association, 2020). Authors need to follow many rules and style conventions that appear to constrict authentic self-expression. However, without a strong voice, academic writing can come across as soulless, boring, and ineffective (Pinker, 2014). Writing with a clear, distinctive voice helps position you as part of a broader scholarly community (Madi et al., 2021). In this column, I will therefore explore what it means to develop your academic voice and provide some tips for how you can put more "you" into your professional writing.

Voice in Academic Writing

In academic writing, voice is a vast and complex topic; beyond what I can share with you in this short column. For now, Gardner's (2010) characterization will do: "To me, your writer's voice is the expression of YOU on the page. It's that simple—and that complicated… Voice is all about your originality and having the courage to express it" (para 4). The words *originality* and *courage* connect with me, as they serve to capture the essence of this principle. According to Robbins (2016), academic writing requires more than just presenting ideas, facts, and conclusions; originality is also essential. You also need to communicate a point of view or stance. When you are doing that consistently in your writing, you are using your own voice. Likewise, courage is needed to weather the inevitable failure you will experience when dealing with manuscript rejection, harsh comments, or push-back on your ideas.

In a typical research paper, writing with a clear voice involves (Academic English UK, n.d.):

- Taking a subtle, nuanced stance or showing shades of meaning
- Selecting and reporting data or sources critically
- Interpreting evidence to support your stance
- Choosing a persuasive structure for your arguments
- Integrating the evidence into your argument, with the appropriate signals
- Writing in your own words

In academic writing, voice is often prominent in specific sections, such as the introduction when personal anecdotes are used to engage readers (MacPhail, 2015), or the discussion section where arguments and conclusions are presented to interpret study findings (Robbins, 2016).

According to Sword (2011), the long-held belief that personality should never intrude upon scholarly writing lest research findings not be taken seriously has begun to soften. For example, in her cross-disciplinary study of 66 peer-reviewed journals, Sword found only one that forbids the use of personal pronouns. She noticed that authors often use an impersonal and seemingly authoritative style in their writing in various ways, such as by using the "royal we," referring to themselves in the third person, attributing agency to their research, and relying heavily on the passive voice. However, by using their own voice in writing, their prose can naturally become more energetic, persuasive, and easier to understand.

Practical Tips

Fortunately, with practice, it is possible to learn how to write within the confines of academia in a way that "has a voice" or that "sounds like a person" (Elbow, 2007, p. 7). Here are a few tips to get you started.

Know and Adjust to Your Audience

As an academic writer, you need to be aware of your audience and write in ways that are as accessible and engaging as the guidelines and occasion allow. How much "you" to put into your prose will largely depend on whom you're writing for and where. For example, as Madi et al. (2021) note, there is a big difference in style between the soft and hard sciences. In fields such as ELT, a strong personal voice can establish a stronger relationship with the readers, strengthen findings, and boost credibility. However, when reporting on formal empirical research, where the findings are more clear-cut, credibility and confidence can be increased by subordinating one's

identity to promote objectivity. Just as wearing formal clothing is appropriate and expected for certain occasions, such as a job interview or a formal dinner, writing in a formal style is appropriate and expected for many academic publications. No matter whom you write for, the goal should be to present yourself in a professional manner that conveys competence, authority, and respect for the occasion in keeping with your scholarly identity. Studying a target journal's style and paying special attention to any submission guidelines are practical ways to gauge the appropriate level of voice in a writing project.

Make a Publication Bucket List

To truly realize your academic writing voice, it is important to experiment with as many different writing styles as you can throughout your career. Seek out different publication opportunities that allow for varying degrees of formality and see which ones resonate most with you. To challenge yourself a bit, make a publication bucket list and populate it with all types of articles, from informal to formal. For example, over the course of your career, you could aim to write at least one:

- Academic blog post
- Book review
- Practical teaching paper
- Article in a JALT chapter or SIG newsletter
- Article in an in-house university journal (*kiyo*)
- Conference proceedings article
- Graduation thesis
- Research article in an international peer-reviewed journal
- Book chapter
- Full book, either with others or by yourself

As you work through your list, you may end up preferring one sort of writing to another. This is fine, as you will have found a comfortable niche and can devote most of your time there. Nevertheless, the experience of trying different styles will stretch your capabilities and teach you a lot about how to express your authentic self in a variety of academic settings.

Keep an Academic Journal

Reading broadly and writing regularly are commonsense bits of advice that can help you improve your academic prose. How about combining these two into one activity by keeping an academic journal? Journals are great for providing a safe, therapeutic space where you can write about what

is important to you. If you keep one devoted to your career, then you'll give yourself regular opportunities to reflect on your teaching practice (Talandis, Jr. 2022). You could, for example, use this space to write reactions to lessons, express opinions on related issues, and critically reflect on academic literature. No one has to read these missives but you, so you are completely free to express yourself, uncensored, as you see fit. Doing so regularly, such as every day, even for a short time, will help you form the habit of writing, through which your unique voice will naturally emerge (Robbins, 2016).

Listen to Your Writing

To really develop your academic voice, you need to listen to it, and not just in a metaphorical sense, but with your physical ears. Elbow (2007, p. 7) points out the benefits of this practice: "When students have the repeated experience of reading their writing aloud, they are more likely to listen to their words and write sentences that are inviting and comfortable to speak, which, in turn, makes the sentences better for readers reading in silence." Listening to your writing is also a great addition to your editing and polishing workflow (Talandis, Jr. & Bailey, 2022). For example, after writing your first draft, you could record yourself reading it aloud, then listen to what you wrote. If you're not keen on the sound of your voice, you could copy and paste your text into a free text-to-speech app such as *NaturalReaders* (www.naturalreaders.com). It is quite relaxing and interesting to sit back after you have written some text and to hear it read back to you. The quality of synthetic voices has come a long way, so the illusion is quite effective. You can also have fun hearing your words in different accents! In whatever method you choose, regularly listening to your prose will help you write more clearly and effectively.

Get Feedback from Trusted Sources

Finally, you can develop your voice by seeking feedback and guidance from others, such as trusted peers, colleagues, mentors, or professional writing tutors. Aim to embed this step into your writing workflow, especially for high-leverage projects. Feedback can help you identify areas for improvement, which will refine your writing style and voice over time. Additionally, seeking feedback can help you develop humility and an open mind, which are important aspects of successful academic scholarship. You may think you are spot on with a particular insight, but you cannot really be sure until you put yourself out there a bit and see how someone else reacts. This

point of advice also gives me an opportunity to plug the *Writer's Peer Support Group*, a team of dedicated JALT volunteers that offer up their time to assist writers looking to get published. If you need to have someone check over your manuscript, get in touch at https://jalt-publications.org/psg.

Final Thoughts

Developing your academic writing voice is an ongoing process that takes time and practice. In the end, giving attention to your academic writing voice is akin to investing in the development of your academic identity and effectiveness as an educator. Being able to confidently write as your authentic self within the confines of academia is a true accomplishment worth pursuing. As Potgieter & Smit (2009, p. 225) note, "Finding our voice in our academic writing involves (in an almost metaphysically profound sense) a journey in search of the self." Have courage and do not be afraid to inject some personality into your writing to make it your own. You absolutely can develop a writing voice that reflects your unique perspective and contribution to our language teaching profession.

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[JALT FOCUS] SIG FOCUS

Michael Phillips

Collaboration, in all its forms, is a cornerstone of JALT activities and the same goes for SIGs. JALT currently has 30 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) available for members to join. This column publishes an in-depth view of one SIG each issue, providing readers with a more complete picture of what these groups believe and do. Past SIG Focus columns are available at https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/sig-news • Email: jaltpubs.tlt.sig.focus@jalt.org

Art, Research, and Teaching SIG

Brennan Conaway
Coordinator

The Art, Research, and Teaching (ART) SIG (https://jalt.org/groups/sigs/art-research-and-teaching) is a new group for artists, researchers, and teachers who are interested in the role of visual art in the classroom. William Hall and I both independently considered ideas for a visual art SIG sometime around 2020. We each pursued it separately, then things stalled, but became re-energized through an article that William and Eric Luong (another founding member of ART) wrote for the LD-SIG newsletter (Hall & Luong, 2021).

Scope

Art has the potential to enrich the learning experience, and ART provides a forum to share resources and discuss innovative ideas about language-learning. Art has many vital uses in the EFL classroom and is particularly important for engaging digital natives, whose experience with language is almost always multimodal.

We also believe visual art offers many benefits for language learners. These include providing content for students to connect with the target language, encouraging active learning via collaborative art activities, supporting multicultural literacy and multi-modal reading skills, offering affordances to interact with SLA material, reducing social anxiety, increasing social inclusion, and promoting critical thinking skills—the bedrock of learning how to learn.

We hope ART will appeal to a wide range of members: artists who teach, teachers who make art, language teachers at art schools, art teachers in CLIL programs, creative teachers engaged in action research, and other language teachers who use art (or want to use art) to bring some creativity into their classrooms.

Officers

As the founding coordinator, I combine my experiences as an artist/designer with EFL concepts I first encountered in the TESOL master's program at Temple University Japan. I use visual art and critical inquiry in my courses at Tama Art University and Meiji Gakuin University.

William Hall (Program Chair) came to Japan on the JET Programme, after graduating from Glasgow School of Art. He studied art education at Kagoshima University, then completed an MFA and PhD at Kyoto City University of Arts. He teaches English and art theory at Kyoto Saga University of Art.

Martin Sedaghat (Publicity Chair) is a teacher for both preschool and university students in Niigata. With a background in archaeological illustration and creating art for picture books, he has learned that art is a powerful tool for providing visual and tactile modalities in the classroom.

Will Tiley (Treasurer) is a lecturer at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in Oita. While his preferred medium for artistic expression is music, visual art is also an important part of his life and lessons. He explores social and cultural discussions and art-creation in the EFL classroom.

Namiko Tsuruta (Membership Chair) is a former US preschool teacher, with a psychology degree from the University of Michigan, and a longtime EFL practitioner and teacher trainer in Kanto. Her passion for the arts and languages extends to her lessons, inspiring learners to express their authentic selves.

Activities

We are excited to feature writers and artists in our *ART Gallery* publication. We think many teachers have ideas and innovations about using visual art in their classroom, and we want to hear from those teachers. We also display art in the journal: artwork used in lessons, student artwork, or art inspired and informed by the EFL-teaching experience. As such, we would like to invite you to contribute both articles and art for consideration.
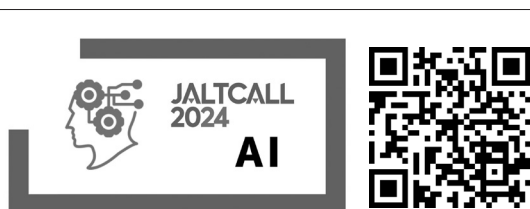
Our first in-person event, *Art in the EFL Classroom: From Kindergarten to University*, was in January 2023. Most of the core officers presented their experiences and lesson ideas utilizing visual art for language learning. A wonderful byproduct of this event was meeting Namiko, who became our Membership Chair.

We are currently discussing a future event with the tentative title *Art Is Useless*. Of course, this is an ironic title, but it points to popular (mis)conceptions about the utility and value of art.

Most of us are new to JALT. We do, however, appreciate the power of visual art to revitalize language-learning, and we hope you will join us sometime! If interested, please contact us at art@jalt.org.

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ARTICLES

JALT PRAXIS

JALT FOCUS • SIG FOCUS

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 • Lifelong language learning • Materials development • Pragmatics, pronunciation, second language acquisition • Teaching children • Testing and evaluation

　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.

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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*

Who's Afraid of *They*? "They" Are!

In 2019, both the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* announced that they were acknowledging additional meanings for the pronoun *they/them*. In the etymological world there hasn't been news this big since the OED decided once and for all to remove the 'word' *quasipostantiologism* from its pages on the grounds that it was a non-word made up only of affixes with no root. (Interestingly, the more basic term *postantiologism* was allowed to remain by a slim margin, due to a well-organized lobbying effort by postantiologists from around the world.)

For centuries, English speakers have used *they* not only as a referent for a group of two or more people, but also as a non-*he*-or-*she*-specific referent for an *individual* person. Famous users going back to Austen and Shakespeare reflected the times by using *they* as a singular. But for some reason the self-styled Preservers of Our Precious Language, English (otherwise known as "the POOPLE"—or more familiarly "the Poops"—but often referred to simply as "They") launched a campaign of shame against singular *they*, banishing it to the colloquial back alleys of English usage. Properly, They insisted, both gender *and* number had to be either retained by differentiation (*he/she*) or subsumed by inclusion (genderless *he*?!), causing speakers to stumble through clunky double-take constructions like "Man lives longer than most other mammals after he is no longer able to bear children," or "Someone has left his-or-her earrings-or-cufflinks in the ladies'-lounge-or-toilet."

The Poops' pronoun gender enforcement gave generations of English teachers anxieties about committing linguistic sacrilege whenever they asked students questions like, "Would anybody like to share *their* thoughts on this Emily Dickinson poem?" or "Which one of you chumps is going to avoid detention by ratting on *their* friends and telling me who stole the projector remote?" Personally, I learned long ago to get around this conflict by using *it*: "If somebody needs to use the bathroom, *it* can take one of the hall passes hanging by the door." You might argue that calling somebody "it" is dehumanizing, but you have to admit that you're doing the same thing by calling them "some*body*" in the first place.

Ironically, the dictionaries' acceptance of singular *they* is not intended to remove gender from pronoun usage, but rather to add and acknowledge *additional* genders, i.e., people who don't identify as either *he* or *she*. Something makes me think that this act of gender recognition on Oxford and Webster's part might be even more infuriating to all those Poops out there (in this case I mean the Protectors of Our Prejudices, Lifestyles and Ethics) who think that two gender words is plenty, thank you. To Them, *nonbinary* is a technical term that should only be relevant in a mathematics classroom. And even then, some of Them might claim the word "condones fluidity" and try to get the math teacher fired for mentioning it in class.

As far as I'm concerned, in typical English no one is *any* gender at all until the speaker/writer chooses—or is compelled by Them—to indicate one. If I were talking to my friend about an encounter I had with someone the day before, I could reveal gender right off the bat by saying, "I was talking to this dude at the party last night—wow, man, he was such a poser!" On the other hand, I could use my oratory skills to tell the same story and leave gender out of it completely: "I say, *mon ami*, you'd never imagine what sort of utterly drab and superficial person I was accosted by at last night's soirée!" Depending on my powers of verbosity, I could postpone the gender reveal for another sentence, another minute, or indefinitely, by using descriptive nouns rather than pronouns: "The tiresome simp had the nerve to come to the party wearing purple silk jodhpurs just like mine!"; "When I started questioning the cretin's motives for imitating my evening's fashion choices, the witless dullard had no more ingenuity than to parrot the same insinuations at me!"; etc.

Mind you, dragging this out sentence after sentence just to avoid mentioning gender can test the limits of your vocabulary. Using *they* is much simpler, and gives you a chance to stick it to Them at the same time, with all the blessings of the OED. So use *they* whenever you get the chance: it's all for one and one for all! And while you're at it, get yourselves a pair of purple silk jodhpurs.

JALT2023

全国語学教育学会
第49回年次国際大会教材展示会
2023年11月24日～2023年11月27日
茨城県つくば市 つくば国際会議場
49th Annual International Conference on
Language Teaching and Learning & Educational
Materials Exhibition

November 24 - 27, 2023

Tsukuba International Congress Center
(Epochal Tsukuba), Tsukuba, Ibaraki, Japan

JALT2023 Plenary Speakers

Gary Barkhuizen, University of Auckland
Sponsored by JALT

Gary Barkhuizen is Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. His teaching and research interests are in the areas of language teacher education, teacher and learner identity, study abroad, and narrative inquiry. Originally from South Africa, he obtained his MA from Essex University in the UK, and his doctorate from Teachers College, Columbia University. His latest book is *Language Teachers Studying Abroad: Identities, Emotions and Disruptions* (2022, Multilingual Matters).

Kathleen Kampa, Independent
Sponsored by Oxford University Press & JALT

Kathleen Kampa is a teacher, teacher-trainer, author, and songwriter who specializes in working with young learners. Kathy promotes an inquiry-based approach to teaching through which students develop 21st century skills. She is a co-author of four ELT primary courses published by Oxford University Press, including *Magic Time*, *Everybody Up*, *Oxford Discover*, and *Beehive*. In addition, she creates songs, chants, and movement activities for young learners, and has produced two albums for children.

Judy Noguchi, Kobe Gakuin University
Sponsored by JALT

Judy Noguchi, Professor emerita, Kobe Gakuin University, does research, materials development, and teaching in English for Specific Purposes. MEXT's Dispatched Expert to SEAMEO Centres 57th RELC International Conference, 13-15 March 2023. Publications (2022): Reviewing the scientific review article, *The Routledge Handbook of Scientific Communication*; Genre-based, corpus-supported writing courses for science and engineering students at Japanese universities, *STEM English in Japan* (Palgrave Macmillan); Ecdysis for globalization: ESP in Japan today, *World Englishes 41* (2022).

Akiyoshi Yonezawa, Tohoku University
Sponsored by JALT

Akiyoshi Yonezawa is Professor and Deputy Director, International Strategy Office, Tohoku University, Japan. With a background in sociology, he conducts research on comparative higher education policy—especially on world-class universities, internationalization, and public-private relations in higher education. He is an editorial board member of *Higher Education Quarterly*, an advisory board member of *Higher Education and International Higher Education*, and a board member of Japan Association for Higher Education Research, Japan Comparative Education Society.