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In this month's issue . . .

Greetings, esteemed readers of the upcoming issue of *The Language Teacher*. As I undertake the role of co-editor for this issue, I am eager to share with you not only the enriching content of this issue, but also a brief chapter of the journey that has led me here. My name is Brian Strong, and I am an Assistant Professor in the School of Linguistics and Language Studies at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, where I also have the privilege of coordinating its TESL programs. Reflecting on my 14-year sojourn in Japan many years ago, I am reminded of the profound impact those years had on my professional and personal growth. It was back in 2013 when my first article was published in *The Language Teacher*, marking the beginning of a rewarding relationship with this journal. Today, I am both honored and delighted to contribute in a new capacity, striving to bridge the gap between research and practice within our vibrant community.

In this issue, we are excited to showcase research and perspectives that span the broad spectrum of language education.

Our Feature Article by **Caroline J. Handley** and **Michael Kelland**, titled "*The Effect of Working Memory Capacity on Instructed Vocabulary Learning*," explores the crucial role of working memory in the acquisition and retention of vocabulary in second language learning. This study not only highlights the theoretical aspects of working memory but also offers key insights for educators on enhancing vocabulary learning through understanding cognitive processes.

James Bury's contribution in the Readers' Forum, "*Reflections on a Retrospective PhD-by-Publication Journey*," provides a compelling narrative on the challenges and opportunities of pursuing a PhD through publication. Bury's reflections shed light on the misconceptions and realities of this path, encouraging a broader discussion about accessibility and

Continued over

2024 Board of Directors Election Candidate Statements can be found on page 51 of this *TLT*

TLT Editors: Irina Kuznetcova & Brian Strong
TLT Japanese Language Editor: Mami Ueda

innovation in doctoral education. His insights are particularly valuable for those considering or navigating alternative routes to academic qualifications.

This issue also includes an interview with Gary Barkhuizen by **Michael Ellis** and our regular JALT Praxis columns, such as My Share, *TLT* Wired, Book Reviews, Teaching Assistance, Writers' Workshop, and JALT Focus. Please check those out as well!

Before I proceed further, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the significant contributions of David Marsh, one of our final proofreaders, who is stepping down from his role. David's meticulous attention to detail and dedication to ensuring the quality of our publication have been invaluable to our team and readers alike. On behalf of the editorial team and our readership, I extend our heartfelt thanks to David for his years of service and wish him the very best in his future endeavors.

In closing, my heartfelt thanks go to the contributors and editorial team for their invaluable efforts, and to you, our readers, for your ongoing support. I hope this issue brings you both enjoyment and useful insights.

— *Brian Strong,* TLT *Co-editor*

尊敬する読者の皆様、*The Language Teacher*最新号へようこそ。今号において共同編集者を務めることになりましたので、本号の豊富な内容を紹介するとともに、私が*TLT*に関わるようになった経緯を簡単に紹介いたします。私は、カナダ、オタワにあるCarleton UniversityのThe School of Linguistics and Language Studies（言語学・言語研究学部）の助教で、TESL Program (第二言語としての英語教授法プログラム)を担当しているBrian Strongと申します。何年も前の14年間の日本滞在を振り返りますと、その年月が仕事上及び個人的な成長に多大な影響を及ぼしたことに気付かされます。2013年に、私の初めての論文が*The Language Teacher*に掲載されました。それがこのジャーナルとの実りある関係の始まりとなりました。今日、新しい立場から、我々の活気あるコミュニティーの中で、研究と実践のギャップを埋める橋渡しになれるように貢献できるのは光栄であり、喜ばしい限りです。

今号では、広範囲にわたる言語教育の研究及び視点をご紹介いたします。

今号のFeature Articleでは、Caroline J. HandleyとMichael Kellandが、"The Effect of Working Memory Capacity on Instructed Vocabulary Learning"という題で、第二言語学習における語彙の習得と保持におけるワーキングメモリ（作業記憶）の極めて重要な役割について詳しく検証しています。この研究は、ワーキングメモリの理論的側面を強調するだけではなく、認知過程を理解しながら語彙学習を高める上での重要な洞察力をも教育者に提供しています。

Readers' Forumでは、James Buryが、"Reflections on a Retrospective PhD-by-Publication Journey"という題で、出版物による博士号を取得するための挑戦と機会についての情報を、説得力のある語り口で提供しています。Buryの考察は、この方法の誤解と現実を解明し、博士号教育における取得の可能性と革新についての広範な議論を促しています。彼の洞察力は、学歴取得への代替手段を検討、模索している方々には、特に貴重です。

今号は、Michael EllisによるGary Barkhuizenへのインタビューや、JALT Praxis連載コラム、例えば、My Share, *TLT* Wired, Book Reviews, Teaching Assistance, Writers' Workshop, そして JALT Focusなどを掲載しています。ぜひご覧ください。

次に進む前に、最終校正者の仕事を降りるDavid Marshの多大な貢献に言及したいと思います。我々の出版物の質を確保するためのDavidの細かな所にまで至る細心の配慮や献身的な仕事ぶりは、我がチームや読者にとって非常に重要でした。編集者及び読者一同を代表して、Davidの長年の貢献に心からの感謝を申し上げます。また今後の益々の活躍をお祈りしております。

最後に、投稿者や編集者の方々の計り知れない努力に対し、また読者の皆様の変わらぬご支援に対して、心から感謝いたします。皆様が本号を楽しみ、お役に立てていただければ幸いです。

— Brian Strong, *TLT* 共同編集者

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The Effect of Working Memory Capacity on Instructed Vocabulary Learning

Caroline J. Handley
Michael Kelland
Tokai University

Previous research has shown a small to moderate but robust effect of working memory (WM) on both first language (L1) and second language (L2) learning and comprehension. However, few studies have addressed the relationship between WM and vocabulary learning in a naturalistic (classroom) setting. In this study, we report on a multi-site experiment that assessed the effect of WM capacity on L2 vocabulary learning. The target items were embedded in a highly supportive learning context which included both input and output activities. Immediate and delayed posttests showed that even under such conditions, WM was positively associated with vocabulary learning outcomes. These results extend findings that WM influences initial word learning (e.g., Martin & Ellis, 2012). In contrast with the findings of Yang et al. (2017), the association between WM and vocabulary learning remained at delayed posttest, suggesting that WM may affect retention as well as learning rate.

先行研究によると、ワーキングメモリ（WM）は第一言語（L1）および第二言語（L2）の学習と理解の両方に対して、小から中程度ながら確たる効果を持っていることが示されている。しかし、教室などの自然な授業環境でWMと語彙学習との関係を扱った研究はほとんどない。本研究では、L2の語彙学習に対するWM容量の影響を評価するため、多地点で行われた実験の1つを報告する。対象となる項目は、インプットとアウトプットの活動を含む高度に支援的な学習コンテクスト内に組み込まれており、このような条件下でも、WMは語彙学習の成果と正の相関があることが、直後テストと遅延事後テストによって示された。これらの結果は、WMが初期の単語学習に影響を与えるという研究結果（Martin & Ellis, 2012）をさらに発展させるものである。また、Yang et al.（2017）の調査結果とは対照的に、WMと語彙学習との関連性は遅延事後のテストでも維持された。このことは、WMが学習速度のみならず記憶保持にも影響を与える可能性があることを示唆している。

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Working Memory and Language Learning

Working memory (WM), as first proposed by Baddeley (Baddeley & Hitch, 1974; Baddeley, 1986, 2000), is “our mental sketchpad, where we hold information ‘in mind’ and process it” (Miller, 2013, p.411). It is also assumed to be critical for enabling the consolidation of information in long-term memory (e.g., Daneman & Carpenter, 1980). Importantly, WM has been shown to have limited capacity; people can actively maintain only a few items in WM before the system becomes overburdened (e.g., Baddeley & Hitch, 1974; Cowan, 2014). Numerous studies have demonstrated the effect of individual differences in WM capacity on learning outcomes, including studies on first language (L1) and second language (L2) acquisition (for reviews, see Juffs & Harrington, 2011; Szmalec et al., 2012).

In a meta-analysis of L1 research, Daneman and Merikle (1996) found WM was a significant predictor of language comprehension. They also found that simple WM tasks, which assess short-term storage ability or phonological short-term memory (PSTM), are more weakly associated with comprehension than complex tasks, which involve an intervening task, thus also assessing processing ability or executive WM.

In a meta-analysis based on 79 studies of WM and L2 processing and proficiency, Linck et al. (2014) estimated the population effect size of WM to be $r = .255$, which is generally considered to be a small to medium effect (see Cohen, 1992). Most studies reported a positive correlation between WM and learning outcomes, although, as in L1 studies, complex span tasks were better predictors than simple ones. However, the studies in the meta-analysis looked at general and specific learning outcomes and assessed different language knowledge and skills. In general, few studies have examined WM in relation to explicit L2 vocabulary learning.

Working Memory and Explicit Vocabulary Learning

Some studies suggest that WM is related to vocabulary acquisition at early stages of language learning. For example, Kempe et al. (2010) found that WM was associated with word learning in a task in which 47 participants with no prior exposure to the language learned to match Russian words to pictures. In a similar design in which 40 participants learned German words, Speciale et al. (2004) found that PSTM was associated with performance in an immediate posttest when translating the words into German, but not when translating from German into the L1 (English). In a study by Martin and Ellis (2012), in which 40 participants learned words (and grammar) in an artificial language, both

PSTM and WM were significant predictors of word learning at immediate posttest. In another study, Cheung (1996) assessed whether performance on two simple-span WM tasks predicted the number of trials needed to learn three English words through direct translation. After dividing the 84 participants into low and high English vocabulary subgroups, he found that the nonword span task was a significant predictor for the low vocabulary group. Finally, in a study with children who had been learning L2 English for more than three years, Masoura and Gathercole (2005) found that vocabulary knowledge, not PSTM, predicted the number of repetitions necessary for children to learn eight new words. However, children were divided into four groups (low and high vocabulary and PSTM), each with fewer than 20 children, which means that, given the estimated effect size (Linck et al., 2014), there was a low probability of detecting an effect of PSTM, even if one existed.

In addition, two studies that used complex WM tasks found conflicting results. Kormos and Sáfár (2008) measured the association between WM and English language gains following an intensive English course. They found that PSTM was related to language use scores (grammar and vocabulary) for a subset of 21 students who had some prior knowledge of English, but not in their larger group of 100 beginner learners. In addition, 45 students from this larger group also completed a complex WM task, which showed an association with language use scores. Elgort et al. (2018) assessed word learning in 47 Chinese and 50 Dutch advanced learners of English, who learned low frequency words and pseudowords by reading each item in three sentences, either inferring the meaning or writing the words. In immediate posttests, WM was associated with knowledge of form but not meaning, in both learning conditions for the Dutch participants and in the writing condition for the Chinese participants.

To our knowledge, Yang et al. (2017) is the only study of WM and vocabulary learning that has used naturalistic instruction and included a delayed posttest. Their study involved three groups of advanced-level English language learners. However, they primarily investigated the effect of different post-reading activities. All groups read the same text, including eight target items, followed by a sentence writing, gap-fill, or non-vocabulary-related (control) activity. WM was associated with vocabulary learning at immediate posttest only, except for the sentence writing group. The researchers concluded that WM modulates vocabulary learning rate but not decay rate. However, as each group had only 18-26 participants, significant effects of WM could only be detected at larger effect sizes than the meta-analytic effect size calculated by Linck et al. (2014) and non-significant results were reported for associations of the predicted effect size of WM at delayed posttest in the sentence writing and control group. Thus, the generalisability of these results is uncertain.

The Current Study

As reviewed above, the few studies that have examined WM and explicit L2 vocabulary learning have mostly measured WM using simple span tasks, focused on beginner-level language learners, involved fewer than 50 participants, and assessed only immediate learning gains. Although in their meta-analysis of WM and L2 learning, Linck et al. (2014) found no evidence of publication bias, suggesting the effect of WM to be robust, discrepancies in studies of WM and L2 vocabulary learning may be due to underpowered designs. The minimum power recommended by Cohen (1992) is 80% power at $\alpha = .05$ (i.e., an 80% chance of detecting an effect if there is a true effect, accepting a 5% risk of making a Type I error and rejecting a true null hypothesis). Based on the meta-analytic effect size of WM of $r = .255$ calculated by Linck et al. (2014), power analysis in G*Power 3 (Faul et al., 2007), shows that, assuming a positive or no effect of WM, 93 participants are needed to reach this power (to consider a potential negative effect of WM, 118 participants would be needed). Therefore, we designed a relatively large, multi-site study to explore whether WM, as measured by a complex span task, is related to explicit L2 (English) vocabulary learning in intermediate-level language learners, and whether WM is associated only with immediate learning rate or also with longer-term retention. To ensure ecological validity, we embedded the target words in a 90-minute communicative lesson plan, which was taught by the second researcher.

Method

Participants

A total of 111 first-year students in five intermediate-level classes at three Japanese universities took part in the study, after providing written informed consent in Japanese. However, the data were discarded for nine students who failed to attend all three classes. The data were also excluded for two additional students, who may have been disadvantaged on the translation-based vocabulary test because their L1 was not Japanese. The data for another three students were excluded as they scored zero points on the immediate posttest, suggesting that they had misunderstood the test, given that no other student scored fewer than three points. In the end, the final number of participants was 97.

Working Memory Test

An operation span (OSpan test; Daneman, 1991) from the PEBL battery of psychological tests (Mueller, 2012) was administered to assess each student's WM capacity. This complex span task was chosen as it does not involve language skills beyond decoding single letters, thus raising the likeliness of reflecting L2 speakers' genuine WM (Sanchez et al., 2010). In complex span tasks, target stimuli are interleaved with a distractor task to assess the ability to maintain information without rehearsal (Conway et al., 2005).

In this test, participants tried to remember strings of randomised single letters, presented individually and separated by a mathematical equation which they had to solve, such as 6 + 2 − 3 = ? The participants had 2 seconds to click the mouse to indicate they knew the answer, and then a number was displayed on the next screen. The participants indicated whether the number was the correct answer by clicking on the True or False button next to it. They were then prompted to type the letter string in the presented order. This letter/maths process was repeated with strings of two to seven letters. The test was restarted if the maths score was under 85%. A final WM score was calculated based on the recall accuracy of the letter strings.

Final scores included "absolute OSPAN score" (OSCORE) and "total number correct score" (TSCORE). The OSCORE is the total number of letters correctly recalled in sets in which the entire data string is entered in the correct order, whereas the TSCORE is the total number of letters recalled in the correct position, regardless of whether the entire set was recalled perfectly. The maximum attainable score is 80 for both OSCORE and TSCORE. The TSCORE was used here, as it is considered more reliable (Conway et al., 2005).

The test was conducted under controlled conditions in a university computer room. All necessary software from the PEBL battery was pre-installed, and the students familiarised themselves with the program through practice sessions before the test started.

Target Vocabulary Selection

To select 12 target vocabulary items, we first chose 20 words that could fit naturally into the teaching materials and did not fall within the first 2000 highest frequency English words on Nation's (2017) BNC/COCA headword lists. The initial 20 words were translated into Japanese by a bilingual colleague and given to a separate class of students with a similar English level as the study participants, who were asked to translate them into Japanese. These vocabulary tests were marked by the second author and a Japanese colleague; all items that were correctly translated by three or more students were excluded. The final set of 12 target vocabulary items—amphibian, carnivore, conspicuous, disguise, entice, evade, habitat, mate, mimic, offspring, venom, vibrant—were all medium-frequency words (from the 4000-8000 headword bands), except for the word "mate," which was unfamiliar in its scientific meaning.

Teaching Intervention

At the beginning of the lesson, students were given a pretest consisting of 12 short English sentences containing the target items, which provided minimal contextual clues to their meaning, and then asked to translate each word into Japanese (see Appendix B). The same instrument was used as a posttest and delayed posttest vocabulary test. The target vocabulary was taught in one 90-minute lesson, which included presentation and practice of the target words, and was adapted from a lesson plan used in a previous study by Kelland (2018). The students were first shown the correct answers to the pretest, followed by a pronunciation/repetition phase. They then read an introductory text on how animals use colour, in which the target vocabulary was boldfaced and underlined, and completed a gap-fill exercise, using pictures to assist them. Next, they were divided into groups of three, and each student read one of three different short texts (130 words) about how a particular animal uses colour (see Appendix A for all teaching materials). Each text included four target words, such that all 12 items appeared once across the texts. Texts were run through the Lextutor vocabulary profiler software (Cobb, n.d.) to ensure that all the words, apart from the target items and animal names (species), were within the first 2000 highest frequency words and so should be familiar and not cause additional learning load. The students read their text and underlined the four new words. They then prepared to tell their group about their animal, with instructions to use all four new words. As the students shared their information, they were instructed to also listen for the new words. Although the students were asked to recall the information from memory, afterwards they could check their text and share any forgotten information. This design meant that all students were exposed to all the information on all three animals and to all 12 target words during the speaking and listening activity.

Vocabulary Tests

A vocabulary test, identical to the pretest, was given as an immediate posttest at the end of the teaching session and as a delayed posttest two weeks later (see Appendix B). A meaning-recall translation test was used following Webb (2008), who argued that multiple-choice (recognition) tests may inflate scores (see also Stoeckel et al., 2021).

Results

Analyses were conducted in RStudio (RStudio Team, 2020), run on R version 4.2.2 (R Core Team, 2022) using a variety of packages: car (Fox & Weisberg, 2019), ggplot2 (Wickham, 2016), lme4 (Bates et al., 2015), moments (Komsta & Novomestky, 2022), psych (Revelle, 2022), QuantPsyc (Fletcher, 2022), tidyverse (Wickham et al., 2019).

Working Memory Test

The mean score on the WM test was 57.61 (SD = 11.34), from a maximum TSCORE of 80. Scores showed a significantly non-normal negative skew (Shapiro-Wilk test, $W = 0.96$, $p = .007$) and a boxplot revealed two extreme outliers (scores of 23 and 25 points). The data from these participants were retained, as removing them from the analyses revealed similar correlations.

Vocabulary Test Scores

On the vocabulary pretest, 76 students gave no correct answers, 17 gave one, five gave two, and one student gave three correct answers ($M = 0.31$, $SD = 0.62$), indicating that the 12 target words were largely unknown before the teaching intervention. Thus, all the words were assumed to be equally difficult, and the differences between raw scores on the tests were treated as linear.

The vocabulary posttest scores were high, $M = 8.82$, $SD = 2.67$, showing that students learned the new words during the lesson. The delayed posttest scores, although lower, showed that this new knowledge was maintained over the following two weeks, $M = 6.00$, $SD = 3.15$. As expected, vocabulary test scores were oppositely skewed, with predominantly higher scores on the posttest and lower scores on the delayed posttest (posttest $W = 0.91$, $p < .001$; delayed posttest $W = 0.94$, $p < .001$).

Working Memory and Vocabulary Learning

As the data are interval data and not normally distributed, a Kendall correlation was calculated (a non-parametric correlation which is more accurate with tied ranks), see Table 1. TSCORE values, our measure of WM, were correlated with vocabulary gains at both immediate posttest ($\tau = .180$, $p = .014$) and delayed posttest ($\tau = .189$, $p = .009$). These results are similar to the meta-analytic effect size of WM on L2 acquisition, $r = .255$ (Linck et al., 2014), being approximately equivalent to $r = .279$ and $r = .294$, respectively (see Gilpin, 1993). Due to the non-normal distribution, robust 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were calculated for each correlation via the bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrap (Efron, 1987), with 10,000 samples. This analysis confirmed the positive correlations between TSCORE and vocabulary test scores.

Table 1.

Kendall Correlations for WM and Vocabulary Test Scores

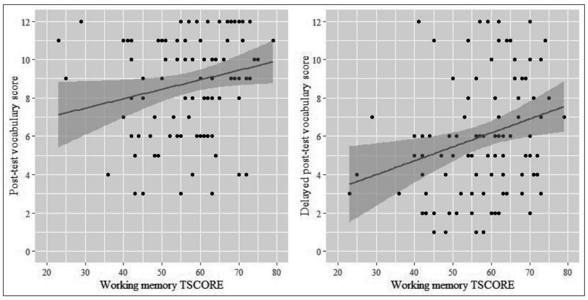
	Kendall's tau (τ)	p	95% CI BCa bootstrap
TSCORE – Posttest	.180	.014	.027, .317
TSCORE – Delayed	.189	.009	.056, .305
Posttest – Delayed	.400	< .001	.260, .516

The association between WM, as measured by TSCORE, and posttest and delayed posttest vocabulary scores is visualized in Figure 1. The regression line (surrounded by 95% confidence intervals) shows high uncertainty in the association between WM and vocabulary learning for those students who scored very low on the WM test. This may indicate that these students' performance on the WM test was adversely affected by uncontrolled factors, such as low task motivation, resulting in measurement error (Conway et al., 2005).

In addition, we examined whether fitting a linear mixed-effects model would improve this simple model. Adding random intercepts for class did not improve model fit for the association between WM and vocabulary scores, indicating that correlations were similar across the different classes. However, pretest vocabulary scores were significantly correlated with posttest scores, as shown in Table 2. Importantly, there was no correlation between vocabulary pretest score and TSCORE, indicating independent correlations between these variables and posttest scores. The calculation of standardized β coefficients showed that as TSCORE increased by 1 SD, posttest and delayed posttest vocabulary scores increased by 0.2 and 0.25 SD, respectively. This means that scoring an additional 11 points on the WM test was associated with correctly recalling an extra 0.5 and 0.8 words.

Figure 1.

Association Between WM and Vocabulary Learning



Scatterplots showing the correlations between WM and posttest and delayed posttest vocabulary scores. The shaded areas around the blue linear regression lines represent 95% confidence intervals.

Discussion

We examined the association between WM and instructed L2 vocabulary learning within a classroom context. The results showed a small but statistically significant effect on both the posttest and delayed posttest scores, confirming previous research suggesting that WM may be a predictor of L2 vocabulary learning (Yang et al., 2017), but with a larger sample size and multi-site design. In contrast with previous studies (e.g., Martin & Ellis, 2012), we found that WM was associated with learning outcomes in intermediate-level learners. Notably, this effect was observed in a high-support learning context, which included several explicit strategies for teaching the new words (visual images, definitions, and example sentences), an input task (reading), and a controlled but interactive output task in which students either produced or heard each target item. This design was informed by research showing that explicit pre-teaching of vocabulary is more effective than post-teaching, especially when accompanied by visual images (Alamri & Rogers, 2018). To our knowledge, this is the largest range of pedagogical tasks used in such a study, yet the association between WM and vocabulary learning outcomes was comparable to the meta-analytic effect size (Linck et al., 2014).

The association between WM and vocabulary learning points to the importance of this element of individual aptitude in L2 learning, especially given that learning new words may exert relatively low demand or load on WM resources. Sweller (2010) suggested that WM load in the presentation of new knowledge is dependent not on the number of different elements to be learned, but on the interactions between them. He described learning individual words as a "low element interactivity task" rather than a complex task, suggesting it may incur a relatively low WM load. Although the reading activities would have imposed a higher load, due to the syntactic interactions between words in sentences and the meanings created as the text unfolds, the texts were carefully controlled to contain only high-frequency (known) words, thereby minimizing extraneous load. In sum, the teaching materials enabled students to focus their cognitive resources on learning the target vocabulary while gradually promoting deeper processing through progressively more complex tasks, which should have mitigated WM effects. These findings contradict those of Li et al. (2019), suggesting that WM affects learning outcomes even when cognitive load is low, reinforcing their observation that researchers and, in our opin-

Table 2.

Association of WM and Pretest Scores with Vocabulary Test Scores

			Posttest vocabulary scores		
term	Coefficients	SE	t value	*p*	95% CI BCa bootstrap
(Intercept)	5.70	1.32	4.31	<.001	2.691, 8.291
Pretest	1.34	0.41	3.25	.002	0.762, 1.992
TSCORE	0.05	0.02	2.09	.040	0.003, 0.096
		Delayed posttest vocabulary scores			
(Intercept)	1.43	1.50	0.95	.34	-0.775, 3.834
Pretest	1.87	0.47	3.98	<.001	0.816, 2.647
TSCORE	0.07	0.03	2.71	.008	0.029, 0.109

ion, also teachers should give more consideration to the effects of individual cognitive differences on learning outcomes.

Finally, a few limitations of this study should be noted. First, the students were treated as homogenous groups regarding English language knowledge and ability, based on university assessment. Although the students' knowledge of the target items was pretested, overall prior vocabulary knowledge may have influenced learning outcomes. In a study with advanced English language learners, phonological memory was only associated with L2 vocabulary knowledge in lower proficiency learners (Hummel, 2009). Second, environmental factors that affect learning and WM were not considered. For example, sleep deprivation has a significant negative influence on WM (for a review, see Blasiman & Was, 2018, pp. 203-204).

Finally, although we recruited participants from three different universities, achieving a larger group sample size than in previous studies, the wide confidence intervals around the associations reported here indicate the uncertainty about the true effect size of WM on the students' word learning. Thus, our results highlight the need for future large-scale multi-site studies in research into the influence of WM capacity on L2 learning to achieve reliable estimations.

Conclusion

We examined whether WM was associated with vocabulary learning in a valid ecological setting, namely within a communicative classroom context. Given the noise of uncontrolled variables and the simplicity of the learning task, any association between WM and vocabulary learning was predicted to be small. Therefore, we used a within-subjects multi-site design to try to maximise the reliability of the findings. Our results suggest that vocabulary learning is associated with WM capacity, even when various instructional tasks are used, underscoring the relevance of individual differences to foreign language learning outcomes.

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Appendix A

Texts used in the teaching intervention (reformatted for publication).

(a) Introductory text

How Do Animals Use Colour?

The fur, skin, or feathers of animals can be many different colours. Some animals have dark or plain coloured bodies, but others have bright colours and patterns. This is because some animals use colour to hide, but others use colour to stand out. Colour helps animals in 3 important ways**:** (1) to hide, (2) to signal, or (3) to attract a partner.

(1) *To hide*

Many animals use colour to deceive hungry **carnivores** that want to eat them. There are 4 main ways animals use colour to hide. Sometimes, an animal hides itself against a background of the same colour, other animals have spots, stripes, or patterns that help them **evade** animals that like to eat them. Animals may also try to look the same as the area they live in. They use colour as a **disguise** to make them look like another object. The last way animals use colour is to **mimic** other animals, so they protect themselves by looking like other dangerous or bad-tasting animals.

(EXAMPLE 1:)
(EXAMPLE 2:)

(2) *To Signal*

Instead of hiding, some animals use colour to make themselves very **conspicuous** to other animals. Their colour sends out clear warning messages that they are dangerous, and should not be eaten. Many insects use colour to signal, as well as some **amphibians** and fish. Such animals may taste bad or they may produce **venom** which could kill other animals. Animals use bright colours to signal, such as red and yellow, which are very easy to see in their natural **habitat**.

(EXAMPLE 1:)
(EXAMPLE 2:)

(3) *To Attract a partner*

In many animals, males have developed different behaviours, such as singing, to attract females. Some male animals use colour to attract a **mate**, even though such colours may also make it difficult to hide from animals that want to eat them. The males have **vibrant** colours that can **entice** females, as they show that the male animal is strong and healthy, which means they will produce strong and healthy **offspring**.

(EXAMPLE 1:)
(EXAMPLE 2:)

(b) Gap-fill exercise

Keyword Practice

1. Actors ___________ the voices of different people.
2. The male lion was searching for a ___________.
3. Animals that eat other animals are called ___________.
4. Many super heroes ___________ themselves so that people don't know who they are.
5. A monkey's ___________ is the jungle.
6. The woman was ___________ due to her bright pink hair.
7. ___________ , such as frogs and toads, live on land and in water.
8. The ___________ of cats are called kittens.
9. The ___________ from some snakes can kill people.
10. The killer ___________ the police for many years before he was caught.
11. The artist loved to use bright, ___________ colours in her paintings.
12. Some people ___________ wild animals to their garden with food.

(c) Jigsaw reading texts

Bowerbird

The male Bowerbird, which lives in Australia, is an example of an animal that uses colour to find a mate. They are called Bowerbirds because they collect vibrant coloured objects to decorate a structure called a bower. They do this very strange behaviour to entice a female partner. The male spends many hours putting brightly coloured objects, such as shells, leaves, flowers, pieces of plastic, stones, or glass, in and around the bower. They will then dance next to the bower, and the female will choose the bird with the most beautiful bower and the best dance as her mate. Some bowerbirds can attract up to 30 mates in one season, and so have many offspring. However, males with badly decorated bowers might not be chosen by even one female.

Poison Dart Frog

The poison dart frogs' habitat is the jungles of South America. They are an example of a very conspicuous animal. These amphibians use very bright colours to help them to survive. There are over one hundred different types, or species, of poison dart frogs, and they have many different colours and patterns. The most common colours are yellow, red, green, blue, and black. Although poison dart frogs are only 5cm long, they are dangerous and can hurt other animals very badly. They all have poison, contained in their skin, that will make an animal sick or even kill it. One species has such strong venom that it could easily kill a large animal or person. The bright colours of these frogs warn other animals that they should not eat them.

Stick Insect

The stick insect, with a body length of between 1.5cm and 30cm, is an example of an insect found around the world that uses colour to help it survive. They are usually green or brown, which allows them to disguise themselves with the natural colours of the forest. In this way they can evade animals that want to eat them. Some types, or species, of stick insect can even change colour to match their environment. One species can keep their bodies completely straight, so they look like a stick, and others can even move their bodies from side to side to mimic the movement of the trees or leaves. They also only ever feed at night, when they can hide in the darkness from carnivores who want to eat them.

Appendix B

Vocabulary test used as pretest, posttest and delayed posttest.

Keyword Check

Look at the words below. Write the Japanese translation for the **KEYWORD** only.

Example:
TREE: The **TREE** is tall.
ANSWER= 木

1. **CARNIVORE**: It is a carnivore
   ANSWER = ______________________________
2. **EVADE**: He evaded everyone
   ANSWER = ______________________________
3. **CONSPICUOUS**: I like to be conspicuous
   ANSWER = ______________________________
4. **AMPHIBIANS**: She likes all amphibians
   ANSWER = ______________________________
5. **VENOM**: Some venom is very strong
   ANSWER = ______________________________
6. **HABITAT**: This is its habitat
   ANSWER = ______________________________
7. **VIBRANT**: It is a vibrant place
   ANSWER = ______________________________
8. **OFFSPRING**: Its offspring are over there
   ANSWER = ______________________________
9. **MIMIC**: She mimicked her friend
   ANSWER = ______________________________
10. **MATE**: It searched for a mate
    ANSWER = ______________________________
11. **DISGUISE**: That's a good disguise
    ANSWER = ______________________________
12. **ENTICE**: It enticed her
    ANSWER = ______________________________

2024 Board of Directors Election Candidate Statements can be found on page 51 of this *TLT*

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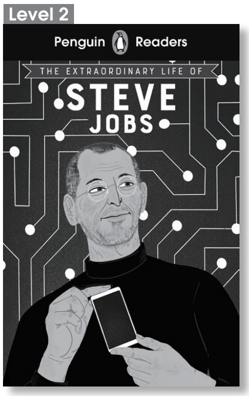

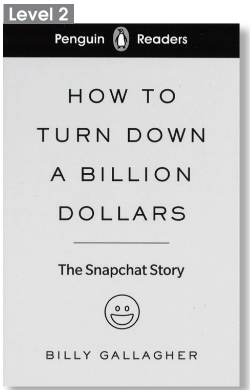

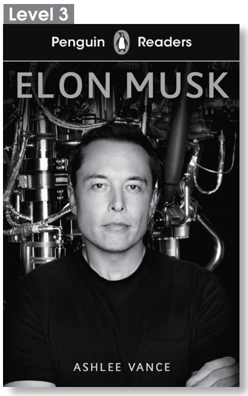

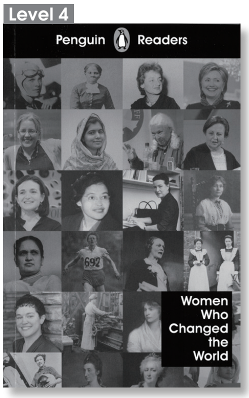

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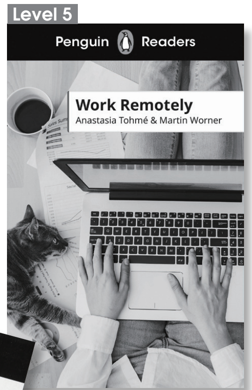

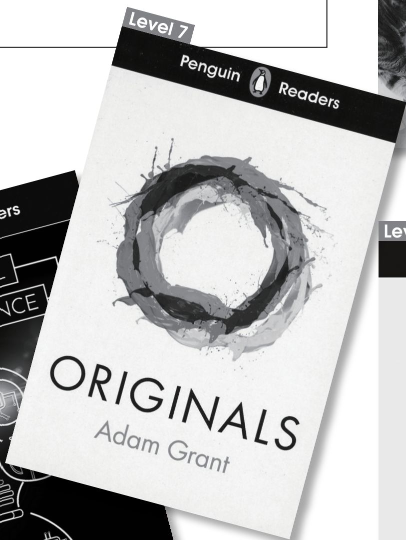

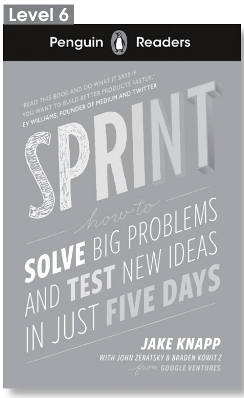

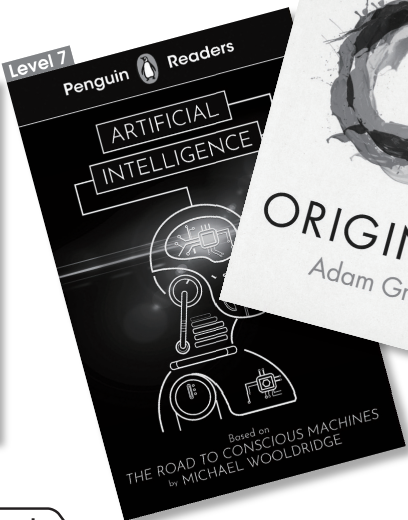

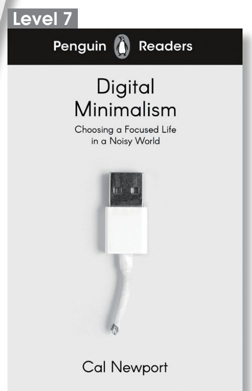

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Reflections on a Retrospective PhD-by-Publication Journey

James Bury
Shumei University

In a context where enhancing career options and economic welfare are increasingly important, many teachers view gaining a PhD as key to cultivating competitive advantage. However, traditional PhD programs are often perceived as inaccessible, and numerous misconceptions surrounding PhD-by-Publication programs remain, especially with regard to what examiners will accept as equivalent to a traditional thesis and what topics and students the programs are suitable for. To address these misconceptions, this article focuses on the retrospective route to completing a PhD by Publication. I reflect on my experiences of completing such a program, outline the process I undertook to obtain the PhD, and add my own perspective to the wider discussion. It is hoped that this short article will help improve understanding of the current contextual factors that shape the retrospective PhD by Publication and encourage others to consider undertaking similar projects and share their own experiences.

キャリアの選択肢の拡大と経済的福祉水準の向上がますます重要になっている状況で、多くの教員は博士号の取得が競争上の優位性を培う鍵となると考えている。 しかし、従来の博士課程は敷居が高いものであると認識されることが多く、論文博士号取得プログラムを巡っては、特に審査官が何を従来の論文と同等のものとして認識するのか、そのプログラムがどのようなテーマや学生に適しているのかという点に関して、多くの誤解が依然として残っている。本論では、これらの誤解に対処するために、遡及的に論文博士号を取得する道をたどることに焦点を当てている。このようなプログラムを修了した自身の経験を振り返り、博士号を取得するために取り込んだ過程を概説し、より幅広い議論に自身の視点を加えている。この論考が、遡及的論文博士号を形成する現在の状況要因への理解を深め、人々が同様のプロジェクトに取り組むことを検討し、自分達の経験を共有することを奨励するのに役立つことを願う。

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Recognized as being the pinnacle of scholarship (Mowbray & Halse, 2010), completing a PhD and achieving "doctoralness" (Johnson & Chong, 2022, p. 219) demonstrates an ability to independently undertake and potentially publish quality research (Jackson, 2013). As publishing plays a significant role in obtaining research funding, universities in a number of countries, including the UK and Australia, now list holding a PhD as a condition of academic appointment. It is also an important factor when applying for the highest faculty positions at the tertiary level in Japan. However, for a varety of reasons, including time and financial constraints, PhDs are often not perceived to be accessible or inclusive (Smith, 2015) and thus can appear to be out of reach to many practicing educators.

In response to this view of PhD programs, alongside changes in job markets and heightened interest in obtaining the award from increasingly varied student cohorts, more diverse PhD pathways have emerged (Peacock, 2017). Among the different types of doctoral programs, the PhD by Publication has become one of the more popular and well-established routes (Frick, 2016). However, in 2023 still only one in three UK universities offered PhDs by Publication (Grove, 2023) and the traditional PhD route still predominates. Furthermore, as much of the published material on PhDs focuses on the conventional route, many misconceptions regarding the PhD by Publication remain, especially with regard to what examiners will accept as equivalent to a traditional thesis and what topics and students the program is suitable for.

To address a specific area of this gap in knowledge, this article focuses on the retrospective route to completing a PhD by Publication, an option popular with published authors and active researchers. By reflecting on my experience of completing a retrospective PhD by Publication, outlining the process I undertook to obtain the PhD, and adding my own perspective to the wider discussion, I hope to improve understanding of the current contextual factors that shape the retrospective PhD by Publication and encourage others to consider undertaking similar projects and share their own experiences.

PhD by Publication

When undertaking a PhD by Publication (also known as PhD by Public Works, Published Works, or Portfolio), instead of writing one thesis of 80,000 to 100,000 words, a series of artefacts are produced, collated, and submitted. The artefacts (i.e., articles, books, book chapters, presentations) are typically drawn together by an overarching contextualizing statement (or critical exegesis) and this work is then usually defended by oral examination (*viva voce*).

The PhD by Publication is commonly offered via prospective and retrospective routes. In the prospective route, candidates create, write, and publish artefacts along with a context statement throughout their candidacy. In the retrospective model, candidates collate a selection of their previously published or created artefacts and write an accompanying context statement which considers what drove the production of those artefacts and what their overall contribution to the field is. Hybrid routes that allow the inclusion of both prior and new publications are also offered by some institutions.

The Retrospective Route

Unlike other PhD routes, which are usually conducted at the beginning of a researcher's career, the retrospective PhD by Publication provides researchers who have already published an alternative route to a PhD by allowing them to demonstrate, through their publications, that they have undertaken doctoral-level research and have the appropriate skills for that level (Smith, 2015). However, similar to traditional PhDs, many people who would like to undertake a retrospective PhD by Publication view the programs as inaccessible, unattainable, exclusive, and overly confusing. These feelings are often compounded by the wide variation of regulations across institutions (see Table 1 for an outline of common similarities and differences).

A further deterrent for those considering a retrospective PhD by Publication is the range of misconceptions and confusion surrounding the programs' advantages and drawbacks. To address this consideration, Table 2 outlines a range of positive and negative factors relating to six main themes. Issues that were particularly significant in my own experience are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Practicalities / General

The positives identified in Table 2 relating to this theme were instrumental in my decision to pursue this route to obtaining a PhD. The increased flexibility and autonomy combined with savings regarding time and money were important as traditional PhD routes are often both more time intensive and expensive.

While there were concerns that this award would be viewed as less valuable or rigorous than a traditional PhD, these were mitigated by my previous positive experiences of completing two online master's degrees, which are also subject to possible stigmatism and skepticism.

Artefacts

The retrospective PhD by Publication appealed to me because my prior research addressed a number of different research questions and used different methods and theoretical frameworks. Although this could have led to issues drawing the publications together into one piece of work, with the help of my supervisors I was able to establish an overarching theme that demonstrated coherence and signifi-

Table 1

Common Similarities and Differences Among Retrospective PhD-by-Publication Programs

Similarities	Differences
• The award is equivalent to a conventional PhD by thesis. • The candidate must already have a substantial body of work in the public domain that is connected to a sustained theme. • The work must show originality and the application of independent critical thinking. • There is an identifiable and significant contribution to knowledge. • Artefacts need to be critiqued and contextualized. • The artefacts and exegesis are brought together into a single, coherent piece of work. • The work is assessed by at least one independent external examiner.	• Some universities restrict the award to their own staff or those having strong connections with the institution. • In some cases, work in non-written form may be allowed. • Some awards are conducted in collaboration with other institutions. • There are a variety of arrangements for supervision and attendance. • Some universities appoint "supervisors" with a record of successful completions, whereas other appoint "mentors" with a lighter advisory role.

Table 2

Factors Relating to Retrospective PhD-by-Publication Programs

Benefits	Drawbacks
Practicalities/General concerns	
• Often completed in shorter time frame. • Often less expensive than traditional PhD programs. • Combine producing published works and earning PhD. • Offer candidates more flexibility and autonomy. • Expose candidates to peer review, critique, and criticism, enabling them to deal with feedback better at PhD level. • Partition PhD into smaller, more manageable pieces of work.	• Lack of general consensus on objectives, purpose, or context. • Possibility of being seen as less rigorous or valuable than traditional PhD. • Issues regarding consistency of awards among universities. • Often restricted openness to candidates other than staff and faculty. • Resistance among scholars due to perceived challenge to, or weakening of, traditional PhD (Lee, 2010). • Fewer chances to network, develop relationships, and participate in university research culture.
Artefacts	
• Already created or published, so not a new project. • Often previously peer reviewed, so already at a publishable level. • Completed progressively, easing pressure of preparing a single thesis. • Can be co-authored, so candidates not isolated as a lone researcher. • Can include wide variety of research questions, methods, and frameworks.	• Limits on age of their creation / publication. • Difficult to combine into single coherent body of work. • Issues regarding which to include. • Confusion over sufficient / appropriate number to include. • Potential enticement for candidates to prioritize time and effort on developing “countable” work → performativity. • Potential temptation for candidates to engage in academic misconduct in order to reach required inclusion number. • Confusion over where they should be published due to flawed systems for determining journal quality. • Questions about definitions of “published” or in the “public domain.” • Issues relating to copyright agreements and confidentiality. • No guarantee that prior publications are of doctoral standard.
Context statement/Structure	
• Encourages candidates to reflect on their artefacts and previous research projects. • Encourages candidates to reflect on their research methodologies, biases, and epistemologies. • Allows candidates to begin writing their context statement almost immediately as it is based on their research.	• Lack of general consensus on length or format. • Confusion regarding writing style, voice, and intended audience. • Inconsistent or absent guidelines on inclusion criteria. • Fewer exemplars of best practices compared to traditional PhD route.

Benefits	Drawbacks
Supervisors / Examiners	
• Often take on more "equal" roles with candidates. • Can have valuable insights and access to a wider range of resources that could improve candidates' work. • Provide support during candidacy.	• May be inexperienced with this route. • Need to be published authors themselves.
Future research	
• Better preparation for publishing after graduation. • More opportunities for research avenues, funding, and collaborations due to increased exposure of candidates' previous work. • Discovery of new research themes and ways to extend previous scale and scope of previous work following reflection on artefacts.	
Career	
• Greater candidate flexibility and autonomy. • Potentially greater opportunities for advancement. • Better chance of gaining long-term, secure employment. • Possible financial incentives.	

cance.

Although artefacts included in a PhD by Publication can take many forms and can be solo authored or joint authored, in my submission, I only included publications in the form of research articles for which I was the sole author (4), lead author (5), or co-author (1). For the publications of which I was not the sole author, it was necessary to outline my precise contribution, in terms of both the contribution percentage and the details of the tasks I undertook. Determining and agreeing on authorship and level of contribution can be problematical in some cases (Paltridge & Starfield, 2023), so keeping well-labelled records of article drafts during their development is recommended.

Most institutions emphasize quality over quantity, and one of the issues that was highlighted regarding my submission was the inclusion of too many publications (generally between three and six, not ten as in mine). On reflection, I included so many articles due to a combination of insecurity regarding the impact of the articles I had written (which focused mainly on fairly small-scale studies and interventions), a desire to produce an exemplary thesis, and the likely presence of impostor syndrome, a sense of self-doubt regarding competence and whether a person feels they "belong" in high-achieving contexts (Clance & Imes, 1978). This mindset is not uncommon, but it is one that should be avoided.

When I was selecting which publications to include, it was important to identify which ones had made the most substantial contribution or impact. The articles' relevance to the overarching theme and their importance as examples of my journey as a practitioner-researcher were also significant factors. I was further aware of the need to acknowledge omissions in the articles' coverage, rigor, and depth. I was fortunate that all the articles I selected had been published within a suitable time from the planned PhD submission (the length of accepted time from publication and submission varies among universities). The ranking of the journals in which my articles had been published was not questioned during the development of my context statement. However, during my oral examination I was asked to justify why I had submitted my research to particular outlets.

Context Statement / Structure

A major consideration regarding the context statement for me, and an issue that is part of a wider discussion on PhD thesis metadiscourse

(Johnson, 2022), was the voice in which it should be written. As the majority of the included articles had been written in the third person and using the academic distancing style, that is how I began writing my exegesis. However, after realizing that I was documenting my own personal journey, I found it more apposite to write in the first person, despite this leading to a different writing style between the included articles and the context statement.

In my case, the most challenging part of writing the context statement was demonstrating the originality and unique contribution of the articles, instead of simply introducing them and setting the context. To do this, it was essential to not only establish a coherent overarching theme, but also reflectively critique my approach to the research I was including. Reviewing the research paradigms, methodologies, and epistemologies was very challenging, but it was also insightful and allowed me to identify certain biases that I had held or other issues that were present in my research design. This has provided me with a better, more informed understanding of the research I had conducted and a platform to improve future research ventures. In my opinion, articulating this realization is a major aspect of a retrospective PhD-by-Publication submission.

A further issue was deciding on an appropriate structure. As each candidate's included artefacts will be different, the structure that best fits their work will differ, but in order to create an exegesis that was more than the sum of the included articles, I felt it was imperative to:

- introduce the artefacts by detailing the educational context and the background to how the teaching interventions included in the articles were developed,
- explicitly state the contribution to knowledge,
- outline my journey as a practitioner-researcher, and
- critically reflect on the significance of the included articles.

In order to fully cover the points above while maintaining coherence and making sure the writing was succinct, the final exegesis contained eight main sections:

1. Introduction
2. Educational context (important as my research was based in the Japanese EFL context, but I was a PhD candidate at a UK university)
3. Background to interventions (i.e., the research projects discussed in the articles)
4. Theme I
5. Theme II
6. Theme III
7. Discussion (focusing on practical, theoretical, and methodological contributions)
8. Conclusion

Depending on the individual submission, some candidates place their artefacts in the body of the context statement, while others include them as appendices.

Supervisors / Examiners

When undertaking any PhD, supervisory mentoring and advice is considered vital as it provides emotional and academic support for candidates when writing their context statement and preparing for their oral examination. I was very lucky to have a good working relationship with my supervisors in which I felt comfortable being open about my ideas, concerns, and issues. However, some supervisors may not be well prepared for the PhD by Publication as it may demand a different doctoral supervisory pedagogy from the traditional route (Lee, 2010) and there is a general lack of guidance on how to best help students through the process (Solli & Nygaard, 2022). Supervisors may also have different incentives as it anecdotally appears less common for supervisors and students to co-publish after PhD-by-Publication candidature. Furthermore, there are possible issues of mismatches in approach and research philosophy between candidates and supervisors. In my case, I extensively read potential supervisors' publications before making a formal application. It was also beneficial that my two supervisors had worked together before and I felt that this helped us work better together as a group of three. Therefore, I strongly recommend considering the perspectives of potential supervisors, the style of their publications prior to appointment, and their previous co-authors and collaborators, before applying to enroll in a program.

My submission was assessed by one internal and one external examiner. The level of input candidates have on who is approached to examine their work may be limited, but it is common for their opinions to be sought. I believe that it is important for suggested examiners to have experience working in a similar context to the candidate, who is tacitly encouraged to cite their work (as well as that of their supervisors). The examiners may be leading authors in the field, which can be intimidating, but it is important to remember that if they accept the offer to assess your work, it is often because they are genuinely interested in what you have produced. Again, in my experience, I was very fortunate to have been assessed by supportive examiners who used the oral examination as a way to better understand my work rather than as an opportunity to strongly criticize my work or be overly negative.

Future Research

Another factor that influenced my desire to pursue this route was the opportunity I would have to reflect on my journey as a practitioner-researcher in an objective way. Submission of a retrospective PhD by Publication illustrates the candidate's progression as a researcher, highlighting both the strengths and weaknesses of that person's work. I looked forward to revisiting my research in this way, critically assessing the contributions I have made to this field via my published research. To do this, I needed to conduct a deep analysis of my articles in order to reach new conclusions that were greater than the findings of the individual articles. However, it was also necessary to analyse the articles subjectively so that I could reflect on my own personal journey as a practitioner-researcher. The process of internalization that I undertook during candidature changed my perceptions of my research and also challenged my sense of self and identity as a practitioner-researcher.

Career

In order to manage and enhance their career and economic welfare, it is important for educators to make responsible choices. Many view publications as a key area in which they can cultivate competitive advantage, employability, and advancement opportunities. If a teacher has published research as I had, then undertaking a retrospective PhD by Publication is potentially the next logical step.

Other Considerations

When deciding whether the PhD-by-Publication route is the best option, it is important to consider the motivation for undertaking the project and the implications that it may have on performativity. It has been argued that PhD-by-Publication candidates can come to think about their research in terms of numbers of publications and journal impact factors, and that these quantitative indicators then become the motivating factors for publication (Jackson, 2013). Consequently, Ball (2003) outlined some key questions to ask:

- Is completing a PhD by Publication important, worthwhile, and something to fully believe in; or is it simply being done because it will be measured or compared?
- Does the research have a greater purpose, or is the purpose to simply publish to sustain your individual career?
- Does the PhD by Publication project truly add to the field or is it just a way of promoting yourself and your published articles by increasing their accessibility? (p. 220)

Process

Having discussed some of the main considerations, influences, and issues I encountered while completing a retrospective PhD by Publication, I will now outline the process I followed and expand on some of the sections illustrated in Figure 1.

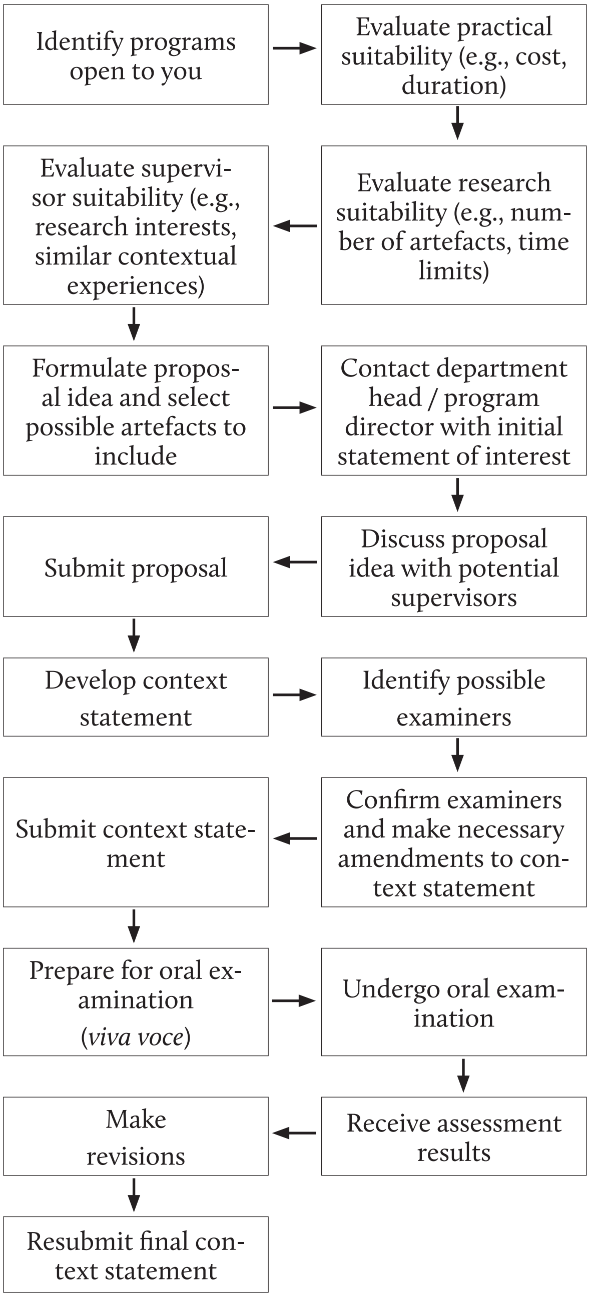
As with all courses that people take, ensuring suitability is imperative to success. Once suitability has been established, a proposal idea needs to be formulated, focusing mainly on an initial conceptualization of an overarching theme that connects the artefacts. This is a difficult task, so discussing and reviewing the proposal with the department head, program director, and potential supervisors is a key process at this point. It also allows all stakeholders to better understand each other's philosophies and approaches at an early stage.

Once the context statement had been written and submitted, I began preparing for the oral examination. For a PhD *viva voce*, it is common for candidates to be allowed to bring a copy of their exegesis and a set of notes with them. I prepared a 2-minute and a 5-minute introduction to my work, and also predicted potential questions relating to themes identified in Appendix 1. This preparation was invaluable in the oral examination, not just because two of my predicted questions were asked, but also because it gave me the confidence to know that I was as familiar with my work and the connected concepts as possible. Without the generous approaches of my examiners and the support of my supervisors, the *viva voce* could have gone very differently, but I enjoyed the experience and I encourage others to view it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that should be cherished.

Following the oral examination, the examiners required minor revisions to my submission. As this is the most common outcome of a PhD *viva voce*, I had prepared myself for this result. The changes included some amendments to the context statement, especially to clarify and strengthen the claim to having developed a unique contribution. Once

Figure 1

Process Undertaken While Searching for, Applying for, and Completing a Retrospective PhD by Publication



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those changes had been made, the revised thesis was approved and the PhD awarded.

Conclusion

The move toward PhD-by-Publication routes aligns with a continued focus in academia and tertiary education on the ability to conduct and publish research. Completing a retrospective PhD by Publication is a major project and one that should not be entered into without full consideration of factors such as financial pressures, family issues, support networks, and the balancing of study and writing with paid work. However, the opportunity for deep self-reflection, the chance to draw previously published research work together into a single opus, and the great satisfaction gained when finally receiving the award can make it a rewarding process overall.

Although the journey toward a retrospective PhD by Publication can be destabilizing and uncomfortable, the point of this article has been to raise awareness of such programs as a credible route for obtaining a doctorate and I hope that it will inform ongoing conversations about pathways to PhD accreditation.

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[JALT PRAXIS] TLT INTERVIEWS


Torrin Shimono & James Nobis

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An Interview With Dr. Gary Barkhuizen

Michael Ellis

International Christian University High School

Welcome to the May/June edition of TLT Interviews*! For this issue we are happy to bring you a fantastic conversation with Dr. Gary Barkhuizen. Dr. 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. He has recently served as editor of the book,* Language Teachers Studying Abroad: Identities, Emotions and Disruptions *(2022). Dr. Barkhuizen was interviewed by Michael Ellis, coordinator for the EFL program at International Christian University High School in Tokyo. Michael holds an MA in TESOL from Teachers College, Columbia University. His research interests include reflective teaching practice and the use of CLIL to amplify marginalized voices.*

Michael Ellis: *In your plenary presentation, you talked about the power of narrative inquiry to explore our teacher identities and the passive role it can have for teacher development. Could you summarize those ideas again for the readers?*

Dr. Gary Barkhuizen: What I tried to do in the plenary was to frame the idea that the work that language teachers do is a narrative experience. That's because as a narrative experience, we have a time dimension to the work we do, like characters of a story interacting over time. These are aspects of story. That was the overall thread running through the whole talk, and one aspect of that was short story analysis, which is a form of narrative analysis I've been using in my work for a long time. I find it to be a very nice way to get into dealing with story for people starting out with narrative inquiry and with research in general. It was published as a methodology article in TESOL quarterly in 2016, where I introduced this approach to analyzing story data. I call it short story analysis, which means you analyze the content of the story by asking who is in the story, where does the story take place, and when do the events of the story unfold. You also focus on the context of the story at micro, meso, and more macro levels.

I then presented short stories of teachers and analyzed them very, very briefly to introduce this framework of teacher practices. Finally, I developed the framework into teacher mindsets and related it to teacher identity, and then looked at how those three complex dynamic systems interact with each other to form a larger network. The stories that I shared enabled me to show how, as teachers, we live stories. Of course, you can use other lenses to examine what teachers do, but I find that using narrative inquiry as an approach to describe our identities as teachers and to describe the work we do is one very effective way.

That resonated with me because you say as teachers, but I'd say maybe as humans, we're really sensitive to stories and the powers that they have to illustrate larger phenomena, but I've never seen it simplified in such an easy-to-understand framework.

The work done with narrative inquiry in language education draws on work from sociology, from philosophy, and from general education, particularly. The philosophical roots and psychological roots are based in those other disciplines. So, it's about human life, but what I spoke about today was teacher life and teacher—researcher life.

Narrative inquiry is quite accessible to novice researchers, but also to anyone researching. I wonder if some might view this as dangerous because the bar for entry could be too low leading to weak research models in the field. How would you respond to such concerns and what are the differences between narrative inquiry and something like a teaching blog? How can we maintain high standards of this research?

This is a question that often pops up when I talk about narrative inquiry. In fact, when I do talks on narrative inquiry, one of the very first slides I put up is, "Narrative inquiry is more than just telling stories." Narrative inquiry is a research methodology. If you are using narrative inquiry as a research methodology, then you need to be rigorous in the way that you go about doing the work. Keeping a blog, telling stories about what happened at work, telling stories about what to do in your classroom are fantastic things to do, but it's not a rigorous, systematic approach to doing inquiry—to doing research. Narrative inquiry needs three major elements. There needs to be focus on a topic, illustrated by an experience, with analysis informed by theory. It's not just descriptively telling stories about people's experiences. It is that, but it's also much more.

Can you think of any common mistakes that people new to the approach might make and how you would advise them in order to maintain that high rigorous standard?

Similar to what I said, researchers often remain at a descriptive level. When I was an editor of *Language Teaching Research*, a very high-impact journal, we used to reject so many articles, not only narrative inquiry, but more qualitative research articles, which were fabulous articles, but remained very much at a descriptive level. They didn't incorporate the theory or weren't clear about exactly what topics were being examined. You need those research questions, the issues, the problems, the angle that you're looking at. There needs to be some systematic inquiry.

I can see how inquiry would be readily useful for stories that have a traditional structure with a beginning, middle, and end. Can you see inquiry as being useful for making meaning of stories that might be more complex or not follow that same traditional structure?

There are different definitions of what story is. Beginning, middle, and end is drawing very much on the more traditional idea, but story means different things to different people in different cultures. However, I think there is some commonality. They are about the experiences of people. There is typically a time dimension, whether that's beginning, middle, end, or some circular way time unfolds in a story, or some back-and-forth sequencing. It's some action over time in some way. Another aspect of story is that there's some reflection or some commentary on what's happening. So, it's not just this happened, then that happened, then that happened. You reflect on it, react to it, and you offer some emotional or evaluative comments about those things happening. I think different cultures, different generations, different genders potentially, even individuals at different times may shift in the way they tell stories. They can be shaped differently and put together differently, but those elements are normally there in some way.

You've mentioned that there's roots of narrative inquiry in social linguistics and sociology. Why do you think that it took so long for this to be seen as a valid approach for teacher researchers?

I think that narrative inquiry in language education has been around for quite a while actually, but we haven't really called it that. In second language acquisition, for example, in the '70s and '80s, researchers were doing work using diary studies. Language learners would write their diaries about their language learning experiences, such as Kathy Bailey (1980). We would consider that narrative research now—self-narrative or autobiographical type work. Then, later on, there was a lot of ethnographic work done on social aspects of learning, looking at identity development and so on. This is theoretically informed with excerpts of data, stories of people's learning accounts, but they didn't call it narrative inquiry. It's been there a long time. I think it was the work of Karen Johnson and Paula Golombek (2002), where they talk about narrative inquiry, using that term. Teachers, preservice teachers mainly, did their own narrative inquiry of their own teacher development.

I didn't realize that it had been around for so long, I guess, because it's only becoming more systematized recently. Could I ask you to make a prediction about the future? Do you think that the role of narrative inquiry in teacher development is going to grow?

I think it is. I put out a book with my colleagues, Phil Benson and Alice Chik, in 2013, on narrative inquiry and language teaching and learning research. The book did very, very well. In fact, the series editors have asked us to do a second edition of that book, and that will be coming out next year. In writing the second edition, we brought in all the multimodal and digital storytelling of narrative work going on. What really pushed that was the COVID-19 pandemic. All my Ph.D. students during that time had to do all of their work from a distance by using Zoom and other digital means to collect and analyze their data, which was quite a big shift. So the second edition of the book has a whole new section on digital methodologies in narrative inquiry. That's one big change. Also, I think now with the growing emphasis on diversity and inclusion, narrative inquiry is proving to be particularly popular as a methodology to delve into those topics. Narrative inquiry has always listened very carefully to the voices of the participants, but now it's growing more to focus particularly on voices that have been excluded in the past and to bring about change.

Right, that makes sense. It seems especially powerful because you're literally amplifying the voices of those marginalized people themselves, not other people talking about them.

Yes, and another aspect is that with narrative inquiry, it's not just going in as a researcher and collecting data from participants. You also bring yourself into the research as the researcher, what is called reflexivity. This means being a part of the research, saying what you did as a researcher, how you collected that data, what your role was, and how you co-constructed that data. Ultimately, it's the participants' experiences that we're focusing on, but we also must consider how the researcher reflexively articulates what they did to contribute to the meaning-making of those experiences. There's much more emphasis on the researcher's role.

You spoke earlier about how the pandemic encouraged us to diversify our approaches to narrative inquiry, but there are already a lot to begin with, such as spoken, written, and multimodal. Could you give a brief summary of what you see as some advantages and disadvantages to the various methods?

It's a simple answer, really. You need to look at the design of the study, what the research questions are, and what's feasible and accessible. Those are practical but important answers. It depends on the size of the project. Some people prefer working with paper. Having some paper with some colored pens is a great way to do a thematic analysis for a small project. If you've got masses of data, then well, that's not going to work. I supervise a number of students, and they come in with ideas about what they want to do, often digital or multimodal. I need to say to them, "Well, how are you actually going to do that? And will it pass the Ethics Review Board?" That's very important because with narrative inquiry, you are exposing these voices. You're getting people to talk about their life experiences in story form. Some of these digital formats stay around forever, when using social media, for example. You've got to be really, really careful, more so than in the past, where you could record something with a recorder and then just download it, transcribe it, print it out, and that's all. With automatic transcription, the data stays up there in the cloud somewhere. I think these practical and ethical aspects are important with these new tools.

I'm glad to hear you highlight the practical issues. I'm currently collecting data using a reflective teaching journal. Before I started, I read about robust research methodology and different approaches to this, but I realized early on that I needed to keep it simple in order to maintain it every week.

Yeah, it's got to be feasible.

What about reflecting with other people, such as duo ethnography versus self-inquiry? Could you speak a bit to the advantages and disadvantages of each of those?

I've been in research teams that do narrative work. I think it's just a matter of multiplying the tasks, having discussions about what the goals are, and how the analysis can take place, just like in any research. I think it's the discussion that you need to do to be more or less on the same page.

I was in one research team where we had a huge project of 40 participants and just four researchers. We divided up the sets of data, so each had 10 sets of data. Then we wrote a 2,000-word narrative of that person's experience relating to the topic that we were focusing on. They were all vastly different. One was quite literary, the other was almost like academic text, and others had bits of quotes and so on. We needed to meet as a team to decide how we were going to standardize it in some way, allowing a bit of flexibility.

If you can talk, discuss things, and work together, it's very nice because you've got someone else to bounce ideas off. Duo ethnography is another thing that's happening now with two people writing to each other, talking to each other, developing a set of data, and working it out. My concern with that is that they need to be done properly. As I said earlier, the analysis needs to be about a particular topic, and it needs to be theory informed. It's not just sharing experiences.

The point about how different people bring different viewpoints to similar stories, I think, echoes back to the point you made earlier about how there are different traditions of structures of narrative.

I think that that can be really exciting, how different people can approach single stories with different structures. But it can also probably get quite confusing, so I can see why working in a team is an exciting but difficult approach.

At your workshop on Monday, you're planning to guide participants through narrative inquiry and the process of it. For the benefit of the readers, could you give any general advice or approaches to this research methodology?

I'm going to ask the participants to articulate their questions. I want it to be participant-led, but I will give a very brief overview framework of some of the core dimensions of narrative inquiry. I published a handbook chapter on five core dimensions of narrative inquiry, and I'll very quickly go over those. These dimensions are what help me be grounded in narrative inquiry because it's such a big field. They include things like the meaning of narrative and the level of engagement of the researcher with the participants. Also working with story data and non-story data. You can still do narrative inquiry with non-story data. In that case, the researcher constructs stories from the non-story data.

I've got about three or four sets of data that I'll put up on the screen, and we'll just have a go at analyzing it. I may do some short story analysis because that's quite a friendly way of going about analysis. We can't cover all of narrative inquiry. We can just get a taste of it and answer some questions. I know a lot of people at the conference are already doing narrative inquiry or interested in starting. I'm looking forward to hearing their questions.

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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, where TLT *readers share their original ideas for the benefit of the community. This issue we have a nice mix of fun, useful, and accessible activities to help ward off those mid-semester doldrums. It's an excellent time to add to your repertoire! First off,* Robert Donegan *has adapted Augusto Boal's interactive 'forum theatre' model to help students recognize and address examples of ineffective communication. Secondly,* Abram Elijah Leon *introduces students to the 'Schwa Ninja' in a fun activity focusing on pronunciation awareness. Thirdly,* Nick Hallsworth*'s pair activity provides essential practice for describing appearances. And finally,* Derek Herbert *also helps students to hone their describing skills—this time with a guessing game focused on unknown objects. We hope you like these activities and encourage you to get in contact at jaltpubs.tlt.my.share@jalt.org if you have your own activity to share. We really appreciate contributions from our readers, so whether you're a veteran or a first timer, we look forward to supporting you in getting your idea published!*

— Best wishes, Lorraine

Communication Forum

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Quick Guide

- Keywords: *Forum theatre, communicative competence*
- Learner English level: *Pre-intermediate and above*
- Learner maturity: *Junior high school to university*
- Activity time: *50 minutes or longer*
- Materials: *Whiteboard/blackboard, written prompts*

This role-play and discussion activity adapts Augusto Boal's 'forum theatre' model (1974/2008, p. 117) to focus on developing language learners' communicative competence. While Boal's forum deals with scenarios of social oppression, this adaptation focuses on issues of ineffective communication. Students think up various examples of poor communication skills and devise short performances that depict those traits. Students act as spectators for other groups' performances, analyse the scenarios and consider more effective communicative strategies. Finally, participants are encouraged to 'step into' the scenario to improve the outcome. Teachers facilitate the process throughout.

Preparation

Step 1: Prepare instructions on paper slips that you can use with hesitant groups. These slips will act as prompts to get groups thinking about the role-plays they will devise later. The prompts each include an example of uncommunicative behaviour (see Appendix).

Procedure

Step 1: Explain that you are going to analyse some examples of poor communication today.

Step 2: Model an example of ineffective communication between people. Ask a strong student about their journey to class. As they are answering, constantly check the time, or yawn, etc.

Step 3: Elicit examples of ineffective communication skills they noticed from students.

Step 4: Discuss as a class how the scenario could be improved. For example, you could apologise for checking the time by explaining that you are expecting important visitors.

Step 5: Tell students to brainstorm in groups more examples of ineffective communication, and then elicit ideas from the class.

Step 6: Organise the students into groups and give them 15 minutes to devise role-plays. Tell them that their role-plays must show at least one example of bad communication skills. At this stage, you can give hesitant groups the prepared prompts for extra support.

Step 7: Get one of the groups to perform their role-play to the class.

Step 8: Give quick feedback to the class, eliciting examples of bad communicative ability evident in the role-play.

Step 9: Get students to discuss in groups ways to improve such uncommunicative behaviour.

Step 10: Get the original group to perform their role-play again. This time, spectators can say 'STOP!' when they see aspects of bad communication.

Step 11: When someone says 'STOP!' invite them to come into the role-play as one of the characters (swapping with the original 'player') and try to improve that situation. As spectators become participants, encourage them to show rather than explain their suggested communication improvement.

Step 12: Repeat this process with other groups.

Step 13: When all the scenarios have been explored, get groups to discuss ways to be great communicators.

Step 14: Conclude with a class feedback session and draw up some bullet points that act as simple instructions for being more communicative.

Conclusion

The forum format is very flexible. Even if spectators hesitate to enter a role-play, the scenarios create useful discussion points. Teachers can use their own judgement on how much support their students need. For example, you could explain a communication breakdown at the start of a lesson rather than using a volunteer student. As mentioned earlier, in some contexts providing prompts for student role-plays may be necessary. However, your students may not need such prompts. There are many topics that the forum could investigate. It could be described as a peer education approach.

References

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Appendix

These are the prompts that could be given to hesitant classes or groups when they start to prepare their role-plays. Each group would have only one prompt.

- Prepare a role-play where someone is not really listening. Try to also include other examples of bad communication.
- Prepare a role-play where people keep interrupting. Try to also include other examples of bad communication.
- Prepare a role-play where someone is too formal. Try to also include other examples of bad communication.
- Prepare a role-play where someone is too informal. Try to also include other examples of bad communication.
- Prepare a role-play where someone does not react appropriately to good news / bad news. Try to also include other examples of bad communication.
- Prepare a role-play where someone is so polite that they can't say what they really think. Try to also include other examples of bad communication.
- Prepare a role-play where someone sounds like a robot (no intonation). Try to also include other examples of bad communication.
- Prepare a role-play where someone keeps finishing off someone else's remarks/comments. Try to also include other examples of bad communication.

Teaching Reduced Vowels: The Schwa Ninja

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Quick Guide

» Keywords: *Pronunciation, listening, reduced forms, schwa, vowels*

» Learner English level: *Low-intermediate and above*

» Learner maturity: *Junior high school and above*

» Preparation time: *~30 minutes*

» Activity time: *~30 minutes*

» Materials: *Whiteboard, schwa ninja printout, listening cloze worksheet and answer key (see Appendices)*

Students will be surprised to learn that the most common vowel sound in the English language is not A, E, I, O, U... or even Y, but /ə/, a symbol known as the "schwa." This activity helps to raise students' awareness of this common but not-so-noticeable sound by presenting it as a sneaky character called

ARTICLES | JALT PRAXIS • MY SHARE | JALT FOCUS the "Schwa Ninja." It is a fun starting point for raising learners' metalinguistic awareness about English pronunciation, particularly stress and vowel reduction.

Preparation

Step 1: Print out or create a presentation slide with the Schwa Ninja (Appendix A).

Step 2: Select a short listening passage (song lyrics work well).

Step 3: Analyse the passage, noting which vowels have been reduced to schwa.

Step 4: Erase words with reduced vowels to create a listening cloze activity worksheet (see Appendix B, for example, with answer key).

Procedure

Step 1: Write a sentence containing some reduced vowel sounds on the board.

Example: *I'm not a normal student... I'm a ninja!*

Step 2: Read the sentence aloud, using hand motions to demonstrate stress by spreading your hands wide on stressed syllables and bringing your hands together on reduced syllables.

Step 3: Ask students to mimic the sound they hear in each reduced syllable.

Step 4: Hold up the printout to reveal... the Schwa Ninja! Explain that the schwa is a sound that is quick, quiet, and difficult to notice, just like a ninja.

Step 5: Illustrate how vowels are reduced by "slashing" them out (ninja sword is optional):

I'm not ~~a~~ norm~~a~~l stud~~e~~nt... I'm ~~a~~ ninj~~a~~!

Step 6: Erase the reduced vowels and replace them with the schwa:

I'm not ə norməl studənt... I'm ə ninjə!

Step 7: Have students read the sentence out loud, spreading their hands wide on stressed syllables, and bringing their hands together in a "ninja pose" during reduced vowels.

Step 8: Explain that students are going to listen to a longer passage and identify the schwas.

Step 9: Read or play the entire listening passage once so that students can become familiar with it.

Step 10: Distribute the worksheet and have students complete the cloze line by line, pausing and repeating as needed.

Step 11: Have students slash out the reduced vowels and draw schwas above them.

Step 12: Review the answer key together as a class.

Step 13: Have students practice reading or singing aloud while contrasting stressed and reduced vowel sounds.

Variations/Extension

The listening cloze worksheet can be adapted to focus on a variety of listening text types. When using song lyrics, you can extend the activity by analysing more verses together and having students discuss the song's meaning in small groups or as a class.

Conclusion

In the context of English as a lingua franca, it is not necessary for learners to try to sound like "native speakers." However, an awareness of English vowel sounds, particularly reduced vowels, can help students to decode spoken English. Introducing the schwa as a memorable character highlights that subtle sound that is so easy to miss in the stress-timed rhythm of English.

Appendix A

The Schwa Ninja

Character created by Abram Elijah Leon using Microsoft *Word* and *Paint* programs

Appendix B

Example Listening Cloze Worksheet

The Schwa Ninja: Analyzing “Humpty Dumpty”

Listen to the song using the link below:

Humpty Dumpty [link to a YouTube video, etc.]

Step 1: Listen again and fill in the missing words.

Example: I’m not a normal student... I’m a ninja!

Step 2: Which vowels are “Schwa Ninjas”? Cross them out!

Example: I’m not ~~a~~ norm~~a~~l stud~~e~~nt... I’m ~~a~~ ninj~~a~~!

Step 3: Write the /ə/ symbol over the reduced vowels

/ə/ /ə/ /ə/ /ə/ /ə/

Example: I’m not ~~a~~ norm~~a~~l stud~~e~~nt... I’m ~~a~~ ninj~~a~~!

Step 4: Check answers with a partner and practice reading this rhyme aloud.

~~~~~~

Humpty Dumpty __________ wall,

Humpty Dumpty __________ fall.

__________ King’s __________ and __________ King’s men,

__________ put Humpty__________.

Answer Key

~~~~~~

/ə/

Humpty Dumpty sat on ~~a~~ wall,

/ə/

Humpty Dumpty had ~~a~~ great fall.

/ə/ /ə/ /ə/

All th~~e~~ King’s hors~~e~~s and all th~~e~~ King’s men,

/ə/ /ə/ /ə/

*Couldn’t put Humpty t~~o~~gether ~~a~~gain.

* The schwa sound sometimes appears here: Couldn’t = “coulduhnt”

2024 Board of Directors Election Candidate Statements can be found on page 51 of this *TLT*

What Does She Look Like?

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Quick Guide

» Keywords: *Describing appearance, communication, task-based learning, pair work*
» Learner English level: *Pre-intermediate, intermediate*
» Learner maturity: *University*
» Preparation time: *5 minutes*
» Activity time: *20-30 minutes*
» Materials: *Photo worksheet (Appendix), timer*

In this communicative pair task, students analyze a photo lineup, describing the appearances of individuals and identifying the person absent from their partner’s lineup. I implement this task twice during our unit on describing appearances—once at the beginning and once at the end. This repetition allows students to gauge their improvement by assessing how efficiently they accomplish the task on the first and second attempts.

Preparation

Step 1: Print the four sets of photos (Appendix A) and make enough copies for your class. Half of the students will be A and half will be B.

Step 2: Cut along the dotted lines to create lineups for students A and B.

Procedure

Step 1: Briefly introduce the idea of describing a person’s appearance. One way to do this is to show a photo and ask students to describe it; another way is to have students describe a classmate for the teacher to guess.

Step 2: Divide students into A and B. Partner each A student with a B student and have them sit facing each other.

Step 3: Explain that each student will be given a photo lineup which contains one person who is absent from their partner’s lineup. The aim of the task is for both students to identify the missing person within the ten-minute time limit.

Step 4: Distribute photo lineups A1 and B1 to students. In each pair, one partner should be A and one should be B. Make sure the students hide the paper so that their partner cannot see it. The answers can be found in Appendix B.

Step 5: Write some useful phrases on the board to scaffold the activity. For more advanced students, elicit some examples from them. For example:

- *My **Person 1** has short, straight, black hair and a beard.*
- *What does your **Person 3** look like?*
- *Does he wear glasses?*
- *My **Person 5** looks like a teacher.*
- *Can you see someone with red hair?*
- *Okay. I think my **Person 2** is your **Person 6**.*

Step 6: Tell the students they have ten minutes to identify who is missing in their partner's lineup and start the timer.

Step 7: Some students may finish early. Approach those students and ask them to describe a person on the lineup to you. Use this as a springboard for conversation until all students finish or the ten minutes are up.

Step 8: If you have time, or after teaching the topic in detail, do another round with photo lineups A2 and B2.

Variation

The activity could be done digitally to save ink. Save the lineups as PDF files, have students download the files and view them on their computer screens.

Extension

As a follow up activity, choose a few students to describe their ideal future partner or a family member to the class. As they do so, listen, ask questions, and generate an AI image of that person using an online tool such as Bing Image Creator. This is generally highly engaging and provides a change of pace from the main time-limited task.

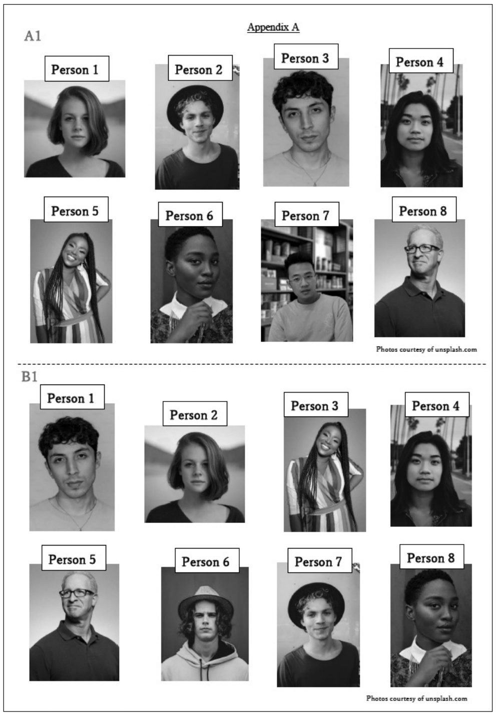
Conclusion

This activity is challenging, interactive, and a lot of fun. Feel free to change the photos or add more for higher levels of students.

Appendices

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

Appendix A



Appendix B

Answer key:

- Round 1: A1 = Person 7; B1 = Person 6
- Round 2: A2 = Person 8; B2 = Person 5

Give Me a Clue

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Quick Guide

- Keywords: *Describing, guessing, vocabulary*
- Learner English level: *Pre-intermediate and above*
- Learner maturity: *High school to university*
- Preparation time: *2 minutes*
- Activity time: *30 minutes depending on class size*
- Materials: *Blackboard, chalk, timer, paper, device with Internet, online word generator (e.g., https://randomwordgenerator.com/pictionary.php) or vocabulary flashcards (Appendix A), three simple objects (see Preparation), a non-transparent bag*

Describing and guessing vocabulary is a fundamental skill in English language learning. This simple yet fun activity guides learners to practice describing and guessing vocabulary items in teams within a competitive environment. In set roles, learners engage together in groups in order to achieve the highest team score.

Preparation

Step 1: Decide on three easily identifiable objects (e.g., a pen, a ball, a spoon) and put them in a non-transparent bag for learners to guess for the lead-in activity in Step 1.

Procedure

Step 1: Introduce the activity by telling the class that there are three objects inside the bag. Get learners to guess in groups what they think the objects are and elicit answers. If needed, provide a clue by shaking the bag.

Step 2: Use target language (Appendix B) for describing the objects (e.g., 'It's something that you bring to class. It's used for taking notes.'), elicit guesses, then reveal.

Step 3: Board language, eliciting any additional phrases from learners.

Step 4: Introduce and demonstrate how to use the online word generator, if you are using it. This tool can be incorporated into the activity so that learners can describe words that are randomly generated. Alternatively, you can use sets of single-word vocabulary flashcards (Appendix A).

Step 5: Group learners into teams of three and introduce the three roles allocated to each member: 'The Speaker' describes the word, 'The Guesser' guesses what is being described, and 'The Referee' remains silent and keeps track of correct answers.

Step 6: Each team decides together which role they take on for the first game. A total of three games are played, so learners will get an opportunity to experience each role.

Step 7: Check that each learner has a different role by a raise of hands to identify speakers, guessers and referees.

Step 8: If using an online generator, make sure speakers have the generator open on their device and are on the same category level in each team. Mention they can 'skip' to the next word in the generator if they feel it is too challenging to describe. Tell guessers to sit opposite the speaker so as not to be in view of the speaker's device. Give paper to referees to keep tally of scores.

Step 9: Make sure everyone is ready and then start the timer to begin the first five-minute game. The emphasis should not be on accuracy but general English communication skills.

Step 10: During the first game, create a table on the board in preparation to write scores for each team.

Step 11: After the first game, collect scores from referees and board.

Step 12: Rotate roles in the second game. For example, speakers are now the referees, etc. Repeat Step 7.

Step 13: After three games, the winning team is the team with the highest average score.

Conclusion

This activity can increase learners' confidence in describing and guessing vocabulary. Moreover, learners are responsible for working in designated roles. This activity also practices additional skills, such as decision making and teamworking.

Reference

Random Word Generator. (n.d.). *Pictionary Generator.* https://randomwordgenerator.com/pictionary.php

Appendix A

Optional Single-word Vocabulary Flashcards

Ship	Pants	Book
Spider	Star	Lamp
Stairs	Bathroom	Coin
Ball	Heart	Worm
Cow	Broom	Bus
Spoon	Duck	Balloon
Rabbit	Shopping	Pen
Carrot	Apple	Dinosaur
River	Sunglasses	Dream
Seashell	Jar	Tree

Appendix B

Target Phrases

Phrases to describe something

- It is something (that) you ...
- It is a type of ...
- It is like a ...
- It is used with ...
- It is used for ...
- It is (bigger) than ...
- It is made of ...
- It has ...
- It has a ...

Phrases for guessing something

- Could it be ...?
- Could it be a ...?
- I think it might be ...?
- I think it might be a ...?
- Would it be ...?
- Would it be a ...?
- Is it ...?
- Is it a ...?
- Are you describing ...?
- Are you describing a ...?
- I believe it is ...?
- I believe it is a ...?
- It has to be ...?
- It has to be a ...?

[RESOURCES] *TLT* WIRED


Sarah Deutchman & Edward Escobar

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 editors before submitting.

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Using Google Classroom Questions to Create a Class Discussion Board

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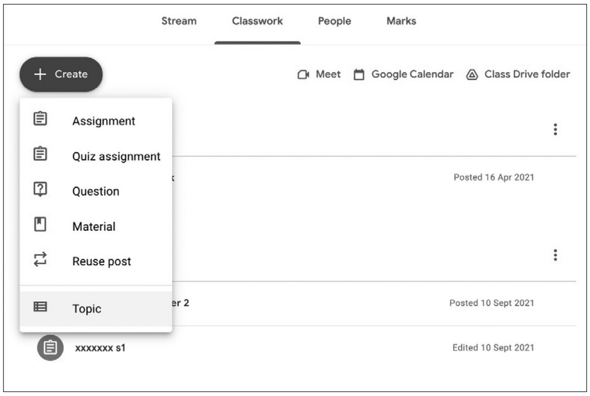
In response to the pandemic, educators were forced to rapidly adapt to new technologies to teach in the online environment (de Vries, 2021; Iwabuchi et al., 2022; Lim, 2023). Google Classroom, an educational platform that can administer assignments and manage online student-teacher communications, quickly emerged as a popular tool in this arena (Ikeda, 2022; Okmawati, 2020). The Questions function is one of the features that supports this online interaction. This function can facilitate bidirectional feedback and advice. However, with a subtle shift in the framing of Google Questions, more in-depth discussions can be managed using discussion boards. In the following sections, I will describe how to create discussion boards on Google Classroom and give some specific examples of how they can be applied in an educational setting.

Creating a Discussion Board on Google Classroom

This procedure merely requires the instructor to set up a new Google Classroom topic and select the appropriate settings. First, select the Classwork tab to create this new topic. Then click + Create and Topic (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Creating a New Topic in Google Classroom



Next, type the topic name (i.e., DiscussionBoard) and click Add. The Discussion Board section will then appear in the Classwork tab. You can now add questions to this area to build the discussion board (see Figure 2).

The next step is to post the questions to the Discussion Board. This procedure is the same for creating any question on Google Classroom, but specific settings create the interactivity of the Discussion Board. First, to post a question, click + Create and choose question (see Figure 3).

Next, enter the question text in the appropriate box. Then, select Short Answer from the drop-down menu next to the question. After this, set the due date and points as required. The most important step is to check the *Students can reply to each other* box, as this essentially creates the discussion board functionality. It is also often useful to check the *Students can edit answer* box. Next, select the discussion board topic, which was created in the previous step. Finally, click the Ask button in the top right-hand corner to post the question (see Figure 4).

Figure 2

Example of a Google Classroom Discussion Board

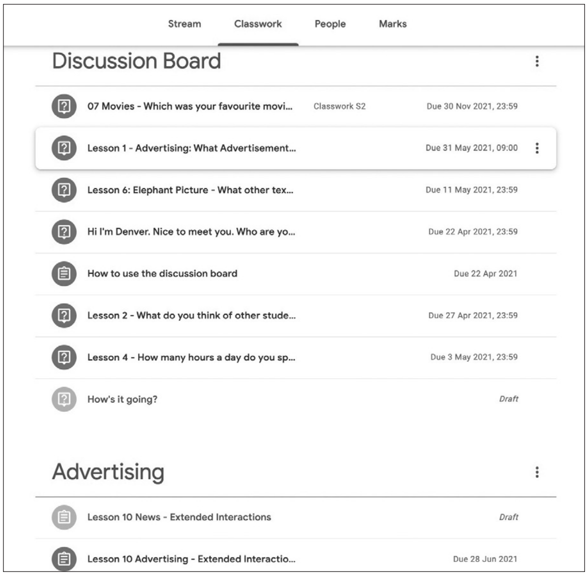


Figure 3

Creating a Google Classroom Question

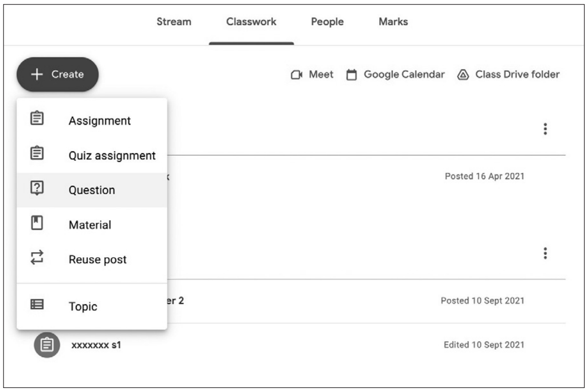
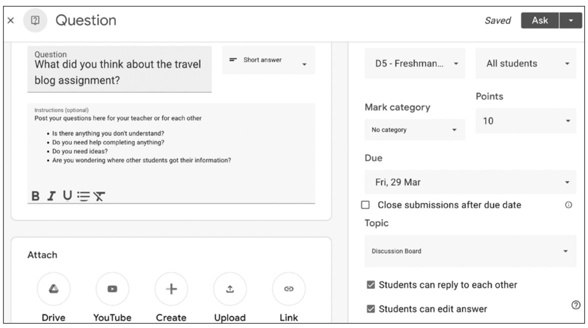


Figure 4

Settings for a Discussion Board Question

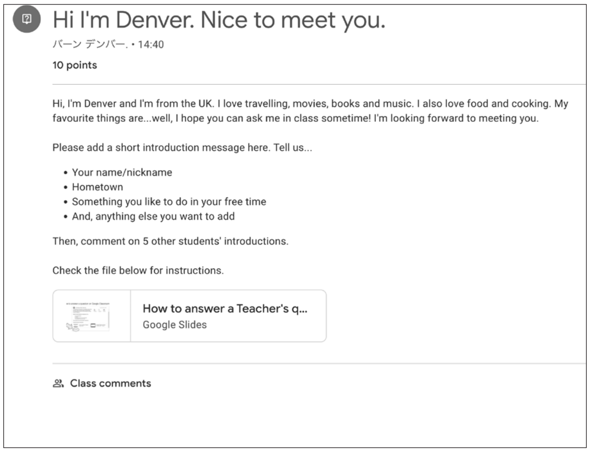


Google Classroom Discussion Boards in Practice

For new classes, I add something connected to the commencement of lessons, such as asking students to write a short introduction. This introductory activity helps familiarise learners with the discussion board and integrate it into lessons from the beginning (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Example Introduction Activity on the Class Discussion Board



As Figure 5 shows, the title does not actually need to be a question. In addition, detailed information can be posted in the dialogue box marked Instructions below the question. The most crucial point, though, is to ask students to comment and reply to each other's posts. This framing transforms the activity from a question-and-response task into something much more interactive. In this first post on the discussion board, I upload instructions on answering questions and adding comments. For this purpose, simple illustrative slides were produced rather than detailed written instructions (see Figures 6 and 7).

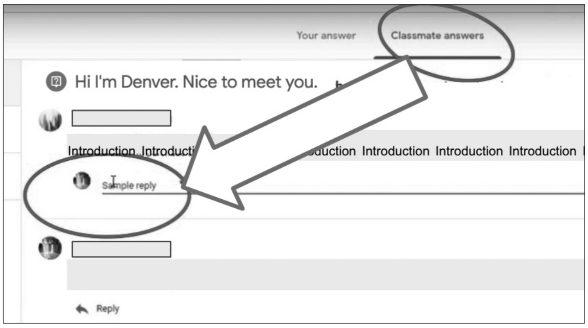
2024 Board of Directors Election Candidate Statements can be found on page 51 of this *TLT*

Figure 6

Instructions for Answering Questions on Google Classroom

Figure 7

Instructions for Commenting on Classmates' Answers



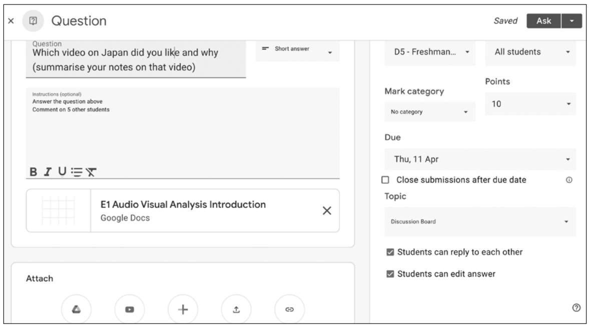
Using Questions on Google Classroom for Assignments

Once the discussion board is up and running, it can manage any number of asynchronous interactions such as debates, conversation practice, homework queries, or collaborative student projects. However, this functionality can also be used for focused and detailed discussion assignments. The following is an example from a communicative English class for 1st-year university students. In this instance (see Figure 8), there was a worksheet attached to the question. The worksheet linked to four English-language

YouTube videos. The students had to watch the videos and answer short analysis/opinion questions in the worksheet. Finally, the students summarised their worksheet answers in the Google Classroom Question section and then read and commented on classmates' summaries.

Figure 8

Example Homework Assignment Using a Google Classroom Question



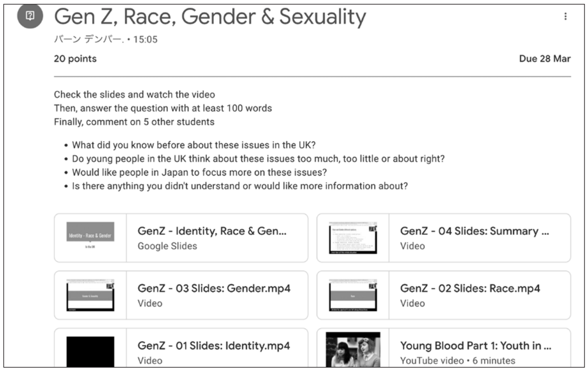
To ensure this activity did actually become a discussion, the question was posted with instructions telling students to comment on a minimum of five classmates' posts. In addition, a due date was set for the assignment. I found this type of task worked best if students were instructed to make a minimum number of comments and awarded points for completing the task on time. Without these instructions, learners were sometimes confused about how many comments to make and some members did not respond or comment at all.

Google Questions can also facilitate more in-depth discussions. The final example is from an asynchronous content and language integrated learning (CLIL) class on British youth culture for 3rd- and 4th-year university students. In this instance, several materials were attached to the question (see Figure 9).

In this assignment, students learned about young British people's attitudes towards race, gender, and sexuality. The question post contained a set of slides and videos of the teacher presenting those slides. There was also a short, subtitled YouTube video where young people discussed their experiences and opinions. Detailed instructions, also explained to the students in person, were posted on the Question screen. The instructions asked learners to view the materials and write a 100-word appraisal of the issues based on the materials and structured questions. Students then read and commented on five classmates' answers. Thus, this example demonstrates that students can interact with quite complex subject matter using this technique.

Figure 9

Example of an Asynchronous Lesson Using Google Classroom Questions



Conclusion

The advantage of using Google Classroom's Questions in this way is that the asynchronous part of the class becomes interactive. Moreover, this technique can be used for homework as well as remote learning. Furthermore, learners can work at their own pace, which might allow quieter class members greater opportunities to participate in interactive tasks. A disadvantage might be the dislocation of these remote conversations. However, by mimicking social media communication styles, it may be more relevant for learners. Nonetheless, there is no substitute for actual face-to-face communication, so it is advisable to review these assignments in class and consider them as supplements to the usual classroom activities rather than replacements.

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The Duolingo English Test: Experiences and Recommendations

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Assessment through testing is a vital aspect of education. However, recent global challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have raised concerns about traditional in-person, paper-based testing. The question arises: Is it time for a paradigm shift in testing modes to embrace the growing ubiquity of Internet connectivity? Could online testing, accessible anytime and anywhere, become a more influential element in education? In reality, this transition is already underway, with universities in the U.S. and the U.K. increasingly moving towards online exams (UNIwise, 2022).

In terms of language testing and assessment, the Duolingo English Test (DET) might be a relative newcomer but is gaining traction with various international institutions such as Imperial College London and Harvard (Duolingo, n.d.). Therefore, while the authors were considering options for an easily administered proficiency test, the DET, which is an online-only test, appeared to be an interesting and viable alternative to other common tests in Japan (e.g., TOEIC).

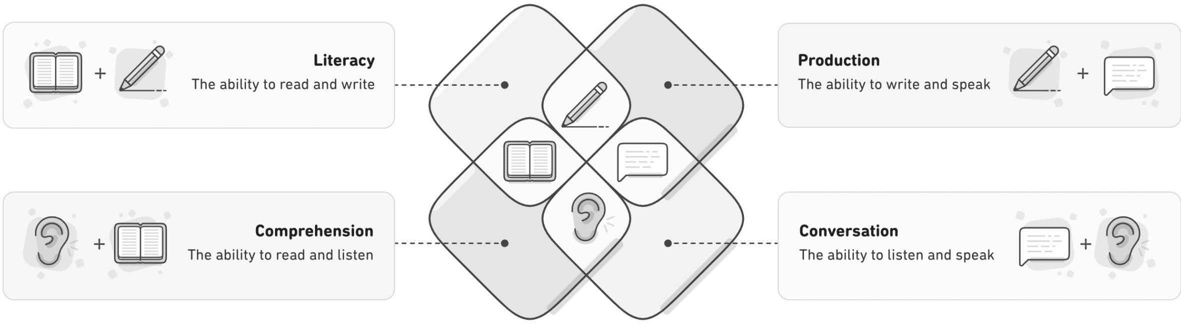
The DET

Created by the educational technology company, Duolingo, the DET was released in 2016 and is an affordable, online, on-demand, standardised English proficiency test that can be taken from anywhere with an Internet connection, allowing test-takers to do the test in the comfort of their homes. However, to be clear, even though they share a name, the Duolingo language learning app and the DET are separate technologies.

The test is aimed at non-native-English speakers and assesses the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a single blended test. Compared to other proficiency tests, it is relatively short and adapts to each test-taker's level by adjusting the difficulty of questions based on their previous answers. This ensures the AI software accurately measures competency in a rapid and efficient manner. The test structure is comprised of three sections: introduction and onboarding (5 minutes), which includes technical setup, ID input, and a rules review; the adaptive test (45 minutes); and a writing sample and speaking sample (10 minutes), totalling approximately one hour. The difficulty of the test varies throughout, and it contains numerous types of unique and randomly selected questions, such as listening to spoken words, selecting the real words, and filling in missing letters from a text. The number of questions is not predetermined as the grading engine adapts and finishes the test when it is confident of the test-taker's score. Once

Figure 1

The DET: Subscores



Note. The DET score consists of four subscores: literacy, comprehension, conversation, and production. Each subscore encompasses two skills.

the test has been submitted, the results are sent to the test-taker by email within 48 hours.

The test is assessed by AI and human proctors who check test-taker videos and keystrokes to ensure tests are completed correctly. Successful individuals will receive a computer-generated score that evaluates their proficiency in English on a scale ranging from 10 to 160, including four subscores (see Figure 1 on the previous page). The overall score is not simply an average of the subscores but rather a weighted combination. Figure 2 illustrates how the DET compares to other test scores.

Figure 2

The DET: Comparative Test Scores

	TOEFL iBT		IELTS Academic		CEFR
160	120	160	8.5-9	160	C2
155	119	155	8	155	
150	117-118	150		150	C1
145	113-116	145	7.5	145	
140	109-112	140		140	
135	104-108	135	7	135	
130	98-103	130		130	
125	93-97	125	6.5	125	B2
120	87-92	120		120	
115	82-86	115		115	
110	76-81	110	6	110	

Note. The overall DET score can be compared to other frameworks and test scores.

The Pros and Cons of the DET

There are many factors that make the DET captivating to takers of English proficiency tests:

- Flexibility and convenience: The DET can be taken anywhere with a stable Internet connection and a quiet room.
- Cost: 59 USD plus tax (about 8,750 JPY)
- Adaptive test: Question levels are adjusted depending on the test-taker's answers, leading to a test time of approximately one hour (about half the time of the TOEIC test).
- Non-traditional question styles and test format: The four skills are tested in a blended manner (e.g., no extended reading, writing, or listening sections) which may suit some students better.
- Expedited results: Test scores are issued within 48 hours. Test-takers receive a holistic score and breakdown of four subscores (see Figure 1).
- Accepted at higher education establishments: The DET is used in admissions procedures of an increasing number of higher education establishments such as Stanford University in the U.S.

While the DET has many advantages over other English proficiency tests, namely its competitive price, convenience, and brevity, it also has some limitations:

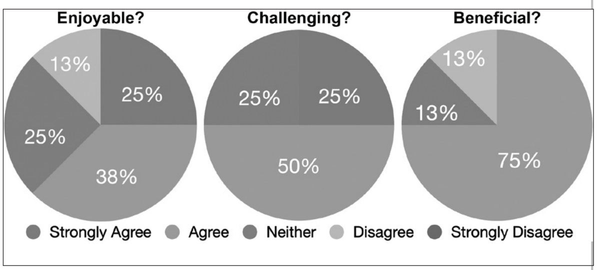
- Test authentication and rules: These are the most significant issues for test-takers. Any violation of the stringent regulations risks test invalidation. Additional factors, including Internet or technology issues, can also impact success. The rules for computer-based tests without in-person invigilators differ from traditional testing, which results in some unusual requirements, such as not looking away from the screen for a prolonged period.
- ID validity: Test-takers may not have the requisite ID (a government-issued photo ID is required) so they may be unable to take the test.
- Test study: Compared to other tests, there are few specific test preparation materials and methods available. Students must improve their English across all four skills to improve their scores.

Student Impressions

A total of eight voluntary participants undertook the DET as part of a pilot study. In a survey, five participants reported that they enjoyed taking the DET, two were neutral, while one did not enjoy it. Six of the eight considered the test challenging, and six also felt that taking the test was a beneficial experience in their English language learning journey. These results are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3

The DET: Student Impressions



Students commented that "It was [a] very strict test and hard to get verified" and "It's too hard to get verified," which resulted in the majority of participants needing more than one attempt to be authenticated by the DET AI and/or human proctors. However, despite these challenges, students generally had a positive impression of the test, with comments including: "Great. I assume that I can test my true practical English ability and essential understanding of language not just memorising words" and "I think it is good. The time limits make me feel pressure, and it also didn't let me to think [about] one question a lot. It was thrilling, so I feel the time passed so quickly. I enjoyed taking the exam."

Thus, test-takers' impressions of the DET were positive, in terms of test style and task difficulty, but verification issues also frustrated the participants.

Recommendations

To get the most out of the DET, it is beneficial to consider the factors below, especially given that test verification can be problematic:

- Usage: This test would be extremely difficult to use in a classroom context. It is recommended for individual case-by-case instances only.
- Create an account: The DET homepage can be difficult to navigate pre-login, so it is recommended that test-takers and instructors create accounts to access vital information about the test more easily.
- Watch the summary videos: Watch the videos available to get a holistic understanding of the process of taking the DET.
- Read the rules: The DET rules are extremely rigorous and can also be unusual and unexpected for those who have not taken an online test before, so reading and understanding the rules in detail is extremely important for successful verification (e.g., test-takers can be disqualified simply for wearing their hair down, as their ears must always be visible).
- Check the environment and the technology: The test must be taken in a quiet, empty room with a reliable Internet connection. There are also various technology requirements, including a front-facing camera, microphone, and speaker.
- Do the practice test: Completing the (free) practice test is highly recommended.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the DET is gaining recognition and may play a significant role in the future of testing. From the perspective of instructors and invigilators, although its brevity, convenience, and affordability are positive aspects, there are significant practical issues that will hinder its adoption. In the context of the classroom, the DET is not a practical form of assessment, as its administration is logistically problematic—payment and ID issues, the requirement for individual test rooms and specific technology, as well as the difficulty of test validation—make it challenging for educators to facilitate multiple concurrent test-takers.

For individual higher-level test-takers who have a strong desire to study abroad, the DET may enhance applications to some institutions. However, in its current guise, and due to lagging recognition in educational institutions and workplaces in Japan, it is struggling for relevance, especially when competing with conventional testing options.

Improved technology, especially in AI proctoring, could enhance the reliability and credibility of the DET as an English proficiency test. It is likely a precursor for a future increase in online language testing and a compelling shift in educational assessment.

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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

Student-Centered Teaching (Part Two): Social-Emotional Learning in Young Learner Classrooms

Martin Sedaghat
Jesse Reidak

What is going on in the minds of young learners in our classrooms? How do they see the world around themselves, and how can we as teachers give them the support they need to grow and learn? In the previous article, six pre-lesson considerations were discussed for teachers of young learners, including awareness of role modeling, effective lesson pacing, and novel task implementation (Reidak, 2024). These are all vital points to think about when planning lessons that will best serve learners' needs and help to orient teachers toward a student-centered approach and mindset.

To this end, what does student-centered teaching look like in a classroom of very young learners? By their very nature, many children want to be independent, move only at their own pace, and are mainly motivated by their own interests. On the other hand, they require teachers to set the routine and structure for lessons, provide appropriate materials, and determine assessment, if any. It is our belief that an effective student-centered approach for young learners involves careful consideration of student contexts, interests, and needs, as well as positive role-modeling paired with opportunities for children to develop social relationships. Additionally, the application of engaging and multimodal tasks will create a variety of ways for students to participate.

Building on the pre-lesson considerations offered in part one of this series, this article will offer an overview of childhood developmental skills with a particular focus on social-emotional learning (SEL) and the characteristic mechanics of young learners' behavior and thinking. By combining the pre-lesson considerations with the advice offered here, teachers can approach their lessons with both better preparation for and a deeper understanding of teaching young learners. For best results, if you have not already, please review Reidak (2024).

Developmental Stages of Young Children

For teachers of any student age, level, and context, it is important to know your audience, so to speak, and take into consideration student needs, interests, and backgrounds. However, for teachers working with pre-primary and primary age learners, it is even more important to become familiar with the developmental stages of children so as to create activities and lessons that best match their physical, intellectual, and emotional capabilities.

Mature or fully developed learners are generally able to adapt to a variety of teaching methods, and time in the classroom can be used to focus purely on language skills such as vocabulary, grammar, or sentence structures. Young learners, on the other hand, require a careful balance of tasks and abilities (e.g., hand-eye coordination, problem-solving, and confidence-building) that support all aspects of their development, with language being only one point. Additionally, whereas older learners often have specific goals for learning a second language, such as passing exams or for their careers, young learners in an EFL context generally do not. They acquire language skills incidentally through exposure and usage, particularly when presented in ways that are engaging, multisensory, and playful. These methods can incorporate such resources as picturebooks, songs, puppets, realia, art and craft materials, and games.

Though there are a variety of stages and milestones for tracking childhood growth, Trawick-Smith (2022) provides a useful description of four major categories for development in the preschool years:

- Physical and motor development: Children are refining their balance, strength, stamina, reaction times, and hand-eye coordination. They can run, jump, throw, catch, use eating utensils, use

buttons and zippers, cut with scissors, manipulate puzzle pieces, and use writing/drawing tools.
- Cognitive development: Children are refining their ability to solve problems with internal thought, think about the past and the future, categorize objects that are similar and different, imagine objects or people, and think in unidimensional terms (focusing on one object or aspect of a problem at a time). They have increased attention spans and increased memory capabilities.
- Symbolic thought: Children are developing their use of symbols, such as words, drawings, or toys, to represent ideas, and engaging in sociodramatic play and role-play (increased complexity of pretend play with other children and more detailed themes). Linguistically, they use language to negotiate meaning and interactions with peers, along with the growth of phonology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics.
- Social and emotional development: Children are growing in their desire to be social with others, and rapidly developing their identity and self-perception, and increasing their independence, altruism and empathy with peers, and awareness and management of emotions.

When planning activities and lessons, teachers should think carefully about these four categories and try to incorporate elements from each, which help their learners to grow physically, intellectually, linguistically, and emotionally. For example, a spelling game might have learners building words called out by the teacher, using chopsticks to select the correct letters from a tray of plastic letters, and then working as a team to arrange them on a board (see Figure 1). In this way, learners are practicing not only linguistic skills but also fine-motor skills and hand-eye coordination alongside teamwork and collaboration.

Figure 1

Spelling Game

The CASEL Framework

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines social-emotional learning (SEL) with five competencies, described below. Through the building and nurturing of these skills, young people "develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions" (CASEL, n.d.). For teachers of young learners, it is vital to blend these skills into activities and lessons, so that children can grow and benefit in multiple ways, such as practicing how to work together or wait patiently while playing a game that builds up phonics skills or descriptive language.

The five CASEL competencies are:

1. Self-awareness: The ability to recognize and understand your own emotions and thoughts, along with how they affect behavior. This also includes recognition of your own strengths and limitations.
2. Self-management: The ability to manage your own emotions and thoughts, and how to control behavior in a variety of situations. This includes stress management and the use of motivation to reach goals.
3. Social awareness: The ability to see different perspectives of others, such as people from other cultures and contexts. This includes the capacity for empathy and compassion for others.
4. Relationship skills: The ability to create and maintain relationships with other people and groups. This includes being able to communicate, listen, work cooperatively, negotiate conflicts, and both ask for and offer help.
5. Responsible decision-making: The ability to make considered choices about social interactions. This includes thinking about fairness, ethics, safety, and the consequences of decisions within a group.

Many picturebooks include aspects of SEL as their main messages—portraying situations about friendship, family, emotions, and hardship—and can be helpful tools for prompting discussion about these topics by allowing children to think about and see themselves through the stories of other characters. This is of particular importance as young learners may still be at an egocentric stage in their development, when it is difficult for them to think about or understand the feelings of people around them, as well as how their own actions may affect others. After reading a book together, the teacher can ask questions to prompt discussion about the underlying message, bringing the children's attention back to the events of the story and how they might mirror their own lives.

It can also be beneficial to practice SEL by bridging picturebook reading with art and craft projects, as children may not have the linguistic ability, even in their own native language, to express themselves verbally. However, they can communicate their thoughts and feelings through drawing and painting. For example, in *The Color Monster* (Llenas, 2018), a little girl helps a monster to understand his mixed-up emotions by separating each one with its corresponding color and imagery into its own jar. After reading the story, learners can create their own emotion cards with any pictures that they associate with those feelings, share them with their classmates, and then put them together into labeled jars to create a class set (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Emotion Jars

The Value of Play

Play is an intrinsic part of a child's growth, aiding in every stage of their development. At preschool age, children move from the simple imitation of toddler play to more complicated sociodramatic and role-play. Role-play activities can be very useful at this stage as they can allow children to explore a variety of roles and relationships, such as parent and child, doctor and patient, or shopkeeper and customer, along with their respective dialogue and communication (Trawick-Smith, 2022). Beyond language, important social and emotional skills (e.g., sharing, taking turns, and empathy for others) can also be practiced. Play is the way that children engage with the world around them and learn about themselves. Some important points to keep in mind when setting up these kinds of play environments in the classroom are to make props and realia available, and to give minimal direction so that children can use the full range of their imagination.

Furthermore, as a subset of play, games are an essential resource for teachers. Apart from motivating children through their enjoyable nature, many games also create space for learners to play with the sounds, words, and phrases of language, helping them to internalize it through imitation, exaggeration, and repetition. Games create a magic circle for players, described by Johan Huizinga's book *Homo Ludens* (1955), in which the rules and limitations of the activity form a temporary reality in which all communication is meaningful and authentic. By their very nature, games are interactive, both socially and linguistically, and allow teachers to take on a variety of roles themselves, such as facilitator, judge, coach, and participant. For small groups of young learners, traditional games like bingo, memory, charades, and "Guess Who" can be used, and are particularly effective when adapted and reiterated for children's specific levels, interests, and needs.

It is within instances of play and games that we can tailor the experiences to be more student-centered by creating a focus on the learners rather than the teacher. Giving learners leading roles, providing agency in how they play, and support through scaffolding rather than outright answers are all ways to emphasize student interest and motivation. For example, learners can play tic-tac-toe with a set of nine cards with the flags of different countries on them. Taking turns in groups, the children can indicate the country for their marker in a variety of ways based on what they have learned, such as a description of the colors and design of the flag, a greeting used there, naming a famous food or landmark, or even using their body to mime an aspect of that country (standing like the Statue of Liberty, moving their arms like the clock of Big Ben, or making the shape of the first letter of the country).

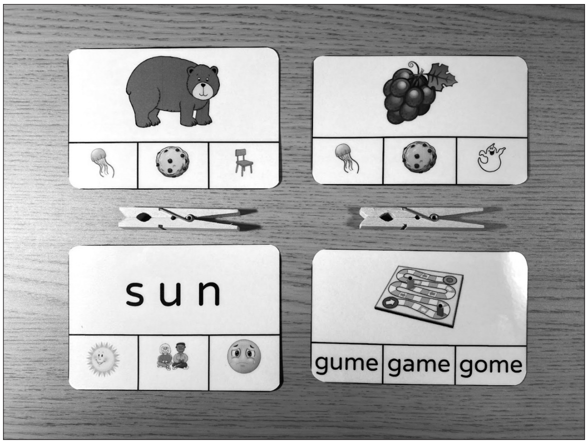
Additionally, games can create an important atmosphere of mystery and anticipation. This is a powerful motivation for young learners who are naturally curious, as even multiple play sessions will result in unique outcomes and unplanned language use. In many ways, games mirror many of the points that children are learning and developing as they grow, such as collaboration, competition, rules, decision-making, and focus, therefore representing an effective and multimodal resource for the classroom. Play is a fundamental part of childhood that enriches all facets of development and paves the way for continued growth and learning, so teachers should make it a significant part of their methodology.

The Value of Choice

Young children typically do not have a great deal of control over their daily lives. They are told by the adults around them what to eat, what to wear, what to do, and where to go. Giving learners agency in the classroom can be a powerful tool with many benefits (Benson, 2011), including building confidence and self-esteem, expressing creativity, and developing problem-solving skills. For example, rather than choosing a set of vocabulary items to teach, we can give them a theme and ask them to share the words they would like to learn, leading to a student-centered and collaborative lesson approach. This way, the children can take a personal role in their own learning and increase their motivation and sense of responsibility.

Games can also be designed or adapted in ways to allow children to choose their own level of interaction and difficulty, which is particularly effective in classrooms in which there is a mixture of ages and developmental levels. Clip card activities are effective in this way, by giving learners a choice of which skills to practice as each participant can easily pick a variation and decide when to challenge themselves with a more difficult skill. In this example, learners select a card from one of the available types, such as rhyming words (bear-chair), initial letter sounds (grape-ghost), consonant, vowel, consonant (CVC) words, and *magic E* words, attaching the wooden clip to the correct answer (see Figure 3).

Figure 3
Clip Cards



The Value of Community

Beyond academic skills, the classroom can be a valuable opportunity for building a sense of community through learners interacting with their peers and forming relationships. A supportive classroom atmosphere is the foundation for a positive learning environment where children will feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings and ultimately feel a sense of belonging (Jacobs & Renandya, 2019). One way to foster a classroom community is to establish a routine such as circle-time in which learners regularly practice social, communicative, and listening skills.

Circle-time, also known as group time, is a well-known method in which the first part of every lesson is set aside for setting up a positive atmosphere, talking about the goals and expectations for the lesson, and giving learners a chance to share, often with all participants seated in a circle. Some examples of circle-time activities include asking each child how they feel, along with a picture or card with a variety of faces showing different emotions so that children can touch or point to their feelings if they cannot speak or prefer not to. Designating a *helper* for the lesson is also useful, allowing each child to take on a small leadership role during which they help to hand out materials, take the first turn in games, and choose a picture book and song for the end of the lesson. Circle-time is also a good opportunity to review classroom rules and discuss new ones together. Rules and expectations proposed and decided on by learners can be more potent than those simply handed down by teachers.

Conclusion

Though many non-Japanese teachers who work with very young children are employed primarily as English instructors, focusing solely on language learning can be a large-missed opportunity. For children who are still in the early stages of development, we should be familiar with all of their characteristics and developmental aspects, and whenever possible design our lessons and activities to address the whole child and promote a learner-centered mindset. In particular, many kinds of games and interactions can be utilized to practice important social and emotional skills, such as sharing, turn-taking, teamwork, and other competencies that are vital both in and outside of the classroom environment.

It is also crucial for teachers to remember the value of play for young learners. What may seem like lost class time to many is in fact a meaningful resource for children to experiment and grow in skills that will aid them in many aspects of life. Games can be key to fostering a student-centered atmosphere, by giving children agency, autonomy, and leadership roles, while shifting the focus away from the teacher at the front of the room. Choices allow learners to tailor lesson-content to their interests, increasing motivation, and helping them to take responsibility for their own learning. Finally, every classroom and school are a community, and these important social groups can be strengthened through regularly setting aside time for learners to share their thoughts and feelings and know that they belong.

A student-centered approach for young learners is one in which children can grow in ways that can benefit them in the long term, throughout their whole lives, rather than focusing on information and academic skills alone. Finding a strong balance between helping them to develop emotionally and socially while also creating an atmosphere in which learning is fun, supportive, and grounded in curiosity is key. It is our hope that this series of two short articles can help to provide some guidance toward striking this balance.

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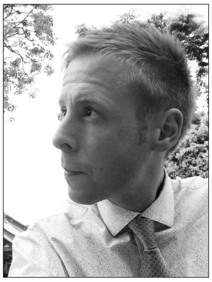

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2024年総会開催通知

Notice of the 2024 JALT Ordinary General Meeting (OGM)

- 日時：2024年6月22日(土) / Date: June 22, 2024 (Saturday)
- 時間：13時 – 14時 / Time: 1pm – 2pm
- 場所：オンライン / Location: Online meeting

議案 / Agenda:

- 第1号議案 2023年度事業報告 / Item 1. Business Report (2023/04/01-2024/03/31)
- 第2号議案 2023年度決算報告 / Item 2. Financial Report (2023/04/01-2024/03/31)
- 第3号議案 2023年度監査報告 / Item 3. Audit Report (2023/04/01-2024/03/31)
- 第4号議案 2023年度事業計画 / Item 4. Business Plan (2024/04/01-2025/03/31)
- 第5号議案 2024年度予算 / Item 5. Budget (2024/04/01-2025/03/31)
- 第6号議案 2024年度全国選出役員選挙の結果 / Item 6. Results of the 2024 National Officer Elections
- 第7号議案 定款第32条の変更：執行役員会の開催 / Item 7. Amendment to Article 32 of the Constitution: Holding Executive Board Meeting

* 6月初旬に、会員の皆様に議案詳細、各報告書のリンク先、及び個別の不在者投票へのリンク先をEメールでご案内いたします。

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

Eメールがお手元に届きましたら、不在投票の方法に従って投票をしてください。本総会は、特定非営利活動法人（NPO）としての地位を保つ為に必要なもので、1/4 (25%) 以上の会員の皆様による出席（定足数）をもって、正式に開催することができます。幸い当学会では、会員の皆様に向けて電子投票システムを提供させていただいており、不在投票をしていただくことで、本総会の出席者としてみなすことができます。

お手数をおかけいたしますが、ご支援とご協力のほどよろしくお願いします。

When you receive the email regarding the OGM, please follow the instructions on how to complete the absentee ballot. It is important for us to have a quarter (25%) of JALT members present at the OGM for it to be valid, and holding a valid OGM is necessary for us to maintain our status as a nonprofit organization (NPO). Fortunately, you can vote online by absentee ballot and be counted present for the meeting, as per the JALT Constitution.

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


Robert Taferner & Stephen Case

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

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

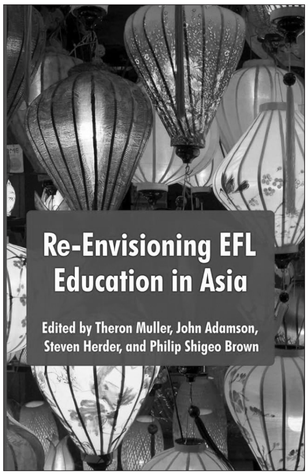
This month's column features Kyle Undem's review of Re-Envisioning EFL Education in Asia*.*

Re-Envisioning EFL Education in Asia

[Edited by Theron Muller, John Adamson, Steven Herder, and Philip Shigeo Brown. Sheridan: International Teacher Development Institute, 2023. pp. vii + 324. ¥3,077. ISBN: 9798988089209.]

Reviewed by Kyle Undem, Konan University

Re-Envisioning EFL Education in Asia ties together 15 EFL-related research studies from 24 scholars around the world. While a significant portion of the studies (eight) originated from universities in Japan, the collection offers a wide geographical range, encompassing studies from various university contexts in China (including the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region), the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Korea. As such, a wide variety of contexts are acknowledged and explored, and as the title suggests, re-envisioned, especially as the field turned to online modalities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each study contributes valuable and diverse insights, offering a comparative perspective on best practices in 21st-century EFL education, both online and in the classroom.



The research themes include second language (L2) identity construction, L2 humour competency, translanguaging, English as a medium of instruction (EMI), content and language integrated learning (CLIL), self-access centres (SAC), team-teaching, and extensive reading (ER), to highlight a few. The overarching theme of this collection of essays and research articles is clear: to offer suggestions to push our field forward while reflecting on the past, especially in EFL contexts where English may not be readily available outside the classroom.

Re-Envisioning EFL Education in Asia, which is the third collection from this editorial team, is highly suggested reading for both teachers and researchers looking to brush up on the latest research in the Asian EFL context, as well as learn about a variety of pedagogical strategies that keep the focus on the learners and their language acquisition. Apart from obtaining theoretical backgrounds, teachers can immediately apply classroom practices suggested in this book. For example, Murphey (2023, pp. 284-287) discusses seven ways to partner through classroom activities, offering creative ways to facilitate a more collaborative learning environment from language learning histories (LLH) to suggestions for implementing learner publications. Additionally, Kavanagh's (2023, pp. 56–58) research on a CLIL course on karate and Japanese culture offers pre- and post-course survey questions which can easily be applied to anyone looking to assess learner's pre- and post-course knowledge of certain content. This harkens back to Yim (2016), who argues that implementing surveys into classroom practices will allow teachers a better understanding of their learners' imagined communities. Also, in line with the findings of how identity is constructed through interaction within the social world (Bucholtz & Hall, 2008), Yamamoto (2023) offers suggestions for teletandem learning as a way to assist with L2 identity construction, finding that "reciprocal learning experiences in teletandem were an opportunity to redefine learners' L2 selves and (re)gain self-confidence" (p. 91).

While having a TESOL background is helpful to develop a deeper understanding of the concepts and findings within the research, this book can still easily be understood. It is recommended for those currently teaching in similar contexts in Asia or in

MA or Ph.D. programs looking for research ideas or capstone project ideas. Another wonderful aspect of the book is that it can be consumed either as a whole pie or as a piece of the pie, where the reader can pick and choose the research that is pertinent to their field of study. The book does, however, read very well from cover to cover and the recurring research on L2 identity, content-based teaching, learner collaboration, translanguaging, and learner motivation all come together quite fluently as a whole. Author bios and other pertinent information, such as ideas for further reading, bookend each chapter, allowing readers the option to further explore their interests and learning.

Re-Envisioning EFL Education in Asia serves as a resource for those willing to keep an open mind in EFL teaching, question their own pedagogy, and continue to reflect upon best classroom practices, including but not limited to building rapport, translanguaging practices in the classroom, and L2 identity mapping. As the title aptly suggests, the editors and authors are not out to reinvent the wheel, or offer the next breakthrough-hit methodology in language learning, but to take a step back and reflect on where we have come as a field, as well as plant a seed for future generations of teachers, researchers, learners, and policy-makers to see where it is we want to go and create a road map of how we are going to get there. Perfect for the autodidact or as a book to read and learn about together with colleagues, this collection of research is essential reading for all looking to reflect on their own teaching and gain new perspectives and ideas into how to reassess their current pedagogical practices.

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Recently Received

Julie Kimura & Derek Keever

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A list of texts and resource materials for language teachers is available for book reviews in *TLT* and *JALT Journal*. If none of the titles we have listed appeal to you or are not suitable for your teaching context, please feel free to contact us to suggest alternate titles. 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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Books for Students (reviews published in *TLT*)

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

Bake sale—Kamata, S. Gemma Open Door for Literacy, 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 graded readers written for those who struggle to read. A lesson plan is available on the publisher's website.]

* *Activator next*—Shiozawa, T., & Martinelli, A. Kinseido, 2023. [This title is a function-situation based coursebook and was written for Japanese college-aged learners of English, who may be identified as false beginners. Activator next provides students with opportunities to use English and to feel the joy of global communication. Audio tracks are available for download.]

* *Home run! Team history MLB*—Halvorsen, J. Perceptia Press, 2023. [Home run! Team history MLB provides a fascinating insight into Major League Baseball. Each of the 15 units features a photograph and histories of two MLB teams, as well as reading comprehension exercises, conversation starters, and a writing assignment. Additional research project ideas provide students with a range of options.]

* *Inspiring Olympians: Stories of great Olympians and what they did afterwards*—Halvorsen, J., & Kobayashi, S. (M. Mathias, Illus.). Perceptia Press, 2023. [This 18-unit coursebook features Summer Olympic athletes who have inspired people around the world in times of conflict and peace. Each unit features vocabulary exercises and a reading passage with comprehension checks, followed by topics to consider for discussion. The instructor can use conversation activities with any unit either in the classroom or online. Students are also given opportunities to think about goals and how to achieve them.]

Integrity—Takeuchi, I. (Series supervisor) Kinseido, 2023. [The series consists of three books that are suitable for beginners in the TOEIC 300–400 range, intermediate learners in the 400–500, and advanced learners in the 500–600 range.

Because online videos have become an integral part of university students' lives, the series makes use of video to increase student interest in global topics and events. The use of authentic videos integrates and enhances the four skills. Videos are available to watch online, and audio tracks are available for download.]

* *Japanese popular culture in English: Discussions and critical thinking*—Sheridan, R., Tanaka, K. M., & Kobayashi, J. M. Nan'un-do, 2024. [This coursebook was developed with the needs and interests of intermediate learners of English in mind. The coursebook was designed to improve reading, critical thinking, discussion, and writing skills. Each of the 12 units includes pre-reading, while-reading, post-reading, and extension activities to promote understanding and help students to formulate their opinions. The teacher's manual includes a 180-question comprehensive test bank.]

! *Talking point*—Harris, J., & Leeming, P. Abax, 2021. [This two-book series takes a task-based approach to making presentations. Units focus on academic talks given by a variety of English speakers. Students have access to the publisher's learning management system, which includes video and audio listening activities, as well as voice recognition.]

! *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 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.]

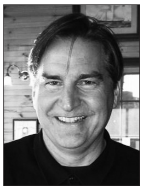
* *What's that you say? Bright ideas for reading, writing, and discussing in the English classroom*—David, J. Nan'un-do, 2023. [This coursebook provides students with topics and activities designed to foster English language learning and practical usage. 15 units include vocabulary building, reading passages, comprehension reviews, and follow-up activities that include trivia questions and well-known quotations. Audio tracks are available for download.]

World adventures / On board for more world adventures—Berlin., S., & Kobayashi, M. Kinseido, 2021. [These two coursebooks each contain 15 chapters featuring video segments shot in 15 countries. The text provides students with interesting scenes relating to various people and cultures around the world. Audio recordings for all unit readings are available for download.]

Books for Teachers

! *Globalisation and its effects on team-teaching*—Fujimoto-Adamson, N. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020. [The author reveals the connections among global issues, policymaking, and local practices as they relate to team-teaching in English language classes in the Japanese junior high school context. Examining this particular context provides the reader with valuable insights as well as a model of research methodology into team-teaching in wider contexts—a greatly under-researched subdiscipline.]

[JALT PRAXIS] TEACHING ASSISTANCE



David McMurray

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

Email: jaltpubs.tlt.ta@jalt.org

This issue's column offers an uplifting essay by an international graduate student who was hired to work as a Teaching Assistant (TA) while taking required courses towards becoming an English teacher. The author describes the morphing of an acronym for his favorite day of the week into a motto with symbolic significance for his chosen teaching career. When he started an intensive teacher-in-training program, he professed needs, impulses, desires, and dreams. By the time he finished his first semester, most of those things had been changed.

2024 Board of Directors Election Candidate Statements can be found on page 51 of this *TLT*

Thank Goodness It's Fun

Xu Yibo

The International University of Kagoshima Graduate School

Friday has always been the most enjoyable day of the week for me. When I was a high school student in China, Fridays nestled comfortably beside weekends and time spent playing basketball. Although McMurray's (2020) acronym TGIF in the context of pedagogy positively conjures the expression "Thank God It's Friday," Daniel (2021) claimed the acronym TGIF meant that we could use Twitter, Google, Instagram, or Facebook all weekend long.

Many of my classmates also come from China, so I suggested the acronym should be *WeTGIF* because the WeChat social media platform was indispensable to our love of esports and gaming. When I entered an English education program at graduate school in Japan, I presumed that I could continue my sedentary lifestyle, but it was about to be disrupted. In addition to Twitter upending Daniel's acronym—my favorite—by changing its name to X, I pondered what was going to happen when I stepped through the classroom on the first Friday of the semester?

Scheduling Fridays for My Future

I thought I would be able to work part-time jobs and evenly spread several of my elective subjects from Monday to Thursday. However, my academic schedule on Friday was crammed with 7.5 hours of back-to-back required courses and TA duties. I took English Education Practice, Seminar, and Special Topics in English. I was a TA for English Education Methodology and English Conversation. All five classes were to be taught by the same professor.

The first lesson of a semester-long course is arguably the most important for both learners and teachers who make most of their decisions about how much they will involve themselves in that course. At first glance, Friday's eclectic lineup of courses seemed unmanageable. The instructor planned to pair the two educational-themed training courses with the two language-learning courses in a multimedia-equipped room. Students hoped that teachers would be invited to sign-up for student assistant (SA) or TA responsibilities in the language labs.

On the first Friday, the classes followed a lesson plan based on Peter Weir's (1989) film *Dead Poet's Society*. The two undergraduate classes took Hirata's (2019) advice on how to have an interesting first class and identify students' needs and motivations. The three graduate school classes employed poetry performance techniques suggested by Shima (2024). In the first period of English Education Practice class, there were eight Chinese students and two Japanese students. In the second period of the Seminar class for sharing action research, there were Japanese students who had studied abroad in Canada and the U.K., a student from Hong Kong, and two Chinese students. The cohort in the English Education Methodology class included 20 undergraduate students who were highly motivated to become teachers at junior high schools or senior high schools in the prefecture. There were 45 undergraduate students enrolled in the English Conversation course. All 10 graduate students from the first period returned to take the last class of the day to study Special Topics in English.

At the end of my first Friday, it was fun filled but exhausting. I asked the instructor how he planned to sustain the momentum all semester long. For example, how could everyone improve their conversation skills enough to achieve the dual purposes of improving English oral fluency and teaching acumen and let alone actively participate from the bottom of their hearts? He replied that I could be a class captain to keep everyone in a happy mood. I was advised to become a veritable interlocutor, so called, "walking dictionary" by whispering vocabulary or chunks of words at just the right moment. Additionally, we decided to choose some unconventional teaching methods. Then, the students could immerse themselves in the lessons and participate in activities inside and outside the classroom. He recommended reading Shapiro and Leopold (2012) who suggested that implementing role-playing in a classroom and provided a "space between practice and play [which] is a fertile ground for cognitive and linguistic growth" (p. 128). Furthermore, we reviewed a survey conducted by McMurray et al. (2020). The researchers indicated that instructors should enlist TAs to efficiently reorganize classroom spaces, set-up outside lecture areas with blankets, and portable whiteboards and sound equipment as needed. TAs can also efficiently liaise with students to guide them to outdoor class locations and cheerlead students who do not seem to be participating. Zazkis and Nejad (2014) claimed that although the use of role-playing in teacher education is rather rare, an unscripted dramatic technique can encourage participants to improvise behaviors that illustrate expected actions of persons involved in defined situations.

I suggested that the fifth class, entitled Special Topics in English, might benefit from role-playing and a TA-cum-drama coach. My initial impression was that my classmates' English skills were not very good, and a few of them confided in me beforehand that they were neither interested in learning English nor had any compulsion to study special topics. To demonstrate how all the Friday classes were woven together and how we overcame the initial disinterest shown by some students, I will share one of the fifteen memorable lessons that we conducted in that course.

Ghost Stories

In our Friday morning class, English Education Practice, on October 27, the teacher encouraged us to interact by making Halloween-themed vocabulary crossword puzzles. The goal was to write riddles that were creative and challenging enough to make junior high school-aged students speculate and think. One Chinese student also took this warm-up opportunity to show a video on how Halloween is celebrated in China. It was friendly, simple and easy to understand. We discussed how to adapt it for teaching at a high school in Japan. In preparation for the afternoon class of Special Topics in English, the teacher tempted us to wear colorful masks and tell ghost stories in exchange for a pile of candies. To give students an opportunity to participate in an afternoon role-playing scenario, the instructor suggested that the TA and two students could try imagined role-playing; that is, writing their own script for a dialogue between characters.

As a TA in the early afternoon, I observed how the instructor lead the undergraduate class of English Education Methodology that was paired with English Conversation.

In the late afternoon, our classroom lights were dimmed. The hallways were shrouded in the mysterious atmosphere of Halloween. As planned, the students walked into the classroom and shouted in rising intonation, "trick or treat?" The teacher replied, "treat!" Then I promptly led my classmates outdoors to a garden on campus. There, a Japanese student and a Chinese student were directed to walk onto a makeshift floral stage and tell ghost stories in English with the aid of their smart phones (see Figure 1). Their story selections were perfect: Lafcadio Hearn's *Kwaidan* and Pu Songling's *Chinese Ghost Story*. The terrifying plots made the students shiver, but they were not too scary, of course. It had just the right amount of tension to keep the audience enraptured. They not only told vivid stories but were prompted by me, who was the TA-cum-drama coach. They also used rich expressions and body language. The audience said they had felt drawn into mysterious worlds. Spontaneously, the teacher made an exciting suggestion: "Let's roleplay! Please don your masks and choose a character from either the Japanese or the Chinese ghost story to perform your part in this school garden." Upon hearing this news, the venue bubbled with excitement. Everyone was eager to try a role that matched one's speaking ability. To ensure the smooth progress of the performance, peer pressure nudged everyone to make a concentrated effort to remember the lines. In the midst of laughter and camaraderie, role-playing scenes officially began when the TA-cum-director called out "action!" Students showcased their strengths and reinterpreted the previous storylines, adlibbing in their own way. In this process, peers encouraged and learned from each other, constantly interacting to create new creative sparks. Whether it was the tone of the lines, the design of the set, or the arrangement of the intercultural scenes, everyone strived to do their best, hoping to present a brilliant performance to their peers in the audience. Thus, a Halloween event full of fun, mystery, and creativity came to a successful end that Friday evening. Students wrote in their reflective journals that they had gained happiness, knowledge, and unforgettable memories from participating.

Figure 1

Photo of a Student Telling a Chinese Ghost Story

Teaching Assistance for TAs

On Fridays during my second period seminar class, I took time to review with the professor what had happened the previous Friday and discussed comments recorded in student journals. We then quickly revised the Friday lesson plans and got ready to implement them. There was a syllabus that deployed lots of elements to inform stakeholders. However, I loved going into the classrooms not knowing exactly what was going to happen. That feeling of discovery and disorientation was fantastic. Even though students knew parts of the lesson plan in advance in some ways, they did not know how the instructor—me as TA—put participants in the whole story together, which was based on the choices the actors made.

Thank Goodness It's Fun

The revamped TGIF program placed great emphasis on interaction and active participation in teaching and learning. I observed students actively participating in classroom discussions through role-playing, outdoor teaching, and other activities. This not only stimulated students' interest in learning, but also promoted the improvement of their thinking and expression abilities. I was deeply inspired as a TA and will pay attention to increasing interactive activities in my own teaching, allowing students to participate more in the classroom.

Since I entered graduate school and became a TA, my concepts and skills have been greatly enriched and improved. Teaching is a job that requires continuous learning and progress. I learned how to stimulate students' interests and improve their learning outcomes by observing how the instructor weaved teaching methods and strategies together. Each student had their unique learning style and pace, so I tried to use personalized tutoring methods as much as possible to meet their different needs. I offered them just-in-time coaching to enable them to use a word they needed in micro-learning moments. At the same time, I adopted a diversified evaluation approach to gain a more comprehensive understanding of students' learning status and provide them with timely feedback and suggestions. This evaluation method not only helped to improve students' English application ability, but also cultivated their autonomous learning and reflective abilities. By serving as a TA, I have gained teaching experience and teaching methodology insights. These gains have not only significant implications for my personal career development but also a positive impact on the English learning and growth of my students.

Takeaways From my Classroom Observations

By experiencing how to integrate five classes into a one-day program by coordinating with my graduate school peers, undergraduate students, and professor, I learned how to maximize foreign language learning opportunities. I suggest these six takeaways from my observations.

1. Pair up 90-minute university lessons on the same day to synergize intensive learning opportunities.
2. Follow a syllabus, but synchronize it with festive calendar dates. Allow for spontaneous changes to surprise and disrupt student pathos.
3. In addition to rearranging desks and chairs in the classroom, identify venues around campus to convene extemporaneous lessons.
4. Hire a TA, or appoint a class captain, to enlist team spirit and serve as a role model for activities.
5. On the first day, have fun but get learners to accept responsibility right from the start by setting goals, defining responsibilities and routines, and designing a cooperative syllabus.
6. If you have international students in the class, do not lose them to cellphone gaming. Instead, involve them in performance poetry slams and roleplay activities.

Conclusion

As a participant and TA during fifteen weeks of five consecutive classes each Friday, I witnessed the transformation of my students that began from their very first class. Even my classmates from China confided in me that they soon started to enjoy English. This transformation was due to unique teaching methods, which did not confine the students to the classroom but used role-playing, outdoor lessons, and props to keep everyone curious and guessing what was coming up next. The acronym *TGIF* became a *Thank Goodness It's Fun* teaching style.

My toolkit of teacher-in-training learning strategies now includes just-in-time learning, visual storytelling, social learning, and microlearning. I look forward to Fridays next semester—weekends too. My coined acronym *WeTGIF* must understandably shift to Friday classroom activities that require preparations on weekends. I will continue to focus on assigned-readings, adopt flipped classroom learning, select online videos, perform poetry sessions, practice on-the-spot three-minute presentations of my master's thesis, and use e-learning software to boost my vocabulary by processing short chunks of information within a few minutes. Following this regimen, I think I can continue to have fun becoming an English teacher.

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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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How to Get a Textbook Project Off the Ground: Part 2

Steven Lim

Jesse Reidak

George M Jacobs

The first column in this three-part series on writing a textbook covered the steps for conceptualizing your project. In this second column, the focus shifts to identifying some of the unique challenges involved in the process of writing a book collaboratively and advice on how to handle these issues.

When pedagogical books are written by authors across multiple countries and in differing teaching environments, there is the opportunity for a variety of experiences, opinions, and ideas to coalesce in one text. However, for the sake of the book, it is necessary that this multitude of voices be in harmony so that readers can utilize it effectively. This article attempts to show how structure and consistency can be maintained in a collaborative writing project and offers advice on how team members can contribute throughout the ever-evolving writing process.

Create Structure Through Headings

Headings underscore the core goals of the text and provide signposting to key information in a comprehensible and digestible manner. Since headings can serve as an effective way for the reader to mentally organize pertinent material (Lorch Jr. et al., 2001), it is important to utilize them strategically.

Headings should be self-explanatory and repeated across chapters to swiftly orientate the readers. Cognitive science suggests that our minds work via schemas (i.e., frameworks) that prepare us for what comes next. For example, if the heading says "ChatGPT", readers will begin thinking about artificial intelligence, but if the heading says "Chat Group", they might begin thinking about conversing with other people online. By repeating headings across chapters, a book establishes schemas which allow the reader to dial into the purpose of the section. In the case of our book, all 17 of the chapters on the sustainable development goals (SDGs) have headings which are identical save for the name of the SDG. For example, the chapter on climate action has the headings: *What is Climate Action?, Key Terms, How are we doing on Climate Action?, Climate Action and other SDGs,* and *How to promote Climate Action.*

The structure afforded by headings provides cohesion to the diverse topics and perspectives that make up the contents of a book written by multiple authors. It is important to establish and reinforce connections throughout a book so that the readers can recognize these connections and anticipate their appearance, with the ultimate aim being for the readers to make the connections themselves without the need for the authors to do so.

A structured approach to headings also makes the writing process a simpler proposition. Once a pattern has been established, the fear of the blank page becomes almost irrelevant: Portions of text practically write themselves because the design of the passage is repeated across chapters. Rather than trying to reinvent the wheel every chapter, the information the writer needs to convey and the research they need to conduct become self-evident. With the consistent use of headings throughout chapters and the repetition of topics across sections of the book, the structure can make it easier for the reader to efficiently access information and allow the author to focus on the details rather than the delivery method.

Use a Consistent Tone

As readers of this column will be acutely aware, language matters. The language used in your writing should be indicative of the intended audience and the core themes of the text. When writing collaboratively, maintaining a uniform tone that fits those criteria through an entire book can be especially challenging. Though having a unique authorial voice is one of the pleasures of writing, when there is a need to incorporate a wide variety of writing styles, it is important to focus on establishing and maintaining a uniform tone.

There needs to be a statement that encapsulates the intended tone of the book for writers to refer to so that they can be reminded of how that the authors as a collective, rather than as individuals, intend to convey the message. In our case, we included this authorial mission statement as part of the introduction, noting that since the book is intended to be inclusive, we tried to make the language free from technical jargon and accessible to people for whom English was not their first language. An overall mission statement is a valuable reference point when considering what language to use when writing.

In addition to an overarching writing mission statement, establishing specific rules on issues that are likely to reoccur is vital to maintaining a consistent tone. These rules should seek to reinforce the tone you are trying to convey to the reader. Many publications which are designed to appeal to an academic audience adopt a detached approach and often refrain from using *you* to refer to the reader. However, depending on the tone of your writing, the use of such language might be entirely appropriate. As Hyland (2002) noted, the way we write establishes the relationship we want to form with our reader. Our book is intended to advocate for the reader to become invested in the SDGs, and as such the frequent use of *you* is a deliberate attempt to appeal to the reader to take action. Rather than passively absorb the text, the reader is supposed to connect it to their own environment and consider how they can contribute to achieving the SDGs.

Another example of lexical choices reflecting the tone in our book was in the use of the word *possibilities* when suggesting potential variations of activities. Several words were tested, such as *options*, *variations*, and *alternatives*, but *possibilities* was chosen because, whilst similar in meaning to the other choices, the nuance was perceived to be less restrictive. *Possibilities* suggests that these are just some of the ways in which the activities could be adapted to suit the needs of different classrooms. Such choices may seem trivial, but the discussions around these decisions help to solidify the core principles of the book in the mind of the authors.

The need to establish rules regarding lexical choices may not be apparent from the start of the writing process. However, when collaborating with others, it is important to address these issues as and when they emerge. By discussing and deciding on unified lexical choices, writers will avoid jarring tonal shifts and can reinforce the underlying themes of the book.

Be Role-Flexible

Although there are many challenges to writing a book with others, one of the benefits is that, no matter the extent to which any individual is struggling with writer's block, as a collective, progress on the book continues. For some, the efforts of colleagues result in positive pressure: Reading the work of collaborators can provide the spark of inspiration that serves as a catalyst for your own writing. For others, it could be disheartening to feel you are unable to match the contributions of your coauthors. In such cases it is worthwhile to consider the other ways in which you can contribute.

When authors are struggling to write their own chapters, there is always the option to proofread and offer constructive feedback on the chapters of others. As in the case of second language learners, authors writing collaboratively are more receptive to peer suggestions and feedback (Storch, 2005). They could also contribute to the book holistically by determining whether there is a need for additional chapters or formatting changes. What is important is to be flexible; rather than being concerned about what they are unable to contribute at any one moment, writers need to focus on what they can do.

Depending on the makeup of the writing team, you might find it useful to assign responsibilities at the outset, such as what sections each person will write and by when they are expected to do so. However all members should be aware that, over the lengthy process of writing a book, these plans are unlikely to remain in place. Therefore, clear communication about contributions and role flexibility are essential to ensure that, as a team, progress on the book continues smoothly.

Writing a book collaboratively requires two principles of cooperative learning: positive interdependence and individual accountability. Each person should be aware that their work contributes positively to the goals of the team, and each person should let the others know what they can or cannot do. Likewise, each person should value what the others bring to the process and be aware that the manner of the contributions may not be uniform as team members adapt to the evolving needs of the book.

Final Thoughts

Being part of the team that wrote *Cooperative Learning and the Sustainable Development Goals* (Lim et al., 2023) provided valuable insights into the advantages and challenges of a collaborative approach to writing. This article has presented three pieces of advice to authors based on our experience: use headings to create structure, keep a consistent tone, and be willing to be role-flexible. These three concepts should help facilitate a smooth and productive collaborative writing process. In the final column in this series, Jesse Reidak will be offering advice on a collaborative approach to editing.

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[JALT PRAXIS] JALT FOCUS

Michael Phillips

JALT currently has 31 chapters and 32 special interest groups (SIGs) spread out across Japan. Many of these groups are very active, holding regular events large and small. Further, collaboration, in all its forms, is a cornerstone of JALT's presence in the language teaching community. In addition to these "visible" groups, there are many other officers and committees that keep the organisation running smoothly from behind the scenes. This column publishes an in-depth review of one JALT group each issue, providing readers with a more complete picture of what the different groups are undertaking and achieving.

Past columns are available at https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/jalt-focus
Email: jaltpubs.tlt.jalt.focus@jalt.org.

This article represents the first instalment of the new JF column. With the broadening of the old column's focus, it seemed a natural fit to invite the national JALT officer who liaisons between the local chapters, JALT's national directors, and SIGs as the first highlighted guest.

Heather McCulloch

Chapter Representative Liaison

I had been "friends" with JALT Gunma for years on social media, but I was too shy to go to an event. In January 2018, however, I finally got the nerve to attend. My initial anxiety was quickly extinguished by Tomoko Yoshida, a guest speaker who delivered an amazing presentation, and by the Gunma chapter members who made me feel right at home. I quickly became a regular member, and later that same year, I became their Membership Chair.

One year later, I became the Chapter President. I then began attending Executive Board Meetings (EBMs) and started getting to know the other chapter presidents. I enjoyed this because I was able to meet many friendly people and learn a lot about JALT. In January 2023, I stepped up to the national position of Chapter Representative Liaison (CRL). Until then, I had not paid much attention to JALT-wide activities, as I attended EBMs merely to support my own chapter.

The CRL has a wide variety of duties. They are a liaison between chapters and the Board of Directors (BoD). To do this, they need to communicate with chapter presidents, facilitate chapter president groups at the EBMs, write reports, attend BoD meetings, join other national committees, work in tandem with the SIG Representative Liaison, and make sure that the presidents are aware of upcoming deadlines. It sounds like a lot, but they also have a lot of support.

My first year as CRL has been a year of learning. Even as chapter president, I did not realize everything that goes into making an NPO not only function but also be successful. We see the directors sitting at the front of EBMs but that is not all there is. There are also people who help us research and publish, conference organizers, people who help us manage our money wisely, people who mentor us, and people who connect us to other groups and organizations. Collaboration between these groups is the key to JALT's strength, and I have the pleasure of being in the middle of it. A large part of what I do is knowing what is available and being able to point chapter presidents in the right direction. I would not call myself a leader, but my role is to be a committed, curious, and flexible support instead.

I still have a lot to learn but I feel like my second year as CRL will involve more activity than the first. Now that many of us are using Zoom, I have access to JALT from Hokkaido to Okinawa, and I have been trying to visit all chapter meetings. I do this to show my support and appreciation for the hard work that they do to further local professional development. My desire is that each chapter president knows that someone understands the effort it takes to keep a chapter going, the creativity it takes to host meetings that cater to a variety of instructors, and the flexibility to keep up with the changing times.

I am thankful to be active in JALT with so many creative, kind, and devoted people. The chapter presidents have shared their practices with me and have taught me so much more than I could ever teach them. The BoD and SRL have taken me under their wings to mentor me and to ensure that I am successful. They are always available for assistance whenever I need help and to provide encouragement. I have received so much more from JALT than I thought was possible.

I am still thoroughly enjoying my time with JALT, from being a member, a chapter president, and a national officer. If you are looking for a place where you can learn and advance your career all while meeting wonderful people, please think about becoming a national JALT officer. We would love your help.

BoD & AUDITOR ELECTIONS

2024 JALT Board of Directors and Auditor Elections

The NPO JALT Nominations and Elections Committee is happy to announce the 2024 elections for the JALT Board of Directors and Auditor. All JALT members in good standing will be invited to cast a ballot in this election.

Voting will begin on April 8, 2024, and end on May 24, 2024, with the results being announced on May 31, 2024, and then submitted for approval to the JALT Ordinary General Meeting. The newly elected Board of Directors and Auditor will begin their official position on January 1, 2025, for two years. An email with an individualized ballot and further instructions will be sent to every JALT member.

— Oana Cusen NPO JALT NEC Chair

Candidates' Information

Nominee for Position of President

Clare Kaneko

***Education* / 学位**

- MA in TEF/SL,University of Birmingham (U.K.)/ バーミンガム大学修士
- Bachelor of Business, Edith Cowan University (Perth, Australia)/ エディス・コーワン大学ビジネス 士号

***Employment* / 職歴**

- Associate Professor, Niigata University/ 新潟大 学准教授

***JALT Experience* / *JALT* 関連**

- JALT President (2023 - Present)/ JALT理事長 (2023年〜)
- JALT Elected Officer Chapter Representative Liaison (2020 – 2022)/ JALTナショナルオフィサー CRL（2020 - 2022）
- Niigata JALT Chapter President (2019 – 2022)/ 新潟支部、会長 (2019 - 2022)
- Niigata JALT NEAR Language conference,

conference chair (2017 – 2018, 2021)/ 新潟支部、NEAR大会委員長 (2017 - 2018, 2021)

- Niigata JALT Public Relations officer (2016) 新潟支部, 広報委員長 (2016)

Statement of Intent

I have been the JALT President since January 2023. I believe that JALT would benefit from stability in leadership for the next two years. With the transition out of COVID still affecting different parts of the organization, from my insights over the past year and a half, I am able to provide consistency in leadership to guide JALT out of this period of recovery and beyond. I have been able to work with a strong team of directors who have provided me with guidance in the past year to continue working on improving the core of the organization. With a new Board of Directors to work with in 2025, I intend to foster a collaborative environment where all input is valued. My existing knowledge of JALT at the chapter level has helped with discussions and making decisions, and I believe I have a strong knowledge of many of the different aspects of the JALT organization and the connections of people and committees since becoming president. I will continue to support our members and volunteers.

私は2023年1月からJALTの理事長を務めています。私は、JALTが今後2年間、安定したリーダーシップを発揮することが有益であると考えています。コロナウイルスがまだ組織のさまざまな部分に影響を及ぼしている中、過去1年半の私の洞察から、私はJALTがこの回復期を脱し、さらにその先へと進むための一貫したリーダーシップを発揮することができます。私はこの1年間、組織の中核を改善し続けるための指針を与えてくれた強力な理事チームと協働することができました。2025年には新しい理事会とともに、私はすべての意見が尊重される協力的な環境を育むつもりです。支部レベルでのJALTに関する私の既存の知識は、議論や意思決定に役立ち、会長に就任してからは、JALT組織の様々な側面や、人々や委員会のつながりの多くを熟知していると思います。これからも会員やボランティアをサポートしていきたいと思います。

Nominee for Position of Vice President

Kenn Gale

After working as a counselor in Southern California for several years, Kenn decided it was time to move on and see the world. He packed up and headed to Central and South America where he spent a number of years teaching and traveling. In 2009, he received an offer to work for the Thai Ministry of Education, where he helped open several schools in their EP department. Consulting and opening schools through Southeast Asia for several years finally led him to Japan. After arriving in Japan in 2012 to manage a successful international school on a two-year contract, he immediately fell in love with the country, its culture, and his coworkers, and has since decided to make Japan his home. Since arriving, he has opened six new schools in central Japan with expansion ongoing, as well as owning a Montessori school. With a staff of over 180 teachers and administrators, he specializes in administration, logistics, and HR. Kenn is passionate about JALT and what it offers its members. He hopes his experience will help lead the company into the future.

南カリフォルニアで数年間カウンセラーとして働いた後、ケンはそろそろ前に進み、世界を見に行く時が来たと決心した。彼は荷物をまとめて中南米に向かい、そこで何年もの間、教えながら旅をした。2009年、タイの教育省からオファーを受け、教育省のEP部門でいくつかの開校を支援した。数年間、東南アジアでコンサルティングや学校の開校に携わり、最終的に日本にたどり着いた。2012年に来日し、2年間の契約で成功したインターナショナルスクールを経営した後、すぐに日本という国、文化、同僚に惚れ込み、以来、日本を故郷とすることを決めた。来日以来、モンテッソーリ・スクールを経営するだけでなく、日本の中心部に6つのスクールを開校し、現在も拡大を続けている。180人以上の教師と管理職を抱え、管理、物流、人事を専門としている。ケンはJALTとJALTが会員に提供するものに情熱を注いでいる。彼の経験がJALTを将来へと導いてくれることを期待している。

Statement of Intent

As Vice President, my goal is to support the entire board of directors and to assist in the daily operations of JALT. The Vice President has clearly outlined responsibilities, one of which is working and managing JALT's Central Office (JCO). I look forward to continuing to work with the staff there and ensure they are equipped and prepared, and support them anyway necessary. Also, I wish to provide support on a case by case basis for the President. JALT is a large NPO and therefore many random and unique projects/situations arise, which I hope to help with. With six years experience on the BOD, it has been a pleasure to serve, and I wish to carry over my experience for another term as Vice-President.

副会長としての私の目標は、理事会全体をサポートし、JALTの日常業務を支援することです。 副会長には明確な責務があります。そのひとつが、JALTのセントラルオフィス（JCO）の運営です。 私は、現地スタッフと引き続き協力し、彼らが装備と準備を整え、必要であればサポートすることを楽しみにしています。また、理事長に対しては、「ケース・バイ・ケース」でサポートしていきたいと思っています。JALTは大規模なNPOであるため、不定期でユニ

ークなプロジェクトや状況がありますが、そのような状況でもお手伝いできればと思っています。副会長として6年間BODを務めてきた経験を生かし、また新たな任期に臨みたいと思います。

Nominee for Position of Director of Membership

Julia Kimura

Education / **学位**

- Ph.D. Temple University/ 博士（テンプル大学）
- Lecturer, Mukogawa Women's University/ 武庫川女子大学（講師）
- Osaka JALT Membership Chair, Member at Large/ 大阪支部:会員担当、無任所役員
- *The Language Teacher* Recently Received Column Coeditor/ コラム編集者
- *JALT Post-Conference Proceedings* Content Editor/ コンテンツエディター
- JALT Director of Membership/ 会員担当理事

Statement of Intent

I am honoured to receive nominations to continue to serve as JALT's Director of Membership. Under my directorship, we put a stop to declining membership numbers, and reversed the trend by making modest gain in our membership. As a result, our membership revenue for the last year exceeded projections by 10%. Furthermore, we increased value to membership by making sure that our members take advantage of the one SIG membership that comes with a JALT membership. The number of members who do not belong to any SIG was reduced by 4%.

I expect this positive trend to continue as I have become a more experienced and effective director. I have worked with the PR team to highlight the value of joining and am now working with the Membership Liaison and Membership Committee to launch new campaigns to target lapsed members and to encourage members to introduce colleagues to JALT.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the efforts of the membership chairs. The biggest lesson I have learned during my term was the importance of fostering good relationships. As a team, we made great things happen, and we will make great things happen as we enter the aftertimes.

JALTの会員担当理事として、2期目の指名を受け光栄に思います。この一年で、会員数の減少に歯止めをかけることができましたし、会員数をわずかに増やすことで傾向を逆転させ、その結果、昨年度の会員収入は予想を10％上回りました。さらに、JALT会員に付属する1つのSIGに参加することで、会員の価値を高めることができ、どのSIGにも所属していない会員数は4％減少しました。

この良い傾向は今後も続くと思います。理事会や執行役委員会の仕組みをより深く理解し、Membership員会などの委員会にも貢献できるようになりました。もちろん、今後、Mentoring and Orientation委員会に貢献出来ると思います。また、PRチームと協力し、JALTに入会することの価値を伝え、会員渉外担当や会員委員会とも協力を行い、退会した会員を対象とした新しいキャンペーンを立ち上げたり、会員が同僚にJALTを紹介するよう働きかけたりしています。

以上の成果は、会員増強委員長のたゆまぬ努力なしには成し得なかったものであり、私がこの２年間で学んだ最大の教訓は、役員との良好な関係を築くことの重要性でした。コロナ禍後チームとして力を合わせ、私たちは偉大なことを成し遂げます。

Nominee for Position of Director of Program

Chelanna White

Education / **学位**

- M.Ed in TESOL, University of British Columbia (In progress)/ ブリティッシュ・コロンビア大学TESOL修士課程修了（在学中）
- TESOL Certificate, Trinity Western University (2017)/ トリニティ・ウエスタン大学TESOL修了証（2017年）
- Bachelor of Arts, Kwantlen Polytechnic University (2016)/ クワントレン・ポリテクニック大学文学士（2016年）

Employment / **職歴**

- Instructor, Reitaku University (2022 – present)/ 麗澤大学インストラクター（2022-現在）
- JET Programme ALT Prefectural Advisor, Kyoto (2020-2022)/ JETプログラムALT府アドバイザー、京都府（2020-2022年）
- JET Programme ALT, Kyoto (2017-2020)/ JETプログラムALT、京都府（2017-2020年）

JALT Experience / JALT **関連**

- Director of Program (2023 – present)/ プログラム・ディレクター（2023年～現在）
- Student Peer Interaction Network Committee member (2023 – present)/ 学生ピア交流ネットワーク委員会委員（2023-現在）

- Program Liaison (2022-2023) / プログラムリエゾン（2022-2023年）
- Regional Professional Activities Committee member (2021) / 地域専門活動委員会委員（2021年）
- Co-Chair of Program, Kyoto Chapter (2019-2022)/ 京都支部プログラム共同委員長（2019年～2022年）

Statement of Intent

In 2023, the position of Director of Conference was created. Since then, I have been re-developing the role of Director of Program (DoP) while supporting chapter and SIG program chairs, as well as supporting JALT as a member of the Financial Steering Committee and Development Fund Sub-committee to help chapters and SIGs have the funds to continue to provide excellent events for our organization. I have been working with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee to develop a database to make finding excellent presenters much easier. Programming should reflect the wide variety of experience and expertise of our members, such as up-and-coming language researchers and educators who I support through the Student Peer Interaction Network (SPIN) Committee in addition to the committees I sit on as DoP. I also coordinate the monthly Zoom for Professional Development sessions—bring a friend!

If reelected, I will continue to develop the role of DoP, and support program chairs in providing relevant, engaging, and forward-thinking programming. I look forward to the opportunity to oversee the completion of the updated Program Chairs Handbook and revitalizing the Program Committee to support this project. It would be my hono(u)r to continue for another term.

2023年、大会ディレクターという役職が創設されました。それ以来、私はDirector of Program (DoP)の役割を再構築しながら、支部やSIGのプログラム委員長をサポートししたり、私たちの組織に優れたイベントを継続的に提供できる資金を支部やSIGが確保できるように財務運営委員会や開発基金小委員会のメンバーとしてJALTをサポートしています。私は、多様性・公平性・包括性（DEI）委員会と協力して、優れたプレゼンターを今よりも簡単に発掘できるようなデータベースを開発しています。プログラミングにはプログラミングには、私がDoPとして参加している委員会に加え、SPIN (Student Peer Interaction Network)委員会を通じてサポートしている将来有望な言語研究者や教育者といった私たちの仲間の多岐に渡る経験と専門知識を反映させる必要があります。また、毎月 Zoom for Professional Development というオンラインでのイベントを主催しています。ご友人にお声がけいただき、ぜひともご参加ください。

再選されたら、私はDoPの役割を発展させ、プログラム委員長が適切で、魅力的で、先進的なプログラムを提供できるようサポートし続けます。最新版のプログラム委員長ハンドブックの完成を監修し、このプロジェクトをサポートするためにプログラム委員会を活性化させる ことを楽しみにしています。ダイレクターとしての任務を引き続き担わせていただけるのであれば光栄です。

Nominee for Position of Director of Conference

Wayne Malcolm

Originally from Cornwall, New York, in the United States, I have been living in Japan since September 2002. I have taught English in various areas of the language education community—English conversation schools, primary and secondary schools, and tertiary institutions.

I graduated from Syracuse University in New York State with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. While living and working in Japan, I gained a Masters of Management in International Management. After that, I gained a Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership, specializing in curriculum and instruction from the University of Phoenix School of Advanced Studies. Eventually, I will take on some more education.

Since joining JALT in March 2008, I have been a chapter president, program chair, publicity chair, treasurer, JALT Business Manager, Director of Program, and am now the Director of Conference. In these capacities I have been a continuous presence at Executive Board Meetings and local events—doing the business of JALT.

When I am not in a classroom teaching, or doing JALT work, I can probably be found running, listening to/playing music, watching stuff, or hanging out with my wife and daughter. The simple things!

アメリカのニューヨーク州コーンウォール出身で、2002年9月から日本に住んでいます。英会話学校、小学校、中学校、高等学校など、語学教育のさまざまな分野で英語を教えてきました。

ニューヨーク州のシラキュース大学で政治学の学士号を取得しました。日本での生活と仕事の傍ら、国際経営学の修士号を取得しました。その後、University of Phoenix School of Advanced Studiesでカリキュラムとインストラクションを専門とする教育リーダーシップの教育学博士号を取得しました。最終的には、さらにいくつかの教育を受ける予定です。

2008年3月にJALTに入会して以来、支部長、プログラム委員長、広報委員長、会計、JALTビジネスマネージャー、プログラムディレクターを歴任し、現在はカンファレン

スディレクターです。これらの役職において、私は理事会や地域のイベントに常に出席し、JALTの業務を行ってきました。

教室で教えたり、JALTの仕事をしていないときは、ランニングをしたり、音楽を聴いたり、映画を見たり、妻や娘とぶらぶらしたりしています。単純なことだ！

Statement of Intent

The Director of Conference has a mandate to organize an engaging international conference. This requires being able to see the big picture view of what an international conference should be, and understanding all the separate elements that need to come together to get the job done. Since 2019 I have been working on the conference, and have been able to refine and hone my capacity to see the moving parts of the conference as one.

Two reasons I am looking to continue as Director of Conference are because the position is still new, and JALT is still crafting how to fully approach and utilize the position; deciding what demands should firmly be associated with the person in this position. I can still aid with defining this position. The other reason I am looking for your support is because the JALT conference is not immune from the realities of socio-economic change that many organizations are dealing with. My experience on the JALT Board of Directors and leading the conference planning team can help guide the conference, and JALT, through to more secure territory. I believe we should use tried and tested techniques, while incorporating new ones that will make processes more efficient and effective.

会議担当ディレクターには、魅力的な国際会議を開催する使命があります。そのためには、国際会議がどうあるべきかという全体像を把握し、仕事を成し遂げるためにまとまる必要のあるすべての個別の要素を理解することが必要です。2019年以降、私は会議に携わり、会議の可動部分をひとつに見る能力に磨きをかけてきました。

私が大会ディレクターを続けたいと考えている2つの理由は、この役職がまだ新しく、JALTがこの役職にどのようにアプローチし、活用するか、この役職の人物にどのような要求がしっかりと関連付けられるべきかを決定し、まだ作り上げている最中だからです。私はまだ、このポジションを定義する手助けをすることができます。もうひとつの理由は、JALT大会が、多くの組織が対処している社会経済的変化の現実と無縁ではないからです。JALT理事会での経験と、大会企画チームを率いた経験は、大会とJALTをより安全な領域へと導く助けとなるでしょう。私は、プロセスをより効率的かつ効果的にする新しい手法を取り入れながら、試行錯誤を重ねた手法を使うべきだと考えています。

Nominee for Position of Director of Public Relations

William Pellowe

Overview: My first experience teaching English was as a substitute teacher at a language school in London while there on a six-month working holiday visa after college. Once back home in Massachusetts, I took a short training course for ESL teachers and got my first full-time job at a language school for foreign students in Boston. I came to Japan in 1990. In my first decade here, I mainly worked at conversation schools and a *senmon gakko*. I started working at my current university in 2000, getting tenure in 2013 and a promotion to Associate Professor in 2015.

Education / 学位

- MA in TEFL with distinction from the University of Birmingham (U.K.)

Employment / 職歴

- Associate Professor, Kindai University (campus in Iizuka City, Fukuoka Prefecture)

JALT Experience / JALT 関連

- Joined JALT in 1990/ 1990年 JALT入会
- Fukuoka JALT program chair 1995 - 1997/ 1995年 - 1997年:福岡支部企画委員長
- Fukuoka JALT chapter president 1998 - 2002; again 2010 - 2019 /1998年 - 2002年11月:福岡支部支部長
- Created and maintained JALT.org's first online event calendar (2001 - 2008, see http://hosted.jalt.org/calendar/archive)/ 2001年 - 2008年 :jalt.orgのイベントカレンダーウェブサイト担当
- Conference vetting (2008 - present)/ 2008年3月 - 現在:JALT年次大会 提出論文の選考委員
- TEVAL SIG website 2015 - 2021/ 2015 年1月 - 2021 年6月:試験と評価研究部会（TEVAL SIG）ウェブサイト担当
- PanSIG Conference website 2016 - present (https://pansig.org)/ 2016年1月 - 現在:JALT PanSIG大会 ウェブサイト担当 (https://pansig.org)
- Acting Director of Public Relations Feb. 2019 - June 2019/ 2019年2月 - 2019年6月現在:広報担当理事（理事代行）

- Director of Public Relations June 2019 – present/ 2019年6月 - 現在:広報担当理事

Statement of Intent

I started doing the job of Director of Public Relations for JALT at the beginning of 2019. I've accomplished a lot in that time, but I feel that I still have more to contribute, so I would be honored to be elected to serve one more term. I'm pleased with the positive reception of the JALT Talk newsletter, with its expanded coverage to include local events and calls for participation, as well as notifications of all JALT publications, making this monthly newsletter more relevant to our community of language teaching professionals. Our social media reach and impact continues to grow. As a member of the board of directors, I've pushed for transparency in the advertisements appearing in JALT media and transparency within JALT, and I support the efforts to increase the diversity within our organization, its leadership, and among its conference speakers, as well as the efforts to create more family-friendly conferences. If elected, I will continue to serve JALT, its officers, and its members to the best of my ability.

私は2019年の初めからJALTの広報担当理事を始めました。その間に多くのことを成し遂げましたが、まだまだ貢献できることがあると感じていますので、もう1期務めさせていただけることになりましたら光栄です。JALTトークのニュースレターが好意的に受け入れられていることに満足しています。JALT Talkニュースレターには、JALT支部とSIGのイベントや発表募集、SIGの全出版物のお知らせが掲載されるようになりました。また、JALTのソーシャルメディアへの影響力も拡大し続けています。理事会のメンバーとして、私はJALTのメディアに掲載される広告の透明性とJALT内の透明性を推進してきました。また、JALTの組織内、指導者内、大会講演者内の多様性を高める努力や、より家族向けの大会を作る努力を支持しています。当選した暁には、JALT、JALT役員、JALT会員のために、引き続き全力を尽くします。

Nominee for Position of Director of Public Relations

Howard Hernandez

I have taught in various schools in Korea and Japan's English language sector. These experiences have taught me valuable lessons about the importance of communication. I graduated from the University of Houston with a bachelor's degree in sociology and psychology. While working in Korea, I obtained a master's in adult education. Currently, I am studying for a PhD in strategic media from Liberty University.

私は韓国と日本の英語部門のさまざまな学校で教えてきました。これらの経験から、コミュニケーションの重要性について貴重な教訓を得ることができました。私はヒューストン大学を卒業し、社会学と心理学の学士号を取得しました。 韓国で働きながら成人教育の修士号を取得しました。 現在、リバティー大学で戦略メディアの博士号を取得しています。

Statement of Intent

From what I have read about the previous directors' experiences, this position requires attention to detail and a sense of empathy for making JALT events and newsletters appealing and relevant to JALT members. My plan for this position is to add new ideas to JALT events and newsletters that will keep everyone up to date on current trends in teaching and media. Additionally, I plan to update our newsletters with insights on emerging trends in technology and media, empowering our members to stay ahead in their field. Through these initiatives, I aim to enhance our organization's visibility and provide valuable resources to our community. I plan on fostering collaboration and continuous learning to propel JALT forward in its mission. Even though this will be my first endeavor as director of public relations, I will do my best to bring fresh ideas and content to JALT.

これまでのディレクターの経験を読んだところによると、この役職には、JALTのイベントやニュースレターをJALT会員にとって魅力的で関連性のあるものにするための細部への配慮と共感の感覚が必要です。 このポジションに対する私の計画は、教育とメディアの最新トレンドをみんなに知らせるために、JALT のイベントやニュースレターに新しいアイデアを追加することです。 さらに、テクノロジーとメディアの新たなトレンドに関する洞察をニュースレターに掲載して、会員がそれぞれの分野で先を行くことができるようにする予定です。 これらの取り組みを通じて、私たちの組織の認知度を高め、コミュニティに貴重なリソースを提供することを目指しています。 私は、JALT の使命を前進させるために、コラボレーションと継続的な学習を促進するつもりです。 広報部長としては初めての挑戦となりますが、JALTに新鮮なアイデアやコンテンツをお届けできるよう全力を尽くしてまいります。

Nominee for Position of Director of Records

Samantha Kawakami

Education / 学位

- BA in Communication (Japanese minor), Alma College (Alma, Michigan, USA)/ コミュニケーション

学士（日本語副専攻）、アルマカレッジ（米国ミシガン州アルマ）

***Employment* / 職歴**

- Associate Professor, Matsue Kosen (Matsue, Shimane)/ 松江工業高等専門学校（島根県松江市）助教

***JALT Experience / JALT* 関連**

- 2003-2009: Associate Member (Macmillan LanguageHouse)/ 2003-2009: ビジネス会員（マクミラン ランゲージハウス）
- 2013-present: Member of Hiroshima Chapter and BRAIN SIG/ 2013-現在: 広島支部および BRAIN SIG 会員
- 2020: JALT2020 International Conference, Room Host Coordinator/ 2020: JALT2020 国際会議、ルームホスト コーディネーター
- 2021: JALT2021 International Conference, Room Host Coordinator/ 2021: JALT2021 国際会議、ルームホスト コーディネーター
- 2022: JALT2022 International Conference, Online Conference Tech Support/2022: JALT2022 国際会議、オンライン会議技術サポート
- 2023-present: Director of Records/ 2023-現在: 書記担当理事

Statement of Intent

I have been the Director of Records since the beginning of 2023. It has taken the first year to get comfortable with all of the regular tasks related to the Executive Board Meeting: gathering and compiling reports to create the JALT Executive Newsletter, making sure that everyone is on the EBM Team in Basecamp so they can actively participate, preparing attendance and voting documents, taking minutes, and making sure that we maintain quorum. I have made changes to these systems which have made things smoother, but I am still fine-tuning everything.

I have also been working on cleaning up Basecamp, an ongoing task, which involves making sure that everyone in Basecamp is a current member and helping people get on the teams that they need to be on.

Also, I have been working with the Technology Advisory and Support Committee. We are working on creating teams of members who can work on various aspects of all of the JALT websites. The goals are to build in redundancy so we are not reliant on just one person and to distribute the workload so it is not a heavy burden.

I am hoping to stay on as Director of Records and continue working on these projects.

2023年の初めから書記担当理事を務めています。最初の1年間は、理事会に関連するすべての通常業務に慣れるのに時間がかかりました。　これらの仕事には、JALT理事会ニュースレターを作成するための報告書の収集と編集、全員が積極的に参加できるようにBasecampでEBMチームに参加していることを確認すること、出席と投票の書類を準備すること、議事録を作成すること、定足数を維持することなどが含まれます。 私はこれらのシステムに変更を加え、物事をよりスムーズに進められるようにしましたが、まだすべてを微調整している段階です。

また、Basecampのクリーンアップにも取り組んでいます。これは、Basecampに登録されているすべての人が現在のメンバーであることを確認し、必要なチームに参加できるようにするための継続的な作業です。

そして、テクノロジー諮問・支援委員会と一緒に仕事をしてきました。 私たちは、JALTのすべてのウェブサイトのさまざまな側面に取り組むことができるメンバーのチームを作ることに取り組んでいます。 目標は、一人に依存しないように冗長性を持たせることと、負担が大きくならないように仕事量を分散させることです。

私は書記担当理事として残り、これらのプロジェクトに取り組み続けたいと思っています。

Nominee for Position of Director of Treasury

Anton Potgieter

After graduating from the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada, with a Bachelor of Commerce degree (Management Economics in Industry & Finance) in 1992, I worked for 12 years in the finance industry in Toronto, first as an internal controls auditor at Citibank Canada and later as a financial analyst and project manager at RBC Dominion Securities and TD Securities. Since arriving in Japan in 2005, I have worked in various areas of the English language education sector. I am presently a lecturer at Okayama University and a number of other universities around Okayama, as well as a business English instructor for a multinational chemical engineering corporation.

After attending JALT events over a number of years, I became a member of the Okayama Chapter in 2013, and since 2015 I have been the Okayama Chapter Treasurer. In 2019 I became involved with JALT at the national level as the Chapter Treasurer Liaison, and since 2021, I have been the Financial Steering Committee Chair. In these positions I have participated in and then overseen the preparation of JALT's annual budget, and presented this to the Executive Board. I am also currently an auditor for the United Associations of Language Studies (UALS).

1992年にカナダのオンタリオ州Guelph大学において商学士号（産業・金融における経営経済学）取得後、トロントで金融関連企業に12年間勤務いたしました。、まずCitibank Canadaで内部統制監査員として、その後はRBC Dominion証券及びTD証券で財務アナリスト、またプロジェクト・マネージャーとして勤務いたしました。2005 年に日本に来て以来、私は英語教育分野のさまざまな分野で働いてきました。私は現在、岡山大学をはじめとする岡山周辺の多くの大学で講師を務めているほか、多国籍化学エンジニアリング会社でビジネス英語の講師も務めています。

地元のJALTイベントに何年もかかわってきた後、2013年に岡山支部のメンバーとなり、2015年からは今までの経験を生かし岡山支部の会計を担当させていただいております。また、2019年からは支部会計リエゾンとして全国レベルのJALTに関わるようになり、2021年からは財務運営委員会の委員長させていただいています。これらの役職において、私は JALT の年間予算の作成に参加および監督し、これを執行委員会に提出してきました。また現在、United Associations of Language Studies (UALS)の監事も務めさせていただいています。

Statement of Intent

If given the opportunity, I believe my experiences as Financial Steering Committee Chair, Chapter Treasurer Liaison, and Okayama Chapter Treasurer, along with my background in finance and working relationship with JALT Central Office, will allow me to build upon the work of past Directors of Treasury. If elected, it is my intention to support chapter treasurers, SIG treasurers, and the international conference treasury team on practical transactional matters, as well as provide assistance with planning budgets and managing finances.

As Financial Steering Committee Chair I have identified areas where JALT's financial resources could be used more efficiently. If elected, I intend to further improve financial reporting by implementing a system that provides information in greater detail. This will allow for more in-depth analysis and enhance the decision-making process on how funds are utilized.

Furthermore, while JALT's revenue is growing again, it continues to be lower than pre-pandemic levels, and the extent to which it recovers still remains to be seen. Chapter and SIG funding is directly related to revenue, and much has changed since current funding policies came into effect in 2016. I believe now is the time for the Executive Board to discuss new funding policies that reflect the current financial environment.

機会をいただけるようでしたら、財務運営委員会の委員長、支部会計リエゾン、岡山支部会計としての経験、財務分野におけるバックグラウンド、そしてJALT中央事務局との協力関係を通して、過去の財務担当理事の仕事をさらに発展させることができると確信する次第です。選出いただけましたら、各支部会計、SIG会計、国際会議財務チームを実務的な取引面でサポートし、予算計画や財務管理に関する支援をご提供させていただきます。

財務運営委員会の委員長として、私はJALTの財源をより効率的に使用できる分野を特定しました。当選されましたら、より詳細な情報を提供するシステムを導入することで、財務報告をさらに改善するつもりです。これにより、より詳細な分析が可能になり、資金を最適に活用する方法に関する意思決定プロセスが強化されます。

さらに、JALTの収益は再び伸びているとはいえ、パンデミック前の水準を下回り続けており、どの程度回復するかはまだ未知数であます。支部/SIGの資金提供は収益に直接関係していますが、2016年に資金調達方針が施行されて以来、多くのことが変化しています。私は今こそ執行委員会が現在の金融環境を反映した新たな資金調達政策を議論する時期であると信じています。

Nominee for Position of Director of Treasury

Glenn Magee

JALT Experience: Gifu JALT President (2021-present), BRAIN SIG Publicity Chair (2021-present), Treasurer (2014-2021), Journal Editorial Review Board (2022-present), Assistant Treasurer TESOL-JALT International Mind, Brain and Education Symposium (2020), *The Language Teacher*: Editor (2016), Associate Editor (2015), Column Editor (2014), Proofreader/Copyeditor (2013), Learner Development-SIG, Editor *Learning Learning* (2012-2015), PanSIG Reviewer

岐阜支部、会長(2021年～現在)、脳科学・心理学と語学教育部会定款、　広報委員長（現在）、会計系（2014年～2021年）、ジャーナル編集審査委員会員（2022年～現在）、TESOL-JALT国際心、脳、言語シンポジウム、会議財務担当者の補佐（2020年）、The Language Teacher、編集者（2016年）、共同編集者（2015年）、コラム編集者（2014年）、訂正者（2013年）、学習者ディベロプメント研究部会、編集者、学習の学習（2012年～2015年）、PanSIG、査読者

Statement of Intent

I am thankful for my enriching experiences through my involvement in JALT activities over the past two decades. The relationships I have formed with fellow educators who share my passion for empowering others have been instrumental in keeping me engaged and committed to the field of education. I am incredibly fortunate to have gained invaluable financial and social experience by volunteering for various local, national, and international events. As a potential Director of Treasury, I pledge to advance JALT's mission and uphold its commitment to supporting language teachers in Japan. I am eager to forge new connections that align with JALT's goals and contribute to its long-term sustainability in supporting educators.

この20年間、JALTの活動に参加し、豊かな経験をさせていただいたことに感謝しています。他者に力を与えるという情熱を共有する教育者仲間との関係は、私が教育分野に関わり、献身し続ける上で大きな支えとなっています。地域、国内、国際的なさまざまな行事にボランティアとして参加することで、かけがえのない財政的・社会的経験を積むことができ、大変幸運に思っています。財務部長候補として、JALTの使命を推進し、日本の語学教師を支援するというコミットメントを守ることを誓います。私は、JALTの目標に沿った新しいつながりを築き、教育者を支援するJALTの長期的な持続可能性に貢献したいと考えています。

Nominee for Position of Auditor

Grant Osterman

Dr. Osterman has been teaching in Japan since 1993. Originally from a small Midwestern town in the United States, he earned his bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in education from the University of Maryland. After a short hiatus, he completed his doctorate degree from Northcentral University in educational leadership. Over his career, he has taught at elementary schools, junior high schools, universities, and is an administrator at a private school in Okinawa.

Dr. オスターマンは 1993 年から日本で教えています。元々は米国中西部の小さな町の出身であり、メリーランド大学で心理学の学士号および教育学の修士号を取得しました。その後、ノースセントラル大学では教育リーダーシップの博士号を取得しました。これまでのキャリアの中で、小学校、中学校、大学で教鞭をとり、現在は沖縄の私立学校の管理者も務めています。

Education / 学位

- Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Northcentral University/ ノースセントラル大学 博士号 教育学専攻
- M.Ed. Instructional Technology, University of Maryland University College/ メリーランド大学大学院修士課程
- B.A. Psychology, University of Maryland University College/ メリーランド大学 学士号 心理学専攻

JALT Experience / JALT 関連

- He joined JALT in 1995 and has served in many roles such as vetting, conference/site chair for events, and currently serves on many JALT committees/ 彼は1995年に JALT に加入し、これまでに審査員、イベントの委員長や会議での議長など、さまざまな役職を務め、現在でも多くの JALT 委員会に参加しています。
- 2016-present the Okinawa Chapter membership chair/ 2016年～現在:沖縄支部会委員長
- 2018 November-2019 November Teaching Younger Learners Special Interest Group Membership Chair/ 2018年11月～2019年11月:児童の学習を指導する特別利益団体の委員長
- 2019 November-2022 November Teaching Younger Learners Special Interest Group Coordinator/ 2019年11月～2022年11月:児童の学習を指導する特別利益団体のコーディネーター
- 2020 June-2020 December Interim Special Interest Groups Representative Liaison for JALT/ 2020年6月～2020年12月:JALTの暫定特別利益団体代表連絡員
- 2021 January-current Special Interest Groups Representative Liaison for JALT/ 2021年1月～現在:JALTの特別利益団体代表連絡員

Statement of Intent

If elected as Auditor my main focus will be on upholding the JALT Constitution, Bylaws, Standing Rules, Policies, and Code of Conduct. Having worked directly with the Board of Directors as SRL since 2020, I have come to see the need for a more transparent and streamlined organization. As SRL, I have worked hard to make sure the next person will not have to start from scratch. We have created, or updated, handbooks and manuals for almost every position within the JALT NPO. I hope to continue this process and make sure all handbooks and manuals are in compliance with JALT procedures, as well as see to it that all members of the organization are well represented.

監査役に選出された場合、私の主な焦点は、JALT　定款、内規、現行規定、方針、および行動規範を遵守することにあります。2020年からSRLとして取締役会と直接携わってきたなかで、より透明性があり簡素化された組織の必要性が見えてきました。私はSRL として、次の後任の方が最初から始めなくても済むように、懸命に取り組んできました。私たちは、JALT NPO 内のほぼすべての役職に対してハンドブックとマニュアルを作成または更新してきました。私はこのプロセスを継続し、すべてのハンドブックとマニュアルが JALT の手順に準拠していることを確認し、組織のすべてのメンバーが適切に代表されるように努めたいと考えています。

JALT MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)

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

https://jalt.org

Annual International Conference

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

https://jalt.org/conference

JALT Publications

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

https://jalt-publications.org

JALT Community

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

Bilingualism • CALL • College and university education • Cooperative learning • Gender awareness in language education • Global issues in language education • Japanese as a second language • Learner autonomy • 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

THE JAPAN ASSOCIATION FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING
全国語学教育学会

JALT Partners

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

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

Membership Categories

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

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

https://jalt.org/main/membership

Information

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

JALT Central Office

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

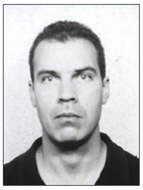
JALT事務局：〒100-0005東京都千代田区丸の内1-8-3
丸の内トラストタワー本館20階

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

Joining JALT

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

https://jalt.org/joining.



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

Life's Harsh Dualities

Fluidentity: This might or might not be a real word. Google couldn't give me a definition, but it did try to help me out with a few interesting links: an impenetrably dense article in a philosophy journal that, perhaps, was about the "archaeology of morals"; a defunct blog for international art students in Italy; and a Reddit page that wanted me to confirm I was over 18 before viewing.

So, I have decided to create my own meaning for the word. Fluidentity is this: a word to describe the subtle or drastic shifts in meaning that words go through each time they are used. When you were 14 and saw your neighbor's dog with its tail dyed pink and said, "Cool!", the meaning you conveyed with that word was substantially different from the meaning you expressed last week when you saw a drunk businessman dancing in evening traffic and said, "Cool!" Time and context conspired to make each utterance unique in meaning.

Actually, I had decided several months ago on a meaning for fluidentity, but I had to change it. You see, I was doing some light reading on French philosophy, and you know what French philosophy always leads you to? Yes, difference. Difference between bodies and minds (Descartes), individuals and societies (Rousseau), signifiers and signifieds (de Saussure), men and "others" (de Beauvoir). And then there's the big one: the difference between difference and *différance* (Derrida). When you delve into French philosophy, you learn to appreciate how it is that two academics can chat amicably on a philosophical topic for hours and then go home with two utterly exclusive opinions in their heads about what they were talking about.

For some people, entertaining intellectual dualities comes easy. (*Duality* implies only two courses where there could be more, so I'm oversimplifying, but bear with me, please. I have a hard enough time dealing with ... *one-ality*? ... is that a word?) While ordinary people want to wake up in the morning and drink their coffee and face an understandable world with words and ideas that mean basically the same as they did yesterday, intellectuals prefer to make sport out of constantly redefining concepts and the words to describe them. Take for example an assertion such as, "Pig Latin as a language game embodies the role micronarratives have in undercutting attempts to create grand unifying theories of history." Someone like me might hear that from a person's mouth and respond by searching for an empty barstool on the other side of the room, whereas an intellectual jouster is more likely to tap her nose and say, "Well played." She would then take one of those words—*embodies*, for instance—and attach a meaning that the speaker never intended, sending the discussion off on linguistic tangents sharper than the icepick used to make her mint julep.

It might seem petty or devious to take otherwise familiar terms and thrust new nuances or meanings onto them just for intellectual fun or one-upmanship. But specialized, one-time-only meanings are nothing new to us as language users. In their classic study called *Politeness* (1978), Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson suggested that a phrase as farfetched as, "Oh God, I've got a headache again" could, under the right conditions, "convey a request [by the speaker] to borrow [the hearer's] swimming suit" (p. 215). Imagining a scenario linking headaches to loaned swimwear requires gymnastic thinking and reminds me of the parlor game *Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon*. Here's another one for you. Create a context that allows the first phrase to convey the second phrase's meaning:

1) "There's purple stuff growing under my right middle toenail."
2) "You should vote Republican this fall."

If regular people can utilize contextual and background knowledge to logically link together superficially disconnected phrases like these, then I suppose it makes sense that the smarter ones among us can do so with single words, at will, in a way that allows others of their ilk to track and land those logical leaps and then nod smugly at each other. It's like they're making giant philosophical puns.

Anyway, I am a believer in the multiverse concept of word meaning: A word means a million different things before and after a given moment, but at the point it is spoken in one unique context, it means only one thing and may never mean that again. Or, we could call it Schrödinger's Cataphora: We don't know what a word refers to or how it will change reality until we actually "open the box" and use it. Or we could call it *fluidentity*. That's what I'll call it for another week or so.

Reference

Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1978). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge University Press.

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