The Language Teaching

The Language Teacher

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JALT2010 – *Creativity:
Think outside the box*
November 19-22, 2010
Nagoya, Japan

‹jalt.org/conference›

Feature Articles . . .

Readers' Forum . . .

My Share . . .

Book Review . . .

JALT Publications

In this month's issue . . .

Happy New Year! Welcome to our first double issue. With this switch to a bi-monthly publication schedule, we really hope to contribute more effectively to your teaching this year.

In the Feature articles, **Mark de Boer** explains why Socratic type questions are not ideal for EFL classrooms, and **Bern Mulvey** describes the accreditation evaluation system in Japanese universities. In Readers' Forum, **Richard J. Sampson** investigates activity and task selection in Japanese elementary school English communication lessons, **Thomas Amundrud** interviews English teacher and photographer Gary McLeod, and **Ken Schmidt** describes ways for using *Photo News* in class. In My Share, **Mark Rebuck** introduces an activity for learning to express annoyance, while **Sylvan Payne** shows how students can create animated dialogs online.

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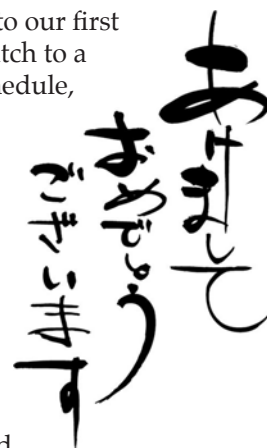
JALT PUBLICATIONS ONLINE

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January/February 2010 online access

Material from all our publications produced in the last 12 months requires a password for access. These passwords change with each issue of *TLT* and are valid for a 3-month period. To access our archives:

[login: jan2010 / password: Ue07hr]

Although it is still cold, spring will come soon. Spring break and cherry blossoms are not too far away. Let's have another prosperous year together!

Mihoko Inamori, TLT Japanese-language Editor

まだ寒い日が続きますが、春はもうすぐです。春休みがやってきて、桜の花が咲きます。風に乗って、暖かい（佳き）日がやってくるのを待ちましょう。今年も実り多き年となりますように！本年もTLTをどうぞ宜しくお願いします。

日本語版編集長
稲森　美穂子

新年明けましておめでとうございます。*TLT*では今年も様々な記事をご用意し、皆様のお役に立ちたいと切に願っています。

Featureでは、Mark de Boerがソクラテスの問答法はEFLクラスには適さないかも知れないと説明し、Bern　Mulveyは日本の大学の認証評価制度について詳述しています。Readers'Forum では、Richard J. Sampsonが小学校英語活動においてアクティビティを選択する際に意識すべきことに言及し、Thomas　Amundrudは英語教師で写真家であるGary McLeodにインタビューをして、Ken Schmidtは写真ニュースのクラスでの使用方法について取り上げています。

My Shareでは、Mark Rebuck が"Getting it off your chest" を Sylvan Payne が"Creating student dialog animations"をそれぞれ紹介しています。

Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)

A nonprofit organization

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

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Submitting material to *The Language Teacher*

Guidelines

The editors welcome submissions of materials concerned with all aspects of language education, particularly with relevance to Japan. As well as for feature articles, reader's forum articles, interviews, and conference reports, we also need material for our many columns.

Submitting online

To submit articles online, please visit:

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From there, you can register an account, then submit your articles through our production site. After creating your account, please be sure to check the *About* page for further submission guidelines.

Information about submitting to our regular columns is available through the *Section Policies* and *Online Submissions* links, as well as within the columns in this issue of *TLT*.

To contact the editors, please use the contact form on our website, or through the email addresses listed in this issue of *TLT*.

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Advertiser Index

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JALT2010

36th Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Exposition

Creativity: Think Outside the Box

November 19 – 22, 2010
Nagoya, Japan

Call for Presentations

Deadline for submissions:
Friday, April 23, 2010

The world is changing. We are preparing people today for jobs and contexts that do not yet exist. The key to thriving, not merely surviving into the future is creativity.

Creativity is the theme for JALT 2010. Creativity was once thought to be inspired by the gods or a gift bestowed upon humans from other worldly sources. In recent years there has been a growing acceptance that creativity is a cluster of skills, attitudes, and motivation that comes about via a complex interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors. Several types of creativity have been identified (Boden, 2001) including combinational creativity (the skills to produce new ideas by associating or combining old ideas in unfamiliar ways), exploratory creativity (learning rules and then exploring what the rules allow one to do), and transformational creativity (altering, adapting or breaking conceptual rules). Creativity is a habit of mind, which strives to be creative.

Teaching as an art

"Any experience that results from the interaction of an individual with his or her environment—

and in which the individual manipulates and shapes that environment—can be called art. The quality of this interaction is influenced by teachers' decisions, their timing, their choice of tasks, even the use of their voices. When all this happens, when everything flows, …teaching ceases to be an action and becomes art" (Pugliese, 2005). Creativity is part of every teacher's capacity to think on his or her feet—a kind of 'improvisational performance,' which requires the teacher to be able to develop a capacity to feel the environment and react accordingly. Creativity also allows the teacher to devise ways to solve more complex instructional problems, design new exercises, or even think of a new teaching method.

Why creativity for teachers?

Many teachers express their creativity through intellectual curiosity—the compelling desire to study and understand a situation. And it is driven, of course, by a desire to teach more effectively, to learn from our experiences, because thinking outside the box is not just a matter of coming up with completely original and spontaneous thoughts out of thin air. Rather, it is sparked by the context that individuals find themselves in: thinking outside of this contextual 'box' allows them to see it from a different angle and opens up limitless possibilities.

Creativity is also part of a life long drive for self-actualization. In other words, creativity provides the space for the development of a sense of personal and professional achievement. It reminds us that we are more than just working teachers seeking professional satisfaction: we are individuals aspiring to higher planes of achievement. Aside from all this, creativity is a huge antidote for those phases of burn out that hit us all from time to time. Creativity is fun!

So join us at JALT 2010 for something beyond the usual workshops and plenary speeches. Along with traditional presentation formats,

the conference committee welcomes unusual ideas, proposals, and innovations. Come on and surprise us—show the world what can happen when we think outside the box.

--Steve Brown & Donna Tatsuki
JALT 2010 Conference Co-Chairs

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For more information and to access the *2010 Call for Presentations*
<jalt.org/conference>

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

Dear colleagues and friends

We're glad you can join us as we take our first steps in the next phase of our journey with *The Language Teacher*. For us, it's an exciting time, with new opportunities for innovation and development.

As you've probably already realized, beginning with this issue *The Language Teacher* has become a bi-monthly publication and will appear in January, March, May, July, September, and November. This follows a unanimous endorsement by JALT's Executive Board at JALT2009 in November.

This change doesn't mean you'll be missing anything, however. Each issue will now have two months' worth of items of interest for and from you, our readers: short papers, discussion items, and opinions pieces. We hope this will also allow greater space for innovation and increased opportunity for you to be engaged with both JALT and the profession as a whole.

Over the coming months, you'll also see that items of news and information which appear in the end section of TLT will be more compact, with URL links to more detailed information online. In addition, news and announcements will be brought to you online in a much more timely fashion.

Of course, reforms like this can't happen overnight, so we'd ask you to bear with us as these changes come into effect over the next six months. The transformation should be complete and the new look TLT fully in place with the July/August issue.

In the meantime, please don't hesitate to let us know if you have any comments, or suggestions to further improve *The Language Teacher*. It's your publication: help us to make it what you want and need.

All the best,
Steve Brown
JALT Publications Board Chair

TLT SPECIAL FEATURE
THIS WAS JALT2009

JALT2009 was a successful meeting of more than 1,700 people who gathered to talk, learn, listen, and create. We got lucky with the weather and were privileged to host some really nice local folks who shared their tea, sake, and customs with us. We hope that you got a T-shirt, made a new friend, had an unexpected rendezvous with an old pal, collected some ideas for Monday morning, and researched some future job or professional prospects. It's never enough to say "thank you" when so many dozens of people worked so hard to put together such a big, well-organized event, but we'd like to say it anyway: THANK YOU to everyone who worked behind the scenes, saved the day, contributed hard labor or big ideas, oversaw volunteers or were volunteers, attended meetings, made the journey, and went to hear a talk. As co-chairs, we were very proud to be able to bring together a stellar cast of speakers, and were terrifically pleased to see conference participants getting the most out of the assembled riches: from the publishers to the poster presentations, from old JALT hands to first-time workshoppers, we felt your energy and hope that you went home feeling like part of the continuing conversation!

Best wishes from Steve Cornwell and Deryn Verity,
co-chairs for JALT2009 "The Teaching-Learning Dialogue: An Active Mirror"

Steve Cornwell and Deryn Verity (with Nobuyuki Hino) at work during JALT2009

Conference bag goodies

Ready for a busy day

At Merrill Swain's discussion session
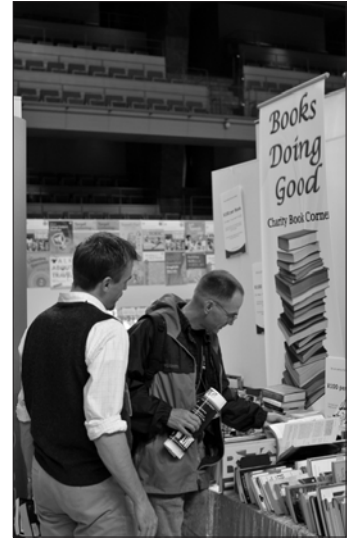
Books doing good

Scott Thornbury on *JALTpardy*

Lunch at the International Food Fair

Training the volunteers to help us

Where to next?

Writing hard at a workshop

Relaxing with some sake

Meeting other educators

Preparing for a full day

Capoeira

James Lantolf discussing ideas

Cool flower

Facilitating autonomy in language learning

Looking for new textbooks at the EME

Poster session

The busy EME

David Chapman is an award-winning-photographer. His photos have been published in the Nihon Photo Contest and used at the New York Institute of Photography. Website: <chapmandavid.com>. Contact: <opie_japan@ hotmail.com.>

The Socratic trap: A strategic snare that EFL teachers should sidestep

Mark de Boer
hobbes English School

Abstract
Teachers use a variety of questions and feedback to facilitate communication in the classroom. One type of questioning strategy uses Socratic type questions to lead the students to a pre-formulated answer. Through examination of classroom discourse, this paper shows that in the EFL classroom, this type of questioning strategy may not be ideal for promoting communication.

教師はクラスでのコミュニケーションが円滑に行われる様に、様々な質問やフィードバックを使用する。その戦略の一つが、前もって処方された答えに学生を導くソクラテスの問答法である。本論では、クラス内ディスコースの調査を通して、EFLクラスではソクラテスの問答法がコミュニケーションを促進するのに理想的ではないかも知れないと述べている。

EFL teachers spend a great deal of time asking and answering questions in order to facilitate communication. Unfortunately, sometimes the way we ask or answer these questions only leads to frustration and confusion with the student. As conversation facilitators and teachers, it behooves us to better understand the dynamics of using questions and answers in our classrooms. This article focuses on the use of questions in the EFL context by applying the Socratic analysis method as outlined by Chaudron (1988) to classroom data gathered at a private English school in Japan. The hope is that readers could apply a similar analytical methodology to examine questioning strategies in their own classrooms.

Paraskevas and Wickens (2003) explain that "The Socratic method in adult education involves the use of systematic questions…the instructor systematically poses a series of pre-set questions…[And] these questions are designed to channel the learners' thought processes along predetermined paths" (p. 6).

Chaudron (1988) further clarifies that the Socratic method operates by asking questions in a formulaic fashion by shaping questions in the form of a choice, and following up student answers with deeper follow-up questions. Teachers can thus manipulate the conversation and lead their students to a pre-determined discovery of what they had wanted to teach in the first place. However, while this works well within science and technology education, it often leads to difficulty in the EFL context, where Socratic questioning can lead to a *Socratic trap*, when communication is hindered rather than helped. The Socratic trap refers to broad questions such as, "Why are

Japanese so interested in cell phones?" where the teacher has a pre-determined answer and tries to manipulate and guide students toward the answer the teacher is thinking of. Even as students try to answer, more questions are added, "Is it because they are convenient?" along with hints "You know, Lawson Convenience Store." Teachers stuck in the trap often continue to add more clues, and even worse, may dismiss student answers if they are different from the answer the teacher is trying to guide them towards. This can lead to confusion and settling for responses from students that don't exhibit their students' full potential. Rather than encouraging learning and meaningful communication, the interaction demotivates students and teachers alike.

One of the teacher's jobs is to provide an atmosphere that gives the students an opportunity to experience "using" the language. To maintain student interest and promote meaningful classroom English communication, a more rigorous questioning strategy may be useful. Through a case study, this article will investigate the effectiveness of questioning strategies in an EFL classroom. After introducing types of questions from the literature, transcripts from a lesson with young learners and an inexperienced teacher at a private English conversation school will be examined. Finally, an analysis of the apparent effectiveness of the lesson will lead to the claim that it may be wise to avoid Socratic questions in these classrooms. My hope is that other teachers may learn from the ethnographic exploration of the classroom discourse presented here and may be able to avoid falling into similar traps in their own classrooms.

An arsenal of questions

Before conducting the analysis of the classroom discourse, it is first necessary to outline the different questioning types as presented in the literature. Thus this section offers an overview of different question types and some discussion of their desirability in promoting communication in the language classroom.

The first question type to be discussed is display questions (Chaudron, 1988; Richards & Lockhart, 1996). These questions represent an attempt at meaningful communication or pseudo-communication, although the commu-

nicative value of this question type is dubious. A teacher using flash cards might use a display question such as, "What is it?" where the teacher already knows the answer. This kind of communication consists of an IRF pattern: *initiation* from the teacher (a question), a learner *response*, and teacher *feedback* (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). Yet the value of these questions for authentic-sounding and seeming communication is minimal, as in all cases the teacher can only check student understanding of information the teacher already has access to, but not interact in a way similar to discourse outside the classroom.

Moving away from questions where the teacher already knows the answer, referential questions (Chaudron, 1988; Richards & Lockhart, 1996) usually require a "yes" or "no" response such as, "Did you go skiing this weekend?" where the teacher does not know the answer. Referential questions can encourage more natural-seeming discourse than display questions.

For the purposes of this article, it is worth considering two other types of questions, convergent (Richards & Lockhart, 1996) or closed (Chaudron, 1988) and divergent (Richards & Lockhart, 1996) or open-ended (Chaudron, 1988). Convergent questions elicit a yes, no, or short response, while divergent questions leave the nature of the response open and encourage higher-level thinking (Richards & Lockhart, 1996).

Language teachers often ask a rapid sequence of convergent questions to help develop aural skills and vocabulary and to encourage whole-class participation before moving on to some other technique.…For example, after asking the convergent questions …the teacher went on to ask divergent questions… (Richards & Lockhart 1996, pp. 186-187).

For example, "Did you go skiing this weekend?" might be followed by "How were the slopes?" and then by "How are the slopes compared to other ski areas?"

Another question type is non-retrieval imaginative questions, which do not require the learner to retrieve given information, but ask for an opinion or judgment (Wajnryb 1992). For example, "What do you think the author meant by this passage?" is such a question. The problem with this type of question is that although it can be effective for encouraging communication, asking one at the

outset of a class period with little preparation may confuse students.

Finally, confirmation checks (Chaudron, 1988) are frequently used questions in teacher-student-teacher response patterns to verify understanding as in S: Yesterday, I saw a hippopotamus! T: A hippopotamus? .

Socratic method weaknesses within EFL

Mitchell (2006) identifies the leading nature of Socratic questioning, "Socrates must know the answers to the questions posed…and the questions he asks are consequently strictly leading" (p. 183). It is this technique of leading students to a predetermined answer that interferes with meaningful exchanges and inhibits learning in the EFL classroom.

All of the question types introduced earlier can be delivered in a Socratic fashion. For example, in a regular display question the teacher already knows the answer, such as when asking, "What day is it today?" With a Socratic question, the teacher has already formulated an answer to the question, such as in, "Why do you think I'm happy today?" Confirmation checks are also abundant in the discourse of the Socratic method, such as in, "It's my birthday today? No..." Here instead of confirming real information, the teacher uses the questions as feedback to steer students away from incorrect answers.

Teachers who may intend to have a communicative class but begin with a Socratic question may find the attempts for discussion break apart. Rather than using Socratic questions, where there is an answer pre-formulated in the teacher's mind, if a teacher uses a non-retrieval imaginative question such as, "What do you think it would be like to live in the wild?", it could open the door to other related questions intended to direct students toward an answer to the original question. Socratic questioning is not ideal for use in a communicative English Language classroom, where the goal ideally would be to communicate, not to use deductive reasoning to arrive at an answer.

Background and data collection methodology

The observation was conducted in a private language school in Japan with a teacher who had only been in Japan for one year (T) and two male first year high school students (S1 & S2). The two students had been studying at the language school for about four years at the time the research was conducted. The teacher had limited Japanese ability. All parties were aware of the research and researcher and gave permission for recording the lesson and publishing the results of the research.

The students were studying the Longman Penguin Reader, *The Call of the Wild* (London, 2000). They were reading the chapter also titled The Call of the Wild. In this class, the teacher asked questions to determine if the students could infer the meaning of the title from the contents of the chapter.

Since my objective was to examine the teacher's questioning strategies, a pocket digital voice recorder was placed in front of the teacher and notes on the class were taken. The main focus of the observation and recording was to document the types of questions used, the kinds of teacher-student interaction witnessed, and the overall effect it had on the classroom discourse. Once the lesson was finished, the recording was transcribed to examine the teacher's questioning strategies.

Data analysis and presentation

The data was transcribed into an excel spreadsheet where the discourse was divided into 18 subsets labeled according to discourse group. Each discourse group was determined by the topic that was discussed within that group. Each time the teacher used a different question or different idea to steer the students to his formulated answer, a new discourse group was labeled. Only 6 lines into the lesson, the teacher entered a Socratic trap by asking a non-retrieval imaginative question, "What is the call of the wild?" From that question onward, all the teacher's questions were attempts to lead the students to his own pre-determined answer. Unfortunately, the opening question was so broad that the first half of the lesson was garbled and incompre-

hensible and it was difficult to extract enough sensible discourse to understand clearly what was happening. The teacher repeatedly asked a series of closed referential questions, trying to lead the students to the answer to his initial question, but was unable to get the students to clearly understand the meaning of the initial question. "What's the call?", "Who's calling?", "What animal howls?", "What kind of call?", "You have a cat, is a cat wild?", "Where's Buck from?", "In the camp, he's a nice dog right?" are a few examples of the questions asked to try and get the students to understand the meaning of the chapter title. Not until discourse group 13, included in Extract 1, does the teacher finally get his footing.

Extract 1. Discourse group 13

165:   T: Yeah, you live in the wild, right? When you are hungry, do you go to the 7-11?
166:   S1: Yes.
167:   T: Yes? If you live in the forest right… and you're hungry, do you go to 7-11 or do you have to kill?
168:   S2: Kill animal.
169:   T: Yeah. Kill animal or catch fish, right?

In line 165, the teacher asked a Socratic question, yet the answer was not the one expected by the teacher, and the question was modified until it was answered according to the teacher's expectations. Then the class could move on.

Extract 2 offers another example of a Socratic question-led theme for discourse group 15.

Extract 2. Discourse group 15

181:   T: ...But he wanted to kill an old larger animal. Why?
182:   S2: Eh?
183:   T: Why?
184:   S1: Where?
185:   T: ….Why did Buck want to kill a big moose? He killed a small one, now he wants to kill a big one. Why?
186:   S1: Buck was hungry.
187:   T: Not hungry, no, no, no
188:   S1: Buck was angry.
189:   T: Angry…Hmm.
190:   S2: Strong.

191:   T: Strong, yes.

Based on the feedback in line 187, when he asked the question the teacher had already formulated the desired answer. This is because while the question on line 181 appears as a non-retrieval imaginative question initially, asking for an opinion, when a student offers his answer in lines 186 and 188, the teacher dismisses them, even though they offer a communicative answer to the question. By line 191, the students have partially answered the question but the teacher moves on to help the student expand on the answer on line 191.

In line 213 in Extract 3 the teacher asks another Socratic question. He then uses the answer to move to discourse group 17 (Extract 4), which is headed by a non-retrieval imaginative question, the common thread being wanting to win at something.

Extract 3. Discourse Group 16

213:   T: When you play tennis, do you want to win?
214:   S2: Want?
215:    T: Do you want to win?
216:    S2: Yes

Extract 4. Discourse Group 17

217:   T: Yes, so, Buck, Buck, wants to kill a big moose. Why?
The Socratic trap that the teacher has fallen into is a direct result of his questioning strategies. The initial question the teacher posed opened the trap and from that point the questions posed were only intended to help the students correctly answer the initial question.

Sidestepping the trap

The Socratic trap could have been prevented had the teacher taken a different approach in his questioning. Banbrook and Skehan (in Richards & Lockhart, 1996) give a clue to a successful strategy by stating, "[Questions] can be used to allow the learner to keep participating in the discourse and even modify it so that the language used becomes more comprehensible and personally relevant" (p. 185).

Asking students personally relevant questions that tied into the book could have been a better place to start the lesson: Where they live–in the city or the country; what they eat or do not like to eat; whether they like camping; or other questions that may have given them a context through which to interpret the different places the character Buck has been exposed to. This real and relevant discussion could continue by moving the questions from the students' immediate surroundings and experiences into the wild with questions such as: What animals live in the forest?, What do they eat?, What would you eat?, or Could you adapt to this new life? This approach should give the students a sense of what it would be like to move from a home to the wild and the meaning of the chapter title could be more effectively explored. Additionally, asking the students what they would do if forced to live in the wild could not only avoid the Socratic trap, but make the discourse personally relevant and allow for more communicative discourse.

Concluding remarks

It is not the intention of this paper to attack the Socratic method or the teacher using it. The use of the Socratic method is a successfully established questioning strategy within the technology education realm. However, within an EFL classroom, it can add considerably more confusion to the teacher-student interaction and thus inhibit opportunities for authentic exchange of ideas, thoughts, or opinions.

From the data observed in the transcript it is evident that the students spent most, if not all, of their cognitive energy trying to understand what the teacher was asking, and the remainder of their cognition was lost trying to find the often illusive answer the teacher had in mind. For the teacher's part, it could not have been much better: He was spending all his time trying to re-word, repeat, or paraphrase his questions so his students would understand him. He was also trying to negotiate a frustrating and unsatisfying teaching experience–one in which he was supposed to be in control but he could not seem to steer his students in the direction he wanted them to go.

The two unfortunate side effects of this failed lesson are that nobody involved could enjoy the lessons offered by London's classic *Call of the Wild* and even worse, there was little learning taking place. For these reasons, teachers wanting to improve their own teaching while increasing student learning opportunities may benefit from increased awareness of the Socratic trap and consciously avoid the kind of rhetorical questions that lead into it.

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Mark de Boer owns his own schools and also teaches at a number of universities. He has completed his MA through the University of Birmingham. His research includes discourse analysis and incorporating Vygotskian theories into the TBL classroom.

> ### *Overheard at JALT2009 in Shizuoka . . .*
>
> "These two researchers strongly disagree with each other. They'd probably kill each other if they were in the same room."

Pan-SIG 2010: Learner Perspectives

JALT

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

The 9th Annual JALT Pan-SIG Conference

— May 22-23, 2010 —

Osaka Gakuin University, Suita City, Osaka

The organizing committee of the JALT Pan-SIG Conference 2010 invites all interested applied linguistic researchers to submit presentation proposals for the 9th Annual Pan-SIG Conference, which will be held on Saturday and Sunday, May 22 and 23, 2010 at Osaka Gakuin University.

This conference is co-sponsored by the College & University Educators (CUE), Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Extensive Reading (ER), Framework and Language Portfolio (FLP), Global Issues in Language Education (GILE), Japanese as a Second Language (JSL), Lifelong Language Learning (LLL), Other Language Educators (OLE), Pragmatics (PRAG), Study Abroad (SA), Teacher Education (TE), Testing & Evaluation (TEVAL) Special Interest Groups, together with the Kyoto Chapter of the Japan Association of Teaching (JALT).

Research in any area of applied linguistics will be welcome. Two types of proposals will be considered:

1. Reports on completed research
2. Works in progress (including completed research design and/or data collection)

Presentations will be 45 minutes in length (including 10 minutes for questions and answers). Preference will be given to those submissions that fit the theme of the conference and/or general interests of the SIG to which the submission is being made.

In particular, presenters that actually incorporate learners (or their voices /images/ videos) are highly encouraged to submit!

Proposals

Contents: (1) a 50-word summary,
  (2) a 150-word abstract, and
  (3) personal information (name, affiliation, contact details)

- Send to: <submissions@pansig.org>
- Deadline: No later than February 15, 2010
- Subject line: The subject line should read: Submission for (XX) where `XX' is the abbreviated form of the SIG. i.e., (Submission for SA)
- Format: All proposals should be sent as an attachment; either as Microsoft Word document (.doc)or Rich Text File (.rtf) file format.
- Submissions made in any other form will not be accepted.
- Proposals for workshops (120 minutes) and poster sessions are also invited.

For further information, please contact Eric Skier (Pan-SIG 2010 Submissions Chair) at skier@toyaku.ac.jp or consult the conference web page at <www.pansig.org/2010/>.

University accreditation in Japan: Problems and possibilities for reforming EFL education

Bern Mulvey

Iwate University

Abstract

This paper looks at the recently instituted MEXT requirement that all Japanese universities undergo an external accreditation evaluation every seven years. Universities are to be evaluated in multiple categories, with the assessments in each category published. They also are to receive grades: pass, probation, and fail. This paper examines the ramifications of, not to mention the opportunities afforded by, this new policy, focusing particularly on the possible impact on EFL education and educators.

平成16年より、日本の国公・私立大学は、その教育研究水準の向上に資するため、教育研究、組織運営及び施設設備の総合的な状況に関し、7年毎に、文部科学大臣が認証する評価機関（認証評価機関）の実施する評価を受けることが義務付けられている。評価機関は、先ず各評価基準を満たしているか否かを評価し、大学の様々な状況を踏まえた上で、「認定」「不認定」「保留」のいずれかの判定をする。本研究は、日本で行われている認証評価制度を紹介・解説しながら、大学（特に英語教育）に与えている影響及び期待すべき成果について推測する。

As of 2004,[1] all universities in Japan must submit to an external accreditation evaluation, to be repeated every seven years. The universities are to receive detailed written assessments in multiple categories from one of four official accrediting agencies—the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA), the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE), the Japan Institution for Higher Education Evaluation (JIHEE), and the Japan Association for College Accreditation (JACA).[2] These assessments are to be publicized. The universities also receive grades: pass, probation, and fail.

Japan's Ministry of Education (hereafter MEXT) has repeatedly (e.g., Chuou Kyouiku, 2002: Daigaku Shingikai 1991, 1998; MEXT 1999, 2001, 2003, 2004a, 2004b; Rinji, 1986, etc.) made its intentions clear: Through these new requirements, it hopes to induce systemic improvements in teaching and research quality, not to mention encourage technical upgrades and on-campus diversity. Universities are being prodded into a greater level of transparency, not just in regards to finances and accounting, but in their grading and advising policies and even hiring practices. Safeguards (e.g., procedures to prevent or punish various types of harassment) for students, staff, and faculty have to be adopted—or clarified and strengthened in the case of universities with policies predating 2004. Finally, these accreditation assessments are to serve the additional function of confirming both the presence of on-campus Faculty Development (hereafter FD)

committees and the effectiveness of their various activities.

In other words, at least in theory, university accreditation represents an unparalleled opportunity to achieve meaningful, lasting educational reform in this country. However, as is often the case with reform attempts of this scope, the reality is much more complex and, particularly with regards to EFL classes and their (often non Japanese) instructors, troubling.

This paper provides a critical overview of the accreditation requirements, their impact, and the potential opportunities they represent. Having served as Dean at a Japanese university undergoing accreditation, headed a university accreditation committee, and authored major sections of the 100-page official accreditation report, my discussion includes first-hand observations not elsewhere available in English. I hope that my commentary here will lead to a more informed public dialogue about Japanese-style university accreditation—both its problems and possibilities.

Background

University accreditation became official policy in Japan with the passing of the following amendments (MEXT, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c): Article 69.4.1-2 of the Gakkou Kyouikuhou makes accreditation a legal requirement, not to mention codifies the official standards and assessment procedures; Article 69.3.2 requires that all 4-year universities in Japan submit themselves to external evaluation every seven years; Article 69.3.4 requires that all evaluation results be publicized. The reach of these amendments, particularly for the former national universities, is reinforced by Article 16.1 of the Dokuritsu Gyousei Houjin Daigaku Hyouka/Gakui Juyo Kikouhou, which states in part that all universities must now undergo periodic assessments of education and research quality, with these external evaluations paid for by the universities themselves and the results publicized afterward (MEXT, 2004b, 2004c).

These new requirements emanated partially out of MEXT's desires both to ensure a uniform level of quality throughout its higher education system and to increase Japan's educational competitiveness worldwide (see Chuo Kyouiku 2004; Daigaku Shingikai 1991, 1998; MEXT 1999, 2001; Rinji 1986, etc.). Note that limited, informal university accreditation had existed in Japan from 1947, when 47 universities banded together to create JUAA (JUAA, 2009)—though, as fitting the founding principle of the latter ("We will use our members' independent efforts and mutual cooperation among them to measure improvements in university quality"),[3] evaluation was conducted for and by members (and later would-be members) according to standards they themselves set, with (until the 1995 publication of their accreditation manual) almost no transparency outside the organization. In April of 1986, the Rinji Kyouiku Shingikai, citing a need "to rebuild trust in the education world" (教育界の信頼の回復, p. 16), first advocated the creation of a government-sponsored, standardized evaluation process (p. 88), both in the form of required "self assessments" (自己評価) and formal "accreditation"—the latter term originally Katakana-ized as アクレディテーション (instead of the now standard "認証評価"), underlining the borrowed nature of the concept (see also Chuo Kyouiku, 2002).

Self-assessments were begun immediately: 88% of universities had conducted at least one by 1997, with 65% publicizing the results (Daigaku Shingikai, 1998). However, the quality of these self-evaluations was heavily criticized; e.g., they were described by MEXT (Daigaku Shingikai, 1998) as being mere "inspections without any assessment" (点検あって評価なし), with universities seen as unwilling and/or unable to achieve the levels of transparency and self-honesty sufficient to allow for productive self-assessment. Requiring evaluations by government-approved external agencies was meant to change this. The various assessment categories and the overall accreditation process are closely based on accreditation in the U.S. (Chuo Kyouiku, 2002; Rinji, 1991, etc.), and with a similar intent. In other words, by requiring "objective" (客観性) external evaluations ostensibly necessitating complete institutional "transparency" (透明性), MEXT hoped to force self-improvement on the weaker programs and stimulate a general raising of standards among all educational institutions.

However, it should be kept in mind that MEXT is also motivated by potentially devastating de-

mographic and economic pressures. Between 1950 and 1980, Japan's population increased 40%, from 83 million to 117 million (Abe, 2000, p. 47). Rapid economic growth experienced over the same period, combined with policy changes enabling easier university creation (especially private), led to an explosive expansion of new institutions. In 1949, the number of universities and students stood at 178 universities and 130,000 respectively; this increased to 382 and 1.4 million by 1970, and 507 and 2.2 million in 1990 (Abe, 2000, p. 48). More importantly, despite the decreasing birthrate (and, after 1990, a corresponding decrease in overall student numbers), the number of Japanese universities has actually continued to increase: up to 756 in 2007, with approximately 2.8 million students enrolled (MEXT 2007a, p. 5).

Daigaku Shingikai (1998, 2000) and MEXT (1997, 1998, 1999) document the growing MEXT concerns over a possible dilution of educational quality, particularly troubling given the need to remain internationally competitive in a rapidly evolving and increasingly globalized world. Mulvey (2001) notes:

> Japan's traditional university feeder programs have reached the point where they can no longer graduate a number of students sufficient to maintain the economic vitality of the majority of Japan's universities. In 1999, for example, 756,149 high school students applied for entrance into university, with 602,078 accepted. This works out to a success rate of 80%—an all-time high, and one which is expected to climb even higher over the next few years. (p. 13)

This success rate climbed to 90.5% in 2006 (MEXT, 2007). That same year, 47.1% of Japan's private universities (266 schools total) reported that they failed to meet their enrollment goals (Nihon Shiritsu, 2006, p. 23). Moreover, Daigaku Shingikai (2000, p. 2), MEXT (1997, 1998), and Mulvey (2001, pp. 13) have estimated that the applicant-to-university space ratio (志願者に対する収容力) will reach exactly 1:1 by the year 2009.[4] In other words, by as early as this year, there will be exactly one student applicant for each available university (including 2-year college) berth—meaning that, particularly in the case of two-year and many regional 4-year institutions, rejecting any student admission applications will

have a direct economic impact (see also MEXT, 2007, and Nihon Shiritsu, 2006).

Consequences predicted by the Japanese government include faculty layoffs, school closures, hiring freezes, and severe budget reductions (Jannuzi & Mulvey, 2000; Mori, 1999; Mulvey, 2000, 2001). Moreover, as the number of applicants comes to equal the number of places available, post-secondary programs have been forced to relax admissions standards in order to maintain enrollment levels sufficient to ensure their economic viability. The Chuuo Kyouiku Shingikai ("Misu-machi," 1999), Kariya (2002), MEXT (2000c, 2008) and the Nihon Keizai Shinbun ("Daigaku de Fueru," 1999), for example, all describe a resultant decline in median academic ability vis-à-vis test-related skill areas among even successful university entrants, with many of the freshmen evaluated lacking minimal skills in math, English, the sciences, and the Japanese language. Daigaku Shingikai (2000, pp. 1-4) also found that a growing number of universities are being forced to accept students even with extremely low examination results (see also "Cram," 1998; Mulvey 2001).

With respect specifically to English education, another side effect of this process has been the weakening (if not elimination) of the potential for beneficial exam washback-type influence on high school teaching methodology and textbook content. The long history of problems with the various types of entrance exams is well documented. However, since at least 1987 (Daigaku Shingikai, 2000), MEXT has been advocating revisions to exam content and overall selection procedures. Indeed, Guest (2000, 2008) and Mulvey (1998, 1999, 2001) cite over seventy, mostly Japanese, studies which underline the changes/improvements made to the various entrance examinations—e.g., the widespread inclusion of writing and listening sections, not to mention a de-emphasis on translation or grammar-focused discrete-item problems—yet with no evidence of a corresponding, systemic change to the high school English curriculum in this country. Mulvey (2001) concludes:

> As even students with extremely poor exam results can now successfully gain admittance into many universities, the pressing need for high school educators to make curriculum

adjustments with every change in exam content would seem to be removed. This in turn would make high school curriculums less open to exam influence, as many students would still pass regardless of any preparation deficiency in their high school English classes. In other words, perhaps the lack of exam influence described earlier is the result of the examinations evolving where high school curriculums have not? (p.14)

The Chuo Kyouiku Shingikai (1999) makes similar observations, concluding, "A number of high school educators continue to hold the opinion that, until the entrance examinations change, the curriculum cannot be changed. Well, we would like them to understand that, both with the Center exam and the individual university entrance exams, extensive reforms have been ongoing for some time."[5]

Keep in mind that holding back academically struggling students, let alone expulsion for failing grades, is legally impossible through the end of junior high school (when compulsory education finishes in Japan); on average, 97.7% of these students choose to enter high school (MEXT, 2007a, 2007b), with graduation rates extremely high (e.g., in 2005, 97.9 % of the high school population graduated on time, with problems with school life/peers the main reason [38.6%] given by the few students who did not—see MEXT, 2006.) Accordingly, in many ways, the entrance exams (both to universities and to the more academically oriented high schools) have long served as an important source of objective evaluation and selection in Japan, ensuring—however inadequately—a level of quality control throughout the system. As the number of test applicants approaches the breakeven point necessary to ensure the continuing financial viability of the various schools, this main function will increasingly weaken in effectiveness and need to be replaced.

The accreditation process

Here, I will focus on the process and specific requirements for JIHEE (2009a, 2009b), though the policies and procedures at all four agencies are necessarily similar, the general framework being mandated by law (see MEXT, 2004a, 2004b).

One year before they wish to be evaluated, universities each must submit an application form and fee to the accreditation agency. After that, universities begin work on the centerpiece of the accreditation process: the 100-page self-assessment report submitted by each university in the summer preceding the three-day onsite inspection. This report requires an extremely detailed and well-documented self-review, with extensive Self-Evaluation (自己評価) and concrete Measures/Future Plans for Improving and Enhancing Quality (改善・向上方策「将来計画」)needed in response to each standard. The report is submitted by the end of June; at about this same time, four to six reviewers (all professors and/or senior administrators) are assigned to the university to conduct the onsite inspection. These reviewers each receive a copy of the self-assessment report, to which they respond formally with written follow-up questions (書面質問) by the end of August.

While minor differences among the four accrediting agencies exist, the substance of the assessment categories remain unchanged from those first proposed by MEXT for self-evaluation (Chou Kyouiku 2006a, Daigaku Shingikai, 1991, pp. 36-38). The following are from the JIHEE website:

The sample questions referred to above are actual follow-up questions asked by accreditation referees in response to university-submitted Self-Assessment Reports.[6] The questions underline some of the key referee concerns: the importance of teamwork, fairness, safety, student-focused teaching and research, faculty voice (including participation in the administrative process), and the necessity for complete transparency and honest reflection at all levels. At my university as well, we received a similar line of questions, including:

- Your FD Committee, in charge of pedagogy and the practical application educational tools or materials, has conducted how many seminars, with how many faculty participating at each?

- With regards to your EFL classes, we note that you leave class content and methodology to the discretion of each individual faculty member. Are there any plans to systematize and unify your efforts?

Table 1. JIHEE accreditation standards

Standard	Sample follow-up questions in each category
1. Philosophy behind Establishment, Mission, and Objectives of the Institution	1. What steps have you taken to publicize your university's mission? 2. What role did faculty and staff play in developing or articulating the university's mission?
2. Education and Research Organization	1. How are the General Education courses organized? 2. It addition to teaching, what role(s) do faculty play at your institution?
3. Curriculum	1. Are syllabi on file for each course? 2. Are class activities and contents accurately reflected by the syllabi?
4. Students	1. How are student evaluation results being used to improve academic quality? 2. What has been the pattern of status change [e.g., withdrawal and/or leave of absence] with regards to enrolled students, and what is being done to correct any problems?
5. Faculty	1. With regards to hiring and promotion, how are teaching accomplishments evaluated? 2. Are Faculty Development activities coordinated and systemic?
6. Staff	1. How is "on the job training" handled? 2. How is worker performance evaluated and what is done with the evaluations?
7. Administration	1. Is there a system in place to insure that the results from the various self-assessments are practically applied to improving the school?
8. Finance	1. Could we have some more information about current and future plans to publicize the university's financial records?
9. Educational and Research Environment	1. What has been done to make the university "barrier free"? 2. Has any preparation been made with regards to potential natural emergencies?
10. Societal Interaction	1. What is the level of autonomous faculty and staff contribution—for instance through lectures and/or committee membership—in the community and nationally?
11. Social Accountability	1. What precautions are in place to prevent sexual harassment? 2. What procedures are in place in case of a sexual harassment complaint?

- Does offering a 2-year renewable contract impact faculty performance and feelings of belonging at the university?

Again, the emphases were on our educational objectives and methodology, not to mention our treatment of both students and faculty. How did we hope to foster critical thinking, develop problem-solving strategies, and/or prepare students to function effectively in an information economy in an internationalizing world? How did our curriculum help our students achieve these objectives? Our treatment of especially foreign faculty, including issues of workload and pension or retirement benefits, was an important topic as well.

Indeed, throughout the 2-year process, I was struck repeatedly by the potential benefits, the possibilities for true reform, that accreditation represents. Keep in mind that, at least in theory, there is more at stake for these universities than critical written assessments and/or bad publicity. The external auditors also assign grades: pass (認定—literally "recognized"), probation (保留) and fail (不認定—literally "not recognized"). Assuming criteria appropriateness, objective assessment and enforcement, universities can now be held accountable for what they teach and how, not to mention their handling of student and teacher evaluations, hiring, and firing.

Accreditation questions…and opportunities

While impressive overall, there remain areas of concern, particularly related to English language teaching and foreign faculty. Much of the problem lies in the specifics of MEXT's chosen methods to improve and evaluate, both teachers and teaching. As mentioned earlier (Daigaku 1998, also see MEXT 2006b, 2008), FD is the centerpiece of MEXT efforts to improve quality at the university-level, with the accreditation reviews intended both to document the incorporation of the FD committees and to evaluate their productivity. MEXT (Chuo Kyouiku, 2006b) defines FD thus:

> FD is a generic term for organized, institution-wide efforts to improve class content and teaching quality. This definition is necessarily extremely vague; specific examples, however,

include requiring peer-review of teaching, holding faculty study sessions to discuss teaching methodology, and offering orientation seminars for new faculty.[7]

In other words, FD committees in Japan are expected to concentrate solely on improving teaching, though exactly what these improvements should constitute—or even an agreed upon definition of "good" teaching—have yet to be articulated. Moreover, FD effectiveness at each institution is graded during the accreditation reviews according to numerical values—e.g., the total number of activities conducted, not to mention the various percentages of participation (the percent of faculty who have a syllabus for each class, the percent who attend each FD activity, the percent whose classes are evaluated by students, etc). This has, understandably, led to an emphasis on "quantity" over "quality." For instance, Miyazaki International College, despite its small size and the lack of demonstrable need, had to increase dramatically its number of FD activities; the resulting sense of unnecessary burden was heightened by the redundant and/or overlapping responsibilities of other, similar, committees predating the advent of FD—in addition to the MEXT-mandated FD Committee, thirty-three faculty had to staff, attend meetings, and plan activities for the Committee on Faculty, Committee on Curriculum, Faculty Review Committee, Teacher Education Committee, and Committee on Students/Admissions (among others). Consolidating and/or otherwise focusing/reducing the total number of committees is not an option; all committees are "counted," all have to demonstrate to the accreditation reviewers a separate, active, agenda.

This emphasis on the quantifiable extends to a heavy reliance on student course evaluation numbers as well. While research in the U.S. (e.g., Felder and Brent, 2004) has demonstrated "a high level of validity" with student evaluations in general (p. 200), several Japan-specific practices are worrisome. Ryan (1998) contains several studies which seem to demonstrate that Japanese students use different internal criteria when rating foreign and Japanese faculty, with the former "not seen as serious teachers" (p. 11). Moreover, typically a single committee, composed of faculty representatives from a cross spectrum of the various departments

(yet unified by a uniform lack of formal training in evaluation method and adult-level teacher education), is put in charge of creating, administering, and assessing student evaluations. Can student-centered, active learning, or both approaches be evaluated accurately and fairly by the resulting forms? As Centra (1993) comments also, the usual result of such collaboration is a student rating form "devised to reflect effectiveness in lectures, lecture and discussion, and other teacher-centered methods" (pp. 47-8).

This is particularly relevant to EFL, particularly the General Education (教養・共通教育) classes that often are the sole prerogative of foreign faculty. These classes tend to be larger than average, dominated by non-majors in the subject area, and among the few (sometimes only) classes on campus taught in the students' L2. Accordingly, the methodology, materials, and educational goals for these classes necessarily differ from most other courses—even from upper-division English seminar classes (the latter usually smaller, taught mainly in Japanese by Japanese faculty to English majors). Theall (2005, p. 2) notes that "teachers assigned a predominantly heavy load of lower-level, introductory, required, large courses" tended to have "depressed ratings." Moreover, at most universities, the overwhelming majority of foreign EFL faculty are either part-time *hijoukin* or on term-limited contracts—Winskowski (2005, p. 41) cites a number of studies which suggest that regular faculty tend to receive higher average evaluations than non regular faculty. Yasuoka (2006), in a MEXT-sponsored study, reinforces these findings. Seminar classes here have the highest average scores (4.3/5), while General Education classes have the lowest evaluation scores (3.8/5). Students with low English scores tend to be (slightly) harsher when evaluating their English teachers. Finally, instructor age significantly impacts evaluation results in Japan: Faculty receive average scores of 3.92 at the age of 30, 3.80 at the age of 40, 3.70 at the age of 50, and 3.58 at the age of 60. Indeed, it can be argued that the current evaluation system (including question content) is skewed against older teachers attempting to utilize communicative, active learning, or both techniques in the larger General Education classes—an unfortunate reality for foreign EFL faculty looking to make a career here.

This is important, as Amano and Nanbu (2005, p. 234) and Ryan (1998, p. 9) note also, because of the aforementioned, accreditation-driven tendency towards increased reliance on evaluation score results in faculty promotion, hiring and retention—and even research funding—decisions.[8] Faculty with lower than average evaluation scores will necessarily—even understandably—be penalized, though this but underlines the lack of input most foreign EFL faculty have into the policy decisions which shape their lives.

Sadly, these are not merely abstract issues. In 2007, Akita Kokusai Kyouyou Daigaku suddenly dismissed almost 20% of its total faculty—all but one non-Japanese with (at least) MA degrees, substantial publications and extensive teaching experience. While I do not presume to know the specific details behind each individual termination, I do know that the teachers collectively appealed this decision to the local labor board and won a preliminary judgment against the university ("Kokusai," 2007).[9] Questions regarding the treatment of foreign teachers are certainly not confined to Akita; Hall (1998) documents a pattern of concerns dating back over 100 years.

Surely the accreditation reviews, ostensibly designed to ensure curriculum and evaluation improvements, not to mention promote transparency, fairness, internationalization, and modernization, can also play a part in alleviating this situation? Indeed, some evidence exists to suggest that the accreditation assessments are already having a positive impact. To name just two examples, Miyazaki Kokusai Daigaku has used feedback from its assessment review to begin investigating clearer delineations of level- and learner-appropriate learning outcomes for its EFL classes, not to mention better coordination between these classes and the rest of its curriculum. Furthermore, influenced at least partially by its own accreditation review, Iwate Daigaku has chosen to do away with race-based discriminatory hiring. Effective this year, faculty hired full-time will be treated the same regardless of nationality.

These two examples are offered here not to prove the efficacy of the accreditation process, but to demonstrate a cause for hope in that process. Certainly, serious questions remain about the nature and accuracy of the measurement tools

and the standards of quality being applied—especially with regard to EFL classes and language faculty. Still, in the demands of the accreditation assessments, particularly the requirements of transparency and accountability, lie perhaps our best chance for future, systemic improvements in this area as well.

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(Endnotes)

1. Trial evaluations were conducted from 2001.
2. JACA deals primarily with 2-year colleges.
3. 会員の自主的努力と相互的援助によってわが国における大学の質的向上をはかる.
4. I prefer using applicant-to-university space numbers as opposed to other types of data because Japanese students on average apply to multiple (3+) universities, artificially inflating the overall figures. In other words, the former data tells us the real number of applicants who applied to at least one university—and not the total number of applications they sent. From experience as a university administrator, the initial excitement generated from receiving more applications than you have seats fades quickly come March when as many as 40% inform you that they will go elsewhere.
5. 高等学校関係者の中には、「大学入試が変わらなければ高校教育は変われない」という意見もあるが, 大学全体としても, 個々の大学におい ても鋭意改革が進められている状況を十分理解してほしい.
6. The questions are taken from 大学評価の心, a JIHEE presentation by Kubo Takeshi on 30 June, 2006.
7. 教員が授業内容・方法を改善し向上させるための組織的な取組の総称。その意味するところは極めて広範にわたるが、具体的な例としては、教員相互の授業参観の実施、授業方法についての研究会の開催、新任教員のための研修会の開催などを挙げることができる.
8. Regarding the latter issues, Amano and Nanbu found the number of universities using evaluations in such a manner "surprisingly large" (むしろ意外に多いとも思える結果であった), though five years later, the number of such schools continues to increase.
9. AIU refused to pay, continuing to claim they had done nothing illegal. As the plaintiffs had by that point all found new employment with better (including tenured/tenure-track) conditions, the case—unfortunately, in my opinion—never went to formal trial.

Bern Mulvey has recent articles in the American Language Review, the Times Higher Education Supplement and Asahi Shimbun, with another forthcoming in the Japan Studies Review. *The Fat Sheep Everyone Wants*, his book of poetry, won the 2007 Cleveland State University Poetry Center Prize and was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. Formerly the Dean of Faculty at Miyazaki Kokusai Daigaku, he currently is an associate professor at Iwate Daigaku.

Considerations for activity and task selection in Japanese elementary school English communication lessons

Abstract
Early in 2008, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) revised its course of study with the introduction of a period of Foreign Language Activities in the 5th and 6th grades of elementary school (MEXT, 2008). Although the widespread implementation of these classes will gradually be effected through 2011, predating this, research suggests that around 94 percent of elementary schools had already been undertaking English activities as part of International Understanding studies (Benesse, 2007). Despite these figures, there has, to date, been a relative lack of concrete direction from MEXT, leading to a diversity of programs developed by individual district boards of education or schools, with a variety of conceptions of International Understanding studies by Japanese homeroom teachers and assistant language teachers (Watanabe, 2006b). This paper will review the proposed purposes of English classes at the elementary school level and provide an outline of a range of concepts teachers should bear in mind when selecting activities or tasks for these classes.

2008年の初頭、文部科学省は新学習指導要領を発表し、小学校5、6年生に外国語活動を導入するとした。外国語活動は2011年までに広範囲で実施されるであろうが、これに先駆け、約94%の小学校では既に国際理解教育の一環として英語活動を導入しているとの調査結果が出ている。この数値にもかかわらず、現時点では外国語活動に関する文部科学省からの具体的な指示が欠けている。これにより、日本人担任教師やALTは国際理解教育に対して多様な考えを持ち、各地域の教育委員会や各学校の裁量で様々なプログラムが開発されているのである。本論では、小学校での英語教育に対して提案された目標を検討し、教師が指導内容を選択する際に意識すべきことを概観する。

小学校英語活動においてアクティビティを選択する際に意識すべきこと

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Purposes of elementary school English lessons

In general, Japanese education focuses on cultivating a zest for living that should link all areas of the elementary school curriculum, including English studies (Wada, 2007). To accomplish this, the International Understanding curriculum was created to fulfill these purposes (MEXT, 2001):

1.   Open-mindedness and understanding regarding other cultures

2. Establishment of a strong sense of self and sense of being Japanese

3. Development of the ability for self-expression and other communication skills for the purpose of expressing one's own thoughts and intentions whilst respecting the positions of others. (p.121)

Concurrently, the course of study for 5th and 6th grade students (MEXT, 2008) states the purpose of Foreign Language Activities as:

   To lay the groundwork for students' communicative abilities, to foster a positive attitude toward communication, and to deepen their understanding of languages and cultures by familiarizing them with sounds and basic expressions of foreign languages.

According to these documents, fostering aptitude for communicative ability is the main goal, not English acquisition in a linguistic sense.

Indeed, in discussing the role of elementary school English classes, Watanabe (2006b) argues there is little to be gained by expecting Japanese elementary school children to become fluent in English when there is extremely little chance for local use of the language. However, Japanese children are seen to be lacking in the ability to positively and assertively convey their thoughts and intentions to others. English lessons at the elementary school level are thus intended to develop the conviviality, identity, and initiative of learners (Watanabe, 2006b) whilst cultivating a general communication ability *through* the use of English. This cultivation of general communicative ability and the enjoyment of interaction feeds the students' zest for living. Akashi (2005), in referring to the elementary school context, notes that:

   To foster communication ability does not mean speaking English fluently. It means learning to listen to and understand the ideas of others whilst concurrently becoming able to convey one's own ideas to others, that is to say, the way of interacting with others. (p. 9: author's translation)

The focus of elementary school English lessons in Japan is therefore not the acquisition of a second language. If we draw upon the idea of communicative competence, whilst there

are elements of each of the four competencies (linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic) that are language-specific, the only purely language-specific competency is linguistic competency (Canale, 1983). The remaining three competencies have elements which are universal to communication, and it is the development of these competencies *through* the use of English that are the desired purpose of Japanese English lessons at the elementary school level.

Defining aims and objectives

Given the stated goals of elementary school English education, the development of aims and objectives for lessons needs to be addressed. An *aim* can be defined as a statement of general change a program seeks to implement, while an *objective* is the result of splitting up an aim into its constituent elements (Richards, 2001). For Japanese elementary schools, these need to be non-linguistic in nature and ought to focus upon the explicit development of sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies with no overt expectation for the development of linguistic competence. Here are some possible aims:

Through this unit / lesson, students will:
• Develop confidence in their ability to express their thoughts, ideas, and choices
• Develop their abilities to cooperate and interact with others
• Develop their interest in the thoughts and feelings of others

Objectives such as the following might be designed:

Through this unit / lesson, students will experience:
• The success and enjoyment of actively communicating their thoughts and ideas about (a travel plan) through English
• Discussing and negotiating with their peers to arrive at a mutual outcome
• Turn-taking in a communicative situation through experience in an English (shopping) activity

- Communicating about thoughts and ideas with peers and learning how to actively listen to, remember, and recall the ideas of others

Whilst these are general statements of what will be developed over the course of the unit (or lesson), more specific outcomes, process objectives, and evaluative items need to be defined for individual lessons and activities. A unit ought to provide learners with successful experiences in conveying their thoughts and ideas as well as listening to and understanding the ideas of classmates. In such a way, enjoyment of communication with others can be more effectively fostered (Kanamori & Oka, 2007; Nihon Kyouzai Bunka Kenkyuu Zaidan, 2005; Watanabe, 2003, 2006a). Furthermore, clearly detailed aims and objectives can result in the creation of more appropriate tasks and activities.

Considerations for selecting tasks and activities

Consideration 1: Experiential learning

Japanese elementary school English classes ought to view interaction and actual language use as a vital component of learning. The conviviality, identity, and initiative of learners and their general communicative ability must be constructed through group interaction. As such, lessons ought to draw upon an experiential approach to learning and provide a framework where all class members have some role in creating the experience through which learning takes place.

Consideration 2: Centrality of tasks and activities

A task-based syllabus, with units built around topics appropriate to the developmental level of students, is most suitable for developing communicative ability. Tasks and activities should be selected to meet the aims of the unit, with linguistic content subsequently selected that allows students to move towards these aims. Learners learn best when they are *involved* in learning experientially, rather than learning *about* the language (Oxford, 2006), an idea in harmony with the conception of communication classes in the Japanese elementary school context (Nihon Kyouzai Bunka Kenkyuu Zaidan, 2005; Wada, 2007). Features of effective tasks and activities for elementary school English classes involve a variety of groupings, interaction types, and strong emphasis on student-centered learning (Kanamori & Oka, 2007; Watanabe, 2003).

Consideration 3: Tasks for development of general communication ability

Tasks at the elementary school level may be a little different from those in a traditional task-based syllabus. In a traditional task-based syllabus, activities are chosen which allow students to make use of the second language to reach a task-intrinsic outcome or result. Purposeful use of the second language creates an environment facilitating language acquisition. However, in the Japanese elementary school context, tasks and activities, whilst asking students to make use of the second language, ought not to have language acquisition as their primary educational objective. Instead, they must guide students towards development of their overall communication ability. This is a subtle but important difference that also relates back to unit or lesson aims and objectives.

Due to the very limited second language ability of the elementary school students, lesson steps ought to provide the relative phrases necessary to conduct activities and tasks. Learners can then move towards the non-language-focused aims or learning objectives more efficiently. Since the focus is *communication* rather than *English*, students should also be provided with examples and encouragement for using a variety of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies. This would raise awareness of communication repair methods and facilitate genuine self-expression. By using communication strategies, students are able to enjoy communicating their own personal messages through a variety of means without large amounts of repetitive vocabulary or pattern practice before task commencement. Indeed, some lessons or units may have communication strategy employment as their overriding aims or desired outcomes.

Since the development of general communication ability through English is paramount, it is

important to ensure that activities involve real and purposeful exchanges of information. Activities that require students to merely convey facts that both parties already know will not adequately assist students in realizing the full power of communication (Kanamori, 2005). Similarly, presentations, where students memorize English phrases and present about some topic to classmates, in many cases do not lead to actual communication because most listeners do not understand what the presenter is saying.

Consideration 4: Variety of tasks and activities

A variety of tasks and activities need to be employed, both to help maintain student interest, and to give a range of learning experiences which allow for the development of general communicative ability. As part of the pre-task phase, models of language use, activation of schemata, and vocabulary building are seen as positive for the development of learners' capacity to complete tasks (Ellis, 2006). Consequently, ample development of basic vocabulary and patterns (upon which students can build their own messages) and practice activities involving movement (seen by Watanabe (2003) as beneficial in the Japanese context) ought to play an important role in lesson steps. Additionally, demonstration of successful task processes by teachers and volunteer students, as well as the activation of schemata and previous learning would further enable students towards task completion.

If we wish to develop the conviviality, identity, and initiative of learners, different kinds of activities should be used to address these various areas (Watanabe, 2006b). Activities which involve interaction and cooperation, such as group and pair work, can be seen as promoting conviviality. Students can learn the enjoyment of interacting with friends and communicating with classmates they might not ordinarily have much contact with. Activities such as interview-mingling to find out about classmates' interests, dreams, feelings, and so forth, can promote a sense of identity and help students focus upon their own ideas and thoughts with reference to those of others. Finally, initiative might be promoted through mingling activities, class or school research, or interactive information-gap tasks in

which students need to solve some problem by interacting with others.

Consideration 5: Team-teacher consultation for personalization

Student motivation plays a vital role in any learning experience. For example, involvement of students' interests and personalization of learning increases motivation (Dornyei, 1998). Homeroom teachers are well positioned to know what sorts of activities would be best suited for their students (MEXT, 2001). As a result, consultation between the homeroom teacher and assistant language teacher about appropriate topics and activities is vital. Such direct discussion and planning can also maintain focus upon the processes and learning environments teachers want students to experience.

Consideration 6: Progression between lessons

When considering the sequencing across the span of a unit, it is important to include activities that build upon each other. This gives meaning to the language learners are using and provides experience in communicative interaction. Furthermore, if students can realize for themselves a feeling of progress, this will ultimately lead to increased motivation and hopefully a more positive outlook on communication itself.

Conclusion

This paper has provided a brief overview of current thinking on the role of English activities at the elementary school level in Japan and has followed up with a discussion of concepts teachers need to consider when trying to create or select activities and tasks. An experiential approach that matches the detailed purposes of elementary school English lessons is advocated. Although the primary emphasis was on background issues regarding task or activity selection, it is hoped teachers can realize the importance of well-founded collaborative decision making. Many of the considerations detailed herein may take time to implement. Moving from a curriculum placing memorization of English linguistic elements at the center to one focusing upon the development

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of general communication ability is an involved process. This has arguably been hindered by a lack of clarity regarding the purposes of elementary school English classes. This article has therefore attempted to provide Japanese and foreign elementary school teachers a basis for refocusing English education upon general communication ability. An exchange of ideas and opinions amongst educators in how to support the continued development of English communication activities at the elementary school level is highly encouraged.

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Overheard at JALT2009 in Shizuoka . . .

"One presenter was using black text on a blue background in his PowerPoint slides. He kept saying, 'As you can see…' and I kept saying, 'No, I can't.'"

Using *Photo News* materials in the EFL classroom

Ken Schmidt
Tohoku Fukushi University

写真ニュース
台風から無事救出
スミスさん家族１１人は台風カトリーナによる洪水の
ため二日間ニューオーリンズの自宅の屋根上に取り残
されたが、ヘリコプターにより無事救出された。

Hurricane Survivors
All eleven members of the Smith family were safely rescued by helicopter after spending two days trapped on the roof of their New Orleans home, surrounded by flood waters from Hurricane Katrina.

Abstract

The pictures and captions from Photo News (写真ニュース) displays, seen in many libraries and schools in Japan, can be a stimulating resource for communication in the language classroom. This article provides a number of ideas for their use, along with comments and variations. Activities include proposing alternate scenarios to explain a photo, drawing a scene based on a partner's description while trying to figure out the story, finding photos based on captions written by classmates, proposing the wildest scenario still consistent with a scene, creating dialogs to match a scene, and speculating on why a photo was in the news.

写真ニュースの写真や説明文は、日本の多くの図書館や学校で見ることが可能であり、語学授業のコミュニケーションを活性化する補助教材にもなり得る。本論ではその使用法について多くのアイディアを、解説やバリエーションと共に提供する。写真を説明する別の説明文を作ったり、説明に基づいて話の筋を考えながら絵を描いたり、クラスメートの書いた説明文から写真を探したり、写真と矛盾しないとんでもない話を考えたり、写真に合う対話を作ったり、なぜその写真がニュースに出てくるのかを思索したりするアクティビティが提案されている。

Photographs and illustrations have long been a staple of the EFL classroom (Adelson-Goldstein, 2006; Curtis & Bailey, 2001; Wright & Haleem, 1991; Wright, 1989). For example, Jianxin (1998) outlined several uses of news photos in conversation classes. In Japan, numerous libraries and other public venues maintain regularly updated *Photo News* (写真ニュース) displays featuring large-format, eye-catching scenes from the recent news accompanied by extended, explanatory captions in Japanese, or Japanese and English. As a result, an excellent but largely untapped source of materials for English conversation

practice may be no further than your school's library. The Photo News captions go far beyond those in typical news photos in summarizing a story and provide excellent support for associated language activities. Photos are available by subscription from various news agencies, with regularly changed displays of four to six pictures. In most cases, old Photo News displays are simply thrown out, but library staff may be happy to save them for use in English classes.

What follows are a number of ideas for utilizing the intriguing pictures and captions for stimulating and supporting communication among your students.

1. Alternative scenarios

In this activity, students create a story to go with a picture, then share this story *and* the true story with classmates, who try to guess which is the actual account.

Level: Upper elementary to advanced

Procedure:

- Select a group of intriguing photos for which explanations are not readily apparent and

fold the sheets to hide the explanatory captions. Actual examples include a man kissing a pig, the Statue of Liberty in the middle of a flooded street, a man lying on the courtroom floor in front of a judge, hundreds of buses jamming downtown streets, or an officer in protective clothing aiming a gun at a 15 meter tall preying mantis. These photos provide rich ground for speculation.

- Lay the photos out on desks and have student pairs each select a photo of interest and devise a scenario (or two) to account for what they see (who? what? where? when? why? how?).

- After a period of brainstorming, each pair unfolds their sheet to reveal the caption and learn the actual story. They then prepare to tell both stories.

- Finally, three or four pairs join to form larger groups. Each pair shows their picture (without caption) to their group and relates their scenarios, while other group members listen, ask questions, and try to guess which account is true.

- When the truth is revealed, pairs can receive points for guessing correctly or fooling their peers. Curious students also often have more questions about the true story.

- As an extra step, the most interesting photo and set of stories from each group can be presented to the whole class.

Simpler option: Divide the class into groups of three. Give each group 6-9 intriguing photos with captions hidden. The first photo is displayed, and after a few minutes' thinking time, each member offers a guess about the story depicted. The caption is then revealed, with the winner being the member with the closest scenario (as judged by the group). Repeat for each picture. As a wrap-up activity, each group can present their most interesting picture and set of 2-4 scenarios (including the actual story) to the whole class.

Commentary: This activity provides an interesting conversation stimulus, plentiful opportunities for language planning (Helgesen, 2003a), a motivating context for genuine communication through story

telling and Q&A, considerable feedback and opportunity to gauge one's success in communicating scenarios, and chances to learn about real people and events through English.

2. Describe, draw & tell

In this activity, a student draws a scene as described by their partner and tries to figure out the story behind it.

Level: Intermediate to advanced

Procedure:

- Before beginning, project one or two sample photos on a large screen and elicit or supply language helpful for describing such scenes (e.g., *on the left, in the foreground, in the background, beside, in the lower right corner, near the camera*).

- As students pair up, lay out the pictures at one end of the classroom.

- From each pair, student A then approaches the photos, chooses an intriguing one, reads the extended caption, and returns with the photo to sit facing their partner.

- Without showing the photo to Student B, Student A's first job is to describe key elements of the scene while B asks questions and attempts a rough drawing.

- After a set time, A attempts to elicit the true account from B, mostly by drawing attention to features of B's drawing (*Why do you think the man is wearing a gas mask and carrying a bird cage? Why does he need that on an open road in the countryside? Why are the others standing so far behind? What could be nearby, outside of the scene?*) This process can elicit a great deal

of language as B also asks numerous questions and A may need to explain the scene in greater detail to provide the needed clues.

- After a set time, A shows the picture (with or without caption) to B. Each pair should compare the drawing to the original and discuss any remaining gaps in B's understanding of the story.

- Finally, partners switch roles and repeat this procedure with a new photograph.

Simpler option: In the second step, Student A, rather than eliciting the story from B (the drawer), simply tells the story to B while using B's drawing as support. A then reveals the original picture and caption for comparison and confirmation of the story. This option involves less interaction and negotiation, but the task is easier to grasp and less daunting linguistically.

Commentary: This activity can be much more meaningful to students than simply describing and drawing a scene, such as mountains, a house, three birds, and two trees. The photo depicts an actual event, and in addition to the drawing task, figuring out what the scene means introduces a further intellectual challenge and reason for interaction.

3. Photo search

In this activity, one student relates a story, while teammate(s) roam the room, looking for the matching picture.

Level: Elementary to advanced

Procedure:

- Students each select two pictures of interest and write up English summaries for homework. Stress that students should not attempt word-by-word translations of the Japanese captions, nor should they make use of online translation services. A simple retelling in their own words will typically be more effective.
- In the next class, collect all the summaries and photos.
- Spread the photos (with captions hidden) on desks around the room, including extra photos (distracters) as needed.
- Place student-composed summaries (including writers' names) on a table at the front of the room.
- After dividing students up into pairs or trios, one student from each team picks up a summary and reads it to their partner(s).
- The partner(s) then proceed to search the room for the matching photo.
- When they believe they have found it, they confirm their guess with the writer (*Is this a photo you wrote about?*), return the photo and summary to their original locations, and start again with a new summary.
- Teams can compete to find the most matches in a given amount of time.

Quicker option: If you have a set of photos with extended English captions and students are advanced enough to comprehend them, clip or copy the captions (English portion only, if bilingual) and use these in place of student summaries. Students follow the procedure above to find the matching photos, and confirm their choices with you.

  Another quick option gives students the choice of relating the story or simply describing the scene. Spread photos around the room. Students individually walk around, taking notes on 3-4 photos. They then form teams of three and take turns talking about their scenes while team members look for the matching pictures. While searching, team members may ask questions

(*Where did this happen? How many buses are in the scene? What's his hairstyle like*), but have only one chance to ask, *Is this the picture?* They must elicit enough information to be sure. After finding the correct picture, teams may check the hidden caption for the real story.

Commentary: This activity combines writing and listening practice with a challenging puzzle aspect and the interest of learning about real events. The need for clear, audience-friendly summaries and descriptions is also made repeatedly clear, through the praise or good-natured frustration of peers.

4. Wild Scenarios

Rather than trying to create believable stories, students compete to produce the *craziest* scenario.

Level: Upper elementary to advanced

Procedure:

- Project one intriguing photo (with extended caption hidden) on a large screen.
- Have student pairs dream up the wildest scenarios they can.
- Each pair then relates their story to the whole class, competing to provide the account farthest from the truth, yet still consistent with the scene.
- After students share their stories, you can tell the real story and have the class vote for the winner.

Commentary: This activity allows all members of a small class to get involved with one particularly interesting scene, pushes students to be as creative as possible, and gives a motivating reason to listen. The activity can be repeated in several rounds. With a large class, students can share their scenarios in small groups rather than the whole class.

5. Photo Dialogs

Here, students create dialogs to accompany photographs and perform them for a group.

Level: Upper elementary to advanced

Procedure:

• Many pictures portray people interacting, and it can be interesting to speculate on what they are saying or thinking. If the class is small enough for students to sit near the front, fix a group of 10–20 interesting photos (captions hidden) on the board.

• Have each student pair develop and rehearse a dialog to accompany one of the pictures. The dialog can include what the characters are saying or their *innervoice* (Helgesen, 2003b).

• Pairs then perform their conversations for a larger group or the whole class while everyone listens and tries to identify the matching picture.

• As a follow-up activity, students can read the captions and tell the other students the actual stories, or adjust their dialogs for the real story, then perform the new dialogs and answer further questions about the situation depicted.

Commentary: This activity supports students in creative conversation practice and performance while giving their audience a reason to listen and even ask for further information.

6. Why Was It News?

While some news photos immediately pique our curiosity, others seem mundane or obvious (e.g., Ichiro running to first base, heavy equipment being loaded onto a ship, a family having a picnic,

a tree). Questions like, "What's happening here?" or "Why are they doing that?" produce… no response. However, approaching them from a different angle--"Why do you suppose this was news?" "What was special about these people or their picnic?"--can motivate speculation, stimulate interaction, and provide a use for many photos that would otherwise be thrown away.

Level: Intermediate to advanced

Procedure: Follow procedure for *1. Alternative Scenarios*, above.

Commentary: Clear, engaging examples or demonstrations are particularly important here, as it may take time for some students to grasp the concept of creating interesting explanations for apparently mundane scenes.

Points to consider

Variations: The activities above are only examples, and these ideas can be easily modified and mixed to create new activities that suit your own linguistic targets, communicative goals and student needs. See *Newspapers*, by Grundy (1993), for other ideas on using news-related photos.

Demonstrations: The creative speculation and sense of play involved in these activities may be unfamiliar or difficult for some students. Clear, imaginative demonstrations eliciting student participation are vital to setting up successful activities. Students need a good look at examples of language they can use, the procedures they need to follow and the potential for creativity and stimulating interaction. Using two, or even three, pictures as examples helps students see how they can adjust for different situations. Eliciting ideas during demonstration helps engage students and reveals misunderstandings. Students need a clear understanding of where the activity is going and reassurance that even crazy ideas are approved. They can thus feel safe, with the knowledge that they can be creative and playful with the activity without making fools of themselves or risking the instructor's displeasure.

Bilingual captions: Some publishers produce Photo News materials with both Japanese and English captions. Consider ways to employ these. When read after, or mid-way through, the story-creation stage, English captions can supply words and phrases students were searching for in developing their own scenarios--a helpful context for learning (Shoemaker & Shoemaker, 1991). When reading the captions to get the story, I may have lower level students read the Japanese first, to support subsequent understanding of the English. With more advanced students, the order can be reversed, with the Japanese simply confirming understanding.

Old or unfamiliar photos: Since speculation and imagination are important components of most of the activities described here, photos will ideally depict events unfamiliar to students, or depict known events in ambiguous or unfamiliar ways. Older photos can thus become more valuable as the events recede into the past, and at the same time provide chances to learn some interesting history. Adult students, in particular, enjoy older photos because they can trigger a variety of memories and stories associated with the events. A mix of older and newer materials often seems to best meet the varied needs and interests of students.

Digging deeper: Further information on pictured events is often easily available online. Have students brainstorm on questions they would like to ask about events that piqued their interest, find the answers for homework, and report back to the class.

Other sources of photos: Many of the activities described here could be done with photos from other sources. Photos clipped from magazines and newspapers are readily available, license-free photos can be downloaded from the Internet, and photos from any Internet news source can be shown on classroom displays. The Photo News materials described here, however, offer the advantages of regular new issues, large size, portability and extended (often bilingual) captions offering brief, but sufficient, accounts for basic understanding of the actual events. This is especially important because speculation can become empty and tedious without the payoff of eventually learning the *real story.* If teachers can find or produce sufficient captions or summaries, any suitable photos can be used.

Conclusion

Photo News pictures are a valuable resource for stimulating classroom communication and can form the basis for numerous activities. Besides helping students use English, they provide opportunities to learn and communicate about real-world events through a foreign language. The extended captions, in particular, can add a new dimension to many picture-based activities, allowing greater depth of understanding and supporting more substantive interaction. Rather than going to waste, out-of-date Photo News materials at many schools can find new life in language classrooms.

Overheard at JALT2009 in Shizuoka . . .

"Excuse me, but are there any stairs in the building?"

"The only stairs I've seen are back at the station!"

Photo News Sources

- *Nikkei Photo News (*日経写真ニュース*)* <www.nni.nikkei.co.jp/> (bilingual)
- *Mainichi Shinbun* (毎日新聞)
- *Asahi Photo News* (朝日写真ニュース)
- *Sankei Photo News* (産経写真ニュース) <sankei.jp.msn.com/top.htm>

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"We might get talked about, but no one ever shows us." Talking about *Privilege* with artist Gary McLeod

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Keywords

Gary McLeod, *privilege*, non-native English teachers, photography

Gary McLeod は東京を拠点とする英語教師・写真家であり、デジタルアートの修士号をCamberwell College of Art in London で取得している。Privilege はGary が日本で撮影した英語教師の写真とインタビューをまとめたものであり、日本における英語媒体のメデイア、例えば、Japan Times やJapanzine ではたいへんな関心が寄せられている。Gary の独特な観点から、日本人ではない英語教師がどのように生活し、自分たちの日本での役割をどう捉え、Gary の言うところの「自発的な国外放浪」を、なぜ歴史のこの時点での日本で選択したのかを写真を通して語る語り口には、一見の価値があると言える。

Gary McLeod is a Tokyo-based teacher of English and photographic artist with a Master's in Digital Art from Camberwell College of Art in London. *Privilege* is a collection of photographs and interviews by Gary of English teachers in Japan, and has attracted considerable attention from the English-language media in Japan, with articles in prominent magazines like *Japanzine* and *Metropolis*. What makes *Privilege* worth looking at is Gary's original perspective on how non-Japanese teachers of English live and view their roles in Japan, and moreover, what his photographs tell us about language teachers who have chosen what Gary calls "voluntary exile" in Japan at this moment in history.

Gary's work is also unique in its use of contemporary social networking to find subjects. I'd come across Gary's ad on Facebook and emailed him to volunteer for a shoot in Osaka in late March 2009. I found him a deeply engaging artist, as well as a thoughtful interviewer, and on the spot suggested doing an interview with him for *TLT*.

TA: So, what is *Privilege*?

GM: *Privilege* is a photographic collection of English teachers living and working in Japan in this era, a record of those people that existed in this moment of time. The main end-point is a

collection of prints that will go into the British Natural History Museum. So that is the ultimate aim, to build this collection of English teachers.

TA: And what was the initial inspiration for *Privilege?*

GM: One of the things that I've always been

interested in is voluntary exile, the decision to move from a familiar situation to a new one. That's something that was driving me to come to Japan originally.

The other major impetus was the *HMS Challenger* and it's photographs of native races as it traveled around the world, which is where the actual format of the photographs comes.

TA: What was the *HMS Challenger*?

GM: It was a Royal Navy ship that sailed around the world in the 1870s. Its main objective was scientific research, but as a secondary mission, it took photos of "natives" in different parts of the world.

TA: How did they choose the people they photographed?

GM: It's interesting, when they came to Japan, they photographed a coolie, you know, someone who pulled the things along, and they photographed a young girl wearing a kimono. That's all they photographed. But the coolie -- he had a shaved head, and tattoos as well. So they pretty much chose subjects they thought symbolized the culture.

But, I say that they *might* just be symbolic. There's no record of who they actually were. The same goes for my photos.

TA: So where do you situate yourself? As an artist? A researcher?

GM: I think they are very intermingled, and the "artist" would be generally how I see myself.

TA: As an artist, what are you coming at in this project?

GM: I'm coming at the pictures as being information I'm collecting. Visual information, that's what I'm seeking out, recording, and documenting. These pictures aren't aesthetic objects, and that's because I see them as information of these people in this moment in time in this century.

I guess you could say I'm coming at it from the point of view of an artist whose practice is based on collecting little pockets of information.

TA: By the way, you have a very unique camera. What makes it unique and how does it work?

GM: What makes it unique is the fact that it's combining an old eye--the Victorian-era brass

lens--with a new brain, a modern prosumer camera. The lens over time has become a metaphor for my eye, and the body of the camera has become a metaphor for my brain.

I'm taking a camera which is so familiar to a lot of people. They see a camera that they think probably, "oh that looks like my camera. Oh my god, they stuck it with an old lens like that. You can do that?"

TA: You're almost making the camera a foreign object again.

GM: *(Laughs)* It *is* <u>definitely</u> an object of interest! I've exhibited it before with the pictures, and it creates a lot of attention.

By fusing the current and the past, I'm trying to draw attention to what is missing.

TA: "Fusing the current and the past"…I noticed on your website, you say we live in a "time-poor culture." Could you unpack that?

GM: Well, in terms of looking at it from the perspective of digital photography, how much time do people spend thinking about the photograph that they're gonna take? It's all just very quick, isn't it?

TA: So how do you bring time into the process of your shots?

GM: The process introduces time physically into the process-the whole procedure of taking the portrait takes anything between 15 and 25 minutes.

What happens when you take a series of photographs over that period of time is, time creeps in. Time is made apparent by change, slight movement, or anything like that.

I like to think that this camera is actually introducing a trip – a journey to the arrival point, as opposed to just getting at the arrival point instantly. That's what I mean by "time-poor culture." It's only when you invest effort and time that something becomes more rewarding.

TA: How you get the mosaic pattern in your photos?

GM: That's because of the automatic process I've used, leaving it to a computer to determine the information in one particular frame, where

it has no relation to any others. So, basically, all the pictures of each subject are taken separately. When they're processed, they're all judged with the same criteria by the software, and it auto-adjusts everything. It looks at one image, determines how many darker and lighter pixels, and adjusts accordingly. But it doesn't know whether a part of one image is a part of another image, so actually, it only looks at the images piece by piece, and yet it's still judging by the same criteria. Therefore the result is that they all slightly change in tones and brightness.

TA: I have to say, I definitely felt speciminized when you took my picture (G chuckles) How do you do that? I certainly got the sense of being *measured*.

GM: Yeah. Well I think that comes from the actual format I brought in from the *Challenger* photographs. It's funny, when people look at the old ones and they look at the teachers, they often laugh because of the similarities between the two – it's quite striking.

It's partly to do with the lens itself being from that era. Photography was different; it was a way of collecting evidence back then.

TA: Anyway, what do you mean by "privilege"?

GM: (laughs)

The dictionary always seems to come up with two different definitions; one that it is a lucky opportunity, the other is when people are granted something they don't deserve. Of course, your own experience of that word pretty much posits which side you fall on.

TA: How many photos have you shot so far?

GM: I've actually done 84, but the goal now is 100.

TA: You said it's more men than women?

GM: Generally it's more men than women, but not by a large amount.

TA: As far as nationality and ethnicity goes…I noticed in the collection online that you've got a very wide range.

GM: Actually, I'm surprised by how wide it's gotten.

TA: Are they all native speakers?

GM: There are three who aren't native speakers, but they do teach English, and they're classed as native speakers. They've all had education in Australia, England, or something like that.

TA: And as far as people's field within the English teaching industry, mostly *eikaiwa*?

GM: Actually no. There's a good balance between *eikaiwa* and ALTs, I think, with some university teachers too.

TA: Speaking very generally, how are the answers different between…women versus men, different sorts of native speakers, people from different countries. Does "privilege" apply to all of them?

GM: It's interesting, I photographed a Jamaican guy yesterday, and he couldn't stress enough how much of a privilege it was to be here, coming from Jamaica where, he said, the opportunity for Jamaicans to travel just doesn't exist. Everyone just travels *to* Jamaica.

Obviously it does vary from person to person. There is a general pattern I've found for some questions, though. For example, "Have you ever felt uncomfortable or threatened in some way?" More often then not, women will say they have more than guys.

It also depends on how long the teachers have been here too. One person today was here for three months, and the longest was actually 22 years. So it's quite a wide range. Plus, what kind of person are they? Are they more positive or more negative? Also, what time did they come, after work, or on a weekend? But overall, I find people are generally positive about their experience here.

TA: So what you're saying is, your subjects usually say living and teaching in Japan is a privilege. "Privilege" being the first definition, that it's a chance, a good opportunity

GM: Yeah, I think the teachers do generally feel that way.

TA: How about the number two, then? That they don't really deserve it.

GM: It's interesting. If you look at the question where I ask people if they feel like they're paid deservedly for what they do, a lot of them say

they're overpaid, particularly ALTs. Even some *eikaiwa* teachers have said they're overpaid for what they do, in terms of work-to-money ratio.

Now, I don't know if they are or not. I've never been an ALT, but going on from what some people have said, some ALTs are glorified voice recorders. I've heard that a lot. But I guess it depends on the year and the ages they're teaching.

TA: Do people describe much of a sense of alienation?

GM: Well, someone today felt that she was giving suggestions but wasn't being listened to. She perhaps realized that what she's doing is just reading out from a book, and she makes suggestions, and gets shot down for it, you know, "That's fine thank you," but no one's listening. So I guess there, people can feel alienated.

But, at the same time, I've had a lot of ALTs who've said they do a lot of lesson planning.

I think it also depends on who's employing them, which prefecture. Some of the feedback I get is that, some prefectures have more money than others, and – there's more opportunity for ALTs than in others.

TA: You asked questions like, "How do you see your role in Japanese society?" "Would you say that native speaking English teachers were necessary or a luxury for the study of English?" or "Do you agree that learning English is a necessary skill for Japanese people?" or "Would you consider yourself a good teacher?" What are some things you often hear about the experience of teaching English in Japan?

GM: Some of the responses vary to, "How do you see your role?" Some of them are "entertainer" to "cultural ambassador" to "cultural conduit", those kinds of things, plus actually, "voice recorder" as well.

As regards to whether teaching English is necessary, a lot of people generally say "no", that learning English for Japanese people is *not* necessary. Occasionally someone says, "Yes, of course, it's vital for internationalization." But generally they say it depends on what students want to do.

Are native speakers necessary? Generally they will say, "yes," because of natural pronunciation

and familiarity with the language, especially in comparison to Japanese teachers of English, who, from what I hear, don't speak English very well. That again is case by case, just a generalization.

TA: So the majority have all generally said they believe the native speaker teachers *are* necessary.

GM: Yeah. I think generally that's the case, not a generalization, though interestingly enough, they say English is not necessary. That's why I asked that question in that way. I say, "Would you say that learning English is necessary for Japanese people?" Often the response is, "No it's not necessary. It depends on what they want to do with their lives." "Therefore, do you think native-speaking English teachers are necessary?" This asks them to think, should they be entitled to have this job or not?

TA: How many folks would you say are really into their profession? Versus, say, people who are just here for the ride?

GM: Well, no one's going to stick their hand up and say, "I'm here for a free ride," but they're all aware of certain people that do come here and free ride, so to speak. Someone drew attention to it today, actually.

TA: And about *teaching*…

GM: Do they consider themselves good teachers? A majority consider themselves at least to be acceptable. A few people have said, "outstanding."

TA: And how do they justify that?

GM: Some of them might justify it by how much they've come, how much they prepare outside of what they're supposed to be there for. You know, particularly with kids and things like that. Actually the ones that said "outstanding" might have been the kids' teachers. But again, this is a generalization.

TA: Of people who have seen these photos so far, what's been their reaction?

GM: Um, a lot of people have said to me, even today someone said to me, occasionally I ask you know, why did you volunteer for this thing? And they said, well you know, I've never seen anyone do this sort of thing about English teachers. You know, *we often get, we might get talked about, but*

no one ever shows us. They said that it was an amazingly new thing that they'd never seen before. So I mean there's that aspect to it. It is a new thing. In that sense, I kind of feel honored to be the one doing it I suppose. A lot of people have said to me, what you're doing is really interesting. I think it's because of how many levels there are to it.

TA: One other thing is, what's going to happen with the interviews? I mean the photos are your focus of course, but what are you doing with all this data?

GM: My intention is to transcribe them all. I believe the museum will accept the transcriptions, though I haven't thought about it much.

GOV.COPYI.   BRITISH/JAPANESE WOMAN, SHIZUOKA. 061. G.M.

TA: Finally, what do you think might be some ripple effects of this project?

GM: Well this is one of the things the exhibitions will present the answer to. Let's not forget, this work is not necessarily completed until it's got an audience, right?

Also, bear in mind that when they go into the collection of the Natural History Museum, they won't be presented at all, because they're going

to be put in the repository and archived for the future. So the exhibitions are where the things are presented, and that's where the real feedback's going to come as to whether I'm actually adding something.

I guess I do sometimes wonder if it would have an effect on people coming here as English teachers or not. I wonder if it would increase it or decrease it. It would also be interesting to see if it humanizes us a bit more to some Japanese people. I guess it would also be good if it had an effect on society in terms of how English teachers are viewed here.

So, if it does have those ripples, then by all means, but I think by that time, the project's very much on its own. I've pushed it out the door, it's taking care of itself, and it just gets devoured by the machine that is culture. It's not my responsibility from that point—I just pushed the wheel.

Postscript

I attended the official Osaka opening of *Privilege* on August 1, 2009. The exhibition consisted of two projectors displaying a slideshow of photos from the collection on two whiteboards in a dark room, accompanied by audio of four separate Japanese students of English reading from transcripts from four different interviews. I also spoke with a few patrons. Many commented on how interesting the concept was, and noted the novelty of Gary finding most of his subjects through Facebook. One audience member noted, however, that a more engaging exhibition might be a series of self-portraits taken by teachers themselves.

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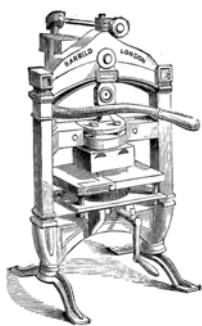
TLT RESOURCES MY SHARE

Welcome to this month's My Share! This month Mark Rebuck offers us a great lesson on finding out what makes our students angry, and Sylvan Payne has an interesting lesson on creating animated dialogs using new technology on the Internet. Enjoy!

Getting it off your chest

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Quick guide

Key words: Annoyance ranking, antisocial

Learner English level: Lower intermediate through to advanced

Learner maturity: High school and above

Preparation time: The time it takes to copy the handout

Activity time: 90 minutes (variable)

Materials: A handout similar to the one in Appendix 1

Introduction

This lesson was born out of my own experience in Japan of frequently feeling annoyed. In it stu-dents not only reflect on and express their own feelings, but they also consider what people in another country may find disagreeable. Teachers can gain a revealing insight into the things that raise the blood pressure of their students.

Preparation

Copy the handout in Appendix 1, or make a similar one.

Procedure

Step 1: Throw a piece of litter nonchalantly on to the floor and see the reaction of the class. Then ask a student "How do you feel about people who drop litter?"

Step 2: Distribute the handout. Go through the 12 items in the *How do you feel about people who...* column, explaining vocabulary as necessary.

Step 3: On the board write: 1 = most annoying; 12 = least annoying. Students work alone to rank the items 1~12 in the *Annoyance Ranking* column.

Step 4: Ask some students what they ranked as number one.

Step 5: Go through phrases A ("It doesn't really bother me") through F ("It makes me furious") on the handout.

Step 6: Write the following exchange on the board:

A: "I'm conducting a survey on things that annoy people. Would you mind if I ask you a question?"

B: "No, (I don't mind) go ahead."

A: "How do you feel about people who…"

Give 15-20 minutes for this mingle activity. Students use the dialogue to help them carry out a survey into what their classmates feel about the 12 items. When asked "How do you feel about people who…" the other student responds with one of the phrases from A~G. The questioner then writes the corresponding letter in the appropriate cell of the *How do your classmates feel?* column. The same question can be asked to more than one person.

Step 7: On the board write: 1 = most antisocial; 2 = second most; 3 = third most. In the last column students mark which of the 12 items they think British people consider to be the three most antisocial.

Step 8: Ask a few students to read out their guesses, and write them on the board.

Step 9: At this point I do a listening comprehension exercise using an authentic recording (BBC Radio) of the results of a survey on antisocial behavior in Britain (see Transcript in Appendix 2). Students listen and write down the results, including percentages, in the last column. Unfortunately, the recording is no longer available online, but teachers can read out the transcript, or announce only the results. Alternatively, data from similar surveys in other countries could be used.

Step 10: Compare the actual results with the students' guesses on the board (see Step 8).

Step 11: Students prepare notes for a short (about one minute) "rant" about something they find annoying. To help start students off, put phrases such as these on the board:

- One thing that really gets on my nerves is (people talking loudly on the subway).
- I really hate the way...
- I find… really annoying.
- I find it disgusting the way…

The teacher monitors, helping with vocabulary. If a student insists that there is nothing he or she finds annoying (it may occasionally happen), an alternative task could be set, for example, "Write about something *you* do that possibly annoys others."

Step 12: Go through the *Gatten* Ranking (Appendix 1). Choose a few students to read out their

rants and explain that their classmates should bang the table one to four times depending on how strongly they agree with the speaker. This step can also be done in small groups.

Conclusion

The fact that there are ongoing campaigns by various transportation bureaus in Japan to discourage antisocial behavior suggests perhaps that a lesson such as this one is particularly relevant. There is surely value, if only cathartic, in providing the communicative resources for expressing one's feelings about the less pleasant experiences of daily life.

Appendices

The appendices for this article are available online at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/myshare/resources/2010_01a.pdf>

Creating student dialog animations
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Quick guide

Key words: Computer, dialogue, animation, four skills

Learner English level: High beginner and above

Learner computer skill level: Basic Internet skills sufficient

Learner maturity: High school and above

Preparation time: About 3 hours

Materials: Computer, high-speed Internet connection

Introduction

Dialogues are a common approach for demonstrating or practicing new language in a communicative context. Having students create and practice short dialogues is an age-old tool for checking comprehension, practicing language, and motivating students. Indeed, dialogue activities are effective for integrating and developing all four skills. However, sometimes performing dialogues in class can be tedious.

A recently developed free online animation application, *Xtranormal Text-to-Movie*, allows users to create short animations with up to two characters. It's astonishingly intuitive and easy to learn. Characters, voice-accents, and background sets are chosen, the script is typed in, and drag-and-drop camera angles, sound effects, gestures, and facial expressions are selected. When it's all put together, the application renders the animation and publishes it. The animations can then be viewed at the Xtranormal website, or even uploaded to YouTube.

The voices aren't perfect, but they sound much better than any other computer voices I've ever heard. The expression is a little flat, and unpredictable in rhythm and tone, but it's not too bad. Think Hal in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. There are a number of European languages in the available voices, such as German, French, Spanish, and Italian, making this a useful activity in other language classes as well. The website is still in development and promises to add more features and improvements in the near future.

The website is free for its basic package. The Premium account option charges a pricey fee for use, and offers a lot of added benefits and variations. I used a Premium account for my class, but it's possible to do this activity for free.

Preparation

Step 1: Create a class account at xtranormal.com and try it out a bit on your own. The average computer-savvy person picks it up in minutes. The website offers a quick, helpful tutorial as well.

Step 2: In a conversation or speaking class, assign small groups of 3-4 students

to write short dialogues. (Having prepared dialogues *before* turning on computers saves a lot of time later. It's a good idea to keep it very simple initially since time disappears quickly in any computer-related language lesson.)

Step 3: It might be a good idea to prepare a handout to give students an overview of the Procedure steps you want them to take. (See Appendix 1)

Procedure

Step 1: In a computer classroom, do a short step-by-step demonstration of how the website works. Create a small animated dialogue eliciting student suggestions. I did a minimal but sufficient demo of 5 minutes.

Step 2: Put each dialogue group to work together on one computer. This means the teacher spends less time running around from computer to computer solving problems. Groups tend to share knowledge and solve problems on their own. Xtranormal allows multiple users to work simultaneously on the same account, so log every computer onto the class account. This will put all the final published animations in one central location.

Step 3: Explain that students will be using their created dialogues as input and have them type in
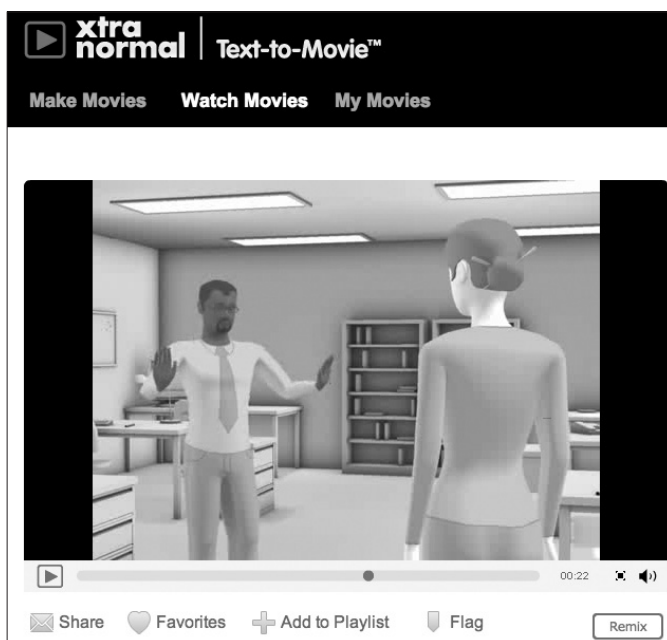
their scripts first.

Step 4: Once the dialogue script has been typed in, allow students to play around with characters, voices, backgrounds, gestures, expressions, and camera angles.

Step 5: When the animations are finished, have students publish them to the account.

Step 6: Finally, have students view each other's work and post constructive reaction comments on the website. This can be done as homework.

Conclusion

The fun factor in this activity was extraordinary. Students loved doing this. Seeing their scripts acted out by animated characters was satisfying and intriguing for even the most lackadaisical student. The unforgiving GIGO (garbage-in-garbage-out) nature of computers forced students to troubleshoot their own spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors. The website's English menus and instructions were challenging to some students, but also provided some new useful vocabulary and idioms. All in all, an enjoyable break with great results. Multiple viewings recycled and reinforced the new language much more than merely watching skits in class.

Reference

Xtranormal Text-to-Movie <www.xtranormal. com>.

Appendix

The appendix is available at <jalt-publications. org/tlt/myshare/resources/2010_01b.pdf>

TLT RESOURCES
BOOK REVIEWS

This month's Book Reviews column features Matthew Wallace's evaluation of *Write on Task* 2, an introductory academic writing textbook.

Write on Task 2

[David Schneer, Gordon Myskow, and Naomi Smith. Tokyo: Pearson Longman, 2009. pp. 134. ¥1,600. ISBN: 978-4-342-57414-6-C1082.]

Reviewed by Matthew Wallace, Kanto International High School

Write on Task 2 is an academic writing textbook that uses a task-based approach to teaching academic paragraph writing intended for senior high school and university students. The book utilizes all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—through a number of task-oriented activities that introduce students to different themes throughout each chapter. By introducing students to these themes, they are exposed to the idea that in order to write effectively in academic settings, knowledge of how to write in different genres is essential (Johns, 2008).

Hyland (2003) defines genre as "socially recognized ways of using language" (p. 21). Each genre has its own unique discourse markers and structure found in texts that are commonly accepted by discourse communities for that particular genre. *Write on Task 2* introduces students to several of these genres and serves as a crucial first step in their mastery of them.

The textbook is divided into four units: *Paragraph Format*, *Sequence*, *Attributes*, and *Analysis*. Within each unit, chapters introduce paragraph genres that are presented sequentially in order of difficulty. Working through the book, students are first introduced to the basics of paragraph writing, followed by genres of time-order, process, persuasion, and cause and effect, among others. Each chapter takes advantage of the writing process by providing pre-writing, writing, and post-writing activities that scaffold students into writing their own paragraph.

Chapters are divided into five sections: *Content*, *Language*, *Signal Words*, *Putting It Together*, and *Final Task*. Vocabulary is provided in the form of wordlists in the back of the textbook. This can be a good opportunity to assign terms for a pre-assignment. As a preview, chapters start with an initial model paragraph. The model serves as a useful lexical and organizational resource for students to draw from throughout the chapter. In the *Content* section, students identify the organizational pattern of the paragraph they are learning to write. Tasks involve initially identifying appropriate topic sentences and eventually producing them from an example paragraph provided. Each chapter also includes a mind map that makes the organization of the studied paragraph quite clear. Grammar and form are addressed in the *Language* section. Explicit grammatical explanations are provided, and then students must identify the correct use of structures. Such grammatical activities performed in context are essential for students to gain a better understanding of how English works (Hyland, 2007). In *Signal Words*, specific discourse items for paragraphs are introduced. The terms are explicitly provided in list form and students perform fill-in-the-blank tasks to recognize how the words appear in the text. In *Putting It Together*, students draw from the previous sections in the chapter and perform step-by-step note-taking tasks, which they will eventually use to write a paragraph. As a way for students to apply what they have learned, a *Final Task* section in the back of the book contains three activities. Students write an original paragraph based on a prompt. They then reflect on their own writing by completing a revision checklist as a post-writing task. The final activity incorporates speaking and listening components that can be done in pairs or groups. Students read their paragraphs to a partner who listens for organizational structure and takes notes in a space provided in the book.

Most students said they liked the step-by-step progression of activities in each chapter. It allowed them to understand the intricacies of each theme and developed their ability to write different types of paragraphs. Many also said they felt more confident in being able to express themselves in their writing after using the textbook. The only issue with the book, however, is that tasks are not consistently formatted. In some chapters, *Signal Words* is presented with its own heading, while in others it is not. This inconsistency did not interfere with the quality of the content. I was able to successfully use the textbook in a senior high school writing class. My students accomplished our objective of writing academic paragraphs in a range of genres.

Write on Task 2 effectively introduces students to the concept of genre and provides them with the lexical, grammatical, and organizational knowledge needed to write academic paragraphs in English. The textbook builds a solid foundation to build on in the future.

References

Hyland, K. (2003). Genre-based pedagogies: A social response to process. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 12*(1), 17-29.

Hyland, K. (2007). Genre pedagogy: Language, literacy and L2 writing instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 16*(3), 148-164.

Johns, A. (2008). Genre awareness for the novice student: An ongoing quest. *Language Teaching, 41*(2), 237-252.

…with Robert Taferner

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

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.

BOOK REVIEWS ONLINE: A linked index of Book Reviews can be found at:
<jalt-publications.org/tlt/reviews/>

Recently Received

...with Greg Rouault

<pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

A list of texts and resource materials for language teachers available for book reviews in *TLT* and *JALT Journal*. Publishers are invited to submit complete sets of materials to the Publishers' Review Copies Liaison address listed on the Staff page inside the front cover of any *TLT*.

RECENTLY RECEIVED ONLINE

An up-to-date index of books available for review can be found at:

<jalt-publications.org/tlt/reviews>

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

Books for Students (reviewed in *TLT*)

Contact: Greg Rouault
<pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

Academic Connections. Cassriel, B., ter-Mate Martinsen, M., Hill, D., & Williams, J. White Plains, NY: Pearson Education, 2010. [4-level integrated skills course for academic study and TOEFL iBT prep incl. teacher's manual, audio CD, and access code to MyAcademic-ConnectionsLab online program for students and teachers].

English Firsthand 4th Edition. Helgesen, M., Brown, S., & Wiltshier, J. Hong Kong: Pearson Longman Asia ELT, 2010. [4-level four-skills coursebook w/ emphasis on oral communication incl. student book w/ complete audio program, workbook, online support, and teacher's manual w/ CD-ROM, test generator software, and audio scripts].

Out Front. Diem, R., & Rabbini, R. Fukuoka: English Education Press, 2007. [Conversation class text for young adult learners in Japan incl. teacher's guide and CD w/ supplementary activities and materials online].

Passport Second Edition. Buckingham, A., & Lansford, L. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. [2-level Japan-specific oral communication coursebook incl. student book w/ full audio CD, workbook, and teacher's guide w/ teacher's resource disc and *Test Center*].

Reading Pass. Bennett, A. E. Tokyo: NAN'UN-DO, 2009. [3-level integrated skills coursebook w/ contemporary reading content and vocabulary, listening, composition, and speaking activities incl. CD and teacher's manual w/ answer key and transcripts].

World English. Johannsen, K. L., Milner, M., & Tarver Chase, R. Boston: Heinle Cengage Learning, 2010. [4-level four-skills coursebook w/ National Geographic content, images, and video incl. full and combo split student books w/ CD-ROM, workbook, online video workbook, teacher's edition w/ online planner, class CD and DVD, and Exam*View* assessment CD-ROM].

Writing Stories. Wright, A., & Hill, D. A. Crawley, UK: Helbling Languages, 2008. [Resourceful Teacher Series activity book for developing language skills through story making].

Books for Teachers

(reviewed in *JALT Journal*)

Contact: Bill Perry
<jj-reviews@jalt-publications.org>

The Handbook of Language Teaching. Long, M. H., & Doughty, C. J. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Teaching Second Language Listening. Lynch, T. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Vocabulary Matrix. McCarthy, M., O'Keeffe, A., & Walsh, S. Hampshire, UK: Heinle CENGAGE Learning, 2009.

TLT RESOURCES TLT WIRED

Elgg: Social networking for language students

Malcolm Swanson

Seinan Jo Gakuin University

Many language teachers strive to provide their students with a variety of situations in which to use natural English. In recent years, many of these opportunities have come from using Internet or email resources. Now, with the growing popularity of social networking, the choices are even richer. However, before asking students to sign up for such services as Facebook, MySpace, or Mixi, it is important to consider what they may be exposed to. There are significant issues of privacy and safety, as well as the problem of focus—while they may start out on task, there is such a volume of material available that it is easy for them to become distracted.

Social networking sites do, however, offer many services, so they should be considered. The obvious advantage is their social nature—they encourage people to communicate, not just within their social networks, but also with a broad range of other users. They provide opportunities for people to meet others with similar interests or goals. And they offer a network of services in one convenient location, such as blog-

ging, texting, sharing images and files, or taking part in activities.

One solution to the issue of using public networking sites for students is to set up your own site, and there are a number of solutions out there that teachers might consider (see <c4lpt. co.uk/handbook/comparison.html>). This article will focus on *Elgg* <www.elgg.org>, an open source social networking platform.

What Elgg offers

Like other social networking services, Elgg offers an online environment in which members can post material, find friends, create and join groups, and generally communicate. However, where public sites are totally run by (and at the mercy of) their operators, anyone can set up an Elgg installation and tailor it to their needs. And being open source, it is free. An out-of-the-box installation of Elgg comes with most of the tools needed to get started. These include activity streams, profile and grouping tools, blogs, file and media upload facilities, posting and page making capabilities, and *The Wire*—a Twitter-like microblogging service.

For those wanting to extend their installation, there is a rich community of developers creating plugins, themes, and language packages (see <community.elgg.org>). Installing plugins allows users access to such services as event calendars, live chatting, online galleries, embedded video, or integration with membership in public

…with Paul Daniels & Ted O'Neill

To contact the editors: <tlt-wired@jalt-publications.org>

In this column, we explore the issue of teachers and technology—not just as it relates to CALL solutions, but also to Internet, software, and hardware concerns that all teachers face.

As well as our feature columns, we would also like to answer reader queries. If you have a question, problem, or idea you would like discussed in this column, please contact us. We also invite readers to submit articles on their areas of interest. Please contact the editors before submitting.

<jalt-publications.org/tlt/wired/>

services. Themes allow both administrators and users to customize the look of their sites, while language packs make sites multilingual (though no Japanese pack was available at the time of writing).

Why not just use Moodle?

Certainly Moodle already contains many of the capabilities of a social networking site, and it could probably be tweaked to work as such. However, the problem is one of focus. Whereas the core role of Moodle is content delivery, Elgg is built around the user. When you log into Moodle, you see your courses… log into Elgg, and you see your personal environment. Each application is useful, but for different things. What is clearly needed is a link up between the two, so that users could log into one and seamlessly access the other (something that, for example, Drupal <drupal.org> can do). One option is to install Mahara <mahara.org>, an e-portfolio solution which does allow for Moodle integration.

Installing Elgg and adding functionality

For users with their own hosted website, installation is easy. Upload the Elgg package to its own directory, create a database, complete a few other minor steps (see the instructions on the Elgg website), then visit your website and follow the instructions. From there, create an admin account and you can begin setting up your site. This is a good stage to play with the installation, learn how to use it, and add features before making the site live. The online documentation is reasonably helpful, and there is a vibrant forum if you really get stuck.

If you do not have a hosted website, Elgg has a number of recommended providers listed on its website who will host your site from around $4.00 a month. Anyone with a basic knowledge of website building should have no problem getting started.

Once installed, adding plugins, themes, or language packs is as simple as uploading them to the *mod* directory, then logging on as administrator and activating them. One thing to keep in mind is that all of these are under constant development, so it pays to visit the forums frequently to have the most recent and stable versions. Unfortunately, Elgg doesn't have any notification system for this—unlike, for example, WordPress.

Adding users

Elgg offers a number of different ways to add users. The easiest (but least controllable) is to simply allow users to register from the login page. There are also options to manually create users, but that is a tedious process. Currently, there are no plugins to bulk upload users, though one is under development. If real control is needed, Elgg has the option to turn it into a *walled garden*, where only registered members can enter and see content.

Stability and usage

Elgg, at the time of writing, is at version 1.6.1 of its development, and is generally very stable. Care must be taken when installing plugins, which are not always as ready as they should be. In my case, I have had sites crash a number of times. This is usually easily fixed by simply removing the plugin by FTP, though in one instance there was also corruption of the database, so frequent backups are recommended.

How to encourage your students to use your site will depend on your programme. I have always had greatest success by integrating it into a course so that it is a core part of the programme, or by running it as a communication activity between students or groups from abroad and my own students. While it is difficult to sustain interest once programmes are over, for the duration of the course Elgg has proven to be a useful social networking experience.

Malcolm Swanson teaches at Seinan Jo Gakuin University in Kitakyushu, and enjoys tinkering with the inner workings of JALT's publications.

> ### Overheard at JALT2009 in Shizuoka . . .
>
> "They keep talking about the 'graying' of JALT, but it's more like 'The Shining'!"

JALT FOCUS

JALT Calendar

Listings of major upcoming events in the organisation. For more information, visit JALT's website <jalt.org>, the JALT events website <jalt.org/events>, or see the SIG and chapter event columns later in this issue.

▶ 23 Apr – Deadline for submissions to present at JALT2010 in Nagoya. See <jalt.org/conference> for more information.

▶ 22 - 23 May – 9th Annual JALT Pan-SIG Conference: *Learners' Perspectives* at Osaka Gakuin University, Suita City, Osaka.

▶ 20 - 22 Nov – JALT2010 "Creativity: Think Outside the Box" will be held in Nagoya, Japan. See <jalt.org/conference> for more information.

JALT Notices

As I write this, the 35th JALT International Conference has just drawn to a close. Official numbers are not available yet, but all indications point to the highest numbers yet for the Granship Shizuoka site. The buzz on the street has it that 2009 was the best all around conference in recent years.

Much of this had to do with the excellent volunteer work put in by the conference committee, headed once again by Director of Programs Phil McCasland. I will not go again through the list of the dedicated folks who put the conference together—for a partial list, see last month's column—but suffice it to say that your efforts were greatly appreciated by the thousands of people present last November.

Volunteering to organize the JALT conference is a truly amazing experience. For those interested in networking, it gives you a chance to get to know, and be known by, some of the best and brightest in JALT; for those wishing to add another feather to their professional caps, duties can range from vetting proposals, to editing the conference handbook, to chaperoning VIPs, to organizing a schedule of hundreds of presentations, to planning a marketing campaign, to liaising with commercial sponsors, to managing a team of student interns.
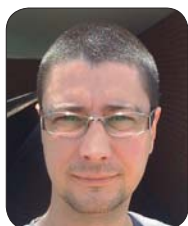
JALT2010—*Creativity: Think outside the box*

Some volunteers are already hard at work now for the 2010 conference. Others, like the handbook editor or the site manager, won't begin getting busy until the fall. Some positions, like the PR people, work very hard before the confer-

…with Marcos Benevides

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

JALT Focus contributors are requested by the column editor to submit articles of up to 750 words written in paragraph format and not in abbreviated or outline form. Announcements for JALT Notices should not exceed 150 words. All submissions should be made by the 15th of the month, one and a half months prior to publication.

JALT FOCUS ONLINE: A listing of notices and news can be found at:
<jalt.org/main/news/>

ence then don't have as many responsibilities during it, whereas others have little to prepare ahead of time, but are very busy for the duration of the conference itself.

In short, volunteering for the JALT conference can be a worthwhile experience, and your participation can be tailored to your own interests and schedule. Depending on the level of involvement you choose to take on, some conference attendance costs may be waived, making volunteering an excellent opportunity for those JALT members who do not have a travel/research budget.

So give it a shot. Be part of the team that makes the 2010 conference the best one yet—another year in a row. Contact <programs@jalt.org> for more information.

And if you want to see more of what happened at JALT2009 last year, go take a look at the special feature at the beginning of this issue of *TLT*.

JALT national officer elections—Call for nominations

2010 is an election year for all national officer positions. Nominations will be accepted from 1 Apr 2010 until 15 May 2010. The call for nominations will be included in the March/April edition of *TLT*. Please also look for details on the JALT website at <jalt.org/elections>.

JALT Journal Associate Editor position—Call for applications

The JALT Publications Board invites applications for the position of Associate Editor of the *JALT Journal*. The Associate Editor will work with the Editor to produce the journal. After being recommended by the Publications Board and approved by the JALT Executive Board, the successful applicant will serve as Associate Editor for 1 to 2 years before serving as Editor for a similar period. For more information, please visit <jalt-publications.org/positions>.
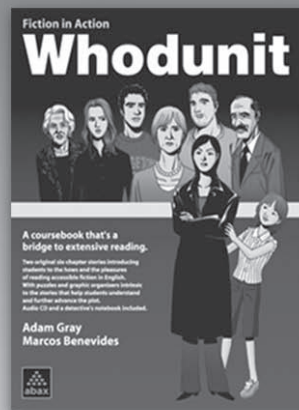
JALT FOCUS
MEMBER'S PROFILE

I n this month's Member's Profile, Michael Post discusses the approaches to language teaching and learning that he has adopted in his classroom.

MEMBER'S PROFILE
Michael D. Post

Principles of teaching

Studying English as a second language involves both the teacher and the student engaging in communication. The type of communication can vary based on the topic of the course, the dynamics of the class, and the motivation of the students. For teachers though, the nature of teaching is continually based upon basic cognitive, socioaffective, and linguistic principles inherent within most types of methodologies. However, for the student, unaware of the methodologies or principles being implemented within the class by the teacher to improve their learning opportunities, effective teaching is based upon relationships within the class, between that of teacher and student and between that of student and student. As a teacher I believe in developing a challenging and rewarding class atmosphere that encourages students to not only talk about themselves and their interests, but to actively engage others by integrating different communication skills to better understand and use English. In order to learn, and have fun while doing it, I have adopted the following approaches to learning:

Theory and application

There are numerous types of methodologies that can serve in laying strong foundations for teaching. However, students are often unaware of a teacher's approach to learning. Because of this, the teacher must be able to engage students through their relationships with them and others in the class in order to better apply the various theories of language learning. The student, who is often concerned with having fun and making friends in class, is going to judge the relevance of the learning from this point. To facilitate learning that is based upon student needs I believe in following a Communicative Approach to teaching through Cooperative Language Learning and Content-Based Teaching. Through these, the atmosphere of a classroom can better facilitate learning while having fun at the same time with the material being presented or explored for further communication.

Apply knowledge and facilitate understanding

Developing relationships within the classroom is one of the great joys of teaching. The better a teacher knows a student, the better a teacher can

gauge which information will be relevant to the student's learning. Additionally, as a language teacher I am very passionate about language and working with students to see how language can be applied in their lives to learn about others, share about themselves and discover new information about the world. By presenting students with information that they can explore, which is relevant to their lives, I am able to help facilitate their understanding of language not only through functions, but also through meanings. Through these interactions with language, and with others, students not only learn to use English, but also learn about topics related to culture, listening strategies related to understanding stories, how to make connections with different types of lexis, and how to improve their general communication skills.

Promote positive foundations for lifelong learning

While the experience and information presented and explored within the classroom is of daily importance to course lessons, the overall combination of each lesson is also vital in developing foundations for lifelong learning. As a teacher I am always learning new things in and out of the classroom. I hope to develop in my students this same passion for learning that I, and other teachers, enjoy. By focusing on accomplishing short-term goals within the class, students also work towards long-term goals. To aid students in reaching their goals the following strategies are promoted within each class:

- Introduce students to new ways of thinking
- Engage in asking and answering questions
- Aid students in using language to critically assess the world around them
- Encourage students to try out new ideas
- Build relationships through the use of language to communicate experience and opinions

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Overheard at JALT2009 in Shizuoka . . .

"If you're gonna get in that line, get me a falafel. If not, then forget about it."

- Develop the personalities of students through interactions with others and with new ideas

By implementing language learning theories that present students with a challenging and rewarding learning environment, Communicative Teaching Methodologies can engage students in areas of learning that stress basic cognitive, socioaffective, and linguistic principles of language development. Presenting students with a diversity of issues that actively engages their mind, different skills can be integrated that allow students to learn how to use the English language for communication purposes in different situations and in different types of relationships. Focusing on strengthening English communication skills as a way of building relationships within the class can motivate students to achieve greater goals not only during the class, but also after the class and throughout their lives.

Michael Post has an MA with distinction in Applied Linguistics from the University of Birmingham, UK. He teaches part-time at Kwansei Gakuin University and his research interests include Critical Discourse Analysis and Media, Communication, **and Culture. He can be contacted at** <themikepostexperience@gmail.com>.

JALT FOCUS GRASSROOTS

I n the first report, Paul Evans describes the experience of proofreading for *The Language Teacher*, and explains how those who are interested can get involved. Then Kip Cates discusses taking students out of the classroom and into the world through international events.

Minding your p's and q's: qroofreading for *The Language Teacher*

by Paul Evans, Proofreading Coordinator & Trainer for *The Language Teacher*

Take a look at any issue of *The Language Teacher*, and you'll see an entire back page filled with the names of all the people involved in its production. As a bimonthly, peer-reviewed academic journal, it might be surprising to learn that all of those people are volunteers. I started out as a proofreader with *TLT* just over a year ago, and now coordinate proofreader scheduling and training. It's been an interesting year and, for those who may have wondered about becoming a part of *TLT*, I'll try to describe how things work.

Joining *TLT* usually begins with our proofreader training. I have a fairly typical education and a reasonably good eye for detail, but I had never done professional proofreading before joining *TLT*. No problem—most people come to us with similar backgrounds. The proofreader training is a logical place to start, as it lets you get to know people and become familiar with how things work. Then, once you move up to being a regular "proofer" and gain some experience, if you want to become more involved there are regular opportunities to do so.

Proofreading work is divided between two roles: copy editors and proofreaders. If you're curious, take a look at the Society for Editors & Proofreaders (UK) FAQ pages <www.sfep.org.uk/pub/faqs/fedit.asp>, which provide a thorough description of those job titles. At its best, proofreading gives you the opportunity to work with great writers and ideas, and keeps you active and engaged in your profession. But it can also be quite challenging, as there is a lot to think about when working with other people's writing. One of the worst things is when you find yourself proofreading a piece of less-than-brilliant writing (it happens). You put a lot of effort into trying to make it better, submit it to your editor, and later on find that most of your corrections were rejected. An important part of the job is to constantly remember that you're not the writer, and just because you don't like a particular style or phrasing doesn't make it "wrong." Nonetheless, my mentor (Greg Rouault, who also edits *TLT*'s *Recently Received* column) encouraged me to remember, "It's easier

…with Joyce Cunningham and Mariko Miyao

To contact the editors: <grassroots@jalt-publications.org>

The coeditors warmly invite 750-word reports on events, groups, or resources within JALT in English, Japanese, or a combination of both.

to help someone come down from noticing too many things… compared with those who are generally oblivious to the things that need to be addressed." In other words, being "picky" is a good place to start.

TLT's proofreader training includes a number of steps, and we try to make them task-based so it won't feel like you're just being given a lot to read. The first thing we have people do is take an in-depth look at a recent issue of *TLT*, to understand the organization of content. That's followed by an overview of our workflow, and the various production steps we go through with each issue. After that is an introduction to proof-reading resources, both print and online, and on the *TLT* Staff Website (sorry, access is restricted). The remainder of the training involves working with practice documents, and then a shadowing phase where you proofread actual articles, but under the mentorship of an experienced proof-reader. People come and go, and eventually new proofreaders are able to step into an open regular position.

As is probably true of most journals, *TLT* is constantly evolving. Changes, while intended to improve *TLT* overall, throw an immediate wrench into the training process, as we need to make significant updates to the training resources. This typifies what is probably the biggest challenge for many of us working on *TLT*: It's work, and it requires a limited, but serious, time commitment. Despite being an all-volunteer staff, we depend heavily on everyone following an established schedule and meeting strict deadlines.

I'm very glad I got involved. In a relatively short space of time I have worked on quite a few ESL-related articles (in the process, reading far more than I ever would have otherwise). I have also gotten to know some good people and feel myself part of a community, which is nice. That said, our work is mostly an online experience so, until the Shizuoka conference back in November, I'd only actually met a very small handful of my colleagues face-to-face.

If you are interested in joining us, we would be happy to hear from you. Please contact either of our Coeditors, Jerry Talandis and Damian Rivers, at <tlt-editor@jalt-publications.org>. (Note: To be considered, you should be a current JALT member.)

Education beyond the classroom

by Kip Cates, JALT Global Issues SIG Chair, Tottori University

The JALT2009 theme, "The Teaching-Learning Dialog: An Active Mirror," generates some stimulating questions for foreign language educators. How much should the language classroom function as a "mirror" to help students look at themselves, their societies, and cultures in new ways? How much should it function as a "window" aimed at opening students' eyes to foreign countries, cultures, and issues? And, if the classroom is a "window," should learners just gaze outside passively? Or should teachers open the window and take them out into the real world?

For teachers who see themselves as educators in the broader sense, learning doesn't stop when the bell rings. Education beyond the classroom means giving students opportunities to use their language skills, increase motivation, and raise awareness through real-world experiences. One way to move students from the classroom into the real world is to involve them in international events. Let me give three examples: one local, one national, and one global.

TIME Festival <www.ncn-t.net/time/>

Most communities have international events that EFL students can join. I belong to a local group called TIME (*Tottori International Multicultural Exchange*). Each fall, we put on a 1-day *TIME Festival* featuring country displays by foreign residents from around our prefecture. As part of this, we invite English teachers from local high schools to send their EFL students along to help. For these student volunteers, this is a unique chance to experience a multicultural event in their own hometown. During the day, they may find themselves using English to help a Jamaican set up her country display, to assist Egyptians preparing Arab food, to play with children from India, or to talk with students from Mexico, Kenya, or France. Judging from their comments,

it's clear this experience opens their eyes to the world, stimulates their curiosity about other cultures, and deepens their motivation to learn English and other languages.

Global Festa <www.gfjapan.com>

At the national level, there are many events students can join. Each October, for example, I take 10–15 university students from Tottori up to Tokyo to attend the *Global Festa* in Hibiya Park. This annual 2-day event is Japan's largest gathering of volunteer groups, government agencies, and non-profit organizations involved with global issues, Third World development, and international cooperation.

During the festival, students explore theme zones dedicated to human rights, peace, and the environment, visit information booths run by the 250 organizations taking part, learn about NGOs working to eliminate land mines, support refugees, and end hunger, meet staff from organizations such as UNICEF, Amnesty International, and Médecins Sans Frontières, and talk to Japanese Peace Corps volunteers fluent in English, Spanish, and Arabic who have just returned from countries such as Bangladesh, Guatemala, and Algeria.

What do students gain from this experience? (1) They learn that there is a big world out there full of people, countries, and problems, including war, poverty, and pollution. (2) They encounter Japanese volunteers with international experience who care about world issues and who are working for a better future. (3) They learn that to cooperate with others on solving global issues they need to speak English and other foreign languages.

Asian Youth Forum <www.ayf7philippines.weebly.com>

For teachers eager to get their EFL students involved at a global level, there are dozens of opportunities available, ranging from overseas school trips, Model UN events, and Peace Boat to volunteer programs in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Part of my work taking students into the world revolves around the *Asian Youth Forum* (AYF). This annual event, organized by

EFL teachers, brings together college students from across Asia for an exciting week of seminars, workshops, and social events aimed at promoting international understanding, cross-cultural communication, and leadership skills, all through the medium of English. AYF 2008 in Tokyo was hosted by JALT and brought together 110 students from 16 Asian countries, including Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, and the Philippines. The students who take part in each AYF event not only learn new languages and improve their English communication skills but also broaden their horizons, deepen their understanding of other cultures, and begin to see themselves as young Asian citizens with an important role to play in working for a better future.

Giving students a chance to use language skills in real-world situations outside school is an invaluable experience that can promote personal growth, global awareness, and language learning motivation. Educating beyond the classroom, whether at the local, national or international level, can be an exciting challenge and a valuable part of our work as foreign language teachers.

TLT COLUMN SIG NEWS

SIGs at a glance

Key: [💡 = keywords] [📖 = publications] [🔊 = other activities] [✉ = email list] [💬 = online forum] **Note**: For contacts & URLs, please see the Contacts page.

As some of you may have noticed, one James leaves and another enters. James Hobbs, the previous editor of this column is moving on, and I, James Essex will be doing my best to fill his boots. James, I thank you on behalf of others for the time you have served and am grateful that you will be here in the background to guide me. I come to this column shortly after completing an MA in Applied Linguistics and TESOL from the University of Leicester. I am currently amployed as an ALT, a post which I still enjoy but feel unchallenged in. My areas of interest include culture in the language classroom, literature in ELT and materials design. I am currently in the process of writing my PhD proposal for Aston University.

Bilingualism

[💡 bilingualism, biculturality, international families, child-raising, identity] [📖 *Bilingual Japan*—3x year, Journal—1x year] [🔊 forums, panels] [✉]

Our group has two broad aims: to support families who regularly communicate in more than one language and to further research on bilingualism in Japanese contexts. See our website <www.bsig.org> for more information.

当研究会は複数言語で生活する家族および日本におけるバイリンガリズム研究の支援を目的としています。どうぞホームページの<www.bsig.org>をご覧下さい。

Computer Assisted Language Learning

[💡 technology, computer-assisted, wireless, online learning, self-access] [📖 *JALT CALL Journal Newsletter*—3x year] [🔊 Annual SIG conference, regional events and workshops] [✉] [💬]

The 2010 JALT CALL SIG Conference will be held on 28-30 May at Kyoto Sangyo University. This year's Keynote Speaker will be **Joy Egbert**. If you are interested in serving as an officer and/or member of the 2010 Conference Team, don't hesitate to contact us. We look forward to meeting and hearing from persons interested in the expanding world of CALL. For more information, see <www.jaltcall.org>.

College and University Educators

[💡 tertiary education, interdisciplinary collaboration, professional development, classroom research, innovative teaching] [📖 *On CUE* —2x year, YouCUE e-newsletter] [🔊 Annual SIG conference, regional events and workshops]

CUE's refereed publication, *OnCUE Journal* (ISSN: 1882-0220), is published twice a year. In addition, members receive the email newsletter *YouCUE* three times a year. Check the CUE SIG website <jaltcue-sig.org> for news and updates about CUE SIG events.

Extensive Reading

The ER SIG exists to help teachers in Japan start and improve Extensive Reading and Extensive Listening programmes. Our newsletter, *Extensive Reading in Japan* (ERJ), is full of ideas for those

…with James Essex

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

JALT currently has 17 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and 4 forming SIGs available for members to join. This column publishes announcements of SIG events, mini-conferences, publications, or calls for papers and presenters. SIGs wishing to print news or announcements should contact the editor by the 15th of the month, 6 weeks prior to publication. SIG NEWS ONLINE: You can access all of JALT's events online at:

<www.jalt.org/calendar/>

new to ER and experienced ER practitioners. It keeps our members up-to-date on ER research and new graded reader releases. Check out our website <www.jaltersig.org>.

Framework & Language Portfolio

[🔆 curriculum-planning, assessment, language education reform, Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), European Language Portfolio (ELP)] [📖 newsletter] [📢 workshops, materials development] [💬]

This SIG wants to discuss the CEFR and ELP, and other similar frameworks and their relevance for Japan. There is an emphasis on developing materials to support educators who would like to use these pedagogic tools; the bilingual Language Portfolio for Japanese University is now available online. The SIG holds periodic seminars focusing on classroom use and is present at many conferences. Refer to <sites.google.com/site/flpsig/home> or contact <flpsig@gmail.com> for more information.

Gender Awareness in Language Education

[🔆 gender awareness; gender roles; interaction/discourse analysis; critical thought; gender related/biased teaching aims] [📖 newsletter/online journal] [📢 Gender conference, workshops] [📝] [💬]

GALE works towards building a supportive community of educators and researchers interested in raising awareness and researching how gender plays an integral role in education and professional interaction. We also network and collaborate with other JALT groups and the community at large to promote pedagogical and professional practices, language teaching materials, and research inclusive of gender and gender-related topics. Visit our website <www.gale-sig.org> or contact us for more details.

Global Issues in Language Education

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

Are you interested in promoting global awareness and international understanding through your teaching? Then join the Global Issues in Language Education SIG. We produce an exciting quarterly newsletter packed with news, articles, and book reviews; organize presentations for local, national, and international conferences; and network with groups such as UNESCO, Amnesty International, and Educators for Social Responsibility. Join us in teaching for a better world! Our website is <www.gilesig.org>. For further information, contact Kip Cates <kcates@rstu.jp>.

Japanese as a Second Language

[🔆 Japanese as a second language] [📖 日本語教育ニュースレター *Japanese as a Second Language Newsletter*—4x year] [📢 AGM at the JALT conference] [📝]

　論文・記事大募集：JALT日本語教育論集を2010年に発行。論文、研究報告、評論、小論、手紙など募集。日本語研究者、指導者、学習者の　皆様応募お願いします。ホームページをご覧ください＜www.jalt.org/jsl＞。

Call for Papers: *JALT Journal of Japanese Language Education*. Japanese as a second language researchers, teachers, and learners are invited to contribute articles, research reports, essays, and reviews. Publication date is 2010. Visit our website <www.jalt.org/jsl>.

Junior and Senior High School

[🔆 curriculum, native speaker, JET programme, JTE, ALT, internationalization] [📖 *The School House*—3-4x year] [📢 teacher development workshops & seminars, networking, open mics] [📝]

The JSH SIG is operating at a time of considerable change in secondary EFL education. Therefore, we are concerned with language learning theory, teaching materials, and methods. We are also intensely interested in curriculum innovation. The large-scale employment of native speaker instructors is a recent innovation yet to be thoroughly studied or evaluated. JALT members involved with junior or senior high school EFL are cordially invited to join us for dialogue and professional development opportunities.

Learner Development

[💡 autonomy, learning, reflections, collaboration, development] [📖 *Learning Learning*, 2x year; *LD-Wired*, quarterly electronic newsletter] [🎤 Forum at the JALT national conference, annual mini-conference/retreat, anthology of Japan-based action research projects] [🗒]

The Learner Development SIG is a lively and welcoming group of teachers interested in improving our practice by exploring the connections between learning and teaching. We also meet to share ideas and research in small-scale events such as mini-conferences, poster-sessions, and local group meetings. For more information check out our homepage <ld-sig.org>.

Lifelong Language Learning

[💡 lifelong learning, older adult learners, fulfillment] [📖 *Told You So!*—3x year (online)] [🎤 Pan-SIG, teaching contest, national & mini-conferences] [🗒] [🗨]

The increasing number of people of retirement age, plus the internationalization of Japanese society, has greatly increased the number of people eager to study English as part of their lifelong learning. The LLL SIG provides resources and information for teachers who teach English to older learners. We run a website, online forum, listserv, and SIG publication (see <jalt.org/lifelong>). For more information or to join the mailing list, contact Yoko Wakui <ywakui@bu.iij4u.or.jp> or Eric M. Skier <skier@ps.toyaku.ac.jp>.

　生涯語学学習研究部会は来る高齢化社会に向けて高齢者を含む成人の英語教育をより充実することを目指し、昨年結成した新しい分科会です。現在、日本では退職や子育て後もこれまでの経験や趣味を生かし積極的に社会に参加したいと望んでいる方が大幅に増えております。中でも外国語学習を始めたい、または継続を考えている多くの学習者に対してわれわれ語学教師が貢献出来る課題は多く、これからの研究や活動が期待されています。LLLでは日本全国の教師が情報交換、勉強会、研究成果の出版を行い共にこの新しい分野を開拓していこうと日々熱心に活動中です。現在オンライン<jalt.org/lifelong>上でもフォーラムやメールリスト、ニュースレター配信を活発に行っております。高齢者の語学教育に携わっていらっしゃる方はもちろん、将来の英語教育動向に関心のある方まで、興味のある方はどなたでも大歓迎です。日本人教師も数多く参加していますのでどうぞお気軽にご入会ください。お問い合わせは涌井陽子<ywakui@bu.iij4u.or.jp>　。または Eric M. Skier <skier@ps.toyaku.ac.jp>までご連絡ください。

Materials Writers

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

The MW SIG shares information on ways to create better language learning materials, covering a wide range of issues from practical advice on style to copyright law and publishing practices, including self-publication. On certain conditions we also provide free ISBNs. Our newsletter *Between the Keys* is published three to four times a year, and we have a discussion forum and mailing list <groups.yahoo.com/group/jaltmwsig>. Our website is <uk.geocities.com/materialwritersig>. To contact us, email <mw@jalt.org>.

Other Language Educators

[💡 FLL beyond mother tongue, L3, multilingualism, second foreign language] [📖 *OLE Newsletter*—4-5x year] [🎤 Network with other FL groups, presence at conventions, provide information to companies, support job searches and research]

Pragmatics

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

Pragmatics is the study of how people use language. As teachers we help students learn to communicate appropriately, and as researchers we study language in use. This is clearly an area of study to which many JALT members can contribute. The Pragmatics SIG offers practical exchange among teachers and welcomes articles for its newsletter, *Pragmatic Matters*. Find out more about the SIG at <groups.yahoo.com/group/jaltpragsig> or contact Donna Fujimoto <fujimoto@wilmina.ac.jp>. For newsletter submissions, contact Anne Howard <ahoward@kokusai.miyazaki-mic.ac.jp>.

Professionalism, Administration, and Leadership in Education

The PALE SIG welcomes new members, officers, volunteers, and submissions of articles for our journal or newsletter. To read current and past issues of our journal, visit <www.debito.org/PALE>. Also, anyone may join our listserv <groups.yahoo.com/group/PALE_Group>. For information on events, visit <www.jalt.org/groups/PALE>.

Study Abroad

[study abroad, pre-departure curriculum, setting up, receiving students, returnees] [*Ryugaku*—3-4x year] [Pan-SIG, national & mini-conference in 2009] [ ]

The Study Abroad SIG is a new and upcoming group interested in all that is Study Abroad. We aim to provide a supportive place for discussion of areas of interest, and we hope that our members will collaborate to improve the somewhat sparse research into Study Abroad. We welcome submissions for our newsletter, *Ryugaku*, and we are still in need of officers. Contact Andrew Atkins or Todd Thorpe <studyabroadsig@gmail.com> for further information.

Teacher Education

[action research, peer support, reflection and teacher development] [*Explorations in Teacher Education*— 4x year] [library, annual retreat or mini-conference, Pan-SIG sponsorship, sponsorship of speaker at the JALT national conference] [ ] [ ]

The Teacher Education SIG is a network of foreign language instructors dedicated to becoming better teachers and helping others teach more effectively. Our members teach at universities, schools, and language centres, both in Japan and other countries. We share a wide variety of research interests, and support and organize a number of events throughout Japan every year. We also have an online discussion group. Contact <ted@jalt.org> or visit our website <jalttesig.terapad.com>.

Teachers Helping Teachers

[teacher training, international education programs, language training, international outreach] [*THT Journal*— 1x year, *THT Newsletter*—4x year] [teacher training conferences/seminars in Bangladesh, Laos, Vietnam, and the Philippines, AGM at JALT national] [ ]

Teaching Children

[children, elementary school, kindergarten, early childhood, play] [*Teachers Learning with Children,* bilingual— 4x year] [JALT Junior at national conference, regional bilingual 1-day conferences] [ ] [ ]

The Teaching Children SIG is for all teachers of children. We publish a bilingual newsletter four times a year, with columns by leading teachers in our field. There is a mailing list for teachers of children who want to share teaching ideas or questions <groups.yahoo.com/group/tcsig>. We are always looking for new people to keep the SIG dynamic. With our bilingual newsletter, we particularly hope to appeal to Japanese teachers. We hope you can join us for one of our upcoming events. For more information, visit <www.tcsig.jalt.org>.

　児童語学教育研究部会　は、子どもに英語（外国語）を教える先生方を対象にした部会です。当部会は、年４回会報を発行しています。会報は英語と日本語で提供しており、この分野で活躍している教師が担当するコラムもあります。また、指導上のアイデアや質問を交換する場として、メーリングリスト<groups.yahoo.com/group/tcsig>を運営しています。活発な部会を維持していくために常に新会員を募集しています。特に日本人の先生方の参加を歓迎します。部会で開催するイベントに是非ご参加ください。詳細については<www.tcsig.jalt.org>をご覧下さい。

Testing & Evaluation

[research, information, database on testing] [*Shiken*—3x year] [Pan-SIG, JALT National conference] [ ] [ ]

The TEVAL SIG is concerned with language testing and assessment, and welcomes both experienced teachers and those who are new to this area and wish to learn more about it. Our newsletter, published three times a year, contains a variety of testing-related articles, including discussions of the ethical implications of testing, interviews with prominent authors and researchers, book reviews, and reader-friendly explanations of some of the statistical techniques used in test analysis. Visit <www.jalt.org/test>.

TLT COLUMN
CHAPTER EVENTS

*A*kemashite Omedeto! May you and yours have a very healthy and happy new year in 2010! Make it one of your new year's resolutions to support your local chapter by joining monthly events—a great opportunity to meet new people and network, exchange ideas, and support your fellow educators! Remember to check the chapter events website <jalt.org/events/2009-10> if your chapter is not listed below. Other events may appear on the website at any time during the month.

GIFU—*Stirring the senses: Reflective portfolios and online assessments* by **Suzanne Bonn Bonn Miyake** of Nanzan U. In this workshop, participants will learn how portfolios allow for reflection on learning and provide an alternative to standard methods of evaluation. In addition, online sources which aid in student assessment will be introduced. Participants will gain a greater understanding of the varied assessments available to them through activities and materials, and are encouraged to reflect on their own contexts. *Sat 23 Jan 19:00-21:00; Gifu JR Station, Heartful Square, 2F, East Wing; One-day members ¥1000.*

GUNMA—*Motivating young adult learners to communicate* by **Roberto Rabbini**. After defining a successful communicative task, the presenter will share a variety of student-led activities that generate real communication and enhance conversational skills and strategies. Participants will be asked to take an active role in the workshop and will be able to take away with them a range of practical activities that both engage and motivate learners. *Sun 31 Jan 14:00-16:30; Maebashi Institute of Technology (Maebashi Koka Daigaku); One-day members ¥1000.*

KYOTO—*JALT's Apple Day: Using Ipods/Iphones in the ELT classroom* by **Matthew Walsh** of Momoyama Gakuin High School and **Craig Hagerman** of Osaka Jogakuin U. This event is for veteran techies and newbies alike! Walsh and Hagerman will lead a cutting-edge session on using Ipods and Iphones in your ELT classroom. Learn the basics, discover ELT related applications, and participate in a hands-on model lesson workshop. *Sat 17 Jan 13:30-16:30; Campus Plaza Kyoto 2F Dai 2 Kaigishitsu; One-day members ¥500.*

MATSUYAMA—*Brain science, teaching, and active skills of communication* by **Curtis Kelly** of Kansai U. For 20 years, the presenter has been teaching "3L" college students (low proficiency, low confidence, low motivation). In order to better understand them, he studied motivation and brain studies related to learning. He will first explain interesting things discovered about learning, and then show how this new understanding was applied in the *Active Skills for Communication* series (Cengage Learning). *Sun 10 Jan 14:15-16:20; Shinonome High School Kinenkan 4F; Free for one-day members.*

…with Michi Saki

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

Each of JALT's 36 active chapters sponsors from 5 to 12 events every year. All JALT members may attend events at any chapter at member rates—usually free. Chapters, don't forget to add your event to the JALT calendar or send the details to the editor by email or t/f: 048-787-3342. SIG NEWS ONLINE: You can access all of JALT's events online at <www.jalt.org/events>

NAGOYA—*Stirring the senses: Reflective portfolios and online assessments* by **Suzanne Bonn Miyake** of Nanzan U. In this workshop, participants will learn how portfolios allow for reflection on learning and provide an alternative to standard methods of evaluation. In addition, online sources which aid in student assessment will be introduced. Participants will gain a greater understanding of the varied assessments available to them through activities and materials, and are encouraged to reflect on their own contexts. *Sun 24 Jan 13:30-16:00; Nagoya International Center, 3F, Lecture Room 2; One-day members ¥1000.*

OSAKA—*Teaching the strategies of speaking* and *Teaching listening to low-level learners* by **Alistair Graham-Marr**. The presenter, of ABAX publishing and author of *Communication Spotlight*, will show how we all use strategies to clarify, show interest, maintain and develop conversations, and help with fluency. Helping students apply these strategies can be very useful and motivating. Later he'll focus on teaching listening effectively, including teaching phonology, to help students with "bottom-up" decoding skills; and developing student knowledge of discourse, to help with "top-down" predictive skills. *Sat 16 Jan 18:00-20:30; Namba Shimin Gakushu Center, O- CAT Building 4F; <jalt.org/events/osaka-chapter/10-01-16>.*

YOKOHAMA—*The link between ER and tests results: Is there one?* by **David Williams**. There is a growing body of work emphasising the benefits of extensive reading in improving student motivation and language skills, and also in improving standardised test scores such as TOEFL and TOEIC. Using empirically-gathered data and student feedback, the presenter will consider how well this body of work reflects the reality at a Japanese university where TOEFL success is an integral part of the curriculum. The session will provide for ample feedback and discussion, and participants will be encouraged to share and consider the establishment, management, and development of their own ER programmes in light of the experience presented. It is hoped that participants will then have new approaches to help them in running more effective ER programmes. *Sun 17 Jan 13:15-16:30; Sakuragicho station. For map, see either <www.eltcalendar.com> or <www.yojalt.org>.*

TLT COLUMN CHAPTER REPORTS

AKITA: October—*Motivation in the classroom* by **Wayne Malcolm**. This meeting was a bit different, as only the first half was devoted to the presentation, while the second half was for chapter elections and business. Malcolm presented on the topic of motivation. This was a very interactive presentation, as the audience was involved in both brainstorming ideas about student and teacher motivation as well as offering possible solutions to the problems involved. As motivation is one of Malcolm's main research topics for his doctorate in education, he was able to direct our attention towards aspects of the topic that might have escaped the casual observer. The second half of the meeting was devoted to officer elections and future aspirations of the Akita chapter. A great time was had by all.

Reported by Stephen Shucart

GIFU: September—*Increasing student input and responsibility to encourage active learning* by **Jon Catanzariti** and **Mike Stockwell**. Catanzariti and Stockwell began by explaining how they have worked together at their university to develop students' ability to reflect on their input into the learning process. Students are asked to discuss appropriate behavior for learning, as well as how they can enhance the learning environment. During the concluding stages of each lesson, they are asked to not only grade but

also to comment on their own performance, as well as give reasons for their assessment of the lesson. The presentation began by asking teachers to assess, through a questionnaire, what type of teacher they were, and whether their beliefs followed a more constructionist or behaviourist approach. There was a lot of information to absorb in this inspiring presentation.

Reported by Brent Simmonds

GUNMA: September—*Art in the classroom* by **Yoko Munezane.** In language education, art can function as a medium of communication because it stimulates human creativity and can be perceived as a way of social communication. We are all inherently artistic, so usage of art enhances motivation in communication. Munezane presented several classroom activities that boost the motivation for communication in class using artwork and the concepts of multiple intelligence (MI) theory. For example, students produce drawings while they listen to a song, which enhances musical and intrapersonal intelligence. By talking about their own pictures, a group activity can be turned into interpersonal intelligence reinforcement. Another activity is having a conversation involving art. Students look at a painting of their own choosing, and form questions about it in their minds. By attempting to share how they interpret the intention of the artist's expression in the painting, classroom communication turns into an interpersonal activity. This can further develop into a creative activity by putting students in a role play as characters that appear in the painting. Communication about art involves imagination, so creative usage of language can take place in the classroom. Films can also be shown to students to enhance listening skills, as well as cultural and situational understanding concerning communication among people. Intrapersonal and interpersonal

aspects of conversation with art can be broken down to various levels of linguistic activities by an instructor to accommodate various student levels.

Reported by Harry Meyer

HAMAMATSU: September—*Sharing 18 years experience with language immersion in a Japanese k-12 school—insights and implications* by **Mike Botswick**. Original designer and director of Katoh Gakuen in Shizuoka Prefecture, Botswick spoke about his school's immersion program. Katoh Gakuen is the oldest and most successful immersion program in Japan. It has Japanese students being exposed to English in learning basic subjects from kindergarten through high school, roughly half or more of each school day. Botswick showed us how the view that introducing English too early may damage children's development of their native language (in this case, Japanese) is false. He said not a single study provides evidence of this—around the world. On the contrary, thousands of studies show that these children's native language development is the same or better than that of other children who are not exposed to a foreign language early. He showed films of first-grade children doing math problems by arranging English word cards to form an appropriate question and then answering it, and of high school students debating in English. There were a wide range of questions from the audience and people left with a desire to learn more about immersion education.

Reported by Dan Frost

KITAKYUSHU: October—*Language awareness and language variety* by **Saeko Urushibara**. So English is not so different from Japanese—or other languages either? Urushibara proposes

…with Troy Miller

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

The Chapter Reports column is a forum for sharing with the *TLT* readership synopses of presentations held at JALT chapters around Japan. For more information on these speakers, please contact the chapter officers in the JALT Contacts section of this issue. For guidelines on contributions, see the Submissions page at the in this issue or on our website.

that language awareness be the basis for English education in Japan, particularly when it is introduced at the primary level. She maintains that while vocabulary is arbitrary and must be explicitly learned, grammatical knowledge is universal and therefore comes cost-free in principle. She supported this notion with many examples and some technical terms, explained to us in very accessible language. Urushibara stresses that English is not Japan's second language, but a foreign language—and should be taught in the context of Japanese. After discussing languages' shared properties, she showed ways of expressing them in various languages and then how to recognize and hence utilize our tacit knowledge of them coupled with our first language to support understanding of the target language. She noted that unique aspects of grammar, such as word order and agreement, can best be handled in terms of contrast. After some discussion of the relative roles of teachers and computers in language instruction, Urushibara fielded questions and remarks about our classroom experiences with and reflections upon the interrelationships of languages.

Reported by Dave Pite

KYOTO: October—*Presentation practice session for JALT National Conference/JALT Business Meeting* by **Kim Bradford-Watts, Bjorn Fuisting,** and **Michael Furmanovsky**. The Kyoto chapter in October provided an opportunity for three speakers to introduce their presentations for the JALT National Conference in November. Bradford-Watts prepared her poster session on metaphorical patterns through analysis of randomly picked textbook prefaces written in English. This unique study suggested the significance of an awareness of metaphors for teachers in the EFL environment. Fuisting presented a stimulating analysis on how to start, organize, and reorganize extensive reading programs. This overall talk was aimed at various ER organizers and worked as a starter kit for complete beginners to a managing kit for those facing obstacles along the way, as well as a budget consultation. Furmanovsky, using two examples of movie versions of classic novels in Graded Readers, pointed out the possibility of bringing out characters' personalities and using them to introduce

vocabulary for personality traits. These practice sessions were a good chance for presenters to polish up their presentations before their big show, but for those who unfortunately could not attend the National, it was a tasty bite. We also held the annual officers' election.

Reported by Wakana Takai-MacLean

NAGASAKI: October—*Elementary school teaching and the implementation of the new English Curriculum* by **Kai Pence**, **Meghan O'Connell** and **Warren Allen**. The presenters, all ALTs working for boards of education in Nagasaki, began by explaining their backgrounds and their motivations for coming to Japan as participants in the JET Programme. They gave their views on the current state of the programme, stressing that they regarded it as an important tool for grassroots internationalization, including interaction not only with students, but also with their parents. With English teaching being not the sole, or perhaps even the main goal of the programme, the diverse background of ALTs was seen as beneficial. Using examples of textbooks introduced in the 2009 school year, the presenters then compared their experiences of elementary school English classes before and since the April move to a new curriculum. Discussion focused on the increase in class hours for fifth and sixth-graders, and the consequent reduction for lower grades, as well as the change in roles of ALTs and homeroom teachers in terms of lesson-planning and materials development. The new textbooks, in particular, were seen as having a positive impact on homeroom teacher confidence and involvement in English classes.

Reported by Richard Hodson

OKAYAMA: October—*From textbooks to TQ: Publishing for EFL teachers* by **Keiko Sakui** and **Neil Cowie**. The two presenters shared their experiences in publishing, from academic writing to the recent release of their textbook, in a casual format. All present were encouraged to share their experiences as well. Sakui introduced the various factors that can lead to getting published and attendees shared their publishing experiences and future plans in small groups. Next, presenters addressed the ques-

tions why to publish in the first place, where to publish, and what kinds of writing to consider publishing. They also provided a helpful list of academic journals, specifying their acceptance rate, approximate readership, and other valuable information. Finally Cowie and Sakui explained how their recent textbook came into print. The presenters, as well as the attendees themselves, provided all present with a wealth of helpful advice for future publication projects.

Reported by Tom Fast

OMIYA: October—*Implementing an effective program using* **English Notebook** by **Laura Blefgen-Togashi** in English and **Setsuko Terasaki** in Japanese. Blefgen-Togashi and Terasaki, who have been teaching at public elementary schools implementing new programs focusing on *English Notebook*, demonstrated hands-on techniques using *English Notebook*. The presenters first overviewed the current situation of Foreign Language Activities at public elementary schools. Togashi discussed her teaching approach by saying, "Children should enjoy language activities, but learning must be happening." To deal with the shortcomings of *English Notebook*, the presenters suggested how best to use it by: (1) pre-teaching followed by ample practice, (2) using materials available at schools, (3) providing interactive opportunities, (4) adding additional challenges and tasks, (5) overlapping English with other subjects, and (6) creating a positive learning environment. In order to enhance learning, the presenters showed how to reinforce the concept of numbers and counting using beanbags. *English Notebook 2*, Lesson 2 was drawn on to familiarize the students with singular and plural forms. Ideas related to feelings and countries were also introduced to strengthen specific lessons. All participants enjoyed the presenters' delivery style and practical lesson ideas. Teachers can easily incorporate these activities with *English Notebook* to implement an effective program.

Reported by Masa Tsuneyasu

OSAKA: October—*My share: Autumn potpourri.* **(1)** *Job hunting workshop* by **Douglas Meyer**. Meyer, the Job Information Center Coordinator, reviewed the basics of finding and landing good jobs, which nowadays require much more than

a degree and a smile. With a decrease in the number of students enrolling each year, the numbers of available teaching positions become more competitive. Strategies, appeal, and flexibility are critical to getting the job. **(2)** *Corpus linguistics* by **Matt Smith** showed how words could be analyzed by their behaviors and the patterns they usually create, allowing the formation of word category families. Participants engaged in concordancing tasks with corpus texts to investigate and evaluate this approach. The presentation also included a brief description of how this approach is being applied to the analysis of the Chubu PASEO Learner Corpus. **(3)** *Curriculum design* by **Gerald Williams** examined a coordinated curriculum to improve students' English level, and using part-time instructors effectively. Also covered were English use in class, student homework, and socializing. Lively group discussions followed all three presentations, and made this a very stimulating day.

Reported by Douglas Meyer

SENDAI: September—*Measuring learners' vocabulary size* by **Paul Nation**. Nation introduced his recent project designing and administering the Vocabulary Size Test to measure English learners' receptive (written) vocabulary knowledge. Nation offered evidence that a goal of 8,000 word families is essential for learners to deal with a range of spoken and written genres, and it is therefore important to track vocabulary acquisition using tests like his. Using actual test questions as examples, Nation explained how he designed the test and listed features which good vocabulary tests must have. In the second half of the session, Nation shared his concept of the four strands necessary for a balanced language learning program: (1) meaning focused input, (2) language focused learning, (3) meaning focused output and (4) fluency development. He followed this with a task in which we were asked to classify various learning activities into the four strands. The session attracted around 70 participants coming from all over the Tohoku area, both teachers and learners. Everyone came away satisfied with the inspiring and insightful presentation.

Reported by Soichi Ota

SHINSHU: September—*Learner autonomy in a CALL-based classroom* and *Vocabulary strategy training* by **Hana Craig.** Craig's first talk covered the development of a CALL course in a private university with students averaging 295 on the TOEIC test. Through teaching the course, it quickly became apparent that although students were studying alone in a computer room there was very little learner autonomy as students made no choices, had no personal goals, and were not raising their self-awareness. Basing her approach on Rebecca Oxford's *Strategies Inventory for Language Learning* (SILL) and adapting Maslow's hierarchy of needs to her classroom, she aimed for scaffold autonomy, with special emphasis on motivating students with content relevant to their worlds, and providing files and notebooks so that they could keep quality records of their work. The second presentation began with a taxonomy of vocabulary-learning strategies but recommended that students not be overloaded with strategies. Craig suggested that students choose words that are interesting, relevant or in the top-1000 word list. She recommended using flash cards and vocabulary notebooks, but suggested that vocabulary learning is more effective if classes are connected so that new vocabulary can be recycled.

Reported by Mark Brierley

TOKYO: November—*Interpreting meaning in popular culture media products: Censorship and readers* by **John E. Ingulsrud** and **Kate Allen.** Authors of the book *Reading Japan cool: Patterns of manga literacy and discourse*, Ingulsrud and Allen were prompted by the question, "How does our students' manga literacy relate to other literacies?" Using a brilliant slideshow with striking images, the presenters explained how certain harmful content such as racism and sexism led some countries to respond with censorship. Responses like this were compared to classroom responses to manga in which strict correct interpretations interfered. They noted four possible positions of interpretation for consideration, in particular selective or parodic, as this suggests that readers interpret manga in a number of ways.

Reported by Jim McKinley

TLT COLUMN
JOB INFORMATION

From Japan to the United Arab Emirates

By Ben Lehtinen

If you have qualifications and several years' teaching experience and are looking for something beyond the borders of Japan, why not try the United Arab Emirates? With the recent fallout from the economic crisis and its effect on oil prices, along with the whole eco-boom gripping the world, the Emirates are currently diversifying their economy beyond petroleum. Though finance and marketing are still shaky, foreign IT companies as well as universities are opening their doors with satellite campuses or partnerships with local universities throughout the seven Emirates.

Working for a university in the UAE has ups and downs as anyone who has worked in the region can testify. A high ranging and tax-free salary package with benefits such as paid housing, paid tuition for children, relocation and furniture allowances, and insurance makes the area quite attractive. Some will say the salary package is so attractive it more than makes up for the poor level of unmotivated students, but every context requires certain adjustments to perceptions and practices in teaching.

If this piques your interest, the most reliable way to land a job in the UAE is through networking. Name-dropping in some way, shape or form on a CV or during an interview demonstrates a genuine interest in relocating there. For example, during the interview (phone or teleconference), one can explain how this contact has been a source of information and a motivating factor for seeking out such a new and exciting teaching experience. Interviewers may not even know the contact personally but only their place of employment and supervisor. Therefore, social networking in its many forms proves yet again to be an invaluable tool.

Another option is to head to the TESOL Arabia Conference held annually each March <tesolarabia.org/conference/>. Bring 25 copies of your best generic resume with a photo, register for the job fair, and then watch for posted positions. When you find one you're interested in, scribble your number on a resume along with the position code/university and check frequently for callbacks for interview scheduling. Then during the interview bring up your experience in professional development, your strategies for dealing with unmotivated students, your reading and writing teaching credentials, your knowledge of CALL/technology mediated learning, and any previous research presentations and publications.

One can also search the list of universities in the UAE at: <www.4icu.org/ae/universities-

…with James McCrostie
<job-info@jalt-publications.org>

To list a position in *The Language Teacher*, please submit online at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/jobs> or email James McCrostie, Job Information Center Editor, <job-info@jalt-publications.org>. Online submission is preferred. Please place your ad in the body of the email. The notice should be received before the 15th of the month, 2 months before publication, and should contain the following information: location, name of institution, title of position, whether full- or part-time, qualifications, duties, salary and benefits, application materials, deadline, and contact information. Be sure to refer to *TLT*'s policy on discrimination. Any job advertisement that discriminates on the basis of gender, race, age, or nationality must be modified or will not be included in the JIC column. All advertisements may be edited for length or content.

Job Information Center Online
Recent job listings and links to other job-related websites can be viewed at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/jobs>

united-arab-emirates.htm>. The Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) have campuses all over the Emirates, as do Zayed University, Abu Dhabi University, and Khalifa University. Some of the university websites have yearlong calls for applications while others are looking for applicants for the fall or winter semester only.

Be sure to have a good look at the process of securing a residence visa and the various documents needed to get attested, authenticated or apostilled with your embassy and/or department of foreign affairs, <www.abudhabiwoman. com/index.php? showtopic=9658>.

Taking a new job is always a step from the known to the unknown, but this experience is the growing part of life. It's not always easy and there may be hurdles or tears along the way, but to try is to grow and to grow is to learn and that is why we became teachers in the first place.

Job openings

The Job Information Center lists only brief summaries of open positions in *TLT*. Full details of each position are available on the JALT website. Please visit <www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/jobs/> to view the most up-to-date list of job postings.

Location: Niigata, Minami Uonuma City
School: The International University of Japan
Position: Temporary English language instructors for summer intensive English program
Start Date: 7 July 2010 (tentative)
Deadline: Ongoing

Overheard at JALT2009 in Shizuoka . . .

"I'm from Osaka. We always try to talk the price down."

TLT COLUMN CONFERENCE CALENDAR

Upcoming Conferences

28-30 JAN 10—**30th Thailand TESOL International Conference:** *ELT in the Next Decade: Sharing, Caring, and Daring*, Bangkok. **Contact**: <thaitesol.org>

19 FEB 10—**Fourth International Wireless Ready Symposium:** *Digital Asia—Language, Technology, and Community*, Nagoya U. of Commerce and Business. Keynote speakers will be Hayo Reinders and Insung Jung. **Contact**: <wirelessready. nucba.ac.jp>

27-28 FEB 10—**Sixth CamTESOL Conference on English Language Teaching:** *One World—World Englishes*, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Plenary speakers will be Andy Kirkpatrick

(Hong Kong Inst. of Ed.) and Joan Kang Shin (U. of Maryland). **Contact**: <camtesol. org/2010conference/2010_Conference. html>

12-13 MAR 10—**International Conference and Workshop on TEFL and Applied Linguistics**, Taoyuan, Taiwan. **Contact**: <ae.mcu.edu.tw/modules/tinyd2>

12-14 MAR 10—**TESOL Spain 33rd Annual Convention:** *Building Bridges: New Competences in the EFL Classroom*, U. de Lleida. **Contact**: <tesol-spain.org/convention2010>

24-27 MAR 10—**44th Annual TESOL Convention and Exhibit**, Boston. **Contact**: <tesol. org/s_tesol/ convention2010>

. . .with David Stephan

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

New listings are welcome. Please email information (including a website address) to the column editor as early as possible, preferably by the 15th of the month, at least 3 months before a conference in Japan, or 4 months before an overseas conference. Thus, 15 January is the deadline for an April 2010 conference in Japan or a May 2010 conference overseas. Feedback or suggestions on the usefulness of this column are also most welcome.

7-11 APR 10—IATEFL Annual Conference and Exhibition, Harrogate, UK. Plenary speakers will be Tessa Woodward, Kieran Egan, Ema Ushioda, and Jan Blake. **Contact**: <iatefl.org/harrogate-2010/44th-annual-conference-harrogate-2010>

8-11 APR 10—2010 Global Language Convention: *Many Cultures, One Community: Language Knowing and Power*, Melbourne. Keynote speakers include: Suzanne Romaine (Oxford, UK), Ato Quayson (U. of Toronto), Nicholas Tate (Int'l School of Geneva), Jo Lo Bianco (U. of Melbourne), Alastair Pennycook (U. of Tech., Sydney) and John Bradley (Monash U.). **Contact**: <wesleycollege.net/convention.cfm>

5-7 MAY 10—Third International ELT Conference: *Telling Tales Out Of School*, Famagusta, North Cyprus. Plenary speakers will be Leo van Lier, Tom Cobb, and Angi Malderez. **Contact**: <elt-emu.org/index.html>

20-22 MAY 10—Symposium of Second Language Writing 2010: *Crossing Disciplinary Boundaries*, U. of Murcia, Spain. **Contact**: <sslw.asu.edu/2010>

25-29 MAY 10—uCALL '10, Aegina, Greece. 25 participants will be chosen for this unique conference centering on the problems of adult language learners. An anthology will be published soon after the Symposium. **Contact**: <sites.google.com/site/ucallsymposium>

26-28 MAY 10—Center for English Language Communication Symposium 2010, Singapore. Keynote speakers will include: Rod Ellis (U. of Auckland), John Flowerdew (U. of Leeds), Angel

Lin (City U. of Hong Kong), and Tim McNamara (U. of Melbourne). **Contact**: <nus.edu.sg/celc/symposium>

7-10 JUL 10—Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA) International TESOL Conference, Gold Coast, Queensland. **Contact**: <astmanagement.com.au/ acta10/Default.htm>

12-14 JUL 10—English Teachers' Association of Israel 2010 International Conference, Jerusalem, Israel. **Contact**: <etni.org/etai>

1-4 OCT 10—TESOLANZ: *Context and Communication: Mediating Language Learning*, Ving's HS, Dunedin, New Zealand. Keynote speakers will be: Rosemary Erlam, Pauline Gibbons, David Nunan, and Merrill Swain. **Contact**: <clesol.org.nz/2010/home.html>

17-18 OCT 10—PAC 2010 and 18th KOTESOL International Conference: *Advancing ELT in the Global Context*, Sookmyung Women's U., Korea. **Contact**: <kotesol.org>

27-28 NOV 10—2010 International Conference on Applied Linguistics (ICAL): *Diverse Languages for Diverse Audiences*, National Chiayi U., Taiwan. **Contact**: <sites.google.com/site/ical2010/Home>

Calls for Papers or Posters

DEADLINE: 15 JAN 10 (FOR 16-19 JUL 10)—18th International Conference on Pragmatics and Language Learning, Kobe U. Proposals for papers (20 min. presentation, 10 min. discussion) are welcome on topics such as L2 talk and text, developmental

DEADLINE: 23 APR 10 (FOR 19-22 NOV 10)—JALT2010: 36th Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Exposition: *Creativity: Think Outside the Box*, Nagoya, Japan. **Contact**: <jalt.org/conference>

L2 pragmatics, pragmatics in language education, assessment, computer-mediated communication, and theory and methodology in pragmatics. **Contact**: <pragsig.org/pll/>

DEADLINE: 1 FEB 10 (FOR 29 MAY 10)—Second Annual North East Asian Region (NEAR) Language Education Conference: *Learning and Teaching Languages in the North-East Asian Regional Context—Sharing and Applying*, U. of Niigata. **Contact:** <iuj.ac.jp/language/conference/ near/>

DEADLINE: 1 FEB 10 (FOR 28-30 JUN 10)— Eighth Far Eastern English Language Teachers' Association conference: *From Broadcasting to Narrowcasting: Global Englishes, Local Contexts,* Far Eastern State U. of Humanities, Khabarovsk, Russia. **Contact**: <feelta.wl.dvgu.ru>

DEADLINE: 15 FEB 10 (FOR 1-4 SEP 10)—20th Annual Conference of the European Second Language Association, U. of Modena, Reggio Emilia, Italy. **Contact**: <eurosla.org/eurosla-20home.html>

DEADLINE: 28 FEB 10 (FOR 23-28 AUG 11)— 16th World Congress of Applied Linguistics (AILA2011) *Harmony in Diversity: Language, Culture, Society*, Beijing. **Contact**: <aila2011.org/en/newsdetails.asp?icntno=92662>

DEADLINE: 1 MAR 10 (FOR 6-8 AUG 10)— Eighth Asia TEFL International Conference: *Teaching English as a Global Language: Creating and Sharing the Asian Framework of Practice*, Hanoi. **Contact**: <asiatefl.org/2010conference/conference2.html>

DEADLINE: 31 JUL 10 (FOR 04 DEC 10)—Applied Linguistics Association of Korea (ALAK) 2010 Conference, Seoul. Keynote speakers include: Tim Murphey (Kanda U. of International Studies) and John Fanselow (Columbia U.) **Contact**: <alak.or.kr/conference/conference_total.html#2010alak>

TLT COLUMN
OLD GRAMMARIANS

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

Works of art that need work

Some of you may question the role in this venerable journal for a humor column. Some of you don't need to rely on *TLT* to provide you with regular infusions of wit on the subjects of Japan, language, or the author's current mental state, and are perfectly capable of keeping yourselves entertained by going to the refrigerator two or three times a week and playing with your squeezable mayonnaise bottle.

I can accept that. I would be the first to admit (after several on-record denials) that humor, as with all art, is at the mercy of innumerable cultural, generational, and individual tastes. Allow me to illustrate this point in my typical overkill fashion by presenting you with some classic examples of works of art and culture that to their authors seemed important at the time but, in retrospect, sucked.

Classical music—*Symphony No. 2 (The Balkans)* by Ernesto Zhwing

In the first movement the horn section rise up against the strings and begin emptying their spit valves on them until the strings are forced to run for the wings. Between movements some offstage negotiations result in the strings agreeing to continue performing on the condition that they are allowed their own conductor. By the middle of the fourth movement there are five conductors and a dozen United Nations

observers interspersed among the orchestra, and everyone is playing on a different page. In the finale the composer is accused of war crimes.

Ballet—*Swamp Lake* by Nikolai Povorovovitch Smirky

Act I opens on an enchanted lake, with a dozen swans dancing seductively around it. A hunter appears among the trees, and most of the swans run for cover, but one remains, lovestruck by the hunter's rugged features and his skill with a duck call. He lacks the will to shoot her and so returns home. She secretly follows him to his chateau. There she is discovered, but surprisingly she is welcomed with open arms and invited to dinner. She dances for the hunter's family and the chef promises her a personal grand tour of the estate— starting with the kitchen— but the hunter interrupts with the announcement that he is in love with the swan and intends to marry her. Accordingly he breaks off his engagement to the razorback hog, who leaves the stage in tears. His parents are concerned. The entire corps ring the stage and prepare for a grand *pas d'action*, but nobody wants to go first and so nothing happens. The curtain falls.

In Act II the betrothed swan prepares to return to her enchanted lake for a time, but the hunter promises to visit soon and finalize their wedding plans. They perform a graceful *pas de deux* and tearfully say goodbye. One week later the hunter and his family are all dead from bird flu.

Kabuki—*Tsumekiri (Nail Clippers)* by Kusai Konro

The young hero, Bouzouki, in a long, expressive dance and monologue that takes him to the end of the *hanamichi* catwalk and back three times, laments to his parents that he has had chronic acne for years and they never helped him do anything about it. Father, in a suspiciously effeminate voice, apologizes for never having

had one of "those talks" with his son, but points out that his job putting marbles in Lamune soft drink bottles has been particularly stressful lately, the economy being as it is. Bouzouki turns to the crowd and strikes a frozen "Feel my pain!" pose for several minutes, while members of the audience shout out the toll-free number for Proactiv Solutions skin treatment. Mother suggests Bouzouki go to school tomorrow without rice powder on his face, and the family gather round the *kotatsu* to enjoy their chicken potpies.

Literature—*Bleep* by Karl Potemkin

Purported to be the first "tweeted" novel in history, the semiautobiographical story of *Bleep* has developed over a series of text messages since late 2007. Few readers have read the first 28,642 chapters, but the author asserts that reading the story from the beginning is not necessary, since the plot is essentially stream-of-consciousness with little or no dramatic continuity. Currently the hero, Karl, is in a manga café cleaning up some iced tea he spilled on his shirt.

Painting/Sculpture—*Ingrown Neck* by Aristotle "Doug" Wainrupt

This is a collage work composed of divots collected from public golf courses in the American state of Delaware. They are tagged, numbered, garnished with croutons, and arranged to resemble a portrait of Paul Kruger, leader of the Boer resistance against the British in South Africa. The powerful symbolism in the work is lost on most of its commentators, including this one.

Overheard at JALT2009 in Shizuoka . . .

"Men don't remember their own phone numbers because they never expect anyone to call them."

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
- over 3,000 members in Japan and overseas
  -国内外で約 3,000名の会員がいます

Annual international conference 年次国際大会

- 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

JALT publications include:

- *The Language Teacher*—our monthly publication - を毎月発行します
- *JALT Journal*—biannual research journal - を年2回発行します
- Annual Conference Proceedings
  - 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

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

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

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

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]:

- IATEFL—International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
- JACET—the Japan Association of College English Teachers
- PAC—the Pan Asian Conference consortium
- TESOL—Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

Membership Categories 会員と会費

All members receive annual subscriptions to *The Language Teacher* and *JALT Journal*, and member discounts for meetings and conferences. 会員は*The Language Teacher*や*JALT Journal*等の出版物を購読出来、又例会や大会にも割引価格で参加出来ます。

- Regular 一般会員: ¥10,000
- Student rate (undergraduate/graduate in Japan) 学生会員（日本にある大学、大学院の学生）: ¥6,000
- 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）: ¥17,000
- Group (5 or more) ¥6,500/person—one set of publications for each five members 団体会員（５名以上を対象とし、JALT出版物は5名につき１部）:1名6,500円

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

JALT Central Office

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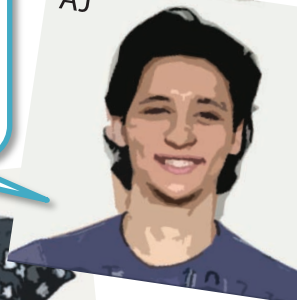t: 03-3837-1630; f: 03-3837-1631; <jco@jalt.org>

Use 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 signup page located at <https://jalt.org/joining>
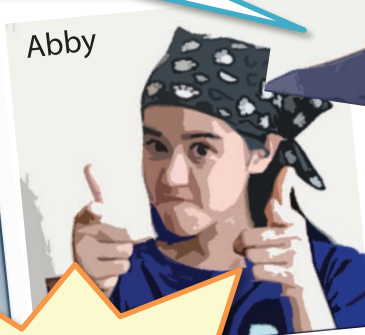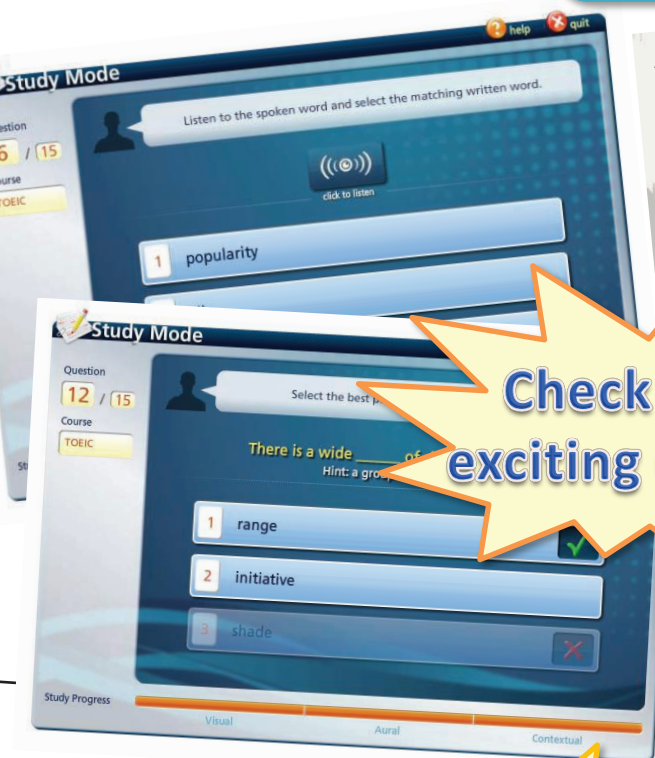
TLT RESOURCES MY SHARE

Appendix 1

Class handout

How do you feel about people who…	*Annoyance ranking (1~12)*	*How do your classmates feel? (A~G)*	*The UK's 3 most anti-social activities (%)*
don't return things that you have lent them.			
tap their foot nervously.			
stand on the right-hand side of the escalator when you are in a hurry to go up.			
spit in public.			
drop litter.			
smoke on the next table when you're eating in a restaurant.			
cough or sneeze without covering their mouths.			
chew their food noisily.			
put on make-up in a public space, for example on a train.			
sit with their legs open so they take up two seats on a train or bus.			
drive really noisy, souped-up cars or motorbikes.			
don't pick up their pet dog's mess.			

A   It doesn't really bother me.   B   I find it slightly annoying.
C   It makes me feel quite annoyed.   D   I get really annoyed by that.
E   It drives me crazy.   F   It makes me furious.
G   There's nothing I hate more than people who do that.

Gatten Ranking

After each person has spoken, the rest of the class responds by banging their fist on the table (but not too loudly!).

I don't feel that way.

I understand how you feel, but it doesn't bother me.

I know what you're saying and I feel the same way.

I couldn't agree more. If anything, I feel even more strongly about it than you do.

Note: *Gatten* (as well as meaning something like "to make sense") is the name of a long running NHK television show in which panelists hit a buzzer to noisily declare they have understood a particular point. Students enjoy this reference to Japanese popular culture.

Appendix 2

The results so far: "dog's mess" is winning: 48% of you think it's the number one antisocial activity in Britain; 30% of you think it's littering; and 22% of you think it's spitting in public. (*Victoria Derbyshire's News Phone-in*, BBC Radio 5 live, August 11, 2005)

Note: The fast speed at which the presenter announces the results made comprehension challenging for most of my students. Teachers recording their own version should compensate for its brevity by using connected speech and other features of natural spoken English.

MY SHARE

TLT RESOURCES

Creating student dialog animations – Sylvan Payne: Appendix

Today we'll be creating dialogue animations using a website called **xtranormal.com Test-to-Movie.**

Your computer is logged onto the website now, but <u>do not do anything</u> until you have watched the short demonstration.

Now follow these steps:

1. Use the dialogue you wrote in the last class. Type the dialogue into the **Write the Script** panel (1). Be very careful with spelling, grammar and punctuation. Even the smallest error will be obvious in your final product. If you need a pause between phrases, drag in a pause icon from the **Direct the Action** panel (2).

2. After your dialogue is typed in, test it by clicking the **Action** button (4). It takes a few moments. Make any necessary changes and test again.

3. After you are satisfied that your dialogue is perfect, you may choose characters, voices and background sets from the **Design the Scene** panel (3).

4. Next, drag in camera angles, gestures, facial expressions and sound effects from the **Direct the Action** panel (2).

5. Test any changes in your movie by clicking the **Action** button (4).

6. When your movie is how you like it, raise your hand. Please <u>do not</u> click the **It's a Wrap** button.