

The Language Teacher

ISSN 0289-7938

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March, 2006 • Volume 30, Number 3

The Japan Association for Language Teaching

全国語学教育学会



JALT2006 Conference News

» Don't just fill your schedule up with presentations . . .

Are you an early riser? Join the Fun Run and get an early morning tour of Kokura as it wakes up for another business day, Kyushu style. Jog past, through, and over many of the centrally-located historical and cultural sites. Wake up with a rush and get your adrenaline flowing for an action-packed conference day. Meet some of the other participants and make your conference experience more memorable. Not feeling quite that perky? Then join one of our afternoon guided walks through Central Kokura. There's lots to see, such as Kokura Castle, Tanga Market, and our new waterfront development. Stop for a cup of coffee beside Murasaki River, or haggle over the price of *fugu* in the market. A very pleasant way to end your day!

» Late riser? No need to fret . . .

The hundreds of sessions over the weekend accommodate any and all time-challenged people. There are plenty of opportunities to meet up with old friends, and to make new ones. The Food Court area offers ample indoor seating, or enjoy the traditionally good November weather outdoors.

» And at night . . .

Just because the sessions have ended for the day doesn't mean that the conference has closed down. The evening social events in the center are a good start to an entertainment filled night. Whether you are looking for a quiet time to unwind, or something a bit more lively, Kokura has plenty of it. And only a 5-10 minute walk from the conference center, probably less from your hotel room.

» Presentation proposal deadlines . . .

Considering presenting at this year's conference? The deadline for submissions is April 28th, 2006. This later date was chosen to give potential presenters more time to prepare projects they wish to present on in November. The Call for Presentations was included with last December's *TLT*, or can be found on the conference website below.

» All you will ever need to know . . .

There are two major sources of information on JALT2006. The most immediate and constantly updated is the conference website <conferences.jalt.org/2006/>. The July issue of *The Language Teacher* will also contain a pre-conference supplement with full information on workshops, speakers, transportation, accommodation, and registration. The same issue will also carry articles written by the Plenary and Featured Speakers.

» Calling all volunteers . . .

Organising an annual conference that hosts up to 2,000 people and includes around 500 different presentations and events is a huge undertaking. Amazingly, JALT accomplishes this with almost all volunteer help! If you have an interest in conference organisation, why not volunteer some of your time? We can find you a position that suits your interest, time, and commitment. For more information, please contact Andrew Zitzmann, National Director of Programs <programs@jalt.org>.



Community, Identity, Motivation

JALT2006

in Kitakyushu, Japan

November 2~5, 2006

<conferences.jalt.org/2006/>

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In this month's issue . . .

LOOKING BACK over last year's issues of *The Language Teacher* it is hard to believe that one-year has passed since writing my first foreword for the journal. During that time, I have had the privilege of reading a variety of informative and interesting articles, enabling me to gain a greater insight into the field of language teaching. This month promises no less with the inclusion of a wide range of material of interest to our readers. I hope you also enjoy this month's line-up.

The feature article by **Veronika Makarova** examines the effect of poetry practice on English pronunciation acquisition by Japanese EFL learners. Her paper describes a study conducted with university students engaged in a poetry reading program and the benefits it offers language learners. Makarova also provides some practical suggestions for utilizing poetry in EFL classes.

In Reader's Forum, **David Barker** discusses the importance of observing our peers in a classroom situation. He points out that many of us have little opportunity to see what goes on in other language classrooms as we focus on our own teaching. Barker describes how one university has established a program for teachers to observe and provide feedback for one another.

This month My Share presents four teaching ideas, the first of which comes from **Adam Murray**. Adam has designed a world weather classroom activity that utilizes the Internet and an online dictionary. **Eleanor Kane** makes some useful suggestions for how teachers can effectively select graded readers and determine the reading level of students in a class. **Laura Bean** proposes a lesson where students work with a partner and are encouraged to reveal their strengths and weaknesses as an individual. Students then write up recommendations or strategies for their partners to address their shortcomings. **Byron O'Neill** explains an exercise where students work in pairs or small groups to write questions related to a particular topic. The students then identify any mistakes and make the necessary corrections.

Finally, a reminder to all that the deadline for submissions for this year's conference in Kitakyushu is April 28, so if you are thinking of making a presentation please get that submission in! All the information you need is at <jalt.org>

Jacqui Norris-Holt
TLT Co-Editor

			<p>TLT Co-Editors: Kim Bradford-Watts & Jacqui Norris-Holt</p> <p>Associate Editor: Ted O'Neill</p>
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JALT Research Grants

The application period for JALT Research Grants 2006 is April 1st to May 31st. More information at: <jalt.org/researchgrants/>

本誌の序文を書き始めてから早一年が経ちました。その間、有益で興味深い記事を読む機会を幸いにも得ることができ、言語教育の理解を深めることができました。今月号の内容も、きっと読者を満足させるものだと確信しております。

今月号の論文はVeronika Makarova氏によるもので、詩の朗読がどのように日本人英語学習者の発音習得に影響を及ぼすのかを検証し、その上で授業における詩の活用方法を提案しています。読者フォーラムでは、David Barker氏が同僚の授業を観察する重要性について議論し、教師がお互いの授業を観察しフィードバックを提供し合うある大学のプログラムを紹介しています。さらにマイシエアではAdam Murray, Laura Bean, Eleanor Kane, Byron O'Neillの四氏が、教室で役立つアイデアを寄せています。

最後になりましたが、北九州市での今年のJALT全国大会で発表を希望する人は、4月28日までに申し込みをして下さいますようお願いいたします。

日本語論文の募集

T L Tは日本語で書かれた論文も歓迎します。ふるってご投稿下さい。

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The effect of poetry practice on English pronunciation acquisition by Japanese EFL learners

Keywords

pronunciation, poetry, rhythm, ELT, applied linguistic study

This paper reports a study of the effect of poetry listening/reading practice on the English pronunciation of Japanese learners. Literature related to the use of poetry in EFL classes is surveyed, the experimental design described, and the results of the effect of the poetry reading/listening sessions are reported. The paper concludes with some practical suggestions for the application of poetry in EFL classes.

本稿では詩を読んだり聞いたりすることがどのように日本人学習者の英語の発音に影響を与えるかという問題を扱う。まずEFLにおける詩の使用に関する先行研究を調査し、次に実験方法を述べ、その結果を報告する。最後にEFLにおける詩の導入方法を提案する。

Veronika Makarova
University of Saskatchewan

Poetry in English pronunciation teaching

The use of English poetry (this term is used in the paper to refer to any poetry written in English, irrespective of the country of origin, nationality, or native language of the poets) is often recommended as one of the ways to improve the pronunciation performance of learners of English as a foreign language (e.g., Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 1996; Pennington, 1996). Unfortunately, the limits of a short paper do not allow one to review and compare the principles of poetry in English and Japanese; therefore, only literature on the use of poetry in pronunciation teaching is discussed here. For readers interested in poetic feet and meter, rhyme, sound symbolism, topics, etc., sources are offered in Appendix C.

Poetry genres

"Depending on preference, anything from Shakespeare to Dr. Seuss, from Longfellow to limericks can be used to good advantage" in pronunciation teaching (Kelly, 2000, p. 22). The poetic genres frequently mentioned in EFL sources in connection with pronunciation teaching include limericks, nursery rhymes, skipping rhymes, jazz chants, classical poetry, and humorous poetry (Graham, 1978; Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; Kenworthy, 2000). As far as modern English poetry is concerned, either it is not mentioned at all, or only *selected* readings are considered appropriate for a foreign language classroom (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996, p. 304-306). The impact of different poetic genres on learners' L2 performance requires further investigation. This study includes classical poetry, limericks, and modern humorous poetry samples (see Appendix A).

Techniques

There is no unified view on the best procedures for the use of poetry in English pronunciation teaching. Various techniques have been suggested, such as listening to a model, reading (aloud, with increased speed, with a metronome), and shadowing (Dalton & Seidlhoffer, 1994, p. 106-108; Celce-Murcia et al., 1996, p. 303). Listening and reading techniques can be combined in different ways. For example, learners may be requested to listen to a model, then to read a poem, record their own reading, listen to it, and compare it with the model (Kim, 2000). Some less traditional applications include rapping and tapping (Dalton & Seidlhoffer, 1994, p. 104-106; Celce-Murcia et al., 1996, p. 298). Poetry readings can also be introduced in interaction with music, songs, and chants. Thus, learners may be offered the chance to read a song's lyrics as a poem, to sing or chant a poem, etc. (Kim, 2000). Some creative involvement of students has also been suggested, whereby learners write their own poetry in English (Holmes & Moulton, 2001) or the teacher writes poetic remakes of students' texts for further pronunciation practice (Makarova, 2001). Some extravagant applications of poetry have also been offered, such as the simultaneous reading of Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky* in English, German, and French (Dalton & Seidlhoffer, 1994, p. 158-161).

The commonly followed technique of *listen to the model and repeat aloud* performed as an after-school task on a daily basis was selected for the reported study.

The proclaimed benefits of poetry reading

It has been claimed that the effect of poetry "may have something to do with the inherent memorability of verse, especially when allied to a strong, rhythmical beat," associated with "the beat of our mother's heart, a beat echoed in the comforting movement used to lull us to sleep as babies" (Vaughan-Rees, 1995, p. 47). Much more attention has been respectively given to the benefits of poetry for practicing English rhythm or beat (Dalton & Seidlhoffer, 1994, p. 106; Kim, 2000) than to any other aspect of the sound system. Certainly, rhythm is such an important element of the English sound system that it has been called the *key* to fluent English (Adams, 1979); moreover, recordings of poetry have been often used to analyze English rhythm (e.g., Kenworthy, 2000, p. 50-69). However, the use of poetry for rhythm practice is based exclusively on the belief in the stress-timing nature of English (e.g., Kenworthy, 2000, p.

54), which has been repeatedly questioned in applied linguistic and linguistic (phonetic) studies (Lehiste, 1973, 1977; Yamauchi, 2000). In fact, the theory of stress timing (or isochrony) in English, according to which the stretches of speech from one stressed syllable to another are of approximately equal duration "has never been experimentally verified" (Cruttenden, 1997, p. 21).

Poetry reading has also been offered as a way of improving learners' stress placement, intonation performance (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996, p. 154-156, 1999), vowel reduction, linking, contractions, consonant clusters (Kyung Suk, 2000), sound quality, vowel contrasts (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996, p. 127-128), sound awareness, and awareness of phonemic differences between languages (Makarova, 1999, 2000).

The benefits of poetry outlined above have never been explained in any rational way, except for one suggestion which links the effect of poetry on rhythm performance with basic body rhythms (Murphey, 1992, p. 3).

The rationale for the study

As shown above, there are many claims to the benefit of poetry readings in class, but surprisingly little objective evidence to prove that poetry actually does have a positive effect on the learners' pronunciation. Even the literature describing the use of poetry may be skeptical in regard to its potential effects on the foreign language learner. While describing reading of poetry with metronomes, Dalton and Seidlhoffer (1994) remark as follows:

While this may be a good method to improve speech rate and articulatory dexterity, it is hardly fair to expect non-native speakers to do something that natives can only achieve with considerable effort. Rapping, for instance, is a display of articulatory dexterity that not every native speaker can manage. (p. 104)

Some studies of learners' attitudes to poetry show that learners may give low evaluations to poetry readings. For example, Korean elementary-to-junior high school students ranked a combination of songs and poems as the 4th (out of 5) activity in decreasing order of preference (Kim, 2000).

The study described below was undertaken to obtain some experimental evidence of the effects of listening to and reading poetry on the pronunciation of Japanese learners of English.

Subjects

Twelve Japanese university students, 2 male and 10 female, aged 19-21 volunteered to take part in the study. All students were English majors enrolled in 2nd-year English conversation classes in a medium-size private university in the Kanto area.

Procedures and texts

First, a model recording of 14 poems was made (see Appendix A). The poems read by two native speakers of American English, one male and one female, were recorded on a portable DAT-recorder Sony TCD-D8. The students therefore had a chance to focus on the model of their own gender, while being exposed to the pronunciation of the other gender as well. Consideration of gender-specific aspects of speech is an essential part of any pronunciation teaching (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996, p. 320), since many aspects of pronunciation are gender-sensitive, such as vowel formant values, degree of reduction, intonation patterns, etc. (Brend, 1975; Byrd, 1994; Coleman, 1971). This recording was copied on audiotapes, and the transcripts of the recorded poetry texts were prepared for the poetry practice home task.

Second, a recording of volunteers was conducted (with the same equipment as above) to create samples of their pronunciation before the home task (see Appendix B for the recorded texts). Students were given about 10-15 minutes to practice reading the texts on the handout, and then their reading was recorded.

Next, the poetry practice home task was given out, whereby the students received the earlier described model recording and its printout as well as a questionnaire about their attitudes to the home task (completed at the end of the 2-week period). The students were instructed to practice listening and reading two poems a day, for at least 1 hour a day, for 2 weeks.

Finally, upon completion of the task, the second recording of the student volunteers was made (see Appendix B). The same procedure as in the previous recording of volunteers was employed. The texts were different from the ones used in the first recording sessions (although similar in type) to prevent the exposure effect—reading of the same texts twice would likely yield higher fluency and higher evaluation scores unrelated to actual improvement in pronunciation.

The selection of texts for the practice home task and recording sessions was determined by the following considerations: The selected poems

represented some genres commonly suggested for pronunciation teaching (see *poetry genres* section), they had relatively easy vocabulary and syntax, and were mostly well-known. The prosaic extracts were selected for their poetic quality.

Evaluation methods

The pronunciation performance of students before and after the poetry practice home task was evaluated in two ways. Firstly, students completed self-evaluations by filling in a questionnaire asking them whether they believed any improvement of various aspects of their reading and pronunciation had been achieved (see Appendix D). A 5-point Likert scale was utilized and students were given space to express any additional comments they had regarding the activity. They also evaluated how much they liked working with each individual poem on the same scale. The questionnaire was conducted in English and students were given the option of writing additional comments in English or Japanese. All students wrote additional comments in English.

Another evaluation tool used in the study was an expert estimation of the students' pronunciation in recordings 1 and 2. Three pronunciation teaching experts (one native, two non-native, all university professors with postgraduate training and teaching experience in phonetics and/or pronunciation) evaluated the pronunciation of all the participants in randomly presented 2-minute prose extracts from recordings 1 and 2, based on a 10-point Likert scale. The evaluation was conducted with the following seven parameters: speech fluency, speech clarity, native-like pronunciation, sound quality, stress and rhythm, intonation, and overall pronunciation performance. The tape presented to the experts was about 56 minutes in duration (2 minutes × 12 participants × 2 recording sessions = 48, plus 10-second intervals between the recorded speakers). The presentation of extracts rather than the full records was necessary for two reasons: firstly, to conceal the fact that the texts came from two different recording sessions, and, secondly, to decrease the tedious evaluation time. This paper reports the results of self- and expert evaluations of the subjects' pronunciation performance.

Results

Expert evaluation

The expert evaluations of the learners' pronunciation performance prior to and after the poetry listening/reading home practice task were recorded

on Excel. The average of seven evaluation parameters was obtained for every subject's two recording samples (pooled by the three experts). The average score received by all 12 subjects in recording 1 (conducted before the poetry practice task) for their pronunciation performance was 2.7, with the three experts' scores pooled together ($SD=0.13$), whereas the average score in recording 2 was 3.5 ($SD=0.18$). A t-test was taken to compare expert evaluations of the learners' pronunciation in the first and second recordings. The test shows that the difference in expert evaluations is significant at $p<0.05$.

Student evaluation

Results of student self-evaluations of the effects of the poetry practice task are given below in Table 1 (see Appendix D, Question 4).

Table 1. Student self-evaluation of the effects of poetry listening/reading practice

Poetry reading evaluation	Average score
I liked reading poetry	3.1
It was useful for my English	3.9
It had a positive effect on my pronunciation	4.4
It improved my reading	3.5
It improved my rhythm	3.3
It improved my sounds	3.3
It improved my intonation	3.3

Students' comments

Students expressed their satisfaction in the following comments: *It was my first experience with poetry; I can now understand the feelings in the poems; the poems are very beautiful; I enjoyed listening to the poems, and would like to listen many more times; and I couldn't practice much, but I'll keep these sheets (poems), and practice more and more.*

On the other hand, in fewer comments, students expressed some concerns about the activity: *I have learned the rhythm to read poems. However, I can't use it when I read ordinary sentences except poems; and some poems were too difficult for me.* Although all the students confirmed that they complied with the requirement of spending about an hour a day on the task, two comments (cited above), *I couldn't practice much...*, and *I would*

like to listen many more times, might also suggest that some of them may need to spend more time on the task. These two comments may also be interpreted as a cultural understatement, or as a simple wish to continue with the activity beyond the 2-week limit.

Since the study was limited to a small number of participants and expert evaluators, only preliminary recommendations can be made at this stage.

Student evaluations of the poems

The evaluation of individual poems by students shows that they preferred the poems with humorous or romantic content, easy lexis, and a dynamic rhythmic beat (given in descending order of preference with the average score on the 5-point scale given in brackets): *Love's philosophy* (4.8), *The owl and the pussy-cat* (4.7), song *My bonnie bell* (4.3), and *The smile* (4.0). The students did not favor the poems with philosophical content, e.g., *Brahma* (2.5), *I am* (2.1), difficult lexis, e.g., *Symphony in yellow* (3.0), or with a changing rhythm that was difficult to follow, e.g., *Beer* (2.7).

Factors to be considered before poetry applications in class

First, it is important to consider the role of poetry in the native culture as well as the language and culture-specific structure of poetry. For example, unlike stress-timed English, the Japanese language is mora-timed, and Japanese poetry is based not on rhymes and meter formed by alterations of stressed and unstressed syllables, but on successions of fixed numbers of syllables in a line, usually five and seven (Yamauchi, 2000).

Second, the teacher needs to have some idea of the place of poetry in L1 and L2 classes. In particular, relatively little reading of native poetry and practically none of English poetry is done in Japan, either in schools or universities. For most students taking part in the study, it was their first encounter with English poetry; moreover, none of them expressed any interest in Japanese poetry.

Third, the factor of students' general English proficiency level should not be disregarded. All of the subjects complained of *difficult words* and problems with understanding the texts.

Practical suggestions

Based on the study and the students' self-evaluations of their achieved progress, it is possible to

make the following practical suggestions for the application of poetry for English pronunciation practice.

1. Profound introduction to English poetry principles (feet and meter, rhyme, sound symbolism, topics) is recommended.
2. Choosing rhythmic poetry with simple vocabulary.
3. Providing comments on the use of difficult or old words and word forms (*thee*, etc.).
4. Translation of difficult words into Japanese.
5. Discussion sessions in which the students' understanding of poetry is verified, and the teacher may offer alternative explanations.
6. Enough time on task and better timing (during academic vacations).

Conclusion

The study shows that poetry listening/reading practice has, on the whole, a positive effect on the English pronunciation of Japanese university students of English and is enjoyed by learners. The selection of classical or modern poetry with simple vocabulary, clear rhythmical beat, and humorous or romantic content can ensure a more effective use of poetry for pronunciation teaching. The results of this study may have been influenced by the fact that the subjects volunteered to participate in the experiment, which means that they may be more motivated to work on their pronunciation than the average learner. Since pronunciation training is not normally a part of English teaching in Japanese universities, it may appear extremely complicated to involve non-motivated learners in research related to pronunciation training.

The results of this study are also limited to a small sample, and more research with larger student populations is necessary. However, the results do indicate that poetry reading/listening practice yields some improvement in learners' pronunciation, and that the learners positively evaluate their experience with the task. Increasing time on task may well help to make poetry reading/practice a more effective tool of EFL pronunciation acquisition.

Acknowledgements

The study was performed with the invaluable contribution of Jesse Glass, who assisted with poetry selection, recording, and data analysis. I would also like to thank three anonymous

reviewers for their thoughtful reading of the text and their suggestions.

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6. *The smile* (William Blake)
 7. *Symphony in yellow* (Oscar Wilde)
 8. *The owl and the pussy-cat* (Edward Lear)
 9. *Beer* (George Arnold)
 10. *The song of an old caterpillar* (Veronika Makarova)
 11. Limerick *Wish I were a fly on the wall* (Robert D. Cowan)
 12. Limerick *The past isn't what it used to be* (Bruce Elliott)
 13. Song *My bonnie bell* (Robert Burns)
 14. *Life* (Emily Dickinson)

Veronika Makarova has a PhD in Linguistics. She was a Post-Doctoral Fellow at Edinburgh University, UK, and has taught a variety of EFL, linguistics, language, and applied linguistics courses at universities in Russia, UK, Japan, and Canada. She has published two books, including *English language teaching: The case of Japan*, with Theodore Rodgers, and over 50 academic papers. Her major research interests include phonetics, pronunciation teaching, cross-cultural studies, and language teaching methodology.

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Appendix A

Material for poetry listening/reading practice

Recordings and texts of the following poems were offered for the 2-week practice session.

1. From *Rime of the ancient mariner* (Samuel Taylor Coleridge)
2. *Love's philosophy* (Percy Shelley)
3. *When the lamp is shattered* (Percy Shelley)
4. *I am!* (John Clare)
5. *Brahma* (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

6. *The smile* (William Blake)
7. *Symphony in yellow* (Oscar Wilde)
8. *The owl and the pussy-cat* (Edward Lear)
9. *Beer* (George Arnold)
10. *The song of an old caterpillar* (Veronika Makarova)
11. Limerick *Wish I were a fly on the wall* (Robert D. Cowan)
12. Limerick *The past isn't what it used to be* (Bruce Elliott)
13. Song *My bonnie bell* (Robert Burns)
14. *Life* (Emily Dickinson)

Appendix B

Material used for recordings

Recording 1 (conducted prior to the poetry listening/reading session):

1. *When the lamp is shattered* (P. B. Shelley)
2. Limerick *There was once a man from Peru*
3. An extract from C. S. Lewis's *The chronicles of Narnia*

Recording 2 (conducted after the poetry listening/reading session):

1. *Stanzas written in dejection near Naples* (P. B. Shelley)
2. Limerick *There was once an old man of Esser*
3. An extract from C. S. Lewis's *The chronicles of Narnia*

Appendix C

Some literature on poetic meter in English and Japanese

- <www.uncg.edu/~htkirbys/intro.html>.
- <www.english.ucla.edu/TA/hyperteach/PDFs/poetry_meter.pdf>.
- <owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_soundmeter.html>.
- Adams, S. (1997). *Poetic designs: An introduction to meters, verse forms and figures of speech*. Peterborough, UK: Broadview Press.
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Appendix D

Student questionnaire

Thank you very much for participating in the English poetry listening/reading practice task. Please, answer the following questions about the task. As you already know, your participation both in the sessions and in this questionnaire study is purely voluntary and has no connection with or effect on your university studies or grades.

- Your age: _____
- Your gender (circle): M/F
- The amount of time I spent on practicing listening/reading poetry with the tape over the 2 weeks' practice session was:
 - a few times
 - almost every day
 - every day for 1 hour
 - every day for more than 1 hour
 - other (please explain) _____
- Please evaluate from 1 (*not at all*), 2 (*very little*), 3 (*yes, on the whole*), 4 (*much*) to 5 (*very much*), what you think of the poetry readings by circling the corresponding number.

I liked reading poetry
1 2 3 4 5

It was useful for my English in general
1 2 3 4 5

I think there was a positive effect on my pronunciation
1 2 3 4 5

My reading has improved
1 2 3 4 5

My rhythm has improved
1 2 3 4 5

My sounds have improved
1 2 3 4 5

My intonation (speech melody) has improved
1 2 3 4 5
- Comments: Write freely any impressions (positive and/or negative) of this task, and your ideas about it; comment on whether you had any problems, felt some improvement, etc. Any comments would be appreciated.

- Evaluate how much you liked practicing each poem. Rank them from 1-5 (1-*not at all*, 2-*very little*, 3-*yes, on the whole*, 4-*much*, 5-*very much*). Please, circle the corresponding number. If you can, explain why you liked or disliked it.

Comments

- Rime of the ancient mariner*
1 2 3 4 5
- Love's philosophy*
1 2 3 4 5
- When the lamp is shattered*
1 2 3 4 5
- I am!*
1 2 3 4 5
- Brahma*
1 2 3 4 5
- The smile*
1 2 3 4 5
- Symphony in yellow*
1 2 3 4 5
- The owl and the pussy-cat*
1 2 3 4 5
- Beer*
1 2 3 4 5
- The song of an old caterpillar*
1 2 3 4 5
- Wish I were a fly*
1 2 3 4 5
- Past*
1 2 3 4 5
- Bonnie bell*
1 2 3 4 5
- Life*
1 2 3 4 5

Thank you very much for your participation!



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Observing language classes in Japanese universities

Keywords

classroom observation, teacher development, programme development, teacher practices and skills, observation checklist

Observations play a key role in both the training and professional development of language teachers. Pressures of time and work mean that most university teachers may never have the chance to participate in the kind of one-on-one observations that are so important for the development of classroom teaching skills. This paper describes the implementation of a programme of staff observations at one Japanese university and provides a summary of the findings in the form of a checklist of points that many teachers were found to be overlooking in their day-to-day teaching.

よい言語教師になるためには授業の観察が欠かせないにもかかわらず、日々の仕事の忙しさに追われそのような機会を持つことがあまりない。本稿は、ある大学で実施されている同僚教師の授業観察プログラムを紹介し、チェックリストの形で教師が見逃しがちな点を説明する。

David Barker

Nagoya Women's University

The need for observations of English teachers in Japanese universities

Observations play a key role in both the training and professional development of language teachers. In Japanese universities, however, an *observed lesson* usually means one where a large number of people watch a class taught as a model or demonstration, and where there is no opportunity for the teacher to get detailed feedback from individuals. Pressures of time and work mean that most university teachers (and particularly part-time staff) may never have the chance to participate in the kind of one-on-one observations that are so important for the development of classroom teaching skills. As a result, those without the benefit of teacher training learn what they know entirely through self-study and trial and error, and even those who have been taught how to teach may still fall into bad habits over the years.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the findings of a programme of observations set up at one Japanese university in the hope that it will serve as a reference point for those in similar environments who want to reevaluate the way they do things in the classroom. I will discuss the implementation of the programme and give a summary of the findings in the form of a checklist of points that many teachers were found to be overlooking in their day-to-day teaching.

How qualified are we as language teachers?

At one time, being a native speaker of English was enough to qualify you to teach it at the university level in Japan. As Staple-

ton (2004) notes, however, this is no longer the situation: "The direction of recruitment appears clear: successful candidates will be increasingly drawn from a pool of applicants holding doctoral qualifications with refereed publications" (p.16). We might suppose that increased competition in the job market and the resulting demand for higher qualifications would be reflected in a general improvement in teaching standards, but in reality doctoral qualifications and refereed publications are not necessarily a good indicator of teaching ability. ELT-specific qualifications, such as the British Cambridge RSA Certificate and Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA and DELTA), which involve intensive periods of classroom-based teaching practice and assessment, are relatively unknown in Japan and carry little weight as currency in the job market (see <www.cambridgeesol.org/teaching/> for more information on Cambridge teaching qualifications).

As a result, many Japanese universities employ as language teachers people who, whilst highly qualified as academics, are largely untrained for the job they do. Stapleton (2004) laments the fact that 40% of applicants for a position at his university did not meet the minimum qualification requirements, and wonders, "Do medical faculties receive resumes from those whose expertise is in agriculture? Does the mathematics department have to filter through resumes from Shakespearean scholars?" (p. 16). I would guess that they probably do not, but this is because medical faculties have never employed farmers, and mathematics departments have tended to stick with those who know their fractions from their decimal points. Language and culture departments, on the other hand, have a history of taking on urban planners, biochemists, optical physicists, and a host of people from other fields totally unrelated to language teaching. With this kind of track record, is it any wonder they still get resumes from such a wide range of applicants?

Furthermore, these stricter employment conditions do not apply to part-time instructors, who actually teach the majority of language classes in most university programmes. Nowadays, anyone hoping to obtain part-time employment at a university in Japan will need to have a master's degree (although not necessarily one relevant to ELT) and, in some cases, publications. This, however, is a relatively recent development, and few, if any, universities ask for practical language teaching qualifications. In reality, finding part-time work often depends as much on being well connected as being well-qualified.

But are qualifications really so important when we are talking about teachers who have been doing the job for 10 years or more? I suspect that many would say *no*, but, as a colleague of mine commented when discussing this article (Alun Davies, personal communication), "Experience is only a plus when it is based on a foundation of sound training and continued development."

In my previous profession, a legendary response to someone who claimed 20 years' experience on the job was "No, you have one year of experience, and it's 19 years old!" Teachers at Japanese universities often find themselves teaching the same limited range of classes with the same kinds of students year after year. Opportunities for development are few, and assessment of performance is generally limited to a survey of whether students like you or not.

For these reasons, experience of teaching English in Japan is not always held in the highest regard in other countries where teachers have to deal with multilingual classes, a far wider range of levels, and continual assessment and development. When I moved to New Zealand, my time in Japan actually worked against me, because the Director of Studies had a very low opinion of English teaching here in general. She also made it clear that references from Japan would be given little credibility in the application procedure. I had the same problem when I applied for work at a summer school in Britain, and I was eventually only offered the job on the basis of a reference from my trainer on the DELTA course, whom I had not even seen for 6 years. I do not believe that these were isolated incidents, as I know of other teachers who have come up against similar prejudices when applying for positions in their home countries.

Do we need to observe university teachers?

Unfortunately, the stereotype held by my previous employers does contain an element of truth. Wallace (1991) says that "Any occupation aspiring to the title of 'profession' will claim at least some of these qualities: a basis of scientific knowledge; a period of rigorous study which is formally assessed; a sense of public service; high standards of professional conduct; and the ability to perform some specified demanding and socially useful tasks in a demonstrably competent manner" (p. 5). Like it or not, there are still people employed in both full- and part-time positions in Japanese universities who would be very hard

pushed to describe themselves as professional language teachers according to these criteria. Nevertheless, the image of backpackers walking into well-paid university jobs is clearly out of date. Teachers and researchers in Japan now make a major contribution to the development of ELT theory and practice worldwide, and many of the best known professionals in our field have spent time working in universities in this country.

A strong argument can still be made, however, that teaching English at a university in Japan is generally not a particularly rich environment for the advancement of classroom teaching skills. Given the conditions we face, an ongoing critical evaluation of what we do will be vital in maintaining and improving standards, and observations are an important element in this kind of professional development. Gebhard, Gaitan, and Oprandy (1990) quote a student teacher on the benefits of observing and being observed: "I used to look only at the content of a lesson. Now I look at and am aware of how that lesson is being taught, what teachers and students are doing, and what media are being used by the teacher" (p. 19). This is precisely the perspective that teachers working unobserved for long periods in the same environment are in danger of losing. On a slightly more down-to-earth note, Ward (2004) makes the point that "within certain bounds, employers have a right to 'know what is going on' in the classroom and to effect some quality control" (p. 23). Given the increased competition in higher education brought on by falling student numbers and the ever-growing focus on accountability, I suspect that we will see more and more universities introducing teacher observations as a tool for the professional development (and evaluation) of both full- and part-time staff.

Setting up a programme of observations

The observation programme at my university was introduced in the first semester of 2004. The aim was to give part-time teachers some feedback on what they were doing well and what points they might need to work on, and to give those in charge of the programme a better idea of what was happening in our classrooms. One of the biggest problems in the first year of observations was that, although we were presenting them as a vehicle for professional development, the fact that the observers were full-time teachers meant that for part-timers there was also inevitably going to be an element of evaluation involved. To counter this, in the second year of the programme, we invited a teacher trainer from overseas to spend

a month observing all teachers in the department including full-time Japanese and non-Japanese staff. (Other teachers who are interested in this kind of project might like to note that university management was more than happy to create a budget for us to do this.)

In the first week of the programme, only full-time teachers were observed, and most were observed two or three times. This warm-up period gave part-time teachers a chance to get used to having an observer around, and it also gave them time to talk to her and get to know her on a personal basis. In some cases, the observer watched classes alone, and in others, full-time teachers sat in to learn more about what to look for and how to give constructive feedback. This was only done where the teacher of the lesson had no reservations about having an extra observer in the class. As a full-time teacher, I was also involved in the programme, and in cases where I was the main observer, the external trainer sat in to give me feedback on the way I had conducted the observation. Initially, the following precautions were taken to try to reduce the amount of stress and anxiety caused to all the teachers involved.

- A letter was sent to all part-time teachers before observations began, explaining what was going to happen and outlining our aims.
- All teachers were given at least 2 weeks' notice of their observation.
- Teachers were told that they could ask to have the observation changed to a different class.
- Observation dates were changed if the teacher felt the one we had chosen interrupted the flow of a course of lessons in some way.
- Teachers were told that they would have the right to ask for another observation with the same observer or someone else if they were not happy with the way the first one went.
- The observer met each teacher before the lesson to discuss his or her lesson plan.
- Part-time teachers were asked to reduce a 90-minute class to 60 minutes so as to allow time for feedback and discussion.

The following were also added in the 2nd year of the programme, based on feedback from the 1st.

- All part-time teachers were told that they could observe any full-time teacher's class at any time without the need to give notice.
- Teachers were encouraged to suggest specific things they wanted the observer to look for.

(Many chose the points highlighted by the observer in the previous year.)

- Every teacher was given written feedback on the lesson.

Findings

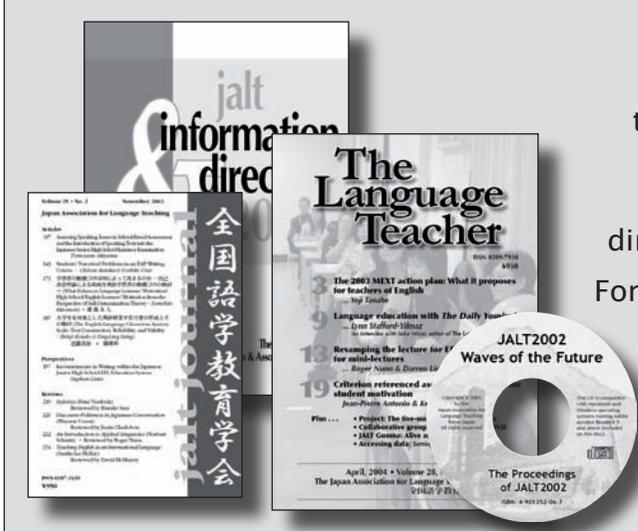
As might be expected, the observers found a wide range of teaching approaches and styles, but most observees said that they found the process to be a positive experience. A typical comment from a part-time teacher was, "The feedback was informative and non-intrusive; all in all, quite constructive. I left with some good pointers for what I need to do to make my lessons better and also reinforcement of what I am doing well."

During the course of the observations, however, it also became clear that even the most experienced instructors were prone to making basic errors that reduced the effectiveness of their teaching. It is difficult to talk about *right* and *wrong* in ELT methodology, where theories are incomplete and still developing, but I would suggest that there are certain elements of teaching practice that exist on a plane above debates about approaches and methodology. Regardless of what you believe about language learning, for example, it would be difficult to justify the idea that standing in front of the board when students are trying to copy from it is good practice!

The vast majority of teachers said that they were surprised at how unaware they had been of what they actually do in the classroom, and that they found it useful to have these things pointed out. It was also a valuable experience for me as an observer because watching other classes made me

think long and hard about my own teaching. In the weeks following, I felt like I was both teaching and observing myself at the same time. This made things quite uncomfortable as I noticed myself making basic mistakes I thought I had long outgrown, but it also felt good to be more aware of what I was doing and to have specific points of reference from the lessons I had watched. When I mentioned this to colleagues from other universities, the response was surprisingly enthusiastic. It appears that I am not the only one concerned about a lack of professional development in this teaching environment, and many people asked me to explain in more detail what I meant when I talked about *getting back to basics*. In response, I compiled a list of problem areas that we encountered most often during the observation programme, and those that I had become aware of in my own teaching. I hope that just reading it will be enough to give teachers food for thought, but the ideal application would be to invite a colleague into your classroom and ask them to focus on any points that you feel concerned about. As Wajnryb (1992) points out, "When we teach, we are often so absorbed in the purpose, procedure and logistics of our lesson that we are not able to observe processes of learning and interaction as they occur through the lesson" (p. 7). Inviting someone to observe you takes courage if you are not used to it, but having a list of specific problem areas to focus on should make it a safer and more productive experience for both parties.

There are obvious difficulties in selecting items for inclusion in a list like this, but the following is a fair reflection of what was found to be causing the most problems for teachers in our university.



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I hope that the majority of these points will be equally relevant for others in a similar teaching environment. The criteria for selecting items were as follows:

1. These points were picked up in several classes and by more than one observer.
2. I have selected points that no teacher claimed to be able to justify when attention was drawn to them.
3. I have tried to avoid commenting on techniques or practices that relate to a specific methodology or approach.

Overall, we identified five major areas of concern. These were lesson aims and planning, use of materials, implementation of activities, teacher behaviour, and the setting and checking of homework.

Lesson aims and planning

Woodward (2001) rightly points out that "Plans are just plans. They're not legally binding. We don't have to stick to them come hell or high water" (p. 24). This does not mean, however, that there is no need to prepare, and most of the problems we saw could have been avoided if the teacher had made a decent lesson plan. Poor planning manifested itself in unclear staging, timing issues, a lack of balance, foreseeable problems being unanticipated, and excessively teacher-centred lessons. There was a marked difference between classes taught by teachers who were working from plans and those who were not. Our advice to teachers was to consider these questions:

- What are your aims for this lesson? (Do not confuse *aims* with *activities*.)
- What assumptions have you made about prior knowledge or ability? Are these assumptions justified?
- Have you anticipated and devised solutions to foreseeable problems?
- Could you do what you are asking students to do? Would you want to?
- If you are introducing new language, have you covered the three key elements of meaning, form, and pronunciation?
- Does your lesson have distinct stages? Have you estimated the time that will be required for each? What allowance have you made for flexibility in timing?
- Does your lesson have a good balance of activities?

Materials

The use of materials caused problems in many classes. Careful consideration of the following points would, in most cases, have helped teachers to avoid them.

- The issue of how to use the textbook is an area of study in its own right, so think carefully about how you use it and what you need to do to supplement it.
- Make sure that you get the most out of your materials. Teachers often failed to develop tasks and activities to anything like their full potential.
- When using pictures or realia, look critically at how much language they might be expected to generate.

One area of particular concern was the use of the black or white board. Harmer (2001) describes the board as "The most versatile piece of teaching equipment" (p. 137) (see Dobbs (2001) for a wealth of good ideas and tips on using the board). Unfortunately, however, this versatility brings with it the potential for mistakes ranging from the mildly regrettable to the downright embarrassing. Here are some key points to think about.

As you feel yourself picking up the chalk or marker pen, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I know why I am writing this on the board and what I want students to do?
- Do students know why I am writing this on the board and what I want them to do?

If the answer to any of the above is "no," deal with the problem before you go any further.

Some other points are worth mentioning:

- Draw an outline of what you want your board to look like at the planning stage.
- If you invite students to write on the board, make sure you set up a framework so that the finished product does not become an illegible mess.
- Do not talk to the students and write on the board at the same time.
- Make sure you give students time to write, and do not explain the contents of the board as the students are trying to copy it.
- Do not stand or walk in front of the board when students are trying to copy from it. (Surprisingly common!)
- After you have finished writing, stand back and check carefully for errors. Take a dictionary into class if you are not confident of your spelling.

- When something no longer needs to be on the board, erase it.

Activities

Giving instructions

There is nothing more frustrating than having a brilliant activity fail because the students cannot understand what they are supposed to do. The giving and checking of instructions was a problem in many of the classes observed.

- Make sure that your instructions leave students knowing what to do the instant you finish talking.
- Instructions should be *clear* and *concise*. Repeat these words to yourself before you start speaking.
- Think carefully about how you are going to check whether students have understood you. Don't rely on asking, "Do you understand?" as your only way of doing this.

Timing and staging of activities

A good lesson should have clear stages and signposting so that the students know at all times what they are doing and why they are doing it. The best lessons we saw had the following characteristics:

- The teacher had clear aims for the lesson which he or she made explicit.
- The lesson had clear stages with subaims for each stage.
- There were clear markers between the stages.
- The amount of time spent on each stage was appropriate to the aims of the lesson.
- There was a good balance and range of activities.

Even with clear aims and good staging, however, a lesson can be dragged down by problems of timing.

- Give students an idea of how long they will have to complete a task or activity.
- If some students are likely to finish before others, make sure you give them something to do while they are waiting.
- Do not cut productive activities short simply because you are in a rush to *get through* the material.
- A large volume of noise is not necessarily proof that something is going well. Do not let activities go on for so long that the students end up chatting in Japanese.

- Try to avoid asking, "Has everyone finished?" Go around and take a good look.

One final point is that in almost every class we observed, teachers tended to rush controlled practice of new words and phrases. Remember that students generally want to repeat new words and sentences many more times than teachers think they do. Try practicing a phrase from a language you are not familiar with to give you some idea of how students might be feeling.

Monitoring of tasks and error correction

Pair and group work are the core of modern language teaching because, as Harmer (2001) points out, they "dramatically increase the amount of talking time for individual students" (p. 117).

We found various problems arising through the teacher being unsure of his or her role during student-centred activities. Think about these possibilities and be aware of what you are doing.

- **Monitoring** – get an idea of how well students are doing the task. Collect data (write down examples of what you hear—very few teachers do this!) to help you give them useful feedback at the end.
- **Correcting** – most students want more correction than teachers think they should give. No one wants to overdo correction, but *under-doing* it can be just as detrimental to the students' progress. Think carefully about what you are going to correct and when you are going to correct it.
- **Showing interest** – where appropriate, join in student discussions as a participant. Ask questions and show interest in what they are talking about.

Finally, avoid getting so involved with one group that you lose track of what is going on in the rest of the classroom.

Teacher behaviour

Many teachers were surprised to find out during feedback sessions that they had been talking a lot more than they had intended (the stopwatch never lies!). Another major challenge for language teachers is striking a balance between speaking naturally and speaking in a way that students can understand. Many of the teachers we observed tended to err towards the latter of these extremes. Constantly ask yourself the following:

- Am I grading my language appropriately for this student or class?

- Is my language natural? (Be careful of words like *bento* and *keitai*).

Also remember that a student's entire English career can turn (either way) on a single comment made by a teacher. Be aware of this responsibility and be very careful of throwaway remarks.

Should teachers use the students' language?

Whilst I am a strong believer in teachers learning the students' language (Barker, 2003), great care must be taken when using it in the classroom. Burden (2001) concluded from his study that "[mother-tongue] explanations belittle the students; the teacher must have more confidence in the learners' ability to understand" (p. 9). If you do use the students' language in the classroom, ask yourself the following every time you do it:

- Am I using Japanese to make it easier for them or for me?
- Did I plan to use Japanese here, or am I panicking?
- How else could I convey meaning in this situation?
- Is my Japanese really up to this task?
- Am I mixing bits of Japanese and English together into a weird kind of *Janglish*? (If you are, stop it immediately!)

Equally, of course:

- Are we going round and round in circles when a simple translation would allow us to move on to a more useful part of the lesson?

Remembering students' names

The most successful classes we saw were those where the teacher knew the students on a personal basis, and ones where the students knew each other well and had a good relationship. This nice atmosphere was immediately noticeable when present and glaringly obvious when it was missing (see Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003, p.26 for some interesting research on the importance of knowing students' names).

When it comes to learning names:

Do

- Make a serious attempt to learn students' names and let them know you are trying.
- Explain to students that you will remember some names more quickly than others, and that

this may be because of factors that have nothing to do with them as people (e.g., you have another student with the same name, so it is easy for you to remember).

- Where appropriate, use names whenever you interact with students.
- Use student-made name cards as a tool to help remember names rather than as an excuse not to bother.
- Ask students to test you by saying "Do you remember my name?"
- Make sure that you give students ample opportunity to learn each other's names, too.

Don't

- Be afraid to ask someone when you have forgotten their name. They would rather have you check than ignore them because you are embarrassed.
- Feel embarrassed if you are not particularly good at remembering names. No one expects you to be perfect.
- Convince yourself that you are *not good with names* and give up.

Interaction in the classroom

Many problems were caused by teachers failing to deal with inappropriate seating patterns. Take a good look at your classroom at the beginning of the lesson and ask students to move if the way they are sitting is not conducive to learning. Also, when putting students into groups or pairs, beware of random grouping or pairing techniques such as giving numbers when you do not know much about the students' personal relationships. Finally, remember that students are acutely sensitive to the way teachers interact with classes and individuals. It is natural for us to gravitate towards the ones who smile and ask and answer questions, but it is also imperative to create an atmosphere of fairness. We noticed the following points:

- Every teacher has a *stronger* side, left or right. This affects where they stand, who they look at, and whom they talk to.
- Different teachers follow different paths when moving around the classroom. Be aware of yours, and make sure that it is not favouring or excluding anyone.
- If the teacher talks to the students at the front, the ones at the back probably cannot hear.
- It is very difficult for teachers to judge how they interact with students. Invite someone in

to observe you if you want to get a true picture of what you do (see Wajnryb, 1992, for ideas on how to go about this).

Homework

Harmer (2001) suggests that "Homework is not easy for teachers or students to get right" (p. 338). He refers to Painter's observation on giving homework that "[the students] were not engaged by it and neither was she" (p.339). The following principles need to be kept in mind if homework is to serve any real educational purpose.

- Think carefully about the need for assignments and do not give homework for the sake of it.
- You only have a right to expect students to put as much thought and effort into doing the homework as you put into setting it.
- Try to achieve a balance of activities. Think of setting *self-study tasks* rather than *homework*.
- Traditional styles of homework such as memorizing word lists can still be a valuable resource.
- If you have set homework, always check it. Make sure that students get some kind of worthwhile feedback.
- Explain the reasoning behind the homework you are setting. In the next class, ask students about whether they found the tasks useful or not.

Conclusion

It is not my aim to tell teachers what they should or should not be doing in their classrooms. As Nunan (1995) rightly says, "Ultimately, it is up to individual teachers and learners to develop and

apply their own criteria for determining what is or is not successful in practice" (p. xiii). The points I have listed above are not unbreakable rules, but they can serve as a starting point for people teaching English in Japanese universities who want to take another look at the way they approach their classes. My main hope is that reading this list will result in a little observer popping up on your shoulder as you teach, and making sure that you develop and retain a keen awareness of what you are doing in the classroom. On a final note, please remember that even if becoming more aware of certain aspects of what you do makes you feel slightly uneasy, rest assured that caring enough to read this far and worrying about whether or not you are doing a good job mean that you definitely have the most important of the basics well and truly covered.

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IN THIS issue of My Share there are some interesting ideas for those who teach using the content-based instruction method. Adam Murray has a suggestion for teaching vocabulary through an online weather site, and Eleanor Kane gives us detailed instructions on how to involve students in choosing graded readers. Laura Bean has adapted the SWOT analysis for use in an English language classroom, and finally, Byron O'Neill describes a communicative lesson for revising previously learned grammar and vocabulary.

Around the world in 50 minutes

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Quick Guide

Key words: Internet, online dictionaries, weather vocabulary, comparatives, superlatives

Learner English level: Beginner

Learner maturity level: Junior high school to adult

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Activity time: One period (50 minutes)

Materials: Computer lab with Internet access, a worksheet for each learner, world weather fore-

cast from an English newspaper (optional—for the low-tech version)

This lesson gives students the opportunity to practice using comparatives and superlatives with real-time weather information. It also introduces students to an invaluable reference tool—an online dictionary.

Preparation

Step 1: Prepare a worksheet of the three appendices.

Step 2: Print out one copy for each learner.

Step 3: Familiarize yourself with a weather website such as <weather.cnn.com> and an online dictionary <www.sanseido.net>.

Procedure

Step 1: Access <www.sanseido.net>. Demonstrate how to use the online dictionary by looking up *humidity*.

Step 2: Have the students open an Internet browser and access <www.sanseido.net>.

Step 3: Divide the students into pairs.

Step 4: Using the online dictionary, ask the students to write the Japanese equivalents of the terms in Appendix 1.

Step 5: As a class, check the meanings of these terms.

Step 6: Access <weather.cnn.com> and show the learners how to use *Find weather around the world* by typing *Toronto* in the box and clicking the Go button.

Step 7: As a class, complete the *Toronto* column in Appendix 2.

Step 8: Have the students access <weather.cnn.com>.

Step 9: Ask students to complete, individually, Appendix 2 using any two cities. It is preferable for them to choose cities in two different regions.

Step 10: Complete Appendix 3 using information from Appendix 2.

Step 11: Have each learner share two of his or her answers from Appendix 3 with the class.

Comments

Many young learners do not enjoy using dictionaries in the classroom. However, most of them

enjoy using online dictionaries. Surprisingly, many learners cannot use computers well, and this can be a challenging activity for them. It is recommended to limit Step 4 to about 10 minutes. Step 9 can be quite time-consuming, so Step 10 may need to be assigned as homework.

The vocabulary portion of the lesson, Steps 1–5 (Appendix 1), could be assigned as homework or done in the classroom using traditional dictionaries in order to allow more time for Steps 6–11. This activity can be done without the use of a computer lab. Instead of using real-time weather information, the teacher could provide copies of the world weather forecast from one of the English newspapers.

References

Find weather around the world. Retrieved September 15, 2005 from <weather.cnn.com>.

Web dictionary. Retrieved September 15, 2005 from <www.sanseido.net>.

Appendix 2

		City 1	City 2
City name	Toronto		
Current conditions			
Temperature			
Humidity			
Wind			
Sunrise			
Sunset			

Appendix 3

Questions:

1. Which city is warmer, City 1 or City 2?
2. Which city is the warmest?
3. Which city has the lowest humidity?
4. Which city has the strongest wind?
5. Which city has the earliest sunrise?



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Appendix 1

Today's words	
humidity	
region	
forecast	
current	
condition (conditions)	
sunrise	
sunset	
Fahrenheit	
Celsius	
haze	
flurry (flurries)	

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Helping students choose a graded reader

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Quick Guide

Key Words: Extensive reading, graded readers

Learner English level: False beginner and above

Learner maturity level: Junior high school and above

Preparation time: One hour initially

Materials: Publishers' catalogues of graded readers, some graded readers, a stopwatch

Extensive reading (ER) seems to be a recent panacea, offering everything from improved reading speeds and vocabulary, to increased positive affect and better spelling. I certainly do not disagree with such claims. However, for ER to work well, students need to be motivated to read in the first place. This article offers some suggestions which will help teachers choose graded readers for their library, and help students choose their first graded reader, thus getting them hooked on reading. By *graded reader* I mean the readily available simplified books aimed at learners of English.

Procedure

Step 1: Obtain publishers' catalogues and print the online catalogue on individual sheets of A4 ready for use in class. Use Japanese language catalogues for lower level students if you prefer.

Step 2: Distribute the catalogues in class and ask students to choose books from them. Ask students to initial the books they find interesting. While they do this, chat with them and discover what kind of genres they like and read in their first language.

Step 3: Order the most popular books that appeal to students from the outset, rather than blindly order library packs. If the library already has a selection of graded readers, these first three steps

are less crucial. However, graded readers are thin paperbacks, and the most popular ones will need to be regularly replaced. Check the books to see if there are any that need to be replaced. No one likes to read a dirty, dog-eared book. Allow a few months after placing an order for the books to arrive and be catalogued by the library.

Step 4: Keep students up to date on the process. Tell them what is happening to their order: when it has been placed; when it has arrived; when the library is cataloguing the books. If there are no graded readers in the library, this keeps the idea of ER fresh in their minds while you wait for the books to become available.

Step 5: During this time, introduce ER and explain its benefits, in Japanese if necessary for lower level students. Explain the *rules* of ER: how it should be easy and fun, and that students should never persevere with a book that they are not enjoying. If this cannot be explained adequately in English, publishers' materials in Japanese will do the job. Bamford and Day (2004) give many worthwhile ideas on how to introduce ER.

Step 6: Help students decide their reading level. There are online tests and commercially-produced tests available, but the following suggestion from Waring (2000, p. 11) works very well. Photocopy a page from each level of a single reader series. Three levels can fit neatly on an A3 sheet. If you have lower proficiency students perhaps only levels 1 to 3 will be necessary. Give students a copy of these extracts, face down, and ask them to write their name on the blank side. Then instruct them to read Level 2. Give them one minute to read. Ask them to draw a line where they finished and count the number of words they read. Ideal for ER is 80-100 words. Students with lower scores should read Level 1 next time, and those with higher scores should read Level 3. Those who tested at Level 2 should go back and read the passage again, highlighting unknown words. Experts recommend that there should be no more than 1 or 2 new words per page for beginners and no more than 3 or 4 for intermediate students. I would add two caveats to this idea: before photocopying, add a word count at the end of every line to improve the accuracy of students' word counts and save class time, and avoid books like science fiction texts with odd personal and place names.

Step 7: Take students to the library. Once they know their own reading level, it is a good idea to show them exactly where the books are.

Step 8: Encourage the students to take the books off the shelves. Graded readers are very short in length

and consequently the spines are thin. The titles are written horizontally on the spine, and students have to crane their necks to read something that is difficult enough to begin with. Ask to take an armful of books of the appropriate level, spread them out on a desk, and judge the books by their covers.

Step 9: Have students read the first pages of a book. Advise them to choose the level that they tested at, or one level lower, and read the first few pages. This will ensure that the book is at an appropriate level for them and perhaps make it more likely that they will choose a book that they enjoy. The teacher should circulate and help students who are having difficulty choosing a book.

Step 10: Have students check the books out of the library. This ensures that everyone goes home with a book and now knows how to use the library. This is particularly important for new students.

Conclusion

Following these steps makes it more likely that books that your students actually *want* to read are on the shelves, and instructs students explicitly on how to go to the library and choose a graded reader. Getting students to borrow books is the first hurdle. After that, teacher enthusiasm, peer support, and interesting classroom activities should ensure that they continue reading.

SWOT as a personal development plan

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Quick guide

Key words: SWOT analysis, personal development, interview, report writing

Learner English level: Intermediate to advanced

Learner maturity level: High school up

Preparation time: 60 minutes

Activity time: 2+ hours (over three class sessions)

Materials: Paper and pen, dictionary

Introduction

What makes us tick? How do we operate in the world? Our personal habits and our way of relating to others are key elements in determining our health, happiness, and success. How do we amass such vital information about ourselves? Without a guru, therapist, or professional coach, who better to turn to than our language-learning partner in English class? A SWOT analysis may sound complicated, but it is the simplest and most effective means of concretely mapping our personalities on paper. Traditionally used in the business context, a SWOT analysis is a tool used by companies in the strategic planning process to assess their attributes as well as their market position. The company itself, or an outside consultant, will name its strengths (S), weaknesses (W), as well as the opportunities (O), and threats (T) which it faces in the marketplace. Strategies are then devised to maximize its strengths, bolster its weaknesses, develop an appropriate response to perceived threats, and capitalize on opportunities.

I propose that the SWOT analysis model be reframed for personal development. This assessment is equally effective in helping individuals to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses, as well as to heighten their awareness of opportunities and potential threats to their success. Sharing this process with a partner makes it even more powerful. A lack of confidence might prevent us from acknowledging our strengths even to ourselves. And while our weaknesses may hang over us like dark, threatening clouds, actually naming them and considering steps to remedy them is a challenging task. However, embarking on this investigation with another person allows us to quickly realize that we are not alone in our personal struggles with time, money, self-esteem, etc. The application of the SWOT analysis in the TESOL classroom provides an opportunity for students to build upon all four skills—speaking and listening during the interview process, and writing and reading during the reporting process.

Procedure

Step 1: Explain what a SWOT analysis is. Provide an example of both a positive and negative aspect of your own personality. Ask the students, as a class, to consider the impact (opportunities or threats) these qualities could have on your future. Modeling this technique using yourself as an example is crucial because what you are exemplifying is not only the procedure to follow but also the license to be vulnerable.

Step 2: In pairs students interview each other for 10–15 minutes. They ask their classmates to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. To learn more about how these attributes might play out in the future, they ask further questions relating to their partner’s dreams, ambitions, concerns, and fears.

Step 3: Interviewers then offer a response and suggestions to their partner for 5–10 minutes. They lend an objective eye and their own life experience to help the other person ascertain their future prospects (opportunities or threats) and map out a possible future course of action.

Step 4: As a homework assignment, students write reports detailing their partner’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. They also add recommendations on how they might capitalize on their good points, turn deficits into assets, and overcome blind spots.

Step 5: Students share their report with their partners in the next class.

Step 6: For homework, interviewees reflect on and respond in writing to their partner’s analysis.

Step 7: During the next class they briefly read their homework to their partner, then hand in both their SWOT analysis and response for the teacher to read and comment on.

Conclusion

Having a clear report of what they have revealed about themselves, along with their classmate’s feedback and recommendations, gives students a fresh, objective perspective on themselves. This is a content-rich, risk-taking activity which helps them improve their self-awareness, set personal challenges for themselves, and develop a personal philosophy. The appendix gives some examples of student SWOT analyses and responses.

Appendix

Analyses and responses of freshman business students

1. One bright student identified his facility with English and his ability to assemble a computer from parts as his strengths. On the other hand he confided in his partner that he feels shy and awkward in social situations. His partner recommended that he share his thoughts with more people. In his feedback, the student responded that through the exercise he had “turned his eyes” to his weakness

and that the conciseness of the report allowed him to face up to it. He then returned the favor to his partner, whose weakness was getting up on the wrong side of the bed. He recommended a solution that had also worked for him—“Go to sleep earlier! I know there are lots of funny TV programs, entertainments, and so on at night. But remember this proverb ‘time flies.’ You need to keep iron will. You determine to sleep earlier.” His partner said she realized the importance of time through the interview, and vowed that she would keep *iron will* in the future.

2. Another student complained of quickly losing interest in things. She gave as an example her experience as a lackadaisical member of the baton club in junior high school, never staying until the end of her marches. Her companion suggested that she find good or enjoyable points in things to maintain her interest.
3. One quiet male student considered his lack of a personal philosophy and his physical weakness as his main deficits. His partner offered the following recommendation: “He should look at himself so that he can have a policy. To have a policy is very difficult for everyone. But as far as he wants his policy, he will get in some time.” To improve his physical strength, she suggested he take up jogging and swimming and follow a diet of rich foods such as liver, vegetables, and cheese. The student acknowledged in his feedback that he did not understand himself, but that his partner’s recommendations helped him realize what things were needed.
4. To remedy her partner’s complaint of having bad eyesight, another student suggested that he “open the window and look over the forest. Green is effective in curing your bad sight.”

The author would like to thank Laura Rauchwarg, a Tokyo-based editor and translator, for providing the idea of writing this article and her expertise in editing it.

Resources

- Robbins, S. (2004). *First insights into business*. Harlow, Essex: Pearson.
- <www.quickmba.com/strategy/swot>
- <www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05_1.htm>

Using previous knowledge and fixing errors in EFL communication courses

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Quick guide

Key words: Speaking, asking questions, latent knowledge, error analysis

Learner English level: Pre-intermediate to intermediate

Learner maturity level: Senior high school and above

Preparation time: 60 minutes

Class time: 60 minutes

Materials: Chalkboard or whiteboard, copy machine, tape recorder, cassette tape

The following article describes a technique that can be used for streamed EFL classes to get students to practice speaking and listening in communicative contexts, using the vocabulary and grammar they have previously studied.

Preparation

Step 1: Decide on a general, familiar theme to be used as a discussion topic for the class, such as travel, sports, or college.

Step 2: Write a list of 8–10 questions based on the chosen theme. Use the variety of grammar and vocabulary that native speakers of the same age group would use in conversations on the same topic. For example, *Have you ever been to another country? What is your favorite baseball team? What are you doing after school today?*

Step 3: Ask the questions to someone with native or near-native English speaking ability, and record the conversation. Ask follow-up questions when appropriate. The answers to each of the questions should be no longer than one or two

sentences, and can be rehearsed. One successful technique is to ask colleagues to answer as they would have when they were students themselves.

Step 4: Make a listening activity by typing the questions asked with the answers given next to them. Include two or three incorrect answers like in the following example, assuming the answer was *England*.

Have you ever been to another country?

- a) Uh-huh, Italy
- b) Uh-huh, England
- c) Uh-huh, France
- d) Uh-huh, Germany

Make one copy for each student in the class.

Procedure

Step 1: Introduce the speaking topic for the day. Tell the class that they must think of some questions to ask each other based on that theme. Write and discuss a couple of questions from the listening activity on the board as examples.

Step 2: Students working in pairs or small groups come up with a question related to the theme and write it on the board. To speed things up and to prevent the same sentences being generated, tell students that questions that are too simple will not be allowed, and that questions eliciting the same information can only be written once. The pair or group that writes their sentence first is allowed to keep it, while slower groups who were trying to put together the same question will then have to come up with something different.

Step 3: Have students write on paper all of the sentences written on the board.

Step 4: Go over each sentence on the board and comment on both local and global errors related to grammar or vocabulary. Problems with pragmatic meaning should also be mentioned if necessary.

Step 5: Elicit corrections from students and write them on the board. When the students are unable to provide the right answer, refresh their memories by explaining the grammar feature or the collocations of misused vocabulary.

Step 6: Have students copy the corrections onto their papers. Do not allow anything to be erased. If a mistake was made, tell the students to cross it out with a single line so that it can still be read. This will allow the students to become more aware of the types of errors they make.

Step 7: (Optional) Assign homework. Ask groups that made mistakes with the sentences on the board to generate five new sentences using the grammar and vocabulary that were used incorrectly. If there are general trends in grammar and vocabulary errors, all students in the class must do the assignment. Homework should be written on the back of the piece of paper used in Step 3. To encourage students, inform them that this assignment will reduce the number of mistakes they make in future.

Step 8: In pairs, students take turns asking and answering the questions from the board, with follow-up questions. Do not allow the students answering questions to look at the board or at their papers.

Step 9: In smaller classes, take note of students who give interesting answers. After everyone is finished with the exercise, ask the class the questions from the board. If no one volunteers an answer, ask these students to share their answers with the class. In larger classes, answers can be elicited from the pair or group that originally wrote the question. Ask follow-up questions when appropriate.

Step 10: Now distribute the listening activity and go over the questions and possible answers. Additional time need not be spent going over anything that students previously wrote on the board themselves.

Step 11: Play the tape and ask the students to listen and circle the answers. Allow them to briefly discuss their answers with each other before playing the tape a second time.

Step 12: Ask students to volunteer the correct answers.

Periodic quizzes should be given to check the mastery of the grammar and vocabulary that were incorrectly used in class. As the semester goes on, students will make fewer of the same errors. It should be noted that students soon sense if they are being penalized for taking risks and using complicated language. When the questions they write on the board reflect this by being too simple, the teacher should reject them and insist on *good* sentences. They will know what you mean. Class participation points that are calculated into the final grade should be given to represent positive reinforcement and to increase the level of motivation. Points can be given to students who try hard in Steps 2, 5, 8, 9, and 12.

Students will show improvement because they know that by offering peer correction, making fewer of the same mistakes, and trying hard to give good follow-up questions and answers, they will raise their grade for the course. The students who are most reluctant to make mistakes will know they are making fewer of them, and they will gain confidence in their speaking ability by having practiced communicating in English on a variety of everyday topics. This technique should not be used to excess, as students eventually tire of this lesson whether or not they feel it is beneficial to them. By looking at the number of errors that appear on the board, I find that at least three, but no more than seven repetitions in a semester works best.

"Wow, that was such a great lesson, I really want others to try it!"

「すばらしい授業！、これを他の人にも試してもらいたい！」



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BOOK REVIEWS ONLINE

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THIS MONTH'S Book Reviews column features Michael O'Connell's evaluation of *Conversation Strategies*, a textbook designed to develop strategic competence, as well as *Immediate Conversations 1*, an English conversation textbook for beginners reviewed by Nathanael Rudolph, and Daniel Dunkley's views of *World Link*, an EFL classroom textbook.

Conversation Strategies: Pair and Group Activities for Developing Communicative Competence

[David Kehe and Peggy Dustin Kehe. Brattleboro, Vermont: Pro Lingua Associates, 2004. pp. x + 150. ¥2,835. ISBN: 0-86647-189-8.]

Reviewed by Michael O'Connell,
Gifu Shotoku Daigakuen

TLT readers interested in developing students' spoken English will find *Conversation Strategies* very useful. The contents of the book haven't changed much since the first edition and yet it is

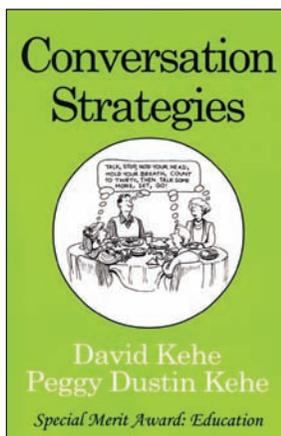
still a very relevant text for developing conversational ability. It is designed to develop students' strategic competence, defined as "how to cope in an authentic communicative situation and how to keep the channel of communication open" (Canale and Swan, as cited in Hedge, 2000, p. 52). It provides students with the opportunity to practice turn taking and repairing breakdowns in communication. Many textbooks even now overlook the value of strategic competence and few seem to teach it as well as this book does.

Conversation Strategies consists of 26 didactic lessons and three review units. Each lesson follows the same basic plan modelled on the PPP (presentation, practice, and production) format and is based on a functional strategy. Some of these strategies are *correcting someone, reconfirming, interruptions, clarification, and keeping or killing a conversation.*

In the Presentation stage of each lesson the teacher is given a short speech to present to the students. The speech is at the back of the student book and students can refer to it at anytime. Unfortunately it is only provided in English; there is no Japanese translation. However there is a cartoon caption at the beginning of each chapter which provides a visual context for the target language.

During the Practice and Production stages of the lesson, students are first given gap-fill exercises to do individually. These exercises help to further solidify the context of the target language. The individual gap fillers also give the teacher a chance to check understanding. Next the students are given a number of controlled task-based drills to finish in pairs. Student A reads a sentence and Student B chooses a response. This is usually done in pairs but sometimes groups of three are used. These controlled drills further reinforce the linguistic context of the language focus of each lesson. Finally, the students are given a less controlled information gap activity. These activities are nearly all designed for pairs or groups of three. This makes the lessons highly communicative and extremely student centred.

I tried the text several times with four different groups of low-intermediate to high-intermediate 1st- and 2nd-year university classes. The classes



had 18 to 33 students and was 90 minutes long. Student reactions to the text were almost all positive. They felt the classes were enjoyable, the target language useful, and liked the way they could speak with other students in English. Nearly all felt they would like to do more of the same kind of activities and most felt the text was just right for their level of English. Smaller classes were able to finish a lesson in 60 minutes while the larger classes needed the full 90 minutes for one lesson. I concluded that the book worked well for intermediate learners and is suited to 60-minute classes.

Conversation Strategies has a very plain appearance, quite different to many contemporary glossy textbooks. The target language seems surprisingly simple, the pictures are in black and white, and the format of each lesson is extremely basic and repetitive. However, what first appeared as negative factors are in fact positive points. Though the entire book is black and white and the drawings are plain, I felt this helped keep the learners focused on their job rather than being distracted by glossy photos and peripheral images. In addition, the language is so simple that it's often not taught in many current ELT texts or syllabi. Indeed many students informed me after class that these short phrases were valuable and had previously been unknown to them.

The simple layout means there is almost no preparation time for the teacher. This makes *Conversation Strategies* extremely versatile. It can be easily adapted to an existing syllabus and works well as supplementary material. The exercises would work particularly well in preparing students for broader topic-based discussions, and teachers involved in this kind of curricula will appreciate the value of this book.

Reference

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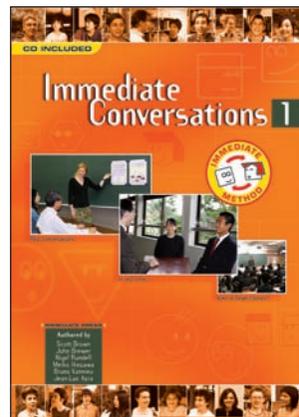
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Immediate Conversations I: An English Conversation Textbook for Beginners and False Beginners

[Scott Brown, John Brewer, Nigel Randell, Meiko Ikezawa, Jean-Luc Azra and Bruno Vannieuwenhuyse. Kyoto: Alma/Immediate Press, 2004; pp. 55. (Incl. CD) ¥2,200 ISBN: 4-9901072-6-8.]

**Reviewed by Nathanael Rudolph,
Kinki University**

Like a weary explorer in pursuit of El Dorado, the foreign language teacher in Japan endlessly clamors for the elusive gold standard in interaction. With such a goal in mind, a group of French instructors from Osaka University developed an approach first used in the teaching of French, German, and Japanese as a second language, which subsequently culminated in the production of *Immediate Conversations 1*, an English language textbook, and accompanying website <immediate-method.com>. The Immediate Method aims to



tackle low motivation and self-esteem, bad study habits, a lack of meaningful language use, lack of preparation time, and large class sizes. *Immediate Conversations 1* is meant for use with a wide variety of ages and within diverse classroom settings, from junior high school to lessons with adult false beginners.

Upon examination it is clear that the Immediate Method is rooted in Grammar-Translation. Students first encounter a structure coordinated with boxes of example vocabulary and blank spaces to add words. An audio CD contains the target language with a translation and explanation in Japanese. Next

are written examples of correct dialogue and a language comparison section to write in new sentences with their corresponding translations. A final section familiarizes students with the language through very short videotaped conversations and their written transcripts. After target language exposure and subsequent practice, students are then given conversation tests individually or in pairs. During these 1- to 3-minute conversations, other students continue practicing the material, and are asked to complete fill-in-the-blank or multiple choice supplementary handouts related to the particular lesson, or do dictated translation exercises.

Numerous questions arise regarding *Immediate Conversations 1*. First, what of the recycling so key to word retention (Nation, 2001)? Students may see recycled words in subsequent lessons or write vocabulary in lists repeatedly, but there is no guarantee of review. In addition, words within the text are presented semantically. Contrary to popular belief, recent research has shown semantic sets can actually hinder the learning of words. Semantic sets can be used in review, but words should initially be presented thematically (incorporating vocabulary into a theme, beginning with higher frequency words) to maximize retention and lessen confusion (Folse, 2004). Also, a large portion of the lesson body consists of space to write second language to native language word translations. This can benefit learning (Folse, 2004), though there are risks both of becoming too dependent upon the L1 and the underdevelopment of skills in the L2 if the L1 is overemphasized (Hunt & Beglar, 2002).

Target language is presented in the form of topical questions broken down grammatically and examined both in the L1 and L2. The form is then practiced repeatedly and scrutinized during the oral test. This sort of practice, however, will likely not bear the fruit of acquisition intended. Practicing in a controlled situation seems not to affect the ability of a learner to produce the language spontaneously (Ellis, 2002). Such practice could actually be considered rote and therefore counterproductive, as students may focus solely on mechanics rather than on the message being conveyed (Brown, 2001).

What of motivation? Clear-cut goals and objectives via the oral exam and progress sheet may foster student motivation if the students are interested in achievement. A lack of rich contextualized comprehensible input and the overuse of mechanical practice, however, disconnect students from the language they produce. The ac-

companying audio and video do nothing to kindle student interest as all the material is lacking in context, unnatural, and of questionable quality.

I chose to use *Immediate Conversations 1* with a small group of young adult false beginners, all of whom had had exposure to English while in secondary school. As suggested by the only time reference in the teacher's guide, a 45-minute block was allotted for a single lesson. Students found the Japanese translations handy, but as expected, learners did not connect with the language they generated and became distracted rather quickly. Decontextualized input offered no solutions either, as students reacted in lackluster fashion. Supplemental materials isolated students and the room quickly became a teacher-centered vacuum.

What does *Immediate Conversations 1* have to offer? It is a small step in the right direction in foreign language education, though by no means a pioneering one. There are attempts at fluency building, though without long-term language use and exposure fluency will not occur. Understanding the restraints in a Japanese secondary school related to curriculum, recycling may prove difficult but is nevertheless essential to improvement. Providing students with well-defined goals is positive, though true motivation cannot be achieved externally. *Immediate Conversations 1* claims to advance the cause of dialogue, but the material cannot escape the ball and chain of Grammar-Translation and mechanical production. Indeed, the *immediacy* of the method seems to be in reality only a temporary solution to the issue of long-term recall and independent use of the target language. Authentic interaction once again has eluded capture.

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- Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

World Link: Developing English Fluency

[Susan Stempleski, Nancy Douglas, & James R. Morgan. Boston MA: Thomson/Heinle, 2005, Book 1A pp. v + 154. ¥1,873 ISBN: 1-4130-1082-2; Intro A pp. v + 149. ¥1,873. ISBN: 1-4130-1080-6.]

**Reviewed by Daniel Dunkley,
Aichi Gakuin University**

World Link consists of a series of four texts for adult EFL learners from low beginning to high intermediate level (*Intro*—false beginner level—followed by levels 1 to 3). I used Intro A and 1A with 1st-year university students for this review.

The materials use a uniform approach at all levels: Starting with vocabulary work, the student is led through listening, conversation, and grammar activities into communication tasks. The special features of the text are its clarity of organization and its multicultural approach.

Each level contains 12 thematic units. The themes are not drastically new, reflecting the commitment to general interest words. Each unit consists of two lessons, A and B, which take about 90 minutes each to complete; the first focusing on listening and speaking, the second on listening and reading.

Lessons contain six activities. Lesson A starts with a vocabulary link, followed by three taped exercises: listening, pronunciation, and speaking. The second half of the speaking exercise is an improvisation or survey. The fifth activity is a language link reviewing a grammar point, and then the lesson ends with a communication task for pairs or groups.

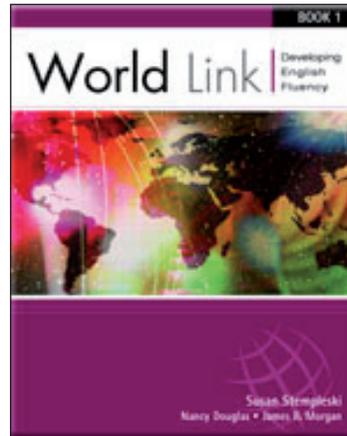
Lesson B, like lesson A, contains a vocabulary and a listening exercise, a language link, and a final communication section, but also includes reading and writing activities. After every three lessons there is a review section. Finally, language summaries and grammar notes are included. The workbook provides supplementary written exercises that prove very useful, ranging from simple matching answers with questions to creating conversations.

The video program consists of two sections for each unit of the text: a *City Living* section with 3-minute scenes about six young people living

in New York, and a *Global Viewpoints* section in which students (some foreign and some native speakers) in the US talk about their lives. The final resource in the package is the website <worldink.heinle.com> which has both a students' and a teachers' section.

Did it work? Generally speaking, it did. However, I found that the Lesson B parts needed reworking: since after a good start, they were mainly devoted to reading and writing. As a result I had to add some speaking activities, some of which came from the teacher's resource book.

There were other problems with the text. There were many typos, about one per unit, some of them serious. The vocabulary lists both in the back of the book and on the website were incomplete, and no Japanese translations were available.



Although the textbook series is entitled *World Link*, the acknowledgements list indicates where it will be used: Latin America, Korea, and Japan. Accordingly, Africa and Muslim countries are hardly mentioned. In addition to problems with typos and vocabulary lists,

there were several practical problems. Some of the themes proved difficult to use. In particular, *World Link 1 Unit 2* (Express yourself!) with its abstract vocabulary about emotions and body language, was difficult for the students; it might be best used later in the course. Other activities, such as *World Link 1 Unit 6*, I did not use because they were too demanding for the students. Many of the exercises, such as the communication section of the My Family unit in *World Link Intro*, need rewriting because they demand too much initiative on the part of the students. For example, they are often instructed to "Interview a partner and take notes," such as in the communication section of the My Family unit.

There are many activities which supposedly stimulate conversation with the instruction "Tell your partner." One example is "Which activities do you do before you travel? Tell your partner" (p. 51). This instruction is both pedagogically impractical and socially unnatural. As we all learn in the process of socialization, trying to engage someone in conversation by telling them

something is socially inept. With a large class the way to use this exercise would be either to have students write an answer individually, or to have them cooperate in producing a list.

Many of the communication activities were seemingly good but in practice had no real information gap. However, a brief survey at end of the semester indicated that the students were satis-

fied with, if not enthusiastic about, the text and that they especially enjoyed the video.

In conclusion, I recommend this text for use with non-specialist students of oral English in universities. It does not teach itself, but has to be managed. It has a sufficient range of resources and exercises to give thoughtful teachers the material they need for a successful course.

RESOURCES • RECENTLY RECEIVED

31

...with Scott Gardner

<pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

A list of textbooks and resource books for language teachers available for review in *TLT* and *JALT Journal*.

RECENTLY RECEIVED ONLINE

An index of books available for review can be found at:

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

* = first notice; ! = final notice. Final notice items will be removed March 31. For queries please write to the email address above.

Books for Students (reviewed in *TLT*)

Contact: Scott Gardner

<pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

Blueprint for Success: Foundations (lower level) / *Framework* (upper level). Fuller, D., Merenda, L., & Tomioka, N. Tokyo: Macmillan Languagehouse, 2005. [Incl. teacher's manuals, CDs].

Gear Up: Plan for Success in English Conversation (Levels 1 & 2). Gershon, S., & Mares, C. Oxford: Macmillan, 2005. [Incl. teacher's manuals, CDs].

! *The Heinle Picture Dictionary*. Boston: Thomson Heinle, 2005. [Incl. English/Japanese version, beginning workbook, CDs, sample lesson plan-ner].

Humanising Your Coursework: Activities to Bring Your Classroom to Life. Rinvolutri, M. Surrey: Delta, 2002.

Inside English: High Beginner. Jones, V., & Kay, S. Tokyo: Macmillan Languagehouse, 2005. [Incl. teacher's manual, CD].

! *Introductory Guide to the TOEIC Test*. Rogers, B. Boston: Thomson ELT, 2006. [Incl. scripts, answer key, CDs].

Japanese Sentence Patterns for Effective Communication. Kamiya, T. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2005.

* *Country ABCs*. Heiman, H., et al. Minneapolis, MN: Picture Window Books, 2004. [Incl. 12 hardcover intermediate readers, each on a different country: Australia, Canada, China, Egypt, Germany, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand, Russia, United States].

TOEIC Listening Practice: Visiting 24 North American Areas. Tatsukawa, K., Lauer, J., & Fujishima, N. K. Tokyo: Eihosha, 2006. [Incl. teacher's manual, cassette].



**Community,
Identity, Motivation**
Kitakyushu, Japan
Nov. 2-5, 2006
**<conferences.jalt.
org/2006/>**

JALT Research Grants

Teaching part-time and need support for doing classroom research? Check out JALT Research Grants for 2006 at:

<jalt.org/researchgrants/>

Advert: Thomson

THE LANGUAGE TEACHER WIRED

...with Malcolm Swanson
& Paul Daniels

<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.

TLT WIRED ONLINE

As well as our feature columns, we would also like to answer reader queries. If you have a question, problem, or idea you'd like discussed in this column, please email us or visit our website at:

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

or go to the forum at:

<forum.jalt-publication.org>



Email efficiency Malcolm Swanson

COMPARED TO even 5 years ago, I now use the phone much less, and seldom go to the post office. However, the amount of email I need to deal with has risen astronomically. In this I know am not alone. In this month's *TLT Wired* column, we asked a number of heavy email users how they deal with message traffic efficiently within their chosen mailing software. If you have other tips to offer, please visit our forum <forum/jalt-publications.org>.

Gee... it does much more than mail...

The folks at Google are good at finding stuff, including you. They are here to take over the world and are starting with your desktop. *Isn't Gmail just another webmail programme?* Yes, and no. Facts:

compared with the 2Mb of space I had on my old Hotmail account, Google's 2600Mb (and rising) is generous to say the least. It is also much faster, using the new so-called Ajax technology that does a lot of the work in the background on Google's servers, without eating up your bandwidth. Also, and this is where it gets interesting, it is very good at finding stuff. Remember that email you sent a year or so ago to that guy who knew that girl who you met in that place where... Just remember ONE word and Gmail will find it for you within a couple of seconds. Sounds good, but why would I want to switch from my desktop email programme? Well, if you're like me, you might have a computer at work with its own email address and a computer at home with a personal email address. You may also travel sometimes or even work at other campuses or schools. Wouldn't it be nice if you could access ALL those emails ALL the time from wherever you were? Never be without that important document that your received the other day? Never arrive at work to realise you forgot to print out that to-do list? Never have to look up someone's email address. It's easy: Gmail will read all your POP mail for you (or if your school's mail system doesn't let you access its pop server, forward all your emails to your Gmail account (in Microsoft Outlook click ->Tools ->Rules and Alerts and follow the instructions). The really neat thing is that in Gmail you can choose how you send your emails, so if you have an account like <john.doe@work.com> with Gmail you can send messages like that (not as <john.doe@gmail.com>) and impress your boss while sitting on a beach in Maui. So, what's this talk of Google taking over the world? Gmail is one of many new services Google has offered in recent months. Google Desktop, for example, is an application that brings information to your desktop such as your email, newsfeeds, online contacts, and much more. It integrates tightly with Gmail and helps you find anything you have ever done on or typed into your computer. Big brother is watching (emailing) you.

Hayo Reinders

Archiving on Apple Mail

When Apple's OS X Tiger hit the shelves, one of the hottest new technologies it contained was Spotlight, its file searching application. Spotlight doesn't just search *for* files—it searches *within* files. No longer do we have to remember file names to find something, as content can be searched as well. As this technology is built into Apple Mail, it theoretically frees us from hav-

ing to carefully file email into folders, as a quick search (or creating a Smart Folder) will find what we want. However, the problem for me was that it only searches what already exists in messages, whereas sometimes I want to add notes or metadata to help me later, or to make grouping into a Smart Folder easier. Enter *MailTags*, a clever little plug-in from Indev <www.indev.ca>. *MailTags* adds a slide out window to messages where I can add keywords or notes, or select a project or priority. I can even add due dates. Then, when I want to gather all the messages on, for example, a certain project, I simply create a Smart Folder using that tag as a criterion. I also use Mail Act-On (by the same company) to label messages or file them to certain folders with simply a keystroke, rather than navigating through menus.

Malcolm Swanson

Eudora tips

If it weren't for its lack of Japanese language support, I'd probably still be using Eudora <eudora.com>. Although aging and quirky, I still find it the best client out there for efficiently handling large amounts of mail on set projects. Here are a few little tips I learned over the years. (Note: these work on the Mac version. I have no experience with Eudora on Windows.):

1. Grouping messages by the same writer, or with the same subject: Simply hold down the *option* key while clicking the criteria you wish to group (e.g., Subject). All matching messages will come together.
2. Group messages: Need to send the same message to a group of people who have emailed you? Simply select those messages (command-click) and hit *Reply*. A new message appears with all the addresses in the *To* field.
3. Mapping an F-key to an action: Sometimes I need to send a similar message to a large number of people. First, I create a template message using Stationery (Window -> Stationery -> New). Then, while holding down the Command key, I click an unused menu button in the toolbar. A dialogue box comes up, and I simply choose Message -> New Message With -> [my template]. In Settings -> Toolbar, select the "Map function keys to toolbar" option. Now, simply clicking the corresponding F-key opens up a new message. Use this solution to handle any repetitive task that involves going to a menu item.
4. Viewing HTML messages: One thing Eudora does badly is handling HTML messages.

Normally I don't mind that, as I prefer simple text anyway. It's faster, and there's less chance of alerting spammers that your email address is valid. However, occasionally I want to see a message in all its glory. Easy! Simply select Open in Browser from the File menu and the message will open up perfectly in your web browser.

Malcolm Swanson

Filtering messages

... on Thunderbird

This tip keeps your Inbox tidy by automatically filtering incoming mail into folders, especially useful for managing busy mailing lists. Although instructions are specific to Mozilla Thunderbird, the process is similar for other email clients. The two steps are to create a new folder and create a filter.

1. Create a new folder in which to store the incoming messages by selecting File -> New -> New Folder... from the main menu. In the dialog box, type a descriptive name for the folder (e.g., "MWSIG list") and choose a location in which to store the folder. The default location is under the Inbox of your main account. Click OK and the new folder will appear in the folders list panel of Thunderbird's main window.
2. Create a filter for MWSIG messages by selecting Tools -> Message Filters... from the main menu. In the dialog box, click the New... button to display the Filter Rules dialog box. Enter a name for the filter, such as "MWSIG messages." Next, change the drop-down list to "Sender" and, in the empty textbox, enter the email address of the list (e.g., jaltmwsig@yahoo.com). Now select an action to perform on emails coming from that address. For example, to move MWSIG email into the MWSIG list folder we created in Step 1, check the "Move to folder" checkbox and select the "MWSIG list" folder from the drop-down list box. When you've finished specifying the rules and actions, click OK.

Derek Di Matteo

... with Outlook

Amazingly, in a space ruled by Mac users, a paragraph on Windows software has managed to slip in. With Outlook I've found that, since the majority of my students consider sending email synonymous with flipping open their cellular phones, it's been a real challenge to know in what form those emails are going to arrive at my computer. But however they arrive, the key to sorting them is

through the Rules Wizard, available from the Tools menu. I've got different folders for my different classes, and I set up email addresses to which my students should send their mail. One such address is <seiseneikaiwa@theronmuller.com>. I've created a rule which automatically moves any email sent there into the folder I've labeled Seisen Eikaiwa. For some of the different newsgroups I'm a member of, such as the ELTJ-Activities list, which has its own folder, I also set the rule to mark the messages as read. Not because I don't read them (at least occasionally), but because I don't want to have to scroll through them individually marking them as read, and I don't want my computer to constantly remind me that I have more than 1,000 unread messages. I'll finish with a final note about making new rules. I would recommend starting from a blank rule and not the default options available in the initial Rules Wizard dialogue; I've found the defaults aren't versatile enough to accomplish what I want to have done.

Theron Muller

More than just email with Outlook

Outlook's email functions are certainly not extraordinary, but what makes this application so efficient is the integration of its calendar, contact list, and notes. If, when composing emails, having important dates, telephone numbers, and a *to-do* list at your fingertips is essential, then Outlook might be the program for you. Another Outlook option I have come to rely on is the desktop alerts. Let's say an email arrives regarding an interesting conference. I then click on the calendar button and while entering the conference date, I add an alert to remind me a week before abstract submission deadline.

One of the more nagging problems we often experience is synchronizing this information on both our home and work machines. Large companies often use Microsoft's Exchange Server to keep track of messages, appointments, contacts, and notes on a central server, but for POP users, we need to be creative. First, on both computers, check the *Leave a copy of messages on the server* box. On my home computer I set filtering rules for incoming work mail to go directly to the appropriate work folders; on my work computer, I set up rules to filter mail from friends and family. This saves me having to sort mail twice. I hand sort only home mail at home and work mail at work. Unfortunately, Outlook's junk email function is not very useful, so I often have to delete such messages manually. There is an option to delete messages from the server

when deleted from Outlook, but you must empty the Outlook trash folder or set the trash folder to empty automatically for this to work. Next you probably want to sync home and office contacts and appointments. If you have many, choose export from the file menu and export only the calendar and contacts as a .pst file (the email .pst file is usually too large). Send the file as an attachment and import on your other computer. If you want to sync items as you create them, you have the option to forward yourself or others the appointment or contact when making it. You can just as easily drag items from the calendar or contact window to an email message and send them to your home address. When the message arrives, drag the attached Outlook file to the calendar, contacts, or notes folder. I should note that the Mac version of Outlook is called Entourage and from what I hear and read, there are similarities, but don't expect it to do what Outlook can do on a Windows machine.

Paul Daniels

And for power users...

Having tried most of the Macintosh mail clients, I would strongly recommend Powermail from CTM Development <www.ctmdev.com/> to anyone who uses email as more than just a way to stay in touch.

As the name suggests, Powermail is aimed at the power user. It has all the key features of a good mail client: POP3 and IMAP support; support for secure (SSL) connections; multibyte character set support (i.e., it can handle Japanese and other character sets); ease of creation of multiple accounts; flexible scheduling options for checking individual accounts, and more.

For me, though, the strongest features are:

- A lightning fast search function: probably the fastest and most powerful of any mail client I've tried. PowerMail's databases are also searchable with Spotlight on Mac OS 10.4 and above, though I find it is faster to search directly in Powermail.
- Highly customizable filters that allow you to set any number of conditions and run actions on incoming or outgoing messages. Good Address Book integration, too.
- Excellent integration with SpamSieve and highly effective at dealing with spam when combined with a server-side option like SpamAssassin, with very low false positive ratings.

Paul Collett

Advert: Seido

...with Joseph Sheehan

<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-publications.org/tlt/focus/>

JALT Calendar

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

- ▶ April 1 – May 31: Application period for JALT Research Grants 2006
- ▶ April 28: JALT2006 presentation submissions deadline
- ▶ May 13–14: Pan-SIG Conference
- ▶ June 3–4: CALL SIG Conference in Hokkaido
- ▶ July 1–2: National EBM (location TBA)
- ▶ September 15: Pre-registration deadline for JALT2006 (presenters)
- ▶ October 6: Pre-registration deadline for JALT2006 (general attendees)
- ▶ November 2–5: JALT2006 in Kitakyushu

JALT Watch

JALT National news and announcements in brief.

- ▶ The application period for JALT Research Grants 2006 is April 1st to May 31st. More information at <jalt.org/researchgrants/>
- ▶ Donna Tatsuki has taken over from Mary Christianson as JALT Acting Director of Records. Donna is a former editor of *JALT Journal* and is active in JALT Publications and the Pragmatics SIG.
- ▶ JALT National Officer elections will take place before this year's conference. See the call for nominations in this issue, and voting information in upcoming *TLTs*.
- ▶ If you need to contact JALT Central Office, note that the email address has changed to <jco@jalt.org>. Please change your address books.

From JALT National Working with Mary

It feels a little strange to be writing this combination thank-you hug and set of reflections on working with Mary Christianson, our outgoing Director of Records, before we've actually said our farewells, but such are the vicissitudes of publishing deadlines. On the other hand, one could argue that this is the perfect time to think back on all that we have done together over the past four and a half years of service on the board. We are in the final stages of preparation for the February Executive Board Meeting, and EBM weekends are the times when Mary's special contributions to JALT have been most important. And I know I can say, without exaggeration, that these contributions have been of value to the whole of JALT as well as to the members of the board itself. Where should I begin in counting our blessings?



Mary has brought an unprecedented combination of warmth and efficiency to the execution of her duties that has made our jobs easier, and, at times, a whole lot more fun. Both her efficiency and warmth have been prominently on display in her production of the minutes of our meetings and of the awkwardly named JENLs, the JALT executive newsletters, which have literally made it possible for us to conduct our discussions in a more productive manner. While determining the agenda is the collective responsibility of the board, Mary combines a fine editorial sense with an intuitive sense of the kind of practical support that participants at our meetings will need to function at their best. These practical supports have included helpful information—travel tips and maps to venues, for example—and a layout and structure in the newsletter itself that has proved invaluable in helping us stay on task. Her suggestions regarding motion formation and the collaborative manner in which she has worked with all participants have proved equally important contributions to the development of the cooperative atmosphere of our meetings over the last several years. I know I speak for the entire board when I say we are proud to have shared in the process.

Mary, we'll all miss you. Thank you and take care.

Hugh Nicoll, Director of Membership

JALT Notices

2006 JALT National elections: Call for nominations

Notice is hereby given that elections for the following positions will take place in November. You are cordially invited to nominate JALT members of good standing who have suitable experience for the positions.

- **President:** She/He has general responsibility for coordinating activities of the Executive Board and for directing and publicizing the affairs of the organization. She/He presides at meetings of the Executive Board and Board of Directors.
- **Vice President:** She/He presides at meetings in the absence of the President and shares the duties and responsibilities of the presidency. The Vice President is chairperson of the administrative committee.
- **Director of Membership:** She/He is responsible for overseeing all JALT Membership records; coordinating the formation of new affiliates, chapters, and SIGS; formulating and implementing policy regarding their relations to JALT National; and assisting in membership drives. The Director of Membership chairs the Membership Committee.
- **Director of Programs:** She/He supervises the arrangements for JALT's annual conference as well as the planning of special programs and workshops which are made available to chapters and SIGS.
- **Director of Public Relations:** She/He is responsible for coordinating JALT's publicity and for promoting and developing relations with other educational organizations, media, and industry. The holder is expected to act as a liaison with JALT's institutional and commercial members.
- **Director of Records:** She/He is responsible for keeping the minutes of JALT Executive Board Meetings and Ordinary General Meetings, as well as keeping SIGS and chapters informed of JALT National activities, and maintaining officer manuals. In addition, the holder will chair JALT's Records and Procedures Committee, which will provide administrative assistance with his/her duties.
- **Director of Treasury:** She/He is responsible for maintaining all the organization's financial records and for collecting and disbursing all the organization's funds. In addition, the

holder must be able to present clear accounts of JALT's financial status.

- **Auditor:** She/He is responsible for inspecting the status of JALT's business and assets, and for presenting opinions to other directors concerning these. The holder is responsible for reporting to the general meeting of the organization or to governmental authorities concerning any problems with JALT's business and assets.

Term of Office: All terms are for 2 years starting immediately after the Ordinary General Meeting at the JALT2006 conference in Kitakyushu (November 2-5).

You can nominate yourself or someone else. In either case, the person must be a current member of JALT. Please clearly indicate membership number(s), affiliation(s), and contact information. Nominations can be sent by post or email to Anthony Robins <nec@jalt.org>, JALT Nominations and Elections Committee Chair, Department of International Cultural Studies, Aichi University of Education, Hirosawa 1, Igaya-cho, Kariya-shi, Aichi-ken 448-8542. Please submit nominations and include brief details of qualifications by May 15, 2006.

2006年JALT全国選出役員選挙一推薦者募集

以下の役職の選挙が11月に行われる事を公示します。これらの役職に適任と思われる会員をご推薦ください。

- **理事長:** 理事長は執行役員会の活動を統括し、本会の事業を指導し、周知させる全般的な責任を有する。理事長は執行役員会の議長となる。
- **副理事長:** 副理事長は理事長不在の際に会議の議長を務め、理事長の責務を補佐する。副理事長は総務委員会の委員長を務める。
- **会員担当理事:** 会員担当理事は本会の会員の記録を管理し、新しい準支部ないし準分野別研究部会、支部および分野別研究部会の設立のための調整をはかり、これらのグループと本会の全国組織との関係に関わる方針を定め、実地する責任を持つ。またこれらのグループの会員の獲得を支援する責任を持つ。
- **企画担当理事:** 企画担当理事は年次大会の準備を監督し、支部や分野別研究部会のために特別なプログラムを企画する。
- **広報担当理事:** 広報担当理事は本会の広報活動を統括し、他の教育団体、報道機関、産業界との交流を促進し、本会と賛助会員との連絡につとめる。
- **書記担当理事:** 書記担当理事は執行役員会会議及び通常総会の議事録を作成、管理し、本会の活動について支部と分野別研究部会に周知をはかる責任を持つ。また記録管理委員会の議長をと務める。

- 財務担当理事: 財務担当理事は全ての経理記録を管理し、本会の資金を収集し、配分する責任を負う。また年次総会において本会の財務状況の報告を行う。
- 監事: 監事は理事の業務執行の状況と。この法人の財産の状況を監査する事。理事の業務執行の状況またはこの法人の財産の状況について述べる事。監査の結果、この法人の業務または財産に関し不正の行為または法令若しくは定款に違反する重大な事実があることを発見した場合はこれを総会または所轄庁に報告すること。

任期: 全ての役職において任期は北九州の年次総会（2006年11月2日-5日開催）直後より2年間とする。

推薦は自薦、他薦を問わないが、いずれもJALT正会員である事。連絡時には推薦する者、推薦される者の会員番号と支部名を明記。以下の連絡先アントニー・ロビンズに手紙またはEメールで推薦文をお送りください。

アントニー・ロビンズ
選挙管理委員会 委員長
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ESP special issue: Call for contributors

The Language Teacher is seeking papers (1,500–2,000 words) related to ESP teaching and learning in Japanese post-secondary and professional contexts, which may include English for business, hospitality, medical, technical, or tourism purposes, among others. Topics should be research or classroom based and may focus on the challenges teachers, materials designers, curriculum innovators, program administrators, and students face in such contexts. Articles about new or innovative ways to teach ESP content, design ESP-related materials, or manage ESP programs are welcome. Additionally, please consider submitting shorter articles to the *My Share* column about practical ways to deal with ESP content in the classroom. If you are interested in writing a paper for this special edition of *TLT* or have suggestions which might fit with the above themes, please contact Heidi Evans or Todd Squires <esp_jalt@yahoo.com>. The deadline for manuscript submissions is March 31, 2006. Articles should be completed and ready for editing by May 1, 2006.

JALT Hokkaido Journal

The *JALT Hokkaido Journal* is a refereed online journal that appears once a year, featuring theoretically grounded reports of research

and discussion of central issues in foreign language teaching and learning, with a focus on Japanese contexts. We especially encourage investigations which apply theory to practice and include original data collected and analyzed by the author. Those interested in submitting a paper should visit <jalthokkaido.net/html/jh%20journal/jh_journal.htm> or <jalthokkaido.net/index.htm> and follow the journal link. The deadline for submissions is June 30, 2006.

Universal chapter and SIG web access

JALT chapters and SIGs have webpages available that contain upcoming meeting information and officer contact details. These pages are linked to the main JALT website and are viewable at <jalt.org/groups/your-chapter-name>, where *your-chapter-name* is the name of the chapter or SIG you wish to contact (e.g., <jalt.org/westtokyo>; <jalt.org/CUE>). In some cases, chapters or SIGs may not have provided up-to-date information; this will be reflected on the webpages. Queries can be directed to the JALT (English) web editor, Paul Collett, <editor-e@jalt.org>.

Staff recruitment

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

...with Theron Muller

<memprofile@jalt-publications.org>



Member's Profile is a column where members are invited to introduce themselves to *TLT's* readership in 750 words or less. Research interests, professional affiliations, current projects, and personal professional development are all appropriate content. Please address inquiries to the editor.

THIS MONTH in *Member's Profile* Neil Heffernan profiles his involvement as Kyoto JALT Publicity Chair and his contributions to the field as a teacher researcher. Contributor to several internationally refereed journals, he has published on diverse subjects, including TOEFL and the process of publishing textbooks. Hopefully you will find his experience inspires your own research and involvement with JALT.

MEMBER'S PROFILE

Neil Heffernan

My name is Neil Heffernan, and I have been a member of JALT since 2002. I find it a good organization and a great place to meet new people. Being actively involved has certainly opened doors for me. Further, I have been the Kyoto JALT Publicity Chair for the past year and a half and have really enjoyed helping out at the chapter level. There is so much work that goes into running the organization, and I think members should be thankful for the people who make the journals and conferences look good and run smoothly.

I have been in Japan since 1995 and worked at several *eikaiwas* before starting at Ritsumeikan University as first lecturer then senior lecturer from 2002–2006. Working at a Japanese university is an interesting experience, and it really helped me to gain recognition, which in turn contributed to my professional success. I will be moving on to Hiroshima Shudo University from this academic year and am looking forward to the challenge of the new position.

Since becoming a university lecturer, I have done quite a bit of research into TOEFL, focusing on how the use of specific learning strategies can

significantly increase scores on the test. My previous position included the responsibility of TOEFL coordinator, which gave me hands-on experience with the test. Another good source of experience came from teaching TOEFL preparation courses, which gave me access to students for research. I have published in *The Language Teacher* and other peer-reviewed journals. With the recent increase in competition for positions at Japanese universities, publishing is a must for anyone wanting to progress in the field.



I have also published academic papers on other subjects like testing, evaluation, and CALL. Further, presenting at both domestic and international conferences has allowed me to see what others are doing in the profession. A lot of teachers out there are doing great things; maybe something we can all aspire to! I have also been on the board of readers for the *JALT Conference Proceedings* the past 2 years. This has given me insight into the process of publishing, insight which could help aspiring authors get their own work published.

My current research interests include a peer evaluation research project investigating student and teacher attitudes toward oral presentations. My co-author and I distributed surveys to 304 students and 60 native and nonnative teachers to compare their attitudes toward such presentations. We found some interesting results and plan to present them at JACET's 2006 conference.

Also, I have just completed a large-scale CALL project that tested an online database created by my co-author, Andrew Johnson, over the past year and a half. It was a short-readings project based on movie trailers and tested with students over a 10-week period to see if their comprehension of target vocabulary increased after completing 15 short readings. The project was in conjunction with a website I am involved with <www.

english-trailers.com> (also by Johnson) that is always looking for new ideas and contributions. If you are interested in CALL or using video clips in your classes, you should check it out. The results of the short-readings project will be published soon in *The JALT CALL Journal*. Collaborating with someone gives authors the chance to gain insight into what others are thinking and share their experience with their collaborators. These are necessary skills for teachers wanting to broaden their horizons and gain more knowledge from what they do.

Finally, I have co-authored two textbooks designed to assist teachers and learners in the

classroom. The first, *Top-Notch Students: Study Skills for Japanese University Students* was published in 2005 and my presentation at JALT2004 in Nara was tied to this book. It and my subsequent article in the *JALT2004 Proceedings* dealt with how to publish a textbook in the field while hopefully circumventing the red tape involved in such a project. My second textbook is entitled *Core Perspective: Access to Fundamental Paragraph Writing* and will be available later this year. Both are published by Macmillan.

I am looking forward to the coming academic year and hope we can all work to make the JALT organization the best it can be.

Showcase

This month in Showcase Kip Cates takes up the theme of global education on Peace Boat, relating some of his experiences as a 2005 Peace Boat volunteer.

Kip Cates

Imagine making a round-the-world educational voyage by ship; visiting exotic ports of call in Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America, meeting local people in Vietnam, Egypt, Cuba, and Peru; studying about ethnic cultures, rainforests, and landmines; then visiting places ranging from Palestinian refugee camps and African AIDS hospitals to Machu Picchu and Easter Island. A fantasy? Not at all. All this happens every year through a unique experience called *Peace Boat*.

Peace Boat is a Japan-based non-profit organization that works to promote peace, human rights, sustainable development, and respect for the environment. Several times a year it runs a 3-month world cruise on a giant passenger ship which holds 900 guests and 300 crew—a floating educational community which visits 15-20 ports around the world.

In spring 2005, I had the honor of taking part in Peace Boat's 49th voyage as a guest speaker, teacher trainer, and consultant on global education, international understanding, and language teaching. The invitation was to join the boat for one week during the India to Kenya portion of the cruise. During my time on board, I gave lectures and seminars to passengers on peace, world citizenship, and language learning. I also had a chance to work with a dynamic group of teachers in Peace Boat's *Global English/Español*

Training (GET) program. This on-board language program gives passengers the chance to take daily language lessons in English and Spanish from native speaker teachers, then immediately use their language skills in each port of call with real people from the local culture.



Kip Cates and his family in front of the Peace Boat

The highlights of the trip included flying fish, breakfasts on deck, passing the equator, on-board social events, and a 2-day safari in Mombasa. But most impressive were the people on board: the energetic Peace Boat staff, the other guest speakers (NGO activists, documentary film-makers, cultural experts from Kenya and Korea), and the hundreds of young Japanese eager to visit other countries, learn foreign languages, study global issues, and contribute to making the world a better place.

Peace Boat provides a unique international experience that interested language teachers and students should definitely try. Check out their website at: <www.peaceboat.org>.

...with Joyce Cunningham & Mariko Miyao

<grassroots@jalt-publications.org>



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



In this issue, Steven Nishida (JALT VP), Leslie Ono (JALT's JET Liaison), and Jessie Elisberg (AJET Education Liaison) write about how, in 2006, JALT continues to *reach out* domestically by opening its arms to JET programme participants. Charles Kowalski follows with a fascinating report about the many story-telling activities at JALT2005.

The JET programme and JALT

At JALT's summer Executive Board Meeting (EBM) in 2005, SIG and chapter representatives met JALT's JET Liaison, Leslie Ono, and had a chance to speak with her about future cooperation and collaboration with the JET community. By the end of the meeting, EBM representatives had agreed to reaffirm JALT's commitment to support current JETs and their nonnative counterparts. Dis-



cussions on this front continued during the annual conference in Shizuoka, where we were joined by Jessie Elisberg, Education Liaison to AJET (The Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching). Following our face-to-face talks at the conference, Leslie and Jessie submitted a number of excellent recommendations for building stronger ties, and these were quickly approved by the Board of Directors at our meeting in late October.

Below is a brief overview of the JET programme and AJET, followed by an outline of JALT and AJET's joint proposal to foster ties at both local and national levels.

The JET programme

The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) programme was founded in 1987 in an effort to increase mutual understanding between Japan and other nations. The primary aims of the programme are to promote internationalization at a local level in Japanese communities, improve foreign language education, and develop international exchange. To that end, JET programme participants work as either ALTs (Assistant Language Teachers), CIRs (Coordinators for International Relations), or SEAs (Sports Exchange Advisors). The JET programme has grown to become one of the largest international exchange programmes in the world. From a modest start at 848 participants representing four countries in 1987, the programme has grown to include 5,853 participants from 44 countries. The JET programme is administered by the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) in cooperation with a number of government ministries, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT).

AJET: Supporting the JET programme since 1987



The Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching (AJET) is an independent organization comprised of current members of the JET programme. AJET was established in 1987 during the first JET programme orientation in Tokyo. Over the years, AJET has grown considerably, all the while working to improve the JET programme for both participants and con-



The AJET table at JALT2005

tracting organizations. Today, members of AJET contribute to the JET programme in many ways, such as organizing workshops and information fairs for JET conferences, promoting a variety of events both locally and nationally, and administering a number of programmes (including the AJET Teaching Awards Programme and the AJET Games sports events). In addition, members of the AJET National Council meet twice annually with representatives from CLAIR, MEXT, and other government ministries to exchange opinions and present reports about issues pertinent to current JETs. The AJET National Council also provides a link between the different local chapters of AJET, which are present in nearly every prefecture of Japan. This year, the AJET Education Liaison will be working with JALT and the AJET National Council to develop new programmes that aim to provide professional support and developmental opportunities to JET programme participants, as well as strengthen ties between the JET programme and JALT.

JALT-AJET grassroots outreach campaign

The grassroots outreach campaign will put local JET constituencies in direct contact with JALT chapter and SIG representatives, encouraging

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campaign now.
Offer ends on March 31!**

greater cross-participation in local events and activities. Local JALT members will be encouraged to offer their expertise—as teacher trainers and career advisors—at annual JET conferences and seminars. Meanwhile, JET participants, along with their nonnative counterparts, will be encouraged to get more involved in local JALT meetings and mini-conferences. We have taken the first step toward achieving these goals by setting up email forwarders and announcement protocols to facilitate a more seamless flow of communication between our organizations.

JALT-AJET nationwide outreach campaign

Our nationwide outreach campaign will allow JET participants to receive the benefits of JALT membership at a reduced rate during the 2006–2007 JET contract period. Furthermore, current JETs will receive discounted annual conference rates at JALT2006. Plans are also underway for nationally-coordinated teacher training seminars, team-teaching discussions at JALT Forums online, and *TLT* articles featuring JET programme-related issues.

JALT and AJET are now in a better position than ever to ensure that JET participants and their nonnative counterparts throughout Japan are entering the classroom with the tools and resources they need. Former JET participants and those interested in getting involved, please contact Leslie Ono <jet-liaison@jalt.org> or Steven Nishida <vp@jalt.org>.

*Reported by Steven Nishida (JALT VP),
Leslie Ono (JALT's JET Liaison),
and Jessie Elisberg (AJET Education Liaison)*

Is your JALT membership lapsing soon?

Then be sure to renew early!

Renewing your membership early helps us to help you! Your JALT publications will continue to arrive on time, and you'll be able to access membership services at JALT events and online.

It's easy! Just follow the links to "Membership" at <jalt.org>, or use the form at the back of every issue of *TLT*!

A space for sharing stories

"Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls trapped in adult bodies, and any angels, archangels, or unseen spirits that may be here among us today: Welcome to the Story Space, a place for all the stories floating through the air to stop and tell themselves through us."

So began the first session of the Story Space. In keeping with the "Sharing Our Stories" theme of JALT2005, it was deemed fitting to create an informal, relaxed space where participants could share their stories over a cup of tea, outside the framework of formal presentations. These stories could be polished (or unpolished) storytelling performances, story-based teaching ideas, or personal stories from inside or outside the classroom.

In the first session on Saturday afternoon, Renée Sawazaki inaugurated the festivities by telling an African folk tale, "The Red and Black Coat," in which a trickster, intending to provoke two best friends to fight, ends up teaching them a lesson on respecting other points of view. Pauline Baird, using a series of pictures in classic Japanese *kamishibai* style, told of a breakthrough in the classroom in her story, "The Poacher and the Marijuana Joint." Robert Long introduced his own contributions to the world's wisdom tales in "New Aesop Fables." Ellen Head shared another African story, "The Children of Wax," which left us pondering the question, "There are those who are meant to stay home, and there are those who are meant to wander around the world; which am I?" And Justine Ross displayed a collection of children's books, written and richly illustrated by students at her university.

In the second session on Saturday afternoon, Chris Cuadra treated us to a recitation of contemporary Philippine poetry in English, including works by his father, which he also shared with the larger JALT audience at the "Stories, Jazz, Wine, and Cheese" event. Mitsuko Matsuo introduced the popular Japanese children's book characters Guri and Gura by staging a puppet play in which the duo make sponge cake, which we were kindly allowed to sample. Midori Iwano demonstrated the "Stories to Solve" activity with a story about heaven and hell. Carl Adams gave a dramatic rendition of the literary work, "Mr. Happy," and shared some classroom activities as well. Miki Yokoyama added a touch of Thai flavor by sharing

"The Stories of Fruit in Thailand," which led to a discussion on the symbolism of fruit in many oral traditions throughout the world. Robert Baines shared a classroom activity, "Creating Hot Seat Stories," where students worked together to create an original story while getting plenty of speaking and listening practice. Patrick Jackson's jigsaw-listening approach to the "Parrot Story" was in a similar vein.

In the final session on Sunday afternoon, Curtis Kelly demonstrated his flair for heartwarming stories with "Sue's Story," which has been a focal point for his class on "The Psychology of Love." Stan Pederson gave a reading, along with follow-up activities, based on his illustrated book *Rabbit Goes to School*—a story with resonance for many native English teachers in Japan, who have found themselves going "across the ocean, and over the clouds, and around the world..." on their way to school. As a surprise treat, we heard another story on the *strangers in a strange land* theme when Arlen Gargagliano, visiting all the way from New York, shared the story of her grandfather's misadventures coming to the United States from Italy armed only with the words "Apple-a pie!" Continuing this theme, Natalie Toba spoke of her experiences coming to teach in Japan for the first time. And finally, just in time for Halloween, Steve Martin shared some stories and activities with a touch of the macabre, including an exercise based on Shel Silverstein's poem, "Someone Ate the Baby."

Once you start telling stories, of course, there's no knowing where it will end. Stories are retold and reshaped, and inspire other stories. There was not enough time for all the stories flying through the air in Shizuoka to tell themselves, so they chose to take flight into the borderless realm of cyberspace, and the "Story Space Online," a virtual fireside for all language teachers with an interest in storytelling, was born. Anyone interested is welcome to pull up a virtual chair at <groups.yahoo.com/group/storyspace>.

And thus it was that, when the Granship set sail in 2005, it carried these tellers and listeners upon waves of stories to distant harbors heretofore undiscovered. May more such ships ply these waves in the future, to carry us to new and exciting destinations!

Reported by Charles Kowalski, Tokai University,
<kowalski@tbd.t-com.ne.jp>

...with Mary Hughes

<sig-news@jalt-publications.org>



JALT currently has 17 Special Interest Groups (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.

THIS MONTH'S column features the abstracts of the Plenary Speakers for the Fifth Annual JALT Pan-SIG Conference 2006, titled *Authentic Communication: Process and Purpose*. It will be sponsored by the JALT Bilingualism, Pragmatics, Testing and Evaluation, and Teacher Education SIGs, as well as the Shizuoka chapter. It will be held at the Shimizu Campus of Tokai University in Miho-Shimizu, Shizuoka on May 13–14. Each of the three plenary speakers will address separate issues of the conference theme.

Pan-SIG 2006 speaker abstracts

James Dean Brown

University of Hawai'i at Manoa

Authentic Communication: whyzit importan' ta teach reduced forms?

James Dean Brown's plenary speech will focus on the evolution of his awareness of the importance of teaching continuous speech forms in second language classrooms, including his recent efforts to compile the literature on the topic and to formulate the rules underlying continuous speech. Brown will describe the reduced form dictations developed to test connected speech comprehension during his term at the Guangzhou English Language Center in the People's Republic of China. Then, he will situate connected speech within the context of the general features of oral proficiency, which include contextual constraints, linguistic tools, and the pragmatics that link the constraints and tools. He will define **connected speech** and its directly related key terminology. Having built up a critical apparatus for identifying the features of continuous speech forms, Brown will discuss the stigma of *lazy English*, attending to the associated issues of *proper English* and the distinction between connected and colloquial speech. This distinction feeds into the debate over whether we can and should teach connected speech. He will briefly outline the current state of research and describe two new books on connected speech, and he will consider the issue of whether continuous speech forms should be taught for listening, or speaking, or both.

John C. Maher

International Christian University, Tokyo

Knowing About Language, Knowing About Bilingualism: A "Language Awareness" Project in Japan

Language awareness refers to what people consciously know, believe, and think about language—factors which underpin the formation of our personal assumptions about language. In his plenary speech, John C. Maher will describe a language awareness study which explored the knowledge and beliefs about language held by educated young people in Japan, in particular their attitudes towards language's historical, geographical, and developmental aspects. Its aim was not to seek confirmation of stereotypes but rather to obtain a valid picture of language attitudes in contemporary Japanese society. Maher will provide a background to the study by explaining that people hold various opinions about language, and that the range and detail of their knowledge are not uniform. He will show that a person's knowledge about language is connected to factors such as their gender, ethnicity, experience of dialect and migration, religion, and social class. The study used data from approximately 1,000 first-year first-semester college students from 15 four-year universities throughout Japan. A basic assumption of the survey was built on the view that Japan is multilingual and multicultural, making the survey a part of a wider study in a continuing paradigm whereby Japan's language situation is described as historically and contemporaneously multilingual and linguistically diverse.

Donna Tatsuki

Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, Kobe

What is Authenticity?

Genuineness, realism, truthfulness, validity, reliability, undisputed credibility, and legitimacy are just some of the synonyms that have been used as equivalent terms for authenticity. Donna Tatsuki will begin her plenary speech by closely examining these synonyms to reveal the existence of several different conceptualizations of authenticity. She will show that each conceptualization implies substantive differences in what is meant by authenticity in relation to teaching materials and what constitutes authenticity of context, task, or activity. Tatsuki will address the issue that not all language teachers or language learners are convinced that authenticity is an issue of importance. They maintain that language should be an object of study that aims to tease out rules and the system of grammatical patterns underlying language. This segregated view of the study of language is represented by invented sentences which are disconnected from ordinary discourse. Tatsuki will argue that such beliefs about the nature of language and language learning have directly affected the development and selection of teaching methods and materials. However, language teachers who are engaging in conversation analysis and in large-corpus linguistic analysis are starting to challenge this disconnected view by demanding that textbook writers provide evidence that they have collected or consulted natural data in the development of new teaching materials. Tatsuki will conclude her plenary by arguing why we need to reframe, reconsider, or possibly reject our notions of authenticity.

Bilingualism—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 at <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ル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>をご覧ください。

CALL—The JALTCALL 2006 Conference: Designing CALL for Wired and Wireless Environments will be held June 3–4 at Sapporo Gakuin University, located within 15 minutes from the beautiful city of Sapporo in Hokkaido. This year's conference focuses on the design of CALL in varied language learning environments, including wireless environments. The conference organizing committee has particularly encouraged submissions in the following areas: the design and use of CALL in new environments including wireless classrooms, the design and use of CALL for mobile learning, and innovative ways of integrating CALL in and out of the classroom.

One of the plenary speakers for this year's conference is Jozef Colpaert, Professor of Educational Technology, Director R&D of the LINGUAPOLIS Language Institute, and Editor-in-Chief of the CALL Journal (Taylor & Francis). For more information on the conference, submission proposal guidelines, and other CALL related events, please visit our website at <jaltcall.org>. Looking forward to seeing you in Hokkaido!

College and University Educators—Information about what is going on with CUE can be found at <allagash.miyazaki-mu.ac.jp/CUE/>. Please check for regular updates on the 15th of each month.

Gender Awareness in Language Education—The purpose of the GALE SIG is to research gender and its implications for language learning, teaching, and training. We welcome submissions for our newsletter (published three times a year: spring, summer, and fall) on both theoretical and practical topics related to the SIG's aims. Book reviews, lesson plans, think pieces, poetry—basically anything related to gender and language teaching—are welcomed. To see past newsletters, please visit our website at <www.tokyoprogressive.org.uk/gale>. To join GALE, please use the form in the back of this *TLT* or contact the membership chair, Diane Nagatomo <dianenagatomo@m2.pbc.ne.jp>.

Global Issues in Language Education—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! The GILE website is <www.jalt.org/global/sig/>. For further information, please contact Kip Cates <kcates@fed.tottori-u.ac.jp>.

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

Learner Development—We are an active, friendly group of teachers committed to exploring connections between learning, teaching, and learning to learn/teach. We are planning a day of *Learner Development: Work in Progress* to take place in conjunction with the Osaka Chapter in the center of Osaka in July. The day is likely to feature an invited speaker in the morning and a workshop with multiple presenters in the afternoon. If you are interested, please contact Ellen Head <ellenkobe@yahoo.com> or Bob Sanderson <sanderson808@hotmail.com> for more information. Looking ahead to November, we are also planning the LD Forum at JALT2006 in Kitakyushu. The forum will echo the theme of the main conference, *Learner Communities, Identity, and Motivation in our Contexts*. If you would like to present at either the Osaka Work in Progress Day or the forum in Kitakyushu, please contact Martha Robertson <marrober@indiana.edu> or Stacey Vye <stacey.vye@gmail.com>. For further information about the Learner Development SIG in general, please check out the LD website <coyote.miyazaki-mu.ac.jp/learnerdev/> or contact the co-coordinators Stacey Vye <stacey.vye@gmail.com> or Marlen Harrison <scenteur7@yahoo.com>.

Materials Writers—The MW SIG has moved into the new year with a lot of ideas and various plans in the works. There are plans for mini-conferences and participation in the upcoming Pan-SIG conference. The MW SIG group email list is active with file sharing and a materials contest, in addition to the regular sharing of information and ideas. We welcome your participation and input. Feel free to contact the co-coordinator for more information.

Pragmatics—The Pragmatics SIG will co-sponsor the Fifth Annual JALT Pan-SIG Conference to be held at the Shimizu campus of Tokai University on May 13–14. Other sponsors include the Bilingualism, Teacher Education, and Testing and Evaluation SIGs, along with the Shizuoka chapter. This year's theme is *Authentic Communication: Process and Purpose*. For further information, please visit <www.jalt.org/pansig/2006/>.

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 list-serv <groups.yahoo.com/group/PALE_Group/>. For information on events, visit <www.jalt.org/groups/PALE>.

Pronunciation—The Pronunciation SIG is seeking new members. This SIG is regrouping, with the intent to discuss, share, and promote ideas, processes, and up-to-date research regarding pronunciation teaching and learning. If you are interested in joining or would like more information, please contact Susan Gould <gould@lc.chubu.ac.jp> or <suzytalk@yahoo.com>.

Teaching Children—JALT Junior 5 will take place in Kitakyushu at JALT2006. You are cordially invited to join us. If you have ideas you would like to share, please submit a presentation proposal to the JALT website before April 28. We look forward to seeing you there! In the meantime, please join our mailing list <tcsig@yahoogroups.com>. We also publish a bilingual newsletter four times a year, full of teaching ideas. For information, please visit <www.tcsigjalt.org>.

今年は北九州のJALT2006年度全国大会でJALTジュニアを開催します！皆様の参加を歓迎いたします。他の人に伝えたいアイデアをお持ちでしたら、2006年4月28日までに是非発表の企画書をこちらのウェブ サイト

<www.conferences.jalt.org/2006>を通して、提出してください。日本語での講演、小学校英語に関しての講演は特に歓迎します。北九州でまたお会いできますよう！それ以前でも<tcsig@yahoogroups.com>に連絡いただければ、私たちの活動に参加できます。また素敵なアイデア満載のバイリンガル機関紙も年4回発行しています。興味のある方は<www.tcsigjalt.org>を参照してください。

Teacher Education—The TED SIG and the Okayama JALT chapter will host a 2-day conference on Professional Development in EFL on October 7–8 at Okayama University in Okayama. For further details, including a call for papers, please visit the TED SIG website <jalt.org/teach> and see this month's *TLT* Conference Calendar.

Teaching Older Learners—Spring has come. Can't you feel it as the trees are starting to come into bud? TOL became an official SIG last year and is making enjoyable and educational plans for the JALT2006 Conference. But you don't need to wait till we meet in Kitakyushu. You can join us and take part in a TOL project now. If you ever thought that you would like to contribute your knowledge and experiences of teaching English in an aging Japanese society, please contact the coordinator, Emi Itoi, <futakuu@nifty.com>. We look forward to meeting you soon. For more information about TOL, please look at our website <www.eigosenmon.com/tolsig/>.

Take advantage of the “One Free SIG” campaign now. Offer ends on March 31!

For two exciting years, we've run a “One Free SIG” campaign to encourage our members to sign up and sample one of JALT's 17 dynamic Special Interest Groups (SIGs). We hope this extended campaign has given you all a chance to try out one of our SIGs and to explore the unique work done by each interest group in its respective field. At the end of March, this special “One Free SIG” campaign draws to a close. However, we warmly encourage you to continue your explorations into the wonderful world of SIGs after the campaign finishes. If, through the “One Free SIG” campaign, you've found a Special Interest Group that matches your interests, we invite you to continue as a paying member to benefit from the variety of news, information, and events provided by each SIG. If you haven't yet started exploring the wide variety of SIGs offered by JALT, please do so! Membership is only ¥1500 per SIG per year, and brings you a wealth of specialized knowledge through the information-packed newsletters offered by each SIG. Don't be left out! Try a SIG today!

...with Aleda Krause

<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.



CHAPTER EVENTS ONLINE

You can access all of JALT's events online at:

<www.jalt.org/calendar>.

If you have a QRcode-capable mobile phone, use the image on the left.

SPRING IS in the air! Isn't it time to visit your local chapter and add some fresh ideas to your repertoire? Don't forget: you can check the JALT calendar <jalt.org/calendar/> to find out the latest information about what's going on.

Fukuoka—Understanding Nonverbal Communication by **Fred Anderson**, Siebold University of Nagasaki. Nonverbal communication is estimated to account for 70% of face-to-face communication. However, it is more difficult to analyze than verbal communication and tends to be more subconscious. In this lecture and workshop, we will examine aspects of nonverbal communication—including the use of gestures, space, and time—and consider how it contrasts with (or complements) verbal communication. We will also discuss ways of integrating the study of nonverbal communication into the curriculum. *Saturday March 18, 19:00-21:00; Fukuoka YMCA, 3F Sanwa Bldg 1-10-24, Tenjin, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka City; one-day members ¥1000.*

Hiroshima—Teaching English to Children by **Yukiko Shima**, Tokyo University of Science, Yamaguchi, and TBA. During the first hour, Shima will introduce the Look and Listen Method. This is a scientifically organized phonics approach for teaching reading to young learners. Shima manages a teacher training course for elementary school English teachers in Yamaguchi Prefecture. The second speaker will be announced on the JALT calendar

homepage. *Sunday March 19, 15:00-17:00; Hiroshima Peace Park, International Conference Center 3F; one-day members ¥500.*

Hokkaido—Adapting the Han Group Organization for Use in College English Classes by **Cindy Edwards**, Hokkaido Musashi Women's Junior College. This presentation explores the group-based class management style of Japanese preschool and elementary school teachers and applies the concepts of peer management, peer cooperation, and shared responsibility to a 1st-year college discussion class taught by a non-Japanese teacher. To facilitate tasks, students work in a six-member *han* led by a group leader, who summarizes the results to the whole class of 36 students and submits a one-page report. *Sunday March 26, 13:30-16:00; Hokkai Gakuen University, Toyohira-ku, Sapporo; one-day members ¥500.*

Kitakyushu—Can IT Solve Age-Old Teaching Problems? by **Mark Cowan**. How are teachers evaluated? Does lesson preparation matter? How are students' abilities evaluated? The presenter will demonstrate two information systems that can provide answers to these questions. E-LessonPlanner <www.e-lessonplan.com> is an online lesson planning system that emails a lesson plan to students before the lesson. E-evaluator <www.e-lessonplan.com/e-evaluator01_en.htm> is a system for evaluating students' language ability. The teacher writes an evaluation in English and a Japanese copy is emailed to the student. *Saturday March 11, 18:30-20:30; Kitakyushu International Conference Center, Room 31 (a 5-minute walk from the Kokura train station); one-day members ¥1000.*

Matsuyama—Synergize Your Students' Skills! and Read Your Way to Better English! by **Euan McKirdy**, Macmillan LanguageHouse. McKirdy examines student skills and discusses ways to use input texts as springboards to promote and encourage student interaction in the classroom. He also looks at graded readers and discusses the merits of implementing an extensive reading program. *Sunday March 12, 14:15-16:20; Shinonome High School Kinenkan 4F; free for all.*

Nagasaki—Spring Plans. Best wishes for cherry blossom viewing season to everyone. At press time, we did not have a meeting confirmed for March, but check with us closer to the dates—or tell us if you happen to have any requests and suggestions for the rest of the year. For email

contacts, as well as news and event updates, go to our homepage <www.kyushuelt.com/jalt/nagasaki.html>, or you can also keep in touch with us by signing up for our monthly email newsletter <www.kyushuelt.com/jalt/nagamail.php3>.

Nagoya—Using Picture Books in the Lesson by **Motoko Mori**, teacher trainer at Education Network, lecturer at Matsuka Phonics Institute. This seminar introduces how to use picture books in the lesson, not just reading them for fun. There are many ways to expand the material in a picture book. Worksheets, activities, and songs will be included. *Sunday March 12, 13:30-16:00; Nagoya International Center 3F, Lecture Room 2; one-day members ¥1000.*

Omiya—Music in the EFL Classroom by **Steven Morgan**, Daito Bunka University. Most teachers include music and songs in their grab bag of lighter classroom activities. Because music has played that *lighter* role in the classroom, little research has been done into the potential it holds for teaching fundamental language concepts and developing basic language competencies. This presentation will look at what music and language have in common. The focus will be on children, but the ideas and materials will interest those who teach students of all ages. *Sunday March 12, 14:00-17:00; Sakuragi Kominkan 5F (near Omiya Station, west exit, see map <jalt.org/chapters/omiya/map.htm#sakuragi>); one-day members ¥1000.*

Osaka—To be announced by Arudou Debito. Details soon: <www.osakajalt.org/>. *Friday March 3, 18:15-20:45; Osaka City Municipal Lifelong Learning Center, Umeda's Dai-2 Bldg. 5F, t: 06-6345-5000; members ¥500, one-day members ¥1500.*

Sendai—Discussion: Issues in ELT Education. The March meeting will be an informal discussion of issues we face as English teachers. The topics will range from the highly practical (classroom management) to the more abstract. Bring your ideas, challenges, . . . and yourself. *Sunday March 26, 14:00-17:00; Sendai Mediatheque, see map <www.smt.city.sendai.jp/en/info/access/>; one-day members ¥1000.*

Shinshu—The Second Annual Mini-Colloquium: Researching ELT in the Japanese Context by **Greg Birch, Theron Muller, Joel Thomas, Sue Fraser, Tetsu Osada, and Mark Brierley**, in association with the Shinshu ELT Research Group. This will be a day of 20–25 minute academic presentations

for teachers and researchers with 10–15 minutes Q and A time for discussion and feedback to improve that research. It is intended as a platform for researchers wishing to polish and improve their work in a constructive environment. For further details: <www.eltresearch.com>. General enquiries about the event: John Adamson at 0266-288070 or <johnadamson@eltresearch.com>. *Sunday March 19, 10:00-15:30; Seisen Jogakuin College, Nagano; free for all.*

Toyohashi—A Magical Journey Through English Land by **Lesley Ito**. Sponsored by Longman, this is a complete course overview of *English Land*, featuring a unit walk-through of all six levels. Join the presenter on an adventure through carefully sequenced age appropriate activities, combined with the perfect selection of Disney characters, stories, and DVD movie clips designed specifically for each age group. Discover the difference in bringing English to life whether you're teaching 6-year-olds, 8-year-olds or 11-year-olds. *Sunday March 26, 13:30-16:00; Aichi University, Bldg. 5, Room 543; free for all.*

Yamagata—Beat Generation Literature in America by **Chris Douthit**. The 1950s was a revolutionary time in American literature because of a group of hip freethinkers from San Francisco called the Beats, whose style, candor, and subject matter broke taboos and opened discussion about sexuality, gender, peace, environmentalism, and many topics that still inspire heated debate today. Focusing on some of the figures in the Beat movement (Jack Kerouac, Gary Snyder, Allen Ginsberg) and their influences (especially Buddhism), we will investigate how a fringe literary group became one of the defining elements of an era. *Saturday March 11, 13:30-15:30; Yamagata Kajo Kominkan Sogo Gakushu Center; one-day members ¥800.*

Yokohama—Fun Activities with Junior- and Senior-High Learners by **Jonathan Robinson**, Oxford University Press. Are you running out of ideas? Here's your chance to learn from and share your ideas with other teaching professionals. During this presentation you will learn how to make your activities more effective while achieving your lesson goals. Each activity introduced will have your students moving with and speaking English in no time. Come along and join the fun! *Sunday March 12, 14:00-16:30; Ginou Bunka Kaikan (Skills & Culture Center) near JR Kannai & Yokohama Subway Isezakichojamachi (see map <yojalt.bravehost.com>); one-day members ¥1000.*

...with Heather Sparrow

<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 back of each issue.

Kitakyushu: December—*Managing Students' Online Learning with MOODLE* by Malcolm Swanson and Nigel Stott. Swanson introduced *MOODLE*, which is a course management system, along with similar programs such as *WebCT*, *Blackboard*, and *Desire2Learn*. Advantages of *MOODLE* over others are that it is free, and, as an open source offering, it is in a state of constant development as well as being reasonably easily installed and configured. It is very adaptable and extendible to different needs. For example, the *Hot Potatoes* program works well with it.

Online courses such as self-checking quizzes, assignments, discussion forums, writing journals, surveys, lessons, resources, and so forth, can be made with the *MOODLE* system. It is being used by educators in a wide variety of institutions around the world, not just in language teaching but in all subjects for all ages, for distance learning as well as in classrooms.

Stott showed how listening and reading comprehension sites can be assigned for homework and checked online, freeing class time for speaking activities. His students read and comment on four other student essays online as well as submitting work for the instructor to correct and mark. By seeing various examples of students' work, we were able to get an idea of what was possible with this system.

Reported by Dave Pite

**Take advantage of the
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Offer ends on March 31!**



**Community,
Identity, Motivation
Kitakyushu, Japan
Nov. 2–5, 2006
<conferences.jalt.
org/2006/>**

Kobe: November—*Oral Testing for Communication Classes* by Rebecca Calman and Carolyn Saylor-Loof. Calman and Saylor-Loof presented a method of testing that helped provide a framework and successfully motivated students in a 13-week communication skills course. They justified using student-student pairs in preference to teacher-student interviews to make students more comfortable, enabling them to find common topics to talk about which more closely resembled a real-life conversation. The benefits of an oral test, as opposed to giving a grade for participation, for example, are that a test provides a framework and a focus, gives a sense of accomplishment, and clearly shows both student and teacher the areas of strength and weakness in the student's conversation. Key points in delivering the course were clearly establishing the fact that there is a test and the criteria to be used. Skills tested included greetings, passing back questions, maintaining the conversation, active listening, and finishing the conversation. In the test, two pairs of students are chosen randomly (to avoid students *scripting* it), and they conduct conversations simultaneously on any number of predetermined topics. When the teacher decides she has heard enough (after about 5 minutes usually) for grading purposes, a signal is given to wind up the conversation.

The audience was invited to try out the method of evaluating two conversations simultaneously. Though most found it easy to focus on a particular conversation or interlocutor, some made mistakes by marking in the wrong column, highlighting the need for a clear layout on the evaluation sheet that matches the seating (or standing) arrangement of the students being tested. Positioning oneself carefully to ensure a clear view of students' body language was also highlighted. This *two pairs* is a useful way of reducing the amount of time spent on testing in large classes and also serves to reduce the amount of stress on the students in the test.

Reported by David Heywood

Kobe: December—*A Drama Approach: Engaging Learners in Their Own Learning* by Steve Brown. Brown's presentation sought to demonstrate how drama and learner autonomy, two of his main interests, can be applied in the classroom. He suggested that autonomy and drama have shared principles of learner control, interdependence, and critical reflection, the latter being something that many students have rarely experienced. The teacher's role is also similar—not directing and showing how, but encouraging questioning and drawing out students' knowledge. When it comes to practice, the need for warm-ups was stressed. Various games and activities can be done to get students thinking in different ways and become more aware how meaning is created; such things as situation, body language, and tone being just as important as the words uttered. Brown presented three projects given to his students that take from 1 to 6 weeks and give students differing levels of autonomy. Video recordings were shown to demonstrate the student performances in one particular project. At the end of the project, students conduct peer evaluations, focusing on both positive points and areas for improvement. After reading the evaluations, students then watch their own recorded performance and write a self-review. At the end of the presentation, Brown, as national president of JALT, held an open mic session focusing on aspects of the presentation.

Reported by David Heywood

Nagasaki: December—*Teaching Language and Intercultural Communication Skills* by Greg Goodmacher and Asako Kajiura. Using their textbook, *This is Culture*, as a basis for the workshop, Goodmacher and Kajiura led us through a

series of pair- and group-work activities, touching on topics such as self-awareness, culture, body language, and stereotypes. They gave us several attractive and thought-provoking ideas for supplementing the text and their dynamic and bright style guaranteed an enjoyable time for all.

Reported by Melodie Cook

Yokohama: January—*Why Do Students Lose Their Motivation?* by Kiwa Arai. What do a monotonous lesson procedure, boring lessons, and bad teacher pronunciation have in common? These three items appear as the top offenders de-motivating all students in Arai's research. Arai is one of the few researchers to date exploring the field of de-motivation. Expanding on her JALT2005 national presentation, Arai explained her study of students' questionnaire ratings on what de-motivates them. Questionnaire items were extrapolated from students' qualitative reporting of de-motivating experiences (Arai, 2004). Items significantly de-motivating to weaker students include uninteresting teaching materials, student inability to communicate with the teacher, and feeling nervous, anxious, or both. Arai's data suggests weaker students tend to more likely respond to de-motivation with strategies such as sleeping in class or quitting.

Arai initiated us into the topic with a teacher version of her research questionnaire. This exercise triggered our personal experience and beliefs on what de-motivates students and how they react. Members were extremely interested to compare their own answers with Arai's results and found the detailed study not only thought provoking but very useful.

Reported by Renata Suzuki

Come on! Get involved!



A JALT membership is more than just a product! It's an opportunity to make a difference. JALT is an organisation committed to the development of professionalism in language teaching and learning. As a JALT member, you can play a part in that by becoming involved. At your local chapter level, there is always a need for speakers, officers, and volunteers. JALT Special Interest Groups need help with events, mini-conferences, and publications. Our annual conferences require a vast team for doing everything from programming to cleaning up. JALT's publications are always on the lookout for committed writers, editors, readers, and proofreaders. So come on! Make a difference!



Get involved! See the JALT Contacts column in every issue of *The Language Teacher*!

For changes and additions, please contact the editor <contacts@jalt-publications.org>. More extensive listings can be found in the annual JALT Directory.

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...with Derek DiMatteo

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

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Niigata-ken—International University of Japan is looking for temporary English Language Instructors to teach in its 2006 summer Intensive English Program for graduate level students from Japan and several other countries. The exact dates have yet to be confirmed, but the contract will probably run from Thursday July 13 through Tuesday September 12. The contract length will be 9 weeks: one week of orientation and debriefing and 8 weeks of teaching. The university is located in Minamiuonumashi, Niigata prefecture, (a mountainous region about 90 minutes by train from Tokyo). **Qualifications:** MA or equivalent in TESL, TEFL, or related field. Experience with intermediate students and intensive programs is highly desirable. Experience with programs in international relations, international management, or cross-cultural communication would be helpful. Familiarity with Windows computers is required. **Duties:** Teach intermediate-level students up to 16 hours per week, assist in testing and materials preparation, attend meetings, write short student reports, and participate in extra-curricular activities. **Salary & Benefits:** ¥875,000 gross. Free accommodation provided on or near the campus. Transportation costs refunded soon after arrival. (No health insurance provided.) **Application materials:** Submit by letter mail or fax a current CV, a short cover letter, and a passport-size photo. **Deadline:** Ongoing. Selected applicants will be offered interviews. **Contact:** Mitsuko Nakajima, IEP Administrative Coordinator, International University of Japan, 777 Kokusai-cho, Minamiuonuma-shi, Niigata-ken 949-7277; f: 0257-79-1187; <iep@iuj.ac.jp>.

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INFORMATION!**

...with Hayo Reinders

<conferences@jalt-publications.org>



New listings are welcome. Please submit information to the editor by the 15th of the month at <conferences@jalt-publications.org>, at least 3 months ahead (4 months for overseas conferences). Thus, March 15 is the deadline for a June conference in Japan or a July conference overseas.

Upcoming Conferences

March 15–18, 2006—The 40th Annual TESOL Convention and Exhibit (TESOL 2006). Tampa, Florida, USA. More than 7,600 ESL and EFL professionals from 96 countries attended TESOL's 39th Annual Convention in San Antonio, Texas in March 2005. Attendees had the opportunity to participate and learn by choosing from more than 900 sessions offered with over 1,674 presenters representing some of the best in the profession. The 2006 conference is expected to be at least equally large. There will also be a doctoral forum. Contact: <conventions@tesol.org>; <www.tesol.org/tesol2006>

March 19, 2006—The Second Annual Mini Colloquium: Local Research by Local Researchers, Seisen Women's College, Nagano. The Shinshu ELT Research Group, in affiliation with Shinshu JALT, would like to solicit proposals for our second annual mini-conference. Our objective is to provide a friendly atmosphere in which beginning presenters can share research or conduct a forum, and receive feedback that might not be available at the national level. Experienced presenters are also welcome. Contact: <2006miniconference@eltresearch.com>; <eltresearch.com>

April 8–12, 2006—40th IATEFL Annual Conference and Exhibition, at the Harrogate International Centre, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, UK. IATEFL holds its International Annual Conference & Exhibition every spring, which is attended by around 1,500 ELT professionals from 70+ countries. It involves a 4-day programme of over 300 talks and workshops and, in addition to giving delegates a chance to meet leading theorists

and writers and exchange ideas with fellow professionals from all sectors of ELT, it enables them to see the latest ELT publications and services in a large resources exhibition involving around 60 ELT-related exhibitors. The plenary speakers will be Michael Swan, Jennifer Coates, Ryuko Kubota, and Bena Gul Peker. Contact: <generalenquiries@iatefl.org>; <www.iatefl.org/conference.asp>

April 14–15, 2006—Qatar TESOL Inaugural International Conference, the College of the North Atlantic in Doha, Qatar. The theme is Best Practices in EFL. Contact: <saydelott@qf.org.qa>; <jhoelker@qf.org.qa>

May 13–14, 2006—The Fifth Annual JALT Pansig Conference (2006): Authentic Communication: Process and Purpose, Tokai University, Shimizu Campus, Miho-Shimizu, Shizuoka, Japan. The past 10 years have been full of discussion about active communication. This conference wishes to build on ideas regarding what makes real communication effective and how we can teach this to our students. It aims to address issues of teacher education, testing, second language acquisition, practical issues, and pragmatics. There are still a few openings for presentation proposals. This conference is sponsored by the JALT Bilingualism, Pragmatics, Testing and Evaluation, and Teacher Education SIGs as well as JALT Shizuoka chapter. Contact: <www.jalt.org/pansig/2006>

May 16–20, 2006—The Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium 2006 Conference, at the University of Hawai'i, USA. CALICO 2006 will again feature uses of cutting edge technologies in foreign language teaching and learning with a focus on collaboration. Workshops, presentations, and courseware showcase demonstrations will present information of vital importance to anyone interested in the field of computer assisted language learning. Contact: <info@calico.org>; <calico.org>

June 2–4, 2006—The 2006 International Symposium of Computer Assisted Language Learning, National Research Centre for Foreign Language Education, Beijing Foreign Studies University, China. The theme of the conference is digital and networked foreign language learning and teaching. Contact: <celea@fltrp.com>

June 3–4, 2006—The JALTCALL 2006 Conference: Designing CALL for Wired and Wireless Environments, Sapporo Gakuin University, Sapporo, Hokkaido. This year's conference focuses on the design of CALL in varied language learning environments, including wireless environments. The conference organising committee particularly encouraged submissions in the following areas: design and use of CALL in new environments including wireless classrooms, design and use of CALL for mobile learning, innovative ways of integrating CALL in and out of the classroom. Plenary speakers for this year's conference include Jozef Colpaert, Professor of Educational Technology, Director R&D of the LINGUAPOLIS Language Institute, and Editor-in-Chief of the CALL Journal (Taylor & Francis). Contact: <jaltcall.org>

June 17–20, 2006—Joint AAAL and ACLA/CAAL Conference, Hotel Hyatt Montréal, Canada. Nationally and internationally, the annual AAAL conference has a reputation as one of the most comprehensive and exciting language conferences. At each conference new ideas are generated, disciplinary boundaries are crossed, and research is shared about the role of language in all aspects of cognition and social action, including language learning and teaching. The AAAL conference is known for its in-depth symposia and focused workshops on key issues in applied linguistics; sessions on a wide range of research studies, in progress or completed; its stimulating and often provocative plenaries; and access to the latest publications via the book exhibit. Last but not least, the AAAL conference is the place for networking, as well as for established and new professionals, and for graduate students. Contact: <carolc@iastate.edu>; <aaal.org>

June 22–24, 2006—Far Eastern English Language Teachers' Association 2006 Conference: Best Practice in ELT, Birobidjan State Pedagogical Institute, Birobidjan, Jewish Autonomous Region, Russia. Contact: <ryanyama@hcc5.bai.ne.jp>; <www.dvgu.ru/rus/partner/education/feelta/Practice.htm>

June 28–July 1, 2006—Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education (ICLHE 2006), Maastricht University, the Netherlands. The conference, organized by ExHEM and Maastricht University Language Centre, will focus on higher education that is delivered in a second or foreign language in a country where the language is not

widely used in the local environment. While this often concerns higher education in English in a non-English speaking country, it is not always the case; other languages are also used. The conference aims to address issues that affect institutions in many countries worldwide. Keynote speakers include David Crystal, University of Wales at Bangor; Jeroen van Merriënboer, Educational Technology Expertise Centre, Open Universiteit; and Scott C. Ratzan, Johnson & Johnson Inc, Brussels. Contact: <www.unimaas.nl/iclhe>

July 4–6, 2006—The 5th Pacific Second Language Research Forum (PacSLRF), University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia. The Pacific Second Language Research Forum is a venue for data-based and theoretical papers on areas of basic research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Topics include, but are not limited to: SLA in instructed and naturalistic settings, the effects of second language (L2) instruction on the rate and route of L2 development, the role of learner differences (e.g., aptitude, age, personality, motivation) in SLA, competing models of SLA processes, SLA theory construction, the acquisition of L2 pragmatics, bilingualism, the influence of cognitive variables (e.g., memory and attention) on L2 learning and use, the assessment of L2 use and development, and methodological issues in L2 acquisition research. Contact: <m.haugh@gu.edu.au>; <emsah.uq.edu.au/pacslrf2006/>

August 5–6, 2006—International Conference on Japanese Language Education (ICJLE). Japanese Education: Entering a New Age, Columbia University, New York City, USA. Keynote speakers include Merrill Swain (University of Toronto, specialist in Second Language Acquisition) and Susan Napier (University of Texas at Austin, specialist in Japanese literature, culture, and anime studies/theory). The invited plenary speaker is Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku (UC-San Diego, on Japanese language proficiency and assessment). Invited panel topics and organizers include: Articulation (Carl Falsgraf, Hiroko Kataoka); Japanese (Haruo Shirane); Classroom Instruction Ideas (Patricia Thornton, Ryuko Kubota); Japanese as a Heritage Language (Masako Douglas, Kazuo Tsuda); K–12 Curriculum Development (Sylvia Acierto, Shingo Satsutani, Kimberly Jones, Ann Sherif); and Second Language Acquisition (Keiko Koda, Dan Dewey, Osamu Kamada). Contact: <japaneseteaching.org/icjle>

September 29–October 2, 2006—CLESOL 2006, Origins and Connections, Pettigrew-Green Arena and the Eastern Institute of Technology, Napier, New Zealand. The theme of the conference is Origins and Connections: Linking Theory, Research, and Practice. There is a wide variety of work currently being undertaken in language teaching and learning, and this range will be reflected during the conference. Particularly of interest is research that is being, or could be, applied in practice. Contact: <clesol@paardekooper.co.nz>; <clesol.org.nz>

Calls for Papers/Posters

Deadline: 22 March, 2006 (for December 7–8)—Tertiary Writing Network Colloquium 2006: Old Text/Nu Txt, at the Napier War Memorial Conference Centre, New Zealand. We are planning a stimulating program with exciting *homegrown* speakers and we are planning a conference dinner at one of the area's acclaimed wineries. We invite those working and teaching in the fields of academic writing, writing across the disciplines, ESOL, creative writing, and writing support to submit a presentation proposal related to the theme: Old Text/Nu Txt: Writing for a Change. Broad interpretations are warmly encouraged. Sample topics include (but are not limited to): the impact of new technologies on writing practice, writing and the Internet, distance learning, innovative teaching practices, new research findings, journals and blogs in the classroom, constructions and deconstructions in writing, plagiarism and authorship. Contact: <F.E.Gray@massey.ac.nz>, <twm.massey.ac.nz>

Deadline: April 28, 2006 (for November 2–5, 2006)—JALT2006: Community, Identity, Motivation. 32nd Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Expo, Kitakyushu International Conference Centre, Kokura, Kitakyushu, Japan. Our set of communities, identities, and motivations is dynamically changing throughout our lives. These identity shifts and group affiliations do not come suddenly, for they are the work of activities in communities over time. Partly, it's the work of dynamic and caring teachers, and so it's no wonder that teachers love it when students begin to say, "I am a user of English," "I am a Chinese speaker," and "German is part of me," as it is a crucial step to competence. Community, identity, and motivation are overlapping and are essential for effective learning. Community affiliation can be one of the greatest motivating factors for learn-

ing; indeed, Vygotskian Socio-Cultural Theory is based on the idea that initial learning is created socially and then internalized to the personal. In communities we become aware of the world and certain choices socially. Socially, we have role models who we learn from and who help construct our identities. We also learn to be motivated by the things that seem to matter to the people around us. So to JALT professionals we might ask: Who are you asking your students to be in your classes and how do you do it? What groups do they identify with and to what end? What kind of a classroom community are you asking them to participate in and how? What are their motivations and how are those related to their communities and identities? How can you as a teacher use this information to help you understand them and help them learn more effectively? As teachers and researchers, we may want to take these questions to our students and colleagues and let their voices ring in our presentations in 2006. Contact: <jalt.org>

Deadline: June 16, 2006 (for October 7–8, 2006)—Teacher Ed SIG and Okayama JALT Conference on Professional Development in EFL teaching, Okayama University, Okayama. The conference will focus on the various career stages that teachers may go through including: initial teacher training, being a novice teacher, and the transition to an experienced professional. The conference will provide opportunities for practical workshops to examine how teachers can approach some of these life stages, and more formal presentations for teachers to share their research or work in progress. We also believe that narrative is a legitimate method for teachers to express their knowledge of teaching and so we welcome presenters who wish to simply share their experiences of career development. Issues that are of particular interest could include: improving our teaching, raising standards in the profession, getting qualifications, working with colleagues, leadership, time-management, dealing with stress, and maintaining motivation. Various types of presentations, such as papers (30 or 50 minutes) workshops, themed sessions or panel discussions (90 minutes), as well as poster sessions are welcome. Proposals should include number of minutes, title and abstract (max. 150 words), as well as author's name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, email address, and specification of any special equipment needed. Notification of acceptance of proposals will be made by July 31, 2006. Contact: <thencowie@cc.okayama-u.ac.jp>; <jalt.org/teach>

Old Grammarians...

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

My list of must-do's in Kyoto/Nara

- Have your picture taken with one of the haunting *maiko* that float around the Gion area. The Tourism Board assures us that, just like the giant pandas at the Ueno Zoo, *maiko* enjoy nothing more than to be gawked at and photographed by thousands of strangers whenever they are out in public.
- Ride the bus. At nearly every stop along Kyoto bus lines, you can hear a brief recorded history lesson in English through the bus's PA system. The announcements aren't always audible over the screaming passengers and squealing tires, but you can always crawl to the front of the bus and ask to hear the message again, in reply to which the driver will kindly direct you to shut up and return to your seat. (Not to be outdone by its older southern sibling, the city of Tokyo has recently installed video screens on some of its metropolitan JR trains, offering quick English lessons to riders, and rumor has it that Osaka is considering showing 30-second clips of *Mr. Bean* followed by multiple-choice comprehension questions on selected subway routes.)
- Visit Sanjusan Gendo. Tradition says that of the 1,000 or so statues peering out from the 33 openings to this ancient building, at least one resembles you or someone you know. Recently it was confirmed that five of them resemble pro wrestler Antonio Inoki, and two of them *used to* resemble popular singer Ayumi Hamasaki.
- Visit the Starbucks at Kyoto Station, or at Sanjo Ohashi, or at Gion, or at Diamond City, or at Kyoto Research Park (with drive-thru!), or at
- Gaze in awe at the beautifully gilded Kinkaku-ji Temple. The building is very well preserved for its age, although the original structure, made of gold-leaf chocolate, was lost several hundred years ago.
- Sneak into the Toei Eigamura film studios and theme park with a jar of wax and pretend you work as a "top-knot stylist."
- Take the Walk of Philosophy from Ginkaku-ji to Nanzen-ji. A thoughtful stroll on this historic parkway is certain to leave you imbued with many soul-stirring life questions, such as *Can one achieve enlightenment and still correctly operate a self-service gas station pump?* or *I wonder what the heck I did with the key to my coin locker at the station.*
- Choose one of the foothills surrounding the city and set a giant fire in the shape of your favorite *kanji* character.
- In Nara, participate in a *shika senbei* [deer cracker] throwing contest. This delightful activity speaks for itself, but the real challenge comes from avoiding what the deer leave on the grass after they've eaten all the crackers.
- Jump into a *jinrikisha* in front of Todaiji and ask to be taken to the airport.
- Take a romantic boat ride through the city's famous network of canals as a dashing young gondolier sings Italian love songs and points out places of artistic and cultural significance in the warm Mediterranean sunshine. (Note: Plan on a bit of extra travel time for this activity.)
- Walk along dusty, sun-baked paths to the entrance of Horyuji Temple, the world's oldest standing wooden structure. Immediately adjacent to the front gate is the world's oldest standing "Line Forms Here" sign.
- Try some famous Nara-zuke pickles, which come in three varieties: extra harsh, industrial strength, and Geneva Accord violation. Nara-zuke reminds pickle lovers of the finest sake, while it reminds sake lovers of the finest sake with a bunch of old cut-up vegetables thrown into it.
- Finally, secretly scoot off to Osaka to get some real shopping done before heading back home.

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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
- Teaching older learners
- 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。パイリンガリズム、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 for Teachers of English
- PAC—the Pan Asian Conference consortium
- TESOL—Teaching 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.

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The editors welcome submissions of materials concerned with all aspects of language education, particularly with relevance to Japan. If accepted, the editors reserve the right to edit all copy for length, style, and clarity, without prior notification to authors. Materials in English should be sent in Rich Text Format by either email (preferred) or post. Postal submissions must include a clearly labeled floppy disk or CD-ROM and one printed copy. Manuscripts should follow the American Psychological Association (APA) style as it appears in *The Language Teacher*. Please submit materials to the contact editor indicated for each column. Deadlines are indicated below.

日本国内での語学教育に関わる投稿をお待ちしています。できるだけ電子メールにリッチ・テキスト・フォーマットの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。郵送の場合には、フロッピーディスクかCD-ROMにラベルを張り、プリントアウトしたものと一緒に送ってください。書式はアメリカ心理学会(APA)スタイルに基づき、スタッフリストページにある各コラムの編集者まで締め切りを留意して、提出してください。提出されたものにつきましては編集者に一任していただくことになります。

Feature Articles

English Features. Submissions should be well-written, well-documented, and researched articles. Analysis and data can be quantitative or qualitative (or both). Manuscripts are typically screened and evaluated anonymously by members of *The Language Teacher* Editorial Advisory Board. They are evaluated for degree of scholarly research, relevance, originality of conclusions, etc. Submissions should:

- be up to 3,000 words (not including appendices)
- have pages numbered, paragraphs separated by double carriage returns (not tabbed), and sub-headings (boldfaced or italic) used throughout for the convenience of readers
- have the article's title, the author's name, affiliation, contact details, and word count at the top of the first page
- be accompanied by an English abstract of up to 150 words (translated into Japanese, if possible, and submitted as a separate file)
- be accompanied by a 100-word biographical background
- include a list of up to 8 keywords for indexing
- have tables, figures, appendices, etc. attached as separate files.

Send as an email attachment to the co-editors.

日本語論文: 実証性のある研究論文を求めます。質的か、計量的か(あるいは両方)で追究された分析やデータを求めます。原稿は、匿名のTLTの査読委員会により、研究水準、関連性、結論などの独創性で評価されます。8,000語(資料は除く)以内で、ページ番号を入れ、段落ごとに2行あけ、副見出し(太文字かイタリック)を付けて下さい。最初のページの一番上に題名、著者名、所属、連絡先および語彙数をなお書き下さい。英文、和文で400語の要旨、300語の著者略歴もご提出下さい。表、図、付録も可能です。共同編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

Readers' Forum articles are thoughtful essays on topics related to language teaching and learning in Japan. Submissions should:

- be of relevance to language teachers in Japan
- contain up to 2,500 words
- include English and Japanese abstracts, as per Features above
- include a list of up to 8 keywords for indexing
- include a short bio and a Japanese title.

Send as an email attachment to the co-editors.

読者フォーラム: 日本での言語教育、及び言語学習に関する思慮的なエッセイを募集しています。日本での語学教師に関連して、6,000語以内で、英文・和文の要旨、短い略歴および日本語のタイトルを添えて下さい。共同編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

Interviews. If you are interested in interviewing a well-known professional in the field of language teaching in and around Japan, please consult the editors first. Lengths range from 1,500-2,500 words. Send as an email attachment to the co-editor.

インタビュー: 日本国内外で言語教育の分野での「有名な」専門家にインタビューしたい場合は、編集者に最初に意見をお尋ね下さい。3,600語から6,000語の長さです。共同編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

Conference Reports. If you have attended a conference on a topic of interest to language teachers in Asia, write a 1,500-word report summarizing the main events. Send as an email attachment to the co-editor.

学会報告: 語学教師に関心のあるトピックの大会に出席された場合は、4000語程度に要約して、報告書を書いてください。共同編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

Departments

My Share. Submissions should be original teaching techniques or a lesson plan you have used. Readers should be able to replicate your technique or lesson plan. Submissions should:

- be up to 1,000 words
- have the article title, the author name, affiliation, email address, and word count at the top of the first page
- include a *Quick Guide* to the lesson plan or teaching technique
- follow My Share formatting
- have tables, figures, appendices, etc. attached as separate files
- include copyright warnings, if appropriate.

Send as an email attachment to the My Share editor.

マイシェア: 学習活動に関する実践的なアイデアについて、テクニックや教案を読者が再利用できるように紹介するものです。1,600語以内で最初のページにタイトル、著者名、所属、電子メールアドレスと文字数をなお書き下さい。表、図、付録なども含めることができますが、著作権にはお気をつけ下さい。My Share 担当編集者に電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

Book Reviews. We invite reviews of books and other educational materials. Contact the Publishers' Review Copies Liaison <pub-review@jalt-publications.org> for material listed in the Recently Received column, and the Book Reviews editor if you wish to review unlisted material, including websites or other online resources. Review articles treating several related titles are particularly welcome. Submissions should:

- show a thorough understanding of the material reviewed
- reflect actual classroom usage in the case of classroom materials
- be thoroughly checked and proofread before submission.

Send as an email attachment to the Book Reviews editor.

書評: 本や教材の書評です。書評編集者 <pub-review@jalt-publications.org> にお問い合わせ、最近出版されたリストからお選びいただくか、もしwebサイトなどのリストにない場合には書評編集者と連絡をとってください。複数の関連するタイトルを扱うものを特に歓迎します。書評は、本の内容紹介、教室活動や教材としての使用法に触れ、書評編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

JALT Focus. Submissions should be directly related to recent or upcoming developments within JALT, preferably on an organization-wide scale. Submissions should:

- be no more than 750 words
- be relevant to the JALT membership as whole
- encourage readers to participate more actively in JALT on both a micro and macro level.

Deadline: 15th of the month, 1½ months prior to publication. Send as an email attachment to the JALT Focus editor.

JALTフォーカス: JALT内の進展を会員の皆様にお伝えするものです。どのJALT会員にもふさわしい内容で、JALTに、毎月活動的に参加するように働きかけられるものです。1,600語程度で、毎月15日までに送ってください。掲載は1月半後になります。JALTフォーカス編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

JALT Notices. Submissions should be of general relevance to language learners and teachers in Japan. JALT Notices can be accessed at <www.jalt-publications.org/lt/focus/>. Calls for papers or research projects will be accepted; however, announcements of conferences, colloquia, or seminars should be submitted to the Conference Calendar. Submissions:

- should be no more than 150 words
- should be submitted as far in advance as is possible
- will be removed from the website when the announcement becomes outdated.

Submissions can be sent through the JALT Notices online submissions form.

掲示板: 日本での論文募集や研究計画は、オンライン <www.jalt-publications.org/lt/focus/> で見ることができます。できるだけ前もって掲載いたしますが、終了次第、消去いたします。掲示板オンライン・サブミッション形式に従い、400字以内で投稿して下さい。なお、会議、セミナーは Conference Calendar で扱います。

SIG News. JALT's Special Interest Groups may use this column to report on news or events happening within their group. This might include mini-conferences, presentations, publications, calls for papers or presenters, or general SIG information. Deadline: 15th of month, 2 months prior to publication. Send as an email attachment to the SIG News editor.

SIGニュース: SIGはニュースやイベントの報告にこのコラムを使用できます。会議、プレゼンテーション、出版物、論文募集、連絡発表者などの情報を記入下さい。締め切りは出版の2か月前の15日までに、SIG委員長に電子メールの添付ファイルで送ってください。

Chapter Events. Chapters are invited to submit upcoming events. Submissions should follow the precise format used in every issue of *TLT* (topic, speaker, date, time, place, fee, and other information in order, followed by a 60-word description of the event).

Meetings scheduled for early in the month should be published in the previous month's issue. Maps of new locations can be printed upon consultation with the column editor. Deadline: 15th of the month, 2 months prior to publication. Send as an email attachment to the Chapter Events editor.

支部イベント: 近づいている支部のイベントの案内情報です。トピック、発表者、日時、時間、場所、料金をこの順序で掲載いたします。締め切りは、毎月15日、2か月前までに、支部イベント編集者に電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

Chapter Reports. This column is a forum for sharing synopses of presentations given at JALT Chapters around Japan. Submissions must therefore reflect the nature of the column and be written clearly and concisely. Submissions should:

- be interesting and not contain extraneous information
- be in well-written, concise, informative prose
- be made by email only – faxed and/or postal submissions are not acceptable
- be approximately 300 words in order to explore the content in sufficient detail
- be structured as follows: Chapter name; Event date; Event title; Name of presenter(s); Synopsis; Reporter's name.

Send as an email attachment to the Chapter Reports editor.

支部会報告: JALT地域支部会の研究会報告です。有益な情報をご提供下さい。600文字程度で簡潔にお書き下さい。支部名、日時、イベント名、発表者名、要旨、報告者名を、この順序でお書き下さい。支部会報告編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。ファックスや郵便は受理いたしませんので、ご注意ください。

Job Information Center. *TLT* encourages all prospective employers to use this free service to locate the most qualified language teachers in Japan. The notice should:

- contain the following information: City and prefecture, Name of institution, Title of position, Whether full- or part-time, Qualifications, Duties, Salary & benefits, Application materials, Deadline, Contact information
- not be positions wanted. (It is JALT policy that they will not be printed.)

Deadline: 15th of month, 2 months prior to publication. Send as an email attachment to the JIC editor.

求人欄: 語学教育の求人募集を無料でサービス提供します。県と都市名、機関名、職名、専任か非常勤かの区別、資格、仕事内容、給料、締め切りや連絡先を発行2ヶ月前の15日までにお知らせ下さい。特別の書式はありません。JIC担当編集者に電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

Conference Calendar. Announcements of conferences and their calls for papers as well as for colloquia, symposiums, and seminars may be posted in this column. The announcement should be up to 150 words. Deadline: 15th of month, at least 3 months prior to the conference date for conferences in Japan and 4 months prior for overseas conferences. Send as an email attachment to the Conference Calendar editor.

催し: コロキウム、シンポジウム、セミナー、会議のお知らせと、論文募集の案内です。Conference Calendar に400語程度で電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。締め切りは毎月15日、日本、および海外の会議で3ヶ月前までの情報を掲載します。

L A S T

C H A N C E

For two exciting years, we've run a "One Free SIG" campaign to encourage our members to sign up and try out one of JALT's 17 dynamic Special Interest Groups (SIGs). We hope this extended campaign has given you all a chance to sample one of our SIGs and to explore the unique work done by each interest group in its respective field. At the end of March, this special "One Free SIG" campaign draws to a close. However, we warmly encourage you to continue your explorations in the wonderful world of SIGs after the campaign finishes. If, through the "One Free SIG" campaign, you've found a Special Interest Group that matches your interests, we invite you to continue as a paying member to benefit from the variety of news, information and events provided by each SIG. If you haven't yet started exploring the wide variety of SIGs offered by JALT, please do so! Membership is only ¥1500 per SIG per year which brings you a wealth of specialized knowledge through the information-packed newsletters offered by each SIG. Don't be left out! Try a SIG today!

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP BEFORE MARCH 31 AND RECEIVE A FREE SIG MEMBERSHIP! FOR MORE INFORMATION ON JALT'S SIGS, VISIT:

jalt.org/main/chapters-sigs

FRAZZLED?



Do you find yourself getting frazzled when preparing for your classes? Are you getting tired of teaching the same old stuff?

Fear not! JALT has the answer to your classroom material needs! Look in next month's issue of The Language Teacher!

Feeling impatient? Then take a peek at <www.jalt-publications.org/jam/>