

# The Language Teacher

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The Japan Association for Language Teaching

全国語学教育学会



# — PAC7 at JALT2008 —

## What's your thread?

**F**ears that I might feel lost and lonely at my first conference in 2005 were burst with the pin that was attached to the “First-timer” ribbon I was given. But nothing convinced me more to go again than the look in my students’ eyes as I shared the latest research in linguistics with them. — *Jane Takizawa*



**I**t's great meeting hard-working, enthusiastic friends at the national conference. I owe a special debt to friends in the Bilingualism-SIG. Without our conversations and mutual support, raising 2 boys here would have been impossible. — *Martin Pauly*

**J**ALT for me is like this one annual trip to the 'Professional Gas Station'. Rubbing shoulders with all those great teachers, researchers and authors not only makes my ego feel good, but also gives me confidence that we have unfaltering support in the daily struggle for personal and professional development.. — *Lukwago Ssali*



**I**went to my first academic presentation at a JALT event in 2002. This is important, as I was previously unaware that teachers even presented. I've met many people in JALT who have since become very close friends. At the JALT national conference, I like the wide variety of presentations.. — *Colin Skeates*

**J**ust months after becoming a JALT member, I somehow found myself in one of the busiest positions in the organization: Conference Site Chair (JALT2004). Nothing has been the same about my Japan experience since. Oodles of positive energy; hoards of new friends, rewarding challenges, and unforeseen opportunities. Never looked back.. — *Steven Nishida*



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# In this month's issue . . .

**J**UNE IS a month for perseverance for many in Japan. Golden Week is a distant memory, and the summer vacation is still months away. This month's *TLT* is packed with ideas to help you weather the stretch until the end of the spring semester.

This month's *Feature*, by **Christopher Weaver**, **Andrew Jones**, and **Juergen Bulach**, explains how Rasch ability scores may be more appropriate than raw test scores when streaming students by ability.

*Readers' Forum* includes **Scott Gardner** sharing application of his specialty area, humor, to the classroom. **Patrick Wicking** reviews literature on the influence of age on learning ability—a topic of increasing interest to teachers as Japan's population ages.

*My Share* includes **Eleanor Kane** using the Tanabata tree to motivate students and **Shelley Peters Karl** with a warm-up activity to help students with the speaking section of the TOEFL iBT.

*Book Reviews* features **Ann Junko Young's** review of 細かく言い表し伝えたい英会話フレーズ2220 (*Komakaku Iiarawashi Tsutaetai Eikaiwa Furezu 2220*), a self-study book for intermediate to advanced Japanese speakers of English. Also, don't forget about regular columns, packed with information about upcoming JALT events, reports of past meetings, and more.

We're working hard every month to keep *TLT* fun and informative, and we hope you can find something for you in this issue. If you're interested in submitting your own article, please see the back of the publication for submissions guidelines.

Theron Muller  
TLT Co-Editor

**日**本の6月は、耐え忍ぶ月です。ゴールデンウィークは遠い記憶のあなた、夏休みはまだまだです。でも、今月号は、皆さんが夏休みまで頑張っているだけのアイデアを満載しています。

今月の特集記事ではChristopher Weaver, Andrew Jones, Juergen Bulachが、能力別クラス編成をする際にはラッシュ・スコアを使った方が素点よりも適切であると解説しています。Readers' ForumではScott Gardnerが、お得意のユーモアを生かした授業活動を紹介しています。またPatrick Wickingは、学習能力に及ぼす年齢の影響についての文献をまとめています。高齢化が進んでいる日本では、このトピックには教師の関心が向けられています。

My Shareでは、Eleanor Kane が「七夕」を使って、生徒の動機づけを図る方法を、また、Shelley Peters Karl がTOEFL iBT のスピーキング・セクション



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ンに備えるためのアクティビティを、それぞれ用意しています。Book ReviewsではAnn Junko Young が、日本人学習者の中級・上級者レベル向けの自習書『細かく言い表し伝えたい英会話フレーズ2220』を紹介しています。JALTのこれからのイベント情報やこれまでのミーティングの報告などを掲載したコラムも、どうぞお忘れなく!

TLT編集部は、毎月、本誌を楽しく情報一杯にするために最大限の努力をしています。今月号でも皆さんに「何か」を見つけていただければ幸いです。記事を投稿したいと考えている読者の方は、本誌の最後にある投稿規定をご覧ください。

Theron Muller  
TLT Co-Editor

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## PAC7 at JALT2008 Conference — TIP #46

***“Set out a game plan for the speakers and sessions that you really want to see. Things move too quickly to keep up once you get there.”***

There are a number of ways to do this:

- Use a Google document (Excel) to create your own spreadsheet of talks you are interested in. Share it with friends to get their opinions.
- Put aside some time to actually read through the abstracts once they are finalized, well before heading to the conference.

<[jalt.org/conference](http://jalt.org/conference)>



# Comparing placement decisions based on raw test scores and Rasch ability scores

## Keywords

placement exams, raw scores, Rasch ability scores

This paper reports an empirical study that examines the relationship between placement decisions based upon raw test scores and Rasch ability scores. Although a fairly strong relationship was found between the two, the paper argues that Rasch ability scores provide a more refined account of students' level of English knowledge because they take into consideration the difficulty of the items on the placement exam and they can define students' level of ability from a variety of different contexts.

本稿は、テストの素点をベースにしてブレースメントを行った場合とラッシュスコアをベースにしてブレースメントを行った場合とを比較し、その結果を報告している。二つの間にかなり高い相関が見られたが、やはりラッシュスコアをベースにした場合の方が、受験者の英語のレベルをより詳細に説明できるのではないかと考えられる。なぜなら、ラッシュスコアは、各アイテムの難易度を計算に入れているため、あらゆる角度から見た受験者のレベルを評価できるからである。

**Christopher Weaver**

**Toyo University**

**Andrew Jones**

**Juergen Bulach**

**Jissen Women's University**

**A** PLACEMENT EXAM can be an effective means of placing students into classes that best suit their English knowledge. Test scores arising from a placement exam, however, must be carefully considered so that the benefits of streaming new students can be achieved. In short, what type of information does a student's score on a placement exam provide those responsible for making placement decisions?

## Distinctive approaches to test score interpretation

Classical testing theory has established the practice of using raw test scores to define students' performance either directly or indirectly through the use of percentiles, t-scores, or z-scores (Brown, 1996). The use of raw test scores has a number of merits. Raw scores are typically very easy to calculate. One simply counts the number of correct responses that a student has achieved on a placement exam and treats the sum total as a representation of the student's level of English knowledge. A student's test scores can also be reported as the percentage of correct responses, which provides additional information about the degree to which the student mastered the content of the placement exam.

Rasch measurement theory (Rasch, 1960/1980) challenges the assumption that raw test scores are a true reflection of students' level of knowledge, arguing that raw test scores are only counts of observed behavior, which is ordinal data. Moreover, ordinal data is only a form of ranking, which can only order students on the basis of being more or less able, but cannot be interpreted as an indication of true ability or be used to specify the true differences between students. In order to achieve these measurement properties, ordinal data must be transformed into interval data. Thus, the Rasch model is a statistical method for turning observations of students' test performances into an interval scale measuring student ability.

Calculating Rasch ability scores involves two interconnected parameters. The first is the students' level of ability. The second is the difficulty level of the items on the exam. The Rasch model for dichotomous scored test items (i.e., items that are scored as either being correct or incorrect) is:

$$P_{ni}(x=1) = f(B_n - D_i)$$

This formula states that the probability ( $P_{ni}$ ) of a student getting the correct response ( $x=1$ ) for an item ( $i$ ) on an exam is a function ( $f$ ) of the difference between a student's level of ability ( $B_n$ ) and an item's level of difficulty ( $D_i$ ). When this formula is implemented by a Rasch program such as Winsteps, student ability and item difficulty are determined through an iterative process. First, item difficulty is calculated with student ability constrained. The resulting item difficulty levels are then used to calculate student ability levels. From here, an iterative process commences in which item difficulty and student ability are calculated and recalculated until the maximum difference between item and student ability levels during successive iterations meets a convergence value of 0.005. This iterative process thus produces an estimate of student ability that not only takes into account the number of items that a student correctly answers, but also the difficulty level of the items on the placement exam. The final estimate is also reported as a probability score measured in logits that represents a student's level of English knowledge as defined by the items on the placement exam.

### Dealing with logit scores

Unlike raw test scores, many people are unfamiliar with the use of logit scores to represent student ability. As a result, it is best to transform the logit scale into a user-friendly scale that will help expedite the placement decision process. Creating

a user-friendly scale involves two decisions. The first decision entails choosing the mean score for the scale. Traditionally the mean score of a Rasch analysis is 0 logits, which represents the mean difficulty level of the items on the exam. In other words, students with an ability level of 0 logits have a fifty percent chance of correctly answering half of the items on the exam. Yet in the context of making placement decisions, the probability of students correctly answering the different items on the placement exam might be of secondary importance compared to determining a student's ability level relative to the other students who wrote the exam. Thus, a user-friendly scale designed for placement decisions would be more meaningful if the mean score of the scale represented the mean ability level of the test takers. To help facilitate the interpretation of student performance on the placement exam, a score of 50 can be used to represent the mean ability of the test takers. Accordingly, students with a score over 50 have an above average level of ability; whereas students with a score under 50 have a below average ability level compared to the other students who wrote the exam.

The second decision when creating a user-friendly scale involves choosing a spacing factor, which can be thought of as indicating the amount of distance a student's level of ability is above or below the mean score of 50. Continuing with the idea of creating a user-friendly scale that is easy to interpret, a score of 25 can be used as the spacing factor. It is important to note that very high ability students may then have a score that exceeds 100 and very low ability students may have a negative score on this scale. The possibility of extreme scores can help identify students with special needs.

### A contextual account of student ability

From a Rasch measurement perspective, the difficulty level of the items on the placement exam is not absolute, but it is relative to the students who took the exam. As a result, there are a number of different contexts that could be used when calculating student ability scores. One is using item difficulty levels from all the students who took the exam during the same academic year. Another context could be much narrower and include only students from a particular faculty or department. Moreover, with the use of a statistical technique called *anchoring* (Wright, 1996), it is possible to include previous administrations of the exam.

Anchoring is basically a two-step Rasch analysis that first uses all the student responses from

multiple years to define the level of difficulty for each item on the exam. These item difficulty levels are then used to define the students' level of ability. The shared item difficulty levels thus create a common frame of reference in which student ability levels can be compared over time.

Table 1 shows a student's raw test score out of 70 possible points along with four different contexts that could be used to calculate her Rasch ability score. The raw score of 33 in itself does not convey very much information about this student's level of ability other than the number of items that she correctly answered on the exam. In contrast, the different Rasch ability scores provide information about the student relative to four different contexts. For example, this student's 1-year department Rasch ability score of 50 means that she has an average level of English ability compared to the other students from her department who took the exam at the same time. Compared to all of the students from the same department who took the exam over a 3-year period, this student has slightly lower than average ability (i.e., the 3-year department Rasch ability score of 49). A much broader comparison involving all of the students at the university who took the placement exam during the same academic year shows this student has a higher than average level of English ability (i.e., the 1-year university Rasch ability score of 55). And finally, compared to all of the students at the university who took the exam over a 3-year period, this student has a slightly higher ability level with a 3-year university Rasch score of 56. In sum, Rasch ability scores can provide an information-rich account of student ability from a number of different contexts.

### Research questions

The differences between defining student English ability with raw test scores and Rasch ability scores create a number of interesting research questions that have very practical implications for the use of a placement exam to stream students. The following research questions guide this investigation.

- How much agreement is there between placement decisions based upon raw test scores and Rasch ability scores?
- In the case of any disagreements, how do placement decisions based upon raw test scores and Rasch ability scores differ?

## Method

### Participants

This study involved the placement exams of 714 female students attending a private women's university on the outskirts of Tokyo. The students, from the English department and seven other departments, are required to take a semester-long English communication course.

### The placement exam

The placement exam is a commercially produced test prepared for the *New Interchange* series (Lesley, Hansen, & Zukowski-Faust, 2003, p. 49-66). The exam has three sections. In the first section, students have 15 minutes to complete 20 items designed to evaluate their English listening skills. In the second section, students have 20 minutes to complete 20 items designed to assess their reading skills. In the third section, students have 15 minutes to complete 30 discrete items designed to assess their grammatical competence.

All of the items on the placement exam are multiple choice with four possible responses. Students write their answers on a mark sheet, which is machine scored immediately afterwards. The results of the exam are used to identify the highest ability students to create an advanced class for each department. The remaining students are assigned in alphabetical order to classes for their department. The exam has been found to be a fairly reliable means of dividing students into two statistically distinct groups based on their level of English knowledge (Weaver, Jones, & Bulach, in press).

**Table 1. A student's level ability defined by her raw test score and four Rasch contextual scores**

Raw test score	1-year department Rasch score	3-year department Rasch score	1-year university Rasch score	3-year university Rasch score
33	50	49	55	56

### Procedure

The first step of this investigation involved calculating the students' raw test score and their Rasch ability scores in four different contexts. These contexts varied according to how the level of item difficulty for the placement exam was calculated using Winsteps.

For the 1-year department Rasch ability scores, separate Rasch analyses were conducted for each department to determine item difficulty. As a result, the student ability scores were based on the level of difficulty other students within their department had with the items on the exam.

For the 3-year department Rasch ability scores, separate Rasch analyses were conducted on all the placement exams given over a 3-year period for each department. The resulting item difficulty levels were then used in a second set of Rasch analyses to determine the ability levels of the students for each department. The results of this two-step Rasch analysis, known as item difficulty anchoring, produced student ability scores based on the level of difficulty the other students within their department had with the items on the exam over a period of three years.

For the 1-year university Rasch ability scores, only one analysis was conducted using the placement exams from all the students who wrote the exam during the same academic year. The

resulting ability scores were thus based upon the degree of difficulty all the students at the university had with the items on the exam.

For the 3-year university Rasch ability scores, an initial analysis was conducted using all of the placement exams over a 3-year period. The resulting item difficulty levels were then used in a second analysis to determine the ability levels of the students. The results of this two-step analysis produced student ability scores based upon the degree of difficulty all of the students had with the different items on the placement exam over a three year period.

The second step of this investigation entailed identifying the most able students from each department based on their raw test scores and their Rasch ability scores. These students were streamed into the advanced class for that department. The cutoff point for the advanced classes varied amongst the departments due to various class sizes and differences in average English ability (Weaver, 2008). As such, the cutoff score represents the lowest raw test score or the lowest Rasch ability score for students placed in the advanced class for their department.

The final step involved a correlation analysis to determine the strength and the direction of the linear relationship between placement decisions based upon raw test scores and the four different Rasch ability scores.

**Table 2. The relationship between the placement decisions based upon raw test scores and the different Rasch ability scores**

	Raw Test Score	1-year department Rasch score	3-year department Rasch score	1-year university Rasch score	3-year university Rasch score
Raw Test Score	-	0.86	0.84	0.84	0.84
1-year department Rasch score	49	-	0.98	0.98	0.98
3-year department Rasch score	55	6	-	1.00	1.00
1-year university Rasch score	55	6	0	-	1.00
3-year university Rasch score	55	6	0	0	-

\*Note: Numbers shown to two decimal points are the correlation coefficients between the placement decisions based upon the students' raw test scores and their Rasch ability scores. All correlations are significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). The other numbers indicate the number of disagreements that existed between the placement decisions based upon the raw test scores and the different Rasch ability scores.

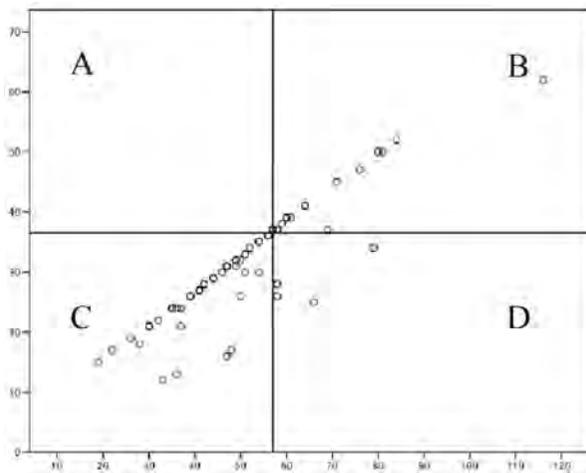
## Results

The relationship between placement decisions based upon raw test scores and Rasch ability scores

The top line of Table 2 shows that there are fairly strong positive correlations ranging from 0.84 to 0.86 between the placement decisions based on students' raw test scores and their Rasch ability scores. The strongest relationships ranging from 0.98 to 1.00 were between the different Rasch-based placement decisions.

The second line in Table 2 shows 49 students that would have been placed in a different class according to their raw test scores compared to their Rasch 1-year department scores. This accounts for about 7% of the placement decisions. A slightly larger difference of 55 students (8% of the placement decisions) was found between placement decisions based on raw test scores and 3-year department Rasch ability scores. The same difference was also found with the 1-year university Rasch ability scores and the 3-year university Rasch ability scores. A much smaller difference of 6 students (1% of the placement decisions) was found between placement decisions based upon 1-year department Rasch ability scores and the other three Rasch ability scores. There were no differences found between the placement decisions based on the 3-year department Rasch ability scores and the university Rasch ability scores.

In order to further clarify how placement decisions based on raw test scores and Rasch ability scores differed, the students' scores were plotted



**Figure 1. The relationship between raw test scores and 1-year department Rasch ability scores for students in the Food Science Department**

on graphs along with the respective cutoff points for placement in the advanced class. Figure 1 is an example of one of these graphs for the Food Science Department. The raw test score cutoff for the class was 37, which means students located in quadrants A and B would be placed into the advanced class. Using the students' 1-year department Rasch ability scores, the cutoff point was a score of 58. Thus, students located in quadrants B and D would be placed in the advanced class. Where the raw test score placement decisions and the Rasch-based placement decisions disagree is with the four students in quadrant D. Their raw scores are below 37, but their Rasch ability scores are above 58. In other words, these four students did not correctly answer as many as items as the students who were placed in the advanced class based on raw test scores, but they answered some of the more difficult items on the placement exam, which resulted in higher Rasch ability scores.

## Discussion

The relatively strong relationship between the placement decisions based upon students' raw test scores and their different Rasch ability scores might lead some to favor the use of raw test scores, especially considering the extra statistical analyses that Rasch ability scores require. Yet there are three issues that challenge use of raw test scores.

First, the strong relationship between placement decisions based on raw test scores and Rasch ability scores in this study might not exist in EFL programs that stream students into a number of different levels. The purpose of the placement exam in this study was to stream students into an advanced class, dividing students into two groups. In a situation where there are multiple cutoff points for different levels of students, there is a greater chance for less agreement between placement decisions based upon raw test scores and Rasch ability scores.

Second, there is a possibility that the raw test scores may not be sensitive to different levels of student ability because they do not take into account the difficulty level of the items on the placement exam. For example, if two students receive the same raw score of 30 on a placement exam, it is difficult to say that they have the same level of English knowledge since these two students might have achieved the score of 30 in different ways. Rasch ability scores, in contrast, take into account the difficulty of the items on the exam, which in some cases more accurately differenti-

ates student ability, as seen with the four students from the Food Science Department (quadrant D in Figure 1). Yet it must be remembered that item difficulty is not an absolute value, but is relative to the students who wrote the exam. As such, it is possible for administrators who are responsible for placement decisions to decide which context (e.g., student ability relative to their department or across the entire university) and timeframe (e.g., the current academic year or including previous years) is most suitable when determining item difficulty levels and student ability scores.

Third, Rasch ability scores are information-rich. An example is the student located in the top right-hand corner of quadrant B in Figure 1. This student's Rasch 1-year department ability score of 116 immediately reveals the extent to which her English ability exceeds that of the other students in her department. The same cannot be said about her raw test score of 62.

## Conclusion

Underlying the differences between raw test scores and Rasch ability scores is the important epistemological issue of defining the nature of knowledge. Rasch measurement theory provides administrators responsible for making placement decisions with an approach that can lead to a more refined account of students' English knowledge by taking into consideration the difficulty of individual items on the placement exam and defining student scores in a meaningful context. Collectively, these properties of Rasch ability scores will help ensure students are streamed into classes that best suit their level and thus optimize the performance of the placement exam.

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During the 2007-08 academic year, **Christopher Weaver, Andrew Jones, and Juergen Bulach** conducted a series of investigations examining different aspects of placement exams from a Rasch measurement perspective. Readers interested in how the Rasch model can be used to evaluate placement exams and track students' level of English ability over time are directed to the papers listed in the references. Inquiries can also be sent to Christopher Weaver, at <ctwaway@hotmail.com>.

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# Three ways humor helps in the language classroom

## Keywords

humor, jokes, riddles, classroom management, linguistic instruction, culture

Classroom humor, far from being frivolous or distracting, can be very helpful in making language classes more enjoyable, in turn helping to motivate students and perhaps aiding them in learning. Three main areas where humor can be beneficial are explained, using examples: classroom management, linguistic instruction, and cultural instruction. It is determined that, as long as humor is used in full awareness of subject, student interests, and student sensitivities, it can make for more lively and successful language classes.

ユーモアはとかくマイナスに取られがちだが、使い方によっては語学学習の授業をより楽しいものにし、学習者の意欲を向上させ、語学学習を促進することも可能である。ユーモアが効果を発揮すると思われる三点(授業管理・言語指導・文化指導)を、実例を挙げながら解説する。結論として、授業のテーマや学習者の興味・感性等を十分把握した上で活用すれば、ユーモアは語学の授業をより楽しく効果の高いものに行うことができる。

## Scott Gardner Okayama University

**H**UMOR IS a wide, often subjectively treated study. Despite many theories of humor across disciplines such as psychology, linguistics, anthropology, and medicine, it is still nearly impossible to determine how humor works. For language classroom teachers a humble humor question may be: Is there an educational benefit to classroom humor that outweighs the effort and risks involved? It is worth reemphasizing the case for verbal humor in the language learning classroom by showing how humor, riddles, and jokes (these terms are used interchangeably throughout) are useful and manageable teaching tools.

### Three benefit areas for humor

Trachtenberg (1979), in her defense of humor in ESL classrooms, provides seven reasons that jokes are useful tools for teaching language:

1. They are brief and can be taught in a short period of time.
2. They are rule-governed, and their rules can be taught.
3. Jokes use a wide variety of speech patterns.
4. Jokes exist in all cultures.
5. Jokes "embody a culture," and so can transmit culture.
6. The speech behavior of jokes is generalizable to other speech acts.
7. Jokes are funny and keep the classroom awake and spirited (p. 90-91).

These seven reasons could be redrawn into three larger categories: (a) 1 and 7 are *classroom management benefits*; (b) 2, 3, and

6 are primarily concerned with *linguistic benefits*; and (c) 4 and 5 are *cultural benefits*. Further support and examples within these three categories will substantiate the benefits of humor in teaching situations.

### Classroom management

The first and last of Trachtenberg's seven points focus on how humor can affect the constraints of classroom teaching. Taken together, these points seem to say that jokes can use time efficiently by keeping students "on task," learning in an enjoyable way. Research gauging student response to humor has generally endorsed humor's ability to make learning more interesting. Hezel, Bryant, and Harris (1982, cited in Zillman & Bryant, 1983) found that college students deemed instructors using topic-relevant humor to be more "witty," "interesting," and "appealing" than instructors using no humor or irrelevant humor in their lectures. Berk and Nanda (1998) showed humor to improve student attitudes toward "boring" university subjects such as statistics.

Studies focusing on language students seem to agree. A questionnaire asking what students hoped their teachers would do to reduce classroom stress found that, in general, "the teacher's attitude to errors and the personal characteristics of the instructor (*humor*, patience, degree of positive feedback, etc.) seemed important" (Hilleson, 1996, p. 272; emphasis mine). Studies with Japanese university students of English support these findings (see Hadley & Hadley, 1996, p. 54). Finally, a survey of university students in Japan also showed that students saw at least three advantages to using jokes in the EFL classroom: "1. English jokes can make our way of thinking more flexible. 2. Jokes develop our imagination and sensitivity. 3. Jokes help students relax and take more interest in the class" (Koga & Cane, 1995, p. 7).

Students may perceive that humor helps them get more out of class, but whether they actually *learn* more is another question. Various factors, including age and gender, seem to play a part in how humor affects cognitive outcomes. Some studies (see Brown & Bryant, 1983; Gruner, 1976; Zillman & Bryant, 1983) negate humor's ability to directly improve learning, while others (see Berk & Nanda, 1998, 2006; Davis & Apter, 1980; Garner, 2006; Ziv, 1988) claim that measures such as test scores and retention show improvement when humor is incorporated into lessons.

Teachers also perceive benefits from humor. Katz (1996, p. 75), referring to field notes and interviews, says that "laughter plays a prominent role in setting the mood." This assessment is supported by a teacher interviewed in another study, who says, "The students generally welcome both humor and personalizing of material to them. A little humor always helps to maintain interest and motivation" (Nunan, 1996, p. 48). A key to success, according to these teachers, is the "personalizing" of the humorous material they use. This means that not only topic-relevant humor (Zillman & Bryant, 1983; Ziv, 1988), but *student-relevant* humor, is important for engaging students. Teachers using humor effectively not only know jokes, but know their students as well.

We can look at the relationship between jokes and lessons in two directions: *lessons from jokes* and *jokes from lessons*.

### Lessons from jokes

Compared with news articles, dialogues, or short stories, jokes are less daunting and take a shorter time to hear or read. They also have the additional intended benefit of being funny. A joke can be used as a warm-up exercise, as a mid-class breather, or as the focus of an entire class period. Depending on the joke, several language skills or cultural lessons could be covered. For example,

- A: Doctor, doctor, please help me! Everywhere I touch on my body, it hurts. If I touch my head, it hurts. If I touch my elbow, it hurts. If I touch my stomach, it hurts. What's wrong with me?
- B: Your finger's broken.

could start off a lesson about parts of the body, *if* clauses, etc. It could also demonstrate doctor/patient interactions and describing symptoms. Entire lessons on linguistic structures, situational cues, or cultural norms could be generated from this one joke. (See sections below.) Before all else, however, the joke very quickly creates a humorous atmosphere that can make students more attentive and receptive to what comes next.

### Jokes from lessons

Perhaps more feasible than building entire lessons around jokes is using occasional humor to



enhance or reinforce material in a prepared lesson. It is more and more common to see evidence of humor's role in teaching, not only in teacher training, but in textbooks as well. A common example is the *Synergy* series. In one dialogue two young people are looking at high school photographs:

Paul: So you liked sports, didn't you?

Mary: Not really, I loved dancing and I had a boyfriend. He was on the school soccer team.

Paul: But now you like soccer.

Mary: Yes, but I don't have a boyfriend.

(Tennant, Fowle, Brewster, Davies, & Rogers, 2006, p. 31)

The ironic humor is not the focus of this activity, but it adds something interesting and perhaps more "natural" to the dialogue, and perhaps increases the activity's effectiveness in reaching its linguistic goals.

### Linguistic instruction

In considering how humor is relevant to language learning, it is important to remember that a great deal of verbal humor utilizes linguistic phenomena to achieve the incongruity that evokes laughter. Most common jokes, therefore, are fodder for analysis (and learning) of language. Incongruity can occur at all linguistic levels in a joke or riddle, from the phonological level

Q. What is black and white and re(a)d all over?

A. A newspaper.

to the semantic level

Q. A plane crashed on the border of Colombia and Venezuela. Which country buried the survivors?

A. They didn't need to bury the survivors.

to the discourse level (such as Jonathan Swift's *Modest Proposal*, a satirical essay too long to include here).

Compare the above plays on words, sounds, and meanings, to the challenges a foreign language learner faces when trying to deal with the

sounds, vocabulary, grammar, and meaning of a new language. A learner of English as a foreign language may struggle at first with the phonological similarities between the past tense verb "read" and the color "red." Without sufficient context, the English learner may not be able to distinguish between the two.

This phenomenon occurs in any language. A Japanese language learner, lacking adequate context, may not know whether her Japanese classmate is talking about doing the laundry (*sentaku*—洗濯) or about taking an elective course at school (*sentaku*—選択). Cook (2000) argues that encouraging students to experiment playfully with the limits of sounds, meanings, etc., (which riddles can help them do) can be of great benefit to them pedagogically: "There is a great deal in both personal experience and in psycholinguistic research which suggests that it is the *unusual* instance which is more likely to be recalled verbatim" (p. 199; emphasis in original). Experiencing a humorous misunderstanding of *sentaku* may help the learner remember both meanings better.



There are of course risks to using jokes and riddles with students. Jokes must work at their level. The "plane crash" riddle above may not register with students who don't know the word *survivor*. What's more, certain cultural knowledge would be required, as in know-

ing that many western cultures bury their dead, that Colombia and Venezuela share a border, etc. Kral (1994) warns of the need for sufficient background for a joke to work in class:

For foreign language learners, the inherent risk in this word-play is that the double meanings will not be as immediately apparent to them as to native speakers; and without the sudden "light bulb" realization, the joke may not seem so clever or funny. (p. 87)

Raskin (1985) also emphasizes the importance of surprise at the end of the joke, the "punch line." (p. 33). While there may still be an opportunity for language learning with a joke that students didn't "get," its immediate humorous effect may be lost (at least until the student tells it to someone else later).

One more linguistic benefit is that jokes are bona fide communication. They are not out-of-context grammar drills, nor are they "canned"

conversations heard on language learning CDs. They are genuine speech acts between teacher and students. Riddles use *wh-* questions not as models or as simulated dialogue, but as actual questions expecting real feedback from the listener. Telling jokes is a language task identical to any other task native speakers might engage in.

### **Culture instruction**

Trachtenberg (1979) mentions perceived obstacles to telling jokes between cultures: "You may wonder, how can a joke not be culture-bound, since, by its very nature, it is part of a culture?" (p. 93). This is the main reason, she contends, that teachers and students alike shun the outright telling of jokes in the classroom. A joke such as

- Q: How do you know if you're at a Mormon wedding reception?  
 A: The bride's not pregnant, but the bride's mother is.

might be unintelligible to students who don't have an understanding of western religions. Koga and Cane (1995) also describe student concerns that jokes can have a detrimental effect on study and motivation if they are not appropriate or comprehensible to the class.

Many jokes, however, are more universal than they appear to be, or may be altered to fit their audience without sacrificing (much of) the humor. For example,

Did you hear about the new \$3 Million Florida State Lottery? The winner gets \$3 a year for a million years. (Adapted from Joke Madness, 2007)

This joke could be (and probably has been) altered to ridicule any provincial, national, or ethnic origin that a speaker may wish to target—or it could be generalized to mention no particular group at all. Other elements of the joke (lottery, a million years, etc.) would be understood by just about any student in a developed country.

Perhaps even more useful as cultural humor carriers are the timeless capsules of folk wisdom that have been passed down over the ages. While many of these proverbs are serious, others are embedded in humorous, ironic, memorable stories. Everyone knows at least one of Aesop's fables (wise and foolish foxes, grasshoppers, lions, donkeys, etc.), and a teacher in retelling one of these stories could make it as humorous as need be. The messages are

universal and are found as well in non-western versions from wise sages such as Confucius or Nasreddin. Kral (1994) provides many examples from the latter, with at least one demonstrating a bit of linguistic, as well as folk, humor:

One day a neighbor inquired of Hodja, "Why do you always answer a question with another question?" He replied, "Do I?" (p. 122)

Another hedge against the problem of cultural ignorance is to use the students' own culture. While the teacher must be careful not to choose material that will offend, it is not too difficult to find humor that is "socially constructive" (Koziski, 1984). Take the following example from an American joke website:

According to inside contacts, the Japanese banking crisis shows no signs of ameliorating. If anything, it's getting worse. Following last week's news that Origami Bank had folded, we are hearing that Sumo Bank has gone belly up and Bonsai Bank plans to cut back some of its branches.... (Joke Madness, 2007)

While this joke ridicules a (somewhat dated) financial crisis in Japan, it also teaches not only American slang but the extent of Americans' awareness of traditional and contemporary aspects of Japanese society.

Even if a joke is steeped in a culture foreign to students, such as the Mormon joke above, it may still be used to teach about that culture. A carefully chosen joke that does not contain too many unknowns and is relevant to class studies in that culture (e.g., American religions) can be useful even if it requires a little explaining.

### **Conclusion**

Anyone who has studied the art of speechmaking knows that humor and jokes can be a useful, appropriate, and perhaps even vital part of a speech, to build interest in the speaker and the topic. Speechmakers are cautioned, however, that their jokes in a speech must be understood, inoffensive, and relevant to the topic. Confusing, offensive, or irrelevant jokes are more distracting than engaging.

Jokes and humor in the language classroom work in the same way. Certainly the joke must be understandable. As shown by Koga and Cane (1995), students left confused after a teacher's joke can feel frustrated and demotivated. Secondly, the content must be appropriate for the audience—and in a multicultural class cultural

jokes run a greater risk of targeting someone in the room. It may be safe to target the teacher's own culture, but if the joke is too narrow in its cultural portrayal, it may have limited benefit. Thirdly, an ideal humorous event in class will have some stake in the subject being learned, making the humor purposeful and not merely entertaining.

The three main benefit areas outlined above reveal humor as a versatile tool in the language classroom. Above all, humor used in a personal way with students, not confusing or offensive, is an important means of building trusting relationships with students that, as studies show, can motivate them. As Ziv (1976) concludes, "Laughter, accepted and shared in the classroom, could possibly bring forth free, less conventional forms of expression on the part of the students" (p. 321). Such conditions are perfect for taking on a new language.

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**Advert**

# The younger, the wiser? Age effects on English language learning

## Keywords

critical age hypothesis, maturational effects, language acquisition

The public perception in Japan of English learning is that younger students will pick up the language much more easily and quickly than older students. In the average eikaiwa classroom, where ages can range from 4 to 74 years old in the space of one afternoon, this phenomenon can be readily observed. However, when one considers the literature on the subject, one finds widely diverging opinions as to how and why this happens. This paper will draw together the most authoritative research to date, and apply the findings to the language classroom.

日本では、若ければ英語の習得が早いと一般的に認識されている。普通の英会話クラス、例えばある午後の授業では、4歳から74歳までの年齢層の学習者がいるが、確かにそのような現象が観察できる。しかし、文献を確認してみると、こうした現象がどのように起こるか、またその理由についても、幅広くさまざまな意見が述べられている。本稿では、現在までのもっとも権威のある研究に触れ、その研究結果を語学教室に適用してみる。

**Paul Wicking**  
Meijo University

“THE YOUNGER, the better, and the older, the more difficult” is widely believed as a statement of fact with regard to the study of English as a second language in Japan. This belief is behind many parents’ decision to pay exorbitant fees to send their toddlers to language school; while many frustrated older students believe this is the reason for their lack of success. This belief also has tangible effects on public policy, with Monbusho’s recent decision to lower the age of compulsory English education from junior high school to elementary school. The interaction between age and second language learning has caught the public imagination and received more popular media attention than perhaps any other topic within the field of second language acquisition. Needless to say, the truth seems to be a lot more complex than would appear at first glance. This paper will examine the research literature on the interaction of age and second language learning, and attempt to draw together some generally accepted principles and apply them to the language classroom.

Most of the research into age and language learning revolves around the *Critical Period Hypothesis* (CPH). Many scholars in different fields have interpreted the term differently, but in its most basic form, it describes a biologically specified period of life when humans have a superior capacity for learning languages. Any language learning that begins after this period will never achieve native-like success. Early on, Penfield and Roberts (1966) defined this critical period as the first ten years of life, while Lenneberg (1967) believed it ended at puberty. Within the consequent field of CPH research, two general streams emerge: those studies which focus on how age effects phonological skills

(pronunciation and accent), and those which focus on morphosyntactical skills.

### The effect of age on phonological skills

Within the last thirty years, research into L2 acquisition has led to widely varying claims about the age effects on pronunciation. Scovel argued in favour for a critical period of phonological development. His contention was that pronunciation is the only aspect of language performance that has a neuromuscular basis and a physical reality (Scovel, 1988, p.101). Therefore, it is uniquely susceptible to maturation processes. He argued that learners who begin a second language after puberty will never be able to achieve native-like pronunciation (although there may be some exceptional cases).

Scovel's contention is perhaps a little too limiting although recent research has added some support for the existence of a less strictly defined critical period. Munro investigated Mandarin speakers for whom English is an L2. The study measured age of immersion (AOI) and degree of perceived accent (DPA). The results showed that speaker variabilities increase with AOI, suggesting that "expected DPAs become increasing less representative of actual speakers and their utterances, the later a speaker is immersed" (Munro & Mann, 2005, p. 333). Munro's findings, as well as being the most recent, are also the best explanation to date of the interaction between age and L2 phonological acquisition. Munro's model deftly takes into account all the conflicting claims made by various studies over the years, and favours a sigmoid decline model of learning ability. Maturation processes are not seen as the only variable that determines eventual attainment of pronunciation. These other variables include psychosocial, neurological, cognitive, and contextual factors, and may in fact help an older L2 learner to have better pronunciation than a younger L2 learner.

Since much research points in the direction of a critical period, and the evidence does not conclusively refute a critical period for phonological attainment, when it comes to attaining a native-like accent, the earlier, the better is a reasonable approach. Although adults may initially acquire pronunciation much quicker than children, adults' ultimate level of attainment will be much lower. And although it is possible for late learners to achieve native-like speech, this appears to be the exception. While many other factors may confound the age factor, maturational processes bind all of them together. It appears that young

L2 learners have great advantages in attaining authentic native-like accents, and that these advantages decline over time. This decline is not a sudden drop at some specified age, but most likely a sigmoid decline most noticeable between ages 3 to 15.

### The effect of age on morphosyntax

The effect of maturational processes on morphosyntax, however, has been significantly more difficult to define. The single most cited reference for the CPH in SLA literature is Johnson and Newport (1989). They performed a cross-sectional analysis of 46 native Korean or Chinese speakers who had immigrated to the US. The subjects were aged from 3 to 39, and had lived in the US for 3 to 26 years. After administering a grammaticality judgment test, it was found that performance was linearly related to age of arrival (AOA) up to puberty. They note that "there was a significant correlation between age of arrival and performance on every type of syntactic and morphological rule we tested" (p.89). For subjects whose age of arrival was after puberty, performance was low but highly variable and unrelated to AOA. Therefore, these results seem to support the CPH, showing a clear demarcation between language performance before and after puberty.

Johnson and Newport's study has been replicated by DeKeyser (2000). DeKeyser tested 57 adult Hungarian speaking immigrants, and found that adults have largely lost the ability to use the innate mechanisms for implicit language learning, and so instead use alternative methods such as problem-solving in order to learn a second language.

DeKeyser (2000) argues:

Early age confers an absolute, not a statistical, advantage – that is, there may very well be no exceptions to the age effect. Somewhere between the ages of 6–7 and 16–17, everybody loses the mental equipment required for the implicit induction of the abstract patterns underlying a human language, and the critical period really deserves its name. (p. 518).

This is a very important qualification through which research in this field needs to be interpreted. Children and adults learn in different ways. L2 learners who begin late in life can overcome their loss of implicit learning mechanisms by relying on explicit learning methods. As such, when assessing the claims of the CPH, the learning mechanisms which produce L2 ability must be taken into account. When these mechanisms

are taken into account, the absolute claims of the CPH are significantly weakened.

Although DeKeyser's results showed a linear relationship between age of acquisition and scores on a grammaticality judgment test, Bialystok (2002) argues that this is not evidence for a critical period. It merely signals a gradual lifelong decline in language learning ability. In order to prove the existence of a critical period, there must be a discontinuity in some learning mechanism, expressed through a change in the slope of the learning curve or the end of access to successful learning (p. 486). Therefore, while there is much evidence within the literature to suggest a gradual decline in language learning ability over time, it remains to be shown that there is a critical age beyond which successful language acquisition is extremely unlikely.

So while it does seem that a critical period exists for phonological ability, it has not yet been proven for morphosyntactic ability. There is no sudden drop in grammatical learning ability at puberty, but rather a gradual decline. This decline is in some way associated with maturational processes, but only as one factor among many.

### Theory and explanation of possible causes

There have been a number of explanations put forward to account for these age effects, usually centering around either neurological maturational causes or environmental causes. One such environmental theory concerns the method of learning. It appears that naturalistic acquisition yields quite different results to formal methods of acquisition. Subjects with a prolonged naturalistic exposure to the L2 in early childhood reach higher levels of attainment than subjects who begin in later life (Oyama, 1978; Patkowski, 1980). Ellis notes, "Studies of learners in naturalistic learning situations provide the most convincing evidence that younger is better and, therefore, some support for the Critical Period Hypothesis." (Ellis, 1994, p.489). However, when subjects have limited naturalistic exposure and instead undergo more formal methods of study, such as eikaiwa classes, **older learners seem to outperform younger ones** (Hoefnagel-Höhle & Snow, 1978).

Finally, the age of language learning and affective factors, particularly anxiety should be considered. Foreign language anxiety has been shown to be severely debilitating in some cases (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991), while facilitative anxiety has been noted as useful and needed in other cases (Bailey 1983). In their investiga-

tion into the factors associated with debilitating foreign language anxiety, Onweugbuzie, Bailey, and Daley (1999) found that age was a significant demographic variable. Older students reported much higher levels of anxiety than younger students. Some possible reasons for this were speed and cautiousness. Older learners perform more poorly than younger learners when a quick response is needed, and so feel more stress under time constraints. They also appear unwilling to take risks and make guesses, but instead place a high value on accuracy (Onweugbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 1999, p. 229-230).

### Overcoming maturational processes

It has been argued that there is good evidence for a critical period of **the acquisition of pronunciation and accent**. Although no such critical period seems to exist for morphosyntactical ability, it is undeniable that language learning ability does decline with age. However, there is no reason for older learners to despair. In the research literature there are many examples of older learners who attain very high levels of L2 proficiency. Within the classroom, there are a number of methods teachers can employ to push their older students towards success.

Firstly, in accordance with the findings of DeKeyser (2000), explicit learning processes are necessary for achieving a high level of language competence. Therefore, rather than a purely naturalistic, immersion approach to learning, teachers should not be reluctant to focus on form. It is through an analytical approach to structure that adults can come to master the target language. The use of Japanese in the classroom is a valuable resource for analyzing **English morphosyntax**, and can be effectively exploited by the teacher. When it comes to pronunciation, overt phonological instruction is necessary for older learners, with an emphasis on sentence-level and discourse-level stress, rhythm, and intonation, rather than word-level drills alone.

Secondly, as Bongaerts, van Summeren, Planken, and Schils (1997) noted, there are certain learner characteristics and learning contexts which can help override the disadvantages of a late start. Motivation and amount and type of instruction will have a significant impact on the language attainment of **older learners**. In particular, motivation is a key characteristic of older learners who have progressed to high levels of L2 proficiency. Therefore the language teacher must be successful in motivating and encouraging students. Another important context for learning

is continued access to target language input. It is important that students receive a large amount of input from native speakers. One class a week is not an effective method of learning. Flege (2001) writes "adult learners' L2 performance will improve over time, but only if they occupy the kind of input-rich L2 environment that is typical for children who immigrate to North America" (p. 547). However, it is just not possible for every EFL learner to pack their bags and go overseas for a couple of years. Within the Japanese EFL context, creating an input-rich environment could mean favouring short intensive courses over protracted one class a week courses. It could also mean ensuring daily input of the target language (e.g. readings or listening to a CD or podcast).

Lastly, older learners have much higher levels of foreign language anxiety than younger learners. Teachers often exacerbate this anxiety when they constantly correct students in a nonsupportive manner, when they do not promote group work, and when they do most of the talking (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Erroneous beliefs about language learning also lead to language anxiety. For example, students may believe that guessing is wrong, that accuracy must be maintained, that language learning is primarily translation, or that pronunciation is the most important aspect of language learning. There are a number of ways in which teachers can work to reduce these anxiety levels. Firstly, teachers should acknowledge these anxieties as legitimate and work to counteract these feelings by creating a safe, non-threatening environment that encourages risk-taking. Games and laughter should not be viewed as time-wasters, but as valuable tools for breaking down students' affective barriers. Secondly, teachers should confront any erroneous beliefs about language learning by stressing the importance of guesswork and group work, and that a high level of accuracy is not the be-all and end-all of language learning.

## Conclusion

The commonly held belief that age is a decisive factor in the success of second language acquisition lacks supporting evidence. Although research does suggest the existence of a critical period for the attainment of native-like pronunciation, it has not been shown for grammatical ability. Certainly, age is a very important variable, and it has been demonstrated that there is a gradual decline in learning ability as one gets older. However, it is possible for

older learners to overcome these maturational difficulties and achieve very high levels of second language ability by making use of explicit learning processes. As teachers, we can give hope and encouragement to mature learners that it is never too late to achieve success. An awareness of the issues surrounding age and language learning will aid us in adapting our classroom methodology to create the most fertile environment for learning to take place.

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## ...with Myles Grogan

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We welcome submissions for the My Share column. Submissions should be up to 700 words describing a successful technique or lesson plan you have used which can be replicated by readers, and should conform to the My Share format (see any edition of *The Language Teacher*). Please send submissions to <my-share@jalt-publications.org>.

### MY SHARE ONLINE

A linked index of My Share articles can be found at:  
<jalt-publications.org/tlt/myshare/>

**I**N THE first activity this month, Eleanor Kane shows us how to use a Japanese tradition (the *Tanabata* tree) to motivate students. Next, Shelley Peters Karl provides a warm-up activity that will help students with the speaking section of the TOEFL iBT.

# English Tanabata tree

**Eleanor Kane**

**University of Shimane**

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### Quick Guide

**Key words:** Grammar review, Japanese culture, writing, motivation

**Learner English level:** Beginner to advanced

**Learner maturity level:** All

**Preparation time:** Several hours

**Activity time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:** Bamboo in containers, thin strips of coloured paper with a hole punched in them, thread for tying the paper to the bamboo, traditional Tanabata decorations (optional)

Tanabata, as most residents of Japan will know, is a festival celebrated on 7 July, the only day of the year when the Weaver Star and Cowherd

Stars meet in the heavens. Traditionally, Japanese children write their wishes on brightly coloured strips of paper and tie these to bamboo. In this activity, students write three English sentences practising three usages of want:

- Want + noun (*I want a new car* or *I want an end to poverty*)
- Want + to + infinitive (*I want to go to France*)
- Want + to be + noun/adjective (*I want to be an astronaut*)

### Preparation

If you don't have planted bamboo available, you will need to cut some before class. Bamboo is hard, so you will need a saw. It also loses its leaves quickly once cut, so it must be placed in a bucket of water. Consider how many students will write their wishes and cut accordingly.

### Procedure

**Step 1:** Have students write their three wishes as indicated above on their own paper. It is crucial that you tell them to write wishes they would not mind sharing with others. If time is limited, without mentioning Tanabata, have students write their three wishes for homework and submit them before coming to class.

**Step 2:** Ask students why they think you assigned this task. Give them the hint of 7 July if necessary. This is a good time to feign ignorance of some aspects of Tanabata if your students are proficient enough to explain the festival in English.

**Step 3:** After checking the students' writing, have them write their three sentences on the coloured paper.

**Step 4:** With a few volunteers, decorate the bamboo after class.

### Follow up activity

**Step 1:** After a week or so, remove the tree and dispose of it according your local recycling laws (you'll need that saw again). The space will seem very bare now.

**Step 2:** In its place, put up a large poster telling students that the Tanabata tree is not magic. In order for them to realize their three wishes they need to start working towards their goals.

**Step 3:** In class, have students glue their original three sentences into their notebooks, regularly update the page with their strategies for achiev-

ing these goals, and let them know how your own goals are progressing.

## Conclusion

You could use bamboo planted on the school grounds, but in rainy season the ink will run and the papers leach colour. For the Tanabata tree to be effective, request permission to place it in a high traffic area. Leave spare papers for other students who might want to add their own wishes to the tree. I also put papers and an explanation in my co-worker's mailboxes. Students will enjoy reading teachers' and administrators' wishes in English.



# Speaking scramble

**Shelley Peters Karl**

**Chubu University**

**<peters@lc.chubu.ac.jp>**

## Quick Guide

**Key words:** TOEFL iBT, warm-up, speaking

**Learner English level:** Intermediate to advanced

**Learner maturity level:** High school to adult

**Preparation time:** None

**Activity time:** 5 to 15 minutes

**Materials:** A question and a stopwatch

The new TOEFL iBT requires students to speak on a given topic with very little preparation time.

This time crunch, combined with test anxiety, often raises students' anxiety to the point that they are unable to perform to the best of their ability. I've found that the following interactive task helps prepare students by mimicking test pressure in a fun, high-energy way. It gives students the chance to practice formulating their own answers quickly, while at the same time allowing them the opportunity to garner ideas from the input of their fellow students as they reformulate their answers several times.

## Procedure

**Step 1:** Select an independent speaking topic from a list of typical topics found on the TOEFL iBT. Such lists can be found in any TOEFL iBT preparation textbook. Alternatively, create a topic that integrates into the content of the course you are teaching.

**Step 2:** Have the students stand up, form pairs, and decide who will speak first.

**Step 3:** Read out the question and immediately start your stopwatch, giving students 15 seconds to prepare their thoughts.

**Step 4:** At the end of the 15 seconds, have student A from each pair begin speaking while student B listens.

**Step 5:** After 45 seconds, instruct the B students to give their answers.

**Step 6:** After 45 seconds, students scramble to find a new partner and run through Steps 2-5 again. Students could also switch a final time and run through the process with a third person if time allows.

## Follow-up

After the activity, elicit some answers from the class and use those ideas as examples to address organization, coherence, and grammatical structures that would help form an effective response to the given question. After such instruction and discussion, give time for students to carefully plan and exchange answers one additional time with the person sitting next to them.

## Conclusion

Though originally designed for TOEFL iBT practice, this activity is also an effective warm-up in many other situations. In whatever situation you use it in, it is important to keep the activity fast-paced and light-hearted.

## ...with Robert Taferner

&lt;reviews@jalt-publications.org&gt;



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

## BOOK REVIEWS ONLINE

A linked index of Book Reviews can be found at:

&lt;jalt-publications.org/tlt/reviews/&gt;

**T**HIS MONTH'S column features Ann Junko Young's review of *細かく言い表し伝えたい英会話フレーズ 2220* [Komakaku Iiarawashi Tsutaetai Eikaiwa Furezu 2220], a self-study book for intermediate to advanced Japanese speakers of English.

## 細かく言い表し伝えたい 英会話フレーズ 2220

### Komakaku Iiarawashi Tsutaetai Eikaiwa Furezu 2220

[Toshihiko Kobayashi & Shawn M. Clankie.  
Tokyo: Sanshusha, 2007. pp. 244. ¥2,100.  
ISBN: 978-4-384-05470-5 C2082.]

**Reviewed by Ann Junko Young,  
Bunkyo University and Rikkyo  
University**

*Komakaku Iiarawashi Tsutaetai Eikaiwa Furezu 2220* is a self-study book that, as the title says, contains English conversation phrases to aid Japanese speakers to find ways to express themselves as precisely and naturally as possible in English. In the preface the authors point out the difficulty that non-native speakers of English have in describing what is around them (e.g., what they see, hear, and smell) even when they reach a high level of proficiency. It also emphasizes the danger of overusing communication strategies (e.g., paraphrasing, avoidance, message abandonment, and the use of synonyms) as that can negatively affect the learners' language

development. According to the authors, in order to avoid fossilization, one needs to make continuous efforts to learn and use vocabulary precisely in the target language without relying so much on such communication strategies. To meet those specific students' needs, instead of presenting phrases that are commonly used by native speakers of English, the book shows how high-frequency phrases used by Japanese speakers can be naturally and accurately expressed in English.

The phrases in this book are categorized and divided into seven chapters. The first five chapters include phrases that might appear in a conversation when the five senses (i.e., vision, audition, olfaction, taste, and tact) are stimulated, and the last two include phrases that are related to the expression of thoughts and desires. In each chapter the phrases are organized around several different topics, which helps students to locate the phrases they want to learn. The number of pages for each topic varies, but invariably on each page the reader will find 10 phrases, which are used and highlighted in different sentences first in Japanese and then in English.

Even though it is not clearly stated in the book, it seems that those with a high intermediate level of English or above would benefit the most from using it. One of the reasons is that the purpose of the book is not to teach basic words or expressions but to introduce phrases that the students could probably say or explain roughly but not precisely. Although lists of phrases used in sentences may receive criticisms for their lack of a larger context, there are still several benefits of using the book, which include noticing new words and phrases in English, checking similar and opposite expressions, and learning their collocations (Nation, 2001). Because the teaching of new vocabulary words and phrases can be focused around certain topics, the use of the book as supplemental material when teaching vocabulary in the classroom is also possible. In my case, I taught about 10 phrases every week to intermediate-level students as an extra activity. Most of the students were not familiar with all the words and did not know how to pronounce them all, either. The purpose of this activity was to expose them to those expressions by explaining their use and meanings; it was not necessarily to make them use those expressions although that could be a follow-up activity.

Unfortunately, regarding how one can use the book for self-study purposes, the only suggestion presented was for the students to go over the sentences in Japanese and then to try to see if they can translate the sentences naturally into English.

Besides that, the authors gave several general suggestions regarding how one can develop English skills as a whole using other forms of input such as listening to authentic materials or reading newspapers. Other than those recommendations, it seems that it is up to the student to decide how to use the book. Students can possibly try to memorize the phrases or just use the book for reference. Some students may have developed more skills or strategies for learning new phrases in English, but others may need specific recommendations or suggestions on how to study and learn the phrases in the book effectively. Unfortunately, those recommendations seem to be lacking in the book. Another issue regarding the effectiveness of the book is that even though the students may be able to increase their passive vocabulary knowledge, the only way

they can actually use the vocabulary learned is when the context makes their use necessary.

I recommend the book for learners who already have confidence speaking in English but who still have difficulties in expressing themselves, especially when using descriptive language. Even though the usefulness of the book depends on individual learners' needs and levels of motivation, it can certainly serve not only as a step to increase learners' awareness of new ways to express themselves but also as a reminder of the need to actively seek progress in their lifelong process of learning a language.

### References

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

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## RESOURCES • RECENTLY RECEIVED

### ...with Greg Rouault

<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/>

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

### Books for students (reviewed in *TLT*)

Contact: Greg Rouault

<pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

- \* *Beyond Boundaries: Insights into Culture and Communication*. Ikeguchi, C., & Yashiro, K. Kirihara Shoten (Pearson Longman), 2008. [Incl. CD, answer key with Japanese abstracts].
- ! *Oxford English for Careers: Commerce 1*. Hobbs, M., & Starr Keddle, J. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. [Incl. teacher's resource book, CD, website assistance].
- \* *Reading for Speed and Fluency*. Nation, P., & Malarcher, C. Santa Fe Springs, CA: Compass Publishing, 2007. [Incl. downloadable MP3 files].
- Sounds Good: On Track to Listening Success 1, 2, 3*. Beatty, K., & Tinkler, P. Hong Kong: Pearson Longman Asia ELT, 2008. [Incl. CDs, teacher's

manual, downloadable website listening materials].

- ! *Well Read 1: Skills and Strategies for Reading*. Blass, L. New York: Oxford, 2008. [Incl. instructor's pack].
- \* *World Around*. Cleary, M. Crawley, UK: Helbling Languages, 2008. [Incl. CD, teacher's book w/ CD, downloadable website resources].
- Writing to Communicate 2: Paragraphs and Essays* (3rd ed.). Boardman, C. A., & Frydenberg, J. White Plains, NY: Pearson Education, 2008. [Incl. answer key].

### Books for teachers (reviewed in *JALT Journal*)

Contact: Yuriko Kite

<jj-reviews@jalt-publications.org>

- ! *English Language Teaching in China: New Approaches, Perspectives and Standards*. Liu, J. (Ed.). London: Continuum International, 2007.
- \* *Language and Education in Japan: Unequal Access to Bilingualism*. Kanno, Y. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008.
- \* *Talk in Two Languages*. Gafaranga, J. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007.
- \* *The Handbook of Educational Linguistics*. Spolsky, B., & Hult, F. M. (Eds.). Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008.
- 小学生に英語を教えるとは?アジアと日本の教育現場から [What is the Meaning of Teaching English to Elementary School Children?]. Kawahara, T. Tokyo: Mekong, 2008.

**...with Marcos Benevides**

&lt;jalt-focus@jalt-publications.org&gt;



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.

- ▶ 31 May – 1 Jun 2008: JALTCALL 2008 "New Frontiers in CALL: Negotiating Diversity" at Nagoya University of Commerce & Business, Nagoya.
- ▶ 28-29 Jun – JALT Executive Board Meeting. Venue: Osaka Gakuin University.
- ▶ Jun 2008: Kagoshima TEYL Conference (joint chapter and TC SIG event) at Kagoshima University.
- ▶ 5 Oct 2008: JALT 3rd Annual Joint Tokyo Conference at Toyo Gakuen University, Hongo Campus, Tokyo.
- ▶ 1-3 Nov 2008: PAC7 at JALT2008 at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center, Tokyo.  
See <conferences.jalt.org/2008> for more information.

**JALT Focus**

In this editor's opinion, the real strength of JALT is its ability to incorporate the energy of so many different individuals in such an amazing variety of complementary endeavours. This is possible because our members are never discouraged from organizing themselves in new ways. Sometimes they do so entirely within JALT, such as when some motivated teachers get together to kick off a new chapter or SIG, or to put on a mini-conference. However, sometimes the result is something harder to categorize.

This month I've invited Michael Stout and the Nakasendo Conference Committee to report on how they worked together, both inside and outside of JALT, to bring us their new conference. And as you read, if you are struck by an overwhelming urge to get all collaborative yourself, I'm sure there's a nearby JALT member waiting by the phone to hear from you!

**MAKING CONNECTIONS**

**working together  
to improve teaching practice**

NAKASENDO ENGLISH CONFERENCE 2008

**Saturday June 21**  
Seigakuin University, Saitama

**Making Connections: The Nakasendo English Conference**

There is a growing trend in language teaching conferences: collaborative organisation. The Pan-SIG Conference is in its 7th year now. The JALT Joint Tokyo Conference 2008 will be the third collaboration between Tokyo and Tokyo-West chapters. The JALT CUE SIG has started *From the Chalkface*, a series of one-day events co-sponsored by JALT chapters. The first JACET-JALT Regional Conference is coming up in Nagoya. Perhaps most notably, this year's international JALT conference is hosting the seventh Pan Asian Consortium as well as the sixth Asian Youth Forum.

Following on this trend we came up with the idea of organising a conference that would bring together five organisations in the Kanto region.

### *Our theme*

Like traveling on the Nakasendo, a major highway during the Edo Era which ran through Saitama where the conference will be held, we see language learning and teaching as a journey of discovery with various “stations” along the way. These stations, or individual learning and teaching communities, benefit from being connected to each other. Therefore, we chose “Making connections: working together to improve teaching practice” as our theme and set these goals for the conference:

- To demonstrate that inter-organisational cooperation is possible
- To establish inter-organisational relationships in Kanto
- To provide opportunities for members to share their experiences through giving and attending presentations
- To support the growth and prosperity of all participating organizations

### *Who is involved?*

First we decided to make connections between the organizations that we were already involved in. The JALT members of the committee sought participation from Omiya chapter and the Junior and Senior High School SIG. Next, through the connections created by the JALT-JET Liaison position and the strong relationship that is forming between JALT and the JET Program, we were also able to get the Association of Japan Exchange and Teaching (AJET) on board. To complete the lineup, we approached a research group Sarah Louisa Birchley, one of our members, regularly attends—a small but enthusiastic organization called ESTEEM (Elementary School Thematic English Education Movement), and the English Teacher and Learner Co-operative (eTLC). Although each group focuses on different areas, each also has skills and knowledge that span across our discipline.

### *Planning*

Once we got the groups together, we formed a conference coordinating committee with representatives of each organisation taking a role. We divided the work between us and communicated

both face-to-face and online. As the conference team is scattered around the Kanto area, we have few opportunities to meet face-to-face. We therefore devised ways to keep our communications smooth. For instance, we set up a mailing list, a website, and we used Google Docs to share and work on planning and promotion files. The Google Docs facility helped us to quickly work on ideas at the same time and produce documents in a timely manner. We also set up a conference wiki, for participants to interact before and after the conference. For instance, we have a panel discussion at the end of the conference, which we hope will tackle some of the questions generated beforehand on the wiki.

As the conference is hosted by a number of organizations, each organization was invited to provide a speaker. We also sought a keynote speaker who understood the need to build communication and rapport between educators. Tim Murphy and his keynote presentation, “Teacher learning communities and the wiki teacher”, is an excellent match with our conference theme.

### *Future conferences*

We hope that the Nakasendo English Conference adds to the trend for collaborative conferences. The next Nakasendo English Conference will have more groups joining in, and we hope that we can provide a model for similar conferences both inside JALT and throughout Japan.

### *More information*

Please visit the conference website at <[www.jalt.org/chapters/omiya/nakasendo.htm](http://www.jalt.org/chapters/omiya/nakasendo.htm)> or contact the Nakasendo Conference Committee at <[nakasendoenglish@yahoo.com](mailto:nakasendoenglish@yahoo.com)>. To join the wiki and contribute to the conference panel discussion, please go to <[nakasendoengconfdissionpanel.wetpaint.com/](http://nakasendoengconfdissionpanel.wetpaint.com/)>.

### **Announcement**

#### *4th Annual Tech Day in Osaka: “Keeping computing simple”*

The popular Osaka JALT Tech Day is back. Past presentations have included using computers for grading, podcasting, and more, at Hannan University from 13:00 to 17:00 on 22 June 22. Dinner at 18:30 for those interested. Contact <[osakajalt@yahoo.com](mailto:osakajalt@yahoo.com)> for more information.

## ...with Damian Rivers

<memprofile@jalt-publications.org>



Showcase is a column where members have 250 words to introduce something of specific interest to the readership. This may be an event, website, personal experience or publication.

Please address inquiries to the editor.

IN THIS month's Showcase David Coulson discusses the publication of a textbook focusing on storytelling.

## SHOWCASE

# David Coulson

*Tell Me Your Stories* is about conversational storytelling for lower intermediate learners, written by Bob Jones and myself. People create and maintain relationships by sharing anecdotes and empathizing with those their listeners tell in response. These stories are often about happy, sad, amusing, or annoying things that have happened to them or to people around them.

Bob wrote an article investigating this kind of interaction for the *ELT Journal* in 2001. After reading it, I realized that a whole syllabus could be based on the essential skill of storytelling. I mentioned this to Bob and we decided to write a book.

It turns out that conversational stories follow a predictable and highly teachable pattern beginning with an orientation, followed by a memorable event and the storyteller's reaction to that event. Moreover, common words and phrases mark each stage. We wanted to find a way of introducing these patterns and phrases to learners, and spent 2 years experimenting with the contents and layout of the units. In each unit, learners create a natural-sounding story on topics such as personal triumphs, small misfortunes, and childhood memories, and they practice how to incorporate them into conversation in a section called Fluency Factory. As the units progress, we also emphasize the important role that listeners play in maintaining conversations, and present useful phrases and hints for expressing interest, amazement, sympathy, and so on.

By the end of the course, students will have 10 high-currency stories ready to drop into active conversation. We hope this book will help learners progress towards a more interactive conversational style.



David Coulson and Bob Jones both gained master's degrees in TESOL from Aston University in the UK. David lives in Niigata City, and Bob lives in Gifu Prefecture. They are both active in classroom-based and linguistic research and the insights from both areas helped shape *Tell Me Your Stories*. David can be contacted at <dgccoulson@hotmail.com>.



## ...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.



**J**ALT2008 ORGANIZERS are working hard to bring you a conference experience you're never going to forget! Interested? Read on! Also this month, Bairbre Ni Oisín writes about her experience of doing "her share" and promoting JALT at her work place, an international primary school.

## Shared identities: Our interweaving threads

by Carolyn C. Latham, JALT2008 Conference Co-Chair; Aleda Krause, JALT2008 Conference Program Chair; and Steven Nishida, PAC7 at JALT2008 PAC Liaison

PAC7 at JALT2008, JALT's 34th annual conference, will be held again this year at the Japanese National Olympic Memorial Youth Center in Tokyo from 31 October through 3 November. The theme is Shared Identities: Our Interweaving Threads. Just what does the theme mean? First, it refers to the strong international focus of this year's conference, with many colorful threads representing the participation of presenters and guests from all the Pan Asian Consortium (PAC) affiliate countries for PAC7—the 7th Conference of the Pan-Asian Consortium of Language Teach-

ing Societies. PAC partner associations are based in Japan (JALT), Korea (KOTESOL), the Philippines (PALT), the Russian Far East (FEELTA), Singapore (ELLTAS), Taiwan (ETAROC), and Thailand (ThaiTESOL). Hosting PAC7 is a truly marvelous opportunity for JALT, helping us strengthen our ties with language teaching associations worldwide.

Conference-goers will find the voices and experiences of our Asia-based colleagues woven right into the very fabric of PAC7 at JALT2008 in its programming and activities. To this end, we are working closely with the PAC partners to include research and discussion threads indicative of the rich diversity within the region. Along with the solid lineup of main speakers that JALT attracts each year, PAC7 at JALT2008 will see additional featured speakers from abroad and an increase in the number of presentations and colloquia with international perspectives. Put simply, this will be a collaborative event that you really don't want to miss!

Another thread in the tapestry of JALT2008 will be the seventh JALT Junior Conference for teachers of children. Each year, JALT Junior, a conference within a conference, offers the opportunity for teachers of our youngest learners to share ideas to inspire their students. The halls buzz; music, chants, games, activities, and stories abound; and the enthusiasm is infectious. Few of the ideas presented work only with children, and teachers of all ages are welcome to join the fun. Looking towards the planned implementation of English as a subject in the upper elementary grades, this year's panel discussion will consider bridging the gap between primary and secondary English education—and whether it's possible to do that. It should be an engrossing forum.

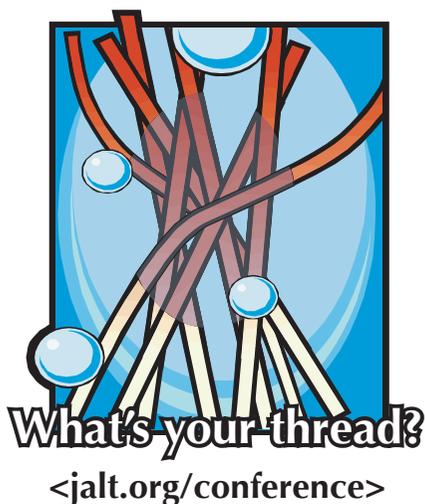
Other brilliant threads include the international group of young adults participating in the 6th Asian Youth Forum (AYF) throughout the conference, and the second Graduate Student Showcase, where current graduate students will present their latest research. The interrelationships (interweaving) between languages and cultures, thought and language, oral and written communication, theory, research, and practical application in the classroom, language learners, and teachers are other vivid threads in the fabric of JALT2008.

Plans to make PAC7 at JALT2008 the best possible conference for presenters and participants are well under way. The impressive group of speakers from around the world will share their expertise in all the various threads of the confer-

ence, especially as they may relate to language teaching and learning in the Asian context. Our plenary speakers will include Yuko Goto Butler and Andrew Kirkpatrick. This year we also have 15 distinguished featured speakers, sponsored by Associate Members, PAC partners, and JALT SIGs, who will each give at least one workshop and an academic presentation. They are Akara Akaranithi (ThaiTESOL), Lourdes R. Baetiong (PALT), Jennifer Bassett (OUP), Richard Day (OUP), Alvino E. Fantini (SIT), Alastair Graham-Marr (ABAX), Chris Kennedy (DEH), Jake Kimball (KOTESOL), Yoko Matsuka (McGraw-Hill), Michael McCarthy (CUP), Chuck Sandy (Cengage), Curtis Kelly (Cengage), Maria V. Verbitskaya (FEELTA), Dai Wei Yang (ETAROC), and Dorothy E. Zemach (MacmillanLH and MW SIG). With more featured speakers than ever, and a special discount on pre- and post-conference workshop fees, participants have an enticing array of possibilities. You can even talk one-on-one with the main speakers at Meet the Stars.

Inspiring opening and closing ceremonies, as well as special events and receptions, will highlight many of the major threads of the conference, including presentations and performances by local and AYF students of the traditional dances and cultural arts of their respective countries. To top it all off, our extensive Education Materials Exhibition will be graciously provided by publishers and other associate members serving Japan. Included in the EME will be the ever-interesting, exciting, and instructive poster sessions.

Come join the interweaving of ideas at PAC7 at JALT2008 and become part of the vibrant tapestry of shared ideas and expertise! You are very welcome!



## Promoting JALT at an international primary school

by Bairbre Ni Oisin, ESOL Coordinator, St. Michael's International School,  
<esolsmis@yahoo.com>

*The Language Teacher* often encourages its readers to promote JALT. However, after becoming a JALT member in 2006, all I did was receive the monthly *TLT* magazine and enjoy its contents, even though some topics seemed suitable for sharing with my colleagues. Then, all of a sudden, I was motivated to do "my share." I decided to apply to attend JALT2007 in Tokyo as part of my professional development and share my experience with colleagues.

I am working at an international primary school as an ESOL coordinator. One of my responsibilities includes supporting mainstream teachers and teaching assistants, who may find teaching in a multilingual classroom challenging. As Sears (1998) points out, "The range of languages to be found among students in international schools removes from the teacher the possibility of using the techniques developed in schools with speakers of only one or two languages" (p. 17). Sometimes, mainstream teachers can find teaching second language learners difficult due to a lack of linguistic awareness. Ferguson & Trappes-Lomax (2002) highlight the importance of linguistic awareness as follows: "A linguistically aware teacher not only understands how language works, but understands the student's struggle with language and is sensitive to errors and other interlanguage features" (p. 116). I felt that attending JALT2007 would help me increase my own linguistic awareness and, in turn, that of mainstream teachers and teaching assistants.

The JALT conference may not be the first conference to spring to mind for teachers' professional development in international schools in Japan, because there are other established workshops and conferences specialising in international school education such as the East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools (EARCOS) conference. Therefore, I was especially careful when filling in the professional development application and wrote: "By attending this internationally

recognised conference, I can avail myself of the opportunity to have access to some of the latest research regarding teaching English, and as a result, will not only enhance the quality of my teaching but also provide ESOL students with the latest teaching methods backed by researchers throughout the world." I succeeded in convincing the management they were making the right decision in allowing me to attend the conference.

A rather nervous and anxious tenderfoot headed off to Tokyo to locate the National Olympics Memorial Youth Centre in Yoyogi. The JALT2007 conference turned out to be much more than I had anticipated. I was overwhelmed by the number and quality of presentations. I spent 4 fantastic days at the conference and left Tokyo feeling completely energised.

With conference energy still flowing through my veins, I decided to make a PowerPoint presentation to my colleagues about JALT and its international conference on the following Wednesday (28 November 2007) at our weekly staff meeting.

Summarising a 4-day conference into 25 minutes was no Sunday picnic. I sketched an overview of JALT and its conference and tailored the content of the presentation to suit the needs of mainstream teachers and teaching assistants working at an international primary school. In addition, I proposed further possible in-service training topics that I would feel comfortable offering in the future, based on the knowledge and materials provided by the conference presenters. At the end of my presentation, I asked 23 members of staff to complete a short reflective questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire illustrated that most of my colleagues were satisfied with the presentation, and showed interest in JALT.

Not only did I succeed in doing "my share" to promote JALT, but also I received a bonus. I was given a green light to attend JALT2008!

## References

- Ferguson, G., & Trappes-Lomax, H. R. (2002). *Language in language teacher education*. London: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Sears, C. (1998). *Second language students in mainstream classrooms: A handbook for teachers in international schools*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

1. Prior to my report, did you know of the existence of JALT?



2. Could you draw a clear picture of what JALT and its international conference are like through today's presentation?



3. Are you interested in attending ESOL in-service training dealing with one of the titles presented at the JALT international conference?



4. Are you interested in attending JALT events/workshops if their contents are related to primary school teaching?



5. Do you feel that it is beneficial for the school to allow the ESOL Coordinator to attend the JALT international conference as his/her career development?



## ...with James Hobbs

<sig-news@jalt-publications.org>



JALT currently has 16 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.

### SIGs at a glance

Key: [🔍] = keywords [📖] = publications [🗣️] = other activities [✉️] = email list [💬] = online forum]

**Note:** For contacts & URLs, please see the Contacts page.

### Bilingualism

[🔍] bilingualism, biculturalism, international families, child-raising, identity [📖] *Bilingual Japan*—4x year [🗣️] monographs, forums [✉️]

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

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

### Computer Assisted Language Learning

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

The CALL SIG would like to say a great, big *Thank you!* to all of the presenters, attendees, sponsor, and support staff for once again making the CALL SIG conference a great success. Looking forward to seeing you again in 2009. Please stay informed at <www.jaltcall.org>.

### College and University Educators

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

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

### Gender Awareness in Language Education

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

GALE works towards building a supportive community of educators and researchers interested in raising awareness and researching how gender plays an integral role in education and professional interaction. We also network and collaborate with other JALT groups and the community to promote pedagogical and professional practices, language teaching materials, and research inclusive of gender and gender-related topics. Co-sponsor of the Pan-SIG 2008. Visit our website <www.gale-sig.org/> or contact us for more details.

### Global Issues in Language Education

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

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

### Japanese as a Second Language

[🔍] Japanese as a second language [📖] *日本語教育ニュースレター Japanese as a Second Language Newsletter*—4x year [🗣️] Annual general meeting at the JALT conference [✉️]

## Junior and Senior High School

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

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

## Learner Development

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

Don't miss our retreat *Crossing boundaries: Interdisciplinary approaches to learner autonomy* at Nanzan Gakuen Retreat Centre on 15 Jun 9:30-16:30. For more information contact Ellen Head <ellenkobe@yahoo.com>. If you want to network with other members but can't make it to the retreat, check out the *community* section of our homepage to find contact people in the Tokyo, Nagoya, and Kansai areas.

## Lifelong Language Learning

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

The increasing number of people of retirement age, plus the internationalization of Japanese society, has greatly increased the number of people eager to study English as part of their lifelong learning. The LLL SIG provides resources and information for teachers who teach English to older learners. We run a website, online forum, listserv, and SIG publication (see <[www.eigosenmon.com/tolsig/](http://www.eigosenmon.com/tolsig/)>). For more information or to join the mailing list, contact Amanda Harlow <[amand@aqualivedoor.com](mailto:amand@aqualivedoor.com)> or Eric M. Skier <[skier@ps.toyaku.ac.jp](mailto:skier@ps.toyaku.ac.jp)>.

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

## Materials Writers

[🗎 materials development, textbook writing, publishers and publishing, self-publication, technology] [📖 *Between the Keys*—3x year] [👤 JALT national conference events] [📧]

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

## Other Language Educators

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

OLE has issued NL 46 with updates on Pan-SIG and PAC7 at JALT2008, plus a discussion paper by Rudolf Reinelt on email in beginner German courses, and information on Erasmus Mundus further education opportunities recently made available at Japanese universities. Copies are available from the coordinator <[reinelt@iec.ehime-u.ac.jp](mailto:reinelt@iec.ehime-u.ac.jp)>.

## Pragmatics

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

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

## Professionalism, Administration, and Leadership in Education

The PALE SIG welcomes new members, officers, volunteers, and submissions of articles for our journal or newsletter. To read current and past issues of our journal, visit <www.debito.org/PALE>. Also,

anyone may join our listserv <groups.yahoo.com/group/PALE\_Group/>. For information on events, visit <www.jalt.org/groups/PALE>.

## Teaching Children

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

The TC SIG will co-sponsor the sixth annual Kagoshima young learners conference, *Bridging the gap between elementary and junior high school English: Exchanging ideas*, on Sun 22 Jun 9:00-17:00 at Kagoshima University, Korimoto campus. Details on the website <www.jalt-kagoshima.org/prog/conference/2008/TCC2008.htm>. We are also looking forward to the seventh annual JALT Junior Conference on Sat 1 Nov and Sun 2 Nov at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center in Tokyo. Hope to see you there! Check out our website <tcsig.jalt.org>.

## Testing & Evaluation

[📍] research, information, database on testing ] [📖] *Shiken*—3x year ] [🌐] Pan-SIG, JALT National ] [📧]

# COLUMN • CHAPTER EVENTS

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## ...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.

**C**OLLABORATIVE CONFERENCES abound this month: with JACET, AJET, ESTEEM, and many JALT SIGs. You're sure to find something interesting in June. If your local chapter isn't listed, or for further details, go to the online calendar. There may be newly added events and updates.

**Chiba—Writing instruction and assessment: The power of "no" by Marlen Harrison**, Indiana University of Pennsylvania. (See Gunma for description.) Sun 8 Jun 14:00-16:30; SATY Bunka Hall 4F, Room 1 (1-min. walk from Inage station east exit on JR Sobu line); one-day members ¥500.

**Gifu—Exploring portfolio Assessment in the EFL Classroom by Steve Quasha**, Sugiyama Women's University. Quasha will demonstrate how portfolio assessment plays an integral part in his communicative English courses. Participants will

experience tasks that will enable them to successfully develop their own grading rubrics and learn how the notion of shared accountability improves language acquisition. Come and experience the many ways portfolios can be used in your own teaching situation to promote student-generated experiential learning, regardless of the age of your students. *Sat 21 Jun 19:00-20:45; Heartful Square (southeast section of Gifu JR Station), Gifu City; one-day members ¥1000.*

**Gunma—Critical approaches to teaching writing: Mindfulness and the power of “no” by Marlen Harrison.** As “World Englishes” continue to dominate discussions of writing pedagogy, instructors ponder acceptable uses and performances of written language. In this lively discussion, we’ll use Thich Nhat Han’s *Mindfulness Trainings* as inspiration to consider L2 writing instruction and assessment, correcting student writing, and our identities as instructors. *Sat 3 Jun 14:00-16:30; Maebashi Kyoai Gakuen College, 1154-4 Koyahara-machi, Maebashi, t: 027-266-7575; one-day members ¥1000.*

**Hiroshima—Special visiting American: Teaching Japanese and WWII by Susan Kawashima.** Kawashima, a lecturer of Japanese language and culture at Hunter College in New York, will discuss her book, which connects her experiences as a child in war-torn Nagoya to her experiences living in New York during 9/11. She will also discuss her experiences teaching Japanese language and culture in the US. *Tues 17 Jun 18:00-19:30; Bluestone, 3-8 Hachobori, #502, 5F (in Popura building, across from Cusco Cafe); one-day members ¥500.*

**Hokkaido—JALT Hokkaido’s SIG Special: JALT’s Special Interest Groups.** Nine 45-minute presentations by SIGs to introduce themselves to participants and do a presentation connected to one of the SIG’s areas of interest. Two 1-hour sessions are planned: Mark Shrosbree, sponsored by GILE and author Leslie Ito, invited by the Hokkaido JALT Teaching Children. For further information contact Don Hinkelman <hinkel@sgu.ac.jp>, Mary Virgil-Uchida <maryvirgiluchida@mac.com>, or Wilma Luth <wilmaluth@gmail.com>. Detailed schedule available <www.jalthokkaido.net/>. *Sun 22 Jun 10:00-16:00; Hokkaido International School, 1-55, 5-jo, 19-chome, Hiragishi (5-min. walk from Sumikawa station); one-day members ¥500.*

**Iwate—Debate and structured discussions in the EFL Classroom by Mark Neufeld,** Sakura no Seibo Junior College. Neufeld will first discuss the teaching of debate in the college EFL classroom. He will examine the format of parliamentary-style debate and the vocabulary and methods involved in teaching and conducting debates. Then he will describe a technique he has developed called *Structured Discussions*. The technique can be taught to high school and college students with high-beginner to advanced English ability and can be used in oral English or integrated skills classes. *Sun 22 Jun 13:30-16:30; Aiina, Morioka; one-day members ¥1000.*

**Kagoshima—Sixth annual young learners conference. Bridging the gap between elementary and junior high school English: Exchanging ideas.** Co-sponsored by TC SIG. Main speaker: **Masato Niisato**, Tokyo Kokusai Daigaku. Other speakers: **Mayuka Habbick, Jan O’Loughlin, Caroline Lloyd, Emi Sugita, Melinda Kawahara, Aleda Krause, Yayoi Aoki**, and more! Website: <www.jalt-kagoshima.org/prog/conference/2008/TCC2008.htm>. *Sun 22 Jun 9:30-17:00; Kagoshima University, Korimoto campus; members ¥1000, one-day members pre-registered ¥2000, onsite ¥2500, students ¥1500.*

**Kitakyushu—TPR-S storybook fun by Melinda Kawahara.** Even the best teachers sometimes run out of ideas. In this workshop the presenter will demonstrate how to use TPR-S storybooks for children through games and activities. Following the natural teaching approach, TPR-S focuses on teaching sentence structures through storytelling. Fun, creative, and imaginative, this teaching approach will have your students anticipating their next English class. A detailed lesson plan will be outlined and everyone will have the opportunity to write their own personalized story. *Sat 14 Jun 19:00-21:00; Kitakyushu International Conference Center (5-min. walk from Kokura Station); one-day members ¥1000.*

**Kobe—Shaping teaching to fit theories of learning by Curtis Kelly.** Almost daily, brain studies are giving us a better picture of how learning occurs. Unfortunately, the methods we use in the classroom have not kept pace. The presenter will discuss some fundamentals of learning (such as emotional intelligence, multisensory input, and deep processing) and discuss ways to use them in our language classes. Participants will be

asked to redesign traditional lessons to better fit what we are discovering about learning. *Sat 21 Jun 18:00-20:00; Kobe International House (Kokusai Kaikan), Gokodori 8-1-6, Chuo-ku, t: 078-231-8161; free for all.*

**Matsuyama—The Nikkei experience in Japan** by **Donna Fujimoto**, Osaka Jogakuin College. *Nikkei* refers to people of Japanese heritage who were raised outside Japan. There are many from North America who have lived long-term in Japan. This presentation will report on the activities and research of a group that began in 2004. Sometimes they are considered “insiders” and sometimes “outsiders.” This experience can shed light on the unstated rules of Japanese society. *Sun 8 Jun 14:15-16:20; Shinonome High School kinenkan 4F; one-day members ¥1000.*

**Nara—Critical approaches to teaching writing: Mindfulness and the power of “no”** by **Marlen Harrison**. (See Gunma Chapter for description.) *Sat 21 June 14:00-17:00; Tezukayama University Gakuenmae Campus (facing South Exit of Gakuenmae Station on the Kintetsu Nara Line); one-day members cost TBA.*

**Okayama—Preparing students for academic study abroad** by **Eri Okuda**, Oxford University Press. Students cope better in study abroad programs if they are adequately prepared with the strategies they need to listen, take notes, and discuss ideas independently and confidently. Through her own anecdotes, Okuda will talk about the problems that students face and skills that they need in order to survive academic study overseas. OUP has a video-based series, *Lecture Ready*, that trains students in the listening and language skills they need during lectures. *Sun 15 Jun 15:00-17:00; Nishigawa Ai Plaza 4F, 10-16 Saiwai-cho, t: 086-234-5882; one-day members ¥500.*

**Omiya—The Nakasendo English conference 2008. Making connections: Working together to improve teaching practice.** Co-sponsored by Aston U, JSHS SIG, AJET, eTLC, and ESTEEM. Featured speaker: **Tim Murphey** on *Teacher Learning Communities (TLC) and the Wiki Teacher*. The purpose of this conference is to make connections. Through our participation in this conference we will forge relationships, share ideas, and gain new perspectives on the art of teaching English. Website <[www.jalt.org/chapters/omiya/nakasendo.htm?a](http://www.jalt.org/chapters/omiya/nakasendo.htm?a)>. *Sat 21 Jun 10:00-17:00; Seigakuin Univer-*

*sity, 1-1 Tosaki, Ageo, Saitama; members of participating organizations and Seigakuin students pre-registered ¥1500, onsite ¥2000, one-day members ¥3000.*

**Osaka—Keeping computing simple** (in collaboration with Nara chapter). The fourth annual Tech Day event to share technologically oriented ideas helpful to language teachers and learners. Tech Day is about how you use computers to help you in the classroom. That might be as simple as making a grade sheet or a simple quiz, up to making podcasts and beyond. The themes of tech day are simplicity and practicality—ideas that teachers can walk into a new classroom and use with a minimum of preparation or tech knowledge. *Sun 22 Jun 12:30-17:30; Hannan University main campus, map <[www.hannan-u.ac.jp/english/other/map.html](http://www.hannan-u.ac.jp/english/other/map.html)> (5-min. walk north of Kintetsu Kawachi-Amami station; 15 min. south of Tennoji/Abeno station).*

**Shinshu—TBA** by **Trevor Keith Landles**. TBA. *Sun 22 Jun 14:00-16:45; Matsumoto M-Wing, Room 4-2 (across from PARCO); one-day members ¥1000.*

**Toyohashi—First Chubu JACET/JALT joint conference 2008: Toward a synergistic collaboration in English education.** The first JACET/JALT Conference in the Chubu region, consisting of a variety of presentations and a symposium in Japanese and English. The featured speaker, **Hideo Kojima**, Hirosaki University, has been active in introducing autonomous learning into the Japanese education system. The conference will focus on how autonomous learning is defined and facilitated in Japanese educational contexts and provide an opportunity to share ideas on collaboration between native and nonnative English-speaking teachers. *Sat 14 Jun 9:10-17:00. Chukyo University, Nagoya campus (Yagota exit 5); Free to pre-registered participants.*

**Yamagata—Creating English theater with EFL students** by **Christopher Gregory**. From simple class projects to more elaborate productions, theater is a versatile English teaching tool for students of all ages and skill levels. This presentation will focus on how to effectively build language skills through theater with an emphasis on creating theatrical projects that are appropriate to students' language levels. *Sat 7 Jun 13:30-15:30; Yamagata Kajo Kominkan Sogo Gakushu Center, Shironishi-machi 2-chome, 2-15, t: 0236-45-6163; one-day members ¥800.*

## ...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.

**Fukuoka: February**—*Task-based language teaching: Current trends* by **Rod Ellis**. Ellis defined the use of tasks in language teaching and his ideas on their implementation in the classroom. He demonstrated several tasks and briefly discussed how they might be set up in the classroom. He explained a number of the features of tasks and several of the major approaches to task-based language teaching. He accepted a number of questions before addressing common opposing arguments to the idea of task-based teaching, responding to a number of what he called “misunderstandings” about the nature of tasks. He emphasized the fact that tasks can be used in a number of different ways in the language classroom, both as learning activities and free practice of language. Ellis directed people to more closely read his books before dismissing ideas and concluded with the idea that tasks are best suited to low-level learners in an EFL context due to their properties of providing implicit language focus and free language practice.

*Reported by Quint Oga-Baldwin*

**Gunma: February**—*Once upon a time in an EFL classroom: Stories as a window to culture and language* by **Renée Sawazaki**. Sawazaki outlined the use of stories and their benefits for language teaching. Stories and folktales provide content-based instruction and can be used to promote communication skills, vocabulary acquisition, and cultural understanding. She discussed the findings of her research and demonstrated various teaching activities. She found that using too many kinds of activities is counterproductive and recommends using a set of core activities. This allows students to become familiar with the process and focus on the content. Activities included: parts of a story, circle stories, storytelling and

book reports, and retelling or dramatization. Students are often required to use graphic organizers to assist in recalling the main events in a story. They may also be asked to assess their classmates’ oral reports. Sawazaki also discussed the use of folktales as windows to foreign cultures and her original model for teaching culture, *The Culture Tree*. Because folktales have morals, they can provide insight into the ethics and values of the target culture and lead to better understanding of that culture by the students.

*Reported by Harry Meyer*

**Kitakyushu: March**—*New ideas to change junior high school English lessons* by **Koichi Kawamura**. Participants began with a quiz about the speaker, a great way to simultaneously introduce himself and his topic—language teaching at the junior high level. Kids love games and Kawamura has a lot of them: vocabulary-building warm-up with relative pronoun practice, description, yes/no and information questions, speed reading, and group discussion, as well as dialogue practice. He had participants standing and moving around, repeating lines quickly with a partner while judging each others’ performance, and numerous other usable, useful exercises.

Peppered with amusing anecdotes, the presentation finished with an explanation of how students’ desks may be arranged together for a dynamic “English Salon” and a video clip of his classroom—full of engaged and interested children.

*Reported by Dave Pite*

**Nagasaki: March**—*Expendable, entertaining educators?: Roles of non-Japanese teachers of English (NJTEs)* by **Thomas Amundrud**. After giving a series of keywords and asking participants to reflect on their meaning both individually and as could be related to their teaching contexts, Amundrud outlined how his research is situated, his research questions and methodology, findings, conclusions, and suggestions for future research. Five main themes emerged in the study—NJTEs as entertainers, as decorations, as constructivist educators, as replaceable staff, and as mental health counselors for students. Lively discussion of the issues raised by the research took place.

*Reported by Melodie Cook*

**Nagoya: March—Where is the M in interactivity, collaboration, and feedback?** by **Michael Coghlan**. Coghlan defined mobile learning as concentrating more on social factors rather than on the device itself. The wider context of mobility implies multiple contexts for learning, the blurring of social and academic spheres of activity, and knowledge dynamic rather than static. Formerly, text was settled and coherent, whereas contemporary text is provisional; *wikis*, *blogs*, and *podcasts* are written by multiple authors. When the whole world is “curricularised,” one sees interaction with everything as a potential point of learning. When each individual can pursue any personal purpose in any place that suits him, the habit of relying on authoritative institutions may diminish. Collaboration needs to be taught to give and receive criticism. Feedback should be linked to one’s personal choices about what one wants to learn, how to learn, and how one chooses to be assessed. The world beyond classrooms has changed a great deal, continuing to do so at ever-increasing rate. The excellent e-teacher employs collaborative approaches, knows when to call in the wisdom of the experts to balance the wisdom of the crowd, and must be e-connected to remain current.

*Reported By Kayoko Kato*

**Okayama: January—Effects of task repetition in “poster carousel”** by **Eiko Nakamura**. Poster Carousel is a fluency activity in which students circulate between classmates, each with their own self-made poster. Each pair must ask and answer questions about the poster as in a conference poster presentation. This is an interesting activity to learn about in itself, but Nakamura went much further presenting transcribed data and analysis which showed that such a repetitive task can lead to greater fluency and accuracy without any teacher intervention. This is intuitive for many teachers, but this case study provided some evidence that it can happen.

*Reported by Neil Cowie*

**Omiya: March—Peer-to-peer dialogue journals** by **Steve Connolly**. Connolly first explained how to administer a peer-to-peer dialogue journal in English. There are few rules: using names, school names, and Japanese are forbidden. The supervising teacher neither sets minimums or maximums for the journals, nor corrects or responds to them. What teachers emphasize on this project is to make sure that students enjoy the weekly exchanges with their partners. The participants

at this presentation enjoyed the students’ entries with pictures and messages expressing the students’ interests and anxieties.

To investigate the pedagogical efficacy of the peer-to-peer dialogue journal, four sets of data were collected and analyzed: the journals themselves, a free-writing quiz, a free-speaking quiz, and surveys. Linguistic improvement was not significant in the journals; however the journal participants outperformed the nonparticipants on the free-writing and free-speaking quizzes. Based on written surveys completed by the participants, the vast majority of the participants enjoyed the activity. Connolly concluded that the secret journal provides a motivating means for authentic communication in English and a potential for linguistic improvement.

*Reported by Masa Tsuneyasu*

**Osaka: February—Getting published** by **Steve Cornwell** and **Deryn Verity**. “To write, or not to write” is the quintessential question held by those who have never published. The workshop provided encouragement to those whose fears of publishing are derived from a long-held notion that research articles should look scientific with statistics, or contain some lofty quality. The presenters dispelled that fear, recommending “starting off small and getting the feet wet first.” So the question is not whether to write but, rather, *what*. Like any piece of literature, an article begins as “a twinkle in the eye of the author,” inspired by the writer’s experience. The workshop helped identify various types of articles, addressed certain issues in publishing, described the steps in getting started, and provided an opportunity to share ideas and experiences among the 27 participants. The presenters concluded with practical words of encouragement, relevant web links, and handouts on getting published.

*Reported by Jake Tobiyama*

**Sendai: February—Doubletake: Two days** with **John Fanselow**. Sendai JALT continued the yearly tradition of an *onsen* retreat with an invited guest speaker. The third (previous presenters were Curtis Kelly and Paul Nation) session allowed attendees to spend some quality time with John Fanselow, teacher trainer and ELT luminary.

During the 3-hour workshop on the first day participants wrestled with Fanselow’s ideas on curriculum and classroom practice. A seminar punctuated by moments of deep insight led to teachers questioning the very foundation of their



## National Officers

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## ...with James McCrostie

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To list a position in *The Language Teacher*, please submit online at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/jobs/> or email James McCrostie, Job Information Center Editor, <job-info@jalt-publications.org>. Online submission is preferred. Please place your ad in the body of the email. The notice should be received before the 15th of the month, 2 months before publication, and should contain the

following information: location, name of institution, title of position, whether full- or part-time, qualifications, duties, salary and benefits, application materials, deadline, and contact information. Be sure to refer to *TLT's* policy on discrimination. Any job advertisement that discriminates on the basis of gender, race, age, or nationality must be modified or will not be included in the JIC column. All advertisements may be edited for length or content.

## Job Information Center Online

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

## MEXT puts the kibosh on college level dispatching

### Michael "Rube" Redfield Osaka University of Economics

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) finally dispatched the dispatching companies. Because universities ignored ministry guidelines to avoid using teachers from dispatching companies, MEXT passed Article 19 of *Daigaku Sechi Kijun* making the use of dispatched teachers at the college and university level illegal starting 1 April 2008.



Dispatch companies (*haken gaisha*) supply teaching staff to educational institutions at all levels in Japan. The dispatched teachers teach credit and noncredit courses (often but not always EFL classes) instead of personnel hired directly by the institutions. Dispatching does not only occur at smaller, financially strapped institutions. Famous colleges such as Ristumeikan, Waseda, and many other major schools have courses taught by teachers who are actually employed by dispatching companies. And dispatching is not just a problem for foreigners; it hurts Japanese instructors as well. Hyogo University uses Japanese dispatch teachers to teach TOEIC classes, and Momoyama and Otemae universities use Japanese dispatch teachers for business courses.

Since dispatched teachers are paid by and report directly to their companies, they are not under the direct control of the schools, which is crux of MEXT's argument against them. Previously, MEXT merely discouraged their use; now they have banned the use of dispatched teachers in universities. It remains unclear whether the ban applies to K-12 instruction.

The MEXT crackdown is connected to labour union pressure. In January of 2007, the Education Workers and Amalgamated Union (EWA) began negotiations with Kobe Shoin Women's University concerning the replacement of EWA members with dispatch teachers from the private companies ECC and OTC. The union chairman pointed out that the use of dispatch personnel went contrary to MEXT guidelines. Shoin's administrators claimed that since the Metropolitan University of Tokyo used dispatch teachers, Shoin was free to do so as well.

In a further negotiating session, the EWA declared willingness to go to the Hyogo Labour Board, disclosing the dubious practice of using dispatch personnel to replace qualified EWA members. Shoin's officials begged the union not to carry out the threat, but since Shoin proved unwilling to negotiate on this point (or any other), the union went ahead and reported directly to the Labor Board; an event covered by the local TV news.

MEXT changed their "guidance" strategy later in the year, by changing Article 19 of *Daigaku Sechi Kijun* to ban the use of dispatched teachers at the college and university level. In negotiations with Shoin this past January, EWA negotiators inquired if Shoin were now going to obey the new law and no longer bring in people from dispatch companies. School administrators assured union officials that this was the case and that no teach-

ers from dispatch companies would be employed at Shoin.

Kobe Shoin changed their employment practice as a direct result of EWA pressure, once again showing the power of unionism. If any reader knows of cases where universities are still disobeying the law, please contact a union (for a list see <[debito.org/blacklist.html#unions](http://debito.org/blacklist.html#unions)>). The new law should be a powerful tool in stopping the use of dispatch teachers in Japanese education.

### Job Openings

The Job Information Center lists only brief summaries of open positions in *TLT*. Full details of each position are available on the JALT website.

Please visit <[www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/jobs/](http://www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/jobs/)> to view the full listings.

**Location:** Osaka-fu, Hirakata-shi

**School:** The Osaka Institute of Technology

**Position:** Full-time lecturer or associate professor

**Start Date:** 1 April 2009

**Deadline:** 20 June 2008

**Location:** Kanagawa-ken, Fujisawa-shi

**School:** Keio SFC Jr. & Sr. High School

**Position:** Full-time teacher

**Start Date:** 1 April 2009

**Deadline:** 12 July 2008

### ...with Alan Stoke

<[conferences@jalt-publications.org](mailto:conferences@jalt-publications.org)>



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

### Upcoming Conferences

**6-8 Jun 08—Fifth National Conference of Japan Association for the Study of Cooperation in Education**, in Nagoya. **Contact:** <[jasce.jp/conf0501indexe.html](http://jasce.jp/conf0501indexe.html)>

**14 Jun 08—First Chubu Region JACET/JALT Joint Conference 2008: *Toward a Synergistic Collaboration in English Education***, at Chukyo U., Nagoya. **To focus particularly on collaboration between NESTs and Japanese EFL teachers.** Hosted by JACET Chubu and JALT Gifu, Nagoya, and Toyohashi chapters. **Contact:** <[www.jacet-chubu.org/](http://www.jacet-chubu.org/)> <[jalt.org/main/conferences](http://www.jalt.org/main/conferences)>

**18-20 Jun 08—Language Issues in English-Medium Universities: A Global Concern**, at U. of Hong Kong. **Contact:** <[www.hku.hk/clear/conference08](http://www.hku.hk/clear/conference08)>

**21 Jun 08—Nakasendo English Conference: *Making Connections – Working Together to Better Our Teaching***, at Seigakuin U., Saitama. To promote cooperation, sharing and support among the full variety of EFL organizations active in Kanto. **Contact:** <[www.jalt.org/chapters/omiya/nakasendo.htm](http://www.jalt.org/chapters/omiya/nakasendo.htm)><[nakasendoenglish@yahoo.com](mailto:nakasendoenglish@yahoo.com)>

**22 Jun 08—Sixth Annual Teaching English to Young Learners Conference: *Bridging the Gap between Elementary and Junior High School English – Exchanging Ideas***, at Kagoshima U., Korimoto. Sponsored by JALT Kagoshima chapter and Teaching Children SIG. **Contact:** <[www.jalt-kagoshima.org/prog/conference/2008/TCC2008.htm](http://www.jalt-kagoshima.org/prog/conference/2008/TCC2008.htm)>

**23-28 Jun 08—30th Language Testing Research Colloquium: *Focusing on the Core: Justifying the Use of Language Assessments to Stakeholders***, in Hangzhou, China. **Contact:** <[www.sis.zju.edu.cn/sis/sisht/english/ltrc2008/main.html](http://www.sis.zju.edu.cn/sis/sisht/english/ltrc2008/main.html)>

**26-28 Jun 08—Building Connections with Languages and Cultures**, at Far Eastern National U., Vladivostok. **Contact:** <feelta.wl.dvgu.ru/upcoming.htm>

**26-29 Jun 08—Ninth International Conference of the Association for Language Awareness: *Engaging with Language***, at U. of Hong Kong. **Contact:** <www.hku.hk/clear/ala>

**30 Jun-11 Jul 08—Lingfest08**, including **4-6 Jul 08—ALAA 2008: 33rd Annual Congress of Applied Linguistics Association of Australia: *Critical Dimensions in Applied Linguistics***, in Sydney. **Contact:** <www.lingfest.arts.usyd.edu.au/>

**1-2 Jul 08—BAAL Language Learning and Teaching SIG Fourth Annual Conference: *Attaining Second Language Proficiency***, at U. of Greenwich, UK. **Contact:** <www.baal.org.uk/sigs\_learn teach.htm>

**1-3 Jul 08—Second International Conference on Language Development, Language Revitalization and Multilingual Education in Ethnic Minority Communities**, in Bangkok. **Contact:** <www.seameo.org/\_ld2008/index.html>

**3-5 Jul 08—Fifth Biennial Conference of the International Gender and Language Association**, at Victoria U. of Wellington, NZ. **Contact:** <www.vuw.ac.nz/igala5/>

**4-5 Jul 08—National Language Policy: *Language Diversity for National Unity***, in Bangkok. **Contact:** <www.nlp2008.org/html/>

**5-6 Jul 08—CUE2008: *Language Education in Transition***, at Kinki U., Osaka. Sponsored by JALT College and University Educators SIG and Osaka chapter. **Contact:** <jaltcue-sig.org/>

**9-12 Jul 08—ACTA2008: *Pedagogies of Connection: Developing Individual and Community Identities***, in Alice Springs. **Contact:** <www.tesol.org.au/conference/>

**21-25 Jul 08—35th International Systemic Functional Congress: *Voices Around the World***, at Macquarie U., Sydney. **Contact:** <minerva.ling.mq.edu.au/isfc/call.html>

**21-26 Jul 08—18th International Congress of Linguists**, at Korea U., Seoul. **Contact:** <cil18.org>

**31 Jul-3 Aug 08—PROMS 2008: Pacific Rim Objective Measurement Symposium**, at Ochanomizu U. To promote the use of Rasch measurement models to analyze data from assessments, including educational measurement. On one day the symposium will focus on language learning and assessment, including development of questionnaires. Participants will have an opportunity to consult with a researcher on how to apply the Rasch model. There will also be workshops to demonstrate Rasch-based software. **Contact:** <www.proms-tokyo.org>

**5-6 Aug 08—WorldCALL2008: Third International Conference**, in Fukuoka. **Contact:** <www.jlet.org/~wcf/modules/tinyd0/>

**20-23 Aug 08—36th JACET Summer Seminar: *Perspectives on Language Teacher Development***, at Kusatsu Seminar House, Gunma. Simon Borg (U. of Leeds) will present on: Introducing Language Teacher Cognition; Teacher Cognition and Grammar Teaching; Teacher Cognition and Teacher Education; Teachers' Conceptions of Research. Register by 15 Jun (max. 40 participants). **Contact:** <www.jacet.org/>

**24-29 Aug 08—15th World Congress of Applied Linguistics: *Multilingualism: Challenges and Opportunities***, in Essen. Pre-register by 30 Jun 08, or thereafter as a latecomer. **Contact:** <www.aila2008.org>

**30 Aug-2 Sep 08—Antwerp CALL2008: 13th International CALL Research Conference: *Practice-Based and Practice-Oriented CALL Research***, at U. of Antwerp. **Contact:** <www.ua.ac.be/main.aspx?c=.CALL2008>

**11-13 Sep 08—JACET 47th Annual Convention: *What is Global English Communicative Competence? A Reconsideration of English Education in Japan***, at Waseda U. **Contact:** <jacet.org/2008convention/index.html>

**11-13 Sep 08—British Association for Applied Linguistics 2008: *Taking the Measure of Applied Linguistics***, at Swansea U., Wales. **Contact:** <www.baal.org.uk/conf.htm>

**18-20 Sep 08—2008 English Australia Conference: Engaging with the Many Dimensions of ELL-COS: Learning, Teaching, Supporting, Marketing, Leading**, in Canberra. (ELICOS means "English language intensive courses for overseas students.") **Contact:** <[www.eaconference.com.au](http://www.eaconference.com.au)>

**26-27 Sep 08—Technology for Second Language Learning Sixth Annual Conference: Developing and Evaluating Language Learning Materials**, at Iowa State U. **Contact:** <[apling.public.iastate.edu/TSL/](http://apling.public.iastate.edu/TSL/)>

**17-19 Oct 08—31st Annual Second Language Research Forum: Exploring SLA: Perspectives, Positions, and Practices**, at U. of Hawaii, Manoa. **Contact:** <[nflrc.hawaii.edu/slr/08/](http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/slr/08/)>

**23-26 Oct 08—NCYU 2008 Second International Conference on Applied Linguistics: Global and Domestic Perspectives**, at National Chiayi U., Taiwan. **Contact:** <[web.ncyu.edu.tw/~chaochih/ncyu2008ical.htm](http://web.ncyu.edu.tw/~chaochih/ncyu2008ical.htm)>

**25-26 Oct 08—KOTESOL 2008 International Conference: Responding to a Changing World**, in Seoul. **Contact:** <[www.kotesol.org/](http://www.kotesol.org/)>

**26 Oct 08—Linguapax Asia 2008: Language and Propaganda: The Uses of Linguistic Influence**, at U. of Tokyo, Komaba. **Contact:** <[www.linguapax-asia.org/](http://www.linguapax-asia.org/)>

**31 Oct-3 Nov 08—PAC7 at JALT2008: Seventh Conference of the Pan-Asian Consortium of Language Teaching Societies**, held concurrently with the 34th JALT International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning: *Shared Identities: Our Interweaving Threads*, and the Asian Youth Forum, at National Olympics Memorial Youth Center, Tokyo. **Contact:** <[jalt.org/conference/](http://jalt.org/conference/)>. PAC is a series of conferences, publications and research networks, founded in 1994, and motivated by a belief that teachers of English around Asia have much to share and learn from each other. Currently, seven associations of EFL/ESL teachers are members, representing Korea, the Philippines, the Russian Far East, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand,

and Japan. Previous PAC conferences have been held in Bangkok (1997), Seoul (1999), Kitakyushu (2001), Taipei (2002), Vladivostok (2004), and Bangkok (2007). **Contact:** <[www.pac-teach.org/](http://www.pac-teach.org/)><[www.asianyouthforum.org/](http://www.asianyouthforum.org/)>

**29-30 Nov 08—Second Annual Japan Writers Conference**, at Nanzan U., Nagoya. **Contact:** <[japanwritersconference.org/](http://japanwritersconference.org/)>

**4-7 Dec 08—Third CLS International Conference (CLaSIC 2008): Media in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning**, at National U. of Singapore. **Contact:** <[www.fas.nus.edu.sg/cls/classic2008/](http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/cls/classic2008/)>

**21-24 Mar 09—AAAL 2009 Annual Conference**, in Denver. **Contact:** <[www.aaal.org/conferences/aaalConferences.php](http://www.aaal.org/conferences/aaalConferences.php)>

**25-28 Mar 09—TESOL 2009**, in Denver. **Contact:** <[www.tesol.org/s\\_tesol/index.asp](http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/index.asp)>

**31 Mar-4 Apr 09—43rd Annual International IATEFL Conference and Exhibition**, in Cardiff. **Contact:** <[www.iatefl.org/content/conferences/index.php](http://www.iatefl.org/content/conferences/index.php)>

### Calls for Papers or Posters

**Deadline: 19 Jul 08 (for 8-10 Dec 08)—Inaugural Conference of the Asia-Pacific Rim LSP and Professional Communication Association: Partnerships in Action: Research, Practice and Training**, at City U. of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Polytechnic U. (LSP means "languages for specific purposes".) **Contact:** <[www.engl.polyu.edu.hk/lsp/APacLSP08](http://www.engl.polyu.edu.hk/lsp/APacLSP08)>

**Deadline: 1 Sep 08 (for 11-13 Jun 09)—International Society for Language Studies Conference: Critical Language Studies: Focusing on Power**, in Orlando. **Contact:** <[www.viethconsulting.com/members/proposals/propselect.php?orgcode=ISLS&prid=48559](http://www.viethconsulting.com/members/proposals/propselect.php?orgcode=ISLS&prid=48559)>

**Deadline: 31 Oct 08 (for 13-16 Sep 09)—Third Biennial International Conference on Task-Based Language Teaching: Tasks: Context, Purpose and Use**, in Lancaster, UK. **Contact:** <[www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/events/tblt2009/index.htm](http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/events/tblt2009/index.htm)>

# Old Grammarians...

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

## Whence these weird words

LET'S TALK about *ch'i*. The one thing that upsets my flow of *ch'i* more than anything else is that little apostrophe in the word *ch'i*. Dissecting the word that way reminds me of someone gutting a fish. It seems to me a wasted effort to try getting nonnative Chinese speakers to pronounce the word *exactly* the way it's supposed to sound (while still appealing to our ignorance by keeping it in Roman characters), so why bother with superfluous punctuation at all?

It reminds me of trying to study Thai in college, when I first heard the malignant-sounding term *glottal stop*. When I first read what it was called, and heard the sound it represented, and saw the phonetic symbol for it (?), I developed an image of a freshly sliced cow's tongue settling on a sheet of butcher shop paper. (In retrospect now, though, I must admit that neither the symbol nor the sound differ much from a simple unfinished question mark—like saying "Wha?" instead of "What?")

These bizarre symbols used to make me wonder, "What kind of thought goes into cataloguing the whole spectrum of human-produced, meaning-carrying noises?" If we're going to be so particular about representing sounds accurately in written characters, where's the symbol for the *velar snort*? The *spit fricative*? The *diphthud*? (This latter occurs in places where a proper diphthong is replaced by a flat, low, slack-jawed vowel sound of indeterminate length, occasionally accompanied by drooling.)

We usually encounter phonetic symbols when studying a second language and the symbols can be as scary as the asphyxiatory sounds they represent. But the symbols alone are not always the problem. Consider these situations:

- Five or more consonants in a row. In high school I was briefly smitten with a girl who had one vowel, an *o*, in her last name, surrounded by six consonants. Ultimately she stopped going out with me because every time I tried to introduce her to my friends they thought I was sneezing.
- Tildes, accents, umlauts, etc. This category includes any other markings that make you instinctively sweep the page with your hand to clean it off. Here's an interesting bit of relevant but fictional trivia: Long before *Begin the Beguine*, songwriter Cole Porter first tried his hand at show tune stardom with a ditty called *Resume the Résumé*, but upon hearing the song, Broadway producer George Abbott told Porter to take his own advice in the title and ply his portfolio elsewhere.
- A *q* or *j* at the end of the word. Such words seem incomplete to many English speakers. Indeed, some prominent American politicians, confronted with a word-ending *q*, have been known to resort to full-scale military invasion in order to "get the job done."
- Pronunciation that actually resembles the word's spelling. English speakers aren't used to this. The English word *lame*, for instance, is pronounced /lem/, silent *e* and all; on the other hand, the French borrowing *lamé* comes much closer phonetically to its actual spelling. Admittedly in such cases the addition of accents (see above) or italics may be necessary in order to avoid confusion: "That outfit you're wearing is *lame/lamé*."
- The letters *d* and *h* together at the beginning or end of a word. Examples: "Your dhoti gave me a bad case of dhobi itch"; "The fleadh was cancelled due to a musicians' strike in Oudh." Be careful, though: *dh* in the middle of a word is rather common and should not immediately be taken as an indicator of foreign origin (e.g., *deadhead*, *madhouse*).

Unusual spellings and characters are becoming far more common as the Information Age slowly melds the world's languages into one great Übersprache. Rather than jump out of my jodhpurs every time I see what looks like a foreign word (why's that *g* suspiciously loitering around in *foreign*, anyway?), I should instead seek rapprochement with all words, thus restoring my balance of *ch'i* and bringing *hau'oli* to my home, even if what I'm reading still looks like Greek to me. *Salaam*.

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お送り下さい。書式はアメリカ心理学会(APA)スタイルに基づき、スタックリステーション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となります。

## 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-editors.

**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。3,000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-editors.

**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 700 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讀者が再利用できるように紹介するものです。1,000字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て下さい。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 in under 750 words
- 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: 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, 1<sup>st</sup> / 2 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、より活動的に参加するように働きかけるものです。1,600字程度で、毎月15日までにしてお送り下さい。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/tlt/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/tlt/focus/> で見るすることができます。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: 15<sup>th</sup> of month, 6 weeks 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、論文募集、連絡代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: 15<sup>th</sup> 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ヶ月前までに、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. Chapters are limited to one report per month. 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 200 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 within an email message 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編集者に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。

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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
- Lifelong language learning
- Testing and evaluation
- Materials development

支部及び分野別研究部会による例会や研究会は日本各地で開催され、以下の分野での発表や研究報告が行われます。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 of College English Teachers
- PAC—the Pan Asian Conference consortium
- TESOL—Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

## Membership Categories 会員と会費

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

- Regular 一般会員: ¥10,000
- Student rate (undergraduate/graduate in Japan) 学生会員(日本にある大学、大学院の学生): ¥6,000
- Joint—for two persons sharing a mailing address, one set of publications ジョイント会員(同じ住所で登録する個人2名を対象とし、JALT出版物は2名に1部): ¥17,000
- Group (5 or more) ¥6,500/person—one set of publications for each five members 団体会員(5名以上を対象とし、JALT出版物は5名につき1部): 1名6,500円

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

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## IN MEMORY OF BILL BALSAMO

**O**N APRIL 22, 2008, Bill Balsamo passed away peacefully at St. Mary's Hospice in Himeji, Japan. With his passing the JALT community has lost a leader, teacher, colleague, mentor, and friend.

Bill, as President of Himeji JALT, founder and leader of *Teachers Helping Teachers*, and sponsor of charity projects that span the globe, cast a wide circle of light. Yet, those who knew him usually remarked at his willing self-effacement, shunning of the spotlight, and quiet, yet constant, work behind the scenes. Once asked about his taciturn public persona, how he preferred to let others have the limelight and quietly go about his business, Bill explained with a smile, "Stay quiet and sooner or later some-



one else says exactly what you wanted to say." Bill might not have liked seeking the limelight, but he could be counted on for stimulating one-on-one conversations that spanned topics from education, opera, politics, travel, to one of his charitable works such as the Casa Anna Orphanage in Dhaka--his first foundation and building project, now celebrating five years of service to the children of Bangladesh.

A participant at every JALT national conference in memory, Bill could be found attending more presentations than seemed humanly possible, happily making his way between conference rooms carrying twelve bags filled with literature about *Teachers Helping Teachers*, Himeji Chapter Newsletters, and notebooks filled with a thousand names and e-mail addresses. In his quiet way, he changed the dialogue of Himeji JALT, bringing this little chapter in its castle town to look beyond its borders and take part, sometimes physically, often spiritually, in his vision of service and support. *Teachers Helping Teachers* was just one of his creations, and as with most of his projects, he invited us to join in his life's task of helping those in need. In this case, it was bringing educational conferences to teachers who otherwise would not be able to attend such gatherings, sharing ideas and lesson plans, insights, and research. THT stands as an example of what Bill taught through his actions: that we should look beyond ourselves, find the needs of others, offer help and consolation and, in so doing, discover ourselves.

A few of Bill's friends have established a memorial for him at <William-Bill-Balsamo.virtual-memorials.com>. This online testament to his impact on so many people is especially appropriate since one of Bill's gifts was teaching many of his friends and colleagues how to establish websites. We want this to be a place where Bill's life can be celebrated by all who knew him.

— from *Himeji JALT* and *Teachers Helping Teachers*