

The Language Teacher

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Urban Edge Bldg. 5F, 1-37-9 Taito, Taito-
ku, Tokyo 110-0016
t: 03-3837-1630; f: 03-3837-1631
jco@jalt.org

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In this, your July/August issue of *TLT*, you can enjoy a Feature Article by **Julia K. Harper**, “Combining Movie Viewing and Guided Freewriting to Enhance Student Attitudes in a University Academic Writing Class,” describing how student motivation and writing skills both improved through the use of movies and freewriting tasks. In *Readers' Forum*, we have two papers: **Roy Morris** gives us a rationale for the use of task-based materials for speaking assessment and improving student motivation, in his paper, “Building Success: Task-Based Speaking Tests in the Japanese Classroom”; and, **Kevin M. Maher** adds to the growing body of work and positive findings on the use of literature in the EFL classroom in his paper, “EFL Literature Circles: Collaboratively Acquiring Language and Meaning.” Finally, our sneak peek at what to expect at JALT2015 comes from **Stephen Ryan's** interview of one our Plenary Speakers, Tomoko Yashima. All this great work can be enjoyed alongside our usual—but equally great—offerings from *My Share*, *Book Reviews*, *TLT Wired*, and *Out the Box*.

You will notice that more than a few things have changed in this *TLT* issue. Not only are we able to enjoy the new look and layout, but we have also made some big changes to our regular columns. I would like to thank some of our outgoing, long-standing column editors—*SIG News's* Jennie Roloff-Rothman, *Chapter Events's* Gary Wolff, *Career Development Corner's* Michael Parrish, and David McMurray for *Grassroots Outreach*. Their volunteered time, commitment, and efforts have helped to make *TLT* the informative, engaging community builder and career developer that it needs to be. Thank you.

However, David McMurray will be rising, phoenix-like, to curate a new column. We also hope to see the *Career Development Corner* live on, online, and in our new section: *JALT Praxis*. The Praxis section was introduced last issue and will host some exciting, new, regular, and exceptional columns. The *TLT* team would like to formally welcome Writers' Workshop and the JALT Peer Support Group to the fold after their first column last issue. From this issue, we also warmly welcome Mari Nakamura as the *Young Learners's* column editor, and David McMurray with the *Teaching Assistance* column, and *Dear TLT*—your way to ask the collective hive-

Continued over

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TLT Editors: Carol Borrmann-Begg, John Roberts
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mind of the *TLT* family your practice, professional, and research questions.

As always, I give a big “thank you” to all the people involved in bringing each and every issue of *TLT* to you. They volunteer their time and expertise, their energy and enthusiasm, and their willingness to get involved. JALT has always aimed to improve the collective knowledge and potential of language educators. Helping us all grow and develop is a great thing. If you would like to help build our community and get involved—writing, curating, editing, reviewing—get in touch! We are looking forward to hearing from you.

Please enjoy this exciting, new (and familiar) issue of *TLT*.

Carol Borrmann-Begg, TLT Coeditor

TLT 7/8月号のFeature Articleでは、Julia K. Harperが映画を使用した自由作文のタスクを使って、どのように学生の動機づけとライティング力の両方が向上したかを論議しています。Readers’ Forum ではRoy Morrisが、スピーキング評価や学生の動機づけ向上のためにタスクを使った題材の使用の論理的根拠を提示しています。Kevin M. MaherはEFL教室で文学を使用している多くの例をあげ、その利点を紹介しています。最後にJALT2015の予告として、基調講演者の1人であるTomoko Yashimaのインタビューを、Stephen Ryanがいち早くお届けしています。これらの記事はすべて素晴らしいものです

が、通常のMy Share, Book Reviews, Wired, Outside the Boxなどもお楽しみ下さい。

本号では、少し変化を感じになられたことだと思います。新しい表紙、レイアウトに加え、通常のコラムにも変化がありました。長くコラムを支えてくださったコラム編集長たち、SIG NewsのJennie Roloff-Rothman, Chapter EventsのGary Wolff, Career Development CornerのMichael Parrish, そしてGrassroots OutreachのDavid McMurrayが職を離れました。彼らが費やしてくれた時間、責任感、努力のおかげで、TLTがより情報豊かで、人をひきつけ、コミュニティやキャリアの形成に役立つものになったことに感謝の意を表したいと思います。ありがとうございました。

一方、David McMurrayがフェニックスのように立ち上がり、新しいコラムを作ります。Career Development Cornerは、オンラインの新しいセクションであるJALT Praxisの中で存続するでしょう。このセクションは前号で紹介されましたが、斬新で定期的な、特別なコラムとなるでしょう。前号での初めてのコラムの後、Writers’ Workshopとthe JALT Peer Support Groupを正式にTLTチームの一員として迎えました。本号からMari NakamuraをYoung Learnersコラムの、またDavid McMurrayをTeaching Assistanceコラムの、それぞれ編集者として迎えます。またDear TLTでは、読者の皆様の実践的・専門的な研究に関する質問に、団結力あるTLTチームがお答えします。

本号の作成にかかわっている人々にお礼を申し上げます。彼らは、時間、専門的知識、情熱などを無償でTLTのために提供しています。JALTは常に語学教師たちの知識や可能性を蓄積し、向上させようと考えています。お互いに助け合い、ともに向上することは素晴らしいことです。もしあなたが、書いたり、監督したり、編集したり、レビューしたりして、JALTの活動に積極的に参加して、コミュニティづくりを手助けしたいと思うなら、ご連絡ください。私たちは皆さんからの連絡をお待ちしています。

それではおなじみの、そして新しくなったTLTをどうぞお楽しみください。

Carol Borrmann-Begg, TLT Coeditor

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

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Combining Movie Viewing and Guided Freewriting to Enhance Student Attitudes in a University Academic Writing Class

Julia K. Harper
Ritsumeikan University

This study describes a combination movie watching and freewriting task used to supplement the regular materials being used in two freshman university writing classes with the aim of creating an enjoyable writing environment in which to build student confidence and skills. The study aimed to explore (1) the benefits of the task as perceived by the student participants, and (2) the benefits with regard to general writing skills as perceived by the instructor. Results showed a positive student reaction, with the majority citing both affective benefits and the improvement of various skills. In addition, teacher analysis of freewriting journals showed improvements in both speed and form over 11 weeks. The instructor also observed that students were able to apply the increased confidence and speed attained by freewriting to their academic assignments, and, at the same time, to apply some of the academic writing skills learned in the class to their freewriting.

本論では、学習者の作文技術の向上と作文に対する自信強化を図るための環境づくりを目的に、大学1年生を対象とする2つの作文クラスで通常の教材を補足する形で行われた、映画鑑賞と自由作文を組み合わせた活動に関する分析結果を報告する。第1の分析は、学生のコメントから得られたこの活動における効果に関するものである。第2の分析は、学習者の課題成果物から教師が得た効果に関するものである。学習者の大部分が課題への積極的な取り組みを見せ、この活動の情意的効果と、自身の作文技術向上を指摘した。さらに、11週にわたり行った自由作文課題の分析からは、作文のスピードや作文構成における向上が確認された。また、ウォームアップ活動としての自由作文と、同じ授業内で課されたアカデミックライティング課題それぞれから習得された作文能力・技術が、相互に効果的な影響を与えていることが認められた。

As Nunan (1999) notes, producing coherent and fluent extended writing texts is a challenge, even for those working in their native language (p. 271). It is unsurprising then that a recent pre-semester survey of my freshmen students enrolled in compulsory English academic writing classes revealed that while 89% felt that writing competence would be useful during their university career and possibly beyond, only 10% claimed to enjoy it, and 6% felt confident in their ability to successfully complete assignments. The survey results were similar to those of previous classes. In an effort

to enhance student attitudes with regard to writing I have been experimenting for several years with a combination English movie viewing and freewriting task (henceforth referred to as *the task*). Over the course of a semester, students watch one complete movie in short weekly segments followed by 10 minutes of freewriting about it in a journal. Used as a 25-30 minute warm-up to the class, the task aims to tap the interest and excitement which can be generated among students by movies and transform it into motivation and energy for extended writing practice. This paper describes an exploratory action research study for which students in two English academic writing courses were asked to try the task for one semester and then evaluate its benefits and drawbacks. The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of its efficacy and to raise issues for future study.

Literature Review Freewriting

Peter Elbow (1998b) describes freewriting as writing for 10 minutes or more about whatever comes into mind without stopping and without worrying about spelling or grammar (p.3) as a way to relieve “the root psychological and existential difficulty in writing: finding words in your head and putting them down on a blank piece of paper” (p. 14), encourage fluency and creativity, and promote the exploration of ideas or points of view (Elbow, 1998a; Mullin, 1991). Freewriting may be used as an exercise to build speed and confidence in general writing skills (Elbow, 1998a, p. 17), or as a starting point for writing assignments whereby initial ideas are generated to be later expanded and edited to create a finished product (Elbow, 1998a; Elbow, 1998b). Guided freewriting, also called modified or focused freewriting, limits freedom to a certain extent by, for example, asking students to explore particular themes or adhere to certain forms or structures. Guided freewriting has been shown to help stu-

dents develop or retain fluency and improve critical thinking and organizational skills (George & Young, 1991; Haswell, 1991).

The Use of Movies in Language Classrooms

By telling a story, movies can capture and maintain interest and stimulate imagination as students identify with situations or characters. Movies can also provide linguistic information for language learners through opportunities for listening to discussions or extended discourse in context. The visual component, especially when action closely matches dialogue, can act as an aid to comprehension (Smith, 2011). In addition, films capture cultural aspects of a society, reflecting traditions, customs, and values, or by exploring social issues. However, since they focus on certain events or characters, teachers should be aware that stereotypes may be created or reinforced in the minds of student viewers (Sherman, 2003; Smith, 2011; Davies & Smith, 1997).

Research Questions

In order to gain an understanding of student perceptions of the task, this study explored two main research questions:

1. What benefits were perceived by the student participants?
2. What drawbacks were perceived by the student participants?

The Participants

The participants were two classes of freshmen university students, A class (22 students) and B class (19 students), taking an advanced English academic writing and presentation class. As four students from B class were eliminated from the study due to lack of attendance, data was collected from a total of 37 participants. The materials and methods were the same for both classes.

Task Explanation and Procedure

Before-viewing support: Handouts provided useful vocabulary and snippets of key dialogue from the scenes to be watched. Occasional short readings or mini-lectures (2-3 minutes) by the instructor provided a means to encourage critical thinking about the content. Students were able to ask questions about the support materials.

The movie: The movie was *Freedom Writers* (2007), the true story of a group of American high school students and their teacher who use journal writ-

ing to gain self-knowledge and learn tolerance of others. It was chosen because of its focus on youth, education, and writing, and because of the similarity of the issues it raises (family, gender, and crime) to those in the class textbook. Also, the fact that the movie was new to these students created a feeling of excitement and anticipation.

Viewing: Each week the class watched a 10-15 minute segment of the movie with English subtitles, starting where viewing left off the previous week. No exercises were assigned nor memos taken; rather, students focused on accessible spoken or written dialogue, visual cues, and action to understand or imagine the story.

Discussion: After viewing, students had several minutes of discussion in pairs or small groups to check their understanding of and hear various reactions to the story. They were also able to check dictionaries or ask the instructor questions.

Writing: As a guided freewriting exercise, students were expected to write nonstop for 10 minutes without concern for spelling or grammar, but also to follow certain guidelines: using the support vocabulary where possible, summarize and react to the movie content, and write in complete sentences. When finished, students drew a line under the last sentence of their entry to indicate how much they had written in that 10 minute period. They were encouraged to complete or expand their entries at home for extra writing practice.

Task assessment: Journals were assessed a total of three times during the term, approximately once every three or four weeks until the movie was completed in week 11. Teacher comments and a letter grade were provided based on the total number of entries, use of key vocabulary, and effort to summarize the movie and express a substantial reaction to it.

Research Methodology

To investigate the research questions, at the end of the semester participants were asked to write an informal essay in English of between 300 to 500 words outlining their perceptions of both the benefits and drawbacks of the task. In keeping with the exploratory nature of the study, no specific prompts or questions were supplied. Students were also asked to answer the following questions: (1) Did you like watching *Freedom Writers* as a prompt for freewriting and why? and (2) Would you like to watch and write about another movie next term? To assure students that their remarks would not affect their grades, the journals were submitted for final assessment and returned to students before the essays were due.

Grounded analysis was used to examine student essays with categories created to group similar observations as they emerged from the data, and the results were reviewed and revised. Email interviews were then conducted with ten randomly selected participants, five from each class. They were asked to confirm, expand, or provide reasons for some of the comments in their essays.

Results

Student Assessment of Benefits

A total of 151 written comments concerning the benefits and drawbacks of the task were retrieved from the essay data, and, as shown by Table 1, 127 (84.1%) were positive. Although A class students provided over twice as many comments as students in B class, the proportion of positive comments was roughly the same at 84.3% and 83.7% respectively.

Table 1. Positive Comments by Students (n=127)

Comments	A class (n=22)	B class (n=15)	Total (n=37)
Could express personal feelings	15	6	21
Enjoyment/pleasure	14	5	19
Improved listening skills	9	10	19
Improved writing skills	10	4	14
Could think about various issues	7	5	12
Aided speaking and reading skills	7	5	12
Acquired vocabulary	7	4	11
Felt involved in the story	7	1	8
Useful exercise for self-study at home	5	1	6
Developed academic writing skills	4	0	4
Could practice cursive writing	1	0	1
Total comments	86	41	127

Student Assessment of Drawbacks

Comments expressing drawbacks accounted for 24 of the 151 total comments (about 16%).

Table 2. Negative Comments by Students (n=24)

Comments	A class (n=22)	B class (n=15)	Total (n=37)
Not useful for learning grammar	6	5	11
Hard to understand the movie dialogue	6	2	8
Difficult to follow the story in weekly sections	3	1	4
Difficult to write with time pressure	1	0	1
Total comments	16	8	24

Discussion

As the principal data was collected from open-ended essays to allow participants free choice as to what to write and to encourage in-depth comments, many students focused their essays on a few key ideas, possibly at the expense of other useful information. For example, although only 19 of 37 students referred specifically to enjoyment of the task in their essays, all but one said they enjoyed it when asked expressly in class evaluations. This limitation was, however, partially offset by data from semi-structured interviews of ten participants.

Benefits as Perceived by Students

Participants showed an overall positive reaction to freewriting about movies. This concurs with very positive evaluations of the task provided in informal written and oral comments from students in previous years.

Enjoyment and Increased Confidence

Studies show that the affective states of students can impact language learning and effort (Ellis, 1994, p. 479), and enjoyment of the task does appear to have enhanced student attitudes with regard to writing. First, the data suggests that the use of movie viewing as a freewriting prompt had a motivational impact. Of the 19 students who mentioned enjoyment as a benefit, 14 specifically attributed this to the movie. Also, in answer to the question, Did you like watching Freedom Writers as a prompt for freewriting and why?, 34 out of 37 students said they loved or liked it (while only one did not and two were neutral), citing enjoyment, interest in the story, a ready supply of freewriting topics, a break in routine, extra listening and writing practice, and the excitement and anticipation of waiting for the

next viewing. All but one student wished to repeat the task with another movie in the second term. In addition, all interviewees confirmed a willingness to tackle difficulties with vocabulary, listening, and writing because they were excited by the movie and wished to communicate their feelings about the story. The freewriting aspect of the task also appears to have had a positive effect on attitudes toward and confidence in writing. Comments such as 'I was happy my writing become faster and smooth' or 'I could write one page quickly so I could feel confident' often emerged from the data. Interestingly, the top mentioned benefit was the opportunity to convey feelings and ideas, reflected in student comments such as "I could write my own opinions more freely with enjoying so I tried harder" and "I could feel confident filling in the full page every time". This suggests that the chance to attend to personal and expressive aspects of written communication was a welcome addition to the usual academic writing exercises.

Positive Impact on Writing Skills

Essay data showed that 14 students felt that the task helped them to improve writing skills while another four students specifically mentioned improvement of academic writing skills. When asked to elaborate on these findings, eight of the 10 students interviewed stated that making a summary and reacting to the movie content provided practice for paraphrasing and summarizing exercises assigned in the course as well as with the writing of papers. In addition, 12 students were positive about the opportunity to reflect on themes and issues related to the movie (which mirrored those in the textbook). In fact, six of the students interviewed said the topic they chose for their final paper was one that they had first explored in their freewriting journal. As Elbow (1998b) suggests, the task can serve as a rough draft of formal assignments. Lastly, seven of the ten students interviewed confirmed that they employed freewriting techniques when working on drafts of academic papers in order to get their ideas and words flowing more quickly. As one student commented, it was, "a change of pace of writing practice [where] I enjoyed and felt confident about writing my ideas [and] I need this skill for my essay".

Impact on Other Skills

Improved listening comprehension was regarded as one of the top rated benefits, an unexpected result considering the listening aspect of the task was downplayed and subtitles were used. However, since extended listening practice is embedded in

the task, it creates an opportunity to familiarize students with techniques for active listening, (combining bottom up processing [decoding sounds] with top down processing [using prior knowledge to construct meaning]), and to encourage them to accept the inevitable non-understandings that occur in authentic listening situations (Nunan, 1999; Rost, 1990). As one student noted, "It was too difficult to listen everything in just one time listening. So, instead of that, I always imagined the story and the character`s feelings from the scene". Also highly rated were vocabulary development (mainly from the support materials), reading practice (short readings; subtitles), and speaking opportunities (short discussions following the movie). One interviewee was particularly articulate in recognizing that various skills were employed in the task saying, "The most important benefit for me? Can I just say all of them? I think being able to express opinions well is most important though if I want to be able to do that, I need to be able to listen and discuss and understand the DVD. Thus, I also need to build vocab at first."

Drawbacks

A lack of grammar instruction was rated as the main drawback of the task, with 11 of 37 students mentioning it in their essays. This may reflect a general belief among students that explicit grammar instruction is fundamental for language learning and it may be useful to remind students that the task does offer an opportunity to practice and reinforce grammar already learned. In addition, eight out of 37 students regarded non-comprehension of the movie dialogue as a drawback. Some may have agreed with one interviewee who said, "I wanted to understand the dialogue perfectly", underlining the fact that students should be reminded to rely on support materials, visual cues, and imagination to supplement listening comprehension and accept non-understandings. Finally, although four students found it difficult to follow an ongoing movie in weekly segments, many more students said they enjoyed the anticipation of waiting for the next viewing. A short review of the scenes shown in the previous week may prove useful to refresh student memories.

Conclusion

The data provided by the 37 student participants in this study suggests that the movie viewing/freewriting task had an overall positive impact on their attitudes, confidence, and effort with regard to writing. However, considering the exploratory nature

of this study, further inquiry should be pursued. For example, while using a movie prompt for freewriting appears to have interested and engaged students, it would be useful to know what other types of prompts would work equally well. In addition, informal analysis of the freewriting journals showed an overall increase in writing speed, use of paragraphing, and use of cohesive expressions, suggesting that further study into how effectively the task reinforces writing skills being learned in the class may also be useful. Lastly, a study using a larger sample of participants representing varied levels of language ability could provide insight as to how this task might impact a wider range of students.

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Julia K. Harper has been teaching in Japan for over 20 years and is currently a full-time lecturer at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto. Her interests include learner motivation, learner-centered language learning, and methods for the effective teaching of academic writing.



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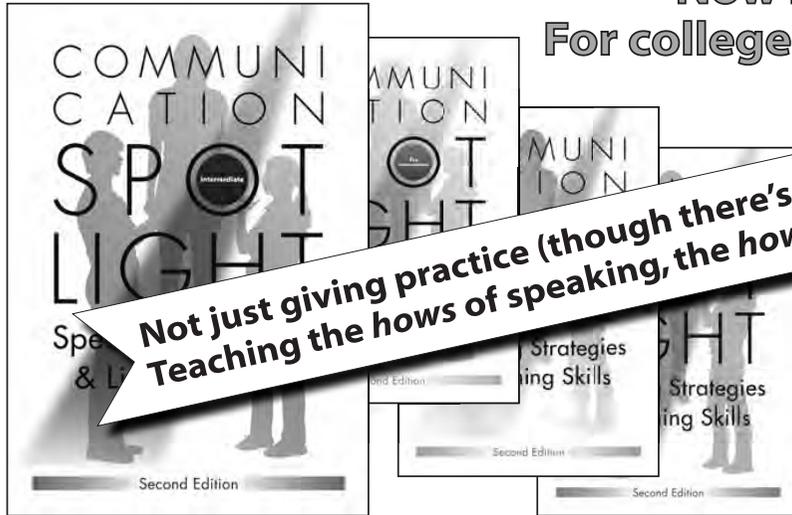
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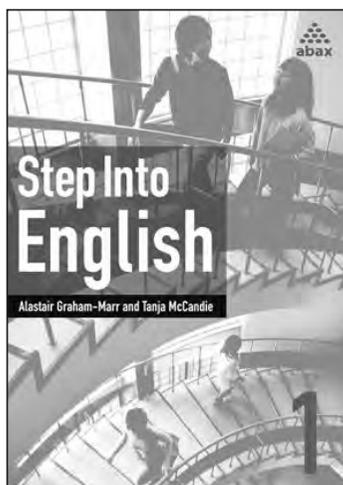


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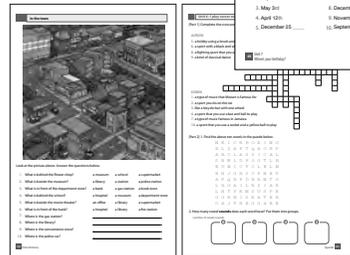
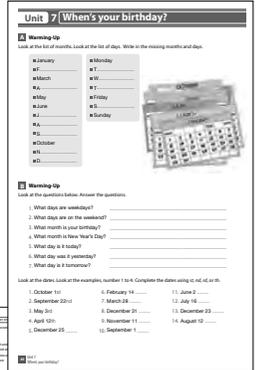


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EFL Literature Circles: Collaboratively Acquiring Language and Meaning

Kevin M. Maher
University of Macau

Literature circles have many advantages for acquiring a foreign language, particularly due to their collaborative nature. Students work together, and increase cultural awareness, critical thinking skills, reading comprehension abilities, and inference skills. Additionally, they search for meaning, examine text, and increase their vocabulary and idiom awareness by seeing those respective items in context. Their collaborative nature can bring a classroom of students together with the teacher as facilitator. For the structure of literature circles to work, each student is assigned a role. These may include Discussion Leader, Real-Life Connector, Passage Person, Summarizer, Graphic Organizer, The If Person, Character Creator, among others. Each of these roles will be addressed, and what is expected of each literature circle member. With each role, they challenge the group members to discuss and examine the text more fully, and therefore collaboratively learn together. This method closely follows Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) model.

Literature Circles (LC) は、特に協働的なので、外国語の習得に役立つ多くの利点がある。学生達はLC内で一緒に取り組むことで文化的意識、批判的思考技能、読解力や推理力を高める。さらに、意味を検索し、本文を調べ、文脈の中で各項目を見て語彙・熟語の理解を深める。LCの協働的特質によって教師は教室の進行役的存在となり、学生は各自の役割を与えられる。例えば、ディスカッションを主導する者、実生活との連結者、読解する段落を決める者、要約する者、関連画像を探る者、仮定の提案をする者、登場人物を創案する者、などである。このように役割をLCグループ内で割り当てることで協力的な学習ができて、本文について徹底的に討論し検証することができる。これは、VygotskyのZPD（最近接発達領域）とも強く関連している。

A Case for Collaboratively Studying Literature

Many second language acquisition leaders in the field promote reading novels. Day and Banford (1998) are strong supporters of extensive reading programs, where students regularly expose themselves to various authors and novels. However, working together, students collaboratively fill in the gaps of knowledge and awareness for all aspects of reading comprehension, vocabulary awareness, idiom usage, and other skills that are directly connected to Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The idea is that students can collectively work out meanings that may be diffi-

cult to make sense of on their own. Additionally, the teacher as the native or near-native speaker can assist in comprehending difficult aspects of both the language and culture within the reading.

Studying literature collectively creates specific strengths such as increasing critical thinking skills, enhancing awareness of the target language through culture, and improving the collaborative nature of studying language together among participants. Krashen's (2003) Comprehension Hypothesis discusses how we acquire language and develop literacy through the process of understanding what we hear and what we read. Increasing reading comprehension assists in acquiring language.

Another value of literature books is that students must read significantly more than traditional shorter readings, which students may be in the habit of using direct translation methods to understand. Iida (2013) found that most university faculties in Japan use the grammar-translation method as their preferred way to teach English over actual communication. Studying literature through literature circles will get students to collaborate and communicate more, as well as allow them to read for deeper meaning. Additionally, Bibby (2012) sees the role of literature as a model to teach the target language's sociocultural features and cultural nuisances. Lastly, Clafin (2012) adds that literature is full of descriptive text and wordplay, very specific to the language and its culture. Additionally, if material is studied together with a teacher, then the teacher can bridge the gaps in regards to social issues and the usage of colloquial English or idiomatic phrases.

Applying Literature Circles with EFL Language Students

Furr (2004) described how uninterested and unmotivated students, once exposed to using literature circles (LCs) in the classroom, became eager to share stories, point at passages to support their arguments, and ask questions of each other. Bibby (2012) addresses how a LC allows students to interact more with the text, promotes their L2 competence, and increases their ability to critically evaluate the text.

The value of student collaboration

Hisatsune (2012) mentions that teachers are consistently looking for activities that increase student's confidence and skills, so students become more autonomous and capable learners since LCs are student-led. As students take control of their own learning, they choose what interests them most as they focus on their roles.

Additionally, according to Daniels and Steineke (2004) this student-led interaction also deepens friendships, collaboration, and builds a better classroom community. Within the LC, each member has a unique overall task, and they collectively guide the content, the direction, the complexity of the lexicon, and go at their own pace (Williams, 2010). In this way, students experience incidental learning and self-directed noticing through meaningful input from the authentic text (Shelton-Strong, 2012).

This student collaboration increases awareness on many levels. Bibby (2012) states how as students interact with the literature, they involve themselves in extended discussion on the issues presented in the reading. Brown's (2009) research confirms this, as he comments on how students change their opinions on various topics through discussing the novel. As they share, argue, and point out text, they examine issues and may come to differing and more complex opinions.

This collaboration connects well even on scientific levels. Maher (2013a) researched the connection of second language acquisition with neuroplasticity. The more students interact and use the target language through discussion, the brain's synapses for language acquisition become stronger. This also connects with a prior study by Maher (2012) in which it is suggested that working with various partners and in pair work, language input, and therefore their language acquisition abilities are increased. Students working together and gaining ideas from multiple partners enhance their learning.

Critical Thinking Skills Enhanced

Kim (2003) discusses how many EFL students, particularly in Asia, come from a traditional educational system that stresses memorizing linguistic aspects of English, as opposed to learning how to question and analyze texts. Chiang and Huang (2005) are convinced that this is one of the greatest challenges to teaching students how to think critically. Brown (2009) states how LCs ensure EFL students analyze the text, that they must connect the reading to the real world, and they must challenge

their cultural assumptions. In this way, students can simultaneously enhance both their English and their critical thinking skills.

While students interact with the literary text, it increases their L2 competence and allows them to critically evaluate it (Bibby, 2012). Teachers can also have a role questioning various aspects of the assigned reading, and suggest to students they view the text in different ways. Brown (2009) observes that as students discuss the reading, they examine emotional conflicts and social dilemmas, which ultimately demand a response from the students or a value judgment.

The Literature Circle Cycle

Each LC group should have about five members, and will remain a group for five sessions. One session generally and ideally equates to once a week. Students are given rolework, (i.e., homework to prepare for their role), prior to each LC session. Five members, with five sessions, and five roles, means that one cycle will be complete when every member has experienced every role. My own personal preference is then to change some of the roles and change the group members for the next cycle, just so students can hear different class member's ideas throughout the semester. Only five roles, maximum, should be given each cycle.

For time-management purposes, each session will be set an amount of time that must be adhered to. Usually, the first session may only be twenty minutes, so that students can get a feel for how they operate. Later, the teacher might extend it up to 40-45 minutes, once students get into the tasks. In my observation, near the end of the novel, when the content becomes more predictable, I usually reduce the required time back down to 25-30 minutes again.

Student Rolework

Prior to each LC session, students focus on specific tasks (rolework), related to a role they will adhere to. Their rolework is then brought into their LC group, and another copy given to the teacher for assessment. I've found the best way to assess their role work is by having minimum requirements and grade them comparative to other students who submit the same role for that session. Daniels (2002), Furr (2011), and Maher (2013b, 2014a, 2014b) all discuss possible student roles, and a combination of these and other unique ones will be discussed in Table 1.

Table 1. Student Roles in the Literature Circle

Title	Role	Rolework to submit
Discussion Leader (DL)	Responsible for generating discussion and time management. If their group finishes early, the DL is held responsible for failing to involve the members properly, or to have created enough questions to generate discussion.	10 interesting, thought-provoking, discussion-generating questions.
Passage Person	This person will highlight passage paragraphs to discuss. Ideally, passages that are unclear, and require a need to further examine and study collectively. Of particular note are passages that seem important to the overall understanding of the story.	Choose at least three passages in the text, and highlight why you chose them. For example, you thought they were unclear, important, critical to understanding the story, etc.)
Visualizer	This person will collect a number of images from the internet; but if the student is more creative, they could draw the images as well. Particularly important images would include cultural items, or photos of products or people found within that culture.	Submit 10 images from the internet. Ideally they should be words/items that are culturally different, and seeing a picture would be helpful to the group.
Graphic Organizer	This role can either draw or collect images from the internet, but they must organize events sequentially with arrows and other diagrams. This person has more of a visual summary type of role.	Submit their graphically organized material.
Culture Connector	This role records anything in the story that is culturally different or unique that might be of interest to the other members. In can include elements from subcultures, past time periods, or foreign cultures.	Submit three uniquely and thought-provoking cultural differences between the readers' world and the story. Preferably not the obvious such as <i>they celebrate Christmas</i> .
Vocabulary Wizard	Choose ten words they find that are new and worthwhile to study in order to understand more of the story.	A vocabulary quiz. This role involves creating a vocabulary quiz with matching answers, to test their members.
Real Life Connector	This role connects events in the story with personal real life events or heresay. Then they ask group members if they have had similar experiences. For example, a character has an interaction with a police officer. This person connects his own experience with a police officer, and then elicits other stories from other members.	Submit two personal real life connections with questions to elicit more discussion from other members.
Summarizer	Summarize the assigned text for that session.	Submit the summary.
The IF Master	Creating <i>what if</i> scenarios. For example, what if you were Jay Gatsby, if you were in his same situation regarding X, what would you do?	Submit two thought-provoking questions, such as, "What if you were X, what would you do in situation Z?" .

Pre-Teach the Idiomatic Phrases

One suggestion for teachers before they assign the next session's reading, is for them to read it beforehand and catch anything that might be difficult for the student to look up on their own. These include

idiomatic expressions, phrases, and colloquial English. If they can study it a week before, and take a quiz on it, then when they later read the phrase in the actual story context, it will help them better understand the story overall. Additionally, recycling

any vocabulary is essential to acquiring new vocabulary (Nation, 2009). So, it would be suggested they should encounter these phrases several times.

Conclusion

In summary, EFL LCs offer an excellent opportunity for students to collaboratively acquire language, cultural awareness, critical thinking skills, increased comprehension for larger reading passages, and overall story and language meaning. It is an opportunity to see and use words in their actual context, and have a similar-minded group with the same purposes, and a teacher facilitator to assist them in this understanding.

Additionally, students can bond and share the learning experience with other classmates that will last well beyond the scope of the class. Years later, they might see those same group members again, and readily ask each other, "What would Holden Caulfield do?"

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Kevin M. Maher is a Senior Instructor at the University of Macau. Additionally he has taught at universities in Seoul (Hongik University), Osaka (Kansai Gaidai University), and Niigata (Keiwa College). He lives in Macau with his wife and two children. Kevin can be reached at <kma-her@umac.mo> at the University of Macau.



Building Success: Task-Based Speaking Tests in the Japanese Classroom

Roy Morris

University of Wollongong

This paper outlines the use of formative and task-based speaking assessments in the Japanese classroom at a range of levels, and argues that integrating this kind of assessment into a program benefits students by building their confidence through progressive achievement and by providing many chances for form negotiation and washback. An example of such a speaking test is outlined, and then evaluated according to criteria outlined by Brown and Abeywickrama (2010), and in accordance with the theories of Nation (1996), Long and Porter (1985) Swain and Lapkin (1989, 1998), and Ellis (1997), amongst others. The paper concludes that task-based speaking assessments help to encourage students to speak English by not only providing opportunities to do so, but also by clearly communicating successes and progressive milestones to them.

本論は、日本の教育現場での形成的かつタスクに基づいたスピーキング評価の使用について概説したものである。その評価方法を教育課程に組み入れることによって、学習者は多くの形式交渉や、それらの波及効果による段階的な習得を通じて、言語能力に自信を持つことができると本論で論じる。Brown & Abeywickrama (2010) の評価基準に基づき、また Nation (1995)、Long & Porter (1985)、Swain & Lapkin (1989, 1998)、Ellis (1997)等の理論に従い、1つのスピーキングテストを例として挙げる。本論の結びとして、タスク中心のスピーキング評価は、学習者に単に英語を話す機会を与えることだけでなく、彼らに段階的な達成目標を明確に認知させ、成功体験をさせることによって、英語を話すことに意欲をもたせることができると結論づける。

This paper outlines and argues for the use of task-based speaking tests as a form of formative evaluation, and in particular as a tool of encouragement and motivation amongst lower level students. The tests are used in a variety of ways, and can provide a facet of a broader spectrum of evaluation, alongside tests designed to assess reading, writing, listening, and presentation skills. The paper will outline an example of a speaking test that I have used which is suitable for a Japanese senior high class, and which provides opportunities to negotiate form and meaning (Swain, 1995) both with the teacher, and with each other (Ellis, 1997; Fernández-García & Martínez-Arbelaiz, 2002; Long & Porter, 1985; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). I will refer to guidelines for assessment outlined by Brown and Abeywickrama (2010).

Background

Free speaking in class is often the first part of lessons to be cut due to time restraints in Japanese high schools, and subsequent speaking activities tend to be restricted to confirming answers of grammar questions, choral speaking, and closed-form interrogational questions as Long and Porter discuss (1985, p. 209), while speaking assessment in particular can dwindle to almost nothing. This is a serious imbalance, and only aids to reinforce in students the idea of English as a theoretical language useful only for passing tests. Speaking tests not only can measure spoken English competency directly, but also, they can act as a motivator, by demonstrating to students their own competence in speaking ability and providing evidence of practical applications of English.

Although many students in Japanese educational systems do learn English at a level that satisfies the requirements of their exams, there are many students with paradoxically low ability who never seem to improve, or even some who are repelled by English. While this can happen when a course is mandatory for all students, this attitude may be bolstered by the relative success of their peers and the lack of general feelings of success they themselves experience. Another thing to consider is different learner styles and needs. Andreou, Andreou and Vlachos (2008) show that students with different learning styles need different kinds of input and output in the classroom; in this way assessment should also be varied in order to not discourage or discriminate.

Criteria

Brown and Abeywickrama's (2010) criteria for assessing the quality of assessment, which I will use here, holds true for both formative and summative tests, and can be very useful when analyzing and assessing the tests you make and use. They outline the five major principles involved in creating and administering language assessment as practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity, and washback. While a thorough reading of the text is best, I will summarize the points here.

Practical tests, simply put, do not overly tax budgetary or time constraints set upon a teacher or student. As Brown and Abeywickrama state, "In classroom-based testing, time is almost always a crucial practicality factor for busy teachers with too few hours in the day" (2010, p. 27).

Reliability is concerned with the accuracy at which a test can reflect the true ability of a student. Issues like repeatability of a test or assessment are paramount. Do students who do the test at different times get a different score due to distracting factors or poorly prepared materials? Issues of inter- and intra-rater reliability are also important to consider (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010, p. 41).

The validity of a test is concerned with content and impact—in other words, does the test logically follow on from classwork, and indeed measure what it is testing for? Is the test well prepared for, and does it offer opportunities for learning? Does it present itself as a punishment for students, or an encouragement to "bring out the best in their performance" (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010, p. 44)?

Another important and problematic facet of validity that needs to be addressed in Japanese schools in particular is face validity—"...the degree to which a test *looks* right, and *appears* to measure the knowledge and abilities it claims to measure, based on the subjective judgment of the examinees who take it" (Mousavi, 2009, p. 247, as cited in Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010, p. 35).

An authentic test or assessment usually has some practical real-world application or relevancy, contextualizing language rather than isolating it. Issues with authenticity come about when language is isolated, forced, unnatural, or irrelevant to the learner (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010, p. 38). Tests should provide the freedom to use non-target language to achieve the same goals.

Finally, washback refers to the ability of a test to effect a change in the behavior of teachers or students, and to encourage them to try things "they would not necessarily otherwise do" (Alderson & Wall, 1993, p. 117). This should be a prime concern in any classroom assessment. Assessing students can have positive or negative results on their future learning. Good tests should positively affect both students and teachers, offer preparation time, give learners constructive criticism, and be ongoing; that is, formative in nature.

Example of Speaking Assessment

Here is an example of a practical speaking test that follows these guidelines.

Students either work alone or in pairs to create the short script of a conversation or short presentation about a prescribed topic—for example, a prompt might be given that reads "Which do you think is better, travelling by train or by car?" The monologue or dialogue is then written down—usually, it is about 40–50 words, or four turns taken while talking—and checked by a teacher, who provides immediate feedback for students about length, structure, grammar and spelling, among others. Teachers can correct the speech outright, actively negotiating with students to reach the final form; alternatively they can underline or highlight problem areas, giving hints as to the type of mistake, and requiring students to correct their own language or to find help from other students or textbooks.

After the presentation is corrected and polished, students memorize it before returning to the teacher and presenting it. This is quantitatively assessed, not qualitatively—students finish as many of these tests as possible in the term, and are given a score based on the amount of work they do, not the quality of the presentations themselves. Teachers can control for quality by not allowing conversations which are too short or simple to be assessed.

Analysis of the Test Procedure and Rationale

The purpose of this speaking test is to encourage meaning-focused output to complete the task. This goal adheres to Swain's Output Hypothesis (1995), which looks at output as having three functions: noticing the gap, hypothesis testing, and a metalinguistic function, that is, negotiation of form. These goals are in line with sociocultural theories put forth by Long and Porter (1985), Appel and Lantolf (1994), and Wertsch (1991). However, how does it measure up as assessment according to Brown and Abeywickrama (2010)?

On the face of it, the issue of practicality seems glaring: how can a teacher expect to simultaneously supervise and control a classroom of students, and administer a test to one or two students at a time? Of course, this type of test would be more easily administered in a team-teaching situation, as my situation was. Technology can also help solo teachers to better utilize class time: presentations or conversations in the second example can easily be recorded in class with minimal teacher supervision, and allows students the freedom to perform when they feel ready. Alternatively, students could record themselves outside of the classroom and submit it to the teacher at their convenience, an activity similar to what Nation calls "the best recording" (1991, p. 4) in which students repeatedly record their

voices in order to fix their own mistakes. Though this admittedly suffers from reliability issues—some students may be too busy to spare the time, and in areas with disadvantaged students, recording devices may have to be supplied. This could encourage study outside the classroom—something which Fukuda and Yoshida (2013) discuss as a substantial problem in Japanese education.

Questions of intra-rater reliability can cause concern in some teaching situations if the classes are shared between teachers. It is partly for this reason that these tests are fundamentally quantitative, not qualitative. A significant side benefit of either test is found in letting the students be creative in what they output. The other reason for stressing quantity over quality is that these tests are designed to encourage what Nation describes as essential strands of a language course: “Learning through meaning-focused output” and “becoming fluent with what is already known” (Nation, 1996, p. 7).

There are some problems with reliability and repeatability in that some teachers accept lower levels of English output as adequate for progression than other teachers; therefore a strong and clear rubric is required for these tests, in order to help standardize the tests as much as possible across a teaching staff. As the tests are criterion-referenced and formative, a bare minimum is set, and ample encouragement to exceed it is given by teachers. We are trying to foster growth on a personal level, and would disadvantage students by setting global standards (Brown, 1995).

Content validity is addressed by matching the assessment to other coursework. A sample criterion might read “answers should include one present perfect sentence”, or students may be asked to disagree with each other or concede the point during the conversation. In this way, the final decision about what to say rests with the students, but some form of guidance can also be administered. Another measure of validity is in its direct testing of spoken English. Although “‘direct assessment’ is a misnomer because it always promises too much” (Messick, 1996, p. 244), it is still more valid than the much less direct method of assessing speaking through listening tests sometimes relied upon.

Face validity, on the other hand, can be a problem. Formative speaking tests, when used within a system whose dominant paradigm is formal summative exams, can be seen as challenging the norm. However, this is not entirely a negative: many students hate and fear summative exams, as Brown and Abeywickrama (2010, p. 1) discuss: “The fear of failure is perhaps one of the strongest negative emotions a student can experience, and

the most common instrument inflicting such fear is the test.” A simple semantic shift—calling the test a *checkpoint*, for example—can benefit both the teacher and student, shifting the focus from the fear of failure that a *test* might engender, and reframing the event as a measure of relative success, while still borrowing from the semantic meaning, and thus instilling a weight of importance to the activity. In my experience, classroom participation and motivation have risen since the implementation of the test.

The speaking test does not deal directly with the issue of authenticity, and is indeed rather inauthentic in its application, asking students to engage in stilted turn-taking that bears little resemblance to authentic conversation. However, the aim is to encourage critical thinking and opinion making, not to mimic real discussion. The language features teachers test for may in some ways dictate this. If one were to make a speaking test where, for example, one student assumed the role of a used car salesman, and another had to negotiate a good price for a hypothetical car, the thematic arrangement of the test could provide opportunities to use more authentic English.

Perhaps the way it is most useful is in its immediacy of feedback. In a school system there are few opportunities for one-on-one work; however during this test, students can test hypotheses and try new English without fear of failure. There is immediate washback for students and teachers alike during the tests, in seeing which grammar points are troublesome, which language is popularly used, and which students need extra help. The benefit of personalizing work like this is that students get immediate personalized attention and tuition.

Summation

In my experience using this test, students have been free to test their own hypotheses about the language and to think of English as a practical tool of communication rather than isolated phrases learned by rote. Working in pairs has the added bonus of encouraging them to negotiate form (Swain, 1995). Further, automatization of the language (Nation, 1996) is encouraged through repetition of the exercises.

Lastly, it is important to show students evidence of their own progress, not merely their competence, if we are to help them feel empowered and motivated in their study. When I first used the speaking test, many students couldn’t manage their time effectively and rushed at the end; however I found in repeated usage that their time management skills also improved. Many of my worst students in fact

seemed to enjoy the assessment, using it as a way to compete against others in a friendly way. I would call that a confidence-boosting success.

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Roy Morris has taught English in Japan in a range of situations, from early elementary education through to mature-aged students, though most of his experience involves upper secondary and tertiary students. He recently graduated with distinction from the University of Wollongong in NSW, Australia. His focuses of study were speaking and assessment. He currently works in a technical college specializing in English education in Kanagawa, Japan.



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Plenary Speaker Interview



Every year, the plenary and featured speakers at our annual international conference write articles for *The Language Teacher* to give attendees some background to their conference presentations. This year, we will be publishing these articles in all of the pre-conference issues of *TLT*. For more information on JALT2015, please see the pullout preview in the centre of this issue of *TLT*, or visit our conference website:

<<http://jalt.org/conference>>

challenges and opportunities facing language educators in Japan, and her thoughts on JALT 2015.

Stephen Ryan (SR): First of all, I was wondering what was it that got you interested in this area of research all those years ago?

Tomoko Yashima (TY): For a long time, I have been working at the intersection of two broadly different fields: second language acquisition on the one hand, and intercultural communication on the other. These two fields are more widely separated than we think, with completely different sets of literature, terminology, and concerns. I thought that both fields could inform and benefit each other, but it was not working out that way.

Looking back, I remember a symposium organized by Rebecca Oxford at AILA 1996 as a turning point. Among the presenters were Zoltán Dörnyei and Peter MacIntyre, two prominent young researchers at the time. It was an extremely stimulating session. I was particularly excited about the concept of willingness to communicate—which was, I believe, being introduced for the first time into the SLA field—as something that would connect my two fields of interest. Since then I have been increasingly drawn to the area of individual differences in learner psychology in SLA, but my interests never left communication, or a view of language as something we can use to relate to people with whom we will never be able to communicate if we do not learn the L2. The combination of the two fields then led me to the idea of international posture, which I postulated later in my motivation research.

To me, motivation to communicate is a vital concept. Infants' L1 acquisition is built upon their innate desire to communicate with people around them, the desire to share attention and intention. Similarly in L2 learning, I believe it is natural for the desire to communicate to be the driving force behind motivation to study the L2. My interest in instructed language learning centers around how learners develop their L2 in such a way that it becomes a tool they use to share information as well as their intentions, and to share—but not necessarily agree with—the views and values of significant

The theme of JALT2015—*Focus on the Learner*—is a timely one highlighting a major shift in our field, from one dominated by descriptions of language and teaching techniques to a greater consideration of the contributions learners make to their own language learning. It is particularly apt that JALT should choose this as a conference theme since researchers from Japan have been at the forefront of this shift. In fact, Japan-based researchers have been so prominent in recent years that it is very easy to forget that this has not always been the case and that for a very long time many researchers in Japan felt disconnected or even isolated from theoretical advances occurring elsewhere. A key figure in the rise of the international profile of Japanese research into individual learner characteristics is this year's plenary speaker Tomoko Yashima. Her pioneering research into L2 willingness to communicate (WTC) and, in particular, her development of the concept of international posture inspired a generation of Japan-based researchers—myself included—to have the confidence to come up with our own theories and explanations of what is happening in our classrooms, as opposed to slavishly attempting—usually unsuccessfully—to apply models and theories developed elsewhere.

Recently I was fortunate to share a conversation with Tomoko, in which I had the opportunity to ask her about her work, her views on some of the main



others, thereby turning L2 into something that represents part of their self-concept. In the process of learning the L2, learners will encounter various views, values, and perspectives expressed by others or stated in the texts and materials used in instructed situations. This creates opportunities for them to have dialogues with others, including teachers and co-learners as well as writers and authors of ideas expressed in the materials. Thus I believe that motivation to communicate emerges when learners encounter diverse perspectives in the L2 classroom, which then becomes a dialogic space.

SR: It's interesting that you refer to the classroom because one of the things that has always impressed me about your research is that it is clearly grounded in the realities of teaching. From a practical perspective, what particular challenges do you see for teachers looking to focus on the learner in Japanese classrooms?

TY: I strongly believe in the pedagogical value of motivation research or learner psychology as it helps teachers to understand learners—or simply to understand human beings—but it also takes time and a lot of observation. Although teachers have an advantage because they know learners and their backgrounds better than outside researchers—particularly when integrating context is becoming increasingly important in doing research—their role as a teacher and as the one who gives grades may affect students' perception and behavior, and might cloud his or her own perception as well when doing research. Another issue comes when you have 40 students in a class, to focus on individual learners under such conditions is a challenge and a further issue is that Japanese teachers are always very busy.

Motivation research is interesting because it is about understanding people. Motivation to learn something has so much to do with acculturation to the context and it tells us so much about how humans become members of a community that they come to value. If someone is not motivated to learn a subject, I feel there is something about the culture or context of learning that he or she finds hard to acculturate into. One day, I hope to design a study that will help teachers understand their students through the insights the research findings can offer, that is, an in-depth understanding of why people behave as they do in their living contexts.

SR: Given your strong practical interest, do you see any evidence of your research influencing actual classroom practice?

TY: You know, after I published my WTC research I received so many inquiries from teachers and researchers at different levels and in different sectors of education, from elementary school to college. It seems my research stimulated their motivation to initiate classroom research in their own teaching contexts. I hope it encouraged teachers to focus on non-linguistic outcomes and recognize that enhancing motivation, self-confidence and willingness to communicate is as valued a goal of instructed FL teaching as a linguistic outcome and might have a longer term impact on their learning behavior. My research concerning the effects of creating an imagined community in EFL classes might have stimulated some people to find ways to implement a vision-focused communicative approach or a practice in which real desire to communicate is created, which leads to WTC and frequency of communication.

SR: So if you received one of those inquiries from someone today looking to start up their own research project, what kind of advice would you give?

TY: My advice would probably be very different to the advice I would have given ten years ago, because recently my own interest has shifted from identifying causal relationships among variables to understanding how learners' motivation and WTC undergo changes in context. My most recent WTC study is a classroom interventional study. If you want to focus on the dynamic aspect of WTC or motivation, I personally believe this is the way to go and teachers have an advantage here because they can design interventions to change their teaching practice or enhance learners' motivation, WTC or reduce anxiety and observe the changes taking place in context. They can try to explain how an interaction of multiple factors brought about these changes in learners, integrating data from multiple data sources. You really have to know the learners well to conduct this type of research, and conducting research then helps you to know the learners better. Combining linguistic development and psychological changes to examine how they interact with each other is the next step; motivation research has been somewhat independent of the SLA mainstream and has not clearly addressed the connection between motivation and language acquisition. There are some great opportunities for teachers looking to research their own classroom contexts.

SR: You mention how your own interest has shifted recently, and it is certainly my impression that we have seen a huge shift in the scope and focus of research in recent years, from the issues we inves-

tigate to the methods we use to collect and analyze data. What are the big changes you've noticed in the field over the years?

TY: Well, looking at the fields of IDs and motivation, I'd first like to point out something you didn't mention in your question, a geographic shift. SLA, at least this is my impression, used to be a somewhat Eurocentric field. Motivation research is ahead of other areas of SLA in becoming more inclusive of researchers all over the world. With motivation research, Japan is now an epicenter, with so much research coming from Japan-based researchers. This is seen in the surging number of international journal articles written by researchers based in Japan and other Asian countries such as Korea and China. I believe you did the meta-study and know the figures better than anybody else. This I think is a very good trend.

I'm personally excited about the Socio-Dynamic turn in SLA, as again for me this new trend has allowed me to integrate different fields I had been working in. From my interest in human development and culture I had been attracted to sociocultural theory and research that focuses on people as embedded in the sociocultural context. As you know Zoltán Dörnyei (2014) recently instigated motivation research using Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST), which sees the context as part of the system. In terms of research, this new trend with CDST encourages us to merge quantitative and qualitative methods. For 10 years or so, I was undergoing something of an epistemological crisis and this trend has presented me with a possible solution. This is an interesting but difficult period for motivation researchers because you can no longer simply apply established quantitative methods to research and publish the results. We need creativity and rigor to try to understand learners' cognition, affect and behavior utilizing various data sources. It's challenging but it is extremely exciting at the same time.

SR: As you mentioned, Asia, and Japan in particular, has seen a lot of research into language learner motivation and the psychology of language learning in general. How would you explain this surge in interest?

TY: One thing we can say is that teachers in instructed FL teaching in Japan struggle to motivate learners, as demonstrated by the fact that research on demotivation started in Japan. One reason I can suggest is that there is a gap between social pressure, with the economic sector and various official sources, such as METI, pressurizing the education

sector and reiterating the need to cultivate a "global workforce" that can (among other things) use English, and the perceptions of many learners who cannot see any meaning in learning English except that it is an important subject for entrance exams or something required in order to graduate. They can communicate with significant others and acquire all the knowledge they need in their L1 so don't see the relevance of English to their immediate lives.

There has also been a surge of interest in motivation research internationally because EFL teachers seem to have been struggling to motivate learners. According to Ema Ushioda, motivation issues are shared by teachers in different contexts across the globe. As far as I can tell, no other subject teachers are as eager to find methods that work, as language educators seem to be. The more devoted the teacher, the greater his or her concern about what the learners are really learning and how they feel. For example, you might feel concerned about learners who appeared to be enjoying the class activities but suddenly stopped attending. Clearly, the psychology of learners is complex and dynamic. Using questionnaires and interviews, motivation research gives some clues to teachers who wish to understand what learners really think and feel. Phenomenological interviews allow us to look at the world as the learners see it. It is about looking at teaching and learning from the learners' perspective. If you accept that teachers and learners construct the class together (after all, you cannot have teachers without learners, and teaching is communication), the desire to understand the psychology of your communication partners is a natural consequence. This may partly explain this surge in interest.

SR: Given this huge surge in interest and activity, are there any particular challenges you see facing researchers working in Japan?

TY: Comparing with researchers based in the West, researchers working at Japanese universities seem to have much less time to spend on research. With such a heavy teaching load and the administrative demands imposed on teachers or researchers, usually not much time is left for doing research and writing papers. Japan-based researchers are in a disadvantageous situation in terms of research and it's hard for them to compete in the international area. Considering this, the contribution of Japan-based researchers to motivation research is amazing.

The greatest challenge we face in language education is that short-term tangible outcomes are expected, such as raising a TOEIC score by so many points within a given period of time, or we often see

economic principles being applied in education. We must not forget the long-term perspective. To do research that helps teachers is important, of course, but it takes a long time before the effects of interventions—for example, through teaching practice designed to enhance motivation—are represented in learning outcomes, so if one expects a short-term result that helps teachers immediately in a visible way, motivation research may appear frustrating or even useless. The seeds of interest sown in the classroom may bloom much later in a learner's life. Also taking a macro perspective, the trend for seeking short-term outcomes may steer people away from research that takes a long time and a tremendous amount of effort, such as ethnographic studies.

SR: Finally, let's talk about the conference. This year's conference theme is 'focus on the learner'. How do you see your research fitting in here?

TY: At one level, all research on learner psychology or learner characteristics have foci on the learner in the sense that the data sources are always learners and their voices. But of course we have to think what it really means to focus on the learner.

In my research, my data sources have included responses to questionnaires, interviews, narratives, and observations as well as language data—written discourse, class-room spoken discourse. In quantitative research, these responses are translated into numerical data that are processed statistically. As a result, researchers are not really listening to individual learners' voices—though I don't mean to suggest that these are useless. Quantitative research can be a powerful tool for us to learn about the general tendencies within groups of learners. Instead, the crucial point of qualitative approach is to elicit data from people in their lived contexts. In studies in which variables are taken out of context, we are not really focusing on the learner. In qualitative studies, and in a CDST-informed approach in particular, we use multiple data to understand people, and I experienced how by combining interview data, classroom interactions, and numerical data, I came to understand better why students communicated the way they did in the classroom as well as their personality, concerns and values. In my experience, analyses are very important because through the intense open coding of interview data and in particular in the process of selecting a code that captures the essence of an utterance, you come to have a deeper understanding of the person's psychology. This process also prevents researchers from interpreting the interview or narrative data as they wish, a trap we can easily fall into. Spending hours interpreting a learner narrative one-hour

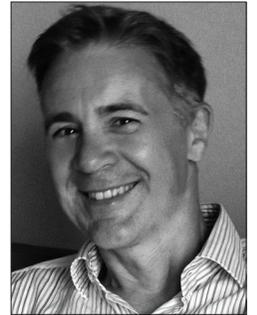
long in length can lead to the discovery of how he or she views learning the language from where they are, an insight I could not otherwise have gained. It is at this moment perhaps when I feel I'm focusing on the learner.

SR: So the process of collecting and analyzing data actually enables you to feel closer and more focused on individual learners. That's certainly given me something to think about and I hope you will talk a little more about this at JALT 2015. Thank you so much for your time and good luck with the plenary.

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Stephen Ryan is a professor in the School of Economics at Senshu University, Tokyo. His research covers various aspects of psychology in language learning, with a particular interest in learner motivation, mindsets, and the role of the imagination. He is co-author (with Zoltán Dörnyei) of *The Psychology of the Language Learner Revisited* and (with Sarah Mercer and Marion Williams) *Exploring Psychology in Language Learning*.



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Jonathan Reingold and Philip Head

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 that can be replicated by readers, and should conform to the My Share format (see the guidelines on our website below).

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Summer is here, the perfect time for festivals, barbecues, and reading another useful edition of *My Share*. While enjoying the summer holidays, Valentine's Day is probably not on your mind, but as everyone knows, WINTER IS COMING. With that in mind, Chris Lyons provides a Valentine's Day themed activity to allow students to explore the meaning of love through writing. Continuing with the theme of holidays, Jamie Sturges presents an activity allowing students to create their own original holiday, perfect for those facing a Valentine's Day without a significant other. Of course to get a significant other, you need to work up the courage to talk to people. With this in mind, Sam Morris provides an activity to help students speak confidently without relying on memorizing a script. Finally, Sara Hendricks illustrates how students can practice a variety of English skills through describing and drawing pictures in pairs.

So sit back, enjoy a cold beverage, and discover new teaching strategies to use when classes begin again in the fall. And don't hesitate to send us your own ideas. We love hearing from you.

All the best, Jonathan & Philip

Say What You See: A Warm-Up Game for Oral Presentation and Fluency Classes

Sam Morris

British Hills

<mrsammorris@gmail.com>

Quick guide

- » **Keywords:** *Presentations, fluency, confidence building, warm up*
- » **Learner English level:** *Intermediate and above*
- » **Learner maturity:** *University and adult*
- » **Preparation time:** *1 hour*
- » **Activity time:** *15 minutes*
- » **Materials:** *Presentation program file consisting of a series of random images, projector, screen*

Many inexperienced learners of English rely heavily on scripts or rote memorisation when giving oral presentations, and this often results in poor

delivery. Such reliance may well stem from a lack of experience and confidence in speaking freely about a given topic. In this activity, learners are asked to describe a series of random images to the class. The students are encouraged to say what they see, rather than relying on a pre-written text, giving them the confidence and skills to move away from scripts, as well as helping them to remain composed should their mind go blank during a real presentation.

Preparation

Step 1: Create a presentation program file comprised of random images: using an image search tool, find pictures of objects, places and people, and place a single random image on each slide. 100+ slides are a good amount for large classes, and should take no more than an hour to create.

Step 2: Set up a projector and screen in the classroom if needed.

Procedure

Step 1: Split your class into small teams (3 to 5 students).

Step 2: Ask the first team to line up in front of the projector screen.

Step 3: Have the front student run to the computer and hit enter. This will bring up a random image on the screen.

Step 4: Instruct the student to face the audience, and give one sentence related to the image. For example, should the random picture be of a black cat with green eyes, the following sentences would be acceptable:

"This is a cat"

"I have three cats"

"Cats are friendly animals"

"It is unlucky to see a black cat"

"Many people in Sweden have green eyes"

Step 5: Send the first team member to the back of the line, and ask the second team member to run forward, bring up a new image, and provide a new sentence. Continue through each member of the team.

Step 6: When the students understand what is required of them, ask them to line up again in front of the screen. Explain that you will give them one minute as a team to work through as many images as possible.

Step 7: Time the students, and count the number of slides they are able to successfully complete in one minute.

Step 8: Give the other teams the opportunity to participate. When all teams have competed, announce a winner.

Variations

1. Advanced level learners can be challenged to provide three sentences about each random image.
2. Teams can be asked to repeat the activity using the same images, allowing them to build fluency and confidence.

Conclusion

This activity is enjoyable, energetic, and simple, but has a powerful effect on learners' confidence in speaking without a script. I use this activity frequently with university and business learners and find it produces a lively start to the class, helps to raise awareness of the expectations placed on presenters, and provides a valuable opportunity for learners to speak in front of their peers.

Drawing for Success

Sara Hendricks

Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University

<sara@apu.ac.jp>

Quick guide

- » **Keywords:** *Drawing game, speaking and listening practice, picture dictation*
- » **Learner English level:** *High beginner to advanced*
- » **Learner maturity:** *Junior high school through adult*
- » **Preparation time:** *15 minutes*
- » **Activity time:** *10 to 20 minutes*
- » **Materials:** *Projector or digital whiteboard and various images, blank paper, pencils*

This activity is fun, interactive, and communicative. It asks students to alternate between practicing speaking by describing an unusual picture and practicing listening by drawing the picture described to them. The students make pairs with one student facing the image on the projector. The student who can see the projector describes the image to his or her partner, who will draw the image. Afterwards, the students switch places so that each student has an opportunity (or two) to practice both speaking and listening. The activity can be tailored to match any current language target from grammar to vocabulary to pronunciation. The real beauty of the activity is that students are self-motivated to participate, every student gets lots of individual talk time, and it is more student-centered than simply listening to the teacher.

Preparation

Step 1: Decide on the language focus of the class. The teacher can choose a grammar focus such as, "There is/There are," a pronunciation practice using minimal pairs, or other vocabulary. The teacher should prepare between 5 and 9 images based on the language focus. For example, the teacher might find images of sheep or ships, or rice or lice if the aim is pronunciation. The teacher might find images of careers if the vocabulary focus that week is on occupations. The images should be funny or strange as well as being fairly detailed so that more advanced students can challenge themselves by trying to describe the entire scene.

Step 2: Set up the classroom so that the desks and chairs are (or can be) arranged in pairs. One student should be able to see the projector screen and one student should be facing away from the screen.

Procedure

Step 1: Explain the activity to the students. Emphasize that the end goal is not to have a beautiful picture, but to have fun practicing speaking and listening to English. The teacher may want to list helpful vocabulary or grammar hints to encourage students to use the target language. Show the students a sample image and model describing the picture and drawing it.

Step 2: Have the students find partners and decide who will describe the image first. Make sure that only the selected student in each pair can see the projector.

Step 3: Show the next image and tell students to begin. Set a fairly short time limit, as it's better to have a few students that don't finish their drawing

completely rather than have many students finish and sit silently.

Step 4: Walk around, encouraging students by admiring the drawings. After the timer rings, instruct students to look at and comment on each other's pictures as they compare their drawings to the real image.

Step 5: Have students change places and then change the image. Repeat as many times as desired.

Conclusion

This activity can also be adapted to any level and can accommodate most class sizes. The images can be a little tricky to find, depending on the target language, but the extra search time is worth the effort. Students enjoy this activity and after emphasizing that the goal is NOT to end up with a beautiful picture, even students who dislike art will have fun.

Our Own holiday: A Creative Classroom Project

Jamie G. Sturges

Toyo University

<jamie@toyo.jp>

Quick guide

- » **Key words:** *Holidays, culture, writing, drawing, collages*
- » **Learner English level:** *Intermediate and above*
- » **Learner maturity:** *University*
- » **Preparation time:** *Varies*
- » **Activity time:** *90 minutes*
- » **Materials:** *Handouts (see appendices), white-board/blackboard, markers, slips of paper, box/cup/hat for selecting paper from, drawing paper, photos/pictures of food (optional)*

Today's a special day, but what kind? Let students be creative by helping them make their own holiday, celebrate its history, wear its designated colors, display its symbols, and plan its traditional meals.

Preparation

Step 1: Arrange the classroom into three separate sections. Distribute students among tables as evenly as possible.

Step 2: Have the group materials ready up front; cut out the cards from Appendix B, but don't distribute them yet.

Procedure

Step 1: On the board, list some well-known Japanese holidays (or elicit from students). See Appendix A.

Step 2: Talk about other holidays. Distribute the cards from Appendix B. Have each group match the holiday name, colors, symbols (two for each holiday), and foods. Review together.

Step 3: Announce that today is also a special day, and have students brainstorm one- or two-word phrases that set the new holiday theme. Have students submit their ideas on small slips of paper. Draw a slip at random and write its contents on the board: Today is _____ Day! Let's celebrate!

Step 4: Assign a job to each of the three different stations where students are sitting, designating them as History, Color/Symbol, or Food. This is where the students will start. Rotate after 10-12 minutes at each station.

The History table collaborates on the legend of the new holiday. They should aim for 4-6 sentences together. Offer a prompt to start: "This holiday began a long time ago when a young man/boy/girl/person was running late for school..."

The Color/Symbol table will decide on the colors (two) and symbols (two) for the holiday, and later explain why they selected the colors and symbols. If they have extra time, they should create a greeting for the holiday.

The Food table will decide on the main course. They will sort through the images of food (if provided) or draw their own, and explain why they selected those foods. Ask follow-up questions, such as: "Do you eat this with your family or friends? What if people have allergies? Where can people buy this food? Do you have to make it yourself, or can you buy it?"

Step 5: Rotate the groups. The jobs at each table change slightly.

The History table continues the story where it was left off in any way they wish.

The Color/Symbol table now has representatives from a Japanese department store. They must create a store display for the holiday using the colors and symbols chosen. Together or individually, draw display banners or products for the holiday.

The Food table will decide on snacks for the holiday and explain why they selected the foods they did. Ask the questions from Step 4.

Step 6: Rotate the groups one final time. The jobs at each table change slightly.

The History table finishes the story.

The Color/Symbol table follows the same procedure as in Step 5, this time representing a different department store.

The Food table decides on desserts for the holiday and explains why they selected the foods they did. Ask the questions from Step 4.

Step 7: Groups return to the tables they began at. Give groups about 5 minutes to assess all the additions; then everyone can present their sections.

Step 8: If possible, display everything on the classroom wall so students can see everything together. Finally, just enjoy your holiday!

Conclusion

This is a break from the normal classroom routine and encourages student originality, creativity, as well as group collaboration (and compromise). The teacher is free to modify or substitute any of the warm-up holidays. By working together and discussing some of the fun parts of holidays, students can create a special experience together and learn about the culture of holidays at the same time.

Appendix

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

Love Is: A Creative Valentine's Day Activity

Christopher J. Lyons

Kochi-ken, Nankoku-shi ALT

<cecil20xx@gmail.com>

Quick guide

- » **Keywords:** *Valentine's Day, English Wall, writing, vocabulary*
- » **Learner English level:** *Beginner to advanced*
- » **Learner maturity:** *Junior high school and higher*
- » **Preparation time:** *0 to 30 minutes*
- » **Activity time:** *20 to 50 minutes*
- » **Materials:** *Worksheet, cards, markers, sample (optional)*

Every year on Valentine's Day, students (and teachers!) are concerned with sweets, cards, and all sorts of tokens of affection. One way to introduce some broader thoughts about Valentine's Day traditions is to have students consider what love is. A fellow teacher shared this activity with me, and demonstrated that her lower level students could use simple vocabulary and concrete ideas to express love metaphorically as a sport or food, whereas her higher level students could use more advanced ideas to equate love to an action or idea. I found that my own students enjoyed expressing their thoughts about love in English as well. Making and decorating cards for use on an English Wall or similar display added to the fun, allowing students to draw and doodle to their hearts' content. This activity combines creative thinking, a bit of art, and some writing, to make a Valentine's Day activity that focuses on broadening students' concepts of love.

Preparation

Step 1: Access the worksheet found in the appendix, and print enough copies for each student.

Step 2: Prepare enough index cards, heart shapes, or other materials for each student to complete a Love is... card.

Step 3: Optionally, create your own sample Love is... card, to allow students to visualize the final product of this activity.

Procedure

Step 1: Ask students what love is. Many times, they will give the dictionary definition of love. Ask the students if love can be a thing or an idea.

Step 2: Demonstrate such sentences as, "Love is a friendly smile," and, "Love is reading a good book."

Step 3: Show the sample Love is... card (optional). Then, tell students that today, they will be thinking about what love is, and making cards to display their ideas. Take a moment to review relevant grammar or vocabulary, such as food, sports, emotions, or activities relevant to recent lessons.

Step 4: Pass out the worksheets. There are examples, so, to avoid copying, students should be reminded that original ideas are best.

Step 5: As each student finishes writing three Love is... ideas, check their writings, and then pass them an index or colored card (or, for added fun, a card cut into the shape of a heart or other themed object). They choose their favorite Love is... sentence and write it on the card, decorating it however they like. On the back of the card, they should write their names.

Step 6: When the students are finished, or when time has run out, allow volunteers to read their ideas of what love is. Then, collect the finished cards to assemble in a display (English Wall or the like).

Variations

For advanced students, this activity alone might be too easy. A good challenge is to have the students write about their choices for what love is by explaining the reasons for their choices, or the meaning of their metaphors.

Also, this activity can work with ideas besides love. Happiness, family, success, and other concepts with subjective meanings can be substituted to make this activity useful throughout the year.

Conclusion

When I first heard of this activity, I was a little skeptical because it sounded too simple to be useful.

However, after trying it myself, I found that the simplicity allows students to express themselves without worrying about difficult English structures. Students are curious to see what their classmates have written, and creating a display raises English awareness and interest throughout the school. Sometimes my fellow teachers make their own cards as well! This activity allows each student to better understand what their classmates might think about love, and that different people may have different ideas about what love can be. And that's really the most important part, because for me love is understanding.

Appendix

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

[RESOURCES] BOOK REVIEWS



Robert Taferner

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

Email: <reviews@jalt-publications.org> Web: <<http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/book-reviews>>

Get on Stage!

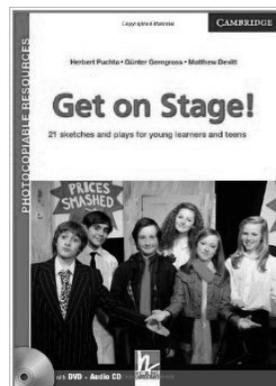
[Herbert Puchta, Günter Gerngross, & Matthew Devitt. Helbling Languages, 2012. pp. 224. ¥6,058. ISBN: 978-3-85272-248-1.]

Reviewed by John Nevara, Kobe Gakuin University

Can an EFL teacher with absolutely no theatrical background learn to effectively employ plays and sketches in their classroom? My answer is that any reasonably capable teacher can acquire all the necessary know-how to stage simple but interesting plays with the help of *Get on Stage!* a relatively new photocopiable resource book published by Helbling Languages and also available through Cambridge University Press.

Over the past decade or so, I have become more and more intrigued by the concept of using plays in my EFL classes. At least some of the benefits

of using drama in the EFL classroom have been documented (Barbee, 2014; Maley & Duff, 2005), giving me the desire to try it for myself. For example, Barbee (2014) notes that a significant amount of research points towards the use of drama as having strong positive effects on learner autonomy, motivation, confidence, and language awareness, with at least some studies also claiming an overall improvement in students' language ability. However, none of the resource books that are available on the market, and none of the several presentations on drama that I have attended at EFL conferences, have ever come close to preparing me enough that I might have the confidence to actually attempt drama in the classroom.



By complete and fortunate happenstance, I recently came upon *Get on Stage!* in a London bookstore. Upon examination, the collection of plays in this resource book, ranging from elementary to upper-intermediate level, were entertaining, needed little in terms of props, and, perhaps most importantly for the EFL classroom, were suitably controlled for difficulty of grammar and vocabulary.

My initial evaluation of the book was positive enough that I thought it worth purchasing. Upon returning to Japan, I examined the contents more carefully and realized that almost every play in the collection had been recorded on the accompanying CD, giving the teacher the opportunity to let students listen to and model the plays.

Get on Stage! also contains worksheets for each script, filled with comprehension exercises that focus on vocabulary and grammar. The authors clearly recognize the importance for students to properly understand the plays before enactment. However, I would say that the real strength of this resource book lies neither in its collection of plays nor in the worksheet exercises, but rather in its clear-cut and extremely practical explanation of how to stage a play in the EFL classroom. Not only is this information provided in written form in the introduction, but it is also reproduced in the accompanying DVD, with a friendly, experienced, and qualified actor and director giving advice through actual enactment of a sketch. In this case, seeing is knowing, as the viewer of the DVD gradually gains a deeper understanding of how to facilitate plays and sketches.

With such a complete resource book—one structured with exactly the right amount of scaffolding for an inexperienced teacher—it seemed only natural that I should attempt to use *Get on Stage!* in the classroom. There was some trepidation for this neophyte EFL drama teacher, but I quickly learned to trust the advice in the book, and somewhat more gradually I gained the instincts that come from real experience.

My students likewise have responded warmly to the introduction of drama into the class. This class of 22 1st-year university students successfully rehearsed and performed two of the shorter humorous sketches in the book, each with a running time of about five minutes. Each elementary-level skit took about four weeks from start to finish, allowing plenty of time for aural comprehension, reading comprehension, grammar and vocabulary practice, several rehearsals of the play, and a final performance in front of the class. These two sketches (*The Perfect Son* and *Colin the Poet*) proved to be appropriate choices for this particular lower-level class of non-English majors, but a more adventur-

ous teacher, with the right class, might be swayed to attempt one of the longer, intermediate-level plays that requires more props and greater planning.

In this teacher's opinion, the benefits of introducing drama were obvious. The students' attendance has improved, their enthusiasm and motivation appears to have increased, and even their *soft skills* (for example, leadership, cooperation, confidence) have improved. However, there is no quantifiable evidence that their actual English ability, as measured through traditional standardized tests, has improved. This suggests that the resource book might be best utilized as occasional supplementary material rather than as a dedicated text, at least in traditional EFL classes.

In conclusion, *Get on Stage!* would be a valuable addition to any EFL teacher's library, but it is particularly useful for the EFL teacher who has a desire to begin incorporating drama into their classes. With this review, I most certainly do not want to damn the book with faint praise. It is a gem of a book, and I suggest that if you are interested in drama you should buy it, use it, and enjoy it.

References

- Barbee, M. (2014). Furthering the case for drama in the second language classroom. *Polyglossia*, 26, 13-26.
- Maley, A., & Duff, A. (2005). *Drama techniques in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Recently Received

Steve Fukuda

<pub-review@jalt-publications.org>



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

Recently Received Online

An up-to-date index of books available for review can be found at: <<http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/recently-received>>

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

Books for Students (reviewed in TLT)

Contact: Steve Fukuda <pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

! *Catch the World: International Culture Magazine (2nd edition)* — Various authors. Tokyo: Macmillan Language House, 2014. [4-level reading skills course with articles contributed by journalists from around the world incl. teacher's manual, audio CD w/ script].

* *Collins Academic Skills Series* — Various authors. London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2013. [6 courses titled: writing, group work, presenting, research, numbers, and lectures on academic skills for students who are preparing to study, or are studying, at an English-speaking institution].

Compass Reading Series — Various Authors. Seoul: Compass Publishing, 2014. [6-level reading course for young learners incl. workbook, audio CD, downloadable supplementary material, and free vocabulary practice application].

Conversation Master — Smiley, J., & Catanzariti, J. Nagoya, Japan: Perceptia Press, 2014. [12-unit speaking course based on developing conversation and discussion skills].

! *Face to Face: To Better Understand Japanese and American Culture* — Someya, M., Ferrasci, F., & Murray, P. Tokyo: Sanshusha, 2014. [14-unit course based on cross-cultural understanding incl. teacher's manual w/ passage translations, final exams, and audio CD].

* *Four Corners* — Richards, J. C., & Bohlke, D. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. [4-level integrated skills course w/ online workbook, Classware, self-study CD incl. class DVD, teacher's edition w/ assessment and audio CD and teacher resource worksheets].

Inside Writing: The Academic Word List in Context — Various authors. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014. [5-level academic writing course teaching vocabulary from the Academic Word List incl. digital resources and interactive e-book].

* *Jetstream* — Revell, J., Tomalin, M., Harmer, J., & Maris, A. Crawley, UK: Helbling Languages. [6-level integrated skills

course incl. workbook w/ audio CD, teacher's guide and access to e-zone resources].

* *Partners in the Classroom: Collaborative English Language Teaching and Learning Projects* — Brown, C. J., & Brown, E. M. Akita, Japan: Akita International University Press, 2014. [Step-by-step guide to introducing more student-centered learning and project-based learning into the classroom based on 7 levels of practice incl. lesson plans].

* *Read to Write (second edition)* — Moore, D., & Barker, D. Nagoya, Japan: BTB Press, 2014. [Writing course using readings to train students to pick up chunks and make new sentences incl. English Writing Manual explaining basics and mechanics of layout].

! *Student Teacher: Introductory English for Education Majors* — Williams, S., & Morooka, V. Tokyo: Nan'un-do, 2014. [12-unit course focused on communication needs of education majors using educational themes and issues incl. audio CD].

Unlock — Ostrowska, S., O'Neill, R., Westbrook, C., Sowton, C., White, N. M., Dimond-Bayir, S., & Lansford, L. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014. [4-level academic English course with Discovery Education™ based on critical thinking, Cambridge English Corpus, and English Vocabulary profile incl. teacher's edition, online workbook, and Cambridge LMS access].

Books for Teachers (reviewed in JALT Journal)

Contact: Greg Rouault <jj-reviews@jalt-publications.org>

* *Researching Intertextual Reading* — Bax, S. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2013.

Second Language Acquisition and Task-Based Language Teaching — Long, M. Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2015.

Contemporary Task-based Language Teaching in Asia — Thomas, M., & Reinders, H. (Eds.). London: Bloomsbury, 2015.

[RESOURCES] OUTSIDE THE BOX



Adam Lebowitz

"Outside the Box" is a column that not only challenges the community to address a problem, but proposes a creative solution without concerns of being unrealistic. The focus is on originality and creativity, not rigor. More information on submissions can be found online, or contact the editor.

Email: <outside-the-box@jalt-publications.org> Web: <<http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/outside-the-box>>

JALT → NALT

Even if you prefer not to read the domestically-produced American newspaper known as the *Japan Times*, it is impossible to ignore the current Cultural Restoration. Statements about the ineluctability of culture are a central part of the revised Basic Education Law passed during the first Abe cabinet in 2006 (Lebowitz & McNeill, 2007). The main problem here is culture is not a legally defined entity. Therefore, its inclusion in a policy

document is problematic: without an established interpretation, it simply becomes the whim of authority.

This is not to say culture is a bad thing. The problem is when culture becomes a tool of national intent it becomes susceptible to the ideology of fundamentalism. And just to be clear, Cultural Restoration is not unique to this society. In fact, we can see it throughout the region. I will not speculate on the reasons why, but the heady '90's talk of "borderless society" and "multiculturalism" seems in the distant past.

On the other hand, now higher education here has also discovered “Japanese Culture”, and it is leading to new opportunities for L2 teaching. These are mainly found in courses for international students. These kinds of courses can be extremely enjoyable, especially for those of us who have advanced degrees in “Asian Studies.” As the numbers of international students increase so should the demand for these courses.

One potential positive outcome of the Restoration is that an artificial construct may finally be put down: Japan. Words are definitive, and if culture is ineluctable, so should be the right to self-definition. Since the orthographic Latinization is coherent, there is no reason why this country should

not be referred to as “Nihon” in English discourse, especially among “foreigners” spending significant time here (Joke: “My first six months here were spent in Japan.” 「ジャパン半年 日本にて」). Everyone has the right to interpret their own experiences. The first step is recognizing the environment. Then, contributions to the cultural milieu become all the more possible.

Reference

Lebowitz, A., & McNeill, D. (2007). Hammering down the educational nail: Abe revises the Fundamental Law of Education. *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*. <http://japanfocus.org/-Adam-Lebowitz/2468/article.html>

[RESOURCES] TLT WIRED



Edo Forsythe

In this column, we explore the issue of teachers and technology—not just as it relates to CALL solutions, but also to Internet, software, and hardware concerns that all teachers face. We invite readers to submit articles on their areas of interest. Please contact the editor before submitting.

Email: <tlt-wired@jalt-publications.org> Web: <<http://jalt-publications.org/ltt/departments/ltt-wired>>

Editor’s note: As we look toward summer vacation, many of us will be considering how we might improve our lessons by integrating technology, but many of our colleagues may be reluctant to take the leap. Here’s an article by an ALT in my local area who discovered a hidden treasure at her school and shared the wealth with her fellow teachers. I hope her experience gives you ideas for broadening the use of technology in your own institutes. Prepare now to keep your classes Wired after the summer sun turns to fall foliage!

Helping Reluctant Teachers and Administrations Integrate Technology into Lessons

Tori Sharpe

Assistant Language Teacher, Hirosaki Minami High School

<tatatatori@gmail.com>

As an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT), it is often difficult to convince the lead teachers to adapt and use new methods and techniques for teaching, especially if it involves a new

piece of technology that they may be unfamiliar with. While blackboards and printed handouts can indeed help teachers achieve clear instruction, sometimes these are not enough for the technologically advanced students who often fill our classrooms. Many schools around Japan are investing in mobile devices such as iPads and other technology, but seldom is there a plan in place to employ them in the classroom. This article describes the process that one ALT in northern Japan used to take advantage of the set of iPad Minis which were provided to her school by the Aomori Prefecture and Hirosaki city Boards of Education, and to get her fellow Japanese teachers to begin using them in their lessons.

Finding Resources and Getting Started

First, we teachers must discover what our schools have to offer in the way of available technology. As assistants, sometimes we are not told what resources are available for us to use with our students. Once you know what is available, you can begin planning to integrate those tools into your lessons. It sounds simple enough, but often ALTs or new teachers at schools forget to look for chances to think critically about whether there is a better way to approach any given lesson using more modern methods.

Once you know what resources are available, decide how to get the other faculty members on

board with your ideas. This year, I discovered that my school had over 40 iPad Minis for use in the classroom. I also discovered that most teachers in the school were unaware that these iPads existed and were available for use. Once I found out about the iPad Minis, I couldn't wait to use them in the classroom. I knew however, that convincing my fellow teachers to use the new tech was going to be a challenge. In the end, I was able to get them to try using the new technology tools, and we had a successful demonstration teaching lesson using the iPad Minis. This lesson sparked a desire in many other teachers at the school to use this versatile resource in their own lessons.

Steps to Win the Faculty Over

Convincing teachers to try a new piece of tech in the classroom is no easy task. It takes careful planning and patience to show non-tech savvy teachers how useful something can be in their own classroom. The truth is that many teachers have difficulty visualizing technology-enabled lessons because they have little to no experience with the technology being introduced. Here are some of the steps I took to get teachers at my school to use the iPad Minis:

1. Introduce the idea. A few months before you plan to use the tech in the classroom, let the teacher with whom you'll be working know about the technology that you would like to use. It does not need to be an in-depth explanation, just a summary of your thoughts and an overview of your intentions.

2. Show them the technology and how it works in simple terms. Once the teachers have warmed to the idea of using the new tech in the classroom, and any fear the teachers may have had has dulled, show them the actual tool you'd like to use and how it works. In my case, I brought an iPad Mini to their desk and played around with it with them—showing them that it was not as scary as it seemed. I encouraged them to get one of the iPads from the box and play around with it. I also assured them that I knew how to use the iPad and have seen how it can be beneficial in the classroom.

3. Ask them questions and reassure them. A few days later I asked the teachers if they had any questions about the iPads. Of course, they did, and they immediately wanted to know the exact application I wanted to use. Since I hadn't decided 100% on the application I wanted to use, we discussed the many uses of the iPad Mini and how it would work as a tool in a variety of ways. I reassured them that the first lesson would require very little knowledge of the iPad Mini on their part, so they wouldn't need to worry.

4. Plan an entire lesson using the new piece of technology. Next, I planned an entire lesson using the iPad Mini, knowing that I might not be granted permission by the lead teacher to use it in the classroom. I planned the lesson to be adapted for use as a whole class discussion, group work, as well as pair work. In this way, I would be ready for any questions regarding the lesson, and I'd be able to properly show the flexibility of the lesson plan and how easily it can be adapted. In my case, I did a lesson on a very specific cultural piece, so the lesson itself was full of pictures, videos, and key words students would need to know. I also printed out a mock handout that students would use while following the iPad lesson.

5. Get the teachers excited and reassure them again. After we looked at the lesson together, the teachers were impressed at the amount of knowledge and visuals a student could learn with the use of the iPad Mini compared to a non-technology-integrated lesson. I could sense their curiosity and slight excitement at the thought of doing this lesson in their own classroom. At this point, I seized the opportunity to reassure them yet again that the iPad Mini is not as difficult to learn to use as it might seem, and that it was worth trying. I also pointed out that our discussion of the iPad Mini had given them hands-on experience of its use in the classroom.

6. Give your lesson and invite other teachers to observe it. Once given permission, carry out your lesson and invite teachers from other subject areas to observe. Later, have a discussion with those teachers about their ideas on the pros and cons of using iPads in the classroom. This allows for proper feedback from all parties, and allows us to improve the lesson together.

Conclusion

If you are considering using a new piece of technology in the classroom that other teachers are unfamiliar with or seem opposed to, don't let that stop you from trying. What originally was a source of fear and discomfort for many of my fellow teachers, is now a welcomed and well-used tool. The important thing is to take it slowly and demonstrate to other teachers how it will benefit the students, improve their instruction, and make the lessons more engaging. Once teachers see the benefits, they may become more willing and eager to be led into the wonderful world of blended instruction.

Editor's Note: For more information on using iPads in the language classroom, check out the free iBook download entitled *Teaching Language Classes using iBooks Author and the iPad*, available in the iBook store.



Malcolm Swanson

This column serves to provide our membership with important information and notices regarding the organization. It also offers our national directors a means to communicate with all JALT members. Contributors are requested to submit notices and announcements for JALT Notices by the 15th of the month, one and a half months prior to publication.

Email: <jalt-focus@jalt-publications.org> Web: <<http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/jalt-focus>>

Position Available

TLT Associate Editor

The Language Teacher is seeking a qualified candidate for the position of **Associate Editor**, with future advancement to the position of Coeditor. Applicants must be JALT members and must have the knowledge, skills, and leadership qualities to oversee the production of a regularly published academic publication. Previous experience in publications, especially at an editorial level, is an asset. Knowledge of JALT publications is desirable. Applicants must also have regular access to a computer with email and word processing capabilities.

This post requires several hours of concentrated work every week editing articles, scheduling and overseeing production, and liaising with the Publications Board. Applicants should be prepared to make a minimum three-year commitment with an extension possible. The assumption of duties is tentatively scheduled for early Autumn 2015. Applicants should submit a curriculum vitae (including details of publication background and published works), a cover letter, and a statement of purpose indicating why they would like to become Associate Editor (and later advance to Coeditor) of *The Language Teacher*, to: Jerry Talandis Jr., JALT Publications Board Chair <pub-chair@jalt-publications.org> by August 1st, 2015. This position will remain open until filled.

New JALT Associate Member

Cornelsen

When Franz Cornelsen founded his publishing house in 1946, his vision was to teach foreign languages in order to foster relations and improve mutual understanding between European countries. His first English textbook was a huge success, and made Cornelsen the market leader in EFL in Germany, a position the company still holds today.



Learners in 20 countries are already using our EFL materials. Now we are bringing our concepts to the world market, where we reached an excellent position with our German courses already. Our author teams are a combination of native English speakers with many years of practical experience, and non-natives who are experts in teaching EFL.

In the global economy, Germany stands for quality and reliability, aspects which also characterize our coursebooks: clear concepts, well-structured, and an easy-to-teach approach, combined with a focus on job-related contents and pragmatic language use. The CEFR, which is increasingly recognized in countries outside Europe, is our guideline to produce coursebooks.

Cornelsen is committed to working with local distributors and building long-lasting relationships with regional partners in markets around the world. Only Cornelsen have the expert regional knowledge which will ensure the best possible fit between coursebooks and learners.

[JALT FOCUS] SHOWCASE



Mitchell Fryer

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

Email: <showcase@jalt-publications.org> Web: <<http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/showcase-members-profile>>

In this issue, Brent Simmonds will showcase the JALT Environmental Committee and the work that they have been doing to reduce JALT's impact on the environment.

JALT's Environmental Committee

Since the early 1980s we have become increasingly aware how climate change caused by increasing greenhouse gas levels will affect our lives. Asian countries and the Pacific islands have recently experienced extremely strong typhoons and cyclones. The Philippines in 2014 and Vanuatu earlier this year have suffered badly. Japan, where the summers are getting hotter and the weather is becoming more unpredictable, is not immune to the impact of climate change.

There is a general consensus that it is primarily government action that is needed to reduce greenhouse gas levels but every one of us has a part to play. *“Our generation has inherited an incredibly beautiful world from our parents and they from their parents. It is in our hands whether our children and their children inherit the same world”* (Branson, as cited in Malone, 2012, p. 11). We as educators are no exception, as it is us who guide and teach the next generation, contributing to hopefully making the world a better place. Environmental concern led a group of JALT members to come together to form the Environmental Committee in 2013 to investigate ways in which JALT can reduce its carbon footprint.

Our initial success was to lobby for *The Language Teacher* (TLT) to be printed on recycled paper, but we soon realized that we needed to take the next important step and create clear tangible goals. We consulted several leading environmental organizations, including Friends of the Earth Japan, WWF, and Myclimate, Japan, as well as TESOL International and similar educational bodies. We concluded that we should focus on two areas; creating sustainable conferences and raising awareness of environmental issues in the classroom, always remembering the three Rs, reduce, recycle, and reuse.

Education conferences can have a huge impact on the environment, both directly and indirectly, some of which are beyond our direct control, such as transport and hotels. There is scope, however, for implementing and managing change. Conference plenary speakers are often flown in, which increases the carbon footprint created by the conference. For example, the carbon footprint of a return flight to Rome would be 3.73 tonnes of CO₂. The JALT2013 and JALT2014 International conferences provided us with opportunities to research various areas of the conferences that we could reduce our environmental impact. From this we were able to submit a set of initiatives to the JALT board in January 2015, some of which were trialed at the recent Pan SIG conference in Kobe.

In February 2015, I was appointed Environment Chair for the 2015 Pan SIG Conference. With the assistance of Catriona Chalmers and the advice received from the GALE and the GILE SIGs, we submitted proposals for change including using sustainable paper, carbon offsetting, badge return stations, and organizing a green bar at the networking party. Firstly, we introduced a voluntary environmental lobby which is working towards offsetting the conference’s carbon footprint. Carbon offsets are projects that have a positive effect on the environment. We have selected certified projects in the Kobe area and are grateful to Myclimate Japan for their advice, and we are in the process of ap-

pointing an independent auditor to oversee future financial transactions. Our initial target is small; to offset the estimated 4 tonnes of CO₂ attributable to air travel related to the conference. Secondly we attempted to run a green or environmentally friendly bar at the networking party. We sourced wine from a company that has invested in several environmental projects. Beer cups were made from sugar cane fibre, whilst some of the soft drinks came in packaging made from Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified material. Using environmentally friendly cups proved to be more expensive than plastic glasses. However, the drinks were reasonably priced. Our final small scale project was organizing badge return points to ensure lanyards (and plastic badge holders) can be used again and name inserts could be recycled. The committee gained a lot of experience through these trial initiatives.

Quality and adaptable educational resources are easily accessible from NGOs such as Plan International, Save the Children, Oxfam, and WaterAid, whilst the United Nations is playing a central role. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) have developed resources in areas linked to climate change such as trafficking, water, and emergencies whilst twenty-five ground-breaking and innovative projects were exhibited at the 2014 Educational for Sustainable Development (ESD) Nagoya conference <<http://unesco.org/new/en/unesco-world-conference-on-esd-2014>>. The conference demonstrated what is possible if people work together to try and create a better world for the next generation and beyond.

Currently the environment committee members are Brent Simmonds, Kip Cates, Mark Brierley, Jennie Roloff-Rothman, and Cameron Smith. We are planning on building on our current goals to develop initiatives at future conferences, ensuring environmentally friendly practices become the norm. In addition, we believe it is in the classroom that we can have the greatest impact; therefore, we will be working to raise awareness of educational resources in future.

Reference

Malone, S. (2012). *Polar City dreaming: How climate change might usher in the age of polar cities*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Sunbury Press.

Brent Simmonds is originally from England and has lived in Japan since 2005. He has an MA in Applied Linguistics (TESOL) from Macquarie University, Australia. He works as a part-time university teacher in Nagoya and is an active member of JALT Gifu. He has held the position of Chair of JALT’s Environmental Committee since 2013.



Joël Laurier & Robert Morel

JALT currently has 26 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) available for members to join. This column publishes an in-depth view of one SIG each issue, providing readers with a more complete picture of the different SIGs within JALT. For information about SIG events, publications, and calls for papers, please visit <<http://jalt.org/main/groups>>.

Email: <sig-focus@jalt-publications.org> Web: <<http://jalt-publications.org/lt/departments/sig-news>>

The July / August 2015 TLT will mark the beginning of SIG Focus. This new column will give a more in-depth view of one SIG each month, providing readers with a more complete picture of the different SIGs within JALT. While the SIG News column will no longer be in the print version of TLT, information about SIG events, publications, and calls for papers will still be available online at <<http://jalt.org>>. We hope you enjoy this new format, as it gives readers a fresh look at the variety of SIGs within JALT.

— Joël Laurier & Robert Morel, coeditors

Welcome to the Brain SIG

<<http://www.neuroelt.org/>>

Neuroscience is changing the world, but not the field of education. The slow pace at which new findings in the brain sciences are impacting our classrooms is a source of concern for some educators. Few graduate programs in ELT give neuroscience its due credit, despite the amazing benefits that neuroscience offers. It is finally unraveling the mysteries of how memory works, the object of our teaching, and how we make meaning of language, the object of our teaching subject.

A group of interested and dedicated educators joined forces to address this gap. We felt that if we waited for neuroscience to percolate through Linguistics and the other academic fields at the base of our profession, we would miss rich opportunities to improve our field. We decided to find out as much as we could and teach each other. FAB conferences, organized by Robert Murphy, have been successfully doing that since 2011, but we felt it was time to bring neuroscience and psychology to JALT as well. So, about a year ago, we formed the Mind, Brain, and Education SIG, a name borrowed from a Harvard Master's program.

In many ways, the Mind, Brain, and Education SIG is different from other SIGS. First of all, we do not see the primary purpose of our SIG, albeit an



important one, to provide a way for people with similar training or interests to interact. Instead, we see ourselves as teachers from every background imaginable, looking for relevant discoveries in neuroscience and psychology that can make others and ourselves better teachers. We see our primary mission as informing ourselves and others about neuroscience. We would like to get a wider range of knowledge of neuroscientific findings, rather than get very deep into the field.

Our forums gather many people giving brief talks on a variety of important concepts or research in neuroscience. We feel it benefits us all to learn more about how long-term memory is made through sleep, how stress or pleasure shape learning, and how our brains use embodied simulation to make meaning. This also explains why we retain more from stories than vocabulary lists.

Our journal, the *MindBrainEd* Bulletin is not a platform for our members to publish research. Instead, we direct our members to fascinating research online, and discuss the ramifications for our field. We do not limit ourselves to journal articles. Each issue looks at: 1) a research paper which is discussed by our SIG Think Tank; 2) an informative *paperless* posting, such as a video or podcast; and 3) something out of the box and hopefully startling. One example is how certain parasites that change the amygdala

might explain why some people are so obsessed with cats, like the Houston twins. Houston Police found these 60-year-old sisters had over a hundred emaciated cats in their house with deep piles of feces all over the floor. Indeed, out of the box.

So join us. By that, I don't necessarily mean you should join us as a member, but come to our forums at the Pan-SIG and JALT National conferences and learn about the interesting things being discovered. Let's see how neuroscience can change our world, one classroom at a time!

Curtis Kelly,
Mind, Brain, and Education SIG

[JALT FOCUS] CHAPTER REPORTS



Tom Mahler

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 on our website.

Email: <chap-reports@jalt-publications.org> Web: <<http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/chapter-reports>>

AKITA: March — *Running a 4-skills extensive reading class* by Ben Shearon, Tohoku University. The purpose of this presentation/workshop was to illustrate an effective method for helping students to both increase their motivation and to focus their English ability. In addition, they learned how to develop lifelong skills by using ER. The workshop started with the question, “What is ER?” Since most participants had never used ER in their teaching, they were eager to learn how ER is applied in the classroom at Tohoku University. The presenter provided an overview of a 4-skills extensive reading class he spent six years developing at his university, and he accomplished this by demonstrating the step-by-step method he used to connect ER to his classroom curriculum. The workshop participants thus were able to learn authentic ER activities that could be applied to their own classes, and the session concluded with a lively question and answer session.

Reported by Mamoru “Bobby” Takahashi

AKITA: April — *Activating extensive reading* by Thomas Bieri, Nanzan University. Extensive reading has recently become a well-known technique for language study and many programs and individual instructors have been incorporating it into their language teaching practice. However, many educators may not have confidence that they fully understand what ER is or how they can take advantage of the benefits. The presentation began with a definition of ER and a general introduction to the principles of extensive reading, particularly as defined by Day and Bamford (1998, 2002). The presenter then demonstrated several classroom activities related to extensive reading and discussed several ways of managing and tracking student reading, most notably the MReader website run by Dr. Thomas Robb.

Reported by Stephen Shucart

GIFU: February — *Characteristics and uses of teacher personal narratives (TPN) in the language classroom* by Suzanne Bonn, PhD Candidate, Aston University. Bonn’s presentation on classroom TPNs via PowerPoint and interactive activities provided a glimpse into the process, methods and difficulties of mixed methods research. JALT members were asked to hypothesize on the whens, hows and whys of TPN use, drawing on their own teaching practices. Bonn warmed up the audience with the same questions her four case study participants (two males, two females, one each NNS- and NS-speaker teachers, respectively, various ages) were asked. For example, concerning narrative audience, teachers were asked where they thought TPNs were used in a lesson, “with whole class, intro, during an activity, upon completion, or end of class.” A lively discussion on the ideal position for TPNs ensued. Then, JALT members were given a chance to analyze and consider databases of results, such as why most of her participants told TPNs mostly to the whole class, whereas an older NNS-speaker, male, used more structural elements of narrative bits with smaller groups. Fascinating stuff! Teachers got hands-on practice with a Conversation Analysis worksheet. At the end, a few teachers asked Bonn about PhD programs.

Reported by Leah Ann Sullivan

GIFU: March — *Teaching the question of culture* by Brett Hack, Aichi Prefectural University. It has often been observed that language is inseparable from culture. So, like it or not, all language teachers are engaged to some extent with teaching culture. As Hack pointed out, the question is not if you teach culture, but how you teach culture. However, very often people approach the teaching of culture by only addressing the tip of the iceberg (i.e. focusing on food, music, fashion, etc.) instead of the deeper values and worldviews that lie at the heart of cultures. Hack presented his strategy for teaching culture, which broadly consists of three stages. Firstly, focus on meaning; secondly, show the production of culture; and thirdly, highlight change or friction. Hack also explained the difference between a typological and a generative point of view of culture —arguing that we should really be teaching from a generative view, which conceptualizes culture as being made by people, rather than people being made by culture. Participants in the workshop deconstructed the hidden meanings in the Marlboro Man, compared a video of Swan Lake with Lady Gaga, and discussed how to teach elements of Japanese culture such as inemuri and the Yasukuni shrine.

Reported by Paul Wicking

GIFU: April — *Re-writing classic foreign literature as graded readers* by Alastair Lamond, englishbooks.jp. The overwhelming majority of graded readers for English language learners are either original stories or retellings of English-language classic literature. Lamond made the case for more stories from non-Western classic literature, and spoke about the decisions that have to be made in the process of creating a graded reader, using his retelling of Natsume Soseki’s *Botchan* as an example. He introduced several tools for managing vocabulary and maintaining ease-of-reading for the targeted level. Also, he revealed several of the issues that came up during the writing and editing process such as supplying appropriate and helpful illustrations, creating additional material to increase accessibility for the English language learner, and overall, ensuring faithfulness to the original and historical accuracy. The presentation was followed by a discussion of the feasibility of putting other non-Western works in graded reader form. In sum, it was an interesting peek at issues involved in ELT materials production and publishing, with lots of practical tips for anyone contemplating writing a graded reader.

Reported by Alan Thompson

GUNMA / SAITAMA: March — *My Share collaboration: Starting the year off right*. Saitama Chapter welcomed four presenters from Gunma in this first-half of the Saitama-Gunma Dual My Share. Kayvon Havaei-Ahary, Taylor Mignon, Barry Keith, and Raymond Hoogenboom all gave 20-minute presentations on the topic “Starting the Year Off Right.” Havaei-Ahary feels that in order to develop both English and thinking skills, Japanese English students should be tasked with asking questions, rather than just answering them. To that end, he presented attendees with three aware-

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ness-raising activities and nine task-based activities where question-making plays a major role. Mignon shared a bit of the surreal. He led attendees through two surrealist writing activities adapted from *A Book of Surrealist Games*. His activities produced uniquely humorous and thought-provoking conversation starters that are certain to inspire motivation and interest in students. Keith showed the success he has had using student profile sheets. Many small adaptations to this common tool have helped Keith overcome the problems of knowing and identifying with students. Hoogenboom gave attendees ideas on how to start student listening audio journals. His students use IC recorders or cell phones to record English summaries of radio shows they listen to each week. The wide variety of radio shows available for free on the internet gives students an ample supply of materials to choose from.

Reported by John Larson

GUNMA / SAITAMA: April — *Gunma / Saitama My Share collaboration: Having a successful year*. Gunma attendees enjoyed four presentations during the second-half of the Gunma-Saitama dual my share. Tyson Rode, Matt Shannon, and Florence Ito made the long trip from Saitama to join Gunma speakers Sylvain Bergeron, Renée Sawazaki, and John Larson. All speakers presented under the shared topic: *Having a Successful Year*. Rode started things off with an interactive lecture on L2 reading and literacy. If students can read, they can learn anything about everything and everything about anything. Among the helpful hints Rode shared was a long list of web-based reading resources such as starfall.com, raz-kids.com, ESLgamesplus.com, and readtheory.org. Gunma Chapter members Bergeron and Sawazaki followed with some practical EFL applications for peace and ethics education. According to UNESCO, time and money spent on ethical education is far outweighed by that used for numeracy and literacy training, despite being essential for developing healthy relationships both at home and cross-culturally. The free, online manual full of lesson plans and ideas can be found at ethicseducationforchildren.org. After a break, Shannon and Ito — long-time team-teaching partners — taught a demonstration class that highlighted active listening. Use of phrases such as “You said...” and “Tell me more...” allows students to make rebuttals, extensions, and more complex discussions. Some lucky participants also received magic staplers. Larson wrapped things up with a brief demonstration of his Recycled News activity and how he has polished and enriched it over 10 years of kaizen. After the meeting, attendees and presenters broke nan together at a local curry restaurant.

Reported by John Larson

IBARAKI: February — *Listening and pronunciation: Keep an eye on the mother tongue* by Maria Gabriela Schmidt, University of Tsukuba; 100 similarities between English and Japanese: How to make the best use by Takashi Shimaoka, University of Tsukuba. The main theme of the All-day Meeting was Pronunciation, with a sub-theme of making effective use of students’ first language, in this case Japanese. Explaining how our comprehensive linguistic cognitive mind is set by the sounds which we hear, even before we can speak, Schmidt emphasized the importance of listening comprehension in second language acquisition. Many interesting ways of using the knowledge of one’s native Japanese were presented to aid students in getting a handle on the intricacies of English pronunciation by Shimaoka. He also introduced his own Shimaoka Kana Transcription (SKT) method as an aid in this challenge.

Reported by Martin Pauly

KITAKYUSHU: March — *Assessment for learning: Dynamic assessment* by Joseph John Simpson. Simpson discussed different models of assessment in the language classroom, comparing the traditional a priori assessment models that measure student performance in an isolated and decontextualized manner to an interactive model that allows the teacher to scaffold the student during the assessment session to grasp the upper limits of student capability. Simpson began by covering the different theoretical underpinnings for dynamic assessment and followed by presenting two actual assessment sessions, one traditional and the other dynamic in order to highlight the difference in student performance.

Reported by Zack Robertson

KITAKYUSHU: April — *Gender differences and literacy* by Michael Berg. Berg began his discussion by reviewing several ways men and women have been suggested to differ physically, psychologically, and cognitively in addition to touching on the extent to which these differences are a result of biological hardwiring, social programming, or a combination of these two factors. He then turned discussion to the various gender issues that can arise in modern day language classrooms and how teachers may better adapt their pedagogical practices to meet the various strengths and weaknesses of both sexes.

Reported by Zack Robertson

KITAKYUSHU: May — *Card games and vocabulary building* by Adam Stone. Stone introduced a card game that can be used to both introduce new vocabulary and strengthen the lexical recognition of already learned vocabulary. For the first part of the presentation, the audience was taught the rules of the game and were allowed to play the game using made-up words. Adam then introduced a simple computer program he has developed that can be used to quickly generate game cards from any set of L1/L2 vocabulary pairs. For the final part of the presentation, the audience tested themselves on their acquisition of the target vocabulary and added input regarding the deployment of the game and its practical uses in the language classroom.

Reported by Zack Robertson

KYOTO: March — *Basic applied statistics for language education research* by Dr. Matthew Apple, Ritsumeikan University. This workshop, oriented towards near-beginners, introduced a number of basic concepts in statistics and outlined a number of applications teachers can use in their classes and research. Apple first went over common terms in statistics, like standard deviation, t-scores, z-scores, and error, explaining how they are relevant to understanding common tests, like TOEIC, and some of the problems in their application. He then explored different concepts of reliability and validity, and explained some of the problems we in language teaching face in applying them to both our classes and our research. The workshop then talked about two common types of statistical analysis used in language teaching research, t-tests and correlation studies, and described the reasons and problems in using each. Following these discussions, Apple then used a file of ersatz student TOEIC test score data to walk the participants through some of the concepts presented earlier. He showed how to calculate basic statistical figures like mean, standard deviation, skew, kurtosis, t-test results, and p-values in Excel. He emphasized that TOEIC and TOEFL ITP are not accepted by many top-level journals since they do not report raw scores and have high error margins, though calculating statistics with data from these tests may be useful for analyzing trends within classes.

He also provided principles for excluding outlying data, and suggestions for using any data or students excluded for other quantitative and qualitative investigation.

Reported by Thomas Amundrud

NAGOYA: March — *Teaching the question of culture* by Brett Hack, Aichi Prefectural University. Language education at Japanese universities shifted towards cultivating a global mindset. The presentation focused on culture: 1) Culture is a central aspect of language teaching; 2) Integrating the study of culture is beneficial for language learners. These are very controversial principles for language teachers. A target culture is just a tip of the iceberg, the view of tourists. Set images of it may carry the risk of reinforcing stereotypes. Culture is always in the background and the story people tell, of course, is changing. Hack's strategy has 3 steps to discuss: a) focus of meaning and do critical analysis, b) show the examples of culture, and c) highlight changing traditions and multiculturalism. Through the demonstrations for beginners and advanced courses, we learned what we can do for our classes to promote a better understanding global culture. The presentation will help us to solve the question of culture.

Reported by Sumiko Shiraishi

NAGOYA: April — *Re-writing classic foreign literature as graded readers* by Alastair Lamond. To promote the enjoyment of reading non-Western classic literature for English learners, publishers re-write them for some levels of learners based on CEFR levels. According to Lamond, the 600-word-level is significant for all students. Some topics are not traditionally welcomed in foreign language textbooks, known as PARSNIP (Pork, Alcohol, Religion, Sex, Narcotics, Isms, and Politics). Five factors are considered when creating graded readers: 1) strong concept, 2) high stakes 3) great characters and settings, 4) real conflict, and 5) a satisfying believable payoff. Placing illustrations in the books is also very effective to ensure comprehension. Lamond picked Botchan by Soseki Natsume to explain the planning process of re-writing. He visited Dogo-onsen, a famous spa in Matsuyama and sat on a tatami mat to read the story as Soseki did. He could imagine the background of the story easily. Practicing that practical way is quite interesting. Thanks to the publishers, graded readers bring about the socio-cultural benefits and ensure a connection with a modern audience.

Reported by Sumiko Shiraishi

NIIGATA: April — *Numbers game: How accreditation, Kakenhi and the "Super Global" program are changing Japan's universities* by Bern Mulvey. It was a beautiful spring day in Niigata, yet indoors a good-sized audience, some people coming all the way from Nagano and Aizu-Wakamatsu, attended Bern's power-packed presentation on the negatives and positives of university accreditation in Japan. Using bilingual PowerPoint slides, Bern began by sharing his own experiences with the accreditation process. After that, he defined accreditation, explained the process in Japan, and highlighted how changing demographics and trends in matriculation rates are related to it. Bern gave a thorough, fair, and balanced assessment of measurement issues, issues of quantity over quality, the FD Monster, the current economic climate in Japan, and concerns about the future, among other topics. While critical about many points, such as a lack of consensus on appropriate learning in faculty evaluation or the need for universities to apply for kakenhi (or else!), Bern reminded us that many of Monkasho's goals are laudable, for example, calling on institutions to do self-examination, set goalposts, and foster

improvements in English education and evaluation. Ending on a positive note, Bern offered many good recommendations to people wanting to get or stay employed at healthy institutions, such as upgrading qualifications, publishing, and improving their Japanese language skills.

Reported by Melodie Cook

SAITAMA: See Gunma posting, March.

SAITAMA: See Gunma posting, April.

SENDAI: March — *Exploring the creation of teaching materials* by Greg Goodmacher, Sponsored by JALT Materials Writers SIG. The presentation abstract began, "Mass-produced textbooks usually do not match the specific needs of our classes and students. Too often, though, textbooks seem to control the lessons and academic content of our schools. The presenter believes that teachers, not textbooks, should lead classes...." With an opening like this, most every language educator's attention would surely be drawn. And right in the middle of the yearly break, when many of us were busy attending to our personal lives, seventeen dedicated teachers came out on a beautiful Sunday afternoon for this highly informative, relevant, and timely presentation specifically focused on the adaptation of existing teaching materials to better meet the needs of our learners and our teaching objectives. For a full three hours, the presenter had us engaged and actively participating in a variety of activities and exercises that allowed us to explore and experience the expansion, improvement, and evolution of teaching materials. Goodmacher's casual presentation style and obvious familiarity with the topic made this event a great experience for all. The event was highly worthwhile, and it was evident that Goodmacher had still more to share, so we look forward to the opportunity to participate in a sequel to this event sometime soon. JALT Sendai would like to extend a special thanks to the JALT Material Writers SIG for sponsoring this event. This was a highly successful example of chapter and SIG collaboration that greatly benefitted JALT members, and served to strengthen our organization as a whole.

Reported by Cory J. Koby

SHINSHU — *April: Can-do statements & assessment in a Japanese context* by Morten Hunke and Yumiko Miyamoto. In our first session, Hunke discussed the implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and Can-Do descriptors at universities, providing three case studies. Feeling a need for more evaluation of approaches, he introduced various means of support for educators who are using CEFR, including JALT's Framework & Language Portfolio Special Interest Group (FLP SIG), JACET's Japan Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (JPOSTL), JACT-FL, as well as some CEFR-informed English and Japanese textbooks including Connections to Thinking in English. Hunke stressed that implementing the CEFR requires strong commitment and collaboration by all stake holders involved. Miyamoto followed with a discussion of Can-Do statements and assessment in a high school context. After providing an overview of the CEFR, Miyamoto explained how a Can-Do list was implemented at a high school in Nagano, where the more EFL context in Japan (as opposed to the more ESL context in the EU) had to be considered. She then reported the findings of research conducted there and discussed how a proficiency test for reading, listening, and writing, as well as student self-assessment questionnaires were used to validate the school-based Can-Do list.

Reported by Mary Aruga

TOTTORI: April — *Workshop on extensive reading* by Dr. Rob Waring. Waring provided insight into the over-representation of intensive reading as a method of learning in Japanese schools, highlighting tendencies in Asian education systems of focusing more on knowledge than use of language, with little assumption that material covered will be recycled in later lessons. Waring also called attention to the inherent risks of an exaggerated sense of student failure in the teaching causes learning paradigm. Participant discus-

sion brought attention to the necessity of repeated exposure to chunks of language in order to make use of active vocabulary. Also explored were the benefits of extensive reading on fluency as well as improvements in vocabulary as measured on standardized tests. Waring presented a plethora of resources for incorporating extensive reading into a variety of teaching systems.

Reported by Tremain Xenos

[JALT PRACTICE] THE WRITERS' WORKSHOP

Making a Working Outline: The Basic Organization of a Paper

David Ockert

Toyo University

TLT Editor's note: This paper has been laid out according to *TLT's* style guide, with the exception of the numbering of headers (which JALT Publications do not use). Before submitting a paper to any journal, writers need to check the style guide for that journal and follow the guidelines accordingly.

Welcome to the second column of *The Writers' Workshop*. For this issue, we will be introducing the format for an academic paper as it would be written and submitted for review. Therefore, this column will be written in the format of an academic journal paper. The first thing to do is create the basic outline used for reporting research in academic journals. The format for many journals is the same. Differences between journals are usually limited to the font size, capitalization of headings, and in reporting references in the Reference section. Also, the balance, or word count in the sections is very important. A paper with six pages of literature review and a single page of discussion and/or conclusions would likely be rejected.

Author (your name)

Affiliation (Where do you work? Usually in italics)

Mailing address (Your mailing address, usually for the corresponding author if more than one author)

Email:

Tel/fax:

Abstract

The abstract should be a concise summary of 200–250 words, depending on the journal. In the abstract, tell the reader all pertinent information regarding your study. For example, was the study quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods? Was a survey used? Was the study longitudinal in nature and was the survey administered before or after an experiment? What was the number of participants, written as (*N* = ???) in parenthesis with an italicized capital *N*. What were the results and the level of statistical significance, written as ($p < .01$ or $.05$) for most studies, but ($p < .10$) is acceptable for exploratory studies (Cohen, 1992). Many journals recommend not using acronyms in the abstract for clarity. The abstract may be centered and indented on the first page or sent as a separate file. Be sure to read the submissions guidelines carefully before submitting to the journal of your choice.

Keywords: Five or six main words; separate with semicolons; examples; EFL; confidence; anxiety

The title page comes next and the title itself should be limited to 12 words

1. Introduction

In the first section, introduce your study in more detail than the abstract. What led you to decide to conduct your study? What related research led you to this belief? State the 'gap' in the existing literature clearly so that the editor of the journal knows what to expect. The reader will also appreciate the information at the beginning of the paper. Some journals and conference proceedings do not use a header for the introduction. This paper follows the format of an exploratory study of the impact of the use of video on student motives to learn English, their confidence to use English, their anxiety toward English use, and their willingness to communicate (WTC) in English. The sections below follow the exact format as the submitted manuscript.

2. Self-determination theory-based L2 motives

The first main heading: What is the scope of the literature within which you have conducted the

study? The heading is usually, but not always, in bold font.

2.1 The importance of competence, relatedness, and autonomy

Sub-headings come next and should support the main heading with more specific detail. The sub-headings are generally italicized.

Figure 1. The hierarchical structure of SDT-based academic motivation (Vallerand, 1997).

[For my paper I decided that the use of a figure would be appropriate to help the reader understand the concept of SDT better, particularly if the reader may be unfamiliar with the topic. If the figure is copyright material, you can get permission from the journal editor. Authors may or may not retain copyright and the journal editor is the best person to ask if you wish to reproduce a graphic.]

2.2 SDT-based L2 motivation studies

A further sub-heading to outline studies using SDT survey instruments provides background information for the reader. It also shows the 'gap' in the existing literature.

3. WTC, confidence, and anxiety in an L2

A second main heading presenting another portion of the literature.

3.1 Background of L2 WTC

A sub-heading to support the heading above.

Figure 2. The heuristic model of variables influencing WTC (Macintyre et al., 1998, p. 547).

A second figure to show visually the concept of WTC. Again, seek permission before reproducing any graphics.

3.2 L2 studies on WTC

A sub-heading to introduce some specific literature involving L2 WTC research.

3.2.1 EFL studies on WTC

3.2.2 Recent developments in WTC research

MacIntyre (2012) recently described "currents and waves" (p. 12) of L2 WTC. By examining WTC on multiple timescales within the class room, he describes the following four 'waves':

- What will other students think, will they tease me for getting it right or laugh at me for getting

it wrong (a wave of social comparisons)?

- Will I be embarrassed in front of the teacher (a wave of personal pessimism)?
- I think I know the answer to the question; maybe I should try (a wave of self-confidence)?
- Does someone else know the answer to the question (a wave of isolation)? (p. 15)

3.2 Confidence as a precursor to WTC

3.3 Anxiety as a precursor to WTC

4. Using technology to influence student affective variables

4.1 Video self-modeling

4.1.1 JEFL studies on tablet-computer use in the classroom

5. Research on affective variables and CMC

5.1 SDT research studies on Ideal Selves and video game use

5.1.1 Are there parallels between tablet-computer PSR and video game use?

5.2 JEFL studies involving video use and motivation

6. Objectives of the present study

6.1 Research questions:

6.2 Hypothesis:

7. Method

7.1 Participants

7.2 Materials

7.2.1 The SDT instrument

7.2.2 The WTC instrument

7.3 Procedures

7.4 Project outline

Table 1. The research project schedule

[In this paper, a table was included to show dates of when the surveys were completed, the dates of the video recordings, and the classes which participated. As a general rule, a table should be used to show numerical data.]

8. Results and discussion

8.1 Changes on the SDT scales

Table 2. Changes on the SDT scales before and after the iPad intervention

8.1.1 Changes on the WTC scales

Table 3. Changes on the confidence, anxiety, and WTC scales before and after the iPad intervention

8.1.2 The SDT and WTC instrument scale correlations

Table 4. The post-intervention correlation matrix for SDT, confidence, anxiety, WTC, and iPad scales for class B

8.2 The results of the SDT integrated regulation items: Ideal L2 selves

8.3 Research questions and answers

8.3.1 Research question one and answer

8.3.2 Research question two and answer

8.4 The hypotheses and answers

8.4.1 Hypothesis one

8.4.2 Hypothesis two

9. Conclusions

Acknowledgments

Author biodata

References

In this section be sure and list every reference for each citation in the body of the paper. Articles or books for more than one author should be listed in the order in which they were published. Many journals require that the author replace their name in order to assure an anonymous review process. Therefore, instead of using your name as both a citation and reference, it may be necessary to simply write AUTHOR and the year of publication for both.

Appendix A

The SDT instrument sub-scale items

This research project used two survey instruments. The self-determination theory instrument was included as an appendix (A) and the willingness-to-communicate scales were included as

appendix B, below. There are a number of things to include as an appendix. For example, since the specific item level descriptive statistics were not included in the Results section, above, they were included in the appendices in addition to the items. The type of information to include as an appendix can be determined by the guidelines for submission.

Appendix B

The WTC instrument scale items

In conclusion, a simple way to start writing your paper would be to put these main section headers down on paper. The literature review should give the background of your understanding of the research on your subject to date, and lead into the 'gap' in the literature that your research question and hypothesis will attempt to fill.

More information about the JALT Writers' Peer Support Group

In continuation to last month's piece chronicling the *JALT Writers' Peer Support Group's* activities over the past 15 years, in this month's issue of *The Writers' Workshop*, Paul Beaufait gives a brief account of the successive PSG coordinators up until the present, and an account of the group's recent and on-going activities, along with an invitation to submit papers or also become a peer reader yourself!

The JALT Writers' Peer Support Group: PSG coordination and peer-readership spanning more than 15 years

Paul A. Beaufait

with Andy Barfield, Wayne Johnson, Torkil Christensen, Wilma Luth, and Loran Edwards

At this juncture, it is a pleasure to recount the names and periods of service for all of the volunteer PSG coordinators to date:

- Andy Barfield (1999 to 2001)
- Wilma Luth (2001 to 2004)
- Torkil Christensen (2004 to 2010)

- Wilma Luth (2010 to 2012)
 - Loran Edwards (2012 to present)
- (W. Luth, personal communication, March 31 to April 2, 2014)

All of those coordinators deserve the greatest possible recognition for their concerted endeavours in bringing the PSG to maturity. Well-deserved thanks also go to founding PSG peer-readers, JALT members, practicing teachers and professional writers themselves, who collaborated with initial writers Goddard (2000) and Luth (2000) to lay the foundations for the PSG of today.

Coordinators and founding members alike have borne witness not only to healthy, organic overlap in roles and responsibilities, but also to the satisfaction that derives from working together and helping other writers.

I remember one person sent us material, and it was quite rough, but we worked with him, and he finally did get published. I felt proud to have facilitated this process I was not with the group for very long, but I do remember we did do some amazing work in assisting people to get published, who, without our support, would probably not have done so. (W. Johnson, personal communication, March 3, 2015)

Current coordinator

The current coordinator, Loran Edwards, became active in JALT soon after arriving in Japan in 2005. With considerable writing center experience, she joined the PSG as a peer-reader “in order to not only assist other writers, but also learn more about academic writing ... and begin to build up ... [her] resumé” (Edwards, 2013).

When her predecessor decided to return to Canada, Loran volunteered her services to act as the next PSG Coordinator. PSG peer-reader membership had dwindled to about four peer-readers, herself included (JALT Publications, 2013, p. i).

Thanks to Loran's recruitment efforts, the number of peer-readers in the PSG has quadrupled over a short period of time. Moreover, the scope of PSG-related activities under her leadership has broadened to include planning and delivering invited presentations at international conferences, as well as reading proposals submitted and arranging writers' workshops for such conferences. In sum, Loran has demonstrated her organizational abilities by taking the PSG to the next level. (P. Beaufait, personal communication, May 13 2014).

Recent and on-going PSG activities

Along with helping writers develop their papers online, PSG members are involved with a variety of other activities. Culminating at present in project work on this new Writers' Workshop column for TLT, current members of the PSG have been involved in a host of writer-support related activities.

These have included introductory presentations both for potential writers or “helpes” (T. Christensen, personal correspondence, 28 February 2015) and for prospective and practicing peer-readers, as well as face-to-face workshops and consultations during expositions at JALT and JALT PanSIG international conferences. Here are some recent examples of events in which the PSG participated:

JALT PanSIG 2013: Nagoya, 18-19 May 2013

- Conference presentations (Edwards, Muller, & Beaufait, 2013a-b), and
- Write-ups (Beaufait, Edwards, & Muller, 2014; and Edwards, Beaufait, & Muller, 2014).

JALT2013: Kobe, 25-28 October 2013

- Conference presentation (Edwards, Beaufait, & Muller, 2013).

JALT PanSIG 2014: Miyazaki, 10-11 May 2014:

- Conference proposal support (Rolloff-Rothman, 2014, p. 42),
- Poster presentation (Beaufait, Edwards, Hutchinson, Lucovich, & Moore, 2014), and
- Writers' workshop (Edwards, Beaufait, Kramer, & Muller, 2014).

JALT2014: Tsukuba, 21-24 November 2014

- PSG writing conferences (<<http://jalt-publications.org/psg>>, 24 February 2015).

JALT PanSIG 2015: Kobe, 16-17 May 2015

- Conference proposal support (A. Stewart, PanSIG 2015 Review Chair, personal communication, 11 February 2015), and
- *TLT* table chats and information displays.

Members of the PSG will be playing similar roles at JALT2015:

- JALT 2015: Shizuoka, 20-23 November 2015:
- Conference presentation (n.d.), and
- *TLT* table chats and information displays.

Loran Edwards, the PSG Coordinator, is planning to attend both the JALT PanSIG and JALT international conferences this year. She is looking forward to meeting aspiring and experienced writers who

are interested in collaboration with the PSG as writers, peer-readers, or perhaps even both.

Loran and other members of the PSG will present again at JALT 2015 on academic writing for professional development in conjunction with the PSG. They all will be looking forward to a large turnout in Shizuoka.

Contact information

To find out more about the PSG and what it does, and learn how to become a peer-reader or how to submit a paper for feedback, please visit the JALT Publications PSG webpage:

<http://jalt-publications.org/psg>

Feel free to choose "Peer Support Group" as the addressee in the contact form accessible from the top bar on any JALT Publications page to volunteer as a peer-reader or to send inquiries about writing projects to the PSG Coordinator.

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Paul Beaufait is the ICT Coordinator for the PSG. His career in language education spans three decades, and focuses largely on blending language learning opportunities and promoting grassroots language teacher development. He holds a Master's degree in French and a certificate of accomplishment in TESL from the University of Montana, as well as a certificate in technology-based distributed learning from the University of British Columbia. He now lives and teaches in Kumamoto, Japan.

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David McMurray

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

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ARTICLES

RESOURCES

JALT FOCUS

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What Tomorrow's Teachers Are Thinking Now

Our debut issue of *TA: Teaching Assistance* raises insightful questions from a graduate student who is also a teacher at the Department of English at Naruto University of Education. Elizabeth Yoshikawa attended the Master's and Doctoral Research Forum held in conjunction with the TESOL International Convention in Toronto. This popular forum gave graduate students an opportunity to discuss their research and challenge practicing teachers to rethink their roles when instructing students how to cross international borders and build global bridges. Students were able to explain their ideas during poster presentations and give concise lectures where their peers asked them to defend their research results.

Yasuko Kanno, from Temple University, also spoke at this event and enlightened participants with a list of things that she wished someone would have told her about research and publishing when she was a graduate student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. She implored students to write, write, and write.

Similarly, this new column is designed to offer readers an insight on what tomorrow's teachers are thinking now. It serves as a platform from which graduate students and teaching assistants can develop and refine future publication endeavors. By sharing perceptions of what is going on in language classrooms, training teachers can help readers, and themselves, come to grips with how pedagogic theories are acted out in the real world.



March 25, 2015 Master's and Doctoral Research Forum, Toronto

Developing an Understanding of the Role of Learning in Internationalization

Elizabeth Yoshikawa

Naruto University of Education

As a graduate student I am encouraged to consider two questions: What is my contribution to knowledge? How is it original? This sounds simple. I need to state my claim to knowledge and outline how I make that claim. However, as an instructor I also have to wonder how my claims contribute to my students' development; specifically to their development as learners of English.

I often struggle with how the research I am doing now equates to the broader scheme, particularly in the many guises of internationalization. When I look at how my own graduate studies and how the university where I teach broach the ideals of internationalization, I find that internationalization can only be equated with students' experiences of others. This is typically through the development of programs, and more specifically through the development of student exchange programs. For the few students who do have the opportunity to study abroad for a short period of time, they may evolve and deepen their understanding of other cultures and their own. These experiences are, however, limited to a select few. Internationalization, Yamagami and Tollefson (2011) state, is just as much about citizenship as it is about economics. Meaning that the economic benefits of program development, especially through inter-university exchange programs should not be the only way to internationalize our education system. We must also consider how we are developing our students' worldview as to what it means to be a part of the global community. My struggle lies within the system. I wonder how are

we adapting our learning and teaching skills so as to include our localized actions within the broader, global scheme of things?

What Do our Students Consider to be International?

There is the argument that when we discuss internationalization within higher education, we do so within the framework of economic globalization (Svensson & Wihlborg, 2010). This is equated with education increasingly being viewed as a service industry. Furthermore this framework addresses the organizational, political, and economic issues related to higher education, but not the pedagogical structure for the internationalization of higher education with regards to learning and teaching. This leads to a situation where there may not be a framework where institutional curriculum development is used to develop an internationalization ideology, regarding the content and learning outcomes of a program or course of study. These are only expressed in idealized or general terms.

Thus, while the learning goals of a program of study may have the appearance of being international, if the actual contents of the curricula are examined it may be found that the course of study in fact is not international. As instructors, we have to address what it is that our students consider to be international or globalized within specific courses and how these can be developed to a point where our students are developing a mindset that would be productive for their participation in the global market force.

What Are We as Instructors Doing for Our Students?

This leads me to another question. As part of the learning economy, what are we as instructors doing for our students? While we might bemoan the frequency of policy shifts regarding EFL education in Japan, it should not negate that we individually must consider what we are doing to improve the learning situation for our students. The documentary *Ivory Tower*, promotes an idea in higher education that receives little attention: the need to humanize or keep education human, as without this element students will be unsuccessful.

If we look at what Barnett (2004), among others, has argued about the decentralization of higher education and its fragmentation, which all points to the dehumanization of higher education, it does not point to the human side of contact with instructors or the students' freedom to ask questions

and be creative. This would be at odds with the ideals of internationalization as a part of citizenship and the needs of a nation to adopt a creative and analytical approach to problem solving and life in general. This point is touched upon in the English versions of recent policies developed by the Japan Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) regarding grade school learning: the ideals of fostering a questioning/curious nature in elementary school students (MEXT, 2011). I have heard many instructors complain that this is then drummed out of students as they study and focus on getting to the next level and passing (hopefully) the Center Examinations at the end of junior and senior high school (Murphey, Kato, & Fukuda, 2010). Yet, once these same students reach university level, as instructors many of us have an opportunity to once again encourage our students to be analytical and curious. This would suggest that as university instructors we must rekindle this mindset, but to do so we must also consciously recognize that there is a disjuncture between Japanese national ideologies of internationalization in a globalized sense and how this is realized in a local context.

Do We have the Power to Change Attitudes in Classrooms?

With the development of a foreign language policy and an internationalization ideology, we must also consider how these policies are enacted within an institution. Many of us who teach EFL might bemoan our institutions' mentality that students who take an English course have in fact become international. Through this we frequently dismiss the idea that we do have the power to change this attitude within our own classrooms. The process of internationalizing our institution is not only about the economics of improving the 'foreign' experience for our students. Internationalization also includes what we can do at our local level to develop and broaden our mindsets. In this, we can appreciate van Eijck (2007) who notes that policies are inherently ambiguous. This ambiguity is important, particularly to us as EFL instructors, as it allows different interpretations of a policy that can be adjusted according to the contextual needs of individual institutions and subsequently the classroom under the centralized ideology of incorporating an internationalization mindset into our teaching practices. This provides us with leeway to help our students develop an international mindset drawing from their local experiences. We can use local experiences and beliefs to integrate ideals of being a part of an international community within our teaching

practices, thus broadening students' experience within their classroom.

As a student, I am encouraged to remember that what I value in my research is culturally defined. As EFL instructors we must also strive to understand that what is valued as EFL interaction varies according to culture (Hofstede, n.d. in Harumi, 2011). As a foreign instructor there is no doubt that I have limited weight within both my department and my institution. However, it is still possible that I can make a contribution to my institution. This contribution is through what I enable my students to do in the classroom. This would mean that as an instructor, I acknowledge and work within the limitations of changes made to EFL educational policies so as to facilitate my students reaching the policy objectives and more importantly improving their confidence in using EFL.

What Are You Doing in Your Classroom?

I will end by asking, what you are doing in your classroom to facilitate your students in developing an international mindset? Are you helping your students to not only develop bridges between the English and the international community they already know, but also using that knowledge to develop an international citizenship ideology? Through our pedagogy we do have the power to help influence our students in their learning development.

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March 26, 2015 TESOL Convention, Toronto



日本 Moodle 協会と日本語学教育学会北海道支部後援

Sponsored by the Moodle Association of Japan and the Hokkaido chapter of JALT
室蘭で Moodle サマーワークショップ

Moodle Summer Workshop in Muroran, Hokkaido.
APVEA の第一回の学会と同時開催

Jointly held with the Asia Pacific Virtual Exchange Association's (APVEA) inaugural conference

室蘭工業大学で第4回の Moodle サマーワークショップを開催します。7月18、19日に行います。無料のワークショップや研究発表などがあります。室蘭工業大学は新千歳空港から約1時間で、登別温泉から近い。参加者、是非 <http://bgettings.com/moodle26/> を参考してください。

Muran Institute of Technology will host the 4th Moodle Summer Workshop on Saturday and Sunday, July 18, 19, 2015. Hope we can see many of you there for this free workshop where you'll learn more about Moodle and also see presentations on using Moodle. Muroran is about 1 hour from Shin Chitose (Sapporo) airport and very close to the famous Noboribetsu hot-springs. You can find more information about the workshop and conference at <http://bgettings.com/moodle26/>



Mari Nakamura

The *Young Learners* column provides language teachers of children and teenagers with advice and guidance for making the most of their classes. Teachers with an interest in this field are also encouraged to submit articles and ideas to the editor at the address below. We also welcome questions about teaching, and will endeavour to answer them in this column.

Email: <young-learners@jalt-publications.org>

A Quest to Foster Literacy Independence: How It All Started

Mari Nakamura

“My students are learning to communicate orally, but I have no ideas how to promote their reading skills.”

“I teach my students only once a week. How can I teach them reading and writing when I barely have time for conversation activities?”

I can genuinely relate to these sentiments frequently shared by teachers at teacher training workshops, I myself have been struggling to find ways to promote children’s literacy skills since I founded my English language school over 20 years ago.

I founded my school, English Square, in a northern city in Japan in 1993. The first classroom was just a tiny *tatami* (straw mat) room in a small apartment where 6 small people could barely fit in. At that time I had virtually no ideas as to how to teach English to children and had only a few textbooks. There were very few resources for teachers of young learners on the market those days, and living in such a remote area, I had very few contacts with other professionals. Remember, it was the pre-Internet era. The best teacher trainers for me were the children in my classrooms. Teachers of children must know that children’s innocent yet brutally honest comments such as “Boring!” and “Again?” can sometimes make you feel like a failure!

Over the years, I have accumulated some skills and knowledge through numerous trials and errors in class with those little critics while learning theories in SLA, TEFL, developmental psychology and neuroscience through reading and later on online courses. Joining ETJ (English Teachers in Japan) and JALT, and collaborating with fellow teachers has empowered me in many ways as well. I have gradually learned to see things from children’s

perspectives and started to see my students’ deeper engagement and active oral interaction during the lessons. However, there was one challenge that seemed insurmountable for me: To develop their literacy skills so that they can be lifelong learners.

Positive literacy education can give children a window to the world. How nice would it be if Japanese children could expand their world by being exposed to new information by reading books written in English, and furthermore if they could express their thoughts and imagination in English? At that time it felt like a dream to me given the circumstance where I could see them only once a week for instruction.

Then, around 2005 several major ELT publishers started to create and promote leveled readers, simple picture books for young ESL/EFL learners, and graded readers in Japan. Very fortunately, I was traveling around Japan to do teacher training those days, and I could learn how to use leveled readers and graded readers from some experts firsthand. I felt like I finally saw a light at the end of the tunnel. “Maybe, just maybe, I can do my share in developing children’s literacy skills!” I thought.

Since then, day in and day out, I have studied methodologies in literacy education while trying out some new literacy activities in class. I was amazed at how children enjoy shared reading experiences and absorb the language as a result. I chose the picture book based curriculum design in young EFL classrooms as the theme of my dissertation for a master’s degree, and learned further on the relevant theories and practice.

My quest for the development of a literacy instructional model for my students has continued, and in 2010, I finally created a three-stage literacy program for children from kindergarten to 6th graders. It is still a work in progress, and it might end up being a totally different program after several years. However, I would candidly like to share where I am at now in the quest with you, welcome your questions and input, and continue to grow myself as a teacher and curriculum designer.

In the following section, I will illustrate the classroom environment and the summary of the three-stage literacy program.

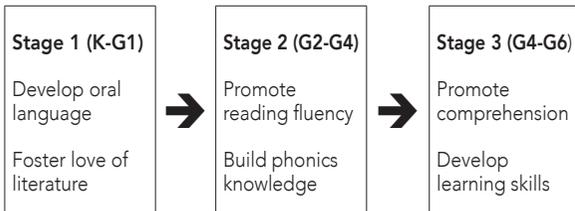
Classroom Environment

As I briefly discussed earlier, I teach at my own private English language school that specializes in teaching children and teenagers and in training teachers. Kindergarten classes meet once a week for 50 minutes while the elementary school classes meet once a week for 60 minutes. The maximum number of students per class is six. Most of the students begin to study English at my school when they start kindergarten. At my school, all four skills are taught in an integrated manner with more emphasis placed on oral language development among young children, from K to G2, while more instruction time is spent on literacy skills development in older children's classes. The goal is to cultivate learners' confidence in using English as a communication tool, and also to foster learner autonomy.

The Overview of The Three-Stage Literacy Program

The diagram below illustrates the overview of the three-stage literacy program to be discussed in the later installments of this column in detail.

The Three-Stage Literacy Program



The key principles in this literacy program are:

1. Throughout the program meaningful content and engaging activities are utilized to keep children motivated and to accelerate learning.
2. The classroom is a safe place where children experiment and learn new linguistic materials and skills through trials and errors with appropriate level of challenge and support.
3. The practice of literacy skills is integrated with the other skills' practice to reflect the multifaceted nature of language.
4. Oral language development is valued in the early stage to take advantage of young children's innate ability and willingness to hear and mimic sounds. They use the oral language as resource for later literacy activities.
5. As children's higher order thinking skills mature, activities that require logical thinking and

problem solving become integral elements in instruction.

6. With the aim to foster literacy independence, making choices and developing learning skills are promoted throughout the program in developmentally appropriate ways.

One thing to be noted is that these stages are not independent from one another. Rather, the diagram above intends to show how the focus of instruction shifts gradually from Stage 1 towards Stage 3. For example, phonics is taught all through the stages, even though it is indicated in the Stage 2 frame in the diagram. Phonemic awareness activities and some basic phonics rules are introduced at Stage 1 to prepare children for the systematic instruction of phonics at Stage 2. They also have ample opportunities to apply their phonetic knowledge while engaging in various literacy activities at Stage 3. In addition, the information on grade levels specified in the diagram is only used as a rough guide, and the timing of moving from a stage to the next depends on the students' profiles.

In the following installments of this column I will guide you through the three stages of the literacy program with theoretical backgrounds, practical ideas and issues I have been facing along the way. I would like to hear your experiences in literacy education, and exchange and explore new ideas together on JALT Teaching Younger Learners SIG Facebook page. <<https://www.facebook.com/groups/jshsig/>>

See you there!

Mari Nakamura, the owner of English Square <<http://www.crossroad.jpe/es/>> in Kanazawa City, has been teaching English to young learners, and has been providing teacher training workshops for over 20 years. She has earned a master's degree in TEYL at Aston University.

Her publications include *English Land* (Pearson Japan, co-author), *Phonics Farm* (MLH) and *Lily and the Moon* (ELF Learning, co-author). Her main interests are in literacy education and learner autonomy. She can be reached at <mari-@pop02.odn.ne.jp>.



Nov. 20-23, 2015

Shizuoka Convention & Arts Center "GRANSHIP", Shizuoka City, JAPAN

*Watch future TLTs for more conference information



Tiernan L. Tensai

Got a teaching problem you can't solve? Need some advice about classroom practice? Stressed out from living in a different country? Then Dear TLT is the column for you. Be it serious or comical, our panel of experts will endeavour to answer all your queries. Send your questions to the email address below.

Email: <dear-tlt@jalt-publications.org>

New Teacher Searches for Books about Teaching

Welcome to "Dear TLT"

During our annual Pubs retreat last fall, the idea of creating a "Dear Abby"-style advice column came up as we discussed various ways of improving this journal. We were really attracted to this idea for several reasons. First, it could provide a forum for addressing specific issues our readers have in a light yet substantive manner. In addition, it would give us the flexibility to cover topics we'd normally not be able to via our regular columns. Our aim is to cover issues of interest and offer up our collective experience in an effort to provide practical ideas and solutions to common challenges we all face in our working lives. Some topics will be light, while others may not, but all in all we hope the shared wisdom of our TLT community can be of service to the larger JALT community. To get things going, we'll put forward a few topics, starting with this month's focus on great books on teaching for new teachers. We hope to eventually deal with issues submitted by you, our readers. If you have a question or topic you'd like to see us address, please get in touch! The email is: <dear-tlt@jalt-publications.org>. So, on with our first rendition of "Dear TLT"...

Dear TLT,

I'm starting out as a new face in Japan with very little experience of teaching English. Being very interested in improving my craft, I want to know where to start reading so that I can do a better job. What books about teaching English have really influenced you, and why?

Sincerely,

Starting Out in Saitama

Dear Starting Out,

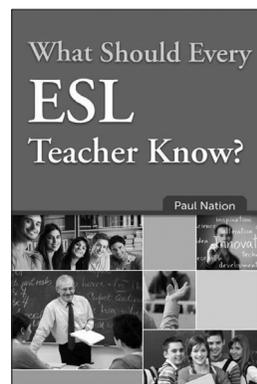
Thanks a lot for your letter, and congratulations on your new life and career here in Japan! You're in for quite the adventure. We really applaud your desire to improve your teaching skills. Your question is an excellent one, but it's also quite challenging to answer! There are so many great books on teaching out there... Hmmmm... well, after some thought, we've come up with a list of excellent books that

will surely get your career off to a good start. These are so good that you'll want to refer to them from time to time as you grow and develop professionally. You'll get more out of them over time as your skills and experience grow. This has surely been our experience...

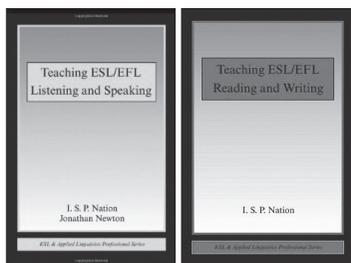
When we were starting out, one of the biggest struggles we had was answering questions about grammar from our students and colleagues. Not being able to do so was a big source of frustration. This is why picking up a copy of **The Grammar Book: An ESL/EFL Teacher's Course 2nd Edition** by Marianne

Celce-Murcia and Diane Larsen-Freeman (1999, Heinle & Heinle) was such a godsend. This one will surely give you confidence just knowing it's on your shelf, and who knows? It may even help you win an argument or two in the teacher's room during breaks! We hear a 3rd Edition of this classic tome is due out in 2016.

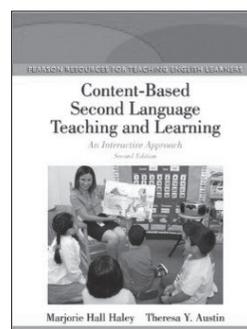
Another book we wish we had when we were fresh off the boat is **What Should Every EFL Teacher Should Know?** by Paul Nation (2013, Compass Publishing). Reading it has had the effect of confirming lots of things about teaching we have learned over the years. What if we'd had that book at the beginning of our careers? It would have saved us a lot of stress. Paul Nation's rock solid rep helps A LOT. We find this practical and easy-to-read book brings us comfort and inspiration even now, after teaching in Japan all these years.



We also recommend two other books by Nation: **Teaching ESL/EFL Reading and Writing** (2008, Routledge) and **Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking** (2009, Routledge, with Jonathan Newton). Both are quite comprehensive, practical, and provide an in-depth overview on how to teach each of the four basic language skills.



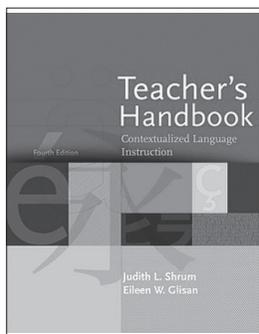
plement a standards-based program, how to create content-based language courses that help improve all four language skills, and how to integrate technology into the classroom. We have lots of pages flagged in this book for continual reference, and we highly recommend it for new teachers such as yourself.



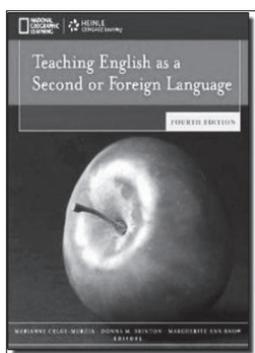
So, Starting Out, that's our list of recommended books for new teachers. There is more than enough practical information here to get you going. You'll learn a lot from these books, for sure. And, as you grow in experience and skill, you'll be able to get even more out of them still. Good luck!

T. L. Tensai

Another great resource to have on your shelf is **Teacher's Handbook: Contextualized Language Instruction** by Judith Shrum & Eileen Glisan (2009, Cengage Learning). It gives background information on language learning as well as specific guidelines and suggestions for teaching each language skill in an engaging and active way. It also has recommendations for integrating technology into your lessons.



Similarly, **Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language** by Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow, Eds. (2014, Heinle ELT, 4th Edition) is also an excellent resource as it provides a wide variety of papers on the foundations of ESL teaching methods, guides for teaching each skill, and very detailed information about professional development for new teachers, such as improving lesson plans, adding more tools to your kit, choosing textbooks, dealing with culture in the classroom, and integrating digital tech). The book also discusses the learner and motivation issues.



Finally, **Content-based Second Language Teaching and Learning** by Marjorie Hall Haley & Theresa Austin (2013, Pearson) is a more work-book style text that guides the reader to consider how to make their lessons more engaging and interactive. It discusses methodologies and how to choose one's preferred teaching method, how to plan and im-

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Please inform teachers of languages other than English and Japanese of this opportunity. We look forward to meeting you, so you can

- tell us about the FL teaching situation at your school
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英語及び日本語以外の教授に関わっている同僚の方にもご案内ください。この学会では次の点も歓迎します：

- あなたの学校及び大学での外国語教授の状況についての情報
- 同僚、教員、学習者、その他とのネットワーキング、意見および情報交換など

ARTICLES

RESOURCES

JALT FOCUS

JALT PRACTICE

JALT MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)

- A professional organization formed in 1976
- 1976年に設立された学術学会
- Working to improve language learning and teaching, particularly in a Japanese context
- 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

<<http://jalt.org>>

Annual International Conference

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

<<http://jalt.org/conference>>

JALT Publications

- *The Language Teacher*—our bimonthly publication
- を隔月発行します
- *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

<<http://jalt-publications.org>>

JALT Community

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

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

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

<<http://jalt.org/main/groups>>



JALT Partners

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

- 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

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

<<http://jalt.org/main/membership>>

Information

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

JALT Central Office

Urban Edge Building, 5th Floor, 1-37-9 Taito, Taito-ku, Tokyo 110-0016 JAPAN

JALT事務局: 〒110-0016東京都台東区台東1-37-9
アーバンエッジビル5F

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

Joining JALT

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



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

A Throng of Gamers

A few years ago while in the USA I decided to visit Comic-Con, a massive gathering of video game, SF/fantasy, and anime lovers—and a cosplayer's paradise to boot. At every corner of Comic-Con one is liable to collide with a Catwoman, plow into a Pikachu, or sideswipe a Street Fighter, all while the original portrayers or designers of these characters are elsewhere in the venue selling autographs. I thought it would be worthwhile to study the virtual depravity as an FPS (First-Person Snooper).

Since it was my first time to attend, and since as a vacationing English instructor I suffered from a lack of funds, luggage space, and imagination, I decided to take the risk of attending Comic-Con dressed as myself. At the train station I found the right platform thanks to all the faeries, androids, and pirates waiting there. Once aboard the colorfully crowded menagerie of a train, I overheard an exchange between two elfin creatures:

“Sit over there, dude.”

“But there are humans sitting there!”

The conference was, as expected, devoted mainly to sales: artwork, action figures, role-play games, the aforementioned celebrity signatures, and of course comics and graphic novels. Though not completely immune to escapist entertainment—as a kid in the 1970s I raced my friend to be the first to see the original *Star Wars* movie ten times, *in the theater*—I still found most of the Comic-Con merchandise kitschy and hyper-indulgent. Long ago, in high school, I had traded away my Dungeons & Dragons dice and chosen loud music for my antisocial teenage diversionary needs. (Certainly there have been legendary admixtures of rock music and romantic fable—all those Middle Earth songs by Led Zeppelin and Rush—but I was drawn more to the grounded social critique of, say, Suicidal Tendencies’ “Fascist Pig”.)

So now, decades later, there seemed little at Comic-Con that could lure me back into the Narnian wardrobe of fantasy that enveloped so many other convention participants. That is, until I discovered the t-shirts.

Just a few rows in from the entrance I noticed them, stacked at the back of some kiosks. Then I found a few sellers dedicated entirely to t-shirts. I was slow to take them seriously. I wasn't impressed with basement-dwelling gamers' tees telling me “The Force is Strong with This One.” But here and there I started to see some provocative styles matching my ironic and/or juvenile tastes. There was a “Shat Happens” tee with a grinning silkscreen of *Star Trek's* William Shatner—unfortunately only available in ladies' sizes by the time I found it. I also liked a particular steam punk design cleverly depicting rusty musical instruments reconfigured as rodent transportation. Finally, I succumbed and purchased a “DJ Yoda” shirt of the famous Jedi sporting sunglasses and headphones.



I think I bought five t-shirts in all that day. One purchase, though, convinced me that, after all, I wasn't properly playing the Comic-Con Game. There was one humble artist standing in his booth at the edge of the action, promoting his indie comics publishing company. When I bee-lined past his selection of books to rifle through his pile of black “Immature Content” tees, he smiled philosophically and said, “I've sold a lot more t-shirts this week than anything else.” I tried to keep his mood up, praising his shirt's sarcastic twist on the parental warning labels you could find on many sales items at the convention, but I could tell he was hurt to see his beloved comic book creations ignored in favor of a snide, one-off t-shirt. Avoiding eye contact, I gave him \$20 for the shirt, stuffed it in my bag with the others, and headed for the exit. At the door, though, I was met by the Incredible Hulk, who seemed to smell me out as an interloper. He raised his arms to attack, but his stuffed green muscle shirt came untucked at the back, and his girlfriend had to turn him around to initiate repairs. I took that opportunity to escape with my booty back into the realm of humans.

Getting to JALT2015 at Granship in Shizuoka

