

# The Language Teacher

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Celebrating 40 years of TLT

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Material from all our publications produced in the last 6 months requires a password for access. These passwords change with each issue of *TLT* and are valid for a 3-month period. To access our archives:

[ login: nov2016 / password: 9kSwf33U ]

Welcome to the November/December 2016 issue of *TLT*. First, allow me to introduce myself. I have worked in Kochi city for the past six years, first as an ALT with the JET Programme, and now as a university instructor. I have been involved with *TLT* for the past three years, first as a proofreader and then as a My Share column editor, an experience that has been very rewarding.

November brings us the 42nd Annual JALT International Conference, this year in Nagoya. For myself, this is one of the highlights of the year, full of interesting speakers, presentations, and chances to meet and exchange ideas with fellow teachers.

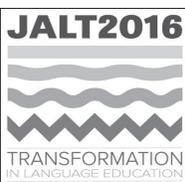
In this issue we have two Feature Articles dealing with Japanese high school students. In the first article, *Japanese High School Students' Attitudes Towards and Usage of Corrective Feedback On Their Written Work*, **David O'Flaherty** examines the topic of teacher's corrective feedback of students' writing and makes several suggestions regarding how to get students to become more engaged with the process. Next, in *University in English? Questions of Confidence*, **Jennifer Igawa** and **Douglas Forrester** investigate why more students at a Japanese high school don't apply for universities where English is the medium of instruction, despite their high school having a much higher than normal focus on English instruction.

Meanwhile, in our Readers' Forum, **Mitsue Tabata-Sandom** explores the topic of reading with Richard Day in her interview titled, *Learning the Core Concept of Extensive Reading from Richard Day*.

Of course, don't forget to check out the many informative and useful articles in the Praxis section. Here you can find fun classroom activities to try in your own classroom, as well as information about the latest in teaching technology, and advice concerning teaching challenges.

For anyone attending the conference, please stop by the JALT Publications booth and say hi—we love meeting our readers. We are also always looking for new volunteers to join our team, and we can provide training and opportunities to

*Continued over*



42nd Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Exhibition  
**November 25-28, 2016**  
 WINC Aichi, Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan



TLT Editors: John Roberts, Philip Head  
 TLT Japanese-Language Editor: Toshiko Sugino

increase your skills and experience as a copyeditor, proofreader, column editor, or reader.

Finally, as this is the last issue of the year, it is time to say goodbye to our senior coeditor, John Roberts. Thank you very much for your hard work and support of this publication and its staff.

*Philip Head, TLT Editor*

**T**LT 2016年最終の11 / 12月号ようこそ。まず、自己紹介にて失礼致します。私は高知市のALTを経て現在は大学で教鞭を取っています。TLTに関しては、この3年間のTLT校正者とMy Share column editorの経験が私には貴重な自己研修になっています。

11月には名古屋で第42回JALT年次大会が開催されます。様々な興味深い講演や発表が用意されており、きっと私たちにとって、感動に満ちた出会いと有意義な意見交換の場となるでしょう。

Feature Articleには2本の論文を掲載しています。Japanese High School Students' Attitudes Towards and Usage of Corrective Feedback On Their Written Work では、David O'Flahertyが日本の高校生の英作文指導に修正フィードバック (corrective feedback) を試みながら英作文の改善過程の研究をし、生徒をもっと深くライティングの課程に関わらせる方法を述べます。次に、Jennifer Igawa and Douglas Forresterが、University in English? Questions of Confidenceの中で、日本のある高校の生徒たちは、他の高校に比べて英語の指導に重点的に取り組んでいるにもかかわらず、なぜ英語だけで授業をする大学にもっと志願しないのかを調査します。

Readers' Forum のLearning the Core Concept of Extensive Reading from Richard Dayでは、Mitsue Tabata-SandomがRichard Dayにインタビューし、多読の中心になる概念を探求します。

他にも授業指導に役立つ助言など満載のPraxis sectionや最後のScott Gardnerの面白いアイデアなどお楽しみください。

年次大会に参加される方は、JALT Publicationsブースにお立ち寄りください。読者の皆さんと話せるのを楽しみにしています。また、JALTの編集に協力できる方を募集していますので、どうぞお声をおかけください。編集作業の訓練も準備されております。

最後に、共同編集長John Robertsの退任に際し、編集への貢献とスタッフへの気配りに感謝の意を表します。

*Philip Head, TLT Editor*

## Submitting material to *The Language Teacher*

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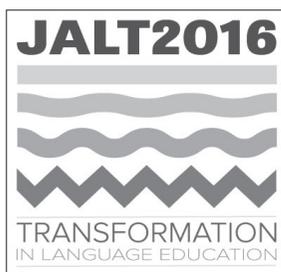
The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) is a nonprofit professional organization dedicated to the improvement of language teaching and learning in Japan. It provides a forum for the exchange of new ideas and techniques and a means of keeping informed about developments in the rapidly changing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

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42nd Annual International Conference on  
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# Japanese High School Students' Attitudes Towards and Usage of Corrective Feedback on Their Written Work

David O'Flaherty

The correcting of errors in L2 writing is a problematic task for teachers. A lack of consistent research evidence supporting a given method of corrective feedback, or even the extent to which errors should be corrected, means that teachers are often left to make judgments on what method and focus are best for their students. It is, therefore, important to understand how students interact with the corrective feedback they receive. This study looked at Japanese high school students' attitudes towards and use of corrective feedback on their written work. Findings suggest that while students felt their teacher should provide extensive corrective feedback and that this feedback had helped them in their written English, their actual usage of the feedback they received was very passive. It is argued that beyond solely providing corrective feedback on students' writing, high school teachers need to ensure their students actively engage with the feedback they receive. The article concludes with some suggestions for achieving this in the context of a Japanese high school writing course.

第二言語ライティングに於ける課題添削は、教師にとって頭を悩ます仕事である。添削に関する方法論について一貫した研究証拠がないだけでなく、どの程度誤りを修正すべきか等、生徒にとって最良と考える方法や重点を判断することはしばしば教師自身に委ねられている。従って、どのように生徒が添削された課題に向き合っているかを理解することが重要となる。

本研究では、日本の高校生の英文ライティング課題添削に対する捉え方、及び添削された課題をどう活用しているかについて調査をした。調査結果によると、彼らは、教師は詳細な添削をすべきで、添削は英文ライティング力向上に役立つと考えているが、実際に添削された課題の活用方法はかなり受動的であった。本論文では、高校教師は添削結果を生徒に提供するだけでなく、その積極的な活用方法を指導する必要があると説き、日本の高校の英文ライティングクラスにおける、前述の問題の解決方法を示す。

The correcting of errors on students' written work can be a time-consuming and problematic process. The type of corrective feedback to use and the extent to which errors should be corrected are not clear-cut choices for teachers. Ellis (2009, p. 98) outlines the main forms of corrective feedback (CF) available for L2 writing teachers and learners:

- *Direct feedback*: Errors on a learner's text are replaced with the correct form.

- *Indirect feedback*: The existence of an error is brought to the learner's attention. This is done by underlining the error or highlighting it in some way, or by indicating the existence of an error in the margin without actually explicitly identifying the error.
- *Metalinguistic feedback*: The learners are given an indication as to the nature of the error. Typically this involves writing an error code near the mistake or in the margin (e.g., IW = incorrect word), or numbering errors in the text and giving short grammatical descriptions at the bottom of the paper.
- *Reformulation*: A native speaker rewrites the entire text to make it more native-like, whilst ensuring the intent of the original text is not altered.

An additional consideration is the extent of the feedback. This can be divided into two broad types: *focused feedback* and *unfocused feedback*. Unfocused feedback involves the teacher correcting every error on the learner's work, whereas focused feedback targets specific types of error for correction (for example, prepositions, articles, etc.).

## Research Into Corrective Feedback on L2 Writing

Studies into CF on L2 writing have generally looked at the issue from three main perspectives: the effect of CF on revised texts, the effect of CF on new pieces of writing over time, and the comparison of the efficacy of different methods of feedback (Sheen, 2010). Truscott (1996) sparked debate in the field by claiming that corrective feedback on L2 writing was not only ineffective but also harmful. Teachers, he argued, should abandon the practice altogether. Truscott's original claim (subsequently supported by Liu, 2008; Truscott & Hsu, 2008) was based on the argument that CF needs to be successfully applied to new pieces of writing for it to be effective, not just revisions of the same piece of work. In response

to this, several studies have looked at the effect of CF over time and on new pieces of writing. Results suggest that a more focused approach to CF (for example, a focus on definite and indefinite articles, regular and irregular past tense, etc.), is of particular pedagogical value (Bitchener, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen, 2007; Sheen, Wright, & Moldawa, 2009). Despite the positive nature of these findings, it does raise the question of how focused CF should be. Ferris (2010) suggests that a strong emphasis on selected structures may constitute too narrow a focus for a writing class.

Overall, there is still no clear consensus among researchers as to the most effective method of CF. Studies focusing on learners' preferences for different types of CF have also produced contradictory results. Even within individual classes, preferences can vary greatly. The differing approaches and aims of researchers have led to results that cannot be easily applied across the field. This means it is very difficult for teachers to use research to guide their choice of CF method. Indeed, Gu nette (2007) warns against teachers looking for a "corrective feedback recipe" (p. 51). She argues that CF should not be seen in isolation. It is one of many factors affecting acquisition, which also includes the kinds of errors students make, their ability, the type of writing they are being asked to do, and their overall motivation to write. In his typology of written corrective feedback types, Ellis (2009) concludes, "The search for the 'best' way to do written CF may in fact be fundamentally mistaken if it is accepted that CF needs to take account of the specific institutional, classroom, and task contexts" (p. 106).

### Purpose of the Study

The lack of clear research evidence for approaching corrective feedback on written work suggests teachers must make a judgment based on their understanding of the context they are working in and of their students' preferences and orientations. Some institutions have guidelines regarding the methods of CF used, while others allow teachers to choose. In either case, a knowledge of how students view and interact with the CF they receive will help teachers to understand how their method of CF is being utilized, and whether it can be amended or improved in any way. The present study is concerned with Japanese high school students' attitudes towards and usage of CF on their written work. Specifically, the study addresses the following questions:

- How do students use the corrective feedback on their written work?

- What are students' attitudes in relation to the responsibility for correcting mistakes on their work?
- What are students' attitudes towards unfocused direct corrective feedback?

### Participants

The participants were 109 high school students enrolled at a private girls' high school in Japan. The students were taking a third grade English Expression course and were all 17–18 years old. This was a compulsory course taught entirely in English by a native speaker (solo, not with a Japanese English teacher). The focus was on the writing of short compositions in English (generally 180–300 words) on a variety of topics. The course consisted of twenty 50-minute classes. In that time, students were required to produce seven original compositions. All of these compositions were corrected and graded by their native English teacher. Unfocused direct corrective feedback was given, that is, every error on the students' writing was replaced with the correct form.

### Data Collection

Data collection consisted of a 14-item anonymized questionnaire split into two parts. The first part consisted of six 5-point Likert-type items relating to the frequency with which participants used the corrective feedback on their work. The second part consisted of eight 4-point Likert-type items relating to participants' level of agreement with issues related to corrective feedback. The original questionnaire was written in English. In order for participants to fully understand the items, the questionnaire was then translated into Japanese. Participants received and filled out only the Japanese version of the questionnaire (see Appendix for both versions). The questionnaire was administered in December 2015 in the final lesson of the 9-month English Expression course.

### Results

Each of the research questions will be looked at in turn in this section. The *Discussion* section will then focus on the practical implications of the findings.

#### *How do students use the corrective feedback on their written work?*

Table 1 shows the results for the six Likert-type items addressing participants' usage of corrective feedback.

Table 1 shows that 66% of participants always or usually looked at the corrections on their work. Seventeen percent rarely or never did this. Beyond this visual check, 40% of participants always or usually attempted to remember the corrections, and 98% rarely or never made any written notes of their corrections. While 83% always or usually double-checked their work before submitting it, only 50% always or usually referred to the corrections on their previous work when writing a new piece. A quarter of participants rarely or never referred to corrections on previous work for new pieces of writing. In terms of the participants' interaction

with their teacher, 79% rarely or never asked their teacher when they did not understand their corrections. Only 8% always or usually did so.

### **What are students' attitudes in relation to the responsibility for correcting mistakes on their work?**

Table 2 shows the results for the three Likert-type items addressing participants' attitudes towards responsibility for correcting errors on their work.

Eighty-five percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the teacher should correct ev-

**Table 1. Frequency of Response (in %), Means, and Standard Deviations: Students' Usage of Corrective Feedback ( $n = 109$ )**

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	5 Always	4 Usually	3 Some- times	2 Rarely	1 Never
1. I look at the corrections on my returned work.	3.77	1.24	36%	30%	17%	10%	7%
2. I make a written note of the errors I have made.	1.21	0.47	0%	0%	3%	16%	82%
3. I make a mental note of the errors I have made.	3.14	1.17	13%	27%	33%	17%	11%
4. I refer to the corrections on my previous piece of work to help me on my next piece of work.	3.39	1.23	22%	28%	26%	17%	8%
5. I ask my teacher about my corrections when I don't understand them.	1.75	1.04	3%	5%	14%	23%	56%
6. Before submitting my work, I double-check it for errors.	4.28	0.99	55%	28%	11%	4%	3%

*Note.* Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number, so may not total 100.

**Table 2. Frequency of Response (in %), Means, and Standard Deviations: Students' Attitudes Towards the Responsibility for Providing Corrective Feedback ( $n = 109$ )**

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	4 SA	3 A	2 D	1 SD
7. The teacher should correct every mistake the students make on their work.	3.16	0.66	30%	55%	15%	0%
8. The teacher should only underline errors (not correct them). Students should then correct the errors by themselves.	2.28	0.80	6%	30%	48%	16%
9. It is the students' responsibility to check the corrections on their work.	3.51	0.59	55%	42%	2%	1%

*Note.* SA = Strongly agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly disagree. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number, so may not total 100.

ery mistake on their work. Fifteen percent disagreed with this, with no participants strongly disagreeing. In terms of student participation in the process, 97% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that it was their responsibility to check the corrections on their work. Thirty-six percent agreed that they should make the corrections themselves (after mistakes have been underlined but not corrected). While this shows that participants viewed error correction as the teacher's responsibility, there was also a significant number of participants who felt that students should have greater involvement in the process.

**What are students' attitudes towards unfocused direct corrective feedback?**

Table 3 shows the results for five Likert-type items addressing participants' attitudes towards unfocused direct corrective feedback.

Ninety-nine percent of participants agreed that looking at the corrections on their work was beneficial for them in understanding their errors. A further 83% agreed that the corrective feedback they received helped them to improve their written English ability. There seemed to be no preference for focused feedback, with 75% of participants disagreeing that this would be more useful for them. Unfocused feedback can result in a wealth of corrections on a given student's paper, but 65% disagreed that the number of corrections on their work prevented them from checking them all. Interestingly, despite a strong agreement that unfocused direct corrective feedback had helped them in their understanding

of their mistakes and in their overall ability, 69% agreed that having errors corrected with no explanation as to why they were wrong was not helpful for them.

**Discussion and Practical Application of Findings**

Results show that the majority of participants expected their teacher to correct all of their mistakes (Lee, 2005, produced similar findings for high school students in Hong Kong), but were generally passive in their use of the corrective feedback they received. Only two-thirds were in the habit of regularly looking at the corrections on their work. Beyond this basic check, the vast majority made no written notes of their corrections and did not ask their teacher when they did not understand them. Participants were, however, positive about unfocused direct corrective feedback in terms of the effect it had on their ability to write in English, and did not express a desire for focused over unfocused CF. Despite this, there was also a significant number of participants who appeared to want a more active role in the CF process. These overall findings suggest a need for a process whereby students' expectations regarding all errors being corrected are met, but which also engages them with their CF.

In terms of participants' lack of active engagement with their CF, the implication is that once the work has been submitted and subsequently corrected and graded, that particular piece of writing is finished. In the context of the English Expression course in this study, this is something the teacher

**Table 3. Frequency of Response (in %), Means, and Standard Deviations: Students' Attitudes Towards Unfocused Direct Corrective Feedback (n = 109)**

Item	M	SD	4 SA	3 A	2 D	1 SD
10. Looking at the corrections on my work helps me to understand my errors.	3.65	0.50	66%	33%	1%	0%
11. Having all of the errors on my work corrected has helped my written English ability.	3.15	0.68	31%	52%	17%	0%
12. It would be more useful for me if only certain errors on my work were corrected (for example: only tense errors, only preposition errors).	2.09	0.74	4%	21%	56%	19%
13. There are too many corrections on my work for me to check them all.	2.28	0.79	6%	29%	50%	15%
14. Having errors corrected with no explanations why they are wrong is not useful for me.	2.77	0.70	12%	57%	28%	4%

Note. SA = Strongly agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly disagree. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number, so may not total 100.

needs to address. Although short review activities of the more common mistakes in students' work were carried out in class, students had the responsibility for checking and engaging with their own CF, and there was no system to ensure this took place. Making student interaction with their CF a formal part of the writing process would remedy this problem.

At the high school level, varying levels of ability and motivation within any given class means that a blanket system of correction that treats all students in the same way, and does not involve follow-up activities, may not be beneficial. Simply having students rewrite their work with their teacher's corrections included is a common form of review, but it does not necessarily engage students with their CF in any meaningful way. Direct unfocused feedback will mean all mistakes are corrected, but it will not ensure students interact with that feedback. Similarly, direct focused feedback will focus students on certain areas, but also does not ensure engagement with those areas. Additionally, it would only be of benefit to students who have problems with the targeted forms. Indirect or metalinguistic feedback may require more interaction with CF, but the problem here is one of ability or knowledge. If a student understands the mistake they have made, it would not be unreasonable to expect them to self-correct that mistake. On the other hand, if it is a complicated structure, something they have not understood, or a grammatical form they have yet to study, self-correction may be of no benefit — particularly if their teacher did not subsequently check these corrections.

A solution for the English Expression course in this study would be to use a combination of feedback methods, and have students produce follow-up work based on their individual needs. As previously mentioned, there may be no *best* method of CF. For this reason, teachers need to make a judgment regarding CF on a student-by-student basis. Direct CF could be used for errors the teacher felt students would not be able to self-correct, and indirect (or possibly metalinguistic) CF could be used for errors that students may be able to self-correct. The ratio of direct/indirect feedback would be at the teacher's discretion and based on their judgment of students' individual needs.

Students could then resubmit their original paper with an attached sheet of self-corrected sentences. For further engagement and to ensure the errors have been fully understood, they could also include two or three original sentences employing the grammatical form(s) in question. If there were mistakes in the self-corrections or additional sentences, the teacher should be able to clearly identify

where the student is going wrong and could then provide the correct form. Students could then submit further original sentences to confirm their ability to use that particular grammatical form. Finally, to make the feedback more comprehensive, some classroom time could be allocated to review a selection of the more complex mistakes made by students on their writing that were or were not highlighted for self-correction.

This process would ensure that, in line with student expectations, all errors are corrected. It would also allow the teacher to focus on specific areas for improvement on a student-by-student basis. Additionally, the responsibility for error correction would be split between the teacher and the students, thus addressing the 36% of participants who felt that students should have greater involvement in their CF. It would also, to an extent, address the 69% of participants who felt that corrections with no explanations were not useful: the self-correction would lead them to eventually understand a greater number of their mistakes, and the classroom review may explain the more complex errors to them.

For teachers with a large number of students and limited time to correct written work, the above suggestions may create an additional workload that would be difficult to manage. The process would, however, have the overall effect of engaging students with their corrective feedback, therefore making them less passive towards it. Fewer errors on their work would mean fewer sentences to correct for homework, so it may also encourage them to pay more attention to grammar on their original piece of writing. This could also serve as a means of motivation for students. As the course progresses, if students have to rewrite fewer sentences for homework, they will have a visual indicator of their progress in their written English.

## Conclusion

This study has several limitations, not least the absence of qualitative data from participants regarding their attitudes towards and usage of corrective feedback. It is also specific to the English Expression course participants were taking and may not be easily applicable to other teaching environments. It does, however, suggest a need for high school teachers to actively engage their students in the feedback process. It is not enough to simply correct students' work. More extensive engagement with feedback has been shown to lead to higher levels of uptake (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2010). Accordingly, where possible, high school teachers should try to incorporate processes which ensure that, while any

expectations regarding all errors being corrected are met, students are required to actively interact with the corrective feedback they receive.

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## Appendix

The appendix for this article, *Participant questionnaire (English and Japanese versions)*, can be found in the online version of this article at <<http://jalt-publications.org/tlt>>.

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# University in English? Questions of Confidence

Jennifer Igawa

Meiji Gakuin University, Faculty of International Studies

Douglas Forrester

This paper reports on an investigation into the low application rates of students at a Japanese public high school with an international studies curriculum to English-medium university programs in Japan. The study examines one potential reason for low application rates among students who have expressed interest in such university programs. An examination of confidence in the four basic skill areas, and specifically in respect to participation in such programs, shows that these students had lower confidence in their speaking skills relative to their listening, reading, and writing skills. The questions that arise from this research, including whether or not confidence levels influence application rates, are meaningful not only for universities offering English-medium curricula, but also for primary and secondary school educators.

本論文では、ある公立高校国際学科の生徒の、全授業を英語で行う日本の大学の学部に対する出願率が低いことに関する調査を報告する。本調査では、英語で授業を行う学部への生徒の関心が高いにもかかわらず、出願率が低い潜在的な理由について分析を行った。上述の学部での授業に必要な英語の4技能に関して、生徒の自信レベルを調査したところ、リスニング、リーディング、ライティングのスキルに比べて、スピーキングスキルに対する自信が低いという結果が示された。本調査結果から示唆される課題は、生徒の自信レベルが出願率に影響を与えるかという問題にとどまらず、英語によるカリキュラムを実施する大学及び、小、中、高校の教育関係者にとっても非常に重要である。

The number of Japanese universities offering liberal arts curricula with English-medium programs (hereafter, EM programs) in the first and second years of instruction has been steadily increasing since the early 2000s. Hosei, Meiji Gakuin, and Waseda have joined the ranks of Sophia and International Christian University (ICU) in the Tokyo metropolitan area. Added to these institutions are regional bastions that include Akita International in Tohoku, Ritsumeikan in Kansai, and Asia Pacific in Kyushu. The increase might be explained by a call from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEXT) to nurture “global human resources” (*gurōbaru jinzai*) (MEXT, 2011a). The introduction of

such innovative multi-disciplinary programs might also serve as an incentive to attract the shrinking body of university-age students caused by national demographic trends. Nevertheless, studying at the tertiary level in a second language imposes considerable linguistic and cognitive demands on the students, including a different learning style, which requires a student to become “an active speaking agent” (Sawir, 2005, p. 570). This intellectual challenge does not appear to be suppressing the popularity of these programs, however. For example, for general applications (*ippan nyūshi*) for April 2014 admission, there were 4.5 times as many applications for available places in both Waseda’s SILS and Hosei’s GIS and a remarkable 13.4 times as many for Akita International (SILS Waseda University, 2014; Hosei University, 2014; Akita International University, 2014). Given that these EM programs are clearly popular, it might be expected that students from high schools with specialized foreign language curricula and content-based classes with a focus on international studies would be well suited to enroll in such programs.

In academic years 2011 through 2013, when the research was carried out, third year students at High School A scored considerably higher on the TOEIC than the Japanese national average. For example, in 2012, the average TOEIC-IP score for 3rd year students at High School A was 607, which compares very favorably not only with the national average of 413 for 3rd year high school students, but also with the national average of 493 for 4th year university students (The Institute for International Business Communication, n.d.). One reason for these comparably high TOEIC-IP scores is that the curriculum at High School A is considerably more focused on English language study than might be expected at a Japanese public high school. The number of compulsory English credits at a standard public high school is five, five and three in the first, second and third years respectively, for a total of 13 credits. At High School A, the compulsory English credits amount to eight, eight and seven for a total of 23 credits, considerably more than the minimum required by MEXT (H. Yokoya, personal

communication, March 4, 2016). Specialized English language courses available at High School A include Speech and Debate, English Literature (using original, authentic texts and not graded readers), Human Rights (research and presentations), Cross Cultural Understanding studied in English, and, for 3rd year students, a four-skills language course involving readings, discussion, critical analysis and essay writing on a variety of social and political topics. Furthermore, all 3rd year students submit a minimum 5-page research paper in English as a graduation requirement. On account of this curriculum, the school attracts a number of students who have lived abroad for a considerable part of their school education. On average there are 15-20 so-called “returnees” per cohort, and they have a special curriculum in the first and second years. In recognition of the school’s specialized curriculum and the students’ advanced language skills, High School A has twice been designated a Super English Language High School by MEXT (2003-2008), and in 2014 was designated a Super Global High School (MEXT, 2011b; MEXT, 2014). Both the curriculum and students’ test results at High School A suggest that it has a rigorous academic program in which students gain the experience and skills that are very useful, if not essential, for university EM programs. Nevertheless, these acquired skills have not translated into high application or enrollment rates to university EM programs.

Contemplating the reasons for the low application rates to EM programs, the researchers posited at least three possible contributing factors. Some students may want to pursue a field of study not contained in EM program curricula, for example, engineering, medicine, or law. Another factor may be financial considerations, as the greater majority of EM undergraduate programs are at private universities. Yet a third determinant may be that some students prefer an undergraduate program in an English speaking country if they want to study in English.

These factors may partly explain the lack of motivation to apply to EM programs among students at High School A. However, there may be another influence contributing to low application rates, specifically, lack of learner confidence, which has been identified as a key demotivating factor in language learning (Dörnyei, 1994; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). Dörnyei’s framework of L2 motivation at the learner level lists four subsuming components of self-confidence (Figure 1).

Factors contributing to *language use anxiety* include the learning environment. Conditions in which the learner can “maintain a positive social

image” provide for self-confidence (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013, pp. 110-111, 121). Another factor influencing self-confidence that Dörnyei (1994) identifies is *self-efficacy*, defined by Bandura (1977) as “the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce certain outcomes” (p. 193). *Causal attributions* and *perceived language competence* also influence confidence. As Weiner (1992) explains, “prior behavior-outcome experiences...in similar circumstances” impact expectancy (p. 205); failure tends to lead to low expectancy, whereas success tends to lead to high expectancy. In other words, feelings of inadequate competence in English classes that exert more demands than typical high school English classes might lead a student to perceive himself as lacking the linguistic tools necessary, and therefore the confidence, to cope with a four-year undergraduate curriculum taught primarily in English. It is this confidence, or lack thereof, among students at High School A that we investigate in the study.

Figure 1. Dörnyei’s Framework of L2 Motivation at the Learner Level

Self-Confidence
Language use anxiety
Self-efficacy
Causal attributions
Perceived L2 competence

Source: Dörnyei & Ushioda (2013, p. 52)

## Methodology and Results

A questionnaire (see Appendix) was given to all third year students in late May 2011, 2012, and 2013, one to two weeks before their spring mid-term exams. This timing was chosen to reduce the influence of those exam results on the students’ responses. The questionnaires were anonymous in order to promote truthful and unguarded responses. Homeroom teachers were asked to distribute, conduct, and collect the questionnaires. The researchers were not present. In 2011, 2012, and 2013, 109, 142, and 148 questionnaires were collected, respectively. Two questionnaires were eliminated from the analysis in 2011 and again in 2012 because they were incomplete.

Respondents were asked to indicate their interest level in English-only undergraduate programs at Japanese universities on a four-point Likert scale (“Not at all”, “Not very”, “Somewhat”, and “Very”). In each of the three years, more than 60% of responses were positive (“Somewhat” or “Very”).

**Table 1. Percentage of Responses to the Question “Do English-only Undergraduate Programs at Japanese Universities Appeal to You?”**

Year	Not at all	Not very	Somewhat	Very
2011	11.3%	25.5%	40.6%	22.6%
2012	16.3%	22.7%	36.2%	24.8%
2013	10.9%	20.4%	40.1%	28.6%

With this positive interest established, what then is contributing to low application and enrollment rates in EM programs by students at High School A? We tested our hypothesis that students lacked self-confidence in their English ability by asking them to rate how confident they were that their English skills are good enough to participate in a Japanese university undergraduate program taught exclusively in English. Students rated each of the four skill areas – speaking, listening, reading, and writing – separately on a four-item Likert scale: “very” confident, “somewhat” confident, “not very” confident, and “not at all” confident.

Looking only at the respondents who indicated a positive interest (“very” interested or “somewhat” interested) in EM programs, confidence in passive skills was higher than confidence in active skills. Table 2 shows that a large majority of respondents at High School A were “very” confident or “somewhat” confident in their reading and listening skills.

**Table 2. Passive Skills: Percentage of Students Responding Positively to the Question “How Confident Are You That Your English Skills are Good Enough to Participate in [an EM Program]?”**

Year	Reading	Listening
2011	60.3%	69.1%
2012	68.6%	70.9%
2013	61.4%	74.3%

This level of confidence could be explained by the fact that high school English classes tend to focus on improving those skills necessary to pass university entrance exams (Kikuchi & Browne, 2009), which have a considerable amount of reading and listening comprehension questions. In addition to the required English courses, as outlined above, many students at High School A also take other courses taught exclusively in English during their second and third years, which might contribute to relatively high confidence in listening.

If we accept that passive skills develop earlier than active skills, we would expect that student confidence in active skills would be generally lower than confidence in passive skills, and this is borne out in the data (Table 3).

**Table 3. Active Skills: Percentage of Students Responding Positively to the Question “How Confident Are You That Your English Skills are Good Enough to Participate in [an EM Program]?”**

Year	Writing	Speaking
2011	33.8%	33.8%
2012	52.3%	31.4%
2013	43.6%	36.6%

In first language acquisition, oral skills develop before written skills; however, in second language acquisition, especially when the learners have already acquired a level of literacy in their first language, students generally learn all four skills in tandem. It could be argued, though, that the goal of English language instruction in Japanese high schools is not acquisition but rather the ability to pass university entrance exams. University entrance exams in Japan test listening and reading skills in addition to structure and written expression. Some universities add a writing section to their exams. Speaking skills, however, are generally not tested in university entrance exams and consequently are unlikely to receive the emphasis that the other three skills do. Therefore, we should not be surprised that students at High School A had the least amount of confidence in their speaking skills.

The higher confidence in writing skills can be explained by the fact that students at High School A have extensive experience writing in English. In addition to elective writing courses and the compulsory graduation thesis in English, from 2012, all third year students at High School A are required to take a multi-skills English course in which they write seven full essays. This course was an elective in 2011, when only 60% of students took the class. This might explain the lower confidence in writing that year.

Although this low confidence in speaking might not pose a problem in regard to university entrance exams, it might become problematic when considering whether or not to apply to university EM programs, which tend to mimic a North American seminar-style learning environment in which students are expected to actively engage in oral discourse.

## Discussion

The study results show that of the four skill areas, students have the least amount of confidence in their speaking ability. Considering the nature of Japanese high school English language curricula, in which there is a responsibility on teachers to prepare students to pass university entrance exams, this is not particularly surprising. However, the size of the gap between confidence in speaking and confidence in the other three skills among students at High School A is noteworthy. By itself, low confidence in speaking may not explain the low application and enrollment rates in undergraduate EM programs by students at High School A. However, it does appear possible that such a low level of self-confidence in oral language ability could be a factor that influences students when they select which university programs they apply for. As confidence is determined by past or current experience, the researchers considered the following contributory factors which might explain this low confidence in speaking among the students from High School A.

1. At High School A there are bi-weekly speaking and listening courses, compulsory for first year students and elective for second year students. There is not, however, a speaking-centered course for third year students. The absence of this type of course inevitably results in a drop in, if not elimination of, opportunities to practice speaking in English. This likely has a negative influence on students' confidence in their speaking skills.
2. The multi-skills English course that third year students at High School A are required to take (involving reading, discussion and essay writing on social topics such as euthanasia, the Japanese SDF, and jury trials) may be too complex for students to be able to participate fully in group discussions. Students might be reluctant to speak up if they do not feel knowledgeable enough on a topic or do not have the language skills to discuss the topic. Furthermore, they might not see a need to participate because the grade for this course is based primarily on essay and exam scores. Moreover, such classroom-based discussion tasks are inherently under strict time constraints and therefore require a certain level of spontaneity if students are to participate in the allotted time. In contrast, reading and writing tasks are generally given as homework, allowing students to spend as much time as necessary to complete the tasks.
3. Students with higher level language skills, for example, students with extensive experience

living abroad or students who have a parent who is a native English speaker, are streamed into separate English-medium classes in the first and second years. The third year multi-skills classes, however, are comprised of students irrespective of English language ability. One possible consequence of these blended classes is that students with weaker English skills lose confidence in their speaking ability. These students have been observed to remain quiet when working in groups with higher level students. Compared to the other skills, confidence in speaking may be more strongly impacted since speaking is a communal activity in which students are immediately aware of each other's levels (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013). Listening, reading, and writing, in contrast, are discrete activities where the results—and the corresponding gap between levels—are not obvious to the whole class.

## Conclusion

The study's initial intention to investigate confidence levels of third year high school students was precipitated by the fact that the number of students in High School A applying to English-medium university curricula was fewer than anticipated. Survey results showed that students were significantly less confident in their speaking abilities than they were in the three other main language skills. This is clear. What is not clear is if this apparent lack of confidence in speaking skills significantly influenced students' decisions to apply to such programs or not. Further investigation into factors influencing students' behavior would be meaningful from both secondary and tertiary educational perspectives. If some teacher-controlled classroom occurrence in high school, including the curriculum itself, is negatively affecting student confidence and motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013), identifying such problems would be the first step to remedying them.

High School A's educational goals include that students "acquire the ability to understand others and express themselves in English by actually using English and developing the comprehensive skills necessary to communicate effectively in English." Raising students' confidence in these skills, in particular speaking skills, is crucial if we are to nurture individuals who are productive participants in a global society. The results of this study suggest that it is important that we as teachers strive to find the most effective ways to help students to develop both their skills and their self-confidence to become those productive participants in a global society.

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## Interview: Learning the Core Concept of Extensive Reading from Richard Day

Mitsue Tabata-Sandom

Massey University Auckland

**E**xtensive Reading is probably one of the hottest topics in the context of second and foreign language (L2) reading instruction (Iwahori, 2008). Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Rodrigo, Krashen, & Gribbons, 2004) theoretically supports ER in which L2 learners' reading development and motivation to read are nurtured by exposure to a large quantity of comprehensible and interesting input. Graded Readers (GRs), lexically and syntactically graded readers, form a core of such facilitative input in ER. In this interview, Professor Richard Day, the Founding Chair Emeritus of the world-wide leading Extensive Reading Foundation, talks about the fundamental concept of L2 reading instruction. Furthermore, he gives encouraging support and input to readers of *The Language Teacher* who have embarked on and want to start the practice of ER. Professor Day has been tirelessly promoting ER through L2 teacher education for many years.



**Mitsue Tabata-Sandom (T-S):** How did you encounter ER in the first place?

**Richard Day (Day):** I was teaching English to high school students in a private high school in Japan, in the Kansai area. It was a senior year, 12th grade, and it was a reading class, and I had some material that was very traditional – skill-oriented with some grammar-translation. I was bored teaching it, and my students were not interested in it at all. They were very polite and they did it. But I said, "I'd love to read! What's going on?" Then I thought, I will get them interesting materials and let them read. So, I

went to the principal of the school, told him what I wanted, and he gave me money. I ordered some books that I thought would be good and interesting. They were more L1 younger literature. I didn't know about GRs at that time. And I got them and gave them to the students on a Friday. I said, "Pick a book that you like." This is the last 20 minutes of the class. "Start to read it, and if you don't like it, get another one." And they did. I had no idea what was going to happen. So, Monday afternoon when the class met again, I was very worried. And one young lady came in, a big smile on her face waving a book and she said, "*Sensei, sensei, I read a book!*"

**T-S:** The whole book!

**Day:** (*Nodding*) And, I just said, "Yes. This is going to do something." Then I was helping a student, Julian Bamford. I was working with him on his Master's program that he was doing independent research for. He was investigating reading. So we got together, and I told Bamford my experience. He said, "Yes, this is similar." Then he said, "Maybe you should use GRs." He turned me on to GRs, and then we got talking about it. Then we started to investigate it. And that's how I got into it.

**T-S:** Then you presented the Top Ten Principles of ER in your 2002 article with Dr. Bamford. You said that you encourage teachers to use the principles as the way to examine their beliefs about reading in general and then extensive reading in particular. Fourteen years after the article, we have had three world ER congresses. Do you see evident changes in teachers' beliefs about L2 reading?

**Day:** Yes. Regardless of how teachers do ER, I think the idea of *we learn to read by reading* has spread. There is a difference between translation and reading. So from talking with teachers, I think that has caught on. I don't know if they are doing ER, but they understand that the more students read, (the more) they may become readers, so I think, just, that idea alone, seems to be very important.

**T-S:** Ray Williams (1986) also said that reading can be learnt only by reading. That's one of the most important principles in general L2 reading pedagogy.

**Day:** Yes. I think that's caught on. So, I am very pleased. That's so important.

**T-S:** My third question is very practical. I want to hear your advice regarding cases when teachers want to employ ER into their courses. I am thinking of three different contexts. First, in a context of a beginners' course, is there a threshold level for teachers to be able to start ER?

**Day:** I think there really isn't. Maybe 20 years ago, I would've said, "Yes, there is." Now, I don't think so, because the material is available. There are GRs that have only the 100 most frequent words of English. So, even at those lowest levels, students know 100 words of English. So, I don't think, there is. Of course, there is a threshold in that students have to have English, they've got to know—

**T-S:** —the alphabet.

**Day:** Yes, they've got to know the writing system, so, I wouldn't say in Day 1 of a beginning English class, we could start ER. But certainly, after three or four months of English instruction, students should know enough vocabulary and the writing system.

**T-S:** Now, the second context, this is actually my context. An advanced student class, but students have been exposed only to conventional intensive-reading-oriented instruction. I am implying that some of the students might have fossilized perceptions toward L2 reading.

**Day:** Oh, yes.

**T-S:** Do you have any suggestions for how to employ ER in such a context?

**Day:** Yes, that's where the whole notion of the teacher having to introduce ER: what is ER? why should you do it? what will happen? If students are in university, as in your case, I would explain the efficacy of ER to them, and give them the results of research. So, they would have a *context*: if you engage in ER, here is what is going to happen. I would also bring the research in which shows its impact on listening, speaking, writing, and vocabulary. Doing this will not only help them become a better reader and a fluent reader, but these things will happen. I think that is very important to do, because when all of a sudden students who have three or four years of English or foreign languages, and they are told to read easy books, they are like, "what am I doing this

for!?" So, that's why we *have* to orient them to what is ER?

**T-S:** The third context is also my current context. I have to teach a genre of social science in Japanese. I had to make numerous lexically and syntactically controlled short texts with a social science theme because there aren't any GRs suitable for this kind of context. Do you have any advice for how teachers who are teaching L2 for specific purposes can employ ER?

**Day:** Yeah, that's a good point. I am not 100% confident that I know everything. Maybe, the internet might be a great source of materials. Have students bring in materials, or share websites with each other and talk about what they've been finding out, because what they need is materials that they can read that are directly related to the special reasons for their reading. That's tricky business.

**T-S:** At some institutions such as public universities, there is a high stake of accountability issues and thus teachers do not have much discretion of implementing ER fully. I would like to ask for your opinion about the practically ideal proportion of ER that you recommend when teachers employ ER in their courses at such institutions.

**Day:** Oh, that's what Hitosugi-*sensei* (Hitosugi & Day, 2004) and I did, because that was the same idea, because if there are 10 sections of Japanese 102, all teachers have to cover the same materials because their students are all going to take Japanese 201. That's a very tricky situation. We were lucky that we were able to give it a try. Most of the reading was done outside the class, because we couldn't take a lot of class time. We would not use every class for ER, but maybe twice a week, we would begin with 10 minutes of ER, right in class. And then on Fridays, during the last half hour, students did ER activities in class with the books they had read. To help them and motivate them, we gave credits toward the final grade for the number of books they read. Actually, after the first two weeks of the semester we had some students who wanted to transfer to our section because they heard that our students were enjoying it! So, it *can* be done but it has to be done very carefully. We did not cut anything out of the syllabus. The students in our class did exactly what students in the other classes did. Our students actually did more work, but they handled it well.

**T-S:** You categorized ER programs into a continuum in your 2015 article. The ER program you just mentioned would be the Modified ER in the continuum?

**Day:** No, we did everything according to—

**T-S:** –‘Pure ER’?

**Day:** Yes, it was. But we made it a part of a regular class. And that class as you know is not a reading class. It was Japanese—

**T-S:** –four-skills language class.

**Day:** Yes.

**T-S:** So, you probably recommend that teachers try ER within the framework of ER principles but outside the class. I mean, try Pure ER but outside the class?

**Day:** Yeah, but spend a little bit of time in class.

**T-S:** At one seminar talk session I attended, Professor Paul Nation asked the speaker who presented a study of ER, “How many of the Top Ten Principles of ER have been empirically proven?” Do you think all of the Top Ten Principles can be empirically supported?

**Day:** Well, we know that generally Reading is usually faster rather than slower, that’s been established quite well. Now, I don’t know if we could actually find evidence to support a lot of them. For example, I think it will be tricky to prove Principle Ten, “Teachers are a role model”. We would have to have a control group and a treatment group to see whether a teacher does this, and there are other variables at work there. So it’s hard to say that it could be supported. Now, I don’t know about Principle Nine, “Teachers orient and guide their students.” Probably. But again, that would involve a treatment and a control group to find evidence for that. Or if we did qualitative research, we might find that “Yes, teachers encourage me, they help me engage,” maybe we could do that without a traditional quantitative approach. It might be possible. Now “Reading is its own reward” is controversial, because there is something like Moodle Reader (<http://moodlereader.org/>). Some work could be done to see if that has support.

**T-S:** Research that uses Moodle Reader?

**Day:** Definitely, that would be possible, because apparently from people like Tom Robb, that group found students really engaged in it, take ease, and move on. So, I would say that reading is its own reward, yes, but there are situations in which things can be done. But I am not a big supporter of the idea of book reports and traditional ways of

comprehension questions afterward, but there are other ways in which students can do post-reading activities.

**T-S:** Next question. How can language teachers convince skeptical administrators?

**Day:** *By the research.* I would say that the research that shows students become readers, and research which provides the effect size, changes of the attitude, and the motivation. And in my work that I’ve done when I talk with teachers, not administrators, I tell them that students get excited about it and enjoy it, and the teachers get very interested in it because they know if you’ve got your students who are motivated and excited, they’ll *learn*. Yes. So, I think, if I were to work with administrators, I would begin with the effect size. And then say, “in addition, they do learn to read, we know that, and then there is other evidence to show that it spills over to other aspects of language learning.” That’s what I would do.

**T-S:** Now, do you have any suggestion to practitioners if they want to do action research, to let the public know about the benefits they are getting from ER practice?

**Day:** Again, I would look at the effect size. If they can report that students are enjoying it, like it, read outside the class, that to me would be very exciting. They might also want to show that students who were not readers in the L1 become readers in the L1 because of ER in a foreign language. That might be something that teachers could do for action research. Because I know it happened.

**T-S:** So, they can examine if it transfers back to the L1. Do you have any practical advice to do such a study in good ways?

**Day:** I would do qualitative research. I would begin with a questionnaire: How much do you read in your foreign language? How much do you read in your first language? Then I would talk to students individually. When you read in your first language, what do you read? Why don’t you read in your first language? You know, just to get them to talk about it, and then, after the ER class, when one semester is over, I would do the survey again, then do more interviews, talk to them again. “Why are you reading more in your first language?” “Are you reading the same thing?” They might be reading novels that they had never read before for pleasure. They would read textbooks. Some interesting things they could do as teachers.

**T-S:** That kind of research is very accessible for practitioners.

**Day:** Easy to do also, and *interesting*.

More and more ER studies have been reported in the L2 reading pedagogy. However, some factors of ER confuse language teachers. In this article, Professor Day clarifies some crucial aspects of ER as well as L2 reading in general, and encourages the audience of TLT to embark on ER both in research and practice.

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**Mitsue Tabata-Sandom** was an assistant professor at the University of Hawaii where she received direct guidance from Professor Day. She is currently a Japanese lecturer at Massey University, New Zealand. She is disseminating accumulated L2 English research findings related to ER into the context of L2 Japanese reading pedagogy.



## [JALT PRACTICE] MY SHARE



### Philip Head and Gerry McLellan

We welcome submissions for the My Share column. Submissions should be up to 600 words describing a successful technique or lesson plan you have used that can be replicated by readers, and should conform to the My Share format (see the guidelines on our website below).

Email: [my-share@jalt-publications.org](mailto:my-share@jalt-publications.org) • Web: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>

Hi again and welcome to My Share, the column devoted to fun-filled and educational lesson ideas. It is difficult to believe that another year has passed. I love autumn in Japan, and in particular Nagoya where I live. The leaves are changing colour and the vista is simply splendid. Additionally, the days are still warm enough to go camping and my family and I try to get into the mountains as much as we can. We usually manage to get a camp in at the end of November. In a few short weeks, we'll be off skiing! I recommend anyone new to Japan to get out of the city as this country has so much to offer.

Anyway, enough about me! Let's turn our attention to the articles in this issue: First, Steven Asquith has an interesting idea of using L1 prompts to increase L2 output. Then, Steve Hampshire has a lesson plan to help students speculate more and become more confident in hazarding a guess. Thirdly, Suzanne Kamata has created a plan to raise awareness of grammatical errors and to help students be more creative. Then, Elizabeth J. Lange and Jong Oe Park have an interesting way of deterring students from being late and increasing levels of politeness in the classroom.

In our fifth article, Michelle Chen shows us a way to have students adapt a famous short story into a play and, in keeping with the famous stories, Michael Bradley introduces a lesson plan to help students act out a court scene and learn lexis associated with legal matters. I hope you enjoy reading the articles as much as I did. See you in 2017!

Gerry McLellan

## Using L1 Semantic Prompts

### Steven Asquith

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### Quick Guide

» **Keywords:** L1 prompts, speaking support, learner confidence

- » Learner English level: *Beginner*
- » Learner maturity: *Junior high school and above*
- » Preparation time: *15 minutes*
- » Activity time: *30-45 minutes*
- » Materials: *Worksheet*

While working as a JHS teacher, I found that one of the most effective methods of encouraging learners to produce longer, more complex, spoken responses was to employ L1 prompts. Usually in JHS, speaking tasks are either limited to a single grammatical form or start with the construction of a written text which is then memorised and performed. However, with the aid of Japanese prompts learners can mentally construct what they want to say, as they say it. This enables them to speak more naturally in English, and focus on meaning rather than form. By using Japanese students' native language as an aid to support the English-speaking practice, learners' confidence can be developed.

### Preparation

Prepare a worksheet (see Appendix) showing the target question with possible responses and elaborations. For instance, a question aimed at practicing perfect and past tenses asking about a particular experience. The response would then describe this experience using the target language with a pre-specified number of sentences. The worksheet also needs to include a table for collecting speaking partners' responses and a brief writing section.

### Procedure

**Step 1:** Explain to learners the importance of mentally rehearsing English to improve oral fluency. Personally, I provide an example of rehearsing useful Japanese phrases in my head prior to arriving for a first day at a new school. Emphasise that this is not memorising, but mentally rehearsing how to use what is already known, and that it can be done at any time or place.

**Step 2:** Demonstrate an exchange using the target language which includes some elaboration. For instance, regarding a favourite place visited, you might include: where you went, what you did, and your impressions. Learners are then instructed to think of similar responses, in this case between three to five sentences, and practise saying these to themselves without writing them down. Usually, I also allow enough time so that less confident learners can be given suggestions if necessary.

**Step 3:** Students then interview classmates and record responses in a table using the L1, in this case, Japanese. Students are told to record the gist of the information, which can then be reassembled into their words, rather than becoming preoccupied with precise translations.

**Step 4:** Once learners have completed the table—typically around four classmate interviews—students then come to the teacher, and using the Japanese response record as a prompt, detail classmates' answers using the third person.

**Step 5:** Finally, students record their response and that of their classmates in writing, and this is submitted and checked for errors.

### Conclusion

Being able to integrate different grammatical forms and sentences to produce coherent oral communication is one of the most difficult skills for Japanese students to develop. Using this format has enabled my JHS students to successfully produce far more complex responses than would normally be the case. This principle of using the L1 as a prompt to support spoken production could easily be adapted to other levels. By harnessing the L1 as a prompt, and encouraging learners to mentally construct and rehearse spoken exchanges, the oral proficiency and confidence of learners can be greatly improved.

## Don't Know? Have a Go!

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### Quick Guide

- » **Keywords:** *Question and answer, speaking, listening, hazarding a guess*
- » **Learner English level:** *Upper-beginner and above*
- » **Learner maturity:** *Junior high second year and above*
- » **Preparation time:** *10 minutes*
- » **Activity time:** *20-30 minutes depending on class size*
- » **Materials:** *One set of A/B worksheets (Appendices) per pair, a whiteboard and pen. Students need a pencil and something to rest the worksheet on to keep it private.*

*Q: Who is Steve Hampshire? A: I'm not sure, but maybe he's a teacher.* The ability to hazard a guess or speculate an answer to a question is a very useful language skill. While allowing the speaker wider access to replies and the chance to answer a question correctly, it also provides a linguistic shield to save you blushes if you get the answer wrong. This is useful for those students whose fear of making an error often leads to an over-reliance on 'I don't know' or just an uncomfortable silence. 'Don't know? Have a go!' is a question-and-answer activity providing practice in the use of speculative language while retaining an element of challenge. Its quiz-like format encourages the need for clear speaking and careful listening as students take it in turn to ask each other a set of questions and "hazard a guess" as to one of three possible answers. The question is who will win? Maybe your students.

### Preparation

**Step 1:** Make copies of the A/B worksheets (Appendices).

**Step 2:** On the board write the speculation language to be practiced (Appendices).

**Step 3:** Prepare a question to read out that students are unlikely to know the answer to and write three possible answers on the board. For example: What is a hiccup? Is it a) a tall teacup? b) a yellow flower? or c) a noise people make?

### Procedure

**Step 1:** Practice the target language using the example question.

**Step 2:** Put the students in A/B pairs and tell them they are going to ask each other some more "you may not know the answer to" questions.

**Step 3:** Give out the worksheets.

**Step 4:** Explain the task as follows:

- a) Either the A or B student in each pair can start. The starter (Student 1) reads their set of questions and three possible answers to their partner who listens and marks their answers in the boxes provided.
- b) Repeat the above for Student 2.
- c) Student 1 reads a second time, questions only. Student 2 responds using a speculation expression plus their selected answer. Student 1 says whether the answer is correct or not.
- d) Repeat for Student 2. The winner is the student who gets the most correct answers.

**Step 5:** Now give the students time to read their worksheets. At this point you can deal with any pronunciation issues found with vocabulary items such as Ottawa, Los Angeles, Joanne, or cheetah.

**Step 6:** Conduct the task with students sitting face to face.

### Extension

Print out large copies of the speculation language for reference in future classes.

You may also wish to tell your students a bit more about Boxing Day or other information mentioned in the text.

### Conclusion

I introduce this language early on in all the courses I teach, university included. In my experience, students, when in doubt, not only quickly pick up the habit of responding speculatively, but they also seem more confident about having a go and are less dependent on "I don't know." It works for me. Try it and see!

### Appendices

The appendices are available from the online version of this article at <[jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare](http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare)>.

## Group Sentence Game

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### Quick Guide

- » **Keywords:** Grammar, writing, vocabulary
- » **Learner English level:** Intermediate and above
- » **Learner maturity:** Junior high school and above
- » **Preparation time:** 10 minutes
- » **Activity time:** 30-45 minutes
- » **Materials:** Whiteboard, markers, slips of paper, box or bag, pencils

I've noticed that students tend to repeat the same grammatical mistakes, yet their eyes glaze over at the briefest discussion of grammar, so I devised this game as a painless way to review grammar. In this activity, groups of students are asked to make

sentences with random words and write them on the board. Working together, students usually spot each other's mistakes, and they often create zany sentences with disparate vocabulary words, which makes the game entertaining. Also, because this activity is competitive, students usually pay attention to see who will win.

### Preparation

Prepare small pieces of paper and a box or bag.

### Procedure

**Step 1:** Pass out small pieces of paper. Have students write one word on a slip of paper and pass it back to the instructor. The instructor may want to specify the type of word (i.e., nouns and verbs, or two syllable words, etc.), or request that students choose vocabulary words from a specific source. Put all of the words in a box.

**Step 2:** Divide the students into groups of 3-5. Divide the whiteboard into enough spaces for each group.

**Step 3:** Draw two words from the box. Explain that each group must construct a grammatically correct sentence using those words. Give students a time limit, if necessary. A member from each group must write the group's sentence on the board.

**Step 4:** When all of the sentences are on the board and/or the time limit is up, check each sentence, correcting grammatical and spelling mistakes. Each perfect sentence receives a point.

**Step 5:** For the next round, draw three words from the box. Continue increasing the number of words drawn each round until the end of the game.

**Step 6:** Calculate the number of points to determine the winner.

**Step 7:** If there are words left over, have the students individually write sentences or a paragraph using all of the remaining words.

### Variations

Give students additional restrictions each round, such as to write a question, or write a compound sentence. Have students check other groups' sentences after they are written on the board, giving their groups additional points for spotting mistakes or making corrections.

### Conclusion

This exercise is easily adapted to various levels and can be used to review specific vocabulary lists. It can

be used as a lesson-filler, or over an entire class period. Students often come up with creative and funny sentences to the amusement of everyone. Because they are working in groups, they are less afraid of making mistakes. Best of all, this activity allows the instructor to bring students' attention to common grammatical and spelling mistakes without putting the class to sleep.

## Learning Authentic and Polite English Through Late Notes

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### Quick Guide

- » **Keywords:** *Excuses, late, policy, politeness*
- » **Learner English level:** *High-beginner and above*
- » **Learner maturity:** *University, adults*
- » **Preparation time:** *20 minutes*
- » **Activity time:** *Varies*
- » **Materials:** *Handouts*

When students come late to class, it can easily cause other students to lose their concentration, which disturbs the flow of ideas. One good way to reduce this is to have a clear and consistent policy of having students bring a note with the reason why they were late. This policy can deter lateness, minimize interruptions, help the teacher keep accurate attendance records, and, most importantly, the late notes can be used to teach and reinforce contextualized socio-pragmatic English, providing appropriate models of language that can be used when students are late.

### Procedure

**Step 1:** Make it a requirement at the beginning of each semester that any student arriving late to the class must bring a late note with a reason and give it to the teacher before sitting down (see Appendix A).

**Step 2:** Collect the late notes for a few weeks until a sufficient number needing correction are available (see Appendix B).

**Step 3:** Use part of a class to practice the art of writing grammatical, feasible, polite, and socially acceptable notes for being late, along with possible follow-up activities as outlined below.

- a) Distribute a handout listing late notes needing correction and use them as a basis to correct what students say while explaining what are socially accepted norms of polite English. Some examples:
  - I was over slept. → *Sorry to be late because I overslept.*
  - Lated with laziness → *I was late because I was lazy. Sorry about that.*
  - Forget wallet. I returned my home. → *Sorry. I had to return home to get my wallet.*
  - Missed train. → *Sorry I was late because I missed the train.*
- b) Have a discussion about further possible reasons for being late. Examples may include: an overcrowded train; traffic held up because of road works; couldn't find my socks or train pass; forgot to bring my books and returned home for them.
- c) Ask students (individually, in pairs, then in groups) to list imaginary reasons for being late and write excuse notes.
- d) Ask for volunteers to write some possible excuse notes on the board and help them make them acceptable and polite in English if necessary.
- e) As follow-up activities for more advanced students, discuss the following expressions and vocabulary: the consequences of being late for work/class; the importance of being on time; and, when giving excuses for being late, the positive impact of being very polite as well as the consequences of being perceived as being inappropriate or rude.

## Conclusion

In addition to improving their English, the late-note policy will not only help discipline students for being late to class, but also allow them to join classes already in progress without creating a disruption. In this way, the late student will save face and the teacher will be able to carry on with the class as if nothing had happened!

## Appendices

The appendices are available from the online version of this article at <[jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare](http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare)>.

# Famous Stories Short Play

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## Quick Guide

- » **Keywords:** *Drama, play, famous stories*
- » **Learner English Level:** *Pre-intermediate and above*
- » **Learner Maturity:** *High school, university*
- » **Preparation Time:** *15 minutes*
- » **Activity Time:** *90 minutes*
- » **Materials:** *Blackboard, blank A4 paper, scissors*

As a review activity, groups of students adapt a well-known story and turn it into a play that they perform in front of the class. Target language from past lessons is given to students to use in the play. Recently, drama activities have begun to gain weight in the language classroom as they have been found to assist L2 learning (Barbee, 2014). These activities can range from short roleplays to longer play productions. Through the process of writing a play, students make use of the language they know to create a story that can be understood by the audience. Performing a play has also been found to improve speaking skills such as fluency and pronunciation (Barbee, 2014).

This activity can be done as a review lesson. Students are given target language they have encountered in the past and are then asked to fit the language into a story they know. The goal of this activity is to turn the story into a play and enact it. This is a guide for the preparation lesson, which takes one full 90-minute class, and performances are done a week later.

## Preparation

**Step 1:** You will need five strips of paper for each group of four or five students in your class, so cut out enough strips of paper.

**Step 2:** Choose target language from previous lessons and write something on each strip of paper. All strips of paper should have different words or expressions written.

## Procedure

**Step 1:** Brainstorm names of famous stories and write them on the board. They can include Japanese stories.

**Step 2:** Circle the most popular story from the list.

**Step 3:** Ask who the characters of the story are and write down the names on the board.

**Step 4:** Put students into groups of four or five.

**Step 5:** Give each group five strips of paper that you have prepared.

**Step 6:** Tell the students that they should turn the story into a play lasting between five and seven minutes that they will perform the following week. As all words or expressions on the paper strips have to be used in the play, students should make changes to the original storyline to make the language fit in the story. Tell them each person is required to speak for about the same length of time during the performance. Encourage them to memorise their lines as much as possible.

**Step 7:** Give students about an hour to work on the script. Monitor and encourage students to be creative.

**Step 8:** After an hour, give students the rest of the class time to rehearse.

**Step 9:** At the end of the class, remind students to use their own time to memorise the script and rehearse.

## Conclusion

In order to give a good performance, students have to learn to work together and assist each other. I have once modified this activity and given it as an end-of-term assignment to first-year university students and received a lot of positive feedback. Through working collaboratively with others, I noticed that the students became more autonomous learners. It also helped the shy students to gain more confidence in speaking English. It is a great way to wrap up the term on a high note.

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# Goldilocks in the Dock: Using Fairytales to Create Mock Trials.

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## Quick Guide

- » **Keywords:** *Legal vocabulary, communicative activity, reinforcement*
- » **Learner English level:** *Low-intermediate to high-intermediate*
- » **Learner maturity:** *University or higher*
- » **Preparation Time:** *30 minutes*
- » **Activity Time:** *60-90 minutes*
- » **Materials:** *Multiple copies of three or four fairy tales.*

I encourage students to follow news bulletins in English. Many news stories concern the judicial system and require specialized vocabulary to understand them. To this end, I introduce around 15 words (see Appendix) over three or four classes to enable students to make sense of court stories.

In this activity, the students have to create a mock trial based on a fairy tale. It contains two main elements: explaining a fairy tale to other students and scripting and performing the mock trial. In both cases, students are focused primarily on communication rather than on form, but they are encouraged to use the target vocabulary.

It is helpful if the class has already performed a more typical mock trial (e.g., one where a student is charged with shoplifting), so they are familiar with the format of the activity.

## Preparation

**Step 1:** Source four or five common fairy tales and adapt them as necessary to remove any overly complex language and to ensure they are of a suitable length.

## Procedure

**Step 1:** Divide the class into groups of at least six students to fill all the roles mentioned below in Step 3. Give each group a copy of a fairy tale (e.g., Goldilocks, Hansel and Gretel). The group reads

their story together and the teacher moves between the groups quizzing each one about their particular fairy tale in an effort to ensure that every member of the group understands the story completely.

**Step 2:** The students form new groups comprising at least one member from each of the previous groups. Ideally, each person in the new group will have read a different fairy tale. The students then tell each other their fairy tales in English, preferably without reading from the paper.

**Step 3:** The students return to their original groups. They are asked to create a mock trial based on their fairy tale. They have to decide who is on trial and what he or she is charged with. They also choose who will play the following roles: defendant, judge, prosecution lawyer, defence lawyer, prosecution witness, and defense witness. The mock trials should be between 6 and 10 minutes long, and each will begin with the judge announcing the charge (e.g., “Goldilocks is charged with theft and criminal damage”).

**Step 4:** The students script their roles and rehearse the mock trials.

**Step 5:** Each group performs in front of the class. Because of Step 2, the students should be familiar with all the fairy tales, enabling them to better understand the other groups’ mock trials.

**Step 6:** The audience acts as the jury for each trial and returns a verdict.

### Conclusion

This activity engages students from start to finish, and using the language creatively helps them to learn it. The trial activity is also a chance to reinforce the target vocabulary—around 15 words—introduced in previous classes (see Appendix). A bonus is that the exercise is light-hearted, so students are likely to feel relaxed, and as a result will hopefully be more disposed to language acquisition.

## [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](mailto:outside-the-box@jalt-publications.org) • Web: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/outside-the-box>

## Farewell – Abayô – L’Chaim!

Poet and playwright Terayama Shûji directed a movie in 1971 entitled *Toss Your Books and Hit the Streets* (書を捨てよ町へ出よう) about one young man’s search for meaning in the midst of our materialistic and pleonectic society. It is definitely a work of its time, but despite its heady idealism there may be a message for our profession, or to the expat teacher in general.

As teachers, it is our obligation to instruct the youth in *The Ways of the World*. The supreme irony, however, is that it is difficult to imagine a realm more separate from society than Academia. This goes not only for L2 acquisition, but pretty much all fields. In other words, the Tower may not be Ivory, but it still puts you in the clouds. Sometimes, then, it is necessary to touch ground. After all, very few

of our students will join us in the Tower, and so it pays to know a little bit of what is in store for them down below.

We are here to labor and to build careers, and I am not criticizing this. At the same time, there are opportunities for us to build our knowledge outside of the Academy. During summer vacation, try working at a part-time job. Work outdoors if possible, or maybe in a small/medium-sized business. Your social experience can only enhance your teaching, and improve your *Nihongo*. You may even make new friends. If the late Terayama-sensei had one message, it was never let your careerism get in the way of valuable experience.

And on this note, *Outside the Box/Off the Wall* is shuttering. It has been an extremely rewarding five years, and an extra thanks goes to those who have contributed, and the TLT staff who have kept me on my toes to make this column more readable.

Keep your nose to the wind and your powder dry!

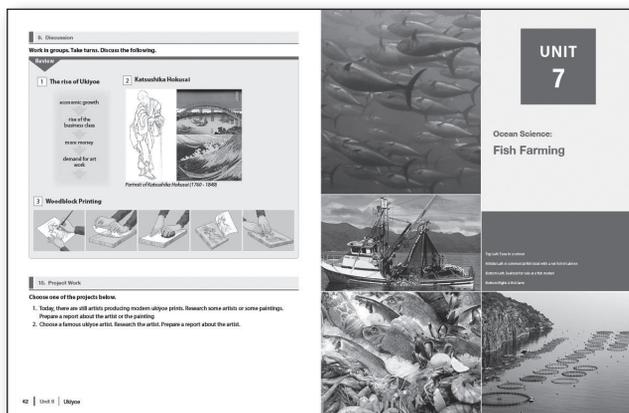
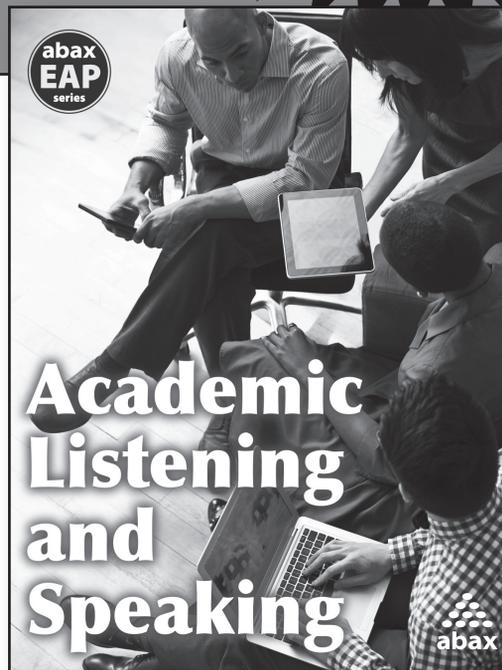
# Academic Listening & Speaking 1 / 2 / 3

by Alastair Graham-Marr and Ben Tutcher

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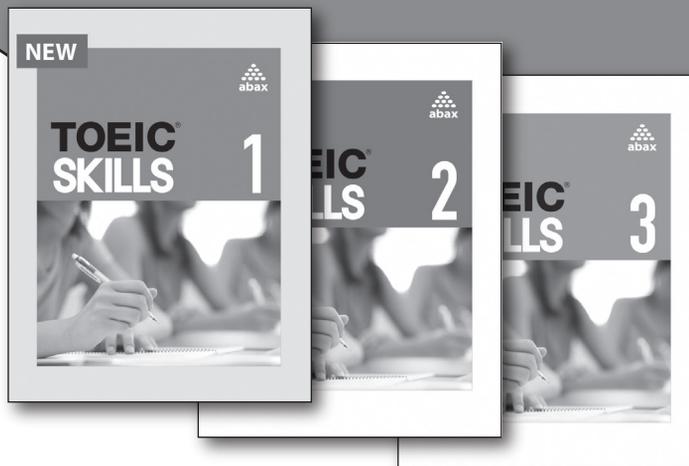
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## Edo Forsythe

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.

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## Quizlet Live: The Classroom Game Now Taking the World by Storm

Gary Wolff

Meiji University

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### Background

Smartphones consume a large part of university students' time, but are used primarily as tools for social networking and gaming. Therefore, smartphones can become a distraction, especially with the introduction of exciting new apps like Pokemon GO. However, students can be introduced to educational apps and shown how more productive use of their smartphones can help improve their academic studies (Cochrane, 2015).

By now, most teachers have already heard of or used Quizlet, the popular online education platform introduced in 2007. This was recognized by SimilarWeb (2016) as the fastest growing U.S. education site in 2015, with over 36 million average monthly visits. In Spring 2016, the Quizlet design team added a new game called Quizlet Live to their repertoire. The new in-class, team-based learning game randomly groups students into teams to compete against other teams using any of the millions of Quizlet vocabulary study sets. Using their computers or mobile devices, team members race to match all the vocabulary terms with their definitions, and the first team to match all 12 correctly wins. For about six weeks, Quizlet Live was beta tested with 50,000 teachers and 1,000,000 students with rave reviews from both teachers and students and was officially introduced in April. In this article I would like to share my own experience using Quizlet Live in my classrooms, which hopefully will assist other EFL teachers interested in doing the same.

### Playing the Game

To begin the Quizlet Live game, the teacher clicks the purple "Live" button in any Quizlet study set with at least 12 terms and then displays the teacher's game screen on the classroom projector screen.

A minimum of six students with their computers or mobile devices go to the Quizlet Live webpage and type in the 6-digit *join* code along with their first name. Students are encouraged to type in their real first name so that they will be able to easily find their other teammates. If there is more than one student with the same first name, they can also add the first initial of their last name.

As students join the game, their names will be displayed along the right side of the Quizlet Live webpage. The system randomly groups students into teams of 3-4, with each team given an animal name. Animal team names have been translated in Quizlet Live into a handful of languages, including Japanese, so if the study set you are playing the game with has either terms or definitions in Japanese, the animal team names are written in katakana (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Screenshot of Quizlet Live team names.

The beauty of this arrangement is that it allows students to make new friends and to collaborate and communicate with other students whom perhaps they have never even talked to before. Because

learners of all levels can contribute to the victory of their team, the team dynamic of Quizlet Live provides a fun, competitive environment which can be a positive experience for all students, compared to other games which might embarrass lower-level learners (Quizlet, n.d.). This instant, random selection of team members also prevents students from having to wait to be chosen in any embarrassing popularity contest.

Students then move around the class to find their other team members as displayed on the screen. After the teacher starts the game, teams race to match all the terms with their definitions. Students are required to collaborate, as only one student per team has the correct answer displayed on their device. The first team to match all 12 terms correctly in a row wins. However, one wrong answer will send a team back to the start. Thus, unlike some other games, Quizlet Live encourages accuracy over speed, rewarding teams that take their time, reach consensus by consulting their teammates, and consistently choose correct answers.

Meanwhile, a color-coded leaderboard on the classroom projector screen (Figure 2) displays the real-time progress of each team as they race toward 12 correct answers. Immediately after the game finishes, Quizlet Live displays a review feature for the teacher to highlight vocabulary terms that were most frequently matched correctly and incorrectly, providing excellent feedback on which terms students should review for the next class. There is also an option to shuffle teams, which I usually do after a few games are played, to give students another chance to socialize and meet even more students. More details, including two videos on how to use Quizlet Live, can be found on their website.



Figure 2. Quizlet Live leaderboard (Quizlet, n.d.).

### Student Feedback

I have used Quizlet Live primarily with four of my technical English classes of third-year university engineering students, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Only a few students expressed regret on minor matters, such as their team never winning or their having trouble joining the game due to technical issues related to connecting to the university’s spotty Wi-Fi network. Many students commented that they enjoyed the game so much, they wanted to play it more frequently than we did.

A post-game, five-question survey using a four-point Likert scale (N=96) confirmed the students’ enjoyment of Quizlet Live (Figure 3). The percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed that the game helped them memorize the technical vocabulary was 95.8%. Over 94% said that it helped them get a better score on the Program-wide Test on Reading (PWT-R), a department-administered technical vocabulary test. 94.8% said it made the classroom learning atmosphere more exciting. 75.0% said it motivated them to study English harder in the future. Finally, 93.7% said they enjoyed learning English with their mobile device.

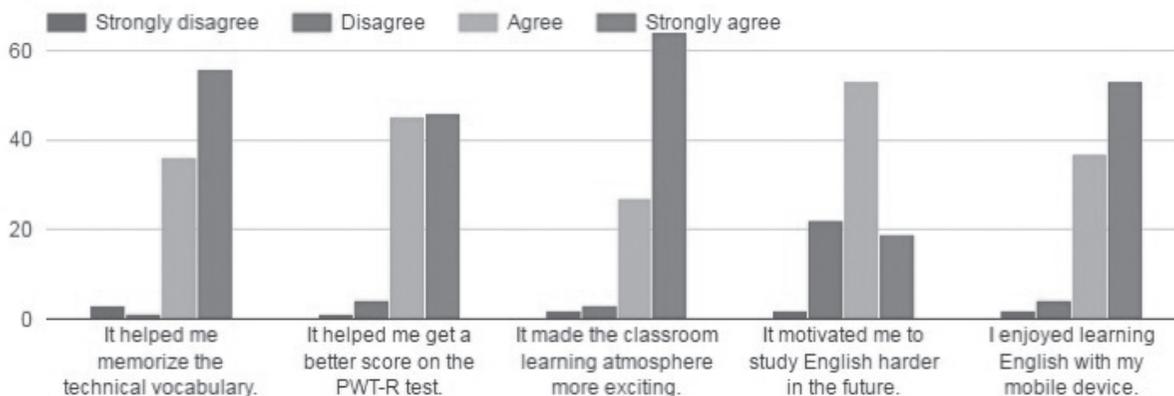


Figure 3. Quizlet Live student survey results.

In a final separate question, students were asked to share their overall satisfaction with the Quizlet Live game on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being “No good; a waste of time” and 10 being “Grrreat!” Over 84% of the students gave the game an 8, 9, or 10 rating (Figure 4).

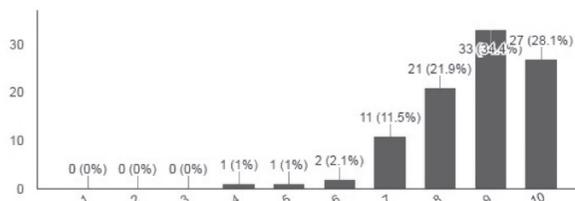


Figure 4. Quizlet Live overall student satisfaction.

## Conclusion

Quizlet Live was designed to bring fresh energy into the classroom, and not only helps students enhance vocabulary skills, but learn teamwork and communication skills as well. By combining studying with an exciting social game, Quizlet Live motivates students to start seeing autonomous study as a way to prepare for the game and thereby increases the effectiveness of their classroom participation (Quizlet, 2016). This fun, interactive learning experience in turn appears to have the spill-over effect of creating a positive attitude shift among many students that they can be successful in their language learning and not view it as such a daunting task.

My experience with Quizlet Live and the Quizlet learning tool in general compares favorably with Lander's (2015) study of 485 foreign language students at a medium-sized private university in southern Japan. In this study, Lander (2015) found that a simple online tool like Quizlet can not only improve test scores and vocabulary acquisition through technology, but also change the mind-set of language learners from a negative to a more positive stance in a comparatively short period of time. It has been a real thrill to see my university students use this new game because they truly love it! I can honestly say I have never seen this same degree of excitement for a classroom language game during my entire quarter-century of teaching Japanese learners of English. Quizlet Live is, in effect, the Venn diagram intersection of mobile language learning, vocabulary retention, and student motivation. Although so far I have experimented only with my university engineering and science students, because vocabulary acquisition is an integral element of most language classes, I will likely be soon introducing the exciting Quizlet Live game to my other EFL classes as well. To get

started using Quizlet Live in your classrooms, visit the Quizlet website today.

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**Editor's Note:** With the fall semester underway, Quizlet Live provides a way for teachers to assess their students' progress through the materials in a fun and engaging way. Calls for proposals for JALTCALL 2017 and PanSIG 2017 are open soon, so consider submitting a proposal to share your ed-tech experiences with your fellow teachers at these wonderful events. Also, many of you will attend this year's JALT International conference this month and will come home with many new tools for your language teaching kit. Add Quizlet Live to your toolbox to keep your students—and your classrooms—Wired!

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## 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.

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This month's column features Robert Andrew's review of *Four Corners Book 1* and Soren Leaver's evaluation of Reading Explorer 1.

## Four Corners Book 1

[Jack C. Richards & David Bolke. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. pp. vii + 154. ¥2,850. ISBN: 978-0-521-12615-1.]

Reviewed by Robert Andrews, Kyoto Sangyo University

**F**our Corners Book 1 is a four-skills EFL textbook in a four-book series for teaching American English to adult learners. The series follows the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001) from A1 (beginner/basic) to B1+ (intermediate), with *Four Corners Book 1* pitched at the A1 level.

The Student's Book consists of twelve topic-based units consisting of four two-page lessons labeled A, B, C and D. The units are bookended with a warm-up section which introduces the topic of the unit, and a wrap-up which offers a topic review and a suggested *real world* extension activity. Each activity is helpfully labelled with an intended dynamic such as *Pair Work*, *Group Work*, or *Class Activity*. The activities are distributed across the four skills. Speaking is strongly emphasized, with six activities per unit, three listening activities (including pronunciation), a reading activity, and a writing activity.

The textbook follows a grammar syllabus with Lessons A and C introducing structures inductively, in which "the learner studies examples and from these examples derives an understanding of the rule" (Thornbury, 1999, p. 49). A typical example is Lesson A of Unit 6, in which students initially

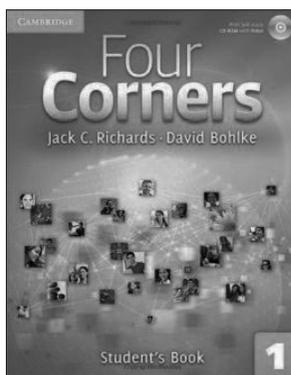
use "What is her job?" and are then introduced to the more natural construction, "What does Lucia do?" in the *Language In Context* section (p. 56). The following grammar section consists of examples and controlled practice of the target form, before the lesson moves on to progressively freer speaking activities. Lesson B in each unit also has a functional target, for example, asking for someone's number (p. 58). This is presented in the *Interactions* section, which is then practiced in the following *Listening* and *Speaking* sections. These lesson structures—presentation of contextualized form and controlled practice becoming progressively freer—suggest the PPP methodology (Willis & Willis, 1996, p. v).

Lesson D in each unit introduces reading and writing. These activities give students the opportunity to consolidate what they have learnt in the previous lessons as well as to practice their literacy skills. In this lesson, some of the most up-to-date material and tasks appear, as many of the reading and writing tasks are designed to look like websites or blog posts.

One strength of the textbook is the use of CEFR *can do* statements, such as "I can ask for and tell the time" (p. 39), at the end of each lesson. This provides clear aims and assessment for teachers and learners. Another strength is *In the Real World* on the wrap-up page. Students are encouraged to use the unit's learning outcomes in real life, such as by browsing English websites to research famous people or read magazines, thus breaking through the classroom walls and allowing some learner autonomy. Furthermore, the textbooks include an excellent self-study CD-ROM with vocabulary, grammar and listening activities, and explanations.

At my university, I taught material from Book 1, as a trial, to four elementary classes on topics related to work and hobbies, then gave students a survey in which they could compare *Four Corners* to their regular textbook and add any additional comments. The students generally responded positively to the activities, particularly the classroom activity in which they had to ask their classmates if they knew anyone who worked in specific occupations.

In addition to the Student's Books, there are Teacher's Editions, Workbooks and a DVD-ROM



classroom presentation software called *Classware*, which allows teachers to present the textbook pages, audio and video using a projector or interactive whiteboard. These components are both a strength and a weakness of the *Four Corners* series. For teachers who have access to them, if they or their teaching institutions can afford the expense, they are excellent. However, without them, students will have no listening scripts or audio recordings for independent study. Also, potentially frustrating for teachers who have to rely on the audio CDs, there are no track numbers in the textbook.

In terms of content, I was concerned that the textbook used very few authentic materials. The listening sections used unnatural-sounding pedagogic language, and little variance in accents beyond general American. Consequently, the listening exercises were considered not very challenging, and overall a majority of students preferred the audio of their current textbook. In addition, the layout and illustrations, while attractive and popular with my students, would probably only be suitable for young adults rather than all adults as the series claims.

In summary, I can recommend *Four Corners* to teachers who can afford the extra components and whose students would like an attractive and unthreatening, albeit imperfect, introductory textbook.

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## East Shikoku Chapter Project

### Call for Stories: Raising Bilingual/Bicultural Children Outside Japan's Urban Corridor

Deadline: November 4, 2016

Editors: Darren Lingley and Paul Daniels

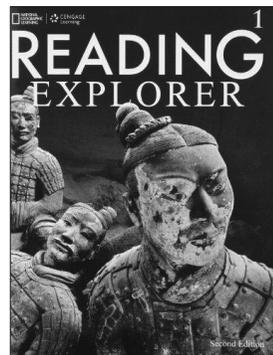
<https://esjalt.org>

## Reading Explorer 1 (Second Edition)

[Nancy Douglas & David Bohlke. Boston: MA, 2015. pp. x + 176. ¥2,770. ISBN: 978-1-305-25452-7.]

Reviewed by Soren Leaver, Fukuoka University

**R**eading Explorer 1 is the second in a six-level textbook series for use in content-based language teaching. It is a resource for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners to develop literacy skills, vocabulary knowledge, and global awareness. The textbook's topic-based structure provides the learner with a means of studying English, while at the same time exploring stories about natural, social, and historical phenomena.



Each of *Reading Explorer 1*'s twelve units contain two lessons. Textual content is presented in reading passages and comprehension sections. Unit themes and target vocabulary form the basis for assessment in cloze passages, multiple-choice questions, true-or-false statements, as well as exercises involving gap-fill, information classification, and term matching. Many of the comprehension exercises include notes indicating the kind of information being assessed or details about word usage. This provides the reader with a deeper understanding of the textbook's pedagogical aims, possibly encouraging greater learner autonomy.

The textbook presents pictorial content in the form of photographic images adapted from National Geographic magazine, and through video. Videos are accessible through the textbook's supplementary DVD, or online at MyELT ([myelt.heinle.com](http://myelt.heinle.com)), National Geographic images help the learner contextualize reading passages, while videos offer real-world examples of unit themes.

One of the biggest changes between the textbook's first and second edition is the inclusion of online content. After creating an account and logging in to MyELT, learners are given access to audio files of the textbook's reading passages, as well as a variety of self-study activities. Native English

speakers are featured on the audio files. Self-study activities allow learners autonomous means of practicing the textbook's target vocabulary, as well as a drag-and-drop format for inputting answers. My-ELT also saves information regarding the date and total amount of time users spend on the website. It also tracks the percentage of correct answers and the number of times users attempt exercises.

I used *Reading Explorer 1* in combination with another textbook to teach high school lower-level EFL learners. We met twice a week for fifty-minute periods in a classroom without Internet access. Since many of my students also did not have a personal computer at home, we used the supplemental DVD in lieu of online content.

Most of my learners enjoyed *Reading Explorer 1*'s topics and reading passages, and found its comprehension exercises challenging. The variation in the format of comprehension exercises throughout the textbook helped keep my learners engaged. On the other hand, they did not enjoy the broader reading skills it presented. In particular, they did not see the value in learning how to read a passage for its gist, make inferences, or skim.

Overall, I would recommend using *Reading Explorer 1* for content-based instruction. Each textbook in the series is labeled according to its level in the Common European Framework for Language Learning (Council of Europe, 2001). This makes it easy to choose an appropriate textbook for a given group of learners. In addition, the textbook's reading passages are substantial enough to be challenging, but brief enough to hold the reader's attention. Target vocabulary within passages appears in red, helping it stand out from the rest of the text. Furthermore, units titled *Amazing Animals*, *Travel and Adventure*, and *The Power of Music*, accord well with the interests of many teenage and young adult learners. The textbook is also visually appealing enough that one could imagine the reader keeping it well beyond its intended period of use.

*Reading Explorer 1* is also a good tool for eliciting readers' schema (Nunan, 1999, p. 133), or background knowledge. Liu (2015) found that activating learners' schema prior to reading significantly improves their comprehension (p. 1353). *Reading Explorer's* generative material activates readers' schema in three ways. First, the provocative full-page photo at the beginning of each unit stimulates related images in the reader's mind. Second, the consciousness-raising questions and pre-reading tasks help the reader draw connections between unit topics and their own life experience. Third, critical-thinking exercises encourage the reader to formulate and express opinions related to unit themes.

One disadvantage of using *Reading Explorer 1* is that it does not have a bilingual glossary. Also, unlike its predecessor, the second edition does not include a headwords list or review sections. Moreover, for students to access online content, they have to be able to create an account, as well as learn how to use the website. Lastly, while the second edition of the textbook claims to have updated material, this author found much of that update incremental. With the shift to online content, *Reading Explorer 1's* Second Edition moves in a more utilitarian direction.

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## Recently Received

Steve Fukuda & Julie Kimura

[pub-review@jalt-publications.org](mailto:pub-review@jalt-publications.org)



A list of texts and resource materials for language teachers available for book reviews in *TLT* and *JALT Journal*. Publishers are invited to submit complete sets of materials to the column editors 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>.

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

Contact: Steve Fukuda — [pub-review@jalt-publications.org](mailto:pub-review@jalt-publications.org)

*English for Life* — Various Authors. London, UK: HarperCollins Publishing, 2013. [3-level skills-based series with each title focusing on one skill incl. workbook, online resources, and downloadable audio].

\* *English through Drama: Creative Activities for Inclusive ELT Classes* — Hillyard, S. Crawley, UK: Helbling Languages, 2016. [Handbook for using drama activities in elementary to advanced classes].

- \* **Focus on Basic English for Communication** — Higuchi, C., & Fukutomi, K. Tokyo: Shohakusha, 2016. [24-unit course for beginner level university students incl. teacher's manual, downloadable audio, and self-study audio CD].
- Get Ready for IELTS** — Various Authors. London, UK: HarperCollins Publishing, 2016. [12-unit examination preparation flipped learning course for pre-intermediate to intermediate students incl. self-study audio CD, workbook, online resources, and teacher's guide w/audio CD].
- ! **Global Connections** — Morikawa, S., & Harrington, L. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2015. [14-unit listening and speaking skills course incl. DVD, teacher's manual, and classroom audio CD].
- \* **IELTS Testbuilder (2nd Ed.)** — McCarter, S., & Ash J. London: Macmillan Education, 2015. [Examination preparation course suitable for students at the Band 5.5-7.0 level incl. audio CDs and answer keys w/ explanations].
- ! **Issues Now in the News (3rd Ed.)** — Worcester, A., & Williams, B. M. Seoul, Korea: Compass Publishing, 2014. [20-unit reading course using selected material from VOA incl. downloadable audio, answer key, and teacher's manual].
- ! **Life** — Dummet, P., Hughes, J., & Stephenson, H. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2015. [Six-level integrated-skills series using content from National Geographic to promote curiosity, develop 21st-century skills, and critical thinking skills incl. e-book, online workbook, audio CD, classroom presentation tool, and teacher's guide].
- Mindfulness** — Onjohji, Y., Nagita, R., Kashihara, Y., & Inoue, M. Tokyo, Japan: Nan'un-do, 2016. [15-unit reading and listening course centered on developing personal and environmental awareness incl. audio CD and teacher's manual].
- \* **My New York Sketchbook Version 2** — Mitsufoji, K., & Uesugi, M. Tokyo: Sanshushya, 2015. [20-unit reading course incl. online teacher's manual, YouTube channel®, and classroom audio CD].
- ! **Read to Write (2nd Ed.)** — Moore, D., & Barker, D. Nagoya, Japan: BTB Press, 2014. [Writing course for Japanese students on basic topics such as self-introductions and school life incl. downloadable checklists, translations, and teacher's guide].
- ! **Speaking of Speech: Level 2** — LeBeau, C. Tokyo: Macmillan LanguageHouse, 2015. [12-unit presentation skills course incl. DVD and teacher's manual].
- \* **TOEIC® Skills** — Graham-Marr, A., Anderson, J., & Howser R. Tokyo: Abax, 2015. [3-level series designed as a test preparation course incl. online teacher's notes and audio CDs].
- \* **Vocabulary for Law** — Racine, J. P., & Nakanishi, T. Tokyo, Nan'un-do, 2016. [10-unit course using corpus-driven vocabulary incl. quizzes and vocabulary notebook].
- Writing in English is Easy** — Gallagher, C. USA: Createspace, 2016. [6-unit writing course for beginner to intermediate students centered on task-based and communicative language techniques incl. online teacher's guide].

### Books for Teachers (reviewed in JALT Journal)

Contact: Greg Rouault – [jj-reviews@jalt-publications.org](mailto:jj-reviews@jalt-publications.org)

**Complexity in Classroom Foreign Language Learning Motivation** — Sampson, R. J. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2016.

\* **LETs and NESTs: Voices, Views and Vignettes** — Copland, F., Garton, S., & Mann, S. (Eds.). London: British Council, 2016. [on collaboration practices between local English teachers and native English speaking teachers].

**Positive Psychology in SLA** — MacIntyre, P. D., Gregersen, T., & Mercer, S. (Eds.). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2016.

## [JALT PRAXIS] TEACHING ASSISTANCE



### David McMurray

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

Email: [teach-assist@jalt-publications.org](mailto:teach-assist@jalt-publications.org)

This issue's Teaching Assistance takes the form of a case study in which Yuta Kawamura, a graduate student teaching assistant, describes how TAs can have beneficial but also negative effects on student motivation in college-level language courses.

The English skill levels of next year's cohort of university entrance exam applicants to Japanese universities will likely be wider than previous years. This is because universities are struggling to maintain enrollment numbers and so are increasing the number of overseas applicants and allowing lower-scoring students to pass their entrance examinations.

Teachers will therefore have to seek new and more efficient ways to contend with mixed-level classes once this diverse range of students comes through the door. At first blush, teachers would likely want to adapt to this change by decreasing the number of students in each class or by creating a wider range of classes to match the various levels of ability. Facing decreased budgets, however, administrators will be hard-pressed to increase class sizes and offer a one-size-fits-all open class.

A more creative response to the issue for institutions that allow just about every applicant to enroll is to implement new ways to support underperforming stu-

dents by bringing in teaching assistants, student assistants, and learning assistants. Universities that are able to attract overseas students by offering content-based courses taught solely in English could also benefit from hiring TAs to support the teacher. While TAs can be vital sources of support for teachers, knowing how to manage them can be tricky. For many TAs, the tasks of planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling classroom environments can be overwhelming. The author shares several tips on making the partnership work.



**Figure 1.** The author helps a student to speak up in class.

## Teaching Assistance from TAs

Yuta Kawamura

*The International University of Kagoshima Graduate School*

Typically TAs set up the electronic equipment and move desks, chairs and whiteboards for a particular language teaching activity. The TA can be asked to take responsibility for playing music, setting up realia used by a teacher following the direct method, distributing handouts and organizing mid-term examination papers. These are essential tasks in the smooth running of lessons to ensure that when students arrive they can get on with learning as quickly as possible (Hodge, 2015). Regular duties include taking attendance, administering faculty development surveys, and disseminating and checking short tests. At my institution the TA cannot grade or evaluate students but they can participate in fieldwork and internship programs. The TA can be asked to summarize and create supporting teaching materials to help students to understand the lesson at hand.

The TA can also take on more important roles in the language classroom when the teacher seeks more assistance and shares lesson plans. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes for students with diverse levels of communicative ability, TAs can be asked by the instructor to assist students who scored low or high on placement tests. Students with low language proficiency levels may need additional assistance to keep up to speed with their peers. Those at the high end sometimes need motivational support to keep on learning. However, I am wary of this suggestion because Blatchford, Russell, & Webster (2012) found that underperforming students who received a lot of TA support made significantly less academic progress than similar students who received little or no TA support. The researchers, based at the UCL Institute of Education and the University of East London, suggested that the principal teacher should be spending more time with students at the low end, otherwise they could be negatively affected by the very intervention intended to help them.

Other non-traditional roles for the TA in the university language classroom can occur when the teacher doesn't speak the students' native language. In these situations some lower level students may fall behind in the class. A Japanese-speaking TA can provide individual assistance without disrupting the teacher's approach. High schools in Japan generally only have Japanese students, but university classrooms are more diverse, with increasing numbers of students from Asia who speak a variety of languages. Foreign TAs can provide support in their native languages.

Foreign students often work as TAs, but their working hours should not exceed 40 hours in one month and they are subject to Japan's Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act. Hourly salaries for TAs in Japan range from 1,000 to 2,000 yen, commensurate with one's academic degree. These jobs provide graduate students with training opportunities that can help them become researchers and develop leadership roles in university education. I was hired to be a TA for a comparative culture course with 45 Japanese and Chinese students. The course was taught entirely in English by a native English speaker using an imported textbook printed only in English. Freshmen majoring in intercultural studies and music registered for the course. The music majors who signed up seemed underprepared for college level English.

Before the course got under way I consulted with the instructor about the syllabus. During the first class, I kept two goals in mind. The first was to alleviate stressful situations for students and

the second was to provide a behind-the-scenes communication link to the teacher. For example, I walked around the classroom and momentarily stood beside each student while the instructor was teaching at the front of the class. At that time, I asked the student simple questions such as “How are you doing?” or, “It’s a good day, isn’t it?” With this rapport, I would follow up with: “Do you understand that word on the whiteboard?” or, “Do you understand this sentence in the textbook?” I approached each student gently. This doesn’t mean the TA is only helping students to learn. I felt the TA is expected to reduce stress and disruption in class. I achieved the second goal by replying to the students’ questions using only English or both English and Japanese. These music students didn’t appear to understand this college-level English class, so I planned to help them using fundamental junior high school level English. They have to pass other English class credits required for their university diploma, so as their TA, I thought I could help them settle into this all-English language class.

The instructor began the first lesson using task-based methodology and communicative techniques. He showed the class a picture and asked one music major, “What are they doing?” The student froze. The teacher had pointed to a picture with various couples holding hands. The intercultural studies majors could easily answer, however they spoke in scarcely audible voices because they didn’t have the confidence to speak up or didn’t want to embarrass the music major student. In this situation, I felt the most supportive role of the TA would be to intervene and help individuals to understand and complete tasks without stress.

When I help English majors, I try to help certain students to fully express themselves in English. Some highly competent students tell me that they are afraid the teacher might say “Pardon?” or, “Can you say that again?” when they try to question or answer in English. Especially if the teacher is speaking in front of a large class it can be embarrassing. Students say that situations like this make them feel like “I can’t speak English.” However, the teacher can’t always stop the flow of a large class to individually teach one student. Most teachers need to stick to the approved syllabus.

When university students can’t understand what their teacher expects them to do or what a particular section of the textbook is about, they ask me directly for help. Occasionally looking at me with an exasperated look of frustration, I feel they are just begging me for the correct answer. I tend to spoon-feed and help these students individually, so they can get the task at hand done quickly and to

help keep things going smoothly for the instructor. At times, however, this inhibits the student’s motivation to learn and study. It certainly goes against the intended effect of an instructor who likes giving hints or vague directions on how to solve problems to get students to think more creatively. To prevent this mismatch from happening too often it is important to create a real teaching partnership between the TA and the instructor.

Although TAs should not deviate from the way the class is conducted by the teacher, at some crucial times it seems important to me to speak in Japanese or to build the confidence of some students. It takes time for some students to realize that their English is in fact good enough to be understood and to believe in themselves from the bottom of their hearts. I enjoy helping these students on a one-to-one basis in English. As a TA, I try not to get into the position of only giving answers or translating into Japanese what the teacher has just said in English. I try to encourage students to ask questions or to answer the teacher in English. I avoid undermining the confidence of students. By reducing their worries I can help them to take ownership of their language learning. The TA and teacher can complement each other’s roles, especially when the TA is offered the opportunity to play a key role in teaching students.

## References

- Blatchford, P., Russell, A., & Webster, R. (2012). *Reassessing the impact of teaching assistants: How research challenges practice and policy*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Hodge, K. (2015, April 1). How teaching assistants can make a real difference in the classroom. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2015/apr/01/teaching-assistants-classrooms-research-impact>

## JALT LD SIG

### The Learner Development Journal, Issue Two

#### Call for Papers

#### Qualitative Research and Learner Development

Deadline: February 7th, 2017

For details: <http://ld-sig.org>

Editors: Masuko Miyahara, Robert Croker,  
Patrick Kiernan, Chika Hayashi

## Writing with "Academic" Style

Loran Edwards

Ritsumeikan University

### A Word from the JALT PSG Coordinator

Possibly one of the hardest tasks that new (and old) writers face is the task of getting their writing to sound *academic*. A common myth is that academic writing is complex and hard to understand for people unfamiliar with the topic. However, when I read scholarly journals, the articles that stand out as well written are not the overly complex ones, but the ones that are clear, concise and easy to understand—not just by the experts, but by everyone. When I sit down to write an academic paper I realize that achieving this kind of clarity and simplicity is not an easy task. In order to write this column I culled through several websites concerned with writing stylistics. I've narrowed down their advice into four characteristics of academic writing that I believe can help you as a writer to *get a grip* on your academic writing style. I also recommend that you later take a closer look at the websites listed in the references to provide yourself with further help and inspiration as you proceed through your own journey with academic writing.

### Characteristics of Academic Writing

The purpose of academic writing is not entertainment, but to provide factual information on a given subject (Hubpages, 2013). That being said, aside from the information being presented in a body of writing, there are also stylistics, or characteristics of academic writing, that need to be adhered to as the educator or researcher presents their ideas to the reader. The four main characteristics of academic writing that need to be considered and adhered to are: *voice*, *clarity*, *hedging*, and *responsibility*.

#### Voice

The purpose of an academic paper is to present new information or ideas on a certain topic. Therefore, you should write in a confident, yet objective, voice. One of the first steps in doing this is to limit the use of "I" or "the author", and write in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person instead wherever possible. Refer to the authority of your work and your research rather than to your-

self. Also, be sure to choose your words and phrases carefully. They do not need to be complicated, but they do need to portray a high level of formality in their use. Try not to use slang or colloquialisms, and also avoid using contractions in your writing (Hubpages, 2013; De Montfort, 2016).

#### Clarity

It is easy to fall into the trap of using *academese* when writing academic papers. We have all read papers filled with convoluted phrases and complicated vocabulary; they may sound very smart, but in reality would be much more accessible if written with simple vocabulary and clear, linear phrasing. In 2014, Steven Pinker wrote a booklet for the *Chronicle of Higher Learning* titled, "Why Academics Stink at Writing." It provides an entertaining look at some of the reasons why writers fall into the *academese* trap, and is well worth reading if you are involved in academic writing.

A basic rule of thumb to give your writing clarity is to keep your vocabulary simple, avoid any vague words or phrases, and make certain that every word counts for something (De Montfort, 2016). The information presented in your paper should be understandable for a large audience, not just those familiar with your field or topic. Your writing should also be precise and supported by evidence. Any factual information, figures, or charts needed to understand the topic fully should be provided in your paper (Hubpages, 2016). However, also be cautious not to include too many graphics. If particular facts and figures can easily be explained in paragraph form within the writing, this often proves better than presenting the information through a graphic. An excess of graphics in your writing can have the effect of disrupting the flow of information in the paper, thus making it harder for the reader to concentrate and grasp the arguments you are presenting.

#### Hedging

Many believe that academic writing merely conveys facts and information. However, an important feature of academic writing, particularly within the humanities and social sciences, is the concept of cautious language, often called "hedging". For example, compare the following two sentences from Gillett (n.d.).

1. "It may be said that the commitment to some of the social and economic concepts was less strong than it is now."
2. "The commitment to some of the social and economic concepts was less strong than it is now."

The first sentence uses hedging by incorporating more of a suggestive tone; this is important as your writing should present your discussions in an objective manner. As an academic professional, your writing is contributing to a much wider debate surrounding your given topic, so your use of language must show that you are simply making suggestions within your selected field (De Montfort, 2016). For a more extensive list of words, phrases and examples regarding hedging, look under "Features of Academic Writing" at <http://www.uefap.com/writing> (Gillett, n.d.).

### Responsibility

In academic writing you are responsible for providing evidence to justify any claims that you make in your paper (Gillett, n.d.). Assumptions are not allowed and everything stated should be accompanied by accurate reporting of where you found the information or how you conducted your research. (Hubpages, 2013). One way to do this is by correctly citing your sources as you paraphrase and summarize your research. Within the fields of TESOL and Linguistics, papers should follow APA guidelines. For a more in-depth look at using the APA format, please see "The Writers' Workshop Quick APA Referencing Guide" (Gallagher, 2016) in the March issue of *TLT*.

### Conclusion

Academic writing is fundamentally different from other forms of writing and requires the writer to use a unique set of writing conventions. Learning to write in an academic style can be difficult, but as

with most things, it becomes easier with practice. If academic writing is new to you, or even if you would consider yourself an *old hand* at the process, there are a couple of techniques I recommend for improving your writing style. Firstly, read a lot! As you read various academic articles you will find yourself beginning to recognize and acquire the rhythm and language of academic writing. The second is to have a friend or colleague *outside* your field of expertise read your writing; if they can understand it, you can think of yourself as being on the right track. Finally, consider contacting the JALT Peer Support Group: a group of writers and reviewers available to help you improve your writing in the hope of publishing your work. We are here to help you—and your writing!

### References

- De Montfort University (2016). How to write in an academic style. Retrieved from <http://library.dmu.ac.uk/Support/Heat/index.php?page=488>
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- Gillett, A. (n.d.). Using English for academic purposes: A guide for students in higher education. Retrieved from <http://uefap.com/writing>
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## [JALT PRACTICE] DEAR TLT



### 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](mailto:dear-tlt@jalt-publications.org)

Dear TLT,

I really need your help! I was just asked by my department head to go as a chaperone on our school's annual study trip next spring. We have about 25 students going, and I'm at a loss over how to prepare them, especially as their English levels vary widely. They will all be doing homestays and taking English

classes during the mornings. What can I do to help get them get ready for a successful trip?

Sincerely,

Flummoxed in Fukuoka

Dear Flummoxed,

Many thanks for your query. It's an issue that every teacher who takes students abroad faces. Yes,

we have responsibilities for the students' safety and welfare, as well as for the smooth running of the program, but on top of that we also want our students to have a worthwhile experience that they'll not only remember, but also use as a stepping stone to further adventures.

So, there are a few issues we need to consider in planning a preparatory course. The obvious one is, of course, their English skills. You mentioned that their English levels vary widely, but this needn't be a hindrance. For one thing, their pre-trip motivation levels will be high as they'll no doubt be excited about going. Also, they will be going to a supportive environment where both homestay families and teachers will be experienced in helping such learners. Having said that, there are many ways you can help them prepare.

### Basic Conversation Skills

When we teach such a class, we usually focus a lot on building basic conversation skills. For example, take the classic dining table situation—what are students going to talk about? Well, since they are just getting to know their host families, they need to be able to talk about themselves and get to know their host family members. They should practice topics such as basic background information, families, hometowns, interests, likes and dislikes, entertainment, and so on.

They also need to be made aware of some key differences in speaking style. For example, they should do their best to avoid long silences by using repair strategies such as "Pardon?" (when someone speaks too fast), "I'm sorry, but I don't understand" (when they are lost), or "What does ~ mean?" (when they don't get a key word or phrase). Silence is interpreted differently in Japan than in many other countries. Here it's not that big a deal, as there are many instances when silence is appropriate (like when a *kohai* talks to a *sempai*). However, overseas silence is often seen as a sign of disinterest or rudeness. Take care about that!

Next, students need to be more active in conversations. This is a tough one, but if they can learn to give longer answers and talk about themselves from time to time without prompting, then it would make a world of difference. The key to this is learning how to answer implicit questions associated with any given topic. For example:

Q: Do you like sushi?

A: Yes, I eat it all the time.

Here, one implicit question was "How often do you eat it?" Other possible implicit questions are:

"What's your favorite/least favorite kinds?" "What's your favorite sushi restaurant?" or, "Why don't you like it?" All that students need to do is pick one or two of these and tack them onto their base answer. Longer answers are seen as friendlier and more communicative. They help students give the impression that they are really interested in chatting.

Similarly, students can practice more interactive conversation if they make it a hard and fast habit to also answer every question they ask someone themselves. This will show their partners that they are interested in sharing about themselves. This sort of initiative is a very friendly thing to do and will make for smoother interactions, like this:

Student: What do you usually do on weekends?

Host mother: Oh, I usually stay at home and relax. Maybe I'll do some shopping or watch a movie from time to time.

Student: Oh yeah? That sounds nice. I usually have to work at my part-time job.

Host mother: Really? So where do you work? ....

You get the idea. It's a simple little rule: just answer my own questions about myself! This will put them in a kind of "catch ball" back and forth rhythm that is the norm in English-speaking countries. Oh, and be sure to practice reaction expressions, such as "Oh really?" "Oh yeah?" or, "Wow! I see." This is an important aspect of friendly interaction.

Another activity is to get the students to tell a story about a fun/exciting/strange/scary experience they have had. They would have time to prepare their stories and look up any language they need, then tell and retell them to new partners. The idea is to give them confidence in being able to tell one or two stories about themselves in detail (where, when, who with, what happened), how they felt at the time, how they feel about it now, or what they learned from it. We think that stories about ourselves are a great way to break down barriers and start a friendship process.

### Resources

There are lots of resources out there that can help teachers to prepare these lessons. ESL websites such as Lanternfish ([bogglesworldesl.com](http://bogglesworldesl.com)) have many readymade lessons for travel English. Your local bookshop will have homestay English phrasebooks that can be used for dialogue practice. There are also many textbooks available, such as *American Homestay—Do's and Don'ts* (Someya, Ferrasci, and Murray, 2008) or *Communicate Abroad* (Cookson and Tajima, 2016).

## Cultural Portfolio

Another interesting activity is to have the students prepare a cultural portfolio before they go that helps them to really consider their own culture so that they can better understand the cultural differences they'll experience while abroad. You could have a set of about 15 different possible topics (such as Japanese, favorite meals, famous local places) but also allow them to choose their own topic that interests them. Then, they have to make a portfolio page which includes a picture and a write-up in English about the topic and the picture they chose. For example, one of our favorite topics is snack foods, and we might show pictures of dried squid, *kombu* seaweed, and *edamame*. Then we could talk about our first experiences with Japanese snack foods and what our favorites are, with a cultural mention that maybe we never would have thought that eating dried squid as a snack was possible back home! Encourage the students to take their portfolios along with them as something they can use to talk about their own culture with their host families or in class (but be sure to tell their language teacher that they've all prepared the portfolios so the teacher can try to incorporate them into their lessons).

Upon returning, you could have the students create another portfolio about the cultural items they encountered while abroad using similar topics, but not necessarily the same ones. This really gets the students thinking about the culture that they experienced and what really was different about it to them.

## The Cooking Challenge

Similarly, you could have the students plan to cook a Japanese meal for their host families while abroad. This is yet another way to both introduce their culture, and to compare it to the culture of the host country. They would have to choose a traditional Japanese dish and learn how to cook it before they leave. They would need to check what ingredients they can source in the country and take any with them that can't be bought there (though check the customs restrictions first!). Once there, they have to explain the dish, then prepare and serve it to their host families. This always provides a good discussion opportunity with their families.

From both a language and a cultural perspective, there are many ways you can help your students prepare for their big adventure. We hope a few of these suggestions will be helpful to you. Good luck, and safe travels!

## References

- Cookson, S. & Tajima, C. (2016). *Communicate abroad: Essential English for travel and study*. Tokyo: Cengage Learning.
- Someya, M., Ferrasci, F., & Murray, P. (2008). *American homestay—do's and don'ts*. Tokyo: Nan'Un-do.

## [JALT FOCUS] SIG FOCUS



### 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](mailto:sig-focus@jalt-publications.org) • Web: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/sig-news>

## The JALT Vocabulary SIG



**F**ounded in 2011, the JALT Vocabulary Special Interest Group (Vocab SIG) provides a forum for focused research and discussion related to vocabulary acquisition. We offer both teachers and researchers a place to connect regarding how learners improve vocabulary knowledge, how to test their knowledge, and how these theoretical aspects connect to classroom practice.

### Publications

The SIG produces three publications a year: a biannual bulletin and a yearly symposium proceedings.

The full symposium proceedings are available in the online journal *Vocabulary Learning and Instruction* (VLI) <<http://vli-journal.org>>. The journal also publishes longer articles based on empirical research in the field of vocabulary.

Our biannual publication is called the *Vocabulary Education and Research Bulletin* (VERB) which can be downloaded from our website (<http://jaltvocab.weebly.com>). Our latest issue includes an article by Stuart McLean and Brandon Kramer about a bilingual version of the New Vocabulary Levels Test and one by Philip Riccobono showing different usages of corpus linguistics in the classroom. Also included is a book review by Tomoko Ishii of *Working Memory in Second Language Acquisition and Processing* (Wen, Mota, & McNeill, 2015), with a focus on how it can be of use to vocabulary researchers. The next issue will come out in spring 2017, with the deadline for submissions on January 16, 2017. See the *Publications* page on our website for more information.

## Events

The Vocab SIG holds several events each year including an annual Vocabulary Symposium and a Vocabulary Colloquium. This year we held our Symposium at the Vocab@Tokyo 2016 conference at Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo. This was a continuation on the very successful Vocab@VIC conference held in 2013, and was the biggest conference dealing with the subject of vocabulary to come to Japan. Featured speakers included such worldwide experts in the field as Tess Fitzpatrick, Tom Cobb, Batia Laufer, Paul Nation, Diane Schmitt, Norbert Schmitt, and Yukio

Tono. There were over 100 individual sessions including poster presentations over a three-day period. The conference was well attended and generated a lot of new research and discussion—we were happy the SIG could be a sponsor. Look for our conference proceedings in the latest issue of the VLI Journal for papers from the event.

We also participate each year in the JALT PanSIG conference and have a SIG Forum at the JALT International conference where SIG members present their current research and teaching ideas as poster sessions.

## Grants

Since 2015 the Vocabulary SIG Grants Committee has awarded both research and conference grants. Up to three grants of either 50,000 or 100,000 yen are available to SIG members. These grants encourage new research in the field of vocabulary and help the recipients pay for conference costs and disseminate their research.

We hope you will consider joining the Vocabulary SIG and look forward to seeing you at one of our future events.

## JALT Vocabulary SIG info

- **Email:** [jaltvocab@gmail.com](mailto:jaltvocab@gmail.com)
- **Website:** [jaltvocab.weebly.com](http://jaltvocab.weebly.com)
- **Facebook:** [facebook.com/groups/236623256372419/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/236623256372419/)
- **Publications:** biannual bulletin VERB and conference proceedings in VLI Journal

# [JALT FOCUS] NOTICES



## 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](mailto:jalt-focus@jalt-publications.org) • Web: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/jalt-focus>

## 2016年第2回総会開催通知

### Notice of the Second 2016 JALT Ordinary General Meeting (OGM)

- 日時: 2016年11月27日(日)  
Date: November 27, 2016 (Sunday)
- 時間: 17:45 – 18:45  
Time: 5:45 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.
- 場所: 愛知県産業労働センター「ウインクあいち」、大ホール3階

Location: Main Hall 3F, Aichi Industry & Labor Center “WINC AICHI”

### 議案 / Agenda:

- 第1号議案 議長選出 / Item 1. Appointment of Chairperson
- 第2号議案 議事録署名人名選出 / Item 2. Determination of Signatories

- 第3号議案 平成28年度理事選挙の結果 / Item 3. Results of the 2016 National Officer Elections
- 第4号議案 その他の重要事項 / Item 4. Other Important Issues

\*11月初旬に、会員の皆様に議案の詳細と個別の不在投票へのリンク先をEメールでご案内いたします。

\*An email containing details of the agenda and a link to an individualized ballot will be sent to you during the first week of November.

Eメールがお手元に届きましたら、不在投票の方法に従って投票をしてください。

本総会は、特定非営利活動法人(NPO)としての地位を保つ為に必要なもので、過半数以上の会員の皆様による出席(定足数)をもって、正式に開催することができます。

幸い当学会では、会員の皆様に向けて電子投票システムを提供させていただいており、不在投票をしていただくことで、本総会の出席者としてみなすことができます。

お手数をおかけいたしますが、ご支援とご協力のほどよろしく申し上げます。

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

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

## New Associate Members (AM)

### iJapan, Co.Ltd.

iJapan, Co. Ltd. is a member of iGroup (Asia Pacific Limited). iGroup was established in



1983, operating throughout the Asia Pacific region, and it is the largest information provider in the region. We work closely with many international well-known publishers, covering medicine, science, social sciences, management sciences, education, and other subject fields.

### Our Products and Services

- Re-selling e-Journals, eBooks & Databases (Science, Nature, ACS, ASME, and so on)
- Publishing (Business Expert Press (USA) / Momentum Press (USA), iG Press (BKK))
- Library Automation (RFID)
- Re-selling Academic Plagiarism Detector (turnitin, iThenticate)

iJapan株式会社はiGroupのメンバーです。iGroupはアジア・パシフィックの出版小売業界において有数の企業体であり、全アジア及びオーストラリアを商圏とし14カ国で1,000人以上のスタッフを有しております。海外の著名な学術出版社の代理店としての活動や図書館関連の製品の取り扱いを行っており、現在、2,000以上の学校、大学、専門学校、研究所、病院、企業等において電子ジャーナル、電子ブック、データベース、Eラーニング・ソリューション、論文剽窃チェックサービスなどを利用いただいております。

## Eigo Live, LLC

www.eigolive.jp is a new and exciting e-learning system that improves students' English ability more effectively than any other system available in the market today, since it is based on human language acquisition neurological studies of the brain's Broca area that proves the importance of listening to learn language.



エイゴライブ

Our extensive e-learning system provides an Evaluation Test to enable users to confirm the best level to start their studies, since the listening ability of Japanese students varies regardless of their reading ability or the number of years studying English.

The curriculum is divided into beginner, intermediate, advanced and expert levels, and also offers TOEIC and TOEFL practice tests. Students can improve their ability quickly by studying a short time each day, using their PC, tablet, or smart phone anytime and anywhere. We offer crash courses for students who have little time to study, to help them learn language skills required to work in restaurants, hotels, stores, transportation and more!

We also provide a convenient group management tool for teachers who want to control learners' subscriptions and monitor their progress.

Free trials are available on request. Please check our website: <http://www.americanenglishlive.com/> for more information and contact [bob\\_brown@eigolive.com](mailto:bob_brown@eigolive.com) for assistance.

エイゴライブの英会話は新しい脳神経科学の成果を取り入れた方式で、アメリカのシリコンバレーで開発された非常に効果がある方法です。英語会話の学習方法がすべて科学的です。

6年も英語を習っていても英語が喋れないという人のための問題解決となります。従来の方式がどうして効果的でない理由は、Brocaという脳の部分を啓発する方法を使用していないからです。Brocaの部位は耳から聞いた音のみに反応します。その時に英語を見ると、刺激の信号通路が変わり、効果がなくなります。この脳科学の成果に基づいてできたのがエイゴライブなのです。エイゴライブは、「英語を見せないで英語を教える」という難題を解決しました。

現在、学校向けに無料体験を提供しています。グループのユーザーを管理できるソフトが付いていて、先生がユーザーの購読や進行状況をモニターで確認できます。Bob BrownのEmail [Bob\\_brown@eigolive.com](mailto:Bob_brown@eigolive.com) にご連絡ください。詳しくは [www.eigolive.jp](http://www.eigolive.jp) をご覧ください。

# JALT MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

## The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)

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

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

<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、試験と評価、教材開発等。

<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):

- AJET—The Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching
- IATEFL—International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
- JACET—the Japan Association of College English Teachers
- PAC—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. *The Language Teacher*や*JALT Journal*等の出版物が1年間送付されます。また例会や大会に割引価格で参加できます。

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

<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

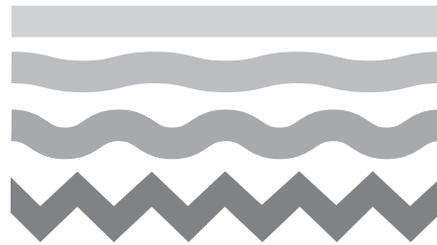
JALT事務局: 〒110-0016東京都台東区台東1-37-9  
アーバンエッジビル5F

t: 03-3837-1630; f: 03-3837-1631; [jco@jalt.org](mailto: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>.

# JALT2016



TRANSFORMATION  
IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

## **JALT Publications at JALT2016**

### **“Getting Published in JALT Publications”**

*... with John Roberts (TLT), Anne Howard (JALT Journal), and Peter Clements (Post-Conference Publication)*

**Saturday, Nov 26, 12:40 – 13:40, Room 1105**

### **“Volunteering with JALT Publications”** (Poster Session)

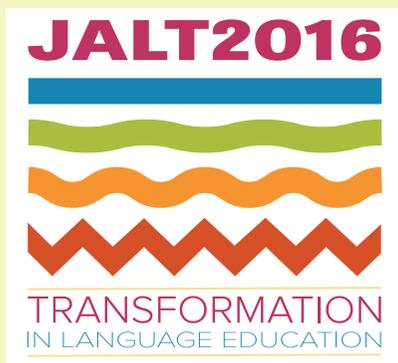
*... with Jerry Talandis (Publications Board Chair), John Roberts (TLT), Anne Howard (JALT Journal), and Peter Clements (Post-Conference Publication)*

**Sunday, Nov 27, 12:30 – 14:00 PM, Room 1002**

*Or visit us anytime at the JALT Publications Table (find us in the handbook). We're always happy to offer advice on your writing projects, or nudge you into joining our wonderful team.*

## **See you there!**

# JALT2016: Transformation in Language Education



## 42nd Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Exhibition

Friday, Nov 25 – Monday, Nov 28, 2016

Aichi Industry & Labor Center – WINC Aichi  
Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan

*"If you speak to one of the thousands who have attended a JALT conference over the last several years, you cannot help but hear stories of transformation. It is the nature of JALT conferences to be change agents. JALT2016 will prove to be extra special: it will not just be transformative—it will provide a platform for exploring transformation from many vantage points."*

### Plenary Speakers

- Anne Burns – *Transforming the Shape of the Way We Work*
- Dorothy Zemach – *Sausage and the Law: How Textbooks Are Made*
- JD Brown – *Classroom Assessment: Improving Teaching/Learning*
- Annamaria Pinter – *Lessons Learnt: Teaching Young Language Learners*

### Featured Speakers

- Alessandro Benati – *Input & Output's Role in L2 Learning and Teaching*
- Marco Brazil – *Transformation From Memorized To Memorable English*
- Alastair Graham-Marr – *Transforming Student Listening*
- Kimi Kondo-Brown – *Teachers Transforming Education Through Evaluation*
- Ryuko Kubota – *Critical Awareness of Language Myths*
- Sarah Mercer – *Transforming Teachers' Professional Well-being*
- Ben Shearon – *Transforming Your Future: Personal Finance 101*
- Chris Valvona – *Write Global, Teach Local: The Great Textbook Myth*
- Ken Wilson – *Reducing Fear and Increasing Classroom Confidence*
- Lynda Yates – *Culture, Talk, and English for the Workplace*

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