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Special Issue: Extensive Reading in Japan



- **Interview**
Kim Bradford-Watts and Amanda O'Brien interview Rob Waring and Marc Helgesen on ER in Japan 3
- **Readers' Forum**
Atsuko Takase examines the attitudes of practitioners and non-practitioners of ER in Japanese high schools. . . 7
Ken Schmidt reports on the findings of interviews conducted with ER practitioners. 11
Mark Furr explains the concept of Reading Circles 15
- **My Share**
Mathew White presents an activity using Graded Reader blurbs 19
- **Book Reviews**
by Miyuki Yonezawa and Julia Christmas 23

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CONTENTS

Interview

- ▶ Interview with Rob Waring and Marc Helgesen on Extensive Reading . . . 3

Readers' Forum

- ▶ Extensive Reading in the Japanese high school setting 7
- ▶ Five factors to consider in implementing a university Extensive Reading program 11
- ▶ Reading circles: Moving great stories from the periphery of the language classroom to its centre 15

Resources

- ▶ My Share
 - » A good story in 50 words? 19
- ▶ Book Reviews 23
- ▶ Recently Received 26
- ▶ TLT Wired. 27

JALT Focus

- ▶ Pan-SIG 2007. 31
- ▶ Showcase. 34
- ▶ Grassroots. 34
- ▶ Outreach. 37

Columns

- ▶ SIG News 39
 - ▶ Chapter Events. 42
 - ▶ Chapter Reports. 45
 - ▶ JALT Contacts 47
 - ▶ Job Information 49
 - ▶ Conference Calendar 51
 - ▶ Staff List 54
 - ▶ Membership Information. 55
 - ▶ Submissions 56
-
- ▶ Advertiser Index 2
 - ▶ Online Access Info 2

In this month's issue . . .

Special Issue: Extensive Reading in Japan

WELCOME TO the May 2007 Special Issue of *The Language Teacher* on Extensive Reading. It's now 10 years since the last Extensive Reading Special Issue. Ten years ago, Extensive Reading was little known, poorly understood, and considered an expensive luxury. How things have changed. Now you can go to a conference, and almost everyone has heard of, or is trying, Extensive Reading.



A decade ago, ER was new to many teachers, so the May 1997 Special Issue focused on introducing the basics of Extensive Reading. But now the world has caught up, so in this issue we've tried to review the various versions of Extensive Reading being practiced right now in ordinary classrooms throughout Japan and to pass on the lessons we've learnt these last 10 years. We've also tried to identify future trends.

The issue opens with an interview of Marc Helgesen and Rob Waring by **Kim Bradford-Watts** and **Amanda O'Brien**. Helgesen and Waring give their thoughts on the current situation and the future for Extensive Reading in Japan. **Atsuko Takase's** article reviews Extensive Reading in the Japanese school system, and looks at the difference in attitudes between practitioners and non-practitioners of Extensive Reading. **Ken Schmidt** reports a series of interviews with college and university teachers and looks at their successes and failures to find some guiding principles for practicing Extensive Reading. Finally, **Mark Furr** shows how *Reading Circles* help to integrate the reading more directly into our classes. But this is not all, there is more in *My Share* and *Book Reviews* as well.

In closing, I'd like to thank all the contributors for their hard work and the editors for their patience and dedication to bring out this Special Issue. Long may their dedication continue.

Rob Waring
Special Issue Editor



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TLT 2007年5月の多読特集号をお届けします。前回、多読特集号が出てから早10年経ちました。その当時、多読はあまり知られていなくて、どんなものかがよく分かってもらえず、お金のかかるぜいたくなことだと考えられていました。時代は変わり、今では学会に行けば、「多読のことを聞いたことがある」とか「今取り入れているところだ」と言う人に出会うことが多くなりました。

多読について知らない教師が多かったため、1997年5月号は多読の基本を紹介するだけのものでした。ところが、今回は、日本の教室で実践されている多読を検証し、この10年間で学んだ教訓を伝えることになりました。

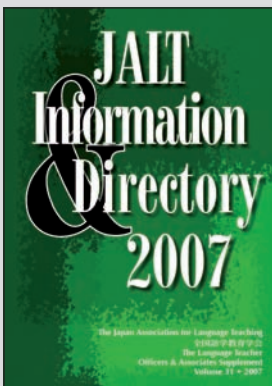
まず、Kim Bradford-WattsとAmanda O'Brienが、Marc HelgesenとRob Waringにインタビューをします。HelgesenとWaringは、日本における多読の現在の状況と未来に関しての見解を述べます。Atsuko Takaseは、日本の学校における多読に注目し、多読を実践している教師と実践していない教師との多読に対する意識の違いについて報告します。Ken Schmidtは、短大や大学で教える教師にインタビューをして、成功例と失敗例を検討し、多読実践の決め手となるガイドラインを見つけ出しています。Mark Furrは、どのようにReading Circlesを授業の中に組み込んでいくかについて説明します。多読に関しては、My ShareやBook Reviewsにも、紹介記事を用意しています。

最後に、この特集号刊行にあたって、多くの投稿者と編集に携わった方たちに厚くお礼を申し上げます。

ロブ・ウェアリング
特集号編集者

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Interview with Rob Waring and Marc Helgesen on Extensive Reading

Keywords

Extensive Reading, graded reading, reading benefits, language learning, program implementation

Kim Bradford-Watts and Amanda O'Brien interview Rob Waring and Marc Helgesen for the Extensive Reading Anniversary Special Issue of *The Language Teacher*. In this interview, Waring and Helgesen discuss the past, present, and future of *Extensive Reading* (ER) in Japan. Topics covered include the meaning of Extensive Reading, the introduction and development of ER programs in educational institutions, challenges in and advice for setting up a program, benefits of Extensive Reading for learners, ER learning styles, and multiple intelligences. Waring and Helgesen also provide a glimpse of ER related organizations and their visions for the future of ER in Japan.

Kim Bradford-WattとAmanda O'Brienは、TLT多読記念特集号のために、Rob WaringとMarc Helgesenにインタビューをした。WaringとHelgesenは、日本のこれまでの多読の歩み、現在の状況と将来の見通しについて述べている。インタビューのトピックは、多読の意味、教育機関における多読プログラムの導入と展開、多読プログラムを立ち上げるための試みとアドバイス、学習者にとっての多読の利点、学習スタイル、マルチプル・インテリジェンスなど、多岐にわたっている。WaringとHelgesenは、多読に係わる組織について簡単な説明をし、日本における多読の将来に関する見解を述べる。

Kim Bradford-Watts
Kyoto Women's University
Amanda O'Brien
Kansai Gaidai University

TLT: Thank you both for taking time for this interview. What exactly is Extensive Reading?

Marc: Extensive Reading (ER) is reading a lot. It usually implies that the goal is reading itself—as opposed to reading and answering comprehension questions, doing a report, or something else. Learners may do something else as evidence of their reading, but the main focus is reading.

Rob: Some people make the distinction that ER involves reading a lot and widely, whereas graded reading involves reading a lot and widely but of specially written and graded texts suitable for students' proficiency level. However, these two terms are used interchangeably within ELT.

Marc: If learners are going to read a lot, they need easy to read materials because we want them to be fluent readers. Of course, some get to the point where they don't need graded material, but easy material is where we start. Just as children's literature and juvenile literature are recognized as real and important genres aimed at specific audiences, we aim to increase recognition of *language learner literature* as a legitimate genre aimed at our target audience: our learners.

TLT: What brought you to the conclusion that Extensive Reading procedures were necessary in your teaching context?

Rob: In my university, the English majors receive only about 400 hours of English spread over their 4-year course. This is the equivalent of about a 13-week stay overseas, which is by no means enough input for the learners to significantly improve their English.

Marc: English is a foreign language in Japan. We are usually responsible for *all* the English our learners meet—as opposed to an ESL situation where they are constantly surrounded with English. In EFL, learners usually have just a few hours of English instruction per week. Reading is a way they can do more and actually enjoy it. And they can read anywhere, anytime, cheaply. Most of the time learners choose the books they want to read. The point of ER is to read what you enjoy. And do it a lot!

TLT: What do your learners do in your program?

Rob: Learners borrow one or two books each Monday and discuss them the following week. I have also just started using *Reading Circles* (see Furr, this issue). Introducing the reading circles has been a bit of a struggle as my learners have the lowest English proficiency in the department, so I've given them lots of support through worksheets of useful sentences for managing discussions.

Marc: My learners have to read more than 500 *weighted pages* per term. Weighted pages means that a page of an easy book is worth less than a page of a difficult book. They write a short report to show that they have actually read the book. I read the reports, stamp OK, and maybe ask questions or make a comment.

TLT: How do you grade or test learners?

Marc: Usually it's very clear from the reports whether the learner has read the books. If they just copy from the book or the blurb, you know it instantly. But I talk with the students about cheating and the situation in Japanese universities, whereby once you get in, you are almost assured of graduating, so grades really don't matter much. What really matters are the skills learners acquire by graduation. And they can only develop the skill of reading by reading.

We start the ER program in April. In early May, once learners have the idea, I give them a hand-out called *Choose your own grade*, which is a chart

listing how many pages learners need to read to get A, B, or C.

Rob: I also do many of the things Marc does. I don't usually check their work except those I suspect are not reading. I try to be nice about it and nudge them rather than force the system on them.

TLT: How has your program evolved since you reported about it in *The Language Teacher* ten years ago?

Rob: Not a lot, except we now do ER as a department. I walk the learners through two to three very easy graded readers before introducing the whole library. This gets them more involved. I also spend a lot of time helping them understand why ER is necessary, how it will help them get a feel for the language, and how it helps the language all fit together.

Marc: In my case, it has changed in several ways. Ten years ago, I was the only one in my department teaching reading. Now we have three teachers doing Extensive Reading. We still make first year reading required and second year reading an elective. About half the eligible learners take Reading 2. We encourage them to take Reading 2 in second year so they get their reading ability up to the level where they can use English for research. Reading 2 includes ER using the Internet. Among other things, we teach them how to find easy-to-read websites.

Also, when I started, I used the standard *summarize and give your opinion* report. We now have a series of three other report types designed to appeal to different learning styles or intelligences, and they give learners a change of pace and choice. The forms are available at <extensivereading.net/er/marcreports.html>.

TLT: What benefits have you noticed from the program with respect to learners and learning?

Marc: Helping learners actually enjoy reading and improve is obviously the big pay off. Before all 1st-year learners took ER, we noticed that those in Reading 2 who had taken ER scored, on average, a full letter grade above those who had completed a traditional program. I also think that giving learners a choice of books and reading level, how much they'll read, and the grade they want, makes them more responsible for their learning.

Rob: There will always be learners who are unmotivated. They just can't connect to English and want to negotiate their life through Japanese. I encourage these learners to take an interest in what they read, and occasionally it is successful. Fortunately, the vast majority of learners take reading seriously, especially since I do, and this leads to a much greater appreciation of the centrality of reading and the primary skill through which a foreign language can be acquired. Even those who are more interested in speaking tend to understand that their English will improve faster if they learn to read well.

TLT: What was involved in setting up the ER program at your school?

Rob: Patience and perseverance. Not everyone likes to have to adjust to new things. Some of our staff members were quite slow to adopt ER, but once they did, they were converts. At first I persuaded the Head of Department to buy up an old ER collection. This gave us about 500 books to start an elective ER course for non-English majors, which went well. Then I got more funding to expand the library, and now ER is part of our required Oral Communication classes. We have an annual budget of around 150,000 yen to build our library. Perseverance was the secret of the success of the program at my school. I had to keep asking for funding, and to lobby for space for the books.

Marc: I was lucky that the university was supportive from the beginning, so I had access to money for books and the university library was happy to handle the paperwork.

There is a lot of help available for anyone interested in introducing ER at <www.extensivereading.net> and a discussion group at <groups.yahoo.com/group/ExtensiveReading/> where people share ideas. There is also the ER colloquium at the annual JALT conference where you can meet people who are doing what you want to do. Remember, it doesn't have to be an *all or nothing* situation. You can add ER as the homework component of a reading class, or even a conversation class.

TLT: What was the biggest challenge?

Rob: Everyone works in different settings, so everyone will face different challenges. In my case, getting the staff to accept ER as a valid endeavour was a major challenge. They couldn't readily identify that anything is *learned* through ER.

Marc: On the other side of the coin, the pedagogical challenge is to reorient learners new to ER. They enter university with six years of experience of intensive reading done, most often, through translation. There are many specific techniques you can use to get learners to engage with reading. *Extensive Reading Activities for Teaching Language* by Bamford and Day (1998) has some great suggestions. But keep in mind the adage: *Reading isn't taught. It is caught*. Be a reader and let the learners know. Beyond that, it is important to set high standards and build in a success orientation.

TLT: Do you think that ER programs suit particular types of learners? Is it more difficult with certain types?

Rob: To some extent, yes. Some learners like to learn from books and texts and do it silently and at their own pace. Others are more outgoing and wish to communicate in other ways.

Marc: I think ER can help anyone, but people with certain learning styles are more likely to be attracted to ER. It's a natural for visual learners and for folks who read a lot in their native language. Different report forms let learners with different styles engage with reading. A lot of readers come with a CD so learners can let the CD *read to them* as they follow along in the book. This appeals to auditory learners, and is very similar to the way most of us learned to read: being read to by our parents and teachers.

Rob: However, all learners must understand that the common denominator in being able to understand a language is to master how the language fits together. Textbooks typically serve up language in a structured, linear way by presenting each language feature one by one. This structure does not allow for recycling, nor does it give the learner the chance to develop depth of knowledge about the language. Research into vocabulary acquisition shows a learner typically must meet a word 10-30 times before it is learned. Grammar patterns require a much higher level of recycling. Graded readers help fill this gap by providing the depth learners need for acquisition. *All* types of learners must recognize this because unless they meet the language enough times, they simply won't remember what they learn.

TLT: What advice would you offer others considering setting up an ER program?

Marc: To quote the famous Greek goddess of victory, Nike: *Just do it!* Get some books, share your enthusiasm, and get started.

Rob: I like David Hill's advice—*start small but think big*. I've advised about 30 ER programs in many countries and have noticed two main reasons for failure. The first is that the ER program is one person's baby but not part of the school's curriculum. Usually when the teacher is assigned to another school or different classes, the program dies. This shows the importance of getting all staff involved. The second reason arises when overly-enthusiastic teachers push ER on the school, staff, and learners. Their initial reaction is to back away as no one likes to feel forced into doing something that will take even more time away from their lives. This shows the necessity of slowly introducing ER into the school, specifying targets of what to achieve by when. This may be getting ER going in one or two classes voluntarily, getting school-wide funding, or even getting ER accepted in the whole school district.

TLT: How else are you involved in the Extensive Reading field?

Marc: One way is the Extensive Reading Foundation <www.erfoundation.org>. The foundation gives *Language Learner Literature* awards for the best readers each year. A number of Japan-based people including Rob, Julian Bamford, Junko Yamanaka, Tom Robb, and myself are involved, as are internationally known people like Richard Day, Alan Maley, Paul Nation, and Peter Viney.

Rob: I also write ER guidebooks, publish articles, and lecture widely on ER. I research the relationship between vocabulary learning and ways to assess the acquisition of a *sense* of English through ER. I research extensive listening, too. I also maintain an ER website <www1.harenet.ne.jp/~waring/er> and am the owner and moderator of two Yahoo! ER discussion lists – the Extensive Reading group and Language Learner Literature writers group. Finally, I write my own graded readers.

TLT: What changes do you think will occur in Extensive Reading over the next ten years?

Marc: I don't know if this is a prediction or a wish—but I hope Extensive Reading is widely

accepted as the essential learning tool it is. In the past decade, we've seen a huge interest in ER worldwide but especially in Asia. I think that will continue.

Rob: I think ER will be much more widely accepted than it is now within mainstream education in Japan. There really has been an explosion in interest in ER among our colleagues. A few years ago the terms *tadoku* or ER were unheard of by many but in the coming decade almost all teachers in Japan will have heard of it.

Marc: We've also seen diversity in the types of readers published. Penguin has some great biographies and film tie-ins. Oxford has an excellent non-fiction list. Macmillan has relaunched the former highly respected Heinemann list. Cambridge even has readers with adult content and Thomson just came out with a very easy graded reader series for Junior High School-aged learners. There is a lot happening, which is likely to continue.

There is also some movement to web-delivery of ebooks. At this point, it involves downloading and printing out the books. I'm not sure that's real progress. Reading online is slower than reading a printed text—and speed is very important to comprehension. It will be interesting to see what happens as the hardware improves.

Rob: I also see a greater appreciation of extensive listening, given the importance of listening in foreign language learning. It is but a small fledgling at this stage.

TLT: Thank you both for giving us some insights into the past, present, and future of ER and EL and how you have been using ER with your learners.

Reference

Bamford, J., & Day, R. (1998). *Extensive reading activities for teaching language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kim Bradford-Watts and **Amanda O'Brien** have been living and working in Kansai for almost 20 years. Their research interests are in Applied Linguistics and Education. They got to know each other well while working in JALT publications. And they both read. A lot.

Extensive Reading in the Japanese high school setting

Keywords

Extensive Reading, implementation of ER, ER practitioner, teachers' role in ER

This study introduces differences in attitudes toward Extensive Reading (ER) between practitioner and non-practitioner Japanese high school teachers. For the last few years, the value of ER has been recognized in various institutions, including private English classes for elementary school children, juku (cram schools), yobiko (prep schools), and colleges or universities in Japan. Although ER seems to be attracting the attention of high school teachers who appear willing to adopt it as part of the high school curriculum, the majority of teachers are still skeptical and reluctant to implement it. The results of a questionnaire distributed at ER workshops compares the attitudes of non-practitioners and practitioners towards ER, and illustrates some important differences. In addition, the effects of ER can be attributed to the teachers' own ER and their experience teaching it.

本研究は、日本の高校で多読を導入している教師と興味は持っているもののまだ導入には至っていない教師との、多読に対する意識の相違を調査したものである。多読は、数年前より、その効果が認められて、大学、塾、予備校、小学生対象の英語教室などで取り入れられてきた。中等教育の現場でも、積極的に学校のカリキュラムの一部として多読を導入しようとする教師もいる。しかし、大半の教師は、多読の効果に対して未だに懐疑的であり、導入を躊躇している。多読のワークショップ等で行ったアンケート調査の結果、多読を行っている教師と多読導入前の教師との間には、重要な意識の違いがあることが判明した。教師自身の多読経験および多読指導経験により、多読の効果がより期待できるという結果も明らかになった。

Atsuko Takase

Kansai University and Baika High School

RECENTLY, EXTENSIVE Reading (ER) has attracted attention as an additional teaching approach among high school teachers in Japan, partly due to the necessity of implementing a new approach in order to attract students of various levels, and partly to the nationwide ER movement.

Realizing that grammar-translation should not be the only methodology used, many high school teachers have been searching for new strategies to motivate students of various levels to study English. In an effort to raise the English proficiency of Japanese high school students, *Mombukagakusho* (The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Culture and Sports) has advocated the use of the Oral Communication approach (*Mombukagakusho*, 2003). However, criticism of this supposed approach includes a reduction in student literacy skills, vocabulary size, and grammar concepts; inappropriate university entrance examination preparation; and lowered proficiency levels (Noriguchi, 2006). Encouragingly, and despite criticisms of ER including "it uses light materials" and "the teachers are not truly teaching the class" (Takase, 2006, p. 4), Japanese teachers have finally started considering the inclusion of this approach which provides more literacy training than the oral communication approach, as well as motivates reluctant students to study English (Uchiyama, 2006).



Helping to spur this trend, there has also been a surge in the publication of guides instructing teachers themselves how to read extensively in English (Furukawa & Itoh, 2005; Sakai, 2002) and how to implement ER programs in schools (Matsui, 2006; Sakai & Kanda, 2005; Takase, 2005). Additionally, the abundance of English books available in major bookstores, as well as a guidebook of ER materials covering approximately 10,000 ER books (Furukawa, Kanda, Komatsu, Hatanaka, & Nishizawa, 2005), has also accelerated this trend.

However, when implementing new teaching strategies, there are often teething problems and ER is no exception. According to Day and Bamford (1998) and the Kyoto Reading Research Project Team (Hashimoto, et al., 1997), some of the major reasons for not implementing ER in the high school curriculum include: cost, limited class time, no support from colleagues, the different role of the teacher, time-consuming work such as book management, students' lack of reading proficiency, and not enough evidence of its effectiveness.

Some of these reasons may be a result of the teachers' inexperience in reading extensively themselves. Many researchers and practitioners suggest that it is essential that the teacher serve as a role model of reading (Day & Bamford, 1998). Once teachers are exposed to ER, anxiety concerning the teacher's role and the effectiveness of ER dissipates and they begin to encourage colleagues and administrators to support the program (Takase, 2006). This difference between the perceptions of practitioners and non-practitioners is the subject of investigation in this paper.

The research questions investigated for this paper are:

1. What concerns do practitioners and non-practitioners have about ER?
2. What positive effects have practitioners found for the use of ER?

Procedure

A Japanese questionnaire concerning high school teachers' attitudes toward ER was administered at three ER workshops in 2006: one in Osaka to Kansai area teachers, and the other two in Tokyo to teachers from all over Japan (see Appendices A & B). Among the 98 respondents, 47 were junior and senior high school teachers. Approximately half of these respondents (23) were already implementing ER in their classes, and the other half (24) were not.

Results and discussion

The comparison between ER practitioners and non-practitioners revealed some interesting data. Non-practitioners (NP) were asked, *What would be the problems in implementing an ER program?* Practitioners (P) were asked, *What are the problems in running an ER program?* The results are shown in Table 1. Although most concerns are shared by both practitioners and non-practitioners, the percentages vary greatly, with the exception of the concern identified as the biggest by both groups: *Cost or lack of materials*.

As illustrated in Table 1, the biggest problem for both non-practitioners and practitioners was item 1 (*Cost or lack of materials*), identified by 83.3% (NP) and 60.9% (P) of respondents, respectively. The second biggest concern of non-practitioners was item 2 (*Limited class time*), which was

Table 1. Concerns in implementing and running an ER program

Item	ER Non-practitioners	ER Practitioners
1. Cost or lack of materials	83.3	60.9
2. Limited class time	58.3	8.7
3. No support from colleagues	33.3	4.3
4. Difficulty of the different role of the teacher	25.0	17.4
5. Time-consuming teachers' work (book management included)	12.5	52.2
6. No time for teachers' own ER	12.5	0.0
7. Reluctant students who are not interested in reading	0.0	39.1

rated 58.3%, whereas only 8.7% of practitioners saw it as a problem. One explanation for this may be that once teachers implement ER or provide students with some in-class reading time, they discover its effectiveness in motivating students to read and time was found to do the reading. Item 3 (*No support from colleagues*), ranked as the third greatest worry for non-practitioners (33.3%), while only 4.3% of practitioners saw it as a concern. There is some evidence to suggest that once colleagues observe student eagerness for ER, they come to support the program (Takase, 2006). Item 5 (*Time-consuming work*) constituted 12.5% of non-practitioner responses, whereas 52.2% of practitioners identified it as a major problem. One reason for the difference is that this item included a sub-item concerning book management which non-practitioners have yet to experience, so this difference is to be expected. The item unique to non-practitioners was item 6 (*No time for teachers' own ER*). No practitioners selected this item as a concern; on the contrary, 17% of them considered this a positive effect of an ER program (see Table 2). The one item unique to practitioners was item 7 (*Reluctant students who are not interested to read*). Considering the response was made mostly by practitioners with less than one year of ER experience, this problem seems to be experience-sensitive and may dissipate as they gain teaching experience. Further research is necessary on this point.



The question (*What positive effects have you found in your ER program?*), was the one posed only to practitioners. Table 2 shows the percentage ranking of their responses. It illustrates the total percentage of the positive effects and the breakdown of the practitioners' ER teaching experience, according to whether they had implemented ER for less or more than one year.

It is notable that 87.0% of the teachers indicated that they believed their students enjoyed reading extensively; 39.1% responded that their students' English proficiency levels have improved; and 30.4% responded that their students have become confident in English. Among them, 78% of item 2 and 86% of item 3 were reported by practitioners with more than one year of ER teaching experience, respectively. Other positive results included increased communication between students and teachers; increased library book usage, including L1 books; and increased promotion of the teachers' own ER. Contrary to *No time for teachers' own ER* posed by non-practitioners (Table 1), teachers who have implemented an ER program seem hooked on reading themselves, however busy they are. Several teachers commented that they experienced the joy of ER and that their own proficiency improved greatly, facilitating their English teaching in other classes. The results of these items can be interpreted as evidence that ER improves learners' English proficiency and their attitudes toward reading and English study, particularly as teachers gain ER teaching experience.

Table 2. ER experience and perceived positive effects of an ER program

Item	Total (%)	< 1yr (%)	>1yr (%)
1. Students enjoyed reading.	87.0	40	60
2. Students' English proficiency improved.	39.1	22	78
3. Students became confident in English.	30.4	14	86
4. Communication between students and teachers increased.	26.1	33	67
5. Library books were checked out in quantity.	21.7	0	100
6. Teachers read a lot of books.	21.7	20	80

Conclusion and implications

The survey reveals that there are differences between the concerns of high school teachers prior to implementing an ER program and the actual problems that ER practitioners are facing. Overall, the actual difficulties experienced are fewer than expected. In spite of the concern by non-practitioners about the inclusion of ER in the limited class time available (58.3%), more than 90% of the practitioners found no difficulty in finding time for the activity.

There are several steps teachers can take to tackle the problems noted. For example, one way to cope with the lack of materials is to join the Japan Extensive Reading Association (JERA), in which the members can not only share their ideas about implementing and practicing ER, but also borrow books of different genres and levels twice a year. A solution to the problem of book management is to ask the library to handle the materials, as this will reduce the burden on teachers (Uchiyama, 2006). Student motivation can be addressed by providing an abundance of easy materials, including picture books, in various genres, and the provision of in-class reading time for Sustained Silent Reading (Takase, 2005).

Concerning the effectiveness of ER, practitioners reported that students enjoyed reading, improved their English proficiency, and developed greater self-confidence. They also reported more favorable attitudes toward ER and English study in general. In addition, communication between students and teachers increased, and the teachers themselves experienced the joy of reading and discovered the effectiveness of ER for improving reading fluency and overall English proficiency.

These results suggest that for teachers considering the inclusion of ER in the classroom it is a worthwhile project to undertake. The findings of this study also suggest that it is important for teachers to try and experience ER themselves prior to its implementation as teachers' attitudes toward using ER change once they have experienced it.

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Appendices

The appendices can be viewed at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/resources/2007/0705a.pdf>

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Five factors to consider in implementing a university Extensive Reading program

Keywords

Extensive Reading, course development, university level

Among the many factors affecting the shape and success of an Extensive Reading (ER) program, five featured prominently in interviews with eight ER practitioners at universities in Japan: 1) convictions regarding language learning, especially in regards to amounts of comprehended input needed and the role of independent reading (and listening) in relation to other learning activities; 2) defining desired learning and attitudinal outcomes and setting reading targets and tasks appropriately; 3) adapting the approach to ER for student attitudes, interests, abilities, and goals; 4) effective introduction of an easily understood ER program, with ongoing support and personal follow-up; and 5) developing reading communities, in and out of class.

本論では、多読プログラムを成功に導くための5つの要因について紹介する。これらの要因は、日本の大学で多読プログラムを実践している8人の教員とのインタビューの中で提示された。1) 言語学習に関する確信。とりわけ、他の学習活動と関連した際の、学習者が理解したインプットの量と自主的なリーディング（+リスニング）活動の役割に関して。2) 学習結果と意識を定義し、リーディング目標やタスクを適切に設定すること。3) 学生が持つ意識、興味、能力、目標に応じて、多読アプローチを調整すること。4) 容易に理解できる多読プログラムを効果的に導入すること。その中には、継続的なサポートと個々の学生の追跡調査が含まれる。5) 授業内および授業外で、リーディング・コミュニティを組織すること。

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OVER THE last 20 years, Extensive Reading (ER) in English has become increasingly popular at universities in Japan. EFL instructors have discovered benefits in the areas of language acquisition and fluency development, reading speed and comprehension, motivation, and sustainability as an enjoyable route to learning and personal growth (Jacobs et al., 2006). Hoping to gain insight into effective ER implementation, I interviewed eight experienced ER practitioners about many factors affecting the shape and success of their ER programs. Five that featured prominently in the interviews are introduced here. Companion materials to this article, including interview excerpts, are available online at <www.extensivereading.net/er/online.html>.



Convictions regarding language learning

Convictions regarding language learning can greatly affect the role of ER in a course. Most ER practitioners would agree on the *necessity* of massive amounts of comprehended input for timely progress toward significant language gains and fluent use, and that interesting, level-appropriate, context-rich materials—such as graded readers—are enjoyable, sustainable ways to get this input.

Some (Krashen, 2003; Mason & Krashen, 1997) hold that ER and EL (Extensive Listening) are *optimal* activities for timely acquisition and suggest that once students are able to read or listen to the simplest of materials, there is little sense in elementary to intermediate level learners spending *large* amounts of time on anything but ER and EL.

Two interviewees have largely taken this approach. Originally assigned to teach a conversation course for pre-elementary education majors at Shitennoji International Buddhist University, Beniko Mason (personal communication, July 26, 2006) persuaded her department that what her low level learners needed most was massive comprehended input. Her English course thus consists mainly of in-class story listening (EL) with out-of-class ER. Kunihide Sakai (personal communication, July 1, 2006) at Denki-Tsushin University was also so impressed with the effects of ER that he has, for years, devoted his general English courses almost entirely to self-selected reading, in and out-of-class. Both instructors have been pleased with their students' response and progress.

Others (Waring & Nation, 2004) believe that although incidental learning through ER and EL is important, it can be a slow process, particularly when meeting unfamiliar language. They suggest that direct attention to high frequency language features, such as lexis, syntax, and discourse, as well as work with reading, listening, and learning strategies, *in combination* with the repeated exposure and practice provided by ER and EL, can yield more efficient progress. Many consider ER and EL to be ideal complements to almost any kind of language study, as they potentially provide the breadth of exposure and depth of knowledge necessary to integrate studied material into the learner's growing *sense* of the language (Waring, 2006).

Two examples of this approach are the reading and writing course taught at Kansai Gaidai University by Tracy Cramer (personal communication, July 2, 2006), and the reading course taught at Nanzan University by Mathew White (personal communication, June 29, 2006). In both courses, in-class intensive study and communication, and out-of-class ER, are mutually reinforcing. ER notebooks also provide Cramer's students with the benefit of practice in summary and response writing as well as the opportunity to communicate with him through on-going written dialog. Both instructors also report the enthusiastic interaction in student Reading Circles (see Furr, this issue) and the motivating effect this has on attitudes toward books and ER.

Desired learning and attitudinal outcomes

Desired outcomes also influence program design. Instructors targeting observable gains within a school year typically ask students to read *at least* a book per week (Nation & Wang, 1999), and most

interviewees set goals in the range of 500-1000 pages or 15-30 books per semester. This can be particularly appropriate for English majors or students in elective English courses whose enrollment indicates a desire to improve their English. Julian Bamford (personal communication, June 30, 2006), at Bunkyo University, for example, requires that students in his *How to learn a language* seminar read and discuss two books each week.

The potential for gains is especially exciting when students can continue ER with course support over multiple years. Marc Helgesen (personal communication, July 25, 2006), at Miyagi Gakuin Women's University, and Kunihide Sakai both see over 50% of their students in 1st-year, required courses sign up for further ER electives. Department-wide programs at Chukyo and Tezukayama Gakuin Universities require two years of ER, with the option of a third at Chukyo (C. Lovelock, personal communication, August 8, 2006; Morrison & White, 2003).

Some instructors teaching required courses for non-language majors, reduce reading targets to, for example, 100-300 pages per semester—possibly calling this *graded reading* (GR) rather than ER. Positive outcomes may range from students overcoming initial resistance and reading more, with greater enjoyment than expected, to identifying ER as a useful strategy for future independent learning, or even getting *hooked* on ER, exceeding targets, and continuing beyond course end. For example, in a required one-semester speaking course at Tokai University, Tina Ferrato (personal communication, June 27, 2006) asked students to read at least five books. Offering a clear rationale and procedure for GR, classroom access to easy, engaging books, and a supportive, low pressure environment, she hoped to provide *at least a reasonable chance* for students to get hooked on easy reading in English, participate in a vital reading community, and move on to truly Extensive Reading. To her pleasure, most students voluntarily read 10-20 books, well beyond requirements.

Understanding and adapting for students

As is apparent in the preceding sections, many interviewee comments highlighted the need to consider and adjust for student attitudes, interests, abilities, and goals. For example, Bamford's general English courses in the Information and Communications Department do not include a formal ER component. These students generally display little interest in English, or in reading, even in Japanese. Bamford finds English music

and DVDs more involving for these students in class, and popular for borrowing from his multimedia library. However, he tries to stay alert to student attitudes, and gladly guides interested students to his graded reader library.

Also focusing on student attitudes, both Sakai and Mason, in introducing their courses, acknowledge the feelings of failure and alienation that many students associate with language study. They then offer a different path—input-oriented ER and EL—that should help many to leave failure behind and move forward with greater enjoyment and success. Symbolic of this new start, Sakai's students all begin with wordless picture books before progressing. Accepting their reluctance to study English, he maximizes in-class reading opportunities, while encouraging voluntary out-of-class reading. Mason, on the other hand, targets 1,000 pages of out-of-class reading per semester (with general success), and employs a mix of in-depth orientation, ongoing encouragement, and evidence of their own improvement to persuade students that ER is in their best interests and worth the effort.

Introduction and follow-up

All eight practitioners stressed the importance of clearly introducing ER's key characteristics, how it differs from intensive reading or grammar-translation, and its potential benefits. The newness of ER may be turned to advantage by offering it as a *missing link* in students' past study, or a new way forward. Such an introduction recognizes students as thinking adults and provides them the opportunity to independently choose to make this strategy their own.

Several instructors emphasized presenting a simple system and avoiding excessive associated tasks which may detract from the main thrust of lots of enjoyable reading. Tasks can be limited to those that contribute sufficiently to course goals to be worth the load (e.g., preparing responses to share with a reading circle) and the minimum record-keeping and proofs necessary to track student reading and award credit.

Clive Lovelock (personal communication, September 14, 2006) at Tezukayama Gakuin University, spoke for many in emphasizing ongoing, individual consultation and guidance—discussing what students have read and reported, looking at progress and goals, and identifying possibilities for future reading. This is critical in helping students maintain momentum and a sense of purpose in their reading. Measuring progress

through periodic assessment (e.g., a pre-test followed by tests at the end of each semester, or as students feel ready) can also affirm the practical value of student ER efforts and contribute to feelings of success and motivation.

Developing a reading community

While some students quickly latch onto ER as *their* strategy, others warm to it more gradually, with the support of community. This begins with the instructor playing the dual roles of facilitator and fellow reader. Ideally, instructors regularly talk about their own reading, speak with students about theirs, and facilitate student exchange through reading circles, sharing recommendations, or chatting during browsing time. Although all the interviewees have GR collections in their school libraries, most also make books available in the classroom. This eases access for busy or forgetful students and affirms reading as a big part of *what we do here together*. These shared reading experiences, the rewarding interaction they allow, and the sense of doing something together with real, meaningful benefit contribute greatly to developing a positive reading community.

Having a library in one's own office can also be a boon. Students can drop by to borrow and talk about books, and a weekly lunchtime book hour provides an especially good chance for community building. A great advantage of this community is its open-ended nature, as students do not have to leave at course end. They can continue enjoying the reading and companionship throughout their time at university, enhancing the chances for impressive language gains. This also allows instructors to encourage students and monitor progress over a longer period. Developing such a community may take time. For example, Ferrato's lunchtime book community took about three years to gel, but such an approach can pay large dividends.

Final remarks

Helping students access the large amounts of engaging, level-appropriate input needed for timely, impressive language gains, should be on the agenda of all language educators. Fortunately, many university EFL instructors in Japan have the freedom and resources available to begin offering ER opportunities to their own students, with the potential for future, cooperative development on a larger-scale. An informed, evolving understanding of language learning, learning activities, and students is crucial when planning an

ER program and the role it will take in a course or curriculum. Consideration of the points discussed here should be part of any such endeavor.

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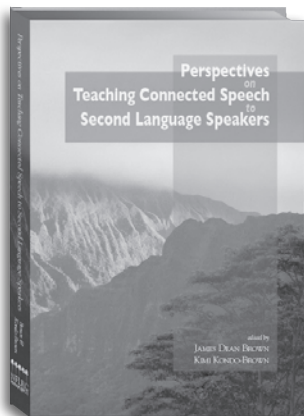
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Reading circles: Moving great stories from the periphery of the language classroom to its centre

Keywords

Extensive Reading, reading circles, discussion

Students enjoy reading graded readers, and reading circles serve to relocate extensive reading materials from the periphery of the language classroom to its centre. Reading circles combine the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. They provide two things often lacking in many communication courses: material that is both comprehensible and interesting to talk about, and a framework which makes having a real discussion in English an achievable goal for students. This article defines reading circles, discusses the benefits of using them in the classroom, and introduces the reading circles roles. Finally, it also explains how to get started using reading circles in the classroom so that students can have interesting, meaningful discussions, in English.

学習者は、graded readersを楽しんで読む。教室の片隅に追いやられていた多読の教材は、リーディング・サークルによって、教室の中心に持ってくる事ができる。リーディング・サークルは、リーディング、ライティング、スピーキング、リスニングのスキルを統合する。また、多くのオーラル・コミュニケーションの授業で欠けている要素も提供してくれる。その一つは、分かりやすく興味を持って会話ができるような教材であり、もう一つは、英語での真のディスカッションを学習者の達成目標とする枠組みである。本論では、リーディング・サークルの定義を述べ、教室で使う利点を論じ、その役割を紹介する。最後に、学習者が英語で楽しく意味のあるディスカッションをする授業へのリーディング・サークルの取り入れ方について説明する。

Mark Furr

ELT materials writer and editor

This paper is based on the article, *Literature Circles for the EFL Classroom* previously published in the Proceedings of the 2003 TESOL Arabia Conference. TESOL Arabia: Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 2004.

Why use reading circles?

In all cultures, over thousands of years, people have been fascinated by a good story—and language students are no exception. And a good story is at the heart of every reading circle. Reading circles combine, in a natural way, the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. They help motivate students to acquire both the habits of reading extensively and of working autonomously. They accomplish this by providing two things that are often lacking in many oral communication courses: material that is both comprehensible and interesting to talk about, and a framework which makes having a real discussion in English an achievable goal for students.

Once students are engaged by a story, they are willing to write carefully in order to be prepared for their group discussions; to speak in English almost all of the time while in their groups; to eagerly point to passages within a text in order to support their arguments; and to question each other in order to establish what the text really means. There are many reasons to use reading circles in the classroom, but the best way to discover them is to try reading circles for yourself (Furr, 2007).



Reading circles: What are they?

Reading circles are small student reading groups which provide a specific framework allowing EFL students to have real, meaningful discussions about stories in English. Successful reading circles for EFL students will contain most of the following nine features.

1. Teachers select reading material appropriate for their students

Reading circles ask language learners to have real-life, meaningful discussions about the stories that they have read. So it is important for the teacher to choose appropriately graded reading texts, which students can read *without* using a dictionary.

A good test to discover whether or not a text is suitable for use in a reading circle is to follow recommendations for Extensive Reading made by Waring and Takahashi (2000, p. 11) in *The Why and How of Using Graded Readers*. Here are some of their suggestions:

- There should be no more than 2-3 unknown words per page.
- The learner is reading 8-10 lines of text or more per minute.
- The learner understands almost all of what he/she is reading with few pauses.

With reading circles, it is best to start with a graded reader that is one level below the actual student reading level because reading circles are based on the ability of our students, not only to read, but also to discuss the texts in English, so the materials must be manageable.

2. Small temporary groups are formed in the classroom

Five to six students in a reading circle works best. At first, teachers should manage the groups so that each group has one or two confident students who are willing to take a risk with something new.

3. Different groups read the same text

There are several advantages if each group reads the same story. First, it is much easier to monitor the progress of the discussion groups. Secondly, using the story text as core material, it is possible to assign a number of different extension activities, including oral presentations and poster

sessions. Group projects and extension activities are ways to evaluate students for their reading circles work. Finally, the teacher may also decide to present a mini-lecture related to the story.

4. Groups meet on a regular, predictable schedule to discuss their reading

This is a crucial aspect to the success of reading circles. Reading circles require some student training time, so a teacher must be willing to commit to several stories and rounds of discussion if there are to be positive results.

5. Students use written notes to guide both their reading and their discussion

The *role sheets* (described later) prompt each member of the group to read a story from a different perspective, and to make notes in English in order to prepare for a group discussion based on their reading. In this way, students are learning that there are both a number of different reasons for reading, and also varying perspectives on any given text.

6. Discussion topics come from the students

It is important to allow students to generate the topics for discussion. These are not classes in literary criticism, but informal discussions about stories. The role sheets provide the help needed for students to find interesting topics.

7. Group meetings aim to be open, natural conversations about stories

Students are encouraged to share their opinions about the texts read for reading circles, so not all of the discussion will be serious.

8. The teacher serves as a facilitator, not a group member or instructor

Teachers need to step back and allow students to assume responsibility for guiding the reading circle discussions. Some teachers may not be used to this, but since students complete the role sheets in advance, and know the roles that they are to play in the group, teachers must allow this process to work naturally.

9. A spirit of playfulness and fun pervades the room

Of course, if reading circles are not fun then we are simply repackaging the types of lessons which students tell us that they hate. The goal of reading circles is clear and simple—to promote informal talk about great stories (Furr, 2007).

Reading circle roles

Next, let us look at the *magic* formula for using reading circles with EFL students.

Reading circles should be student-directed, but at the same time, our students need some tools in order to have interesting, fun discussions about the stories they have read. These tools come in the form of the role sheets that students use when meeting in their groups.

The sheets require each member to read a story from a different perspective and to prepare for a small group discussion based on their reading. The role sheets break the text down into smaller sub-skills with each student in their small group closely focusing on one way of encountering the text. After each student has read the story from a given perspective, or role, as homework, they are brought together, and through discussion these parts become whole. In other words, the role sheets break down the skills of a mature reader into smaller, manageable parts so that each group member is responsible for one aspect of what a mature reader does naturally (Furr, 2004).

When a reading circle goes well, one can easily see many EFL students operating in something akin to what Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) calls the “zone of proximal development”; that is to say, EFL students are able to discuss issues in English and to solve problems in collaboration with their peers that they could not possibly deal with on their own.

There are five basic roles for reading circles and one additional role for higher-level groups which can be introduced later. All of the student role sheets discussed here are available as pdf files for easy printing (Appendix A).

The first role is that of the *Discussion Leader* (DL) whose job is to act as a facilitator in the group and to keep the discussion flowing. The DLs are directed to read the story a number of times so that they have a very solid grasp of the possible themes and the basic plot of the story. The DLs open the discussion with a few open-ended questions concerning the story and then proceed to call on other group members to share their

findings with the group. The DLs do not act as teachers; rather, their job is to keep the conversation moving.

The second role is that of the *Summarizer* who is asked to give a brief, but complete, summary of the plot. The summarizers must understand that they are not to copy too much from the text; rather, they need to retell the story in their own words choosing only the most important events in the narrative.

The next role, *Connector*, is one that students often say is very difficult when they first start reading circles, but by the end of the year, many students think that both completing this role and listening to their classmates as connector is the most interesting role. The connector's role is to try to find connections between the text and the real world in which they live. For example, the connector may make connections between the thoughts, feelings, or actions of characters in the story and family members, friends, or classmates.

While the discussion leader, summarizer, and connector, read the text and prepare to discuss the story from a global standpoint, the next two roles focus more closely on single words or very short phrases.

The fourth role is that of the *Word Master*. The word master may choose *only* five words or short phrases which they believe to be the most important words found in a story. Some students disliked the word master role in my classes until I told them that they should look for special uses of common words and ask their classmates, *What do you think _____ means in this situation?* or *Why does the writer repeat the word _____ eight times in the first two pages of this story?*

The last of the core roles is that of the *Passage Person*. In many classes, the passage person quite often chooses passages which they find puzzling. They then ask the group for help in understanding these passages. Some of the best discussion occurs as the students are trying to figure out difficult passages together; it is often at this point that one can readily see the theory of the zone of proximal development playing out in class.

Finally, the *Culture Collector* role may be used with more advanced groups. This role was created in response to the number of times that students have struggled with the cultural underpinnings and historical backgrounds of some of the stories read for reading circles. To have one student focus on cultural issues later in the term adds a further level of both interest and complexity to the discussions. Therefore, this is a role which should be introduced later in the semes-

ter and possibly should be confined to use with intermediate students and above. The culture collector's job is to look at the story and note both differences and similarities between the culture represented in the story and their own culture.

Getting started with reading circles

After the role sheets have been distributed and the roles carefully introduced, students are each given a reading schedule, and then they choose or may be assigned a role. Each student completes a reading schedule in their small group. Students may also be told that even if they are absent, they *must* have their work ready and contact another group member to present their materials to the group. Making students responsible for their roles, whether they are in class or not, greatly promotes both student responsibility and a very high attendance rate as it is easier to come to class and participate than to arrange to send in their homework by proxy.

To begin with, it is recommended that students read short stories (around 4-6 pages in a graded reader); thus, students are required to read and to prepare their particular role for the entire story prior to the next class.

Conclusion

As stated earlier in this article, I do believe that reading circles can work *magic* for Japanese students in a number of ways. First, students feel as if they are having interesting, important discussions in English while participating in reading circles. I contend that because the reading circle role sheets give each group of students a set of clear, yet complex, tasks, they are able to have discussions at a far deeper level than those commonly heard in EFL classrooms which use course books or discussion-based textbooks. The magic works because the sum of these role sheets is more complex than any of the individual parts. Second, is the fact that at the heart of every reading circle, is a good story. Thus, reading circles serve to relocate the enjoyment of Extensive Reading materials from the periphery of the language classroom to its centre.

Appendix A

The reading circle role sheets can be viewed at jalt-publications.org/tlt/resources/2007/0705b.pdf

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Mark Furr has taught in the US, Armenia, Palau and, for six years, at several universities in Japan, including Yokohama City University and Chuo University. Currently, he lives in Hawaii where he splits his time between managing his own business and working as an ELT materials writer and editor. Mark has given presentations and seminars on Reading Circles both throughout Japan and in the Middle East. He is a series editor for Oxford University Press.

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A good story in 50 words?

Mathew White

Nanzan University

<mathew@nanzan-u.ac.jp>

Quick Guide

Key words: Extensive Reading, previewing, predicting, reading aloud, ranking, blurbs

Learner English level: Elementary and above

Learner maturity level: High school and above

Preparation time: 15–20 minutes

Activity time: 10–30 minutes

Materials: Selected *Extremely Short Stories* and graded reader blurbs

Introduction

In order for students to appreciate Extensive Reading, they need to realize that good stories can indeed be short and that good stories can also be told using vocabulary consisting mostly of words that they already know. Students are sometimes wary of simplified texts, and in many cases they have been instructed to believe that the only good stories are the ones that are really difficult. As Nation (2001, p. 173) observes, “Many of the criticisms of simplification are criticisms of bad simplification”. This exercise aims at freeing

students from this false prejudice. It introduces the students to the joy of reading through the examination of some extremely short stories (consisting of exactly 50 words) and to the strategy of previewing books to find good stories by reading their blurbs. The exercise also provides them with a clear task—the ranking of stories in order to get them thinking more critically about the materials. The output demanded from students is kept to a minimum, although some expressions related to ranking, sharing opinions, negotiation, and persuasion may be necessary depending on the oral proficiency levels of your students.



Preparation

Step 1: Prepare a worksheet with four or five entries from the Extremely Short Story Competition (or use Appendix A).

Step 2: Print out a copy of the Extremely Short Story Competition worksheet for each learner or pair of learners.

Step 3: Prepare a handout with the blurbs from four or five well received graded readers (see Appendix B for an example). The blurbs should be from readers that are appropriate for your students to read extensively, meaning there should only be one or two unknown words in every 100 running words (Hirsh & Nation, 1992).

Step 4: Print the handout consisting of graded reader blurbs on the back of the Extremely Short Story Competition worksheets.

Procedure

Step 1: Write *ESSC* on the board and explain that it stands for *Extremely Short Story Competition*. Ask students to tell their partners how many words they think are allowed in the competition.

Step 2: Explain that the competition, which began at Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates, only allows stories of *exactly* 50 words. Stories that are 49 or 51 words are not accepted.

Step 3: Ask students to tell their partners whether or not they believe a good story can be written with only 50 words.

Step 4: Tell students that they can decide for themselves whether it is possible by looking at some

Advert: EFL Press

sample entries. Distribute the student worksheets.

Step 5: Students take turns reading the short stories to each other.

Step 6: Students rank the stories according to their level of enjoyment when reading or listening to them and decide which one they would select as the winner.

Step 7: Students report their decisions to the class.

Step 8: Explain that the length of a story doesn't determine how good it is, and that there are many wonderful short stories, including stories found in graded readers. Remind students that good stories also provide them with the chance to improve their reading fluency and get repeated exposure to words as they are used in context.

Step 9: (Optional) Individual students read the most popular stories out loud. The teacher may choose to record them to be used as future extensive listening materials.

Step 10: Explain that the blurbs on the backs of books such as graded readers also introduce stories with a very limited amount of words. Then repeat the procedure using the blurbs on the back of the sheet.

Step 11: Based on the blurbs, students share which story they would most like to read with their partners. Students make at least one prediction about what will happen in the story.

Step 12: If you have brought the books to the classroom, students find the books matching the blurbs they selected and start reading. If there are not enough copies of the desired books, instruct students to use the covers, titles, and blurbs to select different stories.

Step 13: Allow them to borrow the books until the next class. If you haven't brought any books with you, explain how students can find such books to read, for example, by going to the library. If a particular book is not available, they should find another book in the same way or consider purchasing the book from a bookstore.

Conclusion

My students really enjoyed reading the worksheet containing some of the entries from the Extremely Short Story Competition in Japan. I chose to use stories written by Japanese university students because I thought it would be easy for them to relate to them, and it might inspire them to try submitting one of their own stories to the competition. These activities could also be done as listening activities if one were to record readings of the materials aloud. To encourage students to use the audio materials now commonly available for most graded readers, the first minute or two of the graded readers' audio material could be used as well. The blurb worksheet (Appendix B) consists entirely of Oxford Bookworms Titles at Levels 1 and 2. If the students have access to materials from a variety of publishers, it might be best to include samples from the different publishers in order to encourage students to explore the differences and find the series that best matches their individual tastes. The idea for the blurb match activity came from Ken Schmidt (n.d.). He has one already prepared, which includes books from a variety of different levels at <www.langconcepts.com/er/materials.html>.

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Appendices

The appendices can be viewed at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/myshare/resources/0705c.pdf>

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IN THIS ER Special Issue, Miyuki Yonezawa starts the column with the long awaited review of *Reading a Million Words in the Classroom*. In addition, Julia Christmas evaluates *Reading Challenge 1*, a content-based, multi-skilled textbook primarily focusing on reading.

Reading a Million Words in the Classroom
(教室で読む英語--百万語: 多読授業のすすめ)

[Kunihide Sakai and Minami Kanda. Tokyo: Taishukan Shoten. 2005. pp. 227. ¥1,500. ISBN: 4-469-24504-6.]

Reviewed by Miyuki Yonezawa, Tokai University

Reading a Million Words in the Classroom (henceforth *A Million Words*) is a guide to Extensive Reading (ER) written for EFL teachers of reading to help them understand the merits of free reading for pleasure as a pedagogical tool. It is composed of five chapters with an appendix of

recommended books. The book is practical and the message is straightforward: they want to spread ER as an alternative to grammar-translation reading of English in Japan. In Chapter 1, Sakai explains the aims and features of ER. In Chapter 2, Kanda illustrates their method of ER. Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 contain successful reports of ER attempted by nineteen ER advocates from teachers of high schools, technical colleges, and universities, cram schools and prep schools for younger children, to self-study adult learners. Chapter 5 illustrates how Sakai has practiced ER in his university classrooms throughout a period of one year. In this way, all chapters focus on how, what, and when to read in order to become a successful reader of English who is likely to improve overall English skills as well.

First, the authors contend that the success of ER is based on an abundance of books with various genres. Also, the key to this success is to increase the pleasure of reading among learners. So, there should be picture books, children's classics, and



teens' books written for English native-speaking children, as well as graded readers for non-native English readers, and even manga comics. They have sorted these books (except manga) into a list of books by their levels. Sakai contends that readers of any age and any level of English ability should start with picture books. For him,

there are no appropriate age levels because the learners are free to select any English materials they choose, with absolutely no reading strategies taught directly by the teacher.

Teachers bring these books to the classroom and their students select what they would like to read. Sakai claims that class periods should be occupied by students' reading time. The students can also take some books home. In the classroom, while observing each student's progress of reading and advising students individually, teachers should make learners conform to the following rules of reading. The rules for teachers are: do not teach but advise your students; let them choose a book; and do not evaluate them based on quantity of books they have read.

Also, the rules for learners are simple, which has made the book influential: first, do not consult a dictionary while reading; second, skip over unknown words and phrases; and finally, stop reading if the book does not interest you. All these rules are supported by the claim that lowering affective filter is a key to success in learning EFL (Krashen & Terrell, p. 19). Yet another advantage of *A Million Words* is that the authors set a clear, specific, and numerical goal to read to become a fluent reader of English: a million words. This number is derived from observations and experiences of Sakai at his university while guiding students with ER for the last three years (p. 6).

One possible criticism of *A Million Words* is that it is too subjective and anecdotal with no statistical data and gives the false impression (see Day & Bamford, 1998, p. xiv) that anyone can become a fluent reader in English once he or she starts ER. Sakai admits, however, their work is still in progress, and their claims need to be verified in the future with statistical data.

Still, there is pedagogical merit in Japanese English education. Sakai's method is contrary to what English learners often have been given in their classrooms. Until today, the mainstream in English education within Japan has been clamoring about the importance of using a dictionary, learning grammar, and precisely interpreting a reading text. This approach has failed to produce many good, fast readers of English but, instead, many learners with English-phobia. A majority of learners tend to lose interest in the English classroom before teachers introduce reading skills and strategies. In this frustrating situation, Sakai's method has attracted teachers and learners of English who have grown tired of the existing unsuccessful methods including grammar-translation method or skill-based learning. Sakai enthusiastically wants to *evangelize* their rediscovered useful merits of ER, which is his purpose for writing *A Million Words*.

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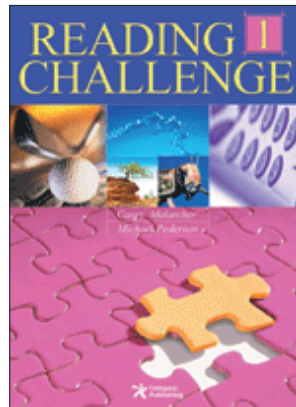
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Reading Challenge I

[Casey Malarcher and Michael Pederson. Seoul: Compass Publishing, 2005. pp. 128. ¥1,500. ISBN: 1932222480.]

Reviewed by Julia Christmas,
JALT JHS-SIG, Wakayama
Chapter

Reading Challenge 1 is a content-based, multi-skilled text intended for high beginning EFL and ESL students. It comes with CD recordings of the passages, listening sections for each chapter, and a script at the end of the book. All 20 chapters of the text follow a consistent format. There are pre-reading questions and pre-reading vocabulary activities. There is a reading passage, followed by post-reading content questions, idiom practice, a writing activity and further exercises that focus on understanding vocabulary through content and context.



Current thought in reading pedagogy emphasizes the importance of teaching vocabulary, providing accessible reading materials, and maintaining motivation through the use of authentic and relevant materials.

Authentic implies real in the sense that students find it meaningful as well as pertinent to their lives. Consistent with these trends, the authors express a triple aim: to provide learners with a variety of interesting, broadly ranged topics, to use a level of language that ensures students can cope, and to foster growth in vocabulary.

The first aim speaks of the importance of *interest*. In addressing this aim, I believe that Malarcher and Pederson are offering a text that contains engaging passages and subject matter. Topics for reading are both familiar and diverse, ranging from Tiger Woods, to typhoons and a hotel made of ice.

The second aim is to keep the content comprehensible, through a *controlled* level of textual input. In order to discover just how controlled the language was, I ran passages from three units through the Web Vocabulary Profiling

Program <www.er.uqam.ca/nobel/r21270/tex-tools/web_vp.html>. Results indicated a very high percentage of passage vocabulary coming from the most frequent 1,000-word list (78.12% for Unit 1, 83.33% for Unit 10 and 83.80% for Unit 20) and a small percentage from the second 1,000 most frequent word list (15.62% for Unit 1, 4.29% for Unit 10 and 5.09% for Unit 20). The authors' maintenance, throughout the passages, of this level of vocabulary parallels Nation's view that the mastering of these first 1,000 most frequent words is absolutely vital for learners' understanding of written text (2001, p. 16).

In order to achieve the third aim of fostering vocabulary growth, it appears the authors have purposefully chosen to create readings that rely highly on vocabulary found among the 1,000 most frequent words in English. Their hopes for smooth progression and transition from easier to harder texts implies a fluency-building approach. In order to develop a large sight vocabulary, to gain general knowledge from texts, to enjoy reading, and to actually be reading, the level of the text must be a major consideration. Laufer (1992) suggests that in order for reading comprehension to occur, 97% of the words must be known to the reader. The actual level of understanding for my students may not be quite that high, but *Reading Challenge* is offering a better match than other texts that I have been using.

For further examination, I tried using the text with one group of high school age students and another group of adults. My students indicated in post-lesson discussion that the text of the passage (on typhoons) was not too hard to read, nor was it too easy. They stated that the topic was interesting, and that the comprehension questions were challenging, but not overtaxing. Most felt that the idiom practice was useful and that the cloze exercise was hard, but fun. The majority said that the listening was the hardest part, however, access to the tape script gave a feeling of closure. I felt that the discussion questions helped students plan for the writing section and the *Vocabulary Review* helped consolidate new vocabulary words.

Reading Challenge 1 is a multi-skill text that is reading based with a smattering of listening, speaking, vocabulary building, and writing exercises. Nonetheless, it does seem to fill a niche. Its authors aim to attract and sustain interest, to allow high beginners to build vocabulary and to interact in a meaningful way, through pre-reading and post-reading vocabulary and writing activities with texts based on a variety of topics.

Currently, many teachers are working on specific skill building (e.g., reading, listening, or functional speaking competence) in the classroom. Some may view the text as lacking in an emphasis on any single area of focus. However, instead of looking at *Reading Challenge 1* in this light, it may be better to see it as a kind of bridge or building block for lower level students to help them reach higher level skills.

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Contact: Scott Gardner

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Countries of the World (elementary / intermediate reader series of 24 books, including Canada, Kenya, Vietnam, etc.). Dahl, M., et al. Mankato, MN: Bridgestone, 1999.

! *Essential English for Communication*. MacGregor, L. Tokyo: Kaibunsha, 2006. [Incl. CD, teacher's manual].

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Lecture Ready: Strategies for Academic Listening, Note-taking, and Discussion (levels 1, 2, 3). Sarosy, P., et al. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. [Incl. DVDs].

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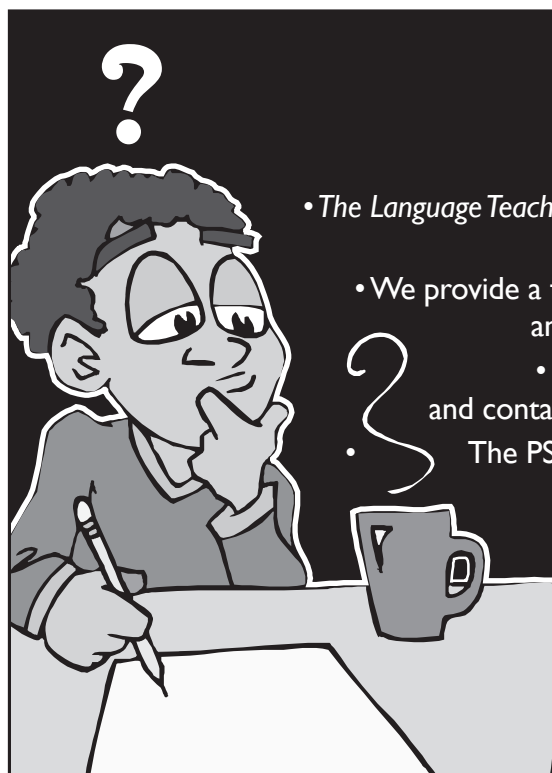
Books for Teachers (reviewed in *JALT Journal*)

Contact: Yuriko Kite

<jj-reviews@jalt-publications.org>

* *The Experience of Language Teaching* (Cambridge Language Teaching Library series). Senior, R. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

* *A Friendly Approach to English for Academic Purposes*. Strain, S. S. Tokyo: Shohakusha, 2006.



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<tlt-wired@jalt-publications.org>



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

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Mixi-ing up Classroom Communities

Paul Collett

So you've decided to set up an online community for your students. You've done your comparisons of the different weblog and forum packages, secured some server space, installed and configured the software, added the modifications you require, edited the templates, registered all your class members, and explained to them how to post and edit content and make comments. Then you sit back and wait for students to start posting and commenting on each other's posts. And you keep waiting. . . hear that sound? Is that the electric wind whistling through the empty pages of your blog?

It can be frustrating to devote all the time required to set up a blog or similar tool and administer it, only to find students aren't contributing.

While there are many reasons for limited participation, ones that I commonly hear from my students include the problem of network access—no Internet connections in their homes, apartments, or dorms; forgotten usernames and passwords; and unfamiliarity with the online software configuration and options. So what should you do—rather than give up? One possibility is to make use of existing online communities, the largest of which, in the case of Japan, is Mixi.

What's Mixi?

Mixi is a free, but invitation-only online Social Networking Service (SNS) where members can write and keep diaries, read and comment on others' dairy entries, send messages, post pictures, create and join communities, and more. It's a growing phenomenon in Japan, with over 8 million users as of the beginning of 2007, approximately one third aged between 20 and 25 (<press.mixi.co.jp/press_070129.html>).

All that's required to use Mixi are a user account and a web browser. There's no need for server space, messy installation or configuration—you just log in and browse or post content. And, as it works with Internet-capable mobile devices, you don't even require a computer or home Internet access to use it. This mobile usability undoubtedly plays a large part in Mixi's popularity; Table 1 gives an overview of user access figures as of 31 Dec 2006, and of the reported 10.1 billion page views in January 2007, 3.1 billion were from mobile devices (<press.mixi.co.jp/press_070201.html>). Even with such a high level of user activity, pages load quickly, due as much to the low-graphics nature of the page templates as the extensive backend architecture (<www.mysql.com/customers/customer.php?id=251>).

Mixi communities

One of the main features of Mixi, and the one of concern here, is its communities. These are basically online forums which anyone can set up based on any theme, and which other Mixi users can join and participate in. Community participants can create topics which the other members can read and comment on, facilitating ongoing dialogue. The top page of the community site gives you a list of the most recent topics listed as links; clicking on a link takes you to that topic page with the comments/replies ordered by date, from first to most recent. It's a straightforward system, simple to navigate and easy to contribute to, as well as easy to set up as we'll see shortly.

Table 1. Mixi user access by device type

User access by device type					
PC	Male 48.2%		Female 51.8%		
Mobile	Male 43.7%		Female 56.3%		
User access by age range and device type					
PC	10s 9.0%	20s 59.4%	30s 24.6%	40s 5.4%	50s 1.6%
Mobile	10s 15.2%	20s 65.2%	30s 16.3%	40s 2.8%	50s 0.4%

Limitations

While Mixi is a potentially useful resource, there are a number of factors which may limit its utility. Perhaps the biggest of which is that it's an invitation-only site; you need an online invitation from a current member before you can sign up and join. How do you get an invite? Ask your students, friends, family; search on the Web. . . it's not too difficult.

If only a few of your students are members, obviously any others you want to join will need invitations and be willing to join. Note too that membership in Mixi is restricted to those over 18; if you're hoping to use this with high school-aged students or below, you're out of luck.

Another potential drawback is that the user interface is all in Japanese, so basic Japanese reading ability is required. It's a fairly simple, user-friendly interface, however, and doesn't take long to learn your way around.

Finally, Mixi can become an obsession. If students aren't already using it and you encourage them to join, be aware it might affect their lives! On the other side of the coin, there's a developing phenomena called *Mixi tsukare*, where people grow tired of, and eventually give up, using the service (<www.itmedia.co.jp/news/articles/0607/21/news061.html>).

Using Mixi

You've decided a Mixi community might work for you and your students, you've got your invitation, and set up your mixi homepage: マイミクシイ. (See <www.japanlinked.com/mixireg.html> for a basic English guide to signing up and getting started.). Time to set up a community for your students. You do this via the コミュニティを作成する page at <mixi.jp/add_community.pl> (see figure 1).

The first step is to give the community a name, and choose the category you want it listed under.

Then you need to set the privacy and participation level—参加条件と公開レベル. This section lets you control who can participate—read and post content—in the community. You have three choices; the top, default one sets the community as open to all, the next allows anyone to join the community, but posting is moderated, and the final option is to set it up as a private community. You can also control who is allowed to create new topics; this in the next section トピック作成の権限. There are two options here—the default, allowing all participants to create topics, or restricting topic creation to the community manager only. Finally, write a brief introduction or explanation for the community in the コミュニティの説明 section, upload a picture or photo to represent the community, and click the 作成 button. You're done. Now, when you go back to the front page you should see the community included in your コミュニティ一覧 list on the left-hand side of the page.

Once you've set up the community, it's just a matter of giving people the URL (and having them sign up if the community is private)—but remember, only other Mixi members can access the community. Going to the community page, you see a list of recent topics; clicking on any of them takes you to that page where you can read the topic and any comments or responses, plus post new comments. Or you can create and post a new topic. There's also an *Events* function where you can create a basic list of upcoming events. Should you decide to upgrade to the premium pay version of Mixi, you get the ability to add polls/questionnaires to the community. And, the communities are fully accessible via web-capable cellphones—you can even post photos directly from your cellphone.

But it's my Mixi!

As with any classroom activity, it's important to consider how students will react to having a class-based community on Mixi. For many, Mixi

こちら。' (Help regarding photo uploads is [here](#).); and a '作成' (Create) button at the bottom. A large block of text at the bottom of the form provides additional rules: '作成後1ヶ月経っても登録数が1人の場合、また複数参加者がいる場合でもトピックの無いコミュニティは自動的に削除させていただきます。公序良俗に反する表現・写真・イラストの掲載は禁止しています。成人向けの内容が含まれると判断される場合は「アダルト」カテゴリをご選択ください。卑猥な写真や言葉等、公序良俗に反する内容は、運営事務局が明らかに利用規約に反すると判断した場合、事前の通告なしに削除させていただきますのでご了承ください。' (If there are no topics in a community after 1 month of creation or if there are multiple members, we will automatically delete it. Posting expressions, photos, or illustrations that violate public order and good morals is prohibited. If it is judged to contain adult content, please select the 'Adult' category. Posting vulgar photos or words, etc., that violate public order and good morals will be deleted by the operations department if it is clearly judged to violate the terms of service, without prior notice, so please understand.)

Figure 1. Mixi community set-up page preferences panel

is something fun they do with their friends, an entertaining social sphere, and they may be taken aback or feel their privacy is being threatened by a teacher entering this sphere. Community membership means all members are listed on the community page, so access to members' diary pages is only a click away. Some students may not be happy with having their diary, their list of friends, or joined communities made accessible to other class members and the teacher in this way. Here, though, is where Mixi's privacy and community functions are useful. Diary access can be limited to *friends* or *friends of friends*, and if that isn't enough, there's an *Access Block* function where you can block access to your homepage for individual users. But rather than putting the onus on students to ensure their pages are private, they can take your word that you won't view their diaries—the *ashiato* (足あと) function which leaves a *footprint* of all visitors to a user's homepage will soon show if you break your promise.

Maximum value

As a free, popular, well-designed, reliable, and easy-to-use system, Mixi has a lot to offer anyone looking to set up an online community for students in Japan, especially students in the university-age group, and the built-in mobile access functionality adds considerably to its attractiveness. Obviously, as with any computer-based tool, Mixi has its limitations, but in this case many of these are social or community based. In dealing with these issues, the teacher can move beyond the technical and administrative duties required when setting up a weblog or forum, and focus instead on facilitating and managing the community. Hear that sound? Is that your students mixi-ing in English?

Paul Collett keeps busy as the JALT national web

and server administrator. He also dabbles in site creation and hosting, and teaches at a few universities in Shimonoseki and Kitakyushu. He's been setting up and encouraging his students to use online learning resources since around the turn of the century with a success rate approximating zero, but thinks he'll get it right eventually.

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

JALT Calendar

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

- ▶ 12-13 May 2007: Sixth JALT Pan-SIG Conference at Tohoku Bunka Gakuen University in Sendai, Japan. See <jalt.org/pansig/2007> for more information.
- ▶ 1-3 Jun 2007: JALTCALL 2007 "CALL: Integration or Disintegration" at Waseda University, Tokyo. See <jaltcall.org/conferences/call2007> for more information.
- ▶ 16-17 Jun 2007: National Executive Board Meeting (EBM); Tokyo Medical and Dental University in Ochanomizu (same as January meeting)
- ▶ 24 Jun 2007: TOL/Pragmatics SIG Mini-Conference "Authentic English and Elderly Learners: A Day of Sharing Theory and Practice" at Temple University, Tokyo
- ▶ 22-25 Nov 2007: JALT2007 "Challenging Assumptions: Looking In, Looking Out" at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center, Tokyo.

JALT Watch

JALT National news and announcements in brief.

- ▶ If you need to contact JALT Central Office, note that the email address is now <jco@jalt.org>.

THIS MONTH in JALT Focus, Jim Smiley introduces the delights awaiting participants at the annual JALT Pan-SIG conference to be held 12-13 May in Sendai.

The Sixth Annual Pan-SIG Conference— Second Language Acquisition: Theory and Pedagogy

**Tohoku Bunka Gakuen University,
Sendai, 12-13 May, 2007**

Classrooms may be seen as self-contained environments comprising various participants, each with their own agenda, purpose, and nature. However, much of what western teachers bring to the classroom is informed by western ELT pedagogic practices difficult to implement in the Japanese context. Learner development provides a prime example: many learner empowerment models require very sensitive handling in certain Japanese contexts, a much more sensitive consideration than that assumed by the original models. The actual Japanese classroom dynamics are often misinterpreted. We hear of the *wall of silence*, and the *uniformity* of students. Consisting of people, the Japanese classroom can hardly fail to be as fully human as any other *people* environment. However, this aspect is often overlooked, and classes are seen as a target, or a single object. The expressions *classroom mechanics* and *SLA: Theory and Pedagogy* are flexible and pliable phrases. Open to various interpretations from diverse disciplines, these phrases set the theme for the Sixth Annual Pan-SIG Conference, to be held at Tohoku Bunka Gakuen University in Sendai on 12-13 May, 2007.

Five Special Interest Groups (SIGs), together with the JALT Sendai Chapter and the Tohoku Association of Language Educators (TALE), offer five very different perspectives on the conference theme. The **Materials Writers SIG** presents their plenary speaker, **Marc Helgesen**, (Miyagi Gakuin Women's University) who will discuss *ELT and the "Science of Happiness."* Marc states:

Positive, motivated students, engaged in what they are studying and with each other, learn more. As a teacher, you already know that. But how do we facilitate that positive attitude in the classroom? And how can we design materials that help create those positive behaviors in ELT classrooms?

The new field of *positive psychology* offers ideas. Psychology has traditionally focused on mental illness. Positive psychology focuses on mental health—What do happy, successful, mentally healthy people do? *TIME* magazine dubbed this *the science of happiness*.

Language learning is, of course, informed by educational psychology. How can we connect ideas from positive psychology to the classroom? Can these ideas make us more effective teachers? And again, as teachers—many of whom develop our own materials—how do we incorporate these ideas into our work. In this session, we'll work, play, and experiment with tasks that attempt to use positive psychology with clear language learning goals. This is especially challenging to material developers. If the goal is behavioral change, it needs to be presented over time, not just as a one-off lesson or a special unit.

It should be noted that positive psychology is not just *happy talk* or *the power of positive thinking* (although *positive self-talk* is very useful). Rather, it involves noticing behavior. What are the things that happy people do? Among other behaviors, they notice good things in their own lives, thank other people, forgive, and they give compliments. They even take the time to laugh.

This session builds on the ideas of Seligman, Csikszentmihalyi, Lubomirsky, Niven, Kataria, and others. It will be a practical, active session. We'll share principles of positive psychology and ways the presenter is using them in his own English teaching and materials development.

The plenary speaker for the **Other Language Educators SIG**, **Martina Gunske von Kölln** (Fukushima University), asks, "Are textbook designs fit for our present classrooms?" In describing her session, Martina writes:

The demands for teaching foreign languages (especially as second, third, fourth, or further foreign languages) in Japan are influencing both educational policies and textbook design. This issue is reviewed in order to assist teachers and textbook authors to consider learners' prior knowledge as well as their needs.

The aim of this presentation is to provide theoretical background as well as illustrate the practical transfer into the classroom regarding the following questions, which the speaker will discuss from a European point of view vis-a-vis the learning circumstances in non-European countries like Japan:

- What needs do learners and teachers have in general concerning their textbooks?
- Can we use textbooks from Europe in our classes in Asia?
- How important is language learning, and what role should cultural learning play in this context?
- How can we integrate tasks focusing on autonomous learning into textbooks to incorporate such learning into the classroom?
- How can we implement appealing product- and content-based tasks in textbooks despite learners' lack of language ability at the beginner level?

With these questions in mind, the presenter will provide several examples of language textbooks (from languages such as German, Japanese, and Spanish) to draw attention to certain problems that may affect language acquisition. Solutions will be discussed with the audience.

The **Pragmatics SIG** presents **Mayumi Usami** (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies) in a discussion about *Discourse Politeness Theory as a theory of interpersonal communication*. Mayumi reports:

After re-examining Brown and Levinson's universal theory of politeness and its major criticisms, this talk will present a Discourse Politeness Theory (DPT), developed based on the results of a series of empirical studies of discourse behavior. This theory attempts to enable researchers to contrast politeness behavior in languages with and without honorifics within the same framework, while minimizing cultural biases.

The DPT is based on the core concepts of *discourse politeness* and *discourse default*, used for representing the prototypical state of factors both in linguistic forms and discourse-level phenomena within the discourse. This proposal thus aims to broaden politeness research to encompass the concept of relative politeness in addition to absolute politeness studied thus far in the field of pragmatics.

Also emphasized is a *universal theory of politeness*, which posits that politeness should

be captured both from the perspectives of the speaker's politeness strategies and the listener's interpretations of the speaker's strategies at the discourse level. The discrepancy between the estimation of the degree of Face Threat by listeners and speakers is thus also integrated into this theory.

DPT consists of the following seven key concepts: a) *discourse politeness*; b) *discourse defaults*; c) *markedness of behavior*; d) *markedness of politeness*; e) *discrepancy in estimation value (De value)*, which is the discrepancy between the speaker's and hearer's estimate of the degree of Face Threat of the speaker's act; f) three types of *politeness effect*, which are positive, neutral, and negative effects toward pleasantness; and g) *absolute and relative politeness*.

Examples from cross-cultural studies are explained by the DPT, and its contribution to the study of cross-cultural pragmatics and interpersonal communication will also be discussed.

The **Teacher Education SIG** plenary speaker, **John Wiltshier** (Miyagi University), will consider how teachers can continually strive to increase the quality of their instructional product in *Evidence-based education – Benefits and challenges*. John suggests:

The consequence-free environments in which many teachers work can be breeding grounds for apathy and low job satisfaction. In order to preserve the teacher's self esteem, increase job satisfaction, and generally re-energize such situations, evidence-based education can be adopted.

Evidence-based education refers to policy and practice that can be justified in terms of sound evidence about their likely effects. In education, opinion seems equally if not more respected than scientific research and perhaps there are good reasons for this: not least being that what is one person's evidence could be another person's arbitrary nonsense! What constitutes *evidence* is one of the key issues addressed.

As teachers we seek professional respect. To gain such respect from others and maintain our own self-respect, we need to encourage situations where evidence exists and is valued, while concurrently not restricting practice to things that can be easily measured or which would choke a teacher's creativity and individual flair. Ways to find such a balance will be suggested.

If evidence based education is to be widely adopted, it needs to be easy to implement and seen as a help rather than a burden to teachers. Examples will be presented to show evidence-based education in practice.

The final plenary will be presented by the **Testing and Evaluation SIG**. **Trevor Bond** (Hong Kong Institute of Education) invites us to consider Rasch measurement in *Lessons learned from re-inventing the wheel: What measurement can tell us about language testing*. Trevor writes:

While a number of commercially available tests are routinely used for testing the language competency of ESL learners, some institutions prefer to adopt their own locally developed assessment protocols, especially for entrance and placement examinations. For researchers and ESL/EFL teachers who are serious about language performance assessments, Rasch measurement has become the model of choice, even if only on pragmatic grounds. The various members of the Rasch family of models allow for dichotomous, partial credit, and rating scale grades to be estimated simultaneously in one measurement framework, while the many facets Rasch model accommodates for differential severity among examiners and the variety of speaking, listening, or writing prompts that form part of a comprehensive second-language assessment. Recommendations for the further development of a recently trialed language placement battery for a tertiary institution in the region show how ESL teachers' own requirements might be incorporated into the testing procedures.

The Pan-SIG conference promises to offer a host of intellectual, educational, and natural riches. For more details, see <www.jalt.org/pansig/2007/pansig07/>. Also, the beauty of Sendai in May is remarkable. Cherry blossoms linger, the Pacific Ocean beckons, and after months of winter chill, the surrounding mountains and hills lend a sense of peaceful enclosure to the city. For those who travel to conferences to taste not only the cerebral stimulus but also the local fare, Sendai's *gyutan* is not to be missed.

Jim Smiley
Pan-SIG Chairman

<www.jalt.org/pansig/2007/pansig07/>

...with Theron Muller

<memprofile@jalt-publications.org>



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

THIS MONTH in Showcase, Dax Thomas from Sugaya Gakuen has a call for teachers interested in collaborating with him on his MA dissertation research. Have your own story to share? I look forward to hearing from you.

SHOWCASE

Dax Thomas

When I say *apple*, what's the first word you think of? According to recent research (Yoneoka, 2001), if your native language is Japanese or Korean you may respond with *red* or *delicious*. However, if you are a native speaker of another language, your response is more likely to be *banana* or *fruit*. Native Japanese and Korean speakers tend to respond syntagmatically, or with words of a different word class than the stimulus, while native

speakers of other languages tend to respond paradigmatically, or with words of the same word class.

My current MA dissertation research explores this interesting Japanese/Korean tendency. In my study, I'll use an online English word association survey to collect responses from participants with different native languages, the goal being to explore the differences in their mental lexical organization.



This research can provide useful insights into how English learners store and relate English words in their minds, which in turn can aid in vocabulary teaching and in the development of learner dictionaries, thesauri, textbooks, and other teaching materials.

I'd like to invite you and your students to participate. I've constructed an online survey that can be completed in just a few minutes. If you're interested in participating with your students, please contact me at <info@thementallexicon.com> for more details and the link to the survey.

Reference

Yoneoka, J. (2001). Word associations: The universal paradigmatic pattern assumption and the Japanese/Korean anomaly. *Kumamoto Gakuen Daigaku Ronshu Sogo Kagaku* 7(2), 161-174. Retrieved 9 Mar 2007 from <www2.kumagaku.ac.jp/teacher/~judy/gyoseki/25.japankoreamonkeywrench.rtf>.

...with Joyce Cunningham & Mariko Miyao

<grassroots@jalt-publications.org>



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

THIS YEAR'S JALTCALL conference at Waseda University in Tokyo promises to be the best so far in the long series of successful events put on by the CALL SIG. Here are some reasons why you need to be there! In the second report, Tim Murphey, JALT2006 Conference Chair, reminisces about the conference and the many people who helped make it a success.

Aiming for the biggest and brightest ever JALTCALL

Greetings! The 12th annual CALL SIG conference, JALTCALL2007, is scheduled for 1-3 June, 2007,

at Waseda University in Tokyo, on the theme of "CALL: Integration or Disintegration?" The conference is being supported by the JALT CALL SIG in association with the Tokyo and West Tokyo JALT chapters and a number of other organisations.



Program

Over 120 presentations by 150 presenters from over 12 countries are planned this year. The program consists of poster, workshop, show and tell, and paper presentations concerning technology in language learning. Topics include integrated course components in CALL, implementing multiple modes of technology, innovative ways of integrating CALL in and out of the classroom, and the future direction of CALL. Most importantly, we will discuss whether CALL is still a unified and discrete discipline, or whether it is being subsumed into other areas as it diversifies.

The keynote address will be delivered by Mike Levy from the School of Languages & Linguistics at Griffith University, Australia. His talk is entitled *Climate Change in CALL: From Realigning the Goals and Technological Options to Breaking the "Hype Cycle."* The plenary speaker, Yasunari Harada, is currently director of the Institute for Digital Enhancement and Cognitive Development at Waseda. The title of his presentation is *Decentralization of Communication Channels in Class: Using Technology to Facilitate Student Learning for Themselves, by Themselves and/or Among Themselves.*

Pre-conference workshops

Two levels of pre-conference workshops will be offered on Friday, 1 June. Beginners will be interested in a workshop aimed at taking the first steps to incorporating CALL into their classes. Teachers already using technology in the classroom will be able to learn new skills in more advanced workshops.

Conference attractions

Waseda University will provide state-of-the-art computer labs and rooms for workshops and presentations, and, as usual, free refreshments will be available between sessions. Of course, JALTCALL's legendary *Networking Reception* will be held on Saturday evening. This year's event

will be held partially outdoors (weather permitting) around a café, and will include an all-you-can-eat-and-drink plan. Tickets are *free* for pre-registrants, so be sure you don't miss out.

In addition, we are planning a large and informative display including commercial sponsors displaying and presenting about the latest CALL materi-

als and language learning technologies. Other JALT SIGs have been invited to participate, too, with *bridging sessions* that highlight crossovers between CALL and their own specialist areas. Organisations outside of JALT and Japan, including IATEFL, will have a presence, too, making this a truly wide-ranging and international conference.

Location

Waseda University is conveniently located near Shinjuku, in Tokyo. Access to the conference site is fast and simple by bus or taxi from Takanobaba station on the Yamanote line. The site is also near several hotels, details of which appear on the conference page alongside comprehensive travel and sightseeing information. As the first weekend of June is a busy time, be sure to book your hotel and tickets early.

Please visit <jaltcall.org/conferences/call2007> for more information and updates about the conference. Any questions regarding the conference should be forwarded to <jc2007@jaltcall.org>. We look forward to seeing you at JALTCALL2007!

On behalf of the conference committee

Paul Lewis & Tim Gutierrez
JALTCALL2007 Conference Chairs

The "contact zone" called JALT: JALT2006

Platt (1991) refers to how groups can learn from each other in what she calls the *contact zone*:

We are looking for the pedagogical arts of the contact zone. These will include, we are sure, exercises in storytelling and in identifying with the ideas, interests, histories, and attitudes of others; experiments in transculturation and

collaborative work and in the arts of critique, parody, and comparison (including unseemly comparisons between elite and vernacular cultural forms) (p. 40).

The JALT conference is a contact zone where diverse communities of teachers, students, researchers, and administrators can come together to explore their identities and motivations and learn from each other. JALT2006 in Kitakyushu was a contact zone gala for me! I didn't think I would enjoy it so much—I was the JALT2006 Chair and as such was supposed to multitask much of the time. The backstage semi-invisible community of stagehands got us thinking about JALT2006 eons before the event came up on the radar (before JALT2005 even). When the conference happened, it had already been in our minds so long that it was not frightening. I even smiled and laughed throughout the conference a good deal as well—mainly due to the communities I was working with in the contact zone.

The highlights of the JALT2006 convention for me were 1) going to dinner with the early arriving plenary and featured speakers on Thursday night and enjoying some special conversations in the convention restaurant overlooking the water (great sight/site), 2) listening to the inspiring plenaries on Friday and Saturday and having numerous people come up to say they really got a lot out of them, 3) attending a sterling Domestic Forum with views as wide as the sky on (the problems with) testing in Japan and some fascinating movement happening in the field, 4) attending the Saturday evening 30th Anniversary of the *TLT* Gala and talking to so many people and listening to Donna Tatsuki sing beautiful opera (we won't mention those strange people dressed in shorts and tuxedos, the jugglers, and the Floppy Frisbee players who invaded the room), 5) then going to the post party to dance and revel with new and old found friends, and 6) finally on Sunday afternoon seeing the still smiling volunteer students working to clean up and pack things away (simply amazing).

A meta-highlight was discovering over the 12 months leading up to JALT2006 a rather hidden

community of special people that, like busy ants, quietly plan, organize, negotiate, and coax the miraculous into being. I won't mention them all to avoid this sounding like an academy awards

speech, but they are people who deserve more recognition (names are in the back of any *TLT* and see Andrew's report in this column in March of this year). Yes, they volunteer and learn things while doing this work, and it does have its small perks, perhaps the best of which is collaborating with like-minded individuals who believe



that professional development opportunities for all are crucial to the lifeblood of the profession. Nevertheless, these people put in Herculean efforts to allow regular members to enter a contact zone that is extremely rich and rewarding. These hardworking volunteers also have to be amazingly positive because there will be setbacks, landslides, and speaker flops—but they just keep marching on, producing the miraculous event as we know it—workers with a Dale Carnegie/Leo Buscaglia attitude!

While I am glad my term as JALT2006 Chair is over, I must say I miss the regular mailings that went on all year. Conference organizers plan years in advance (thank goodness!), and they push the envelope regularly with meetings and dialogue. We, as conference attendees, see the program, the presentations, the galas, and the book exhibits, but we don't realize the countless hours spent producing them all through meetings, emails, and phone calls. Truth be told, those people don't really know exactly what will happen either—they work on faith. Faith that if you keep trying, something good will happen, and if doesn't work the first time, just keep trying, negotiating, thinking, and communing in the contact zone.

Tim Murphey

JALT2006 Conference Chair

Reference

- Pratt, M. L. (1999). Arts of the Contact Zone. In D. Bartholomae & A. Petrosky (Eds.), *Ways of reading* (5th ed.). New York: Bedford/St. Martin's Press.

...with David McMurray

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Outreach is a place where teachers from around the world can exchange opinions and ideas about foreign language learning and teaching. It provides outreach to classroom teachers who would not otherwise readily have access to a readership in Japan. The column also seeks to provide a vibrant voice for colleagues who volunteer to improve language learning in areas that do not have teacher associations. Up to 1,000 word reports from teachers anywhere in the world are welcomed. Contributors may also submit articles in the form of interviews with teachers based overseas.



PARENTS IN Thailand expect high school teachers of English to coach students to win in competitive university entrance examinations, according to Ubon Sanpatchayapong, an associate professor at Mahidol University. The coaching job, however, conflicts with the learner-centered methodologies currently mandated by the ministry of education. As chair of the Secondary Teacher Education Development Special Interest Group (STED SIG) of Thailand TESOL, Ubon is developing her group into a forum where secondary school English teachers can exchange ideas to solve this dilemma and improve their teaching.

Secondary teacher education development in Thailand

Having chaired the STED SIG for several years, there are a number of interesting stories I would like to share with readers of the

Outreach column. There is one story in particular, however, that I wish to share because its plot has been a long-standing challenge for me to solve. It is a mystery entitled *The University English Entrance Examination*. My story, and most of the information reported herein, is based on my own teaching experience and volunteer work with Thailand TESOL, and includes the significance of the examination, the extent that our STED SIG has helped teachers confront teaching problems related to it, and teacher feedback.



Invited speakers at an annual conference in Thailand hosted by the STED SIG

The University English entrance examination in Thailand

Traditional university entrance examinations in Thailand were replaced in 2001 by two new types of entrance examinations referred to as the O-NET (Ordinary National English Test) and the A-NET (Advanced National English Test). The new examinations each consist of 100 questions divided into two sections. Part one tests the understanding of dialogues (50 items), and part two tests the understanding of reading passages (50 items). The examination has a multiple-choice format (four possible answers). It covers grammar, discourse, vocabulary, expressions, and reading comprehension.

The new university English examinations are the major determinant of whether a student will be able to enter a university of his/her choice. Students, parents, and teachers believe that the top-scorers on the examination, the winners, will have a bright future ahead of them. Students realize that they have to work hard to do well on the examination, meaning almost all candidates supplement regular studies with tutorial courses that focus solely on entrance examination techniques that train students "to tackle them" (Thai-

land TESOL, 2002, p. 25). Parents and students enlist teachers to serve as coaches who can help them to overcome the competition. Assisting students to succeed in the examination has been assumed as a task, a real tough task by teachers in Thailand. The students who fail the examination often remark that they feel they hadn't learned the proper test-taking techniques (Sanpatchay-among, 2003).

Apart from the coaching job, teachers have to cope with the demands of Thailand's Education Reform. The 2001 curriculum mandates learner-centered approaches which are different from coaching methodologies. English teachers face the dilemma of whether to best serve the needs of students or to comply with current educational policy. What these teachers need are teaching techniques (physical tools) and moral support (spiritual tools). Teachers need someone to either confirm that it is appropriate to train students to pass the entrance examination, or to soothe teachers by saying that they have done "no wrong" to do so. Teachers in Thailand need to know how to successfully blend the demands of the family and the government.



Teachers fill the room at a seminar in Thailand about university entrance examinations

The extent to which STED SIG helps teachers

The STED SIG serves as a hub for senior high school English teachers to exchange ideas and to improve their teaching. The English teachers at the senior high school and pre-university level who join our group often conduct research based on school requirements such as action research, research on teacher development, teacher training, and learner needs. Each year STED SIG arranges at least two seminars for these teachers to share their findings. A major seminar is held in Bangkok because of its size, and one or two

seminars are held in the provinces for teachers unable to travel. The STED SIG also hosts an annual conference with the American University Alumni (AUA), an association for school teachers. The theme of the conference usually focuses on teaching methodology, classroom activities, teacher training, and issues such as standards, community learning, lifelong learning, or the implementation of education reform policy.

At each seminar and the annual international conference, the STED SIG encourages teachers to learn how to use *physical* and *spiritual* tools. The physical tools are the teaching techniques, the approaches, and the classroom strategies provided at workshops by invited speakers from universities, the British Council, RELO (Regional English Language Office), and the AUA. The guest speakers encourage our members using spiritual tools, suggestions on how to cope with teaching and learning problems. During round-up sessions at the seminars, teachers are invited to ask questions. One of my favorite questions, heard at every seminar, is: Is it better to coach students on how to take the entrance exams, or to teach students grammar and structures? The answer is always "yes it is better to coach" as long as teachers can provide students with the necessary opportunities to use English for communication. We hope that these tools will help our members to improve their teaching as well as assist them in guiding students how to tackle the university English entrance examination.

Teacher feedback

Seminar evaluations and personal conversations with participants lead me to believe in the concept and the effectiveness of physical and spiritual tools. Our members say that they can immediately apply what they obtain from the seminars, and they feel more confident after listening to speakers and colleagues whom they meet at the seminar.

The benefit our STED SIG receives from hosting regular seminars is the recruitment of more members and volunteers. Our network continues to expand, and we feel proud and happy to know that some of the reasons why language teachers in Thailand are gaining confidence and devotion is inspired by our STED SIG.

Conclusion

Teachers in Japan and elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region share commonalities with our situation in Thailand (Shannon & Nasman, 1998).

English is a second or foreign language for our students and we face a similar challenge: to help students pass the entrance examination of the university they most wish to attend. We have been asked to implement approaches to make our classrooms lively places of enjoyable learning, however, in practice, helping students to pass the entrance examination is the real goal stakeholders expect from teachers.

We have to cope with the demands of several stakeholders: parents, students, administrators, and the education ministry as well as the communities to help students become successful users of the English language at school and in the real world. English teachers, similar to the language they teach, are becoming globalized. That is, we have to be ready to adapt to the changes from around the world that we are continually confronted with.

References

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Shannon, J. & Nasman, D. (1998). Teacher education and Japanese English teachers, in J. C. Richards (Ed.), *Teaching in action* (pp. 17-22). Virginia: TESOL, Inc.

Thailand TESOL. (2002). *Secondary Teacher Education SIG*, 15 (2), 25.

Thailand TESOL is a professional nonprofit and nonpolitical organization under the patronage of H. R. H. Princess Galyani Vadhana Krom Luang Naradhiwas Rajanagarindra. Its purposes are to strengthen English language education at all levels, to undertake research in the teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages, to offer scholarships, to disseminate information, and to cooperate in appropriate ways with other groups having similar aims and objectives. The STED SIG is one of eight different Thailand TESOL SIGs: Primary English Teaching, Testing, English for Specific Purposes, Research, Self-Access Learning, Computer-Assisted Language Learning, and Literature. Readers can find out more about Thailand TESOL at <www.thaitesol.org>.

COLUMN • SIG NEWS

39

...with James Hobbs

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JALT currently has 16 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) available for members to join. This column publishes announcements of SIG events, mini-conferences, publications, or calls for papers and presenters. SIGs wishing to print news or announcements should contact the editor by the 15th of the month, 6 weeks prior to publication.

von Koelln, Kazumi Sakai, Mayumi Usami, and John Wiltshier. The conference will be co-hosted by the Other Language Educators, Materials Writers, Pragmatics, Teacher Education, and Testing and Evaluation SIGs, and the Sendai JALT Chapter. It will explore the relationship between second language acquisition and the mechanics of the second language classroom. The Special Interest Groups sponsoring this event will deliver colloquia and symposiums. See <www.jalt.org/pansig/2007/pansig07/>.

Bilingualism

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

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

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

SIGs at a glance

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

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

Pan-SIG Conference 2007

The Pan-SIG Conference 2007 will be held Sat 12 May 9:30-18:10, and Sun 13 May 8:30-16:10, at Tohoku Bunka Gakuen University, Sendai, with the theme *Second Language Acquisition: Theory and Pedagogy*, and with plenary and featured speakers **Trevor Bond, Marc Helgesen, Martina Gunske**

Computer Assisted Language Learning

[🌐] technology, computer-assisted, wireless, online learning, self-access] [📖] JALT CALL Journal Newsletter—3x year] [📍] Annual SIG conference, national conference, regional workshops, publications] [✉] [🗨️]

The JALTCALL Conference 2007 *CALL: Integration or Disintegration?* is scheduled for 1-3 Jun and will offer the opportunity to attend several excellent exciting and innovative presentations. The featured speaker is **Mike Levy** from Griffith University. Our plenary speaker is **Yasunari Harada**, of Waseda University, Director of the Institute for Digital Enhancement and Cognitive Development, and member of the Research and Development Team of the Japanese PhonePass® Automated Speaking Test. More at <jaltcall.org>, or see the *Grassroots* column in this issue of *TLL*.

College and University Educators

[🌐] tertiary education, interdisciplinary collaboration, professional development, classroom research, innovative teaching] [📖] *On CUE*—3x year] [📍] Annual SIG conference, national conference, regional workshops, publications]

Information about what is going on in CUE can be found at <allagash.miyazaki-mu.ac.jp/CUE/>. Check for regular updates on the 15th of each month.

Gender Awareness in Language Education

The GALE SIG, in collaboration with other JALT SIGs and the Osaka Chapter, will hold a mini-conference 6-7 Oct. The plenary lecture is *Gender and Leadership: Some Socio-Pragmatic Considerations*, by **Janet Holmes**, Victoria University of Wellington, followed by a discussion on 6 Oct 18:00-20:00 at TUJ-Osaka campus. On 7 Oct, there will be paper presentations 10:00-17:00 at Kansai University and a panel presentation with Janet Holmes as the discussant. For more information check <www.tokyoprogressive.org.uk/gale/events.html>.

Global Issues in Language Education

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

Are you interested in promoting global awareness and international understanding through your teaching? Then join the Global Issues in

Language Education SIG. We produce an exciting quarterly newsletter packed with news, articles, and book reviews; organize presentations for local, national, and international conferences; and network with groups such as UNESCO, Amnesty International, and Educators for Social Responsibility. Join us in teaching for a better world! Our website is <www.jalt.org/global/sig/>. For further information, contact Kip Cates <kates@fed.tottori-u.ac.jp>.

Japanese as a Second Language

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

「日本語パブリックスピーキングの効果的教授(学習)法について」。このワークショップは第2言語としての日本語を教えている、あるいは学習している人たちのためのもので、パブリックスピーキングの効果的教授(学習)法とはどういうものであるか確認することを目的とするものです。例文や模範型を示しながら、将来使うと予想されるスピーチが実際に作成されるでしょう。ワークショップの参加者は自分の教材や、スピーチをお互いに見せ合い交換できるように、持参してください。他の日本語教育の教授法、学習法、技術についても話されます。2007年5月12日(土)午後18時30分-20時30分京都教育文化センター204号室。住所:京都市左京区聖護院川原町4-13。

Announcing an upcoming workshop: *Effective Methods for Japanese as a Second Language Public Speaking*. This workshop, for Japanese teachers and learners, will identify effective public speaking methods. Using examples, actual speeches may be composed. Participants are invited to bring teaching materials or speeches to share. Other JSL teaching and learning techniques will be discussed. Sat 12 May 2007 18:30-20:30, Kyoto Kyoiku Bunka Center, Room 204, 4-13 Kawahara-cho Shogo-in Sakyo-ku, Kyoto City.

Junior and Senior High School

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

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

ly invited to join us for dialogue and professional development opportunities.

Learner Development

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

Learner Development SIG members are committed to learner and teacher autonomy in language education. This year, we are working on cooperative approaches to professional development through regional gatherings of SIG members. For the latest news and more information, please see our web site <ld-sig.org> where you can read back issues of our bilingual newsletter, *Learning Learning*, online and much more.

Materials Writers

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

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

Other Language Educators

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

Pragmatics

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

The sixth Annual JALT Pan-SIG Conference will be 12-13 May 2007 at Tohoku Bunka Gakuen Uni-

versity, Sendai. The theme is Second Language Acquisition: Theory and Pedagogy. **Mayumi Usami** will deliver the Pragmatics plenary entitled *Discourse Politeness Theory as a Theory of Interpersonal Communication*. The Pragmatics colloquium will be *Discourse in Japanese Language Classrooms*, and the workshop will be *Communication Apprehension and L2 Willingness to Communicate*. Don't miss this annual event! See <www.pansig2007@yahoo.co.uk>.

Professionalism, Administration, and Leadership in Education

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

Teacher Education

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

Teaching Children






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

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

児童教育部会は子どもに英語(外国語)を教える全ての教師を対象にした部会です。当部会では、この分野で著名な教師が担当するコラムを含む会報を年4回発行しております。また、子どもに英語を指導するアイデアや疑問を交換する場としてメーリングリスト <groups.yahoo.com/group/tcsig/>を運営しています。活発な部会を維持していくためにも新会員を常に募集しております。会報を英語と日本語で提供しており日本

人の先生方の参加も大歓迎です。今後開催される部会の催し物へぜひご参加ください。部会に関する詳細は <www.tcsig.jalt.org> をご覧ください。






Teaching Older Learners

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

The TOL and Pragmatics SIGs, the Tokyo and West Tokyo Chapters, and the Graduate College of Education at Temple University are pleased to co-sponsor a mini-conference entitled *Authentic*

English and Elderly Learners: A Day of Sharing Theory and Practice, to be held on 24 Jun 09:00-17:00 at Temple University in Tokyo. For more details, contact Megumi Kawate-Mierzejewska <mierze@tuj.ac.jp> or Eric M. Skier <skier@ps.toyaku.ac.jp>.

Testing & Evaluation

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

...with Aleda Krause

<chap-events@jalt-publications.org>



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



CHAPTER EVENTS ONLINE

You can access all of JALT's events online at:
<www.jalt.org/calendar>.

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

THERE ARE lots interesting events at chapters all over Japan this month. There must be one near you. If your local chapter isn't listed, or for further details, go to the online calendar. There may be newly added events and updates.

Chiba—"Kids' Pier": A Space for Children and Teachers by Yuco Kikuchi and Naoko McLellan. Unlike most teacher training programs, Kids' Pier offers on-the-job training through team teaching and observing experienced teachers' lessons. For children, Kids' Pier is an anchorage, a place to promote positive attitudes toward learning and to raise self-esteem using English as a tool. In this presentation, the presenters will share the whole

picture of Kids' Pier program. *Sun 13 May 14:00-16:30; SATY Bunka Hall, Room 1, 4F (1 min. walk from Inage Station east exit on JR Sobu Line); one-day members ¥500.*

East Shikoku—Task-Based Teaching: Sorting out the Misunderstandings by Rod Ellis, University of Auckland. The first part will consider the design of task-based courses and the methodology for implementing tasks. The second part will present a rationale for task-based language teaching (TBLT). The third part will examine some theoretical objections against TBLT and argue that these are based on fundamental misunderstandings of its principles and methodology. The fourth part will address more substantial problems with implementing TBLT, especially in foreign language contexts, and suggest possible solutions. *Wed 23 May 19:00-20:30; Kochi University Asakura Campus, Room 211; one-day members ¥500.*

Fukuoka--Two Presentations by Terry Fellner by Terry Fellner, Saga University. Presentation 1) *Developing Writing Fluency Through Blogs*. Fellner will examine the use of student blogs to improve writing fluency among Japanese students with low English proficiency and low motivation, studying English at a Japanese university. Presentation 2) *Outdoor Language Learning: Taking Learning Beyond The Classroom*. Fellner will discuss a new methodology he calls Outdoor Language Learning (OLL), a useful and beneficial way of enhancing English language learning in both ESL and EFL situations. *Sat 26 May 18:30-20:30; Fukuoka Jo Gakuin Tenjin Satellite Campus 9F, Tenjin 2-8-38, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka-shi; one-day members ¥1000.*

Gifu—*The Ins and Outs of Getting Published* by **Steve Cornwell**, Osaka Jogakuin College, JALT Journal editor. Many of us live in a publisher-perish world or want to publish in order to engage with our colleagues about our work. This presentation will help writers understand the publishing process. It will discuss what reviewers look for, show samples of feedback authors receive, and provide advice on what to do if you don't agree with the editor. It will describe specific publishing opportunities available through JALT. *Saturday May 19, 19:00-21:00; Heartful Square (southeast section of Gifu JR Station), Gifu City; one-day members ¥500.*

Gunma—*More Community and Motivation Through Coloring* by **Miori Shimada**. The presenter will discuss and demonstrate activities to strengthen the sense of community of a small group of low-level students and enhance their motivation, based on their reading textbook of English anecdotes. The main activities consist of coloring the monochrome illustration of each story at the end of the class and exchanging impressions of these pictures colored by students. *Sun 27 May 14:00-16:30; Maebashi Kyoai Gakuen College, 1154-4 Koyahara-machi, Maebashi (t: 027-266-7575); one-day members ¥1000.*

Hokkaido—*The "Too Easy" Guide to Self-Publishing* by **Paul Gemmell** (12:30-14:30). Gemmell will outline the steps in publishing material using a self-publishing site on the Internet. A live demonstration will be performed and time will be given to address participants' questions. Gemmell will also discuss the pros and cons of this type of self-publishing. ***Going "Multimodal" in the Writing Classroom*** by **Bob Palmer** (15:00-16:00). Palmer will introduce several examples of multimodal writing produced in his classes with special focus on a WebQuest project he designed and implemented in a writing class at Hokkai Gakuen University. *Sun 27 May 12:30-16:00; Hokkai Gakuen University, Subway Building 6, 3F; one-day members ¥500.*

Kagoshima—*TPR-S Storybook Fun* by **Melinda Kawahara**. Even the best teachers sometimes run out of ideas for their next class. Especially when teaching young learners, lessons must be well prepared and full of fun. In this workshop the presenter will demonstrate how to use TPR-S storybooks for children through games and activities. In this hands-on session, a detailed lesson plan will be outlined and everyone will be given

the opportunity to write their own personalized story. *Sun 27 May 15:00-17:00; Seminar Room 117, 1F, Kousha Biru, Shinyashiki (opposite the Shinyashiki tram stop); one-day members ¥1000.*

Kitakyushu—*Incorporating Thinking Skills and ESD in the FL Classroom* by **Judith Johnson**. Linking foreign language learning and thinking skills to the world outside of school is a practical and holistic approach to education. In this session, we will discuss language education within the broader context of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), focusing on the use of thinking skills in the classroom. Generic thinking and learning processes will be applied to language learning and ESD. Bring your favorite textbook! *Sat 12 May 19:00-21:00; Kitakyushu International Conference Center, Room 31 (a 5-minute walk from Kokura station); one-day members ¥1000.*

Kobe—*Japanese Public Elementary School Life and International School Life: How Do They Compare?* by **Amanda Gillis-Furutaka**. Parents with children approaching school age face many important decisions about their children's education. The first of these is often whether to send their child to the local Japanese school or to an international school. The speaker has children in both kinds of schools and will discuss the daily life and explain differences in the teaching approach and curriculum content. After the presentation, there will be a barbecue. The BBQ is ¥2000 per person. Contact David Heywood <heywood@smile.ocn.ne.jp> if you want to join the BBQ. Bring your kids—they can play during the meeting (we will provide supervision). *Sun 20 May 14:30-16:30; Kobe Regatta and Athletic Club <www.krac.org>, 1-20, 2-chome, Hachiman-dori, Chuo-ku, 651-0085; free for all.*

Kyoto—*Effective Methods for Japanese as a Second Language Public Speaking* by **Peter Sakura**, coordinator of the Japanese as a Second Language SIG. This workshop, intended for people who are either teaching or learning JSL, aims to identify effective methods for public speaking. Using examples and templates, actual speeches may be composed for use in future situations. Workshop participants are invited to bring their own teaching materials or speeches to share. Other JSL teaching and learning techniques will be discussed. *Sat 12 May 18:30-20:30; Kyoto Kyoiku Bunka Center, Room 204 (see <kyotojalt.org> for directions); one-day members ¥1000.*

Matsuyama—Entry Level L2 Critical Thinking: Clear Communication by **Lawrie Hunter**, Kochi University of Technology. Second language learners need certain linguistic background knowledge and a number of foundation language skills before they can embark on the study of critical thinking. In this presentation Hunter will explain the structured content and graphical activity-based materials that he has developed for foundation critical thinking at Kochi University of Technology. Participants will come away with a set of thinking tools for their own teaching and materials writing. *Sun 13 May 13 14:15-16:20; Shinonome High School Kinenkan, 4F; one-day members ¥1000.*

Nagasaki—Using Graded Readers in an Extensive Reading Program by **Steven Donald**, Nagasaki Junshin Catholic University. Donald will begin with an explanation of what graded readers are and their relationship to extensive reading, followed by how the two work together to form a reading program. He will conclude with some simple activities that help students' reading comprehension and fluency and also encourage students to form a habit of reading. *Sat 26 May 14:00-16:00; Dejima Koryu Kaikan, 4F (the large white building next to Dejima Wharf and Nagasaki Prefectural Art Museum; take #5 streetcar to Shimin-byoinmae or take #1 streetcar to Dejima); free for all.*

Nagoya—Increase Students' Interest and Motivation by Drawing More by **Ray Goerig**. Vision is the strongest sense, especially in Japanese culture. Truly, a picture is worth a thousand words. Goerig will show how to spice up your teaching by using your drawing skills, including tips on how to draw. Several example lessons which you will be able to use immediately will be provided. No matter what your ability, you will leave with more confidence to use on-the-spot drawings in the classroom. Bring a pencil! *Sun 20 May 13:30-16:00; Nagoya International Center, 3F, Lecture Room 2; one-day members ¥1,000.*

Okayama—ELT Teaching: A Disadvantaged Profession in Japanese Tertiary Education? by **Peter Burden**, Okayama Shoka University (16:00-17:00). This study sought insight from two classes of university freshmen into their beliefs about how English should be taught, and how these beliefs impacted on responses to end-of-semester student evaluation of teaching surveys (SETs). *What You See Is What You Get? Learner Preconceptions of Native-Speaker-Taught University EFL*

by **Paul Hullah**, University of Miyazaki (16:00-17:00). Hullah will discuss research about how Japanese university freshmen form the shared preconceived ideas they hold regarding native speaker (NS) tertiary EFL teachers and classes. *Sat 19 May 19 15:00-17:00; Sankaku A Bldg., 2F (near Omotecho in Okayama); one-day members ¥500.*

Omiya—Indispensable . . . But How Do You Do It? by **Daniel Stewart**, Kaisei Academy, and **Richard Ascough**, Wayo University. Extensive reading (ER) is becoming more and more popular in Japan. ER Guru Rob Waring calls ER "a completely indispensable part of any language program, if not all language programs." The speakers agree. This presentation will start with a brief introduction to ER before showing how ER is done at Kaisei Academy in Tokyo. The presentation will then go on to show the nuts and bolts of setting up a program and how to get the most out of existing programs. *Sun 13 May 14:00-17:00; Sakuragi Kominkan 5F (near Omiya Station, west exit); one-day members ¥1000.*

Osaka—From a Silk Cocoon: Viewing the Award-Winning Film With Its Co-Writer and Director by **Satsuki Ina**, California State University, Sacramento. Ina is a cross-cultural psychotherapist who was born in a US internment camp during World War II. The Emmy award-winning docudrama is about her family's heartbreaking story of incarceration. Although the events happened over 60 years ago, the issues of loyalty, nationality, racial profiling, and personal liberties during times of war remain with us today. Osaka JALT is proud to co-sponsor this event with The Nikkei Gathering and SIETAR Kansai. *Sat 19 May 17:00-20:00; Sogo Shimin Koryu Center (by JR Takatsuki Station); members ¥500, one-day members ¥1000.*

Sendai—Pan-SIG Conference 2007 including **Marc Helgesen** and **Martina Gunske von Koe-lln**. The Second Language Acquisition: Theory and Pedagogy conference will be co-hosted by JALT'S Other Language Educators SIG, Materials Writers SIG, Pragmatics SIG, Teacher Education SIG, and Testing and Evaluation SIG. It will explore the relationship between second language acquisition and the mechanics of the second language classroom. Details are available at the Pan-SIG website <www.jalt.org/pansig/2007/pansig07/>. *Sat 12 May-Sun 13 May; Tohoku Bunka Gakuen University; one-day members TBA.*

Shinshu—18th Annual Suwako Charity Walk. Check the Event Calendar later for start and finish times. *Thu 3 May, Time TBA; Place TBA; free for all.*

Toyohashi—Annual Picnic & Barbecue. Toyohashi will hold its annual May barbecue and picnic at the usual place, in Takashi Ryokuchi Park. Everyone is welcome—guests and visitors—and we ask you to bring something to eat and drink. In the case of bad weather, the picnic may be postponed until the following Sunday. *Sun 20 May 11:00-14:00; Toyohashi Ryokuchi Koen (Takashi station, Atsumi Line); free for all.*

Yamagata—Egypt in Terms of Its History, Culture, Education, and Language by **Doaa Mohamed.** The speaker, who is a researcher at Yamagata University, will share her insights into her life in Egypt and how it relates to teaching English in Japan. *Sat 12 May 13:30-15:30; Yamagata Kajo*

Kominkan Sogo Gakushu Center, Shironishi-machi 2-chome, 2-15, (t: 0236-45-6163); one-day members ¥800.

Yokohama—Brazilian or Japanese: Choosing the Best Education by **Toshiko Sugino**, National Defense Academy. According to a 2004 Immigration Office survey, Nikkei-Brazilians account for nearly 300,000 of the 2 million registered foreign nationals in Japan. Why do some Nikkei-Brazilian parents choose Portuguese-mediated Brazilian schools over Japanese public schools for their children's education? Are there issues of identity shift and identity crisis involved? Sugino will share her investigation of factors that affect these children's language learning from historical, socio-political, and socio-economic perspectives. *Sun 13 May 14:00-16:30; Ginou Bunka Kaikan, Skills & Culture Center, (near JR Kannai & Yokohama Subway Isezakichojamachi); one-day members ¥1000.*

COLUMN • CHAPTER REPORTS

45

...with Heather Sparrow

<chap-reports@jalt-publications.org>



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

Gifu: February—Tools of the Trade: Utilizing the Video-iPod to Deliver Engaging EFL Content by **Bill Pellowe.** Pellowe's presentation took us through the features and relatively untapped potential of the Video iPod. Apart from the obvious music/audio function, high potential for the classroom are in the iPod video, photo/slideshow features. iPods are simple to set up, instantly on, and easily connected to a PC projector or even the classroom TV. A large memory and widely available software make it possible to take almost any audio or visual media and then copy it onto the iPod for instant class presentation. Videos, photos, or written documents, even flashcards can also be projected on the screen with the slide-

show function. Pellowe demonstrated how the iPod is an extremely portable multi-media device rivaling the laptop as the preferred media for any classroom presentation.

Reported by Jon Catanzariti

Hamamatsu: February—A New Textbook by **Jane Nakagawa.** Nakagawa explained how attention to multiple intelligence theory and the Myers-Briggs typology informs her textbook content and lesson materials. Due to questions and exchanges with the audience, Nakagawa was unable to give a lot of specific activities to use, however the free textbooks were appreciated.

Reported by David Elmes

Hiroshima: February—Poetics for Autonomous Learning and Teaching by **Hugh Nicoll.** Nicoll presented the challenges of poetics to learners and educators as threefold in a classroom: how to use them to raise awareness of language, motivate students and teachers, and deepen a feel for the myriad qualities of a language.

These three challenges, Nicoll intimated, would lead to poetry being used as an honest bridge for communication. If poetry speaks true from the heart then it could make us comfortable with the uncomfortable, and let us simply talk more. If we let

ourselves be so conditioned then we could become more autonomous as learners. Autonomy was defined as “a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making and independent action.”

Nicoll emphasized that authenticity and autonomy go hand-in-hand. Teachers who are extremely honest about the authenticity of their own awareness and motivation were likely to produce students who possess a higher capacity of detachment, reflection, decision-making, and independent action. Constant and sincere re-invention of ourselves as teachers, and the promotion of this to our learners, would let us grow as individuals, Nicoll proposed. Perhaps even “letting our souls grow deep like the rivers.”

Reported by Ewen Ferguson

Hokkaido: January—*Teaching Speech Acts Can Enrich Our Students’ Learning* by Jeremie Bouchard. Bouchard started the presentation with a set of questions to probe the audience’s knowledge of pragmatics and to foster conversation about its usefulness in the classroom. He then moved on to explain the concept of *speech acts* and the course he has designed that is based on developing understanding of speech acts in the EFL classroom. Speech acts are understood as attempts by language users to perform specific actions, in particular interpersonal functions such as compliments, apologies, requests, or complaints. We discussed activities that might be used to exercise the different speech acts that he introduced. He made an interesting point by citing the book, *The Virtues Project*, by Linda Kavel in Popov, which provides a set of speech acts that students would benefit in learning. Overall the presentation was full of good information and provided lots of food for thought about what is important to teach in the EFL classroom and what might help motivate students to study.

Reported by B. Bricklin Zeff

Kitakyushu: February—*Dialogue and Vocabulary Journals* by Hudson Murrell. For vocabulary journals, Murrell asks his students to find 10 new words per week (citing source, definition, and type) and every 2 weeks write 10 sentences with two different words in each. They also each contribute three words (with details) to a master list which is used by the instructor as a source for testing. (It was mentioned by an audience member that the software “Moodle” features a glossary that can be added to—to facilitate the whole class accessing the same list of words.)

Dialogue or peer journals are done by pairs of students, starting with self-introductions and exchange of personal information and continuing, like a conversation, into areas of mutual interest. At the beginning of each class journals are quickly checked for new entries and stamped. The journals are not corrected, graded, nor usually read by the teacher, the aim being to motivate students rather than evaluate them. They are also encouraged to formulate short- and long-term goals, reporting on progress to the instructor for feedback. Another means of rewarding effort as well as inspiring both competition and cooperation is a *language tree* diagram of functional language skills, stamped by the instructor as they are mastered.

Reported by Dave Pite

Nagasaki: February—*A Practical Workshop on Using Your iPod in the Classroom* by Bill Pellowe. Pellowe gave a hands-on presentation on how to use iPods in the classrooms. Bill patiently demonstrated and guided us on how to transfer audio CD into iPods, create slide shows to show on iPods, and transfer MP3s and videos in the iPods.

Reported by Maria Luisa Garcia

Nagoya: February—*Versatile Video iPods as Classroom Tools* by Bill Pellowe. Pellowe demonstrated with his iPod how to: get software to organize photos; get iTunes; how to create slide-shows; put images from textbooks, *keitai* (mobile phone) cameras, or slideshows into a TV screen or a projector; find images and video resources online; put a DVD or a CD to an iPod; find Podcasts on the Internet; make Podcasts; and put iTunes into a CD or a DVD. Classroom materials are divided into three smaller groups: content, stimulus, and object. Content involves students studying the language, using vocabulary and dialogues. Pictures or music related to the content will stimulate students’ interest. Students react to an object such as a video and talk about it. Pellowe showed various pictures, some videos, and how to make flashcards with his iPod to use effectively in class. One of them was to stop a scene, make predictions, and later show its unexpected result. To get Pellowe’s handout explaining his use of this technology, contact him <billp@gol.com>.

Reported by Kayoko Kato

Omiya: February—*Understanding and Adapting to Changes to the TOEIC* by Grant Trew. Trew summarized the new test format of the TOEIC (Listening and Reading), introducing the main

changes: the listening sections now use a variety of native speaker accents—Canadian, British, and Australian; most conversations are longer and comprised of natural language; and the reading component is longer with double passages employed.

The implications for teaching are that students need extensive and intensive listening practice; exposure to daily conversation; and to be taught specific test taking skills—predicting, skimming, and scanning. For reading, teachers should provide students with various articles to teach the aforementioned skills in a written context. Additionally, students need to learn how to time themselves.

Trew suggested that in a perfect TOEIC course, students should: 1) be taught test-taking strategies, 2) build linguistic knowledge, 3) develop practical listening/reading skills, 4) practice a variety of questions, 5) use materials suitable for a range of abilities, 6) engage in interesting activities, and 7) be urged to study independently. Trew concluded by presenting examples of new tasks included on the speaking and writing test.

Reported by Masa Tsuneyasu

Shinshu: February—Iroirona Hanashi: Using Stories with Younger Learners by Trevor Ralph and Kazue Taniguchi. Ralph and Taniguchi explained that a story is the art of conveying events in words, images, and sounds in the form of a folktale, fairytale, or fable. In general, stories have a predictable plot that follows a pattern of introducing the characters, setting, time, problem (external or internal), solution (external or internal), conclusion, and ending.

Stories are told for three reasons: to encourage imagination, to pass on wisdom, and to gain verbal skills. For pedagogical purposes, stories can fit into the classroom to introduce new language, practice structures and vocabulary, and consolidate new patterns. Teachers should first present the story with either a storybook or visual aids if possible, have the students practice by answering prediction and/or concept questions, and finally produce the story themselves as a song, flashcard activity, or roleplay.

He suggested an appropriate story length, complexity, and book size as well as a room that's not too bright. Finally, remember to "match voice to the story" to create excitement and anticipation.

Reported by David Ockert

COLUMN • JALT CONTACTS

47

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

National Officers

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COLUMN • JOB INFORMATION CENTER

49

...with Derek DiMatteo

<job-info@jalt-publications.org>



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

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

Job Information Center Online

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

The cover letter

Mark Zeid, Central Texas College

The first step in getting invited to a job interview is not the résumé; rather it is the cover letter for the résumé. The cover letter is much more than a courtesy. It is the first opportunity a job applicant has to impress an employer with his or her professionalism, and is one of the best ways to convince the employer that the applicant is the best person for the job. Here are some tips for writing the five basic parts of a cover letter, and sending it via email.



The first part of the cover letter is the return address and the applicant's personal information, including name, address, phone number, and email address. Many would say this is common sense. However, based on personal experience from reviewing many job applications, it's obvious that "common sense ain't so common." For exam-

ple, one year, almost 20 percent of the applications I reviewed were missing personal information (most notably the applicant's telephone number). Double check your email address, too! No matter how qualified an applicant is, if that person cannot be contacted, that person will not get the job.

The second part is the introduction of the letter. Here it is best to begin with what job you are applying for and where you found out about the job. Applicants who came across the job through professional organizations or contacts are often given extra consideration. The idea is to get your résumé special recognition and not just glanced at and then set aside. Also, most schools post all of their position openings at the same time, or within a few weeks of each other. If the employer does not know which position you are applying for, then the application won't be considered.

The third part is probably the most important. In every job ad, there is a list of qualifications the employer is looking for in an applicant. Usually the job ad states something like "TESOL certification, experience teaching in Japan, MA required, and Japanese language ability preferred." These are known as knowledge, skills, and abilities; also called KSA. The key here is for the applicant to clearly state how he or she meets each of these qualifications. For example, if the employer asks for certification, then the applicant should state exactly where and when he or she earned the certification and level of proficiency. Remember that the employer will check all qualifications, so don't lie or embellish these.

The fourth part of the cover letter is where the applicant should prove that he or she is the best candidate for the job. This is done by listing additional KSA's, computer skills, foreign language skills, and job experience. While all of this will be in the resume, remember that the idea is for the cover letter to get the employer to read the applicant's résumé. Often, those with short cover letters stating the applicant has only met the requirements are given little or no consideration since there are those who do exceed the minimum expectations. This is an opportunity to sell yourself.

The fifth part of the letter is the closing. Here you should let the employer know that you will contact him in case there are any questions or additional information needed. The last part should also include a line or two thanking the employer for taking time to consider the applicant. In Japan, good manners are almost as important as job qualifications, so don't be afraid to use them.

Finally, remember that a cover letter is a standard business letter, even if sent by email. There-

fore, get rid of casual email abbreviations such as *BTW* and *LOL*, and be certain to include the date, an inside address, and a salutation. To avoid deletion, you should put the job position in the email's subject heading. Furthermore, place the cover letter in the body of the email message, not as an attachment.

Job Openings

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

Location: Nagano-ken

School: Nagano Prefectural (2-year) College

Position: Associate professor or assistant professor

Start Date: 1 Oct 2007

Deadline: 14 May 2007 (postmark)

Location: Niigata-ken

School: International University of Japan

Position: English language instructors, summer

Start Date: Jul 2007

Deadline: Ongoing, until filled

Location: Tokyo-to, Shinagawa-ku

School: Seisen University

Position: Tenured (associate) professor of English linguistics

Start Date: 1 Apr 2008

Deadline: 12 May 2007

Location: Tokyo-to, Shinagawa-ku

School: Seisen University

Position: Tenured professor or associate/assistant professor in English-Japanese translation studies

Start Date: 1 Apr 2008

Deadline: 12 May 2007

Location: Tokyo-to

School: Lado International College of Japan

Position: CELTA trainer

Start Date: Jun 2007

Deadline: 31 May 2007

...with Alan Stoke

<conferences@jalt-publications.org>



New listings are welcome. Please email information to the column editor by the 15th of the month, at least 3 months before a conference in Japan, or 4 months before an overseas conference. Thus, 15 May is the deadline for an August conference in Japan or a September conference overseas. Feedback or suggestions on the usefulness of the column are also very welcome.

Upcoming Conferences

12-13 May 2007—Sixth Annual JALT Pan-SIG Conference 2007: *Second Language Acquisition: Theory and Pedagogy*, at Tohoku Bunka Gakuen U., Sendai. To explore the relationship between L2 acquisition and the mechanics of the L2 classroom. Co-hosted by the Materials Writers, Other Language Educators, Pragmatics, Teacher Education, and Testing and Evaluation SIGs, and Sendai JALT Chapter. **Contact:** <www.jalt.org/pan-sig/2007/pansig07/>

19 May 2007—ACTJ and Canada Project in Kyushu Conference: *Canadian Teachers*, at the International U. of Kagoshima. To highlight contributions by Canadians in immersion learning; bilingualism; Nikkei integration and multiculturalism; literature and translation; and human security and peace initiatives. **Contact:** <www.iuk.ac.jp> <www.actj.org> <mcmurray@int.iuk.ac.jp>

26 May 2007—Third Asian EFL Journal Conference: *English as an International Language – Setting the Global Standards*, at Korea U., Seoul. **Contact:** <www.asian-efl-journal.com/index.php>

28 May – 6 Jun 2007—2007 NFLRC Summer Institute: *Developing Useful Evaluation Practices in College Foreign Language Programs*, at U. of Hawai'i. **Contact:** <nflrc.hawaii.edu/prodev/si07d/>

30 May - 1 Jun 2007—Second CELC Symposium for English Language Teachers: *Learning Landscape: Continuity, Innovation and Diversity*, in Singapore. **Contact:** <www.nus.edu.sg/celc/symposium/>

31 May – 2 Jun 2007—Fifth International Conference on Language Teacher Education: *Bridging Contexts, Making Connections*, in Minneapolis. **Contact:** <www.carla.umn.edu/conferences/LTE2007/index.html>

1-3 Jun 2007—JALT CALL SIG Annual Conference 2007: *CALL: Integration or Disintegration?* at Waseda U., Tokyo. To address the current fragmentation of CALL and its reintegration into more traditional disciplines and the widening scope of CALL, e.g., into wireless learning and electronic dictionaries. The featured speaker will be Mike Levy from Griffith U., Australia. **Contact:** <jaltcall.org>

4-7 Jun 2007—25th Summer School for Applied Language Studies: *Multilingual Literacies in the 21st Century*, at U. of Jyväskylä, Finland. **Contact:** <www.jyu.fi/summerschool2007>

8-10 Jun 2007—Fifth Asia TEFL International Conference: *Empowering Asia: New Paradigms in English Language Education*, in Kuala Lumpur. **Contact:** <www.asiatefl.org/2007conference/conference2.html>

9-11 Jun 2007—29th Language Testing Research Colloquium of the International Language Testing Association: *Exploring Diverse Methodologies and Conceptualizations in Language Testing Research*, in Barcelona. **Contact:** <www.iltaonline.com/ltrc07/index.htm>

11-12 Jun 2007—Identity and Power in the Language Classroom, at Umeå U., Sweden. **Contact:** <www.mos.umu.se/IPLC/>

14-16 Jun 2007—Second Biennial International Conference on Teaching and Learning of English in Asia: *Exploring New Frontiers*, in Langkawi, Malaysia. **Contact:** <staf.uum.edu.my/tleia2/index.html>

15-16 Jun 2007—Third Biennial Conference on Intercultural Rhetoric and Discourse: *Multiple Literacies Across Cultures*, at Ohio State University. **Contact:** <www.iupui.edu/~icic/IRconference.htm>

18-21 Jun 2007—Third Conference of the International Society for Gesture Studies: *Integrating Gestures*, at Northwestern U., Illinois. **Contact:** <www.gesturestudies.com/>

20-21 Jun 2007—Discourse and Disciplinarity in Educational Research, at U. of Leeds, UK. **Contact:** <www.education.leeds.ac.uk/research>

22-23 Jun 2007—Cutting Edges 2007: *Classroom Approaches in the Spotlight*, at Canterbury Christ Church U., UK. **Contact:** <www.canterbury.ac.uk/arts-humanities/language-studies/conference.asp>

23-24 Jun 2007—JALT CUE SIG Mini-Conference 2007: *Promoting Lifelong Learning*, at Sugiyama Jogakuen U., Nagoya. To discuss student and teacher motivation; curricula that promote lifelong learning; student self-assessment; and critical thinking in the university classroom. **Contact:** <allagash.miyazaki-mu.ac.jp/CUE/> <CUE_2007_Sugiyama@yahoo.com>

29-30 Jun 2007—Applied Linguistics Seminar & Conference on Japanese Language Learning and Acquisition, at Cardiff U., UK. **Contact:** <www.cardiff.ac.uk/carbs/cjsc/index.html>

1-3 Jul 2007—32nd Annual Congress of the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia: *Making a Difference: Challenges for Applied Linguistics*, at U. of Wollongong. **Contact:** <www.uow.edu.au/conferences/ALAA/home.html>

2-3 Jul 2007—BAAL Language Learning and Teaching SIG Third Annual Conference: *Towards A Researched Pedagogy*, at Lancaster U., UK. **Contact:** <www.baal.org.uk/sigs_learn teach.htm>

5 Jul 2007—Second Lancaster University Postgraduate Conference in Linguistics and Language Teaching, UK. **Contact:** <www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/events/laelpgconference/index.htm>

7-8 Jul 2007—Japanese Society for Language Sciences Ninth Annual International Conference, in Sendai. **Contact:** <aimee.gsid.nagoya-u.ac.jp/jsls2007/wiki.cgi?page=English>

8-13 Jul 2007—10th International Pragmatics Conference: *Language Data, Corpora, and Computational Pragmatics*, in Göteborg, Sweden. **Contact:** <ipra.ua.ac.be/main.aspx?c=*CONFERENCE2006&n=1295&ct=1168&e=1511>

27-30 Jul 2007—Third Corpus Linguistics Conference, at the U. of Birmingham, UK. **Contact:** <www.corpus.bham.ac.uk/conference2007/index.htm>

3-5 Sep 2007—Fifth International Conference on Third Language Acquisition and Multilingualism, at U. of Stirling, Scotland. **Contact:** <www.ioe.stir.ac.uk/L3conference/>

6-8 Sep 2007—40th British Association for Applied Linguistics Annual Conference: *Technology, Ideology and Practice in Applied Linguistics*, at U. of Edinburgh. **Contact:** <www.baal.org.uk/>

11-14 Sep 2007—17th Annual Conference of the European Second Language Association: *Interfaces in Second Language Acquisition Research*, at Newcastle U., UK. **Contact:** <www.ncl.ac.uk/niassh/eurosla17>

15-17 Sep 2007—Sixth Symposium on Second Language Writing: *Second Language Writing in the Pacific Rim*, at Nagoya Gakuin U. To provide an international forum for the discussion of various issues of interest to L2 writing teachers and researchers. **Contact:** <logos.unh.edu/sslw/2007/>

20-22 Sep 2007—Second International Conference on Task-Based Language Teaching: *TBLT: Putting Principles to Work*, at U. of Hawai'i. **Contact:** <www.tbtl2007.org>

5-8 Oct 2007—Third International Conference of the Independent Learning Association: *Exploring Theory, Enhancing Practice: Autonomy Across the Disciplines*, at Kanda U. of International Studies, Chiba. Leading scholars will present, including Henri Holec, James Lantolf, Klaus Schwienhorst, and Kathleen Graves. **Contact:** <www.independentlearning.org>

11-14 Oct 2007—30th Annual Second Language Research Forum: *Second Language Acquisition and Research: Focus on Form and Function*, at U. of Illinois. **Contact:** <slrf-2007@uiuc.edu>

13-14 Oct 2007—First Annual Japan Writers Conference, at Ochanomizu U., Tokyo. **Contact:** <www.viversimples.ezhoster.com/writerconference.html>

21-24 Nov 2007—Second International Conference on Language, Education and Diversity, at U. of Waikato, NZ. **Contact:** <www.led.ac.nz>

22-25 Nov 2007—JALT2007 International Conference: *Challenging Assumptions*:

Looking In, Looking Out, at National Olympics Memorial Youth Center, Tokyo. **Contact:** <conferences.jalt.org/2007/submissions/>



24-29 Aug 2008—15th World Congress of Applied Linguistics: *Multilingualism: Challenges and Opportunities*, in Essen, Germany. **Contact:** <www.aila2008.org>

Calls for Papers or Posters

Deadline: 31 May 2007 (for 21-26 Jul 2008)—18th International Congress of Linguists, at Korea U., Seoul. **Contact:** <cil18.org> <bspolsky@gmail.com>

Deadline: 15 Jun 2007 (for 6-7 Oct 2007)—A mini-conference sponsored by the Gender Awareness in Language Education (GALE) SIG with other JALT SIGs and the Osaka Chapter, at Temple U., Osaka (6 Oct, 18:00-20:00) and Kansai U. (7 Oct, 10:00-18:00). Janet Holmes (Victoria U. of Wellington, NZ) will present the opening lecture, *Gender and Leadership: Some Socio-Pragmatic Considerations*, and will also lead a closing panel discussion. **Contact:** <www.tokyoproggressive.org.uk/gale/events.html> <www.osakajalt.org>

Deadline: 1 Jul 2007 (for 2-7 Nov 2007)—GLO-CALL 2007: *Globalization and Localization in CALL*, at Hanoi U. (2-4 Nov) and Ho Chi Minh City (5-7 Nov). **Contact:** <glocall.org>

Deadline: 31 Jul 2007 (for 12-14 Dec 2007)—12th English in South-East Asia Conference: *Trends and Directions*, at King Mongkut's U. of Technology, Bangkok. **Contact:** <arts.kmutt.ac.th/sola/esea>

Deadline: 20 Aug 2007 (for 1-3 Nov 2007)—Language Planning: *The Need or the Desire to Standardize?* at Agder U. College, Kristiansand, Norway. **Contact:** <www.hia.no/hum/nordisk/norm/engelsk-ind.htm>

Deadline: 30 Nov 2007 (for 26-29 Jun 2008)—9th International Conference of the Association for Language Awareness: *Engaging with Language*, at U. of Hong Kong. To address language awareness in the learning and teaching of languages and, more generally, in literature and education. **Contact:** <www.hku.hk/clear/ala>



JALT Journal

is a refereed research journal of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (全国語学教育学会).

It invites practical and theoretical articles and research reports on second/foreign language teaching and learning in Japanese and Asian contexts.

For more information and submission guidelines see <www.jalt.org/jj/>

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

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

Feature Articles

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

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

Send as an email attachment to the co-editors.

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

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

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

Send as an email attachment to the co-editors.

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

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

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

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

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

Departments

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

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

Send as an email attachment to the My Share editor.

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

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

- show a thorough understanding of the material reviewed in under 750 words
- reflect actual classroom usage in the case of classroom materials
- be thoroughly checked and proofread before submission.

Send as an email attachment to the Book Reviews editor.

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

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

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

Deadline: 15th of the month, 1st / 2 months prior to publication. Send as an email attachment to the JALT Focus editor.

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

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

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

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

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

SIG News. JALT's Special Interest Groups may use this column to report on news or events happening within their group. This might include mini-conferences, presentations, publications, calls for papers or presenters, or general SIG information. Deadline: 15th of month, 6 weeks prior to publication. Send as an email attachment to the SIG News editor.

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

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

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

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

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

- be interesting and not contain extraneous information
- be in well-written, concise, informative prose
- be made by email only – faxed and/or postal submissions are not acceptable
- be approximately 200 words in order to explore the content in sufficient detail
- be structured as follows: Chapter name; Event date; Event title; Name of presenter(s); Synopsis; Reporter's name.

Send as an email attachment to the Chapter Reports editor.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)

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

Annual international conference 年次国際大会

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

JALT publications include:

- *The Language Teacher*—our monthly publication -を毎月発行します
- *JALT Journal*—biannual research journal
-を年2回発行します
- Annual Conference Proceedings
-年次国際大会の研究発表記録集を発行します
- SIG and chapter newsletters, anthologies, and conference proceedings
-分野別研究部会や支部も会報、アンソロジー、研究会発表記録集を発行します

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

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

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

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

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

Membership Categories 会員と会費

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

- Regular 一般会員: ¥10,000
- Student rate (undergraduate/graduate in Japan) 学生会員 (日本にある大学、大学院の学生): ¥6,000
- Joint—for two persons sharing a mailing address, one set of publications ジョイント会員 (同じ住所で登録する個人2名を対象とし、JALT出版物は2名に1部): ¥17,000
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For more information please consult our website <jalt.org>, ask an officer at any JALT event, or contact JALT Central Office.

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Pan-SIG Conference

Second Language Acquisition: Theory and Pedagogy

The conference explores the relationship between second language acquisition and the mechanics of the second language classroom. Plenary Speakers are: Trevor Bond; Martina Gunske von Koelln; Marc Helgesen; Mayumi Usami; and John Wiltshier

May 12 – 13, 2007

Tohoku Bunka Gakuen University, Sendai

www.jalt.org/pansig/2007/pansig07/

JALTCALL 2007

CALL: Integration or Disintegration?

*Keynote Speaker: Mike Levy
Plenary Speaker: Yasunari Harada*

June 1 – 3, 2007

Waseda University,
Tokyo, Japan



More information:
jaltcall.org/conferences/call2007/

CHALLENGING



ASSUMPTIONS

JALT2007

Challenging Assumptions: Looking In, Looking Out

*The Japan Association for Language Teaching
33rd Annual International Conference on Language
Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials
Exposition*

November 22 – 25, 2007

National Olympics Memorial Youth Center,
Tokyo, Japan

conferences.jalt.org/2007/

Extensive Reading in the Japanese high school setting

Atsuko Takase

Kansai University and Baika High School

Appendix B.

Extensive Reading Questionnaire (English translation)

I would like to ask you about your experience or opinion concerning extensive reading. Please answer the following questions.

Name ()

Affiliation ()

1. public junior high school
2. private junior high school
3. public senior high school
4. private senior high school
5. technical college
6. national/public university
7. private university/junior college
8. others ()

1. Are you interested in extensive reading?
(1-strongly agree 2-agree 3-undecided 4-disagree 5-strongly disagree)
2. Are you already practicing an ER program?
(Yes/No)

If you answered Yes in Question 2 please complete the following questions.

- 3-1. How many ER students do you have?
(1) less than 50 (2) 51-100 (3)101-150 (4) more than 150
- 3-2. How long have you been practicing an ER program in your class?
(1) Less than 1 year (2) More than 1 and less than 3 years
(3) More than 3 and less than 5 years (4) More than 5 years
- 3-3. How long have your students been involved in ER?
(1) Less than 1 year (2) More than 1 and less than 3 years
(3) More than 3 and less than 5 years (4) More than 5 years
- 3-4. Who does book management?
(1) librarian (2) teacher(s) (3) other(s),please indicate ()
- 3-5. Where are the books kept?
(1) library (2) teachers' room/office (3) classroom (4) other, please indicate ()
- 3-6. What are the problems you are facing in the ER program?
(You may choose more than one answer)
 - a. limited class time, no time to include in the present curriculum
 - b. cost; no budget for ER materials

- c. no support from colleagues
- d. the difficulty of the different role of the teacher
- e. time-consuming work (book management included)
- f. no time for the teacher to read
- g. students' low proficiency level for ER (reluctant students included)
- h. no evidence of effectiveness (no improvement of students' English proficiency)
- i. others

- 3-7. What were the positive effects of an ER program? (You may choose more than one answer)
- a. Students enjoyed reading.
 - b. Students' English proficiency has improved. (decrease of Englishphobia)
 - c. Students became confident in English.
 - d. Communication between students and the teachers increased.
 - e. Library books were checked out in quantity.
 - f. Teachers read a lot of books.
 - g. Students began to read books in Japanese.
 - h. Others

If you answered *No* in Question 2 please complete the following questions.

- 4-1. Do you want to implement ER in your English class?
(1-strongly agree 2-agree 3-undecided 4-disagree 5-strongly disagree)
- 4-2. What would be problems in implementing ER in the curriculum?
(You may choose more than one answer)
- a. limited class time
 - b. cost; no budget for ER materials
 - c. no support from colleagues
 - d. the difficulty of the different role of the teacher (difficulty in getting information)
 - e. time-consuming work
 - f. no time for the teacher to read
 - g. students' low proficiency level for ER (reluctant students included)
 - h. no evidence of effectiveness
 - i. others
5. Do you want to know more about ER?
(1-strongly agree 2-agree 3-disagree 4-strongly disagree)
6. Do you want to read books extensively by yourself?
(1-strongly agree 2-agree 3-disagree 4-strongly disagree 5-already doing)
7. Do you want to borrow books for your ER program, if available?
(1-strongly agree 2-agree 3-disagree 4-strongly disagree 5-already doing)

Thank you for your cooperation.

Reading circles: Moving great stories from the periphery of the language classroom to its centre

Mar Furr

ELT materials writer and editor

Appendix A. Reading circle role sheets

Reading Circle Role Sheets

In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually *Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector*. These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.

Discussion Leader

Story: _____

Name: _____

The Discussion Leader's job is to . . .

- read the story twice, and prepare at least five general questions about it.
- ask one or two questions to start the Reading Circle discussion.
- make sure that everyone has a chance to speak and joins in the discussion.
- call on each member to present their prepared role information.
- guide the discussion and keep it going.

Usually the best discussion questions come from your own thoughts, feelings, and questions as you read. (What surprised you, made you smile, made you feel sad?) Write down your questions as soon as you have finished reading. It is best to use your own questions, but you can also use some of the ideas at the bottom of this page.

My questions:

1. _____

Other general ideas:

- Questions about the characters (*like/not like them, true to life/not true to life . . .?*)
- Questions about the theme (*friendship, romance, parents/children, ghosts . . .?*)
- Questions about the ending (*surprising, expected, liked it/did not like it . . .?*)
- Questions about what will happen next. (These can also be used for a longer story.)

Reading Circle Role Sheets

In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually *Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector*.

These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.

Connector

Story: _____

Name: _____

The Connector's job is to . . .

- read the story twice, and look for connections between the story and the world outside.
- make notes about at least two possible connections to your own experiences, or to the experiences of friends and family, or to real-life events.
- tell the group about the connections and ask for their comments or questions.
- ask the group if they can think of any connections themselves.

These questions will help you think about connections while you are reading.

- *Events*: Has anything similar ever happened to you, or to someone you know? Does anything in the story remind you of events in the real world? For example, events you have read about in newspapers, or heard about on television news programmes.
- *Characters*: Do any of them remind you of people you know? How? Why? Have you ever had the same thoughts or feelings as these characters have? Do you know anybody who thinks, feels, behaves like that?

My connections:

1. _____

Reading Circle Role Sheets

In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually *Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector*. These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.

Word Master

Story: _____

Name: _____

- explain the meanings of these five words in simple English to the group.
- tell the group why these words are important for understanding this story.

The Word Master's job is to . . .

- read the story, and look for words or short phrases that are new or difficult to understand, or that are important in the story.
- choose five words (*only five*) that you think are important for this story.

Your five words do *not* have to be new or unknown words. Look for words in the story that really stand out in some way. These may be:

- words that are repeated often
- words used in an unusual way
- words that are important to the meaning of the story.

My words	Meaning of the word	Reason for choosing the word
_____ page ___ line ___		
_____ page ___ line ___		
_____ page ___ line ___		
_____ page ___ line ___		
_____ page ___ line ___		

Reading Circle Role Sheets

In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually *Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector*.

These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.

Passage Person

Story: _____

Name: _____

- read each passage to the group, or ask another group member to read it.
- ask the group one or two questions about each passage.

The Passage Person's job is to . . .

- read the story, and find important, interesting, or difficult passages.
- make notes about at least three passages that are important for the plot, or that explain the characters, or that have very interesting or powerful language.

A passage is usually one paragraph, but sometimes it can be just one or two sentences, or perhaps a piece of dialogue. You might choose a passage to discuss because it is:

- important
- surprising
- confusing
- informative
- funny
- well-written

My passages:

	Reasons for choosing the passage	Questions about the passage
page _____ lines _____		
page _____ lines _____		
page _____ lines _____		

Reading Circle Role Sheets

In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually *Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector*. These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.

Culture Collector

Story: _____

Name: _____

The Culture Collector's job is to . . .

- read the story, and look for both differences and similarities between your own culture and the culture found in the story.
- make notes about two or three passages that show these cultural points.
- read each passage to the group, or ask another group member to read it.
- ask the group some questions about these, and any other cultural points in the story.

Here are some questions to help you think about cultural differences.

- *Theme:* What is the theme of this story (for example, getting married, meeting a ghost, murder, unhappy children)? Is this an important theme in your own culture? Do people think about this theme in the same way, or differently?
- *People:* Do characters in this story say or do things that people never say or do in your culture? Do they say or do some things that everybody in the world says or does?

My cultural collection (differences and similarities):

1 [page __ lines __] _____

2 [page __ lines __] _____

My cultural questions:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

A good story in 50 words?

Mathew White

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Appendix A. Extremely Short Story Competition examples

An Extremely Short Story competition is held each year in Japan, with prizes for the best stories. I find this new genre very enjoyable and think you might, too. What are extremely short stories? Extremely short stories must be *exactly* 50 words (not including the title).

What is the topic? People can write about whatever they want. I'm including some examples below that were written by Japanese university students in the past. Please read each story. Rank them from 1 to 5 (1—the one you like the most, 5—the one you like the least). Would you like to try writing one? Would you like to enter the contest?

Christmas Season (Misako Aoki)

When Christmas comes around, streets have brilliant illuminations and we have Christmas spirit. We enjoy the Christmas shopping season. The show windows are dressed with Christmas decorations and the stores display Christmas goods. I watched the news about a "butsudan shop" with a Christmas sale! I wonder what religion is.

Your Ranking: _____

My Baseball Team (Yuko Ogawa)

There are only nine players on my baseball team. We have no good runners. We have no good batters. We have no good pitchers. We have no good catchers. You must think our team is weak. The answer is no. We have very strong teamwork. It leads us to victory.

Your Ranking: _____

Leaving (Yuka Sugai)

I finally decided to leave home to find out what was important in my life. I packed my things and I was ready to see the world. My parents said, "We will always be here for you." I shed tears and realized what mattered most were the people I loved.

Your Ranking: _____

A Crush (Ann Fukushi)

I have a crush on someone. I like him so much, the way he talks, the way he laughs, and the way he looks into my eyes. Being with him brightens up my day and I wish upon a star that one day he will also feel the same way.

Your Ranking: _____

Tests (Midori Yokota)

Everybody has gone through a test once. Some people think it is good because it reflects their daily efforts. On the other hand, other people think it is bad because they have to study for it. I think it is good. What do you think about tests? Pressure or pleasure?

Your Ranking: _____

The selections were provided by Berendt and taken from the panel discussion: Honna, N., Okaura, Y., Berendt, E., Tsuda, S., Lafaye, B., Tonks, B., & Tokuchi, S. (2006, July). *The ESSC (Extremely Short Story Competition): It's theory and practice*. Paper presented at the 19th National Conference of the Japanese Association for Asian Englishes [Nihon Asia Eigo Gakkai- Dai juukyuu kai zenkoku taikai], Aoyama, Japan.

Appendix B. Bookworms series blurbs

These are blurbs from the backs of the Oxford University Press Bookworms Series. Rank them from 1 to 5 according to how interested you are in reading them (1—the one you would like to read the most, 5—the one you would like to read the least).

A) The Elephant Man Author: Tim Vicary Level 1

He is not beautiful. His mother does not want him, children run away from him. People laugh at him, and call him 'The Elephant Man'.

Then someone speaks to him -- and listens to him! At the age of twenty-seven, Joseph Merrick finds a friend for the first time in his life. This is a true and tragic story. It is also a famous film.

Your Ranking: _____

B) Ned Kelly: A True Story Author: Christine Lindop Level 1

When he was a boy, he was poor and hungry. When he was a young man, he was still poor and hungry. He learnt how to steal horses, he learnt how to fight, he learnt how to live -- outside the law. Australia in the 1870s was a hard, wild place. Rich people had land, poor people didn't. So the rich got richer, and the poor stayed poor. Some say Ned Kelly was a bad man. Some say he was a good man but the law was bad. This is the true story of Australia's most famous outlaw.

Your Ranking: _____

C) Sherlock Holmes and the Sport of Kings Author: Sir Conan Doyle Retold by Jennifer Basset Level 1

Horseracing is the sport of kings, perhaps because racehorses are expensive animals. But when they win races, they can make a lot of money too -- money for the owners, for the trainers, and for the people who put bets on them to win. Silver Blaze is a young horse, but already the winner of many races. One night he disappears from his stables, and someone kills his trainer. The police want the killer, and the owner wants his horse, but they can't find them. So what do they do? They write to 221B Baker Street, of course -- to ask for the help of the great detective, Sherlock Holmes.

Your Ranking: _____

D) The Love of a King Author: Peter Dainty Level 2

All he wanted to do was to marry the woman he loved. But his country said "No!" He was Edward VIII, King of Great Britain, King of India, King of Australia, and King of thirty-nine other countries. And he loved the wrong woman. She was beautiful and she loved him -- but she was already married to another man. It was a love story that shook the world. The King had to choose: to be King, or to have love . . . and leave his country, never to return.

Your Ranking: _____

E) The Piano Author: Rosemary Border Level 2

One day, a farmer tells a farm boy to take everything out of an old building and throw it away. 'It's all rubbish,' he says. In the middle of all the rubbish, the boy finds a beautiful old piano. He has never played before, but now, when his fingers touch the piano, he begins to play. He closes his eyes and the music comes to him -- and the music moves his fingers. When he opens his eyes again, he knows that his life is changed forever . . .

Your Ranking: _____