On CUE

For the Language Professional in Higher Education

IN THIS ISSUE

Conferences

Thailand TESOL: Prioritizing Teacher Development January 29-31
www.thaitesol.org

Temple University Applied Linguistics Colloquium 2004 February 15th
www.tuj.ac.jp

Pan-SIG Conference: The Interface Between Interlanguage Pragmatics and Assessment May 22-23
www.jalt.org/pansig/2004/

Thoughts to Ponder

Language is a process of free creation; its laws and principles are fixed, but the manner in which the principles of generation are used is free and infinitely varied. Even the interpretation and use of words involves a process of free creation.

– Noam Chomsky –

On CUE Call for papers

Aims: To provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of a broad range of topics relevant to college and university educators.

Articles Sought

Features

APA-referenced articles relating to language education at the tertiary level.

Criteria for Feature Articles

- Consideration of issues likely to be perceived by college and university educators as relevant to language teaching in Japan
- Well designed and well reported quantitative and qualitative research
- Writing situated within the context of relevant previous work, adding to or commenting on the current body of research.
- Thought-provoking theoretical papers, with clear, practical implications

Inquiries: Mike Hood, <mikehood85@hotmail.com>

From the Chalkface

Inquiries: Tim Micklas <tmicklas@yahoo.com>

Research Digest

Reviews that compare, contrast, and summarize two or more recent publications that cover similar areas, up to 2500 words. Reviews on the researcher's resources and tools, up to 1500 words. Summaries on in-house publications, with information on how to get copies, 200-300 words.

Inquiries: Joe Falout <fallout@penta.ge.cst.nihon-u.ac.jp>

Professional Development

Articles of 1-2000 words on further education, professionalism, and employment.

Inquiries: Mike Hood <mikehood85@hotmail.com>

Reviews

Reviews of books, textbooks, videos, presentations, etc. 600 words; 1500 words for scholarly review essays.

Inquiries: Steven Snyder <snyder@phoenix.ac.jp>

Cyberpipeline

Descriptions of websites useful for language teaching and professional development.

Inquiries: Steven Snyder <snyder@phoenix.ac.jp>

Conference Reviews

Reviews of conferences or individual presentations

Inquiries: Phil McCasland <mccaslandpl@rocketmail.com>

Officer Contact Information for 2003:

Feel free to contact board members

A Letter from the Editor

Greetings CUE Members,

As we head into 2004, we have some changes here at the CUE: Phil McCasland takes over as CUE SIG Coordinator, while Andrew Obermeier steps in as Treasurer. Juanita Heigham continues her role as Membership Chair, and Tim Micklas is still in charge of publicity. And we are pleased to welcome Tim Newfields as Program Chair, bringing assessment to the CUE agenda with a mini-conference scheduled for May (see p.9). We have a healthy SIG—over 300 members and a dedicated executive team. A contagious enthusiasm was evident in meetings and discussions at the recent JALT Conference, not just among the leadership but also among the many CUE members who stopped by the CUE desk. It seems we have much to be proud of, and much to look forward to. Expect great things in 2004 and beyond.

This issue also marks a transition for On CUE, from Michael Carroll's editorship to my own. Michael accomplished quite a bit during his tenure—not only managing the daunting (I'm learning) task of putting out a quality publication, but also elevating On CUE to the status of a refereed journal. Beginning with this issue, submissions are subjected to a peer review process intended to both improve the quality of articles published here and offer the best possible constructive critique for our submitters. This is Michael's legacy, and we owe him a debt of gratitude.

Beginning with the next issue, Joe Falout will assume editorship of the *Research Digest* section. Joe envisions a forum where current research trends are summarized, compared, and critiqued. He will also present readers with reviews of useful resources and tools. And in-house publications, which might not otherwise see the light of day, will be summarized and made accessible. Please contact Joe directly regarding submissions (see call for papers).

Let's move on to the current issue: **Juanita Heigham** and **Michelle Segger** analyze problems in the extensive reading program at one university, trace the sources of those problems, and formulate remedies. **Peter Burden** presents his research on students' self-perception regarding success and failure in studying English. Peter explores the connection between student attributions for success or failure and motivation. And **Terry Wacholtz** explains how students and teachers feel about the usefulness of popular classroom activities utilized in second language learning and discusses the implications of those feelings. Later on in the *Opinions and Perspectives* section, **Stephen Ryan** recounts his conversation with author **Jennifer Jenkins**, who explains her thoughts on English as a Lingua Franca and her controversial book *The Phonology of English as an International Language.* In the *Professional Development* section, **Heidi Evans Nachi** offers tips on writing effective Curriculum Vitae, and one **Mr. Malcolm Pedant** (pseudonym for **Keith Ford**?) offers a brief guide to APA documentation, for those of you thinking about submitting to On CUE. In the *Chalkface* section, **James Venema** explains his successful strategy for incorporating debate into the classroom. **Michelle Segger** rounds out this issue with a review of the CUE-LD Mini-Conference held in Kobe in October.

I hope you enjoy this issue, and I'd be happy to hear from you regarding suggestions for improving this publication, submissions, and general comments. Remember, it's your CUE!

Mike Hood
On CUE *Editor*

From the Editor

Restructuring an Extensive Reading Program

Juanita Heigham
Sugiyama Jogakuen University
Michelle Segger
Kinjo Gakuin University

Feature Article: Heigham & Segger

Introduction

In the last twenty years there has been a growing interest in extensive reading (ER) in both the teaching of English as a second language (ESL) and as a foreign language (EFL), and its value to learners in an EFL setting has been particularly emphasized (Schmidt, 1996, p 81-82). Moreover, the use of ER as an approach to improving reading, and English in general, has become especially popular in Japan. In fact, many of the most vocal proponents (Bamford and Day, 1997; Day and Bamford, 1998, 2000; Susser and Robb, 1989, 1990; Waring, 1997; Nation, 1997; Coady, 1997) are based in Japanese colleges and universities. At our university, a women's university in central Japan, an extensive reading program (ERP) was first implemented as part of its Freshman English Program (FEP) over fifteen years ago. In 2001, a new FEP director, Juanita Heigham, joined the faculty and a rigorous evaluation of the program as a whole was begun. In questionnaires about the program, students gave the reading component the most negative remarks. They criticized both the materials and the way the class was conducted on a day-to-day basis. The results of the questionnaire suggested that the texts being used were not appropriate for the students. In response, one of the teachers in the program, Michelle Seggar, conducted a study in two of her classes to better understand the needs of the students.

In this paper we briefly discuss approaches to teaching reading, describe the 2001 ERP at our university and give a short evaluation of that program. We then detail the study, which clearly showed that despite the program's name, the students themselves were not involved in extensive reading. We conclude by outlining how, in re-sponse to this finding, we revised the program by adapting an eclectic approach to reading that included a mixture of extensive and intensive techniques.

Approaches to Teaching Reading

For the purposes of this paper, approaches to teaching reading will be divided into two basic categories: intensive reading (IR) and ER. A reader is engaging in IR when a relatively short text is studied line by line. A dictionary and grammar notes may be used, and there is often some translation into the students' first language (L1). IR usually includes the practice of dividing the reading process into discrete skills and strategies such as previewing, predicting, scanning and vocabulary building; all of these techniques require the reader to analyze the text at some level. Proponents of IR argue that English language learners should be shown both how to use the skills and knowledge that they bring from their L1 and how to develop new reading strategies and vocabulary building skills (Anderson, 1999; Carrell, 1985; Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983; Floyd and Carrell, 1987; Mikulecky and Jeffries, 1998). The practice of IR is common in the ESL classroom (L2), and even though there are strong advocates of ER in Japan, IR is used nearly exclusively in Japanese English language education at all levels of schooling.

ER has also been referred to as "pleasure reading," "sustained silent reading," and "uninterrupted silent reading" (Susser and Robb, 1989, p. 1). Strong proponents of ER suggest that it is a replacement for IR. They deny the existence of separate skills in reading and believe the teaching of such skills is inappropriate since reading

skills can "only be developed by extensive reading over time…people learn to read by reading, not by doing exercises." (Eskey and Grabe, 1988, p. 228). Indeed, Alderson and Urquhart (1984) state that while IR may be justified as a language lesson, it is *not* reading: "the [IR] lesson consists of a series of language points using texts as a point of departure."

To be an authentic ERP, a program should contain the following tenets (based on Susser and Robb, 1990, p. 3; Day and Bamford, 1998, pp. 7 - 8):

1. Students silently read large quantities of long texts on their own.
2. They select their own reading material for content and level.
3. They read for general understanding.
4. They read for pleasure — no discussion or written work in class.
5. Teacher's role is supportive, not instructive.

In an ERP students are expected to read large amounts of English at a level they can easily understand. There is no consensus on the number of pages necessary to be considered ER, but researchers investigating university-level learners recommend 500 pages per semester (Susser and Robb 1990, and Helgeson, 1997). Day and Bamford (1998) say that "regardless of the quantity…an important consideration is that the reading assignments be long enough to discourage intensive study or translation" (p. 85). ER builds language skills. When learners read a substantial amount at the appropriate level, they see the same vocabulary repeatedly and build "sight vocabulary" (Day and Bamford, 1998, p. 16), words that the reader knows so thoroughly that recognition time is short. The development of quick recognition also happens with syntactic structures. Through this reading saturation, students naturally build their reading ability without focusing on discrete skills. Additionally, since students are allowed to choose their own reading material in an ERP, the texts suit both their ability and their interests, improving their attitudes toward reading. Because they are not reading at an inappropriate level nor focusing on topics unrelated to their interests, students participating in an ERP may have higher motivation to read than those participating in IR (Day and Bamford, 1998).

A *pure* approach to ER, where students are expected to read with no teacher input, can be difficult for teachers to manage in the classroom, and as a result, it has received criticism. To aid in manageability, class readers are often used in extensive reading programs as a supplement to the individual reading students do independently. These texts are targeted at the students' level and read outside of class, but unlike the individual reading material, they are discussed in class. They are commonly used in ERPs for several reasons: the teacher is able to guide and encourage students as well as highlight reading skills that may improve their reading ability; students may simultaneously develop all four language skills while doing activities with classmates; finally, students' reading repertoire may be expanded by exposure to topics and genres that they would not have chosen for themselves.

The 2001 Extensive Reading Program

The reading program at our university is part of the Freshman English Program, a semi-intensive English communication program for first-year English majors. The goal of most of our students is to work in some aspect of tourism or the service industry. The program has approximately 125 students who are tested at the beginning of the academic year and streamed into different levels. In 2001 the students were divided into three levels consisting of six groups of approximately twenty students: two high-level and one level of remaining students whose scores were quite similar. The students attended five English classes a week covering all skill areas and were taught by native English speakers. The extensive reading program used in 2001 consisted of four program-wide prescribed texts regardless of student level. These were *Matilda* (Dahl, 1988), *The Twelfth Day of July* (Lingard, 1970), *The Best Detective Stories of Agatha Christie* (Christie, 1996) and *A Christmas Carol* (Dickens, reprinted 1977). All texts used were authentic.

The basic design of the course required that the students read two texts each semester at a pace of about 30 pages a week; this allowed

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approximately 7 weeks per book. As homework, students were to read the pages listed on their syllabus and come to class prepared to discuss what they had read.

Evaluation

When the 2001 ERP is compared to the generally accepted requirements of an ERP, some discrepancies become apparent (See Day and Bamford, 1998; Susser and Robb, 1989, 1990; Krashen, 1994; Bamford and Welch, 2000; Schmidt, 1996). First, the program had only assigned texts. It is essential to an ERP that the choice of reading material is primarily made by the students. If this tenet is ignored, the texts' level will inevitably be inappropriate for some students and their learning potential will be affected. Additionally, prescribed texts adversely affected student motivation. This was particularly acute since all required texts were by British authors, set in Britain and quite dated. The texts were of limited interest to teen-aged, female, Japanese students.

The next problem was that the pace of reading was too slow. Researchers (Susser and Robb, 1989, 1990; Helgeson, 1997) require their university students to read 500 pages per semester. *Matilda* (Dahl, 1988) and *Twelfth Day of July* (Lingard, 1970) combined have only 389 pages, more than 20% less than recommended. However, the slow pace of the 2001 program was likely necessary because the books required were too difficult for the students. Informal interviews with students revealed that IR techniques, such as consulting a dictionary and translating, were employed by most students to gain only a rudimentary understanding of the text. Thus, it would have been impossible for students to read more than 30 pages per week. In fact, many students were not able to complete the 30-page weekly assignment, and most were dissatisfied with their understanding of the text even after class discussions.

Finally, the students were required to participate in class activities designed by the teacher. The teacher acted as instructor, not merely as a supporter to the students as they worked, breaking another widely accepted tenet of ER. The pleasure reading element of the ERP was compromised by the use of prescribed texts, and the problem was exacerbated by the use of teacher-led class work.

Our initial evaluation of the 2001 reading program showed it was not consistent with ER methodology. When different aspects are compared with the recommendations made in the relevant literature, it is difficult to understand why this part of the program was labeled ER. The program more closely resembled an *extensive IRP*.

The Study

The term *extensive reading* suggests a clear emphasis on a large amount of reading. In order for students to read extensively, the level of material must be appropriate to their ability; students must understand what they read well enough to read quickly. While there are many factors that affect comprehension, research shows that unknown vocabulary is the most important factor when comprehension breakdown occurs (Cooper, 1984; Williams and Dallas, 1984; Luppesco and Day, 1993). McCarthy (1990) points out that vocabulary is the largest component of any language; without it, all other knowledge is irrelevant.

Since vocabulary knowledge is an integral factor in reading comprehension, it is felt that by having learners identify the number of unknown words in a piece of text, a fairly accurate appraisal can be made as to the text's difficulty level for them. However, simply considering the number of unknown words can be misleading, as each text has a different number of words on a page. In view of this, unknown vocabulary has been considered as a percentage of the text by some researchers. Recommendations from a variety of sources are shown in Table 1 (overleaf).

In order to discern the level of materials appropriate for students in the program, we conducted a small study. The materials for this included six pre-selected pages of text: one from each of the prescribed texts for the 2001 reading program and for comparison, one page from a level-2 Penguin graded reader, *Island of the Blue Dolphins* (O'Dell, 1961) and one page from a level-3 Penguin graded reader, *Subject 117* (Brancato, 2000). The pages selected were those closest to the middle of the text that had no picture or titles.

Table 1. Recommendations for Maximum Unknown Words per Page for General Understanding

Researcher	Recommended unknown words
Hill (2001)	5%
Nation (1997)	2%
Anderson (1999)	9
Day and Bamford (1998)	5
Waring (1997)	2 or 3
Bamford and Welch (2000)	1 or 2
Brown (2000)	1 or 2

Two classes totaling 37 students were used as subjects (approximately 30% of the programs' population). The research was conducted during class, but we felt that having the subjects read six pages in one session would yield inaccurate results. Therefore, two pages were presented per class, so the research took a total of three class meetings. In the first session they were presented with the chosen page for *Matilda* (Dahl, 1988) and *The Twelfth Day of July* (Lingard, 1970); in the second with *The Best Detective Stories of Agatha Christie*(1996) and *A Christmas Carol* (Dickens, 1977); and in the third the Penguin graded readers (Brancato, 2000 and O'Dell, 1961). Students read each page and marked all unknown words by underlining, circling or highlighting them, and then wrote the total number of unknown words at the bottom of the page. The results of these findings are listed in Table 2 (overleaf).

This table indicates that *A Christmas Carol* had the most unknown vocabulary with a mean of 31.3 (11.81%) words, then *Matilda* with 22.5 (9.22%). *The Best Detective Stories of Agatha Christie* and *The Twelfth Day of July* were similar with unknown word counts of approximately 9 (3%). The graded readers had the fewest: the level-3 reader with a mean number of unknown words of 4.8 (1.32%) and the level-2 reader with a mean of 1.8 words (0.69%).

Table 3 clearly illustrates that *A Christmas Carol* and *Matilda* have such a high density of unknown words that they do not come within any of the recommended unknown vocabulary parameters. *The Best Detective Stories of Agatha Christie* falls within the 5% limit set by Hill

(2000) but fails to come within any other limit. *The Twelfth day of July* does not meet five of the seven parameters. It is well within Hill's 5%, and within Anderson's maximum nine words; however, when referring to table one, it can be seen that even though the mean is within Anderson's boundary, a third of the subjects could not recognize more than nine words. The level-3 reader meets the majority of parameters but does not meet the three most stringent; however, the level-2 reader falls within even the narrowest-parameters.

Different pages from the texts may have yielded less disconcerting results. However, with the unknown vocabulary of *A Christmas Carol* as high as 52, it is difficult to imagine that alternative pages would yield significantly different results, even following Hill's liberal allowance of 5% unknown words per page. It is also possible that alternative pages of text would have shown even more conclusively that the readers used in the 2001 program were too difficult for ER for the level of students participating.

Program Innovations

After reviewing the program evaluation and the results of the study, we decided that a mixed IR and ER approach would best suit the needs of the freshman students in our program. There are strong arguments for both approaches, and the two approaches complement each other in classroom management; ER is an individual activity done outside of class while IR activities can be practiced in the classroom. Three goals were set for the innovation of the reading program: 1) build students' reading skills, 2) increase students' interest in reading, 3) build students' vocabulary. To do this, a mixture of ER and IR techniques and materials were added to the program. The chart below details the materials chosen to achieve these goals.

These three goals are not mutually exclusive but are intertwined, so in talking about one, the others are to some degree addressed as well. Looking first at goal number one, we chose an IR reading text to directly focus on the discrete skills necessary for strong reading ability. We selected *Basic Reading Power* as the text because of its emphasis on the use of context, its organized and

Table 2. Number of Unknown Words on the Selected Page of Each Text

Subject	Text title					
	Matilda	*12th Day of July*	*Agatha Christie*	*A Christmas Carol*	Level 3	Level 2
1	14	4	6	13	4	0
2	25	14	13	33	5	3
3	21	11	12	51	10	3
4	10	3	10	34	7	5
5	27	9	4	18	6	3
6	27	7	11	31	5	5
7	16	6	6	26	8	4
8	16	7	4	30	7	4
9	19	8	14	28	1	0
10	24	9	7	17	4	0
11	20	6	7	24	9	1
12	26	9	7	33	8	0
13	29	13	7	23	5	0
14	20	9	14	44	3	0
15	23	8	5	27	3	1
16	23	10	4	33	2	1
17	23	8	7	47	2	0
18	36	13	9	30	3	1
19	37	15	10	26	7	2
20	28	14	7	27	5	3
21	37	11	22	43	1	2
22	21	14	10	19	2	1
23	22	8	9	17	2	1
24	28	10	9	48	4	1
25	20	10	4	21	3	3
26	18	7	8	29	4	2
27	18	2	13	27	9	1
28	20	2	8	36	0	1
29	26	8	9	39	7	2
30	30	31	9	43	5	1
31	16	9	11	43	8	1
32	20	8	7	22	5	2
33	32	4	5	20	6	1
34	15	3	8	24	3	3
35	22	6	14	50	2	2
36	10	2	15	52	3	1
37	13	6	11	30	9	4

No. of words per page	243	266	290	265	363	262
Mean	22.5	8.8	9.1	31.3	4.8	1.8
%	9.22	3.31	3.14	11.81	1.32	.69

well-structured approach to skill building, and the variety of reading material. Readings and exercises are assigned from this book as homework and students check and discuss their work in class each week. In addition, we assigned nine class readers for the year as well as 500 pages of required extensive reading. The class readers are not authentic texts but graded readers and are targeted to the students' ability level and interests. Finding books interesting to all the students in a class is nearly impossible, but for our program at a Japanese women's university, it was easier than

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Table 3. Do Texts Come within Recommended Unknown—Vocabulary Parameters?

	Recommended Unknown Words	*Matilda*	*The 12th Day of July*	*Agatha Christie*	*Xmas Carol*	3	2
Hill (2001)	5%	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Nation (1997)	2%	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Anderson (1999)	9	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Day and Bamford (1998)	5	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Waring (1997)	2 or 3	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Bamford and Welch (2000)	1 or 2	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Brown (2000)	1 or 2	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

Table 4. Reading Materials used in the 2002 FEP

Category of text	Book title	Level
Classroom Text	Basic Reading Power	high beginner
Class Readers	*Audrey Hepburn*	2
"	*Stories from the Five Towns*	2
"	*Go Lovely Rose*	3
"	*Moondial*	3
"	*The Secret Garden*	3
"	*Love Story*	3
"	*Princess Diana*	3
"	*Women in Business*	4
"	*Emma*	4
ER	Students' choice	multi

it might be in other contexts. We chose books on subjects typically interesting to our students: stories with predominately female characters, writings about famous female figures, and romances. Students are required to read from these books at home and answer comprehension and discussion questions about them in class. Thus, the readers also directly build reading skills. The ER portion of the curriculum exposes students to large quantities of reading that should strengthen their reading ability as well.

The 500 pages of required ER were added to fulfill the expectations of the reading program's second goal: increasing interest in reading. The fact that regular reading can improve a broad scope of language skills is widely accepted, and student interest in reading is a rudimentary goal for any sound English program. Since the freshman students are now free to choose reading material that suits their interests and levels, reading may become pleasurable. They select their materials from the graded readers at our main campus library, which has nearly 1000 titles. Based on the results of the reading portion of standardized test students are given at the beginning of the year, they are assigned a recommended reading level. Additionally, we suggest a simple test: read a couple of pages of a book, and if there are more than 4 or 5 words per page that they don't know, the level may be too high. On the other hand, if there are no words or only one or two words per page that they don't know, the level may be too low. In addition to the ER, the nine class readers and the variety of reading material in *Basic Reading Power* foster greater student interest, even in the prescribed texts.

Finally, through all the reading students do in all three categories of required reading, they are exposed to a broad range of words, and the repeated exposure indirectly builds vocabulary.

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Additionally, teachers give specific word lists to the students and test them regularly. As a result of both techniques, students' vocabulary is built and strengthened.

At present, we are using the above curriculum in the freshman English program. One year has been completed, and the reading component of the program received positive feedback from the students in our most recent questionnaires. In fact, the ER portion of the curriculum has proven to be especially popular, and most students report that they are enjoying the reading. We intend to continue monitoring the reading program as it is clear that it will require some alterations. We are now considering a reduction in the number of class readers and an increase in the ER requirement, as students have reported that they both enjoyed and felt more empowered making their own reading choices. Typically, the books our students read for their extensive reading requirement are among the first books they have read in English and almost always the first English books that they have chosen for themselves. Most students finish 8-15 books during freshman year, and completing so many books in English increases their confidence and belief in their own ability as language learners. So, despite the need to fine-tune the reading component of the FEP, we feel that the new program design better meets the needs of the students, and we look forward to the program's continued evolution.

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Feature Article: Heigham & Segger

Self-perceived Attributions of Success and Failure among College Students

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While motivation is important in the classroom, in learning it is often used by teachers to define poor performance or a lack of on-task persistence. Motivation needs to be stimulated; yet "without knowing where the roots of motivation lie, how can the teacher water those roots?"(Oxford & Shearin, 1994, p.15) A difficulty in definition is illustrated by Spolsky (1989) who states that motivation includes "various affective factors such as personality, attitudes, and anxiety" without which "learning cannot take place" (p.15). Arguably one of the roots of motivation is task persistence. Motivation can be seen as "an internal state that impels learners towards action" (Covington, 1998, p.11) as evidenced by the exhibition of energy towards the task. A central assumption of attribution theory is that "the search for understanding is the (or a) basic 'spring of action'." (Weiner, 1979, p.3) Personality and achievement are central concerns, and the search for understanding leads to questions of attribution: *Why did I succeed or fail?* Accomplishments are seen in terms of the meanings that each person ascribes to success and failure, notions of success or the probability of success and the accompanying sense of achievement are important for task persistence. During the performance of a learning task, *failure-oriented* or *helpless* students typically tend to seek attributions. This is connected with self-esteem, and involves ascribing causes to our actions and the actions of others (Covington 1992, p.51). The literature notes that *master-oriented* individuals do not seem to engage in this activity. Weiner (1979, 1992) notes that when reflecting on prior successes or failures, the individual assesses ability level, the amount of effort expended, task difficulty, and sense of luck.

Future notions of success or failure are based on the perceived level of ability in relation to perceived task-difficulty. The sense of success or the probability of success and the accompanying sense of achievement is crucial for task persistence.

Learners estimate task difficulty by considering the similarity of the task at hand to previous tasks and performances. Attributional inferences are often retrospective and are closely tied to self-esteem. These personal beliefs will affect the learner's sense of potential, which in turn will determine the degree to which the learner will strive for achievement in the future (Dörnyei, 1994).

Research Objectives

If the cognitive side of our nature controls motivation, it is necessary to analyse causes of success and failure among students: What reasons do learners construct for their successes and failures in learning a new language? (Williams & Burden, 1999). Unfortunately ability is often confused with worth, thus motivation in learning is no longer confined to an integrative/instrumental dichotomy. Yet few studies have examined what students have to say about their own attributions of success and failure.

I decided to apply Williams, Burden, Poulet and Maun's unpublished (2002) survey (see Figure 1) at two Japanese universities where students are studying English. Three research questions were formulated:

a) What are the learners' views of their learning of English up to the present time?

b) What are the key attributions for success?

c) When students do not feel successful, what are the attributions?

Participants

An opportunity sample of 231 students at one private and one national university in Western Japan completed the questionnaire. The students were studying English as either a requirement or as an elective. None were English majors. Most students were studying Commerce or Law; others were studying Engineering, Economics or Tourism. 156 males and 75 females took part. Four native English speaker teachers adminis-tered the questionnaire during an English Conversation class in week 14 of a 15-week single semester program. All participants study English for at least 90 minutes a week, in classes that emphasize speaking and listening skills. Students were asked to consider their level of success in studying English, and to list the attributions for feelings of perceived success and failure. Figure 1 illustrates the questionnaire.

Figure 1. The Questionnaire

M/F   性別   _____

Major 専攻・学部   _____

1. Put a circle (O) in one answer
下記から一つ選んで(０）をしてください

I usually feel successful in English class
私は英語の授業でたいていうまくいった感じがする   ☐

I sometimes feel successful in English class
私は英語の授業で時々うまくいった感じがする   ☐

I rarely feel successful in English class
私は英語の授業であまりうまくいかない感じがする   ☐

I never feel successful in English class
私は英語の授業で全然うまくいかない感じがする   ☐

2. If I feel successful at learning English, the main reasons are:
英語を習うことにうまくいった感じがするなら、どうしてですか。主な理由をあげてください。

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

3. If I don't feel successful at English, the main reasons are:
英語を習うことにうまくいかない感じがするなら、どうしてですか。主な理由をあげてください。

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

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Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis of student responses to the open questions revealed patterns in the data. Key word analysis was used to generate categories of response in the statements made by students (see Nunan, 1992). Categories were then grouped together with reference to attributions of success and failure. The findings were not submitted to inferential statistical analysis, as the focus of the study was to stimulate ideas for teaching practice and suggest transferability to other contexts. Statistics of percentages and means were used as a way of aiding description. The same teachers who helped in the earlier translation translated responses to the open Japanese questions into English, and categories were assigned only when all five teachers had reached agreement.

Results

How do learners view their learning of English? As seen in Table 1 nearly half of the students saw themselves as being *sometimes successful*, while approximately 28% saw themselves as *rarely successful*, 19% as *usually successful* and around 3% as *never successful* at studying English.

Attributions for Success

Fourteen categories of attributions for success were defined from the data (see Table 2). Out of 318 attributions, over a third cited *ability* usually expressed in terms of *I can . . .* perform a task or language function. Typical answers involved *catching the words* or meaning, understanding the communication and the content as well as *being able to reply*, express themselves or speak. They noted having the ability to understand and if necessary offer a response, and the comprehending the teacher's speaking, the listening task or the written text.

Interest was noted in 15% of the attributions. The third category was the internal attribute of

Table 1. Sample

	Number of males	Number of females	Subtotal	Percentage of total
Never feel successful in English	5	3	8	3.46
Rarely feel successful	50	14	64	27.71
Sometimes feel successful	85	30	115	49.78
Usually feel successful	16	28	44	19.04
Total	156	75	231	100.00

Table 2. Attributions Noted for Feeling Successful (n=231)

Attribution	Number	Percentage	Internal/external
Ability	107	33.6	I
Interest	47	14.8	I/E
Effort	38	11.9	I
Mastery	24	7.5	I
The task	21	6.6	E
The teacher	19	6.0	E
Ease	17	5.3	E
Strategies	10	3.1	I
Peers	10	3.1	E
The class	8	2.5	E
Translation	6	1.9	I
Native speaker	6	1.9	E
Future benefits	3	0.9	E
Grades	2	0.6	E
Totals	318	100.0	

effort or trying hard and such attributions for success including doing preparation, revision, and homework; trying hard in class; practicing before class; studying seriously and attending every class. *Mastery* was mentioned 24 times and involved feelings of improvement, enhancement, or success—verbalized as having *mastered a task* and is attributed to having mastered a skill, having good pronunciation, being able to use a dictionary well and feeling satisfied that *my English is not so bad*. The *task* itself was seen as an attribution for success with relevant, interesting, and enjoyable task content, smooth progress through the task, and chances to improve as pair work was used.

The use of *strategies* was mentioned only 10 times, receiving 3% of the cited attributions. This was differentiated from effort in that there was a sense of direction or concrete action. This category of citations included taking notes, using

the teacher's pronunciation as a model for future reference, trying to speak whenever possible, wanting to speak more, and utilizing memory to learn vocabulary.

Table 3 reveals that students who usually feel successful had proportionately the greatest number of attributions, while the 8 students who never felt success did not cite a single attribution.

When attributions are classified according to the students' perceptions of whether or not they are successful in class, we see that 64 out of 115 attributions of students who sometimes feel successful were due to perceived ability, as opposed to 24 out of 32 attributions for those students who rarely feel successful (see Table 4). For students who usually feel successful, 25 attributions were to *interest* followed by 19 to *ability* out of a total of 44 attributions. The use of strategies was poor across all perceived ability

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Table 3. Attribution to Success According to Feeling of Success

	Number of attributions	Number of respondents
Never feel successful in English	0	8
Rarely feel successful	32	64
Sometimes feel successful	185	115
Usually feel successful	101	44
Total	318	231

Table 4. Attributions for Success Named by Students

Attribution	Students who usually feel successful (44)	Students who sometimes feel successful (115)	Students who rarely feel successful (64)	Students who never feel successful (8)
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
Ability	19 (18.8)	64 (34.6)	24 (75)	0
Interest	25 (24.8)	20 (10.8)	2 (6.3)	0
Effort	11 (10.9)	27 (14.6)	0	0
Mastery	5 (4.9)	18 (9.7)	1 (3.1)	0
The teacher	9 (8.9)	10 (5.4)	0	0
The task	4 (4)	15 (8.1)	2 (6.3)	0
Ease	8 (7.9)	8 (4.3)	1 (3.1)	0
Strategies	7 (6.9)	3 (1.6)	0	0
Peers	3 (2.9)	7 (3.8)	0	0
The class	0	8 (4.3)	0	0
translation	2 (1.9)	2 (1.1)	2 (6.3)	0
Native speaker	6 (5.9)	0	0	0
Future benefits	0	3 (1.6)	0	0
Grades	2 (1.9)	0	0	0
Total	101	185	32	0

groups; it was not mentioned at all by students who are generally unsuccessful and by only 10 students overall.

Attributions for Failure

Ten attributions for not feeling successful emerged from the data (See Table 5) with *lack of ability* mentioned in 71.6% of attributions, or 139 times out of a total of 194 attributions. *Ability* was cited 14 times out of 17 attributions for those students who usually feel successful, and 64 times out of 90 for those who rarely feel successful. Typically students replied in the open questions that they were *poor at English*, that English was *their weak point*, they did not know the basics, and had an inability to pronounce, speak, read, listen, or catch meaning. They felt an inability to understand grammar and complained of *words not coming out*. Many students felt an inability to remember vocabulary, which may be linked to poor strategy use. However, these attributions were classified as a perceived lack of ability by students who do not see it as a concrete tool to be utilized.

A lack of effort was noted by 7% of students including *not preparing* or *not participating*. They *do not know English* (and therefore do not try), and *do not study after class*. Lack of mastery attributions include feelings of resistance, stress,

embarrassment, confusion, being lost and lapsing into silence. Other comments stated that there were too many difficult words in tasks; they had not had English classes (until now) that required a verbal response; they were unable to understand or catch what the teacher said. Also, they felt an inability to translate and that Japanese sentence structure was too different to allow comprehension.

Looking at Table 6 below we can see that those students who usually or sometimes feel successful cited proportionately fewer attributions for failure than students who rarely or seldom feel successful.

Looking at the results in Table 7, we can see that across the perceived ability range students attributed lack of ability to failure at learning English, a stable internal cause and one that could affect their future motivation toward English. Across the range of students, lack of ability was overwhelmingly the most frequent attribute, and even those who felt they were usually successful noted ability in 82% of attributions to failure. This is a worrying belief as students who are motivated toward success generally attribute failure to effort, and if they tried harder they would subsequently succeed. By increasing effort on the next occasion, they believe, their ability will carry them through. Failure-oriented

Table 5. Attributions for Feeling Unsuccessful (n=231)

Attribution	Number	Percentage	Internal/external
(Lack of) ability	139	71.6	I
(Lack of) effort	18	9.3	I
(Lack of) mastery	10	3.9	I
Task	6	2.6	E
Teacher	5	2.2	E
Strategies	5	2.2	I
Interest	4	2.1	I/E
The class	4	2.1	E
Japanese	2	0.9	E
Translation	1	0.4	E
Total	194	100.0	

Table 6. Attributions for Failure According to Level of Success

	Number of attributes	Number of respondents
Never feel successful in English	15	8
Rarely feel successful	90	64
Sometimes feel successful	72	115
Usually feel successful	17	44
Total	194	231

students, however, attribute failure to a lack of ability, and we see here a picture of students who may suffer from a lack of self-worth due to persistent feelings of lack of ability—a direct threat to feelings of competence.

Implications: Watering the Roots of Motivation

In the introduction it was noted that affective factors influence motivation, which in turn need to be stimulated. To begin, a distinction must be made between generic *ability* and *foreign language aptitude*. Perhaps learners may feel they do not have the ability to learn foreign languages but at the same time feel they are good at other subjects in school. In this case, learners may develop an avoidance strategy and focus their efforts on the subjects they are good at. Consequently an overall learned helplessness and lack of efficacy might not arise. By contrast, if a learner attributes failure to a general lack of ability, the problem is much more severe. Ascribing failure to a lack of ability results in *learned helplessness* (Good & Brophy, 1990, p. 389), Covington (1998) writes that for some students, the highest priority is the protection of the sense of ability. 71.6% of attributes for failure (Table 5) cited the lack the ability to learn a language, and so these learners may actually "handicap themselves by not studying in order to have an excuse for failing" (p.16). If students believe ability is fixed, self-perceptions of incompetence will trigger humiliation, which will lead to a downward spiral of effort as they

attempt to deflect questions of ability—if they do not try, they cannot be seen as incompetent, rather they are merely disinterested. Therefore we can perhaps see unreceptive, passive students as being *over-motivated* as opposed to somehow being *under-motivated*. The absence of behavior should be viewed as just as reflecting motivation just as "a lively, abundance" of behavior (p.16).

Therefore how does the teacher water the roots of motivation? To start with, a belief that success is due to hard work will lead to an intention to work hard again. Covington (1998, p.71) suggests that there is a need to "ascribe one's failures to inadequate learning strategies" thus focusing not only on the adequacy of effort but also on the quality of effort. By doing so, the "concept of learner strategies bridges the domain of effort and ability so that trying hard but in sophisticated strategic ways is tantamount to increasing one's ability to learn" (p.71). While there is dispute over whether it is better to say that motivation predicts success or that success predicts motivation, there is no doubt that among learners who initially had little desire to learn English, those who experienced some kind of success were more likely to continue studying. If students are able to analyze problems, identify areas of difficulty and create necessary actions to overcome difficult obstacles, even if a task is initially seen as being too difficult, the student can adopt an alternative explanation of perceived causes of failure besides ability. However it is important to remember that exhorting learners to

Table 7. Attributions for Failure Named by Students

Attributions	Students who usually feel successful	Students who sometimes feel successful	Students who rarely feel successful	Students who never feel successful
(Lack of) ability	14 (82.4)	50 (69.4)	64 (71.1)	11 (73.3)
(Lack of) effort	1 (5.9)	10 (13.9)	6 (6.7)	1 (6.7)
(Lack of) mastery	1 (5.9)	1 (1.4)	7 (7.8)	1 (6.7)
Task	0	3 (4.2)	3 (3.3)	0
Teacher	0	0	5 (5.6)	0
Strategies	0	1 (1.4)	4 (4.4)	0
Interest	0	2 (2.8)	0	2 (13.3)
Japanese	0	2 (2.8)	0	0
Translation	1 (5.9)	0	0	0
The class	0	3 (4.2)	1 (1.1)	0
Total	17	72	90	15

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try harder is insufficient. Students need strategy-related messages to use task-appropriate skills. In the classroom the teacher should not focus on failure, but rather point out where students fell short of the goals to complete the task. Bruner (1966, p.53) suggests that "instruction is a provisional state to make the learner or problem solver self-sufficient" and to take charge of their own learning. If not, "the result of instruction is to create a form of mastery that is contingent on the perpetual presence of a teacher."

Conclusion

This small study has attempted to show that teachers need to create a motivational condition encouraging internal attributes of ability and effort to enhance the values, attitudes and developing learners' ability to learn effectively. A key aspect of the paper has been an attempt to shed light on ways in which learners interpret their success and failure and how learners make sense of their learning situation. As Williams and Burden (1999) note "the messages that teachers convey explicitly and implicitly in their classroom about what they consider is successful learning will profoundly affect the learners' developing notions of themselves as learners as well as their progress in learning a language" (p.194). The teacher must create an effective environment for the student by building confidence and explaining that *errors* are a necessary part of language acquisition and should recognize that constructive errors are an inevitable part of a learner's interlanguage.

Low strategy use among the subjects undoubtedly influenced the number of attributions for success, yet successful learners were more conscious of, and willing to describe, actual strategies or learning techniques. Students occasionally cited being able to, or complained of being unable to, translate in their accounts for success and failure which Gillette (1994) notes is a trait of ineffective learners as they "cling to their L1 (first language) as a reference system" (p. 196), thereby relying heavily on translation; whereas more effective learners favour language use and communicative activities in class. Poor students are often very passive, overly dependent on the teacher and leave the work of organising learning in the hands of the teacher. This leaves

the student with skills inadequate to manage learning, which heightens feelings of frustration, inadequacy and boredom.

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Student and Teacher Beliefs about Language Learning: A Preliminary Study

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Introduction

The old adage that we are *products of our experience* goes a long way in explaining our attitudes and beliefs about how we should conduct ourselves in our daily lives and, for the purpose of this study, our various beliefs about how languages should be learned. Each of us is influenced in various ways throughout our lives, by authority figures; teachers, parents, coaches, by our environment; home, educational, economic, social; and by the personal values we hold—be they social, moral, or spiritual. This incomplete list demonstrates the range of factors that influence our attitudes towards learning, whether we prefer formal or informal approaches, one methodology or strategy over another, or our acceptance or rejection of new pedagogical stances. For the purpose of examining the classroom dynamic, this study will concentrate on how students and teachers feel about the usefulness of popular classroom activities utilized in second language learning and discuss the implications of those feelings.

Teacher vs. Learner Beliefs about Language Learning

Student and teacher beliefs about language learning have been examined by a number of researchers, who have shown that students and teachers bring with them distinct and varying sets of ideas and preconceptions about how best to learn. Horowitz (1988) stated that investigating learners' beliefs has "relevance to the understanding of their expectations of, commitment to, success in and satisfaction with language classes" (p.293). Oxford (1990) found that there are a number of strategies available for students to use in language learning and therefore the use

of one predominant style may inhibit learning to a great extent. Likewise, Richards and Lockhart (1994) found that the predominance of one teaching style might discourage learners from using strategies of their choice that could consequently inhibit learning. Furthermore, Chiba and Matsumura's (1998) study comparing native and Japanese teachers of English found some interesting differences. Namely, native English teachers felt more strongly that game-orientated activities and group work were effective for language learning. They discourage the use of the students' native language in the classroom. Their Japanese counterparts however, condoned the use of L1. Chiba and Matsuura also found that Japanese teachers were stricter regarding student errors than native English teachers, who showed more lenience.

In a large-scale study of 517 learners conducted in Australia by Willing (1988), various classroom activities were examined. Students responded most positively to the following activities:

- I like to practice sounds and pronunciation 62%
- I like the teacher to tell me my mistakes 61%
- In class I like to learn by conversations 55%
- I like the teacher to explain everything to us 54%

However, students responded negatively to the following activities:
- I like the teacher to let me find my mistakes 27%
- In class, I like to learn by pictures, films

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and videos. 19%
- I like to learn English by talking in pairs.
  . . . . 15%
- In class I like to learn by games. . . . 10%
- I like to study English by myself 3%

(Willing, 1988, p. 117)

Nunan (1988) followed up on Willings's study and, mirroring the items, surveyed 60 teachers and asked them to rate the importance of the following activities in classroom teaching: pronunciation practice, explanations to the class, conversation practice, error correction, vocabulary development, listening to/using cassettes, student self discovery of errors, using pictures, film and video, pair work, and language games. Interestingly, when comparing the results of the two studies, there is some disagreement with every activity except one: conversation practice, which both groups rated as *very high*. Students and teachers also gave language games an almost identical rating of *very low* and *low* respectively. There is almost total disagreement regarding 3 activities: pair work, student self discovery of errors, and listening to/using cassettes. Students' *low* rating contradicted the teachers' *high* and *very high* ratings. And the students' *very high* rating on error correction contradicted the teachers' *low* rating.

Clearly a large gap exists between teachers' and students' language learning beliefs. Therefore, it is worthwhile investigating these differences in greater detail so that we may decide how we can best achieve our common goal.

Research Questions

The research questions for this project are:
1. What classroom activities do students and teachers believe are helpful in language learning and teaching?
2. What differences exist between the two groups?

Participants

The present study used a one-time questionnaire to investigate the attitudes and beliefs of 134 first-year Japanese female university students and 32 native speaking English teachers about the usefulness of various classroom activities in language learning. The students were all 18 year-old English majors from two women's universities in Nagoya. The questionnaire was voluntary. All agreed to participate. The teachers were native English speakers from Australia, Canada, The United States, and Britain with an average age of 41. As a group, all taught at various universities in Nagoya City and Aichi Prefecture, had an average of 12 years of teaching experience, and at least a Masters Degree. Instructions to the teachers were given either verbally or in writing. If oral communication was not possible, written instructions were given explaining the purpose of the study, and indicating that replying would be optional and results anonymous. Thirty-two of 38 teachers replied.

Methods

The questionnaire is a combination of the one used by Willing (1988) and Nunan (1988) including 16 items (See Table 1). All students were given a bilingual questionnaire while the teachers were given only English versions. The interviews were open ended, done in English (one to one), on site during class time and lasted between ten and fifteen minutes. Interview data were recorded via notes. Only half of the student participants (67) were interviewed because they were under my direct supervision. Some typical questions were: What classroom activities do you feel help you learn most? Why? What classroom activities do you think are least helpful? Why? What other activities would you like to include? What activities would you like to omit? Why? The questionnaire asked the participants the following question: What degree of importance would you rate the following classroom activities in language learning? The participants chose a reply from a 5-point scale that included; very high, high, medium, low or very low. No time limit was given for the students, however most finished within 10 minutes. The teachers completed the questionnaire at their leisure and simply dropped it off in a mailbox. The study originally called for the use of statistical descriptive analysis and thus used a 5-item questionnaire. However, because of technical difficulties, it was abandoned and replaced with percentage comparisons. Therefore

only *high*, *very high* and *low*, *very low* responses were used.

Results

The results of the questionnaire given to both teachers and students can be found in Tables 1 and 2 below. Table 1 illustrates the classroom activities, ranked in order from the most helpful, rated *very high* or *high*. Table 2 denotes those activities given the highest number of low scores.

Table 2 denotes, in rank order, those classroom activities that were given the "lowest scores", rated "very low" or " low" and thus were seen as the least helpful.

It is clear that there are dramatic differences in the way teachers and students believe languages should be learned. As seen in the Willing and Nunan studies, only one activity, conversation practice, was seen as very helpful by teachers and students. This coincides with research done by Eltis and Low (1985), Alcorso and Kalantis (1985), Willing (1988) and Nunan (1988). For the students in this study pronunciation practice was a close second, just below conversation, but well below for the teachers at fifth with 30% fewer respondents ranking it as helpful. The students also felt that working alone and error correction by the teacher were important, at number three and four respectively. However, teachers ranked both of these toward the bottom. Since the communicative approach to language learning dominates instructional pedagogy, it is not surprising that pair work, conversation practice, and to a lesser degree role-playing, are seen as

Table 1

Rank order of classroom activities given *very high* or *high* scores and seen as most helpful for language learning by students. Teacher responses in % for the same activity.

	Students (N=134)	Teachers (N=32)
1. conversation practice	85%	91%
2. pronunciation practice	80%	53%
3. working alone	78%	28%
4. error correction by teacher	76%	28%
5. explanations to the class	70%	51%
6. reading	68%	19%
7. making speeches	67%	28%
8. listening to/using tapes	64%	38%
9. writing	59%	30%
10. student self discovery of errors	56%	59%
11. problem solving	55%	50%
12. language games	47%	34%
13. vocabulary development	44%	78%
14. pair work	44%	81%
15. role playing	42%	38%
16. using pictures, film and video	38%	31%

(Adapted from Willing 1988:116 and Nunan 1988a: 92)

Table 2

Rank order of classroom activities accessed the lowest scores

By students		By teachers	
role playing	30%	making speeches	53%
using pictures, film and video	18%	working alone	44%
pair work	17%	error correction by teacher	31%
language games	16%	listening to/using tapes	28%
vocabulary development	12%	using pictures, film and video	25%

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valuable activities for teachers. However, have a virtually opposite position on these activities.

Table 2 highlights those activities that received the highest number of low scores and thus are seen to be the least helpful. Here again there are few similarities, with the exception of using pictures, film and video, Surprisingly, some of the most favored activities for language teachers—role-playing and pair work—are seen as being the least helpful by students. Also, games which are considered by many educators as a way to make language learning fun appear to be thought of as less useful by those on the receiving end. Teachers, on the other hand, felt that making speeches and working alone were least helpful classroom activities. Students clearly feel differently, ranking *working alone* third most important and *making speeches* half way down the list at number 7.

Discussion

The mismatches found in this project mirror those found in other studies comparing learner with teacher beliefs (Eltis and Low, 1985; Horowitz, 1988; Willing, 1988; Nunan, 1988). Teachers rated pair and group work, role plays, conversation practice and vocabulary development as being important while students rated more traditional activities such as error correction, pronunciation practice, and explanations to the class as more useful. Likewise, the only activity found to be important to both teachers and students was conversation practice. Here too, there are misconceptions as to what conversation practice means, as was found in subsequent interviews.

In follow up, one-on-one interviews with my students (67 of 134) revealed valuable insights. At first glance it might seem odd that students rated conversation practice so highly, yet illustrated such a low preference for pair work and role playing, two activities which provide students optimal opportunity for conversation practice. What the interviews revealed was that conversation practice in the students minds meant talking with the teacher, not other students. Despite the fact that they enjoyed talking with other students in the class, they did not think that they could learn anything of significance by talking with other students. They even preferred lecture-style classes to pair work because they felt that they may be able to learn more by obtaining extra information or ideas from the teacher or by getting a chance to ask questions. This clearly demonstrates a preference for traditional learning strategies whereby the teacher is the dispenser of knowledge. It may explain why *working alone* is rated so highly by students. This questions the value of using the communicative approach as the sole pedagogical tool many teachers employ in the classroom (Eltis and Low, 1985). Secondly, the students felt that some activities such as *using pictures, film and video* could be done by themselves at school language lab facilities, in the library, or at home; such activities were seen as a waste of classroom time. Also, although the students mostly enjoyed language games, many did not understand the learning value of the activity and therefore thought them a wasteful classroom activity.

Some contradictions were evident in the data as well, and it has been suggested that a range of intra-group differences exist in addition to the inter-group differences noted in this study. For example, although role-playing and language games were given the lowest scores, the percentage of students who rated it high was greater than that of teachers. Willing (1988) also acknowledges that among students and teachers alike, a variation of differences about learning beliefs also exists. This study did not account for such occurrences and thus such contradictions could be more properly addressed in future studies by utilizing appropriate statistical analysis. Therefore, even though the findings confirm what other researchers have found, it cannot be said with certainty that the results found here represent the situation in Japanese universities in general. One reason is that only female students and native English speakers participated hardly a representative sample. Secondly, only basic quantitative and qualitative analysis was done. More in-depth data collection and analysis representing a sample which includes both genders and native and non-native teachers would provide a more accurate picture of the situation in Japan. This task falls to future projects.

Conclusion

Knowing that students and teachers have differing ideas about how best to learn languages presents educators with a dilemma about how to adequately approach methodology and activities in the classroom. However, the results of this small survey do provide us with some insights. First, since there is no conclusive evidence one way or another for a correct pedagogical method as both traditional and communicative approaches have resulted in successful learners, it might be best to seek middle ground, utilizing traditional methods and activities preferred by students while using communicative approaches in conversation practice held dear by many teachers. Secondly, research has shown that it is difficult for both teachers and students to dramatically change how they teach and learn (Oxford, 1990). However, more recent studies (Kohonen, 2000,;Williams & Burden, 1999) have also shown that teachers are considered expert figures in the classroom and as such play an influential role both implicitly and explicitly. Therefore, the messages and suggestions that they convey can have powerful influences on learners. This leaves a window of opportunity for teachers to design classroom activities that meet their pedagogical goals, be they proficiency tests or communicative competence. Lastly, teachers should make efforts to illustrate that certain activities they value are worth doing by explaining the language learning goals and letting students see for themselves their value.

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Feature Article: Wacholtz

OPINION & PERSPECTIVE:
An Interview with Jennifer Jenkins

Stephen Ryan
Seitoku University

In the OP column for this issue CUE Stephen Ryan raises some important pedagogical issues as he catches up with phonetician Jennifer Jenkins, who gives her views on English as an international language and the questionable role of the native-speaker teacher.

Jennifer Jenkins' *The Phonology of English as an International Language* (2000) caused a great stir when it was first published almost three years ago. To a certain extent the controversy was predictable, as the book challenges many of the fundamental assumptions that underlie English language teaching. Like many truly great ideas, the beauty of *The Phonology of English as an International Language* lies in its simplicity, and indeed much of it now seems so obvious that you wonder why it was not written much earlier.

Jennifer Jenkins was in Japan this summer on a gruelling nationwide lecture tour and through a combination of sheer good fortune, coincidence and other people's poor organizational skills, I was able to spend several hours in conversation with her. I had expected to find her a little reluctant to share her few precious hours of free time with a humble CUE member such as myself, but I could not have been more wrong; she proved not only to be pleasant company but more than willing to share both her time and ideas.

Despite displaying the usual Londoner's awed fascination at the sight of cleanliness and working machines, Jenkins seemed a little under whelmed by her new surroundings: "I hope you're not going to ask me how I am finding Tokyo! I don't know how many times I have been asked that question today and I still don't know what to say."

After this no-nonsense opening, she continued in typically enthusiastic fashion outlining her plans for her visit. However, amidst the enthusiasm I thought I detected a hint of apprehension and attempted to discover the source of her concern. In response I was treated to a highly amusing account of some of the more bizarre phonology-related research proposals emanating from these shores. This brought her round to the topic of her book: *The Phonology of English as an International Language* was a great title because it attracted a whole audience that would never have read anything written by me. It was completely unintentional but that title got me 'behind enemy lines.' If it had been called something like *The Sociology of English as an International Language* then it would have reached a fairly predictable audience."

I asked if that same title had not put off some of the book's 'natural' audience; people like myself and perhaps other readers of *On CUE*. She agreed: "Sure. But I think these things eventually get around by word of mouth." For readers unfamiliar with the book, *The Phonology of English as an International Language* is ostensibly about phonology, but it encompasses so much more. The book deals with a host of sociolinguistic issues surrounding the spread and ownership of English as an international language. The central thrust of the book is that since the majority of the communication that takes place in English no longer involves native speakers, we should not be teaching an English that refers to native-speaker norms. Jenkins argues that English language teaching has for too long focused on EFL (English as a Foreign Language) when it should be concerned with ELF (English as a Lingua Franca); the distinction being that EFL sees successful communication with a native speaker as its ultimate goal, while ELF targets successful communication between non-native speakers. Jenkins prefers the term Bilingual English Speaker (BES) to non-native speaker: "I wanted to develop the idea that the native speaker, the Monolingual English Speaker, was, in fact, a disadvantaged speaker of the language."

I asked her to elaborate on the distinction between EFL and ELF; was it not just one more acronym to add to a field already loaded with redundant jargon? "ELF was something I originally threw up in a discussion. I just said that we spent too much time talking about EFL when we should be talking about ELF. And nobody knew what I was talking about. I think a strict interpretation would hold that ELF cannot involve a native speaker; that the involvement of the native speaker disqualifies the term English as a lingua franca. The native speaker can be involved in EIL (English as an International Language) but not ELF."

As a native speaker of English making a living out of promoting these native-speaker norms, I was anxious to hear her views on the role of the native-speaker teacher: "I met some teachers yesterday who said to me, 'You'll be putting us out of our jobs!' I didn't really know how to answer that one, but there is some truth there."

Did she not envisage any role for the native-speaker in teaching situations such as here in Japan? "It seems obvious to me that it must be much more motivating for a Japanese learner to see another Japanese speaker of English in the classroom, rather than someone from Britain, Australia or the States. In my view the best teacher is the one who shares her students' L1. By that I mean an L2 BES; this teacher has the best accent to serve as a classroom model in this case a Japanese-English accent. By bringing in that native speaker teacher you are sending a message that learning this language is difficult, perhaps even beyond the learner. The presence of that native speaker is sending out a signal that it is ultimately the native speaker that owns the language."

So, was it time for us native-speaker teachers in Japan to start looking for new jobs? "The problems start when distinctions are made between the native and non-native speaker. This is why I prefer to make the monolingual/bilingual distinction. There's a lot of research going on into 'non-native' speaker speech at the moment. I'm not really sure that any of this is helpful as it still maintains that distinction between native and non-native speaker speech. There seems to be an implication that there must be something wrong with non-native speaker speech."

Our discussion of the role of the native-speaker

teacher reminded me of my own early encounters with applied linguistics texts. A recurring figure in those texts was the tyrannical, authoritarian language teacher bent on denying the creativity and individuality of learners through a strict diet of grammar-based, teacher-fronted lessons. Neither the teacher nor the learners appearing in those texts were recognisable from my own classroom experience. Was Jenkins not in danger of creating another similar myth: the myth of the native speaker teacher attempting to impose values and norms on an unwilling learner? Is the demand for native speaker teachers, and their norms, not coming from learners such as those in Japan? "I'm not saying that it is the individual teachers that are imposing themselves, but that there is a part of the ELT industry that promotes native-speaker English as 'real' English." If it were not the teachers imposing their values, I wondered where she thought this pressure was coming from. "Linguistic corpora can offer us

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Opinion & Perspective

all kinds of insights into how we use language, but the problem comes with how they are used. My concern is when they are used to present, to authorise certain forms of English over others. Corpora are often used to show native-speaker English as 'real' English or 'natural' English. What does this say about other forms of English? Are they 'unreal'? Unnatural?"

I sensed we had touched on an area of deep concern as she suddenly appeared much more animated: "A lot of the data from corpora gets fed into ELT textbooks as 'real' English. Much of that comes in the form of idiomatic language that I'm not sure has any relevance to ELF. I mean, expressions like *just a sec*, or *give me a hand*. This just seems to be a recipe for confusion and misunderstanding. This idea that we should be teaching *real* idiomatic language seems to be a great disservice to our learners. I really feel very strongly about this. By promoting idiomatic English as an ideal, we are setting up our students for ridicule."

As if to prove the point, our conversation deteriorated into a genre familiar wherever language teachers gather the collection of humorous student errors with idioms.

Jenkins believes that there are great opportunities for the development of teaching materials which, rather than confirm the authority of the native speaker, promote the acceptance of ELF models: "I don't see much evidence of anything happening here but I am always telling the publishers that there is a great opening. I don't think that they are really listening but there are so many possibilities for someone with the imagination."

Coincidentally, as if to illustrate the point about publishers' collective failure of imagination, there was a pile of well-known textbooks on a nearby desk which had been adapted for use in Japan by the insertion of the word 'American' into their titles. Professor Jenkins suggests that there are more rewarding paths to follow: "I visited a university yesterday and saw some very interesting materials which used Japanese speakers of English. This is the kind of thing I would like to see more of."

As the title of her book suggests, Jenkins places great emphasis on the role of phonology in the teaching of English as an international language. For many teachers, such as myself and most of the teachers I come into regular contact

with, phonology is not exactly taboo, but simply something that we prefer not to talk about. In my case, this has come about through a combination of a lack of confidence and a lack of success. The origins of my lack of confidence can be traced back to the fact that, although from the UK, I am not a 'native' RP speaker. For example, I remember being in my mid-twenties before I knew that the words *look* and *luck* could be pronounced differently, and I am still not sure which is which. I have never felt comfortable posing as a model for a variety of English over which I do not have complete mastery and I am certainly not alone in being a 'non-native' native-speaker teacher.

As for a lack of success in incorporating a phonological component into my teaching, I confess that in over fifteen years of language teaching, I have had almost no success teaching certain discrete phonetic items. No matter what I have tried, no matter how successful it may have appeared in the classroom, the learners would soon retreat into their old ways. I was reassured to hear that my experience was familiar to Professor Jenkins: "I remember doing all these bizarre pronunciation exercises in class, for example, pressing your finger to your lips, and if your finger got wet, that meant your pronunciation of /*th*/ was correct."

Professor Jenkins admitted that phonology was not her first interest and that her arrival in the field was something of an accident: "I came from sociolinguistics. I get in trouble sometimes when I'm presenting at events full of phoneticians. I get accused of all kinds of things, from undermining standards to… well much worse."

The mention of standards prompted me to probe a little further. Language as a system of communication depends on a set of shared, mutually agreed-upon standards; if we are to reject the authority of the native speaker, then what do we replace it with? "This is where the LF (lingua franca) core comes in," Jenkins explained. *The Phonology of English as an International Language* proposes a core of phonological items necessary for the use of English for international communication. One of the first things we have to realise is that these native-speaker norms just cannot be taught. They cannot be learned. All the research points to a critical period around about eight years old, and after that it is very difficult to acquire a new phonetic system. Of course, there are exceptions but the vast

majority just can't do it."

Jenkins's lingua franca core presents a set of items which are considered realistic and relevant to communication between non-native speakers of English; the goal being "a pedagogical core of phonological intelligibility for speakers of EIL" (2000, p. 123) rather than imitation of the native speaker. I was interested to know how she had obtained the empirical data that provided the foundation for the lingua franca core. "My data comes from proficient users of English; bilingual speakers who are accustomed to using English with other bilingual speakers of English."

Given my own lack of success teaching pronunciation and the apparently limited goals of her phonological core, I wondered about the need for any form of pronunciation teaching at all; was it not possible for learners to use contextual clues to overcome phonological interference? "There are countless examples in the data of the phonology impeding successful communication– even where you would think that the context would make the meaning obvious."

Finally, I was curious to know how she felt about the success of her book and the controversy it had aroused. "When you put a book out, it's out there and people are free to take it out of context and to misunderstand."

Did she feel that she had been misunderstood? "Well, I've never once said that people shouldn't learn native-speaker models. What I do say is that there should be choice and that native speaker models shouldn't be promoted over others. If somebody here in Japan decides that they want to learn RP, it's not for me to stop them. I would disagree with the choice but I would never try to remove that choice."

Jenkins has been consistent throughout her work in maintaining a distinction between models and norms. It may be perfectly acceptable and proper to offer a native-speaker variety of English as a model, as a reference point, but to promote this variety as a norm is to suggest that other varieties are somehow inferior or incorrect; it denies the learner choice.

On first meeting Professor Jenkins, I had anticipated someone a little more frail and jet-lagged. On meeting up with her again at the end of her visit, I had anticipated finding her brimming with the usual frustrations found in

first-time visitors to Japan. I was wrong on both occasions; instead, I found it impossible not to be impressed by her boundless energy and a genuine desire to return here for a less hectic, extended stay. For the sake of a healthy debate surrounding the role of English and language teaching in Japan, we must hope she gets her wish.

When I think of all the books that I have read about language and language teaching, I have to admit that many have been a struggle. Most of those books contain huge chunks that have either left me cold or I have skipped altogether. There is only one book that I can remember reading from cover to cover, and then doing so again. That book was *The Phonology of English as an International Language*. After meeting with Jennifer Jenkins, I was prompted to return to its pages once again and this time it did not make comfortable reading. I was forced not simply to question what and how I teach; I found myself having reservations about my very professional existence. What is it that we, the native-speaker teachers, do that could not be done more effectively by Japanese teachers of English? What is the value of the native-speaker teacher in a Japanese classroom beyond the cosmetic and the commercial? What message is our presence in the classroom sending to our students? Is our presence there not, in fact, doing more harm than good? I am still asking myself these questions and hoping that there may be some readers of *On CUE* out there with a few answers.

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Further Reading

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Opinion & Perspective

Professional Development
Writing Effective CVs

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Professional Development

Securing a full-time position in a Japanese university has become increasingly competitive in recent years as student numbers fall and teaching positions are cut. To keep up with the competition and be prepared for the unexpected job opening, all teaching professionals should maintain a current, professional-looking CV. This article outlines features that strengthen and weaken applications, with specific focus on CVs, and reflects what one hiring committee for a private university has generally found effective after reviewing hundreds of resumes over the past few years. Included here are some basic guidelines for creating an effective CV for language teachers. For other perspectives and more information on finding a job, see the list of resources following this article.

Application requirements and procedures vary according to institution and position. Similarly, CV formats reflect cultural as well as individual differences. Formatting peculiarities aside, hiring committees are looking at the content, processing the application materials in two steps: first, to determine whether the applicant meets the minimum criteria specified in the position announcement; and second, to rank the CVs and identify viable candidates to be interviewed. Because hiring committees members have other teaching and administrative commitments, they are often pressed for time while looking for applicants with clear, well-written CVs that display a candidate's experience and potential.

Transparency

Foremost, hiring committees value transparency. CVs should be clearly written with the relevant information logically organized. Since reviewers begin by looking for specific information, such as minimum number of years of university teaching experience, it's critical to be accurate, clear, and specific when outlining current and past work experience. Organize work experience by year and include both the month and year for start and stop dates, as well as your official title, and whether each position was part-time and full-time. Finally, don't forget to mention the city and country for each position. Regarding your education background, indicate the date each degree was awarded as well as the location of the institution. Without this information, you may mislead or confuse the reviewers about your work history, making it difficult to assess whether you may be a potential candidate.

Balance

When describing current and past work contexts and responsibilities, aim for concrete and specific descriptions and avoid including details that are obvious or will have little meaning for the reviewers. Clarify the setting, if needed (i.e. a university EAP program, a language institute, an IEP, etc.) and indicate the department, school, or faculty affiliation. Explain your work duties for each position briefly and provide an overview of current and previous courses taught, but limit course descriptions to a sentence or two. It may be more appropriate and feasible to elaborate on work responsibilities and courses taught in the cover letter.

Style

You may not have time to focus on your CV design, but think about the overall visual impression your CV will make. *San-serif* fonts are generally easier to read, bullets, boldface, and underlining can set off information in a way that will make your CV easy to digest. Consider

using boldface or underlining features, or a larger font size, to emphasize your work setting, title, or education. Experiment with capital letters or mixing fonts (but no more than two fonts, please!), or other design features. Pay attention to how headings, *white space*, or lines can be used to separate and organize information.

Professionalism

The reviewers will form opinions about you based on the content, design, and scope of your CV. When listing publications and presentations, for example, select relevant examples and stick with a standardized format. APA or MLA style is clearer than your own invented style and enhances the professional quality of your CV; distinguishing among papers, demonstrations, workshops, or poster presentations will further clarify your professional development achievements. Moreover, do not to inflate your achievements and experiences. Unless you have good reason, avoid cluttering your CV with information concerning unpublished papers or private lesson/tutor classes. Finally, always personalize your cover letter by including the institution name and addressing concretely and fully the information or questions outlined in the position announcement.

Appropriateness

Hiring committees often have different application requirements and expectations. Ensure that you understand what should be included in an application package and follow the directions. As you finalize your materials, include only the information and materials requested. Do not include copies of transcripts, research papers, or letters of recommendation unless you are specifically asked to do so. These materials can be brought to the interview if needed. Consider whether to include personal information on your CV—in many Western contexts, information such as age, marital status, race, and hobbies does not belong on a CV. In Japan, however, some hiring institutions ask for personal information, so it should be included if requested. It's important to understand the context and provide the required information and materials in the preferred format, as expressed by the recruiters.

These guidelines reflect the standards and practices of one university hiring committee, staffed by foreign tenured and contract teachers. Following these guidelines may benefit applicants vying for some university positions by helping reviewers better understand CV content. In today's competitive market, it's not uncommon for committees to review 50 to 80 application packages for a single position. Consequently, if information is unclear, forcing reviewers to hunt for or speculate about your education, teaching experience, or professional development, it's possible your application will not receive serious consideration. Find out as much as possible about the context for the positions you're interested in and think about whether these simple guidelines your CV writing effort.

Additional Resources

Glick, C. (2002). Considerations for securing an English teaching position at a Japanese university (part 1). *The Language Teacher, 26*(8), 7-10.

Stapleton, P. (2001). Applying for a university job in Japan: A view from the inside. *The Language Teacher, 25*(9), 29-32.

Tomei, J. (2001). The ever-widening gyre: The job search. *On Cue 9*(3), 25-26.

Professional Development

Pedant, M. (2004). Referencing: A basic guide to APA. *On CUE, 11*(2), 29-30.

As *On CUE* becomes a refereed journal, this is an opportune time to remind readers/contributors of the importance of accuracy and good referencing.

For *On CUE*—as with *The Language Teacher* and *JALT Journal*—we will be using the American Psychological Association (APA) style of referencing. Though this dictate may sound rather imposing, implying some kind of tortuous self-analysis, referencing the APA way does not really necessitate the kind of mental fatigue that leaves you resorting to the medicine cabinet. Obviously, if you trawl through the back issues of the above journals, you will find an example somewhere of all the reference types you seek. However, to make matters a little easier—hopefully—below are some basic example references followed by a list of some of the main points to consider in compiling a reference list. Please note that this brief article only deals with the reference list aspect of APA documentation. Check the APA Manual for information on parenthetical documentation and footnotes.

Example References
Books
Dore, R.P., & Sako, M. (1989). *Education in Tokugawa Japan*. London: Routledge.

Weaver, C. (1980). *Psycholinguistics and reading: From process to practice*. Cambridge, MA: Winthrop.

An edited book
Carter, R., & McCarthy, M. (Eds.). (1988). *Vocabulary and language teaching*. London: Longman.

A book with no clearly stated author
Collins COBUILD Dictionary English Dictionary (2nd ed.). (1998). London: Harper Collins.

Articles in journals
Reid, J. (1987). The learning style preference of ESL students. *TESOL Quarterly*, *24*(2), 323-338.

Susser, B. (1998). EFL's othering of Japan: Orientalism in English language teaching. *JALT Journal*, *20*(1), 49-82.

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Swain, M. (2000). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue. In J. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 97-114). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tarone, E. (1983). Some thoughts on the notion of "communication strategy." In C. Faerch & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Strategies in interlanguage communication* (pp. 61-74). London: Longman.

Article in Japanese
Ochiai, N. (2000). AET to JTE no kyoudou no genjou: Kasukabe shi no rei wo moto ni [The state of cooperation among AETs and JTEs as observed in Kasukabe City]. *The Language Teacher*, *24*(8), 20-24.

Presentation
Swain, M. (2000). What happens to feedback? A paper presented at the Scaffolding Conference, University of Technology, Sydney, Dec. 6-8, 2000.

Magazine article
Death of a philosopher. (1955, October 31). *Time*, *66*(18), pp. 22, 25.

Newspaper article
Model misbehaviour. (2002, September 17). *The Daily Yomiuri*, p.17.

Unpublished master's or Ph.D thesis
Kasai, M. (2001). *Global education: Rationale and theory*. Unpublished master's thesis, Ohio State University, Columbus.

Electronic sources
Though there are various types of web-based references, all should definitely include title, date (either when the site was accessed or a publication date if available) and the URL. Use the word 'Retrieved' to indicate the date when the site was accessed. Here are a couple of common examples:

Professional Development

Article from a journal found only on the internet

Weschler, R. (197). Uses of Japanese (L1) in the English classroom. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 3(11). Retrieved December 4, 2003, from http://iteslj.org/Articles/Weschler-UsingL1.html

Article based on a printed source

Goodmacher, G. (1998). Designing environmental field trips [Electronic version]. *Global Issues in Language Education*, *33*, 12-13. Retrieved December 5, 2003, from http://www.jalt.org/global/33Des.htm

Notes

1) The general order to follow for a book is: Name of author – Year – Title – Place of publication – Publisher.

2) In the reference list, surnames of authors should be listed in alphabetical order.

3) The names of the authors of each book or article should be in the order they appear on the work.

4) Do not use full first names of authors but initials. More than one initial can be used.

5) List all authors of the article or book.

6) The titles of books or journals should be in *italics*, and the titles of articles in standard print.

7) In the title of the book or article capital letters are only used for the first word, for proper nouns and for the first word following a colon in the subtitle.

8) For journals, if there is an issue number as well as a volume number, then it comes in brackets after the volume number.

9) Use the '&' sign rather than 'and' to indicate two or more authors of the same work.

10) If there is a secondary heading or subtitle, use a colon to precede it. The first letter after the colon will be a capital even if it is an article (*a, an, the*), a preposition (e.g. *from, to, at*) or coordinating conjunction (e.g. *and, but, or*).

11) When listing names of editors of a book from which an article is referenced, their names are initial first, followed by surname.

12) When referencing two works by the same author, list in chronological order. When there are two works in the same year by the same author, use year followed immediately by the letters a or b.

13) Works without a clearly stated author begin with the name of the book, placing it alphabetically in relation to authors of other works in the reference list.

14) If you wish to cite a particular edition of a book, do so directly after the title and in standard print.

15) If there is an article that does not run over consecutive pages, show this by using a comma between pages, not dashes.

16) Where possible, with articles or books in Japanese, provide an English translation in squared brackets.

Cross-checking references

As you proofread your paper before final submission, carefully cross-check your references in the body of the text with your list of references at the end of your article. Two common errors are references made in the text that do not appear in the list of references and references listed at the end of the article which have not been referred to in the body of the text itself. One practical way of checking for these is to read through your text and highlight each reference as it appears and then immediately go to your reference list and highlight it there also. As you do this, check that the spelling of the authors' names and the years of the works referenced are consistent.

Professional Development

From the Chalkface: Dear Teachers . . .

Tim Micklas
Section Editor

Dear Teachers,

In the past this column has been a place for teachers to document lessons that worked. Indeed there have been some very good techniques presented. Surely I'm not the only one who has used some of them successfully in my university classes. Lack of quality has never been an issue. However, it's time to move beyond isolated techniques and lessons to more in-depth explorations of projects, courses and curricula. As always, this column will document efforts to combine educational theory and practice. In this edition James Venema describes his experiences using debate in a general English class. Additionally the CUE web-site is a searchable, interactive site. This will be a place to download lesson plans and materials, and also a place for interested teachers to post questions and comments. Ideally it will become an online forum and resource for educators here in Japan. Copies of articles, lesson plans and classroom materials will soon be available at <http://allagash.miyazaki-mu.ac.jp/CUE/>.

We hope that the column and web page will be fundamental to a series of CUE-sponsored workshops and retreats which will culminate in a conference sometime in 2005. The theme of this conference has yet to be fully developed, but for now we are interested in trying to cultivate a more sophisticated understanding of what exactly tertiary EFL in Japan is. Issues of scope, sequence and relevance will be at the top of our agenda. However, without you, the CUE membership at large, none of these ideas will come to fruition. There are over 300 CUE members reading this; we all have our own understanding of tertiary education in Japan. Take this opportunity to let us know your thoughts, opinions, and research interests. Check out the web-page and please contact the editors with your ideas.

Incorporating Debate in the Classroom: Making it Accessible

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Advocates of incorporating debate in language classes have focused on three general aspects that make it ideal for the classroom: First, debate is a popular activity that can effectively motivate students (see Stewart and Pleisch, 1998; Resolved, 1997); second, debate helps develop academic skills such as critical thinking, teamwork, and expression of opinion (Resolved, 1997; Stewart and Pleisch, 1998); finally, debate effectively promotes language development (Venema, 2003; Stewart and Pleisch, 1998). However, there may remain a reluctance to incorporate debate in low-intermediate or high-beginner classes due to concerns over difficulty. In my experience debate has proven a popular and viable activity, even among large low-level classes. This paper explores the development of a course incorporating debate in a number of classes of non-English majors at two national universities.

The Students

The students, generally in the high-beginner to low-intermediate level, were perhaps *typical* national university students in a number of ways. They were generally willing and able to tackle most tasks set before them; however, as non-English majors in a required class, there were mixed levels of motivation and ability. A significant number of the students were reluctant to participate actively in loosely organized conversations or discussion tasks. Students could, however, be enticed to contribute more actively and effectively when given clearly organized tasks with concrete goals, and when they were held accountable in some way for how effectively they completed the task. Debate offered the critical combination of organization and accountability while providing the additional stimulation of focusing on meaningful issues.

Debate Format

To avoid the confusion sometimes surrounding the discussion of debate it is necessary to define the term at the outset:

> *A formal presentation of arguments on both sides of a question by speakers before an audience. (Compact Dictionary of Canadian English, 1976)*

In this context debate is not group discussion but instead formal public speeches following specific rules of procedure. There are two general types of debate, parliamentary and academic, the latter incorporating more structure and preparation time (Resolved, 1997). In the classroom, while it is important to outline rules of procedure, it is often necessary for teachers to alter the rules of debate to accommodate student levels and classroom restrictions. One starting point is the *American parliamentary format* as outlined by Lubetsky et al (2000). This format includes six speeches—three each by the affirmative and negative teams. As the debate is ongoing and dynamic (including not only arguing one's own side and refuting the other team's case but also responding to refutations and defenses) the speeches tend to progressively increase in complexity. For lower level non-English majors it is clear that a more accessible format is required. In this course I chose to concentrate on two crucial aspects of debate: arguing a case and refuting an argument. I then divided these aspects into two distinct speeches. In the first speech, each team argued their case with supporting reasons. After a break for preparation, the teams refuted the opposing team's points. The following format is the result:

1. Affirmative teams make their points
2. Negative teams make their points
3. Break for preparation
4. Affirmative refutation of negative points
5. Negative refutation of affirmative points

While this procedure leaves out the option of a responding to a refutation or a defense, it has the advantage of making the debate process more accessible and minimizing the amount of time required to conduct the debate.

Preparing Students to Speak

In a typical class of false beginners and/or low-intermediate students (particularly when larger classes make one-on-one interaction between students and teacher difficult) it is probably not enough to simply present a resolution and let the students go about debating. I have found three things are critical in developing coherent speeches: 1) ample *preparation time;* 2) *model speeches* that give clear examples of the speech format; and 3) *language samples* of potential arguments.

1) Preparation time

Particularly when tackling complex issues (such as the ever popular resolution: "Japan should retain the death penalty") it may be impossible to introduce and debate a topic within a single 90-minute class, even with the abbreviated format outlined above. In fact, early in the semester, when students are still unfamiliar with debate, a single debate has sometimes lasted over three periods, being introduced in the latter stages of the first and concluded at the beginning of the third. This gives students plenty of time to research a given topic (typically by making use of the Internet) and prepare their arguments and refutations.

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From the Chalkface

2) Model speeches

Lubetsky et al have included model speeches, and exercises to clarify specific aspects of the speeches, in their classroom text. In the class in question two models were borrowed and adapted from Lubetsky et al: one focusing on developing arguments and another on refuting arguments. The model for arguing points includes a *signpost*, *reason*, and *support(s),* as in the following example of the deliberately accessible refutation "soccer is better than baseball":

> *Signpost: Our first point is cost.*
>
> *Reason: Soccer tickets are much cheaper than baseball tickets.*
>
> *Support: In this city, the price of a ticket to a baseball game is about three times higher than the price of a ticket to a soccer game.*

The introduction and conclusion will outline the arguments to follow and recapitulate those already made by incorporating the signposts (cost, excitement, simplicity and color) as follows:

> *Thank you ladies and gentlemen. Today we are debating the resolution, "Soccer is better than baseball." We, on the affirmative team strongly support this resolution. We have four reasons: cost, excitement, simplicity, and color.*
>
> *Our first point is cost. Soccer tickets are much cheaper than baseball tickets. In this city, the price of a ticket to a baseball game is about three times higher than the price of a ticket to a soccer game.*
>
> *...*
>
> *We have talked about cost, excitement, simplicity, and color. We have shown that soccer is a much better sport than baseball. For these reasons, we beg to propose.*

In Lubetsky et al, a refutation model included four stages as in the following example (my own):

> *Signpost: Their first point was cost.*

> *Rephrase: They said that soccer tickets are much better than baseball tickets because they are cheaper.*
>
> *Negation (and why): That is not relevant. The fact that a sport is cheaper in no way suggests that it is better.*
>
> *Rationale: On the contrary the fact that people are willing to pay more for baseball tickets indicates that baseball is, indeed, the better sport!*

In addition to acting as a platform from which to build their arguments (see Venema, 2003; Boyle, 1996) this model serves to increase the coherence of student arguments by incorporating a number of aspects of cohesion.

3) Language samples

Arguments on a topic such as capital punishment are complex, requiring language that may be beyond the ability of low-level students. To facilitate the development of these arguments I have used activities from Johnson (1995) which ask students to read arguments and divide them into *affirmative* and *negative* arguments, such as the following on the resolution, "Japan should keep the death penalty":

> *The death penalty will make people think twice before committing atrocious crimes like murder and kidnapping.*
>
> *Research shows that killers rarely consider whether there is a death penalty or not before they kill.*

Examples such as these allow students to begin to construct arguments and counter arguments based on complex issues such as deterrence.

Choosing Topics and Organizing Classes

The importance of incorporating topics that the students find relevant and interesting is obvious. In my classes this is done in the first class in which students select favorite topics from a text such as Johnson's (see above). Students then vote, and the topics (typically five or six for a semester) are chosen based on overall popularity. It is important to distinguish between *topics* and

resolutions (i.e. "capital punishment" and "Japan should retain the death penalty") and helpful to give students the opportunity to construct *resolutions* (the opinions to be debated) themselves from a list of topics. This clarifies that debate involves opinions to be argued for and against rather than topics to be discussed. Students understand on the first day of class that their own opinion will be, by and large, irrelevant as they will be assigned a position on a resolution at random. The critical skill to be developed is the ability to argue for and against a given resolution, regardless of personal convictions. This works to de-personalize the debate process and defuse the culturally imbedded reluctance to challenge a stated position directly.

Throughout the course students work in groups of two or three, changing groups upon completing a given resolution. The development of cliques is inevitable, so it helps to select groups at random. Students work together to develop reasons and supports for arguments and are dependent on partners to show up to class on time and well prepared. In the language of cooperative learning an element of *positive interdependence* is built into the task.

In a large class a critical concern is how to conduct the debates with many different teams. One option is to have students conduct their debates simultaneously in smaller groups. In this case the sole audience is, in fact, the opposing team and, intermittently, the teacher as I walk around the class monitoring different debates. This has the advantage of reducing the anxiety inherent in public speaking in addition to being an efficient use of class time. The disadvantage is that it is difficult for the teacher to monitor the speeches, and students are more likely to rely on L1. Another option is to have students conduct their speeches consecutively in front of the class. In order to use time more efficiently individual teams may prepare their own points and/or refutations while other groups are speaking. The pressure inherent in a public performance tends to energize the students' preparation efforts and decrease dependency on L1. As a compromise, when the adjacent classroom is available, I divide the class into two groups, halving the time otherwise required without the distraction of simultaneous speeches. I can monitor the speeches by slipping in and out of

the classrooms and have generally found students to be focused and on task.

A critical and potentially problematic characteristic of the speeches is their overall comprehensibility for L2 listeners. It is necessary to have a formal question and answer period immediately after the speeches. During this time students can ask for clarification, repetition, and even translation of crucial vocabulary. Allowing time for overcoming communication problems within the task itself has the advantage of encouraging them to do so in more fluid discussions (Foster, 1998). In addition students are encouraged to make their speech as visual as impossible. Students typically write their *signposts* on the chalkboard as well as important figures, graphs, pictures, diagrams and difficult vocabulary. Finally students, who tend to read too quickly from prepared speeches, are repeatedly encouraged to adjust the pace of the speech to accommodate the needs of L2 listeners. In fact, when judging each other (see below) students make frequent mention of the overall clarity and comprehensibility of the speeches.

Evaluating Students

Regular classes demand a fair bit of effort and preparation on the part of the students, consequently attendance and participation constitutes a significant portion of their final grade. Students are also asked to evaluate each other's speeches in classes by choosing a winner between two opposing groups. Winners are noted and students who record a large number of wins are given extra credit for participation. In addition a final debate is held during the last two classes of the semester. With students acting as judges, one class debates the other. Students may choose which topic and positions (affirmative or negative) they want to debate, with the stipulation that each of the resolutions discussed in class be covered in the final debate as well. Students are evaluated based on peer judging of their debates, teacher notes of their performance, and the quality of the insights offered when judging others. Students were asked to evaluate other teams on the basis of three components: judgments on the quality of the arguments, the language and style in which those arguments are presented, and the overall organization of the speeches (see

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Lubetsky et al, p. 116). As each student judge was asked to choose a winner, teams were given bonus points for winning the debate, the results of which were computed immediately after the debate.

Conclusion

The most common feedback from students has been that the course was difficult. Yet students also write that debate is an interesting, important, and relevant skill. Over the course of the semester most students respond to the inherent competitiveness of debate with increased energy and appear to appreciate the opportunity to communicate in-depth on relevant topics. Most importantly the vast majority of students, by the end of the course, demonstrate the ability to perform debate speeches at a much higher level than they could at the outset. That kind of improvement is a compelling argument for a course on formal debate. Another advantage of debate, with its formalized procedure, is that students can operate autonomously by the end of the course. Having concentrated on providing students with the essential skills and knowledge required early in the semester, my role gradually diminishes to the point where I find myself being essentially an observer by the end of the term. Despite the challenges inherent in a linguistically demanding task, debate is an attractive option for teachers of large, low-level classes.

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A Report from the Mountain:
The CUE and LD Kobe Conference
Learner Development: Context, Curricula, Content

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As a recent CUE recruit, unsure what to expect at my first JALT SIG mini-conference, I was certainly pleasantly surprised. The Learner Development: Context, Curricula and Content conference was held October 17, 18, and 19 at the YMCA on a mist-shrouded Mt Rokko in Kobe, a beautiful site, though it was bit cold. The atmosphere was relaxed; as guests arrived they were greeted with popcorn, the promise of a barbeque (with home-cooked food) and whisked off to locate their assigned bunks. The accommodations were simple, and this was reflected in the very reasonable price that included two nights accommodation, all meals and all conference fees. As a first time presenter, I was a little worried initially and envied the three speakers scheduled for the first sessions Saturday morning. However, by Sunday morning (when it was my turn to present), I felt that I somehow knew everyone in the room, since we had all tasted the homemade sauerkraut on Friday evening, drunk rather too much wine on Saturday night, and eaten countless pretzels all weekend from the extremely large bag that sat in the lobby enticing everyone who walked by!

There were twenty-three presentations and five poster sessions spread out over the weekend. However, this review will outline three presentations that I feel are representative of the conference as a whole.

On Saturday morning, Mary Burch Harmon's presentation entitled *Optional Activities Promote Autonomy* gave a wonderful insight into the resources available to teachers at Kanda University of International Studies. She began with a description of their new self-access center, which includes individual soundproofed audio booths, group video booths, small conference rooms, computers, and a host of other resources supported by a full-time technical staff. The descriptions, complemented by PowerPoint slides, were very impressive, and Mary answered the delegates many questions about the varied and high-tech resources. Then an important issue was raised and discussed: Kanda teachers have begun to worry that despite this wealth of resources that allows them to cater to the needs of individuals, many students are actually working within a very structured, teacher-led curriculum. Mary explained that having recognized this problem, teachers at Kanda are now working together to build a flexible curriculum that allows students to make choices about what and how they learn, simultaneously increasing the usefulness of the resources and developing learner autonomy.

Late Saturday afternoon, Terry Wacholtz eased everyone out of post-lunch apathy with a relaxed and well-planned presentation that packed a punch. His research into student and teacher beliefs about language learning indicates that students disagree with their teachers on what kinds of classroom language learning activities are most beneficial. This was no surprise; the participants could have predicted this. The surprise was that students do not conform to teachers' expectations. This preliminary study showed that students believe more traditional activities are beneficial, whereas teachers preferred a more communicative approach. This was an illuminating session that left participants

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thinking about how to bridge this gap in beliefs. Terry's study is printed in the *Features* section of this issue.

The *DramaWorks* workshop capped the conference and was, for me, the most entertaining presentation of the weekend. Sandra Ingram and Marc Sheffner's aim was to demonstrate how to utilize their drama-based textbooks, entitled *Star Taxi* and *PopStars* in the classroom. Those who attended this presentation were walked through a sample lesson, the presenter acting as *teacher* and the participants acting as *students*. The model class began with a warm-up game designed to provide pronunciation practice of language that causes the most problems for students. This game recycled the same problematic phrases over and over in an entertaining manner. Next, we went on to perform a scene from one of the *DramaWorks* textbooks. Delegates paired up and shadowed the teacher, dramatizing the scene several times so lines were memorized unconsciously. We were then allowed to practice in pairs and encouraged to add our own improvisations. Finally volunteers performed their version of the scene for the rest of the group. Several participants purchased the textbooks immediately afterward, with the intention of using them in their own classrooms. The *DramaWorks* texts provide a most effective and entertaining supplement to any course as a way to improve pronunciation and intonation,

practice language functions, and encourage appropriate body language.

The final wrap-up on Sunday afternoon began with reports from the theme coordinators. They each gave a summary of all the presentations from their theme. This proved valuable, especially to those of us who found ourselves in a *conference dilemma*: forced to make a choice between two equally interesting sessions scheduled at the same time. It also served to refresh our memories of the day's events. Some participants, while reflecting on the day, mentioned the passion and dedication demonstrated by both presenters and participants, a passion for helping their students develop learner independence. Many of the sessions provided practical ideas that could be immediately implemented in our classrooms. Finally, we shared some theme ideas for future conferences.

Many thanks to the organizers of the event. The hard work of Mike Nix, Phil McCasland, Andrew Obermeier, and Tim Micklas was appreciated by us all, and the staff at Rokko YMCA was wonderfully patient with the many and varied demands made of them. Everything went smoothly this time, but I recommend that when you attend the next CUE conference you bring a thick sweater and something for the barbeque.