

ON CUE

Newsletter
March, 1993 Vol. 1, Issue 1

CUE N-SIG Formed

Our petition for official recognition as a JALT N-SIG was presented at the 31 January meeting of the JALT Executive Committee, and was approved without dissent. Our thanks go to **David Wood** the national N-SIG Liaison Officer, whose practical help and advice have been invaluable, and to **Setsuko Toyama**, the National Membership Chair, for putting forward our petition. Three other N-SIG's were also given recognition: Team Teaching, Material Writers, and CALL.

- Gillian Kay, CUE N-SIG Coordinator

JALT N-SIG **College and University Educators** **Statement of Purpose**

Through discussion with other foreign language instructors, we have come to recognize the need for a professional network linking instructors of foreign languages employed at colleges and universities in Japan, to help them understand and meet the goals of Japanese higher education.

NEEDS

The College and University Educators N-SIG proposes to address the specific needs of foreign language teachers in Japanese college and universities. To do this, we plan to: (1) offer a base for mutual support, networking, and professional development among the group's members, (2) disseminate information about current research relating to language teaching at Japanese colleges, (3) help members understand Japanese language information related to teaching at Japanese colleges and universities, (4) provide a forum for the exchange of information and opinion between educators.

GOALS

1. Create a database of members' research interests, and circulate these to members.
2. Produce a newsletter to report on research projects and current practices, and print articles written by members.
3. Provide a translation resource in English of forms and notices commonly circulated in Japanese colleges.
4. Organize regional meetings, mini-conferences, and College and University Educators N-SIG activities at national JALT conferences.

We believe that working toward these goals will not only benefit the College and University Educators N-SIG members, but also their students and institutions.

Q's and A's

This column will give members a chance to ask, and hopefully, answer each others' questions on a wide variety of questions related to our work. Here are some starters:

If your institution does not figure and file your income tax for you, how do you proceed with filling out and filing the forms? Are there any special credits, deductions, expenses, exclusions, etc., which apply to academic endeavors that we would all like to know about?

Has anyone of us yet had the opportunity to read Paul Wadden's book, A Handbook for Teaching English at Japanese Colleges and Universities (Oxford University Press, 1993), and, if so, what comments or additions do you have on the information his contributors (some are CUE members) provide? The book will not be available in Japan's bookstores until April.

Is there computer shareware out there that could be further spread around?

The answers might come along in the same issue, or the question only printed to await any of the knowing CUE members' responses. If you have answers, or even partial answers, to any of the above, then the column is off to a flying start. Submit Q's and/or A's to the Editor.

CUE in the Classroom

Here we can share some of our teaching ideas with our colleagues. Not all the great ones end up as presentations at the national or international conferences, or as articles on the pages of the *TESOL Journal* or JALT's own *Language Teacher*. Some of the newer materials could be discussed here - such as various ways the CINEX films are being used, or other specific techniques discovered that make our teaching even more effective and fun.

CUE in the Future

Upcoming programs that need input from members include the 1993 JALT National Conference in Omiya. We will, of course, have a business meeting at Omiya. If we participate in the JALT Kobe Conference on 8 and 9 May, it will be within the special roundtable, "Mirror on the Classroom."

Here also is the place to publicize meetings, conferences, etc. that would be of special interest to CUE members.

If those of you who have submitted proposals for presentations at JALT '93 would notify the editor when you receive acceptance, so we will be able to print a list of our members' presentations in ON CUE.

Future Events

"Summer Workshop for the Development of Intercultural Coursework at Colleges and Universities," 14-23 July, East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii. The intensive 8-hours daily is intended for faculty wishing to develop college/university courses on intercultural and international topics. Participants from around the world include professors of business and management, language and culture, communication and media studies, English, psychology, education, journalism, sociology, etc. The cost is very reasonable, especially given the housing costs at the East-West Center dormitories for a quarter of any other accommodations available in Hawaii.

Faculty members from Japan attending the Workshop last summer were John Freeman (Nichibei Kaiwa Gakuin), Dale Griffey (Seigahuin University), Richard Klecan (Miyagi College for Women), and Sharon Vaipae (Niigata University).

The space in this workshop goes quickly so if you are interested, write soon for detailed information and registration materials: Program on Cultural Studies, East-West Center, 1777 East-West Road, Honolulu, HI 96848.

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Committee Members Sought

CUE is seeking a few good members to volunteer to fill the Committee positions of Deputy Coordinator, Program Chair, Secretary, and Recording Secretary. Also, if someone raises a hand to be Assistant Editor for ON CUE, your assistance will be welcomed. If enough members take responsibility for specific columns within the newsletter, then it may be possible to function without an assistant editor.

If you would like to offer your time and expertise to our new N-SIG, please write to Gillian Kay for more details on the position.



Gillian Kay, the founder and Coordinator of CUE, is British, and teaches at Toyama Medical and Pharmaceutical University. She is interested in expectations of foreign teachers at Japanese universities and is writing a book on foreign loan words in the Japanese language.

Conference Report

The Tokyo JALT Mini-Conference, **Trouble-Shooting the Language Teaching Workplace**, was held February 14th. This is a summary of the report to On CUE made by **Jeff Jones**, our Publicity Chair. He attended the sessions "Foreign Administrators of Language Programs" featuring speakers **Charles Browne**, **Martin Johnson** and **Cathy Tanzy**, and "Making Sense of the Landscape: The University Workplace" presented by **Paul Wadden**. The second was pointed more directly to CUE members' interests and a considerable range of topics was covered; thus only these brief highlights, especially relevant to college and university teaching, are included.

Wadden characterized the university workplace thus: upside - good pay, security, status, long breaks, academic freedom; downside - discriminatory (sex, color, age) employment status, ineffective approach to language learning (once-a-week, large classes), low status relative to Japanese colleagues.

Following the lead of the national universities as influenced by the Mombusho, private schools as well are frequently offering employment based on a fixed-term. In the private universities, full-time employment greatly resembles the typical Japanese company with a life-long position featuring bonuses, health insurance, pension, private office, and the responsibilities of entrance exams, committees and meetings. In part-time employment, instructors or, as Wadden feels they should more appropriately be called, adjunct professors, receive pay only for the classes taught, but have no responsibilities other than teaching.

The qualifications for college and university positions generally include a master's degree, connections, and patience. Evidence of reliability and dedication are highly favored. Doctorates are not common in Japan because they are often awarded late in life as recognition for achievements. Wadden stated that a minimum of three academic papers are

desirable for those seeking full-time employment. Connections consist of knowing people who respect one's character and qualifications. A good way to make contacts is to join a *gakkai* or study group/research circle. Wadden felt recommendations by the Japanese are not made lightly since the responsibility is heavy on the individual who introduces a new employee. Generally employment is reference-driven rather than qualification-driven. Japanese language ability can be seen as a sign of good faith. Hiring starts in May-June with last-minute hiring in February and March. Part-time job hiring is done in October-November. Some of the CV requests may surprise Westerners - such as the necessity to produce a high school diploma - but this may be the starting point of figuring an employee's pay. It may be when you are interviewed that you already have the job; the committee just wants to see if you can be a team player and work well with the others.

Mention was also made of the *Sempai-Kohai* relationships wherein everyone is ranked. It may take time to perceive the hierarchy, and at any given time, it may be in flux. Caution was urged regarding the factions that exist at the institutions. Most *gaijin* are oblivious to them, but care should be exercised to not ally with one, especially as *gaijin* may be approached by the weakest faction. Although you should rely on your mentor, and he or she does have a vested interest in looking after you, you also should build other relationships because if the mentor leaves, you become at risk. These other contacts also serve as valuable additional sources of information, since the university itself assumes no obligations in this regard.

Reference was made to the tertiary employee as an "academic salary man" in that when you are not teaching, it is assumed you are doing research or administrative work. Your year-round salary reflects year-round responsibilities. The institution has every right to ask for your time. Determine what you have to go to and do; your reaction to demands should be positive and graceful so as to

Conference Report (Continued)

enhance your good character.

Finally, advice was given to not depend upon the university to provide fulfillment. You must have your own agenda for personal growth by looking at your total life. Ask "What do I want to achieve, and how can the most be achieved for both parties?"

Any questions regarding points made here should be directed to Jeff, as he has extensive notes on the proceedings.

- The Editor

Note from the Editor

This is our first newsletter and so is considerably smaller and less-filled with information, news, and views than we hope it soon will be. Suggestions have been made on these pages for some columns as regular features, and they are intended to solicit, from any member, ideas for either regular column contributions, or one-time only specials. Especially interesting would be reports (such as that contributed this issue by **Jeff Jones**) from members on various conferences and meetings (JALT-sponsored or not), and relevant JALT chapter meeting presentations. We hope to print summaries/abstracts of members' published work, members' opinions on any topic related to our profession, plus whatever else you would like to see. Until CUE members have volunteered to write and/or edit specific entire columns, please send materials for publication to me at the Niigata University address or fax number.

- Sharon Vaipae

Research Queries

This column could serve those who are looking for collaborators, existing databases, or other resources, and information, etc., related to their current, on-going long term, or planned research project.

Academic Equipment/Materials

Whether or not this column makes it into print on a regular basis will depend upon your needs, but perhaps some of us have personal professionally-related print or audio-visual materials and/or equipment that we no longer use or want, and would like to sell or trade.

Found in Translation

It is here that we hope to use the services of one or more of our truly bilingual CUE members (yet to volunteer), and will print English translations of administrative and educational messages, forms, or whatever, that constitute a daily puzzle for most of us. The individual(s) who perform this task will receive the eternal thanks of many of us Japanese illiterates.

CUE-Tips

Ever lose out on long-term employment benefits because you moved on to another position just a wee bit too early? Ever not spend available college/university research or library funds because you did not know you could?

This column hopes to feature information that you, the contributor knows, and probably thinks everyone else knows, but actually does not. One way to identify this type of information is to think of items you reacted to like this: "I didn't know *that!*" So share your knowledge about the in's and out's of college and university teaching. Newcomers and even those who have been around for some time will be thankful for new ways to cope and overcome. So speak out and write in: you may have the key to someone's success, or at the very least, one less sleepless night.

The Place of the N-SIGs in JALT by Steve McCarty

The purpose of this report is to inform N-SIG members of the terrain through which aims are accomplished in JALT. The N-SIGs are the vehicle for general JALT members to advance their fields of interest on a national level. Organizational information empowers members to explore the unlimited horizons of what can be accomplished through JALT's N-SIGs.

The number of established N-SIGs doubled as of the January 31, 1993 JALT Executive Committee meeting, as Team Teaching, CALL College and University Educators, and Materials Writers were added to Video, Global Issues, JSL and Bilingualism. The N-SIGs tend to bring new constituencies into the orbit of JALT, increasing its membership base, while expanding JALT's domestic and international contacts.

As seen already, N-SIGs are approved and their funding is authorized by the Executive Committee, the legislature of JALT. The ExCom basically consists of the seven elected national officers, Immediate Past President Sigeo Imamura, and the chapter presidents for a total of about 45 voting members, plus a dozen non-voting appointed national officers such as committee chairs. Minus the chapter presidents, the national officers currently meet several times a year and can make decisions within their mandate all year round. JALT members are encouraged to contact them directly through a pertinent representative with any questions, requests or suggestions.

Technically, N-SIG chairs have a voice at the ExCom, but having no subsidization to attend meetings in faraway cities effectively eliminates that voice. Representing the N-SIGs on the ExCom without vote is the N-SIG Liaison David Wood, who works through the nationally-elected membership Chair Setsuko Toyama. He is also on the JALT Publications Board by virtue of editing the "Of National Significance" column in *The Language Teacher*. David is a brilliant, hard-working advocate for all the N-SIGs and deserves our every assistance.

The ExCom meets three times a year, including at the international conference where the JALT Annual Business Meeting is also held. This fourth legislative meeting of the year is reserved for deliberations of such importance that all JALT members are entitled to vote. It was at such a meeting in 1989, that the JALT Constitution was last amended to admit the N-SIGs. Please refer to the April "JALT News" issue of *The Language Teacher* for the current Constitution and its Bylaws. The requirements to form and maintain N-SIGs were stated, but the role of the N-SIGs in the Association was not specified.

Based on these By-laws, the ExCom formed a policy of funding N-SIGs, an annual grant of 50,000 plus members' dues for recognized groups with over 50 members. Actual funding, however, and membership processing as faced various logistical problems, and it is acknowledged that laws and policies vis-a-vis the N-SIGs need thorough revision.

At the Annual Business meeting held at JALT '92, constitutional amendments proposing the ExCom representation and further integration of the N-SIGs into JALT were defeated by a 51-50 vote in favor, as a two-thirds vote was needed. Actually the pros and cons were not fully heard, as some members well-versed in *Robert's Rules of Order* were able to derail the assembly from its deliberative function. This nevertheless goes to show that the more informed and active members can accomplish their aims in JALT.

The defeated amendments are not referred to committee in the usual way where they could be proposed again, because a new committee is being

formed in the ExCom to examine JALT's laws and workings as a whole. Now that the Constitutional Renewal Committee is in formation, it will be opportune to inquire more deeply what is the nature of the N-SIGs, what academic and organizational roles they can play in JALT, where they ought to fit in the ExCom, and how JALT's laws and policies can be reconstituted to fully integrate this beneficial movement.

JALT-National is short-handed to serve 4,000 members, so individual national posts are turning into committees. Many functions reconstituted every year could instead be institutionalized through the N-SIGs. For example, starting this year the N-SIGs supply conference presentations and reviews. Furthermore, chapters and regional conference organizers are turning to the N-SIGs as representatives of represent major interests and constituencies in JALT, and can readily draw members from their national networks who are near the chapters where their expertise is sought.

Education is communication, and the N-SIG newsletters have vastly increased the information circulating in JALT. David Wood has recently started the SIGNL newsletter to systematically inform N-SIG chairs and elected national officers. Most influential, however, and communicating organizational information among all administrative levels is the *JALT Executive Newsletter (JENL)* which reaches nearly 70 decision-makers. While chapter officers are supposed to hear from chapter presidents about *JENL* contents, general JALT members are entitled to the same information, and chapter presidents would be glad to answer such inquiries.

Sometimes N-SIGs are allotted certain opportunities to publicize their activities, but generally, they earn them, such as reviewing an N-SIG-sponsored colloquium with sufficient academic rigor for *The Language Teacher* editors. The N-SIGs only have two opportunities a year for face-to-face networking, at the international conferences and at the N-SIG conferences which currently have a 200,000 appropriation from JALT-National. The third annual event is under the auspices of the Kobe Spring Conference, which is detailed elsewhere in JALT publications. In any event, the N-SIGs must seize these opportunities and other avenues to clarify their focus and value to JALT members.

In conclusion, N-SIG members will have to show JALT's decision-makers can contribute to the Association, what academic and organizational roles the N-SIGs can fulfill. In the competition of ideas the day goes to the well-informed and the well-organized. The N-SIGs lift JALT members from the local to the national and global levels. Thus rather than a loose thread, the N-SIGs could bind the organization more effectively through the dimension of members' interests.

CUtE

Here we solicit your contributions that will put a smile on our faces: a story, cartoon, comments, etc. . . or your own humorous version of life in Japanese higher education.

e-mail Anyone?

(or everything you always wanted to know about e-mail and were afraid to ask)

We are looking forward to the information Thomas Robb will be sharing with us in our next newsletter - all the mysteries of e-mail explained.

Member Notes

CUE N-SIG Database Compilation

A significant function of CUE N-SIG is to provide resources for its membership. The CUE N-SIG Membership Database will provide information to you about other members, of whom there are now 70. By skimming the database, members will be able to locate others who might have similar situations, interests and/or needs. Included with this newsletter is the **Membership Database Questionnaire** that will facilitate such networking. Please write legibly so that your database information, which will be circulated to all other members completing this questionnaire, will be accurate.

- Please return the questionnaire by 10 April, to Irene Shirley, Membership Chair, in the stamped, addressed envelope provided. It is hoped that the resulting database will be distributed to participating members by the end of April.

Enclosed is an extra copy of the Questionnaire that can be passed along to a colleague who is just joining. If you are a JALT member who has not yet joined CUE N-SIG, complete the form below and send it to Gail Jackson.

If you are not already a member then here is how
To Join Today . . . fill in, cut off and mail
(with ¥1000) to:

Gail Jackson
Takayama College
1155 Shimobayashi-cho
Takayama City, Gifu 506

Name _____

WORK Address _____

WORK Telephone / FAX _____

HOME Address (optional) _____

HOME Telephone / FAX _____

Have you already completed Membership Database form? YES NO

If your answer to the last question was NO, then a Membership Database Questionnaire will be mailed to you upon receipt of this information.

You must be a member of JALT to join any N-SIG.

Please write legibly to ensure the accuracy of your database information. Then please return this page by 10 April to:

Irene Shirley, Fac. of Lit.
Tohoku Gakuin University
1-3-1 Tsuchittoi, Aoba-ku
Sendai 980

Membership Database Questionnaire

Name _____

HOME Address (optional) _____

Telephone _____ FAX _____ e-Mail _____

Name of Institution _____

Faculty _____ Department _____

WORK Address _____

Telephone _____ FAX _____ e-Mail _____

Best Way to Contact You _____

Title of your position (circle)

Kyoju/professor *sennin koshi/assistant professor* *Jokyoju/associate professor*
gaikokujinkyoshi /foreign instructor other _____

Is your institution (circle) national / private / public 2yr / 4 yr

Non-Japanese sponsor or affiliation ? _____

If your institution has a particular emphasis, i.e., nursing, social work, technology, please state it: _____

Subjects/Classes taught _____

Name of JALT chapter _____ Position held _____

To what other JALT N-SIG(s), if any, do you belong, and state any official position(s) you may hold within it (them)? _____

Describe your research interests _____

Collaboration sought? _____

Are you willing to participate in surveys other members may conduct? _____

To which other professional organizations do you belong? _____

Professional journals received: _____

Please note anything else you'd like to have other members know about you, or that you would like to know about other members: _____

I have paid the ¥1000 annual membership fee. YES ____ NO ____