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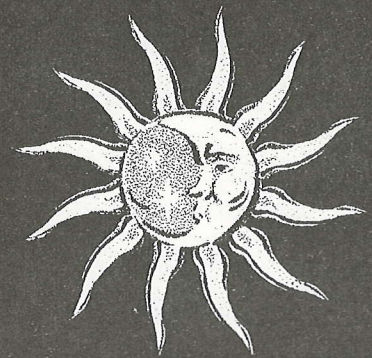
Thought to Ponder:

'The future must no longer be determined by the past. I do not deny that the effects of the past are still with us. But I refuse to strengthen them by repeating them...'.

Hélène Cixous

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A Word from the Editors

Bern Mulvey, CUE Co-Editor, Fukui University

On-going Call for Submissions

As always, we are open to submissions of papers in the following categories:

Features Section: feature articles with a focus on language education and related issues at the tertiary level, up to 2000 words. **Note**: references should be done in APA style.

From the Chalkface: articles about classroom applications, techniques and lesson plans that worked, usually up to 1000 words.

Reviews: reviews of books, textbooks, videos, presentations/workshops, TV programmes, film, etc.; 600 words max.; 1500 words for longer combined or scholarly reviews.

Cyperpipeline: descriptions of websites that might prove useful for language teaching and professional development; length depends on how many sites reviewed.

Opinion and Perspectives: 650 words max.; longer, coordinated,   point-counterpoint type articles debating different sides on an issue are possible (such as, Is ELT an art or a science?).

Category bending and innovation are also possible; length guidelines are flexible. If you have an idea or a specific

proposal for an article or a column, don't hesitate to contact us.

Readers' Choice Award Update

Voting will be conducted through mailers to be included with issue #3 of ON CUE due out this Fall.

CUE Merit Award Update

I am happy to announce that finalists have been chosen and essays received from them. A final decision will be made sometime in October.

Comments/questions/submissions/questions should be sent to us at the points of contact below:

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Feature Article I
Theory into Practice: How Can We Apply Automaticity Theory to the English Language Curriculum?

Fumiko Yoshimura
Kyushu Institute of Information Sciences

Introduction

Currently the emphasis of language instruction has been shifting from one of knowledge acquisition to that of communicative usage. One of the most typical dilemmas English instructors face, however, is that even if we give our students significant amounts of time in the classroom to use English in communicative activities, they still do not acquire the proficiency levels we might expect to justify such activities. What might be missing in the process of our instruction and practice activities?

In trying to answer this question, in this article I will introduce the concept of automaticity theory and explain how we can apply the theory to actual English language courses in institutional settings in Japan. This application, I contend, can help to ensure that our language learners can coordinate individual skills in more complex tasks. The importance of incorporating integrative tasks and true proficiency tests in the curriculum will be stressed.

Automaticity Theory

Automaticity theory attempts to explain how people acquire skills as a function of the automacity of the operating processes. Schneider and Fisk (1983) explain the mechanisms of skill acquisition in terms of contrasting automatic and controlled types of cognitive and memory processing:

Automatic processing is a fast, parallel, fairly effortless process which is not limited by short-term memory capacity, is not under direct subject control, and performs well-developed skilled behaviors. Automatic processing typically develops when subjects deal with the stimulus consistently over many trials....Controlled processing is characterized as a slow, generally serial, effortful, capacity limited, subject controlled processing mode that must be used to deal with novel or inconsistent information. (p. 120)

Schneider and Fisk (1983) show how practice changes controlled processing into automatic processing. According to them, automatic productions are modular and will develop when the component processes are consistent. This modular procesing system can be hierarchical, with the same module being one part of many different skills. The assumption is that there is an upper limit to human attention span. Practice, however, can make automatic productions relatively free of limited memory resources; thus there is no necessary limit to the number of automatic processes which can be active at the same time. Moreover, practice makes productions autonomous, reducing direct conscious control of the subject. This is a crucial point on which it can be said that good and poor learners divide. Automaticity which has been acquired in this way makes it possible to process different stimuli at different stages simultaneously, as in a complex production line.

Figure 1

The Continuum of Automatization (adapted from Whitaker)

Schneider and Fisk (1983) illustrate this change of behavior in practicing a motor skill by describing the change in learning how to play the piano. At the novice level performance is very slow, serial, capacity-limted. Controlled processing is in effect at this stage and the learner must allot much of finite attention capacity to each motor task. After substantial practice, however, the learner builds up a vocabulary of playable notes by consistently repeating each note in a given phrase thousands of times. As the automatic productions develop, the performer can speed up the responses, incorporate more complicated rhythm information, and begin to have sufficient capacity freed up and made available to attend to the patterns of notes, familiar scales and chords, and finally onto entire sections in the music.

Figure 1 (above) shows the continuum of automatization adapted from Whitaker (1983, p. 199). According to Whitaker the stages of behavior acquisition are best expressed as a continuum, not a dichotomy. Starting from the left end of this continuum, we gradually acquire the automaticity of a behavior with repeated practice. In learning a musical instrument, for example, people start from the novel (or novice) stage; with sufficient practice and improvement, they acquire the skills necessary to play a piece of music beautifully and fluently.

By way of comparison and contrast, Anderson (1995) perceives the development of skill acquisition as the development of problem-solving operators. He divides the processes into three stages: the *cognitive stage*, the *associative stage*, and the *autonomous stage*. He describes the general characteristics of each stage as follows:

In the *cognitive stage*, learners commit to memory a set of facts relevant to the skill. Typically they rehearse these facts as they first attempt to perform the skill. The process is slow. The information they have learned amounts to a set of problem-solving operators for the skill.

In the *associative stage*, the connections among the various elements required for successful performance are strengthened. Errors are detected and eliminated, as well. Learners by this time have converted the verbal knowledge once memorized into procedural knowledge.

In the *autonomous stage*, procedure becomes more skilled, more automated, and more rapid. In doing so it requires fewer and fewer attentional resources. Learners also develop more complex skills in the direction of becoming more automated and requiring fewer processing resources. Anderson says, "it is the procedural, not the

declarative knowledge that governs the skilled performance (p. 274).

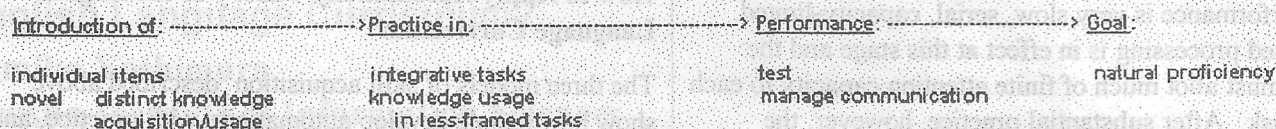## How to Apply Automaticity Theory to the English Language Curriculum

The three models of skill acquisition described above show how people develop automaticity with practice, and they break down a complex process over time into understandable stages. In learning a foreign language, just as with other skill acquisition processes, we must start from an absolute beginning stage at which we have no language and must progress over time until we have acquired language proficiency. Ultimately, we hope to attain the stage where we can exert control over the language well enough to allocate our attention to understanding and responding to the content of messages—to actual communication.

In actual mainstream classroom instruction, however, it is hard to see how the process of acquiring functional proficiency levels over stages is actually acknowledged and dealt with. In terms of input and what is the object of study, discourse is typically broken down into smaller, discrete items for analysis and manipulation. The items are typically grammar points, key vocabulary, typical expressions, and the language associated with communicative situations and functions, etc. For each isolated item, explanation and opportunities for practice activities are often given. Instructors assume that it is the learners' responsibility to practice what has been covered in class until they have acquired the target proficiency. On the other hand, many learners seem to think they have practiced enough after only a few times, even if the learners remain well short of being fluent and proficient in the object of study.

Keeping what instructors and learners think about the matter in mind, if we compare it to the Schneider and Fisk (1983) model, we can see that these learners typically stay at the controlled processing stage. In terms of the Anderson (1995) model, it might be said that in much instruction the associative stage is neglected; but it is at this stage where learners come to coordinate many individual elements as a bridge to the autonomy stage.

Too many of our language learners never develop skills well enough for them to perform more integrative and complex tasks of language use and communication. They need to free up their cognitive and memory resources by becoming fluent, automatic, and efficient at certain processing elements in order to devote their mental resources to more involved, complex tasks of real communication and interaction. In short, they need to

Figure 2

Introduction of: ---------------------------> Practice in: -----------------------------------> Performance: ----------------> Goal:

individual items   integrative tasks   test   natural proficiency
novel   distinct knowledge   knowledge usage   manage communication
         acquisition/usage   in less-framed tasks

A Model of Structuring the Formal FL Curriculum

stick it out with some practice tasks until stages of automaticity have been reached. After practicing distinct skills until a fluency with them has been reached, learners then need to practice them in more integrative, less framed tasks. In so doing they will also learn how to balance their attention span; their cognitive and memory resources can be more efficiently shared out to the various integrated parts of increasingly complex tasks.

Taking this into consideration, we need to restructure the whole curriculum to incorporate language training adapted to the associative stage of Anderson's (1995) model. Figure 2 above demonstrates a model of structuring the formal language curriculum with an application of the theory of automaticity.

First, in creating a curriculum, the goals of our instruction needs to be defined. This means that we need to define the characteristics of spontaneous communication which is at the autonomous stage of language acquisition. Secondly, what is involved in spontaneous communication should be analyzed and broken into its distinct elements. Each element should be taught so that learners can understand it and have enough opportunities to practice it until they can use it without alotting conscious effort.

Employing communicative games and activities are good because they are fun and create situations where meaning is negotiated and exchanged. The true challenge for language instructors, however, is how to orchestrate the needs at different levels and come up with a curriculum which helps learners to develop automaticity gradually and systematically. This includes filling the discrepancy between the overall goal of a language course and the goals of the individual lessons.

In developing a motor skill such as driving or playing sports, the most emphasized stage is not during but after individual items or activities are practiced. After learning basic skills, practice is given for larger units composed of the smaller isolated skills already learned. The units of

practice get larger and larger until learners attain the goal of proficiency. In language learning, incorporating integrative tasks is important because it gives learners opportunities to use distinct skills in less-framed, more complex tasks. Showing a clear goal is important as well in order to motivate learners to practice the same underlying skills over and over. The next section introduces a language curriculum which sucessfully incorporates the theory of automaticity.

Applying Automaticity Theory to LT and LL: A Case Study

I participated in the following process in curriculum development when I was an instructor of JFL at an American university. Every time the JFL curriculum was re-evaluated and revised, it was done by starting with goal setting—that is, what it was felt that students needed to be able to do at the end of each quarter. For example, in the very first quarter, the goal was to be able to introduce themselves and talk about their lives briefly. In the second quarter, the goal was to be able to talk about their friends. In the third quarter, the goal was to be able to describe different places. The main goal was then broken into sub-goals and projected into individual lesson plans. Another important aspect was finding the right methods to measure if the desired goal had been attained by the students.

The overall structure of the courses was as follows: In the first year, each grammar point was introduced individually. A brief explanation was presented and students were given opportunities to use the point in classroom activities. The rationale was that it is very important to learn basic structures well enough to create building blocks to which other structures can be added, thereby creating a usable store of Japanese language in the minds of the learners. This initial emphasis on grammar points, however, shifted to an emphasis on the content of communication as the levels went up. Thus, class activities

gradually shifted closer from highly structured communicative activities to real communication.

In each quarter both integrative tasks and exit tests were incorporated. The integrative tasks were given to provide students opportunities to manipulate and use in wholes isolated grammar points they had learned. The exit test was given to measure learners' oral proficiencies. Because the exit oral proficiency test and the integrative tasks were interrelated and organized systematically, learners could use a task they had done before to prepare for the next task.

Though all JFL communication skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing were taught, the overall emphasis was placed on oral communication. Evaluation of students' communicative proficiencies in real time was one of the greatest concerns in the program's assessment efforts. From my observations I conclude that it was after students had learned each skill and were preparing for the exit test that they had internalized what had been covered and acquired the ability to use the skills. In helping learners to develop proficiency in JFL and to motivate them to practice the underlying skills sufficiently in increasingly more complicated tasks, the integrative tasks and the oral proficiency tests proved to be the two crucial elements. These elements were incorporated in the curriculum from the very first quarter. The oral proficiency tests not only evaluated a learner's actual language proficiencies but also provided a clearly stated goal to accomplish. Integrative tasks were included to give learners opportunities to integrate what they had learned and to use them in more complex tasks. Thus, students were guided gradually, systematically in the direction of developing automaticity.

The Oral Proficiency Tests

The format of the oral proficiency tests in the JFL program included the following: (1) matching up students at random; (2) assigning a broad topic open to some interpretation; and (3) filling the given time with Japanese discourse only. The reason for choosing this format was that this most closely simulates the actual situations student might encounter in using the target language—that is, responding to a partner spontaneously whil managing all the factors that are involved in real communication.

In real communication, we have to be able to pay attention to both the content of the coversation and the language which is used to carry it out. We have to have sufficient vocabulary and syntax to understand our partner, negotiate meaning, and convey our thoughts.

We have to be able to pronounce the words and expressions smoothly and appropriately. We have to consider the interlocutor—their level of language proficiency, real world knowledge, and interests. We have to pay close attention to our partner in order to understand what their says and respond appropriately so that the conversation flows smoothly.

From the perspective of evaluation, the language proficiencies which need to be measured are those that students would show in a spontaneous coversation in real time, where they have to balance their attention among the many involved, interrelated factors. Testing all of these factors individually would not provide an accurate picture of what students could actually do in real communication. On the other hand, in order to be able to pay attention and balance all these factors, students must have reached a level of proficiency at which they can exert good control over their language. Otherwise, they would not be able to communicate effectively in such situations.

The criteria of the oral proficiency tests were given beforehand to show explicitly what was expected of the students. Five categories were used for evaluation: (1) an ability to understand and respond to what their partner is saying appropriately, in L2, and in real time; (2) pronunciation; (3) grammatical accuracy; (4) fluency; and (5) the content of the conversation. By preparing for the tests with these criteria in mind, students learned that they were expected to balance their attention towards all these areas.

However, success with this test format depends on how the students are helped to prepare for the test. To prepare for the tests, students were given integrative tasks. The tasks included creating questions using grammar points that had been covered in class, interviewing Japanese students using the questions, writing compositions using the information they had from the interviews, presenting their compositions in class, and practicing asking and answering their questions to prepare for the oral proficiency tests.

Procedures for Integrative Tasks

The integrative tasks are described in greater detail in the following set of procedures:

(1) As homework, students were asked to prepare questions that used the grammar points taught. The instructor gave specific guidance and correction on the content and language that students had used in writing their questions. At this stage, instructors had control over the syntactic complexity and variety of sentence struc-

tures in the questions. After receiving feedback from the instructor, students were asked to re-organize their lists of questions based on a likely, imagined flow of conversation. They then practicde asking and answering the questions until they had acquired a natural speed and proficiency.

(2) Next, students used their questions to interview students who were native Japanese speakers. In the interview, students had opportunities to use the language they had studied for communicative purposes. Because the language elements were already prepared and practiced well enough, they could allocate more attention and mental resources to the content of the conversation and even experience the enjoyment of real communication.

(3) The sets of questions were practiced still further in order to prepare for the oral proficiency tests. Learners practiced these questions first on their own and then practiced them with as many partners as possible in a class. In practicing with different classmates, students learned how to modify what they had prepared depending on the partner's particular response. They also learned skills to keep the conversation going. Difficulties in carrying on coversations during the practice motivated students to practice Japanese even further.

(4) Based on the interviews they had had with the native speaker of Japanese, students were asked to write a composition. Students wrote two or three drafts per paper on average. For each draft, instructors gave feedback about the content the language. Because the syntactic complexity and the variety of sentence structure were already controlled at the time the questions were written and checked, instructors were more concerned with the appropriateness of the language use at this stage. Typically, instructors underlined the mistakes and explained the kind of mistakes that had been made—such as particle, word choice, verb form, etc. It was the student's responsibility to figure out how to correct the mistakes they had made based on the hints they had received from their instructor.

(5) Sometimes students were asked to present their compositions to their classmates.

Other Activities

Other extracurricular activities such as the Conversation Hour, the Conversation Partner Program, the Japanese Study Abroad Program, etc., contributed to the creation of an environment conducive for students to use the language they had learned. With the Conversation Hour activity, students got the opportunities to chat with native speakers of Japanese in a more relaxed atmosphere. Through the Conversation Partner Program, students met their Japanese conversation partner on a one-to-one basis. Students experienced studying Japanese language and culture in Japan through the Japanese Study Abroad Program.

Thus, in this JFL program, much emphasis was placed on supporting and developing the associative stage which precedes true autonomy. The curriculum was structured so that students could gradually shift from isolated items to true communication. At the heart of the curriculum, it is worth restating, lay the integrative tasks and oral proficiency tests.

Conclusion

Automaticity theory and how to apply it to the development of a FL curriculum have been introduced. The case of a JFL curriculum which I experienced at an American university demonstrates how to apply the theory to real situations. There are two crucial elements needed to fill the discrepancy between the goal of mastery and the beginning level of highly structured activities that practice isolated skills. These elements are (1) the use of less-framed, integrative tasks and (2) the oral proficiency tests. Employing communicative activities for individual skills at low proficiency levels does not guarantee learners will go on to synthesize the orchestration of skills needed for more varied, complex tasks. Automaticity theory shows us the importance of training at the associative stage and gives insights about instructional procedure.

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Feature Article II
Comparing Pre- and Post-Task Vocabulary Teaching: What's the Difference? Why Does it Matter?

Michael Guest
Miyazaki Medical College

Introduction

With the increasingly widespread awareness of both the value of a lexical syllabus and the centrality of lexis in holistic language learning development (as propagated by the likes of Michael Lewis, David Willis, Ronald Carter etc.), most language teachers these days do manage to find some place within a lesson plan for at least some vocabulary teaching. However, the efficacy of vocabulary teaching cannot be based simply upon an arbitrary inclusion in a lesson plan alone, nor merely by the amount of vocabulary work done. More central to efficacious teaching of vocabulary, rather, is the question as to at what point in a learning task it is introduced and for what purpose.

A Simple But Revealing Survey

This became evident to me earlier this year when I conducted a simple survey in which I asked thirty English language teachers in Japan the following questions about their vocabulary teaching habits.

1. How often do you teach vocabulary?

2. About what percentage of your teaching is taken up with vocabulary work?

3. What type of vocabulary items do you tend to highlight?

4. What kind of vocabulary-based tasks or activities do you do most?

5. At what point in the task/lesson do you generally deal with vocabulary?

Key Question

The key question turned out to be #5, as the responses to that question generally determined the responses to most of the others. That is, a consistency was maintained between all the responses depending upon whether a respondent focused mainly upon pre- or post-teaching vocabulary. And from collating these responses, I could make a number of telling assumptions. The survey invited both numerical and explanatory responses. The numerical responses were as follows:

Q5. At what point in the task/lesson do you generally deal with vocabulary?

a. Primarily before doing the task (16)

b. Primarily as it arises in the task (5)

c. Primarily after the task has been completed (9)

Answers to other questions:

Q1. How often do you teach at least some vocabulary?

	Pre/During task (Q #5 'a+b'):	Post-task (Q #5 'c'):
a) Every lesson	(7)	(5)
b) Most lesson	(9)	(3)
c) About half	(4)	(1)
d) Only occasionally	(1)	(0)

Q2. About what percentage of your teaching is taken up with vocabulary work?

	Pre/During task:	Post-task:
a) Over 50%	(0)	(3)
b) About 30-50%	(4)	(5)
c) Between 10 and 30%	(7)	(1)
d) Under 10 %	(10)	(0)

Q3. What type of vocabulary items do you tend to highlight? (Clearly, overlap exists here so please rate them from 1 {highest} to 4 {lowest} in terms of importance you place upon them):

a) Words that students (probably) don't know

Pre-/During task: Post-task:

Rated #1(13) ; Rated #4(1)   Rated #1(0) ; Rated #4(0)

b) Items that I think will be most useful to them in the future

Pre-/During task: Post-task:

Rated #1(3) ; Rated #4(5)   Rated #1(6) ; Rated #4(0)

c) Items that they tend to confuse or make mistakes upon

Pre-/During task: Post-task:

Rated #1(0); Rated #4(11)   Rated #1(3) ; Rated #4(1)

d) Items that will help the learners complete the lesson task more efficiently

Pre-/During task: Post-task:

Rated #1(5); Rated #4(4)   Rated #1(7) ; Rated #4(0)

Q4. What kind of vocabulary-based tasks or activities do you do most?

a) None. I use it mainly to help students complete the task/understand a text

Pre-/During task: (9)   Post-task: (0)

b) Items are notated by students and used in future vocab. quizzes

Pre/During task: (5)   Post-task: (3)

c) Regular recycling of items both productively and passively in future activities and texts

Pre/During task: (2)   Post-task: (6)

Patterns Revealed

These responses clearly indicate that those teachers who introduce vocabulary items primarily before doing a task tend to a) have less total lesson time taken up with vocabulary work, b) highlight mainly those items expected to be 'unknown' to learners and, c) do fewer follow-up tasks. What this seems to indicate is that those who tend to pre-teach vocabulary treat it primarily as an aid to completing a task such that vocabulary learning becomes subjugated to that task, an instrument towards a more immediate pedagogical end. As a result, it is not surprising that the pre-teaching of vocabulary may end up providing little more than meaning pegs for 'unknown'or 'difficult' items, translations or brief explanations of which are expected to allow learners to succeed in completing the task.

When pre-teaching vocabulary, language items are generally decontextualized. This means that lexically light 'function' items plus those that serve textual or interpersonal purposes are often ignored in favor of lexically dense words, since their meanings tend to be more discrete and isolatable even when divorced from context. At this point, one may start to wonder if such decontextualized teaching may be a main cause

of common lexical errors made by Japanese learners of English, given the widespread problem of over-extension due to use of a decoding methodology alone (such as one-to-one translations from L2 to L1).

In this questionable paradigm, the utility of vocabulary study is based upon a search for word meanings, not lexical usage. Little thought is thus given to the long-term utility or range of items, the focus instead being placed heavily upon semantic or paradigmatic properties (often closely related to 'dictionary meanings'). As a result it appears that learner interaction with such items appears to be limited to an L1 translation and, perhaps, an eventual list-type notation in a student notebook.

Moreover, learners are apt to become passive participants in the acquisition process of these items as the teacher has chosen them, given them their 'canonical' interpretations and provided their immediate utility, often a formulaic insertion of a translation into a text. Learners interact with these items only in as much as they will soon come across them in the text and apply a translation formula as a means to completing the task. Beyond task completion, there is little or no motivation for learners to retain these items in a more general or holistic manner. And even if they do happen to retain them, items of little utility or range but great lexical density may well be given undue weight in the learner's lexicon.

On the other hand, those teachers who focused upon post-task vocabulary teaching displayed a much greater sense of stimulating or challenging the learners' holistic language system. By encountering the items initially within a text, learners become more aware of how these items function within text, context providing hints not only for meaning but also for usage. By negotiating these items not merely as translated dictionary headwords, but as 'organisms' within some living, meaningful discourse, learners develop a deeper understanding about the wider properties of an item, not merely a 'meaning'. If we accept that a language item can generally be understood more fully when a context has been provided, it makes more sense to allow learners to negotiate the items in context by themselves before providing any decodings. In this sense, in post-task teaching, learners are encoding themselves with the item's lexical properties before the teacher refines this understanding with a decoding strategy.

Post-task teaching advocates were also clearly aware that vocabulary learning cannot and should not be limited to the mere translation of words. For learners to truly understand an item (as opposed to merely recognizing

it) they must also come to understand its syntagmic properties, its uses rather than its meanings, its functions rather than its translation. It is at this point that vocabulary graduates into the more comprehensive concept, lexis. And since lexical items can be analyzed only in context, the only basis upon which meaning can be anything more than a chimera, it is post-task vocabulary teaching that best serves to imprint the essence of an item more indelibly upon the minds of learners. With post-task vocabulary teaching therefore, the utility of an item is not likely to dissipate with the completion of the task.

Moreover, in the survey, an emphasis upon post-task vocabulary teaching coincided with a tendency to do more follo-up work on vocabulary, particularly syntagmic exercises (i.e., ones emphasizing sequential relations, e.g., collocations, features of register, word forms, grammatical relations, genre, etc.) with items already noted in student workbooks .

Also, those who focus upon post-task vocabulary teaching also appear to develop more lessons that are based upon or include previously encountered items. This allows previously highlighted items to be reinforced such that learner consciousness of these items starts to move beyond merely paradigmatic, 'meaning-based' features and into pragmatic and other sociolinguistic considerations.

Almost all respondents admitted to teaching at least some vocabulary during a lesson, 'as it arises' or 'as questions were asked'. We can safely assume that such 'in vivo' teaching often arises in response to discrete inquiries by learners. Here, a pertinent question perhaps is, are all such teacher explanations regarding lexis given equal weight, or are some dealt with more surreptitiously than others? A learner's inquiry about a low-frequency item, an understanding of which would simply allow him or her to process a text more expediently, should not be given the same weight as an item that is more crucial to the holistic development of the learner's vocabulary.

For example, several teachers who emphasized post-task vocabulary teaching noted that they reiterate post-task some of the items raised by students during the task if they feel that that item is 'likely to recur' or seems to be representative of 'a common misunderstanding' or a 'general weakness'. In this way, items of greater utility and range can be highlighted. We can thus see that this type of vocabulary teaching in the middle of a task or lesson tends to reflect an existing pre- or post-task methodology.

Thus, it is important for teachers not to associate vocabulary teachingwith the pre-teaching of unknown items (decoding) alone. In fact, one can reasonably ask, what exactly the point of only pre-teaching vocabulary is beyond short-term task-completion goals? Although such L1-to-L2 decoding may help a learner complete an immediate task more expediently, it does little to advance his or her overall internal language system. Rather, it is pure L2 encoding, the awareness of how to use that item within a variety of texts, that more effectively expands the learner's lexicon, advancing it from the passive to the active and productive spheres.

So Why Pre-Teach Vocabulary?

Therefore, we must also ask ourselves, if the vocabulary teaching element is treated only as a means to completing a task, what then is the point of that particular task? Unless it in some way serves to further the internal language system of the learner, aren't such tasks little more than busy work? In making these points however, I do not wish to give the impression that I consider all pre-teaching of vocabulary to be non- or counter-productive. In some cases, the expedient completion of a task may be a valid objective, provided that this task fits comfortably within a more holistic language learning syllabus. And for those items that are lexically dense and 'meaning- based', pre-teaching can serve to soften the daunting blow of encountering too many unfamiliar or items within a text.

However, when pre-teaching becomes associated with vocabulary teaching per se--or is seen as the default place in a lesson plan for the introduction of such items, with little concern for or awareness of the wider range of lexis and its more holistic application--this will work to the learners' detriment. If one is purporting to teach a language surely one of the main purposes of any task should thus ultimately become the analysis and greater-consciousness of lexis.

Conclusion

Language learning tasks should not just be busy work to occupy learners for the duration of a lesson, entailing some vague hope that interacting with English will, in some mysterious fashion, further their abilities. With an emphasis upon post-task vocabulary teaching, tasks are more likely to become incorporated into a more holistic language syllabus which will do much more to advance learners' sensitivities towards usage of lexis, as opposed to the listing and memorization of vocabulary words.

Special Feature
A Videotaped Discourse Analysis Approach to Teaching Intercultural Communication

Susan Steinbach
University of California - Davis

Introduction

Many approaches can be used in teaching intercultural communication as a content course. I propose doing so through the lens of discourse analysis and through the lens of a video camera.

Discourse Analysis and the Camera's Eye

Let's begin with discourse analysis. One of the core features of any cultural study is the pattern of communication used within that culture. These patterns manifest themselves in sociolinguistic features such as turn taking, interrupting, pausing, back channeling, hesitating, overlapping, and changes of topic. To capture these distinguishing traits in an authentic way, the use of the camera or the audiotape is paramount. A teacher can use a filmed or an audiotaped conversation to illustrate and isolate discrete discourse functions such as back channeling.

Keying In on Discourse Features

In Japanese, frequent back channeling (called *aizuchi*) is a critical function in maintaining a conversation through the use of appropriate sounds, syllables, words, or phrases in response to another speaker. The same is true in English, which uses phrases like "I see," "Go on," "You're kidding!" and "uh-huh" to maintain the smooth flow in a conversation. Teaching such skills to language learners begins with keen observation of video or audioexamples of authentic speech, then mimicking or recreating these modeled forms on their own. A Japanese student of English would not sound tremendously skilled in conversations with native speakers of English if they could not include some level of back channeling. Likewise, the reverse is true for a 'gaijin' learning Japanese.

The ability to key in on discrete functions in discourse can be amplified by the use of the video camera. Students can watch a playback of authentic speech several times to familiarize themselves with discourse patterns, then even reenact the scene.The video camera can also be used as a key tool to self-insight in experiential learning in the field of intercultural communication.

Several well-known simulations such as *BARNGA* or *BaFa BaFa* offer participants a chance to step into another world, to be confronted by confusion or conflict, to lose a sense of homebase or internalized rules, and to negotiate meaning with others who hold different values.

This experiential process is tremendously enhanced by the use of videotaping which affords the facilitator concrete points of reference during the debriefing process. Students who watch theirbehavior on video after such a simulation are able to make profound connections about the ways they see the world. They are able to see "outside of the box" or outside of the culture in which they have been operating. This is the moment of "ah-hah!"-type revelation caught on videotape.

For example, after conducting the *BARNGA* simulation (a card game) with an ESL class of mixed international students, I asked them to write down a list of the emotions they felt during the game. Then they wrote down a list of coping techniques they used to survive the game. On the day following the simulation, the students viewed themselves on videotape with great interest, laughter and surprise. They were able to add more items to the lists they had written the day before and talk about what happened to them.

The lists of emotions included: confusion, anger, irritation, uncertainty, resignation, amusement, and so on. The list of coping skills included items such as: patience, surrendering, insistence on one's opinion, inventing new rules, hitting others, seeking out an authority or a referee to intervene, persuading others, laughing nervously, and so on. It's one thing to experience these emotions firsthand in a simulation and another to watch oneself coping with these emotions a day later. The power of the camera in the classroom: What a tremendous teaching tool!

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Opinion & Perspective

Why English Education Fails in Japan

Charles Adamson
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Introduction

Foreign language classes, especially the most common, English, at Japanese universities are notorious for their ineffectiveness. This paper enumerates some of the reasons for this situation. The relationships between these reasons are not hierarchical so they have been listed in a somewhat arbitrary order.

List of Reasons

(1) Classification of English classes as *enshu* (as seminars or exercise (in the sense of 'study') classes.

(a) Student-held presuppositions such as the following have negative effects:

- *Enshu* are less important than regular classes (they receive less credit), so students believe *enshu* classes require less effort and commitment.

- *Enshu* do not require study outside of class (often written in school rules, so many students do even less homework than for other classes.

(b) Faculty- and administration-held presuppositions such as the following also have negative effects:

- *Enshu* enroll a smaller number of students than regular classes, therefore, teachers should have more classes to balance the teacher's cost-effectiveness, as measured by the number of students they teach.

- *Enshu* are not real classes in the same sense that lecture classes are.

(2) Overly large classes.

Class size of 40-50 students is often considered small, and universities will brag about them in their advertising. "Conversation" classes with over 100 students are not uncommon. In much of ELT, classes of 10 are considered average and classes of 20 are often thought to be so large as to be unteachable.

(3) Short-term contracts for native-speaker faculty.

Most native-speaking teachers (NST) are only given three year contracts and many more are on one year contracts. This is important in light of my experience that it takes at least five years to develop and finalize a course. NSTs do not have the stability to develop good teaching materials and are forced to rely on commercially published books that are generally not optimized for their students. Teachers may not undertake many student-related activities because they have no long-term commitment to the school and know that almost anything they begin will fall into neglect after they leave.

(4) Extensive use of part-time teachers.

Part-time teachers have little commitment to the school. They will, of course, be professional in their classes but they spend little time on campus. This means that they are not available to the students, except during class time. Learning a foreign language is largely a psychological hurdle and the students need support and encouragement outside the classroom as well as in it.

(5) Inappropriate classrooms.

The physical environment has a strong effect on learning, but language classes are often given in rooms that were

designed for other purposes. This often results in any or all of the following:

- Little or no open floor space, making many potential activities physically impossible. In some of the classrooms where I teach part-time classes, there is so little room that it is not possible for the teacher to move around the room to see what the students are doing. This means that there can be absolutely no individual feedback on activities from the teacher.

- Seats and desks are often fixed to the floor, making it difficult or impossible to use small group activities. Frequently, there are long, narrow desks seating three or four students.

- The furniture in the room can not be rearranged because other teachers complain about the noise.

- Often lectures being given in Japanese in other rooms can be clearly heard, causing students to have problems hearing and concentrating on English.

- Posters and other materials can not be placed in the room, making the use of peripheral learning methods impossible.

- Students must remain in the classroom throughout the scheduled class period, preventing them from practicing the use of the language outside the classroom (a psychological necessity for optimal language acquisition).

(6) Insufficient time devoted to language study.

(a) Frequency of classes:

College-level classes seldom exceed three 90-minute classes a week. My research has shown that less than about 4 hours per week of classes is unlikely to result in student progress. Therefore, the average student's progress is likely to be directly related to the amount of out-of-class study that is done. (See discussion of students' attitudes toward 'enshu' classes in point (1)(a) above.)

(b) Total time allotted to language study:

- During their six years of junior and senior high school, students have about 100 hours of English a year for a total of about 600 hours (note that here, too, the effect of the classes is reduced because of large class size, focus on grammar translation, and the minimal amount of English that is used in many classes). During this period many students spend an additional 2 or 3 hours a week at a prep school (juku) studying English for another 100 hours or so a year, but these classes usually focus on memorizing obscure, and often incorrect, individual items

in preparation for the college entrance exams and will have little, if any, effect on the students ability to actually use the language or understand it. *(Editors' Note: the low hour totals for classroom study given by Mr. Adamson differ from both Monbusho's own much higher figures and the similarly higher findings of many other researchers in the field).*

- College students (non-English majors) will usually have less than 150 hours of English classes during their four years. The typical student will then have had between 750 and 1350 hours of English study, the exact figure depending on their enrollment in juku classes and private lessons.

This figure is actually misleadingly large. Most of this class time will have been spent listening to a teacher lecture in Japanese and much of the work will be aimed at improving scores on the college entrance tests. One study at a famous Japanese university showed that the students actually lost English ability during their required course. In order to evaluate this study time and put it into proper perspective, it must be compared with the figure of 5000 hours which is often cited as the time needed to master a language. Even accepting the figures at face value, the typical student will have studied less than one quarter of the time required for mastery.

(7) Assumption that any native speaker is qualified to be a teacher.

There is little to say about this other than that it is wrong. The questions should be, What will the teacher candidates do in the classroom? What methodologies are they able to apply? What beliefs do they hold about language learning and teaching in general? How well will they mesh with the other faculty members? Will they cooperate with the curriculum?

(8) Poor quality information to administrators and decision makers.

Administrators and decision makers generally have such a low level of understanding about language teaching that they are unable be separate the comments of trained professional teachers from those of unqualified individuals (often unqualified native speakers). They frequently determine which information to believe on the basis of personal relations with the individual. This frequently results in the acceptance of wrong or poor quality information for program evaluation, which exacerbates the other problems.

(9) Problems with curriculums.

(a) Lack of concrete goals:

Most university English programs do not have clearly specified, concrete goals. Goals are generally so vague that it is not possible for the teachers to decide what or how to teach. Real goals can be generated fairly easily by doing a needs analysis, but this is almost never done. When I suggested that a needs analysis be done at one university, I was answered with the question and observation of: "Why would you want to do that? All you need to do is select a book that is easy to teach. There is no need to know anything about the students' possible future uses of English."

(b) Lack of verification of achievement of goals:

Since there are no concrete goals, there is no way to verify that the students have met the goals of the course. This in turn means that there is no way to determine which specific parts of a course or program need to be revised, if they need to be at changed at all.

(c) Lack of coordination and integration:

In most universities there is little or no coordination, formal or informal, among teachers, even teachers of the same course. This means that it there are few integrated programs in which the contents of the curriculum are systematically taught. Critical points may be totally missing and other content may be taught more than once by different teachers. Also students who have had what was designated as a single course but were taught by different teachers may have had different content.

(d) Lack of input from faculty during development of initial curriculum:

Prior to the opening of a new university, or even a new department, the curriculum must be developed for approval by the Ministry of Education. The groups that do this development are usually administrators with no teaching experience or training in curriculum development theory. Once the curriculum is accepted this group disperses and the incoming faculty must do the best they can with it. Other than the short course descriptions (less than 50 words in most cases), there is no guidance for the teacher as to what to teach.

(e) Non-optimal Texts and Other Teaching Materials.

- Ineffectiveness of commercial texts: Many commercially available texts are designed to appeal to untrained teachers and administrators, particularly at language schools. The goals are ambiguous at best and seldom relate to the real needs of university students. The methodological approaches of the books are also frequently of questionable value. Many teachers make their own material in spite of the problems with contract length, but without specific goals (see Problems with curriculums) and integration with other courses, the results also are often far from optimal.

- Inability to construct rich learning environments: Because classrooms are shared, it is usually not possible to hang posters or display realia to be incorporated into class work in support of the language content. The amount of realia that a teacher can carry to class is far below the minimum amount necessary to be effective. ((Relates to point (5) above.))

(10) Student Perceptions of College Education.

(a) Students think graduation requires little or no effort:

Students cut classes and do not do any home work, but society (including students, parents, faculty, administration, and the general public) expects everyone to graduate on time and a very high percentage do.

(b) Students think college is a time for enjoyment before the hardships of employment begin:

Many people consider college to be a vacation after the rigors of exam preparation during high school and before starting a permanent job. Many students consider their club activities to be more important than classes.

(c) Students consider many classes boring:

Many students soon become disaffected and bored with the lockstep system and the lackluster lectures many professors give. Content often oscillates between being much too basic and being far too advanced. Also students who have not understood the content are passed on to higher level courses where they are completely lost.

(11) Problems with buildings and equipment.

(a) Buildings:

Buildings are generally designed with absolutely no input from the faculty. Architects make decisions that should be made by the faculty who will actually be using the rooms, so the rooms are usually designed for general use and are inappropriate for anything other than a straight forward lecture class. The buildings are not designed for student comfort; many do not meet the standards applied to many penal institutions. ((Relates to points (5) and (9)(e) above.))

(b) Equipment:

Equipment such as LLs are frequently purchased by the administration for advertising purposes with little thought as to how they would be used or how their use would affect the curriculum. The features on such equipment are often selected purely on the recommendation of the manufacturers and salespeople/consultants, again with little or consideration of its actual use. Another problem that often arises is that, after equipment with a specific number of seats is installed, class size is increased beyond capacity.

(c) Lack of maintenance:

There is a surprising lack of maintenance, particularly preventive maintenance. Students are often allowed free, unsupervised access to buildings and equipment. Repairs and maintenance are not considered until things stop functioning.

(d) Equipment incompatibility:

Because procurement is done by different groups at different times (usually not involving the users, at least not a useful level), new equipment is often incompatible with older equipment.

(12) Lack of a stable, fixed yearly schedule.

Most university administrations do not seem to appreciate the need for fixing the schedule so that content can be scheduled on a rational basis. Frequently classes are cancelled with no warning. Many teachers eventually give up trying to prepare an integrated, comprehensive plan for the semester's lessons, greatly reducing the effectiveness of their classes.

(13) Poor Japanese language ability.

- Most professional teachers have made a commitment to teaching, not to living in a particular country or learning a specific language. These teachers frequently move from country to country. For many, the short term contracts offered in Japan, accelerate this process. Thus many teachers do not acquire speaking or listening skills in Japanese, let alone reading and writing ability. This means that these teachers frequently have communication problems when dealing with decision makers. Also cross-cultural differences in views on what constitutes a good education further exacerbate the misunderstandings.

- At the college level, the untrained, inexperienced teachers frequently are people who have made an educational commitment to Japan. They have studied the language and society of Japan, not FL teaching methodol-

ogy. However, their fluency and factual cultural knowledge contribute to the decision makers acceptance of their views on language education. The administrators do not realize that such people are frequently people who learned the language in spite of the system, not because of it.

Conclusion

If we consider the above list (plus many other factors that someone might wish to add), we will soon come to the conclusion that most of these problems do not seem inevitable or insolvable. The question arises as to why the situation has not been corrected. I believe that the answers lie in many of the same factors that limit the effectiveness of language programs.

While conditions obviously differ from school to school, one of the key factors seems to be that administrators do not listen to the experienced teachers who have the answers. One reason this group of professional teachers has not been able to establish its credibility is that they are forced by short term contracts to move frequently, never having sufficient time to build improved programs. Another reason is that their own success is limited by the factors listed above; their results are better but not sufficiently so that the administrators will change their tendency to simply listen to the people that they are comfortable with. I might add that many of these untrained, inexperienced people, for reasons of their own, claim to be knowledgeable and offer solutions that frequently mesh well with the faulty presuppositions of unwitting administrators.

In closing, I offer the pessimistic view that the situation is unlikely to change in the near future. There are too many strong factors supporting the status quo. Sometime in the next century there will be a general revision in the entire idea of college education and, hopefully, language classes will change along with the university. There is, however, one ray of hope. According to a Japanese TV news broadcast, carpentry is now the most popular future occupation for students surveyed in grades one through twelve. It is possible that shocking news such as this about student expectations in the educational system may be the impetus for changes that will come sooner rather than later.

Note: Mr. Adamson brings up a variety of interesting points with regards to this very controversial, and very important, issue. Other considerations which Mr. Adamson does not touch upon are questions about the training (including induction and professional development) received and methodology used by the majority of Japanese teachers of English (who, in turn, are respon-

sible for most of the English instruction in this country).
As editors, we would like to invite responses to this, or
any other topic related to this issue.

From the Chalkface I
A Pairwork Warm-up Activity

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Introduction

A great deal has been written about small group and pair work with the rise in popularity of so-called "communicative approaches." Although by no means a panacea, for those teachers who believe that actual practice of the target language is essential for developing communicative competence, small group and pair work have become integral elements of the curriculum (Nunan & Lamb, 1996).

In college and university classes in Japan, where class sizes still tends to be rather large, small group and pair work allow students more opportunities to use the target language (TL) than they would have if they only communicated with the teacher. Despite this obvious benefit, one potential weakness of these kinds of activities is that they often tend to stress transactional use of the TL rather than interactional use (Richards, 1990; see also Brown & Yule, 1983, for more explanation of the interactional vs. transactional distinction). In other words, the activities often involve only an exchange of bits and pieces of information (as in an "info-gap" activity), instead of providing the participants an opportunity to engage in meaningful, more personalized dialogue.

In this brief paper, I would like to introduce a simple pair work warm-up activity that gives students an opportunity to practice the TL and also to interact as classmates and peers. In the following sections, I would like to introduce this warm-up activity, describe the kinds of materials I use, discuss the pros and cons of the activity, and finally provide an example of the materials I have used in my own classes.

Warming up with 'Pair Question Sheets'

Most teachers are aware of the importance of doing some kind of warm-up activity in their classes before jumping into the main part of the lesson. Warm-ups allow students to change gears from thinking about what their boyfriend or girlfriend told them just before class started (or whatever), to the matter at hand, learning the TL. Over the years, I have tried a number of different warm-up activities. In small classes I often fell back on the tried and true "So how was your week?," but that gets old quickly.

Now I use a wider variety of activities, including music, games, and trivia questions. Recently, I have added something to my repertoire that I call 'pair question sheets.' I have found that this activity works well in both large and small classes, and is an effective way to get students speaking right away and focusing on learning English. The activity is done as follows:

First the students have to find a partner. Then, I give one student in each pair question sheet A and the other student question sheet B. The questions on sheets A and B are different. The students take turns askin and answering the questions on the sheets and write down their partners' answers (optional). I tell the students not to look at their partners' papers as they are doing the questions. They must understand the question just by listening and then provide their answer. I also encourage the students to ask follow-up questions and expand each item into a short conversation. Finally, when everyone has finished, I often ask the students to volunteer some of their answers to the more interesting questions, and occasionally this leads to a class discussion or a comparison of answers.

The Question Sheets

The question sheets can be on any topic you choose. The majority of the sheets I have made focus on a specific grammar point such as past tense, "have you ever," or reflexive pronouns, but I have also made sheets which are theme-oriented, such as "your neighborhood," or "high school." I usually put about four or five questions on each paper, and at the bottom I leave space for the students to write a question or two on their own which utilizes the grammar point on the sheet or is related to the theme of the sheet, whichever the case may be. For sheets which focus on a grammar point, I sometimes put a short explanation of the point above the questions.

Pros and Cons of the Activity

First and foremost, the activity gets the students speaking right away. It has enough structure that the students won't be intimidated, but it also has enough flexibility to allow students to express themselves and interact. Rather than a simple transactional exchange of information, the questions allow the students to engage in meaningful interactional conversation. In addition, the question sheets allow students to practice all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The sheets also work very well as a lead-in to the rest of the lesson for the day. If you are working with a grammar-based curriculum and you are planning to teach indirect question formation in your lesson, give the students a pair question activity with indirect questions and introduce the concept to them inductively before proceeding to the main part or the lesson. This way, when you get into the explanation of the grammar, they will have already encountered the form and will have used it in real communication.

On the other hand, if you are working with a content-based curriculum, these sheets can serve as an introduction to a content area. If your syllabus contains a unit on the environment, sheets that contain questions about the environment can serve as a lead-in to the main part of the lesson. A final benefit of using pair question sheets is that the sheets themselves are quite easy to produce. It doesn't take long to type up ten questions and print them out on two sheets of paper.

On the minus side, there are certainly some students who feel strange speaking with their peers in a language other than their L1. This may lead to very short answers (short interactional exchanges only), and consequently less interaction in the TL, or in some cases responses in the L1.

A more complex issue is that of whether input from other NNSs can slow and/or harm students' linguistic development. One study has shown that NNS-NNS interactions provide fewer opportunities to negotiate meaning than NS-NNS interactions, and contain "less quantitatively rich data" (Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos & Linnell, 1996, p. 80). Nevertheless, it is encouraging to note that the same study showed that "participation in communication tasks with other learners is not linguistically harmful" (p.80).

Conclusion

If you are looking for a way to get your students warmed up and focused on learning English right at the beginning of class, I have found pair question sheets to be quite effective. If the questions are interesting and entertaining, the activity can not only be effective pedagogically, but also quite enjoyable.

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Appendix: A sample set of questions sheets on the grammar point "have you ever...?"

Partner A

Have you ever ...?

In English, when we use the expression "have you ever...?" we use the past participle form of the verb. For example, for "travel" and "see":

Present tense -- Past tense-- Past participle

travel traveled traveled --> Have you ever traveled to Europe?

see saw seen --> Have you ever seen a bear?

DIRECTIONS: Ask your partner the questions below. If your partner answers

"yes" to a question, ask a follow-up question to continue the conversation.

For example:

A: Have you ever been to an amusement park?

B: Yes.

A: When did you go? OR Who did you go with? OR Did you like it? etc....

1. Have you ever ridden in an airplane? (ride, rode, ridden)

2. Have you ever tried Thai food? (try, tried, tried)

3. Have you ever written a love letter? (write, wrote, written)

4. Have you ever made *okonomiyaki*? (make, made, made)

5. Have you ever caught a really bad cold? (catch, caught, caught)

6. _____? (fall, fell, fallen)

7. _____? (take, took, taken)

Partner B

Have you ever ...?

In English, when we use the expression "have you ever...?" we use the past participle form of the verb. For example, for "travel" and "see":

Present tense-- Past tense --Past participle

travel traveled traveled -- > Have you ever traveled to Europe?

see saw seen --> Have you ever seen a bear?

DIRECTIONS: Ask your partner the questions below. If your partner answers

"yes" to a question, ask a follow-up question to continue the conversation.

For example:

A: Have you ever been to Tokyo?

B: Yes, I have.

A: When did you go? OR Who did you go with? OR Did you like it? etc....

1. Have you ever broken something? (break, broke, broken)

2. Have you ever bought something expensive? (buy, bought, bought)

3. Have you ever lost your keys? (lose, lost, lost)

4. Have you ever drunk alcohol? (drink, drank, drunk)

5. Have you ever failed a test? (fail, failed, failed)

6. _____? (wear, wore, worn)

7. _____? (meet, met, met)

From the Chalkface II
For Those Who Don't Like to Inhale
Brett Stephenson
Aichi Gakuin University

Equipment:

-- VCR

-- Popular subtitled (or non) video

-- Tape recorder with mic jack/s

-- 90-minute blank cassette tape

Procedure:

Get a video and show them the whole thing in the first two lessons. For lesson 3 of the program, give the students the script of a 5-minute segment and show it to them a couple of times. Then produce the tape recorder and microphones to give them a hint as to what awaits.

Ask them to form groups, and have them practice the dialogue from the script you have given them. Move from group to group as they prepare, and try to give as much individual attention as possible, especially regarding pronunciation and usage questions. Finally, when they (and you) are ready, get them to practice what they have learned by acting the scene out in front of the class.

By keeping the 90-minute tape, you can have as much video and dialogue content as you like.

Assessment:

Assessment of spoken English ability in a language class is always problematic. Still, consider quizzing students verbally on usage issues that come up in the scene(s) they prepared for class. These can be on the order of "If somebody said the same thing to you, how would you

respond?" questions to more involved "Try to use the same word structure but in a new sentence" requests. Another possibility is to have each student work on an especially problematic pronunciation issue (e.g., E /l/ and /r/ sounds differentiation) and have them attempt to "improve" their performance in this particular area.

Rationale (important for selling it to your boss):

To attract apathetic local kids, I have found it necessary to use the appropriate bait. By enticing them with something "fun" (like watching videos), I find that switching the focus to a more "educational" lesson then becomes much easier. In short, the students enjoy it. I enjoy it, and it is fun and "educational."

PS. It also saves you from getting chalk dust up your nose during those hay-feverish spring months.

News Special

JALT 99 Election Coverage: Questions and Answers with the Candidates

Compiled and Edited by Charles Jannuzi for *ON CUE* and *ELT News*

Introduction:

This year four of the key offices of JALT at the national level are up for election. Interestingly, there are more candidates than usual, and the offices of president and vice president are contested.

In the past, vote counts in JALT elections have tended to be rather low. However, as crucial issues concerning finances, membership, and the very continued existence of JALT loom, the editors of *ON CUE* would like to encourage you to participate as much as you can in this year's elections. In other words, read the official statements from each candidate in the pages of the JALT monthly magazine, *The Language Teacher*, attend the "Meet the Candidates" session at JALT 99, and above all, tear out the prepaid postage postcard found in the *The Language Teacher* magazine and exercise your right to VOTE!

With the thought in mind of encouraging you to vote in this year's elections, *ON CUE* is skipping its usual section of news, event announcements and calls for papers and is instead providing additional coverage of the candidates and issues. (The third issue of *ON CUE* for 1999 will have a very complete section of news, event announcements, and calls for papers to get you caught up.) Nevertheless, it is encouraging to note that the

We put a set of questions to all seven candidates for national office and are happy to say that five of them responded. What follows in this report is: the slate of candidates (who is running for what), the set of questions we put to them, and a biography and set of answers from the five candidates who chose to respond. These questions and answers and other election coverage will also appear at the *ELT News* website <www.eltnews.com>, so

if you know any JALT members who do not get *ON CUE*, be sure to direct them where to go. THANKS.

SLATE OF CANDIDATES:

National President: *Jill Robbins*

                                Thom Simmons

National Vice President::   *Tadashi Ishida*

                                Kimiyo Tanaka

                                Amy Yamashiro

National Membership Chair: *Joseph Tomei*

National Recording Secretary: *Amy Hawley*

THE QUESTIONS WE ASKED:

Question 1:

JALT is a major language teaching organization in Japan. Could you please tell us what you feel to be your most important accomplishment in language education here in Japan?

Question 2:

What do you feel is your most important accomplishment in JALT, at any level (chapter, SIG, national) ?

Question 3:

Could you give us a statement of how you define the role of the position you are standing for?

Question 4:

Outline for us in specific terms your set of concrete, measurable goals for your term in office.

Question 5:

JALT finances remain acute. What do you think are three specific steps that JALT national officers should work on to balance finances so that JALT is running small but healthy surpluses every year?

Question 6:

JALT membership is well below its all-time high and seems stagnant. Given the positive relationship between membership and revenues, what three steps do you think JALT could take to attract and keep more members?

Question 7:

Since basic membership fees went up to 10,000 yen, there has been some talk of making membership services more flexible. What is your view on this issue? If it is possible to do administratively, do you think individual members should have more choice on how their money is spent on the services they receive?

Question 8:

Automatically, most people who join JALT are placed into a local chapter. Do you think that membership in SIGs should be placed in equal standing with chapters instead of costing an additional 1500 yen?

MEET THE FIVE CANDIDATES WHO RESPONDED:

I. Candidate Name and Contact Info:

JILL ANN ROBBINS

robbins@kwansei.ac.jp
http://web.kwansei.ac.jp/~robbins

Position standing for:

JALT NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Teaching/Work Position and Title:

Coordinator, Intensive English Program, The Language Center, Kwansei Gakuin University, Nishinomiya, Japan.

Position(s) in JALT:

JALT 99 Conference Program Co-Chair

Nominations and Elections Chair, 1998 and Chair-Elect, 1997

National SIG Representative (1997, 1998)

Publicity Chair, Learner Development SIG (1996, 1997)

Program Co-Chair, Teacher Education SIG (1998)

JALT Nara President (1995, 1996)

Robbins Answer 1:

In my professional life, I have been working to promote learner autonomy through workshops on learning strategies that I have presented at a number of venues throughout Japan during the past five years. I aimed these workshops at helping current teachers to encourage students to be more active and self-directed. As a professor, I have tried to have a positive influence on the next generation of teachers by training them in communicative language teaching.

Robbins Answer 2:

In terms of what I have done as a JALT officer, the most important accomplishment is the planning and implementation of the program for JALT 99. I have worked to make this year's conference a success by encouraging a wide variety of professionals to be involved; including teachers and researchers from abroad. I helped to make sending proposals easier for those outside of Japan by instituting online submissions.

The second most important accomplishment in my JALT career is the restructuring of the national executive board meetings that took place during my tenure as SIG representative. I was part of a coalition of SIG and Chapter representatives that proposed and hammered out a system of equal representation for SIGs and Chapters. This system has saved money for JALT and created a more efficient legislative body.

Robbins Answer 3:

I view the position of President as primarily a person to guide the direction of the organization. In the coming two years, JALT must adapt to its status as a non-profit organization (NPO). I have confidence that we can navigate the uncertain waters ahead by drawing on the human resources JALT has in abundance. The president must be able to communicate calmly and effectively with other national officers and be accessible to members, listening and responding to their needs. The president also serves as a facilitator of JALT's functioning as an organization, chairing meetings of the Executive Board and the Annual General Meeting. Because I have developed a positive relationship with many representatives of SIGs and Chapters, I feel that I can encourage them to

work together to make JALT a success in the 21st century.

Robbins Answer 4:

As JALT president my mission will be (1) to work toward improving communication between members and with other professional organizations, (2) to give current members compelling reasons to stay in JALT, and (3) to make membership more appealing to a wider variety of teachers. These goals are measurable in that membership numbers can be analyzed according to the level taught and renewal status can be tracked. Our joint activities with other professional organizations will be evidenced by increased opportunities for JALT members to take part in the conferences and meet the members of those organizations.

Robbins Answer 5:

JALT national officers should work on these specific budget control measures:

(1) Creating revenue through advertising by commercial and associate members. Officers are becoming aware of the many opportunities for generating new revenues, such as selling advertising space on the JALT websites.

(2) Saving money by moving toward electronic communications and means of reporting that eliminate the current focus on paper and postal communications. For example web-based submission of reports would provide a feasible, cheap alternative to mailed reports that take up volunteers' time and JALT's money for stamps.

(3) Maintaining awareness among all facets of JALT that our purpose is to serve our members--by providing the highest possible quality of service we will ensure loyalty and consistent membership levels.

Robbins Answer 6:

(1) Provide options that suit teachers at a wider variety of educational levels; i.e., publications that are more tailored to their needs.

(2) Make it easier to begin and continue membership through automatic debiting of accounts, just as many other organizations do.

(3) As I stated above; by providing the highest possible quality of service we will ensure loyalty and consistent membership levels.

Robbins Answer 7:

I think that this may happen, if JALT follows the trend in modern society to allow greater personal choice and specially tailored services by organizations.

Robbins Answer 8:

I don't want to propose a specific plan for changing the membership options at this time. But I do think SIGs are an increasingly important aspect of JALT.

II. Candidate Name and Contact Information:

KIMIYO TANAKA:

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http://cc.matsuyama_u.ac.jp/~kim/
 Matsuyama_JALT_Newsletter.html

Position standing for:

JALT NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

Teaching/Work Position and Title:

Instructor of Japanese as a second language (JSL) at

Ehime University, Foreign Student Center (1992-Present)

Position(s) in JALT:

Matsuyama Chapter Past President and its Newsletter and Web Site/Homepage Editor

JALT member of 16 years

JALT 94 Conference Site Co-chair,

Standing Committee Member on Employment Practice

Four-Corners Tour Assistant Coordinator

Chapter President 1996-1997

Tanaka Answer 1:

I think that it is a pity that the Japanese government does not have a concrete policy for Japanese language education, but I have tried to maintain sound policy and practices in JSL (such as the direct method). I have continued to teach foreign students to understand and use communicative Japanese, as well as to appreciate the rich culture of the Japanese people.

 My present and past work and living experiences reflect multilingual and multicultural skills that I hope will continue to serve JALT well, including: JSL instructor at Ehime University, English Language Instructor at Nichibei English Institute; interpreter for the governor of

Matsuyama Prefecture, haiku writer and translator, and former resident in Germany.

Tanaka Answer 2:

I was Matsuyama JALT chapter president for 2 years andand I started and still edit the Chapter Newsletter.

Tanaka Answer 3:

The Vice President is an assistant to the president and a mediator among elected and appointed officers.

Tanaka Answer 4:

As Vice President I would like to offer my services and skills as an intercultural, interpersonal mediator-- between the national officers and the chapters, and between Japanese-language speakers and English-language ones.

Tanaka Answer 5:

It is easy to say, but probably difficult to carry out. Still, I would:

(1) encourage the use of e-mail and reduce the expense of national officers' meetings;

(2) cooperate with local chapter presidents to increase the number of new members; and

(3) strive to make the annual conference more economical.

Tanaka Answer 6:

(1) Strengthen relations with other teachers' organizations and the Japanese Board of Education in each chapter's area.

(2) Make a greater effort to publicize the annual conference among non-members.

(3) Hold regional conferences.

Tanaka Answer 7:

If it is possible, cutting down conference pre-registration fees could be a real benefit to all members--that is, I'd like to see an increase in the discount that JALT members receive when they pre-register for the national conference.

Tanaka Answer 8:

At this time, I think the additional 1500 yen is necessary, if SIGs want to organize their own activities and be engaged in some type of publication.

III. Candidate Name and Contact Information:

AMY D. YAMASHIRO

<amy@gol.com>

Position Standing For:

JALT NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

Teaching/Work Position and Title:

Lecturer, Nihon University College of Commerce

Position(s) in JALT:

GALE SIG Membership and Publicity Chair (1999)

Guest Editor of The Language Teacher (May 1998)

National SIG Representative (1997)

Teacher Education SIG Coordinator (1997)

Teacher Education SIG Steering Committee (1996, 1997)

Teacher Education/Learner Development SIGs

Mini-Conference Organizing Committee (1996)

Yamashiro Answer 1:

My most important accomplishment has been in staff development at various settings in Japan through peer mentoring as well as coordinating co-presentations with colleagues for both domestic and international conferences. In addition, I have also given numerous presentations and seminars in communicative language teaching around Japan. I have had first hand experience in the joys and challenges that teachers face in varying contexts, with all levels, age groups, and types of classes. I taught at the Osaka YMCA for four years before becoming a homeroom teacher at a junior/senior high school for three years. Most recently, after two years as a junior college lecturer, I have just started as a university lecturer.

Yamashiro Answer 2:

As the Teacher Education SIG Coordinator in 1997, I helped to establish a yearly retreat to allow teachers bonded by a common interest not only to get down to business in workshops, but to also to spend "quality time" to deepen budding friendships over meals and just "hanging out." More importantly, I guided the group to brainstorm and set out a proposed two-year plan, so that the next coordinator could start out the new term more effectively and efficiently. The two-year plan included the past two annual Teacher Education Action Research Retreats and the upcoming the *Language Teacher* Special Issue on Action Research (February 2000).

Yamashiro Answer 3:

The role of Vice President has two primary components. One aspect entails being able to work and communicate with the President in a near symbiotic relationship, such that the President's vision (e.g., to reinvigorate JALT) and concrete goals (e.g. to obtain status as a non-profit organization) can be achieved. The other aspect deals with issues concerning leadership capabilities and initiative as well as administrative experience working in offices. I have ample experience chairing meetings and organizing mini-conferences. As the administrative assistant for an NPO Re-training Program, I had to create data bases and archives, prepare publicity and mass mailings, and learn how to maintain an efficient work-place.

Yamashiro Answer 4:

(1) Making JALT Executive Board Meetings more accessible to new delegates (both for native speakers of English and for Japanese members): JALT has a long, colorful history and an alphabet soup full of acronyms. As a native speaker conversant with procedure, I could keep up with the discussion and motions, but I knew many of the other new representatives were often feeling confused and frustrated. From my experience in teaching and setting up a school-wide Model United Nations for regular high school students (240 participants), I have experience in training new delegates to use parliamentary procedure in little or no time.

(2) Getting back the vitality and synergy within JALT: Many of our hard-working volunteers tend to feel burned out and under-appreciated. From my experience as a coordinator and an editor, I know the value of nurturing talent and bolstering the flagging spirits of volunteers. As an MA TESOL graduate from the "touchy, feely" school (the School for International Training) and a doctoral candidate in education (Temple University Japan), I can appreciate both humanistic and rational approaches to teaching, learning, and getting the job done.

Yamashiro Answer 5:

(1) Generate revenue through regional mini-conferences. In the past, National JALT Conferences were guaranteed money-makers because they were held at university sites free of charge. A long-term plan could include creative combinations of a university site, a community hall, and hotel conference rooms to help reduce the costs of the National JALT Conferences. In the short term, considering the growing popularity of mini-conferences each year, with some long term planning on the part of the SIG and

Regional conference organizers, we can raise money for JALT National by offering attractive exhibitor packages to JALT's commercial and associate members.

(2) Making use of electronic telecommunications to save money and time for intra-JALT communication and reporting. By taking advantage of the widespread use of computer technology and the high-tech expertise of JALT CALL members, JALT could create website reporting for Chapter and SIG Officers, and the JALT Central Office could monitor requests for materials without incurring postal costs.

Yamashiro Answer 6:

(1) JALT needs to to provide more open forums for its diverse membership, so that teachers can meet other teachers who share their passion for teaching.

The growing popularity of the Regional, Chapter/SIG, and SIG mini-conferences is due in part to the multidimensional nature of teaching. For example, a single teacher may be interested in teaching children, CALL, and communicative language teaching.

(2) Take advantage of automatic debiting of accounts to facilitate the process of joining and renewing, so that we do not have the annual drop in membership due to forgetting or being late in paying the dues.

(3) JALT will need to seek mutually beneficial arrangement with commercial and associate members, such as by offering special discounts to JALT members and creative advertising arrangements.

Yamashiro Answer 7:

Although a certain percentage will be needed in the general funds, I believe once the technology permits it, and once the Executive Board has decided the baseline membership privileges, eventually it will be possible to allow individual members to direct this "discretionary" dues amount for the particular membership options they want.

Yamashiro Answer 8:

While I recognize the growing importance of SIGs within JALT, I believe that, first, we need to focus on ensuring JALT's overall fiscal and organizational health. We need to support both Chapters and SIGs to continue providing attractive programs and services to retain old members and to recruit new ones.

To argue for changing the status of SIGs (i.e. put them on equal standing with chapters and remove the additional 1500 yen dues) would necessitate changes to the constitu-

tion and by laws governing the duties for both Chapters and SIGs. However, this could be part of a longer range plan to make part of JALT's membership services more flexible.

IV. Candidate Name and Contact Information:

JOSEPH TOMEI

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Position standing for:

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Teaching/Work Position and Title:

Assistant Professor (tenured), Kumamoto Gakuen University, Department of Foreign Languages

Position(s) in JALT:

President, Kumamoto Chapter

Tomei Answer 1:

I hesitate to use the word 'accomplishment' because it implies attainment through solo effort. All of the accomplishments I can think of have been attained by a group of people, not by me alone. Two that I think are most relevant for this position were (1) developing a new position for JET participants within Miyagi prefecture, that of Assistant English Teacher's Consultant at the Prefectural Board of Education and (2) developing the Hokudai Oral Proficiency Test (HOPT) when I was 'gaikokugin kyoushi' at Hokkaido University. These two experiences have made me acutely aware of the balancing act that is necessary in developing a framework for accomplishing something that is not dependent only on the particular abilities of one person. I have also became more conscious of the imperatives of functioning professionally in a Japanese bureaucracy.

Tomei Answer 2:

Though this may sound facetious, I believe that maintaining a relatively even disposition on the executive level e-mail discussion list (JALT EXBO list) might be the most important. In order to make JALT function on a national level, as well as supporting members and chapters in a efficient and timely way, we are going to have to develop more our electronic communication skills. Other accomplishments have been less achieved by me and more due to others, and these include: collaboratively achieving chapter status for JALT Kumamoto and helping to set up institutional subscriptions for JALT publica-

tions. Thanks must go to all those people in other Kyushu Chapters and JALT Central Office.

Tomei Answer 3:

The membership chair needs to first and foremost work to make it as easy as possible to bring in new members and have current members renew, both through chapters and through SIGs. Second, the MC needs to try and understand the needs of JALT's target audiences--which I feel can be broken down into the basic groups of childrens' teachers, secondary school teachers, and tertiary teachers. This is so that chapters and SIGs can be given useful ideas and advice for addressing the needs of those groups to support their members amd bring in new members. Third, the MC needs to develop other audiences for JALT. I feel that two potential groups are elementary school teachers due to teach English and language school owners and administrators. Finally, I hope to argue for changes in the structure of JALT that would allow us to encourage new chapters and new SIGs rather than discourage them because of the potential drain on the budget (see answer to question 8 below).

Tomei Answer 4:

I hope to develop streamlined procedures for reporting memberships, hopefully through a web form that membership chairs can use to report new members. I want to make greater use of email in contacting people whose membership is expiring, both directly and through lists posted to membership chairs in both chapters and SIGs. I hope to develop a sponsored mailing for subscriptions. I hope to figure out a way that we can have a web page form for membership that we can encourage people with personal homepages to link to, giving JALT free publicity. Finally, I hope to work with other officers on a re-examination of the grant structure that allows for greater flexibility and accords with the NPO laws.

Tomei Answer 5:

I hope that through email and sponsored mailings, which would cost JALT little (if anything), I can increase the renewal rate and allow JALT to more easily forecast future revenue. Using web page forms and trying to develop a web page that would allow one to join JALT electronically would also cost JALT little but make it easier for people to join/rejoin. I also hope to work with publications and other JALT members to develop institutional subscriptions as a consistent revenue stream. Finally, I hope that we could develop a new grant structure that would be a systemic solution rather than a stop-gap measure.

Tomei Answer 6:

I think that we have to develop the SIGs as an effective means of bringing in members. This would tie in with a reexamination of the grant structure. I also think that with the JALT WWW domain, we can organize and link up web sites to bring people in from the web. I also think that we should develop more projects and presentations on a lower, sub_chapter level so that new JALT members can enter part of a smaller group that will work to retain them.

Tomei Answer 7:

A lot of dedicated JALT people have worked on a membership 'menu', but have not been able to bring it to pass. The problem with a membership menu is that some options might not be able to be funded at their current levels and will then disappear, possibly resulting in a loss to JALT membership. Though I think a membership menu is possible, with less disruption and a better impact on membership numbers we should aim for bringing down the membership fee. I propose that we set out a two year period where we will take steps to get a large portion of the membership 'synchronized' (i.e. memberships starting in the same month) and develop partial renewals so that we need not refund monies.

Tomei Answer 8:

I believe that all groups within JALT should have an equal chance at developing programs that could (1) bring in members or (2) provide services to their members that JALT would be particularly suited for. My own idea is that we provide chapters and SIGs with a minimum operating budget and pool the rest of the money into a fund that could be utilized when chapters, groups within chapters, or SIGs present a proposal. Chapters would have the first chance at the money for the current year. Then, the funding process would be opened up to SIGs and sub-groups within a chapter.

V. Candidate Name and Contact Information

AMY E. HAWLEY

<shortone@gol.com>

Position Standing For:

NATIONAL RECORDING SECRETARY

Teaching/Work Position and Title:

Junior/senior high school English instructor at Shizuoka Futaba Gakuen

Position(s) in JALT:

National Financial Steering Committee Chair; Shizuoka Chapter President; and National

Chapter Delegate for the Executive Board Meetings

Hawley Answer 1:

My greatest contribution to language education in Japan is the energy and the passion that I have for my students and for language education itself in Japan. Research and publications are important, but I believe that at the core of any great instructor is the portrayal of their true passion for their field of expertise. For me, this portrayal is the way that I carry myself on a daily basis in front of my students and colleagues. It is my energy and passion that has driven me into becoming a teacher and will continue to drive me for years to come.

Hawley Answer 2:

My most important contribution to JALT is my ability to work well with many people throughout JALT to put together a balanced budget. In putting together this year's budget I had to contact many people involved with spending JALT's money. This required being rather strict in some cases, but in the end, I think that I earned the respect of many people in regards to the budget. This respect has helped me to maintain closer contact with all people involved in the budget throughout the year so that the Finance Team knows exactly where the money is going.

Hawley Answer 3:

As with FSC Chair, as National Recording Secretary, I will have to be in contact with many people throughout JALT to obtain the necessary reports and news that I must compile, edit and distribute to all JALT members. Taking notes at national-level meetings is not all there is to being Recording Secretary--getting out the news of what is happening in JALT is the most important thing. I plan to make accurate and informed reports to the JALT News column of the Language Teacher magazine so as to bring a well informed JALT into 2000.

Hawley Answer 4:

As Recording Secretary, I want to continue to reach all members of JALT with national news so that members can make well informed decisions. Many people in JALT feel that they don't know what is going on and I hope to reach people through e-mail, the Language Teacher, and the JALT Executive Newsletter. This, of course, is already being done, but I plan to continue to do it at the

highest standard possible. I will also workclosely with other national officers to make well informed and beneficial decisions regarding JALT policies.

Hawley Answer 5:

As the FSC Chair, let me say now, that the National officers are already doing a lot of sacrificing to help out with the budget. Many officers have given up their budgets, their conference reimbursements, and their EBM reimbursements, just to name a few examples of the sacrifices that officers are making.

So, the officers are setting a fine example, but the question is not where to cut more in JALT, but where to increase revenue in JALT. We have cut so much out of JALT spending already and will continue to do so in some areas of the budget next year, but we really must focus on bringing in the money which leads well into my answer to the next question.

Hawley Answer 6:

This is one of the most important issues facing JALT and everyone seems to have an opinion on it. The following is what we need to do, in my opinion: (1) We need to stop talking about all the ideas that we have and DO something. Talking is getting us no where--we need to take action. (2) We need to look at the demographics of JALT--why does JALT flourish in some places and die in others--and think of ways to help chapters in all locations of Japan to maintain and increase their membership at the same time. (3) We should look at why people join JALT--for the SIGs, the chapters, the publications, etc. And this leads well into the next question.

Hawley Answer 7:

I have nothing against the idea of having a "menu" of services, but I am against it if it will cause JALT to lose money or if it would create an administrative nightmare. We need to really think through all the pros and cons of the idea of having a "menu" of services before we jump into something that will hurt JALT in the end.

Hawley Answer 8:

I think that this fits in with the two previous questions and would have to be considered when looking at why people join JALT and the "menus" of membership issue. Relating this to why some people join and stay in JALT, I would see nothing wrong with it because it would not hurt JALT financially. But it would hurt chapters and some members feel we have done enough of that already.

Cyberpipeline: Special Report
Y2K/Millennium Bug Support

Charles Jannuzi
Fukui University

Introduction

In place of the normal education-related links, I thought it might be of some use to review the Y2K issue well before the fateful day and suggest some WWW links where you can get support if you do have a computer hardware and/or software conflict problem. In the third issue of *ON CUE* for 1999, the year-end issue, I will return to the subject of links useful to tertiary language educators with a look at on-line communities (e.g. free home pages, web-based discussion lists, etc.).

Windows Computing is Possibly Y2K Challenged

If you do Wintel computing (Win 3.x, Win 98/95, Win NT) or use popular Microsoft applications such as MS Office, Y2K problems could affect you. Even if you do Apple/Mac computing, you could be affected if you are hooked up to Win NT networks at your school or business.

First Test

A simple test you can do to start checking if you do have a possible conflict looming is to run your PC's clock forward. The fastest way to do this is double-click on the time at the lower right corner of your Windows screen and roll the date forward (from Win 3.x you have to start up the Clock applet).

A more thorough but practical set of procedures is this: First, put the clock forward to 11:59 p.m. (that's 2359 on a 24-hour clock), 31 December 1999. Then let the system run for a couple of minutes and see if the rollover to 2000 goes smoothly. Next, set the clock to 11:59 p.m., 31 December 2000 to make sure your system rolls over smoothly to the year 2001. The last check is to reboot the PC with the date at 1 January 2001. If the changes take, then so far so good. Don't forget to reset your time back to the current one when you are all finished.

Possible BIOS Conflicts

BIOS stands for "Basic Input Output System". It is not your operating system, but without it you couldn't run your PC. Probably the older the version of BIOS you are using, the more chance of a possible Y2K conflict.

The procedure for checking out your BIOS is this:

(1) figure out which type and version of BIOS your PC is using--you can see this info. on the screen when you boot up before the OS takes over; (2) find the website of the company that makes your BIOS and check there if they are warning of any possible Y2K compliance problems and BIOS updates to fix the problems; (3) if you can't find your company and info. about your BIOS there, try a firmware manufacturer like Micro Firmware <http://www.firmware.com>, as they may well have additional information and a product to help you.

The following is a list of the most common BIOS manufacturers with links:

Ami	http://www.megatrends.com
Asutek	http://www.asus.com.tw
Award	http://www.award.com
Gigabyte	http://www.giga-byte.com
Intel	http://www.intel.com
Phoenix	http://www.award.com (now part of Award)
Soyo	http://www.soyo.com.tw
Supermicro	http://www.supermicro.com

Sources of Software for Y2K Tests

It is possible to get software to run on your PC to check your system out. Some you can download for free over the Internet. For example, there is 'Y2KTEST', which you can get from Micro Firmware at:

ftp://ftp.firmware.com/y2k/y2ktst.exe

Some software is better than others, checking not just software but hardware as well for conflicts. There are also packages of software and hardware which claim to fix Y2K conflicts once discovered. If you care to search out your own freeware or sharewrare for diagnosis and repair, great places to start are:

http://www.download.com (search with 'Y2K' as your term)

http://www.anythingy2k.com/software.html

http://simplythebest.net/y2k/year200.html

Even Windows 98 Needs Fixed

Yes, there is a fix which you should download and install on Win 98. In fact, there have been two patches posted at the Microsoft site. To its credit, Microsoft has done a great deal in the past few years to simplify service, update, and repair downloads from their sites. No matter what language version of Win 98/95 or applications you use, the best place to start is at <http://www.microsoft.com>.

Updating Win 98 to get the Y2K patches is fairly simple if you run the Windows Update that is easily accessible from Start Menu (you will have to be connected to the WWW and have a functioning copy of MS Internet Explorer installed when you run the Update program-- just a warning to all those Netscape fans who like to copy trustbusting judges in the US). Over the internet connection Microsoft will identify what updates and patches your computer needs and, once you begin downloading, even installation procedures are fairly automatic.

MS Office Conflicts

The very popular MS Office 95 has Y2K issues. The most notable problem is simple: In Word 95 the Insert Date/Time and Sort functions will handle the two-digit year '00' all right; the problem is all other two-digit years are treated as those of the previous century. When inserting dates (or sorting data with dates), a year like 2001 may be read as the year 1901.

Microsoft is aware of such problems and wants to help. The places to start to get support are the following sites:

http://www.microfsoft.com/

http://officeupdate.microsoft.com/

http://www.microsoft.com/technet/year2k/

http://www.microsoft.com/technet/year2k/tools/software.htm

Conclusion

If you (1) run the clock test and there are no problems, (2) check if your BIOS needs updated and update it if it does, and (3) download and install key updates from Microsoft for Windows OSes and popular applications like MS Office, you are probably in fine shape for Wintel computing in the 21st Century. If it seems like the end of the world, for once it may not be Microsoft's or your PC's fault.

(Note: Please send your education- and language-related website descriptions and reviews to Charles Jannuzi, <jannuzi@hotmail.com> or <jannuzi@mint.ocn.ne.jp>. Alternatively, consider guest writing and editing this column yourself.)

Officer Contact Info.

Feel free to contact your officers about your SIG.

And consider taking on an officer or editor position yourself. We'd love to work with you!

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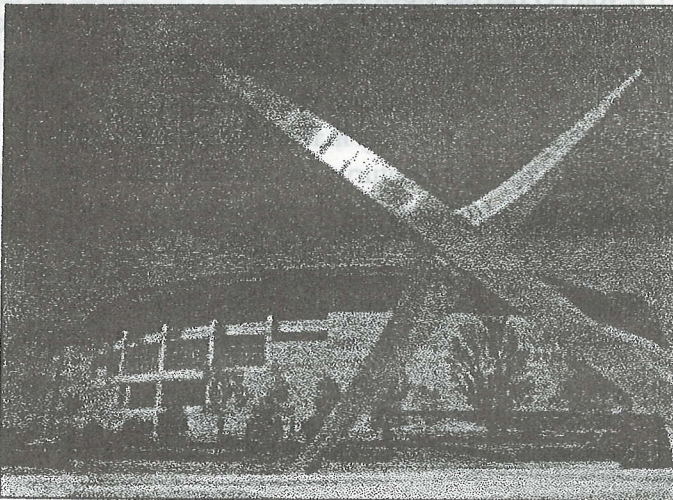Address and tel: same as Mulvey above
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JALT 99 Presentations of Interest to CUE SIG Members

Compiled and Submitted by Jill Robbins, Kwansei Gakuin University

Green Dome Maebashi, Gunma, the site of the JALT 99 International Conference, 8-11 October

Here is a list of presentations at JALT 99 that might be of interest to college and university educators:

Saturday 9:15 AM 10:00 AM B02 Stewart Critical Writing in Academic Writing Classes

Saturday 9:15 AM 10:00 AM 103 Hansford Coping Effectively with Student Absences

Saturday 11:15 AM 12:00 PM 202 MacNeill Community Discovery in an EFL Environment

Saturday 11:15 AM 12:00 PM 204 Numoto Word Lists for EFL Nursing Majors

Saturday 11:15 AM 12:00 PM 205 Yamashina Intercultural Understanding in University Reading

Saturday 1:00 PM 1:45 PM 202 Swanson Day One: Setting the Stage

Saturday 1:00 PM 1:45 PM 204 Widin, et al L1 and L2 Academic Reading Practices: Similar or Different?

Saturday 2:00 PM 2:45 PM 202 Welker I Have a Theme: A Student-Centered Content Course

Saturday 2:00 PM 2:45 PM 204 Greenfield Readability Formulas for EFL

Saturday 4:15 PM 6:00 PM 202 Allen, et al Promoting Classroom Research in an Institution

Saturday 4:15 PM 6:00 PM 209 Mulvey, et al Content Courses: Technology and Innovation CUE SIG Forum

Saturday 5:15 PM 6:00 PM 204 Townsend Utilizing Japanese in an English classroom

Saturday 6:15 PM 7:00 PM 204 Chapple Film, Critical Thinking and Language Development.

Saturday 6:15 PM 7:00 PM 209 Mackenzie CUE AGM

Sunday 9:15 AM 10:00 AM 202 Cogen Task-based Learning for Language Classrooms

Sunday 9:15 AM 10:00 AM 204 Davidson An EFL Critical Thinking/Essay Writing Course

Sunday 9:15 AM 10:00 AM 501 Orr The Essay--Easily Misunderstood, Commonly Mistaught

Sunday 10:15 AM 11:00 AM 308 Bayne Content-Based Learning with Lower Level Learners

Sunday 11:15 AM 12:00 PM DOME Yasui Teaching English in Thailand

Sunday 1:00 PM 1:45 PM 501 Miyazato University-Level Team Teaching - Is It Effective?

Sunday 3:15 PM 4:00 PM 301 Howard Teaching Children About Japan: A Pen-Pal Project

Sunday 3:15 PM 4:00 PM 307 Chen Teaching English Based on Cooperative Learning

Sunday 4:15 PM 6:00 PM 203 Golliher, et al Exploring the Possibilities of a Cognitive Apprenticeship Approach

to EAP: Teachers and Students Discuss Psychology Thesis Writing

Sunday 5:15 PM 6:00 PM 204 Yagi Extensive Reading and Motivation

Sunday 6:15 PM 7:00 PM 202 Katayama Developing Critical Thinking Using Media Reports on Japan

Sunday 6:15 PM 7:00 PM 204 Numoto Nursing Majors Need an Authentic Textbook

Monday 9:00 AM 10:45 AM 204 Gomez, et al Creating College EFL Content-based Courses

Monday 9:00 AM 9:45 AM 507 Witt, et al Challenges and strategies for a computerized TOEFL

Monday 10:00 AM 10:45 AM 202 Visgatis, et al New Roles, New Goals or Just More Rigmarole?

Monday 10:00 AM 10:45 AM 502 Reedy, et al Issues and Obstacles to Teaching Listening Skills

Monday 12:30 PM 1:15 PM 203 Rosszell How are Graded Readers Best Used?

Here are the reading and writing content area presentations at JALT 99:

Saturday 9:15 AM 10:00 AM 506 Kiryu, et al Designing Reading Introduction: Purpose Questions

Saturday 1:00 PM 1:45 PM 209 Newfields Composition Process vs. Product: Connecting How with What

Saturday 1:00 PM 2:45 PM 505 Daniels, et al Challenging Beliefs: Process & Product Writing

Saturday 5:15 PM 6:00 PM 505 Horiuchi I Want to Read More English Books

Sunday 9:15 AM 10:00 AM 208 Mason, et al Researching Extensive Reading

Sunday 1:00 PM 1:45 PM 505 Oertel Children's Literature in Extensive Reading Classes

Sunday 3:15 PM 4:00 PM 501 Handjeva-Weller Activities to Encourage Students to Read

Sunday 3:15 PM 4:00 PM 505 Ozawa InterpretersTraining: EFL Classroom Application

Sunday 4:15 PM 6:00 PM 309 Dycus When More Than Words Get in the Way

Sunday 4:15 PM 5:00 PM 503 Kudo, et al What is Needed to Become Fluent EFL Readers?

Sunday 4:15 PM 6:00 PM 505 Barfield, Brown, Dycus, Jannuzi, Mulvey, Vocabulary: Integrating Lexis in the Classroom FL Literacy SIG Forum

Sunday 6:15 PM 7:00 PM 505 Jannuzi, et al AGM of FL Literacy SIG

Monday 9:00 AM 9:45 AM 504 Kochiyama The Conscious Use of Reading Strategies

Monday 9:00 AM 10:45 AM 505 Zemach, et al Responding to Writing: Learning from Action Research

Monday 12:30 PM 2:15 PM B03 Helgesen, et al Extensive Reading in Practice

Monday 1:30 PM 2:15 PM 506 Jarrell US Teen Magazines: Genres for Beginning Writers
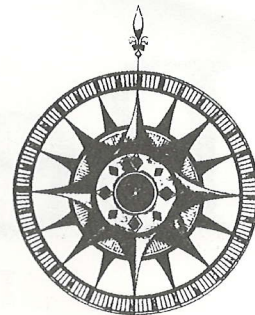
Magellan K.K.

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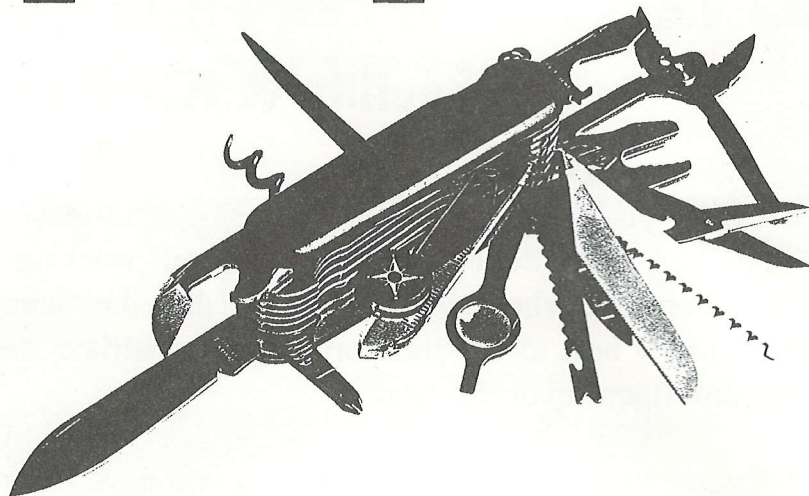
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