CUE CIRCULAR

News and articles from the JALT College and University Educators Special Interest Group

Autumn colors at Hokkai Gakuen University, in Sapporo   *Photo by Toru Kataoka*

See you in Tsukuba!

Welcome to issue 4 of CUE Circular, marking our one year anniversary.

In this issue, CUE SIG co-ordinator Wendy Gough describes a community outreach program in which students gain practical English-language experience through communicating with foreign tourists, Guy Smith discusses the benefits that come from watching video recordings of yourself teaching, and Greg Rouault describes a computer-based business simulation in which he has his students participate.

This issue takes us into the upcoming JALT 2017 International Conference in Tsukuba. A number of CUE SIG events are taking place that may be of interest to members. CUE and the TD SIG are teaming up again for our seventh annual forum designed to promote the sharing of professional stories. This year's theme is 'Globalizing education:

Reflections on shaping broader perspectives in the classroom', and will feature 8 short presentations.

At the CUE SIG annual general meeting, we'll hold a brainstorming session about our upcoming 25th anniversary conference, which will be held in September 2018. We would like to encourage anyone interested in hearing about our SIG's activities or who is interested in suggesting ideas or helping plan our conference come to the AGM and share your ideas to help make the SIG and our next conference even better than ever.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the Circular!
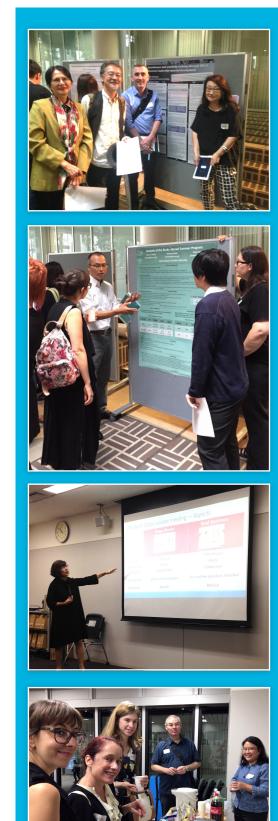
Steve Paton, Editor

Feature articles

CUE Careers column

Scenes at the recent JALT CUE-ESP symposium- Keio 2017. Photographs by Leigh McDowell.

Feature articles

Promoting Intercultural Communication Through Community Outreach

Wendy M. Gough, Tokai University

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At our university in Shizuoka prefecture, a colleague and I facilitate a community outreach program in which our students provide English/Japanese interpreting for disembarking international luxury liner passengers. This helps our community by providing English support for the local tourism industry and is also an excellent opportunity for the students to interact with people from around the world using English. Research has shown that English learners develop their language skills, intercultural competence, and second language identity through participation in community outreach activities in English-speaking countries (Andrew, 2011; Perren, 2008). I believe community outreach projects that are carried out in English within Japan could offer the participating students similar effects.

Benefits of the community outreach project

Benefits for the students. Our students have the opportunity to talk to people from around the world using English in real-life settings. This helps them develop practical English skills, learn intercultural communication, and acquire an awareness of other cultures. The students also develop coping strategies for dealing with a variety of situations when using English. As a result, they gain confidence in their English ability. Furthermore, an additional benefit is that the students are able to create a bond with local citizens through the community outreach.

Benefits for the town. A greater connection is fostered between the university and the town office as well as with the local citizens. This builds trust between the three groups. Also, since the town is situated in a semi-rural area, there are not many local citizens with English speaking skills. Therefore, interpreting services that the students provide at the port contribute much needed English support for the budding local tourism industry.

Developing English language skills

Students' language development. By participating in the community outreach projects, students use English outside the classroom and develop their communicative skills through trial and

error. Observations of and discussions with the passengers have shown that the passengers appear to appreciate the English assistance. They tend to encourage and support the students by praising their efforts and showing patience. These friendly interactions help the students gain confidence in their English speaking ability as they practice target vocabulary and language structures when explaining local sights, shopping, or the various services offered at the port.

Local language development. With an increase in the number of ships arriving at the port, local citizens are becoming aware of the lack of available English resources in the town. Merchants who set up booths at the port and who have establishments in the portside shopping center have begun to post signs for their products and services in English. They have also begun to learn simple English expressions in order to more effectively sell their goods to the passengers. This effort on the part of the local shopkeepers helps the portside area become more English-friendly for tourists and the foreign residents of the area.

Intercultural communication and awareness

Students' intercultural communication. Intercultural awareness and intercultural communication are related to becoming aware of and analyzing one's native culture in relation to other cultures and learning how to communicate with people from other cultures in a second or foreign language (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel, &

Roy, 2015; Byram & Nichols, 2001). When students engage in their English language community outreach activities, they communicate with people from around the world using English. As a result, they become aware of aspects of Japanese culture as well as of the cultures of the people they talk to. This contributes to their understanding of the similarities and differences in communication styles and results in both an openness and a willingness to interact with people from around the world.

Local intercultural development. With international tourists arriving at the port more and more often each year, the local citizens and shopkeepers are gaining exposure to people from other cultures. Even though the majority of the local citizens do not speak English, they can develop an understanding of cultural nuances through contact with these people from around the world. These local shopkeepers are also in a position to introduce Japanese culture to the international passengers, which helps both the visitors and locals become more comfortable interacting with people from outside their native culture.

Students' critical thinking and leadership ability

Communication. Students develop communication skills in Japanese as well as English through completing paperwork at the university and coordinating directly with the port authority. When organizing the activities, the students have planning meetings with port authority officers and town office staff. These meetings, which

take place in Japanese, provide students with the opportunities to conduct business-like meetings and develop communication skills that will be useful when they enter the workforce. This contributes to the students' language learning, organizational ability, and leadership skills.

Critical thinking. As students are using English in unscripted, natural situations without instructor support, they are required to think on their feet, navigate challenging language scenarios, and find ways to express themselves in English. The students also develop their critical thinking skills as they plan projects, such as creating an English map that explains the local public transportation system. They must identify and analyze local English language-related needs and then determine ways to meet those needs. Thus, the students learn coping mechanisms for overcoming communication difficulties as well as skills for conducting needs analyses and solving community problems.

Conclusion

Through observations and conversations with my students, I have found that the community outreach projects help them to understand English communication styles among people from other cultures as well as to develop a sense of themselves as English speakers rather than simply English learners. Therefore, for my doctoral dissertation I am conducting case study research to attempt to understand whether my students'

perceptions of their experiences result in similar outcomes to those found with English learners doing community outreach in English speaking countries. This research has great potential for application at universities around Japan because it provides insights into how English can be used to help students learn practical skills and develop their L2 identity in real-life situations within Japan.

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Take the director's chair

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The decision to reflect on our teaching through watching ourselves on video tends to be one many teachers hesitate to make. On video we look different from the way we are used to seeing ourselves. We also sound different, as usually we hear ourselves filtered through the bones in our skull. We tend to feel instinctively uncomfortable with this video version of ourself. On a professional level, we further worry and fret that we won't like what we see on video, that we won't reach our own "high standards". However, the possibility of damage to our self-esteem can get in the way of taking a candid look at ourselves as teachers.

People are inclined to protect their self-image. In the field of psychology, there are a number of theories (e.g., the many self-enhancement theories) to describe how our minds can alter our perception of reality and memory to help us feel good about ourselves and maintain positive self-esteem (Alicke & Govorun, 2005). If we take the plunge, however, video reflection can offer us objective insights into our teaching. It allows us to bypass mental filters that may present a distorted picture of what is actually going on in our classrooms with our students.

In the last year alone, I have been recorded on video six times. That's six more times than in the past ten years. None of the filming was by choice. My university recorded two of my regular classes, an Open Campus lecture, and three faculty development workshops. Each shoot was preceded by an internal countdown, followed by a strong feeling of relief when it was all over. Yet having forced myself to watch those classes recorded on video repeatedly over the past year to confirm the content, I realize I should have made the choice to reflect on my teaching using video much sooner.

Making the decision to sit in the director's chair and examine yourself can be a tough one, but it may lead to many valuable insights. Thomas Farrell, author of numerous articles related to reflective practice, comments, "There are many reasons why teachers are unaware of what happens in their classrooms. So much takes place so quickly that a teacher cannot hope to see and monitor everything that goes on. This is where technology (audio recordings and video recordings) can help" (Farrell, 2003). Watching ourselves on video, we can discover habits we may not even realize we have. Seeing yourself on video allows you to gain an authentic perspective on your classroom habits and to potentially activate a real sense of urgency to make changes for the better.

Video reflection offers us a chance to look at ourselves from the outside. Research shows that trying to look from the inside can often be misleading. For example, Hattie (2014) points out the difficulty of self-reflection, commenting that "The data from numerous studies reveal that, when compared with objective indices, self-assessments are not only a) poor, but b) frequently turn out to be less accurate than assessments made by other people" (p. 231). However, as Hattie points out, one effective way to reflect on lessons is through observations by other teachers, which help us analyze our teaching from an outside perspective. The perspective offered by another teacher, and the dialogue it promotes, often helps us break new ground in our teaching.

In my six video viewings (it actually gets easier the more you do, you come to accept that the video you is not quite as good, but thankfully not quite as bad, as you anticipated), I picked up quite a list of things I was doing that I would be better off not doing. Nodding too much, talking with my back to the students, breaking in when I should have let students run with ideas, talking mostly to one side of the classroom, over-explaining and repeating myself as though the students didn't get it (watching the video I could clearly see that they "got it" first time), and quite a few more. Although I had walked out of that class feeling that things had gone pretty well, after watching the video and reflecting on the contents, I realized I could have made a much better job of it.

In fact, studies have shown how effective video reflection can be. Tripp and Rich

(2012) identified two important benefits of how video analysis informed teachers' improved teaching practices. Firstly, teachers' desire to improve their teaching increased after participating in reflection sessions on videos of their teaching, and secondly, when teachers returned to the classroom they found it easier to concretely visualize what they needed to do to improve their teaching.

So, how to go about getting yourself on video? The easy answer is to ask a friend to video your class. However, the better answer is to record the video yourself. Set up a camera in the room which captures your image as you teach. If you want to include your students, you will probably need to get their permission beforehand. Perhaps the best way to film videos of yourself is to get involved with faculty development groups at your college or university. In recent years, many universities and educational institutions have begun offering online, open courseware videos to the public, or making in-house professional development videos of lessons taught by university faculty. In this case, you get a professionally edited video included as part of the deal.

Watching yourself on video, identifying areas in need of improvement and then adjusting accordingly improves your teaching style. This may lead to better student and faculty evaluations, which in turn might lead to improved chances for promotion and involvement in important projects. Taking the director's chair involves getting over some personal resistance, but the benefits of doing so are

real and worthwhile. Why not create an opportunity to take a look through your students' eyes?

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Submit an article!

What's happening in your teaching?
What's influencing your decisions?
What obstacles have you overcome, and how?
What ideas or opinions do you have that others might be interested to read?
What have you read, heard, or seen recently that's changed your approach to teaching, either in or out of the classroom?

www.jaltcue.org/cuecircular

Innovative design for ESP in ELT: Online business simulation game

Greg Rouault, Tezukayama Gakuin University

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As my university teaching career in Japan has evolved, I have found that I am increasingly being asked to teach more than only compulsory four-skills language courses. In the institutions I have worked at, I have been asked to teach elective courses where the focus is on the content being studied, yet to deliver them in English. As English is a second language for virtually all of the students, and we are in a foreign language context (i.e., the only contact with the target language is in the classroom), this has presented some unique and interesting challenges.

Background

Many of these content electives have been on business or management topics, which, conveniently for me, I have experience with from both my undergraduate studies and my first dozen years of employment back in western Canada. In addition, I have been dispatched as a business English trainer to Japanese industry and the domestic branches of international companies, and

have also worked in-house as a communication advisor at a pharmaceutical firm. This is the background I bring to the challenge of creating interesting and meaningful content-based English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. Fortunately, I also recall from my undergraduate days that one of the most significant opportunities I had to consolidate my business studies knowledge was taking part in a rather rudimentary business simulation game.

A pedagogical application

This initiative functions as a practical pedagogical method intended to foster motivation by connecting students' current English studies content with their future interests. The specific pedagogical application is an online business simulation game that draws on content knowledge and capitalizes on task-based and experiential learning principles. Hattie (2009) explained that simulations typically involve "the use of a model or game … with an aim to engage students in learning [and] to mimic real world problems" (p. 230). Although not targeted for second language learners or foreign language contexts, the creators of the Smartsims business simulations highlight takeaways such as real-world skills, experience, and confidence derived from "hands-on business experience in the classroom" (https://www.smartsims.com).

Students register and pay a $45 fee (around the upper limit for a coursebook in Japan). After they have been assigned to teams, practice rounds are used to introduce them to the interface. In the "Music2Go Marketing" simulation, for example, students are required to analyze market data, implement a marketing strategy, and make decisions on the market positioning, pricing, and promotional expenditures for a music player in a fictitious market made up of the various teams in the class. I chose this simulation for my classes as it specifically targets a limited number of marketing decisions already familiar to the students as consumers themselves. Other simulations available from Smartsims include a broader scope of business operations.

Content-based and project-based

Several aspects of the simulations are in close alignment with accepted concepts in second language acquisition. Content-based instruction is intended to be integrated with language teaching aims in order to choose relevant topics for the learners (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989). The simulation was used as a pedagogic task defined as "a holistic activity which engages language use in order to achieve some non-linguistic outcome" (Samuda & Bygate, 2008, p. 69). A further SLA concept is what Ellis (2005) calls within-task planning with pressure as participants are required to complete their decisions by a deadline. The simulation also served as a project-based activity running over six weeks which required company team members to cooperate and collaborate on their market research, data analysis, and strategic decisions. In sum, the business simulation game promoted learning by doing, which Silberman (2007) describes

as experiential learning which can lead to greater understanding, better recall, and an enhanced ability to apply the learning more effectively and consistently.

Visible learning

Task-based approaches such as simulations contextualize learning and provide some measure of authenticity. Hattie (2009) explained that "visible teaching and learning occur when learning is the explicit goal, when it is appropriately challenging, when the teacher and the student both ... seek to ascertain whether ... the challenging goal is attained, ... and when there are active, passionate, and engaging people ... participating in the act of learning" (p. 22). In addition to the theory underpinning simulations, my anecdotal experience along with the student reflections captured in KWL (Know, Want to know, Learned) journals have shown that learner interest in the business simulation game was high with a strong feeling of practical, real-world applications. Furthermore, Hattie's 2009 meta-analyses found that cooperative learning had medium effect sizes (d = .59, .54, and .41) when compared with individualistic or competitive approaches. The effect size for simulations (d = .33) was just under his average hinge-point target of .40 for learning initiatives which have been shown to be effective. As these data do not specifically target business simulations used in foreign language and content-based teaching, opportunities for future studies surely exist.

In summary

Online business simulations, which integrate explicit background and topic-specific knowledge with language instruction, can be implemented in L2 coursework to provide a practical task with a project-based focus that requires cooperation and collaboration. This business simulation afforded a competitive scope where learners interacted and negotiated business decisions by using specific language in a rich, meaningful way. The content knowledge and language use which impact the outcomes of the simulated marketing decisions also helped to make the ESP learning more visible.

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CUE Careers

Networking for career development

Networking is meeting a variety of people with the explicit goal of finding points of mutual professional benefit. The advantage of any contacts made may or may not be obvious at the time of meeting but could result in fruitful partnerships. For educators and academics, one of the best places to find a large number of similar professionals is at the meetings of professional and academic societies, such as JALT. You can begin at the local level at regional chapter meetings, where you can make contacts closer to home. However, a national academic conference, such as the upcoming JALT 2017 International Conference taking place in Tsukuba, Ibaraki, offers connections to a broad international network. In addition to JALT, there are numerous organizations in Japan devoted to fields related to language education, for example, Japan Association of College English Teachers (JACET), the Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research (SIETAR), or the Japan Business Communication Association, among others. Even events such as PechaKucha nights or TED talks, which are not explicitly related to education or academia, can be great places to network and meet interesting people, and possibly help your career or teaching. The important point is to go out and create the opportunities to make connections.

Michael Parrish and Richard Miller are the current co-coordinators of the Job Information Center at the JALT National Conference, and are former editors of the Career Development column in *The Language Teacher*.

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There are two ways of looking at conference networking: targeted and random. The former is strategically placing yourself into situations where you will interact with individuals with whom you wanted to connect. The latter is exactly as it states, networking through random or casual encounters. Both are useful and can prove valuable to one's career, but as Pasteur's famous saying goes, "Fortune favors the prepared mind." If you prepare yourself for specific networking opportunities, when the chance ones arise you will be better positioned to take advantage of them.

This article will base some practical examples on JALT 2017, but the ideas are broadly applicable to almost any professional gathering.

Preparation before you attend a meeting

Once you have decided to attend an event, you may feel apprehensive about meeting a room full of new people. Face the fact that you may have to go outside your comfort zone and socialize to expand your career opportunities. One way to reduce anxiety is to come prepared with a brief self-introduction or "elevator pitch" to describe who you are and what your research and professional interests are.

Remember, bring several hundred up-to-date business cards with contact information. For those without a full-time position, you can create a card that simply states your name, qualifications, and a title describing what general kind of position you seek, such as "instructor," "educator," or "researcher". If you are a graduate student, then use the university as your affiliation (including the university e-mail). If you are part-time, then using one of your institutions as an affiliation is also valid. Professionally printed cards are a good investment, but acceptable quality cards can be printed on a home printer, as well. In addition, prepare a business card wallet so you can distribute and collect the business cards. If you are actively job seeking, you might bring a few copies of your academic CV and major publications, just in case.

Ensure that you bring a smartphone, iPad, or a computer with you to the conference. Remember to bring chargers or batteries, too (the Job Information Center at JALT 2017 will have a charging station, FYI). Conferences often utilize social networking platforms such as LINE, Twitter, and WeChat for promotion and dissemination of information. Additionally, update your LinkedIn and Academia.edu profiles (if you don't have either or both, that should be a priority to have in advance of the conference).

If you are planning to give a presentation, be sure to prepare accompanying handouts. These 'takeaways' are ideal for networking with people interested in your specific topic. Of course you need to have your contact information on them, but also list your research interests and current projects. Consider asking questions on the handout, or eliciting feedback via a link to an online survey, so that there is a reason to keep in touch afterwards.

Do your homework online. Find out about the event at the event website and Facebook page (@JALT.conference), follow the event official Twitter handle (@JALTConference) or Instagram account (@JALT2017). Use Twitter hashtags (such as #JALT2017) to see who is attending. You may also be able to post hashtags related to your research interests.

As soon as the conference program is published, start to plan your schedule to maximize networking opportunities at the conference. Ask yourself two important questions: "What are three things that you hope to improve?" and "What are your main objectives?" Taking a red pen and highlighter to a printed copy of the handbook can really help you get focused. If you are looking for research collaborators, search for presentations in

your area of interest. If you are job hunting, find presenters from your region or at institutions where you would like to work. If you are looking to expand your CV, ensure you go to every publishing presentation that you can, as they can provide both practical advice and possible platforms for publishing.

During the conference

Arrive early, so you can feel relaxed and have time to get ready for the day. Review your plan of action regarding the presentations that are most beneficial. Remember to remain open to the random networking opportunities throughout the day. Make a point of meeting everyone, those sitting nearby at a presentation, at the social events and even on the trains going and leaving. However, especially in social events, remember you are there on business, not at a fraternity party, so be on your best behavior and limit alcohol consumption. With that caveat, don't be shy, always introduce yourself and briefly explain who you are. You are bound to meet more people when you make yourself accessible.

Each presentation you give or attend is a networking opportunity. If you are giving a presentation, include your Twitter handle or e-mail address on the first slide of your presentation so that attendees can share what they have learned and contact you easily in the future (Croxall, 2014). Pass out handouts summarizing your presentation and providing contact information. Try to collect the business card of each attendee. It helps if you create some follow-up opportunity, such as a survey or request for feedback. If you

are attending a presentation, just asking "What do you think of the presentation/ conference?" provides an easy and natural conversation topic to break the ice.

At JALT2017, take specific time to visit the Special Interest Group (SIG) booths, as they are located in a separate room. There are always publishing and collaborative opportunities that present themselves. It is also a chance to get more involved in the organization; volunteering is a great way to make deeper connections, learn new skills, and gain experience that can improve your career prospects.

Once you meet a new contact, regardless of context, keep in mind what you want to gain from them, whether it is employment information, details, research collaboration, or teaching tips. Try to keep the conversation polite, professional, and brief; you do not want to monopolize their time. If you are looking for work, Forbes.com business writer Tara Weiss (2009) advises against "[asking] a new contact if he or she knows of open positions. Instead ask what it's like to work where they work." In this way you can get information about their institution which can be used in a future application or interview. If there are open positions and you make a positive impression, they will approach you (Weiss, 2009). At the end of the conversation, remember to exchange business cards.

Upon receiving a contact's business card, many experts advise writing on the actual card, but in Japan this is a cultural faux pas. Instead, use the Evernote or Google

Keep app on your smartphone to store a photo of the card and record notes there. A low-tech option is to attach a Post-It note to the card and write on that. Information would include where you met, the topic of conversation, any questions you had, or possible ideas you wish to pursue.

In addition to face-to-face meetings, use social media (Google+, Facebook, Twitter, LINE) to share what you are doing at the conference, communicate with colleagues and new contacts, and find people interested in the same things. Posting or commenting on the official conference sites will get your name noticed. Croxall (2014) provides a detailed, technical overview of how to use Twitter as a conference tool.

After the conference

The point at which most people fail in networking happens when the event is over. Follow-up is something that many people tend to neglect. Get to the follow-up as quickly as possible, with specific reference to what you had discussed and any future potential reasons to meet or communicate. With a little attention to follow-up you maximize the benefits of your networking efforts.

Networking is like any other skill. Although it may be challenging at first, with patience, practice, and persistence it can become second nature.

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