

On CUE

For the Language Professional in Higher Education

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Japan Association for Language Teaching College and University Educators Special Interest Group

Conferences

CUE Mini-Conference: Content in Language Education

May 20-21, Keio University,
Tama Center, Tokyo

<http://www.wild-e.org/cue/conferences/content.html>

JALTCALL 2000: Directions and Debates at the New Millennium

June 10-11, Tokyo

<http://www.jaltcall.org/conferences/call2000/>

17th Hokkaido Annual Language Conference

June 10-11, Sapporo

[http://www.crosswinds.net/~hyrejalthokkaido/
JALTPage/](http://www.crosswinds.net/~hyrejalthokkaido/JALTPage/)

Thoughts to Ponder

*"We educate the senses,
the imagination, the
social being, the mus-
cles, the nervous sys-
tem, the intuition, the
sense of beauty — as
well as memory and
intellect. Anyway, we
try!"*

*from "Woman on the Edge of
Time" by Marge Piercy*



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On CUE Call for papers

Types of Articles Sought:

Features

APA referenced articles with a focus on language education and related issues at tertiary level of up to 2,000 words.

Criteria for feature articles

- consideration of issues likely to be perceived by college and university educators as relevant to language teaching in Japan.
- well designed and well reported empirical research.
- writing that situates issues within the context of relevant previous work, while refraining from quoting for the sake of quoting.
- thought-provoking theoretical papers, provided clear practical implications are foregrounded.

From the Chalkface

classroom applications, techniques and lesson plans, usually up to 1000 words.

Research Digest

summaries of research, published in university in-house publications, of broad interest to college and university educators.

Opinion and Perspective

650 words max.; longer, coordinated, point-counterpoint articles are possible.

Reviews

reviews of books, textbooks, videos, presentations/ workshops, TV shows, films, etc. Maximum 600 words, 1500 words for scholarly review essays.

Cyberpipeline

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

Focus on Language

a column in which the writer may ask/answer common questions about language that are of interest to teachers and learners. 250-600 words

Approximate Publication Dates:

July 31, Nov. 30, March 30
(Deadlines June 1, Sept. 1, Feb. 1)

Aims: to provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of research, ideas and curriculum activities of broad interest to College and University Language Educators.

Contact & Submission Details:

Editor: Michael Carroll, michael@kyokyo-u.ac.jp

Category bending and innovation are also possible. Length guidelines are flexible.

Officer Contact Information for 2000: Feel free to contact board members about your SIG

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CUE NEWS

Call for Papers and Guidelines for Contributors to

"Projects for the University Classroom: Fostering Motivation and Promoting Learner Independence through Deep Learning"

*Edited by Keith Ford and Eamon McCafferty
for the CUE SIG of JALT*

Purpose and Audience

This book is intended for tertiary-level EFL educators who meet classes regularly and want access to ideas and materials that promote learner independence and deep learning. Successful projects that motivate students to continue their learning beyond the classroom are invited to be shared with other EFL professionals. We wish to provide a publication that is of immediate practical use to teachers. Rather than descriptive pieces, projects will be reproduced in their entirety for teachers to copy and use. Although many teachers may want to adapt materials to fit their own contexts, contributors are asked to provide hard copies of everything they use, including, for example, student instructions, readings, and assessment sheets.

Projects should take a minimum of six and a maximum of twelve classes/weeks to complete, and should include the following elements: a rationale for other teachers (limited to 500 words), possibly including advice from the writer; an introduction for students that can serve as part of the classroom material or homework; some form of qualitative assessment allowing for student reflection/closure (self assessment might be particularly appropriate).

Deadlines / Additional information:

For definitions of terms, specifications for manuscript preparation, and other general inquiries please contact **Eamon McCafferty** <eamon@gol.com>. An initial 250-500-word description of your project should be sent to the same address by **June 15th 2000**. Final project submissions by **January 25 2001**, for publication in **April/May 2001**.



CUE Conference 2000 Preview

Alan Mackenzie, Conference Chair

The CUE mini-conference, "Content in Language Education: Looking at the Future" promises to be a focused, practical event with emphasis on how to increase the type, quality, and amount of content in your teaching.

Some believe that the job of a tertiary educator is simply to teach language. However, there are a growing number of teachers interested in doing much more. They want to use language and language teaching to enable students to examine aspects of life: their own and others that they might not otherwise give time to.

Although we cannot hope to cover all of the ways in which language educators are attempting to broaden the perspectives of their students, we have planned a program that will examine some of these themes in detail.

Cross-SIG Cooperation

In order to keep the conference intimate and create a sense of community, it has been divided into five content areas, each of which has one room set aside for it and a program created by other SIGs in JALT.

GALE (Gender Awareness in Language Education) SIG has a two-day series of workshops and presentations on the content area of gender issues. Interested attendees should bring ideas to share with others on themes of the history of policy and political activism, gender and language, gender and family, sexuality, and gender and the workplace. The aim of the program is for participating teachers to walk out of the room at the end of the weekend with a whole collaboratively developed gender issues course.

Global Issues (GI) SIG has a series of presentations and workshops related to creating global citizens. A broad range of topics dealing with development, global and local perspectives as well as specific issues oriented lessons and courses will be discussed.

Materials Writers (MW) SIG is providing speakers who will focus primarily on issues involved in developing content-based lessons and courses while the forming Pragmatics SIG will

focus on integrating real and appropriate language into the material you produce and the language used in class.

All of the presentations and workshops will be conducted by, and aimed at teachers in college and university situations.

CUE is also providing a varied program of presentations investigating issues in content-based education, content not covered in the main theme rooms, and successful courses and programs.

Full Host Involvement

One of the programs to be highlighted is the Communicative English program set up by our host, Keisen University. Conference attendees will have a chance to hear from the coordinators, teachers and students in the program about its structure, achievements and issues involved in running a communicative, content-based English program across the university curriculum.

Attendees should hope to leave the conference with a plethora of ideas that they can take directly into the classroom on Monday morning, and a head full of issues to stimulate their intellects.

Pre-registration is now open at the CUE website. Please take advantage of this to save time on the day. The deadline for pre-registration is May 1st.

Please display the enclosed poster in your place of work, making sure that both full and part-time staff can see it and encourage your colleagues to attend CUE's first conference.

For more site, pre-registration and detailed program information, visit the CUE Conference website:

<http://www.wild-e.org/cue/conferences/content.html>

Bulletin Board News, Announcements, Calls for Papers

*Compiled and Edited by
Alan Mackenzie*

CALLS FOR PAPERS

(Note: For the contact details of some calls for papers, see the corresponding conference listed under "Conferences and Bookfairs".)

March 31, 2000- NEW SOUNDS 2000-THE 4th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE ACQUISITION OF SECOND-LANGUAGE SPEECH

University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. 20-minute presentations or posters on any topic related to SL speech acquisition. 200-300 word abstracts to: Secretariat, New Sounds 2000; Department of English; University of Amsterdam; Squisstraat 210, 1012 VT Amsterdam, The Netherlands or by e-mail to <newsounds@hum.uva.nl>

March 31, 2000-LANGUAGE IN THE MIND? IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

More Info: <<http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/ell/langmind/index.htm>>
Contact: <ellconlk@nus.edu.sg>

March 31, 2000-LANGUAGE ACROSS BOUNDARIES: 33rd ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS (BAAL)

Homerton College, Cambridge, UK
<<http://www.BAAL.org.uk/baalr.htm>>
Contact: <Andy.Cawdell@BAAL.org.uk>

KATA, IS A REFEREED JOURNAL published twice a year in December and June by the Faculty of Letters, Petra Christian University, Surabaya, Indonesia. It presents articles on the study of language and literature. Its overriding objective is to provide a forum for scholars and prac-

tioners within any of the various **sub-specialities** of the discipline to address a broad **cross-section** of the profession. Appropriate subjects **include**, but are not limited to: the dissemination of **well-conceived analyses**, studies, application of **theories**, research reports, material development **reviews**, critical theory, **rhetoric**, and pedagogy. An attempt is made to maintain a balanced coverage of language, literature, and teaching issues; no area is less welcome than any other, as long as the topic is of general interest within the profession.

More info: <<http://facutly.petra.ac.id>>

Contact: <kata@peter.petra.ac.id>

RELC NEWSLETTER Authors Sought for Environmental Education Book, A South East Asian version of a Philippines-based environmental education/English textbook is being planned. Writers from SEAMO countries are wanted.

Contact: William Wang, RELC Publications Manager, at <purelc@mbox4.singnet.com.sg>. (For free subscription to the Newsletter, contact <purelc@mbox4.singnet.com.sg>)

CONFERENCES AND BOOKFAIRS

(Note: some conferences have corresponding calls for papers—be sure to cross-reference.)

April 1-2, 2000-SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PRACTICAL LINGUISTICS OF JAPANESE

San Francisco State University, USA hosts a number of presentations, **workshops** and poster sessions including invited lectures from Masayoshi Shibatani and Yasuhiko Tohsaku.

More info: <<http://userwww.sfsu.edu/~yukiko/conference/main.html>>

Contact: Yukiko Sasaki Alam
<yukiko@sfsu.edu>

April 3-6, 2000-THE EVOLUTION OF LANGUAGE

Ecole Nationale Supérieure des
Télécommunications, Paris, France.

Concerned with the origins and development of language. Includes contributions from linguists, anthropologists, computer- and neuro- sciences. More info: <<http://www.infrs.enst.fr/conf/evolang/>>

Contact: <evolang@infrs.enst.fr>

April 12-14, 2000-5th TCC (TEACHING INN COMMUNITY COLLEGES) ONLINE CONFERENCE. A VIRTUAL ODYSSEY: WHAT'S AHEAD FOR NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN LEARNING?

More info: <<http://leahi.kcc.hawaii.edu/org/tcon2000>>

Contact: James Shimabukuro
<jamess@hawaii.edu>

April 27-29, 2000-SOCLINGUISTICS SYMPOSIUM 2000: THE INTERFACE BETWEEN LINGUISTICS AND SOCIAL THEORY.

University of Bristol, UK. Intercultural communication, language and gender, ethnicity, discourse analysis, local languages, language development.

More info: <<http://www.uwe.ac.uk/facults/les/research/sociling2000.html>>

Contact: <ss2000@uwe.ac.uk>

March 30-April 1, 2000-THE BILINGUAL BRAIN: THE BIENNIAL GASLA (GENERATIVE APPROACHES TO SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION) CONFERENCE

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, USA.

More info: <<http://web.mit.edu/fl/ww/news/Conf.html>>

May 4-6, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY ROUND TABLE ON LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS (GURT) 2000 Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. "Linguistics, Language, and the Professions"

Contact: <tana@gusun.georgetown.edu> OR <alatisj@gusun.georgetown.edu>

May 20-21, THE CUE CONFERENCE 2000: "CONTENT AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION: LOOKING AT THE FUTURE"

Keisen University, Tama Center, West Tokyo. A two-day investigation into the possibilities for content-based education in university and college settings.

Contact: Eamon McCafferty <eamon@gol.com>
<<http://www.wild-e.org/cue/conferences/content.html>>

June 9-12, JALTCALL 2000: DIRECTIONS AND DEBATES AT THE NEW MILLENIUM.

Tokyo University of Technology

The annual national conference of the computer assisted language learning SIG of JALT

More info: <<http://jaltcall.org/conferences/call2000/>>

Contact: <campbell@media.teu.ac.jp>

June 15-18, 2000-PEOPLE, LANGUAGES AND CULTURES IN THE THIRD MILLENIUM: 3RD FEELTA (FAR EASTERN LANGUAGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION) CONFERENCE.

Far Eastern State University, Vladivostok, Russia.

Contact: Stephen Ryan <RXIS-RYAN@asahinet.or.jp>

July 29- August 1, 2000-FLEAT IV IN KOBE

Kobe, Japan The 4th International Conference on Foreign Language Education and Technology: 'Language Learning and Multimedia: Bridging Humanity and Technology'. Not limited to technology in language learning and teaching, but also cognitive processes of language skills, cross-cultural aspects of language learning, first and/or second language acquisition, and related areas. Papers from Asia, in English or Japanese, especially welcomed. Deadline: 20 January 2000
More info: <<http://www.hll.kutc.kansai-u.ac.jp:8000/fleat4.html>>

Contact: <fleatsnb@kobeuc.ac.jp>

September 4-6, 2000-LANGUAGE IN THE MIND? IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

National University Of Singapore

More info: <<http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/ell/langmind/index.htm>>

Contact: <ellconlk@nus.edu.sg>

September 4-7, NEW SOUNDS 2000-THE 4TH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE ACQUISITION OF SECOND-LANGUAGE SPEECH

University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Contact: <newsounds@hum.uva.nl>

September 7-9, 2000-LANGUAGE ACROSS BOUNDARIES: 33RD ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS (BAAL)

Homerton College, Cambridge, UK
More info: <<http://www.BAAL.org.uk/baalr.htm>>

Contact: <Andy.Cawdell@BAAL.org.uk>

September 15-16, 2000-SECOND SYMPOSIUM ON SL WRITING

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA
More info: <<http://icdweb.cc.purdue.edu/~silvat/symposium/>>

Contact: Paul Kei Matsuda

<pmatsuda@purdue.edu>

<<http://omni.cc.purdue.edu/~pmatsuda/>>

November 2-5, JALT 2000: TOWARDS THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Shizuoka, Japan

More info: <<http://www.jalt.org>> (Note: CUE SIG will hold its Forum and its AGM as well as be a part of numerous related presentations—keep a look out in the pages of On CUE and on CMN-Talk list for more details).

OFFERS

PAPYRUS NEWS PN is a distribution list devoted to the global impact of information technology on language, literacy, and education. To subscribe: send the message “subscribe papyrus-news Yourfirstname Yourlastname” (without the quotation marks, and substituting your own name for Yourfirstname Yourlastname) to <listproc@hawaii.edu>.

For further information, see: <<http://www.lll.hawaii.edu/web/faculty/markw/papyrus-news.html>>.

Contact: Mark Warschauer

<markw@hawaii.edu>

<<http://www.lll.hawaii.edu/markw>>

Attention On CUE Readers: Join the Discussion!

We are looking for opinions and feedback for an upcoming article about distance education.

Please e-mail general comments or answers for any or all of the following questions to Debra Pappler at toonomads@hotmail.com (include On CUE in the subject heading).

What do you think about distance education at the advanced degree level?

- What is your image of a distance program?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of distance degrees as compared to on-campus degrees?
- Are distance degrees as good as their on-campus counterparts?
- If on-campus and distance students do the same coursework and meet the same standards, is there a difference between their qualifications?
- How are distance learners different from their on-campus counterparts?
- Why do people chose distance degrees?

What do you think about distance education for EFL/ESL students?

- What are the advantages and disadvantages for students?
- Is it feasible to learn a language via distance?
- What about on-line language programs: Can they or will they replace language teachers?
- What role will they play in language learning?

What are the advantages and disadvantages for non-native speakers of English in pursuing degrees by distance from English language universities?

Promoting Autonomous Language Use in the Japanese University EFL Classroom

Keith Ford, Tokyo Woman's Christian University

Many educational institutions and EFL professionals continue to explore practical ways of implementing instructional systems which promote the development and expression of learner autonomy. This is a result of the growing recognition of the importance in the language learning process of principles such as choice, responsibility and accountability for one's actions. The promotion of autonomy takes its justification from the argument that self-determination leads to intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan 1985), and therefore, to more effective learning. So, what does *autonomy* and *autonomous language use* involve in the context of Japanese Freshman English language classrooms?

Autonomy is certainly not an all-or-nothing concept. It can occur in various contexts and to varying degrees (for detailed definitions see Benson and Voller 1997), from learners working very independently in self-access facilities, to learners interacting in a classroom situation independent of teacher control. Littlewood (1999) has observed that due to socio-cultural influences and previous learning experiences, expectations for autonomy in Asian contexts may vary significantly from those in Western educational contexts. He distinguishes between *proactive* and *reactive* forms of autonomy or 'self-regulation.' Proactive autonomy involves learners establishing their own personal agenda for learning. Reactive autonomy 'does not create its own directions but, once a direction has been initiated, enables learners to organize their resources autonomously in order to reach their goal' (p.75). It is this latter type, initially teacher-directed, that is more appropriate for Freshman language classes in Japan. In this context, the following autonomous learning goals can be achieved: 'the learner accepts responsibility for his or her learning' (Little 1995:175); she/he learns 'how to function in a group and take decisions often independent of the teacher and...how to negotiate and articulate opinions and feelings' (Legutke and Thomas 1991: 296).

In order to establish increased independence

from teacher control, and increased peer interdependence, learners coming from a traditional teacher-fronted, lock-step classroom will require considerable nurturing, confidence-building and awareness-raising. A language learning environment that involves learners in the decision-making process allows greater freedom of choice, but it also demands greater responsibility and accountability. Therefore, a systematic program of orientation is essential for learners' adjustment to this new environment. The nature of such a program will depend on such factors as the learners' previous learning experiences, socio-

I look at promoting learners' autonomous use of the L2 by raising their awareness of the importance of a number of attitudinal and behavioural factors involved in moving from a teacher-dependent language learning environment to one of active independence/

cultural influences, the resources available, institutional demands, and the experience of the teacher.

Most proposals for learner development, particularly in ESL, have tended to concentrate on the question of 'strategy training' in cognitive and metacognitive skills (e.g. O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990). However, my focus here is on the *interpersonal*, social and interactive side of language learning rather than the *intrapersonal* (van Lier 1996). I look at promoting learners' autonomous use of the L2 by raising their awareness of the importance of a number of attitudinal and behavioural factors involved in moving from a teacher-dependent language learning environment to one of active independence/ interdependence.

From Teacher-Dependence to Active Learner Independence/Interdependence

Making a transition from a passive and teacher-dependent role - which the majority of Japanese high school learners have experienced - to one of active independence is fundamental to the way in which learners will perceive their future contributions and responsibilities in the language learning process. As one learner commented, reflecting an increasing awareness of accepting such a role in a more autonomous learning environment, 'We have to move by ourselves in this class' (Ford 1997). So, what does this 'moving by ourselves' actually involve? In terms of learner activity, increasing independence can be recognized by such hallmarks as learner-initiated interaction, willingness to interact in the target language both in and out of the instructor's earshot, volunteering, willingness to undertake spontaneous communication, active and willing involvement in group formation, and seeking teacher advice when needed. We should keep in mind that these learners have been used to being told what to do, how and when, rather than using their own initiative, and so they must be steadily nurtured in the right direction for them to make this transition.

In addition to developing active independence, learners will need to develop their social interactive skills and their ability to work interdependently with their peers. The term 'positive interdependence', which is linked to Cooperative Learning (e.g. Johnson & Johnson 1992), is often used in this context. Usually, it involves the idea of small groups of learners working interdependently on a common goal-oriented task. Consequently, it is one way of maximizing learners' opportunities for speaking practice and fluency-building. At the same time it has an important affective value, particularly in the case of Japanese learners. Group work does not involve the pressures associated with being called on individually by the instructor, as is the case in a more teacher-fronted, whole-class scenario. Furthermore, because it encourages consensus-checking and group-mindedness, features inherent in Japanese culture, cooperative learning is something that Japanese learners tend to adapt to easily.

Now I would like to consider more closely the following areas involved in promoting au-

tonomous language use: peer relations and positive classroom dynamics, group and pair work, mode of teacher/learner interaction, process-oriented language learning, self-discovery in language development, an emphasis on fluency-building, and the use of the target language as only medium of classroom communication.

Peer relations

It seems that most Japanese Freshman, given the option, will sit with the same classmate(s) in the same part of the classroom. This is usually due not only to friendships but also perceptions of belonging to certain cliques or circles determined by such factors as fashion preferences, appearances, and degree of proficiency in the L2. This is not conducive to establishing a highly interactive class, as clique formation may result in negative peer pressure, competition rather than cooperation, and possibly reluctance to participate. Thus, the instructor must make clear early on the importance of making an effort to get to know and work with all one's classmates. Constant recombining of groups and pairs must be a feature of the early classes.

A transition to a dynamic, highly interactive classroom will involve establishing a common classroom 'culture' (Breen 1985). To promote high levels of interaction, participation and autonomous language use, learners must get the sense that they all have an investment and a part to play in that culture, sharing its rules, attitudes and types of behavior. In this way they will come to feel comfortable in interacting with their peers in the L2. The importance of the socialization process cannot be underestimated, as inherent in the rationale behind promoting cooperation and interdependence in the language classroom is the view that social interaction is the driving force behind interlanguage development. It is, as van Lier notes, 'the 'engine' that drives the learning process' (1996:145).

Pair or Group Work?

While group work is an important aspect of cooperative learning, I suggest pair work should be considered as the dominant pattern of interaction in the first semester. Not only does it allow more students to communicate at the same time, but it can have a very useful affective value for students who feel cautious about using their

To promote high levels of interaction, participation and autonomous language use, learners must get the sense that they all have an investment and a part to play in that culture, sharing its rules, attitudes and types of behavior.

English in front of others. We must always keep in mind that for some of these students it really is the first time they have been pushed to use the language communicatively. Working in pairs appears to be a much more comfortable form of interaction for Japanese students in the early part of a course than group work.

Allwright & Bailey (1991: 164) have pointed to the problem of 'communication apprehension' in the language classroom. That is, where some learners are naturally reluctant to communicate, even in their L1, and prefer to take the role of passive listener. Teachers need to be sensitive to this issue. Each learner may have their own preferred learning style, and some may consider that the most appropriate way for them to learn a language is as listener rather than speaker. However, input alone is insufficient for developing speaking skills, and research on this may well be presented to learners to justify the communicative nature of the classroom. Furthermore, while rationalizing the need to practice oral skills, instructors should give learners as much opportunity as possible to do this out of the public eye as they steadily adapt to the classroom's demands.

Mode of Teacher/Learner Interaction

Most Japanese high school classes, and traditional FL classes, are conducted with an IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) type of interaction, with the teacher seen as source of knowledge and controller of proceedings. Van Lier (1996: 156) summarizes this type of interaction as follows:

"the IRF sequence, while it is effective in maintaining order, regulating participation, and leading students in a certain predetermined direction, often reduces the student's initiative, independent thinking, clarity of expression, the development of conversational skills (including turn taking, planning ahead, negotiating and arguing), and self-determination."

Clearly, this pattern of interaction is not appropriate for developing learners' autonomous language use. With learners making the transition to working more independently and interdependently they need to get used to a very different form of learner/instructor relationship.

That is, one where the instructor relates to learners in small groups rather than from the front of the class in a transmission mode of instruction. They must come to recognize the instructor as resource, facilitator, and counsellor who is there to assist and advise, but not to intervene and threaten the independent/interdependent interaction of the group. In terms of the instructor's own role perception, the key is recognition of the move away from an emphasis on grammatical knowledge to management skills and creating ripe conditions for communicative language use.

In managing this change, one of the main challenges for the instructor is to create a learning environment and classroom culture where learners feel comfortable, confident and relaxed about seeking teacher advice and assistance, and about initiating this interaction whenever required. This may involve seeking teacher opinions on content, advice on grammar and vocabulary, or advice on management tasks.

Learners must be clear about the fact that learner independence should not mean less teacher contact time but actually more time spent interacting in small groups with their instructor. They must not feel they are being deserted but that there is support and advice at hand. In a fully functioning learner-centred classroom of autonomous language users the instructor will be constantly in demand as groups are regularly calling for advice and offering progress checks.

At the same time, if the teacher is to drop back into the periphery of interaction rather than be its pivotal centre, then she/he must not constantly intervene to check on progress or to be seen nudging along the interaction of the group. This is likely to weaken the long-term independence and interdependence of the group for the sake of short-term goals.

Process-Oriented Language Learning

Michael Lewis has defined *process* as 'a developing, dynamic concept. In this it contrasts with the static nature of product' (1993:18). It involves organization, planning, discussing and negotiating how to get things done. Lewis points to the link of product-process to the teaching-learning dichotomy, suggesting learning is process-oriented: 'it is cognitive involvement, struggling, trying, hypothesizing, revising, and other activities of this kind which are the basis of learn-

In terms of the instructor's own role perception, the key is recognition of the move away from an emphasis on grammatical knowledge to management skills and creating ripe conditions for communicative language use.

ing' (p.18). In a process-oriented classroom learners will be involved cooperatively working on real-world tasks, project work, contributing input and ideas, and on language development as an ongoing process of self-discovery. They need to realize that they will be using the L2 for genuine communication rather than seeing it as an end product. Learners will be developing linguistic, social and procedural skills.

A process-oriented classroom is likely to be a sharp contrast to the experience of the vast majority of Japanese high school students. As a means of getting first-hand impressions and experiences of learners' high school education, Ford (1997) interviewed sixty Freshman after one year of process-oriented learning, and asked them to compare it to their previous language learning experiences.

Though there was some genuine variety of experience, the overwhelming reaction to high school English classes was negative, the general picture being one of a traditional, teacher-fronted, lock-step classroom with the medium of instruction being Japanese, the focus of attention being grammatical structure and translation to the L1. Activities were limited primarily to in-class reading and vocabulary list learning, with a distinct lack of pair and group work.

This situation is on the whole maintained by a system of education that continues to put major emphasis on examinations above all other educational considerations. The language learning of these students was thus highly product-oriented. As one interviewee pointed out: 'In our high School days I studied for the exams and so that after the exam we forgot what we learned...because it's the...err...it's the study for the exam, but now I study for my life' (ibid).

This comment clearly shows recognition of the restrictive nature of a product-oriented style of teaching and learning that the speaker experienced at high school, and a growing awareness of language learning as part of a life-long ongoing process.

Self-discovery in Language Learning

In terms of language development, learners in a process-oriented classroom should be encouraged to follow an observe-hypothesize-experiment language learning paradigm (Lewis 1993). This encourages a self-discovery attitude

to language learning, and as such it contrasts with the more traditional **present-practice-produce** paradigm that is **teacher-controlled** and based on a prescriptive **graded linguistic syllabus**. It should be remembered that our learners have already experienced such a **syllabus** during their previous six years of **language education**.

This, of course, can be seen as a very useful experience, in that they come to their university language classes with a **strong grammatical and lexical foundation** on which they can build. There is **though** a need for a shift in emphasis from **studying language usage** to **practising language use**. Learners should now be encouraged as much as possible to **experiment** in their language use and to feel free to make mistakes with **developing fluency** being emphasized.

There is though a need for a shift in emphasis from studying language usage to practising language use. Learners should now be encouraged as much as possible to experiment in their language use and to feel free to make mistakes with developing fluency being emphasized.

Fluency-Building

An emphasis on fluency rather than accuracy is a key aspect of process-oriented language learning. These learners have been used to focusing on form and accuracy at the expense of developing their speaking fluency. This imbalance needs to be redressed with learners given plenty of opportunities to use the target language creatively and spontaneously without the restrictions of **practising grammatical or functional items predetermined by an externally imposed syllabus**. As a key aspect of the **communicative classroom** and of **developing autonomous language use, group work, and interacting in the L2 with one's peers** can be rationalised to learners on the basis that language development, particularly fluency, does not necessitate interaction with an L2 native speaker.

An emphasis on fluency, however, should not imply a complete desertion of form-focused study, but it should be more learner-centred. Learners should be encouraged to look at their own weaknesses through self-correction, monitoring, taping interactions, and other communicative grammar activities such as 'dictogloss' (Wajnryb 1990). In fact, when done in the L2 cooperatively these activities can combine both meaning and form, and therefore a dual focus on fluency and accuracy.

Use of Target-Language as Only Medium of Classroom Communication

Another important process aspect of language development is the need to understand the importance of using the target language as medium of classroom communication. Being involved in real-world tasks and group negotiation, learners must develop the willingness to struggle to extend their interlanguage and vocabulary, and not just fall back on their L1 when communication becomes difficult.

Often, in language classrooms learners use the L2 orally only for pedagogic tasks such as information exchange gaps and prescribed dialogues. Learners need to realize the importance of using the L2 for pragmatic, real-world communication as well. As Little, following Swain, argues, 'all learners must strive to express meanings in the target language if their communicative competence is to develop' (1995:177).

Of course, this kind of demand is very difficult for learners whose previous experience in using the target language for the purposes of oral communication has been extremely limited. In addition, most high school language classes appear to be conducted in the L1. A transition to an English-only policy is understandably difficult but should not be balked in favor of easier options. Many teachers may perceive a teacher-fronted mode of interaction as the only way of making sure all interaction is in the L2. However, with training (in terms of attitude and communication strategies), the presentation of a clear rationale, and incorporating it as part of constant grading criteria, maintenance of an L2 only policy in a learner-centred, communicative, process-oriented EFL classroom can be a realistic goal.

Conclusion

In this paper I have outlined some key areas where Japanese Freshman learners' awareness needs to be raised in terms of attitudinal and behavioral aspects of the language learning process. I suggest that they should be promoted in two ways. First, they should be presented at the outset to learners as explicit objectives/expectations with learners being given a general introduction to the instructional system and its rationale.

Second, learners should be involved in implicit orientation activities that aim to exemplify these requirements. Throughout the course there should be a review of its rationale and constant evaluation by learners and instructors. In this

way, learners will be involved in a systematic process of explanation/rationalisation, awareness-raising, and willingness to participate as they move towards developing greater autonomy in their use of the L2.

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University Student Readiness for Language Learning Strategies Instruction: Teacher-Directed versus Learner-Directed Approaches

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This paper reports on a preliminary investigation undertaken to assess student readiness to language learning strategies instruction on the basis of various approaches in the Japanese university setting. The investigation consisted of a written survey assessing the characteristics of Japanese university students in terms of study management, orientation toward learning, conception of teacher and learner roles, and means of improving learning and providing language learning strategies instruction.

Instructional Approaches to Language Learning Strategies

Oxford (1990) defines language learning strategies as "steps taken by students to enhance their own learning" (p. 1). Cohen (1998) adds the element of choice, defining strategies as "learning processes which are consciously selected by the learner" (p. 4).

Most approaches to strategy instruction are teacher-directed and instruction-based, undertaken by teachers who 'teach' strategies to learners during a language class. In such approaches, strategies instruction is integrated into the existing curriculum at the discretion of the teacher and with teachers having the responsibility for introducing, explaining, and modelling the strategies, necessitating additional teacher training on language learning strategies.

An alternative can be found in student-directed, learning-based approaches, undertaken directly and independently by students using materials developed spe-

cifically to provide self-access, self-direction, self-instruction, and self-assessment of various strategies used by students on the basis of the materials, the task, or their personal learning styles.

Hajer, et al (1996) point out that: (1) print materials for strategy instruction do exist in various forms, including strategies embedded in language textbooks, learner guidebooks, and self-directional strategy training materials; (2) that print

materials can have effects on language skill development; and (3) that print materials can make up for the gaps in teacher knowledge of language learning strategies and language learning strategies instruction and provide the means for students to self-access lan-

guage learning strategies, direct their own instructional approaches to language learning strategies, and self-guide their eventual use of language learning strategies. They close by asserting that "use of print materials for strategy instruction deserves greater research attention and practical consideration" (p. 140).

Highlighting the contrast between teacher-directed, instruction-based and student-directed, learning-based, Oxford and Leaver (1996) point out that "strategy instruction involves active learning and growth on the part of each individual student. It does not involve helping all students to use the very same strategies. In fact, that would defeat the purpose, which is to help learners become more active, more autonomous, more self-directed, and more discerning of what strategies are best for them as individuals. Strategy in-

Most approaches to strategy instruction are teacher-directed and instruction-based... an alternative can be found in student-directed, learning-based approaches...

struction involves helping students know more about themselves, so they can try out, test, and become experts in using the strategies that help them the most" (p. 228). This statement, I believe, points to the importance of considering learner readiness to language learning strategies approaches, particularly student-directed, learning-based approaches.

The Present Study

The present study examines student readiness for language learning strategies instruction by means of a survey of Hirosaki National University students enrolled in English language classes (N=93). The survey was co-written in Japanese by myself and a Japanese high school English teacher and pre-tested by six graduate students at Hirosaki University. The results are reported in English on the basis of back translation with comparisons to working notes.

Survey respondents were predominantly first-year (40%) and second-year students (37%), followed by third year students (23%). The majority of respondents were from the Faculty of Education (75%), followed by the Faculty of Humanities (13%), the Faculty of Science and Technology (6%), and the remainder from the Faculties of Agriculture and Medicine.

The survey considered: (1) learning management (study planning, classroom learning, and grading preferences); (2) educational orientation (teacher-centered versus learner-centered and teacher-dependent versus learner-independent); (3) the respective roles of the teacher and learner; and (4) means for improving learning and introducing language learning strategies.

All questions are based on a five-point Likert scale with five indicating the positive response (e.g. important, frequent, agree), three indicating a neutral response, and one indicating the negative response (e.g. not important, not frequent, disagree). The figures reported indicate means.

Survey Findings

1. Learning Management

The top elements cited in the planning of learning were:

professorial guidance (4.50),
self-designed study planning (4.06),
department-based curriculum (3.99),
textbook or reference-book derived study plan (3.44).

The items considered of most importance in class-based learning were:

realia (4.24)
educational materials such as OHPs and handouts (4.11)
professor-supplied textbook (4.03)
self-supplied texts or materials (3.60)
student produced materials (3.38).

The most important aspects for being graded were:

class participation (4.56)
evaluation of communicative ability (4.31)
multiple quizzes (3.98)
student-produced study materials (3.92).

2. Educational Orientation

Using an attitude-scale format based on 12 contrastive statements, the survey revealed:

- (1) Six indicators which pointed toward varying degrees of a learner-centered, learner-independent orientation:

a) *It is important to be flexible and respond to student needs* (4.42) versus *It is important to follow the curriculum and approved textbook* (2.58);

b) *The effort of the learner determines student success* (4.31) versus *The knowledge of the teacher determines student success* (2.86);

c) *Class time should be used for learning interaction/study and practice* (4.13) versus *Class time should be used for teacher-led instruction and explanation* (2.57);

d) *Student-centered, independent study is important for effective learning* (3.98) versus *Teacher-based instruction is important for effective learning* (3.20);

e) *There are many individual ways to succeed in learning English* (3.95) versus *The teacher is the final authority of the best way to learn English* (3.16);

f) *Observation is the best measure of students' learning progress* (3.66) versus *Testing is the best measure of students' learning progress* (3.28).

- (2) Three indicators showing neutral educational centeredness and dependence/independence:

a) *Instruction & explanation by teacher is required for successful learning* (4.08) versus *Self-discovery by the learner is required for successful learning* (4.06);

b) *The most important thing to teach is the fundamentals of the language* (3.56) versus *The most important thing is to teach how to study & learn language* (3.54);

c) *Even with good materials, students do not know how to learn on their own* (3.23) versus *Given proper materials, students can learn on their own* (3.25).

- (3) A *learner-centered, learner-independent educational orientation mean score* of 39.28 (s.d.=4.31) and a *teacher-centered, teacher-dependent educational orientation attitudinal mean score* of 30.36 (s.d.=4.66), where the score is the mean of the cumulative mean scores for each orientation; maximum score = 50.

3. Teacher's Roles and Student's Roles

The principal teacher roles were identified as:

identifying and addressing student difficulties (4.36),
developing appropriate learning strategies and materials (4.01),

organizing and coordinating student learning activities (3.65),
explaining the content of the course and textbook (3.21),
correcting students' mistakes (3.12),
assigning homework and developing tests (2.22).

The principal student roles were identified as being:

developing effective learning behaviors (4.51),
learning to study on one's own (4.47),
seeking feedback and help from the teacher (3.73),
correcting mistakes and seeking perfection (3.38),
listening and taking notes in class (3.22),
completing the homework and passing the tests (2.93).

4. Improving Learning and Language Learning Strategies

The most important means by which students considered that general learning skills could be improved was seen in

addressing attitudinal approaches to learning (4.41),
addressing fundamental processes of learning (4.34),
planning and management of learning (4.02),
memorization of content (3.89).

The elements seen by students as most important for improving foreign language study were:

student attitudes about learning (4.70),
class curriculum and management (4.49),
student understanding of learning (3.70),
design and quality of textbooks (3.67),
teacher training (3.62).

The perceived importance of learning strategies (following a brief definition of language learning strategies) was weakly positive, at 3.66 (s.d. 0.70) and the most practical means of incorporating language

learning strategies in the English language curriculum was seen in:

language learning strategies teacher training sessions (3.86),
instructional-based curriculum (3.57),
instructional materials for teachers (3.56),
instructional materials for learners (3.49),
textbook insertions (3.54).

Student Readiness Based on the Survey

The responses seemed to point to a tension between a learner-centered, learner-independent orientation held by students on the one hand and a lack of confidence on the part of these same students regarding their own learning capabilities and a reluctance to take control of their own learning on the other.

Most students appear to have a learner-centered, learner-independent orientation, as seen in their recognition of the inherent individuality in learning and the importance of student effort in learning success together with the view that the teacher's role includes responding to students' learning needs and addressing learning difficulties, as well as their evaluation of the effectiveness of independent study and learner interaction in learning.

However, this orientation appears to be tempered by responses regarding study management and improving learning, which reflect an apparent desire for a balance between teacher-guided and self-guided study, confirmed by responses indicating that students stressed the importance of teachers acting to provide learning materials and organize learning activities.

Furthermore, students indicated that attitudes about learning were at least as important as an understanding of learning on behalf of learners themselves, planning and management of learning, curriculum and course management, teacher

expertise or the quality of learning materials.

Finally, students saw instruction and explanation as being as important as self discovery in learning and doubted their own ability to learn independently. In addition, the introduction of language learning strategies was seen by students as being best achieved through teacher training, rather than through instructional materials for students or textbook insertions.

The survey results may serve as a preliminary indicator of the potential for success of these contrasting strategies instructional approaches.

Summary and Discussion

The objective of the survey was to assess a group of Japanese university students in terms of their readiness for language learning strategies instruction on the basis of either of two approaches, described herein as *teacher-directed, instruction-based* and *student-directed, learning-based*.

The survey results may serve as a preliminary indicator of the potential for success of these contrasting strategies instructional approaches.

The results seem to indicate a relatively high degree of readiness for teacher directed, instruction-based approaches. Respondents report preference for professorial guidance and exhibit lack of confidence regarding an independent role in the learning process.

Students see teacher training sessions as the most practical means of introducing language learning strategies to the English language curriculum and see improvements in learning as an outcome of improved attitudes about learning as much as increased understanding of learning or any other means such as concrete planning and management of learning.

This would point to the need to investigate the feasibility of such teacher directed, instruction-based approaches directly, in terms of both institutional constraints, such as curriculum objectives and teacher education, as well as current teaching practices and the acceptance of

strategies instruction by teachers.

Cohen (1998), in prefacing the strategies-based instructional approach to language learning strategies instruction, refers to the fact that "in order for strategies-based instruction to reach the students, the teachers need to know how to deliver it" (p. 96). He also notes the necessity for a "shift in teacher roles from that of being exclusively the manager, controller, and instructor to that of being a change agent" (p. 97), with teachers being diagnosticians, learning trainers, coaches, coordinators, language learners, and researchers.

Student readiness for student-directed, learning-based approaches on the other hand, appears to be relatively low. As above, student dependence on teacher guidance and a student preoccupation with attitudes about learning English over the actual fundamentals of learning itself constitute obstacles to such approaches.

However, in addition to improving language learning, one of the corollary goals for student directed, learning-based approaches is to initiate a shift in the balance of learner-teacher roles, from dependence on the teacher towards dependence on language learning strategies, and ultimately to learner independence. The degree of learner-centeredness characterizing students points to the potential they have for self-instruction and effective use of strategies learning strategies, albeit within the construct of what Littlewood (1999) calls reactive autonomy.

Littlewood points out that while East Asian students have the same latent capacity for autonomy as Western learners, they have likely not experienced learning contexts which encourage proactive autonomy, the Western concept in which learners take charge of their learning, determine their objectives, select methods, and evaluate what has transpired.

Therefore, efforts to increase autonomy

in East Asian settings should initially focus on reactive autonomy, that "which does not create its own directions but (which), once a direction has been initiated, enables learners to organize their resources autonomously in order to reach their goal" (p. 75). Littlewood predicts that, provided the purpose is made clear, students will be able to organize given resources independently towards achieving a goal.

Finally, efforts to improve student

efforts to improve student attitudes about language learning in the abstract sense would be much improved by generating motivation to learn by giving learners strategies to address the actual process of learning autonomously.

attitudes about language learning in the abstract sense would be much improved by generating motivation to learn by giving learners strategies to address the actual process of learning autonomously. The notion that we must improve attitudes to improve learning must be reintroduced as we can improve

attitudes by improving learning with one way being teacher-initiated, student-directed learning-based strategies instructional approaches

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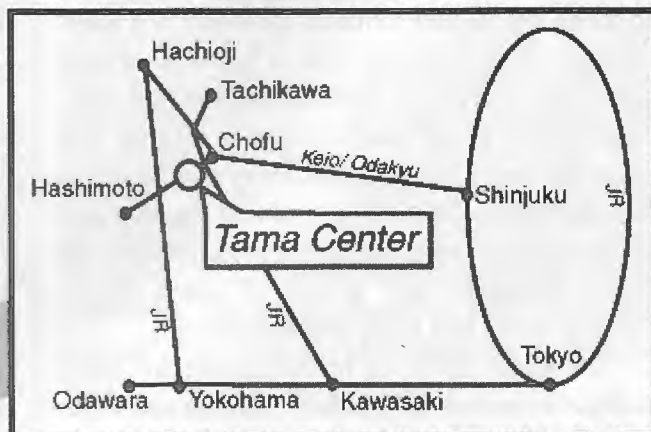
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The Recent Monbushou Reform Proposals: Ramifications and Opportunities

Bern Mulvey, Fukui University

This past summer, the Japanese government made public the specific details (and proposed timetable) of its plans to reform the national university system. Referred to in Japanese as "Dokuritsu Gyousei Houjinka" and/or "Dokuritsu Gyousei Houjin Tsuuzoku Hou," these reforms would result in sweeping changes to the way national universities are organized and administered. Indeed, if fully implemented, these proposals would effectively end the privileged status of these institutions, placing them under the care of overseers with broad powers — including the ability to cut funding to wayward schools and/or remove ineffective teachers.

As is perhaps to have been expected, the government's proposals have sparked strong negative reactions from faculty and administrators throughout Japan. Anti-reform webpages (over 100 so far) have appeared on the Internet, while protests of the more traditional variety have occurred (according to documents distributed at the Zengaku Setsumeikai held at Phoenix Plaza in Fukui on October 22) at every national university in this country. Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly apparent that these protests are neither isolated incidents nor aberrations; on the contrary, and in fascinating contrast to the commonly held conception that Japanese seek to avoid confrontation at all cost, it is clear that many national university faculty members and administrators have joined together into an increasingly organized protest movement, the goals, strategies, and actions of which are becoming more and more confrontational.

The issues involved in this debate will have a direct impact on all teachers, foreign and Japanese, working at national universities in Japan.

This paper provides a summary in English of the proposed reforms and examines the reasons behind the opposition of many Japanese national university employees to their implementation.

What Exactly Are The "Dokuritsu Gyousei Houjinka" Reforms? (note 1)

Beginning as early as the spring of 2001, each national university will become "independent" (hence the use of the term "dokuritsu") [note 2]. In other words, they will no longer be directly under the jurisdiction of Monbusho, gaining greater say in, for instance, setting curriculum and deciding areas of specialization [note 3].

However, this new-found independence will come at a stiff price: each university will still be administered by someone with ties to the Japanese government, in this case a manager (referred to as "houjin no chou") to be chosen by an as yet unnamed cabinet minister. Furthermore, a national advisory committee (with the somewhat Orwellian-sounding name of "Hyokka I-In Kai" or "standards committee") will also be established at this time, with the responsibility of evaluating both the performance of these various managers and the institutions under their control.

These university managers will in a sense replace the *gakuchou* (school president) at each university. They will have both greater powers and more duties than the current *gakuchou*, including the responsibility for, among other things ensuring a more "results orientated efficiency" (*kouritsuteki katsu koukateki ni*) [note 4] in the running of the institutions under their control. Indeed, the government's desired emphasis on efficiency (and hence a better return on its fi-

*... university managers will... replace the *gakuchou* (and) will have both greater powers and more duties ... including the responsibility for... a more "results-orientated efficiency" ... in the institutions under their control.*

-ncial investment) is readily apparent through even a cursory examination of the Dokuritsu Gyousei Houjin Tsuusoku Houan — the Japanese term “kouritsu” is repeated therein no less than 20 times in the 7-page document.

However, by far the most important responsibility of these university managers will be their ensuring that the institutions under their control satisfy mid-term goals (“chuuki mokuhyou”) set for them by the cabinet minister after consultation with the standards committee. Specifically, universities will be asked to produce 3- or 5-year plans for achieving improvements in the following areas (condensed to three categories below for sake of brevity):

- 1) education and research [note 5]
- 2) community service
- 3) spending (by far the longest section, with many sub-categories denoting specific areas to be improved)

and then achieve tangible results in a cost-effective manner. Performance with respect to the above objectives will be evaluated at the end of each 3-5 year period by both the standards committee and the cabinet minister, who will take appropriate action (shoyou no sochi wo kouzuru) where necessary, including possibly issuing direct orders for change (henka meirei) [note 6].

This idea of greater accountability — i.e., requiring universities to satisfy mid-term (i.e., 3-5 year) achievement objectives in order to avoid possible penalties — is a central element of the proposed reforms. As delineated quite clearly in the introductory sections of the proposals, Monbusho is hoping that the implementation of these periodic checks will help stimulate universities to a renewed commitment to world class research (seikaiteki suijun no kyouiku kenkyuu wo tenkai suru), as well as prod them to be more cost-effective and results-orientated (kouritsu teki katsu kekka teki ni okonawaseru koto) in their efforts [note 7].

While the exact form any punitive actions might take is still under discussion, some of the possibilities suggested so far — including the

power to fine (and even terminate) employees and/or cut funding to schools [note 8] — would mean a sharp broadening of the government’s powers vis-a-vis the various national universities. Indeed, despite Monbusho’s assurances that any actions taken would seek to respect the newly granted “independence” of each institution (kaku daigaku no jishuusei/jiritsusei ni toku ni hairyo suru), both the Jokoukai Nyu-su (a Hokuriku-area faculty newsletter) and the Dai Ichi Jouichi I-In Kai (a committee made up of presidents and senior faculty members from national universities across Japan) predict that, at a minimum, both funding and faculty cuts are likely (okonawareru koto ha yousou sare you) under these new provisions [note 9].

Finally, the determination of individual teacher salaries, heretofore solely a factor of age, will under these new laws also take into account the skills, duties, and accomplishments of each employee as well. Individuals judged as not producing adequately — even if they can avoid job termination — will still face the possibility of lower salaries and/or decreased opportunities for promotion as compared to their more productive colleagues [note 10].

In many ways, the proposed changes delineated above mirror similar reforms already enacted in Britain and in Australia. The motives i.e. the Japanese government’s desire to control university spending and gain a greater say in personnel decisions — behind these new proposals are similar as well. In exchange for greater freedom with regards to research and curriculum development.

Japan’s national universities will instead be placed under various new constraints. As careful budget maintenance becomes more and more prioritized under these new laws, faculty and administrators will be forced to become more “bottom-line” conscious, juggling research and educational priorities with the need to reduce overall costs. When one factors in the government’s additional education, research, and community service objectives, the challenges posed by these new reforms should be clear.

The issues involved in this debate will have a direct impact on all teachers, foreign and Japanese, working at national universities in Japan.

Why Japanese Teachers and Administrators are Against These Reforms [note 11]

In order to understand the reasons for Japanese teacher and administrator opposition to these proposals, it is necessary to understand the recent historical context in which these latest guidelines were laid down. Back in 1997, Monbusho announced that, because of the low national birthrate (and resultant decrease in the number of applicants for university entrance), it would seek a 10% reduction in the number of full-time faculty over a ten year period beginning in 2001. This directive initially met with resistance, but once it was realized that these reductions could be carried out without mass-firings (i.e., through natural attrition as Japan's aging faculty finally begin to retire over these next ten years), these new policies were reluctantly accepted.

However, in the summer of 1999, Prime Minister Obuchi announced that he would prefer to see an additional 20% reduction (i.e., on top of the initial 10%) to the faculty workforce over this same ten-year period. Moreover, his cabinet recently came out with an even more drastic call for a 35% (total) reduction — i.e., far more than could possibly be satisfied by natural attrition. In other words, suddenly Japan's national university professors and administrators are being confronted with something most thought they would never face in their lifetimes: the possibility of layoffs and even mass-terminations. As the Jokoukai Nyu-su (Mori, 1999, p. 2) asks, what will happen to their rights (to guaranteed raises, lifetime employment, etc.) as national employees?

Given this background, it is easy to understand the opposition to these latest proposals. Below is a summary of the most important objections:

1) As written, the proposals will drastically reduce the independence of national universities, as well as deaden creativity and effectively end regional specialization. Indeed, note Japanese educators, despite the use of "independence" in the title to the reforms, and

despite the government's stated commitment to nurturing and promoting greater school and research independence and autonomy (daigaku no kyouiku no jishuusei to jiritsusei wo tanpou suru), the final result will be an education system where all must bow to the authority of government overseers — not to mention a standards committee and, ultimately, a cabinet minister. Furthermore, because all national universities will have to satisfy mid-term goals set by the cabinet minister and/or the standards committee, these institutions will, in effect, have to give up their independence and individuality in order to survive.

2) What exactly is to be the composition of the so-called standards committee? In other words,

who will be entrusted with the all-important power to judge the institutions? Also, with regards to these judgements, will the universities in question be allowed feedback into the process? Indeed, if there is a common thread to the above objections, it is the shared distrust in the government's intentions. If these new proposals become law, ask many Japanese faculty and administrators, what will happen to their traditional privileges as Japanese national servants (under the Roudou Jouken Kanren Kitei and the Koukka Koumuin Hou)? Are not these "reforms" just an excuse for the government to close poorly attended schools and/or fire unneeded instructors?

3) Regarding the mid-term objectives — why are so many of them non-education and/or non-research-related? Also, how realistic is it to expect institutions of higher learning to satisfy short- and mid-term "efficiency" goals anyway? Aren't such goals antithetical to education and research, the fruits of which are often not recognizable outside the long-term, if at all?

4) With regards to the selection of the university managers (houjin no chou), why is ex-

This idea of greater accountability — i.e., requiring universities to satisfy mid-term (i.e., 3-5 year) achievement objectives in order to avoid possible penalties — is a central element of the proposed reforms.

perience in education not listed as an essential prerequisite for hiring? As now written, only "superior knowledge and experience in management" (Jimuu to jigyou ni kansuru koudona chishiki to keiken wo yuusuru mono), as well as the ability to run an institution properly and efficiently (jimuu to jigyou wo tekisei to kouritsu teki ni unei dekiru mono), are considered necessary. How can a person lacking experience in education possibly understand the needs of educators and/or run a university successfully? Indeed, if there is a common thread to the above objections, it is the shared distrust in the government's intentions.

If these new proposals become law, ask many Japanese faculty and administrators, what will happen to their legal rights as Japanese citizens (under the Roudou Jouken Kanren Kitei) and as national servants (under the Koukka Koumuin Hou)? Are not these "reforms" just an excuse for the government to close poorly attended schools and/or fire unneeded instructors?

How The Universities Are Resisting These Reforms

In response to the government's proposals, national universities in Japan have formed various study groups (such as the ponderously named "Dokuritsu Gyousei Houjinka Mondai ni Kansuru Kentou Sho I-In Kai") researching ways to best resist the proposed reforms. Meetings between different regional groups (such as the one in Fukui in October) have also been held, at first secretly (out of fear of retribution — see Dai Ichi Jouchi I-In Kai, 1999a, pp. 1-3), and more recently openly to discuss opposition to these reforms. Actions taken so far include disrupting important events with posters and flyers, holding public rallies (complete with speeches) on campus, conducting fund-raising on campus for an aggressive ad campaign (to be launched in the spring of 2000), and distributing flyers and giving anti-reform lectures to students at the beginning of classes.

The protests can be extremely confronta-

tional. At Fukui University, on "Open Campus Day" (a day when parents and young children are invited onto campus to attend various exhibits and activities designed to show the university in the best light possible), hundreds of gaudily colored posters were plastered to walls, trees, windows demanding the rescinding of the dokuritsuhou reforms. In November, preparations for the 50th anniversary of the founding of

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Fukui University were disrupted by the placing of huge banners in protest of the reforms, announcing the faculty's resolve to resist their implementation (these banners remained up throughout the 5-day celebration). Requests for money and/or notices announcing additional meetings regarding this issue appear in boxes of the Japanese faculty twice a month. Finding

anti-reform flyers strewn about (obviously distributed to students by the preceding instructor) as one enters one's classroom is not unusual, nor is it unusual to hear a loud speech (delivered by microphone from directly outside the school cafeteria) through one's office window.

Ironically, a major slogan of the Japanese protestors is one that will seem very familiar to most foreign readers of this article: the inhumanity of placing people on a short-term contract system where workers may be abruptly terminated — regardless of performance — at the end of a fixed contract period. The unfairness of such a system is emphasized over and over again. A poster hung up on Open Campus Day in Fukui, for instance, suggests that this would be akin to treating people like animals or like garbage. Another asks about the long-term effects of this type of system on educational quality, suggesting that resultant job insecurity — not to mention the inevitable staff turnover — would invariably disrupt the formation of student-teacher relationships, as well as put a cap on curriculum development.

Indeed, it is ironic that our Japanese colleagues, when faced with the possibility of being placed under similar constraints as foreign instructors, have responded with the same arguments — and similar tactics — as PALE activ-

ists!

Ramifications and Opportunities for Foreign Faculty

Perhaps in anticipation of faculty and administrative protests, the Japanese government recently moved up the desired starting date for these proposed reforms. Originally scheduled to begin April 2003, some of these new directives may be instituted as early as April 2001, with the time allocated to the various national universities to raise objections and/or come up with counter-proposals being correspondingly shortened as well. Indeed, according to Joukoukai Nyu-su, the Japanese government hopes to end all debate on this issue by the summer of the year 2000 (Mori, 1999, p. 1).

Considering the nature and extent of protests so far, whether the Japanese government will get its way in this or not is still unclear. However, for foreign faculty, the years 2001 and 2003 stand out as being especially important. Regular full-time employees (e.g., sennin koushi, jokyoujuu, etc.) whose contracts (or visa renewals) come up in either of these two years face a stronger than usual possibility of non-renewal, as their terminations would count towards the 10-35% faculty-cuts sought by both Monbusho and Prime Minister Obuchi's cabinet. Moreover, due to these cutbacks, national university-level full-time positions for foreigners — already at a premium — will necessarily become even scarcer; in other words, those who lose their jobs will have an even harder time than usual finding new employment elsewhere.

Gaikokujin kyoushi, historically immune to these kind of issues (they are not considered full-time faculty, so their termination would not count toward the required faculty cuts), have their own problems. Already at some schools, they are being asked to take pay cuts (at this university, almost 15%), as well as accept greater administrative scrutiny over the usage of their already meager (usually less than half that of "regular" faculty) research allowances. Considering the government's emphasis on greater financial restraint and/or spending efficiency, this trend will

only continue. Hence, the biggest selling point — the comparatively high salaries — to this position notoriously lacking (with its standard one-month notice termination provisions and no retirement benefits) in long-term prospects and job security would appear to have been removed.

Still, while these proposed new laws would severely impact Japanese and (to a lesser extent) foreign employees at all national universities in Japan, it is difficult to argue against their neces-

sity. In 11 years of experience in Japan, this author has seen reform-minded schools (names — there are several — have been deleted) hamstrung by their inability to terminate teachers (including one memorable case where a teacher had been absent from class for over 10 years after being institutionalized for schizophrenia). This author has seen

teachers who consistently fail to show up for classes, who pad their research records by plagiarizing (including one individual who copied an essay I'd read in high school and submitted it as his own work!) or by having their names attached to studies in which they'd never participated (a Chinese student at one school I've worked at once came to me with a paper he'd written in English which had the names of 11 Japanese faculty — none of whom had assisted or even met the author — attached to it as co-authors), and who use government funds for dubious research purposes (only to return with extensive picture travelogues depicting their various overseas adventures).

These people are, of course, exceptions; by far the majority of faculty (whether they be Japanese or non-Japanese) and staff at Japanese universities are extremely diligent and professional, passionately committed to helping their students and working together with them towards a better future for the Japanese people.

However, the problem remains that, as the laws stand now, there is little the government can do regarding those few malingerers whose presence saps both the financial resources and the morale of the universities in question. The reforms proposed would change this situation, forcing universities to become more budget-con-

it is ironic that our Japanese colleagues, when faced with the possibility of being placed under similar constraints as foreign instructors, have responded with the same arguments — and similar tactics — as PABE activists!.

scious and results-orientated in the process.

Indeed, if anything, the implementation of these reforms would result in a more level playing field, for Japanese professors would, for the first time, be placed under the same constraints, and receive the same level of scrutiny, that foreign professors now receive as a matter of course.

While the current proposals as now written place too much emphasis on budgetary concerns (expecting national universities to turn themselves overnight into profit-orientated businesses is unrealistic) to be ideal, they represent a good first-step towards finding a solution to the problems described above.

Indeed, considering the resistance of many Japanese nationals to the government's proposed reforms, an opportunity would also seem to exist: could not we (foreigners and Japanese nationals) work together in order to achieve a more balanced deal with the government, thereby improving long-term prospects for everyone?

Now, wouldn't that be a novel idea!

Acknowledgments

Thanks go to Minashima Hiroshi, Tachi Kiyotaka, and Mulvey Eiko for checking my Japanese, and to Charles Jannuzi for looking over my English. All mistakes are my own.

NOTES

1. The discussion in the following sections is a distillation of information from the following sources: "Dokuritsu Gyousei Houjin Tsusoku Houan," "Kokuritsu Daigaku no Dokuritsu Gyousei Houjinka ni Tsuite," and "Kokuritsu Daigaku no Dokuritsu Gyousei Houjinka no Kentou no Houkou" (all three from Monbushou), "Kokuritsu Daigaku no Dokuritsu Gyousei Houjinka Mondai ni Kansuru Zengaku Setsumeikai no Kansei ni Tsuite" and "Dokuritsu Gyousei Houjinka Mondai ni Kansuru Iken Oyobi Shitsumon" (both handouts prepared and distributed by the Dai Ichi Jouchi I-Inkai), and "Dokuritsu Gyousei Houjinka ni Hantai Suru" (Jokoukai Nyu-su [faculty newsletter]). To avoid the readability problems associated with multiple citations for each sentence, specific citations are included only for points where there is some disagreement among these 6 sources.
2. See Jokoukai Nyu-su, p. 1.
3. Monbushou (1999a), dai 1 jou (2), dai 3 jou (3), dai 5 jou, dai 8 jou (2); Monbushou (1999b), p. 3; Monbushou (1999c), p. 1.
4. Monbushou (1999a), dai 2 jou. See also, dai 14-26 jou for a more detailed description of responsibilities.

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(foreigners and Japanese
nationals) work together
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balanced deal with the
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5. Interestingly, there is no direct mention of research-and/or education-orientated goals in the original Hoan (an oversight which has led to its criticism — see Jokoukai Nyu-su, pg. 1; Dai Ichi Jouchi I-In Kai 1999a, 1999b). The supplementary documents later provided by Monbushou (Monbushou [b] and Monbushou [c]) redress this oversight.
6. Monbushou (1999c), pg. 4. See also, Monbushou (1999a), dai 34-35 jou.
7. Monbushou (1999b), pg. 2; Monbushou (1999a), dai 1 jou (2).
8. Monbushou (1999a), dai 23 jou (2), #1 & 2; dai 46jou; dai 66 jou; Monbushou (1999c), pp. 6-9.
9. Jokoukai Nyu-su, p. 1; Dokuritsu Gyousei Houjinka Mondai ni Kansuru Iken Oyobi Shitsumon, pp. 1-7.
10. Monbushou (1999a), dai 57, 59 jou; Monbushou (1999b), p. 4.

11. The following discussion is a distillation of arguments presented in the following: "Kokuritsu Daigaku no Dokuritsu Gyousei Houjinka Mondai ni Kansuru Zengaku Setsumeikai no Kansei ni Tsuite" and "Dokuritsu Gyousei Houjinka Mondai ni Kansuru Iken Oyobi Shitsumon" (both handouts prepared and distributed by the Dai Ichi Jouchi I-Inkai), and "Dokuritsu Gyousei Houjinka ni Hantai Suru" (Jokoukai Nyu-su [faculty newsletter]).

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- Monbushou. (1999b). *Kokuritsu daigaku no dokuritsu gyousei houjinka ni tsuite* (About national universities and the dokuritsu gyousei houjinka). Explanatory mailer provided to all national university employees by Monbushou.
- Monbushou. (1999c). *Kokuritsu daigaku no dokuritsu gyousei houjinka no kentou no houkou* (The dokuritsu gyousei houjinka at the national universities: An examination of directions). Explanatory mailer provided to all national university employees by Monbushou.
- Mori, Touru. (1999). *Dokuritsu gyousei houjinka ni hantai suru* (Opposing the dokuritsu gyousei houjinka). *Jokoukai Nyu-su*, 4, 1-2.

Literature and Drama: A Practical Application for English Language Learning

*Jim Corbett, Pusan Teacher Training Center,
S. Korea*

Literature and drama can be combined to generate meaningful and memorable discussions in an English language class. Since most Korean students have few or no opportunities to talk to native English speakers, using drama is the next best way to expose them to the real world of English. This lesson provides suggestions for using a section from *Oliver Twist* as a vehicle for interactive learning.

Background:

I did this lesson with middle school English teachers and a high school class to demonstrate how literature and drama could be used. The English teachers, ranging from intermediate to advanced in English proficiency, needed fresh ideas for motivating their students to learn English. When the high school class of intermediate learners expressed an interest in exploring European history to advance their English competency, I was inspired to prepare a communicative lesson using written work by Charles Dickens, one of my favorite writers. *Oliver Twist* was my first choice because many high school students could relate to the challenges and struggles that children face in an adult society. In addition to stimulating an appreciation for English literature, the activities in this lesson also created enthusiasm for studying other subjects like history and social studies.

The text for this lesson is from pages 2 to 5 of the Longman Classics version of *Oliver Twist*. This version also comes with a cassette. The scene is the workhouse where *Oliver Twist* lives. In this scene, *Oliver* and many other boys in the workhouse are eating in a big hall. After dinner, many boys pressure *Oliver* into asking the master for more food. When *Oliver* humbly approaches the master, he is verbally scolded, physically beaten in front of all the other boys and locked in a dark room for several days.

Lesson Plan:

The teacher begins by explaining the situation of many children laborers during the time of Charles Dickens. If the students are already familiar with the story or the history of 19th cen-

tury England, the teacher can elicit information by asking questions.

Warm up and Listening Activities

The students talk about emotions felt in their childhoods and then listen to the story and speculate on *Oliver's* emotions.

Warm Up

In groups describe a time in your childhood when you felt:

- happy
- sad
- confused
- afraid
- disappointed
- shocked
- excited
- bored

First Listening Activity A

A. Listen to the tone of the story and circle the adjectives that you think describe *Oliver's* feelings.

- happy
sad
confused
afraid
disappointed
shocked
excited
bored

First Listening Activity B

The students discuss their choices in groups.

- Are there any differences or similarities?
- Why did they choose these adjectives?

In the second listening activity the students listen to samples of dialogue from the text and try to identify the speaker. They then consider other more idiomatic possibilities:

Second Listening Activity A

A. Who is talking? These are spoken statements from the text. Listen and place an "X" next to the appropriate speaker.

- He asked for more?

- Oliver master Mr. Bumble
 b. What?
 Oliver master Mr. Bumble
 c. Please sir.
 Oliver master Mr. Bumble
 d. I can hardly believe it.
 Oliver master Mr. Bumble
 e. I want some more.
 Oliver master Mr. Bumble

Second Listening Activity B

A. Here are some other statements. Who would probably say each line: Oliver, the master, or Mr. Bumble? Discuss your choices in your groups.

- a. I really hate this place!
 b. You will keep your mouth shut!
 c. You little brat!
 d. I want out of here!
 e. Here is your food.
 f. I will teach that kid to be good!
 g. Please, don't hit me!

A third possible listening activity for lower and intermediate level students might be a cloze exercise that focuses on a particular vocabulary list or grammar points.

Dramatic Interpretation

After all the listening activities have been completed, the teacher divides the class into groups of five to eight depending on the numbers.

Each group will practise and perform this scene in the form of a small skit. The group members must select the following roles: Oliver, other boys, the master and Mr. Bumble. All the group members must speak in the skit without looking at the written text. After each presentation, the teacher may check comprehension by asking specific questions about the events and the dialogue.

Further groups discussions can focus on the feelings portrayed by the different characters in the skits. Discussing similarities and differences in the skits appealed to many groups; especially Oliver's responses the various situations.

Follow Up

The students and the teacher discuss what they learned and why they did this activity. They may also brainstorm using other written material like fables and newspaper articles for drama. One student suggested using drama to learn about famous historical personalities.

Feedback and Results

Most of the high school students responded positively to this lesson through active participation and discussions. When some middle school teachers argued that their students did not know enough about drama to do this lesson, I challenged them to ask the students about their favorite television shows, commercials, songs or even stories. All of these forms of communication contain an element of drama. I also stressed that drama is not only a stage presentation nor is it only found in literature; it is a real way of interpreting information and events in daily life. Although many originally questioned the notion of using literature in an English conversation class, most doubts had vanished before completing the skits.

Most women did not object to playing male roles in the skit. If there were objections, they were allowed to use different names in their presentations. Finding time to cover all the essential information in this lesson was a bigger challenge for teachers. To overcome this challenge, many teachers suggested completing the listening activities in class and have each group prepare a skit as a homework assignment. If there are many groups in the class, the teacher may prepare a schedule of presentations.

The drama activity challenged the students to apply the vocabulary they had learned from the various activities and select important points of the story to present in the skit. This generated practical discussions of key words and decision making and cooperation in a group. Even the shy and quiet students participated in the drama activity. Further discussions related to various themes like making polite requests, colloquial expressions and historical changes heightened interest in using drama with other forms of written text. Although many students and teachers were reluctant to participate in an unfamiliar activity related to drama and literature, initial discussions on familiar childhood experiences helped them feel comfortable and enthusiastic. Many teachers expressed enthusiasm about applying similar techniques in their classes.

Conclusion

This lesson was an experiment for me in employing drama activities beyond rehearsed role plays. From my experiences in Canada, Japan and Korea, I knew that students feel challenged when using language spontaneously. In addition, drama makes language learning fun for both the teacher and the students. I am now preparing English drama lessons about Korean folk tales and Canadian history to use in future classes.

Academic Research Sources on the Internet

Steven Snyder; Kyushu University
of Health and Welfare

The last issue of Cyberpipeline ended with some links to new booksellers. In this edition, I'd like to begin with a reference to getting used books on the web.

Advanced Book Exchange

<<http://www.abe.com>>

What does it do?

For those of you who haven't used this service before, the Advanced Book Exchange is a market where many used bookshops can list the books they have. Book listings usually include a note on the quality of the book, the price and how you can purchase it. All you need to do is go to the Advanced Book Exchange site, find your desired book through their search engine, choose a vender that has what you want and then place an order with your credit card.

Why is it important?

Research funds don't go very far on new books, but you can get a pile of used books for the same money. Also, some books are not available any other way. Recently I found a computational linguistics book that I couldn't find for over a year and got it in perfect condition for 10% of the original price!

Those same research funds can only get you so many journal subscriptions. Here is a way to find out about newly published articles.

Alerting Services

What are they?

Some publishing houses give advanced announcements, or "Alerts," of new books and journals, usually through an e-mail listserve. You can even specify the categories which will be sent to you, by either group or specific title.

From time to time you'll receive an e-mail containing the title and contents page of a journal or a brief description of a new book or article. Often there are links to abstracts as well.

Cambridge University Press offers alerting on journals through their UK webpage, or at:

<http://www.journals.cup.org/owa_dba/owa/alerting?sjid=eol>

Alerts for journals by Oxford University Press can be obtained through:

<<http://www3.oup.co.uk/jnls/tocmail/>>

Another excellent alerting service is Scholarly Articles Research Alerting (Sara), which gives advanced information from the Taylor and Francis journals group:

<<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/>>

There are probably others that I haven't found yet; certainly, most publishers will be providing this service in the future.

Why are they important?

Besides keeping you informed about new articles in your primary field, alerting services can keep you current on titles in related areas. A great range of fields can be accessed, but here are just a few examples of Alert titles related to language: ELT Journal, Literary & Linguistic Computing, Comparative Education, Perspectives (Higher Ed), Open Learning, Psycholinguistics, Language in Society, Applied Psycholinguistics, and many, many more. Once you find things of interest you can obtain the articles through interlibrary loan.

Over time you begin to see which journals have the articles you're looking for and you can subscribe to them. You save time, money and you get information on the journals before they are released.

Here are some sites that will help you to find large numbers of published articles in specific fields.

Please send site recommendations and comments to me at <snyder@phoenix.ac.jp>

Article Searches

Northern Lights

<<http://www.northernlight.com/>>

UnCover

<<http://uncweb.carl.org/>>

NACISIS Webcat

<<http://webcat.nacsis.ac.jp/webcat.html>>

What are they?

Northern Lights is a company that provides access to thousands of articles, and many can be purchased for less than through interlibrary loan. Web-based articles are usually free.

UnCover is a catalogue of books and journals among associated libraries in the USA. For the researcher in Japan its main use is as a search engine for finds titles.

NACISIS Webcat is a similar service of associated university libraries here in Japan and the service is offered in both English and Japanese languages.

Why are they important?

Using a search engine to find articles is the most powerful and efficient way to find titles of interest. Combined, these three search engines provide access to the largest database of scholarly articles (and books) in the world.

Many university librarians in Japan are happy to get an article for you, but you usually have to know the complete citation, including the issue and pages numbers.

If you only have part of a reference, you may be able to find the complete citation through these articles searches.

Depending on what you are looking for, using Northern Lights or UnCover may be the most effective way of obtaining the article.

I'd like to close this installment of Cyberpipeline with a candidate for "one of the best things on the web." Some of my colleagues make of game of finding the "best" things in cyberspace, and I'd like to invite you to suggest some too—send me an e-mail with your choice. Please include the address of the site and why you think it is important.

Netfuture by Steve Talbott

<<http://www.oreilly.com/~stevet/netfuture/>>

What is it?

This site archives issues of the newsletter "Netfuture: Technology and Human Responsibility," that is devoted to reassessing computers and technology in human terms—usually in a critical way. Talbott is openly skeptical of technological promise, yet there is a delicious irony in his communicating his criticisms via the Internet.

There are a lot of people critical of the optimism surrounding technological development, but a couple of Talbott's newsletters are remarkable for their juxtaposition of technological claims with books about extraordinary human experiences.

Do yourself a favor and check out two of these newsletters: issue #92 and issue #102. Issue #92 pits Ray Kurzweil's *The Age of Spiritual Machines* against *And There Was Light* and *The Living and the Dead*, both by Jacques Lusseyran. Lusseyran was the teenaged leader of the Resistance Movement in France—and he was blind. As the story unfolds, Lusseyran's blindness is more of an asset than a handicap. In issue #102, Talbott contrasts the potential uses of genetic science with *Expecting Adam*, by Martha Beck. Talbott's threading of Beck's tale of raising a Down Syndrome child within our social agenda to eliminate such children is masterful.

Why is it important?

Technology, and its attendant thinking, will be an inevitably larger influence on our lives. The articles on this site are predictably anti-tech, but they provide material for reflecting about a part of our lives which is rarely examined. Besides being enjoyable and informative, these two newsletters speak directly to the consequences of being smug about the interaction of values and systems, without preaching. This is writing that attends to the subtle connections. You'll find this a very different experience from much of what is on the web.

Is This Really as Good as it Gets?

Debra Pappler

In his January, 2000 article in *The Language Teacher*, Mike Guest suggested that junior and senior high school Japanese English teachers adequately provide students with a foundation in grammar, vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation. In addition, he suggested that the goal of English language teaching (and, in fact, all subjects at the high school level) is not to develop proficiency but to provide "a grounding in general cognitive discipline that provides a foundation for *real learning* (my italics) *at a later stage.*" While I agree that the vilification of Japanese English teachers is counterproductive and often steeped in stereotypes, I question much of Mike's support for his argument.

My first thought while reading the article was *what high school did he go to?* When I graduated I could competently do calculus, translate an intermediate level of Latin (conversation wasn't taught), recite Shakespeare sonnets, and had completed a heavily reference comparative senior research project on Dostoyevsky. My teachers were not preparing me for real learning later in life: they were teaching me! After graduation, I didn't go to university to begin *real studies* of Algebra and Geometry. I took Statistical Analysis, a class which required previous mastery of Geometry and Algebra. My high school learning was the foundation for *further learning* in the subject area and while this sounds similar to Mr. Guest's point, I'm suggesting something fundamentally different.

If I had taken Latin again at university, I would not have started in Latin 1. I would not have had to review basic verb conjugation, sentence structure, and vocabulary; all things I must regularly do with students just out of high school. I encounter students who, in both speaking and writing, do not have a firm grasp of the present tenses. They are not prepared for further learning because they have not really mastered anything.

Mr. Guest suggests that educators who criticize the current system of high school English instruction have unreasonable expectations, out of line with expectations in other subject areas. "The point is...do *any* high school subjects lead

to students being able to use the fruits of those lessons on a daily basis in society? No! So why then is it expected that students who have studied English are expected to maintain a functional, or even expert, native-level of skill in society?"

First, I think it's fair to say that few English teachers (if any) expect "native-level" skill from high school graduates. I think it is, however, perfectly reasonable to expect a student who's studied English for six years to do more than

I am in no way suggesting that university is a bad thing, but when did college become the place for real learning and high school the place for "learning how to learn".

rudimentarily introduce themselves. I'd expect a teenager who'd studied math for six years to be able to do more than add and subtract. Few adults use *any* subject, not fundamental to their chosen profession, on a *daily* basis and those of us who believe that English education in Japan needs improvement don't expect that kind of skill from students. Mr. Guest seems to believe that expecting better skills from Japanese students is akin to asking a high school math student to design a bridge.

The point of junior and senior high school, as I always understood it, was to provide equal educational opportunities to everyone. Those who choose to go on to college were *furthering* their education or specializing. To suggest the main purpose of junior and senior high school education is to prepare for *real learning* later in life is to reduce these institutions to a preschool-like level; they become places where students learn to sit still, get along with their classmates, and draw between the lines.

A high school graduate used to be considered an adult, able to get a decent job and raise a fam-

ily. Increasingly, university degrees are becoming necessary to make a decent wage. I am in no way suggesting that university is a bad thing, but when did college become the place for real learning and high school the place for "learning how to learn". Perhaps, if high school education (which is more readily available to the financially disenfranchised) were improved, there would be less need for "real" learning at university. Frankly, it's an insult to young people to teach them a subject if the expectation is that they can't or won't learn it. If I studied a language for six years and all I could do was hesitantly recite three or four basic sentences about myself, I'd be furious at whatever system had wasted so much of my time.

Young people aren't tender fruits waiting to ripen. They're intelligent human beings capable of incredible learning. Am I mistaken or don't language experts believe the younger the child, the easier the language? I think a major reason that Japanese students can't express themselves successfully, is that they are not really expected to. Mr. Guest suggests that expecting more than the skills currently demonstrated by high school graduates is unreasonable. But if my twelve year old German cousin, Daniella, can speak (and write) more English than my students (and she can), doesn't it follow that whatever system she is being taught by is better at fostering language competency?

Certainly Daniella has some advantages over her Japanese peers. Maybe she does better because she's got more reasons to learn English, maybe it's easier for her because English and German are related or maybe she's got more role models. But rather than just listing all her advantages and saying, "oh, well" shouldn't educators be trying to replicate as many of those advantages as possible. And do the advantages that European students might have over Japanese students explain why Japan ranked 18th out of 21 Asian economies in TOEFL scores (Japan Times, Feb. 18, 2000)?

I agree that, in general, Japanese students are fairly familiar with the basics. I don't think, however, that the familiarity they demonstrate takes six years to achieve. To perpetuate a system that doesn't provide a path to mastery and leaves Japanese students woefully behind their peers

internationally is to waste what are perhaps these students' peak years for learning. Mr. Guest seems to be saying this is as good as it gets so leave it alone; however, this does a grave disservice to students.

A related point that Mr. Guest brings up is that English scholars are re-stressing the need for grammar in the classroom. He seems to suggest that reforming the current system means favoring communication skills over grammar study. As a firm believer in grammar based activities, I am often confused by the grammar vs. communication debate. As far as I am concerned, the two are fundamentally inseparable. Grammar is the tool for accurate and complex communication. Yes, a child and a beginning student can communicate with one-word utterances but they cannot communicate detailed information. It's the

difference between being able to say, "Tummy hurts" and "I think that the cheese sauce on that Eggplant Parmesan is giving me indigestion."

Daniella's success at verbal communication is not at the expense of her grammar ability. Japanese students do not do better on standard written tests of English than their European and Asian counterparts. If they did, one might be able to say that grammar and communication were separable and that Japanese students lacked only communication skills. This is, however, is not the case and as someone who advocates reform in junior and senior high school English classes, I am not suggesting abandoning grammar.

As I've said before, I agree with Mr. Guest's overall point. Japanese teachers cannot and should not be indicted for problems within Japan's language program but arguing that this program, which fails to produce competency, is successful, does nothing to improve it. Open discussion of strong and weak points of a system without over-generalizing to assign blame seems to be a good first step towards improving it and improvement is always possible.

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*The opinions expressed in this
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Executive Board*

Right to Reply: Mike Guest replies to Debra Pappler

First I'd like to congratulate Debra Pappler for her success and achievements as a high school student. She certainly appears to have been more conscientious and adept as a high-schooler than I was. However, to be sure, my best students here in Japan are able to perform at levels similar to that of Ms. Pappler while the rabble, such as myself, fall below these lofty ideals. I'm sure that her scholarly performances were not indicative of the run-of-the-mill student in her home country's high schools, nor are my best students indicative of the average Japanese. Actually, what Ms. Pappler may be inadvertently demonstrating is that there is little difference between Japanese students and the students in her native country.

But, so what! I'm not sure why Ms. Pappler has chosen to recount her scholastic achievements. Ms. Pappler's high-school successes in no way discredit my argument that high-school education serves primarily to provide either basic cognitive grounding *or* a grounding for future study. Her high-school education seems to have not translated directly into practical real-world skills, just like that of our students. The fact that Ms. Pappler did well at it does nothing to alter these facts. Yet for some reason she expects that our students should be able to do more, namely display fruitful real-time applications of those skills learned in school. My argument is that since most high school teaching in any subject is not for productive real-life usage but as cognitive disciplining we should not measure English education's success or failure by real-life yardsticks.

But Ms. Pappler seems to be tying herself in rhetorical knots here. She takes issue with my description of the purposes of high-school education but, I wonder, how did her ability to recite Shakespearean sonnets or conjugate Latin verbs aid her in real life? And she readily admits that her algebra studies provided a grounding for further studies in statistics later in university.

Wasn't Ms. Pappler's high-school education then serving either as cognitive discipline or, as with her study of algebra, as a basis for further academic study? Ms. Pappler's rather vapid argument ("They were not preparing me for real learning later in life, They were teaching me something") simply begs the question. Teaching you what for what? If it wasn't for future real-life usage isn't Ms. Pappler in effect echoing my basic argument? What purpose does learning Shakespearean

sonnets or Latin conjugates have beyond stirring mental discipline? In fact most of her argument is a confusion of constant shifting between admitting that high school education has no practical real-life use and yet arguing that it is in fact something more than mental disciplining, while alternately drifting between prescriptive (what it *should be*) and descriptive (what it *is*) modes of rhetoric.

After both affirming and denying my descriptions of the goals of high school education, Ms. Pappler makes a rather absurd statement. She says that, "the point of junior and senior high school...is to provide equal educational opportunities for everyone". Whatever the goal of an education may be, it is certainly not this. In fact Ms. Pappler displays some categorical confusion here. We may play tennis for health, for fun, for money or to defeat an opponent, but surely no one plays it in order 'to provide equal opportunities to win'. This may be an honourable means to an end but it is surely not an end in itself. After waffling on my earlier argument on the purposes of high school education, is this all Ms. Pappler can offer of her own?

As for her comment that my description of high school as a place to prepare for real learning later in life "is to reduce these institutions to a preschool-like level";

it seems to me to be deliberately misleading. Stirring students' intellects with challenges that presume to develop their cognitive capabilities is not something that stops after pre-school. In fact, if 90% of the study I did in high school was not purely for this type of cognitive exercise I have no idea what it was for (the other 10% was useful as grounding for university studies). I'm certainly not using sonnets or Latin in my daily life now. As for her comments that I am implying that high-schools would then become "places where students learn to sit still, get along with their classmates, and draw between the lines" all I can say in response is that Ms. Pappler shows a very superficial understanding of what intellectual or cognitive disciplining means.

Ms. Pappler goes on to state, "If I had taken Latin again in university I would not have started in Latin 1", arguing that she does have to return to such basics with her 1st year Japanese English students. First, the analogy is invalid in that Latin is not taught conversationally whereas the shift from formalized to communicative English is precisely the crisis point for Japanese English students. A fairer analogy would argue that Japa-

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nese English students would also not be doing junior high school level English if they were pursuing further studies of formal English grammar and translation. I also treat Ms. Pappler's musings here as purely speculative because I studied Biblical Greek and Hebrew as a graduate Theology student. And although I was competent enough to recognize minute grammatical nuances in translating Biblical script and although I could do all the verb conjugations on a formal test or quiz, had I been sent via a time machine back to Greece or the Middle East of Biblical times I wouldn't have had a clue how to greet someone or order a meal or, more precisely, which forms of the verbs (or other parts of speech) to use in these interactions. Sounds a bit like our students doesn't it? The fact is they *can* do all the parsing or conjugations in a formal situation. After all, to enter university they have had to pass a demanding and intricate English entrance exam that could challenge a lot of native English speakers. Our students *do* know how to construct a present, past, participle or perfect form in vitro. In fact, they may have learned grammar *too* well, such that a rigid translation formalism has set in. So when Ms. Pappler mentions that students "do not have a firm grasp of the present tenses" it seems to me to be either a gross misdiagnosis or sheer naivety.

Perhaps she is confusing formal grammar with the communicative conventions of grammatical choice. The problem is that students don't know *when* to deploy certain verb forms. The deployment of English and Japanese tenses simply do not match. English actives are often rendered in Japanese as passives. Stative Japanese forms are often realized in the past in English. Continuous forms in Japanese can translate to almost any verbal pattern in English. This is why after 12 years in Japan I can conjugate Japanese verbs perfectly on an isolated test but will still make some rudimentary mistakes in real-life deployment. When a student says "I came from Osaka" as a response to "Where do you come from" their formal grammar is perfect in that that they have completed a formal grammar translation.

The linguistic convention of English which demands the present tense in such a situation is often unknown to them because it is a social linguistic convention more than a rule of grammar. In other words, it is not that they don't know the present tense. They are merely over-applying well-learned grammar rules! In short, one can know an entire verbal system perfectly as a closed matrix. But, it is familiarity with the manner in which verbs are deployed, along with their pragmatic, interpersonal, sociolinguistic variations and other conventional qualities that students lack and affects their real-time per-

formance. It is certainly not that they have failed to learned their conjugation charts after six years of study.

Finally, Ms. Pappler serves up a series of speculative "this seems to say..." claims. So let me address these points and add what I really do say. First, she claims that I am implying some dichotomy between grammar and communicative English. This claim, however, is completely without foundation. The reality is that grammar *has* become something of a dirty word for many teachers espousing the virtues of communicative methodology and an artificial separation of grammar and communication has ensued. For Ms. Pappler to imply that I am endorsing this dichotomy in my argument is absurd. As it stands, I am in complete agreement with the importance of understanding grammar primarily as a communicative mechanism, hence my mention of

McCarthy, Lewis et al in the original article. It is clearly the present unbalanced focus upon the anti-grammatical tenets of so-called communicative English that I was opposing.

Secondly, Ms. Pappler claims that I am in effect arguing that we should expect no more than the current level of success in terms of student English skills, that "this is as good as it gets". Thereby, I am caricatured into taking something of a non-reformist, complacent position which is a "dis-service to our students". My actual ar-

gument is that given the current lack of clear educational goals towards recognizing English's value as a productive skill, plus the pedagogical mechanisms which echo this reality, the result (lack of active, productive English skills) should come as no surprise. Thus, my further argument: that criticisms of Japanese high-school English teachers are largely unfounded.

Now, if there *were* a clear and consistent effort on behalf of the powers-that-be to make productive real-life skills the goal of English education and provisions made to create a framework suitable to alter the pedagogy I would certainly expect greater productive English skills from our students. This, incidentally, is why Ms. Pappler's German 12 year old cousin has better performance skills than most of Ms. Pappler's students. But this raises the more fundamental question, should such 'vocational' training be the goal of high schools? If yes, then let's set up a system that supports these goals. Then, and only then, if our students do not display proficiency can we legitimately throw some blame around. But until then, wagging the finger at students or teachers for failing to accomplish something that the system was not designed to do and also ignoring the validity of English learning as purely cognitive training is unbalanced and inconsistent.

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Language and Thought: Interdisciplinary Themes

Peter Carruthers and Jill Boucher, editors. Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp xiv + 316 (including references). ISBN 1-521-63108-4

**Reviewed by Steven Snyder;
Kyushu University of Health and Welfare**

Steven Pinker, bless his heart, popularized what many people thought was the killing argument for the so-called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis—the argument of mentalese. Mentalese (actually coined by Jerry Fodor in 1983) was the name of the third chapter of his best selling book *The Language Instinct*, and it is a term that refers to the mental “language” of our thoughts. “People do not think in English or Chinese or Apache; they think in a language of thought.” (Pinker, 1994) Later, Pinker even goes so far as to associate Sapir-Whorf with behaviorism. I was recently told by one linguist that the question of the relationship between thought and language is over. Been solved. Nothing more to talk about.

A week later I encounter a book which reopens that question in a fundamental way. Between 1994 and 1996 five workshops were held at the University of Sheffield which invited scholars from variety of fields to look again at the relationship of language and thought. The resulting book represents the often conflicting views of fifteen of those scholars, with their careful analysis of the many threads involved.

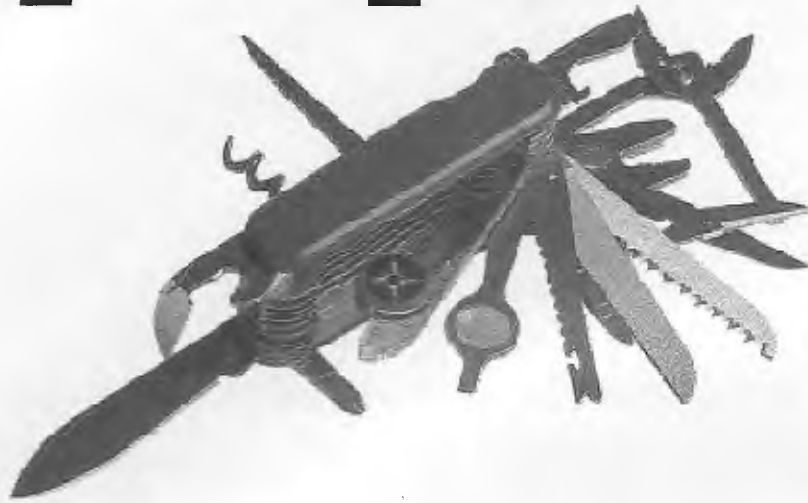
Language and Thought starts off with a superb introductory essay and is then subdivided into three sections: Language, development and evolution; Language, reasoning and concepts; and Language and conscious reasoning. Within each section the articles are arranged to present counter arguments and counter evidence. Its organization places the various positions on cognition in a historical perspective and serves to introduce the rather daunting terminology in a digestible sequence.

Cognitive Science is universally acknowledged to be a mix of linguistics, psychology, philosophy, neuroscience, artificial intelligence, and other fields. In much of the literature of cognition there has been an emphasis on the science side of things. What is at once one of the more valuable things about *Language and Thought*,

yet one of the more challenging, is that there is a noticeable philosophic perspective throughout the book. This has a sobering effect on the reader, as it is always salient in the text that it is our interpretation of the available evidence, not just the evidence per se, which is crucial when discussing the relationship of language and cognition. Unfortunately, parts of the book also teem with acronyms, such as LAD, TOM, SAM, LF, SLI, GAM, ALS, LOT, as well as lots of Xs and Ys. And there is the inevitable precise defining of concepts, which occasionally seem counterintuitive (e.g. the “communicative concept of language” and the “cognitive concept of language” are not what you might expect). Given the scope and the complexity of the topic, this is an enjoyable and highly readable book.

For those who enjoy seeing how things are interconnected, this book will be a treat. Anthropological evidence is weighed along side psychological experiments, logical arguments are pitted against field observations of animal language. In one beautifully enlightening article, Andy Clark of Washington University, St Louis, talks about how language acts as an extension of our cognitive abilities, much like a tool extends the functions of our body. Is there extra-corporal thought? If there is, then it certainly would be conducted in natural languages. This is just one of several incisive approaches to the questions of language and cognition which I had not previously encountered. If you're a student of cognitive science, a language researcher, or even just wanting to start learning about cognitive science, this is a book you will want to have. If you've read Pinker, you know how entertaining and persuasive he is. A lot of people have bought into what he has said, even though his writing is heavily informed by evolutionary psychology. Besides the other rewards in *Language and Thought* it is a good antidote for Pinker.

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