

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

Retail Price for Non-Members: ¥700/ \$7

Conferences

PAC3 at IALT 2001
2001: A Language Odyssey
Nov. 22-25, Nakura, Kitakyushu, Japan
www.ialt.org/ialt2001

PacSIRF 2001 Conference
Oct. 4-7, University of Hawaii at Manoa,
Honolulu, Hawaii
www.UH.hawaii.edu/pacsirf

**AILA Scientific Commission on
Discourse Analysis,
"Discourses on Discourse: The
Language of Education and
Work,"**

Nov. 8-11, Sydney, Australia
www.education.uts.edu.au/centres/cdi/discourses.html

Thoughts to Ponder

...all language is a lie. Yes! Language itself. A stone is a stone, the word 'stone' is not a stone. It is a token, a linguistic banknote that we exchange to indicate the idea of a stone. It saves us the trouble of having to haul one out of the ground to show our interlocuter what we mean.

*Stephen Fry as Dr. Trefusis
from Paperweight, 1992*

On CUE Call for papers

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.

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.

Contact section editor: Andrew Obermeier, andrewo@gol.com

Research Digest

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

Conference Reports, Eamon McCafferty, eamon@gol.com

News and Announcements, Alan Mackenzie, asm@typhoon.co.jp

all other queries to Michael Carroll, carroll@andrew.ac.jp

Professional Development

1-2000 words on further education and gaining employment.

Contact section editors: Debra Pappler and Mark Weinkle,

toonomads@hotmail.com

Opinion and Perspective

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

Contact section editor Keith Ford, jf6k-ford@asahi-net.or.jp

Reviews

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

Contact section editor: Steven Snyder, snyder@phoenix.ac.jp

Cyberpipeline

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

Contact section editor: Steven Snyder, snyder@phoenix.ac.jp

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:

April 15, July 15, January 15
(Deadlines: Feb 25, May 24, Nov 18)

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Editorial

This issue of On CUE, following somewhat belatedly on the heels of the very successful *Developing Autonomy* conference last May, forms something of a bridge between that conference and the 2002 one which is already at an advanced planning stage. The issue opens with a comprehensive review of the 2001 conference by Juanita Heigham and Andrew Obermeier, followed by three feature articles and another in the *Professional Development* section that clearly show how autonomy and curriculum change are linked in the CUE discourse as it is developing at the moment.

In the first of the features, Christopher Kelen, who was unable to get to the mini-conference, shows how the simple process of exchanging dialogue journals with his students has not only allowed English to become a meaningful activity, but has also created a situation in which conscious reflection on their language learning has laid the basis for at least some of them to become truly autonomous learners.

The second and third features both concern curriculum innovation. Martin Bradshaw outlines some of the issues that teachers face when setting objectives for their courses.

Anthony Rausch then describes how his university has dealt with a specific set of constraints by designing an entirely new program to give students an intensive experience of using English as a means of communication, within a structured framework.

The *Professional Development* section also concerns curriculum design and development. Greg Strong sets out, from an institutional perspective, five key issues that are important in implementing successful curriculum innovations. His concluding comments on the importance of supporting all teachers, and involving them in the continuing development and review of curriculum changes, address a crucial but problematic area in the context of many Japanese universities today.

Our *Focus on Language* in this issue has Paul Cunningham ruminating on an inspiring classroom observation through which he was able to experience in a new light the roles of expectations and guessing in listening comprehension.

As usual Steve Snyder's *Cyberpipeline* gives us some pointers to some eminently practical sites that will be useful to many CUE members. In this issue he describes downloadable software for creating self-access materials which can be used by even the least computer literate teachers.

Finally, Nevitt Reagan reviews Marjorie Vaifs 1998 high level listening and critical thinking text, *The Heart of the Matter*.

I wish you pleasant and fruitful reading as you enter the beginning of the second Semester.

If you find this issue worthwhile please remember that it is produced entirely by voluntary labour. If you'd like to be involved, therefore, we are more than happy to welcome you. At the end of this issue there is a list of the various kinds of practical jobs that need doing within CUE.

For On CUE itself, though, the most important thing is your contribution. Our aim is to provide a forum for the sharing of research and ideas of broad interest to university educators. We have steadily been attracting more contributions over the last two years, but still there is room for more. If you have a paper that you've written, or an idea that you would like to develop, please contact me, Michael Carroll, or any of the section editors, listed in the call for papers.

In particular if you are a new writer, or unsure of the value of your idea, please feel free to talk it over with us. We see our role as facilitating the publication of a wide range of relevant material, rather than as primarily gatekeeping. In other words we'll do our best to work with you to get your writing into print. We believe this approach makes for a lively and high quality journal. In addition we believe it contributes to a dynamic and supportive SIG in which we can all, editors and contributors together, develop as writers and researchers. So please keep those contributions coming in.

Michael Carroll

This issue does not have an Opinion and Perspective column, but in the next issue a point-counterpoint discussion is planned on the issue of accountability in teaching in Japanese universities. If you are interested in contributing to this discussion contact Alan Mackenzie or Keith Ford before October 30th.

Message From the Coordinator

Alan Mackenzie, Keisen University

Introduction

'Feverish' is the only adjective to describe our activities this year. We are continuing to offer the best value for money of any organ of JALT through the hard work of large numbers of SIG members coming together in a cooperative environment to create environments through which we can all learn: about college and university teaching, about TESOL, and about each other as people. Before I tell you about this year and next, let me remind of the previous year's accomplishments.

On CUE

Last year, we published *On CUE* ("the best value for money JALT publication I have seen" according to another JALT publication editor) three times with articles covering the gamut of experiences in CUE, from linguistics, through online resources, to classroom techniques for ESL and personal classroom experiences.

CUE Conferences

The years 2000 and 2001 saw two very successful mini-conferences that seemed to capture the spirit and imagination of both presenters and participants. Both *Content in Language Education: Looking at the Future* and *Developing Autonomy* were themes that inspired a range of contributions. *Developing Autonomy* is reviewed in this issue for those that missed it. There is also a preview of the CUE Conference 2002.

JALT Pan-SIG conference

This is a move forward for SIGs. Three SIGs (Bilingualism, Testing and Evaluation & CUE) are holding their conferences in the same place (Kyoto Institute of Technology) at the same time (Saturday May 11th and Sunday 12th 2002). This is an attempt to energise the memberships of the SIGs involved by giving equal billing to all three SIGs, cutting travel expenses for attendees by holding three events in one place at one time, and giving JALT members value for money with three mini-conferences for the price of one. You

can read about how you can contribute to CUE's component of this event later in this issue of On CUE. As in the last two years, we are planning a conference proceedings to be published late in 2002.

CUE Publications

The conference fees from these events have enabled us to publish three books, all of which are free to CUE members. The conference proceedings, *Content in Language Education: Looking at the Future*, was distributed at JALT 2000 and posted to anyone who didn't pick it up in January. *Projects From the University Classroom* will be distributed at JALT 2001, and the 2001 conference proceedings, *Developing Autonomy*, will be posted to you with the final issue of *On CUE* for this year. In the interests of increasing inter-SIG cooperation, we also hope to distribute *Developing Autonomy* free to all members of *Teacher Education* and *Learner Development* SIGs, both of whom made invaluable contributions to the conference. If you do not receive your copies of these publications, please contact eamon@gol.com and we will post them out to you.

JALT/PAC3 November 22-24, 2001

As in the past two years, CUE will have a strong presence at JALT/PAC3. As well as our Featured speaker, Gillian Wigglesworth, many of our members have presentations which can be found on the conference webpage at http://members.home.ne.jp/swanson/2001schedule/title_subject.html#3. We will also have a social event and a business meeting. This year, the CUE forum was held at the CALL conference in May, so we decided not to schedule one for the national conference this year.

The CUE Featured Speaker

Gillian Wigglesworth is a senior lecturer in the Department of Linguistics at Macquarie University, New South Wales, Australia. She received her PhD in 1993 from La Trobe Univer-

sity with a thesis entitled "Investigating children's cognitive and linguistic development through narrative".

From 1992 to 1994 she worked at the University of Melbourne in the Department of Applied Linguistics and the Language Testing Research Centre, where she focussed particularly on the development of oral language assessments.

Since 1995 she has been in the Department of Linguistics at Macquarie where she is coordinator of the applied linguistics postgraduate programs. She is also a member of the Adult Migrant English Program Research Centre research staff. She is currently also working at the University of Melbourne, and will return there full time from the beginning of 2002.

Her research interests include first and second language acquisition, language testing and evaluation and bilingualism, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis.

Four of her publications can be accessed through <http://www.ling.mq.edu.au/dbase/person.phtml?oid=19110>. The following is a summary of her presentation at JALT/ PAC3:

Choice in distance education: Praxis to pedagogy

In recent years, there has been a proliferation of distance education courses related to postgraduate TESOL training, and there is no reason to think that this trend will diminish. With this choice comes the problem of having to decide between many different courses, what they offer, their requirements and the various modes of delivery they adopt. In this paper, the range of different models of distance education are examined, and the advantages and disadvantages of these are discussed in relation to the questions prospective students should be asking about what each particular course has to offer. These questions can range from the purely practical to the more pedagogical. In practical terms, the cost of the course is clearly an example of an issue which is of paramount importance to many prospective students. However, there are also important pedagogical concerns which relate to the choice of distance education course. These include, for example,

how instructor/student, and student/student feedback and interaction is negotiated, the access and availability of library resources and other materials, and the extent to which units are able to mirror the provision of similar training in the on-campus situation.

In this paper, the presenter outlines the practical and pedagogical questions which prospective students should be asking about courses which offer postgraduate training. Both coursework and research courses offered through distance education are discussed, and the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of programs currently available are evaluated.

CUE AGM

This is your main chance to direct CUE activities. You, the members are the people who (should) decide what CUE does over the next year or two. Unfortunately, what usually happens is that the executive decides what we are going to do. This is not the way we want CUE to work. It kind of annoys us that we are left to make all the decisions. PLEASE come along and help us do the difficult stuff. If you are so inclined, you could also volunteer for a job. Currently, there are a number on offer: publicity officer, website editor, and anyone who wants to take on editorial or proof reading opportunities in CUE publications.

The CUE Jump

Saturday night is CUE-Jump night (prices and numbers later). This is a great opportunity to socialize with other CUE members (including the grandly named 'Executive Committee' who are nice guys really). We have a limited number of spaces, so reserve now by e-mailing Eamon McCafferty (eamon@gol.com). First come, first served. Sorry, but we cannot go beyond the physical restrictions of the isakaya.

Conclusion

We hope that you find your 1,500 yen and your conference fees being well spent in CUE. At the moment, the products you see are the result of a very small group of people who work very hard to keep CUE going because we think it is worth the time and effort, is a great professional development activity, and is immensely satisfying. If you think you can do anything to help us out, please get in touch.

Developing Autonomy: The CUE Conference 2001 Reviewed

*Juanita Heigham, Sugiyama Jogakuen University &
Andrew Obermeier, Kyoto University of Education*

Introduction

Arriving for CUE's second conference, *Developing Autonomy*, participants were pleasantly surprised to find themselves at a resort on the tip of a peninsula, with Mt. Fuji towering across the bay. Tokai University's Miho Kenshukaikan was ours for the weekend, and contributed to a retreat-like atmosphere that brought great group cohesion. Thanks to Eamon McCafferty, Alan Mackenzie and Masahiko Goshi for their efforts in organizing the conference, and to the CUE volunteer helpers and the Tokai student volunteers. The excellent organization of all those involved with the planning was greatly appreciated even if unnoticed at the time – unnoticed because things went so smoothly. And among the forty presentations given, there was something to suit everyone's interest since there were four focus groups: the learner; the teacher; issues and research; and materials and methods. Discussions among the attendees spilled over into the lobby, on the beach, over dinner, and even into the bath.

"Autonomy" proved to be a very difficult topic to define. Learner Development, Teacher Education, and Materials Writers SIG members approached the discussion from different angles as did the three plenary speakers, Andrew Finch, Alan Mackenzie and Steve Snyder. Each plenary, in one way or another, called on participants to look at their current practice and be prepared to embrace change.

Featured Speakers

Andrew Finch ("Autonomy: where are we? where are we going?") spoke of autonomy as a philosophical ideal, a way of thinking about teaching that is drastically different from the currently prevalent industrial-based model. He explained that if we want to have a lasting impact on our students, we should focus on devel-

oping independent thinkers and lifelong learners. Additionally, we do not know what knowledge will be useful to our students in the future, so we should not decide what they study; students themselves should make those choices. Finch asserted that there's no longer use for the industrial model of education, which produces competitive devourers of the earth's limited resources. We need to develop a more holistic model, one that encourages respect, cooperation and lifelong learning.

Alan Mackenzie ("Degrees of freedom: teacher autonomy, textual constraint, and institutional growth") spoke of the dramatic changes within universities that now compete to attract applicants from the shrinking pool of Japanese youth. The situation demands that teachers be proactive in their roles. He pointed out that if we want to encourage learners to be autonomous we need to look at ourselves and our own learning as teachers. Since learning is predicated on change, as promoters of learning teachers too should be engaging in change, not just within our classrooms, but within our institutions. While teachers need to work within the constraints of the context in which we find ourselves, by asking the right questions of the right people, teachers can be a powerful catalyst for change and also open opportunities for themselves.

Steve Snyder ("An ethical imperative for learner choice") asserted that if we believe that honoring learner autonomy is the best way to teach, teaching in ways that do not are a form of malpractice. He described several cases of learners with specific physiological or neurological disabilities, and showed how they had been successful against the odds, as a result of their teachers making an effort to find ways to overcome their difficulties. These students may have appeared exceptional, but Snyder claimed that

every classroom is likely to have a wide range of abilities and learning styles. If we can take into account these differences between students, in the same way that the teachers he referred to thought carefully about how to set up their classes so as to allow equal access for learners with particular problems, then we will be fostering autonomy in a most practical sense. It is our ethical imperative to do this.

Trials and Tribulations

In a presentation titled "Trials and Tribulations: keeping autonomy on-track in the classroom" Greg O'Dowd shared case studies of learners in "autonomous programs" that had not succeeded and discussed the reasons for their failure. He stressed that a successful autonomous program depends on a clearly established understanding between students, teachers and administrators about the goals of the program and how to go about achieving them. Teachers should have well defined roles; we must actively facilitate, advise and counsel students. Additionally, the program must be transparent so that the teacher can continually monitor the students as they work, so the students feel supported by the system, not abandoned by it.

Discourse Analysis

Michael Carroll ("Autonomous learning through discourse analysis: What can learners learn by looking at their own use of language") offered us rationale and means for bringing basic discourse analysis into the language classroom. He explained that through the use of their own recorded discourse students can come to understand that English is not just a school subject or logical problem but an activity related to communication. He explained that with Japanese students' educational background, having them "activate" the language knowledge they have already acquired through a type of analysis they are familiar with can lead them to see English as a useful social behavior in which they can invest themselves. And that can lead them to taking control of their own learning.

Literature Review

Andy Barfield's presentation, "Learner autonomy and the literature review," itself allowed autonomy to participants. Barfield gave a brief explanation of multi-colored posters on learner autonomy, academic literacy, and goal setting he had placed around the room. In pairs, participants discussed the poster areas they intended to explore, and formed questions they wanted answered. Having formulated questions, people then browsed about in pursuit of answers, concentration somewhat augmented by the classical violin CD played in the background. Then participants returned to their seats for pair and finally, a whole-group discussion. This alternative presentation style offered participants a chance to actively pursue their specific interests in a relaxed environment.

Individual Learning Strategies

Heidi Evans and Cynthia Quinn's very well-organized presentation "Using small group work to awaken individual learning strategies" provided procedures to guide students to discover, implement and evaluate learning strategies. They gave a step-by-step explanation of a model designed to focus learners on building their own learning strategies. Their presentation detailed how imperative it is to help students develop skills for autonomous learning; they need guidance to understand that they can and should take responsibility for their learning. Additionally, through the model description the role of teachers was strongly highlighted: we are guides, advisors, supporters and counselors – a very integral, active part of their learning.

However...

On a critical note, during the weekend, someone observed that it was ironic that although the conference theme was on autonomy there was little real learner autonomy in evidence in most of the curricula presented. A number of the presentations clearly demonstrated learner-centered activities, but they were not presented as part of well-developed autonomous programs. Quite possibly many teachers have taken only small steps towards autonomy in their classrooms, but

we must remember that to promote autonomy in our students, we as teachers must first be ready for them to accept it; we must be ready to let go of the wheel (but not get out of the car). Probably our own experiences as learners in the classroom didn't promote autonomy, and as a result, the familiarity we feel in more teacher-centered environments conflicts with what we now believe to be true – that autonomy is critical for the development of successful life-long learners. Furthermore, we must, as Steve Snyder said, work toward allowing autonomy to evolve in our classrooms by acting on what we know to be true, one step at a time. Thus letting go of that wheel from time to time, attempting to create activities that encourage autonomy, is in and of

itself a movement in the right direction, even if our base curriculum is not yet as learner-centered as we would like it to be.

Conclusion

At the final reflection session, someone described autonomy as simply, "a great conference topic." She was right. The conference gave us an opportunity to seriously explore autonomy, an element of teaching that many of us are struggling to implement into our classrooms. It allowed us to get a better grasp of it and gave us some new ideas of how to foster it in our students. All in all, this year's CUE conference achieved just what it set out to do.

...and Looking Forward to the CUE Conference 2002: "Curriculum Innovation"

**Part of the JALT Pan-SIG Conference at Kyoto Institute of Technology
May 11th-12th 2002**

After years of stagnation, tertiary education in Japan has finally started changing. However, there is very little coordination of change processes within individual institutions and very little information exchange between them.

This conference aims to explore issues involved in diagnosing institutional problems, developing solutions to those problems, implementing those changes and evaluating their outcomes.

The scope of the conference includes organizational changes, content changes, philosophical and practical changes and the impact of changes on individual students and teachers.

It is also the aim of the conference to offer practical, hands-on workshops to help participants conceive, plan, and implement their own curricular innovations.

Presenters should aim to address the following questions:

- What curriculum innovations has your institution carried out in the last few years?
- How is your institution meeting the demands of the changing economic climate?
- How are changes in your institution evaluated?
- What were the results of the evaluation?
- What course of action was decided on?
- What plans are there for changes in your institution?
- What ideas do you have that may be interesting to others?

Fifty minute papers, demonstrations, workshops and roundtable discussions from both theoretical and practical perspectives are sought as well as proposals for a limited number of 110 minute sessions.

We hope that by providing a platform for teachers from colleges and universities at different stages of curriculum development, we will discover the range of forms of curricular innovation and the outcomes that result.

Conference Calendar

Edited by Alan Mackenzie

Sources:

TESOL Worldwide Calendar
<http://www.tesol.org/isaffil/calendar/calendar-full.html>

The University Of Sydney Language Center Conference Database
<http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/Arts/departs/langcent/conframe.html>

October 2001

- 4-7 (North and Central America) University of Hawaii at ManoAa. Pacific Second Language Research Forum (PacSLRF) 2001 Conference, Honolulu, Hawaii. Contact Jim Yoshioka, PacSLRF Conference Co-Chair, c/o National Foreign Language Resource Center, University of Hawaii, 1859 East-West Road #106, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822. Tel. 808-956-9424. Fax 808-956-5983. E-mail pacslrf@hawaii.edu. Web site <http://www.LLL.hawaii.edu/pacslrf>.
- 5-7 (Europe and Eurasia) IATEFL Hungary. Conference, Nyiregyha'za, Hungary. Contact Tama's Kiss, Nyiregyha'za 4405, Molna'r U. 55, Hungary. Tel. +36-42-491-971. E-mail schoolex@mail.matav.hu. Web site <http://iatefl-h.com>.
- 11-14 (North and Central America) Mexico TESOL (MEXTESOL). Conference, "A New Millennium: Getting Where We Want To Be In ELT," Puebla, Mexico. Contact Carlos Reyes Hernandez, Escuela De Lenguas Buap, Apartado Postal #1467, Col. Centro, C.P. 72000, Puebla, Puebla, Mexico. Tel. +22-29-55-00 x 5813. E-mail careyes56@hotmail.com. Web site <http://www.mextesol.uvmnet.edu>.
- 11-12 (North and Central America) Youth Change. Workshop, "Breakthrough strategies to teach and counsel troubled youth," Portland, Oregon. Contact Ruth Wells, Youth Change, 275 North Third Street, Woodburn, Oregon 97071. Tel. 800-545-5736. Fax 503-982-7910. E-mail dwells@youthchg.com. Web site <http://www.youthchg.com>.
- 12-21 (Australia and Asia) SPELT. Conference, "ELT Methodology and Research," Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Abbottabad, Hyderabad, Multan, Pethawar, and Quelta, Pakistan. Contact Conference Coordinator, SPELT, 206 New Kausar Square, Frere Town, Clifton, Karachi 75530, Pakistan. Tel. +92-21-5676307. Fax +92-21-5676307. E-mail spelt@cyber.net.pk.
- 12-13 (North and Central America) Intermountain TESOL. Conference, Ephraim, Utah. Contact Milton Witt, 2155 Hammond Drive, Taylorsville, Utah 84118. Tel. 801-253-1600 ext. 439. Fax 802-253-1687. E-mail mwitt@merit.com.

- 12-15 (North and Central America) ASOCOPI (Asociacion Colombiana de Profesores de Ingles). Conference, "Beyond Language Teaching : Growing Together," Medellin, Colombia. Contact Alba Lucia Calad, Cra 61 #9-90, Local 5, Cali, Colombia. Tel. +572-551-5634. Fax +572-551-5634. E-mail acalad@hotmail.com. Web site <http://www.asocopi.edu.co>.
- 14-16 (North and Central America) The California Virtual Campus. Conference, "CVC: 2001: Online Learning and Higher Education," Huntington Beach, California. Web site <http://pd.cvc.edu/conferences>.
- 18-20 (North and Central America) CoTESOL (Colorado TESOL). Silver Anniversary Conference, Longmont, Colorado. Contact Larry R. Fisher, 63 UCB, Boulder, Colorado 80309-0063. Tel. 303-938-2584. Fax 303-492-5515. E-mail fisherl@colorado.edu. Web site <http://www.colorado.edu/iec/cotesol/>.
- 18-20 (North and Central America) University of the Americas, Puebla. Fifth Congress on the Americas, "TESL/TEFL Research and Practice," Puebla, Mexico. Contact Liliana Anglada, Area Chair, Achaval Rodriguez 5000, 1146 Cordoba, Argentina. E-mail langlada@arnet.com.ar. Web site <http://www.udlap.mx/congress/>.
- 18-21 (Europe and Eurasia) Saint-Petersburg English Language Teachers' Association (SPELTA). 8th ESP Anti-Conference, St. Petersburg, Russia. Contact Tatiana Ivanova, SPELTA President. E-mail tivanova@ti2705.spb.edu. Web site <http://spelta.spb.ru/anti-conference/start.html>.
- 19-20 (North and Central America) MIDTESOL. Conference, "Understanding and Using the TESOL Standards," Lee's Summit, Missouri. Contact Ron Long. E-mail rwl@iland.net. Web site <http://www.midtesol.org>.
- 19-21 (North and Central America) New York State TESOL (NYS TESOL). Conference, "Language Testing Matters: Make it Count!," Rye Brook, New York. Contact Jee Wha Kim, c/o Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 West 120th Street, Box 66, New York, New York 10027. Tel. 212-678-3936. Fax 212-678-3428. E-mail jeewha@yahoo.com. Web site <http://www.nystesol.org>.
- 19-20 (North and Central America) Michigan TESOL (MITESOL). Fall Conference, "ESL: What a difference we make!," Ann Arbor, Michigan. Contact Maggie Phillips, MITESOL Conference Coordinator, 2160 Overlook Court, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103. Tel. 734-665-3066. Web site <http://www.mitesol.org>.
- 25-27 (Europe and Eurasia) Expolingua Portugal. 12th Portuguese Fair for Languages and Culture, Lisbon, Portugal. Contact SILC, Lda, Rua da Esperanca, 4-2, 1200-657, Lisboa, Portugal. Tel. +351-21-396-60-89. Fax +351-21-396-62-23. E-mail info@expolingua.pt. Web site <http://www.expolingua.pt>.
- 26-28 (Africa and the Middle East) Egyptesol. Annual convention and book exhibition, "Best Practice in TEFL," Cairo, Egypt. Contact Deena Boraie. E-mail dboarie@aucegypt.edu. E-mail cdc@gega.net. Web site <http://www.Egyptesol.org>.

- 26-27 (North and Central America) Ohio TESOL and Lau Resource Center. Fall 2001 Conference, "Passport to Success," Columbus, Ohio. Contact Carolyn Bolin, OTESOL Fall Conference Chair, 255 South Broadleigh Road, Bexley, Ohio 43209. Tel. 614-239-0188. E-mail PENGUINTOO@msn.com. Web site <http://willow.cats.ohio.edu/~otesol/proposal.htm>.
- 26-28 (Europe and Eurasia) New Bulgaria University. Conference, "Speakers of Smaller Languages in the Big World," Sofia, Bulgaria. Contact Dr. Maria Georgieva, Associate Professor in English, Head of Department of Modern and Applied Linguistics, New Bulgarian University, 65, Shipchenski prohod, entrance3, Sofia, Bulgaria. Tel/ Fax +359-2-9712758. E-mail mageorg@nlcv.net. Web site <http://www.nbu.bg>.
- 26 (North and Central America) Oregon TESOL (ORTESOL). Conference, "2001: An ESL Odyssey," Albany, Oregon. Contact Kathy Akiyama, Conference Chair. Tel. 503-845-3951. E-mail kakiyama@mtangel.edu.

November 2001

- 1-2 (North and Central America) Youth Change. Workshop, "Breakthrough strategies to teach and counsel troubled youth," Seattle, Washington. Contact Ruth Wells, Youth Change, 275 North Third Street, Woodburn, Oregon 97071. Tel. 800-545-5736. Fax 503-982-7910. E-mail dwells@youthchg.com. Web site <http://www.youthchg.com>.
- 2-3 (Europe and Eurasia) English Teachers Association of Switzerland (ETAS). 18th Annual General Meeting, Buelach ZH, Switzerland. Contact ETAS Administration, Rue de Hoptal 32, CH-1400 Yverdon, Tel. +41 (0)24 420-3254. Fax +41 (0)24 420-3257 E-mail admin@etas.ch.
- 3 (North and Central America) Maryland TESOL. Conference, Arnold, Maryland. Contact Elizabeth Holden, 841 W. 35th Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21211. Tel. 301-386-7559. E-mail holdenek@pg.cc.md.us.
- 3-4 (North and Central America) TextESOL III. Conference, "2001: An ESL Odyssey," Austin, Texas. Proposal Deadline August 15, 2001. Contact David Schwarzer, University of Texas, Curriculum and Instruction, S28 528E, Austin, Texas 78712. Tel. 512-471-4078. E-mail sdavid@mail.utexas.edu. Web site <http://www.textesol.org/region3>.
- 9-11 (Australia and Asia) AILA Scientific Commission on Discourse Analysis, "Discourses on Discourse: The Language of Education and Work," Sydney, Australia. Proposal Deadline August 17, 2001. Contact Renata Atkin, Centre for Language and Literacy, University of Technology, Sydney 2007, Australia. Tel. +61-2-95143853. Fax +61-2-95143939. E-mail Renata.Atkin@uts.edu.au. Web site <http://www.education.uts.edu.au/centres/cll/discourses.html>.
- 10-11 (Europe and Eurasia) NetLearn Solutions. On-line conference, "ELT: Evolution of Learning and Teaching." Proposal Deadline August 17, 2001. Contact Eric Baber, NetLearn Solutions. E-mail eric@nll.co.uk. Web site <http://www.eltoc.com>.

- 10 (Europe and Eurasia) TESOL-Scotland. Conference, "TESOL and the Classroom." Glasgow, Scotland. Contact Robin R. Mackenzie, PO Box 23024, Edinburg EH3 6WB, Scotland. Tel/Fax +44-131-557-8642. E-mail robin.mackenzie@ision.co.uk.
- 10 (North and Central America) Indiana TESOL. Conference, "Facilitating Academic Language Learning," Indianapolis, Indiana. Proposal Deadline September 28, 2001. Contact Ahmar Mahboob, Center for English Language Testing, 313 Memorial Hall, Bloomington, Indiana 47405. Tel. 812-855-6457. E-mail vicepresident@intesol.org.
- 15-17 (Europe and Eurasia) Anadolu University. The 5th International INGED-Anadolu ELT Conference, "Teaching and Learning English: Meeting Challenges," Ehir, Turkey. Proposal Deadline August 31, 2001. Contact Bahar Canturk. E-mail bcanturk@anadolu.edu.tr.
- 15-18 (North and Central America) National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Annual Convention, "Recreating the Classroom," Baltimore, Maryland. Contact NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801-1096. Tel. 217-328-3870. Fax 217-278-3761. E-mail public_info@ncte.org. Web site http://www.ncte.org.
- 15-16 (North and Central America) Youth Change. Workshop, "Breakthrough strategies to teach and counsel troubled youth," Salt Lake City, Utah. Contact Ruth Wells, Youth Change, 275 North Third Street, Woodburn, Oregon 97071. Tel. 800-545-5736. Fax 503-982-7910. E-mail dwells@youthchg.com. Web site http://www.youthchg.com.
- 16-18 (Australia and Asia) AMEP Research Centre, Macquarie University. AMEP Conference 2001, "Changing Patterns: Language and Settlement in the AMEP", Adelaide, Australia. Contact Linda Ross, AMEP Research Centre, NCELTR, Macquarie University, Sydney NSW, Australia 2109. Tel. +61-2-9850-7592. Fax +61-2-9850-7849. E-mail lross@nceltr.mq.edu.au.
- 16-18 (Australia and Asia) English Teachers' Association-Republic of China (ETA-ROC). Conference, "ELT in Taiwan: Retrospect and Prospect," Taipei, Taiwan. Contact Leung Yiu-Nam, Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, National Tsing Hua University, 101 Sec. 2, Kuang Fu Road, Hsinchu, Taiwan 30043. Tel. +866-3-5742707. Fax +866-3-5718977. E-mail ynleung@mx.nthu.edu.tw. Web site http://helios.fl.nthu.edu.tw/~ETA/.
- 16-17 (Europe and Eurasia) TESOL France. Conference, "Bridging the Gap=Theory and Practice in Second Language Acquisition," Paris, France. Contact Marie-Pierre Beaulieu, 7 rue des Buchettes, 95100 Paris, France. Tel. +331-39826800. E-mail marianni@wanadoo.fr. Web site http://tesol-france.org.
- 16-18 (Europe and Eurasia) ICEF GmbH. Expolingua Berlin 2001, "International Fair for Languages and Cultures," Berlin, Germany. Contact ICEF GmbH, Niebuhr Str. 69A, 10692 Berlin, Germany. Tel. +49-30-327-61-40. Fax +49-30-324-98-33. E-mail expolingua@icef.com. Web site http://www.expolingua.com.
- 16-17 (North and Central America) Puerto Rico TESOL. 28th Annual Convention. "A Rainbow of Intelligences=Uniqueness," San Juan, Puerto Rico. Contact Marta Y. Pabellon, PRTESOL, Calle Canarias 1156, San Juan, Puerto Rico 009205. Tel. 787-774-9821. Fax 787-774-9821. E-mail pabellonprtesol@yahoo.com. Web site http://coqui.lce.org/human/prtesol.htm.
- 16-28 (North and Central America) American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Annual conference, Washington, DC. Contact ACTFL, 6 Executive Plaza, Yonkers, New York 10701-6801. Tel. 914-963-8830. Fax 914-963-1275. E-mail actflhq@aol.com. Web site http://www.actfl.org/.
- 22-25 (Australia and Asia) Japan Association for Language Teaching. Pan Asian Conference 3 at JALT 2001, "A Language Odyssey," Kitakyushu, Japan. Contact David McMurray, Japan Association for Language Teaching, Urban Edge Building, 5F, 1-37-9 Taito, Taito-ku, Tokyo 110-0016. Tel. +81-3-3837-1630. Fax +81-3-3837-1631 E-mail jalt@gol.com. Web site http://www.jalt.org.
- 22-24 (North and Central America) TESL Ontario. Conference, "For the Love of Language," Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Contact TESL Ontario, Suite #405, 27 Carlton Street, Toronto, Ontario M5B 1L2, Canada. Tel. 416-593-4243 or 1-800-327-4827. Fax 416-593-0164. E-mail office@teslontario.org. Web site http://www.teslontario.org.
- 24 (Europe and Eurasia) IATEFL Global Issues SIG. Workshop, "Conversation Groups/Circles: Just bla! bla! or content-oriented communication? Methodological concepts, useful ideas, successful teaching units," Bielefeld, Germany. Proposal Deadline October 1, 2001. Contact Department of Modern Languages, Volkshochschule Bielefeld, Ravensberger Park 1, D-33607, Bielefeld, Germany. Tel. +49-521/51-2331. Fax +49-521/51-3431. E-mail wolfgang.ridder@bielefeld.de.
- 29-30 (North and Central America) Youth Change. Workshop, "Breakthrough strategies to teach and counsel troubled youth," Atlanta, Georgia. Contact Ruth Wells, Youth Change, 275 North Third Street, Woodburn, Oregon 97071. Tel. 800-545-5736. Fax 503-982-7910. E-mail dwells@youthchg.com. Web site http://www.youthchg.com.
- 29-December 2. (North and Central America) National Multicultural Institute. Fall Conference, "Building Personal and Professional Competence in a Multicultural Society," Washington, DC. Contact David Chang. Tel. 202-483-0700 x223. Fax 202-483-5233. E-mail nmci@nmci.org. Web site http://www.nmci.org.
- 30-December 1. (Europe and Eurasia) TESOL-ITALY. Conference, "Towards Understanding Pathways Across Countries and Cultures," Rome, Italy. Contact Paolo Coppari, Via Garibaldi, 26, 01013 Cura (Viterbo), Italy. Tel. +39-761-482664. Fax +39-6-4674278. E-mail c.paolo@thunder.it.
- December 2001**
- 6-7 (North and Central America) Youth Change. Workshop, "Breakthrough strategies to teach and counsel troubled youth," Sacramento, California. Contact Ruth Wells, Youth Change, 275 North Third Street, Woodburn, Oregon 97071. Tel. 800-545-5736. Fax 503-982-7910. E-mail dwells@youthchg.com. Web site http://www.youthchg.com.
- 7-8 (North and Central America) Kentucky Department of Education and Kentucky Department for Adult Education and Literacy. ESL Conference 2001, Louisville, Kentucky. Contact Annie Rooney French. Tel. 502-564-7056. E-mail afrench@kde.state.ky.us.
- 13-15 (Australia and Asia) International Language in Education. Conference 2001, "reflecting on Language in Education," Hong Kong, SAR. Contact the Secretariat, ILEC 2001, c/o Centre for Language in Education, The Hong Kong Institute of Education, 10 Lo Ping Road, Tai Po, N.T., Hong Kong, SAR. Tel. +852-2948-8043/8044. Fax +852-2948-8042. E-mail ilec@cle.ied.edu.hk. Web site http://www.ied.edu.hk/ilec2001.
- January 2002**
- 3-6 (North and Central America) Linguistic Society of America. Conference, San Francisco, California. Contact Margaret Reynolds, LSA, 1325 18th Street, NW, Suite 211, Washington, DC 20036. Tel. 202-835-1714. Fax 202-835-1717. E-mail lsa@lsadc.org. Web site http://www.lsadc.org.
- 20-22 (Australia and Asia) Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA). 2002 National Conference, "Learners from Diverse Cultures," Stamford Grand, Glenelg, Australia. Contact Conference Organizer. Tel. +61-8-8296-9610. Fax +61-8-8296-8188. E-mail adevents@tpg.com.au. Web site http://www.tesol.org.au.
- 23-25 (North and Central America) Asociacion Costarricense de Profesores de Ingles (ACPI- TESOL). Conference, "Globalization and ELT: The Challenge for Costa Rica," San Jose, Costa Rica. Contact Elieth Matamores. Tel. +506-393-9029. Fax +506-222-5023. E-mail elieth-m@hotmail.com.
- 28-29 (Europe and Eurasia) TESOL Ukraine. VII TESOL Ukraine Conference, Chernihiv, Ukraine. Contact Svitlana Bobyr, Prospekt zhovtnevoj, Revolutsiji 159, Apt. 21, Chernihiv, 14057, Ukraine. Tel. +380-462-278812. Fax +380-462-126364. E-mail chspu@mail.cn.ua.
- March 2002**
- 14-17 (North and Central America) California TESOL (CATESOL). Conference, "Learning with Purpose," San Francisco, California. Proposal Deadline November 1, 2001. Contact Kathy Sherak, 1472 Alemany Boulevard, San Francisco, California 94112. Tel. 415-338-7382. Fax 415-338-1717. E-mail ksherak@sfsu.edu. Web site http://www.catesol.org.
- 15-17 (Europe and Eurasia) TESOL-SPAIN. 25th National Convention, "Access Europe: Language as a Common Currency," Madrid, Spain. Proposal Deadline October 30, 2001. Contact

Holly Vass, Convention Coordinator,
CL. San Felipe, 11-2 Ctro. Madrid,
Spain. E-mail holly.vass@wanadoo.es.
Web site <http://www.eirelink.com/tesol-sp/>.

19-23 (North and Central America) National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE). 31st Annual Bilingual/Multilingual Education Conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Contact NABE, 1030 15th Street, NW, Ste. 470, Washington, DC 20005-1503. Tel. 202-898-1829. Fax 202-789-2866. E-mail nabe@nabe.org. Web site <http://www.nabe.org>.

20-22 (Africa and the Middle East) TESOL Arabia. 8th Annual International Conference, "Critical Reflection and Practice," Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Proposal Deadline November 14, 2002. Contact Zafar Syed. E-mail z.syed@mli.ac.ae. Web site <http://tesolarabia.org>.

28-30 (Europe and Eurasia) The University of Technology of Compiègne. UNTELE 2002 Conference, "Use of New Technologies in Foreign Language Teaching," Compiègne, France. Contact Abdi Kazeroni, The University of Technology of Compiègne, BP 60319, 60203 Compiègne Cedex, France. Tel. +33-3-44-23-52-08. Fax +33-3-44-23-52-12. E-mail langues@utc.fr. Web site <http://www.utc.fr/~untele>.

April 2002

6-11 (North and Central America) National Migrant Education Conference, St. Louis, Missouri. Contact National Migrant Education Conference, PO Box 2132, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70816.

6-9 (North and Central America) American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL). Annual conference, Salt Lake City, Utah. Contact AAAL, PO Box 21686, Eagan, Minnesota 55121-0686. Tel. 612-953-0805. Fax 612-431-8404. E-mail aaaloffice@aaal.org. Web site <http://www.aaal.org>.

9-13 (North and Central America) Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL). Annual conference (including pre- and postconvention institutes, and publisher and software exhibition), Salt Lake City, Utah. Contact TESOL, 700 South Washington St., Ste. 200, Alexandria, Virginia 22314. Tel. 703-836-0774. Fax 703-836-7864. E-mail conventions@tesol.org. Web site <http://www.tesol.org>.

May 2002

11-12 (Asia) JALT (Japan TESOL) Pan SIG Conference, Kyoto Institute of Technology. Three SIG mini-conferences in one: College and University Educators on Curriculum Innovation; Bilingualism Development Forum and Testing and Evaluation in the 21st Century. Contact Peter Wanner. E-mail pwanner@ipc.kit.ac.jp. Web site <http://www.jalt.org/pansig.html>

17-19 (South America) Venezuela TESOL (VenTESOL). Conference, Margarita, Venezuela. Contact Natalia McCarthy or Lucius Daniel. E-mail natiamccarthy@cantv.net. E-mail ldaniel@unimet.edu.ve.

June 2002

28-July 1. (Australia and Asia) Community Languages and ESOL (CLESOL) and TESOL ANZ. Conference, Wellington, New Zealand. Contact Elizabeth Morrison, Languages, Massey University of Wellington, Private Box 756, Wellington, New Zealand. Tel. +64-4-801-2794 x 6907. E-mail e.n.morrison@massey.ac.nz. Web site <http://www.tesolanz.org.nz/CLESOL>.

July 2002

1-26 (North and Central America) Penn State Center for Language Acquisition. Summer Institute for Applied Linguistics, State College, Pennsylvania. Contact James P. Lantolf, Director, Center for Language Acquisition, The Pennsylvania State University, 304 Sparks Building, University Park, Pennsylvania 16802. E-mail conferenceinfo1@outreach.psu.edu. Web site <http://www.outreach.psu.edu/C%2611/AppliedLinguistics/>.

August 2002

7-11 (Europe) Organization in Discourse II: The Historical Perspective: An international conference on historical discourse linguistics, Turku, Finland. Contact: Web: <http://www.utu.fi/hum/engfil/oid2002.html>

4-6 (Europe) Sociolinguistics Symposium 14 Gent, Belgium Web site <http://bank.rug.ac.be/ss14/>

6-9 (North America) American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) Annual Conference
Salt Lake City Hilton, Salk Lake City, UT E-mail: aaaloffice@aaal.org

18-21 (North America) Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL) New York Hilton & Towers NYC. Web site: <http://www.dickinson.edu/nectfl/future.html>

September 2002

? (Europe) Conference of University Teachers of German in Great Britain and Ireland Meeting Cork, Ireland. Web site: <http://www.swan.ac.uk/german/cutg/futmeet.htm>

October 2002

31-November 3. (Europe and Eurasia) TESOL Euromed. First European Regional Affiliate Convention, "Convergence and Diversity: English in the 21st Century," Edinburgh, Scotland. Proposal Deadline December 31, 2001. Contact Robin Mackenzie, Honorary Secretary, TESOL Scotland, PO Box 23024, Edinburgh EH3 6WB, Scotland, United Kingdom. Tel./Fax +44-131-556-3838. Web site <http://www.heimdall-scot.co.uk/tesoleuromed>.

November 2002

22-24 (North and Central America) American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah. Contact ACTFL, 6 Executive Plaza, Yonkers, New York 10701-6801. Tel. 914-963-8830. Fax 914-963-1275. E-mail actflhq@aol.com. Web site <http://www.actfl.org>.

6-9 (North America) Annual Conference of the American Translators Association Atlanta, Georgia, Hyatt Regency Hotel. Web site: <http://www.atanet.org/conference/futuresites.htm>

December 2002

16-21 (Asia) AILA 2002 - 13th World Congress of Applied Linguistics: Applied Linguistics in the 21st Century: Opportunities for Innovation and Creativity, Singapore. Website: <http://lisa.tolk.su.se/2001-.html#16-21>
December 2002 AILA

March 2003

25-29 (North and Central America) Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL). Annual conference (including pre- and postconvention institutes, and publisher and software exhibition), Baltimore, Maryland. Contact TESOL, 700 South Washington St., Ste. 200, Alexandria, Virginia 22314. Tel. 703-836-0774. Fax 703-836-7864. E-mail conventions@tesol.org. Web site <http://www.tesol.org>.

April 2003

10-13 (North America) Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL) Omni-Shoreham Hotel, Washington, DC. Web site: <http://omega.dickinson.edu/prorg/nectfl/future.html>

November 2003

5-8 (North America) American Translators' Association annual conference
Pointe Hilton South Mountain Resort, Phoenix, Arizona. Web site: <http://lisa.tolk.su.se/2001-.html#5-8> November 2003 ATA

Journal Writing: Some Observations from a Hong Kong High School Classroom

*Christopher Kelen,
English Department, University of Macau*

The reality principle: a journal entry

Dear Dr Kelen,

A few years ago I discovered that foreigners think everything in English. I mean foreigners' thoughts are in English but not in Chinese. Ha! Ha! I am so stupid. I only found this fact a few years before. I wonder how people can think in English. You know. I think in Cantonese!! But recently, I found myself can think something in English. I did not try to think in English. But I just found myself can think something in English. Ha! That's quite unbelievable!! Let me tell you something. When I was a primary school student I did not know that what I have learnt in English lesson can be used to talk to a foreigner. That means I did not know one of my subject -> English can be used in daily life. So of course I did not know the materials of my English lessons -> 'English words' can help me to communicate with foreigners. How stupid was I?

The 'unreality' of English in many foreign language learning contexts is not difficult to establish. This paper attempts to show how journals can be a means of addressing such issues as how to make English real, and how to make meaning matter. The exchange effected by means of a journal is one which demands a degree of reflection which could probably only begin in writing, as Peter Elbow has pointed out.

It is simply a fact that most of the time you can't find the right words till you know exactly what you are saying, but you can't know exactly what you are saying until you find the right words. The consequence is that you must start by writing the wrong meanings in the wrong words, but keep writing till you get the right meanings in the right words. Only at the end will you know what you are saying. (Elbow, 1973, p. 26)

That is, it could not have begun in the 'real time' of a face-to-face interaction. So writing can be the way into a conversation in which meaning really matters because people care about what they're saying. Toby Fulwiler notes that advocates of journals make just this assumption about the nature of language and learning: "When people care about what they write, they learn and understand better" (Fulwiler 1987, p. 5).

Trust, interest and fluency

The journal activities described here have been run on the basis of the Freudian idea of a 'speaking cure': the idea, crudely transferred, that the (relatively unguided and generically unconstrained) production of text by the student will help, in this case, to develop proficiency. This author's practice is based on the following guiding principles.

The first principle is trust. Asking students to keep a journal implies that we trust them to have:

- something worth saying/writing; something which we are interested in reading and responding to
- the ability to use the English language competently enough to communicate with us on their own terms
- the ability to make their own meaning, frame their own questions, hold up their own half of a dialogue (with us).

It also means that we wish students to trust us: to keep their secrets and not to embarrass them. It implies the confidence of interlocutors in each other, their good faith for one another.

Journal writing means taking a student seriously as someone capable of communicating in the target language, someone worth communicating with, someone with something to say.

Perhaps one only achieves that status through practice. But perhaps one only achieves the feat of having something worthwhile to say by being given credit for having something to say, by having it expected of one. That's where generic expectations can help the student into a culture. The letter form and familiar, respectful style of a 'classic' journal entry fits that heuristic bill. It assumes – and is a means of fostering – mutual trust.

The second principle is interest. Asking students to keep a journal implies that we are interested in what they have to say; hopefully interested enough to respond. By committing ourselves to the sort of relationship implied by the journal we make ourselves open to students: their ideas, their interests, their feedback.

The third principle is valuing fluency. In a journal one uses the words one has for one's own purposes or for purposes which one makes one's own. It is on this principle that we may think of a journal between native teacher and non-native student as 'real' communication. Unlike the many and varied accuracy-focused tasks for which students pick up pens, the point of the journal is to write what you want to mean; to learn what you want to mean and to learn to mean through the process of making meaning.

Who directs the journal?

To function as a self-directed, self-motivated, student-centered activity, in principle, students should decide the topics, frame the questions and the general discursive patterns of the interaction. They should decide how much and what sort of interaction there should be. They should write the instructions to the reader of their journal.

The result of a general instruction along these lines is that some students write to imaginary friends (particularly common among those familiar with Ann Frank's diary), some students practise essay writing or speech writing, some students write stories or poems and some students try all of these out. Most do attempt to enter into a conversation-in-writing with the teacher, even if they digress into various other genres along the way.

Shifting between genres is a strong sign that the task actually means something to the student. One type of text is not enough to encompass the kinds of conversation they wish to have with the teacher. A single journal entry may seek advice

on several issues, offer a poem for criticism, ask a question about grammar, give some examples of sentences (wanting to know whether they are faulty or not). The student is learning some useful lessons about the different register demands of different genres and possibly about how to get between them. Some teachers and students find this disconcerting. But it's better to be confused than to be stuck.

Compulsion and frequency

Should journal writing be compulsory? Compulsion seems counter to the spirit of the exercise. But what if, in the absence of any culture of voluntarism, non-compulsory and non-assessable tasks do not happen? How will new tasks and genres be introduced to students?

There is a great deal of variation in the level of interest which the journal inspires, especially initially when the student has little past experience to relate it to. The student who demands direct examination relevance of every exercise will be puzzled by the whole idea. Evolving real communication from a homework task demanded by the teacher requires firstly having the task become a habit and secondly letting that habit fulfil some personally useful function for the student. A certain amount of staring at the blank page may be involved in getting that process started.

In practice, requiring it less than once a week will make the journal a difficult habit to establish. Being part of your week or your day encourages the kind of autonomous habit for which the journal should provide practice: regularly and independently making meaning in the target language. In terms of feedback, a quick turnaround on the part of the teacher is essential in maintaining the students' feeling that it is they who are controlling the journal agenda. Students should have *their* book with them most of the time. Otherwise the journal takes on an institutional ambience and the work associated with it becomes a chore: something done for the school.

For whose eyes?

The privacy and fluency focus of the journal make it an aberrant text production type in a Hong Kong high school. In the normal course of events all students' work is available to the scrutiny of, not only the class teacher, but everyone higher than the teacher in the chain of

command. In some teaching contexts the marking of writing is uniformly conducted on a punitive error-based scheme (deduct two marks for every error from a notionally perfect score). Such a system is anathema to fluency practice. Why write over a word limit when every word over is potentially two marks deducted? Conversely journal writing is anathema to the mindset behind the accuracy-focused marking scheme: a type of writing focused on meaning, fluency and the student's agenda. In journal writing the teacher does not exercise the kind of control which an accuracy-based scheme assumes. Privacy is thus empowering.

New personality: different reality

Learning to express a different personality and a different reality are important steps on the path to 'belief' in the utility of an idiom and that belief may serve as an intrinsic motivation even for people who cannot be convinced of that kind of motive. Hong Kong has plenty of opportunities for entry into the 'other' world of the English language: newspapers, radio, television, legal and bureaucratic systems operating bilingually, etc. And yet the English language seems to have a set of impersonal (even bureaucratic) associations which tend to keep the learner at arm's length. Probably one of the most successful means to the end of reifying the English language is the adoption (widespread and often voluntary) of English names, at least for the English classroom. The journal can be seen as a logical next step in the development of an English language personality. Deciding how to write means deciding who to be.

Some students write in great detail about their daily routines. In these cases, personality emerges (in the new language) from the need to identify themselves, to claim habits and routines as their own:

I usually get up at 7 o'clock in the morning. However I do not usually want to wake up immediately. Therefore I usually get up at 7.30 o'clock in the morning.

This may be the result of guessing what an appropriate first task would be, but still opinions often shine through a haze of compulsory and routine activity, routinely accounted. The analysis of the characteristics of the learning environment is sometimes acute:

The start of the first lesson represents the

inauguration of the boring lessons. It's quite terrible. Sometimes I'll concentrate on my notes and drop down some main points. But when I find that most of my classmates are thinking of any other things (daydreaming) I cannot concentrate anymore. Then I'll feel that lessons are boring because I do not concentrate.

The foreign teacher gains an impression of how the school and classroom feel to the student. This classroom does not feel like any kind of a paradise to me. It's a very bland, cramped and regimented space.

A dialogic tool

The journal as a negotiated and dialogic tool for student-teacher communication is potentially an instrument for three related types of feedback: ongoing needs analysis, course evaluation and cultural adjustment. The journal assists student and teacher in tailoring their language, demeanour and the curriculum they share to the specific needs of their interaction and its particular situating factors. From the teacher's point of view the journal provides the students' most valuable language input. It is of diagnostic value although it will demonstrate a lesser degree of accuracy than students are capable of in more structured and language focused tasks. As the students' 'free-est' writing it places an onus on self-expression. Because it is free the value of this writing from the teacher's point of view is mainly in finding out who the students are in terms of culture and in terms of personality.

Because of the perpetual feedback loop it entails, the journal contains a mechanism for fine tuning itself both to its participants and to their institutional/environmental setting.

An ongoing feedback process

The value of the journal exercise is as part of an ongoing feedback process. By means of the journal, an unbroken cycle leads from needs analysis to course evaluation and makes these part of the regular business of learning and student-teacher interactivity. Constant compulsory conferencing trains the student in the skill of setting her or his own agendas as a learner, it gives that meta-heuristic task momentum.

In the Hong Kong high school classroom writing always tends to be accuracy-focused (speaking conversely always tends to be fluency-focussed). Students need practice at various

points on the continuum from fluency to accuracy in both writing and speaking. Associating a particular skill with fluency or with accuracy unbalances a student's growth towards proficiency. Some students use their journals to express their ambivalence about such learning methods.

Let me tell you one sad thing. When I get back my composition from you I always feel frustrated. The composition always consists of lots of mistakes. Indeed I felt sad (but not too horrible). But I usually do not know how to correct the mistakes. I feel that your style of writing is different from local English teachers (very different). I think I still cannot adapt. And it will be very difficult for me (or us) to change. But I believe that time can change everything.

A student formulating these sentiments and ideas into any essay genre would inevitably eliminate the ambivalence, correctly assuming that such confusion would be unhelpful on the mark front. But expressing ambivalence and working out what one feels through writing aids personal development, the development of the teacher-student relationship and the development of fluency in writing. In this entry, the journal is serving the function of a bridge from writing to speech: a bridge into fluency. Feedback which would not happen in person is possible on paper.

A writing cure

The 'therapeutic' function of extensive, self-motivated writing (self-expression promoted for its own sake and in its own right), coincides nicely with a communicative or task-based language learning agenda. It does so not only in terms of providing fluency practice which is otherwise lacking, but also in establishing between student and teacher-as-interlocutor a wider range of possible roles. The teacher becomes, *inter-alia*, the student's listener-advisor. This is a way of not necessarily breaking down the teacher's bureaucratic persona but of placing another personality alongside it, allowing the student another way to be with the teacher, such that more genres and registers of discourse are practised. Extending the range of practice is an important step in the series of simulations and approximations of the real which mark the road to authentic language use.

Journal writing has the function of offering a venue for self-expression in a context where there generally are few such opportunities. The teacher should therefore expect to be, at least occasionally, on the receiving end of a tirade about problems, pressures and lacks to which the student feels subject. When this happens it is quite possible that the problem has not been communicated to anyone else. The journal has come to provide a vehicle for the expression of personality not available by other means. Doing something in English which could not be done by any other means is a breakthrough for students who did not know that English 'could be used in daily life'.

Not every student will avail herself of counseling opportunities via the journal. But those who do achieve something in English which couldn't have been achieved in the mother tongue. They receive the advice of a different culture. That kind of achievement places the student squarely on the road to autonomy: she has gone into the other culture and found there what she needed. She has, along that road, given the foreign teacher a pastoral care role in the school, something which would otherwise have been difficult for him to achieve.

Reflection & making meaning matter

The journal relies on and fosters the self-consciousness of the learner and the reality of communication in the target language. Getting students to talk or write about what English means to them, what uses it has for them, how they manage to make or fail to make meaning by means of it, may seem a little warm and fuzzy for the hard-nosed, efficiency-minded language teacher. In fact it is wise not to underestimate the value of conscious reflection on one's efforts as a learner. If that kind of conscious reflection makes the target language real to its apprentices, if it helps them draw the line between what they say themselves and what they have merely been taught to say, then it will be of great value to them as long-term language learners. It will have pressed them in the direction of autonomy. And it will have been a very significant motivating tool in the relationship between teacher and student.

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its for the objective setting process may often be too hastily dismissed. Arguably, for some students — those, for example, learning a new language for purely academic reasons or who are by nature highly analytic learners — this approach may be the appropriate one. In fact, in the early stages of the curriculum process — that is, before the commencement of classes and prior to teacher/learner objectives negotiation — few alternatives to this approach may exist. Though based purely on linguistic/grammatical competency, such 'traditional-approach' objectives may provide the teacher/curriculum planner with essential organizational 'hooks' on which can be 'hung' the language functions, tasks, and genre- and competency-based activities appropriate to the learners' needs and level of development. In fine, they can be devices that can help provide cohesion for the planning and content of the course.

Present academic literature is rife with terminology for describing different approaches in orientation toward teacher/student interaction: authoritarian, democratic, subject-centred, teacher-centred, 'negotiated', dogmatic, learner-centred, 'collaborative' and the like. Such terms tend to find their way to one or the other end of a continuum, with student-centred and teacher-centred respectively defining the extremes. Invariably, at the centre of any discussion concerning these approaches is the issue of course objectives, for as the door closes on the last day of classes all teachers are confronted with the self-same question: Was the class a success? And any teacher, who is responsible to his or her students, must hold the notion of success to a standard or criteria based in large part on student need. Clearly, the asking of this question implies that objectives have, in some form, been prespecified.

But what should the objective(s) of a course of study be? The most obvious — though none too informative — answer to this question is to facilitate the learning process (though the use of the term 'facilitate' already presumes an ideology of sorts). If we in fact begin with student needs, these needs must then be defined. And, to be sure, they are wide ranging. They can be linguistic/grammatical, functional and, no less important, psychological — whether language specific or not. Ideally, the teacher/planner should attempt to tailor course objectives to the multifarious needs of each student. In practice, however, most teachers become proficient time-managers who learn to allocate their resources to those areas of most productive return. The

result is that some student needs tend not to be fulfilled.

So where does this leave the teacher as he or she mulls over course objectives before the commencement of a new class? Before dealing with this question, let me look for a moment at the issue of variability within classes.

Clearly, no class is made up of like-minded students. Much has been written about the fact that different students learn in different ways. Some students, for example, respond to subjective feedback, while others require concrete objective indices of achievement. For some learners attaining objective goals is an important source of motivation; for others it is not.

Teaching Japanese students here in Japan, I am often chagrined at the thought that much of what is being learned is for the sake of obtaining a desired test score. Yet, I have noted, nonetheless, in some of these test-oriented students a diligence that is lacking among those who have not set themselves specific goals. Negotiating with such means-ends students often proves an unrewarding endeavour: they expect to be teacher-led and established goals preset. Clearly, motivation differs, as do students.

A crucial question, therefore, informing the specification of objectives is whether teachers and learners should aspire to be equal partners in the process of objectives negotiation. Inherent in the notion of equality is the presumption that students are in fact aware of their needs as language learners; it presumes that they are aware of both the short-term goals of their learning and its long-term significance.

Counter to such 'aware' learners are learners who, despite having achieved a certain fluency in the language, nevertheless have fossilized inaccuracies that severely hinder effective communication. Reasons for such poor linguistic performance are doubtless many. Yet one has to wonder whether this is the result of a lack of guidance from teachers who allowed the short term wants and 'needs' of their learners to compromise long term linguistic proficiency.

To assume that no, or at least a very loose set of, curriculum objectives need to be defined is to ignore the fact that stages in language development do in fact exist. Around what structures do teachers organize course materials if no objectives corresponding to language level are prespecified? Various alternatives to the linguistic/grammatical competency approach have been suggested, among them that course content be organized around specific tasks, genre or lan-

guage functions. However, these alternatives and the linguistic competency approach need not be opposed. On the contrary, the selection of specific materials from these alternatives can, I believe, be greatly informed by linguistic/grammatical objectives; that is, targeted linguistic competencies can serve to guide teachers in the selection of appropriately graded materials. Thus those linguistic/ grammatical features that have been targeted can serve as the 'hooks' around which to organize materials and direct students' needs. Though tasks, genre and language functions would still serve as the basis for the content of the course, decisions concerning which tasks, genre and language functions to include in the curriculum would be informed by predetermined grammatical objectives.

The success of a linguistic/grammatical approach of this sort would require that two conditions be met. First, it requires that those grammatical structures informing the selection of course materials be truly appropriate to the students' level of development. This means that only those needs that correspond to the particular structures of the learners' level would be addressed; needs ill-suited to the level would be postponed until the learner has reached the corresponding stage of development. Second, it would require that no strict timetable for achieving specific linguistic competencies be preestablished; students would progress to higher levels of competency at an individualized rate, and not at a rate predetermined by the objectives. This would require an ongoing process of evaluation to determine learner progress and to direct the refinement and modification of course objectives.

As a workable model, a linguistic/grammatical approach to the specification of objectives must be flexible. Objectives cannot be predetermined as fixed entities in the traditional sense, but must be thought of as constituting a malleable framework around which activities, tasks, language functions and the like are organized. By definition, an objective is a limiting idea. Likewise, the notion of a developmental stage is a prohibitive one, excluding those elements of the language that reside in the stages above it. A developmental stage modifies and refines the language by specifying which linguistic competencies are to be included in it. Entrance to the next stage is barred in part by the constraints of time. Specific predetermined elements of the language must be assimilated by the learner before his or her present stage can be left behind.

Thus constrained, the process of assimilation cannot be hurried. Part of the process the learner can control consciously; part of it proceeds subconsciously at its own pace. Thus, the exigencies of time oppose any approach that attempts to establish a timetable for language acquisition. And it is these constraints which demand that any approach to objectives specification be a flexible one.

A flexible approach to the specification of objectives must also extend to the role of the teacher in the curriculum process. The fact that all classes are composed of learners with a wide range of needs and objectives makes the role of any teacher a multifaceted one. Besides linguistic needs, learners have psychological needs that must be addressed. Therefore, a large portion of a teacher's responsibility is caring for a classes' psychological well-being. Traditionally, this has included attempts at instilling class morale, creating an atmosphere conducive to learning and bolstering the confidence of individual learners. Failure to address the psychological needs of a class can often be found rooted in various inappropriate teaching ideologies and wrongheaded agendas regarding teacher/learner interaction. Objectives that are too rigidly applied may be particularly culpable. When imposed by a teacher overly concerned with end products, the most well-intentioned objectives can suffocate the spirit of a class and turn the curriculum into a dictator of sorts, well removed from the needs of those it is there to serve. On this point the learner-centred approach points in the right direction: the ideal class leader is the one who can instill a sense of cooperation and involvement in those in his or her charge through a process of joint negotiation and consultation. Product and process are inseparable. Learners must trust that their teacher is aware of their needs and is, therefore, making curriculum decisions based on those needs for their short-term and long-term benefit. Trust, however, is not necessarily a given, and can, of course, be awarded for all the wrong reasons. But it is ensured when learners, through their own input into the planning process, feel that their various linguistic, psychological as well as social needs as members of a new small class community are being met. This is the basis of any democratic assembly. Yet, having said this, not all opinions deserve equal weight; some are simply better informed than others. Respecting opinions and embracing them are very different matters. Ultimately, the teacher those must de-

cide which to embrace, through recourse to his or her own experience and training. Likewise, decisions regarding the refinement and modification of objectives, and which learner needs to address, fall upon the teacher. The idea that teachers and learners are equal partners in negotiation, though perhaps acceding to political correctness, potentially sacrifices the guiding solicitude that should be the outgrowth of a teacher's training and experience. This is not, however, to make the teacher an authoritarian taskmaster. On the contrary, one's knowledge and training must be both directive and accom-

modating. Perhaps if Plato's captain had been a little more sensitive to the needs of his crew, more willing to share the secrets of the stars and to listen to what the winds were telling them, he wouldn't have found himself alone in a lifeboat on an unforgiving sea.

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Gaikokugo Communication in an Intensive Course Format: Experiential Learning at Japanese Universities

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Introduction

This paper is a case study of an intensive *Gaikokugo* (Foreign Language) Communication course conducted in the Faculty of Education at Hirosaki University in August, 2000 for all of the 180 first-year faculty students. The course was organized in response to the requirement by the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports, and Culture that all teaching license recipients have two credits in *Gaikokugo* Communication, which the faculty interpreted as English communication.

The Intensive Course

Intensive courses are defined by Scott and Conrad (1991) as those offered in time-compressed formats, and include such variations as summer sessions, interim sessions, foreign language training programs and weekend colleges. Intensive courses have been criticized for sacrificing the breadth of subject material, disregarding academic standards to accommodate time constraints, and obliging students to 'cram' information at the expense of genuine learning. However, on the basis of a review of roughly 100 studies on intensive courses, Scott and

Conrad found little evidence supporting such assertions. On the contrary:

1. Learning which occurs in a close sequence of sessions has been found to contribute to deep concentration and undivided intentionality. Negative interference due to concurrent class scheduling (several classes in varied subjects over a period of time), can be detrimental to learning, whereas positive interference, in which previously learned material positively interferes with current learning, contributes to retention.
2. Learning outcomes were found to be equal between traditional and intensive-course formats overall, and much higher in language-related courses. The studies that considered long-term retention also showed retention rates for intensive formats comparable to traditional formats.
3. Students have cited the convenience and efficiency, the opportunity for concentrated and uninterrupted study, and the inherent motivation as positive elements of

intensive courses. This, even though faculty do not perceive great differences in student performance in intensive formats. Faculty also mention fatigue, inability to cover equivalent amounts of material, and excessive preparation time as impediments to intensive courses (see Scott and Conrad, 1991).

The Intensive *Gaikokugo* Communication Course at Hirosaki University

The intensive *Gaikokugo* Communication course in the Faculty of Education at Hirosaki University consisted of three ninety-minute classes per day held over one five-day week (22.5 class-hours). The course accounted for the two-credit *gaikokugo* communication requirements of 180 pre-service education majors. Two full-time faculty members coordinated and six prefectural assistant language teachers (ALTs) served as instructors. The course consisted of three content components (Cross-cultural Understanding (excluded in this paper), Listening and Speaking, and Presentation - Written and Oral; one ninety-minute class in each component every day). The 180 students were split into six classes of thirty; the six ALTs worked in pairs alternating between two groups for the Listening and Speaking and the Presentation components.

Course objectives and materials

The objectives for the Listening and Speaking component and the Presentation component were primarily communicative, with the aim of allowing participants to put to use a limited range of structures they already knew in an intensive experience of 'real' communication. There was an explicit focus on reviewing these structures to lay the groundwork for this communicative experience. The program was developed by the coordinators using published materials and provided to students the first day. Instructors were asked to have students form groups and group work was encouraged.

1. Listening and speaking component

The listening activities were based on the *CNN Master Course: ACCESS* program (Melrose, 1996), which uses short segments of

past CNN news broadcasts. Previewing exercises included reading, vocabulary, and structure exercises, followed by viewing exercises. The listening activities required about 20 minutes of the ninety-minute Listening and Speaking component.

The speaking activities were organized on a three-step approach consisting of introduction of the grammar point (with examples), practice through controlled exercises, and use based on individual responses to prompts. The progression was from Present, Past, Future, Wh-Questions, Quantifiers, Articles, Gerunds and Infinitives to Modals.

2. Presentation component

The materials in the Presentation component included activities in both written and spoken forms. The first activity for each day consisted of completing a one to two-sentence summary of the video news broadcast watched in the Listening and Speaking component. Following this were specific writing and presentation activities as follows:

- Day One: personal information and personal preferences and self-introduction slogans
- Day Two: the paragraph: topic sentence and irrelevant information orally introduce Hirosaki University (information provided) orally introduce a place you know well (hometown, a store, etc.)
- Day Three: business letters; personal letters orally brainstorming word connections
- Day Four: informative writing: a newspaper article
- Day Five: informative writing: introducing your school from keywords to oral presentation

The activities included examples and guided practice followed by free activities with the content left to the student. Presentations were undertaken within each of the aforementioned thirty-member student groups.

Student feedback

Students were asked to qualitatively evaluate the course overall (in Japanese). The com-

ments can be categorized as relating to (a) course content, (b) class atmosphere, and (c) effect.

Course content:

Students found the content to be interesting and enjoyable. Some placed the material at an upper middle school level but felt that a review at this level was beneficial. Some alluded to the difficulty of the Listening component. Some requested more pre-activity explanation and error correction, with several going as far as to say they wanted instruction in Japanese. The most common call for change in content was for more practical or topical speaking exercises.

Class atmosphere:

The teacher was clearly the dominant factor in making the experience meaningful for the student. Commonly used words for both class and teacher included *fun, interesting, good atmosphere, friendly*; one student found the teacher *dynamic*, another used the term *powerful* (author's translations). An important bonding seemed to take place as the references to the 'happiness of having — *sensei* as my teacher' were numerous. Students found the group aspect to be valuable, although suggestions included keeping the same groups for the entire week, using a better way of assigning group members, or letting students choose their own groups.

Course effect:

Students referred to an increase in confidence in using English, an increase in motivation to study English, and a widening of their world. The combinative experience of having contact with a native speaker while dealing with the stress of the immersion element of the week-long course with a native speaker was seen as important. Many students referred to their initial unease over having a completely English classroom environment giving way as they 'got used to it.'

ALT feedback

Post-course feedback from the participating ALTs was also requested. The feedback revealed positive evaluation for the listening activities and

materials, negative evaluation for the speaking activities and materials, and very positive evaluation for the presentation activities and materials. Specifically, ALTs noted that the majority of the students had an understanding of the grammar and its use and that many of the activities were suited more for writing than for speaking. ALTs pointed out the value of having a variety of objectives to be addressed in the presentation component and how the activities provided a means for every student to write something different and then compare their work with others.

Discussion and Implications

Although not addressed in this paper, the organizational obstacles at the faculty, committee, and administrative levels were significant. These included the interpretation of the Ministry of Education's *gaikokugo* as English by the faculty, the scheduling of the course during the summer break, and recruitment and compensation of the participating ALTs. Also important to note is the fact that the 180 students took the course as a compulsory requirement for obtaining a teaching license in either elementary education or a junior or senior high school subject other than English.

Learning Objectives and the Learning Outcomes

In terms of true *gaikokugo* communication, the ideal intensive course necessitates a shift from a teacher-centered approach in the traditional manner of a teacher providing information to a student-centered approach in which student learning is an outcome of participation and experience. The course objectives and pedagogical approach in such a participatory-experiential approach must be clearly delineated, and given the inherent time-constraints, organized exclusively toward that end. Many materials are organized such that the open-ended activities which give scope for real communicative action on the part of the student are given little prominence, typically added on at the end. The program's emphasis on the progression to these activities, and the proportion of time allowed to them differentiates it from such materials. Indeed there are few materials available which

lend themselves to such an approach, particularly in an intensive format.

Likewise, the course requirements and grading criteria must be adjusted to focus on the element of experiencing in the class, as measured by participation in the communicative interaction. This leads to use of a Pass-Fail standard based on attendance and participation, with the course structured toward interaction to the degree that attendance in effect equals participation.

The crux comes as we, as curriculum designers and course instructors, are forced to strike a balance between abandoning rigorous course structure to maximize student participation and experience and replacing the standard measures of performance with recognition of participation on the one hand, while ensuring course uniformity and consistency and course content accountability on the other.

Faculty and Student Input

Given the focus on the communicative experience of the course as outlined above, the input expected from all participants takes on new dimensions. The coordinating faculty are expected to create a curriculum which guides the overall experience for both student and teacher, providing the necessary experiential prompts for the student while allowing the teacher to step away from concerns of teaching and grading. The materials provided for the course must be universally transparent, such that both participating teachers and students can easily understand both the target structures and the learning prompts. The participating teachers are expected to establish a dynamic tone to the class, organize students into groups, help them in their initial efforts to participate, and then monitor the class, intervening when necessary to ensure a meaningful experience for all students.

The question of student input is more problematic, as such elements are a recursive function of what we as coordinators and instructors lead them to contribute. Students should be informed that the focus of the course is on participation and that a pass grade will be guaranteed for students who do participate. The stress experienced by students in an intensive foreign language communicative course conducted wholly

in the target language is a significant student 'input,' but with proper prefacing, this can be recontextualized for the student as positive stress. Scott (1994) specifically pointed towards the benefits of students consciously perceiving the high-quality attributes of intensive courses, as an important contribution to the power of the experience. A pre-class briefing for students, in Japanese, on the nature of the experience of an intensive foreign language communicative course conducted wholly in the target language will undoubtedly reduce, or refocus, the stress of the experience.

Conclusion

The intensive course should be seen as more an experiential than a learning endeavor for students. Although not suited for introduction of new material, an intensive *gaikokugo* communication course can provide both an 'intensive' review of previously learned material and an 'intensive' experience in using English in a true-life communicative situation. This case study is instructive in pointing out how the elements of course materials and teacher can maximize the potential for student participation and experience in an intensive *gaikokugo* communication course.

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Edited by Keith Ford and Michael Carroll

Making Friends: Authentic L2 Communication for the First Day of Term

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Searching for an activity that would stimulate first year university/college students while introducing them to communicative methods of learning English, I realised that what they were most interested in was each other. This led to the development of an authentic speaking activity called "Making Friends", which I have used successfully for the past six or seven years with beginning and pre-intermediate level students.

The activity is based on a list of thirty simple questions (see appendix), using familiar topics and vocabulary that the students are likely to have learned in high school English classes. The question list starts with basic questions, such as "What's your name?" and "How many brothers and sisters do you have?" and moves onto asking about high school, sports, music and pets. All the questions can be answered in one sentence, using familiar lexis and grammatical structures. This allows students to relax while experiencing, possibly for the first time, being taught by a native speaker in an English-only classroom.

First, students read the questions on the hand-out aloud. Group reading is useful in this instance because it allows them to vocalise English words, which many will not have done since their last high school English lesson a month or more before. Also, it ensures that each question has been read in advance of the pair work. I usually read the numbers and have the students read the questions to keep everyone going at a brisk pace, but when they hesitate to speak I make it a 'listen and repeat' session, increasing the confidence of low level learners.

Next, I explain that there is also a challenge attached to this activity. I show the students my timer¹, and tell them that they have ten minutes to ask and answer all the questions, including writing down a "short answer" for each of their partner's responses. I model the meaning of

"short answer" by asking the whole class one of the questions, (for example, "Where do you live?") and writing both a short answer ("Yokohama") and long answer ("I live in Yokohama") on the blackboard. I assure student's co-operation by asking them, "Do you think you can write 30 short answers?" Invariably their answer is "yes," and the activity becomes a game.

As soon as I shout, "Go!" (and start my timer) the students begin talking, working down the list, asking their partner, "What's your name?", "Where do you live?", and writing the answers as fast as they can. I make sure they are alternating rather than one person asking all thirty questions and changing over. When the timer buzzes at the end of the ten minutes I yell, "Stop!" and tell everyone who completed five questions to put up their hands, then those who did ten, and so on until no more hands go up. I start with a very low number so all the students have a chance to put up their hands and experience a feeling of achievement. I ask them to find a new partner (by themselves this time, which sometimes takes a few minutes). The question-and-answer process is repeated, but the time limit goes down. Of course the students are able to ask and answer faster the second time, and also enjoy themselves more. The third time through everyone is an expert, at least with the first fifteen questions.

Having a time limit encourages the students to activate language schemata intuitively, rather than agonizing over the correct form for each answer. Another advantage of this "challenge" is that it allows for expansion of the lesson plan so that the students are able to practice the structures and vocabulary several times with the same material and still keep the authenticity of purpose.

How the class proceeds from this point depends on which skills the teacher wants to emphasise. For speaking and listening practice, students can get into groups of four after the third question-and-answer round, and each introduce the person they just interviewed. For a focus on reading and writing, students can write an introduction of their last partner, and then either read their paragraphs aloud in a small group, or exchange papers. Or the activity can be closed after a few rounds of the oral pair-work.

One advantage of this activity is that the students are all sufficiently engaged so that the teacher can walk around the classroom unobtrusively, noting the language level and other important factors about her new class. The first time I tried this activity with a class I found that one or two of the questions were not clear. This turned out to have a positive effect, and gave the students a reason for interacting with me when I was in their part of the room.

My experience of first English lesson, first year university students is that they are shy creatures, dying to make friends with more of their classmates than the one or two with whom they have managed to connect. This activity not only gives them a taste of real English communication, but also allows them to meet new people, thereby setting an interactive, student-centered tone for future lessons.

Appendix

1. What's your name?
2. How old are you?
3. When's your birthday?
4. Where do you live?
5. How did you get here today?
6. How long did it take?
7. What's the name of your nearest station?
8. What line is that on?

9. How many people are there in your family?
10. Who are they?
11. What high school did you go to?
12. What was your favourite subject?
13. Who was your favourite teacher?
14. Who was your best friend in high school?
15. How long have you known him/her?
16. What sports do you like?
17. How often do you play?
18. Which baseball/soccer team do you support?
19. What kind of music do you like?
20. How many CDs do you have?
21. Do you play a musical instrument?
22. Do you have any pets?
23. What are their names?
24. What's your favourite place to visit in Japan?
25. How many times have you been there?
26. Have you ever been abroad?
27. What kind of movies do you like?
28. How often do you rent a video?
29. What's your favourite food?
30. When was the last time you ate it?

Note

¹ I have found an ordinary kitchen timer to be an invaluable teaching aid. Students very quickly become accustomed to stopping what they are doing when they hear the ring, which is a great voice-saver.

From the Chalkface

To submit classroom applications, techniques and lesson plans, up to 1000 words, contact section editor: Andrew Obermeier,

A Toolbox for College EFL Program Design

Greg Strong, Aoyama Gakuin University

This short piece seeks to establish some fundamental components of EFL program design and development. It is based on the Integrated English (IE) Program for freshmen and sophomore students and 45 full-time and part-time teachers in the English Department of Aoyama Gakuin University. Drawing upon our eight-year experience, these components consist of

1. departmental and institutional support for change,
2. placement and streaming of students,
3. program objectives and teacher goals,
4. feedback, evaluation and assessment,
5. ongoing teacher support and curriculum revision.

I. Support for Change

Before any curricular innovation, there must be institutional support. Most EFL educators working in Japan operate within the constraints of an existing English, Business, Law, or Communications department and are not free to implement a systematic curriculum development process according to the principles of EFL teaching. This situation is closer to the idea of 'stakeholders' in a curriculum as once described by Connelly, Irvine, and Enns (1980). The program evolves through the interaction of such stakeholders as teachers, students, and administrators, especially those within the university bureaucracy.

In our case, we needed the assistance of key members of our 36-member department, including the chairman, and a number of senior professors, and a planning committee to establish the need for new courses. It was at that point that I was hired, my job description including

program administration and course writing in lieu of supervising or editing student theses.

To achieve these things, we held extensive, often exhausting meetings with other university officials during the early years of the program. Limiting class size was obviously a financial issue because the university was required to hire additional part-time teachers.

To our surprise, there was strong resistance against ranking classes because it appeared to discriminate against the weaker students. We had to convince the university administration of the feasibility of our plans as well as their legitimacy. Ultimately, we were able to negotiate three different classes, to some degree accommodating the advanced and returnee students, and those students with lesser language ability. The benefits were that it became easier for teachers to plan for their classes; better students were not be held back by weaker ones; nor were weaker students intimidated by better ones.

II. Placement of Students

As for placement and streaming of students, there are numerous possibilities. As Brown notes in *Language Testing in Japan*, the best choice is to develop a criterion-referenced test where the questions are based upon program criteria and goals specific to the institution, and its students (Brown and Yamashita, 1985, p. 18). The entrance exam employed at a Japanese university might be used, except that the results are usually kept confidential. One of our program's shortcomings is that we never developed a placement test to assess our students in terms of our program criteria — for example, by assessing their speaking and discussion skills. Instead, we have relied upon off-the-shelf placement tests from the English Language Centre of the University of Michigan, and the norm-referenced Institu-

tional Placement Test from Educational Testing Services.

III. Program Objectives and Goals

The development of program objectives and the articulation of teacher goals is an on-going process. In the best situations, part-time teachers are included. Emphasizing the dynamic nature of curriculum development, Stufflebeam described the curriculum development process through the CIPP model: context, input, process, product, and evaluation (Stufflebeam, 1971). To a large extent, this is a consideration of product or learning outcomes, the experiential process, and the learning context.

In an ideal situation, the development of a language program takes place after a formal and thorough needs analysis and the subsequent development of goals and objectives for the program. However, this is not how events usually transpire. As Brown observes in *The Elements of Language Curriculum*, "it's often the case that needs analysis, the formation of goals and objectives, articulation of tests, and delivery of instruction are all going on at the same time" (Brown, 1995, p. 217). Furthermore, as the needs of the students and the English Department change over time, the curriculum development is ongoing.

In our case, we only had six months to develop guidelines, a plan, and materials; therefore, some of our decisions have been modified, even abandoned, over time. We chose a source text that offered functional language, structured dialogues, and grammar lessons and a reader that presented various types of texts such as short newspaper and magazine articles, editorials, and essays. Employing a thematic system of organization, in the first of the three IE levels, a student learned the vocabulary and grammatical structures suitable to discussing pop culture, urban issues, food and health, and travel.

At present, teachers supplement these core materials with their choice of tapes, videos, and other teaching resources drawn from a resource library maintained by the English Department. New teachers are given a program guide. Graded samples of student written work and rated videotapes of student discussions are also pro-

vided. Because teacher participation is so important, we organize an annual orientation for part-time teachers where we present curriculum revisions, share classroom strategies, and set goals for the coming year.

The most recent development in the IE Program has been in the direction of task-based learning where the learner's role is to analyze and attend to language use and structure in line with his or her preferred learning style, aptitude, and motivation. On this basis, we have introduced the task of participating in a small group discussion. In another course, Academic Skills, students have the task of learning how to take notes during a lecture.

IV. Program Objectives and Goals

Feedback, evaluation, and student assessment constitute the remaining section of this article. Feedback to teachers in our program consists of anonymous student evaluations that are done at the end of each term. Questions on the form relate to tasks and activities in the program such as participating in a small group discussion, and writing a journal. The evaluation form was developed and modified over a number of meetings with part-time teachers. The evaluation forms are reviewed by the program coordinator.

The IE Program hired an external reviewer, Alister Cumming of the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education to sit on some of our classes, and to review our curricular materials. Two research MAs have been based on testing and evaluating the students and their classes. The full-time teachers involved in the program have maintained a fairly extensive involvement in research and presentations on the program at JALT and TESOL, where possible, in joint presentations with part-time teachers.

Teacher Support & Curriculum Revision

Finally, an EFL Language Program should have room for teacher support and ongoing curriculum revision. Generally, the curriculum should incorporate new technologies such as the Internet, as well as current language teaching methodology. From our experience, teacher support should include easy access to materials, to computers and Internet accounts, and to the pur-

chase of texts and videos for teachers' use. We also provide office space, and lockers.

From personal experience, socializing with part-time teachers should not be overlooked because it is vital in an effective program. This includes forming relationships where part-time teachers feel secure enough to criticize parts of the program and suggest alternative approaches. Furthermore, the orientation and meetings throughout the year help us generate new ideas, review and modify our curriculum. "Involve all the participants in the process of curriculum development," wrote Brown in *The Elements of a Language Curriculum*, and "remember that much more can be accomplished through discussion and compromise than through dictated policy decisions and inflexibility" (1995, p. 190).

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Observing a visually impaired instructor: an insightful experience

Paul Cunningham , Rikkyo University

Mr. Kato arrived at school 10-15 minutes before his 9:00 class. I spoke with him briefly and walked to class with him shortly after the bell rang. After putting his backpack and portable tape recorder on the podium, Mr. Kato addressed the class in Japanese in a strong, clear voice. While he was speaking to the class, he was pulling papers out of his backpack to return to the students. He appeared poised and confident.

Moving into English, Mr. Kato greeted the class and proceeded to call the roll, punching his note cards to indicate if students were present. If a student responded in Japanese, Mr. Kato asked that the student please respond by saying 'here', 'present' or 'yes'. All students cooperated. This procedure took a bit of time, but Mr. Kato seemed determined to record each student's attendance. The verbal process that he used established a control-like dialog with the students, albeit formulaic. The students were quiet. Mr. Kato was clearly in control.

After taking the attendance, Mr. Kato said, "Let's get started!" He began to explain the listening script from the assigned passage. All students appeared to be alert and listened to him without disruption. Mr. Kato gave the following advice to the students: (1) that they might check the script to see how words and phrases were written, (2) that they might refer to their notes and compare them to the script, and (3) that they might want to practice reading the script aloud in an effort to improve their pronunciation. Mr. Kato then reiterated the above in Japanese, perhaps to insure that all of the students understood. (This was one of the few times that he was to use Japanese in class.) He then switched back into English and asked if there were any questions.

Students arriving late would go directly up to the podium and announce their arrival. Mr. Kato

recorded their presence without interrupting the class for very long.

Mr. Kato advised the students to read the script as he played the tape. (The tape and volume had been preset before coming to class.) The one (and only) student who had been playing with his cell phone put it down and didn't fool with it for the remainder of the time that I was in the classroom. Mr. Kato stopped the tape at the end of the passage and (somehow) rewound it to the beginning.

Mr. Kato began to review the homework from the previous week. He spoke to the students (still in English) about the importance of expectations—and building expectations when it comes to listening comprehension. He spoke about the difference between informal and formal discourse and pointed to words or language usage that might serve as hints. He also mentioned the importance of guessing as a (cognitive) strategy.

Mr. Kato proceeded to call upon students to answer questions. Each of the students responded in English. With each new question, Mr. Kato would explain the choices and would strategize with the students in an effort to choose the best answer. He continued to point out words and phrases that might help the students determine the most appropriate choice. Throughout this somewhat slow moving, but very thorough process, all students appeared to be alert and listening attentively. I left the classroom at 9:45.

It was a privilege and a learning experience to observe Mr. Kato teach. I was impressed by the way he managed to take attendance, to revise the attendance list and to call upon students throughout the class. It reminded me of how I take this mechanical chore for granted. With a photo seating chart, I can take attendance visually and update it throughout class without interruption. Mr. Kato had little choice but to

do this aurally. The only prop that he had to support his (audio) memory was the Braille punch card that he used. Relying so wholly upon what he hears, he must have developed a keen memory for hearing.

Speaking of memory, I found it remarkable that Mr. Kato could keep the entire lesson in his mind, including such things as the content of the long listening passage, the multiple choice questions and the answers. He was quite able to recall these at will. While he did from time to time resort to notes in Braille, he left me wondering just how long he spends preparing each lesson.

I also wondered what a challenge it must be to be able to capture students' attention with only your voice. And to use your voice as the sole messenger of your thoughts. The discourse of Mr. Kato's class was almost telephone-like in that everyone had to pay clear attention to what was said. (Some teachers might argue that audio tapes encourage this type of listening more than the richer environment of video tapes.) Again, this was something that I had not considered seriously before.

Relying upon this (listening) channel so completely, inadvertently slowed the pace of class, as did Mr. Kato's methodical and thorough style of teaching. Nonetheless, he managed to keep the students' attention and to get through the lesson.

It would appear that Mr. Kato follows the same advice he gave his students. Expectations are an important part of listening, one that is often overlooked in class. Expectations create a structure or framework for listening, one which can be revised but which always serves as a base. Guessing is another strategy that is frequently left underdeveloped in listening classes, yet it can be so important. It establishes an active approach to listening, one in which the listener plays a vital role. Perhaps the methodical and meticulous approach that Mr. Kato made use of reflect his own cognitive strategies for listening, for facilitating memory and for teaching.

Acknowledgement: I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Kato for allowing me to observe his classroom and leave his room with a sense of enlightenment.

*Comments may be addressed to
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Cyberpipeline: Fun Tools for Teachers and Student

Steve Snyder, Kyushu University of Health and Welfare

At the recent CUE Conference dedicated to *Developing Autonomy* a topic which often came up in discussion was where to find some easy to learn and easy to use software for both teachers and students. Here are a couple sites out you may want to check out.

Hot Potatoes: Half-Baked Software

<http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/hotpot/>

Hot Potatoes is a suite of authorware programs that allow you to quickly create HTML and DHTML activity pages. The software is "free of charge to non-profit educational users who make their pages available on the web." Free is good. The various software tools take up about 9 MB, which is also pretty good. The files you create and the HTML pages are also reasonably small: files usually vary from 3 K to 8 K; Web pages vary from 8 K to 20 K. There are both Mac and PC versions, and downloading from the web site is very simple. There are six software programs in the suite, each one creates a different kind of activity. All activities are self-scored; that is, as someone does the task, the score is automatically computed. You can make a multiple-choice cloze, jumbled sentences, crossword puzzles, matching and ordering exercises. Also, it is so easy to use that some students could create their own activities.

The beauty of creating HTML pages is that the activities are cross-platform and can be put on a web site. The compressed size of the pages also means that you can put them on a floppy disc. This is exactly what I did for a student who wanted to practice Greek and Latin roots. In this case we made some matching activities, some cross-word puzzles and some close activities. The matching activities were created in DHTML and we found that form was the most

effective and fun. DHTML? The 'D' stands for 'Dynamic,' and DHTML refers to Web Pages which have scripted effects. In the case of the matching activity, the student can drag answers from a right-hand column to the appropriate location. When answers are checked, the incorrect items are sent back to the right-hand column for a second try. For the DHTML pages you must use a version 4 or higher browser and be sure that JavaScript is enabled, but that should not present much of a problem.

The pages themselves are, well, pretty straightforward. It is possible to modify them and if you are really ambitious you can even have Half-Baked Software make you a custom program. Small changes can be made, but you have to deal with the code. On the other hand, *Hot Potatoes* lets you and your students quickly create pages that would otherwise require advanced scripting knowledge. This speed and ease make these programs particularly useful for specific needs, like a personal list of words. If you use computer-based displays in your classes, *Hot Potatoes* can help to create materials for contests and games as well. But these are alternative uses, the primary purpose for these programs is authoring web pages, and they provide a quick and easy way of creating on-line materials for your students. It is possible to drop-in a CGI script that will send the scores to you by email, but you have to provide the scripts.

That was a fairly conventional program. In contrast, the next program is anything but conventional.

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

Virtual Friend: Haptek Inc.

<http://www.haptek.com>

Virtual Friend (current version is 2.08) is a talking animation program that is very easy to use. Though it was not intended as a learning or teaching tool, it has great potential for this purpose. In the current state of development the program lets you create scripts for disembodied heads that talk. Not only do the heads talk, they can be programmed to move, to morph into other shapes and change looks! Admittedly, very bizarre stuff, but many students find it fascinating and there lies much of its potential as a tool.

Recently the web site has been upgraded and includes a homepage builder and JavaScript demos. To use any of the online capabilities you need to download the VirtualFriend 3 plug-in. If you experience a problem with the automatic download, you can also save the vf35042.exe file to your desktop and then execute the file there—remember to be on-line when you do this as the rest of the program is downloaded at that time. So once you have the viewer/plug in you can then check out the demos. There are currently 3 demos.

The first demo is called “welcome” and it lets you play with the different textures and morphs. You can make the head talk by writing text in the input box and hitting enter. Sometimes a background change some other problem occurs, but you get the idea of the program. The actual program is on a CD-ROM that you have to order. The program itself is much more powerful than the web site illustrates and you can create lasting scripts. I have experimented with creating a variety of effects with these animations, including web pages, and they work pretty well. But be warned—playing with this program will eat your time! A couple of shy students didn’t want to give a report in front of the class, so I had them write the script with a *VirtualFriend*. There is also a *VirtualFriend* chat room you can use.

The second demo is a greeting card that talks, similar to other on-line cards. The page takes a while to load, so make sure you have a fast connection and a bit of time.

The third demo is building a web page—all you do here is follow the template and then it

provides you with the html code for making a page. If you are skilled at HTML you can create all kinds of effects from this simple script. As long as someone at the other end has the viewer/plugin, you could use this on a web page, send it as an attachment, or link it through another program. There is even a small SKD kit that you can use. It is fun, time consuming, and definitely a gimmick, but it can be used in creative ways. If you see some potential, then let me recommend that you buy the CD-ROM and start experimenting with it.

The Heart of the Matter: High-Intermediate Listening, Speaking, and Critical Thinking

Marjorie Vai. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1998. Pp. ix + 174. ¥2,780. ISBN 0-8384-7857-3.

Reviewed by Nevitt Reagan, Kansai Gaidai University

The Heart of the Matter is a rare gem for teachers lucky enough to work with advanced-level students — an innovative speaking/listening text which thoroughly explores high-interest topics from several perspectives.

The book contains nine thematic units: Anxiety and self-confidence; The Blues; Entrepreneurship; Stereotyping; Art in the context of history; Multiple intelligences; Crime fiction and film; The changing nature of work; and Dream analysis. For young Japanese students, most of these will provide fresh and stimulating ideas, such as the American 'self-help' ethos, the genuine possibility of creating one's own business, and different ways of being 'smart.'

Three extensive listening activities form the core of each unit. Let's take Unit 4, "Us and Them: Creating the Other," as an example of how successive activities add depth to each theme. The first activity, "Expert Opinion," provides a slightly formal 3-4 minute survey of the general topic by an expert or academic specialist (e.g., an education professor's mini-lecture on the origins of stereotyping). The second activity, "Personal Perspective," consists of a lengthier discussion, often by practitioners in the field (e.g., two ESL teachers consider male/female differences in communication styles and problem-solving strategies). The third activity, "Other Voices," involves an even longer open-ended interview or conversation with non-experts (e.g., three people delineate characteristics of the Democratic and Republican parties in the United States).

This clearly-designed, coherent format has several strengths. First, it allows several perspectives to emerge as it expands the scope of each theme. Also, the second and third listening activities recycle thematic vocabulary in new contexts. In addition, the natural, unscripted recordings, each featuring a different speaker, provide valuable models of several varieties of spoken English, from low-intermediate ESL to fluent L2 to educated L1 speakers.

The three listening activities pose challenging yet manageable tasks. Listening One focuses first on the general topic and then on specific information from the mini-lecture. Listening Two involves note-taking, vocabulary learning, and preliminary discussions. Listening Three requires extended personal reactions to the interviews or conversations.

The fourth and final activity (either a video or a mini-project) of each unit supplies the crucial consolidation of ideas and vocabulary. For example, Unit 2, "Legacy of the Blues," finishes with a short film about a blues musician who plays in the New York subways; Unit 3, "Food: Business & Pleasure," requires students to interview a self-employed person and then create simulated plans for businesses based on their own interests.

Unfortunately, the terrible sound and picture quality of most of the accompanying video segments render them practically unusable. This is truly disappointing since the video contains some of the book's most creative and engaging material (e.g., Unit 1: the televised "Horatio Alger Awards Ceremony," which presents three poignant success stories; or Unit 5: a Japanese film student's intensely personal exploration of the conflict between tradition and modernization).

Additionally, despite the "high-intermediate" label, teachers in Japan should reserve this text for advanced students. It was definitely designed for the ESL (not EFL) market. The longer listening activities were not at all easy for my first-year university students (TOEFL 450-520), most of whom had spent at least one year of high school abroad.

The author claims "*The Heart of the Matter* provides the richest and most varied collection of listening materials available" (p. vii). After having used it successfully with highly-motivated Japanese university students, I agree — heartily.

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