Explorations in Teacher Education

JALT Teacher Education SIG Newsletter

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Contents

And now a word from…The Editor

Welcome to the Autumn 2004 issue of Explorations in Teacher Education, the newsletter of the JALT Teacher Education SIG and welcome to any new members of the SIG.

In this issue we have an action research project article by Chris Elvin, an essay about teacher motivation by Michelle Segger, an essay about writing by Paul Tanner, an essay about training sessions for elementary school teachers by Anthony Robins as well as a resource review of the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and two reviews of its books by Tim Murphey, Mari Sekiguchi and Chieko Nishimura. ASCD has been mentioned twice before in the newsletter (Volume 8, Issue 2, 2000 and Volume 10, Issue 2, 2002) and the review affords us an opportunity to learn a little more about an organization which addresses professional development – one of the main focuses of the Teacher Education SIG.

On a personal note I would like to congratulate the former editor, Robert Croker, for all his hard work during the last couple of years. His work has definitely driven the newsletter forward. I would also like to thank him for his encouragement and for all the assistance given on the previous issue, which despite listing me as the editor was nearly all Robert's work. The SIG Coordinator, Anthony Robins also deserves thanks for encouraging me to further my own professional development by becoming the editor of the newsletter.

Simon Lees

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Article

My Students' DVD Audio and Subtitle Preferences for Aural English Study: An Action Research Project

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Introduction

In this article, I first define what action research is, and show by example how to conduct it.

My action research project investigated students' preferred audio and subtitle options and sequences for studying aural English using DVD when a repeated viewing strategy is employed.

By listening to the students' collective voice, reviewing the literature, and personal critical reflection, I conclude that their choices are generally very rational. I explain why I support their choices, and conclude that DVD for aural comprehension, in my classes, should always be played in English, with a balance of three basic subtitle sequences to reflect the majority of their preferred learning styles.

What is Action Research?

Richards, Platt & Platt (1992) define action research as teacher-initiated classroom research, which seeks to increase the teacher's understanding of classroom teaching and learning and to bring about improvements in classroom practices. According to Nunan (1992), it is a form of self-reflective inquiry carried out by practitioners, aimed at solving problems, improving practice, or enhancing understanding. Brown (1994) says it is any action undertaken by teachers to collect data and evaluate their own teaching. It differs from formal research, therefore, in that it is usually

conducted by the teacher as a researcher, in a specific classroom situation, with the aim being to improve the situation or teacher rather than to spawn generalizeable knowledge. Action research usually entails observing, reflecting, planning and acting. In its simplest sense, it is a cycle of action and critical reflection, hence the name, action research.

An Action Research Project

There are many ways in which the teacher can exploit DVDs in class. I have used them for speaking and listening practice, by having students pre-read or post-read the transcript in pairs, for example, as a cloze activity for aural comprehension, or for pronunciation practice with ideal role models such as Harry Potter. I have also used DVDs to help students learn how to express themselves orally in English in a real and appropriate context, and had quizzes and short discussions.

If DVD viewing is done in conjunction with some strategy training, such as goal setting, prediction, ambiguity tolerance or note taking, then it can be a very valuable tool. Perhaps the most widely practiced strategy, however, is simply repeated viewing.

DVDs, unlike videos, have an array of subtitling and audio options that allow teachers the freedom and scope to plan and make well-informed sequencing decisions. Although supporting arguments for various subtitling and audio combinations and, to some extent, their sequencing exist in the literature, a general lack of agreement among my students over these options and sequencing led me to investigate the matter as an action research project.

In the first survey, I collected data about my students' DVD subtitling and audio options if they were using DVD for aural English study. In the second survey, I asked them about how they would sequence their choices.

The First Survey

Thirty-nine female senior high school grade three students participated in the survey, which was all of my students who were present on the day it was administered. This took no more than ten minutes of their valuable study time.

I presented my students with twelve DVD audio and subtitling options and asked them to check any ones that they thought were appropriate to them if their goal was to master aural English. I also gave them time and space for a comment either in English or Japanese after they had checked their options.

These twelve options are; listening in English with either English, Japanese or no subtitles, listening in Japanese with either English, Japanese or no subtitles, silent viewing with either English, Japanese or no subtitles, and no picture with either English, Japanese or no audio. I included the no picture and no audio option simply to present students with all possible permutations. Also, if some students checked this option, it might indicate that they were not taking the survey seriously.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 represents the thirty-nine students' collective preferences.

Checked items mean that at least one student selected this option. Crossed items mean that the option was rejected unanimously.

Table 1 – Students' Collective Preferences for DVD Audio and Subtitles

Listen in English with…		Listen in Japanese with…		Silent viewing with…		No picture with…	
English subtitles	☑	English subtitles	☑	English subtitles	☒	English subtitles	☒
Japanese subtitles	☑	Japanese subtitles	☒	Japanese subtitles	☒	Japanese subtitles	☒
no subtitles	☑	no subtitles	☑	no subtitles	☒	no subtitles	☒

The Students' Unanimous Rejections

Students selected five and rejected seven of the twelve options available to them.

Firstly, no student selected viewing in Japanese with Japanese subtitles, with one student commenting that she didn't need subtitles to listen to Japanese, which is a fair point.

Students also unanimously rejected silent viewing, with or without subtitles. Of course, silent viewing does have its place in the EFL classroom, particularly if it is to stimulate oral production, such as doing an interior monologue (see Stempleski and Tomalin,1990).

Yet, silent viewing to help foster students' aural comprehension still prevails in some quarters. At

the 2003 JALT International Conference, I attended a leading publisher's double-session presentation about classroom video use and experienced silent viewing for listening schemata activation. The clip we saw was of a young Japanese reporter interviewing Irish and German soccer supporters in the street during the 2002 World Cup. Others were waving flags, shouting and beating drums. The question by the presenter was "What do you think they were saying?"

Well, I can't deny that to an extent this kind of activity encourages schema activation. We are all cogent beings, after all. I can also agree with him that I did notice things in the background that I otherwise wouldn't have, but for what purpose?

I have never done silent viewing in class, which may possibly explain why no student selected it. However, their unanimity, and intelligent comments lead me to conclude that I needn't consider this option any more. Silent viewing for aural comprehension, at best, is probably only marginally better than no viewing at all, which is why it is patently inefficient.

Students also rejected the English and Japanese audio options for no picture. Japanese audio is perhaps not so helpful for learning aural English, although some students could have found it useful as an alternative to L1 reading for getting to grips with the basic plot.

The English audio option, however, perhaps needs more reflection. Sometimes I have played a scene with the monitor off to help the students focus on listening comprehension. It may also be necessary during a cloze activity to avoid losing one's place in the exercise. It can also be argued that listening without the distraction of a monitor is just as valid as listening to a tape or CD, which it probably is. But why had I been denying my students the stimulating and rich context

and purpose for communication that these visual images provided? After careful consideration, I decided that I could no longer justify doing so.

Finally, no student selected the no picture, no audio option. On reflection, the amusement and hilarity it generated in class was perhaps just what was needed to ensure that the students participated earnestly, so *mea culpa* necessary!

The Students' Preferences

Listen in English with English subtitles

This was the most popular choice among my students. L1 captions have had their beneficial use in second language learning contexts acknowledged since about the late eighties. Students using captioned materials show significant improvement in listening and reading comprehension, as well as word recognition and vocabulary acquisition (Goldman & Goldman, 1988). In Japan, and more recently, Ogasawara (1994) discovered that fully closed caption videos were much more effective than partially captioned or non-captioned videos. I have found that DVD original language subtitles are nearly always identical to fully closed captions, apart from the occasional absence of a few audio descriptions, and these subtitles are also nearly always almost identical to the dialogue, apart from the occasional paraphrasing during fast-talking scenes. Therefore, they should also be effective.

Kamei (1994) discovered that captions helped higher English proficiency learners process information, whereas it helped lower English proficiency learners obtain information from the movie. Ideally, students will be able to develop both simultaneously, and this is what the literature suggests.

Kadoyama (1996) found that captioned videos were not only useful for improving students' listening comprehension, but also for reading and vocabulary development. Similarly, Kikuchi (1996) investigated the effects of English captioned movies on rapid reading and listening, and concluded that students made progress in both.

Listen in English with Japanese subtitles

This was the second most popular choice. This is how Japanese students normally view movies at the cinema and at home, so it is probably the most familiar to them. Japanese captions can help students to guess or recognize uncertain English words and phrases, but they can also be a hindrance if students rely on them too much. Whether they do actually help or hinder depends much on the proficiency of the student and difficulty of the listening materials (see Yoshino, Kano & Akahori, 2000).

Listen in English with no subtitles

This was the third most popular choice. Presumably, the goal of some if not many of my students is to understand English movies without L1 aural support, or L1 or L2 subtitles, so it is a natural choice.

Listen in Japanese with English subtitles

This was a very minor preference. Students choosing this option can benefit by getting a grasp of the storyline aurally in their L1 and also become familiar with some of the L2 vocabulary.

Listen in Japanese with no subtitles

This was also a very minor preference. The vast majority of my students echoed that listening in Japanese had little or no meaning.

The Second Survey

Feedback from my students clearly showed that repeated viewing of DVD materials is beneficial to their aural development, but to what extent are they really improving, if at all? Students receive information by reading and listening simultaneously. Does listening aid reading, reading aid listening, or do reading and listening have a synergistic effect on each other? In my classes, and perhaps for most Japanese EFL situations, I believe reading primarily helps listening. However, since it is not easy to design a simple experiment to unravel this dichotomy, I decided simply to ask my students about their subjective perception of their listening progress while studying using DVD. This, I felt, would help me to understand my students more than any black box experiment, even if well designed. I also felt that undertaking such research on my students might undermine our mutual trust, which, if met with resistance could dilute the significance of any data interpretation.

My query was, in a fixed setting such as a classroom, where some kind of compromise must be reached, how do I best sequence the audio and subtitling options so that among the students, there is the greatest happiness for the greatest number as far as aural English progress is concerned?

Of the five options that the students selected in the first survey, I asked them what their subtitle and audio preferences would be for first, second and third viewing. I also asked them to explain as best they could, in either English or Japanese, the reasons for their choices. Again, the time to

administer the survey took no more than ten minutes of their valuable study time.

Results and Discussion

Seventy-four female senior high school grade three students participated in this survey, which was comprised of all thirty-seven of my students who were present on the day it was administered, and thirty-eight of my colleague's (see table 2).

Table 2 – Students' Aggregate First, Second & Third Listening Preferences

	1st listening	2nd listening	3rd listening
Listen in English - No subtitles	25	0	27
Listen in English - English subtitles	13	43	18
Listen in English - Japanese subtitles	24	25	23
Listen in Japanese - English subtitles	5	6	4
Listen in Japanese - no subtitles	7	0	2

The data reveals that almost all of the students want to listen to English every time the DVD is played. Also, if students requested L1 input in order to access some of the L2 linguistic features, it is overwhelmingly via the reading channel, and not at the expense of a missed opportunity to listen in English. I decided that I could no longer justify playing a DVD with the students' L1 in the class.

Next, I investigated the students' preferred learning sequences. With the order of difficulty in processing capacity of table 2 assumed to be progressively easier from top to bottom, the students would automatically fall into one of five basic sequences; up (progressively harder), down (progressively easier), valley (hard – easy – hard), level (no change) or peak (easy – hard – easy).

Table 3 – The Students' Preferred Learning Sequences

	Number of Students
Up (progressively harder)	32
Down (progressively easier)	27
Valley (hard - easy - hard)	14
Level (no change)	1
Peak (easy - hard - easy)	0

The most popular choice was progressively harder, with thirty-two students choosing to view the DVD clip by gradually moving their attention from simple plot understanding in their L1, to L2 aural comprehension. This is probably the most orthodox approach. It is scaffolding from the known to unknown, with schema activation, perhaps. Students who chose this approach said that they wanted to grasp the meaning of the story first before tackling a higher level.

The second most popular choice, with twenty-seven students, was to do the reverse. Their reasoning, however, appeared just as logical. These students wanted to have ambiguous ideas first, before having their suspicions confirmed or denied. Students who chose this method often

indicated that it helped their confidence when their guesses turned out to be correct. This, I think, is a very effective strategy. It's testing, in a sense, but it clearly appeals to some learners.

The third most popular sequence was from hard to easy and back to hard again. The surprising thing I noticed among these students, was how so many of them were among the most proficient, outscoring the others in their most recent end-of-term listening test by an average of sixteen points in a hundred.

In Microsoft Excel X for Mac, I ran a t-test of these fourteen students with fourteen randomly selected students taken from the others using scores from the test. The test was made personally using sound files from Helgesen, Brown and Smith's Active Listening series CD (1996), from units that had not been previously covered in class. The popularity of this series among teachers and widely held respect that the authors command, I reasoned, could partially vouch for the test's validity. It also had a relatively high reliability of 0.94 using the Kuder-Richardson 21 formula.

Table 4 – The Difference Between Hard – Easy – Hard DVD Preference Students and a Random Sample of Others in a High School Listening Test

T-test	Mean	s	t-value	df	p
Control	42.1	14.0	51.9	26	0.02
Exp	58.6	19.1			

*p<0.05

There was a significant difference between the two groups. Of course, extreme caution needs to

be exercised in making any claims about the outcome of this test. The group sizes were small enough to cast doubt about their normal distributions or equal variances. If the n sizes are equal, however, the t-test is known to be "robust" to violations about the assumption of equal variance (Hatch & Lazaraton, 1991).

Since the result was not anticipated, it may also be a case of data mining, which is looking for trends or anomalies without knowledge of the meaning of the data. However, if I can make a reasonable attempt to explain why this group outperformed the others, it could help to allay such fears. Could it be that the hard – easy – hard group had a heightened sense of awareness of their zone of proximal development? (see Vygotsky, 1978). Their feedback indicated that they were first challenging themselves, then confirming their guesses, before challenging again, so these students appear to know where they are at, and where they want to go. Also, they were twice as likely to test themselves than students from other groups.

One simple interpretation could be that the strategy is linked to task difficulty, in which case students may be expected to change their strategy as they become more proficient. Another explanation is that this strategy is superior to others, in which case I should consider using it predominantly, although students' known preferences, personalities and differing proficiencies may make this unwise or unfair.

I shall err on the side of caution and assume it is a type I error, but I will certainly continue to investigate with this year's incoming students, which is the cyclical nature of action research. The fourth most popular choice was just one student, who chose to view the movie in English with L1 subtitles on all three occasions, commenting that she could understand. However, her test

score was noticeably low, so she may need guidance and possibly some self-awareness training or confidence building.

Finally, no student chose to view the movie from easy to hard back to easy again. This is not easy to explain, but it could possibly feel psychologically regressive to the students.

Conclusion

This action research project has given me insight about my students' genuine needs, helped me to appreciate the complexity of their learning styles and differing proficiencies, crystallized my thoughts about using DVD media as a tool for language learning, and enabled me to reflect and then act in class.

Students now listen to DVDs only in English, and never silently or in Japanese. The subtitle sequencing is a balance of the three predominant preferences, which is subject to further action research outcomes.

My students have also gained. By critically evaluating their own preferences, they are now generally more self-aware and also more autonomous. Many of my students tell me that they are now studying using DVD outside class, too – which is the perfect solution.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank my students. Indeed, it should not be overlooked how fortunate I was in having such capable language learners, with high intrapersonal intelligences, whose judgment I could respect, and whose insightful comments greatly facilitated my eventual decisions.

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Essay

The Surprise of Collaboration

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I began my teaching career as a primary school teacher in London. This was a very co-coordinated and supportive environment. All teachers worked together to plan a school wide curriculum; new teachers were encouraged to approach more experienced colleagues for help and support and the education authority encouraged teachers to improve their qualifications by offering free career advancement courses.

When I chose to leave this environment to teach in Japan I was deeply shocked. In Japanese private conversation schools I found that most of the 'teachers' were not teachers at all. Most had no training and nothing invested in the profession. I found myself in a situation where not only had I lost the dedicated supportive working community I was used to, but I was actively

discriminated against by my superiors because I was keen to make the learning environment more stimulating, and full of ways to improve teaching techniques.

The frustration of this situation led me to begin work on a master's degree with the intention of teaching in the higher education system. Most universities require that their teachers have a master's degree so I expected to enter a community similar to the one I left in London. I did indeed find that many of the teachers at this level were more serious about their work, but it was clear that one went into one's classroom and closed the door. I was still working alone and no-one appeared to need to know what I was doing and there was no coordination with other teachers at any level. I began to question whether there was any point putting 100% into my job when it appeared that all that was expected of me was to do four pages in the textbook each week.

In 2000 I began work as a part-time teacher at a university I hadn't worked for before. At this university I taught the extensive reading strand of the Freshman English Program. I had no interaction with teachers who taught other aspects of the program, indeed I didn't even know what other classes my students took. I also felt that the texts we expected these first year English majors to read were far too challenging and as a result students felt as though they were failing. Then in 2001 a new director of the Freshman English Program was appointed. When the new director began she was gushing with ideas and enthusiasm and it was infectious. Other teachers, more experienced in the workings of Japanese universities, were quick to point out that her Japanese superiors would never allow all the radical proposals she was planning to make. I tried to curb my enthusiasm, I knew from my experiences in private conversation schools that trying to effect change in Japanese educational institutions is akin to banging your head against a brick wall.

The director of this program however, was fortunate. On speaking to colleagues in other universities in the area, the freedom she was given is unprecedented. She had carte blanche to restructure the whole program. But what was most exciting for me – she invited other teachers to help her.

I found myself, for the first time, in ten years teaching in Japan, in a 'community' of teachers. In this community I was able to voice my ideas and get critical feedback instead of into trouble. It was also the first time in Japan that the people I was working with had ideas that they wanted to share with me. This produced a synergy that revitalized my attitude to my work.

Generally part-time teachers are not involved in any aspect of curriculum design. Despite only being a part-time teacher I was actively involved in the restructure of the Freshman English Program. My master's dissertation focused on extensive reading, particularly on the inappropriate reading materials currently used in this university's program. We included many of the recommendations I made for changing this element of the program. I was also closely involved in developing materials for the learner training and drama strands of the program. These two areas were quite radical in design and we found that we had to work together to produce all the classroom materials ourselves. Next year I look forward to extending my commitment by becoming more involved with the continuing development of the self-access strand of the program.

As mentioned above, some areas of the program are quite radical and we have found the need to produce much of the materials ourselves. This has meant meeting on a weekly basis to discuss

what changes need to be made once our ideas had shown their inevitable failings under the rigors of practical application. There are negative aspects to this. As a part-timer I have to do this in my own time with no financial incentives. Part-time teachers typically have to take on approximately three times the teaching load of full-time teachers to make a comparable income, so my free-time is precious. It is also frustrating that sometimes things don't work in the classroom as we anticipated. Occasionally a lesson goes awry, because we produced it ourselves and the idea didn't pan out in the classroom. This means that there is no 'down time' during the semester; we are always working on the curriculum. Having said all these things I go to these meetings because I want the students to get the best program we can offer, and although time consuming and frustrating at times, the results so far have been ample compensation.

As new teachers have joined the staff they have been invited to join this 'community' approach to curriculum planning. Such an approach is rare in Japan and many teachers are used to working alone; thus several teachers have chosen not to be involved in the curriculum planning. I realize that many of them have spent all their teaching careers with the classroom door firmly closed and they find this 'team' approach both threatening and time consuming. However their inability to become part of the team cause problems in an integrated curriculum where each teacher's input relates to other aspects of the curriculum and other teachers.

The changes we have worked together on at this university (where I only teach one day a week) has given me a fresh outlook on my work. I am now in the process of changing my curricula at the other universities I work at. I am including variations of some of the things we have done successfully. I am enjoying my teaching more and I feel that my students are learning more and they are certainly more motivated.

Along with this revitalized attitude to my work and the realization that there are other teachers in Japan as passionate as I am, I developed a wish to share the ideas that we put into practice at this university. As a result, in 2003 I co-wrote my first published paper with the program director about the changes we made to the extensive reading strand of the program and also gave my first presentation which I (surprisingly) enjoyed.

Essay

The Rashomon Effect: Writing from New Perspectives

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"To be educated is not to have arrived at a destination: it is to travel with a different view" R.S. Peters (Palmer, 2003)

"Every man takes the limits of his own field of vision for the limits of the world" Arthur Schopenhauer (Schopenhauer)

Rashomon is a classic movie directed by Akira Kurosawa (1950) based on a story by Ryunosuke Akutagawa. The story tells of the rape of a woman and the murder of a man, presented in flashbacks from the perspectives of four narrators. Much is different between each account, leaving the viewer to wonder what is actually true. Each person tells the truth—their own truth from their own perspective.   The movie brilliantly illustrates that there is no such thing as an objective truth.

Of course, everyone needs to have a perspective. However a good writer, and critical thinker will usually examine ideas from multiple perspectives. Not doing so can stifle creativity and lead to blinkered, distorted, or even false assumptions. Assumptions can lead to taking ideas for granted without examining them critically. As Ruggiero (2004) says, a good thinker should move beyond the familiar and the habitual to keep thinking flexible. Once a writer has settled on only one perspective, the writer closes off all but one line of thought. Considering multiple perspectives will keep student writing creative, avoid the cliché, allow for more autonomy and encourage students to make informed choices. Exploring concepts from another context can spur the imagination and get those creative juices flowing. The Japanese education system is often faulted for not teaching these skills (McVeigh, 2002).

Using multiple perspectives is not an abstract, theoretical idea. For example, Trevor Sargent noted in his critique of the *TLT* Global Education issue (February 2004) that advocacy-oriented educators design entire courses "around normative goals that correspond to their worldviews" (p. 10). A student able to see issues from multiple perspectives will recognize polemics and propaganda. Hopefully, the student will question the one-sidedness of the instructor's point of view, and help develop the content towards a more balanced, multi-sided issue.

The following are some ideas to aid students in developing multiple and alternative perspectives through different writing assignments. These should help keep students' writing fresh, and avoid writing about trite, obvious topics.

1. Alter the point of view. Japanese students are familiar with Natsume Soseki's novel *I am a Cat (Wagahai wa Neko de aru).* The work was a great success because of the unusual perspective of the narrator, the cat. Having students write one of the key scenes from a movie or book from one of the other character's points of view will result in a new and creative perspective. For example, after having students summarize their favorite book or movie, have them go back and re-write the story from a different point of view. Students could rewrite *Titanic* from the point of view of Jack or the iceberg. Students could re-write scenes from one of the Harry Potter books from the perspective of another character such as Draco Malfoy. Another possibility would be to explain parts of *Lord of the Rings* from the viewpoint of Gollum or Sauron. A final example would be for students to explain parts of *The Last Samurai* from the viewpoint of the Ken Watanabe character, Katsumoto.

2. Rewrite a speech without emotional language. I have students write a summary or a re-write of Martin Luther King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (see appendix a) minus the emotional language. This shows a different focus and aids students in preparing for a non-emotional topic such as a research paper.

3. After finishing a persuasive essay, have students re-write the paper using the opposite argument.

4.   Advice Column. Students are familiar with advice columns from Japanese newspapers. Have students write out different problems (real or imagined). The instructor can compile a list of various problems. Students then select some of the problems and give possible

solutions in the form of advice. Students are apt to be creative when imagining someone else's problem, rather than their own. Alternatively, the teacher can give students problems from an actual advice column without the columnist's advice. Students write answers to the problems. The instructor may or may not show them the original advice.

5. Writing Chapter 0. Students are asked to write the paragraphs that come immediately before the first section of the book or story they are reading. Based on details of the beginning section or chapter, students reconstruct the details of what might have happened just before the opening of the novel. This idea comes from Collier and Slater (1987). A second option is for students to re-write the ending of a story, novel, or movie. What if Sidney Carton had been rescued or the French Revolution had ended before he could make his famous speech at the end of *A Tale of Two Cities* (Dickens, 1997)?

6. Good reason / real reason paradox. J.P. Morgan said, "A man has two reasons for doing something—a good reason and the real reason." (Morgan)   Have students give specific examples of how this quotation applies to them. Hint: the "good reason" is similar to *tatemae* ("superficial"), and the "real reason" corresponds to *honne* ("from the heart") in the Japanese language.

    Good reason: I want to have a part-time job in order to gain valuable experience and learn how to better work with people.

    Real reason: I want to buy a Prada bag.

    A Corollary. People often compare the real with the ideal. Ask students to compare and contrast the real with the ideal in the following: jobs, friendships, parents, relatives, school, dating, marriage, personality, or leisure time.

7. a) Instruct students to examine Edward Hopper's painting *Nighthawks* and Vincent van
    Gogh's *Paris Café*. (Not reprinted here because of copyright laws but readily available on
    the internet.) Students can write about the works in a number of ways: for example,
    compare and contrast the two restaurants and their customers. Students can use the
    paintings to imagine themselves as a waiter/waitress at one of or both of the restaurants.
    Then they can describe what their job is like, the mood and customers of the restaurants
    etc.

    b) Students can write about themselves as customers in one of the cafes. What is their
    mood? Why are they at the restaurant at that time? What are they thinking about at the
    restaurant?

    c) Students pretend that the neighborhood homeowners have decided that the restaurants
    stay open too late at night, are too noisy and should be closed. Students write a letter to
    the homeowners association explaining why the restaurants should be allowed to continue
    operating.

8. A new classification. E.B. White has written an essay called "The Three New Yorks." (in
    Panman, 1998, provided in appendix b) Each is defined in terms of the people who live
    and work there (the native, the commuter, and the settler). After reading this essay,
    students can then create a classification system of people in their community based on
    their own criteria (age, occupation, cultural interest, etc). This is a challenging activity,
    and more difficult than the other activities listed.

Incorporating some of these ideas will hopefully make students more aware of the "Rashomon

idea" of multiple perspectives. Remember, the very act of writing has a way of triggering other ideas. Since some of these examples are rewrites, it also helps student with their own editing. Too often students do not carefully examine or proofread second drafts of their essays. All of the aforementioned exercises can be discussed afterwards to integrate conversational skills. Regardless of which exercises are used, these ideas will assist in forging stronger, habitual mental links between the acts of thinking, reflecting, and writing.

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Appendix a. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (Panman, 1998)

We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and Godgiven rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward gaining political independence, but we still creep at a horse-and-buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregration to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policeman curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on

television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness towards white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son who is asking: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross-country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger," your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and mother are never given the respected title of "Mrs."; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness"—then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.

Appendix b. "The Three New Yorks" (Panman, 1998)

There are roughly three New Yorks. There is, first, the New York of the man or woman who was born here, who takes the city for granted and accepts its size and its turbulence as natural and inevitable. Second, there is the New York of the commuter—the city that is devoured by locusts each day and spat out each night. Third, there is the New York of the person who was born somewhere else and came to New York in quest of something. Of these three trembling cities the greatest is the last—the city of final destination, the city that is a goal. It is this third city that

accounts for New York's high-strung disposition, its poetical deportment, its dedication to the arts, and its incomparable achievements. Commuters give the city its tidal restlessness; natives give it solidity and continuity; but the settlers give it passion. And whether it is a farmer arriving from Italy to set up a small grocery store in a slum, or a young girl arriving from a small town in Mississippi to escape the indignity of being observed by her neighbors, or a boy arriving from the Corn Belt with a manuscript in his suitcase and a pain in his heart, it makes no difference; each embraces New York with the intense excitement of first love, each absorbs New York with the fresh eyes of an adventurer, each generates heat and light to dwarf the Consolidated Edison Company.

Essay

Pooling Resources

Anthony Robins, Aichi University of Education, <anthonycrobins@yahoo.com>

The introduction of English at elementary schools as part of the 'Period of Integrated Study' (Sōgōtekina Gakushûno Jikan) has led to many requests for training sessions for elementary school teachers.   Articles describing both the constraints and possible responses have included Kelly (2002) and Murphey et al. (2004). Undoubtedly, a number of constraints exist which need to be dealt with. Firstly, experience of learning English for the majority of teachers at elementary schools has been like the general population, at junior high, senior high and probably through 'General Education' (ippan kyōiku) at university. Secondly, time for teacher education is limited for the average elementary school teacher, occupied with lessons, pastoral care, visits to parents and club activities. Thirdly, the relatively recent rise of elementary English means a shortage of

experienced practitioners to pass on 'good practice'.

Faced with these constraints, what can you do? The first constraint means that such teacher education certainly has to focus as much on enhancing teachers' own English skills as providing them with teaching strategies. Obviously, these are not mutually-exclusive, allowing a measure of synergy, which can be further increased by awareness of the elementary teachers' valuable training and experience. The main way to deal with the second constraint is to use such limited time as efficiently and effectively as possible by packing in activities, while providing variety. The third constraint is perhaps the most challenging and will be returned to below.

With these responses to constraints in mind, let me briefly describe two sessions I was involved with this summer. First was a one-day open session (kōukai kōuza) which was organized for a number of Aichi elementary teachers in July this year, just after their classes had finished for the summer break. Having been involved in a previous such session, I had identified it as too fragmented, with no continuity between speakers and little opportunity to build up rapport, leading participants to seem less than relaxed, and lacking practical help and advice which could be used immediately. As organizer this year, I tackled these in a number of ways, which I can describe as 'pooling resources'. First, I asked the Teaching Children SIG to send a number of sample copies of their informative newsletter, which is positive both in providing practical ideas and not least in being bilingual. Alison Miyake of the Teaching Children SIG was kind enough to help in this way and the newsletters could be given out during the session. Then, I asked a couple of publishers to send sample material and again they were generous in their help. With regard to presenters, we had four plus myself as coordinator. Partly due to financial limitations, at the university where I work, we are limited to using regular faculty members. They may have a desire

to speak on their favourite specializations, only loosely linked to the issue of teacher education for elementary school teachers. Therefore they need to be encouraged to make their contributions practical and relevant to ensure that the session has a cohesive theme. In addition, cohesiveness was encouraged by asking presenters to stay for as much of the day as possible and to join with the participants to talk informally during lunch and drinks breaks. A frequent criticism of such 'kōukai kōuza', that they are too much unrelenting 'chalk and talk', was alleviated by the newsletters and publishers' materials being introduced at intervals through the day by the coordinator who also provided some 'uplifting' good new items about progress in elementary English education from Japanese newspapers.

Thus, the session resulted as follows:

0930-0945 Registration

0945-1020 Introduction, Overview of issues and Total Physical Response activities   *NS

1020-1100 Language and Identity *NNS

1100-1120 Talking Time over coffee

1120-1210 Improving Pronunciation *NS

1210-1330 Book Display and lunch break

1330-1420 Second Language Acquisition *NNS

1420-1510 Cooperative Learning activities *NS

1510-1530 Talking Time over tea

1530-1600 Video Lesson from a teaching assistant's class at a Nagoya elementary school *NS

1600-1630 Final round-up

*NS = native speaker   *NNS = non-native speaker

The second session was a follow-up, in the sense that two of the participants from the same school in Aichi invited me to do a half-day (afternoon) session. This embodied contrasts, notably a larger number of participants and, given that all the teachers at the particular school were present, a greater degree of compulsion. Predicting that, I decided that the main issues for the organization of the presentation in this case were how to balance activities and the use of language during the presentation.

The first session I described involving more presenters variously used English or Japanese according to presenter. I myself mainly used English, but resorted to my favourite strategy, having key points written down. In contrast, with this second session, I again decided to pool resources by asking a graduate student who had been working as a teaching assistant for Nagoya City and whose lesson had been videoed for the first session to act as interpreter. Why? I felt that it gave an opportunity for the teachers to be exposed to more English, without the less advanced missing the message, and I could more naturally do the activities such as TPR which involved 'keeping to English'. Finally, it gave me the opportunity to have someone collate the results of an instant questionnaire I carried out about the teachers' English learning and teaching experiences so I could give them some feedback and advice based on this.

Thus, the session chiefly consisted of consideration of the following issues. Firstly, the balance of four skills, with my belief that there is a place for a degree of reading and writing in the higher grades. Secondly, the amount of use of Japanese. Again, I suggested a pragmatic approach, but coupled that with advice on the use of clear and simple classroom English to avoid resorting to translation too often. Thirdly, how to choose language and themes to teach, given that this seems to be one of the greatest concerns at elementary schools suddenly faced with creating a syllabus.

These issues were accompanied by practical related light-hearted activities, particularly involving TPR and picture cards which seem to be particularly accessible to teachers who are less experienced and confident in using English. Finally, the session closed with a short picture story, as I was keen to champion the idea of small chunks of English being used whenever they can be fitted in, preferably across the curriculum, rather than limited isolated blocks.

Did the session work? I believe it did, not least because of the enthusiasm of the teachers who were assembled on a hot summer day, presumably not entirely of their own volition. Will it work, in the sense of leading to a more long-term collaboration? My desire was for students at the university where I work to actively assist in elementary English at this particular school. However, time constraints on both sides and the logistics of being in two quite distant parts of the prefecture probably rule this out. I finished by proposing working towards an English camp as a way to reinforce the link between school and university and to give an intensive burst of English, inspired by an article by Curtis Kelly in the Spring 2004 (9.1) issue of 'Teachers Learning with Children' (the Teaching Children SIG newsletter).

Moe details of the first session can be seen at

www.kokusai.aichi-edu.ac.jp/ar/elem.html

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Resource and Book Review

ASCD: An Excellent Resource for EFL Teachers

Tim Murphey, Mari Sekiguchi and Chieko Nishimura, Dokkyo University,

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The full name for the ASCD (Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development) is an

unfortunate mouthful of abstractions that may keep many practicing teachers from considering

joining. However, we find it has been one of the main feeder groups into our own on-going

personal and professional development. A quick glance at their books on their web page will

reveal that they publish progressive educators. Some of our favorites are Kohn (*Beyond*

Discipline, 1996), Jenzen (*Teaching with the Brain in Mind*, 1998), Marzano (*What*

Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action, 2003), and one of the most

exciting books we have read in years, by Thornburg (*The New Basics: Education and the*

Future of Work in the Telematic Age, 2002).

Tim has been a member of ASCD for about 7 years and Mari and Chieko have read several of

their books and articles from ASCD periodicals in graduate school courses. This short piece is *not*

an advertisement but rather describes valuable resources that we regularly share with other

teachers. We find ASCD publications clear and concise enough for undergraduate and graduate

NNS students in EFL methods courses.

Below we will give a brief profile of the organization with quotes mostly from their web page. Then we provide more in-depth reviews of two books that we have read in our courses and that we think are very relevant to EFL teaching. Tim has about 25 books from ASCD that came with his comprehensive membership subscription and another 10 to 20 that he has ordered from them over the years. The information immediately below is from their web page: http://www.ascd.org/

ASCD's mission statement says they are

A diverse, international community of educators, forging covenants in teaching and learning for the success of all learners

Founded in 1943, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) is an international, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that represents 160,000 educators from more than 135 countries and 66 affiliates. Our members span the entire profession of educators—superintendents, supervisors, principals, teachers, professors of education, and school board members.

We address all aspects of effective teaching and learning—such as professional development, educational leadership, and capacity building. ASCD offers broad, multiple perspectives—across all education professions—in reporting key policies and practices. Because we represent all educators, we are able to focus solely on professional practice within the context of "Is it good for the children?" rather than what is reflective of a specific educator role. In short, ASCD reflects the conscience and content of education.

As our name reflects, ASCD was initially envisioned to represent curriculum and supervision issues. Over the years, our focus has changed. We now address *all aspects of effective teaching and learning*—such as professional development, educational leadership, and capacity building.

Book Review

Discovering & Exploring Habits of Mind

By Arthur Costa and Bena Kallick, (2000) Alexandria, Virginia USA
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development US$20.95

How would you like your students to develop the habits of:

● Persisting	● Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision
● Managing impulsivity	● Gathering data through all senses
● Listening with understanding and empathy	● Creating, imagining, innovating
● Thinking flexibly	● Responding with wonderment and awe
● Thinking about thinking (metacognition)	● Taking responsible risks
● Striving for accuracy	● Finding humor
● Questioning and posing problems	● Thinking interdependently
● Applying past knowledge to new situations	● Remaining open to continuous learning

You may already be doing some of these. This book will allow you to appreciate what you are already doing and to reflect on what you could do more to develop habits of mind that you especially value. *Discovering & Exploring Habits of Mind* is a practical guide for educators looking for more information about how to help students develop into self-directed learners.

This is the first book of a four-volume developmental series that is designed for educators to guide children in how they might think and behave intelligently and critically when they encounter challenges, dilemmas and problems in learning and in life. In this first of the series, Arthur Costa and Bena Kallick define and describe 16 types of intelligent behavior that they call "habits of mind" and illustrate their use. Later volumes explore instructional strategies and assessment of the habits at school and at home in more detail. (book 2: *Activating and Engaging Habits of Mind*, book 3:*Assessing and Reporting on Habits of Mind*, book 4: I*ntegrating and Sustaining Habits of Mind*.)

One activity we have done with HsM is to question our teaching with reference to them by asking, "What habits are already being encouraged by activities that we are already doing?" Then we can ask "How can we include other habits?" Try it!

Volume one is divided into seven chapters which describe the importance of the habits of mind (HsM) for lifelong learning. The authors wish to encourage schools and communities to broaden their educational outcomes with the use of HsM. The opening chapter examines the HsM by the historical changes in perspective on intelligence. Chapter 2 defines 16 HsMs and their relationship to enhancing our intellectual capabilities. Chapter 3 shows the benefits of focusing on them as educational outcomes in our curriculum and instruction. Chapter 4 explores how the HsM

fit into the overall curriculum and describes the relationship between learning activities, content, and thinking skills and processes. Chapter 5 relates work ethics to school practices and proposes that the HsM can be promoted in both areas. Chapter 6 deals with how the habits of mind affect and inspire teachers, students, and school staff throughout the school community. Chapter 7 concludes with practical suggestions how to get started in selecting particular HsM to focus on in your environment.

The authors emphasize that the important aspect of intelligence is not to have information but to know how to use it. School, then, is a place to "learn how to learn." This is essential to live productively in an increasingly complex and information-rich world.

Interestingly enough, there are parallels between HsM and the New Courses of Study in Japan (MEXT) which encourages "zest for living" (ikiru chikara) in children. The Courses of Study aim to cultivate: {1} an ability to learn, think, judge and act on their own and to solve a problem; {2} self-discipline, cooperative personality, and kindness and care toward others; and {3} a zest for living such as health and physical strength for a better life. These appear to us to be HsM paraphrased. Thus, this book could be a valuable tool to educators who wish to implement MEXT's Courses of Study. The individual chapters are brief and easy to read. It is a pleasant and fast read for busy teachers.

While this book is targeted toward all educators, language teachers especially should find the implementation of these HsMs easy and useful. After all, as Wilga Rivers (1976) said many years ago, "As language teachers we are the most fortunate of teachers—all subjects are ours" (p. 96). We teach not only language, but life. Teaching and cultivating helpful habits of mind in the

classroom can make the English classroom all the more valuable and exciting to be in. Feed two birds with one scone!

New Courses of Study http://www.mext.go.jp/english/org/eshisaku/eshotou.htm (MEXT) accessed Dec. 24, 2003.

Rivers, W. 1976. Speaking in Many Tongues: essays in foreign language teaching. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House.

Book Review

Multiple intelligences and student achievement: Success stories from six schools

By Linda Campbell and Bruce Campbell (2000) Alexandria, Virginia USA

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development US$ 15.95

Linda and Bruce Campbell describe the application of Multiple Intelligences (MI) and the resulting student achievement through success stories from six schools. The authors show how teachers can learn about MI, apply MI, and measure student achievement through these longitudinal narratives. We recommend this book to English teachers who want to improve their teaching and reach more students, to principals who wish to engage their teachers, and to curriculum consultants who wish a valuable model of change. Moreover, we recommend the long-term nature of this research (from 6 to 9 years) to educational researchers. Seldom do we see such long-term perspectives on change in our curriculums.

Multiple Intelligences is an innovative look at intelligence. Traditionally in schools teachers promote linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences and, indeed, our many classroom and

standardized tests usually test only these as well. In 1983, Howard Gardner identified seven forms of intelligence, the two already over-emphasized in schools, and musical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences. Note that there is overlap here with the Habits of Mind (above), which for example proposes "gathering data through all senses" (promoting musical, special, and kinesthetic intelligences) and "listening with understanding and empathy" (promoting interpersonal intelligence). Indeed, we think the two frameworks can beneficially be used together in curriculum design and methodology.

So, how much it is possible to tap into the various intelligences in our students? There are many books now available that can show teachers how to do this. This particular book emphasizes the developmental stories of schools, how teachers were trained in MI, how they found innovative ways to integrate MI into their curriculum and teaching, and how the impact of MI was measured in a variety of ways over time.

Six MI schools and their history of implementing MI with their students are described: Russell Elementary school in Lexington, Kentucky (over a 9-year period); EXPO for Excellence Elementary Magnet School in St. Paul, Minesota (9 years); Skyview Junior High School in Bothell, Washington (7 years); Key Learning community in Indianapolis, Indiana (6 years); Mountlake Terrace High School in Mountlake Terrace, Washington (9 years); and Lincoln High School in Stockton, California (9 years).

Chapter 1 in the book provides the rationale for introducing MI pedagogy into our school curriculums. Then one chapter each deals with MI implementation in two schools at the elementary (chapter 2), junior high (chapter 3), and high schools levels (chapter 4), with chapter 5 summarizing the findings and concluding. Let's look at one school as an example.

In Russell Elementary school, after six years of incremental training of staff and the gradual implementation of MI pedagogy, "student scores on state tests doubled, [and] disparity between white and black student test scores" was eliminated (p. 15). Russell developed into an MI magnet school a year later. Instruction before MI was teacher-directed and assessment was written classroom tests. Now they have a student-driven curriculum in which arts are integrated into daily lessons in all classrooms. Assessment with MI also involves written classroom tests, but adds projects, performances, and teacher observations. Amazingly, all students take piano lab and primary students write and perform an opera annually.

The authors take us through these longitudinal case studies to show that MI works, not immediately, but over time and with a wide range of schools and students. While the student achievement scores have consistently risen, a good score is not the point of MI theory. The educators emphasize that they teach their curriculum with MI and tests take care of themselves. These well documented case studies show that MI's appeal is broad and inclusive, whether a school is large or small, rich or poor, inner-city or suburban. Moreover, the authors suggest that with numerous skills in place, students are likely to experience success in multiple forms as they grow older.

The authors conclude that meaningful restructuring with MI first takes place within the minds of teachers and their beliefs about the nature and possibilities of their students. From there, all else follows.

What do you think? Or perhaps better stated, "How" do you think?

Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: the theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.

Postscript

It was only after having written the above review that we discovered that there is also an ASCD branch association in Japan called JASCD (founded in 1992). You can visit their web page at http://www.jascd.org/ and get information about their activities. Although it looks as if they are geared more generally toward educators in American and international schools (not specifically language teaching), good learning principles are somewhat like food –we all need to eat well!

Be published in *Explorations in Teacher Education*!

Guidelines

Articles – sharing your research with other teacher educators. Up to 3000 words.

Essays – your opinion or ideas about a topic relevant to teacher educators based in Japan. Up to 2500 words.

Stimulating Professional Development series – teacher educators are often quite professionally isolated. Write up about your teacher education activities, and the institutions that you work in. See previous issues for examples. Up to 3500 words.

Conference Proceedings –did you give a great presentation recently? Write up your presentation – up to 2500 words.

Conference Reviews or Conference Reports – did you attend an interesting conference? Share your thoughts with the TE SIG members. Up to 2500 words.

Book Reviews – have you recently read an interesting book related to teaching, teacher education, language acquisition, or education? Up to 2000 words.

Font: Times New Roman 11 point, single spaced, one line between paragraphs, SINGLE space between sentences.

Notes: Please include a catchy title, your name and professional affiliation, an e-mail address to go at the top of the article, and a 75-100 word bio-data for the end.

Deadlines: ongoing. Submit by e-mail to Simon Lees <simich@gol.com>. Attach as a Word document, titled with your surname, such as 'croker.doc' or 'robins.doc'.

Also, please cut and paste your article into the body of the e-mail, in case the Word document does not open.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Editor if you have any questions or ideas.

What is the Teacher Education SIG?

A network of foreign language instructors dedicated to becoming better teachers and helping each other teach more effectively, the TE SIG has been active since 1993. Our members teach at universities, high schools, and language centres both in Japan and other countries. The TE SIG focuses on five areas: action research, teacher reflection, peer-based development, teacher motivation, and teacher training and supervision.

If you would like further information about the TE SIG, please contact:

TE SIG Coordinator, Anthony Robins <anthonycrobins@yahoo.com>

Explorations in Teacher Education

Newsletter of the Japan Association of Language Teachers

Teacher Education Special Interest Group (TE SIG)

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