The LLL SIG Newsletter

Coordinator's Message
Tadashi Ishida

I hope everyone will be off to a great start in 2013.

First of all, I'd like to express a big thank you to Julia for her hard work as Publications Chair during the past eight years.

I'd also like to encourage everyone to become more active in our group. We are always looking for volunteers to help.

This is a list of the officers for 2013.

Coordinator	Tadashi Ishida
Treasurer	Junko Fujio
Program Chair	Joseph Dias
Membership Chair	Yoko Wakui
Publications Chair	Kazuko Unosawa (Welcome on board!)
Webmaster	Malcolm Prentice
Member-at-Large	Eric Skier, Julia Harper

About the newsletter, I think the content depends on contributions from its readers. All SIG members are invited to submit articles or reports for inclusion in these pages. Even if you feel that what you have to say is trivial, there is always someone who will be interested. Everyone has a story to tell, and I look forward to hearing yours.

Please write
1) About your experience in teaching English to older learners.
2) A report about a lifelong learning related presentation you attended.

Best Wishes to everyone in 2013, the year of the snake!

The LLL SIG Newsletter

Program Chair's Message
Joseph V. Dias

This final newsletter of the year is chock-full of interesting articles and short reports of presentations given at the LLL-SIG Forum at JALT 2012 in Hamamatsu, on October 13th of this year. The second part of an article, "Facilitating Online Language Training for Mature Learners," by Don Maybin, will also appear in this issue. It is based on a talk of the same name that he delivered at the LLL-SIG Mini Conference last year.

The LLL-SIG forum at JALT's national conference was on the theme "Reading for life: The making of lifelong readers." Six speakers participated in the forum, with Melvin Andrade (of Sophia University Junior College Division) leading the way with his segment on "A global perspective on adult literacy and social justice: What the developing world can teach Japan about life transformative reading." He contended that although lifelong reading in English for Japanese adults and the basic literacy needs of adults in developing countries are on the surface different, they share some common features. He felt that, essential to the success of literacy programs, is the use of participatory methodologies that address real-world needs and draw on the life experiences of students. His presentation introduced the educational practices of Action Aid's "Reflect" program and case studies demonstrating the life transformative effects of adult literacy. A short listing of the resources he introduced to the audience will be included with the other, more detailed, forum reports.

Gregory Strong, Joseph Dias and Todd Rucynski (professors at Aoyama Gakuin University and Tokai University) were next in the line up with their segment on "Promoting lifelong readers through a teacher-produced video." Twelve reading teachers collaborated to produce a video showcasing the varied ways that reading can be taught, from literary analysis of graded readers and vocabulary apps for cellphones, to dramatic interpretation and task-based approaches that incorporate the skills of speaking, listening, and writing and integrate reading of online content. The suggestions introduced in the video were intended to cultivate lifelong readers who could derive pleasure from reading, rather than simply learn

to decode complex texts. Joseph Dias will summarize what was covered in this part of the forum.

The third speaker was Adam Murray, of Tokai University, who spoke about the almost unlimited reading content (i.e., authentic texts, original and adapted texts written for EFL and ESL learners) available on the Internet, which can be an invaluable resource in the reading classroom. Not only do these texts provide essential input, but the speaker also maintained that they could be a source of motivation for reluctant readers. Prof. Murray, in this volume and during his presentation, introduced a number of resources for paced reading, timed reading, and vocabulary development that could be used in any learning context.

Finally, Atsuko Kosaka (Aichi University), a "reading workshop" teacher encourages students to grow as readers through mini-lessons, conferences, and sharing time. As a lifelong reader and as a mentor, the speaker described how she helps students learn various aspects of reading, including making effective book choices, talking about books, and expanding their reading repertoire through interactions with other readers. This presentation discussed what a reading workshop approach is and explored its potential contribution to EFL reading instruction. Prof. Kosaka expands upon what she presented at the forum in her article in this volume.

It is our wish that you find some gems of knowledge or wisdom, if not both, in this final issue of the LLL Newsletter for this year. May it push you further forward on your journey of lifelong learning.

Don Maybin teaches at Shonan Institute of Technology. He is a former director of the Language Institute of Japan and co-creator of www.sulantra.com, a multi-lingual website for training users in basic, functional language skills. *This e-article, the second installment of a three-part paper, is based on his presentation of the same name given for the Japan Association of Language Teacher's Lifelong Language Learning Special Interest Group on October 1, 2011 in Tokyo.*

Facilitating Online Language Training for Mature Learners – Part 2

This is the second section of a three-part e-article describing the challenges faced in the creation of an "all inclusive" website, www.sulantra.com, which incorporates an experimental curriculum and pedagogy to develop basic skills in a foreign language. In the first section, I described the classroom-based background to the online training system, including a brief description of the modular, spiraling format of the training approach, which makes it easier for mature language to remember key language for accomplishing specific tasks. Finally, I mentioned the "digital divide", a term which is used to describe those people who are cut off from online information and experiences due to gender, geographical location, economic conditions and, of course, age.

In the second part of this e-article, I will talk about the design measures required to make Sulantra.com more accessible for learners of every age. A fundamental component of any e-learning context is to provide clear instruction in language the user understands – his or her own. There are plenty of English language learning websites – with directions in English. I suppose it works if you are already quite competent in English, but we assume our users are absolute or very

low beginners and would be much more comfortable with a UI in their mother tongue. Besides, why should a Japanese speaker have to wade through English directions in order to learn Italian? (Having said that, some Japanese users do register with English to learn another language to "kill two birds with one stone.")

In Sulantra.com, we enter each language as a target language to learn AND as a *user language* from which to access every other language course in our system (see Diagram 2: Sulantra.com interactive language "mesh"). The platform is complex, but it ensures that all languages are given equal treatment and all learners are given access to our website if they speak one of the languages that we have already uploaded.

Because of this principle of "equal treatment" for all languages, several other technical features are required in the design starting with the login process. The system must allow for a wider range of writing systems that can be entered from left to right (Italian, Korean) or right to left (Arabic, Hebrew). To make signing in even easier, ID and passwords have been kept short and simple with a minimum of four letters only. Perhaps a little less secure, but certainly easier to remember. Other technical revisions included the removal of "hovering" where information appears as a pop-up when the user's mouse is left in one place for more than a second or two. One older test subject from Bulgaria had trouble grasping the concept then found it distracting once he did. Perhaps more fundamental is the number of clicks necessary to activate a feature. The difference between a single click and double click proved frustrating for older users who clicked repetitively when things did not seem to be going as planned. (This brought back memories of

my own first messy handling of a mouse!) The solution, of course, was to make the number of clicks irrelevant.

All of the above are components of the user interface – or UI – the steps, directions and buttons you have to click in order to move through a website. The UI is the backbone of any site and it should be simple, straightforward and intuitive, resulting in a hassle-free online experience for the user. Sadly, for a mature audience the UI can be a nightmare. Even popular shopping sites, such as Amazon or Rakuten, can be surprisingly complicated for first-time users who get confused by menu bars and perturbed by message boxes that appear when problems occur.

In the case of Sulantra.com, our first hurdle was our systems engineer, Yoh. As a youthful "gamer" who spends hours online playing computer games, his original designs were elegant and lovely to look at but hell to maneuver through with hidden menus that were, well, hidden. In one "creative discussion", I complained that many users would be lost in his design and head for the door – if they could find it! I then suggested he work with a specific person in mind, for example, his mother. As it turned out, she plays computer games, too! Notching up the argument, I asked Yoh to design for his grandmother, to which he replied, "But she doesn't use a computer." The obvious answer was to design screens that were so simple and intuitive she would, which is what we have tried to do.

My personal peeve with many UI's is that important buttons are difficult to locate. I can't find the tree I want in the forest on my screen! Different people look at different places on their computer screens – what is "right in front of you" for one

user may be invisible for someone like me who is less familiar with online design protocols. A well-designed site has several points on the screen where the user can click to achieve the same action.

When testing our website, we deliberately used learners over 60 who spoke out loud as they worked their way through the sign-up process then completed several modules of an online course. It soon became obvious that one large button at the top or bottom of the screen was inadequate. Many users simply could not see it. Other times, the button would be just off the screen in the area below but the user was unfamiliar with scrolling, or moving the screen up and down to locate specific sections. If the button was not visible, some mature users would simply wait wondering out loud what to do next or, worse, close the screen.

Solutions were sometimes extreme. We made the UI for Sulantra.com "design redundant" with buttons for the same purpose located in several places in plain view. But for some users, even this "redundancy" was inadequate. Eventually we programmed buttons to change color and/or flash if the user took an inordinate amount of time to click the screen and move on to the next stage in the course. As for drop menus and hovering, we left them out altogether, while menu bars have gone through several incarnations for greater simplicity. Although it may not be very flashy, "simple" is the guideline we follow to make our site more inclusive.

Another core feature of our online pedagogy is conversation management training. Our goal was to prepare users so that they could ask someone to speak more slowly, repeat or provide an unknown word. We achieved it by combining key phrases used for managing conversation, such as "Pardon?" or "More slowly,

please." with icons the user clicks to activate a response. This means the user decides when he or she wants repetition or slower delivery, thus, recognizing the need and contextualizing the key language. In a classroom, learner tolerance for repeated drilling of key phrases can be low for students of any age. Our online system lets users decide when they want to hear the language again – and again. The choice for repetition is personal, not imposed.

Many people have asked why we have gone to so much trouble, time and cost to create Sulantra.com. For myself the main reason is family. I have loved ones who would like to learn French (my mother's school teacher was from Quebec), Spanish (my brother and his wife frequently visit the Yucatan and wish they could say more than "Una cerveza, por favor."), Swahili (my youngest aunt has talked wistfully of seeing wildebeests on the Veldt in Tanzania) and Polish (my oldest aunt wants to know what her mother-in-law *really* thinks). Many of these people have limited formal education, but are intelligent and motivated to learn like so many others around the world. They would study online if they could find a site that does not intimidate them from the first click of the mouse. This is why the technical side, particularly the UI, for any e-learning website is so critical. And just as in a real world classroom, you may have only one opportunity to "hook" the online learner.

For further discussion of mature learners and language training, visit the author's blog at the following link:

http://blog.donmaybin.com/2011/12/26-improving-with-age.html

Target Language(L2) → ↓ Instructional Language(L1)	English	Chinese	Turkish	Spanish	New language
English	❖	Eng>Chin	Eng>Tur	Eng>Span	Eng>NL
Chinese	Chin>Eng	❖	Chin>Tur	Chin>Span	Chin>NL
Turkish	Tur>Eng	Tur>Chin	❖	Tur>Span	Tur>NL
Spanish	Span>Eng	Span>Chin	Span>Tur	❖	Span>NL
New language	NL>Eng	NL>Chin	NL>Tur	NL>Span	❖

Diagram 2: Sulantra.com interactive language "mesh"

Melvin Andrade, a professor and department chair at Sophia University Junior College Division, earned a Doctor of Education degree from the University of California at Berkeley. Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area of California, his hobbies and interests include foreign languages, art and music appreciation, tea ceremony, and current events around the world. He recently published an English textbook entitled Life in Our Global Village (Sanshusha). This is a list of some of the useful resources he presented during the first segment of the LLL-SIG Forum at JALT 2012 in Hamamatsu, on October 13th of this year.

A global perspective on adult literacy and social justice: What the developing world can teach Japan about life transformative reading

-- Melvin Andrade

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Melvin Andrade
Personal HP: http:tinyurl.com/hp-andrade
Global issue links for students:
https://sites.google.com/site/eiawebsite/

The LLL SIG Newsletter

The LLL-SIG Forum at JALT 2012 in Hamamatsu, on October 13th of this year, was on the theme "Reading for life: The making of lifelong readers." This is a report on one segment of that forum, presented by Joseph Dias, Gregory Strong, and Todd Rucynski. Joseph Dias and Gregory Strong, professors in the English Department at Aoyama Gakuin University, are co-coordinators of its Integrated English Program. Todd Rucynski is an Associate Professor at Tokai University and an educational filmmaker with his own company, Fluent Films.

Promoting lifelong readers through a teacher-produced video

Joseph Dias

This presentation reported on the process of creating a DVD, which was made as a faculty development project to promote effective reading instruction by Aoyama Gakuin University's English Department. The groundwork for the DVD-making project began one year before the actual filming. Gregory Strong and Joseph Dias were asked to join a committee to investigate how reading was being taught in two required reading courses for freshmen and sophomores. Somehow, the courses became identified as a weak link in the program and we (along with Peter Robinson, Mitsue Allen-Tamai and four others) were tasked with trying to improve the delivery of instruction.

All the courses were taught by Japanese instructors and fell outside the purview of the Integrated English Program (IEP) that Gregory Strong and I oversee. We knew how reading is handled in the IEP; students read novels, which may be in the form of graded readers, and report on them in both oral and written reports. They also read a variety of other genres, including magazine and newspaper articles, with the aim of communicating about them through English, rather than by decoding grammatical structures. A commercial textbook is used for intensive reading, the introduction of skimming and scanning, and to encourage vocabulary acquisition skills. In the case of the reading courses we were called upon to "fix," none of us quite knew what teaching methodology or approach was being used.

The only evidence that existed about how the courses were taught was a list of the textbooks that each teacher had assigned to his or her students. They ranged from collections of newspaper articles to novels and anthologies of short stories.

The committee speculated that the reading teachers took a grammar-translation approach, offering little participation from students beyond calling upon them to translate or summarize, in Japanese, passages that were read aloud in class. Realizing that it was unfair to paint a picture of how these classes were undertaken in such large strokes, we decided to systematically investigate—through a combination of surveys and class observations—the methods used and how both teachers and students conceived of the course and what they considered to be its strengths and weaknesses.

The results of these inquiries led to a set of recommendations, including a formal proposal for the funding of a faculty development project to promote what were identified as effective reading pedagogy through the production of a DVD featuring ourselves and selected teachers introducing a wide variety of approaches to the teaching of reading, from low-tech methods such as poster presentations and systems to encourage extensive reading, to high-tech techniques utilizing flashcard apps for vocabulary study and CALL.

Before presenting the process of how the DVD was organized and created, we will summarize the results of the surveys that led up to it, which pointed to the advantageousness of facilitating the exchange of effective teaching practices among the reading teachers and between IEP teachers and reading teachers.

The full results of the surveys were reported at the Pan-SIG Conference in Matsumoto last year (Dias & Strong, 2011). What was known about the courses before the survey's administration was that all but one of the 18 reading classes was taught by 15 PT Japanese instructors and 1 FT Japanese faculty member; nearly half of the Reading teachers were veterans, having taught these courses for 8 years or more; the course goals seemed vaguely defined and there were very different assignments and expectations for each teacher's class; and classes were large—45 students, representing a wide range of ability levels, including returnees who were advanced in English ability but weak in Japanese reading skills.

We found, through a series of surveys of nearly 400 students and approximately 30 teachers, that…

- Although reading is often regarded as our students' strongest skill, 80% were either not at all confident about their reading ability or only a bit confident.
- Fifty-three percent liked reading in English and 72% in Japanese; 39% liked

reading in both languages, and 15% did not like reading in either language.

- When reading in English, more than 75% spend less than an hour per week on pleasure reading, with about 52% of them spending less than 30 minutes.
- As expected, the primary class activity involved the recitation of translations (see Fig. 1).

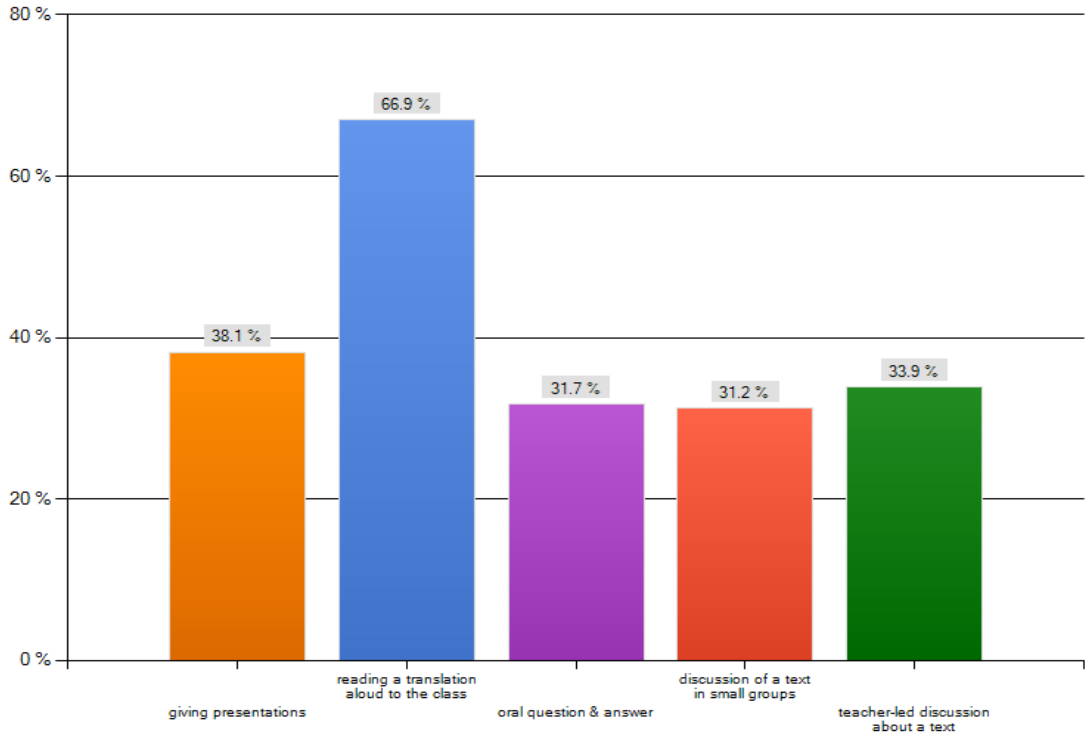

Figure 1: Activities and tasks that student reported doing in their reading classes.

- Over half of the students are doing more than 35% of their reading online—both in English and in Japanese.
- Students were far more experienced and adept than their teachers at using mobile technology for reading (see Fig. 2).
- Sixty-six percent of the students (or more) were doing a substantial amount of reading of blogs, email, and social networking content in Japanese, but they were only about half as likely to be accessing such content in English, representing a great deal of untapped potential to exploit what are clearly highly motivating modes of communication.

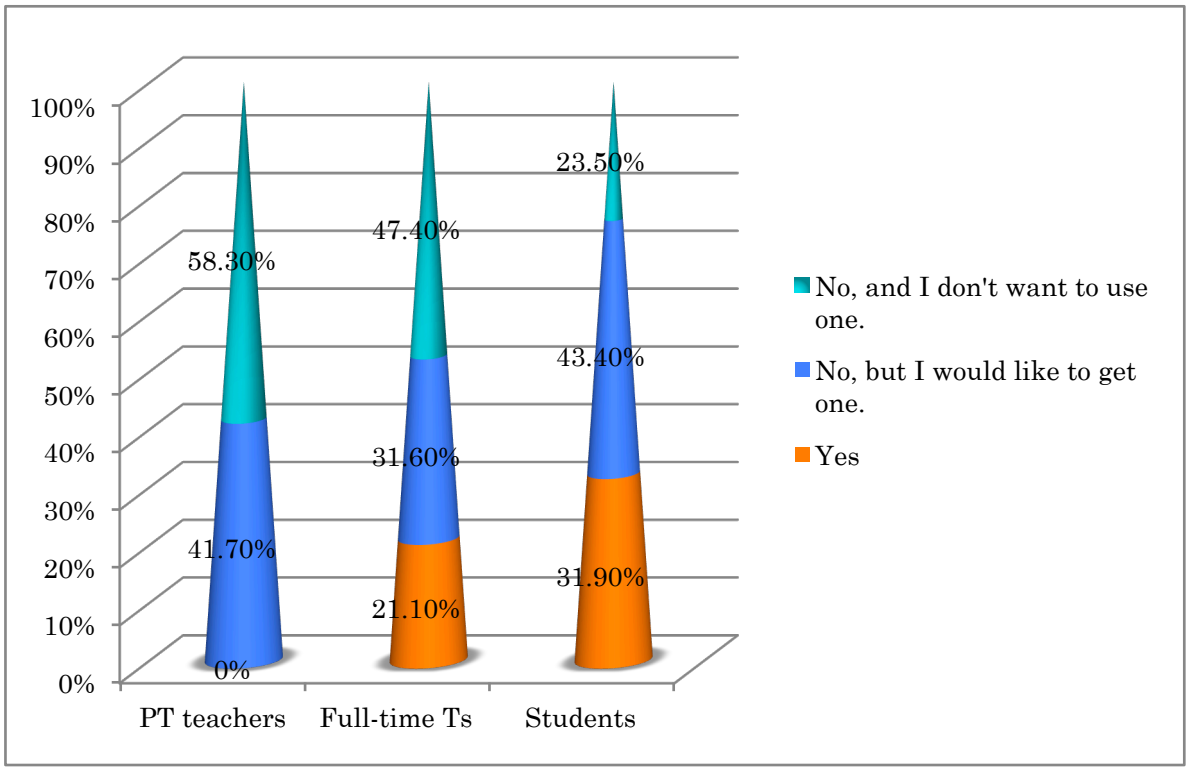

Figure 2: Percentages of all respondents who say they use some type of mobile device (e.g., iPad, e-book reader, etc.) for reading e-books, long documents, or PDFs.

When asked how much their *reading course*, in particular, helped them, a range of positive and negative opinions were expressed:

Positive or neutral comments

I can change my way of reading.

It taught me how to read newspaper articles.

I could read "real" English.

It maintains my English at a certain level.

We can know answers of others.

Negative comments

The class is too quiet.

Translates into Japanese every time for everything.

The teacher's voice is not clear so that I cannot understand what (s)he said.

We just translate the texts, which is boring and not helpful.

There were mixed reactions to the reading courses, with some students finding them beneficial in that they could be exposed to English texts intended for native speakers, learn some reading skills, and exchange answers with classmates; while others felt that translation was overemphasized and classes lacked dynamism. Students went on to reveal that they felt the following factors posed the greatest difficulties when reading in English:

- Vocabulary (79 out of 170 respondents mentioned this)
- Grammar / Long sentences / Slang and idioms / Slow reading speed
- Lack of sufficient background knowledge (e.g., "Historical or scientific articles I'm not familiar with.")

The general picture that emerged through the surveys was one of a fairly traditional grammar-translation approach to reading, tempered by methods exercised by some of the teachers which students responded to more favorably. Through a subsequent survey of the reading teachers themselves, we were able to identify those who demonstrated a variety of techniques and resource use that seemed more in line with current "good practice" (Ellis, 2005; Nation, 2001; Strong, 2010; and Willis & Willis, 1997). Here is a partial list of some of the positive practices that several teachers were already employing:

- Explain, in English, special or difficult words in the text (using information from the internet and reference books).
- Create a family tree of the characters in a story.
- Show the passage of time in a story using a flow chart.
- Use study guides in English and give concise information about the background of reading texts.
- Demonstrate how to use dictionaries—English-Japanese and English-English, including O.E.D.

These findings led us to the next stage of our investigation, which involved seeking permission to observe selected reading classes. All the teachers who were approached welcomed the opportunity to be observed since it was framed as something we were doing in order to identify practices that we hoped other teachers in the program could learn from. In other words, the aim was to "spread the wealth." In the course of the observations, it was possible to recruit three of the reading teachers for the reading DVD project as they were using methods or techniques we hoped might be adopted by other teachers in the program. As "insiders," already teaching these courses, we also felt that they might be the most persuasive in convincing some of their colleagues to introduce new approaches to their teaching.

1. A Rationale for New Ways of Teaching Reading (Joseph Dias)
2. Vocabulary Teaching and Testing (Gregory Strong)
3. Vocabulary Learning Apps for Cellphones (Arno Fuhlendorf)
4. Extensive Reading through Graded Readers (Gregory Strong)
5. Teaching Literary Terms for Graded Readers (Vivien Cohen)
6. Tasks Related to Stories: Katherine Mansfield's "The Fly" (Rieko Okuno)
7. Students Re-telling Stories (Mitsue Tamai-Allen)
8. Interactive Tasks (Gregory Strong)
9. Online Interactive Tasks: Randomizing pairwork with CALL (Yoshiho Satake)
10. From Passive to Active Readers (Kazuko Namba)
11. Jigsaw Reading (Joseph Dias)
12. Contextualized Reading: A Conference Simulation (Joseph Dias)
13. A Poster Session (Gregory Strong)
14. Encouraging Critical Reading (Tamiko Hanaoka)
15. Student Presentations (Gregory Strong)
16. Films and Visual Media Translation (Junichi Miyazawa)
17. Interpreting a Script (Todd Rucynski)

Figure 3: The 17 chapters appearing in the menu of the reading DVD, which was distributed to all teachers in the department upon completion.

Although it is beyond the scope of this report to go into detail about all the content that came to be included on the DVD, it should be apparent by perusing the DVD chapter titles in Figure 3 that efforts were made to introduce pedagogy that allowed for more interaction among students, greater use of the Internet and apps for mobile devices, a multimodal approach to vocabulary study, and a

more task-based approach that would stimulate an active attitude toward learning.

Perhaps the best by-product of the DVD project was the fact that teachers whose teaching practices had never previously been observed or commended were able to have a forum from which they could share their best ideas. They were given the choice to explain their tasks, activities, or techniques in Japanese or English. The filmmaker, Todd Rucynski, tirelessly coaxed teacher-actors through take after take in order to produce a final product that would be both informative and enjoyable for the viewer to watch. In parts, paraphrases of the speaker's words, or simply key phrases, were projected on the screen to aid comprehension.

After the DVD was completed (a process that took nearly half a year), copies were burned for all the teachers in the department. Scenes from it were shown at the annual teachers' orientation as well. Six months after its debut, a follow-up survey was given to all teachers who received it. Twenty-three out of 50-some teachers who we believed to have received the DVD responded to the survey. A somewhat disappointing discovery was that a fifth of the respondents claimed never to have received the DVD. Of those who not only remembered receiving it, but also *watched* it…

- 94% (15 teachers) thought the DVD was a valuable way to get information on ways to teach reading.
- Although only four teachers had actually tried out the suggestions given on the DVD in their own classes, eleven others felt inspired enough to try to do so in the future.

All but one of the teachers surveyed said that they would be interested in additional in-house DVDs on the teaching of other language skills, with one of them writing:

> "I find the DVDs an excellent way of providing information and while I enjoyed the teachers' meeting at the start of the school year, it is very convenient to be able to review material later on."

Perhaps the project was most beneficial for those Japanese teachers who actually starred in the video segments. Even though it was nerve-wracking for some—particularly those who presented in English—they found it to be an opportunity for growth and enjoyed the challenge, as these two comments

demonstrate:

- It was fun. Some teachers gave me feedback and I felt happy to share my ideas with them.
- Personally, I have never wished to attract attention from other teachers. However, I think teachers should not close the doors of their classrooms.
- Valuable experience. I should have developed more effective presentation skills.

The teacher-actors also were very clear about what they hoped the audience would take away from their video presentations. These included:

- That peer teaching is very effective to make students more active and they can learn a lot from each other.
- I hope they will recognize that reading ability can be improved in many different ways. I know my way is very "manual," yet it can touch some students' heartstrings, even though they just try to "think."
- The importance of critical thinking.

In conclusion, although there was some disappointment that fewer than half of the teachers receiving the DVD actually took the time to watch it, the benefits for the teachers involved in its production more than compensated for that. It is also hoped that the DVD will serve the same purpose as a resource book and be brought out when the need for it arises, resulting in more teachers to derive inspiration from it.

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The LLL SIG Newsletter

Adam Murray is a Canadian now on the faculty of Tokai University. In this article, he summarizes some of the useful resources he presented during his segment of the LLL-SIG Forum at JALT 2012 in Hamamatsu, on October 13th of this year.

Online resources for turning EFL students into lifelong readers

-- Adam Murray

The Internet is a gold mine of resources for EFL students, providing an unlimited supply of reading materials on every possible subject. Although such a quantity of materials is wonderful, this abundance of reading matter can be overwhelming for some students as they try to find texts that are at an appropriate reading level for them. This brief paper will introduce some free online resources that can be used in the EFL classroom and for independent reading. These resources will be divided into four sections: authentic texts, adapted texts, texts for learners, and tools.

Authentic texts

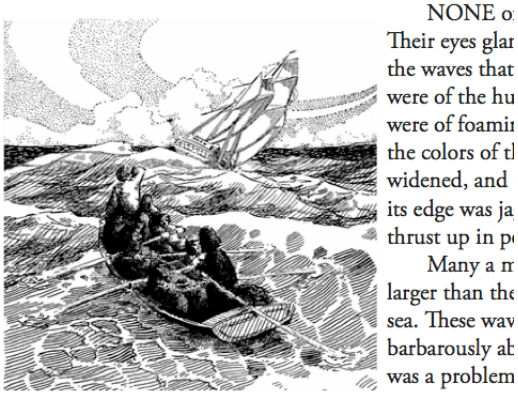
Authentic texts are texts which were written for native English readers. As would be expected, these texts: a) come in a variety of genres, b) are written for a range of ages— children to adults—and c) are written for various purposes. One of the largest, if not the largest, source of public domain literary works is Project Gutenberg. Currently, Project Gutenberg offers over 40,000 e-books that are in the American public domain. In addition to the main website, there are smaller regional websites such as Gutenberg Australia and Gutenberg Canada that offer additional books that are not in the American public domain. These e-books provided by Project Gutenberg are offered in a number of formats, such as HTML, EPUB, Kindle, and Plain Text.

To accompany the texts that can be found on Project Gutenberg, audio recordings are also available on other websites. The largest repository of audio recordings of public domain texts can be found at LibriVox. LibriVox's self-proclaimed mission is the "acoustical liberation of books in the public domain". Volunteers from around the world make recordings of public

domain books in .mp3 (64kbps and 128 kbps) and .ogg vorbis formats. As of September 2012, there were 6,000 projects at various stages of completion. Although it is difficult to criticize the efforts of these dedicated volunteers, it should be mentioned that the quality of these recordings can vary greatly. Some of the recordings were made with low-end microphones and, as a result, there is background noise (e.g., computer fan noise, page turning, etc.). Also, the quality of the actual readings can vary. Some of the recordings were made by enthusiastic volunteers whose love for the books is evident. On the other hand, some of the readers tend to read in monotone voices. Despite these shortcomings, these audio recordings are still useful for reading-while-listening.

Another source of audio recordings is Lit2Go, a website created by the Center for Instructional Technology in the College of Education at the University of South Florida. Much smaller than the previously mentioned websites, Lit2Go offers hundreds of short stories and poems. What makes this site superior to Project Gutenberg is the beautifully illustrated PDF files of the texts. An example of one of these illustrations can be seen in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1: An illustration from Stephen Crane's *Open Boat* (Lit2Go)



In addition to providing illustrated texts, Lit2Go also avoids the previously described shortcomings of the LibriVox audio recordings. As a result of being supported by grant funding, Lit2Go is able to provide high-quality audio recordings in .mp3 format made by professional readers.

Adapted texts

Adapted texts are texts that have been modified in various ways for ESL/EFL learners. Typically the vocabulary and grammatical structures have been simplified to make the text

easier to read and understand. One well-established resource of adapted texts is the Voice of America (VOA) Learning English website. A regular feature of the website is a Special English audio show called "American Stories". The stories presented in this show are adaptions of famous American short stories such as *Rappaccini's Daughter* that have been written for "intermediate and upper-beginner" level students. In addition to being adapted for learners, the stories are read at a much slower speed (33% slower) than the regular VOA recordings. Like Lit2Go, PDF and high-quality .mp3 files are available for download.

For students and teachers who do not have an interest in literature, The Learning Resources website may be attractive. This website has a number of lessons that feature news stories from CNN and CBS which are organized into 12 categories. Examples of these categories are adventure, culture & society, environment, and science & technology. For each news story, the original text, an abridged text, and an outline are available along with audio and video files in Real Audio format. In addition to the news stories, there is a number of supplemental vocabulary and comprehension activities that are suitable for independent study. Unfortunately, the most current news story is from 2005, so it seems that this website is not being actively maintained any more.

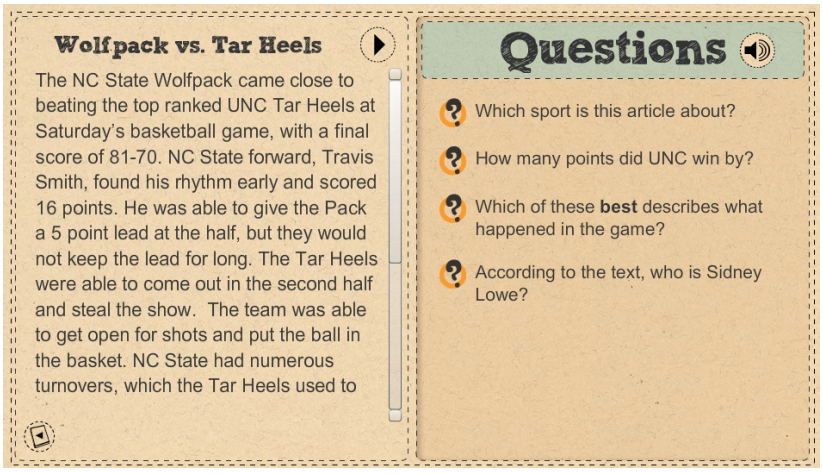
Texts for EFL/ESL learners

Texts for EFL/ESL learners are original texts that were created for learners of English. The University of Victoria English Language Centre has a website called Study Zone that was created for adult English-language learners. The website has readings divided into four language levels: a) upper beginner (level 200), b) lower intermediate (level 330), c) intermediate (410), d) upper intermediate (level 490), and e) advanced (level 570). In addition to the readings, each of the levels has grammar and vocabulary exercises. Some of the topics such as urban legends are an interesting alternative to regular news stories.

Cengage has a companion website for the long-selling reference book *E-Learning Companion: A Student's Guide to Online Success*. The site has 24 reading passages approximately 500 words in length that are intended for timed reading practice. These passages cover a wide variety of topics such as global English, Summer X Games, and Pablo Picasso. The website calculates reading speed and has follow-up comprehension quizzes.

GCF LearnFree.org by the Goodwill Community Foundation offers activities to improve reading fluency and vocabulary. It is intended for beginners and focuses on 1,000 commonly used words. For reading comprehension practice, there are 140 texts that are very short in length (150 words or less) on everyday topics such as family, household, and transportation. As shown in Exhibit 2, each text has an accompanying audio so reading-while-listening practice is possible.

Exhibit 2: GCF LearnFree reading comprehension activity



In addition to reading comprehension activities, there are exercises for vocabulary development and basic reading skills such as letter and word recognition.

Tools

Although the previously listed resources are an excellent starting point for independent reading, students need to be able to locate appropriate reading materials for themselves in order to truly be lifelong readers.

One way that students can identify appropriate reading materials is to measure the readability of texts. Simply put, readability is the ease of understanding or comprehension of text by a specific reading audience. An excellent website for calculating readability scores is Readability Formulas. The website calculates readability scores for texts between 150 and 600 words using a number of popular readability formulas such as Flesch Reading Ease and the Gunning Fog Scale. A unique feature of this website is the "Text Readability Consensus Calculator" which calculates the average grade level, reading age, and difficulty of texts. In

Exhibit 3, the readability consensus score for a text from *National Geographic* is shown.

Exhibit 3: Readability Consensus Score for a *National Geographic* article

Readability Consensus
Based on 8 readability formulas, we have scored your text:
Grade Level: 10
Reading Level: fairly difficult to read.
Reader's Age: 14-15 yrs. old (Ninth to Tenth graders)

In addition to calculating readability scores, the website also generates wordlists from texts. Some of the lists are: a) unique words, b) repeated words, c) single syllable words, d) double syllable words, and e) three-plus syllable words. Using the readability consensus information along with the information in the wordlists, the reader can make the decision whether or not the text is at an appropriate level.

Another tool for analyzing texts is Cloze Horse. Although the website is intended for use by teachers, it can be useful for learners as well. Like the Readability Formulas website, it calculates readability. Cloze Horse relies on one readability formula - Flesch Reading Ease. In addition to calculating readability, Cloze Horse highlights words in the Academic Word List (AWL), low frequency words, and words in the second thousand of the General Service List (2000 GSL). In Exhibit 4, the vocabulary analysis for a text is shown.

Exhibit 4: A text with words highlighted by word level

New Zealand is a small country in the southern Pacific Ocean. There are two main islands, the North Island and the South Island, as well as many smaller islands. New Zealand is 268,000 square kilometres, about the same size as the United Kingdom.

Maori people arrived from the Pacific in the 10th century, and by the 12th century there were many Maori settlements along the coasts of New Zealand. The Maori name for New Zealand is Aotearoa, which means 'The land of the long white cloud'. Seven hundred years later, large numbers of Europeans started to settle in New Zealand. According to Government figures, the population of New Zealand in 2004 was over four million, and of these, about 75 percent lived in the North Island.

There are four main cities. Auckland, in the north, is the largest city with a population of over one million people. Auckland's population includes many different nationalities. For example, there are large groups of European, Maori, Pacific Island, Chinese and Indian people. Together with other smaller groups, they make Auckland an interesting and exciting place to live.

Note: Yellow words – AWL, blue words – 2000 GSL, green – low frequency.

This easy-to-understand output allows the reader to quickly determine the difficulty of the vocabulary used in the text.

Appendix A: URLs of Resources Described (In order described)

Authentic Texts

- Project Gutenberg – www.gutenberg.org
- LibriVox – librivox.org
- Lit2Go - etc.usf.edu/lit2go

Adapted Texts

- Voice of America Learning English - learningenglish.voanews.com
- Learning Resources – literacynet.org/cnnsf/archives.html

Texts for EFL/ESL Learners

- University of Victoria English Language Centre Study Zone - web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/
- E-Learning Companion (Cengage) - college.cengage.com/collegesurvival/watkins/learning_companion/1e/students/timed_reading.html
- GCF LearnFree - www.gcflearnfree.org/reading

Tools

- Readability Formulas – www.readabilityformulas.com
- Cloze Horse - simonsplace.mine.nu/~simonac/clozehorse2/index.html

The LLL SIG Newsletter

Atsuko Kosaka lectures at Aichi University. In this article, she expands upon her fascinating segment of the LLL-SIG Forum, which she delivered at JALT 2012 in Hamamatsu, on October 13th of this year.

A Reading Workshop: The teacher as a life-long reader and mentor, and students as fellow readers

-- Atsuko Kosaka

> "What a difference it makes when a child searches the world for science fiction books by the truly great science fiction writers rather than reading *any* purple-dot book."
>
> -- Lucy McCormick Calkins (2001, 390)

A student in an EFL reading workshop class said in Japanese while returning *Marvin Redpost: Alone in His Teacher's House* (Sachar, 1994), "This book was good, easy to read and moving. I was lost in the story, wondering what would happen next, and the reading time went very quickly. I experienced that I can read an English book if I like the story." The student noted, in Japanese, in his reading record, "I would like to continue to read like this even after completing this course." What he would like to do is exactly what the teacher wants him to do, continuing to read and becoming a life-long reader of English.

While talking with that student, the teacher quickly thought about other titles by the same author and mentioned them to him. At the same time she wondered what books to order next for the classroom library, recalling a recent inquiry from another student, who had asked if there were more books by Simon James. Affirming the second student's eagerness to read more books by her favorite author, the teacher had to tell her that there were only three of his books in the classroom, and recommended a few other authors whom she might like to read.

1. Book Choice and Literacy Talks among Readers

The introduction above describes recent conversations between the teacher and students in an EFL reading workshop classroom, where students often display an eagerness to read. Important in supporting this positive attitude toward reading are choices that both the teacher and students have and literacy talks between and among them. The teacher selects many texts (or parts of texts), each of which she hopes will be appropriate for highlighting particular elements of reading. These include introducing new books and new genres, responding to books, and utilizing reading strategies that proficient readers use.

The students select what to read most of the time, depending upon their preferences, interests, and language proficiency. Routman (2003, 97) argues that reading satisfaction starts with choice and reading competence is closely tied to the amount of time children read on their own. Thus the teacher explicitly instructs students how to select books (and when to abandon books if necessary). She shares her reading territories and talks about her reading life (Atwell 1998, 133-139), or uses interactive read-aloud and shared reading to introduce new genres (Collins 2008, 105). She may also make a class list of "Why Readers Abandon Books" (Fountas and Pinnell 2001, 149) or of "Criteria for Choosing Books to Read" (Serafini 2001, 64). The classroom library is arranged for purposeful book choices for students (Calkins 2001, 36-38). Books in the EFL classroom above are partly organized by reading levels and partly by themes, genres, authors, and other categories. The teacher also guides students in how to recommend books to each other.

The teacher and students not only recommend books but also discuss books that other readers have read. As Atwell (1988, 40) points out, "Literary talk with a teacher and peers is crucial to kids' development as readers," and the teacher responds to and leads her students (Atwell 1998, 47). Calkins (2001, 225-247) introduces ways of teaching pre-collegiate students how to discuss books, including "talking to *develop* rather than to report on ideas" and "keeping book talks rooted in the text." She (Calkins 2001, 395-427) also provides details about book clubs.

Choosing books to read, recommending books to others, and discussing books with each other are not new to our real reading lives. However, these are often lacking in EFL reading classrooms. A reading workshop carefully creates a context for infusing what readers do in their authentic reading into the classroom so that students can grow as readers. Allen (2009, 66) discusses Benson's gradual release model, which explains a process of students becoming independent: from "aloud (mentor and models)" to "along (fellowship)" to "alone (independence)." The teacher is a reader and a mentor, and fellow students are fellow readers.

2. A Framework for a Reading Workshop

The reading workshop often has three components: mini-lesson, reading time, and share time. These are often parallel to a writing workshop, as two leading figures in reading workshop, Nancie Atwell and Lucy McCormick Calkins, come from a writing workshop background (Atwell 1998, 35-36; Calkins 2001, 66). Most reading workshop classrooms start with a mini-lesson, which is a short whole class meeting in which the teacher discusses what she hopes students will use in their independent reading life (Calkins 2001, 43).

Both the writing workshop and the reading workshop have developed in the context of L1 literacy education. This framework, however, is easily adopted in EFL reading. Many teaching techniques, such as a teacher's sharing her reading life, thinking aloud as a mentor reader, and interactive read aloud between the teacher and students, are also useful in EFL reading. An EFL teacher, however, needs to add issues related to reading English as a foreign language. For example, good topics for mini-lessons are when and

how to use dictionaries and other word search tools. In addition, reading strategies of many Japanese students are often underdeveloped when they read in English. They are accustomed to decoding and identifying words, and have little experience in responding to the text based upon solid comprehension. They are not skilled at flexibly reading a text differently depending upon the purposes of reading, either. These skills frequently are topics of mini-lessons, too.

After a mini-lesson, students begin reading independently or sometimes in a small group. The teacher moves among students and confers with them individually, in their partnerships, or in small groups (Calkins 2001, 43). In an EFL reading workshop, students frequently show the teacher one word or one phrase that they do not understand, and expect the teacher to give them an answer. Instead of offering answers, the teacher may encourage the students to develop ways to solve the problems. As Calkins (2001, 102) argues, "[W]e *cannot* give up on the belief that conferring with individual readers can lift them to new levels in the reading they do tomorrow." During conferences, topics covered by mini-lessons are also reinforced for those who are still learning.

The reading workshop class ends with share time. Some educators call this "reflecting time" in which "evaluating strengths and thinking about growth areas, alongside fellow readers, transpires in reflecting" (Allen 2009, 84). It is sometimes difficult to have share time when everyone is engaged in different tasks.

3. Challenges for an EFL Reading Workshop

Atwell points out that the priorities of the secondary literature program are discipline, accuracy, tradition, and mastery, and the center of the curriculum is Great Works of Literature (Atwell 1998, 30). She (Atwell 1998 30) states that, after conducting a reading workshop, the priorities become pleasure, fluency, involvement, insight, appreciation, and initiative, and the center is reader's responses. An EFL reading workshop teacher faces several challenges when she attempts to shift the priorities of the class from traditional reading instruction to growing readers in a reading workshop.

A frequent challenge lies in book availability. It is not easy to have a good classroom library in terms of space, budget, and selection. In addition, there is often a gap between language proficiency and intellectual development of students. There is no simple solution. Each teacher needs to find his or her best way, looking for possible space and budgets from the school, becoming familiar with various sources including Internet sites, and searching for accessible, yet intellectually challenging texts for students. Kosaka (2012, 59) suggests that a teacher creates "contexts where students can read books that are not intellectually challenging from different angles, such as critically examining children's literature as a reviewer or looking at a series of books on the same theme or at books by the same author and making this an intellectually challenging author study project."

Other challenges include class sizes and curriculum constraints. It is not realistic to conduct a successful

reading workshop with fifty students in the class, where the teacher is expected to use an assigned textbook. Most likely, the teacher cannot offer enough conferences to individual students. Further, it is not easy to observe each student's eagerness to read more if everyone is reading the same text at the same pace. Starting a reading workshop with a manageable class size is a good starting point. Or, the teacher can use the concept of the reading workshop to critically examine her teaching. For example, she can ask herself whether or not she is encouraging students to become more independent readers by gradually releasing responsibility to the students, or whether or not she is teaching something students can use in their independent reading. She can also see if there is any opportunity to add texts of her choice to the assigned textbook, such as one poem per lesson, or if there is any space for assignments in which students can work on texts of their choice.

Probably the best challenge lies in the fact that the reading workshop requires the teacher to continue to grow as a reader together with students. Atwell (2003, 67) writes, "An important role of the reading teacher—the most important work, according to my students—is to become so intimate with good books that we bring life, with our voices, to the tattered spines that line the shelves of our libraries. We make it even more likely that kids will find books they love when students, too, have opportunities to inform their classmates about the titles that are too good to miss." Continuing to find and read good books leads to becoming life-long readers.

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The LLL SIG Newsletter

An Afternoon in Ueno Park (Part 18)

Tadashi Ishida

This is the eighteenth in a series of articles in which Tadashi Ishida, an English teacher at a community center in Taito Ward in Tokyo, describes a language-learning activity that he conducted with his class. After considerable research and preparation, the learners toured Ueno Park with a foreign visitor, Mrs. Fitzwater, explaining to her the highlights of the park and answering her questions. After the tour, the learners wrote their own combination text and guidebook based on this experience.

Miss Arai explained the chochin, a paper lantern.

A: This is a chochin. We put a candle in it. We put bamboo
around it, and then we put paper around the bamboo.
F: I see.

新井さんは提灯について説明しました。

ア：これは提灯です。中に蝋燭を入れます。それを竹で囲みます。
そして、竹の周りに紙を貼ります。
フ：なるほど。

Mrs. Fitzwater looked at a small box.

F: Is that an old-fashioned lunch box? What would they take in their lunch box?
A: They would take rice balls and pickles in the lunch box.

フィツウォーターさんは小さな箱を見ました。

フ：あれは昔の弁当箱ですか？弁当に何を入れますか？
ア：おにぎりとお新香を弁当に入れます。

Mrs. Fitzwater looked at an old iron.

F: Did they put coals in the iron?
A: Yes, they did.

フィツウォーターさんは昔のアイロンを見ました。

フ：アイロンの中に炭を入れたのですか？
ア：はい、そうです。

We got out of the Shitamachi Folk Life Museum and headed for the open-air theater.

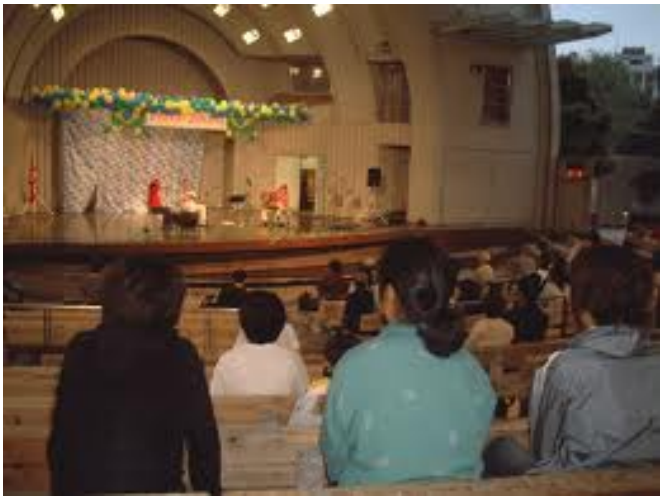
私たちは下町風俗資料館を出て、水上音楽堂に向かいました。

Miss Suzuki told about the open-air theater.

S: The open-air theater is near Shinobazu Pond.
There is a variety show presented every night by first-class entertainers.

鈴木さんは水上音楽堂について話しました。

ス：水上音楽堂は不忍池の近くにあります。一流の芸能人による
バラエティーショーが毎晩行われます。



Mrs. Fitzwater said goodbye to the students.

F: Thank you very much for showing me around Ueno Park. Someday I will show all of you around Houston.
S: When do you leave Japan?
F: I will leave tomorrow on Japan Airlines flight #062 for Los Angeles.
S: Maybe I will not be able to see you off, but please have a good trip.
F: Thank you.

フィツウォーターさんは生徒たちにお別れを言いました。

フ：上野公園を案内していただき有難うございました。いつか、
　　皆さんをヒューストンにご案内しましょう。
ス：いつ日本をたちますか？
フ：明日ロスアンゼルス行の日本航空 62 便で日本をたちます。
ス：おそらくお見送りできないでしょう。御気を付けてお帰りなさい。
フ：有難うございます。

The End

完

The LLL SIG Newsletter

My Impressions of Ueno Park

Hughleene Fitzwater
Teacher, Nottingham Elementary School, Houston, Texas

I am very thankful for the experience I had in Ueno Park, Tokyo.

Ueno Park is a beautiful, restful place to take a Sunday stroll, a boat ride, visit museums, shrines, monuments, see statues, or just enjoy the beauty of nature.

One of my most unusual and special experiences came in the Folk Life Museum, for in that museum a visitor may handle, look at, climb into, and really experience the past.

My day in Ueno Park was a gift from Mr. Ishida and his adult English conversation class. Each person in the class had researched, studied, visited, and carefully written in English the history, general information, and feelings about each place. It was an excellent learning experience for each class member, and I certainly learned many interesting facts and feelings. I want to thank Mr. Ishida and each student for the hard work each one did to show Ueno Park to me.

This Sunday visit to Ueno was a very special day among many special days I spent in Japan. My appreciation of Japan and her people is great.

Thank you all very much for everything.

The LLL SIG Newsletter

Call for Submissions for the SIG Newsletter
LLL SIG Publications Chair

The first issue of the LLL SIG newsletter in the new year will be published in April 2013. We invite members to send submissions such as teaching ideas for the My Share column, interviews, book reviews, resources for adult learners, teacher or class profiles, or short research articles. Research articles written in English should follow the American Psychological Association (APA) style. For information on APA style, please check http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Language: Submissions may be in English or Japanese, or both.

Deadline for submissions: February 17, 2013

Submissions should be sent to Kazuko Unosawa at: k-unosawa@msa.biglobe.ne.jp

We look forward to hearing from you!

The editors

原稿を募集中です。My Share のコラムにレッスンのアイディアなどをお寄せください。その他、インタビュー、書評、論文など、どしどしお送りください。論文の書式はAPAを採用しています。APAスタイルの詳細に関しては以下のサイトをご参照ください：
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

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原稿の締め切り：2013年02月17日
原稿はすべてこのアドレスまで：k-unosawa@msa.biglobe.ne.jp
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編集担当者一同