

# Between the Keys

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# Self-Publishing an English Language Textbook

Joseph Cronin

I am a part-time lecturer at a few universities in Kyoto and Osaka. I have self-published a couple of books, printing up 1,000 copies at a time. I'm into a second printing of one book and a third of the other. What advice would I give to people thinking of doing something similar?

When I began I had already published a book with a Japanese publisher, and so was not rushing into something I didn't know anything about. In fact, a publisher had agreed to take on my second book, but asked me to wait a year. A year later their financial situation took a turn for the worse and my book was dropped. So I was left with a polished text but no publisher. That's what initially got me involved in self-publishing.

Self-publishing entails going with a printing company, and printers have some fixed costs so depending on the print-run the charge per copy varies greatly. You can print 1,000 copies of a 64-page B5 book for something under ¥250,000.

One may be tempted to go for a bigger print run. For my last printing I got quotes of ¥210,000 for 1,000 copies, ¥160,000 for 500 copies, and ¥140,000 for 250 copies. If your materials aren't finely polished, I strongly urge you to resist the impulse to print up a lot more copies than you can use in the first year or so. We are (or should always be) growing and improving. It would be sad not to be able to incorporate the new insights

we get as we teach materials again and again. And a load of unsold textbooks on your second floor are dreadful for the *feng shui* (*fuusui* in Japanese).

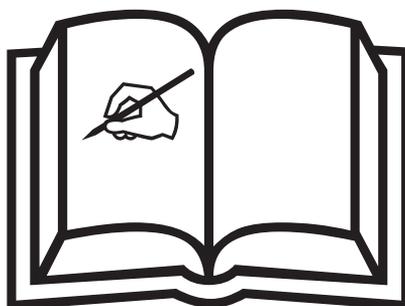
Many Westerners seem to choose A4 size for their books. Our students' other books are generally smaller. B5 is a better choice.

Black and white illustrations that can easily be scanned should not add to the cost (printing-wise, but do please pay the artists). I asked one of my students to do illustrations. She had a couple of her friends contribute also, a good idea in retrospect. All illustrations by one person may not be so interesting. You can also use clip art available on CDs or on the Web.

Black and white photos cost a little extra. Be careful that they will reproduce well. Forget using color other than on the cover.

You might imagine that the printer will be delighted to receive a computer disk. Only with my last printing have I moved to a printer who wants to see anything other than hard copy. Check carefully with the printer as to what he wants and can handle.

I have been very fortunate in that my layouts are being done by John Einarsen, the Art Director of *Kyoto Journal*. We worked in QuarkExpress. But the printer is using the Japanese version so we have to be very careful to catch strange things. 'Oops! Look what's happened to the Euro symbol!' 'That's supposed to be a check mark!' I strongly recommend that you get a professional



layout, or at least a professional to do a major tidy-up after you've come up with a fairly late version of the text.

Basic rules for layout are to leave plenty of white space—blocks of white space. Don't have too long a line, it becomes difficult to read. Don't use a number of different typefaces. Stick to one main one.

A good cover is not so easy. If you use a color photo (something I haven't done) it becomes more expensive. For my last cover I used two colors—black and purple. By using the purple at 20% we also got what someone might think is a third color for no extra cost.

Choose a printer located near you with whom you can easily check on each stage of the production process. Check other publications by the printer to see what kind of binding you can expect. Show the printer a book that's close to what you expect. There's a standard paper quality that you will presumably choose.

One tip I would have is not to grade the material completely regularly. My low-level text starts with two easy units. Students who never imagined they would actually make an effort sometimes realize this is achievable and fun. After a couple of more challenging units, slip in an easier one so that weaker students don't get discouraged.

Do not expect your friends to use your book in their classes. If they do, that's great. Don't become a textbook bore, carrying samples everywhere you go. (Oops! That's something I'll have to work on.)

As to why your gift of a book is not going to sell like *aburimochi*, I think it's true that teaching English in Japan is often rather

absurd—once-a-week university classes with poorly motivated students. Many teachers are involved in a damage limitation exercise and are not terribly interested in a critical examination of their teaching practice. They cope, and do not want to have to deal with learning new materials. Novice teachers are more open to being shown materials. For these people, very detailed teacher's notes are useful. Particularly for the first unit or two explain pretty well everything you do in the class. These notes can just be on photocopied pages in a plastic cover binder.

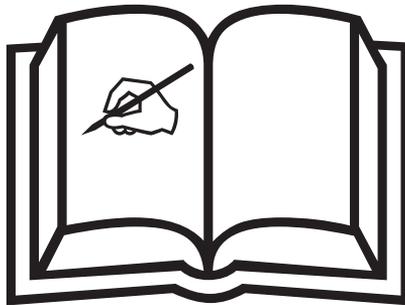
As regards getting your book on the shelves in a bookstore, it's difficult. You will probably have to go through a distributor who

will take a large cut of sales. You will also have to accept full returns on unsold copies. One acquaintance who, unlike myself, has gone down this road is very aggrieved at the number of damaged copies that are returned.

The same bookshops are also involved in selling textbooks on campus at universities. Here you should not have problems dealing with them. At one university they automatically sell all books at 10% off list price. Then the bookshop takes a further 15% discount. The student co-op may be happy with only a 15% cut.

Making a tape is often a struggle. Will you have to pay for studio time? What will go wrong while you're paying for the studio and voice actors? For example, after you've made your recordings you discover one of the voices just doesn't sound good. There's also the fact that in a studio setting some people automatically start to speak very unnaturally. One voice actor I knew men-

*Self-Publishing* continued on p. 15



# Going to Press: Some Important Considerations When Putting Your Textbook into Print

Christopher Weaver, Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology

After countless hours designing, writing and revising your materials, the decisions made at the printers can make or break your textbook-to-be. There are so many little things that you have to take into consideration, so that your textbook matches the image that you have in your mind's eye. Sometimes it can be quite overwhelming.

This article aims to help you through this important stage of self-publication. Being informed about what goes into printing a textbook not only helps you select the best printing company, but also gives you a solid idea what needs to be done so you are satisfied, may I even say proud, of the final product.

This article is organized into three sections. First, I will discuss how to find a printing company that best suits your needs. Second, we will look at some of the technical issues involved in printing a textbook. Third, I will close with some advice for people thinking about self-publishing.

## Finding a Printing Company

Selecting the printing company that you are going to entrust with your textbook is a consuming, but very important task. There is no one way to find the best company. You can talk to people you know who have self-published and ask them if they can recommend a place. At the back of most textbooks published in Japan there is the

name and address of the publishing company. This information, however, may not be too valuable, since these companies are usually located in the major centers of Japan or they might not be interested in smaller projects, or runs, as they call it. Yet, some of these companies may recommend other places that might be interested.

The good old Yellow Pages and the Internet are full of printing companies. The trick here is separating the printing companies specializing in flyers, business cards and signs from ones who produce training manuals and textbooks.

Walking into their establishment will quickly tell you which type of publishing comprises much of their work. The prices will vary considerably between places, so it is well worth your time and money to shop around.

The initial round of selection can be easily done with a phone, fax machine and/or email. Most places are busy, especially the good ones. So they just want to know the basic details of your textbook in order to give you an estimate. Here is a list of things you should have at your fingertips:

- how many textbooks you want to make
- how many pages in the book (remember a double-sided page counts as two)
- what size of paper you are going to use
- the quality of the paper (initially you can go with the standard stock)
- use of color (including what colors used)



- how many photographs the textbook has
- what software program you used to make your textbook
- whether you want to use photographic or scan-based printing (more on this later on)

Here are some important things you need to ask:

What kind of computers is the printing company using? The non-interface, to say it politely, between Apple and Windows-based machines is never so apparent, so it is best to find out if they have the same kind of computers and software that you use. Plus, it is important to establish how you are going to give them the data. Usually you can burn a CDR with all the information they need.

What fonts does the printing company have? I was surprised by how few printing companies had a good selection of English fonts. Most of them had the bare minimum that comes with MS Word. If you have used a nice selection of fonts to jazz up your pages, you face some interesting choices. You can go back and change your fonts, which in turn will force you to revise your page layout. This option not recommended. You can ask the company to purchase the needed fonts. I found that most places suggest this option. This of course drives up the price, because most fonts are priced around US \$25 to \$30 each. Some printing companies may ask you to include a file of fonts that you used so they will have no troubles printing your textbook. Clearly this is ideal, but you might have to negotiate on this point.

When you have built up a pile of estimates then you can do some comparative shopping.

Things to look for:

**Cost of paper.** Once you have narrowed down your choices you can ask about the differences in price for heavier-stock paper if you need it (more on this later).

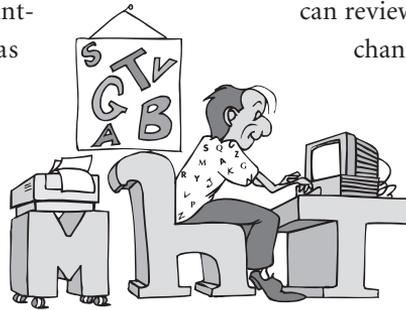
**Fee charged to handle your data.** Basically this includes loading your data on to their computers. If they have to do reformatting, then the price skyrockets! Make sure to find out.

**Production time.** It is best to ask if there is a particular time of year that is especially busy. Printing companies that do a lot of work for universities, printing up their annual school guides, will be reluctant to take on any new jobs in March. Most places can produce your textbook in 10 to 15 working days. Yet, it all depends how quickly you can review the proofs and how many changes must be made before it can be printed.

The numbers tell only half the story. How interested the printing company is in your project and how flexible they are to meet your

specific needs are important considerations. Usually you can figure that out by how quickly they give you quotes and answer your follow-up questions.

When you have narrowed it down to two or three places, you are ready to visit their offices. Give them a call and set up a meeting with a sales person; at smaller printing companies you might end up talking to the president. This meeting should give you a solid idea what company is best for you. Make sure to bring a paper copy of your textbook as well as one on a CDR. The former gives the printing company an idea what you expecting the final product to look like. It is best to use a good laser printer. The CDR copy is handy to have if you want



to check if their computers can read your data. In my case I used an English version of PageMaker to design my textbook. Upon opening it up on a Japanese version, I found that reformatting was definitely in order.

Finally the most important thing you need to do during your visit is ask the printing company to show you samples of their previous work. I cannot stress this enough. Are their past projects similar to yours? Do they look like what you had in mind? Does their workmanship scream quality? If not, you might want to consider another place. Remember it is your textbook and your name is going onto the front page. You want something that represents all the time you have put into the project.

## Printing Considerations

Once you have selected a company, you have to make a number of key decisions about how your textbook is going to be printed. The first major decision concerns the manner in which your textbook is printed. One option is that the printing company will scan a paper copy of your textbook and print it out on basically high-end photocopiers. The price is cheap, but so can be the image quality, though this might not be a concern if your textbook has few pictures or graphics. The other option is giving them the data. They print it on a high-quality printer, photograph the pages, and then use the negatives to print your textbook. All of these steps ensure that you get the best picture quality, but it comes at a price!

A related issue is color. If you are set on using color or having color illustrations or photographs in your textbook, the incredible

price to do so should scare you off. People who really want color should think about approaching a major publisher, although you will have to convince them your text will be a huge seller before they will sink in the needed cash. My suggestion is go with crisp-looking black and white illustrations and photographs. Avoid things that do not have sharp contrasts. Half-tones and fine grey-scale gradients are very difficult to reproduce.

Another consideration is the quality of paper that you want to use. There are different weights of paper. Most likely the printing company will give you a book of paper samples to run your fingers over. Personally, I did not find this very helpful. I asked to see books that they have printed before using the different paper weights. My suggestion is find a page with

lots of graphics on one side. You can then see how much ink bleeds through the paper. Heavier paper will also give your textbook a more professional look

and feel that cannot be distinguished from mainstream textbooks. Yet, looking like the big publishers also costs the big bucks.

You also have to decide how you want to bind your book. The number of pages in your textbook will play a considerable role in your decision. If you have less than fifty, you can go with a staple or two along the spine of the book. This alternative is relatively cheap. Most printing companies will recommend a bead of glue along the spine for larger textbooks. If you want your students to be able to fold the textbook over and use it as a note pad, a wire coil will do the trick, but at a cost.

The look of your cover is probably one of the most important decisions you need to



make. It is unfortunate, but people do judge a book by its cover. So why not have one that stands out from the rest! A catchy title, large easy-reading fonts, an intriguing photograph or an attractive color or two (here is the only exception where I recommend the use of color) will make a world of difference. Spend some time working on the right look.

My suggestion is to make up a few sample covers and show them to students. Ask them which one they like best. A little market research never hurt anybody. You might even consider asking the printer to put a special protective coating on the cover, like PPF. It will give your cover extra strength and protect it from scratches. The extra cost ultimately depends upon how much wear and tear you see your books receiving. If the textbook is only going to be used for a semester, you may not see a return on your investment. Yet, PPF will add an extra shine to your book.

Deciding how many books to print is probably the biggest factor determining how much money it will ultimately cost. It all comes down the basic law of economy of scale: the more textbooks you make, the cheaper they will be to print. A thousand books seems to be a breakpoint where cost per unit becomes reasonable. Once again this will vary from printing company to printing company. Most likely your decision rests in the equation of how many students will use your textbook, how long it will take to deplete your stock of textbooks, and where you will store the extra copies!

### Some Advice

Out of the whole printing process, the proofing stage is the most important. That is

why I will deal with it separately here. Once the printers have either scanned or printed out the proofs for your textbook, there will be time to give it one last look. I cannot stress enough “one last look.” If you have given the printing company a data file, there will inevitably be changes. Their computer settings may be different or they might not have the same version of software (I was surprised to see in my case that the printer was still using one of the earlier and now outdated version of Adobe Photoshop). Nevertheless, look things over.

Better yet, bring someone along who is not deeply involved in your textbook. It is amazing what a fresh pair of eyes can pick out. Most likely there will be numerous little things that need to be noticed, fixed, printed again, and rechecked. The process is quite involved and if possible is

best done over a couple of days. My suggestion is to take your time during the proofing because once the ink has dried, that's it!



### Closing Remarks

There is nothing like the feeling of holding a copy of your textbook fresh from the printing press. All those countless hours you have devoted to your textbook will evaporate into this proud moment. The whole process can be quite consuming with all the different things to consider as well as the considerable amount of money required to put your textbook into press. Hopefully, this article gives some guidance to people thinking about writing a textbook or those ready to go to press. A little information about the printing process will only help get your textbook from your computer screen to your students' hands.

IBK

# Hedging and Hoping: The Addressee in Textbook Rubrics

Kristofer Bayne, International Christian University

## Introduction

The prevalence of text/course books in foreign and second language classrooms is obvious and the choice, as evident in the various publishing house catalogues, grows year by year. For various reasons, such as pre-set text requirements, general time and workload limitations, and—even with a degree of freedom—the third party expectations of administration and students, teachers are extremely reliant on published texts.

While all teachers probably have their pet favourites and no textbook claims to be perfect, anecdotal feedback suggests that not all teachers are happy with certain aspects of texts, particularly the written instructions, or rubrics. Research of a more concrete kind shows that

teachers take on the role of interpreter (e.g. verbatim reading, paraphrasing,

giving examples or combinations of these) and that it dominates teacher talk in the classroom (Bayne, 1995). Related research (Bayne, 1998) also indicates that learners depend on this teacher treatment of the rubric or at least seek something besides to engage the pedagogic task (e.g. peer checking, dictionaries).

Action research underway also suggests that in many cases the absence of the directional aspects of the rubric does not impair the learners' ability to do the task successfully. Directions such as *Fill in*, *Match*, *Rewrite* are deleted while some contextual features,

like *You are on an elevator*, or *You are on vacation in Australia*, are retained. Given self-study materials devoid of directional rubric information, learners were able to draw on in-text examples, context, and cognitive and experience-based initiative. Finally, an examination of rubrics would suggest that they are addressing students, that they are not directing the teacher: *Match the following items in Column A with the correct item in Column B.*

Given the brief gloss above, if teachers complain about rubrics addressed to students and invariably treat rubrics to make them accessible to learners, and if

learners use strategies that bypass or complement the rubric, and if it can be shown that in many cases a rubric is redundant, then we can rightfully ask, "Who or what are these rubrics for?"

To attempt to get closer to an answer, I went to the sources of rubrics—materials writers and publishers—to get their points of view on this and other related rubric questions. While the study is still in its preliminary stages, to stimulate some debate I would like to share some of the more interesting raw data with brief commentary and suggestions.

## Study

To date, thirteen materials writers have answered a set of eleven rubric-related questions, with the opportunity to add further comments. Among these were four local

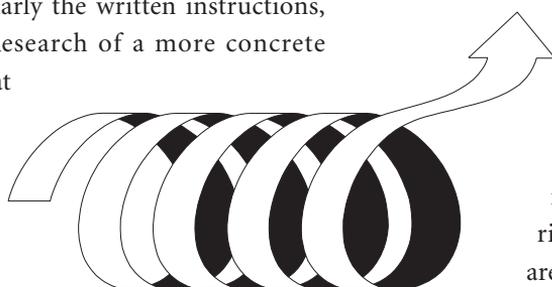


Table 1: Questionnaire on Rubrics

Materials Writers	Publishers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you take into account when writing [rubrics]?</li> <li>2. How do materials writers (MW) expect the written instructions to be used? By whom?</li> <li>3. As a MW what do you consider is the teacher's responsibility with regards to written instructions?</li> <li>4. How about the MW's responsibility?</li> <li>5. And the learners?</li> <li>6. Who is the written instruction addressing?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What classroom-based considerations determine the final form of the instruction?</li> <li>2. What other considerations might determine the final form of the instruction?</li> <li>3. Who is the instruction addressing?</li> <li>4. What do you see as the role of the teacher in using the instruction?</li> <li>5. What do you see as the role of the student in using the instruction?</li> <li>6. Does your company have any established policies or even 'rule of thumb' guidelines with regards to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Writing of instructions?</li> <li>b. Length of instructions?</li> <li>c. Number of steps per instruction?</li> <li>d. Visual presentation of instruction?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

(Japan) in-house teacher-writers (LH), three locally published teacher-writers (LP), and six internationally published teacher-writers (IP) who are also active as teacher trainers/researchers in ELT fields. Representatives of seven publishers (RP) have also responded to eleven questions. The rubric-related questions put to both parties varied in focus with respect to their particular influence on the eventual in-text rubric. There was an overlap in certain questions relating to the perceived use of the rubrics (reproduced in Table 1).

### Comments

Materials writers and publishers consider it their responsibility to write/present rubrics at a level and in a form that can/could be understood by learners. Responses to questions on this point are remarkably similar in their content: “structures simple and the

specialized vocabulary to a minimum”, “clarity and brevity”, “clear, easy to understand”, “natural and user-friendly”, “simple and clear” and “the level of the target learner” being comments fairly representative of materials writers. A number of writers emphasized that teachers who are inexperienced or not native-speakers of the target language were also a consideration. Publishers generally concur, adding that visual presentation should reinforce the lexical/structural clarity in what one publisher described as a “clear, effective and tasteful manner”.

The participants are not in agreement, however, regarding the addressee of rubrics. Table 2 (see page 14) subsumes and organizes answers to relevant questions from Table 1.

We can see a spectrum of addressee combinations that covers students, students (+ teacher), students and teacher, teacher (+



Table 2: Addressee of Rubrics

<p><b>Students</b></p> <p>(PR) “Students.”</p> <p>(PR) “The student.”</p>
<p><b>Students, with Teacher intervention</b></p> <p>(IP) “I consider my instructions to be a kind of dialogue between myself and the learners...also expect that there will be a certain degree of teacher intervention”</p> <p>(LIH) “naturally...read by learners...realistically degree of intervention by teacher”</p> <p>(IP) [indicated agreement with LIH comments immediately above]</p>
<p><b>Students/Teachers, equally</b></p> <p>(LIH) “By both teachers and students or either/or.”</p> <p>(PR) “Teacher and students”</p> <p>(LPÅj) “somewhere in the middle between conforming completely to the intent of the authors, or complete autonomy and independent interpretation on the part of the users”</p> <p>(PR) “A good rubric...[is a]...a balancing act at best” between students, qualified teachers and unqualified teachers</p> <p>(IP) “The learner and the teacher.”</p>
<p><b>Teachers, with Student use</b></p> <p>(LP) “expect the learners to read...Realistically, I write the instructions for the teachers to understand and explain and/or demonstrate”</p> <p>(LP) “the teacher to be the primary interpreter...but...so that they’re easy for students to follow too”</p> <p>(LIH) “Although I try to keep [them] simple so students can understand them, I primarily write them for teachers”</p> <p>(IP) “I do see the teacher as the primary addressee. The learner is the apparent addressee and it is always preferable if the learners understand...”</p> <p>(PR) “The instructions are mainly for the teachers, and only for the students when they get lost”</p>
<p><b>Teachers</b></p> <p>(IP) “really aimed at the teacher”</p> <p>(PR) aimed at teachers, but should be aimed at students</p>

students) and teacher. There is an interesting degree of what I will call ‘hedging and hoping’ with regards to where the responsibility for understanding the rubric lays. Writers and publishers state that they aim to make the rubric accessible to all users yet acknowledge the foibles of students and the guiding role taken by teachers. Two participants state it aptly by describing the

situation as dealing with a “double addressee” or “multi-audiences”. This would suggest that, despite what assumptions teachers might draw from the final product of their labours, materials writers are fairly aware of the realities of the classroom: that despite everyone’s best intentions, students do not always understand what to do and that teachers need to organize.

## Conclusion

The efforts, expertise, and sincerity on the part of materials writers and publishers notwithstanding, I would like to suggest that we could contemplate whether rubrics are a response to these realities or whether the realities are a consequence of the rubrics. To recap on some considerations already described:

1. Teachers express some exasperation with rubrics.
2. Teachers invariably treat rubrics (warranted or not).
3. Students follow teacher treatments.
4. Students can very efficiently use visual examples, contextual clues and initiative if there is no rubric and no teacher.

And in addition, based on the current study:

5. Most materials writers acknowledge or expect 2 and 3 above.
6. Many materials writers see the teachers as the main addressee.

Why not be innovative and realistic and remove as many rubrics as possible and practical? It's not as if there aren't any other access avenues for students. As for the teachers who may be in need of rubrics, they can be placed in a supplement or in a Teacher's Book, along with all the other supporting materials and suggestions.

The removal of rubrics would also allow those teachers who innovate the chance to do so without interference from the original instruction. Students are just as likely to innovate to complete the task in a more

personal way (autonomously). Teachers could go directly to a level-, culture-, age-, whatever-conscious verbal instruction or have the learners themselves suggest how a task should be completed. Dealing with a rubric could even become more of a learning task in itself. Finally, as a preliminary study revealed, left to their own devices learners can work it out.

## References

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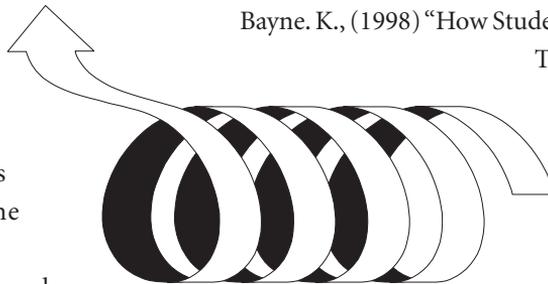
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*I am indebted to all participants for the time and thought they put into answering my questions. The overall feedback was very interesting and insightful and is still in the throes of collection and collation. It must be noted that comments in this paper were taken from a much wider context of 11 questions and answers. Reader comments are welcome at <eltrubrics@hotmail.com>.*

JK



**Do you have something to say? Say it in Between the Keys! Submissions are now being accepted for the Autumn issue. Send your articles or lesson ideas to Jim Swan <swan@daibutsu.nara-u.ac.jp>. Deadline: October 1.**

# News & Announcements

## Call for Participation

Last time, we reported to you that the CUE SIG had opened talks with MW SIG on co-producing a book on learner autonomy in the college classroom. The momentum seems to have pooped out at the moment, but we'll take this opportunity to try to kick-start things again. If you have a *definite* interest in writing for this proposed publication, please send us a proposed title and a short description of what your submission would entail. Send your blurb to both Ian Gleadall <octopus@pm.tbgu.ac.jp> and Juanita Heigham <jheigham@hotmail.com> ASAP. If there seems to be sufficient interest, maybe we can go forward with it regardless of the imminence of JALT's demise. 

## Publishing Opportunity

Beni Fogel in the Tokyo area is looking for people interested in collaborating on a CD textbook project (information below). Interested parties can contact Beni at <beni@tokyo.email.ne.jp> or by phone at 090-804-7423.

"The CD is 70 minutes and 30 seconds in duration. It is comprised of 22 tracks with eleven dialogues and eleven original songs written especially for the English learner. The level is geared toward junior high, high school, and college students.

"The focus of the CD deals with two major problems that Japanese English learners contend with: listening comprehension and speaking. Each unit is comprised of a dialogue and song that

deals with a certain focal point: a grammatical point or common phrase usage. The dialogue shows how the focal point is used in a normal conversation and then the song allows the English learner to practice pronunciation and the voicing of the phrases and its grammar through singing. The more they sing, the easier they remember what's being learned as well as getting used to vocalizing English that can be used in their everyday conversations.

"All of the songs have been tested in the classroom. It works well with junior high and high school students, but adults and my *rojin* (retirement) center students especially like it because they can listen and practice while driving their car, taking walks, or while cooking at home.

"Japanese people have very minimal contact with foreigners if any at all. The listening and singing along with the CD at their own pace alleviates the stress involved with talking to a foreigner at the beginning stages of their English development. What's most important, though, is that students who normally forget what they learn in the classroom can now continue practicing with the constant input that comes from listening to dialogues and singing songs written with them in mind.

"Even though the CD with its booklet (all dialogues and songs are translated into Japanese) is quite complete, it would be best sold along with a textbook that would explain the grammar and offer exercises to further the usage. I am therefore turning to the MW SIG in search of someone who could write a textbook with me. Anyone

who might be interested is asked to contact me directly at the e-mail or phone number above.

“Thank you,  
“Beni”

## Materials Writers Web Resource

Ever wanted to read information about ESL materials writers that was written by ESL writers? If so, please visit the brand-new MWWR (Materials Writers Web Resource), an e-zine on ESL/EFL materials development. Current articles discuss writer's block and research on exercise design in ESL books. Additional contributions are being sought, and information on how to submit is available at the e-zine's site: <[http://www.geocities.com/materials\\_writers](http://www.geocities.com/materials_writers)>.

Thanks,

Keith S. Folsie, Ph.D.

Chair, Materials Writers, 2002

Coordinator, MA TESOL Program

University of Central Florida

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## Call for Nominations

### 1. Interim Election of Acting Director of Public Relations

Following the recent resignation of one of JALT's Board of Directors, Gene van Troyer, from his post as Director of Public Relations, it has become necessary, in accordance with JALT bylaws, to elect an Acting Director of Public Relations to take over for the remainder of the term of office (i.e. until this November). Therefore, as National Elections Officer, I hereby open the call for nominations for this post.

The Director of Public Relations is responsible for: (1) coordinating JALT publicity nationally and internationally; (2) promoting relations with educational organizations, media and industry; (3)

finding and developing new Associate Members, Commercial Members, and institutional subscribers; (4) coordinating Associate/Commercial Member relations with the Business Manager and the Director of Programs, and (5) chairing the External Relations Committee.

To nominate someone (yourself included), contact Edward Haig by email at <[haig@lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp](mailto:haig@lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp)>. All nominees must be JALT members in good standing. The deadline for nominations will be the first day of the Executive Board Meeting to be held at Sophia University, June 29th. The election shall take place at the June Executive Board Meeting.

Anyone who would like further information about this post can contact me at the email address above or by phone at (work) 052-789-4789 or (home) 052-835-8389.

### 2. Call for Nominations for Regular National Officer Elections

The May 31st deadline for the nomination of candidates for the 2002 election of JALT National Officers is fast approaching. As of now the response to the previous calls that I have issued has been decidedly underwhelming. Reluctant as I am to resort to threats and imprecations, I have to say that if JALT members are as unwilling (or, more charitably perhaps, unable) to take a hand in helping to run the organization as this response suggests, then they—we—will hardly be in a position to complain if those who are doing the work do so in ways which prove unpopular. Therefore, if anyone is still considering nominating someone (themselves included), please get in touch with me as soon as possible.

This year, there are five posts up for election: 1. Director of Treasury; 2. Director of Programs; 3. Director of Public Relations; 4. Director of Records; 5. Auditor.

Currently, the list of nominations is as follows:

- Director of Treasury—one nomination, confirmed: Peter Wanner. Present incumbent, David Neill, has stated that he will not be standing for re-election.
- Director of Program—one nomination, not yet confirmed. Present incumbent, Larry Cisar, has stated that he will not be standing for re-election.
- Director of Public Relations—one nomination, not yet confirmed. Present incumbent, Gene van Troyer, has stated that he will not be standing for re-

election (see above).

- Director of Records—one nomination, confirmed: Mary Christianson (present incumbent).
- Auditor—one nomination, not yet confirmed. Present incumbent, Dann Gosman, has stated that he will not be standing for re-election.

For anyone else out there who would like to nominate someone (themselves included), please feel free to contact me directly for further information.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Haig NEC Chair 2002

■



# Student Learning Strategy Handout

Marc Helgesen and Brenda Hayashi; Department of Intercultural Studies, Miyagi Gakuin Women's College, Sendai

As teachers, we are always interested in ways to help our students become more effective and autonomous learners. Also, over the past several years, with the pool of potential university students shrinking, we have noticed an increase in the number of students who lack English study skills. To help deal with these issues, we have identified some good language practice/learning strategies. We put them onto a bilingual handout—Japanese on one side, English on the other (see pages 16 & 17).

Each of the oral skills teachers and teachers of other skills taught in English gives a copy to each student. The teacher will talk a bit about the ideas related to the particular class.

The students are encouraged to paste the sheet onto the inside cover of their textbook or notebook. To facilitate this, we trim the

handout to slightly smaller than B5. The learners themselves decide if they want the English side or the Japanese side facing out.

Since several teachers use the same sheet, this means students get several copies—this is part of the plan. Running into the same information a few times serves both as a reminder of the information and a way of saying, “This is of value. These are ideas many of your teachers recommend.”

We have shared this with colleagues at other schools who have found it useful. We have identified our department and listed our homepage URL on the handout, but note that we did not copyright this. Anyone is free to copy it to use with their students, pass on to colleagues and the like. If it looks useful for your students, we hope you will try it.

Note: Thanks for Yumi Suda for providing the Japanese translation. **IK**

## Self-Publishing continued from p. 3

tioned an occasion where someone managed to put a ‘t’ sound into the word *listening*.

The last time I made a recording I did it on the cheap. A friend who wanted me to make the recording was able to get me free time in a university recording studio. We recorded onto an MD, which I then edited down myself (having first made a copy, useful for the track I mistakenly deleted). I had two excellent voices who actually already knew much of the material through teaching it themselves. I didn't have a recording engineer, but someone helped me set recording levels of the two voices. I made my recording. Great, but...I realized that after a couple of minutes one of the voices became

louder, but not so much that I was able to notice at the time. The tape is definitely usable, but it's a pity that it's not quite as good as it should have been.

Basic advice for tape-making is to experiment a few times before you go for a full version. And unfortunately, be aware that trouble lurks everywhere.

Now I'm in the very pleasant situation of having a couple of books which work very well in my classes. The difficulty is to keep an edge to my teaching. To help cope with this I never prepare, and I try to find slightly different paths through the material. A happy teacher makes for a happy class. May your classes be happy too! **IK**



# Things you can do to *improve your English!*

## Listening

### Before listening, think:

- What is the topic?
- What do I already know about it?
- Why am I listening?
- What do I need to do?

## Speaking

### Before a speaking activity:

- Look at the page, print, etc.
- Think about the topic.
- Think about what you want to say.

### When you speak, make eye contact.

- *Remember, a conversation is like tennis.*  
*You have to help the other person.*  
*Give long answers and ask questions.*



## Reading

### Before reading:

- Look at the book, print, etc.  
Read the title. Look at the pictures.  
If it is a book, read the back cover.
- Think: What do I already know about this?  
What do I want to know?  
What do I need to do?

## Writing

### Before writing, think:

- Who will read this?
- What information do I want them to understand?

### While writing:

- Write in two steps.  
Step one: write the meaning.  
Step two: go back and check spelling, grammar, etc.  
(Don't try to do steps 1 & 2 at the same time).



## If you want to get really, really good

- **Practice outside of class.** Use the CD. Read easy books. Practice with friends.  
Practice on your own: Look around. How would you describe things in English?  
Anything that makes you use English will help.
- **Look at the lesson before class.** Read the tasks.  
Think about what you want to say.
- **Do homework before it is due.** This will help you remember the English you have already learned in high school.  
It will make class easier.

You can do it! 

# From the Desk of . . . the Chair

Jim Swan

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MW's Between the Keys

Greetings fellow materials writers,

How's the weather—hot enough for ya? The weather at the executive levels of JALT has been decidedly hot and stormy since the last Executive Board Meeting in January. I can't go into great detail, as the proceedings would fill a volume, but I will try my best to summarize for you what has been happening and make a prediction about what lies ahead.

As you may recall from my previous column, at the January EBM the Executive Board, driven by financial imperative, made a few pretty heavy decisions. One was the determined passing of a non-deficit budget, which impinged hardest on the allocation to the JALT Publications Board. Another was the decision—as an ostensible money-saving measure—to employ an in-house layout editor for all printed materials that JALT would hereafter generate. The third biggie was the decision to empower an Ad Hoc committee to investigate David Neill's proposal for devolving the chapters and SIGs from the national organization.

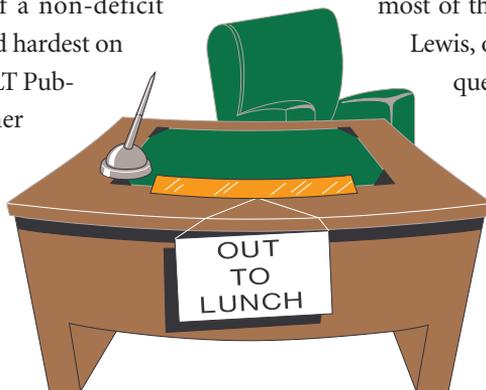
The first two of these three measures together have produced a downpour of e-mail which—since Golden Week, at least—can only be described as torrential. Unfortunately, a lot of it has also been vituperative and ad hominem, insulting and demeaning on both sides. A downpour of flaming hailstones would be a more apt metaphor. No fewer than **seven** motions dealing with Publications Board

issues have been proposed for the June EBM agenda, and, as of this writing (June 7th), two *Language Teacher* editors have been summarily dismissed from their appointments and three crucial National Officers have resigned their posts. Add these empty posts to the others coming up for normal election, and you can see that most of the Executive Board will be vacant by the time of the annual conference.

How much of this hurricane will eventually prove to have been blustering and posturing is unforeseeable now. In a private response to the first draft of this column (which I sent to most of the people involved), Paul

Lewis, one of the TLT editors in question, says that the axed ones are treating the summary dismissal from their posts without a vote of the Executive Board as merely the President's unconstitutional attempt to stifle their dissent, and claims that they will

remain in their posts until the ExBo votes otherwise. Gene van Troyer, one of the resigned officers, posted his interpretation, that the JALT President has acted well within his constitutional authority in removing them. Tim Newfields has analyzed the constitutional grounds as being a bit more ambiguous. Tim Knowles has asserted that most of the current tempest is probably the result of not being able to wink and smile at each other over e-mail, and encourages all the principal characters to begin winking and smiling more. It's going to be a fun Executive Board meeting at the



end of June.

So how many of you folks would go for MW SIG as a stand-alone organization?????

I have not heard that the June EBM will be cancelled, so I am still planning to attend, in the expectation (here comes the prediction I spoke of earlier) that JALT will not actually disintegrate any time soon. Since trying to determine the will of the Materials Writers SIG on most of the upcoming voting items would be like trying to hit a moving target, I hope you all trust me to vote my conscience on these contentious issues.

In order that I may claim to be voting the will of the MW SIG members on **at least one** issue, though, I would like to ask your opinion on this: One of the proposals coming up for a vote is that (with some carefully delineated exceptions) JALT membership be made a requirement for being published in *The Language Teacher* and the *JALT Journal*. It's one of the hot-button issues that precipitated everything, so let me try to fairly summarize both positions on it.

**In favor of this proposal**, it has been claimed that a membership requirement is customary for most academic society journals. It is also argued that writers who submit manuscripts to JALT and who tangibly benefit from academic publication should be willing to show at least this minimal level of support for the group that publishes them. The cost of publishing a feature-length TLT article was given as several tens of thousands of yen, whereas the annual JALT membership fee is ¥10,000. The supporters of this proposal claim that it is not

really so much about raising money as it is about raising JALT self-respect.

**In opposition to this proposal**, it has been likened to a "vanity press" (where you pay to get yourself published) and called tacky, foolish, and unethical. It is asserted that many disciplines inform language teaching, that restricting publishable writers to only JALT members would necessarily shrink the pool and limit the range of potential authors and that, in consequence, the overall quality of submissions would inevitably decline. Comparison was made to the average college "Kiyo" (in-house journal).

So my question to you is this: **Would you favor the proposal to make JALT membership a requirement for publication in The JALT Journal and The Language Teacher?**

I would like to ask **all MW SIG members** who care one way or the other to please send me an e-mail message. **PLEASE WRITE YOUR SUBJECT HEADER AS EITHER "JALT PUBS OPEN" or "JALT PUBS CLOSED"**. You don't have to make any further arguments either for or against—in fact, please don't—because in the past month I've read enough of them to last me the rest of my life. I'll tally up the responses a few days before the conference and try to judge whether the numbers are really representative of the overall will of the MW SIG's members. Too few votes and I'll just go with my own conscience. Fair enough?

I hope this has been an interesting and informative column. I'll try to report back to you as soon as the June EBM is over.

Out for now,

*Jim*

BK

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Summer 2002

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The Materials Writers SIG is dedicated to continually raising the standards in the creation of language teaching materials, in all languages and in all media, whether for general consumption or for individual classroom use. The editors encourage participation from colleagues using new media or teaching languages other than English.

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