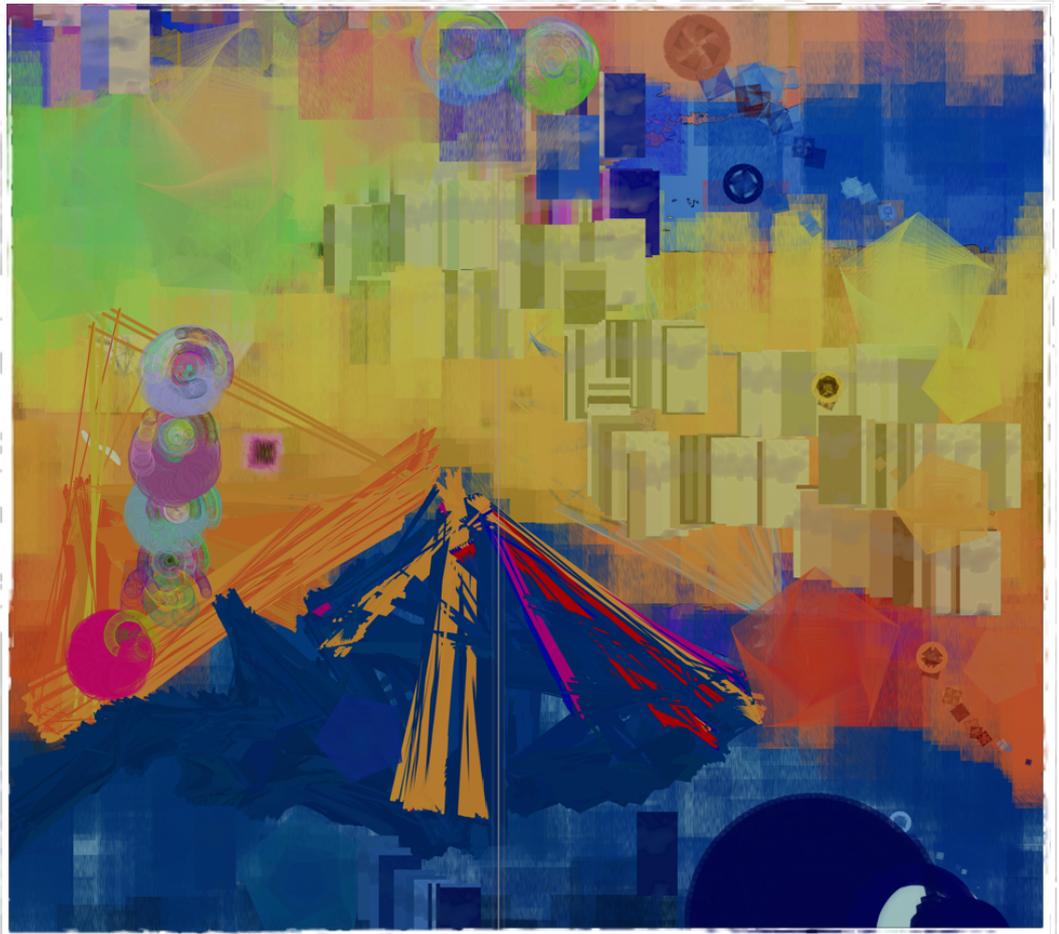


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Between of Keys



A publication of the JALT Materials Writers Special Interest Group

The Materials Writers SIG was established for the purpose of helping members to turn fresh teaching ideas into useful classroom materials. We try to be a mutual assistance network, offering information regarding copyright law, sharing practical advice on publishing practices, including self-publication, and suggesting ways to create better language learning materials for general consumption or for individual classroom use.

WWW.MATERIALSWRITERS.ORG



Table of Contents

Officer Reports

From the Publication Chair (Kaunapawa Nangula).....	3
From the Membership Chair (Forrest Nelson).....	4
From the Program Chair (Lindsay Wells).....	4
From the Coordinator (Adam Murray).....	4

Columns

The Materials Adaptation Column (Greg Goodmacher).....	5
Local Notes: Interview with Travis Holtzclaw (BtK Staff).....	8
Writer’s Point: Uniting Multiple Perspectives in Material Writing (Brian Cullen).....	10

My Share

Task-based Speaking and Listening Assessment (Aileen Bowe).....	13
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Feature Articles

A Systematic Approach to Oral Presentation Assessment (Richard Miles).....	17
The Structure and Writing of Creative Advertising Media for the ELT Classroom (Allan Goodwin).....	24

From the Publication Chair

Kaunapawa Nangula

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the final issue of *Between the Keys* for the 2017 calendar year. Thanks to the amazing MW SIG team for their hard work putting this issue together. From the Officers' corner, you will get a membership comparison report of the year 2016 and 2017 from our Membership Chair, Forrest Nelson. Followed by a short report for some of our year 2018 SIG's planned activities from the Coordinator, Adam Murray.

Teachers are always looking for creative ways to provide their students with opportunities to develop language skills using authentic materials such as podcasts, blogs, radio shows or magazines. When using such materials, knowing how to adapt them for the English learner is key. Greg Goodmacher addresses this issue in our first column, offering us some ideas on how to adapt English newspapers to help develop students' various language learning skills.

Ever thought of becoming a published material writer but don't know where to start? Curious about what you can learn from a published author of language learning materials? Then the next two columns are for you! The first piece is an interview with a longtime member, Travis Holtzclaw, sharing his two-year experience of being a study guide author for a Japanese publisher and his insights on how to teach "toward the test" instead to teach "to the test." The following piece by Brian Cullen introduces us to Sue, who explains the multiple perspectives that all good writers need to keep in mind as they bring their materials into conceptualization. It also provides some tips on how to navigate the clear and sometimes deep muddy waters of writing and publishing teaching materials in order to create a magical classroom learning experience.

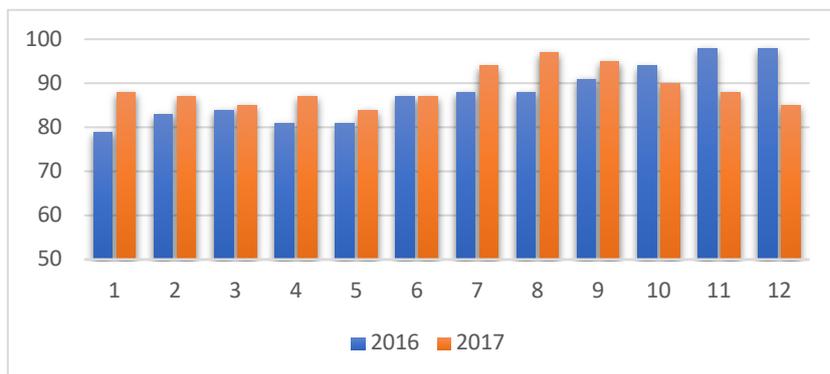
When it comes to language assessment, we are always looking for innovative assessment tools that cognitively and affectively engaging. This issue's My Share features Aileen Bowe who providing us with a way to assess speaking and listening using elements of the task-based language learning approach. This approach has brought positive feedback from the learners with whom she's used this assessment.

In our last section of the issue, we have two featured articles. The first by Richard Miles, walks us through his process of developing a framework for assessing English oral presentations and speech contests in Japan. In the second featured article, Allan Goodwin explains some ways to use advertisements in the EFL classroom. He explains the different components of advertisement through the lens of magazine ads. Allan further provides media related writing activities such as pamphlets, radio, and television commercials.

With all the inspiration packed between the pages of this issue, we hope it brings you new ideas and sparks your creativity as you develop and adapt materials for your students. Enjoy!

From the Membership Chair

Forrest Nelson



The chart above represents the monthly number of JALT MW SIG members. For 2017, the average membership was 89 members. The lowest membership was in the month of April at 84 and the highest membership was in August at 97. Comparing 2016 and 2017, membership seems to increase around the end of summer. The lowest membership for both years tends to be around the end of winter and early spring.

From the Program Chair

Lindsay Wells

Plans for the MW SIG Forum for JALT2018 are already underway. This year's conference theme is "Diversity and Inclusion". In alignment with this theme, the forum will be titled *Diversity and Inclusion in Teaching Materials*. The description is here:

Diversity is becoming an increasingly important issue in today's society. It is therefore in our students' best interests for us to include a wider range of voices in our teaching materials. In this interactive forum hosted by the Materials Writers SIG, a panel of writers will share how they incorporate diverse voices and related topics into the teaching materials that they create. Both theoretical approaches and practical considerations will be discussed.

If you are interested in joining the forum, please contact me at < wells @ meijiro . ac . jp > by February 9th.

From the Coordinator

Adam Murray

I am happy to report that your SIG is doing well. As the report from the Member Chair shows, membership is stable. 2018 looks like it will be an exciting time to be a SIG member. In addition to our annual forums at PanSIG and the JALT International Conference, we are in the planning stages of some co-sponsored events. Also, we are thinking of some new ways to make the SIG even better. In the upcoming months, we will keep you informed by the Members' Mailing List. If you are interested in becoming more active in your SIG, please don't hesitate to contact me.

The Materials Adaptation Column

Greg Goodmacher

Sharing ideas regarding the adaptation of teaching materials is the purpose of this column. Each column consists of five or more examples of ways to revise educational texts or to create teaching materials with newspapers, videos, photographs, advertisements, college catalogs, and other authentic materials (there is no limit as to what we can use as teaching tools). This time the focus is using English newspapers for developing various language skills.

Print versions of newspapers work well for the activities described below, but you can adapt the ideas presented below for use with online media as well. Consider the level of your students and the newspapers. Newspapers such as [The Japan Times ST](#) may be best for students with lower-level English abilities, and [The New York Times](#) is useful for advanced-level English learners.

Ways to Utilize Newspapers

Suggestion One: Newspaper Information Scavenger Hunt

This exercise works well to develop scanning skills, and it also promotes cooperation among students. To each small group of students, give a newspaper and a list of information you want them to find. A group of three students works well. One student, the recorder, is responsible for reading questions and writing the answers. The other two students, the information hunters, listen to the questions and search for the answers. You might allow the recorder to assist the information hunters in their hunt. Choose information that will make your students search through various parts of the newspaper. As a result, they will become familiar with newspaper sections. An example list of questions for the January 2, 2017, version of the Japan Times is below. Prepare students for this activity by teaching them to scan headlines, photographs, and advertisements. They must find the answers in the newspaper.

Example Question List

- Which powerful politician recently tweeted about the Toyota company?
- Which five sports are covered today in the sports section?
- When did Japan's first kissaten, Kahiichan, open for business?
- You can watch a TV program about a disabled man. What unusual activity does he enjoy?
- Are Tokyo stocks expected to increase or decrease in value in 2017? Why?
- What is the current exchange rate for the dollar and yen?
- A story about Nissan mentions a factory in another country. Which country?
- What are two threats to polar bears?
- What are problems that Japan must deal with in preparation for the 2020 Olympics?
- Which Asian city is expected to be hotter than 30 degrees Celsius tomorrow?

Suggestion Two: Student Created Reading Exercises

Tell students that they must understand a newspaper article so well that they can write comprehension questions for other students to answer. Teach students to create different types of comprehension questions. To accomplish this task, make students examine comprehension questions that they often find in reading textbooks. Allow students either individually or in small groups to choose a piece that interests them. Students must work with different news stories. Students write comprehension questions and show their work to you so that you make corrections or point out errors. The last time that I assigned this activity to students, I had them write five true or false questions, five wh-questions, and five discussion questions. Choose the type of questions that you want students to practice writing. Some students write very slowly while others write quickly. I suggest starting this part of the exercise around twenty minutes or more, depending upon the level of your students, before the end of class. Make sure that students are correctly on task. Students who do not finish within the allotted time can finish their questions as homework. After collecting their articles and questions, I made copies of those. Then I put students in small groups. Each student had to explain difficult vocabulary in their articles to other students. Next, students read the articles and answered the questions written by classmates. When finished, the writers of the comprehension questions checked the answers of other students and, when necessary, explained the answers. This activity is especially useful for students who are studying to be English teachers, but it benefits all types of students.

Suggestion Three: Transferring Newspaper News to a TV News Show Format

This activity makes students take the information that they have read in a newspaper and orally present that information as if they are television news reporters. Divide students into small groups. The number depends upon how many roles you want to have in each assemblage: anchorperson, weatherperson, local news reporter, international news reporter, movie reviewer, and so on. Give a different newspaper to each news team. Allow students to determine their roles. They must choose the most newsworthy information in the media, read it, understand it, and summarize it. Teach students the vocabulary and phrases that television news staff often use. Below are some example sentences that I have taught students:

- Now the weather report with Kenji Nakamura. What should we expect Kenji?
- Back to you, Mariko.
- Today was a very tragic day for the people of Syria.
- It was a great day for the economy. Kana Hashimoto, our reporter in the Tokyo Stock Exchange, is here to explain.

Allow students sufficient time to practice. Depending upon the ability and motivation levels of your students, this activity may take several class meetings and rehearsals outside of class.

Suggestion Four: Writing an Obituary for Oneself

The next activity is one that a journalism teacher required students in an American university to do when I was a college student, but it can stimulate ESL/EFL students to think about their goals. Assign students to read sample obituaries of famous people. If you search the internet for obituaries and nytimes.com, you will instantly have useful examples. After teaching students the vocabulary that often appears in obituaries, require them to write

their obituaries. Tell them to imagine that they have lived long and fruitful lives and that they were all very successful before passing away as senior citizens.

Suggestion Five: Fact or Opinion Reading Exercise

Editorials offer opportunities for students to analyze statements and classify them as either fact or opinions. However, editorials can be very difficult to read, so carefully choose ones that fit the level of your students. Some pieces offer mostly opinion statements. For this purpose, a pedagogically valuable editorial will include opinion statements that are supported by facts. Choosing editorials about issues that students care about, such as employment issues or sports and doping, can help to stimulate student involvement. Tell students to find a designated number statements of fact and statements of opinion and to write those sentences in two categories. You could challenge your students to defend their reasons for deciding which statements are expressions of opinion or fact.

Advice Columns

The *Yomiuri Shinbun* has a section that might interest your students. The title is “Troubleshooter.” Experts from various fields, such as psychology or social work, answer questions sent to the newspaper by the general public. Some issues that people for help with are ones that our students care about. In the May 17, 2017, column, a university freshman writes about communication problems with parents. Another person asks for advice regarding her mother who is a binge eater. The questions and answer sections tend to be short, easy to comprehend, and adaptable for teaching purposes.

Newspaper Advice Column Exercise Suggestion A

Teachers can do a lot with this section. One suggestion is to copy about ten different questions and the responses. Cut them up and distribute them to small groups of students. Their job is to match the questions with the answers within a limited period. This activity promotes skimming skills as well as critical thinking. I find that the pressure of a time limit stimulates students.

Newspaper Advice Column Exercise Suggestion B

Students, either alone or in pairs, read the answers to the questions. After that, they rate the advice on a scale of 0 to 10. A rating of 0 means that the students evaluate the suggestions as worthless. A rating of 10 indicates that the students judge the advice to be perfect. Place the students in new groups. Students share their scores and justify those scores.

Advice Column Exercise Suggestion C

After students have read and are familiar with advice columns, handout other questions that people have submitted to the “Troubleshooter” column. Let students choose which issues that they think are the most interesting, and assign your students to write the answers they would give to a friend, classmate, or family member dealing with the same issue. Depending upon time, interest level, and class goals, you could tape the responses of the students to the walls so that all students can read the work of their classmates. They could even vote for the best advice columnist.

Local Notes: Interview with Travis Holtzclaw

Welcome back for our third installment of *Local Notes*. This time, long-time MW SIG member Travis Holtzclaw, who teaches at Meiho Junior and Senior High in Tokyo, joins us to talk a little about writing study guides for a Japanese publisher over the past two years. His first co-authored study guide was released in 2016, and with two more similar guides scheduled for release in 2018, he hopes to share some of the insights gained from his work.



The following are excerpts from the interview:

MW SIG: How did you get involved with publishing and become an author?

Holtzclaw: Well, for me, it was a long process. Over the past decade and a half, I had written some books for the Japanese market and sent out proposals to several publishers. However, none of them were picked up. I was a bit discouraged so I decided to focus on my teaching. I think this was the best choice for me because, soon after, some of the things I was doing in the classroom, including original materials, started to get noticed. This led to some invitations to help with events, which in turn, led to some chance meetings with some influential individuals in the English education industry. Before I knew it, I was sharing my ideas with authors, getting requests for proofreading, and being introduced to editors. Then, there was a request to co-author a study guide. That book, put out by Sanshusha Publishing and titled *TEAP 全パート徹底トレーニング* (*TEAP zen-pa-to tettei tore-nin'gu*), or unofficially as *Complete TEAP: Comprehensive Training*, was released in 2016, but the project led to a couple more requests to do similar books for the EIKEN exam.

MW SIG: What insights have you gained from your experiences so far?

Holtzclaw: Well, I was asked to co-author guides for commercial tests. The main job of the native English-speaking author is to write the test items and these need to be as authentic as possible. Unfortunately, you won't have access to the actual test specifications or the writing and style guides that the actual item writers have. This means that study guide authors will first need to analyze the tests for things such as readability and vocabulary levels. Also, you'll have to identify what types of questions are asked. This all needs to be done before you start writing your items, but it is kind of fun. You are basically "back engineering" commercial tests to discover how they are built and then creating an original one on your own. Anyway, from doing this, I've gained a tremendous amount of respect for item writers and test publishers. They are well written and there's a lot of technical and creative work that goes into them.

MW SIG: Has your work on these study guides changed your approach to teaching?

Holtzclaw: You bet. Native-speaking English teachers are often reluctant to “teach to a test” as doing so takes time away from more authentic and perhaps effective language lessons. However, as I said, the tests themselves, particularly the reading and listening sections (writing and speaking still have a way to go), are well written and contain many features that when taught and trained, will promote language learning and develop skills. I think one thing I’ve been able to do is to identify what parts of these commercial tests can be incorporated into my current curriculum and activities without feeling like I’m “teaching to the test”. I think of this as “teaching toward the test.”

MW SIG: Could you give us some examples of “teaching toward the test”?

Holtzclaw: Sure. At my school, a junior and senior high, I teach the English Conversation classes and an academic English elective. All these students take the EIKEN test several times during their junior and senior high careers. For English Conversation classes, to provide EIKEN listening practice, I have identified the more common questions used in the tests. For example, after dialogues, examinees hear the question “What is one thing that the man says about X” or “What is one thing we learn about the woman?” So, after we finish warm-up conversations or conversational tasks, I ask the students similar questions. I may say, “So Taro, what is one thing that Hanako said about her winter break” or “So Hanako, what is one thing you learned about Taro?” In this way, students are prepped for the listening sections without me having to teach specifically to the tests. Doing this also gets the students in the habit of paying attention to what their partner says during the conversations and provides practice in recalling information. So basically, students develop their English listening skills and prepare for the tests at the same time.

For my academic English elective, I want my students to develop their ability to paraphrase and also to become familiar with academic texts and even research. Well, for EIKEN Grade 2 and Pre-1 reading passages, it just so happens that, not only are the multiple-choice questions built upon having examinees identify a paraphrase of points made in the passages, but many of those passages are basically miniature research papers. They do things such as cite researchers, introduce research findings, contrast benefits with drawbacks, and draw conclusions. Basically, if you know the tests, you can identify their targeted features and put them into your own materials and activities. In this way, you can teach toward a test while not being limited by it. This is perhaps the most valuable, and exciting insight I’ve gained from doing study guide work.

Writer's Point: Uniting Multiple Perspectives in Material Writing

Brian Cullen

Recently, I had the pleasure to be introduced to Sue Banman Sileci, and she shared some of her experience in writing courses for different age groups for both small and large publishers. Sue never dreamed that she could be a materials developer, and in fact, it was far off her radar. “What, me? Write books?”, she says, “That was for people much smarter, much more intellectual or cultured than me.” Like so many other teachers who become materials writers, it was not a clean break into a new career, but rather an extension of her teaching career.

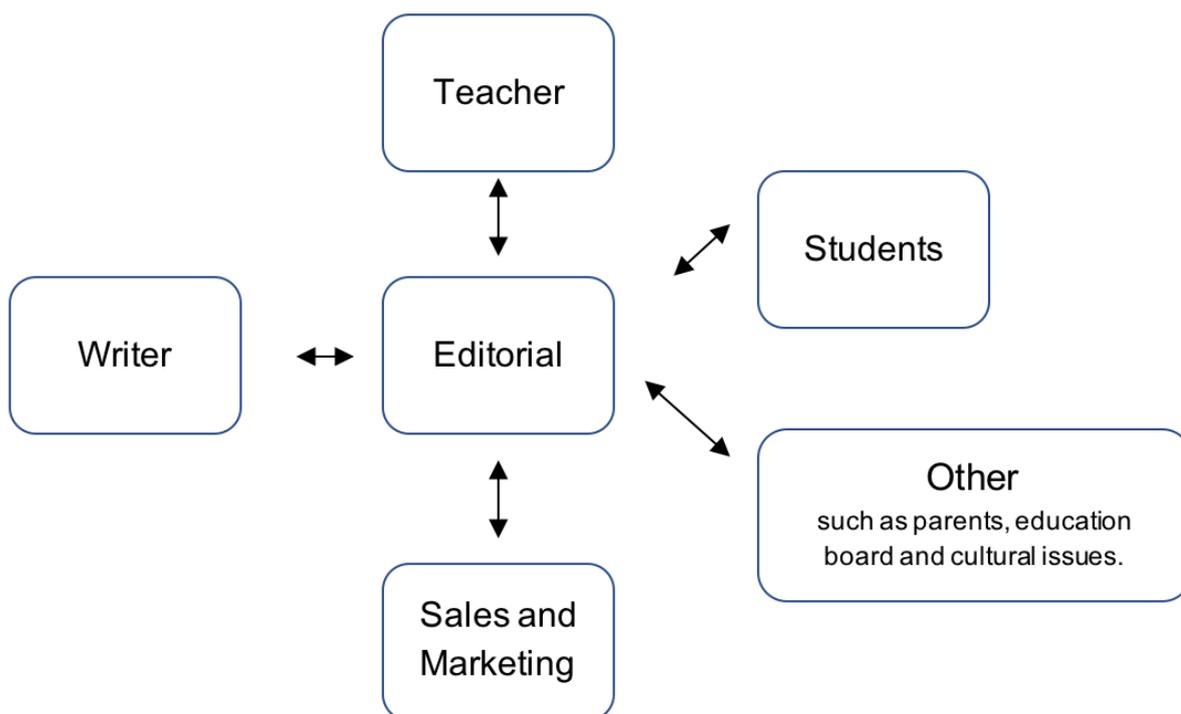
Sue studied Linguistics and German at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota with the intention of becoming an ESL teacher. This led to her teaching in the U.S. and then in Brazil for about 15 years before she started editing at the local branch of an international publisher. Several stressful years later, she left to become a freelance editor and to try her own hand at writing.

Talking to Sue was a useful reminder about the different but complementary roles of materials writer and editor. All good materials writers learn to conceptualize textbooks from the multiple perspectives of teachers, editors, sales teams, and students. However, editors, who represent the publishing company and are incredibly important, are there to mediate among all the perspectives and to make decisions to ensure that the material serves the needs of these multiple parties. Editorial work—among many other things—is to find an appropriate balance through this mediation and to help the materials writer to produce a book that will sell, looks good, meets market needs, is completed on time, and is within budget. It is a reality that editors can't produce their dream books any more than authors can write their own dream books. In a practical world, the needs of the market rule, and we must always be asking ourselves questions which reflect this:

- What do teachers and students need?
- How does that translate into material that they're excited about?
- How much will that excitement translate into sales?

The mediation between different perspectives which the editor must carry out is shown in Figure 1, and the editor can be seen to be responsible for solving a puzzle involving many pieces. Material writers may not need to deal with all areas of Figure 1 directly, but it is good to at least keep in mind the complex puzzle that the editor is facing.

Figure 1. Meditating between multiple perspectives



Sue’s teaching experience helped a lot in getting her started on this complex puzzle. Like all of us, over the years she had found that there was plenty in the books she used that she loved and some things that she didn’t. This insight and true connection to the classroom is what makes teaching such a valuable experience for materials writers. The classroom also helps us to better understand the perspective of the students. Sue’s subsequent work as an editor at a local publisher gave her a fresh perspective and a deeper understanding of the mechanics of activities as she learned valuable skills including the ability to take manuscripts apart, judge them, reorder them, and reflect on them from different viewpoints. Simultaneously working with the publisher helped her to see course books from the point of view of the sales and marketing teams, and overall market. She has clearly managed to integrate these four perspectives successfully into her own writing career as can be seen by her writing for many popular series including *Best Friends* published by McGraw-Hill and *English KnowHow* published by Oxford University Press.

When it came time to write her own material, she had a lot of experience and was able to combine all of these perspectives. Still, she said she had to take a deep breath and put on a different hat. All that background knowledge now needed to combine itself with creativity and her own words on the page.

Since 2008, Sue has focused on writing primary course books for a major international publisher: two different series for the primary market and one for Brazil. She loves writing materials for children because “you can truly picture them using the material with enthusiasm and excitement.” She likes to stay in touch with the classroom and recently visited a few classrooms using her material and “it’s a lot of fun to see that lesson being used, not just in the way intended but in new and creative ways by innovative teachers... and, just as I pictured as I wrote it, the kids were having fun, using English to express themselves, and on their way to really mastering the language.”

Sue’s comments on her writing process are informative. Talking about the lessons that she viewed, she says that it is interesting to recall writing that lesson: “I don’t ever

remember the exact day but I remember the period of time, the stresses I was under, the other things going on in my life as I wrote that part of the book. So there's this funny moment when I visit a classroom and see the lesson being happily used... No one knows I was worried about my daughter as I wrote it, or feeling financial pressure, or wondering what to make for dinner. It's just this great lesson." For those of us who struggle with writing our materials and balancing the writing with other elements of our lives, it is good to know that even a veteran like Sue goes through the same kind of stresses.

Sue's most recent project was a lower secondary course for a local publisher targeted at students in Brazil. It was her first opportunity to write her own coursebook for this sector. She compares writing for primary students versus secondary students: "Material for primary students is often their first introduction to English and the children are little. The material has to reflect that. Writing for lower secondary was fun because we could open up the playing field and were able to loosen up, just a bit, the grammatical and lexical control needed. What I really loved was being able to discuss slightly more complex issues and ask students to reflect on harder questions that involve them, their families, their communities, and their futures. None of it was breathtakingly complex, but still interesting to ask deeper questions."

We all know that creating materials can sometimes be difficult, but it is good to remember that it can also be an enjoyable process in the long run even if it does not seem so at a particularly stressful moment when deadlines are looming and sleep is lacking. For example, Sue relates a conversation with an acquaintance who writes novels and as they compared notes, Sue said, "Writing books is fun." He laughed and replied, "No, it isn't. What's fun is *having written* a book." Sue agrees although she also points out that there are fun moments in writing ELT books like "getting a good idea with a co-author after struggling alone for a long time" or "meetings with the editorial team" or "meeting a deadline and having nothing to think about for a weekend before writing the next unit starts."

To cope with the difficulties and to focus on the task of writing, Sue says she tries to stay away from distractions like Facebook, the refrigerator, and her hobbies, and she sets deadlines and weekly quotas to "force my butt to stay in the chair and my fingers on the keyboard to write." And the external deadline of the entire book always looms above her – it is "that thing I have to do, I have to think about, I have to figure out – no matter what I'm doing." Sue likes writing books, but says she has learned, "it requires real discipline and a knowledge of when I work best, what I can do when I'm tired and what I need to save for the next day when I'm fresh, and then work my life around those times."

Another thing that she likes about writing books is that, particularly with the current emphasis on CLIL, she is forced to understand topics that are far from her interest areas and what she would normally care to study. On any given day, she might be reading websites about the planets, the trucking industry, predictions for 100 years from now, ancient Greece, insect bites, the behavior of cheetahs, or Queen Victoria. When she is in the U.S. and watching game shows like Jeopardy, she always feels really smart because she knows so many odd, random facts!

Sue gives some practical advice on the financial side of materials writing. For the sake of the whole industry, she suggests that writers resist ridiculously low-paying jobs and push for better wages. In addition, she advises writers to be smart—don't take the first offer publishers make and ask other authors and a lawyer whether the deal seems fair.

She also reminds us that we shouldn't lose our own perspective. Big publishers have a strong vision of what they want, but it is good to push for our own angle within that. As

material writers, we have valuable life experience, market experience, and a point of view that needs to be heard. Of course, balance is essential and it's important to remember the sales team's perspective and to use ideas that are general and manageable across all the target markets, and do-able in a classroom. All the perspectives are important. As writers, you should listen to, respect, and trust your editors. However, as your editors are watching your moves, watch theirs. They're human too and get tired, miss things, and may not understand your great idea. It's a team effort with all the perspectives working together to create those magical learning experiences in the classroom.

Task-based Speaking and Listening Assessment

Aileen Bowe (Meisei University)

Learner level:	Pre-intermediate upwards
Length of the activity:	2x 45 minutes
Resources used:	Strips of coloured card paper, paper clips, teacher, self and peer assessment forms, task procedure sheet
Goals:	To facilitate naturalistic, semi-structured language use and to provide a means of assessing speaking and listening skills in a fun, task-based activity.

Preparation

1. Prepare teacher, self and peer assessment forms. Write rubrics for self and peer assessment (e.g. being inclusive, taking time to listen to someone trying to speak, asking questions, etc.).
2. Create a task procedure sheet. For example, groups must build an object (e.g. a house). They may use X amount of paper strips and X amount of paper clips. The object should have X, Y and Z qualities (e.g. the house should be stable, look like a house, and be attractive). Learners should decide on some other qualities of the house. Learners may/may not tear or cut the strips of paper. Learners may/may not draw or write on the strips of paper. Learners have X amount of time (20 minutes is typically enough) to create the object and will then present it as a group.
3. Cut up card paper into strips. Provide 10 strips of paper and 15 paper clips per group.
4. Tell learners that their assessment will be a task-based form of assessment. Familiarity with task-based activities will save some time.

Procedure

PART I

1. Hand out self-and peer-assessment forms. Give learners time to read the rubrics and discuss in groups. Ask learners to think about these rubrics during the task, in

relation to themselves and members of their group. Learners will fill in the self- and peer-assessment forms at the end of the class.

2. Hand out the task procedure sheet to groups. Give learners time to discuss and ask clarifying questions.
3. Divide learners into groups of three to six people.
4. Place the paper strips and paper clips on a desk. Have one learner from each group collect 10 strips of paper and 15 paper clips.
5. Give groups two minutes to plan or brainstorm ideas.
6. Have one person from each group be responsible for time-keeping.
7. Monitor the progress and language use of the groups. The teacher should make notes about individual learners on the teacher assessment form. Rubrics on this form could include: Effort/ Communicative ability/ Use of English/ Group skills/Engagement with the task, etc., depending on the goals of the course/lesson
8. When the time is up, give learners time to think about how they will present their object.
9. Each group will give a short presentation explaining their object.

Part II (OPTIONAL)

For the purposes of this exercise, it will be assumed the object built in Part I was a house.

10. Divide the learners into those who will become house-sellers and those who will become house-buyers (pairs or threes).
11. Give the house-sellers a minute to choose the house they want to try to sell. Give the instructions that they should try to persuade all the house buyers to buy their house by being persuasive. The goal is to sell their house.
12. Give the house buyers the instructions that they should try to get the best deal on a house that is right for their 'needs.' Allow some thinking time for sellers and buyers.
13. Arrange the desks in a row. Place chairs on one side for the house-sellers. Arrange the chairs on the other side of the desk in clumps of two or three for the house buyers. Place the houses on the desks between sellers and buyers.
14. Give learners approximately three or four minutes to have a conversation between the house sellers and house buyers. After this time, ask the house sellers to move one seat to their left, bringing their house with them.
15. When the house sellers have talked to all the buyers, ask the house-sellers to leave the room for a few moments.
16. Write up their names on the whiteboard. Ask each group of buyers to vote on the house they want to buy. Have the house sellers come back into the room and discuss the results. Allow time for feedback on the activity.
17. Give learners time to get back to their seats, rearrange the desks and spend three to four minutes privately self-grading their own performance, and their peers with whom they built their object.

Options

1. In a previous or earlier class, watch a clip based on people selling/buying houses. Have learners note down anything they find interesting, e.g. body language, use of language, visual elements of house-selling, etc.
2. A reading assessment may be incorporated into the assessment in a previous class, or in the next class.
3. Almost all aspects of the procedure may be adapted, including timings, materials, procedures, object to create, rubrics, etc.

Rationale

The creation of this activity came about from the desire to create a meaningful form of assessment of the skills as required by the module: listening and speaking. Having spoken with the learners, they asked for an assessment which did not include listening to a CD player and choosing 'correct' answers, and for a group-style speaking test. It was decided not to test listening and speaking skills discretely, but to create a situation where language use could be used spontaneously and in a semi-structured way. It is not a 'pure' task-based activity, but it incorporates some elements of traditional task-based learning. The decision for a three-way form of evaluation was made on the basis of including reflection and self-awareness into the test. This was similar to Mishan's (2010) assessment of a problem-based learning activity.

The building of the object and the role play activity incorporate elements of play in language learning. Ahn (2016) highlights how language play facilitates "more meaningful interaction" (p. 41). Learners indicated that it did not 'feel like a test' and that it was 'fun.' Roleplays are a staple activity in English language teaching, allowing learners to inhabit different personas and manipulate language use for a variety of purposes in innovative ways. Affective engagement is crucial to the success of this activity and assessment format. In his discussion on the creation of language learning materials, Tomlinson (2012, p. 148) discusses the need for educators to include criteria based on their beliefs about language learning. To this end, affective engagement was purposefully designed into this activity, by creating an object within a group using rudimentary materials and a follow-up roleplay.

The activity described above is easily adaptable to a classroom activity, and need not be in the form of an assessment. However, the approach I have taken to this class is that of a critical pedagogical one and it was thus appropriate for this context to use a non-traditional form of assessment. Córdoba-González (2003) emphasizes that "placing students at the centre of the learning process" is likely to increase learner autonomy in the learning and evaluation process (p. 87).

In my practice, the activity has been received positively by students. Learners gave positive feedback and communicated that it was an enjoyable way to be assessed. I noticed that the 90-minute class was conducted by the learners almost entirely through English, a rarity with learners at this level. Another aspect which was particularly remarkable was the lack of input required by the teacher. The teacher can take a highly passive role throughout this assessment. I recommend sitting at the back of the classroom while writing notes about progress and language use. I found that this puts the onus on the learners to complete the task by working together and not relying on the teacher.

Caveats

1. Institutional requirements may insist on a particular method of assessment, and as such, it may not be applicable to all contexts.
2. A collegial atmosphere between learners will make this activity more successful. Group dynamics vary widely and it may seriously affect the outcomes of the activity.
3. Ideally, learners should have been exposed to the functional language of teamwork in order to be able to communicate. It may be useful to have a 'cheat sheet' of expressions to hand.

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Appendix 1. Self and Peer Assessment Form

Write the names of the people in your group in the boxes. Work together on the tasks, but think about these skills. After the tasks, grade yourself and the other people in your group.

	4/4: Excellent	3/4: Very good	2/4: OK	1/4: Not very good	
Speaking skills		Me	Name:	Name:	Name:
Gives some ideas and asks lots of questions		/4	/4	/4	/4
Tries to talk in English as much as possible in the group					
Makes sure that everyone is speaking and working together					
Listening skills					
Listens to everyone's ideas and is respectful					
Helps someone with some English words					
Tries hard to understand what people are saying in English					

A Systematic Approach to Oral Presentation Assessment

Richard Miles (Nanzan University)

Abstract

Assessment of oral presentations in university courses and speech contests can frequently be holistic. In an attempt to at least partially systemize the assessment process for educators, learners, and speech contest judges; this paper will propose a hierarchical assessment rubric for assessing oral presentations. The rubric is intended to facilitate a more systematic and transparent approach to assessing oral presentations and to provoke further research and discussion on the matter.

Introduction

Despite the need for a comparative study, little research has been carried out to date on the different rubrics used by university educators and speech contest judges throughout Japan. The goal of this study is to analyze a sample of the different rubrics utilized by university educators in Japan, in order to establish whether or not there are salient patterns to how presenters are assessed and to identify and categorize specific factors. This goal also entails exploring the balance between content, delivery, discursive techniques, and language ability in each of the rubrics. From the findings of this preliminary study, a hierarchical assessment rubric has been developed that provides a framework for future instruction and assessment in English oral presentation classes for university educators in Japan, and it could additionally serve as a guideline for speech contest judges.

Background

According to Andrade (1997, p. 1), "A rubric is a scoring tool that lists the criteria for a piece of work, or 'what counts' (for example, purpose, organization, details, voice, and mechanics are often what count in a piece of writing); it also articulates gradations of quality for each criterion, from excellent to poor." As Andrade (1997) further explained that rubrics can serve to both assess and to teach students in almost any educational setting, are seen as authentic, and reflect a more performance-based approach to assessment. Oral presentation rubrics can vary widely according to the purpose they are supposed to serve, the person(s) who wrote them, and to the person(s) or work being assessed (Cripps, Miles, & Wilson, 2015). In one such example, Robson (2008) analyzed the assessment approaches taken by judges at a university speech contest in Japan and found the judges' approaches varied substantially, despite using a rubric that was essentially divided into just two sections: the criteria prepared before the contest (i.e. the content; organization and interest) and the criteria determined on the day (i.e. the delivery; body language, eye contact, pronunciation and voice). All the criteria were rated on a scale of 1-5, and the findings suggest that the delivery criteria were judged more harshly than the content criteria, although interest was the hardest criteria to judge, whereas voice was the easiest. Robson (2008) also noted that judges were either inclined to look for failure or success, and

that this influenced whether they were lenient or harsh in their assessments – supporting a finding discovered earlier in Upshur and Turner’s 1999 study.

In a follow-up study, Robson (2010) found that with retraining, judges could streamline their approaches and were therefore more likely to be consistent in their assessments, although a multitude of factors still influenced the final ratings. In this study, the criteria were streamlined and organized into three areas: voice features (pronunciation, pausing, and volume), capturing interest (content and enthusiasm of delivery) and body and eye control (eye contact and gestures). One finding from this study revealed that although the judges followed the rubric, they did not allot an equal amount of time for each criterion. Judges also indicated that performance in one criterion might have affected assessment of another criterion. Judges also revealed that they had made their decisions and ratings before the end of the speech. Yamashita and Fuyuno (2015) analyzed university commencement speeches (delivered by ‘native speakers’) and found similar pausing, lexical choices, and head movements.

Methodology

The hierarchical assessment rubric outlined in this paper was originally drafted by the author of this paper based on his experiences teaching and assessing oral presentations, and has subsequently been modified after interviews with a sample of university educators in Japan ($n=10$). An analysis of the assessment rubrics used for their university course presentations was carried out and then further modified after an examination of five rubrics used for Japanese university student speech contests. Five of the educators interviewed were involved in assessing oral presentations in general English language education courses, while the other five were involved in teaching various content-based courses in Japanese. The aim of interviewing a contrasting pool of participants and intertwining their views with the rubrics from the speech contests was to obtain wide-ranging responses in order to create as broad and encompassing a rubric as possible. In this study, each criterion related to assessment of oral presentations mentioned in the interviews with the participants or contained in the rubrics used by the participants and speech contests was coded according to its thematic property (as defined by Saldaña, 2015). These coded criteria were then grouped according to their thematic properties into three main categories and then further arranged into sub-categories. The significant (and perhaps predictable) finding from this study was that the educators and speech contests all prioritized differing criterion and areas of the oral presentations when assessing their students’ presentations. There was no ‘universal’ or ‘standardized’ rubric.

Hierarchical assessment rubric

The hierarchical assessment rubric will now be outlined in a top-down manner. The rubric essentially represents an approach for instructors to systematically work through when breaking down how they will assess their students’ oral presentations or judge speech contests. The first step in the approach is to determine the respective weight that needs to be attributed to each of the three main categories. These categories have been entitled: *content*, *delivery*, and *language*. Figure 1 provides a simple breakdown of the three main categories and shows how they may overlap in certain areas.

Figure 1. Hierarchical Assessment Rubric: Main categories

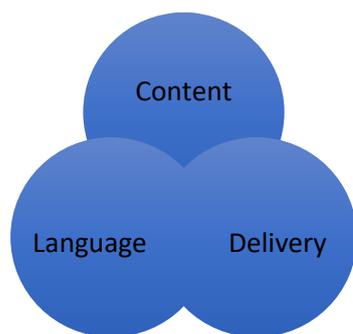


Table 1 provides an overview of the main criteria in each category. These lists are representative of some of the responses obtained in this study, and it is recognized that there are likely additional elements not included here. For a full list of the criteria identified by this study, refer to Appendices 1-3.

Table 1. Criteria (sub-categories)

Content	Delivery	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear message • appropriate topic • supporting information • logic • visual aids • persuasive or informative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eye contact • voice • gestures • interaction • pausing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accuracy • vocabulary • appropriacy • rhetorical devices

The assessment weight assigned to each main category or criterion should reflect the purpose of each course. It can be determined in a top-down style by assigning percentages to each main category and then further broken down within the category by assigning smaller percentages to each particular criterion. It can also be done in a bottom-up approach by assigning percentages to each specific criterion, ultimately leading to a percentage weight for each main category. Each criterion listed in the three main categories can additionally be broken down. An example of this is voice, which can include clarity, intonation, variance, stress, and pace.

It is important to note that a particular criterion can feature in more than one of the three main categories, potentially causing problems for assessment. A pertinent example of this is rhetorical devices. Educators could be merely assessing for the use (in the language category) of such devices as tripling (the rule of three), inclusive language (we, us, our, etc.), or intensifiers (significantly, certainly, strongly, etc.), but they may also be assessing the delivery of these techniques (delivery category). If the presenter accurately uses an example of tripling in their presentation, but delivers the statement with a flat voice, the instructor may need to decide how this is to be assessed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the hierarchical oral presentation assessment rubric provided in this paper represents a preliminary rubric that can be modified and adjusted by educators, judges and researchers alike. The primary purpose of this rubric is to allow for a clear and systematic approach when constructing an assessment rubric. The rubric can more easily be communicated to learners or contestants when they are preparing their presentations so that they can then better focus on meeting the clearer expectations.

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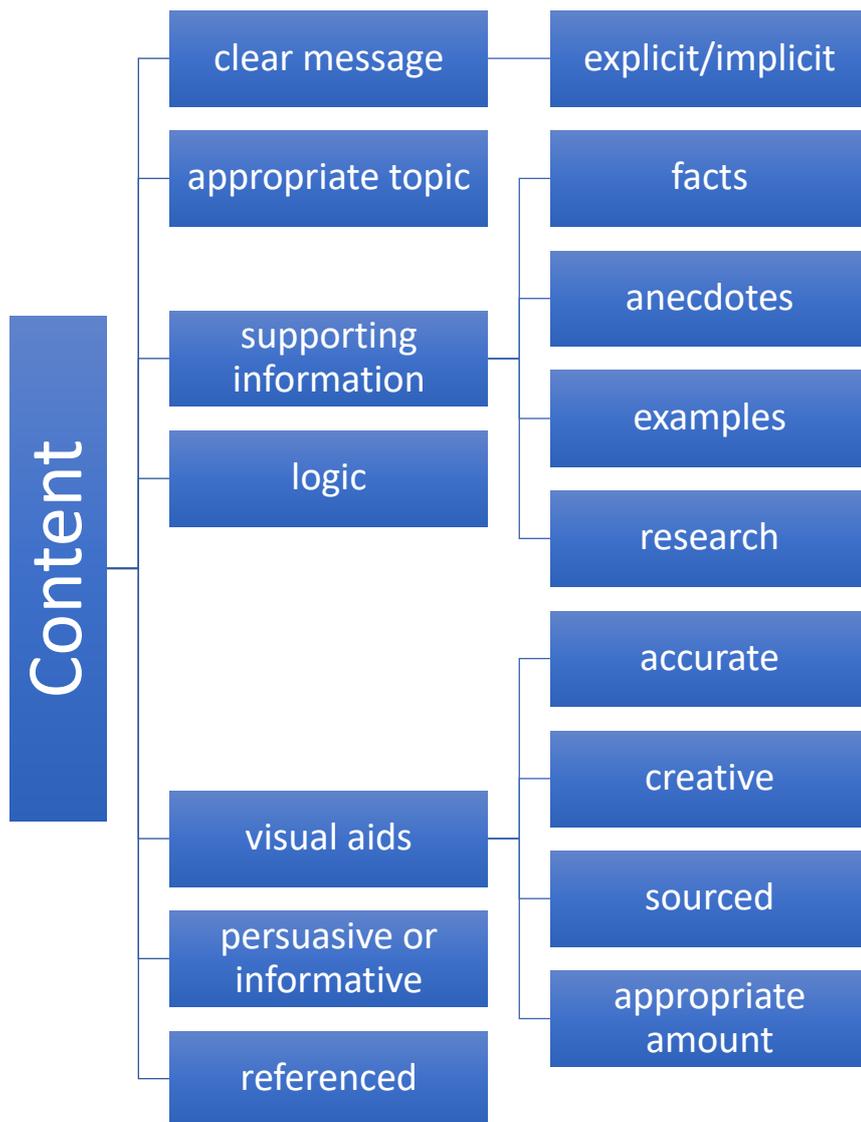
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Biographical information

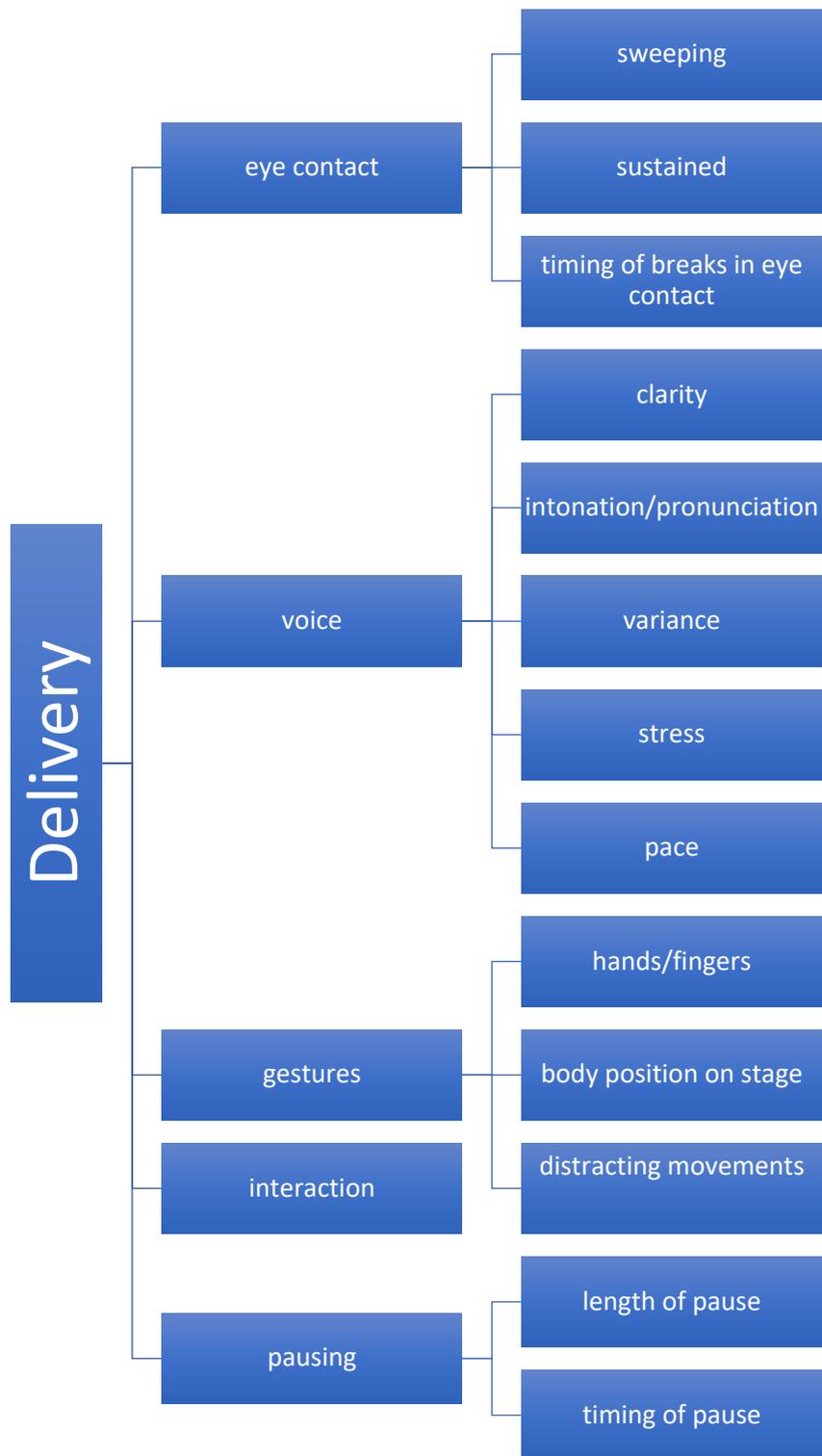
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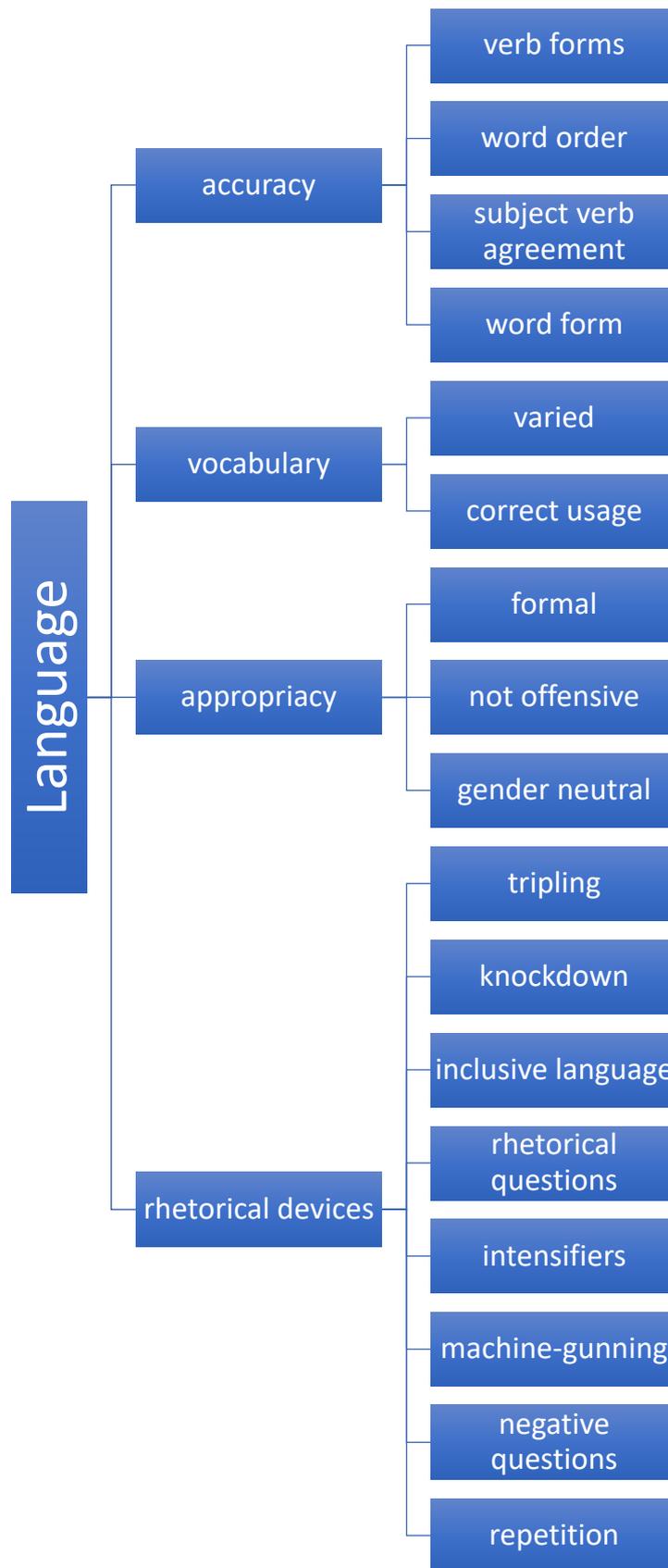
Appendix 1. Hierarchical Assessment Template: Content



Appendix 2. Hierarchical Assessment Template: Delivery



Appendix 3. Hierarchical Assessment Template: Language



The Structure and Writing of Creative Advertising Media for the ELT Classroom

Allan Goodwin (Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)

Introduction

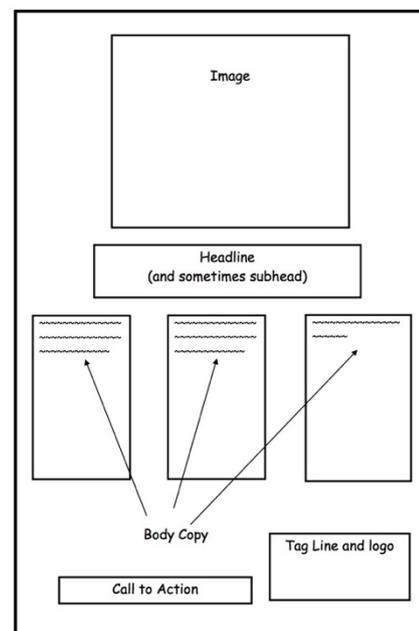
The teaching of English is the teaching of more than vocabulary and grammar; it is the teaching of communications in English. One area of the communications industry that is sometimes taught in English classes at the undergraduate level in Japan is advertising. Students can learn a lot about a culture through its advertising. Advertisements are short and interesting. People who write advertising work hard to write in a manner that is close to natural speech, which means that by looking at advertising language, students are exposed to more natural language than they may read in essays, or even most fiction, apart from the dialogue. However, when advertising is used in English classes, it tends to be held up for analysis, either by looking at individual ads themselves, or by reading articles about advertising itself. What seems often to be missing is teaching learners the basics of how to write creatively and strategically by using the structure and format of ads. This would be of benefit to students in the same way that knowing the five-paragraph structure of an essay is of benefit to them when they go to read a five-paragraph essay: it makes understanding the genre a lot easier when they see how the parts work together and they have a better idea of what the writer may have been doing. This research article will show the elements that make up the structure of an advertisement and types of writing activities that can be done as part of a language class for the following media: 1) magazine ads, 2) pamphlets, 3) radio commercials, and 4) television commercials.

Magazine Ads (and The Parts of an Ad)

Students need: a blank piece of A4 paper.

In advertising, magazine ads are seen as the basic format from which writers and art directors base their portfolios and they are taught to stick to one benefit (this means something that is good for the consumer, as opposed to something about the product itself, which is known as a “feature”) per ad (sometimes one benefit per campaign). From top left to bottom right, the classic ad format consists of an image (this means picture), a headline (and subhead if necessary), the body copy, a call to action (unless part of the body copy), and the tagline and logo (see Figure 1). Teachers showing advertisements in class can point out to students that advertisements often do not have all of the elements in a single ad. This layout is taught because it contains elements that advertisements for print and other media have. Often when one or more element from the classic

Figure 1 Magazine ad layout



layout is removed, it creates more white space on the page, which allows students to change the layout of the elements on the page as they like. It is important for learners and instructors to note that each of the parts of an ad work together.

Part of the Ad: The Tagline

Writing advertising is very different than academic writing. However, for ease of explanation, the tagline may be looked at as resembling the thesis of an essay; it is the slogan used by a product for a particular campaign. The tagline encapsulates the idea of a campaign, and the other parts of the advertisement make up the example that supports that idea. When a campaign has run its course, a new campaign will be developed and it may change the branding of the product. In a magazine ad, the tagline is most commonly found in the bottom right corner with the product's logo. The tagline and logo may be moved to other places on the page, especially if there is a lot of white space on the page because an element from the class ad layout is missing.

Generally, in student portfolios, each advertising campaign consists of three ads. Also, it should be mentioned that advertising is a type of strategic communication. At agencies, creative teams work to strategies written down in a "brief" and given to the writer/art director team. Students of creative advertising at tertiary institutions are taught how to write strategies for their own campaigns. ELT instructors in Japan who want to make this an aspect of their course could teach a simple SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) analysis (as is often done in business English classes).

Part of the Ad: The Headline and Image

The headline should be short: no more than eight to twelve words but shorter if possible. Students in creative advertising programs are taught that the headline should work with an image; it should not explain the image. If the headline explains the image, then either could be removed and the reader would still understand the point.

Part of the Ad: Body Copy

Paragraphs in an advertisement should be only one or two sentences long, and these sentences should be short. Generally, paragraphs are put into columns to allow the reader to track through the article easily. The body copy of an ad should explain the benefit of the product not the features. One way to do this which could be particularly useful in the language classroom is to use stories in which the advertiser's product is somehow used to save the day. Doing this would cause students to focus on benefits from the use of a product rather than the dry features of a product. It also has the students crafting narratives rather than writing individual sentences that explain the feature, which is more interesting for both the reader and writer.

Part of the Ad: Call to action

This is the part of the ad that tells readers where to get more information, or how to buy the product. Examples include "Call xxx-xxxx for more information" or a website for readers to access.

Pamphlet

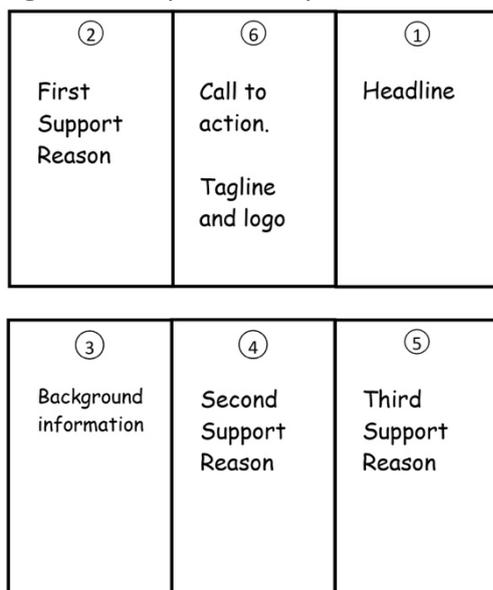
Students need: A blank piece of A4 paper

Whereas a magazine ad shows just one benefit, a pamphlet can be used to show three or more. Occasionally, students have difficulty if an assignment calls for more than one advertisement for a single product. In English-speaking countries, students of advertising learn to write advertising campaigns consisting of three advertisements, all of which have the same tagline. Pamphlets can therefore be used to bridge from making a single poster (known in advertising as a “one-off”) to writing larger campaigns. Teachers can show students that after having done a pamphlet, they have done several single page ads in a single campaign- all that is required to make an advertising campaign is to turn each of the benefits listed in the pamphlet into three individual posters, all of which have the same tagline. Students can make a simple pamphlet by folding a piece of A4 paper into thirds (see Figure 2).

Usually, the pamphlet is held so that each panel is narrower than it is long, but this is not a requirement. Sometimes pamphlets are made to be longer in width than height. If the teacher is creating double-sided stencils on a photocopier, then it can take some fidgeting to get the fold lines to line up correctly. It can be much easier to give students blank A4 paper and have them for the paper in class with the teacher demonstrating.

Using the topic of a travel campaign, here is an example of how a pamphlet may be organized using a common design based on a six-panel pamphlet like the one shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Six-panel Pamphlet



Panel 1: Shows the topic or headline (for example, simply the name of the country and a picture).

Panel 2: Has the first support reason or example (for example, a specific place to go or thing to do).

Panel 3 (reverse of panel 1): background and statistics (for example, where the country is, its demographics etc.).

Panel 4: Has a second support reason or example (for example, a specific place to go or thing to do).

Panel 5 (reverse of panel 2): Has a third support reason or example (for example, a specific place to go or thing to do).

Panel 6 (reverse of panel 4): Has the Call to action, Logo, tagline etc.

Radio

Students need: Lined paper

Radio as a medium for advertising is known as the theatre of the mind. For students, it is very much like writing a dialogue. The only real difference between writing for radio and writing a dialogue is that students can include sound effects (SFX) and music in radio, and these can be brought to class for use in a performance. The first line of a radio commercial is often seen as its headline, and the end is usually the tagline and call to action. For format in

word processing software (see Figure 3) it is often easiest to insert a table and use two columns.

Students then just leave a space below the end of the speaker’s words on the right in order to create the proper space. An easier alternative is for students to write the commercial by hand on a page and use a ruler to draw a dividing line between sounds and their sources. Radio commercials are typically thirty, forty-five or sixty seconds, but teachers could have them at any length. Student speech can be very slow, so teachers may want to double these lengths to start with.

Figure 3. Radio commercial script

Annrcr:	~~~~~
Music	~~~~~
SFX	~~~~~

Radio commercials can easily be recorded using laptop computers and both music and sound effects can be put into them. For example, the easiest way to do this on a Mac platform is by using GarageBand. Student dialogue can be recorded directly through the internal microphone. Sound effects can be made by students and recorded with the internal speaker. Alternatively, sound effects are often included in software instruments packages and can therefore be played and recorded on a software instrument track, or else by making use of one of the many Apple Loops included in GarageBand.

Television

Students need: Lined paper

The format for writing television commercials (see Figure 4) is similar to the format for writing radio commercials, except that the audio (the same as the radio commercial) is written on the right half of the paper.

Figure 4. Television commercial script

Visual	Audio	
	Annrcr:	~~~~~
	Music	~~~~~
	SFX	~~~~~

The visual is written in the left half of the paper. This is similar to writing a skit, something that students may be familiar with already, although the format on the page may be new to them. A significant difference between writing a television script and writing a skit, however, is the availability in television of props, background image, and camera techniques, not to mention sound effects and music on the audio side. If students were to act their television commercials out in front of the class, a narrator could be used to give the audience required explanations. Writing a television script bears similarity to writing a scene from a movie, whereas writing a skit may be closer to writing for a theatrical play: the

audience can only see what is brought on stage. Sometimes instead of the physical props listed in the commercial script, substitute props can be used in class and labeled so the audience can easily understand.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this article only glosses over the advertising world in order to show the necessary aspects and to introduce common media that can be applied to the classroom. It explained parts of the ad while explaining the magazine ad. Then it showed pamphlets, radio commercials and television commercials as examples of the types of writing activities that can be done in an ELT class. Especially when having students creatively make products like magazine ads, pamphlets or radio and television commercials, instructors do not need to create elaborate materials. What they do need to do is give students the tools with which to create the type of products that the instructor expects, and this can mean that teachers spend a significant amount of time researching different types of communication in English.

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Biographical information

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