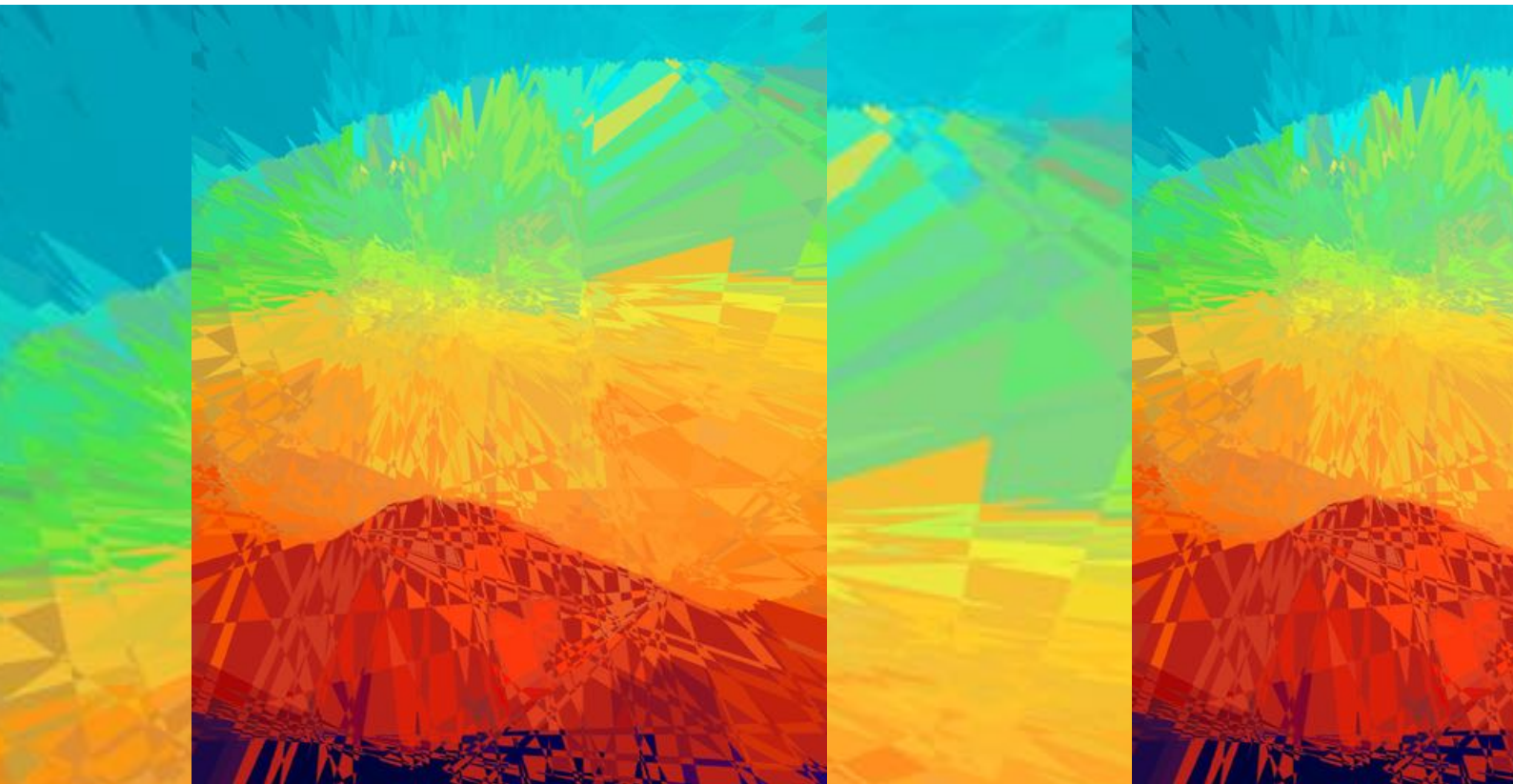


An international journal for teachers and language materials creators

Between the Keys

Volume 32.2 / 2024



Announcement: MW SIG at PanSIG 2024

Musings on Marketing: Developing an ESL textbook for Science Majors at a
Japanese University: Science and Us

Chatterbot: Writing Vinettes with ChatGPT 3.5



Between the Keys 32.2

Table of Contents

Letter from the Publication Chair	3
by Joel Neff	
PanSIG Preview	4
by John Carle	
Musings on Marketing	7
by Timothy Ang	
Chatterbot	14
by Joel Neff	
Messages: Recent Additions to the MW SIG Showcase	21
Call for Submissions	22
Contributors	23
Acknowledgements	24
Links & Resources	25
Copyright Statement	26

Letter from the Publication Chair

Joel Neff

Dear Readers,

Spring has come at last and with it comes new jobs, new school semesters, and new opportunities. In just a few short weeks, people from all over Japan will have the chance to get together in person to discuss ideas and practices at the annual PanSIG conference. We, the Materials Writers SIG, will be in attendance via our table and our forum.

In fact, we begin this issue with an explanation of the Materials Writers' presence at the forthcoming PanSIG 2024 conference. John Carle, in his new role as President for the SIG takes us through the conference itself, what you can expect from the MW SIG table, and how to attend and participate in the MW SIG forum. We hope you can join us there!

We then turn to our regular, "Musings on Marketing" column, - a place where readers and SIG members are able to tell us about their experiences with publishing in all its many forms. This issue, Timothy Ang walks us through his experiences in helping to create a custom textbook for a university. He has a number of lessons learned that we readers can benefit from.

Finally, I've taken over our "Chatterbot" column for this issue. In this short piece, I detail my attempts to get ChatGPT to write a hypothetical vignette I can use for my ongoing research projects. It takes a few more steps than I had anticipated!

Speaking of our columns, this is a good place for me to remind you that we are always open to submissions. We have our guidelines outlined in the back of this issue with more details available on our website. We also accept articles from all readers, regardless of whether they are a member of the SIG or even of JALT.

So, with that in mind, please enjoy this issue of Between the Keys and we hope to see you in May at PanSIG 2024.

Joel Neff

Spring 2024

Announcement

MW SIG at PanSIG 2024

by

John Carle

PanSIG 2024

MW SIG at PanSIG



The Conference

The PanSIG 2024 conference will be held from May 24th to May 26th at the Fukui University of Technology in Fukui, Japan. PanSIG is JALT's second largest conference, focused on bringing together various Special Interest Groups. It's a place where hundreds of educators gather to share ideas, build connections, and have a good time.

The MW SIG will be one of the official SIGs attending the event. We will have a table staffed by officers and will hold a SIG forum. We hope many members of our SIG will attend the conference, stop by the table, and join the forum.

MW SIG Table

The MW SIG table will be open on May 25th and 26th. Please come by to see the various publications, including textbooks and graded readers, created by MW SIG members and the greater JALT community. If you have recently published a textbook and would like to add it to the collection, please bring a few sample copies.

MW SIG Forum:

Teachers, Students, and A.I.s: Interactions in the Modern Classroom

Classrooms, along with the teachers who lead them, have long been early adopters of new

PanSIG 2024

MW SIG at PanSIG

technologies. When a new tool is introduced, teachers, tutors, and other educators engage with it to explore its potential applications within the classroom context. They investigate how A.I. technologies, such as ChatGPT for language assistance, MidJourney for image creation, and ElevenLabs for voice synthesis, can enhance and add interactivity to traditional learning methods.

In this forum, presenters will showcase and discuss their use of A.I. in education, covering everything from the creation of materials for textbooks and lesson plans to the application of A.I. in real-time lessons. The aim is to encourage participants to exchange ideas, experiences, and resources, fostering a community that inspires and learns from one another.

Please join Joel Neff (Publications Chair), Stephen Bridge (Membership Chair), and John Carle (President) in discussing how teachers are using A.I. in their classrooms.

Looking forward to seeing many of you in Fukui!

John Carle

President MW SIG

Link: <https://pansig.org/2024>

Column

**Musings on Marketing:
Developing an ESL textbook for
Science Majors at a Japanese
University: Science and Us**

**by
Timothy Ang**

Musings on Marketing

Developing an ESL textbook...

Welcome to this edition of Musings on Marketing. In this article, author Timothy Ang lists a few of his takeaways from helping to create a textbook for use within his own classes.

Description

Science and Us is a beginner/lower intermediate level textbook aimed for first- and second-year students who are taking English classes at a private university in the Kansai region of Japan. The textbook is composed of 17 units, each featuring science-related articles along with exercises that contain vocabulary, comprehension questions, and research activities. The goal is to use the textbook as a supplement to help improve students' English literacy skills but also improve their knowledge of science topics and critical thinking skills.

The Beginning

My involvement in this textbook project began in the fall of 2022. It came as a welcomed surprise as I had just started at Kwansai Gakuin as an Instructor of English as a Foreign Language (IEFL) for their science & technology department in Sanda, Kobe. By the time I had joined, there were already contributions from other faculty and enough subject matter for a complete textbook. Luckily, there was another round of articles that were written by IEFLs that allowed me to join the textbook process.

Our department conceptualized this idea as a result of the teachers' years of experience and facilitation of the English program for the student science majors. Although we had textbooks for subjects with topics that were already geared towards science, we felt that it would be beneficial to add a supplement that could fill in the gaps of English reading and writing literacy where the existing assigned textbooks could not. Another goal was to integrate basic information research and internet literacy tasks into the proposed textbook. The textbook would then be used for our reading and writing classes.

The Process

After our department decided to create the textbook, the writing began. We did not start empty handed as there were previous supplementary articles made by other teachers. These existing articles were repurposed and revised to be included in the upcoming textbook. Additional article ideas were suggested during monthly meetings. Following this, we had several weeks to submit article drafts. These were soft deadlines so as to prioritize

Musings on Marketing

Developing an ESL textbook...

the demands of the English program but most of the time everything went according to schedule.

The articles had to be unique and interesting which meant an effort to find material that easily connected with students' interests. For example, articles on two influential Japanese scientists: Shibukawa Harumi and Takamine Jokichi were added. Furthermore, we did not shy away from controversial topics, rather we took it as an opportunity to embrace the relatively free editorial control to push certain topics too risky for traditional publications such as nuclear energy or how war influences the creation and development of new technologies.

The articles went through several rewrites and were checked for grammar, editorial, and vocabulary choices. There were occasions where I wrote a sentence that sounded good,

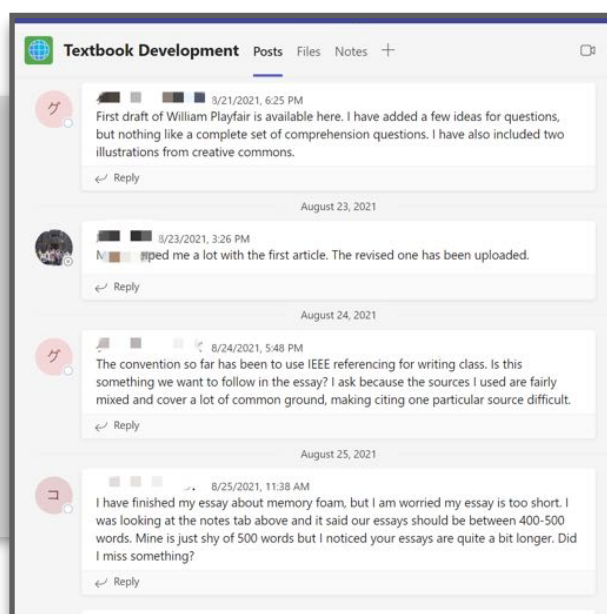


Figure 1. A Microsoft Teams conversation about the textbook

but it had to be simplified and accessible to the target students who were CEFR level A1-B2. On the technology side, there was a Microsoft teams shared folder where contributions were placed in and correspondence was typically done via email or group chat. This project required constant communication and honest and constructive feedback. Feedback was crucial, as some articles required significant revisions to maintain consistent quality.

Musings on Marketing

Developing an ESL textbook...

Off to the Presses

The final editing process was laborious. Additional revisions and finishing touches were conducted through the months of August and September of 2023. Over coffee and sweets, we spent two days going over the articles, as a fresh set of eyes would be more likely to catch any mistakes or suggest better-suited revisions.

It was this final proofreading task that would signal the completion of the textbook that was the product of so many people's hard work and diligent efforts. Our department head provided invaluable leadership in galvanizing our efforts towards the finish line. All in all, the process took around 2 years.

One key advantage we had with this textbook was access to the in-house university printing press. We approached and they were eager to take on the project. This kept the associated material and labor costs negligible, the lead time shorter, and any revisions easier. The textbook is printed on standard A4 paper with a thick cover and glue bound. The book was priced at 1,800 yen for a total of 96 pages. The first print run was at 180 copies for the first edition.

Breakdown of Example Units

The book is divided into three main categories. These units are: Unclaimed Scientists in History, Science in our Daily Life, and Controversies in Science. Each article consists of an average of four to five pages. A typical unit outline is as follows:

- Pre-reading activity
- Main article
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension
- Post-reading activity

Each unit starts with a pre-reading activity to familiarize students with certain concepts and provide background information which includes warm up pair-work questions, grammar concepts, and other research tasks. After this is a 700-to 800-word main article with references. This is followed by a vocabulary section with the English words translated to Japanese and then a comprehension portion which includes multiple choice or open-ended questions. Finally, a post-reading activity usually involves additional questions,

Musings on Marketing

Developing an ESL textbook...

group-work activities, and homework tasks. Throughout the text we add shortened links to other websites and insert royalty free pictures when appropriate. The artwork for the cover was illustrated by a student from the university who was compensated for it.

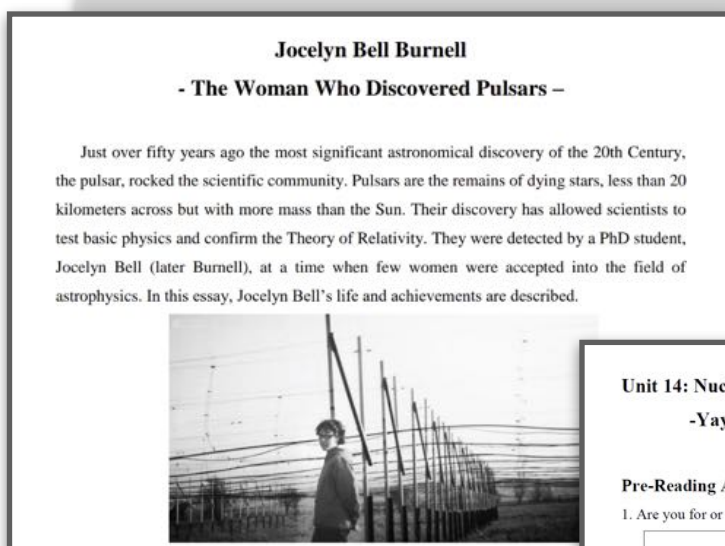
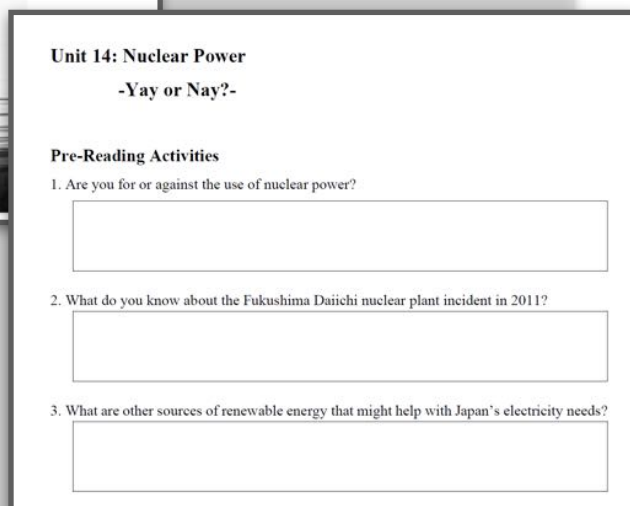


Figure 2 (left). An excerpt from the main article titled 'Jocelyn Bell Burnell: The Woman Who Discovered Pulsars'

Figure 3 (right). An example pre-reading section from 'Nuclear Power: Yay or Nay?'



Reception

I felt glad and it was a privilege to be part of the textbook creation process. However, I honestly had a sense of relief upon seeing the positive responses/reactions from the students and the members of the faculty. Although the textbook is required for the next school year, we couldn't help but be nervous and anxious when the initial sales were so slow. It was only after several reminders that textbook sales started to pick up. From the first few reactions it seems the students liked the content and said it was a refreshing change of pace from the other material they were accustomed to using.

Musings on Marketing

Developing an ESL textbook...



Figure 4. 'Science and Us' on the shelves of the campus bookstore

As of the 2023 fall semester, we are testing out a few articles in our reading classes and are observing the students' response to the book and how much time and effort it takes to complete a unit. After we gather more student feedback from surveys or focus groups, we will adjust our expectations of the number of articles to assign to the syllabus. Ultimately, our goal is to integrate at least two units per semester for both the writing or reading classes.

Lessons Learned

Participating in this textbook has been quite a learning experience for someone relatively new to textbook development. The experience was an education in which I learned the ins and outs of textbook development. Additionally, it was an opportunity for me to hone my curriculum-development skills. Specifically, it gave me the confidence to adapt my own existing material and create additional content for my classes. I believe that when you go beyond relying on existing textbooks and invest time into carefully crafting materials, it can potentially result in more motivated and academically fulfilled students that are inclined to learn and practice more English.

Creating the book was a culmination of the collaborative efforts of many individuals. We were able to take in different points of view and practiced the communication skills that we

Musings on Marketing

Developing an ESL textbook...

often preach to students in our communication classes. The sacrifice and significance of this project did not occur to me until I saw a student clutching the textbook while on her way to class. Although they may not hold the same cache of a referred article at a major journal, the daily reminder whenever I see or use a unit from the textbook has made it more than rewarding enough.

Future Plans

This textbook project provides a foundation and confidence to pursue more textbook related projects. One idea is creating a textbook designed for communication in situations that involve researchers and scientists. We also would like to collaborate with science professors within the university and get their input on any improvements that can be made. And although the textbook is currently only offered on our campus, after some fine-tuning we would like to pitch the textbook to publishers outside of the university. This way, it brings on more visibility for the school's science program and our contributions to its continued progress.

Conclusion

I hope the humble beginnings of this textbook can offer fellow educators a glimpse into academic publishing. I also hope that this article encourages others to explore creating their own materials and to make a dedicated commitment to the students' learning experience. Tailored class materials lead to an enhanced English education and teaching experience for both students and teachers.

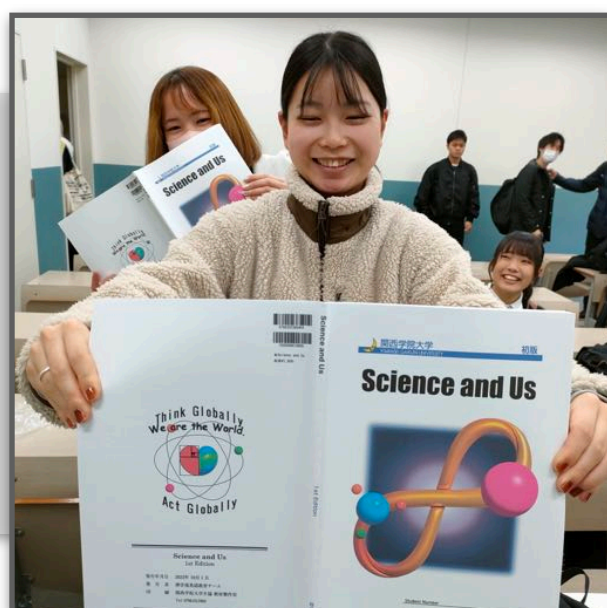


Figure 5. A happy student with her copy of the textbook

Column

**Chatterbot:
Writing Ethical Vignettes for Research
Purposes with ChatGPT**

**by
Joel Neff**

Chatterbot

Writing Ethical Vignettes...

Welcome to Chatterbot, the column in which we explore new and creative ways to get A.I. tools to do our work for us! For this issue's experiment, I'll be using ChatGPT 3.5 (a.k.a. the free version) to write hypothetical vignettes for research purposes.

Vignettes are a useful research tool because they prompt an emotional response from the reader. In this case, the emotional response I hope to elicit is a judgement call as to whether a given situation is an ethical use of an A.I. tool. To that end, the vignettes need to be short, specific, and as unambiguous as possible.

Here is my first prompt to ChatGPT:

Please write a hypothetical situation in which a first-year Japanese student uses an A.I. tool like ChatGPT to complete their assignment. The scenario should be able to be answered by choosing a point on a Likert scale.

ChatGPT's response tells the story of Yuki and includes both Yuki's and ChatGPT's dialogue as part of the scenario. However, Yuki also uses a Likert scale in the scenario. It is also 297 words long (*see Appendix 1*). ChatGPT has not understood the assignment.

Here is my revised prompt:

Please write a hypothetical situation in which a first-year Japanese student uses an A.I. tool like ChatGPT to complete their assignment. Please limit the scenario to 50 words.

ChatGPT returned:

Haru, a first-year Japanese student, turns to ChatGPT for help with a literature essay. He inputs questions about character analysis. ChatGPT provides insightful analyses instantly, allowing Haru to meet his deadline with confidence.

This scenario is more similar to the desired outcome. It needs some editing but it provides a good baseline from which to build a research tool. I asked ChatGPT for five more scenarios that are similar. The responses are concise and appropriate but much too similar to each other (*see Appendix 2*).

At this point, I changed tactics and decided to include a scenario written by myself as part

Chatterbot

Writing Ethical Vignettes...

of the prompt:

Please write a scenario similar to this one: Riku is a first-year student at a Japanese university. He has to write an essay for his class. Riku forgets about the assignment until the day it is due. He uses ChatGPT to write an essay for him. He then turns this essay in as his own work.

ChatGPT responded:

Rina, a first-year student at a Japanese university, realizes she forgot about her essay due that day. Panicked, she turns to ChatGPT for help. Using its assistance, she quickly drafts an essay and submits it. Later, her professor praises her for the insightful analysis, unaware of ChatGPT's role.

This is more in line with what I originally wanted - the scenario is short, easy to understand, and has something I, as a teacher, consider an act that crosses the line from acceptable to unacceptable. I asked ChatGPT to write five more scenarios like this one.

Unfortunately, this time ChatGPT failed to deliver. All five scenarios (see Appendix 3) were the same: student forgets their assignment, uses ChatGPT, the end.

I realized that I had not been giving ChatGPT a key piece of information: As I stated above, I want respondents to have to make a judgment call whether the situation is morally acceptable or not. I revised the prompt:

Using the following scenario as an example, please write three more scenarios that showcase a student using an A.I. tool in a manner that may be ethically questionable. (I then add the same scenario as above.)

ChatGPT responded to this prompt with a useful variety of concise varied scenarios, each of which has a moral question contained within it (see Appendix 4). While they are not perfect, they are useful and easily editable scenarios that can be used within my research tool. Were I to continue to use the same prompt, it seems likely that I would receive additional, similar scenarios. Whether they would be truly varied or mere variations on a theme remains an open question.

Chatterbot

Writing Ethical Vignettes...

Appendix 1

Scenario:

Yuki, a first-year Japanese student, is studying linguistics at a prestigious university in Tokyo. As part of his coursework, he's tasked with writing an essay analyzing the use of honorific language in Japanese literature. Yuki, although passionate about the subject, is feeling overwhelmed by the complexity of the topic and the language barrier.

Feeling stuck, Yuki remembers hearing about an AI [sic] tool called ChatGPT that can help with writing assignments. He decides to give it a try. Logging into the university's online platform, he opens up the ChatGPT interface and starts typing his questions.

Yuki: "Hello ChatGPT! Can you help me understand the use of honorific language in Japanese literature?"

ChatGPT: "Of course, Yuki! Honorific language, known as 'keigo' in Japanese, is a crucial aspect of communication in Japanese society, particularly in literature where it reflects social hierarchies and relationships between characters. Would you like me to provide examples and explanations?"

Yuki: "Yes, please! Can you also help me brainstorm some key points for my essay?"

ChatGPT: "Absolutely! Let's start by discussing the different levels of keigo and their implications in literature. On a scale of 1 to 5, how familiar are you with the concept of keigo?"

Yuki ponders for a moment before selecting "3 - Somewhat familiar."

ChatGPT: "Great! Since you're somewhat familiar, I'll provide a detailed explanation with examples to deepen your understanding. Let's continue our discussion."

Yuki spends the next hour engaging with ChatGPT, asking questions, receiving explanations, and brainstorming ideas for his essay. With ChatGPT's guidance, he feels more confident in his understanding of honorific language and has a clear direction for his assignment.

At the end of their session, Yuki thanks ChatGPT for its invaluable assistance and closes the interface, ready to delve into his essay with newfound clarity and knowledge.

Chatterbot

Writing Ethical Vignettes...

Appendix 2

1. Mei, a biology student, consults ChatGPT for a lab report. She inputs queries on experimental procedures. ChatGPT swiftly offers detailed protocols, enabling Mei to complete her report accurately and on time.
2. Hiro, a history student, seeks ChatGPT's assistance for a research paper. He inputs questions about ancient civilizations. ChatGPT provides comprehensive historical insights, aiding Hiro in crafting a well-researched paper.
3. Aiko, a psychology student, utilizes ChatGPT for a case study analysis. She inputs queries on behavioral theories. ChatGPT offers thorough explanations, helping Aiko dissect complex psychological phenomena for her assignment.
4. Kenji, a mathematics student, turns to ChatGPT for help with a problem set. He inputs queries on calculus concepts. ChatGPT provides step-by-step solutions, aiding Kenji in mastering challenging mathematical concepts.
5. Nao, an economics student, consults ChatGPT for assistance with a data analysis project. He inputs questions on statistical methods. ChatGPT offers detailed explanations and guidance, empowering Nao to interpret data effectively for his assignment.

Chatterbot

Writing Ethical Vignettes...

Appendix 3

1. Takashi, a college student, realizes he forgot about a presentation due today. In a rush, he consults ChatGPT for assistance. With its guidance, he swiftly creates slides and delivers a compelling presentation, impressing his classmates and professor.
2. Haruka, a university student, forgets about an important project deadline. Desperate, she seeks ChatGPT's help. With its aid, she completes the project on time, earning praise from her instructor for the thorough research and analysis.
3. Yumi, a student, overlooks a group assignment due that day. She quickly reaches out to ChatGPT for support. Collaborating with the AI [sic], she contributes valuable insights to her team's work, ensuring they meet the deadline and receive high marks.
4. Hiroshi, a college student, realizes he hasn't studied for an upcoming exam. In a panic, he turns to ChatGPT for last-minute revision notes. With its assistance, he manages to grasp key concepts and performs surprisingly well on the exam.
5. Ayumi, a university student, procrastinates on her thesis proposal until the day it's due. Desperate for help, she consults ChatGPT for guidance. With its assistance, she crafts a compelling proposal and submits it, earning approval from her advisor.

Chatterbot

Writing Ethical Vignettes...

Appendix 4

1. Mika, a university student, faces writer's block on her term paper. She submits a vague prompt to ChatGPT, which generates a comprehensive essay. Mika claims it as her own, without acknowledging the AI's [sic] contribution, earning accolades for work she didn't truly produce.

2. Takeshi, a college student, struggles with complex equations in his math assignment. He inputs the problems into an AI [sic] solver, which provides step-by-step solutions. Takeshi copies these solutions verbatim, presenting them as his own work to his professor, bypassing the opportunity to learn.

3. Emi, a student, faces a coding challenge in her computer science class. She feeds the problem into an AI [sic] programming tool, which generates the code solution. Emi submits the code without understanding it fully, potentially compromising her learning and academic integrity.

Messages

Recent Additions to the Materials Writers Showcase

<https://sites.google.com/view/mwsiqshowcase>



Title: The Spy

Author: Suzanne Kamata

ISBN: 978-1936846887

Publisher: Gemma Open Door

Type: Reading, Extensive Reading

Learning Environment: University, Conversation Schools, High School

CEFR Level: B1 Intermediate

URL: [LINK](#)

Comments: An audiobook is available.

Description: An American woman becomes a spy during WWII and is captured by the Nazis in this Hi/Lo thriller for literacy learners.

Title: Baseball English

Author: Philip S. Riccobono, Ph.D.

ISBN: 978-0-578-89104-0

Publisher: Sports English Press

Type: Speaking, Reading, Writing, Listening, English for Specific Purposes

Learning Environment: University, Business Classes, Conversation Schools, Company, Baseball related occupations

CEFR Level: B1 Intermediate, B2 Upper Intermediate

URL: [LINK](#)

Contact: sportsEnglish1@gmail.com



Description: Baseball English has been created specifically for people working, or preparing to work, in the baseball industry who often need to use English to communicate.

Call for Submissions

We are currently seeking:

- Research articles
- Long-form essays about your experience
- Long-form essays outlining the broad scope of your research
- Work you have created and are willing to share
- Book / Materials reviews
- Conference / Meeting recaps

The full details of what we publish are listed on our website at our [submissions page](#).

However, we are not limited to those categories. *Between the Keys*, like materials writing itself, is always a revision-in-progress.

If you're not sure what kind of article you have, send it anyway. Put the word "pitch" in your subject line and send it to submissions@materialswriters.org.

We can't wait to hear from you.

Contributors

Feature: Making a Move with *LoiLoNote*

Timothy Ang has a Masters in Bilingual and Multicultural Education from the University of Alcalá. He currently teaches English at the school of Science & Technology at Kwansei Gakuin University and has also taught at Kansai University, Kobe University, Osaka Gakuin, and Otemae University. His current research focuses on Student Motivation, ICT in Language Learning, Learner Autonomy, and Curriculum Development.



Timothy Ang

Acknowledgements

Between the Keys and the Materials Writers SIG wish to thank the following individuals for their help in designing, editing, and producing this issue:

- Joel Neff
- Stephen Bridge
- John Carle
- Brian J. English

MW SIG Resources

[MW SIG Website](#)

All the basic information about the SIG is here.

[MW SIG Publication: Between the Keys](#)

We accept submissions all year round.

[MW SIG Showcase](#)

Website featuring textbooks created by SIG members.

[MW SIG YouTube Playlist](#)

Please "like" and subscribe to the channel.

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