The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching

From the Editor

Friends and Colleagues,

Thank you for your support of this thirteenth issue of *The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching*. This journal is a peer-reviewed publication of the Literature in Language Teaching group (SIG) of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT).

In the feature article, "Encouraging Spoken and Written Output: *English through Literature*," **Sue Fraser** discusses whether literary input can encourage both spoken and written production through involvement with texts, expression of personal reactions to content, and formulation of written responses to themes. Her paper details the course design process including the setting of objectives, the methodological choices and selection of texts for "English through Literature," and its implementation is exemplified by a lesson plan for one of the poetry components. It elaborates on her previous work in the 2018 summer issue: "Literature in the L2 Classroom: addressing communicative and policy goals."

In Literature in Practice, **Meredith Stephens** describes the ways she used a multi-author, collaborative, community-specific collection of anecdotes in "*Mind the Culture Gap* edited by Susan Balogh and Jodi Lindsay: Live Readings of Local Literature to Foster Intercultural Understanding" for cross-cultural and linguistic purposes. It became a textbook for required Communicative English classes for Engineering and Biology majors. Stephens details the various activities she used to teach discrete skills of reading, listening, spelling, vocabulary, and collocation, and the top-down skill of summarizing a story. The stories also provide humorous illustrations of pragmatic failure.

Next, in "EFL Creative writing: Using Literature as a Guide for Students' Writing", **Iain Maloney** reports that when a questionnaire-based survey was administered to students studying academic writing at a Japanese university, it showed that there was a disconnect between students' needs and expectations, and their curriculum. As a result, he examined whether it was felt that creative writing might offer a solution to the problems.

Jane Joritz-Nakagawa comprehensively reports on six poems read in her two 2018 JALT presentations offered as "Feminist Disability Poetics in EFL."

Tara McIlroy reports on the European Society for the Study of English (ESSE) Conference held at Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. She notes the broad range of English studies in several disciplines in Europe's diverse countries and, in particular, interest in Kazuo Ishiguro's oeuvre.

John Maune describes the 3rd Asian Shakespeare Association (ASA) 2018 Conference "Shakespeare, Traffics, Tropics" at the Ateneo de Manila University and the University of the Philippines. Session topics ranged from Shakespeare in film, current novels, literary theory, education, performance, psychology and language teaching.

Finally, there is high praise for **Jane Joritz-Nakagawa's** anthology: *women: poetry: migration –* and her book of poetry, *Poems: New & Selected*.

The **2019 JALT PanSIG Conference** will be held from May 18-19 at Konan University in Nishinomiya, Hyogo. Please refer to https://jalt.org for full details. For other events of interest to LiLT members, please refer to the most recent newsletter at http://liltsig.org/the-word-newsletter-of-the-lilt-sig

LiLT members and readers and researchers from around the world are invited to submit their own observations and findings, as well as their commentary about any of the articles published to date.

The next issue of *The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching* is expected to be published in the summer of 2019 of the year and **submissions are being accepted until May 24, 2019**. Further information is available at the LiLT SIG website http://liltsig.org and from the editor of this journal via email: liltsig@gmail.com. or directly to greggmcnabb@gmail.com.

We would like to extend our gratitude to the contributors who have published in this journal and, as always, to the conscientious, thoughtful people who took time out of their busy schedules to help with editing, proofreading and mentoring. Perhaps you may also want to help us in our double-blind review process and enable us to proceed more efficiently through the publishing process. Most of all, as always, we thank you, our readers.

Gregg McNabb — Editor

About the Literature in Language Teaching Special Interest Group

Literature in Language Teaching (LiLT) is a Special Interest Group (SIG) within the NPO JALT. We established this group in 2011 to encourage and promote the use of literature within language classes. The group coordinates with other groups to hold events, publishes a peer-reviewed journal and publishes several newsletters per year.

Contents: Volume 7, Issue 2, 2018

Feature Article

Literature in Practice

Conference Reports

Announcements

Encouraging Spoken and Written Output: *English through Literature*

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Abstract

Educators are constantly seeking effective classroom methods and materials to enable language learners to make active use of their L2 knowledge in order to develop their communicative competence. In this paper, it is proposed that literary input can encourage both spoken and written production through involvement with texts, expression of personal reactions to content, and formulation of written responses to themes. Ways to achieve this are demonstrated by using extracts of literature in English as the basis of communicative tasks involving discussion and individual or collaborative creative writing extension work to develop linguistic, literary, intercultural and creative skills.

This paper details the course design process including the setting of objectives, the methodological choices and selection of texts for a semester-long *English through Literature* course, and its implementation is exemplified by a lesson plan for one of the poetry components. Samples of learners' creative writing relating to this literary input are then presented. Post-course participant evaluations provide evidence of positive reactions to the content and activities, perceived improvement in all L2 skill areas, and suggest continued interest in reading literature.

Although illustrated for the Japanese university context, the ideas and methodology described have relevance for wider foreign and first language educational settings, and provide potential inspiration for teacher-training purposes.

Keywords: literary input; course design and evaluation; creative writing.

If language learning is to enable communication, then language teaching must encompass both linguistic input and activities for output to allow learners to practise their communicative skills in meaningful contexts. Thus, as well as increasing their grammatical and lexical repertoire, language learners need to employ this knowledge to participate in interaction in the target language, and be motivated to express their own ideas and opinions. Utilising literature in foreign language teaching (FLT) can provide such opportunities to develop each of the above aspects, while cognitively and emotionally engaging the learners with its content.

Continuing from the discussion and rationale for the use of literature in language teaching, the contextual issues relating to adopting communicative approaches in ELT in Japan, and an analysis of current L2 literature courses in Japanese universities presented in Fraser (2018), this paper details the design, implementation and evaluation of a literature course which aims to maximise the spoken and written output of its participants. It is hoped that the discussion below of one course entitled *English through Literature* at one Japanese university has relevance for educators in international contexts looking for new ways to develop overall language skills while motivating learners and encouraging active participation in class through exploring the valuable resource of Literature. Although illustrated here for tertiary-level English classes, with appropriate selection of textual input and language scaffolding, the methodology and activity types are equally adaptable for implementation at other levels of foreign or first language education, as well as for teacher-training purposes.

The course design takes into account the recent resurgence in interest in literature apparent in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (COE, 2018), in which expanded descriptors for measuring language learning now include three new scales relevant to literature. As with all course planning and materials writing, national, regional or departmental curricular constraints cannot be overlooked, and thus this example specific to the Japanese context also accommodates recent modifications to guidelines for teaching literature at universities resulting from a Ministry of Education, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) out-sourced project by Tokyo Gakugei University (Gakugei, 2016). As literature is one of four compulsory university initial-teacher-training courses for obtaining a licence to teach English in high schools, recommendations for ways to improve future teachers' language ability and classroom practice are made. Suggestions include activities encouraging university students to express themselves through discussions and essay writing, to understand cultural aspects of the texts, and to consider how they might incorporate literature into their own lessons if they become teachers. From April 2018, MEXT has renamed literature courses as 英語文学 (Literature in English), instead of 英米文学 (British and American Literature), and requests such changes in teaching approaches and learning activities be reflected in university syllabuses.

Instead of simply presenting here a description of classroom practice, this paper offers a timely example of how the new MEXT requirements can be interpreted in specific initial-teacher-training and general university courses in Japan. For teachers in other settings, it also provides an illustration of how similar proposals could be realised and implemented through incorporating

productive skills into interactive tasks based on literary texts by exemplifying ways to make literature in wider FLT contexts innovative and to simultaneously attain various goals for language development, literary understanding and cultural awareness.

The Context

The course (outlined below) was designed as part of the English curriculum at a small private women's university in central Japan. As English Literature is a component of the English core curriculum for students wishing to obtain a licence to teach in junior and senior high schools upon graduation, the university offers two elective Literature courses: 英米文学 I, conducted predominantly in Japanese, and英米文学II, my course. Course II is open to all 3rd- and 4th-year students, and having taken Course I is not a prerequisite. However, for students seeking a teaching license, it is compulsory to take at least one English Literature course. The course comprises 16x90-minute sessions in the spring semester. Participants are English or psychology majors, typically in their very early 20s, with an occasional mature student, several with experience of studying or travelling abroad, mostly motivated to communicate in English, and within the 450-800 range on the TOEIC test. Class sizes are, however, fairly small – 6 to 12 students – because of credit requirements and timetabling clashes, and possibly due also to frequently-voiced views that reading literature is difficult and boring.

The Course Design Process

When initially creating the course, my challenge was to fulfil university requirements of teaching knowledge about literature, while developing overall L2 skills through encouraging learners to think and present their views, nurturing motivation and the desire to read. Several factors were therefore to be addressed in the design process. As with any course design, whether adhering to specific curricular constraints, or as in my case being allowed virtually free rein on content, the first stage is to establish what learners should achieve, and so the following objectives were formulated.

Objectives

The purpose of *English through Literature* is to encourage expression of opinions, provide inspiration for creative writing related to the literary input, raise intercultural awareness, and deepen critical thinking through language analysis and discussion of literature in English, resulting in the

following four objectives:

(a) Linguistic: to develop abilities in discussion and written expression and to expand vocabulary through integration of language skills.

(b) Cultural: to appreciate different viewpoints and social contexts presented in the texts.

(c) Affective: to evaluate critically, formulate and exchange personal responses to issues, and to foster interest in literature and reading.

(d) Literary: to become familiarised with various genres of literature written in English, and literary techniques.

In order for learners to achieve these objectives, several decisions had to be taken regarding literary content and classroom methodology.

Literary Content

To ensure no overlap with 英米文学 I, an examination of its syllabus revealed an exclusive focus on American short stories, thereby enabling me to cover a range of modern, lesser-known and regional British works as well as canonical texts in English. Whereas many literature courses rely on abridged versions and translations into the learners' L1, the decision was taken to work with authentic texts only, as simplified texts are "denuded of depth because the cultural content is often diminished and trivialized" and they "devalue the literary nature of the text" (Carroli, 2008, p. 11). Even though the original language may be complex, it reflects the writers' intentions, themes, and the social, cultural and historical contexts of the works (Teranishi, 2015, p. 170).

Consideration of the type of texts and themes to include in the course reflected recurring suggestions (Carter & Long, 1991; Lazar, 1993) for how L2 acquisition can be facilitated, categorised here into the following four conditions: (i) genres and themes are relevant and interesting to learners (ii) texts are at appropriate linguistic levels for students (iii) length of texts is appropriate (iv) text style and cultural content are familiar to learners. While advocating exposing learners to a variety of genres, selecting themes that have particular relevance for the participants is essential. Thus, for the specified humanities, education and psychology students often with interest in overseas travel, I include themes of love, education, culture clashes, and social problems, in accordance with (i). Following (iii), I present short extracts which are manageable in class, as texts requiring a lot of time to read reduce interaction opportunities. In contrast to (ii), however, I do include some linguistically difficult texts, as with appropriate scaffolding and multimodal support, they can offer richer input and more cognitive involvement. Likewise for (iv), it is sometimes

beneficial to take learners out of familiar zones, to challenge their ideas, to think beyond the known through examination of, for example, war poetry and diary entries written under extreme conditions.

A wide range of literary genres that includes poetry, short stories, novels, drama, letters, diaries, folk tales, and children's literature are therefore explored to enable learners to think, express their ideas in English through discussion and writing by working individually and collaboratively using whatever linguistic resources and communication strategies are available to them, including their L1 where needed, to address the above-stated course objectives. The exact selection of texts each year is, however, made in accordance with the specific levels, interests and personalities of the participants. Although resource books for teaching literature in language classes are available (e.g.: Collie & Slater, 1987; Duff & Maley, 1990/2007; Lazar, 1993) I prefer to select literary texts which my learners should be inspired by or relate to, covering works highly dependent on historical and social contexts, of cross-curricular interest and relevance, containing moments of drama or crisis in the narrative and illustrative of particular literary styles and techniques. Activity types in accordance with the following methodological basis are then devised.

Methodology

The initial methodological design drew on my previous experiences of teaching literature to multilingual groups of mostly European students on teacher-training courses at a UK university. The central point was that the literature was a vehicle for learners to develop all four L2 skills, vocabulary acquisition and cultural awareness, while thinking critically and imaginatively, and participating actively through small-group collaboration. This was achieved through analysis, personal response and creative interaction with the texts in group discussion and written extensions. Materials development and lesson planning appropriate to the participants' own classroom contexts and micro-teaching thereof were also undertaken. Stylistic analysis of literary language, academically agreed interpretations, and historical and social contextualisations of the texts were also incorporated. However, when adapting such courses for the Japanese context, much more scaffolding was necessary in terms of both language and conceptualisation, as those for whom the methodology and activity types were originally designed invariably had a deeper background knowledge of literature in English and a higher level of English language ability.

To facilitate this, materials were substantially adapted and reinforced through multimodal input. Support through paraphrase of complex texts alongside the original, modern equivalents of archaic language, and visuals aimed to reduce reliance on dictionaries and maintain learner involvement even with challenging texts. Expectations for spoken and written output were

modified, in that a policy of 'no wrong answers' was adopted, and that use of L1 had its place in initial group discussions of reactions and formulating ideas, but that through peer scaffolding, plenary reporting was to be in English. Likewise, expectations for written work focused more on content than linguistic accuracy in order to engage learners' personal reactions and creativity. One main feature of the original courses was that all input and discussion was conducted in English, it being the lingua franca of all participants. The decision to continue this format and have a literature course taught almost exclusively in English, and by a native English speaker, was in itself innovative within a Japanese university context, but could offer many linguistic and cultural opportunities for these learners.

Course Content

In this course, in addition to general L2 improvement, learners develop skills of interpretation and appreciation of a range of genres of literature in English. In each session, as well as *reading* small amounts to avoid overloading and demotivation, students *listen* to the teacher, some recordings, film clips, and their classmates, *discuss* the texts themselves and their ideas related to and developed from them, and then *write* in L2. The purpose of the writing in this course is not sentence-level and factual accuracy but creative writing as an extension of the literary input and discussion. Creative writing tasks, undertaken collaboratively or alone, include responses to the texts, and adaptations by "writing in the style of…", extending, updating, and genre changing. Texts are exploited both for reader responses and to raise awareness of different styles of writing, such as comparing Japanese and English poetry, or traditional structured verse and free-form poetry. To help with understanding, extracts are contextualised historically and regionally, and some literary theory is introduced, which can complement what students may have learned previously in Japanese literature classes. Assessment is based on active participation in class discussions and writing tasks. Also, participants have a choice of either writing a book review and making a presentation about it, or preparing materials and a lesson plan based on literature then peer-teaching their classmates, who have the dual purpose of experiencing the activities in student mode, then offering feedback in L1 as potential teachers. To enable revisions to the content, and for research purposes, participants are asked in the final session to provide feedback on the course, written in either Japanese or English.

Each component of *English through Literature* is built around the following process:

(1) Interpretation of a text – to elicit initial ideas and expectations of content from a theme, title or short extract.

(2) Interaction with the text – to discuss and compare personal impressions and reactions to content,

themes and characters.

(3) Theoretical analysis – to explore the social and cultural contexts and linguistic features.

(4) Creative writing in response to the text – to imagine the next stage or ending of the text; to present the story from a different viewpoint; to update or relocate the content to a different context; to adapt the content for a different audience; to directly interact with the protagonist in the original text; to imitate a particular literary style.

During the course, students typically create 10-12 pieces of writing, either individually or collaboratively. All contributions become in effect a portfolio of students' work, as they are collected into an anthology, and distributed to participants. Thus, they can see their own development in print, and can enjoy reading the work of others, allowing them to benefit from their peers' imaginative ideas and creative and individual use of English. In the spirit of 'no wrong answers' specified in the first session of the course, these creative contributions are not corrected to the extent that work usually is in other writing-focused classes. Instead, editing of obvious grammatical problems impinging on meaning and discussion with individual students to negotiate the meaning of any incomprehensible expressions are undertaken prior to compiling their book, in order to retain the learners' original intentions and voice.

The content and procedure for implementation of one example course component is now outlined.

Example component – Poetry
As the initial session of the spring semester, a familiar topic and literary format are selected as the focus, to ease conceptualisation.

1. Introduction: Show photo of trees, flowers, sky scene [= spring in UK]. Elicit ideas and vocabulary of what students *see* and *feel*.

2. Input (i): Students hear then read an English spring poem. Discuss images and impressions of context, writer, age of poem, style.

3. Teacher explains form, poetic devices, imagery of poem. Distribute background information in Japanese on the poem, writer, and style at end of session.

4. Elicit students' images of spring [= spring in Japan].

5. Input (ii): Students in 3 groups (As) (Bs) Cs). Discuss a given poem – content, images, ideas, language, feelings. Speculate where/when written; gender/age of writer?

6. Regroup (ABC) (ABC). Students talk about their poems, but do not show them. Then, comparisons of students' ideas in plenary.

7. Teacher explains poems ABC are all translations of one Japanese poem. Discuss similarities and differences. Elicit expectations of Japanese poems: form, imagery. Compare with a typical poem in English (steps 2, 3).

8. Input (iii): Write Japanese poem on board; elicit literal translation:

朝　の　月　桜　に　ゆるる　風　も　なし
Asa no tsuki sakura ni   yururu kaze mo nashi
Morning of moon cherry blossoms in/around shaking wind also none

This creates a poetic image in Japanese minds, but not a poem in western terms. How can students make it more understandable?

9. Creative writing: Students create poems in English, incorporating, or based on some of, the basic elements from this Japanese poem and their own images of spring (from step 4). Collect extracts to include in class Anthology of students' creative writing.

Sources of literary input:

(i) "Daffodils" 1st verse (William Wordsworth, 1770-1850)

(ii) Three English translations of a Japanese poem by Lady Sarashina (1042)

(iii) Haiku by Shoshu (Shoji Osada, c1870-1940)

The resulting creative writing portfolios emphasise the course's potential for the development of language skills and learner motivation as participants react to issues raised in the literary texts and feel a communicative need to exchange views, and therefore to actively utilise their knowledge of English.

Examples of learners' creative writing

As an illustration of the creativity of learner output, some spring poems written by participants based on the haiku in the example session described above are now presented. It is interesting to note the range of expressions employed when given free rein, and the variation in that while some learners closely followed the imagery and form of the Japanese (e.g., i), others were inspired to move further away from the original (e.g., ii), and bring in a more personal focus (iii; iv; vi). Others included poetic devices discussed in the class, such as alliteration (ii), simile (vii) and personification (iv; v), and all create a lasting impression on the reader through their choice of words and images:

(i)
The moon at dawn
No breeze
To swing the cherry blossom
The air is still and quiet

(ii)
It was a world without colour
When the mild and kind wind blows
All at once, the buds begin to
Bloom and flutter
It is a world full of colour

(iii)
Spring sun
It wakes me up
New world waiting for me

(iv)
The sun is smiling
Dancing flowers and leaves
Singing birds
Bright, warm, comfortable
I was pushed back by a gentle breeze
Start running with this wind
Go to my dream
My future now begins

(v)
When I went through
By the little cherry blossom tree
She danced with my wind
Under the feint moon
In the morning

(vi)
One lonely morning
The moon cut through the darkness
When sunlight reflected
Dancing cherry blossoms
The flowers changed countless colours
- Like my heart
After a while
The wind stopped
The world was filled with silence
The past called to me, "Go back"

(vii)
The moon is floating
In the morning mist
And cherry blossoms
Are melting into the sky
Like butterflies
Is it a dream or Heaven?

Evaluation of the Course

The success of *English through Literature* can be evaluated based on in-class observation of the learners' participation and reactions, creative and linguistic merits of their written output, and on qualitative data obtained from unstructured post-course surveys in which 36 participants over the past five years wrote their own impressions of the classes. This evidence is presented in the form of tabulated occurrences (*numbers*) and individual "*quotes*." Firstly, the extent to which the course objectives were achieved is assessed, then some general impressions are discussed.

(a) Linguistic

The quantity of output in English noted in the amount of talking time and quality of written work generated through student-centred activities suggests that linguistic gains were being made. Moreover, the range of expressions employed when the focus was on meaning to explore their own ideas rather than form when writing suggests that "creative writing activities can benefit second

language development as well as wider educational aims" (Hall, 2015b, p. 17).

Learner feedback underlined belief that the course had improved their English ability in general: *yes (24); a little (6); no (1); not mentioned (4)*; with areas of improvement identified as: *speaking (10); writing (7); vocabulary (5); reading (4); listening (4); grammar (3); output (1); creative thoughts/imagination (7); getting ideas across (2); understanding (4); courage (1)*. While some commented on specific skills: "*feel able to express myself more after this course*"; "*can read books more easily now*"; "*various types of literature will help me to write on my own*"; several suggested the teaching style of being *all in English (10)* and "*many opportunities for writing*" was beneficial: "*we have to speak in English, so I speak better than before*"; "*all skills improved because almost all is in English.*"

(b) Cultural

From learner reactions to the texts, there is evidence of reassessing personal experiences and impressions of other cultures and of their own in light of themes arising in the literature, such as spring (in the poetry component exemplified in this paper), family responsibilities (in a short-story component based on James Joyce's *Eveline*), or the most significant events or phases in one's life (in a drama component based on Shakespeare's *As You Like It* Act II sc. vii). Exploration of intercultural issues is further exemplified in creative writing, by participants choosing to write from a non-Japanese viewpoint in diary extracts, or by transposing the protagonists into situations involving issues such as intercultural marriage or studying abroad when extending storylines or updating fairy tales. One student noted that "*Literature is an opportunity to learn history, culture and eras. That's very interesting for me*."

(c) Affective

Learner engagement may be due to the "active task design" of the course, which "ensures that group work is scaffolded and purposeful and that groups are kept "on task"" (Paran, 2008, p. 29). Although several students found the course *difficult (15)* or *so-so (6)*, interest seemed very high: *enjoyable (26); interesting (17); fun (8)*, with very low absenteeism, and participants enjoyed *working together (13)* and *making stories in groups (5)*. The 'no wrong answers' policy adopted in class based on the belief that "the resources students bring to their studies are to be valued and built on rather than ignored or deprecated" (Hall, 2015a, p. 50) may also enable learners to contribute and share opinions, as they did not feel the pressure to be accurate: "*had problems with grammar, but now not worried.*"

In contrast to negative views on reading expressed in a first-day writing task, an enthusiastic reaction emerges in post-course feedback: *Want to read more books in English now (25); more interested in English literature now (13)*. Although some were *already interested in English literature (5)* and *like reading novels (6)*, others now want to read short/easy/long books *(4)*; want to read books *classmates recommended (2)*, or commented that *"This class taught me the fun of reading"*; *"I thought reading Literature was difficult, but this class changed my mind."*

(d) Literary

Whereas many students stated that they had not read much literature before in L2: *first time to read English literature (3),* or even in L1, and expressed little interest or knowledge of literature in a first-day discussion activity, corroborating conclusions that "most students read little in either the L1 or the L2 and they do not enjoy reading" (Grabe & Stoller in Hall, 2015a, p. 86), a positive shift in attitudes is apparent over the course: *enjoyed understanding about stories and characters (13); liked everything (13); in particular poems (8); fairy tales (6)*. Expectations also changed: *expected literature to be difficult and boring (5); difficult to write/understand poems (5); "hadn't written poems before, but really fun."*

Understanding of literary techniques and genres was demonstrated in their written work in, for example, using appropriate authorial voice and language features to contextualise the supposed diarist (e.g.: writing from the viewpoint of a well-known American singer, or a 19th century English lady), and retaining all structural and thematic elements of fairy tales in their updated versions (e.g., a modern-day *Beauty and the Beast* involving cosmetic surgery, or incorporating a make-over and college dance into a Japanese *Cinderella*).

Positive outcomes noticed in classwork include active participation in group/pair work, where students seem absorbed in the texts and activities, eager to contribute their ideas, and to listen and help others to verbalise their responses. Overall, a very high level of enthusiasm in class and engagement with materials and tasks is noted as compared with observing the same learners in other less student-centred classroom contexts. Indeed, the transition from teacher-directed learning to student-directed learning in this course appears to encourage "improvements in language fluency and communicative competence, and raises awareness of other people" (Kusanagi, 2015, p. 226), while suggesting that student-centred learning "is a significant factor in motivating students" (Sugimura, 2015, p. 248). There is also evidence that the diversity in levels and backgrounds among typical course participants provides opportunities for exchanging and learning from experiences and viewpoints, as well as scope for L2 scaffolding. Less reliance on dictionaries

was noted, and collaboration in group/class discussion and writing tasks encouraged students to contribute their own varied background knowledge, experiences and ideas to explore meanings in texts, rather than passively awaiting the 'correct' interpretation from the teacher. Thus, whereas Hall (2015a, p. 87) states that "many language students are relatively unconvinced of the point or value of literature", results of my small-scale post-course surveys suggest that many appreciated the opportunities to read and discuss literary texts, and recognised that their English had improved in various ways through such a course.

Despite the mix of year groups, majors, and life experiences, class cohesion is usually apparent, with a willingness to communicate and work collaboratively with all members, and to provide scaffolding in both language and ideas to those in more need of support.

There is evidence that learners are no longer reticent about expressing opinions and volunteering answers, but this may be equally due to class size. In very small classes, it is easy to identify when learners are struggling or losing interest, and quickly "react to the way a discussion is going, provide scaffolding as and when it is needed" (Paran, 2008, p. 70). The teacher can also ensure that learners remain engaged through the way tasks are initially engineered, and modified on the spot, to match learner interests and experiences, and thus to generate more involvement and elicit more responses. These general impressions of the participants seem to concur with Paran's (2008, p. 43) assessment that "research indicates that learners who have been exposed to positive experiences with literature, and who are given the opportunity to read literature and respond to it, both benefit linguistically and enjoy the experience."

Concluding Comments

This paper has detailed one example of classroom innovation in ELT at the micro level of one Japanese university, and demonstrates how MEXT recommendations (MEXT, 2013; Gakugei, 2016) for developing communication abilities can be interpreted in practical terms.

Its wider relevance is that it also provides an illustration of what can be achieved in learner L2 output and motivation via a change in input and methodology. In the context described, extracts of literature written in English are the stimulus for collaborative analysis, discussion, and writing, yet these steps could equally be followed with texts from other genres and modes. Likewise, similar changes in teaching methodology could be employed at different stages of education, with the provision of appropriate scaffolding.

By using interesting and thought-provoking textual input, changes in goals result in learner engagement with the literary content, and substantial increases in the amount of classroom

discussion, creative thinking, and written output, thus maximising on opportunities for L2 practice. When compared with general English classes relying on typical ELT textbooks or everyday conversation topics, courses such as *English through Literature* can provide both scope for and evidence of greater L2 gains and participant satisfaction, as learners personalise issues raised in the literary texts and feel a real desire to exchange views, and to express themselves.

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Mind the Culture Gap edited by Susan Balogh and Jodi Lindsay:
Live Readings of Local Literature to Foster Intercultural Understanding

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Abstract

Susan Balogh and Jodi Lindsay compiled an anthology of anecdotes involving cross-cultural misunderstanding in both English and Japanese, by both Japanese and expatriate writers. The expression "Mind the Gap" is taken from the London underground, where passengers are warned to watch their step when entering a train; this is a metaphor for the pitfalls of cross-cultural communication. I decided to use this as a textbook for required Communicative English classes for second year students majoring in Engineering, Maths and Biology. This paper details the various activities I used to teach discrete skills of reading, listening, spelling, vocabulary, and collocation, and the top-down skill of summarizing a story. Beyond simply providing practice for these language skills, these stories provide humorous illustrations of pragmatic failure, and remind students that there is much more to learning a language than the mechanical skills that tend to dominate many language classrooms.

Keywords: local stories, bimodal input, reading-while-listening
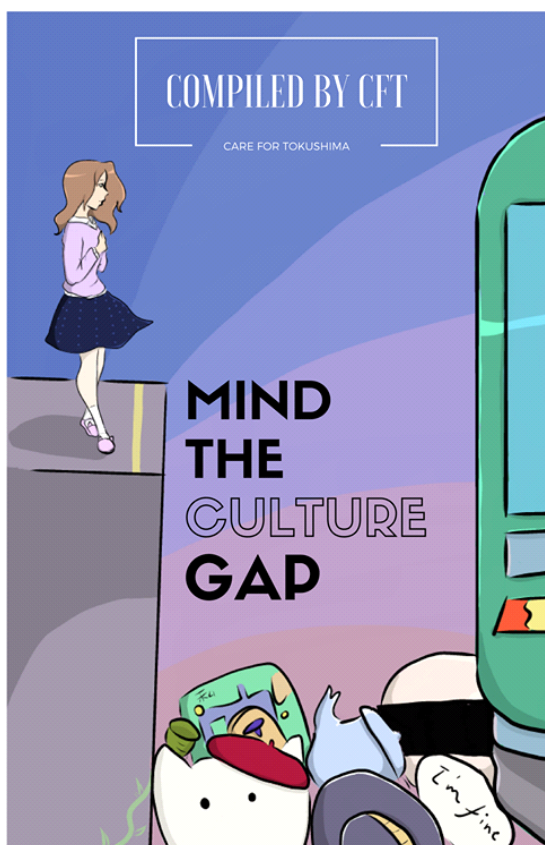
The purpose of this project was twofold. Firstly, I wanted to introduce local literature to my students. Rather than use course books set in distant locales and featuring unfamiliar activities, I wanted to introduce stories written by local people, both Japanese and expatriate. I was hoping to build upon prior knowledge (Hattie & Yates, 2014) and make a connection between the known and the unknown, by featuring local people`s stories in the less familiar language of English. Local literature is not only familiar; it is also important. Part of the university mission is to serve locally; creating and disseminating local literature is one way of doing this.

The second purpose was to implement a Reading-while-listening (RWL) mode in the classroom. The short stories provided an ideal opportunity to conduct weekly RWL. The class was entitled Communicative English, having been translated from *Hasshingata Eigo* in Japanese. It is a required course for second year students who have already completed Basic English and Thematic English in their first year. *Hasshin* means to send out, which implies speaking skills. In order to speak, students need a strong foundation in listening comprehension. The RWL component of these lessons was designed to provide a solid foundation for the speaking component of the lesson, which was implemented in the second half of the lesson (to be discussed later).

How the Stories were Compiled

Susan Balogh of Shikoku University initiated a project of collecting stories involving cross-cultural mishaps in Japan, and by Japanese visitors overseas. Many were written by a group of local Japanese citizens, ranging in age from 40 to 75, who have been meeting to discuss social and environmental issues in English since the 1990s. The members wrote short stories with the aim of bridging cross-cultural distance. The editors supplemented the stories with contributions from international residents who are living or who have lived in Tokushima. The international contributors were from America, Canada, Australia, the UK, Croatia and India. All of the stories were translated into Japanese by the Japanese group. Brooke Szucs was commissioned to provide the artwork. The book consists of 43 illustrated stories of between one and three pages each, and their Japanese translations.

This compilation was not designed to be a textbook, but as a community project. I was given a complimentary copy and decided to use it as a textbook with my Communicative English classes of second year students in required classes. To date I have used it for three semesters, with two classes each semester, and am currently using it for the fourth time. I considered that the students would appreciate stories written by another generation of writers from their own culture.

Benefits of a Japanese Translation

Some argue that English should be taught exclusively in English, and reject the role of the L1: "Belief in direct method is so deeply ingrained, and antagonism to translation so intense" (Cook, 2010, p. 52). Nevertheless, there is an alternative view that the support of the L1 can play an important role. Translation is "a bridge between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the known and the unknown" (Cook, p. 155). Many beginning students' reading "strategy" consists of word for word decoding, but as Harold Palmer cautioned long ago, "reading should be as fluent or natural as speaking or hearing, not the word-for-word puzzling out of meaning" (Masukawa, 1978, p. 246). The Japanese translation provides the students with an overview of what to expect, and frees them from the cumbersome task of decoding. The students were asked to spend a few minutes reading the Japanese translation of the weekly story, before the teacher read it aloud to them in English.

The Stories

One of the most amusing stories was "Yes, I wasn't Careless" by Yoshito Hojo. This story described his stint as a farming trainee in Minnesota. He mistakenly reversed a skid-steer loader (a multi-purpose farming machine) into a barn. The boss berated him: "Get off the machine at once! Look at this mess! Weren't you driving carefully enough?" Hojo replied "Yes" (meaning "No") and continued to be berated by the boss. Hojo concluded, " 'Yes' means 'No' and 'No' means 'Yes' in negative questions in English."

Another entertaining anecdote was "What Kind of Eggs do you Like?" by Yoko Umetsu. Two American high school students were on a homestay visit at her house. In the morning Umetsu asked them "What kind of eggs do you like?" The guests were confused and asked back, "What kind of eggs do the Japanese eat?" Then she showed them some eggs in the fridge, and was tempted to reply "dragon eggs", but didn't because of her guests' serious expression. She rephrased the question, "Do you like your eggs sunny-side up, or boiled, or maybe you would like an omelet?" The guests' comprehension was indicated by their laughter, and Umetsu realized she should have asked, "How do you like your eggs?"

Fish? Duck? Snake?
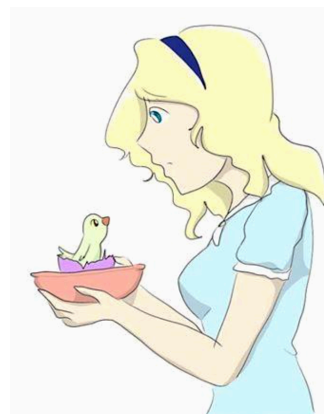
Suzanne Kamata provided two stories for this collection: "Sneaky Sneakers" and "Address Unknown," both originally published in *Wingspan*. "Sneaky Sneakers" describes the common dilemma in Japan, of leaving the house, having put one's shoes on, and then having to enter again to retrieve something that has been forgotten. She had to re-enter her house on her knees to claim her keys. Later she was visiting an American friend who was facing the same dilemma. However instead of crawling back inside the house on her knees, her friend entered the house boots and all. Kamata was shocked, and sought confirmation from a Japanese friend as to whether they sometimes did this too. Her friend confided that she might do this in winter, if her boots were on and no-one was watching, but that she would scold her children if they did the same.
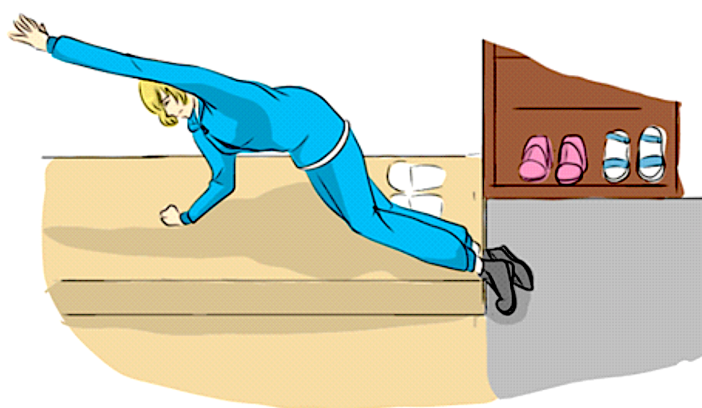
Additional stories appear in Appendix A.

Class Activities

Reading while Listening

In order to bring the stories to life I decided to deliver them according to the RWL mode rather than having the students do silent reading. RWL typically involves following print while listening to an audiobook; the latter supplies the prosody to the text to facilitate comprehension; "Audiobooks provide an excellent bridge between decoding and comprehension for struggling readers" (Friedland, Gilman, Johnson & Demeke, 2017, p. 83). RWL benefits the learning of vocabulary, attitudes to reading, and listening (Isozaki, 2018), reading comprehension (Woodall, 2010; Friedland et al. 2017), and the speed and accuracy of listening (Chang, 2011).

Rather than RWL to audiobooks, the current project consisted of RWL to the teacher's live readings. A live reading unifies the reader with the audience, and the group as a whole (Ong, 1982). More recently, neuroscientific research reports increased brain activity in the areas of social cognition and reward during live interaction. This heightened activity is more evident during the act

of jointly attending to something than when attending to something on one's own (known as "solo attention") (Redcay, 2010). The act of shared reading entails both the readers and listeners jointly paying attention to the same story in the same place and at the same time. This notion of live interaction was the rationale for providing the live reading as the students jointly attended to the text. Each week a particular story was read aloud three times to the class, while the class completed a mini-test consisting of a synonym replacement exercise (see also Stephens, 2017, for another example). Ten words from the text were substituted with synonyms chosen by the teacher, and the students had to record both the original words and their synonyms, and submit them to be marked. (A sample of this mini-test appears in Appendix B.) This mini-test ensured their attention while the story was being read aloud. They were permitted to consult their partner and their dictionaries during this exercise.

Previous research at this institution had indicated that many students preferred listening to a live reading than to an audio-recording (Stephens, Kurihara, Kamata & Nakashima, 2018). This may be because of the group chemistry between the reader and audience, and the communication of the reader's interpretation of the text. According to Lakoff (2008), mirror-neuron circuitry leads the interlocutors to connect face and body movement with the emotions. Van Wassenhove (2013) explains that observation of the movement of the face while talking can facilitate comprehension by the listener. The importance for L2 learners of observing the integration of sound and lip movement was observed by Cheetham (2017). Furthermore, Sekiyama and Burnham (2008) explain that due to the phonological complexity of English, looking at the face of the speaker provides audio-visual integration. In the current study, the students spent much of their time looking at their books as the teacher was reading, but they did intersperse this with glancing at the teacher. Face-to-face communication was integral to the reading.

Spelling and Vocabulary

Previously I had noticed that some students had trouble perceiving the sounds when I spelt out a word to them. For example, when I tried to spell out a word such as 'decipher' (d-e-c-i-p-h-e-r), some students had trouble decoding my spelling; they were unable to write down the letters I was sounding out without the provision of exaggerated pronunciation and repetition. I surmised that because English and Japanese pronunciations of letters of the alphabet were different, the students may need to habituate themselves to the English manner of sounding out of single letters. Therefore, I decided to introduce spelling dictations after the synonym replacement exercise. I chose ten words from the particular chapter from *Mind the Culture Gap* and spelt each word three

times to the class. I began by spelling the words slowly and carefully, and as the semester progressed, and the students' listening comprehension seemed to improve, I spelt them more quickly. After the test I wrote the words on the board and the students marked their own work, to encourage learner autonomy. Then I asked them to tell me their score in English as follows: "I got ten (nine/eight/seven) out of ten." I used this as an opportunity to teach sentence stress, by asking them to raise the pitch and volume, and increase the length of the salient word in the sentence: "I got ten (nine/ eight/ seven) out of ten."

The next exercise concerned vocabulary. I provided an oral gloss of each of the words in the spelling test, and the students had to retrieve them from the list. After this exercise I wrote the answers on the board and again students marked their own work. These exercises also appear in Appendix B.

Focus on Bottom-up and Top-down Language Skills

The discrete English language skills featured in this lesson were reading, listening, spelling, vocabulary, and collocation. Nevertheless, focusing on discrete skills alone is inadequate. Students need to be able to work with the story as a unified whole. Nuttall (2005) reminds us that reading requires both bottom up and top down skills. In order to extend the focus to top down skills, first the students were advised to memorize specific collocations from the story, which they marked with highlighting pens. Then they were paired with the person sitting next to them. Partner A had the book open and Partner B had it closed. Partner B summarized the story to Partner A, incorporating the collocations. Partner A gave hints to Partner B when necessary. Five minutes later the students swapped roles. After this the process was repeated with new pairs formed by partnering with the person sitting behind or in front of them, and then with the person sitting on the diagonal behind or in front of them. In this way the students had up to three opportunities to practice summarizing the text using the specified collocations.

Reading in Different Voices

Another activity which followed the listening component of the lesson was to have the students read the text in a variety of voices. Hattie & Yates (2014) explained the classroom practice of repeated reading during which the students read aloud to someone else, with the aim of improving fluency and prosody. Maley & Duff (2005) and Maley (2017) suggested a number of ways for students to read a text to each other in playful ways, to avoid the boredom that may come with repetition; for example students read successive sentences in a text to each other with dramatic delivery; one reading may be loud, then soft, then fast, then slow, then happy, then sad, and then

normal. They explained that the advantage of this is that the students become familiar with the text, and therefore their reading improves. I implemented their techniques as follows: students lined up in pairs, facing each other, in two rows from the front to the back of the classroom. I called out the manner in which the text was to be read (e.g. "Read loudly!"), and the students started to read to each other as they had been instructed. Then I instructed the member of each pair on the right to move one position clockwise, and the reading was repeated with a different partner. I repeated this process, regularly asking the partner on the right to move clockwise with each reading, and asked the students to read the text in the manner I called out each time. This activity provoked both engagement and hilarity and ensured that the students practiced reading the text without the boredom of repetition.

Discussion

Connecting with the Local Community

The regional university where this study was conducted has as part of its motto "serving locally." It has a department specifically devoted to the local region, known as Regional Sciences. The ethos of serving the local community is thus keenly felt. Collaboration between institutions, generations and nationalities formed the backdrop to this project. The editors compiled the anthology at a local private university, and it was used to teach classes at the nearby national university. The stories were written by an older generation of writers, and yet read by a younger generation of readers. This project is the result of forging connections between these diverse sections of the community, in order to highlight the importance of local people's stories.

Cross-cultural Mishaps go Both Ways

This anthology is a collection of stories by both Japanese and expatriates, and thus provides a mixture of perspectives on cross-cultural encounters. It presents the notion that cross-cultural misunderstanding goes both ways; not only do Japanese speakers have mishaps speaking English, expatriates may flounder in their communication with Japanese. These examples of cross-cultural contact may help students anticipate future encounters they might have when using English.

Focus on Pragmatics

Although an important focus of the lessons was reading, listening, spelling, vocabulary and collocation, the subject matter of the stories concerned pragmatic usage, that is, what is meant by what is said. The stories demonstrated language use for authentic communication. For example, Yoko Umetsu's story highlights the important distinction between the questions "What kind of eggs

do you like?" and "How do you like your eggs?" Examples such as these highlight the fact that language choices have real-life consequences.

Benefits of using an Authentic Text

The anthology is an authentic text and was not designed to be a textbook; it was created for the writers' enjoyment. Accordingly, there are differences in the lexico-grammatical complexity of the stories, largely depending on whether they were written by Japanese speakers or expatriates. As I read the stories aloud to the students, I tried to judge whether the level was appropriate for them. Many of the stories by the expatriate writers had too much lexico-grammatical complexity to be understood without excessive decoding. I discovered that the stories written by Japanese writers were easier for them to understand, and I ended up choosing to read more of the stories written by Japanese than expatriate writers. The students may have preferred the stories written by Japanese writers because they may have found it easier to identify with their stories. Therefore, an unusual feature of this project was that many of the stories were not written by native English speaking language specialists, but by members of the local Japanese community.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

This project had three major benefits. Firstly, the editors have completed a creative-writing project in the local community. The local Japanese citizens and international residents have produced works of creative writing in English, and the local citizens have translated them into Japanese.

Secondly, the students have had the opportunity to read stories by local citizens and international residents of a different generation. They have been able to learn about cross-cultural understanding from both a Japanese perspective, and from that of international people in their community.

Thirdly, the stories in the text could be delivered as a live form of RWL to provide a supply a model of prosody to the text. Furthermore, as Ong (1982) has elegantly explained, reading aloud to a group unifies the reader and audience in a shared experience.

Some readers may wish to pursue similar projects in their communities. Soliciting stories from local citizens enables the conservation of their stories. Having them available in two languages means that they will reach a wider audience. Featuring these stories in classrooms helps the younger generation connect with the experiences of both local citizens and international members of their culture.

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Appendix A: Additional Stories

"Address Unknown," another story by Suzanne Kamata, describes the pitfalls of having a Japanese address; only the postal workers seem to be able to find her house from her address. Her grandmother refused to write to her unless she provided address labels, and even taxi drivers could not find her house. Even her child's teacher, on the annual school-home visit, could not find her house after she had provided a detailed map.
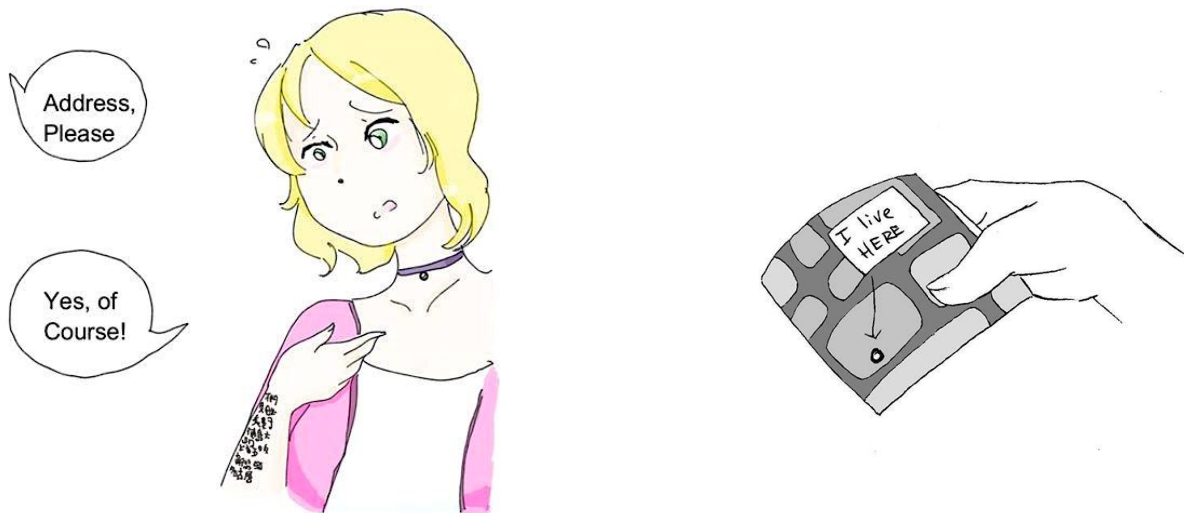
In "The Edamame Experience," Benjamin Herdman began by recounting some of the things that he had learnt in Japan, such as the fact that Japanese people don't often say "I love you", or hug each other. Then he indicated that one of the most interesting things he has learnt concerns edamame (salted boiled soybeans). Convinced they were unappetizing, he only ventured to taste one, skin and all, when he was eating out alone and couldn't be observed. His suspicions were confirmed, until one day he went out with a friend to a restaurant, and witnessed his friend eating it without the skin. Thereafter he appreciated eating edamame.

A Cross-cultural Experience by Keiko Watanabe

A Cross-cultural Experience   *Keiko Watanabe*

About 25 years ago, we lived in Osaka. Our youngest son was in the 4th grade of the nearby elementary school. An Afghan boy called Yama entered *(joined)* his class in December. He had just moved *(come)* from a refugee camp located in Pakistan. Since Afghanistan was a tragic battlefield, his family fled *(ran away)* to the camp. Before the war, his father had fortunately been allowed to study as a PhD student at Osaka Prefectural University, so he was able to invite *(bring)* his family – his wife, his daughter and son – to Osaka.

On Christmas Day, we had a children's party at our house. Yama joined us and showed much curiosity about many things he found *(place)* in our house. With what little Japanese he knew, he asked, "*Kore nani?*" which means "What's this?" in Japanese. A boy answered *(replied)*, "This is a Christmas tree." The questions continued about Santa Claus, Christmas cake, even the TV, among other items *(topics)*.

Finally the other boys laughed at Yama-kun, pointing at him and laughing, "You don't know anything! You don't know Santa, either? So, where are you from? Are you an alien?" Another boy said, "If you don't know Santa, you can't get any presents!" Yama-kun was shocked and deeply insulted. "My country has nothing like this! So what's wrong with my asking?" he could only retort *(answer)*. I felt very sorry that he was so upset, and told the children not to bully him but to try and understand his feelings.

I still remember that scene vividly, and through him I learned a little bit about Islamic countries. Now I am grateful *(glad)* to have had this encounter *(meeting)* with Yama-kun and his family.

77

異文化体験　　　　　渡邊恵子

随分昔のこと、もう4半世紀も前のことです。私たち家族は瑞市に住んでいました。末息子は当時小学4年生でした。12月のある日、彼のクラスにヤマくんというアフガン人の男の子が入ってきました。この子はアフガニスタンの戦場を逃れて、母親と2歳年上の姉の3人でパキスタンの難民キャンプにいたのですが、幸いにも父親が大阪府立大学の文部省派遣留学生としてドクターコースに在学中だったので、父親の市にやってきたのでした。

　12月25日のクリスマスの日にアフガニスタンの子供たちの歓迎会をかねて、近所の子供たちも招いて、我が家でホームパーティをやりました。ヤマ君ははじめて みるテレビやツリーやケーキなどなんでも興味を見せて、覚えたての日本語で「これなに？」と質問の連発でした。サンタクロースを不思議そうに見ては、指さして「なに？」するとそばにいた子があきれて「おまえって、なんも知らんのやなあ。」とばかにしたのです。「サンタも知らへんなんて、いったいお前はどこから来たんや？宇宙人か？」「サンタを知らんかったら、プレゼントをもらわれへんで！」と別の子。たとえ言われたことがわからなくても、ヤマくんは敏感に空気を感じて、大きなショックを受けたようでした。また、涙をうかべて「僕の国、それNO！QUESTIONわるいか！！」と必死に抗議をしたのです。すごく傷ついたのを見て私は申しわけない気持ちでいっぱいでした。子どもたちには「ヤマ君は日本のことを知らないんだから、いじめてはダメよ。ともだちになってあげてね。優しく教えてあげること、わかったわね。」と言うのが精いっぱいでした。

　今でも私はその場面をはっきりと覚えています。彼を通して少しばかりイスラムの文化を学ぶことができました。ヤマ君と家族に出会えたことを感謝しています。

Spelling List: class, family, curiosity, finally, alien, presents, shocked, wrong, bully, vividly

Glosses:
- a very very unkind person (bully)
- in the end (finally)
- very surprised (shocked)
- lesson (class)
- mother, father, sister, brother (family)
- not right (wrong)
- from another planet (alien)
- clearly (vividly)
- strong interest (curiosity)
- gifts (presents)

EFL Creative writing: Using Literature as a Guide for Students' Writing

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Abstract

A questionnaire-based survey of students studying academic writing at a Japanese university highlighted a disconnect between the students' needs and expectations, and what was being supplied by the curriculum. 40 out 132 said the course wasn't meeting their needs. 73/132 felt they couldn't express themselves in English and 57/132 expressed an interest in pursuing other forms of writing. Studies by R. Schrader (2000), Hanauer (2010), Iida (2010), Liao (2012), Bussinger (2013) and Pelcova (2015) have shown the use of creative writing to be beneficial to motivation and has advantages for L2 acquisition. Therefore, it was felt that creative writing might offer a solution to the problems raised by the questionnaire.

Two groups of undergraduate English majors at a Japanese university were introduced to creative writing via travel writing. They were taught a number of skills including writing dialogue, describing sensory input and how to construct an opening paragraph. This paper outlines the course methodology and by analysing student output, concludes that the programmes achieved their aims.

*Keywords: w*riting, creativity, motivation, pedagogy.

Context

In June 2017, in the initial stages of a larger study yet-to-be-published work, this researcher administered a questionnaire to second-year students in the Department of British and American Studies at a Japanese university. The aim was to ascertain attitudes towards the mandatory writing courses provided by the university as a precursor to redesigning the courses. The anonymous questionnaire contained 12 open questions written by this researcher. 132 questionnaires were returned. The key results are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Results of Questionnaire Survey

Response	Number of respondents with this opinion	Percentage
I am unable to express myself in English.	73/132	55.3
Academic writing doesn't fulfill all of my writing needs.	40/132	30.31
I would like to pursue other forms of writing.	57 / 132	43.18

After administering a questionnaire-based survey, it was found that 30.31% (40) of the students felt that the current academic writing curriculum was not fulfilling all of their writing needs. For example, students mentioned email writing or writing reports in a business context. 55.3% (73) felt that they could not express themselves clearly in English. At the same time, 43.18% (57) of respondents expressed interest in pursuing other forms of writing. As a result, in order to explore whether this disconnect could be bridged, in 2017 the university gave permission to develop and trial a creative writing programme which was piloted with students in a third-year writing course. Following the success of that trial, the programme was repeated with second-year writing students in 2018. In both cases the programme ran for seven classes. In 2017 the classes occurred once a week for seven weeks in the autumn semester. In 2018, they occurred once every two weeks for 14 weeks in the summer semester.

All students were English majors who entered the university after both an entrance exam and a rigorous interview process in English and with a minimum TOEIC score of 550, an Eiken level of 2 or higher, or equivalent. The department adopts a communicative approach and classes are not streamed for level. The third-year students (2017 group) were already enrolled in an academic writing class and were of mixed ability, including some who had returned from studying overseas and some who were repeating the class. For the second-year students (2018 group) the creative writing programme was extra-curricular, running alongside their second-year academic writing programme.

The 2018 programme was substantially similar to the 2017 one, with small adjustments made to take into account language ability, expectations of writing ability based on their grade and

the fact that the voluntary nature of the 2018 programme meant attendance was sporadic. The lesson discussed in this paper only changed in one instance, which will be dealt with hereafter.

Based on the findings of the survey, it was decided that introducing creative writing could be a potential way to deal with the imbalance between their perceived needs and what they felt the academic writing courses were giving them. The question "Would you be interested in joining another writing class?" led to answers such as: "No, actually I don't like writing…" or "I like to speaking than writing." It was thought that creative writing might help counteract this antipathy towards writing, something that is supported by the literature which is discussed below.

Theoretical Underpinning

Academic writing does not require students to express their own feelings (Maley, 2012) but creative writing is a useful tool in this regard. This was also shown by Liao & Roy (2017), who discovered that the expressive nature of poetry was appealing to their respondents. R. Schrader (2000) shows that by engaging in personal-oriented freewriting, immigrants to Germany learned how to express themselves in the L2 which led to "high motivation in language learning," "great ease in dealing with writing in the second language" and "a positive emotional relationship to the second language." (p.38-39). Liao (2012) discusses the disconnect between writing classes that focus on form and grammar and students' ability to express themselves in the L2. She goes on to argue that by addressing this problem, motivation can increase.

Pelcova (2015) also argues that creative writing can "enhance their imagination, creativity, enthusiasm as well as motivation" (p.9). In the same vein, Maley (2009) mentions a rise in student self-confidence and self-esteem after engaging with creative writing. This is echoed by Bussinger (2013). Creative writing draws on students' own experiences (Maley, 2012) and Sullivan (2015) argues that this will reconnect students with the work they are producing. Sullivan (2015) shows how creative writing allows students to feel they have a stake in the L2, and to feel that their writing has value to them, something which increases engagement in writing overall. This was echoed in this researcher's own survey results when 55.3% (73) of students felt this was a significant weakness for them (see Table 1).

Finally, it is often thought that creative writing may be too difficult for students below the advanced level. M. Schrader (2000) argues against conflating accuracy with competence and turning language production into "mistake avoidance" (p.61). Liao & Roy (2017) mention this belief as being held by many students in the context of writing poetry. Their study shows that students have an inflated view of what poetry is and therefore feel inadequate to the task.

Hashimoto (2004), Spiro (2007) and Iida (2010) all show that this is a false belief, arguing that just as children can be inventive and creative in their native language long before they have reached a high level of linguistic knowledge and dexterity, so too can our language students. Creative writing can, in the words of M. Schrader (2000), "represent the opportunity of making the target language into the material of one's own thinking" (p.59). One of the aims of trialing the programme with second and third-year students was to provide the department with evidence regarding the question of whether level and ability were a factor. Ideally, a trial with freshmen would also have been conducted but due to logistical and scheduling obstacles, this has so far proved difficult to achieve.

Overall Programme Structure

Given the fact that both the 2017 and 2018 classes had never been exposed to creative writing, it was decided that creative non-fiction would make for a smoother transition than fiction because creative non-fiction shares structural features with the kinds of papers they had experience of writing. Therefore, the class focused on travel writing because students at this university have a high expectation of studying abroad for 6-12 months and the majority experience studying abroad for a minimum of five weeks during their degree programme. In addition, many travel abroad during their vacations. As a result, it was concluded that travel writing would be a genre with which the students would feel comfortable.

To overcome any potential feelings of anxiety, the programme began with the students telling their classmates about either a positive or negative experience they had encountered while travelling. This was the kind of activity in which they had taken part numerous times across their communication classes. The students then analysed the reactions to their stories, highlighting, for example, whether amusing anecdotes had been met with laughter or whether their negative experiences had provoked responses of sympathy. This was done to focus their attention on the reader or audience of any story. In the second class we looked at ways of describing sensory input such as sights, sounds, smells and touch (e.g., temperature, physical strain) and brainstormed details from the setting of their own anecdotes. In the third class, described later in this paper, the focus moved to opening paragraphs. In the fourth, the emphasis was on writing dialogue. The fifth, sixth and seventh classes were workshops in which the students expanded and drafted their work, with editorial input from the teacher and their peers, eventually turning a brief anecdote into a fully-formed piece of travel writing.

Method

Opening Paragraph Lesson

  The 2017 group had spent at least two years studying academic writing (more in the case of repeaters and returnees), while the 2018 group had been learning to write academically for a year. Therefore, it seemed that examining opening paragraphs of actual travel writing would be a comfortable bridge for them between the formal rigors of a research paper and the structurally fluid world of creative writing. The process would give them concrete examples of what they were expected to do (in terms of direction if not quality), a reference point from which to embark. The use of models in teaching creative writing has a long history and can be seen in textbooks such as Diane Thiel's *Winding Roads: Exercises in Writing Creative Nonfiction* (Pearson, 2008). The students' first year writing curriculum focused heavily on learning how to write thesis statements, hooks and supporting paragraphs and so it was decided to present creative non-fiction to them in a similar way, again providing comfort through familiarity.

Table 2

Writing Samples

Author	Title	Publisher	Page	Paragraphs
Banks, Iain	*Raw Spirit*	Arrow, 2004	69	2-3
Bashō, Matsuo (Translated by Noboyuki Yuasa)	*The Narrow Road to the Deep North*	Penguin, 1966	97	1-2
Carey, Peter	*Wrong About Japan* by	Faber, 2004	21	3-5
Cracknell, Linda	*Doubling Back*	Freight, 2014	183	1-2
Garland, Alex	*The Beach*	Viking, 1996	5	1-2
Murakami, Haruki (Translated by Iain Maloney)	*Moshi bokura no kotoba ga uisuki de attanara* [If Our Words Were Whisky]	Shinchosha, 1999	10	1-2

  On one B4 page, I presented the opening passages above. These were chosen because

each offers an interesting approach to beginning a piece of travel writing. Many other opening chapters would work just as well, however, a strong contrast between examples is required. These samples were chosen to highlight specific techniques. As is discussed below, one aim of this lesson was to connect techniques in creative writing with techniques the students had already learned in their academic writing class. For example, in creative writing an opening passage can act as a thesis statement, introducing the main theme or topic of the piece.

The passage from Carey's book, for instance, opens with the author and his son meeting a character called Takashi for the first time, offering a detailed description of this unusual man without any context or explanation as to his identity or relationship with Carey.

> In Tokyo's Harajuku district one can see those perfect Japanese Michael Jacksons, no hair out of place, and punk rockers whose punkness is detailed so fastidiously that they achieve a polished hyper-reality. Takashi had something of this quality. (Carey, 2004, p.21).

By beginning in this way, Carey is, in essence, writing about people, characters, personal interaction and human relationships. The geography, architecture, smells and sounds of Harajuku are less important than the people Carey and his son will encounter.

Garland's novel, however, dwells on the sensory nature of Bangkok's Khao San Road, describing the smells and sights, both licit and illicit.

> …there were long-distance telephone booths with air-con, the cafes showed brand-new Hollywood films on video, and you couldn't walk ten feet without passing a bootleg-tape stall … I caught the smell of grass as soon as I got out of the cab. (Garland, 1996, p.5).

The novel, we can conclude immediately, is going to be heavily focused on location, setting, sensory input and experience.

The extract from Cracknell's book showcases her concern with the interaction between hiker and environment. Banks's is a rattling introduction that gets the reader up to speed and on the road in a few fast sentences, while Murakami's dwells on past travels and his quirky habit of assigning himself some mission for the trip, such as only eating *udon* while in Niigata or pancakes in America. Each one offers a different approach to opening a piece of travel writing from the other

samples, and can be used to illustrated the author's intentions in an easily understandable way.

Students were given the hand-out and a second worksheet which asked them to make notes on setting, when in the story the passage began, which characters were present, what information the author provided first, what was described (place, character, emotions, etc.) and finally what information they thought was being deliberately kept from the reader. This was done in order to focus their attention on what could be included in an opening paragraph but also what could be left out. One of the biggest obstacles to beginning any piece of writing is knowing how to start. Thus by examining how these six writers had done it, it was hoped that the students would not be terrorised by the blank page when their turn came. The 2017 group were given all six openings. The 2018 group, due to level and time constraints, were only given three (Carey, Garland and Murakami). One the students had made notes for each sample, they reconvened and shared their thoughts in small groups. Once the students had shared their opinions, they participated in a group feedback session and on the white board a table focusing the students' attention on the answers to the questions concerning when in the story the book opens, what is described and what is kept from the reader, was constructed. The rationale for focusing on these three aspects is examined below.

In the 2018 class, the table looked like this:

Table 3

2018 collected student notes.

	Carey	Garland	Murakami
When	In the middle	At the end, then quickly jumping back to the beginning	Before the trip has begun
Described	The appearance of Takashi	Khao San Road, sights, sounds, smells, touch, atmosphere of the area	Murakami's 'missions' in the past and his 'missions' for this trip.
Secret	Who is Takashi? Why is Carey and his son meeting him in Harajuku? Why are they in Harajuku?	What beach? [The book opens: "The first I heard of the beach was in Bangkok" and then never mentions the beach again for two paragraphs]	Any details about the trip.

The following conclusions were then highlighted:

1. "It's clear from the table that the authors can start their story anywhere they want: beginning, middle or the end. Each choice has a different effect on the reader. Therefore, you can also begin as you like according to the effects you hope to have on your readers."

2. "You can start with whichever details you want, but your choice indicates the emphasis of the ensuing story. In other words, Carey's book, by focusing so directly on a single person, tells us that his story is going to be about people – himself, his son and the people they encounter in Japan. The physical reality of Thailand is going to play an important role in Garland's novel. On the other hand, Murakami's story is going to be centred much more around his and his wife's experiences and feelings than around Scotland and whisky. Therefore, you, as writers, have to think about what is most important to your story. If it is the characters, then it is best to open with a person front and centre. If it concerns a place, begin with a description of the place."

3. "Each paragraph contains a thesis statement and a hook."

This third point is the rationale behind focusing on "when," "what is described" and "what is kept secret," as shown in Table 3. As mentioned above, the students were familiar with the concepts of thesis statements and hooks from their academic writing. These concepts were elicited and the students were asked to find examples of both in the opening paragraphs. In both the 2017 and 2018 cases, the students reported that there were no hooks or thesis statements. The students were directed to turn their attention to the opening sentence of *The Beach*: "The first I heard of the beach was in Bangkok, on the Khao San Road" (Garland, 1996, p.5). It was pointed out to them that while the opening sentence mentions the beach, the rest of the passage describes the Khao San Road. In fact, the beach isn't mentioned again in the whole passage. It was explained to them that in creative writing it can be the absence of information that acts as the hook, not the provision of it. The row in the table entitled "secret" could then be renamed "hook." They were then told that the opening sentence could also be considered a thesis statement, since the remaining 448 pages would be about the beach mentioned on page one. While the thesis statement and hook did not take the form they were accustomed to from their academic writing classes, the concepts were still relevant and present in creative writing. The lesson and the previous classes were recapped, and the task of writing their own introductory paragraphs as homework for the next class was set.

Qualitative Discussion of Selected Results

The following week (two weeks later in 2018) students returned with their paragraphs. Below I will show examples of what they produced as homework. Their names have been changed; the errors have not.

Mieko:

"Not only did I miss orientation, other international students must be shopping for necessities as we speak". My head was filled with these thoughts as I waited for my suitcases at the baggage claim area. I should have already been in America a day earlier; but having been unable to take the plane I intended to take, like a lost child separated from her mother because there was no Asian around me, I stand looking like a pitiful thing. Finding my suitcases, with the fluorescent yellow stickers, I took them and headed to the taxi counter to find a ride to the university.

Mieko was an excellent student, already receiving A grades (80-100%. The average for the class was B (79-79%) but her writing until this point had been stilted, without colour or passion. Mieko's worked showed a depth of language and a facility with imagery that hadn't been clear from her more academic work. The lesson did not just benefit the highest achieving students; Takuma was less developed as a writer and struggled with the academic writing course. His grades were firmly rooted around C minus. For example, the final draft of his essay prior to the travel writing began:

In many countries, the population of immigrants is increasing, and there are many problems in these countries. How about Japan? Are immigrants to Japan too low? Recently, in Japan also the number of foreign people is increasing.

After corrections, edits and redrafts there are still grammatical errors and unnatural formations. However, Takuma's opening paragraph shows real progress:

I have a funny story. It happened in my friend's house about 10 years ago. One day, my brother and I planned to go to my friend's house. My friend lives in the foot of the mountain so we went to the forest, and explored there. It was very exciting. The

smell of grass and soil were comfortable for my nose. The color of leaves and ground made my eyes happy.

There are still level markers, but there is an engagement that was not there previously. The vocabulary is more varied and the sentence structure more adventurous. In his academic essay on immigration Takuma rarely strays beyond single-clause sentences: "First, the population of immigrants in Japan. The population of foreign people are increasing year by year." When he does lengthen his sentences, it is only with simple connectors: "It was decreased once because of disaster and so on, but it is increasing again year by year." In his travel piece there are still many short sentences but in each paragraph there is at least one attempt at a complex sentence: "The touch of ground was very good because it was so soft that I and my brother could not feel so much in everyday life." "My brother and I plucked up our courage, we two climbed up the wall like my friend did, and my friend pulled us up." As can be seen in these examples, there is also an attempt to render emotional and sensory experiences using phrase like "plucked up our courage" and "the touch of the ground."

These paragraphs were the first instances either student had written anything in this style or genre, so to produce writing of this quality was unexpected. However, by explicitly linking the examples in class to what they had produced in their academic writing via the group feedback session and the table drawn on the whiteboard, it bridged the gap between what had gone before and the new genre they were moving into. Mieko's example in particular shows clear signs of influence from the lesson – she has started in the middle of the story and allows the situation to speak for itself. She hooks the reader with the tantalising scent of some disaster having befallen her but withholds details until the dramatic moment is reached. She is focusing on physical details that echo her emotions at the time, such as the fluorescent stickers which reflect her own feelings of standing out as "a pitiful thing."

By looking at the grades given, the work the 2017 group produced marked a significant improvement from the academic essays they had been writing before. While the average grade had been between C- and B (60%-75%), the average grade for the class for their travel writing was between B and A (75%-85%) based on a grading rubric which had been developed for this programme. The majority of students moved up a whole grading band. Without further study there is no way of ascertaining whether this increase would have happened anyway as a result of natural progression and development, but it does suggest a potentially positive avenue. As the 2018 group were taking the class as an extra-curricular option, no grades were awarded.

Conclusion

The 2017 and 2018 programmes succeeded in their aims. By leading the students through the literature and the choices those authors made, the students were able to apply the techniques to their own work. By focusing on opening paragraphs and the different approaches other writers used, and by linking those techniques to ones they had learned in their academic writing classes, this lesson acted as a bridge between academic writing and creative writing. Their engagement with the subject matter and the experience of expressing their own feelings and thoughts seems to have motivated them. However, further study needs to be done to quantify this improvement and to determine whether there is in fact a trend.

As James (2007), M. Schrader (2000), and Liao (2012, 2017) describe, it is often thought that creative writing is a subject best reserved for elite students. Instead, we see in studies by Hanauer (2010), Iida (2010), Liao (2012) and Pelcova (2015) that creative writing allows students to explore their second language using skills and their existing English knowledge. This study also goes some way towards supporting that conclusion. By deploying literature as the model and guide, through lessons like this we can help students to a deeper understanding of their own language skills and deal with problems of demotivation and low self-confidence.

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This paper is based on two presentations I gave at the 2018 national JALT conference in Shizuoka in November, 2018. I would like to express my thanks to the conference organizers and the persons who attended my presentations and shared ideas with me.

Six poems

In my session "Feminist Disability Poetics and the EFL Classroom," I read aloud six poems, inviting the audience to comment, and to give their input regarding how to use the poems with students. The first poem was by Emily Dickinson. It can be found online (for example at https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Pain_—_has_an_Element_of_Blank_—)

> Pain — has an Element of Blank —
> It cannot recollect
> When it begun — or if there were
> A time when it was not —
>
> It has no Future — but itself —
> Its Infinite realms contain
> Its Past — enlightened to perceive
> New Periods — of Pain.

Was Dickinson referring to pain of the body or mind? So many of her other poems depict psychic pain, crises of consciousness. In this poem pain appears to be endless. This is a reality for many chronic pain sufferers who may be people with "invisible" or "sometimes visible" disabilities. Students could discuss times they experienced physical or psychic pain or both and how it made them feel. If they have only experienced fleeting pain they might imagine experiencing it all the time or day in and day out. They could also write their own poems about pain.

"Ornithology" by American poet Jennifer Bartlett, who has cerebral palsy (Barlett, 2007, p. 29) begins:

> Being disabled is not what you think
> Limitation exists only within the context of others
> as the only language the body knows
> is that which it tells itself.
> Movement appears painful from a distance
> when rather it is just the body reiterating itself.

Her poem suggests that the reality of living with a disability may be different from the image of living with a disability. This theme could be a discussion, research or writing theme for students.

Ona Gritz is also an American poet with cerebral palsy. Her poem "We are Everywhere" ends:

> Right now, a woman with auburn hair
> and a gypsy skirt waits for the light
> in a motorized chair. The walk sign
> flashes green and, magnetized, I follow,
> willing her to notice I'm kin (n.p.)

In the earlier part of the poem (omitted for copyright reasons) the speaker notes other people on the street with visible disabilities. The last line suggests the speaker feels a kinship with others who have disabilities. This poem may invite the reader to think about the notions of kinship and identity and how they might function for people with disabilities in their own communities as well as for themselves.

Although titled "We are Everywhere" persons with visible disabilities are not to be found everywhere in Japan. Due to employment discrimination for example, persons with visible disabilities tend to be absent from workplaces. One idea is for students to visualize a place such as inside a supermarket and insert the missing persons with disabilities into the scene such as a woman in a wheelchair operating the cash register or a boy with Down syndrome stocking the shelves. Another place could be inside a classroom where persons with disabilities are mainstreamed into the class versus the current system of mostly segregated schools. How would the class be different with students with disabilities added?

In Gritz's poem "No" the speaker is a new mother trying to nurse her infant. She has trouble holding the infant and tries to use pillows as a prop. A nurse appears to be disrespectful in her dismissiveness of the new mother's perceptions of what her baby needs. "One" in the line immediately below refers to "nurses":

44

When a new one came, I shyly
explained the pillows, the palsy.
"No," she said coolly and I stared.
"No. That baby needs sleep not milk."
I tried again: "he's hungry."
Shaking her head, she left our room.
I attempted the football hold
The cradle. Tried setting up pillows
then sitting between them. They fell.
Keeping you in my arms, I paced, I sang.
We cried in unison, both of us
so helpless, so desperately new. (n.p.)

This poem invites empathy with the mother struggling in her first attempts to be a caretaker for her newborn. Although she has a disability, we can relate to her as an "ordinary" mother in other respects, just as we should, for example regarding the helplessness she feels in a new situation which may be the same reaction a non-disabled mother might have. Note that she feels "shy" about referring to her disability. Earlier in the poem the speaker says: "My hands / couldn't take you to the right place. / *Cerebral palsy* I mumbled, apology, / explanation." The fact that she feels shy, not confident enough to speak up clearly (she mumbles), and apologetic about having cerebral palsy shows the social power people with able bodies seem to have relative to people with disabilities; perhaps this poem also depicts the relative power of the medical establishment (a power imbalance between the nurses and the "patient"; see Wendell, 1996, chapter five, for a discussion of this theme). The meaning of the title and elements of the story told could be usefully discussed by students.

"The Shaking" is a beautiful villanelle by poet Laurie Clements Lambeth who has MS. It ends:

Many times I've trembled when you're making
love to me, my round shoulders open, bare
but never have I broken into such shaking,

when my body shows us our lives breaking
apart. Still, you hold me. Your kind is rare,
who know (or pretend) dreams seem worse upon waking.

Surprising you stayed; here you are, forsaking
quiet nights for me. Will you be there

when it worsens, my gait palsied with shaking?
Who could be strong enough to hold back its waking? (n.p.)

For me this is a powerful poem inviting the reader to be empathic with her situation, especially her concerns about the effects her illness may have on her relationship with her partner.

Poet Sheila Black writes in an essay: "As a person with a visible disability, I have often felt intruded upon, defined and even circumscribed by the gaze of others" (in Black et al., 2011, Kindle version, n.p.). Her poem in the same book titled "What You Mourn" ends:

Crippled they called us when I was young
later the word was *disabled* and then *differently abled,*
but those were all names given by outsiders,
none of whom could imagine
that the crooked body they spoke of,
the body, which made walking difficult
and running practically impossible,
except as a kind of dance, a sideways looping
like someone about to fall
headlong down and hug the earth, that body
they tried so hard to fix, straighten, was simply
mine,
and I loved it as you love your own country,
the familiar lay of the land, the unkempt trees,
the smell of mowed grass, down to the
nameless
flowers at your feet — clover, asphodel,
and the blue flies that buzz over them. (n.p.)

There are many possible entryways into this poem, including a discussion of the speaker's love for her body despite or because of its imperfections, and the changing language usage surrounding disability.

Nine items for discussion

In a presentation titled "Teaching About Disability" I raised nine items for discussion or consideration for teachers introducing disability as a topic in their classes. These are:

1. People with disabilities face employment discrimination and other forms of discrimination and prejudice.

Jennifer Barlett (2014) wrote:

> To be crippled means to be institutionalized, infantilized,
> unemployed, outcast, feared, marginalized, fetishized, desexualized,
> stared at, excluded, silenced, aborted, sterilized, stuck, discounted,
> teased, voiceless, disrespected, raped, isolated, undereducated, made
> into a metaphor or an example. To be crippled means to be referred
> to as retard, cute, helpless, lame, bound, stupid, drunk, idiot, a
> burden on society, in/valid. To be crippled means to be discounted as
> a commodity or regarded as mere commodity (p. 10).

2. Persons with disabilities are far more likely to be sexually assaulted as compared with the able-bodied (e.g in USA persons with disabilities were said to be seven times more likely to be assaulted on a 2018 PBS news broadcast, see also Shapiro, 2018).

3. People with disabilities are plagued by stereotypes such as the superhero (Helen Keller, Stephen Hawking) or the opposite (a useless, assumed sad and ill, lonely person).

4. Relevant language use has changed over time. These expressions have all been used: differently abled, physically/mentally challenged; disabled, person with a disability, crippled, handicapped, "the" disabled. Currently in the US, person with a disability, or person with ___ (name of disability, such as "person with cerebral palsy"), or disabled person seem to be the most widely used by persons with disabilities. When in doubt one could ask a person what she or he prefers.

5. Disabilities can be visible, invisible, or a bit of both (e.g., persons who have conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis or fibromyalgia may have good and bad days or periods throughout the day, weeks or months where pain fluctuates, making the disability also fluctuate).

6. Physical pain is rarely depicted in literature (compared to psychic pain such as in Hamlet, etc.)

7. Some think that, in English, there is not adequate language to describe pain. Is this true in Japanese as well? I would like to get a reaction from a native speaker of Japanese. I myself feel the difficulty in both languages. For example, see Spero, 2017.

8. Persons with disabilities are absent from many English language books, mass media reports, films, etc. If appearing at all, it may often be a before/after story about achievement following an accident versus a person disabled from birth. Rather than hiring actors with disabilities, often an able bodied actor plays a person with a disability in Hollywood films. An exception is NHK which regularly features persons with disabilities in Japanese language broadcasts.

9. Intersectionality (coined by Kimberle Crenshaw; see for example https://www.law.columbia.edu/pt-br/news/2017/06/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality), retrieved November 27, 2018): Problems related to disability may be seen as carrying over from other problems related to gender, class, status, racial or ethnic background and other identities and circumstances. For example female rather than male persons with disabilities are more likely to be sexually assaulted; poor persons with disabilities or persons with disabilities who are also minorities have various overlapping and interweaving difficulties.

Resources

Four of the poems above come from the anthology *Beauty is a Verb: The New Poetry of Disability* (Black et al., 2011, Kindle version) which contains dozens of poems plus accompanying essays by poets with disabilities. Many of the poems and essays are within the reach of an intermediate level student in Japan if skillfully used, by which I mean, for example, vocabulary and cultural issues would be addressed and students would be allowed to work in groups to discuss them. The Dickinson poem is online; the other books mentioned are written by poet Jennifer Bartlett. Another book of interest may be Kamata, 2008 (see references). This anthology is not restricted to poetry but it includes poems. However note that all the works are by caretakers of persons with disabilities versus by persons with disabilities themselves.

Persons with disabilities are not well represented in EFL textbooks. I am only aware of two textbooks. In Pearson's *Impact Issues 1*, in a chapter titled "Close your eyes and see," a blind man is disrespected by a waiter in a restaurant (see R. R. Day et al., 2011). In Uchida and Iwabuchi (2007) there are two chapters depicting persons with disabilities. One chapter depicts a couple, one of whom is a well known Tokyo University professor with a disability. It depicts the couple as an ordinary arguing couple with just one difference being one has a disability. My students liked this chapter. The other chapter seems to me to fall a little bit into the superhero stereotype and was less liked by me and my students; for example it seems to make it sound remarkable rather than ordinary that a person with a disability would also be talkative, cheerful and optimistic.

As far as resources for the teacher (academic books), I mention above Wendell, 1996, which is my favorite book on feminist disability issues. Also of interest may be Helten, 1996. Both are written by persons with disabilities.

Conclusion

I have explored the usefulness of some poems by women who have disabilities or in the case of Dickinson which have a relation to disability (discussion of Dickinson's health is beyond the scope of this article, but if interested see for example https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/health, retrieved November 30, 2018). Black et al. (2011) also includes work by gay and straight men; the anthology is not merely female poets although many women are included.

I think of the feminist classroom as one where all differences are respected, and where there is better representation of the work of women and minorities than in other classrooms and where thus the voices of women and minorities can be heard.

I believe that feminist disability poetics has a useful role to play in an EFL classroom for the teacher who wishes to introduce poetry by disabled women.

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A Report on the European Society for the Study of English (ESSE) Conference, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic, August 29th-2nd September, 2018

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The 14th conference of the European Society for the Study of English (ESSE) was held from 29th August to 2nd September 2018 at Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. The ESSE conference takes place every two years and has been held in various different locations around Europe since the first event in Norwich, UK, in 1991. Masaryk University faculty buildings are centred around the downtown area of Brno city. Only two hours from Vienna, Brno is in the heart of Europe and its city history provided an ideal location to contemplate the past, present, and future of English studies. For teachers and researchers based in Japan, this conference provides opportunities to connect with colleagues internationally while also gaining an understanding of the broad range of English studies in Europe's diverse countries. A number of roundtable discussions helped to approach topics in depth, looking at such topics as cross-border dynamics, rising populism in Europe, and the changing world of the news media. In this conference report, I will attempt to describe some of the highlights of this culturally and educationally enriching event.

The ESSE conference brings together academics from an impressively broad range of disciplines, from the humanities, translation studies and linguistics. The conference is organized using sub-themes, and through these, sessions are built and planned. Depending on interest and availability, the conference themes can be one session (two hours) or up to three (three time-slots, totaling six hours). A brief perusal of the conference program reveals some of the primary concerns and popular topics of the conference. It also sets the scene for the post-session discussions which were both lively and varied. My interest this time was on the research and discussions explicitly related to contemporary novels, as I am teaching Kazuo Ishiguro to an undergraduate class this autumn semester. Ishiguro has, of course, received increased attention in Japan since winning the 2017 Nobel Prize in Literature, but his impact in other languages and cultures outside the UK and Japan were unknown to me. It was interesting and professionally rewarding, therefore, to be able to attend some sessions on Ishiguro and to consider his work in an international context as a result of participating in this event. In the next section, I briefly describe the plenary talks, selected literature-based talks, and selected language-based talks.

Plenary talks

Plenary presentations at the ESSE conference were varied and appealed to the range of interests amongst the delegates. Anne Fogarty from University College, Dublin talked about how James Joyce and the stylistic experimentation he explored continues to influence contemporary writers in Ireland. Marta Mateo from the University of Oviedo, Spain, talked about English literature in musical translation, referring to opera, musicals and film productions of different kinds. Her approach was particularly suited to a multi-lingual audience whose interests are broad. Josef Schmied from Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany, approached the topic of academic writing with a talk on functional linguistic approaches to abstracts, theses and articles. He used the work of Halliday, Swales and Hyland, familiar to applied linguists and those who are working with textual analysis. Finally, Alfred Thomas from the University of Illinois, Chicago, gave a plenary entitled "Shakespeare's Bohemia: Religious toleration in an age of confessional polarization." In the first part of this enlightening talk, we learned of the importance of the context and meaning of "terror" – using examples from Shakespeare's London. By illustrating the fate of Guido Fawkes and the other gunpowder plotters, the meaning of the word "terror" during Shakespeare's time could be better understood. This talk weaved together historical details relevant to what was Bohemia and is now the Czech Republic, along with literary readings. This plenary was very well received by the ESSE audience.

Selected literature-based talks

As my particular interest at this conference was Kazuo Ishiguro, I begin with some notes from several related presentations I attended. My particular course is a teaching license seminar reading *Never Let Me Go* (NLMG), and I was interested to find that the novel is widely read in Europe and in the UK. Typically a high school text, NLMG is challenging in English and for second language learners presents particular difficulties. In a session on the topic of ageing in speculative science fiction, there were two Ishiguro talks. The first, focusing on the post-human, was entitled "Posthuman cloned bodies in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*" by Pelin Kumbet from Turkey. Kumbet's talk was a summary of her PhD research using the topic of the posthuman/transhuman, pointing out the similarities and differences between NLMG and other related texts. In Ishiguro's text, for example, the long life of humans can only be made possible by the shortened lives of the posthuman protagonists. These manufactured human clones do not get to enjoy any of the benefits of the scientific discoveries of the age, and this is in sharp contrast to the beliefs that readers may have in feeling optimistic about scientific discovery. In countries where a black market in

transplanted organs is already becoming a significant social burden, the topic has particular and immediate meaning. The discussion from participants at the end of the NLMG session offered additional perspectives which I had not considered, including those of the ethical dilemmas faced in real medical situations today, including those related to organ donation and the black market related to organ transplantation, but also difficult decisions faced by parents who have one child with leukaemia (and may be able to save that child if they have another, using the bone marrow to save the sick child). While such discussion deviate from Ishiguro's original story and message, the post-session conversations mirrored those concerns which readers around the world have found so engaging. Whether related to speculative science-fiction, or real science and current fears, the novel has a peculiar ability to capture the reader's imagination. In a second talk in the same session, Sarah Falcus and Maricel Oro Piqueras discussed fantasy, memory and loss in *The Buried Giant*, Ishiguro's 2015 novel. The themes of historical and individual memory were discussed in relation to the topic and the conference overall, and Ishiguro's novels appear to be uniquely placed between fantasy and real-world concerns to enable inclusion in theme-based sessions such as this one on ageing.

Other literature-based talks explored popular topics such as the works of Dickens, Shakespeare, and a variety of different writers. As to be expected, approaches from the field of corpora studies have been hugely influential and researchers can now use powerful online tools to analyze language in fiction with new data and methods emerging constantly. Sessions on Dickens looked at keywords, lexical chunks, and analysis of individual lexical items in depth, employing methods from a variety of fields. The contrast between traditional literary criticism and the empirical methods of using fiction as corpora are becoming blurred. Scientific methods have become more mainstream, and new researchers are doing the work of literary linguists as they pore over old texts in new ways.

As well as classic literature, there were many sessions on contemporary fiction and media also. Neil Gaiman, A.S. Byatt, and Terry Pratchett were all topics explored in one session dealing with myth and fairy tale. Margaret Atwood and Margaret Mitchell were brought together in a similar session. In the field of film and media studies, several presentations on the Netflix series "Black Mirror" showed the impact of such topics. For those teaching and using literature of such types with learners in Japan, the ESSE conference beings together new methods in analysis.

Selected language-based talks

Specialist language-based seminars were held on environmental issues as they arise in the

media, how Twitter is changing opinions on a range of topics including protest and politics, and pragmatic considerations such as humour and aggression in online language use. The range of interests and research skills of these academics was also very impressive. EMI and CLIL were frequently mentioned in summary, assuming the knowledge and understanding of the audience. In one session I attended, art history, linguistics, and architecture were brought together in an "international" themed topic. Popular approaches were stance and engagement analysis from discourse studies, as well as applications of theories from World Englishes. There was a special session on language and crime, using stylistics and forensic linguistic methodology.

In keeping with the cognitive turn and a use of corpora for linguistic investigation, many sub-themes made use of digital methods to explore their topics. One example was the session entitled "Lexis in Contrast: Empirical Approaches" convened by several Czech-based researchers. Translation, cross-linguistic code-switching, and lexical borrowing were all investigated in ten separate sessions. Translations of different linguistic artefacts such as travel documents and news media were of interest here, using methods from comparative discourse analysis using parallel texts. L2 academic speech and writing was explored by a number of presenters from Finland and Sweden. In another session, L2 needs for those with special educational needs was the focus. Cognitive-linguistic approaches to grammar, teaching, and second language acquisition studies were discussed in another session, also with ten separate presentations. While it may have been possible to track the connections between all talks, and the conveners attempted to continue conversations as much as possible, the diversity across session topics sometimes made this a difficult challenge.

Social program

The conference events spanned four days and included a number of activities for conference attendees. The main conference venue was itself a film theatre, and various types of theatre events were offered as part of the post-conference evening activities. The social program and opportunities to meet other delegates was a particular strength of this conference. Each day had ample coffee breaks, each with generous food provided, which drew the participants together for discussions in between sessions. Many participants were from areas outside Europe, including North America and Asia.

While there were some veteran ESSE delegates at the conference, there were also a number of first-time presenters. It was sometimes the case that the groups of presenters knew each other well and had strong academic ties going back many years. This was to the benefit of the audience in the sense that the conference topics had been carefully planned.

As part of the conference, the student organizers had planned some additional social events for participants to enjoy. Along with a convention dinner and trips to do sightseeing in the city of Brno, there were theatre events. Being in the Czech Republic for this conference was the perfect time to learn about Czech theatre. I attended the excellent "Physical Poetry" performance of Petr Vasa, which provided suitably lively and multi-lingual entertainment. His invented language "trans-latin" was a fitting metaphor for the conference itself, which appealed to members from all corners of Europe. At this particular time in Europe's history, it is essential for us all to remember the connections we still have, despite many differences.

Concluding thoughts

Presenting at or attending the ESSE conference helps to remind us of Europe's diversity, and also what is shared by the nations which make up the European area. There is much to see and learn about life in Europe, for those who are locals, and those who have migrated to call Europe their home. At this conference, sessions on migration, travel, and the diaspora represented the energy and ideas of those people. This conference would be an ideal place from which to initiate international collaborations with colleagues in European universities. The atmosphere was friendly and welcoming, even for a first-time ESSE participant. At the time of the next conference, in 2020, the issues such as Brexit will have further influenced Europe's changing political and educational landscape. While the future in Europe is uncertain, the links between languages and culture continue to thrive in the English studies community through events such as the ESSE conference. The next conference will be held in Lyon, France, in 2020.

A Report on the ASA 2018 Conference "Shakespeare, Traffics, Tropics", May 28-30, Ateneo de Manila University and the University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City, the Republic of the Philippines

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The 3rd Asian Shakespeare Association (ASA) Conference was jointly hosted by the Ateneo de Manila University and the University of the Philippines Diliman, in Quezon City, the Philippines. The ASA was founded about five years ago to address Shakespeare studies from an Asian perspective with the inaugural 2014 Conference taking place in Taipei, and the 2016 Conference in New Delhi, which I also had the pleasure to attend. The biennial ASA conference highlights how Shakespeare's influence is indeed global, not of an age, and expanding with no end in sight.

This conference is a complete experience with top-notch plenaries and sessions, cultural tours, food, and performances. In 2014 the featured plenary was given by Michael Dobson, Director of the Shakespeare Institute at the University of Birmingham, and this year by Peter Holland, Director of the International Shakespeare Association. The session topics ranged from Shakespeare in film, current novels, literary theory, education, and performance. A few of the education-related sessions were concerned with using Shakespeare's literature in language teaching. Two creative interdisciplinary talks in one of the education sessions were psychological in nature: helping victims of police brutality, grieving parents and family, deal with their tragic losses through Shakespeare studies, and resident psychiatrists performing case studies using *Hamlet*. Two workshops were of Japanese origin: "Performance" with the Artistic Director of Yamanote Jijosha, Masahiro Yasuda, and "Shakespeare and Manga" with manga artist Harumo Sanazaki.

The day before the conference there was a tour of Old Town Manila and the first of many nightly performances: *The Taming of the Shrew*. The after-dinner performances meant that each day went well into the evening, but there was ample time to reenergize at the included daily breakfast, breaks, lunch, and dinner which were full of an array of tasty Philippine dishes. More importantly, the conference is small enough that it feels intimate, and the schedule is such that breaks and meals afford time for quality conversations. Besides *The Taming of the Shrew,* there was a Yamanote Jijosha viewing of *The Tempest* (originally intended to be live, but it proved too costly to bring the

whole company), *MacBeth* by a six-member group from Malaysia, traditional Philippine music, and *RD3RD,* a chillingly poignant Philippine adaptation of *Richard III*.

      RD3RD deftly uses video montage and Tagalog interjections to superimpose Rodrigo Duterte, the president of the Philippines, onto Shakespeare's psychopath character Richard III. Just dealing with the repulsive yet intriging Richard III takes emotional stamina, but the painful images of the trauma inflicted by state sponsored vigilante deaths of street children in Duterte's war on drugs was crippling. The real atrocities and twisted verse defiled the audience with the inhumanity of our species. Stating there was not a dry eye in the house belittles the effect. By some estimates 20,000 street children have been killed by the vigilante authorities and the creators of *RD3RD* wanted to address that. In attendance was the recently ousted, a few weeks prior to the conference, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Maria Lourdes Sereno, who had opposed Duterte's methods as illegal. There was a question and answer session with the cast and director following the performance at which the director said that the authorities know of *RD3RD*, but as it reaches so few people, and perhaps worse than being forcibly shut down, it has been ignored.

Announcements

women: poetry: migration
Poems: New & Selected

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women: poetry: migration

From Judith Roitman (2018):

> This anthology presents poems of 50 women writing, as Jane Joritz-Nakagawa says in her introduction, "innovative/experimental/avant-garde/adventurous" poetry, who live lives displaced from their origin. That is the premise. By collecting this work by that set of criteria and no other, Joritz-Nakagawa, an American living in Japan, has created a wide-ranging and generous survey of contemporary poetics, granting each poet after her poems a space for a short essay about her process or poetics or whatever seems germane. Rather than the criteria for inclusion limiting the result, it liberates it to include many more forms/techniques/attitudes/poetics than most anthologies.
>
> Many of these poets are also displaced from the language[s] of their childhood, writing in perhaps that first (or more) language(s) or perhaps in the language of the place in which they find themselves or perhaps others although mostly in English (but not all). Many of the essays look at this double-or-more-ness of language.

   women: poetry: migration – an anthology edited by Jane Joritz-Nakagawa – comprises poetry by women living outside their homeland. Throughout this collection the prefix "trans" goes far. Transportation, transmigration, transcendence, translation and, of course, transformation are key for these poetic travelers who are experiencing what it is like to live and think in a country other than one's birthplace. They have crossed not only physical boundaries, but that of voice. I was drawn to the unique ways in which poems mentioned language – thereby giving us two experiences in one. We are engaged in the meaning of each written piece while also being made aware of the complexities of language-making.

   As a reader, I found myself intrigued by a keen attention to words, their aural qualities. This is second nature for those speaking/writing in their native tongue. These are matters we rarely think of in daily conversation. When entering a foreign place though, one becomes conscious of how sounds form words as well as syntax, the sequencing of words to form a poem.
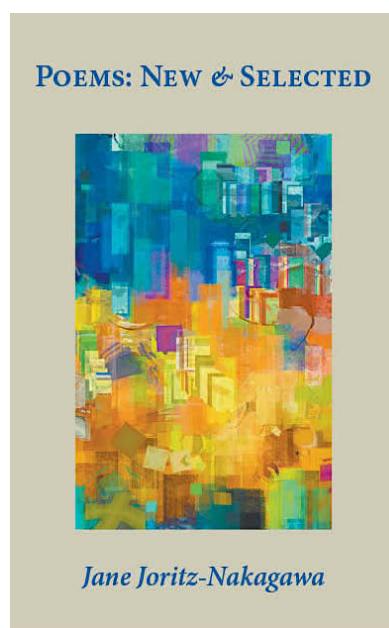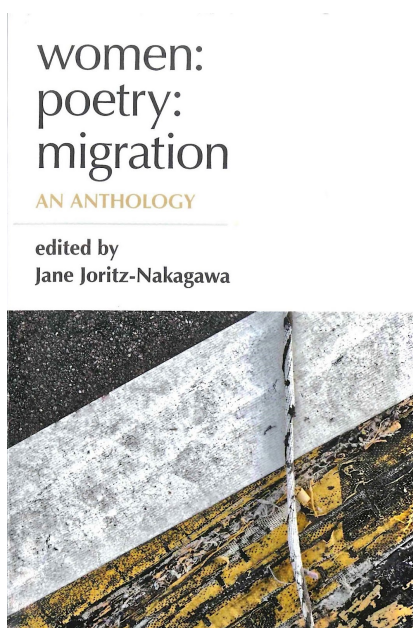
Poems: New & Selected

Poems: New & Selected includes excerpts from Jane Joritz-Nakagawa's moving new poem, "Plan B Audio," together with generous selections from her fourteen previous ground-breaking publications – ranging from *SkinMuseum* (2006) to *Distant Landscapes* (2017) – and an insightful foreword by poet and translator Eric Selland (2018), who writes:

> "Joritz-Nakagawa's poetics is unique in the generation which came of age during the period when the LANGUAGE movement was at its peak. Hers is a radically open form – a framework through which the data of life, poetic themes and materials, freely migrate. She does not reject the personal, but she does not privilege it either. It is simply part of the data. And yet one senses a personal warmth, the presence of an intelligent observer in Jane's work. What we experience as readers is not 'the death of the author' – the poetic subject has simply become more complex. For Jane, as with Blanchot, the poem never ends. It is an infinitely open system, always searching for that which is unexplainable and unattainable: the poem is constantly in search of itself…. The selection here provides an excellent introduction to a poetry whose depth increases with each reading, and which draws us further in, and along, leaving us wanting more."

And according to Ron Silliman,

> "Jane Joritz-Nakagawa's poetry has moved to a place in which the territory between poem and book have blurred, even as the writing and Joritz-Nakagawa's perceptions have sharpened…. At core, Joritz-Nakagawa is more a descriptive poet, but without the austerity that so often accompanies that aesthetic, than a metaphoric one. My favorite moments – there are many – come when she builds a rapid-fire linkage of seeming opposites into larger structures that feel deeply inevitable, like life itself."

59

Jane Joritz-Nakagawa, *Poems: New & Selected*
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Editorial Policy

The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching, the refereed research journal of the Literature in Language Teaching (LiLT) Special Interest Group, invites research articles and research reports on using literature in language classrooms in Japanese and mainly Asian contexts. Submissions from international contexts are accepted based on overall interest and applicability to the journal's readership. Further details can be found at <liltsig.org>

The editors encourage submissions in eight categories:

.   (1) FEATURE ARTICLES: Full-length articles, (Feature Articles, FA) detailing research or discussing theoretical issues. Between 2500-4000 words.

.   (2) LITERATURE IN PRACTICE: Slightly shorter, more directly practical than Feature Articles. Descriptions of how teachers use literature in their classes. Explain clearly for other teachers to be able to readily apply. 2000-3000 words.
Note: On occasion, select "My Share" style activities of how literature was used or advanced in your lessons may also be accepted (see [8] below).

.   (3) Interviews with SIG members: about themselves, their ideas and their teaching experiences using literature. Maximum 2500 words.

.   (4) Write-ups by presenters themselves of their recent presentations (format somewhat akin to proceedings)

.   (5) Conference reports by attendees at literature-themed events.

.   (6) Comments on previously published *LiLT Journal* articles (*Talk back*).

.   (7) Book and media reviews (*Reviews*).

.   (8) "My Share" description of original, effective activities for promoting literature.

Articles should be written for a general audience of language educators; therefore statistical techniques and specialized terms should be clearly explained.

*Authors are solely responsible for the accuracy of references and reference citations.

Style
With slight modifications for appearance, this journal follows the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th edition. We recommend that authors consult recent copies of this journal for examples of documentation and references. For consistency, *please use American punctuation conventions*. Carefully formatted submissions in Pages, MS Word or Libre Office in Times New Roman (font size 12) are fine.