Explorations in Teacher Education

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Contents

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And Now a Word from...The Editor

Welcome to Volume 15, Issue 3, the Summer 2007 edition of Explorations in Teacher Education, the newsletter of the JALT Teacher Education Special Interest Group (TE SIG).

This issue we have four articles, one from our esteemed Treasurer, Michael Crawford, another from Steve Darn, Robert Ledbury and Ian White, one by the infamous James Porcaro, and one by Andrew McInulty. There is also an interview by Paul Tanner and Peter Hoare with Grant Trew, an expert on the TOEIC test.

Once again I am completing this issue in Normandy. Working on Explorations in Teacher Education seems to have a jinx-type effect on the weather in Northern France. Last time I faced driving snow (through the window) and this time it is driving rain. Oh well, so much for the summer. Perhaps I should rename this the “Aquaplanage 2007 issue” rather than the “Summer issue”!

I should add that due to some unforeseen delays in the editing process I am now completing this issue back in Nagoya in early October, so “Summer” is a bit of a misnomer. Oh well.

Anyway, moving right along, what do we have to look forward to in the coming months? Well, the JALT National Conference and the TE SIG General Meeting and Elections of course. More details on that in the next, conference, issue. One of our estimable leaders, Chris Stillwell has roused himself from his slumbers and organised some TE SIG events for the early autumn. Based at Kanda University in Chiba, they look to be interesting and I hope to get along to at least one of them. If you would like further details please contact Chris < stillwel(at)kanda.kuis.ac.jp > or Colin Graham, the Membership Chair, at < colin_sumikin(at)yahoo.co.uk >.

Well, that's about all from me. The next issue will be ready before the JALT National Conference. Hope you enjoy this belated issue.

Simon Lees
Editor

Using CBI in Pre-Service Teacher Training: A course description of "Materials in ELT"

Michael J. Crawford, Hokkaido University of Education (Hakodate Campus)

Introduction

Pre-service English teacher trainees in Japan face a double challenge. Not only must they learn a great deal about education, linguistics, and psychology, but they also have to improve their English skills. As a teacher trainer at a university in Japan, I have sought ways to help learners confront these challenges. One solution that I believe may be effective is content-based instruction (CBI). With CBI, teacher trainees can effectively kill two birds with one stone. They can gain knowledge about areas relevant to teaching English, and at the same time they can improve their English language skills.

To date, there has been little research about using CBI in pre-service teacher training in Japan. Research on a number of issues is needed, but before this is done, descriptions of the kinds of CBI being utilized in this context are called for. In a previous paper (Crawford, 1999), I described a content-based linguistics course for English teacher trainees, focusing on several issues relating to its development and implementation. In this paper, I will describe a similar course that focused on theory and practice of materials in ELT. The description of the course, including the results of a simple survey of the students enrolled in it, will be preceded by a short overview of pre-service teacher training in Japan.

Pre-service English teacher training in Japan

The pre-service training of English teachers in Japan is conducted at universities of education (*kyouiku daigaku*), regular four-year universities, and two-year junior colleges. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, or Monkasho, sets guidelines for this training, but there is some variation in program content from school to school.

In 1999, the Monkasho revised the guidelines for teaching training programs. A major change instituted at that time was an increase in the number of courses related to pedagogy and psychology, and a significant reduction in the number of specialized subject area courses (Yonesaka, 1999). Specialized subject courses are divided into four areas of study, one of

which is English communication. Accordingly, as a result of the 1999 revision, the number of courses aimed specifically at developing trainees' English language skills was reduced significantly.

According to Muranoi (2001), the Monkasho's 1999 revision to teacher training program is problematic because it does not allow trainees the opportunity to develop the English skills that they will need once they become teachers. To solve this problem, he proposed the establishment of proficiency guidelines for aspiring English teachers and argues that a certain level of proficiency be required of teachers before they are awarded a teacher's license.

In 2003, the Monkasho published a policy document that includes guidelines similar to what Muronoi (2001) proposed. The document, entitled "Action plan to cultivate 'Japanese with English abilities'" (Ministry of Education, 2003), states that English teachers' proficiency should be equivalent to the pre-first level of the STEP test, or a score of 550 on the TOEFL or 730 on the TOEIC. This plan includes provisions for intensive in-service training for practicing teachers, but Takahashi (2004) argues that these short-term programs are far from sufficient.

The establishment of proficiency standards and in-service training for English teachers in Japan is a step in the right direction, but in order for the majority of teachers to actually meet these standards, improvements to pre-service training programs are essential. Teacher trainees need sufficient opportunities to develop their English skills before they become teachers. One potentially effective way of doing this is to teach courses that are not specifically language courses in English. The remainder of this paper will describe a course that did just that.

Course description

Basic information about the course

The course, entitled 'Materials in ELT,' was taught in the fall semester of 2005 at the Hokkaido University of Education, Hakodate Campus. It was an elective course specifically designed for students who were planning to obtain an English teacher's license upon graduation. In the course I will describe here, there were 9 students, 6 English majors and 3 Global Education majors. All were third-year undergraduate students.

Course objectives

The objectives of the course were as follows:

1. Familiarize students with English-language publications relevant to ELT materials and materials development.
2. Improve students' ability to read about and discuss ELT materials and materials development.
3. Give students opportunities to practice using classroom English.
4. Provide students with an opportunity to increase their repertoire of teaching ideas and activities.

Course activities

The following were the main activities undertaken in the course in order to achieve the objectives stated above.

1. Reading articles

Students read articles in English-language publications about trends in ELT materials and practical teaching ideas. After considering a number of possible print and Internet publications, the following were chosen as sources for articles: *The Language Teacher*, *ELT Journal*, *English Teaching Professional*, *Dave's ESL Café*, and *Internet TESL Journal*. Common to all of these publications is that they contain articles describing teaching ideas, or articles that contain information directly related to the practice of teaching. The articles tend to be relatively short and written in a straightforward manner, and accordingly are more accessible than articles published in journals such as *Applied Linguistics* or *JALT Journal*.

For the most part, students read articles for homework before coming to class. In class, for articles about trends in ELT, I initiated discussion by asking specific questions. I then divided the class into 3 groups (of 3 students each), gave each group a list of discussion questions, and asked them to discuss them in their groups. After the groups had finished their discussions, a representative from each group was chosen to summarize briefly their group's discussion.

At the beginning of the semester, several articles on practical teaching ideas were given to the students for homework. In class, students were asked to point out the strengths and weaknesses of the activities in the articles, and to discuss whether they would be feasible in English classes in Japan. Additionally, students were asked to explain how they could modify

the activities to make them more appropriate for students in specific contexts. The purpose of this was to prepare students for their teaching demonstrations (described below).

2. Teaching demonstrations

Teaching demonstrations formed an important part of the course. Students were asked to find articles in the journals cited above and demonstrate one of more of the activities described therein. In their demonstrations, the students first introduced the activity by explaining its purpose and its intended audience. They then demonstrated the activity by using the remaining students in the class as pupils. After this demonstration, they concluded by pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of the activity and suggesting potential modifications.

During the course of the semester, students did several "mini-presentations" from 5 to 7 minutes long, and two full-length presentations that were from 15 to 20 minutes long. In both cases, the presentations were either audio or videotaped, and feedback was provided.

3. Teaching materials folder

During the semester, students gradually built up a teaching materials folder that included all of the materials that they had developed for their teaching demonstrations, as well as the materials provided by their classmates. They also wrote descriptions of and comments about activities that they read about in the sources listed above (including the ones they chose for their demonstrations). At the end of the semester, each student had an A4-size "clear file" that was filled with teaching materials and descriptions of teaching ideas.

Grading

Students' grades were based on attendance and participation, written comments about teaching ideas, teaching demonstrations, and the teaching materials folder.

Course evaluation: Students' impressions

On the last day of class, students were asked to fill out a simple survey about the class. One student was absent, so 8 out of the 9 students responded. The survey consisted of 24 statements about the course which students read and rated on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree somewhat, no opinion, disagree somewhat, strongly disagree). The survey was not piloted, nor was its reliability or validity examined, so no firm conclusions can be drawn from it. However, the survey does provide some potentially useful information

about students' impressions of the class, so the results will be described below. Due to space limitations, only the most relevant items on the survey will be discussed.

Students were asked to rate statements that queried their overall impressions of the course. Table 1 presents these results.

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	No opinion	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I enjoyed this class.	7 (87.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0	0	0
2. I learned new things in this class.	7 (87.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0	0	0
3. I'm glad I took this class.	6 (75%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0	0
4. I improved my English in this class.	2 (25%)	3 (37.5%)	2 (25%)	1 (12.5%)	0
5. This class was difficult.	0	2 (25%)	2 (25%)	4 (50%)	

Table 1: Overall impressions of the course: number of respondents (% of total)

Overall, the students' impressions of the course appear to be generally positive. Students reported that they enjoyed the course and learned new things in it. However, 3 students appear not to have felt that they improved their English in the course. Considering that the main motivation behind conducting the course in English was to give students an opportunity to improve their English skills, this is a cause for concern and requires further investigation.

Students were also asked to rate statements about the readings selected for the course. Table 2 presents these results.

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	No opinion	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
6. The readings for the class were interesting.	2 (25%)	5 (62.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0	0
7. I want to look at the journals and Internet sites again in the future.	5 (62.5%)	2 (25%)	1 (12.5%)	0	0
8. I would rather have read articles in Japanese in this class.	0	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (25%)	4 (50%)
9. I want to read more things about English education *in English*.	3 (37.5%)	4 (50%)	1 (12.5%)	0	0

Table 2: Impressions of the readings: number of respondents (% of total)

The results show that for the most part students found the readings to be interesting, and that they want to look at the sources for the readings again. Only 1 student responded that s/he would rather have read articles in Japanese than in English, and 7 out of the 8 students wrote that they would like to read more about English education *in English*.

Table 3 summarizes the results of responses about the teaching demonstrations.

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	No opinion	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
10. I enjoyed doing the teaching demonstrations.	3 (37.5%)	4 (50%)	1 (12.5)	0	0
11. If I become a teacher, I want to try the activities that I demonstrated.	7 (87.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0		0
12. It was hard to speak all in English when doing the demonstrations.	2 (25%)	3 (37.5%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)

Table 3: Impressions of teaching demonstrations: number of respondents (% of total)

These results are generally positive. The students appeared to enjoy doing the demonstrations, and would like to try using them if they become teachers. However, it does appear that doing the demonstrations completely in English was challenging for some students.

Course evaluation: Teacher's impressions

Overall, the class went smoothly, and it appeared that the objectives set out in the syllabus were met. Much of the credit for this goes to the students, who demonstrated a high level of interest in learning about materials in ELT as well as improving their English skills. Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of the class was grading students' materials folders at the end of the semester. The students had accumulated material for many activities for teaching English, and several students commented that they intended to continue adding materials to their folders. It is hoped that this will help the students be successful teachers after graduation.

Despite the fact that the class appeared to be successful overall, there is room for improvement. For example, when students discussed articles in groups, in some cases there was not enough real discussion. Rather, students simply answered one question and went on to the next one without any further discussion. It is important to find ways to encourage students to engage in more thorough discussion. Another problem was with the teaching demonstrations. Some students' critiques of the activities they presented were insufficient as they just said that the activities were fun or interesting. It is important to find ways to encourage students to think more deeply about the strengths and weaknesses of the activities they present.

Conclusion

Pre-service teacher trainees in Japan need to learn a great deal about areas related to English education, but they also need to improve their own English language skills. Unfortunately, changes to the guidelines the Monkasho has established for these programs have made it more difficult for trainees to meet both of these challenges. One potential solution for this problem is to teach courses that are not specifically language courses in English.

In this paper, I described a CBI course for pre-service teacher trainees taught in English that focused on materials in ELT. The purpose of the course was to teach students about the theory and practice of materials and materials development, and also allow them to improve their English skills. Overall, the course appeared to be a success. Students worked hard and participated actively in the course, and provided generally positive feedback in a simple survey conducted at the end of the semester. However, it must be emphasized that the work presented here in this paper is only preliminary, and much further research is required before

it can be said with confidence that CBI deserves a broader role in pre-service teacher education in Japan. For the time being, it is hoped that more teachers who are involved in pre-service teacher training and are using CBI will share their experiences by describing the courses they are teaching.

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Teacher Development in a Context of Expansion – a Case Study from Turkey

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Context

There is an ever-growing body of literature concerning the need for teacher development, teacher training and teacher education in English language teaching. Possibly because ELT is primarily a private sector enterprise, or possibly because teaching language is a more complex process than teaching a content-based subject, training methodology has lagged behind classroom methodology in a way which is not paralleled by the basic pedagogic training of subject teachers in the state sector, at least throughout the European Union.

Notwithstanding the problematic nature of language teaching, various training methodologies have emerged. ELT has recognised the existing limitations of its professional structure and the consequent need for ongoing training and development, particularly in light of the minimal initial training which most native-speaker English language teachers receive.

The majority of literature on training methodology comes from experienced and enlightened teachers and trainers, often working in training establishments or independently, free from economic and institutional constraints. The best training, it would appear, takes place in dynamic, informed 'learning schools', which, one suspects, are few and far between in reality.

'*A school culture in which the entire staff is encouraged to engage in personal learning which feeds organisational transformation, and vice-versa.'* (The Learning School - Adrian Underhill)

The School of Foreign Languages at the Izmir University of Economics, located on the Aegean coast of Turkey, is an example of an institution where the development of teacher support and education and the development of the organisation are, it may be argued, not always at a point of congruence. There are a number of possible reasons for this imbalance:

- Rate of growth of the institution
- Diversity of teacher needs
- Cultural factors, both in teacher expectations and management attitudes
- The relationship between economics, ease and quality

Growth

The Izmir University of Economics (IUE) is a private English-medium university, now in its sixth year. Over this brief period the student population has expanded to over 5000, Over one thousand students each year are required to take an intensive foundation year in English, while the School of Foreign Languages also services support courses in the faculties and second foreign language courses. Over the same period, the number of instructors in the School of Foreign Languages has grown to nearly 200, including some 50 teachers of languages other than English, and around 40 native-speakers of English. Meanwhile, the Teacher Development Unit has grown from a single trainer to a core of five, with the potential for assistance from a few experienced teachers and coordinators.

In Turkey, English language teaching has lagged behind the mainstream for some time, clinging to traditional approaches and rote learning techniques. Many local teachers tend to be married women seeking to earn a second family income. A minority has graduated from faculties of education, while others have taken a one-year postgraduate teaching qualification. Few are aware of the possibilities of in-service training. Similarly, school and university administrations in general have a somewhat limited notion of what teacher development actually involves. In the private sector, the well-established and prestigious Bilkent University in Ankara has a flourishing training unit, founded on overseas expertise, and other universities have replicated the model. Meanwhile, native-speaker teachers are employed both for their knowledge and as a marketing tool and are utilised in a variety of capacities such as running ‘conversation’ classes. Minimum standards in terms of recruitment are loosely defined.

Diversity of needs and policy

The consequence is a huge variety of needs in terms of language competence, pre-service training, orientation for foreign staff, qualifications and motivation levels, leaving teacher educators with a plethora of options in terms of the provision of opportunities for in-service training and development. The composition of the teaching community at IUE is not atypical:

	L1 (foreign)	L2 (local)
Qualifications	DELTA (rare), Masters	DELTA (rare), Masters
	CELTA or equivalent	CELTA or ICELT (rare)
	Other subject qualifications	Language / Literature graduates
	Other ELT qualifications	One year postgraduate training
	No ELT qualifications	Education faculty graduates
Experience	University / High School / Language School Substantial Some Minimal None	

Under these circumstances, the Teacher Development Unit at IUE has adopted an umbrella policy. Stated simply:

To provide in-service support and development to enable teachers to achieve their full potential.

Similarly, the objectives of the unit are limited, but encompass both internal and external training possibilities, and considerations of the needs of both teachers and the institution:

- To manage the effective development of the Teacher Development Unit in cooperation with the School of Foreign Languages (SFL) management.
- To ensure that staff induction and orientation meet the requirements of teachers with increasingly varied interests, needs and experience, and the requirements of the institution.
- To develop and expand a range of short courses available to teachers.
- To meet the needs of all teachers through the development of a range of internationally validated courses.
- To develop an observation program within the SFL.
- To deliver a program of workshops and seminars on a variety of curriculum and materials related topics, and to invite guest speakers, including members of staff, to contribute to the program.
- To organise, in cooperation with SFL management, ELT events that promote IUE as a centre of excellence in foreign language teaching in the region.

In many ways, the above is a realistic attempt to establish a base level of methodological knowledge and other standards which may not have been established during the planning stage of the university. It is also far removed from the ideals of the 'learning organisation' in which teachers are assumed to need to:

•Engage in self-reflection and evaluation
•Develop specialised knowledge and skills
•Expand and update their knowledge of theory and issues in teaching
•Take on new roles and responsibilities
•Develop collaborative relationships

Constraints

In their recent book *'Professional Development for Language Teachers'*, Richards and Farrell list eleven recognised modes of teacher development (adapted):

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•Workshops	•Teaching portfolios
•Self-monitoring	•Case studies
•Teacher support groups	•Mentoring
•Keeping a journal	•Peer coaching
•Peer observation	•Team teaching
	•Action research

The above list makes major assumptions about the existing state of teacher development, motivation levels and basic standards within an institution, and for IUE and many other institutions the implementation of such a set of strategies would be a clear case of running before walking. The major characteristic of the list is that all the action points, with the exception of workshops, depend on teacher initiative and are merely facilitated by teacher educators. Such motivation is not always an intrinsic characteristic. Motivation for learning in the classroom is high when manageable tasks are set, and in the same way, motivation for development can only be present if the job in hand is also perceived to be manageable. Given the demands of the curriculum, a time schedule dominated by regular testing, and little obvious/apparent reward in the way of communicative competence from their learners, teachers have limited time or motivation to indulge in self actualisation. Meanwhile, the institution, largely proficiency orientated and content with internal success, remains unaware of its role in providing extrinsic motivation to satisfy psychological needs. Borrowing from

Maslow's hierarchy, these might include challenging projects, opportunities for innovation and creativity, learning at a high level, important projects, recognition of strengths and intelligence, prestige and status. On a basic level, what is missing is the encouragement of initiative and reward for extra effort.

The role of the Teacher Development Unit, at this stage, has therefore evolved into one of ongoing training and facilitating. Teacher education is seen as two continua, those of training to development, and dependence to autonomy. The objectives of the unit are now seen as stages of these continua:

training ***development***

Imposed (real or perceived)	**Available and voluntary**	**Self-actuated but facilitated**
• Observations by coordinators • TDU observations & feedback • Workshops	• Short courses • Consultation and advice • Externally validated courses	• Peer observations • Journals and other forms of writing • Support groups • Action research

dependence ***autonomy***

There might also be a third continuum; that between the necessary and the desirable. Cultural factors come into play here, since both teachers and coordinators place a high value on experience and performance, the outcome being that judgementalism is both expected and practised. Whilst observations carried out by the TDU are designed to be constructive and developmental, many teachers have come to view these, and attendance at regular workshops, as part of the assessment process.

Requisite preconditions

The TDU is also responsible for providing support to teachers of languages other than English (French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian and Japanese). The context here is rather different, since these programs are much less intensive, and total numbers of both students and teachers are considerably lower, though class sizes are similar. Possibly as a consequence of these and other factors, 'take-up' for teacher development from this sector is high, as is teacher motivation and level of appreciation. Relative success in this area may

provide indicators of circumstances conducive to more productive activity on a broader scale:

•Size of departments. The 'second language' departments are relatively small. Communication and diffusion of information is readily achieved.

•Organisation of departments. The second language departments have a simple hierarchy consisting of a coordinator/head and teachers. Information is imparted directly. The departments are compact in that each occupies a spatial unit. Distance is not an obstacle to face-to-face contact.

•Involvement of coordinators. Given that some of the second language departments are relatively new, and all are expanding, coordinators are seeking out avenues of development and assistance.

•Independence. The second language departments tend to operate relatively independently and are able to implement whatever seems to benefit both teachers and learners.

•Bilingual or multilingual trainer. The trainer needs to have a working knowledge of the target language to be able to follow lessons. Feedback is often conducted in a mixture of English, the target language and the host language, Turkish.

•Novelty and new experience. There is an appetite for new ideas. Many of the second language teachers have had solid general training but are unfamiliar with ELT methodology, which they find new and stimulating.

•Attitudes and enthusiasm. In smaller departments it is easier to strike a balance between youth and experience, a symbiosis which produces a combination of learning and enthusiasm.

•'Take up'. This involves three stages of acceptance; willingness to participate, willingness to implement, and a desire for ongoing development. In smaller departments, there is a close conformity to Everett Rogers' model of the diffusion of innovation. The stages of diffusion - awareness, interest, trial, evaluation and adoption are seen to be in progress. The 'innovators' and 'early adopters' are easily identified and targeted, while teachers who are less receptive are few in number.

Whither next?

The teacher trainers/developers/educators in this case study have recognised that in order to achieve teacher development targets, there needs to be change which brings both teachers and the institution closer to the concept of the learning organisation. This realisation, in itself, has produced a change in the definition of the trainers' role which is now seen as combining

both ‘trainer-down’ and ‘trainer-up’ strategies in an attempt to promote an ‘educational ecosystem’. The development plan for the Teacher Development Unit now includes not only the existing array of activities, but also a set of macro-policies designed to allow change to occur at other levels:

- Foster collegial and self development
- Set minimum standards for recruitment
- Build in staff development time
- Restructure and reorganise (spatially)
- Expand / stabilise
- Encourage interdisciplinary cooperation
- Make recommendations to administration
- Encourage openness, both internally and externally

This case study is one of experience, experimentation, successes and failures, and a good deal of reflection. The product, while the mission of the Teacher Development unit still stands, is a philosophy towards development based on simple advice:

- Accept what is currently practicable
- Deliver what is necessary
- Recognise constraints
- Set manageable targets
- Aim for what is desirable in the long term
- Be flexible

By following this self-directed advice and by turning a philosophy into a practicable policy, and by endeavouring to affect change from within, it is hoped that the learning organisation may become more of an achievable reality than a purely idealistic notion.

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Note: This article is based on a presentation given by the authors at the IATEFL Teacher Trainers' and Educators' SIGs / Başkent University conference, Ankara, May 2006.

Speech Contests: Evaluation, Judging, and Participation

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Introduction

Speech contests are a staple of the English language learning environment in Japan. With more than two decades of experience here as an English language instructor, including teaching a course in public speaking and coaching numerous students for speech contests, and as an organizer and chief judge of speech contests, I share in this article my views and advice on the conduct of speech contests and students' participation in these events.

I furnish the detailed speech evaluation form that is used by judges in the annual speech contest for middle and high school students sponsored by my university. The writing of their speeches and the preparation for presentation of their speeches should be governed by the criteria by which they will be judged. Thus, it is important for teachers who work with students to understand well the criteria, to communicate the essential points to their students, and to guide them accordingly in their work. The criteria in the evaluation form shown here should serve students and teachers well in preparing for any speech contest.

I also offer some comments on the audience reaction to a speech and judges' evaluation of it, which should add to students' and teachers' understanding of the evaluation process and thus be helpful to them in preparing for and participating in the contests more successfully. I selected three very memorable student speeches I have heard over the past many years and offer comments as to why they were such excellent presentations, demonstrating concretely to teachers and students some of the critical elements of successful speeches. Finally, I present the procedures and manner of judging employed in the speech contests for which I serve as chief judge. Organizers and judges of other speech contests might consider this approach as a means of ensuring the most honest, transparent, and fair judging of their events.

Judges' speech evaluation form with descriptions of categories [1]

CONTENT [40 points]

·Topic Choice [The topic is interesting to the audience.]

·Organization and Development [Ideas are put together so that the audience can follow and understand them. The speech is structured around a purpose. It includes an opening, a body,

and a conclusion. It moves forward coherently and smoothly as a unified whole.]

·Speech Value [The speaker has something meaningful, substantive, and original to say.]

·Effectiveness [The speech conveys a purpose and relevance. It is interesting and engaging. The speaker accomplishes what he/she intended with the speech.]

ENGLISH [30 points]

Language Use

- Sentence Forms [variety and appropriateness of structures]
- Correctness of Expression [grammar, word usage, pronunciation]
- Word Selection [variety, accuracy, and appropriateness of word choices]

DELIVERY [30 points]

·Voice Control

- Projection [speaking loudly enough - neither too loudly nor too softly]
- Pace [speaking at good and varying rates - neither too fast nor too slowly]
- Phrasing [the grouping of words in appropriate chunks interspersed with slight pauses for easy listening]
- Intonation [speaking with proper pitch patterns and pauses]
- Pronunciation and diction [speaking clearly - without mumbling or garbling words, or with an interfering accent]

·Body Language

- Posture [standing with one's back straight and looking relaxed]
- Gestures [using a few, well-timed gestures, but nothing distracting]
- Facial Expression [used to reveal the 'emotional' side of the message]

·Audience Rapport

- Eye Contact [looking at members of the audience in the eye]
- Assurance [projecting confidence and making the audience comfortable]
- Sincerity [conveying an honest and genuine connection with the speech content, and interest in the audience]
- Audience Response [contact established with the audience, which is interested and engaged in the speech]

TOTAL POINTS: _____

RANKING: _____

Comments on the evaluation of speeches

Ideally, judges do not read the speeches of the contest speakers. Their exposure to the speeches should be only as they are presented at the contest itself, as it is a *speech* contest,

not an *essay* contest. However, sometimes this is impossible to do, especially if there has been a screening process of many submissions in order to select the finalists and that process includes one or more of the contest judges. However, if all of the judges for the contest itself are brought in only for that event, they should not be given written copies of the speeches.

The category of “English”, in fact, may be neutralized in the evaluation of the speakers. There may be little, if any, significant difference in the quality of the speeches in this category because almost always they have been corrected and “polished” by teachers or others before being submitted or, at least, before presented at the contest itself. Thus, it is very likely that “Content” and “Delivery” actually will be the decisive factors in judging the speeches. Furthermore, I believe these two factors are synergistic. As they interact, the impact of a speech and the final evaluation score may be greater or less than the simple sum of its parts. Thus, I recommend that judges take a holistic view in the evaluation of a speech.

Specifically, in a speech with great content that is delivered poorly, the merit of the content itself may be lessened as the audience loses its interest in, and even its understanding of what is said, and its connection to the speaker. Yet, it is possible for the content to be so outstanding that even some weaknesses in delivery will not deter an audience from maintaining its engagement with the speaker, and thus the content itself may lift a weak presentation to a higher level. Likewise, a speech with weak content may be elevated in the minds of the audience and the judges with a strong and effective delivery that makes the content seem more interesting and relevant than if they had just read the material on paper.

Pronunciation may be a tricky element in speech evaluation. Certainly it must be good enough for the speaker’s words, and thus the content of the speech, to be understood. However, some weaknesses that do not really interfere with the audience following the presentation or its engagement with the speaker may be dismissed in the judging. Probably the most common problem in this regard is garbled pronunciation. Students who have such difficulties must be trained to speak slowly, in a strong voice, with a carefully measured pace and phrasing that will allow listeners the maximum opportunity to follow the presentation and understand the content. Too often students speak in an unbroken and hasty monotone which compounds the negative effect of pronunciation weaknesses. At the same time, a speaker with good pronunciation and voice control, but with uninteresting, trite content in the speech may not succeed in appealing to the audience and the judges. A speech contest is not simply

a pronunciation contest.

Indeed, content tops the list on the evaluation form because a good speech begins with a student writing on an original, interesting, meaningful, and engaging topic. Unfortunately, many students start with deadly hackneyed topics, like their homestay experience or global warming, which do not get them past the preliminary judging in selecting finalists or simply do not work well in the speech competition itself. In the following section I offer some examples of the most effective speeches I have heard from students over the past two decades which provide some insight into what makes a great speech.

Lessons to learn from some great student speeches

In “People Watching”, the speaker simply told about her hobby of discretely observing people and their behaviors in various settings. She gave some examples and in each case described her actions and thoughts along with her observations so precisely and vividly, and with such delighted expression that we in the audience felt as if we were “people watching” right beside her at those moments. Her bright manner of speaking to the audience totally enveloped everyone in her presentation. She was able to engage with the audience in the most natural way. Then, at the end, just as we thought she had said her last word, after a slight pause, she added a final remark, asking the audience what we had learned about her after our astute observation of her in giving her speech, just as she had described how she learned about others from her own “people watching”. It was a brilliantly effective device that caught the audience by surprise and made us realize how totally she had commanded our attention for the previous five minutes.

In “A Cry for Help”, the speaker told about her grandmother who had senile dementia and who lived with her family. She spoke in detail and with much feeling about the care they gave to her every day. She also widened the topic by instructing the audience about the issue of elderly care in Japanese society. This was about twenty years ago, when the elderly population was only about half the percentage it is now. She delivered the speech with total command of her material, as she included some data and facts about this social issue along with the particular circumstances of her own family. It was a very informative as well as personal and heartfelt presentation. Then, just as the audience thought she had come to the end of an excellent speech, she delivered a tour de force that left almost everyone in tears. It was a truly remarkable and unintended result of the 45-second monologue in which she spoke directly to her grandmother who, of course, was not present, expressing her thoughts

and love to her. It was not just a scripted performance, but a genuine and deeply touching moment in which she was totally in control of herself delivering this stunning rhetorical device.

'Curry Rice or Rice Curry?' was a very humorous speech. The speaker, again, had the audience totally engaged with him as he spoke with the ease and comfort of a professional comic storyteller. He wondered whether the dish in question should be called “curry rice” or “rice curry”, speculating on what the differences in meaning might be. The audience was very amused, laughing aloud at times, but all the while wondering what kind of speech this was. Where, if anywhere, was he going? Where was he taking us with this intriguing, humorous, but still rather ridiculous query? Revealing his total control of his performance and the atmosphere he had created, he then acknowledged to the audience that we must be wondering why he was telling us about this rather trite matter. At that moment the several hundred heads in the audience nodded in unison. Yes, please tell us! And he did, as he acknowledged again, now that he had captured our full attention. He went on to deliver the message of his speech, which was simply that we should always ask questions, even about what seems commonplace and assumed truth. He added the words of Thomas Edison to support his point. He accomplished the purpose of his speech with a brilliantly scripted device.

Recommended procedures and manner of judging for speech contests

Following are the instructions I set for the judges of speech contests for which I serve as chief judge. They may serve others to ensure that their speech contests are conducted with the utmost integrity. Students who participate in these contests invest a great amount of effort, energy, and emotion. They deserve nothing less than to be judged with the highest level of honesty, transparency, and fairness.

Each speaker is evaluated solely and entirely on the merits of his/her presentation at the contest itself, according to the items on the Speech Evaluation Form and without any consideration whatsoever of any other factors of any kind. Judges must not have the written copies of the speeches during the judging and thus make no reference to them.

Each judge may use the Speech Evaluation Form in the manner he/she desires. For example, while each speech is being presented they may want to make notes on the sheet or use a system of pluses and minuses to rate each speaker. When each speech is

completed, judges enter the total points at the bottom. When all the speakers have finished their presentations, the judges can easily determine their ranking of the speakers from their point totals. No ties are allowed in the rankings.

Each judge evaluates each speaker entirely independently, without any discussion whatsoever with any other judge. A judge may not in any way, intentionally or unintentionally, attempt to influence, persuade, cajole, or otherwise interfere in any way with the total independence of each other judge and his/her evaluations and rankings of the speakers.

After the presentations, when the judges gather in privacy, a simple tally of the rankings of all the judges is made and thereby the winners are determined. A judge may not alter his/her ranking of the speakers during or after the tallying. There is absolutely no talk among the judges about the speakers and their evaluations of the speakers during this process. Judging, in fact, is done in the auditorium as the judges hear the speeches, not afterwards by negotiation in the back room.

In the case two or more speakers are tied for the top placements to receive awards, they are ranked head-to-head from the original rankings of the judges and a tally is taken to determine the tie-breaking placements.

Judging is entirely confidential and it is inappropriate for any judge to comment in any way to any of the speakers on his/her speech presentation or to anyone else. The head judge may make some general comments to all the speakers and the audience prior to the announcement of the winners and presentation of the awards.

Conclusion

Students' participation in English speech contests can be a beneficial and productive endeavor for their gaining greater comfort, confidence and capability in their communicative use of the language. To enhance their chances for a high level of achievement in such contests it is important that they and their teachers know and address the elements of evaluation of the speeches. At the same time, it is the duty of those responsible for the organization and conduct of the speech contest itself to ensure that it operates at the highest level of integrity, with a fair, honest, and transparent manner of judging. I hope that the remarks in this article will contribute to the successful performance of students who participate in speech contests and to the successful conduct of the contests themselves.

[1] Some items and descriptions in the Speech Evaluation Form are taken from Yamashiro, A. & Johnson, J. (1997). Public Speaking in EFL: Elements for Course Design. *The Language Teacher, 21* (4), p. 14.

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Models of Reading

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In most mainstream literacy literature, you will find models of reading classified as 'bottom-up', 'top-down' or 'interactive', but how do each of these models need to be reconceptualised when referring to EFL Japanese learners in a tertiary college setting?

Each of the above three models found in most mainstream literacy literature most definitely need to be reconceptualised when referring to EFL learners or for that matter any specific group of learners. One of the main reasons for this is that students have different reading abilities, possess different background knowledge, and have different linguistic competencies. The models provide useful descriptions of the reading process but to understand and define literacy is impossible because it is forever changing and is never agreed upon. Day and Bamford find the models unhelpful as they 'polarise a description of how mental processes interact with text features in fluent reading comprehension (1998, p.12). I agree with this but state that they also provide a base from which an informed teacher can utilise and manipulate to suit the uniqueness that every classroom setting offers. Japanese tertiary student learners fall into this category.

The bottom-up model

The bottom-up approach is a data driven process in which the reader decodes letter-by-letter and word-by-word and reassembles the pieces into meaning. Reading occurs as a series of sequential steps as the accumulation of discrete skills help perception become interpretation. One of the advantages of this approach is that since text operates at a number of different levels, the approach sequentially deals with each level as meaning is constructed. At discourse level, syntactic organisation is dealt with, at word level lexical and vocabulary items are reviewed and phoneme and grapheme items are developed, all playing a role in the move towards automaticity. Strategies involved in making meaning are not only functioning at the lower order level through this approach. The approach as mentioned is sequential and therefore higher order processes, it can be assumed will be confronted once lower order skills have been learned. Thus, if the approach were to see its course, at the cognitive level ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings could be utilised.

The purpose of this paper is not to highlight specifically the problems of each reading model

but to reconceptualise and reconfigure them in a way, which will ultimately benefit the EFL learner. First of all the bottom-up model appears to be extremely fragmented as too many separate pieces of information need to be stored in order that each discrete skill can work to achieve comprehension. In an EFL environment, this could easily lead to memory overload and produce an extremely negative affective influence on English as a written mode as the learner slowly and painfully decodes. With regard to the learners I am focussing on in this essay, Japanese tertiary students, they are already capable of utilizing bottom-up processing skills. These skills have been acquired through six years of English study and so it may be more useful to make students aware of the benefits of a more holistic or more global top-down approach.

This model and all models of reading are incomplete and so it really comes down to the role of the teacher and to what he/she feels is needed by the learners in a particular situation and at a specific time. The bottom-up approach is prescriptive but this can be beneficial with complete beginners. Decoding skills are essential from the outset when working with beginners and the building up of phonemic awareness is of vital importance. Beck and Juel describe this awareness as 'essential ingredients' in the reading process (1992, p.112). What the teacher needs to judge and be aware of is that phonetic decoding is only a tool in the process that leads to reading comprehension. As no heirarchy of skills exist in the quest to become an effective reader, early reading skills that are taught under the bottom-up model must relate to the text that is read. By engaging in text, meanings are not merely extracted and represented independently but become part of the in-class-mediation-process (Wallace, 1992, p.62). For the EFL learner, traditional approaches to reading supported by the bottom-up model are essential but an understanding of text and context and the utilization of a holistic view of reading are also requirements. Clarke emphasises this when he argues that a problem arises when phonological, syntactic and semantic discourse cues are taught in isolation before learners have really learned what they are, where they occur in texts and the contextual differences that exist in texts (Clarke in Carrell et.al, 1982, p.120).

At an EFL elementary level, this sort of processing mentioned is difficult to implement but with a strong focus on meaning making through the study of discrete skills in a program that emphasises phonemic awareness, the more global aspects of text can be introduced and a metalanguage established. Using the bottom-up approach in this manner will also balance the different levels and experiences that EFL learners bring to the classroom.

The top-down model

The top-down approach is a concept driven reading process and emerged from the psycholinguistic research of Goodman 1971 and Smith 1971. Goodman famously referred to the reading process as a 'psycholinguistic guessing game' (In Singer and Ruddell, 1976 p.135), where efficient readers he believed did not need to use all of the textual cues available in order to comprehend. This approach purports that both intelligence and experience are needed (all Japanese tertiary student learners do not necessarily possess these qualities) but supports the learner as it 'makes use of all that the reader brings to the text' (Nuttall, 1996, p.17).

The approach uses a number of strategies in the construction of meaning but a central feature of the process is the generation of hypotheses through the utilisation of schemata. The advantages of prediction making have been well documented. Predicting helps prepare the reader more fully for the reading aiding and heightening awareness of already known data. Associations are worked on at a subconscious level as schemata are activated. As readers begin to feel they know something about the text, textual clues aid comprehension, reading speed is increased and positive affective factors are heightened and anxiety is reduced. This approach assumes that higher level processes override lower level ones, as text-level semantic cues (even at sentence level (Nuttall, 1996, p.14)) de-emphasise graphophonic and syntactic accuracy.

In ESL and EFL, this approach has assumed significant status and certainly offers extremely important insights into the possible nature of the reading process. However, for Japanese tertiary students, significant problems can arise and the process needs adjusting. One problem is that of schemata. Do all Japanese tertiary students have the relevant prior knowledge of texts needed to activate schemata? Is schemata knowledge socio-culturally influenced as well as cognitively related? Wallace answers these questions when she states,

> Schemas are not just cognitive constructs to do with the mental organisation of concepts but also social-psychological constructs which allow us to attach particular values and attitudes to that knowledge (1992, p.36)

Japanese tertiary students need also to possess linguistic skills as well as text meaning in order to draw on relevant schemata. If one were to assume that L2 learners possess less discrete reading skills than L1 learners, then in order for L2 learners to utilise schemata,

more discrete skill training needs to be provided. The top-down model needs to be reconceptualised in order to provide a more supportive process in which discourse, context, and tasks are well managed, and are in line with the learner's ability and sensitive to the learner's socio-cultural knowledge.

Another problem with relying on schema is that texts vary depending upon purpose and context and so training in both formal and content schemata is essential. Tertiary student learners and Japanese learners in particular will definitely need assistance in developing formal schemata in understanding the rhetorical structure of texts. Cultural differences in text patterns can interfere in processing and must be taken into account.

The top-down approach perceives the reading process as a cognitive one whereby perception and decoding skills are automatic and a result of the process. The traits of a fluent reader emphasise this. Japanese tertiary student learners with decoding problems however cannot use the top-down approach to their benefit as decoding or the activation of lower level skills is not automatic. Language is then the problem, so the top-down model as a total approach is not enough, and a better balance is needed. It has also been argued that both fluent and poor readers need to rely on context in the sentence and orthographic cues in order to identify meaning. Specific word recognition training needs exposure and Japanese tertiary students must be introduced to this (Eskey in Carrell et.al, 1982, p.95).

Another problem with the generation of predictions is the time needed to do so and the ability of the student to articulate these predictions in a second language. Japanese tertiary student readers need training in how to predict. This will result in predictions occurring at a subconscious level, and if not, the time taken to predict will be greater than the time needed to recognise words.

The top-down model is a cognitive approach that relies on higher-level processes. Japanese tertiary students vary greatly in reading skills, exposure, and experience and generally are deficient in many lower-level linguistic skills. Teachers using the top-down model need to be aware of this and must ensure that they intervene and support the learner in lower level areas that lie outside of the model.

The interactive model

The interactive processing model was developed in response to the shortcomings of both the

top-down and the bottom-up models. The interaction of the model refers to the constant interaction between the top-down and the bottom-up models. It relies on lower level processing skills (identification) and higher-level comprehension and reasoning (interpretation) and so the nature of the process is reciprocal (Grabe in Frehan, 1999). Supporters of the model have argued that the overemphasis in the past on only one model has not helped learners realise their full potential in comprehending and so learners essentially need a combination of approaches (Stanovich, 1980, p.36).

Of the three approaches being examined in this paper, the interactive approach is the one that requires the least reconceptualisation for Japanese tertiary students It has been generally accepted that reading is an interactive process and the interactive model compliments both higher-level processes and lower-level skills. This appears to support EFL learners because processes that are weak or are missing can be supported by processes that are stronger, until over a period of learning a better balance is achieved. A huge problem in the EFL classrooms however, is the variety of levels and skills learners possess. The interactive model appears to be flexible enough in being able to compensate for deficiencies at other levels.

On paper this flexibility appears to be favourable but in an EFL reading program it can appear to be confusing and a little ambiguous. There are a number of interactive approaches but they all appear to be extremely top-down in orientation and heavily reliant on L1 reading experiences. For a teacher with a variety of student levels under the guise of a typical pre-intermediate Japanese college class, the problem then seems to be where to begin and which skills should compliment each other? Eskey refers to ‘holding in the bottom’ and applauds the interactive model as a better balance between skills. His appraisal however, perhaps highlights the starting point when using this model in an EFL situation especially as he states that simple and accurate language decoding has a major role to play in the process (Eskey in Carrell et.al, 1982, p.93).

Fluent readers decode lexical units and syntactic structures not by using schemata in order to predict but by automatic identification. As this process is operating at a subconscious level with fluent readers it results in more room being left available in the memory for meaning making. In this case, lower level processes activate higher-level processes. Therefore, structure and grammar appear to come first when interpreting while the activation of world knowledge is a direct result of the lower order processes. The interactive approach is useful for EFL learners but still relies on the specific teaching of lower level skills and not the over

reliance on higher order skills as many of the models suggest.

The interactive approach is beneficial for EFL learners as it recognises the importance of lexical forms needed for fluent processing.

> It is consistently found that good readers are able to recognise lexical forms at a processing speed faster than the time required to activate context effects and conscious predicting (Grabe, 1988, p.60).

Stanovich (In Grabe, 1992, p.4) also supports Grabe in the recognition of the importance of lexical access allowing for the automatic retrieval of word meanings. Familiarity breeds automaticity and this is an area of prime importance for these learners.

Lexical access is not a spontaneous result of the interactive approach or the other models of reading referred to in this paper. It results from the conscious development of phonemic awareness and the constant exposure and re-exposure to lexical items. The interactive model can simply not compensate for specific lexical knowledge no matter how much processing capacity is made available for the task, if in fact the knowledge has not been specifically dealt with beforehand. For EFL learners the building up of discrete knowledge must be more of an important part of the interactive model than the model suggests. A sound combination of the teaching of discrete skills that represent the bottom-up model and the construction of meaning using holistic, hypothesising strategies, lexical knowledge, grammar and language knowledge, rhetorical structure knowledge, cultural convention knowledge and general knowledge, all need to be developed for the interactive approach to function at a level which will aid the EFL learner.

EFL learners approach reading with different skills and different learning experiences including the learning of their first language. Each model presented in this paper provides unique information about the reading process. It appears that the role of the teacher is crucial in deciding the way this information is transferred (Samuels and Kamil in Carrell et al., 1982, p.34). The teacher needs to adapt his/her strategy to suit the needs of the learner as well as that of the instructional environment. In conclusion, EFL learners in particular need gradual and predominantly bottom-up discrete skills from the outset in what will hopefully lead to a well-balanced holistic approach that is recursive in nature and sensitive to the learner's needs.

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An Interview with TOEIC Expert Grant Trew

With Paul Tanner and Peter Hoare

Grant Trew is one of the foremost TOEIC experts in Japan. He attended the internship program at ETS (Educational Testing Service, the makers of TOEIC, TOEFL, SAT, GRE etc) and is author of *Tactics for TOEIC: Speaking and Writing Tests* and *Tactics for TOEIC: Listening and Reading Tests*. Both texts have been approved by ETS and are published by Oxford University Press.

In this interview Grant will discuss the new TOEIC Listening and Reading format, the new Speaking and Writing TOEIC tests, the importance of the test in Japan and strategies for teaching and taking the new TOEIC tests.

What are the changes in the new test and what are the implications for students and teachers?

Part One, Photographs, now has half the number of questions as before. As this is generally considered to be the easiest section, it is now difficult to justify allocating a lot of study time here. In Part Three (Conversations) many of the dialogues are longer than in past forms and each conversation has three questions rather than one. Part 4 (Talks) is also in many cases significantly longer, and there are now 30 questions rather than 20. For both Parts 3 and 4, techniques such as pre-reading the questions are more important than ever. Another change is that the new test features a variety of different accents of English including North American, British, and Australian. Throughout the test there is an increased emphasis on natural English in use, meaning that students will benefit from exposure to common English phrases and responses.

The reading section has also undergone some changes. Error Correction (Part 6) has been replaced by a Text Completion section, which although very similar to the incomplete sentences in Part 5 now adds more context. Part 7, Reading Comprehension has a new type of question based on double passages and as with Parts 3 and 4 of the listening, the passages are often considerably longer than in the past. The implication for test takers is that time management skills are more essential than ever before, and test-taking skills must be habitual for the successful test-taker.

How can students improve their TOEIC score?

The bottom line is to help students to understand the nature of the challenges, and then help them develop practical listening/reading skills relevant to these challenges, along with as much vocabulary as possible. This includes raising familiarity with the test format, effective time management skills, techniques for processing information quickly and understanding of common 'distractors'. The use of skimming and scanning skills will also help to increase reading speed and comprehension. The final, and key aspect is vocabulary. This is probably the single most important element. Include as much vocabulary input, support and consolidation as possible.

Can you tell us about the Speaking and Writing TOEIC test?

It is a computer based test with all answers being recorded and later evaluated by trained ETS raters. It takes roughly 80 minutes with 20 minutes of speaking-related activities and 60 minutes devoted to writing. Speaking activities include tasks aimed at lower ability test takers such as reading a text aloud and describing a picture and increasingly difficult and practical tasks, such as responding to questions, proposing a solution to a problem, and expressing personal opinions.

The writing test also features tasks which ascend in difficulty, such as writing a sentence based on a picture, responding to an email and writing an opinion essay of about 300 words. Overall, I believe that the Speaking and Writing tests provide a very effective tool for evaluating English productive skills. Perhaps most importantly, I find that the types of things I would teach to help students get a good score are also the type of things that will be of practical value in the real world. I think the positive washback effect if the test becomes very popular will be considerable.

It seems that the TOEIC has become the main measuring stick for English levels in Japan, becoming more popular than the TOEFL or Eiken. Do you have any reasons why?

The driving force behind this increase in popularity is the increasing number of companies that are using TOEIC scores as requirements for hiring, promotion and overseas postings. Because of this, many universities and even high schools have jumped on the bandwagon to set their own score targets and introduce new TOEIC focused programs to attract students. Currently this applies only to the Reading and Listening tests, but I suspect that as the corporate world moves towards the new Speaking and Writing components we will see a shift in this direction.

While we would suggest using your Oxford Tactics for the TOEIC Test*, what should a TOEIC preparation course include?*

Thanks for the endorsement, but regardless of the materials used, I believe that an effective course should include the following elements:

1. Cover test taking skills and strategies – integrated with the practice in every lesson
2. Build linguistic knowledge – active vocabulary support and relevant grammar
3. Develop practical skills (Listening/Reading, Speaking/Writing)
4. Feature practice with questions on par with actual test – simplified items and content don't help students
5. Are suitable for a range of abilities – Give lower ability students vocabulary support and provide challenging tasks for higher levels
6. Are interesting, engaging (encourage interactivity) and grounded in real world skills
7. Include a self-study component – major score increases require more work

After seeing your presentation, we were impressed by your enthusiasm for what many people consider a mundane task. You have been a teacher, trainer, and materials developer for 20 years. How did you end up focusing on the TOEIC and can you explain your enthusiasm?

I was working as a materials developer for an institution with a very large scale program. I had some experience with testing so overseeing it fell onto my plate almost by default. As you say, it is often considered to be a mundane (some would say boring) task. The more I looked at the situation though, I realized it didn't have to be that way. I believe helping students develop practical and effective skills and increasing their stock of vocabulary are best handled in ways that encourage students to actually use the language interactively. Using the same teaching approaches as used in effective skill and communications courses I have found that not only are the classes more interesting and engaging, but the students seem to learn the language and skills faster and retain them longer. Couple this with the fact that TOEIC students often have very strong motivation to learn and you can end up with some incredibly interesting and rewarding classes.

Thank you very much Mr. Trew.

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