

Between the Keys

The Newsletter of the JALT Materials Writers SIG © 2003

Conference 2003
Volume XI, Number 3

The Coordinator's Column

John Daly

Hello Materials Writers.

November already. New Year's cards on sale at the post office already. Can't believe it. I think I still have some of last year's *osechiryori* leftovers in the refrigerator somewhere. Who knows where the time goes.

One of the nice things about November, apart from the red leaves and the sweet smell of smoke sometimes in the evening, is the JALT conference, an event which never fails to energize me. The new people, new ideas, enthusiasm: gives me a kind of glow which I carry back with me to my place of work, where I try to keep it alive.

MW SIG's contribution to the conference this year will be *My Share Live!: Materials Swap Meet*. Programs Chair Chris Elvin, who is organizing the event this year, is providing a new option for participants. This year, for the first time, lessons/activities can be submitted as an attachment to an e-mail to Chris at <celvin@kd6.so-net.ne.jp>. Saves you the trouble of making copies and bringing them to the conference (although it is still OK to do that). Also makes it easier to assemble them in book form some day. So let's support Chris, and our SIG's conference presence, by submitting something for the Swap Meet.

Something? Like what? Well, something about which you can say, "Yes, I put together this lesson, designed this activity myself. I've

used it with students, and it went well. Left them feeling good, left me feeling good." That's the kind of something we're looking for.

There is no MW SIG-sponsored forum this year. You may remember that last January and February, in e-mails to the membership, I asked for your ideas about what we could do at the conference this year, but the deadline for submissions passed without my getting an idea which I could shape into a proposal. However, some of our members will be making presentations. I will be posting a schedule of these at the SIG table at the conference, so I invite you to stop by, find one of interest to you, and support your SIG members by attending.

And maybe we can start thinking a bit now about the SIG Forum that we will present at next year's conference in Nara.

Looking back now for a minute, I am sorry to report that the weekend gathering that was planned for October 25-26 at Yufuin Hot Spring did not happen. With about two weeks to go, and only five people signed up, some thinking we should go ahead and do it, some thinking we shouldn't, I made the difficult decision to call off the event. It seemed to me that, for this event to be successful, that is, for it to accomplish its goal of bringing

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From the Editor

Jim Smiley

There is only a few weeks to go before the 29th Annual JALT Conference opens in Gran-ship, Shizuoka. As well as the plenary speakers, workshops and presentations, there will be around 50 presentations dealing with many aspects of the materials writing process. In this pre-conference edition, three speakers tell you why you should attend their presentation: Kenneth Beigel explains his conversation templates, which were developed during the production of his course book, *What About You?* (McGraw-Hill, 2003); Tracy Terrell Franz discusses her "Online Writing Class and F2F Classroom Applications"; and Melinda Kawahara shows how to have "Fun and Games Using Storybooks". Continuing our series of interviews with the elite in materials writing worldwide, Daniel Droukis talks with Susan Iannuzzi and Deborah B. Gordon, TESOL Material Writers Co-chairs. An MW SIG member, Joe Falout, has co-authored a textbook about different aspects of love, which is reviewed by me. Finally, the MW SIG-related presentations are listed, so you can have a sneak preview of what is in store.

Do not forget to check out our website periodically on <<http://uk.geocities.com/materialwritersig/index.html>>.

In the co-ordinator's column, John Daly reports on some of the difficulties we faced this year: There will not be any conference forum for our SIG, and the Yufuin meeting did not happen. Partly, it is the nature of the beast. With so many of us having such diverse interests, reasons for joining and personal and professional time conflicts, arranging events or co-ordinating interests is very tricky.

However, part of the reason for the failures must lie with us, the members. In order to survive, let alone prosper, we need to re-think our attitude about our contribution to the group. I used to live next door to a *konyaku* maker in Tokyo. She did a steady business. Konyaku is not a flashy product, she explained. It is the kind of thing that nobody really wants to make but that nobody really wants to do without. So, she survives on a trickling industry. For our group to avoid that sort of fate, we must pull together and make an effort to ensure our prosperous future. The conference time is ideal to meet, talk, plan, plot even, renew our energy, vitalise our motivation for our group. In the words of a famous statesman, do not think of what MW-SIG can do for you, think of what you can do for it. BK

WANTED
Your article in *Between the Keys*.
Contact Jim Smiley, editor, at <jimsmiley@beach.ocn.ne.jp> for submission requirements and deadlines.

People in Material Writing

Susan Iannuzzi and Deborah B. Gordon, TESOL Material Writers Co-chairs Elect Daniel Droukis

In continuing our effort to hear from those most closely involved in materials we are fortunate to hear the opinions of the TESOL co-chairs elect for the Material Writers Interest Section. Deborah Gordon has been involved in ESL/EFL since the mid-1970s and started writing professionally when she co-authored *Listen for It*, with Jack Richards and Andy Harper. Since then she has been working as a free-lance materials writer for various publishers as an author, co-author, and contributor. Her most recent book was as a co-author on *Up Close 1 and 2* for Heinle. Susan Iannuzzi has in been materials writing and development for about ten years For the past few years she has been writing for Longman and Oxford University Press most recently, writing *Get Together 1,2,3 and 4* with David McKeegan for Oxford University Press. Although both Deborah and Susan work full time as materials writers, they try to get back into the classroom as teachers at least once a year. Both Deborah and Susan have had experience in teaching Japanese students.

Between the Keys: You got your start writing materials for your own classes when you were discouraged from using published materials. How was that experience and what advice do you have for someone in Japan who may have similar experiences?

Deborah Gordon: It was very useful for learning how to write many different types of materials very quickly, but it was stressful. I often found myself writing materials to fill immediate needs instead of planning ahead. My advice to those having to do the same would be to take the time to write at least a

provisional syllabus so that your materials can build onto one another.

BTK: How have you enjoyed being a free-lance writer? What challenges are there to free-lancing?

D.G.: I enjoy the fact that my job changes often (every time I start a new project). I especially enjoy materials writing when I have the opportunity to collaborate with other authors and editors. However, much of the time I work independently, and I think the biggest challenge for me is staying focused on task and motivated when I'm working alone.

BTK: You said that you occasionally teach to keep yourself grounded. How does that help you in material writing?

D.G.: It helps to remind me of the different ways in which students learn and the different paces at which they learn. It is also extremely helpful in keeping the different levels of students in my mind while I'm writing. I also get the opportunity that way to see the students' current interests.

BTK: You have done some co-authoring. What are the challenges posed by co-authoring?

D.G.: Co-authoring is wonderful when it works well, but it can be extremely frustrating when your co-author and you are not a good fit. It can also be difficult to make materials look seamless when there is more than one author. However, when it works well, in my experience, the quality of the outcome is usually much better than it would have been with just one author.

BTK: You have co-authored several books. What are the advantages or problems that

occur when co-authoring?

Susan Iannuzzi: I have had incredibly positive experiences with all my co-authors, and I'm still in touch with all of them. I think it depends on the individuals involved and the way the co-authoring is executed. It's always a different chemistry, and sometimes it's best to write separately and then review each other's material, or sometimes one of us would write first and then the other would take the unfinished unit and flush it out.

BTK: You have contributed to several books. What is involved in being a contributor?

D.G.: As a contributor I've either written one or more sections of each unit or possibly one or more chapters. For example, at the moment I'm writing only the reading/writing sections of a new 4-level text that is being authored

D.G.: Writing for advanced students is easier for me because the students already know so much, but I enjoy writing for lower levels, too. The materials need to be more straightforward and more transparent for lower level students, and it can be challenging to make things fun and interesting with limited language, but it is rewarding when you are able to do it.

BTK: You wrote two books for Longman Asia. What do you try to include and avoid in books written for Asian students?

S.I.: These books I wrote were specifically aimed at the home study market, so it was important to include material that parents could cope with since their children would probably be going to them for help. By this I mean, choosing vocabulary that would not

“If one wanted to write a course, I think the best place to start would be to figure out what one has learned from his/her teaching context.”

by others. I have also been asked at different times to write such textbook parts as games, dialogs, review units, or listening tasks.

BTK: You have written instructor's manuals. How does this differ from writing the actual textbook especially when you are writing the manual for another author's book?

D.G.: When I write instructors' manuals I try to picture myself in class and imagine how I would handle the lesson. Writing instructors' manuals can be fun to do occasionally because there is less pressure than there is when writing students' materials. They can be difficult to write, too, because you inevitably come across materials or approaches that you disagree with.

BTK: What levels do you enjoy writing for? Are there any problems in writing for a particular level?

only be very familiar to the average Japanese (and Asian) family, but also pronounceable, so for the title *The Alphabet*, we avoided words like 'whale' because while recognizable, the r/l pronunciation is often problematic, and some parents would feel uncomfortable working with this with their children.

BTK: Having taught Japanese at the graduate school level did this give you ideas on what to include in materials for Japanese students that you might not include for students in other parts of the world?

S.I.: Not really, but I have noticed that in working with developing presentation skills, I use some commercially-prepared materials that include examples of actors giving demonstrations of very bad presentations. Most of the Japanese students were uncomfortable

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JALT 2003 Conference Feature

The Online Writing Class and F2F Classroom Applications

Tracy Terrell Franz, Shokei Daigaku & Anaheim University
(formerly NAPU)

As online education has become increasingly recognized as a legitimate medium for instruction, I've pondered the potential for the teaching of writing, my personal and professional area of interest. My initial assessment was not positive. The idea of online education seemed cold, impersonal, insincere, and—honestly—a little too complicated for all involved, especially for L2 learners. My approach to language teaching certainly didn't have room for these kinds of obstacles! I have always considered that the criteria for a successful class is to be found in creating *genuine* connections—in the give-and-take of communication; in hands-on, active learning experiences; in the meaningful interactions between students, texts, ideas, and the world beyond the classroom.

Given these concerns, it might seem surprising that I currently teach online writing classes to adult non-native speakers of English in Japan, and that I consider my classes to be successful “works-in-progress.” Through trial and error in my own classes as well as through research, I've collected some guidelines for the online facilitator of adult/post-secondary L2 writing classes (with some consideration for F2F writing courses as well), which I will discuss in detail during the JALT workshop in November—and for which I will present a very abbreviated overview here.

The Medium

Perhaps the hardest thing to imagine for those of us who are decidedly not computer geniuses (or even for those who are!) is simply this:

What is an online classroom, exactly? Currently, many terrestrial and online educational institutions are developing new software to create these online “spaces,” but many schools still operate using the mainstream resources that are available to any user of the Internet: email, chatrooms, webpages, bulletin boards, and so on.

Undoubtedly, these spaces will become more and more elaborate as the paradigm of “classroom” expands into cyberspace in the years to come. But for teachers of writing, regardless of the technology involved, one very exciting aspect of the existing medium becomes immediately apparent: the majority of—if not all—communication takes place through writing. Thus, students are learning by doing. And the classes can be designed to be highly communicative and very much learner-centered in that the students are expected to participate actively in their own learning experiences.

Learners and Facilitators

My experience as a writing instructor for online and F2F classes has been with students of at least basic English ability at universities in America and in Japan, and that's what I'll mainly focus on during the workshop. However, these techniques can be modified to suit various levels of learners, classroom concerns, and teaching styles.

In preparing to facilitate online students, it's good to remember that even college-aged students—let alone the older, nontraditional students who are flocking to online continu-

ing-education classes—may be intimidated by computers (especially computers that are serving as classrooms!), and communicating solely via L2 writing can complicate this even further.

It is important that we have a sense of who will be entering our classes and anticipate what their needs and concerns will be. This does not mean, as I mentioned earlier, that we necessarily need to be “tech wizards” ourselves, but facilitators do need to be highly organized—perhaps even more so than in the traditional classroom. There can be a phenomenal amount of electronic-paperwork juggling, and it is important that instructors have a clear grasp of the basic technology and resources that are available to them. Likewise, because these classes are often quite short, it is important that facilitators have a developed sense of the goals and workings in the class, and these should be readily shared with the students. As for the time commitment and level of participation, facilitators often must be *more* active than the students—at least in the beginning portion of the course, and they must anticipate (and appropriately address) problems that may arise in terms of discipline, cultural concerns, learning styles, general miscommunication, and so on. The pay-off here will be classes that are more positive, active, meaningful, and focused intently on accomplishing the goals at hand.

Developing Effective Course Content

Many of the approaches that teachers use in the face-to-face classroom can work well in the online environment—even though some fundamentals in delivery, design and approach may be different. The trick is in putting one’s teaching philosophy into coherent, effective practice *online*. Thus, my primary goal in designing L2 online English-writing classes is to answer the following linked questions positively for each class I design

and implement:

- Is it communicative?
- Is it learner-centered?
- Does it encourage critical thinking?
- Does it address all layers of the writing process in student work and in teacher/student evaluation at the global and local levels: (1) focus, (2) organization, (3) development and support, and (4) grammar/mechanics?
- Will students be motivated to participate appropriately and actively?
- Is the material geared towards learners’ specific objectives in the class and beyond?
- Will it significantly improve student writing in English?
- Will it be valuable beyond the classroom?

Online writing classes can be designed to address all of these concerns adequately and more, and it is the materials and application that have come from those questions that I will be sharing in detail during the JALT workshop in November.

Conclusion

I have come to believe online education can foster an environment in which meaningful, genuine connections are created. The act of teaching, like writing, is about moving beyond the bounds of “one”: Not one writer, not one classroom, not one idea—but many. Thus, I look forward to hearing from and sharing with all of you at JALT 2003!

Biography

Tracy Terrell Franz currently serves as a Lecturer in the English Department at Shokei Daigaku in Kumamoto, Japan and teaches and designs online writing courses for Anaheim University (formerly Newport Asia Pacific University). Her prior professional experiences include teaching L1 and L2 English-writing at Lake Washington Technical College in Seattle as well as at two language schools in Japan;

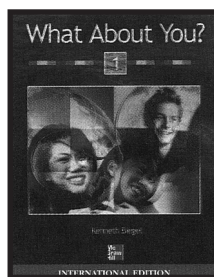
Online Writing continued on p. 14

JALT 2003 Conference Feature

What about Using Conversation Templates in Class?

Kenneth Beigel

Perhaps you are as tired as I had been with using conversation textbooks that provided very few opportunities for students to speak for extended periods about topics relevant to their own lives. Perhaps you are tired of irrelevant exercises based on the lives of fictitious textbook characters, or speaking exercises that take longer to prepare than the time spent speaking. In an attempt to provide better material for my students, I wrote the listening/speaking textbook series *What About You?* (McGraw-Hill, 2003). In the process of writing the series, I discovered that using conversation templates is an excellent way to get students speaking English about themselves for extended periods. This demonstration introduces this highly effective way to get your students speaking.



Language teachers are probably most familiar with templates used in grammar exercises made up of phrases and structures with gaps or blanks that students must fill in with appropriate information. This exercise type has been used in language textbooks for many years, usually in material with an audio-lingual slant and/or self-access CALL material. More recently, it has been used in communicative exercises in which the students fill in the gaps with personal information, rather than a manipulated discrete point.

My demonstration will begin with an overview of the rationale I used in deciding to utilize conversation templates in *What About You?*. This will be followed with a brief look at several of the conversation templates

used as speaking guides in the textbook series. I will explain that while using templates, students have sustained conversations with several partners, and that they incorporate the vocabulary and grammatical structures introduced and practiced in earlier sections of a chapter. In addition, I will propose that using templates can create speaking activities and longer conversational opportunities, allowing the more fluent students to expand beyond the printed page and providing the

less fluent speakers with a structure within a flexible format. Clearly, a very useful technique in the multi-proficiency-level environment often faced in EFL classrooms in Japan.

After the explanation concerning templates, several volunteers will be asked to demonstrate using

a template to produce extended and rather open conversations. They will be separated into "A" and "B" groups. "A" volunteers will face "B" volunteers and start talking using the template as a guide. The participants will be encouraged to talk freely and expand on and deviate from the template as much as they want. Once one pair finishes the conversation, all the volunteers will be asked to say "good-bye" to their partners. "A" volunteers will stand up and move to new "B" partners.

After the demonstration, I hope the participants will discuss and analyze the technique's use and effectiveness. Their suggestions of ways to utilize conversation templates and other aspects of the method will be encouraged. *Conversation Templates* continued on p. 14

JALT 2003 Conference Feature

Fun and Games Using Storybooks

Melinda Kawahara

Presenter(s): Kawahara, Melinda

Day: Sunday, Nov. 23rd

Starting time: 5:20 PM

Length: 50 minutes

Room: Rehearsal Hall

Format: Workshop

This presentation basically says it all in the title. Various games and activities that go hand in hand with story books will be presented. I hope that all the participants will take an active role in the workshop so that they can see just how fun it is. First I will show you three fun activities for repetition of new vocabulary, including a rhythmical chant that your students will ask to do again and again. Next,

I will show you 4-5 really fun games that can be played to retain the new vocabulary from the story book. Instructions of each game will be handed out, as well as some photocopyable material to make your lesson preparation easier. Some problems that could arise using the activities will be given with suggestions on how to overcome them. A very simple motivating activity will be presented, which only takes five minutes to prepare, that will keep your students shouting out answers until the end of the lesson. At the end, you will realize how much fun it is to use story books in the English classroom and how much students can learn from them. **IBK**

Check out the Materials Writers SIG website at:

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Material Thoughts

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JALT
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全国語学教育学会

Jim Smiley September, 2003

JALT2003 Conference Feature

Materials-Related Presentations

Editor's Note: The following is a preliminary list of materials-related presentations at the upcoming JALT 2003 Conference in Shizuoka. According to the JALT Conference website, "Due to the likelihood of scheduling changes, exact times of presentations are not available. Conference attendees will receive details of the exact time and place of presentations at the conference." Between the Keys regrets any inconvenience that the lack of presentation times and rooms may cause.

Title (Format)—Presenter(s)

All Talk No Prep 5 to 10 Minute Activities (Workshop)—Hughes, Mary & Matsumoto, Conrad

Vocabulary for Undergraduate Engineering Students (Short paper)—Ward, Jeremy

Fun and Games Using Storybooks (Workshop)—Kawahara, Melinda

The Online Writing Class and F2F Applications (Workshop)—Franz, Tracy Terrell

What about Using Conversation Templates in Class? (Demonstration)—Biegel, Kenneth

A Lexical Approach to Well-Formed Verb Phrases (Short paper)—Brand, Quentin & Lavalée, Joseph

Exercises to Draw out Students' Motivation. (Workshop)—Saiki, Yukari

Developing Opinions and Critical Analysis Skills (Workshop)—Stroupe, Richmond

Making Music Videos (Poster Session)—Balsamo, William M.

Hot Potatoes: Making Computer Quizzes (Demonstration)—Balsamo, William M.

Youth Culture Issues With Bite (Workshop)—Hronopoulos, Sophia

Speaking Practice with "Structured" Role-Play (Short paper)—Weaver, Kurt

A Student-Initiated Drama Project (Poster Session)—Matheny, William

Teaching Content Classes in English (Workshop)—Kajiura, Asako

Promoting Autonomy through Writing Conferences (Workshop)—Willcocks, Kim & McCrostie, James

Using Local English Resources in the ESL Classroom (Poster Session)—Balint, Martin

Scaffolding the Harvard Case Method (Short paper)—Rundle, Colin

Materials Development—A Whole Model (Short paper)—Smiley, Jim

Campaigning in the Classroom (Workshop)—Pitts, Chris

Using DVD Movie Segments for Lower-Level Students (Demonstration)—Hamada, Mayumi & Akimoto, Hiromi

Teaching Language and Culture through Soap Opera (Workshop)—Cooker, Lucy

Designing "Out of the Box" Listening Activities (Workshop)—Helgesen, Marc

Reading and Speaking about Current Events (Short paper)—Jackson, Daniel

Extended Referential Questioning between Students (Workshop)—Hughes, Robert & Evans, Simon

Implementing Strategy Training: A 7-Step Approach (Workshop)—Kinoshita, Catherine Y

Koto-ku Project—Developing Motivating Materials (Workshop)—Hubert, Annie

Reading: It's Not Just for Testing Anymore (Workshop)—Bayley, Oliver

“Business English: Teaching, Learning and Testing” (Workshop)—Barnard, Roger
Large Classes: A Framework for Classroom Management (Workshop)—Habbick, Robert
Student Communication is about Knowing How (Workshop)—Riley, Paul
The Effect of Vocabulary Organization on Retention (Short paper)—Visgatis, Brad & Masaki,
Michiko

Board Games for Conditional I & II (Poster Session)—Gaylord, Doreen

Interactive Games as Language Learning Activities (Short paper)—Blight, Richard

Writing Quizzes the Easy Way (Poster Session)—Kelly, Charles

The Internet Culture Project: Students and the Web (Demonstration)—Bess, Michael W. &
Bess, Dee Anne

Project Work 101 (Workshop)—Heigham, Juanita

Phonics: American and Japanese Approaches (Workshop)—Blasky, Andrew

10th Annual “My Share: Live!” Materials Swap Meet (MW Event)—Elvin, Chris

A Corpus-Driven L2 Grammar Syllabus (Workshop)—Shortall, Terry

Real-Language Data and the L2 Grammatical Syllabus (FSW)—Shortall, Terry

Collecting and Exploiting Raw Data for Socio-Cultural Training in the Classroom (Work-

Presentations continued on p. 15

Volunteering to help your Materials Writers SIG
doesn't take much time, and is relatively
pain free. Contact John Daly
for more information.

Quick!

Painless

Book Review

Many Faces of Love

by Akira Tanioka, Takashi Suzuki and Joseph J. Falout
Reviewed by Jim Smiley, Ohu University

English title: *Many Faces of Love—Reader's Link*

Japanese subtitle: 21世紀の「愛」を考える
(*Thinking about Love in the 21st Century*)

Authors: Akira Tanioka, Takashi Suzuki and Joseph J. Falout, illustrations by Paul Chatenay.

Publisher: Shohakusha (Tokyo). ©2003. 85 pages. ¥1,600. Cassette available (no price given). ISBN: 4-88198-526-4

"It is often said that we cannot live without love. People, irrespective of age, enjoy thinking and talking about love. Through love, we can feel joy and misery."

—translation of the preface opening lines

These ten reading passages form an interesting collection, usable as a reading class text for the university or adult classes, or as an individual study reader. Comprising ten units, nine focus on an aspect of the love equation and one on body language. Each unit is broken down into five subsections labelled warm-up, main passage, comprehension, thinking and opinion. The book begins and ends with a questionnaire enticing you to find out what kind of lover you are and what kind of lover suits you. Well-drawn cartoons add a touch of humour throughout. To round off, there are two pages of love quotations.

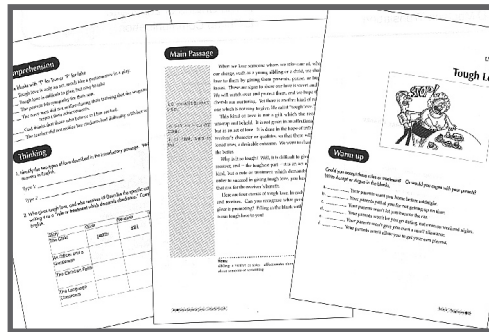
While reading, I was struck by the directness and honesty of the topics. Here, love is

not simply a romantic folly, we are led also to the atrocities within the diamond industry, to different types of tough love, to the selfishness of love. Just as the topics are challenging occasionally, so too is the language, which often seems ungraded and difficult. There is some Japanese support provided in side panels and some bold-faced vocabulary help, but readers are required to use their dictionaries often.

The book has many strengths: the readings are interesting; various pedagogic stages have been realised; top-down processing is encouraged in the warm-ups, higher-order analytical skills are required in the thinking and

opinion sections, supporting ideas using the quotations is expected, memory and recall are facilitated in the comprehension sections; the physical quality of the pages is good and will withstand repeated use.

There are a number of points on the down side, however. Ten units may be fine for adult class courses, but it is an awkward number for a university class. The lack of vocabulary support or during-reading tasks is unfortunate. Questionnaires are structured to force certain answers where free choices would be more relevant. Sometimes, the difference between the questions in the comprehension and thinking sections do not display any core difference in intention, turning the



thinking section into a second comprehension one. The warm up questions require free responses on occasion but lack a place to write them in.

In summary, I have to say that I like this little book. This is Japan and we are now in 2003. Even in the past few months, I have seen numerous Japanese-produced readers that still simply consist of a text, a long

vocabulary list, painfully long explanations of the grammar and a full translation of the text in Japanese. These other works can give the sensation of learning English while actually doing very little of value. Falout et al's text requires readers to create meaning almost unaided. They are requested to try and think in English for themselves. This is a laudable step forward. BK

Interview continued from p. 5

criticizing the actors' demonstrations and this made the atmosphere a bit dead or tense. I have used identical material with students from other countries, even Asian countries (e.g. China), and it went over very well and there was lively discussion. So, the lesson I drew from this was that material, which shows negative examples to be contrasted with positive ones, may not be the best.

BTK: You have written material for Egyptian students. How might these materials differ from those for Japanese students?

S.I.: Egyptian students are more willing to offer critical opinions very quickly. They have a different comfort level with sharing criticism.

BTK: Which have you enjoyed more, writing for children or adults? Why?

S.I.: I really like both. I view textbook writing as an analytical exercise, a puzzle to be completed, and it is nice to have a variety.

BTK: How has your teaching experience helped you in writing materials?

S.I.: It has helped a lot. Aside from having a ready audience to pilot content you're concerned about or a new activity type you've created, you also stay in touch with the classroom trends. It's a kind of grounding or link to the real world and I think some textbook authors lose that.

BTK: Is it possible for someone teaching full time to become a materials writer? How?

S.I.: I think so. If one wanted to write a

course, I think the best place to start would be to figure out what one has learned from his/her teaching context. I mean, what are the current textbooks like, what are they lacking, how are they strong. In addition, what are students at this level like, what is boring or passé to them. This type of information is critical to identify.

BTK: Finally, what advice do you have for someone in Japan who would like to publish materials?

S.I.: Contact publishers in Japan, perhaps through sales reps, and try to begin reviewing material. This gives you some insight into what a manuscript looks like and what is being done for the level/context you're in. It's possible for reviewers to be contacted by publishers for larger roles, e.g. teacher's books, writing tests etc. And similarly, if a teacher has an idea and has reviewed some material, then the teacher would have a contact within the publishing company, who might be able to advise or even take a project forward.

BTK: The JALT Material Writers SIG greatly appreciates the time and effort that Susan Iannuzzi and Deborah Gordon have put into this interview. We have been given insights into areas of free-lancing, co-authoring, being a contributor, writing teacher's guides and other areas of material writing. Hopefully, their insights have given all writers food for thought and future writers insight into the world of material writing. BK

Coordinator continued from p. 2

people together for networking and collaboration, five participants were too few. Still, I am hopeful that, some day, we can get together for a weekend that will give all of us new insights that will lead to better materials.

So, looking back on my year as MW SIG coordinator, I see failure: failure to organize a conference Forum, failure to bring off the weekend gathering. Which makes me think I should step aside, slide over into the position of SIG Treasurer perhaps, a position which will be vacant soon, and let another member, a person with more vigor and vision, coordinate MW SIG's activities in 2004. My approach has been, "Well, I am just one among you. What shall we do together?" Maybe what this SIG needs is someone above, rather than among, with ideas enough to say "Let's do this." If that sounds like you, please let me know.

Finally, I invite all of you to attend our Annual General Meeting at the conference. We will be welcoming new officers (Membership

Chair and Treasurer—and Coordinator?), and collecting ideas about what we can do in 2004 that will be beneficial to the members.

Or, if you can't make it to the meeting, you can stop by any time at the SIG Table (we have 3 chairs!) to talk about MWing, or any other thing. If you'd like to mind the table for an hour or so, maybe talking to some stoppers-by, or just watching people flowing by, that would be great. Let me know.

Looking forward to seeing you in Shizuoka.

John

P.S. Those who are not going to be able to make it to Shizuoka, please know that it always makes me happy to open my e-mail <john-d@sano-c.ac.jp> and find one from an MW member. And those who are not going to be able to make it to Shizuoka, and don't have e-mail, well, postcards and letters are great, too. You can reach me at John Daly, Sano College, 973 Takahagi-cho, Sano, Tochigi 327-0821.

IK

Conversation Templates continued from p. 8

aged. For example, discussion concerning feedback, review, and evaluation techniques. Finally, I hope that the participants will discuss how beneficial is it to have students repeating the same task with new partners as a way to encourage them to test out and expand their conversational abilities and skills in English. Please attend the demonstration and share your views.

IK

Online Writing continued from p. 7

teaching writing as a graduate instructor at Eastern and Western Washington universities; and editing documents for various companies and individuals. Ms. Franz holds a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from Eastern Washington University and a Bachelor of Arts in English-Writing from Eastern Oregon University. Contact: <dktfranz@shokei-gakuen.ac.jp>.

IK



Do you have something to say? Say it in *Between the Keys*! Submissions are now being accepted for the Spring 04 issue. Send your articles or lesson ideas to Jim Smiley <jimsmiley@beach.ocn.ne.jp>. Deadline: Ongoing.

MW-SIG Officers

Coordinator

John Daly is the head man. All ideas go through him.

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Distribution

Daniel Droukis gets the newsletter out to you in time.

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Programs Chair

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Interested in helping out as an officer?
Contact John Daly for more information.

Our Share Editor

Ian Gleadall is working on a follow-up to the successful *Our Share*.

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Newsletter Layout

Chris Poel is a whiz-kid at computer-based design and desktop publishing.

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Treasurer

Stephen Ryan looks after the money.

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Note: Stephen has resigned his position—we are currently searching for a replacement.

Newsletter Editor

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Membership Chair

Kathleen Yamane makes sure that members stay members.

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Note: Kathleen has resigned her position—we are currently searching for a replacement. BK

Presentations continued from p. 11

shop)—Greenall, Simon

Meaning Rules (Workshop)—Jones, Vaughan

Tension Good. Tenseness Bad: The Art of Appropriate Task Difficulty (FSW)—Mann, Steve

News English by CBS: The Real World (Demonstration)—Nozawa, Kazunori

Teaching Listening and Speaking: A Top-Up Approach (Demonstration)—Graham-Marr, Alastair

Intensive Reading: Introducing Practical Readings 1 (Demonstration)—Graham-Marr, Hugh

Still The Best: Tactics For Listening 2nd Edition (Workshop)—Richards, Jack

BK

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