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Between Keys



A publication of the JALT Materials Writers Special Interest Group

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



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From the Publication Chair

Dear Readers,

At the JALT International Conference in Nagoya last November, the MW-SIG held a round-robin forum on various facets of materials development. For the benefit of those members who could not attend that event, three presenters have provided a write-up. Hugh Graham-Marr outlines the author-publisher relationship by describing how a textbook submission proposal should attempt to capture the key aspects of that relationship. Gregg McNabb describes the processes involved in self-publishing, and Barbara Hoskins Sakamoto presents four questions that frame the creation process when writing for young learners. Travis Holtzclaw continues our regular Local Notes column by interviewing Yukie Saito, a Tokyo-based author who has done extensive work writing preparatory materials for the STEP/EIKEN test. We are delighted to announce the start of a new column by Greg Goodmacher. Greg explores ways of adapting a simple EFL conversation dialogue in his new Materials Adaptation Column. Finally, Richard Miller argues why materials writing projects should not be overlooked when building an academic career.

Jim Smiley

From the Programs Chair

The members of the MW SIG are working on the creation of a database that will include the publications of our membership. The purpose is to allow you to list the publications (textbooks, articles, online materials, etc.) that you want other people to know about. The database will be based on a survey that we will send to our members in April after most of us are back from spring vacation. One of the questions on the survey will ask if you are interested in giving presentations related to materials writing. That information will be useful when connecting with local JALT chapters to facilitate presentations. I am also considering what our group should do at our forum at the next national JALT conference.

Are any of you planning to present at PanSIG 2017? If you are, please share your presentation abstract with other members of our group. You can send an announcement to us via mw-members@materialswriters.org.

PanSIG 2017 will be held May 19-21 at Akita International University (AIU) in Akita City, Akita Prefecture, Japan. If you plan to participate, be sure to attend the MW forum below.

Materials Writing with a Pragmatic Focus

One area where pragmatics can—and should—play a significant role is in the production of materials for students and teachers. When students speak in a stilted and ‘textbook’ way, it is noticeable, and it does not present the student in a positive light. This forum will share ways that materials can be made more ‘appropriately

pragmatic' and it should help teachers get a solid sense of what they can do at the ground level.

The forum will have three presentations:

1. How do ELT textbooks present pragmatic markers? – Chie Kawashima
2. The production of pragmatically appropriate TOEIC materials – Yosuke Ishii
3. Principled pragmatics in materials development – Simon Capper

Greg Goodmacher

From the Coordinator

Dear MW SIG Members,

I hope that everyone is able to have some “downtime” between the academic semesters. Before we know it, we’ll be focused on preparing and teaching our classes.

I am happy to report that your SIG had a very successful JALT2016 International Conference. Thanks to the efforts of Greg Goodmacher, the Program Chair, we had a lively Forum that was well-attended. If you missed out, be sure to participate at the next Forum. In addition to the Forum, our Annual General Meeting (AGM) had a good turnout. We now have several new officers to help with the activities of the SIG. However, there still are a few positions that remain unfilled – Webmaster and Publicity Officer. If you interested in becoming more active in your SIG, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Although it is still some time away, the PanSIG 2017 Conference will be held on May 19-21 at Akita International University. This year we’ll be having a joint forum with the Pragmatics SIG titled “Writing Materials with a Pragmatics Focus.” Once the details have been finalized, I will make sure to let you know.

In your service,

Adam Murray

The Materials Adaptation Column

Greg Goodmacher

You are reading the first in a column that aims to share ideas regarding the adaptation of teaching materials. Each column will consist of at least five different examples of ways to revise educational texts or to create teaching materials with newspapers, videos, photographs, advertisements, college catalogs, and other authentic materials (there is no limit as to what we can use as teaching tools). This time the focus is on adapting a simple dialog in an average EFL conversation textbook.

Five Ways to Adapt a Dialog

Let’s consider the short dialog below. It is from unit 5 of *Take it Easy*.

A: What kind of food do you like?

B: I love Japanese food, but I can't stand sushi.
A: That's unusual. So, what are your favorite dishes?
B: I like tofu and noodles.
A: How about Korean food?
B: I think it's okay, but I like Chinese better.

•Suggestion 1: PowerPoint Dialog Memorization Activity

Write the dialog on a PowerPoint slide. That slide will show the unaltered original text to students. Copy and paste that dialog onto several other slides. The number of slides depends on the amount of time you want to spend on this activity and the level of your students. Keeping the first letter, erase the other letters from selected words as you paste. The second slide will have the letters from one word deleted in each line. Erase letters from two words per line in the third slide. Look at the example below. Tell students that they are to read the dialogs aloud in pairs and to try to memorize the dialog. Show the first slide to students. After all of your students have finished reading and speaking, show the second slide to students. You might want to allow students to see the first slide again. Continue with the same process as long as you deem proper for your group of students.

Slide 2

A: W___ kind of food do you like?
B: I love Japanese f___, but I can't stand sushi.
A: That's u_____. So, what are your favorite dishes?
B: I like tofu and n_____.
A: H__ about Korean food?
B: I think it's okay, but I like Chinese b_____.

Slide 3

A: W___ kind of food do you l____?
B: I love Japanese f___, but I can't s_____ sushi.
A: That's u_____. So, what are your f_____ dishes?
B: I l___tofu and n_____.
A: H__ about Korean f____?
B: I t_____ it's okay, but I like Chinese b_____.

•Suggestion 2: Chain Activity

After students have read the dialog in the book, create a chain activity with aspects of the dialog. Chain activities are exercises in which students take turns continuing a dialog or story. Each student, except for the starting student, must connect information to the utterances spoken earlier and add new information. For the dialog above, I would point out the following expressions: "I love Japanese food, but I can't stand sushi." And, "I think it's okay, but I like Chinese better." Depending

upon the level of the students, I might teach them other similar phrases to express a preference for food. I would put my students in groups of around six members. The first states both his and her name and a food preference. The second student must remember and repeat the utterances of the first student. Then, the second student adds his or her information. The third student must remember and repeat the names and preferences of the first two students before expressing his or her information. Students continue until all have spoken. Students are not allowed to write notes, so they must concentrate to remember what previous students have said. Students should be encouraged to help each other. This exercise is easy for the first students but difficult for the last students, so have them repeat the activity in reverse order. In the second round though, students are not allowed to repeat themselves. Each student must state a new food preference.

To prepare students for this activity, write the dialog for a sample chain activity on the blackboard. Pretend to be the first student. Have two students near you be the second and third students. Tell students that they are to express their preferences while following the pattern of the sample dialog.

Sample Dialog

1st Student: I'm Mariko. I love Italian food, but I can't stand pasta with salmon eggs.

2nd Student: Her name is Mariko. She loves Italian food, but she can't stand pasta with salmon eggs. I'm Kenji. I like British food, but I like French more.

3rd Student: She's Mariko. Mariko loves Italian food, but she can't stand pasta with salmon eggs. He is Kenji. He likes British food, but he likes French more. My name is Tomomi. I love Japanese food, but I dislike tempura.

• Suggestion Three: Standing, Listening, and Reading Activity

The third idea involves turning the dialog into a listening exercise. Copy the dialog onto a piece of paper. Cut that paper into small slips of paper. Each slip of paper will have one line of the dialog. Mix up the slips of papers. They should be out of order. Give them to six students who are standing at the front of the class. Those students are to read their lines aloud. The other students are to listen and tell the readers to change locations so that the readers end up reading the dialog in correct order from left to right. Be aware that some parts of a dialog can be read in more than one order.

• Suggestion Four: Expansion Activity

The next suggestion is for teachers to have students come up with additional information to support the statements of preferences in the dialog. In real conversations, native speakers tend to explain why they like or dislike something. First, write the dialog from the text on the board. Then ask a few students what foods they like or dislike and to explain why they like or dislike them. Then, the

teacher can elicit from a few students different reasons why A in the dialog below “can’t stand sushi.” The teacher should write student suggestions on the board at the end of each line. Look at the example below. The bold font shows typical comments that students might produce.

A: What kind of food do you like?

B: I love Japanese food, but I can’t stand sushi. It smells too fishy. I have an allergy to seafood. Sushi rice is too sweet.

A: That’s unusual. So, what are your favorite dishes?

B: I like tofu and noodles.

A: How about Korean food?

B: I think it’s okay, but I like Chinese better. Korean is too spicy for me. Chinese food has more variety than Korean food.

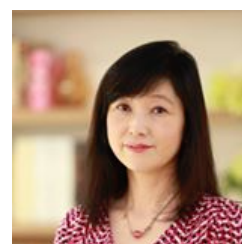
•Suggestion Five: Running Dictation Activity

Do this activity before students have read the dialog in the book, or do it as a review activity a week or two after they have studied the dialog. Assign a partner to each student. One student is the reader/speaker (RS). The other student is the listener/writer (LW). RS sits at a desk at one end of the room. LW sits at the other end of the class. Teachers who like to foster friendly competition in the classroom can state that the first pair to complete the activity without making errors is the winner. Teachers who do not like competition can skip this statement. The teacher explains that the goal is for the LW to write the dialog exactly as the textbook authors wrote it. The RS is to open the book to the page with the dialog when the teacher announces it is time to start. The RS can neither take notes nor carry the book. He or she must memorize as much as possible, walk to the other student, recite what he or she recalls, and return to the dialog to repeat the process until the LW has finished writing the entire dialog. The pair is then to inform the teacher that they have completed the activity. The teacher checks their work. Teachers may decide to allow no mistakes, such as spelling errors or punctuation errors, or accept a certain number of errors. I often do this activity twice with similar dialogs, so that all students can be both a reader/speaker and a listener/writer.

What are your ideas for adapting dialogs? The author of this column would like to receive your additional suggestions for modifying activities with dialogs. I welcome your comments and will include suitable ones in the next *BtK*.

Local Notes: Interview with Yukie Saito

Welcome to our second installment of *Local Notes*. For this issue, we interview Yukie Saito, a Tokyo-based teacher and writer and long-time JALT member. Yukie teaches at both Meiji and Waseda Universities and is a regular presenter at JALT events. She has co-authored a number of



books for English language learners in Japan. In this interview, she shares her views on developing materials for the updated, four-skills based EIKEN tests.

The following are excerpts from the interview:

TH: You have co-authored several ALC Press study guides for grades 5, 4, and 3 of the EIKEN test. How did you get involved in these projects?

Saito: I used to work as an English teacher at an English school for children in Niigata. At that time, I was teaching English conversation to elementary school children. While teaching the same students over the course of several years, I realized students were eager to learn the rules of English grammar. I thought teaching the 5th and 4th grades of EIKEN, including basic English grammar, vocabulary, and phrases would enhance their learning. Once I started teaching EIKEN at the school, I found children challenging themselves more as they now had concrete goals. At the same time, their parents were also very satisfied to see their children pass the 5th and 4th grades. Based on these experiences, I made a draft with several chapters for the 5th grade with my co-authors, who are my best friends. We did this without any contract with a publisher. After that, we decided to submit the draft and proposal to ALC. Surprisingly, they gave us some positive feedback which led to the publications!

TH: Congratulations on that. We wonder how much and in what ways you tailored those books toward children.

Saito: In our series, we focused on being children-friendly, hoping that even young learners could learn on their own and also be able to take some initiative in their own learning through the books. Accordingly, we included Can-do statements so that children could evaluate their own learning. The inclusion of the Can-do statements also reflects the concept of the CEFR framework, which is becoming more popular in Japan. Additionally, we wrote the books in a way to help children acquire the four skills of English, listening, reading, speaking, and writing in a balanced way, though at the time of the first printing, the importance had not been emphasized as much as in the current editions. So, a lot of writing and speaking exercises have now been added to the books. As for speaking exercises, the new versions of books for the 5th and 4th grades include the features of the speaking sections which have been added to the EIKEN since June, 2016. We also added speaking strategies and mock exams to the current editions.

TH: In your view, what do you think the next generation of English language learning materials will look like? Specifically, what is the typical Japanese learner of English interested in seeing in a book?

Saito: With the current emphasis on a balanced approach to acquiring the four skills of English, English tests have been updated to reflect this. For example, writing sections will be added to the 3rd and pre-2nd grades of EIKEN from next June. Materials for English tests will have to reflect this trend. Personally, I welcome the trend toward the four skills, including the productive skills of speaking and writing; however, personally I would like to develop materials for English tests which help

readers to acquire not only the strategies for the tests but also the skills needed to use English as a tool for global communication beyond the tests.

TH: We understand that you've recently co-authored a book with David Thayne, one of the most prolific authors in Japan. Could you tell us about that?

Saito: I was very fortunate to have a chance to work with Mr. Thayne. He has published more than 120 books, so he knows a lot about how to write good English language learning materials. I was able to learn a lot from him during the process. The characteristics of our book are the inclusion of effective strategies for each part of the listening, reading, writing, and speaking sections, two mock exams with detailed explanations about how to answer each question, plus one extra set of mock exams for writing and speaking. We also analyze the TEAP CBT and offer strategies for that as well. Both Thayne sensei and I took the TEAP, so we were able to analyze the test and include effective tips based on our own experiences. For example, the extra set of the mock exams was added because we thought the writing and speaking sections would be the most challenging for test takers. I do hope that high school students will be able to improve their four skills of English as well as pass the entrance examination for the school of their choice.

PanSIG: May 19-21-Akita International University

If you are attending the PanSIG, be sure to catch the forum: Materials Writing with a pragmatic focus.

Approaching a Publisher: A Publisher's Perspective

Hugh Graham-Marr

Done properly, the author-publisher relationship is one that is of great benefit to both parties. Authors of course have their own set of concerns but let me address the issue from the point of view of a small publisher of ELT texts.

First of all, a publisher wants it recognized that they have their own expertise to bring to the making of a book: knowledge of the content, of the course structure and perhaps of the types of exercises that other teachers or course administrators are looking for, knowledge of what is likely to be appealing, and of what might present difficulty. That is, the publisher is not a passive partner in the relationship but one of the two sides that cooperatively build the final product. As such, a publisher doesn't want to see anything close to a completed work in the initial approach stage. For example, on our own publisher's webpage (www.abax.co.jp) we state the following re. submissions:

- For a submission, what we like to see is:
 - a. a one-page rationale for the book (Why is it needed? / What are some somewhat similar products? / How does the proposed product differ from these other materials? / Why would teachers opt for the proposed product?)
 - b. one or two sample units (no more)
 - c. a table of contents

- Taken point by point:
 - a. The one-page rationale is for us to see if the author is looking at the market clearly and is able to distance themselves from their text and look objectively at where it fits into the larger picture. We want to see that the writer has a clear picture of what they are doing and why. Such writers are much more likely to be good partners to work with, and we can see from the start whether we have similar goals or not.
 - b. The sample unit or units, is to give us a feel for how the writer envisions a unit. It also indicates whether the writer is able to adequately prepare the students for a task, has a good sense for the levels of the students, has a good sense of how activities tie together into a cohesive whole, whether they able to write exercises that are interesting and work, and whether they show a good and constant sense of what it is the student is supposed to be learning with each activity and with each unit.
 - c. The table of contents is of course to give us a feel for how the writer envisions the entire book. What are their ideas for the progression and the breadth of the

course?

Secondly, we like to see an author who tries to consider our perspective. Any writer approaching a publisher should do their homework and should personalize their approach to any publisher – nothing is more quickly dismissed than something that looks like a cut and paste, scattershot approach. Here are some questions any prospective textbook writers should ask before they approach a publisher.

- Is the text one that the publisher is currently lacking on their list?
- Does the publisher deal in that kind of text?
- Does the publisher sell to the market your text is aimed at?

The third point is we like to see someone who can complete things in a timely manner. And the fourth point of course is someone who can work with us to write something that is a work we can all be proud of, because yes, we, along with the writer, want to make good materials.

Perhaps more than any other form of book, a textbook, particularly a language textbook, is a cooperative venture. For the venture to be successful, both author and publisher need to recognize the value of each other, what each can contribute, how each can gain, and the risks that each take. As Carol Fisher Saller writes in *The Subversive Copy Editor (2nd edition)*, “To see the writer-editor relationship as inherently adversarial is to doom yourself to a career of angst and stress.” Of course, publishers have their whole own set of issues they need to pay attention to in dealing with writers. But as for an author, if they approach a publisher with this sense of looking to embark on a cooperative journey, they are much more likely to find a partner willing to embark on it with them.

References

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Professional Level Self-Publishing in Japan

R. Gregg McNabb, Shizuoka Institute of Science & Technology

Background

Even though my recent book project was readily accepted by three publishers in Japan, I started down this road because I became dissatisfied with what I perceive to be a lack of speed, excessive rigidity and the generally outdated business models of domestic Japanese ELT publishers. In addition to helping some learn how to publish at a professional level, it is also my hope that as a result of this brief how-to article, more authors in Japan will put pressure on domestic publishers to increase

the royalties paid and otherwise indicate that they need to keep pace with new trends and developments and become proactive in terms of getting books to market. I also hope that until the face of publishing changes in Japan, members of the Materials Writers SIG can form an informal information cooperative where they inform each other of best practices in professional level self-publishing.

Sophisticated and relatively sophisticated desktop publishing software packages enable authors who are so inclined to publish books at a professional level not dissimilar to those published by major ELT publishers. Even for authors who are intending to publish a monochrome B5 book of 80-100 pages, it is possible to do it yourself and create a more professional, polished product than the standard fare offered by domestic Japanese ELT publishers.

While the title refers to Japan, most of the information listed hereafter applies to any professional level publishing project. Since many writers tend to use Apple products, I describe procedures when using a MacBook Pro.

General considerations

- Are you competent using publishing software and do you have decent artistic sense? Do you already have a clear picture of what you will do before you consult a printer about costs?
- Realistically, what's the size of your market? Printers will print 500+ copies but prefer to print 1000+. If you can only sell a few hundred copies, it is not worth your time and effort. If you can be guaranteed of selling 1000+ in a three to four-year period, it may be worthwhile. If your customer base is too small, it is *highly likely* that you will lose money. *Assess the risk carefully*. Calculate your worst-case scenario first. Budget for unexpected rising costs.
- Do you have the skills and commitment to make a proper website and Teacher's Manual for your book(s)? Teachers are very demanding and the market is already very crowded. You must differentiate your product unless it is a niche product or it likely won't sell well.
- Are you well organized? Do you have enough time and start-up funds to front printing and layout costs, etc.? Depending on the scope of your project, costs will vary. As of late 2016, for 1000 books, ISBN and JAN code procedures, and a website, you would need around ¥600,000 in seed money.
- You will be spending *many, many* hours to produce, market and sell a professional-quality book *plus extras*. Can you pay yourself enough? If not, then compromise on quality and control and accept a risk-free 6%-7% from a domestic publisher.
- You will need a good, reliable, overseas English-speaking printer (I can recommend one).
- Solicit feedback about covers, contents and layout from some *severe* critics.
- A Japanese glossary is a must if you want to sell to Japanese professors. Many teachers want just about everything to be done for them, so thoroughness matters.

- You need very basic knowledge about setting up a business (self-proprietorship is ok).
- You must have enough Japanese language ability to apply for ISBN and JAN codes (you'll get 10 ISBN numbers) and to deal with bookstores (distribution staff) *before* printing. The ISBN procedure takes time, so make sure you have three months or more.
- Climate control for storage.

Technical considerations

- You need a nearly error-free CMYK manuscript in pdf (for the printer), which means you have to have Acrobat Pro DC, EnFocus, InDesign, or you can use Markzware, or other “preflight” software solutions. A preflight software package checks the pdf for errors or trouble spots. Errors in the pdf file will mess up the printing process. You could also try Scribus and GIMP (Mac/Windows/Linux) freeware software programs. Here, it is advisable to pay someone unless you know exactly what you are doing. I opted for a combination of both. At this stage, you must already know exactly what kind of paper will be used.
- To print clearly, images should be 300 DPI (view them at 400%). Whenever possible, try to choose relatively simple, clear images. One large image looks better and has more impact than several small ones, and it makes formatting easier, too. Generally, think big. Don't worry about large file sizes. Have ample space from the margin (near spine). Extremely intricate images may not print well even at 300 DPI. Your own carefully selected images will likely be better than stock images.
- Use true black C0, M0, Y0, K100% for typeface. Depending on each printer's specifications, don't exceed 305% of CYMK ink values.
- Using Mac's Color Synch Utility App, adjust and then convert any RGB image into CMYK format before positioning it in your manuscript. According to printers, you can sharpen the image a bit (15-25%).
- A book that is too thin is harder to bind. There is virtually no difference in price between 80 pages and 120 pages.

There may be other considerations I have not covered in this brief explanation that you want to know about. If so, feel free to contact me at greggmcnabb@gmail.com and I'll try to assist.

Designing ELT Materials for Young Learners

Barbara Hoskins Sakamoto

In today's changing landscape of publishing, finding success as a materials writer is more challenging than ever. Writers of materials for young learners are discovering that while the core guidelines for creating successful content remain unchanged, the path to becoming published is not as clear as it once was.

When creating materials for young learners, your answers to these four questions should be your guide:

- 1) Who are the students who will be using your materials?
- 2) Who are the teachers who will be using your materials?
- 3) What content do you want or need to include?
- 4) What sort of parameters are you working within?

If you're writing materials for your own students, you know their age, skill level, background knowledge, and interests. It's relatively easy to craft a handout or unit that's going to work. The further you move from writing for your own students, the more you're going to be generalizing about age range, abilities, knowledge and interests.

The same principle applies to your answers for each of the questions. If you write materials for teachers to use in your school, you're available to explain things that aren't clear. If you write for teachers you'll never meet, you'll need to make sure that any teacher – trained or untrained, fluent in English or not – can pick up your book and understand what to do.

Language or topics your students will find engaging may not be the same for students who are older or younger than your students, or who live in another country. Even when you find a topic like "Animals" that is generally engaging for students across a wide range of ages and in most countries, you need to decide which language to introduce. Out of all the animals that exist, which 8-10 will you include in your lesson? What language will you teach with this topic? There are nearly limitless possibilities: It's (a cat), I like (cats), (A cat) is faster than (a turtle). Which of the language and vocabulary you think are necessary might be most effectively taught through this topic?

Finally, all teachers deal with parameters, although we don't often think of them as such. If you are creating materials to help your students pass a test, that's a parameter. If you need to include vocabulary from a word list, that's a parameter. If you are writing materials for children in Japan, you'll probably want to include pigs in your lesson about animals – pigs are popular here. However, if you plan on selling any books in Muslim majority countries, you can't include pigs (or ham).

Finding the perfect balance between students, teachers, content and parameters is a bit like trying to put together a jigsaw puzzle without much idea of

what the finished picture should look like. The more pieces you put together, the easier it is to complete the puzzle.

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**Find a wealth of information at
MW's Web site:**

<http://www.materialswriters.org>

Materials Writing to Enhance Your Teaching Career

Richard Miller, Kobe Gakuin University

JALT Job Information Centre (JIC)

For most language-teaching professionals, the search for employment and promotion is ongoing and usually takes place throughout a career as there are changes and opportunities that constantly come up (Evanoff, 1993). So it is important for everyone (from beginning educators to tenured professors) in the language teaching industry to draft and then update an academic curriculum vitae (CV, Latin for the course of [my] life) that lists all of one's academic achievements. The academic CV contains only items that are related to education; as it consists of factual information, generally making it rather long, it should not contain adjectives (in contrast to the short one- or two-page power resume/CV used in business). One of the most important parts of any academic CV is the list of publications that a person has written (the other sections include education, teaching experience, service and presentations) (Miller, 2011). In a study done in 2014 of the Japan-based jobs posted on the JALT and JACET websites, 78% of job postings required the applicants supply their publication list along with the CV (Miller, 2015). What constitutes a publication (and therefore counts towards inclusion on an academic CV) is an important question that all academics and educators need to consider, particularly when there are competing and conflicting ideas about what works towards furthering an academic career. Therefore, an important consideration for those who develop materials is that textbooks can be very helpful.

The JALT Job Information Centre (JIC) is privy to a variety of different sides to the publications discussions that take place, discussions that are as varied as can be imagined; for example, when looking at American academic positions, such as those that are found in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and in choosing one of those it will most likely indicate if it is a research university that is looking for a particular type of professor. In that case the publications that are required will be those that are relevant in the field for which they are hiring. That will mean that a textbook, even a relevant one in the field, will most likely not help with the publications list. So, keep in mind the position and the institution: for example, if an American research-heavy university is looking for faculty members who will be contributing to the field and creating knowledge that is relevant to the field, the positions typically require only a nominal amount of teaching, advising, and committee work. For Japan-based language teachers the danger is thinking that this model is the metric from which assumptions are made, which is not necessarily true (Wadden,

1993).

Many tertiary institutions have a ranking for publications, whether informally or officially established, used to evaluate candidates. Table 1 depicts a rough metric, developed by the author, for determining the relative value of publications in terms of securing academic employment. The publications for getting hired matrix for language professionals gives textbooks up to a 'B' grade (with 'C' being the minimal requirement for most part-time and limited term lecturer positions) (Miller, 2015, Miller & Parrish, November 21, 2015). The rationale for the textbook as a publication being rated so high was the assumption that it was an ISBN numbered published textbook.

Table 1: Ranking of publications in ESL/EFL hiring decisions

Grade/Rank	Publication type
A+	Academic Books (Book Chapters), Leading peer-reviewed journals
A	<i>JALT Journal</i> , Important (ranked), second-tier & online peer reviewed journals
B	University Journals, Textbooks, <i>TLT</i> features, Conference Proceedings, co-authored journal articles
C	Book Reviews, My Share, Small Short Articles, Conference Reviews, SIG Newsletters
D	Amazon book reviews, <i>EZine</i> , <i>Scribd</i> , blog posts
F	Publishing nothing at all

Note. A preliminary version of this rubric was presented at a presentation for the Toyohashi Chapter meeting in January, 2015.

Most people who are looking for work at JALT are looking for work as language teachers, and the work that is posted is almost exclusively for language teachers. For general language teaching positions at secondary schools or English conversation schools, research may be beneficial as a discriminating factor and as evidence of professional development. However, in the case of university employment, it is often a necessary requirement, even if the position is primarily classroom instruction.

For the most part, the jobs being offered in Japan for language instructors are for teaching and so are not held to the same research standards of Japanese scholars (Hall 1997; McVeigh 2002). Even the Japanese tenured professors are often not expected to have as thorough a research track record as what one may find in the West, and at some Japanese institutions, tenure may even be granted before a PhD is earned, though this trend is changing (Evanoff, 1993; McCrostie, 2010, Nagatomo, 2016). For university hiring committees, candidates with publication lists heavy with published, peer-reviewed research are welcome; however, so are those with publication lists that contain textbooks. A colleague coined a Yogi Bera-esque truism about the value of academic research and publication, "It counts until it doesn't"

(Ryan Richardson, private communication, July 21, 2012). In other words, different levels of academic publication may be acceptable depending on the level of the position or the needs of the institution. For those with a textbook, it may not count highly as an academic achievement for every job, but it cannot count at all if it is not listed on the CV. In addition, the process of writing, piloting, and refining materials for a textbook can form the basis for more traditional research articles and thus serve double duty.

There are numerous factors taken into account in employment decisions. The hiring committee of any institution will comprise forces that someone on the outside will have no way of discovering. For example, there could be (unspoken) age, gender, or a variety of other forces at work. One of these forces is the publication point system mentioned above. What all jobseekers should be trying to do is to maximize the number of combinations that they can unlock: and a textbook may be the key for the next job. A textbook has several advantages over typical academic publications, it is uncommon, it shows your teaching approach concretely, and shows an ability to design a coherent curriculum. One thing to be sure of is that your textbook has an ISBN number, and make it available online where possible, or (if you are comfortable with this) downloadable in a forum such as Scribd. One caveat: if you have several textbooks but no other academic publications, then it is important to try and get at least two other types of academic publications.

Most advice for academics in the West writing textbooks are as follows:

“So, if you decide to write a textbook, it is worth it to take the time to make it good the first time. The main advantages of writing textbooks are the money, the chance to frame a field from your vantage point, and the enforcement of the need to stay current with the field, because you revise the book every three or four years” (Taylor & Martin, 2010, p. 378).

In his book on publishing for academics, Lussier (2010) advises starting with quantity and then focus on quality. In Japan, job postings overwhelmingly request three publications with a few requiring five. A lack of even three publications poses the biggest problem for those looking for even part-time or contract work. For those in this category, materials writing is an excellent way to enhance your CV. Every institution is different, with different rubrics that go with different publications, so what is true with one university is not necessarily so with others (Nagatomo, 2016; Hayes, 2013; McCrostie, 2010).

As with many Western universities, the hiring committees in Japanese institutions are looking for those who will contribute to the overall academic society of the institution. That means, participating in committee meetings, helping with the direction of the university as well as conducting research (Cahn, 1989). But, of the language jobs being posted, over 86% (in the last half of 2015) were not looking to hire native-speaking language teachers as full-fledged faculty members. Therefore, the metrics that are being used by casual comments such as “textbooks don’t count” may not be a reflection of the reality of the job market. And, when it comes to *hijokin*

(part-time) positions, the expectations for research heavy publications are even lower (Evanoff, 1993; Hayes, 2013; Nagatomo, 2016).

When selecting for the final list of job candidates, the *mogi jugyuo*, (or the sample lesson) is a very popular way of vetting, as just over 1/3 of hiring committees were requesting a sample lesson in a 2012 survey (Miller, 2013). This means that the jobseeker was required to prepare a sample lesson for the hiring committee then deliver the lesson (often to large audiences). The demonstration lesson can be much more powerful if the interviewee is able to use their own book and show the hiring committee the sample lesson from their materials. This is also very helpful when having to write a 'teaching philosophy' (another very popular vetting device required by some hiring committees). When a candidate's statement of teaching philosophy is accompanied by a published textbook reflecting that philosophy, it can have a lasting impact on the hiring committee. It is a good strategy to include your textbook when sending in a job application that requests supplementary materials, such as publications. Even if they only request three academic publications, a textbook (as a fourth submitted publication) tends to add weight to the application, both figuratively and literally, affording you enough points to advance to the second round of interviews. Hiring committees often use points to decide who advances to the next level of the hiring process. Publications are an easy way to process a large number of applicants efficiently by eliminating those who do not have the minimum number of publications (see Table 1).

Case Studies

While these stories have been modified to maintain confidentiality, they took place at a single large private university in an urban setting where the university hires most of its language teaching staff on a limited-term contract basis. That meant that yearly contracts are renewed a maximum number of three times with the lecturers not being permitted to continue beyond that. Recent changes to the labour laws in Japan allow up to five years of continuous employment, possibly up to ten years for academic positions, before employees have the right to ask for permanent employee (正社員/seishain) status. But the practice of limiting contract renewals to fewer than four times (five years of employment) is still quite common (see General Union, 2015; Okukuni, 2016).

The work situation of the teachers was similar to many large institutions with many 'irregular' faculty (those hired outside the tenure system). All of the contract teachers were given cubicle-style desks in a common teachers' room and were not required to research or publish to have their yearly contracts renewed. Within the teachers' room there were close to a dozen limited-term contract teachers, two of whom approached the JIC for advice. When asked about publications on his CV, the first lecturer, (Lecturer A) in his fifties, explained that the system of that institution gave the lecturers the option to sell their materials to the students. There was a low cost binding service to help facilitate this option for the faculty to produce and sell

their materials to the students. He said that he saw this as an opportunity to make extra money and did not bother with actually doing further research with his materials and preferred the binding service as it was a lot less trouble than publishing properly. The problem for him was that because the informally printed textbook lacked an ISBN number, it did not count as a publication on his CV.

The second lecturer (Lecturer B) had done something similar with materials writing in his penultimate year of the contract renewal process and wanted to know how to improve his CV. He was advised to invest the money he would earn from the book sales into getting his book properly published using original illustrations, editing and typesetting as well as the agreement (to the publisher) to purchase a set number of books (in this case 400; 300 for his students, plus another 100). One thing that tends to make a book stand out is the editing and professional illustrations as well as graphic designs, all of which were required by the publisher before sending a PDF file that was printed into a textbook. Due to time constraints and the fact that the text was not fully developed, at that time, the self-publishing option was preferable to publishing through a commercial educational publishing house.

After the book was published, Lecturer B then created a workbook for teacher's notes and then had the book put up for sale on a couple of websites. Later, one of the lessons in the textbook was incorporated into a 'My-share' article (for a Hawaii TESOL publication), and he also did a pre-test that he gave out at the start of the semester to the students, followed by a post-test. The results, along with an explanation for the course was then written up for the department journal, all based on the course taught that was utilizing the textbook.

This example is brought up to clearly illustrate how it is possible to build on work completed; one thing can lead to another (as Lecturer B did versus Lecturer A). In fact, these two cases clearly show where the use of a textbook, along with a positive attitude towards the endeavour and profession, has a lot to do with the success of any outcome. Lecturer A approached the academic endeavour in a way that showed an overall poor attitude, stating "the textbook was 'just a few photocopied lessons cobbled together', academic papers were 'reinventing the wheel', and My-share articles were 'laughable as no one bothers to read them.'" The results were that at the end of the limited term three-year contracts, Lecturer B, who did publish a textbook, was able to secure a new position that was paid more and had fewer classes. While Lecturer A, who did not do research and did not properly publish his materials, struggled as he fit together enough part-time classes to earn an even lower salary the year following the end of his contract.

Remember that attitude is also part of your materials when it comes to job seeking. As a textbook not only shows that you have the stamina to complete a task, it also shows organizational skills, lesson planning and curriculum design. One thing to be aware of is: if the job requires a different type of syllabus to your textbook, or the materials for the job you are applying for, be sure to mention in your cover letter

that you are aware of the differences. Explain that your materials are included to show your knowledge of curriculum development and that you can easily relate to textbooks from your experience that you have learned while developing your own. Never try to convince a hiring committee that you know better than they do and that you are inflexible. Get the job first, then you can change the system after you get further up the hierarchy and have proven yourself.

A word of caution regarding creating and publishing original materials, as I have noted in a previous article:

Ensure that all of your work is original and done well. While ideas are not trademarked, never use any copy-written work or work that might belong to the institution that you were working at while it was being developed. In addition, copying and pasting (plagiarizing) other work would be detrimental to any candidate's chances for obvious reasons. Obtaining original illustrations can be easy by outsourcing to artists in countries such as the Philippines or online so there is no reason not to have your own original materials. (Miller, 2013, p. 93).

In summary, a textbook may not guarantee you the job, but it might help push you to the top of the selection pool, and the latter point is the most important. It has a lot to do with how you, as an author, use the textbook as a publication and as a tool for further publications. If you are not sure what to focus on refer to Table 1 to see where you might be lacking in regards to publications. Ensure that you have enough of the higher graded articles on your CV. Analysis of your original materials can be a rich area to develop in your research, from the ways students use your materials to the reactions or results of other educators who use your materials (qualitative and quantitative surveys could work for either case). The big payoff when developing your own materials could very well be the next job that you secure as a result of your hard work.

Finally, those who end up leaving the profession to follow another career path, consider this: when referring to your (now former) career, a textbook you wrote and published will likely be the most interesting thing to show and discuss in an interview, even far outside of the fields of academia or teaching.

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