

Volume 27 Issue 2

# The School House

The Publication of the JALT Teaching Younger Learners SIG

全国語学教育学会若い人たちに教える研究部会研究部会定款



## In this Issue (内容)

**P3:** From the Editor

**P4:** Alison Nemoto

**P7:** Nicholas DiNunzio & David Juteau

**P10:** Lesley Ito

**P13:** Parisa Fardad

**P16:** Johan Saputra Mujadi

**P18:** Philip Head

**P19:** Martin Sedaghat

**P21:** James W. Porcaro

Picture Book Resources

Speed Reading

The Joys of Worksheets

Unmotivated Adolescent Students and My Challenge

How Technology Saved My Life

Idiom and Slang JanKen Warm-up

Arts and Crafts with Young Learners

Coming Full Circle: Remembrances and Reflections



ISSN: 1881-0713

*The School House*

Volume 27, Issue 2

**Coordinator**

Chiyuki Yanase

**Programs Chair**

Marybeth Kamibeppu

**Publication Chair**

Paul Nanton

**Treasurer**

Emi Sugita

**JALT Junior Site Chair**

Paul Nanton

**Webmaster**

Richard Pavonarius

**Officers at Large**

Marian Hara

Aleda Krause

Jon Catanzariti

Johan Saputra Mujadi

# Winter 2019 – Volume 27, Issue 2

Hi Everyone!

I hope this term has been a productive one for you and your students. This issue has a wide array of topics for your teaching palette. If you are looking to learn new techniques when using picture books in class or want to expand your book list for elementary students then Alison Nemoto's article will definitely spark your curiosity. The next article from Nicholas DiNunzio and David Juteau discusses speed reading methods for their junior high school students. After speed reading, Lesley Ito gives us some practical pointers and ideas about the importance of worksheet activities. Next, Parisa Fardad talks about how his teaching has evolved through trial and error activities for his junior high school students. Our next writer, Johan Saputra Mujadi, outlines how technology has saved his teaching. After technology, it's time to go back to the basics with a rock/paper/scissors lesson plan brought to you by Philip Head. Next, Martin Sedaghat describes how he gets his young learners to dabble in creative art projects. The final article is a reflection piece by James W. Porcaro. He talks about where he has taught and what he has learnt over the years.

If that is not enough for you, get onto our lively Facebook site (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/jshsig/>) to see regular posts offering advice, links, information, jobs and a sense of community! See you there!!

**If you would like to contribute an article, an event you're promoting or anything you would like to be announced to TYL members, you can send it to me ([pnanton@gmail.com](mailto:pnanton@gmail.com)).**

Paul Nanton, Editor, *The School House*

## Picture Book Resources

Alison Nemoto

*Miyagi University of Education*

Hello TYL SIG members!

The JALT international conference is coming up very soon, from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> November, and I'd like to share some information here related to a SIG event at the conference.

Myself, and three other picture book enthusiasts, Chiyuki Yanase, Lesley Ito and Karen Masatsugu will be taking part in a forum titled; "Using Picture Books To Engage and Inspire Young Learners." It will be held on Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 12:10-13:40, in Room 1101 of WINC Aichi in Nagoya.

During the forum, we will introduce some of our favourite titles and share how we utilize picture books in our various teaching contexts. We believe that picture books have a strong universal appeal to all ages and are a truly multi-functional material for the classroom. They can be informative and entertaining, act as a springboard for discussion, games or the creation of original stories or artwork by children.

If you are attending the conference please come along and join us at the event. If you can't make it, I'd like to share three resources for those of you interested in or already using picture books in their classes.

(1) The first resource is a book about how to do achieve the goals mentioned above, of using picture books as a springboard to discussion, and is appropriately titled; "Reading Picture Books with Children." It is written by Megan Dowd Lambert and is published by Charlesbridge (2015). It introduces the "Whole Book Approach," developed by Megan while she worked at the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art and it shows us step by step how we can move away from traditional story time, to a way of sharing stories that involve the audience actively and help them appreciate each book's design and artwork in numerous ways.

(2) The second resource is a website called PEPELT, which can be found at <https://pepelt21.com>. PEPELT stands for 'Picturebooks in European Primary English Language Teaching,' and has been created by four women; Sandie Mourão, Tatia Gruenbaum, Gail Ellis and Annetta Sadowska. It began as a Facebook page where the four added informative videos about the different aspects of a chosen book, but now is a website of its own.

They say on the website; "We wanted to help teachers and other professionals move away from the mundane and the conventional in mainstream course book materials – as well as in the picture books they might already select – and discover the world that picture books can open doors to – a world where learning moves beyond a focus on language acquisition alone."

(3) The third resource I'd like to share is a list of recommended titles for picture books I use in seminars with teachers and lend out to undergraduates taking my course on using picture books in primary English classes. I have listed them alphabetically by author and/or illustrator's name. It is not by any means an exhaustive list and is constantly growing, but when teachers who love using picture books get together, there are usually one or two titles mentioned which you've never heard of before. Anyway, take a look at my present list and maybe there's a book you've never met which you can add to your own collection?

### Alison's Book list

YES HUG TALL Washing Line	Jez Alborough
Little Green Peas	Keith Baker
How Do You Feel?	Anthony Browne
Knock, Knock, Who's There?	Sally Grindley & Anthony Browne
Dear Zoo	Rod Campbell
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear? Have You Seen My Cat? The Very Hungry Caterpillar From Head To Toe Does A Kangaroo Have A Mother, Too?	Bill Martin Jr & Eric Carle  Eric Carle
Skip Through The Seasons	Stella Blackstone & Maria Carluccio
How Many Bugs In A Box?	David A. Carter
Five Little Monkeys Jumping On The Bed	Eileen Christelow
Skeleton Hiccups	Margery Cuyler
Pete The Cat I Love My White Shoes Pete The Cat And His Four Groovy Buttons	Eric Litwin & James Dean
Go Away, Big Green Monster!	Ed Emberley
Where Is The Green Sheep?	Mem Fox
Where's Spot?	Eric Hill
All Are Welcome	Alexandra Penfold & Suzanne Kaufman
I Want My Hat Back	Jon Klassen
See You Later, Alligator! What's The Time, Mr Wolf?	Annie Kubler
A Color Of His Own Fish Is Fish Frederick	Leo Lionni
Froggy Gets Dressed	Jonathan London
Not Now, Bernard Elmer	David McKee
Elphee's Walk	Hiroataka Nakano
We're Going On A Bear Hunt	Michael Rosen & Helen Oxenbury
It's Okay To Be Different	Todd Parr

Yummy YUCKY	Leslie Patricelli
The Lion And The Mouse	Jerry Pinkney
Yo! Yes?	Chris Raschka
Tadpole's Promise	Jeanne Willis & Tony Ross
Lemons Are Not Red	Laura Vaccaro Seeger
What's In The Witch's Kitchen? Ketchup On Your Cornflakes?	Nick Sharratt
They All Saw A Cat	Brendan Wenzel

# Speed Reading

By Nicholas DiNunzio & David Juteau

*Juteau English School*

## Background

Among the many challenges of teaching English to younger learners, a major one is balancing the competing desires to both give, on the one hand, engaging and enjoyable lessons while on the other provide rigorous instruction that leads to demonstrable improvement in English. Working at a private English school servicing students from pre- school through junior high, we have tried to respond to concerns that parents bring about their children's future in English education while also reassuring them that "Rome was not built in a day." Whether or not they can see their children's progress, sticking with English is as important as anything at the earliest ages.

One way of balancing engagement with rigor is sharing "measurables" with both students and parents. Unfortunately, the only measure of English ability that most students currently have access to is grades from their classes, but a grade from school is hardly impartial nor objective. One measurable that we are starting to use is reading speed.

In his book, "What should every EFL teacher know", Paul Nation outlines a "speed reading course". According to Nation, the usual reading speed for an EFL student is under 100 words per minute. (Nation, 2013) But through a speed reading course, students can increase their speed to around 200 words per minute. We use Nation's book "Reading for Speed and Fluency" at Obirin University, but even the level one book is too advanced for our junior high school students. So we reduced the words per passage from 200 to 50. We also simplified the language, editing texts to remain within a highly controlled word-list derived from a hybrid of Eiken 5 and 4, as well as words from the textbooks we are currently using, Step-Into English by ABAX Ltd.

## Creating the readings

We used AntWord Profiler to control the vocabulary in our readings. It can be downloaded for free from: <https://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antwordprofiler/>

For those unfamiliar with the program, AntWord profiler allows you to make a wordlist, including conjugations of words, that you can use to scan a reading passage. A scan then tells you what words in the passage are within or outside of your target list.

For each 50 word passage we followed Paul Nation's recommendation that 98% of words should be known by the students. This means that excluding proper nouns, there is only one word out of a 50 passage that is outside of our word list. While we can't ensure that students know all the words on the our list yet, we feel confident that most of the students have been exposed to the words in their English classes either at our school or in their JHS English classes.

Each reading passage tries to follow a mini-narrative form, with a status-quo at the start, some problem in the middle, and a resolution by end. We have created a fictional family with a brother and sister in school. This way the stories could stay within the CEFR A1 field of "familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family, and immediate concrete surroundings..." (CEFR descriptors) The limited number of characters and Japanese names are used to minimize confusion with names.

Like Nation's speed reading textbooks, each of our readings is followed by a short comprehension test. We use 5 True/False questions. If students get 4 or 5 correct, we encourage them to push themselves to read the next passage faster. If they get 3 or less, we encourage them to take their time on the next passage.

Students are also given a short reading log. Each page of the log contains space for 10 passages. Students record their reading times (as explained below), answer t/f questions and record their scores on the log.

### **Speed reading in class procedure**

- The teacher hands each student a 50 word reading passage.
- The teacher sets a stopwatch located on the whiteboard.
- Students then read the story.
- When they finish, the students write down their time in their reading logs.
- The students then answer the 5 true/false questions on the back of the reading.
- The teacher then goes over the answer with the students, and students record how many answers they got correct on their reading log.

At this point the speed reading task is finished.

Here are some additional non-speed reading activities that we use to follow up speed reading with our first year students.

- Read the story aloud as a class with the teacher checking pronunciation etc.
- The teacher checks for new or unknown vocabulary in the reading. If there is only one

unknown word, the teacher will practice the "guessing meaning from context" strategy. What part of speech is the word? What do you think it means? etc... If more than one word is not known by the class, then we flag the reading for revision.

### **References**

Nation, ISP. (2013). *What Should Every EFL Teacher Know?* Compass Publishing. p.60 Council of Europe. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*

*Learning, teaching, assessment.* P.26

**Refer to page 9 for worksheet, sample passage and questions**



## Speed Reading Worksheet Fall 2019

Story Number	Time 0:00	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Score 0-5
1		T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	
2		T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	
3		T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	
4		T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	
5		T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	
6		T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	
7		T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	
8		T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	
9		T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	
10		T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	
11		T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	
12		T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	
13		T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	
14		T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	
15		T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	T/F	

Story 5

### Two Friends Fight

Haruko is angry. She got a bad grade on her math test. Natsumi didn't help her. Friends should help each other. Natsumi is sad. She likes Haruko, but she doesn't want to cheat. Natsumi studies math very hard. Haruko doesn't like studying. The two friends do not talk all day.

Story 5

### Questions

- 1) Haruko got a low score on her test. T / F
- 2) Haruko helped Natsumi on the math test. T / F
- 3) Natsumi hates Haruko. T / F
- 4) Haruko studies math very hard. T / F
- 5) Haruko talks to Natsumi after class. T / F

## The Joys of Worksheets

By Lesley Ito

*BIG BOW English Lab*

Worksheets are a very important part of my school's program. I attended a presentation many years ago by Chuck Sandy, who said that worksheets have "take away value". That means it is something tangible students can take out of the classroom to show what they have learned. This is especially important for young learners, whose parents are always wondering what they are learning in class! I've been making my own worksheets to cover material not in the textbook for many years. Back then, I had nothing more than a Brother word processor, a ruler, and simple hand-drawn pictures. Now, it is so much easier to make them with computer graphics and clip art.

Worksheets can also facilitate the learning process. Many students are visual or kinesthetic learners and it helps for them to have something to look at or do with their hands while they complete the task, for example, worksheets where students have to cut something out and paste it in the correct place. Finishing a worksheet also gives students a sense of accomplishment that a flashcard game or speaking activity cannot equal.

Here are two examples of worksheet activities that I have used many times over the past couple of years. They are best for elementary students who have studied for more than a year and have basic reading skills. Both of these activities have the goal of getting children to talk about Japanese culture and famous places in Japan in English, because I think it is very beneficial for students to think about their own culture and how they can explain it to other people.

### Summer Festivals in Japan

Summer festivals are becoming less popular these days with children who live in cities (in fact, I'm shocked whenever I hear students tell me they have never been to one!), but they are an important part of Japanese culture. For the first class, we talk about summer festivals and as the vocabulary comes up, I teach the students how to say the different words in English. Then, I teach the remaining vocabulary and we practice saying the words together using flashcards I made with clip art (see some of them on the next page). Next, I have the students group the flashcards into things you can see, eat, wear, or hold. After that, I shuffle the cards and divide the white board into four sections with a marker, titling each section: I see, I eat, I wear, I hold. The students have to use magnets and take turns sticking the card into the correct section with a magnet and then making a sentence about it, for example, when they take the "octopus balls" card and put it in the "I eat" section, they have to say, "I eat octopus balls."

#### Answers:

I eat octopus balls.

I eat noodles.

I eat Japanese pancakes.

I eat shaved ice.

I see a gate

I see fireworks.

I wear a summer kimono.

I wear *geta* sandals.

I wear a *happi* coat.

I hold a fan.

The next class, we reviewed what we learned and then the students get a copy of the worksheet (see some of the clipart below) and a sheet with the clip art on it. Students cut out the cards and paste them into the correct box. Afterwards, they have to stand up, hold up their worksheet, and say the sentences to the class. (If the class is large, have the students make small groups or present it to a partner.)



### Major Cities and Famous Places in Japan

Not only does this lesson teach geography and math, but it also teaches students how to talk about famous places in Japan. Students learn new words like *prefecture* and high frequency vocabulary words like *bridge*, *castle*, *volcano*, *tower*, and *garden* reviewed.

For the first lesson, lay out an English map of Japan on the table. I made little cards with the following city names on them: Sapporo, Tokyo, Kanazawa, Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka, Kagoshima, and Iwakuni, Yamaguchi Prefecture. I ask the students if they can name any big cities in Japan. Usually a student will mention Tokyo or Osaka and then I'll hand them the card and ask if they can place the card over the city. Then we work together to put the other city names on top of the cities on the map.

Next, I'll lay out little cards with the following place names on them: Sapporo Clock Tower, Tokyo Tower, Nagoya Castle, Kenrokuen Garden, Golden Pavilion Temple, Kintai Bridge, Minami Area, Sakurajima Volcano. I'll also lay out cards of those places in a random order. (Note: Minami area refers to the area of Osaka with the famous Glico sign.) I ask the students if they know where any of the places are or if they have been to any of these places and then we'll work together to match up the names with the pictures and put them next to the correct cities on the map. Then we will say the following together as we point to the places on the map:

- The Sapporo Clock Tower is in Sapporo.
- Tokyo Tower is in Tokyo.
- Kenrokuen Garden is in Kanazawa.
- Nagoya Castle is in Nagoya.
- The Golden Pavilion Temple is in Kyoto.
- The Minami Area is in Osaka.
- Kintai Bridge is in Iwakuni, Yamaguchi Prefecture
- Sakurajima Volcano is in Kagoshima.

The next week, I'll lay out the map and the cards and see if the students can put them in the correct places on the map. After reviewing numbers up to 2,000, I'll show them a chart from The Lonely Planet, which shows how many kilometers it is between places, and how to use the chart. Then I'll ask, "How far away is Tokyo from Osaka?" and we will look it up together. I'll let each student choose two cities and then we'll look up the distances between them on the chart so the students can have a chance to get used to using it.

The final week, after the students put the cards on the map, I'll pass out the worksheet (see the worksheet below) and we'll work on it together. Students will need extra assistance with the word problem in question #4. I've used this lesson many times for Open House lessons, where the parents come to observe the lesson. Instead of just having the parents watch the class, I have them work with the child to complete the worksheet. It is a wonderful experience for both the parent and the child because children love to show off to their parents how much they know and parents love working with their child and they feel like they also learned something new.



### Distances Between Cities and Famous Places in Japan

1. You are in Nagoya. How far away is Tokyo? \_\_\_\_\_ km.
2. You are in Tokyo. How far away is Osaka? \_\_\_\_\_ km.
3. You are in \_\_\_\_\_. How far away is \_\_\_\_\_?  
It's \_\_\_\_\_ km.
4. I want to visit Sakurajima Volcano in Kagoshima. It's \_\_\_\_\_ km away from Nagoya.
5. I want to visit \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_. It's \_\_\_\_\_ km away from Nagoya.

## “Unmotivated Adolescent Students and my Challenge”

By Parisa Far-dad

### *MY English School*

Before starting my current job, most of my experience had been working with university level students in Iran. Now I was about to mainly work with young learners in rural Japan in an English conversation school using interactive teaching which was new to me, and also different from the way they were being taught at school. I always had the feeling that I was able to make a good connection with my young students, whether in Iran or Japan. However, working with teenagers has its own difficulties; teaching in another culture also added to the challenge.

I was new at work, implementing a new pedagogy to me, in a new context. Also being the only non-native speaker made me put a lot of pressure on myself at that time. Moreover, my perfectionist approach made adjusting to my new environment more demanding. Nothing was perfect at the beginning, but it was not too difficult to work with elementary kids. Elementary kids could easily get engaged with simple but fun games they liked. With a little creativity, I could motivate their curiosity. With Junior High school kids, it was another story!

I had a junior high school class on Friday evenings at eight pm. There were eight students who were exhausted and quiet at the end of the week. Some of them had been sent to my English school by their *kyoiku mamas* (education mothers) who often feel compelling pressure from society. Those who have experience know how rewarding teaching is; but I never felt that on Friday evenings. Before the class I felt nervous, after the class I felt unaccomplished. I had even thought about quitting since there was no point if I was not enjoying my work and not contributing to the development of my students. There were many things I needed to figure out, but the main one was how to encourage and motivate those lovely but unmotivated kids who had been overloaded and exhausted. They had home assignments, study and extra activities at school, and they didn't have enough time to sleep, or enough time to have fun. I started asking myself “How can I improve myself and my lessons?”

Most of the focus was on myself; how to improve myself. Gradually I came to realize that I needed to switch the focus from me to them: how could I motivate THEM? I took most of my free time searching on how to motivate Japanese teenagers. I started searching for some data but there wasn't much I could find was that helpful. At the beginning, I made a little progress, at least reflecting on myself and my lessons. My improvement dramatically increased when I allowed myself to be vulnerable and started asking for help. When we are open and reach out to get help, we will find wonderful people around who are willing to help. When we embrace our vulnerability, our weaknesses turn into our strengths.

I got help from my colleagues, acquaintances and strangers, some of whom have become my best friends. I worked at a school with ample opportunities for professional development. Having training days at the school and outside the school was a great start; a reflection on my work and even on myself. I started attending seminars, JALT meetings and conferences, and met approachable people who helped and guided me and pushed me to go beyond my limitations, and recognize my abilities to accomplish my goals.

I had assumed that me being passionate about my students' learning and building good relationships was necessary to help develop their motivation. After watching videos on motivation by Ken Wilson (2014), my ideas about being passionate and relationships were reinforced, and I started thinking about how to accomplish that.

The first and foremost thing in being successful to do anything is to be passionate and enthusiastic about it. Passion and its energy are contagious; if you are passionate about something, that lifts you to get the job done in the greatest way. It's your passion not your skills that makes you do an excellent job. I had been trained as a teacher and I think I have

some good techniques, but as the great mystery writer Raymond Chandler said “Technique alone is never enough. You have to have passion.” And Steve Jobs said “The only way to do great work is to love what you do.”

The second point is relationship: to build rapport on a personal level and not just an academic one with your students, and this is another key point but the only way to do it properly is to be genuine. We humans very easily recognize an authentic person from an inauthentic one. If you are sincerely interested in your students and their progress, they can feel it and there is no need for any effort. The bond is shaped naturally. If you are truly happy with their happiness and worried about their concerns, your genuine love for the students; the most powerful motivator is when they know that their teacher genuinely cares about them as individuals. This takes time, but when they feel cared for, they feel safe and this environment helps boost students’ learning ability. Take a few seconds, and think about a teacher who has had a profound effect on you. What is the characteristic trait those inspiring teachers have in common?

In one of my evening JHS classes, before starting the class as I was asking how their day was, a student emotionally replied: ANGRY! I was interested and worried and keenly wanted to know what had happened. We sat down with all the students and I asked one question and the student started to openly explain what had happened in the class that day and how he got frustrated with his teacher who couldn’t understand him, and gradually all other 4 students joined the conversation and they controlled the one-hour class speaking about their frustrations. In the very beginning of the class, I decided to forget about the lesson plan, and I listen to what they had to say and we had a wonderful conversation in English without me pushing them but listening; even the quietest student in the class talked more than usual. I believe that love and care for the students is important. This is supported by brain science. When the students feel secure and connected, they can trust and this produces oxytocin, the feeling of being safe with others (Breuning, 2016, p.44). Feeling safe makes the bond even stronger and produces even more oxytocin. When the students are listened to, they feel valued and respected, and the brain releases a neurotransmitter called serotonin. This chemical is associated with happiness (Breuning, 2016, p.50).

The next point that I noticed which helped me a lot was that little things matter. In one of my junior high school classes, I started experimenting with an extra writing activity. The students had been doing well in the class, but I really wanted to raise the bar; what I realized was if they had a little bit more time outside the class to think in English, it could help them and could be effective, but how? It was not possible to easily find a way to make them talk – not in rural Japan where English speakers are few and far between. However, they could practice it in another way: in writing. Since the focus of language was on past tense, diary writing could be of use. However, this shouldn’t have been an assignment since homework was not pleasant to them, especially with the load of work they had. I took time to buy them notebooks and gave them some different colors and styles to choose from. I asked them their favorite color and wrote their names in copperplate calligraphy on the first page of their notebook. Then I asked them, whenever they felt like, try to write a few sentences in the evening before going to bed about things that had happened on that day. I emphasized that it was not their homework at all, and they didn’t need to apologize for not doing it. They had freedom to choose, either to write or not, to write one sentence or more. I also respected when one of the students decided to not show me her diary. They knew I respected their choice and their autonomy, which is suggested by Dornyei (.pp ,2001 28, 36,104) as another prerequisite to motivation, beside passion and relationship. As time passed, I asked them to write more about their feelings when things went well or not well, if they were happy or frustrated about something. It started from once a week. Over time, they wrote more in their diaries and expressed their emotions more, without me putting any pressure on them. When we give choices to the

students and they find pleasure in what they do (what they like to do) they are actively involved and active learning takes place (Sousa, 2006, p. 65). After several months, I had a lesson with the student who wasn't willing to let me to read her diary. This time she gave me her notebook to check part of her homework. I was surprised and amazed when I saw over 20 written pages of diaries which were filled with the feeling of happiness, frustration, and fulfillment. This was much more than what she normally wrote for regular assignments. Sometimes little caring acts go a long way and make a huge difference.

### **References:**

Breuning, L. G. (2016). *Habits of a happy brain: retrain your brain to boost your serotonin, dopamine, oxytocin, & endorphin levels*. Avon, MA: Adams Media.

Dornyei Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press

Sousa, D. A. (2006). *How the brain learns*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press: A Sage Publishing Company.

Wilson, K. [IAFOR Media]. (2014, December 4). *Motivating the unmotivated- 10 ways to get your students to do something* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUKmzOS0D-Q&t=2721s>

# How Technology Saved My Life

Johan Saputra Muljadi,  
*British Council Tokyo*

First of all, if you are somehow affected by typhoon Hagibis (No. 19), I hope that you could return to your normal routines soon.

## Introduction

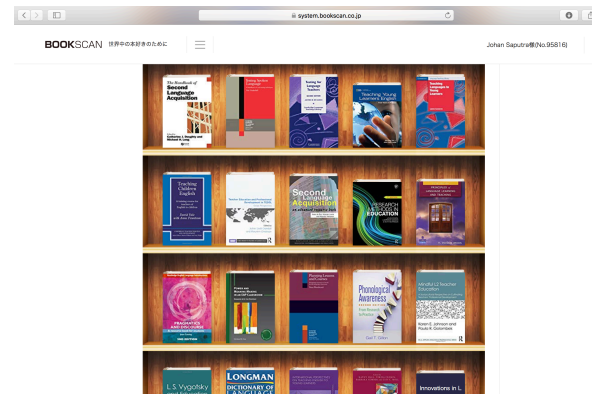
A strong message that I gave the audience of ETJ members at the end of my presentation was “You have got to love yourself.” Technology has saved my life, in a sense that, if I know how to use it effectively, I could save time. Time for planning. Time for thinking. Time for hard labour work. In this article, although it may act as just a reminder of what you have already known, I will share my three tips on how you utilize technology to make your teaching life more convenient.

## Bookscan

**Website link:** [www.bookscan.co.jp](http://www.bookscan.co.jp)

**Purpose:** Scanning physical books into e-books.

I proud myself for having a number of teaching related degrees: I have a Trinity College London TESOL Diploma, a MA in TESOL from Sunderland University (UK), a Post-graduate Certificate in TEAP (Teaching English for Academic Purposes) from Leicester University (UK) and recently completed an iPGCE (Post-graduate Certificate in Education International) from Nottingham University (UK). As an avid reader, I prefer to read paperbacks books over e-books and when my wife and I moved in to a new apartment in March, my wife was irritated with the amount of books I have. Space is expensive in big cities like Tokyo and she wants me to digitalize my books. At one point, I was thinking of selling the books that I no longer need. After sharing my dilemma of having too many books with my good friend, he has advised me that “so do I but you can take them from my cold dead hands. You know the answer, Kindle.”



Screenshot of my “bookshelf” on the

Bookscan website

The way how Bookscan works is that you could either scan the books per item or in bulk. I recommend the premium membership in which you pay 10000 yen for 50 books (200 yen per book). There is a simple calculation that you need to remember. Bookscan counts a book that has less than 350 pages. Between 350 to 550 pages counts as two books and between 550 to 750 pages counts as three books and so on. It goes up in every 200 pages. To summarize, the first book in my bookshelf, “The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition” has over 800 pages, which means that it costs four books out of the fifty. The 10000 yen lasts for a month in which you also qualify for an extra three-months bookshelf usage. So if you pay in July, you have 30 days to send your books and if you decide to cancel your membership afterwards, the bookshelf is available for three months starting from the end date of your membership. This is the time for you to download the books because after three months, the books on the bookshelf will be removed.

As academics, it is important for us to keep our books. We will never know when will we need them again. Therefore, in my opinion, it is crucial to hold on to them. If you are having a dilemma of whether you should sell your books or not, I suggest doing what I have done. I was not able to elaborate on this idea in my presentation at ETJ due to time but some people talked to me after to know about Bookscan.

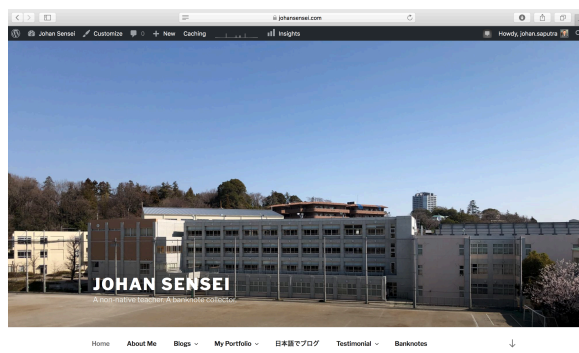
## Wordpress

**My website:** [www.johansensei.com](http://www.johansensei.com)

**Purpose:** Professional Development: blogging, showcasing your portfolio



It was in July of this year, when I purchased a lifetime membership of “wiredcreatives.” A New Zealand couple runs an online company to help people who wants to make money online; the millennials. My website was launched on the 1st of September. I knew nothing about building my own website but I have always wanted to have my own. I use my website for blogging, showcasing my portfolio and building an online gallery of my banknote collection. Many employers these days are far more interested in your digital portfolio than the traditional paper resumes. Feel free to check out my portfolio on my website. Starting something new is always a difficult step but once you have overcome that, having your own website is such a great achievement. You can focus on your “niche” and make it unique to you. My niche is that I am a non-native teacher and a banknote collector. I like to write blogs about teaching and I hope that by the end of 2019, I would have transferred most of my banknote collection online. Now that I have my own website, I can always keep myself busy and to me, that is very healthy for my mind and soul.



**[www.johansensei.com](http://www.johansensei.com)**

**YouTube**

**My channel:** Johan Sensei

**Purpose:** Storing keynotes / powerpoint and self-made videos

I have been teaching ESL for over a decade and I have only started YouTube seriously for work purposes in 2018. Most teachers would probably use YouTube to show a good video as an additional material in the lesson but since I became a creator, I try to make my own videos to show to my students. Personally, I feel that the impact is greater than showing a video made by someone else. Here is an example of a video I made for my Year 5 student.

Screenshot of my self-made video, “Soaking eggs with drinks (beer, tea and apple juice) experiment.”

Students appreciate my effort and I often have a good laugh with my students. I know there are plenty of rooms for improvements but they enjoy watching the video; for some, it is a chance for them to mock the teacher! YouTube is available for everyone and it is great because it allows users to upload as many videos as they want, allowing them to organize their videos into sections so that when they want to use the video again in the next academic year, or simply when they need it, they can easily access it as long as there is an internet connection. The truth is, when there are extra teaching opportunities, I jump into it. While money is important, what is more important is the classroom experience. I view extra teaching assignments as a way to expand my horizon; different schools have different cultures and experiencing it allows me to grow as a teacher. When you have different teaching assignments, ideally, it would be great to be able to recycle teaching materials. I find that in kids lessons, students respond well to keynotes / powerpoint presentations and sometimes, I can use it again in a different classroom. Because I have a limited hard drive laptop, I convert the files into videos and store them on YouTube. Of course, there are several ways to store your files online such as Google drive and Dropbox, but I find that it is easier to organize my materials on YouTube. Feel free to check my channel to see how I organize my materials.

### **Conclusion**

“Technology is becoming increasingly important in both our personal and professional lives, and our learners are using technology more and more. Yet teacher training programs often ignore training in the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and teachers are often far less skilled and knowledgeable than their own students when it comes to using current technology” (Dudeney and Hockly, p. 5, 2007). To what extent do you agree that your students are more skilled than you in using technology? In this digital age, I think it is good for teachers to have their presence in the digital world. As I have mentioned in the introduction, time is precious and it is important to find a way to save time. For me, YouTube has saved me a lot of planning time and I am currently using my website to write blogs about banknotes as one of my private students is interested in history. I hope by reading this article, you are now more motivated in trying out new technology applications to liven your classroom and develop professionally. Thank you for reading.

### **Reference**

Dudeney, G., & Hockly, N. (2007). *How to Teach english with technology*. Edinburgh: Longman.

# Idiom and Slang Janken Warm-up

By Philip Head

*Hiroshima Shudo University*

## Quick Guide

**Keywords:** Warm-up, ice-breaker, idioms, slang **Learner English level:** Any

**Learner maturity level:** Any

**Preparation time:** 5 minutes

**Activity time:** 5 minutes

**Materials:** Blackboard/whiteboard

One of the challenges of junior and senior high school students is how to get students to break out of their small group of friends and talk to other classmates. Another is how to quickly get students to become alert and get into English mode. This activity provides a fun way to get students active and mingling while introducing useful expressions that may not appear in the textbooks.

**Preparation:** Make a list of questions. These can start off with simple questions such as “What’s your hobby?” or “What kind of music do you like?” for low level classes. As the term progresses you can introduce more complex questions or incorporate interesting and useful slang and idioms. For example, “What are you into?” or “What is your jam?”. Expressions can be chosen to reflect the current season or recent news. For example, during rainy season you can have students ask “What do you do when it is raining cats and dogs?” or if there is a sports event such as the Olympics approaching you can have them ask each other “Who are you rooting for?”.

If you run out of ideas a quick online search can find many websites listing common idioms and expressions (e.g. <https://www.ef.com/wwen/english-resources/english-idioms/>) or slang terms (e.g. [www.urbandictionary.com](http://www.urbandictionary.com)) to incorporate into warm-up questions.

## Procedure:

**Step 1:** At the beginning of each class write a question on the board.

**Step 2:** Explain the meaning of the question (in Japanese if necessary) and give examples of when/how it is commonly used. This is also a good opportunity to present the origin of the expression and the culture behind it.

**Step 3:** Have all the students stand up and find a partner. The students take turns asking their partner the question and responding. After both students have asked and answered the question they should *janken* or play rock, paper, scissors.

**Step 4:** Students find a new partner and repeat step 3 until they have won janken three times. After winning three times the student may sit down. During this time the teacher circulates among the students to make sure everyone understands the question and is participating. The teacher can also pair up with any student without a partner due to an odd number of students.

**Conclusion:** This activity is a good warm-up for several reasons. First, it gets students moving and awake which is particularly important for early morning or post-lunch classes. Second, as students begin to reach three wins and sit down, students are forced to move beyond their immediate neighbors and friends and encounter classmates they wouldn’t normally interact with. Finally, it provides a quick and efficient way to introduce and practice new vocabulary and phrases that you feel are interesting or useful but that may not be in the official word-lists or textbooks that you are using.

## Arts and Crafts with Young Learners

Martin Sedaghat

### *Niigata University of Health and Welfare International Preschool*

Many children love drawing, coloring, and making their own works of art, and this creative energy can be very effectively used with English lessons. Projects open up excellent opportunities for various types of language learning, such as listening to instructions, predicting outcomes, and describing finished work. Beyond the artwork itself, children will also be able to practice essential social skills, such as sharing, taking turns, and asking for and giving help. In addition, art projects create a physical link between language and meaning, and provide something tangible for children to proudly share with their families and display at school and home.

In this article I would like to describe some of the important points to consider before, during, and after the creative process. Firstly, before beginning the project, you must think realistically about what your students can do, in terms of physical coordination and patience. If your class has a mix of ages and abilities, how can you help your students so that they can all join in the activity? This can be a good chance to delegate responsibility to older students, and ask them to support their younger classmates. Decide the stages and time-frame of the project. Can it be finished in one lesson, or is it better to break it up into multiple parts? Prepare all the necessary materials ahead of time, and make sure they are close at hand so that the project can move smoothly and students won't lose focus while waiting.



Working through the project once by yourself will allow you to identify any problem spots and particularly difficult parts. If you can, pre-teach important language such as the names of the materials, common phrases for use while working, and perhaps even miming through the actions before starting (holding a crayon, folding a paper, using scissors, etc.).

Finally, make a plan for how and where to

store the projects when they are finished.

Do they need time to

dry or

harden? How will you display them and/or send them home without being damaged?

During the process of the art project, it is often best to give step-by-step instructions. Allow all of the students to finish one part before moving on to the next one together. When making sure everyone understands each instruction, it can sometimes be helpful to model what not to do. Some projects can be a chance for students to be in charge of specific materials, so that the other children have to engage with them to continue their work. Likewise, you can set it up so that each student has to speak with you to move on to the next stage. To make sure there



is clear space to work on, clean up a little at the end of each stage. Of course, always give plenty of praise and positive feedback about each student's work, as some may be less confident or artistic than others.

Finally, when the project is complete, you can take some time for the students to think about and reflect on their (and their peers') work. You might ask them why they chose certain colors and shapes, or what they like best about their creation. What kinds of materials and textures did they encounter? You could also ask where and how they'd like to display the artwork, and then view everyone's work together.

Arts and crafts can be messy, time-consuming, and difficult to prepare, but they can also create a lot of chances for using real, practical language skills. In the flow of your lessons, you can connect them to the theme or topic that you are teaching, or to a specific song or picture book that your students are enjoying. If you carefully consider both the process and the product of the artwork, these kinds of projects will be an invaluable teaching tool.

## Coming Full Circle: Remembrances and Reflections

By James W. Porcaro  
*Toyama Kokusai Gakuen*

As we sat outside that evening in the family compound of his village where I was visiting for a few days, I asked Desiderio about his vision for the future of his country, still then just eight years after independence. He was quite optimistic for its development, though I had to admit to him that I was not. Unfortunately, in fact, my view proved to be more prescient.

I recall well that conversation with my student fifty years ago, in 1970, during the last school break of my third and final year teaching mathematics at Moyo Senior Secondary School located in a remote rural region in the northwestern corner of Uganda, just west of the Nile River and near the border with (now) South Sudan.

In fact, one month after I had returned to the USA, in January 1971, a coup d'état by the notorious General Idi Amin initiated a decade of horror for Uganda, which was followed by another half decade of civil war, massive killing, and ruined social and economic order that lasted to the mid-1980's. The destruction wrought in that period was not the only catastrophe that halted the realization of the hopeful expectations of Desiderio and my other students. In the early 2000's I met in Tokyo the Uganda Deputy Vice-President who was also the parliamentary representative for Moyo district. He knew Desiderio and many of the students and teachers at the school where I had taught many years before. When I asked about some of them he told me that some years ago Desiderio, and others, had died of AIDS which has scourged Uganda with particular vehemence.

### My Journey

My own journey since those early days of my teaching career initially took me back to the USA. After completing a master's degree in African Area Studies, I taught English as a Second Language (ESL) in Los Angeles adult education programs for more than ten years before coming to Japan in 1985. After 14 years teaching English at a prominent *gaigo senmon gakkō* in Osaka, and completing an M.Ed. in TESOL, I was a professor at a university in Toyama until mandatory retirement at age 65 in 2011. During that period, concurrently, from 2004, I started teaching at the university's attached high school (*fuzoku kōkō*) and continue to do so now as a part-timer at age 74. In that sense, as a high school teacher again, I have come full circle from my starting point in Moyo more than five decades ago. Following are some further thoughts as I reflect on those times and the present.

### Moyo and Toyama

Moyo in the late 1960's and Toyama at present in the Reiwa era are assuredly worlds apart. Even now, the United Nations Human Development Index (2017) ranks Uganda at 162, in a list of 188 countries and territories, among those with "low human development" while Japan, of course, is among those with "very high human development" and ranked at 19. In my years at Moyo there was no electricity and certainly none of the digital technology we now take for granted to use in our daily lives and in our classrooms. Classes started at 7 a.m. and were done by 1:30 p.m. in order to mitigate the strain of working in the intensely high temperatures by midday. Students studied in the evening in classrooms at the boarding school with paraffin pressure lamps hanging from the ceiling beams. Their highest concern was to score well on the school leaving examinations for their high school subjects which served as the equivalent to the university entrance exams that most Japanese students now take. My Toyama high school students, wearing uniforms as did my Moyo students, take lessons in air conditioned classrooms often using their iPads with their teachers' lessons. Their objective to enter university, however, is much the same as it was for Moyo students.

## Meaning

Our experiences as teachers, as indeed all things in life, happen in particular places and times, and include personal relationships with particular students, colleagues, and others. These circumstances are situated in sociocultural and sociohistorical contexts from which we derive meaning for ourselves from our teaching. I learned at the very start of my teaching career that responsibility was at the core of the meaning of my work. At Moyo Senior Secondary School my responsibility at one level was to the country of Uganda to serve the need for hundreds more teachers in the educational system that had vastly expanded since independence. At the immediate level my responsibility was to my students and their education, as well as to their families who had sacrificed so much to pay their school fees. I endeavored to enable them to fulfill their hope to advance to tertiary education and salaried employment with a better life beyond subsistence farming in their villages.

I carried that understanding of responsibility to my teaching ESL to immigrants in Los Angeles who sought a better life for themselves and their children. In Japan, teaching English as a foreign language, or as an international language, as some would have it, involves for me now a responsibility of another nature, expressed so well by Jim Cummins (2003) in his essay "Language and the Human Spirit". He observes that "there is an inseparable linkage between the conceptions of language and human identity that we infuse in our classroom instruction." In the context of the instructional choices we make, he notes that we must examine "the extent to which the classroom interactions we orchestrate build on and affirm the cultural, linguistic, intellectual and personal identities that students bring to our classrooms." In my teaching now at high school, my aim has been to meet the responsibility of achieving this humanistic educational purpose.

## Classroom teaching

Teaching English, of course, is very different from teaching mathematics, yet in my high school instruction in both cases a paramount aim was and has been the development of students' critical thinking skills, though in somewhat different facets; for math, more logic, inference, analysis, and problem-solving, for example; for English, more explanation and communication skills of clarity, cohesion, and argumentation, for example. The rationale is certainly evident. "Critical thinking is essential as a tool of inquiry. As such, it is a liberating force in education and a powerful resource in one's personal and civic life" (quoted in Facione, 2011, p. 26).

In the years that I taught at Moyo, little did I know the relevance of my manner of teaching mathematics for my later career as an English language teacher. My lessons at that time had to be meticulously prepared and exceedingly carefully presented to students in English, the language of instruction, which was their second (and often third or even fourth) language. I had to speak very clearly, concisely and precisely, in a linear manner without divergences, with simple vocabulary and syntax, and at a suitable pace, with measured phrasing and judicious repetition, so that students could follow and understand the mathematical principles and procedures presented in the lesson. This way of speaking to students which I had acquired in Moyo prepared me very well for the start of my English teaching a few years later and has served very well ever since. This element of English language instruction is critical for building students' confidence and motivation to learn the language, especially for students at early levels and for those with low language learning capability.

I finally got to teach African Studies in the year 2000 at university, 28 years after completing my master's degree. For ten years I taught the two-semester course, which now could be categorized as "content and language integrated learning (CLIL), as perhaps the only such course taught in English in Japan. I have also continued to present a 90-minute lecture titled "Introducing Africa" many times at several local high schools. This coming full circle back to Africa with my academic engagement with the subject has been deeply satisfying. It has as well kept that narrative of my life vital and enabled me to pass on to Japanese students a degree of knowledge and understanding of the history and life of the people of that continent which merits so much greater international interest and attention.

## Legacy

Yet perhaps most teachers, like me, feel they never really know if they leave a legacy of any kind from their work with students. It may be nice to think that one's teaching has had some valued impact with some students and benefited them in the long run, but frankly there is no certainty of that. As any appreciation of such benefit may be vague and obscure, I feel that I must rely on the meaning that I make for myself which comes from my teaching itself and from the essentially existential yet necessarily ephemeral engagement with students in the classroom. We must never demean the culture of the classroom as something other than "the real world". It *is* the real world with its close and personal interactions, relationships, commitments, responsibilities, and purposes. I knew that even at the very young age when I taught Desiderio and scores of other students at high school in Moyo and I know that now every day I teach my high school students in Toyama.

I would like Desiderio to know that even as our days in Moyo were more than a half century ago, I am still at it, in the high school classroom, strengthened by everlasting memories of those times, guided by realizations learned then and afterwards, and still thoughtful of the conversations we had those evenings in the village so very long ago.

## References

- Cummins, J. (2003). Language and the human spirit. *TESOL Matters*, 13(1).
- Facione, P. (2011). Critical thinking: What it is and why it counts. Retrieved from [https:// www.student.uwa.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/1922502/Critical-Thinking-What-it-is- and-why-it-counts.pdf](https://www.student.uwa.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1922502/Critical-Thinking-What-it-is-and-why-it-counts.pdf)



**Teaching Younger Learners SIG is looking for new and exciting people. If you are coming to JALT in Nagoya , please come to the Teaching Younger Learners SIG table located in the JALT Junior (JJ) area. Also, our annual general meeting (AGM) will be on Saturday, Nov 2, in Room 1107 from 4:25 - 5:25.**