

**The School House**  
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# 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



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## From the Editor

Dear TYL SIG members,

We are sending this special Christmas edition to close the year. Gaby has come on the editorial team and together we have worked on this, along with contributions from all of the officers to share some Christmas cheer. You'll find the officer's self-introductions, and photos from some of their Christmas activities to inspire you.



There is also one article by Emily MacFarlane in Iwakiri Elementary School titled *Using Videos for Interactive Storytelling Activities*. I think you will find the article useful: there is something for everyone in it.

We have new membership and programme chairs who have joined us. Martin (programme chair) has been instrumental in making a survey. Along with all of us officers, he is, '*looking forward to the results of the survey that I made for our members, to see how people feel about the SIG and how we can best support them.*' The link to the survey is at the end of this publication. We want to hear from you, there are only 9 questions so it should only take a couple of minutes.

Even though spring seems far away, preparations for the new school year are already on the doorstep. Therefore, if you have any activities for ice breakers please send them in to share with the membership and we will publish them in the spring edition. The cut-off date for sending in your contributions is 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022. No matter how simple the activity we would love to hear from you.

On behalf of all the officers, we wish you a very happy Christmas and a fantastic start to 2022.

*Kate & Gaby*



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## The 2022 SIG Officer Team

### SIG Coordinator



Dr. Osterman has been teaching in Japan since 1993. Originally from a small Midwestern town in the United States, he earned his bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in education from the University of Maryland. After a short hiatus, he completed his doctorate degree from Northcentral University in educational leadership. Over his career, he has taught at elementary schools, junior high schools, universities, and is an administrator at a private school in Okinawa. He joined JALT in 1995 and has served in many roles for the Okinawa chapter. Currently, he is the Okinawa Chapter membership chair, the Teaching Younger Learners Special Interest Group coordinator, and the SIG Representative Liaison for JALT.

### Treasurer

Hello! I'm Paul Nanton. I've been in Japan since 1998. I started out in Chiba, did a three year stint in Saitama and currently I'm teaching at a junior/senior high school in Tokyo. I have held a variety of positions from Newsletter editor, Membership Chair and now Treasurer. My teaching interests are bilingualism and language acquisition. If you ever have an idea for a speaker or would like for us to co-sponsor an event, please let me know and we'll see what we can do.



## Membership Chair



Hello, my name is Amy Braun and I am the new Membership Chair. I am from Maryland, USA but currently live in Aichi. I have been teaching for almost ten years with seven of those years as a preschool teacher. My interests are more practical-based resources, critical thinking, special needs, and the learning behaviors of young children. Nice to meet you!

## Webmaster and Publicity Chair



Nicholas J. Wilson teaches English in public elementary schools in Nagano, and is a Google Certified Educator focused on fostering student's 21st-century skills through foreign language education. He is an active officer for both the JALT Nagano Chapter (Nagano Chapter Outreach Officer) and TYL SIG and organizes independent professional development opportunities designed for ALTs.

## Social Media Coordinator



Brittny Okahara was born in the United States and grew up in a tiny town on the border with Canada. She's been interested in languages ever since she noticed the sounds of French carried over on radio waves. She was homeschooled for most of her childhood and was left to care for her 4 younger sisters. This gave her a natural eye for both child safety and fun.

Years later, she pursued a degree in Game Art and Animation, but still found herself drawn to young learners. Her senior project was a math game for children. After graduation, she decided to spend a gap year in Japan as an ALT and never returned.

She has taught learners from 18 months to 60 years of age and is currently working as both an after-school English teacher and a part-time preschool teacher in Western Tokyo. In her free time, she still enjoys making her own video games as well as playing games made by others.

### Programs Chair



Hello! I'm Martin Sedaghat, the new Programs Chair for the TYL SIG.

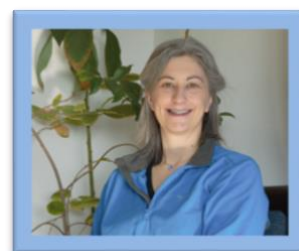
I'm from California, USA, but I've been living in Niigata Prefecture since

2003. I teach at a preschool and I love working with kids. I'm particularly

interested in the use of picture books, board games, and art projects in

English lessons. Please let me know if you have any ideas for presentations and workshops you'd like to see this year!

### Publications Chair



Hello everyone! I'm originally from the UK, and first came to Japan in 1991 (*I think!*). After a few years of teaching in different countries,

I came to the conclusion that the future of Japan and English education lies how the children are taught. So, in 2001 I set up my own school for children in Sapporo aged 0-12 which had an immersion full-time pre-school programme. I (taught and) ran the school for 15 years before being lured into full-time into the world of academia and research. Now, I am researching the role of ALTs and phonics in the Elementary school classroom.

Away from university, teaching, and research, I enjoy gardening, cycling, skiing, and swimming. Please send in your contributions to the School House! I hope to hear from you soon!

### **Publications Co-chair**

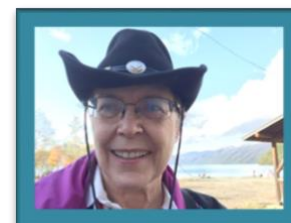


Gaby Benthien (B.Ed., M.Ed. Ed.D.) was born in Germany and immigrated to Australia when she was 12 years old. She began her teaching career teaching Japanese as a foreign language and P.E. at a secondary school in Australia, and has lived in Japan since 1999. While

the first 15 years of her career in education focused on primary and secondary education, Gaby is now involved in primary and secondary education by teaching a variety of subjects at tertiary level, including primary school English, primary school teaching methodology and cross-cultural understanding. Her research interests include L2 motivation, study abroad and teacher development. She has often attended and presented at JALT and Tokyo TYL events, and is currently the co-chair of Tokyo TYL. Gaby enjoys any outdoor activity including cycling, hiking, skiing and gardening, as well as creative pursuits such as pottery and leatherwork.

### **Teaching Younger Learners SIG Committee Chair**

Hello, my name is Mary Virgil-Uchida and I'm the Jalt Junior Conference Chair. I've been a member of the sig since it was first formed and I've always felt we are a unique group of teachers. I came to Japan 39 years ago to teach at an international kindergarten for just one year but I'm still here! I left that school after three years and opened my own English school for younger learners in 1986. I love my job and I love helping new teachers about the joy of teaching children. I hope to see you all next year in Fukuoka!



## Members at large



Marybeth Kamibeppu is from a small-town on Long Island, New York. She always had an interest in travel and other cultures and languages, and her family hosted exchange students from many countries. This allowed her to have short-term homestays in Quebec and Caracas, and eventually led to a semester abroad in Japan during undergraduate work at Colgate University.

To earn tuition for graduate school, Marybeth returned to Japan for a “couple” of years. After graduate school at the School for International Training (MAT), she taught at the University of Maryland, College Park, intensive English program for eight years. Return to Japan followed and she taught students from age 2 – 70 in the Kanto area. Six years ago Marybeth and her family moved to Hiroshima where a new stage of her teaching career began at Hiroshima International School, a small international baccalaureate (IB) school with students from age 3-19. In addition to teaching English language acquisition, Marybeth is the Middle Years Programme (MYP) coordinator and one of the college counselors.

Outside the classroom, Marybeth enjoys aerobics, walking outdoors, attending sports events, and watching Netflix. She looks forward to meeting friends and family beyond Zoom when the pandemic is contained.



Marian Hara is now retired from teaching younger learners from nursery school to high school for over 30 years in Tokyo. She served as the first Teaching Younger Learners chair of Tokyo JALT and co-edits the Teaching Younger Learners page in *The Language Teacher*. While Marian is still a member at large at present, she

thinks it's better to get more younger people involved if possible!



## Classroom Photos, Displays and Seasonal Activities from the Officers

### Seasonal activities and photos shared by Martin Sedaghat

Here are a few photos and descriptions of Christmas crafts that I've been doing with my students this week.



1. Advent calendar - I cut out strips of green and red paper, had the children write the numbers 1 through 25 on them, and then stapled the papers into a chain. Every

morning we tear off one piece of the chain, and the children can see how close we are getting to Christmas!

2. Santa beards - With my class of 2 year olds, I gave each child a picture of Santa and a handful of cotton stuffing. I helped them to apply glue to the picture and they used the stuffing to make his beard.



3. Ornaments - With my class of 0-1 year olds, each child used colorful stickers to decorate the back of a paper plate. Then I made a hole at the top of each plate and tied a glittery piece of pipe-cleaner through it. The children will hang

these on our school's Christmas tree.

4. Stained-glass Christmas trees - For my class of 4-5 year olds, I prepared a silhouette of a tree and a piece of contact paper. We stuck the tree to the paper and the children used pieces of green and red tissue paper to decorate it, finishing by adding a star to the top. We put these in the windows of the school and they look great when the sun shines through them.



### Photos shared by Grant Osterman



Photos shared by Amy Braun



Photos shared by Gaby Benthien



## **Article**

### **Using Videos for Interactive Storytelling Activities**

**Emily MacFarlane**

**Iwakiri Elementary School**

I'm a picture book addict. I admit it. My favorite way to end a class with my younger elementary students is all gathered around a picture book talking about what we think will happen next. Reading picture books aloud to children has huge benefits not only for being an enjoyable experience but also because it presents language in a repetitive and memorable context (Ellis & Brewster, 2014). On top of this, I find that using a scaffolded interactive style, or dialogic reading, is even more constructive than just reading the text as it is written as it not only involves the students but results in greater language gains especially in vocabulary (Watkins, 2018). Like many other teachers, the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted the way I can interact with my students. While we are thankfully back in the classroom, social distancing measures and masks covering facial expressions mean students often find it difficult to engage with any reading activities. However, technology can open up a mountain of possibilities for using picture books in interactive ways both inside and outside of the physical classroom. There are two main options: pre-made resources and teacher-made original materials. URLs for all resources mentioned can be found at the end of the article.

#### **Pre-made Resources**

The majority of teachers are likely to choose pre-made resources for their ease of use and time-saving properties. However, even pre-made materials are likely to need at least some adaption to fit students' needs, so selecting materials that best fit your students can save time and effort in the

long run. These can be used not only during online teaching or for homework, but also in the classroom to facilitate the students to be able to see the book/images clearly. Pre-made resources include a variety of different websites from complete lessons to only read-aloud videos. Here are my recommendations:

- PEPELT Mini e-lessons

The most useful site I have found for using picture books online was created by PEPELT (Picturebooks in European Primary English Language Teaching) and was what I used, with adaptations, during our school closure last year. At the time of writing, they have created 24 'ready-to-go' lessons including pre-reading questions, read-aloud videos by the authors/illustrators themselves, comprehension questions and after-reading tasks such as crafts or writing activities. Even if you don't use their lessons directly they can be a great resource for an interactive style of storytelling giving inspiration and ideas for questions and activities.

- PEPELT lessons in Japanese

This is my personal website created with my co-worker, Risa Kurita, to adapt the PEPELT mini e-lessons mentioned above. It has, with permission from PEPELT, the mini-lessons translated into Japanese in order to provide activities and materials for Japanese students who cannot read English as well as their parents and teachers. In my school we adapted these lessons, in order to cater to our younger students, using worksheets with multiple choice questions and only one or two after-reading tasks.

- Storyline Online

Created by the SAG-AFTRA Foundation, this website features videos of many different famous actors reading children's books accompanied by illustrations. Users can search through their extensive library of videos by book title, author, reader or run time as well as select their preferred video player (SchoolTube, YouTube or Vimeo) when watching. Many videos also come with suggested grade level and activity guides or teachers' handbooks which could help make the read-aloud activity more interactive and engaging for the students. As this resource is

aimed at native speakers, even videos for lower grade levels can be quite fast with limited scaffolding for understanding so caution is advised.

- Online Storytime (Indianapolis Public Library Blog)

Easily mistaken with the very similarly named website above, this blog has hundreds of links to read-aloud videos. They link to a number of different sites, including Storyline Online, but as each video is linked by a picture of the cover, you will have to search through many different posts and links unless you know what you are looking for.

- YouTube

This list of resources wouldn't be complete without including YouTube. While it is home to a huge number of videos of varying quality, with a little searching you can find many videos from the authors/illustrators themselves whether it is on their own official YouTube pages or through their publishers. Here are a few examples of some of my favorite pages:

- Author Pages

While most of these would need adaptations or additions to make them interactive, they often include how-to-draw videos which are great as a follow-up activity. In particular, I love the pages of Emily Gravett (*The Odd Egg*) and Bruce Hale (*Big Bad Baby*). Can't find your favorite author on YouTube? You may find them on apps such as Instagram (i.e. James Dean, 'Pete the Cat') or their own official websites.

- Publisher Pages

Most publishers have their own YouTube pages and have uploaded many read aloud videos especially during the pandemic. Some of my favorites include Nosy Crow, Macmillan Children's Books and HarperKids. You can also find short animated clips from stories such as Weston Woods animation of a section of 'The Dot' for the Scholastic page.

- Animation Pages

Lastly, I have to share my favorite animation studio, Illuminated Films. This British studio has animated a number of Eric Carle stories as well as books from other authors

such as the Little Princess series by Tony Ross. Some of these videos have the story printed on the screen too to allow learners to ‘read along’.

### **Creating your own resources**

While pre-made resources are wonderful, sometimes you can’t find what you are looking for or the effort needed to adapt resources to fit your students makes creating your own videos a more attractive option. Whether these videos are for use in your face-to-face classroom or for your students to use at home, for homework or as part of online teaching, the first thing that teachers tend to worry about is copyright. According to the Copyright Research and Information Center, in Japanese law, a work may be reproduced during classes at an educational institution (except one founded for commercial purposes) and transmitted to those taking the class in other places as long as it doesn’t prejudice the owner of the copywrite. However, during the current pandemic the majority of publishers have altered their policies to give permission to use their books regardless of the school type. Rules vary depending on the publisher but in most cases, videos need to be posted in a closed space (such as google classroom), not accessible to the public (unlisted on YouTube) and removed after a certain amount of time. The School Library Journal has a directory of specific information for numerous publishers which I highly recommend.

Once you have copyright sorted, it’s time to make your video. In order for your students to get the most out of the experience, there are a number of things you should keep in mind regarding your surrounding space, the book, yourself and the way you interact with the audience.

- Your Space
  - ✧ Is your background plain and free from distractions?
  - ✧ How is your lighting? You might need a number of light sources to make sure you are not lit from behind or below.
  - ✧ Is your space quiet and unlikely to be interrupted?
  - ✧ Will your students be able to see well? It’s worth doing some test shots.



- The Book
  - ✧ How does the book look on camera/in-person? (shiny books can be really hard to read)
  - ✧ How much do you like the book yourself? If you don't like it, neither will your students.
  - ✧ How big and clear are the pictures?
  - ✧ Will students be able to get the gist of the story from the pictures alone or will you need props or gestures to get the point across?
- Yourself
  - ✧ Show your face! Facial expressions can help understanding (if necessary move the book closer to the camera to show smaller pictures for a few seconds)
  - ✧ Make eye contact (with the camera!)
  - ✧ Practice! Make sure you know what picture comes next and what words to substitute to help understanding.
- Interaction with the Audience
  - ✧ Pause. Give your students time to respond to questions.
  - ✧ Repeat key sentences to encourage students to do the same.
  - ✧ Use gestures and a rising intonation to encourage students to respond.

While making videos or adapting pre-made resources for your students can be a lot of time and effort, they will allow you to continue to use picture books to present language in a low-anxiety and meaningful context. By using an interactive reading style, this will be not only enjoyable for your students but also create positive attitudes towards learning English while improving their language and literacy skills. While the current pandemic has challenged all of us, picture books continue to hold a vital spot in the young learner classroom.

Resource	URL
PEPELT mini e-lessons	<a href="https://pepelt21.com/mini-e-lessons/">https://pepelt21.com/mini-e-lessons/</a>
PEPELT lessons in Japanese	<a href="https://letsenjoyenglishpicturebooks.com">https://letsenjoyenglishpicturebooks.com</a>
Storyline Online	<a href="https://www.storylineonline.net">https://www.storylineonline.net</a>
Online Storytime	<a href="https://www.indypl.org/blog/tags/online-storytime">https://www.indypl.org/blog/tags/online-storytime</a>
Emily Gravett YouTube	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5cb9Mbt3p9brnwpVR5yocQ">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5cb9Mbt3p9brnwpVR5yocQ</a>
Bruce Hale YouTube	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6w8Vb6y4NP2VgT-pWmxQdQ">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6w8Vb6y4NP2VgT-pWmxQdQ</a>
Nosy Crow YouTube	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/NosyCrow">https://www.youtube.com/user/NosyCrow</a>
MacMillan Children's Books YouTube	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/MacmillanPublishers">https://www.youtube.com/user/MacmillanPublishers</a>
Harper Kids YouTube	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/HarperKids">https://www.youtube.com/user/HarperKids</a>
The Dot - Weston Woods (Scholastic YouTube)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPfGJ9OHR-c">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPfGJ9OHR-c</a>
Illuminated films YouTube	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/c/Illuminatedfilms/videos">https://www.youtube.com/c/Illuminatedfilms/videos</a>
School Library Journal Directory of Publishers Copyright Permission	<a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/113E-0ffEITRoI7zsvk6gjxrAgepeD-JGAD55-ftSfrc/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/document/d/113E-0ffEITRoI7zsvk6gjxrAgepeD-JGAD55-ftSfrc/edit?usp=sharing</a>

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## Submission Guidelines

Please refer to our website <https://jalt-tyl.net/> for detailed submission guidelines. In particular, we are looking for beginning of year icebreaker activities. The deadline for these activities is February 14, 2022 so we can include them in our first issue for 2022.

## Member survey

We would like to hear from you, the TYL SIG members, about what you think of the SIG, how we can improve it, and what kind of events you'd like to see in the upcoming year!

<https://forms.gle/tJTfsxBeeqdTzAig9>





*Best wishes for the  
holidays, and for  
health and happiness  
throughout the  
coming year!*



Photo credits: Gaby Benthien, Kate Sato