

Notes from the Editors

Our regular readers will notice that our journal continues to evolve into a shape that reflects the times. Two years ago we became a fully refereed journal with a review board. Last year we moved from being a strictly 'proceedings' journal to one that accepted articles that were not presented at our annual conference. We also attempted to shift our focus towards experimental research to encourage contributors to produce original findings. In addition, we advertised nationally for submissions. In this spirit of change, readers will notice that this year's edition arrives with yet another new name: *JALT Hokkaido Journal*. This change reflects both our roots here in the north of Japan as well as our wish to become a refereed venue for fledgling authors of experimental studies.

Another major change is our move to an exclusively electronic format. We have made this move after considerable discussion because we believe this medium is increasingly being accepted in the academic community. Another important motivating factor was the money savings generated by eliminating our print costs. A significant benefit of such a move is the increased exposure that the web brings. By publishing in a paperless format we are also happy to make our own modest contribution to the forests of the world.

This year's edition includes six articles. Frank Daulton continues his research on the effect of Japanese loan words on written production in English. Frank's pilot study reveals that these often-maligned features of language learning can actually be of benefit to learners and teachers. Alan Bossaer's qualitative study of English conversation schools in Japan explores the dynamic of professionalism in these institutions providing a rare glimpse at an industry that employs thousands. Besides Alan's insightful suggestions, his rich data are fodder enough for a stand-alone cross-cultural study. Mark Chapman helps us understand that making a cloze test is not as easy as simply taking a passage and whiting out every *n*th word. His experiment results cast doubt about there being a single efficient way to assess reading skills in learners via a cloze test. Justin Charlebois isolates three areas of pragmatic failure and makes suggestions on how an understanding of these features can assist teachers of English to Japanese students. Juergen Bulach, via an experimental study argues that project work is an effective means of teaching language despite some reservations from students about the teacher's role. Finally, Jerry Halvorsen, Kawana, and Stuart Walker, guide us through the making of some cutting-edge 'teaching ware' imparting the nuts and bolts for budding tech-authors.

As of this issue, one of us (Alan) who has been co-editor for the last 3 years is stepping down from this post, as well as retiring from his position as JALT Hokkaido chapter president. He will be focusing more on his own research and job.

Alan Cogen
Paul Stapleton
November 2003