

## *From the Editor-in-Chief*

The issue opens with a paper by Yuko Goto Butler of the University of Pennsylvania on assessments that have been used for the evaluation of elementary school EFL programs in three Asian countries: South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan, concluding that there is still very limited information available and an urgent need to develop good assessment procedures. Assessment will be the topic of the featured presentations at the Bangkok conference.

In the second paper, Faizah A Majid from Universiti Teknologi Mara, Malaysia argues for better strategies for teaching reading to adults through distance learning and describes current theories and some research studies. In the next, Barbara Spilchuk of the National Institute of Education, Singapore tells the story of a newly appointed English department head in a Singapore school and his “journey” to understanding the new culture in which he is about to live and the problems he faces.

In the fourth paper, Yuko Iwai currently at The University of Southern Mississippi, USA discusses a problem common to many Asian nations, how to move from a traditional grammar-translation to teaching of communicative proficiency. This is followed by a paper in which Alex Henry of University Brunei Darussalam, Negara Brunei Darussalam and Robert L. Roseberry of Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada introduce the notion of *move registers*, developed from Swales’ work on genres, and show four ways in which the concept can be applied to the teaching of English.

The next paper by Kiyomi Chujo of Nihon University, Japan and Kathryn Oghigian of Waseda University, Japan tackles a basic issue in test preparation (sometimes called cramming) by estimating the size of the vocabulary required to know 95% of the words in three standard English tests used in Japan, TOEIC, TOEFL and EIKEN. The number established by analyzing

old retired tests ranges from 4000 for TOEIC and 4500 for TOEFL to 5500 for EIKEN. More recent tests have been shown to have lower vocabulary levels.

Joseph Ernest Mambu of Satya Wacana Christian University, Indonesia explores the variety of English used by eight Indonesian English teachers, and argues that these are not errors but typical of Indonesian English. In the next paper, Yu Zhonggen of Nanjing University of Posts & Telecommunications, China and Chan Swee Heng of University Putra Malaysia report improvement in scores on short conversation passages and no change on longer passages in the performance of several hundred Chinese students after a two month break; they are surprised by the lack of evidence of attrition. Finally, Guo Yan and Qin Xiaoqing of Huazhong University of Science and Technology, P. R. China collect evidence on attitudes of several hundred Chinese tertiary students to computer assisted learning; generally the attitudes were favorable, but the students did not seem willing or able to take full advantage of the opportunity especially because of perceived difficulties.

Again, then, we have a good selection of papers from a wide range of countries with good evidence of collaborative work. The topics represent the main concerns of current teachers of EFL in Asia and elsewhere, and make clear the significance of the research work of our members. My thanks to the contributors and to Professor Jeon and her hard-working editorial team. We hope in the not too distant future their work will be eased by a computerized manuscript management system.

If you catch some evidence of distraction in this editorial, I can only remind you of all the events that we have been following recently: a new pandemic joining Avian flu to make travel risky, demonstrations and political crises in Thailand and Pakistan and Iran; threats of new atomic bombs in North Korea, Pakistan and Iran; suffering of refugees in Sri Lanka and Pakistan; and overall, a new economic crisis producing unemployment and major cuts in educational resources all over. The new internet, plus Twitter and Facebook, makes it difficult to start one's day without checking for the latest disaster – an airplane falling out of the sky, more suicide bombers in

mosques in Iraq and India, a factory explosion in eastern China, a dozen policeman killed in India, a North Korean ship suspected of carrying prohibited materials to Burma where the opposition leader is in jail, a young Iranian student being shot and killed as she walked in a demonstration with her father, more stories of young people recruited as soldiers.

So it is not unreasonable to ask what we as English teachers can do to help. There are many suggestions: Barbara Birch has just published a book called *The English Teacher in Global Civil Society* (Routledge 2009) that calls on us to teach “global citizenship” and to use “humanistic education, peace education, cross-cultural understanding, problem-posing, cooperative learning, and critical thinking methodologies” to add social and moral content to our English classrooms. Francisco Gomes de Matos, a Brazilian linguist, regularly sends me his poems arguing for teaching peace; he advocates what he calls the ultimate fundamental communicative human rights, namely, “that every person should have the right to learn to communicate peacefully for the good of Humankind.” For many years, International TESOL has had an interest section on social responsibility. Is it perhaps time that Asia TEFL considered adding such a group?

Editor-in-chief  
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