Material Development in Conjunction with a Textbook

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Abstract

Material development in English language teaching involves more than either commercial coursebook development or simply making handouts for the classroom. Indeed, approaching material development as a key component of course creation, even when that course has an assigned textbook, can transform an individual's personal teaching methodology. Using sources from media linguistics (through professional training in media copywriting) and ELT, this article offers advice to people new to university teaching in Japan for becoming independent of their assigned textbook as a means of professional development. It includes a brief discussion of the Japanese university context followed by sections on syllabus development and some resources for learning about design and presentation preparation used in professional strategic writing programs. It concludes with a tutorial on the basics of using MS Word as a layout program.

Introduction

It is common for business and media professionals to consult books on writing and communications to autonomously develop their skillset. These books discuss aspects of a particular genre, though the genre is not necessarily limited to written form only. Applied linguists are also interested in this type of research as in Monika Kopytowska's 2014 article, "Modality, Distance and the Television News Genre" and Kaur and Ali's 2018 article "Exploring the Genre of Academic Oral Presentations". The present article approaches *the university course with a textbook* as a genre that language teachers make, emphasizing that university lecturers can develop their own teaching proactively by becoming independent of their textbook in their courses. This genre is made up of several products including not only the textbook but also teacher-developed ones: the syllabus, handouts, and presentations. Teaching at the university level is different than teaching within the K12 sector not only because students are older at university, but because when they graduate most students will be going into the workforce.

In EFL teaching in Japan and elsewhere, English departments and institutions expect newly hired teachers to contribute actively soon after beginning and to do so by adding value to the textbook-based course through teacher-produced materials. Proof of ability in doing this is often part of the hiring process. However, teachers graduating from university language teacher training programs are rarely taught how to create their own materials, other than with paper, scissors, and glue. As the COVID-19 shutdowns have shown, this is inadequate. The ability to make materials on a computer is now a requirement in most university teaching situations in Japan. Materials made using MS Word or MS PowerPoint can be automatically converted to Google Doc versions in Google Drive, and then used in Google Classroom (the most common platform in the English-speaking world during the COVID-19 lockdowns, there are many tutorials on YouTube that can help people to learn how to use Google Classroom). As noted in David Jolly and Rod Bolitho's (1998) chapter "A Framework for Material Writing" in *Materials Development in Language Teaching*, "The physical appearance and production of materials is important both for motivation and for classroom effectiveness" (p. 95). This can apply to teachers' sense of self-worth, as well as the students in the classroom. Many books and papers on material development are targeted at commercial textbook developers and not at busy classroom teachers who have quite different requirements. The aim of this article is to show an approach from which EFL teachers can be more autonomous in their language course development, while still using the

textbooks assigned to a class that give students a sense of structure. This is done by drawing on sources used in the training of both language teachers and media copywriters. This article is divided into four parts. The first part, "Context", offers a brief overview of issues that new university instructors in Japan face. The second through fourth parts describe products that university teachers are required to produce, or resources that can help them do this: the second part is about shaping a syllabus by using the coursebook as a resource rather than the de facto syllabus; the third suggests and overviews some resources that are useful; the fourth is a tutorial in the basics of using MS Word as a layout program to help teachers get started with their own materials.

Part 1: Context

A central issue facing new university English language lecturers in Japan is the same as the issue facing new university students in Japan—it requires a new *way of being*. Teachers new to university teaching may have experience working for a dispatch company and being placed at a university, commonly meaning that many if not all the materials and lesson plans are provided for them. Other teachers may have backgrounds as Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in the public or private K12 system, in which they learned what education in Japan is like by seeing what is done at the junior and senior high school levels, while having a Japanese Language Teacher in their classroom. Still others may be new to the country and have little experience with Japanese learners of English, or the Japanese education system.

Writing about general education, and not language teaching specifically, Hargreaves (2006) cites Murray (1992) in discussing four ages of professionalism and professional learning:

> In the pre-professional age, teaching was seen as managerially demanding but technically simple, its principles and parameters were treated as unquestioned common sense, one learned to be a teacher through practical apprenticeship, and one improved as a teacher by individual trial-and-error…[i]n this age, teachers were virtually amateurs: they "only needed to carry out the directives of the more knowledgeable superiors" (p. 495). (pp. 676-677)

This is the approach taken by dispatch companies that send instructors to universities in Japan complete with lesson plans and materials. English language lecturers new to working directly for a university are often given textbooks and a heavy teaching load, so the "more knowledgeable superiors" mentioned earlier become the textbooks themselves, as well as

other materials made available by the publisher. Hargreaves (2006) continues a little later, "pre-professional images of teaching continue to be dominant in many East Asian countries" (p. 678) noting reasons including the Confucian conceptions of teaching, and class size (Hargreaves, 2006, p. 678). He points out, "If one holds to a simple, pre-professional image of teaching, teachers need little training or ongoing professional learning, preparation time is relatively expendable (since the demands of preparation are no so great)" (Hargreaves, 2006, p. 678). University teachers who use the coursebook as a de facto syllabus cannot be said to be progressing significantly from the experiences of dispatched teachers. Many university positions are limited term contracts. Future employers are looking for autonomous, but collegial, teachers. At the same time, while the institutional ideas of education may require textbooks and explicit teaching of grammar as an important (rather than incidental) aspect of the course, many of the people in charge of these programs are foreigners who have different expectations of incoming teachers, from having trained as language teachers in universities in inner-circle English-speaking nations, but also from having experience in doing the job they are hiring for.

If universities are looking for autonomous teachers, it is necessary to outline at least a basic idea of what this may mean. Kathleen Bailey's 2006 book *Language Teacher Supervision A Case-Based Approach,* in which the "majority of the literature cited…comes from North American contexts" (p. 1) has a chapter on autonomy and authority, which is pertinent here. In it, Bailey (2006) writes:

> [t]he focus on autonomous individuals, whether they are language learners or language teachers, is consistent with some political and pedagogical changes of the late twentieth century. Following Hargreaves (1994), Corson (1995:7) describes "an almost universal trend away from things such as centralization, mass production, specialization, and mass consumption, including the standardized school systems that used to be the norm everywhere." Conversely, he notes "an almost universal trend toward the development of flexible technologies that are developed and used in smaller and more diverse units, including a rapid increase in diversity among schools and greater devolution of educational control" (ibid.). (p. 56)

This is describing an "almost universal trend" away from Hargreaves's description of the pre-professional age of teaching. Bailey (2006) goes on in the section "Autonomy within organizations" that:

[a]lthough language programs are indeed organizations, they differ from industrial organizations that produce consumer goods. Teachers themselves (with a fair amount of variation around the world) are professionals with a particular knowledge base and repertoire of skills. Professions are organizations whose work is "highly uncertain and contingent, requiring professional practitioners to rely heavily on their individual skill and judgement within the norms of accepted practise for their particular professions" (Savage and Robertson, 1999:155). (p. 59)

Looking at the quotations from Hargreaves and Bailey show a workplace reality similar to the strategic writing workplace. In both cases, the day-to-day work may be mostly straightforward, but employers require workers to be able to do more creative work if, and when, needed.

Part 2: Syllabus Development with a Coursebook

Communicative language teaching at the university level requires a large amount of preparation (even when there is a coursebook) and this preparation often takes the form of thinking through how the course will proceed. Understanding how university coursebooks are organized is the first step in this. Most university coursebooks are organized in a similar manner to David Wood's (1998) *Making the Grade An Interactive Course in English for Academic Purposes*. This book describes its organization in the introductory "To the Teacher" and "To the Learner" sections. In "To the Teacher", David Wood (1998) writes:

> The program is organized by thematic units chosen for their intrinsic interest. Each unit contains a series of tasks that focuses on meaning and progresses in complexity. Each unit culminates in a final project in which the learners are required to synthesize information and language from the unit in order to produce something–an essay, a presentation, a poster, an argument in debate" (p. 15).

In the "Organization of the Book" section of the "To the Learner" section, Wood (1998) writes, "Each unit ends with a project for you to work on. The project requires that you take the information presented in the unit in a new way to show you understand the information and the language in the activities" (p. 17). He continues in the "Types of Activities" section:

> *Making the Grade* is a task-based program. The classroom activities in this book are called tasks. In each task, you are required to do something that focuses on meaning and information. Therefore, there are no grammar exercises in the book, and only a few vocabulary activities. (Woods, 1998, p. 17)

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From this the final project is seen as an integral, organizational part of the unit, not a throw-away conclusion. David Woods is a professor at Carleton University in Canada. The ESL department at Carleton emphasizes teacher-made materials, which in practice means that teachers make their own units to teach their courses. People doing the one-year program to become ESL teachers in Ontario learn to make academic ESL units as a course requirement.

As with *Making the Grade*, textbooks produced by National Geographic Learning such as the (2020) *World English* series as well as the (2018) *Pathways* series are organized around thematic units, as is Cambridge's (2019) *Four Corners* series. What seems different is that these three series all contain grammar and vocabulary sections into each unit. For the teacher to become more independent from these texts, it is necessary to decide what they believe is the organizing principle of their course first, and their coursebook second. However, it should be noted that the grammar in these textbooks is not new for the students. The grammar covered is an English language version of grammar studied at length during junior and senior high school in the Japanese education system. What is taught in these textbooks is a review and reminder for students, while redoing it in English. The approach to methodology being suggested in this article is based on the notion that the main goal of university English language classes with foreign teachers in Japan is for students to use the language to communicate. This is a tenant of both communicative language teaching and task-based language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 227). As Jeremy Harmer (2007) writes in his chapter on writing in the fourth edition of *The Practice of English Language Teaching*:

> if we say *Write sentences using the 'going to' future*, our aim is not to train students to write, but rather to help them remember the *going to* future…When we ask students to design a good magazine advertisement, however, we are doing this so that they may become good at writing advertisements. (p. 330)

The final project of a coursebook unit presents the teacher with an opportunity. Instead of using the final assignment of the unit in the textbook, teachers can change it, to, for example, some sort of simple presentation type of project with research. They can then add relevant material throughout the unit to scaffold this new final project. Teachers can draw up a unit schedule that shows, for example, a three-class unit in which the coursebook is used for two class meetings, and the third class meeting is divided between students sharing their project with each other and a unit test based on the coursebook material. The resulting unit gives some space for the students to relax at the end before going on to the next unit in the

coursebook, while also allowing for teachers to be more independent of their coursebook. Doing all of this involves carefully constructing a syllabus that communicates the course structure to the students.

A syllabus can be likened to a map which guides students through a course. While it is true that there is a massive amount of information available for writing a syllabus, most of it is beyond the requirements of busy classroom teachers who will be using a coursebook. A simple way of approaching syllabus development in this situation is by writing it like anything else in English–by focussing on the target audience. Courses can have more than one syllabus (for example, a highly detailed one the teacher refers to, tweaking as necessary, and one for the students). In some ways, university education is quite different from K12 education. The target audience of university learning is adults, and most university programs in TESOL are for teaching adult learners. A goal of university education is for students to become more responsible for their own learning, and less reliant on the teacher for day to day understanding of what is required of the student. University education in Japan is a short period of four years during which students change from being high school students into adults who are likely permanent employees of a company. The syllabus given to students should help them to understand the course, what will be done (and when), and how they will be assessed. This last one is often the biggest challenge for teachers who are using a textbook because it necessitates thinking of the entire course before it has been taught. However, as David Nunan (1988) points out in his book, *Syllabus Design*, "it could be argued that any proposal failing to offer criteria for grading and sequencing can hardly claim to be a syllabus at all" (p. 47). Further, it is the same type of information that universities often ask of lecturers shortly after the term begins. Nunan (1988) goes on to cite Shavelson and Stern from 1981, writing that in planning, teachers need to consider the following:

1. The subject matter to be taught
2. Materials, i.e. those things the learner will observe/manipulate
3. The activities the teacher and learners will be carrying out
4. The goals for the task
5. The abilities, needs and interests of the students
6. The social and cultural context of the instruction (p. 47)

Nunan (1998) writes, "[t]his list is so comprehensive that with a little rearrangement, and the addition of assessment and evaluation components, it could form the basis for a comprehensive curriculum model" (p. 47). That this information came from so long ago is understandable. Douglas Brown (2007), in the first chapter of his book *Principles of*

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Language Teaching and Learning writes that "a significant difference between current language teaching practices and those of say, a half century ago, is the absence of proclaimed 'orthodoxies' and 'best' methods" (p.18). He continues by writing that the current emphasis is on the uniqueness of each learner, teacher, context and relationship between student and teacher, concluding that teachers need to use a "cautious, enlightened, eclectic approach" to "build a set of foundation stones–a theory if you will–based on principles of second language learning and teaching" (Brown, 2007, p.18). This is not particularly helpful advice for teachers who need to plan a course using an assigned textbook that will be starting in a week or two.

Along with deciding assessment and evaluation, teachers can fairly easily set up their grading spreadsheet in a manner that separates an assignment's score (whether it is out of twenty or thirty points, for example) from its percent value of the course (whether the assignment is worth 10% of the total score of the course, or if using the same type of assignment across units, whether all of them together are worth 10% of the course). This is extremely useful for teachers to know because it means that, for example, when writing in the syllabus that there will be a test in the fourth week worth ten percent of the course for example, it does not matter how many questions will be on that test or the total number of points the test is out of. It is simply telling the students and the teacher that there will be a test on that day. Teachers do not have to feel that they are juggling numbers and tests just to match a syllabus they wrote before meeting their students for the first time. By simply inputting an equivalent fraction formula into MS Excel in another column (usually immediately beside the raw score column for visual clarity), the number of points for an individual task can be independent of the value of that task within the overall course. For instance, a teacher makes a four-unit course using topics from the coursebook. The teacher decides when making the syllabus that one quarter of the total grade will be for final unit projects. The teacher gives each project a grade out of 20, because it is much easier to conceptualize a score out of 20 than one out of 25. The teacher converts the score out of 20 to one out of 25 using the formula below. Finally, the teacher decides she wants to know how students are progressing, and so at the end of each unit section of the spreadsheet, tabulates scores and converts it to a percentage and highlights the column. This teacher has been using an equivalent fraction formula as follows:
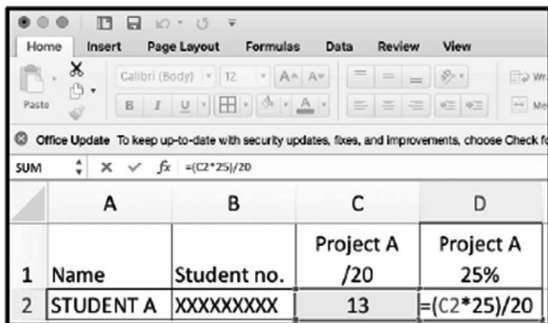
$$\frac{13}{20} \times \frac{x}{25}$$
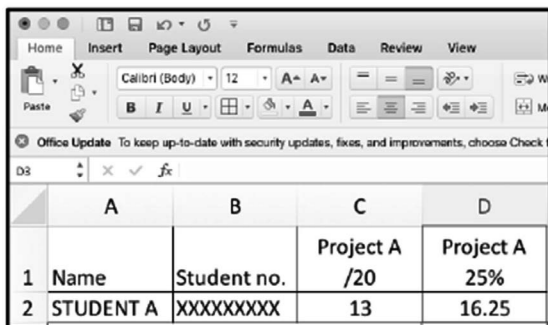
$$20x = (13 \times 25)$$

$$x = (13 \times 25) \div 20$$

$$x = 16.25$$

To set this up on MS Excel, the teacher has a column where the student's score out of 20 is listed. In the next column is the test score converted to a score out of 25. In the above image, the denominator of the figure on the left was multiplied with the numerator on the figure on the right, and the denominator on the figure of the right was multiplied with the numerator of the figure on the left. Then the entire right-hand part of the figure was divided to find x. In MS Excel, this series of steps can be done by typing =(*cell where score out of 20 is**25)/20 (the same as the second to last line in the equivalent fraction solution above, omitting "x"). For example,

C2 (column C, row 2) is the cell where the project score out of 20 was located (a test to check to see if the result was correct in this case is to divide the score out of twenty, 13, by 2, giving a score out of ten, which is 6.5. Then multiply the 6.5 out of 10 by 2.5, giving a score out of twenty-five, which is 16.25).

Getting in the practice of using the type of equation shown above in cell D2 in MS Excel frees the teacher considerably. For instance, if one section of the assessment is divided into several parts, as participation often is (homework, classroom conduct, attitude etc.), the teacher can change the weighting of each part easily. An example of this follows. A teacher gives students a syllabus at the beginning of the term. The syllabus given to students says participation is 20% of the course, and that it includes homework and classroom behavior without specifying the weighting of each within that twenty percent. The teacher thinks before the course begins that homework should be half of the participation grade and sets up an MS Excel spreadsheet to reflect that. The course ends but because of unexpected circumstances, homework has only been checked once. If the homework section of the syllabus is left at half of the participation grade, then any student who forgot to do their homework on that one day will lose ten percent of the course, a full letter grade. The teacher will probably decide that the homework score within the participation grade should not be given as much weight as originally planned. The teacher would feel justified in reducing its value within the course. Doing this would involve nothing more than adding a column, putting in the formula, and changing the columns that are totaled to give a score for the participation section of the course. If the teacher had put in the syllabus that homework would be ten percent (either as a separate section of the syllabus, or by specifying to the students the weighting of the parts of the participation score), then the teacher would not be able to make that change, because to do so would mean that the assessment in the syllabus differed from the actual assessment. If a goal of university education is for students to be more independent of their teacher than they were in high school, they should be more responsible for their progress and learning in a course. That only happens if they are given a syllabus that accurately guides them through the course requirements.

With a thirteen-week term, teachers can organize their syllabus in several ways. The first week can be an introduction class, leaving twelve weeks, which could be broken into four units taking three classes each (possibly two classes to cover text, and one for a unit test and project) or they could do two sets of four weeks of classes, followed by a review day and then a major test if the teacher prefers to use exam-based assessment. If the first of these

options is followed, then the students can be given a syllabus at the beginning of the term that specifies weeks one through thirteen with week one being "Introduction" and weeks two and three being Unit 1 (or whichever unit in the coursebook is chosen to do first), and week four can be specified as "Unit 1 Test; Project share". In the grading section of the syllabus, students can be told how much each section of the course is worth. This encourages student responsibility because they can see when each assignment will be due and how much it is worth in the syllabus, and they can see it from the first day of classes.

This section has dealt with planning through syllabus development with a view of using a coursebook as the basis of the course. This planning of a course and development of a syllabus requires making decisions that enable the teacher to be more independent of the coursebook. Structuring a course in this manner means concentrating on the different tasks within each unit while organizing the syllabus. The teacher can give the student a schedule which shows the major activities done and assignments due throughout a unit. Students can prepare before class if they find the material more challenging than they expected, and if they miss a class they can easily check and have a good idea of what was done.

The following two sections concern the development of materials for use in class (for either face to face classes or online/hybrid classes). The first of these overviews the type of resources commonly used in professional training programs for copywriting. The second gives the basics of using MS Word as a layout program for language teachers new designing their own materials on a computer.

Part 3: Some Resources from Professional Media Copywriting Training

Professional training in copywriting can intersect with language teaching material development in that while both career areas are primarily concerned with language, the language occurs alongside visuals, making for a multimedia message. Although educational programs for copywriters include courses in art direction and presentation skills, those for language teachers commonly do not (possibly due to time constraints within language teaching programs). This section reviews some resources commonly used by media writers in the strategic communication industry that may be particularly useful for language teachers in thinking about how to design their own in-class materials. It is divided into two parts: "Helpful Bits from Robin Williams's (2015) *The Non-designer's Design Book (4th Ed.)*"; and "Mass Market Business Presentation Literature and Making Presentation Slides".

Helpful bits from Robin Williams's (2015) *The Non-designer's Design Book (4th Ed.)*

  This book should be on the shelf of anybody who needs to make something on paper (like a handout) or screen (like a MS PowerPoint presentation slide, or documents for Google Classroom) for others to look at. In a section labeled "Is this book for you?", Williams (2015) lists her target audience, writing, "This book is written for all the people who need to design things, but have no background or formal training in design" (p. 10), which includes "teachers who have learned that students respond more positively to information that is well laid out" (Williams, 2015, p. 10).

  Williams's (2015) book breaks down design into four basic principles "that appear in every well-designed piece of work" (p. 13). Just by keeping these in mind, teachers can improve the design of their teaching materials. Her brief introduction of these principles is as follows:

  Contrast The idea behind contrast is to avoid elements on the page that are merely *similar*. If the elements (type, color, size, line thickness, shape, space etc.) are not the *same*, then make them **very different**. Contrast is often the most important visual attraction on the page–it's what makes a reader look at the page in the first place. It also clarifies the communication.

  Repetition Repeat visual elements of the design throughout the piece. You can repeat colors, shapes, textures, spatial relationships, line thickness, fonts, sizes, graphic concepts, etc. This develops the organization and strengthens the unity.

  Alignment Nothing should be placed on the page arbitrarily. Every element should have some visual connection with another element on the page. This creates a clean and sophisticated look.

  Proximity Items relating to each other should be grouped close together. When several items are in close proximity to each other, they become one visual unit rather than several separate units. This helps organize information, reduces clutter, and gives the reader a clear structure. (Williams, 2015, p. 13)

Williams goes on to explain these basic elements in much greater detail in the chapters that follow.

  The next section deals with color, specifically through the introduction of the color wheel. The color wheel is commonly taught in art classes and readers of the present article can easily find an example by doing a Google image search of it. Although most language teachers cannot make large numbers of colored handouts, they can make individual posters to

show in a class, and often make presentations using MS PowerPoint or iLife Keynote. In the color wheel, the primary colors (yellow, blue, red) are placed in a circle equidistant from each other. The color green is between yellow and blue because that is the outcome of mixing yellow and blue together. Between yellow and red is orange; between red and blue is purple. These colors that come from mixing the primary colors (green, orange and purple) are called the secondary colors. The spaces between the primary and secondary colors are also filled in, with what are called tertiary, or third, colors, which are mixtures of the colors beside them (yellow and orange mix to make, yellow-orange, etc.) (Williams, 2015, pp. 96-97).

Williams (2015) goes on to show color relationships by using the color wheel. This enables people to use colors in their creations that are "pretty much guaranteed to work together" (p. 97). These include complementary relationships: colors directly across from each other on the color wheel, for example blue and orange; triads: a set of three colors that are equidistant from each other, for example red, yellow, blue or orange, green, purple; split complement triads: choose one color, then look at the color immediately opposite, and instead of using that color, use each of the two colors that border that opposite color, so for example, yellow, violet, bluish-purple; and finally analogous colors: a set of three colors that are next to each other on the wheel (Williams, 2015, pp. 97-101).

Williams (2015) continues with color by explaining that a pure color is the hue, if you add black to a hue, you create a shade, and if you add white to a hue you create a tint (p. 102). In the color wheel, this is shown with the hue in the center, the tints on the inside of the wheel and the shades on the outside of the wheel.

The last approximately seventy-five pages of this book are dedicated to type. Dedicated texts on typography emphasize the creation of original typefaces and fonts. Information about type is presented in Williams's book as content knowledge of the area, to help people make choices with fonts available on their computer, or in looking at other fonts to purchase (something that she recommends). By doing it in this manner, she approaches the use of fonts and colors similarly. As Williams (2015) writes in the introduction, "Once you can name something, you're conscious of it. You have power over it. You're in control. You own it" (p. 11).

The first chapter of this part of the book is "The Essentials of Typography", and it begins with punctuation and entering special characters on both PC and Mac platforms. She then discusses accent marks: "[o]n a Mac, the accent marks are hidden in the Option keyboard; on a PC, use the ANSI codes" (Williams, 2015, p. 161). For Mac users, the Option

keyboard can be found by pulling down the language options for the Mac. Click the icon that shows the language (often the flag of a country) and select Show Keyboard Viewer (see figure 1) and before and after pressing the option key (figure 2).

Figure 1. Show Keyboard Viewer

Figure 2. Before and after pressing option key on the keyboard viewer.

As can be seen, pressing Option with this keyboard visible will show the accents available on the Option keyboard.

A lot of information in the "Essentials of Typography" chapter is interesting, and is studied in media writing courses, but probably goes beyond the needs of classroom teachers. An example of this is kerning: "Kerning is the process of removing tiny units of space between characters to create visually consistent letterspacing" (Williams, 2015, p. 163). It is interesting information, but aside from occasionally lining up textboxes when text is placed in multiple boxes, classroom teachers are unlikely to need it. For language teachers trying to design text that is easily readable by language students some useful bits of this chapter include capitals: "setting words in ALL CAPS to call attention to them is not always the best solution because all caps are actually more difficult to read than lowercase" (Williams, 2015, p. 161); underlining: "Don't use the underline button. Ever." (Williams, 2015, p. 162). Williams (2015) points out that it can be more difficult to read when the line passes through the descender (an example of this is the line on the side of a "p" that passes below the level of the line being typed on) and so it is better to just use bold or italic letters, or draw a line under the text, putting it below the limit of the descender (p. 162). She writes about widows: a single word ending a paragraph on its own line; and orphans: the final line of a paragraph ends up on the next page (Williams, 2015, p. 164), and ends with a miscellaneous section, which is "a short list of professional typographic niceties which, if you follow, will prevent your work from looking amateurish" (Williams, 2015, p. 165). One point in this section that stands out is to leave a lot of space around the text, if that text is in a frame or a box (Williams, 2015, p.166), which in MS Word is a textbox. Perhaps the easiest way for teachers to do this is to simply put line spaces in before and after text in a textbox if the lines are going to be visible to the reader.

Williams (2015) describes three relationships that exist in type in the following chapter, "Type (& Life)". These are concordant: it occurs when "you use only one type family without much variety in style, size, weight and so on" (p. 167); conflicting: it occurs "when you combine typefaces that are *similar (but not the same)*" (Williams, 2015, p. 167); and contrasting: it occurs "when you combine separate typefaces and elements that are clearly distinct from each other" (Williams, 2015, p. 167). The point of the section is both concordant and contrasting relationships on text can be visually appealing, but conflicting relationships do not work as well.

Williams's (2015) *The Non-Designer's Design Book* is an excellent resource for learning how to approach design elements, and the relationships between elements on a page, and could help a lot of language teachers in Japan. Its usefulness extends far beyond the

outline provided here. One great benefit to it is the visual examples she uses to show the different concepts. These can act as examples for teachers to choose from that make the concepts covered here concrete. The teaching of reading in English often involves asking to students to look at the title and then the images of an article, to begin to get an overview of its meaning. The same could be said for materials given to students by the teacher, especially in the case where students obtain the materials from an online class-organization platform such as Google Classroom. The next section reviews two resources for developing presentations from the perspective of mass market business presentation literature.

Mass market business presentation literature and making presentation slides

It is often the case that ESL/EFL teachers can find the information in business communication literature useful. The literature on presentations can help teachers understand business presentations, but teachers should keep in mind that these types of books usually assume the communication in presentations is between people who share a native level of competence in the language. This means that these types of books can be helpful for some activities that language teachers do such as creating conference presentations for a target audience of other English language teachers. But for other activities, such as instructing learners, some teachers may feel that without changes the information in these types of books may not be appropriate. This section refers briefly to two sources of mass market literature: *The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs: How to Be Insanely Great in Front of Any Audience* by Carmine Gallo (2010); and *How to Deliver a TED Talk: Secrets of the World's Most Inspiring Presentations* by Jeremy Donavan (2014). These resources are representative of the types of things discussed in the field, and both sources emphasize the importance of simple images that do not detract from the message being conveyed by the speaker. Both books discuss all aspects of creating and delivering a presentation, though the present article is concerned only with the aspects related to the creation of presentation slides without animations.

The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs: How to Be Insanely Great in Front of Any Audience by Carmine Gallo (2010)

Citing Steve Jobs's study of Zen beginning in 1976, Gallo (2010) shows Jobs's slides as also extremely sparse, writing "Simplicity and the elimination of clutter is a design

component that Jobs incorporated into his products and slides" (pp. 88-89). He then shows this in a table with "Steve's Words" on one side and "Steve's Slides" on the other:

Steve's Words	Steve's Slides
"I just want to take a moment and look back to 2007. Two thousand seven was an extraordinary year for Apple. Some incredible new products: the amazing new iMac, the awesome new iPods, and of course the revolutionary iPhone. On top of that, Leopard and all the other great software we shipped in 2007."	2007
"It was an extraordinary year for Apple, and I want to just take a moment to say thank you. We have had tremendous support by all of our customers, and we really, really appreciate it. So, thank you for an extraordinary 2007."	Thank you.
"I've got four things I'd like to talk to you about today, so let's get started. The first one is Leopard."	1
"I'm thrilled to report that we have delivered over five million copies of Leopard in the first ninety days. Unbelievable. It's the most successful release of Mac OS X ever."	5,000,000 copies delivered in first 3 months

(Galo, 2010, p. 90)

The moral of this is that less is more. This may be particularly important when the target audience of the message is using a foreign language, though many students would probably appreciate a little text on the screen as well as a simple image that readily communicates the key point. When presenting to other teachers in a conference, however, this type of information is highly pertinent. When people see slides full of text, they will often read the text, not paying attention to what the speaker is saying. The key takeaway is therefore that the

presentation software is merely there to enhance a speaker's presentation. Next, this article will briefly cover the relevant chapter of Jeremy Donovan's book on making presentations.

How to Deliver a TED Talk: Secrets of the World's Most Inspiring Presentations by Jeremy Donavan (2014)

Chapter 14 of Donovan's (2014) book is "Creating Inspiring Slides", and it contains four tips. The first of these is "Give your talk without slides" (Donovan, 2014, p. 161). Donovan (2014) explains that "As a speaker, you should remove anything that can be construed as a physical or emotional barrier between you and your audience" (p. 161). The following tip is "Drawing legibly and simply is a great substitute for slides" (Donovan, 2014, p. 162), suggesting, "You do not need to be a great artist to pull this off… [just make your images] simple, obvious and legible" (Donovan, 2014, p. 162). Making use of hand-drawn images in MS Word is discussed at the end of Part 4 of this article, and from MS Word, the final image can be copied and pasted into MS PowerPoint for presentations. The third tip is "When you need to use slides to share data or to document an experience, make them simple, image rich, and text light" (Donovan, 2014, p. 162), which seems similar to the method that Gallo describes Steve Jobs using. The final tip is "Emphasize key points using intentional contrast in color, font or placement" (Donovan, 2014, p. 164), which echoes advice on design by Williams discussed above, and Donovan (2014) points out that "the most critical rule of graphic design in slide building is 'less is more.' Be generous with white space" (p. 164). Steve Jobs's slides, described earlier, are a good example of this.

This section on mass market business literature just scratches the surface of presentations and refers only to the making of presentation slides as that is the part most pertinent to this article on material development. All parts of a presentation work together, and teachers could benefit from having at least one book specific to this subject for preparing their own presentations in conferences, and for developing courses in speech skills for language learners.

In summary, this part on resources from professional media copywriting training surveyed some important information from a design book for non-designers, and briefly discussed important elements of slide preparation for presentation software. The aim was to provide useful information from which language teachers may approach the development of their own original materials. This is important because most language teaching positions require teachers to make materials because this can add benefit to the institution's program.

The next section is a tutorial on using MS Word as a layout program, which could help teachers to apply the information in this section.

**Part 4: Using MS Word as a Layout Program: The Basics Step by Step**

Approaching MS Word as a layout program is the single most valuable thing for teachers to do to make their materials (either paper or screen based) better but is not often covered in language teacher training programs. Part 4 shows a simple step-by-step method of generating text and image files on MS Word, adapted from an introduction to art direction for copywriters course taken as part of a three-term Ontario College Graduate Certificate (OCGC) media copywriting qualification. A similar process can be done on MS PowerPoint, but teachers may find it easier to do the layout on MS Word in a vertical layout, and then copy and paste their work into MS PowerPoint. Done in this manner, there are usually very few adjustments that need to be done to the final MS PowerPoint presentation. This article uses the English language version of MS Word on the PCs provided at this writer's workplace, using Windows 10 pro, version 21H1. The version of Gnu Image Manipulation Program discussed below is the newest version as of the writing of his article. The process has been divided into six steps, ending with two additional sections, the first giving a low-tech idea of what to do if you cannot find an image to use, and the second on importing and converting the documents for Google Docs, and then using them in Google Classroom.

Most of this information can be taught to students in the first couple of weeks of classes, so that they can make their own projects and record presentations on Zoom as a final project for a textbook unit. One note of caution for teachers new to this is appropriate. To show an MS PowerPoint presentation in Zoom while being able to see your face, a setting in MS PowerPoint may (or may not) need to be changed. Go to Settings, press Set Up Slide Show, and under Show type click the middle radial, "Browsed by an individual (window)" (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. MS PowerPoint set up show to be browsed by in a window

Doing this means that the MS PowerPoint presentation file will float as a window on the desktop, allowing for the user to open Zoom, or get to the Zoom window if it is already open. If students need this step, they may need to be shown several times. After recording in Zoom, students could check that their face is visible, the MS PowerPoint presentation is visible, and the viewer of the video can hear the presentation on the video file created when saving on Zoom. This video file can be submitted to a designated Google Classroom assignment for the course.

Layout for MS Word in six steps

i) Open a new document in MS Word. Make sure that the window can be dragged around the screen. The first thing that should be done is to zoom out to see the whole page. The reason for doing this is that by seeing the whole page, it can be thought of as a piece of paper. It may be useful to switch from 200% in order to type, to viewing the full page on the screen (68% for portrait view, 96% for landscape view) to make layout decisions.

ii) Decide (if you have not already) if the layout spacing will work better in landscape (called "vertical") view or portrait (called "horizontal"). Most often, teachers will use a horizontal layout for handouts, and worksheets for students to use, and a vertical layout for designing material to be copied and pasted into MS PowerPoint. The naming of the layouts is based on the direction of the text when typing directly onto the page, as opposed to typing text inside of a textbox, and so vertical is for typing in Japanese text, from top to bottom, right to left. When using MS Word as a layout program, text is almost always placed inside

of text boxes, so the decision of the page direction should be entirely based on the spacing requirements of the elements in the handout. To change from portrait to landscape, click the Layout tab in the MS Word window. Next, the far-left button is Text Direction. Click it and choose "Vertical" if you want to make a landscape page. This should be done in a blank document.

**Figure 4.** MS Word layout vertical or horizontal
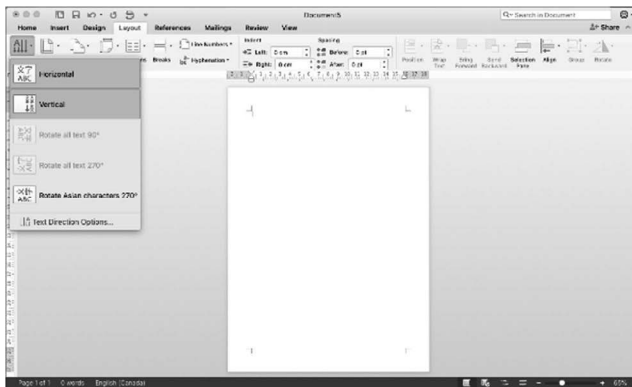
If you change your mind later, the easiest way to fix it may be to start a new document, change the direction, and copy and paste each element from the first document.

iii) Insert a text box. Go to the Insert tab in the MS Word window, second from left. Click the Text Box button. At the bottom, below the images, you will see "Draw Horizontal Text Box". Draw the textbox while holding down the left mouse button. The textbox should already be set to float (in the Wrap Text menu, it is marked as "In Front of Text"). Leaving the textbox lines on the screen make the element far easier to work with until you are finished your layout.

Figure 5. Text box

iv) Insert a picture and modify if necessary. Do a Google image search in Google Chrome and click on one of the images. A black box opens with a larger version of the image on the left. Right click and press copy (see figure 6). Then go to MS Word and press Ctrl v to paste. If the image does not float, go through the steps described above for textboxes, using the Layout tab to get to the Wrap Text button. You can use this Wrap Text button to put a textbox on top of an image by placing the image "Behind Text", and then a textbox "On Top of Text".

Figure 6. Copy image

There are many ways to modify images in MS Word, some useful ones for many situations are presented here. MS Word allows for switching X and Y axis, which means you can make mirror images by copying and pasting an image onto the same page, and then

manipulating them. To do this, click the image, then go to the Rotate pull-down icon and click Flip Horizontal. The following before and after image is an image that has been copied from the Internet and pasted into MS Word twice, one time with the horizontal axis flipped. Notice that the figure with both arms held out has changed.

Figure 7. Flip horizontal
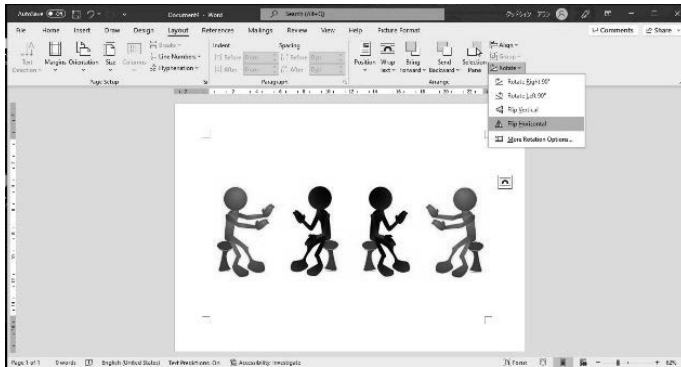
For many handouts, filtering out the color can also help for making copies. To do this, double click the inside of the picture, click the Color button, and under the heading "Recolor" the second from the left is greyscale. Finally, a useful tool is the crop tool. It allows you to use only a small section of a given image, but only along the straight walls—the tool does not make clipping paths. The crop tool comes up by double clicking the image to get the Format Picture tab (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Crop tool
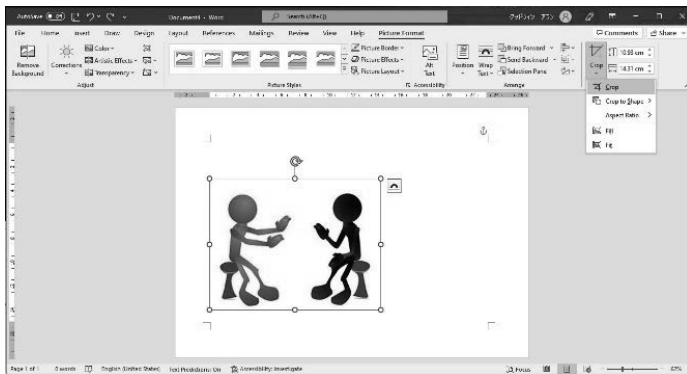
v) Organize the text elements on the page. Clicking either a textbox or an image will give a different set of buttons on the tool bar. Both textboxes and images have the "Arrange" section with "Position" and "Wrap Text" buttons. From the menu that appears, go to "Wrap Text" (Figure 9). This same button can be found in the Layout tab. Push the Wrap Text button. Your text box will float if it is either "Behind Text" or "In Front of Text". In front of text means that if you were to drag a picture across the screen, it would go behind your text.

Figure 9. Wrap text button
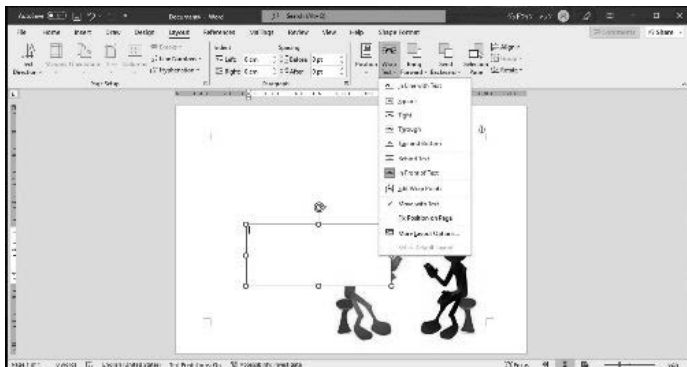
You could, for example, use clipart of two people facing each other and then make textboxes to indicate cartoon talking bubbles. If you set your box to "Behind Text" and dragged a picture over it, you would not be able to read the text. In the case of more than two elements

occupying the same space, the yellow buttons to the side labeled Bring Forward and Send Backward enable you to organize the layers. If you have arranged multiple items exactly as you would like them, you can use the "Group" button to "glue them together". It can also be found on the Layout Tab.

Figure 10. Group
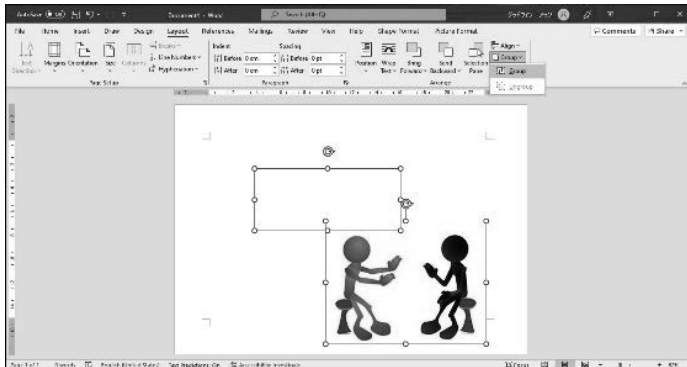
MS Word will treat the grouped items as a single element, so you will not be able to edit them once grouped, though you can edit the entire group (to, for example, change the size of both the speakers and the speaking bubbles without changing the ratio of the size of each element). You can also "Ungroup" items later, if necessary, to change an individual element. The button to do this is in the same location as the "Group" button.

One cautionary note concerns tables in your layout. If the items on your page include a table, it too can be put into a text box. Doing this means it can be moved around on the page, which is convenient, but altering it later can be tricky because it can be difficult to switch from moving the textbox to typing on the table itself. A workaround is to draw the textbox in your final layout file, but then open a new MS Word document, make the table in that document, and copy and paste your table into the textbox on your final layout file. Any time you want to alter the table, delete both the textbox and the table from your final layout file, and create a new textbox in the final layout file. Alter the table in the other MS Word document before copying and pasting it into a new textbox. Depending on the purpose of your final layout document, you may want to save the document that has only your table on it so that you can use it as needed later.

vi) Delete the text box lines after finishing the layout on the page. When finished the layout, double click on the text box line (the border around the text box) and on the right a Format Shape display will come up. Click the arrowhead next to Line and click No line.

Figure 11. Remove lines before and after
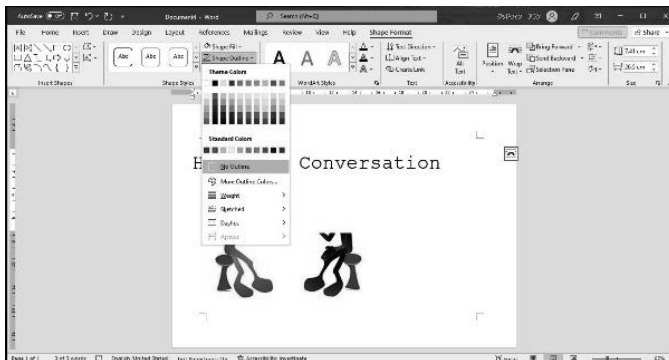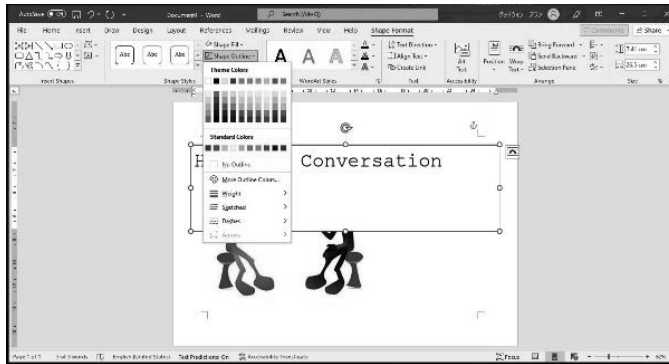
The button immediately above the Shape Outline button is Shape Fill. This can be used in the same manner as the Shape Outline but fills in the color of the textbox. If you click No Fill, then you will be able to see the images beneath the text (see figure 12). In figure 12, notice that on the first image, the character's head is hidden. On the next one, it is visible.

Figure 12. Shape fill no fill before and after
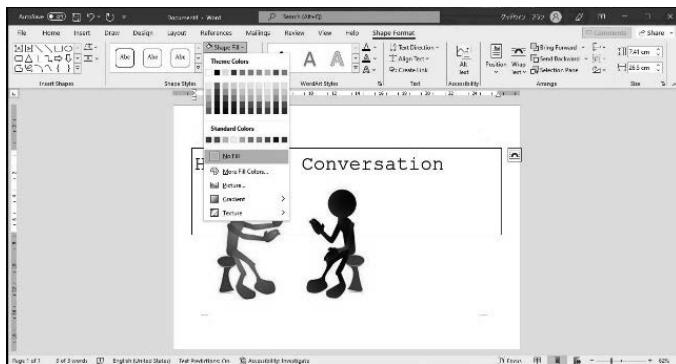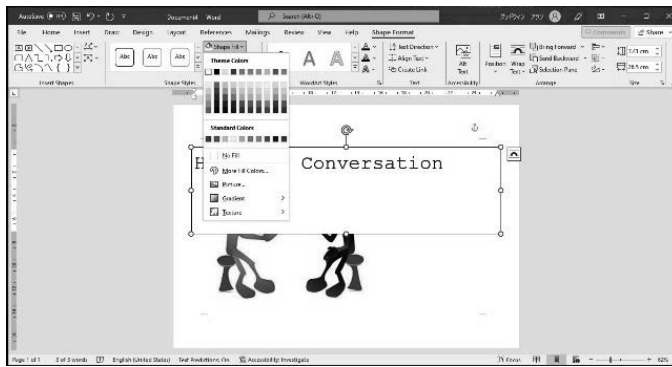
By clicking both No Fill and No Outline, you can place text near to images.

A low-tech solution for when you cannot find an image to use

It occasionally happens that a particular simple image is needed for a class, but the teacher cannot find an appropriate one to use. A good solution for this problem is having the open software program GIMP (GNU Image Manipulation Program) available. Once downloaded, take out a piece of blank paper. Take out a black marker (if it has a thick side, and a thin side, use the thick side). Draw a simple picture with very little detail, but that communicates the meaning. Take a photo of it with a phone. Email it to yourself on an account you can access with your computer (like a Gmail account). Save the image to your desktop. Remove the background grey colour with GIMP by following these steps:

vi.1) Open the image in GIMP (File=> Open as Layers)
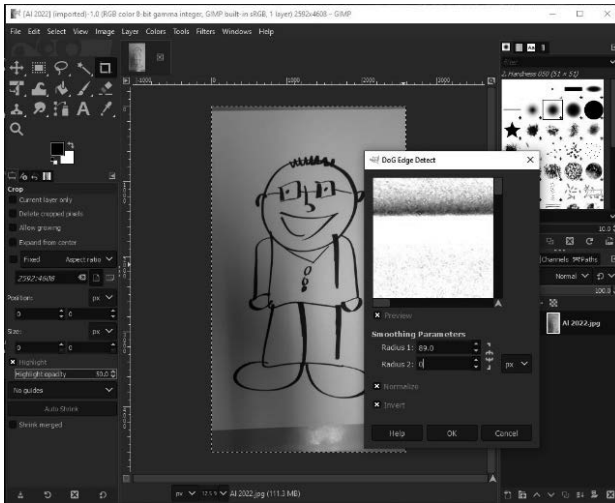
Figure 13. Open as layers
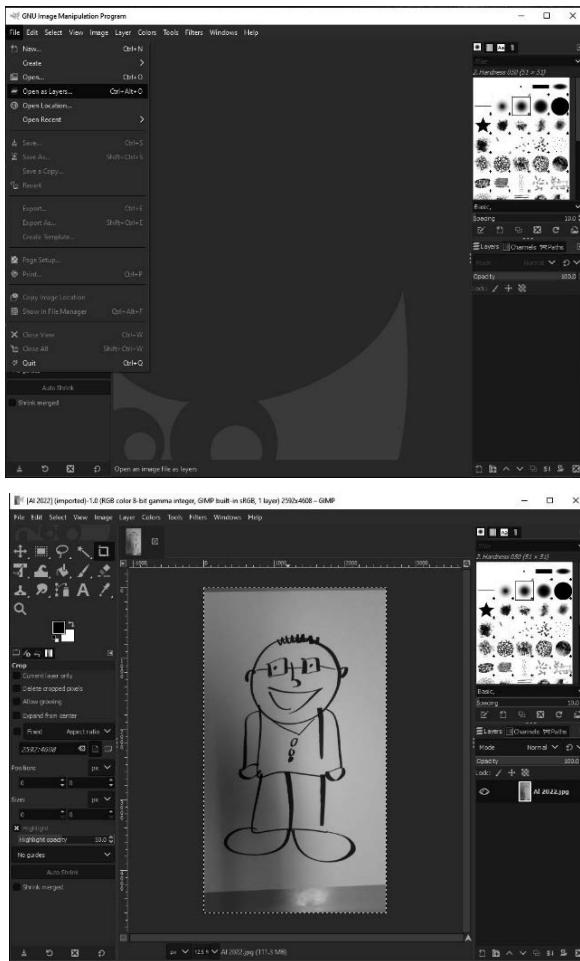
vi.2) Access the Difference of Gaussians (legacy) filter (Filters-> Edge Detect -> Difference of Gaussians (legacy))

Figure 14. Apply filters
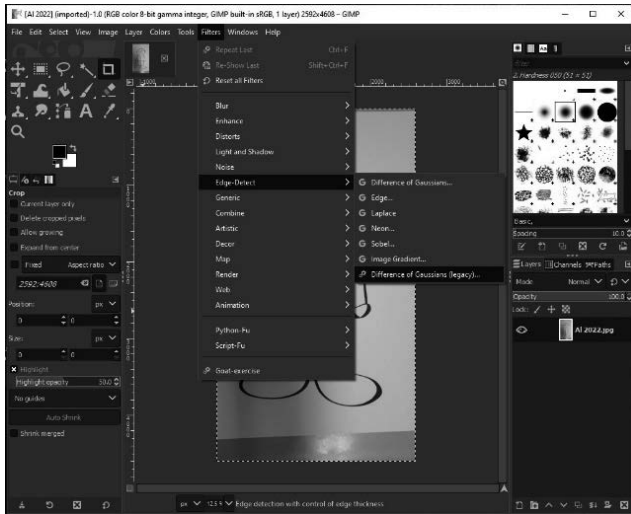
vi.3) In DoG Edge Detect, Radius 1: set to 89. Radius 2: set to 0. It will take some time for this to finish.

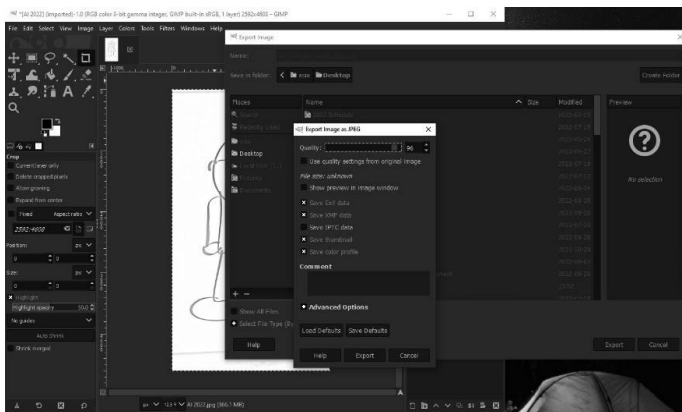**Figure 15.** Before and after application of filter.
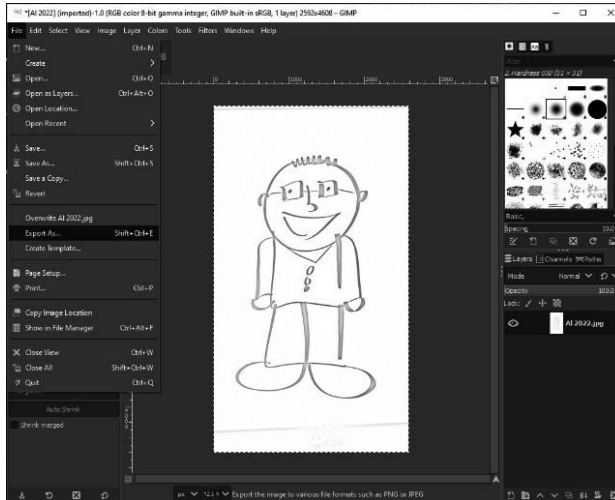
vi.4) Export the file (File-> Export As…). Note: you will need to press export on two pages, and the file should be saved in jpg format to the desktop or another easily accessible folder.
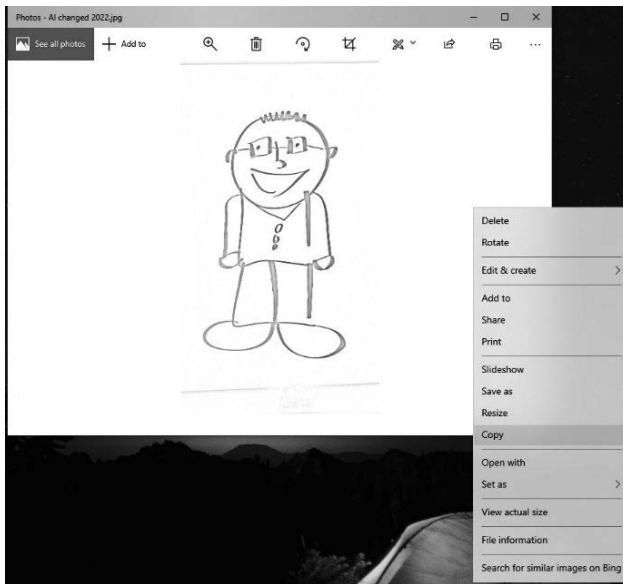
Figure 16. Export file with .jpg extension
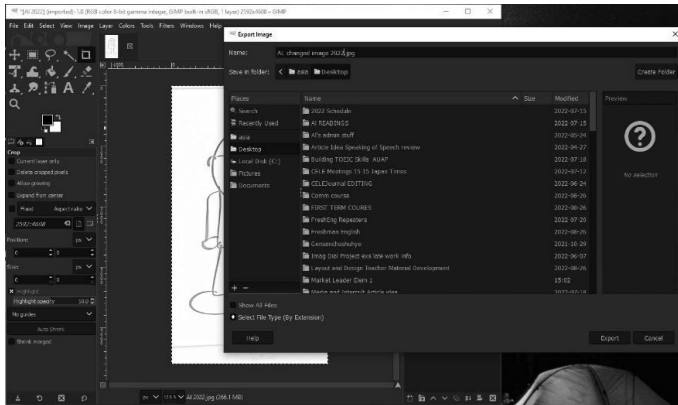
Figure 17. Export a second time

vi.5) Double click the jpeg file to open it in Photos, then right click the image to copy it.

Figure 18. Photos, right click to copy image

vi.6) Paste the image in MS Word by pressing control v, or by using the paste button. Next, lighten any text in MS Word document to match the colour of the line drawing. Use the crop tool to remove any lines unwanted lines on the edges on the image. Because the resulting picture will look like a cartoon, appropriate fonts may be "comic sans", or "Bradley Hand ITC". If required, each element can be copied and pasted into MS PowerPoint. In the case of a handout with a corresponding MS PowerPoint presentation, each element from the MS Word file can be copied and pasted from the horizontal layout file separately and placed on the MS PowerPoint slide so that the visual connection is obvious, but a large amount of extra work is not necessary. An example of this final file can be seen in figure 19.

Figure 19. Final document with text lightened to match image
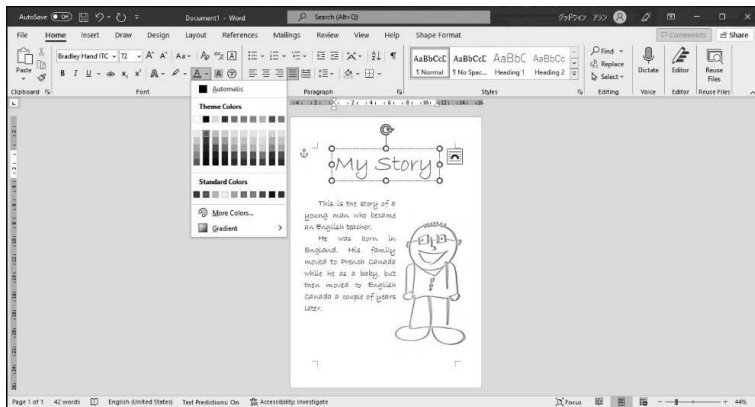
The final image and layout are much lighter than regular text, and look gray in color rather than black, but the overall impression is better than it would be without having used the software to manipulate the image at all. It communicates to the audience clearly, and without the teacher having to learn how to use computer illustration software.

Using the documents in Google Classroom

In face-to-face classes, once documents are finished, the teacher can just print them out and have students work on them. For hybrid and online classes (or even face to face classes with Google Classroom as an organizational tool) things are not quite that simple. The final document can be saved as a PDF if it is for information only (as a poster, or a reading for a class). This is done in the print section of MS Word. On a PC platform, press print. Then change the printer to Microsoft Print to PDF and follow the directions (you will need to save it someplace, the desktop is always a good place, and this means you will need to give it a name).

Once you have the PDF, you can drag it into Google Drive, and from there put it into Google Classroom. In the case of work pages for students to do (for example, write a dialogue, or a one-paragraph essay), items saved as MS Word files can be changed to Google Doc format. Possibly the easiest way to do this is to first change the settings in Google Drive. Press the settings cog to the right of the question mark. Press settings. Click the box beside "Convert uploaded files to Google Docs editor format". Once done, all documents will be

converted when put into Google Drive, so any of them can be easily put into Google Classroom. MS PowerPoint presentations shown in class will also be converted and then can be posted to Google Classroom for students to refer to. Note, however, this box must be unchecked when putting password protected documents (such as grading spreadsheets) into Google Drive.

If your unit includes regular homework tasks (such as topic-relevant pieces of short writing), then making a new worksheet just requires copying the existing one in Google Drive, changing the name, and the image. This creates structure for the students so they know what to expect with each unit but is open so that students can use the space to write on a subject that is interesting to them, while at the same time being relevant to the unit being covered in the course. Although doing this reduces some of the time teachers must spend on idea generation and material development, it does increase grading time. The layout of all documents converted to Google Doc format must be checked because some small changes are often necessary.

In summary, this section introduced a method of making materials in MS Word based on training for the strategic communications industry. These are just the basics for teachers who are not already familiar with using MS Word for layout but should be enough for most situations using print media. Teachers will have more confidence in using MS Word if they practice a bit before they really need to make materials, and a quick sketch by hand to plan handouts before using MS Word usually helps the process considerably. Being able to use MS Word as a layout program can give language teachers a sense of freedom because they do not have to feel tied to wherever the cursor is on the page. Once accustomed to using layout options presented here, it is very often fastest way to create materials.

Conclusion

The aim for this article was to help teachers new to university language teaching become independent of their textbooks. The approach suggested in this article involves the teacher creatively engaging with assigned coursebooks and adding or changing content. This helps teachers grow because it can start them on a path where they feel in charge, possibly eventually coming to the point where they can make courses without a textbook at all. This article suggested to start by reorganizing final projects in a required textbook, then organizing the syllabus around this new information, while concurrently developing a grading spreadsheet. Following a description of some relevant resources that language teachers can

readily approach, a method of material development by using the basics of design and using MS Word as a layout program was described. This article can be considered as advice for the first steps in becoming a more autonomous teacher. Through teaching practice and research (or pursuing an academic program in a relevant area and connecting it to ELT), a teacher can develop a particular thematic focus in their career. The information in this article came from a background in an area outside of language teaching (media writing), as well as ELT literature. Both advertising copywriting and ELT material development are multimedia (image and text) writing heavy areas. English language teaching is a highly interdisciplinary field in which contributions could be made from many different fields.

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