



# Accessible Language Learning Review

Accessibility in Language Learning  
Special Interest Group  
Japan Association of Language Teaching  
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## Welcome to our third newsletter:

Thank you for being a member of our SIG. In this issue we have:

- Why the ALL-SIG was created
- Coordinator's Report on Year 1 of ALL-SIG
- ALL-SIG Forum at the JALT National Conference reports
- New Executive Committee Members
- PANSIG Proposal Theme " Sustainable Inclusivity: Practical Solutions for Supporting Learners"
- Focus Paper 2: Universal Design Line Spacing: A small change by you, could change someone's future.
- Immersive Reader - Using Technology to break down the print barrier
- Your voice: Write for our next issue
- Our recommended websites
- Our projects

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Coordinator, ALL-SIG  
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## Why form the ALL-SIG?

In 2016, the Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities became Japanese law. This change mandates that teachers and teaching organisations are aware of and use accessibility pedagogies, materials, and strategies to optimize educational

outcomes for learners with special needs including psychological, physical, cognitive, and communicative disabilities and learning differences. However, as learner needs are diverse and vary by context: no “one-size-fits-all”. In 2017 an informal group was formed and was accorded SIG status by JALT in February 2021. The purpose of the ALL-SIG is to improve educational equity by providing a focus for current and future members for collaboration, sharing of experiences, practices, theoretical perspectives, and research to target compliance by teachers and JALT with the EDPD Act.

### **Coordinators Report - Self-assessment report to JALT on year 1 of ALL-SIG to members**

The Accessibility in Language Learning Special Interest Group (ALL-SIG) only became recognized as a “non-voting” SIG at the JALT National EBM in February 2021. Since then, the executive officers have kept themselves busy on creating everything from scratch including a newsletter (Accessible Language Learning Reviews), SIG forums and AGM, officer election, website, collaboration with other SIGs, and handling requests from other committees and individuals.

The following part briefly explains what we (not only officers but also all the SIG members together) have established and accomplished in our year one. 1. Membership – As of December 2021, we have 29 registered members. 2. Officers – As of the AGM at JALT in November, we have 8 officers. 3. Public events ALL-SIG held in 2021 – we organized a SIG forum at PanSIG2021 and a forum/AGM at JALT2021. We planned for a joint mini-conference with LLL-SIG but it was canceled in 2021 and is rescheduled for the summer of 2022. 4. Publications – As of December, we have published three newsletters in 2021. Next year, we are planning to publish newsletters four times including two newsletters with reviewed articles. 5. Website – Currently, our main website is ALL-SIG’s group on Facebook. We have been working on a dedicated ALL-SIG’s website and are looking at making it public early 2022. 6. Treasury reports – As of December, we have approximately ¥35,000 in the bank. We have not touched the SIG’s budget at all for anything yet since we received that money from JALT in November.

### **Report from JALT 2021 Perspectives on Accessible Language Learning in the Post-pandemic Classroom / AGM**



**Ryota Moriya** 森谷 亮太 **Coordinator** Global Education Division of the Center for Global Strategy at Otaru University of Commerce in Hokkaido. PhD (International Studies). Research interests:

color-blindness, disability studies, accessibility, and Foucauldian genealogical discourse analysis.

**A case study of visible/invisible (dis)abilities in language learning:** My presentation was an attempt to engage in discussions regarding diverse learner needs in language learning. I shared my context and case analyses of both visible and invisible disabilities including retinoschisis, ulcerative colitis, panic disorder and depression. The method of this study was a life story analysis to collect individual experiences of barriers in language learning. Considering a social model of disability, I addressed that learner needs depend on learning environments. Therefore, teaching practice entails a continuous self-reflection on pedagogical accessibility in class.

### **Andrew Reimann** アンドリュー・ライマン **Program Chair**



Coordinator, English Language Program, Aoyama Gakuin University. PhD ( Applied Linguistics.) Research interest: Globalisations and Intercultural communication, media literacy.

The university context has a diverse range of learners and has traditionally had limited support for accommodating learning differences. With recent developments in Japanese law some considerations regarding accessibility have been made. It remains, however, that many less visible difficulties and differences are undiagnosed and unsupported. Issues concerning social and psychological factors affecting accessibility to resources and information or generally participating regularly in the classroom have become more significant. As educators what can we do in the classroom to ensure that all learners have equal access and opportunity to reach their full potential.

### **Natsuki Suzuki** 鈴木 菜月 **Membership Chair**



Elementary school teacher: specialising in teaching through songs and stories. Masters student at Aoyama Gakuin University: researching motivational differences in learning English.

I presented some issues and strategies in an elementary school context. For example, students who: (1) have trouble sitting down – giving him a chance to be a (time limited) student teacher, and putting a little note on his desk, “You sit on your own chair.” as a constant reminder. (2) learn by monitoring –

changing his seat from the corner of the first row to a second row seat in the middle (3) cannot help yelling out answers – student-student relationships: Another boy sitting next to that boy, whispered to him “You can whisper answers only to me :D!” helped him to comfortably accept the warning.

### **Alexandra Burke アレクサンドラ バーク Publications Chair**



University teacher: specialising in teaching inclusive practices in English language classes. Research interests: Neurodiversity - creating learning environments that reduce barriers and increase learner autonomy..

I introduced the barriers to participation by students with dyslexia and ADHD and long term consequences to them if current and future teachers are not supported to make this 10% of the student body feel welcome. After that, I did a brief demonstration of the capacity of the Microsoft tool immersive reader program within FlipGrid as a tool to overcome barriers, both in literacy and socioeconomic. I'll expand on this in an article below.

### **Outcome of Annual General Meeting:**

The ALL-SIG AGM was held on Sunday, November 14th. The 2022 Officers are:

Coordinator: Ryota Moriya

Treasurer: Ryoko Sato

Membership Chair: Natsuki Suzuki

Program Chair: Andrew Reimann

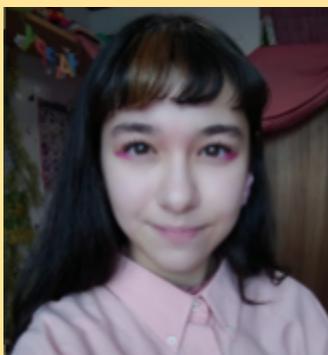
Publications Chair: Alexandra Burke

Publicity Chair: Katrina Persons

Member-at-large: Michael Yap

Member-at-large: Kurt Ackermann

### **Introducing our new Executive Members**



#### **Katrina Persons - Publicity Chair**

I am currently a third year undergraduate student attending Keiwa College. My focus is on inclusive education through the lens of early childhood learning, along with interest in the theory

behind creating an educational environment that aims to support all learners. The early childhood learning program at my college has allowed me to better study, practice, and observe what it means to provide an education that is both accessible and inclusive.

My interest heavily lies in theories such as the theory of multiple intelligences proposed by Howard Gardner and other theories that are proof of the diversity found in learners and the limitlessness of learner diversity. I'm studying to better understand not only the theory behind inclusive education, but also the implementation and understanding of it beyond early childhood learning and to higher levels of education.



**Michael Yap - Member at Large** I am a full-time lecturer at Meiho Junior and Senior High School. My initial research focused on developing autonomous learning, new applications for extensive reading and listening, and alternative assessments. However, opportunities to teach university learners with specific learning needs have led me to expand my interests. I now seek ways to apply differentiated instruction, develop self-paced learning environments, and provide support systems to learners in Japanese secondary EFL classrooms.

Given the amount of work that needs to be done in providing accessibility in language learning, collaborating with peers and experts in the field is crucial. I hope to contribute to making the JALT ALL-SIG a hub for teachers and researchers to better support learners under their care.

**Editor's Note:** Kurt Ackermann was also officially appointed as Member-at-Large during ALL SIG's AGM in November. Since then he has been busy and was not able to provide input for this issue. Hopefully, we have a chance to introduce him to you in the next issue!

## PanSIG 2022



Thank you for your valuable input on ALL SIG's forum at the next PanSIG in 2022. The title for the forum will be "Sustainable Inclusivity: Practical Solutions for Supporting Learners". This year's forum will showcase both practical and practice-oriented theoretical studies about accessible language learning. We are looking forward to seeing you ALL-SIG members at our forum in Nagano!



## Focus Article #2 Universal Design Line Spacing 行間の設定

**Ryoko Sato** 佐藤 良子 (Reitaku University) ALL-SIG **Treasurer** Faculty of Foreign Languages, Reitaku University. MA (English Education). TECSOL. Research interests: Universal Design (UD) second language vocabulary acquisition, dyslexia and ADHD.

The previous article mentioned the selection of font type as one of the ways to improve the readability of teaching materials. This time, how to set the line spacing will be discussed.

Line spacing is said to have an effect on legibility. Legibility is "the visual quality of a text that is comfortable to read and is considered a necessary element for understanding long texts. It indicates how long one can read a text printed in a newspaper, magazine, book, etc. without stress" (Yamamoto, 2010).

See Figure 1 and Figure 2 for a comparison of reading. Which one do you find easier to read? I think most people would say that Figure 2 is easier to read. If the line spacing is too narrow, as shown in Figure 1, the legibility will be decreased.

*Figure 1: Line spacing = 0*

UD is "designing objects and environments so that they are easy to understand and accessible to as many people as possible from the outset, regardless of age, disability, physique, gender, nationality, etc. (Kashiwabara, 2019)" It is also sometimes expressed as "Design for All". UD was originally proposed by Ronald Mace in architectural design, but it is also reflected in products and services. Nowadays, UD is also being recognized in the field of education.

*Figure 2: Line spacing = 1.15*

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Depending on the type and size of the font and the length of the line, the appropriate line spacing is considered to be between 0.5 and 1 letter size. However, line spacing may not always be fine; too much space, as seen in Figure 3, can make reading difficult (Takahashi and Katayama, 2019).

Figure 3: Line spacing = 2.0

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The information mentioned above has recently been covered in universal design guidebooks for visual information published by printing companies and local governments and on websites of printing companies and advertising production companies. This aims to make information accessible to a wider range of people. In education, learners need to be able to access the content they learn. To increase the accessibility of teaching materials, try to pay attention to the line spacing as well as the font selection when creating teaching materials.

今回は教材の読みやすさを高める工夫の一つとして、フォントの種類を選択を取り上げました。今回は、行間の設定についてお話しします。

行間の設定は、可読性に影響すると言われています。可読性は、「快適に読める視覚的な品質で、長文を理解するために必要な要素とされている。新聞、雑誌、書物等に印刷された文章をストレスなく長時間読めるかどうか」を示します(山本, 2010)。

図1と図2を読み比べてみてください。どちらのほうがスムーズに読めますか。図2のほうが読みやすいという人が多いのではないのでしょうか。図1のように行間が狭すぎると、読みやすさは低下します。フォントの種類やサイズ、行の長さによっても異なりますが、適切な行間は0.5~1.0文字分とされています。ただし、行間が空いていればいいというわけではなく、図3のように広すぎても読みづらくなります(高橋・片山, 2019)。

上述した内容は、近年、印刷会社や自治体が発行した視覚情報のユニバーサルデザインガイドブックや印刷会社や広告制作会社のホームページ等でも取り上げられています。より多くの人が情報にアクセスできるようにするためです。教育では、学習者が学ぶ内容にアクセスできることが必要です。

教材へのアクセシビリティを高めるために、教材を作る際は、フォントの選択とあわせて、行間の設定にも留意してみてください。

## References

高橋佑磨・片山なつ (2019)『伝わるデザインの基本 増補改訂版: 良い資料を作るためのレイアウトのルール』技術評論社

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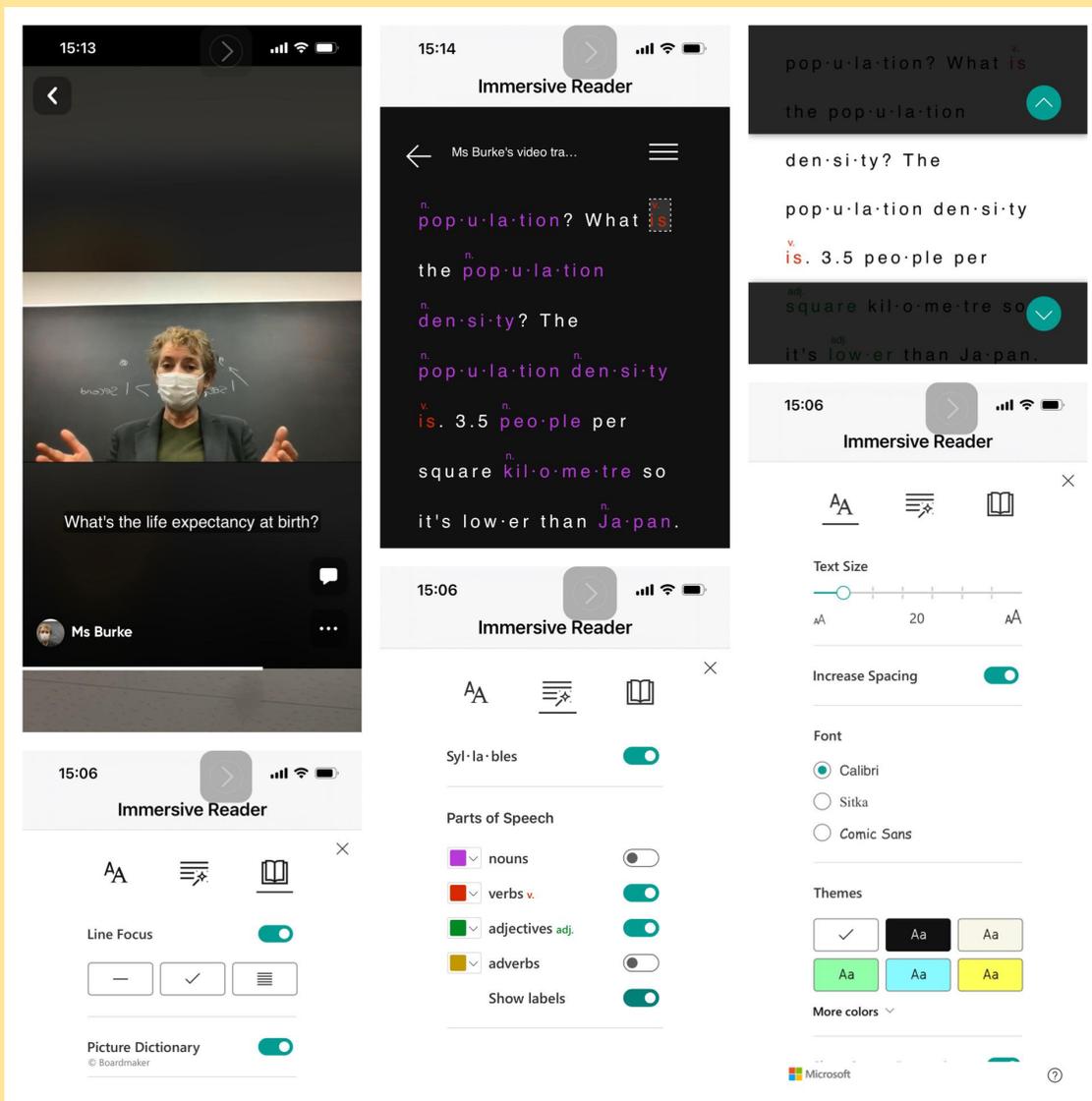
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## Immersive Reader - Using Technology to break down the print barrier Alexandra Burke

Imagine if you could not read the page in front of you. What if you wanted to change the font, size, contrast, color background or just hear it. Microsoft Learning Tools consulted with a wide range of users and developed Immersive Reader. It's incorporated into a wide range of Microsoft products. At one click you can customise how text appears on a screen, use the picture or text dictionary, break words into syllables, hide all but the critical text, highlight the "parts of speech" in the color of your choice, or read aloud to you in the voice and the speed of your choice.

I put it to work in language classes via FlipGrid which is a free video creation application by creating classrooms and topics. Students could watch videos made by me, or make their own, and in some cases, watch peer videos. It creates captions based on what the application recognises as speech. Students found the Immersive Reader function very motivating because they could practice syllabication, and focus on word stress. It's particularly good for students with reading issues because of the read aloud function. Please see figure 1 with Immersive Reader screenshots from my phone.



For students to get portable instant feedback on their pronunciation, and to be able to customise the screen, is a game changer. Dawn Kobayashi spoke at JALT 2020 about how students reported wanting speaking feedback from their teachers throughout school life but few reported getting any personal advice.. In a large classroom, individual feedback is not easy to do without careful planning. Giving any kind of a speech and getting no reaction was demotivating. But with FlipGrid, they can get feedback any time and I can periodically do video feedback for them. Using the voice capture and Immersive Reader tool within FlipGrid has been a revolution in the confidence of my students. You can watch very short educator instructions for getting started with FlipGrid here: [Getting Started FlipGrid for Educators](#)

## Recommended websites

[Color Universal Design Organization Website](#)

[Reading Barrier-free Legislation](#)

[Free Teacher Training on Dyslexia](#)

[Understood.Org: information for teachers](#)

[Designing for accessibility UK Home Office. How to use layout to suit learners.](#)

[UK Home Office accessibility posters in Japanese アクセシビリティのためのデザイン](#)

## **Your voice:**

Please share your ideas or problems [here](#) to be in future newsletters.

## **Future projects: ALL-SIG**

We have three major projects.

**Project 1** Build a SIG website which has both a repository of resources for the information to our SIG members and also create a database which allows you to share your issues and experiences with special educational needs students.

**Project 2** is to create an easy to use, bilingual TO / NOT TO DO List to create inclusive classrooms and online accessible language teaching for the use of ALL-SIG members and also for other SIGs and chapters to consider how to improve the accessibility of their events.

**Project 3** is a collaboration with Lifelong Language Learning LLL-SIG to co-host a joint-forum with LLL SIG at PanSIG 2022.

About our Logo. It's Ally, the ally of learners. This design is the work of Ryoko Sato. We like it because it feels happy, trusting and inclusive!

There are no masks in our photos as they were taken before the pandemic. Until it is safe again, you can see our smiles here.



[Please follow our website to see events and updates](#)