

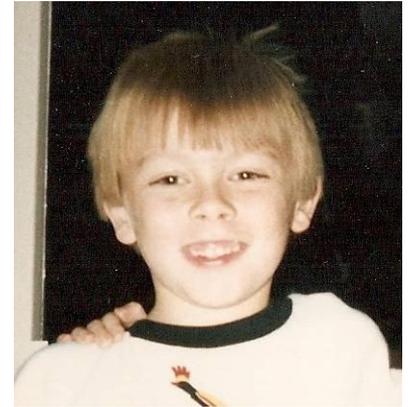
Today's **ELEMENTARY** Discussion

IDEAS WORTH SPREADING

THE ASSISTANT LANGUAGE TEACHER

(in a supporting role in Elementary Schools)

Me...



- I work in four 'rural' Elementary Schools within Tamana City.
 - There is a plan to merge my schools with two others in the next few years.
 - My smallest class is 6 pupils, my largest is 27.
 - My schools have inherited individual curriculums.
 - At Grades 5 and 6 we currently use '*Hi Friends*'.
- (Although a lot of the content is already being used in lower grade classes.)

My Elementary School Kids love English classes.... (Generally) *

- I call it '*Teaching English*' ...
... Some of my teachers call it '*Period for Integrated Study*' or '*Foreign Language Conversation*' ...
- But, for today, I will refer to it as '*Teaching English*'

Eigo wa
tanoshi
katta yo!



English is here to stay

- Standards amongst younger children are increasing.
- Teachers need to stay ahead of this curve.
- Most teachers are happy to see us, when they know we are just here to help them.
- (But we may need to subtly remind them from time to time, it is just the way it goes. Likewise, they may remind us sometimes, though often less subtly...)
- (Teachers have had teaching English added to their already long list of things to do)...



Kids confidence and ability is increasing faster, and from an earlier age.

I'm trouble?



- I am a disruption at school, even when I am trying not to be.
- It's not because I'm popular, it is because we do unfamiliar, interesting things in class.
- Students will ask teachers when English is coming.
(Repeatedly)
- This must be tough for the teacher who works with the students everyday.

But, my teacher...

- The teacher has trained, and achieved, standards required by the Japanese Education system.
- They often have amazing ideas about how to change things, but don't know where to go with them.
- We can help facilitate this, by helping, coaxing and occasionally pushing them.
- 'We don't know until we try' may be a norm back home, but here we need to convince teachers that trying new things is important, and that mistakes are ok, if we all look for positive outcomes.

“I love my time at Elementary School, but... ...It just isn't enough...”

If I visit each of my 4 Elementary Schools 13 times each year, and each class is 45 minutes long, what percentage of the recommended 35 hours High Friends teaching material and activities can I help deliver in each school?

$$13 \times 45 = 9h\ 45m,$$

$$\left(\frac{9h\ 45m}{35\ h} \right) \times 100 =$$

35%

For example, one school has the following guide in the self created curriculum...

- 1st grade – 11 hours per year
- 2nd grade – 11 hours per year
- 3rd grade – 15 hours per year
- 4th grade – 15 hours per year
- 5th grade – 35 hours per year
- 6th grade – 35 hours per year

(I have 9 hours 45 minutes)

So, I need my teachers to go ahead and teach!

But... what really happens when I am not there?

- Who teaches?
- What do they teach?
- Is it the best use of their time?
(Their time is important too)
- How can I help them teach?
(Even if I am far away...)



「しかし、私の英語はあまりよくない。」

- And, just who are these teachers with no ‘English’?
- I hear it all the time, then suddenly in a class, a perfectly formed sentence drifts across the room.
- “Is it a ghost translating between me and the students.”
- All teachers have ‘English’, they have studied it for at least six years and certainly to a higher level than Elementary School Students!



Why don't teachers trust their own English ability?

- Confidence concerns?
- Over-shadowed in class?
- Nervous about the materials?
- Worried about making mistakes?

These are all things that we can help them overcome!

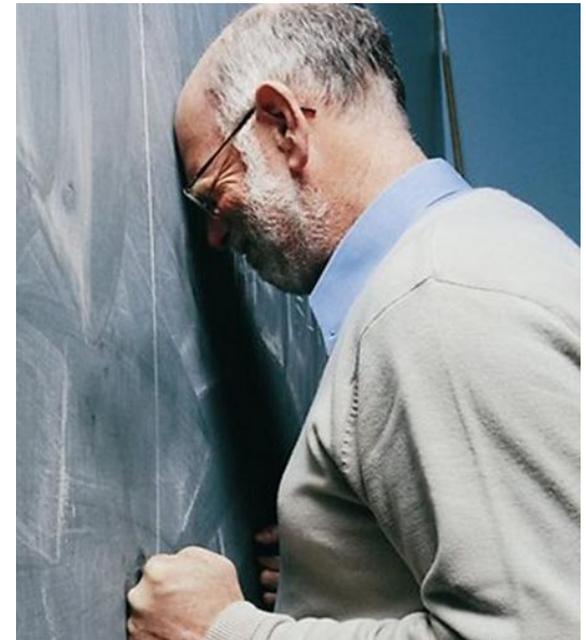
Resulting in better teaching environments for children, with or without us!

“They help me with Japanese...
...The least I can do is return the favour”

- My Japanese is weak, but I can communicate with Elementary School students....

...Just about...

- I can use English, but explaining ‘English’ is much harder.
- So, I need my teachers to work with me, especially at the lower grades.



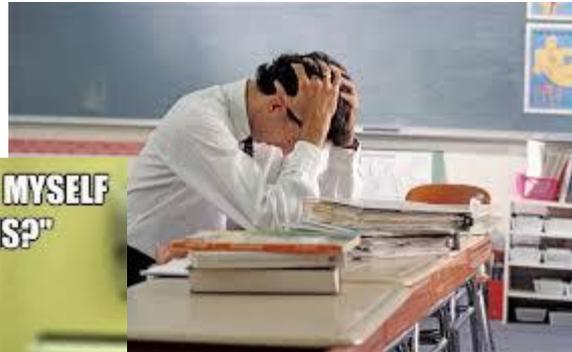
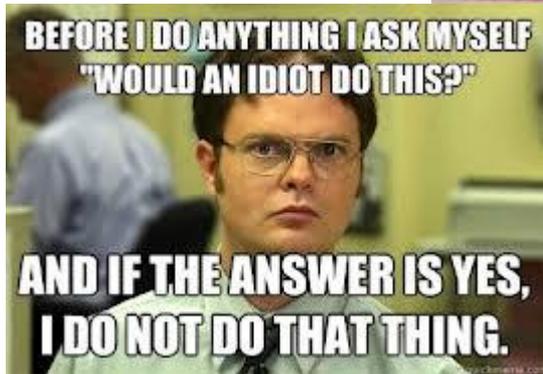
“The times are a changing...”

I perceive the role of the ALT is changing;

- English is becoming more familiar to younger children and teaching is expanding in Elementary Schools.
- I don't spend enough hours with students to teach the '*Hi Friends*' course.
- But I can help the teachers prepare lessons, plan teaching, offer advice, suggestions, ideas for delivery of the content and extra materials. I can help where ever the teacher feels they need support.

So, I think I can best serve my students by assisting the teachers in preparation and supporting them when they are teaching.

What are my sixth grade classes like?



Jen Marx Cote's vision of classroom in the year 2000 (created in 1899).

Support the Teacher

- I think that at grade five and grade six, a Home Room Teacher should be T1 and the ALT should support.

My teachers feel the same way.

- The Hi Friends materials are in place, (nearly) everything is on those CD's..
- By encouraging, building confidence and developing long term material delivery plans, we can keep the English momentum going, in our absence.

Let the teachers teach,

- We are an (expensive) addition to their tool set, it's great to let them know what we can do, but we have to appreciate that they will then use us as they want.
- They know the 'gaps' in their delivery of materials. It may be in this class, or a previous class. It may seem pointless to us, but they have probably spent a lot of time considering it.



Why do it? For the Children!

- I am thinking of the students, both while I am here NOW and AFTER I have completed my time on the JET programme.
- I don't have enough time to effectively teach the students to be good at English. (9hours 45minutes)
- I want to leave students with teachers who can, and will nurture their desire to learn English, to discover other cultures and to explore the world, that will open up for them.

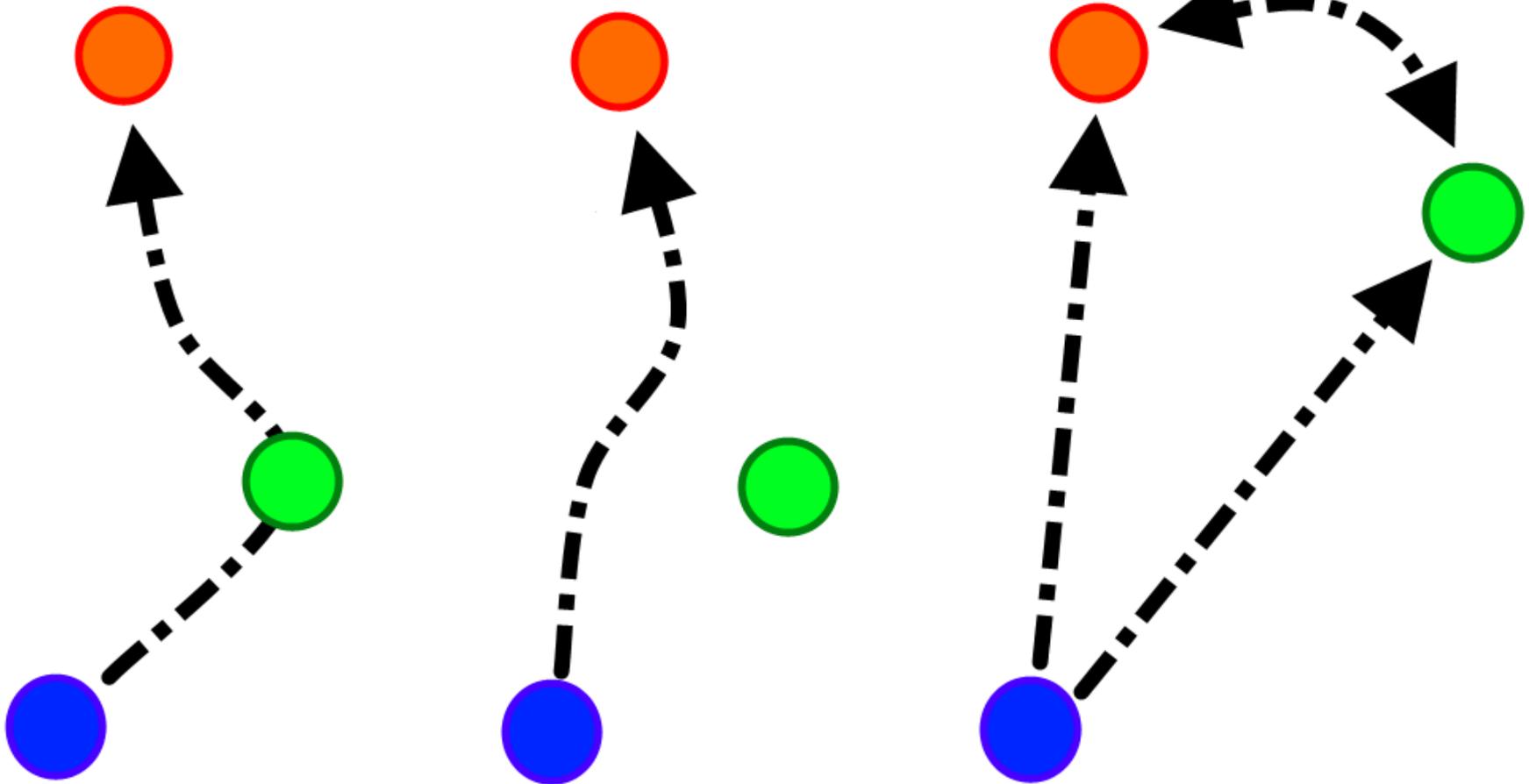
I'm an Assistant Language Teacher...

...at grades 5 and 6...

- I can change little, but I can change a little... by working together with my teachers, developing lessons together, negotiating ideas and delivering classes to meet our students needs.
- So, I think the best use of my time and abilities is to focus more on helping the teachers be the best they can, in turn, they will develop the students.
- If the teachers can teach the class... Then, I can help support the children on a one-to-one basis...



The steps to team success...



We want students to use both us and teachers as a resource for learning.

Why leave the English teaching to someone with (probably) a lower ability level than me?

1. I am not a qualified teacher, they are.
2. It's their class, they have the responsibility when the results come in.
3. They know their students better than I do, and maybe ever will.
4. I can't read the large sections of the text-books or explain the grammar in English, never mind in a second language.
5. Maybe, technically, I'm not so great at English.
6. My speaking may be 'better', if it is, the teacher will call on it.

The teacher as the 'Role Model'...

- When you get a minute, close your eyes, think back to your favourite teacher, the advice, great education or nicest supporting comment they ever gave you.
- We are here to, and to help our teachers to, become that inspiration for students, hopefully in English study...
- The most effective motivator could be seeing their Home Room Teacher communicating well with the Assistant Language Teacher inside the classroom.

How can I become a great T2 for grades five and six?

- I am not suggesting turning up at school and refusing to teach.
- It is a gradual shift of power, responsibility and leadership.
- Develop the trust in the relationship, support the teacher positively, empower the teacher to teach.
- Share ideas and let the teachers show what they can do...



Long term planning

- Prepare a course of lessons together, maybe on a BoE day. (It gets you out of the office)
- The lessons are for (you or) the teacher alone or both of you to deliver together.
- (Planning now will save time later.)
- The teacher may teach a different grade next year, but improvements now will benefit that class. If a lower grade class gets a more confident teacher it will spur their English development.

English is hard, but we can help the teachers and students through it...

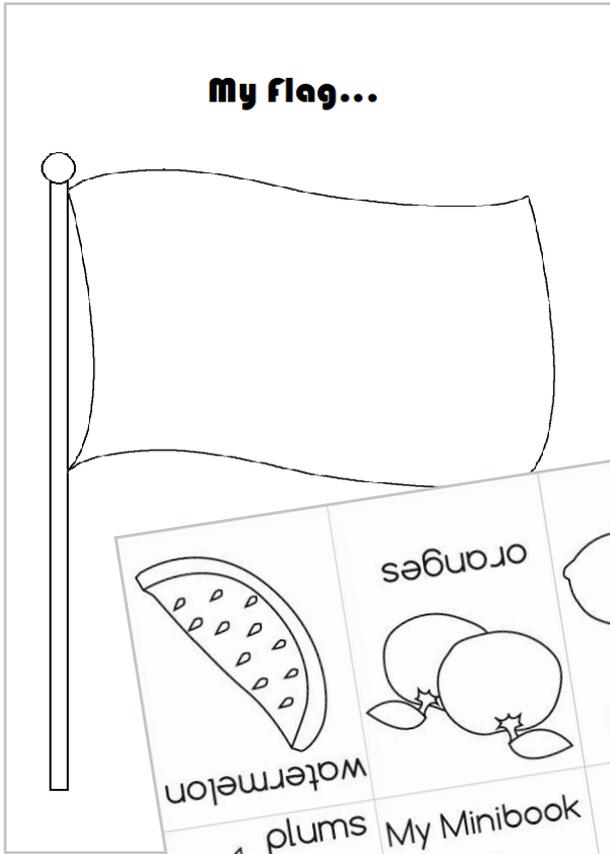
- Bring activities and ideas from that fabled place

‘beyond the books’,

to help the students understand, practice and use more English, and to prepare them for Junior High School.

- Use the internet, T.V., books, friends conversations, anything for ideas.
- We know our own schools, we can bridge gaps between them..
- Coax teacher in to leading more in class. Start with small sections in classes, then build up to whole classes, build confidence in English and Japanese use.

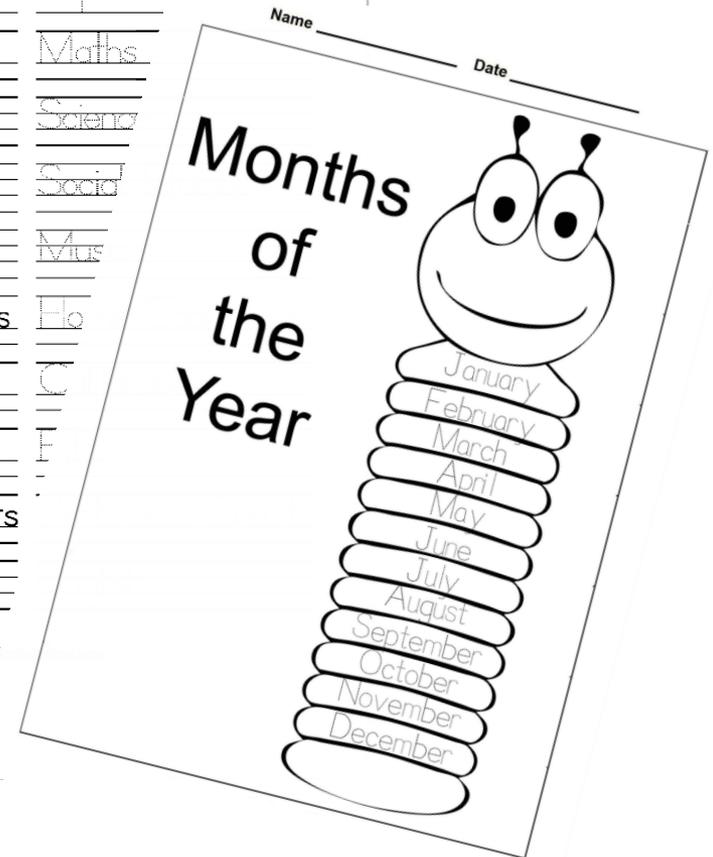
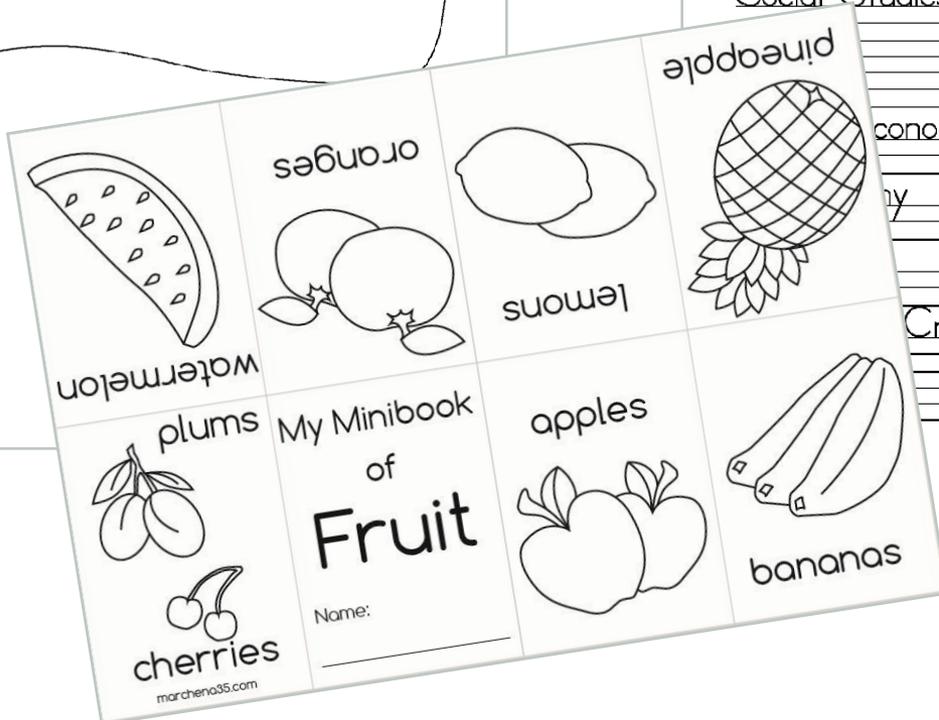
Something to have and to hold...



Name: _____ Date: _____

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Japanese | Japanese |
| Maths | Maths |
| Science | Science |
| Social Studies | Social |
| | Music |
| | History |
| | Art |
| | Physical Education |
| | Health |
| | Home Economics |
| | Technology |
| | Crafts |

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Give teachers and children ownership of English

- I always encourage using extra worksheets and making ‘stuff’ in my classes.
- (“Rainy lunchtime? Oh yeah, my ALT left us some puzzles we can do/ Let’s play that game again...”)
- ‘Material ownership’ gives practical focus to the study, but more importantly, students take things home, show people and keep talking about English.
 - The learning may be reinforced and momentum continues in our absence...

If all else fails...

...Remember the advice of Dicky Fox...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SyxWWYeXKBw>