



**Dr. Jon Clenton (Lecturer in Applied Linguistics, University of Reading) will talk about:**

***“A quasi-coordinated teaching program ... some thoughts on an alternative ELT delivery  
– and a potential project with the University of Reading”***

**Place:** Building B 1<sup>st</sup> floor Conference Room, Graduate School of Language and Culture, Toyonaka Campus, Osaka University

**Date:** 16:30-17:30, November 17, 2014

**Abstract:** It is well known that the Japanese government is determined to proceed with reform of English language instruction at Japanese universities in order to respond to external and as well as internal pressures, with these ranging from globalisation to domestic population changes (Japan revitalisation strategy, [www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/keizaisaisei/pdf/en\\_saikou\\_jpn\\_hon.pdf](http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/keizaisaisei/pdf/en_saikou_jpn_hon.pdf)). Current concern within Japan suggests that University English language provision is not responding very quickly to such pressures in its attempts to meet the immediate needs of the country, and clearly needs an immediate response (<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2014/01/05/issues/english-fluency-hopes-rest-on-an-education-overhaul/>). Any such response will overcome “barriers that can result from diversity [and these] will be crucial in the 21st century’s global society” (Osaka University President: <http://www.osaka-u.ac.jp/sp/en/worldtekijuku/index.html>).

Our initiative is designed with these pressures in mind, and is intended to provide the immediate response necessary. The aim of this research-motivated, evidence-based, project is to respond to these various demands, by designing English language provision in the best possible way within the context and reality of existing Japanese university structures. The goal is to develop processes to allow for a project that is unique, mutually beneficial, and builds upon existing expertise immediately available across two institutions best suited to respond.

Pilot testing has shown that students, who are placed in groups according to their relevant language proficiencies, achieve higher scores on standard language tests, compared to counterparts in classes where no such sub-grouping occurs. General English language classes in Japanese universities are typically grouped according to faculty, with no specific grouping by proficiency, and using generic materials and tests. Our aim is to assess current English Language provision of mixed-level English language teaching, identify opportunities for faster language improvement through grouping by proficiency, and to evaluate immediate priority areas in terms of materials and testing.

Our pilot data shows that if learners are sub-divided within a class, according to language proficiency, improvements of over 1.5 levels on CEFR or equivalent, usually anticipated over a four year period in this Japanese context, occur within six months. Working with support from high level stakeholders, our ultimate aim is to establish best practice for wider dissemination across Japan.

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