

Foreword: Vocabulary Learning and Instruction

It is with great pleasure that we introduce this inaugural issue of *Vocabulary Learning and Instruction*. The journal follows the agenda set this year at the first JALT Vocabulary Symposium: to harness the salient aspects of current knowledge in the field of lexical research and to identify future research questions, approaches and directions. Through all the contributions here runs a thread of relevance, context and application, and this commonality of research purpose lends the journal a collaborative and collegial sense. This is further enhanced by the inclusion of commentary chapters, which skilfully extract headline findings and priority areas for further study. In this way the journal reflects the belief that original and rigorous individual research activity realises its true potential when integrated into collaborative contexts, with multi-faceted approaches to shared research questions.

Much of the most influential recent research into vocabulary learning and assessment has been conducted by scholars based in Japan. The articles in this issue are representative of this region's rich strand of scholarship, and are testament to the journal's potential to tap into this energetic and purposeful research culture. On visits to Japan-based conferences and symposia we have always been impressed with the quantity and the consistently high quality of vocabulary-focussed research. Research hubs such as the JACET Vocabulary and Reading group, the CALS-Asia Swansea outreach group and the Temple University Japan Applied Linguistics group are central to this, and it is significant that the authors contributing to this journal are representative of these and other research groups. This makes for a research network which shares a clear aim: to further the understanding of lexical processing and the application of lexical assessment and acquisition tools. In contrast to this tight focus, though, studies are informed by literature which is empirically and theoretically wide-ranging. This volume includes studies informed by research into autonomy, fluency, syntax, learning strategies and multi-modality, as well as by approaches pivotal to lexical investigation such as word frequency, lexical richness and word knowledge frameworks. The individual studies are methodologically robust, and are presented in considered, proportionate terms; they offer a reliable foundation from which the commentary papers can identify common strands and mutually informative conclusions.

It is important to note that the relevance and applicability of the studies here extends far beyond the Japanese context. *Vocabulary Learning and Instruction* appeals strongly to all of us working at the interface of linguistic research, and teaching and assessment practice. We welcome the launch of the journal and are honoured to have worked with, and to continue working with, many of its contributors and editors.

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