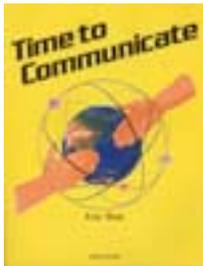


# **Time to Communicate**

## **By Eric Bray**



**Reviewed by Justine Ross, Doshisha University, Languages and Culture Department and Kyoto Sangyo University for Japan Association of Language Teachers (JALT) "The Language Teacher. Issue 28 (11) November 2004**

*Time to Communicate. Eric Bray, Nan'un-do Publishing, Tokyo 2002. pp. 69. Y 1,800. ISBN: 4-523-17391- 5.*

Time to Communicate is appropriate for university students ranging from elementary through to intermediate level. Eric Bray uses eclectic teaching approaches and methodologies, including the communicative approach, as well as developing the 4 skills of listening, speaking, writing and reading. It is a flexible textbook, in terms of how it should be taught, with the main focus being on communication. The book guides and gives students the tools needed to independently communicate with other students, regardless of their individual English proficiency level. I have used it at various universities in Kyoto and recommend it as a text worth using with your class. Each of the 13 units in Time to Communicate focuses on a different topical theme that is relevant and interesting to young adults, such as daily life, family and friends, and summer vacation plans. The textbook can be completed within one semester or spread out over two. The units in Time to Communicate begin with a model dialogue, followed by a set of communicative pair or group surveys that require students to extend their communication skills and talk to each other for a good part of the class. The result is positive. Whether students are motivated or not, shy or outgoing, at beginner or advanced level, they are encouraged to speak to each other. In addition, students need to record the main points of the conversation. This activity can be used later to award a grade for class participation, if needed, although the focus is always on speaking and listening rather than writing. The activities are straightforward. They can be followed easily without losing valuable class

time. At the end of Units 5 and 10 there is a communication test. The students must be able to make a conversation based on activities completed in previous units. The students seem to enjoy this style of performance assessment since they are able to monitor their progress in acquiring better communicative skills more accurately than with a grade from a test. Also, upon completion of each unit there is a listening and writing activity for students to self-assess their linguistic progress. The self-assessment is valuable for both students and the teacher alike. It is a written self-assessment and can be used by the teacher to isolate problem areas that students may be struggling with. The teacher can alter without difficulty the activities in the textbook so that they are appropriate for the level or size of a given class. I have used the textbook in university classes ranging from 13 to 54 students and have also adjusted the activities for higher-level students, by increasing the response time or the number of follow-up questions required in various activities. Considering that most classes are made up of students with various abilities, *Time to Communicate* is a safe choice for a class where the level is unknown, and a textbook must be ordered prior to meeting the students. *Time to Communicate* provides a good balance between practice and production. Gradually, the student becomes more confident in communicating with other class members in English about their own opinions. In my experience using this textbook, students enjoyed discussing topics that are relevant and thought provoking, regardless of their level of English. *Time to Communicate* contains sufficient guidance to inspire communication, yet its pedagogic approach is open enough not to hinder it.

*Reviewed by Reviewed by Justine Ross, Doshisha University, Languages and Culture Department and Kyoto Sangyo Un*

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