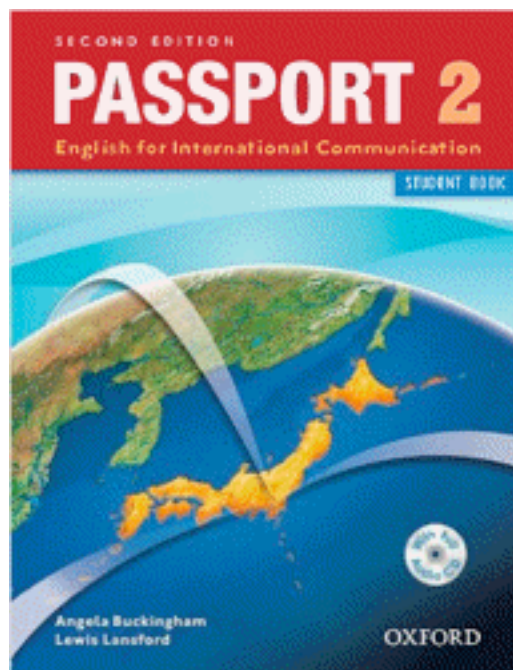


Textbook Review

Passport 2:
English for International Communication
(2nd Edition)

by Angela Buckingham and Lewis Lansford
Oxford University Press (2010)
ISBN: 978-0-19-471822-6



There are at least a dozen textbooks with study abroad themes on the Japanese ELT market. This review describes a text that I have used with some success for the last two years with undergraduates primarily at CEFR-J A1.1 to A2.1 English levels (i.e. mainly in the TOEIC 230 - 455 score range). The current edition of *Passport 2* consists of an 87-page student book, an audio CD, a 43-page workbook, as well as a comprehensive teacher's guide that also features a resource disc. Since the student book is priced at ¥2,630, I did not use the workbook, which is an additional ¥1,160.

The main text consists of twenty thematic units systematically covering a range of travel-related communicative tasks and grammar points. A skillful storyline in which six Japanese tourists visit three different countries for varying lengths of time gives this text cohesion. For example, Unit 5 describes the weekend plans of a Japanese businessman who is doing a homestay in Australia.

In addition to the regular text units, there are also four special units in which students take imaginary trips to the USA, Canada, China, and Australia. Those trips are not as detailed as the ones outlined in McMahon's *Travel Abroad Project* (2005), but they do provide engaging tasks that orient students towards overseas travel.

Each unit is a mere two pages in length and starts off with an engaging illustration and listening exercise. Model phrases are then presented and a detailed conversation follows. Each unit concludes with a dialog substitution exercise and role play. Most lessons took about sixty minutes to cover; the remaining class time was used to cover pragmatic and study abroad themes.

To gauge student reactions to this text, a questionnaire with an informed consent statement was distributed in the final classes of each academic year. This questionnaire was similar to the one described in Newfields (2015) and student responses are summarized in Appendix A. The original Japanese version is available online at [http://jalt-sa.org/PDF/Passport2\(J\).pdf](http://jalt-sa.org/PDF/Passport2(J).pdf)

Pros and Cons

Overall, student reactions to this text were varied, though positive reactions outweighed negative ones. Over half ($n=39$) of the 69 respondents considered the level of difficulty about right and almost two-thirds ($n=43$) recommended this text to at least some degree. Responses to the illustrated scenes at the start of each unit were mixed: 29% ($n=19$) considered these to be the most helpful part of the text, while one-third ($n=26$) were probably frustrated because they could not explain what was happening in those illustrations.

Personally, I feel this text is professionally designed and engaging, but somewhat superficial. Although it offers exposure to a wide range of English accents and some good examples of pragmatic repair, information pertaining to communication styles and what Arvizu and Saravia-Shore (1990) describe as "cross-cultural literacy" is not covered. Moreover, three of the four

imaginary trips are to "inner circle" English-speaking destinations. I hope that future versions of this text will introduce less consumer-oriented touristic topics and shed light on key global issues. Instead of having two North American destinations, it would also be nice to see at least one unit focus on international internship/volunteer opportunities in third world destinations.

The Bottom Line

Overall, I feel that this text is one of the stronger EFL textbooks with overseas travel themes available in Japan. Teachers with particularly low-level students might consider using the *Passport 1* text rather than this text: many of the themes are similar, but the content is simpler. I hope that future editions of this text will include more activities fostering reflective thinking about various cultures. A close look at student test results suggests that more work on basic spelling is also needed. Probably the student workbook content should be expanded to focus more on common spelling and grammar mistakes. Finally, the "Top Tips for Travel" near the end of this text could be more interactive. Despite these limitations, in my view *Passport 2* is a notch above the other EFL texts with travel themes on the market. Although I hesitate to describe this as a "study abroad text", this work does inspire at least some students to think about the diverse experiences that can occur while traveling overseas.

- Reviewed by Tim Newfields

Works Cited

Arvizu, S.F. & Saravia-Shore, M. (1990). Cross-cultural literacy: An anthropological approach to dealing with diversity. *Education and Urban Society*, (22) 4, 364-376.

McMahon, R. (2005). *Travel Abroad Project*. Tokyo: Nan'un-do.

Newfields, T. (2015). Book Review: Study Abroad! (Sanshusha, 2009). *Ryūgaku: Explorations in Study Abroad*, 8 (2) 19 - 22.

Appendix A: Translation of the Student Textbook Evaluation Form & Survey Results

Informed Consent Statement: The purpose of this feedback survey is to help make an informed decision about which classroom textbook to use next year. Completion is voluntary and will not affect your grade. All information is confidential and will be used solely to review this textbook and make a decision about its future use. You are welcome to contact me at any time if you have any questions regarding this survey. - Tim Newfields (Office Room 20906, email: *****)

Part I. Respond to the questions below by checking the number that most closely matches your opinion according to this scale:

1 = very much not so 2 = clearly not so 3 = slightly not so 4 = neutral 5 = slightly so 6 = clearly so 7 = very much so

1. How clear were the objectives of this text?

1: 3%_(n=2) 2: 3%_(n=2) 3: 7%_(n=5) 4: 17%_(n=12) 5: 33%_(n=23) 6: 25%_(n=17) 7: 12%_(n=8) Av=4.96

2. How helpful were the audio recordings accompanying this text?

1: 4%_(n=3) 2: 7%_(n=5) 3: 7%_(n=5) 4: 33%_(n=23) 5: 26%_(n=18) 6: 13%_(n=9) 7: 9%_(n=6) Av=4.43

3. To what extent did this textbook help you to improve your presentation skills?

1: 1%_(n=1) 2: 7%_(n=5) 3: 9%_(n=6) 4: 20%_(n=14) 5: 38%_(n=26) 6: 20%_(n=14) 7: 4%_(n=3) Av=4.64

4. How clear were the instructions for the various activities in this text?

1: 3%_(n=2) 2: 6%_(n=4) 3: 6%_(n=4) 4: 20%_(n=14) 5: 19%_(n=13) 6: 33%_(n=23) 7: 13%_(n=9) Av=4.99

5. To what extent would you recommend this text for students in next year's course?

1: 3%_(n=2) 2: 4%_(n=3) 3: 9%_(n=6) 4: 22%_(n=15) 5: 36%_(n=25) 6: 22%_(n=15) 7: 4%_(n=3) Av=4.67

6. How well did this textbook cover the material outlined in the online course syllabus?
 1: 1%_(n=1) 2: 1%_(n=1) 3: 1%_(n=1) 4: 14%_(n=10) 5: 13%_(n=9) 6: 13%_(n=9) 7: 10%_(n=7) Unsure: 45%_(n=31)

Part II. Agree or disagree with the following statements by checking the number that most closely matches your opinion according to this scale:

1 = strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 = slightly disagree 4 = neutral 5 = slightly agree 6 = agree 7 = strongly agree

1. The overall length of this text was appropriate: there was just enough material.
 1: 0%_(n=0) 2: 1%_(n=1) 3: 3%_(n=2) 4: 14%_(n=10) 5: 25%_(n=17) 6: 36%_(n=25) 7: 16%_(n=11) NR: $n=3$ Av=5.22
2. The cost of this text was fair.
 1: 9%_(n=6) 2: 7%_(n=5) 3: 9%_(n=6) 4: 29%_(n=20) 5: 20%_(n=14) 6: 14%_(n=10) 7: 9%_(n=6) NR: $n=2$ Av=4.14
3. The illustrations in this text were clear and helpful.
 1: 1%_(n=1) 2: 4%_(n=3) 3: 6%_(n=4) 4: 13%_(n=9) 5: 28%_(n=19) 6: 28%_(n=19) 7: 19%_(n=13) NR: $n=1$ Av=5.14
4. This difficulty level of this text was just right for me.
 1: 3%_(n=2) 2: 3%_(n=2) 3: 10%_(n=7) 4: 23%_(n=16) 5: 22%_(n=15) 6: 29%_(n=20) 7: 6%_(n=4) NR: $n=3$ Av=4.55
5. My interest in overseas travel has changed as a result of this text.
 1: 9%_(n=6) 2: 7%_(n=5) 3: 13%_(n=9) 4: 26%_(n=18) 5: 19%_(n=13) 6: 12%_(n=8) 7: 9%_(n=6) NR: $n=4$ Av=3.91

Part III.

1. Which of the units in this text were **most** helpful for you? (check a maximum of 3)
 #1: _(n=9) #2: _(n=3) #3: _(n=7) #4: _(n=8) #5: _(n=2) #6: _(n=10) #7: _(n=5) #8: _(n=2) #9: _(n=3) #10: _(n=8)
 #11: _(n=6) #12: _(n=4) #13: _(n=7) #14: _(n=9) #15: _(n=11) #16: _(n=4) #17: _(n=12) #18: _(n=5) #19: _(n=10) #20: _(n=4) NR: $n=3$
2. Which of the units in this text were **least** helpful for you? (check a maximum of 3)
 #1: _(n=9) #2: _(n=5) #3: _(n=6) #4: _(n=9) #5: _(n=5) #6: _(n=2) #7: _(n=5) #8: _(n=3) #9: _(n=5) #10: _(n=3)
 #11: _(n=3) #12: _(n=5) #13: _(n=8) #14: _(n=5) #15: _(n=2) #16: _(n=6) #17: _(n=1) #18: _(n=6) #19: _(n=1) #20: _(n=2) NR: $n=5$
3. Which of the following parts of each unit were **most** helpful for you? (check a maximum of 3)
 Intro Illustration: _(n=19) Listening: _(n=17) Look & Learn: _(n=18) Conversation: _(n=22) Over to You! : _(n=3)
 Activity: _(n=10) Destinations: USA: _(n=4) Canada: _(n=3) China: _(n=7) Australia: _(n=2) NR: $n=1$
4. Which of the following parts of each unit were **least** helpful for you? (check a maximum of 3)
 Intro Illustration: _(n=26) Listening: _(n=9) Look & Learn: _(n=5) Conversation: _(n=14) Over to You! : _(n=3)
 Activity: _(n=7) Destinations : USA: _(n=4) Canada: _(n=1) China: _(n=2) Australia: _(n=0) NR: $n=1$

Supplemental Question for the 2015-2016 Survey Respondents (n=30):

"What do you plan to do with this text after this course is finished?"

Sell it: _(n=0) Keep it for self-study: _(n=12) Give to a friend: _(n=6) Discard it: _(n=7) NR: $n=5$

Thanks for your feedback.

All comments will remain anonymous and will not influence your grades in any way.

Ver. 1.5 (Jan. 28, 2016 Revision)