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Welcome to the Fall 2014 issue of Learning Learning 『学習の学習』, the Learner Development SIG’s (LD SIG) biannual online newsletter! We hope you enjoy reading it, as the leaves change colour and the year marches steadily on to winter, and perhaps one of the biggest events in our conference calendar—the JALT National conference—which is happening in a couple of weeks.

Firstly, the SIG coordinators, Alison Stewart and Fumiko Murase, report on the latest SIG developments. As most of these have been happening behind the scenes, this is a must read. Next, we have reports from local get-togethers in Kansai, Hiroshima, and Tokyo.

In the “Members’ Voices” section, the following new SIG members: Anita Aden, Adrianne Verla, Mikio Iguchi and Vick L. Ssali; contribute their stories of learner development and report on various activities they have used to promote their learners’ development, while reflecting on the journeys they took to becoming a member.

After these reports, one of our long standing members, Jo Mynard, examines, in the feature article, the various ways in which institutions can promote foreign language motivation outside of class. In this easily accessible article she offers twelve ways to promote motivation, which are helpful not only to those who are thinking about setting a self access centre, but also to those already running one.

Which brings us to the Looking back section, where Joe Falout and Alison Stewart, in a lively discussion, report and reflect on their experience attending the Space, Place and Autonomy in Language Learning symposium that was convened by Terry Lamb and Garold Murray at the AILA conference in August this year. As they report and reflect, they explore the cutting edge research into the various effects that Space and Place have on our learners’ lives, which has implications not only for how we design the spaces that the learner inhabits during their contact with us, but also how we can use our knowledge of these concepts to promote their autonomy both in and outside of these spaces.

Speaking of spaces, it is very fitting that the Looking Forward section contains a preview of the LDSIG’s exciting forum “Learner Development Across Borders”, that will be happening from 1:35-3:05 on the Sunday of the JALT National Conference, November 23, in the Convention Hall 300. The forum is definitely a must see as 22 LDSIG members in 17 interactive presentations focus on learner development taking place across various physical, theoretical, and institutional borders.

Many thanks to all the people behind the scenes that made this issue possible: Mathew Porter and Chika Hayashi for helping to edit it; Monika Szirmai for putting the issue together; Andy Barfield for his outstanding work as Members’ voices editor; Fumiko Murase, for helping with the translation of the LDSIG news at the last minute; and Mayumi Abe and the rest of the treasury team for working tirelessly to compile the SIGs financial report; not forgetting of course Hugh Nicoll for the work of uploading this issue to the LD SIG website.

Enjoy the issue!

James Underwood, Learning Learning Coordinator
Greetings LD SIG members

As we write this in the last week of October, it may seem that the last few months since the last issue of Learning Learning have been relatively quiet. But like ducks swimming along a river, there’s been a lot of vigorous paddling going on under the surface that is taking us to some very exciting destinations.

The JALT Conference is the major event of the LD SIG year, as always, and we look forward to seeing many SIG members at our Annual General Meeting (Sunday, 23rd November, 11.30am-12.15pm) when we’ll be welcoming new committee members and discussing plans for the coming year. In addition, following on from two very successful LD SIG Forums at the PanSIG conference in May and the JALTCALL conference in June, we are anticipating another invigorating Forum, (Sunday, 23rd November, 1.35pm-3.05pm), which will feature 17 interactive presentations and an opportunity to discuss these and your own practices and ideas. Another reason to come to the LD SIG Forum is to applaud the recipients of the LD SIG’s JALT2014 grants. Congratulations to Joel Laurier, Adrianne Verla, and Yoko Sakurai. We hope that many SIG members will have the chance to meet them during the conference, and we look forward to reading their reports on the JALT conference in Learning Learning next year.

One other important note for your conference diaries: a party (Saturday, 22nd November, from 8pm). The SIG is taking over an Italian restaurant just a few minutes walk away from the conference venue. It’s a good chance to relax and let our hair down (if we have any).

Apart from the JALT conference, we are anticipating some other great events, the culmination of months—in some cases years—of concerted effort and collaboration. One is a new website for the bilingual publication of a collection of essays written by children from Rikuzentakata, one of the towns destroyed in the tsunami of 3.11. More than a hundred people have been involved in this project as translators and proofreaders and Sayuri...
Hasegawa, Mathew Porter, and Caroline Ross have done sterling work in bringing this project to fruition. For those of you who will be at JALT on Monday 24th, you can find out more at a Forum (9.15am-10.45am) in which some of the participants, including one of the original junior high school authors, will be talking about their contributions to the project.

Two more publications are also due to come out in the next two months: one is Learner Development Working Papers: Different Cases, Different Interests, edited by Andy Barfield and Aiko Minematsu, an anthology of papers that began life as LD SIG Forum presentations at JALT2012. The papers have developed through dialogue and commentary from colleagues and friends offering insider and outsider views on the subject, resulting in a type of multivocal, multiperspective writing that sets a precedent for critical and inclusive academic publication. A second publication is another anthology, this time originating in the Tokyo get-together meetings, Collaborative Learning in Learner Development, edited by Tim Ashwell, Masuko Miyahara, Steve Paydon, and Alison Stewart. This is a collection of action research studies on different aspects of collaborative learning, and all stages in the production of this book, from choosing the title to the development of the writing, have aimed at being as collaborative as possible. LD Working Papers will be published online on a dedicated website and Collaborative Learning in LD will appear first as an e-book; both books will also be published in limited editions of paper copies for those who want to display it on their bookshelves or give it to their colleagues and friends.

The Tokyo get-together informal mini-conference is the last big event that we want to mention. Taking place at Otsuma Women’s University on December 14th, this is a chance for Tokyo get-together regulars and others to present the ideas and practices that they have been working on this year. One of the main features of this event is the inclusion of students: either presenting with their teachers or with each other. Needless to say, this event will also be followed by a party in a nearby restaurant.

We want to say thank you to all the people who have worked so hard on all these projects. We also want to thank the committee members who have volunteered their time and energy to making sure the SIG runs smoothly, and especially the committee members who are stepping down this year: Ken Ikeda and Mike Nix (Web Development), Stacey Vye and Martin Mullen (Grants), Sayuri Hasegawa and Mayumi Takizawa (Publicity translation and Outreach), and Gretchen Clark and Matthew Coomber (Membership). This means of course that we have many spaces to fill in the committee. If you’re interested, don’t hesitate: Come and join us.

Alison Stewart & Fumiko Murase
LD SIG Co-coordinators 2014

私たちがこれを執筆しているのは10月の最終週ですが、「学習の学習」前号の発行からこれまで数ヶ月の間、比較的静かであったように思われることがあります。しかし、川を泳ぐカルモ達のように、水面下では多くの精力的な活動がありました。
例年の通り、JALT全国大会は学習者ディベロプメント研究部会（LD SIG）にとって重要なイベントです。11月23日（日）の年次総会（11:30-12:15）では、新たな役員を迎え、来年に向けての計画を話し合います。多くのSIG会員の皆様にお会いすることを楽しみにしております。さらに、同日には、LD SIGフォーラム（13:35-15:05）も開催されます。盛況であった5月のPanSIG大会と6月のJALT CALL大会でのフォーラムに続き、今回も活気のあるフォーラムとなることを期待しています。17ものインタラクティブな発表に加え、皆様ご自身の実践やアイデアについて話し合う機会があります。また、このフォーラムは、LD SIGのJALT2014大会参加助成金の受賞者を称える場でもあります。今年の受賞者となったJoel Laurier、Adrienne Verla、Yoko Sakuraiの3名にはお祝い申し上げます。大会開催中に多くのSIG会員の皆様が彼ら3名と直接会う機会を得られますよう願うとともに、彼らによるJALT2014大会の参加レポートを来年の『学習の学習』で拝見することを楽しみにしております。もう一つの重要なイベントはパーティーです。11月22日（土）20:00より、学会会場から徒歩数分のところにあるイタリアンレストランにて開催いたします。

JALT全国大会以外にも、これまで数ヶ月間あるいは数年間－及ぶ努力とコラボレーションの積み重ねによる、素晴らしいイベントが控えています。その一つ目は、3.11の津波被害に遭った地域の一つ、陸前高田市の子供たちによって書かれた作文集を日英バイリンガルで出版する新しいウェブサイトです。このプロジェクトには総勢100名以上の人々が翻訳者や校正者として参加して下さいましたが、特にSayuri Hasegawa、Mathew Porter、Caroline Rossの3名が素晴らしい仕事をして下さいました。JALT全国大会では、11月24日（月）にLD SIGのアウトリーチ活動についてのフォーラム（9:15-10:45）も開催されますので是非ご参加下さい。作文を書いた（当時の）中学生の一人もお招きして、フォーラム参加者達がこの翻訳プロジェクトについて話す予定です。

さらに2点の論文集がこれから2ヶ月の間に出版される予定です。一つ目は、Learner Development Working Papers: Different Cases, Different Interests（Andy Barfield & Aiko Minematsu編）で、これはJALT2012大会でのLD SIGフォーラムから始まった論文集です。これらの論文は、同僚や友人とのダイアログと批評を通して執筆され、その結果、批判的かつ包括的な学術的出版物の先例となるような、多くの声や視点を反映したものとなっています。二つ目は、東京get-togetherの活動を通して生まれた論文集Collaborative Learning in Learner Development（Tim Ashwell, Masuko Miyahara, Steve Paydon, & Alison Stewart編）です。これは協働学習のさまざまな側面についてのアクションリサーチを集めたもので、タイ
Would you like to Join the Learning Learning Publications team?

Now that we produce *Learning Learning* as a team, we are always looking for new members to join. Membership in the team is open to everyone regardless of publication or teaching experience, teaching context, or nationality. The only stipulation is that you can agree to hold the position for at least a year (meaning that you will help with next year’s Spring issue 22(1) and Fall issue 22(2)).

Currently, we are looking for people who are interested in filling these positions:

- **LD SIG Grant Awardees Essay coordinator:** liaises with the grant awardees to encourage and help them to publish their research essays in *Learning Learning*.

- **Review coordinator:** encourages potential contributors to send in reviews (of books, journal articles, materials or web resources relating to learner development) and works with them to publish their reviews in *Learning Learning*.

- **Looking Back report coordinator:** encourages contributors to report on past events related to learner development (which can take the form of conferences, forums, and workshops, both traditional and online) and works with them to publish their reports in *Learning Learning*.

If you are interested in any of these positions and would like to know more about them, please send me an email;

James Underwood,
*Learning Learning* coordinator,
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We’ve had six get-togethers in 2014 until now, with one more to come in December, which will feature the Creating Community: Learning Together informal conference (URL http://ld-sig.org/blog/creating-community-learning-together/), a relaxing Sunday afternoon event with students and teachers taking part and presenting. This provides a new focus to the end of the year for Tokyo get-togethers, and we’re all excited about how things will go in December.

The 2014 get-togethers have been collaboratively written up using Google Docs each time, where all the participants have been invited to contribute to the write-up in the week immediately after a get-together. For more details, please see <http://tokyogettogethers.blogspot.jp/>

This year, we’ve had an average of around 15 people taking part each time (January, February, April, May, June, & September), with September the largest gathering yet:
* January: 13 participants (9 apologies)
* February: 14 participants (7 apologies)
* April: 14 participants (15 apologies)
* May: 17 participants (9 apologies)
* June: 15 participants (11 apologies)
* September: 19 participants (6 apologies).

One point that has been really intriguing about participation this year is that 38 different people took part in the get-togethers from January through to September. Of these, just a little more than half have participated in one or two get-togethers in 2014, and just under half have taken part in three get-togethers or more so far:
* 1 person has taken part six times
* 2 people have taken part five times
* 3 people have taken part four times
* 10 people have taken part three times
* 9 people have taken part twice
* 13 people have taken part once.

So, the get-togethers this year have had a shifting sense of identity from one month to the next. This has led us to consider how to create better continuity and involvement from one get-together to another, because without this it’s difficult to explore issues in depth together over time.

At the September get-together, we reported back to the whole group on the patterns of participation in the get-togethers this year. We briefly talked about reducing the number of get-togethers for 2015 and trying to
synchronize more with the rhythm of the school year. That might mean, for example, holding get-togethers in April, May, June, September or October (depending on when the JALT conference takes place), with an informal afternoon conference in December 2015, to provide a space for teachers and students to share their work and research publicly at the end of the calendar year.

These changes for 2015 are still just a suggestion at this point. To encourage more discussion and get further feedback, we hope to run these ideas past Tokyo area LD members once the October 19 deadline for proposals for *Creating Community: Learning Together* has passed. We are looking forward to hearing SIG members’ views and to reporting in further detail for the LD SIG AGM at JALT2014.

LD Get-together Report: Kansai
Brandon Kramer

The Kansai Chapter needs your help! Heading into 2015 we are looking for someone who can step up and become the Kansai Get-Together Coordinator, bringing everyone together for friendship, networking, and festivities! It’s a great way to meet new people and help others build lasting connections in the Kansai community.

2014 has been a bit of a transitional period for the Kansai Chapter. Although we expect good representation from our members at the JALT2014 National Conference, the Kansai chapter has not been able to meet together this year, something which we hope to turn around heading into 2015!

If you are interested in taking on the Get-Together Coordinator position, or have any ideas for events and activities, please mail them our way. We are looking forward to seeing you in Tsukuba at the JALT2014 Conference!

Tokyo Sky Tree
(http://ameblo.jp/tokyoskytree777/)

Osaka Prefectural Emblem
A cluster of gourds, or sennari byotan, was the crest used by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598), the warrior who unified Japan and built Osaka Castle. It has been stylized as Osaka’s prefectural emblem, the ‘O’ of Osaka linking with the three circles above it that symbolize hope, prosperity and harmony. This emblem was officially adopted on the 100th anniversary of Osaka Prefecture (June 21, 1968).
Autumn in Miyajima

2014 Hiroshima Get-together Report
Jim Ronald

Hiroshima’s LD Get-togethers in theory meet every month, and typically there are half a dozen of us.

In July there were just three and since then we haven’t met up. Wondering how much continuing interest there is in continuing the get-togethers, I surveyed regular—and not so regular—attendees. There was a very encouraging response, both in numbers and in enthusiasm for the get-togethers, and we will be starting up again after our long summer-autumn break very soon. In fact, as you read this, I hope we will already have met up and be glad that our group is up and running again.

We still do need more than one person basically running the get-together—not that I don’t enjoy it—I do, of course!—but when things get busy, I may forget to plan the next get-together, or wouldn’t have time to join it myself. As for what we do, one participant’s description fits the reality of what we do: “brainstorming sessions of research/teaching ideas. sharing resources, reading suggestions, etc.”, while another reminds us that in some ways our purpose is to supplement, or complement, what our wonderful Hiroshima JALT chapter meetings do: “Unlike JALT Hiroshima monthly meetings, the LD get-together is a more friendly and relaxing small society, so participants can express their feelings, opinions, complaints about teaching and learning more freely. From their casual conversation, I learn a lot of small things. The accumulation of these small informations are more valuable to me than formal academic ones. I hope this get-together will create mutual understanding between teachers and learners.” To be honest, I don’t think we do a lot of complaining, but as well as everything else it is, our get-togethers are a place to let off steam and appreciate each other as a community of teachers and learners.
LD SIG Members' Voices

LD SIG Members' Voices offers spaces for SIG members to introduce themselves to other members of the SIG in a variety of accessible and personalised text formats and lengths:

- a short personal profile of yourself as a learner and teacher (100-200 words or so)
- a short critical reflection on your history as a (language) learner at (a) particular stage(s) in your life (around 200-500 words)
- a story of your ongoing interest in, and engagement with, particular learner development (and/or learner autonomy) issues (around 500-800 words)
- a short profile of your learner development research interests and how you hope to develop your research (around 500-800 words)
- a short profile of your working context and the focus on learner development that a particular institution where you work takes and/or is trying to develop (about 800-1200 words)
- some other piece of writing that you would like to contribute and that is related to learner development.

Many thanks to the following SIG members—all new members of the Learner Development SIG from March 2014 to July 2014—for sharing their voices with readers of Learning Learning. We hope other SIG members will also contribute their voice to the next issue of Learning Learning. If you are interested in doing so, please contact the incoming Members' Voices coordinator, James Underwood, at <jamesmichaelunderwood@gmail.com>.

“L D S I Gメンバーの声”は、S I G会員の皆様が他会員の皆さんに向けて多様な形式・文体・長さで、ご自身の考えや活動をご紹介していただくためのスペースです。例えば、以下の様々な声を歓迎しています:

- ご自身の学習者および教育者としてのプロフィールを短く紹介したもの。（約100-200語）
- ご自身の（語学）学習者としての経験で、特定の場における逸話を批判的に考察したもの。（約200-500語）
- ご自身が現在取り組まれている、もしくは関心を寄せていることで特に学習者ディベロップメント（または学習者の自律）に関する問題についてのもの。（約500-800語）
- 学習者ディベロップメントに関するご自身の研究についての短い概要と、今後どのようにその研究を展開していきたいと考えているか紹介するもの。（約500-800語）
- ご自身の勤務環境の短い概要と、勤務される特定機関で学習者ディベロップメントに関し注目している、または取り組もうとしていることについて。（約800-1200語）
- その他、学習者ディベロップメントに関する内容のもの。

2014年度下半期に学習者ディベロップメント研究部会に新たに参加され、今号で『学習の学習』の読者の皆様と様々な声を共有いただくSIG会員の皆様に、感謝申し上げます。

Newsletter of the JALT Learner Development SIG <ld-sig.org/>
Finding ways to SMILE as a learner and teacher

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Have you ever heard the expression that “the shortest distance between two people is a smile?” Sometimes I use pictures to depict this phrase as a warm-up activity. Students guess the words that match the pictures that I draw on the board. Following the decoding of the pictures, I then ask students, “Does a smile make you feel happy?” Quickly, students smile back at me and say “yes”.

As an EFL teacher for the last 14 years, I have enjoyed a lot of smiles. I appreciate the moments that transcend language and create a connection between people that is meaningful. Meeting new students each semester is one reason I enjoy being a teacher. The new season of learning new names and information about students is part of the cycle of this profession that challenges me to approach each term with a smile. My meaning of smile is more than just a physical facial feature of friendliness. It is an approach to life learning that I have used a lot since I arrived in Japan in 2009.

Building a positive communication bridge between people often begins with a nonverbal gesture. Breaking through the communication barrier may depend on how safe a student feels in class. It is difficult to share opinions when the learner is hindered by a lack of confidence in the language. I know this firsthand, for I did not know many Japanese words before I moved to the Kansai area. I needed a lot of SMILES to get me through those first years.

That is why I have created an acronym that reminds me and my students to SMILE when we meet each other.

The “S” stands for ‘Start with a question’, which can be as basic as ‘How are you?’ or ‘What did you do last night?’ To begin with a question creates an opportunity to know someone.

The “M” means ‘Make mistakes’, which reflects an attitude of not worrying about grammatical errors or pronunciation problems. When speaking, it is important to relax and not aspire to be 100% perfect. The freedom to make mistakes usually leads to more learning, not less.

The next letter of “I” is part of the friendship factor of using language. “I” means to ‘Increase your interest in people around you’. It is not easy to meet new people, especially for shy or reserved students, so this step is sometimes the hardest one. Increasing an awareness of others and asking them to share about themselves is a skill that many students have not practiced outside of their usual bubble of family and friends.

The next letter of “L” is a memory recall skill that I learned years ago. “L” is to ‘Listen and repeat’. When I hear a new name or something that I want to confirm in the conversation, I will repeat it. To repeat a person’s name in the conversation makes him or her unconsciously feel special. The personalized touch of remembering someone’s name can really make a difference in building a positive learning environment in a classroom.
The final letter “E” is really the most important of them all, for if you ‘Enjoy your life’, then smiling can occur naturally. Students realize that they can smile and ask questions that are natural and reflect their personal interests. That creates an opportunity to build a new friendship.

Throughout the semester, I have observed that the reminder to ‘smile’ can be used to overcome shyness and perfectionism. Students become relaxed as they create questions for discussion and add follow-up comments to further the conversation with each other. It is my hope that my students will enjoy a ‘smile’ with thousands of people throughout their lives.

Every conversation begins with a SMILE:

S: Start with a question
M: Make mistakes
I: Increase your interest in people around you
L: Listen and repeat
E: Enjoy your life

Implementing Group Presentations to Foster Autonomy

Adriane Verla, Tokyo
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Motivating students to take control of their own learning has always been at the forefront of my mind as a teacher. Working for nine years with junior and senior high school students in Japan, I found one of the most rewarding aspects of teaching to be when students would take control and responsibility for their own learning and find ways to include English in their daily lives. Some examples of English integrated into my students’ daily lives include listening to music with English lyrics as well as watching TED videos and foreign English dramas. By doing so, they generally became more motivated to use English, and their English skills usually ended up expanding greatly.

In April, I left teaching at the secondary level and began working part time at two universities. In many ways I slid into teaching at both universities with little trouble, however I did face a few unexpected challenges at one. One challenge was the required spring English course for first-year non-English majors, made more difficult because it was my first time to teach English to students who were grouped together with not only varying levels of spoken and written English ability but also vastly different attitudes towards English. My previous school had placed a strong emphasis on English education, especially regarding presentation, discussion and writing skills. Even students who didn’t necessarily like English were motivated to study and learn in order to get high scores on university entrance examinations. However, as the entrance exams were a thing of the past to my first-year university students, now I found my classroom to be filled with a wide spectrum of students, many of whom outwardly appeared to have little to no interest in English. Varying interest levels was not the only challenge I found myself facing; students’ levels also varied greatly. While most students lacked the confidence to speak English, their written English ability was also spread across a wide spectrum of differing
abilities. While some students could write a sentence using conjunctions, I also had students who didn’t understand what a subject was or why every sentence needed a verb.

As the semester progressed, I taught the required textbook material and found myself becoming a more confident teacher than before as far as explaining English grammar was concerned. In my previous job, grammar was the responsibility of the Japanese English teachers. Now, I was the sole teacher responsible for explaining grammar rules in a way that the students could understand and apply in practice. In the beginning what seemed like straightforward and easy explanations to me often left certain students more confused. I had wrongly assumed that my students would understand the basic parts of an English sentence. However, despite my best efforts to help my students learn the required material, I found that due to the curriculum requirements and time constraints, there was no time to help them find a way to connect with English. They were just learning the material they needed to pass the speaking and writing exams, but they were not connecting with English on a personal level. It was just a class they had to sit through to get credit, they did not see how what they were learning in the classroom could be applied to interests they have outside of the classroom. I doubt that many of the students even remembered what we studied back in April. I couldn’t see how what they were learning was making any long term impact on their lives.

While I found the experience to be frustrating, it also provided me with a strong desire to make a change. I began brainstorming and bouncing ideas off fellow colleagues at that university as well as other institutions. I desired to find a way to help my students not only find English useful, but also help them begin their own journeys as autonomous learners. I strongly felt that the students needed to be provided with an opportunity to use English not for examination purposes but as a means of self-expression. If I could just come up with a project that students could take ownership of I felt that they would see that English is so much more than just grammar patterns to be memorized and regurgitated onto a piece of exam paper.

Towards the conclusion of the spring semester, I proposed a plan to other teachers in the department to incorporate a semester-long small-group project into the fall English class. The plan is to have students in pairs or small groups plan and create a presentation for a specific audience relating to a day of sightseeing in Tokyo. I had used a similar project with my high-school students in the past and found it to have worked successfully then. With some changes to the focus and delivery, I believe my university students will enjoy the challenge of producing a presentation about their perfect day in Tokyo. The project is still in the developing stages, and I hope it will become an excellent example of action research based on current students’ needs. As this project will only be carried out with my classes now, if proven successful, I believe it has the potential to be implemented into the wider curriculum in the future. I hope also that, by devoting small increments of time in class towards the project, even the lower level students will be able to give a presentation that they can be
proud of by the end of the semester. Also, as many students are living in the greater Tokyo area, they should be able to incorporate their own interests and beliefs into the project and not see English as a useless subject only needed to get credits towards graduation, but as a tool in which they can express themselves. Through doing this project, I believe that the students will begin to feel more connected to English and hopefully be able to use the project as a springboard to become more interested and connected to English.

Since switching not only institutions but also academic levels, it has been interesting to see some of the differences between secondary and tertiary education in Japan. While I knew there would be differences between student levels and motivation, I didn’t expect that many of my students would feel so disconnected with English. For me the greatest challenge has truly been to try and help my students find a connection with English. In doing so, I have had to negotiate through my own beliefs as a language learner, researcher and teacher to try and create opportunities to let my students engage with English beyond the textbook. Through the implementation and trial of the Tokyo project, I hope to better understand my students’ needs and interests and use the project to help them connect with English beyond the classroom. I would be very interested in hearing from other Learner Development SIG members about similar projects they have done in the past or are considering to implement in the future.

When in Rome, do as the Romans do?
Issues of identity and integration living abroad

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I teach English classes such as CALL, TOEIC and English presentation to engineering students at my institution. In 2012 I received a doctoral degree (Ed.D. in Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching) from The University of Warwick, for which I conducted research on identity and L2 motivation under Ema Ushioda and on intercultural communication under Helen Spencer-Oatey’s supervision.

As I reflect on my interest in learner development, I notice that it goes back to 2007 when I began my doctoral research in England. I often wondered why my comfort zone expanded, contracted, and influenced my English proficiency depending on the people I interacted with. I thought it might have been influenced by my belief or perception of the culture or ethnicity of the target language (TL) speakers, or perhaps by my own identity.

My primary research interest is integrative motivation, which refers to “a willingness to be like valued members of the language community” (Gardner & Lambert, 1959, p. 271, original italics). This concept has become recently better known as ‘integrativeness’, which is understood as “a
genuine interest in learning the second language in order to come closer to the other language community” (Gardner, 2001, p.5). Schumann (1986, p. 379) developed the ‘acculturation model’ in which he claimed that “the learner will acquire the second language only to the degree that he acculturates”, based on the social and psychological distance between learners and TL speakers. Theories on integrativeness and the acculturation model are congruent in that they both argue that our second language (L2) acquisition hinges on our social-psychological attitudes towards the TL community.

In my doctoral research I also explored the issues of identity. I thought that people’s identity might be influenced by their interaction with people from the TL community or people from their own heritage culture, which in turn might influence how they view the L2. Thus, in the research that I did, I set out to explore the meanings of integrativeness, acculturation, and identity for Japanese people in the UK and look at how such meanings changed over time. What motivated me to do such research was mostly attributable to my personal interest in these topics because I have lived in five different nations, and I have often questioned my identity as a Japanese. This triggered me to explore and pursue convincing academic theories.

Regarding my research paradigm, I was prompted to do quantitative research in my first year of doctoral research, due to my interest in cognitivist second language acquisition (SLA) theories shaping the concept of integrativeness. However, my encounter with Ema Ushioda and her work, and the emerging and convincing theories that I came across on L2 motivation and identity from a social constructivist perspective, gradually shifted my paradigmatic orientation. I planned to do a mixed methods research halfway through, but I completely changed to a pure qualitative research approach at the end of the first year!

I also became interested in intercultural communication from the initial stage of my research, but I was not aware of any separation between intercultural communication and SLA, which for me was my single ‘target community’. It was not until Helen Spencer-Oatey pointed out that my research has potential uniqueness in ‘integrating’ the two separate fields that I started to realise how separated they were, and also realised my ‘hybridised identity’ in being a part of and apart from them. To be honest, I have been surprised throughout the overall process of doing my research that these two fields still continue to be largely separate. As far as I am aware, only Yashima (2002, 2004) and Jackson (2008) have made cross-references from SLA to intercultural communication.

However, I became all the more convinced that findings from both camps have mutual benefit. For instance, both fields have been treating identity as the centre of attention. Also, I believe that cognitivist concepts such as integrativeness that derived from SLA research need to be examined within the framework of social integration with host communities, in relation to which numerous intercultural communication studies have produced useful and practical insights. In the future, adopting a new research approach such as conversation analysis could also benefit both fields in
studying the identities of people who are in intercultural settings.

I would like to end my self-introduction by expressing my gratitude to Ken Ikeda, whom I met at the Gunma JALT Annual Workshop in Kusatsu last summer. It was my first year in JALT, and I was rather lost in what to do, but he kindly invited me to the LD SIG 20th Anniversary Conference last autumn. I was impressed by the quality of the event, so I did not hesitate to join the LD SIG this year. I hope to touch base with many of you in this promising group!

References


My Language Journey

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My journey teaching English in Japan began almost 17 years ago! I first taught in several “eikaiwa” situations before obtaining an MA TESL/TEFL (from the University Birmingham) and then moved on to teaching at university. I am currently a “Foreign Instructor” in the Department of International Culture at Aichi Gakuin University.

I was born and raised in Uganda. A few years ago I had an opportunity to reflect on my own learner development when I co-authored a piece for the Autoethnography Column in the SchoolHouse, the newsletter of the Junior/Senior High School SIG (Ashurova & Ssali, 2012). It was a unique, double autoethnography representing my own journey in ESL English learning and those of a colleague from and EFL background. In that piece I outlined my own beginnings as a second language learner, and the realization now that first-time learners of English face a language so rich and practical, but extremely complex at the same time. My reflections made me realize that our learning experiences have a big influence on how we particularly look at the challenges English learners in Japan face.

Even in the ESL environment that I had been brought up in Uganda, where
English had been adopted as the official language of school and government at independence in 1962, I had learned English the hard way. It was the de facto language of school, and we could only use our own “vernaculars” at home, or outside school for that matter. At home, everybody used the local vernacular, Luganda. As a matter of fact, my parents, both farmers, couldn’t speak English. My elder siblings did, but nobody expected them to speak it at home. In fact doing so was tantamount to bragging! The English-only-at-school policy was strictly enforced with punishments. Pupils caught by any teacher speaking in the vernacular, inside or outside the classroom, would be smacked, forced to kneel on the ground for some time, or even to do manual labour in the school gardens. This may sound like a brutal way to enforce a foreign language. I think, however, it was appropriate and necessary at that time in a nation where English is the official language of school and government, and with an educational system where English is the language of instruction with a cycle of integration between basic pedagogic structures and integrated, practical usage. All classes and exams in the upper primary (primary 4 to 7) are conducted in English, and pupils need ‘reminders’ to stay in English especially in the rural schools where practically everyone belongs to the same tribe and speaks the same language.

The all-English rule would continue through secondary to tertiary education, and its enforcement as the language of school was even stronger than it had been at primary school. English, even up to date, has remained deeply rooted in administration, media and education, and access to economic and political power is almost impossible for anyone who has not mastered that language. English is used as the language of communication in public places, in places of work and in audiences, especially where groups of people are from different parts of the country. In their homes and tribal areas people use their local vernaculars, but English is the only way members of various ethnic and multi-lingual groups can communicate among themselves and identify with the larger community. The situation is obviously different for Japanese learners of English. They join the school system equipped with a home language which is also the language of education. In homogeneous Japan, you don’t have to be able to speak English in order to belong to society, and practically there is no secondary society to strive to belong to. In Japan learning English beyond the classroom is thus mainly driven by intrinsic motivation. A great many resources and enormous amounts of time are therefore required to create conducive opportunities for learners; for English, while not necessarily a requisite for success in society, is a required part of the curriculum. On the other hand, the ethnic diversity in Uganda implies a deep-rooted instrumental and extrinsic motivation to learn the language beyond just its classroom structure, for English is instrumentally a sine qua non for meeting educational requirements, furthering careers and improving social status.

Here is where the Learner Development SIG comes in handy for me. I must strive, as a teacher, to create an environment for my students to go beyond what McKay (2002) has called “a superficial familiarity with the language” (p. 19). I have
to be aware always that class time is insufficient, and “students do not have ready-made contexts for communication beyond their classrooms” (Brown 2001, p.116). I need to create environments that will enable my students to take “the all-important step from being language learners to language users” (Ashurova & SSali, 2013, p.46).

I am currently involved in setting up an English Lounge at my university, and I look forward to benefiting from the knowledge and advice of fellow LD members. I suspect many of them are involved in activities to extend language learning beyond the classroom. I am looking forward to sharing with them lots of professional experiences and insights from their current practices.

References

LD SIG Grants 2014
The LD SIG Grants Committee would like to congratulate all of the 2014 grants winners. We look forward to their contributions to the LD SIG:

Winner of the LD SIG 2014 research grant: Tomoko Imamura

Winner of the LD SIG Pan-SIG grant: Caroline Ross

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Yoko Sakurai
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For more information please go to: <http://ld-sig.org/grants2014/>

Or send a quick email to: <learnerdevelopmentsiggrants@gmail.com>
Self-access and Motivation

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Summary

A number of authors have examined factors that contribute to an engaging language classroom environment and ways in which teachers can develop learners' motivation in class. These papers have drawn upon years of research in educational psychology and second language motivation.
However, few articles have focussed on how to develop motivation in an outside class self-access centre environment and in this short article I will examine, in general (i.e. not overly academic) terms, ways in which institutions can promote foreign language motivation outside of class via a self-access centre. I define a self-access centre to be a place which provides outside support for language learners and promotes learner autonomy and language development.

1. Social interaction
Language learning is a social process and a self-access centre should provide opportunities for language learners to interact easily. Learners need to practice the languages they are learning and also discuss their learning with others (either in the target language or other languages). Language learners frequently report that interacting with others in the target language is the most motivating aspect of language learning. One practical way to provide opportunities for social interaction is by providing a conversation lounge. To increase opportunities for interaction further, the lounge could be staffed by teachers or students throughout the day.

2. Feedback and encouragement
In order to be able to sustain motivation to continue to work at a foreign language, learners need feedback and encouragement. In class, this feedback and encouragement comes from teachers and classmates. In a self-access learning environment, feedback and encouragement are probably more important and can be provided by either learning advisors or teachers taking on an advising role. Analysis of advising dialogue shows that in addition to facilitating reflection and promoting learner autonomy, learning advisors regularly encourage learners. Follow up research involving interviews with learners revealed that the encouraging comments were particularly valued by learners (Mynard, 2012). Students hired as peer mentors can be trained to provide users with encouragement for their self-access work.

3. Inviting environment
A Self-Access Language Centre (SALC) needs to be inviting and non-threatening. An environment that makes a learner anxious or feel that he or she does not belong does not contribute to a learner’s motivation for sustained language learning. When designing a centre, care must be taken to include spaces that appeal to different kinds of learners and different kinds of learning activities. For example, the arrangement of the furniture could suggest how the space could be used: soft sofas for a conversation area; comfortable chairs for a reading lounge; and separated desks for individual study areas. Even in the smallest of spaces, the use of colour and soft furnishings can make a big difference. In addition, a centre must make it clear through its branding and marketing that it welcomes all learners - not just those good at a language, or those who need extra support. The institution must make a decision as to whether signage and materials using the students’ L1 should be included in a centre.
4. Goal setting
Research shows that having a goal motivates learners to continue studying a language. Goal setting can be a daunting and difficult process for some learners, particularly those who have never had the opportunity to develop learner autonomy. One important role of a learning advisor (or a teacher working with learners in this way) is to help learners to analyse their needs and set achievable goals. The goals should be specific and guide the self-directed learning (Morrison & Navarro, 2014). Ideally, a learner can then create a learning plan and implement it outside of class, drawing on the available facilities and resources - including other learners. Learners should have the chance to discuss their goals and plans frequently with learning advisors or teachers. Having a specific goal and achieving is very satisfying for learners and often prompts further self-directed study.

5. Motivation strategy training
In order to be able to sustain motivation, learners should be able to draw upon a range of strategies themselves. Learners may already be aware of some of these strategies, but sharing and explicit teaching of other strategies could be highly beneficial. The strategies might include the following: goal-setting, rewards, making a task more fun, future L2 self visualization (see Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013), and positive self-talk (Oxford, 2011). This kind of training can be done in class, offered as stand-alone workshops in a self-access centre, or introduced in different ways, for example, through advising, via social networks, on posters, or as activity sheets available in the self-access centre.

6. Learner autonomy
Although one of the main purposes of a self-access centre is to promote language learner autonomy, this also has a positive effect on motivation. Being in charge of one's learning means a high degree of investment and motivation on the part of the learner. Actively choosing to go to a self-access centre will empower a learner. The extent to which learners are able to direct their own learning will vary significantly and this does not necessarily correlate with language proficiency level. Learning advisors and teachers can work with learners in ways appropriate to the amount of metacognitive awareness that they have. Helping learners to reflect and develop an awareness of how to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate learning will help them to develop a sense of awareness and control of the language learning process (Benson, 2011). This kind of awareness-raising is ideally done in a one-to-one situation, but some activities can be incorporated into class. One practical way to provide individualised attention is through a written exchange between the learner and the teacher or learning advisor on written reflections of the learner’s self-directed work.

7. Learner involvement
Learners should be involved in running a self-access centre for several reasons. Firstly, this will ensure that the services are meeting the needs of the student body. Secondly, it will ensure that
there are always learners in the centre which encourages others learners also to come in. This in turn will create a sense of community (see #11). Taking a leading role in managing an aspect of a self-access centre will also be an opportunity to exercise control - a real example of autonomy in action. Finally, learners running a self-access centre are realistic role models for other learners (Yamaguchi, 2011). Learners might participate as administrative staff, peer mentors, materials writers, conversation leaders, materials reviewers, events coordinators, presenters, authors, or take other roles (see Navarro, 2014).

8. Engaging activities
One motivational strategy that learners and teachers often draw upon is to make learning fun and engaging. A self-access centre should include a range of enjoyable resources and activities in the target languages (Cooker, 2010). Examples of resources are movies, dramas, music and games. Activities could include parties, competitions and gamification.

9. Rapport with staff
Another motivating factor is for learners to feel a sense of rapport with staff working in a self-access centre, so staff training should ensure that casual, friendly interactions with visitors to the centre are a normal part of the job. These short, but vital interactions have been referred to as micro-counselling (Shibata, 2012) and may also result in small shifts in thinking.

10. Connection with target language culture
It is important to connect learners with the target language community through resources, activities, and (if possible) international people. This will help learners to see the broader purposes of language learning which in turn contributes to their motivation. This connection could be made through decor, posters, furnishings, language use and staffing. Activities could include conversation circles, cultural performances, language exchanges and international collaboration initiatives.

11. Communities and imagination
Being part of a community is one of the factors that ensures engagement and sustained motivation for self-directed learning (Hughes, Vye, & Krug, 2012). Successful self-access centres often look and feel very different from other learning environments and provide opportunities for learners to engage with ‘imagined communities’. Such communities are people we connect with through the power of imagination (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Murray, 2011). Imagination also allows people to conceive of their ‘possible L2 selves’ such as an ‘ideal self’ and ‘ought to self’ and a ‘possible future self’ (Dörnyei, 2005; 2009) which can be powerful motivators. Imagination needs “freedom, energy, and time to expose ourselves to the exotic, move around, try new identities, and explore new relations” (Wenger, 1998, p. 185). In practical terms, a self-access centre which provides opportunities and freedom for learners to try out resources related to popular culture through movies, television and magazines helps learners to expand their imagination and identities (Murray, 2011).
12. Extrinsic motives
The previous 11 points mainly promote a sense of internal (or intrinsic) motivation. What about learners who are just not that motivated to learn a language? Perhaps they are forced to take a language class but have no real interest? Some of the above points might help, but sometimes an external motive could be more effective. An example of external motives are learning in order to pass an exam, or doing well on a job application. Self-access centre staff could find out what some of these external motives are and provide materials and support for them. Materials might include exam practice tests, diagnostic activities, and job information. Support could take the form of advising services, workshops, and awareness-raising of techniques for rewarding one’s own effort. An institution might consider building in minimal required SALC time in order to help good study habits to form. Some self-access centres allow learners to collect points or stamps as an incentive to visit. I would suggest that these kinds of incentives should be used with caution. One compelling reason to avoid rewarding self-access attendance is that it might reduce existing intrinsic motivation. Decades of research shows that rewarding an activity that is already motivating has a negative impact on a person’s willingness to continue the activity once the reward is removed (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999).

To summarize, there are several factors that developers could consider in order to ensure that a self-access centre is a motivating space. Simply providing a room stocked with language support materials is unlikely to motivate learners to engage in self-access learning. Using this short article as a checklist may be a good place to start if you want to ensure that your centre attracts and motivates learners.

About the author
Dr. Jo Mynard is an Associate Professor and the Director of the Self-Access Learning Centre at Kanda University of International Studies. She has an M.Phil in Applied Linguistics from Trinity College Dublin, Ireland and an Ed.D. in TEFL from the University of Exeter, UK. Her research interests are learner autonomy, self-access, motivation, affect, self-directed learning, and advising. She is the founding editor of *Studies in Self-Access Learning Journal* and the co-editor of four recently published books on advising and learner autonomy.

References
Space, Place and Autonomy in Language Learning: Joe Falout and Alison Stewart discuss the symposium at AILA 2014

At the AILA conference that took place in Brisbane, Australia this August, Joe Falout and Alison Stewart attended the Space, Place and Autonomy in Language Learning symposium convened by Terry Lamb and Garold Murray. The symposium consisted of six presentations by researchers on the experiences of language learners in contexts ranging from Japanese university language study centres to hidden corners in an Emirati university building to a Russian bathhouse. The aim of the symposium was to shed light on a series of questions on space and place: how it affects learners and the uses they make of it, how we can conceptualize space and how we can use our understanding of it to make decisions regarding policy and design, what light this might shed on our understandings of (learner) autonomy.

Alison: Joe, I remember that we were both bowled away by this symposium, and decided there and then to continue and deepen our conversation about it in a written dialogue that we could share with members of the Learner Development SIG. To recapture the excitement and inspiration...
of the event, shall we start by reviewing the presentations and recounting what it was that attracted us to them?

Joe: Sure, I’ll start with the first presentation of the symposium: Cynthia White’s “Emotion in the construction of space, place and autonomous learning opportunities.” She drew on some fascinating case studies, including one of learners of Russian in a study abroad program in St. Petersburg, and another of learners in New Zealand and Germany interacting together in a telecollaboration project. Cynthia investigated how specific settings can contribute to invoking emotions in learners, and how the memories of those experiences add to the construction of identity. During encounters with others in which the L2 was used, these students reportedly experienced a range of powerful emotions. Such emotions help shape important aspects of people’s learning and identity formation, and thus merit more attention in language learning research.

Although the focus of this symposium was on space, the themes of time and motion struck me as something integral to all the presentations. These aspects were particularly highlighted in Cynthia’s presentation. For example, one learner of Russian in St. Petersburg was asked by a Russian woman for directions in the subway. While walking together, the learner tried to start up a conversation. But the woman responded strangely, and they ended up walking silently in the same direction, but now separated some distance from each other. Trying to understand what had gone wrong, the learner said she wanted to stop time, like pausing a scene in a movie, and try to get inside the other person’s mind to figure out what went wrong with the conversation. She was wondering if she had made some cultural faux pas, or pragmatic error, or if it was her accent that caused some misunderstanding. These kinds of emotions and confusion may be happening in language classrooms, influencing how learners see themselves as users of the L2 for better or worse, and I wonder how teachers might recognize such moments and address them.

Alison: Cynthia’s presentation resonated strongly with me too. At a personal level, her examples brought back my own memories of learning languages. The memories of occasions and the emotions I felt at the time are still clear, almost visceral: for example, the confusion and frustration I felt at my failure to explain to my Russian roommate that her boyfriend had called round and then gone again, but subsequent delight when I realized that I finally understood how verbs of motion work in that language. As a teacher of English and student of Japanese, I need to be aware that the emotional impact of language in authentic contexts of use is more powerful than in attempts to describe those contexts.

Whilst Cynthia’s study highlighted the interconnectedness of context and emotion and their role in learning and identity formation, the other side of the coin is that learners can imbue the meaning of spaces around them with their own identities, in other words, they can appropriate space for their own purposes and needs, not necessarily in the ways imagined by the designers of those spaces or by their teachers. Gergana Alzeer’s “Spatio-learning experiences of Emirati female students in a single gender context” featured a series of stunning photographs of
black-clad young women appropriating spaces in a hyper-modern university building, sitting on floors, under the stairs, and in a tiny empty alcove intended for a water fountain. Alzeer’s ethnographic study of the learners and the places they inhabit culminates in a complex map, representing the ways in which these modern desert women engaged with the “hot” and “cold” places in their environment.

**Joe:** A surprising thing about their sitting in odd places was that plenty of chairs and desks stood empty nearby. Yet they choose the floor for what appeared to be serious individual studying. I wondered whether the original space makers, the architects, would be angrily astonished or gleefully delighted that the facilities were being appropriated and used for purposes not initially intended. My guess is that most architects, as artists of public space, would embrace the new uses that people make of such spaces, and allow this ambiguity and potential for multifarious uses to inform their future design.

**Alison:** What struck me most about these images was the clash or mismatch of identities in these surroundings. It was startling to see the way these women chose to ignore the chairs and sit on the floor, but it was also startling to see them carrying fashionable handbags while wearing the conservative burka. In a way, you could say these women are rebels—subverting expected identities that are created or assumed in the context. In the classroom, it’s assumed that they would sit on chairs; wearing burka, it’s assumed that they wouldn’t be interested in western designer accessories.

**Joe:** Yes, Alison, this is important because it shows that learners relate to the spaces they enter by conforming to or by resisting identities that are assumed of them in that space. Another presentation concerned with how public spaces are used was “Social learning spaces and ‘the Invisible Fence” by Garold Murray, Naomi Fujishima, and Mariko Uzuka. They used the concept of “communities of practice” to investigate membership of and access to spaces in a Social Language Learning Space (SLLS) at a large Japanese university. In particular, one concern of the SLLS was about making newcomers feel invited and included, which can be difficult as spaces of participation can be created via the exclusion of others. Various ways were used to help newcomer students gain access, such as old-timers inviting passers-by inside the SLLS, decorating the entryways with posters bearing information about the activities inside, and providing newcomers with roles for participation.

This makes me realize that spaces can exist even where there are no actual walls or lines of demarcation. The example in this presentation was an open door to the SLLS: the spaces inside and outside the SLLS are open to each other, and merge to form a single space. Similarly, inside the SLLS, subspaces may not actually have walls that keep people out, but when others are using the area, some students may feel they are not allowed in. It’s another case of the mutually constitutive influence of spaces on the behaviours and identities of the people who inhabit them. This reminds me of another study in which office location became a determining factor for
students taking doctoral exams. Those with offices more central in relation to the other offices on campus were physically able to consult more with each other and, through sharing their beliefs about ways of coping with the stress and studying for the exams, eventually fared better than those with offices on the periphery (Mechanic, 1978).

Alison: Interesting! So it’s not only a matter of spaces having insides and outsides, but also of centres and peripheries! It’s very complicated, isn’t it? I think one of the most interesting aspects of all in this presentation, as with all the presentations in this symposium, is the way it brought out new dimensions of what constitutes context. Physical space is one dimension, but atmosphere is also part of context. Or is it? Is atmosphere created or at least influenced by the physical properties of a place, or is it something that arises from the interactions and relationships between the people inhabiting it? These are some of the key questions that occurred to me from listening to Garold, Naomi and Mariko’s presentation, and also from another presentation of research set in Japan by Katherine Thornton.

Joe: That’s right, Alison. Katherine’s presentation dealt with space and place in a self-access centre in Japan. Combining questionnaires with student and staff observations over three semesters, she explored how students thought, felt, and behaved in various areas and rooms (i.e., subspaces) within a newly built self-access centre. The purpose of the study was to use the findings to promote meaningful uses of the various subspaces in the center. One of the changes made was the name of the overall space, the centre, from something sounding like a large organization to a friendly community café, E-CO (meaning English Café at Otemon). The main finding was that students were inclined to use spaces that were most convenient for socialising, such as sitting in a cozy corner with small sofas or standing around the counter chatting. Students spent less time in quiet study but they increased their social use of English over Japanese, and the Japanese that they did use became more oriented toward learning socially rather than just socializing (i.e., they were talking about learning). Spaces created collaboratively for learning within a relaxed social environment increased students’ willingness to communicate in English. Notably, the students’ own preferences for using space were included in the decision-making for improving the design of the facility.

Alison: While the previous two studies looked at how students do or don’t appropriate institutional space for their own learning purposes, the last two presentations dealt with the learning that students do outside of the classroom. In Lindsay Miller and Christoph Hafner’s presentation, “Creating spaces for autonomous learning in an EST course”, the locus of learning was shifted to outside the institution, a Hong Kong university, as more traditional writing assignments were replaced with corpus quizzes, a group project to make a scientific video documentary, and an individual written report. A study of the students, using questionnaires and focus groups, as well as project artifacts and out-of-class communication, pinpointed where and how the students interacted about their video project. Whereas class time was devoted to
preparation and support in creating and filming the documentary, the students took ownership of the project and spent a remarkable number of hours practicing and honing the quality of their final video.

Joe: Lindsay and Christoph’s presentation also reminds me that out-of-class learning is where most learning actually occurs, as language learning requires a lot of time, more than what can usually be offered within the time constraints of a class and curriculum. Therefore, it’s important for their own developing autonomy as life-long learners that students recognize this and make time for learning English outside of the classroom and the class schedule.

Alison: I agree, Joe, and I would say that the huge increase in time spent on the project was undoubtedly the key here. A similar point comes through in the final presentation “Public pedagogy through mobile learning: Autonomy and acquisition” by Hayo Reinders. Hayo reported on a refreshingly traditional experiment to test the effect of listening to audio books using mobile phones on Korean students’ acquisition of the passive voice. The study divided a cohort of students into three groups: over the course of one week, one group listened to audio books with pauses inserted, a second listening to audio books with the speed slowed down, and a control group listened to the audio books played at normal speed. Predictably, the first group performed slightly better than the second, which performed slightly better than the third, and all three group performed better in the post-test grammar check than in the pre-test check. Statistically, however, the results were not significant. Nevertheless, the students enjoyed the activity, and it is this enjoyment that will make it more likely that they will continue the activity and get to spend the additional hours listening which should eventually enhance their learning. These final two presentations weren’t so much about space and place in the way that the first four were; instead they focused on the learners, the spaces that they move in and out of, and the opportunities that they have or make for autonomous learning.

Joe: What I learned from these two last presentations was how much attention and interest can be enhanced when learners have the freedom to choose the time and place for their learning. I wonder if the Hong Kong students working on the video project were even aware of how much time they spent doing it. That state of becoming enraptured in the process itself, of losing oneself to the activity, is a state of “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Alison: This is really interesting! When you are completely absorbed in something, time and place seem to fall away—only the activity itself remains. Flow is complete freedom of action and thought; space, or the awareness of it, is actually a constraint on freedom. What do you think?

Joe: Yes, that’s right Alison! In this sense, space can be binding. I suppose that in other senses space can bring liberation. For the group project from Hong Kong, some students enjoyed working individually from within their own rooms, a private space, while collaborating together online, a
public space. Alternatively, by sitting in the alcove of a public hallway, as seen in the Emirati university, a student positions herself in a restricted space to attain privacy. So what we see here is that people’s uses of space are important for how they see themselves, and how they wish to interact with or avoid others.

**Alison:** I would agree with you: space can bring liberation, but how does that work? I think what I want to say is that space usually is a constraint. As Lefebvre (2009) writes, “Space is political and ideological” (p. 171). What I take this to mean is that space, whether in the physical sense of a building, a street, a park, or a forest, or in the symbolic sense of social space (e.g., Bourdieu, 1990), is created and appropriated by people with particular purposes in mind. The opposite of space would be the void or entropy, that is, space with no meaning and no purpose. So space is necessary, because it gives things meaning. It also provides us with affordances (van Lier, 2001; Menezes, 2011), that is, opportunities for learning, provided we have the autonomy to seize those opportunities. In its original sense, an affordance is something in our environment that pushes us to change or adjust our behaviour (Gibson, 1992). I think this is the sense in which we can think of space and place in learner autonomy. When we are habituated to something, we forget about space and place, but when we’re new to something, such as a new language, space and place maybe matter more.

**Joe:** That’s a good observation. We don’t usually notice much about the spaces and places with which we are most familiar. This was also the subject of a plenary at the AILA conference by Elena Shohamy. Public spaces and their influence on human interaction can be constructed by the linguistic landscape, particularly the texts, symbols, and pictures seen in outdoor or open locations, such as on signs, mass-produced and replicated by industrial processes, such as the design of commodities, and in print, video, and internet media. Linguistic landscapes represent and help create individual and cultural identities, power relationships, and transgressions (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009).

One of the exciting things suggested to me from this symposium was the notion that learners can actively participate in the creation of their private and public spaces for learning. At any moment, students have choices and can create opportunities to collaborate with others, distribute their knowledge, and situate themselves within physical, psychological, social, and temporal spaces. Natural fluctuations and fluidity, and contextual co-constructing dynamics, can shape these spaces. For me, this means that teachers and students can choose to act autonomously, that human autonomy articulates and becomes articulated by language use within and beyond spaces and places, some of which we are very familiar with, and some we are not even aware of.

**Alison,** what new understandings came to you from this symposium?

**Alison:** I’m not sure it’s a new understanding so much as a clarification that space is a vital and dynamic way of looking at power relations in social contexts. The “social turn” (Block, 2003) has
been recognized as a major advance in applied linguistics for more than a decade. I would like to hope that a “spatial turn” (a term which, I realize, has been in force for well over two decades in other fields) will be our next new horizon. As I mentioned before, there are already pioneers in our field, such as the late Leo van Lier and Vera Menezes, who have broken new ground in their explorations of affordances. Gergana’s use of Lefebvre in her study was really fascinating as an example of how postmodern spatial theories can underpin research into learner autonomy. But the symposium as a whole, convened by Garold Murray and Terry Lamb, must be commended as a showcase of cutting-edge research.

As a final word, I note that the Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine has this year gone to John O’Keefe, Edvard Moser and May-Britt Moser for their research into “place cells”. These brain cells not only help us map our way around the world, “but in humans at least they form part of the spatiotemporal scaffold in our brains that supports our autobiographical memory” (BBC, October 6th, 2014). What clearer indication can there be than this, of the importance of space and place in human lives? What greater precedence can there be of the need to research it in our own field of applied linguistics?

References


Recently released books and articles on Learner Development

The following list is an extract of one that was compiled by one of cofounders of the LDSIG, Richard Smith, and reprinted here with his permission.

If you are interested in seeing the original list that goes back to 1977 please click here.

If you are interested in doing -- and, with mentoring, feel competent to do -- a PhD in the area of 'History of the language learner autonomy movement' please get into contact with him at <R.C.Smith@warwick.ac.uk>.


Huang, J. and Benson, P., eds. (2013). Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics (36/1). Special issue for the 16th World Congress of Applied Linguistics: Autonomy in Foreign and Second Language Education. Table of contents


If you have read any of the above books and would like to submit a review, please send it on to <learninglearningjaltlds@gmail.com>
JALT National Conference Preview
At this year’s conference there are a number of events related to Learner Development, not forgetting of course the LD SIG party, LD SIG forum and the LD SIG AGM. Thus we have included first a preview of the LD SIG forum and following that, a list of selected presentations at the conference that are related to Learner Development.

The Learner Development SIG Party at JALT2014
Join us for the Learner Development SIG Party at JALT2014 on Saturday, 22nd November (20:00-22:00). Dinner will include nomihodai and Italian dishes (starter, salad, roasted chicken, pizza, pasta, and dessert) for 5000yen at an Italian restaurant just a few minutes’ walk from the conference venue.
RSVP: please sign up on this Google Spreadsheet by Wednesday, November 12th.
*Vegetarian options can also be arranged. Please let us know if you have any dietary requirements in the Notes when you sign up.

Learner Development Across Borders
Sunday, 23 November 2014, 1:35 PM - 3:05 PM (90 minutes)
Room: Convention Hall 300
This year the LD forum consists of 17 interactive presentations focusing on learner development across various borders. Presentations will include: learner development practices in countries outside Japan; theories both inside and outside of ELT that help us to understand learner development; and learner development between and across different institutional contexts. By popular request, the Forum will end with the recital of an original poem on learner development. We warmly invite you to participate in the forum and share your thought and ideas with the presenters.

Across the Border of a Classroom Wall
Mayumi Abe - Temple University, Satomi Yoshimuta - Seigakuin University, Huw Davies - The Open University
As “good language learners” studies showed, learners need plentiful engagement in their target language for successful L2 learning. Considering the limited amount of time in class, it is necessary for learners to expand their learning from inside to outside class across the borders of classroom walls. Then, how can learners develop their skills after learning in class? How is in-class learning linked to out-of-class learning from the learners’ perspectives? What guidance promotes learners’ out-of-class autonomous learning? The presenters will explore how to gain optimal outcomes by connecting in-class and out-of-class learning providing their own experiences as teachers and advisors.
Utilizing a blog for stimulating interest, spurring motivation, and creating community

Lee Arnold - Seigakuin University
This presentation spotlights blog-publishing learner writing to create learner-teacher reader communities in writing courses in two universities. The presenter will discuss the use of differing pieces of instrumental music as stimulants to learner writing in one course, and photographs of differing places in another. From there, selections of learner writing that were published on the presenter’s two teaching and learning blogs will be shown. The presenter will finally discuss how writing publication and blog support crossed the borders of the computer-assisted learning medium and learner development in showcasing unique efforts of creative learner writing, and building learner independence.

Exploring Motivational Boundaries in the language learning classroom
Stephanie Corwin
This presentation will share the preliminary results of ongoing research into the nexus of teacher "quality", motivation, resilience and motivational drives, such as how teachers maintain or boost motivation, how integrally teachers perceive the relationship between their own and their students' motivations, and how consciously teachers attempt to manipulate student motivation through their own motivation. This study seeks to better understand the link between student and teacher motivation and, if possible, either identify or eliminate causality—Does the teacher make the class, or the class make the teacher? Come explore the boundaries of motivation in the language learning classroom.

Pedagogy in Translation: Bringing Learner Development From Across Borders into Japan
Amanda Chin, Brandon Narasaki - Rikkyo University
This presentation will focus on relating the presenters' experiences of teaching in several different ESL/EFL contexts, (e.g. Hawaii, Thailand and Japan) to the Japanese University EFL context. Both presenters have taught in a variety of classrooms (Listening / Reading / Writing / Speaking / etc.) in which learner development pedagogy was implemented, one example being the development of writing habits through free-writing journals in an academic writing course. These experiences have been useful in informing ways to incorporate learner development into university level EFL teaching in Japan.

Orienting Students to Learning
Hana Craig - Sojo University, Kumamoto, Jenny Morgan - Wayo Women's University, Chiba
Language teachers often rush into content teaching at the beginning of a course without properly inducting their freshmen students who are crossing from the Senior High School learning environment to the University learning environment. As a result, these students can miss out on opportunities to learn both inside and outside the classroom. This presentation will explain why time spent on learner orientation is more important than any other classroom activity and explore practical ways to successfully orient learners to learning at the beginning of any language course.
We will cover ways of training students about learning methods, goal-setting, time and homework management, and tools that support an all-English environment.

**Integrating Journalism into the Language Classroom**

*Chris Fitzgerald - Kyoto University of Foreign Studies*

This presentation will outline a project which took place in Kyoto University of Foreign Studies that gave students an opportunity to become journalists by creating an English language student newspaper. By analysing both new media and traditional media, students were exposed to the structure and language of news before researching and developing their own articles. By following the inverted pyramid approach to article structure, students were able to produce a publication suitable for reading by university faculty and students. Students not only gained from taking on different roles outside of their comfort zone, but benefited from practical use of classroom acquired language.

**How far is it necessary to adapt speaking activities for different levels?**

*Paul Garside, Paul Landicho - Rikkyo University*

There is a common perception that classes of different abilities require very different lessons and materials. With a focus on micro-speaking classes, this presentation will show that, by adapting learning strategies rather than materials, similar speaking activities can be conducted among all levels of proficiency. This can apply to very high, even ‘returnee’ students, as well as to very low level students. Key amongst these strategies is working collaboratively, with the aim that all students can communicate successfully, independent of the teacher. Encouraging self and peer-reflection can further help students to become autonomous learners.

**When they don’t want to learn what you teach anymore**

*Bob Gettings - Hokusei Gakuen University*

Many junior college students lose their enthusiasm for EFL study when their dreams of an English language related future are crushed as they move from their first year to their second year at university by the hard realities of their grades, the economy and the job market. This presentation will report on a ten year long LD project that provides students with online study materials and includes personal interviews between students and academic advisers three times a semester. The purpose is to develop a personalized EFL study program but students’ wider needs may require leaving English behind temporarily in order to meet new, individual learning needs.

**Crossing the line: Using Business and Media Ideas to Promote Learner Development**

*Ian Hurrell, Carey Finn - Rikkyo University*

In this interactive presentation, two English Instructors from Rikkyo University will discuss how ideas, theories and skills from disciplines often perceived as unrelated to EFL might be adopted and adapted to promote Learner Development in micro discussion classes. One presenter will focus on the application of business management and marketing techniques, such as self-
determination theory and the use of mantras, to encourage learner autonomy. At the same time, the other speaker will explore the development of critical thinking skills through concepts and techniques drawn from discourse analysis and media literacy, such as hegemony and stereotypes.

Cross-Institutional Collaboration of Sotsurons Via Computer-Mediated Communication:
Unfolding Ventures
Ken Ikeda - Otsuma Women’s University, Joseph Tomei - Kumamoto Gakuen University
Hugh Nicoll - Miyazaki National University, Patrick Kiernan - Meiji University
Kevin Mark - Meiji University, Anita Aden - Mukogawa Women’s University

This is an exploratory project in which teachers and learners utilize computer-mediated communication (CMC) to establish and develop sotsuron (undergraduate graduation theses) between seminars in several universities throughout Japan. We will report on myriad dimensions of sotsuron development in these cross-institutional settings amid technological and logistical concerns, along with students’ real-world concerns, e.g., job-hunting and graduation. We delve into effects and ramifications using Skype, Line and other forms of CMC among learners and teachers. This project meets the contours of Border 3: learner development across contextual borders, by which extent contextual factors influence the implementation of learner development concepts.

Fostering Learner Autonomy in the Classroom: Working with Diverse Learners of Japanese as a Second Language
Tomoko Ikeda, Nobuko Saito - Obirin University

At J. F. Oberlin University in Tokyo, we have offered JSL courses designed to foster learner autonomy since 2003. These courses, in which learners set goals, make plans, put the plans into practice, and evaluate their work, are offered for a diverse body of international students. This diversity presents different types of challenge to the instructors working with the learners with various backgrounds, abilities, and motivations. Looking at the learning activities selected by the learners and their perceptions of the process, we will examine various forms that learner autonomy can take, with emphasis on the learners’ differing proficiency levels.

Exploring autonomous learning in elementary schools and junior high schools
Tomoko Imamura - Yamanashi Gakuin Elementary School

This presentation will explore to what extent it is effective for elementary school students and junior high school students to learn how to be autonomous learners. The following three issues will also be discussed: when to start, how to facilitate, and of any gap that might exist between the views of teachers who work for elementary schools and junior high schools over this issue. The reason for targeting teachers from both levels of education is because of the need to strengthen the bridge between both levels so that learner-centered education might be better fostered. This poster presentation will summarize the results of a pre-conducted small scale research on this issue.
Collaborative and reflective supervision for learner and teacher development: A CLIL-type approach to senior high school EFL instruction
Hideo Kojima - Hirosaki University
My presentation focuses on examining to what extent collaborative and reflective supervision (CRS) promoted a graduate student and senior high school teacher’s autonomy and her students’ autonomy through a CLIL-type approach to teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). In spite of various constraints on learner development across borders, the students gradually showed positive attitudes towards critically thinking about various social issues, enhanced communication skills through collaborative group work, and developed metacognitive abilities for learner autonomy. Moreover, through the reflective teaching cycles under my CRS, the teacher promoted her professional consciousness-raising and autonomous development in the school context.

Positive Psychology in Learner Development
Debjani Ray - Tokyo University of Science
I would like to focus on how ideas outside the field of language education can be used to complement learner development and enhance learning in our language classrooms. In order to do this, I will focus on the use of positive psychology in the language classroom and how they might illuminate new directions for learner development. I will elaborate this by giving examples of the activities that have been implemented in my classroom.

Crossing linguistic borders in teachers and learners minds: Languages
Maria Gabriela Schmidt - Tsukuba University, Foreign Language Center
Students and teachers have often more languages at their hands. But the focus is on error analysis, not mixing up, making borders between the languages. Our brain is without borders, making continuously synergetic associations. Teaching German as a second foreign language, English is part of my instruction. How can the third foreign languages like German, French, Spanish, Chinese, Korean etc. be included in studying English, supporting each other, developing linguistic awareness and synergetic abilities? How does the teacher’s experience studying foreign languages influence her teaching style? How can these potentials be used in teaching foreign languages in Japan?

How to develop learner autonomy in a "lecture" class.
Kazuko Unosawa - Tokyo Woman's Christian University
In this poster session the presenter will focus on how to bridge the gap between traditional lecture classes and classes that promote learner autonomy, based on her experience teaching an English Studies course at a women's university. The course consisted of mini-lectures, weekly worksheets for learner centered tasks as well as poster sessions by the students.

Exploring learners’ metacognitive beliefs and development of their active learning skills
Kie Yamamoto - Temple University Japan Campus
Academic success in an English-medium college is a great challenge for ESL students not only because of language boundary, but high demand of learning strategies in university settings. In
order to better equip ESL students in a college preparation program with active learning skills that are applicable both to undergraduate studies and language learning, I intend to investigate learners’ metacognitive beliefs and implement the active learning materials throughout the project.

Poetry recital: Theories of Second Language Requisition
Caroline Ross - Nakamura Junior and Senior High School
While sometimes we can enjoy the benefits of students who are motivated to learn a foreign language, many classrooms are filled with students who have no interest or desire to be there, but are simply required to attend as part of their course or curriculum requirements. In this poem, I will reflect upon this common reality encountered time and time again by language teachers around the world.

Other Selected presentations related to Learner Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Presenters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:35 AM</td>
<td>1st Floor</td>
<td>Multiple Learning Conversations for Course Design</td>
<td>Barfield, Andy - Chuo University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:35 PM</td>
<td>Atrium</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:45 PM -</td>
<td>Rm 101</td>
<td>Exploring Worlds Outside: Students as Researchers</td>
<td>Boon, Andrew - Toyo Gakuen University</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:15 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30 PM - 6:30</td>
<td>1st Floor</td>
<td>Students' Awareness of Autonomous Learning</td>
<td>Tsukamoto, Mizuka - Kwansei Gakuin University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Atrium</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30 PM - 4:55</td>
<td>Rm 102</td>
<td>Communities of Practice and Language Learners</td>
<td>Nagao, Akiko - Ritsumeikan University</td>
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<td>4:30 PM - 4:55</td>
<td>Rm 201 A</td>
<td>Autonomy, Language Learning and the Brain</td>
<td>Benson, Philip - Macquarie University</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:05 PM - 5:30</td>
<td>Rm 102</td>
<td>Community Outreach and Learning From Within</td>
<td>Lee, Sarah - Asia University, CELE</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:40 PM - 6:40</td>
<td>Rm 302</td>
<td>Developing SRL Practices in the Foreign Language Classroom</td>
<td>Collett, Paul - Shimonoseki City University; Sullivan, Kristen - Shimonoseki City University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 AM - 12:15 PM</td>
<td>Rm 101</td>
<td>Learner Development SIG AGM</td>
<td>Stewart, Alison - Gakushuin University; Murase, Fumiko - Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:25 PM - 12:50 PM</td>
<td>Rm 102</td>
<td>Gratitude Project: Writing, Reading, and Reporting</td>
<td>Harada, Naoko - Kyorin University</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 PM - 2:30 PM</td>
<td>Rm 402</td>
<td>Finding What Motivates Adult Learners</td>
<td>Dias, Joseph - Aoyama Gakuin University; Bollinger, Deborah - Aoyama Gakuin University; Yamane, Kathleen - Nara University</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30 PM - 5:30 PM</td>
<td>Rm 102</td>
<td>Exploring Worlds Inside: Teachers as Researchers</td>
<td>Boon, Andrew - Toyo Gakuen University</td>
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<td>5:40 PM - 7:10 PM</td>
<td>Rm 202 B</td>
<td>Self-Access Conversations: Beyond Classroom Borders</td>
<td>Thornton, Katherine - Otemon Gakuin University; Shibata, Satomi - Tokoha University; Ssali, Vick - Aichi Gakuin University; Mynard, Jo - Kanda University of International Studies; Watkins, Satoko - Kanda University of International Studies</td>
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**MONDAY**

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<tr>
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<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:15 AM - 10:45 AM</td>
<td>Convention Hall 200</td>
<td>Collaborative Approaches to Outreach</td>
<td>Stewart, Alison - Gakushuin University; Barfield, Andy - Chuo University; O'Neill, Ted - Tokyo Medical &amp; Dental University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:35 AM - 12:00 PM</td>
<td>Convention Hall 300</td>
<td>Crossing Borders With Appreciative Inquiry</td>
<td>Murphey, Tim - Kanda University of International Studies; Onoda, Sakae - Kanda University of International Studies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Conference Calendar

**December 6th ~ December 7th, 2014,** “Conflict Management: Peace in the community”

[Peace as a Global Language Conference 2014](http://pgljapan.org)

Join us for an exciting line-up of presentations, workshops and posters that focus on peace activism and education. Please come to take part in the discussion, debate and contemplation, as we come together to realise our potential as co-inhabitants of a shrinking planet.

**December 14 2014, Tokyo,** "Creating Community: Learning Together"

[One-day informal Learner Development Conference](http://ld-sig.org/blog/creating-community-learning-together/)

Join us for an informal relaxing afternoon conference to learn together from teacher and student presenters, about different experiences, questions and issues to do with learner development and community building.

**February, 28 - March 01 2015,** Phnom Penh, Cambodia, “English: Building Skills for Regional Cooperation and Mobility.”

[2015 CamTESOL Conference](http://www.camtesol.org)

Join us in 2015 for the 11th Annual CAMTESOL conference on English Language and Teaching, the ELT conference on the Mekong with more than 1,500 participants from over 30 countries.
Learning Learning is your space for continuing to make the connections that interest you. You are warmly invited and encouraged to contribute to the next issue of Learning Learning in either English and/or Japanese. We welcome writing in different formats and different lengths about different issues connected with learner and teacher development, such as:

- articles (about 2,500 to 4,000 words)
- reports (about 500 to 1,000 words)
- learner histories (about 500 to 1,000 words)
- stories of autonomy (about 500 to 1,000 words)
- book reviews (about 500 to 1,000 words)
- letters to the SIG (about 500 words)
- personal profiles (100 words more or less)
- critical reflections (100 words more or less)
- research interests (100 words more or less)
- photographs
- poems... and much more...

We would like to encourage new writing and new writers and are also very happy to work with you in developing your writing. We would be delighted to hear from you about your ideas, reflections, experiences, and interests to do with learner development, learner autonomy and teacher autonomy.

『学習の学習』は会員に興味あるつながりを構築する空間です。次号『学習の学習』への和文（もしくは英文、及び二言語での）投稿を募集しています。形式や長さを問わず、学習者及び教員の発達に関連した以下のようなさまざまな文章を歓迎しています:

- 論文 (約4000字-10000字)
- 報告書 (約2000字-4000字)
- 学習者のヒストリー (約2000字-4000字)
- 自律性に関する体験談 (約2000字-4000字)
- 書評 (約2000字-4000字)・SIGへの手紙 (約2000字)
- 個人プロフィール (約400字)
- クリティカル・リフレクション (約400字)
- 研究興味 (約400字)
- 写真・詩 その他

これまでにない形式のもの、また新しい方々からのご投稿をお待ちしております。内容についてはもぜひご相談ください。みなさまのご意見やお考え、ご経験、そして学習者の発達、学習者の自律性と教師の自律性に関することなど、ぜひお聞かせください。
# Financial Report, 財務報告

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<td>LD SIG site cost／SIGウェブサイト経費</td>
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<td>Donation for best of JALT 2014／Best of JALTサポート</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Research grants／研究助成金</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 National grants／全国大会参加助成金</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Outreach grants used for Musashi participation JALT2014／アウトリーチ助成金より、JALT2014むさしさん参加費</td>
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<td>December informal conference Creating Community: Learning Together ／インフォーマルSIG学会「コミュニティの創造：共に学ぶ」</td>
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<td>Other miscellaneous／他の雑費</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>December informal conference Creating Community: Learning Together ／インフォーマルSIG学会「コミュニティの創造：共に学ぶ」</td>
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<td><strong>SUB-TOTAL 小計</strong></td>
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<td>Balance in bank account 銀行口座の残高</td>
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Mayumi Abe 阿部 真由美
LD SIG treasurer LDSIG財務
October 19, 2014 2014年10月19日