

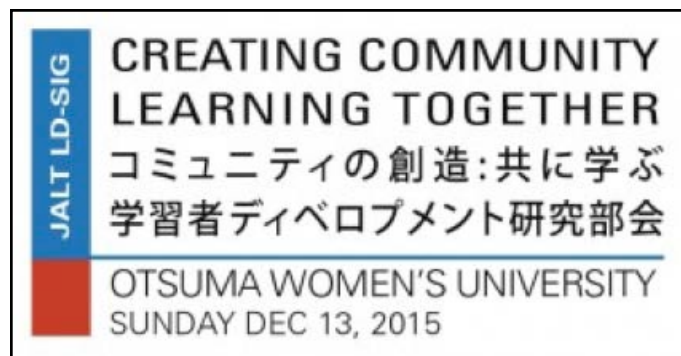
## Getting Connected: Local Get-Together Reports from Kansai, Tokyo, and Hiroshima

つながりを求めて：関西・東京・広島

### 2015 Tokyo Get-togethers

Agnes Patko, Andy Barfield, & Ken Ikeda

With Stacey stepping down last December, Agnes joined Andy and Ken in co-coordinating the get-togethers in 2015. We started the this year's get-togethers in April (rather than January) with the aim of holding five in total over the year and culminating in the second *Creating Community: Learning Together* (CC:LT2) afternoon conference in December.



The get-togethers this year have had a shared focus on community and community building for part of each session; they have also provided a very helpful base for developing ideas for and interest in the Learner Development Journal.

In the first four get-togethers of 2015, 27 different people attended at least one get-together, but only six attended all four, with an average of 14 people attending each one,

so there has been quite some fluctuation between different get-togethers. One reason for this may be that we didn't hold the first get-together until April, and we also had a long break between the June and October sessions. This may have led to a weaker sense of continuity and thematic focus than in previous years.

We raised these questions and concerns at the October get-together and discussed what changes we could make for 2016. As a group we felt that it would be good to have an early-year get-together in February ahead of the new school year, with the aim of focusing and planning possible research projects to develop and carry out in 2016. Participants also felt that it would be good to try to identify possible themes that could be taken up in the Learner Development Journal (LDJ) and link up on these with other LD members outside of the Greater Tokyo area. People also agreed that it would be good to include some space and time for discussion of possible research issues and themes for 2016 at CC:LT2 in December 2015.

Overall, it feels as if we are in a transition period as we try to find our way forward and create more thematic continuity and shared focus for 2016. CC:LT2 is an important part of our attempts to re-focus: as of October 26th we have received 28

proposals, involving around 20 teachers and 16 students as presenters (the exact numbers may change in November as last-minute additions and adjustments are made). We're looking forward to CC:LT2, as well as the bonenkai afterwards, and we hope that many LD members will be able to take part, as well as personally invite other teachers that they know.

Please join us too on February 21 2016 for the first get-together of the year—more details to follow shortly.

For more information, see the Tokyo get-together blog

<http://tokyogettogethers.blogspot.jp/>

## Kansai Get-together

*Anita Aden & Chris Fitzgerald*

If you're in the Kansai area, please mark your calendars for the much-awaited next Kansai get-together. It will be held on November 29 from 10:30 a.m. at the Hito Machi Koryukan on Kawaramachi, an 8-minute walk from Keihan Kiyomizu Gojo or 10-minute walk from the Gojo subway stop. A map is available at the Hito Machi Koryukan home page ([www.hitomachi-kyoto.jp](http://www.hitomachi-kyoto.jp)) in Japanese.

All are welcome to join in the discussion of learner and teacher development in the Kansai region. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Chris Fitzgerald ([chrisfits84@hotmail.com](mailto:chrisfits84@hotmail.com)) or Anita Aden ([anita@mukogawa-u.ac.jp](mailto:anita@mukogawa-u.ac.jp); [strawberry2410@gmail.com](mailto:strawberry2410@gmail.com)).

## Hiroshima Get-together

*Jim Ronald & Ariel Sorensen*

After a break of a few months, the Hiroshima LD get-togethers started again in May of this year, and we've been meeting almost every month since then. Each time we meet, we discuss one chapter of Thomas Farrell's *Reflective Language Teaching: From Research to Practice*. Although this book is not directly concerned with learner development or autonomy, it does help us to keep asking what we are doing in the classroom, where we're going, and what our goals for our students are. Our group also serves as a good sounding board for research ideas, classroom practices, and even plans for textbooks. For better or worse (both, in fact) the get-togethers tend to attract the same people we see in our monthly Hiroshima JALT meetings; as an "alternative" teachers' group it would be even better if we could appeal to a wider range of teachers. All language teachers are very welcome, so if you are reading this, and might be free to join one of our LD get-togethers in Hiroshima, usually on a Saturday afternoon but occasionally on Friday evenings, please get in touch with Jim ([jmronald@gmail.com](mailto:jmronald@gmail.com)). Look forward to meeting you!



Miyajima