

LD SIG Members' Voices

LD SIG メンバーの声

Thinking about language learning 語学について



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My name is Nat Carney and I currently teach at Kobe College in Nishinomiya. I teach listening, speaking, reading, and writing classes for first and second year English majors. When I signed up for the LD SIG the last time I renewed my JALT membership, I did not expect much. My membership in SIGs in the past usually has meant receiving a publication now and then. I quickly learned that the Learner Development SIG actively contacts new members. I have been contacted a number of times with welcomes of various forms, including the last of which was the invitation to write in Learning Learning along with other new SIG members. I enjoyed reading others' introductions, and I am happy to contribute my own.

I have been teaching in Japan for about

ten years now. Like many other foreign teachers I have met in Japan, I did not expect to be here for so long. I began teaching in the United States, first as a Spanish teacher for university students and later as a Spanish/ESL teacher at the same university. Later, I taught EFL in Korea for one year, and then after a few years back in the United States, I came to Japan to teach - first to Kyoto where I worked part-time at a number of universities, then to Sanda where I worked at Kwansei Gakuin University's School of Science and Technology, and finally to Nishinomiya. I have had a very positive teaching experience in Japan, and I have enjoyed working with students here. Especially where I currently work, many of my students are interested in foreign languages and learning about other countries. As well, the students at my school work hard and are a pleasure to work with.

From a learner development perspective, I am interested especially in learners' metacognitive strategies - how they think about what they are doing. There has been a good deal of research on how language learners use metacognition when listening, and L2 listening is one of my main research interests. I especially am interested in the interaction between top-down and bottom-up processing during listening and how listeners try to use these processes to understand when listening. I am also interested in sociocultural theory and its alternative focus on the language learning process. I received my master's degree from Penn State University where sociocultural theory is emphasized, yet when I came to Japan, it seemed very fringe. I

think at least having an understanding of sociocultural theory (SCT) and the SCT perspective on language development is worth many teachers' time. Last year, I reviewed the book *Sociocultural Theory and the Pedagogical Imperative in L2 Education: Vygotskian Praxis and the Research/Practice Divide*. It is not always an easy read, but for those curious about sociocultural theory, the book details SCT's perspective on learning and tells how it is being applied for teaching and research. Overall, though I like statistics very much and I think large-scale quantitative studies have an important place in SLA research, I have recently become interested in individual approaches learners take to acquiring English and in how situational factors can influence learners' progress and perception of what they are doing. I have not done much research in this area, but it interests me.

My own language learning has taught me that things are "learned" and forgotten, and some things are more difficult to acquire than others. Some reasons for this certain might be cognitive, but without question there are affective and sociocultural factors at work as well. Whether through diligent research or less formal interactions with learners, I hope to be sensitive to the non-linear paths some of us take when learning new languages. As a member of this SIG, I look forward to learning from others interested in learner development.

Reference

Carney, N. (2015). J. P. Lantolf and M. E. Poehner: *Sociocultural Theory and the Pedagogical Imperative in L2 Education: Vygotskian Praxis and the Research/Practice Divide* [Review of the book *Sociocultural theory and the pedagogical imperative in l2 education: Vygotskian praxis and the research/practice divide* by J. P. Lantolf & M. E. Poehner]. *Applied Linguistics* 36, 143-6. doi: 10.1093/applin/amu073

The Learner Development Journal: Call for Editors for Issue 2

With the first issue of *The Learner Development Journal* on Visualizing Learner Development well underway under the skillful editorship of Darren Elliott and Hugh Nicoll and heading for publication in 2017, we would like to invite proposals for the second issue of the journal due for publication in 2018. If you are interested in editing an issue (with one or more others) and can bring together a group of contributors with a shared interest in exploring any theme relating to learner development, we would love to hear from you by June 15th.

For further details about the aim, scope and policy of the Learner Development Journal, please see <http://ld-sig.org/ld-journal-concept/>

If you have any questions or would like to check any details with us, please do feel free to contact us.

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