LEARNING LEARNING

学習の 学習

Newsletter of the Learner Development SIG

INTRODUCTION

As Golden Week approaches and the warmer spring weather has started to move in, we hope that you all can relax and take a break from what has been a busy start to a new school year. In that spirit, we would like to extend a very warm welcome to the 2017 Spring Issue of Learning Learning! In this issue, we have brought together a number of articles that look back on some interesting events in 2016.

In Members' Voices, Mina Hirano, Rob Lee, Michiyo Masui, Diane Jacob, Daniel Hooper and Mark Pileggi share from their experience and practice, in articles that reflect their insight and their sense of humour.

Reflections brings together the observations of members who participated in the Creating Communities: Learning Together 3 (CCLT3) held this past December as they look back on what they took away from this successful event.

Get Together reports on the successful organization of both the Tokyo Get-Togethers and the Kansai to the World student conference. Organizers examine the successes and challenges associated with organizing each event and discuss possible directions these events will take in 2017.

In this issue's Focus On, we provide a sample of what to expect in our upcoming Summer Issue. Yusei Ando shares his ideas on goal setting and learner motivation, which are commented on by readers, Rob Stevenson and Ben Thanyawatpokin.

In addition, Alison Stewart reviews and analyses Carol Everhard and Linda Murphy's (Eds.) Assessment and Autonomy in Language Learning, which provides a theoretical underpinning and practical approach to examining the relationship between assessment and learner autonomy.

In our LD Grants Update section, 2016's Learner Development Grant recipients, Nathaniel Carney and Daniel Hougham share their experiences developing a English Storytime program for local libraries (Nathaniel Carney) and the transformative effect of attending JALT 2016 (Daniel Hougham).

With so much to read, we hope that you will also get a chance to look at the message from LD SIG coordinators Matthew Porter and Mayumi Abe, who share with us some of the changes that have taken place within the SIG committee, a quick update on the progress of ILA 2018 from Steve Brown and of course, get acquainted with our new publicity coordinator, Nicole Gallagher and 2017's LD PANSig Grant recipient Farrah Hasnain in the **Member's Profile** section.

Don't forget to look at **LD Connect** and stay up-to-date with LD SIG events happening around you!

So, sit back, relax, and happy reading!

Arnold F. Arao
Editor, Learning Learning
May 1, 2017
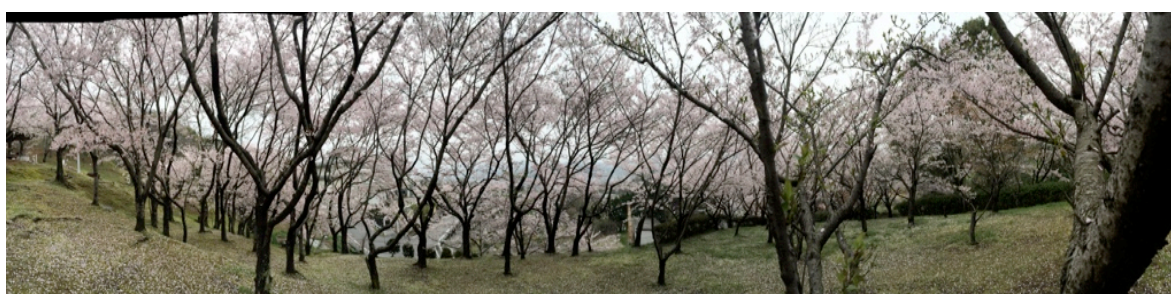
ゴールデンウィークに近づき、暖かい春の季節がやって来ました。新学期が始まり慌ただしい時間をお過ごしかと思いますが、休暇中に日頃の疲れを癒し、リラックスできることを願っています。さて、Learning Learning では2017年春号が発行となります。今号では、2016年の興味深い出来事を振り返る多数の記事が満載です。

MEMBER'S VOICES では Mina Hirano, Rob Lee, Michiyo Masui, Diane Jacob, Daniel Hooper and Mark Pileggi たちによる洞察力に富み、ユーモア溢れた経験談や実践についての記事が書かれています！

Reflections では、昨年、１２月に開催された Creating Communities: Learning Together に参加されたメンバーからイベントの様子についてお届けします。

Get Together では、学生議会の Tokyo Get Together 及び Kansai to the World の記事が掲載されています。同記事では、それぞれのイベントの課題や成功例、将来の方向性について取り上げています。

Focus Onでは、今夏に発行される同誌では、Yusei Ando の目標設定と学習者の動悸について書かれた記事について、読者の Rob と Ben がコメントします。また、Carol Everhard and Linda Murphy's の 著、評価と学習者オートノミーの関係について理論的解釈と実践的なアプローチが述べられたAssessment and Autonomy in Language Learning について Alison Stewart の書評が載っています。LD GRANTS では、2016 年度学習者ディベロップメント SIG 助成金受賞者の

Nathaniel Carney と Daniel Hougham が彼ら主催のプログラム「English Storytime」がどのように発展したか、また 2016 年度の JALT のイベントに参加し、どのように変化したのかを語ってくれました。

さて、すでにたくさんの記事をご紹介しましたが、LD Sig コーディネーターの Matthew Porter と Mayumi Abe からのメッセージにも是非目を通してください。LD Sig の変更事項が載っています。また、新しいメンバー２名、2017 年度の学習者ディベロップメント SIG 助成金受賞者の Farrah Hasnain と PR コーディネーターの Nicole Gallagher をご紹介します！

LD Connect で全国のイベントの最新情報もご確認くださいね。では、リラックスして本誌を楽しんでください。

MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATORS

With the arrival of spring, educators in Japan watch their soon-to-be former students graduate and a few weeks later, as the cherry blossoms vibrantly color the tree-lined paths near school, welcome fresh-faced and eager students. Anyone who has managed to stay in Japan as an educator longer than one year also knows that this period between March and April is a time for people to migrate. At work, this means that that supportive staff member who had a talent for operating every piece of equipment in the CALL lab and also comprehended how these pieces fit to support better learning opportunities, gets moved to the Admissions Office. The department head or principal retires. A beloved colleague moves to a different school or a different country. And the SIG is no different as we shuffle to new jobs, take on new roles in other facets of our lives, or just decide we need to slow down.

With much gratitude, and a tinge of sadness, we must bid farewell to some fine people we've had the pleasure of working on the committee as they graduate and move on. First, we'd like to acknowledge Lee Arnold and Joël Laurier from the Program Team. Lee served for two years as the head of the Program Team. Joel Laurier has bravely decided to take on a new role in JALT, helping to coordinate collaborations between and among SIGs and chapters. Next, we'd like to express our deep gratitude to the outgoing Publicity Team: Kie Yamamoto, Tomoko Imamura, and team leader Rob Moreau. Rob has kindly offered to continue in the role of illustrator and we are thankful that we will still be able to call upon him to provide us with his creative designs.

In local news, the get-together teams have experienced some major changes as well since the AGM in November. Perhaps the biggest change is the temporary departure of Ken Ikeda who has been an integral part of the Tokyo Get-Togethers since 2012, graciously hosting the meetings as well as the Creating Community mini-conference at his university. We cannot thank Ken enough and we'd like to wish him a refreshing and productive sabbatical. In Kyoto, Anita Aden had to step away from the Kansai Get-Together Team, which she had led for the past year, and we hope to see her back again when her schedule permits. The SIG is grateful for all her support with the Kansai group.

Volunteers have come forward to fill the gaps left by their departures, some totally new to the committee and others agreeing to take on new or expanded roles, and we are extremely grateful. Blair Barr stepped back from his role on this team to take over the Program Team, which welcomes new team members Daniel Hooper and Rob Morel. If you happen to attend a forum at PanSIG (Akita) in May, JALTCALL in June (Matsuyama), or JALT2017 in November (Tsukuba), please welcome them and lavish them with praise. Nicole Gallagher has volunteered to head the new Publicity Team. Nicole is already working with the committee to develop a monthly news update to help members keep abreast of all of the SIG-related deadlines, publication releases, and upcoming events. Ian Hurrell and Jenny Morgan have joined the Tokyo Get-Together team as it begins meeting at different locations in Tokyo, and Agnes Patko, who joined the Kansai Get-Together team from Tokyo in April 2016, and will now be organizing the meetings. We are confident that this year will be another active and productive year for the Tokyo and Kansai groups.

We cannot say thank you enough to all of the members who have supported and contributed to the development of our SIG. We hope that the LD SIG will always be a community where every member can grow through collaborating with each other.

Mayumi Abe and Mathew Porter
LD SIG, Co-Coordinators

春の訪れとともに日本の教育者たちは卒業生を送り出し、桜が咲き始めるとともに新入生を迎え入れます。日本では３月から４月は出会いや別れの季節です。

CALL を熟知していた有能なスタッフがアドミッションオフィスに転属になったり、部長や学長が退職したり、または、仲の良かった同僚が違う学校や国に移動したりもします。LD SIG も同様です。私たちも新しい仕事に就いたり、新しい役割を引き受けたり、あるいは生活をスローダウンさせることもあるでしょう。

では、まずは感謝の気持ちを持って、お世話になった方々を送り出しましょう。

初めに、プログラムチームの Lee Arnold と Joel Laurier です。Lee Arnold は２年間プログラムチームのリーダーを務めました。Joel Laurier は勇敢にも JALT で新しい役割を果たす決意をし、今後は全国の SIG とチャプター間の協力をコーディネートすることになります。

PR チームでは Kie Yamamoto, Tomoko Imamura、そしてチームリーダーの Rob Moreau が同チームを離れることとなりました。なお、Rob Moreau は今後も継続してイラスト作成を担当します。これからも彼のクリエイティブなデザインが楽しみです。

各地域においても、昨年 11 月の AGM 以降、いくつかの大きな変化がありました。おそらく一番大きな変化は、Tokyo Get Together チームの Ken Ikeda が一時的にチームを離れることでしょう。Ken Ikeda は 2012 年より Tokyo Get Together で中心的な役割を果たし、彼の勤める大学で定期的集会および Creating Community mini-conference が開催されてきました。Ken には感謝の意を尽くせませんが、充実したサバティカルを過ごされますよう願っております。

京都では、昨年より Kansai Get Together チームのリーダーを務めていた Anita Aden がチームから離れます。スケジュールの都合がついた時点でまた戻ってきてくれることを願うと共に、関西チームを盛り上げてくださった功績に感謝いたします。

彼らが新しい一歩を踏み出した後、有り難いことに、多くのメンバーがボランテイアを申し出てくれました。Blair Barr はプログラムチームのリーダーとなり、Daniel Hooper と Rob Morel が新しいメンバーとしてチームに加わりました。もし５月の PanSIG （秋田)や６月の JALTCALL （松山)、あるいは 11 月の JALT2017 （つくば)で彼らを見かけたら是非お声がけをお願いします。

Nicole Gallagher は新しく PR チームリーダーとなり、メンバーへの最新情報を記載したニュースレターを作成しています。

Tokyo Get Together チームには新しく Ian Hurrell と Jenny Morgan が加わり、今後はこれまでとは別の場所で集会を行います。また、昨年の春に Tokyo Get Together チームから Kansai Get Together チーム に移った Agnes Patko は、今後は関西での集会を主催していきます。

SIG を発展させてきたメンバーの皆さまには感謝の気持ちでいっぱいです。心よりお礼を申し上げます。今後も LD SIG はお互いの結びつきを通して成長していけるコミュニティーでありたいと思います。

MEMBER PROFILES

Nicole Gallagher: *Learner Development Publicity Chairperson*

My name is Nicole Gallagher and I have recently joined the Publicity Team of the Learner Development SIG. I first got involved with the LD SIG in Spring 2015 after receiving a conference grant to attend PanSIG 2015 in Kobe. After meeting several members, I quickly became attracted to the ethos and collaborative community of the SIG. As a relatively fresh migrant from Kumamoto to Tokyo, LD SIG events, such as Tokyo Get-Togethers and CCLT3, have provided spaces for me to share and construct new ideas of learning and teaching.

As a member of the Publicity Team, I will be responsible for sending out monthly announcements of our SIG activities and events. If you are involved in something and want to publicize it, get in contact with me! nicolemariegallagher@gmail.com

Farrah Hasnain: *Learner Development PANSIG 2017 Grant Recipient*

Hello! My name is Farrah Hasnain and I am originally from Washington, D.C. I am currently in my third year of the JET Program as an ALT at a public senior high school.

I will be presenting at this year's PanSIG conference. My presentation will be on the effectiveness of team-teaching in Japanese high schools. My study, featured in the presentation, includes surveys and interviews with ALTs and JTEs nationwide. The survey questions focused on their perceived roles in the classroom and their opinions on their pre-service and in-service training from their employers (boards of education, programs, dispatch companies). I look forward to seeing you there and hearing your ideas!

LEARNING LEARNING PUBLICATION TEAM

MEMBERS' VOICES
ＬＤＳＩＧメンバー謙声

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 new members of the Learner Development SIG in 2016 for sharing their voices with readers of *Learning Learning.* We hope other SIG members will also contribute their voices to the next issue of *Learning Learning.* If you are interested in doing so, please contact the Members' Voices coordinator, Andy Barfield, barfield.andy@gmail.com.

"ＬＤＳＩＧメンバーの声"

ＳＩＧ会員の皆様に多様な形式・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スペースです。以下のような様々な声を募集しております。

・　ご自身の学習者および教育者としてプロフィール。（約 100-200 語）

・　ご自身の（語学）学習者として経験で、特定の段階における逸話の省察。（約　200-500 語）

・　ご自身の現在の取組みおよび関心を寄せていることで、特に学習者ディベロプメント（また学習者オートノミー）に関するもの。（約 500-800 語）

・　学習者ディベロプメントに関するご自身の研究内容の概要と方向性。（約 500-800 語）

・　勤務先の教育環境の紹介や学習者ディベロプメントに関する取り組み。（約　800-1200 語）

・　その他、学習者ディベロプメントに関する内容。

２０１６　年学習者ディベロプメント研究部会に入会され、今号で『学習の学習』の読者に様々な声を共有していただいたSIG会員の皆様に感謝申し上げます。

Why Do I Learn and Teach English?

Mina Hirano
Adjunct Lecturer, Nanzan University

My path as an English learner somehow started in Mongolia when I was thirteen. It was my dream to visit there ever since I saw a picture of a Mongolian nomad boy, riding a horse in the ocean-like grassland under the blue sky. Until I visited there for a short homestay at a local traditional family's *ger* as my first trip abroad, I wasn't so happy about learning English at school. I wanted to study something really new to me such as Mongolian or Chinese, but I had to study the same language as everybody else due to the school system. However, when I encountered people with a different language and culture for the first time under the beautiful Mongolian blue sky, I was fascinated by communicating over and between different cultures and languages. The local people didn't speak English so I talked with them in broken Mongolian and a little Japanese, and, for some reason, I developed my English a little bit. At that point, my motivation towards learning English suddenly grew as I wished so hard, "I want to make friends all over the world! Therefore, I must learn English first!" That wish led me to study at a local high school in California for a year when I was 15 years old and at the University of Oregon for six months four years later.

My second turning point was when I went back to university after working for a while as an English tutor and also a caregiver for children with autistic behavior, in order to get a junior and senior high school English teacher's license. One professor asked, "Why do you want to teach English?"

I tried to explain how learning English broadened my perspective and the world so that I wanted my future students to be able to have the same experience as me. He was not content with my answer and said, "You must find a concrete reason why you teach English that makes sense for every single student in Japan." Since then, I started to look for my answer to that question.

When I entered graduate school in 2014 to do a Master's in Linguistics, my learner identity broadened further and I started to explore the world of research using English. My first small qualitative research project was about English learners' identity. I never forget how one of my participants described her identity as an English learner. Although she was Japanese (an English teacher and also a graduate school student back then), I interviewed her in English. She commented, "Learning English broadened my personality and the way of thinking. It's like you have more colorful clothes in your dresser. Before you learn English, it was only white and black. But now I have colorful dresses in my dresser."

She told me that she used to be reserved and sometimes timid to express her opinions and feelings among Japanese people before she learned English. However, as she started to use English and made foreign friends, she realized that it is essential to show her thoughts and feelings when communicating with people in English. As she did this, she began to enjoy expressing herself in this way. At the same time, she could keep more reserved way of communication with her Japanese friends. It was fascinating for me to gain confirmation from another that that learning English could expand a learner's identity.

For my Master's dissertation, I investigated how and what kinds of assistance were provided between 16 low proficiency high school learners and their teacher in a natural EFL classroom setting, using a sociocultural framework. It was a 2-year case study, and my participants belonged to the bottom class of three English classes according to their proficiency levels. I wanted to explore what was happening in that class because even though the majority of the learners were having difficulty in learning generally

and some had learning disorders, there was a marked sense of mutual assistance and a family-like atmosphere between the people in that class. As a result, I found out that participant learners made up for their personal limitation of English proficiency and knowledge by collective scaffolding. For example, if one of the members of the small group didn't know how to solve English grammatical drills, one started to explain the grammar first, then, when that person was at a loss for words due to lack of knowledge or confidence, the other member naturally took over. And if the second explainer made a mistake while explaining, the third member would assist the explainer's self-correction. This kind of collective scaffolding was often triggered by the teacher's mediation, but how and when to assist each other depended on learners. Through this research study, I learned when and how learners can succeed in assisting to each other and how significant the teacher's role is to facilitate that happened. It was also a good opportunity for me to get to know my participants' version of the answer to the question, "Why do you study English?"

After I finished my master's degree, I started my career as an English lecturer at university last April. As I teach, I feel I really need to know the answer to that question, especially when I found out that the majority of my students have a sense of inferiority as English learners. And this question has also led me to my current research interest in learner's identity. I'd like to finish my long self-introduction (thank you so much for your time and patience!) by quoting Professor Noam Chomsky, who gave me a great hint to the question, "*Why do I teach English?*" I had the privilege to ask him this question when he gave a lecture at Sophia University in 2014. I asked Chomsky mainly about the role of language. Then he calmly and positively responded, "Language is like a hammer. You can use it to build a house, or hit somebody in the head. It depends on our determination."

So, why do I learn and teach English? For now, my answer to that question is to teach learners that we learn and use language not simply to pursue a successful career, but also to construct a house where every person, with their different cultures, thoughts and colors, can live together harmoniously. I'm looking forward to hearing your answers as to why you also learn or teach English!

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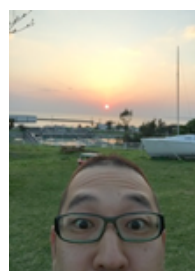
Do You Remember the First Time …

Robb J.Y. Lee
Hiroshima University

Aloha and Hauʻoli kēia hui ʻana o kāua (It is pleasure to meet you). I was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii. I am currently enrolled and working on my Master's degree in curriculum and education at Hiroshima University. It is a great pleasure and honor to be a new member of JALT and the Learner Development SIG and to also connect with all of you through Members' Voices. The reason why I joined JALT and the LD SIG is that it's my mission to learn about new teaching methodologies, technologies and new ways of think to education and English education in particular. As the saying goes, "Seek to understand, then to be understood."

If I may begin by asking you, do you remember the first time you saw the ocean? Do you remember the smell of the ocean or the sound of waves crashing on the shore? How about the feeling of fear and excitement as you were about to kick your slippers off and jump in? After a bit of hesitation and self-deliberation, you take the plunge and your brain begins firing and

creating new synapses to record this experience. You realize that the water is salty to your tongue, and that this vast body of water really is not a lake or river. It actually stretches way beyond the limits of your comprehension.

As a master's student at Hiroshima University's Graduate School of International Development and Economic Cooperation (IDEC), you could say that I have been blessed with the opportunity to meet amazing people from all over the globe. In a strange twist of fate, I crossed paths with such a gentleman from Rwanda as I was going to pick up my application for the University. I introduced myself to him and struck up a conversation about where he was from and why he was studying in Hiroshima. As we departed ways and said our goodbyes, I thought that this was the end of the encounter and I would never see him again. Not a week later, this fellow from Rwanda was standing in front of my house with my wife introducing him to my children and father-in-law. Oddly enough he was sent on a 1-2 day homestay with a Japanese family, and it happened to be with my family.

Life never ceases to amaze me and this was no exception. Fate literally brought him to my doorstep and two months later, we decided to take him to see and go swimming in the ocean for the very first time in his life. It was a very deep and powerful moment for the both of us because he had never seen the ocean before and I had never met someone his age who had never been in the ocean. We were beside ourselves with absolute joy and wonderment.

It reminded me of the little things we often take for granted in our busy world, that even the most mundane of experiences can lead us down the path of our greatest learning. Also, as teachers and educators, we have the responsibility to create the opportunities and conditions that facilitate learning for our students. We are the bridge that connects the educational needs of our students to the knowledge and experiences that lead to higher levels of self-discovery and learning.

Kolb succinctly noted in his proposal of the Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) that:

"Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (Kolb, 1984).

In many ways, I am quite similar to my Rwandan friend in that I am immersing myself in the ocean of graduate studies at Hiroshima University. I hope to learn more in detail about international education in the context of Japan and the intercultural competency levels of domestic Japanese university students. My main research interest is in the area of intercultural exchanges that occur between domestic and international students and how these exchanges are transformative with regards to English ability and intercultural competency. I hope to meet, talk, learn and connect with you in the near future. Thank you very much and Mahalo Nui Loa.

Reference

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development (Vol. 1)*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. Retrieved from http://www.nwlink.com/~%E2%80%89donClark/hrd/styles/kolb.html

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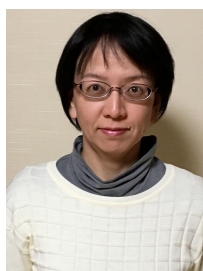
"Sensei, my major has nothing to do with English."

Michiyo Masui
Tohoku Bunka Gakuen University

Hello everyone. My name is Michiyo Masui. I've been working as an English teacher for nearly 20 years. I started teaching young learners aged from 3 to 12 and switched my teaching settings to university a few years later. Now I work for Tohoku Bunka Gakuen University in Sendai, Miyagi, and mainly teach "compulsory" English classes to non-English majors.

Many of my students study health services and rehabilitation and are hoping to work as nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, and orthoptists in the future. The rest of the students make a special study of social sciences such as economics, politics, law and economics, etc. English is one of the liberal arts subjects that the students must take in their first year at the university.

Over the past few years, I've been having difficulty in dealing with students who have no willingness and interest towards learning English. They say things like:

- "English isn't important in my future career."

- "It's fine not to be able to speak English in Japan."

- "English isn't necessary to pass a nursing national exam."

It is not easy to change their negative feelings and low self-confidence towards learning English, which have been developed over many years. In addition, the majority of my students stop taking English classes by the end of their junior year in order to start their job-related specialized studies. Sadly, some students and teachers claim that English should be an elective subject, and those students probably will not take any elective English classes. Their decisions must be respected, but is learning English really a hindrance to becoming a properly qualified health professional?

Under these limited circumstances, studying English has to be meaningful for each student. I have been seeking for answers to the following questions: "What is my role as a university teacher?", "What can I share with my students as a learner?", and "How can I link the isolated English subject with other studies so that the students can continue studying English?"

I have not found robust answers to the questions, but I would like to tell my students that acquiring English will expand their opportunities and help them choose what they really want to do in the future. In order to come to more critical understanding of these issues, I joined the Learner Development SIG. I hope to gain new knowledge and ideas to develop my students' learner autonomy and look forward to meeting and talking with LD SIG members at conferences and other events in the future.

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Perceived Self-Efficacy: Building the Confidence to Speak

Diane Jacob
Osaka English Village

A strong influence on the principles that guide my approach to teaching English is my own experience in learning and using languages. For many years, I studied French. When I was in the fourth grade, my mother enrolled me in an early morning, extracurricular French class, and I continued studying French up until I graduated university with a B.A. in French Language and Literature. However, for the majority of these years of study, I was unable to use it functionally. That is, until my third year of university when I enrolled in a study abroad program in Paris and was pushed to speak. From then on, I was able to make more sense of the relationship between form and meaning, and furthermore, I became more confident and motivated to learn. As a result of my own experiences with French, I am especially interested in encouraging students to put effort into speaking in their second language (L2). Be that as it may, I find that it is not always easy for students to produce speech. Various factors can influence a student's motivation and willingness to communicate. These factors include perceived self-efficacy, a construct related to self-confidence that I find has been influential in my own learning behavior and therefore could be applicable to my students as well.

Of course, I have not been the only person to notice the importance of output. In 1985, Merrill Swain observed that L2 students in French immersion programs, while highly fluent, were not developing a native-like speaking proficiency, despite receiving plenty of comprehensible input (Swain, 1985). She argued that students were unable to develop this proficiency because students were not required to produce language at native-level complexity. According to Swain's (1995) output hypothesis, output serves three functions that shift focus from semantic processing to syntactic processing: *noticing*, *hypothesis-testing*, and *metalinguistic processing*. Output also serves to develop fluency, which is a characteristic of automaticity that supports a functional use of the L2.

In support of this theory, I have found that my language proficiency has developed as a result of producing meaningful output. For example, in a conversation with a Japanese colleague, I wanted to say, "*I think _____ is more _____ than _____,*" but was unable to formulate the sentence. This prompted me to seek out the appropriate linguistic knowledge, whereupon learning the relevant forms, I proceeded to try my new knowledge in other conversations. As a result of this and other experiences, I have developed a functional use of Japanese, despite not having the time to devote to proper studying. The role that output plays in language development is therefore significant.

That being said, I still find that speaking often seems to be the language skill that L2 students struggle with the most. Output involves different, often less practiced cognitive processes than does processing input. Furthermore, speaking involves a higher risk of losing face. In the face of these difficulties, I have looked towards motivation to encourage students to continue in their efforts to speak. In my research into factors that can influence motivation, *perceived self-efficacy* has proven to be an interesting issue.

Bandura (1986) defined perceived self-efficacy (PSE) as a "set of self-referent judgments arrived at through cognitive processing of diverse sources of efficacy information" (p. 362). In other words, PSE is what an individual thinks he can or cannot do, regardless of actual ability. Learners form these beliefs based on *social-comparative information* ("He can do it, so can I!"), *social persuasion* ("You say I can do it? OK!"), *direct mastery experiences* ("I did it before, I can do it

again!"), and *physiological responses* ("I feel extremely anxious, I cannot do it!"). In L2 acquisition, these perceptions can influence whether or not students participate in positive learning behavior, such as willingly and earnestly participating in exercises designed to elicit meaningful speaking practice.

Although helping my students achieve a certain level of language proficiency is important, I have found that I should also consider the development of students' perceived self-efficacy. I became interested in PSE through research into factors influencing students' willingness to produce output; however, perceived self-efficacy is an important concept in many areas of L2 acquisition. I have heard a student say many times, "I'm just not good at languages." Though this statement paints the issue in broad strokes, it stems from a low perception of self-efficacy. A final point that I would like to highlight about PSE is that it is task and domain specific. A student can have high speaking PSE when conversing with friends but have low speaking PSE when it comes to addressing the class as a whole. Also, a student can have high listening PSE but low speaking PSE. When a student claims not to be good at languages, it can be worthwhile to pinpoint the reason for this statement.

In sum, in order to encourage better learning habits and build motivation, I am interested in approaches that can positively influence students' perceived self-efficacy. How a student perceives his or her competence can affect behavior and motivation. Furthermore, motivation, potentially more so than aptitude, can be a strong predictor for successful language development and acquisition. Therefore, I believe that PSE is a construct that warrants further research in how it relates to learner development in second language acquisition.

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A Storm in a Booth - Learner Autonomy in Japanese and *eikaiwa*

Daniel Hooper

Hi everyone, my name is Daniel Hooper and I recently started working as a lecturer in the English Language Institute (ELI) at Kanda University of International Studies in April. I have been teaching in Japan for ten years with much of that time spent working in *eikaiwa* schools. I joined the Learner Development SIG last year and have found it to be a warm and welcoming group of people who are earnestly trying to foster student development. Hopefully this short story will serve as a cheery "hello" to other LD SIG members from someone who was greatly shaped by learner autonomy, and who later fought to promote it in *eikaiwa* schools.

I guess a decent metaphor for my initial relationship with language learning autonomy would be a driftwood raft in shark infested waters. It wasn't pretty: shoddily put together and lacking

engineering know-how but sturdy and buoyant enough to stop me becoming lunch. Left to fend for myself in rural Saitama, my first foray into self-directed learning stemmed from necessity rather than any intellectual belief in concepts like "learner autonomy," mainly because I wasn't aware that such ideas existed. The attractive notion that I would simply "soak the language up over time" quickly evaporated as I met a number of other teachers who had been deftly evaded by Japanese competence despite living here for around a decade. Without any deliberate attempt to study the language many still needed to pull out the "look angry and speak loudly in English" approach whenever they encountered a communicative hurdle. At a diminutive 165 centimeters tall, I thought I had better prepare a backup plan to the intimidation card and so got out the textbooks.

But they weren't really working for me.

Neither were online classes that I started taking in 2009, where essentially I was guided through another textbook filled with "textbooky" sentences of tennis games in the park, the exploits of "Taro" and "Ken," and missed buses that failed to either stimulate me or take root in my brain. In the end, I felt I wasn't getting enough bang for my buck and instead opted for the more economic option of a library card. I started borrowing children's books on a range of topics (usually in the afternoon when kids were in school, as I felt less creepy as a 30-year-old man thumbing through books on dinosaurs and bullet trains). Reading books in Japanese was a valuable experience for me as it both increased my linguistic knowledge and allowed me to regain the childlike curiosity I felt as a kid in the village library where my mother worked, surrounded by unfamiliar and exciting words and pictures. These experiences motivated me to eventually strive to create more opportunities related to personalized and autonomous learning for my students in *eikaiwa*.

Later, as an *eikaiwa* instructor I was put in charge of the same textbooky language that had failed to invigorate my own language studies and began to see myself in the students who sat in the clinical-looking cubicles for the same 40-minute stretch each week. Just as with my experience, I failed in many cases to register any real linguistic development in students as they stumbled through the "Complaining at a hotel" role play that they had done eight times before, but would in all likelihood never have a use for outside of our grey little booth. Eventually, I began to offer graded readers to my students for out-of-class study. This was followed by spaced repetition flash card applications and websites featuring graded news articles. I was excited about my job for the first time in years.

But then… a blip. That was all. The students didn't seem interested. But why? I had read all of the studies, attended the seminars, shown enthusiasm, and offered support. Why wouldn't students want to use free materials? Weren't they paying for classes? They should be motivated, shouldn't they? I was desperate to understand. I read articles on everything I could find about *eikaiwa*, on Charisma Men (Bailey, 2007), educational fad-dieting (Sapunaru-Tamas & Tamas, 2012), and leisure and consumption (Kubota, 2011). I also was intrigued that other attempts to develop learner autonomy, much like mine, often fell disappointingly flat (Makino, 2016; Shigeo-Brown, 2005).

Since then, I have continued to push onwards in my mission of promoting out-of-class study in a world I feel constantly undulates between promise and futility. My relationship with the *eikaiwa* industry has been at times stormy, at times almost oppressively calm, but always with the hope that things can be better. The conversation school industry is, in many ways, almost untouched by academic inquiry. This is perhaps partly due to a lack of "researchers" working in *eikaiwa* and partly because of the bad "McEnglish" (McNeill, 2004) reputation that these schools have both deservedly and

undeservedly made for themselves. I see this both as an opportunity (selfishly as a researcher) and a desperate problem (as someone who watched students' money change hands week after week). The daily ups and downs of my *eikaiwa* classrooms as well as the research on *eikaiwa* that I discovered later in my career have often given me more questions to consider rather than settling old ones. *Eikaiwa* is a puzzle that I sometimes feel stubbornly does not want to be solved. However, over the years, I have met students who have inspired me and convinced me that they deserve better than "one size fits all." Maybe for that simple reason alone, I have grown to believe that the world of *eikaiwa* and the promotion of learner autonomy within it is something that deserves my time and effort in the years to come.

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It's Good to Be the Jack

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What do the words *skateboarding*, *DJ*, *interpreting*, *Aikido*, *wedding pastor*, *surfing*, *Bikkurimark*, *father*, *associate professor*, *snowboarding*, and *MegaBikk* all have in common?

Well, I suppose the only answer could be, me. I was a happy child raised in a Christian home, the younger brother with a flair for adventure. A lack of focus on any one thing led me to try a little of everything. While I like team sports, I'm happiest riding sideways on any type of board. My studies were broad and *Bikkurimark* is my identity as a computer graphic designer, which is what I graduated from the University of Central Florida with, back in 1997. However, a love for interaction with people led me to become a teacher instead. From the Eastern seaboard of the United States to Japan as a JET working for MEXT I landed in Matsuyama, Ehime, right after university.

Living in Ehime was a great chance to learn Japanese, and, while studying the language, I also took up DJing, which began mostly to avoid keeping up with my best friend from

Ireland's drinking pace. Life in Ehime gave me time to learn written Japanese at work and long road trips with surfers not interested in learning English helped my spoken Japanese immensely. I got married to a lovely Japanese girl from Matsuyama, and we started out as newlyweds by moving to Osaka. I began helping at church and was interpreting there, I trained to get a minister's license and I also began marrying Japanese couples.

Why Japan? Well, I traced it back to being mugged for my candy as a child one Halloween in Massachusetts where I grew up. That was the reason for me wanting to learn martial arts to defend myself. It was the defining moment that my interest in Asia was born. That never went away, and I now have a black belt in Tae Kwon Do and a 3rd degree black belt in Aikido thanks to those misguided high school kids that attacked my older brother and myself.

While working at Osaka Gakuin University's I-Chat Lounge, I was able to take an online Master of Science in Education specialization in Curriculum, Instruction and Technology from Nova Southeastern University (NSU) in Florida. I now work at Kobe City College of Technology and teach English communication and TOEIC classes as a full-time associate professor full time. I love it there, and, while I'm not an engineer myself, all the brotherly bonding time spent playing video games growing up became valuable experiences that now allow me to hold friendly conversations on tech-related subjects and join students on occasion for online fun, usually under the alias of MegaBikk.

If there is a point to this chaotic story of mine, it's that no matter how trivial or seemingly negative an event or hobby may be to others, if you keep a positive way of thinking, all of those things can give you individuality and strengths in a combination that nobody else could duplicate. So to all the "Liberal Arts" majors out there, "*There is hope!*"

Mark
Jack of all Trades

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FOCUS ON

The Realization of Goal Setting and the Necessity of Guidance

目標設定の実現とガイダンスの必要性

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Abstract

In this short paper, I consider the issue of goal-setting theory in L2 teaching and show how it is applied to a real teaching situation. Since it was introduced by Locke and Latham (1990), goal-setting theory has been applied in many academic contexts and numerous research studies have supported its application to L2 teaching as well. However, as an English student for three years at university, I strongly feel that this theory has still not yet been fully utilized by teachers in the classroom. The first half of this paper therefore deals with development of goal-setting theory and its relationship to language teaching. In the second half, its application to a teaching situation is considered from a student's point of view. Finally, I conclude this paper with a strong suggestion that teachers should pay more careful attention to goal-setting theory in their teaching.

要旨

本論では、第二言語教育における目標設定理論について取り上げ、またどのように実際の教 育現場で適用されるのかを第二言語学習者の視点から検討した。Locke、Latham に提唱されて以来目標設定理論に関する数多くの研究が行われ、第二言語教育への応用研究も盛んに行 われてきた。しかしながら、現在まで三年間英語を大学で学んできている筆者の視点からす ると、この理論が実際の言語教育現場において教員に十分に活用されているとは言えない。 よって本論の前半では目標設定理論に関し言語教育と結びつけて述べた。次に、その言語教 育現場への応用例を学生の視点から検討した。以上の考察より、言語教育において目標設定 理論に対するより注意深い関心が必要であるという提案に至った。

Keywords: goal setting, motivation, language learning/teaching, student perspective 目標設定、動機付け、言語学習・教育、生徒の視点

Motivation has been one of the central focuses of teachers and researchers in the field of L2 teaching. There have been many motivational strategies suggested in order to help them motivate students to learn the target language so that facilitates students' learning in the classroom and even outside the classroom. I am a junior undergraduate student majoring in International Studies at Tokai University, and got interested in English education two years ago. Upon researching on motivational theories, I realized that much of my language learning had been immensely influenced by the degree of motivation I had at certain time, and how teachers helped me to keep it. This noticing has made me far more interested in this field. While research on motivation has been highly developed over the past several decades, it is also true that some teachers have failed to utilize or even ignored these motivational strategies in a language classroom. Therefore, my prime purpose in this article is to help teachers realize the importance of motivational strategies in a classroom, and a goal-setting theory is focused on as one of them. My secondary

purpose is to show how important teachers' help is when the theory is applied.

Background

A goal-setting theory was introduced by Locke and Latham in 1990, suggesting that people are more likely to deliver a great performance when they are provided with specific, difficult yet attainable goals and that feedback relevant to performance has also a crucial role in allowing them to be committed to seeking the goals (Locke & Latham, 1990; Latham, 2003). Specific goals refer to ones with specific dates, time or other components to be attained so that performers work on it on a step-by-step basis with clear visions. In this regard, it is reasonable to assume that this theory is readily and broadly applicable to a L2 teaching situation since language learning or acquisition requires a long-time and demanding process for students.

However, looking around at my fellow students at university reveals that most of them do not have so-called "specific, difficult, yet attainable goals" for English learning. For instance, Japanese university students often aim to get a high score on the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) that many companies require them to have. Similarly, others might want to improve speaking skills which enable them to be able to communicate with foreigners or English speakers. These students are initially motivated to learn English, but from the perspective of a goal-setting theory, they are less likely to be successful because these goals are not specific. To make their goals more specific, in the former case, students should also care about "*Specifically what score is necessary?*" and "*By what means it should be achieved?*" In the latter case, "*With whom do I want to have a conversation?*" and "*What is my purpose in having this conversation?*" These are vital questions to be answered by students themselves.

In my three years at university, I have spent a considerable amount of time talking with my fellow students about our English teachers and reflecting on the extent teachers help students set and reach specific attainable goals. My provisional conclusion is as follows: "A good English teacher" is often referred to as an "entertaining, easy-to-talk to, and sometimes funny teacher" by students, but "a great teacher" is seen as one whom students gain great benefits from and are somehow motivated by to learn language for certain purposes. Reaching this conclusion has also allowed me to realize that many teachers in a way have succeeded in motivating students tentatively, but only a few of them have actually been successful in helping them keep long-term, lasting positive learning attitudes. Despite the fact that teachers are too busy to deal with every aspect of learning, to go beyond merely teaching language, teachers should try to expend more effort and time on helping and encouraging students to more clearly visualize their language learning. In order to achieve this, I would like to suggest a goal-setting theory as a useful focused activity for teachers and students in the classroom.

Goal-setting Theory in Language Teaching

Numerous studies have identified the importance of goal setting in language learning (Zimmerman, Bandura, Martinez-Pons, 1992; Alison, 1993; Kelly, 2001; Haynes, 2011). In more specific terms, Dörnyei (2001) concluded that goal setting in language learning leads to essentially positive outcomes because it helps learners achieve a high grade in school. He also categorized four mechanisms of goals in performance: First, a goal helps students to focus efforts and concentration on primary tasks, instead of being distracted by irrelevant activities. Second, having a clear goal enables students to envisage how much effort or time should be expended on studying so that they are likely to manage their learning. Third, students tend to be engaged longer in learning when they have a goal, and it is likely to last until their goal is achieved. Last, appropriate strategies for learning can be applied, based on their

specific goals. Aside from facilitating already-motivated students, Alison (1993) points out that goal setting plays a meaningful and effective role in motivating unwilling, reluctant students to learn. As such, goal setting has been widely accepted as a meaningful process for L2 learners.

After recognizing the importance of goal setting, it is now valuable to examine how it is actually applied in language teaching/learning. A goal-setting theory consists of five principles: clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback, and task complexity. It is highly desirable that goals students have include these five features. Therefore, teachers who plan to utilize goal-setting theory in their teaching should help students to take these five aspects into consideration when they ask them to set goals.

Putting Theory into Action

First, goals should be clear for both students and teachers. Especially, when specifics such as a date or score are clear, students are more likely to be motivated to learn. This can be exemplified by my personal experience. The reason why I started studying for TOEIC in the beginning was just because I thought it would be important, and hence, my motivation did not last for a long time due to my lack of a clear purpose. However, when I started planning to participate in the study abroad program offered by my university and consequently a specific score and date were determined, the incentives that I had for getting the score greatly increased and lasted continuously until I achieved the goal that I had set for myself.

Second, challenging and difficult goals within students' range of capacities are necessary for helping them commit themselves to learning and for enhancing their motivation (Bloom, 2013). In this respect, teachers should be fully aware of the importance of comprehending students' levels of English by monitoring and assessing them. Failure to do this often allows for students to be distracted from

learning. In my own case I was always struggling with this because I had a higher proficiency than my classmates; so, most of the tasks that we did in class were not challenging or difficult for me. I clearly remember one teacher at university who thankfully always took great care of students, and gave me an extra task or asked me to foster a conversation in a class. His kind consideration helped me keep motivated and find value in the tasks that we were assigned.

Third, it is important that students place a certain degree of value on goals so that they are likely to start and keep on committing themselves to achieving the goals. More often than not, university students are required to take English classes that do not interest them and consequently lead them to devalue learning itself. The great teachers that I have encountered, always attempted to connect goals to students' real-life through highly imaginative situations. In their classroom, for instance, vocabulary-building activities for TOEIC, often regarded as boring, were integrated with job-interview activities or résumé writing since TOEIC-specific vocabulary is directly related to business situations. In this sense, the goal was no longer merely to get a high score on TOEIC, which we tended to find useful only for job-hunting, but also to improve authentic communication skills or writing skills for a real-life purpose.

Fourth, feedback also plays a significant role in keeping students motivated to strive for a goal as Petchprasert (2012) has comprehensively reported. Students are highly liable to be distracted from pursuing goals, so providing them with feedback at appropriate intervals and helping them not to be distracted are essential for their development. More importantly, feedback also helps students realize where they are in the goal-achieving process, and how much they have done and they should do to attain their goals. In retrospect, my learning has always been related to, and supported by, feedback from teachers and friends alike.

Teachers' feedback was helpful particularly when pursuing certain goals such as getting an "A" score in an assignment or English proficiency test. Such feedback gave me a clear direction for achieving my goal. Peer feedback was more related to psychological aspects such as being more confident or feeling comfortable about using the target language.

Last but not least, task complexity is one of the important keys in goal setting. Despite the similarity of task *complexity* to the first aspect of task *challenge* (both involve a certain difficulty in achieving a goal), task complexity needs to be dealt with in a different way. As mentioned above, students are liable to be distracted from concentrating on the goal, or just from learning. In addition, students are more likely to fail to reach a goal when the task merely requires them to make a slight effort to achieve it. This is often seen among studious, diligent students. It is highly likely, for example, that students will quit studying if remembering all the vocabulary items from a textbook is the only task required to get a good grade in an examination.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude this article by sharing my insights into the issues that I have addressed above and discussing some new ideas that I got from presenting at CCLT3 and talking with other attendees. First of all, applying a goal-setting theory in a language classroom has a crucial role in motivating students, and more importantly, teachers should be fully aware of this fact. Following Oxford and Shearin (1994), I have the strong feeling that goal-setting theory has not been efficiently or regularly utilized in language classrooms. By taking the theory into consideration, students are more likely to engage themselves in learning, and consequently, teachers' expectations for their success are more likely to be met. However, hearing real scholars' voices and understanding their points of view and questions gave me different and fresh insights and reveals that some of them may

make more efforts than I thought they do. I found out that one of the obstacles that hinders them from taking great care of this issue is caused by time limitation and obligation to follow school rules or norms. These findings led me to think that closer and frequent collaboration between students and teachers is necessary in the classroom in order to promote a goal-setting process for learner development.

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Reader Response 1 to *The Realization of Goal-Setting and the Necessity of Guidance*

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As a learning advisor, I find myself often discussing motivation with fellow advisors, teachers, and students. For advisors, motivation is a key focus in our work and is dealt with directly. In talking with teachers, it is often expected of students to understand their own motivation on their own, while students themselves tend to be so accustomed to being led that they lack internal motivation. Yusei Ando's self-awareness to his own studies and research into motivation is a remarkable achievement all teachers might wish for their students to discover. A self-aware student can improve a class by focusing on his own learning, as well as the class as a whole. Yusei not only looked at himself and questioned what he and the teachers were doing and why, but also asked his classmates about their own goals and motivation. Yusei's article brought up questions that I often have when hearing about students like him. I have to wonder where and when that spark first appeared for him to explore his own studies. Was that commitment to reflection always there or did something, or multiple events and experiences, lead to it?

Yusei lays out a path for teachers to help encourage and guide students towards motivation. For many students like Yusei, this is often not done directly. When I have taught motivation directly, I often question the effectiveness of such teaching. Some students are willing from the start, while others simply go through the motions and claim to have been motivated, but motivation to please teachers is not the kind of motivation that is intended or needed. Can there be a way to tell the difference between true internal motivation and simply following directions? When does one end and the other begin?

Ultimately the student must be aware of his or her goal and capabilities towards achieving that goal, especially in competing in today's marketplace. A passive student becomes a passive worker, and those types of jobs cannot compete with today's globalization and automation. Students today must be able to anticipate change and react to it, which requires a nearly endless supply of internal motivation. The sooner and more frequently this is taught in school, the better their chances. Even if a student does not fully grasp the concept of their own motivation in their years of schooling, with repeated activities over time focusing on questions of motivation, the student is likely to become more capable of self-awareness.

In Yusei's further studies, I hope he explores further where motivation comes from and how it grows or withers. And hopefully that will lead to stronger evidence that teaching and learning motivation can have effects beyond the years in the classroom and help empower students to create new opportunities as they face the challenges of technological and global change.

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Reader Response 2 to *The Realization of Goal-Setting and the Necessity of Guidance*

Ben Thanyawatpokin
Himeji Dokkyo University

In this article, Yusei Ando explores the possibility of effectively using goal-setting theory in classroom. One of the features that stands out for me the most is actually not the content discussed but rather the point of view from which the article is written, that of an undergraduate learning English in Japan. Upon reading the article, I began to immediately notice the lack of consistent goals that my students have in most communication classes that I teach. Outside of a few test-based classes and a small number of students who have aspirations to go abroad, my students lack tangible goals that could apply to practical usage of English.

Of course, the syllabi I make and the materials I pass out all coalesce to emphasize "becoming able to converse in English" or "writing academically and with good structure." However, to what extent these official other-determined goals are making an impact on my students' development is not obvious. Many of these official goals are more of a formality to set a tone for a class rather than to help students develop their own self-directed learning and create the impetus they need to become motivated in the classroom.

If students themselves can set appropriate goals for themselves, then they will start to understand how and why they should do to accomplish a goal. However, even before setting a goal there must be a purpose to learning English. Simply by setting goals, students do not immediately become motivated to learn. Here, Ando explains that the study abroad program at his university served as the main catalyst to propelling him to create and meet his own English-learning goals. What of other students in other universities that may not have as much opportunity as Ando? While some students are fortunate enough to be put into a situation where they can have long-term goals involving the use of English, what of those who do not have the socio-economic status, available time, or resources at university to do so? There are still many Japanese students that can legitimately say they have never spoken to a foreigner face-to-face before. Perhaps in the future there will be a higher concentration of international presence in all universities and places of learning in Japan, but at this time goal-setting could well be hindered by the immediate resources (both pedagogical and personal) students have at hand at the universities they attend.

Reading this article, I have no doubt that Ando is a truly blessed student. In a perfect world, all of our students would have the motivation, drive, and resources that he does. As Ando's article and experiences show, goal setting is an important part of language learning. However, I feel that we must also look into how to spur students into formulating goals for themselves and helping them to take a more hands-on approach to their own education. This could be a suggestion for more research into learner autonomy or motivation, but there is also a pressing need to analyze and critique the current landscape of education in Japan.

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What is your opinion about goal-setting or motivation? Share your practice, experience, and ideas with the Learner Development community by writing a short reflection and sending it to learninglearning.editor@gmail.com .

FOCUS ON

"Taking the Elephant by the Tusks": A Review of *Assessment and Autonomy in Language Learning*, Edited by Carol

Everhard and Linda Murphy, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015

Alison Stewart
Gakushuin University

"Assessment is very often the elephant in the room that everyone can see but nobody wants to mention," writes Philip Benson in the Foreword to *Assessment and Autonomy in Language Learning.* This new anthology, edited and introduced by Carol Everhard and Linda Murphy (2015) "takes the elephant by the tusks" (p. viii). Six chapters of innovative theory-elaboration and research, together with an introduction by the editors and an epilogue by Sara Cotterall and Diane Malcolm, turn the spotlight on the difficult—and hence often ignored—relationship between assessment and autonomy. It has become widely accepted (especially in our SIG) that autonomy is a prerequisite for language learning. But is autonomy something that can be, or should be measured or assessed? Furthermore, if learner autonomy means that learners have control of all aspects of the learning process, how does that square with the requirement in most schools and universities that learners be assessed by their teachers? These are important questions for anyone who works in an educational institution—i.e., for all of us—to consider, and this book can serve as a very useful starting point for reflection, discussion, and, perhaps, new research and practice.

The chapters begin with Everhard's wide-ranging review of the autonomy-assessment relationship in the learner autonomy literature. Admitting that it is a multidimensional construct, which makes it difficult to measure, she nevertheless offers a working definition of autonomy as

a way of being or sense of self achieved through cooperatively making decisions about learning, through access to both internal and external resources. The ability to exercise autonomy depends on particular dispositions and predispositions and fluctuates according to circumstances. (p. 11)

Far more elaborate than Holec's famous definition of autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (1981, p. 3), this formulation takes account of more recent avenues of autonomy research such as learner identity, cooperative learning, and the effect of social context. It remains, however, true to Holec's definition in its focus on the learner, their own sense of self, and their ability to take action or make decisions or change according to different circumstances. By learning to reflect and assess themselves, Everhard concludes, learners become more autonomous in ways that benefit all areas of their lives.

The following three chapters take up the challenge of assessing autonomy itself. The first of these three very different chapters is by Fumiko Murase, who developed a questionnaire in order to gain a quantitative measure of learner autonomy of university students in Japan. The Measuring Instrument for Learner Autonomy (MILLA) is a Likert-scale questionnaire based on a four-dimensional model of autonomy (technical, psychological, political and social-cultural). With the final version of the questionnaire comprising 113 test items distributed to 1517 students from 18 universities, Murase used the data she obtained to test the validity and reliability of the model, as well as to gain a better understanding of the construct of autonomy itself. What is intriguing about this study is the finding that there is a strong correlation between the psychological and political dimensions of autonomy, and Murase's decision to respecify them as a single sub-dimension. My intuitive sense is that these

dimensions are basically contradictory, and I would be fascinated to see further exploration of what this correlation might mean.

The second chapter, "Assessing Learner Autonomy: A Dynamic Model" by Maria Giovanna Tassinari introduces a "dynamic and dialogical approach" to the assessment of autonomy. Like Murase, Tassinari presents her own model of autonomy, although whereas Murase's model expresses what autonomy is, Tassinari's is comprised of interconnected "components" that describe what learners do (e.g., managing my own learning, cooperating, evaluating, planning, etc.). These components are built into *descriptors*, which are derived from previous developed materials on strategies and autonomy, and which are listed in a task sheet that invites learners to evaluate their skill or willingness to learn a skill within any particular component. After a trial investigation of the model, a procedure was adopted at the author's university whereby learners advance through a series of steps in which they reflect on their experiences and use the assessment sheets to focus on components of the autonomy model that they would like to work on first on their own and subsequently in a session with an advisor.

The third chapter, "Assessment as Learner Autonomy" by Lucy Cooker offers yet another model of learner autonomy, one which, like Murase's, also derives from statistical analysis. *Q Methodology*, a research method that combines subjective views of individuals through card sorting with statistical factor analysis, is used to identify six "modes" of autonomy, and these modes can then be used in a self-assessment exercise that enables learners to identify their own autonomy mode and the strengths and weaknesses within that mode, as well as to consider alternatives. Like Tassinari's model, the modes of autonomy developed by Cooker are intended for formative self-assessment purposes as a tool of reflection and guide to decision-making about ongoing

self-development. The methods by which these assessment tools were created and the uses to which the authors have put them offer ample food for thought, and better still, the tools themselves—Murase's MILLA questionnaire, Tassinari's dynamic, dialogic checklist, and Cooker's modes of autonomy are provided in appendixes or via links for the reader to copy or download and try out for themselves.

Following these chapters come two chapters that put a different spin on the relationship between assessment and autonomy. Rather than trying to measure autonomy, these chapters describe practices where the task of assessment in a formal educational context is given to, or shared with, the learners. In "Peer- and Self-assessment of Oral Skills in Higher Education," Everhard presents a study in which assessment of oral skills in a general EFL course was triangulated between teachers, peers and individual students' self-assessment. Everhard's carefully designed study revealed that there was remarkable consistency among the three different kinds of assessment, although the discrepancy of higher peer assessment in one group suggests that group dynamics might disrupt the criteria that is more successfully used for assessment elsewhere.

Finally, in "Autonomy in Assessment," Linda Murphy describes an experiment conducted with materials based on Kolb's learning cycle that were intended to help learners of French succeed in tutor-assessed assignments. The materials consisted of a skills audit, a self-assessment sheet, a reflection sheet, a tips sheet, and a skills sheet, all of which gave learners guidance on how to complete them. Tutors were asked to support this scheme by delivering the materials to their students and by explaining their function and hoped for benefits, but the scheme was entirely voluntary for both tutors and learners. An investigation into the reactions of tutors and learners was followed up by interviews with tutors and learners selected from among those who answered positively and those who had

answered negatively. Needless to say, both tutors and students who had answered positively found that they were beneficial not only in terms of enhancing learning, but also in improving communication between tutors and students. An encouraging finding, you might think, except that only one third of the students opted to do the self-assessments; two-thirds did not bother.

For me, this points to the heart of the problem of juxtaposing assessment and autonomy. The students in Murphy's study were given the autonomy to choose whether or not to undertake the guided self-assessment exercise that was provided, something that was intended, and indeed proved to be beneficial for their learning and their academic success, and the majority of the students exercised their autonomy by choosing not to do it. This is a quite different view of autonomy, however, to the one that tends to prevail throughout this collection. Rather than the learners' capacities and attitudes, this view focuses on the political dimension of autonomy whereby institutions, more than learner psychologies, determine the extent to which students can be autonomous.

The chapters in this book are written from the perspective of a range of different geographical and educational contexts, including self-access centres and mainstream language classes. Self-access centres, designed to maximise the learner's control over the learning process, are in this respect very different to compulsory general English language classes in a university curriculum. As a teacher working in the latter type of educational context, I have to grade my students, and although, like Everhard, I've tried giving responsibility for assessment to students or sharing it with them, it never feels comfortable. I do believe in learner autonomy, I talk about it in my classes, and I try to give students opportunities to take control over various aspects of the learning process. But then grading them at the end of the course feels like I've just snatched

control back again. It feels like a violation of autonomy.

There is plenty to admire in this book and some good things to take away from it too. I was particularly impressed with the three theory-building chapters and now intend to try out Murase's MILLA questionnaire, Tassinari's dynamic and dialogic autonomy task-sheet, and Cooker's "modes of autonomy" materials. But I also liked the two chapters describing assessment-sharing practices, since this is where the subject and its inherent problems came most vividly to life. If there is anything to criticise, it is that, to my mind, there is too little account taken of the political dimension of autonomy. Autonomy may very well be a multi-dimensional construct, but assessment, when it is done by someone other than the learner, is fundamentally a political act. But there is much more to explore about the relationship between assessment and autonomy. This book sets an important precedent in highlighting the need to do so.

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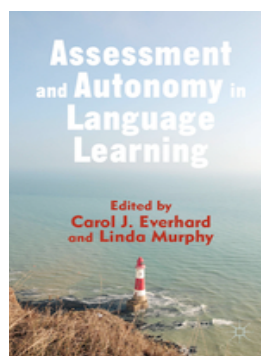
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REFLECTIONS

Reflections on Creating Community: Learning Together 3 (CCLT3)
コミュニティの創造：共に学ぶ３（ＣＣＬＴ３）を振り返って

Overview

Creating Community: Learning Together (CCLT) is an informal afternoon Learner Development SIG conference taking place each December in Tokyo. The event acts as the final Tokyo get-together of the year, and both teachers and their students take part. CCLT3 took place in December 2016. Thirty-four students and 30 teachers attended, and by all accounts everybody had a very enjoyable afternoon—inspiring presentations and convivial discussions, with many different LD SIG members leading the reflection circles after each of the three rounds of presentations.

Here Jenny Morgan, Mitsui Hirano, and Debjani Ray share their reflections on what they learned from taking part in CCLT3. Jenny reflects on how presenting at CCLT3 and talking with participants enabled her to develop her understanding of questions to do with creativity and criticality, as well as explore how learners and teachers may engage with important social and global issues in different ways. Jenny's reflections are followed by "Studying Makes Your Prospects Brilliant" by Mitsui Hirano, a student presenter at CCLT3, who reports on her autonomy-nurturing experiences of attending a "free school" in Japan. Debjani Ray closes the set with "Participating in CCLT3: A Sense of Achievement" by looking at the benefits that CCLT3 offers to student and teacher participants who take part together, share, and connect.

CCLT4 will be taking place in December this year, and you are very welcome to take part with your students. More details will follow in the coming months.

「コミュニティの創造：共に学ぶ（CCLT）」は、毎年 12 月に東京で開か れ る学習者ディベロプメント研究部会のインフォーマルな研究会である。

この 研究会は Tokyo get-together の年度末の会合も兼ねており、教師だけではなく 学生も参加している。2016 年３月に開かれた第３回目の研究会では、34 名の 学生と 30 名の教師が参加し有意義な集まりとなった。ＣＣＬ Ｔ３では，プレ ゼンテーションが３ラウンド行われ、刺激的なプレゼンテーションとともに その後に行われた活発なディスカッションを通して、参加者は様々なメンバ ーと振り返りの時間を持つことができた。

次に、ＣＣＬＴ３に参加した Jenny Morgan、Mitsui Hirano、Debjani Ray の３ 名によるリフレクションを紹介する。まず、Jenny はＣＣＬＴ３での発表と参 加者との対話が、課題についての創造的かつ批判的な理解をいかに構築する。

Sunday December 18 12:00-17:00
Otsuma Women's University, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
12月18日(日) 12:00-17:00に大妻女子大学(東京,千代田区)

Reflections about Co-creating Criticality and Creativity in Learning and Teaching

Jenny Morgan
Wayo Women's University, Chiba

At the third annual *Creating Community Learning Together (CCLT3)* mini-conference hosted by the Tokyo LD SIG (December 2016), the number of student participants outnumbered the teachers! This was inspiring to see as it reflects the motivation by learners to take up opportunities to present their research and/or reflections on their learning to a community of peers which includes both students and teachers. I picked up many useful ideas and materials from all the presentations I was able to see, and enjoyed lively conversations with various learners and teachers throughout the afternoon.

Unfortunately, none of my students in my two global issues seminar classes was able to commit time to preparing and giving presentations, but with their permission and collaboration I was able to share their research work, reflections and final reports in my presentation. My presentation focused on issues of criticality and creativity in a learner-negotiated syllabus for a global issues content based, seminar-style course. Two students worked on creating our poster presentation with me: Using a honeycomb pattern for the poster, we wanted to show the interconnectedness of the learning that happened in our class. In the past, I have tended to view and map syllabus design and learning stages in a *linear* fashion. Of course, some parts of learning are necessarily step-by-step, but I more clearly understand learning-teaching to be interconnected, where deep knowledge building and skills development aren't linear.

In the first class, the students brainstormed various global/social issues they wanted to discuss and learn about in our course, as well as ways (activities, skills, research tasks) they could use to achieve this. Then, we mapped a fifteen-week plan with assessment breakdown. I suggested a certain order of themes to help the learning be interconnected and accumulative, and not merely random. So, in terms of themes, our natural starting point was looking at and sharing about "identities", "communities", "societies." Then, a focus on "gender" aimed to prioritise the realities of these young women students; we felt "diversity" to logically extend the knowledge and

Co-creating learning in a global issues content-based course…

… through learner research, reflections and reports

experiences of (gender) discrimination, empowerment, and the reality and value of diversity in our lives. Research and learning about diverse "social-change makers and heroic individuals" nicely broadened out to "organisations and NGOs working for social-change." For their final projects students chose their own research topics, which were connected to themes we had already explored together.

While working with content, learners carried out activities which required them to engage more critically and creatively with social/global issues; learners did not just have to research and *describe* a social problem, but also activities/prompts guided them to take an *interpretative* view and a *critical* view when they gathered their information, images, and opinions. Regular reflection writing along-side Internet research, out-of-class interviews, peer-share discussions, creating visual materials for their presentations, and writing their final reports all jigsawed together to help my learners to develop their critical understanding of content, and to understand their research processes better (unpublished data).

One of my goals for CCLT3 was to find out from attendees what critical questions might foster criticality in global issues content-based classes. I invited CCLT3 attendees to write on "post-its" any critical questions they use in their classes to get their learners thinking and exploring issues more deeply. Thank you so much to everyone for sharing and writing their ideas! I gathered many rich questions and prompts for me to take into my classes in 2017.

WHAT QUESTIONS CAN HELP LEARNERS/YOU WORK TOWARDS CREATIVITY AND CRITICALITY WHILE ENGAGING WITH IMPORTANT GLOBAL/SOCIAL ISSUES?

- How are you/we connected to this issue?
- Who benefits and who doesn't benefit from this situation?
- EMOTION - how did/do you feel about this (issue)?

- What communities/groups do you belong to now? How do these communities help shape your identity?
- Which groups/communities would you like to join or learn about in the future?
- What slogans, quotations, sayings can you find about this issue? Which are the most interesting for you? Why?
- Find images of different kinds of (diversity) in Japan or other places- write sentences using the prompts for 'three ways of seeing, thinking and questioning' (factual, interpretative and critical views).
- Have students create a survey and find out about attitudes towards their topic on campus. Can their research help understanding/change attitudes?
- What NGOs are doing campaigns on this issue? Why?
- Do you think you could live as ___? Why/why not?
- Environment!!!
- How would you feel if this was you?
- What do other people think? Find out. Do you agree with them?
- Imagine if you were faced with ___, what would you do?
- How would you feel if you had to be ___?
- Imagine/reflect on...you are one of the actors.
- Nicole Gallagher described a roleplay activity where there is a 'lay-judge' and the class engages with agree/disagree stances on an issue. The learners first read some case-studies/stories of different actors.

Re-reading the "post-its" now in January has helped me reconnect with the presentations I enjoyed in December. For example, Dexter Da Silva commented and reminded me about allowing space in the classroom for "EMOTION—how did/do you feel about this (issue)?" Some of the presenters in Round 1 (Dexter Da Silva, Nicole Gallagher, Wakana Sakai, and Yurie Ogura) emphasized the importance of psychological literacy in learning, emotions, and imagination/creativity in communicative competence. I found these presentations particularly refreshing as I am often worrying with my students too much about the academic-intellectual side of language learning and knowledge building. It's good to be reminded how essential the *affective and psychological* aspects of learning-teaching are for sustaining motivation for learning,

developing the whole person, and simply having fun while communicating with other people in the classroom.

The other goal I had for CCLT3 was to talk with many students whose stories I could then share with my own learners. I had interesting conversations with Yusei Ando about learner goal-setting and teachers' roles in supporting learners to set their own goals. He then emphasized the importance for learners to regularly evaluate and adjust these goals throughout a learning cycle. I was very impressed with the quality of research and presentations by three Chuo students, Katsuyuki Tsutumi, Keito Imai, and Kohaku Kawada, who visited Myanmar last summer with Andy Barfield. The students' perspectives as young adults on connecting with local university peers, Burmese teacher trainers, NGO workers, and local business owners offered me a unique insight into important issues facing this emerging nation, issues related to education, gender, ethnic minorities, and micro-finance. This is important background learning for me as I also visit Myanmar in spring to participate in teacher development workshops.

I appreciated talking with Shinobu Nakamura about her extensive reading (ER) project at her university's self-access centre (SAC). Her research showed that by increasing their pleasure reading of graded readers, students developed their vocabulary and confidence communicating in English. All too often, I tend to let ER fall by the wayside due to time constraints when planning my syllabi, but now after hearing the successes of ER at Shinobu's SAC, I'm definitely going to ensure all my communication English freshmen classes get introduced to graded readers early on in their study. At Wayo, I think it'll be enjoyable and motivating for them to aim towards some kind of vocabulary target (with prizes), and to measure their progress at the end of a semester (thanks, Shinobu!).

I was very much inspired by Caroline Kocel's PowerPoint presentation about her research trips to Yap, FSM. Caroline's

journey as a *reflexive* researcher resonated with me as it is largely through asking myself questions and writing reflections in my research journal that I can make sense of my own research processes for writing up data analysis, for understanding the literature, and applying any findings/theories to enrich my teaching-learning approaches; also, in guiding my research students in their own reflection writing and growth as researchers. Caroline's presentation offered a small view into some of the ways that these resilient island communities are facing the challenges of climate-change caused by industrial nations, through environmental education and efforts towards food sovereignty. Caroline shared some photos and thought-provoking visualisations of the "organization and management of learning environments" for environmental education. These powerful visual analyses revealed various elements of learning and pedagogy related to *power* in a classroom, and pose questions about whether the learning-teaching approaches are *participant-driven* (learner-driven) or outsider-driven? Do educational approaches value the participants' lived experiences and existing knowledge about their natural environments and how they sustain local knowledge? Is the learning contextualised, is it co-created, etc? Finally, we discussed the need for *participant*-driven research, meaning that any research projects must have "value-added" benefits to the participants not just the researcher. These were all valuable questions and reminders for me in my EFL teaching in Japan, and also for working effectively alongside teacher trainers in Burma/Myanmar.

Thank you again to the CCLT3 conference team and all the participants. I enjoyed the relaxed, collegial atmosphere, meeting old and new friends, eating the festive treats, and taking away much to reflect on for the coming teaching-learning year.

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Studying Makes Your Prospects Brilliant

Mitsui Hirano
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It was a great honor to be a part of the conference and to share my experience and my ideas with everyone. Also, it was a great opportunity for me to think about English education in Japan because I'm taking the educational course at my university. I talked with the participants about why students seldom have the chance to speak English and to state their own thoughts in English class, and also confirmed what teachers can do to give them motivation and confidence through English study. I learned a lot through the discussions. I think this experience will be helpful and useful for my upcoming teacher training and that motivated me to study English more.

"What comes to your mind when you hear the words *free school*?" When I asked this question, most of the Japanese people at the conference didn't know what free school meant. That showed me the current situation of free school in Japan. "Free school" is a unique school based on diversity and flexibility. In my presentation, I talked about how I changed my motivation and attitude to learning through free school. I was so glad to see that the participants showed deep interest in this kind of unique school.

I started to go to free school when I was in my fourth year in elementary school. It was very different from public and private schools. My free school consisted of elementary to high school classes, with the number of the students being nearly 30, all studying the curricula the Government has set in Japanese. Because of the small school, you can have a deep relationship with both students and teachers and learn how to get along with each other in this community. In addition, my school has several great characteristics. For example, you can make

your own class schedule depending on your needs and sometimes you can study on a one-to-one basis. Also, you have lots of chances to meet people from all over the world. You can learn the importance of respecting individual personalities and building relationship with handicapped people and people with different backgrounds.

On the other hand, there are some problems in free school. Currently, it is not recognized as an official educational institution by the government. Because of this, the students who are in elementary and junior high must be enrolled in regular school because of compulsory education. This means that there is not enough cooperation with regular schools and nearby communities. As for my free school, it is mainly funded by school fees and supporting membership donations, so it is hard to manage the school.

However, I think everything I experienced in free school was meaningful and helped to shape my personality. I realized that learning is not for gaining knowledge, but for finding possibilities through your school life. Also, I learned that learning builds your confidence. I believe these things motivate you to continue to push forward even if you face difficulties.

I strongly hope that people in Japan will know more about free schools and the society will be open to accept various ways of education such as free schools.

Participating in CCLT3: A Sense of Achievement

Debjani Ray
Tokyo University of Science

The varied and unique content of CCLT Conferences, where teachers and students present side by side, is very attractive for me. Due to other

commitments, I was there for only the latter part of CCLT3, so I missed much of it, which I regret, but during Round 3, I managed to see two full presentations that I would like to reflect on here.

The first was by a group of students of Political Science and Economics from Meiji University, Tokyo, who presented on a communicative game, called Husky Race, which they described as "brain-friendly." They also played the game with several participants. In the game, players need to follow some rules: first, players are required to find answers to a list of clues given about some interesting areas of a city or town; the players then go to the places physically and at each place they need to take photos with some landmark as proof that they will later use in a presentation on those places. A few teams are meant to play the game at the same time and to compete with each other. Each team must try to do the race in the shortest possible time.
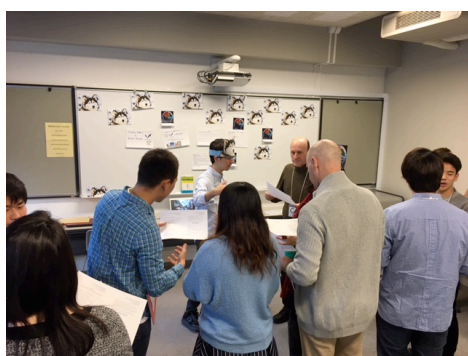

Figure 1. Students playing in "*Husky* Race"

My impression was that the clues, written in English, were all well thought out and that the game gave ample opportunities of exercise that helped in improving the performance of the brain (Ratey & Manning, 2015). The game combines movement with content and makes students actively and effectively engaged in learning which emphasizes the use of the target language throughout the game. The problem solving involved in this game helps in the essential part of the team-building process through brainstorming and sharing ideas and knowledge. It also enhances co-operation and collaboration within the team and gives

plenty of opportunities for improving comprehension and communication skills, so that motivated students use the target language during the game, which in turn will improve their language skills. This game facilitates learning of a variety of processes, which makes taking part interesting and enjoyable and leads to improved outcomes.

My only concern is that there might be some conflict with the school authorities about using this game at school as the students would have to go to different places without any supervision. Other questions I had are about judging the time used in the game as class time or free time, how much of class time can be spent outside the class and school unsupervised and how much of students' free time can be directed to be used for an activity for school. This could provide the impetus for a debate about using this particular game in the class. Overall, the game was very interesting, and the students did a wonderful job presenting and playing it with the visitors to their display. Their teacher, Yoko Morimoto, was also present there and helped the students whenever required, but without interfering in any way.

The other presentation that I spent time at was by Jenny Morgan, of Wayo Women's University, Tokyo. It was on a content-based course dealing with global issues while focusing on encouraging students with limited proficiency of English. The course tried to enhance engagement, understanding, and critical thinking on prominent global issues. The main learning goals for the seminar-style course were developing the skills for critical thinking, opinion making, discussion-developing, researching, and finally, presenting on some chosen global issues. There were some class materials for viewing as well as some learner products, such as journal entries and research reports. The attractive poster used in the presentation provided the major steps of the process, essential information about the project and displayed the outcomes. The nicely organized materials made the logical sequence clear. With its right amount of

font and graphics, restrained use of colours, the self-explanatory poster became a motivational message itself.

Jenny explained how it had been a "challenging puzzle" for her to engage the students with limited English in a meaningful and critical discussion on important social issues. The students worked on a variety of difficult themes such as diversity, social change makers, and gender issues. Jenny also talked about how she guided the students through three levels: seeing, thinking, and questioning, to develop criticality and help them build the necessary vocabulary. She also taught them to research various sources, to choose appropriate topics, to do discussions and peer-share discussions. Finally, the students learned how to write reflections that they shared with each other in class. Then they wrote reports on their research and presented these to their peers, too. As the presenter stated, it was "co-creating" learning.

There were class materials and examples of reflections written by students on display for attendees to look through. One of them was a homework assignment sheet on social change makers. Students needed to go through a series of multiple-choice questions that set them thinking about social change makers and then focusing on one person of their choice. They could choose from a page of pictures of world-famous heroes from different countries from a variety of fields. To help them in doing this, the presenter produced a worksheet using mindmaps to teach them note-taking skills. It was for the students to fill in the blank mindmap after conducting a research on something or someone and in case they did not know or find all the answers, they were allowed to guess or "imagine" them. There were questions to lead the students towards the right direction, for example, why they are a good role model or hero, and how she/he made a difference to people's lives. There was also a guide for writing reflections. The students needed to write reflections on their partner's presentations

on global issues. To guide the students through the steps towards writing proper reflections, the sheet contained questions, multiple choice questions, and supportive statements.

As a teacher myself, I know the hardships when dealing with students with limited English, and it takes no imagination to understand how hard it might be to teach and explain difficult topics of global issues to them. I thought that the presentation was very insightful. The presenter led the viewers smoothly through her challenging journey with the students. At the end of the project when the students learned some new social issues and made their presentations successfully, it finally became enjoyable and rewarding for the students and satisfying for the teacher. Specifically, the class materials caught my attention. They were meticulously created with the mission of supporting the students. The example student products indicated that the class materials undoubtedly enhanced the students' understanding of the complexity of the content and, at the same time, facilitated their language learning.

It was my second time to participate in a CCLT conference: the first time was as a presenter and this time as a viewer. Generally speaking, it is a well-organized conference with a variety of presentations on many different topics and the interactive opening and closing plenary sessions. Its unique quality is having reflection circles after each round of presentations where both the presenters and the viewers can take part together, share, and connect. That is how it creates a sense of achievement for everyone present as people can learn from each other and learn together. And that is also how, in my opinion, this conference stays true to its title.

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GET-TOGETHERS

Tokyo Get-together Report: Making Plans Together for 2017
2017 東京 get-together 報告：2017 年度の計画

Andy Barfield, Ian Hurrell, Jenny Morgan, and Ken Ikeda
アンディー バーフィールド、イアン ハル、
ジェニー モーガン、ケ ン イケダ

We began 2017 with a lively meeting of 14 people in January where we made plans for 2017. The January get-together started with an introduction round to welcome new participants, Peter Joun and Keiko Yuyama. We then discussed the new venue for the Tokyo get-togethers from April 2017, and dates for the monthly meetings, which from April are going to be held at Rikkyo University in Ikebukuro (for more details see http://ld-sig.org/tokyo-get-togethers/).

Our next area of discussion was creating continuity and development from one get-together to the next, with a positive sense of moving forward together. As a "participant-centred" SIG, the get-togethers are entirely reliant on those attending co-creating the format and content of each meeting by bringing along their own pedagogic interests, puzzles and challenges, and/or research interests and concerns, to do with "learner development." People expressed the need/desire for some kind of structure, some degree of continuity–of themes, of people to talk with. Yet, we also want to balance any structure with the "open, inviting culture" of LD, keeping the looseness and spontaneity that allow us to create whatever happens each time with whoever turns up.

We discussed several different options for the 2017 get-togethers:

1. Participants bring to each get-together samples of student work and related teacher puzzles/challenges, to share ideas and explore practical pedagogic issues that they face with their learners, so the get-togethers involve "teacher support group" discussions and sharing. This was done at different times in the past and worked best when people prepared copies of student artifacts/work for such discussions.

2. Another option is at the start of the get-together participants share their learner development themes/topics/areas of focuses, and then people split into "like-minded focus groups" to discuss and learn about a theme or research focus of interest. At subsequent get-togethers people continue to meet with the same theme group to develop and explore ideas more deeply. From experience, it is good if people have the option to change groups, so some flexibility is needed with this option. Past theme-based discussion groups led to some members later presenting together at the national JALT conference and writing up their learning and research together for the conference proceedings. Another group's discussions formed the basis of a book project on collaborative learning. Many of the research team members have since become active in the LD SIG.

3. Some people said they had very much enjoyed the short workshops on doing research that individual members had presented in the first part of get-togethers last year (e.g., Exploratory Practice, interview-based research, narrative research, and diary research). Suggestions for continuing with this in 2017 led to the idea of having workshop ideas come from get-together participants so that sometimes people could volunteer to give an exploratory presentation on a learner development theme that interests them.

4. Another possibility that some people would like to try includes people giving practice presentations to get feedback and critique before presenting

at bigger conferences. People felt this might be a particularly good focus for the October get-together where individuals could run through their presentations for JALT2017 and/or ideas for CCLT4. Such presentation-based workshops might be 20-30 minutes long with plenty of time for feedback and Q&A.

5. Another option is to designate loose time-slots for mingling and sharing learner development interests, questions, and puzzles, with a 60- to 90-minute workshop/ teacher puzzles/ "free-talk" with student samples/short workshop presentations from the participants/working on research themes in small groups. Of course, these time-slots would be negotiated by whoever attends on the day.

We also talked about conveying some kind of minimal structure of the get-togethers on the Learner Development website and in the messages that go out via *Mailchimp* for each month's session. People who have been to a get-together are familiar with what they involve, but for those who have not yet taken part, it would be helpful to have a basic outline such as:

- 14.00-14.15 Mingling and meeting in pairs
- 14.15-14.30 Sharing of people's learner development interests and deciding pairs/groups and areas of focus
- 14.30-15.15 Pair and small-group discussions
- 15.15-15.30 Short break
- 15.30-16.30 Pair and small-group discussions, and next steps
- 16.30-17.00 Sharing with the whole group, announcements, the next get-together

As part of the rolling discussions around structuring the get-togethers and aiming for **Creating Community Learning Together 4** in December 2017, various suggestions were made about reaching out and linking up in an informal way with members of other teacher groups and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) in the greater Tokyo area. It might be possible, for example, to make some connections with a Reflective Practice group that has started up at Rikkyo University. We could also invite CALL SIG members to participate in the get-togethers and explore learner development dimensions of working with different forms of technology. Another link-up would be to encourage teachers with global issues interests to come and take part in the get-togethers. There is also the Framework and Language Portfolio SIG that is interested in a joint event with LD in 2017. Many ideas were mentioned, and we agreed that we want to keep arrangements informal so that CCLT4 keeps its accessible, student- and teacher-friendly, interactive character.

We also discussed how the get-togethers can lead into reflective writing for *Learning Learning*. Some participants from CCLT3 last year are writing reflections and short reflective articles about the conference. The idea is for each short reflective article to be followed by two reader responses from SIG members. Several people at the January get-together expressed an interest in writing a reader response and signed up to do so. It is quite possible that other writing will emerge from the discussions at the get-togethers this year, leading later into different publishing opportunities.

Finally, we talked about a good, sustainable way to keep a record of each get-together that can be shared publicly. In the past we have done collective write-ups, but this has been somewhat of a burden at times to do and put together. For 2017 we agreed that a different person each time would take the responsibility of writing up a get-together. The recorder would be responsible for creating a Google doc and writing a summary of the get-together that will then be posted on the main LD website. For January Jenny kindly offered to do this, followed by Lee Arnold in February. See http://ld-sig.org/2017-tokyo-get-togethers/ for more details.

Kansai To the World: Promoting learner engagement about international issues through a student conference

Sponsored by: JALT LD SIG Kansai Get Together

Anita Aden, Ann Flanagan, Yoshio Nakai, Shuji Narita, Agnes Patko, Jennifer Teeter and Katherine Thornton

Learners of English and other languages across Japan are regularly faced with the same problem: a lack of opportunity to use the language they are learning. This can influence their language learning experiences in multiple ways including never engaging in language learning due to a lack of perceived need, struggling with low motivation, or possessing low communicative proficiency due to a lack of opportunity for interaction. The social turn in language learning research, which has taken place over the last 20 years, emphasizes the importance of interaction with others, not just in terms of proficiency gains made through language practice, but in the effect that it can have on motivation, engagement and learner autonomy. Murphey (1996) has long advocated for the power of peer interaction on motivation, with his concept of *near peer role models* (Murphey, 1996). More recently, Murray (2014) emphasised the importance of the social dimension in fostering autonomy.

University students in Japan may have few opportunities to meet other learners outside their immediate peer groups (classes, club activities); as a result, they may have limited chances to engage in discussion about the social issues that face Japan in the 21st century.

The Kansai Get Together group of the JALT Learner Development SIG, revived in December 2015, decided to organise a forum for students from our institutions to use English to engage in discussion of social issues in the form of a student conference. This paper will describe the event itself and how it was organised, investigate the impact on the student participants by examining their feedback, and offer some advice and suggestions for those interested in holding similar events in their own contexts.

The *Kansai To The World* (K2W) student conference, held in November 2016, engaged local and international students from Kansai area universities in discussions about current globally related issues facing Japan. Within this student-centered event, participants actively employed their communication skills, empathy, and cross-cultural understanding. Through poster presentations, discussion and reflection activities, we saw students engage in discussions about topics generated by their peers. While the focus was primarily on the Kansai region, students addressed the challenges of globalization in the areas of education, tourism, technology, and the workplace.

Literature Review

There is a history of student involvement in academic conferences in Japan, but the research in this area has tended to focus more on students in supportive roles at professional conferences, rather than as presenters themselves at events organised especially for students. In one study, Matsuoka (2015) investigated the impact on willingness to communicate and the language anxiety of interns at a JALT conference. In another, Taylor (2012) cited numerous benefits for students who worked as interns, including opportunities to use English in a local environment compared to an expensive study abroad programme, which increased student motivation and contributed to developing students' intercultural competence.

Despite this minimal research conducted on the impact on students as they take part in conferences as presenters, more student conferences have taken place in Japan in recent years. The Asia Community Engagement (ACE) student conference has taken place in the Kansai area since 2014. At this conference, groups of participating students are assigned a current problem in

business in Japan and asked to develop possible solutions. These solutions are then presented and discussed in English on the day of the conference. The Japan Association for Self-Access Learning (JASAL) has held three student events since 2013: the Student Involvement in Self-Access Centers Conference, was organised by students from Sugiyama Jogakuen University in Nagoya in 2013 (Ssali, 2013); a Self-Access Show and Tell event at Okayama University in 2015 (Fujishima & Ronald, 2015); and the Engaging Students in Self-Access Centres conference at Kanda University of International Studies in Chiba in 2016. In each of these JASAL events, student users and student staff of self-access centres shared observations and talked about their experiences and research at their facilities.

Though similar to ACE, which focused on engaging students in problem-solving activities, the student conference described in this article differs from the previous events. One distinct difference of the K2W conference was the *personalization*, where students developed their own ideas as they prepared posters prior to the event.

Organising K2W

Discussions about the K2W event started in April 2015; however, due to varying school calendars and previous research engagements, the date of the event was decided relatively late, in September. Once the date was finalized and the venue was booked, we created a to-do-list and allocated tasks among the members.

Table 1. Tasks for conference planning

Create a call for posters handout (include application method, deadline, notice of acceptance etc.)
Decide the target group at each institution Appeal to international students
Start advertising the event to students
Application deadline (get informal numbers

of posters & students interested in attending)
Make an online registration form for participants (Google forms)
Site visit to OIC (Ritsumeikan University, Osaka, Ibaraki Campus), decide what equipment to reserve
Make a conference website: https://k2w2016.wordpress.com
Make a conference booklet
Decide the order of presentations/ poster sessions/ tasks that students will do at the event
Decide the final format of the event
Divide the teacher responsibilities (who leads which activity, etc)
Finalise the tasks
On the day: - arrive early to set up the conference room and prepare for registration - set up the room, put up signs to help participants find the room, set up the refreshment area, technology support, etc.

The *K2W: Kansai to the World* conference held at Ritsumeikan University, Ibaraki campus was organzied by Katherine Thornton, Richard Silver, Agnes Patko, Shuji Narita, Yoshio Nakai, Anita Aden, and Ann Flanagan (with support from Jennifer Teeter). Since students, both Japanese and international students were participating from different universities, the event started with Agnes Patko and Katherine Thornton leading an introduction activity to encourage students to get acquainted with each other. Soon the room was buzzing with energy, and laughter could be heard from every corner of the room.

The conference was divided into two poster sessions. Poster Session 1 focused on the themes of Tourism and Technology. The

participants rotated every 8 minutes to new posters, allowing them time to listen to all the presenters. After presenters were finished, students were given a 10-minute break to read the posters in more depth and get some refreshments. Next, students paired up in a reflective discussion activity to discuss the topics. Using colorful sticky notes, they wrote their possible solutions or questions for the presenter and stuck them on the whiteboard near the posters. Members of the LD SIG then grouped the comments into categories. This led to the next activity, a "Gallery Walk", where students walked around the room to read other students' comments and further stimulate follow up conversations. Once students had read all the notes, they chose one poster's theme to talk about in small groups. Following their discussion time, a self-chosen leader of the group gave a short summary of what was discussed with the rest of the participants. After this activity, students were given another short break as presenter set up the second poster session. The themes for this session were "Education" and "Workplace & Employment".

The second session proceeded more quickly due to the students' familiarity with the activities and the increased level of confidence in sharing their thoughts and opinions. Following the second poster summaries, students were given feedback forms to fill out anonymously. The conference received very positive feedback about the variety of topics presented and the style of conference. Many students were keen to participate in another event like this again.

To conclude the conference, presenters were given certificates of achievement and the afternoon event ended with a group photo.

Students' voices
Students filled in a seven-item questionnaire about the event, which included demographic data (see Appendix). We considered using an online form; however,

the idea was discarded as we anticipated that some students may not have a smartphone and some might have restrictions on their internet usage. Because we were not expecting more than 30 participants, we decided that using a paper-based survey and entering the answers into an online form seemed manageable.

Throughout the event, the 20 participants were actively engaged and seemed to enjoy the various activities, reflected by the results of the survey. We received very positive feedback. From the 18 respondents, 15 said they were "extremely likely" to recommend the event to a classmate, and 3 were "likely" to recommend the event to a classmate. Almost all participants rated the event as "excellent" or "very good." They felt that the warm up activities helped to create a friendly atmosphere.

In their comments, many of them mentioned that they enjoyed discussing the variety of topics and sharing opinions about the issues in English with people from other universities and international students. One point that needed to be improved was the time allocated for each activity. They wanted to spend more time on their discussions and needed more time to think. All in all, students felt the event was well organised and each activity fostered communication. They were happy to have participated in this conference and many of them expressed interest in participating and/or presenting at a similar event in the future.

Reflections and Conclusion
Conference organizers reflected on the success of this student-centered event in light of reaching the target audience, achieving the conference aims and evaluating the outcome for future events. In the preparation stage, emphasis was put on adequately planning the components for a half-day conference (Segar, 2010) and defining the tasks that each contributing Kansai Get-Together member would do in the three months leading up to the November 2016 conference. The prior conferencing-making

expertise of Katherine Thornton, Ann Flanagan, Rich Silver, and Agnes Patko added to the smooth process of creating checklists, making fliers and commenting on or editing each other's tasks. Our communication was primarily done via email and the conference files were accessible to all members on Google Drive. From the tasks listed on our conference planning checklist, it was possible to stay focused on completing each item and then respond to details that came up as the conference day approached. Some of the challenges of preparing for this conference included the limited time we had to prepare for it, finding enough student presenters, the uncertainty of the number of participants, and concerns about participants' understanding of this conference's style of activities. Feedback from participants confirmed that our efforts to make an engaging student-focused event were worthwhile and that planning a second K2W conference would be well received by participants in the future.

Figure 1. Celebrating a great K2W Conference.

Photos and video taken during the conference by Shuji Narita reflected the active participation and dynamic interactions of participants with each other and conference organizers. These photos were uploaded immediately following the conference website and the link was sent to all participants the following month, along with an online follow up survey made by Ann Flanagan. Overall, we rated the conference a success, based on the pre- and post-conference agenda, accomplished through the dedication of the LD SIG Kansai Get Together members! This year, the *K2W2: Kansai to the World 2* will take place on June 11th at Kyoto University. We

look forward to applying our knowledge from the last conference, as we prepare for the next student-centered conference.

K2W PHOTO GALLERY

Figure 2. Presenters at the K2W conference Nov 2016.

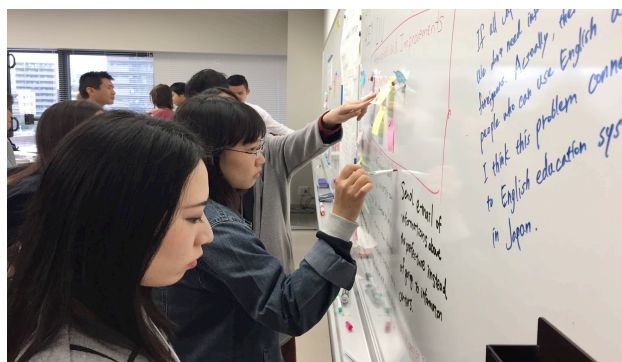Figure 3. Participants and presenters at K2W Nov 2016.

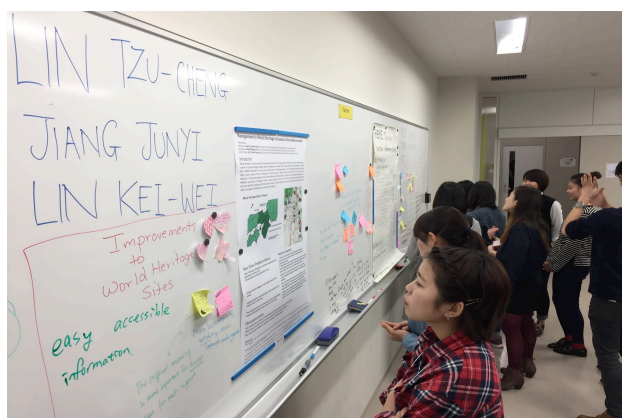Figure 4. Participants adding comments to presenters' posters.

Figure 5. Participants adding comments to presenters' posters.

References

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K2W: KANSAI TO THE WORLD

Useful links:
Kansai to the World website:
https://k2wconference.wordpress.com

Kansai get-togethers are open to language instructors to share together ideas and enjoy discussing current topics and trends happening in education in Japan.
http://ld-sig.org/get-togethers/kansai-get-togethers/

Facebook :
https://www.facebook.com/groups/126518854184011/

Where: Kyoto University
When: June 11th (Sunday)

Appendix: (not the original form)

K2W Conference Feedback Survey
Dear Participants,

Thank you very much for participating in the **Kansai to the World Conference**.
We appreciate all your hard work for making this a successful event. Your feedback is very important to us. Please fill out the form below.

Circle: Male   Female

Year: 1st Year   2nd Year 3rd Year 4th Year Graduate   Exchange
                                                    Student   Student

1.   How likely would you recommend this event to a classmate?
2.   Overall, how would you rate the quality of the conference?
- Excellent
- Very Good
- Fairly Good
- Mildly Good
- Not good at all

3.   What did you like about the event?
4.   What did you dislike about the event?
5.   How organized was the event?
- Extremely organized
- Very Organized
- Somewhat Organized
- Slightly Organized
- Not at all Organized

6. Were the following activities helpful in encouraging communication among participants?

Extremely	Very	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at all
Icebreaking Activities				
Poster and Discussion Session #1				
Poster and Discussion Session #2				

7. Please write any additional comments or feedback that you would like to give us.

Thank you very much for participating in the Kansai to the World Conference.
We greatly appreciate your feedback. It will be very helpful when we plan next year's event.

The K2W Conference Organizers

LD GRANTS UPDATE

2016 Project Grant Report–The Storytime Project
英語のお話会プロジェクト

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I was very happy to have received the 2016 Project Grant from the JALT Learner Development SIG. I used the grant to support a local library English Storytime project that I have been leading for the past two and half years.

Background

I started the Storytime project in cooperation with my local public library in 2014 with the goal of giving children in the community a free opportunity to hear English children's books and songs read by native or expert English speakers. Along with that goal, I imagined that it might be possible to involve students from my university as co-leaders of the sessions. Thus, the project was envisioned as offering community children free chance to hear English storybooks and songs in native or expert English, and providing my students an opportunity to use the English they study at university while contributing educationally to the surrounding community.

My local public library already offered 読み聞かせ (i.e., reading times) in Japanese a number of times per month. However, they had no reading times in English despite having a selection of 300-400 English books for children. I thought that offering English Storytime for children might be popular, and suggested the idea to the library staff in 2013. At that time, I was told there was no open time to schedule English Storytime. After a year, I decided to ask again. In 2014, the staff was more enthusiastic about the idea. After discussion with the library, it was agreed that some of my university students and I would lead English Storytime together.

Implementation

In the fall of 2014, three students and I led the first two Storytime sessions, each of which lasted 20-30 minutes. There were 30-40 children and parents at each meeting—both large groups compared to usual Japanese reading times. This was encouraging. However, as I explored getting more students involved, I found a problem I had not considered—transportation costs. Because English Storytime took place on Saturday mornings, I would have to pay for student transportation costs. Moreover, various policies prevented me from using university research funds. Reluctantly, I gave up having students lead the reading time with me, and from 2014-2016, I led English Storytime on my own.

From 2014-2016, I continued to feel that the Storytime project was worthwhile. It was continuously well-attended, and certain children would come often and interact with me more and more each time. Also, the library staff were pleased it was being offered. Nevertheless, I continued to feel that involving university students would greatly improve Storytime for everyone involved. For my students, I felt that it would give them an opportunity to use English in Japan in a meaningful way in the community. Students at my university often say that a main reason for learning English is to communicate with foreigners. Yet, in the future my students might also have opportunities to teach English to children here in Japan, and many of them will likely have children of their own someday to whom they will want to teach English. For the children attending the sessions, I felt that listening to a variety of English speakers, not just a "foreigner" or "native speaker," could help them develop a broader image of "English speakers." Seeing and listening to Japanese college students reading and speaking in fluent English could be inspiring to young people attending the English Storytime sessions.

After joining the Learning Development SIG in 2016 and receiving the LD-SIG communications, I learned about the Project Grant. I immediately thought to apply for funding for the English Storytime project. I wanted to use the grant for two purposes: funding student transportation and purchasing new books for English Storytime.

Since Receiving the LD-SIG Grant

Since receiving the grant, I have purchased eleven new books and conducted English Storytime with three students for whom I covered transportation costs.

At the last Storytime meeting in November, each of the three participating students read one book by themselves. One student read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle, another read *Five Little Monkeys* by Eileen Christelow, and another read *Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes* by Eric Litwin. In order to prepare for reading, I met with the students twice before the Storytime session to model reading aloud and to listen to them read. I also recorded myself reading the books so they could listen to how I read them. I cautioned them to especially pay attention to intonation changes, as I have found this to be the most difficult aspect of reading aloud for my students. All three students did excellent preparation for the English Storytime reading. They were all nervous to read in front of the group. I was contacted afterwards by one student who said she was "very nervous" but it was a "good and very memorable experience".

Reflection

Successes

The next English Storytime session will be at the end of March, and I am involving three new students at that time. Another student has expressed interest in joining for a future session. Receiving the LD-SIG grant has encouraged me to continue involving students going forward, even though the costs will gradually go beyond the grant.

I am generally pleased with the English Storytime project. Though it is a small project, I feel the goal of giving community children a free opportunity to hear English storybooks and children's songs has been achieved. Now, with the involvement of my students, the project has gained a new layer of meaning: university students make a contribution to the surrounding community, and also gain an authentic experience using English. Though I have not received formal feedback from the library, they continue to seem pleased to have English Storytime offered at the library.

Future Issues to Consider

Despite my enthusiasm for continuing the English Storytime project and continuing to involve students, there are certain elements of the project with which I am not completely satisfied.

One issue I am dealing with is how to further enhance the experience for participating college students. Ideally, I would like students to join the project for a long period, for example, at least three Storytime sessions. With a longer commitment from students, I feel students could improve their communication abilities, and as a group we could add more variety to Storytime activities (e.g., a short puppet show).

Another issue for me to consider is whether the experience is appropriate at all for lower level students. In November, the three students who participated were among the most proficient students that I knew. Their pronunciation was clear, they could read fluently, and they had confidence. I would enjoy drawing from a bigger pool of student volunteers, but if I were to open participation to more students, I will likely get volunteers who do NOT speak English so well. In that case, further training will probably be necessary. However, even with further training, I do not feel that most students could read well enough in front of a group of children and parents. Thus, the issues are: What type of English is

appropriate for Storytime? How much of an accent is acceptable? What level of intonation?

On the one hand, Storytime is a free offering to the public; on the other hand, the presentation quality in Storytime is important to me. Storytime is not primarily meant to be a forum for students practicing English; rather, as expressed earlier, it is an opportunity for children to hear English books and songs spoken by native and expert English speakers. With the three students who participated in November, I definitely feel that goal was met. However, with lower-level students, I think the quality of the Storytime experience could be compromised.

A final issue on my mind is the actual value of the Storytime Project for the children and parents who attend. One of the students who participated in November mentioned that "It is a little strange to read English books, because the children do not speak English." I understood the comment. Though Storytime is not completely monolingual (i.e., using Japanese sometimes is encouraged), it is true that some of the children who come to Storytime do not speak much English, and they probably do not completely understand the stories that are read. Some of the children do not (or perhaps cannot) sing along with the songs. What value are they gaining from Storytime? Are their parents forcing them to attend for the wrong reasons? Obviously, I cannot definitively answer these questions. However, I continue thinking about how I can make Storytime as accessible and interesting as possible to the children attending, while also generally maintaining the use of English and the goal of exposing children to the sounds of English through children's books and songs.

Conclusion
I am looking forward to another year of English Storytime events. My thanks again to the Learner Development SIG for seeing value in the project and for supporting it. If

anyone lives in the Nishinomiya area and would be interested in being involved with the Storytime project, please contact me.

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Reflections on and Takeaways from JALT 2016
JALT2016 の振り返りと学び

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The theme of this year's JALT conference was transformation in language education, with the goal being to explore the transformative power of education from many vantage points. Looking through the conference handbook, I was thrilled to see some of the biggest names in the field of language teaching and research as well as many presentations related to how computer technology can transform the way language is taught and learnt. The use of technology in language learning and teaching is of special interest to me, so I felt like a kid about to enter a huge candy store. What a golden feeling!

I am delighted to report on how the conference has affected my development as a language learner and teacher-researcher. For me, the main takeaways from the conference were collaborative action research, digital teaching/learning tools, and secrets of transformation in language education in Japan.

Collaborative Action Research
I began the weekend with Professor Anne Burns' plenary titled *Transforming the Shape of the Way We Work*. Burns, of the University of New South Wales (Australia), is most well known for her work introducing teachers to the excitement and usefulness of

doing collaborative action research (AR) in their particular teaching contexts. Her reader-friendly book, *Doing Action Research in English Language Teaching* (2010), has been used by language teacher-researchers worldwide, and helped guide my own master's dissertation project which, incidentally, I presented at the University of Birmingham's Graduate Student Showcase at JALT2016. In her plenary, Burns discussed different shades of the meaning of transformation and how we can change the shape of what we do in several different ways. For example, by introducing changes to our practices of language learning and teaching, and improving the way we interact with our colleagues and learners through doing collaborative AR. She talked about the basic steps in AR: Plan, Action, Observe and Reflect (see Figure 1).
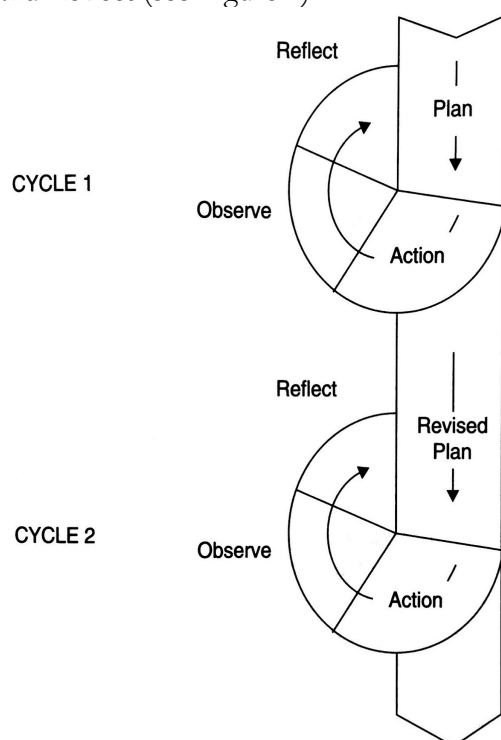

Figure 1. Cyclical AR model based on Kemmis and McTaggart (1988).

For me, the takeaway message from her talk was an encouraging reminder that carrying out AR is a practical and methodical way for teachers to continually and collaboratively strive to deal with common issues and improve teaching practices. Her talk refreshed my fond memories of carrying out the AR cycle, and it made me feel empowered to continue with my efforts to

improve interactions and learning outcomes through doing collaborative AR in my current university teaching contexts. It also encouraged me to seek out further opportunities to share with others with a view to recognizing and crystallizing the most important aspects of the AR I have already completed and the AR I am currently working on.

One such opportunity presented itself while participating in Burns' practice-oriented workshop called *Transformation in your Classroom: What Works?* on Sunday. In this workshop, Burns guided participants in sharing how we are transforming or intending to transform our classrooms, teaching, and how we work with learners. One of the very "hot" issues discussed in my group was the transformative power of educational technology and how it can indeed help to engage students, promote learner development, and facilitate the creation of effective and efficient opportunities for learning. I greatly enjoyed the opportunity to share with my group members about my successful experiences using online learning/teaching tools to engage students and train them in language learning strategies which help them develop their English vocabulary efficiently and effectively.

Digital Learning/Teaching Tools

One of the Saturday afternoon poster presentations that immediately attracted my attention was *Websites & Apps that will Change your Classroom* by Erin Morris and Herman Bartelan of Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages. Their poster presented a wide-ranging list of websites and apps in categories of all skills, speaking & listening, reading & writing, vocabulary, and miscellaneous. For me, one of the key points to be remembered came from a conversation with Morris in which I asked

her which one of the foremost online vocabulary learning tools listed on her poster she thought is more useful, Quizlet or Memrise. Her response was that she finds Memrise, which I had not used much before the conference, particularly useful. Shortly after the conference, I had another go at using Memrise to study Japanese vocabulary and I am pleased to say that I have since become captivated by Memrise's user-friendliness and usefulness. I am now steadily and efficiently learning new Japanese vocabulary at a remarkably high rate of retention and progress toward my goal of acing the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (N2: upper-intermediate level) this coming July. I find Memrise's mobile app for iPhone especially brilliantly designed and easy-to-use. What I have learned firsthand is that Memrise's recipe for effortless learning comprises several simple ingredients, one of which is science which involves giving our brains just the right workout by continuous choreographed testing and adaptive "spaced repetition" of what we've learned at scientifically optimized times so our memories of new words are always growing stronger, and never forgotten. Another ingredient is fun, which involves turning learning language into a compelling, competitive game where we grow a colorful garden of memory; planting the seeds of new words and nurturing them through reviews and tests until they grow strong, take root and blossom into flowers in our long-term memory. I now plan to create my own multimedia flashcard courses and introduce Memrise to my students as supplementary material to be used alongside textbook materials, and as a very useful tool to help them achieve their language learning goals such as getting a high score on the TOEIC test. To learn more about Memrise (and sign up—it's totally free), go to www.memrise.com and enjoy learning more!

Another one of the poster presentations that particularly appealed to me was *Transforming Vocabulary Learning with Quizlet* by Brent Wright of Kanazawa Institute of Technology. Wright presented his research project in which he aimed to enable his students to experience how easy it is to make digital flashcards and thus motivate them to use Quizlet to study vocabulary autonomously and effectively. In his project, he attempted to measure not only the amount of time it took his university students to make 20 English-Japanese flashcards using Quizlet with smartphones, but also the accuracy of the flashcards they created. His findings were that the average completion time of 7 minutes 50 seconds was a reasonably low burden to students, and that accuracy may be an issue that can be addressed by, for example, having students check each other's work using Quizlet's built-in audio to check how words on their word cards sound. The key idea for me was that it is certainly worth training students to make their own word card sets with Quizlet in class, especially as they can check each other's work using Quizlet's excellent audio feature.

Quizlet is undoubtedly a very popular tool among language teachers. This was shown by the large number of other JALT2016 presentations showing how it can transform the way vocabulary is studied. Among these presentations was a workshop called *Quizlet: The Optimum Digital Flashcard Tool* by Bruce Lander of Matsuyama University. Lander introduced some of Quizlet's newest features, such as the collaborative team-based classroom game "Quizlet Live," which requires participants to work together to correctly match the target words and definitions of a Quizlet set. Quizlet Live is, by all accounts, now taking the world by storm (Wolff, 2016). I have also experienced great and rapid success in introducing Quizlet Live in my own classrooms, having received overwhelmingly positive feedback on it from my students over the past several months. The most memorable experience for me from Lander's workshop was playing a very enjoyable game of Quizlet Live for

the first time from a student's perspective using our smartphones. This experience strengthened my resolve to continue using Quizlet Live and other Quizlet activities to make lessons more enjoyable for students.

Lander also encouraged us to attend the JALTCALL 2017 conference that will be held in Matsuyama in June, inspiring me to not only attend the conference but also give presentations to share my successful experiences promoting active learning and learner development through computer-assisted language learning, especially using Quizlet.

Among other key digital takeaways, of particular note is how Google Docs can transform student writing. In his poster session titled *Transform Student Writing with Google Docs*, Nick Boyes of Nagoya University of Foreign Studies explained that Google Docs, which is a free web-based word processing software, can be used to foster collaboration and autonomy among students. With proper support from a teacher, Google Docs allows students to quickly and easily share their written work with their peers and give each other immediate, personalized error-correction feedback, working together on the same document at the same time. As an added anxiety-reducing bonus, we never have to hit "save" again, as all of our changes are automatically saved as we type.

Secrets of Transformation in Language Education in Japan

In their presentation called *Transforming Teacher Development*, Chuck Sandy, Barbara Sakamoto, and John Fanselow of International Teacher Development Institute (iTDi) led a thought-provoking discussion about our beliefs about language teaching and learning. Fanselow reminded us of Socrates' wise words on ignorance: "True knowledge exists in knowing that you know nothing." Indeed, these wise words

prompted me to reflect on my ignorance and seek out other nuggets of Socrates' wisdom, one of which I found is especially relevant here: "The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new." For me, then, an additional and crucial takeaway from JALT2016 was a renewed focus of all of my energy on "building the new," with a view to furthering collaborative action research and making further use of innovative digital teaching/learning tools, especially Memrise, Quizlet, and Google's suite of productivity apps.

One other secret of transformation is of special importance and relevance here. In his presentation titled *The Power of the Senpai*, David Barker of BTB Press explained from past experience that there is no use trying to fight against Japanese university students' tendency to observe hierarchies, as Japanese society places strong emphasis on hierarchy, and the senpai/kohai relationship is a powerful example of this: the senpai (senior or older student) may even have more influence on the kohai (junior or younger student) than the sensei (teacher). It is therefore advisable for us teachers to try and harness the power of senpai/kohai relationships in order to transform our classes into more cohesive and supportive learner groups. To harness the "power of the senpai," I plan on trying to get to know my university students more deeply by participating in more of their extracurricular activities, creating more opportunities for them to learn about each other in class, and structuring in-class activities in culturally sensitive ways that make use of the natural dynamics of the Japanese classroom. For example, it has been suggested that certain group members can be assigned specific roles such as "leader" to coordinate a discussion, "secretary" to record group decisions, and "spokesperson" to report back to the class (Anderson, 1993, p. 108).

Conclusion

In conclusion, I received a great deal of takeaways, handouts, inspiration, and

encouragement at JALT2016. As a result, I am encouraged to keep striving to transform myself into a better learner, a better teacher-researcher, a more supportive colleague, a more successful materials creator, and a more productive citizen of Japan and the world.

I encourage everyone to participate in the JALT International Conference in the future. The conference allows participants a venue for meeting experts in the field, learning about new research, ideas, and materials, networking, learning about graduate study at many top graduate level TESOL programs, transforming yourself, and building your career. There was such a wide range of excellent workshops and presentations, the hard part was deciding which to attend because there were often several interesting events being held concurrently. Overall, most of the presentations I attended were very practical.

As the grateful recipient of the JALT2016 International Conference Grant, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Learner Development Special Interest Group (LD SIG) for awarding me the grant and making my journey to attend and present at the conference in Nagoya possible. It is thanks to the LD SIG grant that I had such a valuable experience at the conference, so I am deeply grateful to all LD SIG team members, especially Jim Ronald who posted information about the grant and tagged me through Facebook, thus encouraging me to join the SIG and apply for the grant in the first place. I am incredibly thankful to be a member of such a supportive, well-developed group, and I strongly recommend that other eligible LD SIG members (or soon-to-be members) can and should apply for LD SIG grants of interest to them. Finally, I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Arnold Arao and Yoko Sakurai for their valuable advice and comments on this report. I am also particularly grateful to Aaron Sponseller, Philip Head and Jim Ronald for their great help with proofreading /copyediting.

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LEARNER DEVELOPMENT GRANT DEADLINES

RESEARCH GRANT
Friday, 30 June 2017 (23:59 JST)

PROJECT GRANTS
Friday, 30 June 2017 (23:59 JST)

JALT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE GRANT
Friday, 25 August 2017 (23:59 JST)

For more information please visit:
http://ld-sig.org/grants/

LD CONNECT
LEARNER DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

PanSIG 2017
Akita International University, Akita, May 19-21, 2017
http://www.pansig.org/

This year's Learner Development SIG forum gives participants a chance to expand their interests by focusing on a variety of topics related to student development. Focusing both on research and practice-based topics, the forum will highlight different aspects of autonomous learning, visual metaphors, meta-cognitive strategies and important non-cognitive factors in learning. Timed rounds of interactive presentations will be followed by a discussion circle, giving participants the opportunity to synthesize the information from the presentations with their own experiences assisting learner growth.

PanSIG 2017 LD Forum Presenters:
Arnold Arao, *Non-cognitive Factors in Student Development*
Daniel Hooper, *Testing the waters: Gauging the viability of autonomous language learning in an eikaiwa*
Robert Morel, *Student Responses to Learning Strategy Instruction*
Matthew Porter, *Collaborative Reflection Using a Visual Metaphor*

JALTCALL 2017
Matsuyama University, Matsuyama, Shikoku, June 16-18, 2017

The theme for this year's conference is "Active Learning through CALL." Active learning is an essential part of language learning. JALTCALL 2017 will focus on how educational technology can encourage learners to take a more effective role in their study both inside and outside the classroom.
http://conference2017.jaltcall.org/

JALT 2017
Epochal Tsukuba, Tsukuba, Ibaraki, November 17-20, 2017

This year's conference theme addresses the vital need for foreign language skills in our multicultural world and the special mission of classroom instructors to prepare students to survive and thrive in a global age. The theme highlights the increased contact that our learners have with foreign tourists, residents and co-workers from around the globe, the new communication technologies that enhance borderless language learning, and the need for language instructors to "think globally, teach locally."
http://jalt.org/conference

GET TOGETHERS

Tokyo Sunday, May 28, 2017
Rikkyo University (Ikebukuro campus), Building 7, Room 7204, 14:00-17:00

The Tokyo get-togethers aim to provide a flexible, supportive, and convivial environment for exploring learner development according to people's particular interests and concerns. At the May get-together we will be continuing to explore learner development interests, puzzles, and issues, as well as developing more specific plans together. You are always very welcome to join us (no worries if this is your first get-together of the year!). We welcome the participation of teachers from diverse teaching contexts—including elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, university, distance learning & graduate studies, and language school settings—and teachers teaching languages other than English.

Please check out more information about the event on our LD webpage: http://ld-sig.org/tokyo-get-togethers/ . Feel free to contact the get-together organisers (Andy Barfield, Ian Hurrell, and Jenny Morgan) at ldsigtokyogettogethers@gmail.com .

Kansai Sunday, May 28, 2017
Sunday, May 28, 2017
Sunday, June 25, 2017
Sunday, July 23, 2017
For further information please contact Agnes Patko at ldkansaigettogethers@gmail.com

Hiroshima (Dates to be decided)
Hiroshima's Learner Development Get-togethers meet eight or nine times a year, every one or two months. One important role of our get-togethers is to support and promote teacher development, providing a sounding board, listening ear, and other sources of encouragement for each other. In the past year, quite a few teachers have joined us for the first time and some, thankfully, have gone on to become involved in roles within the LD Sig beyond local gatherings, including writing projects, grant applications, and LD-focused presentations.

While we have an active mailing list of about 20 people, our get-togethers are typically much smaller affairs where members share experiences and practices related to teacher and learner development. We often see many new faces at our gatherings, which sometimes makes it feel that every time is the first time! As such, it gives us a good opportunity to consider afresh both what learner development is and the roles that our get-togethers may play. On the other hand, the development of longer term projects has seemed hampered by this lack of continuity, and so far there has been no concerted effort (by me!) to work out the best way to proceed. Writing now, it seems clear that just as many other parts of the LD SIG are conducted very successfully without the luxury of regular face-to-face contact, longer term projects for the Hiroshima group, including plans for working on future publications, may be best conducted via email, Google Docs, or other such tools. This will involve more work, more time on the computer for more people—but it will also give more of us chances to be actively involved in working together on LD SIG-related projects. The next step, then, hopefully started by the time this is published, is to invite one or two people to be part of a Hiroshima LD Get-together planning committee. If you are interested, we'd love to hear from you. Please feel free to contact Jim Ronald, at jmronald@gmail.com and I will be more than happy to tell you more.

LD SIG NEWS

ILA 2018 - *8th International Conference of the Independent Learning Association*

We are excited to announce that the *8th International Conference of the Independent Learning Association* (ILA 2018) will be held in September 2018 at Konan Women's University in Kobe, Japan.
More details will be following soon. Meanwhile, we are currently welcoming ideas for potential conference themes and keynote speakers, as well as suggestions for presentation formats and events which will make the conference more collaborative and inclusive.
Please send your ideas to ilajapan2018@gmail.com

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

JALT2017: *Language Teaching in a Global Age: Shaping the Classroom, Shaping the World*
Epochal Tsukuba (Tsukuba, Ibaraki)　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　November 17-20

International Communities: Fostering Learner Development on A Global Stage
In the global age, it could be argued that an outward-looking mindset would be an invaluable tool that would embolden students to participate in a worldwide community of English speakers. The teacher can play a role in promoting notions of international awareness, and dialogue with the world outside of Japan. However, if these ideas are to be truly 'owned' by students, learners must find their place in the global community. The Learner Development SIG Forum at JALT2017 is based on the theme of fostering international mindsets through autonomous learning both inside and outside the classroom, and we are seeking presentations in this area. Presentations could be based on completed or ongoing research in this area, or practical teaching ideas from a range of teaching and learning contexts.

We encourage you to submit proposals for the Learner Development SIG Forum at the JALT International Conference soon. This year's conference is taking place at Epochal Tsukuba in Tsukuba, Ibaraki (about an hour north of Tokyo) from November 17 to 20. The theme of this year's forum is *International Communities: Fostering Learner Development on a Global Stage.*

- Have you used any activities that helped students develop an international mindset?
- Do you promote inter-cultural awareness in your classes?
- Is there an international exchange program or study abroad experience that you could report on?
- Do you have any advice for the teacher trying to implement an increased international awareness in their classroom?

COMPLETING THE PROPOSAL
Applicants are asked to carefully consider their topics as they relate the theme of the forum. Applicants who best reflect this theme will be given priority. In some situations, applicants might be asked to re-submit their abstracts to better reflect the theme.

Please complete the application, including a title and an abstract, by the absolute deadline of **FRIDAY, MAY 12th.**

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScVyehc5GFuCKdPjlKjgmM1lGOb_y2qXGFZK_PLo5KSvkZnfQ/viewform

Research Grant

Deadline for 2017 applications: <u>Friday, 30 June 2017</u> (23:59 Japan Standard Time).

One research grant of ¥25,000 is open to a Learner Development (LD) SIG member (or a research team comprised of LD SIG members) willing to write an article (1000-2000 words/3000 Japanese characters) about their research in Learning Learning. Priority will be given to those who do not have access to institutional funding. Early-career Japanese researchers are particularly encouraged to apply.

LD SIG は、英文（1000〜2000 語）もしくは和文（3000 字程度）の研究論文を「学習の学習」に投稿できる１名（もしくは１グループ）の LD SIG 会員に、研究助成として２万５千円を支給します。雇用主から研究費または出張手当が受給されない方が優先されます。特に日本人の若手研究者の申込みを歓迎します。

Project Grants

Deadline for 2017 applications: <u>Friday, June 30, 2017</u> (23:59 Japan Standard Time)

The Learner Development (LD) SIG is offering two ¥20,000 Project Grant to LD SIG members conducting or leading education-related projects or volunteer activities as individuals or in groups, who are willing to write an article (approximately 1500 words/3000 Japanese characters) about their project for Learning Learning. Applications may include, but are not limited to, the following examples. If you are unsure whether your project qualifies or not, please contact the Grants Team.

*Teachers and/or students engaging with and/or helping communities or groups of people outside of their educational context, at either a local, national, or international level;

*Encouraging student development through supporting student participation in conferences, LD SIG Forums, LD SIG get togethers, etc.

Recipient/s can use the grant in any way within reason that will support their project. Please indicate in your application how the grant will be used to support the successful completion of the project.

Project Grants are open to individuals who receive research money from their workplaces.

学習者ディベロップメント SIG（LD SIG）は、個人またはグループで、教育に関連したプロジェクトやボランティア活動などを行ったりコーディネートしたりする LD SIG 会員に対して、２万円のプロジェクト助成金を２件支給します。プロジェクトを紹介する英文（1500 語程度）もしくは和文（3000 字程度）の記事を「学習の学習」に投稿して頂くことが受給の条件となります。以下のようなプロジェクトが想定されますが、この限りではありません。応募したいプロジェクトが対象になるかどうか確認したい方は、助成金チームへご連絡ください。

＊教員と学生の両方もしくはいずれかが地元・国・国際的なレベルで、普段の教育現場以外のコミュニティもしくは団体に関与・支援すること。

＊学生の能力開発を目的に、学生の研究会や学会大会、LDSIG フォーラム、LDSIG 地域別集会等への参加を支援すること。

助成金受給者は、プロジェクトを遂行するためのであれば、常識の範囲内で必要な経費に助成金を利用することができます。申し込みにはプロジェクトの目標を達成するため助成金をどのように使用する予定なのか明記すること。

プロジェクト助成金は、職場から研究費が支給される方も対象となります。

International Conference Grant
Deadline for 2017 applications: <u>Friday, August 25, 2017</u> (23:59 Japan Standard Time).

One grant of ¥50,000 is available to a Learner Development (LD) SIG member who will attend the 2017 JALT International Conference and is willing to write a conference report or another piece of writing to be published in Learning Learning after the conference. The grant recipient can use the grant to cover their travel, hotel, and/or conference fees for the 2017 JALT International Conference at the Tsukuba International Conference Center (Epochal Tsukuba), November 17-20, 2017. The grant will be awarded to the recipient in person at the LD SIG Forum held during the conference.

JALT2017 全国大会（2017 年 11 月 17 日〜20 日、茨城県つくば市）に参加する LDSIG 会員 1 名に 5 万円を支給します。大会全体に関する報告、またはその他のテーマでも結構ですので、大会後に「学習の学習」に記事を投稿してくださる方が対象です。助成金は JALT 全国大会にて行われる LDSIG フォーラムにて手渡されます。

http://ld-sig.org/research-grants/