

LOOKING BACK | 報告

Reflections on the Learner Development Forum at PanSIG 2018

Andy Barfield, Blair Barr, Paul Beaufait, Gregory Birch, Kate Maher, Marnie Mayse, Robert Morel, Jenny Morgan, Jim Ronald, Simon Stevens, Joe Tomei, & Keiko Yuyama

The Learner Development SIG Forum at PanSIG 2018 took place Saturday, May 19 at Toyo

Gakuen University in Tokyo.

Presenting were Blair Barr, Kate Maher, Marnie Mayse, and Joe Tomei. This forum offered a variety of research- and

practice-based poster presentations. Blair Barr's presentation - *Fostering independent learning through automated feedback using Google tools to present instant feedback* - focused on using online tools for feedback with students working with textbook exercises and tasks.

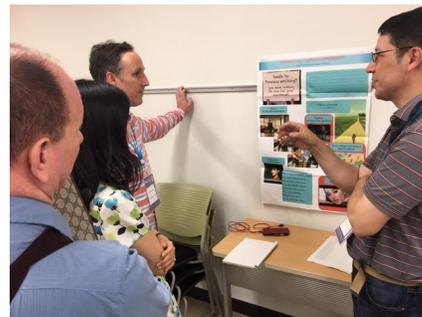


Kate Maher - *Listening to silent students* - reported on her exploratory research project into understanding silent students, using a classroom observation protocol and small-scale qualitative

interviews with a proficient yet resistant

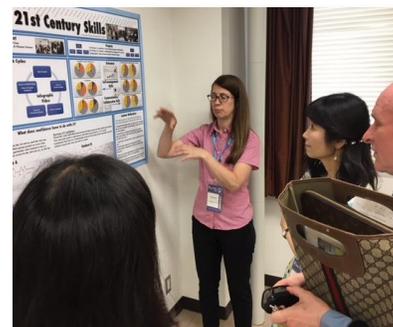
student to encourage his greater participation in group discussions in class.

Joe Tomei - *Towards an L2 metaphor pedagogy* - looked at the development of an L2 metaphor pedagogy for



writing classes, with students guided to develop their awareness of using metaphors by interpreting and writing about short music videos, and then to experiment with enhanced use of metaphor and imagery in their own writing.

Marnie Mayse's presentation - *Contributing to the world of SNS: A social issues research project* - focused on a team-teaching



project with Amanda Yoshida. The project starts with students from different majors researching specific social issues. They next share their individual understandings of an issue, before writing up a research paper. In the final part of the project they collaborate to transform their research papers into 7-8 minute infographic videos.

The forum was organised in an interactive poster presentation style where participants could move from one poster to the next for the first hour. This created conditions for many different conversations and discussions on each of the four themes that the presenters had explored. In the final part of the forum attendees and presenters wrote reflectively for about 10 minutes, then formed small discussion groups to share their reflections and insights with each other. **Keiko Yuyama** - *Globalization and multilingualism as a commodity among Nepali students in Japan* - was unfortunately unable to join the forum, but hopes to share her research into multilingual issues at a future Tokyo get-together.

Some reflections from the forum include:

“I really enjoyed the format. It was great to have the opportunity to talk to so many different people and to discuss different aspects of my research. It really helped me to focus my ideas and explain what we’ve been working on.” **Marnie Mayse**
<marnie.mayse@gmail.com>

“Silence and understanding its power was a refreshing change to discuss with Kate. Marnie’s challenging projects show how students can respond to researching difficult social issues (when given the chance).” **Simon Stevens** <simon.stevens1@gmail.com>

“I wish I’d got here earlier!” **Jim Ronald**
<jmronald@gmail.com>

“Thanks to Robert for organizing. I wonder (if possible) it would be possible to set up an

online space with our posters (either before or after) and have pre- and post- conference discussion. Was interested in Kate Maher’s poster about silence, which used a simplified COPS¹ system first set out by King (2013). Discussion of different quantitative ways to measure learner development constructs could be an interesting topic.” **Anonymous**

“4 posters - no common link. Interesting mix of presentations. Intimate format. Time for different speakers to go in depth. Learning Learning (newsletter). Blair Barr - excellent use of Google forms to check student comprehension outside of class. Marnie - Toyo Gakuen - ALPS. Description - interesting, academic writing, professional skills. Students produced infographic video after writing research paper. Joe Tomei’s use of metaphor with writing class. Usually reserved for higher level class, but introduced how to use this with lower-level learners. Life is a journey. Metaphor within music videos.” **Gregory Birch**, CEFR & Language Portfolio SIG

“I am so grateful for this chance to interact with everyone and share thoughts about not only research ideas, but also surrounding issues. I found this forum very encouraging and meaningful because of the level of interaction.” **Kate Maher**
<k_maher@kufs.ac.jp>

“I enjoyed a really stimulating presentation by Marnie Mayse (Toyo Gakuen) who shared about a social issues research project class which she co-taught (with Amanda Yoshida), and which was aimed at developing learner’s academic and professional skills. I very much appreciated

how the “21st century skills” for this class project encompassed ‘whole learner’ development and not just academic or language skills. Learners worked towards writing a research paper and creating an infographic video for their two projects; they also had to work collaboratively with project partners and develop their critical stance. So, they had to work on self-management, goal-setting, communication skills, issues of confidence and so on. I think this is an essential part of our job as teachers to help students connect their whole person-social skills and selves to their academic learning. Learner reflections can help students unpack these processes and connections, and can give us a window into their learning.

Another participant, Simon (?), and I were both very surprised to see a strong gender-focus on the social issues which the class had brainstormed and chosen together, including issues of gender inequality (e.g. domestic violence) and issues connected to marriage (e.g. same-sex marriage). It’s great to know young people are wanting to discuss these issues.

Marnie said their students created and uploaded (private) self-introduction videos in Week 1; then, the infographic videos on their social issues projects; and self-reflection videos at the end of the school year. These videos sound an exciting way for students to develop their creativity and criticality while engaging with difficult content. She also mentioned the class uses various infographic templates or apps; and ‘Google Slides’ so students and teachers can work and edit material together easily.

Unfortunately, I did not have time to ask Marnie more about the research survey

questions about the target skills or learning goals and outcomes. Thanks for a stimulating presentation and very clear poster! I’d like to consider infographics videos as a learner product in my own research and discussion classes (not just posters and reports) as another format for students to collaborate on creatively and critically as they engage with global issues content.

I also very much benefited from Kate Maher’s presentation and research on silence in the classroom. Her study on one individual student resonated with me and got me thinking more carefully about how I interpret students’ silences and indeed, some students’ absences from class. This will help me frame my conversations/questions more openly with absent or silent students in the future. Her adaptation of the COPS framework was also useful and I hope to explore this further.”
Jenny Morgan <jennyromain@gmail.com>

“What initially grabbed my attention, as I meandered clockwise around the room, was Blair Barr’s project and its apparently seamless integration of [Flubaroo](#) teacher tools and generic Google Forms and Spreadsheets using a [Google Sheets add-on](#) (for Chrome). A post in [JALTCALL’s Facebook Group](#) today (2018.05.24) suggests Google itself is making strides in a similar direction ([Create and grade quizzes](#)). What would connect online quizzes that students take outside of class to fostering independence seems to be largely creating opportunities for learners to get and reflect upon immediate feedback on their reading comprehension and writing accuracy. Decisions to take quizzes two or more times (as long as they’re accessible) are up to the learners themselves.

Next to grab my attention was Kate Maher's investigation of an individual who'd studied overseas, and returned more proficient in English than his near-peers, yet seemed loathe to participate in classroom activities with the latter. I sincerely hope that she will publish her simplified classroom observation protocol (based on King, 2013), with permission to adopt and adapt it. I also am looking forward to laying eyes on a seemingly seminal article she'd mentioned in passing (Gilmore, 1985). That's about as far as I got with note-making during the session."

Paul Beaufait, ICT Coordinator, [JALT Writers' Peer Support Group](#)

"This was a rich sharing of learner development practices and explorations, with a strong multimodal dimension. For me, a recurrent question was: How do we navigate different learner development puzzles, and why? A resonant learner development question came through for me in Kate Maher's poster presentation on listening to silent students. Questioning her own negative interpretations of one student's resistant behaviour and individual silence, she had decided to use an observation protocol (COPS = Classroom Oral Participation Scheme - Martinez, no date) to understand what he was doing in class. Kate later shared with the student some points that she had noticed, inviting him to share his side of the story and to take small steps towards greater participation and interaction in the class. Although I felt that the COPS was a particularly complex observation tool, I was struck by how Kate had simplified it and used it to get some distance on what she was trying to understand with this learner. The decision to observe and use a protocol had allowed her

to detach herself and develop a reflective stance about this student. It was interesting how Kate had used discrete observations to feed back to the student some points that she had noticed. I wondered afterwards how the student had seen the situation and how he responded to the points that Kate had noticed.). What questions would he have had about taking part in the discussion class? What puzzles, if you like, would he be concerned with? This presentation invited us to question how we approach silent students, what interpretations we habitually make of "silent practices of learning and interaction", and to explore how we can develop different understandings of such practices together with our learners.

In listening to Joe talking about the development of an L2 metaphor pedagogy, I was interested by how Joe sees Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development as a metaphor within which the Expert-Novice relationship is framed and can be explored. I hope Joe will share some further thoughts about that in Learning Learning.

Marnie Mayse's presentation was stimulating for the different ideas that it sparked off about shaping student research projects. I found the transformation of student research from written papers to infographic videos inspiring. The multimodal switch from one stage of the project to the next engages students' creativity and criticality in collaborative learning about social issues. What puzzles, then, come up for Marnie and Amanda's students as they do this? How do the students themselves see these projects from their side? Why? Amanda and Marie had surveyed the students before and after across a range of discrete skills to

understand how they saw developments in their self-management skills (e.g., “I can set goals and deadlines”) and communication/ collaborative skills (e.g., “I can develop news idea and communicate them to my group”). While one student in particular seemed to have had a tough time in the video project and rated themselves lower in the second survey on many of the discrete skills, it was clear that most students had grown in confidence across the two projects. “I thought doing things alone was easier, but I realized that my team members really helped me to bring out all of our best qualities,” was one learner’s reflection at the end of the whole project, underlining how this individual saw their own development as co-constructed through interaction with peers.

I didn’t have a chance to talk with Blair, but caught up later in the afternoon with Keiko about her research. Keiko has been working on a small-scale interview project with Nepalese students at a university in the Tokyo area about their multilingual repertoires and how these are commodified within different linguistic markets and education systems. It turns out that the students’ fluent academic use of English is often judged in extremely discriminatory ways within the university. They are, for example, othered as “Asian” and put in separate classes on their own. What other impacts do such structures in the education system and such language ideologies have on these students’ lives? What contradictions do their stories highlight in relation to official slogans and discourses of “international cooperation” and “diversity” under which their recruitment from Nepal has been proclaimed?

I came away with many such questions from talking with Keiko and hope that she, as well as Blair, Joe, Kate, and Marnie will share their students’ voices and perspectives at greater length in the Autumn issue of Learning Learning this year.” Andy Barfield
<barfield.andy@gmail.com>

1 COPS = Classroom Oral Participation Scheme (COPS). Martinez (no date).

Many thanks to all the presenters for their presentations at the forum, to Robert Morel for facilitating the different phases of the forum, and to everybody who attended and took part. To find out more about Learner Development forums, programme events, and get-togethers, go to <http://ld-sig.org/events/>

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