Mini-profiles: Sharing Your Learner Development Interests | ミニプロフィール：学習者ディベロップメントについての関心の共有

… in which SIG members introduce themselves briefly (just 50 to 100 words or more), and write about what interests, puzzles, intrigues them about learner development, and/or about a particular approach or project, or research that they are doing or plan to do, or simply share a short reflection, to do with learner development …

…ここでは、SIGメンバーの学習者ディベロップメント研究に取り組む原動力となる関心や課題とともに短い（50から100ワード程度）自己紹介をお届けします。特別なアプローチやプロジェクト、現在進行中の研究やその計画、さらには学習者ディベロップメントの取り組みに関する内省など、それぞれの思いや考えが寄せられています。

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Hello everyone. My name is Kayoko Horai.
I decided to rejoin the LD SIG because I am interested in the theme of Learner Development, even though I had not been actively engaged in LD before. Also, I have been out of the LD SIG for a while because of the Kumamoto earthquake in 2016. I had to rebuild my house and the SALC building where I work at my university. After I finally felt like things settled down, the pandemic started with all of its unexpected challenges in 2020.

Right now, I am a learning adviser/teacher in Sojo University in Kumamoto. When I was a university student, I couldn't imagine being an English educator because I didn't do well in English class in school. Then, I finally realized that English is a great communication tool when I met non-Japanese people. Now, I enjoy supporting STEM students in my university and assisting their development. I am interested in advising in learning, Self-directed learning, learner development, and the SALC. I look forward to joining more LD SIG events to learn from the other members.

Members' Voices | メンバーの声

Towards the In-class Development of Learner Autonomy and Self-regulated Learning

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My research interest in learner autonomy, more particularly in self-regulated and strategic foreign language learning started in my home country, Hungary. Located in the heart of Europe, Hungarians aim to gain foreign language knowledge – mainly in English and German – for existential benefits such as better job opportunities, broader learning possibilities, or even prospects of settling in a foreign country. However, self-reported research statistics on foreign language skills placed Hungary fifth from last among EU countries (Eurostat, 2019), and domestic large-scale research results (Öveges & Csizér, 2018) revealed a yet widely applied frontal teaching style in primary and secondary school education, leaving little room for communicative language practice. While self-reported data include the participants' level of confidence beyond language knowledge, and recent changes are emerging in approaches to EFL instruction through more practical language skills development, these results serve as a warning to the stakeholders of EFL education about the need for improvement.

Granted with the opportunity to join the EFL instructor's team at a Japanese private university where, besides general EFL classes across all departments, there is an International Studies Program with several English classes focusing on different aspects of EFL language practice and widening learners' global understanding, I have gained a broader insight into the field of EFL education. By taking part in both general English classes and the focused international communications program, not only am I able to draw a parallel between Hungarian EFL education and the still widely-applied grammar translation methods in Japanese EFL instruction (Fujiwara, 2018), but through participating in a program that aims to provide EFL learners with adequate language skills for their successful entry into global platforms, I can gain insight into Japanese learners' EFL learning activities.

I firmly believe that EFL instruction goes beyond providing material, knowledge, and practice that fulfil the aims of a pre-set curriculum (may they be passing high-stake language tests or meeting a certain predetermined level of language knowledge). Building learning strategies, especially in our time of rapidly emerging digital opportunities in foreign language practice, is just as vital for learners as receiving the necessary knowledge and opportunities for practice (Oxford, 1997, 2017; Schmitt, 1998). As EFL practice has been moving progressively outside the boundaries of classroom instruction, language instruction and training needs to shift focus from mere in-class practices to promoting strategic outside-class EFL skills development (Benson, 2013; Zimmerman, 2008). The initiator of such learning processes can often be the teacher (Murray, 2014), and while learners have their individual goals, needs, learning styles and difficulties, the promotion of successful autonomous and self-regulated learning should be incorporated into the EFL teaching syllabus.

Although learning a foreign language spans across several skills and focuses, when determining my research focus, I narrowed my interest down to a crucial aspect of language acquisition: that of vocabulary learning (Folse, 2011; Ghazal, 2007). As Hungarian and Japanese EFL instruction both share the educational goals of (1) preparing learners for high-stake tests necessary for their life achievements and (2) providing useful skills for the global demand of English language application, sufficient knowledge of vocabulary is desired both by learners, teachers and the outcomes determined by the learning curricula. Therefore, one of my missions in my ELT and research activities is to find useful and applicable means of promoting and developing learners' strategies for their out-of-class, self-controlled EFL vocabulary expansion.

My PhD research activities in Hungary focus on secondary-school EFL learners and teachers; however, I believe that language learning spans across a longer – and often life-long – continuum, with each phase strongly affecting the next. While conducting quantitative studies about Hungarian secondary-school

EFL learners' current self-regulated EFL vocabulary learning practices and teachers' views and activities regarding the development of such learning processes, I am currently making qualitative inquiries among Japanese university students about their beliefs, experiences, views, development and approaches related to their self-regulated EFL learning, with certain focus on vocabulary learning. I hope my results can shed light on tangible problems and meaningful pedagogical implications that contribute to the field of EFL instruction and, within that, teachers' contribution to the development of learner autonomy and self-regulated learning both in Japan and on a global scale.

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Interest and Research in Learner Autonomy

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I was an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher in an English language center in Madagascar for several years before I decided to learn more about learner autonomy, as I realized the latter was what my students were lacking. They tended to be dependent on teachers to give them instructions and to guide them on what to learn and what resources to use, though they were already university students and workers. I then started to read papers about learner autonomy, the capacity to take charge of one's learning (Benson, 2011), a notion that was unfamiliar in the context where I was. The more I learned about it, the more I felt that I needed to do much more than just reading about it. Thus, I decided to pursue a PhD on fostering learner autonomy in the EFL Malagasy context in New Zealand.

For my PhD, I especially worked with EFL student teachers and in-service teachers in Madagascar, as I strongly believed that learner autonomy starts with teacher education, as Little (1995) states, "Language teachers are more likely to succeed in promoting learner autonomy if their own education has encouraged them to be autonomous" (p. 180). Firstly, I investigated the affordances for learner autonomy in a rural Malagasy school. Secondly, I conducted a nine-week practitioner research with first-year student teachers, aiming to develop their metacognitive awareness on their writing by means of reflection. The findings from these two phases showed that learner autonomy can and should be implemented in any context. However, before the

implementation, it is crucial to study the context in order to find the affordances and the constraints regarding learner autonomy. The first phase demonstrated that it is important to understand the in-service teachers' existing beliefs and teaching practices in order to raise their awareness of learner autonomy gradually by means of reflective questions. The second phase showed that experiencing the implementation of learner autonomy on their learning for nine weeks made the student teachers aware of their capacity to take charge of their writing and their learning in general by setting goals, monitoring and self-evaluating. They also realized their responsibility towards their learning, and expressed their willingness to promote the same to their future students, as exemplified in the following quote from one of the students:

If I were a writing teacher, I would use the reflective journal sometimes for my students. I would tell them that learning by themselves is really important because when we are just given lessons, we forget them after a few times and we do not really understand why they are like that, but when we have to find solutions and lessons by ourselves, we never forget them. I would let them [set] clear goals and challenge themselves to attain them. (N1)

Including the implementation of learner autonomy in formal teacher education can, therefore, be the most effective and sustainable way to foster autonomy.

In addition to my PhD thesis (published in 2020), I am still writing on the studies I conducted in Madagascar and some follow-up studies. I still would like to continue working with student teachers and teachers on the promotion of learner autonomy in the EFL Malagasy context and hopefully the Japanese context.

Still related to the investigation about affordances for learner autonomy, I am co-authoring a paper with two of my Malagasy former students, which will be published in the Learner Development Journal 6. In the paper, the two student teachers share their English language learning histories (LHL), which, according to Murphey and Carpenter (2008), are rich sources of data to analyze learners' perceptions and beliefs vis-a-vis the languages they learn and to identify the 'seeds' of their agency. In the paper, we focus on the student teachers' learning beyond the classroom, including their sources of motivation as well as the activities they did.

As a learning advisor at Kanda University of International Studies now, I have been conducting research related to advising (e.g. Ambinintsoa, 2020), self-directed learning resources (e.g. Ambinintsoa et al, 2021), and in-class reflection. My experience as a learning advisor has enabled me to appreciate the importance of Intentional Reflective Dialogue (IRD) (Kato & Mynard, 2016) and to understand the uniqueness of each learner. It has reconfirmed my belief in the necessity of self-reflection, which I have applied in my own Japanese learning. I am now writing a paper on self-reflection as the solution to motivation according to my own language learning experience. In addition to learner autonomy and advising, I am interested in motivation related to multilingualism.

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Ecologically Partnering Our Students and Nature: Empowering Learners, Learning, and Life!

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"Partnering? Partnerism?"
Strange words just six months ago (when the virus was peaking again in Japan) and I ran across Riane Eisler's chapter in *The New Possible* (2021), "Caring for People and Nature First: Four Cornerstones for a Successful Progressive Agenda." Eisler, anthropologist turned lawyer-activist, has been telling us in her many books since 1987 that partnerism offers a more equitable and egalitarian way to address our problems and hopefully survive a bit longer on this planet. We have all heard how everything is connected (how our biologies, psychologies, sociologies, economies, and ecologies all depend upon each other) and Eisler does an excellent job of showing how the "domineering agenda" of economists is connected to recent socio-ecological problems:

Both capitalism and socialism were attempts to move away from the domination economics that pervaded most of recorded history. Examples included the top-down economics of tribal chiefs, Chinese emperors, Middle Eastern sheiks, and European kings and feudal lords. Adam Smith was interested in challenging the system of *mercantilism*: the control of economics from the top by kings and court officials. Marx challenged capitalism and the exploitation of workers and peasants by so-called nobles and the growing bourgeoisie.

While many today focus on the differences between Smith and Marx, both men actually saw nature as something to be dominated and exploited. They did not

consider the damage to our natural life support systems or the need to care for them…(p. 72)

We do not need to be scientists to understand that many of our social and ecological systems drastically need revising to have a sustainable future. That's the big picture.

Eisler also writes of teachers partnering students in education (*Tomorrow's Children* 2000) for a better, more ecological way of "walking our talk" and creating dialogue in which teachers continue to learn as well. When such partneristic learning communities emerge dialogically in education, the possibility that they can emerge in families, businesses, and communities grows as well and we all begin to reap the benefits of more egalitarian and equitable societies. (Educators should never assume that they are just teaching the students in front of them; they are teaching future parents, politicians, and business leaders in whose hands the world will evolve.) Respectful and trusting partnerships empower all of us and we all end up learning, being more creative, and evolving more ecologically.

Unknowingly almost, I have been drifting that way somewhat throughout my career. At first by getting students to share the classroom by giving me feedback so that I could make our classes more equitable through action logging (Murphey 1993, Miyake-Warkentin et al, 2020), fighting against the Japanese university entrance exam system (Murphey 2004), publishing student work (Murphey 2021a&b), and social testing (Murphey 2013, 2018, 2019).

Engaging the minds of youth with respect and trust through partnering them goes much further and straighter to the target of ecological and meaningful active learning and lifelong engagement. (NB: Educators should never assume that they are just teaching their students; they are teaching future communities, parents, politicians, and business leaders, through their students in whose hands the world will evolve in eternal ecological waves of respectful and trusting partnerships.) Of course teachers and students will come around to this easier than politicians and corporations, and we can only hope that some of our students will get into politics and corporations and eventually shift systems. After first reading Eisler's chapter, I have read five of her books and am on #6. I have also found the links ***centerforpartnership.org*** and ***partnerism.org*** very helpful as well. It seems rather obvious that the "spare the rod and spoil the child" domineering form of education is not only outdated but does not work.

For more information about Riane Eisler see here:

https://centerforpartnership.org/   https://www.partnerism.org/

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Tim Murphey (PhD Université de Neuchâtel, Switzerland,) TESOL's *Professional Development in Language Education* series editor, co-author with Dörnyei of *Group Dynamics in the Language Classroom* (CUP/2003), author of *Music and Song* (OUP/1991), *Teaching One to One* (Longman/1992), *Language Hungry!* (Helbling/2006), a novel about Japan's entrance exam system *The Tale that Wags* (Perceptia/2010), *Teaching in Pursuit of Wow!* (Abax/2012), co-editor with Arnold of *Meaningful Action: Earl Stevick's Influence on Language Teaching* (CUP/2013), and author of *Voicing Learning* (2021 Candlin& Mynard). He is presently a semi-retired visiting professor at the Research Institute for Learner Autonomy Education (RILAE), Kanda University of International Studies. (100 words)

A Teacher Can Change Students' Perception of English

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How will students feel my English instruction is effective and fruitful? I am currently seeking the answer as a graduate student at the School of Global Communication and Language at Akita International University. In the past, I did not consider students' feelings or help students pursue their dream of English acquisition. To tell the truth, I forgot why I wanted to become a fluent English speaker and what experience I have had in order to achieve the goal. In this article, I would like to identify what makes my students think my instruction is effective or fruitful. I appreciate providing me with this opportunity to write about my English learning and teaching process. I would like to share the process of recognizing my lack of awareness and identifying better approaches to teaching.

　　The first thing I learned that makes my instruction effective and fruitful is that possessing a dream of getting a global status is vital to becoming an autonomous English learner. My values were changed by one teacher when I was a second-year high school student. Her English was like a native speaker's, and she was glittering. I began to hold an admiration for her. I concentrated on her instruction and talk of experiences

overseas, and took notes as much as possible. My English grades drastically improved, and I started to fantasize about becoming a fluent English speaker and getting a job that required English. Until then, I perceived nothing more than English as one of the school subjects. When I was in college, I was depressed with many assignments and wanted to get away from learning English. However, my dream was alive and has inspired me to continue learning English until now. After getting a degree in English and an English teacher's licence, I began working for a company, but my dream was still in my mind. I started to go to an English conversation school. Finally, I began to work as an English teacher. I realized that my dream would come true if I kept my dream alive.

My English instruction was entirely like the style I experienced at school rather than my individual English learning. Students' unmotivated faces explained that they were only studying English to get good marks in the exams. Thus, I felt compelled to encourage students to find their own dreams and convey that English can broaden their possibilities. At the same time, the new course of study published by the Ministry of Education stated that English lessons should be conducted in English at high schools (MEXT, 2009, 2018). My teaching experiences made me want to improve my English skills and learn novel instruction methods to inspire my students.

The second thing I learned that makes my instruction effective and fruitful is that I need to take into consideration the feelings or difficulties of my students in relation to their English learning. Most of my previous students interpreted English as one of their school subjects, just like I did. Nothing more, nothing less. I learned that a motivational factor, "International Posture," is one stimulus for raising autonomous learners (Yashima, 2009). If students can see themselves involved in the global society, it may help them to become interested in English and overcome their negative feelings or any difficulties they are having. It takes a long process for students to change from recognizing English as a school subject to realizing that they can have an international posture in society. I believe teachers can change students' perceptions of English. To achieve this, teachers should be aware of their students' perception of English education. Students' behaviors, reactions, or facial expressions presumably want to convey some messages to me.

Chatting with students outside the classroom indeed gives us clues to see their perceptions.

Since an English teacher is the closest English-speaking and English-learning person to a student, we teachers must show our postures as the models to support students' English learning. However, just learning the instruction methods does not mean that teachers can immediately put them into practice. I have realized that repeated training and reflection are vital to satisfy the Course of Study and raise autonomous learners. It is essential to know what is difficult for students, what activities encourage student engagement, and how to give them a sense of achievement.

With the development of the internet, students must know that English is a universal language and English is required to communicate worldwide. However, it takes a long time to acquire English. It is crucial to become autonomous learners to make dreams practical goals. It is necessary to consider whether our classes are exciting and worth joining and support students to continue learning. When our students find their dream, we know we have succeeded.

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