



Greetings all,

I hope all SIG members are enjoying a fruitful autumn, and that I will see many of you at the national conference in November. I will be stepping down from the coordinator position at the conference AGM, and want to begin by thanking the officer teams I have worked with over the years for all that you have done for the SIG. It has been a pleasure and an honor to work with you. This year marks the publication of *Realizing Autonomy*, edited by Kay Irie and Alison Stewart. Here's hoping that some photographs and brief reports from the Nagoya conference held on 29 October make it into this issue, or at least to the web site by the time this issue is finished.

Reviewing the minutes from last year's AGM, and the notes from this past July's SIG publications team dinner, it is as clear as ever that we are a hard-working group, and that the SIG is an amazing, on-going work in progress. As we move into planning for 2012, several of the key decisions facing us are:

- who will step up to the various roles on the committee for the up-coming calendar year;
- what our publication goals and other projects for the coming years should be; and,
- * how we can continue to work on outreach efforts in honoring our commitment to a longer term project for teachers and learners in Tohoku.

The JALT national constitution requires that SIGs have at least five officers in good standing: Coordinator, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Program Chair and Publications Officer. I am trusting that we can continue our tradition of newer officers shadowing longer serving members, and that we will continue to enjoy the fellowship of a large and cooperative officer team. Electing ("confirming") the new officers is a fundamental discussion point at our up-coming AGM, to be held on Sunday morning, 20 November in Reception Hall 3, from 11:20am until 12:20pm. I hope many of you will be able to join us there, and at the SIG Forum on Sunday afternoon in room 311, commencing at 5:30pm on Sunday 20, November.

I look forward to discussions of future program efforts and publication projects; especially to the idea from the publications team that we explore smaller, Authentik-style volumes.

Recently, while thinking about our commitment to longer term projects for service, I started to explore the project papers at the European Centre for Modern Languages, <<http://www.ecml.at/>>. I was reminded of how important the social dimensions of learning and teaching – inside and outside the classroom, in the wider socioeconomic and cultural contexts of our lives – has always been for our community. The key questions, I think, will lie in the practical exercise of these perspectives, and in the types of alliances we might build with learners and colleagues, inside and outside the SIG.

Further discussions will take place face-to-face at the conference, and on our mailing lists. Please do join in.

In closing, I want to offer a special thanks to Hiromi Furusawa, our hard-working treasurer, who also steps down in November. Also, congratulations to our grant awardees this year, and a hearty thank you to the members of this year's committee: Andy Barfield, Mike Nix, Etsuko Shimo, and Alison Stewart. This year's awardees are:

Advising for Language Learner Autonomy Conference

- 1) Ian Hurrell (Japan), head teacher, private language school, Sapporo; completing MA dissertation
- 2) Meymet Boyno (Turkey), public high school teacher; PhD candidate, Cukurova University, Turkey

2011 JALT International Conference

- 1) Michael Wilkins, part-time teacher at Konan Women's University, Otemae University, and Kansai University of International Studies
- 2) Matthew Coomber, part-time teacher at Ritsumeikan University and Konan University

Hugh



Greetings all,

The last issue of *Learning Learning* came out in the immediate wake of the triple punch of the Tohoku Earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident. The shockwaves at the time reverberated around the world evoking a wide array of international responses from sending international aid and volunteers to a dramatic about turn in Germany's promotion of nuclear power. Since both JALT and our LD SIG are national organisations with many active members in the affected regions of Tohoku, it also stirred a response from our SIG to both check on the welfare of members and submit a donation on behalf of the membership as a whole. Sitting on the sidelines, it was impressive to see how quickly this suggestion became a reality. Meanwhile, there was a proposal to dedicate an issue of *Learning Learning* to the impact of the event on our personal and professional lives and those of our students. Although we did not pursue this idea for the current issue, it is an idea that remains equally relevant and the editors would welcome suggestions for articles that relate to this issue. Where news of the after-effects of the earthquake slid off the BBC website and other international news sites remarkably quickly, there are numerous short-term and long-term issues still to resolve. Our professional concerns with education and promoting language learning are far from the front line of rice ball distribution or prefab housing construction and have scant effect on government policy. We are, though, intimately involved with the important job of giving our learners the opportunities to think about these issues for themselves and to support them in their endeavours. This issue offers a number of examples of how language learning

and teaching can be an integral part of broader educational concerns with developing identities, and building communities.

Colin Rundle's feature article which explores the identity construction of a Japanese intern during her study in the US is a good example of this. The case study (based on a detailed online journal shared with the researcher) maps the communities of relationships in which she was involved and the way the author's subject positioned herself within them. The study is also timely because it underlines the depth of experience and relationship building possible over the course of an overseas internship at a time when trends suggest a decline in the numbers of young Japanese willing to take on the challenges offered by study or work abroad programs. Proponents of English as a *Lingua Franca* may also be interested to see that the subject's work in an international organisation in the US involves her almost exclusively with non-native speakers of English.

For those not ready for overseas experiences or who cannot afford to go, autonomy and identity building must begin in the classroom. Like Colin's paper, Yuko Hiraide's feature contribution explores identity and community but also focuses on classroom methodologies. She draws out five key differences between "Collaborative Learning" and "Cooperative Learning" illuminating their fundamental differences despite similarities which lead them to be easily confused. Ultimately she proposes cooperative learning as a useful preparation for collaborative learning. Why? Read Yuko's article and find out. You will also gain a deeper understanding of both approaches.

Collaborative and cooperative approaches to learning are effective ways to develop community and identity in the classroom. However the seeds

for autonomy and identity building need to be sown much earlier according to Guy Smith and Allen Lindskoog who introduce a game-like task-based approach to building motivation and self-esteem among young learners. Although the research targeted young learners, the authors have pointed out that the approach is readily adaptable to high school learners and even university students and adults.

This issue features two new talents for the editorial team: Michael Mondejar and Jackie Suginaga. Michael has taken the leap to saddle up for this issue and will take the lead with Jackie as assistant for the next one. Jackie in turn will take the reins in the autumn next year, the idea being to have a revolving editorship that opens involvement to a broader membership. Anyone with editing skills interested in continuing the chain should contact a member of the current team as listed at the end of the final pages of this issue.

Michael Mondejar makes his LL debut in Looking Back with his coordinated report of the Nakasendo conference which will please those who participated as well as those who missed it.

We are also happy to be able to celebrate the talent of longer term members in what promises to be a landmark publication for the SIG and a substantial contribution to the field of autonomy research: *Realizing Autonomy: Practice and Reflection in Language Education Contexts* is a collection of papers by SIG members edited by Kay Irie and Alison Stewart due to be published by Palgrave Macmillan in January. A preview of the approach was offered at the showcase event to celebrate the publication in the afternoon of the one-day conference Realizing Autonomy, which took place at Nazan University in Nagoya

on 29th October. An overview is provided in Looking Back.

Talking of seminal publications, Alison Stewart offers a review of the new edition of Phil Benson's classic overview of autonomy research *Researching Autonomy*. With remarkably few reservations, Alison persuaded us that it is worth acquiring the new edition even if you have the old one.

Finally, Looking Forward includes information about the conference Advising for Language Autonomy to be held at Kanda University of International Studies and the LD SIG Forum at JALT2011.

Patrick Kiernan and Michael Mondejar



FROM LD SIG MEMBER**MICHAEL MONDEJAR** マイケル・モンデジャー

Hello!

My name is Michael Mondejar. I've been living in Japan over nine years now, and have been teaching for eight. I am currently a teacher at Kanagawa University in Yokohama, as well as a graduate student in the MA in TESOL program at Teachers College Columbia University.

I became interested in learner autonomy while taking the "Facilitating Autonomy" workshop at TC last fall, where I was introduced to concepts such as self-reflection and learner agency. The idea of empowering students by getting them to regularly analyze and become responsible for their own learning strongly resonated with me; as a result, fostering learner reflection and agency have since become integral parts of my classroom practice.

The instructors of the "Facilitating Autonomy" workshop also introduced me to LD-SIG, which I joined late last year. Since joining the SIG, I have met many inspiring and dedicated teachers, and even had the pleasure to present with some of them during the Nakasendo 2011 English Conference. I hope to continue being actively involved in the SIG, and look forward to working with you all in the future!

FROM LD SIG MEMBER**JACKIE SUGINAGA** ジャッキー・杉永

Hi, my name is Jackie Suginaga. I'm from Ireland. I am currently teaching at Komazawa Women's University, Tokyo. I obtained an MA TESOL from Columbia University, Tokyo and wrote my MA paper on 'Reflection, Action, Exploration: Autonomous Enhancing Tools for Teacher Development'. I believe that exploring and reflecting on what we do is not only beneficial for our learners' development but an essential part of teaching, learning and life. I am delighted to be part of the LD SIG where I know that exchanging ideas and interacting with like-minded people will provide many opportunities for growth and development for my students and myself. ('You learn from the company you keep' - Frank Smith.)