

Tokyo Campus, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012  
My Reflection on the February 19<sup>th</sup>  
Get-Together, Teachers College  
Columbia University

2月19日エリア・ミーティ  
ングを振り返って、コロンビア  
大学ティーチャーズ・カレッ  
ジ（於：東京）2012年2  
月19日

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School

**Key words:** learner development interests, getting to know each other, self-assessment within a self-directed framework, language learner vs language user, identity

I recently became a member of JALT as well as LD-SIG in January 2012. This was my second time to attend a LD-SIG get-together. In reviewing the January meeting, I enjoyed getting to know other members' learner development interests and different teaching contexts. I decided to join the group which had an interest in self-assessment within a self-directed framework, although vocabulary development and collaborative learning were also fascinating topics for me.



### Getting to know LD-SIG members

I thank Andy for providing us with the opportunities to learn new things and get to know other members of LD-SIG. Talking with a LD-SIG member made my vague ideas of self-directed projects clearer. I talked to an attendee named Ken, who teaches in a college. I teach English in an elementary school. Our teaching contexts were different but we shared a lot of interests about vocabulary development and autonomous learning amongst others. Ken talked about his vocabulary building practices at the college. I talked about the project I recently started

which is a kind of self-directed assignment. In the project, each student chooses a topic and a web site to view, and then uses a notebook to record what he or she learned from the web site. Finally, he or she makes a presentation about it to share with other classmates.

### Group discussions

I joined the group "self-assessment within a self-directed framework". Some people left and some new people joined our group, including Sachiko, Chris and Lynn. Chris and Lynn shared their English drama project in which the students wrote and performed a play, showing the video by iPhone. Peter had summarized the previous discussion in January and it helped a lot to confirm our shared perspectives at this meeting. We discussed our various interests and teaching contexts. However, it seemed difficult to narrow our interests into specific research questions. This was because we have such different teaching contexts, which would make the content of assessment varied.

Although it seems important for students to self-assess their performance and improvement within the self-directed framework, the ability of learners to self-assess themselves depends on the student's age and proficiency level. Although it seemed difficult for our discussion to move forward we tried to brainstorm ideas. I suggested a self-assessment of learner's identity as an L2 user vs. an L2 learner. From my experience as a Japanese learner and teacher of English, I have been wondering if having identity as an English learner might be critical to Japanese learners of English.

I found a difference between Japanese people who view themselves as English users who use English as a foreign or the second language in a real context and Japanese people who view themselves as English learners in terms of confidence and autonomy. Recently, I had two returnee students (one is a 4th grader from Canada, the other is a 5<sup>th</sup> grader from Indonesia) at the elementary school. I noticed the returnees who had confidence in speaking and writing English even though they had no more grammar and spelling knowledge than some classmates who had learned English only in Japan. On the other hand, good students who study in Japan feel less confident comparing themselves to the returnees. As for learning, Japanese people as English learners tend to try to get more knowledge about English in school

context but not use it in a real context. They tend to be passive learners. They don't like making mistakes and even think it is impossible to be an English user unless they master the language perfectly.

After talking about my insight above, we shared ideas about differences in identity between an L2 user and an L2 learner. Peter shared his insight that the English user vs. English learner might be relevant to fluency vs. accuracy. Sachiko, who is teaching at an English conversation school, shared her idea that her students seemed to have identities as English users rather than English learners because they were aiming to study abroad. We agreed that our group would explore the relationship between self-assessment, learner identity, socio-cultural aspects and motivation. I am excited to see how our group research will develop.

*Tomoko teaches English at Kawamura High School. Her current research interests are listening for acquisition, autonomous learning, CALL and cooperative learning. She has an MA TESOL degree from Teachers College Columbia.*

## Looking forward 今後のイベント

**LD SIG Forums in 2012**  
**2012 LD SIGフォーラム(6月)**

**JALT CALL Conference 2012**  
**Konan University, June 1-3, 2012**  
<http://conference.jaltcall.org/2011/jaltcall-2012/>

**Darren Elliott**  
**LD-SIG Forum Coordinator**

The JALT LD-SIG will be holding another forum at the JALTCALL Conference 2012. JALTCALL 2012 will be held at the Konan CUBE, Hirao School of Management, Konan University from June 1-3, 2012.

From self-access centres with cassette libraries to m-learning, technology has played an important role in learner autonomy in language education. However, CALL activities

are not intrinsically autonomous and Learner Autonomy need not make use of educational technologies. In this forum, we will explore CALL as viewed through the prism of learner autonomy, and vice versa, in an attempt to find common ground.

Each presenter will give his or her fifteen-minute presentation twice (including questions) within the 90-minute slot, giving participants the opportunity to see four different presentations. Of course, visitors are welcome to join the full session or just come in to see one or two presentations. We will have short presentations on Facebook, CALL in self-access centres, e-learning, blended learning and other autonomy / technology-related topics, from a number of experienced and talented presenters.

The JALTCALL conference itself is always well worth attending, with visitors from around the world and a lively atmosphere. This year, the conference welcomes a true leader in the field with the visit of Dr. Stephen Bax as featured speaker.

**Nakasendo 2012 Conference**  
**Urawa Citizen's Hall, June 2, 2012**  
<http://nakasendoconference.com>

**Robert Moreau**  
**International Christian University**  
**High School**

The LD-SIG forum this year at the Nakasendo 2012 Conference in Urawa, Saitama on June 2<sup>nd</sup> promises to be an interesting space in which participants can share a variety of ideas on teaching and learner development. Since December 2011, members of the LD-SIG have been meeting on a monthly basis and, in groups, have been discussing ideas and conducting small-scale practitioner research in the following areas: collaborative learning, language learning strategies, self-assessment, and vocabulary development.

In this forum, members of each research group will set-up display stations where people can learn more about what members of each group has been working on, ask questions and engage in dialogue on the different topics that people have been exploring so far. Finally, participants will be invited to share thoughts and ideas about what they have seen and discussed.