

LEARNING LEARNING

学習の学習

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In This Issue 今号について

Fumiko Murase & Monika Szirmai

Welcome to the Fall issue of *Learning Learning* 『学習の学習』, the Learner Development SIG's (LD SIG) biannual online newsletter!

Firstly, the SIG coordinators, Andy Barfield and Richard Silver, report on the latest news in the SIG. Next, we have reports from local get-togethers in Kansai, Hiroshima, and Tokyo. In the "Members' Voices" section, a number of new SIG members contribute their story of learner development, which is followed by a language learning history by Sumie Saito.

The LD SIG offers a number of grants every year. In this issue, Alison Stewart interviews one of our 2012 grant awardees, Cory Koby, and asks about his research interests.

From the NGO Outreach team, Colin Rundle and Caroline Ross share their activities and experiences with the newly launched Student Ambassador programme.

In the "Special Feature" section, we offer what you can look forward to at the LD SIG's 20th Anniversary Conference in November. Following the interview with Naoko Aoki in the last issue, we feature interviews with two of our invited speakers, Richard Smith and Kensaku Yoshida, and the special guest speaker, Phil Benson. You'll also find the

information about the conference. We look forward to seeing many of you at this special conference!

Having said that, not everyone can make it to the conference -- unfortunately. So, we do have a feature article too! Here, Peter Hourdequin reports on his action research on exploring the effectiveness of using an online tool, *Edmodo*, for increasing learning gains and promoting learner autonomy of his students at a Japanese university. His article certainly gives a useful insight to those interested in using technology for promoting learner autonomy.

In the "Looking Back" section, Jim Ronald reports on the joint forum at the JALT PanSIG conference while Hugh Nicoll reflects on the LD Forum at the JALT CALL conference. Jim also shares his experiences at the JACET annual convention.

At the time of writing, JALT national conference in Kobe (25-28 November) is just around the corner! In the "Looking Forward" section, you can see a preview of the LD Forum and the list of LD-theme presentations compiled by Ian Hurrell.

At the start of producing this issue, we had discussion on the future directions for the

Learning Learning team and decided to introduce a more organized team, in which the lead editor and co-editors work closely with a team of coordinators taking responsibility for each section. We would like to thank the coordinators: Andy Barfield (Members' Voices coordinator), Caroline Ross and Colin Rundle (NGO Outreach coordinator), and Christopher Fitzgerald (Grant Awardee coordinator). We'd also like to thank Aiko Minematsu, Andy Barfield, and Mike Nix for arranging, conducting, and writing up the interviews with Kensaku Yoshida, Richard Smith, and Phil Benson respectively. Thanks also to Alison Stewart who conducted the interview with the Grant Awardee, Cory Koby, and also kindly offered assistance with editing the feature article by Peter Hourdequin. Our thanks go to the great team of translators: Satoko Ebara, Sayuri Hasegawa, Tomoko Fujita Kawachi, Kayo Ozawa, and Mayumi Takizawa. Thanks also go to Hugh Nicoll for uploading this issue to the LD SIG Website. Of course, our gratitude also goes to the contributors: John Garrett, William Hassett, Peter Hourdequin, Gareth Humphreys, Brandon Kramer, Joël Laurier, Rachelle R. Meilleur, Rose O'Loughlin, Ágnes Patkó, Sumie Saito, and Robert J. Werner. Last but not least, we would like to thank our lead editor, James Underwood, who has overseen the whole production process and supported us with great patience. Without his help (and hard work!), it would not have been possible to publish this issue. If you would like to be involved in *Learning Learning*, please let

us know. New members and new ideas are always welcome.

Finally, we hope you will all enjoy reading this bumper issue!

Best wishes,

From the Co-editors



Fumiko Murase

&



Monika Szirmai

Learner Development SIG News Update

LD SIG 近況報告

Andy Barfield & Richard Silver

アンディ・バーフィールド & リチャード・シルバー

May 2013 - October 2013

With just a few weeks to go until the JALT2013 Conference in Kobe in October, we are very happy to announce that Caroline Ross (a teacher at a private high school in Tokyo) and Aya Matsumoto (a senior student at Meisei University) are the Learner Development SIG's JALT2013 Grant Awardees and that Mike Sullivan (an ESP teacher in Kansai at Nippon Steel & Sumikin-Intercom) and Tanja McCandie (Nanzan University, Nagoya) are this year's Learner Development 20th Anniversary Conference Grant Awardees. For their awards earlier this year, we would also like to congratulate Natacha Piederriere (who teaches at a private high school in Tokyo) as an LD SIG Subscription Awardee, Brandon Kramer (a teacher at a private high school in Kobe) and Adrian Wagner (Niigata) as LD SIG Membership Awardees, and Michi Saki (Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto) as the LD SIG 2013 Research Grant Recipient. On behalf of the SIG we extend our warmest congratulations to Adrian, Aya, Brandon, Caroline, Michi, Mike, Natacha and Tanja and hope that many SIG members will have the chance to meet and talk with them over the coming year.

The month of May saw the SIG pass the annual audit of its financial activities. We'd like to thank Kay Irie for overseeing the SIG's financial records over the last year, as well as for handling treasury matters for the 20th anniversary conference in November. Kay is being shadowed in her treasurer's role by Huw Davies, Mayumi Abe

and Satomi Yoshimuta, who will jointly take over the treasury responsibility after the next audit. In July Ann Flanagan joined Gretchen Clark, Stephanie Corwin and Matthew Coomber in looking after SIG membership matters. Our thanks go to the membership team for continuing to nurture the SIG's growth in membership from 2012 through to 2013—and to Rob Moreau, Sayuri Hasegawa and Mayumi Takizawa for looking after the SIG's publicity needs and making sure that a regular bilingual announcement appears in *The Language Teacher*. On the publications front, in July, James Underwood joined Masuko Miyahara as publications co-chair, with a specific focus on coordinating the production of *Learning Learning* from one issue to the next. We are grateful to James and Masuko for all the important work they have been quietly doing behind the publication scenes. Our gratitude also goes to Mathew Porter and Chris Fitzgerald for joining the editorial team, to Fumiko Murase and Monika Szirmai for jointly editing this issue of *Learning Learning*. Masuko herself is involved in co-editing, together with Tim Ashwell, Steve Paydon, and Alison Stewart, the SIG's anthology of action research papers on Collaborative Learning in Learner Development, while Aiko Minemtasu and Andy have been tending to the Learner Development Working Papers Project, Learner Development: Different Cases, Different Interests. The plan is for both of

these books to be published later this year/early next year.

Over the past several months too a number of SIG events have taken place. We'd like to express our thanks to Jim Ronald for organizing the SIG's collaborative forum with the Global Issues SIG and Pragmatics SIG at the 2013 PanSIG conference at Nanzan University in May; to Hugh Nicoll for setting up and running the SIG's Forum at the 2013 JALTCALL Conference in Matsumoto May 31-June 2; and to Ian Hurrell for arranging the LD SIG Forum (with 24 presenters!), Transitions in the Lives of Learners and Teachers, at JALT2013 in Kobe. We'd also like to thank all the people taking part in these forums. These three different forums will have involved over 40 presenters in total, and we really appreciate all the time and effort that Jim, Hugh and Ian have put in to making these events such positive professional development experiences for so many presenters and participants.

As we write this column in late August, preparations for the LD SIG's 20th Anniversary Conference at Gakushuin University on November 23-4 are going well, and the most up to date information can be found at <<http://www.ldsigconference2013.org/>>. The event promises to be a fantastic collaboration involving teachers, researchers, students and NGOs, and we hope you will be able to be a part of it. We are delighted to have Richard Smith (University of Warwick), Naoko Aoki (Osaka University) and Kensaku Yoshida (Sophia University) as invited speakers, and Phil Benson (Hong Kong Institute of Education) as a special guest speaker. We were also thrilled by the response to the Call for Proposals earlier in the year which resulted in over 70 proposals from within Japan and around the world covering a diverse range of topics and contexts. At the conference there will be spaces for discussion and reflection, as well as opportunities to learn

about the work of a variety of NGOs from students who have been studying about them. There will also be a focus on recovery and rejuvenation in Tohoku with guest speakers from the Rikuzentakata community and Sendai. Our thanks go to Caroline Ross and Colin Rundle for bringing together many students and teachers for the focus on NGOs in the conference; to Mike Nix and James Underwood for continuing to develop the conference website, as well as to Rob Moreau for designing the eye-catching conference logo. Remember that full-time students can attend the conference for free, and for paying attendees, we have purposely kept the registration costs low to enable as many people as possible to take part. Our thanks to our SIG sponsors, the Junior / Senior High School SIG and Teachers Helping Teachers SIG, and our JALT Chapter sponsors, Tokyo Chapter and Yokohama Chapters, for helping us keep the costs so low. Not only that, but we hope you will also make it to the conference party on the Saturday evening!

We know that many SIG members are giving individual and group presentations at JALT2013, and we wish you every success if you are. As the SIG moves towards JALT2013, members of the committee are already making plans for 2014. We welcome your participation and continued involvement in the coming year and hope you will be able to come along the SIG's Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Room 301 at 13.20 on Sunday October 27 at JALT2013. This meeting is an opportunity for SIG members to discuss together different SIG projects and plans, as well as to make decisions about SIG activities for the coming year. We'd like to encourage teachers teaching languages other than English and/or from diverse teaching and learning contexts (elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, distance learning,

language school, and university settings) to come along and take part.

The AGM will mark two years since the two of us became co-coordinators of the SIG. Over that period, it's been a great pleasure for us to see the SIG go through different transitions and develop its team approach, undertake a wide range of different projects, and welcome a truly impressive number of new members both to the SIG and to the committee. The SIG is a wonderful network with many welcoming learning communities, and we wish the incoming co-coordinators, Fumiko Murase and Alison Stewart—who have been shadowing us for several months now—every success in taking things further with you all.



Andy Barfield

& Richard Silver



LD SIG co-coordinators, 2011-2013

10月に神戸で開催予定のJALT2013大会まで、あと数週間となりました。2013年度学習ディベロプメント研究部会(LD SIG)のJALT全国大会参加助成金受賞者はCaroline Ross (東京：私立高校勤務)とAya Matsumoto (明星大学4年生)に決定しました。また、Mike Sullivan (日鉄住金インターコムの関西支部ESP教員)とTanja McCandie (名古屋：南山大学)のお二人が20周年記念大会参加助成金の受賞者と決定しましたことを合わせてご報告いたします。また今年度の前半期におきまして、Natacha Piederriere (東京：私立高校勤務)がLD SIG体験入会・会費助成金(非JALT会員向け)受賞者に、Brandon Kramer (神戸：私立高校勤務)とAdrian Wagner (新潟)がLD SIG体験入会・会費助成金(JALT会員向け)受賞者に、またMichi Saki (京都：立命館大学)が2013年度LD SIG研究助成金受賞者に決定しましたことをお知らせいたします。SIGを代表いたしまして、Adrian, Aya, Brandon, Caroline, Michi, Mike, Natacha, そしてTanjaの皆様にご心よりお祝いを申し上げますとともに、SIG会員の多くの皆様が、来たる年度に向け、彼らと出会い、意見交換の機会を得られますよう、願っております。

5月はSIGにとって例年の会計監査月となっています。昨年の会計状況を監査および11月の20周年記念大会に係わる財務関係懸案調整の労をいただいたKay Irieに感謝いたします。Huw Davies, Mayumi Abe, Satomi YoshimutaがKayの業務をシャドーイングしており、次回会計監査以降、財務管理をチームとして引き継ぐ予定です。7月にはAnn FlanaganがGretchen Clark, Stephanie Corwin,

Matthew Coomber の担当するSIG会員管理チームに加わりました。2012年度から2013年度における当研究部会会員数の増加を促し、継続的に貢献してくださっている会員管理チームに感謝の言葉を申し上げます。またSIGの出版物に係わり、同時にThe Language Teacher の出版における定期的な日英での告知文の確認作業をRob Moreau, Sayuri Hasegawa, Mayumi Takizawa が担当して下さいました。出版に関しては、7月にJames Underwood が Masuko Miyahara とともに 出版の共同責任者として、特にLearning Learning の継続的な出版調整に関して協力をいただきました。JamesとMasukoには、出版の経緯に係わる重要な仕事に継続して寡黙に取り組んでいただき、感謝いたします。Mathew Porter とChris Fitzgerald は編集チームに加わっていただいたことに感謝いたします。Fumiko Murase とMonika Szirmai は共に今号のLearning Learning の編集を担当しました。MasukoはTim Ashwell, Steve Paydon, そしてAlison Stewartと共に学習者ディベロプメントにおける協働学習に関する事例研究集の共同編集にも携わってくれています。そしてAiko MinemtasuとAndy は学習者ディベロプメントについての論文集プロジェクト「Learner Development: Different Cases, Different Interests」に取り組んでいます。これらの書籍は、今年の後半もしくは来年初旬に発刊される予定です。

過去数カ月に渡り、多くのイベントが開催されてきました。Jim Ronaldは5月に南山大学で開かれた2013年度PanSIG年次大会でGlobal Issues SIGおよびPragmatics SIGとの共同フォーラムの企画・運営を担当していただき、心より感謝いたしま

す。Hugh Nicoll は2013年度5月31日から6月2日まで松本で開催されたJALTCALL 大会でSIGの会場設営および運営をご担当いただき、またIan Hurrell はJALT2013年度神戸大会でLD SIG フォーラム「Transitions in the Lives of Learners and Teachers」(24名もの発表参加者がいます!)の計画・手配を担当いただきました。これらのフォーラムに参加して下さいました皆様にも感謝の言葉を申し上げます。Jim, Hugh そして Ian が多くの時間や苦勞を費やして計画・運営した、これら3つの異なるフォーラムは総計40名を超える発表者があり、内容も非常に前向きで専門的な成長を全ての発表者と参加者に提供するものとなりました。彼らのご尽力に心よりの感謝の気持ちをお贈りいたします。

このコラムを書いている8月下旬現在、11月23日から24日にかけて開催されるLD SIGの創設20周年記念大会の準備が着々と進んでいます(最新の情報については<http://www.ldsigconference2013.org/>をご参照ください)。この大会は教員、研究者、学生、そしてNGOが協働する素晴らしいものになること間違いなしですので皆様のご参加をお待ちしています。光栄なことに招待講演ではRichard Smith氏(ウォーリック大学)、青木直子氏(大阪大学)、吉田研作氏(上智大学)を、そして特別講演者としてPhil Benson氏(香港教育学院)をお迎えすることになっております。また、本大会における発表の募集に対しては国内外から幅広いテーマ、そして多様な現場についての70以上の応募があったことを大変喜ばしく思っております。本大会では議論や内省の場に加え、様々なNGOの取組みについて、研究して

きた学生たちから学ぶ機会があります。さらに、陸前高田の地域社会および仙台からゲスト講演者を迎え、東北の復興・再生についても着目します。この場を借りて、本大会開催に際し、NGOに焦点を当てるために多くの学生・教員を結び付けてくれた Caroline Ross および Colin Rundle や学会ホームページを継続的に作成・更新してくれている Mike Nix および James Underwood、そして魅力的な会議のロゴをデザインしてくれた Rob Moreau に謝意を表明します。フルタイムの学生については無料で参加できることをお忘れなく。また、それ以外の参加者についてもできるだけ多くの方々にご参加頂けるよう敢えて参加費を低く抑えています。この低参加費を実現するにあたってご協力頂いた本SIG、Junior / Senior High School SIG、Teachers Helping Teachers SIG、東京・横浜JALT支部の各スポンサーにこの場を借りて御礼を申し上げます。また、土曜日の夜に開催されるパーティーにもぜひいらして下さい！

JALT2013大会では多くのSIG会員が個人あるいはグループで発表を予定していますが、心よりご成功をお祈りいたします。この秋の大会が近づくにつれ、委員たちはすでに2014年度の準備に当たっております。来年度もSIGの活動への皆様のご参加を歓迎いたしますと共に、10月27日（日）午後1時20分より301号室に開催されるLD SIG年次総会へのご参加もお待ちしております。この総会は、SIG会員がSIGの取り組んでいる様々なプロジェクトや計画について話し合い、そして次年度の活動についての決定を行う機会です。英語以外の言語を教えていらっしゃる方、様々な教授法や教育現場で教えていらっしゃる方（小学校、中学校、高校、通信教育、語学学校、大学等）、是非ご参加ください。

私たちがこのSIGのコーディネーターになってから、今年の年次総会で2年を迎えます。その間、SIGが様々な変化を経験し、チームアプローチを発展させ、幅広く様々なプロジェクトを手掛け、見事な数の新会員をSIGと委員会の両方に迎え入れるのを見届けることができ、大変喜ばしく思います。私たちのSIGは素晴らしいネットワークで、多くの温かな学びのコミュニティーがあります。数か月間、私達をシャドーイングしてきた新しいコーディネーターとなる Fumiko Murase と Alison Stewart が会員の皆さんと共に、更にSIGを発展させていけるよう成功を祈っております。

アンディ・バーフィールド & リチャード・シルバー
2011-2013年 LD SIG コーディネーター

Past issues of *Learning Learning*

Issues of *Learning Learning* going all the way back to 1994 are now available in PDF format here: <ld-sig.org/LL/archives.html>.

Many thanks to founding co-coordinator Richard Smith for scanning archival copies, many of which were originally printed on an old Risograph, collated by hand, and mailed in hard copy.

Also, thanks to the hard work of Mike Nix, the LD SIG's first anthology of writing exploring learner and teacher autonomy within Japanese contexts: *Autonomy You Ask!* is now available in digital format, and can be found here: <c-faculty.chuo-u.ac.jp/~mikenix1/ldsig/AYA.html>

Getting Connected: Local Get Together Reports from Kansai, Hiroshima, and Tokyo

つながりを求めて：関西・広島・東京

LD Get-together Report: Kansai

Gretchen Clark

Our summer Get Together was held as part of the Kansai University of International Studies' Summer Seminar on July 20, 2013. We had a small but enthusiastic group of 7 including Gretchen Clark, Michael Wilkins, Ellen Head, Ann Flanagan and Shuji Narita. We welcomed two new faces, 2013 Grant Winner Brandon Kramer and Mayuko Yamamura. Like the March session, this workshop also focused on the theme of action research where participants discussed their own LD-related problems such as 'how to encourage teachers to participate in professional development workshops' and 'what to do when students have trouble completing their homework'. These ideas were discussed in small groups and then by the whole with everyone brainstorming possible solutions. It was a productive hour of idea exchange!

As an off-shoot, later that day Gretchen Clark presented on an action research project that she developed with Ellen Head at the March Get Together. Entitled 'On Learner Development: Perhaps it is TEACHERS who should be taking risks', her presentation explored overcoming fears and taking risks in the classroom as a teacher. For this project, instead of conducting student-large group presentations, she asked her students to present individually for small groups. As it is an unconventional method of handling the student presentation, she was apprehensive of negative feedback from colleagues and/or students regarding the level of formality and lack of central teacher role in the new process but after experimenting with this small group style enjoyed several positive results including: high student motivation, enjoyment and increased L2 interaction.

Our autumn Kansai Get Together was held on September 28 as part of the Osaka Tech Day +Plus one-day conference at Otemae University in Itami. The theme of Osaka JALT Tech Day was Learner Autonomy, with keynote speaker Thomas Robb's plenary entitled: 'Considerations for the Effective Use of Technology for Language Learning.' With all the apps, games, blogs, wikis which have proliferated in the last few years, the power of technology to entrance students is self-evident, and there are many ways of harnessing that for autonomous language learning. LD SIG members and friends met informally over lunch to talk shop about classes, their learner development projects, and reflect on what they learned at the Tech Day.

The Kansai Get Together team: Gretchen Clark, Michael Wilkins, Ellen Head, and Ann Flanagan
Kansai Get-Together Facebook group <http://www.facebook.com/groups/126518854184011/>

LD Get-together Report: Hiroshima

Jim Ronald

The Hiroshima Learner Development get-togethers continue to happen. We meet most months of the year, and there are typically between five and ten people at any get-together. Altogether, over the year, we have a total of 20 to 30 people joining us, with many get-together regulars also active in JALT's Hiroshima chapter.

Topics we've focused on over the past few months have included the following: Moodle, learner reflection, English camp, cross-cultural awareness, learner advising, autonomy-readiness, out-of-class events, and extensive reading. While I continue to be the main manager of the Hiroshima LD get-togethers, more and more of us are involved in contributing to the get-togethers in some way:

finding pre-reading materials (thanks Mathew Porter!), arranging a CALL room for one session (thanks Monika Szirmai!), bringing things to show or things to ask, and sparking ideas off each other.

One aim has been for the Hiroshima get-togethers to be a launch pad for new projects, initiatives, or teams. In a way, hearing about what has been happening in Tokyo, we may feel that we haven't achieved this (yet!). The get-togethers have, however, provided sparks for new topics or perspectives to investigate, have served as sounding boards for new research, materials or activities, and have been receptive, fertile ground for developing ideas or new projects.

The group aims to keep flexible, to welcome people with different schedules. However, we are almost all university teachers and have not yet done much reaching out to elementary school or high school teachers, or teachers at language schools. This is something we need to address.

As we meet at the get-togethers, we are often reminded that we are all learners, and how valuable this social, supportive gathering is for us as we develop in our understanding and practices in our striving to become more able to assist our students' development as language learners.

I'll finish with comments from two regulars at Hiroshima Learner Development get-togethers: one from Akiko Awa, our model, vocal, lifelong language learner, and one from Naomi Fujishima, whose reasons for joining the get-togethers may be echoed by us all.

It is the best place to speak out my opinions from the view point of students. I have learned English mostly on my own. However, I needed a lot of help from English teachers from time to time. Sometimes I couldn't agree with their teaching method or style, so LD get-togethers are also helpful to deal with my frustration.
Akiko Awa

Attending the Learner Development get-togethers in Hiroshima gives me a chance to share ideas with teachers from other universities. It's refreshing for me to hear what goes on in other schools, and I feel a sense of camaraderie with my colleagues there. I've known a few of the regular members for many years, so it's another good reason to go!
Naomi Fujishima

LD Get-together Report: Tokyo (September)

Andy Barfield

This was the fourth get-together of the new school year, and the first since the summer, and 23 people took part in get-together. We started off by taking the first 15 minutes to mix and mingle and talk in pairs with someone we didn't know so well about our working contexts and our learner development interests. Huw, Mayumi (Abe) and Sami Yoshimuta then led the next hour by taking us through a series of workshop tasks and discussions around the 'The Strategy Tree for Language Learners' that they have developed together in their collaborative practitioner research project. The tree is based on Rebecca Oxford's model in 'Teaching and Researching Language Learning Strategies' (Oxford, 2011), and features four main areas of focus: (a) the four skills + grammar, vocabulary & pronunciation, (b) affective strategies, (c) cognitive strategies, and (d) sociocultural-interactive strategies. Huw, Mayumi and Sami presented the model and then invited us to draw on A3 paper our own trees as language learners. We happily did this and informally talked through our different experiences as we drew, before moving round and talking about our trees with different participants at the get-together.

In the second half of the workshop, Huw, Mayumi and Sami asked the whole group for feedback and comments around these three questions: 1. How can this be used in a classroom? 2. How helpful was it for you as a learner? 3. How can the model be improved? The discussion that followed ranged over a number of areas, both for our ourselves as learners and for our learners too. 'The Strategy Tree for Language Learners' could be used in parallel with Language Learning Histories and as a tool for discussing specific areas of development with learners. Learners could be

asked to draw their 'current state' tree and their 'imagined ideal tree' to map possible pathways for their own development, as the tree helps both learners and teachers to conceptualise and represent language learner development in specific terms. Metaphorically, the tree could help learners shift from a metaphor of success/failure/struggle in terms of test scores to a growth/(learner) development/ecological understanding of their learning and language use. The tree might also have applications for self- and peer- assessment.

As for improvements for the model, people suggested:

1. It could include some kind of 'meta' focus (meta-affective, meta-cognitive, meta-sociocultural/interactive).
2. It could be developed with a self-ranking software tool to generate computer images of trees.
3. Different types of tree (including more abstracted versions) could be presented to learners so that they are encouraged to visualize their learning in different, alternative ways.
4. The (represented) relationship between the four skills and grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation could be re-worked in different ways.

This was a full-on, wide-ranging and stimulating discussion which went through to 14.25, and we were all grateful to Huw, Mayumi and Sami for leading such an interesting workshop.

Before the 10-minute break, Andy mentioned that we would be dividing into learner development groups in the second part of the afternoon. He also invited participants to make a small donation of 500 yen to cover room rental costs at Otsuma. (10,250 yen was donated in total: this will be paid into the SIG's bank account and then used for paying the university.) After the break, we re-started by checking which areas of focus people would like to have in the second half of the get-together. Five groups then formed:

- * Collaborative learning: Debjani Ray, Joel Laurier, Stacey Vye, and Tim Ashwell
- * Developing autonomy: Billy Hassett, Fumiko (Kurosawa), John Garrett, Mayumi (Takizawa) and Rob Morel
- * Learning journals/diaries: Caroline Ross & Stephanie Corwin
- * Pedagogies for social justice: Alison Stewart, Andy Barfield, Huw Davies, Ken Ikeda, and Sami Yoshimuta
- * Reading review: Chris Fitzgerald, Fumiko Murase, Ian Hurrell, James Underwood, and Natacha Piederriere

We took about 10 minutes to form groups and then went through to 16.55 or so in small-group discussions. More detailed reports from each group will be posted on the Tokyo LD blog – just go to <<http://tokyogettogether.blogspot.jp>>

The next get-together in Tokyo takes place on Sunday December 15 from 14.00 to 17.00 at Otsuma Women's University, to be followed by an LD SIG 'bonenkai' in the Ichigaya area.



LD SIG 2012 Research Grant Awardee: Interview on Research Interests

2012 年度 LD SIG 研究助成金受賞者：研究課題についての インタビュー

**“Journey of Professionalization”: An Interview
With Cory Koby, LD SIG 2012 Grant Awardee**
by Alison Stewart, Gakushuin University



Cory Koby and I met at the JALT Executive Board Meeting in Kyoto on June 29-30, where he was representing Sendai Chapter and I was an additional nonvoting representative of the LD SIG. He started by apologizing profusely about his delay in writing an essay in return for receiving the research grant he was awarded back in 2012, so, in order to expedite completion of a final article, I agreed to interview him about his interest in learner development instead...

Cory: Well, you see, that's the first problem: you ask me what my research interest is, and what my interest is in learner development. But I'm not sure that I can answer that. I've been teaching for the past six years, and I feel confident now in my teaching, but I don't feel I know enough about how students actually learn. So second language acquisition is something I want to learn much more

about. I've also been looking into Multiple Intelligences and that's something I've tried to apply to my teaching, making sure that I include different kinds of activities that apply to the different learning styles. But as for "learner development", I'm not sure exactly how I would define that.

Alison: In that case, let's start by talking about your teaching context. Where do you teach?

Cory: I teach at an all-girls integrated Junior and Senior High school in Sendai. It's an old Catholic mission school that's considered pretty elite in the area. I teach mostly high school classes though I also do some eikaiwa classes at the junior high level. The high school has an intensive English programme, in which the students spend almost a year in the second year in a school abroad, either in Australia, New Zealand, or Canada. All students are placed in a different school, so they are on their own for the year.

Alison: Wow, that's quite a challenge for 16 year olds.

Cory: That's right. Our job is to prepare them to survive independently, since they will have a limited support structure once they get out there. Once they arrive they are either put into ESL classes for from one to three months, or they go straight into the mainstream. I'm the sub-homeroom teacher for that programme, something I've been doing now for five years. Unlike the

homeroom teachers who move up the grades in the high school with their students, I stay in this first-year preparatory class. That's become an important role for me. Apart from that, I teach the returnee students communication classes, and I've started teaching a unique content course for them—World Topics—through the Social Studies department. I'm really excited about it.

Alison: Did you draw on high school materials from the American high-school curriculum or from British A-levels to teach this course?

Cory: No, not at all. I had a completely free hand to design the classes. So it was all new. This is what has taken up a lot of my time recently. The course is divided into some major themes that the students explore in depth. The first one we did was Food, Nutrition, and Hunger. Now they're looking at Gender Issues. And we will explore Conflict and Conflict Resolution, then Natural Resources to finish the year. These are issues that are real eye openers for them and, I hope, can be really empowering.

Alison: That sounds great. These have got to be very advanced high school students. Where do they tend to go to after they graduate?

Cory: They do intercultural studies, language studies, things like that. Quite a few of them go to Sophia University, because of the Catholic connection. Some go to Akita International University, we usually get one or two into Waseda and Keio. They virtually always go on to private universities, and don't even apply to the public universities. I always find that strange; I'm sure they would get into some good public universities, but it seems that they feel that they "ought to" continue in private education.

Alison: That is curious, isn't it. To go back to what you were saying about the course, it sounds like

you have a lot of freedom in your work as a teacher.

Cory: Autonomy, yes! I have a lot of freedom. With the Social Studies course, because it was a completely new thing for me and because it is Social Studies, not English, even though it's taught in English, I had the option of working with a Japanese co-teacher and took it. I think they wanted me to have the support mechanism if I needed it. But he hasn't gotten involved at all. Previously, the course was taught by a foreign teacher, an outside teacher, who came in just for this course. But that teacher had to leave, and the principal and the department head thought that I would be well suited to fill the place because of my background. So that's one of the courses I've been teaching the third-year students. I also do debate. So yes, I do have autonomy, the opportunity to branch out into something new.

Alison: What have you found to be the main challenges with this new course?

Cory: Well, the first challenge is deciding what to include. So far, I've settled on one topic per term, which is covered using different media. I show them TED talks and documentaries to familiarize them with the theme. I do some lectures and they have discussions and debates, and they write essays, which is the main way I have of assessing them. Last term they also did group presentations, for which each of the groups chose a food aid organization, like Christian Children's Fund, World Food Program, other NPOs and religious charity organisations. The students presented all in English. The capstone of this process was debate. Here the students formed teams, four on each side, plus umpires, and they had to vie for grants of money for their organization. That was really successful. And several of them have continued with the extracurricular debate team. The school

has a sort of Debate Club—actually, it's not a bukatsu, it has a special status, so that students can do debate and still join one other club—and it's had its most successful year to date. In the past few years, a handful of girls have been in the Debate Team and have participated in the national tournament. Because there aren't many schools doing debate in Tohoku, we don't have prefectural tournaments for qualifying but are given a free pass straight to the national. We haven't done particularly brilliantly against the other schools so far, but this year, 35 girls have signed up for the team, and I think we have a good chance to do much better. The debate team has some history behind it now—it's an established thing.

Alison: So success breeds success. It sounds like you're very committed to the school, with the new course and the work you've been doing with the debate team.

Cory: Well, as they say, teaching for a high school is more like a lifestyle than a job.

Alison: So tell me, how did you find yourself in this lifestyle, I mean, job?

Cory: I wasn't a teacher before I came to Japan. I have a BA in law, and I worked for 20 years in business in Canada. Then, my business partner at the time decided to pull out and it seemed to be a good opportunity to come to Japan and let my kids come and experience their other culture. So we came over and I started working as an English teacher. My first job was for an eikaiwa company in Ishinomaki. It wasn't a great job. They sent me all over the place to teach; some places I only visited a couple of times. So it was impossible to establish much of a relationship with the kids. But it was through that job that I came to my present school. During that first year, the foreign teacher who was working at the girls' school left, so the school offered me a full-time position. Initially, I

was working on a one-year contract. That's pretty normal—in fact, it's more stable than some other jobs. They renewed my contract once, and then I asked for a change in status. I asked them to make me permanent. At first, they were, like, but we've never done that before. But I said, well, why not start now? And they did.

Alison: So now you have this stable job at the school, how do you see the job developing?

Cory: Initially I thought I would leave after a few years and go to work in universities. But recently, I've been thinking, why not stay where I am? It's a good situation and I can help improve the course. Things are changing at the school too. I noticed a shift a couple of years ago. When I first started there, the foreign teachers were just part of the furniture, or rather, just window dressing. Foreign teachers weren't expected to do some of the things that our Japanese colleagues do. But now I have a good relationship with people at the school. I've established some kind of track record and people trust me. I'd say I have some sway with the administration. They seem to listen to me.

Alison: It sounds like an enviable position to be in. Why would you think of moving?

Cory: You're right. Where I am now, I can be closely involved in decision-making at the school. When I talk to people I know who work at universities, it sounds like many have no voice at all where they work. But all the same, I have nothing to compare it with. I've only been in Japan six years.

Alison: But it seems that you have been moving forward with your career in these years. You said that you have now started a master's degree?

Cory: That's right. I've completed the postgraduate certificate in language teaching, so I have just two more taught modules and the dissertation to go.

I'm doing it at East London. I know, it's not very well known as a TESOL programme. It's very small compared with Birmingham or Aston. I'm the only master's student on the programme who's in Japan. Probably most other master's programmes have more of a support network.

Alison: So is that what draws you to JALT? The support network?

Cory: Absolutely. It's a journey of professionalization. I can't imagine where I'd be without JALT. Before I joined, I knew very few people who were doing language teaching long term. I joined the Sendai Chapter just three years ago, and was immediately drawn in. Not only have I been the Publicity Chair for the Chapter for the entire time, I have now attended over 30 meetings and two National Conferences, and really appreciate the opportunities JALT provides. My development both as a teacher and learner are still very much in progress. In fact, just as one of the JALT slogans says, for me learning truly is a lifelong journey.

Alison: So, if learning is a lifelong journey, to return to the question I put to you at the beginning, how would you define learner development?

Cory: Well, that is the million-dollar question. As learners, each of us travels down a unique path of exploration and discovery, and these individual and very personal experiences shape our development. As teachers, I see our role as guiding our learners along their individual paths, helping our students understand and make use of their experiences. These definitions are obviously still "under construction", which I suppose is really part of my ongoing development as both a teacher and learner.

LD SIG Grants 2013

The LD SIG Grants Committee would like to congratulate all of the 2013 grants winners. We look forward to their contributions to the LD SIG:

Subscription grant:

Natacha Piederriere

Membership grants:

Adrian Wagner

Brandon Kramer

Winner of the LD SIG 2013 research grant:

Michi Saki

Winners of the 2 JALT 2013 National Grants:

Caroline Ross

Aya Matsumoto

Winners of the 2 LD Conference grants:

Mike Sullivan

Tanja McCandie

The 2014 grants will be announced in late January or early February 2014.

For more information please go to:

<<http://ld-sig.org/grants2013/>>

Or send a quick email to:

<learnerdevelopmentsiggrants@gmail.com>

LD SIG Members' Voices

LD SIG メンバーの声

My Learner Autonomy and Intercultural Communication Research Interests



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My interest in learner autonomy started in 2009 when I took up a new teaching position in a Vietnamese EAP context in Ho Chi Minh City. It was clear early on there that passive learning behaviour was an issue. Among the expatriate teachers, complaints such as 'the students do nothing outside of class' were commonplace. Indeed, the perceived passive learning was often used to explain poor results. And yet, while it was possible to sympathise with these frustrations, they seemed a little unfair. The well-meaning intentions of the teachers were clear, but I felt that many of their frustrations stemmed from a lack of understanding of the local context.

As a teacher on the programme, I wanted to learn more about learner autonomy in order to find more effective ways to promote the concept, and so I completed an action research project to address the cultural challenges that my colleagues and I were facing. This was a collaborative process involving a number of teachers and students which led to the development of an intervention to ensure

a stronger and more consistent approach to autonomy-promoting practices in the institution. This took the form of an independent learning journal. After a 5-week trial in several classes, there was some indication of more autonomous learning practices. In addition, the feedback from the learners was positive overall with most feeling that it helped them transition from their traditional learning practices to those required of them on the EAP programme and later on their specialist degree courses. The journal is now in use across the EAP programme.

I left Vietnam in 2011 to work on an education project with Newcastle University in both Angola and the UK. During this time, as a result of working with high-level learners of diverse nationalities and backgrounds, I developed an interest in intercultural communicative competence (ICC), an area that has experienced rising interest over the last 10-15 years (Sinicope, Norris & Watanabe, 2007).

I am now about to combine both of my interests in learner autonomy and ICC as I undertake a research study as part of a PhD with the University of Southampton, UK (due to start in February 2014). I want to analyse how a learner autonomy approach may help develop ICC acquisition among Japanese EFL learners since this is a relationship that is still to be studied in depth. I am especially interested in: (a) how can definitions of learner autonomy and ICC be framed in a Japanese EFL context?; (b) in what ways are learner autonomy and ICC encouraged in a Japanese EFL context?; and (c) to what extent does learner

autonomy aid the development of ICC among Japanese learners in EAP?

I believe that this analysis of the relationship between learner autonomy and ICC is important as the acquisition of ICC can be hindered by the classroom setting (Byram, 1997). Therefore, my aim is to understand the extent that ICC can develop among a group of EFL learners in a Japanese university context within an organised framework outside of the classroom, where students may develop their own autonomous learning approaches. I hope to find that ICC skills can be acquired as a result of learner experience and learner reflection, when the focus shifts from teaching to learning (Zumbihl, 2012, p. 227). It is my hope also that this study will further the understanding and possibly reinforce the notion and philosophy that learner autonomy and ICC are a fundamental part of a learner's journey.

My research will take place in a university EFL context in Kumamoto, where I am now based. Here there is an emphasis on the development of learner autonomy through teacher support. I intend to adopt a combined quantitative and qualitative approach, enabling comprehensive accounts with data from questionnaires designed to reach a large number of learners, and more open-ended responses from focus groups which will be richer in detail (Lichtman, 2010, p. 84). The focus groups should enable an analysis of learner autonomy and ICC skills and by providing multiple views and experiences (Edley & Litosseliti, 2010, p. 165). This combined approach can be beneficial in language research as it stands to reveal wider aspects (Lazaraton, 2005, p. 215) which I hope will lead to a more complete understanding of learner autonomy in its relationship with ICC acquisition.

However, given that I will not be carrying out any actual research for at least a couple of

years, it is likely that the research methods will adapt as I start to work more closely with my supervisor and with the Southampton research group. Currently, I am working on the early stages of my literature review in which I am discussing contrasting perceptions towards learner autonomy and ICC in Western individualist and Asian collectivist cultures.

In terms of my personal motivation for doing this research, I hope it will provide assistance in meeting my long-term career goals of continuing to work in tertiary institutions with international people. While my primary aim is to provide learners with transferable skills through student-centered, open-ended, problem and inquiry-based learning, I also want to further my development and prospects in educational research in Asia.

I would be very glad to hear from any Learner Development SIG members who have similar interests or who may be able to offer some PhD preparation advice.

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How Learning Experiences Affect My Teaching



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I obtained my MA degrees in ELT and Japanese studies at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Hungary. When I started university, humanities students had to choose two majors. As I had always wanted to become an English teacher, majoring in ELT was obvious. However, I wanted something rare as my other major and as Japanese language proficiency was not required for the

application I was accepted to do Japanese studies. The two departments had completely different attitudes to teaching and learning. In my English courses, I always felt that teachers considered students' progress to be important. They were also accessible when students needed help, for example recommended books for self-study and introduced learning strategies. On the contrary, the Japanese department positioned itself as an educator of the new generation of researchers, therefore, little was done to meet or attend to students varying levels of Japanese proficiency, pace and learning difficulties. The curriculum consisted of reading academic texts and classical grammar from the second year on and Chinese readings ('kanbun') from the third year, all of which required a firm language knowledge which most of the students lacked. As a result, students soon realized that they had two options: give up (which was chosen by more than 70 per-cent of my classmates) or study together and help each other. I selected the latter.

First of all, we needed to become able to look up new words quickly. Senior students introduced us to useful software programmes and websites and we also borrowed dictionaries and grammar books from the library for reference. At the beginning, our study group met only before the classes to discuss our different translations and attempted to create the 'best possible solution' by putting the best part of each work together. As the workload and difficulty of the texts increased, we started to divide the texts into smaller sections and assign each section to a person in the group to translate it. Before the classes, we simply copied the missing parts from others. However, this method did not prove to be effective when the teacher asked for the reading of a kanji or the meaning of specific vocabulary or grammar items. So, we decided to assign each passage of the texts to at least two people who worked together. In

addition, we increased the number of meetings both to discuss the texts, and translate the most complicated parts together. During our meetings, we not only improved our translation skills but also mastered various study techniques. The learning strategies and techniques we developed were applicable to studying in general. As a result, by the end of the third year, we had become autonomous learners and we now formed a coherent and effective study group, whose members made decisions about their own learning processes. These experiences proved the validity of collaborative learning to me and made me realise that collaborative learning goes hand in hand with, or leads one to, greater autonomy.

Since April 2013, I have been teaching English at Meisei University, Tokyo. Here, I am trying to make use of my language studying history to foster my students' improvement in communicating in English. I have introduced strategies and techniques that I found useful, for instance flashcards, recording my voice, making posters, and shared my learning experiences such as collaborative learning and how I became able to make decisions about my learning and become autonomous.

In the first few weeks of the semester I observed great differences between my first and second year students in terms of co-operation. The second-year students worked well together from the beginning and were ready to make decisions about the roles and responsibilities within the group even at the start of the semester. On the contrary, for my first-year students, group and pair work activities were rather new. In high school it seems that they hardly needed to co-operate with one another in the language lessons; consequently, initially, they felt uncomfortable solving various tasks with other students who they had just met.

I have 12 students in my first year class, so it is easy to form groups of two, three or four. Activities include discussing topics, information gap activities, filling in charts, making posters, and preparing presentations. The length of group work varies according to the task, ranging from 2-3 minutes to 15-20 minutes. I often re-group students within one lesson so that they can get to know each other and learn to work with different people. The problems I face when doing group activities and projects with them are disruptive behaviour and going off task. If one member of the group is unwilling to participate it breaks the balance, and as a result, it either makes other students go off task also or imposes more work on them. Therefore, as a teacher I emphasise the importance of taking responsibility for learning and make students aware of their own learning processes. If they learn to make decisions on their own learning, then they start getting closer to becoming autonomous.

I consider it important to foster co-operation—with each member taking part equally—in order to be able to get closer to the implementation of collaborative learning later. (I would not call my first year class collaborative, as it implies students taking great responsibility over how tasks are to be executed and roles to be assigned (Hirade, 2011), for which they are not ready yet. We are still approaching that stage.) You will recall that as an undergraduate I was 'forced' to use collaboration as a tool but my students are introduced to it step by step. I regularly apply activities in which they have to make decisions or determine the role of each student. I attempt to make them think about how various tasks and problems could be resolved and ask them to reflect on the way they approached and solved the task, which helps them realise how they can learn most

effectively. I believe that such activities help them become more autonomous at the same time.

At the time of writing this in July, the Spring semester is almost over and I have seen considerable changes in how my students are becoming more and more responsible for their own learning. In the final group project, which involved writing and preparing an advertisement, they were free to decide who they wanted to work with, their topic and how to execute the task. Hardworking students deliberately selected each other as partners and the less engaged ones realised that they had to work together, which they did not like. However, they all knew the importance of the project in their final grades so instead of pretending to be inept in order to do as little work as possible they attempted to put something meaningful together. That was a significant point for them: they decided not to fail the course and take it more seriously. Although there was great difference between the quality and language of the final products the groups submitted, I consider all of them successful in relation to the decisions they had made and how they carried out the task. I feel that they made a big step towards autonomy.

As a university student, I experienced how collaboration can influence one's attitude to learning and the results of it. As a teacher I am attempting to implement the strategies and approaches I used as a learner in my classroom: collaboration was a key educational/ sociocultural process for me which helped me become autonomous, and I believe that my students can benefit from such an approach also. However, they first have to see that they are the ones who need to make decisions on and take responsibility for, their own learning. They also need to recognise how collaboration can be used as a tool. If they do, then these practices might well be able to lead them to greater autonomy.

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Meet Joël Laurier, a Cooperative Learning Facilitator!



Joël Laurier

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Hello, my name is Joël Laurier. I am a French Canadian but was born and raised in English Canada. I am bilingual and working on mastering Japanese to a reasonable degree. I have been in Japan for 16 years and call Tatebayashi, Gunma my hometown. I am currently teaching at Gunma Kokusai Academy where I have the great fortune of working with fantastic children who do have motivation toward learning English. I have just finished my MA in TESOL at Teachers College Columbia University. It was there that I learned of my new passion—cooperative learning. This teaching strategy has changed not only my way of teaching but also the way I look at teaching in general. I joined the Learner Development SIG in order to be able to share ideas on cooperative learning with like-minded people in Japan who think their students deserve better than a traditional style of teaching. I look forward to meeting you all.

A Welcome and Necessary Change: Introducing Autonomy in a Low Motivation Environment



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In my current situation introducing student autonomy could have a great impact on my students' lives both inside and outside of the classroom. In this short article I will explore the concept of autonomy in language teaching and learning within the context of my current educational institution and outline a general action plan for my own classes for the next two semesters. With a careful implementation I believe that I can help my students become more autonomous in their language learning, a welcome and necessary change if I wish to support their journey becoming independent, successful language users.

The learning context

Among the many definitions of autonomy published I prefer the simple and direct definition given by Benson (2011): "a capacity to control one's own learning" (p. 58). Scharle and Szabo (2000) elaborate that autonomy is not a trait that a student either has or does not have, but is instead possessed "to varying degrees" in every individual in every context. Currently I am teaching at a private high school in Japan with about 1,000 low proficiency, low motivation students. I see a majority of the students at school only once a week, severely limiting time-on-task and often hindering my progress (and theirs) through the

lessons and curriculum. In addition, in each class I have a significant number of other obstacles such as student absences (sometimes as many as 1/3 to 1/2 of the class are missing) and an inability to assign homework due to lack of student cooperation. The students in this environment often act out in class, walk around freely, talk loudly, or sometimes openly refuse to do any work at all as instructed.

Working in this environment can be very frustrating, but I understand the importance of trying new ideas to encourage the students to learn and, more importantly, to want to learn. The current English educational system is not working for my students. Using my own quizzes and tests, established vocabulary size tests, and self-efficacy surveys, I have yet to find a significant difference in ability or confidence in English between the 1st year and 3rd year students, despite the two years of instruction that separates them. If the current system is not working, I feel that I have an obligation as a teacher to search for a new approach to English instruction. I personally believe that rather than continuing to remove student responsibility to make instruction easier, I should give it back whenever possible and let the students take more control of their own education.

Previously attempted student-centered lessons have generally led to confusion and failed plans. Discussions and classroom observations with colleagues have lead me to realize that students spend a majority of their time in other classes copying English phrases and sentences word for word along with Japanese translations into their notebooks. To my surprise and seemingly at odds with the literature denouncing grammar translation and such rote-learning activities, the students seem to be much more focused and motivated during these tasks. Given simple and mechanical tasks, almost all of the students seem to

focus on the activity and complete it as instructed. Although I would like to label this situation as lacking student autonomy due to the heavy teacher influence, the students often seem to prefer it, autonomously opting for a teacher to tell them exactly what to do. This echoes the concerns expressed by Pennycook (1997) that our desire as teachers to impose autonomy could lead us to dismiss such 'opting out' as a legitimate possibility. I must therefore work within this context to increase the students' motivation in class while slowly trying to increase their confidence in the efficacy of autonomous learning.

I believe there are two significant reasons why I should encourage student autonomy. The first is my hope that nurturing the students' autonomy will inspire change and help increase student motivation, as "learners can only assume responsibility for their learning if they have some control over the learning process" (Scharle & Szabo, 2000, p. 80). The second reason is to support the students who are interested in learning English but are being limited by their less-motivated peers. Fostering the desire and ability to take control and learn outside of the classroom could help these students be successful in an otherwise difficult environment.

The plan

As Benson (2012) explains, rather than having direct control over student autonomy itself, as a teacher I can only influence any of the three variables which comprise it: ability, freedom, and desire. I can only help to create an environment that fosters the growth of autonomy within my students, by aiming to "bring something out of students, rather than put something 'in'" (Benson, 2012, p. 7). Due to the limited time available and the conditions of my workplace environment, I want to make limited changes to variables that I

can control rather than worrying about issues that I have no influence over such as what happens in other classrooms. Over the next two semesters I will work to enthusiastically provide the space and materials for more motivated students who have the desire to independently come to study and learn, focusing on the "ability" of students to study autonomously.

First I plan to simply offer open study times where students can come and interact with English, on a completely voluntary basis and initially supervised by a teacher. This open study session will be located in the school's Language Laboratory every morning before school where the students can choose to attend and review material covered in class, study for a large-scale test such as TOEIC or EIKEN, or simply try to use English and communicate in a relaxed space. I feel that this alone will be a large step towards autonomy when compared to their current classroom setting, as well as offer a much better environment to meet the students' individual needs. In addition to providing the physical space to learn, I would also like to equip the students with the tools they need to study on their own, including instruction in using various study methods they can practice outside of school such as using word cards and extensive reading. I believe in the power of extensive reading, in particular, and its potential to encourage student autonomy. Fortunately, I was able to arrange for the purchase of over 300 graded reader books in April this year, which act as the start of a library the students can use to learn on their own. Such forms of informal English extracurricular learning have not previously existed at my school, but I believe they will be very useful in encouraging the students to take control of their own learning experience. Lastly, I would like to include some form of self-reflective tasks in this process, reminding the students of their roles

and guiding them to consider their own learning. It is imperative that the students come to view themselves as a crucial part of the whole learning process (Scharle & Szabo, 2000) if they are to further develop their capacity to control their own learning.

My hopes

I consider autonomy an essential component of language learning, but it cannot be forced upon students who are not ready or willing to embrace it. With a slow, steady, and well-thought out introduction, however, it is my hope that these ideas will spread and I can help my students become better learners throughout their lives. While the plan outlined above is small in scale, even if only a few students benefit it will have been worth the effort. While I do not know how many students will utilize the space and materials offered, with any luck the students who come will see the benefits and bring any knowledge and enthusiasm gained back into the classroom to the benefit of others.

Finally, I would like to thank the Learner Development SIG for the opportunity to join this community and learn from those much wiser and more experienced than I am. While I am eager to try the ideas outlined above and see if I can help inspire positive changes in my students, the plan is flexible and I am open to other suggestions. I would love to hear from anyone who has had similar experiences introducing student autonomy, whether successful or unsuccessful, or anyone with any advice to give. I am still very new to the field of learner development and I have a lot to learn, one of the reasons why I was eager to join the LD SIG. I am looking forward to learning more from not only my own experiences and trials, but also from the experiences of others.

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Exploring Learner Development through e-Portfolios



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The Sojo International Learning Center (SILC) at Sojo University in Kumamoto, opened in April 2010, and I was one of the original 10 teachers who were responsible for the set-up. Initially the main issues that we faced involved trying to get a curriculum in place for over 700 students, figuring out how we were going to assess them, and dealing with shell-shocked non-English majors who had not one, but two classes of English Communication a week. After a while, the next challenge for us was to introduce the students to the Self-Access Learning Center (SALC), which occupies the entire second floor of the building. It

consists of a conversation lounge, a reading area with multi-level graded readers, listening stations, speaking booths, a large English-only DVD collection, with comfy sofas and large screen TVs to watch movies, and much more. Although some students started using the SALC for their own purposes, it appeared (to me) that the majority of students were using the SALC only to complete the activities they were required to do in class.

As this seemed to me like a waste of a great opportunity to use such a useful facility, I decided to find a way to get the students more interested in using it. I first came up with a project that had the students choosing their own homework that paired their own interests with English study (Meilleur, 2013). For example, if they enjoyed watching movies, they could watch movies in English and use movie books or other resources to learn from them as well. However, most students did just enough to meet the requirements and nothing more, and almost none of them did their work in the SALC (or used SALC resources). After that, I realized that students would need more “training” in how to be (hopefully motivated) autonomous learners. Thus I began a new project with two of my colleagues that focused on reflective writing. The idea here was that students would become better equipped to make the language learning choices they needed if they reflected more on what worked and didn’t work for them, and why. Afterwards, they would be introduced to various external activities (i.e., any language study done outside of the classroom, whether it was done in the SALC or not) that they could later choose to use either concurrently with their English classes, or in later years. Students were asked to reflect on a variety of topics, ranging from their own English-language learning histories, to activities done in class, as well as reflections concerning projects and presentations. Initially the reflection questions

were quite specific, but over time they became more generalized, and we tended to get more detailed responses from the students as a result. Students did become better at reflecting as the year wore on, and they provided a lot of useful information as to what they found useful and interesting to do (not always the same thing.) We were able to complete the first stage of this project, but unfortunately not the latter stages, primarily due to time management issues in the second semester.

These two previous projects have led me to my current project. After reading several articles about the benefits of language learning portfolios (Banfi, 2003; Cadd, 2012; Collins & Hunt, 2011; Davis, 2003; Lam & Lee, 2010; Nunes, 2004; Shimo, 2003), I decided to use the concept of student-generated websites as e-portfolios as way of encouraging students to keep a record of their language learning progress, both in and out of the classroom. Although we have some server issues, our facility is CALL-friendly (English laptops and headsets in every classroom for every student, digital projectors, etc.), and I knew I would be able to help my low-level students in class in building their sites. I was unsure where to start, but a colleague of mine introduced me to the Weebly platform <<http://www.weebly.com/>>, which is very user-friendly. After creating my own class website with it, I realized that if I could use it myself, my students would be able to as well. It is mostly a question of dragging and dropping to create what you need on the pages. Students can build as many pages as they like on the site, upload audio and video files, embed documents and YouTube videos, have their own personal blog, and more. This, of course, is with the Pro version of the site, which I currently pay for (\$1 a student per year), but the free version offers quite a lot of possibilities as well.

The initial set-up for the e-portfolios was very teacher-specific. I wanted the portfolios to have the same basic set-up that students would personalize as they went along. Thus, every student's website has the same title (i.e., Name's English Portfolio), and every website has the same four basic pages: Home, Homework (with added subpages), My Blog, and My Links. The Home page is a place where students describe themselves, and their English-learning, personal, and future goals. They can also add photos or other information here. The Homework pages (which include reflections, a speaking journal, video uploads of their speaking tests and presentations, and more) are a repository of all the work that I have asked them to do in and out of class. The Blog page is just that, a personal blog where students can write what they like on topics of their choice, although occasionally I ask them to write about something related to what we have done in class. The Links page is a place where they can add links to useful sites at school—such as the Sojo Moodle and different Facebook pages—and also to other language learning sites that they enjoy.

While there may be some argument as to how tech-savvy Japanese students are (outside of using their mobile phones), I find that most of the students are engaged with their own websites to varying degrees. With the exception of a handful of students, most know how to navigate their sites and add the elements they need to their pages. As this is a new project, there have been a few minor hiccups along the way, but I continue to have students upload their work, reflect on it, and introduce them to various activities they can do outside of class. In the second semester, the teacher-directed focus will lessen as the students will be required to come up with their own English learning plan, with teacher guidance of course. I

hope to discover whether or not, over time, how many will continue to use and add to their e-portfolios through their own self-directed study long after they've finished my class.

Some of the current challenges I am facing with this project include finding a way to evaluate the work done on the websites and trying to be consistent in checking in on the students' websites on a regular basis. In addition to these practical matters, there is also the challenge in having the students "own" their websites, where they take control of the content, and add to them as they see fit. Hopefully, in doing so, students will become more aware of their own learning development, and will be able to become more motivated and autonomous language learners.

I have been working over the past two and a half years on developing autonomy with Japanese students and have found from my previous projects that there is a real need to foster and develop learner reflection and modes of autonomous learning with them (Lyddon, 2011; Matsumoto, 1996; Skier & Vye, 2003); however, there is also a danger in having students become as dependent on the teacher for their autonomy as with other elements of their language learning.

I will be presenting on e-portfolios at the Exploring Learner Development Conference in Tokyo this November, but I am also interested in collaborating with other LD members who may be interested in this project, or something similarly related. Please feel free to contact me any time.

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The Reluctant Language Learner Turned Language Teacher: A brief outline of my language learning history



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My language learning history has been tenuous at best. Like the majority of Irish children, I had absolutely no interest in learning my native language, Irish (Gaeilge). It is generally viewed as a 'dead language' by the majority of the Irish youth—a language with no 'real world' applications outside of Ireland and only slightly more within. By the end of secondary school, I could not even create a simple grammatically correct sentence in Irish that I had not learned by heart. My repertoire now consists of very basic vocabulary and useful expressions like "Can I go to the toilet?" and "Merry Christmas", and this is after almost 16 years of language learning. I also spent six years learning French, and my skill in this language was little better. Deciding to view myself as a 'bad language learner' enabled me to rationalise this ineptitude quite well. I had absolutely no conception of the essential role of grammar in either language and found myself attempting to re-learn the present simple during my final years in secondary school. This pursuit was quickly abandoned when I realised that all I needed to do in order to obtain a high grade in both languages was to 'learn the exam'. Although this tactic left me

incapable of speaking either language, it did result in quite high grades in both exams, which suited me perfectly at the time and continues to suit an increasing number of native Irish learners.

Since moving to Japan almost four months ago with just the words for “hello”, “goodbye” and “thank you”, I already have a better knowledge of Japanese grammar than I ever had after 16 years of learning Irish and six years of learning French. Teaching language learning has undoubtedly helped in this process, but I am of the opinion that lowering my affective barrier was and is the main component of my progress. Instead of relying on osmosis, I am actively studying the language and making an effort to speak it as often as possible. This does not mean that I am anywhere close to having a conversation in Japanese, but I am slowly building up a base of grammar and vocabulary which I am hoping will all come together within the year and enable me to have a semi-basic conversation in Japanese.

Upon deciding to move to Japan, I was informed that I would be teaching students of a lower level than I was accustomed to. From the beginning, I assumed that not having an even partially fluent second language would negatively affect my teaching. I thought that I would not be able to relate to my future students as language learners and that I would not be able to understand the difficulties that they were facing. Surprisingly, I feel that my ‘non-language learning history’ is giving me good insight into the feelings of my compulsory English students. I find myself regularly thinking back on what I know about Irish and French and trying to remember the reasons why these language points managed to slip through my affective barrier. I feel that this is helping me to proactively combat disinterest and to frame lessons/teaching accordingly in ways that accommodate the students’ feelings towards

language learning and that benefit them as a result. I also feel that I now have a greater understanding of my English communication students’ difficulties. Moreover, I find it easier to explain the nuances of the English language by giving a few examples of what I know about the Japanese language. Overall, I believe that my “non-language learning history” is on the way to actually becoming a “language learning history” and I am looking forward to using this to my advantage for the rest of my teaching career.

Learners’ Development of Autonomy through a Speaking Task



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My name is Robert Werner, and I have recently joined the Learner Development SIG. I am a lecturer at Kanda University of International Studies, as well as the Associate Editor of the *Studies in Self-Access Learning Journal*. My experience includes eight years of ESL/EFL teaching at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels in both the United States and Japan. I am new to the field of learner development, having become interested in it recently through an in-class assignment. This in turn led to a desire to assist my students in becoming better learners.

Highly motivated students of mixed ability levels in my university English communication class completed a series of assignments where they recorded a conversation with a proficient user of English, listened to it, and reflected on their performance. The assignment was designed for

students to improve their speaking over the course of the semester, and part of the reflection entailed making a plan to improve for the next conversation (again with a proficient user of English), which was to take place about three weeks later. Students then had time to implement their plan and prepare for the next topic before repeating the process.

As the instructor, I listened to their recordings, read their reflections, and gave as much meaningful feedback as possible to support them by annotating their electronic submissions with comments on the conversations and reflections. Through grading assignments and examining students' reflections over time, I noticed an ability by some students to critically reflect on their speaking and make adjustments in order to improve in specific skill areas. For example, one student initially wrote, I want to improve my grammar and vocabulary. I couldn't speak right grammar and difficult vocabulary. If I improved them, I [would] be able to speak English fluently. An excerpt from a later reflection by the same student not only shows a detailed and thoughtful response, but also that she was enjoying the experience: I would like to improve vocabulary. I do songs worksheets. I will listen to the songs and fill in the gaps. I can learn vocabulary as I sing! So, it's easy to learn words by heart. This strategy improves my skill, not only word skill, but also listening skill. As a result of this and other students' progress, I became determined to improve my own teaching so as to facilitate this type of development in more learners.

Around the same time, I had a conversation with one of the university's learning advisors, and it became clear that we had been independently been working toward the same goal with some of the same students. He was trained in the field of autonomy, whereas I was fueled by my prior experiences in helping younger English language

learners develop their critical thinking skills. This unexpected discovery instilled in me the belief that I was moving in the right direction, and I could see the potential for further student improvement through becoming more active myself in the field of learner autonomy.

I feel that CALL has also played a part in my students' development. In my never-ending quest to use technology both in and outside the classroom, I have introduced students to Edmodo, an online social networking tool for educators that has an interface similar to that of Facebook. With so many students using Facebook, Edmodo provides familiarity without a high learning curve. Students have access to folders customized by the instructor, including links, documents, and audio/video files that can be accessed anywhere, thus providing an online tool for autonomous learning. These folders constitute an electronic library, which is exclusively available to the students in a particular class or classes, as determined by the instructor. My class's Edmodo library contains folders labeled dictionaries (including collocations and synonyms/antonyms), pronunciation (videos of mouth movement and place/manner of articulation), vocabulary (student-created "how-to" guides for strategies taught in class), and pragmatics (student-created videos on correct pragmatic language use). By accessing these folders, students can revisit various resources throughout their development as learners (both during the course and after it has ended).

My current research investigates students' plans to improve in speaking over the course of a semester (as described above). I am analyzing their goals (e.g., vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.), the means of achieving these goals, and examining the relationship between students' perceptions of self-efficacy (and other factors) and their choices. In the future, I hope to look more deeply into different

ways of thinking with regard to improvement in speaking in order to better understand why individuals make certain choices. As I am constantly pushing students to reach their individual potential, I am also striving to develop professionally myself. Through this process I want to help as many students as possible not only to attain their goals in acquiring higher language skills, but also to progress in their development as autonomous learners. Through my present and future research, I hope that I am able to make a positive contribution to the field and help other educators to likewise assist learners in their development.

A Life Spent in Learning Development



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Hello there, my name is William Hassett. I am currently a lecturer

at Dokkyo Medical University working for the Department of Premedical Sciences in its language division. The emphasis of the department isn't focused on English language. In fact, it is only since 2012 that the native language teachers working here even saw a contract. I was offered a full-time/yearly contract in April and I hope by accepting the post I will find, at long last, some security in this profession.

I've been in Japan for a very long time, longer than most of my students. I've seen a lot of changes, my work, the hairdos, AKB48? But something that hasn't really changed so much, I think, is teaching and... how little Japanese I speak. Unfortunately, I didn't major in education; I'm not a natural teacher. I'm an engineer. So when

I began teaching, I didn't view it as my profession mainly because I knew nothing about it. Neither did I plan on staying in Japan for so long. So, what happened?

I hail from foggy London via rainy Ireland and I had a promise of a new start at sunny Melbourne University. To be honest, I was bored and I wanted to go back to school to study History. Luckily, I had a cousin who was a lecturer in 'Australia's No.1 University' and a good way in. But my re-education plan needed funding. It's a long story, but basically I arrived in Japan and started my teaching career at a lowly Eikawa in downtown Utsunomiya, a factory town... and as it was the bubble years... ka-ching!

In those days, most visitor-teachers in Utsunomiya, came from the U.S.A. or Canada. At first, I found it difficult to find a job because I am/was London-Irish, but when I got a start in teaching I found getting work easier using that 'difference' to my advantage. We had a tight-knit community back then; we helped each other and did what we did to get by. It took awhile, but then I began seeing the job as more than a means of putting rice on the table. With the encouragement from the real teachers among us, I started to take things more seriously, eventually returning to the UK to get a TEFL Diploma.

When I returned to Japan, I was able to move away from cram schools and I started teaching for Time T.I. (a subsidiary of Time Magazine). I began teaching, in factories, to young engineers. Back then, many of the big companies were sending their workers abroad, mostly to the US and Europe. I prepared them by improving their general communication skills, but I also helped them to communicate their work knowledge, in English, to foreign engineers when they were posted. My engineering background became a useful tool and I felt at home walking

around the factory floor with my students explaining their jobs to me. For the first time I felt the joy of teaching and it was so fulfilling. But then came the depression and factories started cutting back in education support resulting in my company folding. Fortunately, with the slimming down of the JET program, I was able to find work teaching at a Junior High School then at a High School and now finally I have moved to the dizzying heights of DMU, which I started in spring 2013.

Looking back, I realize that my whole life has been one of Learner Development. In my case, my search for security in Japan has forced me to change and adapt but more importantly to learn and develop new skills. I'm still learning, hopefully still developing, but I've a long way to go before catching up with my peers and the thought of that gap scares me. A bigger scare is knowing that it's only now that I'm beginning to understand what it's really like to be a teacher... even after all this time, there is so much I don't understand and so much for me to learn.

Back to the beginning and my job at DMU. There is so much that needs to be done here. Persuading everyone that English is important is one thing but my biggest task at the moment is to motivate my students who are busy learning to be doctors. In this regard, I'm trying to establish a self-learning/access center where all our students, doctors and nurses can come, meet and make friendships through English. But I need help. By joining the Learning Development SIG I'm hoping to find people there who can advise and help me make my SAC real and successful. I need to understand more about Learner Development and how to go about developing my students' English skills autonomously. The JALT Kobe Conference in October will be a first. Further down the line, on November 23-24 I will make it my business to

attend the 20th Anniversary Conference and hope to see many of you there.

Learner Development Issues in Language Education

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Two concerns arise when I think of learner development in the study of English. First, the motivations behind the pursuit to learn English worldwide seem questionable. Second, it seems newer ways to assist students in learning a language have yet to be significantly utilized. I'm currently in the process of finishing an MA in TESOL, and my study has focused on looking at the influences that push students to learn a language along with how they might do it more efficiently.

Not long ago, I watched a TED talk which detailed that over two billion people are studying English. The speaker in the TED talk seemed to think the situation was of benefit to the world. But, I wonder what the different motivations are behind these two billion people. I wonder what kinds of social systems they are involved with. I wonder if they might be in need of not only re-evaluating their motivations to study English, but their involvement within the societies that they exist.

A review of the literature seems to point to corporate influences as a persuasive factor in shaping students' perceived needs for English. Tsui and Tollefson (2007) state that individual reactions to globalization have been "shaped, and even determined, by the linguistic practices and preferences of multinational corporations, transnational organizations, and international aid agencies" (p. 18). Language learners may perceive that by acquiring English as a skill, they will have gained some worthwhile help to ensure their

economic security. As to who can actually use English to enhance their lives economically or otherwise is in question. Some contend that the usefulness of the language is decreasing relative to population and that this parallels the increasingly polarized economic realities between the "haves" and the "have-nots" (e.g., Holborow, 1999). In other words, English is a language that provides opportunities more for the established elite than for the masses. In any case, this is a social distortion that needs to be looked at and addressed with students.

In second language acquisition, I have thought about how one might introduce new types of material that could both cognitively and motivationally assist students in achieving their learning objectives. Material that would appeal to students who either can't engage with existing material or simply want variety. I've considered two types of reading material that might help—comic book formatted reading material, and motion comics. Evidence shows that language learning material in a comic book format might offer substantial cognitive and motivational benefits over conventional material (El Refaie, 2009; Jones, 2010; Krashen, 2004; Liu, 2004; McCloud, 1994; Wolk, 2008).

I've studied these two areas for some time now, though I have yet to write an article for a journal. The study of what motivates students to learn English is disturbing, as it seems to indicate a worldwide failure in education in general. On the other hand, the more technical study in reading for second language acquisition seems somewhat uplifting. Despite questions regarding student motivation to study English, it seems a winner either way if students can be helped to do it more effectively.

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Pallas Athena, the goddess of wisdom, courage, inspiration, civilization, law and justice, just warfare, mathematics, strength, strategy, the arts, crafts, and skill.

Language Learning History

言語学習歴

From a learner of English at school to a learner as an English user and teacher



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Until the point of my compulsory retirement last spring, I had been teaching English at a public senior high school for more than 30 years. Now I am still working using a re-employment system because I still have an interest in teaching English to young learners and I would like to help them improve their English proficiency and broaden their horizons and possibilities.

As a non-native speaker of English, I feel, as many other non-native speakers of English who teach English in Japan probably do, that there are two important aspects to my connection with English. I am a learner as well as a teacher of English, and learning is a lifetime work.

My initial contact with English was when I was at the age of 15. Like most young people in Japan, English was the subject for me to learn at junior high school for the first time. English attracted me because it was quite different from my native language, Japanese, and I found it interesting to study various things about the new language. Also, to me, English was like a window open to different worlds. One of my favorite books then was (and still is) "Anne of Green Gables." Although the book was written in Japanese, it inspired me to study English hard in order to travel to different

countries. Although I cannot remember exactly how I learned English at that time, I can recall the scene where my classmates and I read the textbook aloud in class. Reading aloud is a way of learning known as "ondoku." I studied hard not only in class but also at home, so I got a good score on the tests and English became one of my favorite subjects. How was my listening ability then? I remember one unforgettable episode in particular. One day after school, I had a chance to listen to an English song. While listening, I noticed I could not sing along with it though I was looking at its lyrics. A long time after that, I understood the reason. I needed more practice because English has its unique characters of sound. However, shock alone stuck to my mind.

In senior high school, I felt that English learning became more difficult, but I still liked it and studied it hard. Through studying English, I could continue to know about people and culture whose backgrounds differed from mine. In addition, studying English was crucial for me to pass the university entrance exam. I remember how we students learned in two main types of class: "Reader" and "Grammar and Composition." In the former class, the teacher read us an English passage we were expected to study, explained some grammatical matters, and asked us to put each sentence into Japanese one by one. After the meanings of all the sentences were confirmed, my classmates and I read them aloud after the teacher. When I reflect on his way of teaching reading, it was very simple. After I became a teacher, I realized that such a "yakudoku" approach has been a common approach in EFL classes in Japan for a

long time. We were not taught other effective ways of reading such as grasping the main ideas of a text. That teaching way may be what could not be helped.

In the “Composition and Grammar” class, I acquired fundamental knowledge about grammar. The teacher was an attractive young woman who spoke English very fluently. The contents of the textbook were arranged focusing on grammar items. We were expected to understand the explanations about them, memorize sample sentences including the target grammar items, and work through different exercises. The main part of each exercise was to translate Japanese sentences into English ones. We did not practice writing any essays. However, later I found this class was very helpful in my English learning history. The teacher encouraged us to memorize five key sentences as our homework and in the next class gave us a quiz. Even now I can recall some of the sentences that I learned. I spent a lot of time learning at home in order to prepare and review classes and studied more by myself using materials made for students who wanted to enter university. I was able to improve my abilities high enough to enter a national university. My reflection on learning in my senior high school days let me notice that my learning was unbalanced in developing four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. My classmates and I were rarely given a chance to use English in situations as in the real world. However, my English learning at senior high school as well as at junior high school built the base of my knowledge about grammar. I really appreciate that because since then I have often recognized that what I gained then remains firmly in my mind.

After graduating from senior high school, I entered a national university to become an English teacher. However, soon I recognized my choice of major was wrong. I had chosen to study education,

but in order to get a license as an English teacher. I was studying with students whose major was English. Almost all the classes I was allowed to attend were lectures through Japanese, but there was a class which was quite different. There I was taught by a native speaker of English for the first time in my life. In those days, he was probably the only native speaker of English at the university. I remember the day when I first attended his class. I could not listen to him and say anything at all except for some simple expressions. After the class, I trudged my way back to the dormitory as I had completely lost confidence in my English proficiency. My roommate in the same dormitory advised me to develop my listening and speaking by listening to an English conversation program broadcast by NHK. I bought a radio-tape-recorder and began listening to it. However, gradually learning English was becoming very stressful to me with tough studies in my major. In my senior year, I repeatedly wondered what job to choose, and eventually I became a police officer because juvenile delinquency was another interest of mine.

After graduating from university, I had a seven-year career as a police officer, which was a really valuable experience. However, a few years after I got the job, I recognized that because of a personnel matter it would be impossible to work in the field related to juvenile delinquency which I wanted to get involved in. In addition, I recognized that I was more interested in teaching. After some more years of consideration, I finally decided to change jobs and become an English teacher. This was a turning point in my life. As I was not keeping in touch with English very much after I graduated from university, I started to learn English again to be an English teacher. I had difficulty in recalling the vocabulary I had learned in my school days, but I persevered and I even studied by using textbooks for junior high school students. My knowledge of

the grammar I had learned long time before turned to be very helpful in learning English again.

I became a teacher in the early 1980s and soon I recognized that situations around English teaching and learning were beginning to change—to greater emphasis on English as a tool of communication in English education. The trend has continued, and all the time I have been making efforts to be a better English teacher—attending seminars, watching TV or listening to the radio, reading books or magazines for English teachers and/or learners, and so on. At the same time, I myself have been learning English in various ways trying to be a better English communicator with well-balanced skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Despite all my efforts, I sometimes feel that I am not spending enough time on developing my English because of different challenges in my professional and personal life. That makes me feel that I need a stronger will to keep on learning.

In turn, my ways of learning English for myself have a lot to do with my teaching in class. English pronunciation is quite different from Japanese pronunciation. It is important for teachers to be able to show good pronunciation to their students. I joined an English teachers' group whose aim was to help teachers to gain English pronunciation articulate enough to teach in class. There, I started my learning by practicing abdominal breathing, and my English sounds became good enough as a non-native speaker. The experience in this group has been very helpful to me as a teacher. As a non-native speaker, I understand what difficulties Japanese learners have in making English sounds, and based on this knowledge and the training I had, I have been teaching English pronunciation to my students.

Various English programs through media such as NHK have also proved very useful to improve my listening and speaking skills. Among

various programs, I like Mr. Toyama's program best because the contents of its textbooks have a rich and attractive variety. Moreover, he is always cheerful and encourages us to continue learning, saying "Keep listening, keep practicing and keep on smiling!" He teaches us listeners the joy of language learning. He also teaches me as a teacher the importance of creating a relaxing atmosphere in language-teaching classes. If learning is not enjoyable, it will not last long, and we know that language learning requires a large amount of time in school days and in the following days.

Information and knowledge from books and magazines for English teachers and/or learners are important resources as well. For example, one day I learned about "shadowing", which is one of the techniques for people who want to be an interpreter. Some high school teachers were already using it in their classes. I tried it at once and since then it has been one of my important ways of English learning. In my English classes, I sometimes encourage my students to try shadowing too according to their proficiency. Another piece of information I got from publications is the effectiveness of extensive reading. Until then, I had usually read texts intensively and rather slowly. However, I recognized the importance of reading easy, interesting texts at a rapid pace and reading a lot of them. This way of reading showed me another way of how to interact with English texts. I later introduced extensive reading into my classes though it was done at a small scale. My students enjoyed choosing and reading easy texts. As for writing, I learned mapping as one way of how to organize ideas, then began using this technique in my English writing, and also introduced it into my classes.

These experiences are some examples of how I have tried to improve different English skills,

mainly focusing on listening and speaking skills, for myself as an English user and teacher. What I will focus on next is not related to such skills, but related to learners' managing learning on their own. Once I attended a certain seminar for people who wanted to get a higher TOEIC score. There, there were some English teachers as well as many business people and some university students. The seminar leader showed us how to train ourselves and pointed out the importance of self-training. I was a little surprised because what he emphasized more was the idea of learners' developing their motivation and learning autonomously. His concern was adults' learning, but it reminded me of reports about practices by some high school teachers. They also insisted on the importance of their students' self-studying. This made me begin to understand that the concept of self-training and self-studying is related to autonomy, which I learned about later and now recognize much more as significant.

Although I had been attending different seminars in order to improve my teaching, I felt the necessity of studying current theories of language and second language learning and teaching so that I could think further about and reflect on my practices considering such theories. Therefore, I entered Teachers College Columbia University Japan Campus. At that time I was in my early 50s, but I thought I was never too old to learn. At TC, I attended various kinds of courses related to TESOL, spending a lot of time in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking about things critically, which resulted in improvement of my language proficiency. Since I began studying at graduate school, I have come to be able to see both practically and theoretically how I have been learning English.

When I look back at my language learning history as a whole, learning as a student in the first

stage was rather unbalanced in terms of improving skills though it benefitted me in that it gave me the basis of grammatical knowledge. In the second stage, taking the point of view as an English teacher has been added to my language learning. I have introduced various ways which I used in my learning and thought effective for my students' learning into my EFL classes after adjusting such ways for them.

In the end, I would like to reflect on why I have been learning English and I will keep learning it in the future. As a teacher of English, I have three important reasons for doing so. One is that I would like to be able to use English more accurately and appropriately in order to make my teaching better. I will be able to help my students interact with me and the classmates more effectively, make more suitable materials, and so on. Another is that in class I can show them a better model of an English user as a non-native speaker. I hope that they feel that they will be able to become good users of English in the future. In addition, by keeping on learning I can show them a model of what it means to be a life-long learner. It is apparent that it takes a lot of time for language learners in EFL contexts such as Japan to become good communicators. Therefore, teachers play an important role in encouraging their students to learn not only at school but also after graduating from school. As a non-native English teacher in Japan, I believe that my attitude toward learning will have a positive effect on my students. In the future even after retiring from my teaching job completely, as just a user of English, I will keep on learning in order to expand my possibilities and enjoy my life more. So my language learning in many different senses is endless.

Feature Article

フィチャード アーティクル

Promoting Student Autonomy with a Simple Online Learning Management System

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This paper explores the use of an online social learning platform to create affordances for Japanese university students to discover and share language content for in-class discussions. Since this was my first attempt at using an internet-based platform to supplement and support weekly face-to-face meetings with my university English communication class students, I resolved to examine the experience in the form of an action research study. In this paper, I first discuss my rationale for the decision to use computer-mediated communication to support the development of oral communication skills. Next, I outline the action research questions I set out to answer along with the pedagogical aims of the online component of the course. Finally, I explain my implementation of the project itself—the context and participants, student tasks, and data collection procedures followed by the conclusions and further questions I came to through this research.

Rationale and Previous Research

According to Graham (2006), blended learning systems are defined simply as those that “combine face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction” (p.5). Having experienced blended learning in graduate school as a means of interacting with teachers and classmates, I had a fairly strong sense that such interactions, though textual in nature, contributed significantly to my ability to speak more articulately about the various issues discussed online when they came up in face-to-face meetings. Although my students’ situation as undergraduate EFL learners obviously differed significantly from mine as a graduate student, I wanted to see if the addition of a blended learning environment could help promote fluency and vocabulary development the way it had for me as a first language learner of domain-specific language (that of TESOL and applied linguistics).

The second factor that encouraged me to introduce blended learning into my English oral communication class related to readings I had done in second language acquisition literature which showed that the addition of online interaction has positive effects on students’ progress in the target language. Since the mid-1990s, research has shown a variety of benefits to the use of learner management systems. Kern (1995), for example, pointed to the simple but significant fact that when language learners interact using social tools online, they increase the total volume of language they are exposed to, and also frequently “output” more language. Other research (e.g., Lamy & Goodfellow, 1999; Ortega, 1999; Warschauer 1998, 2007) has also highlighted some of the ways that online communities increase student access to native speakers and promote peer learning—two factors clearly significant to language growth. Even more recently, research by Thorne (2009) and Gee and Hayes (2011) has pointed to the positive affective connections to

motivation that occur with the formation of what they term “Internet interest communities” and “passionate affinity spaces,” respectively. These researchers highlight the unique affordances of online spaces for learners to work collaboratively around common interests. Finally, Benson (2011) highlights three important ways that technology-based approaches can support student autonomy:

- (1) they place the learner (as controller of the technological device) in direct control of key aspects of the learning process;
- (2) they allow wider access to authentic target language sources; and
- (3) they allow wider access to interactive use of the target language. (Benson, 2011, p.152)

Of course, such technological affordances for student autonomy are difficult to realize if students are resistant to the use of technology for social interaction. In previous years I had been wary of introducing technology into my classes because of a general lack of computer literacy that I perceived to exist among students at my university. But in the case of this particular class, the students had expressed interest in, and familiarity with online communication, and, though they had varying levels of confidence in their own technological literacy, they all spoke about involvement in online social networking sites (SNS) such as Facebook, Twitter, Line, and Mixi. From my discussions with the students about their knowledge and use of such technology, I felt sure that they had the potential to benefit from blended learning activities. This is the third factor that prompted me to introduce blended learning activities into this class. As long as I could find an online social learning platform that was simple and user friendly, technological competence would not likely present itself as the most significant barrier to successful online interaction.

Pedagogical Aims and Action Research Questions

With relative confidence in the suitability of online social interaction for language learning from my own experience and readings in SLA literature, and with enthusiasm from students themselves, I decided to trial a blended learning approach over the course of the second semester. I wanted to explore the usefulness of such an approach to support the broad academic goals I’d set for the course: the improvement of students’ oral communication fluency and accuracy with an emphasis on vocabulary development, strategy use, and speech genre awareness. I also wanted to explore how the addition of an online component to the course might:

- draw upon students’ existing digital media knowledge as a way to promote peer-to-peer communication about new content and language;
- promote student autonomy in using online tools to explore topics that they themselves found relevant and interesting; and
- create new affordances for the improvement of students’ English skills.

I was particularly interested in how students more accustomed to interacting with teacher-selected texts would react to the task of choosing and introducing their own texts. The action research questions which I sought to answer were:

- 1) How would students react to the task of choosing their own texts for class discussions?
- 2) What learning gains would be apparent as a result of the online practice?

The Action Research Study

Context and Participants

The institutional context for this project was a medium-sized private four-year university in Shizuoka, Japan. The project described here took place in a high intermediate-advanced level oral communication class open to third-year students in the university's Department of American and British Studies. In this department, students are divided into leveled tracks using bi-annual TOEIC results. The students enrolled in this elective class came mostly from the English department's highest-level track, with scores ranging from 585 – 855. As an elective class, the students who enrolled can be said to have been highly motivated towards improving their English oral communication skills. The class was small, with only six students enrolled, making for a close-knit class atmosphere and a high degree of familiarity among the students at the time of this project in the second semester of the 2012-2013 academic year.

Data Collection

To explore my action research questions, I kept an electronic journal and made weekly notes on my students' interactions online and in-class. At the end of the term students were also given a paper copy of a brief survey in Japanese (Appendix 2) that asked open-ended questions about their experience in the blended learning project. Participation in the final survey was optional, anonymous, and carried out with informed consent. Students handed in completed surveys to a designated administrator in the university's student affairs office, who then returned them to me after the semester's grading was complete. This survey served as a significant source of qualitative data used in my evaluation of the project's effectiveness.

In the period between the time when the surveys were completed and the time they were returned to me (approximately two weeks), I wrote my own reflections about the project, making note of any problems or other issues that had come up, and trying to critically evaluate the project's successes and failures from my own perspective.

The Online Learning Platform

This project involved the students' use of an online social learning platform called Edmodo to interact with each other and with their teacher before and after weekly face-to-face class sessions. Edmodo is a platform that provides a private online space where students and teachers can share text, images, audio, and video. I chose Edmodo for its simplicity, usability, and broad compatibility with desktop and mobile computing hardware/software.

Edmodo is accessible via web browser and/or smart phone application (iOS and Android) and its user interface is simple and user-friendly—similar to that of social networking sites such as Facebook. Once users sign in, they are presented with a wall of recent posts, and they have the ability to easily post their comments, links, videos, or other files independently or in response to other community members' posts.

Teachers form Edmodo communities for specific groups of students (usually classes). Once the teacher creates an Edmodo group, he or she receives a code to give to students, which they use to join the group. This registration method has two benefits: first, it simplifies the process of student sign-up. Students do not need to input email addresses or other personal information to register with the site in order to participate. They just need the code they receive from their teacher. The second benefit is that students can

choose their level of anonymity on the site. The registration process requires students to create a username and password for themselves, but does not require an email address or even a real name. This helps alleviate concerns that might otherwise arise about the sharing of personal information on the Internet. My students registered with their given names and the first initial of their family names. Some of them chose to register their email addresses too because this allowed them to receive notifications of site activity.

Implementation

I introduced Edmodo at the beginning of the semester in a workshop during class time. I explained how the system worked, helped students get signed up, and informed them of how they would be expected to use the site later in the semester. During this workshop, all the students chose to download the free smartphone app to their mobile devices, and by the end of the workshop session, they were all signed up and ready to go.

I gave the students five weeks in which to acclimate themselves to using Edmodo. During this initial period, I occasionally posted supplementary materials related to readings and in-class discussions. Students were asked only to comment on articles or other posts if they felt so inclined (it was not required). Several students did in fact post comments in response to articles I posted, and one student used the site to clarify confusion she had about a reading assignment.

Toward the end of the initial five-week acclimation period, students were given written instructions online (Appendix 1) and additional oral instructions in class about their assignment to choose a topic, share materials online, and lead a discussion in class. Each student was randomly assigned a forthcoming week in the second half of the semester during which they would be responsible for posting articles, videos, or other materials relevant to their own interests, along with critical discussion questions for their classmates to consider and discuss online and in class. There were no requirements about how much material students were to post and comment upon, but each discussion leader was required to post his/her material by the Friday before our Wednesday class meeting in order to allow everyone ample time to absorb the material and comment upon it if they so chose.

Results and Discussion

Overall, the use of Edmodo as a tool to promote student-initiated discussions and learner autonomy fulfilled my expectations. During the initial acclimation phase, I frequently shared links to articles and videos that related to topics we were discussing in class. One advanced student told me that though many of these texts were more difficult than those he had encountered previously, the online setting made it easier to quickly look up words and research topics more deeply. Several students commented on my posts, and occasionally asked questions for clarification. This indicated to me that the students were ready and willing to take over the responsibility of finding topics by themselves.

In the student discussion leader phase, students found and posted articles and videos with relevant discussion questions on a variety of topics: nuclear power (video), flashmobs (videos), vegetarianism (articles), employment discrimination (articles), Disneyland (article), and whether or not parents should lie to their children about the non-existence of Santa Claus (articles). Students seemed to enjoy this freedom to introduce new content to their classmates, and the broad variety of topics presented suggests that learners were in fact using this opportunity to pursue their own interests in English.

The semester-end survey that I prepared (Appendix 2) contained a total of ten questions, addressing two main areas: students' assessment of Edmodo as a tool (including information about how they used it), and their feelings and thoughts about participating in a blended learning environment. The information gathered from these surveys was very useful in helping me reflect upon the successes and failures of the blended learning initiative.

The semester-end survey confirmed what I suspected about students' means of accessing Edmodo. The survey indicated that the primary means of accessing the online platform was via smartphone: five of the students said they accessed the site via smartphone at least some of the time, whereas only one claimed he or she used a computer exclusively as their means of accessing the site.

The student surveys also indicated that the participants were largely appreciative of the opportunities afforded to them by Edmodo. Here, I focus on responses to the survey questions that asked how students felt about using the site and how useful they felt it was as an aid to stimulating in-class discussions.

Question 3 asked what students thought of the activity of finding English content (articles and videos) and posting it to Edmodo for discussion. Student responses to this question were mostly positive. A few students wrote that they found the process of posting materials technically challenging, but the majority (70%) wrote comments indicating satisfaction with this process. Some comments, translated from Japanese by the author, are listed here:

- When someone posted an article or video, everyone could see it.
- I was able to discover a variety of new (English) websites.
- It increased my opportunities to come in contact with English.

These comments indicate a growing sense of community supported by the sharing of content based on student interests. They also suggest that students were aware of the value of these additional opportunities to read and interact in English.

Question 8 asked students how they felt about the oral communication class's online component in general terms. One student did not answer this question, and one responded that he or she felt that the online component was "not really necessary", but other responses indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the student-generated content approach enabled by the online learning environment. Two indicative responses are listed here:

- It was good to know my classmates' thoughts online. I think if [the learning system] were used even more actively it would help further improve our English language skills.
- It was a fresh way to give students a central role. I thought it was a good experience.

Based on these and the rest of the survey responses collected, I was reassured that most seemed to have had positive educational experiences with the blended learning tasks they engaged in. For sure, a few students found the transition to interaction in an asynchronous virtual environment challenging, but their trepidation may have had more to do with the burden of leading discussions (online and in class) than it did with the technology itself.

In my own reflective journaling, I noted surprise at the controversial nature of some of the topics students chose to discuss (e.g., nuclear power, job discrimination), but was impressed at how students

handled these and other topics critically and sensitively. For example, the student who posted a video about nuclear power production in Japan asked a hypothetical question about choices classmates might actually be presented with in the future such as, “If you could get a cheap apartment or house in an area around a nuclear power plant, would you want to live there?” Another student, who presented on the lighter subject of whether parents should lie to their children about the existence of Santa Claus, provided both pro and con articles for his classmates to consider before the discussion.

In reflecting on the results of the semester-end survey, I speculated that the (two) students who seemed least satisfied with the project were those who were more comfortable with a more didactic pedagogy. Though the surveys were anonymous, I suspect that two students who expressed some reservations about the use of Edmodo were those who in fact participated least and most reluctantly in online discussions. These students seemed to find a shift to more autonomous, socially co-constructed learning difficult. Further investigation would be needed in order to verify this claim. Were they, in fact, resisting more autonomous learning, or were there perhaps other factors at work (e.g., time constraints, lower overall motivation, anxiety related to lower proficiency)?

Conclusion

The project described here used an online learning management platform to give EFL students of oral communication control over the selection of topics and content for online and face-to-face discussion. Survey feedback confirmed my observations that, though the system was not appealing to all students, more motivated learners recognized the benefits afforded by the additional interactions they had with each other and with their instructor online. Edmodo proved to be a simple and effective technological tool for enabling such interactions, and it allowed me to hand over control of discussion topics and materials to the students.

Returning to my initial action research questions about student autonomy and learning gains, I conclude that most students in fact showed themselves to be quite autonomous and capable at discovering and sharing their own English materials online. For a few students the tasks of finding and posting materials, leading discussions, and contributing in class and online were a significant challenge. Still, all students seemed to benefit from the creation of an online community which supplemented our in-class meetings. Even the less motivated and less technically adept students seemed to enjoy sharing items they found, and the in-class discussions that related to student-initiated topics appeared to be engaging and educational for all who participated.

I also conclude that giving students’ responsibility for generating and posing discussion questions to the group on self-selected topics seemed to be an effective tool for encouraging critical thinking. To encourage rich in-class discussions in the past, I had previously often (without much thought) formulated such questions myself. But giving students the opportunity to formulate as well as answer such questions seemed to be a very effective way to help students engage critically with a variety of issues that were meaningful to them. By generating critical questions themselves and being exposed to a range of responses, students can become agents of their own learning, and thus more likely to develop more autonomous and critically reflective thinking habits.

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Appendix 1: Assignment Instructions (posted on Edmodo)

Since we have a good platform for interacting around digital content, let's use it: I would like you to take responsibility for finding some articles, videos, photo essays, or other digital media that interests you. It could be the English version of an article about a news story that you are following. Or maybe you want to show us a TED video you like. You will post some content to this site for all of us to see and discuss. You should write a little introduction to everything you post, and also some questions for us to think about and discuss (here and in class). Due dates will vary because each of you will curate a different week.

Appendix 2: Student Survey

アンケート

このアンケートは自由参加です

参加するかしないかいずれも、成績に関係ない

名前を書かないでください

日本語で答えてください

遠慮なく率直に答えてください

1) Edmodoを使い始めた時にインターネットのSNSなどに関する能力はどうでしたか。When you started using Edmodo how skilled were you in the use of internet social networking sites?

他の授業のオンライン参加は経験したことがある？ あればその経験について説明してください。 Have you interacted online in the context of other university classes? If you have please explain about your experience.

2) Edmodoは殆どパソコンでアクセスしたか携帯でアクセスしたか。

Did you mostly access Edmodo through a computer, or through a mobile device?

あ) パソコン a) computer い) 携帯 b) mobile device う) 両方 c) both え) 場合による d) it depended on the situation (説明してください) (please explain)

2.1) 使いやすいですか。使いにくいですか。 Was Edmodo easy to use? Or was it difficult?

使いにくいと思った人は、その理由を述べてください。

If you answered that it was difficult, please explain how / why.

3) 自分で英語の記事やビデオを探して、Edmodoに投稿する作業についてどう思いますか。 What did you think of the activity of finding and posting your own articles and videos on Edmodo?

4) 教科書のみの授業はよかったですか。(この質問は私たちの使った教科書の評価ではなく、教科書のみの授業をした方がよかったかどうかということ。 Would you have preferred a class that only used a textbook? (This question is not asking for an evaluation of our textbook, rather it is asking whether or not you would have preferred to use a textbook alone without the online component).

5) オンラインで先生とクラスメイトと質問したりすることは平気だった？ためらった？ Did you feel comfortable asking your teacher and classmates questions online?

6) Edmodoでの参加はほとんど自由だったが、オンライン上の参加は授業において必要であるべきだったと思いますか。 A good portion of your participation online (through Edmodo) was voluntary. Should more participation online have been required?

7) 全体的に、Edmodoについてどう思いますか。 Overall, what did you think of Edmodo?

8) 全体的に、このクラスでオンライン参加の部分が合ったのはどうでしたか。 Overall, what did you think of the online participation portion of this class?

9) 他のOCの授業で(例えば来年のOC3で)Edmodoを使うべきですか。 Would you recommend using Edmodo with other oral communication classes (for example with next year's OC3 class)?

10) 他にコメントがあれば述べてください。 Please express any other comments you wish to share.

Special Feature: LD SIG 20th Anniversary Conference

特集：LD SIG 創設 20周年記念大会

The JALT Learner Development SIG's 20th Anniversary Conference, Exploring Learner Development: Practices, Pedagogies, Puzzles and Research, will be held at Gakushuin University, Mejiro, Tokyo, November 23-24 2013.

Invited speakers include Naoko Aoki, Richard Smith, and Kensaku Yoshida. Phil Benson is a Special Guest Speaker, too. We are also honoured to have local guest speakers from Rikuzentakata and Sendai presenting on post-3/11 community-building in Tohoku. And not only teachers and researchers, but also students and educationally oriented NGOs will be taking part to explore with you many different learner development issues.

This special two-day conference is jointly sponsored by the JALT Learner Development, Junior Senior High School, and Teachers Helping Teachers SIGs, with support too from the JALT Tokyo and Yokohama chapters as well as the Education Research Foundation and Gakushuin University.

Please feel free to peruse the full action-packed programme at:
<<http://www.ldsigconference2013.org/conferenceprogramme/>>

We hope to see you there!

Best wishes,

Aiko Minematsu, Alison Stewart, Andy Barfield, Fumiko Murase and Rich Silver,
conference co-chairs, on behalf of the conference organising committee



Practices, Pedagogies, Puzzles and Research
20th Anniversary Conference
JALT Learner Development SIG

Exploring teacher-learning: Interview with Richard Smith, Learner Development SIG co-founder

Andy Barfield and Richard Smith



Richard founded the JALT Learner Development SIG in 1993 with Naoko Aoki when he was a lecturer at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. He had been writing self-study materials for learning Japanese (Japanese – Language and People, published by the BBC in 1992) and originally came to learner development and learner autonomy that way, via reflection on his own learning of languages. In 2000 Richard moved back to the UK to start work at the University of Warwick. He is currently the coordinator of IATEFL’s Research SIG and co-convenor with Alice Chik and Naoko Aoki of the AILA Research Network on Learner Autonomy.

Andy: *Richard—many thanks for doing this interview for Learning Learning. We’re very much looking forward to seeing you in November at the conference. I’d like to start by asking you how you originally came to be interested in ‘learner development’, and how the SIG started out.*

Richard: Thanks, Andy. I’m really looking forward to coming back to Japan for the 20th birthday of LD SIG! Looking back, I think it was mainly because of my own experience of learning languages autonomously—especially Japanese—that I had the idea for the SIG in the first place. By 1993, when we founded the SIG, I’d been in Japan quite a long time—about seven or eight years—and I’d been getting more interested in Japanese language learning. That’s mainly because I’d been writing materials—one book that was never published was going to be a communicative course book for classroom use and the other one, which was published by the BBC, was for self-study. Because the BBC book was for self-study, my co-author—Trevor Hughes Parry—and I decided to include some guidance (‘learner training content’, if you like). Well, by talking to some friends who’d started using the book, we soon realized that this guidance wasn’t really adequate—and we decided to facilitate a workshop at the Omiya JALT conference in, I think, 1991 or 1992 where learners who were also English teachers could share their ideas and feelings. We titled this workshop ‘Japanese for lazy people’ (making a bit of fun both of ourselves and of *Japanese for Busy People*, the title of a very popular JSL/JFL coursebook). The workshop was much better attended than we’d expected, and lots and lots of interesting ideas came from participants for using the environment we were living in to learn the language. Out of that we decided to gather people’s addresses and start up a newsletter for learners of Japanese in Japan, which we called *Learner to Learner* (the title of the Omiya conference having been ‘Teacher to Teacher’)! Well, two things that happened then were that some teachers of Japanese heard about the newsletter and started to get interested; and, second, there started to be some talk of teaching in the newsletter, and how one’s own language learning could affect that. In fact, I think it’s around this time that I started to get my own students to discuss together what they were doing or could do outside class to learn English—just as we’d done in the Omiya workshop for Japanese.

So, out of this, I came up with the idea for a SIG—and developed the idea with Naoko and others. I think right at the beginning we were quite consciously and in a way subversively bringing together two groups in particular—learners and teachers of Japanese—to develop new ideas, especially about learning

outside formal environments. It was all a kind of interesting symbiosis, generating new insights for our teaching, but primarily—at first at least—out of a genuine desire to improve our own learning experience as well. And I'd extend that beyond language learning to mean teacher-learning within a teachers' association more broadly—Naoko and I, and you, and Hugh [Nicoll] and others, were all interested in bringing about what Hugh later called a 'velvet revolution' in the way JALT operated—and we were, I think, innovative in the ways we tried to do things bilingually in meetings, formed our committees, planned events, and so on.

Andy: 'Learner autonomy' has since become much more of a mainstream central concept than 'learner development'. So, how did 'learner development' get chosen as the name of the SIG? And how do you see now the difference between learner development and learner autonomy? And ... where might teacher autonomy fit in that picture for you?

Richard: Naoko and I—and Hugh—heard about and went to a conference on learner autonomy that was being organized in Hong Kong [the 1994 'Taking Control' conference] and I think that stimulated more talk of learner 'autonomy' in the SIG. We were already aware of some of the work going on around autonomy before that (I'd been particularly interested by some of Henri Holec's writings, for example, when I was doing my MA back in 1988-89), but we were aiming to be very eclectic and inclusive in the early years—partly to build membership—and to include people interested in various things like strategy training, cooperative learning, and the Silent Way and other humanistic 'methods'. That desire to be inclusive was one reason for calling the group the 'Learner Development SIG' and not limiting ourselves to one strand of influence.

Since then, as you mention, 'autonomy' has really become a central concept around which everything else revolves, but I'm a bit regretful sometimes that people talk so much about autonomy as an abstract thing, almost as a kind of religious virtue sometimes (like faith, hope and charity!), and not enough about ourselves, our contexts, our ways of communicating with others in teacher associations, or our practices related to learners as a basis for theory development. I know that people in the Learner Development SIG had a debate a few years ago about changing the name of the SIG ...

Andy: Four years ago (already!) in 2009! That was when we did an online survey about future directions for the SIG. About 60 people responded to the survey, and one of the questions was about the name of the SIG. A whole range of other names got suggested—from Autonomous Learning (AL), Autonomy in Language Education (ALE), and Autonomy in Language Learning (ALL) to Learner Autonomy and Development (LAD), Learner and Teacher Autonomy (LATA) and Learner and Teacher Autonomy & Development (LATAD), and one effect of the survey was that it helped us look beyond just learner autonomy in understanding the diverse interests of SIG members to do with learners and development ... and another was that we decided not to change the name after all!

Richard: Whereas about 10 years ago the IATEFL Learner Independence SIG actually did change its name to the Learner Autonomy SIG... Somehow, 'autonomy' as a buzz-word has come to dominate the field globally, with its high priests and priestesses, exigeses and whatnot. But I sense that the phrase 'learner development' just might stand the test of time in a way that 'autonomy' might not. When we coined this phrase, 'learner development' sounded to us relatively practical and process-oriented—more so than 'learner independence' or 'learner autonomy', which represent ideals but not processes, I think—and I have a hunch that, having become a mainstream academic concept and a 'buzz-word' in the profession,

‘autonomy’ might start to fall from favour soon as fashions change and/or other notions become more academically respectable (for example, ‘agency’ seems to be making quite a bid for power at the moment!).

As for the relationship between teacher and learner autonomy, I feel that’s an abstract, academic—almost theological—question that has arisen because of autonomy becoming more of an academic field, with PhDs being written about it and so on—so I’d prefer not to go into it here if you don’t mind.

Andy: *Things get quickly political—as they inevitably do—but let’s talk about that another time then ... Let’s keep the focus on learner development and teacher development, which for me offered an important connection in the early 1990s within the reflective practitioner paradigm towards what I’d like to call the ‘reflective learner paradigm’ of learner development. How do you see the connections there, Richard?*

Richard: Yes, that’s a useful way of thinking about it too. I should say in this respect that another reason for calling the SIG ‘Learner Development’ in the first place certainly was related to the way people were making a distinction between teacher *development* and teacher *training* at the time—‘training’ being something done ‘to’ teachers and ‘development’ being something they’re more responsible for themselves.

Andy: *That was quite an issue in the Teacher Education SIG too and I remember us talking at the time about different connections between learner development and teacher development.*

Richard: Yes, in LD’s case, ‘learner development’ seemed better, less top-down, than ‘learner training’, for the same kind of reason, especially as we were seeing *ourselves* as learners getting together freely to share feelings and ideas.

I think it’s probable that a lot of people *have* felt they’ve developed positively as reflective practitioners, or as teacher-learners, by being part of the SIG—so I think there’s another connection there—in other words, somehow through being involved in a SIG devoted to learner development there’s been a lot of teacher development going on. Certainly, that was the case for me—I learned a lot through the interactions with other members, which we tried to make as ‘humanistic’ as we could at various events. Then there was my own teaching—and I found that with a focus on learner development there I was certainly developing a lot as a teacher. I think these things are all tied together—I can’t separate what I learned through being in the SIG from what I learned from students—but I know that during the time I was coordinating the SIG with Naoko (the mid- to late 1990s) I learned to focus on others much more than before (that’s a never-ending battle, though, and ego often gets in the way!). I was developing a lot at that time, partly through new kinds of professional discussion within the SIG, partly through new ways of interacting with my students—it’s difficult to separate the two experiences as they went together, but what I can say is that teacher development definitely arose out of learner development in my experience, and probably vice versa!

Andy: *You recently wrote in the Stories of Practices book (Barfield & Delgado, 2013) how you then moved into teacher education at Warwick University and how your approach to that was informed by your work in Japan ...*

Richard: Yes, in a nutshell I found that I was engaging in a kind of learner development (or ‘pedagogy for autonomy’, if you will) in my teacher education work. In fact, I don’t see language teaching, teacher

education, supervising research students or—something I’m doing more and more these days—facilitating workshops for practising teachers as fundamentally different, in the sense that in all of them what’s important for me is starting from where the participants are already and what their hopes, expectations and achievements are, encouraging them to make that explicit, and working with that, rather than coming in with too much of a pre-set agenda and imposing what I think they ‘should’ be learning. Of course there are needs for structure and advice, but the fundamental thing for me in all these activities is building from the bottom up—working with what participants bring to the table as it were.

Andy: So you haven’t moved away from learner development, just incorporated it more widely into different areas of your work? I’d like to ask you about the workshops and other activities you’re involved with these days which involve teacher-research, and working with teachers in developing countries. It seems that the IATEFL Research SIG, which you’re currently co-ordinating, is putting a very strong emphasis on promoting teacher-research. And you’ve recently done some teacher education workshops in Nepal, Chile and Cameroon. Could you talk a little bit about your work there?

Richard: Yes, I do think teacher-research is something worth promoting—it’s been part of my own practice since the late 1990s to gather and analyse students’ perceptions and try to improve things on that basis—then, when I started teaching pre-service MA in ELT students at Warwick University I built an action research experience into one of the modules. I think it’s a good way to help student-teachers take more control of their own learning. So what I’m doing now is broadening that experience out into in-service initiatives. There are constraints on that to do with teachers’ lack of time and scepticism about research, for example, but I’ve been quite encouraged that we’ve had some teachers getting enthusiastic recently and submitting reports to the Research SIG newsletter, *ELT Research*, which show quite clearly that they gained a sense of empowerment through carrying out small-scale teacher-research. I also think the way teacher-research is presented to teachers can be improved so it doesn’t seem so academic, but is rather taken as something relevant to them. In these recent workshops I’ve been working with groups of teachers who face quite difficult circumstances (large classes, few non-human resources, including textbooks, and so on), so it’s been important to consider seriously whether teacher-research really is for them, and, if so, what kind.

In January this year I was in Chile for 5-6 days. It was something that the British Council asked me to go and do, —to give a lecture on practitioner research, and more especially to lead a workshop for 80 Chilean secondary school teachers—a two-day workshop—and to set them off on action research, which would take them through a year basically.

It was based on Tom Connelly’s vision, based on his quite long experience in Chile where he now works for the British Council, and on what he felt was needed in terms of teacher development there for secondary school teachers: rather than more of the same kind of ‘one-off’ teaching ideas workshops, the focus should be on getting teachers involved in their own ongoing practitioner research in their own contexts. Tom had already decided there was going to be a kind of mentoring scheme. He would get four local mentors and also set up a Moodle space to support them through the process, so I thought it was quite exciting that somebody was putting a lot of effort into the sustainability aspect of it. It was quite a challenge too—and I felt it was good for me to try and do it.

Andy: And it involves secondary school teachers deciding to do an action research project for a year?

Richard: Yes—in advance of the school, the teachers were made aware that they’d be expected to commit to a process and not just to the one-off workshop. At the two-day workshop they discussed and identified problems they have with their teaching and—in collaboration with one another and with four mentor tutors—started to develop research questions which could help them to investigate these problems. Some of the most common problems identified included:

- * poor student motivation to learn English
- * difficulty in getting students to speak English in class
- * classroom management issues as a result of having large classes (40+ students)
- * having to deal with different levels of ability within the same class ...

From my side I was trying to present teacher-research so that it would be seen as doable, feasible, realistic. I emphasized to the teachers that this must be something that is relevant to them, and not something to judge in academic terms—teacher-research ‘by and for teachers themselves’, as I’ve been putting it. I was quite happy that at the end of the two days we had come up—I say ‘we’ because it was through discussion with the four mentors and teachers—with something that seemed doable and which, initially, was more about exploring than jumping directly into action.

Andy: And this is what you call ‘Exploratory Action Research’?

Richard: Yes, and of course I have to acknowledge a major debt to Dick Allwright there (e.g., Allwright & Hanks, 2009) I recommended to the teachers that they should engage first in exploration, rather than immediately trying to ‘solve’ problems by taking a new action. An example would be a teacher thinking along these lines: “I may believe that my students lack motivation, for instance, but how can I be sure? Also, there may be some new ideas I’ve heard about that I’d like to try out, but these may not be appropriate, and how will I know anyway if students’ motivation increases as a result? What I need to do first is find out more about my students’ current motivation, exploring questions like ‘How do students feel about learning English in class?’ (‘What do they find motivating?’, ‘What do they find demotivating?’); and ‘What do students think would motivate them to learn English in class?’”.

Andy: How might the initial exploratory part be realized in this example?

Richard: Something like this: getting answers to these questions about motivation, before any action for change is undertaken, might involve having students write about their current motivation (in Spanish or English) so the teacher could look at their writing and try to identify common concerns. This would not only help the teacher decide on changes that are appropriate for her students, but also provide her with a way to compare the situations ‘before’ and ‘after’ any change she does try to introduce. If a teacher engages students like this in a period of exploring a problem before making any deliberate attempt to try to ‘solve’ it, it’s possible that such exploratory research might even itself increase students’ motivation so that ‘action for change’ becomes unnecessary ...

Andy: What have the teachers been doing with their projects since?

Richard: There were some problems with teachers getting going after their summer break in February, and we expected that to some extent—but we’re now about two thirds of the way through and I think we’re on track with some interesting work emerging that’s seen as valuable by the teachers themselves. We’re keeping in touch via Facebook and Skype sessions nowadays, and I’ll be reporting on the project at next year’s IATEFL conference with Paula Rebolledo, one of the mentors.

Andy: *And what have you been doing in Nepal and Cameroon?*

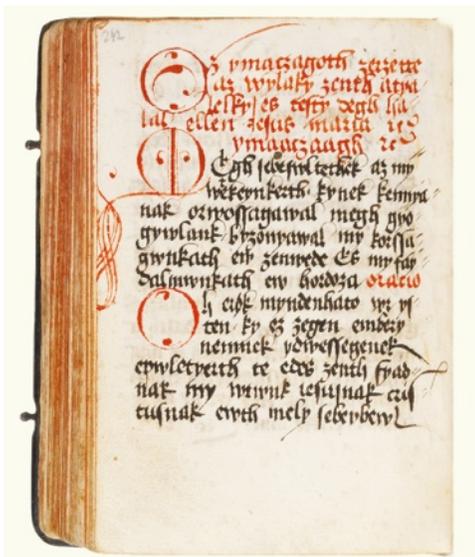
Richard: That’s been work with teachers at national teacher association conferences—it’s not been explicitly autonomy or teacher-research related, but what I’ve been talking about with teachers has been teaching in difficult circumstances and about what research within a particular network I’ve been coordinating can help them with—the network is called ‘TELC’—‘Teaching English in Large Classes’—and it brings together teachers and researchers from a wide range of developing country contexts. Actually, on reflection, this work is implicitly autonomy-oriented in that we’re building resources and insights from the bottom up, including from teacher-research, and that’s the approach I’ve been advocating and trying to put into practice at the workshops too.

Andy: *It sounds all very interesting and I hope we have a chance to hear more about this from you at the 20th anniversary conference in November --*

Richard: I’m very excited about the conference and about discussing learner and teacher development, and teacher-research, with the participants! I’m looking forward, too, to learning more about some of the important work that’s been going on in the SIG in recent years. See you in November!

References

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Interview with Professor Kensaku Yoshida

Aiko Minematsu and Kensaku Yoshida



峰松愛子: 吉田先生が英語教育の分野に足を踏み入れたきっかけは何だったのですか？

吉田研作教授: 高校時代に、後輩の中学生が英語弁論大会に出るのでスピーチ原稿を書く段階から指導をしていた。その後輩が当時の高松宮杯で全国2位に入賞したために全生徒の前で表彰されることになり、その時に先生が「よしけん（注：吉田先生のニックネーム）がいなかったらこの生徒は入賞できなかった」と僕の名前を出して褒めてくれて、それがとても嬉しかった。それがきっかけで英語の弁論だけでなく英語劇を自分も一緒にやりながら後輩や同輩を指導するようになり、教えるのは楽しい、英語の先生になりたい、と思うようになった。

そこで、英語の先生になるためには何が必要か、学校の外国人の先生に質問したところ「これから先生になる人は言語学の知識が必要」と言われたので言語学が勉強できると思った上智大学の英語学科に進学した。大学では言語学サークルを立ち上げて言語学の勉強をしたり、当時の国際学部（注：現国際教養学部）と「国際部セミナー」という、英語で環境や教育などの社会問題に関するシンポジウムを開催したり、STP（注：Summer Teaching Programの略。大学生が夏休み中、様々な地域で中学生に英語を教えるプログラム）を立ち上げたり、セツルメント活動を通して子供達に勉強を教えたりした。全ては英語の教師になるため、幅広い知識を身につけるためだった。

しかし教育実習に行ってみると、出身の中高が受験校だったのもあり、生徒はできる子ばかりで面白みがないと感じた。その後孤児院で働くことを考えたりもしたが、大学の先生達に「やることを決めていないのだったら大学院に行きなさい」と言われ、ぎりぎり大学院の入試に出願した。それで修士を出る頃になって「現場で教えるのも良いことだけど、これから現場で教える若い先生を育てるのも大事なことだ」と言われた。その時に初めてteacher trainingという分野があることを知り、腑に落ちた感じがした。

大学院を修了してから上智大学で助手として教えるようになり、その後ミシガン大学で博士課程を修了した。その頃にはすでに教え子や後輩達で英語の教師になっている人達がいた。そのような現場にいる人達の要望があり、当時の学科長のニッセル先生の協力を借りてASTE（注：Association of Sophian Teachers of Englishの略、上智大学英語教員研究会）を1981年に立ち上げた。ASTEに参加してくれる現場の英語の先生達の話聞くことは僕にとってはとても大きなことで、そこで現場の話聞いて自分のやりたいことや、やるべきことが段々と明確になっていった。それがきっかけで今まで色々と英語教育に携わって

きた。

峰松: 英語の先生になりたい、というお気持ちが先生の原点にある訳ですね。学部時代から数多くの会をご自分で立ち上げて来られていますが、そういう新しいことを始めるのがお好きなのですか？

吉田教授: 好きというよりは、自分のやりたい事を実際にやる場がないから作ってきたという感じ。そういう点では今やっていることもあまり変わっていない。自分でやらないと気が済まない、というところが強いのかもしれない。

峰松: 先生はいつも教育現場から離れないで研究を続けていらっしゃる印象ですが、その点は意識されているのですか？

吉田教授: その点は意識している。僕にとっての原点はASTEの発表の後に参加者が皆でお茶を飲んで談笑するとき。そこからすごく学んでいる。現場で何が起きているのかが聞けるし、それがきっかけで授業を見に行ったり、模擬授業をしたり、という活動に繋がっている。僕も教育実習に行ったので現場経験がまったくない訳ではないけれども、やはり現場の中学高校で現在何が起きているのかを知らない。だからいつもASTEで勉強させてもらっている。

峰松: 30年以上ASTEを続けてこられて、特に気づいたことや印象に残っていることはありますか？

吉田教授: 特に一つというのはないが、現場で起きていることと理論や教育法で研究している内容のギャップを感じる。ASTEを始めた最初の頃は「こんなにも違うのか」と思った。当時から、自分が研究を通して学んだ新しい考えや理論と、現場で起きていることを絶えず照合しながら行き来をしてきた気がする。だから僕が現場に提案するものは現実的なものが多いと思っている。

自分がASTEで発表するときもASTEの参加者に知ってもらいたいというものもあるが、同時に意見してもらえるので随分助かっている。例えばコミュニケーション・アプローチの話をして現場の様々な障害、たとえば入試対策というものが現実問題としてあるという声を聞いて、それを解消するにはどんなことができるのか、ということを改めて考えることができる。

ASTEは、研究者と現場の教師がお互い支え合ってギブアンドテイクしている場。一方的にこちらから知識を与えるのではなく、現場の悩みや問題点を聞くことができ、こちらからも最新の理論やアプローチの話ができる。おそらくASTEで議論していることは日本の英語教育の議論の最先端を行っていると思うし、そのような議論が可能な場であるからこそ、これまでASTEが続いてきたのだと思う。

峰松: 先生にとって現場の声を聞くことに大きな意味があるのですよね。そういった研究と実践のギャップの

狭間にいらして、とても面白いポジションにいらっしゃると感じます。先生にとって、より影響力があるのは研究と実践とどちらだと思いますか？

吉田教授: 研究の中には、僕が思い描いていたことを実証してくれるものもある。例えば、最近読んだ博士論文のためのある研究でnon-nativeとしての英語を使っている学生ほど英語力に自信があり、英語力が低い学生ほどnativeのような英語をモデルとしているという結果を見た。このように思っていたことがデータになると「やった」と思うし、このデータを使えると感じる。これは研究の中でできること。逆に、現場には実証はないかもしれないが、事象がある。現場で起きている事象を見て、喚起されることや改めて考えさせられることがある。だから研究でも現場で起きていることも、両方合わさって意味があると思う。

峰松: それでは、これからの20年で日本の英語教育はどうなっていくと思われませんか？

吉田教授: 4技能を使うことを重視する英語教育、コミュニケーションとしての英語が必要となってくると思う。僕は今後20年でこれに遅れをとったら日本は沈没すると思っている。コミュニケーションというとオーラルコミュニケーションをイメージしがちだけれども、それだけではなくて4技能を使うということが必要。そうでないとグローバル社会の中では日本人はやっていけない。だから2020年のオリンピックが東京になったのは良かったし、コミュニケーションとしての外国語教育にとって良いきっかけとなると思う。これから20年間というのは後ろを向くことは最早できないところまで来ているのだから、英語を使って国際的に活躍できる人材を育成することを目標として前進していく必要がある。

峰松: 4技能の重要性は随分長い間言われているのに、なかなか現場では形にならないように感じます。その要因は何だと思われませんか？

吉田教授: やはり一番大きな要因の一つは、入試が4技能の力をテストしていないこと。入試のほとんどがリーディングで、それに加えて少しリスニングがあるくらいなら結局は読解をするために必要な文法や和訳重視の言語知識を教えることになってしまう。ただ大学の入試問題も、徐々に言語知識を問うものが減り言語活動を求める試験も増えてきてはいる。そういう意味でも4技能の評価が含まれているTEAP（注：Test of English for Academic Purposes。上智大学で次年度より一般入試の一部で採用する予定の英語能力判定試験）の波及効果には期待している。もう一つの要因は外国語を使う場が日本で少ないこと。ただこれも、東京オリンピックが決まったことなどからも今後増えていくのではないかと思う。

峰松: 教育現場にいと、入試だけでなく英語の先生達の意識もなかなか変わりづらいと感じるのですが？

吉田教授: 先生達の意識を変えるのは一番難しいと思う。だからこそ経験をするのは重要で、英語の先生

自身が英語を使ってコミュニケーションする経験をしなければならない。Non-nativeとして英語を使ってコミュニケーションするという経験がないと英語力に自信を持ちづらいし、コミュニケーションとしての英語は教えられない。

以前、ある高校の英語の先生から「どうしたら英語の発音が良くなるか」と聞かれたが、それに対して答えたのが「英語で人とコミュニケーションするのが良い」ということだった。機械的に発音を練習するよりは、人と話していれば自然と通じる発音になる。先生達の意識は変えづらいからこそ、言語体験を通してコミュニケーションとしての英語の意識を高める必要がある。

あともう一つは、先生達に「なぜ英語の教師になったのか」と問いかけること。たとえ中学の時に英語が嫌いだった人も、何かしら英語を学ぶのが楽しいと思った瞬間があるはずだから、その体験を思い起こすことで英語に対する意識に変化があるのでは。

峰松: 学習者も教師も、コミュニケーションツールとしての英語を体験する必要があるということですね。本日はどうもありがとうございました。

Eds.

Many thanks to Aiko Minematsu for the interview with Professor Yoshida! As well as arranging the interview, she very kindly took the time to translate it into English for us, see below.

Aiko: *What prompted you to become involved in the field of English education?*

Prof. Yoshida: As a high school student, I used to teach the younger students in my English Speaking Society (ESS) and helped them write up and deliver speeches. One of the junior high school students I helped came in second in the All Japan Junior High School English Speech Contest for the Prince Takamatsu trophy. When he was awarded in the school assembly, one of the teachers referred to me, telling the whole school that without my help, the student wouldn't have won that prize. That made me very happy, and motivated me to coach the members of the ESS club, helping with not only their speeches but performing English plays with them as well. I became aware of the joys of teaching and this made me want to become an English teacher.

When I asked one of the native-speaking English teachers what I needed to do to become an English teacher, he told me that I should study linguistics. So I enrolled in the Department of English Language and Area Studies at Sophia University. In university, I was active in starting various groups and projects; I founded a linguistics study group, organized a symposium in English focusing on social issues, started the Summer Training Program (STP), where university students travel to different areas of Japan to teach

English to junior high school students, and taught children as part of my student settlement volunteer activity. The purpose for all of my activities was for my future goal: to become an English teacher. I wanted to acquire the skills and knowledge I needed to become a good teacher.

But when I finally went back to my high school as a pre-service teacher to complete my teaching practicum, it seemed different from what I had imagined. The students in my high school were high-achievers, and their aims were to pass the university entrance exams. After finishing my teaching practicum, I thought about working for an orphanage, but my teachers advised me to go on to pursue a higher degree in graduate school. So I enrolled in the MA program at Sophia. When I was about to complete the MA program, one of my teachers said to me, “Teaching is a profound job but training future teachers is just as important.” That was when I first came across the existence of an area devoted to teacher training, and it just clicked with me.

I started to teach as an assistant at Sophia, and went on to the doctorate program at the University of Michigan. By that time, some of my former students and classmates at Sophia had already started teaching English in secondary schools in Japan. Some of them asked me to start a study group for Sophia alumni teachers, and with the help of Professor Nissel, who was the head of the department at Sophia then, I set up the Association of Sophian Teachers of English (ASTE) in 1981, which is a study group for English teachers from Sophia and still continues to be an active group for sharing teaching practices and research findings. Listening to the stories shared by teachers who come to the ASTE meetings was, and still is, crucial for me. The stories that I hear from these teachers have helped me conceptualize my goals and become aware of the practical needs in the classroom. This is how I came to be active in the field of English education.

Aiko: Your research always seems to be practical. Is this something you have kept in mind especially?

Prof. Yoshida: Yes, that is something I have always been aware of. For me, the basis of my research comes from the conversations I have after the ASTE meetings, when all the participants get together and just chat. I learn so much from the teachers there. I can learn about what is happening in schools and in classrooms around the country, and some teachers ask me to come and observe their classes, or even give mock lessons in their schools. I feel like I am always learning from the teachers at ASTE, because although I do have teaching experience from my teaching practicum, I don’t know much about what is actually happening in schools.

Aiko: So you have continued the ASTE meetings for more than 30 years now, which is amazing. Is there anything that has made a strong impression on you over the years?

Prof. Yoshida: I can’t put it down to one thing, but I do feel a gap between the latest research or theories in the field and actual teaching practices. When I first started ASTE, I was surprised at how different research and practice were. Since then, I think that I have always gone back and forth between the new theories that come up and what really goes on in the classrooms, trying to balance them out and analyzing them. So I feel that the things I propose are pretty practical.

When I do a presentation at ASTE meetings, I do it not only because I want to share my ideas but also because I want to hear what teachers have to say. For example, when I talked about the communicative

approach, the teachers shared with me the various barriers that they face in their classrooms, especially the preparation for entrance exams. From there, I was able to go back and think about how we can overcome such barriers.

In the ASTE meetings, we all have something to give and take from each other, and it's not a place for transcending information. We listen to the confines and issues we face in the classroom, and share new concepts in the field. I think that the discussions we have at ASTE is the most up-to-date in the English language teaching field in Japan, and this organic atmosphere has made it possible for us to continue the meetings for such a long time.

Aiko: You're in a very special position, with research on one hand and practices on the other. In your opinion, which do you think affects you more, research findings or teaching practices?

Prof. Yoshida: There are findings in research that validates my thoughts and ideas. For example, a graduate student conducted a study demonstrating how students who are exposed to nonnative Englishes on a regular basis are more confident with their English skills than those who see native speakers as models of English users. When I saw the data for this, I was happy because this was something I had been thinking about. Such proof can only be found through research. Classrooms may not provide proof, but they provide specific cases. There are things that can be found through studying these cases. So I think that research and practice go hand in hand, and are meaningful when both are considered together.

Aiko: What kind of path do you think the English education in Japan will take in the next 20 years?

Prof. Yoshida: The idea of English as a communication tool, and a stronger emphasis on using the four skills is going to be a necessity. In my opinion, if this is not realized in the next 20 years, Japan will sink. When we think of English as a communication tool, we tend to think in terms of oral communication, but it's important to think of communication in terms of using all four skills; otherwise, the Japanese will not be able to survive in the global society. So I think it is good that Tokyo is hosting the Olympics in 2020, because this may work as a good chance to encourage and promote international understanding in education. We cannot go back in time and must move forward to foster students that can be successful internationally.

Aiko: It seems that the importance of the four skills has been discussed for a while now, but not so much seems to have been put into practice in reality in actual classrooms and schools. What may be the factors that prevent change?

Prof. Yoshida: The major factor is that entrance exams do not test the four skills. Most entrance exams focus on reading, with a little bit of listening included. But with the primary focus on reading, the result is that teachers focus on translation and grammar in their teaching. Of course, the entrance exams are changing gradually, and there are more exams that require students to perform in the language rather than test their linguistic knowledge. I am hopeful of the washback effect that new four-skills entrance examination at Sophia University, the Test of English for Academic Purposes (TEAP), which will be implemented in 2015) may have. Another factor is that there aren't many opportunities for students to use English in Japan, but I think this situation may gradually change. With the Olympic games being held in Tokyo in 2020, we will

probably have more chances and needs for using the language.

Aiko: I agree that the entrance exams have major influences on teachers' beliefs, and from my experience teaching in high schools, I feel that teachers' beliefs do not change so easily. What are your thoughts on Japanese teachers of English?

Prof. Yoshida: Teachers' beliefs are the most difficult to change. That's why I believe that Japanese teachers should experience using English as a communication tool. It is so important to actually experience this. If teachers do not have the experience to communicate in English as a nonnative speaker, it is difficult for them to have confidence in their English competency, and moreover, they won't be able to teach English as a communication tool.

Recently, a high school English teacher asked me how he could improve his English pronunciation. So I told him that he should speak to people in English. If you speak to people, you will naturally come to understand what works and what doesn't. I believe this is a better learning strategy than mechanical practice or drilling. In order for teachers to believe in teaching communicatively, they need to get hands-on experience in using English for communication.

Another thing is to ask teachers why they became English teachers in the first place. They must have had some kind of positive experience with English in the past, which they may have forgotten over the years. Being reminded of such experiences may affect their beliefs as well.

Aiko: Thank you so much for your input, Professor Yoshida.

Interview with Phil Benson

Mike Nix and Phil Benson



Phil Benson is a Professor in Linguistics and Director of the Centre for Popular Culture in the Humanities at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. His main research interest is in autonomy and informal language learning. Recently he has been developing this interest in the area of second language users engagement with new media, and he is currently studying YouTube as a globalized space for translingual and transcultural learning. Phil has been a friend of the JALT LD-SIG since the early 1990s and is keen to explore opportunities for collaborative work on autonomy and informal learning across Asia.

Mike: You've been involved with the Learner Development SIG since its early days, Phil, so it's great that you can join us for the 20th Anniversary Conference as a Special Guest Speaker. You've talked several times at previous JALT conferences about learner autonomy, which is obviously what people know you best for. This time, though, you want to think about translanguaging and learning using digital media, especially You Tube. To start with, could you tell us a bit about what has sparked your interest in these newer areas of research?

Phil: I think we have to keep up with the times! A lot of the theoretical research that we rely on in work in

learner autonomy was done 20 or 30 years ago. Henri Holec and David Little are still good sources and I think it is fair to say that not a great deal has been added to what they have to say on the theoretical side. I am not saying that there is nothing that can be added, more that the more important work may well be in the area of applications - what is often called 'autonomous learning' as opposed to learner autonomy. As a teacher in the classroom I have kept up with the work on classroom autonomy, but I have always looked at autonomy more from the perspective of language learning beyond the classroom. This is where the interest in digital media comes in.

I am really interested in how the globalization of social media may be changing the face of language learning beyond the classroom. Only a few years ago teachers in Hong Kong were complaining that their students had few opportunities to use English outside the classroom. Nowadays, if you take a look at the average Hong Kong student's Facebook, you see that they have friends all over the world and they are communicating both in Chinese and English on a daily basis. They are also spending a lot of time on YouTube, watching videos in English and Chinese. No doubt they are using English to do other things online as well, but at the moment I see Facebook and YouTube as the sites where most is going on. The problem is - it's a research problem really - that after years of saying that students have to use a foreign languages outside the classroom to learn it properly, now people are questioning whether they are learning anything when they use it in social media.

So my interest is specifically in trying to establish how we might show evidence that learning is actually taking place. There are a few ways you could approach that, but the one I am focusing on right now is to look at the comments people leave on YouTube videos that involve translanguaging and to use discourse analysis techniques to dig out evidence of language and intercultural learning.

Mike: *Thinking about how we might develop the theoretical bases of learner autonomy that were set out 20 or 30 years ago is a great project for the LD SIG at its 20th anniversary conference, and raises lots of interesting questions we can return to. For now, though, could you explain what you mean by translanguaging and what looking at it can tell us about language learning and use through YouTube?*

Phil: People are generally using translanguaging to talk about situations where more than one language is being used and these languages are brought into some kind of relationship with each other. Code-switching is the example that will be most familiar from sociolinguistics, but translanguaging is something bigger than that. It could include, for example, subtitling a video in another language, speaking in a foreign language when people expect you to speak your first language (or vice versa), or even just using one language to talk about another language. The point about translanguaging, I think, is that it represents a more informal and more fluid way of looking at foreign language learning and use as involving both the foreign language and a first language, and perhaps other languages as well. In online interaction, translanguaging also seems to be the characteristic context for language learning. If the context involves translanguaging (on YouTube that could mean, for example, a fansubbed video), then you start to get comments or discussions about language and that is where the learning may begin.

Mike: *Could you explain a bit more about what fansubbing is?*

Phil: Yes, fansubbing is an interesting area of informal foreign language use/learning. Basically, it involves 'unofficial' subtitling of dramas, animations, or music videos in another language. The most popular at the moment seem to be English subtitled versions of Korean and Japanese drama series. The people who do this work in teams and try to get their versions out within a few days of them being broadcast in Korea and Japan. They are not professionals, just Korean and Japanese speakers who want to use their English language skills (or vice versa). In fact, these kinds of fansubs are not usually circulated on YouTube (if you want to know where, search for 'fansub' on the Internet). Fansubbed music videos are quite common on YouTube, though, and one that I have published some research on is 'Beijing Welcomes You', which was the official song for the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. One version of this was subtitled by a Chinese schoolgirl and it attracted a lot of comments on language issues.

Mike: *I'm wondering what kind of insights and challenges a focus on translanguaging raises for thinking theoretically about autonomy in language learning, and if these should apply to classroom-based learning as well as learning outside the classroom. For me, it's interesting that work by people like Canagarajah and Pennycook suggests that the kind of fluid, informal use of multiple languages, which you refer to, has always been characteristic of actual language use in many societies and contexts, and is also becoming more and more important even in societies, like Japan, that have often been regarded as essentially 'monolingual', as a result of migration, globalisation and the growth of digital media. And yet approaches to autonomous language learning, especially in the classroom, are usually based very much on developing monolingual, not translanguaging, competence. This is reflected for example in David Little's emphasis on appropriate target language use as a principle of successful language learner/user autonomy. Use of other languages is accepted, if at all, only insofar as it enables learning of the 'target language'. Is there a danger of a disconnect between a monoglossic school knowledge about language use and the more heteroglossic action knowledge that people increasingly draw on to participate effectively in inter- and intra-national communication?*

Phil: Well, I have never really been in favour of 'target language only' teaching. I also think that, to some extent, it is a rationalisation of the value that the EFL industry puts on 'native speaker' teachers (who often don't speak the students' first languages). Of course, it is important that learners get chance to use the target language, but classrooms are not always the best place for that. I would also agree that the idea of translanguaging breaks down the idea of separate or self-contained language competences. I think that in practical terms, the ability to switch and negotiate differences among the languages you speak is a very important one, that is often suppressed rather than encouraged in language teaching. I think that we also need to look more closely at the value that learners place on knowing a little bit of several languages nowadays. This is all very much concerned with how we need to think about the development of autonomy in theoretical terms, because it is very much a matter of attending to what learners want learn of languages.

Mike: *What are some other key areas in which you feel we need to build on, or perhaps reconstruct, the theories of autonomy we have had been working with for 20 or 30 years now? The book you co-edited with Lucy Cooker recently*

on The Applied Linguistic Individual¹ suggests, for example, that there is a lot of useful work being done now to develop a more dialectical understanding of individual-social and agency-structure relations in autonomous language learning and use, but also still lots of puzzles to explore there.

Phil: That book actually has origins in the ILA conference that was held at Kanda University several years ago. Lucy and I were interested in several papers that were presented that involve discussion of sociocultural theory and issues of agency and identity. I am interested that we have consistently emphasized that autonomy involves social interaction and interdependence (David Little and Ema Ushioda have led the way there), while at the same time we are criticized for 'individualism' by social theorists who talk a lot about agency and identity and often rely on individual case studies in their research. The dichotomy that social theorists are drawing between autonomy and agency is false one, for me, but I also believe there is a lot more that we could do to incorporate the notion of identity into our thinking. To me, this is a matter of taking a wider view of language learning and its roles in people's lives. How does learning a foreign language change you as a person in the world, and how do we factor that into the idea of controlling your learning? When we think about language learning as a process of identity development, I think that we also have to think of it as both a social and an individual process. The theoretical problem is how to get those two sides of the process to work together, rather than to insist on the social or individual side alone.

Mike: *Maybe another aspect of this wider view is the possibility for people to change, not just themselves, but also the world around them as part of their learning and use of languages. This might be in terms of linguistic agency with, for example, people choosing to speak lingua franca Englishes that challenge the authority of native speaker varieties, or creating new hybrid forms of online communication through the kind of translanguaging you have discussed. Another approach, which the 20th anniversary conference will explore, is around social activism, such as NGO and volunteer work by language students and teachers, and connections between autonomy and global issues and critical pedagogies. What do you make of developing autonomy into a more overtly critical or activist engagement with the world in this way?*

Phil: Certainly, I think that autonomy is about having some degree of control over what you learn of a language and the purposes that you put it to. Possibly that is the most important aspect, because if you don't have that, other kinds of choices may be false. There is some connection here with world Englishes or lingua franca Englishes, but also with issues of language diversity and language rights. I am looking forward to learn more about how people in Japan are linking language learning with activist engagement. I am a little bit hesitant to go in that direction myself. In the past, I was very interested in links between autonomy and critical pedagogies, but in the end, I felt that critical pedagogies too easily becomes a matter of pushing students in the direction of certain ideologies or ways of thinking. I recall one recent article by Stephen Brookfield, who used to write about critical self-directed learning. He had finally decided that self-directed learning was not a good idea, because learners would come up with the wrong ways of thinking. He was talking about racist ways of thinking, for example, and we would probably all agree with him on that. But at the same time, I have the feeling that autonomy, from a teacher's perspective, must be largely

about trusting students. If they are given genuine choices, they will make good choices. So I would like to see a version of critical pedagogy that incorporates that kind of trust.

Mike: *Are there any other areas of thinking about autonomy you feel we need to renew or develop, or connections we should be making beyond the field of autonomy itself, at this point 20 years after the founding of the LD SIG and after three decades or so of work on learner autonomy?*

Phil: Well, we have covered a lot already! I would just sum that up by saying that autonomy is an interesting concept in that it can give us quite a stable point from which to view the kinds of changes that are taking place in the world of language learning. I don't feel that the concept itself needs redefining, in the way that people are redefining learning strategies or motivation, for example. What we do need to do is think about how ideas of choice, decision-making and control over language and learning are relevant to new situations.

Mike: *Finally, I wanted to end by situating the discussion much more specifically and asking you what a key challenge or issue, connected to the development of autonomy, is for you in your own teaching. For me, a big puzzle is how to create space within the English classroom for students to translanguage between English and Japanese in ways they feel are useful for researching and thinking critically about issues of concern to them, at the same time as they take more control over how to develop their English. What is a question or issue in your own practice that interests or preoccupies you at the moment?*

Phil: The situations I usually teach in often present quite substantial challenges to autonomy: content required by a course outline that has to go through a committee to be changed; pre-determined assessment tasks, large classes, prescribed outcomes, large lecture-format classes, and so on. In addition, if you go too far in the direction of student control, the students themselves would feel that they are missing out on something. So in my own teaching, I still face a lot of the basic challenges. How much can I get away with? How can I keep the students on my side? Generally speaking, the students I teach appreciate more freedom, but at the same time they worry about assessments and covering everything on the schedule. These are very basic challenges that don't really go away, because you have to deal with them every time you see new faces in the classroom!

¹ Benson, P., & Cooker, L. (Eds.), (2013). *The applied linguistic individual: Sociocultural approaches to identity, agency and autonomy*. Sheffield: Equinox

NGO Outreach

NGO アウトリーチ

One year after the NGO Outreach team was formed, with the 20th Anniversary Conference lurking just around the corner, now is the perfect time to update you on our activities and experiences so far, as well as the experiences of some of our student volunteers who volunteered for our newly launched Student Ambassador programme, which sought to recruit students willing to work with an NGO during the summer vacation.

Through this programme eight university students successfully found volunteering opportunities and will be representing the following NGOs at the conference:

- Japan Tent, <<http://www.japantent.com/index.html>>
- Free the Children Japan,(FTCJ), <<http://www.ftcj.com/>>
- Shanti Volunteer Association, (SVA), <<http://sva.or.jp/>>

Recently I sent an email to these student volunteers, asking some open-ended questions to gain a better understanding of their motivation for joining the *Student Ambassador* programme and their volunteering experiences over summer.

Students decided to join the NGO Outreach programme for diverse reasons. While some students' priority was to use and improve their English skills, others were more interested in the valuable work experience that volunteering or completing an internship provides. Manami (Japan Tent) is interested in medical training abroad, and stated *"I think it's important to communicate with*

people from other countries". Cathy (FTCJ) is interested in pursuing a career with an NGO; *"the goal that I wanted to achieve was to have a job experience in an NGO."*

With three very different NGOs accepting student volunteers, the work students have completed varies widely. Miu (Japan Tent) explained that she *"supported foreign students to know Japanese culture, for example sado, wagashi making, kimono wearing and so on"*. After Minako joined the programme, her work was invaluable helping to recruit and coordinate two more students to work with her at SVA. Minako, Natsumi and Misaki were responsible for creating a display to introduce SVA at the conference, deciding on the content of the exhibition and translating when required, including producing an original catchphrase. At FTCJ, Fuka, Yuko and Cathy have been doing a whole range of work, including *"collecting information for FTCJ's website, making presentations, reports, and translating."* Depending on the kind of tasks students were required to do, the time that they spent with their NGO also differed significantly, from two or three days of intensive work, to regular weekly volunteering spanning a few weeks to a month or more. One encouraging outcome is that some students have already expressed an interest in continuing an internship position after the conference.

One of our original goals was to engage students in real world situations which necessitate the use of a foreign language. A number of students described encountering language difficulties during their volunteering activities, which suggests that this goal is indeed being met. Of course, the conference

in November will provide further opportunities to use English and Japanese. Students have expressed feeling nervous, worried and uneasy about the approaching conference. However, these same students also said they feel excited and are looking forward to taking part!

With the NGO Outreach team still in its infancy, we have also encountered our own set of challenges. One significant issue is simply finding students willing to volunteer. Membership in a university club entails an enormous commitment of time and energy and many students also have a part time job. With all of this on top of a full-time student's study load, such demands leave little to no time for volunteering. We tried to be as open and flexible as possible with students' availabilities, but NGOs also have their own policies regarding a minimum time commitment for volunteers or interns. In addition, students had to prepare a CV and cover letter; for many, this was a first. This revealed that often, students had never been taught about CV writing norms and expectations, while potentially increasing the workload involved in finding students a placement.

As previously mentioned in last issue's column, a wide variety of NGOs will be involved in the Learner Development SIG's 20th Anniversary Conference on Saturday November 23 and Sunday November 24 2013, and along with the NGO's mentioned above, there will also be the following NGOs participating in the conference:

- Shine On <<http://www.sokids.org/>>
- Social Enterprise English Language School, (SEELS), <<http://seels.jp/>>

While the NGO Outreach Forum itself will be taking place on Saturday afternoon from 16:00 – 17:25, in room 206. Here, you will be able to learn more about these NGOs, and their histories,

missions and activities by speaking with our student volunteers or NGO representatives in Japanese or English. We hope that this relaxed forum will lead to further and wider collaboration between learners, teachers, NGOs, and anyone else interested in facilitating the creation of sustainable links beyond our classrooms. We also hope that members of the LD SIG and other conference participants will come to join us in what promises to be a unique and innovative forum. The Learner Development SIG's 20th Anniversary Conference has always been a major focus point for the evolving NGO Outreach team and we are very excited to see how it pulls together, and what comes out of it! We look forward to seeing you all there!

Colin Rundle and Caroline Ross

ldngooutreach@gmail.com

DEFINITION OF NGOs

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of service and humanitarian functions, bring citizen concerns to Governments, advocate and monitor policies and encourage political participation through provision of information. Some are organized around specific issues, such as human rights, environment or health. They provide analysis and expertise, serve as early warning mechanisms and help monitor and implement international agreements. Their relationship with offices and agencies of the United Nations system differs depending on their goals, their venue and the mandate of a particular institution.

Source: <http://www.ngo.org/ngoinfo/define.html>

Looking Back 報告

The Japanese Association of College English Teachers (JACET) 52nd International Convention in Kyoto, August 30 – September 1, 2013

Jim Ronald, Hiroshima Shudo University

I decided to attend this year's JACET annual convention, held in Kyoto at the end of August, simply because a friend on the organizing committee asked me to. I registered with a fair number of preconceptions that might otherwise have kept me from going: expectations of not many presentations in English, of a lot of presentations too bound up in theory and experimental data to be applicable to the actual experience of language learning in or beyond the classroom, and of not much of a showing for learner development. On all three counts, the JACET International Convention blew these preconceptions away. Over the three days of the convention, there were 27 presentations listed in the Learner Development content area, and more listed under other headings, making it the largest content area of the conference. The vast majority of the over 200 presentations at the conference were given in English. And many of the presentations I attended were excellent, reporting research and relating to classroom practice.

There are too many LD-related presentations to list here, but two excellent reports of research related to study abroad were given by Kay Irie with Stephen Ryan and by Chihiro Tajima, while Mike Stockwell's gave an inspiring account of project work resulting in authentic output: products with real world uses. I only stayed for the first two days of the conference, which meant that I missed the symposium led by Hideo Kojima, Yuka Kusanagi and Masuko Miyahara on support for learner autonomy, as well as quite a few other

presentations.

I've heard that in some ways this year's conference was different from in previous years: deliberately more international, with a large number of presentations given in English, by both Japanese and non-Japanese presenters, and with a broad range of language-education associations involved. Further, not only was there a large number of presentations, there was also a record number of 1,200 participants. Let's hope that this is not a one-off, but a sign of the direction in which JACET is moving. Certainly, if this year is any indication, as many LD SIG members already seem to know, the JACET International Convention has become an important event in the learner development calendar in Japan.

The PanSIG 2013 Collaborative Forum: *The World, the Language Learner, and Relationships* Saturday, May 18, 2013



by Jim Ronald (facilitator)

"Why make your life more complicated?" This slogan, for a cosmetics brand in Britain two or three decades ago, was not part of the vision for this year's PanSIG forum! It was a collaborative, interactive forum, shared by three SIGs:

Learner Development, Global Issues in Language Education, and Pragmatics. The forum comprised ten presentations, many spanning two or three of the SIGs' concerns, given by thirteen presenters from the three SIGs, in 4½ corners of the same

room. It was far from simple and took a lot of preparation!

The collaborative make-up of the forum, in line with the overall conference theme: From Many,



One: Collaboration, Cooperation and Community, aimed to counteract the “Twenty ghettos under one roof” feel that may result from the “one SIG, one room” way that the PanSIG

conference is usually organized. The title we settled on for the forum was an inclusive The World, the Language Learner, and Relationships. We even made sure that each corner of the room contained a mix of SIG concerns: after all, we didn’t want to find we had “Three ghettos in one room”!

Deciding on the forum title and identifying themes took a lot of discussion between SIG representatives, as did planning the timing and management of the forum. Our communication with presenters was not always all it could have been, which meant that although we, representatives, knew how the forum would be, some presenters felt unsure about important details such as timing or corner-sharing. However, once we got started, everything fell into place, and the corners were well attended, with a good chance for all presenters to join at least one other presentation, to discuss the issues raised in their corner, and finally to hear from each of the other corners. In this way, the various goals of the forum were largely met.

A combined introduction to each of the presentations of the forum is being prepared for the conference proceedings but here, for now, is a list of presenters and topics:

Lori Zenuk-Nishide, Donna Tatsuki	The Benefits of Model United Nations Simulations
Andy Barfield	Exploring contradictions between learner autonomy and critical pedagogy for social justice
Louise Haynes	Raising the topic of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power disaster
Jane Joritz-Nakagawa	Poetry, global issues, critical thinking and personal growth
Marybeth Kamibepu, Eleanor Kelly	Connecting drama and global/social issues in language learning
Erina Ogawa	Helpful educational manga textbook activities
Kevin Mark	Integrating learner development, global education and language awareness
Ian Hurrell	Introducing pragmatics: hearts and minds
Jim Ronald	Peer feedback: from hurtful to helpful
Seth Cervantes, Robert Olson	The pragmatics checklist: building awareness of interactional practices

Finally, to return to the question that did cross at least one of our minds during the lengthy exchanges of emails as we prepared for the forum, “Why make your life more complicated?”... Looking back, and thinking of what we learned, and of the relationships that were developed through all the preparations and through the forum itself, maybe we can answer that question with, “Well, this time it was worth it!”

Reflections on the LD Forum at CALL2013
Or “Can discourses of best practices in CALL
leave room for autonomous learning?”

Hugh Nicoll, Miyazaki Municipal University

Forum Title: *Digital literacies for autonomous learning*

Presenters: *Joe Tomei, Kevin Ryan, Robert Cochrane,*
Paul Beaufait, & Hugh Nicoll

CALL 2013, Shinshu University, Matsumoto-shi,
 Nagano 1 June 2013

<<http://conference2013.jaltcall.org/>>

Presenters and participants in the LD Forum at this year’s JALTCALL conference considered ways in which teachers may (or may not) be in a position to implement effective practices to support digital literacies for autonomous learning. When I began putting together our presenter team, I was primarily concerned with how to frame the notion of “best practices” in CALL – the conference theme this year – in relation to the goal of fostering autonomous learning in our classrooms. In reflecting on the forum three months down the road, it was clear that we were wrestling yet again with outcomes vs. process approaches to learning and teaching, and that as soon as we tried to pin these contrasts down, paradoxes and contradictions would pop right back up again.

Joe Tomei began our session by discussing what he described as mismatches between CALL and LD. He noted that whereas both LD and CALL researchers often use the same language and same vocabulary, they end up with different conclusions on how to foster autonomous learning. Both talk about autonomy and autonomous learning, about the importance of learning outside the classroom, and encourage teachers to re-evaluate their roles. Joe characterised these differences as centrifugal (LD) vs. centripetal (CALL), noting the tendency of LD oriented teachers to emphasise group work, whereas CALL-resourced language practice activities tend to bring individual learners together. Acknowledging that these characterisations are stereotypes, Tomei noted the primary importance that metaphors of space, time, and the pace of technological change play in both discourses.

LD, according to Tomei, has a number of things to tell (or remind) CALL folk: (1) The fundamental importance of interaction in courses; (2) The role modeling plays in learners' development of new skills and practices; and, finally (3) The potential usefulness of narrative academic writing styles (common in LD) for CALL researchers seeking to better understand their learners' struggles to learn and work with new tool sets, both in and outside the language classroom. Addressing the things that LD practitioners might learn from CALL advocates, Joe suggested that LD practitioners should relinquish authority for a reason, not as a matter of principle, and embrace the ways in which CALL protocols for organizing classroom practice and optimizing data collection will enhance teachers' abilities to collect data and work more appropriately with students on an individual basis.

Kevin Ryan then offered a brief description of MOOCS, Massive Open Online Courses. MOOCs started up in Canada, with groups of about 1,000. Recently, new platforms such as Coursera have come to dominate this emerging model for providing education to the masses. One widely discussed problem with MOOCs is that the course completion rate is low, averaging 10% or less. Nonetheless, Kevin feels that MOOCs offer an interesting example of hybridity between learner autonomy and CALL approaches to teaching and learning. He also noted that while the ‘C’ stands for “courses,” MOOCS really function as communities of learners, learning together online, with students typically organising themselves into study groups. In a fascinating aside, Kevin commented that “open” in English fails to convey the sense of openness, the metaphorical sense that the door is open and that anyone can come in, a sense, he claimed, better expressed in French (*ouvert*) or in Spanish (*abierto*).

The final three presentations addressed the use of CALL tools and resources for extending the work we do in our classrooms. Robert Cochrane discussed CALL-sourced and supported learning activities with low-level learners; Paul Beaufait described a pilot study using English Central; and finally, I discussed in-class and outside-of-class activities designed to encourage interactivity in a lecture course setting.

Robert's question was how to scaffold from the grammar-translation, examination-centered school experiences of what he described as low level, unsuccessful learners to the creation of environments and practice activities which encourage increased language awareness and development of the concept of strategy use. Cochrane's solution to his teaching context's constraints has been to introduce task-based learning homework assignments using Keller's ARCS (attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction) approach to courseware and homework design. His goal was to create achievable challenges for his learners to choose from, by integrating internet resources into their out-of-class learning practice through a course blog, and encouraging the use of smartphones for self-regulation and self-monitoring by learners. He reported some successes, via student feedback responses to post-course surveys, with learners self-reporting some satisfaction in goal setting and achievement.

Paul Beaufait described a pilot project using EnglishCentral, and asked "What happens when you let students go?" He divided students into two groups, one with explicit learning targets and one without. Learners then engaged in various online learning activities: video-viewing, vocabulary study, and speaking practice. Paul's most interesting finding was that the group without explicit goals studied only 60% of the words (word-families) that the group with explicit goals did, however, their learning performance was, in fact, better. During his presentation and the follow-up discussions, the importance of task design, motivation, and practice outcomes were explored.

In my presentation, I discussed the use of online resources, made available to students enrolled in my Introduction to American Studies lecture course through the course Moodle site. Students were also required to participate in group work: for in-class discussions of lecture materials; the completion of three group research projects consisting of reports and slide-shows uploaded to the Moodle site; and, follow-up forums on their project work and course reading assignments. At the time of the presentation, we were only seven weeks into the semester, and even now, though the

term has been completed, it will take some time for me to evaluate the students' work and their responses to the post-course survey. The more motivated students used the hypertext versions of reading assignments, participated in forum discussions, contributed to glossaries, and in general, were more active in in-class discussions and contributed longer, more articulate exploratory feedback writings. How successful my attempts to encourage the development of digital literacies, interactivity and learner autonomy were remains an open question, which I will be exploring at greater length in a future article, as well as in the revision of course protocols for the coming academic year.

My tentative conclusion regarding the forum is that while we did not manage to resolve any mysteries, the cracks, flaws, and tensions in our presentations did facilitate a useful discussion with participants. A common question running through those discussions was the efficacy and value of the CALL resources we feel we have spent so much time learning and creating. Trying to grapple with that and other related questions sent me back to 'the parrot book' (Barfield & Brown, 2007). Re-reading David Little and Kelleen Toohey's contributions to that volume I was reminded that the core relationships between learner and teacher development, classroom practice(s), and self-access materials and systems (both analog and digital) are at the heart of any "successful" implementation of learner autonomy. During the follow-up discussions, Darren Elliott noted that as teachers we cannot create communities (of practice, of autonomous learners, . . .), communities create themselves. This stands now in memory as a useful reminder to beware the inevitable temptation for teacher-researchers to over-simplify on-going events in our quest for understanding.

Note: The conference website is available for browsing, and the conference handbook is also available for downloading in PDF format.

Reference:

Barfield, A., & Brown, S. H. (2007). *Reconstructing autonomy in language education: Inquiry and innovation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Looking Forward 今後のイベント

Transitions in the Lives of Learners and Teachers JALT 2013 LD SIG FORUM

Hideo Kojima - Hirosaki University

In-service EFL teachers' transitions from being dependent to becoming more autonomous teacher-learners

As a teacher educator, I have helped pre- and in-service EFL teachers to promote their autonomous learning to teach. In the forum, I focus on two cases of in-service EFL teachers' autonomous development under collaborative and reflective supervision. Teacher A, a high school EFL teacher, implemented strategy-based instruction in his portfolio program to develop learner autonomy, while Teacher B, an elementary school EFL teacher and her peers with no certificate in teaching English collaboratively implemented strategy-based instruction in Foreign Language Activities to promote pupils' learning to learn. Both cases have some implications for innovation in EFL education in Japan.

Caroline Ross - Nakamura Junior and Senior High School for Girls

The Elementary Structures of Teaching in Japan. An anthropological account of (one) learner's development within the EFL world

I will discuss how joining the Learner Development SIG has taught me invaluable lessons, not only about my teaching practices, but also about teaching English in Japan. From feeling very much an isolated and unsupported teacher, I now feel I am part of a network that I can support, and be supported by. I will draw upon my background as an anthropologist to examine my role as a reflective

learner, teacher, and participant observer. (Warning: this poetic presentation may contain humour and rhyme.)

Robert Taferner - Hiroshima University

The Role of Correct Feedback in L2 Writing and Grammar Development

In this session, the presenter will summarize the main features of written corrective feedback (CF) on second language (L2) writing theory and practice. While there is ample support for the use of CF on improving comprehension, cohesion, and the mechanical features of learners' writing, there is little support for its use for long-term grammar acquisition. In this study of university level Japanese EFL students, the presenter will demonstrate the ability of written CF to affect the use of tense and aspect in learners' compositions in pretests, and immediate and delayed post-tests over a period of one school term.

Aya Matsumoto & Yuki Ide - Meisei University

From Language Learner to Language User

This presentation will describe some of the experiences of two students of International Studies at Meisei University. The presenters, a senior student and a junior student will highlight how these experiences have helped them to make the transition from English learners to English users. Experiences including participating as a teacher in a summer school project, as a teacher's assistant in a University programme, volunteering at the JALT national conference and studying abroad have helped the presenters develop as language learners and language users. Finally, the presenters will attempt to express how these events have shaped

their personal goals.

Andy Barfield - Chuo University

Transitions in students' understandings of becoming global

In content-based courses where students do self-directed research projects and engage with complex social, legal, political and global issues, how do different individuals see themselves as 'becoming global'? What transitions do they go through in developing over time their understandings of 'becoming global'? In this presentation I would like to explore such questions around students' changing constructions of their global imaginaries.

Samuel Bruce - Yokohama Chapter

Two-way street: an approach to peer observations

This presentation will discuss the supportive peer observation approach used in the World Language Centre at Soka University in Tokyo. The approach is very much about mutual benefit for both observer and observee, with those observing often finding as much if not more benefit from the process. After describing the peer observation system, the presentation will look at some responses from participants in the process and consider the benefits and possible shortcomings of the process.

Saki Michi - Ritsumeikan University

Learner autonomy and the global classroom

The purpose of my presentation is to discuss ways in how learning together with international students in the communication classroom can enhance learner autonomy in the Japanese EFL classroom. The presenter will examine issues regarding learner autonomy and analyse student survey results on autonomous learning and students' intercultural communication experiences on and off the university campus. The presenter will conclude by giving suggestions on how to

encourage learner autonomy in the global classroom.

Debjani Ray - Tokyo University of Science

Transitions in my classroom

I would like to share my story of how and why I initially tried to change my teaching style and in what way it gave me some positive result. To suit the needs of the class how I gradually changed myself from being a controlling teacher or a teacher-centred educator to a more relaxed learner-centred educator and how that resulted in the learners' transitions from not-so-happy passive learners to happy active learners.

Huw Davies - The Open University (UK)

Mayumi Abe - Temple University Japan Campus

Satomi Yoshimuta - Temple University Japan Campus / Seigakuin University

The strategy tree for language learners

Meeting to discuss learning strategies, the presenters talked about experiences with learners who struggle in the university English classroom; about being a distance learner with limited opportunities for interaction, and about providing counselling advice to students that go beyond the four skills. Influenced by Oxford (2011) and her S²R model, the presenters created the strategy tree, a visual aid depicting the three dimensions of language learning: cognitive, affective and sociocultural. The strategy tree is intended as a tool for counselling or use in the classroom to promote autonomous, self-regulated learning.

Joseph Tomei - Kumamoto Gakuen University,

Ken Ikeda - Otsuma Women's University

Using cross-institutional student collaboration to establish seminar paper topics and thesis development: a progress report

We report on the collaborative learning efforts of

students between our universities which started in April with generating initial topics, followed with students interacting with each other through the research process and preparing their seminar papers in the write-up stage. We report on the effects of such student collaboration with our own guidance of the students' papers. We hope to see the degree of this kind of interaction, involving shared understanding, authority over content, and control over activity, help students establish ownership of their topics, and in turn, help us, as supervisors, develop ways to further assist them.

Trevor Coombes & Aiko Minematsu - Shoei Girls Junior and Senior High School

An online teacher's lounge: Blogs as platforms for collaboration and reflection

Creating a culture of sharing among fellow teachers in the same institution can be demanding at times. Based upon our experiences at Teacher's College Columbia University, we began a closed reflective blog for teachers in a private junior and senior high school in Tokyo, with the purpose for English teachers to exchange ideas and reflect upon the ongoing process of their teaching practices. In this presentation, we will share the process of setting up the blog, the discussions which generated from it, and teacher responses. Our own reflections will also be shared.

Philip Brown - Konan Women's University

Expanding horizons and pursuing ongoing professional development through collaboration

An ongoing commitment to learning is not only a hallmark of professionalism but also fundamental to personal growth as a lifelong learner and a teacher. Whilst collaboration may not always appeal to all, it is hoped that by sharing stories of collaboration from within and outside the Learner Development SIG, we might reflect and explore

how such experiences and communities can transform our learning, teaching, and other areas of professional practice, from volunteering and organising conferences to reviewing, editing, and publishing.

Stacey Vye - Saitama University

Narrative learning transformations in a university learner autonomy seminar after the course is over

It is not often that university students and their learner/teacher in a volunteer collaborative autonomy seminar from the previous year can have a venue for sharing critical transformational narratives. Many teachers wonder what has become of their efforts to support their learners' language and lifelong developments, because the teacher often does not know the outcomes of their learners' personal development after the courses are over with too many students and not enough time. In this session, visitors can learn about cool transitional narrative stories from the learners and the learner/teacher beyond the bounds of language learning and the seminar.

Jennifer Capouilliez, Jianwn Chen, Ian Hurrell, Paul Landicho & Tim Opitz - Rikkyo University

What do you think? – Rikkyo University EDC Showcase

This presentation will showcase the course provided by the English Discussion Center (EDC) to all freshmen at Rikkyo University. This unified course employs a learner-centered methodology which has the students work together in small groups to develop the communication skills and fluency to hold extended discussions in English. Instructors from the EDC will present the learner-centered teaching techniques used in the course and visitors will also have the opportunity to experience these techniques for themselves through interactive activities. In addition, teacher research

seeking to foster this learner-centered environment will also be on display.

JALT2013 Conference Preview

JALT2013大会のご案内

compiled by Ian Hurrell



Here are some presentation listings from the conference schedule that have indicated a relationship

to learner development. Some of the presentations are from LD SIG members while others may be of related interest to our membership. With a bumper crop of 37 LD related sessions, including:

- 1 Long paper;
- 22 short papers;
- 3 forums;
- 1 workshop;
- 9 poster presentations and
- 1 Meeting,

there is a lot to whet your appetite this year!

Please note to double check the listings on the day of the conference for any room changes. You are more than welcomed to submit a presentation review, report and/or reflection to the *Learning Learning* journal: <<http://ld-sig.org/LL/index.html>>

Long papers

Sun, Oct 27, 1:20 PM - 2:20 PM; room: Kitano

The learning body-embodied learning

Thornbury, Scott - The New School

The separation between mind and body, a fundamental truth in modern Western thought, is succumbing to a view that thinking, and hence learning, is embodied, i.e. the mind extends beyond the grey matter of the brain, and is realised, at least in part, through gesture, movement, and physicality. What might this mean for (second) language learning? This talk will review developments in this exciting new field, and (very tentatively) suggest some applications.

Short Papers

Sat, Oct 26, 11:00 AM - 11:25 AM; room: 502

Investigating learning goals via learned attention

Peters, Ryan - University of Hawaii at Manoa, SLS Department; Rouse, Andrew - University of Hawaii at Manoa, SLS Department

The presenters will introduce the concept of Learned Attention and discuss related research including mathematical models (Kruschke, 2006) and an application of the concept to explicate the issue of limited attainment of adult second language acquisition (Ellis & Sagarra, 2010, 2011). Then, using specific examples, the presenters will explain how goals interact with learning experiences through the lens of Learned Attention and highlight potential benefits that metacognitive awareness of this process offers learners.

Sat, Oct 26, 1:20 PM - 1:45 PM; room: 404

Personal Learning Projects: A stepping-stone to learner autonomy?

Sykes, Joe - Akita International University

This presentation describes an approach to

integrating self-access learning with an English language speaking/listening curriculum as a scaffold to greater learner autonomy via 'PLPs' (Personal Learning Projects). Findings are presented from an analysis of audio learner diaries, with examples of first-hand insights from learners, into the process of taking personal responsibility for their learning, in many cases, for the first time.

Sat, Oct 26, 1:20 PM - 1:45 PM; room: 407

Exploiting memories to inspire language learning

**Collett, Paul - Shimonoseki City University;
Sullivan, Kristen - Shimonoseki City University**

The presenters will discuss how learners' memories can serve as catalysts for the beliefs that motivate and sustain learning. By helping unlock these memories, we can encourage learners to see the connection between important past events and their beliefs. We will introduce several activities to encourage students to link past experiences with current and future learning endeavors, and discuss the efficacy of such activities, along with other approaches to help learners inspire their own learning.

Sat, Oct 26, 4:15 PM - 4:40 PM; room: Sumire

Learner autonomy and intercultural communication

Saki, Michi - Ritsumeikan University

The purpose of this presentation is to discuss ways in which learning with international students in the communication classroom can enhance autonomous learning of Japanese EFL students. The presenter will examine issues regarding learner autonomy and explain student survey results on autonomous learning and students' intercultural communication experiences on and off the university campus. The presenter will conclude by giving suggestions on how to encourage learner autonomy in the classroom.

Sat, Oct 26, 5:25 PM - 5:50 PM; room: 303

Movie-making activities in English remedial class
Nakanishi, Noriko - Kobe Gakuin University

The presenter will introduce a series of activities involved in the making of the Fall of Freddie the Leaf movie. Based on the picture book story, the students prepared Japanese subtitles, suitable photos, and the English narration to make their own original movies. Though most of the students were very reluctant learners at first, they gradually became interested in reading the story and aware of the importance of English grammar and pronunciation.

Sat, Oct 26, 6:35 PM - 7:00 PM; room: 407

Enhancing metacognition through guided reflection
Kanzaka, Izumi - Soka University

This paper reports on action research conducted to facilitate active participation in the Japanese university EFL context. The students were guided through two ways: reflective questionnaires designed to help them reflect on their attitude in class, identify the reasons they did not volunteer, and think how they could participate more actively; and language-learning advisory sessions to discuss students' willingness to communicate. This paper will discuss how metacognitive awareness can be enhanced through guided reflection.

Sat, Oct 26, 6:35 PM - 7:00 PM; room: Tsutsuji

Developing a support system for tandem learning
**Wakisaka, Masako - Doshisha University; Ou,
Lixian - Osaka University; Aoki, Naoko - Osaka
University**

この発表は、日本の大学キャンパスで留学生と日本人学生のカリキュラム外の活動として行っているタンデム学習プロジェクトにおいて、参加者がどのようなことに困難を感じ、それを解決するために

主催者側がどのようなサポート・システムをデザインしたか、その効果はどうだったかを報告する。

Sun, Oct 27, 9:00 AM - 9:25 AM; room: Reception Hall A

Fostering learner autonomy in higher education

Miyahara, Masuko - International Christian University; Fukao, Akiko - International Christian University; Watanabe, Atsuko - International Christian University; Tsuda, Atsuko -

International Christian University; Watanabe-Kim, Izumi - International Christian University

This presentation reports the preliminary findings on a two-year longitudinal study that explores how autonomy can be fostered among university learners studying English at higher education in Japan. By investigating the interplay of curriculum-based, classroom-based, and resource-based approaches, the presenters share both students' and instructors' voices which help to shed light into the process of autonomy development in the context of formal language learning.

Sun, Oct 27, 9:35 AM - 10:00 AM; room: 305

A longitudinal CA study of L2 learner identity

Siegel, Aki - Rikkyo University

Utilizing the methodological framework of Conversation Analysis to analyse the management of rights to knowledge, this study investigates the development of language learner identity from a longitudinal perspective. Conversational data were collected from the interactions of two L2 users of English, over the course of two years. Through analyses of word search sequences located within this data set, participants' identities were found to be co-constructed in interaction, as well as changing across time.

Sun, Oct 27, 9:35 AM - 10:00 AM; room: Reception Hall A

Beyond chat: A testing-based speaking center

Sasaki, Daniel - Soka University; Chirnside, Alex - Soka University

Many EFL self-access center programs play an important role in supporting the development of linguistic skills. However, beyond general conversation and discussion skills are specific speaking skills, which are required for students to be successful on the TOEFL iBT. With a need arising to meet various student goals, a TOEFL iBT speaking center was established. The paper will describe how the center was setup, the difficulties that occurred, and the solutions that were developed.

Sun, Oct 27, 12:45 PM - 1:10 PM; room: 503

Peer interaction in a high school EFL classroom

Minematsu, Kazuko - Tsuda College

An increasing number of second language (L2) learning studies have begun to investigate peer interaction, focusing more on the social nature of learning. The purpose of this sequential mixed methods study was to investigate whether peer interaction is meaningful in a high school EFL classroom, where 80% of the students perceived themselves as poor at English. The presenter will show what the students learnt and how they felt through the peer interaction process.

Sun, Oct 27, 1:55 PM - 2:20 PM; room: 402

Emergence of group autonomy through SAC activities

Kimura, Harumi - Miyagi Gakuin Women's University

The idea of setting up self-access centers (SACs) started in view of supporting individualized language learning, but in reality they function for divergent purposes. One is fostering group autonomy as a prerequisite of learner autonomy and personal autonomy. SAC users reported that

working with others at SAC helps them take responsibility of their own learning. Their reflection indicated that learners' capacity for self-regulation can develop through experiencing group autonomy.

Sun, Oct 27, 3:50 PM - 4:15 PM; room: 407

Effects of explicit inputs on speaking fluency

Lee, Nancy Shzh-chen - Kyoto University

This study examines the influence of explicit inputs on the speaking fluency of Japanese university students (N = 240). Once a week for eight weeks, subjects narrated the Eiken Pre-Level-1 four-picture speaking test. Subjects were exposed to: 1) self-review, 2) teacher modeling, and 3) explicit teaching inputs. It was found that all subjects have improved their speaking fluency but those exposed to teacher modeling and explicit teaching demonstrated the greatest gains.

Sun, Oct 27, 4:25 PM - 4:50 PM; room: 405

CLIL lectures, autonomy, and portfolios as a bridge

Adamson, John - University of Niigata Prefecture;

Coulson, David - University of Niigata Prefecture

The presenters will illustrate how students develop academic competencies on a 1st year English lecture preparation course at a Japanese university. It is argued that the use of students' course portfolios, encouraged by a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach, lead to stronger autonomous study skills. Findings show how students become more competent academically and independent through a network of resources and brokers available to them.

Sun, Oct 27, 4:25 PM - 4:50 PM; room: 407

Teaching lifelong learning skills: PBL in action

O'Dowd, Gregory - Hamamatsu University School of Medicine

This presentation provides insights into the characteristics of life-long learning (LLL), how

learner awareness can be raised to start the process, and how necessary skills are enabled through teaching methodologies such as Problem-based Learning (PBL). The presenter will share his current research on how PBL develops LLL skills and challenges teachers to explore the questions of why and how PBL does this, in relation to developing students LLL skills.

Sun, Oct 27, 5:00 PM - 5:25 PM; room: 302

Teachers and students: At L1 odds in EFL class

Carson, Eleanor - Hiroshima City University

This study examines if English learners' L2 experience, education and proficiency relate to their preferences for L1 use by teachers in the EFL class, and whether teachers' nationality, education, training, and L2 proficiency influences their tendency to use learners' L1 in class. Survey results support positive answers to both questions. Students preferred L1 use for emotional situations, while teachers preferred L1 for classroom management, indicating mismatching preferences. Theoretical and pedagogical implications will be discussed.

Sun, Oct 27, 5:00 PM - 5:25 PM; room: 504

Young lingua franca users in a transborder space

Tanaka, Hiromasa - Meisei University; Ogane,

Ethel - Tamagawa University; Sugiyama, Aya -

Hoya Second Elementary School; Okuyama,

Kurumi - Meisei Elementary School; Kawamata,

Takanori - Meisei University

The presenters will describe learner identity development in a transborder space, in which Taiwanese and Japanese children interact using English as a lingua franca (ELF). Data include interviews, video recordings, and narratives by the Japanese and Taiwanese students. Analysis of the data was generated through dialogue among the researchers and appears to point toward the critical

role of the development of a lingua franca user identity in enhancing sustained language learning.

Sun, Oct 27, 5:35 PM - 6:00 PM; room: 403

Teachers' learning strategies and their teaching
Hokamura, Michiyo - Temple Univsity; Tsumatori, Chizuko - Temple University

The presenters will report on what kind of language-learning strategies teachers use. The presenters conducted Oxford's questionnaire, Strategies Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), as well as interviews. The participants were teachers are from high school, university, and English conversation school. The presenters also look at the relationship between participants' strategies and their instructions, and between their strategies and their proficiency, and changes in teachers' strategies over time.

Sun, Oct 27, 5:35 PM - 6:00 PM; room: 404

Researching out-of-class activities for group work
Yasuda, Raymond - Soka University

With the spread of programs either simulating western education or preparing students for study abroad, L2 group work has increased within Japan. The increase of such assignments has created a need to investigate L2 project work in the Japanese context. A qualitative investigation into out-of-class group work in an English medium EAP class was conducted to identify the challenges students faced, the autonomous strategies used to overcome those challenges, and the additional support deemed necessary.

Sun, Oct 27, 6:45 PM - 7:10 PM; room: 403

Language (dis)ability of university students
Elston, Wilma - University of Johannesburg South Africa

In South Africa, the problem exists that approximately 65% of students that register at

tertiary institutions have to conduct their studies in English, often their second or third language of preference. Tests are administered to ascertain students' level of linguistic competence and possible academic achievement and programmes are offered to support students in overcoming this language barrier. A comprehensive, compulsory program (including language skills) is suggested to assist students in attaining their full academic potential.

Sun, Oct 27, 6:45 PM - 7:10 PM; room: 501

Learning autonomously for language proficiency
Vye, Stacey - Saitama University

Autonomy research advocates that learners gain control over their learning, but what about proficiency gains? Considering the reliability of the IELTS exam, the results from the pre- and post-tests of 20 university students were compared with their autonomous language-learning practices for 23 weeks. This research suggests that language study plans designed by the learners and their self-reported amount of time spent on the desired learning focus contributed to greater language proficiency.

Mon, Oct 28, 11:20 AM - 11:45 AM; room: 402

The benefits of a conference internship program
Ashrova, Umida - Nanzan University

This presentation will explore how participation in an internship program at a large conference benefited a group of university students. Using an expectancy and value framework for motivation, the interns' initial motivation for engagement in the program and how their motivation evolved was studied. This internship experience might also be useful in sustaining motivation to study a foreign language as it provided what Brophy (1999) refers to as a life application.

Forums

Sat, Oct 26, 12:45 PM - 2:15 PM; room: 301
CALL Forum: Technology and best practices in language learning

Gorham, Tom - JALT CALL SIG;

Robb, Tom - ER SIG;

Elliott, Darren - LD SIG;

Cihi, Guy - Lexica;

Riley, Paul - Oxford University Press;

Martyn, Billy - Language Cloud;

Martyn, John - Language Cloud

This year's CALL SIG forum will be an extension of the theme of our annual conference. We will be exploring how technology has affected the best practices of different areas of language teaching and learning. We are bringing together speakers from different SIGs and different areas of language education to talk about how technology has influenced the best practices in their particular areas. This includes extensive reading, vocabulary, learner development, learning management systems, and learning materials.

Sun, Oct 27, 11:35 AM - 1:05 PM; room: 301
LD Forum: Transitions in the lives of learners and teachers

Hurrell, Ian - Rikkyo University;

Barfield, Andy - Chuo University;

Kojima, Hideo - Hirosaki University;

Taferner, Robert - Hiroshima University;

Matsumoto, Aya - Meisei University;

Ide, Yuki - Meisei University;

Bruce, Samuel - Yokohama Chapter;

Saki, Michi - Ritsumeikan University;

Brown, Philip - Konan Women's University;

Vye, Stacey - Saitama University;

Capouilliez, Jennifer - Rikkyo University;

Chen, Jianwen - Rikkyo University;

Landicho, Paul - Rikkyo University;

Opitz, Timothy - Rikkyo University;

Ray, Debjani - Tokyo University of Science;

Davies, Huw - The Open University (UK);

Abe, Mayumi - Temple University Japan Campus;

Yoshimuta, Satomi - Temple University Japan Campus/Seigakuin University;

Ross, Caroline - Nakamura Junior and Senior High School for Girls; I

keda, Ken - Otsuma Women's University;

Tomei, Joseph - Kumamoto Gakuen University;

Minematsu, Aiko - Shoei Girls Junior and Senior High School;

Coombes, Trevor - Shoei Girls Junior and Senior High School

This forum consists of interactive presentations that look into how Learner Development is a process of change and the ways this manifests itself in different educational contexts. Themes will include: Learner transitions from being passive to becoming active, autonomous learners; the presenters' transitions from being teacher-centered educators to becoming learner-centered educators; and SIG members' transitions from working individually to working collaboratively with teachers and learners in various LD SIG activities.

Sun, Oct 27, 5:35 PM - 7:05 PM; room: 301

Self-access and the lifelong voyage of learning

MacKenzie, Dirk - Konan Women's University;

Thornton, Katherine - Otemon Gakuin University;

Yamashita, Hisako - Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages;

Porter, Mathew - Hiroshima Bunkyo Women's University;

Taylor, Clair - Gifu Shotoku Gakuen University;

Baierschmidt, Junko - Kanda University of International Studies;

Sykes, Joe - Akita International University;

Birchley, Sarah Louisa - Toyo Gakuen University;
Omura, Keiko - Toyo Gakuen University;
Beck, Daniel - Toyo Gakuen University;
Ishikawa, Yukiko - Soka Women's College;
Matsumoto, Kaori - Soka University;
Shibata, Satomi - Tokoha University

On the lifelong voyage of learning, the self-access centre is a port where learners can refuel with ideas, restock with learning materials, share stories of their adventures, and chart out new directions for the future. In four presentations and a poster session, contributors will discuss a variety of current issues in self-access related to learner cognition, advising, assessment, space design and curriculum integration. Organized by the Japan Association of Self-Access Learning.

Workshops

Sun, Oct 27, 1:20 PM - 2:20 PM; room: 307

Student attitude to translation in SLA

Sonda, Nozomu - Yamaguchi University/One World Intl

Recently, L1 use and bilingualism have begun to be recognized in SLA and the place of translation seems to have been found (Cook, 2010; Vermes, 2010), which has deep implications to Japanese college English education. Since there seems to be much less research in terms of student attitude, this study proposes to examine Japanese college students' attitude towards translation for both speaking and writing purposes. The study method will employ both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Posters

Sat, Oct 26, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM; room: Exhibition Hall #3

Evaluation of a student-created corpus

Hirata, Yoko - Hokkai-Gakuen University; Hirata, Yoshihiro - Hokkai-Gakuen University

The purpose of this study is to examine the efficacy of corpus-based tasks in combination with online language-learning tools implemented in a Japanese university. Specifically, the attitudes of different students towards tasks in a blended language-learning course were analyzed. The findings suggest that student perception of corpus-based tasks differs significantly according to several major factors.

Sat, Oct 26, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM; room: Exhibition Hall #3

Teaching methodologies for lifelong learning

O'Dowd, Gregory - Hamamatsu University School of Medicine

This poster presentation provides a description of the characteristics of life-long learning (LLL) and paths to needed skills through teaching methodologies such as Problem-based Learning (PBL) and Team-based Learning (TBL). The presenter will share findings from his current research on how PBL is developing LLL skills and challenge teachers to explore the questions of why and how in relation to developing students LLL skills.

Sat, Oct 26, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM; room: Exhibition Hall #3

A project-based workshop for active learning

Kawamura, Akemi - Tokyo International University; Matsubayashi, Yoshiko - Tokyo International University; Maeda, Joyce - Tokyo International University

Japanese learners of English are often characterized as passive participants in a traditional classroom. In an effort to remedy this situation, a project-based class was designed as one of the cornerstones of the English curriculum at the presenters' university.

This presentation will outline the project adopted, its contribution to language acquisition, and the problems encountered by both learners and teachers. Suggestions will be made for how to implement a similar project in other locations.

Sat, Oct 26, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM; room: Exhibition Hall #3

Engagement through creative homework design

Cochrane, Robert - Kyushu Sangyo University

English language learning can be a challenge for non-English majors, but limited class time can be supported with effective homework design. This poster presents an action research project investigating the effects of how creative homework design, combined with task-based learning and language-learning strategy instruction, can increase student engagement and self-regulation. Surveys, class evaluations, peer collaboration and teacher observation will be presented and discussed along with suggestions for improving effective homework activities.

Sat, Oct 26, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM; room: Exhibition Hall #3

Learner autonomy for science-major EFL students

Murase, Fumiko - Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology

What should we know when we intend to help science-major university students develop their autonomy, as well as their English proficiency? Following the overview of a project on developing a program for promoting science-major students' autonomy and improving their English proficiency, the presenter will report on the survey studies investigating their needs in English learning and their characteristics in terms of learner autonomy and discuss how these findings could be incorporated into the program design.

Sat, Oct 26, 4:15 PM - 6:15 PM; room: Exhibition Hall #3

Becoming a good language learner

Bartelen, Herman - Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages; DiGiulio, Anthony - Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages

Educational research suggests that students who exhibit more control over material choice and learning strategies, are more likely to be motivated and driven towards greater language gains. This poster presentation will include a pamphlet, *Becoming a Good Language Learner*, which was distributed to first-year students at a two-year English vocational college. The pamphlet addresses the issues of setting goals, planning, reflection, motivation, language-learning strategies, time management and the choice of materials and technologies.

Sun, Oct 27, 3:50 PM - 5:50 PM; room: Exhibition Hall #3

Video recording as a learner assessment tool

Okada, Yasuko - Seisen University

Video technology has been widely implemented in language classrooms. This study investigates the effect on self-evaluation of Japanese EFL learners' presentation skills in the classroom. The results suggest that self-evaluation using video recording can help language students reduce the burden of being an evaluator. The benefits of using a video camera for assessment purposes in the classroom will also be discussed.

Sun, Oct 27, 3:50 PM - 5:50 PM; room: Exhibition Hall #3

What comprised their self-regulated language learning?

Ebara, Satoko - International Pacific University

The aim of this study is to explore the factors for discouraging or facilitating self-regulatory

language learning among Japanese university students. While some quantitative studies have investigated learners' tendency of their original perception and the change, this study laid emphasis more on the retrospective interviews to learners' realities. It elucidates the individual learner's reaction to each life history and environment of learning.

Sun, Oct 27, 3:50 PM - 5:50 PM; room: Exhibition Hall #3

Effect of time gap on English learning of students
Tseng, Yen-Cheng - Chang Jung Christian University; Guo, How-Ran - National Cheng Kung University

To evaluate the effects of the time gap on the results of English learning in Taiwanese college students, we investigated the relationship between scores of the General Scholastic Test taken prior to entering college and TOEIC after a 10-week English course. Of the 136 participants, the highest correlation was observed in freshmen, while the lowest was in seniors. The results indicated that the time gap has a remarkable impact on the results of English learning.

Meetings

Sun, Oct 27, 1:20 PM - 2:20 PM; room: 301

Learner Development SIG AGM

**Barfield, Andrew - Chuo University,
 Silver, Rich - Ritsumeikan University,
 Stewart, Alison - Gakushuin University,
 Murase, Fumiko - Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology**

This meeting is an opportunity for SIG members to discuss together different SIG projects and plans, as well as to make decisions about SIG activities for the coming year. We welcome your participation in the AGM and encourage teachers teaching

languages other than English and/or from diverse teaching and learning contexts (elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, distance learning, language school, and university settings) to come along and take part

Spread the word with this flyer!

Forum: Transitions in the lives of Learners and Teachers

13 interactive presentations focusing on:

- Learners' transitions from passive to active learners
- Teachers' transitions from teacher to learner centered educators
- Development of learner-centered practices

featuring an LD Poetry Recital and snacks

Sunday 11:35 ~ 13:05

Room 301



Kobe Convention Center - waiting for YOU!

Call For Contributions

原稿募集

Learning Learning is your space for continuing to make the connections that interest you. You are warmly invited and encouraged to contribute to the next issue of Learning Learning in either English and/or Japanese. We welcome writing in different formats and different lengths about different issues connected with learner and teacher development, such as:

- articles (about 2,500 to 4,000 words)
- reports (about 500 to 1,000 words)
- learner histories (about 500 to 1,000 words)
- stories of autonomy (about 500 to 1,000 words)
- book reviews (about 500 to 1,000 words)
- letters to the SIG (about 500 words)
- personal profiles (100 words more or less)
- critical reflections (100 words more or less)
- research interests (100 words more or less)
- photographs
- poems... and much more...

We would like to encourage new writing and new writers and are also very happy to work with you in developing your writing. We would be delighted to hear from you about your ideas, reflections, experiences, and interests to do with learner development, learner autonomy and teacher autonomy.



James Underwood
jamesmichaelunderwood@gmail.com

Learning Learning coordinator

「学習の学習」は会員に興味あるつながりを構築する空間です。次号「学習の学習」への和文(もしくは英文、及び二言語での)投稿を募集しています。形式や長さを問わず、学習者及び教員の発達に関連した以下のようなさまざまな文章を歓迎しています:

- 論文(約4000字-10000字)
- 報告書(約2000字-4000字)
- 学習者のヒストリー(約2000字-4000字)
- 自律性に関する体験談(約2000字-4000字)
- 書評(約2000字-4000字) • SIGへの手紙(約2000字)
- 個人プロフィール(約400字)
- クリティカル・リフレクション(約400字)
- 研究興味(約400字)
- 写真・詩 その他

これまでにない形式のもの、また新しい方々からのご投稿をお待ちしております。内容についてもぜひご相談ください。みなさまのご意見やお考え、ご経験、そして学習者の発達、学習者の自律性と教師の自律性に関することなど、ぜひお聞かせください。

Financial Report, 財務報告

SIG fund balance August 31, 2013 / SIG資金残高2013年8月31日		
Balance in bank account 銀行口座の残高		908,913
Reserve liabilities JALT本部預け金		200,000
	TOTAL 合計	1,108,913
PLANNED EXPENSES September to December 2013 2013年9月- 12月予定経費		
Table rental at JALT 2013/JALT2013 全国大会テーブルレンタル代	(27,000)	
Shipping LD materials to the conferences/SIGテーブル用マテリアル送料	(30,000)	
LD SIG site cost /SIGウェブサイト経費	(7,500)	
Donation for best of JALT 2013/Best of JALTサポート	(10,000)	
Pan SIG grant/Pan SIG 参加助成金	(25,000)	
Research grant/研究助成金	(25,000)	
2 JALT National grants/全国大会参加助成金	(80,000)	
Projected expenses 20th anniversary LD conference/20周年記念大会参加助成金	(470,000)	
Other miscellaneous / 他の雑費	(20,000)	
	SUB-TOTAL 小計	(694,500)
PROJECTED REVENUE September to December 2013 2013年9月- 12月予定収入		
Realizing Autonomy Proceedings sales (50 copies)/紀要売り上げ		50,000
Membership x 1500 6 months/12/SIG 会員費 (1500円/6ヶ月)		150,000
November conference registration projection/20周年学会参加費		200,000
	SUB-TOTAL 小計	400,000
Projected SIG fund balance March 31st, 2013 / 予定SIG資金残高2013年12月31日		
Balance in bank account 銀行口座の残高		614,413
Reserve liabilities JALT本部預け金		200,000
	TOTAL 合計	814,413
<i>Kay Irie 入江恵, LD SIG treasurer, LDSIG財務, September 3, 2013 2013年9月3日</i>		