

LEARNER DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL 8: Call for Exploratory and Practice-Based Inquiries and Reviews

Theme: *Exploring grassroots, innovative, and creative approaches to language learning materials development through inclusive practitioner-research*

Deadline: Sunday 15 January 2023

Editors: Anna Costantino, Nour Bouacha, and Assia Rolls

We are three language teachers, practitioner researchers and multidisciplinary academics who share a common interest in the mutual development of learners and teachers and learner-centred language pedagogies enacted through practitioner-research. We are keen to work with other teachers and students, and student-teachers, who are eager to explore and discuss the questions and puzzles those learners and teachers bring to learning materials development.

If you are interested in exploring questions like the following, please consider submitting a proposal for LDJ8:

- What puzzles do you and your learners have about developing materials, and how might you explore those puzzles together?
- In what ways is learner-led materials development useful and important for learner development? Why now?
- How could “Quality of Life and Learning” for the learners and for us as teachers be enhanced through co-designing learning materials as investigative tools?
- What models or frameworks can be used for facilitating learners’ involvement in materials development?
- How can we embed critical theories (e.g., critical race, gender, and disability theories) in principled materials evaluation and development frameworks, alongside/as opposed to SLA, and put learners’ needs and wants centre-stage?
- How can we embrace translanguaging practices in materials development against nativistic and normative practices and perspectives of learner development?
- How could the learner be a catalyst in challenging top-down, Anglocentric and Western approaches to materials development and implementation, and promote local understandings? And why?
- How can co-learning, co-designing and co-inquiring in materials development enhance assessment for learning and assessment as learning?

For LDJ8 we envisage grassroots practice-based inquiries aimed at critically situated understandings. We invite contributions from diverse areas of language(s) education from primary through to tertiary, and/or in other relevant contexts, to explore how creative and innovative materials development can be realised through practitioner-driven investigations and learner involvement. Contributions will include practitioners’ and students’ reflections,

both individual and collective, generated within communities of practice through different research-driven inquiries.

Possible areas of activity and inquiry

Some specific areas of activity and inquiry that we hope contributors will be interested in exploring include:

- Acknowledging learners' translanguaging practices (academic, critical, digital, multi-modal) in materials design and their impact on literacy development
- Learners' engagement with critical theories (e.g., critical race, gender, intersectionality, disability theories) in materials development
- Learners' engagement with art in the co-creation of materials and their impact on learner development
- Learners' explorations of the linguistic landscapes through their engagement with materials (multimodal, digital, etc).
- Learners' understanding of sustainable learning practices and environments (social, environmental, and economic sustainability) and quality of life through the designing and development of materials
- Mediating learners' emerging linguistic and cultural identities through the co-designing of materials including learner beliefs and narratives about living and learning
- Materials and the development of learner-centred curricula, pedagogies, approaches, courses, and classrooms in practices.
- Pedagogical innovation through the co-creation of materials by learners and by teachers
- Ideologies of language and learning (including native speakerism) in evaluating and designing materials and their impact on educational discourses and institutions, as well as in learner development
- Discourses of the nation-state (and colonialism) and the monolingual bias in materials designing and their impact on learner development.

If there are other areas of inquiry that appeal to you about engaging with bottom-up, grassroots, innovative, and creative approaches to learning materials development, then please feel free to consult with us by email ahead of sending in your proposal. Thanks.

Developing a community of practices together

Our aim is to make the collaborative process of LDJ8 supportive and inclusive by creating a stimulating and enjoyable community of practices of research and writing.

We warmly encourage co-constructed inquiries, co-authorship, and joint participation of students/learners in inquiries and writing.

As a contributor to LDJ8 you will be expected to collaborate with other contributors at different points in the development of your research and writing, for example engaging in discussions of your practices and inquiries, sharing writing, responding to each other's drafts, and taking part in face-to-face and/or online conversations.

Exploratory writing with a personalised reflective quality

LDJ8 will feature two main types of exploratory writing: **exploratory inquiries** and **practice-related reviews**.

As LDJ8 will feature exploratory writing into grassroots, innovative, and creative materials development, we encourage contributors to **use narrative, dialogue, interview, and other interactive elements** (for example, visual, video, web, multimodal, digital, multimedia) that can **enhance the personalised and reflective quality of their inquiries and reviews**.

With **exploratory inquiries** at 5,000-7,000 words, we are looking for around 6-10 contributions, *each with a strong personalised reflective quality*. We invite contributors to LDJ8 to:

- ground their writing in concerns and questions that they have about engaging with learner-led materials development
- write their inquiries in personalised reflective ways
- include different voices
- relate their inquiry to arguments and debates in the field where appropriate, and write questioningly to construct critical understanding and reflection on practices, issues, discourses, and theorisations to do with learning materials development and evaluation.

We also encourage contributors to **adopt an exploratory stance in their writing and to experiment**. See, for example, the following pieces and enquiries into Exploratory practice by [Zhang, R.](#) (2004), [Chen, Y. S.](#) (2016), [Alison Stewart, Robert Croker, Judith Hanks](#) (2015), [Lena Karlsson and Fergal Bradley](#) (2018), [Michelle Rawson and Maria Esther Lecumberri](#) (2019), and [Yoshitaka Kato and Judith Hanks](#) (2021).

For **practice-related reviews**, we would like to include reflective commentaries at around 2,000 - 3,000 words that **explore print, digital, web, multimedia materials development in grassroots, innovative, and creative ways**. Sources for such reviews could include **presentations, workshops, blogs, book chapters, papers, (online) course modules, software apps, video-talks, books, and so on**. As a reviewer, you would need to relate your review to exploring your own local learner development practices and concerns rather than trying to provide objective, 'clinical' summaries of particular sources. Please consider also reviewing one of these **published books** (For the inaccessible copies, we hope to get an inspection copy to share with you):

Bao, D. (Ed.). (2018). *Creativity and innovations in ELT materials development: Looking beyond the current design*. Multilingual Matters.

Bori, P. (2018). *Language textbooks in the era of neoliberalism*. Routledge.

Exploratory Practice Group (2021). *Why Seek to Understand Life in the Classroom. Experiences of the Exploratory Practice Group*. British Council. https://www.puc.rio.br/ensinopesg/ccg/licenciaturas/download/ebook_why_seek%20to_understand_life_in_the_classroom_2021.pdf

Maley, A., & Peachey, N. (Eds.). (2015). *Creativity in the English language classroom*. British Council. https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/pub_F004_ELT_Creativity_FINAL_v2%20WEB.pdf

Risager, K. (2018). *Representations of the world in language textbooks*. Multilingual Matters.

Smith, R., & Rebolledo, P. (2018). *A Handbook for Exploratory Action Research*. https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/pub_30510_BC%20Explore%20Actions%20Handbook%20ONLINE%20AW.pdf

Slimani-Rolls, A., & Kiely, R. (2019). *Exploratory Practice for continuing professional development*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Tin, T. B. (2022). *Unpacking creativity for language teaching*. Routledge.

If there are **other books or sources** about engaging with materials development from the perspective of learner development that you find inspiring, or especially thought-provoking, and that you would like to review, please contact us to share your ideas. Thanks.

Staged development of research and writing

Rather than working exclusively towards a full draft from the outset, we feel it is more productive and enriching to **build on, re-work, and extend your research and writing in stages through sharing incomplete drafts, discussing them, and getting peer responses from other contributors**, as well as **later receiving feedback from LDJ Review Network members, and the LDJ8 editors**.

The draft schedule planned for the staged development of research and writing is as follows (we may adjust some details later after further discussion with contributors):

15th January 2023	Proposal deadline
End of February 2023	Notifications of acceptance
March & April 2023	Discussion of inquiries and plans
30th April 2023	First piece of writing: exploratory inquiries: 1,200-1,500 words; practice-related reviews: 600-1,000 words; peer responses

31st August 2023	Second piece of writing (building on, re-working, and extending the first piece): exploratory inquiries: 2,000-3,000 words; practice-related reviews: 1,200-1,800 words; peer responses
	Choice of blind peer or open review by LDJ Review Network members
September & October	Feedback from LDJ Review Network members
15 th December 2023 – 31 st January 2023	Third piece of writing (building on, re-working, and extending the second piece): full draft (exploratory inquiries: 5,000 to 7,000 words; practice-related reviews: 2,000-3,000 words)
February & March 2024	Feedback from peers, editors, and LDJ Steering Group
April & May 2024	Finalised drafts
June, July, August 2024	Finalisation of all texts , including abstracts and keywords (English and Japanese, plus another language) and author bios (English and Japanese, plus another language)
September 2024	Proofreading and final checks
October 2024	Publication

Initial inquiries and proposals (Deadline Sunday 15 January 2023)

1. If you wish to check anything with us ahead of sending in your proposal, please email us at: **JALT LDJ8** jaltdj8@gmail.com, and we will get back to you as soon as we can.
2. The deadline for all proposals is Sunday 15 January 2023.
3. For your proposal, please include the following information in a Word document.

Name(s):

Institutional affiliation(s):

E-mail address(es):

Member of JALT Learner Development SIG? Yes/No

Proposal guideline: Start with a brief story about yourself and your working (or studying) context(s), and your interest in exploring grassroots, innovative, and creative approaches to language learning materials development through inclusive practitioner-research. Indicate which type of writing you plan to do.

For an **exploratory inquiry**, write around 500 to 600 words to introduce your proposed inquiry. Include also your ideas and/or concerns about writing in a personalised reflective way.

For a **practice-related review**, write about 250 to 300 words, identifying the book or source(s) you are interested in reviewing and why, and focusing on practices and/or questions that you plan to relate your review to.

4. Send your completed proposal to us (Anna Costantino, Nour Bouacha, and Assia Rolls) at: JALT LDJ8 jaltldj8@gmail.com

We are looking forward to hearing from you—and if you have any questions or concerns along the way, please feel free to email us at <jaltldj8@gmail.com> and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Anna Costantino (University of Greenwich/ Regent's University London),

Nour Bouacha (Bachir Ibrahimi University, BBA),

Assia Rolls (Regent's University London)

About *The Learner Development Journal*

The Learner Development Journal (<http://ld-sig.org/ld-journal-concept/>) is the online, open-access journal of the JALT Learner Development SIG. Published once a year, the *Journal* is devoted to practitioner-driven research, reviews, and interviews exploring learner development issues in language education. The *Journal* represents a commitment to group-based professional development and shared exploration. It provides a forum to explore issues related to specific learner development themes in a collaborative and supportive environment. Each issue of the LDJ contains six to 10 works of varying lengths related to the common theme, for example, reviews of key texts, an interview with or a contribution from a key researcher in the field, and an introduction or conclusion written by the issue editors to provide an overview and context to the whole collection of work. Contributors will work with each other to read and respond to one another's work during the research and writing process. We are especially interested in practitioner research, student participatory research, and co-authored works.