

Looking Back

報告

Interview with Phil Benson: Taking a Wider View of His work as Language Teacher, Learner, Researcher, & Social Justice Advocate



Phil Benson

Macquarie University, Australia



Andy Barfield

Chuo University

Andy: Phil hello, how are you, and how is everything going? I know that you retired at the end of last year, and that you are continuing to do research as Honorary Professor of Applied Linguistics in the Department of Linguistics at Macquarie. Congratulations on your retirement and on continuing to do research: it must be really exciting to have the time for doing research full-time now.

Phil: Hello, Andy, and thank you for your congratulations! Like many language teachers I started my academic career in Applied Linguistics quite late, in the early 1990s. So I have been around for about the same length of time and have been through a lot of the same developments as the LD-SIG. I wouldn't say I'm doing research full-time now, but it is exciting to have the time and freedom to pursue projects that are particularly interesting to me.

Andy: Among your many research projects, which one(s) are you currently working on, and which questions or puzzles or pieces of work have been particularly catching your interest of late?

Phil: I published a book on 'language learning environments' in 2021. It was initially going to be a book on language learning beyond the classroom, but in the end that turned out to be only the end point of the research. Working backwards, I became very interested in the basis of second language learning in the global mobility of languages, in how languages move, and more generally in how theories of language fit in with theories of space. It is a longish argument, but in brief I see second language learning as involving interaction with second language resources in the learner's environment. This is a language ecology view, but unlike earlier ecological views, I am interested in how language learning environments vary around the world: how second language resources make their way into them, the relative scarcity of these resources, and how successful learners construct and expand their environments in order to maximise their access to them. This is how we get from theories of space to second language learning, and especially learner development, and I think this view opens up a lot of new avenues for research and practice.

Andy: That's exciting the emphasis on second language resources, and learners constructing and expanding their environments to access those resources. What are some examples of the new work in this area that you see starting to come through in research and practice?

Phil: Together with Phil Chappell and Lynda Yates, at Macquarie University, I used the ideas of space and resources to explore the ways in which adult international students learning English in Sydney used the spaces of the city in their informal out-of-class learning. As a PhD student at Macquarie, Yeong-ju Lee has applied this spatial perspective in an interesting way to language

learning on TikTok and Instagram. The question of how learners connect online and offline spaces is a really interesting one. I should also mention Mayumi Kashiwa's research at Macquarie on the environmental transitions involved when international students' come to Australia from their home countries, which was inspirational to me; also her PhD project on changes in changes in teachers' conceptions of students' learning environments, which showed how important it is for teachers and students to be on the same page on this issue. Outside work at Macquarie, I have been especially interested in recent work by Suresh Canagarajah who is doing different and exciting ideas with the idea of the space in language learning and use. In the area of language learning beyond the classroom, I think that some of the most exciting work is being done in the area of 'informal digital learning of English' (IDLE), on which there have been symposia at the last two or three AILA Congresses. IDLE researchers are focussed on the online world as a space for informal learning, and though I wish they would look more at the integration of online and offline worlds, they are making real progress in understanding how informal online language learning works.

Andy: When you look back at your own rich and long history of doing research (not just in language learning research, but in other interdisciplinary areas too), how do you see the periods and turns in your own research history? What stands out for you in your personal and professional research trajectory?

Phil: My first degree was in Sociology, and I think I have always had a sociological view of language learning; that is in trying to understand the social side of why people learn languages and how social factors make it easier or more difficult to learn a language. As well as being involved in research on learner autonomy, I also had a parallel research track in sociolinguistics - my PhD was in the area of world Englishes, which I saw as being about not just varieties of English but also about why and how people learned English in different parts of the world. My interest in learner autonomy came out of my work with self-access centres in Hong Kong and my own interest in learning languages independently as an adult, but I now see it as part of a broader shift in language learning and teaching towards learner-centredness in the late eighties and early nineties. The social turn that followed was interesting for me, because I saw names such as Vygotsky, Foucault and Bourdieu coming into language learning theory that were familiar to me from my days as a sociology student. But at that time there also seemed to be some conflict between the so-called 'individualism' of learner autonomy and the new social, community-based, collaborative views of language learning. I think that particular conflict— between the social and the individual—if it is a conflict, has really defined the trajectory of my career. In the early days, research on autonomy took a swing in the direction of the social turn - interdependence rather than independence - but I was always somewhat skeptical of this. I find the idea that everything is socially determined difficult to accept, and if you take the idea of individuals authoring their own lives out of the idea of autonomy, you don't really have much left. That was partly my motivation for engaging with narrative research as a means of getting to grips with the individual and social sides of language learning. With the idea of language learning environments, I am thinking of how second language learning is socially constrained by the environment in which it takes, but also driven by the initiative and effort of individual learners. I think that many socially-oriented researchers have also shifted towards a similar view, so there is now a kind of productive convergence taking place.

Andy: You have been very much committed to research for practitioners and for learners, in the broadest sense, with many of your research projects have been characterised by collaboration and engagement with different communities (for example, [Multilingual Sydney](#), [Racism It Stops With Me 2020](#), [Community Language Under Threat Due to Lack of Support](#), and [International students' experience of racism: A City of Ryde report](#)). Could you share how you see this dimension to your

work – including how different communities that you engage with influence the kinds of research questions and directions that you take up?

Phil: The projects that you mention are projects that I have been involved in Australia. My academic career has been a kind of ‘game of two halves’; the first part in Hong Kong (1991-2013), which was where I developed my ideas on autonomy, and the second part in Sydney (2014-), where I have been much more concerned with multilingualism. There is a difference and also a connection. In Hong Kong, second language learning is dominated by learning English at school from kindergarten through to university, whereas in Australia there are three main contexts: adult international students using and improving their English, heritage (or ‘community’, as it is called here) language learning by children of migrants, and foreign language learning in schools. The connection is that the first two contexts (international students and heritage language learning) both very much involve autonomous learning beyond the classroom, although these take very different forms in Australia and Hong Kong. The way that I see the community dimension of the work that I have been involved in here in Australia is, first, that it is important to understand the life of languages in different communities and, second, that it is important to understand how languages and language learning fit into learners’ lives. Language learning beyond the classroom is far more important, and complex, in Australia than it was in Hong Kong (which is not to say that it was not important or complex there also).

Andy: I’m really struck by how you communicate your research and reach different audiences through multiple genres (academic papers, books, talks, social media, videos, mass media reports, websites, leaflets, city reports, and so on). The diversity of research products is phenomenal. What influences the choices you make in how you publish/share your work? How has this dimension of your work grown and changed over time for you?

Phil: I think that is mainly because I have a short attention span! I am rather restless in regard to research and, in that respect, autonomy and out-of-class learning have been a kind of anchor for everything else I have done. But again, I think the move from Hong Kong to Australia has been a major factor in diversifying genres and audiences. In Hong Kong, I think I was more of an advocate for autonomy in the context of language education. In Australia, I have become more of an advocate for language learning itself, especially for heritage language learning, which is undervalued in the community. In regard to international students, it is more a question of advocacy for a better understanding of students’ lives, not only in respect to language learning but also into issues such as racism and a more general tendency to isolate international students from mainstream social life.

Andy: All these issues are so deeply interconnected in our own and our learners’ lives and participation in society. For me it’s striking how questions of learner autonomy, agency, and identity, not to mention rights and access to resources, are becoming ever more socially situated and engaged with by practitioners and researchers in language(s) education. For sure, issues of social justice and the struggle for a more equitable future have always been there, but they now seem to be increasingly recognised and taken up — some very strong connections here to the theme of LD30 and *Learning for Change and Action, Making a Difference for the Future*. Speaking of which, as we come to the final part of this interview, could you share with us what you are looking forward to focusing on in your sessions — and also learning about — at the conference?

Phil: In my plenary talk, I will be looking at the broader context of the history of the LD-SIG in the development of language learning research over the last 30 years. In particular, I’ll be trying to evaluate the lasting significance of the ‘learning’ and ‘social’ turns that I mentioned earlier. There will also be a workshop on language learning beyond the classroom where I will try to introduce

some practical implications of ideas on language learning and space. It's some time since I have been to an LD-SIG event, so I am also looking forward to learning about what is new in your world!

Andy: Thank you for your wholeheartedness in taking part in this written interview, Phil. It's been fascinating to learn from you a wider view of your work as language teacher, learner, researcher, and social justice advocate, and how you see your researching life and developments in the field over time. I am sure readers will have gained, like me, many new perspectives on your work, and started seeing new and exciting possibilities and directions for their own engagement with learner development. Thank you so much!

Phil: Thank you, Andy! The LD-SIG has been at the forefront of the kinds of research we've been talking about for many years, and it is a real honour to be invited to the conference and to do this interview.

Journeys to Learner Wellbeing: A Dialogue on Building Student Communities



Stacey Vye

Saitama University

Chiyuki Yanase

Keio University



INTRODUCTION

At the JALT PanSIG conference in 2023 in Kyoto, Stacey gave a poster presentation at the Learner Development (LD) SIG Forum about the self-access centre she oversees at Saitama University. Chiyuki was nominated as one of the recipients of an LD-SIG conference research grant and was interested in learning how to enhance learners' wellbeing. Since Chiyuki was also curious about whether a facility like a student-access centre could serve as a student community and contribute to boosting their wellbeing, she seized the opportunity to pose this question to Stacey during her poster session. That is when our dialogue began. Our discussions continued to explore how to establish the learners' own community for collaboration and communication by organizing various events, fostering learner autonomy, and accessing useful activities such as grounding practice and reflective dialogue to maintain or improve learners' wellbeing. From our collaboration, the dialogues evolved into a dialogic plenary for the LD30 Conference.

Chiyuki: Stacey, this dialogic plenary has provided such a wonderful opportunity for me to delve deeper into our latest research and professional interests. I remember meeting you at the JALT International Conference in Hamamatsu in 2012, and we instantly clicked while discussing how effective storytelling could be for language learning. Since then, I have always looked forward to seeing you at the JALT annual conferences to explore our professional interests and occasionally share aspects of our personal lives. However, it was our mutual friend, the legendary Michele Steele, who founded and organized the Best of JALT awards, who brought us back together in 2019 when she invited us to her birthday celebration after you earned your Ed.D. Unfortunately, the dreadful pandemic separated us for a while, but fortunately, we reconnected and began to engage more personally. To my surprise, our personal life events align remarkably, and so do our latest

research interests. I feel deeply honoured and privileged to present my research interest in learner wellbeing with your expertise.

Stacey: Oh, my goodness, Chiyuki, why did we wait ten years to get together more often and discuss, learn, grow, and stay connected? I am glad we are closer now and making up for lost time. That is right, in 2012, we spoke about how storytelling can be a powerful English learning tool for vocabulary, sequence and scope of a story, and learner ownership of the narrative. I will explain later in this mini-dialogue, yet more recently, I think storytelling and the use of metaphors play an integral part in wellbeing, which has been useful working with students at our hybrid self-access center at Saitama University.

Our dear Michele Steele got us together again for her birthday at one of her favorite Mexican restaurants just before the pandemic. I think so many of us miss Michele very much after her passing. One respite was grieving together with you and others helped me not feel alone and share stories of her warmth, wit, and never-wavering dedication to the JALT community that was healing. I am grateful that now we regularly discuss personal and professional growth, and yes, we sure have a lot in common. In fact, there is one more practice we share, which is I am now baking bread and trying to make it as delicious as yours, but I am not quite there yet. Chiyuki, we spoke about this a bit, but can you let the readers know how you got interested in learner wellbeing and learner-centered community? ?

Chiyuki: I couldn't agree with you more about Michele, and we share many values, both privately and professionally. That's why, when we started discussing our ideas about integrating learner wellbeing information, resources, and events into a facility like your self-access center this spring, we were so excited and couldn't stop discussing the focus on the learner on the bus in Kyoto after the PanSIG conference. To answer your question, I became interested in learner wellbeing and started thinking about the importance of building a student community or a hub where they can manage the place independently.

My initial motivation to learn about teacher wellbeing was that I experienced significant burnout in 2020 during the first year of emergency remote teaching (ERT). As a part-time lecturer, I teach at four universities across five separate departments. In 2022, I started four new courses at a new university and also began teaching in a different department at one of the universities I had been working at. Designing four new courses presented a considerable challenge. Additionally, learning to navigate four different learning management systems (LMS) and various video conferencing platforms made preparing for the new academic year in 2020 overwhelming. Due to the excessive workload, constant uncertainty, and anxiety I experienced, I had my first panic attack and teacher burnout for the first time in my 30-year teaching career. Clark (2021) asserts that prioritizing teachers' well-being is essential to facilitating engaging and inspiring classroom settings. This reflection resonated with me profoundly because of the mental issue I had. That was when I started reading about teacher burnout and wellbeing extensively to understand how I could deal with my panic attacks and overcome the setbacks. Thanks to the Teacher Wellbeing Handbook (Mercer & Gregaersen, 2020), I realized how crucial it was to take care of myself.

Stacey: I am so sorry you went through this heart-wrenching time in your professional career that impacted your wellbeing. Managing four LMS systems and teaching remotely in one place with various video platforms is a significant burden and challenge. I think many full-time tenured faculty have little to no idea about the hardships part-time faculty went through while teaching remotely during the pandemic. In 2020, I could barely manage the various platforms at one university, yet luckily, I already had my own teaching website with less to prepare. Chiyuki, your resilience and self-awareness of overcoming a teacher burnout crisis and setbacks are profound as you are

internally aware of the importance of continual self-care and wellbeing. I am curious: What kept you interested in the wellbeing of learners after you returned to the classroom face-to-face?

Chiyuki: Thank you so much for your kind words. I am so amazed that you were prepared for unprecedented circumstances in 2020. How lucky your students were. It took me a while to become comfortable with ERT, so when we returned to face-to-face classes in 2022, I was overjoyed. I also noticed the excitement in the learners as they reunited with their classmates. Nevertheless, I also observed an unusually high number of students struggling with mental health issues. This phenomenon connects with the research of Seto et al. (2023) regarding university students' mental health problems, and that is why I continue to study the topic of wellbeing among them. By this point, I had developed coping strategies for my panic attacks and anxieties. Feeling compelled to help my students, I decided to share the activities that had worked for me.

Stacey: By experiencing anxiety firsthand, you are well prepared to advocate for the learners' coping mechanisms with much compassion, empathy, and a greater understanding. That is a strength and a gift, Chiyuki. I am wondering, could you let me know how you facilitate wellbeing with your students?

Chiyuki: Thank you, Stacey, for identifying my strength! You are such a great motivator and always inspire me to come up with ideas. Perhaps finding positive characteristics for students can be another class activity to enhance their well-being. Anyhow, the first activity I introduced was called WOOP (wish, outcome, obstacle, plan) (Oettingen, n.d). WOOP is a science-based mental strategy that helps people identify and achieve their goals, set preferences, and change their habits. Setting manageable goals, such as walking more than 6,000 steps a day, gave me a sense of purpose and a daily focus, which significantly reduced my constant anxiety. I introduced WOOP at the beginning of the semester and asked students to come up with achievable goals and report their experiences with it at the end of the semester. Some of them reported achieving their goals, such as getting up early every day, gaining a sense of purpose, and increasing confidence, much like I did. It is too early to assess the activity's effectiveness definitively, but at the very least, it seems to be beneficial.

Another activity I incorporated into my classes is called the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding activity (Smith, 2018, April 10), which is a mindfulness practice that helps students stay in the present moment rather than worrying about the past or the future that can often lead to uncontrollable anxiety. The grounding techniques engage the five senses to bring attention to the present moment. Here is how the process works (Smith, 2018, April 10):

1. Look around and identify five different things you can see in your environment. It can be objects, colors, or anything in your surroundings.
2. Pay attention to your sense of touch. Identify four things you can touch and feel. It might be the texture of your clothing, the surface of a table, or the sensation of the ground beneath your feet.
3. Listen carefully and identify three different sounds you can hear at that moment. It could be the sound of traffic, birds singing, or the hum of a computer.
4. If possible, notice two distinct scents in your environment. It might be the scent of food, flowers, or anything else around you.
5. If you have access to something to taste, such as a piece of food or a drink, take a moment to taste it and focus on the flavor.

The "5-4-3-2-1" grounding activity helps you to be more aware of the present moment, which can be particularly useful when you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or disconnected. It encourages mindfulness and can help you regain a sense of calm and control. Particularly before

nerve-wracking activities such as presentations, I ask my students to close their eyes and do this exercise. Nobody complained about the activity, and some mentioned that it made them feel less nervous. Whether these activities are truly effective or not, I am committed to exploring more evidence-based practices to enhance and promote the well-being of my students. Overall, my students have inspired me to delve deeper into the study of well-being, both for teachers and learners. I believe that such activities and resources could also be beneficial in your self-access centre. What do you think, Stacey? Could you share what you do at the centre for your students?

Stacey: Before I discuss the English Resource Center (ERC), Chiyuki, the WOOP and the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding activities must be soothing and beneficial for your students and teachers or advisors, and will work well at the ERC, so I will try them with students as the need arises. It seems that you practiced with many students in classrooms with large student numbers if I am not mistaken. How lucky your students were to practice their sense of wellbeing in their classrooms due to your expertise as a wellness practitioner.

About our center, the ERC is designed as a group advising context with only three volunteer advisors open in the afternoons for students to gather and work on their English language skills and foster a sense of belonging in a social community. I have been incorporating reflective dialogues suggested by Kato and Mynard (2016) through a series of strategies that facilitate the learner to come up with reflections and solutions rather than being told by the advisor what to do. As the dialogues progress, the students' depth of reflection increases as they become more aware, go deeper, and then transform with more profound levels of reflection regarding their learning processes. The authors' three principles, which are techniques that can immediately benefit students, are that the advisors focus on the learner rather than themselves, keep an open mind through support and respecting the learner's choices, and take a neutral position by not judging and evaluating, but rather encourage the learners to be more aware, so they challenge their own preconceived notions through reflection (Kato & Mynard, 2016). I have tried to adhere to these general practices for many years before the publication, yet having a well-laid-out published advising roadmap serves as a significant reminder to me and provides greater access to the advisor and teacher communities.

Chiyuki: The reflective dialogue sounds excellent for facilitating a humanistic and learner-centred approach. It explains a lot about your mindful and kind speaking manner. Could you please tell us more about the practices you incorporate into your teaching based on the principles you mentioned?

Stacey: One practice that changed for me about learner development is the power of storytelling by using metaphors to bolster wellbeing by using imagination and empathy (Aoki, 2012; 2019), metaphor and empathy (Kato & Mynard, 2016), and the use of empathetic and mindful listening (Sheldon-Strong & Tassinari, 2022) to support the learners' psychological wellbeing in a creative and uplifting manner. By not ignoring the learners' puzzles at hand, instead exploring the learner's views and expectations without pressure through imaginative play, I can revisit what they are stressed out about together so they can come up with their own goals to redress those concerns. Aoki (2012; 2019) created an inspirational list of can-do statements for advisors to boost their confidence as practitioners by using imaginative statements that encourage empathy not only for the learners, but also for the advisors themselves that I will post in the ERC this autumn for the TAs and advisors. One example that I love that helps to keep the focus on the learner instead of myself is the statement, "I can imagine how this person would feel, think and act in this situation (rather than how I would act in this situation)" (Aoki, 2019, p. 156). I also love to read Naoko's (Aoki) statements as well for her wisdom that helps keep her memory alive as my mentor and friend, who, like Michele, passed away too young. I can actually hear her distinct voice and see her smile as if we

are still communicating whenever I read her publications. Since I have not used the advisor can-do statements yet with others at our center, I will have to report the findings to you later, Chiyuki.

Similarly, Kato and Mynard (2016) advocated how the learner can create metaphors as a powerful visualization strategy that helps express feelings and thoughts in an alternate view with the support of the advisor (Kato & Mynard, 2016). For example, a learner at our center was frustrated with his motivation and lack of progress with his self-studies of English. When I encouraged him to describe his learning English through YouTube videos in a metaphor, he said, “Hmm, I’d say, sailing a boat without a map” (Vye, 2021, p. 111). We then could creatively refer to this roaming boat going here and there without much progress in the third person rather than focusing on the setbacks of the learner himself. Then, upon reflection, he set a study plan using specific videos and reading and listening techniques using closed captions with confidence that helped him navigate more clearly to improve his English for his own purposes and at his pace. Encouraging the ERC advisees to use metaphors to tell a story has been a joy to listen to and work with, as no two stories are the same, and the results lead to greater awareness through reflections to reach their own learning goals.

CONCLUSION

Chiyuki: Thank you so much for sharing the practice with a successful case. This is great advice for all of us to understand the power of storytelling and the importance of empathetic listening.

Through our dialogues for the plenary presentation, we have reached a consensus that establishing a community of students, by students, and for students would yield numerous benefits, including a sense of belonging, increased self-confidence, and resources for their overall well-being, haven’t we? I have learned a lot from you and am inspired to share my thoughts and experiences with fellow educators and educational institutions. Thank you so much, Stacey.

Stacey: Thank you for our ongoing dialogues at JALT workshops, through friendship and professional development, over so many years, Chiyuki. I have learned a lot from you too, so I feel inspired knowing that I have more tools to share with the learners in our center, in the classrooms, and with colleagues. Hopefully, the *Learning Learning* readers can explore and adapt some of our practices that work well for their students. I have learned a lot from your experience facilitating students’ goal-setting pursuits through WOOP and calming anxieties by focusing on the present. I also look forward to more dialogues with you soon and in many years to come.

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Stacey Vye is a professor and volunteer advisor at Saitama University. For over 20 years, she has been researching learner and teacher autonomy through the lenses of retrospection, narratives, self-efficacy, and reflective dialogues. And by focusing on the wellbeing of others and myself, my work is more meaningful and satisfying .

Chiyyuki Yanase is a lecturer at multiple universities in Tokyo. With over 30 years of experience in teaching English at various institutions, she holds an MSc in TESOL from Aston University. Her current research interests primarily revolve around the well-being of teachers and learners.

PanSIG Forum

Title - Learner involvement in developing learner-centred pedagogies and practice

Amelia Yarwood

LD SIG Programmes Coordinator

At the centre of every learning activity is the learner. During the LD SIG's PanSIG forum, we decided to keep this concept close to our hearts as we explored the potential benefits of learner involvement in the development of learner-centred pedagogies and practices. Practical, innovative and collaborative approaches to all areas of the teaching and learning experience were welcomed. In particular, we wanted to explore how we could better take into account the voices of learners and foster their capacity to craft their own future. The presentations covered a wider array of topics including, but not limited to, the co-construction of academic skills, materials and resources, understanding the experience of learners when instructors get involved in group work and supporting student-run workshops.

As a first-time facilitator, the experience was made just a little more challenging by circumstances that made attending PanSIG in-person impossible. Thankfully, the LD SIG community is full to the brim with thoughtful, motivated individuals who happily volunteer their time and energy to support each other. A special thanks to Robert Moreau and Nicolas Emerson for stepping up as the on-site support team - the smooth running of the forum was ensured because of your enthusiasm. I would also like to thank the nine presenters for joining our pre-PanSIG feedback sessions and sharing thoughts, files and comments on the Padlet page. It was great to see so much interaction between presenters.

Attending PanSIG in-person wasn't feasible, but with Zoom I could emcee to a degree. From my screen I watched as audience members and presenters discussed, enthused and congratulated

each other on actions taken to bring learners to the foreground of learning. Using mentimeter, we captured a snapshot of how the audience members felt about the presentations:



Audience members also shared the following reflections and comments:

As always, very inspiring to hear stories from practitioners brave enough to trust their students and experiment and explore.

I've got ideas to take back to class and try.

I love how poster presentations are really dialogues about a poster - a two-way conversation.

Great to meet up with so many passionate colleagues.

Emily Choong's interactive presentation was fun and stimulating. Very empathetic towards students and solutions based.

I saw three presentations. The common theme was a focus on a project based learning integrating CLIL. There was a lot of talk about integrating AI tools into LD. Much food for thought!

Stacy Vye's ERC and learner ownership poster session was informative and inspiring. Looking forward to seeing how your project develops!

Really enjoyed the forum with every poster and presenter engaging and having great discussions with attendees (and other presenters!) - welcome to self-access posters too! - Thank you one and all.

It's inspiring to see that others are doing similar things in their classes. Also reassuring that I'm on the right track and it's nice to share with like-minded educators.

Jenny's learner-centred pedagogy for DEI related to ecotourism encouraged students to own their success of their eco presentations and English agency.

Learner Development SIG aims to be a lively, dynamic community of learners and teachers from all teaching contexts who share an interest in exploring learner autonomy and development through practice, research and dialogue. This year's LD SIG forum at PanSIG 2023 achieved those aims while inspiring all. Congratulations everyone.

PanSIG 2023, LD SIG Forum presenters and abstracts

Learner-generated materials for English communication

Ivan Lombardi, University of Fukui

Keywords: Exploratory practice, communicative English, reflective evaluation of materials

From April 2023, I will teach an advanced English communication course for first-year university students who plan to study abroad in the anglosphere during their undergraduate years. The course meets twice a week for a total of 30 times (90 hours). It will follow an exploratory practice approach in which students work in small groups to create, test, and revise learning materials based on the actual communicative situations they experience as freshmen (meeting other students, registering for courses, finding accommodation, interacting with the instructors, and other themes chosen by the students). The goal of the course is for learners to reflect on their daily communicative events and become able to recreate them in English.

Instructor's involvement or interference in a learner-centred practice

Mizuka Tsukamoto, Ritsumeikan University

Keywords: Group work, online, student-teacher dynamics

This is an ongoing study on encouraging students to take ownership over learning through working in groups. The attempts have encountered various challenges but with some successful aspects. Through the process, improvements have been made to improve the learning experience for both the students and instructor. The poster describes how the group work took place in an online environment, the successes and the challenges that the instructor faced due to her involvement or lack of involvement in the process. Discussion will extend to what measures could be taken for improvement.

Applying learner-centred pedagogies to bring DEI content and issues of ethical travel into an “English for Tourism” course

Jennifer (Jenny) Morgan, Sophia University, CLER

Keywords: DEI, experience sharing, modified materials, travel and tourism

In designing content and materials for a university “English for Tourism” elective course, the presenter wanted to expand on the typical situational roleplays in many “Travel English” textbooks (e.g. How to greet foreign travelers at the hotel) and bring in awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and an ethical traveler's mindset from the course outset. The presenter will share materials and activities that encourage learners to draw on their own rich experiences of diversity and interests in travel and tourism, and co-create knowledge with their peers through roleplays, discussion, research and presentations. While developing language skills and expanding their content knowledge, students take ownership of their learning and develop a critical understanding of important related issues including ethical travel, DEI, and sustainable tourism in today's globalized world.

Preparing for PBL in a First-Year University Classroom

Robert Moreau, Meiji University

Keywords: PBL, global issues, reflection on learner-centred teaching practices

Project-based learning (PBL) can be an effective way to create student-centered learning opportunities. Through the completion of projects, students can not only develop their communication skills in the target language, but also grow as autonomous learners through the choices they make involving the researching, gathering, and organizing of information. This presentation explores the initial stages of the introduction of PBL into a first-year university, global issues classroom using a five-stage framework proposed by Stoller and Myers (2020). During this poster session audience discussion will be encouraged. It is hoped that through the sharing of ideas and experiences using PBL, teachers will be able to consider new ideas for facilitating learner development in their classes.

Co-Constructing Academic Literacy with Multimodal Conversations

Ellen Head, Miyazaki International College

Keywords: Academic literacy, social-constructive approach, skill development

Academic Literacy is particularly challenging when first year students enter college with a level around CEFR A1 or 2, and have to participate in CLIL or EMI courses. In this poster presentation, we take a look at how a social-constructive approach was used in order to help students develop their writing personas and schemas. Lea and Street (2006) point out that academic literacy is not simply a matter of written products, but entails a complex of abilities and skills. In our course, the textbook *Q Skills for Success* (Lynne, 2019) provided the main focus. Students were challenged by the level of critical thinking demanded by the book, as they did not assume that English classes would require it. In addition, it was very attractive for them to use digital translation as an alternative to using a dictionary, and they sometimes translated chunks of text. How could the students develop the skills of writing and have confidence in their ability while using these resources? It was vital to create a conversation spanning various genres including writing and speaking, formal and informal, digital and non-digital, L1 and L2, in order to authenticate the students' writing. The poster will use data from student's learning journals, feedback questionnaires and paragraphs to address the development of academic literacy in the first year of their course.

Creative Online Elements for Learner Ownership are Encouraged During Face-to-Face Learning

Stacey Vye, Saitama University

Keywords: SALC, advising, autonomy-supportive online strategies

This poster session provides several examples of supportive behaviors that facilitate greater learner ownership and engagement during remote learning at a university self-access learning center (SALC). The learners' preferences for attending the SALC for group advising were analyzed before, during remote learning online, and afterward when the center resumed face-to-face and online hybrid sessions. Additionally, the advisors participated in focus group sessions for the same duration. The focus group identified valuable elements that increased learner ownership during online advising because learner engagement strengthened from effective personalization in a creative digital venue associated with remote learning. As a result, the learner autonomy-supportive online strategies are encouraged in a hybrid environment for promoting learner ownership, as detailed in the LD-SIG Forum.

Understanding students' English speaking anxiety in face-to-face and online contexts

Emily Choong, Utsunomiya University

Keywords: Foreign language classroom anxiety, low-anxiety classrooms

Language teachers need to be aware of their students' worries about learning English so that the classroom can be a safe place for them. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) has been widely used to measure language anxiety. This presentation talks about how the instrument was updated to reflect the focus on speaking skills and the changes in English learning environments due to the pandemic. FLCAS was adapted to address English speaking anxiety in Japanese EFL undergraduates in face-to-face and online learning contexts. The presenter will discuss the cultural appropriateness and content validity of the instrument. This study hopes to inform language teachers on how to tackle psychological aspects of language learning to create low-anxiety classrooms in the future.

Supporting student-run SALC Workshops

Katherine Thornton, Otemon Gakuin University

Keywords: SALC, learner-led events, student voices

English Cafe at Otemon (E-CO), Otemon Gakuin University's self-access centre, has always had an active student volunteer group which supports our activities. In recent years, in addition to working at the counter and organising seasonal events, students have started to plan and implement their own workshops. Topics include: study abroad experiences, Chinese language and culture, and UK culture. In this poster presentation I will explain how we have helped students to develop the skills to run these workshops successfully, and what challenges we have encountered in the process. Voices from the students themselves will be highlighted to show how they have gained from these experiences.

Learning form the learners: Keeping up to date with emerging resources for language learning beyond the classroom

Jon Rowberry, Sojo University

Keywords: Reflective evaluation of resources, student voices, interactive

With the proliferation of apps and online tools for language learning it is increasingly important that learners themselves play an active role in identifying resources rather than relying on teachers and learning advisors for guidance. This interactive poster will present an ongoing project in which students make short, slide show videos to introduce their preferred resources for language learning and explain how they use them. The videos are then made available to peers and future cohorts of learners. The outcome of the project is that both learners' and instructors' knowledge of popular and emerging resources for language learning is constantly updated. Participants will be able to view some example videos and learn how the project was set up and administered.