

## LDSIG Get Togethers Plan for the Year

The Learner Development hosts get-togethers throughout the year. All members are welcome to share and discuss their learning, teaching, and researching practices and interests with learner development in pairs and small groups. Each get-together typically starts with a catching-up session where members get to reconnect and share the puzzles or research they are working on. Following this, one or two members will give a mini-presentation, which we will all use as a focus point for the discussions that follow.

The first get-together of the 2024 year was on March 24th, attended by four people. For the spring semester term, we have scheduled meetings on April 21st, May 12th, & June 23rd. We will send out reminders two weeks before, which will include a sign-form, further details, and the meeting link. There will also be get-togethers in the autumn semester; we will let you know as soon as we have finalised the dates.



## LD-SIG Forum: *Stories of Learning, Learning from Stories*

Amelia Yarwood, LD-SIG Programmes coordinator

The power of stories to transform how we view learner development is the theme of this year's LD-SIG forum at PanSIG. Held at Fukui University of Technology, our forum will host four speakers:

1. **Tomoko Hashimoto** from Tokyo Future University will share an inspiring story of a Japanese mother who pursued a postgraduate degree in English Education while working part-time as a teacher. She will explore how societal norms and expectations for working mothers pose challenges when it comes to lifelong learning. Inspiring and thought-provoking, this story is an emotional rollercoaster.
2. Stories of diversity and minorities within Japan are at the centre of **Mike Nix's** presentation. His students from Chuo University listen and learn from the stories of those within these diverse communities to understand notions of domination and otherness, and to sit with the complexity of real, lived experiences. At the heart of this presentation is connection, empathy and learning to trust others to find the solutions they know are best for themselves.
3. **Anita Aden** from Mukogawa Women's University continues the focus on the classroom, in particular, the conditions of gaining and demonstrating knowledge. She explores phases of the learning cycle and how each phase relates to perspective development for teachers and students. Discussions in this presentation are the foundations upon which academic and personal growth takes place.
4. From Meiji University, **Robert Moreau** brings us a personal narrative as a teacher who uses Project-Based Learning (PBL) to engage his students in an exploration of learner autonomy. Part personal reflection, part idea generation, this presentation invites attendees to share their own reasons behind the pedagogical choices they make in the language classroom.

Join us at the LD-SIG forum to (co-)construct stories of learning for our own growth, the development of our learning communities and for the benefit of all.

**LD-SIG forum details:** The LD-SIG forum at JALT PanSIG 2024 Conference will take place on either Saturday 25th or Sunday 26th of May, 2024 at Fukui University of Technology (福井工業大学) in Fukui. The format is a 60-minute poster presentation.



## *LD-SIG Forum: AI: Benefits, Challenges, and Issues for Learner Development*

**Blair Barr**, LD-SIG Programmes coordinator

**When/Where:** May 17th to May 19th, 2024, at Meijo University Nagoya Dome Campus as part of the JALTCALL 2024 conference: <https://jaltcall.org/jaltcall-2024/>

This forum will examine how advancements in artificial intelligence and new technologies can aid or impede learner development.

**Mart Christine Johnston** will explore how Japanese university students can improve their writing skills by using AI (such as ChatGPT) with a single prompt. The students in the study wrote a series of passages on pen and paper, in class over a number of weeks. They then corrected their spelling and grammar using a simple AI prompt before making notes of their most obvious/common errors.

**Blair Barr** will focus on how he has developed the grading schemes of writing assignments to keep students focused on their abilities to produce English in presentations. At the end, a discussion will be opened to the audience to explore how our approaches to evaluating writing have evolved with the rapid development of AI tools such as ChatGPT.

**James Underwood** will examine how guidelines relating to the use of AI can be negotiated between students and teachers to ensure that AI tools promote, rather than detract from, language learning and enable learners to foster a sense of independence and autonomy. With these guidelines, it is hoped his students will take an informed approach to using AI tools and use them effectively to reach the goals described in their learning plans. At the end of these presentations, the audience will be invited to reflect on and share their perspectives on using AI tools to support language learning with a focus on learner development.

Join us at the LD SIG forum to investigate together how advancements in artificial intelligence and new technologies can aid or impede learner development.

# The Learner Development Journal Issue 8: Exploring Grassroots, Innovative, and Creative Approaches to Language Learning Materials Development Through Inclusive Practitioner-Research

**Editors: Anna Costantino, Assia Slimani-Rolls, and Nour Bouacha**

*The theme of Issue 8 of the Learner Development Journal is “Exploring Grassroots, Innovative, and Creative Approaches to Language Learning Materials Development Through Inclusive Practitioner-Research”. Here, the three editors provide an update on progress and a taster of what we can expect to read about when the issue comes out later this year.*

Issue 8 of *The Learner Development Journal* features five exploratory and practice-based inquiries along with two narrative reviews that explore creative and learner-based approaches to language materials development. Almost all contributors have submitted their third drafts, which are undergoing another round of reviews.

The five practice-based contributions share a common concern with designing and implementing learning materials that recognise multilingual identities in complex learning environments. Three studies challenge monolingual biases and native-speakerism by identifying and harnessing classroom translanguaging practices.

Through ethnographic reflexivity, one of the inquiries looks at how an "only-English" traditional communicative activity affected multilingual learners' sentiment in a secondary classroom in Berlin. Two other contributions investigate the potential of translanguaging practices for learner development in Japan. One explores translanguaging practices in art-based pedagogy in higher education contexts through a workshop series where performance poetry was used to bring about students' full linguistic repertoires. The other reflects on how translanguaging practices helped them to increase student participation in learning activities in an all-girls secondary English conversation course.

In the fourth practice-based contribution, the writer offers insights into the complexity of multimedia environments while designing and implementing language learning projects for a CLIL course about manga at a Japanese university. The action research study reveals the endeavour and struggles in designing and implementing multimodal materials based on the assumption that all language learners have multimodal competencies.

The fifth and final contribution is an exploratory practice-framed study. The writers engage in an autoethnography revolving around the idea that learning materials can be deployed as investigative tools when understood as PEPAs (Potentially Exploitable Pedagogic Materials). They aim to dialogically understand how one English language teacher, supported by her mentors and co-authors, engages in creating materials with a desire to expand and adapt the lessons with her students while exploring the life of the classroom.

In the two narrative reviews based on practical experience, the authors aim to understand two areas of inquiry related to developing teaching materials: (1) how to be creative in designing materials and (2) how to mentor language teachers in a community of practice where materials are used for investigation. These reviews can benefit practitioner researchers and mentors as they provide additional insights into the creative and developmental scope of pedagogic materials.

After completing the third round of review, we will continue to work with the writers towards their finalised drafts across spring and summer. We foresee publication in autumn.

We hope readers will appreciate the classroom instances experienced and narrated by the contributors and their endeavour to understand them through practitioner research.

## The Learner Development Journal Issue 9: Engaging With and Exploring Autonomy, Creativity, and Well-Being for Learner Development

**Editors: Stacey Vye, Robert Moreau, Amelia Yarwood, and Ivan Lombardi**

We, the editors for *Learner Development Journal 9* (LDJ9), share a mutual interest in autonomy, creativity, and well-being as language teacher-researchers. For the nascent issue of the journal, we are ecstatic to have gathered a healthy number of proposals from practitioners worldwide who are eager to discuss reflective questions and puzzles related to exploring the learner development of learners and teachers.

We started an inquisitive process prior to the LDJ9 call for proposal submissions that closed this past February 2024 and posed the following questions:

- What puzzles do you have about developing the interconnections between learner autonomy, creativity, and well-being?
- How might you bring those pieces together in engaging projects and understand them in new ways?
- What are your experiences as practitioners in such engagements with your learners?
- How do we/you/our learners break through into new practices, spaces, and ways of creative participation in learning?
- What challenges and questions come up for you and your learners in these processes of change in learner development?
- What stories of practice would you and/or your learners like to share and develop to foster autonomy, creativity, and well-being for learner development?

At the time of writing, the submitted proposals had been reviewed and the invitations to contribute were sent. Our LDJ9 contributors hail from diverse areas of language education, both internationally and from Japan, focusing on practitioners' and students' stories and reflections. At present, we are facilitating response communities based around common themes to support the contributors. Coordinating online response communities across time zones will be challenging, but by exploring practice-related stories of autonomy, creativity, and well-being through inquiry, reflection, and research, everyone involved in LDJ9 will grow as writers, educators, and editors from now until our expected publish date in the autumn of 2025.