Learner Development Across Borders: Reports From the LD SIG Forum

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With the theme of the JALT2014 International Conference being *Conversations Across Borders*, the Learner Development SIG Forum consisted of 19 interactive presentations, given by Learner Development SIG members, that focused on learner development across three different borders: international borders, in which presenters shared their experiences of promoting learner development in different cultural contexts; interdisciplinary borders, in which presenters discussed how concepts outside the field of learner development, or even ELT, can be used to complement and enhance concepts in learner development; and contextual borders, in which presenters discussed the various challenges and considerations of implementing learner development in different educational contexts. This paper consists of reports on 13 of these presentations, including reflections from the discussions the presenters had with participants in the Forum. For more information on Learner Development SIG activities and publications, please visit: ld-sig.org

「境界線を越えた会話」をJALT2014のテーマとし、学習者ディベロップメント（LD）研究部会フォーラムでは、19ものインタラクティブなプレゼンテーションが研究部会会員によって発表された。これらの発表は3つの異なる境界線を越えLDを考えることに焦点を当てていた。まず一つ目の境界線は国境だ。発表者は、異なった文化的背景でLDを促した経験を語った。2つ目の境界線は異なった学問分野にまたがる境界線だ。ここでは、LDの分野、更にはＥＬＴの分野以外での発想や概念が、LDの概念を補い、発展させるためにどのように活用できるかを議論した。最後の境界線は環境的な境界線だ。ここでは、異なった教育環境でLDを実施する際の課題や考慮すべき点が議論された。この論文では、プレゼンテーション参加者とのディスカッションの振り返りを含んだ、13のプレゼンテーション報告を行う。LD研究部会の活動や出版物についての詳細はld-sig.orgへお越しください。

Pedagogy in Translation: Bringing Learner Development From Across Borders Into Japan

Amanda Chin & Brandon Narasaki

Although there are many ideas and activities for promoting learner development in our classrooms, much of the current research separates these activities into different contexts. Some promote activities based on physical locations (e.g., ESL vs. EFL), but other activities are designed specifically for skills, such as writing or speaking. Although many activities are developed for a specific skill or course, contextual borders are not so rigid. We shared how we have translated activities from contexts we have previously taught in, such as the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM), the Hawaii English Language Program (HELP), and Ubon Ratchathani University (UBU), Thailand, into the context we were currently teaching in, Rikkyo University (RU), Japan. Through interactive discussions with our audience, we examined several areas of learner development, two of which will be discussed.

One large area of focus was the idea of *self-assessment*. Although many students tend to rely on the teacher to be the ultimate authority on language, self-assessment puts more responsibility into the students' hands for correcting their own mistakes. One valuable study exploring self-assessment came from Yang (2003), who integrated reflective portfolios into a language course for EFL college students. This was an effective assignment that we adapted for a composition course at UHM. Students used reflective portfolios to make a collection of their best writing and reflect upon the progress they had made throughout the class.

We expanded on this by showing how self-assessment can be used in speaking classes as well. In our discussion classes at RU, we have adapted this activity in order to help students prepare for group discussion tests, conducted with no instructor interference. In review lessons, we provide self-check lists for the use of the functional language that is graded in their discussion tests, such as asking for

examples (Can you give me an example?), and agreeing/disagreeing (I totally agree/I'm sorry, but I disagree). After their self-assessment, students then create goals to improve their performance and are responsible for achieving these goals in their next discussion. By placing the onus on the students to check themselves, we find that they become much more actively engaged in their own practice.

One concern that emerged during the discussion was about how providing explicit grading criteria could be too similar to "teaching to the test." However, one alternative discussed was having classes, rather than the instructor, construct their own self-assessment criteria. This would encourage learners to review, activate, and use their own knowledge to assess themselves.

Another area of focus was the idea of *topic choice*. We defined this term as the amount of freedom given to students in deciding their own topics for class assignments. Topic choice can be used in any skill area, but our own examples came mostly from individual student presentations at UBU, writing assignments at UHM, and reading activities at HELP. It is highly likely that the topics students choose are ones they consider to be valuable and relevant in their own lives and directly connected to their learning needs. One reading activity using topic choice that has been effective both inside and outside of Japan is the *literature circle* (Hsu, 2004). This is an activity we used to encourage learner development by having students lead small group discussions on short readings of their own interest. The *leader* must prepare a copy of the reading, select important or difficult vocabulary to explain, and develop both comprehension and discussion questions to help the group engage with the reading. The leader controls the progress of his or her own group, while the instructor takes a more hands-off approach by simply monitoring progress.

At RU, topics are predetermined through a unified textbook, so topic choice is more limited than the literature circles at HELP. However, students still have the freedom to develop their own ideas under these predetermined topics, as they are responsible for navigating through any number of sub-topics during their group

discussions. For example, when discussing the topic of *Celebrities*, students might discuss various sub-topics such as good role models, bad role-models, ways to become a celebrity, and so on. By allowing students to select their own topics of interest, teachers can encourage a sense of responsibility, empowerment, and hopefully motivation in students when researching and learning more about their ideas.

Several audience members commented on the prevailing belief of many programs in Japan that learners are unable or unwilling to choose their own topics for assignments. However, it was encouraging to hear examples from participants of the varying degrees of freedom in allowing learners to choose topics and that everyone agreed their learners were perfectly capable of choosing interesting and engaging topics to study. Perhaps in the future, more programs will allow for autonomous learning in language classes.

Overall, we felt that our forum experience produced a lot of great dialogue for each of our topics. While interacting with other professionals in the forum, it was clear that many others naturally adapted learner development tools and methods into not just one context, but into many. This affirms our own experiences and beliefs that contextual borders are not so absolute, teaching is not a static practice, and there are a multitude of avenues towards successful learner development.

Orienting Students to Learning
Hana Craig & Jenny Morgan

First-year university students have crossed a border from a high school language learning environment to a university classroom context. These students need to adjust to language classes that possibly encompass more learner centered and collaborative styles of learning and teaching, have a stronger focus on communicative activities, and have higher demands on learners to produce language spontaneously. Moreover, learners will experience working with

unfamiliar classmates and different intercultural behaviors from non-Japanese teachers, as well as possible confusion caused by a new set of unfamiliar assessment requirements. The various differences in the learning contexts can be barriers to effective learning and teaching unless teachers transparently guide and equip their students to adapt to this new environment.

However, university language teachers often rush into content teaching at the beginning of a course without properly inducting students to their new learning community and environment. We believe that the time spent on learner orientation at the start of the course can be regarded as more important than any other classroom activity as it holds many long-term benefits. This report outlines a number of practical ways with which teachers can successfully induct their students into any language course.

It is important that students feel comfortable, capable, and in control of their learning in order to do well (McAlpine, 2009). Thus, at our two universities we conduct orientations for all our classes (communication English and discussion skills classes as well as content-based research courses). These orientations are designed to be welcoming, motivating, interactive, and informative. Using student-centered activities from the start of the course reinforces the expectation that student interaction is central to their learning success. Thus, teacher-centered, lecture-style ways of informing students about the course are avoided, and information is presented using task-based and communicative approaches. This helps students get used to these learning approaches from the very beginning of the course.

In addition to feeling comfortable and getting used to a more interactive classroom atmosphere, it is important that students start to develop the habits that will make them successful not only in their language course, but also in their other courses and future careers. Students who are organized and habitual in their learning, proactive in seeking help, and reflective of their individual strengths and weaknesses are the most successful (Zimmerman, 2001). To

support these behaviors, we cover the key information and study skills required by our students in our orientations.

We orient learners to the class and teacher by using low-stress communicative tasks and games, such as icebreakers (both language- and nonlanguage-based to reduce cognitive effort and increase fun in the first few classes), name learning activities (production of name cards, information exchange activities, and sharing of individual and class photos), and a teacher quiz (a fun multiple-choice quiz about the teacher that students answer collaboratively in pairs or groups). These have all been received favorably by our students and set the tone for the rest of the course.

Students learn about the details of the course via a syllabus quiz. They then experience what it means to learn language proactively through the practice of classroom English activities (survival English phrases to help students "stay in English"), communicative English activities (natural English phrases, including openers, closers, and reactions, which support the creation of real conversations in English), and a homework policy that students sign to indicate their understanding and agreement of their homework requirements.

Students find out about the wider learning context of the university through a tailor-made orientation video, a physical campus tour or scavenger hunt, and an interactive orientation to online learning tools. The use of worksheets to support these media and tasks also leave the students with a record of information that they can refer to at later stages of the course.

Finally, students practice study skills they need to succeed by completing weekly schedule and time management activities, goal-setting activities, and self-assessment and monitoring activities, and by signing a learning contract.

Since we began focusing on orientation activities at the start of a new semester, we have observed a number of positive effects on our students. First, we have noticed more self-regulated learning behavior, such as students referring back to their worksheets or reminding each other of course information, rather than asking the

teacher. Second, by encouraging natural English phrases, we now have students spontaneously saying "bye for now/catch you later" at the end of classes, and have observed that they are actively trying to use more colloquial phrases and verbal reactions to expand their conversations with each other. In addition, the homework policy and learning contract were negotiated and written up with the students, so we have managed to avoid problems arising out of ambiguity, and we are able to gently refer students back to these guidelines if individuals are missing homework or assignment deadlines. Furthermore, the same orientation is run by all teachers at our universities (with opportunities for individual teacher adjustments), which means that all students and teachers are on the same page. This results in a greater sense of fairness regarding learner expectations from a community of practice, as well as a shared feeling of "we're all in this together." Some students have also expressed that they felt more confident about their English classes and progress because they could keep their own records more easily. The results we have achieved in our classes strongly indicate that class cohesion, student motivation and participation, and learner autonomy can be better fostered by taking the time to do orientation activities, as outlined above, before moving into specific lesson content.

The JALT Learner Development Forum was a very supportive, efficient, and stimulating way to share our methodology and materials with our peers and gather new ideas and resources from other presenters about how to more effectively work with students so they become confident language learners in a new environment. In particular, one presenter shared his students' campus newspaper and the task cycle, which exemplified a student-generated language project that empowered multi-level learners to engage with content and language. In the future, we also plan to develop our orientation tasks, based on peer and student feedback, in a continual cycle of reflection and adjustment.

Skills Across Borders: Using Critical Media Literacy Tools to Facilitate Learner Development

Carey Finn

Many EFL instructors enter the profession after working in a different field, such as biology, journalism, or marketing. Although at first glance it may seem illogical or implausible to transfer the skills and experience gained from these fields into an EFL context, utilizing skills across disciplinary borders may serve to facilitate learner development.

Coming from a background in media theory and research, I constantly explore classroom activities that effectively combine my media and EFL knowledge. One possible way to do this is by using *textual analysis* skills that promote critical thinking in the language classroom. Textual analysis here refers to the in-depth examination of a text, which can, in rough terms, be any instance of communication—oral, written, or visual, such as a speech, a newspaper article, a photograph, or a video. This kind of analysis can be facilitated through the introduction of basic *critical media literacy* skills into lessons. Critical media literacy can be defined rudimentarily as the ability to evaluate media texts with a focus on identifying and critiquing hegemonic representations of gender, race, class, and sexuality (Kellner & Share, 2007).

In its facilitation of critical thinking, critical media literacy can be a tool in the development of learner autonomy, in which learners are empowered to take charge of their learning inside and outside of the classroom, engaging with and assessing texts both English and otherwise. With the above in mind, I designed a short activity focused around several photographs that I thought was well suited to the topic of gender in the curriculum of an English discussion course taught at Rikkyo University.

Gender is a potentially problematic yet common theme in EFL texts. Although textbooks seem to be improving in their general

representation of men and women (Lowe, 2013), in my experience, many texts still often reflect heteronormative ideologies and stereotypes that may perpetuate prejudice and social inequality. Examples of these stereotypes include the representation of families as exclusively heterosexual and nuclear and the gender binary division of interests and household labor.

This activity utilized eye-catching portraits ("Leland Bobbé, Half-Drag," 2013) of drag queens from New York. Half of each person's face featured them in their wigs and make-up and presented as female, while the other half was plain and male presenting. I found the images could be used in an engaging and assumption-busting warm-up for discussions (or other classroom activities) on gender issues.

The beta version of my activity involved showing the male-presenting side of the face to one half of the class, and the female-presenting side of the face to the other half. The idea was to have the students work in pairs or small groups for 2-3 minutes to create a narrative about the person in their half of the photograph based on basic prompts, like family, personality, hobbies, and career. Then, they would pair up with those from the other side, with the photos concealed, and briefly fill their partners in on the person in their photo. The photos would then be revealed in their entirety, and the students would realize that they had been talking about the same person. The instructor could encourage the students to reflect on their assumptions, having them talk about how their stories might have changed had they known the person's gender, and why determining someone's gender is considered to be of such fundamental importance.

When trialing this activity, I realized that students tended to be highly suspicious about the gender of the people in the photos, quickly picking up that they were drag queens. An alternative way of handling this activity, which I found to be much more successful, was to display only the male-presenting half of the face to the entire class and have the students, in small groups, create narratives, using the same prompts. The students' reactions to the activity were largely positive; they seemed to enjoy concocting narratives and almost always, as a starting point, tried to determine the gender of the person—probably because the face could be considered to be androgynous. As a side observation, I noted that when I displayed a black male-presenting face, the students' narratives seemed to reflect racial stereotypes; they tended to consider the person to be poor, African, have a large family, and be either a prisoner or a track and field athlete. The activity could thus also be used as a warmer for discussions or other classroom exercises on racism, for example, with groups creating and then comparing narratives about photos depicting black and white people doing the same activity or in the same pose.

On presenting this activity at the Learner Development SIG Forum, I received positive feedback from other EFL instructors, who expressed how difficult it can be to engage students in the topic of gender, as well as how tricky it can seem to integrate critical thinking skills effectively in lessons where time is already tight. The overall response was that this activity could be a creative, quick, and fun exercise that could be adjusted for various levels and topics. This feedback was encouraging, and I hope to develop further activities in the same vein.

For example, textual analysis might be used to have students consider magazine covers or advertisements, comparatively or as individual texts, for topics like racism and gender, as well as things like beauty, class, power, and consumerism. The students could be guided to examine what is included and excluded, such as angles, lighting, positions, and so on. Introducing critical media literacy tools can be a powerful, quick, and easy way of identifying and challenging assumptions and discrimination.

The ultimate goal is for students to use these tools autonomously by actively analyzing texts inside and outside the classroom on their own. Activities such as the one detailed here may help to promote more thorough assessment skills, equipping students for deeper

communicative engagement with authentic English texts, thereby facilitating greater learner development.

Integrating Journalism Into the Language Classroom

Chris Fitzgerald

Because the organizers of this year's Learner Development Forum encouraged participants to present about other disciplines used in ELT, I chose to present about a project in which students at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies took on the role of journalists. The two advanced classes that completed this project were made up of students ranging from proficient to almost fluent in English. I wanted to introduce a project that would be challenging for all students and fit in with the theme of the textbook unit we were covering about *News*, so I chose to have the students create a college newspaper called *The Gaidai Times.*

Having no previous knowledge of how to create such a publication, I did some research about methods of writing journalistic articles and found the *inverted pyramid model* presented by Edwin L. Shuman (1903) in his book *Practical Journalism* (p. 109). This model has been used for more than a century to teach journalism students how to prioritize and structure an article (Scanlan, 2014). It takes the shape of an upside-down triangle with different levels symbolizing the various sections of an article. The widest part at the top represents the most substantial, interesting, and important information the writer wants to convey, illustrating that this kind of material should head the article, and the lower portion of the triangle illustrates that other material should follow in order of diminishing importance. Use of this format means that the reader can stop reading the article at any point and still understand what it is about.

To introduce this concept to my students, I had them analyze some English language newspapers and identify the inverted pyramid model in real articles. After this, they began work on their own articles. I broke the classes up into pairs or groups of three and had them brainstorm ideas for newspaper articles for a college newspaper with topics relating to the university or life in Kyoto. I encouraged them to think about demographic issues, like the age and gender of their audience, which would consist of students and staff of the university. They were also required to interview at least one person connected to their article—such as a cafeteria employee if they wanted to do an article about a university cafeteria—and submit one original image to be printed with their article. As an incentive, I told the classes that the best article would get on the front page.

After finalizing their topics, which included topics ranging from "An Interview with a Maiko" to "Campus Festivals," students organized their articles in blank inverted pyramid templates with the *five Ws: who, what, where, when* and *why* in the top level of the pyramid, down to the least important details like physical descriptions at the bottom. One good example was the article on the campus festivals. The students first introduced the two university festivals, giving important information about when they were held, who could take part, and what activities were included. The article then provided quotes from an interview with one of the festival organizers and finished with details about how to sign up to be volunteer staff for the festivals (see Appendix A for the inverted pyramid of this article). Over the following three weeks, students worked on their articles outside of class, and I checked in on them for some time in each class to check progress. I also had students share their articles with other groups and peer-edit each other's work on a weekly basis as their articles were developing, giving feedback on all aspects of their articles, including grammar, content, layout, and attention to the inverted pyramid model.

Finally, I compiled and did some final grammatical tweaking of the articles and created the final product, which I was able to share at the forum. This final part was quite a time-consuming task,

which involved me organizing the articles in a presentable way using basic word processing software. I then printed it off and put it together for reading. In the future, I will consider including students in this part of the process also to give them a final say in the layout of the paper. The underlying goal of this project was to get students interested in engaging with English news, which I returned to frequently throughout the academic year. Students were happy to see their names on their articles and read other articles, as well as to see their work distributed within the university by other teachers and in the university Self Access Center.

However, I still felt that something more was needed at the end of the project to justify the hard work that students had put into it. They had produced an impressive publication in a foreign language, yet it seemed anticlimactic to have no concrete final activity to conclude the project. Knowing that the forum would be a perfect place to air this issue and get some meaningful feedback, I posed the problem to those who came to my presentation and got some valuable ideas. There was an attendee who had also done a similar project and had the same problem of not knowing exactly what to do with the product after the students had created it. One great idea that I will consider for the future was to put the articles online so that students can edit their articles themselves; these articles could also serve as a model to help future students develop their own articles. Other ideas included developing a comprehension quiz that could let students engage more with the articles and creating audio versions of the articles that could be used to develop the project into a four-skills activity. With these ideas and others taken from the forum in my back pocket, I am starting a new semester with more confidence.

How Far is it Necessary to Adapt Speaking Activities for Different Levels?

Paul Garside & Paul Landicho

With the theme of this year's conference being *Conversations Across Borders*, we aimed to address the border between different levels of ability among students. There is a common perception that classes of different abilities require very different lessons and materials, as expectations of how long students can talk, and about what topics, varies greatly depending on level. However, in the discussion classes that we teach at Rikkyo University's English Discussion Center (EDC), this is not deemed to be necessary. Rather, by introducing a range of functions and communication skills, essentially the same lesson is taught to classes with widely differing levels of ability, from low-level classes of students with TOEIC scores below 250 points, to high-level classes of near-native level returnee students. This often comes as a surprise to newly recruited teachers and was the inspiration behind this presentation.

In the EDC, students work together in groups of three to five and use a variety of *functions* and *communication skills* to discuss a range of topics, from fashion to the death penalty, with their peers. It should be stressed that the term function is not used here in the traditional sense of accomplishing a narrow communicative objective, such as making a request or an offer, but rather as a means of encouraging the speaker to generate content. In the EDC context, therefore, functions consist of things like giving (or asking for) opinions, reasons, or examples. However, such functions only serve to provide the students with a framework for their discussion; it remains the student's responsibility to provide the actual content. As well as functions, we also introduce communication skills. These are basic strategies that can be utilized by listeners as well as speakers in order to enable a discussion to flow smoothly and naturally. They include such things as using reactions while listening, indicating agreement or disagreement with the previous speaker's idea,

asking for clarification, and finishing a turn with a question in order to keep the discussion moving (Brown, 2007).

The key point is that these functions and communication skills facilitate the exchange of ideas and form the basic framework of any discussion, whether among language learners or native speakers of English. Therefore, by introducing various functions and communication skills, similar speaking activities can be applied equally to classes of very high, even returnee students, as well as to classes of very low-level students. Of course, the content supplied by classes of different ability levels will differ. However, we have often found that overall English ability is not necessarily the determining factor in the quality of their discussions, as low-level learners with a high willingness to communicate can fare just as well, if not better, than more reticent higher level learners.

In terms of adapting the lesson for the different levels, one thing we do is to give our lower level classes more basic function phrases, such as "I think. . ." for expressing an opinion. Intermediate classes are encouraged to use slightly higher level phrases, such as "In my opinion. . ." and advanced students are given complete freedom to generate their own function-marking phrases within the stated function category, in this case *opinions*. A couple of examples we have heard are "From my perspective. . ." and "The way I see it. . ." In this way, we can scaffold the same activities, such as group discussions or sharing ideas with a classmate, for different level classes.

From the teacher's perspective, another way that we adapt our classes is through feedback activities. While the students are conducting their discussions, the teacher's role is to monitor the students and take notes on the use (or nonuse) of the target functions and communication skills. These observations then form the basis for feedback given to the students after their discussion. Such feedback is often entirely teacher fronted for lower level classes, with the teacher giving advice on how the class as a whole can improve their performance. Higher level students, however, can be asked to discuss their own, or each other's, performance together.

For example, they can tell each other which functions or communication skills they were able to use and which they were not. They can then use this information to formulate their own targets for future discussions.

One feedback technique that applies to all levels is to have students undertake a short, formative exercise in order to practice one particular element that is in need of improvement. For example, if the teacher notices a lack of agreeing and disagreeing in their students' discussions, students could be told to give their opinion on a selected topic to a partner, who then has to agree or disagree with that comment. This ensures that all students have the experience of actually producing the target language, with the expectation that this will transfer over into future group discussions. Regardless of the style of feedback, the aim should be to assist the students to improve their performance in subsequent activities (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

During our presentation, we held an example group discussion, followed by an example of a formative feedback activity based on agreeing and disagreeing. We also had the opportunity to speak to, and hear from, many other participants. It was very interesting to hear about the teaching experiences of the people in our audience, all of whom had experience of teaching speaking activities, whether in a high school or university context. A common remark was that they had initially felt such unassisted discussion activities would be too challenging for their students, so it was particularly rewarding to hear some people say that they would like to try some form of the activities we demonstrated and discussed. We hope that many more people will also be encouraged to incorporate group discussions into their own particular teaching context.

Crossing the Line: Using Social Psychology and Marketing Concepts in Motivational Poster Design

Ian Hurrell

In the learner-centered classroom, teachers cannot rely so much on their authority to tell their students what to do. Rather, learner-centered teachers focus more on guiding their students to follow certain paths to improve their learning. The use of motivational posters is a simple and effective way of conveying important concepts, central to teaching programs, clearly and persuasively. Principals from social psychology research can be useful when creating these posters to make their message more persuasive. In addition, principles from marketing theory can also be useful when designing the posters to make them more attractive and useable in the classroom. In Table 1 are some key principles that should be considered when designing motivational posters for your classroom.

Table 1. Principles of Motivational Poster Design

Principles of persuasion (Social psychology)	Poster design (Marketing theory)
1. Encapsulate your core idea in a short, pithy way 2. Take into account the audience's past experience and behavior 3. Make your message achievable 4. Offer benefits or rewards 5. Repeat the message multiple times (Berkowitz, 2014)	1. Make your poster attractive 2. Keep text to a minimum 3. Provide a positive emotional value 4. Design in an easily useable size (Coleman, 2013)

In discussion classes at the English Discussion Centre (EDC) at Rikkyo University, instructors routinely use Paul Nation's (1989) *4-3-2* activity for building fluency. In this three-stage activity, students are divided into two groups. One group are listeners and the other speakers. In the first stage, the speakers talk continuously about a predetermined topic for 4 minutes with a listener in pairs (the listener's responsibility is simply to give positive reactions to the speaker's ideas and nothing more). In the second stage, the speakers change partners and repeat the same content from stage 1, but this time in 3 minutes. Then, in the final stage, they change partners again and repeat the same content in just 2 minutes. The key aspect of this activity is that learners should increase their rate of speech in each stage to build fluency. However, a common problem is that rather than increasing their rate of speech, many of my students would speak at the same rate and cut content to complete the task. Despite repeated instruction that they were supposed to speed up their rate of speech and repeat their ideas in full at each stage, this problem persisted. Therefore, to tackle this problem, the following poster (Figure 1) was designed using the principles from social psychology and marketing theory outlined above.
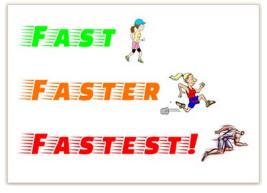

Figure 1. Poster designed for use with Paul Nation's 4-3-2 activity.

Utilizing the principles of persuasion from social psychology research, it was decided that the message "fast, faster, fastest" would succinctly encapsulate what the students have to do for the activity in a short message. Also, the adjective-comparative-superlative grammar point is very familiar to the students' past experience of learning English; this makes the message easy for the students to pick up quickly. When introducing the poster for the first time, I explain that the students simply have to speed-up between each stage, which gives them an achievable goal. I also explain that this activity will benefit the students by helping them to build their fluency, which will help to make their oral communication sound more natural. Finally, the message is repeated between each stage of the activity to give the learners maximum exposure.

With regard to applying the poster design principles from marketing theory mentioned above, I first searched for a font and pictures that would attractively present the short 3-word message of "fast, faster, fastest." This was done using http://www.1001fonts.com and Google Images, which are great, free-to-use resources for people who want to create their own posters. The pictures of the three people gradually running faster and faster, the speed themed font, and the green, amber, and red font colors were also intended to engender a positive emotional value of speed around the activity. Finally, the poster was color printed in A4 size and laminated for ease of use in the classroom.

After using this poster in my classes for a few weeks, I noticed several positive effects on my students. First, I observed that many students would approach the activity saying to themselves "fast, faster, fastest," indicating that the core message of increasing their rate of speech between stages was being transferred. Also, I was able to wave my poster to unobtrusively remind my students to speed up during the activity. When I did so, I would often observe a sudden upsurge in my students' rate of speech. I have found the use of this poster to be very useful in conveying the key concept of this activity to my students clearly and persuasively.

When introducing these ideas at the Learner Development SIG Forum, I noticed a few raised eyebrows when using words like "persuasion" and "marketing," as these are not words that are commonly heard in a language-learning context. However, after I explained how I used these concepts in my teaching context, many commented on how these principals might be applied to many other teaching situations. For example, one participant expressed concern that students are often afraid of making mistakes in their communication classes, which often leads to communication breakdown, so we discussed how a poster might be designed to encourage students to ask for help from their peers when they encounter communication problems. After the forum, I was buoyed by the positive response from the fellow professionals who attended my presentation, and I look forward to investigating into how concepts from social psychology and marketing theory might be further applied in language classrooms.

Fostering Learner Autonomy in the Classroom: Working With Diverse Learners of Japanese as a Second Language
Tomoko Ikeda & Nobuko Saito

In the Japanese Language Program at J. F. Oberlin University (JFO) in Tokyo, one of our goals is to help students develop learner autonomy. As part of our ongoing efforts to provide our students with such opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom, we have offered a set of learner-centered Japanese as a second language (JSL) classes under the umbrella term *chutoriaru*, which derives from the English word *tutorial*, since 2003. Building on a previous discussion of the practice of *chutoriaru* (Ikeda, Saito, & Ieda, 2012), which included its institutional context and background, this presentation focused on the diversity of the learning activities chosen by the learners at differing proficiency levels.

Although the *chutoriaru* is a required course for degree-seeking international students, it is an elective JSL course for short-term exchange students and is offered at three different levels–beginner, intermediate, and advanced. Each *chutoriaru* course starts with awareness building, including self-analysis, and is followed by planning (setting goals, making study plans, and deciding how to evaluate their work), implementation, and reflection. Students record their study and have face-to-face advising sessions with their instructor, which are carried out throughout the semester. Students and instructor also evaluate the student's work together at the end of the semester.

For the presentation, we examined various *chutoriaru* activities conducted in 2014. Although we presented activities from all three levels, we will focus on the intermediate students' work in this report. At the beginning of each class session, students write down their plans for the day and proceed with their individual studies. Below are some examples of the activities the students did in their *chutoriaru*:

- One US student practiced conversation with a Japanese student using a conversation textbook to gain confidence when speaking and read graded readers, such as a novelized Miyazaki Hayao anime story.
- One Mongolian student watched and discussed Japanese dramas with a Japanese student to improve speaking skills and expand vocabulary used in conversational Japanese.
- One Taiwanese student practiced speaking with a Japanese student through discussing various aspects of Japanese culture and society using newspapers.
- One Vietnamese student worked with a Japanese student on pronunciation using a *shadowing* textbook.
- One US student translated a novelized version of a PlayStation Portable game into English to improve translation skills.
- One Russian student translated news articles on Russia from *NHK News Web* into English to improve reading skills.

- One Thai student reviewed elementary grammar to build a solid foundation in the Japanese language using a course book with notes in Thai.
- One Korean student worked to increase *kanji* knowledge and skills using his favorite guitar magazines and iPad and iPhone apps.
- One US student worked to prepare for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) with a JLPT workbook, a *kanji* book, and a grammar book.

As shown above, the learners conducted a variety of activities, tailored to their needs and interests, which are not normally done in language classrooms. We received quite a few questions during our presentation concerning the students. Particularly, one participant took notice of the fact that some students tackled authentic materials, such as a popular comic book and a fantasy novel that seemed beyond their current proficiency. He commented that these materials are more interesting for the learner than graded readers that are usually "boring" and do not motivate learners to read more. This touches on the widely accepted concept of learner autonomy, namely that "autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec, 1981, p. 3). In a conventional language classroom, a beginner student would probably not be exposed to authentic materials that are popular among L1 users, mainly because they might be considered too difficult or inappropriate. However, by looking at the activities pursued by the students taking *chutoriaru*, it seems that many learners take joy in working with these materials, use them in ways the teacher would not think of, and are capable of choosing their own materials to meet their learning needs with advice from instructors.

Other participants asked questions about the Japanese student volunteers who work with the JSL learners in the *chutoriaru* and other JSL classes. Every semester, approximately 200 students sign up for a program called Japanese Class Guests run by the Japanese Language Program to support the international students and also

to learn from them. The volunteers sign up for a variety of reasons, which include the desire to make friends with or help international students, to repay the kindness they received while studying abroad, to experience *teaching* Japanese, to spread Japanese language and culture, and to enrich their college life. They take part in classes in various forms, such as participating in discussions and serving as conversational partners, as well as providing comments on the learners' presentations. Surveys indicate that interaction like this is a learning experience for all parties involved.

It has been 13 years since the inception of *chutoriaru* at JFO. Although some teachers in the Japanese Language Program initially met the introduction of *chutoriaru* with skepticism and resistance, the concept of learner autonomy is now considered one of the guiding principles of our program. However, it might be time to revisit the notion of autonomy and examine if *chutoriaru* classes are suitable for our current students, because learners' needs and the learning environment have changed greatly over the years. Such changes include a greater number of students who have clear ideas about how they wish to improve their proficiency and easier access to a variety of information and communication technologies (ICT). Therefore, this program, which is intended to foster learner autonomy and give learners control over their own learning, needs to be flexible to accommodate their ever-changing needs.

A Report of an Elementary School Concierge Project: Learner Autonomy and Educational Reflection Tools as Research Tools
Tomoko Imamura

"Becoming a lifelong learner" (Arai, 2014) is drawing more attention in elementary school education with the recent trend of fusing *ikiruchikara* (zest for living) and the introduction of the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum in Japanese education (MEXT, 2010). As a result, project-based learning is being conducted more

and more in English classes and integrated studies in Japan. This trend inspired me to design and conduct a school concierge project at one private elementary school in Yamanashi Prefecture.

The aim of the project was for the students to become concierges for guests attending the school festival and provide *omotenashi* (a warm welcome), as well as guide guests around the school. The project was 11 days long (four classes per day), and 18 students from grades one to six participated in the project team. The students worked together and carried out conversations to cross borders—such as age, personality, and English competence—to achieve a variety of goals. These goals consisted of daily goals, such as finishing up the school map in English; team goals, such as expressing their ideas during team meetings; and personal goals, such as learning English for real-use purposes.

At the same time, this project helped the students to form the foundation of lifelong learning by developing reflective thinking and autonomous actions. For this purpose, this project adopted *motigraphs* (Imamura, 2014), which are a research tool designed to monitor learners' motivational shifts (see Appendix B). In this project, students plotted their motivation to study English on a line graph from 0 to 10 and also wrote short notes that reflected their feelings on the graph. The students also used reflection sheets (see Appendix C). Here students wrote individual reflective comments on small pieces of paper and glued them around a project team photo. The reflection sheets also had the purpose of showing the students' progress as a colorful visible representation for the students' parents and guests to see at the school festival.

By using these tools, students could look back and visualize their own learning tendencies before and over the course of the project. These tools also assisted students in describing themselves as learners, as well as helping students understand their own strengths and possibilities, which is one of aims of the IB learner profile (IB, 2014). For example, many of the students mentioned that they like English and think that this is one of their strengths. Interestingly, some of

them also wrote about their own learning tendencies, for example "I don't handle situations facing rivals well." In this way, these reflection tools were also useful as research tools for teachers to understand and facilitate the students' needs during the project period, needs which were changing quickly day-by-day.

There were two phases to the project planning. The first 3 days were the first phase, where students built their own plans and goals, concepts of main ideas of the project (such as what a concierge and *omotenashi* are), and team goals. A large amount of time was used to have team discussions on this subject. The first two motigraphs were also drawn during this period to enhance the students' reflections on themselves. The following 8 days were the second phase, in which students took actions to achieve their goals. In this phase, students reflected on their activities and achievements and then talked in teams to modify their plans or carry out the new ideas that came out of their discussions. Reflection sheets were also filled out during this period to help this process. The 11th day was the school festival, where the students guided festival guests and gave presentations about the events in the festival. Finally, the third motigraphs were drawn after the school festival for students to look back on their own personal development.

Throughout the project period, a number of autonomous actions and reflections were observed—students thinking deeply about what they could do for the team. Some of their autonomous actions were also beyond language-use matters. For example, some students started picking up small pieces of trash in the hallway during the school festival. Others started making room decorations for our room, where we had an information booth and presentation area, without instruction. The two reflective educational and research tools also offered a range of data and hints about the needs emerging from the activities that the students created. For instance, one girl mentioned, "I could not talk with my teammates well, so I will try to make more friends tomorrow." I noticed this girl did not interact with her teammates smoothly on that day, so I encour-

aged her teammates to talk to her during the activities. After I read her reflection, I also changed my approach to help her problem. For example, I gave her advice, such as saying to her teammates "I would like to help." As mentioned before, these kinds of reflection comments helped the teachers work as real facilitators and assisted students in achieving their own goals.

At the forum, the attendees gave me ideas and hints on how to develop the project further. One teacher advised me to continue researching about the after-effects of the project on the students. Some also encouraged me to continue this project in the future. After working hard with my students over the 11 days of the project, I felt a sense of accomplishment, but I also felt tired, so the kind words of my audience revitalized my motivation. I feel lucky to have been given this precious advice and ideas and I am now planning to conduct another concierge project in the winter with the aim of developing the project into *being young concierges for our prefecture*.

Collaborative and Reflective Supervision for Learner and Teacher Development: A CLIL-Type Approach to Senior High School EFL Instruction

Hideo Kojima

The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) is currently working to promote the English Education Reform Plan corresponding to reforms for globalization from the elementary to junior and senior high school education stage. EFL teachers in Japan are involved in this reform and encouraged to promote professional development and innovation in ELT.

As a social constructivist in my approach to teacher education, I administered collaborative and reflective supervision (CRS) to help Ruriko (pseudonym), a graduate student and senior high school EFL teacher, to introduce content and language integrated learn-

ing (CLIL) at her school, designated a Super Global High School by MEXT. This study aimed to examine to what extent CRS was effective in enhancing Ruriko's professional autonomy and her students' autonomy by integrating the 4Cs: content, cognition, communication, and community (Coyle & Marsh, 2010) into a CLIL-type approach to ELT.

In the 2nd year of her MA course at Hirosaki University, Ruriko was required to work on research-based teaching practice at her school. She implemented CLIL in her English Communication 1 classes. Using an authorized textbook, *Crown English Communication 1* (Shimozaki, 2013), she taught 80 first-year students with a post-beginner level of English in Class A (40) and B (40). She also did team teaching with an assistant language teacher (ALT) once every 2 weeks, and once a month, Ruriko returned to the university for CRS sessions with me. Table 2 provides an example of an outline for a CLIL-type approach to instruction.

Table 2. Application of the 4Cs in Unit 1: "Going Into Space" From *Crown English Communication 1*

Content		• the earth seen from the space
		• working with people from various nations
		• the life & experiments on the International Space Station (ISS)
		• the reason why Mr. Wakata, a crew member of Spaceship Earth goes into space
Cognition	Lower-order thinking Skills	• summarize the life & experiments on the ISS
		• understand what is important to work with people from various nations
		• explain why Mr. Wakata goes into space
	Higher-order thinking Skills	• think about what is impressive or sympathetic about Mr. Wakata
Communication	Language of learning	• S takes ~ to…, dream of~ing, a variety of, worry about~ing, experiment, humanity
	Language for learning	• how to ask and answer wh-questions
	Language through learning	• questions & answers
		• new vocabulary & expressions
Community/Collaboration		• understand peers' different ideas
		• play one's role in group work
		• raise one's consciousness as a global citizen
		• understand different values

Here we can see that the students are encouraged to apply all of the 4Cs in Unit 1. In the first lesson, the students asked in pairs, "Would you like to go into space?" and "When you were 5 years old or so, what did you want to be in the future?" They also practiced expanding conversations by using "Why?" (content/community). Next, they checked new words, phrases, and sentence structures. They also retold the life and experiments in space, using keywords given by Ruriko (cognition/communication). Then, they confirmed

by asking and answering questions in English about the importance of working with people from various countries and the reason why Mr. Wakata went into space in spite of the danger (cognition). In group work, the students gave each other roles by deciding who was going to be a leader, a recorder, a monitor, and a reporter in advance. At the end of their discussions, each group's reporter reported what their group had discussed (community). Finally, the students organized their ideas again and wrote about what was impressive or sympathetic about Mr. Wakata in English. In the last lesson, the students discussed why going into space was related to the rediscovery of love for the earth and the discovery of our humanity as citizens of the earth. They also exchanged their ideas about what was impressive and sympathetic about Mr. Wakata and why (cognition/community).

There were various constraints on Ruriko's CLIL instruction—such as the 1st-year students' lack of communication skills in English and Ruriko's lack of confidence in asking key questions to foster the students' higher-order thinking skills. In spite of these, Ruriko's reflections demonstrated that CRS assisted her in analyzing the students' perceptions of EFL learning, gathering information about their progress, developing her teaching strategies for CLIL instruction, fostering her professional consciousness of innovation in ELT, and collaborating with her fellow teachers, as well as improving her instruction through reflective teaching cycles, which echoes findings in other research (Bailey, 2006). Overall, CRS seemed to be effective in the limited educational settings of this study.

Although it should be appreciated that Ruriko's students were likely to show positive attitudes towards CLIL activities in the community of learning, it is essential for her to continue her professional development so that she can more effectively take into account the knowledge and experiences that her students bring to class, present more authentic tasks to contextualize learning through real-world environments, provide more scaffolding at the right time and the right level, and promote more positive attitudes towards

collaboration among her colleagues (Richards & Farrell, 2005). It is hoped that Ruriko will be able to contribute to the exploration of new ways of collaborative working with students and colleagues and that CLIL will be successfully practiced for innovation in ELT at her school.

Positive Psychology in Learner Development
Debjani Ray

In the classroom, teachers have to deal with educational psychology in some form. Reading on positive psychology made me interested in trying it out in my language classrooms because, as most teachers would agree, happy students are better students. To do this, I incorporated Seligman's (2011) *PERMA* model into my classroom to foster positive education.

PERMA is an acronym for Seligman's model of well-being and happiness designed to "produce measurable improvements in students' well-being and behavior," and to "facilitate students' engagement in learning and achievement" (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009, p. 295). PERMA stands for five concepts that Seligman uses to measure well-being:

- *Positive emotions* come from intellectual stimulation and have long lasting effects on the mind and counter negative emotions.
- *Engagement* nurtures happiness by being engaged in meaningful tasks.
- *Relationships* provide a source of good emotions by support from other people.
- *Meaning* gives fulfillment in life and living by having connections with something higher/bigger.
- *Achievement* comes from having goals and pursuing them, which in turn builds self-esteem and provides a sense of accomplishment.

Two classes of 2nd-year electrical engineering and architecture students took part in this study, one class of 20 students and the other of 12. The focus of the class was on improving English through doing projects in students' relative fields of study and presenting them. For example, in one class, the architecture students chose to research and present about some important pieces of architecture in Tokyo, with special emphasis on the uniqueness of the design.

To introduce PERMA, I took one whole period at the beginning of the semester to discuss positive psychology with the students and the concepts of PERMA. We discussed how PERMA could be implemented in the classroom while working on the main class project, for example, how they might employ the concepts of engagement or achievement to be able to reflect on what they achieved, and continue their heavy project work with a sense of satisfaction. For the class projects, which the students were completing in small groups, they had a lot of opportunities to practice PERMA both inside and outside the classroom. Each week, the students also reported on how they used PERMA and how it worked or did not work for them. This helped them to stay motivated and keep on doing their work, whilst maintaining good relationships with their teammates and enjoying a sense of success.

The concept of positive emotion was easily incorporated into their classwork. Each week, the students had to report about their work on the project during the past week. At that time, they tried to focus on the positive experiences regarding the project. For example, if someone did not do their part or did badly, which might have slowed the progress of the group, the group members were not to blame that person, but rather try to encourage them by reflecting on the points they did well that week or what they had done well in previous weeks.

Engagement also worked very well. The students were able to manage the stress of the demanding work and dealt with challenges in a positive way. They did this by discussing and sharing their own ideas in the class and sometimes contacted and met their group members outside the class to discuss their projects.

Relationships helped students to stay focused and avoid negative emotions by sustaining a positive atmosphere. They tried to avoid criticizing group members in order to do this; by doing so, they gained a deeper understanding of productive relationships.

Meaning was very important for the students as they strived to do their part in their groups. For their project, each group chose a theme and everybody in the group had to choose one aspect of that theme to research for a week, which they brought to the next class to share with their group. From there, based on the group feedback, class feedback, or both, they would take their projects to the next step. By doing their individual part of the research, they helped each other in completing the whole project. Being one part of a bigger group made the task meaningful for them and also helped them to understand the inherent meaning of that task.

Accomplishment was also easy for them to savor. Each week they had to tell the class about their activity regarding the project, and they received feedback from the class. By reflecting on their work of the past week, they could see their progress, thus feeling a sense of accomplishment, which also helped to build the students' self-esteem.

From the results of the students' projects and the students' engagement in the class, a positive result was achieved by embedding PERMA in my classrooms. The atmosphere of the class, the behavior of the students, and the outcome of the work were all very satisfactory. At the LD Forum, people showed a huge interest in PERMA. Most of them had not heard of this model before and they asked a lot of questions to clarify the various concepts of PERMA. After learning about my project, many were enthusiastic and said that they wanted to try it in their own classes as well. I would also like to use PERMA in more of my classes and compare the results of using of this kind of approach between my different classes. That way, we might be able to better understand the benefits and the difficulties of implementing PERMA into language classrooms.

Crossing Linguistic Borders in Teachers' and Learners' Minds

Maria Gabriela Schmidt

Learners of English at the university level in Japan often study another foreign language for at least one year. In teaching German as a second foreign language, this means dealing with English almost every day because the students have studied English for many years. Some students take notes in English, others prefer Japanese. German and English have similarities, but differences too, resulting in positive and negative transfer. For example, some students make the mistake of capitalizing the personal pronoun, writing *Ich* instead of the standard *ich* with a lower-case *I,* or some would use a different spelling for similar sounding words, such as writing *house* instead of the German *Haus* (Bucher, 1997; Fukuda, 1994). However, using the acquired knowledge of one foreign language for studying another foreign language can be classified as a learning strategy (Uhl Chamot, 2008). As successful learners tend to employ these cross-linguistic strategies, the focus in classroom teaching is to support learner activities on differential error analysis by using associations, making analogies, searching for clues and similarities, and employing other strategies to acquire new items.

In my classrooms, I encourage students to balance three languages: German (second foreign language, or L3), English (first foreign language, or L2), and Japanese (native language, or L1). For example, when introducing new basic vocabulary, some English equivalents are given and strategically used to encourage students to make hypotheses about new expressions. Students can compare the word order in German sentences with sentences in English and Japanese. This can raise awareness of differences and similarities between languages, which can help students to systematically utilize already acquired linguistic knowledge, repeat it, and reconnect it. These ideas are supported by research which suggests that the more new things are connected in our brains, the better we can remember new vocabulary and grammar (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2010), as well as research in German as an L3 after English (Hufeisen & Lindemann, 1998), and also recent research on third language acquisition (Cabrelli Amaro, Flynn, & Rothman, 2012).

The students' feedback on this integrative approach is twofold. Some students quickly adapt to it and feel motivated. However, others are confused and feel uncomfortable because they prefer to study with a clear distinction between the languages. In my experience, the opinions of my colleagues are divided in a similar way. Some do not want to use English or Japanese, focusing on a German-only approach that stays within the border of a single language. Other colleagues extend their teaching of German to include Japanese or English.

In light of these considerations, the following two questions were developed to give insights into the classroom management and the teachers' perceptions on the use of nontarget languages in language learning:

1. How do teachers of English in Japan take into account the languages that students have at their disposal, e.g., German, French, Spanish, Chinese, or Korean?

2. How are English teachers themselves influenced by their experience with studying a foreign language?

These two questions formed the background for interviews, which were conducted during my presentation at the LD SIG Forum. The presentation started with a short introduction about this idea of crossing language borders in the classroom. Then it switched from presenting into an interview with my audience on ELT practices in the classroom. I asked my audience questions focusing on both student and teacher language considerations regarding the extent of nontarget language integration into the classroom. I also asked them about how their cultural and language experiences have influenced their teaching ideologies with regards to language integration. The following comments came from the short interviews I conducted during my presentation time slot at the forum.

One native English-speaking teacher commented that he reflects on his foreign language learning and integrates it into his classroom teaching. He integrates Japanese too, but he does not consider other foreign languages: "As a teacher, I present myself as a language learner to my students. This is important to my teaching. Therefore, I integrate Japanese in my English classes."

One nonnative English-speaking teacher has a multilingual background through his family and life in various countries. His focus is on language, culture, and identity, and he tries to integrate all the languages learned by his students into his teaching: "Because of my personal bio, I am very much sensitive to multilingual contexts and try to integrate it in my teaching. Language is about culture and identity."

Finally, another native English-speaking teacher did not consider other languages, stating a strong monolingual approach: "No, I never thought about it that way. I focus only on English. Well, I will have to consider it."

Reflecting on my initial assumptions before the presentation, these comments clearly indicated three different styles of ELT among teachers. Despite the cursory nature of this data, these interviews are enough to convince me that this topic is worthy of further investigation. As I talked with the teachers in person and one to one about their own experiences with and beliefs about foreign languages, the answers they gave were honest and reflective. This was very supportive and has encouraged me to expand this idea into a full-scale research project in the near future.

My presentation concluded with a discussion of the need for further research and support for synergetic foreign language teaching across language borders, focusing on positive learning and considerations for both learner and teacher language development. With global communication as a goal for developing communication skills, these cross-linguistic considerations pose a promising area for further study.

Cross-Institutional Collaboration of *Sotsuron* via CMC: Unfolding Ventures

Joseph Tomei & Anita Aden

The Japanese university seminar class, like many Western borrowings in Japan, bears slight resemblance to the original. In the West, it represents a small class where students are expected to engage in discussions about assigned materials, with the goal being an original research paper related to the content of the class. In Japan, it represents a relationship with a particular teacher, considered a formative one for Japanese students, with Wadden (1993) noting the "importance that students place on their seminar classes" (p. 176) and Lebra (2004) observing that "the *sempai-kohai* [junior-senior] alliance . . . in a university seminar class may be retained as an everlasting *uchi* [in-group]" (p. 67). However, assuming that students naturally move from high school English to paragraph writing in their 1st year of university, followed by essay writing, and finishing with an original research paper in the 3rd or 4th year of university, the students have little, if any, experience in long-form writing. Therefore, it becomes a challenging task to get students to produce a paper of sufficient content and length that can satisfy the requirements of the seminar class (Nicoll, Tomei, & Occhi, 2015; Tomei, 2012).

Although individual teachers and schools may have various requirements and schedules, a rough approximation of the seminar system is that students choose a teacher based on their research area, who then guides them to produce a completed research paper. Unfortunately, the possibility of online translation, and the ease of *pakuri* (plagiarism), makes the seminar class increasingly challenging, and, as non-Japanese teachers negotiating the system, we are often left adrift. This shared challenge led to our project.

Research on computer-mediated communication (CMC) suggests that a wide range of skills could be improved through the use of information communication technology (ICT), such as Skype and

Line (Zourou, 2009). Previous research concentrated on particular skills, such as speaking and writing, so it made sense to try these tools in our seminar classes so that we could connect our two geographically separated seminars. The students were 3rd- and 4th-year university students in Kyushu (British and American studies) and 4th-year students in Kansai (education). The students used ICT to connect through CMC as they worked on their final research projects. Their research projects included "Using ICT to communicate with deaf children" and "Researching the factors of difficulty through an examination of Macmillan Readers." We hoped CMC would provide a platform where students from both universities could collaborate to improve their thesis writing. Within the confines of their own university, students have limited opportunities to communicate with others about their research topics, making their work mechanical and mundane. This is understandable, as the prospect of writing a research paper was less an act of *searching* and more the answering of display questions set by the teacher. Therefore, the basic premise of the project was to connect these two groups through CMC in order to create new challenges and develop their research and academic writing skills to produce a work of sufficient length and content to complete the course.

Via CMC, the students communicated synchronously using Skype chat and asynchronously using LINE messaging groups with peers at the other university. These chats were scheduled around student job-hunting, with each teacher working to make his or her students available during the other teacher's scheduled seminar class. Students also established a Line chat group to exchange information and ideas. In addition, the Hyogo-based students were asked to present the topics of their research projects by recording themselves and uploading videos to YouTube, which were then embedded in blog posts, which the Kumamoto students were asked to respond to. This made it convenient for both students and teachers to write feedback through comments, which included support and praise, as well as substantive suggestions. For example, when a student discussing tools for deaf children mentioned the episcope, students

in Kumamoto immediately asked the student to explain what it was. As a result, rather than merely explaining to the seminar teacher what an episcope was, the student had several opportunities to express and refine her explanation. Furthermore, the students gained solidarity with seminar cohorts in another prefecture as they reflected on authentic reasons to communicate in English through CMC.

During the forum, we had many chances to interact with our audience, who brought their own experiences of using CMC in their teaching contexts. After describing different ICT tools used in our project to connect students through CMC, another participant joined our discussion and introduced other available ICT tools, such as PhotoStory and Voxopop, which underline how the process of knowledge creation, especially in the realm of ICT tools, is exceptionally fluid. Through these suggestions, we noticed our own level of *development across borders* expanding to incorporate these practical learning tips. The technology skills used during this project directly increased student confidence to use other online tech tools, and in moving forward, we feel that the possible uses of CMC between students and teachers are truly endless. As we apply new methods of CMC, there will be new challenges for us to discuss, but the true catalyst for these insights is the open exchange of ideas and questions that the LD SIG Forum offers.

How to Develop Learner Autonomy in a "Lecture" Class
Kazuko Unosawa

How to make lecture classes more interactive is a concern for many teachers. My focus at the LD SIG Forum was to introduce classroom practices to make a lecture-style class, traditionally a teacher-fronted format of teaching, more student centered by incorporating learner development concepts, such as learner autonomy. According to Benson (2011), autonomy is "the capacity to take control of one's own

learning" (p. 58). Therefore, rather than the teacher lecturing all the time, the students can be more in charge of their learning by making a lecture course more interactive. My presentation was based on my experience teaching an interactive lecture course titled "English and Culture" at Tokyo Women's Christian University in 2013.

The course was an interactive course in English studies in Japanese offered to students in the 2nd to 4th year. The first semester in the course, titled "British English and Culture," focused on studying culture through English. After a discussion of the diversity of British English, the features of British culture and society were discussed through the analysis of topics, such as class and the characteristics of British humor. Furthermore, we used a wide range of other audiovisual materials such as movies, video clips, news, and songs to consider the characteristics of different genres, for example speeches, media English, and commercials. Finally, there was an explanation of key concepts pertaining to fields such as sociolinguistics, cultural anthropology, and drama studies to help the students with their analyses.

The second semester of the course, titled "World Englishes and Culture," focused on English other than British English. After a brief discussion of the differences between British and American English, we analyzed different genres of American English with a focus on society and culture. The course ended with a class on Indian English. Key concepts from disciplines such as sociolinguistics and drama studies were also introduced like the first semester.

To make the course more interactive, students tackled homework assignments prior to the class so that they could develop their critical thinking skills and make the most of their prior knowledge of the content. Some of the tasks involved watching YouTube videos and reading online materials. For example, the students watched Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech and analyzed the characteristics of the speech, such as keywords and the effect they had on the main ideas. In class, the students discussed their analyses in small-scale pair and group discussions.

There were two kinds of tasks for homework. One was designed for the students to analyze the genre, and the other type aimed to provide background knowledge on the topic. Tasks for background knowledge were assigned when it was considered difficult for the students to analyze further without it. For example, the students read "Humor Rules" in Kate Fox's *Watching the English* (Fox, 2004, p. 61-72) prior to watching Monty Python's Flying Circus, a British sketch comedy series that was broadcast in the UK in the 1960s. However, they sometimes analyzed genres for homework and in class with no prior knowledge. For example, they were asked to conduct a contrastive analysis of comics such as Blondie and Sazae-san. The task was to compare the two comics and discuss the characteristics of the characters, topic, discourse, illustrations, and humor, and analyze how American and Japanese culture were reflected in the two. In another example, the students analyzed the characteristics of Indian English by listening to a news clip on YouTube.

Finally, at the end of the semester, the students participated in a poster session. The posters ranged from the class differences of the characters in the *Harry Potter* movie series to the differences between American and Japanese commercials. After the presentations, the students selected the most informative presentation and wrote why they had selected that poster.

During the LD SIG Forum, there were many questions from my audience. For example, I had a question about whether the students could analyze the genres without background knowledge. My answer was that it was challenging for many of the students and that there were many instances when the students could not come up with an answer to the analysis questions. However, there were some students who could answer the questions in ways and to an extent that I did not expect. For example, when we analyzed Barack Obama's inauguration speech, a student analyzed metaphors and their effect on the style of the speech; this was an area that I had not analyzed in detail in class. In another class, we discussed Indian English and it was generally a difficult task for most students,

but one student researched the linguistic characteristics of Indian English and presented a detailed analysis of the video clip that all had watched as an assignment. In these cases, I felt the students' analyses were a stimulus for the rest of the class and an opportunity for the students to develop critical thinking skills.

It is my 2nd year of teaching this course, and through the opportunity to present and discuss the content with my audience at the LD SIG Forum, I realized the strengths and the weaknesses of the course. For instance, I have to consider whether I was successful in making it clear to the students in class that my analyses were an individual attempt and not *the answer*. In the future, I will try to reinforce this point by conducting discussions about my interpretation of the materials with the students. I look forward to teaching the course again next year and making it more interactive, to develop the learner autonomy of my students.

Acknowledgments

Bio Data

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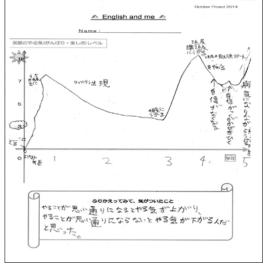
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Appendix A

Example of an Inverted Pyramid Template

Appendix B:

An Example of a Motigraph

Appendix C:

An Example of a Reflection Sheet