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Editorial

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Editorial

Jo Mynard, Kanda University of International Studies, Japan

Welcome to the June 2012 issue of *SiSAL Journal*. This is the ninth issue of the journal and the first one that is *not* a special issue. The editors felt that it was appropriate that having some general issues might attract submissions on emerging interest areas within the field of self-access learning.

The papers in this issue can be grouped roughly into three themes:

- Theme 1: How do students learn best through self-access?
- Theme 2: Self-access resources
- Theme 3: Advising

How do Students Learn Best?

Self-access centres aim to support learners in different ways, through materials, facilities, learner development, advising and other support, and community-building events. Several contributors to this issue take a close look at the ways in which we might best offer this support. **Heath Rose** begins his article with a helpful summary of strategy research. He then describes a study investigating the strategies used by learners of Japanese, with a focus on cognition and self-regulation. He concludes by calling for more research that acknowledges context-specific approaches to strategic learning.

Howard Doyle and Michael Parrish share a summary of some of their research at their institutions in Japan, research which began with the realisation that their students were only aware of limited “ways” to learn English outside of class. In a later stage of the research, the authors found that a closed-item questionnaire served as an awareness-raising tool for students to learn and implement a wider range of effective ways to study.

Leander Hughes, Nathan Krug and Stacey Vye investigate why frequent visitors initially came to their centre in Japan and why they continue to come. Many of us working in the field have noticed the importance of social dimension of self-access learning, but it is useful to see more empirical research supporting these assumptions.

Self-Access Resources

Colleagues working in libraries work hard to ensure that they are addressing students’ needs. **Glenna Westwood** was concerned about the needs of students taking foreign language courses within her institution in Canada, and this inspired the research she conducted in Mexico. The author investigated the needs of students

taking language courses at the University of Guanajuato and found that students frequently consult resources such as grammar books, course texts and films. The author concludes by sharing her experiences of including such resources within a library collection.

Pauline Moore Hanna describes an approach to helping students to learn how to use phrasal verbs by making use of a computer-based Learning Object (LO). The author describes how the LO may resolve the difficulties that learners have with learning phrasal verbs, with considerations which might be useful for self-access materials developers in other contexts.

Advising

In his article, **Paul Moore** discusses the role of *academic language and learning advising* in Australian universities. The author outlines the practice and explains how it is influenced by political, pedagogical and practical factors. He draws on Carson and Mynard's (2012) description of the role of advising in language learning and explores how the two fields might inform each other.

All of the articles featured in this issue have implications for learning advisors working in self-access contexts. We constantly need to examine the ways in which we help learners to find the best strategies and approaches to self-directed learning. We are also engaged in helping learners find the most appropriate resource. I am grateful to the authors for sharing the insights from their contexts. Their work has certainly made me reflect on my advising practice.

Upcoming Issues of SiSAL Journal

There are still four weeks until the deadline for submissions for the September 2012 issue, which will also be a general issue. Following that, there will be two guest edited special issues. Heath Rose from Trinity College, Dublin will be editing the December 2012 special issue on strategies. Rachael Ruegg from Akita International University in Japan will be guest editing the March 2013 issue on writing. Please take a look at the details online.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the contributors for submitting their work to *SiSAL Journal*, to the reviewers for their feedback, and to the editorial team once again for their input, support and editing skills. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome new members to the *SiSAL Journal* editorial team and to thank existing members for their continued support. For a full list of members, please see the website.

Notes on the editor

Jo Mynard is an Associate Professor at Kanda University of International Studies in Japan. She is the Director of the Self-Access Learning Centre, Assistant Director of the English Language Institute and Deputy Director of the Research Institute of Language Studies and Language Education. She holds an Ed.D. in TEFL from the University of Exeter, UK and an M.Phil. in applied linguistics from Trinity College, Dublin. She has taught EFL in Ireland, Spain, England, the UAE and Japan, and has been involved in facilitating self-access learning since 1996. She co-edited three recently published volumes; one on learner autonomy and two on advising in language learning.

References

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