

Conference report

**Reflections and New Perspectives:
2021 JALT International Conference Report**

Mary Hillis
Ritsumeikan University

Tara McIlroy
Rikkyo University

In this paper, the authors reflect on the 47th JALT Annual International Conference held online from November 12-15, 2021. The theme of the conference, *Reflections and New Perspectives*, provided a venue for presenters and attendees to reflect on their experiences during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and look to the future of language education and research. Likewise, this report aims to reflect on the conference to keep a record of the events. There are several themes in the reflections from this event. One element of the reflection is the diversity of possibilities in the ever-changing field of literature in language education research. A second theme seems to be the evolving nature of the choices and uses of literature for language learning. Second language (L2) and additional language (L+) learning in various contexts has already begun to change and will continue to adapt to the new reality of a post-pandemic world. Additionally, the conference provided an opportunity for researchers and teachers to share their work while still enduring the ongoing pandemic.

The 2021 JALT conference was conducted online using Zoom and the conference platform Edzila. This format was the same as in 2020, which meant that audience members were familiar with how to navigate the site, move between sessions and interact with speakers. Although the online format may have constrained JALT's usual collegiality and the ability to provide "opportunities for those involved in language education to meet, share, and collaborate" (JALT's mission statement), the online presentation format allows for increased interaction at the end of sessions and through the Zoom chat.

As in previous years, the LiLT SIG invited a Featured Speaker to the international conference, and

just as in 2020, the Featured Speaker joined the conference virtually from overseas. After considering various options for Featured Speaker, the SIG decided to invite a US-based professor of linguistics and author, Greta Gorsuch. Greta warmly accepted the invitation and was kind enough to join us from the US at the Japan-friendly scheduling, although her timing was less convenient. Although the online pandemic situation has created several inconveniences and has changed our teaching lives immeasurably, the situation of being able to connect with colleagues globally has been one of the positive elements of the current situation.

Literature in Language Teaching SIG Forum

Our SIG forum, *Looking Back, Thinking Forward: Literature in Language Teaching*, applied the conference theme to the use of literature and creative writing in the classroom. Six presenters shared their experiences related to the pandemic teaching situation and their uses of literature. The forum was coordinated by Mary Hillis of Ritsumeikan University, who has presented at the LiLT Forum previously and this year took on the role of Forum Chair in 2021. The first three presenters in the forum discussed pandemic reading (McIlroy), teaching with texts from outside the canon (Villanueva), and using Japanese short stories with university-level English learners (Tu). The second half of the forum focused on learners writing their own poems in response to the ongoing pandemic (Maloney), the language used by students in their multilingual poetry with a focus on translingual and multilingual writing (Kubokawa) and guiding students through the process of publishing their own literary work (Decker). The forum speakers were all current LiLT SIG members based in different parts of

Japan. While most of the presenters talked about their experiences teaching at the tertiary level, the topics had possible applications in various contexts. Each speaker had ten minutes for a short practice or research-based presentation. Following the presentations, audience members were given the opportunity to ask questions to any speaker, and those attending did so by writing their questions in the chat or asking them directly. The time for Q & A allowed for some additional interaction beyond the presentations themselves, and the chat conversations extended the interaction with conference participants. Andrew Decker was the Forum Chair at the 2022 conference.

Pandemic reading in the language classroom: The Decameron Project by Tara McIlroy

From a classroom teacher's perspective, the pandemic may have presented new opportunities for reading new fiction. Pandemic fiction could be fiction written during a pandemic (such as Boccaccio's *Decameron*) or feature a pandemic (*The Iliad*). The focus of this presentation was one short story that emerged from the pandemic from the *New York Times Magazine* collection *The Decameron Project*. McIlroy teaches an elective course for advanced learners using contemporary fiction and a book from the short introduction series as a textbook (Eaglestone, 2013). The approach in the class is to integrate the four Cs of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), i.e., Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010). The last of these, cognition, may include using higher-order thinking skills (HOTs) such as evaluation, comparison, and creation as discussed in Bloom's revised taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). The first stage in preparing to teach selected contemporary fiction in this course was to read all of the short stories in the New York Times collection *The Decameron Project: 29 New Stories from the Pandemic* (New York Times, 2020). Although the stories are all available online, they are behind a paywall and cannot be shared fully with students. Baker's story is available under Creative Commons license; the full text can be shared with students directly from the author's website. McIlroy reported that *Origin Story*, by Matthew Baker (Baker, 2020), was notable because it seemed suitable for inclusion in a Japanese classroom. The story tells the fictional account of a family's experience under lockdown in Detroit in 2020. The matriarch of the family creates a new dessert as an innovation, although the multigenerational conflict of the story is resolved in

a humorous moment shared between two female characters. While much pandemic fiction may be associated with negative feelings such as fear, *Origin Story* seems to be more in keeping with the original Decameron stories, some of which were tales of hope and celebration.

Teaching Outside the Canon Inside Japan by Camilo Omaña Villanueva

Camilo Omaña Villanueva is a doctoral student at Murray State University, and through his studies, he has developed an interest in social justice literature which he has since incorporated into an English curriculum for returnee students. One example is journalistic text from *Time Magazine*, *The Story Behind TIME's Cover on Anti-Asian Violence and Hate Crimes*, which was published after the murders of Asian-American women in the United States in 2021. Another example is narrative nonfiction, *Bus 57: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime that Changed their Lives* by Dashka Slater. It is a Stonewall Book Award Winner, and along with the reading, Villanueva invited a guest speaker to the classroom to discuss LGBTQ+ issues and answer students' questions. As the students read, they make connections between texts outside the literary canon and social justice issues inside Japan.

Strangely familiar: Reading Lafcadio Hearn's Kwaidan (怪談) with Japanese Students by Li-hsin Tu

Many teachers in Japan are familiar with *Kwaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange things* by Lafcadio Hearn which was originally published in English in 1904. Because of its cultural familiarity (the chapters are based on Japanese ghost stories) and availability (the book is in the public domain and available at Gutenberg Press), Li-hsin Tu considers it an ideal fit for English language instruction. She discussed activities that can be paired with the first two stories in the collection. Students read the first story, *Hoichi the Earless*, watch a film adaptation, and then write an essay to critique the movie and compare it with the story. The second story, *Oshidori*, is read alongside *The Little Hunters at the Lake* by Turkish author Yalvac Ural (in *Stories for Reading Circles: Bookworms Club Bronze*, published by Oxford). Students engage in various writing tasks, one being to complete stem sentences, such as the following: *The main character wants ..., but ..., so...* In this way, students study literature and academic writing in tandem.

The Psychological Benefits of Creative Writing for L2 Students by Iain Maloney

In this presentation, the discussion took the form of an inside view of learner poetry writing. Iain Maloney, an author and academic based in the Nagoya area, has become known for his own creative writing as well as his creative teaching. In this short talk, Maloney described some of the 2020 creative work his students produced during the first year of the global pandemic. For details of the course see Maloney (2020). Far from simply dwelling on the negative aspects of the situation, there was instead an abundance of humor and celebration in these poetic works. Even poems dealing with issues related to loneliness or the online learning situation itself, seemed to do so with self-awareness. The psychological benefits, therefore, had much to do with the process of writing but also related to the discussions and reflections in peer-review activities. Maloney had separated the poems into themes such as relationships and feelings, which worked as a way of structuring the content. Some of the poems were written in English only, and some in Japanese and English. Maloney explained how the poems and the discussions that followed seemed to be a kind of remedy for the isolation many students had been feeling throughout 2020. The theme of this forum was looking back and looking forward, and his talk allowed a bit of both.

Translingual and Multilingual Writing Practices in University Students' L2 Poetry by Jared Michael Kubokawa

In this presentation on the topic of multilingual creative writing, Jared Kubokawa approached the discussion of learner writing through the lens of multilingualism. This perspective refers to the multilingual turn in academia (Ortega, 2013) and an increase in interest in the value and potential of language knowledge as a resource. Kubokawa explained that translingual writing occurs when writing in a language other than the primary language (see Kellman, 2000 for a discussion of this in practice). For perspective, Kubokawa described how translingual writing has been popularised over time by classic writers such as Conrad and Beckett. From this background, the talk then moved on to look at Japanese learners' multilingual resources in their poetry writing, in particular with the use of sound devices such as onomatopoeia. In his poetry course with Japanese learners, the writing produced includes *shinbaiku* and

open form poetry. The presentation showed how multiple examples of Japanese linguistic references added to the sensory and aesthetic effects of the poetry. Kubokawa intends to research this area further and will report on his ongoing project in future presentations.

From literature to literary publishing: Students publishing students' creative writing by Andrew Decker

Amongst the frequently asked questions related to literature teaching is from practitioners who want to try using literature in their classes but go beyond literary reading and interpretation. How exactly can it be done? What specific advice do teachers have? Andrew Decker provided answers to these questions in his practice-based talk on the topic of students' creative writing. Decker works at Kansai University and holds a postgraduate degree in creative writing. This background in writing and producing creative works relates to his interests and current area of focus in the courses he is designing. Using project-based learning, his approach aims to provide opportunities for students to be involved at the level of project-management and planning, but also including the reviewing and editing phases. His talk covered specific details about the creative planning process, including explanations about the relevant aspects of the creative commons license which may be required when creating such courses.

Featured Speaker

Interest Pursuit: Choosing and Using Narrative Texts for Teaching and Learning

Greta Gorsuch of Texas Tech University delivered a featured speaker workshop *Interest Pursuit: Choosing and Using Narrative Texts for Teaching and Learning*. The session was organized around three main topics: student outcomes, text selection, and use of the chosen texts in class. Throughout the interactive workshop, she alternated between posing questions to participants in the chat and discussing her research and experience using narrative texts with language learners in the U.S., Japan, and Vietnam.

Student outcomes were linked to different traditions, which she categorized as language learning, literary competence, language use, multiple literacies, education, and reading comprehension traditions. For example, outcomes in the language learning tradition might include the study of grammar and vocabulary or

the practice of reading strategies. On the other hand, outcomes in a literary competence tradition might include the study of literary devices or the use of creative writing activities to respond to the text. Many workshop participants responded in the chat that they were working in multiple traditions at the same time.

After deciding the student outcomes, the next step is choosing narrative texts and planning a sequence of activities: in other words, crafting a syllabus. Examples of how text selection and sequence affect each other were given. For example, teachers may decide to start by reading short texts and gradually progress to longer ones, or by reading texts written in the first person to reading texts written in the third person, or by moving from texts with direct speech to those with indirect speech.

In the last part of the presentation, Gorsuch recommended an in-class repeated reading technique to use instead of assigning reading homework. First, the teacher breaks the selected text into approximately 500-word sections for the students to read multiple times. Then students read silently at their own pace, and during the second reading they listen to the teacher reading aloud or to a recording of the text. Finally, they read it two more times in class.

Participants asked whether students become bored reading the same text four times; however, she replied that she did not encounter this situation. This is because students notice new or different things upon rereading, and after completing the reading, students are asked to make comments on their experience. In this way, students have agency, and "... learners show that what they take to be interesting or compelling is not at all what the teacher expected" (Gorsuch & Taguchi, 2010, quoted in Gorsuch, 2021a). Student comments from a repeated reading of the graded reader version of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Scandal in Bohemia* were shared with the audience to illustrate this point. By allowing students to respond freely, a rich variety of responses were received which show their engagement and interest in the text.

Literature is a Moveable Feast for Language Teachers and Learners

The title of Greta Gorsuch's short presentation, *Literature is a Moveable Feast for Language Teachers and Learners*, was inspired by her recent reading of Hemingway's memoir published in 1964. She discussed another book published in the 1960s, *Honey Bunch and Norman and the Paper Lantern Mystery* by Helen Louise

Thorndyke, which cemented her love of reading as a child. She referred to the idea of books as "durable technology" (Gorsuch, 2021b) and their reliability as a source of language input for language learners. She also referred to Hall (2015) as a useful resource for instructors and curriculum planners.

As well as using the multiliteracies framework, Gorsuch referred to the recently updated Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2018). The CEFR is an international standard which can be applied across all languages. The scales of the CEFR go from A1-A2 (basic) and at the next level B1-B2 (independent) to the highest levels of proficiency, C1-C2 (proficient). Even at level A1-A2 the 2018 CEFR makes reference to students being able to explain their feelings in relation to a work of literature. Gorsuch explained that this is an important point for curriculum planners to recognise, and that recent trends seem to include literature learning at lower levels of L2 language proficiency. The discussion about supporting lower-level learners helps to recognise the value of narrative and storytelling at all points in the language learning journey.

She outlined ideas for implementing a multiple literacies approach in which "Learners experience the second language through multiple forms of texts with multiple treatments of the texts on multiple occasions" (Gorsuch, 2021b). With multiliteracies, content curation is paramount because not only books, but also art, film, and online texts, such as blogs or websites, are used as the basis for projects and discussions. The presentation concluded with a practical application of multiple literacies for teaching a scene from *Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain. Specifically, students read the scene from the book in which Tom Sawyer whitewashes a fence, watch a YouTube video of the same scene, and then read another version of the scene written from the point of view of a different character.

Presentations of interest

Literature and Global Citizenship in the Language Classroom by LiLT Officer Luke Draper

Continuing the theme of considering ways of selecting texts for language learners and justifying their use was Luke Draper's talk on global citizenship in the language classroom. Draper is a lecturer at Kwansei Gakuin University whose current research interest is creative writing with a link to curriculum development. This

short conference talk approached the topic of text selection from the perspective of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Texts in literature classes can sometimes have clear connections to global issues but should be carefully selected for aspects such as appropriate topic and level of difficulty. Draper referred to the examples of *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini and *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood as texts frequently used in language arts classes. Although these may be useful texts in some contexts, Draper illustrated how such challenging texts may require in-depth pre-teaching before they could be utilised in Japanese classrooms. Using the example of the short story *Hey, Come on Out* by Shinishi Hoshi, Draper explained how the use of Japanese texts can enable a sense of engagement with the stories. His students responded positively to the selected texts and through a variety of reading and post-reading Draper described how literature-based activities can encourage and increase learners' knowledge of global issues.

Creative Writing: A Novel Process for EFL Success by Darin Harrell and Paul Goldberg from XReading

For teachers working with literature in different contexts, connecting the real lives of students and their reading experiences can be a challenge. In this presentation, session participants learned about one successful project combining reading and writing. Darin Harrell and Paul Goldberg co-presented on creative writing with high school students. Goldberg represented the extensive reading online tool X-Reading, and Harrell is a new LiLT member at large and has been working in Tokyo in high schools for a number of years. In this presentation, the two described a project in which students created fictional stories as ebooks and then published them online for other language learners to read. Together the two presenters discussed the stages in planning the project and offered advice for others who may be asking students to write their own books. One example was a book entitled *Changing Lives*, which had around 5500 words and was introduced with the blurb "This is a book about the challenges of being popular and knowing who your real friends are". The short text looked to be appealing and interesting for teenage readers. The books have been added to the library available online on ER Central and have already received positive feedback from peers. Readers on ER Central can grade the writing according to comprehension, difficulty and readability. The timeline for his project was around five months,

going through the stages of 1) drafting 2) writing 3) peer editing 4) self-editing and 5) publishing. Both presenters discussed future plans for the creative writing project, which may include a creative writing competition in the future.

A New Series of Graded Readers from Atama-ii Books by Marcos Benevides and J. V. Chen

In this promotional presentation, publisher and series editor Marcos Benevides introduced Atama-ii's multipath series and new *What If ...?* series. Each book in the multipath series has eight endings and is written in the second person, making them interesting for language learners and suitable for the classroom or extensive reading. However, Benevides mentioned that the primary disadvantage of this format is that the stories are simple, and there is limited opportunity for character development. In the company's new *What If ...?* series, the second person point of view is retained, but each story has only two endings, allowing for more detailed plots and characters. The books in this series are in the romance genre. In *Rock Candy*, you are chaperoning a K-pop star and fall in love, and in *Kiss & Tell*, you are an exchange student who is attracted to two people. Because "you" is never described, the main character of the books could be imagined as any gender, age, or race. In the second half of the presentation, J. V. Chen, co-author of *Good Waves* from the *What If ...?* series, read from the book and presented results of a small survey she conducted on extensive reading. Chen is a student at J.F. Obirin University and enrolled in Benevides' Creative Writing and Publishing seminar class. The books in the new series are about 3,000 words long and include colorful illustrations. They will be available in digital, print, and audio and integrated with Xreading and MReader.

Creativity in Education: Putting Japan in a Global Context by LiLT Journal editor Cameron Smith

In this presentation, Cameron Smith considered how creativity is promoted in different education systems. He first discussed how Japanese education documents promote creativity implicitly in pursuit of economic and social renewal. They stress the importance of knowledge, collaboration and, increasingly, diversity and foreign language education. By contrast, he argued, most countries have taken an individualist cognitive approach focussed largely on the future demands of work. This approach frames creativity as a general thinking skill and

deprecates content study, particularly foreign languages, as less relevant. He then discussed two challenges to the cognitive approach. First, creativity appears to be a domain-specific skill supported by subject knowledge. Second, real-world creative activity occurs typically in teams rather than individuals. Therefore, sociocultural models stressing interaction, exchange, and diversity capture the process better than cognitive models. Finally, he discussed the recent “humanitarian turn” in the OECD *Education 2030* project which appears to reflect these critiques. It addresses social and environmental as well as economic concerns, reasserts the importance of disciplinary knowledge, and emphasises diversity and cooperation. He concluded that, as Japanese policy suggests, there is a direct role for modern languages in promoting creativity in education.

The Business Side of Independent Writing and Publishing by Gregg McNabb

Gregg McNabb, LiLT Membership Chair and author of *Reading On* textbooks, presented as part of the Materials Writers SIG Forum titled *The Business Side of Independent Writing and Publishing*. In his talk, McNabb shared his experiences writing and publishing his own textbooks. He covered the basics of getting ISBN and JAN codes in addition to points to consider when choosing images, such as image size, resolution, and the amount of ink required. Independent authors not only write, design, and publish their own books, but also manage business and marketing tasks. Therefore, it is necessary for them to analyze and evaluate the marketplace in order to identify what differentiates their book from similar books. To treat writing as a business, he recommends keeping proper records, putting a value on one’s time, and pricing appropriately. As a final word of advice, he urged the audience to carefully consider personal bias and how it might affect textbook content, and as a result, the adoption rate by teachers and universities.

A Storytelling Workshop: Lessons from Performative Language in Translation by Joshua Solomon and Megumi Tada

Although the Tsugaru dialect and local traditions are in danger of being lost, efforts are being made by a group, *Wa no mukashiko* which performs stories in the local vernacular at community venues. At Hirosaki University in Aomori Prefecture, Joshua Solomon and Megumi Tada facilitated an innovative workshop on Tsugaru stories which used a CLIL approach to teach both

language and regional studies. Japanese and international university students enrolled in the workshop watched performances by members of the local storytelling group and studied their use of voice, rhythm, and gestures. Working with the written texts and translations of the stories, they practiced performing them in English. The storytellers provided feedback on the students’ performance techniques, and the facilitators provided instruction on English pronunciation and use. On the final day of the workshop, students performed the oral stories to audience members via Zoom. The stories were culturally relevant and familiar, and some students remembered hearing similar tales when they were young. The presenters mentioned learners’ emotional investment in the stories and the process of intralingual translation (Japanese vernacular to standard Japanese, plain English to literary English) as areas of interest. They finished the session by encouraging attendees to think of ways to combine creative language use with community outreach and local topics.

Gathering Students’ perspectives on anecdotes and L2 Identity Formation by Joachim Castellano

Joachim Castellano works at Aichi Prefectural University and is currently a PhD student looking at learners’ uses of stories and narratives in L2 settings. He is currently researching anecdotes as an under-researched yet potentially rich area of storytelling in daily life. Storytelling exists in all cultures and popular storytelling in education includes children’s nursery rhymes, as well as fables and ballads. In this presentation Castellano explained how he is particularly interested in identity and storytelling and how these may be connected and can develop together. Anecdotes differ from other kinds of presentations in the tone and purpose, as well as how the audience will react when listening to an anecdote. The presentation first described some justification for using anecdotes and then outlined how lessons on anecdotes could help learners to build confidence in their speaking skills. Students delivered their anecdotes without scripts and the reflective comments from the activities were collected in narrative frames. The results of his pilot study (N=28) revealed that a variety of emotions were included in the anecdotes, and that the selected anecdotes were revealing in relation to identity development. Supporting learners by helping them improve their templates to use allows for scaffolded learning. Those working with learners at

different levels of English proficiency may be interested in using storytelling activities such as anecdotes.

Promoting Multimodal Literacy in EFL Class with a Biographical Picture book by Bethany Lacy

Bethany Lacy from Korea University delivered a presentation titled *Promoting Multimodal Literacy in EFL Classes with a Biographical Picture Book*. Authentic picture books can be enjoyed by children, older readers, and language learners, and they offer various benefits; for example, readers can enjoy both the words and pictures. For a series of lessons with one Japanese middle school student, she used *Lotte's Magical Paper Puppets: The Woman Behind the First Animated Feature Film*, written by Brooke Harman and illustrated by Kathryn Carr. The book is a biographical picture book set during World War II about Lotte Reiniger, the multiplane camera, and animation history. During each reading session, they first discussed the images without the text, and she encouraged the student to rely on background information and previous knowledge to make inferences about the illustrations. Then they read the text, discussed comprehension questions, and clarified vocabulary words. Over the course of the reading sessions, the images and text were treated equally. After finishing the book, the student was assigned to watch a video of Lotte Reiniger's silent films on YouTube which they discussed in the next session. Lacy administered a vocabulary pretest and posttest, and many of the target vocabulary words were action verbs from the book, such as sweeping, cheering, and winking. The vocabulary posttest showed statistically significant results, and Lacy pointed out that the results of her case study suggest that picture books can be helpful for not only vocabulary learning, but also developing critical reading skills and a basic understanding of complex concepts, processes, or historical events.

Reflections on the conference (Mary)

We were thrilled to welcome Greta Gorsuch as our featured speaker in 2021 because of her scholarship in second language reading fluency and comprehension. Recently, she has published literacy and ESL fiction books with Gemma Open Door and Wayzgoose Press, including *Post Office on the Tokaido*, *The Night Telephone*, and *Key City on the River*. Her books, *The Visitors* and *Queen Serene*, were entered in the Language Learner Literature Award sponsored by the Extensive Reading Foundation. As a result, her presentations were attractive for members of not only the LiLT SIG, but

also the Extensive Reading SIG, College and University Educators SIG, and others. Her featured speaker workshop and short talk were both well-attended and drew on her experiences in Asia yet offered new perspectives on using narrative fiction in language learning contexts.

As this was the second time for the JALT International Conference to be held online, attendees were more familiar with the format and took advantage of opportunities to make professional connections before, during, and after the event. For example, after Gorsuch's presentation on Monday, a few participants had the opportunity to have a short question and answer session with her in the continued presentation discussion breakout room provided by the JALT conference organizing team. In addition, attendees were invited to join the JALT2021 Conference Discord server, where they could post introductions, ask for help, contact sponsors, or make connections with others. In fact, each SIG had a dedicated channel on the platform, and although these channels were relatively quiet, they provided another avenue for sharing information. At present, the [conference site](#) on Edzila is still available, and participants can access the conference information, handbook, and content shared by the presenters.

Reflections on the conference (Tara)

As language teachers working with literary texts, we are often asked to justify the inclusion of literature into our classes. Perhaps the most commonly asked question about literature is how it helps learners with their L2 and additional language (L+) learning. We are aware of the position from Paran (2008), who distinguishes between teaching literature and teaching language using literature. These are two different things, although the relative position of any teacher on the scale between literature teaching and language teaching may vary. The talks in this conference report show how lively the discussion about language and literature continues. Beyond the well-trodden path of personal growth, cultural growth, and language learning models (Collie & Slater, 1987), contemporary concerns around the uses of literature for language learning at the particular time concern additional issues. Literature may prove relevant to learners' lives because it empowers and engages them.

A second point to consider is that online conferences are no longer new and exciting in this second year of the pandemic despite the benefits that they can offer. As we write this conference report, many

teachers are still working from home or are conducting so-called 'mixed' classes with students joining their lessons online, while some are also teaching lessons in the classroom. Furthermore, educators around Japan are also working with unusual circumstances within the classrooms, with mask-wearing as standard and with the as-yet unresolved situation for international students who cannot enter Japan because of ongoing visa restrictions. With the backdrop of this situation, the conference was part of the professional development for teachers in the current academic year.

This report aimed to reflect on our personal experiences of the conference and summarize selected talks related to literature in language learning. Reflecting on the pandemic while it is still ongoing creates the opportunity to talk through and discuss our current feelings about these unusual global events. While many things have changed irrevocably over the past 18 months, some things have continued reliably. We continue to teach new classes, new students, and new texts. Learners bring their creative ideas to every lesson. Those things are constant. Our narrative here offers a view from inside the pandemic while thinking forward to how things will be in the future when we hope that all of the current worries are behind us. This conference reflection is a way of considering how the pandemic may have set in motion some critical changes in education that will affect educators and the language learning environments we work in for years to come.

Biographies

Mary Hillis teaches English at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto. She has an MA in English with a concentration in TESOL. Her professional interests are writing centers, literature in language teaching, and professional development. <mhillis@fc.ritsumei.ac.jp>

Tara McIlroy (PhD, University of Birmingham, UK) is an Associate Professor at Rikkyo University in Tokyo. Her current research interests are uses of literature in the language classroom, teacher education and language curriculum design. <mcilroy@rikkyo.ac.jp>

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