Call for Proposals

Issue 12 of the Learner Development Journal (LDJ12)

Theme:	Curriculum Development as Learner Development: Practitioner Perspectives on Design, Implementation, and Reflection
Deadline:	February 28th 2027
Email:	ldj.issue12@gmail.com
Editors:	Kimberly Abella & Ralph Artugue

Learner development stands as an area of critical focus for learner-centred curricula. Yet, how do those involved in curriculum-making construct and support the development of learners in the design and implementation of curricula? And how do teachers and learners make sense of the curricula they work with? What puzzles, contradictions, and challenges come up for them about learner development?

We are two language teachers and practitioner-researchers interested in making the often-invisible processes of curriculum development visible and explicit in relation to learner development in action. For us, curriculum serves as the backbone of teaching and learning, articulating the underlying vision, rationale, and aims that are intended to inform and support teachers' and learners' classroom practices. By contrast, we see syllabus as the visible body built around this backbone, comprising the specific cycles, stages, units, activities, materials, and assessments that bring the curriculum to life in the classroom.

For issue 12 of the Learner Development Journal (LDJ12), we invite practitioners to reflect on their experiences, successes, and challenges in designing and implementing curricula for learner development—including sequencing content, selecting materials, organising activities, addressing learners' interests and goals, and designing assessments that foster learner development over time. We welcome teacher and learner reflections on what happens when curriculum guidelines meet classroom realities, including gaps between intended and actual learner proficiency, institutional constraints, and the adjustments practitioners make to align an educational plan with a group of learners in all their complex diversity.

In the inquiries that will make up LDJ12, we also wish to explore with you how learners engage over time with both the curriculum in action and their own evolving development as learners within a classroom or a course, and as active participants in wider society beyond their immediate context of learning.

Overview

If you are interested in collaboratively exploring questions like the following, please consider submitting a proposal for LDJ12:

a) What choices do teachers make when adapting or designing curricula to support learner development, and what values or assumptions shape those choices?
b) What happens when a curriculum intended to support learner development does not work as planned, and how do practitioners notice and interpret that gap?
c) How do teachers revise, adapt, or reform their curricula to better support learner development in response to what did not work, and what do these coping strategies look like in practice?
d) When practitioners collaborate on curriculum design for learner development, how do they find consensus amid differing views, and in what ways does this collaboration among teachers support learner development?
e) How do institutional constraints, such as time, resources, policy, and class size, shape what is possible when designing curricula for learner development?
f) What can teachers in different contexts, including levels, subjects, and institutions, learn from one another's curriculum choices for supporting learner development, even when their teaching situations look very different?
g) How, and why, do curricula empower, constrain, or undermine learner development?

For LDJ12, we hope to gather a wide range of practitioners to put together a genuine collection of inquiry and writing centered on how curricula can be built and revised in relation to the complexity of learner development in practice. Contributions are welcome from a broad mix of language teaching and learning contexts, both within Japan and beyond, spanning primary through university level, as well as other settings where this theme feels relevant. We hope contributors will draw on both individual and shared perspectives from practitioners and learners alike, grounded in real practice and developed through inquiry, reflection, and practitioner research.

If your interests connect to curriculum and learner development other than those covered above, or if you have questions before submitting a proposal, please reach out to the LDJ12 editing team at ldj.issue12@gmail.com.

Possible Areas of Activity and Inquiry

Specifically, for LDJ12, we hope contributors will be interested in exploring areas such as:

a) Retrospective accounts of a curriculum, set of resources, or sequence of activities designed to support learner development, tracing the original design choices, what happened once it met the classroom, and the reasoning behind any reform or re-implementation that followed.
b) Documentation of coping mechanisms teachers have relied on when a curriculum has not unfolded as planned, including how the gap between plan and practice was noticed, interpreted, and responded to by the teacher, and how these responses shape the development of learners.

c) Case studies of a single class, cohort, or program showing real-time curriculum decisions in support of learner development, drawn from lesson plans, teaching journals, or classroom artifacts.
d) Paired and multi-voice accounts, such as co-authored reflections between collaborating teachers, or teacher-learner dialogues, showing how curriculum choices affecting learner development are negotiated among different stakeholders.
e) Comparative reflections across contexts, levels, institutions, or subject areas, surfacing what different curriculum styles and rationales for learner development can offer one another.
f) Grounded, practice-based accounts of a co-constructed learner development curriculum that are still in progress, including revision processes and the values or assumptions that have shaped subsequent adaptations.
g) How AI integration can be used to support, accelerate, or disrupt learner development, and the effects it has on student autonomy.

Developing a Community of Practice Together

Our goal is to make the collaborative process of LDJ12 supportive and inclusive. We hope to build a community of practice where contributors feel comfortable sharing the messier, in-progress side of curriculum and learner development work, not merely neatly packaged and absolute results. We warmly welcome co-constructed inquiries, co-authorship, and joint participation of learners alongside teachers in the writing and reflection process.

As a contributor to LDJ12, you can expect to engage with other contributors at various points while developing your writing and reflections, whether through sharing early drafts, responding to others' curriculum accounts, or comparing experiences across different teaching contexts. To support this, we will offer opportunities to discuss your practices, give feedback on writing in progress, and take part in online and/or face-to-face conversations with other LDJ12 contributors, including the editors.

LDJ12 will feature two main types of writing: **Stories of Practice** and **Practice-Related Reviews**.

Stories of Practice. We are looking to feature 6-10 contributions, each between 4,000-6,000 words with a clear personal and reflective voice. We encourage contributors to LDJ12 to:

a) approach their writing personally and reflectively, letting their own voice and the voices of learners (and other stakeholders) shape the piece
b) bring in perspectives beyond their own where possible, whether from learners, colleagues, or others connected to the curriculum work focused on
c) root their writing in real, practice-based questions or tensions they have encountered while designing, delivering, or reforming a curriculum
d) connect their account to wider conversations in the field on curriculum development and learner development.

Practice-Related Reviews. We invite reflective commentaries of about 2,500 – 3,000 words linking your reading of one of the following books to your own local curriculum development and learner development practices and concerns. Reviewing specific chapters or parts of the book is welcome.

- **Beames, S., Higgins, P., Nicol, R., & Smith, H.** (2024). *Outdoor learning across the curriculum: Theory and guidelines for practice* (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003010890
- **Bollas, A., & Bennett, C.** (2026). *Designing curricula for learner autonomy and engagement: Connecting notional hours, blended and self-regulated learning*. Springer Nature. https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-032-13520-9
- **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.** (2024). *Curriculum flexibility and autonomy: Promoting a thriving learning environment*. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/eccbbac2-en
- **Stacki, S. L., Caskey, M. M., & Mertens, S. B.** (Eds.). (2020). *Curriculum, instruction, and assessment: Intersecting new needs and new approaches*. Information Age Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-64802-030-8

Staged Development of Research and Writing

Rather than working exclusively towards a full draft from the outset, we feel it is more productive and enriching to build on, rework, and extend your Stories of Practices and Practice-Related Reviews in stages by sharing incomplete drafts, discussing them, and gathering peer responses from other contributors. This will be in addition to receiving later feedback from LDJ Review Network members and the LDJ12 editors. This staged development includes:

Deadline for proposals	February 28, 2027
Notification of acceptance	March 14, 2027
First pieces of writing	May 9, 2027
Second pieces of writing	September 12, 2027
Third pieces of writing	February 27, 2028
Finalization/Finalisation of all texts	September 24, 2028
Publication	November 26, 2028

Choice of Open or Blind Peer Review

In keeping with established LDJ practices, contributors may choose between blind peer review and open peer review by members of the Review Network and guest reviewers invited for LDJ12. For more details, see https://ldjournal.ld-sig.org/peer-review-process/.

Initial Inquiries and Proposals (Deadline)

1. If you wish to check anything with us ahead of sending in your proposal, please email the editors, Kimberly Abella and Ralph Artugue, at ldj.issue12@gmail.com, and we will get back to you as soon as we can.
2. The deadline for all proposals is Sunday, February 28th, 2027.
3. For your proposal, please include the following information in a Word .docx file:
    - **Name(s)**
    - **Institutional affiliation(s) and country of work/residence**
    - **E-mail address(es)**
    - **Member of JALT Learner Development SIG? Yes/No** (Note: You do not need to be a member of the LD SIG to contribute to LDJ.)
4. Start with a brief story about yourself and your working context(s), and your interest in exploring curriculum development and learner development through inclusive practitioner research.
5. Indicate which type of writing you plan to do:
    a) **For STORIES OF PRACTICES**, write around 500-600 words to introduce your ideas and proposed focus. Also include your experiences and/or concerns about writing in a personalised/personalized reflective way.
    b) **For PRACTICE-RELATED REVIEWS**, write about 300-400 words, identifying the book you are interested in reviewing and why, and focusing on practices and questions that you plan to relate your review to.
6. Send your completed proposal as a **Word.docx** attachment to the editors using the tag line **[NAME/S] _LDJ12_Proposal**

Contacting us

If you have any questions or concerns along the way, please feel free to email us at ldj.issue12@gmail.com, and we will get back to you as soon as we can. (The Call for Proposals was officially released in October 2026, on different email discussion lists, Facebook, and other social media platforms, as well as on the LDJ website: https://ldjournal.ld-sig.org/issues/ldj12-call-for-proposals/ .)

Looking forward to hearing from you —

Best regards,

Kimberly Abella & Ralph Artugue

Kyoto and Tokyo, September 2026