again!"), and *physiological responses* ("I feel extremely anxious, I cannot do it!"). In L2 acquisition, these perceptions can influence whether or not students participate in positive learning behavior, such as willingly and earnestly participating in exercises designed to elicit meaningful speaking practice.

Although helping my students achieve a certain level of language proficiency is important, I have found that I should also consider the development of students' perceived self-efficacy. I became interested in PSE through research into factors influencing students' willingness to produce output; however, perceived self-efficacy is an important concept in many areas of L2 acquisition. I have heard a student say many times, "I'm just not good at languages." Though this statement paints the issue in broad strokes, it stems from a low perception of self-efficacy. A final point that I would like to highlight about PSE is that it is task and domain specific. A student can have high speaking PSE when conversing with friends but have low speaking PSE when it comes to addressing the class as a whole. Also, a student can have high listening PSE but low speaking PSE. When a student claims not to be good at languages, it can be worthwhile to pinpoint the reason for this statement.

In sum, in order to encourage better learning habits and build motivation, I am interested in approaches that can positively influence students' perceived self-efficacy. How a student perceives his or her competence can affect behavior and motivation. Furthermore, motivation, potentially more so than aptitude, can be a strong predictor for successful language development and acquisition. Therefore, I believe that PSE is a construct that warrants further research in how it relates to learner development in second language acquisition.

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A Storm in a Booth - Learner Autonomy in Japanese and *eikaiwa*

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Hi everyone, my name is Daniel Hooper and I recently started working as a lecturer in the English Language Institute (ELI) at Kanda University of International Studies in April. I have been teaching in Japan for ten years with much of that time spent working in *eikaiwa* schools. I joined the Learner Development SIG last year and have found it to be a warm and welcoming group of people who are earnestly trying to foster student development. Hopefully this short story will serve as a cheery "hello" to other LD SIG members from someone who was greatly shaped by learner autonomy, and who later fought to promote it in *eikaiwa* schools.

I guess a decent metaphor for my initial relationship with language learning autonomy would be a driftwood raft in shark infested waters. It wasn't pretty: shoddily put together and lacking

engineering know-how but sturdy and buoyant enough to stop me becoming lunch. Left to fend for myself in rural Saitama, my first foray into self-directed learning stemmed from necessity rather than any intellectual belief in concepts like "learner autonomy," mainly because I wasn't aware that such ideas existed. The attractive notion that I would simply "soak the language up over time" quickly evaporated as I met a number of other teachers who had been deftly evaded by Japanese competence despite living here for around a decade. Without any deliberate attempt to study the language many still needed to pull out the "look angry and speak loudly in English" approach whenever they encountered a communicative hurdle. At a diminutive 165 centimeters tall, I thought I had better prepare a backup plan to the intimidation card and so got out the textbooks.

But they weren't really working for me.

Neither were online classes that I started taking in 2009, where essentially I was guided through another textbook filled with "textbooky" sentences of tennis games in the park, the exploits of "Taro" and "Ken," and missed buses that failed to either stimulate me or take root in my brain. In the end, I felt I wasn't getting enough bang for my buck and instead opted for the more economic option of a library card. I started borrowing children's books on a range of topics (usually in the afternoon when kids were in school, as I felt less creepy as a 30-year-old man thumbing through books on dinosaurs and bullet trains). Reading books in Japanese was a valuable experience for me as it both increased my linguistic knowledge and allowed me to regain the childlike curiosity I felt as a kid in the village library where my mother worked, surrounded by unfamiliar and exciting words and pictures. These experiences motivated me to eventually strive to create more opportunities related to personalized and autonomous learning for my students in *eikaiwa*.

Later, as an *eikaiwa* instructor I was put in charge of the same textbooky language that had failed to invigorate my own language studies and began to see myself in the students who sat in the clinical-looking cubicles for the same 40-minute stretch each week. Just as with my experience, I failed in many cases to register any real linguistic development in students as they stumbled through the "Complaining at a hotel" role play that they had done eight times before, but would in all likelihood never have a use for outside of our grey little booth. Eventually, I began to offer graded readers to my students for out-of-class study. This was followed by spaced repetition flash card applications and websites featuring graded news articles. I was excited about my job for the first time in years.

But then… a blip. That was all. The students didn't seem interested. But why? I had read all of the studies, attended the seminars, shown enthusiasm, and offered support. Why wouldn't students want to use free materials? Weren't they paying for classes? They should be motivated, shouldn't they? I was desperate to understand. I read articles on everything I could find about *eikaiwa*, on Charisma Men (Bailey, 2007), educational fad-dieting (Sapunaru-Tamas & Tamas, 2012), and leisure and consumption (Kubota, 2011). I also was intrigued that other attempts to develop learner autonomy, much like mine, often fell disappointingly flat (Makino, 2016; Shigeo-Brown, 2005).

Since then, I have continued to push onwards in my mission of promoting out-of-class study in a world I feel constantly undulates between promise and futility. My relationship with the *eikaiwa* industry has been at times stormy, at times almost oppressively calm, but always with the hope that things can be better. The conversation school industry is, in many ways, almost untouched by academic inquiry. This is perhaps partly due to a lack of "researchers" working in *eikaiwa* and partly because of the bad "McEnglish" (McNeill, 2004) reputation that these schools have both deservedly and

undeservedly made for themselves. I see this both as an opportunity (selfishly as a researcher) and a desperate problem (as someone who watched students' money change hands week after week). The daily ups and downs of my *eikaiwa* classrooms as well as the research on *eikaiwa* that I discovered later in my career have often given me more questions to consider rather than settling old ones. *Eikaiwa* is a puzzle that I sometimes feel stubbornly does not want to be solved. However, over the years, I have met students who have inspired me and convinced me that they deserve better than "one size fits all." Maybe for that simple reason alone, I have grown to believe that the world of *eikaiwa* and the promotion of learner autonomy within it is something that deserves my time and effort in the years to come.

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It's Good to Be the Jack

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What do the words *skateboarding*, *DJ*, *interpreting*, *Aikido*, *wedding pastor*, *surfing*, *Bikkurimark*, *father*, *associate professor*, *snowboarding*, and *MegaBikk* all have in common?

Well, I suppose the only answer could be, me. I was a happy child raised in a Christian home, the younger brother with a flair for adventure. A lack of focus on any one thing led me to try a little of everything. While I like team sports, I'm happiest riding sideways on any type of board. My studies were broad and *Bikkurimark* is my identity as a computer graphic designer, which is what I graduated from the University of Central Florida with, back in 1997. However, a love for interaction with people led me to become a teacher instead. From the Eastern seaboard of the United States to Japan as a JET working for MEXT I landed in Matsuyama, Ehime, right after university.

Living in Ehime was a great chance to learn Japanese, and, while studying the language, I also took up DJing, which began mostly to avoid keeping up with my best friend from