

**Mark James
(1996~98)**

During my two years at LIOJ, I was an instructor (Community Program, Business Communication Program, High School Intensives) and program developer. As I look back, I remember an experience that was rich for several reasons. For example, the flexible, supportive environment was ideal for exploring ideas from the degree in education I had just finished. Also, as I learned more about LIOJ, I became increasingly excited that I was part of an organization with such a strong record of activity in and commitment to the field of second language education. Finally, I was consistently impressed by the professionalism of the organization and my colleagues; this is something that I now realize is quite rare.

It has been four years since I left Odawara, and as I near completion of a Ph.D. in second language education at the University of Toronto, I think back to two LIOJ experiences in particular that had an obvious influence on what I am doing now. First, although it was a struggle at the time, the task of developing the LIOJ curriculum stimulated my interest in both curriculum design and teaching methodology. That experience has since been a reference point for curriculum work that I have done in various settings, and has shaped my doctoral research. Second, the challenge of co-editing the LIOJ commemorative publication *Perspectives on Secondary School EFL Education (POSSEE)* showed me how rewarding writing and publishing can be and helped me to develop skills that are of great value in my current work.

To sum up, I feel extremely fortunate to have been part of LIOJ. The experience helped me to grow tremendously professionally, giving me a strong push along a rewarding career path. I also have many happy personal memories, like laughing with students and colleagues during evening programs and High School Intensives, meeting interesting and interested educators during the Summer Workshop, and quietly enjoying the views from the roof of Asia Center. Overall, the experience was wonderful, and I am anxious to come back for a visit soon.