

**Natalie Williamson  
(1996~99)**

The year that I found LIOJ (1996), was the year that I also found my (now) husband in Japan. I loved LIOJ for all that I learned there as a teacher, and for allowing me to stay in Japan with my new partner. When I joined LIOJ, I was a reasonably inexperienced teacher in comparison to my colleagues; and like a sponge, I soaked up any advice, ideas and knowledge that came my way. What struck me initially was the professional attitude of the other teachers and staff at LIOJ, and the impression that LIOJ was somehow a cut above the rest. I was proud to be a teacher there and appreciative of all that I could learn.

While at LIOJ, I was involved in teaching the Community Program, the Business English course, and, of course, High School Intensives. There were times when my energy was pushed to the absolute limit. Aaahhh...High School Intensives...After a full week of teaching community students, a couple of busloads of giggling high school students would arrive at Asia Center and the fun would begin. We would run these students through class after fun class of English. At about 8 p.m., just when I thought my head was about to spin off its axis, I would find myself standing on a stage in front of 80 high schoolers, doing a really bad impression of John Travolta, teaching them the dance from Saturday Night Fever!

I taught at LIOJ for three years, and the experiences I had there are permanently etched in my memory. I am now teaching ESL in Perth, Australia, and often when I find myself in a challenging situation, I fall back on the skills that I gained at LIOJ. I was stretched to my limits, but I will never forget the other teachers, staff, students and Workshop participants that I met.