

The LLL SIG Newsletter

**A Program to Inspire and Energize:
The LLL-SIG Mini-Conference at Tokyo Keizai University
*Joseph Dias (Program Chair)***

The LLL-SIG's mini-conference was much less *mini* than in previous years, thanks to its concurrence with the ETJ (English Teachers in Japan) Conference and English Language Teaching Expo. Other JALT organizations represented at the event included: West Tokyo JALT, Tokyo JALT, Yokohama JALT, and JALT Critical Thinking SIG. Peter Ross, of our LLL-SIG, and David Paul, the founder of ETJ, deserve kudos for arranging the facilities and coordinating this large-scale event, which was held at Tokyo Keizai University on October 1, 2011.

These well-attended presentations, all of which took place in our designated room at the conference, made up the LLL-SIG program:

1. **TADASHI ISHIDA**: Older students as both teachers and learners
2. **YOKO WAKUI**: Language for better communication: Three case studies of senility, anxiety disorder, and stress
3. **N. KINAMI, M. YAMASAKI, and T. MORIOKA**: How cooperative learning, learner autonomy, and self-motivating strategies help EFL learners maintain their motivation
4. **DON MAYBIN**: A language training website that bridges the "digital divide"
5. **JASON CHARE**: The challenges of mental health in Japan after March 11
6. **JUNKO FUJIO**: English Clubs: Learning English without the guidance of teachers

Here are summaries of the presentations submitted by the presenters themselves, along with commentary added to some of them by the program chair. Brief biographies of the presenters follow each of the summaries. Photos were taken by the program chair, Joseph Dias.

10:00-10:45 slot: TADASHI ISHIDA

TITLE: Older Students as both Teachers and Learners

SUMMARY: The presenter discussed how he has helped promote international understanding and intercultural communication between Japanese and non-Japanese people through the medium of English. This has been achieved by having adult learners hold demonstrations for foreign visitors to Japan about such things as calligraphy, the

The LLL SIG Newsletter

tea ceremony, putting on a kimono, and the playing of traditional Japanese musical instruments. These foreign visitors are also matched with the adult learners, who serve as volunteer tour guides. The presentation ended with a case study illustrating what happened at a festival where international students from Waseda University carried a portable shrine with the help of residents of a downtown Tokyo community.

BIO: Tadashi Ishida is the director of NPO Grassroots Exchange Organization. He has been teaching English to senior citizens at a community center in Tokyo, sponsored by the Taito Ward Board of Education for the past 28 years. In addition, he somehow found the time to serve as the vice president of JALT for 5 years, and was the founder of its Lifelong Language Learning SIG.

11:15-12:00 slot: YOKO WAKUI

TITLE: Language for better communication: Three case studies of senility, anxiety disorder, and stress

SUMMARY: Teachers need to know how to communicate more effectively with students who are under great stress or who may even be mentally ill. The presenter, who has been studying psychotherapy for years, talked about individuals around her, including students, who are mentally troubled. In the first 10 minutes, the presenter reported on her qualitative analysis of her interactions with a senile patient (her mother), a university student in an English writing class who had an anxiety disorder, as well as university students in an English listening class who were under considerable stress. She then spoke about the results of her qualitative research and introduced six key steps to successful conversations, not only with the mentally compromised, but also with students in general. In the last 15 minutes, the audience was led through an interesting pair activity for communication that has been popular with the presenter's students.

Here are the six steps to successful communication, which Yoko Wakui presented during her talk:

1. Using positive language (e.g., saying "Enjoy the test!" instead of "Don't worry!")
2. Using words which indicate possibility (e.g., "can," "could," rather than, "should," or "must.")

The LLL SIG Newsletter

3. Making cause and effect relationships clear (e.g., "Your lack of participation means that your classmates are deprived of your knowledge and wisdom.")
4. Setting the pace and leading (e.g., make positive statements that are hard for students to disagree with, such as, "You can do it because I've seen you do it before.")
5. Giving embedded suggestions (e.g., Instead of saying "You have to do the assignment." say "I believe you can do it easily.")
6. Chunking up (e.g., Asking questions like "How does x relate to y?" or "What are we trying to achieve here?")

BIO: Yoko Wakui is currently teaching at Aoyama Gakuin University and Ferris University. She is also a practicing therapist. Her interests include lifelong language education, psychology, autonomy, and motivation. She published TOEICテストで730点を目指そう and Learner and teacher autonomy in Japan 2: More autonomy you ask!

12:30-1:15 slot: NORIKO KINAMI, MAYUMI YAMASAKI, and TAKAAKI MORIOKA

TITLE: How cooperative learning, learner autonomy, and self-motivating strategies help EFL learners maintain their motivation

SUMMARY: A lot of English teachers in Japan feel that it is very difficult for university students and adult learners to maintain their L2 motivation. This is because most of them have very few opportunities to use English in their daily lives and it is not necessary for them to continue learning English. Moreover, they do not meet their teacher very often: some learners attend an English class once a week and others meet their teacher twice a month. Even if the teacher succeeds in enhancing the students' motivation in the classroom, many of them cannot maintain their motivation outside of class and they eventually quit studying English. It is obvious that English teachers need to do more to help their university or adult learners maintain their motivation.

The presenters have been doing research on how English teachers in Japan can help university students and adult learners maintain their motivation. Their studies are based on strategies to maintain L2 motivation suggested by Dornyei (2001). In their presentation, they spoke about implementing cooperative learning in English classrooms to maintain and enhance learners' motivation, creating learner autonomy to

The LLL SIG Newsletter

promote self study and lifelong learning of English, and helping learners acquire self-motivating strategies.

Reference: Dornyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

BIOS:

Noriko Kinami (M.S.Ed. in TESOL, Temple University Japan) is an instructor of OTC, Inc (Overseas Training Center). She now teaches English mainly at companies and has been teaching foreign languages (Japanese as a foreign language, Japanese as a second language, and English as a foreign language) for more than fifteen years.

Mayumi Yamasaki (M.S.Ed. in TESOL, Temple University Japan) is an associate professor in the Nursing Department at Kobe Tokiwa University, Hyogo. Her research interests include teaching EFL reading and writing, and developing learner autonomy for nursing students.

Takaaki Morioka (M.S.Ed in TESOL, Temple University Japan) has been teaching English for more than 6 years. He is as an assistant professor at the Osaka University of Commerce. His research interests are in bilingual people's identity and Japanese English learner motivation.

2:15-3:00 slot: DON MAYBIN

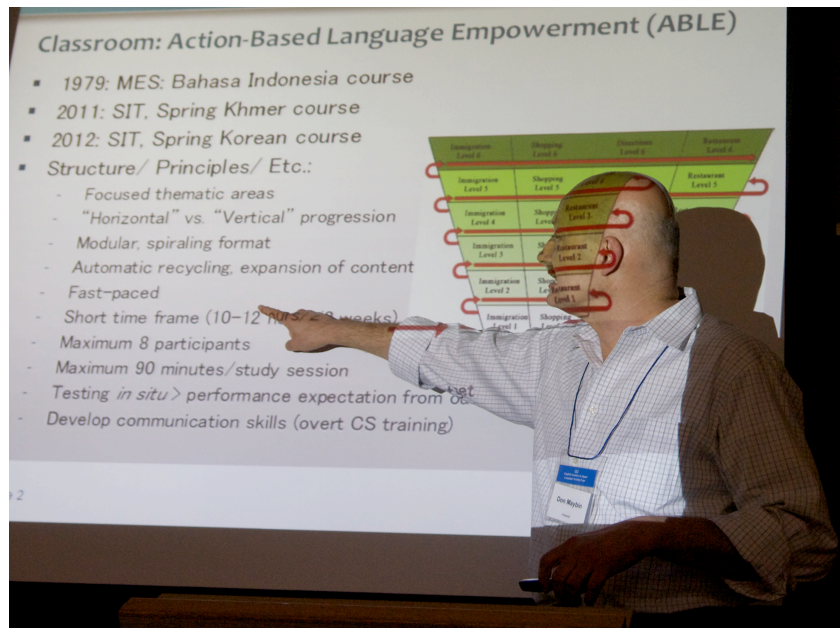
Title: A language training website that bridges the "digital divide"

SUMMARY: Don Maybin, of the Shonan Institute of Technology and co-author of Macmillan Language House's *The Active Learner*, gave a spirited talk entitled "A language training website that bridges the "digital divide," in which he spoke about how classroom-based survival language courses focusing on a variety of foreign languages--from Arabic to Turkish--were being adapted for online use with older learners in mind. Contending that too many e-learning sites assume users are in their 20's and/or in university with advanced technical skills, the speaker spoke of how his team strove to develop a website that could help mature learners easily access courses, while content, visual components and sound data would be readily available. Maybin gave a brief introduction to the structure and principles of the training approach followed by a series of anecdotes on the challenges faced in making online language

The LLL SIG Newsletter

learning accessible for mature learners. The interface issues painstakingly considered by the creators of the course were numerous and intriguing.

BIO: Don Maybin teaches at Shonan Institute of Technology. He is a former director of the Language Institute of Japan and co-author of *The Active Learner* (Macmillan Language House).



Don Maybin explaining his adult language learner-friendly website.

3:30-4:15 slot: JASON CHARE

Title: The Challenges of Mental Health in Japan after March 11

SUMMARY: Jason Chare, Executive Officer and Director of the TELL's Life Line discussed how the organization has been responding to the psychosocial and mental health demands of the multiple 3/11 disasters and its role coordinating efforts with other Life Lines and NGOs. He reported that calls to TELL's Life Line and Counseling Center after the events of March 11 were immediate and the organization began providing crisis response as well as long term support to the community. As an NPO serving the international community in Japan, TELL found itself uniquely placed to help coordinate between international relief agencies and domestic mental health providers. The presenter outlined the range of mental health needs that typically follow a disaster, the role that a "public health model" and "specialized care" can play, and

The LLL SIG Newsletter

detailed TELL's involvement within this framework. He expressed words of caution about the tendency of the media to overstate the likelihood of natural disasters leading to serious mental health issues, as the vast majority of those affected by disasters tend to cope well in the long term and show remarkable resilience.

BIO: Jason Chare has a degree in psychology from University College London (UCL) and a Masters degree in Japanese from the University of Essex. A long term resident of Japan, he has worked mainly within the non-profit sector, most recently as Executive Officer and Director of Life Line Services at the Tokyo English Life Line (TELL). A proponent of the "public health model" of mental health care, he has been involved in organizing community training programs in diverse subjects including, client-centered counseling, substance abuse and suicide.



Jason Chare, Director of Life Line Services at TELL, making a point.

4:45-5:30 slot: JUNKO FUJIO

Title: English Clubs: Learning English without the guidance of teachers

SUMMARY: There are a lot of English-learning groups all over Japan for beginners to advanced learners. Most of them are self-help learning groups without teachers. Their members regularly get together to chat on a variety of topics in English. Curiously, people over 70 years of age, who do not speak English at all in their daily lives, are still very eager to continue their learning in such groups. Junko Fujio, the treasurer of the LLL-SIG and former head of the JALT Central Office, led a fascinating and highly

The LLL SIG Newsletter

interactive session on "English Clubs: Learning English without the guidance of teachers." Some representatives of Bluebells International (BBI), an English-learning/maintenance social club of long standing, kindly joined the session for a Q & A. BBI's International Relations sub-group offers anyone an opportunity to discuss various issues in English as long as they have a sincere desire to exchange views in the target language. Each of their sessions is held in one of the public halls in Chuo Ward. Most of the participants are Japanese, but non-Japanese are welcome. They meet every Saturday from 3:00 PM to 16:45 PM. According to their publicity material:

"A few weeks or so prior to the session, the chairperson is nominated. S/he picks the reference material for discussion from newspapers or magazines such as the New York Times or The Economist, and mails it to the BBI-IR mailing list. The chairperson is responsible for leading the discussion. For example, for the October 1st session Mr. Yoshitaka Mishima, a lawyer, was the chairman and he chose as the topic " U.S. response to 9/11 Plunged Pakistan into Chaos," which was taken from Project Syndicate."

The presentation could have easily been extended for an additional hour, or more, since the participants were so eager to ask questions and speculate about how the experiences of the Bluebells might apply to our teaching/ learning environments. The participants in the panel discussion spoke of their wide-ranging interests, concern with content rather than a painstaking attention to grammatical minutiae, and they demonstrated fearlessness in the face of a room filled with English teachers. So, it was concluded that developing English skills involved attitude and motivation, such as that of the Bluebells International members, rather than specific skills that we as teachers might endeavor to instill in our students. Of course, our university-aged and adult students could certainly benefit from joining in the group's activities as well.

BIO: Having served as the supervisor of the JALT Central Office for 18 years, Junko Fujio currently teaches an English class for older learners and translates publicity materials aimed at non-Japanese residents for a local government.

The LLL SIG Newsletter



Junko Fujio, former supervisor of the JALT Central Office (above) and (from left to right, below) members of BBI-IR, Shinichi Ogawa, Hiroshi Tsujio, and Naoto Odagiri_

