

The LLL SIG Newsletter

The English Language Teaching Expo Review

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The English Language Teaching Expo on the 1st and 2nd of October was my first chance to attend an LLL event outside of the JALT National Conference. It was also my first time to attend an event for English teachers in Japan. As a longtime chapter program chair, please allow me to first view the Expo wearing my program chair's glasses. I will then put on my scholarly spectacles to report on the educational/pedagogical specifics.

The site

The walk to the site (Tokyo Keizai University) from Kokubunji Station was the right distance for a nice workout, but not so far that one would be out of breath. The well-manicured tree-lined campus put me in the proper state of mind for the expo.

Attendees

At most JALT conferences I have attended about half of the attendees have been Japanese, half have been from English-as-a-first-language countries, and a sprinkling have come from other countries. At this event I noticed that about one-third were from each of the Philippines, Japan and the English-as-a-first-language countries.

Organization

There was a well-organized registration desk, a conference booklet and an educational materials/snack area. Light lunches and drinks were also sold. As well as a one-hour lunch break, there were 30-minute breaks between the 45-minute presentations, which was a welcome change of pace. ETJ appeared to be the main organizer with good cooperation from other organizations and publishers.

LLL Participation

Our SIG, the Critical Thinking SIG and three chapters (Tokyo, West Tokyo, and Yokohama) made up the JALT presence. The LLL SIG Mini-conference had a strong presence in this big event. Our presentations were on Saturday and were well attended.

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A very short summary of the presentations.

Older Students as Both Teachers and Learners by Tadashi Ishida

Tadashi explained the activities of his NPO Grassroots Exchange Organization and how he has helped promote international understanding and intercultural communication between Japanese and non-Japanese people through the medium of English. Special mention was made of the activities involving senior citizens.

Language for Better Communication by Yoko Wakui

Yoko presented her experiences and findings concerning three case studies of learners experiencing senility, anxiety disorder, and stress. The presentation was a bit sobering, but her suggestions for coping with these difficult situations was valuable.

How Cooperative Learning, Learner Autonomy, and Self-motivating Strategies Help EFL Learners Maintain Their Motivation

by Noriko Kinami, Mayumi Yamasaki, and Takaaki Morioka

The presenters introduced ways of implementing cooperative learning in English classrooms to maintain learners' motivation, creating learner autonomy to promote lifelong learning of English, and helping learners acquire self-motivating strategies. Much of the presentation was based on motivational strategies suggested by Dornyei.

A Language Training Website that Bridges the “Digital Divide” by Don Maybin

Don discussed challenges faced in making online language learning accessible for mature learners. He described a language training website which addresses issues surrounding the “digital divide,” particularly the barriers to accessing online information and training for specific demographic groups, including older learners.

The Challenges of Mental Health in Japan after March 11 by Jason Chare

Jason described the activities of the Tokyo English Life Line (TELL), specifically how the organization responded to the psychosocial and mental health demands of the recent disaster in Tohoku and its role in coordinating efforts with other Life Lines and NGOs.

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English Clubs: Learning English Without the Guidance of Teachers by Junko Fujio

Junko gave an overview of English-learning self-help groups which do not have a formal teacher. She focused on those for older learners and described their organization, goals, and purposes. The presentation was assisted by members of one such group.