

# The LLL SIG Newsletter

## Coordinator's Message

Tadashi Ishida

I hope this newsletter finds you in good spirits. While the leaves are changing color and the weather is getting a little chilly, I thought I would share some SIG news with you.

First, we have a change in our officers and a new name added to our leadership. Julia Harper, who had done a wonderful job over the past eight years (such a long time!), stepped down as Publications Chair and Kazuko Unosawa took her place. Thank you, Julia, for all your work for the SIG. Welcome to Kazuko Unosawa. We are glad to have you on board.

## The LLL SIG Officers (2012-2013)

Coordinator	Tadashi Ishida
Treasurer	Junko Fujio
Program Chair	Joseph Dias
Membership Chair	Yoko Wakui
Publications Chair	Kazuko Unosawa
Web master	Malcolm Prentice
Member-at-Large	Eric Skier
	Julia Harper

## The LLL SIG Annual General Meeting Brief Report

Date: October 13, 2012

Time: 6:45 PM - 7:10 PM

Place: Room 45, ACT City Hamamatsu Shizuoka

The following items were resolved at the Annual General Meeting.

1. Appointment of officers: All of the officers except Publications Chair were reelected.

2. The Business Plan, Business Report, Financial Reports and Budget for revenues and expenditures were passed.

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## Program Chair's Message

Joseph V. Dias

The end of the year is nigh and the holiday season beckons us with the promise of renewal of body and soul. With the dawn of the New Year, despite the coldest days ahead, the fragrance of spring seems close at hand. All the best holiday cheer to JALT LLL-SIG members and their families. May 2013 bring you happiness, the continued ability to savor the gift of lifelong learning, and the enthusiasm to pass it on to our students.

Thank you for the support of your membership in the LLL-SIG and many thanks to those who presented and participated in the lively program of events that were held in 2012, particularly the LLL-SIG forum on the nurturance of lifelong readers at the national conference in Hamamatsu, Shizuoka, and our Mini Conference, held in association with English Teachers of Japan (ETJ) and JALT's West Tokyo Chapter and the marvelously active Speech, Drama, & Debate SIG. This newsletter will report on presentations that were given in both events.

The well-attended LLL-SIG Forum was divided into four parts. The first speaker, Melvin Andrade gave participants a global perspective on adult literacy and social justice by sharing his views on what the developing world can teach Japan about life transformative reading. The second speakers (Gregory Strong, Joseph Dias, and Todd Rucynski) discussed a faculty development project that involved collaboration on a teacher-produced video showcasing the varied ways that reading can be taught. The third speaker, Atsuko Kosaka, showed how a "reading workshop" approach to reading classes can encourage students to grow as readers through mini-lessons, conferences, and by sharing time. The final presenter, Adam Murray, showcased some Internet reading texts (i.e., authentic texts or ones adapted for EFL learners) that can be a source of motivation for reluctant readers.

The subsequent Mini Conference, held in November, less than one month after the national conference, was one of our most successful and enthusiastically attended events ever, with a varied line up of speakers who covered different approaches to the instruction of speech, debate, and drama at all levels...frequently from a lifelong learning point of view.

Tatsuya Sudo not only spoke a bit about the history of the art of Rakugo, a traditional spoken art which started about 300 years ago in Japan, but he also gave captivating performances of Rakugo. Sudo Sensei showed us that through English Rakugo, our students could learn not only English but also their own culture. He saw the learning of English Rakugo as providing a great incentive for Japanese English learners who are interested in conveying the complexities of Japanese culture in English to others.

Another speaker, Aya Kawakami, with over 20 years of experience in music and theater, demonstrated some drama techniques that aid in the creation of a safe environment where participants felt free to explore and develop ideas as a group and as individuals. She showed how drama activities--such as hot seating, people poems, character development and line omissions--are vital tools which can provide useful intermediate steps, particularly in creative writing, debate, discussion, and 'free' conversation; areas where students traditionally encounter difficulty. Participants were shown how they could modify such drama activities, with the goal of challenging students to, step by step, come closer to autonomy.

In the most popular of all the presentations, Nena Nikolic-Hosonaka, a lecturer at KUIS (Kanda University of International Studies), a J-Shine examiner, and radio and TV personality, demonstrated how dramatic play can be beneficial to both the personal and academic development of a child. After introducing some techniques used in elementary school classrooms, a short play was performed by the teacher and some of her spirited trainees.

In her presentation "Creating and Staging Personal Narratives as a Solo Art Form," Aoyama Gakuin University professor, Michiyo Okawa, described a pedagogy for encouraging students to construct personal narratives as a solo art form in the EFL classroom and showed touching and deeply affecting

sample performances, which focused on such issues as the loss of loved ones and self-destructive behaviors.

In Paul Howl's passionate presentation, offering much audience participation, it was explained how increasingly sophisticated speaking skills could be attained through role-play.

David Kluge offered mesmerizing workshops on debate and oral interpretation. In the first one, he showed that debate was something everyone could do to exercise their brain and body. After giving a definition of debate and explaining some basic principles, participants prepared brief debates and then carried them out. His second presentation, "Oral Interpretation for Lifelong Learning," described Oral Interpretation as a simple, inexpensive, and creative way to do drama in a relatively short period of time. Participants worked on a short piece, and then performed it for the rest of the group.

On the final day of the Mini Conference, Dawn Kobayashi, a lecturer at Onomichi City University in Hiroshima, presented a set of rules to aid student actors improvise a scene and keep a conversation going spontaneously. This practical presentation introduced some effective rules for transforming even the shyest of students. In fact, they worked to make even the most reserved of this enjoyable workshop's participants transform themselves into major "hams."

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## English Rakugo Presentations in 2012

Tatsuya Sudo

Kanda University of International Studies

I presented Rakugo, traditional Japanese songs called 'dodoitsu', and a modern popular Japanese song in English at the international conference of JALT held in Hamamatsu in October and the mini-conference held at Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages in November.

As for Rakugo, I told a classical piece called Tatsumi no Tsujiura or Fortune Cookies in Tatsumi and two short stories based on English stories. I performed the classical piece sitting on a zabuton and wearing a kimono as usual, but I tried the two short stories; one based on a Canadian picture book, the other based on a British folk tale, sitting on a chair. I started to try this new presentation style recently when I present foreign stories.

Dodoitsu is a poem or a song composed of 7-7-7-5 syllables which developed toward the end of the Edo period or the mid-19th century. Lafcadio Hearn, a well know Japanologist and a ghost story writer translated dozens of Dodoitsu into English, so I sang Dodoitsu both in Japanese and his translation. I also sang an internationally known Japanese song 'Sukiyaki' or 'Ue wo muite aruko' in the literal translation and the international version with the audience.

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*Don Maybin teaches at Shonan Institute of Technology. He is a former director of the Language Institute of Japan and co-creator of [www.sulantra.com](http://www.sulantra.com), a multi-lingual website for training users in basic, functional language skills. This e-article is based on his presentation of the same name given for the Japan Association of Language Teacher's Lifelong Language Learning Special Interest Group on October 1, 2011 in Tokyo.*

## **Facilitating Online Language Training for Mature Learners – Part 1**

For mature learners interested in tackling a new language, or developing one they already have some background in, there are a number of formats to serve you. Self-study textbooks, classroom courses (or, if you have the means, private tutors) and TV language learning programs come to mind. These study modes are relatively familiar and well within the mature learner's comfort zone. But what happens when senior students go online to develop their skills? Too often, the learning experience can be frustrating with disappointments on a number of levels. This needn't be the case.

This is the first of a three-part e-article which describes the challenges faced in the creation of an “all inclusive” website for developing basic foreign language skills. The site, [www.sulantra.com](http://www.sulantra.com), incorporates a curriculum and pedagogy developed through classroom-based research that I have conducted over three decades (yes, I am “mature”, too) using a selection of European and Asian languages as the target. In the classroom research, students ranged in age from adolescents to seniors. (My oldest student was a 93-year-old gentleman in Gotemba who showed up in class with a walker eager to learn French!) About five years ago, I decided to develop an online version of the training system, which would allow learners to study “any language, anywhere”. I soon realized that if I wanted to include “anyone” in the mix, special considerations would have to be made.

I refer to my curriculum and pedagogy as *ABLE*, which stands for

“Action-Based Language Empowerment”. The goal of each *ABLE* classroom-based program is to prepare learners with enough basic language, as well as communication strategies, so they can function on the streets of a foreign country in as short a time as possible. The material is function-based (we focus on getting a specific job done) and, at the end of most courses, participants literally rush to the airport, jump on a plane and within hours find themselves on the street. They confirm their communication skills in a series of *in situ* tests, asking strangers for directions, ordering meals in cafes, bargaining for presents in a local market, buying bus tickets to specific destinations... In other words, survive.

The *ABLE* curriculum is structured in thematic modules (e.g. shopping or using local transportation) and learners move through several of these modules in a single lesson. When an entire set of modules is completed at one level, learners move up to the next level where language is automatically recycled and expanded in a giant spiral (see Diagram 1: A language learning spiral with 4 functions and 6 levels). This makes the core language easy to remember, a critical aspect for mature learners. The modular, spiraling format also makes the training system ideal for online application – assuming you are comfortable studying on a computer.

Watching my 20-ish aged university students moving in and out of their virtual realities, I find it hard to remember the days when computers didn't exist. But that is because I work in the computer sciences department of a Japanese university and these machines come with the job. Talking with my younger brothers, I frequently realize that the use of computers is not quite as pervasive as I assume. Whether two-finger typing a short e-mail message or giving up on a Google link, computers are intimidating for them. Every time I suggest a computer-based solution to some mundane problem, the fraternal response is usually “Yeah, right...”, which translates as “I give up.”

Like my brothers, many mature learners may come out of an online experience thinking they are some form of low-tech dummy, doomed to be left by the wayside as others (i.e. the “technically gifted” younger generations) take advantage of the endless opportunities the Internet has to offer, including language training. In academic circles, there is talk of the

“digital divide”, which refers to the growing gap between those who have access to online information and opportunities, and those who don’t. The reasons given for this divide are varied, for example, limited income, location or gender, but I have yet to come across a definition of “digital divide” that includes age as a factor. This is odd given that just a generation ago, apart from a few lab technicians in white coats, masks and hairnets (seriously!), computers were not part of anyone’s reality. It is almost as if the online community assumes older generations will not be around much longer and need not be considered as a component of the digital divide world.

So how do we make it easier for mature learners to go online and remain there? In the second part of this online article, I will describe in detail the design measures taken to make our language training website all-inclusive and accessible for learners of every age.

For further discussion of mature learners and language training, visit the author’s blog at the following link:

<http://blog.donmaybin.com/2011/12/26-improving-with-age.html>



Diagram 1: A language learning spiral with 4 functions and 6 levels

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## An Afternoon in Ueno Park (Part 17)

Tadashi Ishida

This is the seventeenth in a series of articles in which Tadashi Ishida, an English teacher at a community center in Taito Ward in Tokyo, describes a language-learning activity that he conducted with his class. After considerable research and preparation, the learners toured Ueno Park with a foreign visitor, Mrs. Fitzwater, explaining to her the highlights of the park and answering her questions. After the tour, the learners wrote their own combination text and guidebook based on this experience.



Mrs. Fitzwater looked at a small kitchen utensil.

F: What do you call this?

N: We call it an oroshigane.

F: Do you know what you use it for?

N: Yes, I do.

F: We call it a grater. We grate cheese or onion or something like that on it.

N: We grate radish and ginger on it.

フィッツウォーターさんは小さな台所用品を見ました。

フ：これはなんと言いますか？

ニ：おろし金と言います。

フ：何に使うか知っていますか？

ニ：はい。

フ：私たちはグレイターと言います。チーズや玉ねぎのようなものを、それでおろします。

ニ：私たちは大根や生姜をおろします。



Mrs. Yoshida described the pillow.

F: Would you use that kind of a pillow to sleep on?

Y: I will show you how to use it.

Mrs. Yoshida demonstrated how to use it.

吉田さんは枕について述べました。

フ：寝るためにそのような枕を使いますか？

ヨ：どのように使うかお見せします。

吉田さんは使い方を実演しました。



Mrs. Fitzwater became interested in the old Japanese hair style and asked Miss Arai about it.

F: Are you glad that the old hair style has changed?

A: Yes, I am glad that the hair style has changed because I can't do my hair like that myself.

F: In other words, you couldn't fix it yourself. You would have to go to the beauty parlor.

A: Yes, you're right.

フィッツウォーターさんは日本髪に興味を持ち、新井さんに聞きました。

フ：古い髪型が変わってうれしいですか？

ア：はい。古い髪型が変わってうれしいです。なぜなら自分であのよう髪を結えないからです。

フ：つまり、自分で髪を整えられないのですね。美容院に行かなければいけないのでしょうか。

ア：はい、その通りです。



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## Message from the New Publications Chair

Kazuko Unosawa

I am very excited to be the new publications chair of the LLL SIG and look forward to meeting members at JALT get-togethers and conferences. I currently teach at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and Dokkyo University. I teach academic writing, reading and discussion classes. I am also a tutor at the Writing Center of Teachers College Columbia University, serving on the editorial committee of *Accents Asia*, Journal of the Writing Center of Teachers College Columbia University, Tokyo. At the moment, I am interested in the development of learner autonomy in language classes, the implementation of collaborative learning (CL), use of technology for CL and ways of increasing the effectiveness of peer feedback in writing classes. When I have free time I enjoy reading, creative writing, zumba, swimming, listening to music, painting, cooking and traveling. Please feel free to contact me any time when you have articles for our newsletter (k-unosawa@msa.biglobe.ne.jp).

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## Call for Submissions for the SIG Newsletter

### *LLL SIG Publications Chair*

The first issue of the LLL SIG newsletter in the new year will be published in April 2013. We invite members to send submissions such as teaching ideas for the My Share column, interviews, book reviews, resources for adult learners, teacher or class profiles, or short research articles. Research articles written in English should follow the American Psychological Association (APA) style. For information on APA style, please check <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Language: Submissions may be in English or Japanese, or both.

Deadline for submissions: February 17, 2013

Submissions should be sent to Kazuko Unosawa at: [k-unosawa@msa.biglobe.ne.jp](mailto:k-unosawa@msa.biglobe.ne.jp)

We look forward to hearing from you!

The editors

原稿を募集中です。My Share のコラムにレッスンのアイデアなどをお寄せください。その他、インタビュー、書評、論文など、どしどしお送りください。論文の書式はAPAを採用しています。APAスタイルの詳細に関しては以下のサイトをご参照ください：

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

言語は英語でも日本語でも結構です。

原稿の締め切り：2013年02月17日

原稿はすべてこのアドレスまで：[k-unosawa@msa.biglobe.ne.jp](mailto:k-unosawa@msa.biglobe.ne.jp)

ご投稿をお待ちしています。

編集担当者一同