

The LLL SIG Newsletter

Self-introduction and greeting to members

Tomoko Imamura

My name is Tomoko. I was appointed as membership chair succeeding Ms. Yoko Wakui who has contributed to our SIG for more than six years. I would like to thank her, Mr. Ishida and all the SIG officers for their kind assistance and advice when I became an officer. In advance, please let me express my apologies for delayed replies to emails or inquiries which come from my short experience. I am working to catch up lately.

Let me introduce my background at this opportunity. I am currently teaching English at a private elementary school where English is taught for all graders. I have taught English at language schools in Japan for eight years. My students were from babies to adults. I started giving my own English classes before leaving for England and entering graduate school. Last September, I obtained a master's degree in TESOL. I am interested in researching on motives of LLL and how learners' learning motives change over a lifelong span. Also my interest covers teaching young learners and motivation dynamics.

The experience of teaching a wide range of students of various ages stimulated me to be interested in seeing language learning from a lifelong span. Adult students learn languages for a variety of reasons. Some of the reasons are characteristic for elder adult learners. To regulate their life styles, to retrieve their youth (Ishida, 2005) and as anti-aging activities (Ishida, 2005; Murray, 2011) are for examples. At the same time, there were some shared factors of learning motives between both younger and elder adult learners from my experience and observation during teaching adult students: e.g. making reasons to get away from home and refresh themselves, to widen their social circles, and to maintain their language abilities. Some of my students used to bring home made refreshments and chatted with classmates after class. As learning motivations develop time by time, motivation factors of adult learners and of young ones are not completely the same (Ryan & Dornyei, 2013). Interestingly most of the adult students in my class had very positive backgrounds concerning English or English learning. Some students were good at studying English grammar when they were younger and some mentioned they have positively been influenced by their children to use English. Japanese adult learners are sometimes classified as less active passive learners in a number of learning settings, Saito&Eisenstein-Ebsworth (2004) for as one of the examples, though; my students were very active learners. They loved to have homework and even proposed to me what they want to do in and out of classes sometimes. Their learning purposes and motives are sometimes very unique, reflecting their personal real life contexts; thus I have sometimes found it was challenging to provide suitable and comfortable learning environments and tools for them, constantly while dealing with students of other age groups. At the same time, I believe that that is why viewing language learning in a life span activity is necessary and worthwhile for teachers.

Thank you for reading this and I am looking forward to seeing and talking with SIG members at this

year's conferences and meetings. Wishing all of our members will have a fruitful and successful 2014.

References

Ishida, T., 2005. *Hajimeyo! Ikigai to shitenno eigo*. Yokohama: Shunpusha.

Murray, G., 2011. Older language learners, social learning spaces, and community. In: Benson, P.&Reinders, H. (Eds.), *Beyond the language classroom*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 32-145. 2013.

Saito, H.&Eisenstein-Ebsworth,M.2004. Seeing English language teaching and learning through the eyes of Japanese EFL and ESL students. *Foreign Language Annals*, 37(1), pp.136-51.

Ryan.S. & Dornyei.Z.2013.The long-term evolution of language motivation and the L2 self. In A.Berndt (Ed.), *Fremdsprachen in der Perspektive lebenslangen Lernens*. Pp.89-100. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.