

## **Message from new LLL-SIG Coordinator**

Joseph Dias  
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Joseph V. Dias coordinates the IE Program in the English Department of Aoyama Gakuin University. He also teaches courses on intercultural communication and food culture. His research interests include computer-assisted language learning and autonomy in language learning. Currently a reviewer for the JALTCALL Journal, he served as the program chair of the LLL-SIG for 10 years before taking on the role of coordinator of the SIG from early this year.

### **New beginnings**

It is my pleasure to take the reins as the new coordinator of the Lifelong Language Learning SIG. Together with the other officers (Andrew Reimann, Program Chair; Rie Wakui, Publications Chair; Kathleen Yamane, Membership Chair; Natsuki Suzuki, Treasurer; and Malcolm Prentice, Webmaster), I look forward to introducing some changes that will make our program offerings more accessible to our widely dispersed membership while also maintaining the excellence that was achieved under the long-serving stewardship of the previous coordinator, Tadashi Ishida. Since I served as the SIG's program chair for 10 years, I am aware of where the SIG has been and hopeful about the direction it can be taken in the future. Input from the SIG's members is vital to the process and it is always welcomed.

### **Revamped vehicle for informing you about the LLL-SIG's activities**

First of all, we have a new page on JALT's revamped website that will have links to all of our future events at the bottom:  
<https://jalt.org/groups/sigs/lifelong-language-learning>. Bookmark that page so that you can stay informed about all of our upcoming forums, mini-conferences, talks, and invitations to co-present with us at conferences on our panels.

## **A bit about the new SIG Coordinator, Joseph Dias**

I am an American from Silicon Valley (San Jose), now working as a professor in the English Department (Communications Section) of Aoyama Gakuin University. My initial interest in lifelong learning sprang from a pantomime course I took at an adult school in Berkeley shortly after I graduated from university. It allowed me to plug into a much wider variety of student cohorts than I was exposed to in my more formal education, including deaf people who were learning pantomime alongside me, and followed the course through a sign language interpreter. This was a truly precious experience. At Aoyama Gakuin, I have taught "non-traditional" mature students in our former night program (Nibu). That helped me to see the different needs, and richer depth of experience, of such students firsthand.

Having been involved with JALT, in various capacities, for more than 20 years, I served as the program chair of the West Tokyo Chapter at the time that Tadashi Ishida was its treasurer, some years before he rose to become the vice president of the entire organization (for 5 years!) and, more recently, its auditor. I have mostly held minor roles, vetting conference proposals and submissions to the JALTCALL Journal, helping with the organization of conferences, and serving as the LLL-SIG's Program Chair for the past 10 years.

## **Short history of the LLL-SIG**

On the morning of November 23, 2002, JALT invited the featured speakers of the national conference that was being held on that weekend to a breakfast at a restaurant near Shizuoka Station. Tadashi Ishida, acting as host to discuss various things over breakfast, happened to sit next to Dr. Curtis Kelly. When he told Tadashi Ishida that he held a doctorate in adult education, he could not believe his ears because Curtis' workshop at the conference was on Theories and Principles of Teaching Children. Although Tadashi had been teaching English to older learners for about 20 years, he noticed that they had something in common and he realized that we cannot teach English to children without thinking of

what they might become as adults, nor can we teach adults without taking into consideration how they were taught as children.

Later that evening, Tadashi came up with the idea that JALT should have a Special Interest Group devoted to the specific needs of teachers who teach English to older learners. With the knowledge that everything was possible in JALT if you wished it to happen, six months later, Tadashi decided to form a SIG devoted to supporting teachers of adult learners. In May 2003, he drafted the constitution and bylaws, which were then submitted at the June 2003 Executive Board Meeting. Margaret Yamanaka, the second member to join the LLL-SIG, supported the motion at the meeting and it was carried.

The SIG was initially named "Teaching The Aged." However, upon being advised that the term "the aged" connoted "the very old" in English, it was changed to the "Teaching Elderly Learners SIG." Being further advised that "elderly" also referred to those who were quite advanced in years, it was further revised to its present form, "Lifelong Language Learning SIG." This more general, and inclusive, name allows the SIG to cover issues related to language learning by mature learners and ways to instill lifelong learning habits in learners of any age.

## **Our SIG's members: Who are we?**

Although our membership has monthly fluctuations as new members join and the membership of others lapses, we currently (as of May 2021) have 35 individuals in the SIG, nicely balanced between Japanese and foreign members (19 foreign and 16 Japanese). Two members are based outside of Japan, in the US and Canada.

We have representation across the whole of the Japanese archipelago (with the exception of Okinawa), from Hokkaido to Shikoku, and Kyushu.

Here is a breakdown of where our members are located:

***Tokyo*** (7)

***Other Kanto area prefectures*** (8)

- Kanagawa (4)
- Saitama (2)
- Chiba (1)
- Ibaraki (1)

***Kansai area*** (6)

- Osaka (2)
- Kyoto (2)
- Nara (1)
- Hyogo (1)

***Hokkaido*** (3)

**Other Prefectures**

- Yamagata (2)
- Niigata (1)
- Nagano (1)
- Aichi (1)
- Gifu (1)
- Fukuoka (1)
- Ehime (1)

Although the majority of our members are employed by universities, a wide variety of employment entities are also represented:

* junior or senior high school	3
* language school	4
* university	23
* culture center or community education	2
* municipal-government affiliated	1
* unstated	2

When we plan future programs, we will take into greater consideration the geographic distribution of our members and their

affiliations. It seems that most of the people who come to our events do so mainly because they are interested in the topic of a particular forum or panel discussion, rather than in lifelong learning per se. If we hold more online events, that may help to make our program offerings more accessible to our geographically diverse membership and give us a chance to get to know each other better. Even after the pandemic has passed, we plan to continue holding occasional online events.

Also, we probably have not done enough, until now, to reach out to those teaching in language schools, community centers, or at junior and senior high schools. It would be desirable to recruit future speakers from among those teaching contexts. We will be reaching out to our members directly to see if they might want to join LLL SIG-sponsored forums or panels, something that we have not done enough of to date.

### **Attending the first Executive Board Meeting as new SIG coordinator**

As the new coordinator for the LLL-SIG, I attended the EBM (Executive Board Meeting) on February 13th (2021) remotely. It was presided over by JALT's extremely competent and energetic new president, Dawn Lucovich. There was no particular business at the EBM relating directly to our LLL-SIG. As a representative of our SIG I mainly had to vote on various procedural motions and to approve JALT's proposed budget. Fortunately, JALT has sufficient funds in reserve to weather whatever the pandemic might throw at it. Revenues were down from new memberships and conference fees but they got offset by the reduced costs arising from the fact that conferences have had to move to an online format over the past year due to the pandemic.

JALT 2021 is being planned as a F2F conference, at the Granship Shizuoka from November 12, 2021 to November 16, 2021, but with accommodations for participants and presenters to join and present through online means as well. More about the LLL-SIG's participation at the conference below.

Other news from the EBM included...

\* A new Listening SIG is now being formed, to be led by Naheen Madarbakus. Our LLL-SIG might consider doing some collaborations with this SIG in the future.

\* The JALT website and databases are having a complete do-over. The newly designed site will allow our SIG to promote events more conveniently from the website. We saw a demo of it and it looked like it had a clean, efficient interface. [The transition to the new website is nearly complete as of this writing.]

\* A new communication tool has been introduced for SIGs, chapters, and national officers. It is called Basecamp. I informed Robert Chartrand, JALT's Vice President, that our SIG would like to give it a try. Therefore, he created an area in Basecamp for us. JALT has subscribed to use Basecamp for one year to explore how appropriate it might be for the organization. It looks like an efficient way for our SIG's officers to have everything in one place and off of email. It offers us a SIG message board, a to-do list, a group chat, scheduling functions, and an area for docs and files. It has a simple, easy-to-learn interface and most of the JALT officers have been making use of it productively.

The highlights of each of the EBMs will be reported to you through this newsletter in the interest of transparency and so that you might be better aware of how JALT operates. Should you become a SIG, chapter, or JALT national officer in the future, it will make you better prepared for what you might face.

### **Our SIG's Mini Conference (April 3, 2021)**

Our Mini Conference—which was formerly held in January or February at Kanda Gaigo Gakuin and then at Otsuma Women's University, in conjunction with English Teachers in Japan (ETJ)—was held online this year at the beginning of April. This Mini Conference was conducted in tandem with the annual orientation for teachers in the Integrated English Program at Aoyama Gakuin University. It was a HyFlex event in that Aoyama Gakuin teachers participated either online or in person on campus, and the LLL-SIG Mini Conference attendees joined via Zoom. Details of the event

and the full program of talks can be found at <https://jalt.org/event/lifelong-language-learning/21-04-03>.

**Discussion, Reading, and Writing Activities to Prepare for Lifelong Learning / Core Panel**  
10:00 - 10:40

Deborah Bollinger	Increasing students' interest and participation in online reading activities
Chris Parham	Journal Writing in the IE Classroom
Jeff Bruce	Using full-length novels for book reports in IE III Core
Brenda Butler	A review of a method for introducing and conducting media discussions so that IE objectives are met in an online setting.

**Developing a curriculum that enhances Lifelong Learning / IE Seminar Panel**  
10:45 - 11:25

Catherine Takasugi	Re-invigorating the Interview: Four approaches aimed at keeping students engaged
Deborah Bollinger	Aspects of organizing and facilitating a guest lecture online
Hamilton Armstrong	Assessing and Assessing: Creative ways of securing digital materials / Also... New ways for reviewing/testing/soliciting and doing critical analysis in the online Seminar context
Jerome Martin	The Evolution of the Seminar 'Communicating Japanese Culture in English': How technology has transformed it

**Drama Kings and Queens in the Classroom / Drama in Language Education**  
11:30 - 12:10

Chris Parham	Introducing 12 Short Plays For The Language Classroom
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## LLL-SIG's Forum at JALT 2021

JALT2021 will be the organization's first international conference and educational materials exhibition with both online and face-to-face sessions. Our SIG's forum there is titled "Reflections on the past; projections of the future" and here is a short description of the event.

In the slightly more than half a century of TESOL's existence there have been a cascade of methods and innovations that teachers have been challenged by. The move to an online pedagogy due to the pandemic accelerated trends while forcing all of us to reevaluate fundamentals. In this forum, prompts (both visual and textual) will be provided to elicit discussion on where we've been on our journey as language teachers and where we're headed.

Anyone wishing to join this panel and/or submit visual and textual prompts that will be used in the session, should contact us at the

“send email” link at the bottom of <https://jalt.org/groups/sigs/lifelong-language-learning>.

## **In this Issue**

Six articles in this issue are based on the contributions to a LLL-SIG forum at the JALT 2020 National Conference on the topic “Bridging Social Distances in Online Learning.” The co-presenters at that forum, and authors of the papers presented here, are all associated with the English Department at Aoyama Gakuin University, and its Integrated English Program in particular. One of them is the program co-coordinator (Andrew Reimann), four of them are teachers in the program (Kazuko Namba, Catherine Takasugi, Jonathon Campbell, and Fraser Gould), and one of this served as a teaching assistant in the program in her capacity as a graduate student in English language pedagogy, Natsuki Suzuki.

Supporting teachers with limited technological skills, encouraging students to participate who have anxiety or social withdrawal, and generally motivating the connections and communications we take for granted, are at the forefront of online learning management skills. The quarantine situation will pass eventually, however the skills and techniques developed and discussed in these articles will continue to be essential elements of the hybrid English classroom and lifelong language learning, well into the future.