

# SDD PanSIG 2013 Conference Report

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The 2013 JALT PanSIG was held from May 18th to May 19th in Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture. The venue was in the spacious R building of Nanzan University's Nagoya Campus. This was the 12th annual PanSIG Conference, whose goal is to showcase the activities of the JALT SIGs and to stimulate more interaction among and between SIGs. Twenty six SIGs came together in innovative ways to make this a very successful and enlightening Pan-SIG.

This year the SIGs were joined by the JALT Peer Support Group (PSG). The PSG gave the featured presentation *Writing for academic publication: Participation and collaboration*. This presentation was very well received judging by the number of questions asked by the audience. The PSG also gave a shorter presentation about joining the PSG as a Peer-Reader. According to the latest information the PSG is growing quickly and has gained many new Peer-Readers.

There were two plenary speeches. *Exploring practitioner perspectives on collaboration, co-operation and community in the language classroom* by Judith Hanks was the first speech, and *Ten rules for doing effective research* by Robert Croker was the second. Both of these speeches were very well received by the attendees.

The theme of the conference was *From Many, One: Collaboration, Cooperation, and Community*. In the spirit of this theme, SIGs joined in partnership with other SIGs and created joint programs. Each partnership was given a separate room. The keystones of these co-created programs were the PanSIG forums. Each partnership hosted a forum with a single theme of interest to all of the partnering SIGs. The SDD SIG united with the Critical Thinking SIG and the Literature in Language Teaching SIG to co-host the CT LiLT SDD Forum. The theme of this forum was *Creativity, critical thinking and language learning*. Creativity featured in each presentation in this forum. David Gann (Critical Thinking) discussed critical and creative thinking, Dawn Kobayashi (Speech, Drama and Debate) talked about levels of creativity and drama techniques, Jane Nakagawa (Literature in Language Teaching) explained the relationship between multiple intelligence theory and creativity, Tara McIlroy (Literature in Language Teaching) discussed

originality and creativity. The Q&A session of this forum included a lively debate about the nature of critical thinking and creative thinking.

The two words that best describe the SDD presentations are "Useful" and "Interactive." All of the presentations were very practical, focusing on things teachers can do in the classroom to enhance their students learning. Roehl Sybing showed the attendees some beautiful examples of his students' storyboard projects in his presentation *From conversation to storytelling: Recycling language across genres*. A passionate case was made for the use of TED Talks in Jay Klaphake's *TEDTalks and TEDx events as project-based learning*. James Venema gave us many "nuggets" of wisdom about the common problems Japanese students have while learning debate in his presentation, *Formal debate and academic writing: Facilitating critical thinking and effective writing*. Mark Brierley Explained how to use technology to support debate in his presentation *Using Moodle to support debating in class*.

The SDD presentations were also incredibly interactive. Enough time was given for discussions with other attendees and Q&A sessions with the presenters. There was an interesting discussion about how to teach students to design effective PowerPoint slides in Terry Fellner's talk *Teaching academic presentation skills to low-level English speakers*. Paul Nehls' presentation *Student feedback on the value of impromptu speeches* sparked a very active Q&A session.

Attendees were invited to engage in improvisation exercises with Dawn Kobayashi who talked about *Improving students' conversation skills with improvisation*. David Kluge welcomed everyone to "David's Boxing Gym" as a part of his presentation on *Performance, Literature, and Critical Thinking*. The most interactive presentation was Aya Kawakami's *Dramatic steps to the L2 world* where the attendees participated in drama activities that went far beyond the usual "roleplaying" activities typically incorporated in ESL classrooms.

The conference was concluded by a Final Panel Discussion about the theme of the conference *From Many, One: Collaboration, Cooperation, and Community*. The plenary speakers Robert Croker and Judith Hanks, JALT President Kevin Cleary, and the audience joined in the lively discussion.

PanSIG 2013 was very successful due to the efforts of the organisers, especially SDD's own David Kluge, who was the conference chair, and the many student volunteers, without whom conferences like this could not function.