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JALT President

Kevin Cleary

Dear OLE SIG members and conference attendees,

Congratulations to the OLE SIG on the occasion of holding the 2nd OLE SIG Conference, *Language learning and teaching beyond the first foreign language*, at Chukyo University in Nagoya. The conference theme is very intriguing, and I would hope that we will soon live in a world where many people desire, and achieve, the ability to speak at least two languages besides their mother tongue.

When I tell someone about JALT they are often puzzled or curious about the “for language teaching” part of our organization’s name. I then make sure to explain that while most of our members are English teachers, we are not limited to English, and in fact have many members who teach and learn Spanish, French, German, Portuguese, Chinese, Korean, Japanese as a foreign language, and so on. I also then mention the existence and high level of activity of the OLE SIG. OLE plays a key role in JALT maintaining its identity as an organization dedicated to the promotion of excellence in language learning, teaching, and research.

Sadly, many schools today are reducing or eliminating classes in foreign languages other than English. Student motivation to take or excel in these classes is also dropping precipitously, at least from what I have heard from students and teachers. However, I think that we can all agree that it is extremely important to learn more than one additional language, as we find out a lot about ourselves, our original culture, and our world when we master new grammatical rules, discover new metaphors for describing the world and how we experience it. Learning one additional language opens our eyes to the world around us, and learning more than one gives us the opportunity to more deeply understand our humanity.

So, on behalf of all the JALT Directors, I would like to say to OLE “Good job! Keep it up!” We appreciate your hard work and look forward to working with you on many more projects in the years to come.

Thank you, and best wishes for a most invigorating exchange of ideas and experiences at the 2nd OLE SIG Conference!