

Wednesday 3 June

2:20pm - 3:00pm

Room: Block Y, Room Y305

Presentation Title: Language, Learning, Life: Mature Learners' Stories

Presenter / Co-presenters:	Garold Murray, Akita International University
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Theme:	Learner and teacher experiences
Presentation Type:	Paper presentation

Abstract

While much of the literature in the area of independent language learning focuses on young adults—learning primarily in institutional settings—this presentation examines the English language learning stories of twenty-four (24) mature learners, ranging in age from mid-thirties to mid-seventies. The learners are "members" of a self-access centre which provides learning opportunities for the general public. The stories are the product of a series of life history workshops, offered at the centre, which guided the participants through the process of writing and analyzing their language learning histories.

A thematic analysis of the stories reveals that while the participants write about their learning strategies and activities, this is not the dominant theme. Rather, the stories focus more on the relationship between the learners' lives and the English language. After describing the learning and research contexts, the presenter discusses the themes arising from the stories: learning strategies, identity, imagined future selves, communities of practice, and challenges facing mature language learners. The presentation concludes by considering the implications for foreign language learners and educators.

Biodata

Garold Murray is a professor at Akita International University in Japan where he has developed two self-access centres, one of which caters for members of the general public. His research employs narrative inquiry to explore learner autonomy in language learning in classroom, out-of-class, and self-access contexts.