

JALT 2026 Lifelong Language Learning SIG Forum

Roots & Shoots in the Classroom: Growing Global Citizens through English

Forum Description:

As Dr. Jane Goodall reminds us, “*Every individual matters. Every individual has a role to play. Every individual makes a difference.*” Inspired by her *Roots & Shoots* movement, this 2026 Lifelong Learning SIG Forum explores how English education can cultivate empathy, environmental awareness, and a sense of global responsibility across the lifespan of learning. Forum participants will share classroom practices and community projects that embody the *Roots & Shoots* spirit — fostering compassion for people, respect for animals, and care for the planet through meaningful language use. Together, we will discuss how lifelong learning and language education can nurture hope, agency, and positive action in an age of uncertainty. This session invites all educators to reflect on how we can plant seeds of understanding, connection, and kindness through our teaching — helping learners of all ages grow as thoughtful, engaged global citizens.

Speakers:

Timothy Ang (Toyo University) has a Masters in Bilingual and Multicultural Education from the University of Alcalá. He currently teaches English at the LEAP Program for Toyo University in Japan and has also taught at Kwansai Gakuin University, Kansai University, Kobe University, and Otemae University. His current research focuses on Student Motivation & Autonomy, ICT in Language Learning, and Curriculum Development.

Joseph Dias (Aoyama Gakuin University) currently coordinates the Integrated English Program for the English Department at Aoyama Gakuin University and he is the president of JALT’s Lifelong Language Learning SIG.

Catherine Takasugi (Jissen Women’s University) holds a Doctorate in Education from the University of Calgary in Canada. Her current research focuses on multicultural families’ experiences of school refusal in Japan. Alternative perspective, creative style, and storytelling characterize her work. In the classroom she actively cultivates a culture of care ensuring that all students feel welcomed, respected, and valued.

Chiyuki Yanase (Keio University) is a lecturer at several universities in the Tokyo area and a facilitator of the Lifelong Language Learning SIG Forum. She is a strong advocate for wellbeing-focused education and is passionate about incorporating creativity and imagination into her language classes to foster learner engagement, empathy, and holistic development.