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Review of JASAL 2017 by a Student

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Yui Fukushima, Konan Women's University, Kobe, Japan

On December 16, 2017 the JASAL annual conference was held at Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS). There were 149 participants; teachers and students involved in the field of self-access learning. They were from all over Japan and some came from abroad. At the conference, we heard helpful and stimulating information from each participant's research.

The venue was KUIS 8. It was a new building at Kanda University of International Studies. KUIS 8 is a really huge facility, like a domed baseball stadium, and the whole building was a SALC. KUIS students can do many things there. For example, on the first floor, students can use various types of presentation rooms, computer booths and cafeteria spaces, all of which are clean and stylish. Students can decide how they study, and how they use the spaces by themselves. Also, there are many materials, such as books and DVDs. Some have colorful hand-made pop-displays on them, so students can see the recommendations. On the second floor, students can practice speaking English because they cannot use Japanese in that space. There are many nice sofas. Dedicated students always sit on them, and they invite other students who want to improve their English speaking skills. KUIS 8 was quite a stimulating facility. I was glad that KUIS 8 was the venue for the conference.

Konan Women's University e-space committee members, Ayumi Tahara (fourth-year undergraduate), Erina Kinoshita (third-year undergraduate), Yukino Watanabe (first-year undergraduate) and I attended the conference to exchange information with other participants to create a better e-space. Also, we gave a presentation about our approaches in e-space. We believe community is important for our SALC. Please imagine a place where students can help each other, and can talk with teachers in a friendly way. Helpful relationships make English study comfortable. If a student faces a difficult question in a workbook, other students will help her. If a student wants to know about study abroad, other students who have experience doing this will give her advice. If a student wants some advice for her English study, she can ask teachers without hesitation. Actually, we always have a kind atmosphere and a big seed of helpful relationships in e-space. We want to grow the seed and

expand these relationships beyond our department so that we can provide a comfortable SALC to study English in.

We hope that we will get repeaters and newcomers at e-space. Moreover, when motivated students gather and help each other in their studies, the SALC can have more energy and a stimulating atmosphere. This year, we carried out many events and lectures in e-space. Also, we started to hold workshops, such as TOEIC workshops. We thought a lot about “community” and tried to grow in various ways. We spoke about our efforts in front of other participants at the JASAL conference.

The entire day at JASAL 2017 was exciting. All of the participants gave wonderful presentations. We got many helpful ideas to improve the environment in our SALC. The e-space committee will use these ideas to keep making a better atmosphere for English study, and will make the e-space a more attractive place which all students will want to visit and use.

Notes on the Contributor

Yui Fukushima is a third year student and a student committee member of e-space, the self-access center at the Department of English Language and Culture at Konan Women's University in Kobe, Japan. She is actively involved in developing learner community at e-space and also in her part-time work. She was a presenter at the JASAL annual conferences in 2016 and 2017.