

General Summary for the 2011-2012 Kumamoto ALT Skill Development Conference

Total Numbers:

Total number of registered participants = 235 (132ALTS&103JTEs)

Total number of attending participants = **233** (2 ALTs absent due to illness)

Total number of survey respondents = 173

Total number of presenters = 37

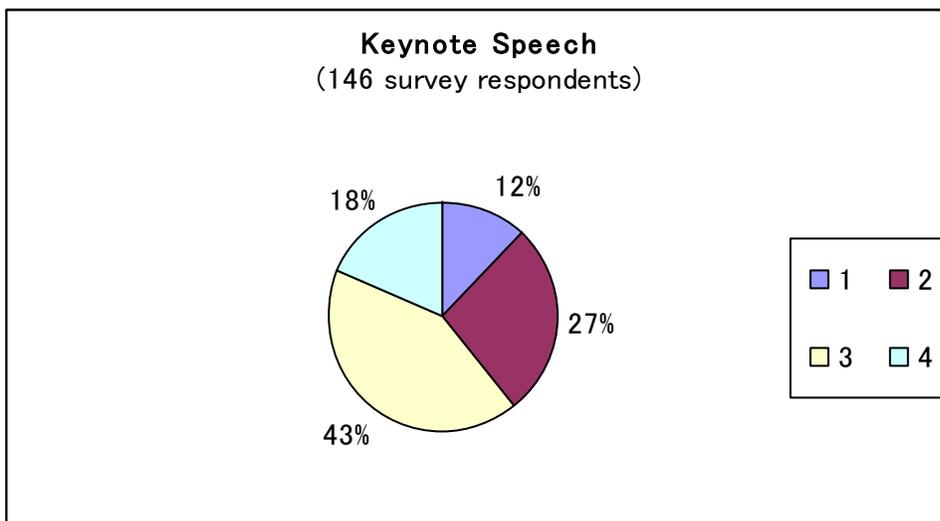
Total number of workshops presented = **25**

Total number of new workshops offered (i.e. those not seen in previous years) = 5 (Coordinating and Implementing Creative Projects with your JTE, Bringing the World to the Classroom, Teaching Together, Teaching the World through World Englishes, Internationalization in the School and Community, Care and Feeding of the introvert JET)

Survey Results (in pie-chart format!):

- 1= Not Useful
- 2= Somewhat useful
- 3= Useful
- 4=Very Useful

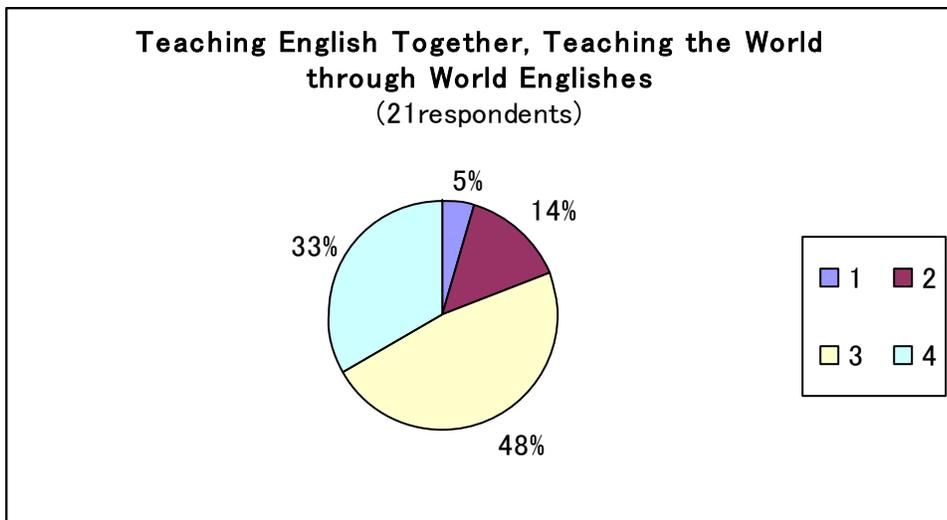
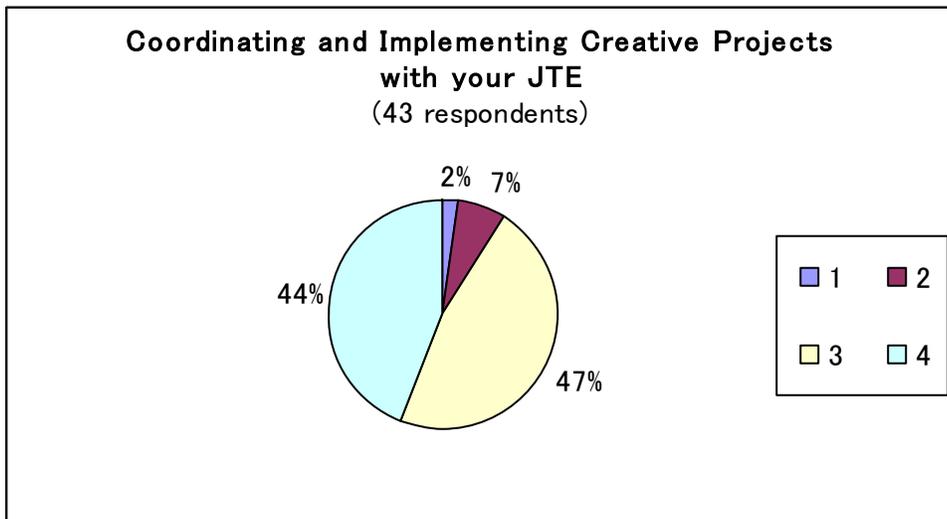
Keynote Address



Workshops

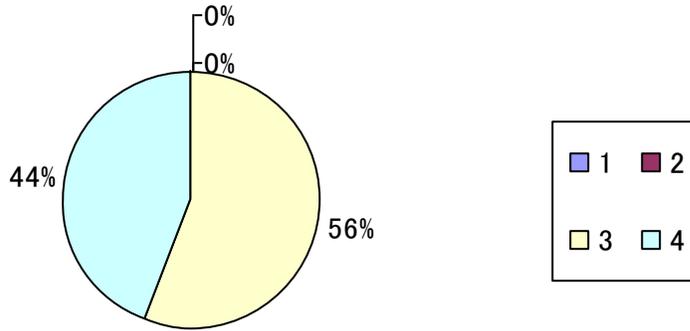
Session 1

- 1= Not Useful
- 2= somewhat useful
- 3= Useful
- 4=Very Useful



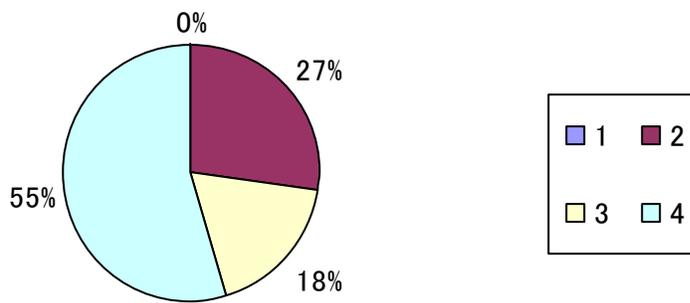
Lesson Plan Swap

(9 respondents)

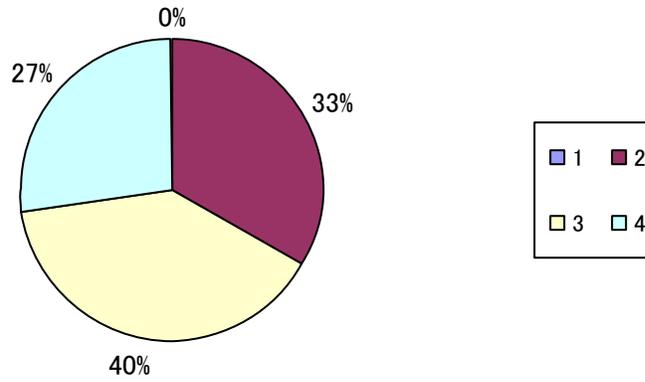


Teaching Elementary

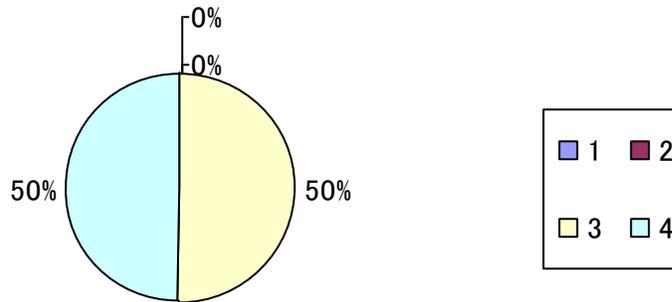
(22 respondents)



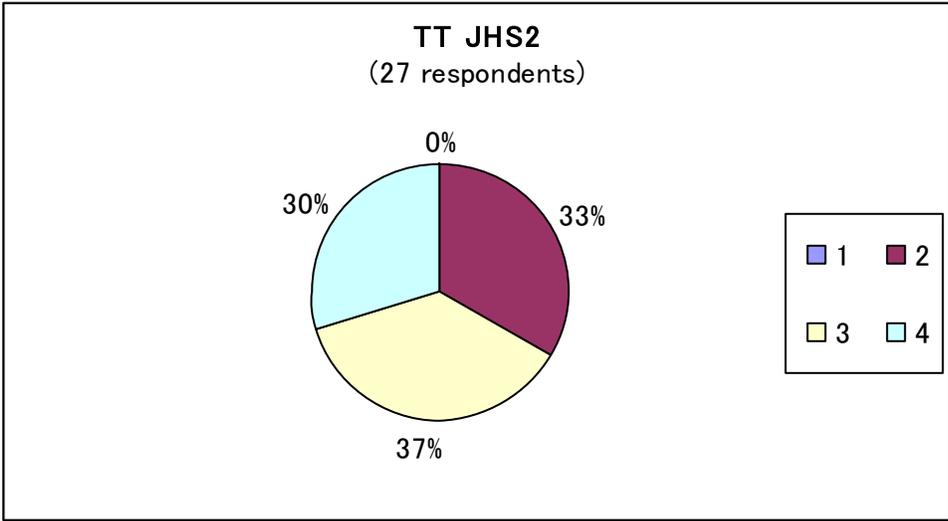
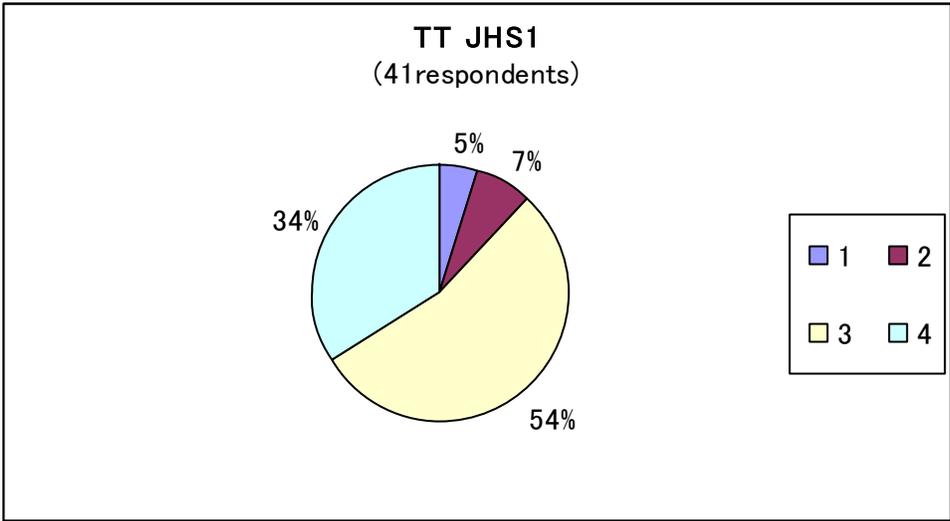
Bringing the World to the Classroom
(33 respondents)



Teaching Special Needs
(10 respondents)

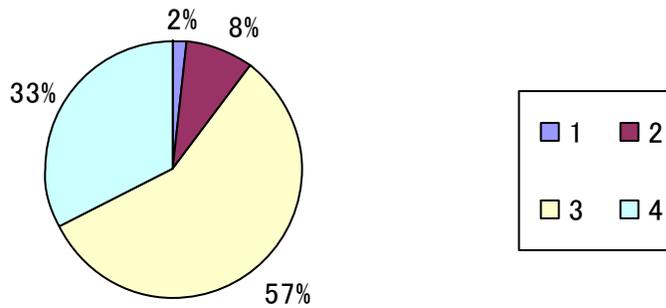


1= Not Useful
2= somewhat useful
3= Useful
4=Very Useful



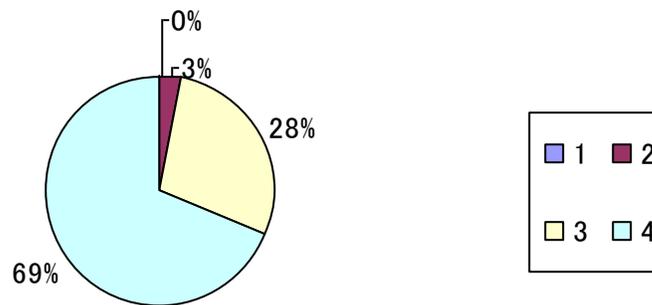
Teaching English Grammar in a Japanese Classroom

(48 respondents)



TT SHS

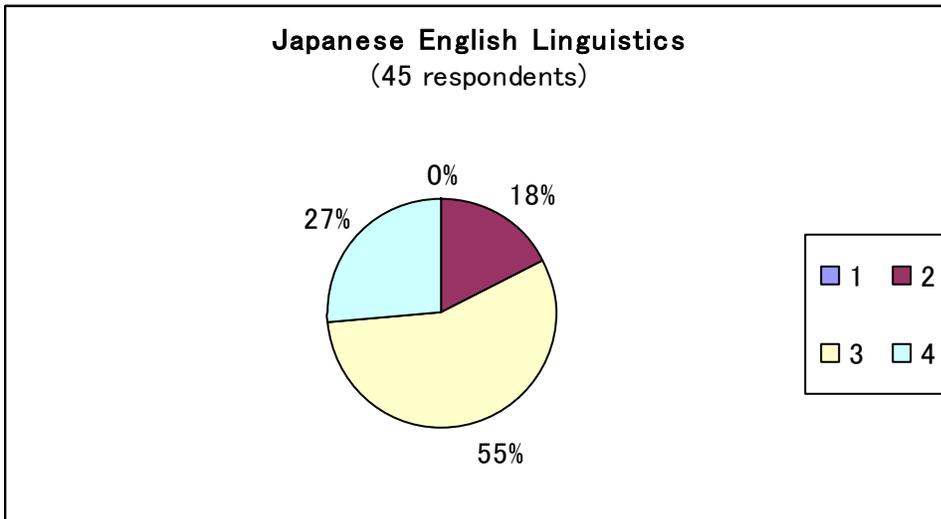
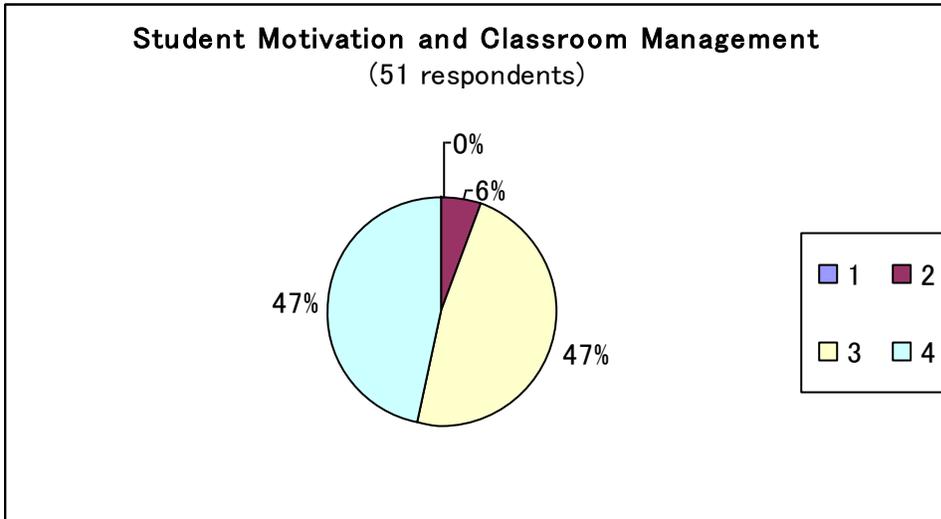
(32 respondents)



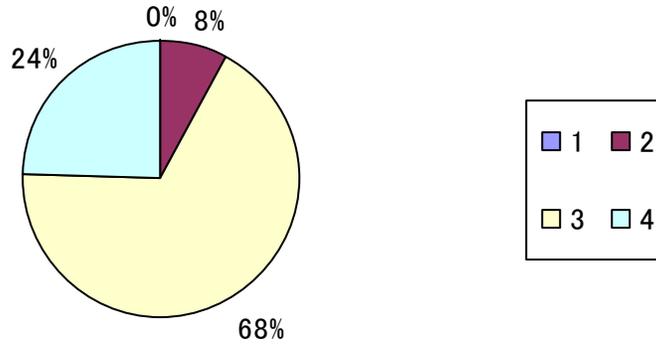
Workshops Session 3

1= Not Useful
2= somewhat useful

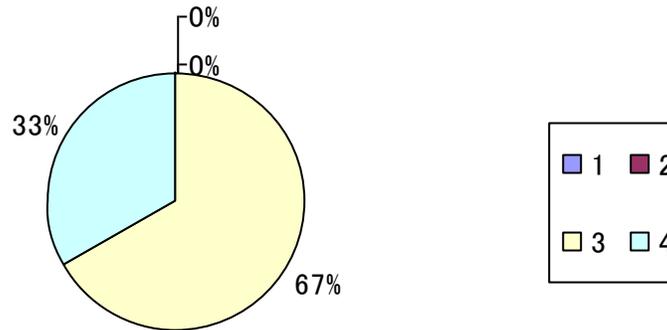
3= Useful
4=Very Useful



English Outside the Classroom
(37 respondents)



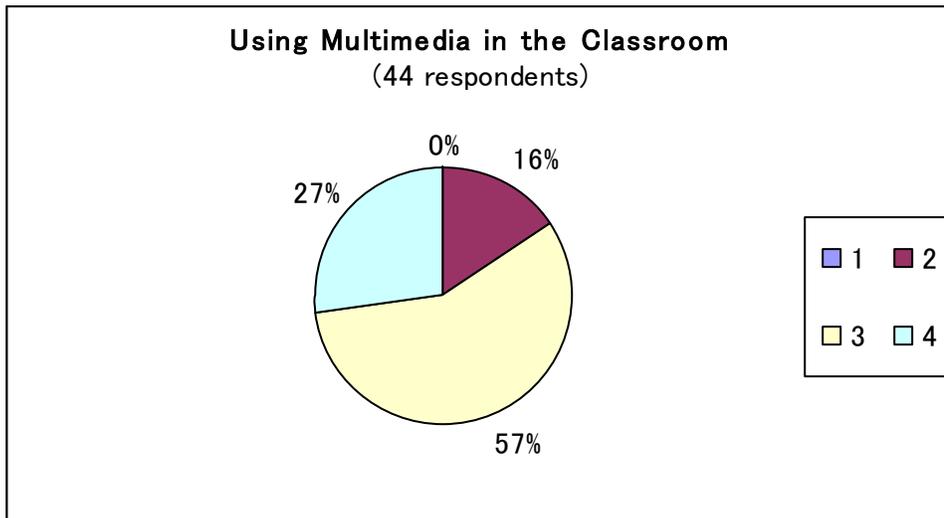
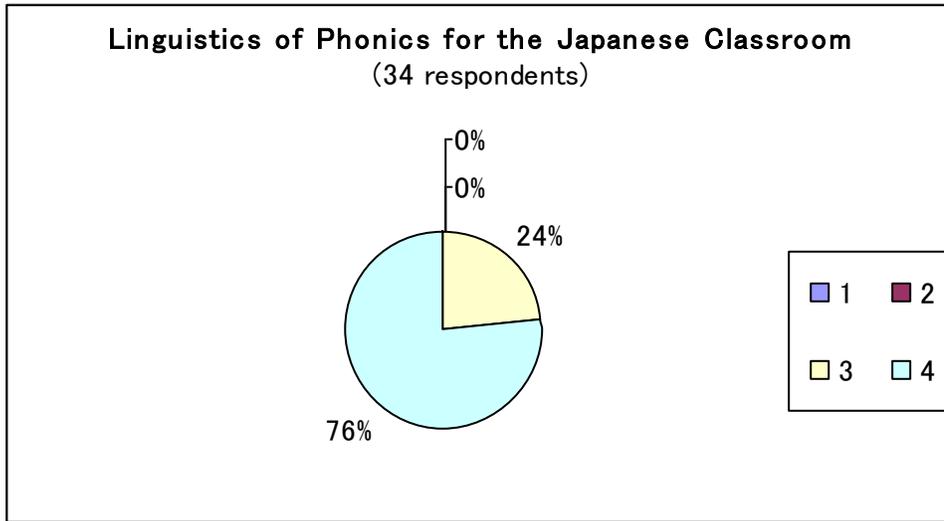
Introduction to the Japanese Education System
(6 respondents)



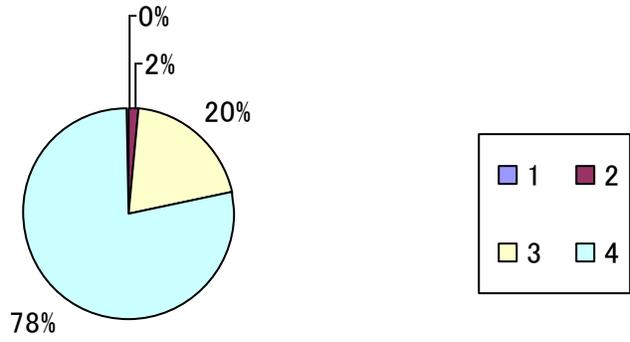
Workshops

Session 4

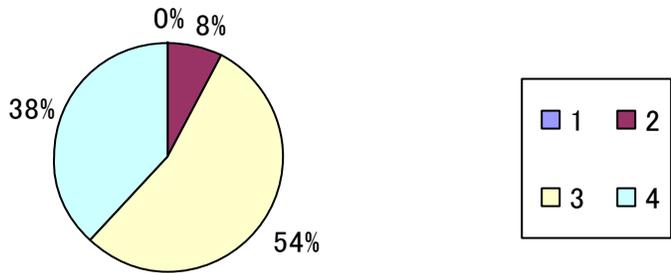
- 1= Not Useful
- 2= somewhat useful
- 3= Useful
- 4=Very Useful



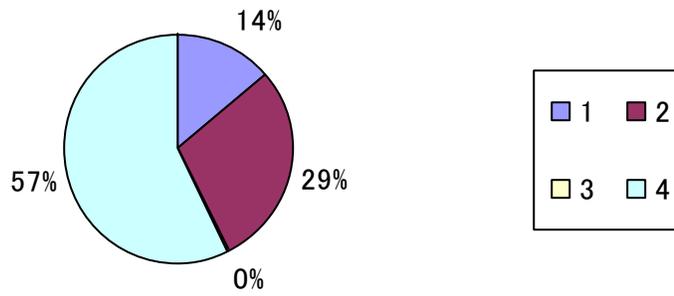
Trading Places
(64 respondents)



ALT/JTE Relations
(13 respondents)



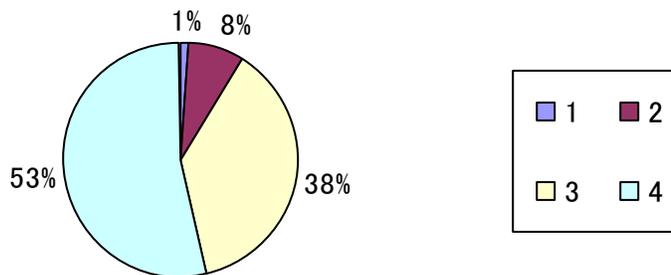
**Effective Time Management, Self Care and
Decision Making**
(7 respondents)



Workshops
Session 5

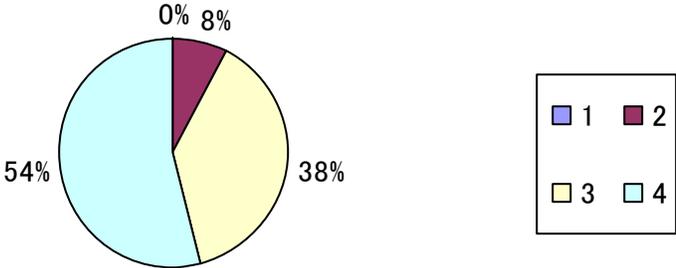
- 1= Not Useful**
- 2= somewhat useful**
- 3= Useful**
- 4=Very Useful**

J-Pop Culture
(80 respondents)



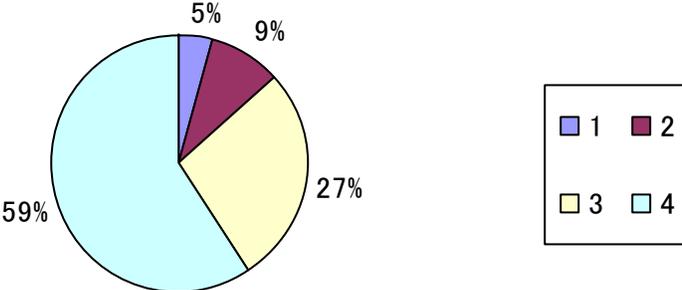
Women's Hour With Marilyn & Leah

(13 respondents)



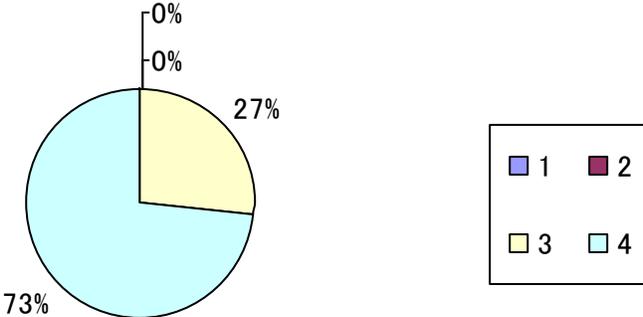
Men's Health

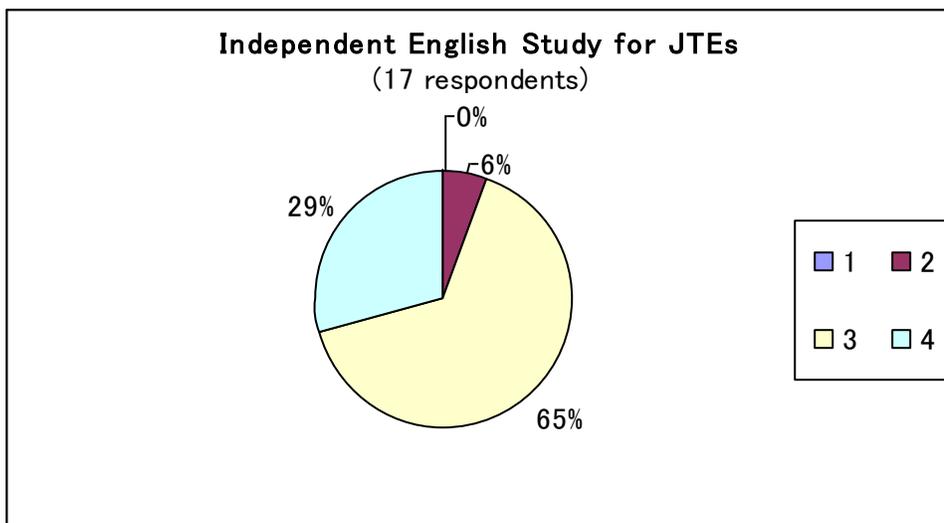
(22 respondents)



Care and Feeding of the Introvert JET

(15 respondents)





Brief Analysis of the Results:

Keynote Address

61% of respondents found this year's keynote address useful or very useful while 39% found it somewhat useful or not useful. From the results it appears that just over half of the participants found the keynote address useful.

Some of the comments that found the keynote address very useful or useful were.

"Good contextualization for the entire conference, since ALTs come from a myriad of cultures and countries."

"Raised good questions about diversity and English diversity - good trouble shooting examples."

"Prof. Yoneoka gave a very affirming and thought provoking message about English Education in Japan. Her message made our jobs as ALTs seem more realistic- rather than trying to get students speaking at a super high level!"

"英語の多様性についてよくわかり、面白かったです！こういうワールドワイドな視点で話していただくと、がんばって英語を教えないと！という気持ちが強くなります。(It was really interesting and I understood a lot about the diversity of English! When I listen to this kind of worldwide perspective, I feel more strongly that I have to do my best to teach English!)"

"色々と参考になりました。発音については自分もあまり自信がないところですが、頑張ろうと思います。(The keynote address was very informative. I also don't have much confidence when it comes to pronunciation, but I'm going to give it my best.)"

"We can know about diversity nowadays and we (JTEs) can be confident thanks to her speech."

"Useful, practical, fun. Should do it again next year!"

"Accessible, practical and gave interesting information that ALTs can use in the class."

And some comments that found the keynote address somewhat useful or not useful

"While it sparked interesting discussion, I found the lecture in general too technical (graphs, terms used only in academia) and vague - it was hard to see how the content actually connects to our work."

"役に立つかどうかは疑問にしても、講義自体は楽しかった。(I doubt whether or not the information will be useful, but the lecture itself was enjoyable.)"

"While I did find some of the ideas new and interesting to play with, I was given very little in the way of useful or applicable knowledge and methods for my work."

“A lot of it was general knowledge to me. Despite intentions was still very American-centric (tone towards other countries)”

“I learned the phrase “lingua franca”. I had a hard time understanding the relevance of the presentation.”

“While interesting, the presentation was too academic and thus impractical for this variety of conference. It would be great as an article in a JET magazine journal, but not for this event.”

“It is interesting to learn about English as a diverse language, but offers little practical advice for ALT/JTE.”

“I think that it very much slapped/glazed over the fact that English is so often used as an Imperial tool.”

Response

The keynote address can often be a bone of contention and pleasing all participants is difficult. Each year an academic is invited to open our conference with a keynote address. The keynote address each year offers a different speaker who offers a different perspective in relation to English education in Japan. Last year's keynote address was not rated like this year as the conference was rated as a whole and we only have comments to refer to and it appears the comments were as mixed as they were this year. One thing that does stand out from the comments is that many participants want something practical that offers not just abstract ideas, but skills to support them to be better teachers in the classroom. We will be mindful of this when selecting this year's keynote speaker.

General Trends and Common Questions/Comments:

The following are some of the more common questions/concerns I found in the questionnaires. If you have any suggestions for improvement in these areas, please let me know. Thanks.

The workshops were the most useful part of the conference. It appears that when participants have a choice about what they want to attend it is a far more useful for them. 21 out of the 25 workshops scored over 80% as being useful/very useful. We were happy to see that workshops went really well and most participants got something useful from attending the various workshops on offer.

Some of the common threads from the comments about what participants found most useful or least useful about the conference are as follows. We have responded to these comments.

“The opening/closing ceremonies seem like a waste of time. We should cut them and only have workshops.”

The opening ceremonies and closing ceremonies can seem somewhat long; however it is an important part of the conference where the people who sponsor and support the conference get at chance to speak to us. It is much shorter than some of the more formal ceremonies that we are all involved in at our schools.

“I find some of the workshops useful. But I didn't find this year's and last year's keynote speeches because they were focused on broad language themes rather than teaching in the classroom.”

This is a big challenge for us as organizers of this conference. It is something we will take into account when talking with this year's keynote speaker about what the needs of the ALT community are.

“I think the conference should be held in November like last year.”

Every year a similar request is asked and no time seems to be okay for everyone. Each year the conference is usually at the beginning of December and last year it was moved to November because of the JLPT exam and people complained about it being in November.

"I think the conference should be held in a different location"

The reason for the conference being at the current location is that it is centrally located for ALTs to attend from the various parts of the ken. The other reason is that the cost of the venue is considerably lower than some other venues. There are budget restraints and regulations that my (Marie's) office must adhere to.

"The workshops were useful, but there were timeslots when nothing looked appealing."

Please get in touch with us about workshop topics that you would find useful and if you would like to present something new. This will help with more variety in each stream of workshops. We welcome any new ideas and if you want to present it is great opportunity to be part of making the conference more useful.

The following comments are a selection of comments from the feedback we received

"Most useful are the opportunities for ALTs to share their experiences with each other so a lecture where that was possible were good."

"Seeing all the people in the Ken again is really mood boosting! Having the opinions and input of JTEs is extremely useful."

"I enjoyed having the JTEs here too. It was really nice to get their perspectives/thoughts on things. The workshops were generally useful and good"

"Most useful - Variety of workshops - Least useful - Some abstracts didn't give the best idea of what the actual workshops covered. Not enough Kumamon. Please make him the next speaker."

"Definitely meeting other ALTs is beneficial. I'd like to hear one or two JTEs talk about their expectations of ALTs etc. I feel like JTEs just kind of blend into the background. I'd like to see them brought into discussion more - even though it's hard form them to understand at times. Maybe use the help of a translator/interpreter."

"The most useful aspect of the conference is getting to see other ALTs in one venue and able to bounce ideas off each other. The energy of the staff, presenters is always a great morale booster. The least useful was this year's keynote speaker"

"Well, Judy Yoneoka's keynote speech was very interesting. During breaks my JTEs and I were able to chat about teaching English, so it was a relaxing time. Thanks for the great MYC!"

"Most useful was networking with other ALTs and some JTEs, the PA talk at the end and the practical teaching ideas in seminars."

"Appreciated the fact that there was a wide variety of workshops for us to choose from"

"I enjoyed having the JTEs here too. It was really nice to get their perspectives/thoughts on things. The workshops were generally useful and good."

"Did not get much from keynote speaker (again), not sure how to improve this. Meeting other ALTs is valuable; I like parts of workshops that have us interacting as well as with JTEs. Concrete ideas >general philosophizing. This year's contents were more positive than last, good job!"

"Useful - Meeting with other ALTs (especially if one is relatively isolated) - Having the JTES present, too, to have their input and point of view - being able to know when other ALTs are

experiencing similar problems and the various solutions that are proposed to deal with them. - Learning about new ideas to implement in one's lessons - especially when one might be a little burnt out. Not so useful - Not having anything really to complain/criticize about the conference itself"

"Not useful - the opening speech is too long. If it was half an hour, another workshop could be added. Sharing information with ALTs and JTEs: lesson exchange, websites, etc."

"Actually, the spread of workshop topics this year was great I think. Can't really think of any others at the moment, so....awesome conference".

Workshops we'd like to see next year:

"Linguistics of Phonics for the Japanese classroom and Japanese English Linguistics were fantastic this year and want them back"

"English study for JTEs."

"Gender roles in Japan in the classroom - The classroom disciplinary environment in Japan. An explanation that clarifies the role of JTE in the school and the community."

"Trading Places and Pop Culture"

"A workshop on Budgeting - Workshop about what Japanese Kid's feel like all the time - Japanese etiquette"

"Seminar for JETs who are leaving, career options etc some more JTE specific inclusive topics. Activities that bridge the gap between ALTs and JTEs"

"Different kinds of "Genki" and recognizing/finding contributions you can make if you feel unworthy next to your predecessor or fellow ALTs"

"How to interact in the staffroom"

"Stereotypes of foreigners and Japanese beyond the obvious."

"Independent Japanese Study. A Japanese school life class by a JTE."

"ALTs roles/duties/tasks (a JTE only workshop)"

"Integrating phonics into set curriculum - Child/linguistic development"

"Using multimedia in the classroom and Student motivation"

"Important Japanese Cultural differences, Japanese Cooking recipes, Japanese Geography"

"Workshops dealing with personal development (like introvert JET)"

"Techniques specific to SHS"

"Trading places, Men's health, lesson plan swap"

“Making the most of Eigo Note/How to still have fun, engaging lessons even when you're required to follow the Eigo Note curriculum.”

“Dealing with the Japanese workplace - Etiquette at work - problem classes”

“Teaching about phonics - Motivating students - World cultures”

“Maybe there should be a separate session for ALTs to vent. It's easy for the conversation to run negative. We need a bitching session.”

Creating and implementing creative projects. Using multimedia in the classroom - J-pop culture.

“Basic teaching skills - a chance for different school levels to chat about problems etc. - Fun lesson idea”

“Care and feeding for of the introvert JET”

“Negotiating change in the JHS classroom (of teaching methods, with JTE) - Curriculum Planning (for both ES and JHS)”

“Balancing the realities of the experience with one's expectations - Gaijin vs. Japan: your place in Japanese society - A refresher on the duties and the limits of the ALT position.”

“Stress management - Effective communication with JTEs”

“Health and well-being (not gender specific)”

“LBGTQ issues”

“Teaching English Grammar - Linguistics (the more the better)”

“Perhaps a Q&A panel with experienced JETs and JTEs with new ones.”

“Ekaiwa”

Please do contact us about any ideas for workshops for this year's SDC. We will consider all ideas and hope we can make this year's conference a fulfilling and educational event for ALTs and JTEs in Kumamoto Ken.