

Natsuho Mizoguchi

During the pandemic, Natsuho Mizoguchi was a great asset to JALT Gifu. She was a very efficient membership chair who, under challenging circumstances, assisted in other areas, especially program planning, which meant the chapter could survive and prosper in tough times. At the time, completing her university education and beginning her teaching career must have been difficult. However, she was able to commit time to JALT. As the world was adapting to its new circumstances, JALT Gifu needed a new treasurer. Natsuho volunteered and developed into a very efficient officer. She demonstrated that younger members of the organization can play an essential part in its development and future success. Natsuho was instrumental in creating the Student Peer Interaction Network (SPINS), which supports potential and current students in JALT. She has become a role model for young students in JALT.

--Brent Simmonds

I am writing to nominate Natsuho Mizoguchi for the JALT Award for Early Career Excellence. As her friend, colleague, and mentor, I have had the privilege of witnessing her teaching career flourish over the course of several years since her graduation from university. I am confident in stating that she is an outstanding nominee and a marvelous embodiment of what "early career excellence" represents.

Within JALT, Natsuho's enthusiasm and active participation are widely recognized by her peers across several local chapters and at the national level. She initially joined JALT as the Membership Chair for the Gifu JALT Chapter while still a university student. Her courage to take on this role immediately demonstrated her motivation to contribute her skills and experience wherever needed, a commitment she continued when she eventually became the chapter's Treasurer. As a local officer, she also collaborated actively with Presidents and Officers from nearby chapters (Nagoya and Toyohashi) to plan and host several joint events. During my tenure as Chapter President, Natsuho proved herself to be one of the most diligent, responsible, and adept problem-solvers I have had the pleasure of working with and mentoring. I can confirm that this sentiment is widely shared among my peers who have also had the opportunity to work closely with Natsuho.

Beyond the local level, her passion for doing more for the association brought her to the attention of many, including a former JALT President who recommended her as the Chair for JALT's newly formed SPIN (Student Peer Network Committee). Under Natsuho's leadership, the committee collaborated with other branches of the organization to expand JALT's reach to student members, and they hosted a highly successful Student Research Symposium featuring over 18 presentations. Such success speaks volumes about Natsuho's remarkable leadership skills, evident even in the early stages of her career. Her contributions within our organization have continued to expand as she took on additional roles, such as a PanSIG Committee member, JALT

2023 Japanese translator, and JALTCALL 2023 Japanese advisor. Her multiple involvements in various branches of the organization reflect the level of respect and trust she has earned from others through her dedication, yet she remains a humble individual always eager to quietly serve and offer assistance.

In the preceding paragraphs, I have extensively detailed her contributions within JALT because they vividly illustrate the kind of person Natsuho is. She is someone who is always ready and willing to selflessly help whenever the opportunity arises, and this reflects her identity as a teacher. During our mentoring sessions, I am constantly reminded of and impressed by the effort she invests in her students' well-being. Natsuho continually strives to improve her teaching skills and works with a wide range of students, including those with atypical qualities and circumstances whom many other educators might find challenging. However, Natsuho invests the time, patience, and care to understand each student she encounters, fostering mutual trust and respect. These qualities reflect the genuine heart and principles that Natsuho holds as an educator. Despite my role as her mentor, I consistently find myself impressed by the teacher she has chosen to become, and I am privileged to learn from her in my own journey of self-improvement. She serves as a model educator whom I believe many young and aspiring teachers, as well as experienced veterans, can look up to.

In terms of research, Natsuho deliberately makes a point to contribute to both the Japanese-speaking and English-speaking sides of the dichotomy often recognized in the field of English education research in Japan. Since the beginning of this year, she has delivered several presentations, authored multiple publications (including a book chapter for an upcoming publication), and is actively involved in at least three ongoing research projects on various topics of interest. Her contributions to organizations and our field through both languages showcase her commitment to learning, as she views her research as opportunities to understand the craft and become an even better teacher. To label Natsuho as "hard-working" would be an understatement, and it is her unwavering desire for growth and improvement that truly leaves me impressed.

While this nomination letter must come to a close, my praises, respect, and admiration for Natsuho are boundless. Her accomplishments and contributions during the early stages of her teaching career are undeniably commendable and deserving of recognition from our community. Furthermore, we have the privilege of anticipating and witnessing the boundless potential that she will undoubtedly continue to demonstrate and share with our field, her schools, and her students in the future. With all this in mind, I wholeheartedly nominate Natsuho Mizoguchi for the JALT 2023 Award of Early Career Excellence.

--Jackson Koon Yat Lee