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The Japan Association for Language Teaching

全 国 語 学 教 育 学 会



ON CUE

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATORS

National Special Interest Group

大学教育者特別分科会

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**ON CUE**  
 Japan Association for Language Teaching  
 College and University Educators N-SIG  
 Newsletter Vol. 5 No.1 April 1997

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This issue of ON CUE is edited by Jack Kimball, David Trokelshvili and Thom Simmons.

# Protesting against Discrimination vs. Protesting against Protest

Ivan P. Hall

Former Professor, Law Faculty, Gakushuin University, Tokyo  
Gaikokunin Kyoshi, Tsukuba National University, 1984-87

Thanks to public actions and statements by a small number of highly placed men and women of conscience, both foreign and Japanese, the world over the past two years has learned a lot about the dismissal without pension of several dozen long-serving senior foreign teachers at national universities, as well as the general precariousness of long-term employment for foreign nationals at institutions of higher learning in Japan.

On the European side, the British Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Alastair Goodlad, protested the unfairness of the gaikokujin kyoshi dismissals when he visited the Japanese Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Gaimusho in May 1995. On the U.S. side, the recent American ambassador to Tokyo, Walter Mondale — on numerous public occasions before businessmen, journalists, educators and cultural exchange officials of both countries — brought up the related problems of job security and the limited number of permanent academic positions for foreign scholars at Japan's universities. Two years ago, on 4 April 1995, the U.S. Embassy issued a press release on this issue, following an hour's meeting between the ambassador and seven current and former kyoshi. A year ago, on 25 March 1996, Mr. Mondale visited the Monbusho to make his plea directly to the then Minister of Education, Mr. Mikio Okuda. In Washington, meanwhile, a nonbinding Senate resolution calling for the immediate cessation of discriminatory dismissals and the restoration of jobs and benefits already lost thereby has been drafted by Sen. William Roth (R-Del.) and Jeff Bingaman (D-N. Mex.) for submission during the current 105th Congress.

And the American panel of the intergovernmental U.S.-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON) plans to take up these issues, including that of restitution, with the Japanese side at their biannual meeting in Washington this coming May.

On the Japanese side, Minister Okuda and Mr. Tadashi Amemiya (the Monbusho's bureau chief for higher education) submitted to a full hour's questioning in the education committee of the Upper House of the Diet by Mr. Kazuto Kamiyama of the Social Democratic Party on the 7th and 21st of May last year. These Diet interpolations followed a sympathetic hearing given to a group of ten foreign teachers who had visited the Parliamentary Vice Minister for Education, Ms. Kiyoko Kusakabe (also of the SDPJ) on February 29 to present a petition requesting: (1) compensation to long-serving kyoshi dismissed without pension; (2) continued employment for those still earmarked for dismissal; and (3) genuinely equal treatment for foreign teachers at all Japanese universities.

These unfair practices have also been exposed by some of the world's leading academic journals: in *Science* (7 July 1995); in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (28 July 1995); and in *Nature*, which in an editorial on 24 October 1996 averred that "employment policies in Japan's national universities are indefensible and amount to racial discrimination." The world's leading scientific magazine characterized the nationwide protest of Japanese academics against the proposed abolition of their own permanent positions — when they had long denied that privilege to their foreign colleagues — as "tenured hypocrisy." Among the Japanese media, NHK covered the kyoshi dismissals in a 6-minute special on 4 April 1995, and there has been ongoing treatment of these issues in the Asahi-affiliated monthly opinion journal, *Ronza* (May 1995 and October 1996). The problems of mid-career dismissals and lack of tenure for foreigners were officially taken up by the university division of the Japan Teachers Union (Nikkyoso/Nichidaikyo) last November.

The Monbusho, which the late ambassador and historian Edwin O. Reischauer once characterized as Japan's most conservative central ministry, quite predictably has refused to meet these complaints in any significant way. Nevertheless, much has been done to help create. Nevertheless, much has been done to help create the requisite gaiatsu that wide public knowledge and political concern both in Japan and abroad which, with enough persistence, is the only thing that could ever move the bureaucratically calcified Monbusho to change its century-long discriminatory policies.

Many readers of the CUE Newsletter will already be familiar with some of these developments. The point of this recital is to emphasize the wide range of action undertaken to date, much of it catalyzed by a small group of foreign university teachers and their Japanese and foreign sympathizers--but without any input or support at all from the largest organization of foreign teachers in Japan. I am not a member of JALT, and do not want to speak out of turn here. I realize that JALT has a very large and diverse membership only some of whom are at universities; that only a fraction of that group are senior kyoshi at national universities; and that, conversely, a considerable number of foreign scholars not in JALT also are worried about long-term job security. Still, it does seem a pity that the professional organization with the most persons likely to gain over the long term from these efforts by others has to date chosen to remain a cipher in the equation. Allow me, therefore, to address a few brief remarks to those readers in JALT who are either skeptical about the value and purpose of these efforts, or even prefer to defend the Monbusho on these issues.

Why should a handful of foreign teachers be going to all this trouble? The answer -- if you still need one after all these expressions of diplomatic, parliamentary, and media concern -- comes in several forms. For those already fired or facing imminent dismissal, it's a practical question of livelihood for oneself and one's family. Having in nearly all cases been repeatedly misled and rudely treated, many also find it a matter of maintaining one's elementary self-respect. Others, secure for the moment but nevertheless anxious about their employment prospects over the long term, would like to become eligible for the job security of all of their Japanese colleagues enjoy from the time of their first regular appointment. Or, failing that, to have at the very least a more performance-oriented and less capricious employment system for foreign staff.

All this may sound a bit remote to younger persons on the lower rungs of the career ladder, especially those who are still in the first flush of excitement after arriving in Japan. But, unless you are willing to consider your work in Japan no more than a brief, exotic interlude of three to six years to be followed by a solid reentry into the profession in your home country -- or, unless you are willing to bum around for years as an academic vagabond, just to stay in Japan -- here is what awaits the serious foreign scholar committed to lifetime work in this country. You will gradually steep yourself in the language and culture of Japan, as the Japanese have urged you to do. Chances are you will marry into the Yamato race, buy a home some day, and bring up children whose primary culture is Japanese. Then, at some point in your late 40s or 50s -- precisely as you reach the high curve in your professional productivity, in your grasp of the ways and needs of Japanese students, and in expenses for your children's secondary and college education --you will be asked to leave.

For those at national universities there will be virtually no legal recourse as the laws governing the Japanese bureaucracy now stand. Those at private schools will have the option of fighting it out in court over a two-year period or so, as several persons are now doing. In thinking about your own future the essential point is to realize that Japan at the end of this decade and century is actually retrogressing in the area of permanent tenure or long-term hires for foreign scholars, even as it touts the growing number of newly engaged foreign university teachers, the overwhelming majority of whom are being brought in on short-term contracts. At the national universities, older foreign kyoshi have been thrown out and barely 16% of appointments in the newer kyoin category carry tenure. And the Monbusho has recommended that the private universities, which in the past have carried some permanent foreign staff, switch to a system of term-limited contracts for foreigners.

Foreign scholars now taking steps against "academic apartheid" (as I have called it) are motivated by less personal concerns as well. The dedicated teacher can only deplore the pedagogical cost to Japanese students of an endlessly revolving door of foreign teachers who are never allowed to reach, or give of, their professional maturity. The serious researcher questions the scholarly quality of an ethnocentrically segregated academic system where nationality regularly overrides performance as a criterion for dismissal,



and from which no "reverse" instances of MIT Nobel Prizewinner Susumu Tonegawa could ever conceivably emerge. Those with an eye on international relations are worried about the way academic insularism hobbles Japan in meeting its immense challenges of regional, let alone global, leadership. They decry the refusal to reciprocate the academic opportunities afforded the many Japanese scholars now tenured at North American and European universities, and emphasize how these restrictive policies fly in the face of over two decades of promises to the outside world to "internationalize" and genuinely open up Japanese universities to foreign staff.

Finally, a word about those foreign teachers who have chosen to protest not discrimination but the act of protest itself, on the grounds that guests in a foreign country should not complain or make waves. Presently known as "guestism," this viewpoint apparently derives from some half-baked notions about cultural sensitivity mixed in with semi-digested chunks of value relativism and stirred briskly into a one-sided sentimentalism about Japan. Greater truth in labeling would suggest another moniker: "guesto-enteritis!"

Just because one is a "guest" in another country does not oblige one to suffer abuse silently. We are in any case concerned here not with the short-term cultural "exchange" but with long-serving professionals who have made a career commitment to Japan. Just imagine the hullabaloo in the Japanese (and American) press that would occur if Western universities were to throw out dozens of senior Japanese scholars for the purpose of "refreshing" their departments with younger Oriental faces -- a justification given both senior by some private universities to Japanese judges at recent court hearings, and by the Monbusho to the American Embassy.

The willingness to be walked over (or see one's foreign colleagues walked over) without raising one's voice in protest on the assumption that one is thereby being properly "Japanese," overlooks the enormous amount of thinly veiled conflict (and the dramatic rise in litigation) among the Japanese themselves. It betrays an extreme cultural-relativistic suspension of the belief that there are indeed some universal standards of decency to which all must be held. And it smacks of a sentimental -- and thoroughly patronizing -- reluctance to admit that Japan, like any other nation or culture, has its darker as well as brighter side.

A real love of Japan (as of any other country, or other person for that matter) requires one to behold, and care about, the more problematical aspects -- the difference between having a crush on a pin-up poster, and being in love with a real woman. Some Japanophile expatriates -- particularly those in flight from negative aspects of their own Western culture -- have spun themselves a cotton-candy idyll by registering only the comforting (usually aesthetic) dimensions of their adopted country. This fantasy is inconvenienced by any evidence that Japanese social arrangements have their harsher, and exploitative side, including institutions that are systematically tilted against weaker Japanese, and foreigners.

Precisely in this connection we must not forget Japan's permanently resident Korean community, 600,000 strong, and the seemingly endless struggle they have been waging since 1970 -- South and North Koreans together, hand in hand -- to open up the universities to tenured positions for non-Japanese staff. Compared to their travails those of Western scholars are like a feather on the rock of Sisyphus, although both are working toward a more pluralistic and open Japan. Foreign university teachers should bear in mind that the present barriers to their long-term service are powerfully backed by educational conservatives and nationalistic reactionaries in the Monbusho and the political parties. Nothing short of widely-based gaiatsu, together with hard-headed and sustained pressure from those adversely affected, will serve to move the situation forward. Ask any seasoned resident-Korean scholar-- one graduated from Todai even, yet wandering from contractual pillar to short-term post -- what he or she thinks of the tender-minded philosophy of "guestism" and the gratuitous interference it runs on behalf of the most backward elements on Japan's educational scene!

# Demographic Information about Japanese Colleges and Universities

Translated by Tim Newfields

Number of college students in Japan: 2,540,000

Number of four-year universities in Japan: 565 (Dec. 95 )

(average 4,496 students per college)

Number of junior colleges in Japan: 596 (Dec. 95)

Number of junior college students in Japan: 490,000

(average 822 students per college)

Number of college teachers in Japan: 137,000

(avg. 242 teachers per college, 19 students per teacher)

Number of junior college teachers in Japan: 20,000

(average 34 teachers per college, 25 students per teacher)

Percentage of Japanese entering university or jr. college—

29.7% of all males, 45.4% of all females

Percentage of Japanese who graduate from high school: 96.7%

The population of 18 year olds hit a peak of 2,050,000 in 1992 and is declining steadily . . . by the year 2009 this figure will shrink to 1,210,000.

Source of Information: Takano, Jiro. "Tokai Daigaku ga Mokuhyou Mono:

21 Isseki no Kibou" [Tokai University's Target for the 21st Century.] Tokai Daigaku Gaikokugo Kyouiku Senta Hoshin (Bessatsu). 21 Seiki no Gai-sen wo kataru: 96 Nen Shinpojuumu Yori" [Highlights from a Symposium of Tokai University's Foreign Language Center's Policies for the 21st Century].

NOTE: From these figures it would seem the following averages are true:

4,496 students per 4-year college ..... 242 teachers per college

19 students per teacher

822 students per jr. college .... 34 teachers per college ..... 25 students per teacher

# JALT Debates Tracking, Streaming

Edited by Jack Kimball

## More than Pedagogy: An Introduction

Jack Kimball

Tracking and/or streaming is a flash point among teachers and observers of cultural influences on education. Grouping language learners of similar achievement raises questions of what works best for students, instructors, administrators and the community at large. Responses to these questions keep flashing green and red lights. Go for it under one set of contingencies. But stop under a different set. As Cook points out, a class of students on the same track can be a lot easier for the teacher to manage and a more meaningful engagement for learners. Conversely, both Joritz-Nakagawa and Kotori worry about fulfilling students' worst expectations, namely, that those streamed into less advanced classes will see themselves as fundamentally less capable than others.

Notwithstanding the unsettled and separate debate about tracking and equity in U.S. secondary education, for very different reasons the debate among JALT members over tracking/streaming will not likely be resolved over the next few months or years. With respect to the English teachers among us, the issues embedded in the JALT debate reach deep within our collective and highly ambiguous "presence" in Japan as educators of foreign values perceived by many as too dominant worldwide, values and attitudes that are perhaps too aggressive vis a vis Japanese polity. In other words, in addition to the pedagogical dilemmas surrounding whether "to track or not," as Adamson puts it, there is the larger societal tug-of-war between -- on the one hand -- a culturally passionate, some might say a culturally self-preserving, insistence to maintain mixed-ability classrooms for the sake of communal homogeneity, and -- on the other hand -- compelling research data that indicate specific benefits to ability-tracking under controlled circumstances.

More pertinent to Japanese pedagogy, however, is how these questions of whether to track / to stream college students might, and in time will, shed light on the essentially unanalyzed practice of slotting language learners into classes based merely on a student's age and the order of a student's last name. In this regard, tracking/streaming offers a few approaches within a wider range of potential alternatives for organizing language education: For example, grouping students (a) by their interests in subject matter; (b) by their willingness to participate in learning "experiments" (TPR, suggestopedia, etc.); (c) by their desire to share and collaborate on special projects organized around similar learning styles; and indeed, (d) by their keenness to work in classes of outright mixed abilities and learning styles, in which less advanced students serve as "apprentices" to more advanced peers. The authors who are participating in the JALT debate on tracking and streaming are thereby opening an important line of inquiry that should lead to broader and deeper examination of underlying assumptions about teaching as well as observable practices.

These pieces -- "pieces" is the operative word since some are small essays, others, in their authors' terms, are "notes" -- derive from the tracking/streaming thread on JALTCALL, the JALT e-mail subscriber list. While a few of these pieces are reprinted more or less as they first appeared online, all the authors were invited to reflect on the debate and to offer additional thoughts if they chose. The aim here, then, is to advance the debate by airing ideas of its various contributors and to record the results within the pages of ON CUE.

## To "Track" or to "Place"?

Paul Doyon

Recently, there was a discussion on JALTCALL about "tracking" or "streaming" (it seems that tracking is the American term and streaming the British term). In this piece I will define tracking, look at its history, describe how it is different from "placing," and finally present arguments for "placing."

DEFINED The National Education Association of Alaska's web page defines tracking as "the practice of dividing students into separate classes, groups, or schools for high, average, and low achievers".

**HISTORY** One of the originators of the tracking system in America, is also the pioneer of the IQ test, Lewis Terman.

Terman refined the test developed initially by Alfred Binet, and it was retitled the Stanford Binet. Among the uses to which Terman put his test was gathering data to support his claim that most minorities were inferior. He tested the students in the schools of San Jose and Oakland, divided them into three tracks, and offered his organisational plan as a great discovery of achievement. Later, the state of California adopted the Terman ideal for its higher education system and referred to it as the Master Plan for Higher Education. Community colleges accommodated the slow track; state universities, the medium track; and the prestigious universities, the fast track. Versions of California's fully institutionalised tracking system were adopted, under differing labels, in many other states. (Australian Education Network's web page, downloaded 2/7/97) Now it seems that tracking has become quite universal--and controversial.

**PROS AND CONS** The proponents of tracking claim that it helps high achievers progress more quickly and that it allows the lower achievers more focused attention. Its opponents claim that it: a) provides poor role models, b) lowers expectations, and c) concentrates minority students in classes with a slow instructional pace.

**TRACKING IN JAPAN** It's very obvious that tracking occurs in Japan to a large degree. The entrance examinations for high schools and universities are, for the most part, obvious reminders that this happens.

**TRACKING VS. PLACEMENT** What was actually being talked about on JALTCALL had to do with placing students in varying levels of ESL classes based upon the language level of those particular students. I would assume that this is based not on whether or not the student is a high, average, or low achiever; not on the student's ability; nor on the student's overall level of intelligence, but on the simple fact that the student was/is at a particular point with the language and that this point is similar to those others who have also been (or would be) placed at the same level. For this reason, I would not call this tracking, but placement. Now, having straightened that out, it seems that the lengthy discussion on JALTCALL had nothing to do with tracking at all, but on whether or not students should be placed with other students who are at a similar place with the language. For me this is not a simple "Yes/No" question, but one where we need to add "Wh-questions" (when, why, how, who, what, where) to the equation. Whether to place or not might very well depend on the unique circumstances that every teaching situation seems to bring with it.

The argument against placing the students by level was that it was not "fair" and that all the students should receive equal treatment (regardless of their differing needs). Yet, this argument holds no water. It is like saying that all the patients to a hospital should receive penicillin. Why should all people be treated the same when all people are different and have different needs? Certainly, this can not be considered as "Fair." We have seen that in some countries that placing "ideology" before people's actual needs has failed. I think that we all can agree that what we want to do is what's best for our students--not what's best for our ideologies. Let's not make the same mistake with ESL in Japan.

A great language educator once said that we need to meet our students where they are at with the language. Unfortunately, we can't be in more than one place at the same time. However, by placing the students we can more effectively meet more of them close to where they are at and hopefully help them learn more effectively.

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## Streaming

Melodie Lorie Cook

I agree with streaming, because it's easier for a teacher to prepare more meaningful lessons for students and there's not as much worrying about stronger students not being challenged enough and weaker students being overly challenged (frustrated). This is particularly important in large classes which meet only once a week. As I said in my posting to JALTCALL, I was surprised to hear that a no-streaming position was being defended in some departments of the university I previously worked at because streaming was seen by some as "non-democratic." (Like the LDP is democratic, right. And liberal! ha ha.) Although all of the native-English-speaking teachers were pro-streaming, many of their Japanese colleagues (English teachers) believed that students should be kept together based on their subject major, and not streamed by ability, for the convenience of their native-English-speaking teachers. It seems that the



issue is not so much pedagogical, but political, and administrative. It's easier to keep the students together in one group, and who are these foreign teachers making demands, anyway? The nerve!

On the other hand, I proctored a streaming test (listening) in which a number of students quickly answered everything without listening to the questions and then promptly fell asleep, thus ensuring their places in the lowest level classes. It would seem then, that some students would rather be with their friends, or in an "easy" class than in a class really suited to their capabilities.

## Track and Stream

Jane Joritz-Nakagawa

One argument against streaming is the idea of "self fulfilling prophecies." Students labelled C grade behave in a C grade fashion; students labelled A grade succeed as they, and their teachers, parents, etc., have expected all along. A famous psychological study illustrated this point. Students who were randomly divided into classes were taught by teachers who were told that either they had an especially brilliant group or an ordinary one. Those who were believed to be brilliant were treated as brilliant and performed brilliantly. The so-called ordinary ones were evaluated as ordinary at the end of the term by their teachers. Students' own lowered expectations of themselves, combined with the lowered expectations of others including teachers who consequently may offer less challenging work can characterize the cycle of self-fulfilling prophecies.

The book *Cooperative Learning Cooperative Lives* presents the viewpoint that the high achievers are as damaged as lower achievers psychologically by ability groupings (e.g., they become over competitive, isolated, and don't learn how to work with others, etc.).

Some feel grouping classes by ability is a necessity, if a necessary evil. However, I think this viewpoint ignores several important aspects of streaming: 1) the negative psychological effects; 2) the negative performance effects (e.g. resulting from self-fulfilling prophecies); 3) the availability of better alternatives to ability grouping; 4) the evidence that factors other than measurable or perceived ability make for success.

Interestingly, ed. psych research has found in pair learning that matching personalities was found to be far more effective for learning than matching students by level. The perfect match was not matching similar personality but rather matching a neurotic with a stable person. This was found to substantially increase learning for both the neurotic and stable person in the pair and was found superior to any matching by ability. The recommendation of the authors was to neither track by ability nor by personality but rather for teachers to try to find out the strengths, weaknesses, personalities, learning styles etc. as best they can in a non-tracked group and vary the teaching approaches/methods/tasks. The reasons were two: 1) nontracking is better for learning for everybody; 2) nontracking is psychologically better for everybody (of course one effects the other but they were considered separately).

Although I've read in academic journals and books such things like diverse groups are more creative because they see more sides to a problem, and that group (cooperative) learning affords the combined insights necessary for greater learning, common sense alone tells me this is true. Tracking assumes that homogeneity of ability leads to better learning, but my position is opposite. I think heterogeneity of ability, as well as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, abledbodiedness etc., etc., leads to better learning.

Even if we assume that ability grouping is good for students (which I don't) it should be pointed out that often standardized tests and other ineffective placement tests are the usual vehicles for placing students into tracks. Those used at the schools where I've worked have not been valuable to me at all as to learning what I need to learn about my students. I wonder if they measure what is important to succeed in my classes? I believe the answer is no. They don't measure a person's goals, drive, level of effort, etc. Most of what is necessary for success, the most crucial things, are not measured by placement tests. They measure some aspects of how a person is on a certain day but don't measure where they want to end up. I don't really even believe in high and low students in the ordinary sense, not since I've become a teacher. Crude example considering oral EFL ability, which is rarely tested by placement tests: I have students with a poor command of grammar (when speaking) yet they have the determination and creativity to compensate well and communicate quite effectively (comprehensibly, warmly) on any number of topics. I have others who make far fewer mistakes in such things as grammar and usage but lack the ability to come across well, for example they seem to lack flexibility and insight (e.g., of the cultural and interpersonal variety), and make a

worse overall impression as communicators; some probably do well on paper tests but aren't risk-takers in conversation, etc. When we talk about ability we are talking about constellations of various strengths and weaknesses. Unfortunately placement tests don't measure these things well and are in general often used to do all kinds of things which they are incapable of doing. I think they are more of a formality (at least in my experience) and probably aren't too much more reliable than chance if at all a good deal of the time.

One might say the students themselves should choose their own track if tracks are offered. A test only measures certain aspects of a students' abilities, and doesn't take into account the actual skills needed for success in the class, which may be very different indeed, as well as the student's goals and desires. (It also doesn't take into account the effects of test anxiety on the results; these effects may be most influential in the case of the habitually poor test performer.) Students may wish to progress at different rates. A so-called low student may have a job as a ski instructor in Canada in the following year and may wish to work at a brisk pace, despite the extra effort that will be required.

However Sonia Nieto in her book *Affirming Diversity* states that if a school is tracked the best thing to do is to de-track it and if that isn't done the teachers individually should not group by ability because it leads to less learning for all the students and also has damaging psychological effects. Nieto doesn't think students should place themselves into tracks (if they have a choice) because she feels the so called low achievers may not have the confidence having already been defeated/demoralized by the system to try something more challenging.

In the past 3 years I've had classes with so called low students mixed in with returnees but the classes went smoothly and all had a chance to learn and improve. The students' reports of the classes were positive and I believe real progress in their English was made. I believe the approach mentioned above: for teachers to try to find out the strengths, weaknesses, personalities, learning styles etc. as best they can in a non-tracked group and vary the teaching approaches/methods/tasks, is the best (though each teaching situation must be judged individually). If heterogeneity leads to conflict rather than cooperation intervention is necessary. For those who view conflict as inevitable all I will say is my own classes have been pretty harmonious. Also conflict can and I would say should be un-learned. Conflict resolution is an important teaching/learning area.

To give extra help to students who want it outside of class in Japan the alternative has been expensive jukus and such. A better alternative would be one provided by the school free of charge such as student (or teacher) led study groups, self access centers in addition to library services etc. I think these combined with the above would be better than tracking.

## Tracking Students

Chiaki Kotori

I've seen (and experienced) the problem of self-stigmatizing of students who have been tracked-judged as--weak. To minimize the danger of stigmatization, I think teachers need to be able to explain (and should explain) the following things in the beginning before students begin to form any negative attitude: 1) why tracking is necessary in a given situation; 2) when and how tracking is done; 3) how it benefits the students in each different section; and 4) whether there is a chance to advance if the program runs in consecutive semesters.

Tracking inevitably produces so-called "low or weak" groups of students by whatever criteria used for a given program. The differentiation does not have to affect one's self-worth, but in reality it does seem so. This is actually a reflection of my own situation where we stream students but don't give them much explanation about the placement. Students are not informed which level they are on by their teachers, either, but sooner or later they figure it out by talking to their friends or sempai. The speculation, however, often involves their own imagination and groundless rumours that in some cases lead to stigmatization. I think in our situation we should explain about our tracking the students (especially the benefit, and perhaps for those who may take it, what it means and what it doesn't mean to be placed in one section) next semester when we announce the sections.

Having said that, I still wonder if the explicit and objective knowledge about the placement would be such a good idea in my situation. I am mainly concerned about the weak group, how they would take it, whether this may be better unsaid, etc. Any observations? I'm curious to know how explicitly (or implicitly) the purpose and the benefit of streaming is explained to the students at your school if you use streaming.

In addition, students in a mixed class also have an opportunity to learn from and stimulate each other. When I was an English major, I think I was in a tracked class for the required courses. For electives, we were free to choose whatever classes we wanted, so these classes consisted of students with different levels, years, and sometimes

majors. The tracked class worked fine, but it was often in those elective courses that I had a chance to see and hear other students who were advanced speakers of English. I was often quite fascinated just to see them doing what I wished I could in English.

## **To Track Or Not To Track, That Is The Question**

Charles Adamson

Tracking seems to be very controversial these days. There are heated arguments about whether or not to track students, with some teachers assuming that tracking should be a basic premise of curriculum design and others saying that it makes no sense at all because heterogeneity leads to more learning than homogeneity.

Hamlet in the famous soliloquy alluded to in the title looks at both sides of the question. I propose that this is exactly what EFL teachers are not doing when they think about tracking. Teachers are considering their specific situation and then generalizing without thinking about whether the generalization is correct. They are stereotyping. For some, the stereotypes based on their unique conditions suggests tracking; for others, it does not. Thus we have a controversy since everyone thinks that they are correct and the others wrong.

I want to present an analysis that strongly suggests that tracking is appropriate in some cases and inappropriate in others. I will also discuss other factors that might modify the initial decision.

### **What Tracking Means**

Tracking means putting students into classes based on their scores on some sort of proficiency test. In the case of EFL students they are usually tracked according to the results of a test that attempts to measure their overall level of language ability. The TOEIC, TOEFL and Oxford Placement tests are examples of this kind of test that I have used. There are many more. For criterion courses (discussed below) the test may measure the students' knowledge of specific points rather than some overall ability. EFL tracking is based purely on the students' language level at the beginning of the course. There is no attempt, nor in my opinion is it valuable, to track students by any other criteria.

### **Types Of Classes**

For this discussion of tracking students in Japanese schools, it will be useful to group classes into four different categories according to the goals of the class.

**Orientation Classes:** These are those classes that are often given to non-English majors. The goal is to develop some sort of empathy for the English language, the culture of countries where the language is used, and the people who speak the language. The powers-that-be have little interest in whether or not the students learn much English and the teacher often ends up just entertaining the students. There are never clearly stated goals for the class. In fact if there are goals, they are so vague as to be completely useless.

**Conversation Classes:** This is the kind of class we find at language schools and in many colleges (where the course is usually taught by native speakers). In language schools, class size is often 10 or less. In colleges, it is sometimes 100 or more but seldom less than 30. The goal is the general development of conversational fluency. However, the contexts in which the conversations are to take place are seldom specified.

**Criterion-referenced Classes:** This type of course is less common in Japan. The goals of a criterion-referenced class are carefully specified in terms of what the students will know or be able to do at the end of the course. These goals become the criterion. The students can not pass the course until they attain a level equal to or above the criterion. This type of class is frequently an ESP course.

**Advancement Classes:** These classes usually have vague, long-range goals. The powers-that-be expect that the students' overall English level will rise, although they do not know for sure what this means exactly or how you could demonstrate that it happened. Although the goal is vague, we do have a sense of what is wanted and can design lesson plans that will move the students in this general direction.

Other English-related subjects will usually fit into one of these categories. For example, literature, linguistics, and ESP classes will be either Orientation, Criterion-referenced, or Advancement classes.

Now let's look at the value of tracking or not tracking in relation to each type of class.



## Orientation Classes And Tracking

In this type class, it is not even possible to track. The goals are not sufficiently defined, so making a test to measure the students current level in relation to the goals is impossible. If the goals are more clearly defined, the class will move to another type, probably Advancement. It would, of course, be possible to place the students in groups using some standardized test, but it is questionable whether could be called 'tracking' since there are no clear goals to use as a measure of student ability. I personally believe that an argument can be made in favor of this type of placement, but will not pursue it here.

## Conversation Classes And Tracking

Eikaiwa (or conversation) schools track conversation students almost without thinking about it. They have found through experience that tracked classes give the best results and their customers expect it. In fact when I was involved with this sort of program, students complained vociferously if they thought they had not been placed in the optimal class. I designed a complex tracking system that used both a written (multiple choice test of grammar and vocabulary) and a listening test at entrance into the program and a conversation test at middle and end of each semester. The system was constantly compared to the results and adjustments were frequently made to insure that the student placements were optimum. The reason that tracking was effective was that the materials and class activities could be set at a difficulty level that resulted in optimal learning by the students. We found by experience that, when the level of the materials was too high or too low compared to the students abilities, the amount of learning per unit time fell drastically. We experimented with many different types of learning and found that no method (including cooperative learning, CLL, Silent Way, Suggestopedia, TPR, audio/lingual drilling, and the methods from the manuals of commercial texts) increased the individual student's learning as much as tracking. In other words method was a less important predictor of student learning than tracking. This was further verified by the decrease in learning, when for administrative/economic reasons, we were forced to increase the range of levels in a class. I have seen no tests results with which to evaluate the streaming of college classes but I see no reason why they should be different from conversation classes in eikaiwa schools. My own experiences teaching college conversation classes support the conviction that tracked classes are better in terms of student learning but I have no hard data to back up this impression.

## Criterion-referenced Classes And Tracking

If the criterion levels are appropriate for the students (reachable within the time frame by most or all of the students), tracking is not appropriate. Students who already have attained some or all of the goals can be grouped with students who have not yet reached the goal. Situations can then be created by the teacher where the individual students are graded on the performance of the group. Higher level students will then assist the lower level students to achieve the class goals. We can not say that the higher level students have learned at an optimal rate, but that is not the goal here. Also it is possible to rearrange student groupings so that while lower level students are practicing, more challenging material can be given to the upper level students. Here we are interested in having all the students reach a specified level, not in stretching individuals as much as possible. We might note in passing that this type of learning is effectively used by the military and in some company training classes.

## Advancement Classes And Tracking

Here, just as with conversation classes, tracking is effective in raising the average amount learned (where we define the amount learned as progress toward some specified goal). If the materials and activities are inappropriate, the students will spend much of their time not understanding or repeating what they already know. This leads to inefficient learning. If the students are all more or less at the same level, suitable materials and activities will stretch a few of the students, be a review of not yet solidified knowledge for a few others, and provide close to optimal learning for the majority. Due to the uneven nature of language acquisition, we can expect the students in each of these three categories to change with each new activity.

## Summary Of When To Use Tracking

Tracking is optimal for conversation and advancement classes. Criterion-referenced classes are best if not tracked. Orientation classes can be tracked or not.

## Arguments Against Tracking

Many teachers who are categorically against the use of tracking insist that the students are psychologically damaged by knowing that they have been placed in a low class. I agree that this is stressful and disappointing for many students. However, the lasting damage done to both high and low students in non-tracked classes can be far worse. These



students will stop learning and studying. They are in grave danger of becoming dropouts. The lower students go through school wondering why they never understand things that are so easy for the others. The obvious answer for many is that they are stupid and this negative self-image will have a long term effect on their lives. The higher level students will go through the class unchallenged and may actually begin to drop from the levels previously obtained.

Some teachers argue that cooperative learning will remove the negative psychological effects and it often does. However, the higher level students do not attain the learning (movement toward the goals) that are possible when they are tracked. Cooperative learning is an excellent choice when forced by the administration to teach a non-tracked conversation or advancement class, but it will not achieve the same level of results as when the same students are placed in tracked classes.

## Other Factors Influencing Tracking Effectiveness

There are a number of other factors that should be considered when deciding whether or not to track a group of students. I will mention some of the more important and comment briefly on each.

**Class size:** Larger classes are general harder to handle because of the reduced teacher/student contact time. As a general rule, proper tracking can be expected to have a stronger effect for larger classes.

**Ability range:** The positive effects of proper tracking become stronger when the ability range of the students in the overall group becomes larger. Think of a group consisting of some zero-beginners, some intermediates and some very advanced students. The best results (in terms of average growth per student) for a non-tracked class would be far below the results that could be obtained by tracking the students into three different levels.

**Required/Elective courses:** Basically this is a statement about motivation. Students in required courses are generally less motivated and would benefit from material and activities that provided the appropriate amount of challenge.

**Teaching method:** There is an interaction between teaching method and tracking, particularly with non-tracked classes. There are some things that are difficult to do with non-tracked classes. Additionally some teachers due to personal preferences or lack of methodological training do not have the flexibility to change to methods that are appropriate for the tracking status of the class.

**Student beliefs:** Due to individual beliefs, student can be expected to react better to one type of class than the other. However, there are techniques in NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming - see the February 1997 Special Issue of The Language Teacher for more information) which allow the teacher to change student beliefs in ecological ways.

**Grading:** Whether or not the class is graded (and how) will have an important interaction with tracking. When classes are non-tracked, the teachers for individual groups can grade the students in comparison to other students in the same group and the grading across groups will be relatively fair. However, when students are tracked grading must be done by comparing all the students in all the levels for it to be fair. Another possibility is to give the classes at various levels different course names and allow them to be graded independently, but this is often not feasible in Japanese colleges.

**Communicative skills:** The goal of communicative skills will have a very strong effect. Consider the students mentioned in the discussion of ability range. Any type of communicative conversation activity would be far from optimal with the non-tracked class.

There are other factors but their effects are weaker, so their specification is left as an exercise for the reader.

## Conclusion

The controversy over tracking is largely the result of the lack of an overall analysis of the effects of tracking. When such an analysis is made, it becomes clear that there are situations which call for tracking and there are situations that call for non-tracking, if we wish to optimize learning. It is, therefore, necessary for curriculum planners to carefully consider the goals of the specific class as well as the goals of the program and the school when deciding whether or not to track the students.

# "Quality" of Education

Steven van Dresser

For several years, the foreign English faculty have been trying to restructure courses and curriculum in the English Department at our women's junior college. One of the reasons for attempting change was the idea that if we could provide a more challenging course option, we could attract greater numbers of better students. We thought this would help in recruitment of all students and should be widely accepted within the institution as promoting the "quality" of education. The first suggested change, during my three years here, was to try to split our courses into two mutually exclusive programs of study. One program would be relatively academic and might lead to a teaching certificate or a secretarial license. The second program would be more communicative and might lead to a secretarial license. Admission to the "teacher's program" would be limited to the "better" students.

This was rejected for several reasons. First, the catalog offered all program options to all students. Reducing the number of course options would reduce the attraction of the school. Some students might want both secretarial and teaching credentials and it was possible to achieve both, even though few students had. Secondly, the splitting of students into two programs of English would also have the effect of splitting them for their other general educational subject courses, as well. Several teachers in the English Department who taught courses other than English protested that they didn't like splitting classes on the basis of ability, forcing them to teach separate classes of more and lesser able students separately.

There was a third objection. Some people suspected that the group of better students would get preferential treatment; smaller classes, more attention, better teachers, etc., leaving the weaker students to struggle along in larger neglected classes. The opinion was expressed that at matriculation all students should have reached the same degree of competence. We should therefore be putting more effort and resources towards teaching the weaker students. The purpose of the classification seemed to be to challenge the better students who were already more than adequately prepared. If we had intended to separate students based on abilities and then put the lower students in smaller, more intense classes, with the better students hoarded into large and boring lectures, we would be providing appropriate service, according to some. We may not actually get all students to the same level, but we could not be faulted for not trying.

In a more Western tradition, special attention is given to the better students. This flies in the face of, "The nail that sticks out gets hammered in." There is also the practical problem of who teaches whom, after the separation. Few faculty, whether Japanese or foreign, wanted to be stuck with larger classes of all lower level students. A compromise was reached at one point which allowed students to choose their level after testing, but with the opportunity for faculty to encourage students to go into the "appropriate" group. We set up a "challenge" group and a "relaxed" group. This worked to a degree, but failed when several weak students wanted to stay with their friends. (Some faculty even suggested, tongue in cheek, that they thought the "challenge" class was set up for those for whom any English was a "challenge", or for the "academically challenged.")

This past year we split classes after classification, giving students no choice. We devised a testing scheme which used several stages of classification. The final stage was a structured interview which decided the borderline cases. In retrospect, the classification seemed to work rather well — no students sought to change groups and no teachers tried to get students into different groups for the whole year.

We are also trying again to offer a more and a less rigorous program of study. Students will make their own choices after their first semester. It is not known how many students will choose a course of English linguistics and literature over a course emphasizing communication and business English. It may still result in overcrowded classes for the masses and small intensive classes for a small elite group of the academically inclined. As a teacher of oral communication and business English I'm a bit worried. There are some indications the central administration is too.

I wish there were a general conclusion from this discussion. I have very mixed feelings about these issues and I believe all of my colleagues, Japanese as well as foreign, do as well. There is no clear consensus here, nor was there in the JALTCALL mailing list which started all this. The good news is that it appears that the quality of students applying for the next school year may be up, while the total number is down only slightly. The bad news is that, however our students are split, there will be fewer teachers this year. I hope the remaining resources are not spread too thinly to teach them all well.

# Streaming/Tracking: A Review of the Issues and the Literature

Thomas L. Simmons

The primary issue in the tracking/streaming debate is essentially whether or not students should be segregated into groups on the basis of perceived potential ability or demonstrated skill level and taught in those groups. A reiteration of given definitions would be helpful here.

Shafritz, Koepee, and Soper (1988) gave a basic overall definition. Tracking is also referred to as 'Streaming.' Essentially it means grouping students on the basis of assumed or demonstrated ability. This definition is very loose and all studies refer to some selection criteria.

Mosteller, Light & Sachs (1996) made the following argument in their definition of tracking. They preferred the term 'skill-grouping over ability grouping in that skill grouping depends on current manifest skill whereas ability grouping presumes a permanence in quality that may in fact be altered by education training and experience (p. 799). This is hardly a radical departure in the history of evaluating and identifying achievement levels -- Binet did not actually presume permanent differences in learning ability nor did he propose any underlying basis to explain the differences he observed among school children in France in the early part of this century

Grouping in many forms is possible. There are the politically motivated and the pedagogical rationales as well as the inadvertent types of grouping. However, it is not evident that an earlier comment in JALT Debates Tracking, Streaming about a distinction between placing or tracking is being made in the research literature.

## **The Three Lines of Debate**

The debate over 'tracking' (aka 'streaming') has historically followed three lines, which incidentally were reflected in the JALT debate: those opposed to grouping on socio-political, or socio-psychological grounds, those supporting grouping on the basis that research provides evidence for improved learning and those who say the evidence is inconclusive either way (Mosteller, Light & Sachs, 1996).

## **The opposition**

Oakes (1986) basically said that tracking inevitably leads to racial, ethnic and socio-economic segregation. Her fundamental thesis was that in a democratic society, democratisation is the primary concern and whole-class instruction was the best way to go about this. Welner and Oakes (1996) reiterated the dangers of segregation along ethnic/racial and social economic status (SES) lines. They also maintained that the literature clearly showed no research support for tracking with regard to improved learner achievement.

Gordon Swanson (1993) laid the crimes of tracking at the feet of Lewis M. Terman, who is supposed to have originated the idea of tracking. Terman, a professor at Stanford University prior to WW I, was working in the traditions of those who believed that intelligence is wholly inherited, can be determined by empirical measurement and tends to be consistent along the lines of perceived race.

This tradition includes Francis Galton. Galton is often credited with being one of the leading pioneers of modern statistics. Galton, who actually coined the term 'eugenics' in 1883, (1884) believed that everything could be measured and in fact everything that was inheritable could be measured (Gould, 1981, p. 75). But Galton did not stop there, he advocated marriage and family size according to his assumptions on the hereditary endowment of the parents.

There are others in this tradition whose beliefs were unmitigatedly racist. There is a long and illustrious 19th century to early 20th century tradition of craniometry --measuring heads and brain size (Gould, 1981). Paul Broca, possibly the leading name amongst them, claimed that the size of the brain was related to intelligence. He further assumed that people could be ranked on a mental scale of intelligence that was distinctive to race (Topinard, 1878).

Those who believed that intelligence, hence superiority, was inherited, continued the belief that race was related to a person's value and that value could be reified by measuring and affixing a numerical value. Alfred Binet's work in the early part of this century was the source of much of what people presently believe about testing. Binet was a believer in Broca's theories (1889). Later, discouraged by the discrepancies in Broca's claims, Binet pursued other means of measuring mental abilities (Gould, 1981).

Binet was employed by the French government in 1904 to devise a way of identifying children who were not able to keep up a normal pace of learning in the classroom and would need additional help. Eschewing learned skills he attempted to employ numerous parameters in deducing a child's potential to learn. His scale was used to determine mental age. By the time of his death in 1911, he had published several scales for measuring learning potential. Later a German psychologist, W. Stern, proposed the division of mental age by chronological age and



this became the intelligence quotient (IQ) (Gould, 1981, p. 150).

It is important to point out that Binet did not propose these scores as the indication of inborn intelligence nor did he believe it could be used to rank children on the basis of mental worth. He did not even propose any theory of the causes of poor academic performance. That dubious distinction goes to others. To some extent, Binet was a brief and reasonable interlude in the use of testing to provide those with racially and sexually demarcated agendas with justification for their policies.

Some of the worst excesses and distortions of the Binet research were by H. H. Goddard, L. M. Terman, and R. M. Yerkes and Terman was at the head of the pack. Through the reification of Binet's scores and the use of these scores to 'prove' intelligence, they initiated the hereditarian theory in the United States (Gould, 1981, p. 157), a theory of IQ that has been embraced by the political, academic and financial interests of the industrialised countries of the world, including Japan where its use is currently advocated as a means to determine a persons' value to society. Goddard took Binet's work to the States. Terman developed the Stanford-Binet scale and advocated social policies that would restrict entry into professions and vocations on the basis of scores. And Yerkes' work with the U.S. Army was used to establish the massive amounts of 'objective' data that has been interpreted to justify many government policies for years.

People like Broca and Terman illustrate extremes. In the face of mounting evidence to disprove their theories, Broca and Terman continued to vacillate and invent new subterfuges to explain the conflicting evidence away. Terman went so far as to calculate the IQs of the long dead from scant historical records. Examples of his test questions show he was unwilling or unable to accept any type of divergent or contextually specific thinking.

It is to this long and vigorous tradition that people like Oakes and Swanson refer in their opposition to the segregation of students. Their argument is based on the equality of the students with regard to a socio-political standard in opposition to socio-economic, ethnic, racial or sex grouping. However, this does not completely address the historical basis of grouping or subsequent research in learning and teaching. Since the entire issue has been populated with open advocates of racism and sexism, the entire issue has been written off as venal and invidiously discriminatory.

Using people like Terman as Swanson has, as an example of this school of thought, is rather like using Adolf Hitler as an example of a leader of a sovereign people. The Terman and Hitlers of the world serve to illustrate extremes but they can not provide reasonable evidence to discard an entire idea. They can not be used, as has been done so often, to discard the practice of evaluating someone's current level of attained skill nor how that information should be used. It is not that simple.

It should be obvious that even in a native speaker population a dyslexic or severely retarded student can not be expected to maintain a normal or average level of achievement. Given that there are extremes, it is logical to allow for the possibility of less extreme variations in levels of ability or speed. I would point out that in 1990, in the first systematic study ever done by the Japanese Ministry of Education, the researchers found that more than 9% of the children in grades 5 and 6 were two or more years behind grade level in achievement. (Ochiai, 1995) At this time I think we can say that those who are at a significant disadvantage ('at risk' is the phrase commonly found in the literature) are not identified and are not provided equivalent, that is to say, commensurate opportunities to achieve their potentials as are the other 81%. As Doyon and Cook also pointed out in this debate, the question of fairness remains just that, questionable.

## Research supports grouping

Researchers who say there is support for improved learning form the second line of argument. The basis of grouping is that there are real differences in learning ability that can be best administered and taught by providing a sort of 'level' or 'focused' environment.

The most common type of grouping is by age. Mosteller, Light and Sachs (1996) have compiled a list of studies that investigate the four other types of groups. The control classes in the studies were whole class (mixed) that were heterogeneous in nature. The three experimental groups include (1) between class groups (XYZ skill grouping) which were homogenous groups within a grade level in one class; (2) Cross-grade grouping (Joplin Plan) that were homogenous groups compiled from more than one age group and from more than one class; (3) and within class groups that were homogenous subgroups within classes of the same grade.

Mosteller, Light and Sachs (using the label 'skill group' rather than tracking or streaming) found that the research provided reason to believe that (1) reading skills benefited more from skill grouping, especially lower level students -- grouping offered more flexibility; (2) there was more student participation overall -- they spoke more in skill groups; (3) students reported better attitudes toward school and greater perceived learning levels; (4) parents and teachers prefer skill grouping and support it more than whole-class.

Another recent study delineates a somewhat different type of grouping. The Yale Summer Psychology Program was a study, conducted in 1993, to ascertain if teaching students on the basis of measured ability in



four different abilities would evince better performance (Sternberg, 1997). The four abilities were (1) memory; (2) analysis (compare and evaluate knowledge); (3) creativity; (4) practicality (put knowledge into practice). Their findings indicated that students whose tested abilities were matched to the instruction performed significantly better and that by measuring creativity and practicality they significantly improved their ability to predict achievement in class.

## Research is inconclusive

The third side of this debate says there is no real evidence to support either side. Several participants in JALT Debates Tracking, Streaming, asserted that there was definitive evidence either way but the literature searches that go back to the 30s and 40s show that research to date has provided only 15 studies that use randomised, controlled trials. According to Mosteller, Light and Sachs (1996), the best experiments are dated (last done between 1960 and 65), short term, involve small populations, and are confined to single schools. In other words, in all this time there have been no long term studies of any considerable size to provide good empirical data to support the use of tracking on the basis of improved achievement in the classroom. It has also been pointed out that there is rarely any adjustment in curriculum to take advantage of streaming (Kulik, 1992). When tracking is used, there is very little effective advantage taken of the situation. Another problem is that the reported positive effects of tracking may be due to sampling fluctuation or the Hawthorne Effect -- short term gains caused by the change in attitude toward the situation by those participating in the experiment (Mosteller, Light & Sachs, 1996). In essence, the effects of ability grouping to date were found to be unsupportive for tracking: the effects are essentially zero for all levels (Slavin, 1993, p. 549); and "because of variability in the findings of these studies, they do not conclusively favor skill grouping for high-skill students, nor do they favor whole-class instruction for the other skill levels." (Mosteller, Light and Sachs, 1996, p. 806-7).

## Summary

Not a very positive epithet. Basically we are dealing with an approach that gets mixed support from the communities it effects but should, intuitively anyway, hold promise for new approaches to learning. Work in learning styles and multiple intelligences should be opening up this entire area for innovation. The evidence for the expanded categories of skill and intelligence should provide the financial and political impetus to fund the development of these new approaches -- the slighted masses should be getting a shot at their chance to prove themselves. We should be seeing good studies into effective ways to learn and teach in countries like the United States and Japan. But we are not.

And classroom teachers, being a rather powerless lot, are not going to do much about it until there is a large grassroots movement to do so or larger political interests decide to provide the budget for any future research. So the debate remains pretty much anecdote and conjecture.

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# Knowing into Doing: Creating Transfer in Teacher Education

Lynn Henrichsen

Converting "knowing" into "doing" is one of the great challenges in the teacher-education process. In a teacher-education course, for instance, students may learn much about methodology, etc. and become familiar with many important principles, strategies, and skills.

This familiarity, however, does not ensure that these students will successfully put the ideas learned in their graduate courses into practice in their own classrooms when they begin teaching.

All too often, ELT teacher-preparation programmes operate on the assumption that the approaches and procedures presented in courses will naturally find their way into teachers' classroom repertoires. These courses employ a simple "transmission of knowledge" approach in which knowledge about teaching is delivered to students, who are expected to spontaneously put that knowledge into practice at some point in the future. Unfortunately, the teacher preparation process is not as simple as an arithmetic problem in which "1" (transmission of knowledge) + "1" (later teaching experience) = "2" (the ability to teach well). Experience and research both show that this knowledge-to-practice transfer seldom takes place automatically.

Converting "knowing" into "doing" is one of the great challenges in the teacher-education process.

Teacher educators in other fields have recognised and addressed this problem. For instance, Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers (1982, 1983) have been affirming for over a decade that few teachers who gain skill with a new instructional approach will actually transfer that skill into their active teaching repertoire. After gaining competence with a new teaching approach, most teachers will still not use it regularly and properly unless a number of additional transfer-inducing strategies are incorporated in their training.

Teacher educators in the ELT world have begun to demonstrate an increased awareness of the challenge of creating transfer. Donald Freeman (1995), Richard Day (1993), and others have written and spoken about strategies that we can employ to increase the likelihood that the knowledge people gain in our teacher preparation courses will actually transfer into their teaching practices.

## ***Eight teacher education strategies for increasing the likelihood of transfer***

Drawing on these sources, the remainder of this article presents eight teacher education strategies for increasing the likelihood of transfer.

### **1. Develop participants' "executive control."**

Joyce and Showers (1982, 1983) urge that people learning about a teaching strategy develop a "meta understanding" of what it is good for, why and how it works, how it can be fitted into their instructional repertoire, and how it can be adapted to fit varying teaching settings and types of students. They call this understanding "executive control." If teachers know only the mechanics of a teaching practice but don't understand the principles behind it, it is not likely that they will be able to make it work in their situations.

### **2. Make teaching principles relevant to participants.**

If it is to transfer into practice, the knowledge presented in teacher education courses must be personally meaningful to the participants and relate to their teaching situations. People do not come

into teacher education programmes as blank slates (Gaies, 1995). Their previous and current experiences constitute a personal learning/teaching history that serves as a "filter" for the input provided in the course. This "filtered" information then combines and connects with their existing knowledge, and only this new knowledge is put into practice. In other words, what transfers is not the information presented by the teacher educator but the knowledge that is constructed by and within the teachers themselves. This being so, we need to design our courses to provide opportunities for participants to make such connections and express them. For instance, after a new concept has been presented, course members might be invited to think about and then explain how they could apply it in their own classrooms.

The knowledge presented in teacher education courses must be personally meaningful to the participants and relate to their teaching situations.

### **3. Arrange for observations.**

Merely explaining a principle or even demonstrating a teaching practice is seldom enough to create transfer. Participants in a teacher preparation course need to see the target approach being used by a skillful, experienced teacher in an authentic situation. Visits to actual classrooms are most effective, especially if those classes are similar to those the teachers-in-preparation will teach. In lieu of, or in addition to, these live visits, videos of such classes and teachers are also useful.

### **4. Allow for a high Level of Skill development.**

New ideas presented in the abstract seldom transfer into practice. Even concrete demonstrations of specific applications are not sufficient. As soon as possible after learning about a new method or procedure, teachers need opportunities to practice it. During the course itself, participants must reach the highest possible level of skill development. Reaching this level may require numerous observations and in class practice teaching sessions, but such are necessary. It is unrealistic to expect teachers to try something new in the complex and daunting Real worlds until they feel comfortable and confident with it.

### **5. Arrange a practicum experience concurrent with the course.**

Observations of classes and in class practice teaching experiences are both helpful. However, few transfer-inducing experiences are as powerful as real-world practice teaching that runs parallel to a teacher-preparation course. Integrating formal course work with simultaneous teaching experiences not only increases motivation and interest in the 'theory course but also encourages the making of connections between principles and practice. These connections-and the new "theories of teaching" that participants create as a result tend to endure long after the course is over.

### **6. Encourage mentor and/or peer coaching.**

During their practicum experience or when they return to their own classrooms, teachers are more likely to transfer principles to practice if they work with someone else who understands and shares their teaching improvement objectives. Mentors are experienced individuals who are adept at using the target principle and are willing to work with new teachers. They can serve in a variety of roles as models, coaches, or cheerleaders. When mentor teachers are not available (or even if they are), novice teachers can be assigned to work with one another as peer coaches. They can observe each other's classes, encourage experimentation, share and compare reflections, reassure one another when difficulties arise, brainstorm solutions to problems, and simply provide companionship as they work the new practices into their teaching repertoire. This interchange with another human being is extremely helpful. Joyce & Showers (1982) report that when such a coaching component is implemented effectively, nearly all teachers transfers the target practices into their active teaching repertoire.

## 7. Include post-teaching follow-up sessions.

After they have had a chance to try out a new teaching principle or practice in "the real world," teachers often need to discuss it again in order to clarify and solidify their understanding. In addition, knowing that they will need to report on their implementation experiences provides additional motivation for teachers to make the effort to move from "knowing" to "doing." For both of these reasons, teacher-preparation courses that include follow up sessions tend to produce greater amounts of transfer.

## 8. Allow sufficient time for transfer to take place.

Teaching is a complicated activity with many challenges-for both new and experienced teachers. Novice teachers face an intimidating barrage of challenges when they begin teaching. "Survival" often takes priority over the implementation of principles or procedures learned in a teacher-preparation course. Only after they have gained some experience and developed a degree of confidence will such teachers be ready to turn their attention to putting these principles and techniques into actual practice. "Veteran" teachers face a different challenge. Even when they have become competent in using a new approach, they may fall back into old teaching patterns simply because those behaviors feel so comfortable. It may take a prolonged effort to reach the point where the new behaviors feel equally natural. In either case, transfer is not immediate; it takes time.

"Survival" often takes priority over the implementation of principles or procedures learned in a teacher-preparation course.

Converting teaching principles into practice is not an easy task, and such transfer certainly does not happen automatically. Fostering transfer requires wise programme design giving attention, effort, and time to transfer requires encouraging activities. Is it worth all that? Of course. The transfer of knowledge into action is one of our ultimate aims. If it does not occur, the time and effort spent in other teacher-preparation activities are essentially wasted since they will not have the desired effect on practice. Meeting the challenge of transfer in teacher education is crucial to our success, and transfer-inducing strategies are well worth implementing.

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- Professor Lynn Henrichsen can be contacted at  
Department of Linguistics, Brigham Young University  
Provo, UT 84602 USA  
e-mail: Lynn\_Henrichsen@byu.edu

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# Citizenship status in the U.S.A. and Japan: Requirements for naturalization

David Aldwinckle

One thread that petered out before time and good evidence was: "just how difficult is it to naturalize into Japan?" This is a cornerstone to the "assimilation" theme that so many of us long-termers here hold dear, so let's lay it to rest.

As fate would have it, I ran across a great article in the Daily Yomiuri's "Overseas Newspapers' Weekly Summaries" feature, and it spurred me on to run down to my local equivalent of the INS and inquire about the Japanese requirements for becoming a citizen.

Summaries of both follow. You decide for yourself which country is more difficult to naturalize into.

## **America's requirements**

Source: Daily Yomiuri, Friday Nov. 22, 1996, Page 15-16, originally printed in the Washington Post. Entitled LEARNING, AND EARNING, THEIR STRIPES, the article tells us a lot about what it takes to become an American citizen. You must (after appearing in person at any one of the US's 33 district offices, and meeting with INS interviewers):

- 1) pay \$95
- 2) have lived in the US for five years (does not indicate consecutive years, and my wife was able to maintain her Green Card status if she appeared stateside once every 2 years to renew)—or three years, if married to a US citizen.
- 3) be of good moral character (i.e. no felony convictions)
- 4) be of sound mind (interviewers judge that)
- 5) speak and understand English (requirement waived if elderly or disabled)
- 6) pass a test indicating an understanding of American history and ways.

And that seems to be it. Nothing here about financial status, having to change your name, minimum language ability so long as you can understand the interviewer (or are in some way incapacitated). Nothing about blood and soil at all.

But let's talk about the highest-looking hurdle—requirement number 6—the Test. What sort of questions appear on it? Well, each applicant gets a list \*in advance\* of 100 study questions, and gets asked around 12 of them at random. A passing evaluation goes like this:

"The would-be citizen can make a couple of mistakes, cannot be completely clueless...The whole process takes about 10 minutes...the Test produces a lot of unfounded anxiety...It's not an impossible or difficult thing. We're not trying to trick people. On the other hand, you can't come in and grunt two words and we rubber stamp you." (ibid)

Those 100 INS Questions appear on a separate email following immediately. Take the test yourself and decide how hard it is.

## **Japan's requirements**

Now for Japan:

I went down to the local Ministry of Justice (Houmu kyoku) and sat down for an hour with an official. At first, he talked at me as if I were a child, and about very private things. When he started interrogating me about my parents' marital status I interrupted: Hang on. This is immaterial—all I want are the bare bones of what it takes to qualify, not whether or not "I" personally qualify, for citizenship. He nodded, hitched up his politeness level, and gave me the beef:

TO QUALIFY FOR JAPANESE CITIZENSHIP, YOU MUST:

- a) have lived continuously (hiki tsuzuki) at Japanese addresses for five years
- b) be over twenty years of age "in terms of abilities as per the law" (20 sai ijou de honkokuhou ni yotte nouryoku o yuusuru koto)
- c) behave well (sokou ga zenryou de aru koto)—and they do check—my dictionary even has the word "sokou chousa" (personal conduct survey) in it
- d) demonstrate the means to support your family
- e) be willing to relinquish the citizenship of your native country once Japanese citizenship is granted
- f) respect the Japanese Constitution (i.e. don't plot against or advocate destroying it, or associate or join a group or political party which does)

(extenuating circumstances considered if the applicant is married or related to a Japanese)

Fine. Most of the above are typical "we don't want just anybody naturalizing" types of conditions, used to weed out

candidates in the US as well. But wait, there's more! For Japanese naturalization, you must go through three rounds of paper chase:

#### ROUND ONE--PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION

In my case, bring in:

- 1) Birth Certificate (shusseki shoumeisho) and Proof of Citizenship (kokuseki shoumeisho)--ask your country if they will give you some proof other than just your passport. Passport will do in a pinch.
- 2) Overseas family documents: Marriage Certificate of your parents overseas (fubo no kon'in shoumei)--including remarriage. Adoption papers (youshi engumi no shoumei) if you were adopted or had your name legally changed. Papers showing relations to siblings (kyoudai kankei), or lack of siblings if available.
- 3) Domestic family documents: your own Marriage Certificate, Birth Certificates for children, spouse's ward registration form (koseki touhon) and ID papers (mibun shoumeisho), police records (keisatsu shoumeisho), death certificates (shibou shoumeisho), and your gaikokujin version of your ward registration form.

Why all this information? Because if you become a Japanese, you have to complete a ward registration form like any other Japanese, and this sort of information matters. Whether or not you are a bastard child, whether or not you are the eldest son--these things affect your legal standing in this society. Still, if documents are legally unavailable from your country, waivers are possible.

Next, if they say you qualify, go to:

#### ROUND TWO--APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Fill out:

- 1) Naturalization Permission Application Form (with picture)
- 2) Outline of your overseas relatives (shinzoku no gaiyou). This includes names and addresses of all members of your immediate family (including those of members that may be inaccessible after divorce).
- 3) A list of all your addresses since birth (called a "resume"--*rireki sho*). Note that this is even more thorough than a US govt. security check, which would want all your addresses for the past ten years. I asked about transient years--college rooms and dormitories etc.--and he said to the best of *my memory would be fine*.
- 4) Japanese documents: ward registration forms for all members of your Japanese family as far as the parents stage. Proof of Residence Form (*juumin hyou*) for your spouse.
- 5) Your *gaijin* card with history of where you've lived for the past five years in Japan.
- 6) An outline of your livelihood (*seikei no gaiyou*). I forgot to ask for more details on this.
- 7) Proof of your employment (*zaikin shoumeisho*)
- 8) Proof of your earnings (*gensen choushuu hyou*)
- 9) Tax records from the local tax office for your family and business (to show you've paid)
- 10) Records, contracts showing your land ownership and house ownership
- 11) Snapshots of your family, home, and workplace

Got all that? Now...

#### ROUND THREE--WAIT AND BE CONSIDERED

Applications take about one year to a year and a half to process. The fee is free (except for the cost of all the documents, which at around 300 yen a pop will add up). Fortunately, it could be worse: there are no taxation stamps (*shuunyu inshi*) to buy, and all translations of overseas documents can be done by nonofficial translation agencies, such as yourself.

I then asked about "acculturation requirements"--like the US INS Test--or minimum language ability. The official said that there is no test on Japanese history, culture, and the like. Minimum language ability is about third-grade level (*shougakkou sannensei*) for reading and writing ability, and basic conversation level would do. I would pass, he said. However, there must be a demonstrated level of assimilation on my part. Who are my Japanese friends and how many do I have? What kind of house interior do I have? Do I get along with my neighbors? (There are occasions when they come and ask them, he said.) Non sarcastically, I asked him to quantify a minimum level of "Japanization"--if I had to wear a yukata and geta during off-hours, if I had to be able to eat natto, if I had imported a Canadian prefab house would I be invalid?, etc. He laughed (once you make a bureaucrat laugh, magic happens), and said none of that was really necessary. But any inspection of my lifestyle should not inflict upon the officials any sense of incongruity (*iwakan*), whatever that meant. I guess that if we weren't practicing some American form of suttee or female circumcision with the inspectors looking on, we'd be okay.

OKAY, YOU'VE PASSED THE INSPECTION, AND QUALIFIED. NOW WHAT?

If citizenship is granted after a year or two, you will be issued the proper documents for citizenship and passport, and be given a document (in Japanese) to put your seal on (not sign), saying "I give up my American citizenship and take Japanese citizenship exclusively".

Bring your gaijin passbook, inkan, documents, and driver licence, and do what they say. Choose a name in kanji (with legal Japanese readings) and/or kana, and that's it. You are a Japanese citizen. Congratulations. You've burnt your bridges.

However, there is a loophole (for US citizens anyway—can't say for others). Dual citizenship is now possible in the US (I checked with American authorities here in town), but not in Japan. But there are possibilities:

1) As long as you do not commit treason (serving in another country's armed forces, espionage), you cannot be forced to give up your US citizenship without expressly requesting it in writing. So as long as you do not SIGN anything, a Japanese document is not legally enforceable in the US. Whether or not a seal qualifies is an issue for the lawyers to get rich from.

2) The onus of telling your native country of your naturalization is on you, not on the Japanese government. So after you get your citizenship, you get statement-of-intent forms to send to your former government. Send them off yourself. Once you get an answer back from the US Govt. revoking your citizenship, take it to your ward office. I said that the US government could take years deliberating over it—won't that affect my Japanese rights and privileges in the interim? No, it would not, the official said.

This is a rather large game to play, but mum's the word.

## Conclusions:

So which country do you think has the more difficult procedures for naturalization? Granted, both the US and Japan will do background checks to make sure you are of sound mind and sound finance. The documentation for the Japanese side may seem extreme, but I'm sure that there is a paper chase in the US as well (fill out Form XYZ, fill in Form PDQ) that were not mentioned by the Washington Post. Immigrants, please fill us in if you know.

Besides, this degree of documentation in Japan is not unusual for Japanese—most of the public documents listed above are needed for a damn driver's licence! Moreover, the information required for ward registration may be rather thorough (even impossible to get from overseas), but as it is required of all Japanese citizens, that's that. Those are the conceits of the law here. However, in the US most of these (financial support of spouse, no criminal records, oath of allegiance, etc.) are taken care of at the visa stage. The US conditions listed in the Washington Post article apply at the permanent residency stage (Green Card there, eijuken here), while in Japan, even with an eijuken, you've got to show more about yourself: Snapshots of my home and family? Suitably Japanized home? Ability to make friends and get along with the neighbors? Even the Japanese I've talked to are surprised at this degree of Third-Degree.

So let's talk about proclivity. I asked the Japanese official whether or not large numbers of people naturalize every year through Sapporo. He said plenty do (but inexplicably declined to give numbers), and not all of them ethnic Koreans and Chinese. But after peeking at my Japan Almanac (which has no stats for naturalization), I resorted to Tony Laszlo's numbers to find that 11,146 persons naturalized into Japan in 1994 (see <http://www.iac.co.jp/~issho/immnat.html>). But in America, things are radically different. Enough people pass the Test and get through the paper chase—over one million this year alone, according to the Post, demonstrating to me, at least, that it's not all that bad. Proof and pudding: the equivalent of the TOTAL NUMBER OF ALL FOREIGNERS IN JAPAN (just over one percent of Japan's population) naturalize into the United States recently EVERY YEAR. Or, according to the US Census Bureau, 1300 would-be immigrants every day enter America. That means that America absorbs all of Japan's annual intake of foreigners in just over a week!

This is not a statistic to ignore. Just about \*every single American\* here reading this posting has or has ancestors who went through a version of this process—my Polish great-grandparents in the 1910's, and my British dad in 1972. On the other hand, practically NO Japanese can claim this background, indicating a great deal about assimilation. If you're not born it, you have to claim it. Not all that many do.

But anyway, my point is this. It may seem obvious that Japan is going to be far behind accepting foreigners legally, given what we know about Japan's history and social attitudes towards strangers in general. And especially compared to the US—the US is the real outlier in the world when it comes to absorbing extranationals. (Anybody else want to give us more information about other countries?) We all know that. But enough Fukuzawans were questioning whether it is actually easy, or even possible, for a foreigner to take Japanese citizenship. I hope this information lays those questions to rest.

# What's Happened to the JALT Job Information Center?

Michael "Rube" Redfield  
Osaka University of Economics

One of the highlights for many at JALT National Conferences has always been the Job Information Center. I remember going there looking for professional EFL people to recommend to my school (and I found many) and finding the place packed. There were job seekers, of course, but also a plenitude of jobs throughout the country and even overseas. The JIC was always crowded. But this last year in Hiroshima I had a hard time even finding the place. Talk about poor locations: the JIC was hidden behind one of the main lecture halls, off to the right of the publisher displays (adjacent to some kind of folk art display). And when I finally found it, there was virtually nothing going on, two staffers, a job seeker, and almost no job ads. What happened to the JIC?

To prepare for this article, I looked at the JIC/positions section of twelve recent issues of *The Language Teacher*, ranging from December, 1995 to January, 1996. What I found confirmed my suspicions: the JIC is not delivering the goods. Only two high school positions were mentioned (Kyoto Nishi, and Katoh Gakuin), one American campus (Minnesota State), one foreign college (Kuwait University English Language Center), and positions at thirteen Japanese colleges. Of the latter, only three offered definite tenured positions (Bakia, with two positions, and Otaru Shoko and Hokkaido College of Education, both advertising in Japanese). Tsuda offered a tenure or tenure track position, while Japan Women's University had two renewable contract positions. I.C.U. had an adjunct instructorship, Miyazaki Medical a gaikokujin kyoshi post, Musashi Tech (is this a university?), two full time lecturer positions, and Matsuyama University a two year terminal slot. The other schools offered part time lectureships. With the literally hundreds of Japanese colleges and universities, this is all the JIC managed to come up with. I personally know of many more jobs in the Kansai area each year than the JIC apparently does for the entire country.

Turning to the JIC 'booth' at Hiroshima JALT, I could find only nine jobs listed for the Kansai area, one at the high school level (again Kyoto Nishi), and none at the college level. True, I was only there Sunday morning, but the JIC does not take jobs down until the end of the conference, do they? Again, I was sorely disappointed. The jobs are there, but the JIC is not getting the information to us.

And it is not that the people at the JIC do not always know what they are doing. Craig Sower, Ken Dillon and Wayne K. Johnson of the JIC brought us a generally excellent series of articles on job hunting in Japan appearing in the October, November, and December issues of *The Language Teacher* (TLT). Although apparently members in good standing of the Chrysanthemum Club, the JIC authors have many insights into Japanese educational institutions, institutional and general Japanese culture, and the job application process. The section on resume making (November TLT) was the best I have seen on the subject. Having said that, I must point out that there are serious flaws in the JIC authors' analysis.

For example, the authors make a big deal of the 'interview' in their second article. In reality, there often is no interview. I have had nine college teaching positions in Japan, and was never interviewed for any of them. On the other hand, I have been formally interviewed for three jobs which I did not get. It might be fair to say that when there is "kone" [a connection] involved, there is no interview (although at some time or another you will have to show that you have two arms, two legs, can speak English, and don't necessarily drool) but when "kone" plays little or no role, then there may indeed be an interview.

A more serious error deals with qualifications. The authors state in their first article, "(A) position as a part-time lecturer usually requires at least a Master's degree in TEFL/TESL, English Literature, Linguistics, or a related subject. A Master's degree in another field plus a TEFL/TESL certificate might be acceptable at some schools" (p.47). This, being generous, is a case of wishful thinking. I recommend people for jobs at my school (and others) every year. I have also advertised positions with the JIC at JALT conferences. Naturally from late summer on I get a series of phone calls, faxes, and email messages. Most of the applicants are already working at the college level and want to expand their teaching schedules. And the vast majority of them are fairly recent to Japan and do not meet Sower et al's qualifications. They do not have Master's in TEFL/TESL or related fields, nor do they possess TEFL/TESL certificates.

To be sure, they have Master's degrees in, to cite some of the latest examples, journalism, theater, anthropology, Japanese language, Japanese studies, French, education communications, and even divinity, but these are not, to me at



least, 'related subjects.' Sower et al would have been better off to say that a Master's in TESL/TEFL is a potential help in finding a first college job, but the best way to get a college job is to already have another college job. Your first college job is in effect a Japanese college teaching certificate. With that, regardless of past academic degrees (colleagues with a BA in Japanese Studies and an A.A. in who knows what, have had no trouble securing additional part-time positions) you are eligible for further employment, generally with no interview required (since your initial college has for all intents and purposes 'guaranteed' your suitability).

Our JIC authors are even further off base when it comes to tenured positions. They state, "Tenured positions are extremely rare and often require a Ph.D. in a related field, experience and publications," (October TLT, p.48). Tenured positions are indeed rare, if you only look at The Language Teacher's Job Information Center/positions section (I found three in my twelve-issue, fourteen-month informal survey). In reality, there are a number of positions, but it does take a lot of digging to come up with them (one place to look is on university bulletin boards, often found in the English Commons Room, and generally written, as two of the JIC positions were, in Japanese). To name a few, none of which required a Ph.D., filled by non Japanese in the past two years in the Kansai alone: Kobe Gai Dai, Konan, Kwansei Gakuin, Meijo Tan Dai, Heian Tan Dai, Notre Dame Joshi, Kyoto Sangyo, Ritsumeikan, and Ryukoku (the last with at least ten tenured positions). These cover only those positions that I am personally aware of. The qualifications were basically those that Sower et al cited for part-time instructorships. All of the candidates filling these positions had Master's in TEFL/TESL or related field, experience (often fairly limited), and publications (although for the most part these were very minor publications indeed). What all the candidates truly had in common, however, was the fact that they are all sympathetic, educated native speakers of English, with excellent connections. As Sower et al mention all too briefly (November TLT, p.60), connections are what get people jobs, not qualifications.

And so what is the JIC to do? They certainly have expertise, but looking at a year's worth of Information Center/positions sections and the very disappointing JIC booth at Hiroshima JALT, obviously lack effectiveness. How can the JIC become what both the membership and the JIC volunteers surely wish it to become? I have two radical perhaps but certainly not unimplementable suggestions.

One. Require all JALT National officers, plus the heads of all SIGs and local chapter presidents, to submit authentic job ads yearly to the JIC. Pass a bylaw stating that such officers will automatically lose their positions with JALT if they fail to produce any legitimate job ads for the JIC for more than a period of two years running.

Two. Offer a free one year membership to all others submitting legitimate job ads to the JIC, either for *The Language Teacher* or for the JIC booth at the national conference.

Remember, anyone can recommend people for jobs in Japan. Just because you submit an ad to JIC does not necessarily mean that you are in charge of finding people at your school. In my experience, all college instructors can informally submit resumes on behalf recommended candidates, and in fact it is almost a duty of full time faculty to do so. If your candidate does not get the position, it is not your fault, for at least you tried. Which is something, trying, which I am not convinced the JIC has been doing earnestly enough (when I'm looking at the results, not the apparent effort) of late.

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# The Job Information Center (JIC)

Craig Sower  
JIC Chair

## The JIC

The JIC is a group of volunteers who provide a free service to JALT members looking for work and employers seeking prospective employees. In addition to editing a monthly column in The Language Teacher, we also set up and staff the JIC at the annual conference. We report to the membership chair of JALT, and the JIC chair is a national officer. Basically, employers who wish to publish job announcements in TLT send them to the chair, who edits the English ads and then submits them. We are privileged to have a new co-editor for Japanese announcements, Ms. Chiaki Kotori, who started in February 1997. The deadline for ads is the 15th of the month, two months prior to publication. For those teachers or employers who cannot wait for TLT's publication cycle, Ken Dillon added The Web Corner. There have been on-going debates concerning the kind of language that can be included in announcements, about discrimination, and about what the JIC's role should be. So, in an effort to promote dialog within JALT on employment issues, we added an op-ed section to the column.

## Serving without remuneration

Prior to, during, and after the annual conference, the unpaid JIC members, assisted by other volunteers, spend hundreds of hours setting up the JIC, processing job listings from employers, working the desk, doing the JIC presentation, and helping applicants and employers meet and exchange information. Last year, like the year before, the members of the JIC spent the entire conference at the JIC. The only presentation we could attend was our own, which we videotaped. The main differences between the 1996 and 1995 conferences were (a) last year we not only worked the whole conference, we were also required to pay for admission; and (b) the location assigned to us was not as good in 1996 as in 1995.

## The JIC Mission

It has been brought to our attention that there is some dissatisfaction with the service, and with the number and quality of job announcements, both in TLT and at the conference. Perhaps this is due to confusion about our role. The JIC provides information. We do not provide jobs. We publish those job announcements that come to us. We do not beat the bush looking for them and we do not scout the bulletin boards of institutions looking for notices. Indeed, there is some question whether publishing private information of that sort would be legal or ethical.

Doubts have been raised about the accuracy of information given by the JIC at the conference, and in articles run in TLT in October, November, and December 1996. There were questions regarding the qualifications people need to get jobs, the importance of interviews, and the role of connections. These will be addressed in the same order.

A review of the videotape of the JIC conference workshop shows Craig Sower saying the following:

Another disclaimer: ...when we say the Japanese do this and Americans do that, those are generalizations and we understand that. But obviously we don't have the time to go into every individual case that

might arise. For every rule we've cited or statement we've made I'm sure there are hundreds of counter-statements and counter-examples. We're just giving you what we think are the most likely.

We clearly stated that there are exceptions to the information we have given. Unfortunately, not everyone who complained about the service attended the workshop. Similar caveats are in the articles. In writing the articles and preparing for the conference workshops, Wayne Johnson contacted many schools and discussed their hiring practices, especially in regards to qualifications and interviews. In TLT, October 1996, p. 46, we said the threshold qualification for most universities was a Master's degree in TEFL/TESL...or a related subject. Since Mr. Redfield cited Ryukoku University as having ten new tenured positions, we checked again. According to Who's Who, Faculty of Intercultural Communication Ryukoku University, 4-1996, pp. 25-57, this year Ryukoku has at least twelve new non-Japanese professors with Ph.Ds teaching various culture and language courses. But maybe he was referring to the nine other new English instructors in the Faculty of Intercultural Communication. Here is a breakdown of the qualifications of the people teaching in those positions:

There are two Ph.Ds in Linguistics; two Ph.D. candidates (all but dissertation); two MA's in Literature, both teachers with over twenty years experience in Japan and Taiwan; one Law Degree plus MA in TESOL, 25 years experience; one MA in TESOL, ten years experience at universities in Poland and Japan; and one MA in TESOL, 12 years experience. All nine English teachers have publications. All candidates were interviewed and no one made the cut for the interview list without at least a Master's Degree in TESOL or a related field, several publications, extensive teaching experience and, most importantly, connections.

Which leads to the final issue. In TLT, November 1996, pp. 58, 60, we wrote:

### Connections

Although all of the information we have supplied is useful for seeking employment, one cannot overemphasize the importance of affiliations and relationships with those in the field. Connections (jinmyaku) are important in any culture but in many cases seem to be a necessity. Not found in bulletins or newspapers, rather they are acquired by word-of-mouth. Basically, the chances of getting a good job are directly proportional to the quality of your connections.

That does not seem unduly vague. It was repeated at length at the workshop, as were admonitions that some folks with less qualifications get good jobs, and that there are many exceptions.

### Summary

In a perfect world there would be plenty of jobs, people hiring would advertise, the two-month delay between submitting an ad and its publication would be shorter, and folks just arriving here would enjoy the same advantages long-time residents do. However, that is not the case. The market is tight but that has nothing to do with the JIC. If Mr. Redfield feels it is as easy to secure a job now as it was in the past, and also believes that „in reality, there are a number of tenured] positions available, he is certainly entitled to those opinions. Readers may judge for themselves whether they are accurate. What to do? Well, this year there is no on-site liaison person for the annual conference, and the JIC is in desperate need of someone of experience to set up the conference activities. As chair of the JIC it would give me great pleasure to nominate Mr. Redfield as the JIC conference liaison for Hamamatsu. All I need is an address, but I need it soon because the pre-conference information has already started to go out. As to the column in TLT, if it is true that some people know of many more jobs in the Kansai area each year than the JIC apparently does for the entire country. I would be more than happy to post any and all official notices. Please send them in and I'll see to it that they are published.

# JALT Membership Survey: An Interim Report

Steven Snyder, Chuck Iwai and Stanley Davies

## Introduction

During the 1996 International JALT Conference in Hiroshima the first demographic survey of JALT membership was conducted and the results are of special interest to CUE members. (For those interested in survey methods, see the last section, below.) This was the first membership survey ever conducted on JALT, even though JALT has been around for over 20 years. Although we are continuing with a detailed analysis of the data, we now have sufficient information for an interim report. The following gives a general profile of the JALT membership and, as the majority of those who responded to the survey are college and university teachers, some indications as to the current state of university teaching in Japan.

Why a JALT membership survey? Outside of Japan, a number of professional associations for language teachers, including TESOL, as well as professional groups of all kinds, have conducted surveys of their membership. Professional associations need information about their membership to better serve them. These surveys, in general, tend to be evaluations of their organization, with only basic information requested about the membership. The 1996 JALT survey differed in that we also obtained data on job situations and a detailed profile of JALT members. It was our hope that data gained from this survey would be valuable to the executive board of JALT, the NSIGs, and the members at large.

## Results of the 1996 JALT Survey

What is the typical JALT member like? The membership of JALT is split just about evenly, half female and half male. The "typical" member would most likely live and work in a major urban area-- beginning with Kansai or Kanto, which is where 53.4% of us live. While 91.6% of JALT members are over thirty, most of us are between 30 and 50 years old and the split at age-forty is about half over and half under. Nearly 90% of members have a masters degree or above (9% reported having a doctorate). Given the foregoing, you might not be surprised to learn that 85.9% of respondents at the International JALT Conference said their primary employer is a university or junior college-- which suggests something about the potential growth and influence in JALT of college and university teachers, as well as the potential growth and influence for the CUE NSIG. Also, 83.9% of those responded that they are full-time with their main employer, which indicates that the vast majority of JALT members who are college and university teachers are also employed full-time. The survey revealed that North Americans dominate JALT-- 62.6%. United States citizenship is the most common nationality, at 53.8% of the membership. Other nationalities by percentage: Japan 16.1%, UK 11.6%, Canada 8.8%, and Australia/New Zealand 5.6%. (All other categories were under 3%). The influence from the US is felt in other areas as well. The great majority of respondents received their highest degree from US institutions. One interesting discovery, which will be further studied, is that while 16% of the respondents identified their nationality as Japanese, only 8.8% responded that their highest degree was from a Japanese university-- a lot of Japanese JALT members have degrees from the US and UK. Other than JALT, TESOL is the most popular teachers' association (38.6%), followed by JACET (20.1%) and IATEFL (17.7%).

English, not surprisingly, is the native language of 80% members. When asked for "Languages you are fluent in," English language received 90.8% responses. There should also be no surprise that 96% of us teach English. One finding did surprise us -- almost half (48.6%) of respondents claimed that they are fluent in Japanese. As only 16.1% of respondents were native Japanese, this leaves 32.5% of teachers of foreign nationality who are fluent in Japanese. (Of course, we have no way in this preliminary report to determine the degree of fluency!) We learned from the survey that many of us have more than one major area of study in our educational background and that 21.3% claim to have a background in foreign languages. Also, 76.2% of respondents claimed to have taught in Japan for 5 years or more, with 32% who have taught in Japan for more than 12 years. Although half of us being fluent in Japanese may seem suspiciously high to some, we do have reason to believe that a large percentage of us have developed Japanese language skills to some advance level.

Depending upon how you view the implications of the survey results, we are a relatively stable population -- or, we change jobs a lot! As mentioned above, three-fourths of those surveyed have taught in Japan more than five years, and nearly half of that population has taught here more than twelve years. We also learned that 39% have lived in only one prefecture during their stay in Japan, and another 41% have lived in just two prefectures. On the other hand, 55% of respondents have worked for their main employer for 4 years or fewer, and half of them for only two years or fewer. Most respondents have changed jobs in the same working area. So much for the often rumored, "They only



hire from outside the prefecture." But how mobile are we as a group? When 80% of respondents claim to have worked for their main employer for fewer than 9 years, it appears that there is a lot of mobility, but when we consider that 51.4% have actually lived in Japan fewer than 9 years, it seems harder to track our mobility as a result of wanting to find "better" career choices. In fact, some of this apparent mobility may be due to terms of contract rather than to a desire to change jobs --although 83.9% have full-time positions, only 26.5% do not have fixed-period contracts. There is also a lot of part-time work being done by teachers who have a full-time position. In terms of future plans, many of us plan to be here a longtime - 45% said that they plan to continue teaching in Japan for more than 11 more years. Some 38.3% characterized their job situation as "secure."

Most of us have been members of JALT for more than 5 years and it seems that those who responded to this survey teach in Japan a while before they join JALT. Our main reasons for being a part of JALT are the annual international conference and the publications. Those responding to the survey have attended the annual conference multiple times. Their attendance at local meetings is poor. Even so, most think that they are getting good value for the JALT membership. Generally, JALT publications are well thought of, but NSIG publications in general do not enjoy as high a rating. Most of us are career teachers-- 63% have more than 10 years of teaching background. Interestingly, a lot of us have taught in countries other than Japan and our home country, and many of us have taught in several other countries. The majority of JALT teachers are generally satisfied with the teaching in Japan and claim that it is rewarding. And speaking of computers, a majority are Macintosh users and most have computer access through work, including the Internet. However, most don't regularly use computers for actual instruction. Another interesting fact is that a majority travel abroad on average once a year, while over a third of us travel abroad twice a year.

We have known for some time, based upon membership lists, that CUE is the largest NSIG in JALT. The Conference survey indicated that although college and university educators represent 86% of the respondents to the survey, only 18% of respondents identified themselves as CUE members. The potential for growth in CUE is tremendous. Unfortunately, the follow-up question of "Are you interested in any of the following NSIGs" brought a mere 10% response for CUE, suggesting that CUE needs to get its message out.

## ***A Word of Caution***

Surveys of this kind are helpful, but they only give us a general picture and we should be very careful in drawing conclusions, especially from an interim report. Please keep in mind that this was a pilot study and that respondents were self-selected, a potentially invalidating factor. Total respondents were 250 attendees of the 1996 International JALT Conference. Questionnaires were distributed at registration for conference, and data were subsequently compiled from the 70-question mark sheet which respondents either fully or partially filled out. The self-selecting of respondents means that the data we have reported here are suggestive. The method of data collection was chosen to save costs and to efficiently create an initial body of information. Our goal was to seek a rather modest level of precision, looking for a general profile and areas for further investigation. Although we obtained a large number of responses (roughly 10% of all attendees at the conference), due to the method of our soliciting respondents, the results of this survey may be generally applied to only the population of persons who were actual attendees of the conference.

From the foregoing report it should be clear, then, that the majority of respondents comes from the university and junior college JALT constituency. For this reason, the preliminary results as they appear here are perhaps more generalizable to populations such as CUE than they are for the general population of JALT as whole. It will only be after further treatment of the data and subsequent surveying that we will be able to have a sharper picture. Due to limitations on space, the information presented here is but a small part of what we have collected, selected for the special interests of CUE. Following an in depth analysis of the data we will produce a final report which will include many more items of interest to members of CUE.

## Swap Meet and JALT 97

Jimmy Swan

Acting on Nelson Einwaechter's suggestion a couple of years ago, the CUE N-SIG tried holding an academic paper exchange at the JALT 95 conference. It was a bust, unfortunately, eliciting papers from only two people. It didn't get off the ground last year in Hiroshima, either. Just before the JALT 97 proposal deadline, though, it was suggested to me that we try incorporating the academic paper exchange into the Material Writers N-SIG's very successful "My Share -- Live!" teaching materials swap-meet, this year going into its fourth year.

I tried to pass the buck, because I didn't want to burden MW volunteers with another task that doesn't rightly belong to them. But I didn't want the chance for an academic paper exchange to just slip past us again, either, so in the end I submitted two different proposals, one for each exchange project. I hope the academic papers exchange proposal is approved and I hope that the turnout is good enough to make everyone want to do it again year after year.

CUE members' active participation is needed to make this little project fly. We'll need to ask two things of you.

First, dig out your old papers, especially ones that have been published in venues where they are unlikely to have been seen by many of your colleagues. Prepare a display copy of each to bring along with you to the conference and submit them all at the CUE N-SIG Table. All comers will be welcome to browse through the academic papers on display during the designated time slot. If you want to also bring along giveaway copies, that's fine, but at least prepare handouts of your contact info, so that browsers will know where to get in touch with you later.

The second thing we'll need from you is your help in preparing the displays and staffing the room during the scheduled display time-slot. Show up at Hamamatsu City this year in October 10, 11, & 12 and help make it a success this time, OK?

## CUE NSIG Officers

College and University Educators (CUE)

Sandra T Nakata--Co-Coordinator/  
Conference Programme Coordinator  
4811 Kami-Tsuruma #353  
Sagamihara-Shi  
Kanagawa-Ken 228  
(0462) 51-1520 ext 267-6178  
e-mail: 75021.1560@CompuServe.COM

Thom Simmons--Co-Coordinator,  
Newsletter Production & Distribution, Interim Treasurer  
2-28-10-303 Morigaoka, Isogoku,  
Yokohama 235 JAPAN  
Fax: 81 45 845 8242;  
e-mail: malang@gol.com

Jack Kimball--Co-Editor  
kimball@post.miyazaki-med.ac.jp  
Miyazaki Medical College  
5200 Kihara  
Kiyotake, Miyazaki 889-16  
0985-84-4485  
e-mail: kimball@post.miyazaki-med.ac.jp  
<http://interserver.miyazaki-med.ac.jp/~Kimball/>

David Trokeloshvili--Co-Editor/Layout  
Yokohama-shi  
Kohoku-ku  
Kozukue-cho 350-3  
Park Square C-307  
Japan, 222  
Tel: 045-474-2023  
Fax: 045-474-2024  
e-mail: trevil@gol.com

Steven Snyder -- Membership  
Miyazaki Womens College  
Tel/Fax: 0985-85-7161  
e-mail: <tomobear@m-surf.or.jp>  
infrequent email site<71124.3114@CompuServe.COM>  
1-28-5 Kano, Kiyotake-cho, Miyazaki-gun, 889-16

Lorraine Koch-Yao -- Database  
12-53 Wakakusadai Aoba-ku  
Yokohama 272  
Res: 045 961  
POE Fax: 03 3353 8908  
<no Email at this time>

## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Our work as college and university teachers includes a variety of tasks. Members are invited to contribute articles or information on topics which will help other teachers in any aspect of their work. Possible areas might be:

1. The theory and practice of teaching language at college level.
2. Abstracts of your own or other authors published work.
3. Teaching ideas useful for college level classes.
4. News of relevant presentations, conferences, meetings in your area.
5. Offers / requests for cooperation with research, giving presentations, writing articles or sharing of teaching materials.
6. Reviews of relevant books, videos, teaching materials, presentations.
7. Relevant newspaper or magazine articles, reproduced as they are, or with commentary.
8. The administrative structure of Japanese colleges.
9. Contract, salary, retirement pay given when you leave your position, insurance and pension.
10. Research, holiday, sick, maternity and home leave.
11. Research Grants.

Please send contributions or abstracts to the 1997 Co-Editor of ON CUE, Jack Kimball. ON CUE welcomes balanced, well-written articles, essays and letters on any theme pertaining to college and university language education in Japan. The Editor of ON CUE has the final decision about publication.

The opinions of the contributors are not necessarily those of the Editor. Because ON CUE is published by volunteers who also have full-time teaching responsibilities, contributors are asked to ensure the accuracy of their submissions. The best way to submit material is to send, simultaneously, a printout and a 3.5" floppy disc of the material. Discs should be compatible with (or readable by) Macintosh computers using Microsoft Word.

Please be sure to write your name, university affiliation, and the title of your submission on the disc. Submissions in Japanese should be sent camera-ready. If you require the return of your disc and/or printout, please include an appropriately-sized stamped self-addressed envelope.

Back issues are available. All requests must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

## ABOUT THE CUE N-SIG

### Statement of Purpose (created 1992)

Through discussion with other foreign language instructors, we have come to recognize the need for a professional network linking instructors of foreign languages employed at colleges and universities in Japan, to help them understand and meet the goals of Japanese higher education.

### NEEDS

The College and University Educators N-SIG proposes to address the specific needs of foreign language teachers in Japanese colleges and universities. To do this, we plan to: (1) offer a base for mutual support, networking, and professional development among the group's members, (2) disseminate information about current research relating to language teaching at Japanese colleges, (3) help members understand Japanese language information related to teaching at Japanese colleges and universities, (4) provide a forum for the exchange of information and opinion between educators.

### GOALS

1. Create a database of members' research interests, and circulate these to members.
2. Produce a newsletter to report on research projects and current practices, and print articles written by members.
3. Provide a translation resource in English of forms and notices commonly circulated in Japanese colleges.
4. Organize regional meetings, mini-conferences, and College and University Educators N-SIG activities at national JALT conferences.

We believe that working toward these goals will not only benefit the College and University Educators N-SIG members, but also their students and institutions.

CUE has the same basic goals of JALT, but with a specific focus on college and university language education. The group aims to help members develop and share their teaching and research interests in this area. We are committed to helping our members communicate with each other; through submissions to our newsletter, presentations at conferences, and by contacting people with similar concerns listed on our information and networking database. As JALT is a pedagogical and academic organization, the major focus of CUE is on teaching and research. We also respond to members' needs for information relating to employment issues, although CUE has no labor union affiliations, and cannot advocate on their behalf. CUE aims to facilitate exchange of information and opinion between members to help them develop professionally, and through this to improve college and university language education in Japan.



## Publications

ON CUE : newsletter; published at least three times a year.

CUE IN : Information and Networking database, distributed periodically.

Any JALT member with a particular interest in college and university language education is welcome to join CUE. The annual fee is 1,000.

## The Networking Database

If you wish to add or change some of your details, please write your name on the questionnaire in this issue, fill in the places to be added/changed, and send to Lorraine Koch-Yao, our membership database secretary. Members who have not yet filled in the questionnaire are encouraged to do so.

## E-mail Networking

A list called JALTCALL has been established for communication on any aspect of language teaching, and CUE members are welcome to use this.

To join JALTCALL, send a message to Steve McGuire Nagoya University of Arts [spm@gol.com](mailto:spm@gol.com) and ask for details

## Translators

CUE members Michael Fox and Steve McCarty have kindly offered to translate documents sent in by members relating to their work, from Japanese into English. Please send to Michael at: Hyogo Women's College, 2301 Shinzaike, Hiraoka-cho, Kakogawa, Hyogo 675-01. Work fax (0794) 26-2365, Home tel. (078) 928-0308 or to Steve at: Kokubunji Nii 3717-33, Kagawa 769-10.

# Important Notice

As CUE gets bigger, it demands more work. We need a treasurer now. Next year, we will need someone to get the final copy to the printer and stuff all those copies into the envelopes and haul them down to the post office and hand stamp each one with the big rubber stamp, and someone to co-ordinate all the stuff out side of the conference. As of the next January first of 1998, Thom Simmons, who has coordinated the CUE since 1995 -- elected in Matsuyama in 1994, re-elected in Nagoya in 1995 and Hiroshima in 1996 -- will no longer be working in any official capacity in CUE.

## Caution

If CUE does not have a treasurer to file reports, CUE will not get any funds. If CUE does not publish three newsletters a year it will be put on probation. These positions need people to commit for 1998

At this time, T. L. Simmons, the co-coordinator is also the newsletter distributor and the interim treasurer, and has done a fair amount of editing on the last two issues. We will need another hand at the wheel in 1998.