

全国語学教育学会

The Japan Association for Language Teaching

College and University Educators Newsletter

ON CUE

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ON CUE

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CUE'S MERIT AWARD

FOR NEWCOMERS TO COLLEGE TEACHING... CALL FOR NOMINATIONS!

CUE's Merit Award for Newcomers to College Teaching. This is a brand new and very special way of recognizing outstanding language educators who have recently started teaching at the college or university level. CUE's Merit Award consists of special recognition at the CUE Annual General Meeting at Omiya in November and one year's free membership in JALT and CUE (if a winner of CUE's Merit Award is already a member of JALT and/or CUE, his or her membership will be renewed for another year). The winning essay(s), details below, will also be published in the ON CUE newsletter.

Who is eligible to be nominated for the Merit Award? Any instructor of any language (L1 or L2) who has been teaching at the junior college, college or university level in Japan for no more than three years as of April 1, 1998. (In other words, any language teacher who is entering the fourth, third, second or first year of post-secondary teaching as of April 1, 1998.) There are no age restrictions.

Who may nominate a candidate for CUE's Merit Award? Nominations for CUE's Merit Award candidates are requested from all CUE members. CUE members are asked either to write or E-mail Steven Snyder, CUE Membership Chair, suggesting one candidate (with candidate's affiliation and address). Nominations should be sent by mail as follows.

Steven Snyder
Miyazaki Women's Junior College
1415 Hei, Kano, Kiyotake
Miyazaki 889-1605

Or, the E-mail address for nominations is <tomobear@m-surf.or.jp>.

Each nominee will be notified by CUE and asked to submit a short essay either in English (500 words) or Japanese (1200 characters). The topic of the essay will be related to the nominee's commitment to post-secondary language teaching.

Who will judge the candidates for CUE's Merit Award? The winner or winners will be chosen by a Merit Award Review Panel appointed by, but independent of, the CUE Executive Board.

One nomination only is requested from each CUE member. Deadline for receiving nominations is June 1, 1998.

TECHNOLOGY & LEARNING

Digital Diploma Mills

Automation of higher education?
Warning signs from North America.

David F. Noble,
York University, Canada

[David Noble is co-founder of the National Coalition for Universities in the Public Interest. His latest book is The Religion of Technology. Noble is currently writing another entitled Digital Diploma Mills.]

Recent events at two large North American universities signal dramatically that we have entered a new era in higher education, one which is rapidly drawing the halls of academe into the age of automation. In mid-summer the UCLA administration launched its historic "Instructional Enhancement Initiative" requiring computer Web sites for all of its arts and sciences courses by the start of the Fall term, the first time that a major university has made mandatory the use of computer telecommunications technology in the delivery of higher education. In partnership with several private corporations (including the Times Mirror Company, parent of the Los Angeles Times), moreover, UCLA has spawned its own for-profit company, headed by a former UCLA vice chancellor, to peddle online education (the Home Education Network).

This past spring in Toronto, meanwhile, the full-time faculty of York University, Canada's third largest, ended an historic two-month strike having secured for the first time anywhere formal contractual protection against precisely the kind of administrative action being taken by UCLA. The unprecedented faculty job action, the longest university strike in English Canadian history, was taken partly in response to unilateral

administrative initiatives in the implementation of instructional technology, the most egregious example of which was an official solicitation to private corporations inviting them to permanently place their logo on a university online course in return for a \$10,000 contribution to courseware development. As at UCLA, the York University administration has spawned its own subsidiary (Cultech), directed by the vice president for research and several deans and dedicated, in collaboration with a consortium of private sector firms, to the commercial development and exploitation of online education.

*Presumably cyber-happy
students are not enthusiastic
about a high-tech academic
future.*

Significantly, at both UCLA and York, the presumably cyber-happy students have given clear indication that they are not exactly enthusiastic about the prospect of a high-tech academic future, recommending against the Initiative at UCLA and at York lending their support to striking faculty and launching their own independent investigation of the commercial, pedagogical, and ethical implications of online educational technology. This Fall the student handbook distributed annually to all students by the York Federation of Students contained a warning about the dangers of online education.

Thus, at the very outset of this new age of higher education, the lines have already been drawn in the struggle which will ultimately determine its shape. On the one side university administrators and their myriad commercial partners, on the other those who constitute the core relation of education: students and teachers. (The chief slogan of the York faculty during the strike was "the classroom vs the boardroom.") It is no

accident, then, that the high-tech transformation of higher education is being initiated and implemented from the top down, either without any student and faculty involvement in the decision-making or despite it. At UCLA the administration launched their Initiative during the summer when many faculty are away and there was little possibility of faculty oversight or governance; faculty were thus left out of the loop and kept in the dark about the new Web requirement until the last moment. And UCLA administrators also went ahead with its Initiative, which is funded by a new compulsory student fee, despite the formal student recommendation against it. Similarly the initiatives of the York administration in the deployment of computer technology in education were taken without faculty oversight and deliberation much less student involvement. What is driving this headlong rush to implement new technology with so little regard for deliberation of the pedagogical and economic costs and at the risk of student and faculty alienation and opposition? A short answer might be the fear of getting left behind, the incessant pressures of "progress." But there is more to it. For the universities are not simply undergoing a technological transformation. Beneath that change, and camouflaged by it, lies another: the commercialization of higher education. For here as elsewhere technology is but a vehicle and a disarming disguise.

What is driving this headlong rush to implement new technology? The commercialization of higher education.

The major change to befall the universities over the last two decades has been the identification of the campus as a significant site of capital accumulation, a change in social perception which has resulted in the

systematic conversion of intellectual activity into intellectual capital and, hence, intellectual property. There have been two general phases of this transformation. The first, which began twenty years ago and is still underway, entailed the commoditization of the research function of the university, transforming scientific and engineering knowledge into commercially viable proprietary products that could be owned and bought and sold in the market. The second, which we are now witnessing, entails the commoditization of the educational function of the university, transforming courses into courseware, the activity of instruction itself into commercially viable proprietary products that can be owned and bought and sold in the market. In the first phase the universities became sites of production and sale of patents and exclusive licenses. In the second, they are becoming sites of production of, as well as the chief market for, copyrighted videos, courseware, CD-ROMs, and Web sites.

The first phase began in the mid-1970s when, in the wake of the oil crisis and intensifying international competition, corporate and political leaders of the major industrialized countries of the world recognized that they were losing their monopoly over the world's heavy industries and that, in the future, their supremacy would depend upon their monopoly over the knowledge which had become the lifeblood of the new so-called "knowledge-based" industries (space, electronics, computers, materials, telecommunications, and bioengineering). This focus upon "intellectual capital" turned their attention to the universities as its chief source, implicating the universities as never before in the economic machinery. In the view of capital, the universities had become too important to be left to the universities. Within a decade there was a proliferation of industrial partnerships and new proprietary arrangements, as industrialists and their campus counterparts invented ways to socialize the risks and costs of creating this

knowledge while privatizing the benefits. This unprecedented collaboration gave rise to an elaborate web of interlocking directorates between corporate and academic boardrooms and the foundation of joint lobbying efforts epitomized by the work of the Business-Higher Education Forum. The chief accomplishment of the combined effort, in addition to a relaxation of anti-trust regulations and greater tax incentives for corporate funding of university research, was the 1980 reform of the patent law which for the first time gave the universities automatic ownership of patents resulting from federal government grants. Laboratory knowledge now became patents, that is intellectual capital and intellectual property. As patent holding companies, the universities set about at once to codify their intellectual property policies, develop the infrastructure for the conduct of commercially-viable research, cultivate their corporate ties, and create the mechanisms for marketing their new commodity, exclusive licenses to their patents. The result of this first phase of university commoditization was a wholesale reallocation of university resources toward its research function at the expense of its educational function.

Class sizes swelled, teaching staffs and instructional resources were reduced, salaries were frozen, and curricular offerings were cut to the bone. At the same time, tuition soared to subsidize the creation and maintenance of the commercial infrastructure (and correspondingly bloated administration) that has never really paid off. In the end students were paying more for their education and getting less, and campuses were in crisis.*

The second phase of the commercialization of academia, the commoditization of instruction, is touted as the solution to the crisis engendered by the first. Ignoring the true sources of the financial debacle - an expensive and low-yielding commercial infrastructure and greatly expanded administrative costs - the champions of

computer-based instruction focus their attention rather upon increasing the efficiencies of already overextended teachers. And they ignore as well the fact that their high-tech remedies are bound only to compound the problem, increasing further, rather than reducing, the costs of higher education. (Experience to date demonstrates clearly that computer-based teaching, with its limitless demands upon instructor time and vastly expanded overhead requirements - equipment, upgrades, maintenance, and technical and administrative support staff - costs more not less than traditional education, whatever the reductions in direct labor, hence the need for outside funding and student technology fees.) Little wonder, then, that teachers and students are reluctant to embrace this new panacea. Their hesitation reflects not fear but wisdom.**

The foremost promoters of this transformation are vendors of the network hardware, software, and "content."

But this second transformation of higher education is not the work of teachers or students, the presumed beneficiaries of improved education, because it is not really about education at all. That's just the name of the market. The foremost promoters of this transformation are rather the vendors of the network hardware, software, and "content" - Apple, IBM, Bell, the cable companies, Microsoft, and the edutainment and publishing companies Disney, Simon and Schuster, Prentice-Hall, et al - who view education as a market for their wares, a market estimated by the Lehman Brothers investment firm potentially to be worth several hundred billion dollars. "Investment opportunity in the education industry has never been better," one of their reports proclaimed, indicating that this will be "the

focus industry" for lucrative investment in the future, replacing the healthcare industry. (The report also forecasts that the educational market will eventually become dominated by EMOs - education maintenance organizations - just like HMOs in the healthcare market.) It is important to emphasize that, for all the democratic rhetoric about extending educational access to those unable to get to the campus, the campus remains the real market for these products, where students outnumber their distance learning counterparts six-to-one.

Corporate training advocates view online education as yet another way of bringing their problem-solving, information-processing, "just-in-time" educated employees up to profit-making speed.

In addition to the vendors, corporate training advocates view online education as yet another way of bringing their problem-solving, information-processing, "just-in-time" educated employees up to profit-making speed. Beyond their ambitious in-house training programs, which have incorporated computer-based instructional methods pioneered by the military, they envision the transformation of the delivery of higher education as a means of supplying their properly-prepared personnel at public expense.

The third major promoters of this transformation are the university administrators, who see it as a way of giving their institutions a fashionably forward-looking image. More importantly, they view computer-based instruction as a means of

reducing their direct labor and plant maintenance costs - fewer teachers and classrooms - while at the same time undermining the autonomy and independence of faculty. At the same time, they are hoping to get a piece of the commercial action for their institutions or themselves, as vendors in their own right of software and content. University administrators are supported in this enterprise by a number of private foundations, trade associations, and academic-corporate consortia which are promoting the use of the new technologies with increasing intensity. Among these are the Sloan, Mellon, Pew, and Culpeper Foundations, the American Council on Education, and, above all, Educom, a consortium representing the management of 600 colleges and universities and a hundred private corporations.

Last but not least, behind this effort are the ubiquitous technozealots who simply view computers as the panacea for everything, because they like to play with them. With the avid encouragement of their private sector and university patrons, they forge ahead, without support for their pedagogical claims about the alleged enhancement of education, without any real evidence of productivity improvement, and without any effective demand from either students or teachers.

In addition to York and UCLA, universities throughout North America are rapidly being overtaken by this second phase of commercialization. There are the stand-alone virtual institutions like University of Phoenix, the wired private institutions like the New School for Social Research, the campuses of state universities like the University of Maryland and the new Gulf-Coast campus of the University of Florida (which boasts no tenure). On the state level, the states of Arizona and California have initiated their own state-wide virtual university projects, while a consortia of western "Smart States" have launched their own ambitious effort to wire all of their

campuses into an online educational network. In Canada, a national effort has been undertaken, spearheaded by the Telelearning Research Network centered at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, to bring most of the nation's higher education institutions into a "Virtual U" network.

The overriding commercial intent and market orientation behind these initiatives is explicit, as is illustrated by the most ambitious U.S. effort to date, the Western Governors' Virtual University Project, whose stated goals are to "expand the marketplace for instructional materials, courseware, and programs utilizing advanced technology," "expand the marketplace for demonstrated competence," and "identify and remove barriers to the free functioning of these markets, particularly barriers posed by statutes, policies, and administrative rules and regulations."

"In the future," Utah governor Mike Leavitt proclaimed, "an institution of higher education will become a little like a local television station." Start up funds for the project come from the private sector, specifically from Educational Management Group, the educational arm of the world's largest educational publisher Simon and Schuster and the proprietary impulse behind their largesse is made clear by Simon and Schuster CEO Jonathan Newcomb: "The use of interactive technology is causing a fundamental shift away from the physical classroom toward anytime, anywhere learning - the model for post secondary education in the twenty-first century." This transformation is being made possible by "advances in digital technology, coupled with the protection of copyright in cyberspace."

"In the future, an institution of higher education will become a little like a local television station."

Similarly, the national effort to develop the "Virtual U" customized educational software platform in Canada is directed by an industrial consortium which includes Kodak, IBM, Microsoft, McGraw-Hill, Prentice-Hall, Rogers Cablesystems, Unitel, Novasys, Nortel, Bell Canada, and MPR Teltech, a research subsidiary of GTE. The commercial thrust behind the project is explicit here too. Predicting a potential fifty billion dollar Canadian market, the project proposal emphasizes the adoption of "an intellectual property policy that will encourage researchers and industry to commercialize their innovations" and anticipates the development of "a number of commercially marketable hardware and software products and services," including "courseware and other learning products." The two directors of the project, Simon Fraser University professors, have formed their own company to peddle these products in collaboration with the university. At the same time, the nearby University of British Columbia has recently spun off the private WEB-CT company to peddle its own educational Web site software, WEB-CT, the software designed by one of its computer science professors and now being used by UCLA. In recent months, WEB-CT has entered into production and distribution relationships with Silicon Graphics and Prentice-Hall and is fast becoming a major player in the American as well as Canadian higher education market. As of the beginning of the Fall term, WEB CT licensees now include, in addition to UCLA and California State University, the Universities of Georgia, Minnesota, Illinois, North Carolina, and Indiana, as well as such private institutions as Syracuse, Brandeis, and Duquesne.

The implications of the commoditization of university instruction are two-fold in nature, those relating to the university as a site of the production of the commodities and those relating to the university as a market for them. The first raises for the faculty traditional labor issues about the introduction

of new technologies of production. The second raises for students major questions about costs, coercion, privacy, equity, and the quality of education.

With the commoditization of instruction, teachers as labor are drawn into a production process designed for the efficient creation of instructional commodities, and hence become subject to all the pressures that have befallen production workers in other industries undergoing rapid technological transformation from above. In this context faculty have much more in common with the historic plight of other skilled workers than they care to acknowledge. Like these others, their activity is being restructured, via the technology, in order to reduce their autonomy, independence, and control over their work and to place workplace knowledge and control as much as possible into the hands of the administration. As in other industries, the technology is being deployed by management primarily to discipline, deskill, and displace labor.

Technology entails an inevitable extension of working time and an intensification of work as faculty struggle to stay on top of the technology.

Once faculty and courses go online, administrators gain much greater direct control over faculty performance and course content than ever before and the potential for administrative scrutiny, supervision, regimentation, discipline and even censorship increase dramatically. At the same time, the use of the technology entails an inevitable extension of working time and an intensification of work as faculty struggle at all hours of the day and night to stay on top of the technology and respond, via chat

rooms, virtual office hours, and E-mail, to both students and administrators to whom they have now become instantly and continuously accessible. The technology also allows for much more careful administrative monitoring of faculty availability, activities, and responsiveness.

Once the faculty converts its courses to courseware, their services are in the long run no longer required.

Once faculty put their course material online, moreover, the knowledge and course design skill embodied in that material is taken out of their possession, transferred to the machinery and placed in the hands of the administration. The administration is now in a position to hire less skilled, and hence cheaper, workers to deliver the technologically prepackaged course. It also allows the administration, which claims ownership of this commodity, to peddle the course elsewhere without the original designer's involvement or even knowledge, much less financial interest. The buyers of this packaged commodity, meanwhile, other academic institutions, are able thereby to contract out, and hence outsource, the work of their own employees and thus reduce their reliance upon their in-house teaching staff.

Most important, once the faculty converts its courses to courseware, their services are in the long run no longer required. They become redundant, and when they leave, their work remains behind. In Kurt Vonnegut's classic novel *Player Piano* the ace machinist Rudy Hertz is flattered by the automation engineers who tell him his genius will be immortalized. They buy him a beer. They capture his skills on tape. Then they fire him. Today faculty are falling for the same tired line, that their brilliance will be broadcast online to millions. Perhaps, but

without their further participation. Some skeptical faculty insist that what they do cannot possibly be automated, and they are right. But it will be automated anyway, whatever loss in educational quality, because education, again, is not what all this is about; it's about making money. In short, the new technology of education, like the automation of other industries, robs faculty of their knowledge and skills, their control over their working lives, the product of their labor, and, ultimately, their means of livelihood.

At York University, untenured faculty have been required to put their courses on video, CD- ROM or the Internet or lose their job.

None of this is speculation. This Fall the UCLA faculty, at administration request, have dutifully or grudgingly (it doesn't really matter which) placed their course work - ranging from just syllabi and assignments to the entire body of course lectures and notes - at the disposal of their administration, to be used online, without asking who will own it much less how it will eventually be used and with what consequences. At York University, untenured faculty have been required to put their courses on video, CD-ROM or the Internet or lose their job. They have then been hired to teach their own now automated course at a fraction of their former compensation. The New School in New York now routinely hires outside contractors from around the country, mostly unemployed PhDs, to design online courses. The designers are not hired as employees but are simply paid a modest flat fee and are required to surrender to the university all rights to their course. The New School then offers the course without having to employ anyone. And this is just the beginning.

Educom, the academic-corporate consortium,

has recently established their Learning Infrastructure Initiative which includes the detailed study of what professors do, breaking the faculty job down in classic Tayloristic fashion into discrete tasks, and determining what parts can be automated or outsourced. Educom believes that course design, lectures, and even evaluation can all be standardized, mechanized, and consigned to outside commercial vendors. "Today you're looking at a highly personal human-mediated environment," Educom president Robert Heterich observed. "The potential to remove the human mediation in some areas and replace it with automation - smart, computer-based, network-based systems - is tremendous. It's gotta happen."

Toward this end, university administrators are coercing or enticing faculty into compliance, placing the greatest pressures on the most vulnerable - untenured and part-time faculty, and entry-level and prospective employees. They are using the academic incentive and promotion structure to reward cooperation and discourage dissent. At the same time they are mounting an intensifying propaganda campaign to portray faculty as incompetent, hide-bound, recalcitrant, inefficient, ineffective, and expensive - in short, in need of improvement or replacement through instructional technologies. Faculty are portrayed above all as obstructionist, as standing in the way of progress and forestalling the panacea of virtual education allegedly demanded by students, their parents, and the public.

The York University faculty had heard it all. Yet still they fought vigorously and ultimately successfully to preserve quality education and protect themselves from administrative assault. During their long strike they countered such administration propaganda with the truth about what was happening to higher education and eventually won the support of students, the media, and the public. Most important, they secured a new contract containing unique and unprecedented

provisions which, if effectively enforced, give faculty members direct and unambiguous control over all decisions relating to the automation of instruction, including veto power. According to the contract, all decisions regarding the use of technology as a supplement to classroom instruction or as a means of alternative delivery (including the use of video, CD-ROMs, Internet Web sites, computer-mediated conferencing, etc.) "shall be consistent with the pedagogic and academic judgements and principles of the faculty member employee as to the appropriateness of the use of technology in the circumstances." The contract also guarantees "a faculty member will not be required to convert a course without his or her agreement." Thus, the York faculty will be able to ensure that the new technology, if and when used, will contribute to a genuine enhancement rather than a degradation of the quality of education, while at the same time preserving their positions, their autonomy, and their academic freedom. The battle is far from won, but it is a start.

The second set of implications stemming from the commoditization of instruction involve the transformation of the university into a market for the commodities being produced. Administrative propaganda routinely alludes to an alleged student demand for the new instructional products. At UCLA officials are betting that their high-tech agenda will be "student driven," as students insist that faculty make fuller use of the Web site technology in their courses. To date, however, there has been no such demand on the part of students, no serious study of it, and no evidence for it. Indeed, the few times students have been given a voice, they have rejected the initiatives hands down, especially when they were required to pay for it (the definition of effective demand, i.e., a market). At UCLA, students recommended against the Instructional Enhancement Initiative. At the University of British Columbia, home of the WEB-CT

software being used at UCLA, students voted in a referendum four-to-one against a similar initiative, despite a lengthy administration campaign promising them a more secure place in the high tech future. Administrators at both institutions have tended to dismiss, ignore, or explain away these negative student decisions, but there is a message here: students want the genuine face-to-face education they paid for not a cybercounterfeit. Nevertheless, administrators at both UCLA and UBC decided to proceed with their agenda anyway, desperate to create a market and secure some return on their investment in the information technology infrastructure. Thus, they are creating a market by fiat, compelling students (and faculty) to become users and hence consumers of the hardware, software, and content products as a condition of getting an education, whatever their interest or ability to pay. Can all students equally afford this capital-intensive education?

Another key ethical issue relates to the use of student online activities. Few students realize that their computer-based courses are often thinly-veiled field trials for product and market development, that while they are studying their courses, their courses are studying them. In Canada, for example, universities have been given royalty-free licenses to Virtual U software in return for providing data on its use to the vendors. Thus, all online activity including communications between students and professors and among students are monitored, automatically logged and archived by the system for use by the vendor. Students enrolled in courses using Virtual U software are in fact formally designated "experimental subjects." Because federal monies were used to develop the software and underwrite the field trials, vendors were compelled to comply with ethical guidelines on the experimental use of human subjects. Thus, all students once enrolled are required to sign forms releasing ownership and control of their online activities to the

vendors. The form states "as a student using Virtual U in a course, I give my permission to have the computer-generated usage data, conference transcript data, and virtual artifacts data collected by the Virtual U software. . . used for research, development, and demonstration purposes."

According to UCLA's Home Education Network president John Korbara, all of their distance learning courses are likewise monitored and archived for use by company officials. On the UCLA campus, according to Harlan Lebo of the Provost's office, student use of the course Web sites will be routinely audited and evaluated by the administration. Marvin Goldberg, designer of the UCLA WEB-CT software acknowledges that the system allows for "lurking" and automatic storage and retrieval of all online activities. How this capability will be used and by whom are not altogether clear, especially since Web sites are typically being constructed by people other than the instructors. What third parties (besides students and faculty in the course) will have access to the student's communications? Who will own student online contributions? What rights, if any, do students have to privacy and proprietary control of their work? Are they given prior notification as to the ultimate status of their online activities, so that they might be in a position to give, or withhold, their informed consent? If students are taking courses which are just experiments, and hence of unproven pedagogical value, should students be paying full tuition for them? And if students are being used as guinea pigs in product trials masquerading as courses, should they be paying for these courses or be paid to take them? More to the point, should students be content with a degraded, shadow cybereducation? In Canada student organizations have begun to confront these issues head on, and there are signs of similar student concern emerging in the U.S. In his classic 1959 study of diploma mills for the American Council on Education, Robert Reid described the typical diploma mill as having

the following characteristics: "no classrooms," "faculties are often untrained or nonexistent," and "the officers are unethical self-seekers whose qualifications are no better than their offerings." It is an apt description of the digital diploma mills now in the making. Quality higher education will not disappear entirely, but it will soon become the exclusive preserve of the privileged, available only to children of the rich and the powerful. For the rest of us a dismal new era of higher education has dawned. In ten years, we will look upon the wired remains of our once great democratic higher education system and wonder how we let it happen. That is, unless we decide now not to let it happen.

Notes

* Tuition began to outpace inflation in the early 1980s, at precisely the moment when changes in the patent system enabled the universities to become major vendors of patent licenses. According to data compiled by the National Center for Educational Statistics, between 1976 and 1994 expenditures on research increased 21.7% at public research universities while expenditure on instruction decreased 9.5%. Faculty salaries, which had peaked in 1972, fell precipitously during the next decade and have since recovered only half the loss.

** Recent surveys of the instructional use of information technology in higher education clearly indicate that there have been no significant gains in either productivity improvement or pedagogical enhancement. Kenneth C. Green, Director of the Campus Computing Project, which conducts annual surveys of information technology use in higher education, noted that "the campus experience over the past decade reveals that the dollars can be daunting, the return on investment highly uncertain." "We have yet to hear of an instance where the total costs (including all realistically amortized capital investments and development expenses, plus reasonable estimates for faculty and support staff time) associated with teaching some unit to some group of students actually decline while maintaining the quality of learning." On pedagogical effectiveness, Green noted that "the research literature offers, at best, a mixed review of often inconclusive results, at least when searching for traditional measures of statistical significance in learning outcomes."

DISTINCTIVE TEACHING **Daily Immersion**

An open door to language practice.

Julian Bamford,
Bunkyo University

[The author responds to and extends Jonathan Britten's suggestions in On Cue, December 1997 for providing students weekend immersion opportunities.]

Weekend immersion programs sound like a great idea, and a residential dormitory an even greater one. In the meantime, here's a parallel idea I've been involved in for the last decade at the small private university where I am on the faculty. I open my office to students as a language lounge. The door is open from 9 'til late every day, and I mean open. Students used to say they hesitated to knock so an open door was the only answer. Now when newcomers hover outside, I or someone else here can welcome them in. At the height of summer and depths of winter, I hang a transparent plastic sheet over the door to keep the heat/cold in.

English (or another foreign language) only is used in the room. When I compare this to the torrent of Japanese in my regular English classes, it amazes me with how little effort the rule is kept. I shouldn't be so naive: Asking a student last night why she spoke English to other students in the room even when no one else was around, she replied, "I want to practice English." Japanese may be used by foreign students and teachers for whom it's not a first language. Chinese students, for example, may not speak Chinese but may speak Japanese or English. Japanese can, however, be used by anyone taking the role of teacher, i.e., for explanation. At most times there is either a music CD playing or an MTV videotape

showing on the big screen TV to set the mood. Students know they can't read Japanese-language magazines in the room, or do homework that doesn't involve a foreign language. (One exception made in the name of education is that anyone can do any kind of studying in here when the university library is closed.)

We teach students to ask what they want to say in English.

It's hard for beginners to say what they want to say in English. We teach students to ask "How do you say (Japanese word or phrase) in English?" to one of the other people in the room when they get stuck. There's a pad of "How do you say _____ in English?" papers as well. If no one can answer, students fill this in, put their name at the top, and drop it in a basket. I write answers to these questions once a day so the papers can be picked up by students next time they're in.

Students crowd in at lunch time, sitting down with their lunch boxes or a tray from the cafeteria. There may be as many as 15 bodies, tripping over coats, bags and each other. Often one of the part- or full-time faculty (foreign and Japanese) squeezes in to eat lunch and chat to students. It is sometimes necessary to introduce shy students to each other to break the ice.

For a few students, the room is a home away from home.

At other times of the day, students drift in and out. Many help themselves to a cup of ¥20 instant coffee (profits to charity). On average there will be two or three people in the room at any one time. For a few students, the room is a home away from home: They seem always to be here when not in class. They either study, or talk to each

other about classes, homework, jobs and their lives in general. It is also helpful to have something else to talk about on the table, and to change it weekly. In recent weeks we've had a list of questions that lead you to find which of the three male leads in the TV sitcom "Friends" is most suitable as your boyfriend (clipped from a teen magazine, with some questions made easier by eliminating the slang); horoscopes (ditto), instructions for how to write Christmas cards, and a page of jokes with "I don't get it?" and "Do you get it?" on top. There are periodic crazes for "Scrabble."

Students rarely know how to go about studying a foreign language by themselves, or how to reach their goals (e.g. TOEFL 520). It is useful to offer counseling, and I talk to several students every week about this. It is also useful to have both self-study material and review material available for students who want it. Review material is a piece of cake: the most popular is a library of English-language (no Japanese subtitles) movies and TV shows with closed-captions which students can either watch in the room or check out to watch at home. With my academic bookcases moved out to make space, I have a row of 5 sets of videodecks/TVs/headphones against one wall. (There are a few extra headphones with double adapters for students who want to watch a movie together with a friend.) There is also a computer with a typing tutor program and English word-processing software. Finally there is a library of graded readers organized by language level which I encourage students to use. All of these items have been bought gradually over the years by applying for part of the annual budget for special purchases over and above our regular faculty research money. In addition, I myself bought a cheap microwave oven for heating lunch boxes and put it in the kitchen down the corridor.

Effective self-access study materials are hard to find.

Effective self-access study materials are harder to find or make and it is an ongoing research project to come up with them. Successful for some students are a box of SRA cards, and the sets of self-study videotapes I have made by taping some of my extra-curricular classes. I teach these extra classes to small or large groups of students when I have time. Twice weekly I teach a big (30 students) conversation/vocabulary class which is also open to local residents. Small classes have ranged from academic preparation (reading and writing) for students on their way to study abroad, to the intermediate vocabulary building class I am teaching to 4 students this winter vacation. There is demand for even more, so I pay an assistant who teaches a daily TOEFL reading class and an advanced vocabulary building class. One part-time teacher holds English-language debate sessions in his own time after school on the one day a week he comes. He says it keeps him sane.

Once or twice over the last decade, students who graduated have stayed on for six months or a year to improve their English and get the TOEFL score they need before studying abroad. They pay no tuition to the university. I give them some extra help and in turn they help the other students.

I'm here every day, even Saturday and Sunday, days that attract graduates who live and work locally.

A big reason that the room works may be that I'm here every day, even Saturday and Sunday, sometimes, days that attract graduates who live and work locally. (On the days I can't come, I arrange for the room to be unlocked.) I spend a fair amount of time interacting with students. They spend a fair amount of time interacting with each other as well. I organize my day so I do work that

needs concentration in the mornings when traffic in the room is light. At other times when I have thinking work to do, I put on headphones and play a tape of white noise which blocks out background sounds.

Security has yet to be a problem, thank goodness. A book, magazine or videotape disappears once in a while, but no big stuff so far. When I'm not in the room, someone else usually is, or students are dropping by briefly to check out or return a video. This means there is usually someone around to answer my phone which is nice. There is also usually some candy, cookies or fruit brought by local residents or someone who has been on a trip, which is even nicer. I publicize the room by putting posters up all over the campus ("Do you want to practice your English?"), and flyers in the language teachers' campus mailboxes. What I do for students is noticed and appreciated by other university faculty, but this doesn't translate into any overt support. I've been asking for a larger room for years to no avail so far.

It takes a lot of time to organize the room and keep it running, but it's all in the name of education. It's not what the university considers it's paying me for, but I think it fits the bill in general terms. After all, I'm paid to teach a foreign language, and (like Jonathan Britten) I believe that practice must be part of the foreign language curriculum.

A graduate (a local homemaker who came to my extra-curricular classes and now lives in the US with her husband) wrote recently to say, "Learning should be a joy in life." That strikes me as an excellent guiding principle. There is precious little joy to be wrung by students or teachers, myself included, from the regular classes and curriculum. After years of unsuccessful lobbying, I've concluded that trying to reform the curriculum isn't the way to go. Instead, add classes, review and practice opportunities that offer the joy of teaching and learning to the students and teachers who want it.

The Tracking Equation Revisited

Summing up of terms.

Paul Doyon

The terms "tracking" or "streaming" are packed with emotional residue. And for good reason -- connotations associated with either of these two words, for people familiar with their roots, are connected with racism and bigotry. After all, it was Lewis Terman, one of the originators of the tracking system in America and also the pioneer of the IQ test, who used this test (later retitled the Stanford Binet test) to gather data to support his claim that most minorities were inferior.

A New Set of Definitions: While the term tracking was originally based on "IQ" -- which for the most part, is considered a "static," or unchanging state -- what we are talking about here in Japan with regards to language education is "proficiency," which is not static, but "dynamic" and usually improves with time. The disagreement in the tracking equation has more to do with how different people use the word tracking to define a broad range of circumstances with regards to grouping students. It is for this reason that I propose a new set of definitions to describe clearly what happens.

1. Grouping: dividing students into groups.
2. Randomized Grouping: dividing students into groups randomly or without any prior criteria.
3. Nonrandomized Grouping: dividing students into groups based on a similar (or dissimilar) trait or traits.
4. Tracking/Streaming: dividing and grouping students together based on similar ability and/or achievement levels.

5. Proficiency Grouping: dividing and grouping students together based on similar proficiency levels.

6. Placement: placement in an already established group based on some kind of criteria for entering that group, e.g., a test.

From all the confusion, one might assume that the term tracking has been used too loosely in the recent literature. The original meaning of this word meant to divide students into groups based on ability (originally determined by IQ) and gradually came to mean dividing students into groups for high, average, and low achievers. I imagine that the latter was not based solely on IQ, but on other components which might include psychodynamic factors like motivation, drive, and self confidence.

Proficiency delineates the point along a continuum, but whether one is a high or low achiever delineates the rate at which one moves along.

Proficiency Grouping: With regard to EFL/ESL, what we are talking about is the placement of students in varying levels determined by the students degree of proficiency with the language, which might, in turn, be determined by the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Provisional Proficiency Guidelines. See Omaggio Hadley for a brief overview of the ACTFL Provisional Proficiency Guidelines. Proficiency (in the case of EFL/ESL) describes what one can and cannot do with the language. It delineates the point along a continuum that an individual is at with the language. But whether one is a high, average, or low achiever delineates the rate at which one supposedly moves along that continuum.

The Dangers of Not Having the Proper Placement Tests: Unfortunately, many placement tests do not succeed in measuring the range of abilities that make up what has come to be called, "communicative competence." Omaggio Hadley defines proficiency as being "comprised of a whole range of abilities that must be described in a graduated fashion in order to be meaningful" (1993, p. 9). Joritz-Nakagawa points out: "[T]hat often standardized tests and other ineffective placement tests are the usual vehicles for placing students into tracks.... 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" (1997, pp. 7-8).

Placement tests need to be developed with care and precision by those who are trained to do so to measure what students can do with the language in a range of areas, and not just to measure what they know about the language. One test that fits these criteria may be the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), an integrative test, which "addresses a number of abilities simultaneously and looks at them from a global perspective rather than from the point of view of the presence or absence of any given linguistic feature" (Buck, Byrnes, and Thompson 1989, p. 3-1).

Teaching "Psychodynamic Competence": I define psychodynamic competence as the ability to use one's thoughts and emotions in a way that enhances one's state of being, and in turn, fosters the learning experience. In a language classroom, this would deal with changing self-defeating belief systems and emotions that detract from the learning experience into ones that enhance it. An example might be in teaching students the benefits of "optimism" v. "pessimism" and how this relates to their own personal learning experience. Other issues, might

include: overcoming shyness, motivating oneself, eliminating procrastination, and getting into the "flow" of learning.

Joritz-Nakagawa mentioned "self fulfilling prophecies" where teacher expectations for certain students and those of students themselves result in self-fulfillment. Kotori emphasizes the need for the teacher: "[T]o be able to explain ... the following things in the beginning before students begin to form any negative attitude: 1) why [proficiency grouping] is necessary in a given situation; 2) when and how [proficiency grouping] is done; 3) how it benefits the students in each different section; and 4) whether there is chance to advance if the program runs into consecutive semesters" (1997, p. 8).

What is important for students to succeed in acquiring a language (before anything else) is the belief that they can actually succeed in acquiring language, and secondly, learn the skills necessary for them to learn more effectively. It is therefore important for the teacher to hold positive expectations for students (regardless of level), and for students to hold positive expectations for themselves. As Stevick writes in *A Way and Ways*: "In a task-oriented group like a language class, the student's place is at the center of a space which the teacher has structured, with room left for him to grow into. In this kind of relationship, there are two essentials for the teacher: faith that the student will in fact grow into that space, and understanding where the student is in that space at any given moment (1980, p. 31).

The danger may not be in whether students are placed in proficiency groups, but rather in interpretations.

Accordingly, it seems here that the questions of importance are not whether or not we

should place students into proficiency groups, but "how" and to "what degree" this should be done. Obviously, no matter how we group students, there will be some variation in levels of their proficiency, and intuition tells me that some variation is good. However, when the variation is too great--as in a randomized group--we are more likely to run into problems. As Adamson states: "[T]he lasting damage done to both high and low students in [non-proficiency grouped] 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 (1997, pp. 10-11).

Therefore, the danger may not be inherent in whether students are placed or not placed in proficiency groups, but rather in the interpretations both teachers and students have for the reasons this happens.

The Best Partners for Students:

Murphey in *Language Hungry* (an excellent book offering students information in addressing the issue of psychodynamic competence) states, "The best partners for [students] may be other [students] who are at [their] approximate level..." (1998, p. 5).

Kumon: The success that Kumon, the early-education cram-school system, offers is it allows students to achieve mastery at one level before proceeding to the next. When students enter the program they are given a placement test and then given materials which are deliberately easy in order for them to experience immediate success, which provides confidence and motivation for more demanding levels. While I am not recommending Kumon for communicative

language teaching, the tenets are the same for proficiency grouping. As Omaggio Hadley explains, "As one goes up the scale, progressively more language skill is needed to attain the next level" (1993, p.13).

"Reality" Clouded by "Biases" and "Ideology":

As Adamson writes, "...[proficiency grouping] is appropriate in some cases and inappropriate in others" (1997, p. 9). And as Doyon states, "Whether to place [students in proficiency groups] or not might very well depend on the unique circumstances that every teaching situation seems to bring with it" (1997, p. 6). What is important here is that we look at what is practical and feasible in the unique situation that we are in; and also what will be best for our students. It is essential to realize that sometimes our ability to see "reality" is often clouded by our "biases" or "ideologies." Connotations with certain words sometimes cloud ability to see clearly, which in turn, forces us to make hasty conclusions.

Without looking at unique circumstances, we cannot make informed decisions.

Proof or Insights: We must also be wary of any research that claims to "prove" that one way is better than the other. As opposed to the pure sciences (in which events are fixed and can be reproduced in a laboratory), what happens in any classroom is temporal, idiosyncratic, and therefore nonrepeatable. Recently, there has been a move towards classroom based action research which: "[U]ncover insights into the complexities of teaching and learning, rather than on obtaining 'proof' that method X works better than method Y, or that coursebook A works better than coursebook B. This approach is therefore centrally concerned with and analyzing what actually goes on in the classroom, rather than simply measuring the end point of learning" (Nunan 1989, p. 6).

Teachers need to be able to make informed decisions. Without looking at the unique circumstances with which one is presented with in their own teaching situation, we cannot hope to make informed decisions about the placement of students in proficiency groups. Teachers and program directors need to understand the goals of their programs and the reasons for the placement of students in proficiency groups. Moreover, students (and teachers) also have a need (and a right) to understand clearly why these decisions are made (or not made). In university settings it may not be practical, feasible, or necessary to place students in proficiency groups due to scheduling problems and the fact that most students will likely be at an approximate level. However, in language schools it might be essential for the success of the school.

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Teaching Is Not a Process

Scepticism as motivation for freedom.

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As someone who does not believe that "teaching necessarily equals learning," I am sceptical. Understanding the answers to questions about teaching and learning is one thing (probably several); understanding the teaching process is quite another (and for my part, less interesting).

It's really something to observe people trying to come up with definitions of learning, consciousness, etc. What is learning (how do you define it)? And how do you measure it? Two pretty fundamental questions that so far I have not found satisfactory answers to. And I am not sure that answering these questions will in the end prove as useful as might appear.

My answers here, then, will be pretty unscholarly, I'm afraid. I cannot come up with a variety of quotes and references for the points I am about to make. Perhaps somebody else can.

Perhaps I can start, though, with a long quote from John Holt: "If we taught children to speak, they'd never learn." Suppose we decided that we had to 'teach' children to speak? First, some committee of experts would analyze speech and break it down into a number of separate 'speech skills'. We would probably say that, since speech is made up of sounds, a child must be taught to make all the sounds of his language before he can be taught to speak the language itself. Doubtless we would list these sounds, easiest and commonest ones first, harder and rarer ones next. Then we would begin to teach infants these sounds...

"Along with our sound list, we would have a syllable list and a word list.... At the same time we would teach the rules of grammar.... Everything would be planned, with nothing left to chance; there would be plenty of drill, review, and tests, to make sure that he had not forgotten anything.

"Suppose we tried to do this; what would happen? What would happen, quite simply, is that most children, before they got very far, would become baffled, discouraged, humiliated, and fearful, and would quit trying to do what we asked them." Sound familiar?

Teaching does not necessarily equal learning. "I taught them but they didn't learn!" How often have you heard that wail, either from yourself or others? I can recall several teachers from my grammar-school days who must have wailed this in the staff room daily. I have also heard it in staff rooms in Japan. And I may even have been heard mumbling it myself.

What is learning? And how do you measure it? I am not sure that answering these questions will prove as useful as might appear.

To learn, students need at least to be awake and paying some kind of attention; if they are asleep, or if their attention is elsewhere (which with adolescents is frequently the case), they are not going to learn much. Perhaps this recognition is one reason for the relatively recent shift from observing teachers in action to observing students in action: what are they up to while the teacher is "teaching"? (Scholarly reference - "Breaking Rules" by John F. Fanselow, Longman 1987).

The desire to learn is crucial in the "teacher + student = learning" equation. The teacher must want to teach, and the student must want to learn. Moreover, it is the student's wanting to

learn which draws the teaching out of the teacher; and also vice versa. Someone once said that learning is not exactly what the student does; any twit can learn, even a puppy dog can learn tricks. The student RESPONDS to the teacher, and the teacher responds to the student.

Teaching is not a process, nor can it be reduced to a set of procedures. Perhaps we can call it a response, or a responsiveness.

Teaching cannot be reduced to procedures: your students will see to that!

Some people are trying to define the teaching process. I don't think that teaching is a "process". Although procedures are important, and for a beginner teacher, they are a lifeline, teaching cannot be reduced to procedures: your students will see to that! So, instead of wasting time trying to define the teaching process (whatever that may be), why not investigate the learning process? More specifically, why not investigate and study how and what your own students learn? To quote John Holt, (How Children Fail, Penguin 1982, p 212), "This is the only kind of educational research that will ever actually improve education - research done BY teachers, in THEIR own classrooms, to solve what THEY see as THEIR own problems." (Holt's emphasis)

Science, it has been said, is always of the general, and can only be of the general: random or sample populations are taken, tested, and the conclusions are, it is hoped, to be applied to people generally. Children are given half the adult dose of medicine: but a 12 year-old is not the same kind of child as a 4 year-old. The theories are all very well, perhaps, but they won't necessarily tell you what is going on in Mika's head in the front row, or Yoshio's in the back, or in Shinsuke's who's not here at all, today, NOW.

Generally speaking I am sceptical of the value of theoretical research into, for example, Second Language Acquisition, for practising teachers. For the most part, either they are useless number-crunching, or the conclusions they come to are completely predictable using just instinct or common sense or both.

An example of the former: an investigation into the use and frequency of certain words in Somerset Maugham's short stories: this word occurs so many times in the earlier stories, that word occurs so many times overall, etc., ad infinitum. What does this have to do with the whole point of writing and reading these short stories, i.e. the aesthetic experience?

Absolutely zip. Insights, then, into the creative process? Again, none. The point seemed to me, that here was someone who had just recently acquired some concordancing (if that is the right word) software, and was eager to try it out and justify the expense. The hard work is inputting the data (i.e. the stories), presumably done by a lackey. The rest can be done by pushing a few buttons: click, click, and hey presto! A thesis!

An example of the latter: some bright spark gets it into her head to investigate Krashen's "affective filter" in SLA, and tries to monitor the affect of anxiety on student performance. Conclusions? Common sense, or teaching experience, or just straightforward human understanding (by the way, where does understanding have a role to play in these heady days when "information" is all?), or common sense, experience and understanding will tell us the answer instantly: that a certain amount of anxiety when faced with anything new, is normal; that excess or unnecessary anxiety detracts from performance; that anxiety can be harnessed positively, and is so used by "good" or "fast" learners. And that therefore teachers should strive for a class atmosphere that takes this into account. I flip through to the conclusion, andguess what I find?

Another peeve I have against much SLA

research these days (though I am always on the lookout for something interesting, is that much of it has to do with analyzing how people learn language. A worthy cause, but the people they analyze WANT to learn the language. My students are not so sure. Maybe they do, if it's more interesting than watching TV, if their boy/girlfriend is not available, if it doesn't clash with their part-time job, if the weather's nice, if it's raining, if they feel like it, if the teacher's good looking, if there isn't any homework.....Research which looks at the BEST or FASTEST way to learn a language just does not apply here.

Researchers often lose sight of our need for freedom, and so cannot respect it, and so ignore it. The research is then read and implemented by similarly ignorant people.

I think what I am groping for here, is that the hidden but implied objectives of much research of this kind are intended to allow more control over language-learners, by which I mean (and I think this is what in practice it will come down to) more manipulation of students. That is what happens because the research is conducted by people who do not fully comprehend human freedom and human variation in acting out freedom. Researchers often lose sight of our need for freedom, and so cannot respect it, and so ignore it. The research is then read and implemented by similarly ignorant people.

Another point is that it seems based on a reductionist view of human beings: the very vocabulary of much research these days with all its computerese jargon - input, output, processing, data, etc. - suggests a concept of the human being as some kind of glorified computer. If people wish to persist in this view, fine. But I for one disagree.

The Achilles' heel of much SLA is that learning goes on inside people's heads, and because we can never know exactly what is going on in someone else's head we can not know exactly what is going on in students' heads while we are teaching them.

Finally, the Achilles' heel of much SLA is the fact that learning is something that goes on inside people's heads, and because we can never know exactly what is going on in someone else's head we can therefore not know exactly what is going on in students' heads while we are teaching them. Are they "processing"? Are they "making sense of blocks of language"? Are they "determining rules"? Are they daydreaming? Are they "learning"? It's impossible to know for sure. Since it's impossible to know exactly what is going on inside people's heads, it's impossible to know if, how or when anyone is learning something.

John Holt again: "The problem with all such research and researchers is that, even with 64-channel helmets, the data is so crude compared to the activity...." (How Children Fail, p 212).

"The difference between fond and delighted parents playing 'This Little Piggy Went to Market' with their laughing baby's toes, and two anxious home-based would-be clinicians giving 'tactile stimulation' to those same toes, so that the child will one day be smarter than other children and thus get into the best colleges, may not on the face of it seem to be very much. But in fact it is the difference between night and day." (How Children Learn, p 21).

"Opportunistic" Organizational Strategies in EFL

How to profit from programmatic
"split" — and further commentary on
ESP and streaming.

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English language instructors in Japanese universities often must deliver their programs with little or no knowledge of program goals, and without a unified curriculum. I propose this state of affairs is a result of decentralisation of university English language programs and that by analyzing this management structure through Pascale's organisational model (1991) we can find avenues to resolving instructors' concerns.

Pascale describes decentralised organisations such as English language programs in Japan, as having achieved "split." Characteristics of split are autonomy versus dependency, individualistic versus collegial staff relations, opportunistic versus planned strategy, discretionary versus mandatory systems, transformational versus managerial style and pluralist versus elitist structure (Kennedy and Edwards, 1996, p.68). Most English language faculty members in Japan would agree that these split characteristics describe and define their professional environments. Administrative efficiency has obviously motivated Japanese universities to allow this situation. While there are some clear benefits for all parties concerned, the fact that there is little course continuity or overall plan for the English language programs clearly perturbs many language professionals in Japan.

Pascale's Management Model

Pascale defines organisations as having "fit"

when all parts of the organisation run smoothly together. When fit succeeds, it is satisfying, with all parts of the organisation and people in it working for a common aim and all departments carrying out responsibilities in line with objectives (Kennedy and Edwards, p. 65-6).

Highly centralised organisations are concerned with achieving fit in the name of efficiency; however, it is often difficult to achieve in large organisations. Having a high degree of fit requires that the aims and goals of the organisation be defined. English language programs in Japanese universities have a high degree of fit in relation to the overall aims and goals of Japanese universities. Moreover, foreign language instructors on Japanese campuses are concrete and visible entities, serving to promote goals of internationalisation, models of cultural and language authenticity for students. Foreign language staff are an important feature in the marketing of both public and private university programs and courses to new students. Foreign language experts also assist Japanese universities, in part, with building and maintaining global linkages for research networking, student exchanges, and staying up to date in international academia, business and politics.

While most English language staff in Japanese universities will acknowledge a high degree of fit in relation to the above aims, actual language classes and programs that foreign language experts are in charge of operate within a totally different organisational context. Kolf (1996, p.37) notes that this system evolved in both universities and language schools in Japan and describes it as the short course or "smorgasbord instruction." Each short course is "individually owned" by the teacher since the teaching staff individually have absolute discretion as to syllabus, text, method and type of testing for each class. Pascale describes this organisational situation as a high degree of split.

"Split" or "fit" are neither positive or negative in themselves. It is the "tension" or "contention" that can develop when aspects within the organisation do not mesh that can create a positive or negative feeling. Pascale's third organisational element "contention" (p. 67) has a stronger likelihood of occurring within decentralised organisations such as English language programs. Contention arises because the staff feel there are no clear overall goals to the program nor any real organisational agency / person available to help resolve this feeling. Since clear aims and goals belong to the fit area of organisational management, but English language programs operate within a split environment, contention or tension arises. A split environment, on the other hand, is successful when its strategy is "opportunistic" rather than planned. Clearly many language professionals are uncomfortable with opportunistic strategy and look back wistfully to organisational and curriculum models which are similar to the planned strategies such as EAP, ESP programs and the Intensive English language programs in Western institutions.

Kennedy and Edwards prefer to use the word "tension" in order to keep in mind that the contention that arises is creative rather than destructive. This tension can be a "source of innovation and change" (p. 67).

Planned v. Opportunistic Strategies
As stated, the prevailing reason why "split" has occurred is that it is administratively more efficient to operate language programs as decentralised departments. Several facts govern this practical management / organisational route for Japanese universities. First is the fact that foreign staff often can not communicate well enough in Japanese to participate in staff meetings. Second, contracts are either very short (1-3 years) and / or many foreign language experts often do not elect to stay for longer periods, even if they do have the opportunity to do so. Third,

coordinators of English Language programs are seldom appointed; reasons for this could be economic, or there could be concern that the professional integrity of the staff would be challenged. If there are coordinators, they often rotate on an annual basis and they see themselves not as innovators but as maintainers of the system. All these factors make it difficult for planned strategy to take place. As a result, the overall strategy of English language programming becomes opportunistic in all its glorious and not glorious manifestations.

Because of this opportunistic organisational strategy, Kolf observes that the "core" faculty have an ambivalence about what the English department is and what it should teach. Some professors are qualified to lecture in literature, some in linguistics. To some, the English class is not so much a chance to use English, as to look at aspects of foreign culture. Staff members with backgrounds in TEFL per se are sometimes a clear minority. In consequence, it seems sensible to the teachers to let each one do what he or she is best at (Kolf, 1996, p.37).

Tension results from teachers imposing curriculum notions.

Kolf expresses doubts felt by foreign teachers: (1) whether students might benefit from more continuity (clearer overall goals), and (2) whether students really get to choose what they feel they might need within the short course curriculum. Given that there are no particularly useful guidelines for foreign staff on which to base the courses, except very general course names such as English Expression, English Conversation, Spoken English, English A, English B and so on, teachers and, in particular, new teachers must base their courses on whatever information they can glean from ad hoc meetings with fellow staff, and by relying on textbooks.

If one applies Pascale's management organisational model, however, one can see that teachers' feelings of contention or tension result from teachers imposing curriculum notions that better suit programs that are managed as strongly centralised organisations. EAP, ESP programs and English Language Intensives for second-language learners in North America, Britain, Australia and New Zealand are examples of these types of programs in that they respond to clearly defined goals and aims of both students and universities. Foreign language programs in Western universities are viewed as possible models on which to develop the English language programs in Japan too, but these models cannot adequately respond to the needs and situations of Japanese students, nor the teaching environment.

English language programs in Japan develop in an "opportunistic" way. Though the word opportunistic is fraught with negative connotations, there are some very positive aspects, as well. Kolf calls this sort of opportunism "a teacher friendly, short course curriculum" (p. 37). In this environment, the teaching staff have many opportunities to develop original course materials, to use various methods, and to choose ways of testing and classroom management which suit teachers' personal and professional inclinations. I feel that this sort of environment helps prevent teacher burn-out and provide an ideal environment for professionals to implement new pedagogical ideas. The prevailing feeling, too, is that most language professionals treasure this autonomy and would not easily relinquish it.

Possibilities of Resolution

Avenues for resolving tension can be found at the points where fit and split overlap. There are certain aspects of almost any language program that are planned (a "fit" attribute) by the administration or faculty. Some of these include a) number of courses that must be taught; b) length of each class; c)

total number of students to be taught; d) schedule; and e) the barest of outlines as to what the content of these courses will be.

Core faculty, however, often have autonomy (a "split" attribute) to decide how to apportion both the classes and students. Teaching timetables are also negotiable. It is here that the most collegiality (a "fit" attribute) among both foreign and domestic staff takes place on an annual basis and I propose it is at these points that creative innovation can take place.

Some Suggestions

The following suggestions cannot pretend to answer needs for every institution, but the main point is that innovative change can occur where there is collegiality and where opportunistic strategies can be applied.

The decision about what course textbooks will be used in classes needs to be decided collectively, in that teachers should notify each other and negotiate with each other concerning possible conflicts. Since many of the text contents are quite similar, all aspects of repetitiveness may not be avoided, but at least students may avoid having to have the same texts for different courses.

By designing first and second year classes (which are often the largest classes) as passive, input-type courses, such as for listening and reading, and by basing third and fourth year classes (often smaller classes) on more active output, such as spoken discourse and writing, there will be less repetition of content and fewer difficulties of trying to make very large classes function as conversation classes.

Streaming is contentious pedagogically and can have adverse psychological affect.

Another suggestion would be to avoid streaming students according to language

level. This procedure is contentious pedagogically for a number of reasons. First, it leaves students with no choices either among the kinds of classes they might want nor choices with whom they might like to study with (either fellow students or lecturers/professors). Secondly, streaming can have an adverse psychological affect which dampens both teachers' and students' expectations and efforts.

Thirdly, many EFL university students have already experienced 'streaming' during their high school English studies. This is especially true of Japanese students. Streaming is an appropriate procedure for ESL language programs in the English-speaking world, where the students might be entering English language programs needing to learn a new script or be entering at roughly the same skills level or requiring EAP programs. However, by the time Japanese students arrive at university, surely, they should be making study choices that address what they might feel is of interest and of use to them.

Fourthly, streaming is highly questionable in EFL programs which purport to have a communicative curriculum. According to Savignon, the cornerstone to communicative curriculums is to learn how to negotiate meanings (cited in Harris). Classes which have students who have a broad spectrum of abilities provide all students regardless of their level with a perfect environment in which to practice learning how to negotiate meanings.

Decentralized structures in Japanese universities can provide a unique milieu for opportunistic strategies.

Since most staff members have to teach between 6-8 classes a week, if staff members teach two or three sections of the same course, (and hence have to prepare for only

2-4 courses) preparation for class would be reduced. Staff, then, will have more time to cultivate greater specialization and expertise for their courses. Students will actually have a limited number of courses to choose from, but their choices will less likely result in their being submitted to repetitive subject matter or the same lecturer/professor year after year.

While EAP / ESP programs or extended curriculums suit the needs of students and the organizational structures of many universities both inside Japan and abroad, they are not appropriate to many programs in Japan. The short course curriculum can be a reasonable solution to curriculum planning if students have real choices among the short courses offered and if the possibilities of repetitiveness are reduced. Further, the decentralized organizational structure of these language programs in Japanese universities can provide teachers a unique milieu in which opportunistic strategies for language teaching can be optimized. By creating a situation in which teachers can refine their courses into unique offerings and by giving students limited but real choices among the various classes and their respective sections from which to choose most of the problems of repetitiveness, language skill omissions and lack of choice can be minimized.

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