

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: CURRICULUM REFORM AS A REFLECTION OF TRADITION AND CHANGE: JAPANESE TEACHERS APPROACHES TO DIMENSIONS OF DIFFERENCE VIA THE INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

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In the midst of significant social and global change, Japan has embarked upon its most significant education reform since the immediate post-WWII period. In 2002, MEXT enacted the integrated curriculum (*sogoteki na gakushu*), a decentralization effort intended to empower teachers and schools with the autonomy to create and implement curriculum of their own choosing.

The purpose of multi-site case study is to discover if and how Japanese teachers are utilizing the autonomy provided by the integrated curriculum to provide students opportunities to interact with dimensions of difference based on Japan's changing cultural landscape and global role.

This multi-site case study is based on seventeen months of field work in Japan, at which time I analyzed government and school documents; interviewed teachers, administrators, scholars, and leaders of NPO/NGOs; and observed integrated curriculum activities in 60 public schools. Based on this data, I uncovered three approaches to the integrated curriculum that confront students with dimensions of difference: 1) the human rights education approach; 2) the cultural co-existence approach; and 3) the international understanding education approach. In the context of the human rights approach, teachers implemented curriculum to help students: 1) develop self-esteem; 2) contend with issues

of bullying and social exclusion; 3) and learn about the rights of minorities, the disabled, and the homeless. Schools in ethnically diverse communities implement a cultural co-existence approach to the integrated curriculum, engaging students in the exploration of human migration and the growing ethnic diversity of their communities. In the international understanding approach, teachers help students explore foreign cultural influences on Japanese culture; the nation's relationship with its Asian neighbors; and the role of the Japanese Government and NPO/NGOs in overseas development and volunteerism.

While these approaches to the integrated curriculum were by no means universal, the findings of this study confirmed that many schools in diverse urban areas did implement at least one of these three approaches.

Curriculum Reform as a Reflection of Tradition and Change:
Japanese Teachers Approaches to Dimensions of Difference via the Integrated
Curriculum

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Japanese society is confronting unprecedented educational challenges¹ with significant implications for the nation's cultural traditions and global role. Many Japanese students are lashing out violently against the school system in ways heretofore un-imagined, or refusing to attend altogether.² Corporate leaders complain that new recruits are *shiji machi ningen*,³ lack incentive and motivation, and are unable to state their opinions or form judgments. Under pressures of globalization, Japanese teachers struggle to maintain alliances among family, region, and nation, while preparing students to work and live in a multi-cultural world.⁴

The population continues to age,⁵ stressing the employment and social security system.⁶ An influx of foreign workers⁷ is forcing Japan to re-consider its self-declared cultural homogeneity, and in turn, the way that it is preparing its youth for global

¹ For details see: The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). 2001. *Education Reform in the 21st Century* (Tokyo: MEXT).

² Non attendance (*futoukou*), acts of violence in school (*konai bouryoku*), classroom breakdown (*gakkyu houkai*), and the *ijime*(bullying) are well -known and have been discussed and analyzed for decades in educational scholarship and the popular press. For more information see MEXT (2001).

³ Literally, a person who waits for instruction.

⁴ Simon Marginson, "After Globalization, Emerging Politics of Education," *Journal of Education Policy* 14.1: (1999) 19-35.

⁵ In 2003, the percentage of Japanese citizens over the age of 60 approached 20% while the number of children under 14 dipped to about 16%. Japan's current birth rate stands at 1.29. Statistics from the Japan Information Network, <http://www.jnn.com>

⁶ According to some predictions, the labor shortage will reach ten million workers in the next two decades. Moreover, the index of ageing reveals that currently, for every citizen aged 65 or older, there are 4.8 persons in the labor force. By 2050, this number will decrease to 1.7, placing additional economic burden on the working generation to pay for the social security of the nations' elderly. For further information, see: Yeong Hae Jung. "Can Japan Become A Society Attractive to Immigrants?" *International Journal of Japanese Sociology* 13 (2004): 53-68.

⁷ In 2002, the Japanese Department of Justice reported that the population of registered foreigners in Japan was 1,850,000, about 1.45% of the general population. This is a 44.5% increase over the past ten years. This increase is due in large part to changes in the Immigration and Refugee Act instituted in 1990 that provided preferential status to foreign nationals of Japanese descent to enter Japan to live and work. Brazilians of Japanese descent took advantage of this opportunity and now constitute the third largest minority in Japan at 275,000. Ministry of Justice Homepage: <http://www.moj.go.jp/ENGLISH/preface.html>.

citizenship. The presence of foreign children⁸ in Japanese public schools creates tension with traditional modes of teaching and learning that have well served the Japanese population but seem ill-equipped to handle the large influx of non-Japanese children. Globally, the international community (particularly the United States) is pressuring Japan to share a greater burden in multi-national peace-keeping operations to help ‘fight the war on terror.’⁹ At the same time, China and Korea are weary of Japan’s perceived attempt to re-militarize as evidenced by anti-Japanese protests in China during the Spring of 2005. Finally, Japan’s Overseas Development Aid (ODA) is second only to the United States, a position that garners significant international clout.¹⁰ However, Japan’s attempts to capitalize on its international position, such as its bid for a spot as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, have been met with rejection.

Japan is at present a nation struggling to redefine itself amidst historic change and uncertainty. As John Nathon states,¹¹ Japan is experiencing yet another identity crisis more profound than anything that has preceded it. The nation is confronting the forces of globalization and seems ill-equipped to handle the consequences of a diversifying society, and its growing responsibilities as a global leader.

In times of public uncertainty, the Japanese public and politicians alike have historically called upon the education system to counter disrupting trends. According to

⁸ According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as of 1997, there were 76,260 foreign children attending Japanese public schools. http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/human/econo_rep2/article13.html. In 2000, MEXT reported that 19, 250 students required supplemental Japanese language instruction. For further information, see: MEXT “Nihongo Shidou ga Hitsuyou na Gaikokujin Jidou Seito no Ukeire Jugyuu ni Kansuru Chousa [Research on Japanese Language Classes for Foreign Students]” (2002). http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/14/02/020214.htm.

⁹ The Japanese Self-defense Forces are currently serving in Iraq in a non-combat role, while the Japanese Diet debates whether to repeal Article 9 of the constitution, the non-aggression act.

¹⁰ According to the OECD, Japan’s ODA for 2004 was 8,859 million US dollars, second only to that of the United States in total dollars.

¹¹ John Nathon, *Japan Unbound* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2004).

Christopher Hood, “It may be the case that Japan used education more than many other countries to help form suitable characteristics in its people.”¹² This overt attempt to socialize children through schooling is embedded in the curriculum in moral education lessons, and in the role of *shudan seikatsu* or group life, a concept that guides early childhood education in Japan.¹³ Hence, the expectation that children will learn to function benevolently in a complex modern society through lessons imparted at school means that teachers are held responsible for solving local problems such as youth violence, and global problems such as rescuing the national economy from its stagnation. For all of these reasons, Japan provides an optimal case to examine the tensions between national and global educational aims.

Burbules and Torres describe this tension as a conflicting and dialectic situation in which cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity interact through the ‘glocal.’ Globalization is a process by which global and local forces compete for dominance in the national narrative, with neither prevailing.¹⁴ This ‘glocal’ mix of local affiliations and global skills finds expression in education policy and practice. While nations utilize education in an attempt to compete in the global marketplace of technology, goods, and ideas, they also struggle to maintain cultural traditions and social cohesion.

This multi-site qualitative study explores the implementation of a curriculum reform in Japan called the *sogoteki na gakushu*, or the integrated curriculum. Unlike traditional Japanese approaches to education reform that have reflected a certain

¹² Christopher Hood, *Japanese Education Reform: Nakasone's Legacy* (London: Sheffield Centre for Japan Studies: Routledge Series, 2001).

¹³ See: Catherine Lewis, *Educating Hearts and Minds: Reflections on Japanese Pre-school and Elementary Education* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹⁴ Nicholas C. Burbules and Carlos Alberto Torres, “Globalization and Education: An Introduction,” in *Globalization and Education: Critical Perspectives* eds. Nicholas Burbules and Carlos Alberto Torres (London: Routledge, 2000).

uniformity of curriculum and instruction, the provisions of the integrated curriculum transfer substantial authority to individual school sites and the discretion of school site-based administrators and teachers, decentralizing the educational decision-making process.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the ways in which Japanese teachers create and implement the integrated curriculum in classrooms. It makes manifest the ways in which Japanese teachers use the autonomy provided via the integrated curriculum to engage students in the exploration of “dimensions of difference” as they learn to live in a multicultural nation and assume world leadership.

I use the phrase “dimensions of difference” to capture the ways in which teachers use the integrated curriculum to engage students in considerations of human difference in all its forms. Japanese society has prided itself on an inclusive form of groupism in which bonds built on personal and professional/institutional affiliations are strong and enduring. Japanese schooling reflects this approach to group socialization by maintaining student solidarity through institutional structures such as homerooms and after-school clubs. While this form of social organization helps students develop strong personal relationships with peers, it can also exclude others who are considered different in some way. As Finkelstein points out, Japanese concepts of community and harmony can lead to educational practices that exclude and discriminate.¹⁵

This tendency to ‘fit in’ socially has resulted in a tendency for children to conceal their differences. For example, Japanese families are reluctant to relocate for fear that

¹⁵ Barbara Finkelstein, “Educating Strangers,” In *Patterns of Value Socialization in US Primary Schools-A Comparative Study* (Osaka: Osaka Daigaku Ningen Kagakubu [Osaka University Human Sciences Department], 1997).

their children will be excluded from social groups in school; Japanese returnees¹⁶ have hidden the fact that they speak English from their peers by displaying a strong Japanese accent when called upon to read aloud in English class; Korean students have used Japanese names in schools to hide their ethnic differences from their peers and teachers; and *Burakumin*¹⁷ students are known to get off the bus at a different stop to hide the fact that they live in a *Buraku* area. Learning differences as well, while recognized by teachers in the classroom, have not been compensated for in the education system. Rather, shortcomings in educational achievement are socially constructed as a lack of effort on the part of students and their parents. In a real sense, one could easily reach the conclusion that difference is not acceptable in Japanese society as the Japanese proverb *deru kui wa utareru* (the nail that sticks up gets hammered down) strongly conveys.

This pattern of social exclusivity has begun to show signs of change. The recent influx of foreign students who are physically and culturally distinct from the Japanese has elevated the recognition of difference in schools and society. The myth of the homogeneous island nation is being unveiled. Tsuneyoshi epitomizes the challenge of Japanese schools as an “attempt to overcome the limits of the traditional model of community, one that may provide stability, a sense of belonging and mutual support to its majority members, but may also restrict individual freedom and diversity of behavior.”¹⁸ This study seeks to discover if and how schools and teachers are unveiling Japanese ‘dimensions of difference’ to overcome the limitations of the traditional model of

¹⁶ These returnee children (*kikokushijo*) have lived overseas for a number of years, often in English speaking countries. Their re-adjustment issues into Japanese schools have been well-documented and analyzed. See references later.

¹⁷ Defined and considered in chapter 2

¹⁸ Ryoko Tsuneyoshi, *The Japanese Model of Schooling: Comparisons with the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

community: to raise awareness, acceptance, and tolerance of difference among Japanese youth.

This study proceeds on the assumption that teachers are agents of tradition and change, and through curriculum and pedagogy, can and do prepare students to confront social and global challenges. Utilizing Popkewitz' construction of the school curriculum as a cultural system through which national and global identities are constructed,¹⁹ this study focuses on the work of teachers in the classroom as they engage their students in the exploration of tradition and change in Japan. In the process, it reveals the dilemmas teachers face as they try to balance local cultural alliances of community and family, while at the same time, prepare students for social change and global leadership.

This study focuses on re-constructions of the Japanese nation in the context of a rapidly changing society. It uses school reform as the institutional mechanism, and the work of teachers as the agents of change, to investigate whether Japan is adapting to its changing international role as well as domestic diversity. The findings of this work will inform education for cultural co-existence (multicultural education) practice in Japan and elsewhere as educators the world over contend with the growing diversity of their student body and the conflicts inherent in balancing global roles, national solidarity, and ethnic autonomy.

Research Questions

The primary research question is: In what ways do Japanese teachers engage their students in the consideration of the Dimensions of Difference via the integrated

¹⁹ Thomas S. Popkewitz, "Reform as the Social Administration of the Child: Globalization of Knowledge and Power," in *Globalization and Education: Critical Perspectives*, eds. Nicholas Burbules and Carlos Alberto Torres (London: Routledge, 2000).

curriculum? Secondary questions include: How and why did these approaches emerge? What activities, if any, do educators implement to help students discover issues of discrimination and injustice in society? How do educators help students develop self-esteem and respect for others? How do educators open the hearts of students to the community, nation, and world? What types of educational opportunities do teachers provide for students to develop an awareness of social change and diversification within their own nation? How, if at all, do Japanese teachers engage their students in learning events that help them develop concepts of tolerance and cultural co-existence? What types of activities are being implemented in the integrated curriculum to help students learn about the world without developing bias or prejudice? What concepts of citizenship do Japanese educators hope to nurture through the integrated curriculum? What world leadership role do they envision for Japanese citizens and how does it manifest itself in the integrated curriculum? In what ways do Japanese teachers engage students in the discovery of Japan's global role and responsibility?

This multi-site case study focuses on the work of teachers in classrooms in the context of a specific curricular structure, the integrated curriculum. Based on my analysis of site observations, interviews, and documents, I identify three approaches to the integrated curriculum that Japanese educators have implemented to help students consider the dimensions of difference: 1) the human rights education approach; 2) the cultural co-existence²⁰ education approach; and 3) the international understanding education approach. While this study by no means capture all the approaches to the

²⁰ Cultural co-existence (*tabunka kyosei*) is the term used in Japan to describe the ethnic diversification in Japanese communities and schools. In English, the term multicultural education best describes this approach.

integrated curriculum,²¹ these three approaches epitomize the ways in which Japanese teachers help their students struggle with dimensions of difference amidst national and global change, the primary focus of this study. Furthermore, as we shall see throughout the course of this study, these three approaches are well-grounded in traditions of teacher practice in Japan, evolving as Japanese teachers reacted to both local and global pressures through time.

Human rights education in Japan emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, the result of the struggles of educators in the greater Kansai area to help minority children achieve in school, and rid Japanese society of bias and prejudice against the *Burakumin*²² and permanent resident Koreans in Japan (*Zainichi Kankoku/Chosen Jin*).²³ The National Dowa Educators Association (*Zenkoku Dowa Kyouiku Kenkyu Kyogi Kai: Zendokyo*) formed in the 1950s and remains active in the pursuit of equality of opportunity for all children who attend Japanese schools. The City of Osaka is now at the forefront of human rights advocacy and education in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Interest in education for cultural co-existence (*tabunka kyousei*) among Japanese scholars and educators evolved in reaction to the increasing numbers of foreign children

²¹ One prevalent approach to the integrated curriculum that I will not cover given the focus of this study is the community-based approach (*chiiki gakushu*), which focuses on traditional Japanese culture through community outreach. This approach opens the doors of the school to the local community as students explore neighborhood facilities, commercial and residential distinctions, transportation systems, and the environment. Students meet the people of their community, and learn about the work that they do and the problems that they encounter. Other integrated curriculum activities in the community-based approach that I observed in the course of my fieldwork in Japan focus on the work of traditional Japanese artisans and efforts to preserve their art forms; ancient Japanese history revealed in the physical environment through the examination of artifacts, museums, and historical sites; and local environmental issues.

²² The *Burakumin* are a status minority in Japan created through political decree in the Edo Period (around 1700) to work in lower status occupations. For more information on the *Buraku* issue (in English) see; Buraku Liberation Research Institute, *Dowa Education: Educational Challenge Toward a Discrimination-free Japan* (Osaka: 1995); and Juichi Sugino-hara, *Today's Buraku Problem: Feudalistic Discrimination in Japan* (Kyoto: The Institute of Buraku Problem, 2002).

²³ Koreans constitute the largest non-Japanese minority in Japan. For more information, see Sonia Ryang *Koreans in Japan: Critical Voices from the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 2000); and Sonia Ryang, *North Koreans in Japan: Language, Ideology and Identity* (Boulder, CO: Westfield Press, 1997).

attending Japanese schools. The first ‘systemic’ attempt to consider the implications of multicultural education in Japan came about in 1981 with the formation of The Intercultural Education Society of Japan (IESJ) (*Ibunkakan Kyouiku Gakkai*).²⁴

International Understanding Education emerged after WWII as Japan sought to re-establish its reputation in the international community of nations. The Japanese Fundamental Law of Education (1947) stressed the importance of international exchange and cooperation. The reports of the Central Council for Education (CCE) throughout the post-war period have focused on the importance of international understanding, cooperation, and exchange.²⁵

These three approaches to the implementation of the integrated curriculum make manifest the ways in which Japanese teachers intersect students with locality, nation and world. These approaches encompass the diversity of ways in which teachers use the integrated curriculum to engage students in what it means to be Japanese. For example, the Human Rights education approach focuses on hierarchies of difference within Japanese society. In this approach, teachers focus students’ attention on the issue of bullying in Japanese schools, framing it as a human rights violation. In addition, teachers implement content that brings issues of discrimination against the *Burakumin* to the fore through life studies classes (*inouchi no kyouiku*) designed to help *Buraku* students improve their self-esteem. This approach also explores other social issues in Japanese society such as homelessness and disability

²⁴ The IESJ began its work with sixty-four members in 1981—as of 1997, there were 911 members. IESJ’s journal, “Intercultural/Transcultural Education” began publication in 1987 and continues to print two issues annually. See Kazuhiro Ebuchi, “Ibunkakan Kyouiku to Wa [What is Multicultural Education?],” in *Ibunkakan Kyouiku Kenkyuu Nyumon [Introduction to Research in Multicultural Education]* ed. Kazuhiro Ebuchi (Tokyo: Tamagawa Daigaku Shuppan Bu, 1997).

²⁵ See: Gunei Sato, “Nihon no Kyouiku to Kokusaika [Japanese Education and Internationalization]” in *Kokusaika to Kyouiku [Internationalization and Education]*, ed. Gunei Sato (Tokyo: Housou Daigaku Kyouiku Shinko Kai, 1999).

The cross-cultural co-existence approach focuses on the ethnic and cultural diversification of Japanese communities. It adds complexity to locality by adding a foreign dimension. Learning events in this approach consider the growing ethnic and cultural diversity within Japan, particularly in communities with Korean, Indochinese, and Brazilian populations. Teachers implement content that engages students in the consideration of the ethnic and cultural diversity of their own communities, and also helps students with ethnic roots²⁶ discover their cultural heritage.

The international understanding education approach leads students beyond local and national realities to explore Japan's relationship with the rest of the world. Students discover the ways in which Japanese governmental and non-governmental organizations volunteer in developing countries to promote sustainable development. Through information technology, interaction, dialogue, and debate, students explore foreign influences on Japanese culture and international political issues. They also interact with foreigners living in Japan, and work on their English language conversational skills, a perceived necessity in a globalizing world.

These three approaches to the integrated curriculum serve as the analytical framework for this study. They reveal how teachers use the integrated curriculum, knowingly or otherwise, to bring aspects of the local and the global into the learning process. These approaches uncover the content that teachers deem important for students to understand as they confront the challenges that globalization presents. In addition, these approaches answer the question 'why' the integrated curriculum has evolved into its

²⁶ Japanese educators use the term 'ethnic roots' to refer to children who were born in Japan but have at least one foreign-born parent

current form, as expressions of teaching traditions that have evolved over time and have found contemporary expression in the context of the integrated curriculum.

While these three approaches reflect what I call Japanese approaches to dimensions of differences brought about as a result of global forces such as human rights awareness, increased immigration, and Japan's changing global role, it should be clear that Japanese education stakeholders use the term 'internationalization' (*kokusaika*) rather than globalization to refer to these issues. In the context of the internationalization, Japanese policymakers discuss the education of Japanese returnee students, international students in Japanese universities, and foreign children attending Japanese schools. Japanese policymakers have not traditionally discussed the *Burakumin* or the Korean issue, or the rights of the disabled and the elderly, in the context of internationalization. However, with the recent influx of foreigners into Japan, policymakers now discuss the Korean issue, for example, in the context of cultural co-existence and internationalization, further blurring the lines between what is defined as human rights, cultural co-existence, and internationalization. In other words, the changing social context in Japan has forced new definitions of human rights, cultural co-existence, and internationalization, and new applications of these ideas in Japanese classrooms.

In addition, the approaches by which I have organized this study are not mutually exclusive. For example, while I use the term '*tabunka kyosei*' (cultural co-existence) to refer to education approaches based on cultural co-existence between the Japanese and the growing foreign population, Japanese policymakers often use the term '*kyosei*' or co-existence, in discussions about the *Burakumin*, Koreans in Japan, the elderly and the disabled. Also, policymakers often use the term '*tabunka kyosei*' in their discussions of

internationalization because, rightly or wrongly, they construct the increase in the foreign student population as an issue of internationalization, not globalization.

Therefore, it should be clear that the organization of this study is based on my construction of globalization which is more closely aligned with the ways in which scholars think about globalization: an approach that incorporates human rights, cultural co-existence, and internationalization. It seems to me that the Japanese educators construct globalization as an economic phenomenon rather than a cultural one, and most often refer to the cultural implications of globalization as internationalization.

In order to examine this complicated feature of school reform, it is important to understand the context within which it is being enacted. In the following paragraphs, I explain the nature of the current education reform in Japan, drawing on the documents of various education councils that have called for reform, and explaining the key concepts that define the current reforms, including the integrated curriculum, the focus of this study. I then refer to the scholarship on globalization and education, illustrating the diversity of opinion that exists on how globalization affects national education policy and practice. Finally, I return to the case of Japan, reinforcing the importance of this study in the context of the current educational reforms being enacted.

Education Reform in Japan: The Emergence of Yutori Education and the Integrated Curriculum

Fujita has called the current wave of education reform the ‘third era’ of education reform in Japan.²⁷ Without question, the current reforms are the most comprehensive since the post-WWII period. Throughout this era, education stakeholders in Japan, particularly MEXT and the Japan Teachers Union (JTU), have struggled for the hearts and minds of Japanese youth. While MEXT has forwarded a conservative agenda focused on education for human capital development,²⁸ the JTU has fought for a progressive education agenda to increase teacher autonomy and promote a student-centered approach to teaching and learning.²⁹

In the 1970s, the Japanese Teachers Union (JTU), joined by parents, politicians, the press, and scholars, expressed their growing dissatisfaction with the Japanese education system. As a result of growing affluence and the baby boom, places in higher education did not fulfill demand. In this competitive arena, the importance of entrance examinations grew to epic proportions. The exams became a popular obsession and

²⁷ Hidenori Fujita, “Education Reform and Education Politics in Japan,” *American Sociologist* 31.3 (2000): 42-57. Japan’s first education reform took place with the establishment of the modern education system during the Meiji Period (1868-1912). The Imperial Rescript of Education (1890) established the principles of an education system based on the service of the individual to the state. Three themes are prevalent in the Rescript: 1) Confucian values such as filial piety and loyalty, 2) the role of education as a moral exemplar, 3) and the duty of subjects the nation’s laws. The Rescript dominated the philosophical orientation of Japanese education until the post-war period (1945). Japan’s second education reform occurred in the late 1940s under Allied Occupation. The Fundamental Law of Education (1947) provided the basis for a democratic and egalitarian education system. Demilitarization, decentralization, and democratization were the primary concerns of the SCAP (Supreme Command Allied Personnel) education authorities during the post-WWII reform era.

²⁸ For example, in the 1960s, then Prime Minister Tanaka, proposed specific quotas for engineering students in higher education in an attempt to forward the nation’s economic agenda. For more information, see: Robert Evans, Jr. “The Contribution of Education to Japan’s Economic Growth,” in *Windows on Japanese Education*, Edward Beauchamp, ed. (NY: Greenwood Press, 1991).

²⁹ Nagao provides a good overview of the JTU’s struggle for a progressive approach to teaching and learning in Akio Nagao, *Sogoteki Gakushu toshiteno Jinken Kyouiku: Hajimete Miyou, Jinken Sogo Gakushu [Human Rights Education via the Integrated Curriculum: Lets Start Human Rights Integrated Curriculum]* (Tokyo: Meiji Tosho, 1999).

remain what Thomas Rohlen calls “the dark engine powering the entire Japanese education system.”³⁰ This pressure to achieve took its toll of the nation’s youth, and parents pointed to the education system as the cause of social and psychological problems among the nation’s children.

Over the past three decades, the Central Council for Education (CCE), the nation’s premier deliberative organism on education issues, and other deliberative bodies,³¹ have proposed a series of policy recommendations to relieve some of the stress associated with the education system, and have attained some small victories through the years.³² Below I focus on three of the primary education documents that have forwarded a reform agenda: the 1972 Central Council for Education White Paper; the 1985 White Paper of the National Council for Education Reform (NCER); and the 1996 CCE White Paper.

In 1972, the CCE White Paper comments on such matters as the declining state of students lives and the stiff competition for entry into higher education. The language of the document implies that the nation had lost its connection to nature, and that human relationships have suffered due to the rapid economic growth of the 1960s and 70s.³³

³⁰ Thomas Rohlen, *Japan’s High Schools* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983).

³¹ Since the post-war period, the Central Council for Education (CCE) formed as a deliberative body to discuss important educational issues. In addition, the Prime Minister’s Office adjourns ad hoc councils on occasion for the same purpose. The National Council for Education Reform (NCER) is an example of an ad hoc council. For a detailed explanation of the NCER and its deliberations in the mid-1980s, see Leonard Schoppa, *Education Reform in Japan: A Case of Immobilist Politics* (London and New York: Nissan Institute/Routledge Japanese Studies Series, 1993).

³² MEXT has provided modest policy reform throughout the 1980s and 90s such as decreasing class time for the core curriculum to provide opportunities for additional school-wide activities; the gradual elimination of Saturday classes; reform of the university entrance examination system; and curriculum revisions such as Life Environment Studies (*seikatsuka*), a class that combines science and social studies for elementary school first and second graders.

³³ Central Council for Education, *Reports on Education Reform* (Tokyo: Government of Japan: Ministry of Education, 1972).

In 1985, nearly 15 years after the publication of the 1972 Report, the NCER states: “We find the nation’s system of education in a grave state of desolation, and this has led to the call for education reform, which is the task of this Council.”³⁴ This quote from the document captures the prevailing mood of the NCER concerning the Japanese education system in the mid-1980s.

“over-emphasis on memorization in classroom instruction has prevented children from developing the ability to think and judge independentl, or from developing create power...too many stereotyped people have been produced who have no distinctive individuality...competition for university entrance has intensified, creating various manifestations of the state of desolation in education such as bullying, school violence, juvenile delinquency, and school refusal...In evaluating individuals, too much emphasis is placed on academic background...Due to socio-economic development, the content level of subject areas has increased...As a result, there are some students who cannot keep up with classroom lessons...School programs are operated on the basis of teacher-centered modes of thinking rather than child-centered ones. Further, many schools are closed to parents and the community. Urbanization has caused a decrease in places to play for children, thinning of relations between neighbors, and the sense of community solidarity is weakened.”³⁵

In spite of this rhetoric, the prevailing attitude in the mid-1990s was that the reforms implemented had not accomplished the desired result. Ironically, while the reforms of the 1980s and 90s were implemented to ‘relax’ schooling and provide additional time for independent student exploration, because the volume of information in the core subjects remained unchanged, it actually forced teachers to cover more content in less time.³⁶ As a result, a MEXT³⁷ survey conducted in 2000 revealed that the

³⁴ National Council for Education Reform, *Second Report on Educational Reform* (Tokyo: Prime Minister’s Office, 1986).

³⁵ Ibid. pg 5-8.

³⁶ Shinichi Ichikawa, *Gaku Ryoku Teika Ronso. [The Academic Decline Debate]* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shinsho, 2002).

majority of Japanese students were unable to understand the majority of the content of their lessons.³⁸

In 1996, the CCE White Paper reiterates many of the previous concerns and recommends drastic change including a 30% reduction in the content of the core curriculum, and the implementation of the integrated curriculum, the focus of this study. The CCE also defined two concepts that are the current buzz words in Japanese education reform: *yutori* education (education with room to grow) and *ikiru chikara* (zest for living).

The term *yutori* education (translated roughly as education with room to grow) has circulated within the Japanese education world since the 1970s. In my explorations of Japanese education documents, the first reference to *yutori* education I discovered was in the Course of Study released in 1977 (implemented in 1981).³⁹

In the late 1980's, the term gained greater prominence as criticisms of the examination system grew and politicians and educators searched for ways to make Japanese education more responsive to the individual needs of students. The MEXT Course of Study released in 1989 (implemented in 1992) recommended *yutori* education that values the individual.

³⁷ MEXT refers to the Japanese Ministry of Education, Sports, Culture, Science and Technology. Before 2000, the Ministry was known in Japanese as *Monbusho* and often abbreviated in English as MOE (Ministry of Education). The name change occurred during restructuring when the Ministries of Education, Sports and Culture and Science and Technology were merged into the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture. Japanese now refer to the Ministry as the *Monbukagakusho* (or *Monkasho* for short) but also use the acronym MEXT for convenience. I will use the term MEXT throughout this study although the reader should know that prior to 2000, MEXT was not used.

³⁸ MEXT data indicate that 30% of upper elementary, 50% of junior high, and 70% of high schools students claim that they understood less than half of the content of their lessons (*hotondo wakaranai*). One purpose of *yutori* education was to make learning that was 'easy to understand' from the students' perspective. See: MEXT (2001).

³⁹ MEXT reforms the Course of Study about every ten years based on the recommendations of the Central Council for Education and other deliberative bodies.

The 1996 CCE Report provides the most extensive definition of *yutori* education: “to have psychological and physical space; to reflect and think about things; to be able to participate in and experience a variety of activities.”⁴⁰ The Council suggests *yutori* education in the whole society including home and community so that children can observe themselves, think for themselves, and have a variety of experiences in daily life at schools, with their families, and in their communities.

The definition of *ikiru chikara* (zest for living) implies the qualities and abilities to solve problems for oneself even in situations encountered for the first time; the ability to think independently; a spirit moved by nature and beautiful things; a mind for justice and fairness; respect for human rights; the ability to sympathize with and think from another person’s point of view; learning for self-realization along with demands to meet the needs of a changing society; stress on the irreplaceable nature of individuality, personal and creative growth of each individual child; a spirit of self-reliance; individual responsibility; co-existence with others and; tolerance towards differences.⁴¹

The term *ikiru chikara* captures the essence of this curriculum reform based on a new vision of the desirable Japanese child. Self-initiative is stressed. Independent thinking and problem solving are central to this new vision. The use of the terms self-reliance and individual responsibility reflects a neo-conservative view of government in which citizens can no longer rely on the beneficence of government for their well-being. The use of phrases such as co-existence with others and tolerance towards difference, reflects a recognition of a changing society in which differences are becoming common rather than the exception. Taken in total, the definition of *ikiru chikara* reflects the

⁴⁰ Central Council for Education, *The Model for Japanese Education in the Perspective of the 21st Century: First Report* (Tokyo: MEXT, 1996)

⁴¹ Ibid.

purpose of *yutori* education and the integrated curriculum: to nurture a new concept of citizenship in which people are expected to be self-motivated and tolerant, able to co-exist in diverse public spaces with others who may not share their cultural heritage. As stated earlier, the purpose of this study is to discover if and how Japanese educators are attempting to employ the integrated curriculum to nurture this new vision of the desirable child, specifically in the context of co-existence with others and tolerance towards difference.

In April 2002, MEXT implemented the new Course of Study. With this document, MEXT implemented many of the recommendations of the 1996 CCE White Paper such as a five-day school week, a 30% reduction in the content of the core subjects, and the integrated curriculum.

The Integrated Curriculum

MEXT defines the integrated curriculum as environmental and social experience based on observation, experimentation, research, problem-solving, and real-life learning. The purposes of the integrated curriculum are stated as: 1) foster student's ability to find a theme, think, judge, and solve a problem on their own; and 2) nurture in students the ability to discover their own way of learning and thinking, and an attitude to discover topics with creativity and individualism.⁴² To accommodate this reform initiative, MEXT has provided schools 3 hours per week for the local, school-site cultivation of the integrated curriculum.⁴³ With the goal of cultivating *ikiru chikara* (a zest for living)

⁴² MEXT (2001).

⁴³ 110 hours per year at the 6th grade level. By comparison, science and social studies for the same school year receive 95 hours.

among students, individual schools generate integrated curriculum plans together with instructional policies and pedagogic practices.

MEXT issued broad guidelines to schools, recommending that they might implement activities that focus on one of five areas: 1) environmentalism, 2) volunteerism; 3) information technology; 4) health and welfare; and 5) international understanding education. The Course of Study suggests that students might experience the manufacturing process of goods, interact with people of different ages such as the elderly, and study English as well as interact with foreign cultures as part of international understanding education.⁴⁴

MEXT encouraged schools to seek the cooperation of social education-related organizations to expand and improve experiential activities including volunteerism and other social service learning activities. In addition, MEXT urged schools to make the integrated study periods related to classroom knowledge: in other words, activities should complement the content of textbooks.

MEXT also recommended that schools offer educational activities that emphasize the special characteristics of the communities in which they are located. To facilitate this type of community interaction, MEXT altered legislation to promote the use of outside expertise in the classroom. Under this provision, local experts with professional knowledge and skills can work in schools as part-time instructors without professional teaching certifications. As of 2000, 11,607 part-time teachers have visited schools throughout the nation to share their unique knowledge with students.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ MEXT, *Gakushuu Shodou Youryou: Shou Gakkou [The Course of Study: Elementary School]* (Tokyo: Ministry of Finance Publishing Office, 1998).

⁴⁵ MEXT (2001).

It should be clear that the implementation of *yutori* education and all that it entails, including the integrated curriculum, is contested intellectual terrain. Immediately after the new Course of Study was released in December 1998 (to be implemented in April 2002), reactions from scholars, the press, and parents have been unending and increasingly negative. Some scholars complain that the decreased curriculum will further exacerbate the academic decline of Japanese students as measured by international assessments;⁴⁶ others contend that Japan will lose its competitive edge in the global arena of international trade and commerce, a position obtained through the development of human resources via education;⁴⁷ others argue from a social class perspective, claiming that the decrease of the curriculum will further disadvantage the underclass as they compete for positions in higher education still determined by the entrance examination system.⁴⁸ Parents complain that public schools are not providing the knowledge base their children need to compete for positions in Japan's universities and many are opting out, enrolling their children in private schools.

On the other hand, another group of scholar and educators share the view that *yutori* education is necessary for students to move beyond basic academic skills: to acquire new academic competencies required to the 21st Century, including computer and

⁴⁶ The results of the 2003 Organization of Economic Co-operation Development (OECD) International Test of fifteen year-olds revealed that Japanese students have faltered on international assessments; falling from the first position to the sixth position on the applied math section of the test, and from eight to fourteenth in reading comprehension. See: Lary MacDonald, "Education Reform and Social Change in Japan: The Case of Osaka," *Human Rights in Asian Schools* (8): 79-88.

⁴⁷ The arguments of Fujio Ohmori, a former MEXT bureaucrat, now professor at Kumamoto University, best depict this interpretation of *yutori* education: See Fujio Ohmori. *Yutori Kyouiku Bokoku no Ron [Yutori Education and the Ruin of the Nation]* (Tokyo: PHP Research Center, 2000).

⁴⁸ See: Takehiko Kariya, *Daigaku Juken No Puresha- wa Dou kawatta—Kougai Gakushu Jikan no Chousa [How have Examination Pressures Changed: Research on Out of School Study Time]*. (Asahi Shinbun: January 11,1999).

cultural literacy.⁴⁹ While the debate remains highly charged, the politics of this reform are beyond the scope of this study and are provided here to inform the reader of the highly contested nature of this reform within Japan as the nation grapples with the role of education in the midst of historic change.

The Japanese often refer to education policy and practice in their country as a pendulum (*furiko*) that flows back and forth between conservative and progressive forces. The 2002 Course of Study represents the culmination of over fifty years of debate and discussion concerning the direction of education system policy and practice in Japan, from the immediate post-WWII period to the present. Arguably, the implementation of the integrated curriculum represents the most drastic change in curriculum in sixty years and as such, warrants careful and extensive consideration.

Education reform is an international phenomenon as nations react to the global forces that impinge upon traditional modernist approaches to education policy and practice embedded in national identity and economy. Therefore, it is imperative to consider the current reforms in Japan in the context of larger global trends in education. In order to frame the recent developments in education reform in Japan in a global context, in the following literature review, I examine the scholarship on globalization and education, detailing the various ways in which scholars interpret the relative influence of globalization on national education policy and practice. I then reflect on why Japan provides a unique national case with which to examine the tensions of the global and the local in education policy and practice.

⁴⁹ See (among others): Kikuchi Shimizu, *Gakuryoku Teika: Shiron [Academic Decline: My Argument]*. In *Gakuryoku Teika Hihan: Watashi wa Iitai: Rokunin no Shuchou [Criticism of the Academic Decline: What I Want to Say, The Arguments of Six]* Akio Nagao (ed.) (Tokyo: Advantage Server, 2002).

Globalization and Education (Literature Review)

Scholars who write about the impact of globalization on education policy and practice do so from a variety of perspectives. One group of scholars argues that the current global context severely limits the ability of the nation-state to regulate and control national education.⁵⁰ Other scholars claim that schools may be the only institutional space remaining in which adults (teachers) can nurture students in the national image and maintain cultural traditions and social structures.⁵¹ The following paragraphs explore these opinions and others.

The apparent demise of the nation-state under the power of global forces is a common area of commentary and analysis. Some view the emergence of global economic models propagated by supranational organizations⁵² as a threat to the ability of nation-states to regulate the flow of commerce and finance in and out of their countries.⁵³ On the other hand, some nations perceive the onslaught of global culture through electronic media as the primary threat to national cultural identity, and react by entrenching local cultural norms through media censorship and/or institutional means such as schooling.

Burbules and Torres claim that the global context presents a fundamentally different sort of challenge to education than did the previous modernist framework. In the past, education focused on the needs and development of the individual and the state.

⁵⁰ Meyer et al. (1996) and Dale (1999).

⁵¹ Green (2003) and Popkeiwitz (2000).

⁵² i.e. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund

⁵³ See: Joel Spring, *Education and the Rise of the Global Economy* (New York: State University of New York, 1998) and Stephen Klees, "World Bank Education Policy: New Rhetoric, Old Ideology" *International Journal of Educational Development* 22 (2002): 451-74.

Its aim was to prepare its citizens for local and national economic participation in culturally and linguistically homogeneous communities. Burbules and Torres argue that education in a global age stretches the alliance of community beyond the family, region, and nation. Family, work, and citizenship, the main sources of identification in Enlightenment education, remain important, but they compete with social mobility and other sources of affiliation. Educational aims now have more to do with flexibility and adaptation, learning how to coexist with others in diverse public spaces, and helping to form and support a sense of identity that is viable in multiple contexts of affiliation.⁵⁴

John Meyer et al. argue that the role of the nation-state in determining the goal and purpose of education, has been seriously compromised in the current global context. According to Meyer et al., the institutions of the nation-state are essentially shaped at a supra-national level by a dominant world ideology that promotes Western modernity with an emphasis on historical linear progress. This has resulted in the ‘isomorphism’ or similarity of curricular categories in education systems throughout the world regardless of economic, political, or cultural differences.⁵⁵ As a result, schooling is no longer an instrumental choice of independent societies to meet local needs, but a global imperative.

In addition, national education policies across the globe are increasingly being shaped by international assessments.⁵⁶ The United States has reacted to its dismal performance on these assessments by stressing a back to basics approach that emphasizes reading and math proficiency. In contrast, while Japanese students have retained a high

⁵⁴ Burbules and Torres (2000): 21-22.

⁵⁵ John W. Meyer et al., “World Society and the Nation,” *American Journal of Sociology* 103.1 (1996): 144-68.

⁵⁶ The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA’s TIMMS, 1995), and the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development’s (OECD) PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) (2000 and 2003) are the most comprehensive international assessments to date. For further information on OECD’s PISA assessments see <http://www.pisa.oecd.org> and for details of the IEA’s TIMMS, see <http://www.iea.nl/>

ranking in these assessments, on attitudinal surveys, they were far less likely to say that they like math or science, or had the desire to pursue a career in math or science.⁵⁷

MEXT has interpreted these results as a reflection of Japanese students' lack of motivation. The problem, according to MEXT, is the result of a 'cramming type of teaching' (*tsume komi*) that dominates classroom instruction in Japan. While Japanese students were effective test-takers, they lacked opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills to solve real problems, and hence failed to see the connection between proficiency in math and science and career opportunities.

There is also a growing understanding that the neo-liberal version of globalization is reflected in the education agendas that are realized in particular policies for evaluation, financing, assessment, standards, teacher training, curriculum, instruction, and testing.⁵⁸ However, the neo-liberal version has not gone unchallenged as teacher unions, new social movements, and critical intellectuals have expressed verdant opposition to initiatives such as vouchers or publicly subsidized private and parochial schools, defending public education against the introduction of pure market mechanisms and efficiency models borrowed from the business sector.

Davies and Guppy comment that globalization has produced a sense of cultural dislocation.⁵⁹ All groups, including liberal minority groups acting to protect their cultural heritage, and majority groups attempting to protect a sense of shared national cultural history, feel threatened by the forces of global culture. Schools are the institutional battleground through which a form of identity politics, the so-called 'culture wars', is

⁵⁷ MEXT (2001)

⁵⁸ Roger Dale, "Specifying Globalization's Effects on National Policy: A Focus on Mechanisms," *Journal of Education Policy* 14.1 (1999): 1-17.

⁵⁹ Scott Davies and Neil Guppy, "Globalization and Educational Reforms in Anglo-American Democracies," *Comparative Education Review* 41.4 (1997): 435-59.

being waged. Conservatives in the United States laud a national curriculum to instill ‘cultural literacy’ in students that they fear have lost touch with what it means to be an American. On the other hand, minority groups utilize the universal language of human rights to organize, raise funds, and build vast information networks to challenge education practices of the dominant culture, and promote multicultural education to celebrate their native languages and cultural traditions.⁶⁰

Post-modern scholars are also dubious about the future of national education systems, but for entirely different reasons. These scholars argue that the forces of globalization have pre-empted any attempt to create a common culture through education. Donald claims that a common curriculum, one that incorporates all perspectives within a nation, is futile in the current global context.⁶¹ According to Edwards and Usher, the modernist education project, which aimed to assimilate diverse populations into a unified national culture, is outmoded.⁶² Bhabha furthers this argument, stating that building a common culture through education is a dangerous notion because those who possess the power to exercise meaning will create the construct by which otherness is defined.⁶³

Another group of scholars takes a more nuanced approach to globalization and its influence on national education. Appadurai interprets globalization as flows or ‘scapes’ of finance, technology, information, people, media, and culture among and between nations. These ‘flows’ engender identities which challenge traditional ideas of

⁶⁰ For example, in Canada, Native North American tribes are assuming control of their educational systems; in New Zealand, the nation’s bicultural heritage between native Maori and the English is reflected in new educational provisions; in the United States, African American populations assert their cultural autonomy in the Afro-centric school movement while Hispanic populations demand bilingual education programs. Davies and Guppy (1997): 456-57.

⁶¹ James Donald, *Sentimental Education* (London: Verso, 1992).

⁶² Robin Usher and Richard Edwards, *Postmodernism and Education: Different Voices, Different Worlds* (London: Routledge, 1994).

⁶³ Homi Bhabha, “A Good Judge of Character: Men, Metaphors, and Common Culture,” in *Racing Justice, Engendering Power*, ed. Tony Morrison (New York: Pantheon Books, 1991).

community, nation, and work—identities that are hybrid and elastic, no longer necessarily attached to tradition, culture, creed, or nation.⁶⁴

Scholars in this camp believe that the modalities of globalization are inherently contradictory. From above, globalization is a process that primarily affects the elites within and across national contexts, while globalization from below becomes a popular process that primarily draws from the rank and file in society. Globalization is often viewed as a trend toward homogenization around Western norms and culture, but globalization can also be viewed as an era of contact between diverse cultures leading to an increase in hybridization and novelty. In cultural terms, there is a tension in the way that globalization brings standardization and cultural homogeneity while also bringing more fragmentation and the rise of locally-oriented movements.

These contradictory tensions of globalization are impinging on the teaching profession, placing teachers in a precarious position. While the forces of global markets that stress market-based reforms such as accountability through high-stakes testing push from the top, the institutions of civil society that promote a cultural agenda pressure the education system from below. Teachers must train their students to perform up to academic standard levels determined at the state and/or national level, while at the same time, help students understand the importance of living benevolently and cooperatively in a multicultural society. Teachers are stuck in the middle of competing political agendas, a precarious position in which one or more of the stakeholders are bound to be disappointed with the performance of schools and teachers.

Green et al. argue that the forces of globalization have impinged upon a basic

⁶⁴Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

function of education systems, that is, to create social cohesion among disparate members of a nation. In their words, “Globalization engenders centrifugal forces which can dislocate traditional bonds, fragment societies, and reinforce conflict and division.”⁶⁵

Hallak adds that the weakening of the nation, family, and the world of work as a result of globalization has produced distressed individuals who lack faith in society and the future.⁶⁶ Popkewitz argues that globalization is challenging the collective idea of a nation and citizenry through pressures produced by minority groups and changing migration and demographic patterns within nations.⁶⁷

Coulby and Zambeta⁶⁸ claim that contrary to the prevailing perception that nationalism and globalization are at odds, the state actually promotes both a nationalist and a global agenda through education policy and practice. Globalization and tradition are not necessarily conflicting or mutually exclusive processes. However, they add that education resists change because nationalism persists in school curricular policies.

“Nationalist narratives make claims for a national culture’s distinctiveness, originality, nobility, and supremacy. Dominant discourses of the cultural supremacy of the nation...constitute common features of the school curricula. These nationalist discourses link themselves to racism. Cultural distinctiveness, originality and purity presuppose uncontaminated cultural existence in a protected territory...This cultural authenticity relies on a lack of interference or borrowing from other cultures...and implies a racial purity and cleanliness of a nation’s culture. Thus, ethnocentrism is a prominent characteristic of history teaching that...feeds xenophobia and nationalism.”⁶⁹

Although the state continues its attempt to control schooling through curriculum, it can

⁶⁵ Andy Green, John Preston, and Ricardo Sabates, “Education, Equality and Social Cohesion.” *Compare* 33.4 (2003): 453-70.

⁶⁶ Jacques Hallak, “Viewpoints/Controversies: Educational Policy and Contents in Developing Countries,” *Prospect*, 30.3 (2000): 277-98.

⁶⁷ Popkewitz (2000).

⁶⁸ David Coulby and Evie Zambreta, “Trends in Globalization,” in *World Yearbook of Education 2005: Globalization and Nationalism in Education*. (London & New York: Routledge, 2005).

⁶⁹ *Ibid* 82-83.

no longer limit the flow of cultures, symbols, and meanings in a globalized system. As a result, the school curricula may pale in comparison to the global media of fast food, fashion, and music as influential factors in shaping young people's identities.

As mentioned in the introduction, Popkewitz characterizes the school curriculum as a cultural system through which national and global identities are constructed. The curriculum is thus a form of discourse consisting of text, experience, and dialogue that forms individuals into the seam of the collective narrative.⁷⁰ And because we presume that the collective narrative will transform with time, the curriculum must shape the personality and knowledge of the child to contend with the social and cultural changes that occur. However, Popkewitz reminds us that in order to construct a new national narrative, the old vision of cultural identity must be deconstructed. One must disassociate the self with the old identities of the collective narrative, a process that is wrought with anxiety and resistance. In a sense, "one's home is no longer located where one thought it was,"⁷¹ a disconcerting prospect for many citizens the world over.

While much of the analysis of globalization's effect on education focuses on the contested territory of the national self, implying as the post-modernists do, that the construction of a collective narrative through education policy and practice is no longer tenable, others such as Green, have suggested the possibility that education could be a medium to realize social cohesion in the fragmented post-modern world. In fact, Green strongly suggests that schools are among the few institutions left which can still potentially perform this role.⁷² Thus, curriculum, in the hands of a skilled teacher, can potentially counter global trends, encouraging the local and communal, along with

⁷⁰ Popkewitz (2000)

⁷¹ Wald in Popkewitz (2000) 170.

⁷² Andy Green, *Education, Globalization and the Nation State* (London: MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1997).

international and global identities. Popkewitz concurs, and supports the possibility of curriculum as a hybrid model where global, national, and local images meet.⁷³

The means by which a nation contends with the forces of globalization in the context of education policy and practice vary drastically depending on international economic position and the perceived threat of cultural homogenization. As a result, some nations will utilize education policy to promote cosmopolitan identities in which foreign language and international exchange are emphasized, encouraging travel for language study and multicultural tolerance; while other nations will take an insular approach built upon suspicion and resistance, and revitalize nationalism and citizen loyalty through history teaching.⁷⁴

Japan's position in the global economy and culture provide a unique national setting with which to examine the tensions between globalization and tradition in education. Japan is a major benefactor in the global arena: one among the triadic powers, including the USA and Europe, for which the 'economic' benefits of globalization outweigh the potential disadvantages.⁷⁵ In addition, the global reach of Japanese products and business are unquestioned, assuring the nation's economic influence in growth regions, particularly in Asia where development projects funded by the Japanese government and Japanese multinational corporations are expansive.

However, it also appears that the nation feels apprehensive and/or possibly threatened by the growing forces of 'cultural' globalization within its national borders. As we have seen, as Japan ages and the birth rates declines, the forces of globalization have brought an unprecedented number of foreign workers to Japan in search of

⁷³ Popkewitz (2000).

⁷⁴ Marjinson (1999).

⁷⁵ Coulby and Zambreta (2005).

employment opportunities. These foreigners appear to be challenging Japan's sense of cultural exclusivity and traditional notions of purpose and place. In the context of education, the presence of foreign children in Japan's schools causes friction with traditional modes of teaching and learning that have well-served the nation but seem ill-prepared to accommodate an increasingly diverse student body.

The choice of Japan for a study that considers the effect of globalization on education is also significant in the sense that the recent education reforms in Japan seem to run counter to international trends. While many nations, including the U.S., stress a back to basics approach focusing on math and reading competencies, accountability, and school choice; the current reform in Japan reflects a move towards more autonomy for teachers to create and implement curriculum focusing on progressive educational ideals. Motani⁷⁶ points out that progressive educators/scholars have taken advantage of the integrated curriculum initiative to forward their own particular agendas. For example, Nagao of Osaka University suggests a human rights education-based integrated curriculum;⁷⁷ Sato of Tokyo Gakugei University promotes international understanding education;⁷⁸ while Tanaka of the Development Education Association and Research Centre, encourages schools to incorporate a development education (*kaihatsu kyouiku*) focus to the integrated curriculum.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Yoko Motani, "Hopes and Challenges for Progressive educators in Japan: Assessment of the `Progressive Turn` in the 2002 Education Reform," *Comparative Education*, 41.3 (2005): 309-27.

⁷⁷ Nagao, (1999).

⁷⁸ Gunei Satou & Eiji Hayashi, *Kokusai Rikai Kyouiku no Jugyou Tsukuri: Sogoteki na Gakushuu wo Mezashite [Creating International Understanding Lessons via the Sogoteki Curriculum]* (Tokyo: Kyouiku Shuppan, 1998).

⁷⁹ H. Tanaka, "Sougou Gakushu to Kaihatsu Kyouiku [Integrated Studies and Development Education]," *Kaihatsu Kyouiku* 38.8 (1998): 3-11.

Finally, this study is also significant because it focuses on the work of teachers with students in the classroom as they engage students in learning in the context of the integrated curriculum. While most studies that consider the effects of globalization on education focus on policy and politics, this study concentrates on the ways in which teachers initiate learning that promotes dialogue among and between students and teachers. In the process, teachers, if they so choose, can challenge students to recognize, tolerate, and appreciate difference, and learn to live benevolently in a global society.

Methodology

This qualitative multi-site case study took place over a span of three years and several months, during which time I resided in Japan for seventeen months. The methodology I have utilized consists of classroom observation, interview, and the review of various forms of documentation. During my field work, I had the opportunity to observe integrated curriculum activities in about sixty Japanese public schools at the elementary, junior and senior high school levels; interview forty-five Japanese educators, administrators, MEXT bureaucrats, union leaders, leaders of NPO/NGO organizations, and scholars; and review the commentary and scholarship on education reform in academic journals and the popular press.

For two months in 2003, I conducted research at the MEXT as the Japan-America Society Public Service Policy Fellow. Between August 2004 and November 2005, I returned to Japan as a Fulbright Graduate Research Student to continue my investigations of the integrated curriculum.

Because this policy is a direct attempt by MEXT to decentralize the curriculum decision-making process, this study makes no attempt to provide an overview of the integrated curriculum taking place in Japan's more than 34,000 public schools (elementary and junior high)⁸⁰ and/or senior high schools. The integrated curriculum is not bound to a textbook and cannot be evaluated by quantitative measures. Furthermore, teachers were not provided with training or guidance and as a result, have created curriculum plans that are as diverse as the communities in which they teach. The cases used in this study do not represent or even attempt to establish a pattern to the integrated curriculum throughout Japan. Nor does this study examine all approaches to the integrated curriculum which are too numerous to mention. Rather, this study limits the examination of the integrated curriculum to a selective number of schools.

The integrated curriculum at all Japanese schools are diverse and varied. The educational activities that I describe in this study based on human rights, cultural co-existence, and/or international understanding, constitute only a portion of the integrated curriculum activities at any particular school for any particular grade-level. For example, if a school implements the human rights component, it will likely consume no more than one-third of the total time devoted to the integrated curriculum throughout the year (e.g. 35 hours from 110). In addition to the human rights component, schools might explore local community through community-based learning; visits factories and places of business for work training; or utilize time for independent drill using handouts from

⁸⁰ There were 23,420 public elementary schools and 11,102 public junior high schools in Japan as of the 2004 school year. Japan Information Network Statistics http://web-japan.org/stat/category_16.html#School_Facilities

Japanese language and/or mathematics drill books.⁸¹ While some integrated curriculum plans were similar and national patterns have emerged as the practice becomes entrenched in the classroom repertoires of Japanese teachers, no two integrated curriculum plans are exactly the same, and this endless variety makes any generalizations impractical and potentially misleading.

The process by which I selected schools for field visits was not random. In fact, I targeted schools in the most ethnically diverse parts of the country. Specifically, I chose to conduct field work in Osaka to observe the integrated curriculum in schools with *Burakumin* populations; in Kawasaki for schools with children of Korean ethnic heritage; in Yokohama for schools with Chinese returnees and Indochinese refugees; and in Oizumi Town, Gunma Prefecture for schools with Brazilians students. However, I did not limit my fieldwork to these locations. I also found it productive to include schools with well-developed (*jujitsu shiteiru*) or ‘unique’ approaches to the integrated curriculum. I based the selection of these site visits on the recommendations of the integrated curriculum supervisor in local boards of education, individuals who knew where to find the most innovative teachers in the region. As a result, the descriptions of integrated curriculum activities contained in this study are examples of best practices (based on my own criteria), approaches that reveal how Japanese teachers engage their students in the consideration of dimensions of difference, the focus of this study. Therefore, the cases presented in this study may be exceptional because they take place in schools that contend with social diversification and/or schools with educators who understand the

⁸¹ At one elementary school I visited, the first 30-minutes for three days a week, was devoted to independent study as part of the integrated curriculum. Students worked through a series of prints for Japanese language and mathematics, progressing at their own pace and asking teachers for assistance when needed. This consumes about a third of the integrated curriculum for the year—the remainder was devoted to international understanding, etc.

importance of these issues and have utilized the integrated curriculum to implement content that engages students in the consideration of these issues.

With a few exceptions (e.g. Oizumi Town, Gunma Prefecture), I focused my fieldwork in Japan's two largest metropolitan areas: the Kansai area (Osaka City and locations in Osaka Prefecture including Takatsuki, Ibaragi, Matsubara, and Yao Cities); and the Kanto area (Tokyo City, Kawasaki City, Yokohama City, and Chiba and Saitama Prefectures), because I expected to find the most ethnically diverse communities in these areas. The majority of my site visits were elementary schools (35) but I also had the opportunity to visit junior high (17) and senior high schools (7). I had three objectives for each site visit: 1) observe integrated curriculum activities; 2) interview teachers and/or administrators about the content and implementation of the integrated curriculum; and 3) collect documents about the school and the integrated curriculum.

I collected, examined, and analyzed three types of data: 1) Documents; 2) Observations; and 3) Interviews.

I consulted MEXT documents such as annual White Papers (2002-2004) and the Course of Study implemented in 1981, 1992, and 2002. I also referred to the reports of the Central Council for Education (CCE) (1972 and 1996) and the National Council for Education Reform (NCER) (1985-1987).

The amount of scholarship, books, journals, and magazine/newspaper articles that comment on the current education reforms in Japan is staggering. The Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute (BLHHRI), The National Institute for Education Research (NIER) and MEXT among others, have published collections of integrated curriculum lesson plans. Through these resources, I was able to triangulate the data I had

collected through my own observations, comparing and contrasting my data with integrated curriculum activities around the country. I also referred to the criticism and commentary on *yutori* education and the integrated curriculum in scholarship and the popular press. Although these arguments do not have a direct bearing on the content of this study, they did inform my knowledge of scholars', educators', and the public's perception of the integrated curriculum.

My site visits were coordinated through contacts in prefectural boards of education and/or education centers. While most of my visits were solo explorations, I also had the opportunity to attend a number of research meetings.⁸² In total, I attended thirteen research meetings during my tenure in Japan; some organized at the national level, others local, regional, and prefectural; while still others were organized by the Japanese Teachers Union (JTU) and other teacher organizations.

I videotaped all of the integrated curriculum activities that I observed during my fieldwork. Many of these activities took place in gymnasiums, on the school grounds, in the school's rice paddy, in the immediate neighborhood surrounding the school, or on field trips to distant locations.

I also found still photographs a valuable resource. Although videotape and field notes captured the flow, mood, and attitude of the lesson, still photography provided me with an effective way to capture data presented by students during presentations, written

⁸² Professional development in Japanese occurs through a designated school system. MEXT and prefectural and city boards of education appoint designated schools to pilot new and innovative programs such as the integrated curriculum. Educators and administrators of the designated schools hold research meetings consisting of demonstration lessons and discussion, often facilitated by an education scholar from a local or national university. Designated schools also produce research manuals (*kenkyu kiyō*). They are elaborate descriptions of the characteristics of the school, the student body, and the content of the lessons, complete with yearly plans, commentary from the teacher's perspective, and student reactions to the lessons. These resources were invaluable to me as I conducted my analysis of the integrated curriculum.

information posted in classrooms, and notes taken on the board by the teacher. I photographed this information and used it as an additional data source.

I conducted forty-seven interviews during seventeen months of work in the field. Interviewees included MEXT officials, Japan Teachers Union (JTU) members, leaders of Non-Profit and Non-Governmental Organizations (NPO/NGOs), and scholars, teachers, and school administrators.

During my fellowship at MEXT for two months in 2003, I interviewed officials in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction Division. In the spring of 2005, I returned to this division to speak with officials again concerning the problems encountered, and the future of the integrated curriculum.

In 2003, I also spoke with principals and teachers of elementary and junior high schools in the greater Tokyo area. In 2004-2005, I continued these interviews in Osaka, and again in Tokyo, speaking with more teachers than administrators during this second round. I also interviewed several scholars concerning their interpretation of the integrated curriculum; curriculum specialists in charge of the integrated curriculum at boards of education and education centers; and leaders of NPO/NGOs about their role providing instruction to schools in the context of integrated curriculum.

Most interviews were one-on-one interactions but several times, I was able to gather a group of educators (up to four at one time). All conversations were recorded and a waiver of consent signed by each participant. I was the interviewer for all interviews.

Interviews were semi-structured conversations. I used a series of questions that asked the interviewee his/her opinions of the integrated curriculum, the structure and goals of the school's integrated curriculum, and their role in the creation, evaluation,

revision, and facilitation of this curriculum. I also gathered information about the student population (socio-economic status, ethnicity, nationality, etc.) and school characteristics.

In the following three chapters, I describe a selection of the learning events taking place in the context of the integrated curriculum that I observed during nearly sixty site visits over a period of more than two years in Japan (2003-2005). The chapters organize the integrated curriculum activities into the three approaches described earlier: 1) the human rights education approach; 2) the cultural co-existence education approach; and 3) the international understanding education approach. Each chapter begins with a short summary of the historical evolution of each approach in the context of teacher practice in Japanese schools, followed by a selection of the best practices I observed in the course of my field work.

Chapter 2: The Human Rights Education Approach to the Integrated Curriculum

The vocabulary of human rights is a global language serving the aspirations of minority groups around the world. This has precipitated new forms of nation building in the context of education policy and practice based on pluralism and cultural difference. Minorities traditionally deprived of their cultural autonomy are asserting their autonomy in the context of education policy and practice throughout the world.⁸³ The UN Declaration of Human Rights (1949)⁸⁴ remains the cornerstone document of minority groups who struggle for the recognition of their cultural heritage and equality in education and the workplace.

Japan has been at the forefront of human rights education since the 1950s. Since that time, based on the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the UNESCO vision of human rights education,⁸⁵ the human rights education movement in Japan has evolved into a national organization of teachers, researchers, and scholars. Most recently, human rights education advocates have capitalized on the autonomy provided via the integrated curriculum to further a human rights agenda in Japan's classrooms.

In this chapter, I situate the *Burakumin* minority in the context of the human rights education movement in Japan as it evolved over time. I then analyze the ways in which one important group of educator-activists in Japan have capitalized on the autonomy provided via the integrated curriculum initiative to forward human rights education in the nation's classrooms.

⁸³ Davies and Guppy.

⁸⁴ <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

⁸⁵ http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php-URL_ID=7952&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Making Discrimination Visible: Japan's Minorities and the Evolution of Human Rights Education

1) The *Burakumin*

The *Burakumin* are a caste-like minority, a remnant of what many scholars have identified as Japan's feudal age.⁸⁶ Researchers claim that *Buraku* communities were created through political decree during the Tokugawa Period (1630- 1865).⁸⁷ According to data from 1987, the government estimated a *Burakumin* population of 1.2 million in 4,600 communities.⁸⁸

Called *eta* (defilement abundant) and *hinin* (non-human), many *Burakumin* worked in occupations considered impure under Buddhist ethics such as slaughtering animals, or working with animal skin as tanners. However, Suginothara makes clear that many *Burakumin* were engaged in farming, so any suggestion that discrimination against *Burakumin* was the result of their defiling work is exaggerated.⁸⁹

Often referred to as an invisible minority, *Burakumin* are ethnically Japanese but suffer an unusual form of discrimination.⁹⁰ They are subjected to the same

⁸⁶ Yasumasa Hirasawa, "The Education of Minority Group Children in Japan," in *Transcending Stereotypes: Discovering Japanese Culture and Education*, eds. Barbara Finkelstein, Joseph Tobin and Anne Imamura (Yarmouth, MN: Intercultural Press 1989).

⁸⁷ At the beginning of the Tokugawa Period, as the nation came under centralized control after civil war, the Tokugawa Shogunate enforced a strict social class system consisting of four main classes: Warrior, Peasant, Artisan, and Merchant. The *Senmin* (humble people) were people of meager social status. According to Suginothara, the governing class placed these "humble people" in the lowest social position below the peasants, "in order to evade and appease the dissatisfaction and avoid a revolt of the...farmers who were being squeezed...to death and forced to lead miserable lives." Juichi Suginothara, *Today's Buraku Problem: Feudalistic Status Discrimination in Japan* (Kyoto: The Institute of the Buraku Problem, 2002): 17-18.

⁸⁸ The *Buraku* Liberation Research Institute contests this estimate and states that around 3 million *Burakumin* live in 6,000 *Buraku* communities. For more information, see: Yasumasa Hirasawa, Yoshiro Nabeshima, and Minoru Mori, *Dowa Education: Educational Challenge Toward a Discrimination-free Japan* (Osaka: Buraku Liberation Research Institute, 1995).

⁸⁹ Suginothara (2002).

⁹⁰ Nobuo Shimahara "Toward the Equality of a Japanese Minority: The Case of *Burakumin*," *Comparative Education* 20 (1984): 340-73.

discriminations that other ethnic minorities face in education, marriage, employment, and place of residence; however, they do not have cultural and physical traits that distinguish them from the Japanese majority as do other minorities.⁹¹

The movement for *Burakumin* liberation organized officially as a *Suiheisha* (Levelers Association) in 1922 but was disbanded by the wartime Imperial Military Government in 1940. After the war, activists re-formed and created the National Committee for Burakumin Liberation (NCBL). The organization changed its name in 1955 to the *Kaihoudomei*, the Burakumin Emancipation League, and pressed for social and economic equality. Known as administrative struggles, the efforts of the *Kaihodomei* were rewarded in 1969 when the Japanese government passed the Special Measures Law for Dowa Assimilation Projects to improve the living conditions in Buraku areas. Such improvements included the construction of housing developments, schools, community centers, roads, parks, and the like. Between 1969 and 1994, central and local governments contributed a total of 12,000 billion yen to the improvement of *Buraku* communities throughout Japan.⁹²

Since the post-war period, the educational attainment of *Burakumin* children has been a primary concern of Japanese educators. According to MEXT statistics, by 1975, 87.5% of *Burakumin* attended high school, narrowing the gap with the national average of 91.9%. However, since 1975, the difference in high school participation rates of

⁹¹ Most discrimination against *Burakumin* takes place when the family of a potential marriage partner or employer investigates the background of the individual through the family registry (*honseki*) that traces family lineage back for centuries. In 1976, *Burakumin* activists finally succeeded in restricting access to these government records through an act of the Japanese Diet. Today, the discriminatory practices persist as families and employers use publications sold in bookstores to investigate family registries.

⁹²For example, the local government in Wakayama Prefecture relocated an entire *Buraku*; in Kobe City, the government built 4,741 public housing units; in Kyoto City, over 80% of those living in the *Buraku* are in public housing. Additional public works projects have widened roads and built parks. Schools have benefited from these resources as well, hiring additional classroom teachers and improving school facilities. Suginoara (2000): 157.

Burakumin and non-*Burakumin* students remains between 4-5%. Nabeshima also points out that college entrance rates for *Burakumin* have declined since the 1970s.⁹³

The Japanese government terminated the financial provisions for *Buraku* areas provided by the Special Measures Law for Dowa Projects in 2002. Suginothara states that there is no reason at all for continuing Dowa policy in *Buraku* areas today.⁹⁴ Not all would agree. The efforts of the *Buraku* Liberation League have improved the living conditions of *Buraku* communities but, as Shimahara and others point out, inter-group relations and discrimination in employment and marriage persist.⁹⁵ *Burakumin* families also stand to suffer a setback in educational attainment for their children with the dismantling of government scholarships for high school and college education, a result of the elimination of the Dowa Special Measures Law.⁹⁶

2) Dowa Education and the Zendokyo

On May 6 1953, activist educators from the Kinki region (Osaka, Kyoto, Nara, Hyogo, Wakayama Prefectures) and Shikoku (Tokushima and Kochi Prefectures) formed *Zendokyo* (the National Federation of Dowa Education Associations) to address the educational and social needs of *Burakumin* youth. As of 1995, 34 of Japan's 47

⁹³ For example, Hiroshima Prefecture statistics indicate that in the 1970s, college participation rates for *Burakumin* were comparable to rates for non-*Burakumin* students. However, by the mid-1980s, the gap had grown to a 40% participation rate for non-*Burakumin* students, and a 23% participation rate for *Burakumin* students. This gap persists. See: Nabeshima (1995): 29.

⁹⁴ Suginothara (2002): 150.

⁹⁵ Shimahara (1984): 200.

⁹⁶ The *Buraku Liberation News* (March, 2003) published a series of articles about the pending expiration and non-renewal of the Law on Special Measures for Dowa Districts. The survey asked *Burakumin* families about the use of scholarship funds provided under the special measures law that was set to expire. 56.4% of the respondents supplemented the cost of high school with Dowa scholarships funds, and 53.6% used these scholarships for college expenses. When asked how the non-existence of these funds would have affected their children's academic course at the high school level, 51.6% responded that it would have made a difference, and 19.4% said that they would have discouraged their children from attending private high schools which charge higher fees than public high schools. Responses to the same questions for the college level were similar. 61.3% said it would have made a difference, and 27% responded that they would have tried to persuade their children to forego college.

Prefectures had local *Zendokyo* chapters, which have focused not only on advocacy for the *Burakumin* population, but also, as they developed over the years, on advocacy for other minorities.⁹⁷

The *Zendokyo* defines Dowa Education as educational engagement to eliminate *Burakumin* discrimination.⁹⁸ The goals of Dowa education are three-fold:

1. to deepen knowledge about the history and the nature of *Burakumin* discrimination;
2. to develop proper awareness and sensitivities among children so that they regard the issue of eradicating discrimination an important concern; and
3. to cultivate caring, cooperative relations among children so that they are empowered to fight discrimination.⁹⁹

The emphasis of Dowa education has evolved over time, adapting its strategies to confront contemporary issues. In the 1950s, the primary concern was school delinquency among *Burakumin* children. During this time, Dowa educators visited *Buraku* areas, encouraging parents to send their children to school. In the 1960s, as attendance rates increased, Dowa educators focused on improving school facilities and public services in *Buraku* areas. Equipped with additional government funds, local governments initiated a variety of infrastructure projects in *Buraku* areas, improving educational facilities and hiring additional teachers.

In the 1970s, the focus of Dowa educators turned to school and curriculum reform. Attendance of *Burakumin* children had increased dramatically but misconduct was frequent and according to Nabeshima, traditional disciplinary actions such as

⁹⁷ For example, permanent Korean residents in Japan. See: Ichiro Akashi, "Zendokyo and Others: Teachers' Commitment to Dowa Education," in *Dowa Education: Educational Challenge Toward a Discrimination-free Japan*. Eds. Yasumasa Hirasawa, Yoshiro Nabeshima, and Minoru Mori (Osaka: Buraku Liberation Research Institute, 1995).

⁹⁸ Yasumasa Hirasawa, "A Policy Study of the Evolution of Dowa Education" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1989).

⁹⁹ Akashi (1995) 21.

punishment and reprimands increased the distrust of schools and teachers among the *Burakumin* community.¹⁰⁰ Perceptive Dowa educators interpreted this behavior as the result of a sense of alienation, poverty, and discrimination. Schools began to offer supplemental instruction (*sokushin*) after hours to increase the trust of the educational establishment in the eyes of the *Burakumin* community, and to help *Burakumin* students recover from persistently low achievement.

School reform continued into the 1980s. *Buraku* Liberation Study Groups formed to help mediate conflicts and struggle for human rights.¹⁰¹ Dowa educators introduced texts that contained stories of *Burakumin* struggles such as *Ningen* (Human) into the moral education curriculum.¹⁰² In addition, many schools invited *Burakumin* into classrooms to talk to students about their past struggles and future challenges.

From 1990 to the present, Dowa educators have based their ideology on The UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child (1959),¹⁰³ and the UN Decade of Human Rights Education (1995-2004),¹⁰⁴ documents that consider the rights of ethnic and cultural minorities throughout the world. Today in Osaka, Human Rights Education, borne of the Dowa Education Movement, has expanded to encompass all forms of discrimination.¹⁰⁵ The administrative struggles of the *Buraku* Liberation League and the emergence and evolution of the Dowa Education Movement in the greater Osaka area

¹⁰⁰ Hirasawa, Nabeshima and Mori (1995).

¹⁰¹ Hiroshi Ikeda, (2001) “*Buraku* Students and Cultural Identity: The Case of a Japanese Minority,” in *Ethnicity, Race, and Nationality in Education: A Global Perspective*. eds. Ken Shimahara et al. (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2001).

¹⁰² Moral education is part of the required curriculum and schools are permitted a choice of texts.

¹⁰³ <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/25.htm>

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/1/edudec.htm>

¹⁰⁵ Recently, the term *jinken kyouiku*, or human rights education, is slowly replacing *Dowa* education as the preferred term. Basically, *Dowa* education was the term used for the liberation of the *Buraku* population, however, now that the term movement has come to encompass the rights of other minorities in Japan as well as issues of gender equality, human rights education is the preferred term.

have placed the city of Osaka at the forefront of human rights education for the entire Asia-Pacific region.

Human rights education in Japan emerged to help *Burakumin* students succeed in school and Japanese society. It has evolved over the past fifty years from a small regional movement into a national network of research centers, teacher research groups, and educational scholars. Human rights (*Dowa*) educators continue to fight for the human rights of all students who attend Japanese schools, regardless of nationality and/or ethnicity through research, activism, and regional and national meetings.

The Human Rights Education Approach to the Integrated Curriculum

The integrated curriculum has provided a useful ‘curricular space’ to expand the depth and scope of human rights education in Japanese classrooms. Japanese scholars have supplemented this approach to the integrated curriculum with scholarly texts,¹⁰⁶ and research institutes have compiled and published collections of lesson plans with a human rights focus to the integrated curriculum.¹⁰⁷ In addition, through associations such as *Zendokyo* and the Japan Teachers Union (JTU), teachers share their classroom experiences and lesson plans with fellow educators regarding the implementation of a human rights education-based integrated curriculum. Themes addressed by teachers, whether at national (*Zendokyo*)¹⁰⁸ or regional (JTU)¹⁰⁹ meetings, range from issues

¹⁰⁶ For example, see: Akio Nagao (1999).

¹⁰⁷ Tetsuo Arakawa and Katsuya Kodama, *Jinken Kyouiku to Sogoteki na Gakshuu [Human Rights Education and the Integrated Curriculum]* (Nagoya: Chiiki Kokusai Katsudou Kenkyuu Sentaa [Community and International Activities Research Center], 2002).

¹⁰⁸ In November, 2004, I had the opportunity to attend the *Zendokyo* Annual Conference in Osaka in which teachers shared their human rights education-based approach to the integrated curriculum with their colleagues.

¹⁰⁹ I attended a JTU regional conference on human rights and peace education on October 16, 2004 in which the integrated curriculum formed the core of the discussion.

concerning the education of institutionalized children,¹¹⁰ to peace studies and the education of minority students.

Educators in the Osaka area remain at the forefront of the human rights education movement in Japan, and their approach to the integrated curriculum reflects this. Of the twenty-one schools observed in Osaka Prefecture, eighteen implemented a human rights education-based component within the integrated curriculum. However, this approach is not limited to the Osaka area. I also observed schools in Kawasaki City that implemented a human rights approach to the integrated curriculum.

What follows is an analysis of the ways in which Japanese teachers create and implement the human rights education approach to the integrated curriculum. While not exhaustive, the following selection provides an overview of the ways in which Japanese teachers intersect students with human rights issues via the integrated curriculum. The lessons analyzed in this chapter include: 1) the bullying (*ijime*) issue; 2) life studies classes (*inouchi no kyoiku*); and issues of social justice and equality facing 3) the *Burakumin*, 4) the disabled, and 5) the homeless.

1) The *Ijime* Issue: Bullying in Japanese Society A Human Rights Violation

The *ijime* or bullying problem in Japanese schools has been an issue of concern for Japanese educators since the 1980s. According to MEXT, reported cases of bullying peaked in 1995 with 60,000 reported cases, and have since declined to 23,000 cases in

¹¹⁰ For example, the human rights integrated curriculum at one Osaka elementary school focused on the education of children under state custody.

2003.¹¹¹ While the cause of bullying in Japanese schools is not entirely clear, it appears that students who are different are often the object of harassment and ridicule. For example, changing schools in Japan seems to be a rather traumatic experience for students, so much so that fathers often leave family behind when they transfer positions within companies.¹¹² In addition, school culture in Japan reflects the social hierarchies that exist in Japanese society, the so-called *tate shakai* or vertical society.¹¹³ This is reflected in the senior/junior (*senpai/kohai*) relationships that dominate peer relationships in Japanese schools, placing seniors in a position of dominance, especially in the context of sports clubs. While these hypotheses are speculative at best, the fact the bullying continues to be a concern for Japanese educators has prompted them to incorporate the issue into the integrated curriculum as a human rights concern.

In 1999, Midori Komori formed the Gentle Heart Project¹¹⁴ in memory of her daughter, Kasumi Komori, who took her own life, the victim of bullying. The Gentle Heart Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to the elimination of bullying and other forms of violence from Japanese schools and society. The Gentle Heart Project describes bullying as an act of despicable violence. As a result, many children with kind hearts who would never say a word to harm another person, take their own lives. The Project's public information pamphlet depicts *ijimeas* a tragedy for the entire society that sometimes results in the terrible loss of life. Ms. Komori defines *ijimeas* a small war. Moreover, she continues,

¹¹¹ MEXT, "Japan Education at a Glance (2005)," <http://www.mext.go.jp/english/statist/05101901.htm> accessed January 4, 2006.

¹¹² This phenomenon is called *Tanshin Funin* in Japanese.

¹¹³ Chie Nakane, *Tate Shakai no Ningen Kankei (Japanese Society)* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1970).

¹¹⁴ <http://www.gentle-h.net>

“Peace is not just the absence of war but a society in which the human rights of each individual are treasured. We cannot allow ijime to continue. Our children are crying for help. Blood is flowing from their hearts and bodies. More than one million children isolate themselves in their rooms, another 130,000 refuse to go to school. Children as young as ten are victims of vicious crimes. We at the Gentle Heart Project have a dream to build a society without bullying and to this end, we provide lectures, exhibits, and educational activities.”¹¹⁵

Teachers throughout Japan have requested the services of the Gentle Heart Project. Ms. Komori travels extensively to talk with students of all ages about the harmful effects of bullying, and provides students with strategies to avoid being the aggressors, or victims of, bullying.

In February 2005, I observed Ms. Komori engage a group of fifth grade students at Iida Elementary School in Kawasaki City, in a discussion on bullying. Ms. Komori talked extensively about her daughter, painting a portrait of her as a happy child with many friends. She described in detail the last few days of Kasumi’s life, talking about the anguish she felt over losing her daughter. She also displayed pictures and introduced other Japanese students who had taken their own lives, the victims of bullying. She asked students to recall and write down instances in which they had suffered from the insensitive comments of others, or inadvertently said something that hurts another’s feelings. She used students’ comments to illustrate that all people fall victim to the hurtful comments of others from time and time, and furthermore, that most of us say things to others that are hurtful, often without realizing the harmful nature of our comments. In reaction papers, students commented that this exercise made them realize that bullying is not only physical in nature, in fact, it is more often verbal.¹¹⁶ Ms.

¹¹⁵ Gentle Heart Project, *Ijime Shakai no Naka no Kodomotachi [Children in a Bullying Society]*, Pamphlet.

¹¹⁶ Anonymous student’s reaction papers obtained from homeroom teacher.

Komori closed the lesson by telling students that she would be happy today if they remember two things: 1) it is never OK to hurt someone's feelings; and 2) that it is OK to be different.

The implementation of the *ijim* issue in the context of the human rights approach to the integrated curriculum confirms that teachers view the problem as a human rights issue. The homeroom teacher of this fifth grade class felt that student-to-student relationships form the basis of human rights, the first step to recognition and appreciation of human difference in all its forms. His point strengthens the case for the implementation of the *ijim* problem within the context of a human rights education - based integrated curriculum, a starting point in the journey towards the recognition of, and respect for, the human rights of all.

2) Human Rights Begins with Self-respect (*Inouchi no Kyouiku: Life Studies Education*)

Tolerance for difference begins with self-respect. We find as educators that students who lack self-respect and confidence often lash out at others in harmful ways. Furthermore, these students are often different in some way—they may be overweight, academic underachievers, poor in sports, or ethnic minorities. They might perceive limitations in schooling and society based on their minority status, which will adversely affect motivation and effort in school.

This situation persists in Japan among *Burakumin* students. In an attempt to counter this negative trend, teachers in several elementary and junior high schools that I observed have implemented a life studies class (*inouchi no koyuiku*) within the human

rights education-based integrated curriculum to help these students regain respect of self, and hopes for the future.

Takatsuki Dai Yon (number 4) Junior High School (T4JHS) is one such school. Located in a traditional *Buraku* community, teachers recognized a lack of self-confidence and diminished expectations for the future among their students and decided to utilize a segment of the integrated curriculum to confront this concern. As a teacher at the school informed me, the most pressing concern for these students is overcoming the stigma they harbor as *burakumin* students, which reflects on their attitude towards school and life. He added that harmful words and actions of students are all too common at this school, and that without a positive self-image and self-respect, students are not able to respect the thoughts and feelings of others.¹¹⁷

In an effort to measure students' sense of self-respect and expectations for the future, in 1999, teachers at T4JHS surveyed their students. The survey asked students a variety of questions related to self-image, future goals, etc. The results revealed dominant patterns of early marriage and childbirth, traditional gender roles, low motivation in school, and below average intended college participation rates.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Interview, November 2004.

¹¹⁸ Nearly 80% of females responded that they would like to marry in their early twenties; over 60% of students (male and female composite) wanted children before the age of 25; 32% of males wanted their marriage partner to do housework while only 2.5% wanted them to work outside of the home. Findings also revealed that while over 35% of the males responded that they liked themselves, only 20% thought their school grades were above average. This compares to nearly 60% of students outside of the district who ranked their schoolwork above average. Moreover, over 40% of the students asaid that they did not try very hard in their school studies. As for future progress in school, nearly 45% of the males replied favorably to attaining a high school education (37% of females), while 27% of males and 23% of the females hoped for some type of college education. Takatsuki Number 4 Junior High School, "*Sodate! Jison Kanjou: Inouchi, Kyouka, Chiiki Gakushuu, Gakushuu Katsudo Anshuu [To Grow: Self-Respect: Life Science, Subjects, Community-based Education, Class Activities: A Collection]*" (paper presented at Takatsuki Number Four Junior High School District Research Meeting . Takatsuki City, Osaka Prefecture, Japan, November 3-4, 2004).

Concerned about their student's self respect and future aspirations, T4JHS implemented a life studies course (*inouchi no kyouiku*) as a key component of the integrated curriculum. T4JHS teachers collaborated with the school nurse, PTA members, and local health care professionals, to create and implement a life studies curriculum based on the education of the body and the heart, and gender issues.

The entire life studies program consists of six themes and consumes twelve hours of the school's integrated curriculum.¹¹⁹ Teachers engage students in lessons that focus on understanding one's own and others' personality traits; developing a positive self-image (*kouteikan*); managing stress and gender relations, and improving communication skills. Teachers also implement a program called CAPS (Child Assault Prevention) to provide students with the skills to recognize and report abuse and violence, at home or school.

In November 2004, I had the opportunity to attend a research meeting at T4JHS. The city board of education had designated T4JHS as a research school for human rights education.¹²⁰ The public was invited into open classrooms. I observed a lesson dealing with the AIDS issue. Health experts, in collaboration with teachers and students, provided the class with a detailed overview of the AIDS situation in Japan and around the world, and explained to students how to prevent the spread of the disease.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ The integrated curriculum at the junior high school level consumes between 40 to 70 hours of the yearly schedule. The time allocation is determined by the school.

¹²⁰ The meeting began with classroom observations followed by break out discussion sessions, a forum for visiting educators and parents to ask questions and discuss the content of the lesson. Finally, all participants gathered in the gymnasium for greetings from local board of education officials, an explanation of the school's human rights-based integrated curriculum, and a lecture from a University-affiliated education scholar.

¹²¹ To begin the lesson, a group of students prepared a Q and A session. They presented information on how and how not to be infected with the HIV virus, dispelling myths about how to contract HIV. Following this, a nurse consultant from a local hospital explained that AIDS cases in Japan are increasing, and described how even one sexual partner who has had sexual relations previously can represent a series

In addition to the life studies curriculum at junior high schools, teachers at Japanese elementary schools do not uncommonly recognize the need to implement life studies lessons in the context of the integrated curriculum. As one educator expressed it, “Our students lack dreams for the future.”¹²² Through a life studies component of the integrated curriculum, teachers hope to help students regain dreams for the future.

At Kaio Elementary School in Ota Ward, Tokyo, the school nurse and sixth grade teachers planned and implemented the life studies curriculum in collaboration with medical professionals from a local hospital. The day that I observed, a head nurse from the local hospital, with the assistance of nurse trainees and a retired doctor, spoke to students about her work as a childbirth specialist; the child birthing process; infant development; the rights of children in Japanese society;¹²³ and the AIDS epidemic.¹²⁴

In the second half of the two-hour lesson, the nurse trainees joined small groups of students with life-like newborn dolls. The weight, size, and physical attributes such as the inability of the neck to hold up the head, were exact to that of a newborn baby. The nurses explained how to hold the baby and passed the doll around to the students. Students expressed their surprise at the weight of the dolls. They asked questions such as, “How old is the baby when it can hold up its head without support?”

I observed life studies courses in other elementary schools as well. In Higashi Elementary School, Oizumi Town, Gunma Prefecture, a mid wife involved students in

of encounters, linking each student who engages in an unprotected sexual act to potentially multiple partners.

¹²² Interview with Tokyo elementary school teacher: June 2003.

¹²³ She relayed a story from her visit to China in which she heard that because of the one child policy, many families do not properly register second-born children with the local government and thus, the child is deprived of certain advantages in the social system. She emphasized this point and told the students that they should feel fortunate to have been born in Japan where the government acknowledges each human life and thus, provides certain protections in the social system.

¹²⁴ The nurse informed students that the number of deaths due to HIV/AIDS in Tokyo has tripled in the past ten years, totaling 350 cases in 2004.

hands-on activities. While explaining the birthing process, students came to the front of the class to hold doll replicas of a fetus at three months, six months, eight months, and newborn. Another student experienced life in the fetus simulated by placing the student in a cloth bag in a fetal position.

The implementation of the life studies course in the context of the integrated curriculum is an attempt by Japanese teachers to provide educational opportunities for students to develop a positive self-image, which hopefully will be reflected in students' future aspirations in school and society. One might interpret the perception of teachers that students "lack dreams for the future" as an indication of an unequal society in which minority students assume that their futures are limited given their family background. This might be the case at Takatsuki Dai Yon Junior High School where a *Burakumin* minority is present at the school. However, the two elementary school versions of the life studies curriculum that I observed were not in schools with a substantial population of minority students. Nonetheless, teachers felt that their students lacked confidence in the future. One teacher I spoke with suspected that the lower socio-economic situation of the families in the area might very well have an effect on the future aspirations of students.¹²⁵

Principal 2 of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child declares that "all children shall be given opportunities and facilities...to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, and socially."¹²⁶ There is certainly no doubt that Japan provides opportunities and facilities for children to develop. However, if a child perceives opportunities to become productive members of society limited because of race,

¹²⁵ Interview, June 2003

¹²⁶ <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/25.htm>

class, or gender, it is the duty of educators to intervene in this cycle of failure by providing educational opportunities for students to overcome their insecurities and develop to their full potential. The life studies curriculum is an attempt to help students fulfill their human rights, overcoming any and all socially constructed obstacles that might inhibit their progress.

The integrated curriculum activities described thus far have focused on issues of student-to-student interaction in the context of the *ijime* (bullying) issue, and student self-respect and the value of human life through the life studies course. As students progress in the education system, teachers provide opportunities for students to expand their field of inquiry beyond the walls of the school to consider larger societal issues.

In the following section of this chapter on the human-rights approach to the integrated curriculum, I provide further examples of learning that brings the problems of the real world into student's field of vision. Educators have used the integrated curriculum to help students learn how and why the human rights of some individuals are violated because of their differences. In this section, I use lessons that address the *Burakumin*, disability, and homelessness to demonstrate how educators are providing students with opportunities to think deeply about human rights in the context of these serious social issues, and consider possible solutions.

3) The Blood Industry: Remnants of Status Discrimination from a Feudal Age

Meat processing plants in Japan have been traditionally located in *Buraku* areas. While the situation has changed dramatically in the past 30 years, the occupation is still

considered unclean, processing plants are still often located in *Buraku* areas, and jobs are often occupied by *Burakumin*.

According to the teacher, the purpose of this lesson is for students to study the *Burakumin* issue by developing an appreciation for the valuable work they do, providing meat products that nourish the body and are necessary for survival. Through independent research and a field trip to a meat processing plant, this teacher sought to bring a human rights issue, the *Burakumin* issue, closer to the students' everyday lived experience.

The teachers writes in the introduction to the lesson that market competition has created economic hardships for some meat processing plants but that many have endured due to the efforts of individuals who have restructured and reformed their business practices to compete in the free market. Venture capital provided by other *Burakumin* has aided these businesses and created a sense of pride in the *Buraku* community.¹²⁷

In the course of this series of lessons, the teacher began by establishing relevance, helping students recognize that meat products are part of their life everyday. In their quest to learn how meat is brought to their dinner tables, students viewed a video of a meat processing plant; interviewed people at meat shops, grocery stores, and a meat producers' cooperative; and conducted a field visit to a local meat processing plant. As a culminating event, students planned a party for all those who have cooperated with them in their examination of the meat processing system.

By hearing the explanations of the process by those who work hard providing this service, the teacher hoped that students would overcome their biases against *Burakumin*.

¹²⁷ Dowa Kouiku Kenkyu Kyougikai [Dowa Education Research Group], *Watashi Deai Hakken Part 3: Jinken Sogo Gakushuu O Hajimeyou: Jinken Sogo Gakushuu Puran Shu [My Discovery Part 3: Lets Start Human Rights Integrated Curriculum: Plan for Human Rights Education]* (Osaka: Dowa Kouiku Kenkyu Kyougikai, 1999).

In the concluding statements, the educator points out that the change in approach to the *Burakumin* issue in the 1990s, focusing on actual experience, has helped students grasp the issues in a concrete and productive way.

Identifying a group of people, minority or otherwise, with an occupation, is inherently bias, and at the worst, an expression of prejudice. The stigma attached to those who perform this so-called ‘blood work’ in Japanese society persists. Furthermore, while *Burakumin* still work in this occupation, many who do work in this huge industry in Japan are not *Burakumin*. In fact, many *Burakumin* do not work in this industry—many are public workers, teachers, etc. While the distinctions between *Burakumin* and non-*Burakumin* in Japanese society gradually blur through inter-marriage and social and economic mobility, educational activities such as this may in fact reinforce bias towards the *Burakumin* minority. Educators must take care to temper such content with data that demonstrates to students that *Burakumin* are involved in all facets of society. I found no evidence that this educator attended to this.

The investigation of the *Buraku* issue has been a fundamental part of human rights education in the greater Osaka area. The integrated curriculum has provided further impetus for educators to engage students in the examination of this lingering issue. However, these activities appear on the decline. There is a growing sense that Japanese society has overcome the *Burakumin* issue, as revealed by the non-continuation of the Dowa Special Measures Law. In addition, schools in traditional *Buraku* areas focus on helping students build self-esteem and confidence to face their futures. The life studies course in the integrated curriculum described in the previous section is an example of this approach.

4) Disability: From Actual Experience to Actual Success

Disability is a common topic in the integrated studies curriculum. In the following paragraphs, students hear from people who have overcome their disability to lead fulfilling lives, and others who struggle for the rights of the disabled in Japan. The following examples present the struggles and successes of people living with disability in Japanese society.

Human rights issues form a pillar of the integrated curriculum at Ibaraki High School in Osaka Prefecture. Twice a year, the school plans a Human Rights Day, inviting local community members into classrooms to talk with students about human rights issues. On the day that I observed, four speakers discussed their struggles with disability and their efforts to forward the agenda for the rights of the disabled in Japan. Below, I highlight two of these discussions.

Takayuki Ochiai, who is hearing impaired, talked to students about how he has challenged his disability through sports, in his case, Rugby. Throughout junior and senior high school and into college, Ochiai was a team leader on the schools' rugby team. After college, he established a deaf rugby team in Japan and was instrumental in taking the idea of deaf rugby international. In August 2004, Ochiai led the Japanese team to the First International Deaf Rugby Competition in New Zealand where Japan placed 2nd. Ochiai now works in a retail company, analyzing price trends for retail goods, and still plays rugby every weekend.

Students were impressed with Mr. Ochiai's determination as the following comments reveal.

“I didn’t think that those with hearing disabilities could talk and was very surprised when I understood Mr. Ochiai’s speech. Although he has experienced many hardships in his life, he always displayed a smiling face as he told us about playing rugby and his current job. When I heard about his determination to create a rugby club, become the team leader, and work to spread deaf rugby in Japan and throughout the world, I thought that I should be more energetic in school activities and become a stronger person like him. It also inspired me to study sign language when I go to college.”¹²⁸

Another speaker, Mr. Gomaе, talked to students about universal design and the Japanese with Disabilities Act (JDA). Mr. Gomaе explained to students that universal design is a system by which everyone can use products with more ease and comfort. For example, redesigning a computer keyboard so that it is easier to identify important keys, or putting an indentation on a shampoo bottle so that those who wear eye glasses can tell the difference between shampoo and rinse when they take a bath—these are examples of universal design.

Mr. Gomaе explained to students that he is campaigning with all his effort for the Japanese with Disabilities Act (JDA), which is now being considered by the Japanese government. Similar to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the JDA would impose fines on public offices and business that are not accessible to the handicapped. The bill has the support of the United Nations.

Students commented that this presentation was the first time they had heard the term universal design. One student states, “Since junior high school, I have heard many presentations about the handicapped—that we should not discriminate against them. Today was the first time I realized that treating the disabled differently could also be a

¹²⁸ Ibaraki High School, *Jinken Kansoubun: Baria Furee, Shintai Shougai to Shakai, Supotsu* [Reaction Papers to Human Rights Activities: Barrier Free: Physical Disability and Society, Sports] (Nov, 25, 2004).

source of discrimination.”¹²⁹ Another student concluded that when he hears about the passage of the JDA law in the near future, he will thank Mr. Gomae for his efforts.

The disabled in Japan have advanced their cause in recent decades but challenges remain. According to Itayama, the disabled in Japan have ‘come out,’ are more publicly visible and vocal than in the past. However, although legislators review disability issues and make improvements, unlike the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the disabled in Japan do not have ‘rights’ and therefore, no legal recourse to petition for more equal access to public facilities and social justice.¹³⁰ In education as well, inequality persists. While compulsory education is guaranteed under law,¹³¹ “too few motor disabled, mentally retarded, and health impaired youth have the opportunities to receive equivalent high school education.”¹³² The implementation of this content into the integrated curriculum is an effort on the part of teachers to develop students’ awareness of the issues facing Japan’s disabled, in order to build support for legislation and attitudes of social inclusion.

5) There is NO Place Like Home: Japan`s Homeless Problem

Homelessness in Japan is not new. One notices the homeless in tent cities constructed in Ueno Park in Tokyo. According to those who have volunteered their services to the homeless, many are in social limbo, in their 50s, unemployed yet not able to collect their government pensions until they turn 62. Collecting cans to recycle for

¹²⁹ Ibid

¹³⁰ Kenji Itayama, “Two Decades for People with Disabilities: Achievements, Future Tasks and Possibilities for Government Policies in Japan” (2002). http://www.dinf.ne.jp/doc/english/other/wz_twodecades_e.htm. (Accessed February 20, 2006).

¹³¹ Junior high school ends compulsory education in Japan. High schools are not compulsory.

¹³² . See: Toshihiko Mogi, “Current Issues on the Human Rights of Persons with Disability” *Japanese Journal of Studies on Disability: Special Edition* 22.2 (1994).

cash is a common occupation and one can see the homeless pulling carts full of cans through the streets of Tokyo in the early morning hours. An article in the British newspaper the Guardian (June, 20, 2003) states that the Japanese government estimates the nation's homeless population at about 25,000, double the estimated number from seven years previous.

Some progressive high schools have incorporated the issue of homelessness into their integrated curriculum. One educator stated that his impetus for implementing a series of lessons on homelessness was a series of media reports in which youth were vandalizing the homeless, burning their cardboard structures and throwing rocks at them. The teacher hoped that through this series of lessons, students would come to realize that the homeless were human beings, no different than them; and that the circumstances that render people homeless may be no fault of their own—that in fact, homelessness is a social not a personal problem.¹³³

In the course of a series of five lessons, the teacher linked students to the problems of homelessness with media images and newspaper stories about the homeless; personal stories written by the homeless; interviews with the homeless; a visit to a homeless shelter; and a visit to their school by a homeless woman.

As the teacher reflected on the experience, he understood the vital importance of direct contact and conversation between students and the homeless. Through this interaction, students came to the conclusion that the circumstances that lead to homelessness are not that uncommon. Now, the issue of homelessness is a permanent component of the integrated curriculum at this school. The homeless visit classrooms

¹³³ Osaka Prefectural Board of Education, *Yatte Mio Sogo Gakushuu: Manabi no Plan-Do-See: Koukou Sogo Gakushuu no Projekuto: Osaka Shuu [Let's Try the Integrated Curriculum: Learn: Plan-Do-See: Project of High School Integrated Curriculum Activities in Osaka]* (Osaka: Kaihou Shuppan Sha, 2002).

regularly and students take field trips to centers that assist the homeless, and shelters that house them.

I joined another group of high school students from Kunijima High School in Osaka Prefecture on a visit to a homeless shelter. The shelter director told students that the local community was hostile to the shelter at first, but through outreach activities such as a weekly coffee/tea time, the community has accepted and even embraced the shelter's residents. While the shelter provides re-training programs for residents, most are in their fifties, and will begin to collect a government pension at 62. As a result, many are not motivated to re-train for work although most work menial jobs, earning money collecting cans and other manual labor occupations.

According to a Wall Street Journal article (June 18, 2003), while Japan's homeless problem pales in comparison to the estimated total of homeless in the U.S., until 2000, the Japan Government had provided no public funds to provide assistance to the homeless. In 2003, the government increased funding and has set up shelters in Osaka and other large cities, but efforts still fall far short of need. Moreover, non-profit organizations such as churches, that provide soup kitchens and other services to the homeless in the U.S., are rare in Japan. The Japanese government has enacted another piece of legislation, the 2002 Law to Promote the Independence of Homeless People, but critics of the law complain that its focus on re-training excludes those who are unable to work, and provides local governments with a way to legally and forcefully evict the homeless from public spaces.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ The Japanese Government, *2002 Law to Promote the Independence of Homeless People*.
http://www.ipss.go.jp/s-info/e/irj/swsw/swsw02_7.html

Conclusion

Taken in total, the integrated curriculum activities of the human rights education approach demonstrate how teachers intersect students with contemporary social issues born of social inequality and injustice. The *ijima* issue reflects the lack of tolerance for difference among students. Some students are singled out and taunted for their differences, driving some to the point of suicide. The Gentle Heart Network works towards the elimination of bullying from Japanese schools and society. Ms. Komori's schedule of presentations in schools throughout the country demonstrates that teachers recognize this human rights violation, and have capitalized on the autonomy provided via the integrated curriculum to implement this content.

The historical accumulation of social exclusion still weighs upon Japan's *Burakumin* population. While progress is evident, teachers still perceive a lack of confidence among *Burakumin* students and have implemented life studies classes to help these students come to the realization that they are unique and special individuals, and with effort and confidence, can achieve in Japanese school and society.

Teachers are also engaging students in the exploration of issues of equality facing the *Burakumin*, the disabled, and the homeless. Each of these populations has organized and advocated for legislation to change Japanese society with some success, but challenges remain. The *Burakumin* issue faces the possibility of fading into distant memory, the disabled fight for the legal means to protect their rights, and the homeless struggle for support from government and understanding from the public. The implementation of these issues of social equity and justice demonstrates teachers' commitment to elevate human rights to the top of the agenda in the context of the

integrated curriculum. This focus on students' immediate social environment has the potential to prepare them with the social skills of tolerance and empathy needed as they expand social networks beyond the walls of school into community, nation and the world.

As globalization brings human rights issues to the fore and ethnic and cultural minorities the world over advocate for the recognition of their ethnic heritage in education policy and practice, the evolution of human rights education in Japan can serve as a concrete example of how this process evolves over time. Human rights activists in Japan have successfully pressured the Japanese government to pass legislation to improve *Burakumin* communities. Dowa educators have encouraged *Buraku* students to attend school and as a result, the *Burakumin* have made considerable progress towards social equality in Japanese society although significant challenges remain. Japanese educators now apply human rights education to engage students in the consideration of a variety of social problems included bullying, and the rights of the homeless and the disabled, through the integrated curriculum. I would argue that human rights education in Japan provides a valuable model as minority groups in other societies struggle for their rights. Globalization means that these groups now have access to this information through electronic media and communications. In a sense, globalization makes it possible for the model of human rights education exemplified in the context of the integrated curriculum in Japan to be utilized by educators in other nations as they struggle for ethnic recognition and equal rights and protections under the law.

Chapter 3: The Cultural Co-existence Approach to the Integrated Curriculum

The Emergence of Education for Cultural Co-Existence in Japan

In a growing number of communities in Japan, as students expand their spheres of inquiry into community, they encounter foreign people and culture. As discussed in the introduction to this study, as the nation ages and the birth rate declines, the number of foreign laborers in the country has increased dramatically. Since the 1990s, changes to immigration laws have provided preferential status to foreign nationals of Japanese descent. Many Brazilians of Japanese descent have capitalized on this opportunity—Brazilians now constitute the third largest minority in Japan.

However, the presence of foreigners in Japan is not a new phenomenon. Koreans have lived and worked in Japan since WWII and many remained after the war. Okinawans have come from the islands to the large metropolitan areas of Tokyo and Osaka in search of work. Returnees from China, many orphaned in the aftermath of WWII, have returned to Japan with financial support from the Japanese government; and some refugees from Indochina have found safe haven in Japan.

The presence of these minority populations in Japan has significantly affected education policy and practice. The language and cultural differences that these groups of children bring to the Japanese learning environment have challenged the Japanese model of schooling that equates ethnicity with nationality.

As mentioned in the introduction to this study, the Intercultural Education Society of Japan (IESJ) (*Ibunkakan Kyouiku Gakkai*) is the most noted consortium of

scholars/teachers organized to consider the implications of cultural co-existence in the nation's schools. The word *ibunkakan kyouiku* (multicultural education) has gained recognition in the educational terminology dictionaries in Japan. Moreover, specialists in the field are gradually emerging. Those who conduct research in the field come from a variety of disciplines including comparative education, educational sociology, educational psychology, anthropology, foreign language studies, Japanese language studies, and so forth. The research in multicultural education in Japan has considered macro issues such as politics and policy, and micro issues such as identity, theory, and practice.¹³⁵ Research on multicultural education in Japan considers the education of: 1) Japanese children living overseas, 2) returnees (*kikokushijo*),¹³⁶ 3) foreign international exchange students, 4) Japanese students abroad, and so on. Recently, the focus of the research has shifted to the education of foreign children in Japan as their numbers have increased and their needs call for action.

The term *ibunkakan* in Japanese refers to different 'i' (異) cultures `bunka` (文化) and between `kan.` (間). In other words, the term reflects the interaction between different cultures. Recently, Japanese scholars have used the term *tabunkakan* (多分化間) as well as *ibunkakan* (異文化間). The Japanese character for `ta` (多) refers to many, as opposed to the character for `i` (異) or different. The distinction is subtle but significant. In English, the term multicultural refers to `many` cultures, therefore, the

¹³⁵ Kazuhiro Ebuchi, "Ibunkakan Kyouiku to wa [What is Multicultural Education?]", in (ed.) Kazuhiro Ebuchi *Ibunkakan Kyouiku Kenkyuu Nyumon [Introduction to Research in Multicultural Education]* (Tokyo: Tamagawa Daigaku Shuppan Bu, 1999).

¹³⁶ *Kikokushijo* are children who have lived overseas for a period of time and return to Japanese schools. The most comprehensive studies of *Kikokushijo* in English are: Ching Lin Pang, *Negotiating Identity in Contemporary Japan: The Case of Kikokushijo* (New York: Kegan Paul International, 2000), and Roger Goodman, *Japan's "International Youth": The Emergence of a New Class of School Children* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

term *tabunkakan kyouiku* is closer to the English equivalent. However, in the Japanese educational context, scholars and educators more often use the term *ibunkakan kyouiku*.

Several Japanese scholars have offered a variety of definitions for the term multicultural education (*ibunkakan kyouiku*). Kobayashi defines the term as “the emergence of actual educational activities and the thorough investigation of a variety of issues, the result of communication and contact with other cultures.” He continues, “Rather a special area of education, (*ibunkakan kyouiku*) is a way of approaching a variety of educational content.”¹³⁷ Ebuchi defines *ibunkakan kyouiku* as a “process of human development that is the result of interaction between two or more cultures, a mutual process that results in cultural adaptation.”¹³⁸ Ebuchi also distinguishes multicultural education from the term international understanding (*kokusai rikai*) education. In international understanding education, the nation is the presumed primary actor, the basis upon which culture is constructed. On the other hand, multicultural nations are home to people of many cultures, hence the status of a unified culture is tenuous. Culture, rather than the nation, forms the foundation of education for multicultural nations. Minority cultures—their adaptation, learning and social issues, are a primary area of study in multicultural education. However, Ebuchi warns that we should not ignore the role of the nation in multicultural education, or, on the other hand, ignore culture in the context of international understanding education.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Tetsuya Kobayashi, “Ibunkakan Kyouiku no Kankou no Atatte [Concerning the Environment for Multicultural Education]” *Ibunkakan Kyouiku [Intercultural Education]* 1 (1987): 9-19.

¹³⁸ Kazuhiro Ebuchi, “Zainichi Ryugakusei to Ibunkakan Kyouiku no Kankou no Atatte: Ibunkakan Kyouiku Gakkiron [Concerning Multicultural Education and Foreign International Students]” *Ibunkakan Kyouiku [Intercultural Education]* 5(1991): 27-42.

¹³⁹ Ebuchi (1999): 23

Both definitions imply that multicultural education results in some form of cultural co-existence (*tabunka kyousei*), the result of cultural adaptation and adjustment.

However, the process by which education nurtures this type of cultural adaptation is less clear. Several Japanese scholars have hypothesized the method by which national cultures change through education for cultural co-existence. Sato offers Berry's model of cultural adaptation as a means by which to determine levels of acceptance or resistance on the part of minority children to the host culture.

1. Integration: maintain special characteristics of cultural identity AND develop cultural contact with dominant culture
2. Assimilation: do not maintain characteristics of cultural identity AND develop cultural contact with dominant culture
3. Separation: maintain special characteristics of cultural identity BUT do not develop cultural contact with dominant culture
4. Marginalization: do not maintain special characteristics of cultural identity AND do not develop cultural contact with dominant culture¹⁴⁰

Immigrant groups in all nations adjust to the dominant culture by such means. The hope is for immigrants to integrate into the dominant culture while maintaining aspects of their cultural identity, the integration scenario in Berry's construction of cultural adaptation.

However, the ability of immigrant groups to integrate rather than separate or become marginalized is largely dependent upon the institutions of the host culture, primarily its schools.¹⁴¹ Sato offers the following model of cultural change through multicultural contact and interaction.

1. A/B = A: a process of assimilation in which the minority culture is subsumed by the majority culture

¹⁴⁰ Gunei Sato, "Zainichi Gaikokujin Joshi Kyouiku [The Education of Foreign Children in Japan]", in (ed.) Gunei Sato *Kokusaika to Kyouiku [Internationalization and Education]* (Tokyo: Housou Daigaku Kyouiku Shinkoukai, 1999).

¹⁴¹ Ibid. pg. 20

2. $A/B = A/B$: the majority culture extends respect to the minority culture but rejects social change, remaining fixed in its traditional cultural forms
3. $A/B = C$: the majority and minority cultures mix to form a new culture¹⁴²
(A= Majority Culture, B= Minority Culture)

Sato upholds this last form ($A/B = C$) as the goal of multiculturalism. However, he argues quite convincingly that culture is not free from the structures of the nation and as a result, complete reformation of the national culture is unlikely. What is more likely is a scenario in which an A` (prime) culture is formed, one that incorporates some aspects of the minority culture but maintains the primary aspects of the dominant culture.¹⁴³

To summarize, one goal of multicultural education is the reformation and restructuring of a national culture (*kokka shugi*) to form a multicultural society (*tabunka shugi*). Ebuchi describes this as a cultural process and a mode of education. The mode of education, the planning, content, and implementation of teaching and learning is a cultural process that transforms attitudes to nurture cultural co-existence.¹⁴⁴

The integrated curriculum has provided a unique opportunity for teachers to expand their exploration of multicultural education in Japan. Japanese students are learning about the myriad of cultures that exist within their own communities and throughout the nation. Foreign community residents and non-profit organizations visit classrooms, introducing Japanese students to the cultural arts, storytelling, music, traditional dress, language, etc. of Korea, South America (Brazil and Peru), China, and South East Asia (Cambodian and Vietnamese). Schools organize events in which students celebrate the cultural diversity of their communities through song, dance, and

¹⁴² Sato and Hayashi (2001).

¹⁴³ Ibid: 2.

¹⁴⁴ Ebuchi (1999): 18.

drama. Junior high school teachers engage students in the exploration of migration from Japan in the past, and immigration to Japan in the present.

In the following sections, I provide examples of integrated curriculum activities in ethnically diverse schools, specifically in communities with Korean, Brazilian and Indochinese Refugee/Chinese Returnee¹⁴⁵ populations. To begin each section, I provide a brief overview of these minority communities, describing the process by which they came to be, and their current status in Japanese society.

The Cultural Co-existence Education Approaches to the Integrated Curriculum

1) Koreans in Japan: Identity Conflict: Assimilate or Differentiate?

a) Introduction

According to the 2004 Report of the *Kaigai Kouryuu Shingikai* (Overseas Communications Committee), there are 613,791 Korean permanent residents in Japan, constituting 32.1% of all registered foreigners in the country.¹⁴⁶ In addition, approximately 200,000 ethnic Koreans have acquired Japanese citizenship and are no longer counted as registered foreigners.¹⁴⁷

Koreans in Japan are referred to as *Zainichi Kankoku Chosen Jin*. This title reveals two interesting facts about the status of Koreans in Japan. The term *Zainichi* implies temporary residence in Japan. This obscures the fact that most *Zainichi* Korean children were born and raised in Japan, are third, fourth and sometimes fifth generation

¹⁴⁵ This term refers to Japanese nationals who were stranded in China after WWII, unable to return for a variety of reasons. Since the 1980s, the Japanese Government has provided financial assistance to return to Japan for those who could provide documentation of their Japanese nationality.

¹⁴⁶ In 1994, Koreans constituted 50% of all foreigners in Japan compared to 32.1% today, the result of growing numbers of immigrants from South America.

¹⁴⁷ Yasunori Fukuoka, *Lives of Young Koreans in Japan* (Melbourne, Australia: Trans Pacific Press, 2000).

immigrants, attend Japanese public schools, and are culturally and linguistically more Japanese than Korean.

The other interesting distinction is the inclusion of *Kankoku* and *Choserin* the title. The terms refer to South and North Korea respectively. For political reasons, many *Zainichi* Koreans have aligned themselves with the organizations that represent the policies of South or North Korea despite the fact that nearly all *Zainichi* Koreans came from the southern part of the Korean Peninsula. Two organizations represent these political alliances in Japan. The *Chongryun* affiliates with North Korea, and the *Mintoren* (also known as *Mindan*) affiliates with South Korea. Scholars have estimated the North and South affiliations of Japan's *Zainichi* Korean population as 350,000 pro-South and 250,000 pro-North sympathizers.¹⁴⁸

Koreans came to Japan by a variety of means, both forced and voluntary. Many Koreans were brought to Japan through forced labor policies during Japan's colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula (1910-1945). In 1938, 800,000 Koreans lived in Japan and by the end of WWII (1945), it is estimated that the Korean population of Japan was 2.3 million. Most Koreans returned to their homeland after the war in 1945 but it is estimated that about 600,000 remained.

Briefly, in the immediate post-war period, Koreans established their own ethnic schools in Japan. In 1946, there were 525 Korean schools, but by 1948, MEXT decreed that all Korean children must have a Japanese education.¹⁴⁹ In 1955, *Chongryun* re-established its schools (as private institutions) and as of 1993, there were 150 *Chongryun*

¹⁴⁸ Ryang points out that it is impossible to determine these numbers with any accuracy because neither *Chongryun* nor *Mindan* keep accurate membership records. For further information, see: Sonia Ryang, *North Koreans in Japan: Language, Ideology and Identity* (Boulder, CO: Westfield Press, 1997).

¹⁴⁹ Sonia Ryang, *Koreans in Japan: Critical Voices from the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

schools with about 20,000 students.¹⁵⁰ The remaining majority (130,000) school-aged Korean population in Japan attends Japanese public schools.

Koreans have suffered a plight similar to *Burakumin* children in Japanese schools and society. In the 1960s and 1970s, Dowa educators in the Osaka area recognized that many Korean children were not attending school. Educators in Hyogo Prefecture and Osaka City took up the cause to assist these children, inspired by the work of the Buraku Liberation Movement. Dowa educators urged Korean students to reaffirm their cultural identity, use their Korean names, participate in Korean cultural clubs, and by this means, increase awareness of their own culture. Despite the efforts of teachers, many Korean students refused to participate and displayed a passive attitude towards these cultural activities. Educators soon realized that it was not the lack of will that created this hesitation, rather it was the bias and discrimination these Korean students felt in Japanese schools and society.¹⁵¹

According to Nakajima, Japanese educators and schools have made considerable progress in the past three decades in their efforts to recognize and celebrate the Korean heritage of their students. This would not have been possible without the efforts of dedicated Dowa educators who were instrumental to the movement for Korean cultural recognition. Currently in schools throughout Japan, it is no longer taboo to celebrate Korean culture. Students participate in cultural clubs in which they rehearse Korean *Jangoo* (Drums and Chimes) for performances at school and community events. *Zainichi* Koreans now enjoy a sense of community as they celebrate their ethnic heritage

¹⁵⁰ It is important to note that graduates of *Chongryun* schools must pass an additional examination to matriculate to a Japanese institution of higher learning.

¹⁵¹ Tomoko Nakajima, "Kokunai Rikai to Kokusai Rikai [Internal Understanding and International Understanding]" *Ibunkakan Kyouiku [Intercultural Education]* 2 (1988): 58-67.

through drama, music, fashion, food, and festivals. Many students of Korean descent have thus developed an awareness of, and a respect for, their ethnic culture.¹⁵²

b) The *Fureaikan*

In 1988, the City of Kawasaki established the *Fureaikan* to promote interaction between Japanese and *Zainichi* Koreans by helping citizens overcome the ethnic wall between the two cultures, and deepen understanding to promote cultural co-existence. The *Fureaikan* was born of citizen and community activism, a community and political partnership to rid the community of bias and discrimination, and learn to live together in cooperative co-existence.¹⁵³ The *Fureaikan* central office is located in the *Sakuramoto* area of Kawasaki Ward, where over 4,000 of Kawasaki City's 9,265 *Zainichi* Koreans reside.

The general information provided to the public explains that many confuse the mission of the *Fureaikan* as one of international understanding education. On the contrary, the *Fureaikan* is meant to serve the needs of the immediate community, especially the *Zainichi* Korean community.

The *Fureaikan's* outreach is vast, consisting of local discussions held to talk about the issues facing *Zainichi* Korean; in-house research meetings that focus on human rights, home education, adulthood, Korean traditional culture, *Hangul* (Korean language), and Korean cooking; and visits to Kawasaki public schools to introduce Korean culture. Through these school visits, connections between the schools and the *Fureaikan* have

¹⁵² Ibid

¹⁵³ Kawasaki Fureaikan, *Daremo ga Chikara Ippai Ikite Iku tame ni: Kawasaki Fureaikan: Sakuramoto Kodomo Bunka Senta [For all to Live with Lots of Energy: The Kawasaki Fureaikan and Sakuramoto Children's Culture Center]* Informational Handout.

deepened. Korean cultural activities have become part of the curricular and cultural events at many Kawasaki public schools, and personnel from the *Fureaikan* visit schools often to introduce Korean culture through children's stories, dance, music, language, cooking, etc.

Teachers in Kawasaki have capitalized on the enactment of the integrated curriculum to increase students' exposure to Korean culture. According to the *Fureaikan's* Director of Educational Programs, the integrated curriculum has dramatically increased the school visits of *Fureaikan* staff.¹⁵⁴ In the following section, I describe the integrated curriculum activities at Kawasaki schools where teachers have made the exploration of Korean culture a primary focus.

c): The Fureaikan Visit Schools

The day that I conducted fieldwork in Shiboguchi Elementary School in Kawasaki City, four members of the *Fureaikan* staff introduced Korean culture to 200 third graders through cultural activities which included: 1) music, 2) arts and crafts, 3) games, 4) language, and 5) clothing.

The music presentation featured *Jangoo* Drums. The instructor informed students of the history of the drum and its current use in Korean society in festivals and parades. He demonstrated some simple rhythmic exercises on the drum and students took turns playing along. For the arts and crafts activity several tables were set up in a corner of the gym, equipped with colored pencils, scissors, glue and tape. Students received a print of *Tenka Dai Shogun*, a Korean God. They colored the print as they liked and cut and

¹⁵⁴ Interview, May 2005.

pasted it together in the shape similar to a totem pole. Volunteer parents assisted students with the activity.

In another corner of the gym, a *Fureaikan* teacher introduced students to traditional Korean games. She demonstrated a game called *chagi* in which the object of the game is to keep a birdy in the air with hands and feet; and Korean tops, similar to the Japanese *koma*.

In another classroom, students enjoyed trying on Korean traditional clothing called *Hanbok*. Girls wore *Jeogori* silk top with a skirt, boys sported baggy pants called *Paji*. Teachers and parents assisted with the activity and took pictures.

Another *Fureaikan* guest teacher introduced Japanese students to the Korean language (*Hangul*). She taught students simple greetings, the names of family members and people, and vocabulary to use at school (teacher, classroom, etc.). Students also learned to write their names in Korean (*Hangul*) script.

The final activity was a presentation of a Korean folktale, *Sanen no Touge* (The Three Year Mountain Pass). The storyteller used a *Jango* drum as he narrated the story to simulate running, walking, and other actions of the characters. The narrator told the story in Japanese, using different voices to distinguish male from female, young from old. He was accompanied by a female voice telling the story in Korean. The storytellers also used *Kamishibai* (Japanese Paper Theater) to illustrate the scenes of the story.

The examples of the Korean cultural activities described above appear to be a reflection of a superficial approach to multiculturalism often referred to as the 3Fs approach (Food, Festivals, and Folklore). Indeed, the *Fureaikan* staff did share Korean games, traditional clothing, music, language, and folktales with Japanese students.

While I share this criticism, the Director of *Fureiaikan* Education Programs felt that the implementation of the integrated curriculum has actually enhanced the effect of their school visits. In the past, she felt that teachers did a poor job preparing and/or following up with students on the study of Korean culture. Now however, the integrated curriculum has provided teachers with additional time for preparation and follow up. Hence, according to her, students ask more informed questions that are directed at the lives and culture of the Korean population in Japan, reflecting the fact that students recognize Koreans as a part of their community.¹⁵⁵

However, at the schools described above, I did not feel that teachers effectively articulated to their students that Koreans are a part of the ethnic fabric of Kawasaki. The lesson plan describes the visit of the *Fureaikan* as the introduction of the nation ‘closest to Japan.’ This approach defeats the attempt to frame the *Zainichi* Korean issue in the context of cultural co-existence, the primary objective of the *Fureaikan*.

In Osaka, in addition to the implementation of the *Zainichi* Korean issue in the integrated curriculum, many schools have ethnic clubs (*minzoku kurabu*).¹⁵⁶ One afternoon a week, students gather, often with a volunteer teacher, to learn ethnic games, songs, dance and language. Local governments also help encourage ethnic clubs by hosting annual cultural festivals, providing schools with a public venue to perform. One teacher of an ethnic club observed in Higashi Osaka incorporated the memory of a fallen *Zainichi* leader, slain while fighting for social justice, into the school’s culture festival. While most schools refrain from the political and restrict the activities of ethnic clubs to

¹⁵⁵ Interview, May 2005.

¹⁵⁶ I also observed Korean, Chinese and Viet Nameese ethnic clubs in Osaka area schools. It is important to know that ethnic clubs are voluntary. While observing, I noticed on more than one occasion teachers inquiring into the whereabouts of students who were supposed to be attending ethnic clubs. They were often found playing soccer on the school grounds.

arts and crafts, music and language, this teacher pursued an activist agenda, continuing the fight for equality of opportunity for the *Zainichi* Korean population, a fight that she claims is not yet over.¹⁵⁷

In my interview with this teacher, I inquired whether the enactment of the integrated curriculum had altered the school's approach to the *Zainichi* Korean issue. She responded that the simple answer was no: the school had a long history of embracing Korean culture. However, she did admit that the enactment of the integrated curriculum has provided additional time to coordinate activities between her school and the local *Chongryun* North Korean school. She added that the integrated curriculum had allowed teachers to expand the *Zainichi* Korean issue beyond the ethnic clubs, which are voluntary, and engage the entire student body in the consideration of issues of equality and justice for this minority population.

Several administrators I spoke with in Osaka felt that interest in ethnic clubs was waning. One elementary school principal informed me that the number of schools participating in the city-sponsored cultural festival was in decline. Another principal said that *Zainichi* Korean parents at his school have complained about the Korean ethnic clubs, suggesting that English conversation clubs would be a more productive use of time. In this environment of declining interest in ethnic clubs, the implementation of the cultural co-existence approach to the integrated curriculum assumes greater importance.

Koreans in Japan are considered 'oldcomers,' a term referring to the fact that the Korean minority in Japan has a long history dating back to the early 20th Century. Since the late 1980s however, Japan has experienced a new wave of immigration. These so-

¹⁵⁷ Interview, December 2004.

called newcomers,¹⁵⁸ particularly immigrants of Japanese descent from South America, represent a completely different challenge to the Japanese education system. Differing patterns of heart, mind and association¹⁵⁹ that these children bring to the educational environment challenge Japanese patterns of socialization for children in schools. In the following section, I focus on Brazilians in Japan, providing a brief explanation of the history of migration and repatriation that is currently taking place, and an example of the use of the integrated curriculum to explore this issue in an urban junior high school with a significant population of Brazilians of Japanese descent.

2) Brazilians in Japan: A Case of Repatriation

a) Introduction

Between 1908 and 1940, approximately 190,000 Japanese immigrated to Brazil—another 60,000 departed in the immediate post-war period.¹⁶⁰ Many of the immigrants were farmers suffering from poverty and declining agricultural prices, others were second or third sons who would not inherit the family land under the traditional Japanese *ie* system.¹⁶¹ In addition, the Japanese government encouraged migration to relieve overpopulation in the rural areas.¹⁶²

Most intended to work in Brazil for only a few years and return home, but consequences of war and the economic situation in Japan immediately after the war

¹⁵⁸ Ryoko Tsuneyoshi, “The New Foreigners and the Social Reconstruction of Difference: The Cultural Diversification of Japanese Education” *Comparative Education*, 40.1 (2004): 55–81.

¹⁵⁹ Finkelstein (1997).

¹⁶⁰ Prior to 1925, far more Japanese immigrants headed to North America and Hawaii. However, the U.S. Immigration Act of 1924 halted Japanese immigration to the continental United States and diverted greater numbers to South America—most to Brazil. For more information, see: Joshua Hotaka Roth, *Brokered Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Migrants to Japan* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002).

¹⁶¹ Traditionally the eldest son inherits family land and assets

¹⁶² Roth (2002).

prevented them from doing so. Many Japanese in Brazil have contributed to agricultural development, while others have moved to the urban centers to pursue professional education and employment. In 1989, the Brazilian Government estimated a Japanese population of 1.2 million, the majority concentrated in the state of Sao Paulo (887,000).¹⁶³ Ninety percent of Japanese in Brazil now live in the cities and have integrated well into society, intermarrying and gaining economic and professional status. Tsuda comments that Brazilians perceive the Japanese as a positive minority that has maintained a strong Japanese ethnic identity.¹⁶⁴

The push and pull factors, both political and personal, that sent hundreds of thousands of Japanese to the South American continent until the early 1960s, has brought some of them back to Japan in search of work and their ethnic heritage. The economic difficulties in Brazil in the 1980s coupled with Japan's booming economy and changes to immigration law opened the doors to Japan for these blood relatives, and many took advantage of this opportunity.

Some communities in Japan, both rural and urban, have attracted substantial populations of Brazilians. Brazilian ethnic communities have emerged in places like Hamamatsu City in Shizuoka Prefecture, and Oizumi Town in Gunma Prefecture, manufacturing centers with large numbers of factories, big and small, that employ foreign workers. Second and third generation Brazilians of Japanese descent also live in large metropolitan areas in the Osaka area, and the greater Tokyo area (including Kawasaki and Yokohama Cities in Kanagawa Prefecture). The following is an example of a junior

¹⁶³ Population statistics derived from Sao Paulo Humanities Research Center and includes Japanese of mixed descent. In Roth (2002): 57.

¹⁶⁴ Takeyuki Tsuda, *Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

high school with a substantial population of Brazilian students that embraces a cultural co-existence approach to the integrated curriculum.

b) Constructions of Brazilians in an Urban Junior High School

Ushioda Junior High School is located in Tsurumi Ward, Yokohama, an area known for its large minority population. Marked by a river, the area has been home to various minority groups such as Koreans and Okinawans. More recently, Brazilians have come to the community.

Ushioda Junior High School's integrated curriculum incorporates a human rights approach to cultural co-existence. The school's Declaration of Human Rights reads:

“Each individual, overcoming differences, valuing others, enjoying peace, with an eye on the future, gradually learning to live together.”¹⁶⁵ The school's human rights curriculum embraces four themes.

Number 1: Respect

Difference is special, Individuals are special
Accept the importance of others' lives and culture
You are the one and only you in the world

Number 2: Friends

I am not alone, I must rely on others to live
I am here because I have friends
Friendship is a most precious treasure

Number 3: Dreams

Dreams are something to be granted
Even if you have things you want to do, to become
If you don't do anything, you cannot start
Take the first step

¹⁶⁵ Ushioda Junior High School, “Human Rights: Jinken wo Soncho Shi, Chiiki to tomo ni Ayumu Kyouiku wo Mezasu [Respecting Human Rights: Aiming for Education based on the History of Community]” (Yokohama, 2005).

Number 4: Individuality

Things you cannot do, you do not like to do—that is individuality

People have strong points and weak points

Your likes and dislikes are your individuality¹⁶⁶

2004 was the first year of the cultural co-existence through human rights integrated curriculum at Ushioda Junior High School. One focus of this curriculum is the study of the foreign population of Yokohama. Teachers used the following questions to help guide students' exploration into this issue: Why do foreigners live here? How and why did they come? and, Why do they attend this school?

Based on these simple questions, teachers decided to engage their students in the study of Japanese overseas migration as one component of the integrated curriculum. Students began their inquiry by first learning about the history of Japanese overseas migration from the experience of a teacher who was born in Brazil. To follow up this activity, students visited the Japanese Overseas Migration Museum in Yokohama¹⁶⁷ to continue their study of Yokohama's historical international connections.

I visited Ushioda Junior High School on the day that a Brazilian-born teacher presented her life story to students. She began the presentation with a picture of herself as an elementary school student in Brazil and asked the students to think about why she was there. She talked briefly about the history of Japanese migration, why many Japanese went to North America in the 1800s, but that by the 1900s, most migrated to South America, especially Brazil.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid

¹⁶⁷ The museum pamphlet describes the purpose of the museum in the following manner: "Japanese migration has a 100-year history. Recently, second-generation Japanese are returning to Japan as workers, students, etc. In the past 10 years, 300,000 second-generation Japanese from South America have returned to Japan with their families to live and work. In this context, we have established this museum to help the public understand this history." JICA Yokohama. "The Japanese Overseas Migration Museum" Information Pamphlet (2003).

She relayed the story of her grandfather, from Fukushima Prefecture, the oldest son in a large family whose father had died. At the time, Japanese were encouraged to migrate. Advertisements encouraging immigration to South America were common and promised the possibility of life in a “dream-like country.” At fourteen, her grandfather left the port of Yokohama for the sea journey to South America. He arrived in Brazil in 1936. The Brazilian government provided all immigrants a plot of land when they arrived, but the land was jungle and the process of clearing it for farming was difficult, taking several years.

The teacher explained her grandfather’s struggles and successes as a Japanese immigrant in Brazil. She told students about going to school in Brazil, and her experiences after she returned to Japan in 1990.

She closed her talk by reminding students that many Japanese Brazilians have returned to Japan. She complimented them on their behavior with foreign students, telling them that although there were a significant number of students in the school from other countries, she does not hear of any discrimination at the school.

Students shared their comments on the teacher’s presentation. One student wrote of her surprise when she heard that this teacher had experienced such hardship when she returned to Japan at the age of ten. “During club activities, she always tells me, ‘You can do it if you try.’ I now understand the deep meaning of this comment. My grandfather was an immigrant and I discovered many similarities with my family. My mother was born in Okinawa. I now have developed a burning interest to learn more about immigration as a result of hearing about her experiences.”¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸Ushioda Junior High School (2005).

The minority students at Ushioda JHS are a mixture of Okinawan, Korean, Brazilian and others from South America. Therefore, in addition to the focus on the connections between Japan and Brazil, the school's integrated curriculum incorporates a variety of other cultural activities. For example, one integrated curriculum event featured a *Zainichi* Korean rap duo that performed a song named One Korea, supporting the reunification of the Korean Peninsula. Another project entitled Korea Day brought students together to experience Korean culture in a series of workshops including *Jango* drumming and a discussion session on the issues currently facing *Zainichi* Koreans. The school also welcomed a Japanese volunteer of a JICA Overseas Youth Volunteer Program who spent two years in Nicaragua. Students were also encouraged to explore their cultural heritage through independent study and exploration. One teacher accompanied a student to Okinawa in search of the home in which his grandparents were born and raised. They discovered that the location is now part of a U.S. military base.

Ushioda JHS's approach to cultural co-existence through the integrated curriculum is truly unique. Other schools that I observed, with populations of Brazilian students, did not necessarily embrace a cultural co-existence approach to the integrated curriculum. In Gunma Prefecture, an area known for its local Brazilian population, the integrated curriculum of an elementary school that I visited implemented an English language component. While I was impressed with the wonderful English greetings that awaited me when I visited classrooms, I was puzzled by the approach. When I asked one teacher if the school had considered embracing Brazilian culture in the context of the integrated curriculum, he showed me some student essays, part of a life histories section

of the integrated curriculum. Students explored their ethnic heritage in these essays which were posted in the room for others to see. While effective as a form of self-exploration, it occurred to me that this approach might fail to incorporate the entire class in the exploration of local diversity.

In actuality, the integrated curriculum at this elementary school was well developed. On the day that I observed, third graders wrote interview questions in preparation for environmental site visits, part of an environmental studies section of the integrated curriculum. Sixth grade teachers implemented a peace studies unit in which groups of students determined an issue for further exploration, gathered information from the world-wide web and library, and presented their findings in a school-wide assembly. In addition, a Cambodian community member had helped the school establish a sister-school relationship with a school in Cambodia. Pictures of the new water well, built with donations from students at this elementary school, adorned the school's display case. In addition, one teacher at this school had incorporated a comparative study of Japan and Brazil in the context of math class, comparing annual temperatures between the two cities, and graphing this data. So, it seems that while a cultural co-existence approach to the integrated curriculum was not emphasized, the school did embrace cultural co-existence, at least partially, in different ways. I continue to wonder however, why English rather than Portuguese is implemented as a foreign language in the integrated curriculum, and why a sister-school relationship is not nurtured with a school in Brazil.

3) Other Minority Groups in Japan: Chinese Returnees and Indochinese Refugees

a) Introduction

In addition to the Koreans and Brazilians already mentioned, two other groups constitute a substantial portion of the foreign population in Japan. The so-called Chinese returnees are one such group, and Indochinese refugees are another.

In the aftermath of WWII, many Japanese nationals in China were unable to return to their homeland for various reasons. War orphans were one such group. These children lived in the Japanese-controlled part of China near the present-day city of Beijing, known at that time as Japanese *Manshukoku*. The offspring of Japanese parents who lost their lives or whose whereabouts became unknown in the aftermath of the war, they remained in China where they grew up. Many of these children led miserable lives, hiding in Japanese settlements where some died of disease or hunger. When the Japanese government did provide ships to repatriate these people back to Japan, many could not return because they had families or they did not receive the information about the repatriation.¹⁶⁹

In 1973, the Japanese government started a program to pay for the repatriation of Japanese in China and their spouses, and single children under the age of twenty. As of 2003, 109,959 Chinese returnees have obtained permanent residence status in Japan and another 8,894 are temporary residents.¹⁷⁰ The Chinese population in Japan now constitutes 22% of all registered foreigners, the second largest foreign population after Koreans.

¹⁶⁹ Shokun Ishii, *Tabunka Kyousei Kiwado Jiten [Cross-Cultural Co-existence Keyword Dictionary]* (Tokyo: Jiten Henshu Iinka, 2004).

¹⁷⁰ Ibid: 68.

Indochinese refugees constitute another group of foreign residents in Japan. In the aftermath of the Vietnam conflict, political refugees who feared reprisals under new political regimes left Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, some in boats that arrived on the shores of neighboring nations. Under pressure from the international community, Japan created a refugee policy and in 1979, for the first time, accepted Vietnamese refugees as temporary residents. The Japan government also extended refuge to residents of refugee camps located in other nations. Soon family members joined their relatives in Japan and by 1981, 11,000 Indochinese refugees were living in Japan. In 1981, the Japanese government revised its refugee law and since then, out of the 2,872 people that have applied for refugee status in Japan, only 305 people have had it granted.¹⁷¹

Although the Japanese government has since restricted the numbers of Indochinese refugees, family members of permanent residents continue to enter Japan, a phenomenon the Japanese call *yobidase*. These refugee communities tend to be concentrated in certain areas of the country. In general, areas with inexpensive housing such as government subsidized housing (*danchi*) attract refugees and their families. One such area lies in Izumi Ward, Yokohama City.

The following is a description of the integrated curriculum of two elementary schools in this area. Ichou Elementary School has gained national press and notoriety for its multicultural approach to school management and curriculum. A book published in 2005¹⁷² provides detailed descriptions written by past principals on the process of school reform which includes, but is not limited to, the activities of the integrated curriculum. I

¹⁷¹ Ibid

¹⁷² Keizo Yamawaki and Yokohama Shi Ritsu Ichou Elementary School, *Tabunka Kyousei no Gakkou Zukuri: Yokohama Shiritsu Ichou Shou Gakkou no Chousen [Making a Multicultural School: The Challenge of Ichou Elementary School, Yokohama City]* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoku, 2005).

draw from these accounts to describe this school and its integrated curriculum. In addition, I provide descriptions of the integrated curriculum activities at Iida Kita Elementary school, which lies in the same school district.

b) Cultural Co-existence Education in Action: Ichou Elementary School

Ichou Elementary School is known for its large population of children with foreign citizenship or ethnic roots. The two largest groups are the children of returnees from China, and refugees from Indo-China (Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos). The number of foreign children in this community began to grow substantially around 1990. As of 2004, 53% of the student population had foreign citizenship or foreign roots.¹⁷³ In addition, school enrollment has declined dramatically, from 383 students in 1994, to 215 by 2004. The small number of children at the school makes the presence of foreign children all the more noticeable. The majority of these ‘foreign’ students were born in Japan.

Ichou Elementary School embraces the theme of creating a school in which all students are free of worry and can experience a fulfilling school life. In pursuit of this goal, the school has implemented an open school format and gained the support of community, parents, volunteer organizations, universities, the three other schools in the district (two elementary and one junior high), nursery schools, and kindergartens in the area. In the context of Japan’s changing demographics, they imagine that many schools in Japan will soon experience similar circumstances, and hope that the model they

¹⁷³ The majority of these children are Vietnamese (46) with the second largest population being Chinese (22), with 6 Cambodia (6), Laos (3), and one student from the Philippines, Thailand, Brazil, and Peru. 38% have foreign citizenship, the remainder are children with foreign roots. Ibid.

provide, based on years of experimentation, will be beneficial to other schools struggling with similar issues.

In 1999, the previous principal noticed that foreign-born students hid their cultural and ethnic difference, and avoided speaking their native language at school. There was a high level of stress among these students who used their time in the international classroom and supplemental Japanese language class to release their anger and frustration. Foreign parents did not attend PTA events because the school had no way to communicate to them the importance of such events in their native language. They were fearful of coming to school to talk with teachers, and given their tenuous employment status, many might lose their jobs if they took time off to attend school events.

Foreign born parents did not understand the method of guidance practiced among Japanese teachers and often expressed their dissatisfaction, saying that Japanese teachers were too soft on students, that they should practice firmer discipline. They did not attend open class sessions limiting the effectiveness of such events. The community was also anxious about a further increase in the area foreign population. Finally, the cultural, religious, and political differences among the foreign-born population prevented any cohesiveness within their own community as well.

The principal interpreted the school's diversity in a positive light, one of a kind in Japan, and set about to change the existing negative situation. He viewed the diversity of the school as an opportunity to nurture cultural co-existence, and wanted teachers to think about the many nations represented in the classroom as a way to develop interest among students in international issues.

The problem that the principal found most disturbing was the way in which foreign students would avoid speaking their native language at school, and even pretend that they did not understand Chinese or Vietnamese when visitors came to the school.¹⁷⁴ He wanted to create a school atmosphere in which students felt comfortable speaking their native language and asked the staff members that had some Chinese language ability to speak to the students in Chinese. Other staff members began to study Vietnamese and Cambodian. He also called upon upper grade students to provide translation during school events. He wanted students to feel that speaking two languages was a special skill that they should take pride in.

In the second year of this principal's term, he concentrated his efforts on foreign-born parents, visiting homes accompanied by translators, and providing additional time when needed for foreign parents to have a private audience with teachers and the principal.

MEXT designated Ichou Elementary and the three other area schools in the school district as "Schools for Learning Together with Foreign Children." With this designation, universities provided their assistance and expertise. Students from the Yokohama National University volunteered to tutor students in Japanese language; and professors provided lectures, advice, and workshops on Japanese language instruction and international understanding education. As a result of this designation, teachers began to see improvement in the Japanese language ability of the foreign students. Student's calligraphy improved remarkably with the assistance of a local expert to the point where it was entered in the city's calligraphy exhibit. According to the principal, the progress

¹⁷⁴ Yamawaki and Yokohama Shi Ritsu Ichou Elementary School (2005).

of the foreign students also motivated the Japanese children in the school to learn more about their own culture and try harder in their language studies.

In year three of the principal's term (2002), the school began to show noticeable improvements in many areas. Students could be heard in the hallways speaking Chinese and Vietnamese so much so that some teachers had to ask them to use more Japanese in the classroom. Interactions with parents improved as well. The appointment of a native Chinese speaker as the PTA Chairperson changed foreign parents' attitude toward the school. The need for personal discussion time all but disappeared as parents recognized that the school had the interests of their children in hand.

In the final year of this principal's three year tenure (2002), although many issues had been resolved, others came to the surface. For example, he perceived a need to help foreign students maintain their native language and called upon volunteers to implement such a program. However, this had not yet materialized in a practical way. In addition, although the school made efforts to assist foreign parents with their Japanese language studies, time issues and other concerns prompted the school to seek outside assistance. Progress has been made in this regard but more effort is required to provide the proper language support for these parents. This previous principal also thinks that connections in the community could be further strengthened. For example, given the decrease in the student population, the principal suggested that parents and community members participate in the school's sports festival, but teachers were hesitant to pursue this.

At Ichou ES, the integrated curriculum serves a unique purpose of providing the curriculum structure to supplement education for cultural co-existence, an approach that already permeates the school's mission. One sixth grade homeroom teacher at the

school realized that although many of the students are foreign born, they have no memory or interest in their native culture. He considered this unfortunate and implemented an integrated curriculum lesson to provoke students to contemplate the nation from whence they came, and why they were living in Japan, attending Ichou Elementary School.

The students had studied about war in their textbook, and the teacher expanded the depth and scope of this lesson by asking students to look up information about war and conflict in other countries. First, students divided into four groups representing Japan, China, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Each group gathered information about these countries and also interviewed people who had experienced war in these countries. In fact, most of the foreign students in the class were influenced in some way by war. As previously mentioned, many of the Chinese students were the children of war orphans abandoned in China after WWII, and many Vietnamese and Cambodian students are the children or grandchildren of refugees who escaped South Vietnam after its fall in 1975, or the re-education camps of Pol Pot in Cambodia.

One student from Cambodia relayed the story her mother told him about escaping Cambodia in 1975. He was born in Vietnam and eventually came on Japan. A Chinese student told the story of how his grandfather was orphaned in China and says that he still has difficulty talking about it. A Vietnamese parent visited the class and told her story about coming to Japan as a refugee, and learning to be an interpreter.

The teacher commented that she was impressed with the efforts of students to interview friends and family members who had experienced war, and also felt that the

Japanese students in the class developed a deeper understanding of the conditions that brought foreign children to Japan.¹⁷⁵

3) Iida Kita Elementary School

In September 2005, I visited a neighboring school to Ichou ES: Iida Kita Elementary School. As was the case with Ichou ES, Iida Kita ES has initiated school-wide reforms to create a learning environment conducive to cultural co-existence. The school's research theme is to nurture children to feel the joy of learning and living together with other children.¹⁷⁶

The school has only 216 students, among which 54, exactly 25%, have foreign roots. Students' ethnic backgrounds are Vietnamese, Cambodian, Chinese, Laotian, Peruvian, Brazilian, Korean, Filipino, and Thai. The school administration has made efforts to communicate with foreign parents, providing translators so that parents can voice their concerns about their children's' educational and social development. The meetings are held in the evening to allow working parents an opportunity to attend. In addition, the PTA has planned various international events such as a world cooking class.¹⁷⁷

In-school research meetings are also part of the school reform effort. The school invites foreigners to talk with teachers about cultural aspects relevant to children's'

¹⁷⁵ Yuko Suzuki, "Bokoku no Bunka wo Taisetsu ni Shita Gakkou Zukuri [Creating a School in which Ethnic Cultures are Important]" in Keizo Yamawaki and Yokohama Shi Ritsu Ichou Elementary School, *Tabunka Kyousei no Gakkou Zukuri: Yokohama Shiritsu Ichou Shou Gakkou no Chousen [Making a Multicultural School: The Challenge of Ichou Elementary School, Yokohama City]* (Tokyo: Meishi Shoku, 2005).

¹⁷⁶ Iida Kita Elementary School. *Yutakana Kakawari Ai wo Tsujite: Tomo ni Manabi ni Ikiru Yorokobi wo Kanjirareru Kodomo no Ikusei: Kenkyu Kiyo [Through Wonderful Relationships: Nurturing Children who feel the joy of Learning Together with Friends] Research Report.* (Yokohama, 2004).

¹⁷⁷ More than 100 people attended the event in which participants learned recipes from all of the countries represented at the school.

educational and social development. PTA members also participate in human rights research meetings. One Japanese mother who attended the research meetings said that she was quite shocked to hear the circumstances by which many of these mothers had come to Japan, and gained a new respect for their situations.¹⁷⁸

One activity of the integrated curriculum is called “Let’s Learn About Our Countries.” In this curriculum, students learn about the customs and cultures of foreign countries from which they come, including Japan. The goals of this curriculum are: 1) to help students recognize that they are a member of an international community; 2) to help foreign children understand their situation as foreigners in Japan as well as build pride in their ethnic heritage; and 3) to increase the cooperation of parents in school activities. Students conduct their own research using the internet and human resources in the community, including their parents and relatives, to learn about their ethnic heritage. In addition, foreigners from the local community visit the school. Each grade level studies a different country and presents this information to other students and the community during an all school event held each fall.

During the course of the year, many foreigners visit classrooms to share their culture with students. For example, a Vietnamese international exchange student visited classrooms and talked to students about schools, food, clothing, and traditional games in her country. Another guest teacher introduced students to Cambodian culture and language including simple greetings, counting, clothing, food and daily life. Students also participated in a Cambodian game called *Saru no Happa Tori Ai Gemu* [Monkey Grabs the Leaf Game].

¹⁷⁸ Iida Kita Elementary School (2004).

A guest teacher from China talked to students about the Great Wall and taught them a Chinese handkerchief dance. A second-generation mother from Peru informed students that there are many people in Peru who came from Japan. A guest teacher from Laos talked to students about her struggles when she first arrived in Japan. A guest from the Philippines taught students how to perform the Bamboo Dance. A Korean international exchange student visited third graders and read them the Korean folktale *Sanen no Touge* (The Three-year Mountain Pass). Sixth graders studied Japanese drumming and in the process, learned about drumming traditions in other nations.

Another interesting feature of this curriculum is the grade-to-grade level interaction integrated into the structure. The upper grade level students visit the classrooms of the lower grade level students to share what they have learned. For example, sixth graders shared information about Laos with first graders, while fifth graders talked to second graders about Vietnam.

The integrated curriculum at Iida Kita ES culminates in a cultural festival attended by parents, community members, and members of the board of education. I observed this public event in September, 2005. Students had decorated the walls of the gymnasium with poster boards that provided information such as the size, population, language and culture of various nations, including some not represented in the study body such as Germany and the United States. One entire wall was a replica of the Great Wall of China, while another was Cambodia's Angkor Wat.

The event featured the cultural performances of six nations (China, Cambodia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Brazil, and Japan). Students introduced each culture with song and dance. Each presentation began with introductions of the target culture such as the

national flag, words of greeting, and individual stories of students re-discovering their native culture through exploration and inquiry. The day concluded with a Peruvian student asking those in attendance to make a small contribution to a fund that builds schools in Peru.

The approach to cultural co-existence at these two neighboring elementary schools (Ichou and Iida Kita) in Yokohama surpassed the integrated curriculum to encompass aspects of school management and guidance. School administration had made significant efforts to garner the support of the foreign-born parents with noticeable success. The integrated curriculum has served as an additional educational space to engage students in the consideration of the multicultural environment in which they live. More importantly, teachers at both schools recognized a need to provide opportunities for students to ‘find’ their foreign roots, given that most of these children were born in Japan and have little or no knowledge of their ethnic homeland.

I also had the opportunity to visit the junior high school that these children would attend. While I expected to find a similar approach to the integrated curriculum at this junior high school, I found no evidence of such an approach. In interviews, the responses of teachers and administrators at this school and others reflected an acceptance of the diversity in the school and community so pervasive that the need to address it in the curriculum seemed unnecessary and even counter productive. This junior high school principal and others informed me that they considered issues such as cross cultural co-existence the responsibility of the elementary school. He felt that by the time students entered junior high school, their day-to-day existence in the midst of a diverse student

population had eliminated the need to incorporate content focusing on cross-cultural co-existence.¹⁷⁹

I am reminded of a scholarly work by Tomoko Nakajima, a Japanese professor who has written extensively on the issue of Koreans in Japan. She stated her surprise when she asked principals in Australia about their multicultural education practices. Their most common response was that they really do not practice multicultural education, rather the diversity of the students naturally creates a multicultural environment.¹⁸⁰

This junior high school principal and others that I spoke with seemed to accept the view that the `everydayness` (*nichijoka*) of an ethnically diverse school rendered these differences almost invisible. In fact, Shimizu et al., in their fieldwork in Japanese schools in the greater Kanto area, also noticed this tendency to `not see` (*miyou to shinai*) and therefore not attend to, the special needs of foreign students in Japanese schools¹⁸¹ It is interesting to note that these schools had predominately Asian minorities from China and South East Asia, most of them born and raised in Japan. The principals sensed no sign of tension between students. One wonders if it is because these students are visibly and now perhaps culturally indistinguishable from Japanese students.

In my visits to these schools, I noticed students speaking to each other in foreign languages in the hallways and on the playground. In fact, more than once, students made the effort to approach me, the visiting foreigner, to inform me that they were Vietnamese or Chinese. They told me their names and helped me try to pronounce them correctly,

¹⁷⁹ Interview, June, 2005.

¹⁸⁰ Tomoko Nakajima, *Tabunka Kyouiku: Tayousei no tame no Kyouiku Gaku [Multicultural Education: Educational Theory for Diversity]* (Tokyo: Meishi Shoten, 2003).

¹⁸¹ Kikuchi Shimizu, *Nyuukamaa no Kodomotachi ni Taisuru Kyouiku Shien no Kenkyuu: Dai Tousehiken ni Okeru Fiirudo Chosa Kara [Research to Support the Education of Newcomers Children: From Fieldwork in the Tokyo Area]* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo, 1999).

writing them down in Japanese katakana script. It seems quite clear that it would have been easy for these students to conceal their identity and hide their ethnic heritage. In fact, there are likely instances in which students have ‘Japanized’ their names to conceal their foreignness. However, this seemed to be the exception rather than the rule. I was surprised to see students proclaim their ethnic difference so openly, a positive development for cultural co-existence in Japan given the controversy regarding name usage that has influenced the cultural identity of *Zainichi* Koreans.¹⁸²

However, it would be unfair to say that all of these students with foreign roots or nationalities will find equality of opportunity in secondary and higher education, or in the Japanese workforce. In my conversations with teachers of supplemental Japanese language instruction, they expressed a concern for the language delays that they observed among this cohort of students, not in conversational ability, but in reading comprehension and compositional skills. Because these students were born in Japan, attend Japanese public schools, have Japanese friends, and watch Japanese television, teachers were at a loss to explain the reasons for the language difficulties but suspected that the foreign language environment at home might somehow contribute to the problem. In other words, the inability of these students to ask a parent for homework help, over time, might accumulate to the point where advanced language skills, especially writing skills, are compromised.

Educational advancement for foreign students in Japan is obviously a point of concern. On the one hand, a decline in the Japanese student population has created a situation in which high schools, which are not compulsory and ‘compete’ for students, are making concessions for this cohort of foreign students. For example, a high school in

¹⁸² For more information on the name issue, see: Fukuoka (2000).

Gunma Prefecture provides three different courses, in the morning, afternoon, and evening, to open opportunities for students who work to pursue their high school education. In addition, this school provides students with six years to complete their education, rather than the normal allotment of three years.

On the other hand, several Japanese teachers expressed their concern to me about the potential limitations that these students will face in their future educational prospects. The lack of advanced Japanese language skills may make it difficult for many of these students to pursue learning at an academic high school, one that leads to a university education. While most will find opportunities in the vocational high schools and jobs in factories, etc., their limitations for advanced learning are real. Because many of these students arrived in Japan in the early 1990s, it may still be premature to predict the educational futures of these students. However, Shimizu et al. predict that the struggles of foreign students in the Japanese upper secondary and higher education system will soon become clear.¹⁸³

The cultural co-existence approach to the integrated curriculum has provided students, parents, teachers, and community members opportunities to overcome the ambiguities that ‘foreignness’ perpetuates. Foreign children are discovering their ethnic heritage, Japanese children are learning to live in cultural co-existence with foreign children, and the community is overcoming their apprehension of the ‘foreignness’ in their immediate environment, to tolerate and even embrace the cultural diversity of their communities. However, the problems that these students may encounter as they advance in the Japanese educational structure reveals that further accommodations might be necessary.

¹⁸³ Shimizu et al. (1999).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described the efforts of Japanese teachers to implement education reform to support cultural co-existence, and the role of the integrated curriculum activities in that process. I have detailed the efforts of the Kawasaki *Fureaikan* to incorporate Korean culture into the integrated curriculum. I have described the integrated curriculum activities in a Yokohama junior high school with Brazilian students. I have also talked about the circumstances that have brought Chinese returnees and Indochinese refugees to Japan, and the integrated curriculum implemented at these schools.

The integrated curriculum activities discussed up to this point have focused on issues within Japan. In the following chapter, the focus shifts to consider Japan`s knowledge of, and interaction with, the rest of the world. In the context of international understanding education, the next chapter focuses on integrated curriculum activities in which students discover the world through information technology, interaction, dialogue, and debate. In the process they consider the influence of foreign culture on Japanese traditions, Japan`s relationship with other nations, and Japan`s role in the world.

Chapter 4: The International Understanding Education Approach to the Integrated Curriculum

The dilemmas of mediating the claims of Japanese national identity and Japan's role in the world have been constant since the opening of the nation in the Meiji Period (1868-1912); through the post-war period of defeat and occupation (1945-1952); to the most recent era of economic power and increasing global responsibility (1970s to the present). In this chapter, I illustrate how international understanding education has navigated the age old dilemmas of balancing Japanese national identity and international responsibilities, taking note of Japan's changing position in the international community from 1945 to the present. I then examine the current implementation of international understanding education in the context of the integrated curriculum.

1) International Understanding Education in Japan: Re-affirming Nation amidst Defeat

It is no exaggeration to say that international understanding education has been a pillar of Japanese education reform in the post-war period. Japan's military stance and action during the war, and its devastating defeat, had left the nation bereft of international respect, knowledge, and position. In the immediate post-war period, the nation utilized the education system as the primary means to re-establish the nation's position in the international community.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ J. Katsuta, (1980) "Shakai Mondai Toshiteno Kikokushijo Mondai [Social Problems and the Returnee Problem]" (paper (presented at International Symposium on Changing Society: Implications for Social Studies Education, 1980).

As Japan recovered from the devastation of war, the UN Declaration of Human Rights (1945)¹⁸⁵ served as the cornerstone for international understanding education. Japan's Fundamental Law of Education (1947) also set forth the nation's determination to contribute to world peace and human welfare.¹⁸⁶

Throughout the post-war period, the Central Council for Education (CCE) has emphasized the importance of international understanding education.¹⁸⁷ Based on CCE Reports, MEXT has implemented various education policies to 'internationalize' Japanese education such as: 1) designating certain schools for returnees to ease their re-adjustment to Japanese schooling; 2) establishing the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program;¹⁸⁸ and 3) reaching a goal of 100,000 foreign international students in Japan for short/long term undergraduate and graduate study.

In the past two decades, the mediation of Japanese national identity has been further complicated with the rapid influx of foreigners into Japan, particularly the Brazilian communities that emerged seemingly overnight. This development has placed additional pressure on Japanese educators to consider a multicultural approach to education policy and practice. The 1987 Report of the National Council for Education Reform (NCER) was the first time that the issue of foreign children attending Japanese

¹⁸⁵ Specifically UN Declaration: Article 26, Item 2) which states, "It (education) shall promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations....and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace," United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1945) Available online: <http://www.un.org/>

¹⁸⁶ The first line states, "Having established the Constitution of Japan (1946), we have shown our resolution to contribute to the peace of the world and welfare of humanity... the realization of this ideal shall depend fundamentally on the power of education." The Fundamental Law of Education is available at: <http://www.u-gakugei.ac.jp/~takeshik/funda.html>

¹⁸⁷ I referred to the reports (white papers) of the Central Council for Education (CCE) in chapter 1.

¹⁸⁸ The JET Program places about 6,000 young foreign nationals in schools and government offices to assist with foreign language instruction (especially English), sports coaching, and city/prefectural-level international correspondence, events and exchanges.

schools was mentioned.¹⁸⁹ The report calls for “*kokusaiteki ni hiraketa gakkou*” or schools that are open to internationalization. Sato identifies this as the first time the seed of cultural co-existence (*tabunka kyosei*) was planted in Japanese education policy.¹⁹⁰

The most recent rendering of international understanding education in Japan is presented in the 1996 CCE Report. This report makes a concerted effort to address the situation of foreign children in Japan’s school, outlining the following three principals:

1. To nurture the ability and qualities for cultural co-existence, and to have an attitude of respect towards other cultures;
2. From an established sense of self as a Japanese, partake in international understanding
3. In the context of an international society, respect others’ position and learn to express your own thoughts and ideas.¹⁹¹

The evolution of international understanding education in the post-war period reflects a history of continuing efforts to ‘internationalize’ Japanese education. However, many Japanese scholars have taken a critical view of Japan’s specific form of internationalism. Befu views the rhetoric of Japanese internationalism as dominated by economic interests more concerned with Japan’s commercial prowess than a genuine humanitarian desire to understand other cultures.¹⁹² Kurimoto suggests that the internationalization of the production process has dominated the rhetoric on

¹⁸⁹ Nakajima is quite critical of a statement in the report that Japanese public schools lack experience with foreign children. In fact, over ten thousand ‘foreign children’ were attending Japanese schools at the time, the majority *Zainichi* Koreans. According to Nakajima, the fact that *Zainichi* Korean students were not recognized as ‘foreign children’ with specific educational needs is a clear indication that the education approach to these students was one of assimilation rather than cultural recognition. See: Tomoko Nakajima, “Kokunai Rikai to Kokusai Rikai [In-country Understanding and International Understanding],” *Ibunkakan Kyouiku Intercultural Education* 2 (1988): 58-67.

¹⁹⁰ Sato (1999) 26.

¹⁹¹ Available in Japanese on-line at www.mext.go.jp

¹⁹² Harumi Befu, “Internationalization of Japan and Nihonbunkaron,” in *The Challenge of Japan’s Internationalism*, eds. Hiroshi Mannari and Harumi Befu (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1983)

internationalism in Japan.¹⁹³ Morita argues that the government's proposals to nurture internationalism in education are an attempt to rekindle Japanese militarism and imperialism.¹⁹⁴

It was not until the late 1980s that the many of the criticisms so prevalent in Japan became known to the English-speaking with the publication of *Transcending Stereotypes*.¹⁹⁵ As 1980's scholarship on Japan, in the United States especially, focused on the strength of Japanese homogeneity and egalitarianism, Finkelstein et al. edited a collection of readings that revealed the diverse nature of Japanese society. Abridged articles focused on the plight of minorities in Japan, the issues of returnee children, and harsh criticisms by Horio,¹⁹⁶ Fujita,¹⁹⁷ and others of Japanese education as a means of social stratification.

Foreign scholars with extensive fieldwork in Japan have joined the critique. Goodman calls internationalization in Japan a "history of ambivalence," a swing between xenophobia and xenophilia, a battle between the acceptance and/or rejection of the outside world. McVeigh claims that education in Japan has been, and continues to be, dominated by a theory of economic nation-statism. While the education reforms of the Meiji Period and the post-WWII period were presented in an 'internationalist light,' the deep-rooted ideologies of nation-statism were left in tact, resulting in a backlash against

¹⁹³ Kazuo Kurimoto, *Kokusai Jidai to Nihonjin [Japan and the International Age]* (Tokyo: NHK, 1985).

¹⁹⁴ Morita (1988) noted in: Mark Lincicome, "Nationalism, Internationalism and the Dilemma of Education Reform in Japan," *Comparative Education Review* 37.2 (1994): 123-51.

¹⁹⁵ Barbara Finkelstein, Ann Imamura, & Joseph Tobin (eds.) *Transcending Stereotypes: Discovering Japanese Culture and Education* (Yarmouth, MA: Intercultural Press, 1989)

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. Teruhisa Horio, *Japanese Critique of Japanese Education* 208-16.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. Hidenori Fujita, *Education Policy Dilemmas as Historical Constructions* 147-61.

progressive, democratic reforms in both eras.¹⁹⁸ “Consequently, rather than the state/capital nexus existing for the sake of citizens and society, the citizens and society are working hard for the benefit of the state.”¹⁹⁹

The curricular content and teaching methodology of international understanding education (IUE) has also been subjected to harsh critique. Tabuchi claims that the Western emphasis of IUE neglects the Asian cultures closer to Japan, a trend that has actually increased the bias towards Asian foreigners living in Japan, especially Koreans. He adds that Japan’s international position and persuasiveness will be compromised until the nation can learn to co-exist with foreign minorities within its own borders.²⁰⁰

Minoura delineates three types of internationalization in the Japanese context: 1) friendly relationships across cultures based on sister-city and/or sister-school relationships; 2) a form of nationalism, in which Japanese participate in global events for the benefit of Japanese society; and 3) a form of transnationalism, transcending nation and culture.²⁰¹ She suggests transnationalism as the ultimate goal of international understanding but points out that most activities undertaken in the context of international understanding education in Japan’s classrooms reflect types one and two in her schema.

Nakajima identifies two ways in which the classroom application of IUE is flawed: 1) IUE focuses outside of Japan’s national border; and 2) IUE is abstract, removed from everyday experience. She suggests three ways in which these

¹⁹⁸ Brian McVeigh, “Education Reform in Japan: Fixing Education or Fostering Economic Nation-Statism?” In *Globalization and Social Change in Contemporary Japan*, eds. J.S. Eades, Tom Gill and Harumi Befu (Melbourne, Australia: Trans Pacific Press, 2000).

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. 89.

²⁰⁰ Isoo Tabuchi, “Kankoku/Chosen Oyobi Kankoku/Chosen Rikai no Kyouiku Naiyo no Kouzou. [Content and Structure of Understanding the Education of Koreans in Japan]” *Kokusai Rikai [International Understanding]* 17(1987): 13-27.

²⁰¹ Yasuko Minoura, “Ibunka de Sodatsu Kodomo no Bunka Teki Identitii [The Cultural Identity of Children Raised in Multiculturalism]” *Kyouiku Gaku Kenkyu* 61(3): 213-21.

shortcomings can be overcome: 1) rather than attempting to involve students in IUE, help them understand that they are immersed in it daily; 2) rather than help students gain international understanding and knowledge, help them to realize that it is their responsibility to become involved in issues of international concern and human welfare; and 3) rather than inviting foreign expertise into the classroom to broaden students' perspectives, call on the human resources that exist in the community to share their international work, experiences, and perspectives with students.²⁰²

As the preceding section makes clear, the conflict between balancing Japanese national identity and internationalization has been a dominant trend. The implementation of the integrated curriculum in the nation's schools has provided teachers with a unique opportunity to continue efforts to promote international understanding education. The following paragraphs describe a small sample of the activities in which teachers engage their students.

The International Understanding Education Approach to the Integrated Curriculum

In the current Course of Study implemented in 2002, MEXT suggested that schools pursue IUE as a component of the integrated curriculum, and many schools have done so. In fact, according to a MEXT survey, 79.2% of elementary schools implement an international understanding education component to the integrated curriculum.²⁰³

For clarity and convenience, I divide the following integrated curriculum activities into two independent sections. In the first section, I highlight activities that

²⁰² Nakajima (1988) 62-65.

²⁰³ The number is lower for junior high schools (39.4%). See: Japan Education at a Glance (2005) Japanese Ministry of Education. <http://www.mext.go.jp/english/statist/05101901.htm>

demonstrate student's interaction with foreign visitors, and student consideration of Japan's international relations, using China as an example. In these activities, students welcome high school and university exchange students into their classrooms, and uncover Japan's cultural connections with China, as well as discuss the current state of politics between the two nations. These activities focus on internationalization within Japan and the nation's foreign diplomacy.

The second section shifts the focus to integrated curriculum activities in which students consider Japan's evolving global role. Students learn about the ways in which the Japanese government and Japanese NPO/NGOs contribute to international development through volunteerism and information exchange; and the role of the English language as a tool of internationalization. These activities reflect how Japanese teachers are intersecting their students with evolving concepts of Japanese global citizenship and the nation's role as a global leader.

1) Internal Internationalization and Foreign Relations

a) Importing Diversity:²⁰⁴ Student Interaction with Foreign Visitors

A typical pattern to IUE practiced in many schools is to invite foreign guest teachers into classrooms to interact with students and introduce their culture and language. Schools utilize a variety of social community networks to facilitate this type of activity. The large number of international students in Japan's universities provides a great resource. Many universities encourage their foreign students to visit local schools and facilitate such events through liaison offices. However, university students are not the

²⁰⁴ David L. McConnell, *Importing Diversity: Inside Japan's JET Program* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000).

only resource for foreigners living in Japan, and schools utilize a variety of human resource networks for this purpose. Below I briefly explain some opportunities for Japanese students to interact with foreign visitors.

i) High School Rotary Exchange Students

At Kaio Elementary School in Ota Ward, Tokyo, high school Rotary Scholarship students joined Japanese elementary school students in classrooms for an hour of activities followed by lunch and free time on the playground. The Rotary students were from India, Germany, Brazil, Peru, Sweden, and the United States. While in Japan for an academic year, these foreign students attended Japanese high schools and lived in Japanese homestays.

The high school students divided into three groups to interact with students. The Japanese students in each classroom separated into small groups of five or six, and a high school student (or group of students) joined each group. Some of the high school students worked in pairs while others interacted with students independently. They rotated between groups of students every 15-20 minutes, providing the Japanese students the opportunity to interact with many of the Rotary students.

Each Rotary high school student (or group of students) presented their culture, games, expressions, etc. in their own unique way. For example, the Indian student taught simple expressions in Hindi; a Peruvian student shared the Spanish names of insects with the class; and the Brazilian students explained the representations on their national flag.

All of the foreign high school students spoke Japanese with varying levels of proficiency. Most had studied Japanese in their home country. While it might have been

difficult at times for the students to understand them, their enthusiasm and youth overcame these obstacles. Rotary volunteers joined the event as well. Ten Japanese volunteers (some Japanese students who had experienced Rotary programs overseas, others host families of the visiting students; and some senior personnel in the Rotary organization) observed the classroom presentations. After the classroom interaction, the Rotary students joined the children for lunch and free time on the playground.

ii) University International Students

A central component of Noborito Elementary School's (Kawasaki City) sixth grade integrated curriculum is international understanding education through discovery learning and interaction. The teacher began the unit by allowing students opportunities to explore the internet and gather information about foreign countries such as traditional arts, sports, culture, and daily living habits. Small groups of 3 or 4 students shared this information with their classmates during a mid-term report, creating posters, newspaper-style prints, and power points for their presentations. In the process, students discovered various international issues related to poverty, human rights, etc.²⁰⁵ After the information gathering stage of the unit, the homeroom teacher contacted the international student affairs office at a local university to request a visit from foreign international students to the school.

6th graders from Noborito ES welcomed international students from Senshuu University, located near the school. Students prepared for the visit, sending invitations to their international guests and creating the lesson plan in consultation with their

²⁰⁵ Kokusai Kyouiku Kenkyuu Kai: Jugyuu Kenkyuu Kai [International Understanding Research Meeting: Lesson Research Meeting] Noborito Elementary School. Kawasaki City. Pg. 7-12.

homeroom teachers. On the day that I observed, three international students (from Korea, China, and Germany) visited 6th grade classrooms.

The Chinese student introduced herself as a doctoral student in economics studying the ODA (Overseas Development Aid) system between Japan and China; and a Chinese minority, one of many different ethnic groups in China. She shared some Chinese greetings and expressions with students and answered their questions. She told students about her ethnic community in China; elementary school life; sports; time zones; cuisine; climate; and popular culture including Japanese popular culture that is fashionable in China. She closed the 90-minute lesson with a simple Chinese game and Japanese *karuta*.

In the 6-2 class, a German international student began the lesson with a brief self-introduction in German, asking students if they understood her. She then asked students to find Germany on a world map. She told students about the ethnic diversity of the German population, the flag, and the land area in comparison with Japan.

At this point in the lesson, Japanese students introduced aspects of Japanese culture to their international guest. One group of students explained interesting and/or difficult Japanese expressions, providing details of their meaning and example sentences to demonstrate their usage. Other student groups introduced Japanese cuisine including New Years food; and popular culture including television, anime, and pop music. Students in this class took an active role in planning and presenting the lesson, providing information to their international guest to help her navigate her temporary stay in Japan.

The Korean international student interacted with students in the 6-3 class. Each student provided a brief introduction and passed their name card to their foreign visitor.

He proceeded to translate their names into Korean (*Hangul*) letters and write the script on each student's name card. The students asked questions about Korean schools, food, culture, etc. Then they played fruit basket in Korean, calling out the names of fruits such as banana, strawberry, and melon, in Korean, Japanese, and English as they ran about the classroom looking for an empty seat.

In 2004, the number of foreign students studying in Japan exceeded MEXT's goal of 100,000 to reach 117,000. Asian students account for 90% of the foreign student population in Japan, 65% of that population being from China.²⁰⁶ It is quite clear that Japan has become a desired destination for foreign students, bringing greater diversity to the nation's institutions of higher learning.

However, the dominance of the Asian students has caused some education scholars to classify Japanese institutions of higher learning as regional centers of learning, rather than global centers.²⁰⁷ As a way to further diversify Japanese higher education, policymakers passed legislation to support short-term international education programs (*tanki ryugaku suishin seido*) in the mid-1990s. These short term programs provide instruction in English to accommodate students who lack the required Japanese language skills to navigate course work in Japanese. This strategy seems to have paid off as roughly half of the students in short-term programs are Westerners. Tsuneyoshi points out that various problems exist in these programs such as the burden brought upon Japan professors to prepare lectures in English, and the acquisition, training, and retention of

²⁰⁶ Japan Education at a Glance (2005) Japanese Ministry of Education.
<http://www.mext.go.jp/english/statist/05101901.htm>, pg. 26

²⁰⁷ Kobayashi (1991) quoted in: Ryoko Tsuneyoshi, "Internationalization Strategies in Japan: The Dilemmas and Possibilities of Study Abroad Programs Using English," *Journal of Research in International Education* 4.1 (2005): 65-86.

English-speaking staff for program administration.²⁰⁸ In spite of these issues, foreign students are now part of the landscape of Japanese institutions of higher learning, both national and private.²⁰⁹

Japan has promoted international education policies that, in McConnell's words, have 'imported diversity'²¹⁰ into virtually every corner of the country. The short-term study programs for foreign students are examples of these policies. Public school teachers have utilized the integrated curriculum to 'import diversity' into their classrooms, bringing foreign international high school and college students into their schools to interact with their students. In addition, Japanese students learn more deeply about their own culture in the process of introducing it to their foreign guests. While the visits are generally one-time occasions, students are nonetheless given opportunities to interact with foreigners, an opportunity that many would not get out of school.

However, as Nakajima has pointed out, bringing foreign guests into the classroom removes internationalization from the students' immediate environment. In the two previous examples, both groups of students who visited Japanese classrooms are temporary 'guests' in Japan. This approach might in fact reinforce the Japanese vs. non-Japanese dichotomy that Nakajima has identified as a potential problem for this type of activity.

²⁰⁸ Ibid

²⁰⁹ Tsuneyoshi points out that some private institutions such as Kansai Foreign Language University implemented short-term programs in English in the early 1970s. The national universities such as the University of Tokyo did not start their short-term programs until the mid-1990s. Ibid.

²¹⁰ McConnell (2000)

b) Japan's International Relations with China: Historical Influence and Current Conflict

Japan has had a long and sometimes tumultuous relationship with its large neighbor to the East—China. While scholars often point to the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) as the end of Japan's 250 years of self-imposed isolation (*sakoku*) during to the Tokugawa Period (1603-1868), between the 5th and 8th Century, missions to China brought Buddhism and the Chinese writing system to Japan.²¹¹ While the term *Wakon Yousai* (和魂洋才 Japanese Spirit, Western Technology) dominated the politics and policies of education of the Meiji Period onwards, the term *Wakon Kansai* (和魂漢才 Japanese Spirit, China Technology) captures the earlier era of cultural and educational exchange with China. However, sixty years after the end of hostilities between the two countries, relationships remain tense as reflected in recent anti-Japanese demonstrations in China in the Spring of 2005. China is reacting to three issues: 1) Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine, dedicated to Japan's fallen war heroes; 2) the current debate in the Japanese Diet concerning a move to revise Article 9 of the 1946 Constitution, the Non-aggression Act; and 3) the controversy about the way in which Japanese history textbooks depict the nation's actions in China during the Second World War. The following two integrated curriculum activities illustrate how Japanese students are uncovering the often forgotten connections between their nation and China, as well as discussing the current impasse in international relations between the two nations.

²¹¹ Jansen, Marius B. (1980) *Japan and Its World: Two Centuries of Change*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

i) Folk Dancing in Japan: Chinese Traditions in Practice

Katsushika Junior High School in Funabashi City, Chiba Prefecture, implements an integrated curriculum based on student-directed research projects. Entitled “Making an International Town: Funabashi,” the content encompasses culture, industry, tradition, nature and the environment, health and welfare, and volunteerism and internationalism in the local community and beyond.

Students form small groups and develop a research theme through internet exploration and consultation with teachers and peers. Many of the student research projects explore international content. While first graders explore the local community, second and third grade students plan their projects to correspond with school trips to Kamakura (second graders), and the Kansai region: Kyoto, Nara, Osaka, and Kobe (third graders). The research projects are numerous and varied. In the following paragraphs, I detail just one activity that focuses on the Chinese influence on a local cultural tradition.

The Fool’s Mask Dance (*Baka Men Odori*) is well known in Japan. Between 1716 and 1735, a shrine attendant in the Katsuhika area of Funabashi City created this dance. This folk dance has spread throughout Japan and is now known as the Funabashi Fools Mask Dance.²¹² In this research project, students sought to compare this dance with folk dance in China (where it is said that the dance originated) to discover differences and commonalities between the two cultures.

Students investigated Chinese dance traditions and discovered that folk dance (*Minkan Buyo*) is a common activity in rural China. In the process of their investigations,

²¹² Katsushika Junior High School, *Katsu no Ha: Watashitachi no Machi wo Tsukuru: Kokusai Toshi (Funabashi wo Tsukuru) [The Leaf of Katsu: Making Our Town: The International City (Funabashi)]* (Chiba, Funabashi, 2003).

they also learned that China has 55 recognized ethnic minority groups, and each group has their own folk dance traditions.

In contrasting Japanese and Chinese folk dance traditions, students realized that dancers in both countries often wear masks and dance for the Gods. However, while the Chinese dance to appease the Gods, the Japanese dance to entertain the Gods. Students interviewed a local official at the community center about teaching the mask dance. He told them that he teaches the dance to children as young as five years old, to adults as old as eighty.

Students reacted to the activity positively, indicating that at first they knew nothing about the mask dance, but now, not only do they understand the importance of such local traditions, they were also able to deepen their understanding of the connections between Japan and China. Students also wrote in their reaction papers that this research project helped them realize the importance of protecting local cultural traditions.²¹³

ii) Anti-Japan Demonstrations in China: International Relations through Discussion and Debate

A sixth grade class that I visited at Seinan Elementary School in Tokyo's Minato Ward takes a unique approach to the integrated curriculum. For about forty hours of the integrated curriculum time, students investigate an issue of their choice determined in consultation with the homeroom teacher. Each class period begins with a short 5-10 minute presentation in which a student explains the issue and presents questions for discussion. Following this, the floor is open to debate. Students direct the discussion and

²¹³ Ibid.

the teacher intervenes on occasion. Research subjects are diverse and vary from violent crime to environmental issues. Many of the themes are international in nature.

On the day that I observed, a female student addressed the issue of Japan-China relations. In the spring of 2005, there had been a series of anti-Japan protests in China, some that resulted in vandalism to Japanese-owned businesses and the Japan Embassy in Beijing.

To begin the class, a student presented 7 pages full of hand-written text on large sheets of paper that were attached to the blackboard with magnets. She read through the text which described the issues and her thoughts and opinions. Her research theme was entitled, "Anti-Japanese Demonstrations: Japan-China Relations." She mapped out the issues, stating that China's anger with Japan was due to Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to *Yasukuni Shrine* (dedicated to Japan's war dead), the history textbook issue, and Japan's bid to become a permanent member of the United Nations. She felt that the anti-Japan actions in Chinese were an over reaction, and that Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to *Yasukuni Shrine* was a private matter, the right of every citizen in a free country. She closed by stating that the research project had taught her the importance of the heart, that each person's heart is embedded in the society that he/she lives.

An animated debate followed. Students expressed their opinions and challenged the arguments of others. The discussion centered on the role of the *Yasukuni Shrine* and Japan's war history in the context of the current tensions with China. Some students felt that Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to *Yasukuni* as a private citizen was justified, while others felt that it was ill-conceived and reckless. Many students felt that their textbooks should be more forthcoming with Japan's past war record, but also felt that the chances of

another major military battle between the two nations so remote as to render China's reaction mute. The teacher prompted students with questions throughout the debate, at one point asking students why the Chinese were not angry with the English and the Germans, both nations that had colonies in China in the past. Students also wondered why Japan was able to maintain positive international relations with the United States, a country that also suffered casualties at the hands of the Japanese military, while international relations with China continue to be volatile. While one group of students understood China's anger and thought that Japan needed to apologize to China for past atrocities, another group was strongly opposed to further apologies. Students were unanimous in the necessity of dialogue between the two nations to reconcile past differences, but were skeptical about reaching a solution to the political standoff.

The lessons described above that consider Japan's relationship with its large and now powerful neighbor, China, are indicative of the dilemma of national identity and international position that Japan faces. While some students uncover the deep cultural connections between the two nations, finding more similarities than differences, other students recognize a deep political rift between the two nations. These activities also illustrate a trend to move away from the Western-dominated focus in IUE, towards a more balanced approach in which the study of Asia, in this case China, takes center stage.

The integrated curriculum has given teachers the autonomy to engage their students in discussion and debate that directly affects their fortune as members of Japanese society, and role as future leaders of the nation. Students are debating how others, in this case the Chinese, perceive their nation. In the process, they learn that

alternative views exist on these issues, even among the members of their own class. The integrated curriculum has provided teachers with the freedom of thought and action needed to implement this type of learning, and students have responded positively, calling into question a criticism often heard that Japanese students lack the communication skills to express themselves effectively in public. This type of integrated curriculum activity empowers students with civil liberties and rights, proving to them that their opinions matter and their advocacy can make a difference in the outcome of these political battles that affect the future of their nation.

While the previous section has focused on temporary foreign residents in Japan and their interaction with students, and the nation's foreign relations with China, activities in the following section engage students in the examination of the role of their nation as an active participant in the international community. In this next section, the focus is on how students are engaged in content that confronts them with the dilemmas inherent in world leadership as Japan struggles to define its international mission and leadership role.

2) Japan's Global Role: Constructions of Japanese Citizenship for the 21st Century

Japan's global role has changed markedly as the nation has gained economic status and with it, international power and influence. In the following section, I will show how Japanese students are considering the role of their nation in international development through the work of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and a Japanese NGO, the Japan Asian Friendship Society (JAFS), organizations that provide technical assistance and volunteers to a variety of projects in developing

countries. Both JICA and Japanese NGO/NPOs have taken an active role in international understanding education in the context of the integrated curriculum.

I will also describe an integrated curriculum activity that incorporates the English language as a primary focus to international understanding education. Teachers are utilizing the integrated curriculum to implement conversational English activities, a strong emphasis in international understanding education.

a) The Work of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA): The Government's Response to International Understanding Education

The work of JICA is of particular interest to students and schools in the context of the international understanding education component of the integrated curriculum.

JICA's offices in Yokohama hold an impressive array of research facilities, classrooms, and the Japanese Overseas Migration Museum. JICA also publishes a Curriculum and Resource Guide based on the content of the museum, with lessons about sugarcane plantation workers in Hawaii, Japanese immigrants in Brazil, the Japanese Internment in the United States, and the food and consumer culture of Japanese immigrants in the Americas.²¹⁴ The JICA education division has also developed teaching resources on the lives of children in developing countries. One informational pamphlet entitled "I want to go to school"²¹⁵ explains the reasons why 1 in 5 children in the world are unable to attend school, and details how JICA's education assistance is building schools and providing volunteer teachers in these nations. These educational resources are child

²¹⁴ *Japanese Overseas Migration Museum: Gakushu Katsudo no Tebiki [Curriculum and Resources Guide]* Draft Copy (Yokohama, 2005)

²¹⁵ Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), *Gakkou e Ikitai [I want to go to School]* JICA Info Kit. Informational Pamphlet (Yokohama, 2005).

friendly—complex issues are explained in easy to understand language with animated characters, graphics, visuals, and colorful photographs.

The following three integrated curriculum activities demonstrate a cross-section of the types of international understanding education activities that incorporate the work of JICA. In the first activity, students conduct research on JICA`s work and interview JICA staff. The second activity features classroom visits of past participants of a JICA overseas volunteer program. The third activity is an example of JICA`s international understanding education classrooms for junior high school students.

i) Students Interview JICA Staff

Junior high school students at Katsushika Junior High School in Funabashi City, Chiba Prefecture, have shown a keen interest in Japan`s development assistance programs and the work of JICA. Through information resources on the internet, students discovered that much of JICA`s work is in the medical field conducting research to prevent communicable diseases. JICA also works to solve environmental problems such as global warming, and assists in national recovery from military conflicts. Students discovered that JICA builds schools and hospitals; provides emergency assistance to developing nations to rebuild after natural disasters; and conducts research to determine the power, transportation, and communication needs of developing countries. JICA also operates two volunteer programs, for youth and seniors, to assist with human resource development in developing countries.

Students interviewed JICA staff about their volunteer programs. They learned that there are over 140 types of volunteer opportunities: from beauticians to soccer coaches.

1965 marked the first dispatch of JICA volunteers to Laos. Since that time, over 23,000 JICA volunteers have worked in 73 countries from Eastern Europe and Africa, to the islands of the South Pacific. JICA volunteer positions are based on requests from developing nations. In addition to traditional occupations in medicine and science, educators and cultural arts personnel are being deployed in increasing numbers.

Students asked JICA staff questions about participating in volunteer activities. The age requirements are 20 to 39, and applicants must pass a test to qualify. Volunteers are deployed for two years—it takes about six months for volunteers to become adjusted to the host country and about two years to make a difference. Students also asked if they would be able to communicate without English. JICA staff responded that English is highly recommended and they advised students to study English if they want to participate in JICA volunteer activities.

Students learned that international assistance takes place not only with financial contributions, but also with contributions of human resources such as labor and knowledge. They concluded that although it is difficult for them as students to participate, the first step is to consider the world's problems as their own problems and consider ways toward their solution.

ii) JICA Overseas Volunteers Talk About Their Experiences

Former JICA volunteers also visited schools to talk about their overseas experiences. On the day that I visited Ibaragi High School in Osaka Prefecture, I observed three young Japanese talking to high school students about their experiences in Jordan, Syria, and Morocco.

One JICA volunteer spent two years in Jordan working in a facility treating children with learning difficulties. According to this volunteer, Jordan has an unusually high rate of children born with learning handicaps and recently the government has begun to provide them with some assistance. The facility in which she worked was quite large and number of children being treated many. While learning about the differences between Japan and an Islamic nation, she worked with the children and provided advice and counsel to native staff.

This JICA volunteer prepared a print for students describing the national and cultural attributes of Jordan and its international relationship with Japan. The print indicated the population, land area, the history of the nation and the Islamic Religion, the capital (Amman), and its ethnic composition (70% Palestinian). The print also explained that 92% of the population is Sunni Muslim and the meaning of that distinction.²¹⁶

She told students about her struggles to implement activities for the children in her care without a common language. When she arrived, the children were often idle, sometimes their movement restricted. However, by the end of her two year assignment, she was able to engage the students in drawing, exercise, and music activities, and was able to provide experiences for them outside of the institution as well.

Students remarked in their reflection papers that they were impressed with this volunteer's perseverance to struggle through adversity and finally engage the children in physical and educational activities. Students learned the importance of will and self-satisfaction, and the value of interacting with others through volunteer activities.

²¹⁶ Ibaraki High School, "*Baria Furee: Shintai Shougai to Shakai: Jinken Kouji, Kansoubun. [Barrier Free: Disability and Society, Human Rights Activity Reflection Papers]*" (Osaka: Ibaraki City, Osaka Prefecture, 2004).

Another JICA volunteer talked to students about her service in Syria, also working with children with learning difficulties. She told students that when she arrived, many of the children did not wear pants or socks and the windows of the building were broken, letting in the cold air. She sent a request to Japan for “socks with holes” and received 600 pairs of new socks. The children in the facility and many others in the community enjoyed warm feet that winter.

She explained how she was the only foreigner in the facility and how the only way she could communicate was with her limited Arabic. With music, physical education, and art projects, she was able to overcome cultural differences and communicate with the children.

Students held negative images of Syria as a dangerous country but after hearing from the JICA volunteer, recognized that many warm and friendly people live in every country. They were surprised when the volunteer told them that many of the children she cared for said quite matter of fact, that they would participate in suicide terrorism. Another student was impressed with her story about the socks and felt embarrassed at the fact that Japanese people throw away clothing just because they no longer like something, or it is no longer in style. One student admired the volunteer’s ability to open up her heart to these children and help them try to overcome their disability.²¹⁷

In another classroom, a JICA volunteer talked to students about his experience in Morocco working in the rehabilitation center for people who had been dismembered. He provided physical therapy to individuals who had received an artificial limb to help them adjust to living with the prosthetic. Many of the children were victims of polio while

²¹⁷ Ibid 18.

others had lost a limb due to traffic accidents. Very few of his patients had lost a limb because of land mines.

He introduced students to the Moroccan culture, language, cuisine. He talked about life in an Islamic culture and challenges in his daily life. He showed students slides of a lamb being slaughtered and explained the religious significance of this ritual. He told students that he often felt laughed at or made fun of because of his Asian heritage and this sometimes made him angry. However, he stressed to students that although it can be difficult to understand foreign cultures, if you have an attitude of trust, you can overcome language and cultural barriers.

The fact that Moroccans were very grateful to receive an artificial limb left an impression on students. They thought that perhaps people in wealthy countries like Japan have lost a sense of appreciation for such things. One student expressed his surprise when he heard that most Moroccans lost their limbs because of traffic accidents rather than land mines. This made him/her realize the relevance of the issue because traffic accidents are also common in Japan. The volunteer's attitude of calm (*heiki*) towards issues of cross-cultural understanding impressed students. One student remarked that he had heard the term `culture shock` many times but had not really understood the meaning of the term until hearing about this JICA volunteer's experience in Morocco.²¹⁸

iii) JICA`s International Understanding Classroom

JICA also provides international understanding classroom activities in their main office in the Minato Mirai area of Yokohama. The building holds an impressive collection of video resources for viewing and free literature about JICA`s international

²¹⁸ Ibid. pg. 23.

activities. It is equipped with several classrooms and also houses the Japanese Overseas Migration Museum.

The day that I visited the JICA office, a group of junior high school 1st graders from a school in Yokosuka, Japan visited the JICA facilities. The lesson started with the JICA instructor asking the students to tell her the numbers of nations in the world. Students guessed between 100 and 130. She informed them that the UN officially recognizes 191 nations. She then asked each student to name a country. As students called out the names of countries that they knew, she divided the names of the nations into two groups on the board and asked students why she had done this. After a brief silence a student responded, “Poor and Rich nations?” The JICA instructor then explained the concept of developed and developing nations and pointed out how most of the nations they named were developed countries. She informed that about 80% of the nations of the world are classified as developing nations. She then displayed a map to help students locate developing nations.

In the next section of the lesson, students participated in an activity called “The World in a Supermarket.” In this activity, groups of students received a bag of basic food items purchased at a local supermarket. Their task was to identify the country of origin of the product. This includes identifying the origin of the agricultural products used to make the product.

One group of students pointed out that the cocoa beans used to make candy bars are imported from West Africa. They identified corn and soy as products from North America; tea from Sri Lanka and India; bananas from the Philippines, Ecuador, and Taiwan; salmon from Canada, Norway, Alaska; coffee from Indonesia, Columbia, Brazil;

cucumbers from China; octopus from Morocco, crab from Russia, etc. One group of students noticed that many vegetables and fruit are imported from China because of the proximity to Japan and low cost of labor. Students recognized that developed nations are major importers, while developing nations are often major exporters.

The JICA instructor had spent two years in Zimbabwe as a volunteer teaching music in an elementary school. As an introduction to her experience in Africa, she asked the students to brainstorm images that came to mind when they thought of Africa. Students offered dark skin, poor, jungle, hot, AIDS, bare feet, straw homes, homes over water, drinking river water, etc.

She then showed the students five different pictures. The first two were of a modern city with tall buildings and shopping malls. The next two were village scenes with families walking and riding small taxi vans. The final picture was a scene inside a large grocery store. She asked the students if they thought the pictures were of Africa. Predictably, students identified the village life pictures as 'African' but not the modern city images. She informed the students that all of the pictures were of Zimbabwe, those of tall buildings are in the capital city, Harare, while the others were taken just outside of the capital in the surrounding villages. She finished the lesson with pictures of her teaching music in an elementary school in Harare. Students noticed well-dressed children in clean uniforms in a large, modern school building. They recognized that the classrooms were very similar to Japanese classrooms. She stressed that not everyone in developing nations is poor, but that the socio-economic differences between the cities and the villages are stark.

The integrated curriculum has provided Japanese teachers opportunities to explore development education (*kaihatsu kyouiku*) with their students, examining the role of Japan as a donor nation²¹⁹ and the assistance the nation provides to the developing world.²²⁰ In addition to government-sponsored development assistance programs such as JICA, the role of Japanese NPO/NGOs has increased considerably in the past decade. Japanese have formed organizations to promote cross-cultural understanding between the Japanese and foreigners living Japan. Other NPO/NGOs expand their mission to provide development assistance in the form of fund raising and volunteerism for small-scale projects in developing countries. The integrated curriculum has provided educators with the curricular space to invite leaders of NGO/NPOs into classrooms to share their work and expertise with students. The following is a description of one such activity.

b) Japanese NGOs and International Development: Sharing Knowledge in the Classroom: The Japan Asian Friendship Association

Teachers at Kayano Elementary School in Minno City, Osaka Prefecture, planned and implemented this lesson in collaboration with the Japan Asian Association and Friendship Society (JAFS), a local NGO dedicated to providing clean water to the world's poor.²²¹ Prior to the visit of the NGO, students had spent considerable time in the library and on the internet gathering information on school life in India, the climate,

²¹⁹ Japan's contribution to Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) exceeds all nations with the exception of the United States, a total of 9,295 hundred thousand dollars in 2002. See JICA's website at: <http://www.jica.go.jp/english/>

²²⁰ Recall that Tanaka of the Development Education Research Center also endorsed this approach to the integrated curriculum. See: H. Tanaka, H. "Sougou Gakushuu to Kaihatsu Kyouiku [Integrated Studies and Development Education]" *Kaihatsu Kyouiku [Development Education]* 38.8 (1998): 3-11.

²²¹ See website: http://www.jafs.or.jp/index_e.html

animals, population, land area, sports, festivals, cooking, furniture, music, the history of India under British rule, the struggle for independence, and the life of Gandhi.

Students had also explored issues of human suffering and deprivation such as the lives of India's street children. They created a poster board containing newspaper clippings about street children. One newspaper article entitled 'The daily life of a girl named Amin' describes her as a street child who works the New Delhi train station picking up trash such as the newspapers and empty bottles left by passengers. She sells these items to recyclers for about forty rupees a day, enough money for food. She feels protected sleeping alongside the street vendors who often spend nights next to their carts. Another article tells the story of street children who live in constant fear of being chased away by adults and the police for collecting trash. The article talks about the efforts of an NGO in India called Butterfly that provides an outdoor classroom so that these children have the opportunity to learn how to read and write.

To begin the lesson, a guest teacher from India introduced her culture. With slide photographs, she talked to students about India's geography, famous individuals (Gandhi), famous sites (Taj Mahal), language, etc. She told students that the Indian Government recognizes eighteen official languages such as Bengali, Gujarati, Kashmiri, etc. The most prevalent language is Hindi although English is also commonly spoken. She spoke of India's agricultural products including cotton and sugar cane, and transportation such as the Darjeeling Toy Train, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. She displayed artifacts such as traditional clothing: Saris for the girls and Sherwanis and Dhotis for the boys. Students were given the opportunity to try on this clothing

Following this, the NGO representative talked about the condition of the earth's water supply. She used a globe to illustrate that the earth is about seventy percent water. Using a 400 ml plastic bottle full of water to represent the earth's water supply, she asked students to guess how much of it is suitable for human consumption. She poured a very small amount of the water from the plastic bottle into the bottle cap to help the students visualize the minute amount of the earth's water that is suitable for human consumption, less than 1%.

The NGO representative then showed the students slide pictures of India to illustrate the dry areas of the country. She explained that rather than having four seasons like Japan, there were only two—a rainy season and a dry season. She showed pictures of flooded villages during the rainy season, wet paddy rice farming, tilling with water buffalo, and women and their daughters with water vassals on their heads going to fetch water from the village well in the early morning.

A primary mission of JAFS is to build water wells in Indian villages. To close, the JAFS representative encouraged students to contribute to the mission of helping India's children live a better life by building water wells in their villages. Students were encouraged to ask their parents for small contributions, that no amount was too small, and she assured them that the money would be put to good use.

MEXT identified volunteerism as a primary focus to the integrated curriculum. As the previous examples of the integrated curriculum illustrate, volunteers from JICA and NGO/NPOs²²² are visiting classrooms to talk to students about their international

²²² Currently, there are over 20,000 NPO/NGOs registered in Japan, and this number is increasing at the rate of about 400 per month. The passage of the Special Nonprofit Activities Law (1998) simplified the

volunteer experiences. Students have in turn developed a keen interest in learning more about volunteerism, a significant development in a country that has traditionally relied on government services for its well-being.

c) The English Language as Reflection of Japan`s Internationalism

In this final activity, I consider the role of English language instruction as a component of international understanding education in the context of integrated curriculum. Japan`s education councils have perceived the inability of the Japanese to speak English as an impediment to international understanding. Rightly or wrongly, the nation is embarrassed by their lack of conversational English. At present, English language instruction is not an officially mandated subject at the elementary school level. However, many elementary schools have utilized the integrated curriculum to introduce their students to English conversation activities. The following lesson is an example of an approach to English language instruction that several schools that I observed are implementing.

The City of Takatsuki in Osaka Prefecture named Hiyoshidai Elementary School a research school for the study of international understanding education. The school`s research plan focused on English language instruction.

In November 2004, guests from the city hall, and educators and parents from around the region, gathered on this day to observe the integrated curriculum at Hiyoshidai Elementary School (HES). Educators at HES incorporated a variety of subjects into the

process for establishing a NPO/NGO in Japan and prompted a dramatic increase in the number of such organizations. For more information see: Jeff Kingston, "Building Civil Society: NPOs and Judicial Reform," in *Japan`s Quiet Transformation: Social Change and Civil Society in the 21st Century*, ed. Jeff Kingston (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004).

integrated curriculum including community-based education, environmental issues, and Japanese culture, via a content-based approach to English as a Foreign Language.²²³

3rd grade students created a shopping street derived from previous fieldtrips in their neighborhood. On this street, students managed two stationary stores, two flower shops, a vegetable stand, and a pet shop. Parents and visitors wandered along the shopping street examining goods and making purchases. Students conducted all transactions in English, welcoming their costumers with a warm ‘May I help you?’

The 4th graders tackled the environmental issue of trash recycling. The guest teacher started the class with a short rap that repeated the English phrase, “Garbage, garbage, too much garbage. What should we do? What should we do?” She then talked to students about the 3Rs: reduce, reuse, and recycle. With picture cards, students reviewed the vocabulary of various trash items including cardboard, jars, newspapers, cans, magazines, pet bottles, milk cartons, toys, plastic bags, etc. The teacher asked the students to respond yes or no to the question, Is this trash? Can you reuse or recycle this? In this way, students learned that some items that they considered trash could be reused or recycled in a variety of ways.

The 6th grade students gathered in the gymnasium to introduce aspects of Japanese culture in English to the audience. Teachers implemented this lesson because they believed students` knowledge of traditional Japanese culture and customs to be weak. Students demonstrated Japanese calligraphy, origami, *shougi* (Japanese chess), Japanese

²²³ Hiyoshidai Elementary School, *Sekai wo Tanoshimou: Tsue Au Chikara wo Takameyo [Lets Enjoy the World: Lets Raise Our Ability to Express Ourselves] Kokusai Rikai Kyouiku no Kan Suru Chosa Kenkyuu: Tabunka Kyousei Kyouiku, Eigo [Research Concerning International Understanding Education: Cross-cultural Co-existence and English]* (Osaka: Hiyoshidai Elementary School, 2004).

toys such as *koma* (tops) and *taketombo* (bamboo flyers), judo, traditional clothing, cooking (*okonomiyaki*, a traditional Osaka dish), and *wadaiko* (Japanese drumming).

Some of the lessons in Hiyoshidai ES's integrated curriculum are based on Global Education in EFL (GITC),²²⁴ a content-based approach to teaching English as a Foreign Language. Global Education in EFL aims to promote the attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to fulfill one's potential and become a responsible global citizen in a multicultural and interdependent world community. The Global Education in EFL curriculum is based on five thematic areas; 1) Human Rights Education; 2) Peace Education; 3) Environmental Education; 4) Cross Cultural Communication; and 5) Area Studies.

GITC thematic units provide word games, storytelling with *kamishibai* (paper theater), action games with body movement, writing activities, songs and chants, and pronunciation worksheets. In addition to the activities described above, I have observed this approach to English language instruction in the integrated curriculum in two other elementary schools. This content-based approach seems to be gaining support in school districts throughout Japan.

The debate over the implementation of English language at Japanese elementary schools has been ongoing for many years. Some school districts such as Yokohama and Kawasaki City in Kanagawa Prefecture, and Shinagawa Ward in Tokyo, implement an international understanding classroom program for elementary schools. Foreigners residing in Japan visit elementary schools on a part-time basis to engage students in the study of foreign cultures and English language. Often, the instructors are not native

²²⁴ Globe International Teachers Circle (GITC) ended its work in Feb. 2004 but its thematic units and other materials are still available from Bell Works at <http://www.bell-works.com>

English speakers but are proficient enough to conduct lessons in English, and at the same time, introduce their native culture to students.

Many school districts without such programs devote some time in the integrated curriculum to English language instruction. Often it is no more than 20 hours per year within the 110 hours allocated to the integrated curriculum. In some schools, Japanese homeroom teachers teach these English language activities.

However, some districts have used the integrated curriculum to provide additional time for English language activities. For example, in Oizumi Town, Gunma Prefecture (mentioned previously), elementary schools devote thirty-five hours per year to English language activities for all students grade three to six. This provides each student with nearly one hour of English per week for the entire school year, a considerable accomplishment given that in most of the international understanding classroom programs, teachers see the same class of students often only once a month.

For better or for worse, English is lauded as the global language. Japan's education councils have pushed for the improvement of English language instruction in Japan as a means to the internationalization of the nation, a phenomenon Tsuneyoshi calls "Englishization as Internationalization."²²⁵ While supporters of cultural co-existence (*tabunka kyosei*) have argued that this approach ignores the internal ethnic diversity of Japan,²²⁶ calls for the implementation of English education at the elementary level continue.

²²⁵ Tsuneyoshi (2005)

²²⁶ Tabuchi (1987)

Aspinall suggests that English for international understanding in which the emphasis is on the study of foreign cultures should be excluded from the English curriculum. Rather, the emphasis should be placed on talking about Japan in English.²²⁷ The Global Education in EFL approach described above suggests that a growing number of schools are taking an alternative approach to English language instruction. Students at Hiyoshidai ES are using English as a medium to explain Japanese culture and study environmental issues such as recycling. Teachers are utilizing the integrated curriculum to move beyond simple English greetings and the study of foreign cultures to promote a content-based approach to English language instruction, a model seems to be spreading throughout the country.

Conclusion

The activities in this chapter reflect the use of the integrated curriculum to incorporate international understanding education activities into Japanese schools. The activities described above took place in elementary, junior and senior high schools. They reflect a variety of approaches: 1) interaction with foreigners in Japan; 2) student research projects and debate focusing on Japan's relationship with China; 3) the role of JICA and Japanese NGO/NPOs in international development assistance; and 4) the role of English language instruction as a tool of internationalization.

The integrated curriculum activities described above reveal the continuing struggle to mediate Japanese national identity and the international position of Japan in the community of nations. Foreign international students visit schools but as temporary

²²⁷ Robert W. Aspinall, (2003) "Japanese Nationalism and the Reform of English Language Teaching," In *Can the Japanese Change Their Education System?* Eds. Roger Goodman and David Phillips (Oxford: Symposium Books: Oxford Studies in Comparative Education, 2003).

guests, their status in Japanese always clear and comfortable. Students struggle with their cultural and political relationship with China and the feeling of uncertainty that this international relationship entails. They learn about Japan's role as a donor nation but wonder why some members of the international community still distrust them. And struggle as they may, the nation seemed to fall further behind its Asian neighbors in its comfort with conversational English, a perceived handicap in the world of global commerce and competition.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

As stated in the introduction, the purpose of this study was to investigate the ways in which Japanese teachers engage their students in the consideration of the dimensions of difference via the integrated curriculum. This study has revealed how teachers have utilized the autonomy provided by the integrated curriculum to undertake learning events that engage students with the ‘glocal,’ the interaction between local affinities and global responsibilities, in the context of the integrated curriculum. Specifically, the study has identified at least three approaches to the integrated curriculum: 1) the human rights education approach; 2) the education for cultural co-existence approach; and 3) the international understanding education approach, which reveal the efforts of Japanese teachers to engage students in the consideration of difference in its various manifestations. Through this learning process, students have had opportunities to: develop self-esteem and respect for the thoughts and feelings of others; examine discrimination and injustice in Japanese society and globally; build an awareness of social diversification in their own communities; learn attitudes of tolerance and cultural co-existence; and consider Japan’s role in the world and their responsibilities as Japanese and global citizens.

1) Considering Dimensions of Difference via the Integrated Curriculum

a) The Human Rights Approach

The human rights education approach reflects the weight of local tradition on education policy and practice in the Osaka area, dominating the approach to the integrated curriculum at schools that I observed in that area. Teachers in these schools have recognized the struggles that the *Burakumin* community continue to face, and have

implemented a life studies component to the integrated curriculum in an attempt to help these students overcome their sense of inferiority borne of discrimination and lack of opportunity. Students were given opportunities to develop respect for the thoughts and feelings of others through the study of the bullying (*ijime*) issue. Teachers also confronted students with issues of bias and discrimination in contemporary Japanese society as they considered the struggles of the *Burakumin*, the disabled, and the homeless.

It is also important to note that the integrated curriculum has provided the impetus to expand human rights education beyond the greater Osaka area. Schools in Tokyo and Gunma Prefecture are implementing a life studies curriculum in collaboration with local medical professionals, and the Gentle Heart Network (NPO) travels the country talking to students about bullying.

b) The Cultural Co-existence Approach

The cultural co-existence approach has to do with helping students learn to co-exist with ‘cultural’ others in public spaces. Globalization is challenging the definition of the nation as changing demographics and immigration alter the ethnic composition of the national collective. Japan can no longer ignore this social reality. The cultural co-existence model reflects that teachers, at least in some schools, are utilizing the integrated curriculum to embrace this vision with their students.

As the descriptions of the integrated curriculum activities in chapter three illustrate, schools with Korean, Brazilian, and Chinese/Indochinese students have utilized the integrated curriculum to embrace cultural co-existence. Students consider the ethnic diversity of community through the investigation of the history of Japanese migration out

of, and foreign immigration into, Japan; prepare for, and participate in, cultural festivals that celebrate the ethnic diversity of community; engage in interpersonal dialogue with foreign residents of Japan; and uncover personal narratives of war and suffering that brought the parents of many Chinese returnees and Indochinese refugees to Japan.

c) The International Understanding Education Approach

In the context of the international understanding approach to the integrated curriculum, teachers have intersected students with content that challenges their assumptions about the world and Japan's position in the international community. Students have interacted with foreign visitors; uncovered the foreign influences on Japanese culture; and debated Japan's relationship with its Asian neighbor, China. They have also considered the role of Japan as a leading donor in international development through examining the work of JICA and Japanese NPO/NGOs.

Taken collectively, the integrated curriculum activities described in this study bring local and global issues such as bullying, discrimination and injustice, ethnic diversification, and world poverty and conflict into students' field of inquiry. At the same time, it nurtures students' interest in these fields of inquiry, increasing their potential to participate in volunteerism, both locally and internationally. Finally, students have developed their English conversational skills, focusing on environmental and cultural themes. Through these learning events implemented in the integrated curriculum, students have had ample opportunity to consider the leadership role of their nation, and their role as Japanese citizens.

2) The Integrated Curriculum at the Secondary Level

While I found that most elementary schools wholeheartedly embraced the integrated curriculum, the junior high schools I visited were often more ambivalent about it. Without question, I did observe some interesting approaches to the integrated curriculum at the secondary level,²²⁸ however, many of the administrators I spoke with expressed to me that their staff was less than enthusiastic about the integrated curriculum. One principal in a upscale part of Yokohama informed me that many of the students in his district were already attending private schools, and he suspected that *yutori* education would prompt more parents to leave the public education system for fear that public schools would not prepare their children for the entrance examinations to enter upper secondary schools.²²⁹ Junior high school educators in Japan are very cognizant of the fact that they are evaluated according to the level of high school that their students matriculate to. It appears that the entrance examination system still leaves a dark cloud on the Japanese education, hindering the enthusiasm for the integrated curriculum in many of Japan's secondary schools.

The approach to the integrated curriculum in senior high school was dependent upon the relative prestige of the institution. In general, high schools with the most dynamic approach to the integrated curriculum were schools at the lower end of the academic ranking, often high schools with a health and welfare focus. This was not always the case however as I observed an exception approach to the integrated curriculum at Ibaraki High School, one of the top two high schools in Osaka Prefecture, which is noted twice in this study. In the case of upper secondary schools as well, it

²²⁸ The three that are noted in this study are Takatsuki Number 4 JHS, Ushioda JHS, and Katsushika JHS.

²²⁹ Interview (July, 2003)

appears that the more schools focused on the university entrance examination system, the less likely they were to pursue a dynamic approach to the integrated curriculum. One high school administrator I spoke with lamented to me this fact, stating that while his students may enjoy high school more than their counterparts in academically demanding high schools, their university options were limited because of that fact.²³⁰

3) Decentralization, Autonomy and the Integrated Curriculum

The implementation of the integrated curriculum is an effort to decentralize the curriculum decision-making process, providing teachers with greater autonomy to create and implement educational activities based on content that they deem important for their students. However, the policies strength, that is the decentralization and autonomy, might also be its weakness. Most of Japan is not ethnically diverse. Foreign populations tend to congregate in the major metropolitan areas and although foreign international students and English teachers can be found throughout the country, they are considered temporary guests, not permanent residents. As a result, rural schools in Japan are unlikely to embrace the approaches I have outlined in this study. Although MEXT statistics indicate that 75% of Japanese elementary incorporate an international understanding education component to the integrated curriculum, one would suspect that English education is the central component of this curriculum in many rural schools in Japan.

Currently, the Central Council on Education is discussing the possibility of implementing English language into the Course of Study at the elementary school

²³⁰ Interview (November, 2004)

level.²³¹ If this proposal is implemented, given the previous 30% decrease in the core curriculum, the hours devoted to the integrated curriculum will, in all likelihood, be decreased to accommodate English language learning. Certainly, the study of English is important to Japan's international competitiveness and cooperation. However, I fear that the implementation of English will detract from the human rights, cultural co-existence, and international understanding approaches to teaching and learning now taking place within the integrated curriculum. Japanese scholars have long derided the Western emphasis to international understanding education focused on the English language and Western cultures as detrimental to Japan's relationship with its Asian neighbors and minorities in Japan such as Koreans. If English becomes part of the core curriculum at the elementary school level, it is my hope that Japanese educators retain the approaches to human rights, cultural co-existence, and international understanding that focuses on Japan's relationship with its Asian neighbors as well as the rest of the world.

4) The Growing Role of Civil Society: Japanese NGO/NPOs and the Integrated Curriculum

Perhaps one of the most significant outcomes of the integrated curriculum is the increasing role of civil society in the Japanese educational process. As is evident from the activities detailed throughout this study, teachers have utilized the outside expertise of medical professionals, foreign nationals, the Japanese Government (JICA), and Japanese NPO/NGOs. In this way, the integrated curriculum has provided students the opportunity to learn from others outside of the immediate school environment—individuals with specific content knowledge who enthusiastically share their expertise with students. A

²³¹ At present, Japanese students receive instruction in English from the first year of junior high school.

primary purpose of the integrated curriculum was to open the doors of the schools to community, bringing human resources into classrooms, and permitting students to explore beyond the school walls. All of the approaches described have provided opportunities for Japanese teachers to intersect students with civil society, bridging the gap between school and community, community and nation, and nation and world. This approach has fundamentally changed the way in which Japanese children learn, helping teachers overcome a criticism that Japanese schools are classroom kingdoms (*gakko okuku*), isolated from community and society.²³²

5) An Unexpected Outcome of the Integrated Curriculum: Changes in Pedagogy

There is reason to believe that *yutori* education and the integrated curriculum has precipitated a fundamental change in the way that Japanese teachers teach. The integrated curriculum has provided the curricular space and teacher autonomy needed for explorations of the global and the local to take place. There is ample evidence to suggest that many schools and teachers are utilizing the integrated curriculum for this purpose, focusing on activities that promote human rights, cross-cultural co-existence, and international understanding. The integrated curriculum has permitted teachers the freedom to permit independent student exploration. Teachers expect that students will leave the school to investigate the local community and beyond. They have provided students with greater autonomy to conduct research and explore.

There is also evidence to suggest that students are taking ownership of knowledge. As students collect information through research, interview, and actual experience, they

²³² Manabu Sato, "Classroom Management in Japan: A Social History of Teaching and Learning," Chapter 8 in *Classroom Practices and Politics in Cross Cultural Perspective*, ed. N. Shimahara (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1998).

become content experts who then share their expertise with teachers and peers through individual and small group presentations. Students are engaged in extended debate on issues such as the recent anti-Japanese protests in China. They are exploring the growing ethnic diversity of their own nation and Japan's changing global role. Based on interviews with teachers, and student's reflection papers on integrated curriculum activities, there seems to be some change in the capacity of Japanese children to consider alternative points of view, develop a tolerance for difference, and embrace the role of their nation as an international leader.

6) Leaning Towards Multiculturalism? Implications for Japanese Society

In one sense, an overarching purpose of this research was to discover if Japan is leaning towards multiculturalism. In this study, I have examined the use of curricular reform as an educational space in which teachers can help their students explore the challenges and possibilities of social change. While social change is always disconcerting to a nation, it is also inevitable. Popkewitz reminds us that old identities must be deconstructed in order to construct a new national narrative.²³³ The three approaches to the integrated curriculum I have described in this paper reflect a systemic educational process by Japanese teachers to provide opportunities for students to construct a new national narrative in order to live in a global age, full of endless possibilities and unforeseen uncertainties.

It is clear to me (at least among the teachers that I talked to) that Japanese teachers felt an obligation and responsibility to provide opportunities for students to consider serious social and global issues confronting Japan and the world, including the

²³³ Popkewitz, 2000.

struggles of minorities and foreigners in Japan and other nations, the lives of the disabled and the elderly, and the lives of children in the world suffering from war and want. In this sense, the Japanese teachers I spoke with were acutely aware of the diversification occurring in their nation and sensed the need to equip their students with the proper skills and attitudes needed to live in peaceful co-existence with others, both within their national borders and internationally. The activities of the integrated curriculum at most of the schools I observed reflected this attitude.

However, public opinion in Japan does not reflect the same level of acceptance to the changes happening in the nation as a result of ethnic diversification. There appears to be ample resistance to `embracing multiculturalism` in the Japanese nation as reflected in public opinion.²³⁴ Nonetheless, teachers in many of the schools that I visited are making a concerted effort to promote a model of human rights/cultural co-existence/international understanding education via the integrated curriculum. There is real progress to be acknowledged but the road remains fraught with difficulties.

7) The Future of the Integrated Curriculum

At the moment, the integrated curriculum continues to flourish at schools throughout Japan. However, its future remains uncertain. On January 18, 2006, the Sankei Newspaper reported that due to the suspicion that *yutori* education has `invited` the academic decline of Japanese students as measured by the results of on the 2003 OECD PISA International Assessments,²³⁵ the Central Council for Education, in their

²³⁴ For example, a public opinion survey conducted by the *Yomiuri Shinbun* (July 3, 1996) indicated that the percentage of the Japanese public willing to accept foreign workers declined from 72% (1991) to 57.7%.

²³⁵ The results of the 2003 OECD's PISA test of fifteen year-olds revealed that Japanese students have faltered, falling from the first position to the sixth position on the applied math section of the test, and from

interim report, has suggested an increase in the numbers of hours devoted to Japanese language, science and math, which will in turn greatly reduce, or potentially eliminate, the integrated curriculum.

Globalization is a dual process with inherent tensions co-existing between global pressures from above, and local pressures from below. In this case, global forces from above, specifically the OECD, have placed a fear in the Japanese public that the quality of their human resources are in jeopardy. From below, the integrated curriculum represents an effort to provide students with learning opportunities that help them balance the local and the global, to cherish cultural traditions while respecting the cultural differences, and make a positive contribution to world peace and human prosperity. In an ironic twist, the forces of globalization that have promoted an approach to the integrated curriculum based on human rights, cultural co-existence, and international understanding, may in fact bring about the demise of this reform. In other words, the power of testing, in this case international assessments administered by a supra-national organization, the OECD, may cause the Japanese to rethink *yutori* education and all that it entails. I am reminded of the words of David Berliner who claims that anytime national pride is at stake, national governments will reform education in an effort to retain international reputation.²³⁶ Will education policy in Japan continue to support teachers in the pursuit of progressive educational ideals via the integrated curriculum, or

eight to fourteenth in reading comprehension. Immediately, the press and some scholars pointed to *yutori* education as the source of the problem. On January 19 2005, both the Daily *Yomiuri* and the *Asahi* Newspapers reported that the Minister of Education indicated that schools could use the integrated curriculum for supplemental instruction in Japanese language and/or math. By early February, the Daily *Yomiuri* reported that 71.9% of the Japanese public disagrees with *yutori* education. This compares with 60% agreement among the public on *yutori* education shortly after the MEXT announced curriculum reforms in late 1998.

²³⁶ Lecture at Conference, University of Tokyo, December 2004

will policies force them to return to pedagogy that emphasizes test preparation? Only time will tell.

Suggestions for Future Study

The possibilities for future study that this inquiry into the implementation of the integrated curriculum in Japan offer are virtually endless. Most of the scholarship on *yutori* education and the integrated curriculum argues that decreasing the content of the core subjects will further exacerbate the academic decline of Japanese students, a position that has already garnered substantial scholarly support. It would be quite informative to discover how students are responding to the integrated curriculum from the perspective of the academic decline argument. It seems quite clear that they are ‘memorizing’ far less information than previously. However, are they gaining additional skills that were previously perceived as lacking: independent research skills, self-expression and presentation skills, critical thinking skills? Most importantly, given the fact that over one hundred thousand students are classified as *futoko*, that is they refuse to go to school for extended periods of time, is *yutori* education bringing students back to school? Are they discovering the joy of learning, or does the Japanese educational system remain a meritocracy, a pressure cooker of testing to obtain social status?

The politics of this reform are also fascinating and warrants further investigation. The history of political divisiveness between the Japan Teachers Union and MEXT is well-documented. However, in the mid-1990s, the two factions apparently reconciled their differences. It would appear that *yutori* education and the integrated curriculum is victory for the JTU, a progressive contingent that has struggled for greater teacher

autonomy and freedom from the constraints of the powerful MEXT. However, in my discussions with JTU leaders, I did not get the impression that they felt this way. An investigation of the politics of this reform could reveal the enduring struggle for the heart and mind of Japanese youth that continues to manifest itself in education policy and practice: through textbooks, curriculum, pedagogy, socialization practices in schools, teacher training, etc. This type of study would reveal the deep political factions in Japanese education: conservatives who support a return to the basic competencies, and progressives who support the autonomy that the integrated curriculum provides.

Another interesting approach would be a comparative study of education policies in Japan and the United States, comparing the 'No Child Left Behind' policies that stress accountability through high stakes testing, with *yutori* education in Japan, which appears to be a trend towards greater autonomy and less emphasis on testing. In the context of global competition, it would be informative to consider if and how the current education policies of the two largest economies in the world benefit and/or detract from human capital development in both nations.

Quite clearly, the possibilities for future study are endless and could offer useful comparative data for policymakers and practitioners as education systems in all nations face similar challenges: preparing students for global competitiveness while maintaining traditional alliances to community and nation.

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