

Current Issues in High School English Teaching in Japan: An Exploratory Survey

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Although there has been a great deal of debate about the strengths and weaknesses of English education in Japanese high schools in ELT publications and newspapers in Japan, the vast majority of these arguments have been based on anecdotal or unsystematic evidence. The purpose of the survey reported here is to begin to develop baseline quantitative data about Japanese high school English teachers—their background and training, their priorities, the problems they face in the classroom and the influence that the 1994 Ministry of Education Course of Study Guidelines have actually had on teaching practice. In this project a 26-question survey was sent to the approximately 1200 high school English teachers working at general (college preparatory) and vocational high schools throughout Chiba prefecture. With an overall return rate of approximately 19%, results indicate that the type of response a teacher was likely to give varied clearly according to the teachers' major in college as well as the amount of previous team-teaching experience they had.

Introduction

Since the era immediately following the Meiji Restoration of 1868, English has been emphasised as a subject of instruction at Japanese junior and senior high schools. Amano (1990), in a historical account of the development of Japanese university entrance exams, which include English as a primary subject, describes how the examination system has come to be so deeply embedded in both the society at large and the secondary education system within which students and teachers function. Competition among students for entrance into the few prestigious national universities is fierce and based almost solely on entrance examination scores. White (1987) points out that for students and parents alike, getting good grades on the entrance exam is important above all else. The enormous pressure that high school English teachers in Japan face in trying to prepare their students for these exams is therefore not surprising.

Unfortunately, up until now, the English which has been tested on college entrance exams has tended to be of a discrete-point and passive nature

(Brown & Yamashita, 1995), a focus which seems to help propagate the heavy reliance on the grammar-translation method of instruction in the high school English classroom (Widdows & Voller, 1991), as well as memorisation and rote learning (Tinkham, 1989).

In 1994, however, the Japanese Ministry of Education (Mombusho), introduced the new Course of Study Guidelines (Goold *et al.*, 1993a, 1993b, 1994) which, for the first time in Japan's history, emphasise the development of a student's communicative ability in English as a primary goal of high school English education. How much of an effect though, do these guidelines have on classroom practice? What are the most important concerns of Japanese high school teachers? What do teachers actually do in the classroom? These are the questions which motivated the present survey.

Instrument

Questions for the first draft of a two-page survey were developed and based on the long experience of the authors inside junior and senior high school classrooms, as in-service English teacher-trainers and from their Ministry of Education curriculum development experience. The teacher survey asked respondents to provide some background information about themselves, their education and experience, and then posed specific questions about their participation at in-service teacher training seminars, their work in the classroom, and their experience with Oral Communication classrooms. It was piloted, and then revised based on input from eight Japanese high school English teachers working in other prefectures. The final version of the questionnaire consisted of 26 questions including several open-ended questions. In order to assure the highest return rate possible, great efforts were made to keep the length of the survey to two sides of one A-4 paper. Although there was some discussion about making a Japanese translation of the survey, all high school teachers in the pilot felt that the two-page English version was short and clear enough to send out without translation.

Subjects and Method

The survey was sent out to every full-time Japanese teacher of English working at a public high schools in Chiba prefecture. Since both authors felt that the teaching practices and attitudes at *jitsugyo* (vocational) high schools differed substantially from those of *ippan* high schools (general high schools that prepare students for entrance to 2 and 4 year colleges and universities), questionnaire results were divided and compared along these lines. In total, 1,234 surveys were sent out to 1151 *ippan* and 71 *jitsugyo* English teachers working in Chiba prefectures at 131 general (hereafter referred to as *ippan*) and 17 vocational (hereafter referred to as *jitsugyo*) high schools. Although a stratified random sample of teachers working throughout Japan's 48 prefectures would have been preferable, no official list of English teachers is kept by Mombusho. It was only through great effort that the authors were

able to briefly borrow a copy of the 1996 Chiba Prefecture staff list (Shokyuin-roku Henshu linkai, 1996), a closely guarded annually published volume which lists the names and addresses of all high school teachers working in each prefecture. Chiba prefecture is located close to Tokyo, Japan’s largest urban centre. Each survey was sent out with a brief cover letter (in Japanese) from the researchers explaining the purpose of the survey, as well as a postage-paid envelope in which to return the completed survey.

Results and Discussion

Return of the survey

The overall return rate for the survey was a dismal 18.6%, as outlined in Table 1. Since this is a low rate of return, it must be acknowledged at the outset that the 18.6% of teachers who did return the survey may, in some significant way(s), be different from those who did not return the survey. That is, the results presented here may, or may not be true of the teachers who didn’t respond.

Table 1 Survey return rate

	<i>No. of schools in Chiba</i>	<i>No. of teachers in Chiba</i>	<i>No. of surveys returned</i>	<i>Return rate</i>
<i>Ippan</i>	131	1,151	216	18.7%
<i>Jitsugyo</i>	17	71	12	16.9%
Totals	148	1,222	228	18.6%

There are several possible explanations for this low rate of return. Although the high school teachers who helped to pilot our survey clearly indicated that an English-only survey (with a Japanese cover letter) would be most appropriate, it is possible that the average English teacher in Chiba prefecture felt intimidated by having to fill out a survey in English. Sending out a bilingual survey may have encouraged some of these teachers to respond. Another possibility is that some teachers may not have responded because they were too busy. The survey was sent out in mid-May, which is just at the beginning of the Japanese academic year — a time when teachers are busy starting up new classes, committees, and student clubs, as well as beginning work on the various school festivals which occur later in the year. A survey sent out in the middle of the school year might have had a better chance of receiving a teachers attention. It should also be noted that due to the prohibitive cost of sending out the first mailing (approximately \$2300.00), no attempt was made to send out a second wave of surveys, which would have undoubtedly increased the return rate. We believe, however, that ultimately, this low return rate does not take away from the main purpose

of the present study, which was to begin to provide baseline quantitative data about high school English teachers in Japan.

Teacher age

One of the first things to be noticed in the data analysis was that although the ratio of male:female teachers was almost identical at the *ippan* and *jitsugyo* high schools (which were 67% male and 23% female), there were noticeable differences with regard to the average age of teachers at each type of school (see Table 2). Whereas half of the English teachers working at the *jitsugyo* schools were 35 years old or younger, only 28% fell into this category at the *ippan* high schools.

Table 2 Teacher age

Age (years)	Jitsugyo high school	Ippan high school
20–35	50.0%	27.9%
36+	50.0%	72.1%

One explanation for the younger average age of *jitsugyo* teachers may have to do with the fact that the teaching positions at *ippan* high schools are generally considered more prestigious than the *jitsugyo* ones. In the Japanese education hierarchy, as in other sectors of Japanese society, age is an extremely important factor when considering promotions and raises in pay (Evanoff, 1993; Amano, 1990). It is likely that as teachers get older and develop more power within the system, they apply for, and get transfers to the more prestigious *ippan* high schools. This explanation is partially supported by the results of question 3 in the survey (see Table 3), which indicates that *ippan* teachers generally have more years on the job than their *jitsugyo* counterparts (only 23% of the *ippan* teachers had fewer than 10 years teaching experience compared with 50% for the *jitsugyo* teachers).

Pre-service teacher training in Japanese universities

It has long been argued that one long standing problem facing the Japanese education system is the relative lack of formal training teachers receive in Japan (Rohlen, 1983; Amano, 1990). This also seems to be the case for high school English teachers, who must teach English as a foreign language (EFL)

Table 3 Teaching experience by type of high school

Years teaching	Jitsugyo high school	Ippan high school
0–10	50.0%	23%
11+	50.0%	77%

in a setting where students get little exposure to English outside the classroom. As can be seen in Table 4, only between 3% and 8% of the Chiba high school English teachers responding to the survey reported majoring in TESL or TEFL at university.

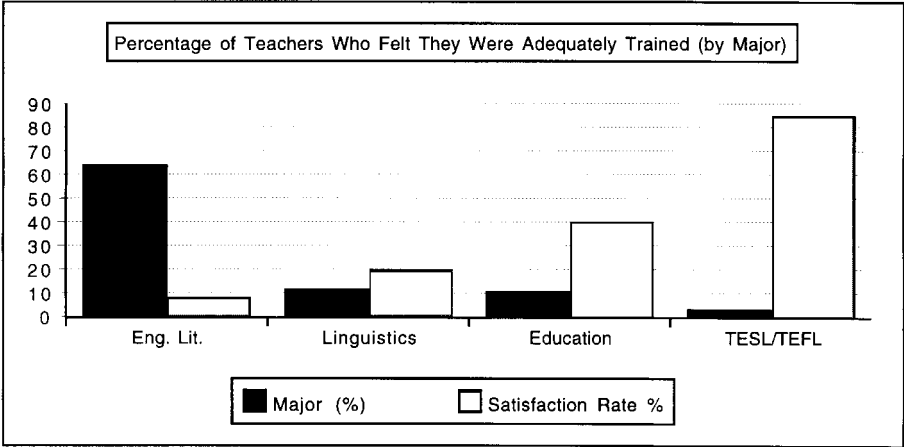
Table 4 University majors of high school English teachers

Major	<i>Jitsugyo</i>	<i>Ippan</i>
English literature	75%	63%
Education	0%	13%
Linguistics	0%	12%
TESL/TEFL	8%	3%
Other	16%	9%

EFL teachers in Japan typically major in English literature in college, a trend that holds true in Chiba prefecture where between 63% (*ippan*) and 75% (*jitsugyo*) of the teachers reported that they majored in literature. In most cases, prospective English teachers studying in literature departments are not required to take any additional courses in second language acquisition theory, ESL methodology and techniques, or testing. The only major requirement for becoming an English teacher beyond taking the prerequisite English literature department courses and passing a written test is to complete two weeks of practice teaching, usually with another teacher who has also majored in English literature.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the results in Figure 1 indicate that 92% of the teachers who majored in English literature reported that they felt they weren't adequately prepared in college for their duties as English teachers. Linguistics majors, too, reported a very high level of dissatisfaction with the training they received in college. This may be due to the fact that many linguistic departments in Japan tend to teach the majority of their courses through the medium of Japanese, and focus more on historical rather than applied linguistics. Although a majority of education majors also felt dissatisfied, the rate of dissatisfaction was much lower than for literature and linguistics majors, perhaps due to the more practical and applied nature of education-oriented courses. Dramatically different results were obtained from the far fewer TESL/TEFL majors, 85% of whom reported that they felt they were adequately trained for their subsequent duties as English teachers.

Although the results of open-ended questions are difficult to quantify or summarise in a chart, it should be noted that when respondents were asked to list what other courses they took in college related to teaching English, there were a large number of responses which indicated that teachers felt a need to go outside of their university to learn more about how to teach English. While a small number of teachers actually listed the additional



Major	% of teachers who felt they were adequately trained	% of teachers with this major among respondents
English Literature	8%	63.4%
Linguistics	20%	11.7%
Education	40%	12.7%
TESL/TEFL	85%	3.3%

Figure 1 Satisfaction rate of Chiba prefecture high school English teachers with teacher preparation received in college

college courses they took (which is what the question asked), the majority of teachers who responded to this question wrote in all of the non-university related activities they engaged in to learn more about how to teach English effectively. Responses varied widely, with many teachers resorting to some sort of self-study from books, magazines, and educational pages of newspapers. More than a dozen teachers in the survey reported privately attending either graduate level TESL classes, seminars or certification courses. Several reported attending local teaching seminars, and many took English conversation courses.

In-service teacher training

Although it is clear that most English teachers who responded to our survey did not feel that they were adequately trained to teach English while in college, we felt it important to look at their reaction to the occasional opportunities they were given for in-service teacher training as well. Overall, we found that not only were *jitsugyo* teachers more likely to attend in-service seminars than their *ippan* counterparts (see Table 5), but that they were also likely to attend a higher number of seminars (both private and public) as well.

Table 5 In-service seminar attendance rate

	<i>Jitsugyo</i>	<i>Ippan</i>
% of teachers attending seminars	75%	67%
Average no. private seminars attended	3.66	3.12
Average no. public seminars attended	2.75	2.29

There are several possible explanations for this higher rate of attendance by *jitsugyo* teachers. The first is that *jitsugyo* teachers simply face more problems in their classrooms than *ippan* teachers. Statistically, vocational schools in Japan tend to have substantially higher rates of delinquency than *ippan* schools (for example, see Rohlen, 1983). With all the recent media focus on the problems of bullying, violence, decaying morals, and increasing suicide rates among Japanese high school students, *jitsugyo* teachers may be attending these seminars in order to better cope with delinquency problems among their students.

It also may be that *jitsugyo* students are less motivated to study English in high school since the vast majority take vocational jobs that do not involve the use of English after graduation, and thus have no pressing need to prepare for the English subsections of the college entrance exam. In our experience as teacher trainers we have found that many teachers from vocational schools state specifically that they are attending in-service training seminars in the hope of finding new ways to deal with this lack of student motivation. Yet another possible explanation has to do with the grammar-translation method of teaching English. This method, which is still widely used in Japan (Widdows & Voller, 1991), is favoured by the *ippan* teachers since it closely matches the discrete-point, passive nature (Brown & Yamashita, 1995) of college entrance examination questions. It is also easier to teach without previous training since it is a teacher-fronted method which does not require a communicative ability in English on the part of the teacher. Thus, *ippan* teachers may feel less in need of in-service training than the *jitsugyo* teachers, who, unfettered by entrance exam pressures, are more likely to experiment with communicative teaching techniques and methodologies. Indirect support for this line of reasoning may be found in the fact that the overwhelming majority of seminar topics reported by teachers were related to communicative language teaching (see Table 6).

Table 6 Most popular topics for in-service seminars

<i>No. reporting this topic</i>	<i>Topic</i>
123	Communicative methods/techniques
18	Reading
13	Speech/pronunciation
11	Team-teaching
8	Writing

Although the results in Table 7 indicate that *jitsugyo* and *ippan* teachers gave very similar, generally positive ratings to the usefulness and quality of instruction given at official and private in-service seminars, it is interesting to note that in every case, official seminars were given substantially lower ratings than private ones. The most likely explanation here is that the vast majority of official seminars are conducted by mandatory attendance. Principals and head English teachers often decide who will attend these seminars, irrespective of the needs or desires of the individual English teachers. It should not be surprising, then, that private seminars, which are usually attended by choice, get higher ratings than the obligatory official seminars.

Table 7 Perceived usefulness and quality of in-service seminars (ratings on a scale of 1 = not useful to 5 = very useful)

	<i>Jitsugyo</i>	<i>Ippan</i>
Usefulness of seminar		
Private	4.0	3.9
Official	3.6	3.1
Quality of instructors		
Private	3.8	3.9
Official	3.6	3.0

It should also be noted that there are far too few opportunities overall, for both *ippan* and *jitsugyo* teachers to attend in-service seminars. According to the Senior Supervisor at the Tokyo Metropolitan Institute for Educational Research and In-Service Training, it would take approximately 10 years to give every high school English teacher in the Tokyo area a two-day seminar on a given topic with the limited budget the government devotes to in-service training (Yamamoto, S., personal communication, July, 1996).

Communicative competence in the classroom

In April of 1994, a new set of Mombusho guidelines for English education in Japanese high schools came into effect. These guidelines, which were first published in 1989 (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture), emphasise for the first time the development of students' communicative competence in English as the primary goal of instruction in the Japanese high school English classroom. In our survey, 67% of *jitsugyo* teachers and 68% of *ippan* teachers reported having read the guidelines. When asked what their most important classroom goal was, a surprising 100% of *jitsugyo* teachers, and 64% of *ippan* teachers cited the development of students' communicative ability above all other choices.

Although this may seem like a very promising set of responses, it is possible that either some of the teachers were answering these questions as

they thought they *should* (i.e. telling the researchers what they wanted to hear), or that an unusually large proportion of the 18.6% of the teachers who responded to our survey support communicative approaches to language teaching, unnaturally skewing the data. Actually, there are a host of other studies which indicate that more traditional, translation-oriented methods still prevail in most Japanese classrooms (for example, see Law, 1994, 1995; Shimizu, 1995; Miller, 1995; Hino, 1988). Furthermore, when asked what pressures affected their teaching styles the most, the number one answer for both types of schools was to teach the contents of the textbook (see Table 8).

Table 8 Largest pressures on classroom teaching

Rank	<i>Jitsugyo</i>	<i>Ippan</i>
1	To teach the contents of the textbook	To teach the contents of the textbook
2	To make parents happy	To prepare students for the entrance exam
3	To prepare students for the entrance exam	To follow the Mombusho Guidelines

If one accepts that the operationalisation of the Mombusho guidelines includes the Mombusho-approved textbooks, and teachers feel compelled to teach the contents of these textbooks, then communicative language teaching should be flourishing. Unfortunately, Mombusho-approved textbooks are not necessarily a clear reflection of the Course of Study Guidelines. A study by Knight (1995) points to the wide gap that exists between the structure and repetition-oriented activities common in the Mombusho texts and the communicative goals stated in the Course of Study. To state the problem in terms of Canale & Swain’s (1980) Communicative Competence Model, observed classroom teaching practice by Japanese English teachers emphasises the use of Mombusho-approved textbooks to develop students’ grammatical competence almost to the exclusion of any attempt to develop their socio-linguistic, discourse, or strategic competence (Browne & Evans, 1994).

When one considers that the vast majority of English teachers in Japan receive no formal teacher training, that only 34% of *jitsugyo* and 33% of *ippan* teachers in our survey reported to making their own lesson plans, and that every Mombusho-approved textbook comes with a teacher’s manual that has detailed lesson plans emphasising translation and drill-focused teaching techniques, it is not surprising that a wide gap exists between the communicative goals of the guidelines and actual classroom practice.

Team-teaching

The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme is a government programme, financed and run jointly by the Japanese Ministries of Education,

Home Affairs, and Foreign Affairs. Created in 1987, the programme, which is the largest of its kind anywhere in the world, sends native speakers of foreign languages (predominantly English) into Japanese junior and senior high school classrooms to assist with foreign language teaching. Up until the introduction of the JET programme, and its much smaller predecessors, the Mombusho English Fellows (MEF) Programme and British English Teachers (BET) Programmes, foreigners were not allowed to teach in public junior and senior high schools. Before these programmes came into existence most students and teachers (especially those living outside the major metropolitan areas) had never seen a foreigner beyond television or the movies, much less had a chance to use English as a tool for communication. With over 4,800 foreigners currently working on the JET programme as assistant language teachers (ALTs) for the 1997–1998 academic year, and well over 20,000 ex-ALTs (Oliphant, H., Japanese Ministry of Education, personal communication, October 2, 1997), the impact on students, teachers and school administrators should not be underestimated.

With the JET programme now in its eleventh year it is perhaps not a surprising result that 90% of *ippan* teachers and 100% of *jitsugyo* teachers in our survey reported having the experience of team-teaching with a native speaker of English. What was unexpected, however, was the enormous number of teachers who reported a high number of team-teaching experiences. Not only did 42% of *jitsugyo* and 54% of *ippan* teachers report having 25 or more team-teaching experiences (see Table 9), but, as can be seen in Table 10, these experiences were rated as largely useful and positive ones for teachers and students alike.

Table 9 Number of team-teaching experiences

<i>No. of lessons</i>	<i>Jitsugyo</i>	<i>Ippan</i>
Never	0%	6%
1–5	25%	10%
6–10	8%	10%
11–15	0%	9%
16–24	25%	11%
25 or more	42%	54%
Total	100%	100%

That one of the respondents who checked the box for 25 or more team-teaching experiences, felt it necessary to write in on their questionnaire 'this is a silly question for me', speaks to the great impact which this programme has had on Japanese teachers of English (JTEs). In the early years of the programme, most JTEs had great difficulty and hesitation in working with foreign ALTs. In fact, in the early years of the programme, one of the most oft cited obstacles to team-teaching by JTEs themselves was a lack of confidence

Table 10 Perceived usefulness of the team-teaching experience (average) (ratings on a scale of 1 = not useful to 5 = very useful)

	<i>Jitsugyo</i>	<i>Ippan</i>
For your students	4.25	3.92
For you as a teacher	4.42	4.02

in their own ability to communicate in English with a foreigner (Wada & Brumby, 1994). Although there is still a great deal of debate as to whether or not the JET programme has improved the quality of communicative language *teaching* in Japan, the programme has clearly had an impact on the English language ability of the JTEs *themselves*, as well as their confidence level in working together with native speaker ALTs.

Oral communication classes

As dictated by the 1994 Course of Study Guidelines (Mombusho, 1994), all first year high school students are required to take a general English course, titled English I. In addition to this course, students must also complete several more English classes chosen from among six elective courses (summarised in Table 11). One of the major changes in the 1994 Course of Study Guidelines was the new focus on developing student’s communicative ability, which resulted in the implementation of the three new oral communication courses.

Since individual schools are allowed to organise their own curriculums, this means that the classes which are taught vary widely from school to school. Although the introduction of the three oral classes would seem to be a very positive development, one that should be in agreement with teachers’ stated goal of developing students’ communicative ability, the reality of the oral classes’ implementation is a very different story. Most striking is the almost complete avoidance of the Oral C recitation, speech, and debate

Table 11 Summary of Mombusho-dictated high school English courses

Required first year English courses	
English I	(general English)
Elective English courses for second and third year students	
English II	(general English)
English IIB	(reading)
English IIC	(writing)
Oral Communication A	(speaking)
Oral Communication B	(listening)
Oral Communication C	(recitation, speech and debate)

course. As can be seen from Table 12, even though it's been more than two years since the introduction of the new guidelines, only 9% of the *ippan* teachers and *none* of the *jitsugyo* teachers reported teaching the Oral C course. One likely reason for teacher avoidance of this course is a lack of confidence in the ability to teach speech and debate due to the lack of formal training in these areas. Although local boards of education often hold in-service training seminars on speech and debate, seminars are usually short (from 3–6 hours), and not widely available to all teachers. Echoing the uncertain future of the Oral C course is the fact that as of 1997, only two Ministry of Education-approved textbooks were available for this course.

Table 12 Oral English classes taught in Chiba prefecture (reported)

	Oral A	Oral B	Oral C
<i>Jitsugyo</i> schools	75%	25%	0%
<i>Ippan</i> schools	38%	67%	9%

Another interesting finding was the almost opposite rate of implementation of the Oral A and Oral B courses at the *jitsugyo* and *ippan* high schools. The most likely explanation for this difference has to do with the recent trend among private universities of adding listening comprehension components to their university entrance exams, which gives added pressure on *jitsugyo* schools to teach English classes which emphasise listening skills (the Oral B course).

Although one might expect that the oral English classes which *are* taught would be conducted largely through the medium of English since the purpose and focus of these oral classes is to foster student ability to communicate in English (Mombusho, 1994), survey results indicated that in a typical 50 minute English lesson *jitsugyo* teachers used English for an average of only 33% of their class time with *ippan* teachers using slightly more English 41% of the time. It seems that despite the Ministry of Education guidelines and the large impact that the JET programme has had, other pressures such as the need to teach the contents of the textbooks and the need to prepare students for entrance exams still affect classroom activities more. In fact, Brown and Yamashita (1995) argue that the predominance of translation and teacher-fronted (i.e. non-communicative) teaching methodologies in public schools may be due to the overwhelmingly discrete point, receptive nature of the entrance exams. Still, it should be mentioned that these figures for classroom English use do represent an improvement from the almost negligible amount of English use which was common in the dozens of classes observed by the authors in the mid 1980s (i.e. before the introduction of the JET Programme and the new Course of Study Guidelines).

As can be seen in Table 13, however, when teachers were asked to approximate how many minutes per 50-minute class they devoted to various classroom activities, the more teacher-fronted, drill-oriented activities still

predominated, even in the Oral English classes. Here, too, though, both authors felt that the amount of reported pair and group work represents a major improvement over what was common in the mid 1980s.

Table 13 Teaching activities in the Oral A classroom (average number of minutes per 50 minute lesson)

	<i>Jitsugyo</i>	<i>Ippan</i>
1) Explanation of grammar and vocabulary	8.9	8.5
2) Language drills	11.1	11.4
3) Use of audio tape	13.6	7.9
4) Review of old material	8.1	5.9
5) Pair and group work	12.2	15.1

Conclusions and Implications

One of the most important findings in this study was that the few respondents who majored in TESL/TEFL and education at the undergraduate level clearly felt more prepared for the many challenges they subsequently faced as English teachers than those who majored in English literature or linguistics. If the results of the Chiba prefecture survey are indicative of attitudes of English teachers held throughout Japan, and if Mombusho truly believes that the new Course of Study Guidelines' emphasis on developing a student's communicative ability is an important goal, then the issue of teacher dissatisfaction with the quality and amount of pre-service training they received in college (especially of those who majored in English literature) will have to be addressed. At the very least, it seems that the creation of more undergraduate programmes which would allow prospective teachers to major in TESL/TEFL could help them to be better prepared for the many challenges they will face as high school English teachers.

With regard to in-service training, although teachers seemed to have a generally positive opinion of the seminars they attended, local budgets for in-service training are still far too small to have much of an effect in enabling teachers to cope with the demands of teaching newly created courses such as the Oral Communication C (speech and debate) course. Here, too, if the implementation of the new Course of Study Guidelines is deemed as an important goal, then much more serious thought will need to be given to how best to provide teachers with the tools they need to successfully do so in their classrooms. In any case, it is apparent from the survey that there are distinct differences between *jitsugyo* and *ippan* teachers in Chiba prefecture with regard to their level of experience, as well as their classroom needs and goals, and that in-service seminar planners would do well to address these differences.

Another point which became clear in this survey is the extremely powerful effect Mombusho-approved textbooks have on reported teaching behaviour.

If efforts were made to encourage textbook writers to follow the new Course of Study Guidelines more closely, it is quite possible that classroom teaching practice would do so as well.

Although our survey was limited to high school teachers of only one prefecture and had a response rate of only 19%, we believe that the results warrant further research. If a way can be found to obtain contact information for all high school teachers throughout Japan, a follow-up survey given in both Japanese and English, with a stratified random sample of teachers from every prefecture would do much to increase the generalisability of the results presented here.

More research also needs to be carried on the effect of the JET programme as well. During the early years of the JET programme, the very presence of foreigners in the classroom and teachers' room was enough to stimulate change. In a recent survey, however, the vast majority of teachers expressed disapproval of the one-shot system of having an ALT visit a different school each day (Scholefield, 1996). With a large number of teachers in our survey reporting 25 or more team-teaching experiences, the programme has obviously entered a new phase. At the very least, with two teachers from different countries working together in the same classroom, there is much potential for co-operative teacher development (Edge, 1992), or for utilising the native speaker as a cultural informant (Browne & Evans, 1994). There needs to be more discussion of the future potential for this programme, the largest of its kind in the world.

Although it has been difficult to quantify or even summarise the many comments received in the open ended questions on this survey, the richness and variety of responses made it clear that there is a real need for well conducted qualitative research studies to be done in this area as well. For example, an in-depth case study which compares a small number of teachers who majored in English literature with those who majored in TESL, or one which compares *ippan* English teachers with *jitsugyo* English teachers would help paint a much clearer picture of the daily activities, concerns, and challenges of such teachers.

The Japanese system of secondary English Education has undergone a tremendous amount of change in the past 10 years and is now at a major cross-roads. Despite its stated goal of developing students' communicative competence in English, many obstacles still exist in secondary English education. What is done over the next few years in terms of research, teacher training, textbook development, and implementation of the JET programme, may very well determine whether the next Course of Study Guidelines finds Japanese students entering the 21st century with a focus on developing their communicative ability in the world's most spoken language, or a return to more grammar translation.

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