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An Experiential Curriculum for Elementary School in Japan

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AN EXPERIENTIAL CURRICULUM FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN JAPAN

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to propose a curriculum encouraging experiential learning in a safe environment for learners at a public school in my hometown in Japan. Through reported problems and phenomena involving children, people began to notice a need to re-examine such questions as, what is education, who are the children, how happy are they to learn, and how can we welcome them as fellow members of our society. From the moment I began to formulate this proposal for an improved elementary school, I have questioned: who are the Japanese and what education is for them. Since I believe that the current education system is in need of changes, it is necessary to have my own vision about why and how such changes should occur. While analyzing the problems and phenomena in school, and society in general, to support the need for changes in the education system, I cannot avoid finding my own answer to the above questions. In the following literature review, I first discuss about the Japanese character and society. I, then offer my opinion on education along with introduction of the history and current situation of school education in Japan. Before outlining my proposal, an analysis of the people and the culture in my hometown, Niigata will be presented briefly in order to familiarize the reader with my clients and their needs. This paper's framework will make reference to the strategies of Project Adventure, Inc. as well as group development theories in the frame of experiential education. "Full Value Contract," (Schoel, Prouty,

& Radcliffe, 1988 and Henton, 1996b) a contract to respect others and the self, and "Challenge By Choice," (Rohnke, 1977 and Henton, 1996c) in which participants choose their own challenge so that making them responsible for their learning. With games with those principles are used for building a class. One cannot ignore the development of a group when they work with/for a group of people. Forming, storming, norming and transforming stages initially proposed Tuckman (1995, originally 1965) will be used as a reference in this paper. Finally I will introduce to the reader, various attempts at experiential learning in Japan, too.

The Japanese societies is in the midst of significant change. The majority of the people who are building this society were born after WWII –a significant turning point for Japan in terms of social value system. People have raised in a Japan different from the one before WWII. Changes have occurred not only in the systems but also in people's way of thinking. I strongly believe that I must do something now for the future of our children, who are our future; otherwise the future of our health society will suffer. I do not believe that it is proper to leave the situation and problems as they are now; the Japanese, including the government, must begin to consider the situation more seriously (for example, conducting active about educational reform). We cannot insist on remaining where we are now; we must move forward to the better world.

What happened to children?

"Bad news" stories involving students fill newspapers and TV almost daily, the students ranges in age from 5th or 6th to 12th grade. Although most problems are "petty"

in nature, such as bullying or quarreling among students, the serious problems have increased over the past several years. Terms, such as "classroom collapse," and "Ijime (serious bullying)" have become popular in the last few years. In one instance, a 7th grader (13-year old) killed and decapitated a younger neighbor (8 year-old boy) and putting the head on the entrance wall of his school (Matsue Police Department, 1999). In that same year, a 8th grader stabbed a female teacher to death with a Swiss army knife in front of his classmates (Shimotsuke Shimbun, March 10th, 1998). Such crimes and other disturbances were caused by students at risk of committing violence, but also by well-behaved without a history of disturbing behavior. While such problems used to occur in large cities elsewhere in the world, they are occurring throughout Japan. One further crime committed by a high school boy last February must be mentioned. 30 miles away from the prefecture under study, a high school student killed an old woman he had never met, while she was in her home. To date, a motive for the murder is not known; the boy is an ordinary student without any outstanding rewards suspensions or the like (TV Niigata, May 18th, 1999).

In Japan—a wealthy country—children are raised and cherished within a core family. Not only are children given the basic necessities of like—love, food and shelter—but also luxuries not enjoyed by children elsewhere, such as their own room, a bike, computer games, a personal computer, and a cellular phone. A trip to Shibuya, a popular area in Tokyo for junior or senior high school students, in the middle of the week, reveals numerous students who skip their classes and hang around on the street. Although they come to the area in search of fun, I must question if "fun" is what they find,

as most of them seem to be frustrated. How do you feel about yourself? What are your dreams? These are the questions I wonder about when I see the students hanging around.

In rural areas, like my neighborhood, children have many places to play, for example in backyards, by streams, on hills, near or in rice paddies, even the backyards of shrines and temples. These days, however, I do not see children playing outside after school. I do not hear their chuckling voices from a playground near my house. I see only infants playing in sand paddies with their mothers and grandmothers. Children no longer come to my garden to catch insects, a favorite pastime for children during the early mornings of summer.

What students want nowadays seems to me an artificial happiness; the real happiness is the unique and self intended one. They can have one, of course. Although the environment has rapidly changed in this century and the pace of the change continues to increase, human-beings cannot and do not change in 50 years or so. As long as children have chances, they will not follow such materialistic satisfactions. The problems children have, therefore, must be attributed in fact to their adult role models.

Do adults cause the problem?

Adults, and the Japanese culture in general, experience problems. Children's behavior is a mirror reflecting the values and ethics of their outside world. Therefore, if the adults in general as well as parents act irresponsibly towards the next generation, children will act so as well. If parents heavily emphasize materialistic pleasure, their

children will do the same. Finally if adults are apathetic to their responsibilities, children will follow suite. Of course, the behavior of children is not caused by adults alone. Indeed, changes in ways of interaction and communication among people also affect the behavior of children. Interaction is increasingly more indirect. As communication via computers and phones replaces physical interaction, thereby causing twisted relationships. The traditional, interpersonal culture oh Japan gradually changed. Communities no longer exist, even though neighborhood do. Related issues include a weakened sense of ethics, as supported by the existence of violence and sex on TV at all times of the day. Furthermore, countless "how-to" manuals exist not only for sports, self help issues, or hobbies, but also for intimate relationships (for example "how to entertain your date from A to Z"). What have adults taught to the younger generations? Does materialistic satisfactions such as having something you can buy, mean happiness? What values should humans carry from childhood to adulthood? How do people become adults? Why are we struggling so much for education? What can we do for our children? These are just some of the questions that have arisen in my mind, as I examine the state of the younger generation today.

Why this now: School is a fun place to learn

Although the problems I have mentioned seem to be a result of Pandora opening her Box, a look inside shows that Hope still remains. If children are the mirrors of their adult role models, then, so can they be a mirror that adults cast upon themselves. Although causing social reform is not the intention of this study, I do hope that it will

encourage a change of the school system. Government Curriculum Guidelines for the year 2002, each school in Japan is expected to build to some degree its own integrated curriculum. Various experiences and ways of learning definitely create a sense of fun and owning for students, as I witnessed the growth while observing students at summer camps. Introduction of experiential learning into school education is therefore one way to positively change the education system.

In the following paper, I will outline my proposal for an elementary school curriculum, for my hometown, Niigata, Japan. The proposal has two parts; one is establishing a safe and fun learning community, while the other outlines integrated experiential learning projects.

Words and terms used in this paper

Although there are many school and branches of experiential education, I will mainly focus on the one which includes the sense of risk taking. The branch was advocated by Kart Hahn of the Salem School and the Outward Bound Schools (OBS, James, 1995). Using John Dewey's educational philosophy, Hahn believed that it was important for human beings to take risks. Because when they take risks, whichever successful or not, they learn (James, 1995). Hahn also suggested that people's existence or values are influenced by the responses from others; therefore people need to interact with each other. He founded OBS, which is an adventure education organization, in which students learn from their (adventurous) experiences. Experiential education is education triggered or encouraged by personal experiences. It is therefore an individual

experiential learning process. The Experiential learning is process which occurs through primary experience (hands-on) and secondary experience (theory) in indeterminate situations. Generalization and application come along to those two experiences. The Association of Experiential Education, a nation-wide association for experiential educators, and has its origin in the OBS, offers this brief definition. "Experiential education is a process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill and value from direct experiences" (Luckmann, 1996). According to Joplin (1995), eight characteristics are necessary. The namely characteristics are: '"student based rather than teacher based'; 'personal not impersonal nature'; 'process and product orientation'; 'evaluation for internal and external reasons'; 'holistic understanding and component analysis'; 'organized around experience'; 'perception based rather than theory based'; and 'individual based rather than group based'" (Joplin, 1995). Project Adventure (PA) is an experiential firm originally from the US, but which has spread overseas to such countries as Japan, Australia and the like. During the 1970s many those who were involved OBS and taught in Massachusetts, started to bring a sense of adventure and the essence of learning in the wilderness, to the classroom (which is far from the wilderness). The games and activities invented or developed by Project Adventure (for example by Karl Rohnke) are well known and popular among experiential educators not only in the US but also overseas. PA often uses the "ropes course" which although originally invented by OBS, have been continuously developed by various firms. The "ropes course" is a place where participants can experience an organized adventure. Since the course is not related to the theme of this paper, I will not deal the course any further.

There is one more concept which must be mentioned, namely group theory. According to Tuckman (1995), any group experiences in four stages: forming, storming, norming, and transforming. In the forming stage, they are testing "to identify the boundaries of both interpersonal and task behaviors" and they testing "the establishment of dependency relationships with leaders, other group members or preexisting standards." In the storming stage, the group may experience conflict among members; it is therefore, a stage of resistance. In the norming stage, "ingroup feeling and cohesiveness develop, new standards evolve, and new roles are adopted." In the last stage, "transforming," "[r]oles become flexible and functional, and group energy is channeled into the task" (the quotes are from Tuckman, 1995).

Limitation of this study

I hope that this proposal will be used as a reference for the further development of ideas. Although the proposal focuses on school education in my hometown, there are pieces that someone else can pick up and extend with her/his ideas. This proposal is the first organized attempt to introduce experiential learning with adventure subjects in Japan. It is a limited study and only a beginning, but I would like to continue studying the topics, using what I learned for this paper and what I am writing in this paper.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Before moving on to my curriculum plan, I would like to discuss why the curriculum will be effective for people in Japan. For this purpose, it is necessary to know my targets (clients) are and their society, my stance on what education is, and to know the philosophy and applications of experiential education. At the same time, I would like to introduce some significant studies and terminology for this paper.

The Japanese

I have thought a lot about the differences between the American and the Japanese, and have considered critical points and the application of experiential learning to the Japanese education system. Although there are many similarities which influence people's behaviors and value systems, there also are many differences. Among these differences I would like to focus on interdependency and homogeneity in the Japanese, as such characteristics form the basis of the Japanese society. When thinking of the Japanese, one cannot avoid these points: interdependency and homogeneity in relation to individualism (Reischauer & Jansen, 1995a, 1995b). As much of the literature exploring Japan and the Japanese people argued, the Japanese work to their full potential when they work in teams (Hofstede, 1995). American research on group theory, examines the reason for success in certain manufacturing industries. Those who are

inside a certain situation cannot objectively see what is going on (phenomena), however they can answer questions about the contents of the solution (reasoning). For those who looking from the outside it is relatively easy to see the phenomena, although it is less easy to distinguish the causes of the phenomena. For me a Japanese born and raised there, it is difficult to analyze who the Japanese are; therefore I relied upon the book, The Japanese Today: Change and continuity (Reischaure & Jansen, 1995) because of its wide coverage and profound analysis based upon a considerable number of studies. The original author, Dr. Reischauer, who was the former American Ambassador to Japan and a professor at Harvard, was born in Japan and stayed there for quite a while, in order to study it. Like Reischauer, I would like to focus on the Japanese social systems and traits. Although the Japanese share similar social/economical systems, and philosophies with many Western countries, unique characteristics are not hard to find. Even though the society consists people who are different physically, ideologically and socially, certain tendencies can be found which enable us to notice the differences. When examining the Japanese, the reader may want to view them in relation to the group and the individual, interdependency and independence, harmony and conflict, homogeneity and difference, relativism, adaptation, and children in the society.

The Japanese society consists of numerous and various small groups: it is a group-oriented society. The most basic group is the family, while the second basic group has changed from community (divided into villages) to companies. The Japanese people verify their identity in relation to a particular group (Reischaure & Jansen, 1995c). The sense of belonging to a certain group or inclination towards groups in general is

significant and strong for the Japanese people. Group stability is therefore to be stable is critical for them. However, this inclination towards group-centered identity often causes an overreaction to or blindly belief in one group. Members must sacrifice their individuality; they are pressured or obligated to become unimportant, faceless parts of the group and to follow the unwritten rules of the group. Because of a high population density, and the construction of the first industry, agriculture and fishery, which depend heavily on cooperation, the people had to interact with each other. As Reischaure & Jansen (1995b) pointed out, the Japanese have a sense of individuality: distinguish between the public position and honest opinion, however, it is not their primary sense. To understand how the Japanese have kept the balance between interdependency and independence, it is necessary to examine the education system.

School education and mass media heavily influence homogeneity (Reischaure & Jansen, 1995d), while students learn the importance of belonging to a group. In terms of social life, they learn to interact with others not as equal and different but by being the same. Although the details will be discussed later in this chapter, it should be mentioned here that the difference in interpretation is quite problematic. The Government Curriculum Guidelines, created a well organized curriculum in which children have the same quality and quantity of education for at least nine years (Reischaure & Jansen, 1995d). To be an exceptional or outstanding student is not always welcome by the Japanese; individuality must be expressed mildly in order to maintain harmony within the group. When expressing individuality, it should be done in an appropriate time and manner, be modest and must show respect to those who are

more powerful: older, higher status, or gender (Reischaure & Jansen, 1995b). When talking about notions of right or wrong, Japanese people tend to use phrases like "it is wrong in terms of common sense"; common sense is a standard of morality. Quite often, crimes and scandals judged according to the "common sense." However, this term is relative, vague and dependent upon the view of the group. As a large group, the Japanese share the same norms, that make up "common sense." Some scholars argue that the fundamentals of this phenomenon is characterized by "relationship-ism," which is a principle that depends upon the relationship among the people involved (i.e., Ebisaka, 1997). As Reischaure & Jansen, (1995e) pointed out, the Japanese way of thinking may depend upon the situation: relativism. Japan, differs from monotheistic countries and cultures; solid ethical objectivism like Christianity (Hunt, 1995a) does not exist.

In examining history, one can see how well the Japanese adjust themselves to changes in society, however, a gap between the real self and the self expected by the group or others may form during the period of adjustment. The better their ability to adjust, the more serious their struggles. According to Japanese culture, people are expected to show empathy towards others (Tsuneyoshi, 1992a); children are raised to be able to empathize with others. How does this influence one's identity? Tsuneyoshi points out that the identity of the Japanese is less distinguished between self and the others than the Americans who distinguish self and others more easily (1992a). The difference in distinguishing between self and others may be a result of the relative thinking of the Japanese people.

In this case, a person's perception happens when teachers manage their classes:

they use the function of "mutual monitoring," and they encourage cooperative/harmonious acts (Tsuneyoshi, 1992b). They well know and skillfully use well the Japanese character, so that, on the surface it seems as though that the students govern the class by themselves, understanding what ought to be doing from subtle signs from the teacher (Tsuneyoshi, 1992b).

Children in Japanese culture

As Yamamura (1986) points out, in Japan children are a treasure not only for their parents but also for the society to which they belong. Traditionally, at latest before World War II, children were raised in and by the community and had many care-takers besides their parents, such as god parents, midwives and, in wealthy families. These care-givers were respected by the children as different kinds of parents. Because of their preciousness (up to the age of six), little children were treated as holy children of the gods. Today, however, the historical status and role of children is only apparent at local historical festivals. In the modern age of nuclear families, the strong ties between children and the community have weakened; and only the strong ties to their own parents (especially mothers) remain, and even these have changed to an overwhelming sense of protection and encompassment (Yamamura, 1986). Parents expect much of their children as suggested above, that the Japanese assume that children are born with good spirits; therefore the role of parents is to raise the children and to nurture the spirits. In explaining the different ways of child raising, Tsuneyoshi (1992a) uses an analogy of plant raising (the Japanese way) and one of animal raising (the American way). For

plants, if one pour water and feeds it the necessary nutrition, they will grow quite smoothly; the plants already have in their core the necessary genetic information for maturity. For animal raising, however, one must discipline to get along with each other in a group (family or herd). Tsuneyoshi (1992a) also points out that Japanese parents rear children by using empathy, while American parents do it by using authority.

Children are well disciplined in schools; their school life is well organized with rigid schedules and rules. Because the Japanese culture is based on interdependency, maintaining harmony within a groups is one of the priorities. To be different from friends may seem a threatening to them, as homogeneity is a hidden key word. Besides written rules and regulation, children face "unwritten rules" such as the shape and color of school bags, and even how to role the sleeves.

Over one half of the children in Japan live within a core family, (their parents and themselves or at most one sibling). Even in my hometown, which is in the countryside, the situation is not much different from that of the national data. According to the latest national survey, 0ver 50% of elementary school students attend *Juku*—a school after school for extra study (Naikakusoridaijin kanbo koho shitsu [Office of Prime Minister], 1991). As stated before, I no longer see children playing outside with friends, both on weekdays and weekends. It used to be said that a child's is to play; today "playing," which used to mean interaction with friends, now means individual interaction with things like Nintendo.

As mentioned in Chiiki shakai no kyoikuteki kino no shosou [various aspects of an educational system in a community] (1983), to play in a group of children of different

ages promotes a child's growth both mentally and physically. Because the child can learn a sense of independence, unity and cooperation, norms and punishment, interpersonal communication skills and the like. After the revision, however, children did not have much time to play with friends or interact with each other.

Their life in general is far removed from the community even though they live in a local community; they no longer have a chance to get involved with their community. Many children do not have the opportunity to benefit by being with their grandparents; benefits such as wisdom from their rich experiences or acquiring a gentle mind towards seniors. Previously, the community played a role in raising the children, but now as children have less contact with the community, the bond with and pressure from parents has strengthened.

History of school education in Japan

In this just over one hundred years, Japan experienced two drastic educational changes one due to the Meiji Restoration and the other due to its defeat in World War II. After the Meiji Restoration of 1886, the Japanese began to modernize, which for them meant industrialization and Westernization. As it modernized, it imported the educational system of other countries, especially those from Europe. Although school education in Japan began after the Meiji Restoration (around 1867 and long after samurais governed feudal societies), the cram schools (for lay people) and Confucius schools in feudal domains before the Restoration cannot be ignored. In the Edo Era, (the feudal society governed by samurais) there were thousands of cram schools taught by

samurais and intellects who were lay people but had attain a certain degree of specific studies. Because of these education systems, Japan had a relatively high you can literacy rate (i.e., 45% of men and 15% of women, Reischaure & Jansen, 1995f). At the Confucius schools for the children of samurais, the learning of ancient Chinese poems and the teachings of Confucius: devotion to parents or seniors were emphasized. Common subjects between the two school systems included reading, writing, and sometimes arithmetic (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, Sports, 1972). With the Meiji Restoration, a Western-style educational system (elementary, lower secondary schools, and university) was available to all Japanese people, regardless of their class and status (Amano, 1990). The ultimate purpose of the education at this time was to create a suitable work force for industrialization, by using national curricula and a metaphor of the symbolic emperor (White, 1987) for political and social cohesion. The society was hierarchical with the Emperor at the top and everyone else educated to as a retainer for him. Formal education at this time was highly influenced by the political situation: because of Japan's participation in wars, education was based upon totalitarianism, nationalism, and militarism. Even though there was a progressive educational movement in 1920s , it was destroyed by the re-emergence of post-war nationalism (White, 1987).

From 1945 to 1952, Japan was governed by the Occupation Alliance , which under the General Headquarters Office (GHQ), caused drastic changes economically and socially (Amano, 1986). The central object of their policy was to encourage Japan to become an ideal pacifist with a well organized economy. In the efforts to rebuild Japan

as peaceful nation, American notions of egalitarianism were introduced into the Japanese education system, by an educational reform task force from the United States (Duke, 1989). The new Japanese Constitution set out three main principles: the sovereignty of the people; pacifism; and respect for fundamental human rights. To build this new country, the education of the people was critical.

The School system after World War II

The education system after World War II (WWII) was called "new education" (Takemura, 1989). Mandatory education was extended from six to nine years (six years in elementary school and three years in junior high school). The types of schools in Japan are: elementary; junior high; specialized high school (general, academic, commercial, agricultural, technical, women's); advanced technical high school; vocational college; junior college; and university (including graduate school). Although high school is not mandatory, in order to work, at least a high school degree is required: over 97 % of the junior high graduates go to high school (Data of those who graduate in Niigata in 1997: Niigata Prefectural Government Bureau of Education, 1998). Over 40% of the high school graduates enter university (National average from Niigata Kensei Yoran [Handbook on Niigata], 1998); most of the others go to junior colleges or technical colleges. The rate students who go on to secondary school educated is quite high, I would say. Graduate schools are still less popular than in the US. In order to advance the next school level, students must pass a exam(s). This need of passing the exam influences heavily on school education in Japan. Another character of higher education

schools in Japan is that it is difficult to enter university graduating from the school is easy. In addition, finding a good job depends on attending a reputable school. To maintain a standardized quality of public education, the system is controlled by the central government (mainly by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports). Everything from class schedules, what must be learned in special grade, class size and other related details are controlled by the government. While the new education was flexible and experiential, today it is less so.

Kyoiku Kihon Ho [Fundamentals of Education Act]

Here is the essence of the Fundamentals of Education Act that governs the fundamentals of school education in Japan. The principles from Kyoiku Kihon Ho [Fundamentals of Education Act]—Preamble— (Takemura, 1989) are:

1. to build a democratic nation
2. to build a modern nation
3. to contribute to world peace
4. to contribute to the welfare of humans.

The Act seeks to educate the following people (Takemura, 1989):

1. people who respect each one's dignity
2. people who seek the Truth
3. people who long for peace

Therefore, the aims of the Act are: to promote universal education to build a unique culture. As Takemura (1989) states "Education aims to shape one's character as a

member of this peaceful country: those who love the truth and justice, who have respect for individual value, labor, and responsibility, and self reliant."

Children's life in school

The Fundamentals of Education Act, the School Education Law, the Government Curriculum Guidelines, and other laws and ordinances organize and govern the lives of children in school. In order to universal education in Japan, the government rigidly decides class schedules, instruction hours for each subject, maximum class size and the content of the textbooks (please see Table 1: Annual Plan 1998 and Table 2: Instruction Hours). Students come to school at a designated time, wear the school uniform, sit in rows in a class and listen (most of the time) to lectures, eat the same lunch, sometimes go to a club activity, finish their routine job: cleaning designated areas, and return home (Please see Table 3:Daily Time Table). Under the current Government Curriculum Guidelines, each school has very limited freedom to alter the scheduling or curriculum, even minor changes to accommodate the students and particular circumstances. However, from the year 2002, each school can and must plan/arrange/manage certain parts of the curriculum, depending on the needs of the students and the environment.

Table 1: Annual Plan 1998

Major events from Annual Plan 1998
Tokamachi Kawaji Elementary School

	April	May	June	July	August	September
1st 10days	Academic year starts	3 days break		music day	summer vacation	2nd term starts
	1st term starts		School counselor (one	star festival		2nd term: 86 days
	(84 days, 4/6-7/24)	school day trip				
2nd 10days		teachers visiting stud	family member's visitir	visiting a class		with other school
last 10days		Athletic meeting		end of the 1st term		
				summer vacation starts		
				(38days, 7/25-8/31)		

	October	November	December	January	February	March
1st 10days	music day			the 3rd term starts	ski day	
		students' government general meeting		(56 days, 1/8-3/24)	participating in the town snow festival	
				calligraphy day		
2nd 10days	marathon day	visiting a class				visiting a class
last 10days	arts and science day	students' gvmnt mtg	end of the 2nd term: winter vacation starts			commencement
			(16 days, from 23rd to Jan. 7)			end of the academic year:
						spring vacation starts
						(10 days, from 26th)

Table 2: Instruction Hours

Tokamachi Kawaji Elementary School, Niigata JAPAN

grade	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
SUBJECT						
language	306	315	280	280	210	210
social study			105	105	105	105
arithemitic	136	175	175	175	175	175
science			105	105	105	105
study on living	102	105				
music	68	70	70	70	70	70
drawing and manual arts	68	70	70	70	70	70
home economics					70	70
physical education	102	105	105	105	105	105
subtotal 1	782	840	910	910	910	910
moral	34	35	35	35	35	35
homeroom	34	35	35	70	70	70
subtotal 2	850	910	980	1015	1015	1015
*subtotal 2 is hours fixed by a law						
OTHER ACTIVITIES						
students' council	15	15	15	17	17	17
club				35	35	35
school events	45	45	47	56	56	
GRAND TOTAL	910	970	1042	1123	1123	1067

Table 3: Daily Time Table 1998

Tokamachi Kawaji Elementary School, Niigata JAPAN

Monday – Friday			**Saturdays***	
		Time		Time
reported by		8:15	reported by	8:15
morning study		8:20 – 8:30	homeroom	8:30 – 8:40
homeroom		8:30 – 8:40	1st period	8:40 – 9:25
1st period		8:40 – 9:25	2nd period	9:30 – 10:15
2nd period		9:30 – 10:15	intermission	10:15 – 10:35
intermission		10:15 – 10:35	3rd period	10:35 – 11:20
3rd period		10:35 – 11:20	closing by	11:30
4th period		11:25 – 12:10	dismissed by	11:45
lunch		12:10 – 12:50		
lunch break		12:50 – 13:35	*twice a month	
cleaning		13:35 – 13:50		
5th period		13:55 – 14:40		
6th period	Wednesdays	14:45 – 15:30		
	Thursdays (club)	15:00 – 15:45		
	Fridays (committees)	15:00 – 15:45		
for special clubs	Tuesdays	15:00 – 16:55		
	Thursdays	15:55 – 16:55		
dismissed by		16:30		

Government Curriculum Guidelines

The original Government Curriculum Guidelines ("the guidelines") were publicized in 1947. Public education offers the citizens the opportunity to learn along the lines described by the Constitution and the Fundamentals of Education Act. The guidelines suggest ways of instruction for each subject, and the amount of time to be spent on each. From the first revision in 1951, it became less of a 'guideline' (suggestions) and more of a government ordinance that had to be followed. By the fourth revision, the guidelines described 10 subjects area namely, arithmetic, literature (language), social studies, science, music, art, home economics, moral, physical education, and living education. Within the guidelines can be found the general objective for each subject area, as well as the subject goals and subject content for each grade level.

The first Government Curriculum Guidelines [Gakushu shido yoryo]-A Plan was called "New Education" (Takemura, 1989). It focused on problem solving, the equality of the sexes, flexibility of work load (decided by each school) and students choice about their occupations and interests. Furthermore, the curriculum included a self guided research project and home economics.

Since the first version was not perfect in terms of quality of the guidelines, due to a lack of time for preparation, it was revised in 1951. Each subject area was formed, integrated and separated into four categories: one was the basis for learning: arithmetic and language; the second was problem solving: science and social study; the third one was arts: music, arts, and home economics; and the last one was related to health (PE) (Takemura, 1989). The San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1952 ended the Allied

Occupation of Japan, and from then on, revisions of the curriculum guidelines were handled by the Japanese alone.

The second revision occurred in 1958. Having gained its independence, the question of develop a stable economy was the biggest issue for the Japanese. Therefore, they worried about the national quality of education. The improvement of students' achievement in the 3Rs: reading, writing, and arithmetic became the first priority. To achieve this, the government focused on the national standard. In addition, the "morale class" was revived. This class had been eliminated by the occupation administration, because of its focus on nationalism. However, the contents of the morale class in 1958 differed from that before the war in that the new course focused on individual moral development.

After the Korean War began, the overall attitudes towards the reformation of Japan changed. Prior to the Korean War, Allied Forces planned to transform Japan into an idealistic, pacifist, and democratic country. However, the possibility of nearby conflict and the effects on Japan of U.S. military forces to Japan in 1954, under the US-Japan Security Treaty, this occurred despite the pacifist principles in Japan's Constitution (Tokyo Academy, 1997a). As the direction of political reform changed, so too did the reform of education.

The third revision in 1968, "modernized" public education (Takemura, 1989): the curriculum was standardized and changed so progress could be measured by tests and exams. The revisions aimed to increase the amount of knowledge taught, as the rapid growth of industries such as heavy metals, automobiles, and electrical products, required

an educated and skilled workforce (Tokyo Academy, 1997a). The revisions aimed to offer an equal quality of instruction. Although they succeeded in creating a skilled workforce, they caused problems such as students who were unable to keep up with the rest of the class. Conflict between individual difference and "being average" existed.

The rapid economic growth of 1960s and 1970s, created the concepts of *gakureki shugi* (educational credentialism) and *juken jigoku* (examination hell) (Amano, 1986). Japanese people began to believe that working at a highly-ranked company: a desirous job was 'a sine qua non' for the continued economic stability of Japan (White, 1987 and Naikakusoridaijin kanbo koho shitsu [Office of Prime Minister], 1987). In order to enter a highly-ranked company, a student must first attend a highly-ranked university; entrance exams gave everyone an equal opportunity to enter a highly-ranked university. Therefore, the tendency for score-oriented education begun to emerge. Education in Japan is interpreted as reading, writing, arithmetic, and memorization. Since the focus on score-oriented education, children's free time has decreased. They are now one of the busiest groups within the Japanese population. Over 23.6% of elementary school children and 59.5% of junior high school students attend *Juku* (cram schools) (from "Percentage of elementary school and lower secondary school children attending *Juku*", Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture, 1997) and the percentage is growing rapidly.

Since the 1980s, many educational problems such as students refusing to attend school (school refusals), bullying, suicide, and violence toward teachers and peers have been reported. Some scholars called these phenomenon, "educational crisis" (Amano,

1986). Recently there has been a rapid increase in the serious crimes, such as murder, robbery, or lynching towards non-resistant people, committed by students (some examples are available at Matsue Police Station Home Page).

Upon those tendencies and problems, people (adults) became concerned about the school reform. The report from an ad hoc Central Educational Council gathered by the Prime Minister, Mr. Nakasone, emphasized the importance and urgent introduction of education that encourages the development of individual talents (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, 1990). The next round of revision responded to this report and public opinion.

A fourth revision took place in 1977. Due to the seriousness and number of students who could not keep up with their class, the forth revision focused education which gave students "latitude." This term is quite vague, and actually a bad idea because although it meant more free time in school, it actually resulted in students having less free time. Because instruction hours were decreased by 10%, and the range of subjects was reduced, students had to study more on their own in order to pass the university and college entrance exams. Although the curriculum changed, the entrance exams did not. This caused the opposite result of what the planners had intended. Other changes under this revision included: the role of morale and physical education classes, and a focus on basic formulations, theories and logistics rather than advanced problems or applications.

The fifth revision occurred in 1989, and still applies today (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, 1989). The revision introduced the "life-long education," a

concept used by UNESCO and the OECD (Organization for Economical Cooperation and Development) (Tokyo Academy, 1997b). After this, the whole focus of education changed from competition to personal growth, as the guidelines tried to eliminate competition from physical education and other subject areas. Instead, education began to focus on the significance of developing individual talent and personal exploration. Further key concepts include continuing (adult) education, and education which is open to the community.

The sixth revision was announced at the end of 1998 and will be effective from 2002 for elementary and junior high schools (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, 1999). Its key concepts include: education that brings energy, wisdom, and strength to life, self-discovery, and internationalization. Along with these concepts is a new method of teaching: some parts of various subjects will be taught in an integrated and experiential way [Sogo Gakushu]. On one hand, this will be exciting phase for experiential educators, outdoor educators, and environmental educators. On the other hand, it is my anxiety how much teachers can fully understand the concept of experiential education effectively apply it to learning in the classroom. People seem to think that people think that experiential education is just a form of instruction that results in a certain outcome. Teachers who are not familiar with experiential leaning need manuals, but it is doubtful whether instruction according to a fixed manual is experiential learning, regardless of the difference in mental and physical condition, needs, and environment of the receivers (i.e., students). Therefore it is urgent for those who are interested in experiential leaning to have reference source that can be used as a guide when drafting

their plans. Although I wonder how much teachers can prepare for learning opportunities which are really experiential in nature, I hope that this report will be helpful.

What is education: changes in the point of view

Questions now arise: what is education? And what is learning? What is knowledge? As long as public education is for society, and children are among its members, the public education must meet the needs of children. Does the education of children to become members of society mean education that we are struggling to change? At one education meant brainwashing or the purification of ideology under the nationalism. Then, and now—it meant the inputting necessary to people a properly educated industrial workforce. However, it is changing and must continue to change, especially in an age of advanced technology in which the ability to apply, adapt and create are becoming necessary skills. As the contents and direction of education change, so too must its objectives. The thoughts of Socrates, Plato and Dewey regarding the objective of education, namely to nurture the individual to become virtuous, critical and creative, has not changed. In fact, education's objectives as stated in the object of education in the Fundamentals of Education Act (Takemura, 1989) continues to reflect their thoughts. Interestingly, this objective of education does not refer to any specific educational subjects; Dewey, emphasized that education should be close to the learners' life (Dewey, 1938). If this interpretation is considered in terms of learning in the brain, then learning by memorizing information needed for basic and simple tasks is inclined to "taxon

memory" {the original research done by O'Keefe & Nadel (1978) in Caine & Caine, 1994a}. In taxon memory, the information and formulas that were memorized become meaningless, unless the person constantly refreshes and re-memorizes the information. However, if the learning can connect pre-existing knowledge and newly learned knowledge, the front cerebrum that governs analysis and application will be activated and the learning will be deepened. The learning happens in the "locale memory" which easily blends he new information with that previously leaned (Caine & Caine, 1994a). Interestingly, what Dewey argued regarding experience and education was supported by studies of the brain. However, balancing memorization and the application of the learning is a critical point. As long as children are members of society, they should know the rules along with their learning. Since the amount of information to be memorized (and used) is so huge, the education tends towards memorization. Examples include: the different ways of reading of each Chinese character (over 3,000 to 5,000 at least) as well as the meaning, the direction of reading: vertical or horizontal, from the right or from the left; and the expressions to be used proper in conversation and writing, according to their relationship with the listener. Countless and unwritten rules exist in these examples. As an educator-to-be, I hope that school education will offer children opportunities to learn while having fun, and will let them find their happiness in socially acceptable ways. At the same time I want them to become responsible and mature enough for next century; school can therefore be the place where they would encounter a variety of things, and practice what they learned, as members of a mini society (classes). I hope to offer experiences that will trigger further and meaningful learning. For

children who will be more than faceless members of society.

Another aspect of school education to be examined is the way of evaluating students' achievements. As previously mentioned, the ultimate goal of school education (as most of the people think) is to prepare students for college entrances; therefore, achievement can only be evaluated by a score. This system is too simplistic for evaluating diverse individual differences and capabilities. As Gardner (1983) suggested everyone has an advanced aspect(s) of her/his intelligence, and each person's learning pattern is different. Even though the intelligence can be nurtured and changed depending on the environment, there must be a better way of learning, according to each person's highly developed intelligence(s). In presenting different learning styles students can take their own approach to the problem and can learn more deeply and because of that, they also earn a sense of ownership. For these reasons, therefore, experiential learning, which offers numerous ways of exploring and experimenting, is quite a logical and wise choice for learning.

Experiential education in Japan: alternative not mainstream

The history of experiential education in Japan is longer than many think it to be. Those who studied in the US or European countries, introduced this progressive notion of education to Japan (Nakano, 1978) in the 1920s; the translation of books also helped. One example of a successful student-centered educational institution from this time was the private, Seijo School, by Mr. Sawayanagi (Nakano, 1978). The school continues to offer a qualified school education. Although experiential education bloomed in the

1920s to 30s, it was not popular enough to change the national educational standards, partly because of the political environment at that time (i.e., the invasion of Asian countries and the world war). Another reason for its low popularity was the educators' lack of full understanding of the education; educators thought it meant their noninterference in discipline, which caused chaos and disorder in the schools. From then until now there is a long period in which experiential education was not taught. During this period, Japan experienced nationalism, defeat in WWII, and economical power and now, recession.

As people encounter the unknowns, the sense of risk taking emerges. All learning is an adventure if interpreted from the psychological point of view. As Caine and Caine (1994b), Ewert, and Vygotsky (originally from their works in 1989, Henton, 1996a} pointed out, when learning occurs, the learner takes risks and can "own" the situation in "relaxed alertness" (Caine & Caine, 1994b). In talking with many school teachers, I learned that hundreds of teachers all over Japan are trying to introduce experiential learning under the current Government Curriculum Guidelines. One teacher told me about his year-long project on the local history, while another explained that she lets students gather cans and plastic bottles in order to study the local recycling system and at the same time, buys wheel chairs for people in need. Although countless examples of experiential projects exist, without background theories and flow of its continuity, the examples are not enough to prove how experiential learning is a powerful learning tool. In addition to the lack of research, there is a gap in these experiential projects, as they tend to focus only on experience; few efforts are made to learn from secondary

experiences and the application of knowledge. It might be useful to examine the individual Iki Iki School Projects (more details will be explained in the following section) which are funded by Niigata Prefecture. It is doubtful that many educators now teach classes or arrange classrooms with theoretical endorsement, certain academic goals, and anticipated effects in mind, as the popularity of, and research on experiential learning, is low. Even if research exists, it is not easily accessible to those who want to know the information.

Experiential education with adventure: Outdoor education

"Experiential education with adventure" has been interpreted in Japan as the dangerous activities out of doors. Although both experiential education and outdoor education were introduced to Japan long ago, the mixture of the two concepts like that in the US, is completely new for the Japanese.

Although a movement of outdoor 'activities' such as mountaineering or school camping trip (at longest two nights three days) was introduced from the United States in the 1950s (Hoshino, 1985-6) and promoted by the Sports Promotion Law in 1961 (Ebashi, 1967), the concept of "outdoor education" have not widely recognized by Japanese people. Before this movement, the YMCA camping also began in 1930 and since then, they have offered short term camping activities in their residential facilities (Ebashi, 1986). As Ebashi (1986) concluded, these programs involving activities like erecting tents, or cooking outdoors, were too short and too limited to be considered "education." Recently, experiential education in an outdoor setting began to be offered by various

organizations including Outward Bound Japan, Project Adventure Japan, and other members of the Japan Outdoor Network (JON). In October 1997, the Japan Outdoor Education Society (JOES), the first nation-wide umbrella organization for outdoor educational organizations and professionals in Japan, was formed. Its members include researchers, academics, governmental officers, and practitioners of outdoor education (Japan Outdoor Education Society, 1997). Many of the members believe that the JOES is a seed from which a big tree of education will grow. Experiential education and through its challenges and processes, children can learn many things that will enable them to see themselves from different points of view. Outdoor education will also will get them involved in the education process: children will not be limited to just memorizing notes and textbooks. However, these outdoor experiences are special events for students; the question is how to experience something similar in the classroom.

Experiential education in the classroom

Due to the latest revision of the Government Curriculum Guidelines, experiential education now growing. Although a few instances of cooperation between researchers and teachers has introduced experiential learning methods (for example, by Hirano, 1996), they tend to focus on individual challenge and learning, but they tend to ignore the background (for example, Nagumo, 1996). Even through experiential education introduced to Japan almost 70 years ago, people seem not to know much about the education. Although some experiential activities and projects are used as a part of moral class or other school activity, for example, a day-visit to a local nursing home, it rarely

invites further learning. The experiences applied to school education with group development theory (both intrapersonal and interpersonal incentives) and sense of adventure (risk taking) were rare. People do not seem to understand that outdoor activities (environmental education or volunteer works) are education; they do not recognize the relationship between experiences and learning.

Experiential Education with the sense of risk taking in school

Now, there is a new movement of experiential education which includes a sense of adventure in the school. Takaku (1998) succeeded in making a safe environment and in raising the self-conception of students through self governed challenges. Takaku, a school teacher, is the first experiential practitioner who tries to make a safe environment for his students through games or less stressful activities. His approach—cooperation games with the concept of "Full Value Contract" (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988 and Henton, 1996b) and "Challenge By Choice" (Rohnke, 1977 and Henton, 1996c) by Project Adventure—was unusual but encouraging and meaningful for many practitioners (Takaku, 1998). In terms of challenges in a safe leaning environment, some attempts have begun in physical education classes in a junior-high school. Ninomiya, Nakayama, and Morozumi (1997) have tried to offer students the opportunity to re-think/re-gain their self-concept through extraordinary team efforts and individual risk taking using their indoor challenge ropes course. Even though no formal research examined their attempts, they influenced the students' ways of thinking and self concept to a certain degree, which is clear by their in-house questionnaire (Ninomiya, T., Nakayama, M., & Morozumi, T.,

1997 and Tokiwamatsugakuen, 1999). Their reason for introducing Project Adventure into school was to change of students' relationship with friends and others, and their self concept. However, their application of experiential learning with adventure to subject study has not yet been attempted.

Roots of Experiential education

Experiential education has philosophical roots in John Dewey's philosophy of education. For Dewey, education should pull out compassion and potential ability from students rather than pouring in theories. Dewey rejected dualism, which emphasized the separation of the cognitive side of human beings from the subject who experience (Hunt, 1995b). Instead, he emphasized the importance of subjects and experience in philosophical inquiry and learning (Crosby, 1995). He explained that humans learn through primary experience (hands-on experience) empirically, and secondary experience (theories) epistemologically (Hunt, 1995b) through the interaction between subject and experiences. This is base of experiential learning, from which Kurt Hahn developed adventurous experiential education based on this philosophy. For Hahn, learning is compensatory, which means: "to purify the destructive inclinations of the human personality, to redress the imbalances in modern ways of living, to develop each person's disabilities to their maximum potential, and to place new-found strength in service of those in need" (James, 1995). He practiced his belief in several experimental learning schools which in Germany and the United Kingdom one of them being Outward Bound School (James, 1995). Dewey's philosophy and practices, and Hahn's practices,

together with influences from Carl Rogers ("client-centered therapy," Rogers, 1983) and other psychological methods (for examples, Jean Piaget, Kurt Lewin), make up the foundation of experiential education today (Kolb, 1984). Now that the philosophies and background information is known, attention can turn to examining the details.

Models of integrated curriculum

There are many ways to categorize the curriculum, as there are several interconnected subject areas by referring to these categories, educators (teachers) can build an experiential learning curriculum according to the needs, development and circumstances of the children. At this time, I would like to examine the categorization of Fogarty (1992). First she categorized the integrated curriculum into three blocs: integration of a single subject: discipline; integration across subjects, and one which mixed the other two: in and across subjects. She then divided these three categories into 10 sub-categories, with four models of integration in each subject. Theoretically there are no connections between the information and/or formulas in one subject, with those in another; this is the traditional model of school education ("fragmented" model, p. 269). Even though there are no connections, teachers can concentrate on transmitting information deeply and widely. The second model has some connection of items in each subject ("connected" model, p.270), as the items function as a bridge to each other. Fogarty's last categorization is the "nested" model (p. 272) in which one item is taught by various kinds of approaches other than core (content) such as, thinking skills or organization skills, like layers of a nest wrapping the core. There is one further model of

integration in each subject and across subjects. It is the "sequenced" model (p. 273). Although there is a relationship across subjects, the sense of integration is weak. Each subject has sequences, by which learners are exposed to a board frame of related concepts within the sequenced model, are three. The first of sub-models of integration is the "shared" model (p. 275) in which two subjects are overlapped to some degree by a shared concept. Fogarty (1992) uses an example of photosynthesis and interviews: both subjects share the concepts of cycles (concept), respect (attitude), and sequencing (skills). This integration needs preparation and a rearrangement of curriculum. The second sub-model is the "webbed" (p. 277) or "thematic" model (p. 129, Caine & Caine, 1994c}. Upon a core concept, topic, or categories, is built a web of integrated curriculum across subjects. Those concepts, topics, and categories should be general and common to the different subjects. The third sub-models is the "threaded" model (p.278) in which connects by a common theme and creates a larger concept. Even though a clear concept common to the subjects exists, this sub-model needs additional efforts and curricula. There are also three sub-models of the mixed in-subject and across-subjects integration. The first is an "integrated" (p. 279) sub-model, which is interdisciplinary, all subjects are related to each other and have a common core concept, like circles overlapping each other. This sub-model requires teachers to have not only the ability to integrate subjects by common concepts according to the topic, but also the ability to choose where/how to focus (need broad knowledge). This may be more applicable for the junior high and high school level, where teachers teach their specialization, it is too complicated for the elementary school level. The second sub-model is the "immersed" model (p. 280),

which deepens study on one topic from every possible direction. Immersion is ideal for those wanting in-depth learning (Caine & Caine, 1994c). But may be too narrow of focus. Furthermore, it may be unhealthy for the student to examine topics from one point of view only, as this tends to unbalance learning. The last one is the "networked" model (p.282). The last two sub-models are the individualistic learning models which requires learners to be highly motivated on the issue. On one hand, the learning is not limited to the classroom but extended to further inquiry of experts or the latest study. On the other hand, it tends to wander among subjects and is difficult to use in the classroom, where students have the different fondness on an issue.

Group theory

Even though the Japanese have built a group-based society, they were not interested in the study of groups or their related issues. The small groups have always existed but people did not recognize their existence; it was just a part of their life.

One reason why no attention was paid to group studies could be that the Japanese assumed hot to behave, rather than studying it. That is another Japanese characteristics: their unique way of communicating by assuming. For example, they assume how people should/ought to act within a group, or they assume what other people's emotions are and the hidden meaning of what they say/do. The most beautiful form of assuming does not require any verbal communication. In stead of examining or studying things, the Japanese tend to assume based on their past experiences or on related information about the issue. This technique, which requires a society in which people share the same value

system and have highly developed skills as mind-readers. In addition to this, children today grow up without getting used to interaction within other in a small group, as they do not have may chances to play with friends, in stead, interaction with machines (video-games)is more common. Furthermore, the development of virtual/indirect communication such as the Internet, pagers, or cell-phones, even means children can find friends who share common interests, but never personally meet. The interaction between the two people is irregular, and partial, which means that only a part of them interacts, and they can choose which part of them should known. Even though they may share the same goals, they do not form a group. Sometime people do not physically join a group, but instead belong to a group in which they can only be partial-selves. Although Japanese people want a homogeneity and interdependent society, (Reischaure & Jansen, 1995a), the bond among group members is weakening because of differences in people and value-systems; people are no longer used to direct contact with others.

Therefore in order to build and lead a group, the knowledge of group theories; ways of group developing (both positive and negative); and ways of using groups dynamics effectively are necessary. Leaders of group should know that each group has its own character or its dynamics, at the same time. This is especially true for the Japanese, and for teachers, as classes are groups. If a group leader assumes what the responses or responsibilities of the group should be, but never actually examines what they are, s/he might lose the group or lead it in a wrong direction.

One group development theory was created by Tuckman (an excerpt from the original in Wren, T., 1995). According to him, there are four stages in group

development; the first is forming, the second is storming, the third is norming, and the last stage is performing. These stages are not linear in development, but flexible, depending on each group (i.e., some may skip a stage or remain in a stage). In the forming stage, orientation and the testing of one's behavior towards members of a group (Tuckman, 1965) occurs; interactions at this level are superficial. In the storming stage, conflicts between personal desire and the desires of the group occur and the members must find a resolution. These resolutions lead the group to the next stage, norming. Here, their standards or norms settle down and interaction with other members becomes more intimate. Opinions from the other members will also be raised. The group then move to the next and last stage of development, namely performing. In this stage, group performance is the best and most active as the group finally functions as a group, in which members depend on and support each other.

Games can be a barometer to check the conditions of a group. Project Adventure uses games. Through which the facilitator, who leads the games, can see the group's condition of the group and that of each member. In assisting workshops at PAJ*, I came to understand how powerful and useful games, as a tool, could be. Besides games, facilitators could examine the group's condition through other means, for example, events in which the group could participate, or by monitoring the group's achievements.

*I was an intern there for over six months from October 1998 to April 1999.

Project Adventure

My curriculum plan uses some ideas and games invented and/or arranged by Project Adventure, Inc. (PA) and its affiliated company in Japan, Project Adventure Japan. As Johnson and Johnson (1997), in relation to group theory, and Caine and Caine (1994b), in relation to learning in the brain, mentioned that learners need to be and feel safe in a group in order to learn and grow; groups which create this atmosphere are highly productive. The methods that Project Adventure put into practice are well suited for safety, especially psychological safety, issues. Through the use of cooperative or initiative games and fun plays, PA aims to help people learn in an environment free from tensions that could develop into threats to personal learning. In threatening situations, children stop learning, and try to protect themselves in naïve ways (Caine and Caine, 1994b). Hart (1983) called this phenomenon, "down-shifting" (cited in Caine and Caine, 1994b). There are three theoretical frameworks to support activities and programs of Project Adventure. The first framework is experiential learning cycle, as it is necessary when learning occurred, to have a cycle of experience, reflection (debriefing), and generalization and application of the experience to the next step or to real life situations with a goal setting. Learning occurs through these process as the latter interprets the concepts in a practical way. With metaphors and debriefing, games mean more to the participants because the latter can connect the games to their real life and therefore apply what they have learned. It is a helpful tool for generalization. The second framework is "Full Value Contract" (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988 and Henton, 1996b), a contract in which participants agree that they will respect each other and learn/help as a

group while recognizing individual differences. "Full Value Contract" is very effective and powerful, especially for the Japanese who live in groups but do not know groups. At the beginning of the program, participants agree to a contract of various ways. One, called Full Value Being is shaped taking from a silhouette of a participant's whole body, and with everyone's words/signs that represent what they expect for the group and for themselves are put onto the drawing. Examples include "being honest" or "cooperation." The Being represents each of the participants and at the same time, represents another member of the group. It is a unique experience to see the words/signs in the body rather than verbally agree to them. This exercise prepares a common ground upon which the participants can rely especially when conflict among the members occurs; a resolution can be found based upon the agreement. The third framework is "Challenge By Choice" (Rohnke, 1977 and Henton, 1996c). Here, a challenger decides how s/he will respond to a challenge. It encourages a personal commitment to learning so that the student can have a sense of control, rather than forced into the experience. This helps the students avoid feeling unsafe, because when they feel unsafe, their brain interprets the challenge as a threat, which obstructs their growth or learning (Caine & Caine, 1994b). It also gives other members a chance to support the decision. "Challenge By Choice" (Rohnke, 1977 and Henton, 1996c) contains a sense of a structured encounter group: picking up on the sense of a safe and supportive environment, participants can reduce their anxiety and self doubt. A group of researchers observed obvious changes in the participants' self concept (Lieberman, M. & De Vos, E., 1982); through PA activities (Adventure Based Counseling), self-concepts such as self satisfaction underwent positive

changes (Lieberman & De Vos, 1982).

PA differs from other programs which use wilderness learning, based on reality is interpreted in the experiences and adventures, and based on the dangers that are encountered. PA leads its participants to think of reality indirectly through games and metaphors, which are not necessarily real, but which can be applied to and used in daily life. The dangers which PA uses in its program, are well-organized and are safe (though they look dangerous: perceived danger) if the proper procedures are followed. Perceived danger is a very effective for risk taking. With these methods and facilities, PA successfully "brings adventure home," as their motto states. PA's advantage lies in their focus one's perception of danger: it is the participant who feels/perceives a scene or phenomenon to be dangerous; the reality is otherwise. PA has well organized and developed methods, even though they do not take folks into the wilderness. For wilderness programs, a direct exposure to reality and uncontrollability come into play. The wilderness programs also use metaphors, however the metaphor itself is very real: in the face of violent nature, humans are helpless. By bringing participants into a situation from which they cannot escape, wilderness programs urge them to confront difficulties, and the real self, and to solve problems; it is a journey deep into the wilderness and into one's self.

These two schools of experiential education should and do complement each other. A great way to enhance individual learning, especially in terms of self concept or organization, is to first, create a safe environment through games and initiative problems. Then, the group is taken to the wilderness so that they can explore unknowns (risk-taking),

and can learn efficiently with each other to handle the situations when encountering the direct and real dangers.

My hometown: Niigata Prefecture

As the following experiential curriculum is for a school in my home prefecture, Niigata, I would like to examine the characteristics of the prefecture.

Japan is the same size as the state of California, but has approximately 120 million people. Niigata borders on the Sea of Japan on one end and on the other, is surrounded by high mountain ranges from the center of Japan; Niigata is located in the middle of main island of Japan. From November to March, the Jet Stream brings us much snow to the areas by the mountain ranges. The winter is cold but the summer is hot and humid. A lot can be learned about Niigata from the following statistical data. The prefecture is the 5th largest prefecture, and has a population of: approximately 2.5 million people (Niigata Kensei Yoran [Handbook of Niigata Prefecture], 1998). Its main industries are agriculture: rice, flowers, fruits and vegetables; fishing; manufacturing; and leisure: ski resorts and Sado Island (Niigata Kensei Yoran, 1998). The deep snow brings clean water which is good for rice planting and sake brewery. In terms of wealth, Niigata is above average; for example, according to the national census data (1993), 76.9% of the population owns a house, ranking Niigata 5th nationally (Niigata Kensei Yoran, 1998). Furthermore, the gross prefectural product ranks14th out of 47 prefectures, and the rate of those who require final assistance from the government was only 3.1 % (this ranks Niigata 37th among all prefectures) (Niigata Kensei Yoran, 1998).

Characteristics specific to Niigatans exist. Niigata is a typical village-based society, therefore, cooperation, interdependency, and mutual monitoring are necessary. Moreover, the nouns, "endurance" and "diligence" best describe people in Niigata. Being a farmer in a severe environment and having experienced tough governance (for example, samurai-governed feudal era until about 130 years ago) meant people in Niigata had to work hard but have endured. It can be interpreted that a lack of "hungry spirits" leads to a tendency to set self limitations. As part of a group, members are required to cooperate, follow the rules and not be outstanding; interestingly, the educators in Niigata have had similar concerns. As has been written, "Niigatans are honest and hard workers. On the other hand, they do not have sufficient radical way of thinking and creativity" (Rikakyoiku senta 20nen no ayumi [the 20-year history of Science Education Center], 1984). Because of the agricultural base in Niigata-society, which stresses cooperation, interdependency is critical. In terms of interdependency, people must follow some traditions and unspoken rules which still remain in each village.

School education in Niigata

The peculiarities of school education in Niigata fall into two categories: one is the prefectural fund for schools, "Iki Iki School Project [activating school project] & Iki Iki Step Up School Project [advanced level of the project]" and the other is the distribution of "Rika Kyoiku Centers [science education center]." The former two projects have funds available for schools which plan to explore more than what the national curriculum guidelines currently allow, for schools concerned about such issues as anti-school refusal

campaigns, or enforcing of physical strength through: volunteer work, community history, computer education, or international education by experiences. Schools can apply for anything they consider useful for the school's education, as long as the plans encourage students' learning and promote school education. The amount of distributed funds is quite small; therefore schools cannot have an aggressive plan which needs a large amount of money and lasts over a year. It is quite doubtful if the projects actually contribute to the improvement of school education in this prefecture. In reality most of the approved projects are volunteer works or partial experiential learning activities (Iki iki sukuru purojekuto (1), 1992).

Niigata has 28 Science Education Centers [Rika Kyoiku Centers] as of March 1999, which serve as a training facility of elementary and junior high school teachers so they can offer qualified science classes. The centers also function as a research center for local vegetation and geology, and in addition, published books and reports that feature the local ecology and geography. Direct services, programs for students, such as field trips, science experiments, and lectures are offered in affiliation with schools. The center is open to the public for environmental education programs, such as a one-day bird watching tour. Although the centers have full-time instructors, who are loaned and trained by a year-long special program by the centers, the impact and effects on improvement of science education have not evaluated nor shown any significant changes. However, by the organization restructures which have began in April 1999, and by introduction of a new category of teaching: Integrated Study from the year 2002, the center should become more active and committed to school education from now on. It

will become an excellent resource for educators in related to the new Government Curriculum Guidelines. As the revised national curriculum guideline emphasized, experiential education as the key for the next generation, these facilities are asset as they offer an experiential: environmental and scientific education.

Other concerns related to schools in Niigata

Teachers and those involved in school education in Niigata, refer to the prefecture as the "undereducated prefecture" (for example, Kobayashi, M., 1965) since only a small percentage of its high school graduates enter university—just 31.5 %, which ranks Niigata 41st among all prefectures in Japan comparing with the national average 41.7 % (Niigata Kensei Yoran [Handbook of Niigata], 1998). Teachers also have other concerns, such as Niigata's rate of school refusal in elementary schools, which is the 3rd highest among all prefectures, and is about twice that of national average: 0.42 % vs. 0.24 % (Niigata Educational Statistical Data, 1998). Junior high schools have similar rates: 2.14%, which is much higher than the national average, 1.65%, ranking Niigata 4th highest among the prefectures (Niigata Educational Statistical Data, 1998).

Serious bullying issues and its high rate of students' suicide make the mental problems of children a critical issue in this prefecture. It is disappointing that schools do not have full time psycho-counselors. Instead, counselors are assigned to several schools and visit each school for one day every few months (for example, from Table 1: Annual Plan 1998 on page 19). I doubt if many students, parents, or teachers take advantage of this counseling system, especially as it is not readily available.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Objects of this plan

1. Building a learning community which both students and teachers can feel safe to explore unknowns.
2. Integrating some (at least) part of each subject as a project so that students can immerse themselves, try out things by their way to make sense and learn.

Building a safe learning environment

The main points of the following curriculum plans are: building a safe learning environment in the class and introducing experiential learning more to subject areas. A safe learning environment—both psychologically and mentally safe—is necessary since students learn when they feel non-threatened. The brain will deepen its learning if it is in "relaxed alertness" mode, relaxed and excited to explore unknowns (Caine & Caine, 1994b). If a person feels nervous his/her brain conclude that it suffers from a threat and shuts down to new learning, causing dysfunction (Caine & Caine, 1994b). The brain is "down-shifting" its function (Caine & Caine, 1994b). For the Japanese, who live in groups, to be in a safe environment is critical, as they have depended on each other for a long time. The group norms, which govern the members, is critical: if the norm are safe for everyone, the members can be relieved. Although the Japanese are good at

accomplishing things in groups, it is unclear and have ignored if they can feel safe in the group. School education, changes in family structure, changes in styles of playing, and changes in society have been influenced the children's life. Thus it could happen that children do not become used to taking part in a group. With knowing group theories, perhaps now is the time to grown and learn while a part of group.

A cooperative atmosphere

If the class is safe for everyone, a cooperative atmosphere in which the group can attain higher productivity will exist. In cooperative groups, as compared to competitive or individualistic groups, the degree achievement is higher, as there is mutual encouragement to attain a goal (p. 105, Johnson & Johnson, 1997).

When a teacher perceives that education is an effort to trigger learning, s/he cannot assume an authoritative stance towards the learners but instead, will act as a facilitator, supporting learning and growth. As Henton (1996a) points in Adventure in the Classroom, in these cases teachers act as facilitators: "[c]onductor, [c]o-learner, and [c]oach." (p.29).

How to integrate the curriculum

The sub models which Fogarty proposed were: fragmented, connected (bridging items), nested, sequenced (sequencing between subjects), shared (sharing concepts among subjects), webbed or thematic, threaded (a common theme), integrated (interdisciplinary), immersed, and networked models. Considering the models of Fogarty (1992) and stages

of development of elementary school students, I would like to propose some "webbed" and "thematic models" (Caine & Caine, 1994c) suitable for students in Niigata and items to trigger leaning in a fun way: game in this chapter.

Goal: energizing learning, centripetal force

For individual and group learning, an "operational" (Johnson & Johnson, 1997) goal, which should be suitable for situation and environment, is necessary. If the goals are "Specific," "Measurable," "Attainable," "Relevant," and "Trackable" (SMART, p. 81-82, Henton, 1996b), then progress and process can be measured. They with mutual encouragement and monitoring will accelerate and deepen group learning.

The goals for certain periods of the year usually depend on the development and condition of the group, however, certain general goals can be expected with related to the school schedule (please see Table 1 of page 19 for your reference.). The academic year starts in April and ends in March in Japan.

・ Goals from April to the beginning of May:

The main goal is for students to get to know each other, as this will set the tone for the class and will help to build a safe learning environment. Ice-breaking and warm up games come first, then de-inhibitizing games, which help to ease self-disclosure, will be used to eliminate any sense of threatening feelings by encouraging a sense of safety. Timing of its introduction will depend on the condition of the class, namely once all students know each other and feel good about being in the classroom, no one is afraid of

making mistakes and peer pressures. With those activities, the atmosphere in the classroom should be safe so that the students are excited to learn. This is also the time to set the rules for a safe learning environment through collaborations with me, as a teacher, and the students. Full Value Being ("the being") will be introduced sot the students can set the rules by themselves. With this they can earn a sense of commitment also. As the class grows, it will experience conflict. "The being" is a good tool for resolving the conflict, as it allows the students to reflect their behavior and how they should correct it. It can also be used as a guideline for the class moral code. If necessary, games, which related to conflict or communication, can be used to arouse the student's attention on conflict.

Setting personal goals will be introduced and encouraged. For reflection and self evaluation, which also encourage students' commitment to their learning, the keeping of a personal journal will also be introduced. If necessary, a format for journal will be distributed (depending on students' age). Pair sharing will also be introduced for reflection and goal setting sessions. Towards the athletic meeting—one of the biggest school events—will be held at the end of May, initiative problems (a category of games), which encourages group awareness, will be introduced to the class.

For subject studies, two school events during this term will used. The first one is the bus trip, which is at the beginning of May, and the next one is Athletic Meeting at the end of the month, May. For a but trip at the beginning of May, preliminary studies on the trip will be integrated, for example, in literature: could be a travel writing, social studies: studies on the designated area, and science: geographical features of the

designated area. Matters relating to the athletic meeting, such as the human body or history of the athletic meeting will be taught simultaneously so that the students are immersed and can learn more using the event. It would be a good idea to study about speed in relation to speed competition in the athletic event. A game can be used for introduction of concept of speed.

My first priority at early this period, as a teacher to build the class, through such activities, interviews with them, and students' home visit, is to know who the students are including background information and what their goals/dreams are. Because the class cannot be avoided to have influence from a teacher, I must know importance of influence of my behavior and role modeling and encourage the class to participate in their learning.

- July, around the end of first term:

The goal is to have the student a sense of group and connection to the class, and certain personal achievement are goals around this time. Before the long summer vacation, the class needs to terminate the current stage they are in, because after different experiences during the vacation, the class will be different from the one before the vacation. In examining the condition of the class and interactions among the members, some activities which bring a sense of cohesion such as "human chair "or "human rope"; "balloon," which may bring a sense of termination, but also a sense of continuous connection with the class will be used. Achievements of the whole class tasks such as the athletic meeting and initiative games, the class should experience the first moderate peak experience by this time. Personal connection towards the class will be reinforced

by class management such as the presentation of a personal evaluation of the first term. For personal reflection other than their journals, a self evaluation form will be prepared, of which a part could function as a questionnaire and as self reflection.

For subject study, some brief in-subject integrated group projects will be introduced. The timing of its introduction and its contents are depended on the group's condition. Through the cooperative games and activities related to the being, the students will learn how to share information and help to learn each other.

Students may have experienced a variety of things during the summer vacation and are both mentally and physically detached from school. Therefore, a goal for this term is to change their physical and mental mode from non-school to school and to reenergize personal/group learning. Which projects will be presented and how, will depend on the group: the physical/mental conditions, influences from outside information sources, people who come in contact with, or the group's stage of development.

If the class has reached performing stage by this term, bigger projects will be presented. However, if the group is in the storming or norming position, further icebreaking and initiative games will be introduced. Buddy system or team presentations, instead of personal presentations, will be also emphasized to reduce chances of threats for learning. The teacher should pay attention to sub groups in the class and change members in the group or buddy system so that students can interact with everyone, rather than only a few classmates. By the term, integrated study projects can be introduced. The school events at this time of the year are art and crafts day, marathon day, music day, which involves stage performance and parents' class visit. By now they

experience some integrated study projects more than the first term. Arts and craft day is when they can present their achievement in front of audience and a wonderful opportunity to make their learning real. With those events as chances to cooperate, hopefully by the end of the second term the class will have reached the performing stage.

- During the last term of the year:

Hopefully by this time, the role of the teacher will decrease and supports will be more indirect, as students begin to organize their learning by themselves. If the students are ready, projects: community-based researches or service learning projects, which involve less teacher-involvement, will be introduced to the class A project related to the end of the academic year, which can act as a farewell termination ceremony, such as a collection of compositions or, an art or music piece would be nice for celebrating the group's achievements. Games at this time must let participants feel/see the power of a collection of people, for example, "Rope Yart Circle" or "Human Chair." A self-evaluation, composed of a questionnaire, and personal sentiments about the class, can also be completed at this time. Through the project and the evaluation, the students personally can reflect what they learn and how they grow during the year, too. These attempts are not only for group termination but also personal reflection.

Methods

1. By games in homerooms, moral and physical education classes.

   • Cooperative games with the concept of Project Adventure's "Full Value Contract" (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988 and Henton, 1996b) and "Challenge By Choice" (Rohnke, 1977 and Henton, 1996c). They also encourage risk-taking/feedback.

2. By class administration: here is a fun and exciting place

   • Decoration: If classrooms are colorful decorated, it will attract students' interests. I want to avoid an uneasy atmosphere that tasteless classrooms make. In addition to the decoration, miscellaneous items like books, which can be touched and examined could create an attractive and relaxing atmosphere will be set in the classroom.

   • Communication with students: set aside time, like office hours, regularly for personal questions and talks.

   • Informed consent for students: If suitable, information related to the students could be shared with them, for example, grading criteria. Encouraging the self evaluation process to promote the sense of owning the learning. I, as a teacher would like to take into consideration somehow their own goal setting and their evaluation on their own achievement when evaluating their achievement (if/how the evaluation result could form part of the grade is an issue which needs further consideration).

- Communication with and informed consent for parents: not knowing what is on in the school may cause anxiety and unnecessary doubts. Conflicts, distrust or suspicion towards schools from parents may be from the lack of information. Thus Frequent communication and efforts of disclosing information such as a class newspaper, exchanging notes will be used for this reason.

- Community involvement: whenever there is a chance, the communities' involvement not only in the class and school events, but also in study of subjects will be encouraged. Parents and the community should also be informed as children are raised by schools, parents, and the community in a joint venture.

3. Integrated curriculum projects:

- Subjects should be taught by in integrated manner. Projects should be integrated and as much as possible, <u>real</u> for the students. Fogarty's (1992) classification makes reference to some integrated projects. Although the detailed contents of the Government Curriculum Guidelines which states what ought to be covered for each grade should have been examined, I did not do so as its it too minute. My plan is not a rigid one, to be followed by a certain grade level, but rather a framework for a curriculum that can be changed to suit the needs of the students.

How to build a safe learning community

For community building, I will apply games in a sequence, as invented and/or developed by Project Adventure, Inc. as Takaku (1997) tried to build such a safe learning environment with his class in the moral class and homerooms. It is a way to make a learning community which is safe and fun place to be and with experiential education. However, he did not apply the methods into the subject areas yet. Please refer games list from page 59 to page 62, which I am planning to use and mostly from Quick Silver (Rohnke, K. E., & Butler, S., 1995), FUNN Stuff Vol. 1 & 2 (Rohnke, K. E., 1996), Protruding Navel (Morozumi, T., 1997), and Heavy Box (Morozumi, T., 1998).

The integrated curriculum is ideal when students are "immersing" (Caine & Caine, 1994c) in a meaningful learning environment. However, it is beyond my capacity at this time to make a year-long integrated curriculum for a specific grade, as it means that I would ignore who the learners are. I believe that experiential learning should encourage learning through experiences to each student Therefore I raise only some examples of experiential learning projects for my future reference, some of which can be altered in detail, depending on learners needs and age.

Zip Zap		BT	brain twister	
Who's Shot?		BT	brain twister	
Hoop Me Rhonda!		TR/commu.		
Jumping Shucking Twirling-Medley	FS 1			PE class
Plunging the Depths of Psyche Ce	FS 1	FUNN	deinhibitizer	
Ring on a Rope	FS 1	FUNN		
Snail	FS 1	BT	brain twister	
First Name Only	FS 1	BT/TR	brain twister, also good for class: language (Roman Letters: 4th grade	
I Lean	FS 1	TR	also good for class: home econo, social	social study
Run! Shut! Knock Yourself Out	FS 1	WU/DI/TR		
Puzzle Variation	FS 1	IN	also good for class: social study: map	
4 Sheets to the Wind	QS	stunts	diversity/communication	moral class
Action/Reaction Dollar Drop	QS	stunts	action reaction time, PE lecture	science study
The Bends	QS	stunts	fair play	
Connect the Dots	QS	BT		
Magic	QS	BT/ stun	arithmetic class: gather students' interests	
Onion Jousting	QS	stunts		PE class
AP: Adventure Programming is the basic workshop of Project Adventure				

QS: QuickSilver		IB: IceBreaker	
FS: FUNN Stuff Vol. 1, 2		WU: Warm Up	
NAVEL: Protruding Navel		DI: DeInhibitizer	
HB: Heavy Box		TR: TRust	
		BT: Brain Twister	
		FUNN: Functional Understanding's Not Necessary	
		stunts	

Windmill Stretch	AP	WU		
Bill's Button Factory	FS 2	WU/DI		
Look down,Look up	FS 1	WU/DI		
Mrs. Babushka	AP	WU/DI		
Peek a Who	AP	IB/DI		
Group Juggle	QS	IB		
Star Wars	QS	WU/IN		
Angel and Spy	AP	WU	FUNN	
Copy Cat	QS	WU	FUNN	
Cowboys	AP			
Fox and Squirrel	NAVEL			
Geography Bingo	NAVEL		class: social study	
Key Punch	QS	IN	also good for class: arithmetic and language	
Le Cav	FS 2	IN		
Toxic Waste	QS	IN	also good for class: arithmetic and science (keep a balance)	
News Room	FS 2	IB		
Pile Up	QS	IN		
Push'em into Balance	NAVEL	TR	two people facing lean and push the other by hands separated as far	
Quick Lineup	QS	IN	team effort	
Rodeo Throw	NAVEL			
Rudy's Ploy	FS 2			
Shelpa Walk	AP	IN/TR/team		
Squirm	NAVEL			
The Leaning Tower of Feetza	FS 2	IN	also good for lower grade arithmetic	
Wham Pam	AP	IB	memorizing names	
Word Ordering (kotoba)				language, moral (normalizatio
Your Add				
Feeach & Mooch (group gesture)				
Duct Tape		IN/FUNN	fun	
Spider's Web		IN/LE		
Giant Seesaw (Whale Watch)		IN/LE		
Egg Holder		IN	also good for science class: gravity	
Bird's Nest		IN	also good for science class: gravity	
Polar Bear		BT	brain twister/new paradigm	
Nails		BT	brain twister/new paradigm	

King Frog	NAVEL	non-verb	brain twister	
Washing Machine	AP	WU	quick energizer, get body warm	
Circle Sit-down	AP	sense of group achievement		
Compass Walk		TR	also good for introducing directions for lower grades	
Hug a Tree		TR	also good for introduction of the environmental study	
Human Camera	AP	TR/DI		when participants are close
Blind Polygon	HB	IN/TR	heavy/anxiety, good for review of difinitions of figures	
Everybody's Up	AP	IN		
Mine Field	QS	IN/TR		
Yart Circle	QS	trust/sense of group		
Mute Lineup		trust/tea	light	
5-5-5 Stretch	AP	WU	PE	
Ameba Tag (transformer tag)	AP	WU	PE	
Asteroid	AP	WU	PE	
Bee	AP	WU	introducing safe issues	
Bumper Car	AP	WU	introducing safe issues	
Catch the Dragon Tail	NAVEL	WU	PE	
Chronic Disease Tag	NAVEL	WU/DI	FUNN	
Count Off	AP		brain twister	
Elbow Tag	AP	WU	PE	
Hospital Tag	HB	WU	PE	
Impulse	AP	WU		
Knee Slap	QS	IB/WU		at the beginning of the schoo
Instant Replay	NAVEL	IB		
Me You Risa	AP	IB	memorizing names	
Mirror Stretch	AP	WU	PE	
Monarch	QS	WU	PE	
Name Five	QS		building a fun/safe environment	not for first days
Pair Tag	AP	WU	PE	
Pass My Shoe	HB	WU	FUNN	
People to People	NAVEL	WU	building a fun/safe environment	
River & Bank	AP	WU	building a fun/safe environment	
Samurai	NAVEL	WU	PE	
Storyline Stretch	AP	WU	PE	
Tai Chi Stretch	AP	WU		

Table 4: Game List

NAME OF ACTIVITY	FROM	category	for	when
Categories	QS	grouping	grouping	beginning of the activities
Have You Ever	QS	WU	gathering info/checking condition	
Human Treasure Hunt	QS	IB	introduction	beginning of the activities
Bumpity Bang Bang	QS	IB/DI	building a fun/safe environment	second first
Funny Face Relay	PA AP*	DI	building a fun/safe environment	first is OK
Hog Call	QS	DI/TR	building a fun/safe environment	after 2nd day
Speed Rabbit	AP	DI	building a fun/safe environment	after 2nd day
Help Me Tag	AP	WU/DI	building a fun/safe environment	second first
Minnesota's Mosquito	QS	WU/DI	building a fun/safe environment	second first
Billboard	QS	IB	introduction	beginning of the activities
Cocktail Party	AP	IB	introduction	beginning/anytime
Commonalties	QS	IB	introduction	beginning of the activities
How 're ya doin? Just fine, thanks	QS	IB	introduction	beginning of the activities
How We Differ	QS	IB	introduction/diversity	beginning of the activities
It ain't Me, Babe	QS	IB	introduction	
Name Toss	AP	IB	introduction	beginning of the activities
Who are You?	QS	IB	introduction	beginning of the activities
Truth is Stranger than Fiction	QS	IB	intro., gathering info on participants	
All Aboard	AP	IN		
Group Juggle Warp Speed	QS	IN	exciting but not so heavy	
Home Electric Machine	AP	IN	team effort to make a machine-others guess	
Human Knots	NAVEL	IN	heavy/physical	
Magic Carpet	AP	IN	not so heavy	
Magic Shoes	NAVEL	IN	not so heavy	
Name Warp Speed	AP	IN	exciting but not so heavy	
Phones and Faxes	QS	IN	also good for science class: gravity, flow of water	
Half Pipe	QS	IN	brain	
Commons (three teams in one ma	QS	IN	light and fun	
Popsicle Push-up	NAVEL	IN	physical	
Clock	AP	IN/WU	also good for introducing the time for lower grades	
Group Juggle Warp Speed	FS 1	IN/IB	light and fun	

How to integrate the curriculum: thematic models

As long as teachers know of ways to build a model within the Government Curriculum Guidelines, they can integrate various subjects along the models and meet the specific need/character of the learners. Here are examples of the integration.

1. Our area

"Our area" is a map-centered project and classifies as "thematic" model of integrated curriculum (Fogarty, 1992). It is most suitable for students in 3rd to 5th grade. Details of the items that can be covered by this project under the Government Curriculum Guidelines are as follows:

arithmetic: magnification, measuring length, size, fraction, volume, relationship between figure and volume, reduction.

social study: map reading; our local area: people's life, facilities (inc. recycling), industry, environment, connection to broader area: prefecture, region, country and international; our nation: industry, relation to other countries

language: understand written/spoken words, presentation, letter writing, summarization, construct one's thought.

science study: familiar plants and animals, functions of water, geographical feature of our local area.

arts: three dimensional map making, coloring

1. Map:

- map making: map reading, features of the map.

- location of our area: in prefecture, in region, in Japan and in the world plus direction.
- a field trip with an expert from the Science Education Center—geographical features of our area—vegetation: local vegetation on the map.
- Geographical character and industry.

2. Water and our life: through the relationship between water and our life
   - Functions of the water.
   - What is the function of the water? How does it relate to my life? How much water do I need daily? Water and industry: how and what industries need water.
   - Water circulation.
   - Is water limited or unlimited? If limited, how? If not, why? How to reuse the wasted water.
   - Recycling of water: How to recycle the water. How can we contribute to recycling?
3. Me, us and the people surrounding us

Through discussions with students, the places to be investigated and people to interviewed are decided. I am expecting students to raise places like public facilities (fire department, town hall, recycling center, or police station), nursing home, companies, and schools for young people. Groups of the students may choose one place to study from among several choices. The following outlines

the requirements to be covered.

- Gathering the real information (i.e., inquiry to the facility, phone/individual interview).
- Time limit- the amount of the time they can use is limited: have to distribute the time.
- additional research- using materials other than textbooks.
- Obligate to report on their progress-keeping a group journal.
- Find points of interests.
- Find problems they might have.
- Find/think a possible contribution which the class could make.
- Presentation of their study to the class, with visual aids (drawing, pictures, or a handwritten map).
- Individual report along with their group findings: what I learned from the project.
- They present their result in front of the class (and hopefully in front of their parents). I am expecting their parents' contribution for this project., along with the students' research.

4. Me and my ancestor:

Other than the map, students will learn through the life of a model family (parents and twins of the same age to students) about remote issues such as history so that the students can feel the history close. Questions are: what was life like

children in a different period: the life before the century in the Edo Era; before WWII; when their parents were children.

- Social study: geography, climate, the peoples' life in general, political situation, activities that children enjoyed.
- Home economics: clothing, housing, food: let's cook the food that the people ate at that time.
- Scientific study: How to preserve the food and crops; how to grow rice. Sanitary issues (how they garbage/recycle the waste).
- Language: Interviewing their parents to see what life was like their childhood. Writing about life if the student lived in a different time.

5. Dialect

- Language study: What is our dialect? Gathering information on dialects by interviewing people they know. How different/similar is the dialect to that of nearby areas? What is the standard Japanese? Library research; opportunity to listen to the local stories by advanced users of the dialect (seniors). Debate session about the dialect and standard Japanese.

Another thematic model could examine conservation of Toki project (the endangered national bird of Japan, also known by the name of Nipponia Nippon) in Sado Island, Niigata Prefecture. This theme will focus on environmental study first and then spread to other fields of study. Science study: research on ecology and facts of the bird

(if possible, a field trip to the conservation center); environmental study (why it is in danger of extinction); and studies on birds and their seasonal travels. A local Science Education Center will be the resource center for this project. Another field of study is social study: functions of the Toki Conservation Center, and the relationship with the national Environment Agency and the Chinese people on the project. This would extend the students' interests to the relationship between Japan and China or further inquiry into the central Government. In this sense, this could be a "sequenced" model (Fogarty, 1992).

The last example of the thematic model is "mystery." For language: reading a mystery which is unfinished and having to write the ending (composition). For science study: study by a mystery box of electric circuit and revealing the tricks. For social study: collecting the popular seven major mysteries, any interesting phenomena, or stories related to the mystery. For art: drawing, carving under a title of 'mystery,' If possible and suitable, the students will have a self-presentation and critique session. For music: mysterious sounds: why it is mysterious—any factors which consist of the sounds.

Other ideas of the curriculum are ones with key concept like 'life,' 'invention' and so forth.

Additional ideas for the class

The following ideas for games are not enough as full projects but good are enough for grabbing students' interests:

- Whale Watch: an aid for balance—science

- Impulse: an aid of concept of speed—arithmetic
- Magic Carpet, Star Wars: as an introduction of space—arithmetic
- Pipeline: as an introduction of flow of water—science
- Egg Holder: weight and gravity—science
- Four Sheets to the Wind—moral class: diversity, differences of interpretation
- First Name Only—language: memorizing Roman letters (4^{th} grade)
- Monarch, social system under monarchy—social studies (an example from Henton, 1996d)
- Object Retrieval—science: balance (an example from Henton, 1996d)
- Key Punch—language: memorizing the Japanese alphabets (1^{st} grade) and Alphabets (4^{th} grade)

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

This is an experiential curriculum plan for building a safe and exciting learning community in an elementary school in Japan. Japan is a small-group inclined society, in which the systems and power of small groups cannot be ignored. The Japanese live within groups and relate with one another through cooperation and the mutual monitoring. For the Japanese, it is specially important to build a safe environment for all who involved. On the other hand, the Japanese can no longer assume/expect groups to be mono-valued; it is time to re-examine what the group is and to use its power to encourage one's personal growth. The Japanese society as well as people change.

School education in Japan had undergone incredible changes in the last hundred years; before and after WWII, it completely changed direction from totalitarianism to individualism. For a long time, education was perceived as merely inputting necessary information so students could become a part of the society; individual real learning was ignored. Real learning occurs when a learner not only memorize the information, but also owes it, applies it to, and arranges it in a suitable format depending on each situation. Creative and critical thinking are the products from the real learning. As brain studies prove, for being critical and creative for those real learning, experiences are necessary. Experiential education, therefore, is necessary for learning.

This elementary curriculum plan attempts for a school in Niigata to encourage real

learning with two approaches: one is building a safe learning environment by plays and the other one is the integrated experiential learning projects which invite the real learning. Through games developed by an experiential learning provider, Project Adventure, Inc. and classroom management, students as well as teachers can build an unthreatening and exciting learning community.

With efforts to integrate various subjects areas by a theme: the "thematic" model of integrated curriculum, a unthreatening and exciting learning community will be build by students as well as a teacher. From these projects, students can learn not only the items in subjects, required to learn by Government Curriculum Guidelines, but can also apply their learning to a different situation. This is a plan which waits for practice.

ANALYSIS

Through my study for this paper and at Mankato State University (now Minnesota State University), I found an answer to why experiential education is so powerful and necessary for the Japanese. By examining the group-oriented Japanese society, I clearly know how important it is to be in safe groups in order to grow and live. By examining learning in terms of brain research, I know how accurate what Dewey purposed and I know that the learning does not occur on the black board or through experiences out-of-door but in the learner's brain. Although my plan focuses on the people in Niigata, it is also applicable to schools elsewhere in Japan as school education is nationally equalized.

For the time being, it is not possible to analyze if and how this plan will work. Theoretically, then, I did not accomplish my work but just finished writing a proposal. By all means, further study and arrangements are necessary. Even if one devotes her/his time to one field of study, s/he cannot prove influences without a objective data. However, this is the preparation for my real challenge. Hopefully, when I bring this plan into practice in cooperation with a researcher, I expect to have a formal research. The cooperation between researchers and practitioners is unavoidable for education for: obtaining an objective data to prove effects of attempts, extending possibility of learning, and ways of teaching. Theories are there for practices. In joint ventures between researchers and practitioners, not only a program evaluation but also study on behavioral changes of the participants should be done.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I would like to make the following three recommendations: first, to use this as a reference; second, to make further researches on experiential education available to the public; and third, to study further experiential education.

To try, examine, and change is a must; this is not an armchair theory but a starting point for practice, and I urge the readers to treat it as such. I also expect feedback and ideas from those with a critical eye to improve this proposal. We must be critical, creative, and willing to learn from others and from own experiences.

Secondly I expect a change of the current situation, so that experiential education is introduced more into school education and all researches related to the issues done in Japan could become available in Japan. Through my research for this paper, I was disappointed how little research is available; although I found some reports on experiential learning projects, it was not 'researches' to which I could refer. I further expect a change in the library research system, as it is unbelievably hard to find articles in Japanese libraries. Almost no information is available.

Lacking of theoretical frameworks or purposes of the attempts, the available research was mostly reports of the experience days in nature or in an unusual occasion: what they plan and did, comments from participants, and conclusion. Although many researchers, practitioners and lay people often discuss how important to have real experiences in school education, and even though experiential education is not new for us, little research has been done. If we are serious about making a change happen with

experiential learning, we should study and learn it more seriously. For practitioners, teachers, including myself, this means learning more about what experiential education is, how to research it and ways to apply it. Experiential education is not just experiences, but rather, a more influential and powerful way of learning if those offering the learning know its functions and backbones. Practice is the most important, but we as practitioners should/cannot ignore the theories and reasons for why we are doing this. It is irresponsible and unprofessional for a practitioner to use experiential education without first studying it. Unfortunately many teachers and educators in Japan continued to think of it as a voluntarism or nature/outdoor experience. If you leave the experiences there without application through reflection, it is doubtful how much the experience fosters learning and how much is understood.

CHAPTER V

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Warren, K., Sakofs, M., & Hunt, J. S., Jr. (Eds.) (1995). The Theory of Experiential Education. Boulder, CO: Association for Experiential Education.

This is a book of assorted theories, research and practices of experiential education. A national association for experiential education, the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) gathered and re-sorted the papers from the Journal of Experiential Education (their quarterly magazine). If you are interested in experiential education, but cannot take time to devote yourself to its study in a school, this is the book you should read first and intensively. Since this is for practitioners, the wording of papers is familiar and there is much lots of information which is sufficient for practices.

Caine, R. N. and Caine, G. (1994). Making Connection: Teaching and the human brain. Menlo Park, CA: Innovative Learning Publications.

This is a book that I referred to for why experiential integrated learning is beneficial for learners. By re-organizing and summarizing previous research on the brain, the two authors Caine and Caine, explain what it is to learn or to study for the brain, and what happens then. It points out that the learning in the brain is holistic and need not only information but also other kinds of connections with previously obtained information. This proves what Dewey urged about the importance of experiences and connections.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, F. P. (1997). Joining Together: Group theory and group skills. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

This is a book about the study of groups. When thinking of experiential education, the influences of groups cannot be ignored, as they are the basis of one's identity. To understand individual identity, it is necessary to know the person's attribution to certain groups. With exercises and games for groups, you can study the group with your students and study the human relationship practically. The wording is familiar to non-researchers, too. Among the books on group theories, which are for business purposes, this is unique to study groups

Reischaure, E. O. & Jansen, M. B. (1995). The Japanese Today: Change and Continuity. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1977)
*Its Japanese translation is also available: Reischaure, E. O. (1990). Za Japanese Todei. [The Japanese Today] M. Fukuashima. Trans., Tokyo: Bungenshunju.

This book is about Japan. It analyzes Japan from every aspect such as geography, history, and anthropology. This is an objective and well-organized book. I was surprised by how much he studied this country. It is harder for the Japanese, including myself, to study and organize who we are, for non-Japanese. The author loved Japan but at the same time, he could see and analyze what happened in Japan very objectively. With such a deep love and knowledge, he could finish his job as the US Ambassador to Japan when antigovernment and expulsion movement for Japan-US security treaty heated up. The parts which discuss about the philosophy, and uniqueness of the Japanese were especially wonderful, with a wide variety of research and information to support his arguments. It not only gives you the information about Japan and the Japanese, but also gives you the reasons and background information about how Japan and the Japanese are.

Henton, M.(1996). Adventure in the Classroom. Hamilton, MA: Project Adventure, Inc.

This is written by Mary Henton, who used to work for "Adventure in the Classroom" section of Project Adventure, Inc. This book is full of logistics and theories for experiential learning, through PA activities. By reading this book, you will gradually get a sense of the education, and can see that experiential learning

does not have to be well organized and big projects at the beginning. However, you cannot expect much about examples or games from this book. If more games were available in this book, it would be more helpful to get a clearer picture of the education.

Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. (1989). Shoggako gakushu shido yoryo. [Government Curriculum Guidelines for Elementary Schools]. Tokyo: Monbu-sho Insatsu-kyoku.

This is the current edition of Government Curriculum Guidelines and is published by Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture. It is like a bible for teachers. It is the revisions of the national guidelines of school education from Kindergarten, elementary, junior high, high, to schools for physically and mentally challenged children. This is actually a requirement of all of the mentioned schools have to follow from instruction hours to items to be covered. Any attempts should cover and follow at a certain level the guideline. Although from the year of 2002 each school will have freedom to offer a part of curriculum along to its environment, it has to follow the guideline for the most part.

Takaku, K. (1998). Tanoshiminagara shinrai kankei wo kiduku gemushu. [Games that build trust]. Tokyo: Gakuji Shuppan.

The first book of adventure games in the classroom (most of them are from Project Adventure, Inc.) in Japan. The author is an elementary school teacher and introduces the games mainly to the moral class. He chose some of the games which he enjoyed with his class and explains how-to with a brief introduction of experiential education, Project Adventure's principles: CBC (Challenge By Choice), FVC (Full Value Contract).

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