

Evaluation of the Assistants to Teacher of Japanese (ATJ) Program in Victorian Schools, Australia.

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Abstract

A Survey was conducted of past participants and their Universities in the Teacher Assistant program by way of a questionnaire. A questionnaire was given to Japanese participants in the Victorian Department of Education's program to send graduates from Japanese universities to schools in Victoria as assistants to teachers of Japanese. In the years 1996-2008, about nine Japanese universities and two hundred and seventy five of their graduates participated in this program. The survey was conducted in order to find out (a) if the program met the expectations of the Japanese Universities and the participants, (b) how the program had affected future courses of participants and (c) how the program could be improved. In 2003, a program evaluation was conducted at eight schools in Victoria with an overall similar conclusion to the survey conducted in Japan; the objectives of participants and schools were successfully met.

Keywords: program evaluation, Assistants to Teachers of Japanese Program, Australia, Department of Education

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Background

In 1992, the Victorian Department of Education¹ introduced a foreign language learning program known as Language Other Than English (LOTE), with the view that every school student, by the year 2000 would be given the opportunity to learn languages other than English. By the end of the 1990s around 380 Primary and Secondary schools offered a LOTE Japanese in their school's curriculum which created a significant demand for qualified Japanese language teachers and native speakers of Japanese.

In the fall of 1995, the Council of Japan in Victoria, the Director of the Department, and the head of the Division of International Education sought assistance in Japan. Japanese Universities offering courses in Teaching Japanese as a Second Language (TJSL) collaborated for mutual aid and cooperation.

The trial of Assistants to Teacher of Japanese Program, herein referred to as "program", in 1996 with two universities resulted in twenty Japanese graduates being sent to Victoria. In the period 1996 to 2008, two hundred and seventy five graduates from more than eight Japanese Universities², here in referred to as "Participants" or "Assistant Teacher Japanese (ATJ)", participated in the program.

2. Outline of the Program

The 'term' was a twelve-month engagement and commenced at the beginning of April for participants. Participants were selected giving preference to Japanese University graduates, finishing TJSL courses with English proficiency requirement of more than 5.0 of International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores, 500 of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or 3.5 of the Test for Writing Essay (TWE). They were also assessed for their adaptability including willingness to take a teaching load across one or more schools. A staff member of the Department of Education assessed participants in a personal interview in November of each year.

Participants in the Program met their own expenses for their airfares and relevant visas to stay in Australia. The Participant's health insurance up to 1998 and 'Incidental Allowance' of \$30Au per week, (increased to \$40 after 2002) was paid by the host school together with provision for family home-stay or similar accommodation.

The role of the Victorian Department of Education:

- Selection of Japanese University Graduates
- Placement at Victorian Primary and Secondary Schools as Assistants to LOTE-teachers
- Coordination of the Program
 - visiting schools
 - orientation on arrival for Assistants
 - study meetings during the term of the program
 - an annual review of the program for improvement
 - provision of a handbook for Participants containing information including Victoria's school system, the role of the Assistants in schools, various duties at schools including with teachers and LOTE coordinators, further explanation on Program participation and eligibility, financial responsibilities both Participants and the schools/Department

The role of Japanese Universities in the program:

- Recommending applicants for participation in the program
- Providing explanation of the program to applicants
- Assistance with the interviewing processes

II. THE AIM OF THIS EVALUATION

The aim of the evaluation:

- assess the extent to which the program met the goals of the key stakeholders in Japan; the former Participants in the program and their Japanese Universities
- assess the perceived impacts of the program on Participants and their courses after the program
- identify issues of concern; make recommendations, where necessary, to improve the program

In addition, findings are compared with the results of the evaluation undertaken by the University of Melbourne in 2003.

III. DATA MANAGEMENT

Evaluation data was collected through a questionnaire in Japanese provided to the former teaching Assistants and the teaching staff of the Japanese Universities. The questionnaire was prepared on Google documents. The URL was sent by mailing lists from March to November 2009.

The survey was composed of two parts, with 54 questions for the Assistants and 15 questions for the Universities. 17 out of the 54 questions for Assistants and 6 out of the 15 questions for Universities required participants to fill in their opinions, comments, or reasons for their response related to the question. The remainder of the questions were multiple-choice questions requiring participants to select either one or more choices out of 4-6 options. The questions were formed according to the objectives of the Japanese Participants by a professor of TJSJ of a Japanese University and a former Assistant.

Unfortunately, only 87 out of 275 former Assistants answered the questionnaire. However, owing to the questionnaire's composition; respondents filled in their own experiences, opinions and comments, enabling enough useful information to assess the outcomes of the program and obtain useful information for improvement in the program.

Reasons for the response level include University administrations' inability to contact all ATJs, the percentage of women in the program who have married and changed their name and addresses and relocations of Participants over a long period.

IV. FINDINGS--SUMMARY

1. The Participants - ATJs

The majority of respondents were satisfied with the program in spite of working for little pay.

Participant's Comment reviewed:

While assistants who worked for commercial providers wanted more freedom from teaching as a reward for paying very expensive participation fees. The ATJs of this program were able to form better relationships with other ATJs by cooperating and helping each other without having to be entertained by the Department of Education as we did not pay so much.

Most respondents learned how to cope with various classroom situations as well as being able to practice a variety of teaching techniques and as 90% of the Participants taught Japanese after the program, it can be concluded that this was the most valuable outcome of the program for them.

- More than 20% of those who were not necessarily interested in teaching Japanese before the program taught Japanese after returning to Japan.
- The program was very useful in helping participants achieve their future plans; especially those wishing to get experience in teaching Japanese.

- Other ATJs also chose their future courses based on their experiences in the program, such as teaching English at Japanese schools, finding jobs to use English or teaching Japanese to Japanese children at schools.
- A majority of respondents stated that they realized what it means to be Japanese, the importance of understanding their own culture, of knowing other cultures or of the present world situation. These lessons they learned through their experiences in the program, positively affected their decisions for their future courses.
- Almost all of the ATJs would like to see the continuation of the program.

2. Universities

- All the universities that participated in the program did so because teaching experience was invaluable for their graduates seeking teaching Japanese as their future work and because the program was administered by a reliable non-profit organization.
- The Universities want to keep the program going as they considered it to be successful and to have met their expectations.
- Their confidence in the Department of Education was essential for the program going for such a long time. It has been supported by the direct communication with the staff of the Department, e.g. explanation of the program and interviews given by the staff of the Department every November, occasional visits to Japan of other staff.
- This was the primary reason why they made every effort to keep the program going as they consider the program to be responsibly and efficiently managed.
- The teaching-staff of the Universities kept direct contact with the Department of Education and made pastoral visits to ATJs in Victoria.

3. Suggestions for the improvement of the program and problems identified

- Some issues identified by Participants in the earlier stages of the program (e.g. at study meetings for Assistants) improved the situation both in Japan and Australia.
- Some universities would prefer to send their junior students so that the university could officially support them during and after the program.
- An annual follow-up survey is necessary in order to get fresh opinions from ATJs.
- It is necessary to find financial assistance for ATJs in Japan.
- It would be useful if a new ATJ could work together with a previous ATJ for a certain period.
- Applicants without a university degree (e.g. B.A.), cannot be accepted in Victorian schools by regulation of the State of Victoria.

Some problems were identified however; most Participants had a good relationship with teachers of Japanese and LOTE coordinators. Participants that were dissatisfied felt they were under utilized in their position due to teachers not knowing how to make use of them and unclear of the role of their Assistant.

4. Comparison with the Evaluation in 2003

In 2003, the Department of Education funded a pilot program to extend the original program into eight rural and regional schools. The Centre for Program Evaluation at the

University of Melbourne conducted an evaluation of the extension of the program including the provision of funds by the Department and the sustainability of program.

Evaluators interviewed Principals, Language Teachers/Coordinators, and the Assistants in 2003 at eight primary schools at least twice during the first year of their participation in the program (Lyn Hoare 2005).

The findings and suggestions or recommendations in relation to the Assistants are summarized as follows:

- The program was regarded as highly successful by all stakeholder groups and met the Department's objectives.
- Most schools considered the commercial internships by Japanese commercial providers to be inferior to this program. Primary reasons for this included the fact that this program was better managed, and the assistants were interested in teaching as a career, rather than purely seeking to gain English language expertise.
- Most schools approached LOTE with equal expectations of language learning and development of intercultural awareness. The presence of the Assistants enhanced both language and cultural learning outcomes.
- This program extended cultural awareness to the broader community.
- The Assistants' English skills should be as accurately evaluated and represented as possible.
- Initial documentation provided to the assistants should be provided in both English and Japanese.
- The orientation program of the Department for the Assistants should be adapted and possibly lengthened in consideration of the Assistants' fatigue and culture shock.
- Pastoral care for ATJs is recommended: That the program has access to a person who speaks fluent Japanese, is around the same age as most ATJs, located out of the Department hierarchy so that he/she is not threatening and unbiased and preferably has professional counseling skills.

The design and the method of collecting data of the evaluation in 2003 were different from those of the evaluation in 2009 but, by comparing the findings of these two, we can learn how this program is regarded both in Australia and in Japan. All the stakeholders regarded this program as highly successful. It met the Department's and all the Participants' objectives. The Assistants in the evaluation of 2003 were working in Victoria at the time of the survey, but those who responded to the questionnaire in 2009 were in employment and the emphasis of evaluation was put on the information about their employment in relation to their courses after the program. Those outcomes were naturally different from those in 2003, as seen in the following findings.

V. FINDINGS--INFORMATION IN DETAIL FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ATJS

1. Profiles

Half of all ATJs majored in TJSL. Including those who were TJSL minors, 80% of all ATJs learned about TJSL at university.

Table 1.1. Present place of residence

| | |
|--------------|--------|
| Japan | 72.4% |
| Out of Japan | 27.6% |
| Total | 100.0% |

Table 1.2. Present occupation

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| Full-time | 51.7% |
| Part-time | 18.4% |
| On leave (taking care of children) | 24.1% |
| Student | 11.5% |
| Total | 100.0% |

Those who live in Australia are 54.2% of those outside of Japan. Full-time teachers of Japanese accounted for 12.6% of responses; part-time teachers are constituted 5.7%. Some graduate school students are teaching Japanese as part-timers. More is discussed about the present occupations of former ATJs in V.4.

Table 1.3. Motivation for participating in this program (multiple answers)

| | |
|---|-------|
| In order to get experience in teaching Japanese | 78.2% |
| In order to live in another country | 66.7% |
| In order to learn English | 58.6% |
| In order to get various experiences | 47.1% |
| Interested in secondary education | 31.0% |
| Interested in Australia | 23.0% |

(More than 10 answers. The percentage of the total respondents, 87.)

Table 1.4. Experiences before participating in the program (n=87)

| experiences | yes (%) | no (%) | total (%) |
|---------------------------------------|---------|--------|-----------|
| Living overseas | 75.9 | 24.1 | 100.0 |
| Traveling abroad | 96.6 | 3.4 | 100.0 |
| Living independently from your family | 63.2 | 36.8 | 100.0 |
| Teaching practice in TJSL | 56.3 | 43.7 | 100.0 |

Table 1.5. Future plans when you applied for this program (multiple answers.)

| | |
|--|-------|
| To teach Japanese abroad (in any country). | 47.1% |
| To teach Japanese in Australia. | 35.6% |
| To teach Japanese as a second language in Japan. | 32.2% |
| To go to a foreign country (any). | 20.7% |
| To teach English in Japan. | 20.7% |
| To continue my study in Japan. | 13.8% |
| To find a job in Australia (other than teaching Japanese). | 11.5% |

(More than 10%)

2. Experiences in Australia

Table 2.1. Your job(s)/responsibilities (multiple answers.)

| | |
|--|-------|
| Explaining about Japan and Japanese culture. | 87.4% |
| Making teaching materials. | 79.3% |
| Teaching Japanese in the class. (while a LOTE coordinator was observing) | 75.9% |
| Model pronunciation or reading (as an informant). | 71.3% |
| Speaking with learners. | 59.8% |
| Helping a LOTE coordinator in teaching. | 58.6% |
| Helping learners in the class. | 57.5% |
| Helping the coordinator in making teaching materials. | 54.0% |

(More than 50%)

Checking home work, helping students learn writing, marking tests, taking care of learners, making tests, only helping (no teaching at all) a coordinator followed the jobs/responsibilities in the table 2.1. Other responsibilities included translating and taking care of Japanese students, organizing Japanese Day, helping with speech contests, writing grade sheets (in place of a coordinator taking long absence), helping coordinators brush up their Japanese skills and meeting with other teaching staff.

Table 2.2. Your cultural experiences

| | | | |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| You began to identify yourself as Japanese | very strongly. 70.1% | not very strongly. 28.7% | not at all. 1.1% |
| You wanted to know more about Japan | very strongly. 94.3% | not very strongly. 5.7% | not at all. 0.0% |
| You found the town where you were stationed | very agreeable. 73.6% | not very agreeable. 25.3% | not agreeable at all. 1.1% |
| You wanted to know more about Australia | very strongly. 83.9% | not very strongly. 16.1% | not at all. 0.0% |
| You wanted to know more about the world | very strongly. 87.4% | not very strongly. 12.6% | not at all. 0.0% |
| As for school children, you came to | like them. 89.7% | not like them very much. 9.2% | dislike them. 1.1% |
| As for teaching | you came to like it 70.1% | nothing changed in you. 26.4% | you came to dislike it. 3.4% |
| As for home-stay, you enjoyed it | very much. 77.0% | so, so. 18.4% | not very much. 4.6% |

3. About job/working environment

Table 3.1. If you were able to find colleagues who you could open your mind to (not necessarily in the same department).

| | |
|--|--------|
| You asked for their advice often. | 55.2% |
| You did not ask for their advice. | 36.8% |
| You could not find any trustworthy colleagues. | 8.0% |
| total | 100.0% |

Although six ATJs said that they did not have any trustworthy colleagues, they still answered that they did not have any problems in their jobs and they were able to establish very good relationships with their colleagues and other staff.

About relationships with people at school, most of the respondents were able to establish very good relationships. (With the school children 94.3%, with the other Japanese language teachers 85.1% and other school staff 83.9%.)

Table 3.2. You were able to gain useful knowledge and experiences from your school's staff

| | | | |
|------------|-----------|-------------|--------|
| very much. | not much. | not at all. | total |
| 94.3% | 4.6% | 1.1% | 100.0% |

As a reason for their answers, most respondents responded that they were able to learn many teaching methods which they could use for their classes and how to establish good relationship with school children by watching their colleague's classes.

Table 3.3. About the pay for your jobs

| | |
|---|--------|
| A. Satisfactory | 46.0% |
| B. Satisfactory (in comparison with assistants sent by commercial provider) | 43.7% |
| C. Not satisfactory | 10.3% |
| total | 100.0% |

Many of the respondents who selected choice 'B' indicated that commercial providers asked for very high participation fees and home-stay fees but did not take proper actions to address the concerns and problems of their participants. Considering these conditions, the pay for jobs in the government program was satisfactory.

Table 3.4. About your contribution to Victoria

| | |
|--|-------|
| I was able to attract more attention to Japan. | 32.2% |
| I helped them learn Japanese from a native. | 25.3% |
| It is difficult to know. | 18.4% |
| I was able to introduce my students and colleagues to the present Japan. | 4.6% |

4. Observation on the relations among responses

Some of the responses were related to other questions in the survey. I will discuss them from the following perspectives.

4.1 With or without teaching practice in TJSL

As seen in Table 1.4. above, 56.3% of respondents had the experience of teaching practice in TJSL before participating in the program ('with teaching practice group') and 43.7% did not ('without teaching practice group'). These responses were related to other questions:

Table 4.1.1. Finding their jobs worth doing

| | very much | not so much | not at all | total |
|--|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| With Teaching Practice Group | 71.4% | 28.6% | 0.0% | 100.0% |
| Without Teaching Practice Group | 68.4% | 28.9% | 2.6% | 100.0% |

70% of both groups found their jobs very rewarding. This tendency is stronger in the 'with teaching practice group'.

Table 4.1.2. Learning from their jobs

| | very much | not so much | not at all | total |
|--|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| With Teaching Practice Group | 95.9% | 4.1% | 0.0% | 100.0% |
| Without Teaching Practice Group | 92.1% | 5.3% | 2.6% | 100.0% |

Here, too, both groups learned much from their jobs and the 'with teaching practice group' has the stronger tendency. The group with teaching practice tends to think that they learned more from the jobs but the difference between the two is not much. I can say that those who had undertaken teaching practice before participating in the program did not feel this affected their ability to benefit from their experiences as ATJ. They still felt that they learned much from their jobs and found their experiences very rewarding.

The comments or descriptions based on their experiences, however, reveal differences between the two groups. The 'with teaching practice group' made very concrete and accurate comments both on teaching Japanese and overall teaching at schools:

- I experienced various types of teaching: teaching to Australians, teaching to students in different levels.
- I experienced difficulties in teaching school children: how to attract their attention, how to keep them motivated
- how to manage class activities, how to contact or take care of them
- I experienced other roles of teachers besides teaching, such as attending meetings or participating in school events.
- I learned the importance of human relations.

About 30% of both groups found their jobs not worth doing but 84% of these respondents felt that they had learned a lot about the culture and education in Australia as well as gathering new experiences. 'The Japanese classes were cancelled,' 'I just helped

teachers and could not teach myself’ showing the discrepancies between their eagerness to do more and their under utilization by a poor teaching environment. These seem to be the main causes of ‘finding their jobs not worth doing’.

Table 4.1.3. Problems in the job

| |
|---|
| <p>With Teaching Practice Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with other teachers was difficult. • I did not have knowledge, nor experience in teaching school children. • Classroom management was difficult. • The job description of ATJ was not very clear. • My English was too poor to communicate with other teachers. • How could I motivate the children? Should I spend more time teaching language or teaching about culture? I did not know how to make a test. I had to spend more time taking care of children more than teaching language. |
| <p>Without Teaching Practice Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My English was too poor to explain something or give instructions to children. • It was difficult for me to work with the other teachers. • The job description of ATJ was not very clear. • Classroom management was difficult. • I did not have enough teaching materials. • I had to find for myself what I should teach. • Communication with teachers was difficult. |

It is very clear that the experiences in teaching practice directly affected the ATJs problems in their job.

Both groups mentioned their weakness in English, the ‘with teaching practice group’ in relation to the communication with teachers and the ‘without teaching practice group’ to teaching methods. The ‘with teaching practice group’ should have learned to teach Japanese, to a certain extent, without using the native language of the learners. On the other hand, the ‘without teaching practice group’, tried to explain in English about the usage of Japanese without much knowledge about teaching methods. The reason why the ‘with teaching practice group’ mentioned their insufficient proficiency in English can be interpreted to mean that they had more communication with teachers than the ‘without teaching practice group’ since they could find more problems in their teaching skills.

‘Ambiguous job description’ was mentioned by both groups but their reasons differ in details. The ‘with teaching practice group’ could not do what they thought that they should do because they were not sure if it was included in their job responsibilities or not. The ‘without teaching practice group’ could not decide how much they should do since they had no previous teaching experience. The former group knew more about the whole process of teaching. Some Coordinators also did not know about the role of Assistants clearly and hesitated to ask them to do certain tasks.

4.2 Motivation to participate in the program

78.2% of ATJs were motivated to gain experience in teaching Japanese. 35.3% of them found positions in teaching Japanese as a second language and 20.6% in business after the program. Many of them chose employment requiring a high English proficiency, e.g. management of an international hall, a publisher of magazines for foreigners in Japan, a bilingual company, a trading company, 31.6% of those who had other motivations are teaching English, 10.5% are teaching Japanese, 26.3% found jobs in other fields. The following results show the relation between their motivation and the present career. Tanaka & Ishida (2007) carried out a survey of 19 former Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme teachers who are teaching Japanese at UK secondary schools, and found that the JET Programme motivated JETs to become teachers teaching Japanese.

Table 4.2.1. Motivation and present career (figures show the number of the respondents)

| | With motivation to have experience in teaching Japanese (n=9) | With Motivation to have experiences in teaching Japanese <u>and</u> others (n=59) | With motivation <u>other than</u> teaching Japanese (n=19) |
|--|--|--|---|
| Teaching Japanese | 4 (full-time 1, part-time(2) ³ , on leave ⁴ 1) | 16 (full-time 8, part-time 6, on leave 2) | 2 (full-time 2) |
| Studying about teaching Japanese | 3 (B.A. 1, M.A. 2) | 2 (M.A. 1, Ph.D. 1) | 2 (M.A. 2) |
| Teaching English | 3 (full-time 3) | 9 (full-time 9) | 6 (full-time 4, part-time 2) |
| Studying about teaching English | 0 | 1 (Ph.D. 1) | 0 |
| Teaching Japanese to Japanese school children | 0 | 3 (full-time 3) | 0 |
| Business | 1 (full-time 1) | 6 (full-time 4, part-time 2) | 5 (full-time 5) |
| Housekeeping, Caring for children | 0 | 15 | 2 |
| Preparing for | 0 | 0 | 2 (finding a teaching post 1, entering graduate school 1) |

Some of the respondents were once engaged in teaching Japanese after coming back to Japan but had to leave their jobs for a while in order to do housekeeping or take care of families, children or parents. The following figures show the ratio of those who taught Japanese after the program. () = the number of assistants

- With motivation to have experience in teaching Japanese: 55.6% (5/9)
- With motivation to have experience in teaching Japanese and other things: 33.9% (20/59)

- With motivation other than teaching Japanese: 21.1% (4/19)

Approximately 37% of those who participated in the program hoping to get experience in teaching Japanese were employed as teachers of Japanese on their return to Japan. More than 20 % of participants who were not necessarily interested in teaching Japanese found a post in the field of teaching Japanese or entered graduate schools to study about TJSL.

4.3 With the motivation to teach Japanese in Australia

Thirty-one ATJs wanted to teach Japanese in Australia before participating in the program. How did the program affect their plans? Their places of residence and present posts are as follows.

Table 4.3.1. Places of residence and present posts of those who with the motivation to teach Japanese in Australia

| places of residence | present posts | |
|---------------------|---|-----------------|
| Australia | Teaching Japanese | 5 (part-time 1) |
| | Studying at graduate schools (TJSL) | 2 |
| Japan | Teaching Japanese | 3 (part-time 2) |
| | Studying at graduate school (TJSL) | 1 |
| | Teaching English | 6 |
| | Teaching Japanese (to Japanese school children) | 2 |
| | Business | 6 (part-time 2) |
| | Caring for children, housekeeping | 4 |
| Sweden | Teaching Japanese | 1 |
| Canada | Studying at graduate school(TESOL) | 1 |

Most of them had to give up their future plans because it was financially difficult for them to be independent in Australia.

4.4 Participating in the program for 2 years

Twenty-three out of 87 participants worked as assistants for 2 years. 9 of them have been in Australia and 6 of them are teaching English in Japan. Those who worked as assistants for 2 years tend to continue teaching Japanese in Australia or to find posts where they can make use of English such as teachers of English or businessmen/women.

VI. FINDINGS-- INFORMATION IN DETAIL FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR UNIVERSITIES

Responses were obtained from 9 persons who had been in charge of this program. The results are shown in the following tables.

Table 5.1. Selection of students for short term program⁵ (for 2-3 weeks, started in 1999).

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Those who are in TJSL courses | 1 |
| Any students | 2 |
| Those who are majoring TESOL or TJSL | 2 |
| Others | 4 |

Table 5.2. Selections of graduates for long term program (for 1 year)

| | |
|---|---|
| Those who completed TJSL teacher training courses | 5 |
| Those who were majoring TESOL or TJSL | 2 |
| Graduates of other majors | 1 |
| Other | 1 |

Table 5.3. Preparation for the program (Multiple answers)

| | |
|---|---|
| Offering special preparatory courses | 0 |
| Giving chances to hear about the experiences of the former assistants | 8 |
| Explaining of the program by the person in charge of the program | 8 |
| Nothing special | 0 |
| Others | 1 |

Table 5.4. Reasons for sending their graduates (Multiple answers)

| | |
|---|---|
| We can trust the Department of Education. | 9 |
| It is a Non profit program | 9 |
| The living conditions of participants are assured although the pay is not good. | 8 |
| Experience in teaching Japanese is required to find a post. | 9 |
| It helps to develop the international relations with the partner country. | 2 |

Table 5.5. About the low pay (Multiple answers)

| | |
|--|---|
| Accept it since they are without teacher certificates. | 2 |
| Unreasonable | 0 |
| Unfortunate but still a good opportunity to gain experience. | 6 |
| Useful for their future although they are not well paid. | 9 |
| Others | 0 |

Table 5.6. About why the program has been able to continue for such a long time (Multiple answers)

| | |
|---|---|
| The Department of Education made their responsibility clear by sending a staff member to explain about the program and give a personal interview. | 9 |
| The former participants recommend the program to applicants. | 6 |
| There have been applicants every year. | 6 |
| We could respond immediately in case of troubles. | 3 |
| Many people with good will worked hard to support the program. | 7 |
| Others | 1 |

The universities unanimously agreed that the program was able to continue for such a long time because they could confirm the responsibilities of the Department of Education by communicating directly with the staff who came to interview the applicants every year.

Since the universities sent their students who had already graduated, they could not support these students officially. Because of this, they had to make certain of the responsibilities of those who accepted their graduates.

The efforts to keep the program going are as follows:

- Introducing the program in university classes.
- Recommending the program as a future course after graduation
- Recommending excellent graduates to the program
- Visiting the schools where the assistant are working.
- Recommending the short-term program too. (Participating the long-term program after having experiences in the short-term program)

Other opinions are as follows:

- It has lasted for many years as it is a very good program.
- Participants have very good impressions of this program.
- The explanation and interview by the staff of the DEECE is highly evaluated.
- The universities offer guidance for future careers after the program.
- Currently there are problems for students with being stationed at schools in remote areas.

VII. FINDINGS-- PROPOSALS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PROGRAM

1. From the Assistants

To the universities (figures show the number of the respondents)

- | | |
|---|----|
| • Nothing in particular | 39 |
| • Report on the experiences of the Assistants | 16 |
| • Explanations of the program | 10 |
| • To recommend the program more strongly | 5 |
| • To give support after the program | 1 |
| • Workshop how to make teaching materials and to learn the classroom English before the program | 1 |

To the Department of Education and schools

- | | |
|---|----|
| • Not particularly | 20 |
| • Improve the curriculum and teaching materials | 10 |
| • Increase the hours and budget for LOTE | 9 |
| • Assistance to get a visa for the 2nd year | 8 |
| • Work out how to make the best use of assistants | 5 |
| • More study meetings for assistants | 5 |
| • Stability in accommodation | 5 |
| • Giving more information | 5 |

- Better pay in comparison with other language assistants 3
- Workshop to learn the classroom English 2
- Setting up a period to work together with the previous ATJ 2
- Public Relations for the program 1

2. From the Universities

- Continue sending their staff to Japan annually to keep the relationship with mutual trust 3
- Necessity to find financial support in Japan for better pay 1
- Sending junior students, not graduates, so that the universities can give support to the assistants and also guidance for their future courses 1
- Regular follow-up surveys 1
- Regular report from the Department to the Universities 1
- To develop similar programs with other States in Australia 1

VIII. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

As a whole, I can conclude that this program has been very successful and is supported by the good will and efforts of the people who worked for it without asking for any reward. However, an evaluation of the program should be conducted more regularly for its further improvement. I also need an evaluation from the eyes of schoolchildren and also hear opinions of the staff in charge of the Department of Education in Victoria.

As for the financial support, The Japan Foundation announced the grant for airfares to those who are participating in this type of program from 2010 and some universities have already encouraged their applicants to apply for it.

Many staff of both the Victorian Department of Education and the Japanese Universities who pioneered the program are gradually retiring making this evaluation project very timely. I will be very happy if the results of this evaluation are useful for those who will continue the program. I hope that similar programs will be developed with other states or countries.

NOTE

*I would like to thank Toshiko Ishida for her valuable advice and for her assistance in collecting data. I would also like to thank Mr. Ian Wykes, a former staff member of the Department of Education who conducted annual interviews with applicants from the beginning of the program through 2008.

1 The Department of Education has been variously known as the Department of Education and Training (DE&T), the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) or The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) depending on changes of government in Victoria. In this paper, I have used the Department of Education or simply 'the Department' to refer to this institution.

2 Himeji Dokkyo University (Himeji), Doshisha Women's University (Kyoto), International Christian University (Tokyo), Tokyo Woman's Christian University (Tokyo) and Nanzan University (Nagoya) are sent their graduates from 1996 - present, University of Tsukuba (Tsukuba) sent 1997-1999, Nagoya University of Foreign Languages sent 1999- present, Tokyo Woman's Christian University sent 2000- present, and Akita International University sent 2008- present.

3 Two former ATJs of the respondents are teaching Japanese part-time while studying at graduate schools.

4 Because respondents had to care for children and are on leave.

5 The short term program was held twice a year in March and August for 2 or 3 weeks. During the first week, participants study English and, during the rest of their stay, help teach Japanese at schools. The cost is borne by the participants.

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