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# **Japanese Immersion Programs in Four Public Elementary Schools in the U.S.**

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## **Introduction**

I had an opportunity to conduct a research on teacher education at the School of Education of the University of Michigan as a visiting scholar from September in 2015 to September in 2016. During my stay there, it came to my attention that there were various attempts in American public schools to offer better education by introducing programs that set them apart from other schools. Especially, I was surprised to learn that immersion programs were gaining popularity in public elementary schools in the U.S. When I heard the word “immersion,” what first came to my mind was French immersion programs in Canada which started early in the 1970s (Barik & Swain, 1975) and Katoh Gakuen in Shizuoka, Japan, which started English immersion in 1992 (Bostwick, 1999; Yokota, 2004), both of which have continued immersion program with some success to this day. I quickly decided that immersion programs in the U.S. must be Spanish immersion, because I remembered that principal of a junior high school in Ann Arbor, Michigan, was speaking both in English and in Spanish at a parent-teacher meeting as there was a large number of Latino parents who were not able to understand English. Therefore, I received a mild shock when I learned that there were four major Japanese immersion programs in the U.S. from a school booklet of Niji-iro Elementary School in Livonia, Michigan, and this school proudly announced it was one of those best Japanese immersion schools in the U.S. It was my understanding then that the number of Japanese children living in Asia outnumbered that of Japanese children living in North America in 2005 (The Ministry of Internal Affairs

and Communications, 2015), which meant there might be fewer Japanese children in the U.S. and therefore, it was easy to speculate that there might be less demand for Japanese language education. Also I remembered reading a study on the Japanese immersion program which began in 1989 in Fairfax, Virginia (Thomas, Collier, & Abbot, 1993). It was the only study I had ever read that investigated and concluded the positive effect of the Japanese immersion program in the U.S. The study was conducted over 20 years ago. I wondered if the program was still going on. Rekindling my interest in the Japanese immersion programs, I embarked on a journey of investigating Japanese immersion schools in the U.S. to seek their *raison d'être*. I used an ethnographic approach, arranging visits to four public elementary schools with Japanese immersion programs, meeting and interviewing principals, teachers, students and parents, and confirming my understanding of their programs after my visits by asking questions via email.

The purpose of this study is three-fold: the first is to describe how Japanese-English immersion programs were implemented in four public elementary schools in the U.S., the second is to find common challenges these schools faced, and the last one is to suggest pedagogical implications for English education in Japan. First of all, I would like to briefly explain the history of immersion programs in the U.S.

## **Brief historical overview of immersion programs in the U.S.**

The number of people who speak languages other than English at home in the U.S. has dramatically risen in recent decades as the data of the census indicates the number was 31.8 million in 1990, 47 million in 2000, and 60.3 million in 2015 (U.S. Census Bureau). Children constitute a large part of this group, and Ruiz Soto, Hooker, and Batalova (2015) report that in 2012-2013, 4.85 million English language learners (ELLs) were enrolled in American schools, comprising nearly 10% of all students in American public schools.

To meet their needs to acquire English, their target language (L2), and to develop their primary language (L1) at the same time, public schools attempted several approaches with varying degrees of success for several decades. There were also times when they were politically influenced by the “English Only Movement” which gained momentum as in the passage of Proposition 227 in California (1998) and Proposition 203 in Arizona (2000), which banned the use of bilingual teaching methods and the use of language other than

English to instruct children. However, some schools and supporters of bilingual education did continue to seek for more effective methods that were modeled after the Canadian French immersion programs for native English-speaking students (Genesee, 2004).

A language program to teach both L1 and L2 is called two-way immersion (TWI) or a dual language education that has become popular in the U.S. in recent years (Kim, Hutchinson, & Winsler, 2013). In this program both ELLs and native English-speaking students learn academic content through two languages. There are mainly two kinds of TWI: the 90:10 model and 50:50 approach. In the 90:10 model, which is called “full immersion,” both ELLs and English-speaking students study subjects in the minority language through second grade for 90% of the time and when they reach third grade, both groups receive half of their education in English and the other half in the minority language. In the 50:50 approach, “partial immersion,” students study subjects half in English and half in the partner language from kindergarten forward.

Research demonstrates positive student outcomes in these programs. For example, the results of early studies (Lindholm-Leary, 2005; Thomas & Collier, 2002) showed that TWI programs were effective in both L1 and L2 acquisition and helpful for academic achievement. More importantly, they found children became bilingual while maintaining academic performance as high as children in English-only programs and this meant conversely that immersion programs do not impede or delay academic development such as in math and social studies.

More recently, Lindholm-Leary and Genesee (2014) claim that research on the evaluations of the outcomes of students in immersion programs so far has been consistent in the following points:

1. Students generally achieve as well as, or better than, their peers in mainstream programs.
2. Majority language students develop normal levels of proficiency in their L1, although not native-like levels of proficiency in an L2.
3. Minority language students quickly become proficient in the dominant societal language and they develop higher levels of proficiency in their L1 than their peers in mainstream programs.
4. Students from minority groups with learning challenges demonstrate levels of L1 proficiency and academic achievement that are at least as high as their peers

in mainstream programs.

5. More exposure to the societally-dominant language does not always result in higher language proficiency or achievement, whereas more exposure to the minority language often results in higher levels of proficiency in that language for both majority and minority language students.

It seems research over the past four decades clearly shows positive outcomes of immersion programs. However, caution should be taken in accepting this result because of methodological difficulties in comparing immersion programs (Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2014) and recently it was reported that French immersion in Canada “has turned into an elitist, divisive and deeply troubled system” with less success in bilingualism rate than previously expected (Hutchins, 2015).

## Japanese Immersion Programs in the U.S.

As of 2011, languages used in TWI programs include (with number of immersion programs) Spanish (239), French (114), Mandarin (71), Hawaiian (34), Japanese (28), and German (13) (CAL, 2011). According to the data of the census in 2015, the number of those who spoke Japanese at home in the U.S. was 449,475, while that of those who spoke Spanish at home was 60,361,574. This means that the number of TWI programs does not always correlate with the most frequently spoken minority languages in the U.S. Among 28 Japanese immersion programs in American schools, I chose four schools because of their reputation and accessibility from where I stayed in the U.S. They were:

1. Niji-iro Japanese Immersion Elementary School, Livonia, MI
2. F.L.I.C.S. (Foreign Language Immersion & Cultural Studies), Detroit, MI
3. Great Falls Elementary School, Great Falls, VA
4. Thomas Dooley Elementary School, Schaumburg, IL

All are public elementary schools. Niji-iro Japanese Immersion Elementary School (hereinafter called Niji-iro) is a magnet school, which accepts children outside their school district. Magnet schools are public schools with specialized courses or curricula. "Magnet" refers to how the schools draw students from across the normal boundaries defined by authorities.

In the United States, “immersion” or “one-way immersion” is used to refer to

bilingual schools when the program is designed for language majority students, and “two-way immersion” when the program is designed for both language majority and language minority students (Thomas, Collier, & Abbot, 1993). Of those four schools, F.L.I.C.S. offers a partial immersion program aimed to develop Japanese language for English-speaking students, while Niji-iro, Great Falls Elementary School (hereinafter Great Falls), and Thomas Dooley Elementary School (hereinafter Thomas Dooley) provide two-way immersion programs for both Japanese-speaking students and English-speaking students. According to Lindholm-Leary (2005), a two-way bilingual immersion program includes the following four features.

- Instruction and classwork take place in two languages, with non-English language used for at least 50 percent of the students’ instructional day.
- The day includes periods of instruction during which students and teachers use only one language, with no translation or language mixing allowed.
- Both English language learners and native English speakers do work in both languages in a balanced proportion.
- English language learners and native English speakers are together for most content instruction. (pp. 56-57)

Though Niji-iro, Great Falls, and Thomas Dooley say they offer TWI programs, my school visits revealed similarities and differences in their programs. Let me start from the common features of their programs.

## **The Common Features of the Japanese Immersion Programs**

### **1. The Strong Relationship with the Japanese Communities**

It seems TWI programs were established based on the strong relationship with the large Japanese communities that surround these schools. Niji-iro is located in Livonia in the southeastern part of Michigan which is about 30 minutes’ ride by car from Detroit where a large number of Japanese reside and work mainly for automobile industry. Similarly, Great Falls is located in the wealthy neighborhood close to Washington D. C. and Thomas Dooley near Chicago where a large Japanese community is found. It is not difficult to imagine that those programs were established because of the demand for bilingual education from the Japanese communities. For example, when I asked Barbara DeHart,

assistant principal of Great Falls, what made their program successful, she answered that her school owes the success of the program to the strong collaboration between the Japanese embassy and an American congressman who supported the program and to the effort of the Japanese teachers who created the program 25 years ago. She also told me that the wife of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Akie Abe, and the U.S. first lady Michelle Obama have visited Great Falls. Another example can be found in the 2014-2015 annual education report of Niji-iro where Karen Young, principal, writes the Rainbow Code of Conduct at Niji-iro, four of which presented in English and three in Japanese:

- Respect Others
- Ookina Kokoro (Big Heart)
- You are a team
- Gambaru (Great Effort)
- Be responsible
- Itsumo Egao (Always positive)
- Valient Spirit (p. 3)

It seems Niji-iro is demonstrating to future students and their parents who live in a Japanese community close to the school that the school emphasizes both American and Japanese values in their education.

Jean-Daniel Ostertag, principal of F.L.I.C.S. told me that they have a partnership with an organization which sends Japanese university students to teach Japanese culture to their students.

## 2. Promotion of Learning World Languages

The schools I visited already had missions to teach not only Japanese language but also other world languages. For example, Great Falls is one of the 16 schools in Fairfax County, Virginia, where immersion programs begin in kindergarten or grade 1. Students learn through the medium of a world language such as French, German, Japanese, Korean or Spanish, and Great Falls is one of the two schools that offer TWI in Japanese. The school district emphasizes the importance of bilingualism, biliteracy, and intercultural competence. Similarly, Thomas Dooley is one of the elementary schools in District 54 in Schaumburg, Illinois, which offer TWI programs in Japanese and Spanish, and one-way immersion program in Chinese.

Surprisingly, F.L.I.C.S. is the only elementary school in Michigan that offers one-way immersion program in Spanish, Chinese, and French, besides Japanese. Each grade has four classes and students of each class learn content areas through four different languages which are integrated into classroom culture. F.L.I.C.S. used to accept children only at kindergarten at first because the content of foreign languages was too advanced for new comers, but now they let a few children at different grades enter. During my visit at F.L.I.C.S., while standing at the hall, I could hear French from one room and I saw students' works in Chinese and Spanish displayed on the wall. The goals of their partial immersion program are practical and similar to the goals of English learning in Japan. They are to increase global understanding, to improve employment potential, to increase native language ability, to sharpen cognitive and life skills, and to improve chances of entry into college or graduate schools.

Niji-iro is the only Japanese TWI in Michigan and they have no TWI programs in other languages.

Next, we turn to the differences among the four schools.

## The Different Features of the Japanese Immersion Programs

### 1. The Students Ratio

The student ratio of Japanese-speaking students and English-speaking students in TWI program at Niji-iro and Thomas Dooley were 5:5, while at Great Falls it was about 1:6. Though it is important for English-speaking students and Japanese-speaking students to interact with each other in both languages in a balanced proportion, Great Falls has a policy that less than 10% of the students should be fluent at the start of the immersion program.

What is interesting is that not all students in these schools belong to the immersion program. At Thomas Dooley, two-thirds of the students are in the immersion program and at Great Falls, one third of the students are in the immersion program while the rest are in the non-immersion program where every subject is taught only in English. Assistant principal at Great Falls told me that in one grade there were 98 students and 28 of them were immersion students and there were only five or fewer Japanese students out of the 28 students. At Thomas Dooley, the number of Japanese students is much larger because



two-thirds of the students belong to the immersion program and one third of them are Japanese-speaking students and another one third are English-speaking students, making a nice balance of the student ratio. At Niji-iro all the students are in the immersion program with 48% of them as Japanese speakers and 52% as English speakers. At F.L.I.C.S., according to principal, there was only one student whose parents were Japanese and a few Hispanic students, and so the majority of the students at F.L.I.C.S. were African American children.

## **2. Curriculum and Assessment**

Each school seems to strive to show that bilingual education leads to academic achievement, but their methods vary. For example, Niji-iro combines the Common Core standards, Michigan standard, and the Japanese Course of Study. They even use Japanese textbooks sent from Japan. On the other hand, Great Falls does not use the Common Core, but uses Virginia Standard. The Common Core standards show what American students should know and be able to do by each grade, especially in English and mathematics and it started in 2008, but each state has a right to choose whether they should make use of it or not. Thomas Dooley uses the Common Core and MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) to measure growth of each student over time. They also use STAMP, Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency, to measure Japanese proficiency in four domains of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

According to principal of Niji-iro, their curriculum is made so that students find connections between two languages. When math is taught in English on Monday, the expansion of the math lesson is given in Japanese the next day. When plants are taught in English, students have lab work in Japanese the next day. This means a Japanese-speaking teacher and an English-speaking teacher work together in one classroom. Art, music, P.E., and instructional technology (IT) classes are also offered at Niji-iro. These subjects are compulsory in all Japanese elementary schools except IT, but not all schools in the US teach these subjects due to much emphasis on language art and mathematics. Also, Niji-iro uses the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Systems to determine students' reading levels. Principal of Niji-iro proudly told me that students at her school can become bilinguals in four years of school experience.

At Great Falls, science, math, health are taught in Japanese, while language art and

social studies are taught in English. Teachers team-teach students of grade 1 and 2. They use Fairfax County standard for elementary school students to assess Japanese proficiency in speaking and writing at grade 3 and at grade 6.

Thomas Dooley has developed a teaching system called “The Two-Teacher Model” which “strengthens separation of language by time, by person, by content, and by location.” Two teachers are assigned to one TWI class and they collaborate in planning and conducting classes. One teacher teaches the Japanese only curriculum and content and the other teacher teaches the English only curriculum and content. Daily Instructional Minute Allocations found in their school website shows that what is taught in English in Week 1 is reinforced by teaching the same content in Japanese in Week 2. A teacher at Thomas Dooley explained to me that if students learn concepts in Japanese shared reading, they will learn the same concepts in English shared reading and that if they write a composition in Japanese, then they will write one in English next week. While a Japanese teacher teaches shared reading and guided writing, an English-speaking teacher teaches guided reading. Students taught by the Japanese teacher in the morning go to the English teacher in the afternoon and vice versa, so teachers teach the same content twice in a day. Also they switch languages and skills as well. Teachers don’t team teach at Thomas Dooley, but work together closely.

Grade K-6 at Thomas Dooley

English Literacy--60 minutes

Week 1—15 minutes for shared reading, 45 minutes for guided reading

Week 2—15 minutes for shared reading, 45 minutes for writing, word study, centers for students and student conferencing

Japanese Literacy--60 minutes

Week 1—15 minutes for shared reading, 45 minutes for writing, word study, centers for students and student conferencing

Week 2—15 minutes for shared reading, 45 minutes for guided reading

Math in English--60 minutes

Science in English--30 minutes

Social Studies in Japanese--30 minutes

Daily Instructional Minute Allocations at Thomas Dooley

Also there are high expectations at Thomas Dooley which encourages teacher-to-student communication and student-to-student communication to be in Japanese as well as classroom signals.

Beth Erback, Principal of Thomas Dooley explained to me that math is taught in English first and then gradually shifts to Japanese. She said that Common Core standards assessments are done three times a year and her school is always in the top ranking. She added that the result of Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, or PARCC, shows that her school is No. 2 in the area, and No. 19 in the State of Illinois. She also said that those who enroll in Thomas Dooley are interested in Japanese culture and heritage, or the parents have an experience of learning Japanese, and that many students are waitlisted to enroll in Thomas Dooley.

I observed one shared reading class of the 18 third-graders taught by a Japanese-speaking teacher. Shared reading is 20 minutes along. She was showing a Japanese textbook and reading aloud sometimes asking questions to confirm their understanding. The textbook was about 電波塔 or 東京タワー, which I found was not easy, but most students were responding to the teacher. Then the teacher showed how to write Chinese characters. She wrote: 東京タワーに変わる電ぱとうがひつようになったから. The students had to answer だれ、何、どこ、どうして、いつ、どうやって in Japanese. At the same time, an English-speaking teacher is teaching students exactly the same content. Then the Japanese teacher showed students how to use Word to write a composition in Japanese. At Thomas Dooley, one teacher teaches Japanese and social studies in Japanese, while the other teacher teaches math and science in English. The students are taught in one language in the morning and in the afternoon they are taught in the other language to switch languages. Next, I went to a class where a teacher is teaching grade 3 guided reading to 21 students in groups in English. Students sat at a table in a group of five and they were reading books which were assigned by the teacher. One teacher was at a table asking questions in English that was the same content as the Japanese class. There was also another teacher at a table for gifted children. I understood how the two teachers repeat the same content in two languages. I was impressed with the complicated yet effective system of the Two-Teacher Model.

At F.L.I.C.S., from kindergarten to grade 4, teachers try to integrate Japanese language and the content of other subjects such as math, social studies, and science, and

from grade 5 to 8, students have two classes of Japanese a week. One of the Japanese teachers I interviewed mentioned that it is difficult to teach the content at kindergarten, so she teaches basic Japanese words such as greetings, songs, and simple conversation at kindergarten and grade 1. I observed her grade 1 class where students did some pair work speaking Japanese such as 名前はなんですか。何歳ですか。どこに住んでいますか。私は英語を話します。私は日本語を少し話します。どうぞよろしく。Hiragana is taught from grade 2 onwards at F.L.I.C.S. I was given a chance to observe a grade 4 class where a Japanese teacher was teaching hiragana, らりるれろ, and students were practicing writing them. I found a poster of multiplication tables in Japanese on the wall. Then they watched a video of a short skit which included the target grammar: これ, あれ, and それ. The video was well made with subtitles in Japanese and its translation in English. The teacher used only Japanese during the class and explained the differences of これ, あれ, and それ by using a stuffed animal. The students seemed to understand the meaning of the target grammar and practiced writing them five times. I asked an African American student why he decided to learn Japanese. He answered that he liked Japanese culture and he wanted to go to Japan. He seemed to be so proud of learning Japanese at F.L.I.C.S., since he is learning something that is not easily available to students outside his school. As the final question during the interview with principal of F.L.I.C.S., I asked him what school he didn't want his school to be, and he said it is a school which doesn't teach foreign languages. He was a French teacher for 16 years and a vice-principal for five years and in January in 2016, he became principal after completing exams.

### 3. The Continuation of Japanese Learning after Elementary Schools

Some students of Japanese TWI are given a chance to continue learning Japanese, while others are not. After graduation, Thomas Dooley students go to Addam Middle School with a Japanese immersion program, but there is no immersion at high school level. At F.L.I.C.S., it is possible to change the target language before they graduate, and they go to CASS TEC or Renaissance High School or other schools depending on the score of the test they take at grade 8. Principal said his students are placed in the level 3 (advanced), 2 (intermediate), or unfortunately level 1 (novice) in Japanese class at these high schools, but he emphasized that what students learn at his school about foreign cultures cannot be measured in the test. Students of the Japanese immersion at Great Falls go to middle

school and high school for continuation of Japanese learning. Most of them take AP Japanese at high school, which is quite different from F.L.I.C.S. in Detroit. AP stands for Advanced Placement and offers college-level curricula and examinations to high school students. Niji-iro was founded in 2015, so they do not have graduates yet, but it is likely that their students will be placed in AP Japanese at high school similar to the case of Great Falls.

## Challenges of Japanese Immersion Schools

### 1. Finding and Hiring Immersion Teachers

In spite of the enthusiasm for bilingualism and efforts to reach their program goals, these schools do face challenges. First, finding and hiring qualified teachers is the most difficult part for the administration. Principal of Niji-iro, admitted that finding teachers is a challenge. Likewise, principal at F.L.I.C.S. told me finding certified teachers is the most difficult. The Japanese teacher who showed me her grade 4 class at F.L.I.C.S. had a teaching certificate from Michigan. In the U.S., it is necessary to pass the test for teacher certification given by a state in order to teach in that state. The two Japanese teachers at Great Falls both had a green card and a certificate to teach kindergarten to grade 6 in Virginia. They said being teachers in the U.S. is not easy, because teachers have to be with students all the time because they get sued by parents if something happens to their children when the teacher is not around. Thomas Dooley had nine Japanese teachers, one in each grade from K-6 plus two teachers, with good proficiency in Japanese and the Illinois teaching degree. Also, at Thomas Dooley, I met a Japanese woman who worked under the superintendent of language and culture at the Schaumburg 54 school district. Her role is to support teachers in implementing the curriculum, matching Japanese texts and English texts, and making lesson plans. Thomas Dooley has 420 students and is much larger than the other schools, but they seem to have sufficient number of Japanese teachers and an assistant from the district like her.

Support for teachers and evaluation of teachers were found in all schools that I visited. At Niji-iro, professional development is given at staff meetings and in a 5-day workshop where teachers learn how to use scaffolding strategies in language teaching. Principal at Niji-iro told me that she uses a teacher evaluation grid for teacher evaluation.

Assistant principal of Great Falls wrote to me after my visit and explained that to maintain teacher quality of all teachers, administrators evaluate staff every three years using the criteria. She added that as they walk through classrooms, they look for high student engagement, how teachers make connections to their students, and implementation of the Fairfax County Program of Studies and that if teachers are struggling in any of the areas, they provide professional development from personnel who are available to work with their staff. At Thomas Dooley, teachers stay after school on Wednesdays for professional development and pair teachers have weekly planning time once or twice a week. Principal of F.L.I.C.S. told me that teacher evaluation gives pressure to teachers and prevents some teachers from working at public schools. In Michigan, private schools pay less than public schools, but they have no teacher evaluation. Therefore, F.L.I.C.S. struggles in finding teachers who can teach immersion program.

## **2. A Lack of Budget**

Another big issue is budget. The four schools I visited are all public schools with free tuition. Detroit public schools are struggling with the tight budget and teachers sometimes went on strike during my stay in Michigan. They protested against their poor teaching environment where no heating system was provided during the cold winter. I went to take a look at their library at F.L.I.C.S. and noticed that they had much fewer books compared with Japanese elementary school libraries. Also, F.L.I.C.S. had no school bus service. Moreover, the concern of principal of Niji-iro was how students from Detroit with low socio-economic background would get along with the curriculum.

I had thought Great Falls was free from financial problems unlike Detroit schools. The school is located in the richest suburb in the Washington D. C. Metro Area, home to many government officials and wealthy politicians. The school buildings looked far more beautiful and teachers looked more professional than those in Detroit. However, I was shocked to hear the Japanese teachers of Great Falls complain that they were worried that the Japanese immersion might be scrapped next year and they might lose their job. They said the school district had the budget cut every five years and normally the TWI was first to be eliminated due to the lack of budget. Despite the protests to keep the TWI, Fairfax County presented a smaller spending plan and the scrapping of the Japanese TWI was likely ("Virginia schools may scrap Japanese immersion programs," 2016). About a year

later, I checked the school website and found the Japanese TWI was still available at Great Falls to my great relief.

## Pedagogical Implication for the English Education in Japan

Through the investigation of the four immersion schools, it was found that these schools demonstrate that learning through a second language does not impede cognitive development, but rather it goes beyond language proficiency and gives students academic confidence and broader cultural awareness. Moreover, as the cases of Niji-iro, Great Falls, and Thomas Dooley show, the TWI model can be the most effective method for educating both Japanese-speaking students and English-speaking students. Introducing the TWI model into elementary schools in Japan may be a lofty goal because of the lack of qualified teachers and teaching methodologies. However, it gives some insight into the English education in Japan.

First, learning a second language at elementary school can start earlier. There was a big controversy over whether to introduce English education at elementary schools in Japan about ten years ago. Some people who were against the introduction of English insisted that learning English would make children confused in learning Japanese. This is not true. The TWI programs start teaching a second language from kindergarten or grade 1 with confirmed academic success. According to the Course of Study which was published in March in 2017, English is going to be taught from grade 5 as a subject from 2020, but I firmly believe the starting age should be lowered to grade 1. Students in Japan still have limited opportunities to continue their English learning, which often times, not long enough school years to acquire full communicative skills in English.

Second, English teachers in Japan should be given more chances to receive training or more time to reflect on their teaching (Watanabe, 2017), because professional development of teachers directly influence the quality of the English education in Japan. All four schools I visited seemed to have far more freedom in designing and implementing their curriculum based on the needs of students and in choosing teaching methods and assessments than their counterparts in Japan. In fact, no common teaching method was found among these four schools and this can be a weakness of immersion programs in the U.S. However, these schools believed in their mission and educational philosophy of

their immersion programs and the teachers I met at those schools were all eager to learn about their teaching methods and assessments. Also, all principals I met told me that they evaluate their teachers, which means those teachers in the Japanese immersion programs are constantly under pressure to succeed. On the other hand, principals also support teachers by allotting some time to teachers for professional development. English teachers in Japan are also under pressure to succeed and they too should be given opportunities to learn for the betterment of the English education in Japan.

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