Education Reform and Social Change in Japan: The Case of Osaka

LARY MACDONALD

This paper explores contemporary constructions of cross-cultural co-existence as they become manifest in a major curriculum reform initiative in Japan known as the *Sogoteki na Gakushuu*, or Integrated Curriculum. In the context of rapid social diversification, this study seeks to discover whether Japanese educators are utilizing the autonomy provided by this decentralization effort to explore aspects of social change via international understanding, human rights, and multicultural education.

This entry constitutes a preliminary evaluation of the Integrated Curriculum in the greater Osaka area. I describe the youth-related social issues that have prompted calls for education reform in Japan. I then provide an outline of Japan's social diversification within which these education reforms are being enacted. I provide the basic purpose of the Integrated Curriculum as stipulated by Japan's Ministry of Education and offer five examples of Integrated Curriculum educational activities in Osaka Prefectural Schools. I end with some comments, suggestions, and questions for further study.

Current Educational Issues

Since the 1980s, youth-related problems such as school violence, bullying, and school refusal have prompted the Japanese public, politicians, and policymakers to consider education reform. In 1998, an NHK broadcast brought the issue of classroom breakdown (*gakkyu houkai*) to the public's attention. According to this television special, classroom management had become untenable in classrooms as teachers struggled to maintain an environment conducive to learning amidst chaotic conditions. In 2000, the *Daily Yomiuri* Newspaper[1] noted that 1 in 6 Tokyo area schools reported conditions of classroom breakdown in at least one classroom, indicating that the problem was more widespread than suspected. The issue of school refusal (*futoukou*) is another troubling trend. Students are refusing to attend school in alarming numbers. In 2000, the Japanese Ministry of Education (MOE) reported that nearly 140,000 students were classified as *futoukou*.[2]

Recent research (both international and domestic) has identified possible reasons for Japan's current educational problems. The Japanese Ministry of Education (MOE) surveyed students and found that many were having difficultly understanding the content of their lessons.[3] A Benesse Educational Research Center survey discovered that Japanese youth were far less likely to have experiences with nature and help with household chores than they were 20 years ago.[4] An Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) study revealed that Japanese students spend less time cleaning up the house, cooking, shopping, and washing dishes than their counterparts in other OECD nations.[5] This data seems to indicate that Japanese schools are content heavy and application poor. In

other words, schools appear to overload students with information that many of them do not comprehend, and at the same time, fail to provide experiential activities for students to apply their knowledge to real-life situations.

Education Reform

In July 1996, the interim report of the Central Council on Education recommended drastic changes to the school curriculum. The Council encouraged schools to nurture students with *ikiru chikara* (a zest for living) and suggested *Yutori* education (relaxed education) as a means to achieve this goal. The public, educators, and policymakers appeared to agree with the Central Education Council's call for curriculum reform. In December 1998, the MOE Curriculum Council announced these changes in the new Course of Study to be implemented in April 2002. In addition, in December 2000, the Japanese National Commission on Education Reform suggested 17 proposals for changing the Japanese education system. The Commission's main criticism was "the standardization of education due to excessive egalitarianism."[6] The Commission recommended that Japanese education foster students with a rich sense of humanity and creativity. They suggested community service activities; education to develop the individual talents of students; curriculum that is easy to understand from the student's point of view; and education that cultivates an outlook on career and work.

Based on the recommendations of these various deliberative bodies, in April 2002, schools throughout Japan began to implement the Integrated Curriculum study period for 2 to 3 hours per week.[7] MOE defines the Integrated Curriculum as education that fosters student's ability to find a theme, think, judge and solve a problem on their own. It recommends content based on information technology, health and human welfare, internationalization, etc., but ultimately, schools and teachers have the autonomy to implement activities based on their own assessments of student and community need and desire. The MOE strongly encouraged schools to seek the cooperation of social-education related organizations to bring local expertise from the community into student's education experience, and at the same time, provide students with experiential learning that takes them beyond the school walls into community and neighborhood. Japanese teacher journals indicate that most educators welcomed this opportunity to create and implement curriculum free from the constraints of the MOE, and exercised this new-found autonomy with vigor and commitment.[8]

Japan's Changing Social Context

Japanese society is experiencing vast social diversification. According to the Ministry of Justice, in 2002 there were over 1,850,000 registered foreigners living in Japan, the equivalent of 1.45% of the general population – an increase of 4.1% from the previous year and a 44.5% increase over the past ten years.[9] One of the reasons for this increase in the foreign population of Japan is the 1990 change to the Immigration and Naturalization Law that provided preferential immigration status to South Americans of Japanese descent. However, it is important to note that the majority of foreign residents in Japan are Asian (Korean – 33.8%, Chinese – 22.9%, and Filipino – 9.1%) with Brazilian (14.5%) following.[10] At the same time, the Japanese population continues to age and the birth rate declines, putting pressure on the labor market and the national pension fund. By 2003, the percentage of Japanese citizens over the age of 60 approached 20% while children under 14 dipped to about 16%.[11] Demographers in Japan predict that this trend will worsen.

Osaka City and Human Rights Education

The City of Osaka provides an environment rich with a history of human rights civil activ-

ism in education. As Makiko Shimpo[12] reveals, human rights education in Osaka evolved from the Dowa Education Movement in the 1950-1960s. The Dowa Education Movement was formed to help *Buraku*[13] children succeed in education and society, and rid Japanese society of discrimination towards *Buraku*. This experience was used as the basis for further exploration into the education of minorities in Japan and expanded in the 1970s to consider the situation of Korean students and the handicapped. Dowa educators made efforts to reform the curriculum by introducing human rights readers (*Ningen*) as texts for moral education classes. In addition, government policy actions such as the Dowa Special Measures Law advanced the Dowa movement through infrastructure improvements in *Buraku* communities. From the late 1980s to the present, the Dowa Education Movement has aligned their proposals to The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), documents that consider the rights of ethnic and cultural minorities throughout the world. Today in Osaka, human rights education, born of the Dowa Education Movement, has expanded to encompass all forms of discrimination.

The Content of the Integrated Curriculum in Osaka Prefectural Schools

The freedom of movement and association provided by the decentralized nature of the Integrated Curriculum reform represents a timely opportunity to further develop and disseminate human rights, international, and multicultural education in Osaka and throughout Japan. Scholars and education activists have promoted human rights and/or international education approaches to the Integrated Curriculum through books and journals.[14] In addition, education research institutes have compiled and published collections of Integrated Curriculum activities and lesson plans based on human rights, international, and multicultural education.[15]

Below are a few selected Integrated Curriculum activities observed in Osaka Prefectural schools during October and November 2004. These activities represent five distinct approaches to the Integrated Curriculum, all based on human rights, internationalization and/or multicultural education. I have titled them: 1) Human Rights Begins with Self-respect; 2) the 3Fs Approach (Fashion, Food and Festivals); 3) the Lived Experiences of Foreigners in Japan; 4) Multiculturalism through English; and 5) Japan's Global Role.

Human Rights Begins with Self-respect

In 1999, teachers at Yoshida Junior High School (YJHS)[16] surveyed their students. The survey asked students a variety of questions related to self-image, future goals, etc. The results revealed the following: nearly 80% of females responded that they would like to marry in their early twenties; over 60% of students (male and female composite) wanted children before the age of 25; 32% of males wanted their marriage partner to do housework while only 2.5% wanted them to work outside of the home.[17]

The survey also considered various aspects of students' self-respect, comparing students at YJHS to students outside of the district. The survey found that while over 35% of the males responded that they liked themselves, only 20% thought their school grades were above average. This compares to nearly 60% of students outside of the district who ranked their schoolwork above average. Moreover, over 40% of the students at YJHS said that they did not try very hard in their school studies. As for future progress in school, nearly 45% of the males replied favorably to attaining a high school education (37% of females), while 27% of males and 23% of the females hoped for some type of college education.

Concerned about their student's self-respect and future aspirations, YJHS implemented a life science course *(inochino kyouiku)* as a key component of the Integrated Curriculum.

The lesson I observed dealt with the AIDS issue. The results of the questionnaire revealed that many of the students were curious about the AIDS epidemic. The purpose of the lesson was to help students gain correct knowledge about the AIDS problem, think about and ask questions actively, and recognize the importance of their ideas and the thoughts of others. YJHS teachers wanted students to understand that AIDS is not a peculiar disease but one that is preventable with proper knowledge and action. They also hoped that students would gain an understanding of people living with AIDS and sympathize with, rather than discriminate against them.

To begin the lesson, a group of students prepared a Q and A session. They presented information on how and how not to be infected with the HIV virus, dispelling myths about how to contract HIV. They stressed that most people are infected with HIV through sexual intercourse or blood transfers.

Following this, a nurse consultant from a local hospital spoke to the students about the AIDS issue. She explained that AIDS cases in Japan are increasing, particularly among 20-year olds. She used a poster to illustrate how even one sexual partner who has had sexual relations previously can represent a series of encounters, linking each student who engages in an unprotected sexual act to potentially multiple partners. The nurse then passed condoms around the class and advised students on their correct usage.

In the discussion meeting that followed, parents, teachers, and fellow educators discussed in detail the importance of the lesson. A parent expressed her gratitude to the teachers for undertaking such controversial content in the classroom, saying that she found it difficult to talk to her children about such issues.

The 3Fs Approach: Fashion, Food, Festivals

Takahara Elementary School (TES) is located in an area of small factories and inexpensive apartment complexes. The demand for manual labor accompanied by the availability of reasonable housing attracts foreign workers to the area. There are 47 students in this school who have foreign citizenship; the majority Vietnamese (35). A school survey found that among the Vietnamese students, 70% percent were born in Japan; 60% speak Vietnamese at home; and 50% eat dinner alone because their parents work long hours.[18]

Students at TES participate in *minzoku* (ethnic) clubs once a week for two hours on Thursday afternoon. The school has three ethnic clubs; the *Saektong* Club (Korean), the *Zonjom* Club (Vietnamese), and the *Donfanron* Club (Chinese). Students in each club are a mixture of children with ethnic roots in the target culture and Japanese children. Teachers divide the clubs into two groups; a lower-age group (1-3 grades) and an upper age group (4-6 grades). Students learn traditional games, simple expressions, cooking, ethnic song and dance, and how to play musical instruments in the target culture. Every fall, the *minzoku* clubs perform at the city cultural center.

The day that I observed, the *Saektong* Club (Korean) was rehearsing a musical number with *Changgu* (traditional Korean chimes and drums) set to a narrated story. The Chinese club practiced a song based on the melody of "Oh My Darling Clementine" an American folk song. The volunteer teacher, a Chinese national and community volunteer, wrote the Chinese pronunciation of the song in Japanese katakana script on the blackboard, and the students practiced the lyrics. Following this, the Chinese club practiced a Chinese dragon dance. Students in the Vietnamese club practiced the steps of a dance routine set to Vietnamese music and drumming.

The Lived Experiences of Foreigners in Japan

At Egawa Elementary School (EES), a Chinese community resident from Halpin (northern China) visited a 2nd grade class to talk about her life in China and Japan. She told the children about spending her childhood making snowmen in the winter and playing with *otedama* (bean bags). She explained that Chinese children spend the New Years holiday eating *suigyoza* (dumplings) and celebrating with fireworks. She came to Japan five years ago on the invitation of her elder sister who had moved to Japan in 1994. When asked about the problems she experienced living in Japan, she responded that she did not understand the Japanese language at first but has gradually become accustomed to life in Japan.

She then talked about her son who is a member of the 2nd grade class. When he was two years old, she left him with her older sister in Halpin and came to Japan. Mother and child lived separately for four years. Two years ago, her son was able to join her in Japan and appeared to be thriving in the Japanese educational environment. The boy explained that because his mother has to work long hours, there is often no one home when he returns from school. At this point, the Japanese homeroom teacher asked the students to raise their hands if they are sometimes alone at home. About 75% of the students responded positively, some explaining that it was normal to arrive home to an empty home because their parents work into the evening. To conclude, the visiting parent from China shared some pictures of her son with the class. The final picture was mother and son meeting at the airport in Japan after four years of separation.

Multiculturalism through English

Guests from the city hall and educators and parents from around the region gathered on this day to observe the Integrated Curriculum at Hayama Elementary School (HES). Educators at HES incorporated a variety of subjects into the Integrated Curriculum including community-based education, environmental issues, and Japanese culture via a content-based approach to English as a Foreign Language.

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

Meanwhile, 3rd grade students experienced an Integrated Curriculum lesson that utilized a community-based education approach. Based on their knowledge of the town derived from previous fieldtrips, students set up a shopping street similar to the one located in their neighborhood. On the shopping street, students managed a stationary store, a flower shop, and a vegetable stand. Parents and visitors wandered along the shopping street examining goods and making purchases. Students conducted all transactions in English, welcoming their customers with a warm 'May I help you?'

The 6th grade students introduced aspects of Japanese culture in English to the audience. They demonstrated Japanese calligraphy, cooking *(okonomiyaki*, a traditional Osaka dish) and drumming (*wadaiko*). They projected a live video image onto a large screen as they explained the process of each activity in English.

All of these lessons are based on Global Education in EFL,[19] a content-based approach to teaching English as a Foreign Language. Glo-

bal Education in EFL aims to teach students the attitudes, skills and knowledge that enable understanding of, and respect for, others. The Global Education in EFL curriculum is based on five thematic areas; 1) Human Rights Education; 2) Peace Education; 3) Environmental Education; 4) Cross Cultural Communication; and 5) Area Studies.

Japan's Global Role

Teachers at Kamaya Elementary School (KES) planned and implemented this Integrated Curriculum lesson on environmental issues in India in collaboration with a local NGO. Students adorned the walls of the gymnasium with posters describing Indian culture, geography, food, climate, agricultural products, etc. To begin the lesson, a guest teacher from India introduced her culture to the students. With slide photographs and artifacts such as traditional clothing, she introduced India's geography, notable individuals (Gandhi), famous sites (Taj Mahal), language, etc. Although the guest teacher spoke in Japanese, a member of the NGO staff interjected often, asking students questions to see if they comprehended the content. The guest teacher spoke of India's agricultural products including cotton and sugar cane, and transportation system such as the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Following this, the NGO representative talked about the condition of the earth's water supply. She illustrated the severity of the problem by counting to eight and explained to students that every eight seconds, someone in the world dies for lack of clean water. With a globe in hand, the NGO representative demonstrated that the earth is about seventy percent water. She used a 400 ml plastic bottle to represent the earth's water supply and asked students to guess how much of it is suitable for human consumption. She poured a very small amount of the water from the plastic bottle into the bottle cap to help the students visualize the minute amount of the earth's water that is suitable for human consumption, a mere 0.01%.

The NGO representative then showed the students slide pictures of India to illustrate the dry areas of the country. She explained that rather than having four seasons like Japan, there were only two – a rainy season and a dry season. She showed pictures of flooded villages during the rainy season, wet paddy farming, tilling with water buffalo, and women and their daughters carrying vassals on their heads to fetch water from the village well in the early morning. She concluded the lesson by explaining their project to build water wells in Indian villages and asked the students for their cooperation in this effort.

Preliminary Thoughts and Future Considerations

The lessons detailed above demonstrate various aspects of the Integrated Curriculum. In all cases, educators implemented educational activities to meet the needs and/or desires of students, parents, and the community. In the case of Yoshida Junior High School, teachers conducted a survey and learned of the issues troubling their students such as lack of confidence and deflated expectations for the future. Based on these findings, educators decided to implement a life science curriculum in collaboration with a local hospital. At Takahara Elementary School, foreign guest teachers from the community (Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese), in collaboration with Japanese educators, helped students prepare ethnic performances of music, dance, and song through *minzoku* clubs, a reflection of the growing ethnic diversity of the student body. The local government encouraged this type of cultural activity at schools by hosting a citywide cultural event which provided a venue for students to perform in public. The presentation on the lives of foreigners living in Japan at Egawa Elementary School extended beyond the 3Fs approach, bringing the lived experiences of foreign com-

munity members into the classroom. The English content-based curriculum of Hayama Elementary School utilized community resources by bringing English speakers into the classroom, and in addition, incorporated environmental and cultural content. Teachers at Kamaya Elementary School demonstrated cooperation with a local NGO, cultural area studies, and consideration of global issues.

Overall, the efforts of teachers, administrators, community members and NGOs in Osaka Prefectural schools to incorporate human rights, international, and/or multicultural education into the Integrated Curriculum are impressive.

The Integrated Curriculum lesson at Yoshida Junior High School was human rights based, focusing on student's self-image, many of whom are from *Buraku* communities. As a teacher at YJHS explained to me, "Many of these students lack the self-confidence to be successful in Japanese society. We therefore feel that students need a greater understanding of, and respect for, who they are, and how they can contribute to their own society. This will form a building block to further international understanding." Professor Gunei Sato of Tokyo Gakugei University confirms this approach, stating that in order to stop discrimination and prejudice, it is first necessary for students to have a positive sense of self.[20]

The 3Fs approach is a traditional approach to the study of culture that is quite common in Japans' schools, particularly at the elementary level. However, there appears to be a trend away from such activities in some of the communities that I visited. One elementary school administrator explained to me that fewer and fewer schools are participating in the city's annual cultural festival. Another administrator said that many of the parents in his school district have expressed their reservations about the cultural clubs, preferring instead to have English activities.

The Integrated Curriculum lesson at Egawa Elementary School considered the lived experiences of foreigners in Japan, an effective and powerful approach to cultural teaching and learning. I would like to suggest two additional ways in which this approach might be expanded or enhanced. 1) Schools could provide more opportunities for foreign-born parents to participate in school events and activities. At an elementary school in Yokohama, foreign-born parents visit the school regularly to interact with students through communication games and cooking activities. This type of educational activity does not require that parents have a high level of Japanese language ability, and might provide them a sense that they are contributing to their child's education. 2) Schools could make an effort to help students retain their native language. The Japanese education system provides supplemental Japanese language instruction for foreign-born students. However, educational efforts to maintain students' native language are rare. At least one elementary school in Osaka that I am aware of is implementing native language lessons for Vietnamese and Chinese students. The teacher who has organized these supplemental language classes felt very strongly that helping these students maintain their native language would provide them with a sense of pride in their native culture, and also facilitate communication with their parents who often do not speak Japanese. The linguistic and cultural divide between immigrant parents and their children who grow up in a foreign culture is well-documented and extensively studied. As educators, it is imperative that we consider the home situation of students. Without parental understanding and participation, these students may struggle to succeed in the dominant culture or grow alienated from their native language and culture and by association, their parents and cultural community. This issue is common among immigrant families in all nations and not specific to Japan.

Many Japanese scholars have criticized Japan's approach to international understanding through English activities. By focusing on

the West, particularly English as a Foreign Language and the cultures of English-speaking nations, Japanese educational scholars have argued that the nation has tended to ignore its Asian neighbors. According to Isoo Tabuchi, the Western emphasis of the international education curriculum has not only turned its back on Asia, but has raised the bias against Asians residing in Japan. By maintaining a bias towards neighboring nations and being unable to live amicably with foreigners in Japan, Tabuchi claims that Japan's ability to persuade and influence the international community will be limited.[21] Given that the majority of the foreign population in Japan is Asian, it is imperative for Japan to improve its relationship with, and understanding of, its Asian neighbors. As is evident in the examples provided above, many schools in Osaka are actively pursuing a human rights, international, and/or multicultural Integrated Curriculum based on internal internationalization, that is, the Asian ethnic and cultural diversity within Japan.

On the other hand, it is also clear that many schools, parents, and administrators would prefer the less controversial path to international understanding via English activities. If schools insist on English instruction as the focus of the Integrated Curriculum, the Global Education curriculum utilized by Hayama Elementary School provides an effective model that incorporates area studies, environmental problems, peace and human rights education. In this way, teachers can create curriculum that incorporates substantive content with age-appropriate English.

The approach of Kamaya Elementary School provides a comprehensive approach to the Integrated Curriculum. Students displayed initiative in gathering information prior to the lesson via the internet and other resources to gain prior knowledge of the target culture and created posters to display this information. The school collaborated with the local Asian-focused NGO to introduce the target culture to the students, and also challenge students with a global environmental problem. Students were then given the opportunity to work towards solving the problem with action in the form of contributing to the construction of water wells in India. This approach corresponds to Japan's growing international role as one of the world's largest international donors. It provides a means by which Japanese students can explore the leadership their nation is providing and take part in this cause to help people suffering from want and war.

This preliminary study makes clear that many schools in Osaka Prefecture are utilizing the Integrated Curriculum to explore aspects of Japan's changing social context via human rights, international and multicultural education. It is also important to note however, that the integrated study period is not the only educational space in which teachers find opportunities to help their students discover multicultural, human rights and international education. The ethnic *minzoku* clubs are a prime example of this – they are held after school and are voluntary.

On the other hand, some schools are utilizing the Integrated Curriculum to learn about local Japanese culture. In the summer of 2003, I had the opportunity to visit several schools in the greater Tokyo area. Students at an elementary school in Tokyo made clay pots in an ancient Japanese style and cured them over an open fire pit. In Kawasaki, students experienced pre-modern life in Japan by cooking over a charcoal fire. Elementary school students in Saitama studied the history of the ancient burial mounds in their town and created clay figures called *haniwa* similar to those contained in the burial mounds of the ancient noble class. Junior high schools students in Matsumoto learned the ancient art of *aizome*, indigo ink dyeing.

Many schools in Japan are using the Integrated Curriculum to promote aspects of Japanese identity – whether they construct that identity as local, national, and/or global is subject to interpretation. The content and implementation of the Integrated Curriculum pro-

vides a unique window into how Japan constructs its post-modern national identity. Many questions remain. For example, is there a trend in Japan towards the construction of a multicultural nation? What can education policy and practice, particularly the Integrated Curriculum, reveal about these trends?

Finally, the results of the 2003 Organization of Economic Co-operation Development (OECD) International Test of fifteen year-olds revealed that Japanese students have faltered on international assessments; falling from the first position to the sixth position on the applied math section of the test, and from eight to fourteenth in reading comprehension. Immediately, the press and some scholars pointed to *Yutori* education, the relaxed approach to education that includes the Integrated Curriculum, as the source of the problem. On 19 January 2005, both the *Daily Yomiuri* and the *Asahi* Newspapers reported that the Minister of Education indicated that schools can use the Integrated Curriculum for supplemental instruction in Japanese language or math. By early February, the *Daily Yomiuri* reported that 71.9% of the Japanese public disagrees with *Yutori* education. This compares with 60% agreement among the public on *Yutori* education shortly after the Ministry of Education announced curriculum reforms in 1999.

Changes appear inevitable, however, most educators I have spoken with do not think that the Ministry of Education will abolish the Integrated Curriculum but will likely decrease the numbers of hours devoted to it. I am reminded of something that David Berliner, a Professor of Education at Arizona State University, said at a conference at the University of Tokyo shortly after the results of the OECD test were released. He stated that whenever national pride is at stake, education policy will likely reform to attend to perceived shortcomings. In the case of Japan, it appears that the recent decline in academic ability as measured by the OECD test has wounded the nation's pride. As a result, the future of the Integrated Curriculum is at stake. In the meantime, I continue my explorations of the Integrated Curriculum in search of approaches to cross-cultural co-existence in Japan.

Endnotes

1. 28 July 2000.

2. Defined as a student who misses thirty days or more in the school year (2001). See Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2001), *Education Reform in the 21st Century*, Tokyo, Japan.

3. This phenomenon has been labeled 7-5-3, named after a popular children festival of the same name. Survey research conducted by the MOE revealed that 30% of elementary school students, 50% of junior high students, and 70% of high school students reported that they understood less than half of the content of their lessons (MOE, 2001).

4. For example, Japanese children were far less likely to touch a frog or hang out the wash than they were 20 years ago. See Bennesse Education Research Center, *School Children Now: Have Children Changed?* volume 19.

5. OECD (2001*). Study on Children's Experiential Activities.*

6. Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2001) *Education Reform in the 21st Century*. Tokyo, Japan.

7. For example, according to the New Course of Study (published in December 1999 to take effect in April 2002), schools were instructed to conduct 110 hours of the integrated study period for 5th grade elementary school students.

8. I found articles and opinion pieces on the integrated curriculum in education journals such as *Kagaeru Kodomo* [The Thinking Child], *Gakyuu Kenkyuu* [Classroom Research], *Kyouiku Tenbou* [Educational View], and *Kyouiku Jaanaru* [Education Journal] dating from 1997 onward.

9. Ministry of Justice Homepage: http://www.moj.go.jp/ENGLISH/preface.html. This number does not include illegal workers in Japan who overstay their visas, etc. Shimada estimates that there were nearly 300,000 illegal workers in Japan in 1992. For a

closer look at Japan's foreign workers see Haruo, Shimada (1994) *Japan's "Guest Workers,"* Translated by Roger Northridge. University of Tokyo Press, Tokyo, Japan.

10. Ibid.

11. Japan Information Network Webpage, http://www.jnn.com

12. This publication (2004, March) "Fifty Years of Human Rights Education in Osaka," pp. 37-41.

13. The *Buraku* people are a caste-like status minority in Japan created through political decree in the Tokugawa Period (1603-1867) that still experiences discrimination. The current population of *Buraku* varies between 4,600 communities and 1.2 *Buraku* according to the Japanese Government, and 6,000 communities and 3 million *Buraku* according to the Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute. For more information on the *Buraku* issue (in English) see *Dowa Education: Educational Challenge Toward a Discrimination-free Japan* (1995) Buraku Liberation Research Institute, Osaka, Japan; and Juichi Suginohara (2002) *Today's Buraku Problem: Feudalistic Discrimination in Japan*. The Institute of Buraku Problem, Kyoto, Japan, among others.

14. See Akio Nagao (1999) *Sogoteki Gakushuu toshiteno Jinken Kyouiku: Hajimete Miyou, Jinken Sogo Gakushuu* [Human Rights Education via the Sogo Gakushuu: Lets Start Human Rights Integrated Curriculum] Meiji Tosho, Tokyo, Japan, and also Gunei Satou and Eiji Hayshi (eds.) (1998) *Kokusai Rikai Kyouiku no Jugyou Tsukuri: Sogoteki na Gakushuu wo Mezashite* [Creating International Understanding Lessons via the Sogoteki Curriculum] Kyouiku Shuppan, Tokyo, Japan.

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

16. All school names in this paper are pseudonyms.

17. *Chu Gakusei no Ishiki Chosa: Purojekuto Houkoku Shuu*. [Survey on Junior High School Student's Will] (2000, March) Gender, Buraku Discrimination Project Committee

18. *T Shou Gakko Jisen: Dai 4 Sho: Kyousei wo Mezasu Kyouiku*. ["T Elementary School: Actual Practice" in *Education for Living Together*] (2003, December 24)

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

20. Gunei Satou and Eiji Hayshi (eds.) (2000) *Kokusai Rikai Kyouiku no Jugyou Tsukuri: Sogoteki na Gakushuu wo Mezashite* [Creating International Understanding Lessons via the Sogoteki Curriculum], Kyouiku Shuppan, Tokyo, Japan, p. 3.

21. Isoo Tabuchi. *Kankoku, Chosen Oyobi Zainichi Kakoku, Chosenjin Rikai no Kyouiku Naiyou no Kouzou*. [Koreans in Japan: the Content and Structure of Understanding Education] Kokusai Rikai, Vol. 19, 1987.