

Analysis and Evaluation of the Problems with the Living and Working Conditions of Shimane Assistant Language Teachers on the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme in 1998

(J.E.T. Programme/cross-cultural communication/work relationships)

Midori OTANI* and Timothy D. VAN LOH**

I. Introduction

"Kokusaika, Internationalization" has been one of the key issues for the Japanese government, and the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (hereafter referred to as "the JET Programme") has been an innovative programme to promote internationalization on the local level all over Japan as well as to advance English education at junior and senior high schools. The living and working conditions of the Assistant Language Teachers (hereafter referred to as "ALTs") on the JET Programme have been the source of much controversy. However, not much academic research has been done, particularly from a cross-cultural point of view in terms of the JET participants' concerns or difficulties at work and in communicating and establishing/maintaining relationships with their Japanese Teachers of Language (hereafter referred to as "JTLs") and supervisors. Therefore, for the purpose of uncovering concrete concerns and difficulties that ALTs may have, the authors distributed a questionnaire (based on our personal interviews of 24 JET participants and 10 JTLs) to Shimane ALTs in 1998.

II. Procedures

The questionnaire (a copy of which B found after the conclusion) consisted of four sections: Personal History, Pre-Arrival: Expectations of the JET Programme, Post-Arrival: Orientation, and Relationships and Communication at Work. It was composed of 45 questions and included enough space for ALTs to present their opinions and to explore their concerns from a cross-cultural perspective. The questionnaires were distributed with the

help of a grant from the Shimane International Center at the end of February, 1998, and 44 of the 60 questionnaires sent were returned by the end of March. This high return rate, 73%, may show that ALTs are concerned about the JET Programme as well as their personal working and living conditions. However, in this paper, we have focused on key questions from the last two sections of our questionnaire, attempting to uncover the source of and provide solutions to problems in the workplace through evaluation and analyzation of the responses to the questionnaire. It should be noted that percentages do not always equal 100% due to multiple responses by some ALTs.

We have cited many direct comments and opinions from ALTs in the endnotes section. This is because each ALT's living and working conditions have many variable factors, such as the numbers of schools they work at or visit, the policy of English education in each school or for each JTL, the personality of each ALT as well as each JTL and supervisor, and the ALT's level of Japanese speaking proficiency, etc. the ALTs' comments and opinions should reveal where their concerns reside. We hope that this will help to improve the working conditions and relationships between the ALTs and the JTLs/supervisors in the future.

In evaluating the questionnaire with regards to problems in the workplace, two questions were used as the starting point. The first question was "What kind of job satisfaction have you found?" and the second question was "Is your role clear to you?" The solutions to the problems raised can be found in the comments given by the ALTs for these two questions taken along the answers to the with other questions asked in the questionnaire. Following the evaluation, the authors have added their own analyses of the problems and, by working together, have

*Doctorate Student of Anthropology, the American University

**Department of English

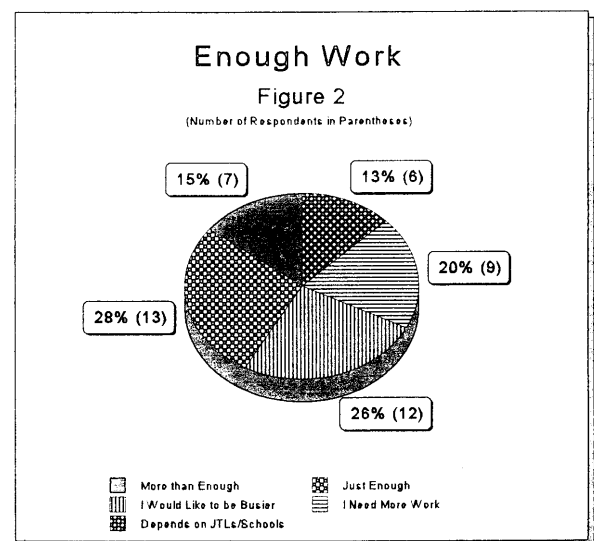
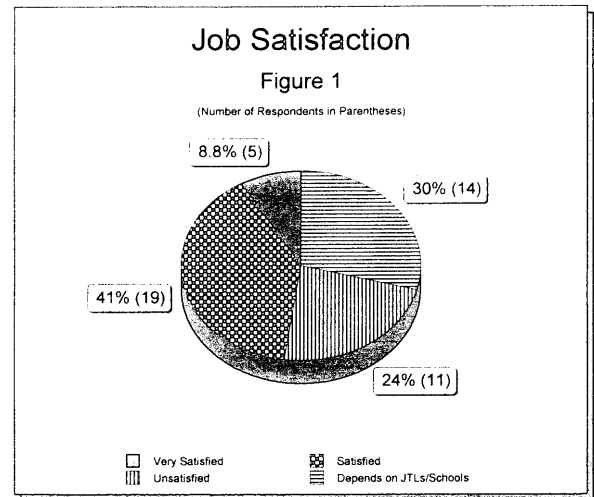
sought to provide a cross-cultural perspective on the problems.

III. Results and Discussion

A. Overall, what kind of job satisfaction have you found?

The answers to this question were not extreme in either direction (Fig. 1). Only five respondents said that they were very satisfied and none expressed being not satisfied at all. In all, about half indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied. Of those who expressed the highest degree of satisfaction, only one wrote a comment.³ About half of those who were satisfied gave a reason for their satisfaction. These reasons ranged from the students to the teachers.⁴ Some of them gave reasons why they didn't choose "very satisfied."⁵ Those who stated that they were unsatisfied were the most articulate as to why they felt this way.⁶ Many of those who chose, "It really depends on JTLs or the schools", also gave reasons for doing so, most expressing a great difference in how they are treated from one JTL/school to another.⁷

In response to this question, the comments show a clear trend revealing what makes ALTs satisfied and what makes them unsatisfied in terms of the time spent at work. Positively, satisfaction largely comes from the following factors: 1) Being given responsibility that is worthwhile and challenging; and 2) Communicating with JTLs and other Japanese staff members. Negatively, dissatisfaction comes from: 1) Not being used to one's full potential; 2) Disinterested students; and 3) A lack of responsibility. The first positive factor, "Being busy with something that is worthwhile and challenging" can mean that the ALTs are making an impact and having a sense of being needed, usually by being made responsible for something in particular. Among those who responded to another question in the questionnaire, "Do you think you have enough work to fill your working hours?", 15% said, "more than enough", 28% thought "just enough" and 46% felt that they would like to be busier. Nine respondents felt that they had too much free time (Fig. 2). In particular, ALTs who come to Japan with a passionate motivation to work tend



to have a greater feeling of shock when they become dissatisfied with their jobs.

As to the second positive factor in job satisfaction, the importance of communication (particularly approachability for communication and the openness to communicate,) attitudes can be seen through the comments to the question, "In the Japanese classroom or at your office: a) What makes you feel happy or satisfied?, b) What makes you feel annoyed." When answering question "a)", ALT after ALT used phrases such as, "Teachers who talk to me", "Students who talk to me", "People in the office who talk to me", and even, "Anyone trying to speak to me." Conversely, those who answered question "b)" did so with comments like, "Being ignored", "Not being treated like a person but just as a foreigner", "Not being told about...", "No communication, eye contact, or acknowledgment of my presence", "When people speak

about me, in front of me, without bothering to include me in the conversation”, and worst of all, “Having my name forgotten.”

In addition, the questionnaire indicated that not enough ideas about or discussion time for team-teaching are available with the JTLs. Only 48% of the respondents felt that they had enough time to communicate with JTLs about their classes. However, in reality, one of the problems with Japanese schools is that teachers are extremely busy with too many responsibilities in addition to teaching such as after school activities, student problems, and administrative work. Some JTLs are too busy to discuss work issues with their ALTs even though it is their desire. Furthermore, JTLs do not have time to teach ALTs about the different educational system in Japan compared to what the ALTs have experienced in their home countries. This would include areas such as the difference in the school systems, educational philosophies and classroom management styles. Many ALTs point out that they found out how busy Japanese teachers are through their work. So some ALTs are hesitant to initiate conversations with their JTLs and supervisors.

Also, some Japanese teachers or staff members mentioned that they felt hesitant to speak in English or were afraid of making mistakes even though they would like to talk to ALTs. One staff member at a junior high school pointed out that once some teachers and staff members start to interact with ALTs even in broken or incorrect English, other staff members often try to communicate with the ALTs also. Others pointed out that some ALTs are easier to begin a conversation with.

The areas mentioned above are areas that ALTs and JTLs have a great deal of control over and would be wise to improve upon where needed. However, every situation is not going to be able to yield the qualities needed to bring about job satisfaction for ALTs. As the comments show, the job of an ALT does not tend to give a great deal of job satisfaction. However, the comment made by the ALT who was very satisfied summarized how Van Loh felt during his time as an ALT. The key seems to be in the statement, “...understand it is difficult to integrate ALTs more” with special emphasis being

given to the word, “understand.” ALTs should decide which battles they want to fight and understand that they can’t change a system that is often imposed upon schools and micro-managed by bureaucrats in Tokyo who aren’t always in touch with what is happening daily in the individual schools. This especially includes the role that team-teaching is supposed to play in the classroom.

In addition, ALTs need to remember that they are only guest teachers who are here for a relatively short period of time. Circumstances that are both beyond the ALTs knowledge and control are often the cause of perceived problems. Usually though, the JET ALT can find an area of their job as a teacher or, more broadly, as a member of the JET Programme where they can have an impact and invest their time and energy. Being an ALT is only one part of the job. In agreement with the comment from the very satisfied ALT, Van Loh derived much of his job satisfaction from various types of community volunteer work (fulfilling one of the job ideals set forth by one of the three JET Programme sponsors: the Ministry of Local Affairs) and didn’t make much of an effort to try and solve various “problems” with the ALT role in his schools.

On the other hand, speaking for JTLs, some wish that ALTs could stay longer than the maximum of three years allowed by the JET Programme. Since most ALTs come to Japan without teaching experience or an educational background, it often takes more than a year for them to learn the Japanese system of education. One experienced JTL pointed out that “Even a Japanese teacher who is fresh out of college needs several years to master his/her job.” But, this is an issue that the JET Programme itself must work on although JTLs and ALTs can strive to improve their own situations.

The communication problem seems to be the underlying thread that potentially, when absent, causes everything to unravel but, when present, holds everything together. This communication can come in various forms as indicated by the comments: evaluations, meetings, training sessions, “joking around”, small-talk at break times, and meaningful conversations both on and off the job. One road-block that stands in the way of meaningful conversation is

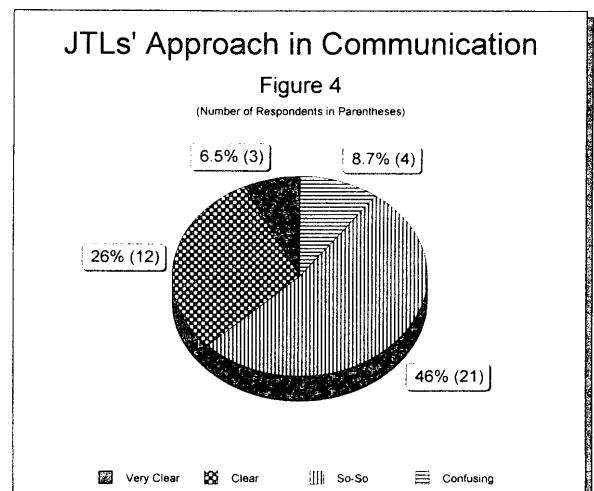
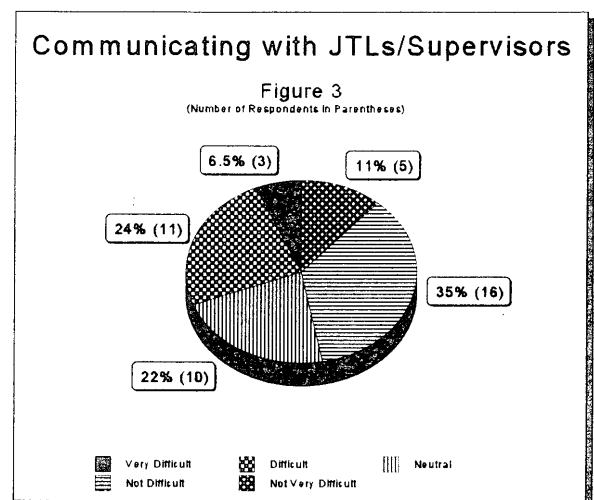
language. The questionnaire shows that even though 41% of the respondents felt that they were able to communicate in the Japanese language, even all those who responded positively cannot speak fluently as indicated by comments such as, "Yes, but only a little!" Thus, it is clear that the vast majority of ALTs cannot communicate effectively in Japanese which leaves them largely dependent upon an English speaking Japanese. In response to the question, "Overall, how do you feel about communicating with JTLs/supervisors?", the ALTs' response was largely negative (Fig. 3). Twenty-two percent of the respondents were neutral in their response while 46% felt that it was difficult (35%) or very difficult (11%) and only 30.5% felt that it was not difficult (24%) or not very difficult (6.5%) to communicate with their JTLs and/or supervisors.

The second to the last question of the questionnaire, "When you communicate with JTLs, do you feel that their approach is very clear, clear, so-so, confusing or very confusing?" revealed that not all JTLs or supervisors are able or willing to communicate clearly in English even if they have the ability to do so (Fig. 4). Only three ALTs (6.5%) felt that when they communicated with JTLs, the JTLs' approach was very clear. Twenty-six percent of the respondents felt that the JTLs were clear, while 46% of the respondents answered with a "so-so." Four ALTs (8.7%) felt that the JTLs' approach was confusing. However, it was the comments on this question that demonstrated that, at least from the ALTs' perspectives, the clarity of the JTLs' approach does not always depend upon the language ability of the JTL. Thus, the communication problem has as much to do with language as it does with culture.

The solution for the ALT is to invest some of the time spent at the office in studying the Japanese language as well as the differences in culture that dictate communication styles. Of the eight hours a day or so spent at the office, only five ALTs (11%) responded by saying that they work all eight hours or more on average. Almost 55% indicated that on average they spend four or less hours doing work. Forty-six percent of the respondents stated that they would like to have more work given to them (Fig. 5). In addition, a chief complaint of ALTs in

the questionnaire is having to be at the office with nothing to do, especially during tests or days with no classes which includes the summer. One ALT answered the last question of the questionnaire, "Do you have any suggestions that would help you to improve your work-related conditions in Japan?" by giving a good piece of advice on how to remedy the communication problem for current ALTs, "The onus should be on me to learn Japanese-I am a visitor and I have more time to study... I made a serious miscalculation in not studying until February. If I could speak Japanese, I could do so much more." Studying the Japanese language and way of communication seems like a productive thing to do and it would be a good idea if the school, board of education, or even community assigned (a) person(s) to help the ALTs with this part of their job.

Another ALT suggested a way to improve the



situation for their replacement by writing, "To improve conditions here for my replacement, I plan to construct a pamphlet of information about the school, classes, teachers, difficulties, strategies, opin-

ions, etc." Most ALTs are asked to write a letter to their replacement explaining much of the above. However, as ALTs have many things to do in the last few weeks before departure, this task is often given a low priority and thus the letter that the replacement receives may be lacking in substance. But taking time on a regular basis (especially as ALTs go through or have just gone through a "learning experience") to integrate what they have learned into a growing pamphlet or file of some kind for their replacement does a great service for the future ALTs of that school.

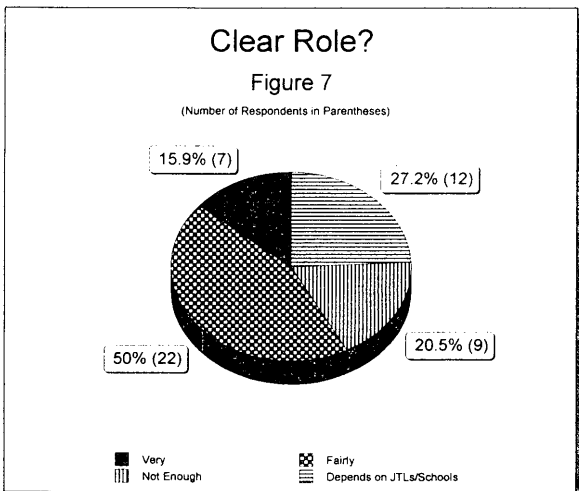
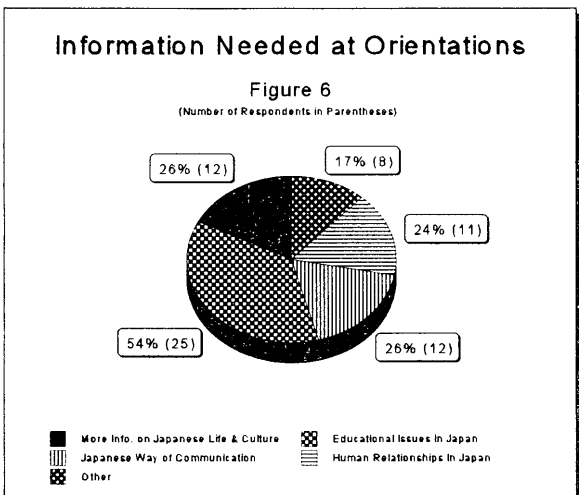
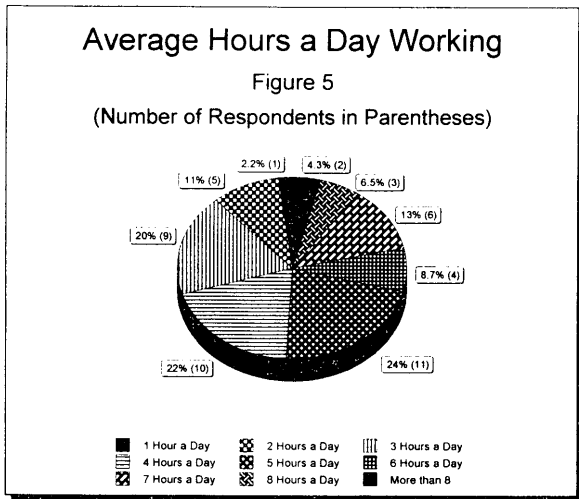
For JTLs and supervisors, the solution seems clear: even though this may be challenging, take the initiative to communicate clearly and directly with the ALTs exactly what is meant using words not just body language. Don't let job responsibilities, fears of failing at English, or anything else sidetrack this important task. Even a small amount of time taken from one's busy schedule spent in conversation with ALTs means a lot to both sides. Particularly, in regards to team-teaching, communication is the key way for JTLs to explain to ALTs about the JTLs' or the school's educational policy, philosophy, direction, and goal for English education.

Those in charge of the prefectural orientations could also provide more information on the differences between the Japanese and western way of communicating. Twenty-six percent of the ALTs who responded to the questionnaire requested more information on this matter (Fig. 6). Even those who would have liked more information on Japanese life and culture in general (26%),⁹ educational issues in Japan (54%), human relationships in Japan (24%)¹⁰ and other (17%)¹¹ made comments about the need for more information on how to communicate with Japanese people.

B. *Is your role clear to you?*

Sixty-six percent of ALTs expressed positive responses (very and fairly) to this question (Fig. 7).

The three comments that these respondents made indicate that they are satisfied with having a basic idea about their roles.¹² Like the first comment made in note twelve, most of those who made comments and responded that their roles were fairly



clear wrote that their roles were clear because of their personal initiative in defining or creating roles and/or that their roles have been becoming more clear over time.¹³ These comments indicate that whatever job description they are getting from the Ministry of Education is vastly different from what they are finding at their schools. Those who indicated that it depended upon JTLs or the schools had similar responses.¹⁴ The same held true but to a greater extent for those who answered that their roles were not defined clearly enough.

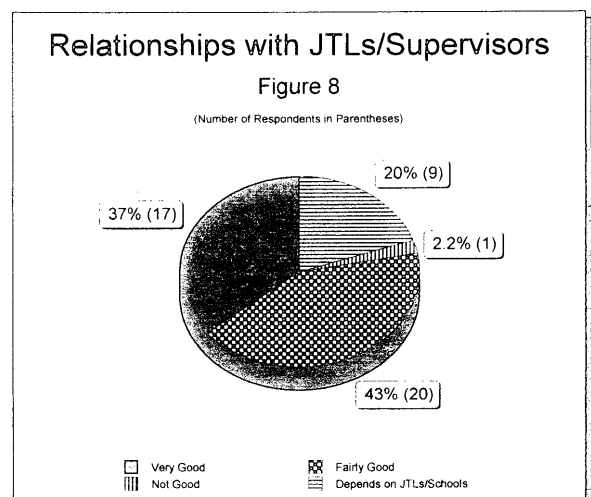
It seems that the Japanese adage of "case by case" can be applied to the ALTs' role as well. What seems to be clear is that the Ministry of Education may present one type of role but ALTs often find themselves in unique situations that either ignore the Ministry of Education's ideals or contradict them entirely. However, another way of looking at it would be that the Ministry of Education gives a general prescription of what school life for ALTs should be like but at each school the specific conditions dictate what the ALTs' roles really are. JTLs and supervisors should be aware of this and seek to present their ALTs with clear job descriptions as quickly as possible (even before arrival). However, ALTs should be forewarned that, realistically, because of cultural, personal or other reasons, this may not happen. They should be instructed at orientations on how to discover their unique role at each school and with each JTL.

Never the less, it would be ideal for JTLs to give their ALTs job descriptions that clearly spell out the ALTs' responsibilities both for days when they have class and working days that they don't have class. JTLs should write out exactly what the ALTs can (i.e. talk with students at break time) and can't do (i.e. "joke around" with students during cleaning time, sit on a desk) in addition to what is expected of ALTs both in the class-room and at their desk (i.e. study Japanese). It would be good if a committee of ALTs, JTLs, and supervisors at boards of education could make a sample job description that would then be distributed to all ALTs, JTLs, and supervisors to be used as a basis for creating individual ALT job descriptions.

In addition, reflecting upon the earlier advice

about communication, regular check-ups should be made on whether the ALTs are successfully fulfilling all of their areas of the job description. These could be in the form of a written evaluation or take place verbally one on one or in a meeting. ALTs should also have an opportunity to evaluate their JTLs and supervisors.

Although the questionnaire showed only half of the respondents were satisfied with their job situations, an overwhelming majority of ALTs indicated that they had a very good (37%) or fairly good (43%) relationship with their JTLs or supervisors (figure 8). Only one indicated that their relationship was not good and nine (20%) said that it depended upon the JTLs or the schools. These statistics are encouraging because they show that, overall, ALTs are getting along with their JTLs and supervisors.



IV. Conclusion

A good relationship is not enough to provide high job satisfaction for most ALTs. As this paper has shown, there are still many problems that need to be addressed. ALTs feel that they are not being used to their full potential and this leads to a decrease in job satisfaction which leads to apathy in the workplace. In order to help solve the problems addressed in this paper, a lot of effort needs to be made by the ALTs, JTLs, supervisors, the Ministry of Education, and those in charge of ALTs at the prefectural level.

Finally, the authors would like to thank those

ALTs who responded to the questionnaires. The high response rate itself indicates their great concern for the Japanese Exchange and Teaching Programme in Shimane Prefecture. We would also like to thank our spouses, Hiroki Otani and Naomi Van Loh, for their support, encouragement, and help in the research and writing of this paper.

Endnotes

1. The JET programme was started in 1987 by the Japanese government, particularly the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Local Affairs. By inviting young college graduates to Japanese communities, the programme seeks to fulfill three main purposes: helping English education at junior high and high school levels, helping internationalization in Japan on the local level, and improving Japanese image among young people overseas. Now, over 5,000 people from 25 different countries are working through this programme all over Japan.
2. Otani is currently doing research on communication and work relationships particularly between ALTs on the Shimane JET Programme and JTLs with the intent of writing her dissertation. Van Loh is a former Shimane ALT, having worked on the JET Programme from the summer of 1995 until the spring of 1997. Van Loh began assisting Otani with her research in the fall of 1996. He was then asked to draw upon his experiences both as an ALT and then as a post-ALT in order to help with the writing, evaluation and analyzation of the afore mentioned survey for the purpose of providing a foreign perspective to coincide with Otani's Japanese perspective.
3. "I do wish I could do more--but understand it is difficult to integrate ALTs more. So I do more on a volunteer basis for the community."
4. "I love my kids." "I have been given a lot of responsibility." "I'm very satisfied with the teachers but not with the students." "My Japanese Teachers of Language..." (hereafter referred to as "JTLs") "... are very willing to try new ideas and give me a lot of freedom to prepare classes."
5. "...teachers don't know how to delegate work and don't team teach consistently..." "The job can get annoying... usually weeks when students just haven't cared to work."
6. One person wrote that because they work at six schools and have more than 1,000 students, they can only attend each class about once every two months which makes them feel that they aren't making a significant impact. Other reasons given were: "Too much free time." "Even though I am qualified I am given very little responsibility and I can't make any decisions." "Some JTLs don't compromise and I am not mentally challenged. The job is too easy. There is little room for creativity on my part." "The job application information was a bit misleading about ability, level of commitment, etc."
7. "At some schools I'm very satisfied because the JTLs used me as more than just the 'token gaijin.' At other schools, I feel like I'm just there to be stared at." "Some schools fully utilize us, some don't. I've spent two really happy, fulfilled years teaching 15 hours a week, by myself and taking a lot of responsibility. Now, I do nothing but repeat text and it's mind-numbingly boring..." "My greatest satisfaction comes from teaching classes solo..."
8. "...it depends on their level of English and whether they have spent time overseas so they know how to cut through Japanese formality and innuendo." "I often find the Japanese unwilling to be clear and relevant and quite unable to be logical. I don't blame them, but it makes life difficult." "Their English is clear, but they are still Japanese so don't say things as directly as we are used to." "ALTs should properly understand the JTL's regular job before passing judgment." "My JTLs have always been very direct with me and I feel I can be direct with them--up to a point!" "We lose something in the translation." "After a year or 2 one can better understand "JTL English" and ways of asking for help or advice." "This is difficult to answer. Some JTLs have very good English so we talk and understand. Those with poor conversational English are never straight with me and they are obsessed with not upsetting me." "Indirectness is

- a cultural value, but JTLs with experience speaking to foreigners sometimes overcome it.”
9. More information on the “decision making process.”
 10. More information on “how Japanese communicate.” “Is it normal that they ask a million questions but they just laugh and avoid the question when I ask them?”
 11. “How should we communicate with Japanese.” “Decision making process. It takes many to make a decision.”
 12. “I think role is to a certain extent something you invent for yourself and it has very little to do with what Monbusho says!” “I do what I am told. If I... have another idea, it’s dismissed.”
 13. Our ideal role is clear, but generally what happens in school bears no relationship to our statement of purpose, teachers don’t have the time (or the motivation) to make the JET Programme work as it should. At the moment, I think the JET Programme is a colossal waste of taxpayers money, it’s not working the way it should.” “After one and a half years on the programme I pretty much know. But this took a lot of time to figure out! No matter how often you ask for feedback on team-teaching lessons or what exactly you’re suppose to be doing, you usually don’t received a clear explanation/answer.” “Different JTLs have very different expectations, but I am generally aware by now of what I am expected to do by each.” “I have had to work out the parameters of my job myself. I worry that I am not adequately fulfilling the expectations that my supervisor and school have of me.”
 14. “My role is becoming clear. It is different depending on where I am. And it is different from what my JTLs sometimes say it is. For instance, I find I am often asked if I have ideas. I take this to mean they need my ideas. In fact, this is not usually the case. So I have adjusted
- to this situation. I usually only give input when it is well thought out and there is enough time to implement it properly.” “I have defined my role after my experiences here. When I first arrived, I knew my role, but it conflicted with the role expected of me by my co-workers. I didn’t define my role correctly (even after orientations). Now I know my role better and it is fairly clear that I have chosen correctly.” “In spite of all sorts of meetings and conferences, I don’t think my “role” has ever been explained clearly. I have found my own method... but without feedback it’s impossible to say that I’m doing the right thing. Also, what works in one school, won’t necessarily work in another. I don’t think JTLs have a clear idea either.” “In many ways I think I’m still defining it. There is a minimum role, but you can do so much more above and beyond this.”
15. “I try to adapt to their whims (wishes) that are acceptable to the overall goal of “internationalization.” “At times I’m expected to do as I’m asked. Other times I’m expected to produce ideas at a moments notice. It’s never been made clear if or not I have authority in the classroom especially in areas of discipline.” “I have no idea what is expected of me, and whether or not I’m fulfilling these expectations.” “The stated goals of the JET programme (as much as they are ever stated!) are not intelligently and actively pursued. If there are other, hidden goals being achieved, that’s one thing, but for me personally the programme is not rewarding as I see little or not positive effect.” “I know what is acceptable ‘work’ done now, but after three years I’ve really just now figured it out. Someone needs to explain to the JET ALT before the first day of school: JOB TRAINING SESSION!”

(Received October 2, 1998)

QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out the level of satisfaction as well as the difficulties JET members have working in the Japanese society.

The main categories of this questionnaire are:

- Pre-Arrival: Expectations of the JET Programme
- Post-Arrival: Orientation
- Relationship & Communication at Work
- Personal History

<i>Personal History</i>						
<i>(Please check all that apply and/or fill in the answer where appropriate)</i>						
<i>How long have you been on the JET programme ?</i>				<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third</i>
<i>What was your major at university ?</i>						
<i>Did you have any work experience before this programme ?</i> <i>If yes, what was your profession and how long did you work in it ?</i>						
<i>Did you have any teaching experience before ?</i> <i>If yes, what kind and for how long ?</i>						
<i>Have you ever lived overseas before the JET programme ?</i> <i>If yes, where and for how long ?</i>						
<i>Do you have a close friend in Japan ?</i>				<i>Yes, a lot</i>	<i>Yes,</i>	<i>No,</i>
<i>Who are your close friends in Japan ?</i>		<i>JTLs</i>	<i>Japanese teachers of other subjects</i>	<i>Supervisor at the board of education or city hall</i>	<i>other JET members</i>	<i>other:</i>
<i>Do you feel that it is difficult to make a close Japanese friend?</i>			<i>Very difficult</i>	<i>Somewhat difficult</i>	<i>Not difficult at all</i>	
<i>Why?</i>						
<i>ALTs: Can you communicate in the Japanese Language ?</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>Only Speaking</i>	<i>Only Writing</i>	<i>Other</i>	
<i>ALTs: Do you think that the Japanese language is</i>			<i>Yes, definitely</i>	<i>It depends on the situation</i>		<i>No</i>

Pre-Arrival:**Expectations of the JET Programme**

- 1) What aspect of the JET Programme motivated you to apply?
 - a) Living abroad b) Traveling
 - c) Teaching d) Earning money
 - e) Experiencing Japanese culture
 - f) Other()
- 2) What expectations/assumptions did you have about this program?
 - a) Japanese life in general
 - b) At your workplace (at the Japanese school/at the city hall)
- 3) Was Shimane-ken or your town one of your choices?
 - a) If yes, why did you choose your area?
 - b) If no, what or where was your choice?
 - c) What aspect of Shimane Prefecture do you enjoy?
 - d) What aspects of Shimane Prefecture do you not enjoy?
- 4) What was your knowledge of Japan based upon before your arrival (please circle all that apply)?
 - a) I Studied Japan/Japanese at college.
 - b) I did a self-study of Japan/Japanese.
 - c) I spoke with Japanese living in my home coun try.
 - d) Other()
- 5) Please rate your knowledge of Japan before your arrival?
 - a) Very knowledgeable b) Knowledgeable
 - c) Little knowledge d) No knowledge
- 6) In a size comparison, is your home city/town quite different from your assigned Japanese city/town?

Post Arrival: Orientation

- 1) Do you think that you had enough information at your orientations?
 - a) More than enough information
 - b) The right amount of information
 - c) Not enough information
- 2) If you are not satisfied with the information at your orientations, what kind of information might have helped your work and stay in Japan?
 - a) More information on Japanese life and culture in general
(such as)
 - b) Educational issues in Japan such as school system, policy and philosophy
 - c) Japanese way of communication (such as)
 - d) Human relationship in Japan (such as)
 - e) Other ()

**Relationship & Communication
at Work--ALTs**

- 1) What is your working situation (please circle all that apply)
 - a) Junior high school
 - b) Senior high school
 - c) Base school
 - d) Base school with additional school visits
(how many schools?)
 - e) Based at a board of education, with school visits
-On average, how many schools do you visit every week or every month? ()
 - f) Other ()
- 2) Overall, what kind of job satisfaction have you found?
 - a) Very satisfied
 - b) Satisfied
 - c) Unsatisfied
 - d) Not satisfied at all
 - e) It really depends on JTLs or the schools
comments:

- 3) Is your role clear to you?
- Very clear
 - Fairly clear
 - Not clear enough
 - Not clear at all
 - It really depends on JTLs or the schools
comments:
- 4) Are you familiar with the Japanese education system or school philosophy?
- Yes, because I learned about it before coming to Japan
 - Yes, because the JTLs explained to me
 - Yes, I learned by myself through my work
 - No
 - Other:
- 5) Do you think that you have enough work to fill your working hours?
- More than enough
 - Just enough
 - I would like to be a little busier
 - I have too much free time, I need more work
 - It really depends on JTLs or the schools
comments:
- 6) On average, how many hours a day do you spend doing work related projects (teaching, planning, assigned tasks, etc.) ?
- less than one
 - one
 - two
 - three
 - four
 - five
 - six
 - seven
 - eight
 - more than eight
- 7) Overall, how is your relationship with your JTLs or supervisors?
- Very well
 - Fairly well
 - Not well
 - Not well at all
 - It really depends on JTLs
comments:
- 8) How important is it to have a good relationship with your JTLs or your supervisor?
- Very important
 - Fairly important
 - Not important
 - Not important at all
 - It really depends on who the JTL or who my supervisor is
- 9) What factors do you think are important in forming good relationships with your Japanese colleagues
- Talking with them about things other than school
 - Working very seriously
 - Attending school/board of education enkais
 - Other:
- 10) Are you satisfied with the amount of time you have to communicate with JTLs about things other than class?
- More than satisfied
 - Just satisfied
 - Not satisfied
 - Not satisfied at all
 - It really depends on who the JTL or who my supervisor is
comments:
- 11) Do you have enough time to prepare for the class with JTLs?
- More than enough
 - Just enough
 - Not enough
 - Not at all
 - It really depends on the school or JTLs
- 12) Since most JTLs and supervisors are extremely busy, some of them would prefer to discuss the plan with you after your working hours? Would you mind doing that if they ask you beforehand?
- Yes
 - No
- Why?

- 13) In the Japanese classroom or in your office--
- What makes you feel happy or satisfied?
 - What makes you feel annoyed?
- 14) Do you have enough feedback or evaluation from JTLs or supervisors?
- Yes
 - Yes, but not enough. I would like to have more feed back
 - Not at all
- 15) You might find different customs and rules in the Japanese classroom or work places. For example, a teacher sitting on the desk is considered to be rude by the Japanese. What is your opinion?
- I don't care how the Japanese feel, I like to be myself
 - If I knew it was rude, I wouldn't do it
 - It's not my style to sit on the desk anyway
 - I would discuss this matter with my JTL to see how he/she feels
 - other:
- 16) In the future, what do you think would help you improve work related areas the most?
- 17) Outside of the classroom, do you join in the other activities at your school, such as school festivals and club activities?
- I join them very actively (school lunch, school clerning, school festivals, club activities and others)
 - Whenever JTLs ask me to join, I do
 - Personally I don't like to join other activities
 - Not at all
 - It depends on the school
- 18) Overall, how do you feel about the following issues?
- (1=Very Difficult; 5=Not Very Difficult)
- Teaching at a Japanese school 1 2 3 4 5
 - Communicating with JTLs/supervisors
1 2 3 4 5
 - Living in Japan 1 2 3 4 5
- 19) When you communicate with JTLs, do you feel that their approach is:
- Very clear
 - Clear
 - So-so
 - Confusing
 - Very confusing
- Comments:
- 20) Do you have any suggestions that would help you to improve your work-related conditions in Japan?