



Multicultural Education in the English Class: How English Teachers Can Support Minority Students

-Adapting Existing Textbooks
-Focusing on Communication and Critical Thinking

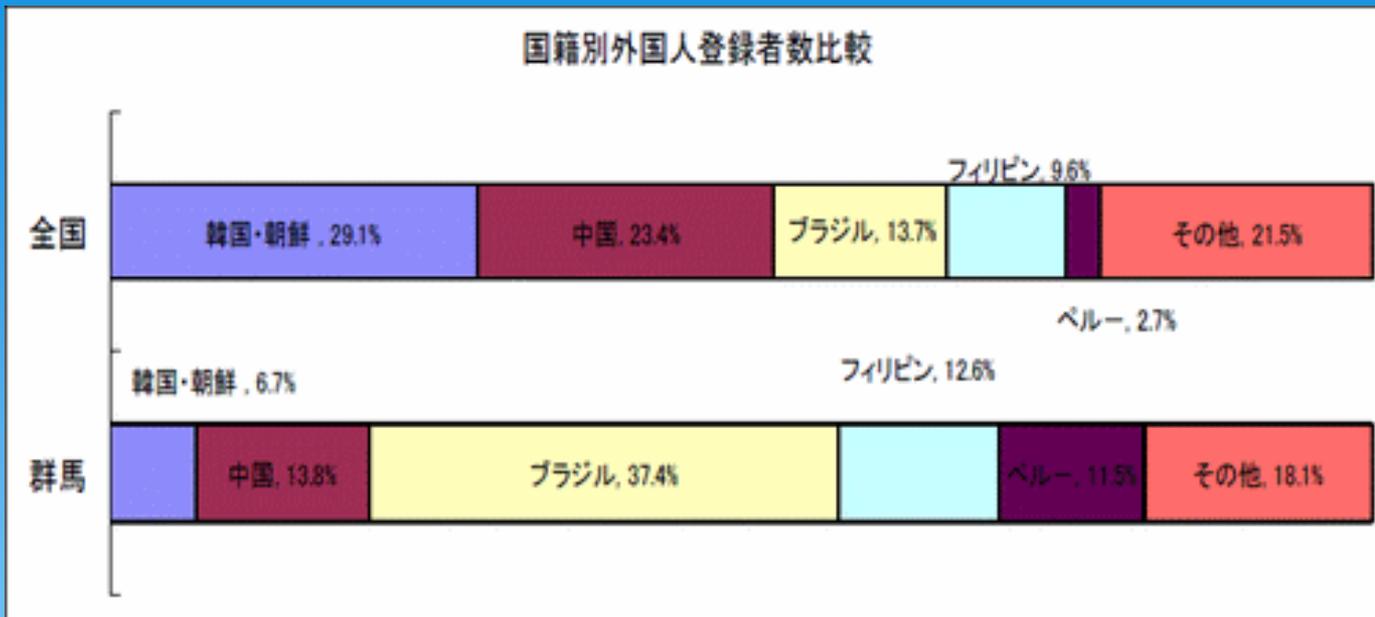
**Jan 5, 2013 Minakami
Shin Eigo Kenkyukai Kanto Block**

TODAY'S WORKSHOP

- 1) Overview of Newcomers in Japan by Cheiron McMahill
- 2) Ondol and Kimchi by Riki (Wang Li)
I have a Dream by Shin Keigo
- 3) 4) The Peaceful Culture of Tea by Yu Yang
- 5) A Dynamic Mosaic of Multiculturalism by Watanabe Mayu
- 6) Questions, comments from participants: after each presenter

1. Numbers of language minorities in Japan- 2009 data

Foreigners legally registered in Japan 2,186,121 (2009) ■ In Gunma Pref: 45,766 (2006)



Ranking	City Name	Numbers	Percent of total
1	Isesaki	11,816	25.8%
2	Ota	8,486	18.5%
3	Oizumi	6,753	14.7%
4	Maebashi	4,460	9.7%
5	Takasaki	3,963	8.6%
—	Top Five Total	35,478	77.5%
—	Other	10,288	22.4%
Grand total		45,766	100.0%

Who are ethnic, cultural and linguistic minorities in Japan?

I ran an NPO (International Community School, or ICS) from 2000 to 2012 to support foreign/ minority children in Isesaki. One elementary school in Isesaki has more than 20% foreign children.

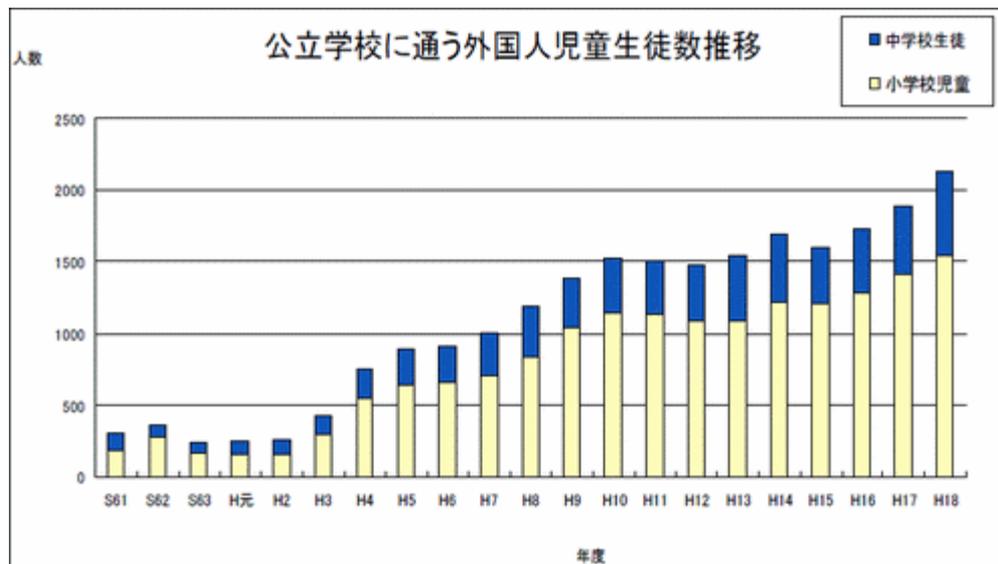
Why do minority children have a hard time in Japanese schools?

- * It has been difficult to argue for standards or rights in programs for foreign national children since they are exempted from compulsory education in the Basic Education Law in Japan. They may attend Japanese schools, but this is merely optional (Yorimitsu, 2005). Schools are thus not obligated to adapt to minority children (of course, many schools and teachers DO try their best anyway).

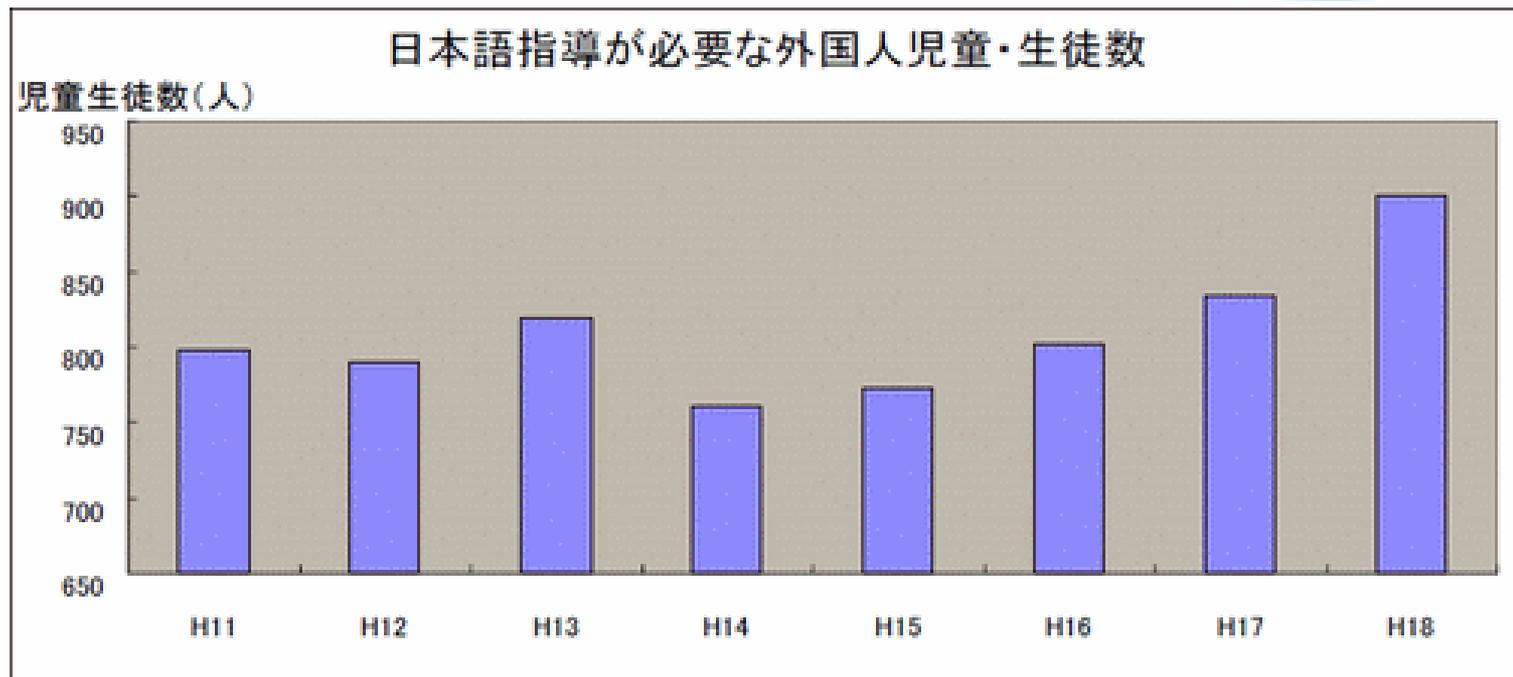
Increase in foreign children going to public school in Gunma Prefecture

※出典:平成18年度群馬県の学校統計 2006 school data

Individual schools and teachers must cope with the increase in minority children, even though the national government does not provide sufficient funding or guidelines for their educational needs.



A lack of data- we don't know much about minority students' needs- only a little about how many need help with Japanese (Gunma, up to 2006)



The experiences and needs of 1st & 2nd generation minorities are both similar to and different from other minorities.

平成18年末現在 (単位:人) 2006 national data

http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chousa/shotou/042/houkoku/08070301/009/001.htm

Age	Total	S. or N. Korean	Chinese	Brazilian	Filipino	Peruvian	American	Other
5~9	66,325	16,980	11,308	17,476	5,369	4,045	1,640	9,507
10~14	57,398	20,449	10,652	11,328	4,696	2,882	1,432	5,959
Totals	123,723	37,429	21,960	28,804	10,065	6,927	3,072	15,466

Many Koreans and many Chinese speak Japanese as an L1 & have been in Japan for generations, while others are newcomers. But all minorities need support for their cultural and historical identities, and home or heritage languages.

However, the Japanese government/Monkasho have followed a policy of simple cultural and linguistic assimilation.

As foreigners continue to stay longer and settle down in our country, it is exceedingly significant for the development and stability of our nation and also an essential condition for their own happiness that their children acquire the knowledge and skills in Japanese they need to live as members of our society.

Gaikokujin jidou seito kyouiku no jyuujitsu housaku ni tsuite (houkoku). (Report on guidelines for expanding the education of foreign children). (June, 2008.) Retrieved November 14, 2010 from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chousa/shotou/042/houkoku/08070301.htm.

This policy has been a failure, as many minorities drop out of school, leave Japan, or get caught in a cycle of temporary work.

- * In one MEXT survey, 1.1% percent or 112 of the foreign children whose parents responded were found to be out of school, while 17.5% were unaccounted for (*MEXT “Survey on the actual conditions of foreign children not attending school, 2005-6.* However, no accurate records kept.
- * The *Japan Times* English daily newspaper estimated in 2008 that “more than 10,000, or one-third of the Brazilian children between the ages of 5-14 living in Japan at the time were not attending any school (“Education woes...” *The Japan Times*, 11.14.2008).

Even Monkasho found out in an official survey in 2005 that the problem is not just Japanese language acquisition.

“Survey on the actual conditions of foreign children not attending school, 2005-6. 112 applied. (From MEXT homepage)

- not having enough money to pay for school lunches, materials, and excursions (15.6%),
- not understanding Japanese (12.6%),
- planning to return soon to the country of origin (10.4%),
- differences in school customs and life between the home country and Japan (8.9%).

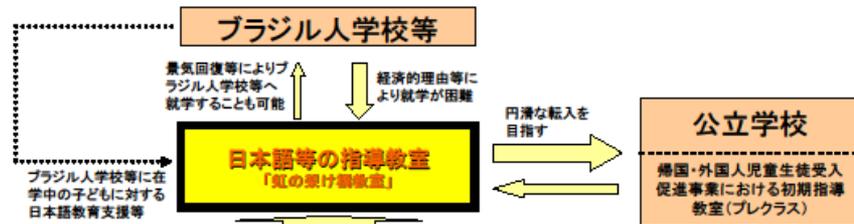
定住外国人の子どもの就学支援事業

平成21年度補正予算額: 約37億円

概要

- ・昨今の景気後退により、不就学・自宅待機となっているブラジル人等の子どもに対して、日本語等の指導や学習習慣の確保を図るための場を外国人集住都市等に設け、主に公立学校への円滑な転入が出来るようにする。
- ・また、ブラジル人等の子どもを中心としたブラジル人等コミュニティと地域社会との交流を促進する。
- ・本事業は、景気後退が回復するまでの緊急措置として3年間の計画で実施する。

ブラジル人等の子どものための日本語指導等の実施



- 役割: ブラジル人学校等・公立学校にも通っていない子どもを対象に日本語指導等を実施。(ブラジル人学校等に在籍する子どもも受入れ可能) また、ブラジル人等の子どもを中心とした地域社会との交流事業を実施。
- 対象: 義務教育段階の子ども等
- 期間: 原則6ヶ月程度
- 場所: 外国人集住都市等において実施
- 内容:
 - ・日本語指導等を行う教員等
日本語指導や教科指導
 - ・バイリンガル指導員(ブラジル人教員等も含む)
ポルトガル語等の母語指導と教科指導の補助
 - ・コーディネーター等
ブラジル人等の子どもの公立学校への受入促進、地域社会との交流の促進等

文部科学省

拠出金支出

国際移住機関(IOM) <「子ども架け橋基金」の設置>

①周知・公募

②申請

③審査・採択・委託

地方公共団体等(外国人集住都市等)



Nevertheless, MEXT continues to focus just on rapid Japanese language and cultural assimilation. It has funded the Rainbow Bridge Program from 2009-present to return such foreign children to public schools, on the assumption that the problem is a lack of Japanese ability and a lack of interaction with the local (Japanese) community.

During this grant project, grantees (including my NPO) have been given six months per child to provide sufficient Japanese and exposure to the Japanese community for the child to enroll or re-enroll and successfully attend their local public school.

Proof of foreigners' unstable employment conditions

2006 government survey of foreigners (N=738) in the Kanto region

- * 64.8% had changed jobs in Japan.
- * 62.8% had moved over twice within Japan, 9.2% over five times, with the main reason given as a change in workplace.
- * Over 50% had already left Japan once for an extended stay in the home country, some as many as four times.
- * 78.9% rent; only 3.1% replied they owned their home.
- * The respondents, however, were not happy with this situation; 73.8% wanted to stop moving and stay in same region (Kokudo Kotsusho, March, 2007).

Further Impact of the economic crisis

- * 2009 survey of nikkeijin in Oizumi Town in Gunma (N= 477): 40% of foreigners unemployed
- * Of those with jobs, only 10% employed as full-time workers.
- * Of the unemployed, over half did not want to return to their countries because of concerns for their children's education (*Jomo Shimbun* February 26, 2009).

Response of Japanese government contradicts and at the same time reinforces its policy of assimilation & “blames the victim”

- * Welfare benefits denied to foreign workers to help them weather the economic crisis.
- * 1 year “Kikoku Shien Project” offered by the Ministry of Health, Welfare & Labor= money given to cover the cost of a one-way ticket to Nikkei visa holders and their dependents to return to their country of origin, on the condition that they do not come back to Japan to work for at least three years.
- * Those refusing to leave offered training in Japanese language and etiquette.
- * Japanese language proficiency requirement added for future Nikkei visa applicants.

Through my NPO work, I already knew that minority children drop out of school or go back to their parents' countries for these reasons:

- * Most Nikkei children cannot stay in Japan even if they want to, because of their parents' unstable employment conditions and the lack of safety nets for temporary foreign workers.
- * Knowing this, parents are not happy with their children forgetting the L1 or taking on a Japanese identity. Nor are they happy with the prospects of their children dropping out of school and becoming temporary factory workers.
- * Nikkei and other foreign children are also often the victims of racial and xenophobic school bullying, which foreign parents cannot accept.

I decided to support what I knew by asking parents and children who had returned to South America from Japan about their experiences and opinions.

Who I interviewed, observed, and surveyed:

- * 2009-10: 24 children in Brazil and one or more of their parents, their teachers and principals, and community activists/supporters
- * 2010: 48 children in Peru, 21 of their parents, and 2 former returnees in Argentina, their teachers, principals, and supporters



Finding 1: The Economic Crisis forced the timing of leaving Japan, but it was not the only reason for leaving Japan. Parents and children were also unhappy with Japan's policy of "assimilation" (同化主義) and the lack of upward mobility in Japan.

Categories of reasons	Number of replies
Personal reasons (Marriage of a relative, parents' health, parents' death, missed family, school bullying, child turning into a "Japanese," homesick, visa expired)	28
For children's education (child's grades in Japan were poor, thought child wouldn't be able to enter high school or university in Japan, child forgetting Spanish, level of education in Peru higher, more chance of child becoming a white-collar worker in Peru)	21
Japanese economic crisis (parents unemployed, temporary contracts severed)	17
No response	7

- Peru's educational level has gotten much higher. I believe that now Peru is already very competitive in all of Latin America in terms of education. Peru's schools are better, as they offer a greater variety of subjects and require more of the student.
- I believe Peru's schools are better, because in Japan, the children in elementary and junior high do not study, they don't get homework, they never fail a subject, the parents don't have to send them for special classes during the vacations, they don't learn like here in Peru. They never have to repeat a grade, so they always stay behind academically.
- In Peru our children have more chance of attending a good high school/university and becoming a professional worker.
- Peru is better for our children, as they have more opportunity to move into a good profession.
- Japanese schools stress physical education and sports, while Peruvian schools stress critical thinking and academics.

Finding 2: Peruvian parents came to believe Japan's educational system disadvantages their children.

Finding 3: Parents were not happy with their children acquiring Japanese at the cost of losing the mother tongue. 24 Brazilian parents, 2009-10

- * One or both Brazilian parents took their children back to Brazil because of the economic crisis, but also, they were concerned about their child forgetting Portuguese.
- * Camilla's mother, Itaporanga: "I deliberately spoke only in Portuguese at home with my children, but when they started to go to Japanese public school, though they acquired Japanese, they couldn't communicate with me anymore in Portuguese at home. Since there wasn't a Brazilian school nearby, I took them back to Brazil."

The children who had assimilated to Japanese culture and language were in fact suffering deeply:

“I want to go back to Japan”

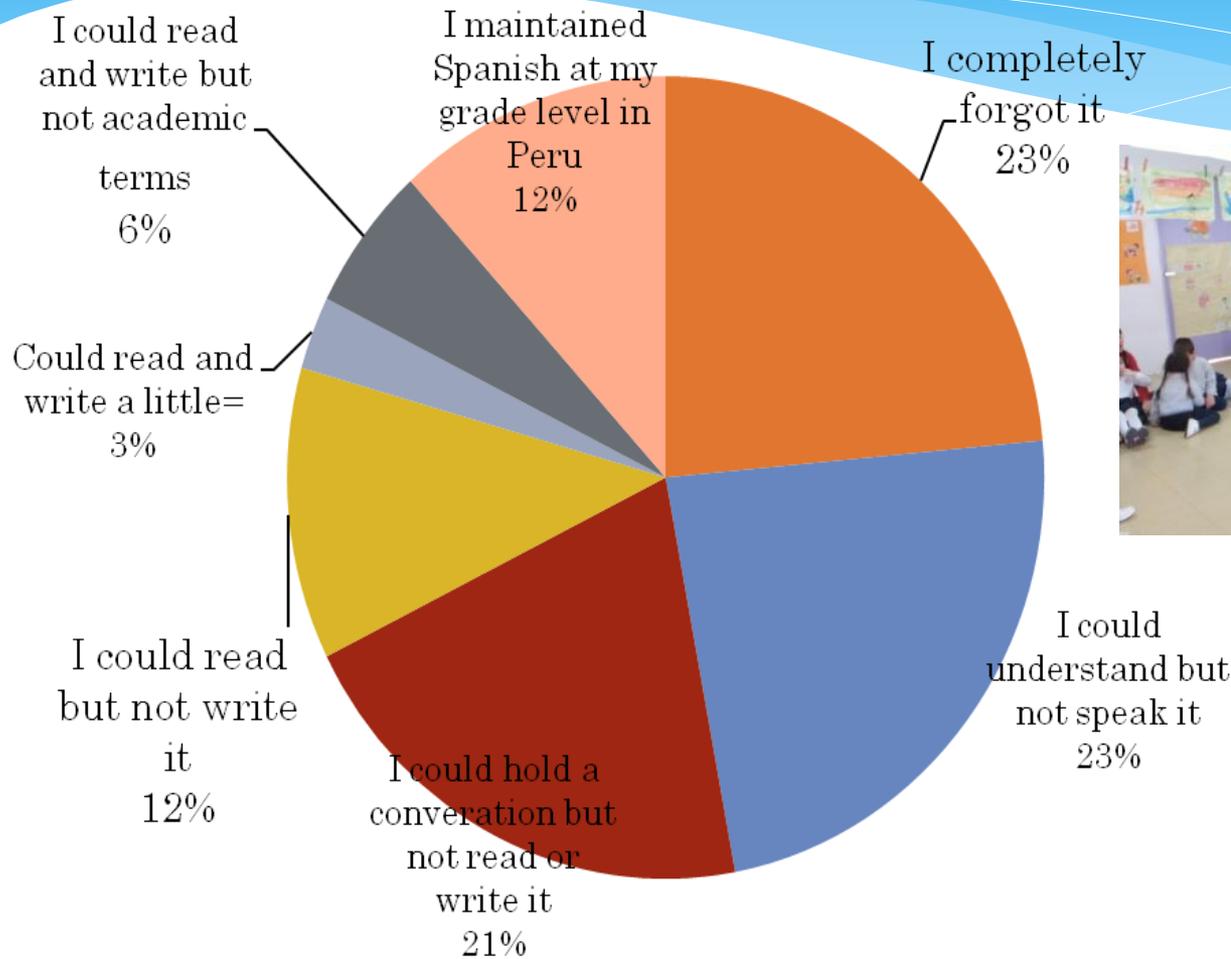
12 of the 14 students at La Victoria and 8 of 21 students at La Union school in Lima

- “Si, porque es mi pais.” (Yes, because it is my country).
- “Si. Nihon no tomodachi to asobitai. Nihon no gakkou ni ikitai. Zettai!” (Yes. I want to play with my Japanese friends. I want to go to Japanese school. Absolutely!)
- “Kaeritai. Kitanai kono kuni. Nihon ni mo tomodachi ga ite “zettai kaeru” to yakusoku shita. Koko ga kowai. Jiken ga oosugiru.” (I want to go back. This country is dirty. I promised my friends in Japan, “I will absolutely return.” I am scared here. There is too much crime.)
- “Si si si. Tomodachi to asobitai. Mata omoide o tsukuritai.” (Yes yes yes. I want to play with my friends. I want to make more memories).
- “Si. Kaeritai. Riyu kuuki ga kirei de tomodachi to itai kara.” (Yes. I want to return. Reason: the air is clean and I want to be with my friends.)
- “Hai. Tomodachi ga nihon ni iru kara. Itoko ya obaachan ga iru kara.) (Yes, because my friends are there. And my cousins and grandmother are there).

The Japanese they had acquired in Japan was not in fact useful as children in South America

- * 24 students in Brazilian public and private schools: We cannot use Japanese here at all. (Bilingual education not recognized by Brazilian MEC. English and Spanish required as foreign languages. Students who had gone to ICS in Gunma and acquired English were doing well).
- * 48 students in Peruvian private “Nikkei” schools: Yes, but only with other returnee friends/in Japanese class. (Peru: English main foreign language. Japanese as optional extra subject. Argentina: English main foreign language, but Japanese finally recognized as official foreign language from 2011. No instruction at level sufficient to maintain Japanese acquired in Japan).
- * **2 adult former returnees in Argentina:** When I got back, I couldn’t really use it, except a little bit at Nichia Gakuin, a Nikkei private school. But I use it now in my work.

50 returnees to Peru/Argentina: It was difficult or impossible to maintain our Spanish while going to Japanese public schools. We acquired Japanese but lost Spanish.



We wish we had maintained our mother tongue, because now we need extra help.

The struggling ones who had attended Japanese schools in Japan

- All of the children who did not maintain their L1 in Japan needed special instruction. In Brazil: kept back 1 or more grades, given tutoring before or after school. In Peru & Argentina: those who could afford it attended private “Nikkei” schools, with instruction in Japanese and Spanish as a Second Language.

The lucky ones who had attended Brazilian or international schools in Japan

- All of the children who has maintained their L1 while in Japan were integrating smoothly and getting good grades. In many cases, teachers said they were their best students. They were considered, ironically, as “Japanese” by their new schools.

Do we wish our children could have also studied Portuguese in Japanese schools? (Brazil, 2009)

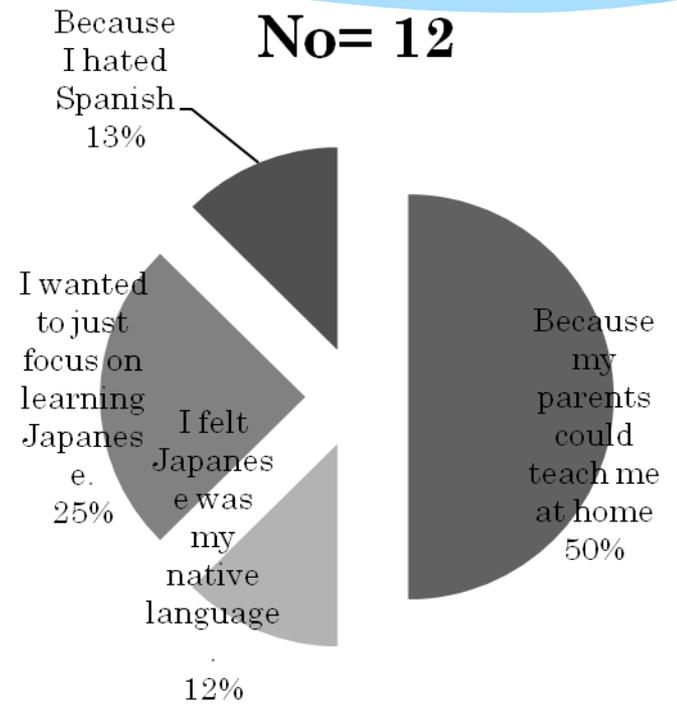
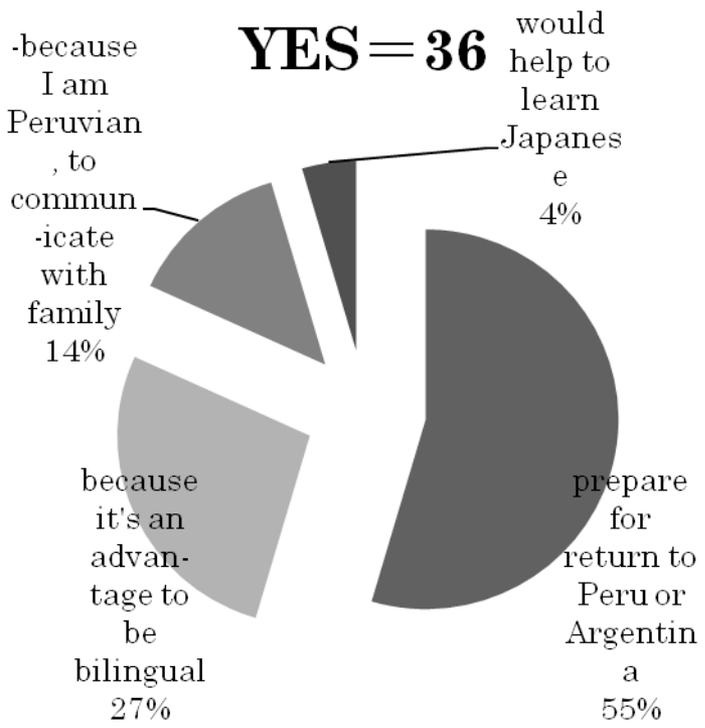
- * 24 parents: Yes
- * 24 children: Yes
- * Erick's mother in Vitoria pointed out,
- * “Even if Brazilians plan to stay in Japan, they don't know when the day they leave will come. When they return to Brazil, if their child does not possess academic ability in the Portuguese language, they will really suffer.”

Do we wish we could have also studied Spanish in Japanese schools?

(Peruvian and Argentinian returnees, N= 48, no reply= 2)

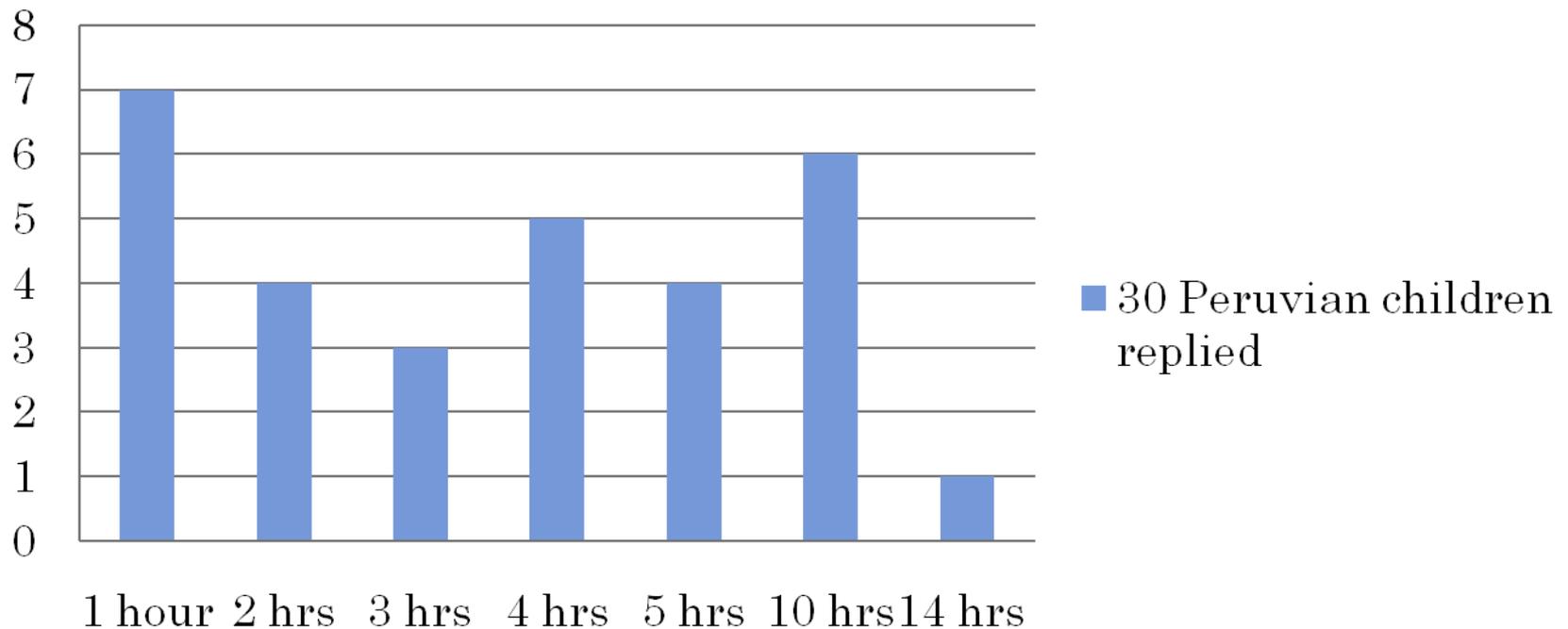
I would have liked it.

I wouldn't have liked it.



EVEN ONE HOUR OF SPANISH A WEEK WOULD BE A BIG HELP... even after school is okay...

What is the minimum number of hours a week of Spanish mother tongue instruction you needed?



Were you bullied in Japanese schools? Was this bullying “racial”?

YES=17 children

NO=24 children

- * 17 children: Yes, because I was a foreigner
 - I was called names, such as “black” or “foreigner”
 - They laughed at my Japanese.
 - I knew it was because I was a foreigner, because the other foreigners around me were also bullied.
- * 3 children suffered physical attacks, 1 child for years.

- * 1 child: I wasn’t “bullied,” but whenever my friends were angry with me, they would call me “foreigner.”



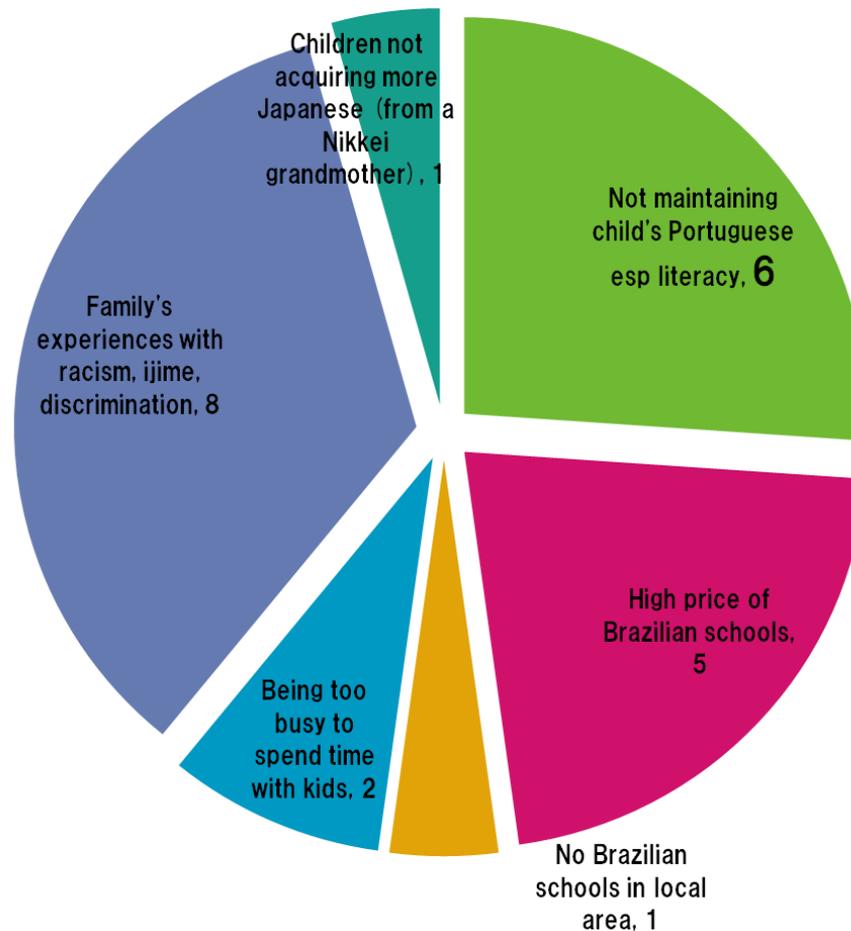
Please tell me how you were bullied:

“si por ser de otro pais me jalaban el pelo y me golpeaban dela nada y me hacian la vida inpocible” *Yes, for being from another country they pulled my hair and hit me for nothing and made my life impossible.*” (Student, La Union, Lima).

Sí, porque era diferente a los demás y no sabia mucho japones. Ejemplo me insultaron, me pegaban y se reian de mi. *Yes, because I was different from the others and I didn't know Japanese. For example they insulted me, they hit me, and they laughed at me.* (Student, La Union, Lima).

24 Brazilian parents: Racism, ijime, discrimination was our worst problem in Japan

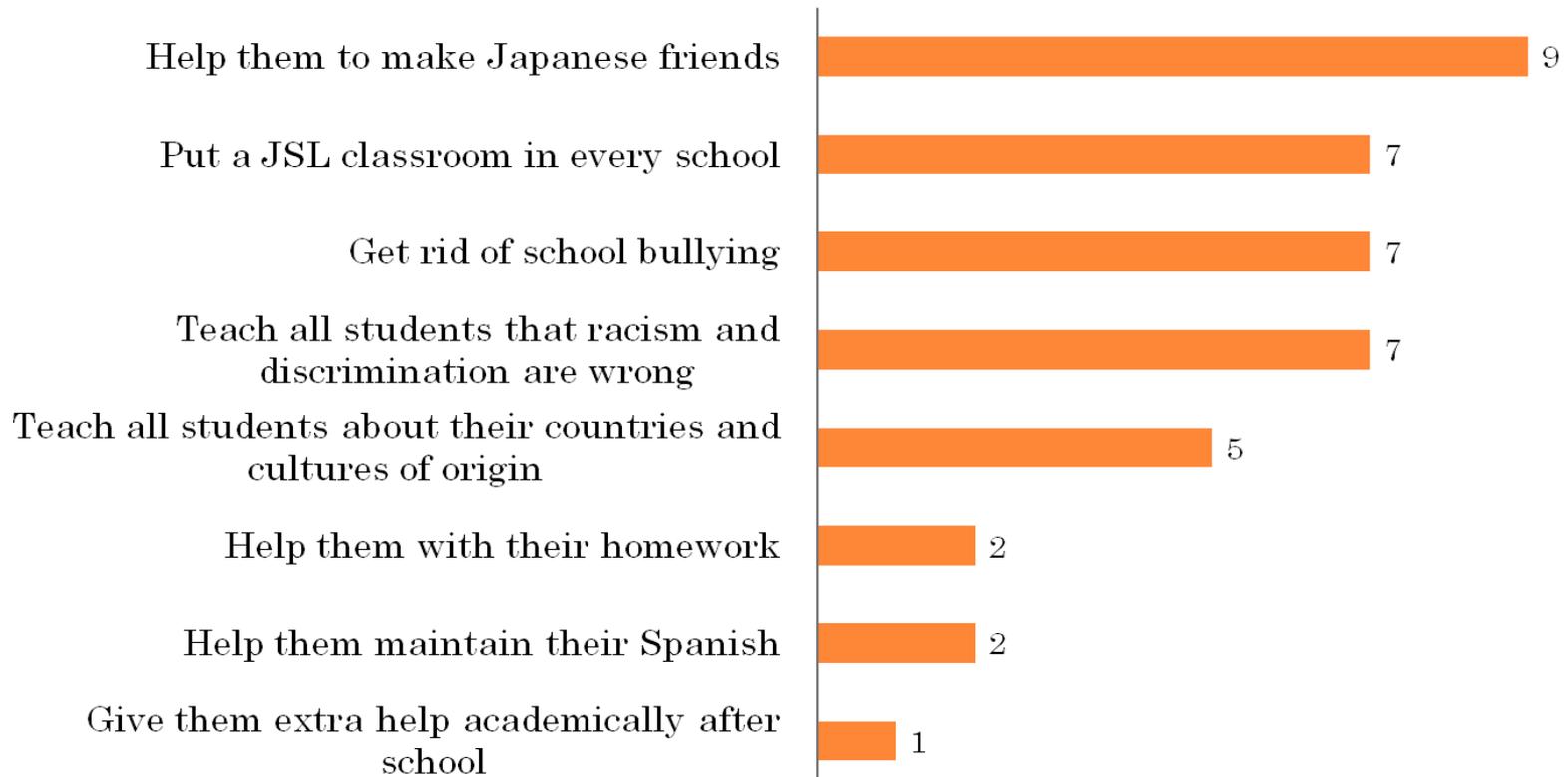
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● 保護者に日本滞在中の不满について聞いたところ、日本語教育に対する要望はあまりなかった

Message to Japanese schools and teachers: Don't just teach us Japanese, but teach about our cultures, help us make friends, teach that discrimination is wrong
(50 returnees to Peru and Argentina)

How can Japanese schools help minority children?



English language classes can be a place to learn about minorities, and also allow minority students to exploit their language learning abilities

- * Increased instruction English in Japanese schools can bridge the gap between Japanese and migrant children, and benefit both groups. As Oda (2012) points out, some Brazilians see the English language as offering a chance for Brazilians to improve their status even in Japan, such as this Brazilian father:
- * Japanese schools should at the least have a system of English at a high level which benefits Japan's global importance, from which both native and migrant children would benefit. (N. family, São Paulo-SP, Brazil, July, 2009).
- * Countless minority students have found mentors in their English teachers, and gotten into Japanese universities on the basis of their superior English skills

My Daito students' presentations today: Questions which we investigated this year

1. Do English textbooks talk about and value multiculturalism and multilingualism INSIDE Japan?
2. Do English textbooks teach about the existence, history, and problems of minorities in Japan?
3. Do English textbooks stress listening, speaking, and discussion activities that would give minority and majority children a chance to know about these issues?
4. Can English textbooks be adapted or supplemented easily?
5. Can English classes give a chance to minority children, who might already speak two or more languages and be good at language learning, a chance to succeed in Japanese schools?

Let's enjoy my students' lessons now!

Postscript: My experiment with multicultural, multilingual education

- At International Community School (ICS), we created our own theme-based curriculum based on the situation and experiences of the students (about 30-50 full-time students on average, ages 4 to 17).
- We mixed Brazilian, Peruvian, Japanese, American and other methods of evaluation.
- We focused on student research/experiential projects and presentations.
 - An example from September of 2010 is our monthly theme of “School Spirit.”

Bi-, tri-, quadri-lingual options at International community school (ICS)

- * Spanish or Portuguese or English medium academic instruction: about 16 hours per week (open to non-native speakers as well)
- * English for communicative purposes: about 6 hours per week, 4 hours extra optional after school (not divided by native vs. non-native)
- * Japanese as a second or first language and academic instruction, about 6 hours per week, extra tutoring available (divided roughly by level)
- * Flexible age groupings (students not strictly divided by age or grade)

“School Spirit”

Theme-based project work

Goals: to realize

- ▶ We ourselves are worthy of study.
- ▶ We ourselves can find out what we want to know, and generate knowledge.
- ▶ We all have different experiences and values, and these can be resources for our community.
- ▶ We have an amazing ability to share our knowledge in many languages, using various media, and we are worth listening to.
- ▶ Even our teachers don't realize all we can do and what we are learning; it's a good chance for our teachers to sit and listen to us sometimes.

1. Survey of school members (social studies)

→ Students interviewed parents, staff and classmates about their experiences, dreams and ideas concerning education in Portuguese, Spanish, English and Japanese, and then analyzed the answers.

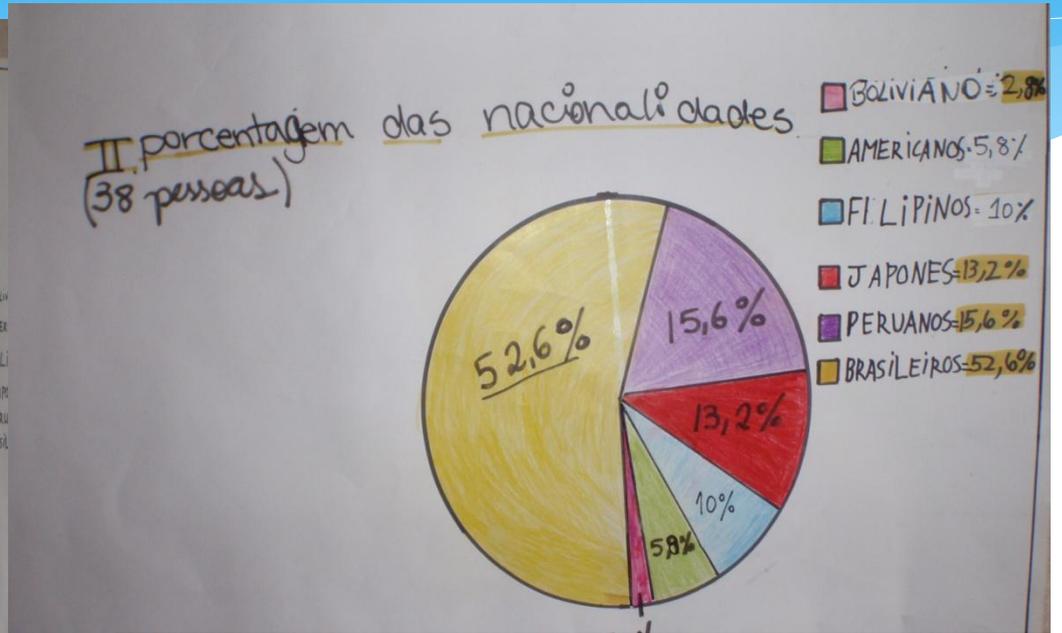
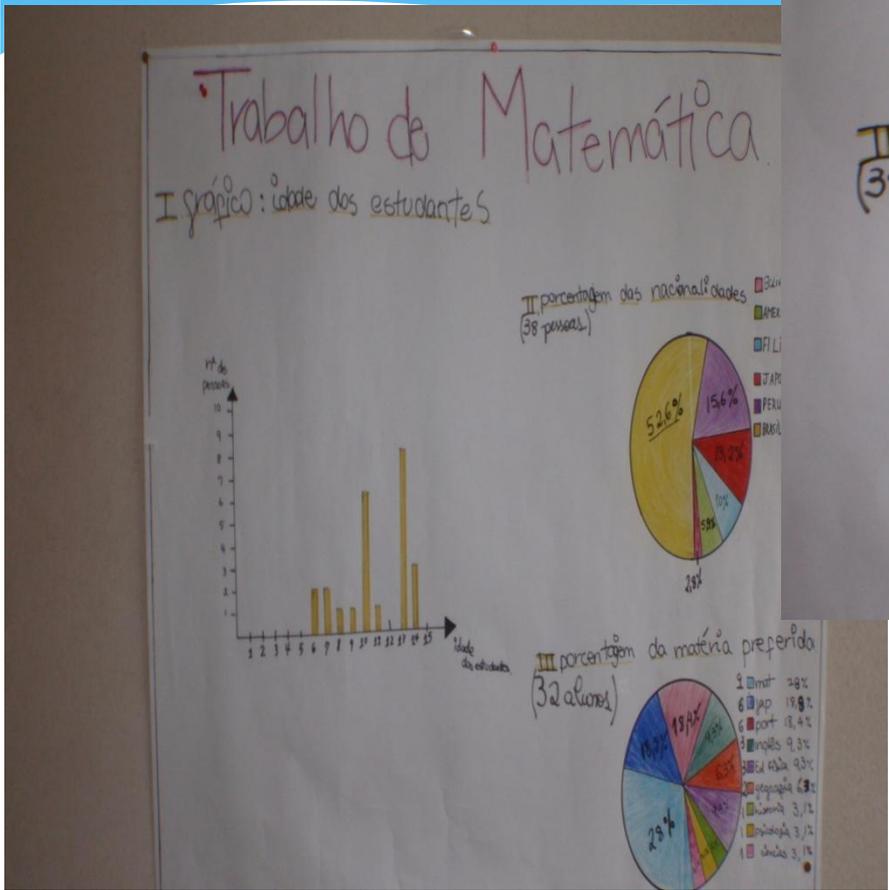
2. Compiling statistics, creating graphs (social studies, math)

→ Students statistically analyzed their data to present an overview of our school community.

1. Survey results (social studies)



2. Statistical analysis and use of graphs (Social studies and mathematics)



3. Presentations (communication skills)

Cooperation across differences in age, gender, mother tongue, nationality (Multicultural, peace studies)



4. Responding to questions and comments in any language



Supporting language minorities in public schools

(1) ICS after-School “Dream Club” in four public schools in Iseaki

- * Hands-on activities related to human and geographic diversity
- * All children welcome (including Japanese)
- * Currently conducted in Portuguese, Spanish, Vietnamese, English and Japanese
- * About 40 children attended in 2011



Funded by Ministry of Culture grant for teaching JSL

(2) Mother tongue support classes for elementary through junior high school students at ICS

Saturdays 1-5 PM (about 30 students in 2011)

- Students choose two languages from Spanish, Portuguese, English, Japanese, Urdu.
- Parties and events related to languages, cultures four times a year

○ Purpose:

- 1. Support of L1 identity
 - 2. Maintenance, development of L1 literacy
 - 3. Improving parent-child communication
 - 4. Improving academic achievement
 - 5. Friendship among language minorities
- (although Japanese children are also welcome)

