FROM DEWEY TO BRUNER:
Overcoming Structural Deficiencies in Japan's English Language Conversation Programs for High School Students

The Scientific Approach to Value in Education and its Possible Contribution to English Language Communication as a Vehicle Whereby Japanese Youth May Participate in Global Transformation

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines several possible contributions and limitations of John Dewey's Progressive educational theory towards creating an effective program for improving the teaching of oral English courses in Japanese high schools

In particular, the study attempts a critical examination of Dewey's theory of Instrumentalism as a standpoint from which it continues to contribute to the retrogressive state of contemporary Japanese pedagogical orientation In so doing, the thesis attempts to elicit, find speculative guidance in, and occasionally utilize in the clarification process, critical evaluations of Japan's university entrance examination system

The aspects of Dewey's theory which are considered as conducive to the above goal are: his approach to the relationship between educator and student, teaching techniques, and his research in the realm of education as it applies to meeting the needs of society. It is put forth that although Dewey's ideology in these areas has actually contributed to pedagogical dilemma which may impede the compulsory teaching of English conversation in Japanese high schools, such a contribution must be considered en route to reaching an accurate solution

It is contended that the cognitive-linguistic theory of Jerome Bruner is required as a viewpoint which serves to supplement, ameliorate and to assimilate Dewey's proposals in order to clearly elaborate a method by which Japanese adolescents may fluently express their hopes for participating in global ecology.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse tentera d'établir quelques apports et certaines limites de la théorie d'éducation Progressif de John Dewey face au développement d'un module efficace pour améliorer l'enseignement des cours d'anglais oral dans les écoles secondaire japonaises.

Cette étude examinera particulièrement la théorie Instrumentiste de Dewey en tant que point de vue selon lequel continue à contribuer à l'état arrêté de la ligne suivie par la pédagogie japonaise actuelle. Ainsi, cette thèse s'intéressera aux évaluations critiques sur la système japonaise d'examens pour l'admission à l'université, pour s'en inspirer, guider les hypothèses, et parfois les clarifier.

Les aspects de la théorie de Dewey visant le but déjà mentionné seront observés son approche des relations entre un professeur et ses étudiant(e)s, les techniques qui peut êtres utilisés par les professeurs pour l'enseignement, et son étude du domaine des sciences pédagogiques autant qu'ils s'applique à fait l'affaire des besoins de la société. Il sera proposé que si l'idéologie de Dewey dans ces domaines a contribué en effet à la dilemme pédagogique qui peut être a empêcher l'enseignement obligatoire des courses d'anglais oral dans les écoles secondaire japonaises, une telle contribution reste néanmoins à mi chemin pour l'atteindre avec justesse.

On proposera ensuite la théorie psycho-linguistique de Jerome Bruner comme bas de compliment, de perfectionnement, et d'alignement des propositions de Dewey, a fin d'élaborer plus directement comment améliorer la compétence des adolescents japonais en exprimer couramment leurs espoirs à l'égard d'un conservation de l'écologie mondial.

Unless culture be a superficial polish, a veneering of mahogany over common wood, it surely is this—the growth of the imagination in flexibility, in scope, and in sympathy, till the life which the individual lives is informed with the life of nature and of society When nature and society can live in the schoolroom, when the forms and tools of learning are subordinated to the substance of experience, then there shall be an opportunity for this identification, and culture shall be the democratic password.

John Dewey
The School and Society

Teaching is vastly facilitated by the medium of language, which ends by being not only the medium for exchange but the instrument that the learner can then use himself in bringing order into the environment.

Jerome Bruner
Toward a Theory of Instruction

What we need to do, and all we need to do, is bring as much of the world as we can into the school and the classroom; give children as much help and guidance as they need and ask for; listen respectfully when they feel like talking; and then get out of the way. We can trust them to do the rest.

John Holt
How Children Learn

The teacher is as a needle, the disciple is as thread.

Miyamoto Musashi
Go Rin No Sho

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Mrs. Kazumi Iwamoto is the principal and teacher of the prep-school (juku) where I taught English conversation. Mrs. Iwamoto's tireless devotion to her students forms a paradigm for all educators to follow. With virtually no complaint, she allowed me to test my hypotheses in her school. Her feedback concerning the efficiency of these contributed greatly to my understanding of education in Japan. Mrs. Iwamoto was responsible for my recommendation to the administrators of Richmond International College, who supported my attempt to develop of a modular English conversation program based on the conclusions of this thesis. I am grateful to them for their trust in me.

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PREFACE

My research for this thesis commenced in Tokyo, Japan during July, 1990. Originally, I was interested in writing on Japanese internationalism and the apprehension of values through the study of karate. While training with a karate master, I decided to teach English conversation to Japanese children and young adults, part-time, as a means to support myself and fund my research.

I began with very little understanding of current Japanese culture, and a vocabulary of the Japanese language that was limited to at best ten phrases. Over a period of two years, I experienced a new perspective on how the Japanese learn English, and in what manner the way they are educated affects their daily lives as members of our expanding international community.

My students were from varied backgrounds, but most were from the upper-middle class of Japanese society. I was most perplexed by these adolescents, who were very shy and reserved when I first began to teach them. Many of these young people would not even attempt to speak with me in English unless they covered their mouth with one or both hands. Their pronunciation was very poor and their vocabulary of English words was limited. Many began to fall asleep as soon as class started, and a few of them cried. I became frustrated at my lack of ability to help them to improve, but this fired me with a steadfast determination to succeed in bringing them out of their shells. For the most part, I really wanted to talk with them, and find out what was behind their fragile exteriors. Although I originally intended to research the effects of karate training (as an international sport) on the Japanese youth, I became convinced that improved verbal communications skills, using the English language, must be a prerequisite to the successful integration of these individuals on an international basis.

I was told by the principal at the prep-school where I taught that most of these teenagers were honour students, and all but a few had been taking English conversation courses there for several years. They had had many teachers from various countries (all native English speakers), and each of my pupils attended class regularly, once-a-week, year-round. Some of them had already graduated from high school and were attending

university I could not believe that they could pass an English language examination with the abilities that they came to my class with.

The ages of these individuals ranged between thirteen and eighteen, and they were all attending regular schools, six days per week. There were about 25 adolescents in all. Some of them were attending the same school, but most were from different schools and were studying at different levels (middle-school, high-school and college) A few had been on a home-stay program in the United States for about two or three weeks, and one had stayed in Colorado, with an American family, for two months.

Nevertheless, only two brothers, 14 and 16 years old, could really have a conversation with me in English (strangely, they had never been outside Japan), and it was only limited to likes, dislikes, their sports and hobbies and what they had studied in school the week before

It seemed as if none of the students had an opinion about anything that I asked them, even if they had the choice between a 'Yes or No' answer to a 'Like or Dislike' question. I could not really evaluate their comprehension because of their embarrassment and shy behaviour. Sometimes the class became unruly and impossible to control. They would not only refuse to speak English, but kept up a fast paced conversation in Japanese that I could not possibly grasp. I resented this, but felt powerless to prevent it. The principal came to my aid once or twice and scolded the students. Consequently, they gave me the silent treatment again or just said "no" to everything I asked them. They would only talk about food.

Between their struggle to learn and my struggle to teach, a great thing happened. I suddenly realized what set of circumstances was inhibiting them from each another and all of them from me The answer, I discovered, was *etiquette*. Japanese act reserved because orthodox social interdictions imposed over centuries of feudal rule have determined their prescripts for behaviour in daily interaction At one time, the dominant class of the social hierarchy wore swords, and could be easily identified. Sharp distinctions between classes still exist in Japan, but due to an overall conformity to Western style dress, it is difficult to tell who's who, hence personal expression has become limited to only close friends, and extroverted behaviour is only tolerated when one is drunk, and therefore exempted from having a command over one's faculty of judgment.

They could not grow to trust me because I did not fit in to this scheme Hence, they had no vehicle by which they would be able to identify with my relationship to them They were suspicious of my intentions and took advantage of their freedom to test my patience I was foreign to them in many ways To my students, as to most individuals in their society, I would always be a *gaijin* (pronounced guy- as in Guy Lombardo and gin- as in 'gin and tonic'), which literally means 'outsider' in Japanese

Instead of learning English, they were developing an animosity towards me Since I was a figure of authority, they could not aim their hostilities at me, therefore, these bad feelings were redirected towards their fellow students, to whom shyness was already an accepted mode of behaviour. In day-school, I had heard that learning for them was not enjoyable. I had been told by my Japanese friends that secondary education was centred on the task of memorization for entrance examinations that would determine their station and progress in society. In my class there were no tests or formal structures and no books The students had no point of focus on which they could ground their understanding and draw concrete conclusions. Although their grammar in written exercises was excellent, when it came to speaking they were at a loss for words. It was up to me, the teacher, to find a solution I took both direct and indirect approaches to this problem.

In my attempt to make the course more effective, more interesting for them, and especially to make it enigmatic, I began to tackle value-laden, international issues (such as ecology) and introduced these to the students via foreign and domestic publications We looked at many photographs of war from magazines and newspapers, in both Japanese and English. We all brought in books, articles and magazines about War, global pollution, the deterioration of tropical rain-forests and the effect on the ozone layer of earth's atmosphere

Since we were limited to working within the confines of a small classroom, and I personally wished to avoid the use of formal texts for English language instruction, I had to discover a curriculum that would foster imagination, creativity, and freedom of thought Conversely, I believed that if they could expand their vocabulary, they would be able to express themselves more freely, and would not be worried that other students would know that they were fallible. This was also a crucial element in the mutual-trust game The odds were against my success because, as I had discovered earlier, shyness and reserved behaviour

was part of being polite and fitting in to society for Japanese people. I was dealing with an aspect of the 'national character' of the Japanese.

I thought that if I reinforced the idea that "to err is human", the students would loosen up a little and not take making small mistakes so seriously. I talked about current events, my own experiences from childhood and adolescence, and finally, I used humour. I tried to make them laugh any way that I could. I purposely mimicked them and asked them to teach me jokes and bad-words in Japanese, even if they could not explain or translate these. They spoke Japanese slang often in class, and called each other bad names. Soon, I learned their vocabulary, and of course they wanted to hear these words in English.

I had to reassure them that anything was all right in my class, and they could gain control, but I was already familiar with traditional Japanese values from my Martial Arts training and I felt that they really knew who was in control. If they wanted, they could bring taboo objects into the class, like comics (Japanese children's comics are full of sex and gratuitous violence which we evaluated together), gum, candy and chips (all kids love treats, but most of these students had been in schools of one kind or another for ten hours that day), and playing cards. We began to talk about playing *Pachinko*, a popular kind of pinball-slot-machine used for gambling in Japan, and from this we approached the subject of *Yakuza*, the Japanese mobsters. The boys liked these classes very much. Girls could bring idol magazines, fluffy stuffed creatures and cute things or popular music cassette tapes to class, and they enjoyed talking about the victories of teen-age *Sumo* wrestling superstar, Takahanada. Things loosened up a little bit, and all of the students began to talk about what they liked, what people said, and who they thought was important. Then they began to ask me questions. Takahanada was still at the top of my list, for at nineteen, he was the youngest sumo wrestler to win a grand championship, and, he was from Tokyo.

The principal of the school became very worried during various intervals, but she could not refute the fact that the students were speaking English, sometimes loudly, and they were enjoying themselves. She was tutoring a class in formal written grammar and vocabulary in the next room, and soon, to her delight, more and more of the other students wanted to join the conversation class. Japanese students may only study English conversation (often as a non-compulsory elective) in their last year of high school, a course for which no grade

is given Their entrance examinations for university contain a short 'hearing test', in comparison with a complicated written exam which is wrought with outdated idioms, and words that are rarely used in the everyday speech of native anglophones

New students joined my classes, on recommendation from my present members In a short time I had aroused these children's interest, gained their trust, and reassured myself that teaching is a profession with great emotional rewards I was convinced that it was not an accidental occurrence, so I commenced research in this field I also began to teach English conversation at the Tokyo campus of Richmond International High School and College, and was given a free hand in formulating curriculum, for both Tokyo and Osaka's conversation courses, that would prepare middle and high school students to study in Canada for two to three years. In considering the modern facilities and audio-visual equipment that were available for my use at Richmond, I decided that it would be ridiculous to offer these new students a completely spontaneous program, since I had learned a few tricks from teaching my prep-school groups.

I realized that I had grown interested in three areas from my previous experience. First, **Curriculum:** What type of material was important in their study of English conversation, and why was it essential to their participation in everyday speech? Second, **Communication:** How could the learning process of English as a second language of conversation be ameliorated for this group of Japanese youngsters, and why was it accelerated by the new ideas that were introduced by me in such a liberal fashion? Third, **Consequences:** What were the qualitative results of my choice of internationally-based curriculum and democratic methodology? In other words, are there *intrinsic values* in the learning experience of spoken English that can not be divorced from the ability to communicate with native Anglophones?

Each conversation that I have with these students reassures me that I was successful in teaching them to express themselves in English, on a conversational level. But what were the ethical consequences of motivating them in a democratic and interactive milieu? Was I propagandizing them with my own values, those of my background and ethnocentric experience because I encouraged them to accept multiculturalism? Will these progressive ideas be useful to them in Japanese society? Is it necessary to determine whether their lesson

was a truly valuable learning experience in an ethical sense, or was the practical value of their learning to speak English a goal-in-itself?

How could I ascertain if they were becoming more responsive because of my course's broad global perspective, or whether they were only upgrading their level of comprehension and speech using the English language, or both? Should the teacher be free to unilaterally choose the learning environment for the students, or should the students and teacher decide the curriculum and methodology democratically? It was my job to teach them English conversation, not Ethics, but I intentionally used the latter to teach the former, as I determined that my students needed to cultivate more democratic and ecologically conscious habits. How did I reach this determination? I only wanted to make the class as realistic and useful as possible, and the consequences were that the students learned to speak English well. In the final evaluation, the students claimed that my method worked, while their previous teachers were only nominally successful. The answer, they said (surprisingly echoing Erich Fromm), was not 'freedom from' the proscribed rules of behaviour, only the *freedom to question* these, through their personal discovery of how other cultures live and learn to interact with the world.

My thesis is intended to approach questions such as these which I was forced to consider while planning for and teaching my Japanese students. In time, they **began to ask me questions of their own** about sex and drugs, love and war, and 'Rock n Roll' music. In my attempt to discover a foundation in educational philosophy for improved learning in this society, I, myself, as well as other Japanese and foreign educators that had previously attempted this objective, embraced particular ideas and discoveries of John Dewey. Still, there were limitations to Deweyian Progressivism when it was applied towards formulating a system of education in Japanese society, and I was obliged to consult the works of other educational philosophers Among them were Alan Bloom, James Britton, Jerome Bruner, Noam Chomsky, Paulo Friere, John Holt, Craig Howard and R.S. Peters.

While in the process of examining the educational philosophies of these individuals, I was prompted to rethink the choices I had made concerning teaching methods and curriculum. I settled on the notion that the historical trends in Japanese education (i.e. militaristic leanings and the Occupation's reforms) continued to impact on current educa-

tional realities. The ambiguities inherent in Dewey's Theory of Progressivism led to it being misinterpreted by the Japanese educators. Deweyian Instrumentalism was too easily implemented by educational reformers because of the Japanese tendency to sacrifice individuality for social acceptance. Therefore, I believe that a Brunerian approach, which is based on the use of intelligent teaching aids and problematic learning, should provide a more viable alternative and *one that when considered in the light of Japan's renewed interest in Internationalism, may ultimately prove to be more humanistic*

We are truly blessed for the time is ripe for a new educational revolution Present day Japan is undergoing a Renaissance of North American style, thus it was relatively simple to catch the attention of my students by using objects and ideas that were familiar to me. Many students want to prepare for travel to North America, including taking up residence to work or study for extended time periods. By providing an atmosphere of freedom for new ideas, and a forum where constructive argumentation was not only permitted, but encouraged, I gave these youngsters a fresh chance to enjoy learning, and they want more In a recreational learning environment, every achievement is shared by the group, and failure is a challenge to be met **with the help of the other members**. Education, in this sense is directed at the development of the individual in order to add meaning to the group as a whole, a sentiment that the Japanese are well familiar with. It seemed to me that the fact that my students were motivated to learn another society's spoken language testified to their multicultural sentiments, and desire for true understanding through an interpersonal exchange of identity Furthermore, by enticing my students to examine critically both positive and antisocial aspects of their own society, their minds had begun to broaden regarding problems that are manifested unilaterally on an intercultural basis, and they began to develop a vocabulary to express their concerns to others, both Japanese and foreigners

The key to speaking a language fluently is in not having to think too deeply about one's next words in a conversation. I discovered that *intuition* is the most valuable tool that the mastery of a second spoken language may develop. My desire to know more about intuitive thought brought me to the realm of cognitive psychology, and perhaps through a hunch of my own, to Jerome Bruner's theories on teaching and language acquisition Over the three years that I had undertaken research on this thesis, I was unable to locate any

references to Bruner regarding the teaching of English conversation in Japanese high schools. Nevertheless, investigation into Dr Bruner's work on intuition has had a great effect on the inferences and resolutions that I arrived at in the conclusion of this thesis, and I am convinced that his ideas must find their way into the minds of the Japanese pedagogy I have only utilized Jerome Bruner as a possible solution to the problems caused due to Dewey's influence on education in Japan, since, as was formerly alluded to, teaching strategies derived from Bruner's version of cognitive, developmental psychology may prove to be a viable alternative to Instrumentalism in a rapidly internationalizing country

This thesis is intended to demonstrate that democratic methods of linguistic education impart a respect and appreciation for freedom, and a strong feeling of self-confidence in the participating members of the classroom, the students. My goal is to determine **why** a problem-posing approach to learning English conversation is an effective method, and how its efficacy depends on presenting the student with a full range of sensory, as well as intellectual challenges Information-sensitive teaching strategies raise moral issues regarding whether, as contemporaneous prototypes of second-language education, they may run contrary to Japanese traditional values If they do, what are the social and cultural implications of creating data bases for English conversation amelioration in Japanese high schools. It is my belief that, in Japan, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture must establish a strategy whereby entrance examinations will demonstrate accountability to second language verbal proficiency. The failure to develop sufficient information-sensitive technologies in this domain will be revealed in the potential inaptitude of further generations of Japanese regarding efficacious communication with the English speaking world, which may possibly have considerable impact on restricting Japan's ability to initiate dialogue on international environmental concerns. This thesis makes the claim that an examination of the degree to which Deweyian Instrumentalism has influenced Japanese pedagogy should be undertaken, in a process of critical evaluation through which the Japanese education system could generate plausible reforms. Furthermore, Japanese pedagogy should be aware of Brunerian theory on linguistics and learning in order that contemporary measures may be extrapolated whereby positive changes may be initiated. In their struggle to overcome

the structural deficiencies that their education system exhibits, the value of a scientific approach to oral English learning must not be ignored.

In the 1983 Course of Study for Upper Secondary Schools in Japan, the claim was made that English courses should,

> Further develop students' basic ability of hearing, speaking, reading and writing in English, while grasping the outline or main points of the matters, and develop the positive attitude of understanding English and expressing themselves in English. (Ministry of Education, 1983, p 82)

It is the aim of this thesis to determine to what extent these goals are being achieved, and if they are not, in what manner can reforms be initiated in order that deficiencies in Japan's education system, which may be obstructing Japanese high school students from being able to communicate verbally in the English language, can be overcome

I have developed a great respect for my pupils of English conversation, who are pioneers in their field of study and face overwhelming odds that lie in diametric opposition to their success. My aspiration is that some of them will become educators themselves, and continue to pass on the fruits of their labour to further generations. It is my belief that I have instilled the hunger for knowledge, a sincere concern for global ecology, and a curiosity about other "styles of living" in my students, as well as a strong feeling of self-esteem when facing the unknown. If at the very least, those young individuals who attended my classes have retained the ability to converse in English, then my assistance in ameliorating Japanese high school English conversation programs has been a worthwhile task, and one which I hope to continue throughout my life.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1. Objectives of the thesis

a) To critically examine the significant contributions of John Dewey's Instrumentalism to Japan's pedagogy, and its possible application in teaching Japanese high school students English conversation. This objective will be attempted with regards to the justification of suggesting possible modernizations to the current Japanese high school educational system by the adoption of a legitimate English conversation module that may improve the current program's success in two areas:

1. teaching students to speak English fluently and naturally in a fixed time period (two to three years)

2. imparting in the students an awareness of, and interest in global changes in ideological trends in order to prepare them for participating in planetary improvement.

b) To critically examine the possible limitations of Dewey's progressive educational approach towards providing sufficient revision and amelioration to the current Japanese high school educational system's English conversation program. This will be attempted towards the same general aim as outlined in a) 1 and 2.

These limitations will be made in specific reference to the following issues:

i. a lack of a uniform system which high schools may follow to construct and plan English conversation courses.

ii. a lack of *oral examination systems* by which quality educators may be selected to teach English conversation courses.

iii a lack of examinations by which student's progress in English conversation may be evaluated

iv. a lack of qualified North American English conversation teachers.

v. Dewey's naive and perhaps utopian approach to pedagogical methodology (which has led to its abuse).

vi the great differences between North American educational systems and the current Japanese high school system.

vii. the difficulty with Japanese political interpretation of Dewey's early twentieth century American Progressive Movement.

viii a lack of correlation between Dewey's idea of "personal growth" as the end of education, and the value of education in Japanese society

ix. a lack, in some high schools, of any English conversation courses whatsoever

c) To approach uncertainties and further questions on this issue and offer a precise guidance, towards the amendment of Japanese high school English conversation programs

Given the contributions and limitations of Deweyian Instrumentalism in the modern history of the Japanese Education with regard to the aforementioned aim, I will conclude that information-sensitive linguistic aids and problem-solving educational techniques alluded to in the cognitive, developmental psychology of Jerome Bruner may adequately respond to questions left unresolved or not even approached by Dewey

2. Setting the context: Japanese high school English language courses in perspective

a) A Background of Education in Japan

A brief outline of the last three hundred years of Japanese education must first be undertaken, so that a clear definition of the strengths and weaknesses of this system may be approached Three distinct periods emerge in an examination of the history of the Japanese Educational System. The first runs parallel to the Tokugawa Era (1603-1868), a time when Japan was at peace and the Samurai Class (Knights) were at the top of the feudal society Japanese society was divided into social classes, with merchants on the bottom of the social scale, farmers and artisans in the centre, and a Military Class at the top, all presided over by the Emperor While the Emperor resided in the capital city of Kyoto, the Shogun (Generalissimo), who was the supreme military commander and political strong arm of the empire, made his home in Yedo (present-day Tokyo) The Bakufu (Shogunate made up of the ruling nobility), who were the clan chieftains of the various regional powers, provided education for their samurai retainers in the form of colleges that taught Chinese characters, Confucian philosophy, Abacus Computation and Budo (martial Arts with the strongest influence in Kendo fencing). The main campus Shohei-Ko, was established in Yedo, and the predominant dogma of the time was obedience to higher authorities Daimyo (Nobles) furnished smaller schools in their fiefs that were based on this example and some Confucian

scholars branched out to form their own independent academies, which were called *shijuku*. Merchants, traders and peasants who wanted their children to receive an education, sent them to *terakoya* which were parish schools that were taught in the local Buddhist temples. There students were taught the basic skills of reading and writing by priests and monks.

> Those attending were commoners, most likely farmers' children, and the virtues taught were Japanese agrarian common sense, cooperation with and respect for others, thrift and the avoidance of waste. While Confucian precepts advocating more stringent observance of filial piety and obedience were part of the curriculum, the morality actually inculcated was homely, and down-to-earth (White, 1987, p 53)

The second period is demarcated by the beginning of the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912), which marked the transformation to a centralized political system and an opening of Japan to Western ideas. This promulgated a strong voice of resistance by the ruling clans of the samurai nobility, who were chagrined by the Shogun's loss of political monopoly, and the movement of the Emperor and capital from Kyoto to Yedo. The Imperial government established the Bansho Torishirabe-dokoro in Yedo during the conversion of 1868-69, which later became Tokyo University. In 1890, Japan's Parliamentary body was formed, and the same year, **The Imperial Rescript on Education** was issued. This decree effectively designated the Emperor, through a conservative return to Confucian ideals, as the country's instrument of ethical inspiration, a sentiment that was to remain as a profound influence on education in Japan until 1945.

> In essence, the Confucian teachings of the Tokugawa period, briefly abandoned, were thus emphatically reinstated as a means of anchoring the new education culturally and making it an instrument of legitimation and support for the political institutions of the state. Because the Meiji Emperor was the official source of this new direction in his role as provider of moral guidance for the country, both intentions were reinforced. He was Japan's crucial link to the past and centre of all legitimacy and authority. Schools thus enshrined the state's highest values, old and new. Reverence for both Western learning and Eastern morality were combined around the ultimate concerns of ordering and strengthening the young nation. (Rohlen, 1983 p.54)

By the turn of the century, Japan had imported the ideas for their educational system from other countries. Centralized, state run institutions were being created based on France's system of national authority. The establishment of a few public universities that catered to

the elite class was initiated through an investigation of Germany's system England provided the groundwork for the introduction of athletics and moral instruction, although Japan's primary influence was the United States From America the Japanese acquired not only curricula and school furnishings (blackboards, desks, books), but the design for classrooms and gymnasia as well. Teachers were samurai in the Imperial government's employ, and were viewed as the ethical leaders and guides of the youth towards the nation's new morality They were pompous and bellicose, many being army officers, and they began to introduce military drills and training exercises as part of a rigorous physical education curriculum Japan was about to enter into wars with both China and Russia, and the government had to prepare their potential fighting force at short notice

The shift of education to the meritocracy that is existent in contemporary times occurred during this crucial period, during the formation of Japan's school system Six year primary schools were made compulsory for both boys and girls, as was previously mentioned, to strengthen the nation's character through discipline and authoritarianism Secondary education was created as a means by which students could prepare for entry to university. Three types of *chugakku* (middle schools) were established at this time The first type was for average students, and those of lower classes, and was a continuation of upper elementary education. Although many student's of these schools aimed at university education, few were accepted into Japan's public universities, which, although the government disapproved, prompted the creation of several private universities Many of the students who graduated attended Trade Schools and were eventually hired as industrial workers. These schools began to offer their students to local factories and plants so they could gain valuable working experience.

The 'higher' middle schools were originated to ready the graduates of regular middle schools for higher education, and although they were geared toward the samurai class, many students from the lower classes succeeded in entering them This, in effect, began to change the face of Japanese society, and caused an uproar in the political community by Conservative groups that supported the return of Japan to a status not unlike that of the Tokugawa Era.

Finally, there were middle schools created for girls. While the boys' schools taught foreign language, literature, the sciences and social sciences, the curriculum of girls' schools was aimed at creating good homemakers. When boys were undergoing athletic and military training, girls were learning cooking, sewing, child care and etiquette. Attendance to middle schools by girls surpassed that of boys attendance in the few years since their creation, and as a result, **more girls were achieving secondary graduation than Japanese boys** (Rohlen, 1983) Even though the school system was taken up with little enthusiasm, soon children from all segments of society were graduating from elementary school and continuing on to secondary education and beyond. The government provided grants to farmers whose second sons (the first-born would inherit the farm) wished to go on higher learning, and mass programs were initiated to promote fourteen years of education for all Japanese. Government envoys were sent abroad to study foreign languages, new teaching methods, and philosophies.

> From the end of the Meiji period (1912) to World War II, Japanese education experienced a widely diverse set of influences. John Dewey was particularly in vogue in the 20's His influence was strong in part because while his proposals could clearly be seen as modern and Western, they were in their underlying philosophy close to indigenous Japanese ideals of the unity of cognitive, physical, and affective development. The roots for the idea of educating the whole child,' which returned with the American Occupation reforms after the war, were deeply Japanese, and because of their Western cachet could flourish as a modern 'import'. Dewey's first impact, however, was a philosophical one, with some influence on experimental education. (White, 1987, p 61)

As the influence of Western thought grew in Japan, from a fashion, to a social and political trend, a renaissance of Japanese culture was also under way. This created an important moral issue for the bureaucrats of the time, who were all samurai nobility. They had to deal with potentially rapid changes in their society, as more and more commoners were gaining the ability to rise to positions of power. In order to formulate an educational system that would not discriminate by social class, and hence assist the intellectual prime of Japan to rise to the top, thereby building up the national character, the national entrance examination system was instituted in the 1920's. Competition to succeed in mastering these examinations and enter into the state and private universities became severe. Due to the

anonymous and impersonal nature of this system, high school and university entrance examinations became the main criteria for admittance to a top corporation, thus avoiding the obligations dictated by blood and birthright. Peter Frost, who contemplated the history and future of the Japanese entrance examination system, concluded that,

> In such circumstances, it is not surprising that the government was unable to stop the various high schools from administering very difficult written entrance examinations. Underlying the prewar examination system, in sum, lay a number of complex factors, the first and most obvious of which was that there was only a limited number of spaces in a clearly defined educational hierarchy for the increasing number of Japanese men who wished to get ahead. The idea of judging these students by written examinations, Masuda Koichi tells us, was not only a concept dating back to early Japanese traditions, but also an educational practice in vogue in those European school systems that the Japanese were using as models in their own nation building. With so much at stake, short, factual, or "right or wrong" answers seemed to be the most objective and hence both the fairest and the most discriminating way to distinguish between students who probably did not differ all that much in their training and ability. Most important of all, the rising notions of progress, social mobility, and the right of the individual to serve the state if able were still in conflict with a society bound by obligations and a sense of place. "Probably no Meiji leader thought about matters in quite this way," notes Thomas Rohlen, "but the fact remains that outside of education, particularism retained its extraordinary power, and the Meiji leadership was anxious to assure that the nation would benefit from the secure flow of talent to the top. The sacredness of exams in Japan, even today, seems proportional to the flow of particularistic forces it holds at bay." (Beauchamp, 1991, pp.288-89)

As was demonstrated in Frost's passage, the scholastic examination was the method by which Japan's educational system conformed to Western ideology, and contributed to the nation building process. Within ten years, the refusal of traditional samurai families to abandon Tokugawa ideals prompted the Japanese government to wax increasingly militaristic and nationalistic (Duke, 1986). In one generation, Japan's educational meritocracy had become self-perpetuating, and the public's spirit was caught up in this new race for national excellence.

Education became the voice for the reintroduction of *Bushido* (the samurai ethic) into everyday life. Foreign Language Studies were virtually eliminated from the national curriculum, and students had to spend half their study time on the assembly lines of

munitions plants. Spearheaded by the emperor and national government, the schools were turned into military academies for producing a new generation of samurai warriors, which led Japan towards the martyrdom of her most promising intellectual minds of the time on the battlefields of the Second World War.

In the last year of the war between Japan and the United States, a campaign was organized by the Japanese Navy to recruit pilots for their newly formed "Divine Thunderbolt Corps Special Attack Force". Propaganda for this drive was aimed at educational institutions, universities and Higher Middle Schools. The recruits were volunteers from the most elevated ranks of achievers, and after two months of intensive training, they became kamikaze pilots. In this last-ditch effort to save the nation from disgraceful defeat at the hands of the foreigners, all efforts were concentrated on the recruiting program. Allowing foreign soldiers to step onto Japan's consecrated soil would be the ultimate loss of face. In the words of a survivor,

> I still believe that what we did was covered with a certain sacred righteousness. The error was outside us and was involved with the fundamental question about the justice or injustice of the war itself and the intensive indoctrination we were given in which the nation's feelings on the war were sublimated to a rather fanatic and religious level and individual reasoning was disregarded. (Adams, 1973, pp 136-37)

The loss of the war and commencement of American occupation (1945-51)marks the beginning of the third period in Japan's educational history. The compounded effects of strafing by American B52's and fifteen years of militarization by the Imperial government had left Japan's Educational System in shambles.

Japan was placed under occupation by the Allied Forces led by General Douglas MacArthur, Commander in Chief of the combined American military. November 3rd, 1946, Japan's new Constitution was introduced which effectively eliminated all ties between the Emperor and the government, reducing his position to a mere symbol of the State and the people's unity. This Constitution, which was strongly influenced by MacArthur himself, took effect in 1947. The same year, the Imperial Rescript on Education was scrapped, and in its place, the American's put forth *the Fundamental Law on Education* and *the School Education Law*. The former of the two of these laws fundamentally guarantees the right to

equal educational opportunity for all Japanese citizens and prohibits discrimination on any basis. According to one interpretation of this law,

> A central goal of the education system is to produce self reliant citizens of a peaceful and democratic nation who respect human rights and love truth and peace. The law emphasizes the importance of political knowledge and of religious tolerance in the development of sound citizens, but it specifically prohibits any link between political parties or religion and education (I.S.E.L., 1989, p.90)

The American advisors also introduced three major changes in Japan's Educational System in order to salvage it and establish it as a major democratizing force. First, they extended the range of compulsory schooling from six to nine years, which formed an protective umbrella over waning Middle School attendance. This action injected fresh hope for the financially ailing populace, who feared that their children would lose their chances for higher education and be recruited for massive urban reconstruction projects.

Second, they decentralized education, and transferred organization and supervision of the pedagogy from the Ministry, to local boards of education, which were established in each prefecture. The Ministry was reduced to the role of a curricular coordinator, while municipal governments selected the board members, who in turn form school budgets, and oversee the appointment of teachers and superintendents to each school within their jurisdiction. It is up to the school administrators and in many cases, particular teachers, to choose which textbooks they prefer to use, based on the Ministry's authorized list. Joseph C. Trainor, who was a member of the Education Division of General Headquarters during Japan's Occupation, describes the importance of the Board of Education Law to decentralization as follows,

> The world in which [Japan] finds herself is not one conducive to calm and orderly progress in developing the new democratic patterns which she has adopted. There will repeatedly come over the central government the feeling of need for strengthening its hold upon all governmental activities, including education. Some governments may not be able to resist the temptation to respond to that feeling. In any such development, should the political forces become strong enough, the Board of Education system might be abolished. On the other hand, each year will see an increased understanding by the people of the importance of their Boards of Education and the value of their having a direct voice in the selection of members for them. The Board of Education Law placed the schools close to the people and the more experi-

> ence the people of Japan have with this relationship to education, the more difficult it will be to take from them the direct voice which they now have in educational affairs. (Trainor, 1983, p 202)

The third major change introduced by the Occupation was their encouragement of the Japanese pedagogy in the formation of non-political unions, the largest of which, dubbed **the Japan Teacher's Union**, rapidly gained popularity among pedagogues that opposed the prewar ideology The union's strong leftist leadership mustered the efforts of young educators whose collective policy centered around the democratic control of schools and the persistence of educational reforms.

The American Occupation lasted until the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951 (Lowe and Moeshart, 1990. p.102), and within that time period, many educational reforms took place that are still in effect today. The school system was revamped, with a three year high school and four year university program added to the previously established six years of primary and three years of middle school Although the Americans put all their best intentions into democratizing the Japanese educational system, **there was no vigorous grassroots movement in Japan's history to support such an effort**. As a result, the new schools that were created immediately fell into a predominant social hierarchy, and behind the scenes, the 'freedom' that came with Americanization resulted in a deluge of academic curriculum, a literal flooding of the system with learning material, and a new race to the top of the ladder Educational opportunity for all was once again the rule of the day, and in effect, the American approach helped to legislate in liberal ambiguities that were in complete disregard for Japanese personality and historically grounded social norms. Most Japanese teachers recognize the value of individual freedom, but are also aware of the serious problems that American high schools face in today's world.

> They know that to institute diversity and choice in high schools is to challenge both the Confucian emphasis on social order and the principles of efficient preparation inherent in the prewar legacy These issues are more sharply drawn in education that in any other Japanese institution because time has compounded rather than simplified the value choices involved. The overwhelming facts that face high schools today are that nearly all young Japanese are enrolled and that the majority of them intend to go on to college. If history has provided a set of contrasting ideals and legacies, contemporary Japanese society has come to constitute an environment for education that establishes

> entrance examinations as the key to understanding its dynamic. (Rohlen, 1983, p.76)

The sheer numbers of young people that were attending secondary schools heralded in a new form of heated competition: University admission. The equality that was promoted by American educational ideals would be transformed by the Japanese into an organism that they could deal with and that would adapt easily to Japanese society. Herein lies the core of the entrance examination's source of power. These examinations became fused with the only touchstones that would enable a criterion that could legally segregate a new generation, and they grew to replace the traditional Japanese sentiment the importance of testing one's strength to persevere over the odds. The test of an individual's endurance, (in feudal times, the swordsman's duel), has been fused with a patriotic character since the Occupation, and ultimately, the quality of education has since been superseded by a devotion to the institutions of social stratification, presided over by prestige of university admission. Even though there is an overwhelming trend in high schools towards participation in diverse extracurricular activities (characteristic of American institutions), personal achievement of the Japanese secondary student lingers among the vestiges of an antiquated, oppressively academic Confucian environment, where the examination is the ultimate contemporary challenge. According to Benjamin Duke,

> Examination preparation, the backbone of the school system, from this perspective goes far beyond mathematics or English class with its rote memory of abstract equations and emphasis on detailed rules of grammar. That is the superficial aspect of Japanese school that tends to distract us from the fundamental. Rather, examination preparation epitomizes the daily tests of perseverance and endurance, fulfilling not only a mathematical function but a spiritual need of the Japanese. The entrance tests to the high school and university have, to this observer, replaced the physical tests of survival of a bygone era as a challenge to one's depth of endurance. Their importance to this society and its industrial competitiveness extends well beyond the classroom. (Duke, 1986, p.129)

b) The Impact of English on Japan's International Role

Thirty years before the end of the Muromachi Period (1338-1573), the first foreign ships landed in southwestern Japan. They were the Portuguese, who were followed by Jesuit Missionaries, the Dutch, British, Russians and later on, British traders. Christianity became

a popular religion in Japan, until it was outlawed, and Japan's doors were closed to foreigners, as the Shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu unified the nation in 1639. In 1800 the Russians began to establish trade in the Kurile Islands, which were Japan's most northern boundary, and the Black Ships of Britain and America were soon seen approaching on the horizon.

In 1845 American Naval Commodore James Biddle attempted to take two warships into Yedo Bay, but he was refused entry to the harbour. Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry of the U.S. Navy successfully entered Uraga with four men-of-war in 1853 and by March 31st of the following year, the Americans succeeded in being the first foreign country to sign a treaty with the Japanese (Sansom, 1950). American Diplomat Townsend Harris was the first to receive an audience with the Shogun, and on December 7th, 1857, he negotiated the right for American ships to put ashore and established a unique relationship between the two countries. July 29th, 1858, the Americans brought the first steam locomotive, whiskey and pistols to Japan and signed further diplomatic treaties.

Early in 1861, the first Japanese diplomatic mission travelled to Washington to ratify the treaties. In the next two years, an influx of American literature arrived in Japan, although only a handful of scholars had been sent abroad to study the English Language. At the same time, Scottish journalist, J.R. Black, published the first English language weekly newspapers, *The Japan Herald* and *The Japan Gazette*. This monopoly was due to the fact that it was he who imported the first printing presses into the country.

> He also produced one of the first regular newspapers in the Japanese language, the *Nisshin Shinjishi* or *Reliable Daily News*, and he exerted some influence through articles written by himself or by Japanese political writers. He attacked the government at the time of the agitation for a national assembly and was offered an official post in hope of silencing his adverse comment. His influence on Japanese journalism was considerable though it is not always fully recognized in Japan. (Sansom, 1977, p.421)

English novels began to appear as Japanese translations of foreign books were in style. Several writers including Oda Junichiro, Kawashima Chunosuke, Shiba Shiro and Baba Tatsui, all of whom studied at universities in England and the U.S., became known as the popular translators of the times. A notable group of educators, writers and economists were sent to Europe and America during these years to gather information on political practices that would be used in forming Japan's new government.

Although many of these gentlemen, like Kato Hiroyuki (first director of Tokyo University) and Itagaki Taisuke (founder of the Liberal Party), would go on to become Japan's leading politicians, the most remarkable of these figures was the academic Fukuzawa Yukichi. Fukuzawa had already lived in America for one year, as he'd stowed away on the Japanese vessel that escorted the Shogun's envoys to Washington in order to ratify the treaty of 1958. He wrote an account of the events that led to this risky decision.

> In 1858 he was sent to Yedo to give lessons in Dutch to the young men of the clan on duty there one day, on a visit to Yokohama, he spoke to some foreign merchants in Dutch and found that they did not understand him. it was thus that he discovered that English, not Dutch, was the language of the future, and set about learning it at once. (Sansom, 1977, p 429)

Okuma Shigenobu was the leader of a samurai clan who's actions had a profound influence on the political trends during the Meiji Restoration Although he had never travelled beyond Peking and Korea, during the Formosa Expedition, he was well read in his colleagues' translations of English and American politics. In fact, Western philosophy, economics, medicine and language were already being rivalled with an equally intense revival of Confucian learning. A Conservative movement was in the works which was antagonistic to the transformation of Japan into a modern industrial nation. The brunt of the conservative samurai faction's malcontent and anxiety centred on the claim that the new education had a softening effect, on the character of the ensuing generation.

> When the Ministry of Education was formed in 1871, it proceeded to encourage Western learning and decided that a complete system of education must be devised and enforced. One of the high officials, Tanaka Fujimaro, was sent as a commissioner to examine the systems of Europe and America. He returned in 1872, and in that year a most detailed and voluminous Education Act was issued, which laid the foundations of state-controlled compulsory education. The plan was ambitious, providing for universities, middle schools, elementary schools, normal schools, and technical schools on a large scale, and the statement of policy that accompanied it made it clear that, in future, education would be organized on Western lines. (Sansom, 1977, pp.455-56)

In 1871 and 1872 respectively, Imperial Decrees on samurai code began to eliminate the carrying of swords and the wearing of 'topknot' hairstyles. Christian Colleges were founded in 1873 by Nakamura Keiu and 1875 by Niishima Jo, both of whom, unbeknownst

to the Imperial Government, had been living in New England. These schools and many other public study groups, were institutions of utilitarianism and free-thought that were supported by private individuals who had resided in America and believed that it was their duty to provide for the diffusion of these ideals to Japanese society. In 1880, a law restricting public gatherings was issued in an attempt curb these activities.

Within the year, the actions of Okuma and his associates prompted the Emperor to issue the famous Rescript that called for the formation of parliament by 1890. He founded Waseda University in 1881 (a private university that stood for the freedom of inquiry) and formed the first Constitutional Progressive Party in 1882. Since the CPP supported moderate reform it gained little influence over the Conservative opposition, which was supported by the government In 1889, Okuma helped in the drafting of Japan's Constitution.

Mori Arinori was forty one years old when he became the Minister of Education in 1885. Being ten years the junior to most of his fellow politicians was no shortcoming for him Mori, who was seen as a moderate, took it upon himself to revise the educational policy with an emphasis on the teaching of English. He also stressed the dominance of the state in education, in other words, the primary aim of education should patriotic. Mori was a close friend of the Prime Minister, Ito, and they had travelled together through Europe and the U.S.A. Their concern was that educational institutions were lagging behind in the development of a Japanese curriculum. Mori believed that courses in Japanese language and history must not fall by the wayside in the name of Western progress Of course, Japan was in the process of nation-building, hence the first concern was that uniform state control would become more efficacious with a parallel emphasis on national identity.

> Japan's decision to embark on this course of educational expansion reflected the conviction of the Meiji reformers that education was what the nation needed to provide it with the trained workers and talented leadership needed to 'catch up' with the west. Mori Arinori, an early minister of education, expressed the goal quite succinctly: "Our country must move from its third-class position to second class, and from second class to first; and ultimately to the leading position among all the countries of the world. The best way to do this is by laying the foundations of elementary education." This belief in the ability of education to foster industrialization and economic growth has continued to serve as a basic principle of Japanese education today (Schoppa, 1991, p.25)

The second concern was a brewing discontent with the colonial powers that, in every other Asian country, were working against traditional inherent values. Christianity became the fundamental opponent of the government's radical conservative wing. All one had to do was pick up a world history text to learn of the Western conquests in the name of Christ. The confession and the absolution from sins were completely alien notions to the Japanese, and it was believed that these and other concepts intrinsic to Christianity, were the most dangerous enemies of the traditional Japanese character. The government was finding that as the support by foreign Christian organizations for private colleges and universities increased, it was becoming increasingly difficult to control the behaviour of extremist groups, who in the past had restricted their protests to lectures and articles. On November 11th, 1889, Mori Arinori was at home preparing to attend a ceremony for the proclamation of Japan's Constitution, which was developed according to his ideas and suggestions put forth in the Rescript on Education. Seen by the radicals as influenced by Western, hence Christian persuasions, Mori was assassinated on his own doorstep as he left his house.

> He was in fact, though modern minded in respect of the material benefits of Western civilization, essentially a conservative man, and his educational policy was fundamentally nationalistic and militaristic, for he planned to give rifles to elementary school children for their drill and to make the dormitories of normal schools resemble military barracks. This did not protect him from the assassins, however, who alleged that he had profaned the great shrine at Ise; and the cause of his murder was summarized in the liberal magazine the *People's Companion* by saying that he fell a victim to the reactionary thought that he himself had aroused. (Sansom, 1977, p 480)

Okuma was mortally wounded by a terrorist's bomb shortly after Mori's murder. The Meiji Emperor died in 1912, before the outbreak of the First World War, in which Japan established itself as a global power. By this time she had already been victorious in her war with China (1894-95), with the Russians (1904-5) and had annexed Korea in 1910. This was a time of utopian innocence and naivety for Japanese pedagogy, but students were making great accomplishments. Japanese social reformers started the first Trade Unions in 1912, and they began to attract a small group of workers, as more young men and women were graduating from secondary education than ever before, and the universities were flourishing (Lowe and Moeshart, 1990, p.36). John Dewey, a strong supporter of Syndicalism, especially when it improved the rights of teachers, was visited this same year by Naruse Jinzo, the

founder of Japan's Women's University (Kobayashi, 1964,p.28). Dewey had the opportunity to lecture at Tokyo Imperial University, where he made this observation of Japanese classrooms in 1919,

> They have a great deal of freedom there, and instead of the children imitating and showing no individuality—which seems to be the proper thing to say—I never saw so much variety and so little similarity in drawings and other handwork, to say nothing of its quality being much better than the average of ours. The children were under no visible discipline, but were good as well as happy; they paid no attention to visitors.. I expected to see them all rise and bow (Kobayashi, 1964, p 28)

The Taisho Emperor survived his predecessor for only fourteen years, until 1926, when Hirohito was coronated and the Showa Era began. Between 1926 and 1934 The Japanese Trade Unions flourished, and finally collapsed under the strain of the great Depression. During this Era, both Anarchist-Communist and Syndicalist influences were gaining popularity among the new generation of intellectuals, although the success of trade unions was hampered by the increasingly authoritative waxing of the Meiji government, and eventually police action was taken against their leaders. In his study, Society, Schools and Progress in Japan, Tetsuya Kobayashi, Professor of Comparative Education at Kyoto University, deals with the pressure that the pre-World-War-II Japanese government exerted on Liberal and radical political reform organizations,

> The national federations of the trade unions, which were organized in the early twenties, systematically led the labourers and the peasants into strikes and other agitation. A few political parties were associated with the labour movement were organized in this period by sects of socialists and communists. Among them, the Communist Party, which was secretly organized in 1922, was declared illegal and suppressed by the government. Other socialist parties and the labour movement also suffered to various degrees from government pressure...As the government strengthened its oppressive control over the socialist movements, the student movement became more radical and as a consequence suffered more from the government...During the labour disputes in the twenties there were some cases in which the labourers or peasants sent their children to the "proletarian schools". Between 1929 and 1933 a few attempts were made to organize teachers' unions, and as a part of the movement a short-lived Proletarian Education Institute was set up as a centre for the socialist education movement. This soon met government oppression. Together with the leaders of the student movement, many individuals and groups of school teachers, who intended to liberalize

> school education, were suppressed on suspicion of being 'red'. (Duke, 1976, pp.37-38)

One thinker stands out as an important figure of his time, Hatta Shuzo, who's great influence by the Social Anarchist, Peter Kropotkin, motivated him to form a Libertarian solution to the class struggles effected by Imperial rule. Although Hatta graduated from a Christian University, he was excommunicated from the Church, and began to spread Kropotkin's ideas throughout Japan, via an agricultural and factory worker organization called the All-Japan Libertarian Federation of Labour Unions. Like Kropotkin, his inspirational model, Hatta's revolutionary philosophy was based on his belief that,

> free association was not just a good idea or one among a number of contending theories of social organization. Rather it was a natural characteristic of human beings, a fundamental truth or principle which we all recognize from the experiences of our life, knowing that without it life would simply collapse and we ourselves would perish. (Lowe and Moeshart, 1990, p.46)

Hatta died in 1934 during the beginning of an unparalleled pandemic economic depression, during which truculent political upheavals lead to the Japanese military's participation in the Lugouqiao Incident (Rohlen), and finally Pearl Harbour as Japan's youth were plunged into the horrors of bloodshed and death of World War II. The culmination of slaughter and genocide that began with the Holocaust, ended with America's atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On August fifteenth, 1945, the Emperor read the final Imperial Rescript in which he agreed to the surrender terms of the Potsdam declaration with the words, "The time has come for us to bear the unbearable."

Article 9 of Japan's Constitution reads,

> Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

In designating Japan as *the world's only nation that ascribes constitutionally to international peace*, the Allied Occupational Forces perhaps provided Japan with new pedagogical options for societal goals to be aspired to cooperatively. After the Occupation's decentralization of the Japanese education system had been tentatively realized, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture set about interpreting the significance of new Constitu-

tional directives. Although Instrumental education was abandoned shortly thereafter, Japanese pedagogy now has the technology available to rediscover the merits of communicating democratic viewpoints through education methodologies. The process of streamlining an out-of-date oral english program may help Japanese pedagogy to generate renewed focus on international cooperation through dialogue, rather than the prevailing convergence on economic superiority through the mathematical and scientific domination of high school curricula.

As I have established, American utilitarian ideals exerted a great influence on the political climate in the 'Land of the Rising Sun' even fifty years prior to John Dewey's appearance on the scene. It still holds true that *Instrumentalism wields a prime influence on Japanese pedagogical currents*, and to this very day, Dewey continues to be the most well known academic, bar none, to the Japanese educational administrator (Kobayashi, 1964, pp.1, 154). If one is to undertake an accurate critical examination of the Japanese school system, it would be impossible to ignore the sway of progressive, liberal forces. The following section is focused on Dewey's philosophical trend in Japanese education, and how this has effected the Japanese student's current dilemma in the area of English conversation instruction.

CHAPTER 2:
Part One — Dewey's possible contribution to a Japanese high school English conversation program

1. Introduction

In this chapter I shall attempt to establish a correlation between Dewey's progressive educational philosophy (Instrumentalism), its influence on Japanese pedagogy, and possible contribution to teaching English as a spoken language in Japanese high schools. To accomplish this goal, I will examine and analyze areas in the Japanese school system that already bear the mark of Dewey's instrumental approach to education. This will benefit my elucidation regarding the adoption of an alternative approach to rote memorization for teaching English to Japanese students. This approach will also serve to legitimize the value of experience oriented, problem-solving based learning methods, as opposed to didactic erudition, for use in the Japanese high school English teaching process

I will show that Dewey's epistemology and educational ideology can be oriented towards an acceptable mode of teaching English conversation in Japanese high schools, since Japan's pedagogy is already using instrumental methodologies to transmit knowledge to the students. Concurrently, I will examine the possibility for using liberal oral English teaching methods to diffuse information regarding global ecological and societal issues

I will take up this analysis by briefly examining the twofold disposition of Japanese schools. This will be attempted through a critical comparison of Japan's social pragmatics of learning English conversation, with the functional value of existing high school English courses. Next, I will examine the efficacy of utilizing Deweyian philosophy of education to suggest possible ameliorations in teaching English conversation to Japanese students, and I will show how these possible amendments run concurrent with existent political trends. I will conclude this section of the chapter by establishing that, in part, the pedagogical espousal of an instrumental approach in teaching English conversation may be valuable in helping secondary students to establish their identity in Japanese society, and as members of an ecologically aware international democracy.

2. a) Eliminating dualities

In Japanese elementary schools, learning is based on doing (Bonnaker, 1990) Students get the chance to handle and manipulate their material, and many teachers will pay individual attention to the needs of each child. The pupil is taught to learn from an immediate experience of an object, and grows accustomed to this mode of apprehension. In high school all this changes. No longer is the student considered as an individual. Their future success in achieving the highest examination marks possible is the sole concern of their educators (Beauchamp, 1978, 1991). This rings truer for boys than it does for girls, since the girl who is accepted to Tokyo University may have trouble in finding a husband in the future (Bonnaker, 1990). Apart from some private schools, the field trips and interesting 'show and tell' classes that characterized the atmosphere of freedom in their earlier learning years are all but gone. Most parents and many students are wrought with anxiety during this period, for the expectations are high. A male student who cannot keep up will be unable to obtain employment in a reasonably prestigious firm, and may have to face the social degradation of his family name; a heavy load to carry for a teenager, or a Japanese of any age for that matter. According to Peter Frost, even Japanese pedagogy, who for seventy years have placed so much emphasis on the examination system of admission to university, still have plenty of criticism for it when their articles appear in newspapers,

> At least since the 1920's there have been repeated complaints in the Japanese press that examination hell has prevented Japanese students from having a healthy childhood, has blunted intellectual curiosity, has discouraged females from applying to universities, has overlooked less academic leadership skills, and has encouraged those students who finally do get admitted to do almost no academic work in college. "The typical prospective examinee has come to be close-minded and lonely," wrote Tokyo University Professor Shimizu Yoshihiro in 1963. "Even his parents tend to become nervous and on edge." Stress upon memorized facts, added Shimizu's colleague Orihara Hiroshi in 1967, does not encourage Japanese children to "hold a lantern to the unknown." (Beauchamp, 1991, pp.291-292)

Since the days of the Samurai Class, social mobility and loyalty to the group have been balanced by severe, abrupt testing, as in duelling, before which a young Japanese boy would spend lesser periods with his mother, so that he could study with a fencing instructor. In present day Japan, the intense interval of testing maintains "a very noticeable gap between

a relatively small elite, who enjoy top jobs in the bureaucracy or modern sectors of the economy, and the great mass of the populace, who are likely to remain in agriculture or other traditional sectors of the economy and hence to have less income, less prestige, and a good deal less security (*Ibid*, p.293). The maintenance of this gap puts a great deal of pressure on the Japanese government,

> to guarantee that access to this limited elite will be decided in the fairest possible way. This need for fairness, in turn, creates a tendency for access to be decided by formal tests in which there are very objective "right or wrong" answers for which a widely enrolled school system can prepare (*Ibid*)

In consideration of Frost's analysis, where would oral English programs for Japanese high schools fit into this system? In Japan, existing high school English conversation courses are actually lessons in two skills: hearing and pronunciation. There is no true speaking of English in an interactive manner, and although a few schools have native English speaking teachers, most of the instructors are Japanese who have graduated from university majoring in English Literature, and admittedly can not speak the language (Sawa, 1991) In middle schools, English classes are based teaching students vocabulary lists and some basic grammar. In high schools, since English education in Japan was 'de-conversationalized' long ago, the students are more than likely to be learning a set of preestablished requirements (based on the Ministry of Education's *Course of Study*) for the multiple choice English section of the National University Entrance Examination. In most juku classes, privileged students also study the English sections of previous admission tests from specific universities.

> English can be seen as a screening device, a means of letting relatively uneducated people know their place in Japanese society. It seldom is viewed as an important means of communication ... The core of English learning in Japan is the memorization of the meanings of individual words and phrases to enable the student to fill in the correct word in a particular box, or draw a circle around the correct answer, on crucial examinations (Wordell, 1985, p.73)

To a native English conversation teacher in a Japanese high school, there are several inconsistencies that seem to arise from the status accorded to foreign persons, hence foreign languages, in many sectors of Japanese society. Foreign teachers of English conversation

classes must struggle with social biases in Japanese culture, and with the internal conflict of ideals that they've grown accustomed to in their own ethnic community. As school administrators lack the knowledge required to formulate effective oral English programs, it is usually the teacher's responsibility to determine whether indifferent students should be taught practical English usage, or simply prepared for exams using outdated material (which, once more, is recommended by the Ministry of Education's *Course of Study*) that seems antithetical to a course befitting the appropriate utilization of English in daily conversation (Buckley, 1990; Schoppa, 1991). Perhaps the response to this issue may consist of a compromise, that is, a pragmatic application of the given curriculum to a more realistic orientation.

> In contrast to junior high-school vocabulary lists, the high-school vocabulary lists contain words and idioms (which the students must learn) that are usually archaic, obtuse, and virtually useless. Although the first, and I believe correct, reaction is to throw away the standard text, it would do the students a great disservice to do so. They have to cope with the material in tests; they will be judged with how well they have learned the often useless phrases. No matter how distasteful the contents are to you, you can alleviate some of their suffering by helping them to learn what their school system has chosen for them. (Gunterman, *ibid.*, p.127)

These words and phrases that the students must learn have to be put into proper context, otherwise they are not really being understood, only memorized. To Dewey, who was devoted to hunting up and doing away with educational inconsistencies, ideological dualities can be dealt with by using the principle of continuity. He believed that the value of an experience was in its educational quality. It is the direction that that experience will take in the formation of the individual that determines its value in relation to its practicality. In other words, mere acquisition of knowledge through schooling has no goal-in-itself, since the ultimate aim of education is in the integration of its subjects with society. Dewey's pragmatic philosophy deems education as instrumental in forming in the individual qualities that will help him to be better adapted towards dealing with the circumstances of their lives. The meaning of an educational experience is that first, it prepares the student for doing the same task in the future and second, it precipitates the conditions for future learning, i.e., it is not an final end but a constant process. Dewey maintained that the knowledge one amasses in schooling must be relentlessly mastered anew so that one can maintain a technical grasp

of prevalent intellectual trends. The reason for the continual questioning of one's ability to fulfill a task is that, *education in the skills required to perform that task was undertaken out of context of their practical execution.*

> These questions cannot be disposed of by saying that the subjects were not actually learned, for they were learned at least sufficiently to enable a pupil to pass examinations in them. One trouble is that the subject-matter in question was learned in isolation; it was put, as it were, in a water-tight compartment. When the question is asked, then, what has become of it, where has it gone to, the right answer is that it is still there in the special compartment in which it was originally stowed away. If exactly the same conditions recurred as those under which it was acquired, it would also recur and be available. But it was segregated when it was acquired and hence it is so disconnected from the rest of experience that it is not available under the actual conditions of life. It is contrary to the laws of experience that learning of this kind, no matter how thoroughly engrained at the time, should give genuine preparation (Dewey, 1938, pp.47-48)

Japanese high school students are being prepared to succeed in gaining high marks in university entrance examinations, and the development of memorization abilities, which is used in methods for learning English reflects this Although many of them will probably be able to score high on annual company English tests, they will never be able to communicate with an English speaking person. The present trend is towards corporate sponsorship of English conversation courses for those in middle management who have a chance for promotion (Ichikawa, 1991). Secretarial schools also have to re-teach English in courses that feature native English instructors, where 90% of the curriculum is based on listening and speaking (Bonnaker, 1990). All of this would be unnecessary if high schools adopted interactive English conversation courses, that is, **classes where English was actually being spoken instead of just memorized or recited**. The following passage, translated from Japanese, is a summary of the root of the problem, as seen by Dr. Ota Yuzo, who studied at McGill University in Montreal,

> At the beginning of the Meiji Era, the English language became an elective subject in Japanese middle schools, but due to a lack of good teachers and proper dictionaries, it was a difficult subject to teach. From the middle of the Meiji Era to the mid Taisho Era, teachers skilled in the use of the English language used texts and dictionaries that were more accurate, and improved English education was available to Japanese students After the Occupation, there was a resurgence in the Japanese pedagogy's interest in the English

> language, not only as the memorization of vocabulary lists and rules of grammar, but as a tool by which communication with foreigners could be initiated. During the 1950's and sixties, Japanese wished to surpass the limits of formal education and sought to communicate naturally using everyday English. Rather than simply studying from books, individuals tried to converse with foreign visitors to Japan in order to ameliorate their fluency in English, and found themselves correcting the writing on placards and signs. Unfortunately, the last twenty years have seen English become just another subject required for the successful scoring of applicants on university entrance examinations. It seems as if Japanese high school students are not concerned with communication or understanding of English from their hearts. In fact, soon after the examination period has ended, the English that they studied so diligently is forgotten. The author considers this to be a pity, since contemporary Japanese disregard the use of spoken English as a vehicle to achieve international friendship, for in its place, financial success has become the sole personal and collective goal. (Ota, 1981, pp.281-82)

In most cases, classroom learning of English conversation in Japanese high schools is based only on the recognition of words, phrases, and idioms that will appear in the hearing comprehension section of entrance examinations. These courses contribute nothing to students' usage of English in actual conversation, and therefore have little or no value to them if they find themselves in future situations where they may have to communicate in English. The only possible way to rectify this situation is to introduce a legitimate curriculum and methodology for teaching Japanese students to speak English, one that can be employed by an English speaking instructor, be they foreigners or Japanese natives. English cannot be utilized as a true language unless it can be verbalized in a meaningful and felicitous manner, and I cannot substantiate the Japanese pedagogy's claim to have accomplished this based solely on examination scores.

b) Finding effective techniques for communication

Lately, there has been a boom in the use of English for television commercials. Usually they feature some American movie actor or actress, or a famous Formula one race car driver. Nine times out of ten, these ads are trying to sell cars or cigarettes, and I wouldn't doubt that they are very successful, even though not many people understand them. The reason for this, I believe, is charisma. In Japanese society, a dynamic and vigorous personality is only useful in the talent business, where unlike Western culture, entertainers do not make large salaries.

Japanese talent does have a great effect on social trends though, and they never limit themselves to just one medium An entertainer who is featured in the latest film will also turn up on a television drama, an instant noodle commercial, and billboard advertisements on the local trains for a language school or new stereo system They usually make weekly appearances on variety or quiz shows, and in magazine profiles, interviews and fashion spreads. Although foreign media stars that speak little Japanese have no trouble gaining popular appeal in Japan, Japanese talent are rarely known outside their own country (Buckley, 1990). Since the deflation of Japan's economic bubble late in 1989, advertising campaigns seem to rely more and more on Anglicization to introduce to the public the influx of American and European products, that the opening of the Japanese market has made more abundant. As a result, Japanese entertainers and models may be seeking to improve their oral English fluency in order to meet the needs of a rapidly diversifying media

English courses for Japanese high school students are not geared towards helping these youngsters to achieve any level of fluent communication of their ideas. These classes are for the accumulation of memorized material that must be successfully recognized during their crucial entrance examination period. The basic texts for these courses, supplied by the Ministry of Education, contain vocabulary and short stories wherein the appropriate idioms are included, and these must be comprehended by the students. Mothers of these students will try to make them as comfortable as possible, so that they will be able to pass many hours each evening, and early morning, spent studying these expressions. But apart from the context of the story they have memorized, these pupils have no idea of how to use the idioms, colloquialisms or expressions in actual speaking situations The methods of teaching these structures do not vary, since students are limited to reading and hearing them, with the rare instance of pronunciation. Recitation has been a common method of memorizing in Japanese schools since the days of the terakoya, but in this case, the students will end up making the same mistakes as their Japanese English teacher At home, it is often the case that their mother will study the same material as they have in order to quiz them and help them to study Often she will ask her children not to reveal their private study methods to their classmates, in order that they maintain an edge over them come exam time (Shimahara, 1979)

> The mere absorbing of facts and truths is so exclusively individual an affair that it tends very naturally to pass into selfishness. There is no obvious social

> motive for the acquirement of mere learning, there is no clear social gain in success thereat Indeed, almost the only measure for success is a competitive one, in the bad sense of that term—a comparison of results in the recitation or in the examination to see which child has succeeded in getting ahead of others in storing up, in accumulating, the maximum of information. So thoroughly is this the prevailing atmosphere that for one child to help another in his task has become a school crime. Where the school work consists in simply learning lessons, mutual assistance, instead of being the most natural form of cooperation and association, becomes a clandestine effort to relieve one's neighbour of his proper duties. (Dewey, 1990, pp 15-16)

English, in Japan, is considered a language to be spoken with Caucasians, not with members of one's own nationality. Therefore it is difficult to motivate the pupils to attempt to communicate with each other, in a conversation class. The teacher must be their guide in this respect, discovering new techniques that will aid the student's intercommunication in the English language. There are a variety of methods that will make this possible. Discussions can be prompted through having the students fill out questionnaires about themselves and about their classmates This in effect is the first step in communication, that is, wanting to find out something about someone else. This method can prepare them for a conversation with an English speaking person, and it aids them in developing the confidence to transmit their own ideas to someone else, in English. The students will begin to realize that talking about themselves can be fun and hearing about other people's lives is an interesting activity. The teacher can expect some laughter and shocked expressions when they discover facts about his or her own life, as many of these ideas may be truly foreign to Japanese students. Finally, teachers can gain valuable insight regarding the likes, dislikes, personality, goals, and intimate lives of their students; facts which may be utilized at a later time to help motivate students to speak more freely, more often. Through actual communication in English, there is a bonding that occurs between classmates and teacher that cannot be duplicated in any other learning situation. This is the true value of communication.

> As a matter of social philosophy and of scientific sociological doctrine, there is much to be said for the proposition that the essence and lifeblood of human society, that which makes our connections with one another genuinely social, not just physical, is the existence of *communication*—the fact that by means of language the net outcome of every experience, the meaning of every discovery, the occurrence of every fresh insight and stimulating outlook can be communicated to others, thereby becoming a common possession. And the entire process of education has for its foundation the fact that mind and

> character develop through contact and intercourse. The pains taken in totalitarian states to use schools, press, books, pulpit, public meetings, radio, and even personal conversation, as a means for instilling a single uniform set of ideas is a backhanded tribute to the identity of freedom of mind with the existence of a free society (Boydson, 1991b, pp 179-80)

"Shigata ga nai" has been a popular Japanese expression for hundreds of years. Its meaning is the equivalent of *"C'est la vie"* in French or "Nothing can be done about it" in English. The statement characterizes the Japanese' everyday attitude to their society, where not a whole lot can be done to change one's station in life. It is a resignation of the power of personal obligation to a higher authority. The examination system, a leftover from the time when Confucian ideals were at the core of social interaction, even now continues to form the locus for Japanese public identity. My friends tell me that Japanese can communicate a complete feeling or request in a glance, hand gesture or posture. I do not doubt this, for the skill that Japanese mothers exhibit in controlling their children without having to yell and scream, or use corporal punishment is obvious to any foreign person who has ever travelled on a busy train in Tokyo. Nevertheless, there is a limit to how much information can be transmitted between two individuals that speak different languages. Hence, Japanese English courses in high schools must procure interactive methods of teaching practical English. *Without the use of these techniques*, the task of learning the English language may be seen in Deweyian terms, as diminishing the [Japanese] individual's ability to evolve into a member of the democratic community (Dewey, 1916). Non-democratic teaching methods, which are still being used to teach English in a rapidly internationalizing Japanese society, may have to be eliminated if Japanese high schools are to overcome their inability to create English speaking citizens.

c) Creating a natural environment

Communication is not always a two-way street. With today's media explosion, the senses of sight and hearing are undergoing a constant bombardment of input by television, radio, print, and photographed images. No wonder taking the family up to the mountains for one day in a hot spring is a popular way for urban Japanese to spend their Sundays. High school contributes to this overload of absorbed information as well. Since the 1970's the

incidences of nervous breakdown, suicide and school violence by Japanese high school students before exam time has shown a steady rise (Beauchamp, 1991; Bonnaker, 1990; Shimahara, 1979) In Japan, where high school students are purported to be well behaved and socially adjusted, adolescent behavioral problems have become a real nightmare (Bonnaker, 1990; Buckley, 1990).

This rise in radical antisocial behaviour by high school students may have something to do with the Japanese attitude towards youth. The only word in the Japanese language that expresses the equivalent adolescent or teenager is shonenki, which literally translated means small-year-period . In fact, until the age of twenty, the individual is still considered a child, no matter what unequivocal hormonal changes have taken place. It is perhaps relevant that children in Japan are quite independent. It is not uncommon to see an eight or nine year old making it to school alone on a train full of business men and women. Until the last year of middle school, students have the freedom to play with their friends, participate in local sports teams or become a regular member of school and recreation centre clubs. Play and art is encouraged in school classes. Once the first exam year approaches, students are submitted to a hectic study schedule, both in school and at home, that leaves them little time to blow off steam, relax or be creative. Professor Ezra Vogel, Director of the East Asian Research Centre at Harvard University, explains shiken jigoku (examination hell) in the following manner,

> Preparation for examinations is painful not only because one must make such sacrifices but also because until one has finally passed entrance examinations there is always the anxiety and fear that one may not make the grade There is no question that during this period of asceticism these students absorb an amazing amount of facts. Not only do they master their own language, literature, and history, but they also learn to read English and become familiar with the history and culture of Europe and America. Course requirements in mathematics and science are at a higher level than those of comparable American schools But at the same time, students must sacrifice types of scholarship not measured by entrance examinations. For example, since the examination is written and not oral, a pupil studying English does not practice ordinary conversation, but concentrates on reading, on fine points of grammar, and in some cases, on pedantic expressions which are likely to appear on the examination Since examinations cover a full range of subjects, a child who begins to show strong interest in one field usually will be encourage by his teacher and his parents to broaden his interests so that he can get fully prepared also in other subjects. Since multiple choice examinations cannot

> measure original and creative thought, the emphasis is placed on memorization. (Beauchamp, 1978, p.235)

Usually, the jukensei's (entrance exam student) day starts at about six a.m., when their mother will wake them up. They will usually study for an hour and then eat the breakfast that she has prepared for them. Depending on the distance to their school they may have to wake up earlier, but at most institutions, the first bell is at 8:30. The school day lasts until 3:00 p.m. on Monday to Friday, and 12:30 p.m. on Saturdays, with a thirty minute lunch period during the week. Classes are fifty minutes long, and are held in the same classroom, with five minutes for the teachers to change rooms, before and after their courses. After school the students will spend one hour in an extracurricular club or activity before heading to a prep school *(juku)* to cram for their tests, and they'll usually arrive home about 8:00 p.m.. At that time, a student will probably watch a little television and take a nap before dinner, which will be at around 10:00 p.m., when his father returns home. After supper, he or she will continue to study until midnight, then take a bath and prepare the next day's uniform and textbooks. For this hectic schedule to run smoothly, the most important element is harmony. The student's goal is to memorize as much material as possible in order to score high on their examinations, and they know this.

> If, as in Japan, the crucial motivating force is the next entrance examination, then the primary purpose of teachers, by implication, is to disseminate information to students. It is the duty of the student to absorb the information in preparation for examinations. For this arrangement to work most efficiently, students should be passive and teachers active. (Rohlen, 1983, p.155)

There is not much interaction going on in high school classrooms, and there is no time for it. The feeling is that if everyone cooperates, then no time will be wasted and they can all move together towards their goal. Thus the language used for teaching English in high schools is Japanese. This saves time and effort on the part of the teacher, who has to teach classes of 45 to 50 students at a time, and facilitates his or her ability to cover the exam material in the allotted time period, with a minimum of friction. It also contributes greatly to inability of the students to communicate using the English language.

> The Japanese high school student today is perhaps more isolated than his or her prewar counterpart, more given to the solitary activity of cramming facts into his head ... independence and freedom of choice are not primary goals

> of socialization. Hence, he is for the most part wholeheartedly acquiring what he thinks he needs, and what society insists he needs, to succeed later in life. (White, 1987, pp 161-62)

In my classes, I allowed the use of Japanese for students to be able to explain to each other the meaning of questions that asked them. I also let them answer my questions in Japanese, but they (or their classmates, had to help them to) make sense of their answer, and vocalize it in English Although it was not taboo to speak in Japanese in my English conversation classes, I did not encourage it, in fact, I tried to assist the students to form their thoughts in English by speaking to them in English. If this did not work, there were a plethora of aids and substitute mechanisms that I had used to get my point across. Among these were: the blackboard, on which I could write, draw or scribble images and symbols that they recognized and associated with my vocalizations; magazines and texts that were full of photographs and pictures which were easily related to and talked about; and videotaped movies, where situations occurred that students could identify with, question and describe as compared to their own life experiences. The last tool, the use of videos, was quite effective, as these were in the English language, and didn't demand as much concentration from the students as, say, reading a text would. I found these valuable mechanisms for the transformation of the student's school experience. Popular films, and ethnocultural exposées created an excitement in the students when it was time to start class. If they tried hard in the first part of class, they felt as if the movies were rewards in the second half. When they weren't speaking English, they were listening to it *and watching others speak English in everyday situations* After each video, we had a short discussion on what the students liked or disliked, and what they found familiar or shocking about the film on tape. In this way they were constantly exposed to English as a natural method to communicate ideas, and were not limited to listening to my voice or looking at their books. Furthermore, the discussion period afforded them the freedom to express their criticisms regarding what they've seen. I never tested them on their observations, I only required them to make some kind of evaluation in English regarding their feelings, which in the long term, I hypothesized, was the mark of actual fluency in a spoken language.

> Indeed the level of fluency that some students are able to attain in the time available is painfully slow and tortured and only barely comprehensible. But whatever progress is to be made in achieving fluency is up to the student.

> The role of the teacher is to provide the language environment that permits the student to try his wings, so to speak. The first requirement of the language-learning environment is that it be in the language being learned (Wordell, 1985, p.174)

My only classroom rule, one that was agreed to unanimously by my already over-worked students, was that more than fifty percent of the time they must speak English to either myself or another student. The trick was to maintain this ongoing dialect without using discipline. Personally, I empathize with the Japanese English conversation teacher, who is tied down by his/her obligation to the impending examination scores. I didn't ignore this fact completely, only used a different approach. Students were in my class to develop and perfect their English speaking abilities, so I concentrated on this task. The more exposure they received to spoken English, the more they may have grown to feel comfortable with the language. Their ears could become accustomed to hearing English words, in different dialects, and most important, they could begin to recognize their own errors in grammar and pronunciation. Once they achieved this actualization, they could seek to help other students that were lagging behind to correct their own mistakes as well, and to do this, first they had to speak English correctly to their classmates. The process became self-perpetuating.

> A primary responsibility of educators is that they not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of actual experience by environing conditions, but that they also recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth. Above all, they should know how to utilize the surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute to building up experiences that are worth while. (Dewey, 1963, p.40)

Besides the principle of continuity, Dewey believed that 'the principle of interaction' was equally as valuable in determining if an experience is truly educative. According to him, it was not only the task to be learned, but the conditions surrounding the situation in which the learner acquires the task that are relevant to the degree in which genuine learning is occurring. Dewey thought that since language is the tool by which we exchange experiences, it must essentially be our primary vehicle for socialization. The expression of ideas is by definition an interactive process whereby we seek to identify with others. Therefore, language should never be taught without interaction.

> When it is taken away from its natural purpose, it is no wonder that it becomes a complex and difficult problem to teach language. Think of the absurdity of having to teach language as a thing by itself. (Dewey, 1990, p.55)

If the language is not taught in an environment where the communication of ideas and convictions is the primary goal, then the ability to articulate spontaneously in that language will not be developed Moreover, according to Dewey, the interactive learning environment duplicates the actual social setting wherein true abilities may be put to their true test (Dewey, 1916).

d) Promoting a wide variety of perspectives

There are two sides to the justification for presenting an English conversation program through diverse media. When teaching Japanese high school students, the first problems may transpire if one encounters an overly fatigued class. My final juku lesson begins at 8:00 p.m., just about the time when the student's oppressive study schedule begins to take its toll on their patience and attentiveness. When they're in this state at home, more often than not, their mothers serve them hot coffee or tea, and one of a variety of stamina tonics that are available over-the-counter in any Japanese drugstore. These tonics contain high levels of caffeine and nicotine, as well as anything from ginseng, to bull's blood and snake venom. I prefer to serve them up a sensory cocktail that will not turn them into chain-smokers or coffee-zombies in later life. To keep them alert and interested in participating in the conversation it is important to change the learning medium perhaps several times during the allotted study period. It is up to the instructor to discern when the instruments of learning must be altered, according to his or her assessment of the room's ambience.

The other facet of this varied contribution of media deals with creating in the students an aptitude for adaptation to the many social realms where English may be a useful spoken language. If they can understand English in any form, be it written, spoken, screamed, sung or whispered, then they will be able to make use of their own speaking proficiency to suit the situation. Also, they will come in contact with tremendous variations in English accents, intonations, lexicons, vernaculars and dialects, not to mention the innovative terminologies that turn up as soon as a new technology is invented or improved. Different professions use different vocabulary, such as, a doctor, architect, engineer or lawyer. They have to be

prepared for the worst possible situation (a robbery for example), one in which their survival may be dependent on English comprehension ("Empty your pockets, now!") and to a degree, articulation ("Help! Police!"). At any rate, native English speakers come from varied cultures and ethnic backgrounds. There is a vast difference between Jamaican, Australian, Cockney, Mississippian, maritime-Canadian and Hong Kong English speaking persons, although the first language they learn is usually English. More often than not, unless they listen very carefully they cannot understand each other.

Dewey writes that varied perspectives must be made available to the student, so that he or she can choose what is appropriate to make up their own educational actuality. First, there are different types of personalities, for example, the artistic, business oriented or scientifically geared student. For each mind there must be an appropriate medium, which is to say, you can't fit a square peg into a round hole. Try teaching the names of pro-wrestlers and National Football League teams to a mixed group of girls and boys. The boys love it, and are thrilled at the discovery of the English spelling and pronunciation of their heroes' names; the girls are fidgety and bored, several have their heads on the table, eyes half closed, and a few are speaking privately to each other in Japanese. You'll be sure to see a couple of boys falling asleep as well. Dewey has also remarked that intelligence is the sum of our acquired habitual flexibility that allows us to adjust to the myriad of circumstantial changes in order to promote our concerns. Growth, as Dewey saw it, is the process of habitual adaptation to these situations. Growth is the end of life, and education, since it generates the habits that help the individual to grow all through life, is an end in itself.

> Habits take the form of habituation, or a general and persistent balance of organic activities with the surroundings, and of active capacities to readjust activity to meet new conclusions. The former furnishes the background of growth; the latter constitute growing. Active habits involve thought, invention and initiative in applying capacities to new aims. They are opposed to routine which marks an arrest of growth. Since growth is the characteristic of life, education is all one with growing, it has no end beyond itself. (Dewey, 1916, p.62)

The student must find his or her special vocabulary with which ideas and feelings can be communicated to the other classmates. It is also the vocabulary that, according to their orientation, the student may make use of in a future occupation or interest. Finally, by

studying English conversation in many different forms, the student will be able to adapt to almost any situation once he or she finishes their schooling. This type of learning will prepare them for a lifetime of speaking English as opposed to merely using English to score high on an entrance examination. By the time Japanese students reach their final year of high school, they are eighteen years old, and in many ways, they have learned the essentials that they will need to carry them through society. During the three years that make up high school education, it is the responsibility of the educator to insure that the process of learning is not left behind when the student leaves the classroom and continues on into adulthood. According to Dewey,

> Individuals differ enormously in this stage, so much so that, in the latter stages of schooling, the curriculum should be sufficiently differentiated for the child to be able to learn only what is intrinsically congenial to him ... The suggestion is of continuity of growth in action. The task of the teacher is to observe and help to maintain it and to refrain at all times from breaking into it. (Boydson, 1991a, p.246)

e) Reconstructing the curriculum to sustain its value

It has already been established that the most useful mode of behaviour for Japanese high school students when attending classes is acquiescence to authority and unpretentious acceptance of whatever the knowledge that must be learnt. This type of timid deportment has no place in an English class where speaking about oneself is the first step towards the mastery of conversation. According to the students, they would rather be outside camping, skiing, surfing, biking, or any other recreational activity that can be enjoyed in a natural setting. But this too is impossible, except on the rare occasion where we can organize an extracurricular field trip. Students are motivated by their desire for the freedoms that cannot be afforded them during this crucial period, hence, even the most introverted youngster will find the necessary vocabulary and English expressions to describe a school ski trip, visit to their grandparents country house or an experience from elementary school like a nature walk. My city kids are thrilled at the chance to bring in photographs from these occasions, in fact, most of them keep several albums of pictures, and at a glance, the observer cannot help but notice the gallimaufry of healthy smiling faces among their group of friends and classmates. This is the type of atmosphere that I try to maintain in my classroom, and even though I

cannot bring the mountains, forests and sea into the room. I can offer the students a varied curriculum, based on environmental concerns, the preservation of natural areas, and study of recreational activities.

To cover all these areas in a meaningful way, it is necessary to use several textual references, for example, one book on the summer Olympics, a cassette tape and manual about ecology and conservation, newspaper articles from both English and Japanese tabloids, and videotapes that deliver a message to the students in dramatic form. We also do some role-playing using pictures and photographs, which the students can describe as if the person or situation concerned was themselves, a friend or family member, or a person that they have just met. Of course, different groups are at different levels of proficiency, and there are enormously varied capabilities between the members of each class. Therefore it is important to try and make the exercises as personal as possible, which can only be achieved through an intimate knowledge of the students concerned. This is the educator's challenge.

> The pedagogical problem is to direct the child's power of observation, to nurture his sympathetic interest in characteristic traits of the world in which he lives, to afford interpreting material for later more special studies, and yet to supply a carrying medium for the variety of facts and ideas through the dominant spontaneous emotions and thoughts of the child. Hence their association with human life. (Dewey, 1990, p 141)

Another significant source of meaningful learning can be drawn from multiculturalism, with material that exposes the students to a variety of global ethnic communities. There is no end to the availability of source material to support this type of learning module. As the student discovers new facets of living, he or she will be able to compare and contrast these cultures with his or her own. The net result is an identification of their own person with individuals from other ethnic backgrounds, and in this, students can develop a reason for improving their English conversation as a lifelong goal. The more curious they become regarding the world outside, the more they long to *interact* with that world in order to gain a more specific understanding of their own interests. They begin to develop an international identification without even having to leave their classroom, and the more bilingual they become, the better able they are to fulfill their personal quest for global knowledge. Dr. Agnes Niyekawa, a sociologist and linguist who has researched the use of English by

Japanese who reside in Hawaii, made the following observations in an article that appeared in Mae Chu-Chang's *Asian and Pacific American Perspectives in Bilingual Education*,

> The flexibility of being biliterate, bilingual and bicultural is not limited to the cognitive domain but extends to general attitude as well ... The monolingual monocultural person may assume that the values of one's culture are universally shared by all human beings. In contrast, a bilingual, bicultural person, being aware of the subtle differences in the two cultures he or she is familiar with, is less likely to be culture blind. The awareness of the relative nature of cultural values seems to make it easier for a bilingual bicultural person to understand and learn a third and fourth language and culture. In a nonhostile environment, there appears to be a byproduct of having mastered two or more languages and cultures. It is the mental capacity to deal with the ambiguous, the unstructured with less anxiety and greater openness. In other words, the biliterate, bilingual, bicultural person, especially in two divergent languages and cultures like Western and Asian or Pacific, not only has broadened his or her intellectual horizon but also has the potential of growing personality to be more open and flexible. (Chu-Chang, 1983, p.116)

I believe that the preceding quote by Dr. Niyekawa illustrates the relevance that Instrumentalism, as a science of education, has on the issue of bilingualism for Japanese high school students. The importance of this influence can be felt through the inquiring disposition that the students develop as they progress along the course outline and the curriculum that is offered to them. Rather than their previously exhibited blind acceptance of the facts and figures that are fed to them by the school system, they begin to question the accuracy of the material, which is not surprising, for it exceeds by far the recognized boundaries of their past experience. The school experience, in Dewey's view, either contributes to forming habits that will be valuable to the students throughout their lives, or simply, it does not.

> The consequence of formation of such habits is inability to control future experiences ... How many students, for example, were rendered callous to ideas, and how many lost the impetus to learn because of the way in which learning was experienced by them? How many acquired special skills by means of automatic drill so that their power of judgment and capacity to act intelligently in new situations was limited? How many came to associate the learning process with ennui and boredom? How many found what they did learn so foreign to the situations of life outside the school as to give them no power of control over the latter ... the trouble is not the absence of experiences, but their defective and wrong character- wrong and defective from the standpoint of connection with further experience...It is not enough to insist

> on the necessity of experience, or even of activity in experience. Everything depends on the quality of the experience which is had (Dewey, 1963, pp.26-27)

School can be a place where students are prepared for facing any situation through the development of intelligence, our critical medium of adaptation. By simulating problematic situations which will appear whenever the mind encounters unknown territory, the progressive school habituates the student to adopting a problematic approach to overcoming the unfamiliar, rather than fearing it. Perhaps this curiosity in the unknown is what motivates the students to succeed in advancing through my program at a quicker rate than their previous language classes and teachers demonstrated. The instrumental approach to English conversation amelioration may help to produce students that are self-motivated towards improvement, for they are learning to pinpoint task-oriented goals from within themselves, and are constantly being provided with variable external conditions that provide active social challenges.

To Dewey, both traditional and progressive education offer 'experiences' to each student. The problem with the abilities acquired in the didactic milieu is that they are arbitrary and disconnected from any of the activities that the students may have to perform, to survive later on in their lives. To rectify this problem, it is the teacher's task to provide a curriculum of various participatory exercises that will help to prepare the students for survival in a rather imperfect world, where flexibility, as opposed to rigidity, is the indispensable and unique disposition of human integrity. In the English conversation class, any learning mechanism that can be utilized to replicate the authentic dialogue should be offered by the instructor, and may prove to be an essential element in the determination of the student's progress. Oral English teachers could include in the student's curriculum plays (that can be used in conjunction with cassettes), novels on tape, and movie scripts that can be read by students alternating with repetitive viewings of scenes from the respective film on videotape. All of these sources can present problematic global issues to students. As they begin to improve their English speaking abilities, perhaps they will find that through their teacher's guidance, a new vocabulary has empowered them with the necessary resolve to address these problems. Rather than having students learn words strictly to grade higher on entrance examinations, vocabulary can be relevant to pressing societal issues, and help students to deal with the

many perspectives that they will approach in adult life as they will be entrusted with the maintenance and reconstruction of their community. In Dewey's own words, "Standards or guiding procedures of some kind are clearly necessary, if the notion of active, flexible personality is not to be degraded to the level of the unlovely jelly-fish (Boydston, 1991a, p 549) ",

> In brief, all this wide range of educational materials can be made to serve a common purpose. They can be used to create both a need for a painstaking reinterpretation or reconstruction of beliefs and attitudes, so as to secure an integrated and coherent outlook or way of life, and also a willingness to assume personal responsibility for this task of reconstruction. (*Ibid.*, P.556)

In the progressive classroom, students are given the freedom to express their opinions, dreams, goals and fears. High school students are mature enough to realize that what they are being offered is not simply a chance to improve their English speaking ability, but an opportunity to understand the world they are a part of, so they may reach out become closer to it. They know that speaking English feels good, and having the confidence to communicate with people from other cultures gives these students a chance to exceed the cultural borders of their own country and have the opportunity to reconstruct and reform the world in a better way. This is a possible application of Deweyian Instrumentalism on which the standards of a progressive Japanese pedagogy could be modelled.

f) English conversation as a vehicle of democratization

In Japan, the community is the hub of all meaningful activity. Each person finds their own niche accordingly, and their human value lies in the personal contribution that they make to the maintenance of the whole of society. At present, advancing up the social ladder is a reality for those individuals who can graduate from the best universities only. The problem facing Japanese high school student's is that university entrance exam grades are the sole standard which determine the applicant's consideration and entry level into esteemed Japanese corporations (for example, Mitsubishi, Mitsui, and Sumitomo). Graduating from the Faculty of Law of *Todai* (Tokyo University) is basically the only method by which one may be hired into a managerial position in any of these companies, an accomplishment that secures the social status of one's family and name. Hence the goal for most parents is that

their son receives a degree in International Law from Tokyo Daigakku, and the whole childhood of their offspring becomes an academic race towards this ambition.

In Japan there is still little or no chance for those of the female gender to find a managerial position in a large corporation, so many young women are opting for the medical field Medicine is the most respected profession in Japanese society, but the hours and working conditions are both physically and psychologically taxing. With a population of more than 100 million people, most of whom are over fifty years old, Japanese hospitals are always crowded. Because of this, a position at one of Todai's medical research facilities is the most cherished and respected social level that a woman can aspire to Of course, these most respected institutions in Japan have the responsibility of taking care of all of members in every sector of society, since aneurysms and cancers are the country's number one and two killers. Research to find the causes and possible cure for these diseases is of foremost importance to the Japanese. As the average age of the population ascends, the results of medical research becomes a matter of national priority. (I.S.E.I.)

Although few students can pass the two severe entrance examinations to Tokyo University, the prospect is open to Japanese students who hail from any social sector. Todai also happens to be one of the elite universities whose criteria for acceptance insist that students' English hearing test results appear within the 90's bracket, most other institutions require 80's or less. English conversation courses are a two year prerequisite for graduation at Todai, hence the value of graduating students to big business and international medical research. In fact, the better one's spoken English is, the more chance an individual has to eclipse the berth of one's peers and be appointed to a higher office. In most large Japanese companies, promotion, which means getting the chance to work in the International Department, or at a branch office overseas, is determined by annual English conversation skills examinations. There are many potential social problems that may befall Japanese who achieve promotions to the latter position, but these will be examined later on in this thesis. For now, it is important to point out how important English fluency actually is, as the core of social mobility for Japanese nationals. It is idiosyncratic that the quintessential objective of this culture is being achieved by only a handful of individuals, while the balance of society is encumbered by the drudgery of meaningless bureaucratic tedium According to Yushio

Tanaka in *Japan As It Is*, "Japanese children are probably the world's hardest studying. This situation has spawned a whole industry of special private tutoring schools called *juku*. You cannot get hired by a good company unless you have graduated from a good university, which you cannot get into unless you have graduated from a good high school, which you ..and so on with rigorous examinations at each level (Tanaka, 1992, p.131)." Tanaka further elaborated,

> Academic credentials are very important to succeeding in business in Japan. Not only is graduation from one of the nation's top universities an important consideration for anyone hoping to get hired by a big blue-chip company, it is also important in climbing the corporate ladder. As the competition for admission to the leading colleges and universities has escalated, intense competition has developed for admission to better high schools and even the more academic-oriented junior high and elementary schools. The goal of all this fierce competition on entrance examinations is to attain the lifetime security that goes with working for a big company, but the extreme pressures this has generated has distorted the educational process and sparked such major social problems as school drop-outs and increased delinquency. As a result, a small number of companies have decided disregard academic credentials in the selection process. (Tanaka, 1992, p.229)

Although Tanaka's final comment seems promising, the national university entrance examination still holds a great power in determining the probable direction of most Japanese high school student's futures (Sawa, 1991). The genesis of the individual's resignation to the pencil pushing and desk work which is characteristic of the typical Japanese salaryman or office lady can be traced back to what may be characterized as a State manipulation of one of their most creative periods in life, their high school years. Perhaps the active English conversation class will serve as a relief from the fatuous recitation and memorization that lend no genuine purpose to tangible realities. Since most high school students will not be able to succeed in getting high entrance exam scores, the only vocation that their studying will have prepared them for will be sitting at a desk in an office and writing figures in a book (Bonnaker, 1990). Although they will form the important support staff for those lucky individuals who can create social change, chances are their intellectual growth will stagnate, and the many hours spent cramming and sweating over practice tests and textbooks will have been wasteful. Dewey's instrumental view of education maintains that, "the classroom is a kind of test-tube for social living (Boydston, 1991a, p.541)." The Ministry of Education,

Science and Culture of Japan is currently trying to overhaul the antiquated teaching practices of their pedagogy, and they may come to realize, as Dewey had, that, "the important problem in education is to fill education having a occupational direction with a genuinely liberal content (Boydston, 1991b, p.259)." According to him,

> When nature and society can live in the classroom, when the forms and tools of learning are subordinated to the substance of experience, then shall there be an opportunity for this identification. (Dewey, 1990, p 62)

Dewey was adamant about the school being the initial medium for the individual's introduction to the only mode of living that promotes interactive communication Democracy. Japan's constitution and political configuration preserves the democratic freedom of the citizens in society to have a free voice in the control of their state The Constitution also states that Japan will play an active role in the advancement of peace among the nations of the world. If Dewey were given the opportunity to consider these facts, perhaps he would assert that Japan's institutions of education must be models for Japanese society Dewey believed that, school was responsible for preparing students to participate in Constitutionally predicated techniques of social interaction (Dewey, 1991a) Since, according to Dewey, Democracy was the most conscientious state of affairs between citizens and the state, school curriculum and methodology must reflect this ideal (Dewey, 1990).

> The great thing to keep in mind, then, regarding the introduction into the school of various forms of active occupation, is that through them the entire spirit of the school is renewed. It has a chance to affiliate itself with life, to become the child's habitat, where he learns through directed living, instead of being only a place to learn lessons having only an abstract and remote reference to some possible living to be done in the future It gets a chance to be a miniature community, an embryonic society . The aim is not the economic value of the products, but the development of social power and insight. (Dewey, 1990, p.18)

The English conversation course may be one of the last outposts of intellectual freedom and creativity in the Japanese secondary school system The extraordinary problems that this raises for Japan's pedagogy can only be justified if there exists no possible retort to the proposed evolution of their educational design. If Japan is to continue to progress as a democratic nation, escape the oblique equivocations of the entrance exam, and respond to the international demand for economic and political emancipation in order to face growing

ecological concerns, high school English conversation classrooms may have to become an area for the development of transformational dialogue.

g) English speaking Japanese and international relations

It is not unlikely that as Japanese nationals improve their English conversational abilities, a more intimate involvement in international relations by the private sector may become evident. All Japanese are required to learn English as a second language, but few are skilled enough in English conversation to be able to communicate with Westerners or English speaking foreign visitors to their country. The fact that Japan, a country that was levelled by the effects of World War II, picked up her economy from a standstill in less than thirty years, and is now a leading international economic power, still has Western nations reeling. Only recently has Japan begun to feel the pressure of global recession, although the Japanese have not been hit half as hard as Canada, America, the E.E.C. or United Kingdom has. A reason for this could be that the standard of living for the average Japanese (90% of whom belong to the so-called 'middle-class') trails behind that of Europe and North America, although the nation's per-capita GNP is fourth in the world among the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation's 24 top ranking countries (Buckley, 1990). On this basis, Japan overtook the former Federal Republic of Germany to become the world's second largest economic power. That was in 1968, and further trade surpluses resulted in Japan succeeding the U.S.A. as the world's largest creditor nation in 1986. Still working hours and living standards may be considered to be below par by Western standards (Bonnaker, 1990). Although the Japanese government has begun to reverse its policy on imported goods, such as manufactured items and agricultural products (to meet the needs of an increasingly affluent society), the average Japanese worker still has more working hours and less vacations than their European and North American counterparts.

> Japan is currently working to redress its external imbalances as quickly as possible through a steady process of structural adjustment toward an economy led by domestic demand rather than exports. The Government is placing special emphasis in this context on the expansion of domestic demand in the categories in which Japan has lagged behind the advanced nations of North America and Western Europe, particularly housing and infrastructure. (I.S.E.I., 1989, p.42)

This nation has always been able to function as a single body, and although the competitive Japanese distribution network gives the impression that the country is rocked with turmoil from within, it is precisely this dynamic system that has helped to sustain their economic independence in the face of planetary economic collapse. This strength may have made the Japanese a scapegoat for envious developed nations who have not been able to fathom why Japan has risen to such heights with a minimum of external diplomacy. Of late, 'Japan-bashing' has been a popular tool for accumulating voters in the candidacy for America's presidential election. Japan's reaction to the OPEC oil crisis of the 1970's was to withdraw from any political stance that might put her own supply in jeopardy. In recent years she has begun the process of reversing her policy, and has recently initiated ground-breaking diplomatic links with Israel, a political move that would have had dire consequences before the outcome of the Gulf-War. The process is still a slow one, and political tempers are running hot.

The collapse of the Japanese economic boom, which is known as the 'bursting of the bubble' has not halted foreign corporations from seeking Japanese investment in joint-economic projects. As a result of this confidence in the continuing strength of the Japanese yen, more and more foreign people are heading for the 'Land of the Rising Sun' to seek economic opportunity. This presents an unparalleled opportunity for the Japanese education system, as increasing numbers of native Anglophones are available to teach English conversation courses in Japanese high schools. The Japanese government has already developed programs to promote this goal, some of which will be discussed later on in this thesis. The chance for Japanese English conversation teachers to study abroad, and by doing so, to ameliorate their own spoken English is also being supported by the Government of Japan (Ministry of Education, 1989).

> English is an international language of many dialects, none of which can claim to be better than another. Some say that even Japanese English is due respect rather than disdain. For practical reasons, one should try to learn to speak the dialect or dialects that are most easily understood by speakers of all the other dialects. But to be a truly international man, one must be able to understand as many of the dialects as possible, which skill can only come from listening to or engaging in conversation with speakers of other dialects. For one's own fluency of expression, it is sufficient to engage in conversation with anyone who can understand the language. Being partial to a particular

> race or nationality is undignified and unbecoming to someone hoping to become an internationalist. (Wordell, 1988, p.178)

The democratic environment of the classroom is an experiential stepping-stone for honing their abilities to interact as free individuals in society, and as members of a cooperative, communicating, and interactive international order. An instrumental learning environment provides a paradigm for social empowerment, which is not limited by national or ethnic boundaries, and, according to Dewey, it is by far more fulfilling to the individual's experience than didactic pedagogical traditionalism. Japanese live in a democratic society, so the responsibility for pedagogical reform may not be solely contingent on politically initiated reforms, but should also be supported by the cooperative voice of individuals in society. According to Dewey, economic needs dictate that individuals become more directly involved in this task. These views have already found acceptance in Japanese educational policy, and continue to be relevant for possible reforms (Kobayashi, 1964).

> We cannot blame our Government or any other government for not instituting new policies as long as the people themselves are engaged in the futile task of identifying patriotism with isolation, and trying to obtain independence without regard to the interdependence that now exists. It is for us, the people, first to develop a genuine cooperative spirit and sense of the mutual interests that bind the nations of the world together for weal or woe—and at the present time so largely for woe. The principle of good neighbourliness is as fundamental in international matters as in the village or city. The principle has now ceased by force of events to be simply an ethical ideal. It has become an economic necessity. (Boydston, 1991a, pp.263-64)

With all these international pressures bearing down on the Japanese, the primary concern abides in entrance examination scores. Although academic achievement test scores in English grammar are higher in Japan than most other nations, most Japanese are still helplessly incapable of communicating with people from other countries (Bonnaker, 1990; Ota, 1981). Until the rest of the world learns the Japanese language, Japanese citizens who desire to become more internationally minded may be obliged to improve their basic English language conversation abilities. If the Japanese pedagogy wishes to succeed in achieving this, they will have to uproot the structural shortcomings that past developments in Japan's history of English teaching have established, which are currently being maintained by the university entrance examination system.

h) English fluency as a common national interest in Japan

I have seen in the Japanese a true desire to understand styles of living that are foreign to their own. This is not merely a reflection of their financial autonomy, but it seems to me, to be an honest curiosity and an expression of the desire to become a more complete international person. Many adults are discovering the learning of English conversation as an enjoyable hobby or pastime, and I sincerely hope that this spirit of emancipation can find its way into secondary education in the near future I also believe that because the Japanese people are highly educated as a result of their twelve to sixteen years of intensive education, they are constantly seeking more challenging information, and when the domestic contingencies for the availability of this material become exhausted, they begin to look elsewhere in pursuit of new intellectual frontiers. The Japanese appear to be avid readers and concentrate extensively on reading about other ethnic societies in books, magazines and comics. It seems that if they lack the benefits for corporeal travel, they content themselves with the cerebral journey that is distinguished by the written word, an all but extinct medium in Western society. The gruelling years of secondary education mold the Japanese into perfect model citizens, on the whole, who are not only polite and thrifty, but are not afraid of hard work. They will do everything in their power to insure the proper education for their own children, but they are also under great quantities of stress (Buckley, 1990, Duke, 1986) Perhaps to improve their children's chances of scholarship and partly to enhance their own literacy, learning to speak English has developed into a national past-time for countless numbers of Japanese adults (Bonnaker, 1990) The government, recognizing the growing need for a two to three year English conversation program at the high school level, has begun to emphasize the multicultural and international merit of study abroad programs for both secondary students and teachers (Ministry of Education, 1989)

> Paulston (1977) in examining the relationship between bilingual education programs and students, self-concepts concludes that 'bilingually taught children showed self-concepts as positive as - -and more often, more positive than—monolingually instructed pupils' Studies that measured students' bicultural attitudes also found them to be more positive than earlier after two-to-three years of bilingual instruction. An Asian or Pacific person in an English-speaking country is all the more likely to have a more positive self-concept and identity if bilingual and biliterate than if monolingual Being biliterate means having gone through an arduous process to become so, and

> ... a state thus achieved will not be taken lightly ... Such a person can serve as the link, the translator-interpreter between the two peoples. It is exactly individuals with these abilities who are in increasing demand in this inter-dependent world (Chu-Chang, 1983, pp 114-15)

In Japanese culture, the obligations of the social order are present in the everyday lives of the people. All interactions are determined by the interrelations of the subjects, and the basic values of etiquette, politeness and respect are built-in to social behaviour in ways that one would never bear to witness in the West. Actually, it is so natural for people to act this way that they don't realize it; after all, it is their culture. Automaticity of daily rituals is common.

Japan is famous for recycling more than 70% of its trash. People separate burnable and non-burnable items into garbage bags, and put these outside on different days of the week. I remarked to a group of students about how impressive this was, and how it contrasts with recycling habits in other countries. They were shocked. They had never even given this action any consideration. Furthermore, they had absolutely no clue as to the purpose for separating their trash this way. Through the discussion that followed on the ethics of ecology and conservation, the students came to a realization that infused their routine comportment with substantive significance. They began to identify their actions with the meaning for these, something that will never be forgotten. Furthermore, this complete exercise was done in English, hence, the vocabulary and expressions learned would be inexorably imputed in the student's memory, without pain or pressure, and would continue to have social import, since this material is associated with the everyday actions of all members of the student's culture. It is in this realm that the merit of amalgamating democracy and education becomes clear. In the words of John Dewey,

> As far as school education is a part of the required practical means, educational theory or philosophy has the task and the opportunity of helping to break down the philosophy of fixation that bolsters external authority in opposition to free cooperation. It must contest the notion that morals are something wholly separate from and above science and scientific method. It must help banish the conception that the daily work and vocation of man are negligible in comparison with literary pursuits, and that human destiny here and now is of slight importance in comparison with some supernatural destiny. It must accept wholeheartedly the scientific way, not merely of technology, but of life in order to achieve the promise of modern democratic ideals. (Boydston, 1991b, p.275)

3. Summary

Ideas put forth by John Dewey can help to pinpoint to an extent the social relevance of teaching a two or three year English conversation program to Japanese high school students, in particular, the justification of using a value laden curriculum and interactive environment to achieve the goal of English fluency By offering the student's a hands-on approach to learning, their quality of experience will help the to acquire the necessary skills that are requirements in order to communicate using the English language in a genuine situation.

Teaching English conversation by using a variety of resources which are based on real-life global and social concerns imparts to the students a vocabulary that will remain useful for the duration of their lives, and will help them to effectively transform the world they live in. Interactive, Instrumental and Progressive Education is a precursor for the student's adult existence in the democratic realities of Japanese society, and the global community, so attitudes and conduct can be identified that will aid in the student's pragmatic growth and survival. Since the Central Council on Education was formed by Japan's Ministry of Education in 1967, they have been the prime source of progressive educational reform throughout the 1970's and 80's. According to Rhodes Scholar Leonard James Schoppa, the CCE has been the Ministry of Education's,

> ...premier advisory organ to deliberate on basic guidelines for the development of an integrated educational system suited for contemporary society (Schoppa, 1991, p.172).

Between 1973 and 1978, the ministry's Educational Curriculum Council evaluated the CCE's proposals and put forth a set of their own reforms,

> The final reforms, introduced as a series of alterations to the curriculum, emerged from this extended process [Their] emphasis on 'education with room to enjoy it' actually reflects the teacher's union's concerns about the pressures of 'examination hell' The bulk of these changes introduced in the new curriculum were designed to lessen these pressures by reducing the amount of material students were forced to learn under curricular guidelines. The final curriculum package provided for a 20 to 30 per cent reduction in curriculum and a 10 per cent cut in the hours of academic instruction. .The reduction in the amount of material and number of courses high school students were required to study was supposed to provide them with flexibility to pursue a greater diversity of specialized courses. Although this relaxation

> in rules did lead to some increase in choice in upper secondary schools, however, the level of specialization actually achieved in the schools was not greatly enhanced. The large majority of academic high schools continued to list more than the thirty-two credits as required. More significantly, however, was the fact that many subjects not listed as required were effectively mandatory. English, for example, was not listed as required. Nevertheless, because it was on the university entrance exam, virtually every high school student continued to study it - most for three years. (*Ibid.*, pp.205-206)

Progressive reforms recommended by government organizations and committees have had only nominal effects on the day to day lives of Japanese high school students. Boards of education still have the right to refuse recommendations suggested by the Ministry of Education based on current university entrance examination requirements, hence, instrumental changes have been stymied for the last twenty years. As a result, English conversation classes have suffered, to a large degree, due to their insignificance when applied towards admission to post-secondary educational institutions. Although Japan's constitution is based on democratic freedom, Confucian standards continue to influence social life to a large degree, for it is through identification with responsibility to higher authorities that the average Japanese may realize their aspirations and goals. Nevertheless, this thesis makes the claim that Japanese achievements in scholastic reform based on Dewey's philosophy have made important contributions to the democratization of teaching standards and curriculum in Japanese high schools. According to the research and sources cited in this thesis, Instrumentalism has impacted on the Japanese pedagogy in both positive and negative directions. In the following sections, I will attempt to determine to what extent Dewey's ideas have been and may continue to be appropriate in the evolution of Japanese pedagogical reorganization.

CHAPTER 2:
Part Two — Dewey's limited impact on school reform in Japan

1. Introduction

The progressive approach to education has enjoyed a wide influence in developed nations across the globe. Dewey had a hand in forming the national system of education in the United States, and his educational philosophy continues to be the predominant interest for American pedagogy and administrators Although Dewey originated the rationale and justification for the compulsory nine year educational program, both in the U S.A. and Japan (from the Occupation period onwards), the Japanese pedagogy has been able to teach a great deal more to their students in this period and they do not have the grave discipline problems that American schools have had to face in recent years (Rohlen, 1983). Although in 1951, MacArthur's Supreme Command of Allied Powers claimed to have decentralized the Japanese education system (Baltz, 1965), the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of the Government of Japan has been able to retain singular control over school curriculum through its maintenance of the *National University Entrance Examination*, and its key resource, the *Course of Study*.

This thesis has already shown that Dewey's instrumental approach to teaching may be of great value when borne on the task of developing English conversation abilities in Japanese high school students. In the following section I will briefly examine the shortcomings of Instrumentalism when applied to the unique cultural circumstances that predicate Japanese society, and in particular, I will establish to what extent progressive methodologies have contributed to Japanese educational reform. I will attempt to pinpoint the areas where Dewey's philosophy could not be implemented and offer a rationale for why it was impractical for Japanese educators to attempt such reforms.

2.i. The lack of a uniform national educational system

Japan's national system of education is based on both the Liberal Democratic government's Ministry of Education, which diligently selects a corporate-oriented curriculum for schools to use, and the left-wing Teachers Union, which represents the voice of the pedagogy and is supposed to promote more democratic and progressive educational stan-

dards. As a result of this ideological split, exceptional determination for the organization of schools rests on municipal administration's 'Prefectural Office of Education'. Since each independent ward is made up of a mixed bag of political beliefs, the disposition of that region's school entrance examinations may differ drastically Furthermore, American instituted educational changes, being alien to Japanese culture, were all but eliminated during the 1950's, and in their place, a powerful array of private schools began to spring up, which in recent days, have become more autonomous than ever During the years previous to World War II, Dewey aired hopeful aspirations for Japan's pedagogy, but could not deny that rather than having the national character that America's system exhibits, Japanese education was traditionally 'nationalistic'. Dewey wrote an article for *Social Frontier* magazine in 1935, *Towards a National System of Education*,in which he explained his definition of this:

> There is a fundamental difference between a national and a nationalistic system, and we must face the issue of whether we can have one without growing sooner or later into the other By a nationalistic system, I mean one in which the school system is controlled by the Government in power in the interest of what it takes to be welfare of its own particular national state, and of the social-economic system the Government is concerned to maintain. The school systems of Japan, Italy, the U.S.S R. and now Germany, define better what is meant by 'nationalistic' education than will any abstract descriptions. (Boydston, 1991a, p 357)

Although the Japan Teachers Union tirelessly campaigns for a decrease in the pecuniary lean of the meritocratic hierarchy, often onto the steps and through the front doors of Japan's Diet building, the Ministry of Education still controls school curriculum, and as each year passes, national examinations for university entrance become increasingly mathematically and scientifically oriented. The reason for the inability of progressive movements to have a genuine effect on Japanese high schools is that the institutions of Japanese culture have not the same national identity as those in Western nations. According to Kobayashi (1976), there is no need for a uniform national education system, because there already exists a countrywide orderliness. In 1949, Frederick M Kerlinger wrote Techniques of Democracy, which reviewed the remolding of Japanese education by the Occupation. He alleged that not only the education system, but as well the attitudes of the people had changed from authoritarian to democratic (Baltz, 1965, p. 106). On paper, the Supreme Command for Allied Powers Education Division could easily prove this, for according to their study,

> Prior to World War II, the fundamental aim of Japan's educational system was to indoctrinate their youth with ideals dedicated to making them useful servants of the State, and of society. The welfare of the individual was secondary to that of the State. By 1944, the national government had almost unlimited control of the public education system of the nation. Occupation officials proceeded to decentralize both the government and the education system of Japan. Decentralization of education was legally accomplished by 1949, resulting from a series of laws passed by the Diet (*Ibid.*)

In the pre-Taisho Eras, Imperial edict generated collective national identity. Perhaps the Education Division of SCAP overlooked the fact that Japanese national unity was already manifest in meeting the standards of university entrance examinations. The challenge presented by these tests parallels ancestral rites of passage and behavioral axioms, and their elimination may have been purposely ignored by the Occupying authorities. Hence, one basis for the adversity to justifying compulsory oral English programmes for Japanese high school students is deep rooted Meiji Era, and even Confucian educational philosophies, which run concurrent with modern societal realities. Kobayashi asserts that,

> A fundamental difficulty of Deweyian progressivism was that public education in Japan had been conceived from an early period as being wholly and ultimately for the good of the state. The Meiji oligarchs had been united in their faith in the power of education to transform society, education as a means for creating a moral society had been a part of their Confucian tradition. With Japan threatened by foreign domination, they made education an integral element in their program of building a unified and strong nation. The nationalistic motivation for establishing schools on an unprecedented mass scale had democratic implications in so far as schools enabled more individuals to realize their potentialities of growth in a wider area of choices, as well as to expand their familial and provincial concerns into a larger, national concern. All these consequences were liberating, but the aims were basically undemocratic, since the growth of the individual was a means, rather than an end. Education was primarily to make him a loyal and useful subject. (Kobayashi, 1964, p.100)

ii. The difficulty in selecting qualified oral instructors

The principal of the prep school where I teach told me that twenty years ago, she and a large group of bilingual English teachers petitioned the Ministry of Education to make English conversation courses compulsory in Japanese high schools. The Ministry created a bill which was introduced to the Diet for debate. When the Teacher's Union caught wind of

this, they pressured the Opposition parties to form a coalition in contest to that bill. She said that Japan's English teachers panicked, and threatened to strike if they were forced to instruct their classes in the English language. The coalition succeeded in vetoing the bill, and that was the last time the issue has arisen She believes that since entrance exams have become increasingly difficult since that period, Japan's English teachers are less capable to teach oral English now, than they were then Dewey's influence in Japanese education, on a political level, may still have significance in this area, for unless Boards of Education can offer positive input regarding the skills that characterize a high school English teacher, Japanese students will never partake fully of the benefits that learning a second language has to offer.

> In union is strength, and without the strength of union and united effort, the state of servility, of undemocratic administration, adherence to tradition, and unresponsiveness to the needs of the community, that are pointed out in the same document, will persist And in the degree in which they continue, teachers will of necessity fail in the special kind of productive work that is entrusted them (Boydston, 1991a, p.161)

The ability of the private sector to set educational policy, which was generated to offset nationalistic prerogative, has not been able to contend with the omnipotent examination system to this day, and will not succeed in promoting progressive education until this system can be eliminated or circumvented. Even though 95% of middle school students succeed in being accepted, and graduating from a high school of some kind (Rohlen, 1983), it might take four or five years before they can succeed in scoring high enough on the entrance examination for the university of their choice. Therefore many students are enrolling in English speaking colleges, in Japan and abroad, for the two year period that it will take them improve their conversation level to the point where they can pass the Test for Oral English as a Fluent Language or TOEFL. After this shorter study period they can score high enough on that fluency test to be accepted into an American or Canadian University, which they can graduate from after three years and catch up with their peers at home. These students usually have difficulty entering Japanese companies because they have not graduated from a recognized Japanese university. It is difficult, if not impossible, for them to get teaching positions in the field of English conversation because they are not Caucasian (*Ibid.*). Prefectural guidelines for the hiring of English teachers (grammar and reading) are quite

standard, whereas pre-established requirements may or may not exist for high school teachers of oral English, depending on the ward.

Still, for high school students who choose travelling to a foreign country to improve their second language skills as an alternative to studying in Japan, the number one choices remain as Canada and the U S A , where English is predominantly spoken

According to the Ministry of Education's 1989 Outline of Education in Japan, in 1987, 53.8 per cent of Japanese high school students studying abroad participated in educational programmes in the North American region, which amounted to 30,908 students out of a total of 57,484 individuals (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 1989, p 69). From this figure the MOE's report deliberated that, "In order that students may increase their international understanding and improve their proficiency in a foreign language, it is of significance for them to experience a school life or a home stay abroad while in the upper secondary school age (*Ibid.*)."

> In this context, with a view to contributing to better mutual understanding and cooperation with other countries, the Japanese government is actively undertaking activities for educational exchange and cooperation with other countries through Unesco, OECD and other international organizations. The government is also strengthening a variety of bilateral programs, including those for exchange of students, teachers, educational leaders and others (*Ibid.*, p.67)

Furthermore, other than the seeking out of residents of Japan who possess a passport from an English speaking country, there are few options available to the Japanese pedagogy in their quest for second-class, i.e. oral English instructors In order of priority these nations can be defined as, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Britain and America This presupposes discrimination on the Japanese part, by Western standards, but in reality, there is no other method available to school administrators who cannot even determine the fluency of members of their own society. The 'de-conversationalized' aspect of high school English courses forms the logic for the employment of non-functional English teachers of Japanese origin, and for the importation of inexperienced, English speaking foreigners through programmes such as JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) and Working/Holiday The MOE claims that these programmes were introduced,

> In order to help improve teaching of English in secondary schools and to increase mutual understanding between Japanese and foreign peoples. (*Ibid.*, p.71)

Conversely, Laurence M. Wag, who has been a teacher of oral English in Japanese schools since 1979, gives his opinion on why foreign teachers are hired into the Japanese high school system,

> A foreigner is likely to be hired to teach English at a senior high school to enhance the school's prestige, especially in its competition with other schools for qualified students. For this purpose, a foreign teacher who looks racially different from most Japanese people is likely to be given preference over other applicants A foreigner on the faculty makes life interesting for all concerned, and a number of students are probably made more aware of their 'Japaneseness'. (Wordell, 1985, p.63)

As English conversation has no value in the Japanese examination system, there has been no justification of late for the necessity of Japanese English teachers to be bilingual. Foreign teachers are seen as token 'gaijin', or international decorations on the educational cake (Wordell) According to the principal of the prep school where I teach, there can be no positive change in the system, like the adoption of an English fluency test, until the unilingual old-guard retires, which according to their average age, she predicts, shall occur within the next ten years. It is then up to the Japanese to make the important modifications, that will encourage English speaking members of their ethnic group to seek employment as English teachers in both public and private high schools.

iii. Entrance examinations have no oral English section

Dewey can have no lasting meaning to the Japanese pedagogy because his theory of Instrumentality cannot be applied to English language education. The reason for this is that both high school and university entrance examinations have no English conversation section. The academic dualities and detachments that this maintains have no equal in any other society where English is learned as a second language (Beauchamp, 1978, 1991; Duke, 1986; Sawa, 1991). Within the school system itself, there are no standardized tests that can be used to evaluate student's progress in oral English, even in schools where English conversation is taught. The burden for this falls on each individual teacher. Due to the size of classes and

of the lack of motivation on the part of the students, learning more than the basics of pronunciation is not a practical goal, hence oral examination is unnecessary The Japanese government is really only concerned with maintaining the country's edge in the field of technology, and this fact, according to sociologist Merry White, renders postindustrial Japanese society as defective,

> because the corporate and other hierarchies that produced a high level of competitive effort during a period of rapid expansion are now stagnant and merely reproducing themselves Put another way, the tightly structured relationship between the hierarchies means the creative use of talent is not possible. (White, 1987, p.174)

With Japanese expansion, one would think that the *kikoku shijo*, children who have lived outside Japan when their fathers were posted abroad by their companies, would have a great deal of opportunity and respect once they return to study in Japanese schools, being internationalists. In reality, they have been left behind academically, and in may cases are considered to have forgotten the manners and etiquette that forms the sociocultural definition of Japanese identity. These students can speak English and would do very well on any fluency examination. Furthermore, they would be invaluable as tutors for their classmates, considering the student/teacher ratio at most schools Finally, they are pragmatic realities for the Ministry of Education, for they are the product of the elite sector of Japanese society, those who have the skills to direct foreign trade, and should be considered as far more advanced from utilitarian perspective. Nevertheless, in most cases, they have less use to Japanese society than even the foreigner does, for their is no category where they can fit in, in Japan's harmonious stratification.

> Rather than trying to harness whatever talents and skills the children may have acquired overseas, the ministry of education (sic) and the foreign ministry have responded to the anxieties of parents by establishing 'reentry' programs: classes and schools to 'reintegrate' these children to Japanese life So while the talk of reform insists on the importance of global views and skills for Japanese children, the stigma attached to cosmopolitism continues to plague the 'accidental' international child (*Ibid*, p 175)

Dewey, who was a strong advocate of both Internationalism and individuality in education, still continues to have a great affect on Japanese pedagogy in an ideological sense Parents of students must usually give up their dream for their child to become a member of

an international community, in order to face the acerbic actuality of entrance examinations Dewey believed that schools alone were not responsible for the progressive development of the child's intelligence (Dewey, 1990) and his public advancement of this opinion generated the parent interest groups that came to be known as Parent Teacher Associations Among the Occupation period changes instituted by the Americans was the installation of the mechanism for P T A 's in each prefectural ward. These bodies are presently functioning as a forum where the aggravated parents of *jukensei* (students studying for entrance examinations or *juken*) may voice their concern to representatives of their municipal office of Education.

> The Japanese high school years are defined by a fixed set of incontestable realities centering on the exam system. The path is straight and narrow. Students stick more closely to family and school. Choosing not to study hard is severely penalized A culture of diligence results in acceptance rather than experimentation and is oriented to external, not internal realities. Diligence means outward conformity to the system, persistence in the pursuit of its goals, and significant self-denial To Japanese, these are crucial aspects of maturity. Dewey, one assumes, would be disappointed. (Rohlen, 1983, pp 315-16)

There is no interest in integrating English conversation to the examination system, as the individual concern for the significance of learning English does not run concurrent to its articulation

iv. Native English teachers in Japanese high schools

The Japanese that I have spoken with have expressed their opinion to me that North American English is easier to understand than the Queen's English, which they believe, includes both Aussie and Kiwi, the English dialects of Australia and New Zealand respectively It is probable that, if an individual receives enough exposure to a dialect, then its comprehension will follow unequivocally The explicit exposure that most Japanese receive to spoken English is by way of their television sets. The visitor to Japan will note that, as previously mentioned, many commercials use North American English partially or in their entirety. Furthermore, since American trends figure strongly in Japanese culture, the American, and by geographical association, Canadian dialects are of exceeding importance to Japanese who aspire towards bilingualism. Dewey insists that the aim of education must

not be external to its process Japanese high school education may be characterized by memorization of facts and equations and compliance with a senior's authority In the life of the Japanese adult, expertise in these activities increases corporate endurance value, that is to say, how well one will fit in (Bonnaker, 1990, Sawa, 1991) Dewey intended this methodology to be applied towards democratic strategies of education, to be used in democratic societies. The Japanese experience of high school education, as well as their corporate vicissitudes are strictly meritocratic, so the Japanese pedagogical application of Dewey's Instrumental learning approach digresses from his original intentions. R S Peters echoes this view in the following comments,

> The analysis both of 'aim' and 'education' should reveal the inappropriateness of conceiving of an aim of education as some end *extrinsic* to education which education might lead up to or bring about. On this general point I am very much in agreement with Dewey . . Aims can also relate to principles immanent in procedures of education, such as freedom and individual self-origination ... The justification of principle is one thing their application in concrete circumstances is another. (Peters, 1973, pp 27-9)

Another point is that since Dewey's educational philosophy stems from liberal thought and ideas, educators who are familiar with his curriculum have already attempted educational reforms in Taisho Japan, which failed due to government military pressures (Aso, 1972; Kobayashi, 1964). Would a progressively oriented be able to effectuate a great deal of openness in today's Japanese high school, where the freedom of thought and ideas is not encouraged? Perhaps a movement towards examination deregulation could inaugurate an exponential improvement in the use of English in everyday life on many levels of Japanese society, as memorization of English grammar could be replaced by conversation classes. The unfortunate factuality is that although in theory, the Japanese Ministry of Education (1989) claims that high schools are ready for such monumental reforms, in reality, the examination system may still bolster didactic teaching methods.

> Elementary and secondary education placed stress only on the percentages, the odds of success in passing tests for admission to a higher-division school and then to college. There has been no training in real debate that enables the students to construct their own opinions and clearly explain their views students are taught to learn set formulas by rote instead of being encouraged to do original thinking and experimentation (Sawa, The Japan Times, 1991)

The previous comment by Kyoto University's Professor Takamitsu Sawa is a commonplace attitude among academics, who frequently voice their objections to the system they are a part of in newspaper articles and 'letters to the editor' of prominent publications. Nevertheless, quality educators are being lured away from positions in Japanese high schools by the superior salaries of the corporate sector The Japan Teachers Union does not consider foreigners as apropos members, and most schools don't even require final grades for conversation classes (Wordell 1985) So the system, once again perpetuates its own losses. Those North American university graduates who would be potential candidates for English conversation instructors usually reconsider, since "the salary is less than half that of a bank employee " (Sawa, 1991)

The North Americans that end up teaching in Japanese schools usually don't have the credentials that are required to enter the corporate sector, and until recently, college certificates were not even a prerequisite. Hence quality instructors are rare, and the gap must be filled by Japanese nationals, otherwise oral language courses shall remain at a practically nonexistent level in secondary institutions. Perhaps there is a misunderstanding by those who are responsible for creating national university entrance examinations at Japan's Ministry of Education that English is must be assimilated grammatically and syntactically, and can this can be achieved without any reliance on oral comprehension. If this is true, it may be at the root of the lack of importance in teaching English conversation to Japanese high school students According to Niyekawa, "One of the misleading basic assumptions of the generative paradigm is that language is a logical system rather than a cultural phenomenon (Chu-Chang, 1983, p.3)."

> Asians trying to acquire English as a second language, (should be) concentrating on pragmatics and the speaker's world view, since pragmatics and world views are not always logical and consistent, we will inevitably find idiosyncrasies in an account of the structure of a language (*Ibid.*, pp.19-20).

The importance of this last point is apropos to the problems Japanese high school students have in speaking English. Dewey asserted that the educative experience must be instilled with real-life issues. Japanese students of English may never reach their true potential to utilize English this language unless quality educators are able to associate learning tasks with the global communication of particular ideological trends. These trends

deal with new vocabularies and concepts that are constantly changing the face of modern English, and empower educated individuals to gain access to data regarding transcontinental phenomena. As Japan stands at the threshold of the Twenty-first Century, paradigms of freedom and ecology have begun to replace 'scientific progress for fiscal gains' as the government deliberates on educational reform. Japanese families should not be obliged to undergo radical changes in their lifestyles in order that English conversation become a core subject. High school students, though, have the right to understand what the ability to communicate with other nations entails, and in this way, they may be able to make future political choices for themselves and their own children, choices that may affect *Japaneseness* in synergy with the world we all must share. According to the Asian Cultural Centre for Unesco, Tokyo, Japan's current educational reforms most fundamental idea's are,

> firstly, to carry out actively the transition to a lifelong learning system, secondly, to develop educational programs in which emphasis will be placed on individuality, and thirdly, to make our education system cope with such changes as internationalization and computerization (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture Government of Japan, 1989, p 78)

v. Dewey's utopian approach to pedagogical methodology

In Dewey's Progressivism, the dichotomy of the practical being compliant with the theoretical is constantly being rebutted. This method is used to support his assertion that individuals must derive meaning from social interaction Dewey asserted that democracy was the social condition in which interaction between individuals could best be encouraged, hence, the cultural value of an educational experience should be based on the degree to which it maintained the exigencies of affiliated living

Instrumentalism is based on Dewey's theory of learning He asseverates that any means by which the acquisition of habits that upgrade the individual's ability to survive in their society occurs, is moral. The intellectual activity of learning, forms habits that aim at solving problems, therefore, according to him, intellectual growth = advanced problem solving ability. Dewey's philosophical assertion was that there can be no truths in themselves, only 'warranted assertions', which are claims that can only be validated by the degree in which they are beneficial to the attainment of some objective Craig C. Howard contends that,

> Progressivism grounds itself in Dewey's naturalism, in his theory of instincts, habits and intelligence, which translates itself uncritically into the acquisitive and instrumentally oriented ideology of growth There is no point in Dewey's thought from which we can determine the difference between growth and decay In that respect he is naively optimistic concerning the fortunes of human development in the twentieth century. (Howard, 1991, p.104)

Howard asserted that Dewey was naive because he did not examine the connection between instrumentality and morality His philosophy was too wholesome and too optimistic for social realities that also must be contended with This rings true not only for attempts to apply Deweyian educational reforms in Japanese society, but in any contemporary educational setting Moreover, his influence may have only perpetuated the problems in Japan's 20th Century school system, because Dewey's concept of learning was influenced by the progressive views at the turn of the 19th Century. Taken literally, Instrumentalism circumscribed learning to an adaptation for social life, and curriculum had to have practical aims. In lieu of his leverage on Japanese education, intuitive learning strategies (especially in the realm of English instruction) are basically obscure. In this way, Dewey's influence may have contributed to the importance of the university entrance examination, which is the foundation in which this thesis claims that high school Oral English programs have been neglected: Japanese university entrance requirements conceive of pragmatic erudition as determined by its significance to technological progress, and English conversation abilities are on the periphery of the scientific domain.

vi. The Pedagogical incongruity of Japan and North America

Why has Deweyian educational philosophy failed to sustain democratic learning environments in Japanese high schools, even though it is associated with former Japanese educational reforms? To deliberate a solution to this problem, three educational systems must be briefly surveyed These systems all occur in political environment's similar to Japan's, that is to say, Liberal Democracies Hence, in a very basic sense, Instrumentalism contends that the educational values of these programmes may be similar to those entrenched in the Japanese educational system Let us determine if this is so.

Educators in America, Britain and Canada have written a great deal about their own education systems. With the growth of the British middle class, education has now become

a means to acquire social advancement The mastery of technical skills qualifies the student for entry into elite institutions, which in turn improves the chances of social mobility by being hired into the upper ranks of large institutions Finally, the average student is drawn from the children of increasing ranks of salaried, white-collar workers, who value education as the route to possible vocational advancement Graduation from the ultimate institutions of learning, Oxford and Cambridge, has been the dominant criterion that could guarantee a top corporate position

> Educational credentials have become a key currency in the competition for life-chances. For employers, they signify a certain level of competence, and at the higher levels, of prior socialization into managerial and professional attitudes. For potential employees they offer some passport to privileged occupational positions The growth of state bureaucracies from the late nineteenth century onwards has been similar in its effects to the bureaucratization of the private corporation, in creating an increasing demand for certified manpower. The modernization of the higher civil service, with its examination-based, predominantly Oxbridge entry, occurred at the beginning of the modernization and expansion of the universities (Rustin, 1986, p.35)

If the British meritocratic system seems familiar, it is probably because, as previously examined in Chapter One of this thesis, Japanese pedagogy and politicians of the Meiji Era travelled abroad to study foreign education systems in order to set standards for their own, which they themselves were in the process of establishing The American model for education has been, and continues to be the *Declaration of Independence* which guarantees the sovereign rights of free individuals within American society Freedom and equality are considered by the American people to represent the quintessence of justice itself. The middle class, with their upgraded level of education, may have succeeded in destroying the ritual and moral connection of 'the family', and in its place, education becomes our format for the inculcation of value to new members of society. Equality in this sense, is the tantamount right of American peoples from vastly differing cultures and ethnic groups to have access to education According to University of Chicago professor Alan Bloom, one result of this dogma is that students have become timid, as they have no faith in the observed set of ethnocultural circumstances that they are born into. At the outset of the American education system, this concept of 'liberty and equality' was exciting and new for every sector of society,

but in recent, troubled times it has become artificial and sophistic, as students waste their best years in complacent high school environments. Scholarships have become easily available to students who cannot afford college, but the best institutions utilize Scholastic Aptitude Tests as their primary requirement for admission. There is no intellectual excitement connected with higher learning, only financial security in a recession scourged economy Bloom, in his book *The Closing of the American Mind How Higher Education has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Minds of Today's Students*, expressed that to his dismay,

> Harvard, Yale and Princeton are not what they used to be- the last resorts of aristocratic sentiment within the democracy. The differentiations based on old family or old wealth have vanished. The old wounds that used to be afflicted by the clubbable on the unclubbable, in our muted version of the English class system, have healed because the clubs are not anything to be cared about seriously All this began after World War II, with the GI Bill. College was for everyone. And the top universities gradually abandoned preference for the children of the alumni and the exclusion of outsiders, especially Jews. Academic records and tests became the criterion for selection. New kinds of preference- particularly for blacks- replaced the old ones, which were class preserving, whereas these are class destroying Now the student bodies of all the major universities are pretty much alike, drawn from the best applicants, with 'good' meaning good at the academic disciplines. (Bloom, 1987, p 89)

In Japan, Todai, Keio and Waseda Universities are still considered to be, as Bloom put it, 'aristocratic last resorts'. According to sources such as Sawa (1991) and Ota (1981), the entrance examination has perpetuated economic divergence within Japanese society. Those families which can afford to send their children to private academies, Juku and cram schools, and provide tutors, furnish them with better chances than the average student to enter one of the three most respected institutions of higher learning. Furthermore, in Japanese high schools, teachers tend to grant more attention to excellent students than average achievers, or those students with great potential, but who have learning difficulties, which tends to widen the gap between high scorers and higher scorers on university entrance examinations (Bonnaker, 1990; Beauchamp (1991). Beauchamp commented that,

> American education is usually characterized as a system of mass education, with uneven qualitative levels; while European education is often viewed as elitist. The Japanese have adopted elements from both and have molded a

> unique system which, although having some serious problems, comes closest to being both a mass system in which meritocracy is a fundamental principle (Beauchamp, 1992, p 37)

In light of Beauchamp's view regarding the Japanese education system, a concise survey of Canadian education will follow. Like most societies with Liberal Democratic governments, the control of Canada's schools is under provincial delegated authority. Compared with Britain and the U.S., Canadians spend more on education, which may be a result of the fact that a higher percentage of Canadian people are attending school, than citizens of either of the former two nations (Lockhart, 1991, p 98) Regardless of this wonderful accomplishment, the Canadian government has failed in all its attempts to establish a Federal Bureau of Education since 1892, and Canada remains as the only advanced country in the world that lacks this institution (*Ibid.*, p 99) The reason for the absence of national educational policy by the nation that, per-capita, has the most expensive and widespread educational system, is the inability for Federal and Provincial governments to cooperate on an accountable level (*Ibid.*).

This has resulted in two problems. First, the teaching profession is considered as one of the lowermost social positions, and as a result, teachers have almost no authority in their classrooms. Second, government support has abandoned support for smaller public schools, on the basis that they are not efficiently run. These factors have prompted the provincial opening of massive central schools, that have become impersonal 'factories' of education, and in particular, there is a growing mobilization of the public-sector's support for expensive private schools, where disciplined schooling can be administered in more effective manners The disorganization of secondary schooling forces the issue of accountability on Canadian teachers. Although, over the past twenty years, student enrollment in public schools has decreased by 15%, this has been met by a 60% increase in private school enrollment (*Ibid.*, p.104).

> The trend towards more direct public subsidy of private education may be motivated as much by growing public concern with public school accountability as by a carry-over of elitist thinking. However, the concerns of those who maintain faith in public education as a prime instrument of social equity are justified by the evidence that private options, publicly funded or not, tend to reinforce existing social inequalities (*Ibid.*, p 105)

Unlike Canada, the Japanese federal government has a Ministry of Education which organizes school curriculum, but like Canada's situation, the Japanese are also experiencing a boon in private school enrollment (Buckley, 1990) Herein lies a possible clue to solving the problem approached at the outset of this section, why Deweyian educational methods fail to precipitate sustained reform when applied to the Japanese education system. To summarize, the British system still uses an *entrance examination system* to determine acceptance to a few elite universities The American system bases admission to their Ivy League colleges on *grades achieved in aptitude test scores*. The Canadian system, with no central authority, has cultivated the inception of *private learning institutions*, where education can be administered to the students on a disciplined basis. The Japanese educational system, with its resemblance to the British, American and Canadian systems, places the most emphasis on the National University Entrance Examination, which eliminates any divergence in curriculum from the Ministry of Education's *Course of Study. This has been further precipitated by the Confucian emphasis on examinations as the sole marker for social mobility*, which forms the basic distinction between the Japanese model and the Western one. Deweyian Progressive influences are incongruous with Japan's unique social trends. Instead of creating more democratic classroom environments his influence may have instilled the entrance examination with unequivocal power, as high school curriculum, engineered towards selective university admission, has become obsessively scientific in response to Japan's fiscal necessities.

vii. Effects of Japanese interpretation of Progressivism

Dewey laid down the foundation for his progressive educational philosophy in the first twenty years of this century It was during this same era that Japan marked her greatest boons in attendance to secondary education (Rohlen, 1983). Furthermore, Dewey's writings in the post Second World War period encouraged pedagogy to become the political ideology that helped to provide support for the rebuilding of the world's peaceful order. One of the first 'social reforms' initiated during American Occupation was an elimination of the 75% of Japan's pedagogues, who were career military officers (*Ibid*). These two fundamental influences of progressive education had a great deal of sway in political circles. According

to Nancy C. Whitman, professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Hawaii, based on Deweyian models, SCAP ushered in major revisions to the Japanese education system for,

> during the American Occupation of Japan, compulsory education was extended to the ninth grade. This change terminated the differentiation of students by schools and mathematics curricula after elementary school. The junior high school now embraced students with a wide range of mathematics ability. The educational thought of John Dewey influenced the content of the new mathematics program. Emphasis was given to practical mathematics in daily living as compared to mathematics as an academic discipline (Beauchamp, 1991, p.147)

Dewey's educational philosophy was aimed at improving a stagnant system of rote learning. The Japanese educational system was inspired more out of necessity than anything else, as resourceful political entities of a new state were forced to deal with unprecedented numbers of educated youngsters, all of whom were potentially eligible for higher education. There are many political concerns that differ between the American student's ultimate quest to be independent from their pedagogical dogma, and the Japanese pupil's intense desire to become integrated with society by acceptance into the educational system. The fruits of socio-political changes in both nations led to psycho-social distinctions that were drawn from the altered pedagogical realities. While in the U.S., students and teachers have become nonchalant about learning (Bloom, 1987), in Japan there is a desperate movement to amass the maximum erudition humanly possible. During Dewey's early days, science was considered the new frontier in which education would serve as a social pioneer. As the pedagogical interest in science and technology wanes among American students, it has become the prime motivator for their Japanese counterpart. Government interpretation of progressive ideals, for Japanese students, is mostly responsible for this emphasis, which remains a highly mystical phenomenon in the eyes of American observers. Dewey's educational philosophies continue to appeal to Japanese pedagogy as they seek to understand their own educational system and the system that was imposed on them, or according to Kobayashi, a revival and application of the ideas that influenced education during the Taisho and late Meiji Era. In Kobayashi's own words,

> An important factor that helped to stimulate interest in Dewey was the American Occupation of Japan. Many of the educational reforms were

> considered by the Japanese as based on Dewey. Although there may have been some Occupation personnel who preached Dewey directly, it was the Japanese themselves who took the main initiative in the study of Dewey because they believed that it was necessary to examine Dewey in order to understand the American-type educational system which was being transplanted into Japan Finally, the Japanese today seem to find much of Dewey's philosophy meaningful in understanding Japanese existence. They are beginning to appreciate his criticism of traditional philosophy of education, and society (Kobayashi, 1964, p 156)

Still, there has been , of late, a waning in the Japanese educators interest in John Dewey Thirty years ago, Kobayashi wrote the prophetic statement that, the current dominance of Dewey in the study of educational philosophy will decrease, as the Japanese reexamine their own traditions, continue to widen their interests, and face new problems (*Ibid*, p 157) He believed that this trend would be healthy, if enriching philosophical alternatives could be provided. After all, Democracy, whether it be American or Japanese, is grounded on the toleration of diversity Kazuo Yoshida, who contributed to the summer of 1983 issue of the American *Journal of Popular Culture*, stated succinctly the differences in cultural traits of Americans and Japanese:

> One would attribute to American culture, for example, freedom, equality, effort-optimism, democracy, individualism, abstract rationalism, technology, virtuous materialism, fast food and so on One would assume that Japanese culture would include group consciousness, close identification between man and reality, seniority, institutionalism, harmony, etc. (p 121) (Wordell, 1988, p 12)

This thesis advances the proposition that, cultural exigencies are responsible for the enormous incongruities between Deweyian Instrumentalism and the Japanese educational system, since the former has failed to have an enduring impression on the latter. The vicissitudes that are occurring in the Japanese system are perceivable in the abundance of grammar and syntax oriented high school English courses, in contrast with the lack of oral English programs for Japanese high school students In a nutshell, this may signify that the egalitarian aspect of compulsory secondary education in Japan has been undermined by admission requirements to top universities which are contingent on students developing advanced rote memorization skills, rather than the ability to specialize in a particular application of their knowledge.

The reasons for the Japanese identification with implicit, practical goals, while American education seemingly holds a highly ideological bias, can be understood when one critically examines the written languages of the Japanese. American students must learn a total of twenty-six Roman characters, with which their whole vocabulary can be expressed in writing, this grants them considerable freedom for the pursuit of other activities, whether they be scholastic, recreative, or may I add, antisocial. In Japan, like America, students also have to learn syllable systems, three of them in fact, with the combined systems of *hiragana* and *katakana* adding ninety-two more characters to that of *romaji* (the Roman alphabet), which was taught during the Meiji and Taisho Era, and reintroduced by SCAP during the Occupation.

> Japanese children have to learn *kanji*, the Chinese characters, in addition to the syllabaries. During the first six school years, they learn about 900 of them, and in the following three years in junior high school they learn the remainder of the 1,850, which account for roughly 96 percent of the running text of newspapers. Since each *kanji* has usually two or more alternate readings, the task of learning to read is made that much more complex. Yet incidences of reading disability in Japan are rare (Makita, 1968; Sakamoto and Makita, 1973). The Japanese writing system of the mixed script of *kana* and *kanji* is considered highly efficient for reading, since *kanji* represent the meaning carrying content of words, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, and tend to stand out when surrounded by *kana*. (Chu-Chang, 1983, pp 100-01)

Learning kanji means the learning of symbolic representation of conceptual units. This is a task that must be mastered at **the preschool level** by Japanese children. While learning the phonemes and morphemes (units of sound) of the Roman system, native English speakers must rely primarily on their sense of hearing, logographic writing systems like kanji are highly visual representations of complete ideas and feelings, hence the emphasis for Japanese people on the faculty of sight. In fact, so much emphasis in the school system is put on the memorization of kanji, Japanese students find it very difficult to think of English in terms of a verbal language, rather than that of a symbolic system. Most of the study of English, as has been noted before, consists in the memorization of a word/idiom vocabulary, which mirrors techniques utilized for memorizing kanji. So, English has been reduced to the level of an unspoken language, similar to the study of Latin by Westerners. The influence of Instrumentalism now becomes quite clear, as the English language, not unlike kanji, is

studied toward the goal of passing written tests, and reading text. In *The Japanese School* (1986), Benjamin Duke wrote that although American high school students are only required to study a foreign language for two years, 90 per cent of their Japanese counterpart's study English for six years

> The study of English in Japan, however, extends far beyond the classroom of the school. The demand for private classes in English is overwhelmingly from elementary children through the adult community. Many university students thrive on the income from private English tutoring of elementary and especially junior and senior high school students, the so-called jukensei, preparing for the exams. Native speakers of English are in great demand to offer language lessons, sometimes at exorbitant fees, whether they know anything about teaching English, and most do not. Private English schools abound. English teaching in Japan has become an entire industry in itself as a result, in part, of the examination requirements. (Duke, 1986, p.159)

If literacy was the only use for English, then the Japanese educational system would have justified the subsuming of progressive educational methodologies for learning the English language, but far from being a 'dead language' like Latin, English is initially used for verbal communication. In America, and many other countries, the ability to speak English is essential to release ethno-cultural groups from the inability to communicate, by **forming a common base** which can be learnt and understood by anyone. This may be an optimistic point of view considering the racial violence that characterizes large American cities, but to the Japanese, who are in need of a vehicle by which they may promote reciprocal international understanding, the mastery of *spoken* English has unequivocal value. According to the study by Eloe, Lewin and Morris (1988), from grade seven on, the Japanese student must study English every week for several hours. Nevertheless,

> the emphasis in English classes at Japanese schools is on grammar and reading comprehension, and not on speech. Most high school graduates can read and write what they want to communicate, but cannot say it. From our experience, most educated Japanese adults understand English grammar as well as most American high school teachers of English, though they are not proficient at, or even capable of, simple conversation. A recent international survey showed that while the Japanese are in the top 5% of English-language comprehension among peoples of the world, they are in the lower 20% in conversational ability. (Wordell, 1988, p.37)

Progressivism, like English, looks great on paper, but it is a different animal when put to the test of hard particulars of practical use Japanese problems with teaching practical English stem from exegetic decisions made at the political level In both the case of teaching English conversation to Japanese high school students, and of Dewey's Instrumentalism put to wont, a major obstacle has been that the concept of 'aim' has been misconstrued with the meaning of the term 'purpose' (Peters, 1973, p.12). **While aiming is an active mode of direction, a purpose is an intended result** According to Peters, in Dewey's philosophical quest for the reconciliation of the practical with the intellectual, he **ignored critical reflection: the champion of morality**, which doomed progressive education to an erroneous lapse into over-scientification Education in Japan has already run this course, since the Occupation. Thus, Japanese educators of the 1950's and early '60's were caught up in this philosophical dilemma as they tried to put Dewey's Instrumental teaching approaches into practice. Duke supports this claim since he regards that Japanese teaching methodologies were based,

> on the theories emanating from the great U S. educational reforms instituted by John Dewey In the postwar period the traditional one-way method of teaching gave way here and there to techniques utilizing student participation and student initiative. In many a classroom, children were encouraged to speak up, ask questions, give opinions, confront each other with varying viewpoints Criticism was applauded, free discussion promoted, individual student activity nurtured The child was encouraged to take an active role in the learning process rather than be a passive note taker. The teacher-centered or subject-centered classroom was to be reoriented into the child-centered classroom. The traditional was to become the progressive The future worker of Japan was to undergo a new type of democratic education based on U S ideals. Alas, it was unnatural The enchantment with pupil-teacher relationships was short lived. The intrinsic value of the individual has deep roots in Japanese social customs Individuality per se does not This distinction, as viewed by a non-Japanese, remains a key element of the social structure of this nation and an elusive concept difficult to analyze. (Duke, 1986, p 162)

viii. Japan's value of education is not 'personal growth'

Dewey opined that the growth of the individual was the sole aim of society, hence, the sole aim of education was to minister to this process The reason for Japan overtaking Germany and now the United States it terms of technology is that Japanese education puts less stress on abstract goals, and more stress on fundamental basic understanding Japanese

international competitive dexterousness is the outcome of precise control on a micro-societal level. William Bonnaker wrote that it is resolve which is the pedigree of Japanese national character, and resolve alone which is at the root of Japan's system of education.

> The successes of that education system are legendary. 99.99 percent attendance rate, virtually 100 percent literacy, number-one in the world on achievement tests in science and math, 94 percent rate of students making it to high school, of whom over 94 percent of those will graduate. The American School System, in comparison, leaves over 20 percent of its [illegible] functionally illiterate, drags American students further behind [illegible] every year in math and science, compulsorily passes them from junior high into high school, so that only [illegible] who start high school finish. Moreover, once the Japanese are bound directly for industrial jobs from high school, they give Japan the very asset most American managers say they themselves lack: an educated, capable and committed workforce. What's less well known in the West are the draconian means by which the Japanese achieve their successes, and the mortal price they pay for them. (Bonnaker, 1990, pp. 181-82)

The entire Japanese student population must learn the technological rudiments of mathematics, science and physics at a very young age. The consequence of this nation-wide concentration on **interdependent progress** is that there are now more than twice as many engineers per capita in Japan, as there are in America (Rohlen, 1983). Contrary to both Rohlen's and Bonnaker's often pessimistic view of Japanese educators, the fact remains that the Japanese education system is the most efficient in the world. While the United States based macro-economics on an abundant influx of skilled immigrant labour, research innovation and laissez-faire social politics, Japan has had to build her economic system from scratch, with one hundred plus million people being the blue-chip factor on which domestic and international economic growth has been contingent. According to Rohlen,

> Japan has always seen human resources as fundamental. As a resource-poor late developer, she had no choice. The recent minister of education, Nagai Michio, once said to me, 'When I was Minister I always had one overriding goal—the independence of the Japanese nation.' He meant that he viewed education primarily as a critical factor in the defense and prosperity of his country. (*Ibid.*, pp. 324-25)

The Japanese are a proud and independent nation. Their pride comes from their ability to maintain this economic and cultural independence, and grows out of the social nexus that

drives their economic machinery forward Nagai was the minister at the time when the principal of my prep school was pushing for English conversation to become a standardized, compulsory part of educational curriculum Nagai agreed with her and her colleagues and set about trying to internalize these goals pedagogically

> However, the insularity and ethnocentricity of Japanese corporate life and the inertia of the bureaucracy of the ministry of education forestalled any genuine change The topic, however, is a popular one, especially among educators and social commentators who have lived or travelled overseas These people usually dwell on an abstract need for 'international' children, rather than on any personal benefits to be gained from mastering a foreign language or other cosmopolitan skills. (White 1987, pp 174-75)

These external aims must be voiced in an abstract manner, because they cannot be equated with Japanese education's infrastructural organization The high school system is efficient because the growth of the individuals within this order is aimed at the improvement of national economic welfare by ameliorating scientific advancement Everything in the Japanese high school student's education is geared for this purpose The idea that as an aim of education, personal growth must be acquiescent to societal advancement, has only recently been challenged by Japan's Ministry of Education, Science and Culture Instrumentalism had its day in the Japanese educational arena, but the effects of Deweyian educational philosophy may still be manifested on several societal levels up to the present time

> The insight that students tend to learn more readily when the content of their learning is directly related to their immediate experience may or may not be used to further the goals of personal growth The pedagogical techniques that increase learning rates can be ripped from their normative context and used to accomplish 'socially useful' but personally destructive ends To the extent that science is seen as the epistemological standard by which all other forms of knowledge are measured, the practical human interest is either extinguished or reformed. (Howard, 1991, p.81)

Since Japanese high schools aim at readying students for corporate life, the study habits that they are encouraged to develop are intended to engender in them the ability to become engrossed in repetitive work without getting bored, or making careless mistakes The routine memorization and testing induces students to be well behaved, attentive to detail and motivated toward the same goal. entrance exams. The Japanese school year consists of six day weeks, with a forty-one day summer vacation, during which many students attend

summer classes and prep schools. Schools and classes are separated according to academic ability, which usually is the determining factor in the race for university admission. The momentum effectuated by this race is appreciated by both parents and teachers, who do everything possible to help students to avoid tangential issues and concentrate all the student's time on learning. Roger Buckley, author of *Japan Today*, claims that the Occupation's bid to democratize Japanese education backfired, since indiscriminate legislation paved the way for meritocratic discrimination.

> A decent education is crucial to the life chances of young Japanese. Since Japan can be loosely defined as a meritocracy where one's first job after graduation is often one's only one, many Japanese are eager to compete for the undoubted advantages that entry into a prestigious university can bring in terms of career and even marriage prospects. Parental wishes for their sons to aspire to a top-ranking university are inculcated from a very early age. Admittance to a good high school is a virtual sine qua non for future success, since without competent teachers and a competitive atmosphere only the exceptional pupil will be able to make it. The failure rate for entrance to Tokyo or Kyoto National Universities is inevitably very high, but it does not deter the ambitious from attempting to reach the pinnacle. (Buckley, 1985, p.88)

On a political level, the Ministry of Education supplies the high standards of curriculum that help school administrators to mobilize students in the learning process, organize classes, and eliminate excess digressive activity. The aggregate of all this exertion as *examination hell* approaches, may be exhibited in the lack of means by which students may learn to deal with external stress in a productive manner, and this carries over into the corporate sector. Where there is no room for error, there can be no therapeutic technique by which an individual may vindicate failure.

> The problem of youth suicide in Japan centers on those who do least well in school, who cannot keep up, and who tend to drop out early. Low academic performance, dropping out of high school, and leaving school after ninth grade are closely associated with broken families, poverty, and other environmental factors, as well as with learning problems, personal instability, and difficulty in peer relationships. Undoubtedly, the accelerated pace of Japanese public education up through ninth grade, the preoccupation with exam preparation, and the great significance of educational achievement to adult careers and status accentuate the problems of low achievers. (Rohlen, 1983, p.333)

In the 1970's, when the movement to have English conversation institutionalized within the Japanese school system failed, school-related problems accounted for one quarter of youth suicides (*Ibid* , p 334) Now, twenty years later, one wonders whether with increased pressures to succeed academically, Japanese society is on the verge of a social crisis As our technologically progressive civilization gradually destroys itself through environmental negligence, the Japanese youth are also floundering in an intellectual wasteland It may be possible that this thesis proposes a method by which solutions may be propounded to resolve both problems concurrently A possible answer, which is relevant to the suggested educational reforms,is in the direct communication of values that occurs when two individuals are engaged in a face-to-face conversation The Ministry of Education's *Course of Study* for Japan's secondary schools offers educational objectives that are based on the Fundamental Law of Education and the School Education Law (Ministry of Education, 1983, p 121) This text infers that Japanese Education is aimed,

> at realizing the spirit of respect for human dignity in the actual life of family, school, and community, endeavouring to create a culture that is rich in individuality and to develop a democratic society and state, training Japanese to be capable of contributing to a peaceful international society, and cultivating morality as the foundation thereof.. To make students consider the relationships between matters and phenomena in the natural world as well as the harmony among them, and realize the influence of the natural environment on the existence of human beings, thereby heightening students' interests in preservation of the natural environment Also to deepen students' understanding of biological phenomena and to develop a positive attitude towards the appreciation of life ..To develop student's basic ability to understand a foreign language and express themselves in it, to deepen their interest in a language, and to help them acquire the basic understanding of the daily life and way of thinking of foreign people (*Ibid* , p 103)

In fact, the Japanese high school has yet to carry out on a practical level the goals toward which it prototypically aspires. Study according to previous state university admission entrance examinations dominates high school curriculum and restricts the extent to which parents, schools and society consider the significance of fluency in spoken English in Japan. To date, a network for Japanese progress in cross-cultural communication already exists, in the availability of English as one of the world's leading languages of verbal interaction. It is up to Japan's Ministry of Education, as well as both ward and prefectural

boards of education, to institute the changes that will help Japanese high schools students to catch up with this global reality

3. Conclusion: The lack of oral English in Japan's schools

John Dewey has had an incontrovertible and inveterate influence on the Japanese schools system, most notably in secondary education (Kobayashi, 1964). The instrumental approach to learning has been carried to its corporeal extreme in the Japanese education system In Progressivism, the value of a learning experience is determined by the degree to which it promotes free and intelligent, reflective inquiry. The problem of Dewey's philosophy is that empirical activity which furthers the faculty of investigation is shackled to an external valuation. There is no consideration to whether the student is enjoying the subject to be studied, and I suppose Dewey asseverated that this consideration of instrumental learning would be taken for granted. Nowhere in the Japanese secondary education system does the contention exist that learning should be fun. With all the positive scholastic results that Deweyian Progressivism's influence has achieved in Japan since the late Meiji Era, the last forty years of Japanese pedagogical philosophy have suffered from the same ailment as Howard claims Instrumentalism has: The long-term goals of society as a collective unit, may have become incongruent with the short-term aims of its individual members (Howard, 1991)

> This confusion in Mr. Dewey's theory of inquiry reflects a characteristic weakness in the liberalism of the nineteenth century—a weakness which his philosophical reconstruction of that tradition as never entirely overcome. The source of the confusion is an assumed freedom of indifference and the supposition that values are objectively indeterminate apart from individual preference or interest. The weakness of liberalism, as a philosophical doctrine, is its inability to accept the full consequences of this notion of freedom, which is nevertheless implicit in its traditional assumptions (Boydston, 1991b, p 399) Dewey is moving in the right direction when he seeks objectivity in the *evidence* for value judgments, his social behaviorism leads him to ignore one very important kind of evidence, namely, that concerning the immediate quality of the experience of value itself." (*Ibid.*, p 407)

There are few slow lanes in the Japanese high school student's race for university admission, only educational expressways In the midst of this intellectual tide that permeates every aspect of 'Japaneseness', the child's delight in learning has been cast aside. English

conversation is not included in school curriculum because it is considered anomalous to the task of erudition. There are no exams that can measure its skill, no texts that can guarantee its attainment or amelioration and finally, no teachers that are qualified enough to teach it This is because speaking is considered an inefficient waste of time, while true socially productive work is conducted in a silent, deliberative manner

Considering that geographically, Japan is a very small island who's more than 100 million individuals are concentrated demographically in four large cities, one can understand how improvements in social cooperation can improve the exploitation and distribution of what, up to very recently, have been extremely limited resources But in contemporary times, there has been no shortage of anything in Japanese society, anything that is, except perhaps enjoyment in learning in the case of secondary education Forty two years ago Gilbert Highet wrote,

> Anyone who teaches should realize that it is a serious matter to guide another person's life. Professional teachers, politicians and authors especially have great power to do influence people of all ages for good or evil An author should not write novels or plays irresponsibly simply to earn money and gain a reputation. If he does this, he will discover toward the end of his life that he has wasted his talents on works which he and the majority of his readers will despise. The surest protection against that possibility is to ask how your ideas could possibly be misused or misunderstood And like all teachers, he must think not of himself, but of all the people he is trying to teach (Highet, 1969, pp.121-22)

I am not surprised that Japanese English teachers feel guilty because they cannot speak the language, but I do not believe that because of this, blame can be laid on them for not teaching English conversation to their students. They are part of a system, a system that, as I have shown in this thesis, may be maintaining merit-based incongruities instead of supporting parallel development for both improvements in student's individual strengths and scholastic abilities. A primary obstacle to constructive reform is embodied in the Japanese pedagogical view that learning equals memorization An outcome of this conviction, when applied to university admission is that regular high school graduates, who are perhaps equally intelligent and creative as their counterparts who've had the opportunity to attend private academies, cram schools, and juku, are lacking the memorization skills necessary achieve high enough scores on entrance exams to top universities, which excludes

them from employment in top corporations (Bonnaker, 1990) A further obstacle is that, to the Japanese professional, learning English does not necessitate speaking the language (*Ibid.*) The consequence of this is that although Japanese understand the structure of English, they cannot use it for communication Bonnaker concludes that,

> English (Eigo) has a special status in Japan It manages to be everywhere and nowhere By the time a Japanese student graduates from high school, he has had six or seven years of it, and will get another two to four years of it if he goes to university Yet it will be very unlikely after this, say, decade of English, that he will be able to converse intelligibly on even a beginners level. Such prodigious incompetence, though, is not really his fault Except for some diplomats and company men whose work will take them to English-speaking countries or put them into regular contact with English speakers in Japan, there is little need actually to learn English. Students, who prepare from middle school on for the English part of 'Examination Hell' tests, and specialists (such as medical doctors and scientists, who must learn English to keep up in their fields) often learn to *read* and sometimes *write* it well but may not be able to vocalize so much as a single coherent sentence. Beyond these cases, English is more of a minimal social insignia - like our wearing at least thongs and a T-shirt to enter a restaurant - than a practical tool. In fact, Eigo in Japan is now much more than an indigenous social formula than a foreign language. It is often more important to be seen taking English than either to learn or fail to learn it. (Bonnaker, 1990, pp 218-19)

Bonnaker and Niyekawa (Chu-Chang, 1983) are in agreement regarding the issue that, for Japanese, learning English must include the accumulation of syntactical knowledge with collateral development of conversational skills. This final obstacle is one which I believe shall exhibit the most serious ramifications. Reforms are due in the methodology by which English is taught to Japanese high school students. The most distressing concern is regarding the popular view that learning English consists in memorizing rules of grammar and syntax, and developing the ability to recite out-dated idioms. High school English conversation course curriculum may prove to be an effective aid for educating young adults towards increased awareness in global environmental deterioration. If the Japanese government has established that the injection of capital into ecological programs may be one of the only apropos techniques for global improvement, then from the onset, it has ignored a major asset in this confrontation Interaction of public interest groups and youth organizations through bilateral colloquium may be another avenue by which realistic progress in ecological awareness may be affected. By improving their Oral English skills, Japanese high school

students may have the opportunity to travel abroad, communicate with students from other countries, and question their own nation's progress in global environmental preservation

> If values are presented as received truths, rather than as the consequences of arduous critical thinking by particular people struggling with timeless questions of human existence, those upon whom such truths are bestowed certainly will become 'value illiterate'; they will be unable to 'read' the signs and symbols of their times. (Howard, 1991, p 118)

The Japanese Ministry of Education, Science and Culture has placed priority on establishing English conversation programs in every high school. A small part of government capital intended for scientific and technological research could be better used, if diverted by the Ministry to form a symposium that could study how improvement to high school English programmes could be supported by adding an oral section to university entrance examinations. This investment would serve not only in maintaining an already productive scholastic system, but could be used to establish an *educational research fund* for the foundation of **an efficacious conversation module that could be instituted on a national basis in existing English language courses**. The proposed budgetary changes must be initiated by support from the Teacher's Union, for without its cooperation, English will remain as a 'ghost' language for Japanese citizens. Finally, parents, or at least, concerned mothers must also support these reforms to the existing system, so that each one of their children who enters the Japanese education system will graduate with a life-long ability to communicate using the English language. Perhaps when these improvements are instituted, Japanese may begin consider themselves as true internationalists. Improved English communication may permit further generations of Japanese citizens to better contribute to the inauguration of a new era of cooperation through their effortless exchange of ecological strategies. The Japanese have already realized that their advanced research capabilities in the area of technology are a byproduct of their excellent system of education. The time has come for the scientific field to return some of its expertise to Japanese pedagogy, so that intelligent learning media can be put to use in the realm of English language education, in particular, through the creation of Oral English programs for Japanese high school students.

CHAPTER 3:
Conclusion — Using Bruner to create a conversation module for Japanese high school English teachers to use in class

1. The problem

Simply stated, the problem that faces the Japanese high school education system is how positive changes may be initiated. The system has a strong tendency to perpetuate its defects because the progressive ideals that inaugurated it have become too deeply ingrained in the society that it has created. The strength of the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party in a country where most people live according to traditional, conservative beliefs, is characteristic of a cultural heritage that is based on the separation of thought and action. Victor N. Kobayashi stated Japanese pedagogy's failure to effect any enduring Progressivist revisions to their curriculum and methodology when he wrote,

> Part of the pessimism of some Dewey scholars concerning the faith in social reform is due to the strong weight of tradition which they feel, and which they are proud of, yet which they consider hinders progress. Japan not only has a complex economic system, but a heritage of undemocratic thought which continues to persist and to dominate much of Japanese life, and liberals feel helpless at times in their impatience. Then, too, they note the way in which many of the democratic reforms of the Occupation have been undone so quickly and easily or have proven to be ineffective. Not all share in this pessimism, however. Japanese studies of Dewey reveal a wide variety of interests and interpretations. (Kobayashi, 1964, pp.148-49)

The Japanese have always been very open-minded towards the assimilation of new and foreign ideas, take for example, Chinese logographs as the primary writing symbols (as mentioned earlier, Japanese must learn between 1600 and 1800 Chinese characters from kindergarten until the third year of junior high school), golf, tennis and baseball as the most popular sports, and *Makudonarudo*'s {McDonalds} 'Big Mac', Japan's most popular fast-food, which contains both beef and milk (until recent times both foods were taboo in Japanese society) (Bonnaker, 1990). Even though these imported notions have essentially remained true to their Western counterparts and sustained popular appeal, imported Western educational ideas, such as Instrumentalism, were subjugated to indigenous modifications by the Japanese pedagogy. According to Beauchamp,

> Although we cannot directly transplant or borrow foreign pedagogies or policies, we can learn from them. The best example of this is probably Japan At least since the eighth century, and especially during the first decades of the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) and again during the American Occupation (1945-1953), Japan *selectively* decided what was worth importing from the West and, rather than tear it out of its natural context and replant it in Japan, proceeded to analyze and understand Western ideas and adapt them to the Japanese environment. (Beauchamp, 1985, p 28)

These foreign concept may have been modified according to current social modes of interaction which were developed as early as the *Yayoi Period* (300 B C E -300 A D), when the introduction of rice planting and metalworking techniques widened the division of labour, and have resisted change for two millennia (I S E I , 1989, p 4) Finally, Japan's indigenous religious order, Shinto, is complemented by both Buddhism and Christianity It is a popular saying that the individual is born Shinto, has a Christian wedding, and is buried as a Buddhist. But most Japanese do not live according to religious exigency, rather, they tend to conform to the preestablished social norms of behaviour

The Japan of both the Meiji Restoration and the American Occupation was influenced by progressive changes that called for an abandonment of traditional lifestyles and political structures of the Edo Period (1603-1868), so that modernization could be approached at a more rapid pace. Dewey's pragmatism was an effective philosophy to fuel this force of change, because it encouraged the renunciation of establishmentarian limitations, for the evolution of social liberty. As Bloom puts it,

> Dewey's pragmatism—the method of science as the method of democracy, individual growth without limits, especially natural limits saw the past as radically imperfect and regarded our history as irrelevant or as a hindrance to rational analysis of our present. (Bloom, 1987, p 56)

The freedom of education, in the Deweyian sense, took place in order to liberate individuals from the flawed authoritative systems of their past Since national education (1890) was developed during the same period as Japanese confederation (1889), progressive ideas were grounded in the era's political realities, the transfer of power from the Shogun to the Emperor and Diet (Sansom, 1950) But in 1945, the Americans reapplied this philosophy Predicated by the fear that Japan may revert back to militaristic political control, the Occupational authorities sought to disengage the dominance that the Ministry of

Education had over Japanese schooling. In fact, the Fundamental Law of Education (1947) **specifically prohibits any link between political parties and the pedagogy** (I S E I , 1989, p 90) The Occupation aimed at implementing liberal social reorganization through the introduction of child-centered educational strategies,

> As an observer of the Occupation has pointed out, the Occupation was not an ordinary military project merely limited to disarmament and reparations, it was a 'saturation-type operation' intended to affect all aspects of Japanese culture, with consequences that would survive the eventual signing of a peace treaty Japan had threatened other nations with her military might in a disastrous war; her militaristic tendencies were viewed as an expression of her authoritarian tradition The Allies hoped that Japan would be transformed into not only a peace-loving nation, but also into a democratic state, for it was believed that a democratized Japan would contribute to international order. Thus the Occupation became one of the most enormous experiments in 'social engineering' ever conducted in any nation (Beauchamp, 1978, pp 181-82)

The idea may have been that, without the control of any large political force, Progressive education would return Japanese society to a natural, peaceful state The educational reform imposed by the Americans on the Japanese is not the first philosophy of this type, but strangely enough, it suggests a dogmatic sympathy with Social Anarchism's libertarian ideals of education This may not be a coincidence, for the same ideals were borne out of History's great revolutions against monarchy, and the Occupational authorities that formed the new Japan during the late 1940's were searching for a political state that would effect the maximal split between the Japanese Emperor, and his subjects Since the philosophical pillars of Anarchism were the beliefs that first, individuals are naturally good (an opinion shared by many, but not all Libertarians), and second, that they are naturally social, the logical substitution of this idea for previous educational influences would serve to rid Japan of its 'evil' political institutions According to Pierre-Joseph Proudhon,

> An integral part of a collective existence, man feels his dignity at the same time in himself and others, and thus carries in his heart the principle of a morality superior to himself This principle does nor come to him from the outside; it is secreted within him, it is immanent. It constitutes his essence, the essence of society itself It is the true form of the human spirit, a form which takes shape and grows toward perfection only by the relationship that every day gives birth to social life. Justice, in other words, exists in us like

> love, like notions of beauty, of utility of truth, like all our powers and faculties (Woodcock, 1986, p 22)

After the death of Peter Kropotkin in 1921, libertarian solutions to political oppression became popular among Japanese intellectuals like Hatta Kropotkin emphasized that just as life is characterized by growth and change, since individuals are living in a natural society distinguished by mutual agreement, it, too, must continually readjust and develop, without the constraints of ruling authority, but stimulated by science and innovative ideals. Both Kropotkin and Michael Bakunin believed that revolutions were brought on by mass impulse, that rigid political organization hampers natural evolution (Lowe and Moeshart, 1990, p 47).

William Godwin did not share this spontaneous and naturalistic view On the contrary, he took the standpoint that education was the key to liberation from political authority, which he believed negated life To Godwin, the anti-social tendencies in members of society would be kept in check through public self-censorship, a perfect model for Japan In fact, the Americans' transfer of pedagogical control from the federal government, to the independent ward offices, so that education was directed by small social groups, seemed equitable in part with Godwinian social anarchism. Godwin maintained that, by no means should a system of education fall into political hands, hence, the independent school was the ideal learning unit

> The project of national education ought uniformly to be discouraged on account of its obvious alliance with national government .. Had the scheme of a national education been adopted when despotism was most triumphant, it is not to be believed that it could have forever stifled the voice of truth. But it would have been the most formidable and profound contrivance for that purpose that imagination can suggest. Still, in the countries where liberty chiefly prevails, it is reasonably to be assumed that there are important errors, and a national education has the most direct tendency to perpetrate those errors and to form all minds upon one model. (*Ibid.*, p.73)

Leo Tolstoy was an author with great vision who had great respect for Godwin's progressive educational theories Like Bakunin and Kropotkin, he also wished to reverse the relationship between the common people and the aristocratic stratum of society. In the 1870's he became involved in experimental libertarian education, which promoted free exchanges of information between teachers and students. His writing is characterized by a back-to-basics morality, which was supported by his belief in the fundamental moral nature

of revolution, as opposed to the violence of political authority. Although John Dewey supported the elimination of didactic teaching methods, he was in discord with Trotsky's doctrine concerning the worthlessness of political regimes. Nevertheless, Dewey was appointed Chairman of the sub-Commission of Inquiry that went to Mexico City in August of 1937 and January of 1937 to procure the testimony of Trotsky regarding the charges on which he was convicted in the Moscow Trials (Boydston, 1991a, p.310). The charges brought against Trotsky that he collaborated with the Germans and Japanese to assassinate the Soviet Union's political leaders- were determined to be unjustified. Furthermore, Dewey did not feel that he was the right choice as director of the inquiry, for although he empathized with Trotsky's plight, he could not acquiesce with the radical tenets of Trotskyism. In the outcome of the committee's investigations his comments were:

> Personally, I have always disagreed with the ideas and theories of Trotsky and I disagree with him now, if possible, more than ever. It is undoubtedly true that Trotsky has adhered more closely to the pure Marxian line than has the Stalinist regime. His insistence upon the permanent revolution or a series of proletarian revolutions in all countries is sufficient proof of this. From my point of view—that such revolutions inevitably defeat their own ends—this means that, by adopting the Trotsky direction, American radicals would be jumping out of the frying pan into the fire (*Ibid*., p.334). I looked upon the Soviet Union as a social laboratory in which significant experiments would be worked out. Before the Depression—in 1928 to be exact, I visited the Soviet Union—and upon my return wrote a series of articles in which I presented the favourable aspects of what was being accomplished (*Id*., p.335). ... The germs of educational freedom which certainly existed at that time have been, according to reliable reports, all but completely destroyed (*Id*., p.336).

Due to the socio-political changes brought about by the Second World War, a new type of education was being formed that encouraged the endurance and acceptance of freedom, liberty and peaceful cultural transformation. The Japanese, who were without a technology of production, could not rely on a system based on historical materialism because of their traditional pride in the island's independence (Beauchamp, 1978). Furthermore, since Deweyian Instrumentalism seemed to the Japan's pedagogy (circa 1952) to contain revolutionary liberal ideals, those who opposed the Occupation's reforms had Progressive teaching systems all but eliminated (except for the experimental schools of the early sixties) (Baltz, 1965, Schoppa, 1991; Traynor, 1983). A reason for the transient nature

of SCAP's educational policy could be that, although Progressive education was based on Dewey's liberal scholastic reforms, natural philosophy, which was the basis for his beliefs, maintained that if given the opportunity, individuals will spontaneously do what is good for their society (Howard, 1991) Progressive and liberal educational strategies have been enduring influences on Japanese pedagogy because Dewey, like Marx before him, "never fully freed himself from optimistic illusions about human nature (Conway, 1987, p 209)" In other words, since laissez-faire idealism may not present students and teachers in Japan with sufficient challenge, extreme renditions of educational strategies affiliated with liberal-style learning have not been tolerated (Duke, 1986) Problem-solving, interactive approaches to learning soon prove to be inefficient and un-critical to the Japanese pedagogy, as summarized in the following passage by Professor Shimahara,

> Experimentalism, with which John Dewey's philosophy was generally identified, was the most influential underlying orientation of the new education in Japan A major problem confronted by progressive college professors and other leaders in the postwar education, therefore, was to translate experimentalism, developed on foreign soil, into the radically different matrix of Japanese culture By 1950, Japanese educators were beginning to express their impatience with the transplanted progressive education, since they were discovering that it did not work in Japanese culture These negative reactions toward progressive education were growing in an emerging social and political situation, which had affected the course of Japan's history...Methodologically, the uniformity of cognitive and motivational orientations of the students, as well as the teachers, began to be stressed again, teachers employed behaviouristic conditioning to impart skills, knowledge, and attitudes Thus during the course of the 1950's, the original orientation of postwar education disappeared from most schools. Japanese education had quickly adapted to the demands of the political, economic, and social institutions of Japan — institutions central to the cultural core Thereafter, the fundamental orientation of Japanese education has not greatly changed up to the present time (Shimahara, 1979, pp.66-67)

To Japanese educators, a surviving image from the post-war era, the reabsorption of public vitality within the domain of communal society, was transformed by civic despondency, to a strictly socioeconomic concern Japan's retort was that a technology-based education was the only institution that could alleviate a resource deficient, war-torn domestic economy The only beacon of optimism was in mass education towards national fiscal improvement The external influence on Japanese society that relegated education to civic

responsibility could not persist after the San Francisco Peace Treaty (1951), by which national autonomy was restored. The dilemma for the Japanese was that their guiding force of prosperity, the Emperor, no longer could be followed as a living example of harmony and national identity.

> Loyalty to the Emperor did not necessarily involve international cooperation, peace or democracy, though they were certainly associated with the Emperor in that situation. Irrespective of the fact that these central ideas of Western liberalism won favour in Japan during the Taisho Era (1912-1926), the fundamental contradiction between them and the demand for absolute obedience persisted. (Lowe and Moeshart, 1990, p.66)

The Japanese have always thought of themselves as one people, and as social control must be difficult for an island brimming with 100 million souls, an institution to guide pedagogical prerogative was obligatory. Since the Emperor's decree was constitutionally impotent, the Ministry of Education's curriculum guide, the *Course of Study*, became Japan's exclusive pedagogic creed in the national process of economic reconstruction.

2. The solution

Modern day Japan's fiscal problems have to do with production surpluses. In the area of agriculture, there is a surplus of rice, in education, a surplus of knowledge. The corporate machinery that the post-war era created continues to reproduce itself, therefore reinforcing both commercial egocentricity and societal asymmetry. As these concerns can be interpreted as precipitates of a corporate encroachment of Japanese education, a possible solution to the Japanese inability to communicate in English consists in discovering a new theory of instruction that will maximize the humanization of learning. This theory, which should be supported by political reforms to Japan's current education system, may be forged with a focus on the modernization of bilingual education. Specific reforms must be concerned with the liberalization of English language programs with the aim of improving communication between Japan's Japanese speaking majority, and the nation's English speaking cultural minorities. Beauchamp maintained that,

> A political rationale lies behind virtually every form of education, but it is especially evident in the controversies surrounding bilingual education. Bilingual education is more than just learning another language, it also involves the redistribution of power. As Jerome Bruner suggested in his 1969

> *Saturday Review* article, "A theory of instruction is a political theory in the proper sense that it derives from the consensus concerning the redistribution of power within society ... who shall be educated and fulfill what roles." It follows, then, that although arguments favouring bilingual education invariably talk about preserving the culture and literary traditions of speakers of minority languages and may accomplish that goal it is fundamentally redressing political and economic power between the haves and have nots. Thus one of the major reasons why the dominant group in a country refuses to learn the languages of its minorities is simply the reluctance to grant prestige or status to these languages, and by extension, to those who speak them. (Beauchamp, 1985, p.10)

In Japan, it is not the case Japanese refuse to learn English, actually, high scoring on the English section of university entrance examinations may determine candidates acceptance to national universities. In truth, the political reality that Japan rejected the pedagogic reforms of the Occupation may be expressed in the truncated nature of Japanese scholastic English. English is a language to be understood and read, but not to be spoken, hence, by association, English speaking people cannot be communicated with, and the Japanese government may more easily censor foreign influences, and adapt them for inculcation to the general populace. Paolo Freire originated the term, 'the banking concept' of education, which implies that students are to be receptacles for the deposit of information by the teacher (Freire, 1972, p.45). Furthermore, in his critical view of revolution, he considered that if an oppressive force is the architect of the social change, then the revolutionary act is only a instant in that society's history, and contains no emancipating import. This type of revolution does not promote a continual process of liberation, because revolution is, by nature, educational, critical and transformational of the culture it traverses.

For education to transform the student's world it must be critical, thus, the student will be constantly reevaluating their circumstances in order to discover meaningful opportunities to liberate themselves from oppression. This idea of education as liberating praxis stems from the cognitive act. The student is not simply memorizing the teacher's information, but is learning to question it. As the student and teacher exchange information in this problem-solving dialogue, they are making the curriculum part of their own reality, they are learning to find the words with which they can name their own world (*Ibid.* p.145). The

leaders of the educational revolution cannot say the words unaccompanied, they must say them together with the people

> The fact that leaders who organize the people do not have the right to arbitrarily impose their word does not mean that they must therefore take a liberalist position which would encourage license among the people, who are accustomed to oppression The dialogical theory of action opposes both authoritarianism and license, and thereby affirms authority and freedom There is no freedom without authority, but there is also no authority without freedom All freedom contains the possibility that under special circumstances (and at different existential levels) it may become authority Freedom and authority must be considered in relationship to each other (*Ibid*.)

Freire, as Dewey, and Marx before him, accepted the Hegelian axiom that every state of knowledge is achieved by a re-ordering of preceding states (Barnes, 1976, p 100) In 1957, Noam Chomsky re-ordered preceding concepts of language education, when he put forward his first rules, principles and generative procedures regarding linguistics This reassessment was based on his analysis of the basic units of grammar (George, 1989) During the same period, Jean Piaget's study of human behaviour sought to determine how children can learn knowledge which adults present to them for their own ends Much of his work centred around how language is instrumental for children in coming to terms with past experiences, and relating these to new ones (Barnes, pp 81 83) Contemporary writers like Edward Sapir and L S Vygotsky were influential in the linguistic field due to their hypotheses regarding how speech guides action by the formation of new meaning (*Ibid*, p.100). The importance of language in cognitive development, Jerome Bruner's linguistic theory, forms a cornerstone in the study of how thinking is related to (and according to Bruner influenced by) speech. Bruner holds in common with both Sapir and Vygotsky that language is,

> a means by which we learn to take part in the life of the communities we belong to, and a means by which we actively reinterpret the world about us, including life itself. Through language we both *receive* a meaningful world from others, and at the same time *make meanings* by reinterpreting that world to our own ends (*Ibid*, p.101)

Language is the exclusively human tool that makes reflection on our culture possible It is a symbolic method for presenting our circumstances in a rational way, that upon

reflection, allows for the construction of modifications that open avenues to future improvement. The bulk of Bruner's research deals with formulating a teleology of language acquisition, which is reflected in his views towards the creation of a high-performance curriculum. The value of this pursuit, according to James Britton (1970), is not that a sequence of learning is established, but the determination of how the anticipation of a particular outcome can be formulated, according to the reappearance of events or segments in that sequence that exhibit a tendency towards repetition. Bruner believed that in the stages of learning, action and perception were interlocked in two ways. First, *the enactive system*, where action and perception occur simultaneously, second, *the iconic system*, in which perception is liberated from action. For the purposes of this thesis, I will concentrate on the linguistic consequences that this system ramifies, for I believe that it is of utmost importance to Japanese English conversation teachers.

> In Bruner's terms, the stages refer to the establishment of the third system of representation - the linguistic system– upon the foundations laid by the enactive and iconic systems. Bear in mind also Bruner's point regarding the mismatch between the systems: it is a kind of inequilibrium that will not let the child rest, but prompts him to further exploration, further growth. (Britton, 1970, p 207)

Bruner considered verbal behaviour as the fundamental *'tool'* that we use to liberate ourselves from past experiential constraints, by communicating freely with others, and in this way, environmental transformation may be impacted. Beginning at an early age, children discover that speech is the most productive method by which external change may be occasioned. Hence, children become natural learners, and master the art of predicting the consequences of their demand. As pupils, their ability to ask questions and formulate hypotheses should be encouraged, rather than impeded. It is the craft of the contemporary teacher to provide students with the technically challenging stimuli that will encourage them to develop this natural inquisitiveness.

> Bruner was right that the 'intrinsic motivation' which arises when we become personally interested in a topic is an immensely more powerful spur to learning than any 'extrinsic' rewards or sanctions which the teacher can provide (Barnes, 1987, p 138). It is discoveries such as this no doubt that prompted Bruner to speculate on the importance of tool-using as a transitional stage on the way to a full application of the organizing principle of language to the raw material of experience. (Britton, 1970, p 213)

This applies directly to Japanese pedagogical problems, since federal regulations for entrance examinations emphasize English language proficiency. Japanese students, on the other hand, are experiencing an across-the-board **limited English speaking or non-English speaking status** (LES/NES), and therefore come into conflict with *international* pedagogical standards. Bruner's research in this area exhorted him to develop culturally and socially specific diagnostic programs for the bilingually challenged student, in which the remedial sequences are immersed in materials that tap the student's interest in culturally diversity (Cole and Frue., 1971). During the Occupation, both allied and Japanese educational reformers attempted to make the use of romaji compulsory in all subjects, that is to say, the Japanese language would be written in the same characters that we use to write English. This type of reorganization was supposed to reintegrate Japanese society with worldwide educational goals, for according Post-Taisho politics, the elimination of romaji from school curriculum was paramount to the rejection of Colonial domination by American and European ideologies over Japan.

> The whole problem of romaji, so sorely in need of some sort of serious scientific analysis, was as far removed from the touch of sound experiment as ever. The problem remained where it had always been, in the domain of emotional claims and counter-claims, with violent clashes of opinion, with unbalanced charges fraught with ill-will and with little being accomplished (Trainor, 1983, p 319)

The three year program (1947-50) to reintroduce romaji as the sole written language in Japanese schools was deemed a failure, due to the Japanese deep identification of their national character with their three writing forms (Duke, 1986). According to Aso and Imano (1972) the Japanese Ministry of Education, aware of failure of both the pre World War II and Occupation reform programs, insured that the value of romaji would remain simply as a requirement for university entrance examinations, and this may never change. Although the Japanese pedagogy can claim across-the board second-language education, high school students are limited to acquiring a minimum level of English *biliteracy*, just enough to sustain Japan's race for technological superiority. Bruner's study concluded that programs which are designed to,

> maintain one's native language and culture while gaining proficiency in English should be developed in recognition of the cultural bias of the standard

> English curriculum in schools. This approach seeks to diversify the curriculum, to avoid limiting the development of LES/NES children. (Chu-Chang, 1983, p. 164)

Bruner believed that education must be a more effective method of social change than revolution, particularly in light of the almost instantaneous diffusion of information that our Computer Age makes possible. School, then, can be seen as a frontier for the diversification that is imperative, if students are to be prepared for the myriad opportunities that will be presented to them in contemporary life. Hence, in contemporary educational programs, global views may serve as the predominant strategy by which educators could present meaningful curriculum to their students, and in that way, help them to deal with their world. In *Education for a Global Society* (1973), James M. Becker offered his advice regarding ecology-sensitive curriculum.

> Expert environmentalists differ in their views of the stability and resilience of ecosystems...Some insist that the solution to environmental problems lies in more scientific knowledge and better technology and better technology, others see socio-economic morality or the strengthening of spiritual values as the best hope. There is, however, general agreement among the experts, at least, that environmental problems are becoming increasingly worldwide and, therefore, demand a global approach. the diversity and richness of the human environment and the interplay between natural forces and man's dreams and aspirations might well serve as a major focus of global education. (Becker, 1973, pp. 41-42)

Instead of concentrating solely on theoretical models of English usage, it is up to future Japanese educators to continually adapt the curriculum, and their methodology, in order to keep up with sweeping global changes. Techniques must be ascertained that intersperse comprehensive and interactive learning strategies throughout school life, so that Japanese secondary students may transcend the incongruities of classroom languor (which may have reach their apex in English courses).

> We have been negligent in coming to a sense of the quickening change of life in our time and its implications for the educational process. We have not shared with our teachers the benefits of new discovery, new insight, new artistic triumph. Not only have we operated with the notion of the self-contained classroom but also with the idea of the self-contained school—and even the self-contained educational system .. If a sense of progress and change toward greater excellence is to illuminate our schools, there must be

> a constant return of wisdom and effort to enliven and inform teacher and student alike (Bruner, 1979, pp 125-26)

In the method of learning a subject there are three processes that operate almost concurrently According to Bruner these are, *acquisition* of new data that usually runs contrary to the student's existing beliefs, *transformation* of that data into terms that students can examine, in order to exceed the limits of its comprehension, and *evaluation*, which is checking whether the procedure employed by students to control that data has succeeded in achieving the aims that they had set forth The degree to which a learning period can be sustained is dependent on the outcome that the students expect from their endeavours As early as 1967, the Japanese Ministry of Education called for a reevaluation of pedagogic standards and practices, according to the expanding needs of the new *information centered society*,

> Japan's schools education has made giant strides over the past century, and the degree of dissemination in this country is very high by international standards as well This has played an important role in the growth and development of our country as a modern state Meanwhile, as to existing school education, not a few problems are being pointed out in relation to both its system and substance at the moment or a score of years after the inauguration of the new education system, and a comprehensive examination of school education is now being called for. Furthermore, the rapid development of technological innovation and the complexities of society require that school education solve a growing number of new problems in the years ahead. Accordingly, it is considered necessary at this juncture to reexamine the past achievements of our country's school education, clarify the problems involved and thereby establish measures for improvement At the same time, it is essential to study fundamental measures for the comprehensive expansion and improvement of school education from a long-range point of view in order to meet the future progress of our country and society (Aso, 1978, pp.97-98)

The Monbasho's educational reform agenda took the shape of an university entrance examination expansion policy (Tanaka, 1992). As this thesis has previously shown, this approach eventually resulted in the use of high schools as mechanisms that upgrade students' retention of mathematical and scientific data. While at present, the ideal learning situation in Japan is the jam-packing of as much information into the student's waking hours as time permits, Bruner would assert that there is no guarantee that the data is being assimilated,

and even if it is, it may not have any meaning to the students beyond the examination period To remedy this, he suggests that a curriculum must centre on issues that are valuable to the members of a society, and adds that students should be encouraged to question these, and develop alternative modes of considering data, based on their acquired knowledge

> If information is to be used effectively, it must be translated into the learner's way of attempting to solve a problem (Bruner, 1966, p 53) . Unless the learner also masters himself, disciplines his taste, deepens his view of the world, the 'something' that has got across is hardly worth the effort of transmission (*Ibid* , p 73) It has been remarked that words are invitations to form concepts It can equally be said that the combinatorial or productive property of language is an invitation to take experience apart and put it together again in new ways (*Id*, p 105)

In the Japanese pursuit of educational excellence, two fundamental difficulties should be confronted according to Bruner's view First, the guidance of learning toward 'average' pupils, so that all children will be able to fit in, and succeed at developing their own individual skills This has a special significance when English learning is confronted with actual verbal ineptitude The Japanese Ministry of Education recognizes the bicultural import of bilingual education, and the benefits that this type of learning accrues Garcia asserted that,

> The societal benefit of bilingual-bicultural education is greater than what, at first glance, is apparent As we enter the fourth quarter of the twentieth century, we recognize the urgency of cross-cultural understanding. Our society and our globe are shrinking in social distance, requiring more human contact and better communication (Garcia, 1976, p.49) Nevertheless, students that are gifted in the area of oral English are basically on their own Mathematically or scientifically gifted students have abilities that are recognized as intrinsic to university admission, but the student who can speak English well, for whatever reason, may have to sacrifice their maintenance or improvement of this special skill to afford more study time to other disciplines According to recent sources (Ministry of Education, 1989), the Monbasho is willing to concentrate more on bilingual education,

> However, the identification, definition, and nurturing of verbal talent has proven far more troublesome than that of some other types of giftedness. Verbal talent, by its very nature, resists precise definition. Unlike mathematical talent, which some educators — albeit unfairly — define narrowly as skill in solving spatial and quantitative problems, defining verbal talent evokes such seemingly intangible qualities as insight, inspiration, and creativity Much like the concept of creativity, verbal talent is viewed by some as a personal attribute and by others as an intellectual process. (Fox, 1982, p.9)

The fact is that modifications to university entrance examinations so that an oral English section may be included may be either impractical given present technology, or many years away. This brings us to the second major difficulty, the training of teachers in techniques that will serve to stimulate students' interest in school so that they will find more independent goals for learning, that is to say, internal motivations that stem from the teaching methods. Curiosity in learning has waned in Japanese high schools because the curriculum continues to be a reflection of the government's concentration on progress in the fields of science and technology. Economic demands of the past forty years may have contributed to the seemingly meritocratic nature of university admission, and since the collapse of Japan's bubble economy, fiscal recovery may have surfaced as a current political aspiration. But according to Kobayashi, this economic power has,

> become a source of trouble for Japan, both on domestic and international fronts, as can be seen in the environmental crisis by pollution and the international trade and monetary tension. Many of the difficulties that the Japanese people are finding in the present international community, both on national and individual levels, can be attributed to their inexperience in [linguistic and cultural] multiplicity. As Japan's international activities expand, such difficulties will increase further unless this handicap is overcome by some organized effort, among which education is of prime importance. To be effective in this new task, however, the national education must first overcome some of the traditions which have developed in the past closely related to the mono-racial composition of the Japanese. (Kobayashi, 1976, p 173)

Bruner's theory contributes a great deal to the construction of a viable alternative. At the core of this prescription for change, is the recruiting of teachers of non-scientific topics that recognize the motivating effect of using a dramatic personality in the classroom. Also relevant to this program is the *'denaturing'* of the curriculum, for Japanese students that would entail material which negates the stress and paralysis that result from purely didactic instruction. Bruner maintained that students will become superior assets to society if they are encouraged to be creative in school, whereas, if their curriculum is limited to passive learning, they will remain dependent on the institutions that exploit their energies. It is the task of socio-linguistics to identify problems such as these so that in the long-run, culture-specific solutions may be proposed. To paraphrase Bonnaker (1990), for the majority of members in Japanese society, the problem of unilingualism may lie at the heart of their

inability to transgress from this cycle. It is Bruner's conviction that social maturity stems from the educational spiral, for with the proper guidance, the old becomes a spring-board for the new

> If a curriculum is to be effective in a classroom it must contain different ways of activating children, different ways of presenting sequences, different opportunities for some children to 'skip' parts while others work their way through, different ways of putting things A curriculum, in short, must contain many tracks leading to the same goal Finally, a theory of instruction seeks to take account of the fact that a curriculum reflects not only the nature of the knowledge itself but also the nature of the knower and of the knowledge getting process (Bruner, 1966, pp 71-72)

This process begins with the teacher Bruner conveyed this idea in many ways, but his most outstanding influence in this area was Whitehead, who "once remarked that education involves an exposure to greatness (Bruner, 1977, p 91)." Teachers are models for students, who personify the traits that they identify with in their educators, be they good or bad Television and film also serve as effective images for students to follow, even if their communication is in a unilateral sense The computer, as well, is a great dramatic tool that saves students the time of memorizing knowledge, so that they can get on with the exercise of manipulating it. The curriculum's program can be highly personalized to each student's needs, and in Japan's case, may take some of the load of having to speak English off the shoulders of the Japanese pedagogy. Finally, computers save time, for while students are undergoing a learning sequence, the machine can provide immediate feedback or correction to them Playful activity is one of the first methods that children use to explore their world, hence, the value of games should not be underestimated in an educational setting.

> A program for a teaching machine is as personal as a book: it can be laced with humour or be grimly dull, can either be a playful activity or be tediously like a close-order drill (*Ibid*, p 84) Games go a long way towards getting children involved in understanding language, social organization, and the rest, they also introduce a theory to these phenomena. As for stimulating self-consciousness about thinking and its ways, we feel the best approach is through mastering the art of getting and using information—learning what is involved in going beyond the information given and what makes it possible to take such leaps (Bruner, 1966a, p.95)

The key to stimulating self-consciousness is presenting students with contrasts to their present society or culture, and arousing their curiosity in these. The outcome will be their participation in novel modes of relating to the world. Contrast is transmitted through symbols and themes that appear in conceptual categories. Alien landscapes, economies, ecologies and daily necessities that can be presented to Japanese high school students through English documentaries (i.e. *The Vanishing Rainforests*), model exercises (planning a trip, cleaning the neighbourhood), talks and discussions, contrasting film loops (Inuit life vs. Kalahari Bushmen) and supplementary kits (such as computer games or guessing games like 21 questions), all lead the students to an identification with how language transcends ethnic barriers. Identification, for passive Japanese learners, would provide patterning for coping with **oral situations** rather than merely written ones. Bruner states that in selecting the curriculum, the first criterion should be the consideration of 'the psychology of the subject matter' and second, the degree to which that pattern fosters 'the personification of knowledge' for the students involved.

> Just as concepts and theory serve to connect the facts of observation and experiment in the conventional disciplines of knowledge, so great dramatic themes and metaphors provide a basis for organizing one's sense of man, for seeing what is persistent in his history and his condition, for introducing some unity into the scatter of our knowledge as it relates to ourselves. (*Ibid.*, p. 163)

Not unlike Dewey, Bruner's ideas have met with skepticism in many circles. Behavioral psychologists in the field of linguistics have contended that Bruner's teleological arguments for the function of perceptual mechanisms as guides for behaviour are largely equivocal, and that perception ought to be encapsulated (George, 1989, p. 17). Author and professor, Charles Wordell, who taught English conversation in Japanese high schools for five years, believes that Japanese pedagogy would be doing the students a great disservice by modifying the curriculum or methodology, and he exhorts future teachers of oral English not to expect too much from their students, and to stick to teaching them the basic units of speech, nothing more. Wordell maintains that the Japanese high school English conversation classroom,

> is no place to present a full-blown cross-cultural study .. Young Japanese realize that in Japanese organizations their first duties are to learn who holds the power, how things are done, and how to avoid offending anyone .. Those

> who challenge the system may win a minor victory—only to find the results did not merit the effort (Wordell, 1988, p.13)

Wordell's view is not uncommon among teachers of oral English in Japanese high schools, for the administrational and bureaucratic walls that they run up against, combined with the pressures from panicked mothers who fear that problematic learning will reduce their child's chances of examination success, create an oppressive emotional burden. In Japan,

> Success or failure on examinations is not only the success or failure of an individual but of his family. The self-sacrifice, anxiety, excitement, and happiness or sorrow that attend examinations are fully shared by parents and siblings. It is assumed that the child is successful in large part because of his parents' help and community recognition for success or failure is accorded to the parents as much as to the child himself. But beside the applicant himself, the most involved person is the mother. In listening to a mother describe examinations, one almost has the feeling that it is she rather than the child who is being tested (Beauchamp, 1978, pp 225-26) ..The Japanese Ministry of Education contributes indirectly to examination anxieties by pressing schools to raise their standards, and the schools in turn pass the pressure on to the families. The school teacher who wants to please his superiors and who takes seriously his responsibility for his pupils' futures will want to do everything he can to insure the child's success. This inevitably means that he will advise the mother to have the child study harder and to sacrifice other activities that might interfere with studying...The cost to the individual is the anxiety and pressure which he must endure at the crucial point of admission (*Ibid*, p 237).

At any rate, one would hope that in any schools retaining an oral English program, administrators are open to any ideas or methods that could ameliorate their student's English language fluency The Ministry has already instituted several programmes to keep second-language instructors familiar with global updates in their field. The government recognizes that it is becoming increasingly important for teachers to brush up on their professional competence and teaching skills in order to maintain quality education. Teachers who are distinguished by making continuous efforts to improve their skills should receive administrative recognition equivalent with higher remuneration. To date, professors of oral English are still at the bottom of the ladder in terms of seniority . Overdue structural reforms in the area of teacher training are slowly being encouraged by the government. "Nevertheless the

most valuable educational achievements will depend on the spontaneous creativity of the educators themselves" (*Ibid*., p 395)

> In order to help school teachers broaden their horizons in an international perspective, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture every year administers a program for providing a large number of elementary and secondary school teachers with an opportunity to visit other countries for one month or for a half month. The Ministry also administers a program for sending several secondary schools teachers abroad with a view to contributing to an increase in mutual understanding between Japanese and foreign peoples, as well as to the promotion of education for international understanding. In addition, as part of in-service training of foreign-language teachers at universities, the Ministry conducts programs for sending a number of these teachers (teachers of English, German or French) to countries where the language of their specialty is spoken. (Ministry of Education, 1989, p 70)

Although the Ministry claims that their reform programmes are effective, it is still up to the competency of the respective ESOL instructors to select effective materials from the national *Course of Study* in order to teach their Japanese students. The Teacher's Union must find a way to support ESOL instructors, be they Anglophones or Japanese, in acquiring the competence to utilizing the mountains of available curriculum, not just the sources deemed worthwhile by the Ministry, furthermore, oral English study should not be limited to the use of books alone. Oral English instructors must find the confidence to present their curriculum by utilizing 'new educational technologies' if valuable modifications are to be affected. According to Bruner,

> To attempt a justification of a subject matter, as Dewey did, according to the child's social activities is to misunderstand what knowledge is and how it may be mastered (Bruner, 1979, p 121). There exists today a pragmatic sense of how, on a broad scale, to measure the success of a particular curriculum or even how it is working in a given region or for a particular group of children. The pragmatism will one day be converted into a more systematic way of proceeding, and that day will be hastened if we take seriously the task of building a theory of instruction (Bruner, 1966, p.171). The intelligent use of money and other resources now available will depend upon how well we are able to integrate the technique of the film maker or the program producer with the technique and wisdom of the skillful teacher (Bruner, 1977, p 92)

Bruner's cognitive/developmental psychology based educational strategies taken into consideration, perhaps in the future Japanese high schools should not be limited to teaching

oral English in structured classes, but should also offer new options to students The possibilities include English immersion classes The results of Lambert and Tucker's (1972) experiments in Montréal with English speaking children in French immersion classes were encouraging (Chu-Chang, 1983, p 108) and could be applied towards Japan's pedagogical needs Other alternatives may include exchange and home-stay programs with native English speaking countries Hawaiian's of Japanese descent are fluent in both English and Japanese, and have established institutions in which exchange students can receive "the equivalent of a Japanese high school education, including Japanese history, geography and literature (*Ibid*, P114)" Finally, special schools are being created abroad specifically to meet the needs of Japanese high school students, curriculum is taught in English, but the students maintain contact with members of their own society and peer group, so pressures to conform to Western styles of living are greatly reduced. Under mounting pressure by boards of education, the Ministry was forced to amend,

> the Enforcement Regulations for the School Education Law to institutionalize study abroad by upper secondary school students by enabling them to study at secondary schools abroad without taking a long leave of absence or leaving their school, and by allowing their upper secondary schools to recognize their study abroad as part of the credits leading to the completion of their upper secondary school course. Further, in order to facilitate the successful admission in upper secondary schools of children who are returnees from a long stay abroad and whose number is increasing under 'internationalization' trends, the Ministry in October 1988 made some amendments in the same Regulations to provide these children with more opportunities to enter, or transfer to, Japanese upper secondary schools. (Ministry of Education, 1989, p 86)

As early as 1985, the Ministry began to grant university entrance qualification to students who had attended special training schools These high school students, who were recognized as equivalent to upper secondary school graduates, and who completed their courses at schools designated by the Ministry, have paved the way for Japanese high school students who exhibit a marked interest or above average skills in oral English (*Ibid*, p.87). It is now the responsibility of the Ministry to legislate new amendments to the School Education Law that would encourage the expansion of funding for the creation of many more government-sanctioned courses and special training schools

3. The method

The educational impasse that has been exposed in this thesis, specifically that requirements for admission to Japanese top universities have impeded Japanese high school students from acquiring English conversation skills, may be surmounted if, at the very least, a compulsory program of oral English could be included in every Japanese high school's curriculum, and this must be legislated in by members of the Japanese Diet. Constitutional changes may have to be enacted, but the fact is that the Liberal Democratic Party's Ministry of Education must form effective policies on educational reform. If it cannot do this, then it is up to the Socialist Party and the Teachers Union to summon up enough support to carry an educational reform bill through the government legislation process. The attention that the Japanese devote towards insuring the highest entrance examination scores for their children is paramount, but the Ministry's allotment of funds to the creation of more complex and mathematically demanding requirements for university entrance (in the name of scientific superiority) must not limit fiscal spending in educational and environmental sectors. According to Ichikawa Shogo in his article *Financing Japanese Education*,

> the commercial world's interest in the education budget results from its profit motive in the fields of school architecture, school textbooks, teaching materials, and aides. Groups such as the Federation of Economic Organizations, the Japan Committee for Economic Development, the Japan Federation of Employers,' Associations, and the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry also attempt to influence educational policy when they see their interests at stake. Their requests usually reflect their interest in manpower planning and employment stabilization, promotion of science and technology, preservation of the social order, and administrative reforms designed to decrease the size of governments. Owing to its financial contributions to the LDP, the world of commerce and industry enjoys a close intimacy with the ruling party, resulting in its having an important voice in the formulation of educational policy. (Beauchamp,1991, p.92)

Perhaps the LDP is disregarding the most important uses for science and technology, which may evidently be in the area of education. The following example may shed some light on the root of this enigma. In 1982, the government funded Institute for New Generation Computer Technology began its ten year project to develop a 'fifth generation' computer that could handle machine translation and expert systems. Their aim was,

> to create a machine whose functions imitate those of the human eye, ear, and mouth and which solves problems with a thought process resembling that of human beings. This project is being conducted on the basis of international cooperation, with many foreign researchers participating, and the results are being shared with researchers around the world. (I.S.E.T., 1989, p. 75)

Ten years of research to bring computer technology to the point where it can replace two or three years of practical human learning! Perhaps the funds that went towards this project could have been utilized in a more realistic and productive way, if they were invested developing a module for the teaching of Oral English in Japanese high schools. This module would make use of advanced computer technology, among other learning tools, and could also function **on the basis of international cooperation**. In fact, both Japanese educational researchers, and experts on teaching oral English as a second language from abroad could collaborate in order to write the programs, and integrate a global network of communications satellites, to make this program available in other nations as well. Alas, much of the famed technological revolution in artificial intelligence has been wasted on the development of elaborate home video games. Benjamin Duke elaborates on this touchy subject,

> In a nation that has achieved international notoriety for its highly developed computer industry, the diffusion of computer assisted teaching, and computers themselves, in Japanese schools seems incongruous. In contrast, computers in the classrooms constitute the litmus test for evaluating the standards of a school in rapidly increasing numbers of U.S. communities. Even elementary schools with at least one computer are becoming common. American youth at all levels staring glassy eyed at the computer screen in the classroom symbolizes a modern school preparing for the era of high technology. Not so in Japan. "MYCOM," the microcomputer, is gradually finding its way into the tiny homes and minuscule apartments of Japan. But computer penetration into the public schools has barely begun. For example, according to the pertinent office of the Ministry of Education, only 0.1 percent of the elementary schools and 0.9 percent of the junior high schools were equipped with computers in the mid-1980's for a grand total of 121 out of 45,054 public schools at the compulsory level. From all indications, it will be quite some time before computer-assisted teaching, a popular concept in the United States, becomes widespread in Japan. There seems to be little disposition so far by Japanese teachers to employ modern technology currently flowing from Japanese factories for classroom teaching purposes. (Duke, 1986, p. 152)

Duke proceeded to relate that if Japanese fail to modernize their antiquated education system, they could be facing their economic Waterloo in the Twenty-first century. In English classes, not much oral practice in required, in fact, few language laboratories with their tape recorders, so abundant in the U.S., are installed in Japanese high schools. "Such facilities could provide the students with an opportunity to hear spoken native English and to imitate correct pronunciation" (*Ibid.*, p. 154). To take this idea one step further, with the widespread installation of high school data-bases in the near future, the Japanese student could have a direct line, via terminal, to a nationwide and worldwide grid of English conversation exchange, and *guided by a skilled teacher/technician*, this student could interchange a variety of experiences with other students, and then discuss results in class. This network could also be made available for global deliberation on environmental topics, and students could encourage each other to contribute their ideas and solutions through multi terminal connections. Films, games and live camera link-ups could be broadcast digitally, and students would be able to view each other as they speak. The system could also be used **to evaluate students on vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and current affairs**. The teacher, who would have undergone special information systems training, would be present to assist and support the students, and supply them with written materials, such as vocabulary lists, that would supplement their practical learning. Parent/Teacher associations and administrators would be able to fill in for teachers, and supply assistance at data bases located in cultural and social centres, for students who become interested in working with the system after school hours. In Japan, teachers will have to take the lead in order to accumulate the necessary specialized skills to become guides of *SECAT (my acronym for Systems for English Conversation Ability Testing)*. In Japan, the government must,

> strive to help people acquire information literacy through both formal non-formal education, and to help universities and other educational institutions train experts who will take the lead in creating and developing an information-intensive society. To this end, the government will promote the improvement of the curriculum related to information science and technology; the provision of information equipment, the enrichment of the in-service training of teachers; and the research and development of model software for teaching and learning. (Ministry of Education, 1989, p. 133)

Furthermore, because of world time zones, there should be link-ups with other high schools at varying time periods over the two to three year program, this way students will become familiar with many different English dialects Data bases could be installed .n prep schools and technical colleges as well Finally, the system could also be used to teach Japanese and other languages abroad with students acting as tutors for language learners based in foreign countries The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of the Japanese government recognizes the inevitable spread of the new information media to the education sector of society, and has already begun to accept the policies of the National Council on Educational Reform, which put forward the following objectives in 1989,

> The first objective is to help people acquire information literacy, in other words, the ability to select needed information from among the vast volume of information available and make use of it efficiently To this end, the Ministry will help enrich teaching about information at each school level In addition, outside formal education, it will expand non-formal education programs for the development of information literacy. The second objective is to utilize new information media in educational activities To this end, the Ministry will conduct research and development work on high quality educational software and on computers suited to educational purposes It will also promote the development of new learning systems using new information media The third objective is to train progressively those who will assume leading responsibilities in an information-sensitive society. To this end, on the basis of the projected future demand for information engineers, The Ministry will formulate a plan for the training of engineers and researchers, related to information processing, mainly at the higher education level. Based on this plan, the Ministry will set up and expand necessary faculties and departments so as to meet the demand from society The fourth objective is to encourage educational and cultural facilities to become more information-oriented. To this end, the Ministry will conduct studies on the idea of making educational facilities more 'intelligent' as recommended by the National council on Educational Reform It will help furnish educational and cultural facilities with new information oriented equipment, and help universities create information networks for presenting information about individual universities Further, as data bases are expected to be more and more important in the information-intensive society, the Ministry will promote the creation of various data bases (*Ibid.*, pp 126-27)

For the purposes of this thesis, I have concentrated on how English conversation ability could be improved by Japanese high school students, but the idea that the proposed module be reserved for adolescents seems wasteful, and perhaps future studies may examine

how a scientific approach to learning may help Japanese to acquire English speaking skills at younger ages. I personally hope that others who have studied ideas such as this will be able to transform and evolve them into even more promising possibilities. The most important aspect to be considered in the success of Japanese high schools students to improve their English conversation skills may be the enriching experience that will follow their ability to communicate interculturally with their peers. Close ties of friendship and understanding will follow from this international exchange of ideas and compassion that will prove invaluable to future cooperation on methods by which imminent ecological deterioration may be averted. The beneficial effects of socialization on a friendly basis during adolescence have been well documented by researcher Thomas J. Berndt who claimed that,

> children interact more frequently with close friends than with other classmates. For this reason, research on friends interactions has greater ecological validity than research on nonfriends' interactions. Stated differently, friendship is a special relationship but is also the prototypical peer relationship. Moreover, because of their distinctive features, friends' conversations are likely to have a greater impact on children's reasoning and behaviour than conversations with nonfriends. Consequently, researchers will obtain the most powerful and most valid tests of hypotheses about the contributions of close peer relationships to sociomoral development when they focus on interactions between friends. (Kurtines, 1987, pp. 298-99)

If Berndt's hypotheses are valid, the Monbasho's proposed educational reforms such as "downplaying the emphasis on entrance exams, beefing up moral education, countering delinquency, upgrading teaching-credential requirements, and making various other changes to give students a 21st-century internationalist perspective (Tanaka, 1992, p. 127)" should include the development of face-to-face oral English programs, and their related information-sensitive modules. This thesis has examined from a critical footing the scientific pedagogical contributions of John Dewey in the history of Japanese education, which may be supplemented by methodological recommendations put forth in the linguistic theory of Jerome Bruner's cognitive/developmental psychology. It has been suggested that a reexamination of the Deweyian educational philosophy {Instrumentalism/Progressivism}, augmented by a critical reevaluation of suggested educational reforms according to Brunerian proposals {problem-solving methodology, use of technology as learning aid, teacher as guide}, may be conducive to the quest for a program that may help Japanese high school

students to overcome the structural deficiencies in their society that inhibit the acquisition of oral English. Based on this research, an ESOL module could been proposed that, making use of both 'intelligent' educational media networks and the creation of data bases for global, cross-cultural dialogue with other students, may be useful for achieving this purpose. The addition of competent educators (**SECAT** guides), challenging stimuli, and the utilization of ecologically significant curriculum could refiesh the Japanese pedagogical system with a new, more humanistic goal for learning oral English. Yushio Tanaka wrote that,

> While agreeing that American-style education contributed to Japan's postwar development, many [Japanese] people feel this is a good time for retrospection and review. (*Ibid.*)

The proposed reforms may help Japanese English teachers to transcend the limits of an antiquated university entrance examination system, and encourage pupils to confidently intuit solutions to environmental problems by exercising their individual verbal skills in discussion with their foreign counterparts. If Japan's students are to improve their abilities to conduct dialogue and cooperation on an international basis, awareness of global ecology could become a curricular vehicle by which high school oral English programs may be established.

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