

language does not equal fluency in culture. Miscommunication can, and does, occur based on cultural misunderstandings as much as on linguistic misunderstanding.

Therefore, the issue of culture, and cross-cultural communication, must be addressed in the language classroom. Several aspects of culture must be addressed. These include the appropriate mixture of cultural general and culture specific content; the issue of potential challenge to the individual's notion of self; and, the perception of reality as culturally bound. Finally, it is important to understand that communication will not always be successful. Cross-cultural communication takes time and patience.

Reported by Rita Silver

SAPPORO

ARE CONVERSATION LOUNGES EFFECTIVE?

By Stuart Walker

Drawing on his experience as both a manager and a teacher at conversation lounges in Japan, Stuart Walker contrasted the teaching style, curriculum, physical environment and underlying philosophy of the conversation lounge with the traditional class.

Basically, the conversation lounge fulfills two important needs of Japanese students: flexibility of schedule and emphasis on relaxed conversation. It also represents a reaction against the formal, rigid grammar/translation system endured by all Japanese students as part of their public education.

Although sales is the number one concern at conversation lounges, Walker felt they are clearly effective in helping to break down students' traditional fear of oral communication in English, making them accessible to casual conversation. However, the quality of teaching, the problem of teacher job satisfaction, and the unsystematic presentation of material require attention.

Reported by Ken Hartmann

YOKOHAMA

OPEN HOUSE AT LIOJ

Once again the Language Institute of Japan, commonly known as LIOJ, opened its doors to teachers of English for a day of workshop presentations. Robert Ruud, Director of LIOJ, and Nobuhito Seto, General Manager, sketched the purposes and functions of the Institute's English language programs. Other presentations given by current LIOJ teachers centered around practical suggestions for teaching at various levels.

Presentations on using video in the classroom included an explanation by Elizabeth King of

Robert O'Neill's full-length ESL video, *The Lost Secret*; a demonstration of the effective use of commercial, in-house and student-produced videos by Sherri Arbogast; and a discussion led by Tammy Guy on applying a short video that describes a process (in this case, the process of making soy sauce) as a tool for teaching and reinforcing the passive voice.

Presentations on other activities for the classroom included Roger Davies' demonstration of an echo technique which can be used for teaching songs to large groups; games for students by Eric Arbogast, Keith Hoy, and Barbara Hoskins; a presentation by Linda Damas and Norman Tyrrell of techniques to improve students' listening comprehension and speaking skills through the use of TV news broadcasts, newspaper articles, and photographs; and a description of the various applications of computers in writing, reading, grammar, and speaking-listening classes by Eric Herbel.

Workshop participants were treated to a variety of presentations and greatly appreciated LIOJ's continuing efforts to encourage and inform teachers of up-to-date theories and practical techniques for the language classroom. Thank you LIOJ!

A JET IN JAPAN

By Amy Johnson

The speaker for our June meeting was Amy Johnson, one of approximately 850 foreigners who came to Japan last year to participate in the Japan Exchange Teaching (JET) program. This August more recruits will be pouring in from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States to make a total of more than 1,400 JET participants. Sponsored by the *Mombusho*, *Gaimusho* and *Jichisho*, the number is expected to eventually increase to 3,000.

Johnson began by defining some JET program terms. "CLAIR" stands for Conference of Local Authorities for International Relations, the organizing body of the program. There are two types of foreign participants: "AETs" and "CIRs." AETs are Assistant English Teachers. They are based at schools or education centers. Some of them visit the same school regularly while others visit different schools. CIRs are Coordinators for International Relations and they work primarily in government offices.

Next, Johnson described her experience in this program, from how she was hired to what work responsibilities she and other JETs (as they have come to refer to themselves) take on.

Finally, in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the program, she welcomed questions and comments from the audience, which sparked a lively discussion of the role of foreigners in English classrooms in Japan.

Reported by Suzy Nachtsheim