Promoting Creativity in the Japanese Classroom. : A Cross-Cultural Study

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A Cross-Cultural Study

Kathy E. Bird

"If we make an effort to be creative and spontaneous, Japanese teachers will not give us a good grade." University Student Surveys, 2007

"Personality is lost because the opinions of the students are not respected." University Student Surveys, 2007

"To ask a creative question and spontaneous thought is a waste because the teachers can only explain what is written in the textbook." University Student Surveys, 2007

"Every child has the "right to express their own feelings, to give their view of events, to explain themselves, to reflect upon their own behavior, to have their fears and their hopes taken seriously, to ask questions, to seek explanations in the natural world, to love and be loved, to have their inner world of dreams and fantasies and imaginings taken seriously, and to make their own engagement with life." [1]

When I first started teaching at Japanese universities, I was perplexed by the obsession placed on grammar, and the students' inability to transfer that knowledge into a free expression of thought and ideas. I knew that Japanese were very intelligent but when I asked a question to one of the students, they would turn to their neighbor and confer with the neighbor and most of the time would not answer my question. Every time I would ask students why they would not at least try to speak when asked a question, the typical response was, "We Japanese are shy", or "It is a national trait". Usually after class, students would come up and ask a simple question that could have been asked during the class time and that would have created an atmosphere for discussion and thinking. Other times I would try to speak to a student and he or she would hesitate, look at his or her neighbor and then never respond, only later to find out that the student had a high fluency level from living overseas for more that 7 years. Knowing that Japanese high school test scores far exceed American test scores created a desire to find out why Japanese are one of the lowest among Asian countries in English speaking skills. I began a two-year research to find the answer and during that time I interviewed over 1000 students to

find out just what was behind this so called 'shyness phenomena' found in the university classroom. From the interviews, I narrowed the possible phenomena of shyness to be related to some kind of tension students felt starting back to elementary through high school that possibly had a psychological affect on the students' ability to speak in a classroom setting.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the various types of tension found in Japanese elementary through high school classrooms and it's effect on students' creativity and English speaking ability at the university level. Although the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is making ambitious efforts to reform the Japanese educational system, enhanced thinking skills and creativity and also reduce the stress associated with university admissions, I believe there are other types of tension that also need to be addressed. Teacher-student relationships and peer relationships play a major role in the Japanese school system, but also pose potential barriers, blocking students' ability to speak English more freely in class. This will be a cross-cultural study covering the areas of teacher-student relationships, group dynamics, and age-based power and authority relations. This paper will show how tension can act as a distraction, draining energy from the students and teachers, which could otherwise be used for more creative learning. Long used educational routines are inherently negative. Allowing them to become too ingrained in students' experiences cause them to limit their range of responses and can lead to the development of a stagnant mind that avoids free creative thinking. Fear of self-expression and of judgment of others can severely limit one's creativity.

There is a large range of literature on the subject of creativity, however in this paper the focus will be mainly on the field of education and how the Western and Eastern cultures view creativity. This paper will cover the various tension generators that are in a typical Japanese elementary through high school environment that may cause a suppression of creativity. Comparison of Japanese and American classroom practices will be discussed to provide the reader a better understanding of how tension in the Japanese classroom is a factor in creating shy students who do not want to talk in a creative and spontaneous way, thus hurting their chances to improve their English speaking ability. The results of student surveys will be examined, which were the outcome of a two-year study done involving extensive interviews and discussions with Japanese students from four Universities in the Tokyo area. The questions were written and administered to students at mid to high-level universities. Throughout this paper, the reader will find quotes taken from the student surveys that the reader will find illuminating.

Creativity : How the West and East View Creativity

Generally most studies in the area of creativity have adopted the western concept of creativity. However eastern thought holds a different view. This "discrepancy is found among both researchers and laypersons."[2] Studies show that creativity is expressed according to culture and therefore studies are showing that adopting a universal vocabulary and approach towards

creativity could be irrelevant.[3] It is important in this paper to discuss the different perspectives on creativity both in the west and east to better understand how creativity can be utilized in a Japanese class environment.

Western Views of Creativity

In the west, Judeo-Christian tradition has had a tremendous influence on how creativity is defined. One of the fundamental tenets of this belief system is that the world was brought into being, created by one God, and that God also "created man in His image" and that individuals, working under divine inspiration, can receive ideas and concepts. This fundamental tenant is natural and does not always look at ideas or concepts as genius. There are obligations when receiving this power, and that is to give to others (mankind) in return for the power or blessing received. The explanation for creativity from this perspective can best described as *inspiration a list.*

There are many philosophers, religious leaders, economist, psychologists and other influential people who have attempted to define the meaning and process of creativity. A majority of the studies on creativity have come mostly from the United States, with emphasis on individualism and the methodology is largely reductionistic in nature.[4] In the western model of creativity, there is a great emphasis on encouraging the individual to reach their individual potential and where uniqueness is revered.

Definition of Creativity

"The process of sensing a problem, searching for possible solutions, drawing hypotheses, testing and evaluating, and communicating the results to others. The process includes original ideas, a different point of view, breaking out of the mould, recombining ideas or seeing new relationships among ideas."[5]

"Creativity involves being imaginative going beyond the obvious, being aware of one's own unconventionality, being original in some way. It is not necessarily linked with a product-outcome."[6]

In the National Curriculum Handbook for Primary and Secondary Teachers, 1999, it states that there are four key qualities that learners must have in order to achieve their values goals when applying creativity :

"-the ability to identify new problems, rather than depending on others to define them.
-the ability to transfer knowledge gained in one context to another in order to solve a problem.

-a belief in learning as an incremental process in which repeated attempts will eventually lead to success.
-the capacity to focus attention in the pursuit of a goal, or set of goals."[7]

Western Creativity：A Historical Perspective

Psychology and its Influence on the Study of Creativity

"Creativity is the step child of psychology"[8]

The study of creativity did not develop until the 1950's when psychologists began to do empirical studies on the subject. In the development of the study of creativity, there were four major schools of thought in psychology that had an impact on the evolution of the western concept of "creativity"：

Psychoanalysis：Sigmund Freud introduced a pathological viewpoint on the creative process. To Freud, the similarity between neurosis and creativity was great. He believed the unconscious process in creativity was a subliminal of the libidinal impulse thus creating achievements in the arts and sciences.

Behaviorism：B.F Skinner (1974), was the most prominent expert on behavioral theory. With heavy emphasis on science, Skinner developed his concepts of "operant conditioning" and "control of behavior" by reinforcement. His motivational theory was known as "instrumental and operant" learning and states that the primary factor is consequences：reinforcers are incentives to increase behavior and punishers are disincentives that result in a decrease in behavior. For example, if a child is a humorist in class, the laughter of the other children may serve to reinforce his behavior and he will do it again. If the classmates criticize him for acting foolish, the child may avoid such antics in the future. Thus, the child initiates the behavior, and factors in the environment either reward or punish his behavior.

"I am fearful that the teacher will humiliate me in front of everyone because when I was in Junior High, I did not answer the teacher's question correctly so the teacher made me stand up in class for one hour." University Student Surveys, 2007

"Nobody criticizes me (now at his university) but I feel that I am being criticized because of my junior high experience, which made me fear the opinion of my classmates." University Student Surveys, 2007

"In elementary school, classmates teased a girl for making mistakes in class. Gradually the girl stopped answering questions and became a quiet girl." University

Student Surveys, 2007

Behaviorist focused on the relationship between creativity and external positive reinforcement (praise, honors, rewards, etc). A behavioristic model of creativity was inherently determined by the methodology. For creativity to be even considered present, it was necessary that there be shown some discernable creative product. The behaviorist relied heavily on scientific experiments and failed to recognize or explain the uniqueness of individuals.

Humanistic Psychology : In the early 1960's Humanistic Psychologies emerged as the "third force" disagreeing with the Behaviorist approach as an oversimplification that undervalued the importance of the individual's psychological makeup, inner experience and potential self-actualization. A major contribution in the field of Humanistic Psychology was made by Abraham Maslow, who for 10 years, studied well and successful people to find out what made them happy and at their optimum. This optimum was called "self-actualization." Maslow contended that if man's lower needs of food and shelter, security, love and belongingness, self-esteem and the esteem of others were met, self-actualization occurs. He believed that when man achieved self-actualization, man's full potential would be attained through a release of intense creative energies. Maslow called this process a "peak experience" when pursuing one's interest with intensity and euphoria. According to Maslow, "They are intrinsic aspects of human nature which culture cannot kill, only repress."[9]

Cognitive Psychology : In the 1950's, J.P. Guilford was one of the most influential forces on the US educational system. He as well as other researchers of his time believed that "Individuals are born with a certain intelligence or potential intelligence; this intelligence is difficult to change; and psychologists can assess one's intelligence (or IQ) using short-answer tests, and, perhaps, other "purer" measures, such as the time it takes to react to a flashing light or the presence of a certain pattern of brain waves."[10] His psychometric approach to creativity became popular among educators who measured creativity through testing the ability to envision or imagine multiple solutions to a problem. In 1974, Ellis Paul Torrance developed a benchmark method for quantifying creativity and invented the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking, which showed that the IQ test was not the only way to measure intelligence.

Other cognitive psychologists such as Howard Gardner studied the lives of famous people during the first half of the 20th century. The emphasis was on arts and science, showing that people are creative within a specific domain rather than creative in general. In 1983 he developed the theory of "Multiple Intelligence" veering away from the traditional I.Q. testing, and proposed eight different intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in children and adults. Dr. Gardner believed that in the past, education and culture focused on linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence. A highly articulate or logical person was what was considered intelligent, but he asserts that equal attention needs to be placed "on individuals who show gifts

in the other intelligences：the artists, architects, musicians, designers, dancers, therapists, entrepreneurs, and others who enrich the world in which we live. Unfortunately, many children who have these gifts don't receive much reinforcement for them in school. Many of these kids, in fact, end up being labeled "learning disabled," or simply underachievers, when their unique ways of thinking and learning aren't addressed or valued by a heavily linguistic or logical-mathematical classroom."[11]

Theories that Address the Social Environment Rather than the Individual

In recent years researchers on creativity have been looking at how the social environment can influence creativity. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, former head of the department of psychology at the University of Chicago, describes creativity as culture-bound with no universal criteria for the measurement of creativity. In his model of creativity, the creative experience is a three-way interaction between field (society), the domain (culture) and the individual. Creativity occurs as a result of the three-way interaction of a person with a domain of knowledge and a field that makes decisions about that domain of knowledge. According to his model, the act of initiating creativity does not belong only with the individual, but can come from any part of the system or by the system itself.[12]

Asian View of Creativity

"If we do not know the other students well, we do not like to be in a bad mood in class when we make a mistake. We fear to be looked as stupid by unknown students so this stops creativity in a class room." University Student Surveys, 2007

"The Confucian organic cosmological order is distinguished by the creativity of Heaven as a life-giving force that is ceaselessly self-generating. The Confucian universe is seen as an unfolding, creative process, not as a static, inert mechanistic system controlled by an absent or remote deity. As a protecting, sustaining, and transforming force, Heaven helps to bring all to their natural fulfillment as cosmological. This is because humans are imprinted with a Heavenly-endowed nature that enables them to transform themselves through self-cultivation. The ethos, then, of this creative cosmology is one that encourages education, learning, and self-transformation. The optimistic view of humans as receiving a Heavenly nature results in a Confucian educational and family ethos that ideally create a value system for nurturing innate human goodness and the creative transformation of individual potential. This ethos is one that encourages a filial sense of repayment to Heaven for the gift of life and for a Heavenly-bestowed nature. The way to repay these gifts is through ongoing moral cultivation for the betterment of self and society."[13]

The eastern perspective of creativity is less product oriented and is associated to personal

fulfillment and inner essence of ultimate reality. Confucius' teachings are mainly concerned with practical ethics of daily life without the addition of religious consideration.[14] The principles of Confucian teaching emphasize education where moral cultivation is emphasized and the teacher serves as the moral exemplar to the students while students' appropriate response is that of respect through obedience; the family system; the hierarchical social relationships; benevolence.[15] In essence, the traditional eastern educational model is one of collectivity and conformity, which tends to eliminate those attributes in students which would prevent cohesiveness of the group by drawing attention to the students' shortcomings, problems or negative traits that need to be corrected in order to maintain the group balance and cohesiveness. The results could be that of diminished self-esteem with levels of creativity greatly reduced. A good example of this is when I write on the blackboard during a lesson, with a point to make, if I make a insignificant mistake that all the students could figure out as a small mistake, ten minutes later a student will raise his hand to tell me about the mistake. He was left behind thinking about telling me of the mistake and missed the point that I was trying to make. I was shocked the first time this happened and soon began to fear that students were watching my every move and if I made a small mistake they would announce it in class. Consistent with my interviews, I found that the students indeed are parroting what the teacher does to them : point out their mistakes. From my interviews, I also found that some of the students point out mistakes the teacher makes so as a way of getting back at the teacher.

"In 5th grade a teacher asked me to answer the question but I could not answer it. Then my classmates said, 'Why didn't you answer that. It is easy! Maybe you are stupid!?' I felt so bad and humiliated but my teacher did nothing to help me" University Student Surveys, 2007.

Markus and Kitayama[16] argue that those living in individualistic and collectivistic cultures see themselves differently due to differences in socialization. The individual's need for validation is tied culturally so that in a collectivistic society, the need for validation is toward conformity with the social group but in an individualistic society the social pressures are toward differentiation, and therefore to encourage behavior which is individualized to a much greater degree.[17] According to Markus and Kitayama socialization that is individualistic involves :[18]
・ self construed as independent
・ self as separate from social group
・ personal feelings and opinions expressed in direct ways
・ individual behavior
By contrast, collectivist socialization involves :
・ self being construed as related to group; as interdependent
・ self seen as part and parcel of social group
・ compliance with in-group

Cross-Cultural Differences in a Classroom Environment :

"Rote and repetitive learning, learning mechanical way without thought or meaning, has been developed by Confucianism to the extent that the students in Confucian culture are considered as the lack of abstract thinking, constraints on behavior cause by face and lacked of originality and creativity"[19]

In an American classroom, you will see less emphases on memorization and more emphases on developing critical thinking skills. Great care is given to the class environment to promote free and open discussions. Although the teacher has had many years of schooling and is qualified to teach, the students are treated as equal and the students' opinions are respected and cultivated by the teacher by giving as much encouragement and knowledge to the students, thus helping them develop their own opinion and expression as they develop into adulthood. A teacher therefore must demonstrate flexibility, creativity and refrain from criticizing the students' creative thoughts that they voice. This teaches students how to be flexible, creative, and be able to take risk in their thinking processes. In a Japanese class you will see more emphasis on memorization, rote learning, teacher-centered, textbook-centered and a dislike by students for ambiguity or open questions from the teacher. The teacher is supposed to be respected (outwardly) and rarely contradicted by the students. Even when the teacher says something that the student does not understand, the students will not interrupt the teacher. During the interviews conducted for this paper, many students said that the teacher would get angry if they were to interrupt the lecture or would tell the students that if they did not understand what the teacher was saying, they would have to ask after the class. This is opposite to an American classroom where the teacher prefers to be interrupted in the class if the student does not understand the material taught and will allow a discussion from that question to occur in a free and exploratory manner. It is unheard of for a teacher, and most cases for students, to criticize a student for asking a question during the class. In the American educational system there is a saying that, "The only stupid question, is the question not asked."

"I feared to say the wrong answer because it seemed that the teacher demanded the "right" answer from us. Japanese teachers teach from the textbook too much, leaving no room for any new ideas." University Student Surveys, 2007.

Another difference between the two countries is in teacher-student relationships. American teachers are at the school to assist and help the student achieve his or her academic achievement. If the student is having problems in class, regardless of the problem, the parents of the students question the effectiveness of teachers or the school itself. On the other hand in a Japanese school, the parent and teacher form a symbiotic relationship and if the student has trouble then both parent and teacher will place the responsibility onto the child. The child knows that he or she must achieve academically for his/her parents' personal sacrifice in his or her

success. The teacher is the master, the parent is the motivator and facilitator, and the student is the diligent learner.[20]

"Japanese teachers think that it is important to teach children without any delay, so students' questions are annoying for them, which makes the atmosphere uncomfortable for questions." University Student Surveys, 2007.

According to some studies, teachers in eastern cultural traditions find it difficult to value creativity in the classroom, seeing creative children as more disruptive than other children. [21] Other empirical work, by Ng suggests that the teacher's attitude toward learners has an impact on their effectiveness in fostering creativity in the classroom, such that teachers who expect obedience and respect rather than challenge from their students, and who see themselves as the ultimate authority, place little emphasis on developing students' individual autonomy. 'Creative' responses are punished and not rewarded. On the other hand 'western' teachers work from the assumption that their role is to help students reach their inner potential, and thus encourage and reward creative behavior in the classroom.[22]

'Shame' And It's Possible Hindrance In Speaking English :

In the extensive interviews that I did in the past two years, the word 'shame' kept reappearing as the reason for Japanese students not wanting to speak in class. The word 'shame' conjures up negative connotations when viewed from an American perspective. However, in the literature on 'shame', it is clear that shame is viewed as a positive trait for Japanese and according to Okano (1994), 'shame' is promoted in Japanese society. The promotion can be seen in the different taboos found in society that promotes 'shame'; to stare at people or look directly into their eyes, to show your abilities or talents openly, to show competitiveness, to assert one's own opinion, etc. This kind of shame is used to reduce friction such as envy or competitiveness, thus avoiding being singled out to be the target of ridicule or ostracized from the group. The concept of hiding what one has and let one's talent or ability come out naturally is a hard concept for westerners to fathom. According to Okano (1994), "Japanese people believe that one's importance, power, or value should be only implied or suggested, but not revealed openly. This belief implies that what is hidden is powerful."[23] Americans, on the other hand, promote verbal assertiveness, and the need to make one's opinion as clear and distinct as possible. Open competition is a natural expression and is seen in the classroom environment. As a teacher trying to teach English, Japanese style of communication hinders students from learning to speak English in a natural and creative way.

In the United States, it is not uncommon to see an elementary classroom with many colors and decorations hanging on the walls. Japanese elementary classrooms are much more sterile and cold. There are times Japanese teachers hang the student's drawings or writings on the wall to

display but not to the degree one would see in the U.S. Another difference that is evident is in the teaching style of an American elementary teacher. If a teacher teaches a subject that day and then asks the students questions, the students will freely raise their hand to answer and if called upon will answer with no hesitation. If the answer is only half correct, the teacher will respond as follows："Good job, Sally, I like that you are thinking about what I said. Another way that you could say it is…" The teacher will give the correct answer but not tell the student directly that he answered wrongly. When interviewing students, I wrote on the board a sentence that had a small mistake and asked them to role-play and tell me how a Japanese teacher would address the mistake. They said, "You made a mistake and need to change this mistake." or "I just got done teaching you the correct way to write this, why did you miss this？" I then asked them which style of response to a mistake they preferred and unanimously the American style was chosen. In Addendum #1, is a class outline from a California school stating the scope and expectations of how the teacher is expected to generate creativity in the classroom. Looking at the Hollywood School-House brochure, one gets an understanding of the importance placed on and ways creativity is fostered in an American school by the vocabulary used：

Relating to the environment
＊ nurturing staff
＊ warm
＊ creative

Relationship between teacher and student
＊ child-initiated play
＊ child-directed play
＊ teacher-supported play

Child's development
＊ explorers without failure
＊ at their (students) own pace and unique style
＊ communication of feelings
＊ beginning of autonomy
＊ flexibility to just be (express one's individual qualities and expression)

Support structure
＊ Everyone-parents, teachers, and administrators are integral part of building a strong, caring and stimulating environment.

"In Japanese society, I think that people tend to only point out the mistakes."
University Student Surveys, 2007

Tension Generators in a Japanese Classroom that Hinder Creativity :

Learning to speak English is probably the hardest task for many Japanese students. They are smart and have studied English in junior high and high school but tend to be very critical of themselves. In an American setting, students know much less than their Japanese counter-parts but yet they rarely say they are poor at a second language and will openly try to speak and try different ways to say something in a foreign language without feeling bad or caring whether they make mistakes when speaking. They may even try to focus less on the correct way of speaking a sentence and experiment by trying to put words together in a creative way. They take learning seriously but the process is much more relaxed in approach. Through many interviews with my students I began to realize that their hesitation and fear of making mistakes was a little too excessive for a class trying to speak English.

"If a student makes a mistake, their teacher gets angry and has a bad impression about the student who made a mistake. Students should accept and have little concern with mistakes other students make." University Student Surveys, 2007

"Students sneer when another makes a mistake." University Student Surveys, 2007

This section of the paper will discuss the results of two surveys distributed at two different times and at four universities in the Tokyo area : Questionnaire on "Bullying in Elementary Through High School" distributed July 2007, and Classroom Tensions Found In Elementary Through University, distributed in November 2007. These questions needed a cross-cultural perspective in order for the students to fully understand the scope of each question. Extensive interviews were given to students at each university and during a 2-year period, the students imput was gathered and implemented in the questionnaires. Before administering the questionnaire, students were given many examples of the differences in Japanese and American classrooms. Having had a child who attended kindergarten through junior school in the Japanese school system and having two older children who attended kindergarten through high school in the American system, the questionnaire and interviews were based on a cross-cultural perspective; being able to see from both sides of the cultural divide. When the surveys were administered, the students were told that all information would be kept confidential and that participation in the survey was not mandatory.

The following are graphs from the two surveys :

Classroom Tensions Found in Elementary Through University, July 2007：

### *Question #1 : Strongest tension felt from elementary school through high school.*

a. Teacher-student tension. Teacher gets angry if student's answer is not perfect.

b. Fear of being bullied or ostracized if student doesn't know the subject well or cannot answer the teacher's question.

c. Fear of humiliation by the teacher and/or criticism from other students if student doesn't have confidence in the subject or doesn't know subject well.

d. Competition over grades.

e. Tension between different age groups.

f. Tension from unexpressed emotions.

Tension In The Classroom Question #1

- 22% — a
- 9% — b
- 32% — c
- 15% — d
- 13% — e
- 9% — f
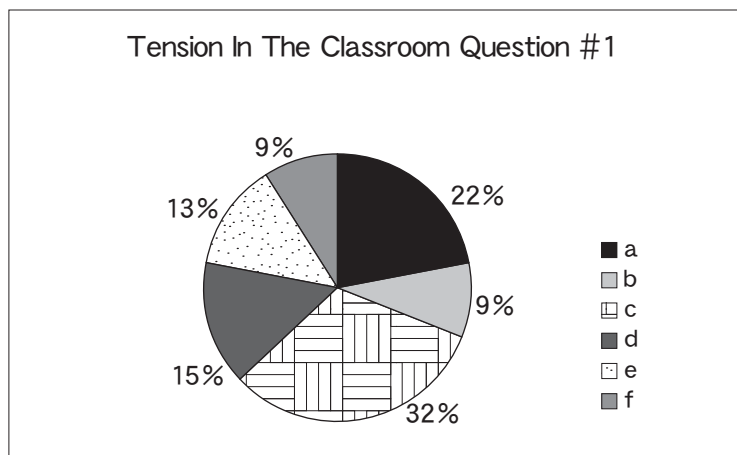
Comment : Tension generated from the teacher by far was the greatest tension felt by the student, and was solely based on giving the correct answer with no consideration for effort or attitude on the part of the student.

Question #2 : How can teachers eliminate tension listed in question #1 ?

a. Create a more relaxed class atmosphere : student and teacher not too concerned with small detail, freedom to speak without being criticized or laughed at by others.

b. Creating a more friendly atmosphere among classmates.

c. Creating a friendly atmosphere between student and teacher.

d. Eliminate intense competition : memorizing replaced with more free thinking and speaking with no fear of criticism. Encourage more individual thinking and no criticism for being different.

Tension In The Classroom Question #2

15%
9%
24%
27%
25%

■ a
□ b
■ c
□ d
■ e
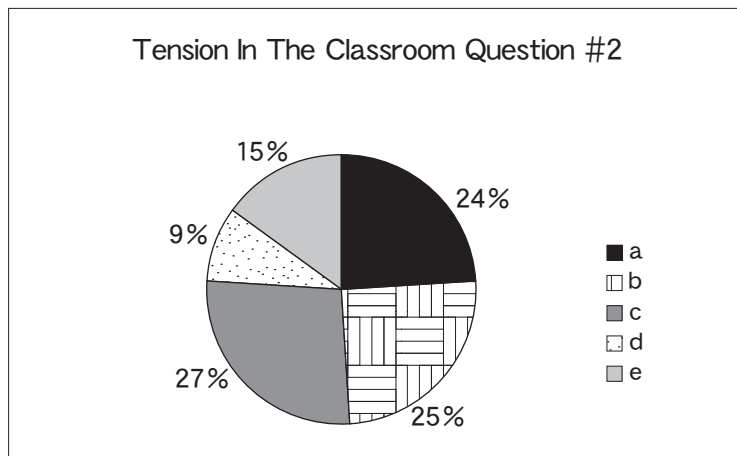
Comment：In these responses, 'friendly' should be interpreted as being able to make a mistake without being criticized or humiliated.

Question #3 : From elementary school through high school, was there a system where you could answer questions in a creative or spontaneous way without being scolded for saying it in a different way than was taught ?

Tension In The Classroom Question #3

58%
42%

■ Yes
□ No
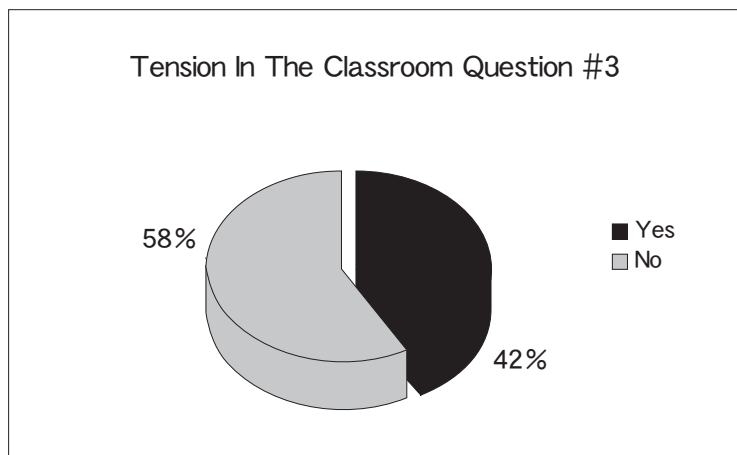
Comment：Although 42% responded 'yes' that is still a relatively small percentage and should be much higher. From the interviews it became apparent that the higher the grade level the less there was any system available.

Question #4 : Could you freely express your own ideas from elementary school through high school ?

Tension In The Classroom Question #4

51%
■ Yes
□ No
49%
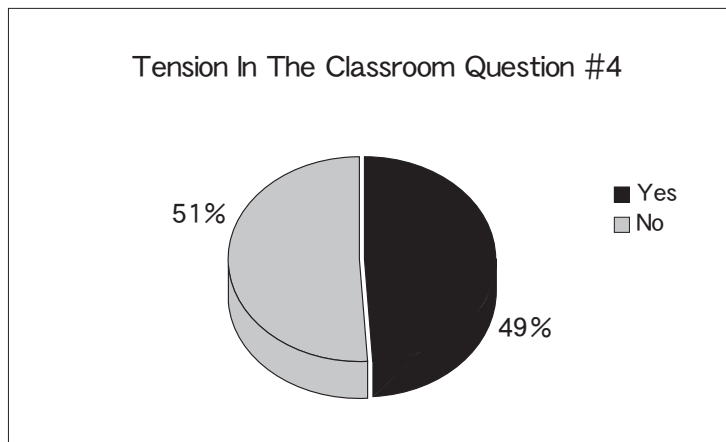
Comment：The responses to this question were inconsistent with those given in student interviews. Possibly students did not understand the question correctly because they had no cross-cultural perspective from which to compare. From interviews it was learned that freedom to express meant freedom to participate in parroting what the teacher taught and not necessarily expressing new or original ideas. Even if 49% was a correct figure, ideally it should be much higher.

Question #5 : From elementary school through high school, do you wish there had been more freedom to express your own ideas?

## Tension In The Classroom Question #5

21%
■ Yes
□ No
79%
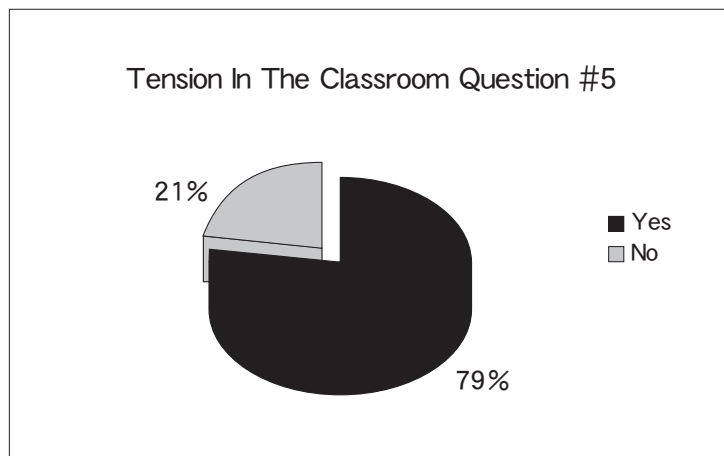
Comment：Results from question #5 are inconsistent with that of #4, but #5 more closely correlates to the comments given in the student's interviews. An overwhelming majority of students wished they had been able to express their own ideas in class more freely.

Question #6 : If you could express your own ideas creatively without any constraints or fear of being humiliated, criticized or laughed at in class, would you speak more in class ?
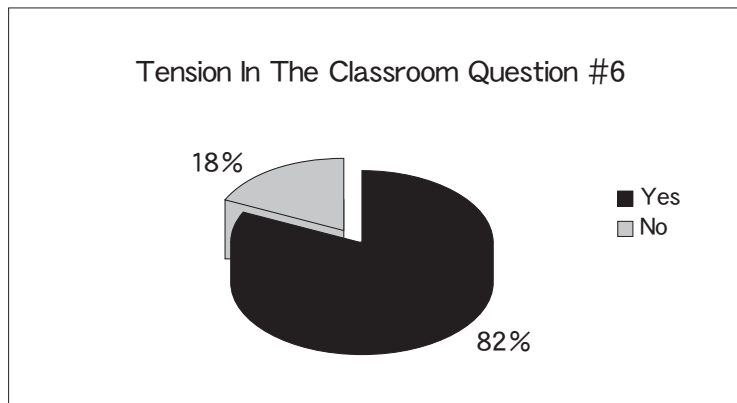
Comment : This question refers to students' current status as a university student. An overwhelming majority would speak more in class were they not conditioned to fear humiliation or criticism.

Bullying in Elementary Through University, November 2007 :
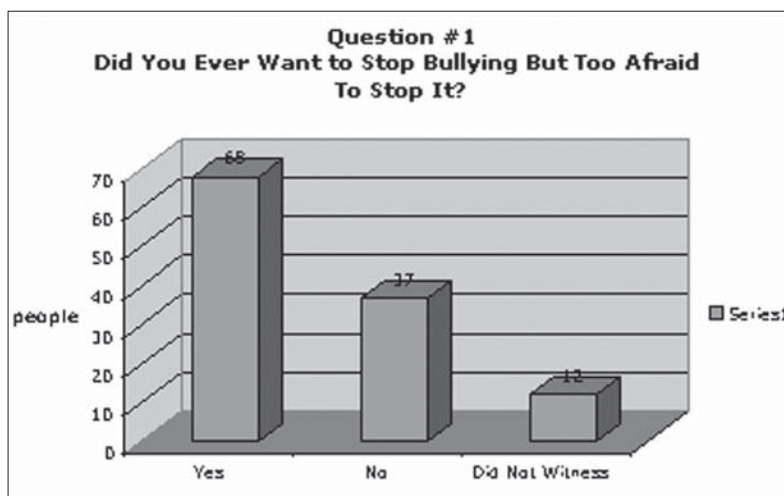
1. Comment : It is somewhat doubtful that some students said they had never witnessed bullying through their school life. In interviews some students were reluctant to approach the topic of bullying but after repeated questioning admitted that they had been not only been bystanders but had acted as the bully at different times. Many students had seemed to be in all three position of bully, victim, audience and or bystander.

Question #2
Did You Feel Responsible for the Group Harmony?

(bar chart)

Category	people
No Response	13
No Concern	37
Yes (Not a Burden)	33
Yes (Was a Burden)	34

☐ Series1

x-axis: 0 10 20 30 40 — people
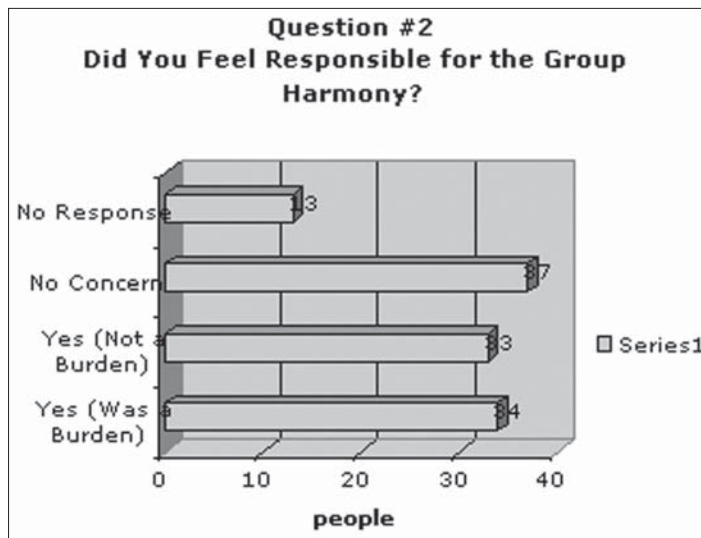
2. Comment：Both 'yes' respondents' added together show that a high percentage of students concern themselves with maintaining group harmony. This is not conducive to spontaneous and creative responses in an English class.

Question #3
Have You Been Ostracized From the Group in the Classroom or at School?
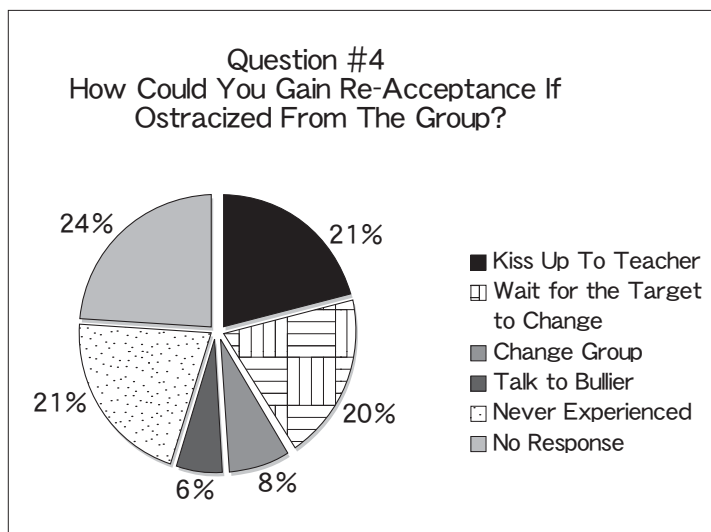
(bar chart)

Category	people
Yes	57
No	54
No Answer	2

☐ Series1

y-axis: 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 — people
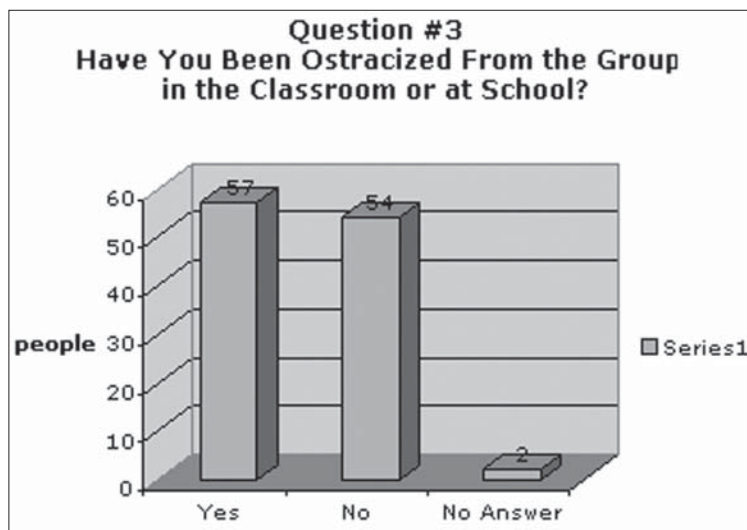
3. Comment：The percentage of 'No' responses is highly doubtful based on the interviews conducted. One student who responded 'no' later admitted that after taking the survey, he had nightmares and recalled having been bullied but had repressed the memories. Numerous other students had not suppressed the memories to that degree but admitted they had forgotten the incidences until being interviewed. The number of 'yes' respondents was unacceptably high.

Question #4
How Could You Gain Re-Acceptance If
Ostracized From The Group?

24%
21%
24%
21%
20%
6%
8%

- ■ Kiss Up To Teacher
- ▨ Wait for the Target to Change
- ▤ Change Group
- ▥ Talk to Bullier
- ▫ Never Experienced
- ▨ No Response

4. Comment : The two main ways given to regain acceptance are both ones that diminish self-esteem and neither one is a guarantee that the student would not be bullied again. This means that the tension is never fully alleviated once bullying has been experienced.

Question #5
Are You Afraid To Make A Mistake As A
University Student?

people

55 | 55 | 14
Yes | No | No Response

■ Series1
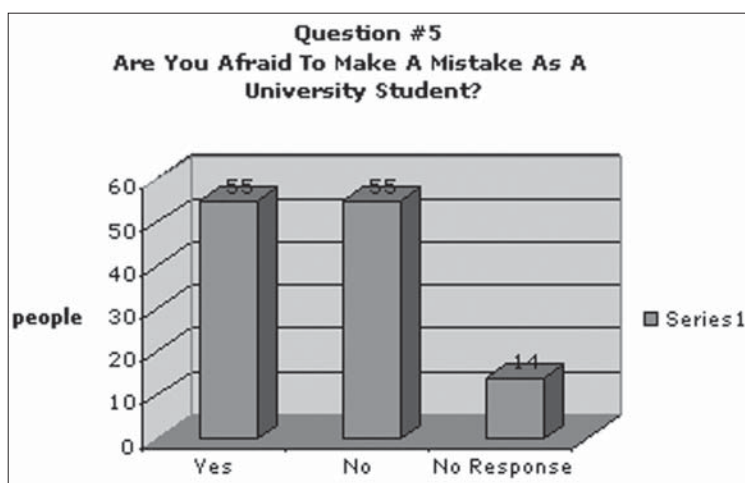
5. Comment : 'yes' and 'no' responses are equal but 'yes' response should be less than 10% in order to have an ideal English class atmosphere. One student commented that he felt he was not being criticized now but could not overcome the conditioning created by his experiences from his pre-university education.

Question #6
Where Does Most of Your Stress Come
From As A University Student

28%

13%

39%

13%

7%

- ■ Family
- ⊞ Teacher
- ▨ Friends
- ⊡ No Stress
- ▨ No Response
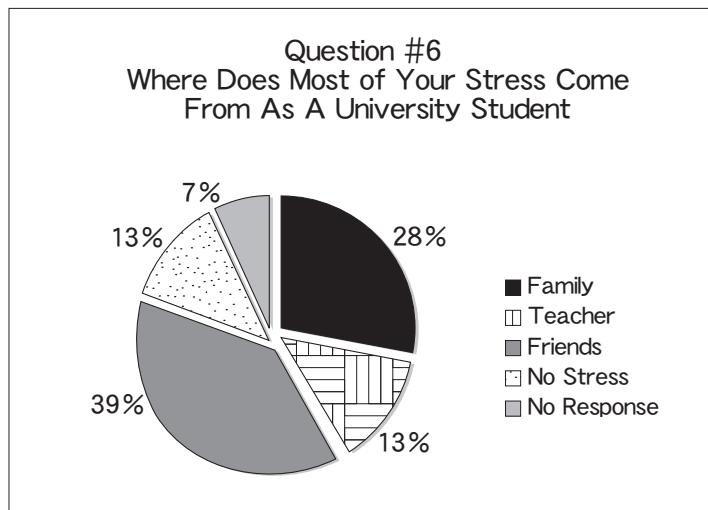
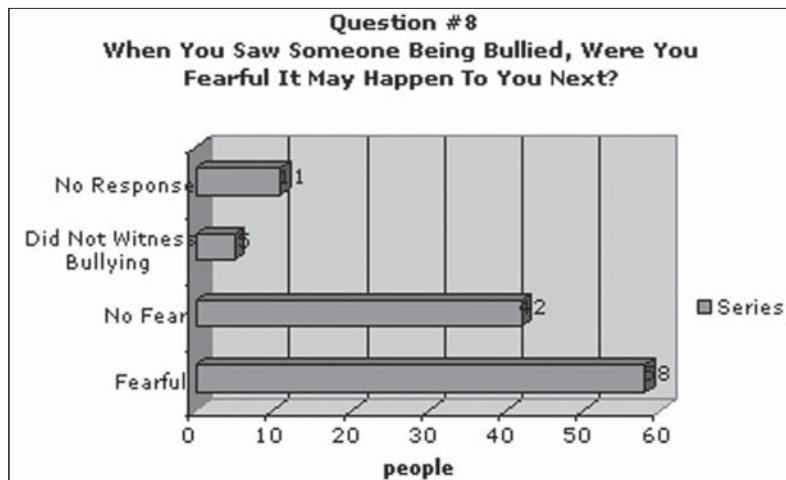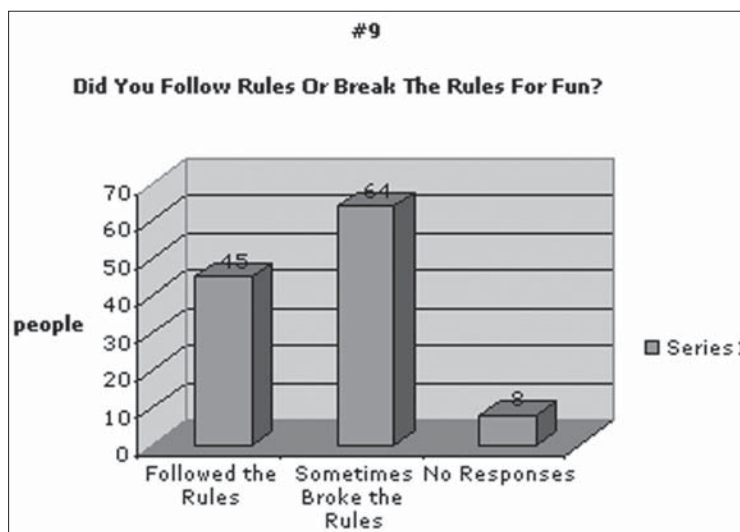6. Comment：From survey comments, students seemed overly sensitive about friendship related issues stemming from growing up in an atmosphere where bullying and ostracizing was present. Although bullying has influenced the group dynamics during the earlier years of the Japanese education, the pressure to keep harmony in the group is also a root of the tension found in a university student. In the interviews, students said that they felt pressure to keep group harmony with their friends by not appearing selfish, aggressive or too arrogant. Many interviewed said it was very tiresome to try to please their friends and keep group harmony. Parents also pressure their children to get high marks in university classes. Parental concerns seem only to be with the final outcome.

Question #7
When You Witnessed Other Students
Get Bullied How Did It Make You Feel?

44%

19%

9%

8%

8%

12%

- ■ Sorry, Sad, and Uneasy
- ⊞ Helpless
- ▨ Rediculous
- ▨ Afraid
- □ Stay Out of It
- ▨ Did Not Withess or No Response
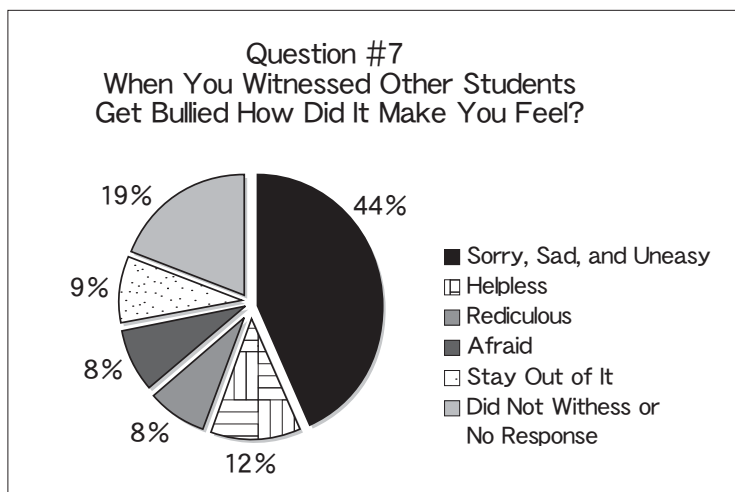
7. Comment：Responses are self-explanatory.

Question #8
When You Saw Someone Being Bullied, Were You
Fearful It May Happen To You Next?

No Response	1
Did Not Witness Bullying	5
No Fear	2
Fearful	8

(horizontal bar chart, x-axis: people, 0 to 60; legend: Series1)

8. Comment : a large proportion of respondents experienced Tension generated by fear of being the next target of bullying. The number of respondents stating they had 'no fear' is doubtful based on the interviews and instances of respondents having repressed memories. One student at first claimed she had no recollection but after discussion admitted that she remembered "school as a vicious environment where each day the goal was just to survive." The number of students that did admit they were fearful should have been much lower for a healthy learning environment.

#9

Did You Follow Rules Or Break The Rules For Fun?

(vertical bar chart, y-axis: people, 0 to 70; legend: Series1)

Followed the Rules	Sometimes Broke the Rules	No Responses
45	64	8

9. Comments : As seen in the graph, more than half of the students broke at least some of the rules during their elementary through high school. School rules in Japan are not more than what you would find in an American public high school. However in a US classroom you will not find students policing other students and there is an atmosphere of support by the teacher. A typical outline of high school rules in the US can been seen in Addendum #2. What is perplexing

about the comments in the student interviews, was that senior students police the younger students in a very intimidating way making the students either angry, afraid or anxious. Many students spoke of how the seniors would always boss them telling them not to break the rules. It was said many times that the seniors were often jealous of the freshman and it was a way to intimidate them rather than to act as an older sibling with a desire to help them. One student said that the seniors even went after him for something like plucking his eyebrows. I was even told that many times, students will watch other students and if they make a mistake they will criticize them for being foolish. According to Hayashi, senior students are often stricter than teachers in checking on junior students.[24] Students are assigned to positions specializing in 'school discipline' so that they can watch their classmates in cooperation with teachers. According to Yoneyama (1999) who cites Murakami (1999), school rules strengthen peer management and even when the students are given opportunity to make rules, the results do not differ from the rules prescribed by teachers.[25] According to Yoneyama, in her findings, the students, if they break the rules, they are not punished directly by the teacher but more by their classmates..[26] This is because students see breaking the rules as disturbing the harmony of the group causing the group to be unharmonious. Yoneyama cites Ishikawa, that the modern bullying has evolved to become more like what Japanese military called shigoki, "'Make a man out of the weak' who might otherwise jeopardize the collective order, spirit, cohesion and conformity of the military." Yoneyama (1993)..[27]

Returning to the graph, from the student interviews it became apparent that those who broke the rules were those who sought more spontaneity, creativity and autonomy. In my own classroom experience, those students with the more creative hairstyle and clothes generally have the better speaking skills and are less reserved in responding in class. Much of the present research seem to point to the rules as the problem, but looking at American schools, which also have as many rules as Japanese schools, (See Addendum #3), the problem does not lay in the degree of the rules but how they are created and how they are enforced. In the U.S., students and parents know they have the right to challenge the rules if the rules seem to be no longer valid, whereas, in Japan, rules come from the top down and even though teachers, parents, and students may not understand the reasons for the rules, the pressure to conform and obey and avoid criticism, group alienation or bullying takes precedence over expressing their own opinions and thoughts openly, which are components of creativity. The conclusion could be drawn that the high number of respondents that sometimes broke the rules may have had the desire to take risks and to have more autonomy in their lives. More research in this area is needed and desirable to help eliminate the tension that hinders student's creativity.

"Passivity comes from the hostile atmosphere and experiencing the feeling of humiliation and the state of being uncomfortable." University Student Surveys, 2007

"Seniors demand freshman to do as they order them to do." University Student Surveys, 2007

"When I was a junior high student, I belonged to a volleyball club. At that time, I was worried about the relationship between the seniors and juniors. My volleyball club was strict about the seniority system. I had to keep the volleyball club rules. For example, the first year students had to wear white shoes, have a black bag and so on. One day I was playing volleyball but I was really tired and felt thirsty. I accidentally drank the water before all the seniors drank the water. Then the senior got angry and then after 2 or 3 days, I was wisecracked by them. If I thought the seniors ideas were wrong, I couldn't say anything and had to listen to what the seniors told me to do." University Student Surveys, 2007

There are five categories that were the most frequently cited by students as those generating tension in the classroom during elementary through high school. Two question addressed tension in the classroom at the university they are currently attending and is incorporated into the comments.

1. Tension Generated From Teacher-Student Relationship :

It is very clear from the graph that students have a desire for the teacher to be more friendly and kind towards them during their learning process. In the interviews that I did, it was interesting that the students never complained about the studying demands and the entrance exam preparation that so many go through to get to a university, but their greatest concern was the need for a more friendly relationship with the teacher. They felt the teacher should allow them to express themselves more in class as well. In my interviews they said that when the teacher pointed out a mistake it would help them if the teacher did it in a more positive and less humiliating way. They also indicated that they would like to be able to express their opinions more to the teacher without the teacher getting angry or irritated.

"In my university, I felt tension between a teacher and the students. The teacher gave us a look of dislike toward us and showed no interest in the class. It made me very sad, because in the classroom, a teacher has a great influence on us and is a very important figure." University Student Surveys, 2007

"I think I do well when the atmosphere of the class is peaceful and there is a mutual trust between the teacher and students." University Student Surveys, 2007

"In junior high my art teacher told me in class that, 'your work is not artistic.' I tried my best but could never get his approval." University Student Surveys, 2007

"In Brass Band Club, I played the French horn and the conductor told me during our practice for a musical contest, 'Your sound is NOISY.'" University Student Surveys, 2007

"A teacher at my university called us stupid and that he could not teach us anymore." University Student Surveys, 2007

"In junior high I could not express my own opinion in class because in Japan we think that if one has a question, one asks the teacher after the class is over." University Student Surveys, 2007

"In junior high I was yelled by my teacher for misunderstanding something in class. I was frustrated and thought, 'Why did he shout at me? I only misunderstood.'" University Student Surveys, 2007

"Teachers should understand teenagers' feelings and listen to them. By being close to them, the students can feel free." University Student Surveys, 2007

"I feel there is a distance between the teachers and students and I want a friendlier atmosphere between the two as well as among classmates." University Student Surveys, 2007

"Teacher is responsible for creating a friendly atmosphere because it isn't easy to speak your own opinion." University Student Surveys, 2007

"My teacher in junior high got angry easily and whenever I made a mistake, he would always get angry with me. He did not smile, so I was scarred because I couldn't understand what he was thinking. I felt ashamed whenever he shouted at me and I was worried that everyone was laughing at me." University Student Surveys, 2007

"Teachers should not overly praise the one student that always makes the perfect answer." University Student Surveys, 2007

"I cannot talk with a teacher because they are too fierce." University Student Surveys, 2007

"Most of the bullies were the teachers and it was common to see my friends fight with the teacher. Of course I fought with the teacher too." University Student Surveys, 2007

"In junior high I was yelled by my teacher for misunderstanding something in class. I was frustrated and thought, 'Why did he shout at me? I only misunderstood.'" University Student Surveys, 2007

2. Tension Generated From Fear Of Making Mistakes :

This tension probably is the most detrimental tension generator of all as it blocks students from practicing speaking English in class. A majority of the students I interviewed did not like to speak in a class where they did not know the other students well for fear of being laughed at by others. Mistakes should be looked upon as a learning process and emphasis on the correct answer should be replaced with a more positive respect for the students' efforts in experimenting with the knowledge he or she has already learned. The teacher should be a mentor who is gently cultivating the effort and allowing the student to be more autonomous in his opinions and style of learning. The comments below are self-explanatory and hopefully can give insight to what needs to be adjusted to allow students to develop a more creative and spontaneous approach to speaking in a classroom setting.

"If we made mistakes in the classroom, classmates would laugh or become silent and laugh behind our backs." University Student Surveys, 2007

"I would have less stress if I could express my feelings more." University Student Surveys, 2007

"When I made a mistake in answering a question, there was a teacher who would be angry." University Student Surveys, 2007

"When I do make a mistake I feel depressed and it continues for a few days." University Student Surveys, 2007

"Yes I am very afraid to make mistakes, because I am afraid to be laughed at by others." University Student Surveys, 2007

"We want to enjoy studying, but many Japanese teachers require the perfect answer, which puts pressure on us not to say the wrong answer." University Student Surveys, 2007

"I have been raised not to make mistakes and when I did I would be yelled at. Even to this day it is the same situation." University Student Surveys, 2007

3. Tension Generated From Rigid Rules :

Rigid rules and barriers prevent students from gathering information and/or connecting with others. Many students in the survey stated that they neither understood the trivial rules nor did they follow them, as they did not know what the meaning of the rules were. For example, I had a student register who had lived in an English speaking country for four years, but he was required still to take an English class in order to graduate, instead of receiving credit for his years of overseas experience. Because the rule in the manual does not address this problem, the teacher cannot help the student who then becomes bored and gains no skill from attending the class. Although rules are very important in running an organization, the flexibility and creativity to help this student was sacrificed for the rule's sake. In Western universities you may find the opposite to occur. They would find the student's experience of attending school in a foreign country as an asset to their university and would give them automatic credit for the language learned when living in the foreign county.

"Japanese schools are performing according to the manual." University Student Surveys, 2007

"In general I did follow the rules, but sometimes I wanted to break them because I felt some of the rules were meaningless." University Student Surveys, 2007

4. Tension Generated From Responsibility to Group Harmony :

The ability to think for one's self and speak spontaneously are key components to learning English conversation. Group harmony is secondary to thinking independently and speaking spontaneously. From the interviews, many students were hesitant to speak when called on or when there was silence in the room for fear of looking too aggressive, selfish and not letting others speak their turn or looking like they are showing off; especially if they had a higher English ability. This works counter to what is needed in a free moving natural way of speaking English. In the interviews, I found that the students were overly concerned about how the other students think, whether it be that they look selfish, too aggressive, or too stupid. Being responsible for group harmony is too obsessive and must be lessoned so that the student can focus more on speaking freely without the burden of what others may think.

"Yes I felt responsible but it was not a burden. Maybe everybody feels responsible for the group harmony because teachers always say, 'Cooperate with each other.'" University Student Surveys, 2007

"Yes I did because my classmates and teachers saw me as a reliable person and they asked me to harmonize the group. Sometimes it was too much work that I began to

think it as a burden." University Student Surveys, 2007

"I always felt responsible for the group because for a girl it is very important to belong to a group in order to have a comfortable life. It was a burden for me but it is better than being bullied." University Student from surveys, 2007

"I felt stress from not being able to say my opinion in order to keep harmony in the group." University Student Surveys, 2007

"I have been bullied when I was in junior high school. I was transferred so I did not have friends. When someone made a mistake, commonly one of his or her friends laughed or supported him. But I didn't have the person to follow me, so I must bear many laughters and gossip towards me." University Student Surveys, 2007

"Since I experienced being bullied, I tried to keep the harmony in the class, but I did not make a big difference." University Student Surveys, 2007

"Sometimes I didn't say my opinion because of the group harmony. That was my stress." University Student Surveys, 2007

"All my friends are very kind to me. But, we don't always have the same opinion. Sometimes, we must be sensitive. In addition, my position is always pleasing them. So I feel a responsibility that I should be sensitive. It's so tiresome." University Student Surveys, 2007

5. Tension Generated From Fear Of Being Ostracized And Or Bullied

> **"The Ministry of Education defines "Ijime" as a particular form of aggression, physical or psychological, which is carried out unilaterally and continuously against someone weaker than the perpetrator (s), which the victim him/herself finds detrimental."**[28]

The surveys on bullying were based on the Morita category four roles involved in bullying. Morita categorizes four roles in bullying : victims, victimizers (Bullies), the audience, and bystanders. Several children, the "victimizers (bullies)," bully a child, the "victim," and the rest of children are the "audience" who cheers for the bullying, and the "bystanders" who allow bullying without intervening.[29]

"I believe that I have been bullied not only once, but multiple times by different people in different ways. I tried to remind myself, but I couldn't because I lock

away memories that I want to forget. But when I feel alone or dream at night, the memories come back, which made me realize that I cannot forget my past. I am sure though, that the bullying has made me stronger." *University Student Surveys, 2007*

"*One day I was suddenly ostracized. My friends never spoke to me, which confused me because I did not know what to do. Another day my bag was hidden and they just laughed at me. For the first time, I wanted to die.*" *University Student Surveys, 2007*

"*Victims rotated in bullying situations. One time I would be bullied and another time I would be the audience. When I was bullied, I was verbally teased and ignored. When I was the audience, I laughed right after the "boss" laughed at a victim. I did so because if I did not I would be treated as the friend of the victim.*" *University Student Surveys, 2007*

"*In junior high I was bullied. One day, girls were ignoring me in my class and I did not understand why I was being ignored. When I spoke to them, I was only given a blank look. This experienced scared me of bullying and I could understand how victims felt but I was never able to help because my safety came first.*" *University Student Surveys, 2007*

"*In junior high, I belonged to a tennis club. One of my friends who was the clubleader was a good tennis player. On the other hand, I was a poor player and was quiet. I was ostracized from the tennis club group. When I would talk to my friends, the group leader would take them away from me, and this made me very sad.Though I was a part of the club, I felt alone and wanted to cry. This condition continued for one to two weeks, though it felt longer. I could do nothing to act against the bullier who talked behind my back. She bullied other friends but I could not help them because I was afraid that I would be bullied again.*" *University Student Surveys, 2007*

"*When my opinions were different from others or someone hated me, so I was ostracized from the group.*" *University Student Surveys, 2007*

"*When I was in elementary school, I was in a group that had a leader who was very smart but very spiteful. She would bully a member of the group and she frequently changed the victim. So, sometimes I was bullied and during that time I felt sad and lonely. But my classmates, especially boys, helped me by telling me that I did not do anything to deserve this and I should be with them. So I left the group and made new friends. My old group ignored me, but I ignored the bullying from them. From*

this experience, I decided to choose my friends carefully and if their personality was bad I could break the friendship off." University Student Surveys, 2007

"My things have been hidden at school more then thirty times. From this I felt very stressful, since I had to go look for multiple missing items in a day. When I left my desk for a while and returned, I found that many things were hidden." University Student Surveys, 2007

"In elementary school, classmates teased a girl for making mistakes in class. Gradually the girl stopped answering questions and became a quiet girl." University Student Surveys, 2007

"If I stopped the bullying I could be bullied as well, so I became a bystander out of fear. I thought the bulliers were ridiculous but I feared to stand up against them because it could be my turn to be the target." University Student Surveys, 2007

"I was scared to stop the bullying because if I did so, I would be bullied. The girl who was the leader of the class bullied a girl who was not good at sports and schoolwork." University Student Surveys, 2007

"In junior high, I saw a classmate get bullied by his/her friends who were friends with the classmate just yesterday. Since then, I have been afraid of bullying." University Student Surveys, 2007

"Targets of the bullier often switch. If I tried to help the victim, I would become the next target. So when the bullier ignores a target, I too ignore the target because I was afraid to stand up against the bullies." University Student Surveys, 2007

"Personally I didn't dislike her, but in my class we were ordered to ignore her by the bullies. We did not use violence against her, but we excluded her from the group. Since relationships are very important, anyone disturbing the harmony was bullied by everyone is the class." University Student Surveys, 2007

"One day, when in junior high school, I went to school and when I got into my classroom my desk was missing. Finally my desk was found in the boy's restroom. I was also told by the bullies, 'Somehow, you are an eyesore!'" University Student Surveys, 2007

"While my friend was a victim, I was a bystander. I wanted to help her but if I did, I would be the next victim, so I was frightened to stand up for her. I feel guilty that I

did nothing to help my friend." University Student Surveys, 2007

"Guys like to play around a lot, so it is hard to tell whether they are fooling around or actually bulling someone. Both fooling around and bulling look similar to me so it is hard for me to tell. If I tried to stop people from bullying someone, it would be too difficult, so I walked away." University Student Surveys, 2007

"When in a bullying situation, I was just a bystander. I could not do anything but watch people get bullied because I was afraid that if I stopped the bullying, I would be bullied. In Japanese school, people who protect victims also get bullied because bullies do not like to be bothered." University Student Surveys, 2007

"In my group there was a "boss" and if I disobeyed, I would be kicked out of the group, therefore instead of helping I just watched bullying occur. One day, some people began to ignore me and I was not able to make it into any groups. Soon the target changed and another person was bullied, and I pretended not to see it." University Student Surveys, 2007

"I did not wish to bully my friends, but if I stood up I would have become the victim and I was scared of becoming the victim. The only thing I could do was to talk behind the bullies back." University Student Surveys, 2007

"There was a bully in my class and when she was annoyed, she would say bad things behind my classmate's back. We were scared of her so she became the leader and we followed her opinion even though we did not want to. There was a class clown who was very cute and funny but the bully did not like her, so one day the bully told my classmates that the class clown was the target." University Student Surveys, 2007

"In junior high, bullying occurred in my class. The bullying consisted of neglecting the victim. The "boss" had an eye on a girl in my class, so other girls bullied her as well. I was an audience even though I thought it was foolish. I could not say this to the "boss" because if I did so, I would become the next target." University Student Surveys, 2007

"When I was in junior high, I bullied. Girls form groups in classrooms and my group had six members. In the beginning we were good friends (shopping and going to the movies). But one day, I began to dislike a girl who was in the group, who I thought was selfish. So I told another girl in the group, who was my best friend, about my feelings. She too confirmed that she had the same feelings because she was selfish

and would not listen to what my best friend said. Gradually my best friend and I stopped talking to her. Then the other girls in the group began to do the same as well. We began to neglect her and put her down because she was out of our group and had been absent from school for a week." University Student Surveys, 2007

"I was bullied to create excitement in the classroom, club meeting, etc. It's happened to me often to be bullied in order to create excitement." University Student Surveys, 2007

"I have experienced bullying and I think that teachers who take charge of the class having bullying must take the place of the bullied student." University Student Surveys, 2007

"In grade 1 and grade 2, I was either beaten up or hit. I always felt scared and all I could do was tolerate it. Do you know what it would be like not to be able to predict when you were going to get beat up or hit？" University Student Surveys, 2007

"Yes, I have been ostracized in my club. Do I have to repeat this again？ Please don't make me repeat this horrible memory. This question is useless. Why should I have to repeat it？？ What is the meaning of dividing Junior high school time and others？ (What is the meaning of bringing it up again in the survey.)？ Sorry, I'm very rude. But please understand victims feeling. Victim wants to know what happened in the classroom or school. But don't want to repeat. I'm not delegate of victims."
University Student Surveys, 2007

ADDENDUM #1

Early Childhood Program Scope and Sequence

Every day, our experienced, nurturing staff welcome the children into a warm, creative, hands-on environment. The focus is on educating the whole child. Schoolhouse teachers and staff create an environment that nurtures the social, emotional, intellectual and physical development of each child.

A hands-on, multi-sensory approach to learning is implemented.

We strongly believe it has to be in the hand before it gets to the brain. We believe that child-initiated, child-directed, teacher-supported play is an essential component of developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Monthly themes are followed, complemented by emergent, child initiated, and open-ended curriculum.

We base our philosophy on the work of **Piaget** and **Erikson** :

Piaget believes that through play we can be "explorers without failure". It is through play that young children develop the basic skills they will need to become effective contributors to the health of a changing world.

Erikson believes that children develop in stages that must be honored. Each child develops at their own pace and unique style.

We believe :

・ The most important tools a child can master in early childhood are : socialization, language acquisition, communication of feelings, and the beginnings of autonomy through separation.

・ In teaching and modeling environmental awareness, including the knowledge of, and respect for all life.

・ A curriculum should be culturally responsive, free of bias and compatible with the values of children's own cultures.

・ Everyone—parents, teachers, children and administrators—are an integral part of building a strong, caring and stimulating community.

 Early Childhood Daily Routine

We believe that children rely on routine for comfort and security. We are a five-day a week program.

At the Hollywood Schoolhouse, children experience opportunities for inside and outside play, process-oriented exploration and hands-on, multi-sensory learning. Throughout their week the children explore through music, dance, dramatic play, painting, sculpture, science, fine and gross-motor exploration and problem solving. They converse, resolve conflicts, tell stories, and learn to listen, share, and live in community with one another.

We also provide a nurturing environment that enables children the flexibility to just be.

The Hollywood School House-Preschool-Elementary-Middle School / 2007,
http : //www.hollywoodschoolhouse.org/

Addendum #2

Douglas MacArthur High School
Rules and Procedures

1. No food or drinks will be allowed in the classroom.
2. Each student must have an ID card in his/her possession at all times.
3. When a student leaves the classroom, the student must have a pass. Students may use an official wooden pass only in the building where the student is currently in class. If a student leaves the building, the student must have a pass. No other passes will be permitted. Students should not be released from class unless it is an emergency.
4. Students (male or female) may not wear head coverings on the MacArthur High School campus except on the athletic fields.
5. Work-Study students must leave campus at the designated time.
6. Public displays of affection are not appropriate on the school campus.
7. Beepers, cell phones, CD players, etc. will be allowed before and after school. No electronic devices, of this type will be allowed to be used or visible between 9 : 00 a.m. and 4 : 00 p.m.
8. Wallet chains will not be allowed on campus.
9. Boots with steel toes will not be permitted on campus or at campus activities.
12. Earrings may be worn in the ear(s) only. Shorts may be worn at the appropriate length. Dresses and skirts that are significantly above knee length should not be worn.
13. MacArthur High School is a closed campus. Students are to remain on campus during their lunch periods.
14. Students are to remain in the cafeteria, picnic area or courtyard of the campus during their lunch period.

15. Students are required to clean their area after lunch.

16. Students who are truant from class will not be allowed to make up work for credit.

Conclusion :

In conducting this cross-culture research, it could be said that neither Japanese nor American educational systems have all the answers or are devoid of their particular challenges. There is much both sides can learn from each other and there is much to be respected in the Japanese educational system. When walking into a Japanese university classroom from a foreign teacher's perspective, it is amazing the level of meekness, respect and diligence the students exhibit, and their dedication to education. Certainly the Japanese educational system has served the country well up until now, making it a world economic power. Japanese products are known the world over for their quality and attention to detail, but as is true in many cases, repetitive methodology and ways of doing things without adjusting to the changing environment, often makes the positive become a negative and a detriment to continued success in the educational system. Without ingenuity and creativity, no country will be able to maintain it's competitive edge. It is interesting to note from the quotation previously cited from the Board of Education defining bullying in 1997. One has to ask themselves how much progress has been made with this problem in the last 10 years. It was heart wrenching to read the comments from the student surveys and to see their potential squandered by a rigid system that is unable to harness and direct their creative energies.

There is a dilemma in trying to blend western thought and Confucian thought and many Japanese teachers erroneously believe that if they allow creativity they will loose control of the management of the class. But it is possible and as I have proven in my own classroom to have friendly authority over the students. This research is ongoing but teachers need to instruct their students about negative and positive creative behavior from an early age. For example, individualistic behavior is not necessarily bad as long as it is not done merely for the aggrandizement of the individual. Students should be taught in line with Confucian thought, that they have an obligation to use their creativity to give back to society. In this way, individual creativity can be directed for the good of the group and society in general. If this attitude towards creativity was adopted and incorporated in the Japanese educational system, the importance and need to eliminate the tension generators discussed in this paper would become more apparent to educators and students alike.

"Without any constraints or fear of being humiliated and criticized, Japanese students would have a creative and spontaneous opinion." University Student Surveys, 2007

[1] Anna Craft, *Creativity across the primary curriculum: Framing and developing practice.* (London: Routledge, 2000) 3.

[2] Weihua Niu, Robert Sternberg, "Contemporary Studies on the Concept of Creativity: the East and the West." *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, Vol. 36, Number 4, Fourth Quarter, ((2002)

[3] A.K. Ng, "A Cultural Model of Creative and Conforming Behavior." *Creativity Research Journal,* Vol. 15, Nos 2 & 3, (2003), 223-233.

[4] E. Sampson, *Celebrating the Other. A dialogic account of human nature.* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993).

[5] Paul E.Torrance, "Creativity. What research says to the teacher." *National Education Association,* Washington D.C., no. 28, (1969).

[6] Anna Craft, *Creativity Across the Primary Curriculum,* (London: Routledge, 2001).

[7] Kimberly Seltzer, & Tom Bentley, *The creative age: Knowledge and skills for the new economy,* Demos, London, (1999), 10.

[8] Rollo May, "The Courage To Create". (Toronto: Bantam, 1975).

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