

Team-Teaching in English: Working for Students

Native English-speaking Teachers (NETs) in Japanese public schools can be seen as an educational investment, enriching Japanese students to the world outside of Japan and broadening their understanding of mixed ethnic cultures in English-speaking countries. But, how is that possible in a homogenous country like Japan? Because there exist challenges which disrupt the potential of fully implementing an effective team-teaching program in a Japanese English education system. We can, however, set our minds with a positive attitude, take innovative steps with a forward-thinking purpose, and believe that we can achieve success. It begins in incorporating a well-efficient plan with everyone's cooperation, trust, and belief in one another. With these in place, the flow will proceed smoothly and a vision of a successful team-teaching program can be established in the schools and the communities.

In the mid-1990's, before I became a NET in Japan years later, I had this rare opportunity to be taught by two high school Japanese language teachers working together in the classroom. One was the lead teacher and the other was the assistant teacher from Japan. I always saw them five days a week and the target language of Japanese was almost always used in every class lesson. I could also learn about the Japanese culture/customs. There were opportunities to enter the annual Japanese speech and skit contests because those were a class assignment. My school also had a Japanese club with Japan-related outings. Then, in my last year, I met a class of Japanese students from Japan when they visited my school. For that one day, we did group presentations to introduce our country and shared valuable cultural memories with each other. All of these experiences happened in a public school! As for my assistant teachers, I never saw them replaced by another assistant teacher in the middle of the school year and they could stay in the same school for more than a year. Moreover, they were able to have opportunities to make a contribution at my high school, build good relationship with my lead teacher, and become a member of an Association of Teachers of Japanese.

In Japan, the English education curriculum is quite complex and different from the U.S. in how it tailors team-teaching in their schools. Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) can be assigned as the homeroom class teacher and share their work responsibilities with other subject teachers. These include taking care of the school's academic scheduling, reports, events, meetings, clubs, and so on. Then, when it comes to their classroom teaching and other English-related responsibilities, their official English textbook curriculum becomes the biggest priority and it carries that influence on to students to mainly focus on passing the entrance examinations. Therefore, the students' opportunities to benefit from "regular" team-teaching learning with their JTE and NET varies greatly. So, what can be done to properly increase the number of team-teaching lessons in an English class?

First, integrating the NETs into JTEs' regular scheduled lesson curriculum would be a good start rather than it being a supplement to team-teaching in English class. Because it helps keep JTEs accountable to fully utilize their NETs, incorporate cultural lesson activities in class, and make the progress of the program grow within the school. If possible, try implementing it on a daily basis or as close to it, and only schedule NETs with their JTE to multiple schools for "educational outreach" purposes. Find a way to make it work! JTEs and the NET also have to discuss lesson plans, so it's essential for them to be seated with or within close proximity to each other in the teachers' room. These NETs aren't just enthusiastic short-term assistant teachers, but include long-term experienced NETs. There are genuine NETs as well with unique, individualistic, and diverse teaching skills willing to contribute to their school(s) and have hopes to build a trustworthy relationship with school teachers. They do their best effort to work with JTEs, support English-related after school programs, and much more. It is also a good opportunity for all school teachers to learn more about their NETs and acknowledge what they can do in the school to be a productive member. For example, NETs in junior high schools can take part in what other teachers do at work. They can be assigned as the cleaning lead/sub teacher for a group of students to clean the classrooms, be assigned to a color team with work responsibilities on Sports' Day, and so on.

In regards to resources, purchasing a district school license for domestic and international teaching materials for the English department in each Japanese school and providing a work laptop for every NET, is an investment in providing quality education. The budget for it does exist and it's possible! For example, Japanese public schools that are given the opportunity with a special subsidized budget to be a "model" school, equipped with hi-tech resources in classrooms and an ICT specialist to train school teachers for a period of time, has already been set aside as a trial. Moreover, those who are in such schools, should take advantage and utilize it efficiently. It's up to teachers and

educators to make wise choices, think of the students' future, and expand the model program to other schools. Let's also do this with the English team-teaching program! To do so effectively and efficiently, please see "Goal and Outcome" at <http://www.laurasian.org/jleap/index.html> and "Benefits" at <http://www.laurasian.org/jleap/benefits.html> to visualize what a successful team-teaching program is like in the U.S. Then, try to use it as a catalyst to prioritize the quality necessities in the Japanese English education, as well as a way for more Japanese public schools to establish a mutual international connection with public schools abroad.

Over the years, I've also been developing teaching resources and putting them on my website, [Eigo Ganbare](http://www.eigoganbare.com). Many JTEs, they can only have access to limited, shared teaching resources, and must follow a rigid public school English curriculum. But, if they were provided a balanced workload, teaching flexibility, and a smooth access to resources such as Eigo Ganbare and other educational sites developed by NET/JTE volunteers or licensed English teachers/educators, then they can more confidently enjoy teaching with a purpose and encourage their school to request additional resources to motivate their students. Even NETs who use the pre-made lesson plans and activities from external sites can be inspired to create better lessons of their own or with their JTEs.

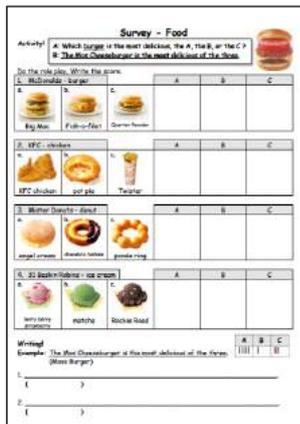
What is Eigo Ganbare? It originally started out as a message to students that I put on their worksheets because I wanted them to have hope. It means to do your best and stay motivated. Because no matter how difficult English is, you can do it! Now, it can be a similar message for JTEs to have the spirit of determination to enjoy what they teach, embrace co-teaching with a NET, provide effective JTE/NET team-teaching training to elementary school teachers as English becomes a compulsory course, build confidence to engage new challenges, and respectively support their superiors in making good decisions. 全員参加で楽しくガンバロウ！！

In this Eigo Ganbare website, what hidden treasures can you find?

Making the education system work better is within our reach!

<http://www.eigoganbare.com>
(英語)

<http://jpn.eigoganbare.com>
(日本語)



Interviewing



Reflection



School Blog



Augmented Reality Auras



Social Media Education



Cultural Presentations

****When using these resources on Eigo Ganbare, please keep this in mind, “日本の公立学校のみ”に限定。他の利用は認めません。”**
And for parents, please support the local schools in your community.

What's your idea that you "CAN" add in class?

Read more articles, [The Pen Pal Project](#) and [JHS English Club: Success is Doing](#).

To learn about another team-teaching philosophy through the eyes of your fellow Japanese, teaching as an ALT in the U.S., please read their essay report at <https://www.jfalco.org/jle-jleap>.



Teacher's ☆



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