

## On Three Kiwi Schools :

### A Report on My First Visit to Schools in Auckland, NEW ZEALAND

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Faculty of Education in Mie University began to send visit group of professors and students to The University of Auckland in New Zealand since 2011, so this year (2012) is the second year. I myself joined the visit group for the first time this year and visited one primary school, one intermediate school and one college (=upper secondary school) in and near Auckland City during Sept. 17th and 19th.

Those school are in the similar democratic society like Japan, but there are many different characteristics from Japanese primary and secondary schools. So I will introduce some of the different characteristics in some New Zealander schools in this report.

**Keywords:** school system, no entrance ceremony, teachers lounge, different activities in the same class, perfection of ruling students, slogans on the classroom wall encouraging students

#### Forword

From Sept. 10th to 20th, 2012, three professors including me and ten students of Faculty of Education in Mie University visited Auckland, New Zealand. It was the second year for our faculty to send visit group to The University of Auckland.

I myself joined the visit group this year for the first time, though I had my own seminar from Sept. 11th to 14th in Kumano City and joined late to the visit group in Sept. 15th (and stayed one more day after the visit group returned to Japan).

It was my first visit to New Zealand. I visited The University of Auckland and three primary and secondary schools in and around Auckland City. I was very impressed on New Zealander schools, so in this report I'd like to introduce some characteristics of them.

By the way, what is the meaning of 'kiwi schools'?

Most of us, Japanese people know that kiwi is a name of a fruit; the shape is like egg and flesh of the fruit is green, sometimes yellow and having many small seeds.

And I think there are not so many Japanese people who know that it is

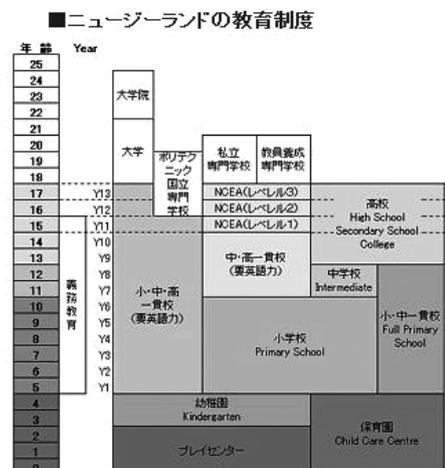


also the name of the bird on this picture. For New Zealander, kiwi is a bird. On the other hand, they call the name of that fruit 'kiwifruit.'

And do you know that there is the third meaning of 'kiwi'? It is used like 'kiwi people' or 'kiwi school.' It means 'New Zelander.'

So the meaning of the title of my report, 'three kiwi school,' is of course not the school of teaching how to grow kiwi trees, but ordinary New Zealander schools.

#### 1. School system in New Zealand



(<http://www.delightstay.com/abroad/15.html>)

Before describing three kiwi schools, it is necessary to explain New Zealander school system. In

New Zealand, school year begins in February and ends in December. One school year is divided into four semesters.

Pretty much different from Japan, there is no entrance ceremony in February, because in New Zealand, every child whose fifth year birthday was over has the right to enter primary school. Fifth year children enter school one after another all the year round.

In New Zealand elementary education is six years long, the same length as Japan but begins about a year earlier than Japan.

Secondary education system is rather complicated as indicated in the figure in the previous page.

1. Full Primary School : a combined style of primary and lower secondary school
2. Intermediate : 7th and 8th grade
3. high School / Secondary School / College : 9th to 13th grade
4. united lower and upper secondary school : 7th to 10th grade
5. united primary and secondary school : 1st to 13th grade

I myself visited one primary school, one intermediate and one college.

College is not school of higher education but school of upper secondary education.

## 2. Oratia District School

Now I will introduce three kiwi schools.

In fact, The visit group visited four schools. But when other members visited Puna Kohungahunga, a kindergarten located within Epsom Campus of The University of Auckland. Epsom Campus is about 20 minutes by bus from the centre of



Auckland City. Our visiting group except me visited there on Fri. September 14th, but on that day I was still in Kumano City, Japan..

Oratia District School locates in the western part of Auckland. We visited there in Sept. 17th.

We Japanese 13 visitors were divided into eight groups. I and one senior student who belongs to English Education Course of our faculty visited 'Reception Class'.

It's a class of the first graders and there are nine kids.



But on that day there were more children, more than twice as regular members.

'Reception Class' means that first grader children welcome some kindergarten children who in the near future will go over five years old and enter this school. So there were welcome messages to the guest that day, including the name of our student!

I in fact was proposed to watch other class and misguided to this class, but I preferred to stay there!



In the picture in the next page, there are both five years old first grader children and four years old kindergarten children. I cannot distinguish each!

The classroom was very colorful and flooring was covered with carpet. Some parents of pre-school children gathered around them.

Some parent brought a whole cake. The teacher Ms Carol Hope let one girl count the members that day. Later the cake was cut into small pieces and



children tasted them at morning tea time.

Before showing the children a real cake, Carol talked about common fraction. Children learned about ‘whole,’ ‘half’ and ‘quarter.’ Learning mathematics was connected with children’s ordinary concern.

Then all first grader and second grader class members and guests children gathered in the hall and enjoyed dancing.

After that the class and the guests went to the library. Carol read a book for children.

After one period observation, the vice principal of this



school showed our visit group around the school. Japanese pupil Amato Nakamura and his mother Aya Nakamura went around with us.

Among many places we visited, there was one strange room.

In one corner of this room there were many instrument like electric guitars.

And in the next corner there were display of the results of mathematics learning.



Through this photo we can observe the learning task to guess what maths children used when they had built their towers. Children made papercraft tower and then reflect the procedure of making from mathematical aspect. I don’t know in which



grade children learn this but it is very interesting for me.

### 3. Remuera Intermediate School

Remuera Intermediate School locates eastern part of Auckland near Epsom Campus of University of Auckland. It is an intermediate school so it only has 7th graders and 8th graders.



At the front of our visit, Principal Ms Janet Exon welcomed us and explained about this school. This room below is teachers lounge. I think perhaps every school in NZ has this kind of room for teachers to rest and communicate each other. There' no



room crowded with desks like Japanese SHOKUIN-SHITSU (staff room).

Teachers join from 10:30 to 11:00 for morning tea time. It's such a long break compared with Japanese teachers.



Then four female students came to this room.

Principal Janet said the girl at the far right who introduced themselves has Japanese mother, but it is not only she who speak Japanese in this school. There is a subject, JAPANESE in the school curriculum.

We visitors were divided into four groups and these four female students took each group and showed us around the school.

Though the girl who led my group were a little bit shy and didn't talk to us individually, they knew well what to do and what to explain to us. I was very surprised at positive mind and action of students.

They are members of school council, like SEITOKAI in Japan. They are nominated from students and so are respected by them.

Another point that I was surprised was that four students were permitted to go out of classroom during lesson period to take care of visitors. I think in Japanese junior high schools it is difficult for some students to go out of classroom during lesson time and do some other activity.

There was another surprising thing for me.

In the front space of this school, there was a plate which honors Head Boy and Head Girl of each school year.

This school is public school. And in Japan it is impossible that public junior high school honors most valuable person among its students.

This is a lesson of science.

Each group are doing different activity.



It is ordinary in kiwi schools.

Children are doing different activities in the same classroom according to their learning ability. It is not considered as discrimination but considered to meet needs of each learner. It is very very different from Japan.

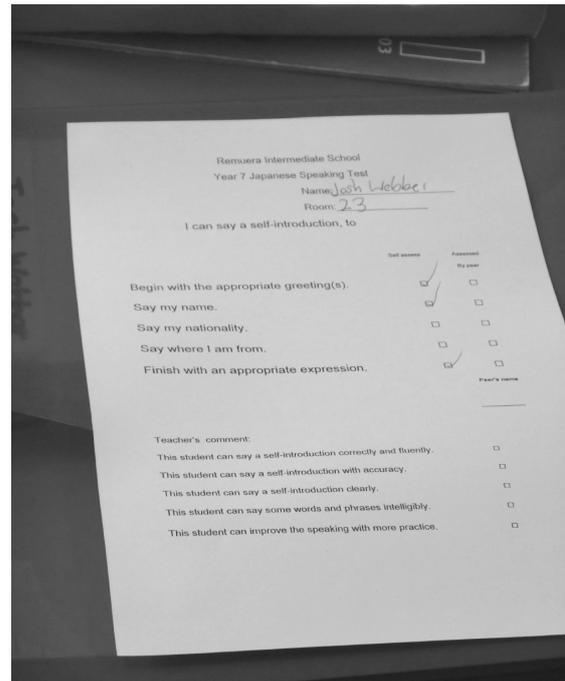


This is Japanese Language lesson. The teacher said to me she is half Chinese, quarter Russian and quarter Japanese. And she also said to me, "Please come to my class. Today we have test."

I was not sure why she invited me to the class where students have a test. Should I observe the students answering calmly ?

But soon when I entered into the classroom, I understood. It was checking time whether each

student mastered using some pattern of self introduction.



Students grouped into pairs and checked oral speech each other. Then they called teacher and asked for checking.

I think one part of Japanese sentence patterns they were using was insufficient.

Students said in self introduction, "Auckland kara desu." But it should be, "Auckland kara kimashita."

#### 4. Pakuranga College

Pakuranga college locates in the eastern part of Auckland.

College is not an institute of higher education, but secondary education. It has students from 9th graders to 13th graders.

About this school I'd like to report two surprising points for me.

**Point 1 : Some teachers' eagerness or mind to perfection of ruling students in some special fields: keeping quiet, not disturbing others and concentration.**

She is a teacher of English, their mother language. This is a 9th grader class.

Her speech to students were very clear.



And she never looked over every single students' action which was against rules to keep concentration in the lesson.

In my own lecture in Mie University, students frequently begin to chat. I make caution some time but not every time. But I learned in New Zealand that consistency is important because it has a serious relation to students' reliance on teachers. Teacher should act under the same rule every time.

**Point 2: Some words or slogan on the classroom wall**

I saw these words below in Pakuranga College.

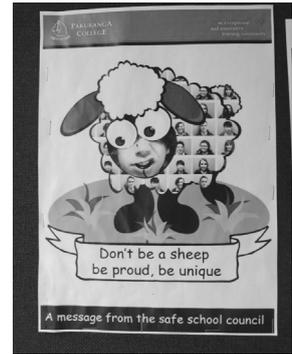


**To live a creative life we must lose our fear of being wrong.**

I know a similar slogan in Japan : Classroom is a place where children can fail (=Kyoshitsu wa machigau tokoro da.)



**Stand tall stand proud**



**Don't be a sheep be proud be unique**



**Intelligence is knowing what to do when you don't know what to do.**

**"We're all in this together!" Stand up against Bullying**



I don't know how these sayings and slogans effect students' school life. Next time I visit kiwi schools I will interview with students.

**Afterword**

I know well that characteristics I introduced in this report derive from what I came to know through my visit to each single primary, intermediate school and college.

So at next stage I have to examine whether these characteristics can be adopted in many other kiwi schools as well. It will be my task at next visit to Auckland in 2013.

I am especially interested in multiple learning processes in the same classroom: is it popular in many schools? and does it work well?

So I will keep on researching kiwi schools!