

Explore Japan



A Cultural and Educational Experience for
Grade 10 High School Students
In the Greater Edmonton Area

Held on October 26, 2010

Prepared by the Explore Japan Steering Committee

Edmonton Japanese Community Association – Culture Programs Committee
Institute for Innovation in Second Language Education at Edmonton Public Schools
Japan Foundation, Toronto
Alberta Education
Alberta Japanese Language Teacher's Association

December 17, 2011

1. Program Objective - What is the “Explore Japan”?

The program provides an opportunity for Grade 10 students in the greater Edmonton area to explore Japanese culture at first hand. Through a variety of activities facilitated by Japanese community members, the program will enhance the understanding of Japanese culture by the Edmonton youth and promote friendship between Japan and Canada. High school Japanese programs will greatly benefit by participating in the event.

2. Background

The Edmonton Japanese Community Association (EJCA) has been promoting Japanese culture and language in the Edmonton areas. Since 2002, it has been providing the “Japan Today” program to junior high schools as a Grade 8 Social module supplement.

In May 2010, EJCA Culture Programs Committee received an inquiry from the Alberta Japanese Teachers Association (AJTA) if cultural presentation to Grade 10 students who would start studying Japanese Language and Culture in September could be organized by EJCA.

After some research activities, the first Steering Committee meeting was held on August 7, 2010, and a decision was made to proceed with the plan.

3. Date/time: Tuesday October 26, 2010 9:00 – 3:20

4. Schools, students, teachers, and chaperone registered

| School | Area | Students | Teachers | Chaperone |
|---|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Harry Ainlay High School | Edmonton | 91 | 2 | 0 |
| Lindsay Thurber Comprehensive High School | Red Deer | 22 | 1 | 0 |
| Bellerose Composite High School | St. Albert | 27 | 1 | 1 |
| Memorial Composite High School | Stony Plain | 26 | 1 | 0 |
| Spruce Grove Composite High School | Spruce Grove | 19 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | | 185 | 6 | 1 |

5. Program Details

a. In the homeroom

Students had a morning gathering, lunch, and waited for buses after the program was over in own homeroom.

b. In the hall with all students together

(i) Opening session – Welcome and Introduction

- Keynote speech
- Japanese Drum (Taiko) presentation



Welcome



Keynote Speech



Taiko

(ii) After the lunch session – Kimono Show and Japanese Dance

After lunch, all students got together in the hall and watched a Kimono Show and traditional Japanese dances.



c. In the classrooms and the hall

(i) Modern Japan

A third year Grant MacEwan University student who was in Japan for one year as an exchange student told his experience in Japan using slide pictures. He talked about modern Japan, technology, and life styles, particularly of young people.



(ii) **Flower arrangements and tea ceremony**

The room was prepared in the tearoom settings with flower arrangements. After an explanation of flower arrangements and a tea ceremony, students watched the ceremony. Then, Japanese sweets and tea were served to all students.



(iii) **Calligraphy**

After students appreciated professional calligraphies displayed on the wall, the presenters explained calligraphy and tools. Students practiced a few kanji using samples and made one good copy. Some students made their own name cards in Japanese.



(iv) **Kimono and Origami**

All students tried Yukata (casual summer Kimono). Two spots with Japanese shoji screens and cherry blossom trees were set for photo shooting. Traditional Japanese music was played as background sound. At the origami workshop, students took a close look at samples first, then, they made their own origami.



(v) **Karate and Taiko workshop**

Taiko workshop: Presenters explained about Taiko, then, demonstrated key techniques. All students had a turn for



drumming a Taiko.

Karate workshop: Instructors guided students into the “Karate world” including trials.

Both Taiko and Karate demonstrated the Japanese way of behavior, i.e. politeness, concentration, and respect. Students were introduced to these values while they enjoyed practicing Taiko and Karate.



6. Student Handout

Handout bags were prepared.

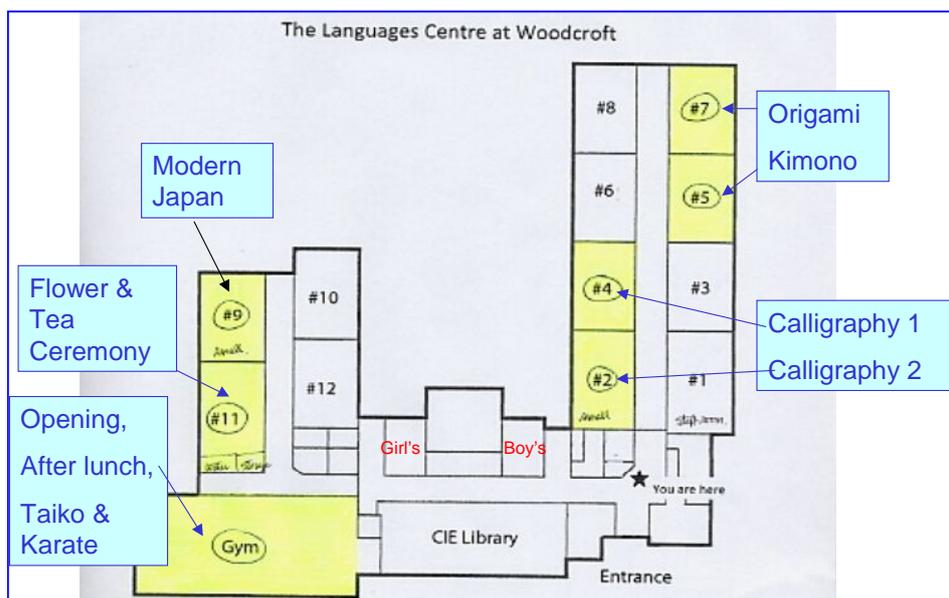
- Individual student’s time schedule printed in group’s color paper
- Student’s name tag in group’s color
- Instruction sheet of activities
- Quiz sheet (There was one quiz for each session. The quiz will be used back in Japanese language class.)
- Feed back form

7. Donations - Gift bags to schools

Various door prizes donated by the sponsors were distributed to schools as gifts so that teachers could use the prizes at Japanese classes.

8. Facility Information

The Institute of Innovation in Second Language Education (iisle) at Woodcroft School, 13750 Woodcroft Avenue, Edmonton



9. Summary of feedback

Students' feedback (135 responses from 5 schools)

a) Overall satisfaction:

| | |
|---|------|
| Very satisfied | (74) |
| Somewhat satisfied | (40) |
| Between Very satisfied and Somewhat satisfied | (1) |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | (4) |
| Very dissatisfied | (1) |
| No answer | (15) |

b) Each session/event/workshop received "Very satisfied/Somewhat satisfied from more than 90 per cent of students".

Teachers' feedback (5 teachers)

- a) All teachers are "Very satisfied" with the experience.
- b) All teachers marked "Excellent" as to how meaningful it was for their own Japanese-language program.

10. Voices from teachers and students (excerpts from feedback forms)

- Very welcoming
- Well organized
- Instructors were very nice
- The Speech was powerful and the Taiko demo was exciting
- Because of your presentation, I want to go to Japan
- Fun and a great way to introduce Japanese art forms
- Lots of meaning behind the traditions
- ...helps us learn about Japanese culture
- Cool, artistic and creative
- Fun and interactive
- ...challenging, but fun
- It was fun and educational
- I found the whole experience informative and engaging
- It has inspired me to learn more about Japan
- I will be looking forward to it next year
- It made me very enthusiastic about going to Japan
- ... made me feel all immersed in culture and everything
- It was really helpful to understand Japanese culture. I really want to recommend to my friends
- This program was very good. I want my friend to know more about Japan

- ...it's really good to see and feel Japanese culture
- [found the following most fascinating]...respect towards others, and the significance of their language
- Really enjoyed myself and I believe my students also really enjoyed themselves too!
- The presenters had prepared the activities very well
- An excellent way of seeing the subtleties of Japanese culture

11. Suggestions for future consideration - Next steps

- Timeline (when it is to be held: Teachers are extremely busy in September and October whereas the weather would be a major concern from November onwards)?
- Venue (Mats/chairs in the gym for students? Some students did not seem to make themselves comfortable as the designated homeroom already had tools for sessions)?
- Participants (It would be better if as many jurisdictions/schools across Alberta could participate. However, due to the capacity of the facilities, it is necessary for the number of participants to be limited — perhaps we need to think about how to advertise the program and select schools since teachers' commitment is indispensable as well? In addition, organizing the similar program in the greater Calgary area and/or having elementary/junior high school students involved would be effective in promoting and sustaining Japanese programs?)
- Content of sessions (refer to “aspects of Japanese culture they want to learn more” under Suggestions by Students.) ... more students' involvement/initiative such as presentations of skits, etc.?
- Length of sessions (depending on the content, longer sessions could be considered)?
- Food (lunch/snack break) as an important aspect of Japanese culture (but difficult for it to be handled)?

Suggestions by teachers:

- “Maybe not in October... October is a crazy month for me”
- “I would love to have bento boxes with my students. This would have been a teachable item to add to the list. / Lunch was a bit too long./ Snack break time!/ ...some Japanese food... nothing too complicated ... raise funds for the committee”

12. Proposal for 2011

The Steering Committee met on December 17, 2010. With feedbacks provided by students and teachers as well as the committee's reflections, the following was identified:

1. The event was successful clearly achieving the goals set by the Steering Committee.
2. Participating students enjoyed the event very much while exploring Japanese culture.
3. A variety of stakeholder for Japanese language and culture promotion played a vital role in planning, preparing, and executing the event, which made the format of the event in ideal

one.

4. The venue was suited for all the sessions and for the number of students attended.

The Steering Committee proposed the following for 2011.

1. The Explore Japan program will be continued to 2011. In principle, we will have the same Steering Committee membership and the organization structure, and offer the same programs.
2. The program should be held in November instead of October. Teachers are busier with professional developments in October, and have less time to deal with extra activities.
3. Use the IISLE facility.
4. Design programs to accommodate all high schools that want to participate. For that end, most likely, the same program will be repeated in two consecutive days.
5. Reserve budget at early stage.
6. Start planning fro 2011 by preparing a survey of schools.
7. Provide expectations/information to schools prior to the event regarding the following:
 - a) The facility is non-smoking environment
 - b) The open and close of building doors will be controlled by iisle for security reasons.
 - c) Students will sit on the gym floor for some activities. They may come with own cushions.
 - d) Each participating school will arrange bus/transportation.
 - e) Food is not included in the program.



Main Entrance



Hallway

Institute for Innovation in Second Language Education at Edmonton Public Schools