

# Letters to the Editor

## Japanese Students Respond To Editorial

Letter to the editor  
ESL Office

In the last issue (Volume 64: Issue 5) of *The Clarion*, you carried Sarah Rogers' article "We Americans Should Listen More Often." It described her experience with Japanese students and her thoughts about improving communication between American and Japanese students. The article stirred up discussion among the Japanese students in our ESL class. Here we provide some of the responses concerning the issues raised in Sarah's article.

Ayako said that she agreed with Sarah in that American students should listen more. "It does not mean that American students should be more interested in Japanese. I just want to say that all people, wherever they are from, should take opportunities to know about other countries. Since I came to this country, I have found many cultural differences, such as in sharing a ride or participating in class activities. I did not know these differences until I actually live here. The information we get from TV or reading is not necessarily

reliable." Manabu always wants to involve himself in the American school life and learn more about American culture. He said, "We are all different. We can never find anybody who is exactly the same as you are. However, no matter how different we are, we can always find something in common. We should not have a bias or be prejudiced because of our differences. Try to talk to different people and get to know them as Sarah does, and you will find something interesting you have not known."

In spite of their desire to communicate with American students, they have difficulties to do so effectively. English is so different from their native language, and it takes courage as well as effort to overcome the psychological and linguistic barriers. Saemi, sweet but shy, revealed her feelings and concerns, "It is still difficult for me to keep talking with American students. I cannot always understand all they say, so I don't know how to respond to them. Even if I want to talk with them, I cannot explain things fully in English. Besides, I worry that American students may not be interested

in what I say." Sharing the same feelings, Yukiko said that some American students regard her as a quiet, serious and uninteresting person because she seldom talks. "Actually I like to talk, and I am very active and talkative when I speak Japanese." She is very frustrated for not being able to say what she wants to. She said, "I should study English harder to improve my language skills. I don't want Americans to think we Japanese students are dull. And I want a lot of Americans to read Sarah's article."

Interestingly, our Japanese students have different ideas about why they chose to come to school in America. Yurie agrees that Japanese students come to school here because it is less expensive and competitive than the schools in Japan. Rie, however, does not agree with that. "I don't think American schools are cheaper or easier to enter. In fact, I passed the college entrance exams in Japan." Miki also passed the entrance exams in Japan, but she chose to come here to see a new world. "If you consider the expenses of going back home for winter or summer vacations, it is not

cheaper at all to study in America. Also, we cannot take a part-time job because of our foreign student visa. And I don't have time to work because it takes much more time to study in a foreign language." Tamaki thought, "It may be easy to enter an American college, but it is certainly not easy to do well in school work, because we have to use a foreign language and live in a different culture. As to the expenses here, I even don't want to think about them. What attracts me here is I can try new things which may not be able to do in my own country. There are more opportunities in America."

However, everyone agreed with Sarah that Japanese students are no more different than other students in America. They have similar interests and similar hobbies. Because of their temporary language difficulty, they appear more quiet and need to be approached and encouraged by American students.

## Teachers Made A Difference

To the editor,

I'm a third year student here at Brevard College, and like many students, I would be attending Community College if it had not been for Brevard. After my senior year in high school, I hated school and my teachers. They spoke, and I listened. Because of this, the classes were very boring.

After graduation many of my teachers thought I was crazy for trying college, and I think my parents thought so too. Well, I came to Brevard and started school, and I will always remember my teachers (professors) for that first semester. They really made a difference. At the end of my freshman year, my GPA was a 3.3. I was really proud that I accomplished this, but I could not take all the credit. If the teachers at Brevard College had not stuck their hand out for me, I might be working at a burger place.

Well, I want to get to the point. This week I heard that some of the teachers at Brevard College are leaving and will not return to Brevard College next year because more Ph.D's are needed. Now, you can call me an idiot, but when did an piece of paper become more important than a warm heart and helping hand? After all, this is the basis of learning, not a piece of paper.

While at Brevard I had four English teachers: Miss Chapman, Mrs. McBride, Mrs. Jackson and Mrs. Miller. None of these teachers have a Ph.D. This didn't hurt my English background; it only helped it. Now, I know that Brevard College is growing, and it is great to be a part of this, but I have to wonder: in which direction are we heading if great teachers have to go?

I would like to thank my teachers here at Brevard. Mrs. Chapman, thank you for everything that you have helped me with. I will always remember and try to use the knowledge you gave me. Mrs. Jackson, thank you for the understanding and the helping hand that you gave.

Mr. Burger, who will retire after this year, I just want to say thank you for showing me that there can be excitement in History, and I'll always remember the "special guests". I hope you find that pterodactyl. Thank you for the great classes at Brevard College.

To me, there are more important things in teaching than a documented piece of paper, and although it may be important, it is not the only way students learn.

Thank you,  
Scotty Setser

The Pertelote staff would like to remind all students to pick up their yearbooks before May 3.

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*The Clarion staff  
congratulates the  
graduates of 1996.*



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Letters for publication must contain author's signature.

Letters can be deposited in *The Clarion* box in the bookstore, the white box on the lobby wall of MG, or Ms. Miller's office, room 110 in MG.

Letters are welcome and appreciated.