Evaluation of *Hoshuukoo*: Application of a Practical Participatory Evaluation Approach for Community-Based Japanese Supplemental Schools

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Outline

- Background
- Program context
- Evaluation design
- Evaluation questions
- Data collection methods
- Evaluation findings
- Recommendations
- Use of evaluation findings
- Participant learning
- Reflection

What is *Hoshuukoo*?

- Established by Japanese parents abroad to smooth their children's transition upon returning home

- Community-based weekend Japanese language school at the K-8 level

- Partially funded by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)

Where are Hoshuukoo located?
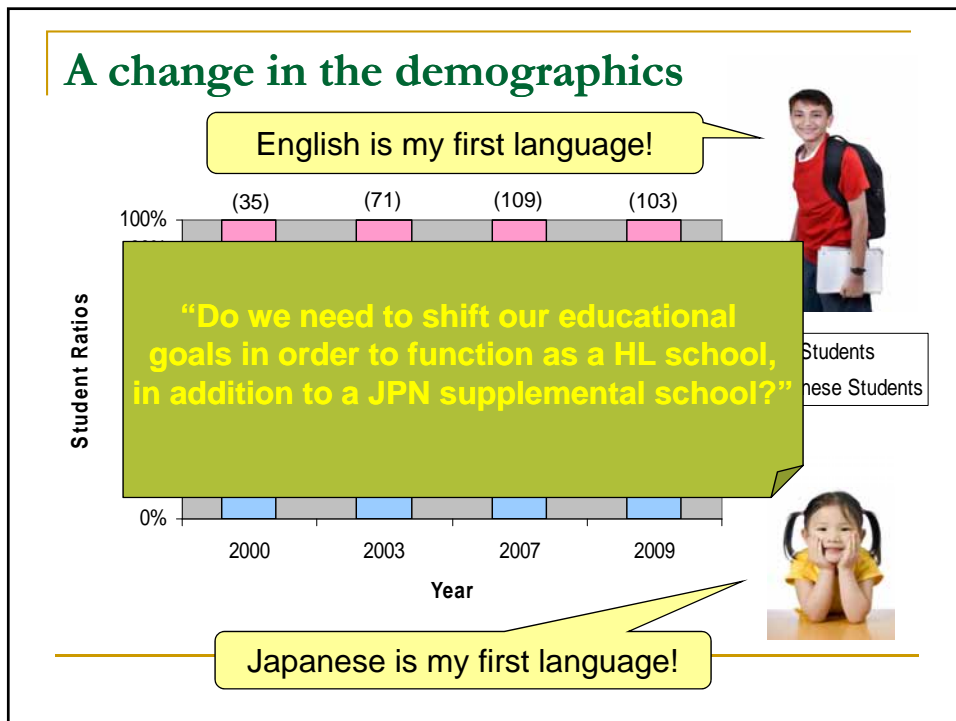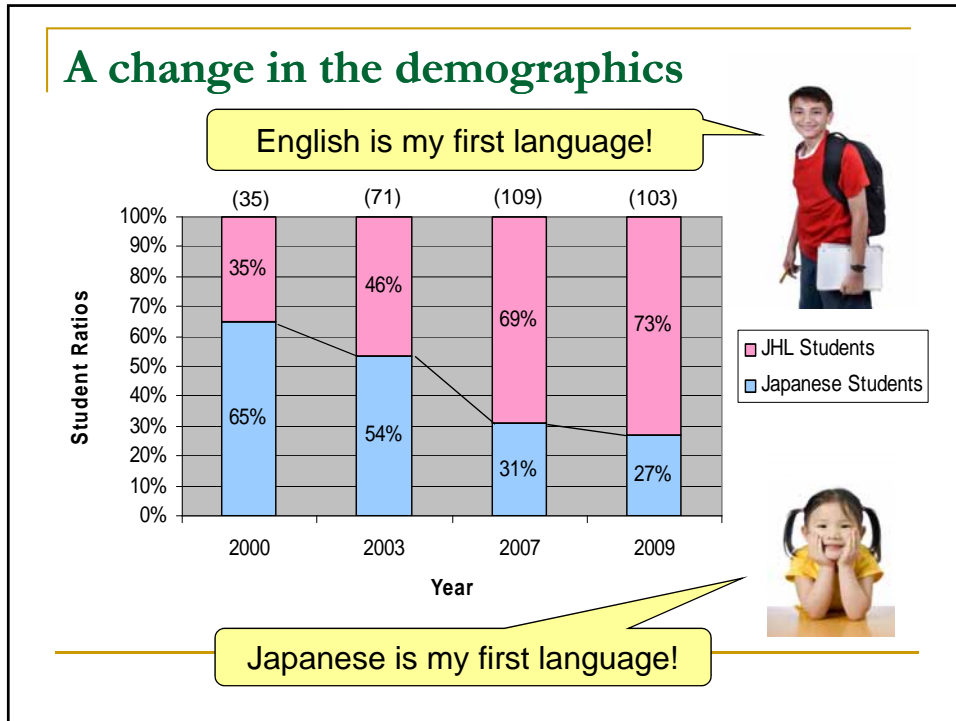
What are the challenges in Hoshuukoo?

- Lack of financial, human, and material resources

- Having to simultaneously teach students with different backgrounds

Program context

- Established in October, 2000 with 34 students
- 103 students in April, 2009 (typical in size)
- South central U.S.
- A city population of 786,382 (2009 U.S. Census estimate)
- Many technology corporations
- Near a major research university with more than 50,000 students, 2,900 faculty and 21,000 staff members

Potential challenges in evaluation in Hoshuukoo context

- Not enough time (Time constraints)
- Not enough knowledge (Low capacity)
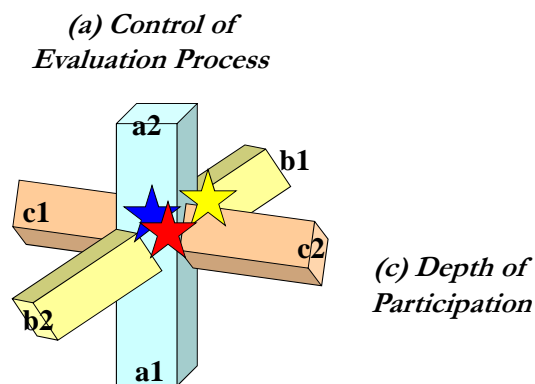- Not enough money (Budget constraints)
- Political influence

Gain a greater understanding of the program (evaluation capacity building, immediate change for improvement)

Design of the Practical Participatory Evaluation process

(a) Control of Evaluation Process
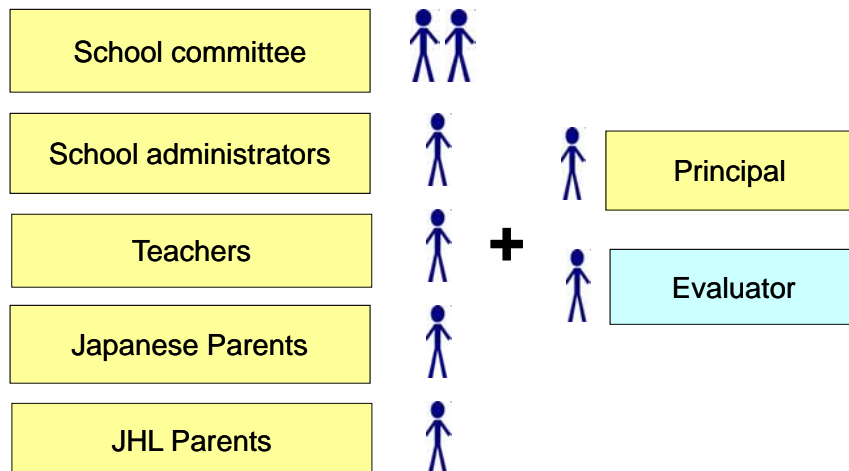
a1: Practitioner Controlled
a2: Researcher Controlled
b1: Primary Users
b2: All Legitimate Groups
c1: Consultation
c2: Deep Participation

a2

b1

c1

c2

b2

a1

(c) Depth of Participation

(b) Stakeholder Selection for Participation

(Adapted from Cousins & Whitmore, 1998, p.12)

Evaluation collaborators

| School committee |
| School administrators |
| Teachers |
| Japanese Parents |
| JHL Parents |

+

| Principal |
| Evaluator |

Evaluation questions

- Are there two different groups of students in terms of Japanese language proficiency, and if so, is this difference due to having different backgrounds?

- What issues result from having students with different backgrounds in the same class? How do classroom teachers deal with these challenges?

- How are opinions and attitudes regarding the existing program among the Japanese group, the JHL group, and teachers different?

Data collection methods

- Are there tw... ...ps of students in terms of Japanese... ...ciency, and if so, is this difference d... ...ferent backgrounds?

- Assuming there are differences, w... ...lt from having students with differen... ...in the same class? How do classroo... ...al with these challenges?

- Wh... ...d attitudes re... ...ing the exis... ...the Japanese L1 group, the J... ...rs? Are they different?
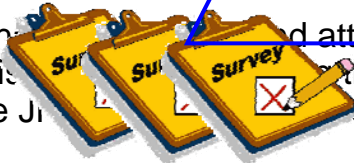
Evaluation participants

	Japanese L1 Group	JHL Group	Teacher Group
Total number	27 (100.0%)	73 (100.0%)	11 (100%)
Test participants	19 (70.4%)	50 (68.5%)	-
Student survey participants	7 (25.9%)	18 (24.7%)	-
Parent survey participants	19 (70.4%)	48 (65.8%)	-
Teacher survey participants	-	-	9 (81.8%)
Interview participants	-	-	5 (45.5%)

Evaluation findings

Q1: Are there two different groups of students in terms of Japanese language proficiency, and if so, is this difference due to having different backgrounds?

- Two patterns in the students' test scores
- JHL students' inability to understand question prompts in tests
- The difference began to be noticeable at pre-school and becomes greater. Teachers feel there is very little that they can do by the junior high level.

Evaluation findings

Q1: Are there two different groups of students in terms of Japanese language proficiency, and if so, is this diff

Yes, there were two different groups in the program and it was likely due to their different backgrounds

re-school and becomes greater. Teachers feel there is very little that they can do by the junior high level.

Evaluation findings (cont'd)

Q2: Assuming there are differences, what issues result from having students with different backgrounds in the same class? How do classroom teachers deal with these challenges?

- JHL students speak English in class, inability to keep up with class, inability to comprehend language used in test items etc.

- Teachers try to accommodate the different needs, and do their best to help JHL students

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Evaluation findings (cont'd)

Q2: Assuming there are differences, what issues result from having students with different backgrounds in the same class? How do classroom teachers deal with

Issues that had gone unnoticed:
- **inappropriate teaching practices**
- **teachers' frustration caused by a lack of…confidence, communication, learning opportunities**

- Teachers try to accommodate the different needs, and do their best to help JHL students

Evaluation findings (cont'd)

Q3: How are opinions and attitudes regarding the existing program among the Japanese L1 group, the JHL group, and teachers different?

- Different purposes and goals

- Different needs and preferences

- Little consensus re. expected learning outcomes between parents and teachers (even among teachers)

Evaluation findings (cont'd)

Q3: How are opinions and attitudes regarding the existing program among the Japanese L1 group, the

- Dif

- Dif

- Litt

bet

Different opinions and attitudes regarding the existing program between JPN group and JHL group

Lack of communication between parent group and teachers (also among Ts)

es

teachers)

Recommendations

- Invest more resources in teachers
  (provide structured T training, incentive system etc.)

- Conduct proper assessment
  (have multiple standards, multiple criteria etc.)

- Strengthen internal communication
  (enable more interaction, communication etc.)

- Prepare for change
  (build collaborative partnership, seek additional working funds etc.)

Use of evaluation findings

Invest more resources in teachers	- Monthly teacher meeting hours	☹
	- Workshops	🙂
	- Non-teaching lead teacher	☹
	- New incentive system	☹
Conduct proper assessment	- Introducing a new test	△
	- Multiple standards for assessment	☹
Strengthen internal communication	- Monthly teacher meetings	☹
	- Teacher observations	☹
	- Initial orientation with parents	△
Prepare for change	- Collaborative partnerships	🙂
	- Additional working funds	△

Participant learning

"We have never thought of offering a course that is not included in the MEXT's curriculum, but if they can do it, we can do it too."

(a comment in a working session)

"We formed a task force, designed and distributed a survey on our own."

(personal communication)

Participant learning

"We have never thought of offering a course that is not included in the MEXT's curriculum, but if they can do it, we can do it too."

Developed a sense of independence
Recognized local talents

(on)

"We formed a task force, designed and distributed a survey on our own."

(personal communication)

Reflection

- Established *positive working relationship* with collaborators
- Collaborators' *support* on a formative and collaborative evaluation approach
- Large *investment of time and effort* from both evaluator and collaborators
- *Determination* to actually make changes and improve their educational environment
- *Available working funds* to support the changes

Selected references

Austin Japanese School (2010). *Gakko shiryoo* [Information about the school]. Retrieved August 30, 2010 from http://www.austinjs.com/

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The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2008). *Kaigai sizyo kyouiku zyouhou* [A report of Japanese children living overseas]. Retrieved April 10, 2009 from http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/clarinet/004/001/001/001.pdf