

# Auckland Central Japanese Cluster (ACJC) Pop-Up Lunchtime Culture Event Event Report with photos

## Background:

ACJC consists of a new Japanese language programme at Balmoral Primary School and Balmoral Intermediate School; on the same campus, and existing Japanese language programmes at Auckland Girls' Grammar School (AGGS) and Auckland University of Technology.

## Rationale:

Approximately 600 Year 4, 5, 6, and 7 pupils at Balmoral School learn Japanese for 30 minutes per week. The amount of practice they can do and the amount of new language input they receive is limited due to short classroom time therefore the cluster group seeks opportunities to increase pupils' exposure to the Japanese language and culture whenever possible. Prior to this event we hosted a concert by the visiting Nanazumai Japanese Dance Troupe at Balmoral School and The AGGS sister school, Ohtani Junior High School, from Japan spent a morning with the Japanese classes at Balmoral School playing games and practising Japanese. The Pop-Up Lunchtime Culture Event is a new trial initiative to see if we can engage all pupils in enjoying culture as well as encouraging them to use the Japanese they know, without encroaching on class time.

## Description of the Event:

A group of twenty volunteers, consisting of four Oberon University Interns from Tokyo, three Japanese Teaching Assistants from Yamaguchi University, and 13 student volunteers from the Japanese language programmes at AUT, travelled by UBER, the 20 minute journey to Balmoral School. All the volunteers had spent many hours in the weeks leading up to the event, purchasing materials, cutting out paper template shapes, designing posters, practising the origami, and sorting the origami paper into different colours. They even cut out and pasted together black and white circles to make 600 pairs of eyes for the origami owls and jumping frogs.

The group arrived 30 minutes before the start of Balmoral School lunchtime and set up 6 large tables outside the school auditorium with large posters showing how the origami are folded and all the origami paper colours set out so pupils could say, in Japanese, which colour they liked. A 'menu' of seven items was offered:

## Easy Origami

いぬ (dog)



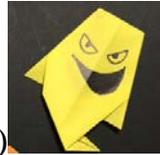
さめ (biting shark)



numbers and colours fortune-telling sheet



おばけ(ghost- for Halloween)



### Challenging Origami



ジャンピングフロッグ (jumping frog)



フクロウ (owl – to keep for good luck)

Supermarket Bag Origami to give to Mum and Dad (to encourage speaking about family members in Japanese)



When the school bell rang the volunteers were very very busy working with the hundreds of pupils who rushed up to join in the fun, but we had prepared for this chaos by having pairs of volunteers, one to demonstrate and one to help individuals who found some part difficult. We also had a few volunteers who circulated around encouraging those pupils who were a bit shy to come forward, and the younger pupils who were being pushed back by other more eager, older pupils.

The one-hour lunchtime passed by very quickly and everyone had a great time making origami, even the Year 3 pupils, who are not learning Japanese yet, were being taught simple Japanese words like *inu* 'dog' and *aka* 'red' etc.

### **Thoughts for the Future:**

The things we learned from this event were

- 1) There were plenty of examples of pupils coming up and introducing themselves and using colour expressions and expressions to do with their family members and the Year 3 students were shyly trying out new words but if we want pupils to practise lots of spoken Japanese, it is better not to provide such an interesting and busy 'origami menu' for them, because the volunteers were trying to teach 5-10 pupils at the same time and the pupils were concentrating very hard on the folds and then moving immediately to fold the next shape because they really liked everything on the menu, therefore Japanese language became the secondary part of the event, after the culture.
- 2) Events of this nature impact positively on the wider school community. For example, we found the itinerant music teacher is a Japanese speaker as he was in the auditorium when the event was taking place and he was unaware that Balmoral pupils were studying Japanese. He has expressed interest in furthering his Japanese studies and will now begin greeting his pupils using Japanese when they come to class.
- 3) Feedback from the volunteers suggested they really enjoyed the experience of working with younger learners of Japanese than themselves and the experience helped them develop skills such as teamwork, crowd management, and an understanding of the diverse personalities of the pupils they were working with.
- 4) You can only order one UBER vehicle on one account at one time. When the teacher tried to order three the first two were cancelled half way to the venue and this disaster was only diverted by a call to UBER and by volunteers downloading and using the UBER application for the return journey so we could order three large vehicles at the same time.
- 5)

### **Conclusion**

The lunchtime pop-up culture concept is a great one and we are currently planning more events of this nature but will be looking at more of a language focused event next time. We are very lucky to have the full support of Balmoral School principal and staff and we are very grateful for the financial support from the Sasakawa Fellowship Fund for Japanese Language Education.

### **Photos**





