

## Final Report to SFFJLE

### 2017 NCEA Workshop at the University of Canterbury

#### Canterbury Network of Teachers of Japanese

The University of Canterbury (UC), in conjunction with Canterbury Network of Teachers of Japanese held its fourth workshop for senior secondary students studying Japanese on 8<sup>th</sup> of June. The aims of this annual day-long event are to boost students' confidence and competence in dealing with NCEA assessment topics, introduce them to some inspiring and entertaining aspects of Japanese culture, and facilitate greater engagement within the local Japanese-learning community.

This year's workshop was the largest so far, with 370 students from 15 high schools, supported by 30 UC student volunteers and 25 Japanese teachers from secondary schools and UC. Indeed, the workshop has now grown to become the largest such event in New Zealand, and among the largest in Oceania.

The day started with a warm welcome from Professor Paul Millar (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor – College of Arts), and greetings from Mr Mitsuru Murase (Consul, Consular Office of Japan). A special talk was delivered by a UC alumni and internet marketing pioneer Mr Tim Williams, on his encounters and experiences in Japan, as well as the skills required for the rapidly changing world.

The secondary school students had three intensive language sessions, with 30 UC students who helped them to learn Japanese as role models and mentors. The feedback was overwhelming, indicating those involved enjoyed their day at UC.

The students spent the day engaging in three interactive activity-based classes geared to the separate year levels. Then the 370-plus workshop participants reassembled for the final session, which started with a rousing performance by the Christchurch-based Takumi Japanese drum group which included students from Christchurch schools studying Japanese. It was then time for the much-anticipated group dance, which has become a prominent and popular feature of this event. The YouTube video we produced in 2015- *Youkai Taisou* -received 52,000 hits and for a short while topped the Yahoo Japan's *Eizou Toppikusu* ranking. The 2016 video, which was posted to the website of the Japanese Studies Aotearoa New Zealand (JSANZ), attracted over 89,000 viewers from New Zealand and overseas. This year the chosen dance was *Koi Dance*.

<https://www.facebook.com/JapaneseStudiesAotearoaNZ/videos/1662250843795464/>

This year's cohort of UC student volunteers included several undergraduates who had, in previous years, participated as high school learners, and then worked their way up to become senior students in the UC Japanese Programme. The UC students had learnt much from their role as mentors for the young learners, and the experience had highlighted the value of a strong learning community as a ready source of knowledge, encouragement and advice.

We think the general evaluation of the project is very high and it has successfully achieved our aims, which include (1) enhancing the network and cooperation among secondary schools and tertiary institutions involved in Japanese-language education in the Canterbury region and (2) outreaching and fostering Japanese-language study to the public. This project contributed to strengthening the network of Japanese language education in the region.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Sasakawa Fellowship Fund for Japanese Language Education for their generous financial support for this workshop.