

## A Report to Sasakawa Fellowship Fund for Japanese Language Education

### The NCEA Japanese Workshop at the University of Canterbury, 2015

On 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015, the University of Canterbury (UC) hosted 271 senior high school students for its third annual NCEA Japanese Workshop. This was the largest language workshop of its kind in New Zealand, where students from 15 schools in Canterbury participated in a variety of interactive lessons and activities.

The main aim of the event was to boost students' communicative skills in preparation for their Japanese NCEA assessments. The workshop also sought to engage students with their Learning Community, so that they could interact with and learn from Japanese learners of a range of proficiencies, including the 26 UC undergraduate and graduate volunteer teaching assistants. We also hoped that they would be inspired by adults using Japanese professionally. Thus, the workshop plenary session included a highly motivational talk by Mr. Jonathan Hendriksen, the founder and CEO of visual marketing software company Shuttlerock, whose company ValueClick Japan was the first foreign-owned entity to be listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange. In explaining how his passion for Japanese led him to make cross-cultural ventures, Mr. Hendriksen set out a vision for the students to multiply their own opportunities through their language studies. Zchde Peseta, a student from Cashmere High School, wrote on her evaluation that "The guest speaker really made me think again on "why" I'm doing Japanese as a subject and how it can lead to many career paths in the future." In his welcome address, Mr. Masayuki Tsuchikawa, the Christchurch-based Japanese Counsellor and Consul, also encouraged students to try using social media to experience authentic Japanese and improve their language fluency.

Under the guidance of the workshop organiser, Dr. Masayoshi Ogino from UC, the students were divided into 15 groups depending on their NCEA level. The students participated in 3 language sessions, which were taught collaboratively by their high school teachers, UC and CPIT teaching staff and the UC teaching volunteers. Mr. Matt Crosby, a teacher from Burnside High School, happily noted that the students were quite proficient and engaged well with both their tasks and their classmates. According to Grace Driver, a student from Rangiora High School, the different teaching styles helped her and her fellow classmates to approach their NCEA assessments with more confidence, as the workshop had broadened their learning experiences.

Other opportunities for enjoyable cultural immersion included a morning tea of authentic Japanese pastries, a traditional *taiko* drum performance by *Takumi*, as well as a dance by the assembled 330 participants of *Youkai Taisou*, based on the popular animation *Youkai Watch*. This footage has been edited together with sections of the dance previously filmed by each of the participating institutions, to make the *Canterbury Youkai Taisou* <https://youtu.be/g95Q3qXL76w>. This follows on from the 2014 workshop's collaborative dance project *Koisuru Fortune Cookie*, which has attracted over 23,000 views on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/CQE8kGwWsv8>). This year's participants are hoping that their dance will prove to be an even bigger media sensation.

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