

# Report on Japanese Matsuri/Immersion Day 5 July

## Manawatu-Horowhenua

### Background/Rationale:

As a result of very poor participation rates in last year's Japanese events, especially the Massey Speech Contest, it was agreed upon (between Massey staff and myself) to have a meeting of regional Japanese teachers early in the year to ascertain the problem.

This meeting took place in February 2018 and was well attended. The outcome was that teachers said they don't have time to prepare students for competitive events in addition to the demands of NCEA. Also, students and teachers don't like to give up any more after-school time. It was therefore decided to change the format of the Speech Contest in order to make it more of a fun event, and to run it as a full day event during school time.

### Description:

Organising Committee: Dave Stout, Tessa Moxey and Elin King

Participating schools: Waiopahu College, Awatapu College, Otaki College, Feilding High School, Freyberg High School, PNGHS.

Numbers: 108 people participated

Events: Speeches for Y11 – Y13 (1 per school per level) Organised by Elin King, judged by Dr Penny Shino and Mr Toshiaki Yamauchi

Trivia Quiz (5 per school, 1 per level) Organised by Dave Stout

Manga contest (4 per school) Organised by Tessa Moxey

Origami challenge (4 per school) Organised by Denis Tate

Japanese archery demonstration (Kyudo) Organised by Steve Needham

Description of events: (much of this report has been kindly contributed by Dr Penny Shino) Enthusiastic students studying Japanese at regional high schools took part in a *matsuri* (festival) hosted by the Japanese programme, School of Humanities on the Manawātū campus on Thursday July 5. 100 students and eight Japanese teachers attended from six schools (Awatapu College, Feilding High School, Freyberg High School, Ōtaki College, Palmerston North Girls' High School and Waiopahu College). The Sasakawa Fellowship Fund for Japanese Language Education generously funded the event.

The matsuri gave students the opportunity to experience a day of fun, creative and cultural activities on a Japanese theme with students of Japanese from other schools they would not normally have a chance to meet. The highlight was a demonstration of *kyūdō* (Japanese archery). Three archers clad in formal Japanese attire carrying bows as long as they were tall

were led in by Mr Steven Needham (head of the Japanese department, Freyberg High School and the New Zealand Kyudo Federation Manawatū branch secretary). The other archers were Massey's Dr Ebubekir Avci (Lecturer in Mechatronics, School of Engineering and Advanced Technology) and Connor Dunlop (Year 13, Freyberg). The strong ritual and meditative elements completely enthralled the students, 'so quiet you could hear a pin drop', as one teacher commented. Other activities included origami and manga contests, a history and geography quiz, a shared sushi lunch and an impromptu karaoke performance by students and staff of 'The Devil's Pants'.

On a more formal note, the day's line-up also featured a Japanese language speech contest. Winners were Category 1 (Y11): Olivia Bishop-Matthews (Feilding High School), runner-up: Kate Nicholson (Waiopahu College); Category 2 (Y12): Abii Bingle (Awatapu College), runner-up: Julian Bunthorn-Srey (Feilding High School); Category 3 (Y13): Matilda Fyles (Awatapu College), runner-up: Rebekah Rowan (Waiopahu College). Judges were Mr Toshi Yamauchi, Senior Tutor in Japanese, and Dr Penny Shino, Japanese programme coordinator. Topics ranged from cats, to Harajuku street fashion, the online world and Rarotonga. Penny Shino was impressed at 'the huge increase in the range and sophistication of vocab used – it shows just how the Internet can massively boost language skills'.

The origami contest consisted of each team being given multiple sets of instructions for making different origami shapes. The winning team was the team to make the most different shapes in a given time. The winner was Freyberg High School.

In the Manga contest each team was asked to create a 4-frame manga depicting a cultural situation in Japan ie a foreign student arriving at a Japanese and being reminded to take off shoes before entering the house. The winning team was Awatapu College.

The trivia quiz was pretty challenging, consisting of a series of trivia questions on Japan as well as some map work. The winning teams were Awatapu College and PNGHS who were 1<sup>st</sup> equal.

### **Thoughts for the future:**

The 8 teachers attending met towards the end of the day for an informal debrief. They expressed the wish for the matsuri to be made an annual fixture. In fact, they would like to increase the number of activities offered so that students are all occupied with one activity or another during the day.

Possible added activities could be: a photo studio with dress-ups, karaoke, kendama, janken, shodo, toshidama, a movie/skit, bon-odori. A meeting of teachers will be held at the beginning of 2019 to decide which activities will be implemented – this will depend on how many teachers are participating and how many activities each one is prepared to organize.

Possible improvements could be

- a standard mic. Students were told by the judges that throwing their cue cards on the floor as they progressed through their speeches, was not a good look. Therefore

students need their hands freed up to hold and shuffle their cars. A podium might be good too.

- Changing the order of activities so that the manga contest is earlier in the day and the origami challenge (less taxing) at the end of the day.
- Putting all the speeches together, one level after another – this makes it much easier for the judges.
- Looking into the possibility of funding for teachers' relief costs

It is hoped that the changes above (or some of them) will make next year's event even more enjoyable. The following extract comes from Dr Penny Shino's report:

"The success of the matsuri lies in the teachers themselves who actually organized the event. It's another example of the high level of collaboration of local schools with each other and with our Japanese programme," said Dr Penny Shino, who is also president of Japanese Studies Aotearoa New Zealand. 'We hope this has a positive effect on recruitment at Massey and also the vitality of Japanese language learning in New Zealand.'

#### **Acknowledgements:**

We are enormously appreciative of the funding we received from the Sasakawa Fellowship Fund for Japanese Language Education which made this event possible. None of this would have gone ahead if not for their generosity.

Thanks also to SushiMaMa who provided us with over 100 obento (lunch packs) for lunch. The packs were delicious and very good value, and were delivered to the door for us.

And a big thank you to Massey University for providing a very suitable venue, and to Dr Penny Shino and Mr Toshi Yamauchi for all their help in setting up the venue and judging the speeches, which was, as always, of a very high standard.

"And the students are to be congratulated too, on their focus, courtesy and fantastic behaviour. They are a credit to their schools and a pleasure to have on campus ". Thanks to Dr Shino for this positive comment about our students.