

The influence of the Japan Studies Institute on my life, both professionally and personally, has been both profound and multifaceted. My initial interest in being a part of JSI was generated by two specific events. First, shortly after accepting my teaching position at Northeastern State University, I had the opportunity to attend a conference where results of the 1999 Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). This study was a repeat of a similar study in 1995 comparing mathematics learning and achievement for eighth grade students in multiple countries around the world. What set the 1999 study apart was the use of video recordings of math classrooms in the various participating countries. In the book *The Teaching Gap* (1999), video recordings of math classrooms from 3 countries—Japan, Germany, and the United States—were compared and analyzed. The purpose of this video study was to determine why the United States students were scoring so much lower on the mathematics assessments than their Japanese counterparts. If the U.S. could replicate what the Japanese were doing in the classroom, maybe U.S. student scores would improve. When discussing the results of the TIMSS report, I realized that I needed to change the way I taught mathematics. The Japanese approach seemed more effective, so I started using it in my courses. The second event that generated my interest in JSI was my participation in the China Studies Institute in 2016. As part of CSI that year, I was able to observe a Chinese Middle School mathematics class. That experience, when combined with the other parts of CSI that summer, helped me to understand that mathematics learning was not only affected by what was happening in the classroom, but also what was taking place outside of the classroom. I was able to understand mathematics education in China by attaining a deeper understanding of Chinese culture. Thus, if I wanted to have a better understanding of mathematics education in Japan, I would need to gain a deeper understanding of Japanese culture. This is the first way that I have been influenced by JSI. I want to continue researching the Japanese mathematics classroom by examining pedagogy and content through the lens of Japanese culture and experience. I hope to visit Japan, observe classrooms, and interview teachers so that I can gain the necessary knowledge to enhance my own teaching and enrich other math educators by sharing my experience.

The second way that I have been influenced by JSI is curricular enhancements. I plan to incorporate various pieces of numerous sessions that I have been a part of this summer. I teach a University Strategies course for incoming Freshmen. I have some freedom with curriculum in this course, so I can include activities that stem from JSI sessions. Potential activities include the following: California Roll Making Demonstration, Ikebana Flower Arranging, Kamome inspired Sister-City exploration, and Japanese Language communication. In my mathematics courses, I can include using Japanese names of numbers as well as continue to enhance the Japanese model of learning via problem-solving. My statistics courses will be able to make use of information from several sessions including the following: Issues in Japanese Government, Economics, and Society; The Resilience for Tomorrow: Rikuzentakata's Challenges 11 Years After Tsunami Disaster; and U.S.-Japan Relations: A Strategic Partnership built on Friendship. In our Graduate Math Education Program, since the courses are diverse, we can incorporate parts of almost every session. Thus, the Japan Studies Institute will be a part of numerous curricular enhancements in my department.

The third way that I have been influenced by JSI is program initiatives. It is vital that we find ways to connect to Japan in our community and on our campus. There are multiple ways this can happen. First, the community can investigate becoming a sister-city to Japan by finding something that connects the two groups of citizens. This would be one way to encourage international relationships that may have been previously unconsidered. Second, my colleagues would potentially benefit by having research projects funded by the Japan Foundation or the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. Third, the University would benefit by re-establishing a Japan connection for faculty and students. If NSU and the Office of International Programs can investigate becoming a JOI host site, work to enhance programs that encourage students and faculty to visit Japan, and recruit Japanese students and faculty, then the benefit both NSU and Japan.