DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 358 157 TM 019 956

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TITLE Conducting and Reporting Case Studies.
PUB DATE Apr 93
NOTE 35p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Atlanta, GA, April 12-16, 1993).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Case Studies; Classroom Observation Techniques; Classroom Research; *Evaluation Methods; Foreign Countries; Heuristics; *Kindergarten; Longitudinal Studies; Preschool Education; *Qualitative Research; Research Design; Researchers; *Research Methodology; Research Reports
IDENTIFIERS *Japan

ABSTRACT

Issues and elements of case study research are explored and illustrated with the example of a case study of a kindergarten in a suburb of Tokyo (Japan). Case study research is a type of qualitative research that concentrates on a single unit or entity, with boundaries established by the researcher. The case is an example drawn from a larger class, and its study involves in-depth and longitudinal examinations. Case study research is used when the questions are how and why, rather than what and how many. Case studies are used when particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and inductive phenomena are considered. Issues in planning a case study and selecting a case are reviewed. A case study conducted by the authors at Kawasaki Kindergarten in Tokyo, Japan, is discussed as an illustration of the method, with dialogue between the authors demonstrating their different views of the school they studied. (SLD)

Conducting and Reporting Case Studies

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Prepared for the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Atlanta, Georgia, April, 1993.

Abstract

In this paper we begin with issues relating to conducting and reporting case studies. We then illustrate how we put basic principles into practice using an illustrative case study we conducted at the Kawasaki Kindergarten, a preschool in a suburb of Tokyo, Japan. We address such issues as what constitutes a case study, when to use case study research, selecting cases to study, and writing about case studies. Our illustrative case is used to illustrate principles relating to such factors as multiple means of collecting data, views of an insider and an outsider, and developing themes.

Introduction

The conduct of research that is described as case study research has become much more prevalent in education in the last several years due in part, I believe, to the growing interest and acceptance of research that is variously called naturalistic, ethnographic, or qualitative. While the presentation of case studies has long been an avenue used by psychoanalysts (Freud and Bruno Bettelheim have written extensively of their cases), neurologists (Oliver Sacks enlightened us with The man who mistook his wife for a hat as did Harold Klawans clinical cases), and existentialists (Irving Yalom), that type of writing was not usually considered research. It was informative, helpful and instructive, especially to the practicing clinician, but was it really "research." How could we rely on the results? What did it mean in terms of adding to the body of knowledge about a particular discipline?

We find in the practice of educational research today that case study research has become fairly widely used and, I would venture to say, accepted in at least some quarters (Hammersley, 1986). As I was preparing this paper, I perused the 1993 AERA Annual Meeting Program to get an idea of the research that will be presented at this meeting that uses the label "case study." I'll share a few examples. Single case studies included: The case of cooperative groups. The influence of ethnic encapsulation on beginning teachers' cultural sensitivity: A case study. Enhancing motivational opportunity in elementary

schooling: A case study of the principal's role. Designing videodisc-based case methodology for the reform of reading education courses: The classroom as a case. Implications of the White Pines integration case study for classrooms, schools, and society. And multiple case studies included: Leadership strategies of exemplary high school department chairs: Four case studies of successful "middle managers." Portfolios and assessment: A study of two classrooms. The experiences of beginning physical education teachers at the elementary level: Emergent themes of four case studies. Classroom research as social enterprise: Case studies of preservice teacher researchers. I cite these as illustrative of the range of topics covered and their prevalence in the educational research domain.

Our purpose here is to look at 1) the issues and elements of case study research and 2) to illustrate putting principles into practice: the Kawasaki Kindergarten experience.

Issues and Elements in Case Study Research

The first part of our paper addresses several important issues relative to case study research.

What constitutes a case study

It is important to note that there is little agreement about what a case study is and definitions of case studies vary widely (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988, 1991). Some say it has become a category in which to place research that does not fit into other categories. I was able to find only two books devoted solely to the methodology of case study research

(Merriam, 1991; Yin, 1984), although some general books on qualitative research discuss case study research.

I have identified six components of case study research from the literature (Lichtman & Wark, 1992). First, case study research is a type of qualitative research that concentrates on a **single unit** or entity. The unit can be a person, a classroom, a school, a community college. [I will speak later about units within units and multiple units.] It often focusses on how people make sense of their lives (Merriam, 1988).

Second, case study research involves the establishment by the researcher of **boundaries** relative to the questions to be asked or the problems to be studied (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). It also involves setting **boundaries** or defining the system or unit to be studied (Smith, 1978).

Third, case study research acknowledges that the unit or entity studied is seen in the larger **context** in which it exists (Geertz, 1973). In fact, the case cannot really be separated from the context (Yin, 1984). Interpretation and understanding of the case in terms of its context is important (Cronbach, 1985; Shaw, 1978).

Next, the case is an example or an instance **drawn from a larger class or group** where the boundaries have a common sense obviousness (Adelman, Jenkins & Kemmis, 1983).

Next, case study research usually involves an **in-depth** and **longitudinal** examination of a single entity (Davey, 1991).

Lastly, case study research is a **process** that "describe[s] and analyze[s] some entity in qualitative, complex and comprehensive terms not infrequently as it unfolds over a period of time" (Wilson, 1979, p. 448).

Merriam (1991, p. 21) captures the flavor of these ideas in her definition of case study research. Case study research is "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit."

When to use case study research

Deciding when you should conduct case study research is not always easy. It is instructive to remember that you should use this type of research when you are answering questions about **how** and **why** rather than what and how many. Case studies "get as close to the subject of interest as they possibly can, partly by means of direct observation in natural settings, partly by their access to subjective factors (thoughts, feelings, and desires) (Bromley, 1986, p. 23)." As you listen to our case study of a Japanese preschool, you should find elements of getting close to the case.

Use case study method when you are interested in the four criteria given below.

Particularistic - the concentration is on a single phenomenon or situation.

Descriptive - the concentration is on describing and explaining in detail.

Heuristic - as an aid in exploring and understanding a phenomenon.

Inductive - moving from the particular to the general.

Areas to consider as you plan a case study

General issues that you need to consider when planning a case study include are similar to issues in any conducting any type of research.

- formulation of a research question or focus of the study
- determining propositions and rival propositions
- setting boundaries and selecting a case
- using multiple sources of information about the case
- using suitable methods of analysis and organization of the data
- linking the data to the propositions
- interpreting and reporting the case (Lichtman & Wark, 1992; Yin, 1984).

How you go about selecting a case is an area we have spelled out more fully. There are a variety of ways to classify how to define case selection. I have chosen to look at three: Selecting a single case, using embedded cases, using multiple cases.

Selecting a single case. When selecting a single case, you need to decide what it is you want to represent. Your purpose in the selection of a case is to choose a part of a larger class or group. You are not trying to use the case to generalize in the statistical sense. For example, you may want to select a case

that is **typical** of other cases like it. In the case we discuss later, we chose a Japanese kindergarten that is typical of a larger group or class of kindergartens that subscribe to a certain philosophy as a traditional Japanese preschool. In order to know what is typical, you as a researcher need to be familiar with the context and other cases.

Another way to select a case is to choose a case that represents an **extreme**, **deviant**, or **unique** example of other members of the group or class.

A third way to select a case is to choose a case that represents the **ideal** of that group or class. You could choose an award winning classroom or teacher, for example.

Using embedded cases. Sometimes you are in the position of selecting a case that is actually embedded in a larger research effort. You might choose to focus on a particular child (typical, deviant, or ideal) who is part of a larger study of a classroom or school.

Using multiple cases. Sometimes you may decide to use several examples to represent a particular group or class. This approach raises issues of how you report about the several cases in your study. Lancy (1993) suggests that one way is to develop a "collective portrait" of the group. Miles and Huberman (1984) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) also offer alternative ways of organizing multiple case data.

Conducting and reporting about case study research

We highlight three areas of interest to us in the conduct of the research we conducted at the Kawasaki Kindergarten. We believe it very important to use multiple sources of information from multiple informants. In our study we interviewed students, teachers, and administrators. We observed classes over different time periods. We observed multiple classes. We also observed interactions of students and students, teachers and students, teachers and administrators. We utilized videotapes and photographs. We took field notes and wrote memos.

We are also concerned with insider's and outsider's perspectives. We felt it important that we gain an understanding of this preschool from the viewpoint of an insider, someone who understood the language, the culture, and the experiences. We felt it equally important that the viewpoint of an outsider also be considered. An outsider might see things differently or see different things. We have incorporated this philosophy in the presentation of our paper. I should say here that we operate from a constructivist theory of qualitative research. We are not trying to recreate a reality that exists independent of us because we believe that reality is a constructed interpretation and dependent on the viewpoint of the researcher. By using an insider and an outsider as researchers, we hope to demonstrate the multiple reality notion.

Of all the issues surrounding qualitative research, the one about which there are no definitive rules and guidelines is the

reporting of data from the research. Operating from a constructivist (Guba, 1990) viewpoint, we constructed our understanding of the reality of the kindergarten and left to the reader to judge the trustworthiness and authenticity of the process (Lincoln & Guba, 1986) or the trustworthiness of the product as discussed by Atkinson, Heath and Chenail (1991) or judging the quality of the narrative presented in terms of resonance (the degree of fit, overlaps, or reinforcement between the case study report as written and the basic belief system undergirding that alternative paradigm), form and structure, and applicability (Lincoln & Guba, 1990). We chose to report our data from both of our perspectives. At times we were in agreement. At other times we were not. Finally, we saw as one of our purposes the development of themes to aid in an understanding of our case. We went about this process individually and collectively. We were not interested in reaching agreement since we did not have an underlying notion of a single meaning. Rather we wanted to expand our description and understanding of the case.

Principles into practice: The Kawasaki Kindergarten experience

Strong interest in preschool education has prevailed in the United States for many years. There has long been a recognition of the importance of preschool. Students, especially those who are disadvantaged, are thought to enter elementary school on a firmer footing if they have experienced preschool. We have, in the United States, explored many approaches to preschool

education. In fact there is no one philosophy for preschool education that has been universally adopted in the United States. As approaches to preschool education in this country continue to be examined, we decided to bring additional insight about preschool education by focussing our attention on preschool education in Japan.

While we in the United States have considerable information about Japanese education, most of our information has been about education at levels above the preschool. Yet preschool education has become a major focus in Japan as the number of children attending preschool increases each year (Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989). Many Japanese children begin early childhood education at age three and continue until they are six years old. Traditional Japanese preschool education adopts a philosophy of a group-oriented environment, child-centered programs, and play activities. Our purpose in this case study was to examine how this philosophy is implemented in a typical preschool in Kawaski City, a suburb immediately adjacent to Tokyo.

We present our case study as a description of our two views of the same preschool. We tell our stories separately and together. Satomi, a native Japanese, has lived in the United States for a number of years and is married to an American. Her expertise is in preschool education. During the time of this study, she was completing work on her doctoral dissertation. Marilyn's expertise in case study and qualitative research provided a balance to Satomi's content-area expertise. Marilyn

worked closely with Satomi while she completed her dissertation. Marilyn and Satomi collaborated on this case study. Throughout this paper we write from our individual perspectives and they have been so designated.

Satomi. I was able to locate the preschool we studied and had spent a considerable amount of time there prior to this latest observation. I had considerable experience at this preschool, having studied it on several occasions prior to writing this case. Cooperation with the Director and teachers had been well established and they were anxious for us to study the school. During the month of February 1992, I visited Kawaski Kindergarten and my account is based on that visit. During 1992, I arranged for Marilyn to visit Kawaski Kindergarten and her account is based on that visit. In addition, we held numerous discussions about the school, its philosophy of education, the students, the role of the administration, and the feelings of joy we had while at the school.

In order for you to "see" the school through our eyes, we have chosen to intersperse our comments about various aspects of the school. So you can follow our narrative better, we have included our names at the beginning of each section. We have chosen to follow Wolcott's (1990) advice to writers.

Initial impressions of the Kawaski experience

Marilyn. First impressions are to be considered very strongly. I have always felt that they serve me well. They help

my vision to be keener, my ears to listen well. And so it was with my first encounter with the Kawaski Kindergarten.

All arrangements had been made prior to my leaving the United States. Satomi had made appropriate contacts with the director of the school. She gave me a subway map and a small piece of paper, written in Japanese, that I was to give to a passerby on the street if I was unable to locate the school. I felt very prepared. (I should say at the outset that, although I have traveled extensively, I had not been to Japan and spoke no Japanese.) Upon arriving at our hotel, [my husband and I both were scheduled to visit the kindergarten, he as photographer, I as observer], we were presented with two faxes from the director. We knew we were being taken care of and that our arrival was anticipated and expected. If I had had any misgivings beforehand, they were allayed.

The next morning, after several confusions with the subway system, we were met at a main subway terminal by the director and his wife. If you have not been to Japan, you might find my question a reasonable one: "How would you find us?' I said to Tetsuya, when he said he would meet us at the subway stop. He laughed. "Not to worry. I will find you." And of course he did. Tokyo is an enormous city. But few Westerners venture beyond the city limits on the subway. I was relieved when he greeted us. We proceeded to the school and I had my initial visit to Kawasaki Kindergarten.

Located in a busy suburb of Tokyo, Kawaski Kindergarten is actually on a main street, just a few short steps from the subway stop. Had we not been with Tetsuya, we might have overlooked it since its entrance seemed to be a large, dirt driveway in the middle of a bustling block. There was a sign painted on the fence. You can see in Figure 1 the sign in Japanese and the inviting entrance to the school. (All photographs appear at the end of this paper.) We walked in, through the driveway which actually turned out to be a playground, and we went to the director's office.

Custom is so very important in Japan. I was anxious to get started with my observations. I could see all the children around, some poking their little heads into the room where we were. Much of the space was quite open and we could readily see into several classrooms. But we had to follow the custom of drinking tea. At this time we met Tetsuya's mother. We were told she was the assistant director of the school. It was not clear to me who ran the school. The mother may have been involved in the administrative and business end while, for his part, Tetsuya was very knowledgeable about all the programmatic aspects of the school. And since his mother did not speak English, I had to rely on him as my informant. I learned that he is a professor at a local university and teaches students pursuing degrees in preschool education. Some of the teachers at Kawasaki Kindergarten were his students.

I want to say some things about Kawasaki Kindergarten from my viewpoint. Its physical surroundings were bright, but modest. The director's office was not private and various people wandered in and out throughout our time there. You can get a glimpse of it just behind the jungle gym in Figure 2. It also doubled as a place to put on your shoes (you must remove your shoes when you enter an interior in Japan), a place to store audio-visual equipment, a place to meet parents, and a place to keep records.

The classrooms were average in size, equipped with tables and chairs. Cubbyholes were available for coats and lunchboxes, and shoes were left in their place outside the classroom. Each classroom was equipped with a piano. Figure 3 is a typical classroom in Kawaski Kindergarten. A large room was set aside for art. Across the playground was a sort of log cabin which was used by the children as a playhouse. Playground equipment was minimal.

Satomi. Let me give you some background into Kawasaki Kindergarten. It is located in the busy, heavily industrialized city of Kawasaki, Japan, and was built in 1955. It has one classroom for three-year-olds, three classrooms for four-year-olds, and three classrooms for five-year-olds. The enrollment fluctuates around the two hundred level while the teaching staff consists of eight full-time teachers, the director, the assistant director, the helper to the assistant director, and the school van driver. Additionally, on a part-time basis, an art teacher, a gymnastic teacher, an accountant, and a special education

teacher are employed by the school. The school is privately owned and run by the director's family and the director's mother is his assistant director.

My visit began as the gate opened into a spacious playground made of sand, flanked on the right by monkey bars, a jungle gym, a climbing structure shaped like an airplane, a gymnastic structure for climbing and swinging, another climbing structure that had both a net made of chains and a ladder for the children to climb, as well as large hoops and squares that could be used as swings. Just beyond this structure stood the facade of a brightly colored fantasy castle behind which the children's outside play toys were stored. To the left of the playground, there was a rustic log cabin which left the impression of an oasis in the middle of this industrialized metropolis.

The school building was a large, two-storied white building with a flat top, housing three rooms at the lower level and four at the upper level. All the classrooms were furnished in almost the same manner. Each classroom had two doors situated on the left and right sides of sliding windows that were centered at the front of the classrooms. The doors provided access to the classrooms from the halls that connected them. Entering each of these classrooms, I could see on the entire length of the left wall a display board on which the children's artwork was shown. On the length of the right wall was a blackboard. Beneath this blackboard toward the back of the classroom was a small door which was kept open almost all the time by a hook. It connected

each classroom. Children could crawl through it into the adjoining classrooms. Although this door was provided as an escape in case of an emergency, the children found it more useful for play than for the purpose for which it was designed. I was struck with how inventive children can be. In all the upstairs classrooms, a piano, an organ, bookcases, a cupboard, a variety of stuffed animals, and two or three baskets full of blocks and plastic toys were found. In none of these classrooms did the teachers have desks.

Each child had a shelf with his or her name on it with a box containing crayons and a pair of scissors, another box containing clay, a plastic board upon which to model the clay, a large drawing book, and a workbook. Next to each child's shelf was another shelf used to store each child's hats. Two different hats were provided for the children, one for coming to school or going home, and the other for going outside of the school, exercising or playing outside. Each child shared with another child a small open cubby in which to hang his or her belongings. Generally, each classroom had four to six tables which were made by putting five or six desks together to form each table.

Although the weather was cold, there was a kind of warmth resulting from the happy sound of children's laughter, chirping birds and the cockadoodledoo of the roosters who were the residents of the kindergarten, as well as the brightly colored, cheerful surroundings. The cleanliness and orderliness both inside and outside the school impressed me greatly. The school

did not find it necessary to hire a custodian because the cleaning was done by the teachers and children.

Compared to Western schools, there were few toys relative to the number of children and the children were allowed to play the piano at their whim when it was not in use by the teachers. Although land was at a premium in Japan and the available space was utilized at maximum efficiency, no expenses were spared to assure that the appropriate sized spaces were allotted to maximize the benefits of the classrooms, playground, and other facilities.

Marilyn. I am amazed at the level of detail observed by Satomi. I focused less on the actual physical surroundings than I did on the children and staff. I noticed one teacher washing the windows of the classroom at the end of the school day. I inquired of the director if that was a common occurrence. He remarked that preschool teachers in Japan do not see this as a burden since they deal with the whole child and cleaning up after a child is a recognition of the whole child. I did not personally see it, but I learned that children cleaned up after themselves as well. I thought that a preschool teacher in the United States would certainly not find it in her list of tasks, expected or desired, to wash classroom windows. I came away with my general impressions, but I am reinforced that multiple eyes are so important and enlightening in conducting case studies.

The children at Kawasaki school

Marilyn. I had come to Kawasaki Kindergarten, most of all, to get a sense of the children and by implication how the Japanese preschool philosophy was exemplified in a typical preschool. I remember my first glimpse of the children as I sat in the director's office. Two little girls peeked in, smiled, and ran out as do children all over the world. They seemed intrigued by us, two Westerners in their own little environment. As we sat drinking tea, we noticed a number of other children who wandered in, smiled, and said good morning in English. I asked how to repeat the phrase in Japanese and I did my best to wish them good morning in Japanese as well as in English.

All the children seemed to be dressed alike. I learned later that the color-coded tags on the smocks they were wearing designated their age group. Many of them also wore little differently colored caps which also designated their age group. Only later did I learn that these were used for outside play. No harsh words were spoken to the children who, out of curiosity, were looking in the director's office. No one scolded them for being out of their rooms or for interrupting us. In fact, they did not seem to be noticed by anyone except me. I knew that in an American preschool it would be very unlikely that a child could interrupt a visiting person in the principal's office. It was almost as if the director and the other adults did not see them or that this was usual behavior. I do not mean to imply anything like chaos, for that was not the case.

The school program

Marilyn. After our tea we were taken to the classroom of the art teacher. The teacher, a man in his forties I would guess, had paint and other art paraphernalia all over the large room where his activities occurred. He joined us later for lunch and he shared with us some of the children's books he had written and illustrated. The art room was being used by a number of children. There seemed to be none of the "let's all make a jack-o-lantern, an easter basket" or similar activity. The children were free to explore what they wanted and their work was exhibited on the walls.

I continued to have this sense of openness, acceptance of children, and a feeling of warmth as children and teachers moved freely around the school. While the children were noisy, I neither saw nor heard anyone admonish them to be quiet. There seemed to be a feeling of happiness.

Teachers made considerable use of the piano and I was told that knowing how to play was a must for all teachers working in Kawasaki Kindergarten. I was unable to determine if that requirement was applied at other preschools. The teachers used music to get the children's attention, to begin and end certain activities, and to involve the children in group singing.

As I wandered from classroom to classroom, I was struck with the sense that so many children would be in the care of only one adult. Each classroom had a ratio of thirty children to one teacher. You will remember from Satomi's account of the

personnel at the school that the additional personnel are involved with administrative tasks, with the exception of the art, special education and gymnastic teachers. In contrast to a typical American preschool where the student-teacher ratio is usually about fifteen to one, with an aide usually available, these large classes amazed me. How could the teacher control such a large group? I saw no evidence of students being out of control. Of course, I recognize that we were visitors and that students may have been on their best behavior, so to speak. But large classes are typical and I would be amazed if all teachers were able to change their style just because we were there.

Satomi and I shared our ideas about this class size. She stated that in Japan at the preschool level, students work cooperatively. If there is a problem with one of the students, it is not the teacher who solves the problem. The teacher expects that the students will work together to solve the problem. This philosophy is so different than that in the United States.

Satomi. The children came to school six times a week except for the third Saturday of each month. On Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays the children stayed from 8:30 a.m. until 2:00 pm, and on Wednesdays and Saturdays they stayed from 8:30 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. The activities were uniform for each classroom of the same age group, thus a description of one classroom is a general description of all the classrooms for that age group.

A day at Kawasaki Kindergarten started with the cheerful greetings of the children and teachers. "Ohayo gozaimasu (Good morning!) was heard everywhere. Tiny children in their school uniforms bowing in unison and saying, "Good morning!" resembled dominoes falling forward to capture the heart.

Some children arrived at school by walking and others came by school van. By 9:50 a.m. all the children had arrived. The school van had made four different routes to pick up the children and the ones who arrived by school van gathered in one classroom singing songs and playing games according to the directions of an appointed teacher. At 9:00 a.m. those children who were already in school went outside to play. Each time the school van arrived at the playground, the children immediately moved over to the school building to avoid the van. You can see in figures 5 and 6 how the playground serves a dual role. It was reminiscent of watching a tide rushing in and out as the children all moved away at the announced arrival of the school van and back again when the van left to pick up more children.

When the children arrived at school, they changed their shoes outside and put on shoes for inside wear and went to their own classes to change into their smocks. In figure 7 you can see the places where shoes were kept. None of the children whom I saw, including the three-year-olds, had a problem changing their clothes. After changing, they went to a specified classroom or outside to play.

At 9:50 a.m., all the children lined up for morning exercise according to their own classroom designations. Since the colors of the children's hats denoted different classes, it was easy for everyone to determine where the children belonged. The morning exercise included following musical directions for activities such as jumping, clapping hands, stretching, turning, and running in place. By 10:00 a.m., exercise was over and the children were instructed to stay in line and go to their own classrooms. Before they entered their classrooms, everyone washed their hands and gargled. Those children who needed to go to the bathroom were allowed to do so.

Marilyn. I did not have an opportunity to see this early morning regimen since I arrived at the school after the initial morning activities. But I could imagine all the little children lined up just so. I saw no evidence that children would not participate in such activities. Several of the children I noticed during the day appeared to be Downs' syndrome children. When I asked the director about this, he advised me that they took in several children with mental disabilities. I was given to understand that they required some special help, but they also seemed to be included in many of the regular activities.

The use of smocks and hats of different colors served several purposes. Children were able to find where they should be. Teachers were able to single out children who might have somehow strayed into the wrong place. With so many children, it seemed to me that some system was needed to keep track of them.

We are so careful in the United States about locations for playgrounds being separate from that of transportation. Yet in Kawasaki Kindergarten the bus drove into the play yard and play had to be stopped temporarily. I watched this activity at the close of the school day. I was amazed at how smoothly children lined up for the bus, and got out of its way.

Satomi. I began my observation inside the classroom of five-year-olds as the teacher played the piano and the children sang the morning song and then the school song. After the songs, everyone greeted each other by saying "Good morning." The teacher took roll call and asked the children, "Who are the tobans today?" [The tobans are those persons chosen daily on a rotating basis to help in the classroom.] The tobans are responsible for giving the children vitamin pills and stickers to put on their date books which indicate their attendance. The tobans usually consist of two children, one boy and one girl, and everyone has a chance to be one of the tobans for the day.

By the time they finished their morning greetings and choir, it was about 10:40 a.m. and the teacher announced the activities of the day for the classroom. This particular day the children were instructed to draw pictures of subjects of their own choosing. The teacher asked the children to take out their drawing books and crayons from their shelves. As soon as the teacher finished her announcement, she turned around from the children and started to take care of her business, and there was a minor storm of children flying around the classroom in order to

get ready for the activity. Some were bouncing on the floor with other children and others were talking and wrestling simultaneously; however, they all managed to get back to their desks by the time the teacher turned around and told the children that they could draw anything they wanted to. During the drawing time, there was lots of talking, getting up and going to visit others at different tables (even going to visit with others in different classrooms), and running in place. The teacher saw what was happening but did not say anything to the children. When the teacher stepped out for a little while, the classroom really went wild. Then the tobans came up to the front of the classroom, chanting, "Zip up your lips, put your hands on your lap, and get quiet." The children followed the tobans and chanted with them. The order for quiet and the efforts of the tobans were praised by the teacher when she returned.

Marilyn. Can you imagine an American teacher giving out vitamins in her classroom? Or three-year-olds gargling on a regular basis? These customs are signs of how the Japanese teacher sees the whole child to be important. Cleanliness, health, and freedom to explore are values that seemed to be implicit in the kind of program I saw at Kawasaki Kindergarten.

Group effort, cooperation, and the expectation that students will take care of themselves and each other was evident. The tobans played an important role in this. It was almost as though these little children were the teacher's aides, without benefit of experience or age. They had status in the mind of the teacher

and the students, at least for the day they served as tobans. Our expectations of positive and appropriate behavior are often rewarded.

Rounding out the day

Satomi. After lunch, between 12:40 and 1:40 in the afternoon, the children had free time to play inside the classroom except for the children who were still eating. This free time in the classroom consisted of drawing, play dough, books, blocks, and card games. By 1:40, smocks were hung up in the cubbies and school uniforms were put back on in preparation for going home. The teacher played the goodbye song and everyone joined in singing. Figure 9 gives you a sense of how these little tykes looked. After the song was completed, the children all bowed to the teacher and said, "Sensei, sayonara" (Teacher, goodbye), and bowed to each other and bade each other goodbye. By 1:50, all the children who were ready to go home had gathered in the hall. While waiting to be picked up by their parents or the school van, they sang songs and played games with the teachers.

Marilyn. I had a good bit of time to watch the end of the school day. Children moved freely from one place to another. There was little need to keep children huddled in a place, waiting for the bus to appear. They were free to move around and someone came over to us and said a word or two in English. They were free to smile and move about. The two little girls you see in figure 10 came in to say goodbye to us.

Rules, Rituals and Metaphors

The importance of meals. **Satomi.** Drawing time lasted until 11:30 a.m. The teacher then played the piano theme signalling that it was cleanup time. After cleanup, the children started preparing for lunch by washing their tables with wet cloths, washing their hands, and taking their lunch boxes from their yellow bags.

By 11:50 a.m., every table had been decorated with the children's bentos (lunch boxes) which were all laid out in an orderly fashion. Figure 8 is typical of lunchtime at the school. When the cloth wrapper that had held each lunch box had been unfolded, the box was placed with chopsticks, spoon and drinking cup in the appropriate locations for each upon the cloth. Lunches had been brought from home in plastic boxes or aluminum boxes decorated with cartoon characters. Food had been prepared in such a way as to appeal to the eye as well as the palette. Carrots were sculpted into the shape of flowers, and dessert, usually consisting of fresh fruit, included apples that were cut in such a manner that they had the appearance of bunny ears. No peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in plain brown paper bags for these children. An example of a bento that I observed consisted of fried cod fish cut into small bite-size pieces, buttered, sauteed spinach, cooked carrots cut into butterfly shapes, cherry tomatoes with lettuce, quartered boiled eggs, and rice. Food items were fitted into the box neatly and precisely like a jigsaw

puzzle. Simons (1987) also described bentos as culinary jigsaw puzzles.

When everyone was ready, including the children and the teacher, a ritual began when the teacher sat at the piano and began playing the bento song. The song indicated the children's appreciation of their parents' preparation of the food, and the encouragement to eat all the food that they had been provided so the children could grow strong and healthy. After the song, everyone chanted in unison the formal announcement for beginning the meal, "Itadakimasu," a word that encompasses the meaning of "Thank you for the food; I am going to eat now." By 12:40 p.m., all chanted the word "Gochisosamadeshita" or "thank you for the food; it was delicious."

Marilyn. Meals were taken by the family on the premises. We had the opportunity to share in a very special meal prepared for us. After all, visitors from the United States are seen as special. We were joined for lunch by the art teacher, the director, his wife and his mother (who is actually the assistant director). Only the director spoke English. There was considerable smiling, head nodding, and other nonverbal signals passed between us and the director's family.

The children's meals were like the feast we were served, only on a smaller scale. We were taken into the living room of the director's apartment. Sitting Japanese style on the floor, we positioned ourselves around a large, rectangular, low table. Fortunately for my husband and me, there were two "chairs" with

backs on them and we were able to make ourselves more or less comfortable. I was never quite sure what to do with my legs. They didn't fit under the table and sitting lotus position for a meal of more than one hour in duration was not quite for me.

It was clear that lunch had been prepared specially for us. There were six of us at this table. During the course of the meal I counted fourteen different cups, dishes, saucers, and so on placed in front of each of us. I tried to determine what all the items were, but because of our language differences was not able to learn about them all. Several items were familiar to me, since I had eaten Japanese food on numerous occasions in the United States. There was an emphasis on fish and vegetables. But I was surprised at one dish. It seemed to be a kind of beef stew, with meat, potatoes, and carrots. This had been prepared by the director's new wife, a young woman who was in her early twenties and had been a teacher. Perhaps she thought that was what Americans wanted to eat. I knew that I had to taste everything and that actually I should finish everything. But even my husband's appetite was not as large as the quantity of food placed in front of us.

I saw the serving of meals as an important ritual. The level of effort involved in the preparation of lunch was a sign that the meal was important. The various phrases said before and after eating, and organization of the meal and its balance suggested that it stood for order, for symmetry. The whole child was recognized and emphasis was given to physical as well as

other needs. Meal as metaphor, an idea not seen in schools in the United States.

The school as family. **Marilyn**. I want to share my impressions of how the school was a metaphor for the family. In fact, the director, his wife, mother, and grandmother all lived in an apartment within the school premises. They modelled family behavior and the children had an opportunity to see that. Children could think of school as an extension of their family, a place where they spent some time during the day, but a place where they respected their peers and honored those in authority.

Music and chants. **Satomi**. One thing that amazed me was the use of ritual songs and chants to lead the children in the transitions to new activities. There was always plenty of time allowed for this transition. Music was very important and was used to indicate cleanup time, time for lunch, and time to begin the day.

Order in the midst of freedom. **Satomi**. One thing lingered strongly in my memory. It was the fact that the children were allowed to wander in and out of the classrooms freely at all times, including visits to the other classrooms. The teachers did not make any effort to prevent these excursions but left it up to the classmates to instruct the wanderers to come back to where they belonged.

There was no verbal request for cleanup in this school and there were no complaints from the children about this activity. Although cleanup activities appeared chaotic, by the time this

tumultuous storm of activities had passed, pristine order was left in its wake.

The Whole Child. **Marilyn.** I was mostly struck by the lack of a formal, educationally oriented program. I saw no signs of prereading or math activities. I saw no emphasis on learning in an academic sense. The development of the whole child, the emphasis on physical activities, the arts, and music--these were not expected by me. I perhaps extrapolated downwards and expected a heavy emphasis on things academic.

Cooperation and expectations that students would take care of themselves and each other was quite evident. I would expect this to be almost a necessity in such a large class. But in the United States, I doubt that we would experiment with increasing class size. The hue and cry is always to reduce class size.

Kawasaki Kindergarten: our final impressions

Marilyn. My eyes were opened wide by my visit to this school. I witnessed large groups of young children living, playing and working together. I saw order and freedom. I saw opportunities for children to be themselves, while respecting others at the same time. I saw developmentally appropriate activities without strict adherence to academic matters, a preschool program I would have expected to see in the United States, but not one I expected to see in Japan. I also saw how important it was to see this school through my own eyes and the eyes of Satomi, for she, as an insider, was able to offer much more insight than I would have obtained on my own.

Satomi. I have always enjoyed working with children and adults at Kawaski Kindergarten, not only because I know the place and the people, but also because they warmly accept me as one of their own. Although they know that I have a different perspective because of having lived in the United States, they have no pretense with me and I likewise feel that I can be myself when visiting with them. I am always amazed at the enthusiastic willingness and cooperation of the children as well as the teachers to participate in my research. Because of their openness and acceptance, I felt that my presence as an observer had very little influence on the everyday life of the children and the teachers. I am very pleased that Marilyn had an opportunity to visit the school because with her observations, we were able to integrate our views and crystallize them into one holistic insight.

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