



## Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

**Report Title:** Revisiting and Rediscovering Japan's Teen Scene      **Name:** Lisa Shafer

**Other Team Members:**

**Program:** Oakland Program

**Trip Dates:** 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001

**Location Visited:** Japan

**Post Fellowship Reporting Template:** PFR Template 01

**Project Summary:** I traveled to Japan to get reacquainted with the Japanese language and culture, particularly teenage and school culture, as well as to explore the Japanese media and its coverage of minority and low-income people. I was inspired to propose my fellowship when I saw even the most disengaged student light up in my Japanese language & culture elective, which was new last year. I also was inspired to propose the Japanese trip by my interest in comparative media and my friendship with a Japanese reporter who used to cover America for her newspaper, the Mainichi Shimbun. Although I did not know it at the time of my application, my reporter friend was transferred by her newspaper back to Japan this spring. I was able to visit her, her family and her newspaper company. The trip was a chance for me to see how Japan has changed since I was an Assistant English Teacher with the Japanese Exchange and Teaching Programme 15 years ago. I was able to stay with a host family in the town where I had worked. The homestay was especially enlightening because the father just retired as a high school principal and we were able to have many discussions about the school systems in Japan and America.

**Career Impact:** \*Through experience in being a rudimentary, non-native Japanese speaker, I gained empathy and understanding for students who come to my class without fluent English skills. I could see how frustrating it can be for students who understand sophisticated concepts but cannot articulate that understanding because of the language barrier  
\*Between Japanese people who spoke English with me and my own Japanese language skills, I succeeded in learning an incredible amount about the nation and its people in three weeks  
\*I stretched myself physically by climbing Mt. Fuji alone. I pushed on up the 3,776 meter mountain suffering from altitude sickness and loneliness. When I thought of quitting early, I reflected on my own students who had struggled with a hike up to Vernal Falls in Yosemite, but persevered. The exhilaration of conquering my doubts and overcoming my adversity was unforgettable

**Classroom/Community Impact:**\*Students videotaped each other with questions for Japanese teens; Japanese teens answered those questions on video  
\*Students and staff members followed my blog (<http://mediasensei-tion.blogspot.com>) while I was in Japan  
\*Students asked questions about Japan in two press conferences held in my journalism room  
\*One student wrote a feature story about my trip and Fund for Teachers that will be published in the school newspaper  
\*Students figured out directions on a Japanese-only instruction sheet to dress themselves in Japanese yukata (an informal summer kimono)  
\*Students who were in my Japanese elective last year have stopped into my room multiple times to talk to me about the trip, pick up souvenirs from Japan, and watch a video I took of Japanese teenagers

**Open Response:** \*I will speak at one of our school's Professional Learning Community meetings about Fund for Teachers, my experience in Japan and blogging  
\*I have established an exchange with the Japanese school I visited – Kazuko's English Village – and we will begin sending videos and e-mails  
\*A newspaper article will be published on in the Green & Gold newspaper about my trip  
\*Students who were in my Japanese elective are planning a lunch to watch videos of my trip and ask questions  
\*I am preparing a special newspaper with stories and photographs to share with students and staff

**Quote:** "Telling my students about Japan has been even more exciting than the actual trip. My students are excited to take a class in Japanese next semester."

Photos:



Two students from Ena Agricultural High School cool off after a hot summer day at school.



Ena High School student starts baseball practice after school. Japanese baseball season runs all year with a summertime national tournament.



In Japan, hair clips are all the rage for boys. These boys sit outside a Harajuku store.



Lisa Shafer visited a "cram school." These students take extra classes three evenings a week at private schools.



A teenager dresses in a Little Bo Peep outfit and participates in "cosplay" in Yoyogi Park.



My students trying on a yukata after my return from Japan.



This girl is dressed in traditional geisha wear for an event at a Harajuku shopping mall.



Ryohei, a teenager whose mother runs a cram school, searches through his stack of manga for a gift for an Oakland student.