

Fostering Empathy towards Immigrants through English Education: Testing the Database of Immigrant Narratives (DIN)

英語教育を通じて移民への共感を育む：
移民物語データベース (DIN) の試行

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要旨

日本への外国人居住者の総数が増加し、永住権保持者が最大の在留資格を占めるようになると、日本は他のOECD諸国とともに、高齢化社会、地方の過疎化、高齢化社会、少子化といった重大な社会問題に対処するために移民を受け入れようとする過程にあるように思われる。しかし、政治家の発言や政府文書を調べてみると、日本国民に対して、移民受け入れは行われておらず、将来的にも予定されていないという一貫したメッセージが発信されていることがわかる。「移民」の存在を否定する政府の発言は、外国からの短期滞在者と長期滞在者の両方を「外国人」という言葉で一貫して表現し、同時に外国人の入国を認める在留資格を拡大している。

本論では、このような移民否定主義的なメッセージの意味を考察した上で、異なる文化的背景を持つ共感対象（移民）に対して、日本人大学生が移民の立場から物事を考えることを促進するために、Database of Immigrant Narratives (DIN) を活用したカリキュラムの有効性を検証する。異なる文化的背景を持つ人々に共感する大学生の能力の変化を測定するために、大学3年生の「専門演習」で共感尺度 (The Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy) を用いた。

Introduction

At 3.2 million residents (Immigration Services Agency, 2023), foreigners represent 2.5% of Japan's total population. This percentage is small not only compared with culturally diverse OECD nations such as Australia (29.9%) and the United States (13.6%), but also those with high degrees of cultural homogeneity such as Denmark (10.5%), Iceland (17.8%), and Sweden (19.5%) (OECD, 2024). Furthermore, as the Japanese government does not calculate foreign-born residents but only non-Japanese nationals, the total number of foreigners is inflated by the over 280,000 *zainichi* Koreans (Immigration Services Agency, 2023) who have lived in Japan for

multiple generations.

Nonetheless, pressures to admit foreigners into Japanese society mirror those at work in OECD peers: a perennially low birthrate (1.20 in 2023; Fujinami, 2024), a rapidly aging population (65+ comprising 29.1% of the total population; Chiba, 2023), increasing social security benefit payments for seniors (62.9% in 2020; Cabinet Office, 2023), expanding swaths of the country officially classified as “depopulated” (51.5% of municipalities; Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2023a), and widespread labor shortages for both full and part-time workers across all industries (52.5% and 30.9%; Teikoku Data Bank, 2023). Not only does Japan fare worse than the OECD average in each of the above categories (low fertility; aging society; rural depopulation; labor shortages), decades of policy initiatives have failed to bring about meaningful corrections in these trends.

Significant challenges notwithstanding, and in contrast to other developed countries, the Japanese government has largely avoided implementing immigration strategies, with the result that the country has experienced annual population decreases from 2008 (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2023b). However, beginning in 1989, and also in 2012, 2015, and 2019, legislative reforms to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act have expanded visa classes and residency periods for foreign workers. Yet, while policies have functioned to encourage the influx of foreign residents, the government has been careful to explicitly deny that changes to legislation represent “immigration policies.” Former Prime Minister Abe Shinzo cautiously prefaced immigration reforms by assuring the public in 2014 that “We are not adopting a so-called immigration policy” (as cited in Roberts,

2019, p. 89), and again in 2018, saying that the expansion of visa classes was “not an immigration policy” (as cited in Menjyu, 2020, p. 83). This aversion to immigration can be seen in the name of the agency tasked with overseeing it, which while translated into English as the “Immigration Services Agency,” does not contain the terms “immigrant” or “immigration” in the Japanese, but rather approximates to “Border Control and Residency Management Agency” [*shutsunyū koku zairyū kanri chō*].

Government policy regarding immigration has been the purview of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which but for brief interruptions between 1993-94 and 2009-12 has held continuous political power following the Second World War. The LDP maintains its denial of facilitating immigration based on its definition of who an immigrant is: “a person who has so-called permanent resident status at the time of entry [translation mine]” (LDP Political Investigation Committee, 2016, p. 2). As foreigners are not allowed initial entry to Japan as permanent residents, the LDP can deny that expanding visa classes constitutes an acceptance of immigrants. However, in principle, foreigners with ten years residency are eligible to apply for a permanent resident visa, a status currently enjoyed by over 1.1 million individuals, making it the single largest group of resident foreigners (Immigration Services Agency, 2023). The presence of such numbers of permanent foreign residents has prompted a reconsideration of Japan as, in effect, a modern destination for immigrants (Menjyu, 2020; Miyajima, 2022).

Despite denying that immigration is taking place, the government of Japan has made attempts to impress upon the citizenry the importance of *tabunka kyōsei*, a phrase that translates literally as “multicultural-living-together,” but can be understood as “multicultural co-living” or

“multicultural co-existence” (Kashiwazaki, 2016). Although the term came into use in the aftermath of the 1995 Kobe-Awaji Earthquake (Kurimoto, 2016), and was popularized primarily through the activities of non-profit organizations (e.g., the Tabunka Kyosei Center), it is currently employed in official publications across local, prefectural, and federal governments. Of note, the Ministry of Education (MEXT) has devoted increasingly large budgets to efforts aimed at the “enhancement of Japanese language education and education for foreign students to promote increased acceptance of foreign nationals” (MEXT, 2019), with 1.9 billion yen budgeted in 2020, up from 1.3 billion in 2019. Similarly, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications has released a *tabunka kyōsei* promotion plan with the goal of “building a ‘new normal’ through the construction of a diverse and inclusive society,” (translation mine, 2020, p. 1). Yet, despite such initiatives, the government continues to avoid referring to immigrants as anything other than foreigners, causing it to be critiqued as promoting a bifurcated social structure consisting of Japanese and non-Japanese, where immigrants are assimilated as a permanent foreigner class (Kashiwazaki, 2013).

This conception of immigration, embedded in policy, can be identified in government discourse. An tertiary analysis of word usage in Canadian and Japanese governmental policy papers on the topic of immigration is revealing.

Where the Canadian government frames its policies as “immigration” involving “immigrants” or the more inclusive term “newcomers,” the Japanese government exclusively employs the term “foreigner.” Furthermore, without reference to immigrants (*imin*) or immigration (*imin seisaku*) it employs the words “acceptance” and “coexistence” with high

Table 1: Word Usage in Canadians and Japanese Government Documents

An immigration system for Canada's future: Strengthening our communities (Government of Canada; 2023, 52 pages)		Comprehensive measures for acceptance and coexistence of foreign talent (Ministry of Justice; 2023, 58 pages)	
Word (English)	Frequency	Word (Japanese)	Frequency
newcomer	49	<i>shinjin</i> <i>shinzanmono</i> <i>nyūkama</i>	0
immigrant	31	<i>imin</i>	0
foreigner	0	<i>gaikokujin</i>	598
coexistence	0	<i>kyōsei</i>	99
accept	0	<i>ikeire</i>	125
understand/understanding	4	<i>rikai</i>	23
immigration	201	<i>imin seido</i> <i>imin seisaku</i>	0

frequency. “Foreigners are coming, and we need to get along with them” appears to be the message to the Japanese public.

For educators in Japan this poses a particular difficulty: How can one talk about issues related to immigrants, when their existence is officially denied? Furthermore, what curricular strategies may be employed to facilitate intercultural understanding, when the subjects of study are exclusively framed as “others” (i.e., foreigners)? This paper attempts to identify the reasons underscoring governmental avoidance of the terms “immigrant” and “immigration,” as well as to clarify the language in which the topic of immigration is being carried forward. Second, it briefly introduces a curriculum for third-year Japanese undergraduates in which an immigrant database, *The Database of Immigrant Narratives*, was utilized to promote perspective taking and understanding of the lives of immigrants. The results of a Japanese version of the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (Wang et al., 2003), used to measure changes in perspective

taking and awareness, are discussed, and implications for classroom strategies to promote intercultural understanding are considered.

Immigration in Japan

Although Japan experienced an influx of imperial subjects from Taiwan and the Korean peninsula before and during the Second World War, since its opening in the 1880s the country has been a net exporter of its citizenry, concluding with the final government-sponsored emigration in 1973 (Nagayoshi, 2020). Post-modern Japan's first encounter with issues related to immigration occurred in 1975 with the arrival of refugees from the Vietnam War (i.e., the boat people), who although small in number (11,319 persons; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023) resulted in 1982 in Japan becoming a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.). Japan's first real experience with large numbers of foreign nationals coming into the country began in the 1980s, spurred by labor shortages in low-skilled positions (Takatani, 2018), and the rapid appreciation of the yen following the 1985 signing of the Plaza Accords (Miyajima, 2022). Strong labor demand absent visa classes for low-skilled workers resulted in increases in illegal laborers, with estimates as high as 250,000 persons in 1989 (Ventura, 1992). Prominent amongst such workers were tens of thousands of Iranian nationals, who exploited a visa-exemption agreement to enter Japan, after which many overstayed to engage in illegal work (Asgari et al., 2010). As with the signing of the Convention in 1982, immigration reforms in 1989, which expanded visa classes, enacted strict regulations on illegal workers, and created a visa class for foreigners with Japanese ancestry (Li, 2012), were largely a reaction to the presence of unanticipated foreigners

already in the country, as well as to pressure from labor organizations. In attempting to address these issues, the 1989 immigration reform bill has been regarded as the start of Japan's immigration policy (Nagayoshi, 2020).

While 1989 may be considered Japan's first foray into immigration, the terms "immigration" and "immigrant" are conspicuously absent in official documents, excepting in cases where the government and working groups deny that immigration is either taking place or being considered. One such example is the Japan International Trainee & Skilled Worker Cooperation Organization (JITCO), which was founded in 1991 to facilitate the incorporation of low-skilled workers into what is now called the Technical Trainee Intern Program (TTIP), overseeing over 346,000 trainees in 2023 (Immigration Services Agency, 2023). While widely acknowledged to be a guest-worker program by politicians in interviews (Strausz, 2019), JITCO maintains that its mission is not to address critical labor shortages, but to accept "foreign human resources such as Technical Intern Trainees and Specified Skilled Workers as a part of its organizational aim of contribution to the development of the international economic society" (JITCO, n.d.). Similarly, the government insists that nurse and caregiver trainees entering Japan through bilateral economic partnership agreements (EPAs) between Japan and Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam are intended to strengthen economic partnerships (Naiki, 2015), and "not as a measure to address labor shortages in the nursing field" (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2011, p. 4). Foreign students, who topped 300,000 in 2023 (Immigration Services Agency, 2023), represent another example of unofficial labor, as they are allowed to work up to 28 hours a week, providing Japan with vital human resources, particularly in

the service sector (Nagayoshi, 2020). While officially in the country for educational purposes, “many ‘foreign students’ in Japan are, in fact, workers” (Takizawa, 2021, p. 65). Each of the above categories of individuals function to supply labor for the Japanese economy while allowing the government to insist that their presence is temporary, and that foreigners are welcomed as a means for Japan to contribute to international society.

Immigration without imin

In cases where the government admits to allowing foreigners entrance into society to address labor shortages, their status as immigrants is straightforwardly denied. A 2016 policy paper titled “Toward the ‘Age of Coexistence’: Basic Plan to Accept Foreign Workers”, authored by the Liberal Democratic Party Political Investigation Committee, called for increasing the numbers of foreign workers, but with the following caveat:

In order to ensure the sustainability of the economic and social infrastructure, a comprehensive and concrete study will be conducted on how to accept foreign talent in the medium to long term, focusing on areas of real need. To this end, we will conduct cross-governmental studies and deliberations on necessary matters, including a mechanism that will not be misunderstood as an immigration policy and a way to build a national consensus. [Emphasis added; translation mine] (LDP Political Investigation Committee, 2016, p. 1)

While the LDP may believe that the specter of immigrants complicates the building of a national consensus, it continues to expand programs and visa classes to allow them into the country. Strausz (2019) concludes that

the LDP employs a piecemeal approach to immigration in order to “avoid opposition by far-right groups that might oppose policies that look like broad-based ‘immigration’ policies rather than sector-specific foreign labor policies” (p. 86).

Even working groups not directly connected with the government evidence extreme caution when referencing immigration. A 2024 policy proposal produced by the Population Strategy Council (PSC) titled “Population Vision 2100,” which was hand-delivered to Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, called for increasing foreigners to over 10% of the population, yet with the understanding that such increases did not constitute immigration:

The United Nations once proposed the concept of “supplemental immigration” to compensate for population decline and other factors. If population stabilization is to be achieved through an influx of foreigners, huge numbers are needed. It is unrealistic, difficult to foresee the future, and a major concern for the stability of society. Therefore, a “supplemental immigration policy” to offset population decline should not be taken. [Emphasis added; translation mine] (PSC, 2024, p. 12).

In addition to calling for increased numbers of foreigners to work and reside in the country, the PSC emphasized the need for their assimilation: “In terms of social integration, it is important to ensure education and social participation not only of the first generation but also of the second and subsequent generations” (Translation mine; p. 12). In predicting the needs of multiple generations of foreign residents, the PSC would appear to be acknowledging that immigration will take place; however, the authors are deliberate in avoiding the use of the term:

The term “immigrant” is ambiguous and therefore confusing in some discussions. For this reason, the term *eiteijyūgaikokujin* (permanent resident foreigner) is used to refer to both *eijyūgaikokujin* (permanent resident foreigners) and *teijyūgaikokujin* (permanent resident foreigners with fixed terms of residency). [Translation mine] (PSC, 2024, p. 12).

While the use of *eiteijyūgaikokujin* may not work in the interests of clarity, such is not its purpose. Rather, through its use, the PSC is attempting to discuss the reality of permanent foreign residents without resorting to use of the term *imin*.

The trouble with *imin*

The contradiction of facilitating immigration without immigrants has been noted. Roberts (2019) indicates the proclivity for Japanese sources to avoid the word *imin* through use of phrases such as *gaikokujin no ukeire* (acceptance of foreigners), in place of *imin no ukeire* (acceptance of immigrants). This phenomenon partially stems from differences in nuance between the English “immigrant” and the Japanese equivalent “*imin*”, such that the latter term is frequently employed to include broad groups of non-Japanese. By way of example, a 2023 BBC article titled “Greece boat disaster leaves 78 dead and hundreds missing: Europe migrant crisis” (Wright, G. & Gozzi, L., 2023), was presented on the BBC News Japan website the same day as “Ship carrying *imin* sinks off the Greek coast, killing at least 79 people.” The discrepancy in the deceased notwithstanding, that “migrant” should be translated as *imin* indicates an inflexibility in the Japanese to parse differences between the terms “immigrant” and “migrant,” resulting in a conceptual blurring between

such groups. Similarly, in covering the phenomenon of migrants illegally crossing the U.S./Mexico border in 2024, Japanese media routinely employed the term *imin* in reference to illegal aliens:

Newly arrived imin are now becoming more noticeable everywhere in major cities on the East Coast and in the North. Existing shelters are not able to accommodate the influx of imin. A building that was once used as an elementary school building is now a place where imin take shelter. Seeing them gathered outside, even in the early afternoon on a weekday, shows how many imin are out of work. (Translation mine; ANNNewsCH, 3:03 – 3:32)

Conceptual ambiguity embodied in the Japanese term *imin* results in a difficulty to parse the differences between legal immigrants and migrants. This confusion also extends to the concept of refugees, which Japanese undergraduates have indicated an inability to distinguish from *imin* (Ostman, 2017).

In addition to negative connotations surrounding the term “*imin*,” a dichotomous worldview that partitions the world into Japanese and non-Japanese may function to complicate discourse regarding foreigners in Japan. While discussions of Japanese identity (i.e., *nihonjinron*) are beyond the scope of this paper (cf. Kowner, Befu & Manabe, 1999; Burgess, 2010; Befu & Manabe, 2018), the belief in Japanese homogeneity may contribute to monolithic conceptions of “us” and “them” that function to emphasize “foreignness,” while limiting vocabulary that render differentiation between groups possible. For example, Takatani (2018) indicates the historical difficulties experienced by the post-war Japanese news media in differentiating between the status of legal and illegal foreigners, evidenced in its tendency to employ the blanket term “foreign worker” (*gaigokujin*

rōdōsha), a situation that was only partially alleviated by the introduction of the phrase illegal residents (*fuhō taizaisha*) in the 1989 revisions to the Immigration Control Act. While current immigration reforms may be seen as progressive, in that they seek to expand opportunities for foreign workers to contribute to Japanese society, in responding to the perceived problem of illegal foreign laborers, the government has been indicated as creating a discourse in which “foreignness” and “illegality” were connected in the national consciousness. Takatani (2018) notes a consequence from continued government efforts to regulate illegal residents in the absence of a clear immigration policy:

The government’s focus on countermeasures against “illegal aliens” has probably contributed to the reinforcement of unfounded fears with people, not only about “illegal residents,” but also that the increase in the number of foreign workers will worsen public safety. In turn, this idea of linking unskilled migrant workers with “worsening safety” has made it more difficult to put “immigration” on the policy agenda. (Translation mine; pp. 543-4)

Whether deliberate or unintended, Japan now faces the prospect of incorporating large numbers of immigrants without inclusive language (e.g., immigrant, newcomer, etc.) to promote their existence as permanent and contributing members of society. In analyzing keywords used in relation to minorities in Japan by the *Sankei Shimbun* between 1997-2008, Burgess (2008) noted a lack of the use of *imin*, in favor of *zai’ nichi gaikokujin* (resident foreigners), *rai’ nichi gaikokujin* (foreigners who have come to Japan), and *gaikokujin rōdōsha* (foreign workers), while at the same time frequently employing the terms *tabunka* (multicultural) and *kyōsei* (coexistence). The result appears to be a form of “Japanese

multiculturalism” where “foreigner” remains a permanent identity. Kashiwazaki (2013) indicates a weakness in such a system, that it largely fails to “incorporate immigrants into the national polity” (p. 43), contributing “to a reinforcement of the ethnically homogenous conception of Japanese nationhood” (p. 44). Prime Minister Fumio Kishida summarized such a vision in the following terms at the 2nd Annual *Reiwa Rincho Kaigi* in 2023:

I believe that we must think about a society in which we can live together with foreigners... We must consider a symbiotic society that is uniquely Japanese and fits the reality of Japan. (Translation mine; Abema Prime 2:31-2:47)

Testing the Database of Immigrant Narratives in a Class for Third-year English Majors

In the absence of straightforward government messaging to further public understanding that its policies are facilitating immigration by individuals who will reside (semi)permanently in the country, educators are presented with the difficult question of how to promote interest and understanding amongst students concerning the growing numbers of immigrants coming into Japan. While government language, centered around the use of the term “foreigner,” may function to call attention to differences between immigrants and indigenous Japanese, empathizing (i.e., perspective taking) with immigrants represents a pedagogical strategy to draw attention to similarities between learners and perceived “others.” Already widely employed in medical programs to promote physician/caregiver understanding of patients through examination of their narratives (i.e., narrative medicine; cf. Charon, 2001; Charon, 2006, DasGupta et al., 2006),

engaging students in the life stories of immigrants, in which they are encouraged to take alternate perspectives, affords learners the cognitive space to consider not only how they would feel in the place of others, but also fosters a deeper understanding of the challenges that immigrants face in a new society, as well as the contributions that they make.

Launched in March 2022, The Database of Immigrant Narratives (DIN: www.icnresearch.net) is a resource currently consisting of forty-six interviews of immigrants to Japan as well as Japanese immigrants to other countries. The DIN contains full-length interviews, divided into videos by topic, allowing users to gain knowledge concerning immigrants' home countries, their reasons for immigrating, the challenges they face in their new country, as well as their contributions to society (for a full discussion of the DIN and its features, see Ostman & Xethakis, 2023).

Participants and Procedure

Five male and eight female third-year Japanese students participated in a one-year course focused on examining the experiences of immigrants using the DIN. English ability, as evaluated by the instructor, placed students in the Elementary/Intermediate range (CEFR A2/B1). In the first class, students were informed that they would be watching video interviews of immigrants, and that they would be asked to engage in perspective taking exercises and group discussions in order to gain a deeper understanding of the immigrant experience.

To introduce students to the concept of immigration, they were shown the interview of a Japanese woman who had immigrated to Canada. It was hypothesized that beginning with an empathy target whose cultural and formative life experiences (e.g., education, surroundings, etc.) were

Table 2: Questions regarding the first interview subject, Junko.

#	Question
1	How is Junko's childhood similar to your childhood? Write some things that you have in common below.
2	Why did Junko decide to move to Canada? Was it an easy decision for her? If you were her, would you do the same thing?
3	How was Junko's life in Canada at first? What challenges did she have? How do you think you would respond to these challenges if it was you?
4	How has Junko's identity changed after living in Canada for over 20 years? Do you think your identity would change if you lived in another country? How would it change?
5	What is Junko doing now to contribute to Canadian society?
6	Junko is an example of a Japanese that left Japan to live in another country. Do you think you would like to experience living in another country? Why or why not?

highly similar to that of students would aid in perspective taking, which could then be accessed when attempting to take the perspectives of immigrants whose cultural backgrounds and formative experiences were less similar. The interview was divided into a series of clips, which were initially assigned to individual students to watch independently before watching together as a class. Students offered summaries and impressions of their clip, with input from the teacher and other students.

Following the viewing of the entire interview, students were asked to follow up on cultural-specific information offered by immigrants (i.e., birthplace, home country, etc.), followed by a series of questions designed to assist empathic interaction with the interview subject.

The second class concluded with students discussing their answers in small groups of two or three, before engaging in a group discussion. This two-class pattern was repeated employing a series of immigrant interviews: Luz (Mexico; classes 3, 4), Marko (Germany; classes 5, 6), Liu (China; classes 7, 8), Brad (Australia; classes 9, 10), Lily (Canada; classes

Table 3: Class themes in the second semester

Class	Question (English/Japanese)
16, 17	Why do immigrants come to Japan?
18, 19	What do immigrants know about Japan before they come?
20, 21	What are immigrants first impressions of Japan?
22, 23	What occupations are immigrants engaged in?
24, 25	What challenges do immigrants face living in Japan?
26, 27	What do immigrants like/dislike about living in Japan?
28, 29	What advice do immigrants have for other immigrants/for Japanese?

11, 12), and Marlo (Indonesia; classes 13, 14). The final class (class 15) was used to summarize content from the seven interviews viewed during the semester.

The second semester employed an alternate approach, where instead of watching full interviews in sequential clips, clips from various interview subjects were organized around topics.

Outside of class time, students were asked to choose one interview subject from the DIN and write a 1,500-word report consisting of three sections: 1) an analysis and explanation of the cultural background of the immigrant, 2) a brief summary explaining how the immigrant came to be in Japan, 3) a discussion of what the student learned about the immigrant experience. Each student completed a short presentation based on their report in the final class (class 30).

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected from students twice: at the beginning (class 1) and end of the course (class 30). A paper-based version of the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE) was administered to students to assess the efficacy of the DIN in developing learner ability to engage in perspective

taking. The SEE is “a self-report instrument measuring empathy towards people of racial and ethnic backgrounds different from one’s own” (Wang et al., p. 221). As originally developed by Wang et al., the SEE comprised four subscales used to measure aspects of ethnocultural empathy: empathic feeling and expression, empathic perspective-taking, acceptance of cultural difference, and empathic awareness. The Japanese version of the SEE (SEE_J; Ostman & Xethakis, 2023) was used in this study. The SEE_J (Appendix A) is shorter than the original SEE, comprising two subscales, empathic feeling and expression (EFE_J) and empathic awareness and perspective-taking (EAPT_J) and employing a 6-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 6 = Strongly agree). Data analysis consisted of two steps. First, means and standard deviations for students’ scores on the pre- and post-administrations of the SEE_J and its subscales were calculated. Second, changes in scores between the pre- and post-administrations were evaluated using Wilcoxon signed-rank test, and effect sizes (Cohen, 1988) were calculated. All data was analyzed using SPSS V28.

Results

The results of the analysis indicated that the DIN had a positive influence on students’ perspective taking ability. Means for the post-administration scores were higher on both subscales, the EFE_J and EAPT_J, and the SEE_J taken as a whole (Table 3). While Wilcoxon signed-rank tests showed that these changes were not significant, this was most likely due to the small sample size ($n = 11$; Stephens, 1996). Effect sizes indicated a medium effect ($r = .26$) for the EAPT_J, and a small effect ($r = .18$) for the SEE_J, but only a very small effect size for the EFE_J.

In addition, the efficacy of the DIN in promoting perspective taking can

Table 4: Means, standard deviations, medians and results from Wilcoxon signed-rank tests for SEE_J and subscales.

Scale	Pre			Post			z	p	r
	M	SD	Mdn	M	SD	Mdn			
SEE_J	48.91	7.46	49	51.45	4.99	53	- 0.849	.396	.18
EFE_J	28.73	5.12	30	30.00	3.16	29	- 0.401	.688	.08
EAPT_J	20.18	4.05	20	21.45	3.67	22	- 1.253	.210	.26

be seen when looking at changes in the scores of individual items in the EAPT_J subscale. Scores for items 19 *“It is easy for me to understand what it would feel like to be a person of another racial or ethnic background other than my own,”* and 20, *“I can see how other racial or ethnic groups are systematically oppressed in our society,”* increased .27, from 3.73 to 4.00, and 4.09 to 4.36, respectively. Importantly, scores on Item 25, *“I am aware of how society differentially treats racial or ethnic groups other than my own,”* increased by even greater amount, almost half a point, from 3.82 to 4.27. As with the scale scores, Wilcoxon signed-rank tests revealed that none of the increases were significant. Nonetheless, the moderate effect sizes for Items 20 ($r = .29$) and 25 ($r = .28$) indicate positive changes.

Discussion

Although changes in SEE scores were not statistically significant due to the small sample size, results indicated that course content facilitated learner engagement in perspective taking with empathy targets from differing cultural backgrounds. Given the cultural constraints presented by Japanese concepts surrounding the term *imin*, didactic discussion of immigration-related issues may prove difficult in some classroom situations. A further complication involves a lack of access to members from differing cultural backgrounds, particularly in universities in rural

areas where residents from other countries make up a small percentage of the population.

The DIN represents a resource that educators can use to introduce immigration-related content through empathic immersion in the lives of immigrants from various cultural backgrounds. While direct attempts to emphasize the importance of empathizing with members of outgroups may not prove effective (*cf.* Henry-Tillman et al., 2002), perspective-taking exercises, where learners are asked to imagine themselves in the narratives of cultural others, offers a non-threatening approach to deepening cultural understanding, and an approach that has shown positive effects in this study.

As the ability to engage in perspective-taking is mediated by ingroup/outgroup perception (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Cikara et al., 2011), educators may find it useful to initially present learners with empathy targets with whom they can be predicted to perceive higher degrees of similarity. For example, the curriculum presented in this study began with a Japanese immigrant to Canada who had grown up in a city close to many of the students in the class. Subsequent immigrants were selected based on characteristics (age, gender, hobbies, life experiences) that were shared by learners. As the class progressed, and the subject of immigration increased in familiarity, students were presented with increasingly dissimilar empathy targets (for a full discussion, see Ostman, 2022).

A second strategy employed in the course involved the use of full narratives in the first semester, switching to subject-based clips from various interviews in the second, reflecting the two principal objectives of the curriculum. The first objective was to assist learners in engaging in perspective taking; therefore, full interviews were employed, with the

life story of a single immigrant covered over the period of two classes. The second objective involved deepening learner understanding of the immigrant experience, which was achieved by viewing clips from multiple interviews based on a given topic (e.g., What are some reasons why people immigrate to Japan?). In constructing the DIN, interviews were included both as full-length videos and also divided into short clips by subject matter so that it could be utilized for both objectives.

Conclusion

The DIN was created not only to provide learners with access to individuals with whom they may differ culturally, but also to facilitate intercultural understanding through engagement in perspective taking, as learners consider not only how others think and feel, but also how *they* would think and feel in the life situations of the people they encounter. This narrative-based approach to understanding outgroups, known as narrative medicine, is already a common feature of medical training programs, and has been employed to generate understanding in caregivers towards patients with whom they perceive minimal similarity. Resources such as the DIN may be utilized to engender understanding on immigration-related issues through empathic immersion into the lives of individuals whose existence and contributions may be largely unrecognized, even as their numbers continue to increase.

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Appendix A

The Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy-Japanese Version (SEE_J)

Empathic Feeling and Expression

1. I seek opportunities to speak with individuals of other racial or ethnic backgrounds about their experiences.

人種、言語、文化が異なる人たちの体験について、その人たちと話をする機会を求めている。

2. I share the anger of those who face injustice because of their racial and ethnic backgrounds.

人種、言語、文化が異なるという理由で不当な待遇にある人たちの怒りを同感できる。

3. When I interact with people from other racial or ethnic backgrounds, I show my appreciation of their cultural norms.

人種、言語、文化が異なる人たち付き合うときは、その人たちの習慣を喜んで受け入れる。

4. I feel supportive of people of other racial and ethnic groups, if I think they are being taken advantage of.

人種、言語、文化が異なる人たちが利用されているような場合、その人たちに助けたいと思う。

5. I get disturbed when other people experience misfortunes due to their racial or ethnic backgrounds.

人種、言語、文化が異なるという理由でその人たちが不幸に見舞われるとき、私は平静ではいられなくなる。

6. When I see people who come from a different racial or ethnic

background succeed in the public arena, I share their pride.

人種、言語、文化が異なる人たちが公平な競争において勝利したら、その人たちの喜びに同感する。(孫正義・ケンブリッジ 飛鳥・ローラ)

Empathic Perspective Taking and Empathic Awareness

7. I know what it feels like to be the only person of a certain race or ethnicity in a group of people.

集団の中で、自分が他の人とは人種、言語、文化が異なる唯一の人間であるということはどんな感じなのか理解できる。

8. I can relate to the frustration that some people feel about having fewer opportunities due to their racial or ethnic backgrounds.

異なる人種、言語、文化が理由で自分たちは正当に扱われていないと知っている人たちの気持ちを私は理解できる。

9. It is easy for me to understand what it would feel like to be a person of another racial or ethnic background other than my own.

人種、言語、文化が異なる人たちの一員であるということはどういう感じなのか容易に理解できる。

10. I can see how other racial or ethnic groups are systematically oppressed in our society.

日本では人種、言語、文化が異なる人たちがどのように意図的に不当に扱われているかを理解することができます。

11. I am aware of how society differentially treats racial or ethnic groups other than my own.

日本の社会では人種、言語、文化が異なる人たちはどのような点で日本人と異なる扱いを受けているかを知っている。