

**Stephen Shrader
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LIOJ came to my attention when I read about the Thailand-Japan Team Teaching Exchange in the pages of *The Daily Yomiuri*. I remember being impressed, because LIOJ went against the idea, widespread at that time, that team teaching must be a native speaker/non-native speaker team. It was a school that seemed to have a vision of language education that I wanted to be a part of. After gaining enough experience to feel that I might be able to operate effectively with the LIOJ team, I decided to apply. I thus served for one year as an LIOJ instructor, and am currently the program developer.

While at LIOJ, it has been a great honor for me to work alongside some of the finest language teachers that I have known. This was especially true as an instructor. Diane McCall, whose ideas regarding kids' classes have inspired me to try new ways of interweaving new and old material. Stuart Abrahamson, whose ability to welcome an idea which might differ from his own, entertain it, think about it critically, take the best from it, and always maintain his gentle demeanor, reminds me of the type of colleague that I aspire to be. Doray Espinosa, whose consistent level of dedication to the school and professionalism as a language teacher has raised my awareness of what these things mean. Jon Collier, whose ability to see the humor in any situation, remains a giant among the people that I have known. And Jim Kahny, who manages to keep his cool in situations that go beyond my level of patience, keeps me striving to grow.

Becoming program developer has necessarily changed the way that I interact with my colleagues, but I have certainly learned as much this year. Young Shin Kim, Frances Devaney, Gabriella Cseh, and Tracey Cook are also colleagues who have played a part in my professional learning. It has been a pleasure working with all of them at LIOJ.

It would be difficult to say which program has been the most enjoyable for me, because all of them have been both fun and educational. LIOJ is the only school that I know of in Japan where one might be called on to teach such a variety of students. It is an institution that challenges its members to push the limits of their professional lives. It is the hardest work that I have done, and it has without a doubt been the most rewarding.

Working at LIOJ marks a milestone in my career. It has been my dream for several years to begin teaching in Japan's university system, but I find myself torn. I know that I will probably never find another school that represents a more challenging and dynamic way of participating in the field of language education. LIOJ is a crucible of people and ideas that will always stand out for me.