

**Teachers College
Columbia University
Japan Alumni
Association**

TC Alumni Spotlight – Asano Keizo

Reminiscing about the New York campus; and AI in Japan



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Education:

Nanzan University,
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“Mingle with real humans. The truth is always there.”

Tell us about yourself and your work recently. I graduated from TC, New York, in 1981, finding a job as a high school teacher, in Nagoya, Japan. I continued my career until 2004 as a foreign language teacher and administrator at the same high school. Since that year, I've been engaged in higher education, teaching promising young Japanese students. My current academic interest is in foreign language education in Japan in the era of artificial intelligence.

What drew you to TC? Dr. John Fanselow was there.

What is your favorite thing about the place you live now? Not too crowded or too dormant, not too old-fashioned or too much advanced.

What is a favorite memory from TC? Reading the NY Times (paper!) and sitting down on the steps in front of the Library with coffee on sunny days

What class, teacher and/or classmate has had a lasting effect on you? John Fanselow: Try the opposite. Still keep that in mind.

What is the hardest thing about your current job? The hardest thing is that everyone in Japan believes the aim of foreign language education is to be a user of English.

What is your advice for somebody who is trying to get into your field? Think about what you can teach other than language (English).

Share a recent classroom/work episode. A student told me, when we met at the beginning of the year, that she had enjoyed her study abroad during the recess. During the recess, I wondered? She explained she had studied English in Canada for two weeks! Two-week study abroad cannot be my image of studying abroad. Today's college students refer to their foreign experiences as "study abroad" regardless of its length and contents. Good. We live in the different age now.

What motivates you? Foreign language (English) can nurture more peaceful individuals through its learning process, other than getting skills to communicate.

What has been the biggest challenge in your career? How did you overcome it? Career shift from high school to college. Lots of people at the higher education level those days undermined high school teachers including me. Both high school and college teachers just do different jobs, nothing higher or lower/better or worse. I decided to better communicate with my students, which was regular responsibility to high school teachers, and I did so. I wrote papers and did presentations just like other college professors to prove that an ex-high school college professor can do both academics and teaching, as well as administrative responsibilities. And I did. It took me longer than other regular college professors did to get promoted to be a full professor. However, I was happy to show the college professors that that was a piece of cake.

What advice do you have for others starting at TC now? Mingle with real humans. The truth is always there.

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