

Clearinghouse Invites Educators to Explore Resources for Teaching about Japan

By Nicole Restrick and Linda S. Wojtan

The National Clearinghouse for U.S.-Japan Studies specializes in providing educational information about Japan to K–12 students, teachers, specialists, and curriculum developers. Indeed, service, coupled with a sincere dedication to helping individuals find reliable information about Japan, underlies all Clearinghouse activities. Its publications are complimentary and its Web site provides access to the U.S.-Japan Database of educational materials and the Lesson Plan Database. Established in 1989 through a grant from the United States-Japan Foundation, it has been funded by the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership since 1993, and is a joint project of the Social Studies Development Center and the East Asian Studies Center at Indiana University, Bloomington.

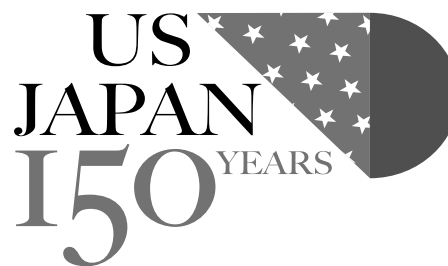
The Clearinghouse publications program is designed to help teachers by providing educational information about Japan in a format convenient for classroom use. Perhaps the most useful publications for teachers are *Japan Digests*, two-page summaries covering a range of topics related to Japan and U.S.-Japan relations. Published three times a year, all *Japan Digests* focus on teaching and explore a variety of ways in which to incorporate a particular topic into the classroom. Past titles include “Examining Japan’s History Textbook Controversies,” “Teaching about Japanese-American Internment,” “Japanese Education,” and “Understanding Okinawa’s Role in the U.S.-Japan Security Arrangement.” Teacher feedback confirms that many of the *Digests* are often integrated into classroom instruction on Japan. For example, a Massachusetts teacher praises the rich cultural data in “Daily Life in Japanese High Schools,” explaining that students can easily read the material and initiate cross-cultural comparisons. Similarly, a Nebraska teacher extols the multifaceted exploration found in “Rice: It’s More Than Food in Japan.” Her students follow their exploration of rice in Japan with a comparison to the role of corn on the Great Plains, especially during the early settlement period. Additionally, “Teaching Primary Children about Japan through Art” has inspired both elementary and secondary teachers to engage students in art-based Japanese cultural studies. Teachers have also taken advantage of this *Digest* author’s offer of free calligraphy for the classroom!

The annual Clearinghouse newsletter, *Shinbun*, features updates on Clearinghouse publications and services and highlights new Web sites. It announces curriculum resources published by organizations such as the Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education (SPICE); professional development programs available to teachers such as the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia (NCTA); and information about

study tour opportunities such as the Fulbright Memorial Fund Program and New Perspectives: Japan.

Clearinghouse *Internet Guides* are useful references to online resources offering background reading and curriculum on designated Japan-related topics. Available *Internet Guides* include “Japan in World History,” “Japan’s Imperial Family,” “Japanese Festivals and National Holidays,” and “Women in Japanese Society.” All *Guides* are dated and are routinely updated in their online format. *Internet Guides*, *Shinbun*, and the *Japan Digests* are available free of charge in print or can be easily accessed on-line.

Clearinghouse publications are also made available as part of the complimentary *Teaching about Japan Information Packets*. These packets include copies of *Shinbun*, most *Japan Digests* and *Internet Guides*, as well as information on a variety of other Japan-related resources. *Information Packets* are an excellent introduction to K-12 educational resources on Japan. Educators are invited to order these packets for themselves, or for distribution at conferences, seminars, and workshops.



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For online education resources visit www.us-japan.org or
contact your local Japan-America Society

ESSAYS

The Clearinghouse site on the World Wide Web is often the first introduction to Clearinghouse publications and services. Over the years, the Web site has become an important means of connecting with educators worldwide. It serves as a gateway to K–12 Japan studies on the Web by providing easy access to Clearinghouse materials and links to numerous other resources such as AEMS (Asian Educational Media Service), SPICE, the Five College Center for East Asian Studies, Consulates General of Japan, English-language Japanese newspapers, and the Japan Information Network's KidsWeb Japan site. In addition to the full texts of *Japan Digests*, *Internet Guides*, and *Shinbun*, the site also offers access to two Clearinghouse databases: the U.S.-Japan Database of educational materials and the Lesson Plan Database.

Knowing where to locate quality resources for classroom use can be a stumbling block for educators teaching about Japan. The National Clearinghouse for U.S.-Japan Studies strives to assist educators in their search by offering online access to the bibliographic U.S.-Japan Database of educational materials. Staff members collect, analyze, and abstract materials and resources of general interest, as well as documents that can aid in the development and implementation of curricula and lessons on broad areas of Japanese culture and society, and on U.S.-Japan Relations.

A major strength of the U.S.-Japan Database is its link with the ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) system of the United States Department of Education. In addition to abstracts written in-house, the U.S.-Japan Database contains relevant abstracts selected from the ERIC Database, the world's largest and most widely used educational database. ERIC's broad scope allows Clearinghouse staff to include in the U.S.-Japan Database research reports, conference papers, and journal articles on Japanese language education, educational studies conducted in Japan, and numerous other areas of interest to educators. The database is searchable by full-text, title, and keyword. Citations in the U.S.-Japan Database include information about availability, material type, date of publication, cost, and an abstract. Clearinghouse staff also conducts custom searches of the database free of charge.

The Lesson Plan Database is by far the most popular feature of the Clearinghouse Web site with its lessons for elementary, junior high, and senior high school classrooms on Japanese culture, history, geography, and language arts. Most lessons in the database are flexible and can be adapted to suit a wide range of grade levels. The Database is searchable by subject, grade level, and keyword, or patrons can browse an index of all lesson plans. Educators interested in supporting education about Japan by sharing their expertise are invited to submit their "best practices" lesson plans to the Clearinghouse for review and possible inclusion in the database.

In addition to our free publications program, the Clearinghouse publishes collections of lesson plans for purchase in cooperation with the ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education. *Teaching about Japan: Lessons and Resources*, edited by Mary Hammond Bernson and Linda S. Wojtan, has a sampling of basic lessons for all grade levels. *Tora no Maki II: Lessons for Teaching about Contemporary Japan* and *Nippon*

Nyumon: An Idea Book for Teaching Japanese Economic Topics are both products of the Keizai Koho Center teacher fellowships program. Lessons in *Tora no Maki II* are keyed to the National Council for the Social Studies standards, making it an extremely practical resource. Although all lessons from *Nippon Nyumon* are grounded in economic topics, they can be applied to a wide range of subjects including geography and cultural studies. The Clearinghouse also distributes Lynn Parisi's *The Constitution and Individual Rights in Japan: Lessons for Middle and High School Students*, an excellent classroom introduction to both Meiji and 1947 Constitutions. All publications are reasonably priced at no more than \$12 per book including shipping and handling.

Connecting with the Clearinghouse

The Clearinghouse is always looking for input from educators on how to improve services. What topic would you like to see covered in the next *Japan Digest* or *Internet Guide*? Clearinghouse staff appreciates hearing about new and exciting resources that can be included in the U.S.-Japan Database, and encourages contact with the new Associate Director, Tracy Bee. When you come across a resource indispensable to your teaching about Japan, contact the Clearinghouse so that the information can be disseminated.

Educators are encouraged to make use of Clearinghouse resources and services. Call toll-free or send an e-mail, letter, or fax to the Clearinghouse for:

- Complimentary publications:
Japan Digests, *Internet Guides*, *Shinbun*,
Teaching about Japan Information Packets
- A custom search of the U.S.-Japan Database or the Lesson Plan Database
- Help in designing curriculum or locating resources on a particular subject
- Lesson plan publications

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