"bubble economy" of the 1980s, ignores the dramatically different approaches to company paternalism in the two countries. Most American workers would not want a company dormitory, hospital, nor supermarket. They probably would prefer to receive higher wages which they could spend wherever they choose on the open marketplace. Without the cultural context, the students can only conclude that the Japanese approach creates a superior work ethic. This stereotype from the 1980s continues a decade later even as the Japanese economy struggles, while the U.S. continues to have the highest worker productivity rate in the world.

The most successful lessons focus narrowly on one aspect of Japan and compare it to the U.S. Elementary lessons compare festivals (I:25), student interests (II: 35), and school slogans (II:77); middle school lessons compare constitutions (I: 63), stock exchanges (II: 21), and business practices (II:129); high school lessons compare policies for the elderly (I:127), and economic policy (II:151). The writers of these more successful lessons carefully avoid making broad generalizations that are not supported by the information they present. Teachers who have background knowledge on Japan could easily implement these lessons into their curriculum.

In conclusion, I think that the *Tora no Maki* series might better be shared only among the participants of the Keizai Koho and similar teacher-exchange programs. By distributing it to members, NCSS risks appearing to promote an unstructured, patchwork approach to meeting its thematic standards. Although the *Tora no Maki* activities do, in fact, illustrate the standards, they fail to provide a well-developed approach to the teaching about Japan. U.S. teachers with an interest in teaching about Japan need more than just lesson plans.

Perhaps NCSS could follow the models of organizations such as Project Wild and the Great Books Program by offering copies of *Tora no Maki* to teachers who take extended workshops on Japan. Or a less complicated approach would be to include an annotated bibliography of resources for the study of Japan by Japanese Studies experts and a cautionary essay on the importance of content knowledge. Unfortunately, NCSS President Pat Nickell, in the preface to *Tora no Maki I*, seems to disparage such experts by stating that the publication of lessons "reflects the real work of real teachers who work with real children. It is not the work of theorists or philosophers" (I:5).

Decisions about curricular content are difficult, especially in a multicultural society. The tendency of social science professional organizations and some state governments to neglect content in their curriculum documents, however, leaves teachers in an ambiguous world of ungrounded objectives. NCSS could contribute more to social studies education by producing a publication that outlines content about Japan that is appropriate at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. These publications could use *Tora no Maki*-style lesson plans to illustrate this content. As a series of unrelated lesson plans, however, *Tora no Maki* seems to have only limited value. Teachers without Japan-content background, who pick up these volumes hoping to find a few quick lessons on Japan, could easily go awry. ■

NOTES

1. *National Council for the Social Studies, Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* (Washington, D.C.: 1994).
2. Ruth Wells, *A to Zen: A Book of Japanese Culture,* illustrated by Yoshi (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992). This nicely illustrated book falls victim to a common practice among children's picture books: its contents depict, almost entirely, Japanese traditional culture with a limited number of images of modern Japan.

Putting "the Tigers" in their Classroom Context

By Linda S. Wojtan

. . . although evaluation of creativity and approach are matters of opinion, all of the lessons should be credited for their ground-breaking attempt to link Japan-related content to the social studies standards of the National Council for the Social Studies.

First I would like to thank my colleagues for their thoughtful perspectives on *Tora no Maki: Lessons for Teaching about Contemporary Japan*, vol. I and II, and express my appreciation for the invitation to respond. Space considerations require that I comment only on a few key issues and leave many unaddressed.

Professor Rice states that a review of other supplementary materials confirms that *Tora no Maki I* and *II* does not "set new standards in content or creativity." Having extensively used all the materials he cites, I must differ, and express not only my own viewpoints, but also those of many colleagues. Many in the field of precollegiate Japan studies have praised *Tora no Maki I* and *II*, specifically for presenting fresh material, especially in the lessons focusing on *hansei*, deregulation, *kendama*, the aging society, *kaizen*, and the Tokyo Stock Exchange. Further, although evaluation of creativity and approach are matters of opinion, all of the lessons should be credited for their groundbreaking attempt to link Japan-related content to the social studies standards of the National Council for the Social Studies. Since these standards are often mandated, such linkage encourages usage of these lessons by teachers and legitimizes their place in the curriculum.

The lessons in both volumes were designed for use in a wide variety of classrooms, including those having no Internet access. Therefore, lesson authors were careful to avoid Internet-dependent lessons, since even when connections are available, they can be uncertain and sometimes frustrating for both teachers and students. Unfortunately, Professor Rice does not acknowledge "Japanlinks: Using the Internet to Investigate Modern Japan" (II:41), a notable lesson based entirely on the use of the Inter-

net, which affords an Internet-based model of techniques that can be applied to any of these lessons, or those published elsewhere. In addition to the lesson on food cited by Professor Rice, several other lessons offer Internet enhancements through the sections focused on Extension and Enrichment as well as Supplemental Resources.

Professor Rice identifies the lack of a general editor as the reason "Japan's Economy: 21st Century Challenges" is reproduced twice. Lucien Ellington's work was intentionally repeated in its entirety as a professional courtesy to those who might be photocopying the lessons for classroom use, an important consideration for time-stressed teachers.

Linda Wojtan teaching at a teachers' workshop at The Mansfield Center at The University of Montana.

Despite the usefulness of some of the supplementary data offered in Professor Rice's self-titled "nit-picking" section, several items require comment; unfortunately, space permits just one. The automobile industry role-playing lesson incorporates trade negotiation topics from the summer of 1995, including an increased U.S. share of the Japanese market, especially by setting targets for the opening of dealerships. Professor Rice implies that this matter has been resolved, offers the Saturn as proof, and cites a statement from I:54 as an example of "dubious dated assumptions." Since the issue is U.S. automakers' penetration of the Japanese (not U.S.) market, the statement in I:54 is actually still painfully accurate.

Figures for a six month period in 1997 confirm that GM sold just 408 Saturn cars and station wagons in Japan, 1/500th of the 194,871 Camry sedans sold in the U.S. for the same period. Additionally, the Chrysler Neon, dubbed the "Japanese car killer" by the media, has not done well, despite favorable size and price.

It is important to remember that both volumes were developed as a collection of supplementary lessons designed to augment and enhance teaching about Japan at the K-12 level. In Professor DeCoker's review the supplementary nature of these lessons and their role in the curriculum does not seem to be appreciated. Rather, they are freighted with responsibility for not only the shortcomings of the decentralized U.S. system of education, but also his perception of the inadequacies of the NCSS standards. It is doubtful that any supplementary work can resolve problems of this nature.

Quite frankly, I am stymied by Professor DeCoker's assertion that these lessons can only be safely executed in the hands of veterans of Japan study tours.

Quite frankly, I am stymied by Professor DeCoker's assertion that these lessons can only be safely executed in the hands of veterans of Japan study tours. Are only those who have been to Japan to be allowed to use any supplementary materials? I cannot find any compelling justification for this assertion other than his charge of lack of context. First, at the risk of sounding self-serving, I must submit that a careful review of similar collections of individual lessons reveals that these two volumes provide as much background and context as any of them. Indeed, in some cases the extensive information found in many *Tora no Maki* appendices exceeds the norm.

Secondly, if Professor DeCoker is referring to the wider context of the issue of teacher preparation regarding Japan, as I approach my twentieth year in East Asian outreach and twenty-seventh as an educator, I am sympathetic. However, we should be careful to note that both teachers and curriculum materials do not function in a vacuum. Books by Japan specialists, the Internet, textbooks, Japanese nationals, and other resources exist to some degree in all schools. Further, it is useful here to acknowledge professional development opportunities for teachers other than travel programs. Opportunities ranging from one-day workshops to intensive summer institutes have all contributed to remedy the lack of formal training on Japan challenging most teachers.

Finally, it is disappointing to see how differently Ms. Fisk and Professor DeCoker interpret the words of NCSS Past President Pat Nickell. Is Dr. Nickell's statement a positive assertion about the efficacious nature of these lessons, or a negative one evincing disdain for theorists? Is the glass half empty or half full? More importantly, shouldn't we be raising the glass to celebrate the work of these educators? ■

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Editor's Note:
If you would like to purchase *Tora no Maki I* and *II*, contact:

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