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# Giving students something worth researching

The identification and development of the skills, mind-set and capacities necessary to help students become real researchers depend upon a number of institutional as well as pedagogical conditions. I have been fortunate that at Sophia University, these institutional conditions have been met. Sophia is a teaching-oriented university in central Tōkyō, and the Faculty of Liberal Arts (once called the Faculty of Comparative Culture) is the oldest international program in Japan. The social studies area has developed a long tradition of fostering undergraduate research, a trend that is just now emerging in many Japanese universities. While we teach a broad range of liberal arts classes, more than half of our professors research and often teach about Japan in one way or another. As a result, our curriculum on Japan is something that many students come to Sophia to pursue. It also means that our classes are often a collection of students from all over the world with different educational and personal experiences, language abilities, and research interests. This leads to a more diverse view of Japan and Japanese Studies. Within these very positive conditions, the role of the teacher or professor in developing young researchers is greatly supported.

In order to bring students into the research cycle, to give them the responsibility as researchers, we must listen to them, see where they are coming from and why they are doing research, and based on these goals, allow them to take the initiative and in time lead other students. It requires us to create a learning context where they can pursue their research in their own way. This requires a willingness to step aside and delegate responsibility to the students themselves. It requires a greater understanding of their abilities, and the limits of those abilities, and to be able to anticipate when and how they will hit those limits as they venture into research contexts that are usually not what they have been prepared for in other parts of an undergraduate curriculum. From this new role as professors, it means we must understand how to direct from behind, while being able to see the road ahead, allowing students to take the sorts of risks that almost any good research requires while keeping them safe and supported. Academically, this entails a collaborative practice of curriculum de-

sign and a shift in the pedagogical roles of the classroom. Finally, if we are to treat our students as researchers, it means that their scholarly product will be disseminated in some way beyond the classroom.

But the first step, one that the advisor must take responsibility for initiating and then facilitating, is to give the students some reason to do research, to be researchers. Unlike PhD students or other scholars who have already selected a scholarly life for themselves, undergraduate students must have a reason to do the rather substantial amount of work required to become a real researcher, and that reason usually comes from outside of the desire to further their career. As advisors, we must help them find and facilitate their engagement with real-world topics that are of interest and significance beyond the academy. Of course, while they might learn valuable research skills by interviewing their classmates about some part of academic life, I have found that engaging students in my own research and support activities, especially those that have some impact on what some call the "outside world", is the single most important stimulus in exciting the research impulse strongly enough for them to make the commitment of time and energy.

## Student researchers at Sophia University

The research program that we have created to develop student researchers came out during the triple disaster of 2011. For me, like many scholars, teachers and universities in Japan, the triple disaster of 2011 was a turning point in how we imagine the goals of academic research, the possible contributions of the university to the larger society, and which sort of programs can be developed around these issues (For a fuller review of this research, please see Slater et al. 2020) and it was also a turning point in the ways that we can imagine and develop our students as researchers working on meaningful topics and producing scholarly results of some relevance.

As all of eastern Japan was rocked by the earthquake, quickly the scenes of the tsunami began to inundate us, mostly through social media. The threat of radiation leakage soon followed. On almost everyone's mind was the same question: "What can we do?" Many of us went up to Tōhoku to help as soon as it was possible. We were volunteering our labour to do whatever manual work that we could—mostly digging rubble out of the few remaining structures, gutters and what was left of the house foundations. I think that virtually no one thought of this as a "research opportunity", even though this singular event probably generated more research in the subsequent years than any other event in the history of Japan. Like many academics, I also brought my seminar students (*zemi-sei*) with me.

Two experiences during this period allowed, or maybe forced me, to rethink the potential contribution of scholarly work to society and to understand the importance that students could have in that effort. First, we were digging rubble one day in Tōhoku, and an old woman, inspecting the ruins of her house, called us over. She said that she had seen our camera and wanted to tell us something. She explained that her government had forgotten her, and the mass media just wanted to tell their already decided stories—not her story. She explained, "I thought that maybe you young people could take down what I have to say—because I have a lot to say". And then said, as almost an afterthought "And you can tell others about…all this," she spread her hands out across the wreckage that was once their homes. It dawned on us all that in fact, she was asking us to leave the digging of rubble in her house, so that we could record an interview with her. My students, being anthropology students, were equipped to do this sort of thing, although only in a classroom context, but we naively began the interview. She had a lot to tell so our interview lasted over three different visits to the site over the coming weeks. Each time, after a morning of digging, my students began interviewing her about her community, what was left of it and what lay ahead. This was my first experience with students as fully fledged researchers.

The second experience occurred in the classroom. In an effort to address the disaster in some way, I had thrown out my previous syllabus and with some feeling of accomplishment, presented my students with a new "disaster anthropology" syllabus. But when they got it, they were confused, and began to huddle together. After some minutes, they came back to me and said, "While we really appreciate this, Professor, this is not what we had in mind." They continued, "We do not want to read about other disasters. We want to help and research this one, our own disaster." Their proposal was that we continue to go up to Tōhoku each weekend, take the overnight bus from Shinjuku to arrive at dawn Saturday morning of volunteer work, interview in the afternoon, repeat on Sunday and take another overnight bus on Sunday midnight back to Tōkyō. They would write fieldnotes and make transcripts of whatever interviews we got, and then at the end of the semester write this up to get credit. I accepted their proposal. This experience showed me two things—if given the chance to do meaningful research, students will expend great energy and effort. Also, if I let my students take responsibility for their own learning, this effort could result in real research. The rest of this article outlines some of the practices that we have developed in the past decade in order to guide that effort in a productive way, from our post-disaster origin (Voices from Tōhoku, see https://tohoku-karanokoe.org) and now our subsequent iteration as Refugee Voices Japan.

## Students as researchers

While most of the short articles put the stress on the researcher part of "student researcher", I think we need to begin with the student part. The students in our program are quite anomalous in Japan. The majority are "returnees" (*kikokushijo*) who have spent some significant portion of their lives outside of Japan, usually in an English-speaking country, during high school. They are a hugely diverse group, having grown up all over the world and bringing with them a much broader wealth of experience than found at almost any department in Japan or many other countries for that matter. Overall, they are relatively wealthy, from cosmopolitan backgrounds and now going to an elite private university. On the other hand, their Japanese-language ability, and their familiarity with Japan as either a scholarly study or as lived experience is less developed than the average Japanese college student's. I teach anthropology within a social-studies area, and our program is designed to introduce them to Japanese society, economy and politics in a critical way that can cause some to be uncomfortable because it is at odds with much of what they have learned in school. This research class is usually taken by anthropology or sociology majors as one of the distribution courses for their major, during the third or fourth year.

Students have complex and often not fully formulated positionalities (Robertson 2002). By positionality I mean their relationship to the project, to the research subjects (in our case, once disaster survivors but today refugees) and to the act of research itself. I try to begin by understanding why each student is doing research, what they are looking to get out of the research, and what they are willing to put into the research (in terms of time and energy, but also their emotional commitment). If their goal is just to get a grade, the time and effort required of this sort of class is usually too large, and they drop the class. Do they want to become a professional researcher? Often, students who take this sort of class have graduate school as their immediate goal upon graduation, and many see this research opportunity as a means to accumulate the skills and credentials necessary for admission. In that case, students are often more motivated to do outside research, do individual-skills development and spend more time refining their writing for the project. Is this project part of a larger personal agenda of social justice? This is also quite common and today, many, but not all, of our researchers are also active in the Sophia Refugee Support Group[1] (explained below). These sorts of students will spend more time and energy outside of class with our "research subjects" (disaster survivors or later, refugees), building an unstructured and

1 https://www.instagram.com/sophia.srsg/?hl=en

very personal relationship. More generally, positionality speaks to the race, class and gender of students as this is related to our research subjects. Thus, just taking the students who submitted their own pieces to this collection as examples, a Burmese (Thaw Tar) interviewing refugees from Myanmar will have a very different relationship with his research subjects than a Japanese (Soma Ayano) interviewing an African, or a Filipina student (Megumi Mallari) interviewing a Syrian who just fled the war. This is a complex dynamic that each of our student researchers talks about in their essay, and it is a recurrent point of discussion among the research team. From the point of view of the professor, we need to remember that in order to facilitate the transformation from class group to research team, from student to researcher, the professor/research-team leader needs to acknowledge the individuals in their team.

## Researching vulnerable populations and support

Our project falls within a number of different subfields, one of which is applied anthropology. A minimal early definition might be the application of the methods and theory of anthropology to the analysis and solution of practical problems (Stewart 1983). Sol Tax is often credited as the founder of this subfield that he at first described as "action anthropology", an approach that studies anthropological problems. It pursues it in a context of action where the anthropologist "would not keep herself as a mere observer, but is involved intimately in solving problems" (Tax 1975, 514). Kedia and Van Willigen (2002, X) update this definition as "process as a complex of related, research-based, instrumental methods which produce change or stability in specific cultural systems through the provision of data, initiation of direct action, and/or the formulation of policy". We might say that action or applied anthropology is the praxis-based engagement of anthropological research that includes direct researcher involvement with the goal of transformative activism within the participating community.

Interestingly, there is very little scholarly literature on the ways that undergraduate students can be engaged in these projects within the field of anthropology, and in only a few university programs do we see any effort to include this in the training of graduate programs even when they offer a course on how to integrate undergraduate students into anthropological research. Until recently, most anthropological research was conducted in far-flung locations that prevented anyone but professionals or PhD students from visiting. But even today as we have shifted to more "at home" ethnographic projects, (see Kottak 1982 for a classic statement) anthropology has not produced the library of systematic literature on the role of training of students as re-

searchers. In contrast, there are numerous other examples outside of the discipline, most of which fall somewhere along a gradient from volunteer support (see Hagan 2021) to researching social problems (see Johnson 2005 in sociology) but there are few systematic efforts to link these two goals in a disciplined fashion, and almost no scholarship that addresses these ad hoc efforts.

More specifically, we are working with vulnerable populations, a fact that has certain implications for the involvement of students. The people we have worked with have shifted over the years, from 2011 survivors in Tōhoku to radiation refugees who fled mostly Fukushima to foreign refugees seeking recognition, currently living in the Kantō area. While diverse in geography, age and life-course trajectory, they as both individuals and as groups fit most definitions of "vulnerable populations" (Merry 2005). There is rich literature on the challenges, and the need to be researching these populations within anthropology, although it has not produced a synthetic or consensus perspective within anthropology (Marino / Faas 2020) nor in adjacent qualitative research fields (Pinto 2019). The work on research with refugees, in particular, is less developed (but see Ramsay 2020 for a recent perspective). More specifically, focusing on the methodological practice, we might say we are working on oral narrative, even though there is little consensus on the use of this method across a wide range of vulnerable populations including disaster survivors and refugees (Hoffman 2019; Pennell 2017). One aspect of the field of oral history of refugees is more developed due to the rather particular ways that interview data can be used as "testimony", a type of material that has in the past ten years become increasingly important in scholarly work on what counts as evidence, in particular, within the context of a refugee-recognition applications and court hearings (Pennell 2017). While this is not the place to outline this literature, I will focus on those aspects of this dynamic that appear to be systematically different when conducted by students, most notably the immediate interview situation. (For a full discussion of the methodology employed by the project, please see here in English[2] or here in Japanese[3]).

## A differently configured project

Even in this cursory review of some of the literature, it is important to note that our projects begin from a very different place than that which is assumed in much of the literature, and this difference speaks directly to the role of students as researchers. In this literature, most often it is assumed that inter-

2 https://refugeevoicesjapannet.wordpress.com/methodology/
3 https://refugeevoicesjapannet.wordpress.com/methodology/ja/

view questions about a refugee's life will be generated from a review of previously published literature in the field. It is assumed that the interview is often the first time researchers will have met the research subject. These extremely difficult circumstances often yield rather random results, and then usually involve a process of trial and error, even when the research is conducted by very experienced senior researchers. It would be unreasonable and unproductive, especially in the context of a single semester, to expect students to get very far in any substantial data collection.

In our project, rather than encountering a refugee as a research subject initially and primarily within the context of data collection (usually in the context of an interview or survey), our relationships with our subjects all date back to an earlier relationship of support, efforts primarily run by students through direct contact with the refugees. It is through this direct and personal contact that we establish a pre-research relationship that in turn allowed us to begin to understand the background, current situation and future plans of the refugees. By the time refugees volunteer to be interviewed, they have met me and many other students, and usually have already gone through at least one interview with some of the more senior researchers in our program. This is not to say that this early contact makes the refugees less vulnerable; rather it is that the students and I are more familiar with the nature of their vulnerability and can try to adapt accordingly. This is also not to say that the start of any formal interview does not also present its own challenges, but this pre-research contact enables even students to overcome many of the initial hurdles of any interview—familiarity, establishment of trust, etc—considerations that are perhaps even more important in the case of refugees or other vulnerable populations. Below is an outline of the nature of this contact in order to illustrate one way to prepare students for better research.

## Our support effort—the Sophia Refugee Support Group

Through student support groups (university "circles", an important part of student life in Japan), we have organised different forms of volunteer support for our target populations, from digging rubble in Tōhoku, to tutoring children who have relocated from Fukushima to our current group, Sophia Refugee Support Group (SRSG). This sort of engagement is an important opportunity for the students to understand the immediate situation of refugees in Tōkyō and to get to know the individual refugees who might volunteer to be interviewed. As such, it is also an important opportunity for students to begin to understand the need and significance of the research

itself, especially for 20-something students with relatively little worldly experience. Currently, the SRSG conducts monthly "Refugee Cafes" where refugees and students gather, teach and learn Japanese language and life strategies for Tōkyō, periodic talks by lawyers or doctors, but mostly it is just a chance to do some 'deep hanging out' with each other. The act of support allows students to better understand the overall situation, to learn how to speak to them in a natural way as they engage in a relatively structured and important activity of providing support. Once research begins, the familiarity, sometimes friendship, that is established with the narrators greatly helps students and informants navigate the relatively intimate setting of the interview.

The relationship between the support and research part of the project allows students to experience the reciprocal relationship between the two. Not only does the support facilitate better research—allowing us to establish familiarity and specific knowledge of individual refugees' situations—but the results of research are also used to better target the support efforts moving forward. The result of the research, the knowledge that students gain from systematic ethnography—interviewing or participant observation—always includes numerous insights into the needs of this vulnerable population. These insights are culled from the research and used by the Sophia Refugee Support Group to refine current and initiate new programs. For example, in our research on female African refugees, we came to understand the need for hygiene products. Today, each month we send to our refugee friends a wide array of these products—easily sourced by us but harder for the refugees to secure. Similarly, after listening to a number of stories of failed refugee applications (Japan usually recognised less than 1% of all applications) ostensibly based on the rejection of non-Japanese language documents, the students developed a document-translation subgroup. In our case, our multilingual students were uniquely prepared to undertake this important job of providing translations of necessary documentation for the refugee-asylum application.

For students, seeing this link between scholarly and support activity is an important way of making our research "useful", of having some feeling of accomplishment that they have impacted the larger world around them. For more experienced academics, we often tell ourselves that publishing in a journal has some of this same function—which in some (unusual) instances could be true. Students usually like to see a more immediate effect of their work and in a shorter time frame. This recursive relationship between the support and the scholarship services that purpose.

## Research pedagogy, *zemi*-style

The literature on students as researchers is quite developed in terms of the pedagogical practices and challenges within the immediate context of data collection (e.g., Fraser et al. 2004, which brings up some issues we will address below). There is also a stimulating if smaller body of literature around ideas of social justice that documents students as engaged in more activist research in their own student communities (Ginwright / Cammarota / Noguera 2006; Sherrod / Flanagan / Kassimir 2006). This is all interesting and relevant scholarship but perhaps more than any other aspect of developing students as researchers, it is important to note that each classroom setting is part of a larger culturally specific set of expectations of what an appropriate and productive learning environment should be—Japan is no exception. Within the context of the class itself, we mostly adhere to a workshop style or what we call *zemi* (originally based on the English word "seminar"). Because many of the students take the course for multiple semesters, we have a number of age and experience levels in the class at once. In a *zemi* class, older and more experienced students called *senpai* take an active role in the running of the class, sometimes recognized as teaching assistants, with the primary role of mentoring younger students, or *kōhai* in Japanese. This requires a displacement of the professor, and with a few exceptions, there are few lectures by me; even when I lead discussions at the start of the term, one important goal is to move into a less "teacher-centred" format. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning. Students are presenting to the class materials that they have found or generated which are necessary for the success of the whole group. Most of the students who have gone to a Japanese high school are familiar with the experience of sustained group work, guided by older students with a large amount of the task distributed by and to each student.

This format might seem at first to be less labour intensive for the professor, but in fact it takes some time to learn how much can be delegated and what sort of monitoring is necessary, tolerated and sought by students. It depends on very able *senpai*, who fully understand the nature of research and of the course and are able to stay in close communication with you. A good *zemi* also requires quite a bit of buy-in by students, as they are being asked to make a greater commitment of time and energy than in other courses. For some, they welcome this expectation in exchange for greater autonomy and responsibility in their own research, others do not. At least some level of familiarity with the format of the *zemi* is also very useful. For the foreign-exchange students from America or Europe in our programme, some of whom take this

class, this sort of work seems less familiar, and at times, integration with the students from a Japanese background is a challenge. In the words of one of my most experienced Japanese students, "I really like having American students in the class—they always have interesting perspectives and are willing to share them, but one thing—they really do not know how to work in groups".

While there are a few basic shared readings assigned by me—mostly primary-source documents such as the Convention on Refugees, and some literature-review articles to give them a sense of the parameters of the field (e.g., "The International Law of Refugee Protection" [Goodwin-Gill 2014] and "Ethical Considerations: Research with People in Situations of Forced Migration" [Clark-Kazak 2017])—we move as quickly as possible to students themselves developing annotated bibliographies of their topic. These would include the statistical profiles of today's global-refugee crisis, an outline of the shifting patterns of immigration flows in Japan, country reports from the refugee narrator's home country, legal documentation, reports by the Japanese Immigration services, reports by the different Bar Associations in Japan, and theory and comparative ethnography on the topics of interest as they seek to narrow down the focus for the term. This material is checked and guided by me and *senpai*/TAs, but all done by the students.

The most teacher-centred aspect of the course is the detailed training in oral-narrative and ethnographic interview methodology. This requires question generation, interview techniques, and turn-taking (and then later, transcribing, coding and analysis). Because each of our narrators usually has had some previous interviews, the transcript and video recordings for that interview provide an important chance for them to be exposed not only to interview flow in general, but also to the particularities of each narrator. The *senpai* then take over the practice of the interview technique, conducting mock interviews and holding meetings on how to deal with the most common problems.

## Students interviewing Vulnerable Populations

The logical and ethical challenges of working with vulnerable populations such as these are well documented in the literature (for example, in the European Commission Directorate-General for Research and Innovation 2020) and it is not necessary to recite them here, but to note that we strictly follow the principles and best practices designed to ensure refugee safety and security. All students are trained to understand and practice the importance of conducting interviews that are structured about "dignity, respect, human

attention and empathy" (Hoffman 2019, 139). They also follow the principles and practices of consent, confidentiality and presentation of data. For example, we use non-coercive recruitment procedures and always have a fully informed consent agreement in writing. Moreover, our refugee narrator retains full control and ownership of their data, image, voice and story; at any stage of the process, they can withdraw participation and any data collected to that point. Because central to our project is the publication of findings, the refugee narrator has full approval (or disapproval) of all content, design, images and text that goes up on our website, and approves of all narrative and video clips that go up on the website. Since the refugee narrator's story, face and voice will all be available for public consumption, this is important. This is important not only to protect the narrators—our first priority—but also to impress upon the students the possible real-world implications of the collection, analysis and presentation of data.

Students as researchers do present additional challenges as well as opportunities especially in the immediate context of data collection—the interview itself. In most, but not all, cases, our student researchers are younger than the refugee narrator. As such, for many narrators, they do not carry the same amount of authority nor demand the same amount of respect that a more senior researcher (or professor) might. There have been some cases where the refugee decided that they did not feel comfortable speaking to students. Sometimes, although it was rarely verbalised in this way, they saw my assignment of student researchers to their interview as a lack of respect. As one refugee explained to me, "At first, I thought that you were taking me and my story lightly by having your students [rather than yourself] do the interview. That upset me, to tell you the truth". He continued, "I did not want to talk to a bunch of kids". Instead, he wanted to talk to "someone in charge", and in this project, as in many projects, that meant the professor. This refugee eventually became one of our most interviewed narrators and ended up forming very close bonds with some of the students, but these were his first feelings.

Sometimes, refugees have been hesitant because they did not think young people knew enough about the world generally and the refugee situation in particular to understand the complexity of their story. To address this feeling, our students have to be as fully informed as possible, and often have to work to gain the trust of the refugee narrator by demonstrating this knowledge. (This is rarely necessary when an older researcher conducts interviews.) At times, I have the first interview with the refugee, alone or with some of the students, in order to put the students in the same frame of "researcher" as I

am. We might slowly transition from me to them as the primary interviewer, as the refugee narrator begins to feel comfortable and accepting of the students. If this fails, we also might abandon the students as interviewers, and I would conduct the interview myself or with my senior colleagues. This represents a pedagogical failure—that we have failed to create a situation where the students are fully involved in a way that allowed the refugee narrator to feel secure. But in those unusual cases when this has occurred, students have once again seen the strong feelings and real-life consequences of the practice of research.

Far more often, the fact that the research was conducted by students was accepted and welcomed by the refugee narrators. The reasons are many. Any refugee-asylum applicant has been interviewed by immigration authorities many times (at least half a dozen in most cases), in what are almost always contentious and even combative events where the primary aim of the interviewer is to cast doubt on their refugee story as a justification for rejection of their refugee application. The students, in their unassuming and usually friendly way, present a dramatically different interview context, where the refugee usually feels far more comfortable than in any of the other interview contexts that they have experienced with authorities. But other times, refugees are also more comfortable talking to students than to me. One woman explained, "It was easy to talk to students—they are always nice and want to know more". She continued, teasing me a bit, "And no offence, Professor, you are an old white guy, even if you are wearing a polo shirt".

Part of the welcome of students by refugees lies in the excitement at being able to tell a group of young people the real situation of their lives. Most refugees, at least in Japan, feel that few know their story and fewer still care about it. They also recognise that more often younger people than older people are open to them. One Cameroonian refugee explained that "I have a long story, my story. [The situation in my country] will not be resolved any time soon. So, young people are our future, the future of Japan, and they are the ones who should know". Behind this is the hope, or maybe faith, that these young people will produce change, that they are more likely to be willing and able to act upon the knowledge that they get from the interview. As this same Cameroonian noted, "This might not help me, but it could help others". In this case, the youth and inexperience that inevitably comes with student researchers are understood less as a handicap than as an opportunity.

Even with these positive feelings, the interview is not without challenges. The more a narrator sees their role as educating the students, the more they

will usually be in control of the interview, dominating the talk, dictating the flow of topics and at times even checking or testing the understanding of the student researchers. While in a sociological survey sort of exchange, these patterns would derail the interview and compromise the collection of data, in semi-structured, ethnographic interviews, this pattern allows the interviewee to steer the discussion to what is important to them—one of the goals of this sort of interview. Nevertheless, the student interviewers sometimes struggle to introduce the sets of questions that they have prepared within the larger flow of talk, an important part of learning how to manage the interview and secure useful data.

With younger refugee narrators—for example, other college students—there is often an establishment of a sort of rough equality of status with student researchers. This can result in a high level of comfort and trust, a shared frame of reference especially for popular cultural references and similar humour, all of which produce a high level of comfort quite quickly on both sides. One challenge in these sorts of instances is to prevent the interview from falling into sort of a chat session, and to keep the research-related information flowing in a way that results in substantive research. Nevertheless, this is a sort of context that senior researchers could not replicate, and where students do a better job in some ways.

It is always important to remember that when you are interviewing, the research instrument is not a digital audio recorder or a camera—it is the whole person of the researcher, their specific race, class and gender, their face, gesture and eye contact, the knowledge and personality. And age or status. And students and younger researchers are different and thus bring new and distinctive ways to relate in an interview, and thus different sorts of data collection and production are also possible. Each interview is different, and most interviews fall somewhere between these examples, but the sort of dynamics that are presented when students act as interviewers is predictable and thus can be anticipated, and must be prepared for by the professor.

## Dissemination of Findings

Although this is the final step in our research project each semester, it is one of the most important because for students the difference between "homework" you do for class and "research" often hinges on dissemination. As one student explained, "The thing I hate about school is that I work so hard on my papers, submit them, and that's it. Some teachers give me comments—many do not—but either way, that is the end of it, the end

of my work. It does not go anywhere and does nothing". Point well taken. It is important for the professor to make some way for the results of the students' efforts to be taken outside of the context of the classroom. Above, I have noted one important "use" of our research—the direct application of findings to identify the needs and the possible solutions to those needs to improve the lives of our refugee friends, which sits at the heart of our support effort. But there are also other types of dissemination as well.

Some of the students' research work is good enough to be published in a journal, or otherwise shared with a wider audience. In those cases, I try to co-author papers with them if they are not quite ready (a topic for another paper). Of course, at least at the start, most students are not ready for peer-review journal publication. But even those students who are producing very high-quality work are often not (yet) focused on the academic pipeline of article writing as a suitable, interesting or even worthy end goal of their efforts. One fourth-year student asked me and the whole class, "Why would we even want to write an article that you have to go to the library just to access, maybe pay money to read and then no one really reads anyway?" This comment goes back to the beginning of the paper where I noted that it is important to understand students' motivations. In an academic ecosystem that has traditionally had a narrow view of scholarship (often limited to peer-review journals), part of the role of a professor in mentoring students as researchers includes a widening of our usual definition of the evaluation and dissemination of the scholarly work. It is also our responsibility to find some venue to make this happen. If research findings are to be taken as seriously pursued ends, demanding time and energy, creativity and insight, they must be shared in some way.

At the end of each semester, all students publish their findings on a website that is open to the public. Voices from Tōhoku, our Japanese-language website with thousands of short clips of survivor narratives from the 2011 triple disaster has had more than 10,000 hits—rock-star numbers for an oral-history website, and one of the largest of any undergraduate-oral history website of any kind. It is also the largest site of its kind on the 2011 disasters. Refugee Voices Japan, our current website began in English and is just now opened; we are translating the material into Japanese as time and budget allow. This is one way to allow us to share students' research beyond the spaces of the classroom and the time limitations of the semester. Putting up and maintaining a website that continues on from year to year as students graduate and move on is important work that inevitably falls upon the professor, at least as the only person who is there over time. It requires some development of

skills and mobilisation of labour (editing, web design, etc.) and securing of financial resources (for labour as well as server and maintenance). For me at least, this has meant an effort to navigate the academic bureaucracy that usually, at least in Japan, has quite different ideas of what education is, how it is enacted, measured and given credit for, and how it is funded (or not). It probably means some lobbying of the public-relations sectors of the university to convince them that this sort of effort is worth supporting from a recruiting and reputation-building point of view.

## Concluding Remarks

If the first step in our effort to develop young researchers is to give them something worth researching, the final might be to help them understand the unpredictability of real research. In order to move from controlled environments of classroom-practice sessions to actual research, it is necessary for students to realise that the way research is planned and how it ends up is often quite different. And they have to understand that at times, the best-laid plans fail to produce the sorts of results that lead to publishable work or even completion of the data collection. Because we are dealing with "human subjects", different members of vulnerable populations, most recently refugees, their situation is insecure, in constant flux and they are often unable to complete the series of interviews required under our current research schedule, all due to factors outside of the students' control. Moreover, there could always be interpersonal situations that do directly involve the students such as personality conflicts, different visions of where the research focuses, and even racial or ethnic conflicts. Students have to be made aware of these circumstances and the possibility that they might impinge upon the original research plan, and be ready to refocus, sometimes overhaul, their research plan on the run. While it is difficult to learn these skills, they are some of the most important to the development of sustainable and adaptable researchers, students or not. Again, these are issues that go back to the fundamental realisation that I seek to instil in my student researchers—that their research matters, that work with any "human subjects", and especially vulnerable populations such as refugees, has an impact and thus carries with it a willingness to accept that responsibility, as you better understand your relationships to the other people involved in our research project.

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