

## **Sexual Harassment Issues in Japan: Report on University Classroom Intervention**

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### **ABSTRACT**

As a long-time educator in Japan, I have made interventions for a range of issues related to marginalized sexual identities. I found that it was helpful to work with life story narratives from LGBTQ individuals. These interviewees were with regular people from the Kansai area in which I was teaching. Positive pedagogical experiences encouraged me to introduce sexual harassment issues among a small group of university students. In a content-based, language-education course on culture in the UK and Ireland which I conducted with 11 students in a national university in western Japan in early 2018, I made use of a wide range of materials. We devoted ten hours in total during the semester to sexual harassment issues. We used role plays and real-world scenarios from the University of Exeter's pedagogical resource toolkit, the "Intervention Initiative." Activities in the toolkit underline the responsibility of bystanders to help prevent the continuation of acts of sexual harassment which are often ignored due to the influence of toxic campus cultures. The intervention indicated that most young Japanese are willing to engage with sexual harassment topics in the classroom, but inhibition levels are high. The reasons for these high levels of inhibition need to be more fully acknowledged and explored. A focus on bystander intervention is seen to be particularly problematic for anti-harassment programmes in Japanese social and cultural contexts. Suggestions are made for more effective approaches to help Japanese students engage with relevant issues in their classrooms.

**Keywords:** Sexual abuse, East Asia, consciousness-raising, bystander, inhibition