

**Announcement of an open lecture hosted by the Kyoto University  
Global Center of Excellence (GCOE):  
Revitalizing Education for Dynamic Hearts and Minds**

Invited Lecturer:  
Mikel Garant, Ph.D.  
Department of Modern Languages  
University of Helsinki, Finland

Lecture (Parts 1 and 2):  
*Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance in Japanese and Finnish Classrooms  
Approaches towards English Academic Writing for Translation Majors at the  
University of Helsinki*

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Kyoto University  
Yoshida South Academic Centre Building  
East Wing Room 101  
[http://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/access/campus/y\\_south.htm](http://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/access/campus/y_south.htm)

18 March 2010  
4pm (Thursday)  
Free: No reservations are required  
Contact: david.dalsky @ fx5.ecs.kyoto-u.ac.jp

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Abstract:

Part one of this presentation reports on the results of a long-term study focusing on cultural factors that influence English language teaching and learning in school settings in Finland and Japan. Since this presentation will be in Japan, I will assume the audience knows the Japanese English language teaching system. Therefore, I will concentrate on contemporary trends in English language teaching and learning and in Finnish comprehensive schools. Data from classroom observations and interviews in Finland and Japan based on Hofstede's 4-D cultural model will be presented. This paper will suggest that underlying cultural values as well as teaching methods influence English teaching and learning outcomes in the two countries.

Finland is internationally recognized as having one of the highest education and English proficiency levels in the world. The University of Helsinki is the top ranked university in Finland and recent studies state that the university conducts over 50% of the research conducted in Finland. The second part of this presentation reports the results of an in-depth study focusing on learner attitudes toward English academic writing teaching and learning at the University of Helsinki, Finland. Data were gathered from 90% of the first year (N = 20) and second year (N = 19) translation majors via online surveys and focus group discussions with the participants. The focus groups were recorded in order to maintain the integrity of the data. Relevant suggestions for the planning of quality academic writing courses, building lexicon, and other results also came out of the data. The results also suggest that some aspects of academic writing share wide agreement as to their importance while there is a distribution of opinions about other aspects of academic writing. This suggests that different learners have different strategies when writing academic papers. Audience participation and discussions comparing the Finnish setting with the Japanese setting are encouraged.