



“The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page” (Saint Augustine)

# LEARNING & CHANGING 2

**March 16, 2015**

Danny Minn: Yeah just going back to your earlier (Sure) question about uh If I'd seen any kids develop, grow right in front of me- my eyes. (Uh-huh) And in general, the kids who go abroad, study abroad, right? To go to- well we have several choices here (Sure) the- China, the US, Australia. They seem to grow a lot faster. They change a lot faster. Uh and you can- you can really see it. And the other students who don't go abroad, I don't really notice that much of a change in them.

José Cruz: I think more so getting- as a Japanese person getting out of Japan and seeing the rest of the world. I think that is like **the** key to personal development for anybody as a uni- as a university student, as a person, to get outside see the world, see how different people live. Some live in mountains, some live on the beach, some live in huts, some live in you know, horrible mansions with Donald Trump and his lot, and... People live in different ways, to see that and to experience it. It's not just your neighbourhood. It's not just your state it's not just you know, uh, your immediate peer group. That really is the key to to human growth. On the other hand, what I don't like to hear is the idea from kids and sometimes it's given to them by some of their teachers, that “the only way I can really learn how to speak English is to leave this university.” (Mmm. Right) And uh I don't like to hear it for a lot of reasons. One I don't like to admit the truth, because that's the truth. That really is for most kids the best way to

really learn the language. But if that's the truth, me as a university instructor, uh being- that means that I'm part of a- a system that's kind of a problem. (Hmm) What are we charging money for then? Uh because it is not at all uh uh a- a strange expectation for a kid to begin a program in French at any university, and even if they didn't study a lot of French in high school, to go through four years of education of French, and expect that kid to become fluent by the time that they graduate. (Uh-huh) Whereas in Japan that is, that is an extreme expectation. (Mm- hmm) You cannot expect even if they did study English for four years that they will actually come out speaking, reading and writing English.

Danny: Alright. But again, **outliers**. There are lots of Japanese people who have not travelled abroad or studied abroad, and they can speak English. I've met some, yeah.

José: But but you've said that they're outliers, right? (Right right) OK so these are not- this isn't the norm.

Danny: No. But it's possible.

José: And uh- of course it's possible. (Yeah) You know, uh but what's the norm? The norm in university in in in Canada or in America or in Europe, is that you take up a program, you do what you're told and you continue as you should and you graduate and you get OK grades, you know, **2.9, 3.1**. That you'll

come out learning that language. (Right) That you're **going to** be functional in that language and go work in Germany with the German that you've learned. That's the norm and yes I don't know what the numbers are\*, but like, I would say 65-70% of students who go through that program will come out with that result. What's 65-70% in Japan? They will not be able to speak this language.

Danny: Or alright, well the requirements are more rigor- rigorous. **You know**, in an American university they're **going to** say, OK, you **want to** learn this language, "x" language, you're **going to** have four of these classes a week (yup yup) at least and uh lab time (Mm-hmm mm-hmm), you have to go into the lab (yup) and put the headphones on.

José: Whereas in Japan, the the expectations are different. Um they begin at junior high school. There's mandatory English education from junior high school to- to high school, and then mandatory education again in

university so a total of something like eight years of English education; double the amount of time that's necessary for a university student (Hmm) in North America. You put it into that perspective, then what's **all of** this money being spent in Japan. So I see myself as being part of a problem that needs to address that. These kids, quite rightfully so, believe that they have to leave the Japanese education system to actually achieve their goal. If that's the case, what is the Japanese education system doing? You know.

Danny: "Decompress".

José: Decompress! Yeah decompress. Yeah, go dye your hair.

| Word count | Time | Words/Min. |
|------------|------|------------|
| 809        | 4:48 | 168.54     |

Pointers:

**the:** "the" is usually pronounced differently depending on whether it's in front of a consonant or a vowel. Here José pronounces it against those rules in order to add emphasis. See the pronunciation link below. (0:46)

**outliers:** a word coined by Malcolm Gladwell to describe data points that are outside the norm. In this case people who succeed against expectations. (2:33)

**2.9, 3.1:** José is referring to the Grade Point Average system used in most Western Universities. (3:12)

**going to, want to:** Danny pronounces these as "**WANNA**" and "**GONNA**" (3:42)

**all of:** José drops the final "V" sound and pronounces this as "**ah-luh**" (4:22)

Discussion:

Do you want to travel someday?

How long do you think it should take to study a language?

Have you studied abroad?

VOA ARTICLE: "UNDERSTANDING THE MISUNDERSTOOD TEENAGE BRAIN"  
<http://bit.ly/2e9p7Oe>

WIKIPEDIA: "OUTLIER"  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outlier>

ENGLISH CLUB: "HOW TO PRONOUNCE 'THE'"  
<https://www.englishclub.com/pronunciation/the.htm>

WIKIPEDIA: "GRADING (GPA)"  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grading\\_\(education\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grading_(education))

<http://goldfish365.com/>

