

# In Practice

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## Less Lecture, More Learning

By Adair Linn Nagata, vice-president of human resources for training and staff communications, Citibank, N.A., Citicorp Center, 3F, Citicorp Training Center, 2-3-14 Higashi Shinagawa, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 140, Japan; 813-5462-5045; fax 813-5462-5049.

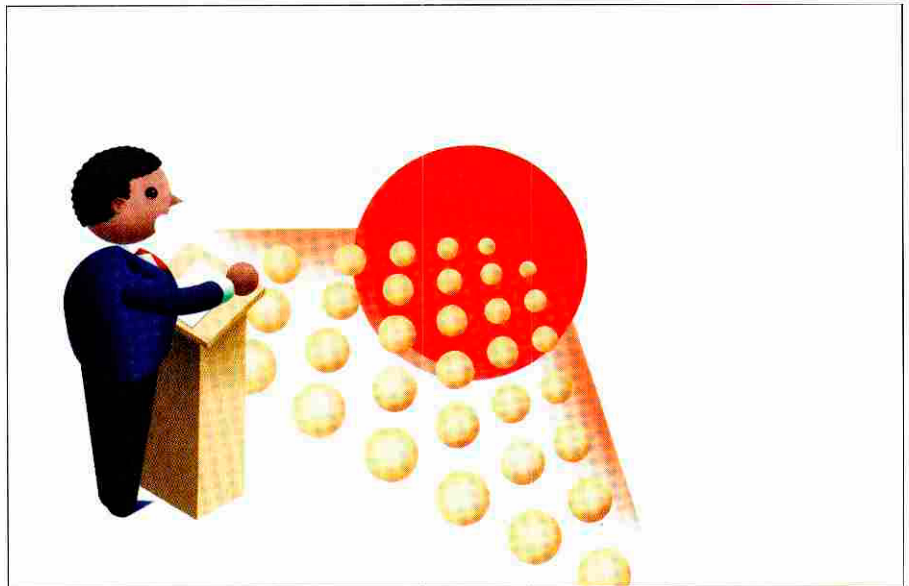
Presenting in English to Japanese groups can be frustrating for a Western trainer, especially if you're doing it for the first time. Learners may seem unwilling to take part in discussions or ask questions.

Before you lose confidence in your training skills, remember that Japanese educational practices emphasize self-effacement. Unlike most North American training audiences, Japanese learners are unlikely to provide feedback in the form of facial expressions or interested questions—unless you show them what you want and encourage them to participate in that way.

Japanese adult learners bring important skills to training sessions. You can expect unquestioning attention to lectures and sensitivity to working together harmoniously in groups. But most Japanese are uncomfortable with mental wrestling in public, especially in another language. Few Japanese are willing to stand out in a group of colleagues by participating actively in training sessions. And that's true even for Japanese who have had educational experience abroad.

Unless lecturing is all you intend to do, consider carefully how you will involve people in the types of training activities you have planned.

**Require and reinforce active participation.** Begin by establishing right away the expectation that people



Jose Cruz

will participate actively in the training. Describe typical Western training methods so learners will know what you're used to, and be specific about how you want people to respond and participate in class. After you've established the practices you want learners to use, reinforce those who try them out.

Begin the session with a relevant question. Write it on the board or screen, to get people thinking about the topic from the time they come into the training room. Involve people in discussing their answers to the question by having each person start with the person next to him or her. Then call on the most expressive people you have observed to share with the group.

It's not enough for you to ask questions. Require participants to ask questions, as well. Many Japanese educators think it is selfish for a learner to take up the group's time with questions. You will have to articulate the value you place on learners' questions, take time to ask for

*How do you train Japanese groups in English? By being aware of cultural norms and making your expectations clear.*

questions, and allow enough time for learners to express them.

Don't take breaks until you get two or three questions. Tell people they can't get coffee until people have asked a specified number of questions.

Use name tags or name tents, and call on people to respond when there are no volunteers. Allow time for people to write down the most interesting, thought-provoking points of the session or day. The next day, you could start by asking a few people to share their written comments. They can do so in pairs, or in small groups, or as a whole group.

Dividing into small groups is a good way to increase "air time" for trainees. If you expect the groups to present to the class later, be sure to include someone in each group who can write English easily to prepare any written materials.

If you have a bilingual assistant, consider allowing the reports to be in Japanese. You can comment based on the translation your assis-

tant provides. If teams can ask each other questions or evaluate each other's presentations, the interaction will be much richer if they can do it in Japanese.

**"Show and tell" at the same time.** As you train, reinforce points by using a flipchart, slides, and handouts. Seeing the written word helps the group adjust to the speaker's accent and focus on new terminology and concepts. And handouts make it easier for learners to concentrate the presentation, because they won't have to take as many notes.

Begin with a written overview of course objectives and an outline of topics to be covered. Review that information periodically, relating the details to the big picture. At the end, summarize the training by tying the objectives and outline to the course evaluation.

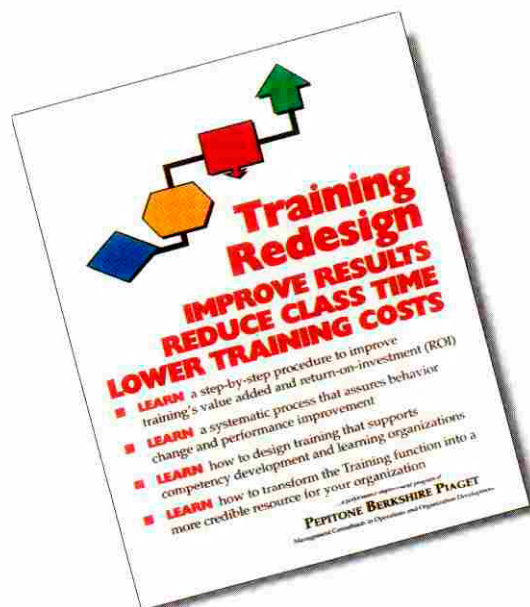
**Encourage student feedback.** Ask the group and individuals about the speed, jargon, and complexity of your speech and try to make adjustments. Watch to see if some people

are mouthing the answers without saying them out loud. Call on them early to set the example of successful participation.

Circulate around the room. Stand near people who seem inattentive, or draw their attention by using their names in examples. Expect people to sleep during lectures, especially after lunch—unless you plan countermeasures.

**Create a supportive atmosphere.** Be careful not to cause anyone to lose face. For example, dignify errors by reframing an incorrect response as an answer to a question that is different from the one that was asked.

Most adult Japanese learners will respond cooperatively when they understand what you expect them to do. Training people from different cultural backgrounds requires that you examine your training practices and be ready to articulate your basic value and behavioral assumptions. Plan from the start to create the context that will make your training effective.



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## The Name Game

By Rebecca Thomas, a free-lance writer based in Alexandria, Virginia.

What's in a name? Plenty, according to David Morand, assistant professor of management with the School of Business Administration at Pennsylvania State, in Harrisburg. People at work today are much more likely to call one another by first name, regardless of title or station.

Not too long ago, first-naming was unheard of. So why the change? Apparently, using first names may do more to level power differences among CEOs, managers, and subordinates than most formal strategies found in complex worker-involvement schemes.

Interestingly, management researchers have paid little attention to the role of first-naming at work.

"If I were your boss, says Morand, "and told you on your first day to call me 'Dave,' it would set an imme-

diately positive tone for our whole relationship."

An employee might even be willing to forego such perks as executive dining or preferred parking in favor of being allowed such informality.

Some highly bureaucratic organizations may persist with more formalized "name calling." But many newly decentralized organizations—where more frequent and informal interaction takes place among all employees—find that first-naming generates a sense of equality and friendliness. A more relaxed atmosphere can lead to higher levels of employee satisfaction and communication.

Some corporations are taking first-naming to another level: They have instituted formal policies to mandate universal first-naming among employees.

Unsure about what to call someone at work? You are not alone. Many employees resort to using no name at all. Penn State researchers advise managers to listen for such name avoidance as a tip off to more deep-seated, problematic issues.

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## Tools for Better Communication

What sets successful managers apart from mediocre ones? Author Rick Maurer says that, among other things, the best managers excel at giving and receiving feedback.

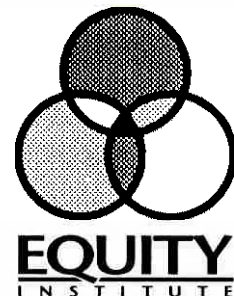
In his book, *Feedback Toolkit: 16 Tools for Better Communication in the Workplace*, Maurer lists six communication approaches that he says distinguish the best managers from the rest:

**They just do it.** "These managers don't wait to become perfect at giving feedback," Maurer says. "They know it is important and they just haul off and give it."

At times, even good managers may give feedback inelegantly, Maurer acknowledges, but they do improve with practice.

**They do it often and informally.** The very best managers don't wait for the annual performance-appraisal time to provide feedback to their employees.

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## In Practice

They find frequent opportunities to give people the information they need in order to improve.

**They focus on the customer.** Excellent managers direct their feedback toward "making things better for an external customer," Maurer points out, "or for the folks down the hall." They keep feedback conversations focused on what is truly important. They avoid giving personal opinions. They know they are in business to serve customers, and they provide feedback with that aim in mind.

**They seek feedback.** "The best managers find ways to get feedback from their staff," Maurer says. "This is a bit surprising, since most organizational structures emphasize top-down feedback and offer no formal way for a boss to receive it. These people have to *work* at getting the feedback they need."

**They find ways around the system.** Organizations don't always make it easy to give and receive feedback. In fact, says Maurer, some create extraordinary mazes through which feedback is supposed to flow. "When the formal system doesn't work or creates hassles, these managers take a chance and go around the system."

**They build a foundation.** Effective managers know that a high level of trust in the workplace makes it easier for people to give and receive feedback. "They create ways for people to get to know one another," says Maurer, "so that feedback sessions aren't meetings between strangers."

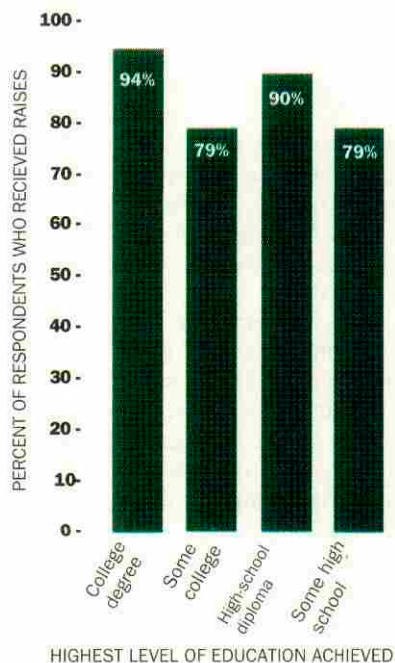
You can contact Maurer at 703/525-7074 (phone) or 470-9929@mcimail.com (Internet). Order *Feedback Toolkit* from Productivity Press, 800/394-6868.

## More Work Doesn't Pay

Traditionally, a job promotion meant a raise. Not anymore. At least not for a lot of women. Thirteen percent of working women who are promoted on the job receive no pay increase.

That's the word from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' National Longitudinal Survey, as reported in the October 1994 issue of *American Demographics*.

## Do Pay Raises Accompany Promotions for Women?



The data are from 1991 interviews with 5,000 women between the ages of 37 and 48. The same women were part of a 1968 study; they have been interviewed regularly since then.

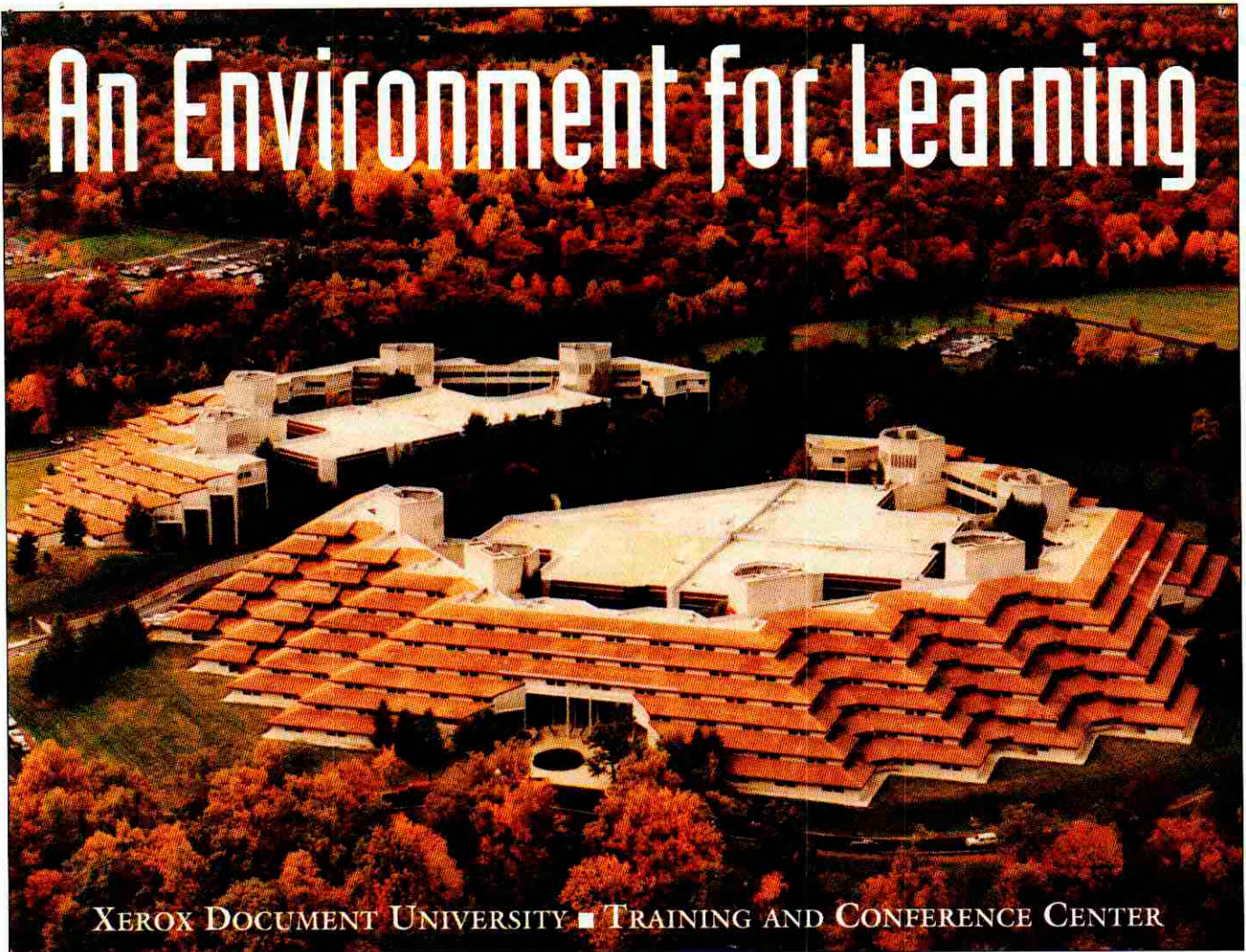
Women in managerial occupations are most likely to receive more pay when they get promoted; 94 percent reported increases. Service workers are the least likely to receive raises with their promotions; only 76 percent did. And managerial occupations are more likely to promote women than are service occupations.

Women who work full-time are significantly more likely to get raises with their promotions than are their part-time counterparts.

Education also makes a difference. Ninety-four percent of college graduates who got promoted received raises. That compares with 90 percent of women whose highest level of education is a high-school diploma, and 79 percent of women who dropped out of high school. Interestingly, women with some college but no degree did no better than high-school dropouts; only 79 percent of women with some college got raises when they were promoted.

Black and white women are equally likely to be promoted, as are

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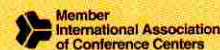
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