



The Co-op Japan Program Survey, 2005: Brief Report

Submitted to:

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February, 2006.

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¹ This document has been formatted for two-sided printing.

The Co-op Japan Program Survey, 2005: Brief Report

Background:

The Co-op Japan Program is a Canadian university and college based, international co-op/internship program linking some of the best engineering, science, business and arts discipline undergraduate students from across the country with highly committed Japanese businesses. The Co-op Japan Program formally integrates an undergraduate student's Canadian academic studies with valuable work experience in a Japanese company. The program is open to universities and colleges nationally and is currently administered from The University of British Columbia.

The Co-op Japan Program's mandate is to provide Canadian undergraduate students with career-related work experience within a Japanese company during their undergraduate curriculum and at the same time to provide Japanese companies with the opportunity to employ highly capable and motivated Canadian undergraduate students

(<http://www.thecoopjapanprogram.com/home/index.php>).

The Co-op Japan Program is in the process of evaluating and improving its content and delivery, and as part of that process, commissioned Applied Research and Evaluation Services of UBC (ARES – www.ares.ubc.ca) to poll former and current participants about their experiences in The Co-op Japan Program. ARES acts as an independent third party, ensuring that responses are conveyed to The Co-op Japan Program with no personal identifiers, thereby ensuring the confidentiality of those responses. Further, as ARES personnel are not content experts in The Co-op Japan Program, the results of the survey are, for the most part, simply reported and not interpreted or commented upon.

Method

In late November, 2005, The Co-op Japan Program at UBC went through their rosters of graduates back to 1988, as well as current participants, identified those with working email addresses, and emailed them to say that ARES would be sending them a survey about their experiences in The Co-op Japan Program. ARES sent emails with links to the survey to the current and former participants on December 9th, with a reminder on December 19th, and closed the survey on December 23rd. As an incentive to participate, respondents were offered the opportunity to be in a draw for one of four, \$50.00 gift certificates from Amazon.ca.

The technique of using emails and a web-based survey was chosen because it is relatively inexpensive and produces much quicker turn-around and higher response rates than trying to send out hard copy surveys. Additionally, exact return rates can be calculated, as opposed to using the regular mail service which does not allow knowledge of how many articles actually reach the person they were sent to (unless registered mail is used, which again would be both slow and prohibitively expensive). With regard to how representative the sample was, there is an assumption that there should be no particular differences between current participants and graduates who have known email addresses and those whose email addresses are not known, or who have no email addresses.

Survey

In order to obtain “top of mind” responses, many of the survey questions were in the form of text boxes, allowing the respondent to freely react to the question in an unlimited text form, as opposed to check-boxes that can restrict the range of possible responses. These open-ended responses were examined both verbatim, and by categorizing themes across respondents using *SPSS Text Analysis* software (http://www.spss.com/textanalysis_surveys/). Of course, because any one comment from a respondent can have more than one thought within it, the number of responses can often exceed the number of respondents.

It is important to remember that this sort of grouping of open-ended responses, while simplifying the data, also loses information through both simplification, and because the classifications and clusters are made from the judgment of the researcher, and others may well have different interpretations of the initial text.

The survey was divided into three sections. The first contained three general questions about The Co-op Japan Program: what was the best aspect, the worst aspect, and what useful thing(s) did the participant take away from The Co-op Japan Program.

The second section contained more program-specific questions. They covered: an assessment of the immersion Japanese language and culture course; whether or not The Co-op Japan Program improved the participant’s understanding of Japanese language, culture, and business practices; whether or not The Co-op Japan Program influenced the participant from a technical perspective, business perspective, personal perspective, future planning perspective, employment opportunity perspective, employment decision perspective, educational opportunity perspective, and decisions about education perspective; and whether or not the participant would be interested in mentoring a Co-op Japan Program student, receiving a program newsletter, and/ or attending a Co-op Japan Program reunion in Vancouver in 2006.

The third section contained questions about the respondent. They covered: the year and amount of time spent in The Co-op Japan Program; the company, projects, and duties the participant worked was assigned in Japan; whether or not the participant maintained contact with friends and/ or contacts from Japan; whether or not the participant utilized the contacts from Japan; what the respondent was doing now (work, study, etc.); gender and year of birth; whether or not the respondent would recommend The Co-op Japan Program to others; whether or not the respondent had any other comments; whether or not the respondent would allow The Co-op Japan Program to contact him/ her about the responses in the survey; and, finally, contact information to enter the draw. See [Appendix A: Survey](#) for a copy of the survey.

Results

Respondent Characteristics and Current Activities:

A total of 154 current and past participants were sent emails asking them to participate in the survey and 48.1% (74) responded. The sample was comprised of 29.7% (22) females and 70.3% (52) males. The mean age of the males was 24.9 years (SD = 2.2), the mean age of the females was 24.7 years (SD = 2.4) and the overall mean age of the sample was 24.9 years (SD = 2.2).

Table 1: Response Rates by Year

| Year | Total # Students | # Emails Sent | # Responded | % Response |
|--------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|------------|
| 2005 | 41 | 9 | 6 | 66.6 |
| 2004 | 37 | 28 | 15 | 53.6 |
| 2003 | 51 | 40 | 17 | 42.5 |
| 2002 | 67 | 33 | 13 | 39.4 |
| 2001 | 52 | 18 | 11 | 61.1 |
| 2000 & pre to 1997 | 146 | 26 | 12 | 46.2 |
| All | 394 | 154 | 74 | 48.1 |

In response to the question “How many months were you in The Co-op Japan Program?”, 23.0% (17) indicated “8 months”, 47.3% (35) indicated “12 months” and 29.7% (22) indicated “other”. Looking at the “other” category, 1.4% (1) respondent indicated “1 month”, 9.5% (7) indicated “6 months”, 2.7% (2) indicated “9 months”, 5.4% (4) indicated “10 months” and 10.8% (8) indicated “11 months”.

In terms of companies worked for and number of placements, they included Taiheiyo Cement 4.1% (3), Sansyu FineTool 2.7% (2), Sumitomo Chemicals 2.7% (2), Yokohama Rubber 5.4% (4), Tamatake 5.4% (4), Sony 8.1% (6), Sanyo (7), NTT (7), Dianippon (2), Bosch 4.1% (3), Banyu 2.7% (2), Asahi 4.1% (3), ATR 10.8% (8), and 24.3% (18) other companies with only one placement.

When asked if they maintained contact with Japanese co-workers and/ or friends made in Japan during The Co-op Japan Program, 89.2% (66) indicated “yes”, and when asked whether or not they utilized any business/ research contacts made during The Co-op Japan Program, 23.0% (17) indicated “yes”. Of those, 13.5% (10) used the contact for a reference, 4.1% (3) for career advice or opportunities, 2.7% (2) for personal contacts, for professional contacts, and 6.8% 5 for other contacts that did not fall into coherent groupings.

When asked about their work status, 47.3% (35) indicated they were employed full-time, 5.4% (4) employed part-time, and 31.1% (23) were not working. The areas that those that were working were in were variable (except for software-related design, where 16.2% (12) respondents fell) and did not fall into coherent groupings.

When asked about their current studies, 27.0% (20) indicated they were pursuing undergraduate studies, 27.0% (20) indicated they were pursuing graduate studies, and 10.8% (8) indicated they were pursuing “other” studies.

When asked about the area they were studying, some general groupings emerged: 10.8% (8) indicated computer engineering, 6.8% (5) indicated electrical engineering, 2.7% (2) indicated civil engineering, and 2.7% (2) chemical engineering.

Finally, 56.8% (42) respondents indicated that they would allow The Co-op Japan Program staff to contact them about their responses.

General Questions about The Co-op Japan Program:

Fully 93.2% (69) indicated that they would recommend participation in The Co-op Japan Program to undergraduate students. Their responses clustered as follows: 43.2% (32) indicated for the international/ cultural experience, 39.2% (29) for the personal growth, 23.0% (17) because it was a unique opportunity, 21.6% (16) for the international work experience, 10.8% (8) because of the career opportunities, 9.5% (7) for the educational growth and opportunities, 6.8% (5) because it was fun, 5.4% (4) because they made new friends, and 5.4% (4) had responses that could not be otherwise classified.

“It changed my life. I never expected to be living in Japan after I graduated from university nor was it my intension when I entered the CJP program. Programs like CJP can open doors to a world that so many university students never get to experience. Even if you don’t end up working in a job with any relation to Japan after you graduate from university, the memories and experiences in Japan will live on for a lifetime.”

When asked what they liked most about The Co-op Japan Program, the responses clustered as follows: 37.8% (28) indicated what was best was working in Japan with a Japanese company; 29.7% (22) cited learning the Japanese language and culture; 27.0% (20) cited making friends and meeting people; 17.6% (13) cited working abroad without specifically mentioning Japan; 12.2% (9) cited travel and sightseeing; 9.5% (7) cited the ability to combine work and travel; and 4.1% (3) appreciated Co-op Japan organizing things for them.

“The chance to have a truly international experience and the allowance of a firsthand experience of what working in a Japanese company is like.”

When asked what they liked least about The Co-op Japan Program, the responses clustered as follows: 27.0% (20) indicated it was too expensive and/ or the wages were too low; 24.3% (18) thought the immersion/ orientation program should be improved, 14.9% (11) cited a lack of program support, 5.4% (4) didn’t know what to expect, 4.1% (3) cited language and communication difficulties, and the remainder had responses that could not be clustered.

“It was very expensive”

In terms of the most useful things that they took away from The Co-op Japan Program, the responses clustered as follows: 44.6% (33) cited knowledge of a different culture and language, 32.4% (24) cited new friends, 24.3% (18) experienced personal growth, 18.9% (14) valued the work experience, and 10.8% (8) cited unique responses that did not fit into larger clusters.

“Discover a total different society and culture.”

The other broad question concerning The Japan Co-op Program asked whether or not respondents had any general comments about the program.

Program-Specific Questions:

Respondents were asked whether or not they took the immersion Japanese language and culture course, if so, did it assist them in preparing for their work term in Japan, and in either case, about how could the course be improved. All but 2.7% (2) respondents indicated that they took the course (72 - 97.3%) and 31.1% (23) indicated it did not prepare them. Suggestions for improvement clustered as follows: 41.9% (31) thought the language component could be improved, 20.3% (15) thought the culture component could be improved, 14.9% (11) found it too costly, 9.5% (7) found it too short, 4.1% (3) found it too long, and 25.7 (19) had unique suggestions that could not cluster in groups larger than one.

When asked if their placement in Japan improved their understanding of Japanese language, culture, and business practices, 98.6%, 100%, and 87.8% respectively replied “yes”.

Respondents were asked whether or not their work experience influenced them from a technical perspective, and 70.3% (52) indicated “yes”. Grouping the responses, 37.8% (28) mentioned improved technical skills, 28.4% (21) gained new perspectives, 10.8% (8) said it influenced their career objectives, 4.1% (3) said it improved their career potential, and 13.5% (10) had unique responses that could not be grouped.

Respondents were asked whether or not their work experience influenced them from a business perspective, and 51.4% (38) indicated “yes”. Grouping the responses, 27.0% (20) mentioned they gained knowledge of Japanese business and/ or cultural practices, 13.5% (10) gained new perspectives, and 12.2% (9) had unique responses that could not be grouped.

Respondents were asked whether or not their work experience influenced them from a personal perspective, and 93.2% (69) indicated “yes”. Grouping the responses, 27.0% (20) mentioned they gained new perspectives, 23.0% (17) mentioned personal growth, 10.8% (8) said they became more adaptable, 8.1% (6) said they made new friends, 6.8% (5) said they improved their career potential, 5.4% (4) said they came to appreciate the Japanese, 5.4% (4) said they gained confidence in themselves, and 14.9% (11) had unique responses that could not be grouped.

Respondents were asked whether or not their work experience influenced their future planning, and 75.7% (56) indicated “yes”. Grouping the responses, 18.9% (14) mentioned they gained new perspectives, 12.2% (9) said it made them consider working in Japan (or were already working there), 10.8% (8) said it made them consider working abroad (or were already working

abroad) without specifically mentioning Japan, 10.8% (8) said they intended to return to Japan but not to work there, 8.1% (6) said they would consider returning to Japan, 2.7% (2) said they would consider working or were working for a Japanese company, and 14.9% (11) had unique responses that could not be grouped.

Respondents were asked whether or not their work experience influenced their employment opportunities and decisions. With regard to employment opportunities, 60.8% (45) indicated “yes”. Grouping the responses, 16.2% (12) mentioned they gained good work experience and/ or contacts, 13.5% (10) said it improved their resume, 9.5% (7) said it showed their capacity, 6.8% (5) said it opened up opportunities, 5.4% (4) said knowing Japanese and/or having had the experience of working in Japan was a “plus”, 5.4% (4) got jobs or job offers in Japan, and 10.8% (8) had unique responses that could not be grouped.

With regard to employment decisions, 51.4% (38) indicated “yes”. Grouping the responses, 17.6% (13) mentioned they gained new perspectives, 10.8% (8) said they would consider working (or were working) in Japan, 9.5% (7) said they would consider working (or were working) abroad without specifically mentioning Japan, 5.4% (4) said they would return to Japan, and 6.8% (5) had unique responses that could not be grouped.

Respondents were asked whether or not their work experience influenced their educational opportunities and decisions. With regard to educational opportunities, 31.5% (23) indicated “yes”. Grouping the responses, 8.1% (6) said it improved their opportunities, 6.8% (5) said it made them want to study in Japan (or they were already studying in Japan), 6.8% (5) said it helped to define their interests, 6.8% (5) said it made them want to continue on to graduate school (or they were in already graduate school), and 6.8% (5) had unique responses that could not be grouped.

With regard to educational decisions, 38.9% (28) indicated “yes”. Grouping the responses, 17.6% (13) said it made them want to go to graduate school, 13.5% (10) said it helped them to define their interests, 6.8% (5) said it made them want to study Japanese and/ or other languages, and 5.4% (4) had unique responses that could not be grouped.

The final questions in the program-specific section of the survey asked whether or not the respondents would be interested in mentoring a Co-op Japan student, receiving a Co-op Japan Newsletter, and/ or attending a Co-op Japan reunion in Vancouver in 2006. The “yes” responses to these questions were 62.2% (46), 63.5% (47) and 77.0% (57) respectively.

Appendix A: Survey

Click to return to [Survey](#)

The Co-op Japan Program Survey

THE COOP JAPAN PROGRAM

Thank you for agreeing to complete the survey!

This survey has three sections:

1) Your general views about The Co-op Japan Program

2) Some specific Program questions

3) Some questions about you to help us classify responses.

If you have any questions about the **CONTENT** of the survey, please contact:
Jenny Kagetsu, Director, The Co-op Japan Program, 604.822.3022 or email jenny.kagetsu@ubc.ca

If you have any **TECHNICAL** questions about the survey, please contact:
Adam Hunter, MBA / B Eng. (Mech), Senior Analyst
Applied Research and Evaluation Services, UBC
(604) 822-9132, email ahunter@ares.ubc.ca

Remember, all of your responses will be confidential.

Section 1: General Program Questions

1. What did you like **MOST** about your participation in The Co-op Japan Program?

[text box]

2. What did you like **LEAST** or find least useful about participating in The Co-op Japan Program?

[text box]

3. What was the most useful thing(s) that you took away from The Co-op Japan Program?

[text box]

Section 2: Program-Specific Questions

1a. Did you take the immersion Japanese language and culture course?

< > no < > yes

1b. If "Yes" did the course assist you in preparing for your work term in Japan?

< > no < > yes

1c. Either “Yes’ or “No”, how could the course be improved? [text box]

2. Did your placement in Japan improve your understanding of:

2a. Japanese language < > no < > yes

2b. Japanese culture < > no < > yes

2c. Japanese business practices < > no < > yes

3a. Did the Co-op Japan Program Japanese work experience influence you from a technical perspective?

< > no < > yes

3b. If “Yes” please explain how? [text box]

4a. Did the Co-op Japan Program Japanese work experience influence you from a business perspective?

< > no < > yes

4b. If “Yes” please explain how? [text box]

5a. Did the Co-op Japan Program Japanese work experience influence you from a personal perspective?

< > no < > yes

5b. If “Yes” please explain how? [text box]

6a. Did the Co-op Japan Program Japanese work experience influence your future planning?

< > no < > yes

6b. If “Yes” please explain how? [text box]

7a. Did your experience with the Co-op Japan Program influence your employment opportunities?

< > no < > yes

7b. If “Yes”, please explain how [text box]

8a. Did your experience with the Co-op Japan Program influence your employment decisions?

< > no < > yes

8b. If “Yes”, please explain how [text box]

9a. Did your experience in The Co-op Japan Program influence your educational opportunities?

< > no < > yes

9b. If “Yes”, please explain how [text box]

10a. Did your experience in the Co-op Japan Program influence your decisions about your education?

< > no < > yes

10b. If “Yes”, please explain how [text box]

11. Would you be interested in:

11a. Mentoring a Co-op Japan Program student? < > no < > yes

11b. Receiving a Co-op Japan Program newsletter? < > no < > yes

11c. Attending a Co-op Japan reunion in Vancouver in 2006? < > no < > yes

Section 3: About You

(Remember, your responses are confidential. If any question makes you uncomfortable, just go on to the next.)

1. In what year did you participate in the Co-op Japan Program?

[drop down 1998 or earlier yearly to 2005]

2. How many months were you in the Co-op Japan Program?

< > 4 < > 8 < > 12
< > Other (Please explain) [text box]

3. What was the name of the company that you were working with in Japan?

[text box]

4. Describe the project(s) that you worked on in Japan?

[text box]

5. What were your duties in the project(s) that you worked on in Japan?

[text box]

6. Have you maintained contact with Japanese co-workers and/ or friends made in Japan during the Co-op Japan Program?

< > no < > yes

7. Have you utilized any of the research or business contacts you made in Japan during the Co-op Japan Program?

< > no < > yes

If "Yes", please explain how? [text box]

Current Activities

8. Are you currently:

- 8a. Working full-time
- 8b. Working part-time
- 8c. Unemployed

If you are working:

8d. In what area are you primarily specializing? [text box]

8e. What is the name of the company you are working for? [text box]

8f. Is this company affiliated with or do business with any Japanese companies?

< > no < > yes

8g. If "Yes", please explain how [text box]

9. Are you currently:

- 9a. Pursuing Undergraduate Studies
- 9b. Pursuing Graduate Studies
- 9c. Pursuing Other Studies.

9d. If "Other, please explain [text box]

9e. If you are studying, in what area are you primarily specializing? [text box]

General Demographics

1. What is your Gender? < > Female < > Male

In what year were you born? [drop down]

2. Would you recommend participation in the Co-op Japan Program to undergraduate students?

< > no < > yes

2a. Please explain why or why not? [text box]

3. Do you have any other general comments or suggestions about the Co-op Japan Program?

[text box]

4. Would you allow the Co-op Japan staff to contact you about your responses? (If "Yes" the researchers at ARES would be allowed to link your name with your comments and contact you. If "No", then your identity and comments will not be linked together.)

< > no < > yes

If you wish to be entered into the draw, we will need you to give us your contact information:

Name [text box]

Phone [text box]

Email [text box]

Thank you for completing this survey and good luck in the draw!

To submit the survey, click [here](#)
