

“Talking with Fulbrighters Series” was launched on December 12, 2019 at Kansai University Umeda Campus. The topic of our first session was “Language by Design: How Schools can be Organized to Ensure All Students Become Multi-Lingual” presented by Dr. Jacob Werblow, Associate Professor at Department of Educational Leadership, Policy & Instructional Technology at Central Connecticut State University. He is currently Fulbright Lecturer in American Studies, teaching at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies and Kyoto University.



Dr. Werblow introduced us to a growing trend in language teaching in the United States — away from a hierarchical, English-only teaching method to a more horizontal, multi-linguistic, immersion approach, starting at the earliest stages of formal schooling.

Eleven participants, including a current Fulbright Student, Alumni members, and their friends; joined Dr. Werblow and engaged in the discussion from various viewpoints, including the functions of the human brain. Studies show a multi-linguistic approach not only facilitates a superior wiring of the brain’s structure and development but also enhances student’s understanding in other subject areas. Moreover, given the diverse ethnic background of children currently studying in US schools, non-English speakers, who are often placed at the periphery in school, can gain greater self-respect and a more positive cultural identity when they see their language and culture given equal weight and value in the school curriculum.

Before the formal opening of the session, Dr. Werblow exchanged greetings with each of the attendees to get cues about who he was going to be engaged with. This spontaneous conduct may reflect his previous background as a teacher, but also serves as a reminder of how horizontal, personal relationships in a diverse social environment should start.