

## Religion in the ELT Classroom: Japanese University Students' Perspectives

**Ken Foye**

Hokkaido University of Education, Hakodate Campus, Japan

### **Abstract:**

Following up on a study on teachers' perspectives (Foye, 2014), this paper reports on a survey of nearly 500 university students in Japan to ascertain their views on discussing or mentioning religion in the language classroom. Respondents were questioned about their feelings regarding discussing or mentioning religion in class. In particular, the students were asked if mentioning of religion in class was acceptable or appropriate; they were also queried regarding the appropriateness of the study of (a) a dialogue in which attendance at a religious service was mentioned in passing, and (b) a dialogue in which religious practice was discussed somewhat more deeply. The participants' responses to these questions were cross-analyzed with their indicated religious beliefs. In addition to gathering quantitative data in the form of multiple-choice opinion questions, the survey asked respondents to expand on their answers by providing written commentary, which was examined for emerging themes and trends of thought.