Akira Kobasigawa

- Born 12/17/1932 in Korea
- B.A. (1955) and M.A. (1956) both at George Peabody College, Ph.D. (1963) University of Iowa, Institute of Child Development

Major Employment:

- University of Windsor – 1974-1998, Professor
- University of Windsor – 1998-Present, Professor Emeritus

Major Areas of Work:

- Cognitive Development
- Social Development
- Learning

SRCD Affiliation:

- Member since 1969
- Reviewer from 1978-1992

SRCD ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Akira Kobasigawa

Interviewed by Julie Hakim-Larson
University of Windsor
July 16, 2009

Hakim-Larson: SRCD oral history interview of Akira Kobasigawa, Professor Emeritus of Psychology, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Interviewed by Julie Hakim-Larson: Professor of Psychology, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada. We are conducting this interview at the University of Windsor's campus on July 16th, 2009. And I'm going to start by telling you a little bit about how I first met Dr. Akira Kobasigawa. I met Dr. Akira Kobasigawa when I first came to the University of Windsor in 1991 as a new faculty member and Dr. Kobasigawa was the graduate studies chair at that time. At that time, I became a committee member of the graduate studies committee and Dr. Kobasigawa was the leader of that committee. I learned much about graduate education from Dr. Kobasigawa. Another thing is that we both shared an interest in cognitive development and I was very fortunate when I first started to teach courses in cognitive development to have Dr. Kobasigawa give some guest lectures in my class.

Currently I serve as the graduate studies chair in the Department of Psychology at the University of Windsor and learned some of my skills from Dr. Kobasigawa at that time. So we're going to turn now to talk directly to Dr. Kobasigawa and learn a little bit about his general intellectual history. So I wanted you to start by just telling us a little bit about where you were born and about your parents' own educational and occupational backgrounds.

Kobasigawa: Okay. Before I answer your question I would like to express my thanks to the SRCD oral history committee members for asking me to participate in this important project. I feel quite honored. And Julie, thanks for your very nice, kind introduction.

Now, I was born in Korea in 1932 as a Japanese citizen. I grew up there until the end of World War II. My father, Hiroshi Kobashigawa, former professor emeritus of the University of the Ryukyus, Japan, was born in Okinawa, a Japanese island located about 500 kilometers south of the main islands. After he got his

college education in Tokyo, now known as the Nippon Sport Science University, he went over to Korea to teach Korean students studying to become teachers. Korea had been already annexed by Japan as its colony. So the official language there was Japanese.

He started his teaching career in a city called Chunchon, which is located about 90 kilometers northeast of Seoul, capital city in Korea. And if you drive about 25 miles north, you get into North Korea. In Chunchon City, he met my mother, Kiyo, a daughter of a civil engineer from Niigata, Japan. After teaching in Taegu and Seoul, in 1939 my father returned to Chunchon to teach physical education in a new founded teacher training school. That school became the basis for the present Chunchon National University for Education.

Around that time, Korean students were forced to speak the Japanese language and recite principles of Emperor Worship. I don't know how he was doing there, but I always sensed that my father had a very good, trusting relationship with his Korean students. In fact, 25 years after World War II, the Alumni of the Chunchon Teachers College invited my father back to Korea.

Hakim-Larson: Okay. Tell us a little bit now about your early childhood and tell us a little bit more about where you grew up and your own awareness of your own ethnicity and your own ethnic background.

Kobasigawa: I spent my early childhood in Seoul. As I said, that's the capital city of Korea. And my first playmate of the same age was a Korean boy who was living close to my house. His mother was very nice to me, always welcomed me and on many occasions, I had lunch with that boy. He didn't understand even a single Japanese word and I learned of several Korean phrases like: "Did you eat?" "I ate a lot"; "The food tasted great." So by age four, I was aware that there are at least two ethnic groups in Korea, Japanese and Korean. And I was also aware that there were differences in languages, food preferences, and housing styles.

Hakim-Larson: And what was your schooling like then at the elementary school level?

Kobasigawa: My formal education began in 1939 in Chunchon. I attended the school, which was exclusively for Japanese people, but there were a few Korean children at each grade level. During that time, Japan adopted 6, 5, 3, 3 education system. After a six-year elementary school education, children had to prepare for the entrance examination to five-year secondary school education, and then they go to three-year more advanced schools and finally three-year university.

A few words about the Korean children. Virtually all Korean children learned to speak, read, and write Japanese language when they became grade one. By the time they became grade six, top Korean students were as good or better than top Japanese children at that time, at least in my city. So Korean students worked very hard. Actually, they were good at sports, practically good at everything. They were the source of my frustration during childhood.

Hakim-Larson: So what is your sense of the effects of the war on schooling and on the children that you knew at that time?

Kobasigawa: When I was born, Japan was already involved in the so-called 15-year war and so stories we learned, and songs we learned, and games we played became increasingly more war-related. Even the grade one language textbook began with: "The cherry blossoms are out. March! March! Soldiers, march!" A few years later they added even a trumpet sound so it goes, "Soldiers, march, march, march [personal expression of trumpets playing]."

On Decem--

Hakim-Larson: I was going to ask then--

Kobasigawa: Yes.

Hakim-Larson: --how did some of these events affect your schooling?

Kobasigawa: On December 8, 1941, my mother woke me up and she told me that Japan got into war against America, Britain, and China and she was very concerned what might happen to Japan. And I couldn't understand her apprehensions, because at school, teachers and my friends were all excited day after day about the victory news. And it became very fashionable among boys whether they want to join army, navy or air force. Unfortunately, victory news ended in six months. In June 1942, Japan lost the Midway Battle. After that, we did not hear any victory news. In the summer of 1944, we lost the battle at Saipan and on the day I became grade six, the U.S. marines invaded Okinawa where my father was born. Still, teachers said to us that we would win this war.

Hakim-Larson: And were there some experiences you had in the sixth grade that were quite interesting to you now that you reflect back on them… during your schooling?

Kobasigawa: Well, prior grade six children in my school had to prepare for the entrance examination to get into various secondary schools. So they went to school at 7:00 in the morning rather than 9:00 and then stayed there till 5:00 rather than 3:00 to finish up all the grade six math and language material by the end of the second term. They used the third term to review grade four through grade six materials.

And this kind of routine did not happen to us. Instead grade six classes of 1945 had to go to distant mountains to find pine tree stumps. We had to dig out huge roots with bare hands and shovels. The teachers said that we would produce aviation gasoline out of pine oil. And there wasn't any factory in the city to produce such aviation oil and we wondered if teachers knew that at least 200 pine trees were needed for just one airplane to fly one hour. So how could 60 grade six children dig out 200 pine trees? So when people became desperate, they cannot reason properly. And as my father feared, in June 1945 we lost the battle of Okinawa and on August 15, 1945 Hirohito announced Japan's surrender.

Hakim-Larson: And what happened to your family during this time?

Kobasigawa: After the war?

Hakim-Larson: Yes.

Kobasigawa: After the war? August 15 was a day of jubilation for Korean people, because they were liberated from a 35-year colonization by Japan. So for 24 hours, they were shouting, screaming out of joy. On the other hand, there were 750,000 Japanese people stranded. They had to be repatriated from Korea with one knapsack per person. And our family had a special problem. My father was from Okinawa and the United States armed forces were controlling Okinawa. Japan lost its power to control that island and we could not stay in Korea. So we had to leave Korea with the other Japanese people. And the problem was when we reached Japan we did not have any place to go.

Hakim-Larson: So your family became refugees at that point and where did you end up going?

Kobasigawa: So anyway, we had to leave Chunchon. But train stations in Korea around that time were chaotic. They just didn't have any departure or arrival schedules and too many people were moving, not just Japanese people trying to get out of Korea, but Korean people who were trying to move to South from North Korea, from China and Japan back to Korea. But we managed to reach Pusan, the port city of South Korea. It was the end of October. So we left Pusan by using a very tiny illegal so called black market boat, and as a grade six boy that was the first time I rode a boat and crossed the ocean for six hours. I was very excited and I couldn't think about how dangerous that trip was. We were very lucky and after we reached Japan, I learned that mines were still floating in the Korea Strait. One of my teachers of the elementary school couldn't reach Japan because his boat hit one of the mines. Another teacher's uncle's family could not reach Japan. The same thing happened to that family. So in a way we were very lucky.

We went back to Japan, as I said, and immediately we found out that major cities in Japan were burned to ashes because of heavy air raids. So my father decided to go to a city that escaped the air raids. The city was located in Southern Japan. And you used the term refugees. We went to that town and the first woman my father spoke to thought we were beggars. But you will meet very kind people too and a kind farmer in a small village allowed us to use his detached one room house. And the entire village was very kind to our family and in April 1946 I was admitted into a secondary school in that city.

I got the highest entrance examination scores so my five-year education in Korea must have been good.

Hakim-Larson: How was this for your father, who was a professor back in Korea?

Kobasigawa: He couldn't find a job. And my mother said his rank was too high, higher than even the principal of the secondary school. Whether that's true or not, my mother did a very courageous thing. She used all the cash we had and bought rice, and the price of rice increased twice rapidly. The price increased very rapidly, so that was a smart thing that she exchanged cash to rice. I'd like to point out that--this is an incidental comment--around that time, only 30% of Japanese people had secondary school education.

And one year after World War II, Japanese government finally decided to send Okinawan people back to Okinawa Island from mainland Japan. So my father all of a sudden wanted to go back to Okinawa. One of my teachers told me that that's not a good idea to go back to Okinawa, because there wasn't college level education at that time. But in December 1946, my family members were thoroughly sprayed with DDT by occupying American soldiers, and left Japan for Okinawa.

Hakim-Larson: And is this during your high school years or--

[Both speaking at once]

Kobasigawa: You see, that was during the secondary school year. Right?

Hakim-Larson: Yes.

Kobasigawa: And things were so mixed up at that time.

Hakim-Larson: So can you tell us a little bit about your high school years and--

Kobasigawa: Okay.

Hakim-Larson: --and what your schooling was like then?

Kobasigawa: When we went back to Okinawa--that was I said December 1946--my father's hometown looked like a refugee camp; people were living in green United States army battlefield-tents. And we joined a refugee camp and that condition lasted for six years.

And about high school. From secondary school education, I began high school in Okinawa. And students built their own classrooms using, again, army tents. And we did not have any textbooks until 1948. Even in 1948, textbooks were only for math, English, and Japanese language. And in the same year, we adopted the new educational system, 6-3-3-4, but the last 4 college education part was missing in Okinawa. And so I think high school students wanted to go to Japan to get university education, but the United States military government controlling Okinawa did not allow us to leave for that purpose. So in 1948, high school students submitted a petition to the United States government in Okinawa for the necessity of a four-year university. In the following year, I and three other students visited the Department of Education of American government in Okinawa and we asked them to release issue passports to Okinawan high school students who wanted to go to Japan to take university education. So, it was a very exciting time. We were always constantly active, perhaps because we were so poor, we were intellectually frustrated.

I graduated from high school in 1950, March 1950. In the same year, finally the University of the Ryukyus was founded. And a group of scholarship students was sent to Japan for university education. In the following year, I, too, left Okinawa for Tokyo.

Hakim-Larson: Okay. What high school experiences--going back to your high school experiences for a moment--were particularly important for your intellectual development?

Kobasigawa: Around that time, teachers' salaries were ridiculously low. For example, if I worked just one day washing and ironing American soldiers' clothes, I could make as much as one teacher's monthly payment. See, if you worked for American soldiers and get 15 packs of Lucky Strike cigarettes, that's comparable to one month's pay for most of the teachers at that time. Okay? So people said that only fools became teachers. But I think 1,500 teachers quit their jobs, but those "fools" who remained teaching, they taught us very well. And I still remember one of the teachers who taught us Japanese language gave us very interesting stimulating lecture, and many of the things probably I did not understand at that time. Some of them stuck with me and very frequently I think back and again and again think back and I find out how meaningful significant things he pointed out. Some of the things are useful even to us. One day he introduced to us a very short poem that he found in a grade one language book. And it went like this: "Many, many faces. Two eyes. Two ears. One nose. One mouth. All of them are the same faces. All of them are different faces." Probably at that moment I said, "So what?" And somewhat later, I thought that probably he brought up that short poem telling us that the essence of literature is expressed by that grade one short poem. And several years later, I was reading *Child Development and Personality*, first edition by Mussen and Conger. In the introduction section, these authors say how we approach child development research and then I realized that that short poem is also pointing to the essence of our research. Mussen and Conger say that one approach is to discover universal general laws applicable to all children, all species. On the other hand, no two human beings are alike, and we need another approach. Another approach is to study uniqueness of each child. And I thought that's comparable to what this short poem was saying. And later on, I had met various psychologists; they say: "Should psychology be nomothetic or idiographic?" One experimental psychologist said, "Nomothetic;" a clinical psychologist said, "Idiographic." And I say this short poem says why not both? In essence, I like this short poem.

Hakim-Larson: Yes, a very good example. So tell us a little bit more about the origins of your interest in child development.

Kobasigawa: I became interested in child development research towards the end of my first year of graduate training. In 1954, when I was in senior year, I had an opportunity to study in the United States under the GARIOA program. GARIOA stands for Government and Relief in Occupied Area. The United States used this program immediately after World War II to give out emergency aid to such occupied nations as Japan and Germany. I had to write what area I wanted to study in the United States. For various reasons, I wrote educational psychology. The Institute of International Education in New York processed my application form. And maybe because I wrote educational psychology, they assigned me to George Peabody College in Nashville, Tennessee, which now is included in Vanderbilt University. These two universities are located close together and there were various joint programs.

So the first graduate course I took at Peabody College was a child psychology course taught by Susan Gray. She became interested in early training projects with disadvantaged children later on. I think she's also responsible for establishing a PhD program in school psychology at Peabody. Anyway, I read Margaret Mead's *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* as well as additional selected reading materials from *Carmichael's Manual of Child Psychology*. And I think I enjoyed Mead's book more than Carmichael's. But we kept correspondence for many years. First we talked about research on identification. Later she told me about her projects with disadvantaged children.

Hakim-Larson: This is Margaret Mead or Susan Grey?

Kobasigawa: Susan Grey. But still I hadn't decided to study child development, but when I took theories of learning at Peabody taught by Gordon Cantor, a new PhD from Iowa -- he was the one who shaped me into a child psychologist. He is the one who told me that there were unexplored interesting areas in child

psychology. He introduced me to articles by Boyd McCandless, Charles Spiker and these were the people who organized the so-called experimental child psychology program at the University of Iowa Child Welfare Research Station.

When I attained my master's degree, I had to return to Okinawa, so I returned to Okinawa and I met Agarie. And he went to University of Iowa in 1956 and he told me he was taking Boyd McCandless' course and he introduced me to--he told me to read Mussen and Conger's textbook, and I think when I read *Child Development and Personality*, my interest in child developmental research was strengthened.

Hakim-Larson: I see. And so tell us a little bit more about some other important people who contributed to your intellectual development.

Kobasigawa: In addition to my language teacher at high school, I will first say Nicholas Hobbs. I think several years later, he became president of the American Psychological Association. I say he is an important person to me for my intellectual growth because he introduced to me two radically different theories in psychology at the beginning of my graduate training: He taught me Carl Roger's theory of personality and then he suggested that I take Gordon Cantor's *Hull-Spence Learning Theory*. When I went to University of Iowa in 1960 I greatly--

Hakim-Larson: This was for your doctoral program?

Kobasigawa: Yes, that's correct. Yes. Sorry.

Hakim-Larson: So you received a Bachelor's and a Master's from Peabody College?

Kobasigawa: That's correct. Yes. At Peabody I got a BA in English, then an MA in psychology. When I went to the University of Iowa, I benefited from Charles Spiker's course on research methods in child development, which was essentially an application of philosophy of science to research in child development. I frequently visited Milton Rosenbaum's office. He was a social psychologist in the department of psychology and we talked about observational learning and research.

But I have to say that Willard Hartup contributed to my intellectual growth probably most. He was my supervisor and I was his research assistant for two years at Iowa. First, when I was in Okinawa, thinking about what types of research I might be interested in, he sent me a copy of his first publication--first study, which was concerned with the effects of adult's nurturance-withdrawal on child's dependency behavior. And I think that must be one of the first studies in which experimental technique was used to determine antecedent conditions of children's dependence. I became very much interested in that type of approach. Second, when I was at Iowa, the so-called "variable" approach was very dominant and instead of talking about developmental issues, you study effects of specific variables on children's behavior. Hartup constantly reminded me of the importance of developmental issues. And also in his experiment--his research design**,** he combined naturalistic observational data and experimental techniques. And I thought that approach was very interesting. Finally, he directed my dissertation research. Through that experience, I thoroughly learned from him how to write research papers.

And after I graduated from Iowa, Harold Stevenson invited me to work at the Institute of Child Development at Minnesota University--the University of Minnesota. And that was an eye opening experience. In addition to Harold Stevenson, Herb Pick, Ann Pick, Bill Charlesworth, John Wright, all these people showed me that the diversity in approaches to child research is very important. And that was a very useful experience. During my training at Iowa--going back to Iowa and thereafter--Professor Bandura kept sending me preprints of his research and chapters.

Hakim-Larson: How did he know to do that?

Kobasigawa: Well--

Hakim-Larson: This is Albert Bandura?

Kobasigawa: That's right. When I went to see Hartup for the first time, we talked about my research interest and I said that I wanted to translate the notion of identification into experimental research. And he said, "Do you think that imitation is the basis for all human learning?" And I said, "I couldn't believe imitation is that powerful." And he said, "If you want to study imitation, say that (imitation is the basis for ...) and if you don't say that, somebody else will say so. I said, "Who will say that?" He said, "Bandura." Hartup said, "Bandura." So I immediately wrote to Bandura that, "Please send me all the reprints of your studies." I think he sent me only one reprint, but he sent me a box of preprints. That's how he started sending me his--

Hakim-Larson: He got you on his mailing list.

Kobasigawa: Yes.

Hakim-Larson: So there was Albert Bandura then and were there others?

Kobasigawa: Yes. I think after Iowa, John Flavell's numerous writings influenced my ideas, the way of my research and during my final 10 years or so (at the U. of Windsor), the late Mike Pressley, from him I received great intellectual support. And Annette Dufresne was a very stimulating research associate at the University of Windsor.

Hakim-Larson: So what social events do you think may have influenced your teaching and your professional activities in development?

Kobasigawa: I have to say it has to be the fact that I received a scholarship in 1954, and had a chance to study in the United States. I think this is not just me. Many of my friends who experienced that say this.

Hakim-Larson: So it was those events post-war with the GARIOA program that--

Kobasigawa: GARIOA program--

Hakim-Larson: --and some of your friends had a similar experience?

Kobasigawa: Okay. I finished my Master's degree within one year. That means I studied very hard. I think a more accurate statement is that I was forced to study hard by course syllabi professors distribute. Those course syllabi were very new experience to me and to all Japanese students studying in the United States. And these course syllabi tell us what to read, what assignments should be completed by when, when we have to write examinations and so on. And so initially, because these things were new to me--to us--we felt that we were being treated like a carriage horse allowed to look at only one direction. It's only gradually I began to realize that how carefully these course syllabi were prepared. So I learned not just child psychology, but also how university courses should be planned, prepared and how we should teach those courses. I think that's what we learned. So those experiences were useful things for my professional activities.

Hakim-Larson: So would you characterize the development of your ideas in the field of child development as evolving in a straightforward manner?

Kobasigawa: Yes, I would say--yes, straightforward manner. While I was studying one concept, I added a few other concepts, but those additional concepts were needed to understand the initial concept. So although I studied various skills, strategies, new concepts, I think research ideas evolved in a straightforward manner. Also my research style did not change greatly. Always I enjoyed observing children in addition to obtaining objective scores. I did not change my theoretical orientation radically.

Hakim-Larson: Okay. So let's talk a little bit about your personal research contributions to the field. What were your primary research interests, especially at the beginning of your career? And then--

Kobasigawa: I've--yes, I think such terms as identification, observational learning, modeling effects probably best represent my research interest at the beginning of my career.

Hakim-Larson: Okay. And now tell us a little bit about how there was a continuity in your work and in your development. And which of those continuities do you think are the most significant ones following up with those terms from early on?

Kobasigawa: From 1969 to 1998, the year I retired from the University of Windsor, I was interested in two major themes. One: What do children do when they study? The second theme: What do they do when they try to remember what they have studied? So in that sense, there was a continuity in my research themes. Also, I used--in my studies on modeling effects, I observed the children in a standardized play environment. In my research on the development of study strategies, memory strategies, I tried to observe children in a standardized study setting. So I think there was a continuity regarding the research methods.

Hakim-Larson: So what shifts do you think occurred in your work and what events do you think were responsible?

Kobasigawa: I moved from research on "modeling effects" to research on the children's use of strategies, metacognition, self-regulation and so on. The first reason was that by 1968, we had demonstrated sufficiently that a wide range of children's behavior could be modified through modeling effects. Second, I think including Bandura's theory of observational learning, there was the influence of information processing models. And finally, I think the biggest event was a research paper by Flavell, Beach, and Chinsky on children's use of rehearsal strategy in serial-learning tasks. That simple study directly observing children's use of strategy affected my shift--

Hakim-Larson: The shift in your work?

Kobasigawa: --the shift in my research, yes.

Hakim-Larson: So can you tell us a little bit about reflecting back on some of the strengths that you felt occurred in your research and some of the weaknesses of your research and theoretical contributions?

Kobasigawa: I think the strength regarding research on children's use of study strategies, we had a rather useful model. I and Annette Dufresne suggested that there are at least two important decisions that people make in any independent self-regulated learning situations. One is what should be emphasized for studying and the second important component, how long should I study? And this model happens to be consistent with Bandura's model. He says that people constantly think about--have to decide what activities to pursue and once activities are chosen people have to decide how long to pursue. And recently Janet Metcalfe also suggested her theory of allocation of study time. In her model, there are two important components. First of all is choice, which I think is comparable to our "what to study." The second component in that theory is perseverance, which is comparable to our "how long to study."

In the same way when I started research on children's use of retrieval strategies, most people were concerned with the use of retrieval cues. Do children use on a spontaneous basis retrieval cues? I think retrieval process includes much broader things. In addition to search process, we included decision process, which is nothing novel. I think many other researchers suggested this. So after using retrieval cues you have to think, "Did I gather sufficient information or can I formulate final answers or the information I gathered up to date appropriate for task demands?" So there are at least two processes and using this broader conceptual framework, I think we could study what search questions children generate, how do they narrow down search areas using what they know and how do they terminate such processes? What was--okay--

Hakim-Larson: So this is strengths and--

Kobasigawa: Strengths--

Hakim-Larson: --strengths and the weaknesses.

Kobasigawa: --and I think that by using--in addition to objec—I said objective measures like number of correct responses, how long they actually studied, we used interview data and observational data to--I think by using such additional data, objective measures became more meaningful. For example, a group of children spent a very long time for studying and yet they remembered more poorly than those children who spent much less. Usually we say study longer to achieve better learning scores. Why those children who studied longer performed more poorly than those children who studied less amount of time? Those children who spent much longer time used task inappropriate strategies. And those children who studied less amount of time used task appropriate strategies. So I think we--by using these observational data and interview data--

Hakim-Larson: That combination was most--

Kobasigawa: --yes--

Hakim-Larson: --informative?

Kobasigawa: --yes. Contribution--did you say weakness?

Hakim-Larson: Mm-hmm.

Kobasigawa: The weakness is that by the time when we were doing these investigations, already others were saying that children were learning many things from other people. So the question of how the society is contributing to the development of children's strategies, metacognition, we did not examine at all.

Hakim-Larson: I see. So that came later?

Kobasigawa: Yes, it's a weakness.

Hakim-Larson: So what do you think has been the impact of your work on researchers at that time?

Kobasigawa: When I began modeling studies in Okinawa, observation—the experimental approach to children's social development was very rare in Japan and that's how probably I got recognition from Japanese researchers. I think many of the studies that I did were done as probably one of the first studies or they were done at the earliest stage. For example, John Hagan, Rob Kail asked me to write a chapter on the development of retrieval strategies. For me, that was one of the first review articles (on children's retrieval strategies).

Hakim-Larson: I see.

Kobasigawa: So when--later on when people write on the development of retrieval strategies, some of the things I mentioned in that chapter to organize the area probably become the way to summarize much more recent studies, that can be used as a framework to organize new data. I don't know whether that was a--that's contribution, but--

Hakim-Larson: Oh yes.

Kobasigawa: --I think it so happened that those studies were done at the earlier stage.

Hakim-Larson: And which of your manuscripts then do you think best represents your thinking about children's cognitive development in terms of some of that work that had an impact?

Kobasigawa: You mean--

Hakim-Larson: Yes--

Kobasigawa: --my research, my thinking, my--which of these studies support my view of--

Hakim-Larson: Children's cognitive development.
Kobasigawa: --cognitive development?

Hakim-Larson: Right--best reflect that?

Kobasigawa: Okay. I think this view is not particularly mine but represents many others' view as well. Cognitive development includes many aspects, but it reflects at least in part the fact that, with age, children gradually become increasingly more effective and flexible in distributing their cognitive resources in many tasks. And following this idea, I and Annette Dufresne conducted several published and unpublished studies using classical paired-associate learning tasks. In these tasks, we included highly related easy pairs and unrelated difficult pairs and we asked children to study these materials in a self-paced manner. And we used 6 through 12-year-old children; 10 and 12-year-old children allocated more time for studying difficult items than for studying easy items. On the other hand 6 and 8 year old children allocated about the same amount of time for studying easy and hard items. And 10 and 12 year old children used various sources of information to carry out such differentiated allocation of time. For example, virtually all these older children used their knowledge that unrelated pairs are very difficult to learn and therefore they have to study longer. How much longer? Initially many of them will say study easy things once. If things are difficult, study twice. And about half of the older children begin to use some forms of self-testing to assess their progress of learning to extend their study time. Only with 12-year-old children we find some of them use the information about how poorly they performed on the previous trial and they extend study time on the next trial.

I think similar kinds of things I can say regarding the research concerning children's retrieval skills. For example, we studied how children locate information in textbooks. Upper level children say--actually they do--upper level children read text material much faster when they are trying to locate just one information in the text than when they are asked--they were told that they would be asked many questions later. Such differentiated reading speed were not observed at the lower level students, children. In addition, all the children try to speed up their skimming process by using additional knowledge. For example, they know that checking the opening sentence of paragraphs they can decide which paragraphs they can--they should read carefully, which paragraph they can skip. In addition, they use the knowledge how the information they are looking for may be expressed in the text. For example, information about the temperature is likely to appear as numerical figures.

Hakim-Larson: I'd like you to tell me a little bit now about the institutions where you have worked and to tell us a little bit about when you worked there and what you did there.

Kobasigawa: Okay. I began my teaching career in Okinawa in 1956 and I worked in the department of education, University of the Ryukyus. In September 1960, I began to work as a graduate assistant at the University of Iowa Child Welfare Research Station. So I left University of the Ryukyus. By the way, I was an instructor in Okinawa. I left the University of Iowa in August of 1963. From September 1963, I began to work at the Institute of Child Development, the University of Minnesota. I worked there for nine months as a postdoctoral fellow.

In September 1964, I was hired again by the department of education, the University of the Ryukyus as assistant professor. I stayed there till May 1969 and before that I had a chance--I worked in the department of psychology, Michigan State University, from September 1968 for one year.

In September 1969, the department of psychology, the University of Windsor, offered me a job. I became associate professor in that year. In 1998, I became emeritus at the University of Windsor. When I came to the University of Windsor, there was only one child development undergraduate course. I created two new courses, Advanced Child Psychology: Cognitive Development and Advanced Child Psychology: Social Development. Now--

Hakim-Larson: So these are the courses that you taught that involved child development--

Kobasigawa: That's right.

Hakim-Larson: --throughout your career?

Kobasigawa: That's right.

Hakim-Larson: Okay. And so tell us a little bit more about some of these courses and--that you taught that were child development related. And did you experience any tension between your teaching and your research at all?

Kobasigawa: Okay. When I arrived in Windsor the first thing I did with a few other faculty members involved in child development research was to have several meetings with representatives of school systems in the city and the county so we could use their school children for our research purposes. So after several meetings, we developed mutually agreed upon procedures that University faculty members should follow to do research in the school systems. (Robert Orr, a new faculty member from Iowa, contributed most to this effort.) I think we are still following that procedure. I did not have any difficulty to get into school systems during the time I worked at the University of Windsor.

I worked with very capable undergraduate and graduate students and they conducted the research with children very effectively, frequently asking useful follow-up questions on a spontaneous basis. I encouraged these students to assess the limits of children's understanding of concepts or strategies that these students were researching, investigating. By the way I got this idea, to test the limits of children's skills, from one of the
clinical professors in this department. And I like that type of research direction.

Hakim-Larson: So can you tell us a little bit about the courses specifically that perhaps you were involved in developing at the University of Windsor?

Kobasigawa: During my final 15 years--at least I can remember--I taught two undergraduate courses, one educational psychology for second year students and advanced child psychology: cognitive development for fourth year students. Most of them went on to the graduate schools. I was also responsible for teaching two graduate courses, one children's learning and the other cognitive development. What else did I do?

Up until 1991, I think I taught two courses in each term. And that's what I requested during the job interview in 1969. And besides, I was allowed to teach only those courses I wanted to teach. So you asked me about the tension between teaching and the research. I didn't have any tension. And as I said, I was teaching only those courses I wanted to teach and the number of courses I taught were what I requested.

Hakim-Larson: I see. So a lot of your research seemed to be experimental but also had some applied focus. Can you tell us a little bit about your experiences with the applied component?

Kobasigawa: Okay. I think that children are exposed to various search problems in school settings. For example, they are asked to do so called projects. So one line of research I did in school settings directly I thought more relevant to school settings was research on children's skills to locate information in various educational materials. So we studied what kinds of research questions children generate and how they narrow down search areas, how--what kind of search cues they generate based on what they generally know and their knowledge about textbooks. And we asked them to evaluate gathered information, data on the basis of certain criterion.

I thought that things I was doing were more related to elementary school, but at least two graduate students who worked with me were interested in the development of study strategies. They said that many of the university students come to university counseling centers and their problems are frequently related to their lack of knowledge of study strategies, how to cope with university education. So they have told me that there is a different direction how research on study skills can be used in the applied settings.

Hakim-Larson: Exactly.

Kobasigawa: Yes.

Hakim-Larson: Yes. Very interesting.

Kobasigawa: And oh, I'm not a school psychologist telling teachers try these new study techniques, teach these study strategies to children. So I mainly discussed my research findings with schoolteachers. I always enjoyed talking about my research findings.

Hakim-Larson: Very good. So we're going to kind of switch now to talk a little bit about your experiences with SRCD, the Society for Research in Child Development. When did you first join SRCD and what was your earliest contact with SRCD and with whom?

Kobasigawa: I joined SRCD in 1969. My first contact took place in 1970 when I submitted my manuscript to Betty Caldwell. She was editor of *Child Development* at that time.

Hakim-Larson: Okay. And was this a study--one of your studies that did get published there or was it another study?

Kobasigawa: It's--that study was published--that--I was somewhat lucky because they were interested in gathering studies from Canada so my study was published in a special issue. I think that *Child Development* editor wrote, "We should look to the north," or something like that (in that special issue).

Hakim-Larson: I see. Okay. So Betty Caldwell was your first contact there? And can you tell us about the first meeting that you attended, the first SRCD meeting?

Kobasigawa: I think I attended SRCD meeting in 1975 as the first one, held in Denver. That was a very interesting, exciting trip because many child psychologists traveled together from various universities such as Wayne State, Michigan, Michigan State, Western Ontario, and the University of Windsor. And after 10 years absence, I met my former teachers, Gordon Cantor, Bill Hartup, Harold Stevenson, and I mentioned about my chapter. I was preparing my chapter on the development of retrieval strategies. And I met quite a few researchers involved in memory development, John Hagen, John Flavell, Scott Paris, Rob Kail, Steve Yussen. So I found SRCD was a good place to meet researchers in your own area.

I met Ellen Scholnich and she was Associate Editor of Child Development, and she introduced me to several members on the editorial board. About 50 years ago, I submitted my application form to the University of Iowa and Boyd McCandless was the one who processed my application form. I finally met Boyd McCandless--

Hakim-Larson: Oh, I see.

Kobasigawa: --in that meeting. Nowadays it's very difficult to attend all the sessions you want to attend. SRCD became large. But at the Denver conference I was able to attend all those sessions that I was interested in.

Hakim-Larson: Isn't that something? So you--can you tell us a little bit about the history of your participation in the scientific meetings and your participation in other aspects of the work of SRCD?

Kobasigawa: After the Denver meeting, I attended the SRCD meetings on a regular basis until I retired from the University of Windsor. After my retirement, I had a plan and the plan was to encourage young researchers from Okinawa to attend SRCD and present their studies. And around the time I was retiring as you know--you may remember--I became seriously ill and my plan didn't go as much as I wanted. But in 1999 and in 2001, we were able to present at least two poster papers.

Hakim-Larson: Very good. Yes, go ahead.

Kobasigawa: Did you ask me in other aspects--

Hakim-Larson: Yes, other aspects like what else you were involved in with respect to SRCD and your editorial work.

Kobasigawa: Okay. So regarding the other aspects, I was on the editorial board and worked for first Ellen Scholnich, later Linda Siegel, Bob Sternberg, and Rob Kail. When was the Detroit--1983--for the 1983 conference--

Hakim-Larson: I was there too.

Kobasigawa: --oh, you were?

Hakim-Larson: Yes.

Kobasigawa: Okay. I was chair of one panel entitled "Cognitive Processes I: Learning, Attention, Memory." I--you know, I've--people complain about the review processes. But as far as my experience was concerned, I felt that we had very good agreement among reviewers.

Hakim-Larson: What do you believe are the most important changes to occur in SRCD over the years that you've been involved in the activities and the years that you've had an association with the organization?

Kobasigawa: The key word for establishing SRCD was to promote interdisciplinary research. And about the time I began my graduate training, it seems that that effort was dying. In Senn's monograph, Dale Harris lamented that interdisciplinary groups no longer represented the Society. And so--but by 1970s, probably there was the change. At the 1979 meeting in San Francisco, there was a symposium regarding developmental psychology's interdisciplinary dimension. And right now, multidisciplinary taskforce is working for this original direction. I think getting back to this original key idea--

Hakim-Larson: That's right.

Kobasigawa: --is an excellent thing.

I was told that at the first SRCD meeting in his presidential address, Robert Woodworth said that the term "child development" covers the period between conception and maturity. He added that we should still attend to the stage of senescence. I think SRCD seems to be moving that direction as well, and if you look at the 1999 members' directory on every page at least 15 percent of the members indicate their interest of age range as "life span."

There was a 1983 meeting in Detroit. I think--

Hakim-Larson: Yes.

Kobasigawa: --that was the first meeting where poster sessions were included by the program committee. I think that's a good direction and more papers have been accepted and people seem to be carrying on exciting exchange of ideas in those sessions.

Hakim-Larson: Yes, I have to agree. I have to agree with you. Yes. So you've told us a little bit about SRCD. Now tell us about--if you could comment on the history of the field of child psychology during the years that you've participated in the field. What continuities, what discontinuities, what events you see as being related to these.

Kobasigawa: I think that the first big change I noticed should be the number of publications in this field. When I began my college education, Roger Barker summarized the field of 1950 with very pessimistic words: "The field of child psychology is dying in terms of both productivity and quality." And also people complained that researchers don't refer to any theory in a systematic manner.

In contrast to such pessimistic ideas, in 1963, actually on the day I defended my dissertation, I received a new child psychology book, which Harold Stevenson edited and he says: "The last decade has been one of the most exciting and productive in the history of child psychology," and so on. And so this trend seems to be continuing and I--

Hakim-Larson: But it continues to be exciting?

Kobasigawa: --yes. And because of this increase of publications I cannot even follow my own area's studies. So this is the thing.

Now I mentioned that people complained about lack of theory in child psychology. I think during '60s or '50s, theory oriented papers appeared. But those papers were influenced by various forms of stimulus response theories. And stimulus response learning theories affected not just children's learning but also children's social development area. And on the other hand, I think diversity in views of child development always existed in this field, because in 1950 Dale--no, Wayne Dennis--in 1956 Dale Harris, in 1959 Bill Martin strongly indicated that we should look at Piaget's stage theory and the stage theory may be more important to us. So different views co-existed I think all the time.

And I think towards the end of the 1960s, even those people using S-R learning theories to study children's learning felt that their findings cannot be adequately explained by traditional stimulus response theories and many child developmental--child psychologists began to look at information processing models' control processes. And numerous studies began to appear during the 1970s regarding children's use of strategies, their metacognitive knowledge, regulation, self-regulation while they're studying. And people said that stimulus response learning theories viewed children as passive organisms. And those people who became interested in Piaget's approach now began to look at children as active organisms constructing their own cognitive development. I think these are new trends during--I think 1970s.

Children are surrounded by other people and as I said probably before other people teach children informally and formally. And so there should be social contributions to children's cognitive development. This kind of idea appeared in 1980s. When people became interested in social contribution, they began to use Vygotsky's theories.
Once I think that was the 1970 APA meeting, Bill Charlesworth pointed out that, to understand complex processes of children's development, we have to consider the biological basis and gradually, slowly people interested in children's cognitive development began to include biological basis. So during the 1990s, textbooks on cognitive development began to include a chapter or a section on the contribution of biological basis.

I think looking at all these changes I just mentioned, you can see several discontinuities. And you may be able to look at various changes by using John Flavell's ideas of looking at the sequences of cognitive development. So in the history of our field even limiting to child cognitive development you see "addition." For example, there was Piaget's theory and later Vygotsky's theory was added, "substitution," for example, child as a passive organism model was replaced by child as active model, and inclusion or integration, coordination, for example, child active model combined with Vygotsky's social model to explain cognitive development.

I think I have seen many additional changes that I didn't include. For example, experimental demonstration that infants are much more competent-

Hakim-Larson: Yes.

Kobasigawa: --and I think these changes we can think about, hopefully we can say they are progress of the field.

Hakim-Larson: Right. So have your views concerning the importance of various issues changed over the years, and, if so, how?

Kobasigawa: I think that the educators are very much interested in, for example, research I have been conducting. Educators are interested in how children learn in school settings. In 1963, the year I graduated from Iowa, Sheldon White reviewed more than 200 experimental studies on children's learning. His conclusion: these findings are not relevant to educational settings. So that was the situation. That's how the area looked.

And I left the United States in 1964. I returned in 1968. The significant change I immediately recognized was that researchers and students were very much interested in social contributions, applications of their findings to the betterment of human society. If you look at 1969 *American Psychologist* at least three presidential addresses are included there. But presidential addresses at the MPA, EPA, and APA all are concerned with
the social contribution of psychology. Besides in 1969, I was hired by the Department of Psychology, the University of Windsor and the major focus of the department has been applications.

Hakim-Larson: That's right.

Kobasigawa: So comparing to the day I graduated from Iowa, the status of research on children's learning, I think I'm pushed to think about the contributions of our research to educational settings at least. So I think that's a significant change.

Hakim-Larson: That's right. And what are some publications that you think also reflect some of these changing issues as well, some publications in the field in terms of what people wrote?

Kobasigawa: How do you mean?

Hakim-Larson: Like some of the books that people were writing or the journal articles in terms of changing from more basic research to more applied research, because that seems to be the focus of what you're trying to tell us.

Kobasigawa: I think so, I think so. For example, Ann Brown--I forgot the first name of the second person—Palincsar—developed--I think the program was called reciprocal teaching. I think that was an extension of our knowledge of metacognition extending to poor readers.

Hakim-Larson: I see.

Kobasigawa: And I think the strategy of teaching is reflecting Vygotsky's ideas. Initially teachers partly involved in directing students' mental activities. Later on, students are left alone to carry on basic metacognitive strategies. But you know, --even in simple experiments, you prepare instructions very carefully, train researchers very carefully. But there are individual differences among experimenters.

Hakim-Larson: Right.

Kobasigawa: They modify words (of instructions) slightly. Then you will get very different results.

Hakim-Larson: Right.

Kobasigawa: And I think it's very important to remember that even if you develop very nice package of instructional materials extending basic research to applied settings, teachers have their own philosophy of teaching. So when teachers are going to pick up and communicate to children, some of the wonderful teaching techniques may not show great results.

Hakim-Larson: Yes.

Kobasigawa: Which may not indicate that initial ideas were inadequate. See, we all teach quite differently, so the evaluation of applied research is very difficult.

Hakim-Larson: Yes, because there might be some unique aspects for each person?

Kobasigawa: Because each teacher is--

Hakim-Larson: Different?

Kobasigawa: --yes, yes. And because of that, I think we may miss that aspect when we evaluate teaching--instructional materials based on--

Hakim-Larson: I see.

Kobasigawa: --basic research. So it's a very difficult area, although we have seen many extensions from basic research.

Hakim-Larson: What are your hopes and your fears for the field in the future?

Kobasigawa: I don't know whether my personal experience is appropriate here, but when I went to Peabody I went there as an exchange student. Many people told me that I was a cultural ambassador, so I followed this idea. When I met Nicholas Hobbs, my academic advisor, I told him what I have been doing to impress Hobbs. I told him I was vice president of international student club--student's club of not just Peabody College, but also Vanderbilt University. I have been busy with developing various social programs of the club including an international potluck dinner. And Nicholas Hobbs happened to be the person--only one person--probably one person I couldn't impress with my social activities. He said, "There should be a different purpose of exchange student program." Essentially I think his message was it's useful to have an international potluck dinner, but it passes away. You will forget about it tomorrow. It's more important to become able to exchange your research ideas with psychologists from different countries. I think that's what he was trying to tell me, that--

Hakim-Larson: Collaboration?

Kobasigawa: That's right. That's much more important--

Hakim-Larson: …collaboration.

Kobasigawa: --yes, aspect of exchange program.

Now, going back to SRCD, as you know more and more foreign scholars have been attending to SRCD meetings. I see many scholars from Japan and I am told that SRCD members represent by now more than 50 countries. In this context, I think it is very nice that the International Affairs Committee of SRCD is trying to establish a task force to internationalize the Society. And my hope is to move in this direction. There should be more research collaborations among scholars from different countries as children are developing in quite different contexts.

Hakim-Larson: That's right.

Kobasigawa: So I think that collaboration is very useful.
Now I don't know whether I have any fear. But I mentioned that the number of publications has been increasing very rapidly. This increase is not just publications. We have seen more and more new ideas how children may develop. I think in your area, new treatments seem to appear. Even in our department, when I was in the psychology department, various clinical therapies, cognitive, behavior modification, emotion something and so on. Now you attach neurological something. And when I was a graduate student most of us completed the PhD program in three or four years and I don't know whether--if you want to integrate all those changes, not just publication, number of therapies--

Hakim-Larson: Right.

Kobasigawa: --and theories.

Hakim-Larson: So just a lot of information for students to learn?

Kobasigawa: That's right. And even, people used to say, "The way we are screening graduate students to our program all these students should have experimental psychology at the undergraduate level." And social psychologists will say, "Traditional experimental psychology methods are not particularly useful for undergraduate students if they want to become social psychologists." I don't know whether you still have experimental psychology concerning social psychology. I don't know. But--

Hakim-Larson: It's integrated with the research methods course.

Kobasigawa: Okay. But you see, my point is that people may not say experimental psychology is the basic requirement. You see? The traditional thing may not be useful for students who want to become applied child psychologists or something like that.

Hakim-Larson: So your fear has to do with there just being so much new information--

Kobasigawa: That's right.

Hakim-Larson: --and things to learn?

Kobasigawa: And how to organize--because of new things appearing, the traditional idea some course is the basic for whatever you want to be--

Hakim-Larson: Yes.

Kobasigawa: --in psychology. Right?

Hakim-Larson: And so that might get--

Kobasigawa: So--

Hakim-Larson: --lost is what your--part of your fear?

Kobasigawa: --how you--yes, so there may be various different ideas you may want to try. What might be the best way to train clinical child psychologists? Some may say experimental psychology may not be a critical area.

Hakim-Larson: I see.

Kobasigawa: I don't know.

Hakim-Larson: Yes.

Kobasigawa: This is not my fear, but it's just you have a big, big difficult problem to solve.

Hakim-Larson: Right. How to distill all of this for students?

Kobasigawa: Yes, yes.

Hakim-Larson: Right. So on a more personal note, tell us something about your interests, about your family and ways in which this might have had some bearing on your scientific interests.

Kobasigawa: At one of the departmental colloquiums, I know who asked me, but one of my colleagues said, after I talked about the development of
strategies, "What strategies did you use when you were in grade one?" So what strategies did I use when I was in grade one? I went to the school. I don't know what you call this, but my school had a school precept and this is not a good way of translation, but direct translation is, "Study hard and play hard." I was puzzled and I was confused. This didn't make sense to me. If I study hard, I don't have time for play; if I play hard, I don't have time for study hard. Besides I thought school was the place to study hard, not the place to play hard. And I said this problem to my father and my father said--who happened to be a physical education teacher--"play is important too." And see, probably I was very young and I couldn't focus on two things. I focused on--I decided to focus on play hard. And to play hard, the biggest enemy is the school homework assignments. And so my problem was how to get rid of--I have to figure out ways, strategies to get rid of home assignments, homework assignments quickly. And you see, I found teachers' guidebooks in my house and I also found some of the answers to my math homework assignments were in teachers' guidebooks. And teachers' guidebook didn't make sense, why teachers need teachers' guidebook to teach grade one math. But anyway, there were answers. But based on a painful experience, I found out that teachers' guidebook answers are sometimes misprinted.

But anyway, another common very popular homework was to copy several pages of language textbooks. I used different kinds of pencils to write fast. One day towards the end of grade one I saw my friend was printing in small letters. Maybe Canadian children too at grade one, they are more likely to print in big letters. And I realized that this printing in small letters is another way to get rid of homework. So I practiced that--

Hakim-Larson: You can do it more quickly you think?

Kobasigawa: --more quickly. So I practiced how to print in small letters. I didn't use this technique because teacher--I found out the teacher already knew that technique belonged to that particular boy. I learned from the same boy much more constructive strategy, much more useful even for graduate students, professional researchers, when they write review articles. I don't know the reason why, but when I was in grade three, we watched three movies within a short period of time. The movie was about one particular medical Japanese doctor, eminent medical doctor. His family was poor, but he became internationally known medical doctor. And at the end of the third film, the teacher asked us how we felt about the film. I thought the correct answer would be something like, "I was deeply impressed. I'm going to work very hard just like this medical doctor." Unlike my conventional answer, my friend, who was printing in small letters, he said, "I think these moviemakers are all liars." And I thought that answer was silly. Another painful thing happened here, but I omit that. I told him his answer was silly and why he said such a stupid thing. And then he said, "Oh, you don't believe me?" and he started drawing a three x N table, three movies by N various events well known associated with this medical doctor. And I immediately realized what he was trying to do. So famous event number one, movie number one depicted this way, second movie showed this way, third movie showed this way. For all these major events, all the moviemakers described quite differently. But I was stunned by his brilliant way of comparing the movies and I was shaking how smart this boy was. And I think that's a very useful strategy.

Hakim-Larson: And that was in grade three?

Kobasigawa: That was in grade three.

Hakim-Larson: So it sounds like from in first grade and throughout those early school years there were--you had an interest in things like allocating time and energy to studying and to the strategies, is that right?

Kobasigawa: I don't know whether I extended that kind of interest but when I was in grade one in my first art class, there was a day when the teacher said, "Now you can draw anything you want to." So I drew my favorite object, the airplane. You see, all boys like to draw tanks, battleships, airplanes, so I drew airplanes. I knew that the left wing is-- the leftwing and the right wing are equally long. I knew that there are two engines on--one engine on one side, the other engine on the other side, but I drew the airplane, one wing shorter than the other and I didn't draw one engine at all. I only drew one engine only. And I expected my teacher come to my--to see my airplane and I expected him to praise me. Instead he said, "You are wrong. You are all wrong." And I asked him the reason why he was so negative. He says, "You used color silver." And I didn't tell him he--"Don't you know that Japanese airplanes are painted silver?" I asked him, "What color should I use?" He said, "Any color but silver." I went to see my hero in grade five and people said that he was the best student in grade five. And I told him my problem and, "What should I do with this somewhat dumb teacher who doesn't know that Japanese airplanes are painted silver?" and so on and so forth. And my hero said he doesn't want to use silver either and he explained to me quite simply that there are--there is a dark side when you look at the airplane. That dark side should--you should use dark color. On the other hand, you may find very shiny part of the airplane and that shiny part you may not have to draw--or use any color. Just leave it blank. And he started, so we drew airplanes together without using silver.
And there are various people who taught me you don't need the color brown. Grade one children, when they draw trees they are likely to use brown for coloring--what do you call that? I forgot the name--tree trunk?

Hakim-Larson: Oh, okay. The trunk of a tree?

Kobasigawa: The trunk of trees. And I learned that I was shocked that there was not a single tree that has brown trunk. Apple is not entirely red, which is likely to do at grade one level. When you look at apples, apples have many different colors. With this kind of simple tricks, you can experiment drawing very interesting different things. Later on, when my younger brother was in grade seven he was showing drawings and he was using brown for his tree. I said, "You use brown for tree's trunks?" He said, "Use any color you want," and there he used--he drew fat black line. I said, "What is that?" "Telephone pole." "You can use any color for telephone pole." It happened that painting won the prize.

Hakim-Larson: Isn't that something?

Kobasigawa: So I eventually learned use any color you want.

Hakim-Larson: There you go. So is there anything else from your family, your mother, your father, your current family, children, grandchildren, anything that you'd like to tell us that you think is related to the field at this point?

Kobasigawa: I don't know.

Hakim-Larson: Your mother was also--was your mother--her background was what? Did she teach too or--

Kobasigawa: No, she was--what do you call--I think she took care of children mainly. But I learned many things from her. I think her high school education in Korea must have been excellent. My younger brother studied mechanical engineering. He--

Hakim-Larson: And he could draw?

Kobasigawa: --that's the guy--

Hakim-Larson: Right, right, that's the guy who could draw ….

Kobasigawa: --because he was studying mechanical engineering one day a high school student--no, no--grade nine student came to our house preparing for the entrance examination to high school. And this grade nine child was asking math questions to my younger brother. And my brother couldn't teach well and then my mother came out and she showed the grade nine boy how to solve that math problem. I think I learned various things from my mother like you know math. And when I was in grade four, you see, Japanese people--Japanese educators even changed the names of baseball like "out". They didn't want children to learn English, because that belonged to enemy language.

Hakim-Larson: I see.

Kobasigawa: Okay. My mother told me when I was in grade four, "Use X for the unknown number when we solve any math problems." So I used the X and my teacher looked at this and said, "That's not the way I taught you. Besides this X is enemy language," but I learned math well.

After World War II, U.S. army came into the city. I went to see American soldiers. Already on the day American soldiers marched into Chunchon city, there were Korean children already speaking to American soldiers, "Harro," that's hello, okay? So I said to my mother, "What is harro?" so she explained that to me and I said, "I don't want to say harro to American soldiers," cuz that's all Korean children are saying. So my mother said, "Why don't you say, 'How do you do?'" But anyway, that's how do you do?

Hakim-Larson: There you go.

Kobasigawa: But anyway--

Hakim-Larson: So you learned a lot from her?

Kobasigawa: I think so.

Hakim-Larson: And your father as well, because he--

Kobasigawa: Well, he was busy with what--

Hakim-Larson: He was a physical education teacher?

Kobasigawa: He--yeah--

Hakim-Larson: A professor?

Kobasigawa: --he's one of those fools who kept--

Hakim-Larson: Who was teaching?

Kobasigawa: --teaching.

Hakim-Larson: Yes.

Kobasigawa: And so--

Hakim-Larson: He was pretty busy?

Kobasigawa: Especially like Sunday, he has to attend the--some kind of athletic meetings. But--well, fortunately he was a professor and he attended the various conferences. So when--in 1955 shortly before I left for the United States he said, "What are you going to study?" I said, "Educational psychology." He

said, “It doesn’t matter what you are going to study. Study statistics, statistical methods. That is going to be very important in any area.”

Hakim-Larson: Ah, and you followed that advice?

Kobasigawa: I think that’s the only advice I followed. The rest I ignored.

Hakim-Larson: Were there any other stories you wanted to tell us about your family or your hobbies or anything before--

Kobasigawa: No, I--

Hakim-Larson: --we conclude? Anything else?

Kobasigawa: --I don’t think so.

Hakim-Larson: Okay. Well, thank you so much for this very interesting and informative interview, Dr. Kobasigawa.

Kobasigawa: Thank you very much for agreeing to conduct this interview.

Hakim-Larson: You’re welcome. I enjoyed every moment. It was a pleasure.

End of Interview