

“I WAS MEANT FOR THIS” Mike Timm

... HIGH SCHOOL JAPANESE TEACHER
... ROLE MODEL
... MICHIGAN CITY SUCCESS STORY

Seishin ittou nanigoto ka narazaran. Hard work is the key to success, according to Japanese teacher and 2009 Michigan City High School graduate Mike Timm.

CULTURED: Mike teaches Japanese at Indianapolis Arsenal Tech High School and nearby Harshman Middle School. He majored in Japanese and education at Ball State, living outside Tokyo for a year while in college. “I love the Japanese language and culture. You’ve got anime and manga. You’ve got ancient history, signs of respect, the way the people interact. Japanese life fascinates me.”

SLOW START: Mike is grateful to his high school Japanese teacher, Sensei Mike Tsugawa, for pushing him to his limits. “I got a ‘D’ in Japanese freshman year, but Sensei believed in me. He encouraged me to study and participate in a Japanese competition, and something clicked. I realized by my junior year that I was meant to do this as my career.”

KISHIKAN (DÉJÀ VU): “I tell my students that Japanese isn’t the most important thing they’ll learn in my class. Their most important lessons are to be on time, to organize their binders, to think critically. My high school Japanese teacher used to tell us the exact same thing.”

SECRET TO SUCCESS: “I was Japanese Student of the Year in high school. At the awards, my teacher said I was ‘laboriously average.’ But he talked about my efforts as an aid and tutor, and said I’d ‘be a fine teacher one day, through sheer sustained effort and dedication.’ It sounds corny, but persevering at something you really want, even if you are mediocre starting out, is all it takes to become successful.”



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Michigan City High School offers clubs, cultural exchange programs, and dual college credits in four languages: Spanish, German, French, and Japanese.

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