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# INTRODUCTION

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It is my great pleasure to introduce the Second Proceedings of the National Symposium on Japanese Language Education in the year of celebrations for the 40th Anniversary of the signing of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between Australia and Japan. As Julie Bishop, Minister for Foreign Affairs, mentioned in her remarks at the anniversary in February this year, Australia and Japan enjoy a special friendship and strategic partnership that has exceeded the expectations of those who signed the treaty. For this she extends credit to the friendship and people-to-people links which often start from the Japanese language classrooms in Australian schools. As many of us know, Australia is currently placed fourth in the world for the number of learners of Japanese, and the overwhelming majority of them are studying Japanese in primary and secondary schools.

The Proceedings are an outcome and record of the National Symposium for teachers of Japanese in Australia. Two years after the inaugural symposium, the second National Symposium on Japanese Language Education was delivered in collaboration with the International Conference on Japanese Language Education in July 2014 in Sydney. True to the Symposium theme of *“Local Connections, Global Visions”*, the two forums brought together some 800 Australian and international participants from over twenty countries to discuss both local and global issues and to network with each other. The National Symposium featured papers under topics including National Scope: Australian Curriculum and White Paper; Leadership and Advocacy; Information and Communications Technology (ICT); Articulation; Heritage; and Sharing Best Practices. For the National Symposium, the joint delivery of the two forums meant that Australian best practices were showcased in front of an international audience, while the Australian school teachers had opportunities to mingle with a highly diverse group of teachers of Japanese, ranging from their schoolteacher counterparts in other countries to global leaders in the field.

Arising from the symposium, these Second Proceedings capture both the big picture and best practices. On the big picture of the national level, Kent Anderson, then Pro-Vice Chancellor (International) of the University of Adelaide (now Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Commerce and Engagement) of the University of Western Australia), contributes a presentation on the relevance of Japan and Japanese in Australia. Anderson, the most energetic champion of Japanese language education in Australia today, warns that the days when a focus on Japan needed no justification are over, citing examples of Japan being excluded from national agendas; and encourages us, the stakeholders, to more actively advocate and promote Japan. Another big picture is presented by Robyn Spence-Brown, who is a leading expert in Japanese language education. Her paper, originally presented as a Special Lecture at the International Conference, draws a comprehensive overview of Australian Japanese language education today, with critical reflections on its history, economic and strategic environment, language education policies, and the students and teachers. She advocates a repositioning of Japanese as a vehicle for intercultural learning and a gateway to other cultures and languages of Asia.

David Nunan, keynote speaker for both the National Symposium and the International Conference, is an influential Australian academic who leads the world in the field of foreign language education. His contribution to this volume provides a collection of global best practices which go beyond the boundary of classrooms. The examples he gives encompass extensive reading, email tandem learning, dialogue journal, intensive listening and contact assignments, all of which engage learners in out-of-classroom practices. He stresses the importance of integrating classroom-based learning with out-of-classroom learning since both support each other, and his global examples inspire us to incorporate more out-of-classroom activities into our local lessons.

The two discussions that follow report on local best practices that effectively utilise ICT. Wendy Venning introduces a technology-enriched primary school practice. Using Flashmob, her students sing, dance, join in word play, and actively engage in using Japanese. Most importantly, they have fun in learning. Kathleen Duquemin's Year 5 students employ technology to increase reading fluency. Scaffolded by Triptico Word Magnets on Interactive White Board, as well as assisted by *Tellagami* avatar, the students improve their reading of whole words and sentences.

Content and Language Integrated Learning or CLIL is what enhances the two local practices reported next. CLIL is a pedagogical approach which aims to teach both the content and the language, while the target language is used for the learning and teaching of the content. Hiroki Kurihara's junior secondary students learn Japanese history, e.g., Edo and Meiji periods, as well as the language used to discuss history, while Caitlin Lee, Maya Asano and Hiroko Koga's junior secondary Japanese lessons, which deal with the 2011 Tohoku disaster, teach geography curriculum. Although Lee's team does not use the term, we believe it is a practice in the spirit of CLIL. In spite of the benefits of application of CLIL being widely spoken about, many teachers believe that it is too difficult and do not attempt to use the approach. Mariel Howard challenges such teachers by inviting them to her mini Finnish CLIL lesson. The teachers, after experiencing the CLIL lesson first-hand, are more likely to trial CLIL in their own classrooms.

Echoing Anderson's and Spence-Brown's calls for advocacy, Nathan Lane shows the ropes of the school community-based advocacy for Japanese language education, including a language week, a Melbourne city excursion, a teddy bear exchange between his school and its sister school in Japan, a poster competition project, and other examples besides. Shoko McInerney's advocacy is for the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme, which encourages the students to become reflective, active lifelong learners and critical thinkers. However, we believe that her ten-year committed engagement in the IB PY Programme has worked in fact as advocacy for her Japanese program.

The last paper in these proceedings comes from the different perspective of a researcher. Rowena Ward examines the extent to which graduates of a tertiary Japanese program use Japanese in their employment, and how. It is a type of articulation study, investigating articulation from tertiary study to employment. Although on a small scale, the study finds that some graduates use Japanese in employment, and when they do, they use Japanese mostly for speaking. She concludes the paper with a call for further study of workplace use of Japanese by graduates.

The proceedings as a whole draw a particular picture of Japanese language education situated in Australia and surrounded by global influences. Internationally, Australia is one of the leaders in Japanese language education. At the national level, while Australia and Japan enjoy an excellent relationship, the rise of China, India and other countries often overshadows the relevance and importance of Japan, and the learning of Japanese. It is clear that we can no longer sit back and simply enjoy the prominence of Japanese language education in Australia, but must now proactively advocate further development of Japanese language education. Locally, we find a number of exciting best practices which are in themselves effective ways of advocating and promoting Japanese, alongside the school-wide effort of campaigning for Japanese. These best practices inevitably involve ICT in a variety of ways. This might be somewhat intimidating for some of the established teachers who may be technologically challenged. However, as the Finnish CLIL lesson has shown us, we need to have a first-hand experience before giving up on it. These best practices are also often embedded in content, whether it is a history lesson or personal experiences related to the Tohoku disaster. In this context, Japanese lessons have become a gateway to learning much more than the language and its mechanics. While Spence-Brown proposes repositioning Japanese as a gateway to other cultures and languages in Asia, it can be promoted as a gateway to many other content areas as well. We also need to consider life after school learning of Japanese. By providing more concrete evidence of connections between school learning and use of Japanese in employment, we can build a stronger case for further advocating for Japanese in schools.

The school teachers represented in this volume are at the forefront of advocating for Australian Japanese language education. By practising innovations and by presenting them in the symposium and then in the proceedings, their best practices will have a sizable impact on the future of Australian Japanese language education. In the following volumes to come, I would like to see many more inspiring best practices that will energise all of us who are involved.

This volume comes out two years after the symposium took place. I note here that some of the contributors have moved on from the positions they held at the time, and that the affiliations given in the text are the ones at the time of the presentation in 2014. Current affiliations can be found in their biographical data on pages 169 to 171.

In closing, I would like to express my appreciation to the Japan Foundation, Sydney, for providing Australian teachers of Japanese with opportunities to present their practices and for giving them prominence. I would also like to thank all those who were involved in the making of this volume, especially Yutaka Nakajima who first envisioned this project, and David Kelly whose eye for detail compares to no other. I note lastly that my editorship ends here with this volume, and I hand it over into Robyn Spence-Brown's capable hands.