

**National Symposium
on Japanese Language Education
Proceedings**

2012

Creating the Future

The Japan Foundation, Sydney
Melbourne Centre for Japanese Language Education

**National Symposium on Japanese Language Education Proceedings
2012: Creating the Future**

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Foreword

Welcome to the volume of proceedings from the National Symposium on Japanese Language Education (NSJLE) 2012. This event was the first in almost four decades to bring together Japanese language educators from across all sectors and levels around the nation. Australia has the fourth-largest number of Japanese learners in the world, and more than 95% of those learners are at the primary and secondary levels. NSJLE provides the unique opportunity to bring together the diverse groups of the Japanese language education community in Australia to share information and expertise.

The 2012 symposium was a great success. This volume is a record of the depth and breadth of knowledge in the field of Japanese language education in Australian schools. It allows those who were not able to attend the chance to engage with ideas and opinions from the symposium. These papers offer a glimpse into innovative ways in which Australian teachers of Japanese are leading the field and helping to create the future of international Japanese language education.

I would like to thank the following people for their tireless work in making these proceedings possible: Professor Chihiro Kinoshita Thomson, for her work guiding the editorial panel through the selection and editing process; Robyn Spence-Brown, Anne de Kretser, Cathy Jonak and Hyogyung Kim for taking part in the selection and editing process; and Yutaka Nakajima, Matthew Todd and Elicia O'Reilly for editorial assistance and administration. Finally, thank you to the contributors to this volume, without whom none of this would be possible.

The papers in this volume are but a small selection of the strong voices heard on the day. I hope you enjoy them.

Nao Endo
Director
The Japan Foundation, Sydney
July 2014

Introduction

Anne de Krester, Melbourne Centre for Japanese Language Education

The inaugural National Symposium on Japanese Language Education (NSJLE) was held 1–2 November 2012. It was a wonderful event, celebrating the commitment, expertise, innovation, dedication and generosity of educators and stakeholders in Japanese language education. It was the culmination of a great deal of hard work from a wide range of people and organisations. It was exciting, it was successful and it led to greater national cooperation and collaboration.

In 2009, the Melbourne Centre for Japanese Language Education (MCJLE) was commissioned to write a report titled *The current state of Japanese language education in Australian schools*. The report, written by myself and Robyn Spence-Brown and published in 2010, made six recommendations to the Federal Government. One was the establishment of a national council for Japanese language education to create a national focus on the teaching and learning of Japanese, and give educators, researchers and stakeholders opportunities to share innovations, best practice, research findings, discuss issues, and advocate for Japanese language education. Japanese is the most widely taught foreign language in Australia—and has the highest student participation numbers—but at the time of the report there was no national body of Japanese educators, nor a national voice advocating for Japanese language education in Australia; indeed, this was the first national conference on Japanese language education to be held in decades.

Believing in the importance and necessity of establishing a national body advocating for the teaching and learning of Japanese, the MCJLE and The Japan Foundation, Sydney committed to ensuring the recommendation made to the Federal Government in the report was brought to fruition. MCJLE has had a cooperative and collegiate working relationship with The Japan Foundation, Sydney, which equally determined that a national focus was needed, and so the two organisations began discussions to consider working together to plan and execute NSJLE. Having no experience in organising an event of this scale, the MCJLE was uncertain of what the experience would entail. Organising a gathering of Japanese language educators on a national scale was a huge task and somewhat of a risk. Planning the symposium together with The Japan Foundation, Sydney allowed the two organisations to pool ideas, skills and contacts.

Long before the report was written, there had been many discussions with The Japan Foundation, Sydney about the numerous innovative programs and excellent teaching in existence all over Australia. In addition, we were aware that many Japanese Language Teachers' Associations (JLTAs) around the country were working extremely hard and

effectively to provide professional learning, support and encouragement to teachers in their states or territories. However, we also noticed that there was duplication of information dissemination, professional learning and processes for organisation—and yet, not enough sharing of best practice or successful teaching programs, ideas, strategies or research outcomes that could and should be shared nationally to broaden and strengthen the knowledge base and streamline workloads. The aims of the symposium were to showcase the strengths of Japanese language education, to discuss issues facing Japanese language education (such as falling student participation rates), and to look at what could be done to ensure future growth in numbers and quality of Japanese language education programs in all sectors.

The Japanese teaching community and related stakeholders are famously generous for their willingness to support anything that will promote Japanese language education. All organisations involved were tremendously helpful in promoting the symposium, widely advertising details to ensure that as many people as possible were aware of the event. The Japan Foundation, Sydney and MCJLE were able to use their resources to ensure comprehensive promotion. Hoping that a long lead time for the symposium would result in greater attendance, we decided on early November for the symposium. We were determined to hold it in 2012, a year that did not clash with the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations (AFMLTA) conference. After initial planning discussions, our focus quickly turned to matters of logistics: venues, number of participants and budgeting. Having never undertaken such a venture, it was difficult to know how many participants we should expect, so we optimistically booked a venue for 110 people.

With the generous cooperation of state and territory stakeholders from all sectors and levels of education, as well as publishers, booksellers, JLTAs and the AFMLTA, interest, support and enthusiasm from the Japanese language education community was overwhelming and the symposium created a more-than-expected amount of interest from a wide range of people, as evident by the numerous emails that came from all over the country and from overseas as word of the symposium spread.

Once registration opened, attendee numbers grew steadily. I was relieved when the number climbed to 50, and excited when it rose again to 80. Then, over one weekend, six weeks before the conference, the number jumped to more than 150, far exceeding the venue capacity. All of a sudden, we had to quickly secure a bigger venue. November is a busy time for conferences in Melbourne, but fortunately, a bigger, suitable venue was found and, with our panic allayed, we had somewhere to accommodate as many people as were willing to come.

When registrations closed we had 320 delegates, far beyond our expectations. This included Japanese language educators from every level (primary, secondary and tertiary), stakeholders from every state and territory of Australia, as well as delegates from Japan, the USA and New Zealand. Not surprisingly, participants from Victoria made up just under half the registrations, with New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia also strongly represented. Secondary teachers made up almost half of the total delegates, with stakeholders and academics also significantly represented.

Wanting a positive tone for the symposium—and confident that there was much optimism about the future of Japanese language education despite recent participation decline—the title of the symposium was set as *Creating the Future*, and four areas for the focus of presentations were chosen: advocacy in and out of the classroom; innovative structures for changing learning and increasing opportunities; information communication technology; and teacher education and development.

The submissions provided us with an interesting varied, and comprehensive program. In all, we had 42 presentations—the majority were individual, but many were panel presentations. Poster presentations also provided another opportunity for sharing. Wanting the symposium to focus on Japanese language education locally, but also to look internationally for trends and inspiration, two local and two international key note speakers headed the program, all challenging and encouraging educators in their thinking and approaches, providing direction, raising questions and challenging attitudes and approaches.

After a stimulating first day, the symposium dinner was held in Queens' Hall of the State Library of Victoria, a beautiful room reflecting the past of Melbourne and a fitting venue as a symbol of history and learning. The dinner was attended by 110 delegates and invited guests including dinner guest speaker Wing Commander Sonja Halloran, who gave a fascinating speech about her Japanese language learning journey and how that experience and expertise kept weaving its way through her professional career, through language studies with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) in Australia, studying at the Air Self Defence Force Command and Staff College in Tokyo and working at the Embassy in Tokyo, culminating in her involvement in Australia's RAAF relief mission to Japan after the March 2011 tsunami. Her message was simple but resonated with everyone. Having Japanese as a second language is a skill which can continue to provide and weave opportunity through one's life; we never know how or when, but it will always be welcome and often exciting. The dinner was a wonderful opportunity for delegates to relax, celebrate the teaching and learning of Japanese, and to network and enjoy time together.

The success of the symposium exceeded our hopes and expectations in terms of numbers and enthusiasm. By the end of the first day, many delegates were asking if there would be another symposium. The number and range of attendees was a welcome surprise, highlighting the strength of Japanese language education in Australia, and how far and wide its influence has spread throughout the country, as well as internationally.

As the symposium was held in the final stage of National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) funding, many teachers benefited from financial support from their sector body. The Japan Foundation, Sydney also provided numerous substantial travel grants to many interstate teachers, which contributed to the large participation numbers and the wide range of teachers able to attend, particularly from the furthest states and territories. The Japanese Language Teachers' Association of Victoria (JLTAV) was also very generous in providing funding to its members to assist with the costs of attending the symposium, and the MCJLE supported teachers as well. When conducting the research for our report to the government, one of the overwhelmingly positive messages that came through was how cohesive the Japanese teaching community was and how supportive, encouraging and sharing they were. This was evident in the organisation, promotion and execution of the symposium where at each stage, everyone involved—whether directly or indirectly—was more than happy to help in any way possible. It is testament to our community and no doubt a key factor in why the symposium was such a success.

One of the wonderful outcomes of the symposium was that there has been subsequent sharing of knowledge and resources between states and territories, schools and individuals. Despite the challenges facing all Japanese language educators at this time when enrolment rates are decreasing slightly, the atmosphere at the symposium was one of excitement, enthusiasm and enjoyment. Teachers welcomed and revelled in the opportunity to network, share and learn from one another and hear about research that could impact their teaching approach or methodology. This was a hope that has been transformed into a real outcome. Such a large gathering of people passionate about their work created wonderfully positive atmosphere and a definite buzz. NSJLE 2012 was the first step to developing a national body for Japanese language educators and developing a national profile. With more work to be done to achieve this, there is confidence and commitment that this will happen.

The symposium was a huge learning curve for all involved. However it was an extremely rewarding experience and the outcome so positive that the inaugural NSJLE will be followed by a second in July 2014, and hopefully many more after that.

Editor's Introduction

Chihiro Kinoshita Thomson, UNSW, Australia

The proceedings of the National Symposium on Japanese Language Education provide a snapshot that records a significant period of the history of Japanese language education in Australia from local, national and global perspectives. NSJLE was held a week after then-Prime Minister Julia Gillard's launch of the *Australia in the Asian Century* white paper, and the timing made us even more aware of the importance for all Japanese language educators to have the chance to hear a plurality of perspectives in an era when the global agenda pushes change on the national agenda, which in turns becomes policy that has the potential to have an large influence on local programs.

The symposium theme, *Creating the Future*, is a reflection of the history and the current state of Japanese language education in Australia. Blessed with a number of talented and highly professional Japanese language educators at all levels; fortunate enough to have the support of a variety of bodies, including the Australian Government and The Japan Foundation; and backed by a stable and prosperous relationship between Australia and Japan economically and strategically, as well as in people-to-people links, Japanese language education in Australia has thrived to achieve world-class outcomes in both education quality and the number of learners. This volume celebrates these successes by sharing innovative practices by Australian teachers of Japanese.

However, the future we are to create is filled with uncertainties: changing governments and their policies; the so-called "China threat" that accompanies the rise of Chinese language programs to the detriment of other language programs; Japan's never ending economic down-turn; and the possibility, and in some cases reality, of Japanese language program closures. One of the aims of the symposium was to start a dialogue among stakeholders to create a national council of Japanese language education. For us to actively participate in creating the future of Australian Japanese language education, and to creatively turn uncertainties into allies, we need a venue for continuing discussion. It is hoped that these proceedings will offer strategies for advocacy and ideas for discussions, and pave the way for such a national body.

Just as the symposium was a successful integration of many layers of difference, this volume embraces multiple perspectives. Contributors range from primary school teachers and postgraduate students, to national opinion leaders and internationally renowned academics. Issues raised encompass language policies, information and communications technology, classroom instruction and advocacy. The collection also contains papers in both English and Japanese.

The volume is divided into three sections. The first, *Cutting-Edge Language Education*, begins with a paper by Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku on advocacy. The paper is not only cutting-edge on its own, but also a tool for staying at the cutting edge in providing concrete strategies for advocacy of Japanese language education. Angela Scarino's paper follows, highlighting the cutting edge of Australia's national agenda, and exploring the way in which the Australian National Curriculum and its adaptation for languages will potentially have a sizeable impact on what and how we teach Japanese in schools—and consequently, in universities. Hiroko Kataoka then brings differentiated instruction and assessment to the horizon, which, no doubt to many readers, a brand-new idea in language teaching and learning. It challenges the currently prominent one-size-fits-all approach to teaching and testing, and bring us to the forefront of classroom practices.

The Plenary Panel Discussion echoes the diverse and pressing issues in Australian Japanese language education of 2012. The panel is mediated by Robyn Spence-Brown, and includes comments from Matthew Absalom (President, Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations), Anne de Kretser (Director, Melbourne Centre for Japanese Language Education), Kathe Kirby (Executive Director, Asia Education Foundation), Carolyn Stevens (President 2011-2013, Japanese Studies Association of Australia), Chihiro Kinoshita Thomson (Australian representative for the Japanese Global Network), Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku (then President, American Association of Teachers of Japanese) and Kent Anderson (Pro-Vice Chancellor [International], University of Adelaide). These comments are inevitably situated in each participant's own context, and a number of issues raised in the panel are relevant to the discussion on the creation of a national council.

We then move on to share innovative practices. Two papers, by Wendy Venning and Mariel Howard, are descriptions of energetic and inspiring practices at local primary schools. Although the content of the papers is very different—one is on computer technology and the other is on speech contests—the authors' passion and love for the Japanese language and the students in their programs is outstanding and inspiring. The success of these primary school innovations is extremely encouraging, and worthwhile communicating to many. The paper by Sarah Pasfield-Neofitou, Masae Uekusa and Mari Morofushi considers the use of tablet PCs in the teaching of Japanese at tertiary level. This is an important indication of how the incorporation of technology has become a topic relevant to all levels of Japanese teaching. Aya Kondoh and Hyogyung Kim then propose process-oriented and case-based approaches to the instruction of business Japanese, a contribution that might save many business ventures in the future by equipping learners with global communication skills. The papers in this section provide a glimpse of best practices in Japanese language education.

The *Food for Thought* section includes two very different papers. They highlight groups that surround mainstream Japanese language education: heritage speakers and postgraduate students. Although the number of heritage learners of Japanese and postgraduate students in Japanese applied and educational linguistics is small, they do and will continue to play major roles in the overall scheme of Japanese language education in Australia.

This was our first attempt at publishing proceedings arising from a teachers' symposium. As the Chief Editor, I first thought that I would like to see more research oriented papers in the proceedings; however, current research culture at Australian universities does not necessarily encourage academics to contribute research papers to a publication such as this one. In hindsight, it is good that we have been able to provide an outlet for innovative and inspiring local practices.

I would like to express my gratitude to The Japan Foundation, Sydney, for editorial assistance in the production of this volume. Thanks, too, to all the contributors, review committee members, editorial and support team members, especially Yutaka Nakajima and Matthew Todd.

In closing this introduction and looking forward to the next volume, I hope that this publication becomes the front-line for cutting-edge practices of Japanese language teaching and learning at all levels.

Cutting-edge language education

Japanese language education in the global age: new perspectives and advocacy

Y.-H. Tohsaku, University of California, San Diego

Abstract

As globalisation reshapes our world and impacts on every aspect of our lives, education is forced to undergo constant changes to effectively prepare our children to participate in twenty-first century society as productive global citizens. Japanese language education is no exception. Faced with globalisation, we as Japanese language educators need to rethink our goals, contents and classroom practices. This paper will examine how globalisation has impacted on educational policies and reforms, everyday classroom teaching and professional development, and explore the new perspectives and values of Japanese language education. It also has become more and more important for us to advocate for Japanese language education as the vision of Japanese education has been shifting in the twenty-first century. We will discuss how we can develop our advocacy skills and what we can do to advocate Japanese language education to students, parents, school administrators, communities, politicians and other stakeholders.

国際化時代における日本語教育: 新たな視点とアドボカシー

當作靖彦、カリフォルニア大学サンディエゴ校

国際化により世界が再編成され、我々の生活の様々な局面に影響を及ぼしている。その中で、教育は、子供たちが生産性の高い国際人として21世紀社会に参加できるよう効率的に養成するものとなるべく、絶え間ない変化を余儀なくされている。日本語教育もその例外ではない。日本語教育関係者も国際化に対峙し、指導目的・内容・教室での実践を再考する必要がある。この論文では、教育政策・改革、そして日常の教室指導と教師の職能開発に対して、国際化がこれまでにどのような影響を及ぼしたかを分析し、日本語教育の新たな視点と意義を探ることにする。また21世紀社会においては日本語教育の展望が変化し続けているゆえに、我々日本語教育関係者が日本語教育を推奨(advocate)することがこれまでになく重要になってきた。我々日本語教育関係者がそのためのアドボカシーのスキルをどのようにして育成する、また学生、保護者、学校管理職、地域社会、政治家、その他関係者に向けて日本語教育を推奨するために何ができるかについても議論する。

Introduction

Japanese language education is at a crossroads in many countries. While the number of Japanese language students has been increasing in such countries as China and Indonesia, there are many countries that have been experiencing a drop in Japanese language enrolment. In a constantly and rapidly changing globalised world, Japan has been losing the economic power it had boasted since 1980s. From the 1980s to the early 1990s, Japanese language classrooms were crowded with students who were interested in doing business with Japan or gaining employment in Japanese companies. After this economic downturn, Japanese language classrooms have been filled with generations of students who are fond of Japanese pop culture. However, due to the falling status of Japan in the globalised economy, interest in Japanese language learning has evidently been waning in many countries. In the United States where the author is teaching Japanese, people's focus on Asia has clearly shifted from Japan to China. More and more schools have started teaching Chinese, whilst other language courses including Japanese, are scaled back or cut.

Faced with this situation, we as Japanese language teachers must intensify our effort to advocate Japanese language education in order to attract more students to our classroom and maintain our program. In this paper, I will discuss how we should advocate Japanese language education. I will discuss three important factors of advocacy: Vision, Value and Visibility. Then, I will discuss six elements for raising our visibility: Communication, Culture, Connections, Collaboration, Credibility and Community.

Three Vs for advocacy: Vision, Value, and Visibility

First things first: Vision

The first keyword for successful advocacy is Vision. Education without vision is powerless. Likewise, advocacy without vision is powerless.

We face problems including program cuts, cuts of small advanced level classes, lack of good curriculum materials, and lack of professional development opportunities. Those issues are important. However, when we talk about advocacy, the first thing we should do is have a strong vision of Japanese language education.

We are teaching Japanese within each country's education system, and Japanese language education constitutes an important part of that system. The main goal of education is

to help young people develop into productive, intelligent adults. Education means the total development of children. Our main goal must be to help the human development of children through Japanese language education. We should help students grow to be intelligent, knowledgeable, smart citizens who can lead a rich, fruitful, productive life. In other words, we should be educators before Japanese language teachers.

Once the vision of Japanese language education is set, it should be shared among all those who are involved in the profession and everyone should do their best job to make this vision a reality. A strong vision will unite Japanese language teachers and become a foundation for advocacy and will also help us think about how we should solve issues of program cuts and lack of funding. I strongly believe that education without vision is useless.

More than grammar and vocabulary: Value

One of the important goals of foreign language teaching is, of course, to impart knowledge of grammar and vocabulary as well as functional skills and abilities to use the language in the real world. Nowadays, however, this goal may not be sufficient. We have to add more value to foreign language teaching.

The twentieth century society saw change, but the change was rather slow, consistent and predictable. As long as we made an effort, success was guaranteed in our life. Compared with the twentieth century, changes in the twenty-first century are much faster and more complicated. Due to this, the twenty-first century world is diverse, fluid, chaotic, uncertain and unpredictable.

Information created by and available to the general public in the last century was rather limited. Those who had specialised knowledge were respected and held power. The main goal of education was to provide students with knowledge. Thus, the memorisation of information was encouraged. On the other hand, in this century, an abundant amount of information is produced every second, especially through the internet. In this information-rich, information-driven age, the general public can have easy access to information anytime, and having specialised knowledge is no longer considered special. Rather, it is considered more important to have the ability to search for and access information, organise and synthesise available information, and make decisions on issues and solve complicated problems.

Surviving in this complicated, globalised twenty-first century world requires a different set of knowledge, abilities and skills from the twentieth century. The main goal of educational activities now is considered to help children develop the knowledge, abilities and skills that they need to survive the twenty-first century. They are called key competencies (OECD 2003) or the 21st century skills (Partnership for the 21st Century Skills 2006).

Examples of these include:

- Knowledge on current, complex social issues
- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Creativity, innovativeness, curiosity and imagination
- Problem-solving and decision-making skills
- Initiative and entrepreneurialism
- Flexibility and agility
- Collaborative and leading skills
- Various literacies (information, technology, media, cultural, etc.)
- Cross-cultural communication skills (NNELL 2011)

We as Japanese language educators must design and implement our instruction so as to impart required knowledge, abilities and skills to our students through the teaching of the Japanese language. This way, Japanese language education will become more valuable as a school subject and worthwhile advocating.

In order to have our students acquire these knowledge, abilities and skills in our Japanese language classroom, we have to adopt a new teaching model. The prevalent teaching model of today originated in the nineteenth century. It is called the “factory model”. In this model, a teacher, standing in front of a large number of students, gives a lecture and leads the classroom in mass practices. This model makes it possible to produce a mass of students who have uniform and standardised knowledge and behaviour. This model of education was created in response to the needs of the industrialised age that needed a large number of factory workers who had the same knowledge and skill. However, the twenty-first century requires a different education model to prepare students for living in our

diverse, globalised, complicated world. This is the case with Japanese language education, too. We should adopt such approaches as Project-Based Learning (Markham 2003; La Mer and Mergendoller 2010), Problem-Solving Learning (Jonassen 2010), Passion-Based Learning (Newell 2003), the Thematic Approach (Dirkx and Prenger 1997), Inquiry-Based Learning (Gonzalez 2013) and Content-Based Instruction (Valeo 2013).

The goal of Japanese language education in the global age should be more than the acquisition of grammatical, phonological and lexical knowledge and functional communicative skills. Rather, it should be the acquisition of social and networking abilities; that is, abilities to engage in social activities, to connect with others to develop new communities and societies, and improve quality of life by using the Japanese language. These abilities can be best acquired through social networking activities in the real world. This new approach to language teaching is called the “Social Networking Approach” (see Kokusai Bunka Forum 2012; Tohsaku 2013). By bringing a variety of social networking activities into our classroom, we can easily create learning environments where our students effectively acquire and develop twenty-first century skills in addition to language skills. On top of that, we can connect our language classroom with communities outside our schools and thereby raise the visibility of our education.

The use of these approaches in our Japanese language classroom produces students with global fluency and minds who can survive the twenty-first century world. This is value worth advocating.

Be everywhere: Visibility

One of the important goals of advocacy is to raise the visibility of Japanese language education. To this end, we should consider the following 6 Cs (based on NNELL's advocacy website):

- Communication
- Culture
- Connections
- Collaboration
- Credibility
- Communities

Communication

We should communicate what we are doing in our classroom to parents, other educators, community and stakeholders whenever possible. We should talk about the short-term and long-term benefits of Japanese language learning. It is important to tailor our information depending on the audience. When we talk with parents, for instance, we should emphasise the benefits of Japanese language learning for their children's future career. When we communicate with local politicians, we should focus on the impact of Japanese language education on the local economy.

Whenever we have a chance, we should highlight and boast about our students' achievement and success. For example, if your student wins first prize in a local or national Japanese language speech contest, you should publicise it through not only your school newspaper and classroom newsletter, but also in your local newspapers and TV stations. Even a small publication is helpful to raise the visibility of your program. It is important for the community and stakeholders to become aware that you and your Japanese language classroom are too good to lose.

In the current information age where social networking services play an important role for information exchange and dissemination, the effective use of social networking services such as Twitter, Facebook, Google+ and YouTube is key to successful advocacy.

Culture

The uniqueness of Japanese culture can attract many people's attention. Organise cultural activities and events in which not only students but people in the community enjoy and gain the knowledge of Japanese culture. As it is evident that many of our current students are interested in Japanese manga, anime, video games, cosplay and J-Pop, Japanese pop culture has the power to excite young people and draw them to the Japanese language classroom. Also, Japanese pop culture is a good vehicle to keep them motivated for learning Japanese and about Japan. Whenever possible, create opportunities where your students can demonstrate their knowledge of Japanese culture to the community and stakeholders.

Japanese culture has been an influence on life in many regards: industrial design, art, food, technology, fashion, and entertainment. Highlight these Japanese characteristics and emphasise how Japanese language learning will make young people aware of them. This kind of knowledge will make them more creative and imaginative. Such creative minds will help them in their future career.

Connections

Look for opportunities to connect with others and influence them on the benefits of Japanese language education. For instance, if you are asked to give a talk about Japanese manga, never say “no”. Always say “yes”. Whenever you have a chance to talk about Japan, Japanese culture and Japanese education, make yourself available. Make yourself indispensable. Always say “yes” (Rifkin and Haxhi 2012). This way, you will raise your visibility as a Japanese language teacher in your community.

You can use your students to develop connections with your local community. For instance, have your students organise a play or festival that is related to Japanese seasonal events (e.g. *hanami*, *momijigari*), holidays (e.g. *kodomo no hi*, *oshōgatsu*), or Japanese culture (e.g. Japanese hip-hop, Japanese art and craft, *ikebana*) and invite local community people. Or have your students organise a Japan anime night where Japanese anime movies are shown to local children and young adults. Students can explain how popular anime is in Japan and give comments about each anime movie shown.

Your students can work with students in Japan through social networking services such as Skype and Google Talk or through the internet to conduct a cultural exchange project. Get local community people involved in this project by, for example, presenting the outcome of the project to them live or through the internet. Connecting your classroom and students with people outside the school will raise the visibility of your teaching and become a plus for advocacy. On top of that, your instruction will be connected to the real world.

Collaboration

We teachers are always busy and tend to work isolated from our peers. Collaboration with other Japanese language teachers, however, will help improve our teaching and advocacy of Japanese language education. Collaborate with other Japanese language teachers to gather and exchange information, develop materials and develop curricula, and develop articulated programs and organise events. Working together with other Japanese language teachers, rather than working alone, definitely raises the visibility of Japanese language education.

Foreign language education does not have a high status in many countries. Collaborate with other language teachers to advocate the importance of foreign language education for young children. Also, collaborate with teachers of other subjects and let them know how foreign language education can contribute to their subject and education as a whole.

Finally, collaborate with people outside your school. Your presence in this type of collaboration will attract a lot of attention to Japanese language education.

Credibility

While you are involved in advocacy activities, you will be often asked for information and data regarding Japanese language education. For instance, your local politician might like to have your enrolment data or information about the future demand of Japanese language courses. Always make sure that data and information you provide is accurate. Also, make sure that information provided by others is accurate before giving it to others. Once you lose credibility in what you say, what you do, and in the data and information you provide, it will be difficult for you to effectively advocate Japanese language education.

When you engage in advocacy, certain data and information is constantly requested. Try to accumulate and keep them on file so that you can provide them immediately. Also, do not forget to do your own research by using and analysing that data and information, and prepare for presentations and arguing for the importance of Japanese language education using your data.

Community

Try to make you, your program and your students visible in your community. Encourage your students to be involved in the community. For instance, your students can sing Japanese songs in a local festival. If you are teaching at a high school, you can take your students to local elementary and middle schools to recruit your future students. Encourage your students to talk about their experience in your classroom and the benefits of Japanese language learning. Have them make presentations (e.g. sing age-appropriate Japanese songs, perform short skits in Japanese, show *kamishibai* or teach *origami*) to elementary and middle schools, which will excite and motivate younger students about learning Japan, Japanese language and culture. It would be a good idea to contact local newspapers and broadcasting stations about these opportunities. Remember that any photo opportunities are beneficial for advocacy. Also, you can use the photos in your newsletter and have it distributed to the students' parents, other teachers, school administrators, school board members, local politicians and the wider community people.

The students' parents and community always become big supporters when you are faced with program reduction or elimination. The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining!

Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I have talked about the importance of advocacy for Japanese language educators. In order to advocate effectively, we should:

1. Be visionary teachers
2. Add value to our Japanese language teaching
3. Constantly raise our visibility in the community.

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The development of the Australian Curriculum and implications for Japanese language education

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Abstract

In this paper I set the context and provide a rationale for a shift in languages education in Australia. I discuss the major features of the Australian curriculum for languages and draw implications for the learning and teaching of Japanese in Australian schools, K–12; and for understanding and describing learner achievements. The discussion will draw examples from recent research studies conducted in Australia.

Key words

Globalisation; intercultural language learning; Australian Curriculum; teaching and learning Japanese in Australia; interpretation in communication and in learning

全国統一カリキュラムの開発が日本語教育にもたらす影響について

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要旨

本稿では、オーストラリアにおける言語教育の変化についてその背景と理由を述べる。その上で、全国統一カリキュラムの言語教育部分の主な特徴を紹介し、統一カリキュラムがオーストラリアの学校(K-12年生)の日本語教育に今後どのような影響を与えるか、また生徒の学習成果を理解し説明するのにどう役立つのかを論じる。議論を進めるにあたっては、最近オーストラリアで行われた調査研究を実例として挙げる。

キーワード

グローバル化、異文化間言語学習、全国統一カリキュラム、オーストラリアの日本語教育、コミュニケーションと学習の解釈

Introduction

The Australian education community is currently engaged in the development and implementation of a national Australian curriculum, under the auspices of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). The Australian Curriculum is being developed through three dimensions: a set of learning areas (the Arts, English, Geography, Health and Physical Education, History, Languages, Mathematics, Science, Technologies, Humanities and Social Sciences, Economics and Business, Civics and Citizenship); a set of cross-curricular capabilities (literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology competence, critical and creative thinking, ethical behaviour, personal and social competence and intercultural understanding) and three cross-curriculum priorities (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures; Australia's engagement with Asia; and sustainability). The development of the curriculum for each learning area has begun with the preparation of a so-called Shape Paper, written by an academic, to provide a conceptualisation of the learning area that could be used as a blueprint for curriculum development according to the key constructs developed by ACARA. I write this paper as the academic, invited by ACARA, and working through its extensive consultative processes, to write the Shape Paper for Languages (see ACARA 2011). As such, I write as an actor in the development process, although it must be highlighted that although I have had the opportunity to propose a design, I have had no role in the decision-making. Writing from this position, in this paper I discuss the context of the development that provides a rationale for the nature of the development. I then discuss six key considerations and features of the curriculum for Languages. Throughout the discussion I draw implications specifically for curriculum design, and for the teaching, learning and assessment of K–12 Japanese language learning in contemporary Australia. For the first time in the past three decades of national curriculum development in Australia, the curriculum for Languages is not being developed generically in a way that is intended to apply to all languages but, rather, the development is language-specific and it is for this reason that it becomes particularly valuable to highlight implications for specific languages—Japanese, in the present instance.

Context: setting the scene for the development of the Australian Curriculum: Languages

In setting the scene for the development of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, I consider first the reality of globalisation and its impact, and second, the national Australian Education reform agenda.

Language learning is taking place in the context of globalisation, which in its contemporary guise is creating a new social order; it is producing the movement of people and their ideas and knowledge, goods and services at a scale and speed that are unprecedented. The fact of such global circulation is not new but, combined with the reality of advanced technologies, the intensity is much more marked than in previous times. The process of globalisation has altered the nature and extent of social, cultural and linguistic diversity in societies. The new term “super-diversity” (Vertovec 2010) is intended to capture the kind of sociocultural complexity surpassing anything that many migrant-receiving communities have previously experienced. The impact on education in general and on languages education in particular has been well documented. The very nature of multilingualism and multiculturalism is changing (see Blommaert 2010; Kramsch 2014; Kramsch and Whiteside 2008; Lo Bianco 2010). In this context of mobility and global information networks, language use and capabilities are increasingly important, and communicating successfully—that is, being able to exchange meaning across languages and cultures—becomes critical. Language issues are more salient than ever before and mobility, mixing and social, cultural and political dynamics become central concerns in the learning and teaching of languages. In his preface to an international review of “non-native language learning” in a global world, Kurt Fischer sees language learning as “central to politics, economics, history and most obviously education ... language learning is not isolated, but totally enmeshed with all the important issues of the future” (2012, 23). He views language learning as central to improving communication, which is at a premium in this context, but also as a means to promoting global understanding, highlighting: “To understand the importance of language and culture, people need to be familiar with several languages and cultures” (23).

The new global reality of our times requires a renewed conceptualisation of language learning itself. In languages education many diverse manifestations of the impact of globalisation have emerged in recent times. These are best characterised as a shift from monolingual to multilingual views of language learning, or what Ortega (2010) has termed “the bilingual turn”. This means that the process of learning additional languages is itself understood as a multilingual act—where all the languages in the learners’ repertoires come into play—rather than one which involves learning additional languages separately from the language of learners’ primary socialisation. Cenoz and Gorter (2011) refer to this as a ‘holistic approach’. Cook (2005) coined the term ‘multicompetence’ to refer to the co-existence of more than one language in the same mind. Li Wei (2011), working with Chinese background learners, notes the code- and mode-switching in the language use of these students and that this hybridity is a natural part of their multilinguality and language use. García (2009) uses the term “translanguaging” to describe the kind of language use that is integral to bilingual

language learning. Another dimension of change in language learning is in the recognition of language learning being not only a cognitive and linguistic activity, but also a social and affective one.

Language learning is not simply a matter of learning a subject at school but, rather, learning about oneself and others and the way languages and cultures shape identity (Norton 2012). It requires individual learner biographies and trajectories of experiences be taken seriously. Specifically, what are needed are curricula and pedagogies that engage with and build on “the diversity in semiotic modes that learners, with diverse social, cultural, linguistic and learning biographies bring into the classroom” (Stroud and Heugh 2011, 413-429). It is these understandings about the changing nature of language learning that were brought to bear in the development of the Shape Paper for Languages in the Australian Curriculum.

A second aspect of the context that has shaped the development of languages in the Australian Curriculum is the National Educational Reform agenda.¹ The Australian Curriculum was foreshadowed in the *Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians* (MCEETYA 2008). These national goals include languages as a key learning area, prioritising Asian Languages. The Australian Government’s white paper, *Australia in the Asian century* (2012) was released by the previous federal government, marking in education a renewed emphasis on the learning of Asian languages and the need for students to have direct experiences of Asia. As mentioned, ACARA has designated Asia, and Australia’s engagement with Asia, as one of the cross-curriculum priorities that needs to be enmeshed in learning in all learning areas. A recent review of Japanese language learning (de Kretser and Spence-Brown 2010) provides a thorough analysis of the learning of Japanese language and culture in Australia at the present time. Despite Australia being one of the largest centres in the world for the learning of Japanese as a foreign language, and the positive uptake of Japanese in Australian schools K–12, there are some signs of fragility in the provision and nature of learning Japanese.

These two aspects indicate the need for a curriculum for Languages, including Japanese, which represents a significant change from the status quo. How these contextual realities and their implications for language learning and teaching were conceptualised and “translated” into a curriculum design are discussed in the section that follows.

¹ It should be noted that with the change of government at the end of 2013 some aspects of the Australian Education Reform agenda are likely to change. Notably, the new government has initiated a review of the Australian Curriculum and a review of teacher education that are likely to impact on the national educational landscape.

Key considerations and features of the Australian Curriculum: Languages

In this section I address six features that are central to the design of the Australian Curriculum: Languages. These include (1) profiling learners and learning; (2) reconceptualising the key features of Language, Culture and Learning; (3) reconceptualising teaching and learning practices; (4) the specificity of Japanese; (5) reframing of aims, curriculum content and its scope and sequencing; and finally, (6) achievement standards.

Profiling learners and learning

The design of the Australian Curriculum: Languages began with a consideration of learners and their learning. The profile of learners in the Australian language learning classroom is rich and increasingly diverse. In designing a curriculum for language learning, it is necessary to appreciate who the learners are linguistically and culturally. Learners come to language learning with diverse knowledge, experiences of life and learning, affiliations, desires and memories that come from their life-worlds (see Scarino and Liddicoat 2009; Liddicoat and Scarino 2013, Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion). Traditionally, these characteristics have been seen as part of a learner's "background" or traits and teachers were invited to "be aware" of the learner's profile. The notion of "background" has meant that the life-worlds of students have indeed been backgrounded. Yet, learners' biographies or life-worlds, mediated through the languages and cultures of their primary socialisation at home and at school, are constitutive of learning. Learning is understood to emerge through linguistically and culturally mediated, historically developing practical activity (Gutiérrez 2003). In learning an additional language, learners learn to operate within (at least) two linguistic and cultural worlds, and they learn by constantly comparing, interacting and reflecting on the experience. It is in this sense that their language learning is *intercultural*. Their learning is not an abstracted activity; it is embodied. Learners participate (1) as language learners, using language and cultural tools to create new knowledge and understanding; (2) as intercultural language users, using the target language to develop a personal voice in the target language, recognising the linguistic and cultural demands of communication across languages and cultures; and (3) as persons, whose identities are developed through the process of learning.

The Australian Curriculum: Languages—Japanese² will be based on this view of learners and learning and an intercultural orientation to language learning, as described in the

² At the time of writing this paper, the Australian Curriculum: Languages—Japanese has been written to a first draft stage only and, based on the data that emerged from a national consultation on the initial draft, it is currently being re-written.

Shape Paper for Languages and as further elaborated in the Australian Curriculum: Languages Design Paper.³ The implications for teachers of Japanese are that they need to recognise students of Japanese as diverse (as learners who may or may not have a home “background” in Japanese or may or may not have a prior learning experience of Japanese at school or in the community). They also need to recognise the role of their students as language learners, as intercultural language users and as young persons. They need to *personalise* the learning of Japanese, to consider what learning Japanese might mean for different learners with different affiliations, goals and expectations in relation to learning Japanese. They need to consider the different kinds of “bridging” towards understanding that will be needed by different learners, the different kinds of challenges that Japanese language learning poses for different learners, and they need to maintain high expectations. Teachers of Japanese also need to recognise that, for all learners, learning Japanese in Australia is different from learning Japanese in Japan or indeed in any other context—for example, the USA or Singapore. They need to understand the changing, contemporary world and Japan in this context, and reflect upon the kinds of experiences of Japan and Japanese-ness that they are creating with students in their classrooms. Finally, in relation to learners and learning, teachers need to recognise that, like their learners, they too bring their distinctive life-worlds to their teaching, and that they too see the world and learning through their linguistic and cultural lenses.

Reconceptualising Language, Culture and Learning

As already mentioned, the impact of globalisation on people’s lives, work and learning is substantial. Language learning, including Japanese language learning, needs to be responsive to changing global realities. For the languages education profession, this means moving beyond communicative language learning to accomplish a kind of language learning that reflects the multilingual reality of the diverse spaces in which languages are now used. Kramsch (2006; 2009; 2011) highlights a major difference from communicative language teaching when she states that “today it is not sufficient for learners to know how to communicate meanings, they have to understand the practice of meaning making itself” (Kramsch 2006, 251). This implies, firstly, that learners do not just exchange words but, rather, that they exchange personal meanings, mediated through the lens of the languages and cultures of their primary socialisation. It also implies that they need to understand what is entailed in the reciprocal exchange of meanings, especially when the exchange is across diverse linguistic and cultural worlds. This also entails questioning assumptions, trying to understand the world from another’s point of view or stance, and being able to “move between” languages and cultures. Thus, the key concepts of language learning (Language, Culture and Learning) need

³ In addition to the Australian Curriculum: Languages Shape Paper (ACARA 2011), the work on developing curricula in specific languages is based on the Australian Curriculum Design: Languages, which ACARA has not yet released.

to be reconceptualised. The view of *language* in the Australian Curriculum: Languages (ACARA 2011) not only acknowledges language as a grammatical system and as social practice, but also as a practice that involves people and their participation in a reciprocal process of interpreting the language and culture, the person and the self. The view of *culture* not only captures culture as facts, artefacts and information and as social practice (i.e. ways of doing things in diverse cultures), but also as a lens through which people mutually interpret, create and exchange meaning. The view of *learning* not only includes acquisition of new knowledge and participation in the use of knowledge, but also as involving processes to make sense of knowledge, self and others (see Halliday 1993). It is a kind of language learning that calls for a greater emphasis on interpretation, reflectivity, reflexivity and imagination (see Scarino 2014 for a detailed discussion).

Byrnes (2006) highlights another dimension of language learning that becomes crucial. This is the understanding that learning a language involves a process of engaging all language users in continued language development toward highly functional multilingualism. In other words, it is necessary to take a long-term developmental perspective.

These ideas are also reflected in shifts in Japanese second language education, for example, in the work of Hosokawa, who advocates a shift in language learning from “what” and “how” to “why”; that is, from Japanese language learning and Japanology to Japanese language education; and from Japanese society and culture to “a pedagogy of language-culture and the development of problem-finding and problem-solving learning by using Japanese” (Hosokawa 2005, 218). In this view, language learning shifts from being teacher-guided to being learner-centred and, more recently, to highlighting learner subjectivity. Developing literacy across languages is understood as holding in play both the learners’ first language(s) and the additional language being learnt (Koda and Zehler 2008).

In summary, for all students learning languages (with or without a home background), language learning involves necessarily moving between “bridging”, “negotiating”, “crossing”) at least two linguistic and cultural worlds. As Aoki, a Japanese–Canadian educator, explains:

Bilingualism ... is indeed a mode of being-and-becoming in the world. For me personally, learning a second language has been an entering into the strange world of unfamiliarity. Gradually, the new language sheds its unfamiliarity as I see more deeply into another perspective of the world and see with my new eyes an already familiar world. Two perspectives dance before me and press forward upon me, and when I find difficulty with one perspective, the other lends a willing hand.

Being bilingual ... is to meet the unfamiliar second language at the margin of the horizon of the mother language. It is to belong to two worlds at once and yet not belong to either completely. It offers an opportunity to fall back on the only person I must depend on, myself. Being bilingual asks of me that I live while probing life and life experiences. Because I live in tension at the margin, questioning becomes central to my way of life. (Aoki 1987/1991, 243)

In learning to use the target language, learners learn to: (1) exchange meanings reciprocally through interaction with people and/or texts; (2) “move between” and come to understand the linguistic and cultural systems of the language they are learning, and at the same time referencing these to their own linguistic and cultural systems; and (3) develop metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness of what it means to interpret and to act in the world, and to be interpreted reciprocally by others (ACARA 2011).

The implications for teachers of Japanese of this reconceptualisation of the key concepts in languages education is that they will need to go beyond traditional views of language, culture and learning to consider using the Japanese language as a social practice, in Australia and in Japan and other Japanese-speaking communities, in actual or virtual spaces. They need to consider learning language as an intercultural endeavour, focused on the exchange of meaning. They need to ensure that students are invited to reflect on Australian English and Japanese, Englishness and Japanese-ness and on themselves and others. Such reflection should become an integral and natural part of language learning. Teachers also need to consider their own conceptions of these key concepts and the way their own conceptions impact on the Japanese learning experiences that they create for their learners.

The specificity of Japanese

Approaching the development of the Australian Curriculum: Languages as language-specific after many years of developing generic frameworks for learning languages in Australia raises an important question. What is it that is specific in teaching and learning specific languages? Some aspects of the distinctiveness of particular languages that need to be considered include the following:

- Language communities: Languages are practised by communities of speakers whose identity is defined by their language—which communities and which identities, for Japanese?
- Learners: The profile of learners learning the specific language (i.e. Japanese) in Australia here and now.

- Learning: Linguistic and cultural “distance” of the specific language for Australian learners: the concept of what it is that is “difficult” or “different” to learn from an Australian learner’s perspective.
- History: The history of the specific language in Australian education: how has it been framed and what is the impact of this framing?
- Language: Distinctiveness of concepts, grammar, etc.

Thus, in relation to Japanese language learning some examples of the specificity of Japanese might include explicit features of the linguistic system; principles of the *kana* and *kanji* writing systems; knowledge of aspects of Japanese language use (e.g. levels of formality and their significance in interpersonal relationships, awareness and use of honorifics, understanding politeness conventions); and aspects of Japanese cultural practices and values (e.g. the interrelationship of traditional and modern perspectives in society, an awareness of the role of respect for age and hierarchy, an awareness of the integral role of Shinto and Buddhism).

The implications for teachers of Japanese are that they need to shift away from the generalising tendency that has resulted from generic frameworks and reconsider the specificity of Japanese. It also means considering the learning of Japanese from the (Australian) learners’ points of view and imagining diverse ways of “bridging” the individual, Japanese and Japanese-ness in the world. It also means seeking to avoid reinforcing stereotypes through teaching and learning.

Reframing aims, curriculum content and its scope and sequencing

The expanded, interrelated aims of language learning in the Australian Curriculum: Languages are as follows. Learners learn to:

- communicate in the target language
- understand language, culture, and learning and their relationship, and thereby develop an intercultural capability in communication
- understand themselves as communicators (ACARA 2011)

These aims are intended to capture the interpretive, reflective, reflexive and imaginative work involved in learning languages. The third aim acknowledges that language learning is not a static subject in the school curriculum, but rather that it involves

people communicating with each other and coming to understand the nature of communication and the self as a communicator when communicating both within a language and culture and across languages and cultures.

These aspects are further elaborated in the curriculum design through two strands: (1) communicating in the context of diversity and (2) understanding (not just language but also the process of exchanging meanings). These are further elaborated through a set of sub-strands as follows:

- Communication
 - Socialising and taking action
 - Obtaining and using information
 - Responding and expressing imaginative experience
 - Translating (mediating; moving-between/languages and cultures)
 - Reflecting on intercultural language use
- Understanding
 - Systems of language
 - Variability in language use
 - Understanding of the role of language and culture

It is through these strands and sub-strands that the nature, scope and sequence of language learning is depicted. The progression in learning is captured in content descriptions and elaborations (see ACARA 2011). These sub-strands are further developed as “threads” for specific languages. (see Scarino 2013 for a depiction).

The implication for teachers of Japanese is to ensure that they capture the distinctiveness of learning Japanese. It also means considering the nature of language learning and expanding the domains or scope of work encompassed in the communication and understanding strands. For example, the translating sub-strand is one that has been much debated in the development process. This arises from teachers understanding translation as the process of word-for-word rendering that it might have been in the past, rather than its contemporary sense of mediating cultural meanings. It is not by chance, for example, that the concept of “lost in translation” has gained so much currency in literature and cinema, or that the concept of translation and Japan should feature so strongly in the theatre works of the Canadian director, Robert Lepage—particularly

in his work, *The seven streams of the River Ota* (Lepage 1996). It also means creating opportunities for intercultural experiences and reflection for students. Teachers need to take a developmental view of learning, ensuring that they build connections across the span of learning. Importantly, it means resourcing ourselves as teachers so that we are able to critically discuss our own experiences of an ever-expanding repertoire of intercultural engagement with the target language.

Achievement standards

A number of issues arise in relation to seeking to describe student achievements in languages education, including Japanese. A major problem is the absence of an adequate description of student achievements. A sustained study of students' experience of learning Japanese (Lo Bianco and Aliani 2013) shows how students are, in fact, seeking more rigorous and extensive learning. There is no clear understanding of the nature, range and level of achievements that might be expected of language learning in Australia. This is due at least in part to the fact that descriptions of student achievements in languages education have been generic rather than language-specific. Further, there is evidence that there is a great deal of variation in student achievements and that this relates to two major variables: time on task and learner background.

The Student Achievement in Asian Languages Education (SAALE) project (Scarino et al. 2011) investigated student achievement in four languages—Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian and Korean—through testing at three points along the K–12 continuum: at the end of the primary cycle, at the end of Year 10, and at the end of Year 12. The study explicitly examined the variables of time on task and learner background. Based on statistical analysis of the test data and qualitative analysis of student responses, descriptions were created for specific student groupings. In other words, descriptions of achievement were developed at “average” and “high” levels in a way that took into account time on task and learner background. Furthermore, the descriptions are supplemented by exemplars of students' work with commentaries that outline the features of language use and language learning evidenced in each exemplar. This work represents an initial step in the direction of establishing empirically based descriptions of achievements that are sensitive to the context of learning. Much more research is needed to develop descriptions that do justice to the nature, range and scope of Japanese language learning.

Teachers of Japanese need to consider actual student achievements, tailored to different groups of learners (who have been learning Japanese for different periods of time and who are learning Japanese as a second language or as a background user of Japanese).

Teachers also need to reconsider their own expectations about the nature and extent of student achievements, for these expectations can be highly influential.

Conclusion

The development of the Australian Curriculum: Languages—Japanese provides an opportunity for teachers (and other interested parties) to re-examine and re-conceptualise the learning and teaching of Japanese in Australian schools. In curriculum terms, the shift needs to be towards a focus on *meaning*, recognising its centrality in both the process of communication and the process of learning. It is also necessary to consider the nature, range and scope of Japanese language learning. In pedagogy, it is necessary to honour the learners, to recognise that language and culture need to be integrated in learning experiences as students learn to move between at least two different linguistic and cultural worlds. Further, it is necessary to reconsider the central role of reflection, to build meta-awareness of the role of language and culture in communication and in learning. Finally, it is important to develop students' capability for reflection, in a way that is reciprocal and recognises the knowledge, assumptions and values of others. Through the assessment process, it is necessary to expand the learning that is valued, to develop accounts of language-using-and-learning that capture communication as well as reflection, and to develop alternative ways of assessing that do justice to learners of Japanese.

For many, the Australian Curriculum: Languages, and specifically the curriculum for Japanese, will not be seen as “new”. This may well be the case in some instances, but it is certainly more. It seeks to put in place a necessary expansion of learning to focus on meaning and the ways in which it is interpreted, created and exchanged, and with this careful attention to reflection, both on the role of language and culture in communication and on self in relation to other. In this way a utilitarian curriculum, which is so often highlighted in relation to the learning of Japanese, will begin to be complemented with a curriculum that is humanistic and educative.

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Differentiated instruction in Japanese language classes

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Abstract

This paper introduces differentiated instruction (DI), a widely used approach in primary and secondary schools in the United States and elsewhere, to the community of Japanese language teachers at all levels including universities. Based on the premise that all learners are different, DI makes it possible for teachers to provide opportunities for students with different readiness, interests and learning needs to perform at their best, so that learners can learn the most appropriate content through the most effective processes, producing the best products. This presentation introduces the rationale and components of DI as well as a few examples at university and high school levels. It also discusses issues and questions about DI.

Key words

differentiated instruction, content, process, products, assessment

日本語のクラスにおける区別化指導

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要旨

本稿では、大学を含むあらゆるレベルの日本語教師を対象に、アメリカやその他の国の初中等教育で広く実践されている区別化(DI)と呼ばれる指導法を紹介する。学習者がそれぞれ違った個人であるという前提のもとに教師は、DIを通じて、異なるレディネス、興味や学習ニーズを持つ生徒が、自分の能力を最大限に発揮できるように仕向けることができ、区別化された指導を受けた学習者は、各々にふさわしい内容を最も効果的なプロセスで学習し、最良のプロダクトを生み出すことができる。本稿は、DIの理論を紹介し、何をどのようにして区別化するのかを説明した上で、大学や高校での実践例を報告し、DIの主要な問題点や疑問点についても論じる。

キーワード

区別化指導、内容、プロセス、プロダクト、評価

Issues and rationale

Regardless of the level and type of school—primary, secondary or tertiary, regular or Japanese language school—our Japanese classes are made up of a variety of students. Our students vary in their cultural and language backgrounds, family histories and educational experiences. Their aptitude for learning languages and styles of learning may differ, too, and the Japanese language proficiencies they bring to their class, unless they are in a basic introductory course, differ also. Our students are all very different individuals.

We have observed that, despite using the curriculum, textbook and teaching philosophy, outcomes differ for every class. There may be several reasons for this, but the most likely is the difference among students and the combinations of differences that students bring to class. The differences in proficiency grow larger as students advance in their study of the language. In upper-level courses the differences have grown so large that sometimes it becomes impossible for every student to make progress if they are all taught in the same way. In this presentation I would like to discuss differentiated instruction (DI), which could help students increase their Japanese proficiency while using our limited time and resources effectively.

Rebecca Alber summarised the rationale for DI when she stated: “Equal education is not all students getting the same, but all students getting what they need. Approaching all learners the same academically doesn’t work. We have to start where each child is in his learning process in order to authentically meet his academic needs and help him grow ... equality is about meeting the needs of the individual” (2010). This statement captures the essence of DI. Learners are all different individuals and they learn differently; equality of education does not mean treating and teaching everyone in the same way but providing opportunities for everyone to learn in the most effective and the most appropriate way for each. In fact, research has shown that students are more successful in school and find it more satisfying if they are taught in ways that are responsive to their readiness levels (see Beecher and Sweeny 2008; Stavroula et al. 2011).

This belief is the foundational premise of DI. This is important to note because I have been told more than a few times by colleagues in Japan that the philosophy of DI cannot be applied to teaching in Japan because all learners in a class must be treated “equally,” namely, given the same treatment and taught in the same way.

What is DI?

Many school websites cite a definition of DI attributed to Carol Tomlinson: “A flexible approach to teaching in which the teacher plans and carries out varied approaches to content, process, and product in anticipation of and in response to student differences in readiness, interests, and learning needs.” DI is an approach to teaching, not a method. Much of the content of this presentation builds on ideas from Tomlinson and others who have been researching and practicing DI in classrooms at all levels and in all locales.

Components of DI: students and instruction

Three traits among learners require differentiation of curricular elements (Theisen 2002). The table below presents these traits and curricular elements.

Students	Noun-modifying phrase
Readiness	Content
Interests	Process
Learning needs	Product

Theisen calls the learners’ traits “Differentiate Why?” and the curricular elements, “Differentiate What?”

Components of DI: learner traits

An appropriate execution of DI requires that we find out and consider learners’ differences in readiness, interests and learning needs. We will look at each of the learner traits and curriculum elements individually.

Readiness

Readiness refers to what students know, understand and can do now. Students’ current proficiency level, skills, content knowledge and understanding of content are included in readiness, but readiness is not the same as or limited to student ability. Rather, readiness means more general preparedness.

Interests

Interests include students' interest in content such as the knowledge of specific topics and skills they want to gain from instruction.

Learning needs

Learning needs include learning profile, learner background and pace of study. Learning profile encompasses several aspects: learning styles (auditory learner, visual learner or motor skill learner); motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic, instrumental or integrative motivation, intensity); personality (introverted or extroverted, risk-taking, tolerant of ambiguity); and learning environment (space size, quietness level). Student background includes cultural background (ethnicity and linguistic background, including heritage learners and previous study); and family background (socio-economic background, family configuration, familial attitude towards learning). In addition, learners may have handicaps such as a disability or disorder; alternatively, they may be gifted. All these differences result in differences in learning needs. Learners also differ in pace of study or learning speed. Learning pace may be affected by differences in cognitive ability, especially among young learners.

It is extremely important for instructors to know about the learner differences discussed above if one of our teaching goals is to teach everyone to attain the best proficiency they can.

Components of DI: curricular elements

What to differentiate?

1. Content → What

Related to objectives; often based on standards

2. Process → How

Activities, tasks, grouping and length of time

3. Product → Assessment

Outcomes that are to be assessed

The three components of DI relating to curricular elements are content, process and product. "Content" is what we teach; "process" relates to how we teach; and "product" refers to assessment.

Content

Content is what the teacher plans to teach to attain objectives. Each course has instructional goals, which should be the same for all learners because they define the reason for the course. However, there is always more than one way to attain those goals. Unit objectives, weekly objectives and daily objectives all lead to the attainment of goals, and it is possible to vary objectives according to learner traits; namely, students' readiness, interest and learning needs. Content as well as objectives can be differentiated according to how well a student understands a concept and what their skill levels are. Lesson plans and teaching materials should reflect these differences.

An example of differentiated content can be found in Technical Japanese (JAPN422), at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), my university. Despite its title, the topics dealt with in the course span a variety of disciplines including science and technology, health science, humanities and social sciences. This course is one of the most difficult to teach because cohort comprises a variety of backgrounds and proficiency levels. This variation has increased recently, because budget cuts and cancellation of courses have compelled some students to enrol despite their lack of readiness. This course has been taught by three instructors in the last several years and each has taught the course differently, but all agree that differentiated instruction was necessary.

When I last taught this course, I conducted a pre-test composed of some items from previous JLPT Levels 3 and 2, the Simple Proficiency-Oriented Test (SPOT), and kanji reading and writing tasks. The ten students in this course fell roughly into two groups: four heritage background students, and six students who had passed Advanced Japanese (JAPN302). Among the latter, some attained good grades in the course but others barely passed. The three course goals were the same for all the students: to develop some reading strategies appropriate to their levels; to be able to summarise information obtained from reading passages and present it all to their classmates both in speech and in writing; and to increase their knowledge of and ability to use kanji and kanji compounds, mostly in comprehension. The objectives for each student were different according to their proficiency levels and their area of study and interests.

The class met twice a week in three-class cycles. One group met in class to study using a shared textbook, while the other group went to the computer lab to read individual reading materials. During the next class, the groups swapped activities—the first group went to the lab to do individualised work, while the second group came to class to work with a shared textbook, different to the other group. In the third class, all students came to class and presented their readings to the entire class. This cycle was repeated until the end of semester. Below is a chart of the cycle which started during the second week of semester (Diagram 1).

Diagram 1: Class schedule

週／曜日	クラス内容 Section 1(6名)	クラス内容 Section 2(4名)
1-火	コースの説明、プリテスト(SPOT、JLPT、漢字)	
1-木	読み物とプロジェクトの説明: インターネット情報	
2-火	教科書 第4課	Lab 1: 読み物の選択、決定
2-木	Lab 1: 読み物の選択、決定	教科書 第2章 ノート・テイキング
3-火	発表(読み物の内容); 書類提出	
3-木	Lab 2: 読み物1	Lab 2: 読み物1
4-火	教科書 第6課	Lab 3: 読み物1
4-木	Lab 3: 読み物1	教科書 第3章 リーディングの基本スキル
5-火	読み物1発表(5人)	
5-木	教科書 第9課	Lab 4: 読み物2
6-火	Lab 4: 読み物2	教科書 第4章 より深いリーディング
6-木	読み物1発表(5人)	
7-火	教科書 第10課	Lab 4: 読み物2
7-木	Lab 5: 読み物2	教科書 第8章 ライティングの基本スキル
8-火	読み物2発表(5人)	

Next to the chart are directions given to students on the procedure for individual reading.

このクラスでは自由課題の読み物を四つ選んで読みます。

1. 読み物の分野とトピックを選びなさい。分野は自分の専攻と関係のあるものを少なくとも二つ選んでください。残りの二つは、自分の専攻分野でも、違う分野でもかまいません。分野を選んだら、次にトピックを決めてください。
2. インターネット検索をして記事を選びます。二つか三つ、適切なものを選んで、その分野、トピック、URLを日本語の電子メールでkataoka@csulb.eduに送ってください。その時、一番興味のあるものから順番に1、2、3と番号をつけてください。教師が内容をみて難易度や長さが適当であると判断した場合には1から順番に読んでもらいます。もし適当ではないと判断した場合には、その他の記事を探して読むように言います。

The following is the format of the reports students wrote after reading their articles and before making presentations to their class. After their presentation, students quizzed the class to see if their presentation had been comprehensible to all classmates.

レポート# _____ (読んだ記事のコピーを添付してください。)

氏名: _____ 提出日: _____

1. タイトル
2. キーワード(5つまで)
3. 要旨(100字以内で)
4. この記事を読んで自分が新しく得た知識
5. この記事から学んだ漢字と単語(自分が覚えたいものを20書きなさい。)
6. 発表のまとめ:上の3、4、5を含めて5分以内の発表にまとめなさい。図や表も用意しなさい。
7. 他の学生のためのハンドアウト
 - (1)内容をまとめたレジュメ
 - (2)覚えると役に立つ漢字／語彙5つ
 - (3)理解できたかどうかのクイズ(5問まで。)

In all upper-level Japanese classes at CSULB, students are required to complete projects, research or reading reports. They are given a choice of topics, procedures and formats such as written, oral and multimedia presentations. This is a reflection of our effort to differentiate content.

Process

The second component of DI is process. Process refers to how one teaches: namely, differentiation of activities, tasks and grouping of students. Activities and tasks can be ordered, for example, from concrete to abstract, from simple to complex, from structured to open, and from less to more independent. Depending on the students (and often groups of students), different activities and task types can be assigned, rather than assigning the entire class the same activity or task.

Multiple intelligence activities can be used to differentiate on the basis of learning profile. Different teaching materials with the same or similar content can be used. For example, some reading texts can be used as is, but others given to different groups can be modified, semi-authentic texts with slightly less-complicated sentences and fewer kanji.

Auditory learners may learn sentence patterns via listening and speaking practices, while visual learners may learn the same structural patterns by reading them.

Group work is indispensable in foreign language classes because of its communicative nature. Differentiation can be used for pair and group practices, where students can be grouped according to their readiness, interest or learning profile. In all cases, similar students can be grouped together, or different students can be grouped together. The latter option may seem counterproductive, but it is useful because it can expose students to different ideas and learning styles. Some students work better alone, and others work better in groups. In order to satisfy all students' needs, it is mandatory that class work consists of "ebb and flow" of experiences (Tomlinson 1995), moving from individual work to group work to whole-class work, then back to group work or individual work.

Another factor in the differentiating process is scaffolding. Scaffolding is "an instructional method whereby the teacher provides temporary support while employing strategies designed to help students accept responsibility for their learning" (Tennessee State Board of Education 2001), based on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, or ZPD (Vygotsky 1978). ZPD concerns the distance between what the learner can do alone and what they cannot do even with help. The ZPD itself is the area covering what the learner cannot do alone but could with help from a teacher, or in collaboration with peers. Scaffolding is used to help and guide students to fill the ZPD. Since the ZPD differs greatly from student to student, differentiating the type and amount of scaffolding is essential, particularly when teaching a class with highly diverse students.

An example of DI in process is seen in a Recycle unit developed by Michiko Schricker while teaching at a Saturday Japanese school in California. In a section of this unit, she prepares the students through pre-reading activities introducing the process of a science experiment recycling Styrofoam. The pre-reading activities include discussing recycling, viewing a video of recycling Styrofoam, introducing and practicing new vocabulary (both input and output activities), and verbally explaining the procedure of recycling Styrofoam using pictures, new vocabulary and sentence structures already familiar to the students. Schricker then differentiates the next activity of letting students explain the recycling procedure in several ways, depending on the students' ability and rate of progress. Options including matching the pictures and sentences, filling in the blanks in sentences which explain the recycling procedure, writing sentences on their own, or verbally explaining the recycling procedure.

After concluding the above activities, Schricker presents a passage that explains how Styrofoam is recycled. The global reading activities (choosing a title and matching paragraph numbers to the topic of each paragraph summarised in one sentence) are the

same for all students. The detailed reading activity is differentiated according to how much understanding is expected of each student. Schricker developed three levels of reading comprehension activities: the simplest is to fill in vocabulary to complete a summary of the reading, the second is to complete sentences to write the summary, and the third, to summarise the recycling process without assistance. Students learn in Japanese about recycling and can tell others about the process, but in different ways. In addition, those activities are done in groups or in pairs, unless students prefer to work individually.

Product

Product refers to outcomes that are used for assessment. In DI, differentiating product is extremely important because we begin with the premise that students' learning objectives may differ. Since assessment of the course goes hand-in-hand with objectives, students with different learning objectives should naturally be given different assessment.

Products can vary. Some examples include presentations, reports, posters, journals, films, discussions and debates, in addition to the more traditional interpretive tasks of reading and listening. The instructor can use DI by not only providing a variety of products but also giving students their choice of products to be evaluated, based on such factors as students' language background, cultural background, interests, learning styles, and language proficiency. Grading options enter the picture also. We do not want to grade the outcomes too easily or too harshly, so we must find an optimal level that is challenging but not impossible for any student.

Differentiated assessment

Assessment plays an invaluable role in DI because it forms the basis for determining content, process and product. Chapman and King state, 'Differentiated assessment is an ongoing process through which teachers gather data before, during and after instruction using multiple formative and summative tools' (2012, 1) to identify learners' needs and strengths. Let us look at four topics concerning assessment.

Differentiated Assessment

1. Constant assessment
2. Assessment appropriate to individual learner
3. Assessment with options
4. Assessment that reflects objectives

The first topic is constant assessment. In DI, we need to assess students constantly, beginning with a pre-instruction assessment. Pre-assessment has a two-fold purpose: one is to grasp the learners' needs, and the other to set objectives. Among those of us who teach Japanese in secondary and tertiary schools, our greatest concern regarding readiness is to find the learner's proficiency level and, when dealing with higher level courses, deal with kanji issues. Because kanji are also vocabulary, writing Japanese depends heavily on their use, and so are intrinsically linked to proficiency. In fact, differing levels of kanji knowledge is one of the main reasons for differentiating instruction in upper-level classes.

In order to use DI, one needs to conduct frequent on-going assessments, both formative and summative. This is for the purpose of creating or choosing activities and tasks that are appropriate to learners and to monitor learner growth. These assessments should be both frequent and appropriate to individual learners. However, since it is nearly impossible to differentiate assessment for each individual, one may want to divide the class into groups according to language proficiency, language skills, cultural background and, in the case of younger learners, cognitive ability.

Students may be given assessments with a variety of choices. For instance, the learner may choose the task, work style, assessment tools or evaluation format, such as self- or peer-evaluation. The learner should be given opportunities to express or present what they have learned in class and can do in the best way they can. Needless to say, whatever the form or the tool, assessments should be able to measure how objectives have been met.

An example of a traditional but differentiated assessment is a kanji quiz. Since students' knowledge of and skills in using kanji can be so diverse, especially in upper-level Japanese courses, it is often not fair to require all students to learn the same amount of kanji. After the student and the instructor have decided the level of involvement in kanji and how much the student is to learn, a kanji quiz can take various forms. For instance, some students may be required to learn to read and write all the kanji and kanji compounds introduced in class; others, to read all the kanji but to write only selected kanji compounds; and the rest, only to read them. If all students are required only to read the kanji, then each group can be differentiated by giving them full credit by completing 100%, 90% or 80% of the quiz. One group may be required, in addition to writing the reading of the kanji, to write in Japanese the meaning of the kanji compounds, while the other group may be asked to match the words with meanings written in a different column.

Another example of a rather traditional but differentiated assessment is from my course Japan: Its Land, People, and Culture (JAPN452). This is a content-based instruction (CBI) course that takes up topics such as Japanese geography, food, industries, dwellings and leisure activities. The final exam gives students choices of questions to answer. Below is an example, with rubric omitted:

次の質問の中から二つを選んで、それぞれ300～400字で教えてください。内容の正確さ(1/4)、日本語の正確さ(1/4)、構成(1/4)、及び説明の論理性(1/4)で採点します。(20x2=40)

1. 日本の川はどうして短くて急流が多いのですか。また、そのために、どんな利点や問題点がありますか。
2. 今多くの国立公園が直面している問題は何ですか。それはどうすれば解決できるでしょうか。
3. 食料自給率が低いのはなぜ問題なのでしょう。
4. 環境にやさしく、エネルギーを無駄にしない住居というのはどのような家ですか。

In addition to giving choices, this type of writing can be differentiated in several ways: asking for longer or shorter responses; giving simple or detailed instructions or giving hints; preparing different rubrics; or, instructing students to use certain structures or paragraphs. The task can be made more creative, therefore differentiated, by giving situations such as having to write a petition letter opposing a dam, asking the government for more funds for maintaining the national parks, or arguing for the free import of foodstuff at an international free trade conference.

In individual oral interviews, which are conducted at the end of the fall semester in Advanced Spoken Japanese, we ask students a list of questions such as those seen in the box below.

JAPN311プロチーブメント・テスト (抜粋)

- 自己紹介をする時にはどんなことを話しますか。
- いつでも/どんな場合でも同じですか。
- それぞれの場面でどのように違った自己紹介をするか説明してください。
- ○○さんの趣味について教えてください。
- どんな人がその趣味が好きだと思いますか。どうしてそう思いますか。詳しく説明してください。
- ご家族はどんな家族ですか。
- お母さんの趣味について教えてください。その趣味についてもう少し詳しく教えて下さい。
- 出身地はどこですか。○○さんは、ずっと▼▼で育ったんですか。▼▼はどんなところですか？
- ▼▼を知らない日本人に▼▼について分かり易く教えてあげてください。
- ▼▼の自然環境は？その自然環境は守られて／保護されていますか。どうしてそう思いますか。
- じゃあ、○○さんの経歴を教えてください。
- ○○さんは、どんな性格ですか。そんな性格をどう思いますか。なぜですか。
- 将来どんな仕事がしたいですか。そんな仕事は○○さんにむいていますか。どうしてそう思いますか。

それでは、次の場面で1分(2分)の自己紹介をしてください。(場面を英語で書いたカードを渡す。)

Differentiation takes place by asking the italicised questions to only those whose proficiency level was high when the course commenced. Those who began with lower proficiency may be asked italicised questions, but are not expected to answer them fully or appropriately. Since the weaker students do not respond to the same questions as the stronger students, using the same rubric for all the students does not penalise the weaker ones.

Issues and questions about DI

The fairness issue

Differentiated instruction is not free of issues and questions. One of the reservations about DI is philosophical. Japanese instructors, especially those from Japan, have voiced opinions such as, “We cannot teach students in one class differently, because it is not fair,” and, “The administration would have a fit if they found out we are giving different teaching materials or tests, because that could lead to favouritism.” Are we “allowed” to have different objectives for different students? Is it ethical to give assessments that are not exactly the same for everyone? Is it acceptable that students who are awarded an A for the course have a range of skills and abilities? Of these questions, the last is the toughest to address.

To these questions, we can ask, “Is it acceptable that students’ readiness differs so much when they start a course?” It is of course ideal if all students share the same readiness and the same proficiency level when they enter a language course. Indeed, it is supposedly the same in introductory courses. However, as students progress in language study, uniformity across the cohort develops into diversity and this gap widens as the course progresses. It is not only proficiency level or readiness in general, but also students’ level of interest and learning needs that change as they grow.

Assigning grades

Were we to give all our students the same objectives, teach them in the same way and assess them in the same way, it is obvious that weaker students would not be able to perform as well as those with much higher levels of proficiency. Since the content would be more difficult and they would not be ready for such a challenge, those students are doomed to receive a lower grade. If we focus on those who are lower in proficiency, then the more advanced students may not be learning anything new and would end up wasting valuable time to learn more and advance even further. Those students should be given more opportunities to learn. It is very difficult to see how filling these gaps can be unfair and lead to favouritism. I do believe DI is the fairest way to educate our students, and help them achieve their best.

One way to grade fairly is to consider giving three separate grades, which Tomlinson calls “3P grading”. The three Ps stand for performance, process and progress. If we focus on performance, only those whose absolute proficiency levels are high to begin with can get good grades. However, if we consider process and progress, and if the learners are

guided through their work using DI, they have a good chance to receive high grades in these areas. Course grades could be a combination of the three.

Student concerns

When one tries to tell students that we do DI in class, some students may become unhappy. Among them are those taking the course for an easy A. As much as we do not want to believe that some students come to our classes with that sole motivation, such students do exist. I have had a few, and I had to tell them that one of the goals of the course was that students complete the course with more proficiency. Not every student was satisfied with that explanation, but everyone did agree to stay in class and put in an effort to improve.

Another group, although few in number, are Japanese heritage language learners (JHL). They have been raised speaking Japanese at home, but the amount of exposure to Japanese differs from student to student, as do their proficiency levels and skills. A couple of those students voiced the concern that their ability might be overestimated solely because they are JHL speakers and thus end up unfairly placed in a high-proficiency group which may disadvantage them in grading. It was not until I gave a pre-assessment test (composed of selected test items from the past Japanese Language Proficiency Test and a part of the final exam for the course) and told each student their result that they were convinced that their Japanese ability was not overestimated.

In addition, giving the students on the first day of instruction some information on DI and how the instructor would assess them usually works. I also have students sign a contract stating that they understand the goals of the course and that they are willing to work with the DI format, including differentiated home assignments, projects and tests. This should protect the instructor's position.

Limitations of DI

Unfortunately there are limitations to DI. It is not possible to employ DI when the differences among students in readiness and learning needs are too great. For instance, a group of children with a great discrepancy in age in one class, such as five to twelve, cannot be taught effectively even using DI due to differences in cognitive ability. This issue is often encountered in Saturday Japanese schools in the United States.

A huge gap in proficiency levels among students cannot be filled by DI. I have taught an upper-level Japanese course in which students' proficiency levels spanned from Novice High to Advanced Mid according to the ACTFL proficiency scale. DI cannot work in a class with this much of a gap. Even if the gap is not so wide, it is nearly impossible to teach a class of Intermediate Low learners with a few true beginners. There is a limit to differentiation.

Teacher workload

Differentiated instruction requires teachers to be flexible in their approach to teaching and adjust the curriculum and presentation of information to learners rather than expect students to modify themselves for the curriculum. This means constant work on the part of the teacher.

It is said that DI is not something extra you do but is a part of everyday teaching that every teacher should do. Regardless of what our pro-DI colleagues say, learning to incorporate DI into everyday teaching is time-consuming, and means a much bigger workload compared to traditional teaching. Preparing and giving pre-tests (a part of which could be an oral proficiency interview with each student), grading them, making a form for and reading personal background information sheets, and grouping the students into two or more groups is time-consuming at the beginning of the semester when we are at our busiest. Once the term starts, the teacher has to prepare differentiated teaching materials and home assignments, followed by differentiated assessment tools. In addition, the instructor may not be able to use the teaching materials prepared prior to the new term, because they may find that the student population is very different from their original assumptions.

There is, however, a silver lining in teacher workload in DI: the instructor does not have to fret about having to give an A to a strong student whose proficiency was higher than the course goal to begin with and who never studied throughout the term. The instructor does not have to agonise about what to do with students lacking readiness who, no matter how hard they work and how much they improve, could not get an A if they were in a traditional course. The student who shows great improvement over the term could earn a high grade they could never attain otherwise, which in turn might give them more confidence and motivation to work harder. It is a well-known fact that success is the best motivational factor for even further success. That is perhaps the greatest reward for the teacher, which makes some extra work worthwhile.

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Note: These resources are all available online, having been chosen with busy teachers in mind.

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**Japanese language
education in Australia:
now and in the future**

Plenary Panel Discussion

Japanese Language Education: Creating the Future

Edited by Robyn Spence-Brown

Panel members

Dr **Robyn Spence-Brown**, School of Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics, Monash University (Panel Chair)

Mr **Matthew Absalom**, President, Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA); School of Languages and Linguistics, University of Melbourne

Ms **Anne de Kretser**, Director, Melbourne Centre for Japanese Language Education (MCJLE), Monash University

Ms **Kathe Kirby**, Executive Director, Asia Education Foundation (AEF)

Professor **Carolyn Stevens**, President (2011-2013), Japanese Studies Association of Australia (JSAA); Professor of Japanese Studies, Monash University

Professor **Chihiro Kinoshita Thomson**, Australian representative on J-GAP program and Japanese Global Network; Professor of Japanese Studies, School of Humanities and Languages, UNSW, Australia

Professor **Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku**, President, American Association of Teachers of Japanese; Professor of Development Studies, University of California, San Diego

Professor **Kent Anderson**, Pro-Vice Chancellor (International), University of Adelaide

Robyn Spence-Brown

The panel has been asked to address the following questions:

- What are the **strengths** of Japanese Language Education (JLE) in Australia and the **challenges** facing it?
- How can we build on strengths and address challenges to ensure it remains **strong** and **relevant**?
- How can we **promote the relevance** of JLE and **build demand** in schools, universities and the community more broadly?
- How can we **work together** across states, levels of education, and internationally to build for the future?

I've asked each of the speakers to speak for six minutes or so about one or two aspects of these questions that they think are important, from different perspectives. Then, when they've all had their say, we're going to open it up for the panel to pick up on points that have been raised, and get into more of a discussion. I'd like to ask Kathe Kirby, Executive Director of the Asia Education Foundation (AEF), to start.

Kathe Kirby

I want to focus my five minutes worth of comments today on the issue of building demand for Japanese language learning in Australian schools. I've chosen that topic because I wanted to draw on a report that the Asia Education Foundation published in June this year (2012) called "What Works: Building Demand for Asia Literacy", so my early comments are going to be focused on a combination of what works at building demand for languages education in general, for Asian languages and then finishing with Japanese.

I think all of us here are well-versed in the fact that building demand for languages is as critical an area for investment as providing the supply of teachers and high quality programs. We know that. We've known that for a long time, but I don't think that we've developed much of an evidence base to actually tell us what works at building demand. When we started this research project, we asked these sorts of questions: "What influences a primary school principal to support the choice of one language over another or any language?", "What influences a school community to support the choice of one language over another?", "What arguments work best with a largely monolingual Australian community?". Well, things like the White Paper on Australia in the Asian

Century make a difference to the community's views about the importance of learning languages. "What influences a Year 7 student to choose Japanese over, say, Chinese or French?", "What strategies influence a year nine student to continue their Japanese language?", "What arguments and incentives are successful for Year 10 and 11 students to continue on with their studies into Year 12 and then on to university?"

The point that I want to make here is that we know that building demand for languages learning, for Asian languages, for Japanese language, is a complex task that does not have one single answer. The arguments that we might put to children in primary school, in Year 7, in Year 9, in Year 10 or 11, are quite different arguments and I don't think we've recognised that nearly enough. And in fact, we might've done an analysis of many of the strategies around the country that were funded through the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools program on building demand; many of them have had a fairly narrow focus and they've often had a focus on just the vocational reasons for learning a language. And I don't know how many times people have suggested to me, "Well, if they just waived HECS, then students will do a language at Year 12." We don't have any evidence to support that.

What's really my point today is the need to know more about this area and to gather evidence. There are lots of things we do know, and we've known them for some time: we know that a powerful driver of demand in students to continue with their language studies is having a sense of purpose. We know that that purpose is really supported when the whole school is commissioned, when there are studies of countries where that language is spoken embedded across the curriculum, when the school community values and celebrates the languages taught in the school. We know, and our report absolutely validates this, that personal encounter is one of the strongest drivers of demand for school principals and teachers and members of the community, perhaps in hosting visitors from a language target country. We know that parents play a critical role in supporting school language choice and in fact, that's one of the things that our report has emphasised.

We collected 26 case studies of what's working around the country to build demand. We didn't want to accept the case studies unless they had a report, an evaluation or data to prove that their strategy was being effective, and one of the key overview messages that comes through is the importance of having parents on side. But think about this: how many strategies at a system level have there been to educate parents about Japanese language or the value of languages learning in general? What role does policy play in speaking to parents? What role does leadership from politicians and from education leaders have? And of course we know that a powerful driver of demand is high quality teaching, at all levels of school, of course, but vital to keep students engaged in the

primary years, in transition to Year 7 and again in early secondary school, where our data shows that the influence of friends, the power of the teacher and the timetable most drive the demand to continue on with language study. But we also know that no matter how high quality the teaching is, that we're often coming up against structural impediments that have been put in place to hold us back, to create barriers; we know what those structural impediments are. One of them, of course, is pathways between primary and secondary school, the opportunity for students to have continuous language learning. One of them is Year 12 assessment procedures, and another one is the vital need for increased time on task.

We've actually known about these impediments for a long time. All of these factors, from high-quality teaching to personal encounter and purpose, the removal of structural impediments right down to political and community support, drive demand for Asian languages and Japanese language in Australian schools, singly and together. I don't think we've recognised the depth of what's required. Joe Lo Bianco often talks about the 67 plus reports that have been undertaken into languages education in the last 30 or 40 years in this country, so nothing that I've said to you today will shock you, but little has been done at the systemic level to address these issues.

I really picked up, as all of you would, the important objective in the White Paper announcement, that all Australian children will have access to continuous language learning from primary school through to secondary, thereby setting in place the importance of doing something about language pathways.

The fact that little has been done and languages have remained largely optional in Australian school education has made languages absolutely vulnerable to the issue of demand. Maths teachers don't talk about driving demand; English teachers don't talk about the need to drive demand. It's largely a conversation in languages education and perhaps in the arts and some other areas. Perhaps the White Paper's objective that every child will have continuous access to learning a language will go towards rectifying that.

My second last point is that too little research has been done in this area to know what is working. Our report includes a literature review; we sent the researchers back four times, we said there must be things there, there must be more literature that's been done on this issue of what arguments work with kids at primary, higher, lower secondary, upper school, the community, parents, principals, what strategies are working to build those continuous pathways.

So my final point is this (and I think that this creates a real challenge for Japanese language education going forward): we also need to focus, as well as those macro issues, which I've just briefly gone through, all of us here, need to challenge on what are the strategies that will build demand for Japanese language education, specifically?

The really wonderful report on Japanese language education in Australian schools undertaken by Robyn Spence-Brown and Anne de Kretser (drawn on) in the *Four languages, four stories* report, emphasised that a one-size-fits-all approach to Asian languages in Australian schools doesn't work. We have to know, what are the arguments that are going to specifically speak to that primary school principal, that are going to specifically speak to parents and to children at those different levels of schooling, to encourage them to continue on with their Japanese language education?

And we have a challenge here; and that challenge (apart from some of the things I've mentioned) is the growing profile of China in Australia, and that's one of the languages that is on the tip of everyone's tongues: "We must be learning more Mandarin". And yet, Japanese has the most long-term and largest footprint in our schools and we need to build on the strength of that. So that's really the challenge that I'm going to leave here with you today: Is the argument for learning Japanese being lost in the community and what are we going to need to do to specifically address some of the issues that are just briefly outlined and identified today in regard to Japanese language learning in our schools? Thank you.

Robyn Spence-Brown

Chihiro Thomson, from UNSW, will focus on a tertiary perspective on some of these issues.

Chihiro Kinoshita Thomson

Kathe talked about building demand in the school sector. I'd like to make some comments on building demand in the tertiary sector.

I think in the tertiary sector, student enrolment is still very strong in Japanese; however, there is a demand which is not yet harvested due to mostly structural issues. Some university students are not taking up Japanese, or for that matter, any languages, or continuing with Japanese not because they don't want to, but because they cannot or they don't think they can or because they don't know how.

Professor Lo Bianco talked about this morning what he called the “waverer”, who is neither committed nor totally uninterested, and I think this is where we can build demand. When a high school leaver comes to the university, say this person is interested in doing an Engineering degree, he would go to an Engineering Faculty student centre. But the Engineering Faculty student centre will not tell him how to do a language within the university structure. We need to have better communication between us; people from Arts faculties or other faculties who are offering Japanese and places like the Engineering Faculty student centre, as well as high school teachers or career advisers who’d advise this person where to go, how to find Japanese courses.

Non-Arts degrees, such as Engineering, Architecture, Medicine, etc., make it very difficult to continue with Japanese or take up Japanese as a major. I’ve done a very small survey at the UNSW, that’s my university, and I’ve found that there is no single program in the University of New South Wales that does not allow a language to be taken. It might just be a single subject, but most likely, you are allowed to take up to six subjects in Japanese or another language. That means you can do a three-year long, continuous study of language, if you have the will to find it, and I think it’s probably similar in other universities: if you are committed, you can find a way to do a language.

And also, when you come to a university as a first-year student, you don’t know the way around, and the time goes very quickly and you’ll be a second-year, third-year or fourth-year student and you think, “Oh, maybe I can take Japanese as an elective,” and they do. Many of the first-year students in my course are Engineering students who are in their third or fourth year. They like the Japanese course very much but next year, they are graduating; it’s too late.

So those are the structural issues within the university, and we need everybody’s help to inform our students or other administrators, to make it more visible in the university system for high school leavers or new students of Japanese to find a way to do Japanese, even if they are not majoring in Japanese.

Another point I want to make is that there is not enough incentive to start or continue with Japanese in the university system. Victoria is blessed with a bonus point system (for university entrance), however in New South Wales, in my university, only those who are going into the Arts degree would receive bonus points for doing a language. I think we should inform university decision-makers of information, such as that US universities require a foreign language for admission. For example at Harvard, they recommend four years of language study before being admitted; Stanford, three or more years; UCLA, two years required and three years recommended. This is for admission, and many top US universities require foreign language courses to be taken during their

degrees. For example, Columbia requires at least intermediate level proficiency; Yale, at least three courses; Duke, at least three courses. We need collaborative effort among faculties within a university, we need collaborative effort between the university sector and high school sector, and we need collaborative effort among universities so that we can build more demand within the university.

Robyn Spence-Brown

And now Anne de Kretser, Director of the Melbourne Centre for Japanese Language Education (MCJLE), will share some ideas.

Anne de Kretser

My work involves predominantly primary and secondary schools so I'm going to talk about those sectors. I'm going to talk about two things today and the first is to make the point that we are doing well and Japanese is doing considerably well. We are doing a very good job.

When Robyn and I interviewed a lot of people for the report that we wrote, one message that came through was, "Why are we worried about Japanese? Japanese is fine." Even though, after the boom in the '80s and '90s we had the bust, we have survived and Japanese is still very strong in Australia. So when we interviewed people, that's why they were wondering why we were concerned about Japanese. However, even though we've remained fairly strong, we have to keep evolving. And Japanese teachers have been expert in doing that. We've adapted, we have changed. We can't, perhaps, rely as much on the rhetoric that was used about students needing to learn Japanese because it would help them get a job. So we have adapted.

Tohsaku-sensei talked about culture and how important that was, and that's one of the things that Japanese teachers have been—very expertly, I think—able to help their students with: learning language and culture together. That's been one of our strengths. Having pop culture now—and I notice that even on Sunday mornings when Rage used to be on—now it's Asian pop instead. Pop culture, the digital age, that exchange that we have, are all very important to us.

But importantly, I think Japanese teachers have embraced and used the personal touch to their advantage. Sister school exchanges, language assistants coming into the school: that personal exchange cannot be underestimated, and those personal exchanges make the language real for the students and I think that has been an ongoing strength of ours.

However, we do have challenges as well, and as the public discussion around Chinese (Mandarin) has increased, the discussion about Japanese may have become less visible. That's an ongoing challenge for us, as Kathe said, and it's something that we, as teachers, need to be very, very aware of, but also very proactive, in making sure that our voice is heard. Today is a great example that we have a lot of voices and that we need to use them.

There was an interesting study done through the University of South Australia a few years ago, interviewing students who were learning a language. And when they asked the students, "Why should you learn a language?" the students said, "I'm a global citizen. It'll help me get a job and I think it will be good for my future." When they asked them, "Why are you studying a language?" they said, "I enjoy it. I'm good at it, and I like my teacher."

Sometimes the messages that we convey are not always the ones that resonate with the students. And I think Kathe is exactly right. Some of the messages that are going out may not really be that important to a Grade 4 student or even a Year 7 student. So we have to be very careful, but also very strategic, about those messages that we give.

Through my work at the Melbourne Centre for Japanese Language Education, I often got calls in the past from teachers asking me to ring their principal and convince them that the Japanese program is worthwhile. In the last two years, I've had numerous calls from principals asking me to come and speak to the staff to help them understand how important the Japanese program is. That's been a really big turnaround, and I think that that's a great turnaround.

I mentioned this morning that we have a principal at this conference; we also have classroom teachers, classroom teachers who are trying to use Japanese in their class. So they're supporting Japanese in their school. So Japanese isn't a specialist subject, it has become a mainstream subject, and the students see their Japanese teacher using Japanese outside of the classroom, conversing with other teachers. They see those other teachers using Japanese where they can in their class. It doesn't have to be a huge amount, it's that the students see that it's a more mainstream thing than a specialist thing and therefore that message that Japanese is too hard or it's too difficult, or the poor children can't cope, that sort of action actually helps to make sure that that message is not being sent.

The other thing that I really would like you to think about is that in secondary schools, the message that often is given to students is: "If you don't go all the way, don't go at all." They're only talking about the end product: Year 12. "How many students do we have going through Year 12?" I know it's a numbers game in your schools but when we only talk to students about success of language learning in terms of finishing Year 12, then I think we are losing students who might stay with us longer.

RMIT did a pilot program called VET in Schools, and they actually offer the students a certificate, a vocational Certificate II in Languages, in Japanese. And they offered it to schools where they were losing students after the post-compulsory years, or in schools where students generally did not show a great interest in learning Japanese. Having the students being able to actually accomplish a certificate at a midway point, after Year 9, and in some cases Year 10; actually being able to say, “I studied Japanese ’til Year 10 and I have a qualification. I have a certificate that says I achieved this much,” was a very powerful thing in those pilot schools. The numbers of students retained increased and interestingly, some of the students who decided they weren’t going to continue, after getting that qualification, decided, “You know what? I am going to continue.” I think that we need to start looking at acknowledging students’ language level at other points, not just at the end of the game.

With my work, I’ve travelled to particularly South Australia and Tasmania and worked within Australia, and I see—and Robyn and I saw this through our report as well—teachers involved in the Japanese Language Teachers’ Associations (JLTA) working so hard to provide professional development for their teacher body. They work very hard to keep their teachers networked and connected. They’re all doing amazing work, but we don’t share that work. There are innovative programs, there are fantastic processes, there are incredible teachers doing amazing things, and in their network or in their state, they are able to support one another. But we are not sharing that in a bigger way. And one of the things that MCJLE, and I hope The Japan Foundation, are going to work on is actually bringing those JLTAs together to ensure that there’s a stronger body and that we work more closely together, sharing that information and making sure that information and knowledge is shared amongst us. We are living in the digital age and that sort of thing is much, much more easily done these days. So that’s where we’re heading, I hope, in the future. Thank you.

Robyn Spence-Brown

Now I’d like to invite Carolyn Stevens, President of the Japanese Studies Association of Australia (JSAA), to speak.

Carolyn Stevens

As the current president of the JSAA, sadly, one of the tasks I’m called upon to perform is writing letters of support to the university, usually senior managers, on behalf of Japanese language programs that are under threat of downsizing or even closure. This trend is despite the clearly recognised need for, and promises of support for, Asian

literacy in Australia, as per the White Paper released last Sunday. Thankfully, at least to the Federal Government, Asian engagement seems to be important.

So then, why this constant sense of threat? Why is it that we feel the need to quote, “Tame the tiger,” as Joe (Lo Bianco) noted this morning? In his keynote, he described an uneasy relationship between knowledge, which is what we do, and power, which is what they do, as outlined in policy. This uncertain and uneasy relationship is at the heart of this sense of insecurity. And I think I speak for many here when I say that oftentimes it seems as if teachers, whatever the level of schooling, end up creating knowledge in spite of the support, or lack thereof, of policy or (those in) power. Policy takes a fairly narrow focus on the vocational aspect of studying language, at any level, but I’m particularly talking about university.

This is problematic because it separates language from the rest of the academic curriculum as somehow different or special; an extra add-on. And unfortunately, this often results in a subordinate status. This is the tension quoted from Joe’s book from 2009: “[a] tension between the view that we have language provision serving economic and employment ends versus serving the ends of social justice, educational access and personal satisfaction”. The problem is, if we barter with the “tigers” using the currency they value, we too end up focusing on the economic and employment ends of our discipline and make ourselves even more vulnerable to the ebb and flow of supply and demand. Despite the government calls for continuous support, if there is falling demand, there is little realisation of policy support from our heads of schools, deans and vice chancellors.

With the rise of China, students as well as administrators, turn their interests to Chinese. Others have their eyes on South America and are supporting Spanish. We are told that the economic rise of China and India has encouraged university students to study these languages, and therefore, we learn that Japan has to contract if China is to grow. This neo-liberalist view of Asian literacy hurts not only just the area specialists who are not included in the flavour of the month menu, but it also endangers those who are chosen, for when supply and demand principles drive education, everyone runs the risk of vulnerability.

I would like to see teachers of Japanese at both the secondary and the tertiary levels promote the study of Japanese in non-instrumentalist ways as well. As Kathe pointed out, let’s project ourselves as the teachers do in Maths and in English. Project that image, and the reception will follow.

But this situation is not limited just to Australia. The Modern Language Association, which is the peak academic body for the teaching of foreign languages at universities in the United States, wrote in 2007:

In the context of globalisation and the post-9/11 environment, the usefulness of studying languages other than English is no longer contested. The goals and the means of language study, however, continue to be hotly debated. On the one end, it is considered to be principally instrumental, a skill to use in communicating thought and information. At the opposite end, language is understood as an essential element of a human being's thought processes, perceptions and self-expressions. (MLA 2007)

In light of the [*Australia in the Asian Century* report, which] I would consider fairly instrumentalist, we also have to argue a further case, that of the intellectual value of studying Japanese and how the study of Japanese enhances and deepens our understandings of ourselves and others in exactly the same way that the study of History or Philosophy does. We want to take advantage of the current political and economic climate that prioritises Asian literacy for economic growth and employment opportunities, but we must not rest on the White Paper's instrumentalist support. Regardless of the cheerleading in Canberra, those of us in any form of education, whether it's tertiary, primary or secondary, are vulnerable to administrators who follow numbers. We must present our discipline as an intellectually vital area, and the activities of the MCJLE and also my organisation, the JSAA, are crucial in supporting this.

My organisation sponsors activities such as a biannual conference. We have a newly formalised annual symposium grant program and we also publish an ERA A-ranked journal *Japanese studies* published by Routledge in the UK. These are all ways the JSAA supports teachers of Japanese at all levels in ways that are recognised by the workplace managers who are following numbers, but are also intellectually viable. While many of you here are already members, I call on the others to join, and those who are already members to engage with the association's activities more regularly. I think the JSAA can assist with this project, moving away from instrumentalism and towards intellectual vitality through its activities. One of my main goals is to show the monolingual leaders at the top that the study of Japanese is not merely a trend to rise or to fall, but an academic area with intellectual as well as strategic benefits.

Robyn Spence-Brown

Now I'd like to hand over to Matthew Absalom, president of the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA).

Matthew Absalom

It's fantastic to see you all here today and congratulations on a very interesting program.

I want to talk a little bit about some of my own work. I'm a linguist and a language teacher. I teach Italian, but I'm here in my role as the president of the AFMLTA. I did a little study on motivation a couple of years ago, looking at why first-year university students have continued or dropped the language during their second years. I pulled out the students that kept going with Japanese to the end of Year 12, and the statistic that stood out was the importance of teachers, and this point's already been made. It looks like only a subtle difference, but statistically, actually that's significant. Everything else, you can see the factors there (*referring to Powerpoint slide*): travel, culture, future employment, teachers and entertainment. And then you see things such as strategic Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) scores. I also want to note that, by the end of school, parents have moved out of the equation, actually. If we look at motivational studies in junior secondary, parents are a big thing. By the end of school, it's not the parents anymore. If anything, it might be students' peers. But by the end of school, students have become people. They're a little bit more independent, they make their own decisions. So that's something to think about.

Here's a quote: "Japanese was a much more interesting experience than French at senior level and the teacher seemed much more interested and knowledgeable." And this comment's been made before. Actually in Australia, we've got an expert body of Japanese language teachers and that's a strength that really needs to be maximised.

I just want to talk about Japanese more widely. Japanese is a little bit of an anomaly in Australia. If you think about the language, and if you think about the other languages that we teach here, the perceptions are different. If we pick out other languages, people will say "French is music" or "Indonesian's easy". Italian: "all the Latin lovers". What do people say about Japanese? It doesn't have—there isn't a "hanger" like that. There isn't a, "I'm doing Japanese because..." Okay, people say "anime" and all of that, but I'm not convinced that's the thing. But just think about that a little bit.

It's not a community language because there haven't been waves of immigration. So Japanese doesn't have the community language status that other languages have. It's not necessarily a language for business anymore. Everyone's talking about Chinese now. It's not spoken widely. It's not a mass language. It's not like Spanish, Arabic. It's not a language of colonialism. And people say it's not easy. The thing about "easy" though, look, seriously, nothing's easy, actually. I mean, anything that's valuable isn't easy. And as languages educators, we shouldn't fall into the trap of saying, "It's hard," because everything's hard. It's hard to write a critical essay. It's hard to learn a musical instrument. It's hard to drive a car. It's hard to get the pasta just right.

I think the other important thing I'd like to talk about is branding. This is my point. Rethink the message. What's the message? Think about the message. Japanese clearly has a special place in the heart and minds of countless Australians, otherwise it wouldn't have the strength that it's got in education. That's something really, really important for you to bear in mind. People have fond memories of learning Japanese. They don't have the horror of, "My Latin teacher was this," or, "French was hideous, Madame was—" you know, whatever. We don't have those stories around Japanese, which is something to really build on. There are clear special relationships between Australia and Japan. When I was doing a bit of research, you know, apparently the best buckwheat soba noodles are from Tasmania? You know that old adage about getting to people through their stomach.

I think a good way to think about Japanese is as a gateway language. We have to be a little bit more collaborative in languages and a little bit less competitive and combative. It's nice if people can use Japanese to move on to Korean or whatever it is. And we should actually be happy with that and not going, "Oh, no. Keep doing Japanese." Intellectual and chic and an achievement. They're three things that I want you to think about around Japanese. Intellectual, as my colleague just said. Japan is, from a design point of view, from a fashion point of view, to look at—aesthetically very pleasing. Something to bear in mind. We're talking about adolescents. They like the way things look. They like fads.

I think it's good to think about what's easy as well. I'm a phonologist. Japanese is phonologically a very accessible language. Same vowel system as Spanish, Indonesian. Not difficult syllabic structure. From a pronunciation, from a phonological production point of view, it's actually quite accessible.

And the people side of it, we've heard about it today. We've got connections. Increasingly, I'm talking about language learning as about people. If we make it all about books and whatever, that'll appeal to that nerd that likes books, but the 99% of the rest of your students are interested, actually, in interacting with people. Working together; last point. As I've said already, within languages, we're our own worst enemies. We look at

each other and go, “Oh, no. They’ve got a few of my students. They should have kept doing Italian. Why did they move to Japanese?” We’ve got to move on from this, we’ve got to move away from it. We’ve got to think as a field. We’ve got to think as “languages”. We’ve got to think of each other, not being divided and conquered. We have to learn from each other.

The AFMLTA National Conference 2013 will be a fabulous opportunity to learn from one another. The AFMLTA, what do we do? We do some national projects—we’re looking at building capacity. One of our recent ones has been mentoring leadership. You can find this on our website. We’re putting up examples of practice at the moment. We need better research, we’ve heard that already. We need to know what works. (You can see we’re all on the same page up here.) We need to know why people choose Japanese. Why? Because it’s unclear to me why students choose Japanese. We need to know why. We need better collaboration. AFMLTA, MLTAs, JSAA, we’ve got representatives of universities here. Schools; get some research happening in your schools. Do it yourself. It’s easy to do research in your schools. If you want some suggestions, contact any of us. We’ll help you out. I’ll come to your school and help you, wherever it is. But get some research going. Work out for yourselves what’s going on.

And don’t let this moment slip away. We’ve got our moment now. Everyone’s always seeing those moments, this is a good moment. And think about quality. What do we want for our students? What do the students want? Have you asked them? And that’s where I’m going to finish.

Robyn Spence-Brown

Now, it’s over to Professor Kent Anderson, who has just arrived from the airport.

Kent Anderson

どうも、こんにちは。本当に遅れまして申し訳ありません。アデレード大学のケント・アンダーソンと申します。今日、日本語で発表するか英語で発表するか、本当に迷っていたんですけども、ジョー・ロビアンコ先生と話していたとき、「ケントでは絶対に5分以内で報告はできない!」と言われたので、早口で話すために英語で発表させていただきます。

So I started in Japanese to tie in two things, to make two points. One, is I’m one of those evil administrators that you’ve heard about. Some of us evil administrators speak Japanese, speak foreign languages, and believe deeply and passionately about the

importance of language. You have allies that you don't know about who are there, who will come. And we've seen that again and again. So it's not as bleak as we sometimes think it is and that is my punch line for today. I only have five minutes, but my message is a very simple one: "the power of the positive"—the power of the positive message.

The second reason that I started off in Japanese is I love to tell stories, so let me start off with a story of mine. I took French in Years 6, 7 and 8 because I was a student in the United States and in order to go to university, you had to do a language. And I failed. Having failed at French before I got to the point where you can get into university, I took German for Years 9, 10 and 11, and I failed. I got into university somehow and there decided, "Well, shoot. I'd better do something," and so I started to study Japanese. And well, my Japanese is not perfect; but I can get by enough to do things. The point of that story is that on the back of those failures of French and German is the success of another language. So what I'm trying to suggest is we change the language, for example, on retention, not to talk about how we fail our students if they don't stay with us, but how we actually leave them prepared to succeed in not only learning another language but in hundreds and thousands of other ways. Connecting with people. And that is one of the things that I think the White Paper talks about very well.

Okay, so my message is again simple: the power of the positive. There are two aspects to that. The first is the negative is lazy, intellectually lazy, and I think a scapegoat for too much. It is hard to change. It is easy to retain the status quo. Therefore, given the two options, we will do nothing. Negative is easy for evil administrators to ride. The positive is something that they want to do, but given no option, like the vacuum, they will go into the negative space.

The second is, the positive is powerful. If you don't try something, of course you won't achieve anything. So first is the willingness to try, and being positive. And I want to repeat what others have already said, there should be no excuses for something being hard. Everything in life that is worthwhile is hard. Don't use "hard" as a negative. Hard is a positive that builds resilience, that builds humanity, and that builds powerful relationships. And those are the challenges. I was rewriting a speech of the Vice Chancellor's today. I took out "problems" and I put in "challenges". Those are the challenges that present us. And then, whether you believe the research or not, there is this concept of the power of positive thinking and positive psychology.

Okay, if you have come with me this far and you believe in this power of the positive, I think there are two aspects, or two ways I want to think about it. One is around learning. The message that this is the hardest language; the message that most people never get to fluency; the message that we have dropouts; the message that our retention rates are not

as high as we want, are negative messages which make the cause harder. Turning that into the positive, which is how we prepare people for those future successes, I think is easier to get people on board with.

The second one is about the politics, or the public policy as Joe (Lo Bianco) would talk about. Let me focus on three things here. The first is, why Japan? So much of our time now is talking about the negative of Japan. The lost decades. Why Japan? I want to get beyond that. Japan (I like this idea of rebranding) is sexy. Japan has the strongest teaching infrastructure of any language. You guys are the best. This is the model for the rest of the world. So get out of the conversation, of the rhetoric, of deficit, and move to how strong we are. The same with the White Paper. No one actually debates what the White Paper is arguing, which is, the gravity has shifted and we need to prepare. All of the debate, all of the negativity is over: do we put in ten thousand dollars or ten billion dollars? I mean, that's a pretty positive conversation to be having. Let's turn it into the positive. And finally, the challenges in schools. I've been there, I've been to your schools, my son's in your schools, I've taught in the schools; I know it is challenging. I know doing that day in and day out, you can get frustrated and you can fall into the rhetoric of the negative, but it's actually the positive that will bring us along. It's the positive that the evil principals, it's the positive that the evil deans, it's the positive that the evil cheque writers, the politicians and the bureaucrats, want. Optimism sells. And we have something that this country needs and you are the best in the world at delivering it. Thank you very much.

Robyn Spence-Brown

I've asked Professor Tohsaku to go last so that he can, with his critical eye, from an outsider's perspective, comment on some things he's observed since he's been here.

Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku

Because I went through a very bad education system, I didn't develop well my critical thinking skills, and so I cannot be critical in that way, but I'd like to talk about the building of Japanese language education in Australia from a slightly different point of view.

As Chihiro-sensei said when she introduced me (*for the keynote address*), I am the first president of the American Association of Teachers of Japanese. This association started on January 1st this year. Before then, we had two organisations. One is ATJ, mainly consisting of university faculty members who are teaching Japanese language, Japanese literature. And another one is NCJLT, mostly comprising K through 12 teachers.

Before these two organisations merged, they hardly had a conversation between these two entities. Probably, the conversation started five or six years ago when we started developing national standards. That was the first time when I think university faculty members and K–12 teachers got to work together and discussed the streamlined program of Japanese language, and that was a really good opportunity for both the K through 12 teachers and university faculty members. And also we developed an advanced program, AP Japanese Language and Culture program, whereby high school students can take this university Japanese language course while in high school, and if they pass the exam, they can get college credit before coming into a college. In order to develop the AP program and exam, especially, high school teachers and university teachers come together to develop the program and test. During the course of this process, we have a conversation and we get to know each other. Before the introduction of the AP program, university faculty members didn't care about K through 12 programs. And K through 12 teachers were afraid of talking to us. But communication is really great. And I think it's important for K through 12 teachers and university faculty members to have a conversation, to sit together and to understand each other. This is really important for building a future of Japanese language education, I think in Australia too. And one good way to have this kind of conversation is to develop a well-articulated program. By not having a well-articulated program from kindergarten through to university, we waste a lot of money and time. And also, we cannot create highly proficient Japanese language speakers.

I often hear in the United States, “How many years do you have to study Japanese if you want to become proficient?” It's true, Japanese language is really difficult, but sometimes (it's not) because (it is) too hard, it's because we don't have well-articulated Japanese language programs from kindergarten through university, that students won't become more proficient in Japanese. So I think teachers from every entity, every sector, should get together and think about developing a well-articulated program from K through university. And also, we should not forget after university. I think we should think about Japanese language education from cradle to grave. Even after university, when education is over, people should use Japanese.

So developing life-long Japanese language speakers and users is really important. I was reading a newspaper article, actually *Nihon keizai shinbun*, the other day, and in that article, I don't mean to put down cab drivers, but a cab driver who had worked for a really famous, big corporation in Japan, he actually was in Southeast Asia, and when he returned to Japan from Southeast Asia, he was fired and he lost his job and he became a cab driver. And when someone interviewed this cab driver and asked “Why do you think you were fired?” he replied “Because I didn't have any professional skills.” I talked about twenty-first-century skills this morning, and in this article, this person who interviewed

this cab driver said, “In the twenty-first-century, having professional skills, perfect professional skills, is really important to survive.” So if you study Japanese, you should strive to become a really proficient speaker. There is a business book talking about *Ten thousand hours*; in order to become professionally skilful, you have to do something, one thing, for ten thousand hours. Ten thousand hours is just a figurative thing, but if you want to become more proficient in Japanese, you have to, although it’s hard, you should work really hard. And you should work from kindergarten through university and even after university is over, I think you should keep studying Japanese, and we should emphasise that. And, again, it’s up to you to create joy in learning Japanese.

And I know my time is up soon, but in order to build up the future Japanese education in Australia, you should constantly do leadership training. Leaders do not stay young forever. We need the next generation of leaders. The same is true in the United States. When I was approached by The Japan Foundation five years ago and asked “What is the priority for Japanese language education here?” I said, “Development of young leaders.” We won’t stay young forever, and we need, constantly need, the next generation of leaders, and I think the same is true with Australia.

And also lastly, I talked about advocacy and as you see from my talk, advocacy needs special skills. So in order to advocate for Japanese language education in Australia, I strongly suggest you have a workshop to train people for advocacy skills. Thank you.

Robyn Spence-Brown

Now, I’d like to throw the floor open to the panel, to throw in those important comments you’ve missed or pick up on things that other people have said. Who would like to kick off?

Matthew Absalom

I absolutely agree that we shouldn’t be justifying ourselves. I want to remind you that in every declaration for educational goals for young people—the three declarations: Darwin, Melbourne, Adelaide—languages has always been one of the key learning areas. We actually have to stop justifying ourselves.

But the point I want to make is actually about finding out why the students are doing it. Sometimes the curriculum documents tell us that the kids are doing it because they want to talk the language or, you know, they want to go buy one of your nice Japanese pancakes or something and they want to talk to the lady while they’re doing it. Some kids don’t want to, some kids want to read, some kids want to do something else. My

point is to find out why they're doing it so we can respond as educators, so we can go, "Oh, I've got a group of nerdy big heads here who want to read. Let's do some reading even though the curriculum doesn't tell us to", or "I've got the opposite, some illiterate fools who don't want to read." Let's emphasise another aspect of the language. That's my point about why they're doing it. I just want us to be able to be responsive and actually feel okay about going, "Hang on a minute, okay, I've got this curriculum thing here, but the kids want this (other thing). I know I can do it. I know their Japanese will improve through these activities. Let's give it a whirl."

Kent Anderson

I hadn't thought about Matthew's suggestion of brand until he made it. I think it's an excellent one. Let me encourage one thing which is, we don't have to wait for Japan to figure out what Japan's brand is, and fall on the back of that. This is Japanese for Australia, and that can be different, and indeed we might even lead Japan in this.

The second point is, tagging on to the end of this conversation we were just having right now, when you go into a branding exercise, you are not just saying, "What do the clients want?" you are also saying, "Who do I want to be?" So, I'm not in favour of just 100% giving up who we are to wherever the students might be at this time. I want to take a bit of responsibility for who we are as well. But I think the brand is a wonderful idea for JSAA or for one of those others. Also, I might plug Languages and Cultures Network for Australian Universities (LCNAU) Languages Communities; for the university teachers here, please join in this advocacy.

Chihiro Kinoshita Thomson

Taking on the branding idea, I think if we let the students do the choosing it'll work. And just to look back at my last semester, our students did some presentations on their own chosen topics and one was "maid cafes" and a second was, "Why is it that Japanese idols don't sell in Australia?" And those topics came along with "Why is the Japanese suicide rate so high?". So, you know, let the students choose what they want to learn and it will work. And also our Australian students have different types of consuming life. They use Hello Kitty stationery goods and they aspire to buy Shiseido Cosmetics, even though they are so expensive and they can't afford it, and they eat sushi every day. We don't have to sell Japan too much, they already own their own Japan. Let the students do their own talking, I think it will be alright. And after listening to Tohsaku-sensei's talk this afternoon, and I've known Tohsaku-sensei for many years, I have taken his advice and I want to do some self-promotion, and I'd like to encourage you to do more self-promotion.

This year at UNSW we have focussed on advocacy. One of the advocacy strategies was, we applied for the Office of Learning and Teaching citation for an outstanding contribution to student learning, and we were awarded that, along with \$10,000 dollars. You know, being humble is Japanese, I know self-promotion is not very Japanese-y, but we need to do it and I'm sure there are many more deserving teams and individuals here who'd deserve this award much more than us, but we did it and that's why we got it. We need to do it and I encourage all of you to apply for awards.

Kathe Kirby

I wanted to pick up on something that Anne de Kretser has said and link her to the obvious enthusiasm for the number of associations that have been talked about during the panel discussion. Anne made a point about sharing good practice, and if there's one thing that the AEF learned through the report we did into what's working to build demand, it's that if we do share practice, we're sharing good practice and that it's really powerful. One of the profiles we did was a program happening in New South Wales independent schools where they actually were teaching parents at primary schools the language that the primary school was teaching, so parents were able to come in for half an hour a couple of times a week and had a go at learning Japanese or Chinese. This had a really powerful effect on the parents. And the parents all of a sudden say, "Oh now we get it! Oh this is fun! We're going to really support this." I'm using that as an example, when you share that practice, when you say, "Here are some schools in New South Wales doing this, why couldn't schools everywhere be doing this?" So it's a way to bring the parent community in. And I think that with the rich and live associations that you've got, one of the real challenges is utilising the technologies that there are today. How are you going to really build on sharing good practice and sharing what's working? Because everybody in this room has strategies that they know work really well. So I just urge you to think about that.

Robyn Spence-Brown

Thank you very much to all the panellists, for giving us such rich ideas in a very short period of time: Very important ideas about how to connect and how to advocate for Japanese—and a lot of challenges. That's why we invited them, because just as Jo Lo Bianco said about our expectations for students, we have very high expectations for the Japanese community. We feel very privileged to have had you here. Thank you for starting many conversations for us.

Innovative practices

Wiki wonderland: a tool for learning and advocacy

Wendy Venning, St Francis de Sales College

Abstract

The Junior Primary sector (4–8 year olds) is under-represented in the LOTE literature. This age group has particular learning needs which are largely ignored in LOTE research. Yet creating the future starts here: this is the time when foundations can be laid for sound language learning skills, and above all, the time when a love of language learning can be instilled.

This paper will discuss the use of a wiki in a Junior Primary Japanese program. The wiki was originally designed as a communication tool for parents and the wider school community, to showcase Junior Primary language learning in an outer metropolitan school. This use of technology then became a tool of advocacy for language learning. Parents became advocates, sharing the wiki with friends and relatives all over Australia and indeed all over the world.

In addition to showcasing student learning and becoming a tool for advocacy, the wiki also became a learning tool in itself. Pages on the wiki could be re-used time and again to review targeted language, using the interactive whiteboard to pinpoint or extend the linguistic focus.

The paper will conclude with hands-on advice and tips for setting up a wiki.

Keywords

Junior Primary, wiki, technology, communication

ウィキ・ワンダーランド:学習とアドボカシーのためのツール

ウェンディ・ヴェニング、セント・フランシス・ド・サール・カレッジ

要旨

現在のLOTE教育は、小学校低学年(4～8歳)を十分に考慮して行われていない。この年齢の子どもたちに特有の学習ニーズは、LOTEの研究において大いに見過ごされてきた。しかし、未来の創造はここから始まると言ってもよい。小学校低学年こそ、言語学習のしっかりした基盤を作る時期であり、何より言葉を学ぶことの楽しさを教えられる年齢でもある。

本稿は、小学校低学年の日本語プログラムにおけるウィキの活用について論じる。もともとこのウィキは、郊外の学校で小学校低学年の生徒がどのように外国語を学習しているかを示すために、生徒の親や地域社会とのコミュニケーションのツールとして開発されたのだが、このテクノロジーは、その後外国語学習そのものを推進するアドボカシーのためのツールとなった。生徒の親達が率先してオーストラリア国内、その他世界中の友達や親戚とこのウィキを共有し、広める役割を担ったのである。

このようにウィキは、生徒が日本語を学ぶ様子を紹介し、アドボカシーのツールとなったが、それだけでなくウィキは学習のツールにもなっている。ウィキに載せた記事は、学習目標とされている言葉を復習するのに繰り返し使うことが可能で、さらに学習のポイントを詳しくあるいは発展させて教えようと思えば、インタラクティブ・ホワイトボードを併用することもできよう。

本稿の締めくくりとして、実際にウィキを立ち上げるためのアドバイスやヒントも紹介する。

キーワード

小学校低学年、ウィキ、テクノロジー、コミュニケーション

Introduction

The Junior Primary sector (4–8 year olds) is under-represented in the LOTE literature. This age group has particular needs: students are often pre-literate; are still developing fine motor skills and social skills; have a high need for routine and repetition; have high teacher dependence; and have an interactive play-based learning style that thrives on hands-on activities (ACARA 2011, 7). These learning parameters are largely ignored in LOTE research. Yet creating the future starts here: this is the time when foundations can be laid for sound language learning skills, and above all, the time when a love of language learning can be instilled.

This paper will discuss the use of a wiki in a Junior Primary Japanese program. The wiki was originally designed as a communication tool for parents and the wider school community to showcase Junior Primary language learning in an outer metropolitan school. This use of technology then became a tool of advocacy for language learning. Parents who could clearly see how the above learning parameters translate to the Japanese classroom, and who could then clearly see the benefits of learning Japanese at Junior Primary level, then became advocates themselves, sharing the wiki with friends and relatives all over Australia and indeed all over the world.

In addition to showcasing student learning and becoming a tool for advocacy, the wiki also became a learning tool in itself. Pages on the wiki could be re-used time and again to review targeted language, using the interactive whiteboard to pinpoint or extend the linguistic focus. Furthermore, students became so keen to feature on the wiki that they put extra effort into producing high quality work that would be showcased.

Classroom technology

The explosion of classroom technology over the past few years has been tremendously exciting. One of the most exciting things is the way new classroom technology allows teachers to connect with parents. Language teachers often don't have much contact with parents, especially at primary school level, where the homeroom teacher is the parents' main contact. Technology that allows language teachers to become closer to parents is extremely useful. My experience of working with younger children is that parents are generally very keen for their children to learn a language.

They are also very keen to know what their children are learning, and very interested to know what is going on in the classroom. This parental involvement drops off as children reach high school, but at Junior Primary level, parental interest and involvement in schooling is

very high. Parents' own past language learning experiences may have been very teacher-oriented, may have been at secondary level, and perhaps focussed heavily on using writing to learn a language. Learning a language at Junior Primary level is very different.

About Junior Primary students

This age group has particular needs. Students:

- are often pre-literate (often do not even know how to hold a pencil, and cannot recognise any letters, let alone write any);
- are still developing fine motor skills (many cannot cut with scissors, many cannot fold a piece of paper in half);
- are still developing social skills (often call out, have little consideration for others' needs);
- have a high need for routine and repetition (the sense of stability Junior Primary children get from following routines is hugely important to learning);
- have high teacher dependence, constantly needing reassurance; and
- have an interactive play-based learning style that thrives on hands-on activities (ACARA 2011, 7).

You may think this is a perfect description of Year 9s, but in the case of Junior Primary students, these characteristics are typical of the normal social development of this age group. In addition, our younger learners are increasingly presenting with a variety of challenging behaviours. These often arise from a lack of social maturity, particularly in the areas of persistence and resilience. This is what we must expect of learners of this age group. We must find ways to engage these younger learners, ways of learning language that do not rely on literacy skills which may not yet be present. A successful lesson takes these learning needs into account.

Looking in on my Junior Primary classroom, you might think the students are not learning—they are just play-acting, just singing songs, just making craft. But in fact this is how 4–8 year olds learn (Bell and Lambart 1997; Makin and Wilmott 1998); the essential learning may just not be as explicit as it is in secondary classrooms.

For example, we may be learning the sentence patterns of:

Kore wa nan desu ka? ___ desu

Kore wa ___ desu ka? Hai, ___ desu Iie, ___ desu

We frame these in something age appropriate, like using the book *A visit to the zoo*, and use the zoo animals as a base for the sentence structures.

The wiki is a way of clearly showing parents the way we learn a language at Junior Primary level—not just the sentences we are learning, but also the activities we use to focus on those sentences—the toys, the craft, the puppets, and the learning through creative play.

The wiki

My wiki started out as a communication tool for parents and the wider school community, to showcase the work the students were doing in their Japanese lessons. I wanted the pages of the wiki to show that my Japanese teaching is clearly targeted to meet Junior Primary needs. I wanted parents to see the variety of activities in my Japanese lessons; the use of the school environment such as the schoolyard and playground; the ways students use classroom technology such as the SmartBoard and iPads; and most of all, the sense of fun.

I also wanted parents to see that while students thought they were learning about zoo animals, for example, in fact they were:

- learning about word order in Japanese sentences
- learning how to ask and answer questions in Japanese
- learning about the syllabic nature of Japanese writing, and so on.

I wanted them to see that what the child saw in the lesson—say, making a tiger, or a paper plate face—provided an opportunity for reflection on the language being learned.

What is a wiki?

A wiki is simply a publicly accessible website to which you can add, on an ongoing basis, as many pages as you like. The pages can simply feature information. For example, my wiki includes a broad outline of my teaching program and the Australian Curriculum Framework for Japanese. Previously, the official page contained an outline of the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability (SACSA) for Japanese, and showed parents how my teaching program reflected the South Australian Languages policy. From the parents' point of view, this is probably the most boring part of the wiki—no photos of their children here. But it is valuable to have this information out there in the public domain, easily available to any interested parents. Transparency is a key idea for me. Then—on more interesting pages—we can add photos, glittery headlines and video clips of students.

In other words, my wiki is an electronic class newsletter, showing parents what their students are learning in Japanese on a regular basis. It's important to me not just to show the “star” pupils, but everyone having a go. Making mistakes is part of how we internalise our language learning, and the process is as important as the product. I can include links to other sites we use in the classroom, such as the folk stories on KidsWeb Japan. In this way, parents can click on the link and immediately read the story that the class has read on the SmartBoard. Or the student can click on the link and share the story with their parents.

I can also include links to other sites which may not be Japanese in nature, but can still be used in the Japanese lesson—for example, the animation made by primary school children in South Australia of the song “Caught in the Crowd” that I used in our lessons on feelings. This was an effective way of combining Japanese with broader educational goals, as the song, and the really moving video clip, looks at bullying at school. Many of my students were in tears watching this, and our conversations about how we were feeling came right from the heart. Again, it is valuable to be able to show parents how we teach language at Junior Primary level.

Students and parents can also use the wiki to follow up on Japanese learning at home. On each page, I write the language we have focussed on in each topic, to give parents a starting point so that they can become involved in conversations with their children about the Japanese the child is learning. Parents can see the songs we have learned, and use these to help their children review learning. When we make origami, I put the steps on a wiki page, so that students can do more origami at home if they wish.

It's fair to say that, notwithstanding the learning that takes place, Junior Primary students often focus on something interesting to them, for example: "Mum, we ate marshmallows in Japanese today!" The wiki page allows a conversation to develop from that: "Why did you eat marshmallows in Japanese?", and most importantly, "What words did you learn?"

The wiki allows parents to easily see that the marshmallows were in fact pretend *dango*, and the chocolate sauce was pretend soy sauce. Parents can see that the language and intercultural focus was on saying grace: *itadakimasu* and *gochisosama*.

It is not realistic to expect Junior Primary students to articulate to their parents a lot of what happens in a lesson. The wiki provides a tool to frame conversations about language learning, making it easy for parents to ask appropriate questions in talking to their child. I find this transparency most beneficial to parent-teacher communication, as parents can clearly see what their children are learning, and how they are learning it at the Junior Primary level.

At its simplest level, my wiki invites parents in to my classroom so they can see what we are doing in Japanese lessons—thus fostering transparency in my teaching program.

Advocacy

As time went on, I found that the wiki had taken on another role—as a tool for advocacy. As parents saw that it really is worthwhile learning a language in Junior Primary, saw how much Japanese the students were speaking and writing, and how the student's understanding of Japanese culture was growing, they began forwarding the site address to grandparents, relatives and friends: of course to show off their child's achievements, but indirectly celebrating the achievements of the Japanese program. It is wonderful to see parents and the wider community sharing the excitement of our Japanese program—in just a year, parents had shared the wiki with friends and relatives all over Australia, and indeed all over the world. This is fantastic advocacy for the teaching and learning of Japanese.

A learning tool

In addition, the wiki has also become a learning tool in itself. My students are excited to feature on the wiki, and this has become a motivating factor driving their learning. They want to produce great work that will feature in a photograph. They want to be recorded speaking Japanese so that the clip will appear on the wiki. When the photos

and videos appear, the students want to see and hear them again and again—so the wiki then becomes a teaching tool. Using the interactive whiteboard, I can pinpoint particular linguistic items for the class to review. I can press pause and ask students to supply the next word—or think of an alternative, or to sing the next line of a song. Because the video features themselves, their brothers and sisters, and their friends, it is so much more fun.

I have also deliberately used the wiki to further the connection between home and school in a Show and Tell page, in which students show others the Japanese things they have at home. When shown my wiki, the South Australian Minister for Education commented in particular on this page because of the language learning links made between home and school.

The wiki has also been used in ways I didn't envisage—a teacher at another school (where Japanese is not taught) used my page on making origami to demonstrate procedure writing to a class.

Setting up a wiki

Wikispaces, a site where teachers can create their own wiki, is free for schools. Teachers simply need to create a name for the wiki and log on to www.wikispaces.com to establish their own page. I think it is good to choose a name that shows clearly what the wiki is about. Of course you can use any other website template to serve the same purpose. Wikis can be used as information sharing sites in which anyone can contribute or add parts, but my wiki is read only because of its primary function as a newsletter.

Photos and videos are imported as files. Video clips need to be kept short in this format. Wikis operate differently to Word documents, and I've found the best way to display photos and videos is to first create a table. Of course you need permission from parents to show students' photos on a website. Many schools now have a standard consent form for this. Some parents do not consent, and there are valid reasons such as custody disputes that may come in to play, and these rights must be respected. I know of some teachers who black out the faces of children who do not have consent, but I take a great deal of photos and prefer just to not use those that include non-consenting children. One does have to be careful not to have children in the background too, as with computer technology a tiny dot in the background can be enlarged so the face is recognisable. It is always better to crop or remove the photo.

Headlines, emoticons, and long video clips are imported as widgets using embed codes. I like Glitterfy.com for headlines, but Sparklee.com and CoolText are also popular. Colour backgrounds for pages are also imported as widgets. I have found that writing is best done first in a Word document if you want to use Japanese script, then cut and pasted in to the wiki. On an iPad, it is easier to write directly in Japanese script.

Conclusion

My wiki functions primarily as a communication tool—an electronic audiovisual newsletter for parents and the wider school community to showcase the Junior Primary language learning in our school. From this beginning, the wiki has grown into a tool of advocacy for language learning as parents have shared the wiki with friends and relatives across Australia and around the world.

In addition to showcasing student learning and becoming a tool for advocacy, the wiki has also become a favourite classroom learning tool. Students enjoy revisiting pages on the wiki to review targeted language, and have become so keen to feature on the wiki that they put extra effort into producing high quality work in the hope of being showcased.

I am passionate about language teaching: my wiki is an opportunity to share that passion with others, inviting them to join me on a walk through my Wiki Wonderland.

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Japanese speech night at the primary school level: Advocacy through language learning

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Abstract

Every year at Kalamunda Christian School, students are invited to take part in a Japanese speech contest. The contest is held in the evening in the school gymnasium, with family and friends as the audience. Speeches are based on the topic for their year level. Students use topic-related phrases they have learnt to plan their own talk. It is then checked by the teacher before the students practice it to the point of fluency. Most students know their speech by heart, although reading of hiragana script on the day is allowed. The number of participating students has increased steadily over the contest's history. In 2008, 22% of the students studying Japanese took part. By 2013 the number had grown to 37%. The evening is highly anticipated by students and parents alike. It has improved student motivation and changed the culture of language learning. In addition to advocacy, the contest has greatly improved student learning. Students who enter the competition every year have approximately 60 phrases in their long term memory. By changing the vocabulary, the number of sentences they are able to create in the future is enormous.

Keywords

speech contest; Japanese; primary; language advocacy

初等レベルの日本語スピーチコンテスト:言語学習を通じたアドボカシー

マリエル・ハワード、カラマンダ・クリスチャン・スクール

要旨

当校の生徒は、毎年日本語スピーチコンテストに参加することができる。このコンテストは、学校の講堂で夕方、家族や友人を招いて行われ、子どもたちは、それぞれの学年に見合ったトピックに基づいてスピーチを用意する。低学年の生徒なら、自分や家族、あるいは住んでいる家について話をし、高学年になれば、買い物に行く設定でスピーチをしたり、友達と出かける計画について話をする。生徒は、トピックに関連した言葉遣いを覚えて各自のスピーチに盛り込む。出来上がったスピーチは先生に添削してもらい、すらすら言えるようになるまで練習する。本番でひらがなの原稿を読むことも認められているが、ほとんどの生徒がスピーチを暗記している。コンテストに参加する生徒は年々増えており、2008年の参加者数が日本語を学ぶ生徒の22%であったのが、2013年には37%にまで増えている。親子ともに非常に楽しみにしているこのイベントは、生徒の学習意欲を高め、言語学習を取り巻く環境に変化をもたらした。スピーチコンテストによって日本語教育が推進されたことに加え、子どもたちの日本語力も大きく向上した。毎年コンテストに参加する生徒が確実に覚える構文の数は、およそ60と考えられており、名詞や動詞を別のものに置き換えて同じ構文を使えば、学習者の作文力は無限に広がっていくだろう。

キーワード

スピーチコンテスト、日本語、初等レベル、言語教育のアドボカシー

Introduction

Kalamunda Christian School is an independent Christian primary school which, since 2008, has run an evening Japanese speech contest in Term 4 for Years 1-6. At Kalamunda Christian School, all students from Pre-Primary to Year 6 receive 60 minutes of Japanese instruction per week. In 2008, 22% of the students in Years 1 to 6 took part in the contest. By 2013, the number had grown to 37%. Over its six-year history, the speech contest has considerably improved student motivation and skill and changed the culture of language learning. In 2009 to 2011, I also ran the speech contest at Swan Christian College Junior School (until 2010 called Midland Christian School), where the results were similar to those at Kalamunda Christian School.

At the contest, the students present a speech or role-play based on the topic they have covered in their Japanese classes that year, as follows:

Year 1	Self-Introduction
Year 2	Describing family
Year 3	Describing own room, garden and house
Year 4	Shopping role-play
Year 5	Arranging an outing with a friend
Year 6	Inviting a friend to a birthday party (2008-2012) Biography of favourite artist and explaining processes used to create own artwork (from 2013)

Aims of the speech contest

The contest was born out of a desire to motivate the students in their language studies. The plan was also to ensure that learnt expressions remain relevant throughout the year, form a usable chunk of natural conversation, get revised often and go into the students' long term memory.

The contest was also planned to overcome some of the challenges of language education in primary schools: namely, lack of time allocation; lack of information and communications technology (ICT) and other resources; and frequently changing teachers. All of these factors combined means primary school language teachers must make effective use of all the time and resources available, and plan programs that are embedded into the curriculum, providing continuity even if the language teacher was to change.

Another aim of the speech contest was to create an “open-ended” activity to recognise not only individual students’ abilities but also their capabilities, thus focusing on each student’s potential. The structures for both the speeches and role plays provide an opportunity for extension, as students are able to add as many new words and additional phrases as they are capable of memorising.

A speech contest also provides a communicative purpose to improve accuracy and fluency in the language: “Learning is about personal meaning-making ... Interaction needs to be purposeful ... about something ... have[ing] value in its own right” (Scarino and Liddicoat 2009). Both speeches (real communication) and role-plays (pretend conversations) provide practice for real impromptu language use. This communicative purpose can and should be created in a regular classroom, but is naturally reinforced in a wider context when the audience grows to a couple of hundred people.

It can be argued that neither the actual speech contest nor the practice for it provides an opportunity for real spontaneous conversations. In order to address this issue, Year 6 students at Kalamunda Christian School study art through the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) pedagogy, where real communication is ensured by studying another subject (art) in a foreign language (Japanese). On the other hand, a typical tourist to Japan is not likely to make an art project but has a need to buy some food and souvenirs. A speech contest provides a perfect opportunity to revise and memorise high-frequency, everyday expressions for future use.

Finally, a speech contest increases the profile of languages in the school community, especially if press, and guests from outside of the school, are also invited. The audience also has an opportunity to learn about the culture of the country. At Kalamunda the audience gets to sample Japanese food, see the judges dressed in kimono and watch videos clips about Japan.

Steps to a successful speech contest

1. Effective teaching of the content during the year

The success of the speech contest relies heavily on the effective teaching of content during the year. As time is limited, opportunities need to be maximised by making learning interesting, fun, relevant and age-appropriate, and above all, instilled with a real communicative purpose. Far too often primary school children are taught lists of nouns with no sentences to communicate with. Japanese children are not likely to walk

around pointing out all the colours they can see, but “What is your favourite colour?” is a common question among this age-group and provides real communication.

A variety of methods and activities need to be provided in order to maintain interest and ensure a variety of language uses. There are many language learning resources available to purchase and many more to download, but as any good educator knows, simple everyday items like blankets, dice, balls, card, puppets and pictures are a great and cheap way to engage student interest. As Scarino and Liddicoat say, “The key is to have resources which open up multiple possible uses and allow for flexibility and creativity in teaching and learning” (2009).

“Music is the most effective memory strategy as emotional experience is readily recalled” (Alford 2010). Some of the songs learnt at Kalamunda Christian School match the topic they are studying at the time, while others are sung during the last 5 minutes of the lesson. These “filler songs” are often real Japanese children’s songs on YouTube, which are played in order to increase the students’ vocabulary and understanding of the Japanese culture. Even if students do not understand all the words, the songs will improve their intonation and provide a calm multi-sensory learning environment. As revision, students are also encouraged to sing along to songs they have previously learnt as they trace new characters.

The power of revision cannot be underestimated. It is especially useful to expose students to the same words in different contexts and by different methods. You can cater for each student’s preferred learning style by revising the same words in a variety of ways: visually, kinetically and aurally. By using plenty of movement in sports, role-plays, games and gestures you can engage the power of “motor memory” (Alford 2010). Getting students to think of their own mnemonics for new words will help them recall the words later. Changing location can also help weaker students, as “teaching a concept in a different location assists students to recall it through episodic association, i.e. utilizing the associative emotions they develop” (Alford 2010). Teachers should also use emotions to engage learners’ “brain compatible learning” by modelling an optimistic state (Alford 2010).

All Japanese assessments at Kalamunda Christian School are open ended, and students are given a rubric to help them achieve their goals. Students also practice their speaking assessments with a friend, ask for help if needed, and get assessed when they believe they are ready. This ensures that students know their speeches or role-plays well before the contest, as the speaking assessments are the same or similar to the speech they are required give in the contest.

Finally, target language should be used as the mode of delivery whenever possible to maximise the time available. As any second-language speaker knows, it takes the brain a moment to get used to the new language environment and start not only understanding but also producing more language. My own experiences, as well as observations of my students, show that constant swapping of language does not allow the learners to enter this new language “zone”. In addition, by using the target language only, the students are likely to become familiar with everyday expressions like “well done”, which were not even included in the intended learning outcomes for the lesson. This “incidental language learning” adds to both speaking and listening skills and improves the students’ fluency in the language. At Kalamunda Christian School all students from Years 1 to 5 start their lesson with a 20 minute “Japanese-only time”, in which previously learnt expressions are revised and new expressions are introduced and practiced. Year 6 students listen to and speak only Japanese during their 60 minute CLIL art lesson.

2. The role of script in effective teaching

Kalamunda Christian School has a “no romaji” policy in order to ensure correct pronunciation and to remove the crutch that often prevents students from advancing in their hiragana reading and writing ability. The Japanese script is sold to the students from the beginning as a “secret code” that their family cannot read, which creates mystery and intrigue.

Students learn each character as it comes up in the new expressions they are learning. The characters get revised regularly as they come up in new words, and each lesson revises some old characters and introduces new ones. The written language supports the spoken language and vice versa, as the expressions students have memorised help them read and write new script, and their knowledge of the script helps them learn new words. This method also ensures that any new students get a chance to learn the characters as they are being revised by others.

Over time, students progress at their own pace, moving from individual character recognition to being able to read words and eventually whole sentences. All hiragana tests and other reading and writing assessments are similarly scaffolded to cater for students at various levels of reading and writing proficiency.

3. Good marketing of the event

As is the case of any event, good marketing is essential to create excitement and hype. Students are reminded about the speech contest at the start of each year, and quite often they are already asking what their new topic is in their very first lesson. They are reminded of the benefits of taking part: improved Japanese and public speaking skills, improved confidence and an opportunity to impress their parents and friends. The event is also a permanent feature of the school calendar.

Entry into the contest is invitation-only, based on their speaking mark. This makes the invitation to participate highly desirable and ensures that students work hard to get a good mark in their speaking assessments. However, if a child really wants to participate but has not made the mark, they are given extra help to reach their goals. Often this extra attention helps deepen the relationship between teacher and student, and ensures that the student stays motivated in their Japanese studies for years to come. Once a student has indicated their desire to take part and permission has been received from the parents, the student is not allowed to change their mind. This supports the school's values of commitment and resilience.

The principal, Mr Gavin Nancarrow, always attends the speech contest in order to show his support for the event and languages in general. Every year, other language teachers in the area are also invited to see the event either as judges or as members of the audience. The event is made as "official" as possible, with students wearing formal school uniform, standing one by one on the stage, speaking into a microphone and bowing at the beginning and end of their speech.

The hall is decorated with Japanese posters, Japanese video clips are shown during breaks between year groups, and Japanese food is offered at the event. In 2013, speech contest students even sang a Japanese song and performed a Japanese dance on the stage. Every year the contest improves, with new things to showcase to parents.

4. Planning and practice of own speech

Students are given ample examples of speeches and role-plays. Students particularly enjoy the subliminal method, which I first experienced as a student of Swedish in my native Finland. Students are asked to put their heads on their desks and close their eyes. The teacher plays relaxing Japanese music, and after a while starts giving example speeches and role-plays while the students are still resting.

Students base their own speech or role-play on the structures and expressions learnt throughout the year. Depending on the level of ability, they are welcome to add new words or expressions. If they struggle to memorise the whole conversation, they can also delete some of the phrases. This happens particularly closer to the speech contest itself as some students run out of time to memorise the whole speech. Often the winner is not decided only by correctness or fluency, but also by how many expressions the student has managed to include in their speech. Students are not upset even if their speech ends up shorter than originally planned. The joy comes from being able to stand on stage and show their parents what they have learnt. On the other hand the ability to add new words and expressions enables students to make their speech their own and allows able students to stretch themselves with an open-ended task.

The teacher writes down English translations of students' speeches as a PowerPoint presentation in order to provide a translation for the audience. The students get a copy of this speech and meet with the teacher one-on-one to ensure they can say the expressions correctly. In most speaking activities, real and practice, communication and fluency are more important than accuracy. However, as students are likely to use these phrases as a framework for future spontaneous communication, it is essential that they are memorised correctly. Once students can recall each expression, they practice in pairs and at home to improve fluency. Students who have already learnt their own speech are happy to help others, which improves learning outcomes for both students.

Actual contest

Students compete in their year groups. The two invited judges, one a Japanese teacher colleague and the other a native Japanese speaker, are given a copy of the English translation of the speeches so that they can follow them, tick off correct sentences and write notes if necessary. They are also given a list of all students with space after each student to write notes on the judging criteria of pronunciation, accuracy, fluency and variety of expressions.

The judges have time to deliberate after each year group and find consensus on the winner and runner-up. During this time the audience learns more about Japan by watching a short video clip. The results are announced at the end of the contest, and engraved medals are handed out at a future assembly. All participating students are given a Japanese trinket or treat as a thank you for taking part.

In 2012 and 2013 we had to separate the evening into a junior and a senior contest as the number of contestants grew to 65 and 73 respectively. Japanese supper was served between these contests.

Evaluation

As pointed out by Scarino and Liddicoat, all programs and activities need to be evaluated: “Evaluation is an integral part of the process of curriculum renewal. Evaluation involves making considered judgment about a program to ensure that what is being done in teaching, learning and assessment is worthwhile, effective and sufficient” (2009).

Evaluation for the speech contest is done every year by asking students about their experiences straight after the contest. I have also asked for feedback from principals, parents and stakeholders about how to improve the contest in future years.

Evaluation of the speech contest has resulted in many improvements over the years. As the number of participants increased, the contest was split into junior (Years 1–3) and senior (Years 4–6) sections with a shared supper between the contests. As access to technology improved, short video clips on Japan were added to entertain the audience while the judges deliberated.

Student evaluation

According to surveys, students enjoy taking part in the competition and most of the students come back to compete in following years. Classroom observation has proven that those who have participated in the contest continue to be highly motivated in their Japanese class and can recall expressions learnt in previous years. They are able to remember both the topic-related vocabulary and the key sentence structures and phrases used in their speech or role play. Altogether, the school’s Japanese program in Years 1–6 covers over 60 phrases and sentence structures as well as hundreds of individual words. Children who take part in the contest every year have the potential to retain all of these in their long term memory and thus be able use them in their own Japanese conversations in future years.

The contest was awesome. I like it because I get to talk in front of people. My Japanese gets better and I can still remember last year’s speech too. (Isla, Year 2 student)

Principal evaluation

The following statement was made by Gaye Entwistle, the acting principal of Swan Christian College Junior School. After receiving positive feedback from her after the first contest at the college in 2009, I asked her to write down her impressions so that I could include them in a professional development session that I ran in Perth in February 2010:

The Japanese contest was a new idea for the Junior School. Mariel was really keen and saw it as a great way to grow the profile of LOTE in the school and also challenge the children.

The planning and prep that went into the evening was great and the kids loved to have the extra sessions of coaching. There was a great up take of kids for the evening.

A large group of parents and friends arrived at the event and were treated to a sample supper of Japanese food. The atmosphere was exciting.

The delight was that we saw our children perform who were very competent but also those who managed to really persevere and push through the fear of performance. The standard of presentation by all children was really impressive.

Parents were delighted, and all the apprehension I felt leading into a public competition for the younger students quickly disappeared as I saw the pride and excitement as they competed and were encouraged and rewarded. It was a wonderful event we would really like to build into our regular program for the year.

Parent evaluation

I have also conducted informal oral surveys with parents after each contest, all of which have been positive. The following parent was asked to write down her impressions so that I could include them in subsequent professional development presentations on the topic.

A wonderful opportunity for the students to speak Japanese in front of an audience, to “force” them to converse yet with a thrill of competition.

The subject was “real life communication” about themselves, which will be useful later in life to speak to any Japanese speaker. The competition gave my daughter confidence, not only in her Japanese speaking but in speaking to a group of adults (parents) in a safe small atmosphere.

It was set up beautifully and carefully introduced to be a safe place. The PowerPoint behind each student enabled us non-speakers to understand what the child was saying.

Overall, a carefully thought out, carefully managed, delightful evening for parents and students alike. (Michelle Plaistowe, parent of a Year 5 student)

Conclusion

At the start of 2008 there were many disengaged students in the Japanese classes at Kalamunda Christian School. The purpose of the speech contest was to provide motivation and goals for the language learners as well as improve their language skills. In terms of improving motivation and Japanese language skills, the speech contest is the most significant addition to the Japanese language program at Kalamunda Christian School.

The number of participating students has increased steadily over the contest's history. In 2008, 32 students (22% of the students studying Japanese) took part. By 2013 the number had grown to 74 (37%).

The evening is highly anticipated by students and parents alike. As envisaged, it has improved student motivation and skills and changed the culture of language learning. In addition to advocacy, the contest has also greatly improved the students' language skills. Students who enter the competition every year would have approximately 60 phrases in their long term memory. By changing the vocabulary, the number of sentences they are able to create in the future is enormous.

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初級日本語コースにおけるタブレットPCの使用:インキング機能を使用した授業運営の利点と課題

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要旨

スクリーンに直接文字を書き込むことができる「インキング」機能が付いたタブレットPCは、数学や理科の分野を中心に多くの教育現場で使用されている。しかしながら、言語教育の分野ではまだ研究の余地があるようだ。そこで本稿では、タブレットPCを導入した初級日本語コースの実践を通してわかった様々な使用方法について報告する。具体的には、文字・語彙・文法の指導、ライティング・リーディング指導、教材開発、インタラクティブな授業運営、既習内容の復習、そして授業中のクイズなどにおけるタブレットPCの使用について述べる。

キーワード

日本語教育、タブレットPC、ICT

Use of tablet computers in a beginners' Japanese course: benefits and issues of using “inking” in the classroom

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Abstract

“Inking” is a feature of the tablet computer that enables the user to write directly on the screen, and is frequently used in educational settings, especially in the areas of mathematics and science. However, when it comes to language education, there seems yet to be scope for research. This paper explores the various uses of inking, based on an actual Japanese course for beginners, which has introduced tablet computers. The report will give specific examples of how tablet computers can be used in areas such as: teaching scripts, vocabulary and grammar, teaching reading and writing, developing teaching materials, running interactive classes, revising work and setting quizzes to students.

Keywords

Japanese language education, tablet computers, ICT

はじめに

タブレットPCは、教育の現場で10年以上使用されているが、言語教育の分野では十分に使われていない(Ellis-Behnke et al. 2003; Rogers and Cox 2008; Colwell 2004; Enriquez 2010)。日本語教育においては、伊藤(2006)が文字指導にタブレットPCを使用することの有用性について考察している。伊藤(2006)によるとタブレットPCの一つの利点は、スクリーンに手書きで線を引いたり文字をハイライトしたりすることができる「インキング」機能の存在である。これにより、パワーポイントスライドなどのデジタル化された教材を使用した指導と、従来のようなホワイトボードによる手書きの指導を融合したハイブリッドな教授法が可能となる。例えば、スライドに「り」、「さ」、「そ」のように印刷された文字が手書きの文字と異なるひらがなを表示した上で、講師がインク機能を使用してスライドの上に直接書いて見せることで印刷された文字と手書きの文字の違いを同時に見せることができる。このようにインキング機能は、日本語教師にとっては大きな可能性を秘めている(伊藤 2006)。

これを踏まえ、大学の日本語初級コースにて上記のインキング機能を導入し、タブレットPCの有用性を模索した。本稿では、この機能を使用した授業を複数回行った筆者を含む4名の講師達の記録をもとに、タブレットPCの可能性について報告する。

タブレットPCの導入

上で述べたように、大学の1年目の初級日本語コースにタブレットPCを導入した。本コースは、1週間に、全体講義が1時間、セミナーが2時間、そしてチュートリアルが1時間の計4時間構成になっており、教材には『げんき』(Banno et al. 2011)を使用した。

学期前に、講師たちは、大学での積極的なテクノロジーの使用を促進することを目的としたイー・エデュケーション・センター(eEducation Centre)にて、タブレットPCの使い方について研修を受けた。その後、インキングを可能にする「シンプル・ペン」のプラグインが付いたタブレットPCが各講師に与えられ、これを取り入れた授業を1学期間実施した。授業では、講師のタブレットPCをプロジェクターに接続し、クラス前方の大型スクリーンに映し出して授業を行った。授業でタブレットPCを使用したアクティビティを行った際には、各講師がどのようなアクティビティを行ったか、学生の反応、次回に向けての反省点などの詳細を記録した。

授業におけるタブレットPCの使用方法及び利点

この記録から、タブレットPCの様々な使用方法が明らかになった。例えば、1)文字・語彙・文法指導、2)ライティング・リーディング指導、3)教材の改善、4)学習者とのコラボレーションを重視したインタラクティブな授業、5)既習内容の復習、6)授業中の小テストやフィードバックにおける使用などが挙げられる。各項目の詳細は以下の通りである。

文字・語彙・文法指導

講師は、書き順や間違いやすい点に学習者の注意を引きながら、タブレットPC上に文字を実際を書いて見せたり、文字をなぞったりしながら指導した。文字学習は、初級の日本語学習者にとって最も難しい学習内容として知られている(Yamashita and Maru 2000; Itoh 2009)が、ひらがなの文字の上に同じ音のカタカナを書いて相互の類似点を示したり、漢字を覚えやすくするために、部首を異なる色で示したりすることができた。

インキングは、「こ・そ・あ・ど言葉」のように距離間や動きを示す抽象的な語彙を教えることにも便利であった。また、語彙をグループごとに色分けしたり、ハイライト機能を使用して「いる・える」や「う動詞」などの間違いやすい文法を教える際に、学習者から答えを引き出したりすることもできた。

ライティング・リーディング指導

インキングは、文字の書き順の手本を見せたり、手紙のようにまとまった文章を書く際に模範となる文章全体を提示したり、重要な情報をハイライトしながら読解のサポートをしたりすることができることも明らかになった。また、コーラス・リーディングの際に、読んでいる部分を講師がハイライトして、学習者に目で追わせることにより、書かれた言葉と発音される言葉を効果的に関連付けることもできた。

教材の改善

学習者が講師の後に続きリーディングをする際、文章へ注釈を加えたり、ふりがなや英訳を随時追加したりすることができ、教材の強化につながった。また、タブレットPCを利用して学習者へのサポートがその場でできるため、英語の内容を減らし、日本語を中心とした教材を準備することができた。学習者の間にも、日本語の教材を見ながら、助けを借りずに自分で意味を考えたり、思い出そうとしたりする努力がうかがえた。

学習者の参加を重視したインタラクティブな授業

多くの大学で、学生の欠席率がますます問題となっているため(Latreille 2008)、学習者の関心を高める方法を模索することは大変重要である。今回、筆者たちが実践したタブレットPCを導入した初級日本語コースでは、インキング機能を有効に利用し、インタラクティブな講義展開を試みることで、この課題に取り組んだ。例えば、クラス全体で穴埋め問題を行う場合、従来のパワーポイントスライドではアニメーション機能を用いて事前に用意した正しい答えしか表示することができなかった。しかし、インキング機能を使用することで、学習者が挙げた解答案をスライドにいくつか書き加えたり、それをもとにクラスで議論を行ったりすることで、学習者の理解度を確認しながら授業を進めることができるようになり、その場に臨機応変に対応したダイナミックな授業が可能となった。それに伴い、インキング機能でスライド上に手書きで文字を書き込むことで、正しい書き順を示したり、学習者が実際にノートに書く時間を与え集中を維持したりすることができた。このように、事前に内容を準備することができるスライドの強みと、手書きで文字が示せたり、臨機応変に対応したりできるホワイトボードの強みを融合した授業展開を行うことができた。さらに、携帯可能なタブレットPCを使用することにより、講師が学習者の方を向きながらスライドに書き込みができるため、学生にとってはスライドが見やすく、講師にとっては学生の集中を維持しやすい。

既習内容の復習

学期が開始する前に、講義、セミナー、チュートリアル間で教材を共有しやすくするために、使用するスライドの形式を講師間で統一した。例えば、講義で使ったスライドをセミナーで使い直す際には、講義担当の講師がインキングした英語のヒントやふりがなを消したり、講義では全て表示していた文をセミナーでは穴埋め問題に変更したりと、単純な繰り返しを避ける努力をするとともに、学習者の理解度を段階的に向上できるよう徐々に難易度を上げる修正を加えた。また、試験前には、前述したように授業で繰り返し学習した文章を、復習シートに載せることで更なる学習を促した。この復習シートは、授業で講師が解説する際に残したインキングをそのまま残した状態で、授業後にも学習者が各自のスマートフォンやパソコンからアクセスできるように加工した。

授業中のクイズ

インキング機能を使用し、日本文化に関連した賞品付きのクイズも行った。従来のパワーポイントのように、質問が記載されたスライドに続き、次のスライドですぐに答えが提示される形式とは違い、インキング機能を使うことで、スライドの空白部に答えを随時書き足していく形式をとることができた。これにより、学習者に考える時間を十分に設けながらクイズを進行することができた。

タブレットPCを導入した日本語授業に向けた課題

以上のように、タブレットPCには様々な使用方法や利点があり、スライドとホワイトボード両方の要素を持ったタブレットPCの良さを引き出すために講師たちが様々な工夫をしているのが見受けられた。しかし、タブレットPCの普及にはまだ課題が残っている。タブレット本体の重さにより長時間の携帯が困難なことに加え、処理速度の遅さや突然のフリーズにより円滑な授業運営が妨げられてしまうこともあったため、携帯性・安定性の向上が望まれる。また、インキング技術を授業で有効に使用し、パワーポイントスライドやホワイトボードには無い、タブレットPCならではの利点を活かすためには、十分なトレーニングや創意工夫が不可欠であるため、講師側の負担が大きくなってしまう場合もある。しかし、講師の記録によると、タブレットPCは、導入の初期段階で教材の作成や操作方法の学習に時間と労力の投資を要するものの、一通りの操作を行えるようになれば、非常に柔軟にカリキュラムに組み込むことができることがわかった。タブレットPCとインキング機能は、本稿で述べたように、授業をよりインタラクティブにする可能性を秘めているため、より有効な使用方法を模索する価値があるのではないだろうか。

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グローバル時代における日本語教育:プロセスとケースで学ぶビジネスコミュニケーション

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要旨

近年、特にアジアでは、日本企業のグローバル化の影響から、日本語ができる人材の獲得競争が激しくなっている。就労目的や現在の仕事のために日本語を学ぶ学習者の数も増加しているが、日本語教育の現場では人材育成についての議論が乏しい。

筆者らのこれまでの調査研究から、背景を異にする者同士が、日本語を使い協働をしていくためには、異文化理解はもちろんのこと、課題を達成していく能力や問題発見解決能力が重要であることが示されている。本稿では、調査結果を基に日本語教育を人材育成の観点から捉え直すことを提案し、人材育成のための2つのアプローチを提唱した。第一は、課題達成のプロセスで学ぶ、いわばプロセスアプローチ、第二は、実際に企業で生じた問題や当事者間のコンフリクトが書かれたケース教材をもとに、問題の解決のために討論をするアプローチ、いわばケース学習である。本稿では2つのアプローチやそれらを見出すまでの過程に加え、それぞれの教育実践例等を示すことで、グローバル時代における日本語教育の再考を促した。

Japanese education in the global era: process- and case-based approaches for business communication

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Abstract

In recent years, there has been an increase in learners who learn Japanese for the purpose of working, particularly in Asia, so a paradigm shift in Japanese education is necessary. Japanese language education requires a new approach to teaching and learning at the intermediate level and beyond. In addition to learning language itself, it is important to support learners who would like to work collaboratively with people of different cultural backgrounds. In this paper, we discuss business communication in Japanese language learning with the results of our research conducted in Japan, China and India. Moreover, we describe two Japanese learning approaches based on our research: the “process-oriented approach” and the “case-based approach”. The former promotes Japanese learning through problem solving by accomplishing communicative tasks in business situations. The latter involves learning identifying problems and analysing them from multiple viewpoints through discussion of solutions based on real cases. We present those practices with textbooks based on two approaches. We conclude that Japanese education should be considered in the broader context of human resources development in this global era.

Keywords

Japanese for special purposes JSP; business communication; business process; case learning; human resource development and Japanese language education

1. はじめに

21世紀のグローバル時代において、グローバル人材が戦略的に必要であるという認識から、日本国内外で人材獲得競争が激化している。日本国内では、少子高齢化等による労働力の不足が懸念されており、さまざまな職種や業種で、これまで以上に、日本語ができる外国人の労働力に期待が寄せられている。

求められる人材について議論も進んでいる。例えば、ライチェン他(2006)は、3つの力(キーコンピテンシー)、すなわち ①自律的に活動する力、②相互作用的に道具(情報、言語他)を用いる力、③異質な集団で交流する力が必要である と主張している。しかし、日本語教育の現場では、人材育成という枠組みから、教育内容や教育方法について語られることは少ない。

日本国内はもとより、日本国外在住の日本語学習者が実利的な学習目的を持っている傾向が調査でも示されている。大学を含む学校教育機関を対象とした調査結果では、日本語学習の目的の第3位に、「将来の就職」という回答がある(国際交流基金2013)。同調査の学校教育機関以外の調査結果でも、「将来の仕事」(53.9%)、「今の仕事に必要」(40.7%)と考えられている。

そこで、本稿では、言語習得の観点に加え、今後は人材育成という観点から日本語教育を考えていく必要があるという立場をとり、筆者らが開発した2つのアプローチと教育実践例について報告する。

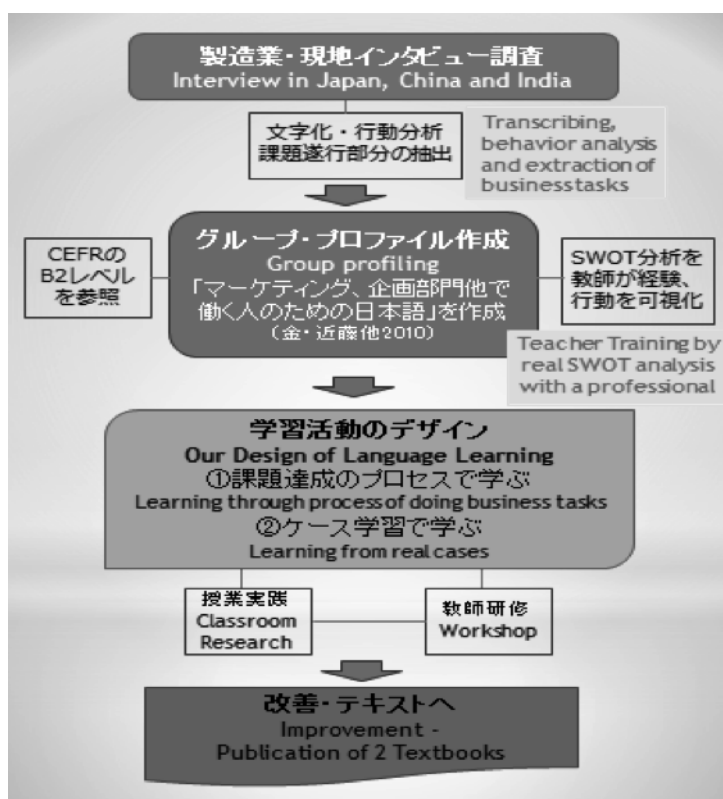
2. グローバル人材育成のための2つのアプローチ

2.1 企業調査から教材開発までの概要

筆者らは2008年から2012年まで日系企業で、インタビュー調査(日中印)と質問紙調査(中国)を実施した(劉他2011、近藤他2009)。そして、企業で求められる能力の精査(堀井・近藤2010)、行動分析、マーケティングや企画部門で使用される日本語のグループプロフィールを作成した(金他2010)。そしてこれらの調査から、主に、課題達成能力、問題発見解決能力、異文化理解能力が必要であることが示された(堀井・近藤2010他)。さらに、それらの力をつけるために、2つのアプローチを見出した。第一のアプローチは、仕事上の課題と日本語を切り離さずに、「課題達成」に主眼を置き、そのプロセスの中で日本語を学ぶこと(近藤他2012)である。企業では、上司から部下に課題(タスク)が与えられ、部下はそれに応えていくことで仕事は進んでいく。つまり、仕事は課題達成の連続体と言える。課題を遂行していく状況下では、日本語そのものの上手さ(習得度)は問われず、課題が達成できるかどうかが問われることとなる。

他方、課題を遂行していく際に様々な問題点が生じる。「案件について部下(日本語非母語話者)からなかなか報告がされない」「部下(非母語話者)が締め切りを守らない」「上司(母語話者)に対し、いつ、どのタイミングで報告していいかわからない」など、数々の問題点がインタビューで挙げられた(近藤・金他2009)。筆者らは、このような課題遂行上に生じる問題点を解決する必要があるという観点から、「ケース教材」を使って日本語学習者が学ぶことができるのではないかと考えた。この学習をケース学習と称し、第二のアプローチとした(2.3で後述)。なお、ケース学習とは、事実に基づくケース(仕事上のコンフリクト)を題材に、設問に沿って参加者(学習者)が協働でそれを整理・討論し、時には疑似体験をしながら考え、解決方法を導き出し、最後に一連の過程について内省を行う学習である。ケースメソッド(高木・竹内2006)を援用している。

図1. Plan-Do-See-Actionの過程



これらの2つのアプローチをもとに2種類の教材を開発し、授業実践を行い、教材を検証した。そして、授業実践の記録や教師からのフィードバック、学生からのコメントに基づき、改善が必要と判断した場合は、該当部分を加筆修正した。

2.2 課題達成のプロセスで学ぶ

2.2.1 開発テキストの概要

課題達成の力をつけるには、課題遂行のプロセスを日本語で経験することが重要である (process approach)。工作上必要な視点や課題が提示され、日本語の語彙や表現、知識や情報を手がかりに、学習者自らが、その課題を達成するような活動デザインが有効であると考え。まず、筆者らは、製造業(化粧品会社)の営業とマーケティングに必要なCds(Cando statements)とタスクを作成した(金・近藤他2010)。Cdsを作成する際には、次の①から③を行った。①CEFR(Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: 以下CEFR)のCdsとの照合。②製造業勤務経験者(日本人ビジネスパーソン)へのヒアリング及び検討会。③経営コンサルタントによるSWOT分析研修の受講。筆者らが行ったトヨタ自動車のSWOT分析のプロセスを振り返り、SWOT分析の結果(音声及びアウトプット)と筆者らが作成したCdsとを照合した。①から③を総合的に判断し、日本語を用いて企業等で従事していくには、CEFRのB2レベルを目標に立てることが妥当と判断した。そして、このCdsに沿ってタスクを作成、さらに、自己評価、言語的・文化的体験の記録を入れ、テキスト『ビジネスコミュニケーションのための日本語』(2011)を開発した。その後、授業実践等を行い一部改定したものが『課題達成のプロセスで学ぶビジネスコミュニケーション』(2012)である。

『課題達成のプロセスで学ぶビジネスコミュニケーション』は、「企業の求める人材を知る」ための基礎知識はもとより、ビジネスの場面を疑似体験させるためのタスクが構造化されている。5名の化粧品会社勤務の社員を登場させ、マーケティング業務の一部を学習者が疑似体験する学習内容である。外国人社員が、異なる部門の日本人社員と会議に参加し、ディスカッションを行い、企業内外の状況分析をし、持続可能な企業としてブランド戦略を提案(プレゼンテーション)するまでのプロセスを辿る。学習者は、登場人物が従事する業務や、業務中に使用される日本語のやり取りや表現(言語知識)の理解を目標とするだけでなく、言語知識を使って、より主体的に企業分析・商品分析のタスクに取り組む。

タスクは日本語の4技能のバランスを考え、多様なコミュニケーション活動から構成されていることも特徴の一つである。例えば、プレゼンテーションでは「聴衆に向けて一方的に話す」活動、会議でのディスカッションや居酒屋でのコミュニケーションでは「対面でのやりとり」の活動などが複数組み込まれている。以下にLesson 4「企画を具体化する」を例に、Cdsと技能を示す。

例)Lesson 4 企画を具体化する

1. 抽象的複雑、かつ未知の話題でも、社内会議などにおいて第三者間の複雑な対話を聞いて理解することができる。(聴)
2. マーケティングにおけるSWOT分析など、特定の視点から取り上げられた分析記事を読んで理解できる。(読・書)
3. 母語話者同士の活発な議論を聞いて理解でき、支持側や反対側の論理を的確に把握できる。(聴・書)
4. 社内会議などにおいて、問題解決のための議論に参加し、自分の考えや意見を正確に表現できる。また、複雑な筋立ての議論に対し、説得力を持って見解を提示し、対応できる。(聴・書)

これらCdsに沿って7つのタスクが作成された。タスク1はSWOT分析そのものの理解、タスク2はトヨタ自動車に関するSWOT分析の概要把握、タスク3から6までは、SWOT分析をしている企画会議を聞き、4要因(Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats)についてメモを作成し整理する。タスク7は同会議の内容をまとめる活動である。続く「チャレンジ」では、学習者自身が、関心のある企業についてSWOT分析を行い、その結果を発表する。最後に、自己評価をし、活動を振り返る。詳細は、Lesson 4(pp.52～64)を参照されたい。

2.2.2 教育実践例

(1) SWOT分析

「企画を具体化する」ための目標は、(1)SWOT分析の記事の読解と要点の整理、(2)SWOT分析の結果の理解、(3)商品の位置づけやマーケティング戦略についての議論の3つであった。日本で日本人と仕事をしている、あるいは将来そうしたいと思っている学習者3名(V: ベトナム 旧JLPT2級程度、T:台湾旧JLPT1級程度、K:カザフスタン旧JLPT3級程度)に対しSWOT分析に関する授業を4回(90分×4)行った。学習者は全員、この4回の授業の前に10回、Lesson 1から3までの授業を受けていた。

本稿では2つのタスク(タスク1、タスク2)を例に授業で観察されたことを述べることにする。1点目は、日本語のレベル差を超え、ビジネス知識の共有が可能だったことである。Vは前述のとおり、旧JLPT2級程度であったが、大学の時にSWOT分析を勉強したことがあり、英語でその知識を有していた。そのため、SWOT分析の手法を一から日本語で理解する必要はなかった。例えば、最初のタスクである、Task1(p.53)には、SWOT分析の説明が9行、日本語で書かれている。Vは、「Strength」から「強み」、「Weakness」から「弱み」という語彙にたどり着く、いわばトップダウン読みをしている様子が窺えた。その後、Vは、自分より日本語のレベルが高いT

と、日本語レベルが低いKが、SWOT分析について知識がないことを知る。そしてVは、SWOT分析について説明をし、両者の理解を助ける。説明は概ね英語であったが、ビジネス知識の共有、強化のためには効果的であったと考える。

2点目は、学習者が日本語(漢字や本文の理解)を支援する様子が観察されたことである。Tは漢字圏出身者であるため、漢字の読みや理解については、他の2名より格段に優れていた。そのため、Tが2名に漢字(脅威、縦軸他)の読み方を教える様子が観察された(タスク1)。当該テキストの語彙表には、タスクをする際に必要となる漢字すべてに読み方が書かれていたが、限られた時間内でタスクを終わらせる必要もあったため、Tは支援を求められていた。次のタスク2では、トヨタ自動車のSWOT分析の概要を読み、空欄を埋めることが課せられていたが、Tは用語の選択においても支援をしていた。

授業の最後(4回目)に、Tはアップル社のSWOT分析についてプレゼンテーションをした。プレゼンテーションは、次のLesson 5の学習目標とされていたため、当初予定にはなかった。Tは、既存のアップル社のSWOT分析を参考に準備をしていたため、独自の観点が不足していたが、企業の現状とSWOT分析の結果等について、一定の説明をすることができた。

SWOT分析の内容は紙幅に限りがあるため取り上げることができないが、SWOT分析の利点については述べておきたい。①極めて汎用性が高い手法である。分析対象は企業、商品によって異なるが、強み(Strengths)弱み(Weaknesses)機会(Opportunities)脅威(Threats)の要因を踏まえ、新たな戦略を立てるまでのプロセスは同じである。②分析で使用される語彙は企業や商品によって左右されることなく共通語彙が多い(テキストには重要語彙に*を付与)。そのため、学習者の関心のある企業や商品についてSWOT分析をすることができる。③分析のプロセスの中で、各要因を付箋に何枚も書いていくことが課せられているため、「書く日本語(writing)」も自ずと必要になる。④他の学習者に対しては、「私の書いた強みはブランド力です」「これと私のとは、同じですね」と自分の書いたことを述べていき、その異同を全員で整理する。いわば、課題遂行のプロセスを学習者全員が共有できる手法である。

しかし、実践から見えた課題もある。日本語のレベルが3級程度のKは、語彙を覚えるのに苦勞していた。SWOT分析は、使用語彙がかなり決まっているとはいえ、語彙の負担(量、暗記)が分析の妨げになる場合もある。これについては今後の検討課題としたい。

(2) ビジネススピーキング

当該テキスト(Lesson 2, Lesson 4, Lesson 5)を使用した教育実践は、他機関でも行われ、「ビジネススピーキング」に特化した授業(8回、50分×8、6名対象)について報告(大橋・橋本 2012)がされている。スピーキング強化を目的とした授業のために、8回のうち4回は、各学習者にプレゼンテーションを課している。内容は、①自分が選んだ外資系企業を紹介する。②その企業の社員として、提携候補の日本企業を紹介し、③自社のSWOT分析を行う。最後に、④その日本企業を訪問したという設定で、自社商品のプレゼンテーションを行う、の4つであった。個々の実践については詳しく述べられていないが、筆者は授業観察に行く機会があり、NTTドコモ社のSWOT分析の結果を聞くことができた。そして、授業終了後には、学習者(4名)に当該テキストについて質問をし、いずれも5段階評価で答えてもらった。以下にそれらの回答を示す。

1. テキストは役に立ちましたか 3名:とても役立った 1名:だいたい役に立った
理由:(原文のまま)
S1: 内容を問わず実際のビジネス場面に仕えそうなフレーズなどを覚えやすいように紹介したから。
S2: どのように日本でプレゼンテーションした方がいいことが分かりました。アメリカのやり方とはずいぶん違うので、具体例が多くて助かりました。
S3: ビジネス場面に適する表現の豊富さ
S4: 私は日本で働きたくないから、よく評価ができないんですが、役に立つようです。
2. タスクの内容はどうでしたか。
4名:よかった
3. タスクの量ははどうでしたか。
3名:ちょうどよい 1名:少し多い
4. 語彙の量ははどうでしたか。
4名:ちょうどよい
5. とりあげた場面は適切でしたか。
2名:非常に適切である 2名:適切である
6. 興味を持った・楽しいタスクはどのようなタスクでしたか。(自由記述)
S1: 自分でSWOT分析を発表するタスク
S3: Lesson5のプレゼンテーションのスライド・タスクは特に楽しかった。
7. 役に立つと感じたタスクはどのようなタスクでしたか。(自由記述)
S1: Lesson5の王さんになったつもりで話してください、というタスク。
S2: 新しく学んだ表現、文型、語彙などを生かして違う場面に適用するタスク。
S3: 以上のLesson5のタスクはまさにそうだが、自ら新たな表現を使用しつつ内容を作り出すことを中心としたタスクが極めて役に立つと感じた。
S4: プレゼンテーション(プレゼンテーション)のタスクはとくに役に立つと思います。ビジネス場面以外、使えるチャンスがたくさんあると思います(アカデミックの発表など)。

当該授業は、スピーキングの授業であったことから、それに付随したコメントが多い。しかし、筆者らの開発意図は伝わっていると考える。大橋・橋本(2012:37)では、「日本語非母語話者の雇用者には、与えられた仕事をこなすだけでなく、日本人と話し合いながら問題点を発見・解決し、成果をあげていく能力が求められるのである。こうした傾向から、『ビジネスコミュニケーション』(本テキスト)に見られるように、今後、教科書の構成も仕事上起こりうる場面を設定して学生に課題を与え、一人ではなく協働でその課題を解決していくスタイルが中心になっていくであろう」と述べられており、筆者らの考えるグローバル時代の日本語教育へのアプローチが共有されていると言える。

次に第二のアプローチであるケース学習について述べる。

2.3 ケース学習を通じて学ぶ

2.3.1 開発テキストの概要

仕事の課題を遂行していく過程で、さまざまな問題が起こることは言うまでもない。日本人同士でも問題は起こるが、日本人と外国人間では、そもそも問題の捉え方が異なるために、問題の解決が予想以上に長引く。誤解を生み、解決できないことも多々ある。何が問題でどうしたら解決できるのか、いわゆる問題発見解決能力が必要となる。この能力を育成するために、筆者らはケースメソッド(高木・竹内2006)を援用したケース学習(case-based approach)を提唱した(近藤・金2010)。なお、ケース学習とは、前述(2.1)したとおり、事実に基づくケースを題材に、設問に沿って参加者が協働でそれを整理し討論し、時には疑似体験をしながら考え、解決方法を導き出し、最後に一連の過程について内省する学習を指す。

筆者らが開発した『ビジネスコミュニケーションのためのケース学習－職場のダイバーシティで学び合う－』では、日本(日系)企業で働く外国人・日本人社員の経験した仕事上の困難やコンフリクトがもとになっている。学習者には、討論を通じて、コンフリクトが起こった状況や登場人物の立場・心情を読み取り、複雑な人間関係や利害関係等の諸要素を想像し、解決策を論理的に考えることが期待される。当該テキストは10のケースと、語彙リスト、タスクシート、「ケースの裏側」(補足説明、討論のためのヒント)から構成されている。下記に「ほう・れん・そう!？」(近藤他2013, 40)の一部を示す。

私(わたし)は、インドに駐在員(ちゅうざいいん)として勤務(きんむ)している日本人(にほんじん)(浜田(はまだ))です。日系(につけい)の食品会社(しょくひんがいしゃ)に勤(つと)めて3年(ねん)になります。工場(こうじょう)ではインド人(じん)の工場長(こうじょうちょう)を中心(ちゅうしん)に、90人ほどのインド人(じん)と8人(にん)の日本人(にほんじん)のスタッフが働(はたら)いています。

私(わたし)は普段(ふだん)は工場(こうじょう)から1時間半(じかんはん)離れた支社(ししゃ)にいて、インド工場全体(こうじょうぜんたい)の統括(とうかつ)をしています。社内(しゃない)では基本的(きほんてき)に英語(えいご)でコミュニケーションをとっています。社員(しゃいん)の中(なか)には、日本(にほん)に住(す)んだことがあり、日本語(にほんご)と日本文化(にほんぶんか)に精通(せいつう)しているインド人(じん)が一人(ひとり)いて、私(わたし)がインド人社員(じんしゃいん)とうまく意思(いし)の疎通(そつう)はできないときは助(たす)けてくれます。

ところが、3年経(ねんた)った今(いま)でも困(こま)っていることがあります。インド支社内(ししゃない)での連絡(れんらく)や相談(そうだん)の体制(たいせい)が整(ととの)わないのです。日本(にほん)でなら、報告(ほうこく)、連絡(れんらく)、相談(そうだん)、いわゆる「ほう・れん・そう」が徹底(てつてい)していて、報告書(ほうこくしょ)や日報(にっぽう)を出(だ)すというシステムがありました。何(なに)かあれば、部下(ぶか)は私(わたし)のところに相談(そうだん)に来(き)ますし、部署間(ぶしょかん)での情報交換(じょうほうこうかん)もできました。しかし、インドでは、現場(げんば)からの情報(じょうほう)が私(わたし)たちに上(あ)がってきません。そのため、企業(きぎょう)の業績面(ぎょうせきめん)で大変(たいへん)なロスにつながっているのです。(省略)

2.3.2: ケース学習で学ぶ:「ほう・れん・そう!？」を例に

筆者らは、インドの日系食品会社を訪問し日本人3名(総括、セールス、工場管理担当者)に対し約160分のインタビューを行った。そこでは「現場からの情報が上がってこない」「部署間での情報交換ができない」等複数の問題が話された。それらの内容を「ほう・れん・そう!？」(近藤2013, 40-47)と題したケース教材にした。本文はA4用紙1枚程度(ルビ付き)で、その他に語彙表(英語、中国語、韓国語、インドネシア語訳付き)とタスクシートがある。食品工場に勤務する日本人の浜田さん、インド人のアリリさんとヤマさんにまつわるトラブルが書かれている。

本ケース教材を使用し、中国人会社員2名(日本語能力試験旧1級程度)に対し、90分間の授業が行われた。手順は、(1)ケース教材を各自読み、質問を受ける。内容の確認をする。(2)用意された設問に基づき話し合う。(3)全体で意見交換や議論をする。(4)個人で一連の活動を振り返り、内省シートに記入する。設問は次の4つであった。(1)それぞれの気持ちを考えてみましょう。(2)この状況で何が問題だと考えますか。(3)あなたにも似た経験がありますか。(4)あなただったら、このような場合どのように行動しますか。(5)相談された場合、どのようなアドバイスをしますか。

授業開始時、学習者はケース教材の読み取りに集中していた。設問の「正解」が何かを気にしていた。しかし授業が進むにつれて、上司(浜田さん)が部下(アリリさん、ヤマさん)とのコミュニケーションができていないこと、報告を待つだけでは不十分であることを指摘するようになった。さらに、自分がヤマさんと同じ立場の場合は、「日報、週報、月報で報告する」という新しい解決策が述べられた。これは討論の前には述べられなかったことであり、学習者同士が自身の考えや経験について協働活動をしていく中で生まれた解決策であった。

3. おわりに

本稿では、グローバル時代に求められる日本語教育を考える上で、2つのアプローチを調査概要、テキスト概要、実践例と合わせて報告した。グローバル社会では、これまでになかった新しい課題や問題に直面する。あらかじめ答えが用意されているわけではない、「正解」もない。そのため、当事者自らが考えていくこと、課題を最後までやり抜くこと、問題を発見し解決していくこと、そして人と協働して仕事をするのが求められることとなる。そのための方法として、(1)課題達成のプロセスで学ぶこと、(2)問題の所在を発見し、日本語を用いてさまざまな意見に耳を傾け討論をし、最後に解決策を導き出すという「ケース学習」を提案した。ますます加速するグローバル社会に対応できる日本語人材を育成することは急務である。今後は、2つのアプローチを採ることの有効性を探っていきたい。またアーティキュレーションの観点から人材育成について検討を進めたい。

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Food for thought

Japanese heritage language learners and the NSW High School curriculum: Eligibility criteria and other hurdles

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Abstract

As parents of Japanese heritage children, we explore issues related to the development and implementation of a heritage Japanese course in the NSW high school curriculum. We first provide a definition of “heritage language learners” and draw on recent case study research (Oguro and Moloney 2010) and local research into heritage learners (Oriyama 2010). The research findings highlight the issues of eligibility criteria as well as the challenges of providing appropriate educational choices to heritage language learners, who are a diverse group of students. We identify major issues related to the use of so-called “eligibility criteria” which determine the students’ eligibility or non-eligibility for entry into the various Japanese courses as well as the limited opportunities, both in schools and in the community, for heritage Japanese learners to explore and develop their unique linguistic and cultural skills, awareness and identities. We then provide a historical overview of the development of the NSW courses, including the heritage language courses, followed by the experience and perspective of a heritage language learner. Our paper concludes with suggestions for a balanced approach to establishing eligibility for the various courses, reflecting the diversity of heritage language learners.

Key words

eligibility criteria; heritage language learners; Australian curriculum; heritage language courses

継承語としての日本語学習者のニューサウスウェールズ州中等教育カリキュラムにおける扱いについて:履修資格基準やその他の障害

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要旨

HSCの日本語ヘリテージ・コースが、ニューサウスウェールズ州の中等教育カリキュラムの中でどのように開発され、実施されるに至ったかについて、継承日本語話者を子どもに持つ親の視点を踏まえて考察する。まず、最近の事例研究(Oguro and Moloney 2010)や、特定地域の継承語学習者に関する研究(折山 2010)に基づき、「ヘリテージ・ランゲージ・ラーナー」とは何かを定義する。これらの研究結果で見えてくるのは、ヘリテージ・コースにまつわる履修資格基準の問題、そして多様な背景を持つ継承語学習者に対して、各々に見合った継承語教育を提供することの難しさである。次に、様々な日本語コースがある中で、生徒がそれらを受ける資格があるかどうかを決定する、いわゆる「履修資格基準」の主な問題点を洗い出し、継承語として日本語を学ぶ生徒にとって、学校やコミュニティーで自らの言語面、文化面でのスキル、意識やアイデンティティーを模索し、開拓する機会がいかに限られているかという点に目を向ける。その上で、他言語のヘリテージ・コースを含むニューサウスウェールズ州のコースがどのように開発されてきたか、その歴史的経緯を概観し、実際の継承日本語話者が自らの経験談とを考えを述べる。本稿の締めくくりとして、いくつかあるHSC日本語コースの履修資格基準を策定するにあたって、継承語学習者の多様性を反映したバランスの取れたアプローチを提案する。

キーワード

履修資格基準、継承語学習者、オーストラリアのカリキュラム、ヘリテージ・コース

Introduction

The New South Wales Higher School Certificate (HSC) is a credential awarded to secondary school students who successfully complete senior high school studies in NSW. The results of the HSC examinations are used to determine admission rankings for universities. The Japanese Background Speakers course was formerly offered to native speakers and heritage speakers who were deemed to have a background in Japanese, but was far too difficult for the vast majority of heritage students. On the other hand, eligibility criteria applied to the Japanese Continuers course meant that most heritage Japanese learners were deemed ineligible for the Continuers course and therefore had no choice but to give up studying Japanese altogether for the HSC.

In 2007 and 2008, the HSC Japanese Committee lobbied the NSW Board of Studies (BoS) to remove the eligibility criteria. This coincided with the announcement at the end of 2008 of national funding for the Board to develop so-called “heritage language courses” in Japanese, Chinese, Korean and Indonesian (de Kretser and Spence-Brown 2010). In 2011, heritage language courses were introduced for these four Asian languages in NSW, and HSC examinations for the new courses were implemented in 2012 for the first time. Fifteen students took the examination for Japanese Heritage course that year, and 18 enrolled in 2013. The Board notes that the role of eligibility criteria is twofold: to place students in courses that are appropriate to their level of proficiency; and to not advantage students who use the language for sustained communication outside the classroom (personal communication, 17 April 2012). The position presented in this paper is that heritage learners vastly differ in language proficiency, and that eligibility criteria which treat them as a homogenous group prevent them from undertaking courses more suited to their level of proficiency. Eligibility criteria are still applied to language courses, however, and fundamental issues are therefore still unresolved.

This paper explores these issues by first providing a contextualised definition of the heritage language learner. It then presents issues related to the focus on language proficiency in determining eligibility criteria for this group of learners with diverse experience and proficiency in their heritage language, including a case study of a heritage learner.

Definition of heritage language learners

While there are several interpretations of the term “heritage language learners” or other related terms (see Lo Bianco and Slaughter 2009, for a discussion of the various terms), we follow Oguro and Moloney who, in the context of the school system in New South

Wales, define heritage language learners (HLLs) as

school children who are being educated primarily through English but who also have contact with other language(s) through their family or community. This group may include children born in Australia or those who have migrated to Australia, and may include children who have one or more parents or carers who use the heritage language with them. (2012, 71)

In their research, Oguro and Moloney (2010; 2012) found HLLs to be diverse in terms of linguistic, pragmatic and sociocultural awareness, and competence in their heritage language (see also Oriyama 2010; Moloney and Oguro 2012). As a result, Oguro and Moloney (2012) argue that HLLs are either placed in courses which do not match their abilities, or discontinue their study of Japanese in senior years. As one student lamented: “I was denied the opportunity to advance my Japanese during secondary school” (78).

In contrast to the variable abilities found in the research above, the definition of a Heritage Japanese speaker provided by the NSW Board of Studies focuses on the language proficiency of HLLs as a group:

Heritage Japanese language students are typically those who have been brought up in a home where the Japanese language is used and who have a connection to Japanese culture. They have some degree of understanding and knowledge of Japanese, although their oral proficiency is typically more highly developed than their proficiency in the written language. These students have received all or most of their formal education in schools where English (or another language different from Japanese) is the medium of instruction. They can therefore be considered to some extent bilingual, with English or the other language being the predominant language. (BoS 2010, 5)

The focus on language proficiency is further marked by the use of so-called “eligibility criteria” to determine which course students of Japanese are (in)eligible to undertake during their senior schooling in New South Wales.

High school language curriculum in NSW: eligibility criteria, other hurdles and the heritage language course

Students in NSW must complete 100 hours of language study before the end of Year 10. Students in Stage 4 (Years 7 and 8) start studying languages at the beginner level in most schools. Some schools use a part of the 100 mandatory hours for the students to study multiple languages. In Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10), languages are elective subjects. In Stage

6 (Years 11 and 12), languages are elective subjects for the Higher School Certificate (HSC).

Of the Stage 6 HSC language courses, only four Asian languages—Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Korean—have differentiated courses for learners with heritage or background in those languages. Eligibility criteria are applied to all courses with the exception of the Background Speakers Course. The students' (in)eligibility to enrol in a course is determined based on the eligibility criteria, irrespective of student preferences. Table 1 lists the various Japanese courses and their target students in detail.

Table 1: Stage 6 Japanese courses and their target candidature

Course	Description of target group
Japanese Beginners	“students with no prior knowledge or experience of the Japanese language, either spoken or written” (BoS NSW 2006; cited by Oguro and Moloney 2010, 26)
Japanese Continuers (+ Extension option)	“students who, typically, will have studied Japanese for 400–500 hours by completion of Stage 6” (BoS NSW 1999; cited by Oguro and Moloney 2010, 26)
Heritage Japanese	<p>Heritage Japanese language students are typically those who have been brought up in a home where the Japanese language is used and who have a connection to Japanese culture. They have some degree of understanding and knowledge of Japanese, although their oral proficiency is typically more highly developed than their proficiency in the written language. These students have received all or most of their formal education in schools where English (or another language different from Japanese) is the medium of instruction. They can therefore be considered to some extent bilingual, with English or the other language being the predominant language.</p> <p>At entry level to the course, students will have typically undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some study of Japanese in a community, primary and/or secondary school in Australia, and/or • formal education in a school where Japanese was the medium of instruction up to the age of ten. (BoS NSW 2010, 5)

Japanese Background Speakers	“students with a cultural and linguistic background in Japanese” (Board of Studies NSW 1999; cited by Oguro and Moloney 2010, 26)
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The difference between the Heritage course and other courses is that it not only aims to improve language proficiency but also to strengthen the student’s connection to his or her Japanese heritage, and to develop a positive and mature bilingual and bicultural identity (BoS 2010). Students are expected to recognise and write approximately 500 kanji, including combinations. The number of kanji for the Continuers course is 200, while students who complete the Background Speakers course are expected to be able to write the 1006 kanji taught in Japanese primary schools and recognise kanji designated for daily use.

Eligibility criteria and related issues

Table 2 outlines the NSW Board of Studies’ (n.d.) eligibility criteria for Stage 6 language courses. For the purposes of determining eligibility, “formal education” is defined as “education provided in the system of schools ... that normally constitute(s) a continuous ‘ladder’ of full-time education for children and young people.” (UNESCO International Standard Classification of Education 1997; cited in BoS n.d.).

Table 2: Eligibility criteria for Stage 6 language courses

Course	Eligibility criteria
Beginners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have had no more than 100 hours study of the language at the secondary level (or the equivalent). • Students have little or no previous knowledge of the language. For exchange students, a significant in-country experience (involving experiences such as homestay and attendance at school) of more than three months renders a student ineligible.
Continuers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have had no more than one year’s formal education from the first year of primary education (Year 1) in a school where the language is the medium of instruction. • Students have no more than three years residency in the past 10 years in a country where the language is the medium of communication. • Students do not use the language for sustained communication outside the classroom with someone with a background in using the language.

Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students have had no formal education in a school where the language is the medium of instruction beyond the year in which the student turns ten years of age (typically Year 4 or 5 of primary education).
Background Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No criteria

Decisions on eligibility are made by the principals of schools providing the courses. The issue with this arrangement is that there are not many principals whose area of expertise is in languages. In addition, some criteria are ambiguous, while all implicitly appear to equate potential exposure with proficiency. For example, the Continuers criteria that “[s]tudents do not use the language for sustained communication outside the classroom” may be interpreted differently depending on the principal.

For some students, the gap in proficiency levels between the Continuers and Background Speakers courses has been appropriately filled by the introduction of the Heritage course. There are students, though, who are deemed ineligible for the Continuers course but find the Heritage course too difficult. Furthermore, the current criteria suggest that students who go to Japan and study there after the year in which they turn ten may lose their eligibility to study the Heritage course. These issues and ambiguities mean students are unable to take courses best suited to their abilities.

Other hurdles

There are access issues as well. The small number of teachers who have the ability to teach the Heritage course, combined with the small number of students wishing to study the course, means that the Saturday School of Community Languages in Chatswood and the Open High School (both operated by the Department of Education and Communities) are the only two schools offering the Heritage Japanese course. The eligibility criteria to attend the Saturday School—as well as restrictions at local schools, mostly related to resources, for enrolment in the Open High School—severely limit access to the Heritage course.

Another hurdle is that simply speaking Japanese at home is not sufficient to allow students to follow the Heritage course, which demands a high level of expression as well as reading and writing skills. Students need to acquire substantial ability for expression in Japanese, as well as reading and writing skills, to study the Heritage Japanese course but pathways which enable students to do this before they reach Stage 6 are extremely limited. There are no courses offered at mainstream schools or Saturday Schools

operated by the DEC. The only pathway currently available is the preliminary course for Years 9 and 10 provided by the Open High School.

An increase in the number of Japanese HLLs has been cited as one of the reasons for developing the Heritage course, but a comparison of the total number of students studying Japanese shows no increase from 2011 to 2012, as can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Number of students taking Japanese courses and other heritage language courses (BoS NSW 2012)

NSW HSC course	2011 total	2011 rank	2012 total	2012 rank
Japanese Background Speakers	31	35	22	43
Japanese Beginners	541	5	625	5
Japanese Continuers	802	3	692	4
Japanese Extension	270	9	192	12
Heritage Japanese	-	-	15	49
Heritage Indonesian	-	-	1	61
Heritage Chinese (Mandarin)	-	-	90	20
Heritage Korean	-	-	33	36

The only course for which there has been a growth in the number of students is the Japanese Beginners Course. The poor uptake for the Heritage course can be seen as a manifestation of the issues of access and eligibility criteria discussed above.

Case study: Perspectives of a heritage language speaker

Following is the perspective of Noriko Kojiro, whose experience highlights the diversity of experience, proficiency and dynamic needs of heritage learners.

Heritage language speakers should not be categorised or bundled together by arbitrary standards such as eligibility criteria as there are vast differences between individual heritage speakers. Even if one is able to speak both Japanese and English, the stronger language for the individual will vary depending on factors such as environment, time and topic. I lived in Japan until age ten, lived in Canada until age 17, then lived in Japan for eight years before migrating to Australia at age 25. English was my stronger language from my mid-teens to the early twenties but neither language is particularly stronger than the other

now, although it may be easier to speak in one language or the other for certain topics and situations.

The curriculum for the Heritage course in NSW includes identity and culture but individuals have different ways of dealing with these concepts. They are certainly matters that cannot be taught. I thought of myself as Canadian for many years. If I were asked what nationality I feel I am now, I wouldn't really know and wonder if it really matters. It is more important to me that I am who I am and that I am able to contribute to society in whatever way I can using my skills, particularly my language skills. There are of course people who feel a stronger connection to their first native language and the culture related to it. However, identity and language proficiency are personal and are not necessarily related to the parental language background, the number of years spent in the relevant countries or the language of instructions at school. Students may even reject the learning of their heritage language if identities are "taught" at school. We acquire and adapt to identity and culture through life's experiences. They cannot be learned in a classroom. Language education should just be that. It should not be an environment in which students are put into arbitrary categories based on eligibility criteria and taught identity in addition to language. The teenage years should be a time when people are able to freely explore and pursue language capability as well as cultural identity and literacy. The ideal would be to provide an enabling environment for students who have potential to become truly bilingual and bicultural.

Conclusion

The preceding argument, supported by the case study presented above, provides evidence against the use of rigid, broad ranging and potentially ambiguous eligibility criteria, in favour of a more balanced approach reflecting the "extremely diverse language origins and competencies of the learner cohorts in Australian languages, and the complex task of providing fair, appropriate and comparable assessment" noted by Lo Bianco and Slaughter (2009, 52). They further argue that "it is important to recognise that all learners have legitimate interests and rights, with distinctive needs and potential, rather than being seen as problems interfering with the efficient operation of examinations" (52). While we recognise the need for decisions to be made regarding the target cohort of any course, in recognition of the diversity of knowledge, skills and abilities reflected in that cohort, it is essential for any criteria related to inclusion or exclusion of individual students from a course to be unambiguous, fair and flexible.

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Lost in Research: an attempt to create a learning community for research students at an Australian university

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Abstract

This self-reflective report introduces a learning community for research students whose research interests are related to Japanese applied linguistics, Japanese language pedagogy and Japanese cultural studies at an Australian university. Research students at Australian universities often feel that they do not have sufficient intellectual and social support. In order to improve the research environment for postgraduate and honours students in the Japanese program at an Australian university, a number of research students have organised a learning community called the Benkyokai (study group). The findings from observations and written documents indicate that the Benkyokai has provided its members (research students) with both emotional and academic support. Through sharing their research experiences and resources at the Benkyokai, the research students support each other in various aspects of their research career. In other words, the Benkyokai functions as a Community of Practice (Wenger et al. 2002; Wenger 2006).

Keywords

Research students; Australian universities; Community of Practice; Emotional and academic support; Benkyokai (study group)

研究者の孤独:オーストラリアの大学で大学院研究生のためのラーニング・コミュニティを構築する試み

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要旨

自らをふりかえる意味合いも込めたこの発表では、日本語の応用言語学、教授法やカルチュラル・スタディーズに関心を持つ、オーストラリアの大学の大学院研究生のために作られた学習コミュニティを紹介する。オーストラリアの大学では研究生の多くが、知的にも社会的にも十分な支援を受けていないと感じている。あるオーストラリアの大学の日本語学科では、大学院生や名誉学位を目指すオナーズの学生のための研究環境を改善すべく、研究生のグループが「勉強会」と称する学習コミュニティを立ち上げた。この学習コミュニティを観察し、所見をまとめた結果明らかになったのは、勉強会が、メンバーである研究生にとって精神面でも学術面でも支えになっていることである。研究生は、勉強会で自分たちの経験や知恵を共有することによって、研究生活の様々な側面において支え合っている。言い換えれば、勉強会は「実践共同体」(Wenger et al. 2002; Wenger 2006)として機能しているのである。

キーワード

研究生、オーストラリアの大学、実践共同体、精神面および学術面での支え、勉強会

Introduction

As Australia has the fourth-largest number of Japanese language learners in the world (The Japan Foundation 2013), it is not difficult to find academic articles discussing how we can improve the learning environment for Japanese language learners in Australia (e.g. Thomson 2009; Fukui 2014). However, articles discussing the learning/research environment for students who engage in Japanese language education research are scarce. Research students form an indispensable component of Australian Japanese language education, as they not only engage in research on Japanese applied linguistics and Japanese language pedagogy, but may also become the teachers and researchers who make contributions to further the development of Japanese language education in Australia.

This paper is a self-reflective report, which introduces a learning community for research students in Japanese linguistics, pedagogy and cultural studies at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Australia. The three authors are members of the learning community and will reflect upon their own and their peers' practices in this report. This learning community is called the Benkyokai, a Japanese term meaning "study group", and is analysed based on the concept of a "Community of Practice" (Wenger et al. 2002; Wenger 2006). The aims of this paper are to portray how the Benkyokai has been organised, and to report how the Benkyokai has supported the research students so far. It articulates problems faced by these students and describes the processes in which they overcome these problems through their participation in the Benkyokai.

Problems

Research students at Australian universities inevitably encounter many dissatisfactions and difficulties throughout their research degree. According to Conrad (2006, 34), the least satisfactory aspect of doctoral study is the intellectual and social climate. For students, the lack of intellectual and social support beyond their supervisors creates a sense of isolation, which can impact on planning and conducting their research and writing their theses. Joining a supportive research community which provides intellectual and social support is thought to be key to the successful and satisfactory completion of research degrees (Conrad 2006).

At UNSW, where this study takes place, faculties provide their research students with some support, such as seminars and workshops for research students, in an attempt to create an intellectual and social climate that is favourable for them. However, these seminars and workshops are held intermittently, and participants vary. Through these experiences, research students in the Japanese applied and educational linguistics found

it difficult to share their research interests and passion with other research students in political science, media, translation and the like. In other words, these occasional seminars and workshops, which include research students from various disciplines, are less likely to help with forming a strong, supportive and continuing community among those who share a common research interest.

At UNSW, the number of research students in Japanese applied linguistics and Japanese language pedagogy has constantly increased over the past few years to reach a critical mass. Thus it was timely to create a learning community—or Community of Practice—for research students in the Japanese program to provide them with support not offered by the faculty.

Community of Practice

A Community of Practice (CoP) is defined as “groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger et al. 2002, 4). In order to be classified as a CoP, the community contains three particular characteristics: domain, community, and practice as described in Table 1 (Wenger 2006).

Table 1: Domain, Community, and Practice

Domain	The area of particular interest shared and pursued by all members of the community.
Community	A particular group in which all members are expected to participate in order to pursue a shared interest, while building a mutually supportive relationship through engagement in various activities.
Practice	Activities developed by members in the community to develop and maintain their own knowledge and skills related to the domain, and to learn from other members through participation.

A CoP requires continuous interaction between members. Conversation with a stranger with different domain of interest does not lead to the establishment of a CoP. Members in a CoP will be able to recognise, given the proper structure, that they are in the best position to pursue their own objectives through interaction with other members (Wenger 2006, 4).

Benkyokai

A group of research students in the Japanese program at UNSW has been operating the Benkyokai since 2011. The Benkyokai aims to improve its members' research by sharing experiences and relevant information regarding their research amongst members, and by supporting each other in various aspects of their research career. This section will introduce how the Benkyokai is organised.

Domain

Benkyokai members belong to the Japanese Studies program at UNSW and share research areas—that is, Japanese applied linguistics, Japanese language pedagogy and Japanese cultural studies. Each member has a research topic related to these areas. All members are very keen to improve their own research to successfully complete their degrees, secure scholarships and gain future employment. Their shared interests and goals help create a common ground and a sense of common identity amongst the members, fostering a sense of belonging.

Community

Table 2 describes 16 past and present Benkyokai members, including an academic supervisor. Currently, 11 members are active (two have successfully completed their degrees and started or plan to start more advanced degrees [marked by *]), while four members have successfully completed their degrees but continue to contribute as peripheral members (marked by **). One member withdrew from the Benkyokai in 2012 because he decided to discontinue his research project (marked by ***). The members are diverse in terms of their research experience (Honours, Masters, PhD), language background (Japanese native speaker, English native speaker, Chinese native speaker), enrolment status (off-campus or on-campus, full-time or part-time), and other factors such as teaching/learning experience. The Benkyokai also allocates roles to members, such as leader and event coordinator. This diversity creates multidimensional interactions among the Benkyokai members.

Table 2: Benkyokai members

Name ¹	Degrees	First Languages	Periods in Benkyokai
Tsukasa	PhD	Japanese	2011 S2–current
Kumi	PhD	Japanese	2011 S2–current
Sara*	PhD/ Honours	English/ Cantonese	2011 S2–current
Yoshinobu	MA by research	Japanese	2011 S2–current
Takako*	MA by coursework ² /PhD	Japanese	2012 S1–current
Kanako	MA by coursework	Japanese	2012 S2–current
Toshiko	MA by coursework	Japanese	2013 S1–current
Yukie	MA by coursework	Japanese	2013 S1–current
Megumi	Practicum student	Japanese	2013 S1–current
Takeshi	Graduate Diploma	Japanese	2013 S2–current
Professor Robson	Supervisor	Japanese	2011 S2–current
Anne**	PhD	English	2011 S2–current
Momoko**	PhD	Japanese	2011 S2–current
Linda**	MA by coursework	Mandarin	2012 S1–current
Emily**	Honours	English/Cantonese	2012 S2–current
Robert***	MA by coursework	Mandarin	2012 S1

¹ All names are pseudonymous.

² Coursework students in the Benkyokai are enrolled in a special project course where they are required to conduct a research project for one year.

Practice

The Benkyokai operates via two main practices: weekly meetings and information exchanges on members' own Wikispaces³ and emails. Weekly meetings are organised as follows:

Table 3: Weekly Meetings

Time	Thursday 4-6pm
Place	A booked classroom/the main library's meeting room/the supervisor's office
Languages used in the meetings	Japanese (occasionally English)
Basic flow of each meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members report their weekly research progress and receive feedback on their own work from other members. 2. Members discuss a specific topic relevant to their research (e.g. read academic papers on learner identity and have discussions; discuss how to structure a literature review; rehearse their presentations for conferences and receive feedback from each other). 3. Members decide the discussion topic for the following week. 4. Members set goals for the coming week.

Members who are unable to come to the university campus participate in the meetings via Skype. The chosen leader of the group usually leads discussions, however all members have the opportunity to contribute to discussion in a relaxed atmosphere (some members often bring snacks to share in the meetings). All members agree on the basic principle that they must contribute constructive arguments to create a supportive environment.

The Benkyokai has also had its own Wikispaces website since 2012, providing members with yet another way to participate and communicate with each other. Since the website contains some confidential research data, only registered members have access to the website. The members mainly use Japanese to communicate.

The Benkyokai website has two main functions. The first is to share information and resources for research and seminars/conferences. Members post a variety of information and resources on the site, such as details of upcoming seminars/conferences, references of useful readings, questions regarding theories and research methods. Members also

³ Wikispaces are social writing platforms for education (<http://www.wikispaces.com>). Users can create their own page, communicate with each other and work on writing projects alone or as a team.

use email to share important information and resources, as well as to offer personal support. Minutes are taken at each meeting and posted to the website so that all members can keep track of what has been discussed.

The second function is the recording of individual research progress. All members have their own page where they can write about their research, and post weekly goals, research plans and reports of their own research progress.

The Benkyokai regularly organises gatherings and events for both academic and social purposes. Members have also formed panels to participate in conferences, and have prepared and discussed presentations together. At the end of semester, the Benkyokai organises a dinner party to provide members with an opportunity to get to know each other better in an informal setting.

Emotional and academic support

This section outlines how the Benkyokai has supported research students by analysing three data sources: members' written comments,⁴ exchanges between members from 2011 to 2013, and participatory observation (the authors also participate in the Benkyokai). Data indicates that the Benkyokai provides two main types of support to its members—emotional support, and opportunities to develop academic knowledge and research skills. This section also describes one of the challenges involved in strengthening the Benkyokai as a CoP.

Emotional support

As indicated above, the primary motivation for establishing this study group was to solve one of the all-too-common issues that postgraduate research students face at universities: namely, isolation. The data indicates that the Benkyokai has been functioning well to achieve this goal. For example, Takako points out that the Benkyokai is not only for *benkyō* (study), but it is also a “home” for her. She explains that “we share our personal experiences” like a family, and this home provides the individual with a space to grow. Takako's perception of “the Benkyokai as a home to belong” is reflected in her active participation. She often takes the initiative in welcoming new members to the community (by proposing/organising social events) so that they can begin to “feel at home” in the Benkyokai. Takako is often called *okāsan* (mum) in Japanese by other members of the group because of this caring role. This indicates that

4 In 2012, the members wrote how they felt about the Benkyokai to review its effectiveness. Each report was one page written in English.

other members also see the Benkyokai as a home that gives them a sense of belonging. The Benkyokai works as a “comfort zone” that protects members from becoming isolated in their new academic environments and from getting emotionally lost there.

Yoshinobu’s comment below also illustrates how the Benkyokai provides emotional support to its members. Yoshinobu, who cannot always physically be on-campus due to full-time work, points out that the Benkyokai is “an indispensable place” for him. He says:

As a full-time high school teacher, it is a little difficult for me to keep proceeding with my study constantly as sometimes I have to leave my study aside. But, at least once a week, I have this Benkyokai to attend physically or on Skype. By attending it, I can feel reassured that I am also a research student like others as well as proceed with my study by receiving advice from other members of the Benkyokai.

This comment reveals that, while Yoshinobu too regards the Benkyokai as “a home” to which he belongs, he also considers it a place where he is reassured of his identity as a research student in the Japanese program at UNSW, not just a full-time worker. Although it might be difficult for him to keep up the pace with his research due to his physical isolation over long periods, this comment shows that his regular participation in the Benkyokai helps him maintain his identity as a research student by constantly interacting with others in the group.

Opportunities to develop academic knowledge and research skills

It is important for research students to develop the knowledge and skills to conduct research and write academic papers. The Benkyokai functions as a unique space for helping members to develop research skills and academic knowledge. Members can decide what they want to do in weekly meetings, and can therefore address areas that they want to improve or develop. For example, when Toshiko was writing an abstract for her research project for the first time, she asked other members for comments and advice. Other members were more experienced in writing academic papers, so they shared their knowledge and experience with her. After receiving comments from other members and re-writing her abstract, she described her feelings as follows:

Thank you very much for giving me comments on my first abstract ... I have learnt a variety of things through your comments on structures of abstract, appropriate academic expressions, grammar mistakes, and things I should add to my abstract.⁵

As this example demonstrates, the Benkyokai provides members with academic support that is not otherwise available, helping them to develop academic knowledge and skills required to become a competent researcher.

Another member, Emily, who is not a native speaker of Japanese indicates that the Benkyokai has helped improve her Japanese language proficiency as well as develop her knowledge of Japanese language education and culture.

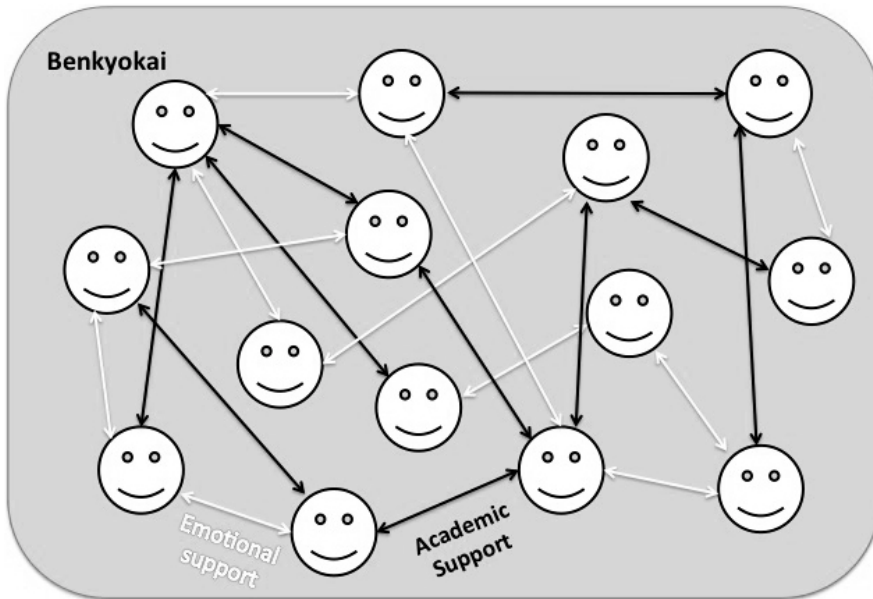
As a non-native Japanese speaker and a first-time research student at university, being a part of Benkyokai has been a great learning experience. The consistent weekly meetings in Japanese have helped me keep up with my Japanese [language] study. The support network within Benkyokai is very strong – regardless of research career, background, or stage of progress, everyone is willing to extend his or her support and advice. It is also interesting for the members of Benkyokai to be able to develop interest and offer insights into each other's research, across research areas that span from culture to language education.

Because discussions in weekly meetings, on the website and through emails are conducted mainly in Japanese, the Benkyokai provides non-native speakers of Japanese with valuable opportunities to improve their Japanese language proficiency (for more details, please refer to Thomson and Chan 2014).

Diagram 1 illustrates the support system in the Benkyokai. The Benkyokai contains complicated, multi-dimensional interactions which allow members to support each other academically and emotionally.

5 私の初めてのアブストラクトにコメントしてくださって、本当にありがとうございました。アブストラクトの構成の仕方、的確な表現、文法の訂正、もっと挿入するべきことなどのコメントをいただき、色々なことを勉強させていただきました。

Diagram 1: The Support System in the Benkyokai



All members have different backgrounds and experiences, and different skills they want to develop. The Benkyokai leverages these differences to help members develop the skills necessary to become competent researchers. By creating opportunities to share knowledge, experience and resources with each other, members not only develop a stronger sense of community but also successfully improve various aspects, helping them to better conduct research and write academic papers.

It is worth mentioning that the Benkyokai is not an alternative to formal academic supervision. It provides research students with an important additional dimension of support. As their supervisor also participates in the Benkyokai as a member, and continues to provide necessary supervisory support to members individually outside the Benkyokai, research students do not lose any input from their supervisor. By having this unique opportunity to share thoughts and opinions regarding their research and learning/teaching experience, members receive more diverse feedback, support and information as it comes not only from their supervisor but also from each other. The Benkyokai is a community where research students support each other over in the course of their study. This improves their research environment and productivity.

Challenges

Generally, the Benkyokai provides members with the emotional and academic support presented above. However, it is also true that the Benkyokai faces challenges as a CoP. The Benkyokai accepted four new members in Semester 2, 2012 and Semester 1, 2013. However, the new members took time to understand how to participate. One of the reasons was that new members had few chances to see how other members had been involved. For example, Takako (who joined the Benkyokai Semester 1, 2012 and took a caring, motherly role), was absent for several months in 2013 for personal reasons. She would have been a good mediator to bridge the gap between the founding members and the new members. Members have attempted to organise informal dinner parties in addition to information sessions to explain how the Benkyokai works. As membership changes, it is important that the Benkyokai develops structures to help new members settle in and form stronger bonds so that all members can make the most of the Benkyokai.

Conclusion

This paper describes the Benkyokai and how it supports research students in the Japanese program at UNSW, through the concept of community of practice. Despite the fact that universities try to support research students in a variety of ways, such as seminars and workshops, many research students still feel that they do not have enough intellectual and social support. Often, university-led support events are inclusive of diverse disciplines and lack continuity. The Benkyokai is organised by research students themselves who share similar interests. These members have developed the structures and practices to maintain the Benkyokai as a community of practice that provides members with important emotional and academic support.

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Contributors

Matthew Absalom is a university teacher and researcher, professional linguist, Italian language coach, translator and author. His current appointment is in the Italian Studies Program at the University of Melbourne. He holds qualifications in music, education, languages and linguistics, and his research interests cover Italian linguistics, computer assisted language learning and languages education. Matthew is President of the AFMLTA.

Kent Anderson is a comparative lawyer specialising in Asia. He joined the University of Adelaide in 2012 as Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) and Professor of Law in the Adelaide Law School. He has an eclectic background, having completed his tertiary studies in Japan, the US and the UK in law, politics, economics and Asian Studies. For the decade before joining the University of Adelaide, Kent was a joint appointment at the Australian National University College of Law and Faculty of Asian Studies, where he was Director from 2007-2011. He was the Foundation Director of the School of Culture, History and Language in the ANU's College of Asia and the Pacific. Kent is a Board Member of the Asia Education Foundation and Vice-President of the Asian Studies Association of Australia. He was President of the Japanese Studies Association of Australia from 2007-2009.

Anne de Krester is the Director of the Melbourne Centre for Japanese Language Education. Her work includes providing professional learning opportunities, resource development, and advice and support to pre-service teachers, teachers, schools and institutions in Australia, mainly in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. Anne is also co-author of the report, *The current state of Japanese language education in Australian schools*.

Mariel Howard has 15 years of experience teaching languages across all year levels in Australia and in Japan. For the past six years she has taught Japanese at Kalamunda Christian School in Western Australia. She has presented extensively in Perth, as well as at the AFMLTA National Conference 2013. In 2012 she was awarded the JLTAWA Language Teacher Award. In 2013 she started a CLIL support hub in Perth and ran her first CLIL program teaching Art to Year 6 students in Japanese. In January 2014 she became the Languages Consultant across Swan Christian Education Association schools in WA.

Hiroko C. Kataoka is Professor of Japanese at California State University, Long Beach. Her current research and writing focus on heritage speakers of Japanese and Japanese immersion programs. Her most recent book is *Amerika de sodatsu Nihon no kodomo tachi* [アメリカで育つ日本の子供たち], co-edited with Gun'ei Sato. Hiroko has conducted numerous workshops in the US and abroad on pedagogy-related issues. She has also served on many national committees and boards, including the Japanese National Standards Task Force (Chair), AP Japanese Task Force, and the boards of directors for ATJ, NCJLT and Aurora Foundation. In 2007 she received ACTFL's Florence Steiner Award for Leadership.

Hyogyung Kim holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics from Ochanomizu University. She was Lecturer at the Japanese-Language Institute from 2009 to 2012, and then Senior Language Consultant at The Japan Foundation, Sydney from April 2012 to April 2014. She is currently a Specially Appointed Associate Professor at Osaka University. She has published teaching resources work on classroom research.

Kathe Kirby is the Executive Director of Asialink and the Asia Education Foundation at the University of Melbourne, where her work focuses on equipping young Australians for the Asian Century. Asialink is Australia's largest Asia-Australia centre and works across the education, business, arts and community sectors. Kathe has a background in education as a teacher, university lecturer and policy maker. She is a Board member of the Foundation of Young Australians and the Australia Malaysia Institute. Kathe is a regular contributor to the media on Asia literacy in Australian schools.

Aya Kondoh holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics from Ochanomizu University, as well as a Graduate Diploma in Education of Language Teaching (Japanese) from the University of Technology, Sydney. She has been Associate Professor of the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, Tokyo, and Director of Japanese Language and Culture Program. Since April 2014 she has been Professor at Reitaku University. Her research interests include business communication and teaching resources.

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Sarah Pasfield-Neofitou is a lecturer in Japanese and the eEducation Coordinator for the Arts Faculty at Monash University. She is the author of "Online Communication in a Second Language: Social Interaction, Language Use, and Learning Japanese" (Multilingual Matters 2012). For more information, see <http://sarahpasfieldneofitou.com>.

Angela Scarino is Associate Professor in Applied Linguistics and Director of the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures at the University of South Australia. Her research and publications are in the areas of language learning, languages and cultures in education, and language assessment. Her experience includes research and development work in Australia, as well as in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and New Zealand. She has led a number of research projects of national significance focused on intercultural language learning and on assessment of student achievements in learning languages. She has served as the President of the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia and President of the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations.

Noriko Shimada is the President of the HSC Japanese Committee, Inc., which is a non-profit organisation working with the Japanese community, academics and relevant government organisations to encourage the study of HSC Japanese and provide support and information to interested parties. For more information, see <http://hscjapanese.web.fc2.com/index.html>.

Kaori Shimasaki is a third-year PhD candidate at the University of New South Wales, majoring in applied linguistics. Kaori's research interests include Japanese language education; in particular how Japanese language learners are learning Japanese in communities outside the classroom. Besides researching, Kaori has taught at a heritage language school and has experience as a tutor at the University of New South Wales.

Robyn Spence-Brown is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Languages, Culture and Linguistics, Monash University. She teaches postgraduate units in applied linguistics and introductory Japanese. Robyn's research interests include language assessment, the impact of ICT on language teaching and learning, and the teaching of Japanese in Australian schools.

Carolyn S. Stevens was appointed Professor of Japanese Studies and Director of the Japanese Studies Centre at Monash University in 2012. Her work spans a range of areas of cultural and social anthropology, including disability and social welfare in Japan, Japanese popular music, consumer culture and fandom in contemporary Japan and sensory anthropology. She was President of the Japanese Studies Association of Australia (2011-2013), and currently edits the Association's journal, *Japanese Studies*.

Chihiro Kinoshita Thomson is Professor of Japanese Studies at the University of New South Wales. She represents the Japanese Studies Association of Australia in the Global Network of Japanese Language Education and is a past President of the association. Her research interests include learner agency and autonomy in Japanese language learning, and Community of Practice of learners and speakers of Japanese.

Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku is a Professor at the University of California, San Diego, where he is Director of the Language Program at the School of International Relations and Pacific Studies and Coordinator of the Undergraduate Japanese Language Program. He received his PhD in Linguistics from the University of California, San Diego. He is former President of the American Association of Teachers of Japanese.

Masae Uekusa holds a Masters in Applied Linguistics for Language Teachers and has four years' experience teaching Japanese in Australia. In addition, she has undertaken tablet training through the eEducation centre in order to prepare for her current project.

Wendy Venning, PhD, has over 25 years of experience in languages education, and has taught every age group from 4 year olds to adults in a variety of settings in Australia and Japan. Her success in language teaching has been recognised in an Outstanding Teacher Award, presented by the Premier of Victoria. Wendy has lectured in Language Teacher Education, and has presented papers at international conferences in Brisbane, Canberra, and Melbourne. Her research has been published in numerous papers, book chapters and newspaper articles. She finds Junior Primary students demanding but delightful.

Conference Abstracts

The potential for Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approaches in Japanese programs in Australian schools

Russell Cross, Margaret Gearon, Nicholas Creed, Naomi Mori-Hanazono, Junko Nichols

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approaches to the teaching and learning of additional languages (in Victoria, called Languages Other Than English, and in the Australian Curriculum, Languages) has recently been promoted by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development as a key means of better engaging learners in both primary and secondary schools. This approach, which is producing successful outcomes in languages programs in European countries, especially in addressing issues of the crowded curriculum and the promotion of higher levels of achievement in foreign languages programs, is now being examined in Victorian schools. The presentation will commence with an overview of the background to CLIL approaches and their conceptual framework. It will then focus on the trial implementations of a CLIL program in a range of primary and secondary schools in Melbourne. The panel members will present the details of their involvement in this innovative approach to languages teaching and learning in Japanese in their schools. The presentation will conclude with a number of implications for the teaching and learning of languages, in particular Japanese in Victorian primary and secondary schools which elect to introduce a CLIL program.

Exploiting the potential of the Ultranet and eBookboxes to support effective learning in Japanese

Madeline Jenkins, Jennifer Swanton, Jacalyn Tossol, Maree Boliancu

The Ultranet is an initiative of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development whereby students, parents and teachers can access information about teaching and learning on a state-wide, secure online system.

eBookboxes are a key component of the Department's commitment to provide high quality digital content and support high quality blended teaching and learning using the curriculum planning capabilities of the Ultranet. eBookboxes bring together relevant research, background information and quality digital content that can be readily adapted and modified to meet the needs of individual students. Three Japanese eBookboxes that are aligned with VELs Levels 5 and 6 are currently available on the Ultranet.

This session will introduce aspects of the Ultranet, including features of the Japanese eBookboxes. Teachers who have worked on the elaboration phase of the eBookboxes will also share their experience in creating complete learning sequences from standard eBookboxes.

Flipping the classroom: adventures in student-controlled learning

Julie Devine, Eri Tomita

Eri Tomita and Julie Devine have been trialling the use of video to present grammar structures to Years 9, 11 and 12 over 2011 and 2012. The theory is based on the idea of flipping the classroom, where students study new concepts at home in their own time, and use time in class to do consolidation and practice activities. This session will present the finding of the trial: the advantages and disadvantages, the challenges of implementing the program and how they were overcome, student feedback and future directions.

Using ICT to effectively engage and retain students

Noburo Hagiwara

This session will showcase how Japanese Language classes at Kolbe Catholic College have successfully transformed into 21st century learning. The college offers Italian and Japanese where compulsory status is only for Years 7 and 8. Currently, more than 40% of the entire student cohort (approximately 1000) is enrolled in Japanese and engaging in various language learning experiences with innovative and dynamic ICT-rich pedagogy based on a one-to-one device program. Participants will be provided with the core philosophy as well as practical classroom ideas and solutions. For more information, see www.hagipod.com.

Everyday Languages Program Years K-2: the benefits of less more often and how it was implemented with success

Karen Gorrie

In an effort to address two recurring themes in recommendations for (Japanese) language education—reform of programs in primary schools; and the idea that successful language learning requires appropriate time, regularity and continuity—our school this year completely changed our languages program offered to primary school students.

With funding from the Asia Education Foundation, St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School has established an Everyday Languages Program for students in Years K-2. This effectively means that all students in these year levels experience language classes (at this stage in either Chinese or Japanese) for 20 minutes each day. Already we are seeing huge success with this new way of programming languages in the curriculum, and are planning to extend this to Year 3 next year.

This presentation will look at reasons behind this radical change for our school in the way we program languages, how it can be done, why it should be done, and the benefits that students gain from learning languages in this way.

Quality and quantity: the ACT Education and Training Directorate's multifaceted approach to providing languages pathways and increasing students learning languages

Kristina Collins

The ACT Education and Training Directorate has developed a multifaceted approach to both developing system capacity to teach languages and increasing the number of students engaging in languages programs. A combination of policy requirements, development of languages pathways K-12, provision of teacher professional learning and student engagement activities has more than doubled the number of students learning languages in the last five years. Enrolments in Japanese programs have increased by 235% in five years. This presentation will discuss some of the strategies employed by the Directorate in developing language capacity as well as current findings relating to time on task and student retention in elective years programs.

Making Japanese learning engaging and personal by developing intercultural skills

Yoshie Burrows, Yoko Nishimura-Parke

Making language learning engaging and relevant for all students has always been paramount for languages teachers. This session will explore how students' engagement can be maximised by applying intercultural pedagogy into the teaching of Japanese language in junior and middle secondary.

Intercultural language learning (IcLL) is a pedagogy that has proved to be very successful in making language learning dynamic, personal and relevant to each student. With IcLL, students are constantly involved in a process of noticing, comparing, reflecting and interacting with the new language and culture. They play an active role in their learning, thus experiencing a much more personal engagement with the new language and culture.

Yoshie Burrows has applied Intercultural language learning into her Japanese curriculum for the past three years, noticing a significant increase in her students' engagement and motivation. She will present examples of units of work she developed around the IcLL principles, drawn from authentic materials and the recently-published Japanese series *iiTomo*. The examples will also offer ideas about how to incorporate digital resources in the Japanese classroom. Samples of students' reflections will be also presented, giving the opportunity to discuss and compare differences between IcLL and non-IcLL tasks. There will also be scope for discussion about how to track evidence of intercultural learning.

At the end of their presentation, Yoshie and Yoko will review the key benefits of this pedagogy outlining the potential that IcLL offers to make the learning more engaging and to consolidate, at the same time, the profile of Japanese language learning in Australia.

What can we do to encourage young Australians to embrace Japanese: strategies to extend high school students' Japanese competency and enhance student engagement in the classroom

Sally Mizoshiri

In this presentation, I aim to share my strategies to extend high school students' Japanese competency. These activities and strategies are enhancing student engagement in my classrooms. The three strategies that I will focus on in this presentation are: critical higher-order thinking and cross-curricular learning; language to extend communicative and linguistic competence; and authentic real-world opportunities for Japanese use.

Our language classrooms must provide challenge matched with requisite support for students to succeed. Our students need to see that learning a second language is a skill that can be applied to real-life scenarios one hundred percent of the time.

We need to enable students to draw on their experiences and find ways for them to create a personal affinity with Japanese. The experience of learning a language needs to be enriching and holistic and must be designed so that articulation is seamless and that

there are clear pathways for our learners to follow. Our students must feel that Japanese learning is an advantage—something that makes them stand out from the crowd!

Drama in the classroom to improve language outcomes and engagement

Yuko Fujimitsu, Melissa Luyke, Shingo Usami, Yoko Nishimura-Parke, Junko Nichols, Tomoko Shimbo, Mari Nobuoka

This panel session will demonstrate how teachers can bring a little drama into the classroom to get students speaking and responding, collaborating, and having fun, while experiencing meaningful learning.

Presentation 1 (Mari Nobuoka, Melissa Luyke, Shingo Usami)

By commencing the session on translation skills for beginners with a short skit, this presentation will demonstrate the effectiveness of drama and humour in highlighting common pitfalls in translation. Audience members will deepen their understanding of the complexities involved in translation by identifying the essential elements and comparing translation theory with their own experiences.

Presentation 2 (Yoko Nishimura-Parke)

Yoko will share a sample activity from her Heritage Japanese classroom. The activity is designed for students to express their ideas and opinions from a bilingual and bicultural perspective. In developing their understanding of the chosen artist and her lyrics, students imagine what the artist's childhood was like as *haafu*, and share their feelings about discrimination. By acting out the interview, students experience deeper empathy. The resulting interviews are vivid evidence of students' engagement, creative thinking, and intercultural understanding.

Presentation 3 (Junko Nichols)

This presentation explains how a drama technique known as “hotseat” can be applied in a language teaching context. It presents experience from a Japanese immersion class held at Central Queensland University. The lesson plan was developed by a drama lecturer and a Japanese teacher, and deliberately uses a controversial topic, whaling, to engage students and stimulate their use of grammar, vocabulary and different language registers. The technique can be applied to a range of topics and contexts.

Presentation 4 (Melissa Luyke, Shingo Usami, Yuko Fujimitsu, Tomoko Shimbo)

A series of innovative, drama-based Japanese Immersion Workshops in WA is having a direct impact on motivational levels resulting in increased numbers in upper school. Workshop survey responses collated from the anonymous and therefore honest voices of participating Year 6–10 students and their teachers have proven beyond a doubt that language classrooms are in desperate need of more energy, more excitement, more creativity, more interaction, more exposure to Japanese realia, and more drama!

Pieces of the puzzle: interrelated factors that have enhanced the teaching and learning of Japanese at our secondary school

Les Mullins, Nicholas Creed, Peter Jackson, Ayako Yasunaga

Mount Waverley Secondary College Junior Campus has recently been redeveloped, with its state-of-the-art facilities setting a new standard in school architecture and educational philosophy. The major feature of this school building is the Purposeful Learning Spaces or more colloquially “open plan spaces”. Teaching and learning at MWSC-Junior Campus is not confined within four walls. Purposeful Learning Spaces support an educational philosophy that emphasises engagement, differentiation, and collaboration in learning and the maximising of the teaching team’s combined talents.

The timetable supports this educational philosophy by blocking the Year 7 and 8 Japanese classes into groups of three classes, which are timetabled together into Purposeful Learning Spaces.

MWSC is also part of an Innovative Language Provision In Clusters (ILPIC) program operating with the support of government funding in a cluster of local primary and secondary schools. This program aims to improve the quality of language teaching and learning through the provision of funds to purchase state of the art software and hardware with communication capabilities, and the trial of Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL).

This funding has allowed the college to purchase 27 iPads, and a starting set of apps. Regional funding has also supplied us with a Polycom electroboard. This HTML-compatible TV monitor allows us to video conference student expositions with other schools within the cluster. A further technological initiative is the use of Apple TV. Through use of this facility, teaching material and student work produced on the iPads may be displayed to groups of various sizes, also opening a range of possibilities for interactive learning with the technology available on-line.

In the teaching of Japanese at MWSC we have been convinced of the value of making intercultural understanding an integral and significant part language teaching and learning. From Year 7 to Year 10, intercultural understanding is written into the Japanese language teaching syllabi.

The State of Asian Languages in Tasmania

John Kertesz

The State of Asian Languages in Tasmania is a NALSSP-sponsored research report on the views of Asian language teachers and continuing pre-tertiary college students. It provides a unique profile of teacher demography, career stages and intentions, as well as classroom and external professional factors influencing student Asian responses to language learning and their retention, particularly in the significant high school years. Convergence of student motivation factors with teacher perceptions of school appreciation and support for their efforts provide warnings for teachers as well as schools for the future success of this learning area. Concurrently, variations in student motivations and future aspirations, as well as continuing perceptions of Asian language difficulty, provide critical focus areas for both retention and recruitment.

We can consider neither the future of language learning, nor LOTE as part of the national curriculum, without understanding and responding to the most significant cause of variations in student performance, the teacher. Amidst federal LOTE promotion programs, statements about language relevance, and public references to the importance of teacher quality, the reality in Tasmania is that expenditure on professional development has failed to even maintain student numbers, suggesting that teacher practices may be contributing to the decline, or at the very least failing to acknowledge and respond to real causes of student withdrawal. It is imperative that policymakers, learning leaders and Japanese teachers themselves facilitate professional behaviours that overcome isolation, yield genuine ongoing improvements in pedagogy, overcome a cargo-cult mentality in professional development, establish connections with Japanese communities locally and in Japan, and, above all else, engage with students to understand and maintain their motivation to learn Japanese.

A window into the views and perceptions of teachers and secondary students of languages

May Kwan

The findings of two reports undertaken by Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ): *National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP): Languages in Independent Schools in Queensland* (2009); and *Secondary students views and perceptions on languages other than English in Independent Schools Queensland* (2011), provided perspectives from the curriculum managers and teachers and students.

National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP): Languages in Independent Schools in Queensland Report looked at the characteristics of the workforce, identification of issues surrounding retention of staff, qualification to teach the NALSSP languages, issues surrounding transition from primary to secondary and reasons schools are not offering a NALSSP language.

Secondary students views and perceptions on languages other than English in Independent Schools Queensland (2011) was an endeavour to find out from secondary students what they think of their language learning experiences and which of these experiences would they like more or less of. The findings provided essential information for teachers in assisting them to reflect, plan and improve practice but more importantly to engage students in learning languages beyond the compulsory years in secondary schools.

The above projects were funded through the Australian Government under the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) and School Languages Program (SLP).

Making links, making progress in the primary school

Therese Sakamoto

Over the past 30 years, the citizens of Frankston, Victoria and Susono, Japan have shared a close friendship through their sister city relationship. Based on this strong link, Derinya Primary School in Frankston commenced a connection with Susono Nishi Primary in 2010 to promote friendship between children through the Language Discovery (Palaygo) email exchange program. This program has proven to be a most satisfying and successful venture for students, schools and local communities.

Through Language Discovery, students are able to communicate in meaningful exchanges of information, ask questions and gain an understanding of grammar structure with the Phrase Palette tool which enables prompt creation and exchange of email messages, stories and quizzes in the receiver's language. Through regular implementation of the Language Discovery program in Years 4–6 Japanese classes, students have also gained intercultural understanding in addition to new language learning and their motivation has increased. Students have also enjoyed using the program at home and during computer time in their classrooms to interact on a more frequent basis than solely in Japanese lesson time.

The success of this program has led to reciprocal visits between student and staff representatives from each school and enabled students, school families and whole staff to directly experience intercultural exchange through school visits and homestays. In 2011, a delegation from Derinya Primary visited Susono to mark the 30th anniversary of the sister city relationship and to establish a sister school arrangement with Susono Nishi Primary. It is most exciting that our link through Language Discovery has blossomed into a formal connection between our school communities. Other schools in Frankston and Susono are also joining Language Discovery to provide their students and school communities with real, fast and meaningful connections to expand their language programs and to investigate potential sister school ties.

Wiki wonderland: a tool for learning and advocacy

Wendy Venning

The Junior Primary sector (4–8 year olds) is under-represented in the LOTE literature. This age group has particular needs: the students are often pre-literate, are still developing fine motor skills and social skills, have a high need for routine and repetition, high teacher dependence, and an interactive play-based learning style that thrives on hands-on activities. These learning parameters are largely ignored in LOTE research. Yet *creating the future* starts here: this is the time when foundations can be laid for sound language learning skills, and above all, the time when a love of language learning can be instilled.

This paper will discuss the use of a wiki in a Junior Primary Japanese program. The wiki was originally designed as a communication tool for parents and the wider school community, to showcase the Junior Primary language learning in an outer metropolitan school. This use of technology then became a tool of advocacy for language learning. Parents who could clearly see how the above learning parameters translate to the

Japanese classroom, and who could then clearly see the benefits of learning Japanese at Junior Primary level, then became advocates themselves, sharing the wiki with friends and relatives all over Australia and indeed all over the world.

In addition to showcasing student learning and becoming a tool for advocacy, the wiki also became a learning tool in itself. Pages on the wiki could be re-used time and again to review targeted language, using the interactive whiteboard to pinpoint or extend the linguistic focus. Furthermore, students became so keen to feature on the wiki that they put extra effort into producing fantastic work that would be showcased.

Discussion may include large-screen presentation of numerous pages from the wiki. The paper will finish with hands-on advice and tips for setting up a wiki.

Constructing transnational spaces and identities: exploring the potentials of a Japanese language course for ‘background speakers’

Kenta Koshiba

With an increase in the number of so-called “heritage learners” or “background speakers” enrolling in language classes, the potentials and effectiveness of ‘heritage language courses’ have become a widely debated issue both nationally and internationally. However, empirical studies that examine such courses, especially those at the senior secondary and tertiary level, are only beginning to emerge. Thus, this case study aims to contribute to this field by examining the language learning experiences and identity construction of Year 12 and tertiary level background speakers who were enrolled in a special “Japanese for background speakers” course that was offered by an Australian university. The data utilised in this study is derived from a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with eight students who were enrolled in this course, as well as from audio-recordings of naturally occurring classroom interactions. These data sets will be analysed in depth using the notion of “theory of practice” (Bourdieu 1977) and in light of recent theoretical developments in the area of sociolinguistics and globalisation (Blommaert 2010). This paper will argue that the Japanese background speakers’ course may have provided a space in which the students could discursively and collaboratively construct transnational identities that challenged what it means to be “Japanese” or “Australian”. At the same time, this study will also highlight how power, legitimacy and essentialist identity categories may exert powerful influences on how the students position themselves and how they are positioned by others within the classroom.

Japanese heritage language learners and the NSW high school curriculum: eligibility and other hurdles

Noriko Shimada, Paul Moore

This paper explores issues related to the development and implementation of “heritage Japanese” courses in the NSW high school curriculum. We first provide a definition of the ‘heritage language learner’ and a historical overview of the development of the NSW courses. We then draw on local research into heritage learners (Oriyama 2001) and recent case study research (Oguro and Moloney 2010) to highlight issues and challenges in providing appropriate educational choices to such a diverse group of learners. Major issues relate to the implementation of so-called “eligibility criteria” for entry into the various Japanese courses, and limited opportunities (both in schools and in the community) for heritage Japanese learners to explore and develop their unique linguistic and cultural skills, awareness and identities. We conclude by discussing how different states have addressed similar issues, and implications for a national curriculum.

Australian Curriculum Languages: design, development and opportunities for engagement

Suzanne Bradshaw

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is an independent authority responsible for the development of an Australian curriculum that supports 21st century learning for all Australian students.

ACARA’s work is carried out in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including teachers, principals, students, academics, governments, State and Territory education authorities, professional education associations, community groups and the general public.

This presentation will introduce the major design features of the Australian Curriculum and provide an update of the curriculum development process at ACARA in relation to the Languages learning area and discuss opportunities for engagement.

Using inking technology in the teaching of Japanese

Sarah Pasfield-Neofitou, Mari Morofushi, Masae Uekusa

An established body of research on tablet PCs (a laptop with screen that can be written on, called “inking”) has demonstrated that the use of inking can be highly beneficial in a wide range of educational situations; however, research on the ways in which language teaching may be enhanced via the use of tablet PCs is still emerging. The teaching of Japanese in particular, and other languages which employ a non-alphabet writing system, has a huge potential to benefit from the ability of teachers to demonstrate the live and authentic use of the written language. Teaching the many different characters required for active use and recognition in Japanese has long been a challenge, and in this paper, we explore innovative uses of inking on tablet PCs as one solution. Drawing on surveys with students and teacher journals, we describe the benefits for teaching *hiragana*, *katakana* and *kanji* characters, as well as quizzing, modelling reading and handwritten genres, responding to student questions, facilitating revision between classes and for specific purposes such as examinations, providing answers to class activities, teaching vocabulary and grammar, in particular, abstract vocabulary items that are difficult to represent through flashcards, annotating difficulty content and challenging students by reducing L1 content, and constructing knowledge collaboratively with students. The presentation will conclude with a discussion of students’ reactions to these innovations, the potential drawbacks associated with both the physical and virtual environment, and a vision for future applications of technology.

Expressing oneself through digital storytelling: ANU student-centred Japanese learning project

Carol Hayes, Yuki Itani-Adams

Digital stories that combine image, narrative and sound, provide a powerful way of developing student communicative skills. The process of creating a digital story addresses the goals of 21st century student-centered learning expectations, by focusing on creative thinking, risk-taking and effective communication with the added advantage of developing effective technical literacy.

Is it possible to include “impact” within an assessment rubric for intermediate language-learners’ oral production? By presenting the results of the *Digital Story Telling Project* that has been running as part of the ANU second-year Intermediate Japanese language course for the past three years, this paper will demonstrate that the answer to this

question is yes. The project aimed to assess the value of using digital stories in Japanese language teaching as an alternative to the individual oral presentations or tests, and secondly to examine methods of encouraging students to become more proactive and to better express their own personal emotions, beliefs and ideas—beyond a superficial “it was fun” level.

This paper will firstly introduce our project focusing on the teaching delivery methods we have developed over the course of the project, including analysis of student evaluations. Secondly, by presenting a detailed linguistic analysis of a number of digital stories, it will demonstrate how students tried to express their emotions, beliefs and thoughts.

Should foreign languages be taught at university?

Yuko Kinoshita, Yanyin Zhang

The most obvious reason for taking a language course is to gain language skills. We know that younger children learn foreign languages more efficiently, so some say that allocating resources to schools, not universities, will yield maximum return. Perhaps the TAFE sector is a more suitable place for language training for adult than universities, given its focus on vocational and skill-based training. And an intensive delivery with immersion is known to be efficient for acquiring linguistic competency, but is difficult within the current university system.

Anecdotal evidence about public opinion—perhaps now categorised as market opinion—is not encouraging for us. Small enrolments in many language courses seem to indicate that few students or their parents value them. And university administrations are pressuring language courses to reduce assessment standards and contact hours. So why teach foreign languages in this relatively expensive educational setting, the university?

We argue that language studies at university level should not be considered as just professional, vocational or technical skill training. Rather, it is a liberal art, contributing to the intellectual and cultural development—and employability—of the student beyond simple language facility. This does not mean that we replace linguistic curriculum with cultural studies or cultural exposure. On the contrary, the framework of language learning achieves these results through implicit learning, more effectively than explicit studies. This is what makes it unique and valuable.

Immersion versus non-immersion: what the data tells us

Noriko Iwashita, Robyn Spence-Brown

The paper reports on the findings of a study which attempts to identify characteristics of performance of learners in two different programs (immersion vs. non-immersion). A number of immersion programs have been mounted in Australia, and in most cases, where the principles of this approach are adhered to, the outcomes for language learning are positive both in attitudes to the target language and culture and in language gains. Although the proportion of the school curriculum allocated to the target language may vary, such an approach has been shown to have significant advantages over the traditional language classroom setting in terms of the levels of fluency acquired in the target language. This is due in part to the fact that the language is used for meaningful purposes rather than simply being studied for its own sake, and also to the richer and more intensive exposure to the target language that such an approach affords. However, as Elder points out, there are currently no norms or benchmarks available indicating the nature or extent of language proficiency that can be achieved under such conditions, a lacuna that this study will attempt to address at least to some extent by profiling characteristics of performance under typical and more time-intensive learning conditions. The paper provides further insights into the complex issues of learner background, and suggests implications for pedagogy and assessment.

Japanese immersion program in secondary school: the Robina High School experience

Sellina McClusky

Robina High School has always been a vibrant language learning environment. When many state schools were phasing out compulsory Year 8 language learning, Robina High School was one of the few state secondary schools in south-east Queensland to maintain a compulsory one-year language program. In 2007, when Robina High discussed increasing its academic excellence curriculum, Japanese immersion became an obvious option. The school had motivated students, supportive parents and capable curriculum managers, so in 2008 the Robina State High School Japanese Immersion Program (RSHSJIP) was born. The Japanese Immersion Program at Robina High School is the only secondary Japanese immersion program in Australia.

The JIP is a three year course which runs from Year 8 to Year 10. Students study maths, science and business in Japanese. The maths and science course is based on the Extension Maths and Extension Science curriculum. The business course covers general computer applications in Years 8 and 9, and becomes Asian Business Studies in Year 10.

In 2011 our graduates achieved amazing successes and our school community is already delighted with the positive outcomes of the program. Each year we improve our practices and attract a wider enrolment area as the news of our program spreads throughout our community. We are happy to share our trials and successes with other interested language teachers and community members.

Language immersion camps: engaging the hearts and minds of secondary school students

Kaori Okano, Teresa Castelveter, Jennifer Swanton, Andrea Sampson

Language Immersion Camps are an application of classroom language learning in a (more) real life context and present a number of benefits for students (e.g. fluency, listening comprehension skills, spontaneity of speech, expansion of vocabulary, heightened motivation, and enhancement of cultural knowledge). The relative value of different aspects depends on the ages and proficiency levels of learners, as well as the social context where language learning occurs. In Victoria, one such context is that the majority of students cease studying languages by the time they start Year 11 (only one in ten VCE students study languages); this number is even smaller in the regions. These students are a select specialist group in their own schools. Against this backdrop, this panel discusses what sense high school students make of their Japanese language immersion camp experiences, and how best we can enhance the benefits of immersion camp for Year 9 and 10 students before the camp, during the camp and once they return to their schools by building a community of practice with an interest in language learning. The panel presenters have been involved in designing, implementing and evaluating Japanese language immersion camps for secondary school students. Successful language immersion camps activate affective as well as the cognitive areas of student engagement and this can revitalise or even spur student interest in the language and culture.

Successful models for learning Japanese via distance education

Hilary Hughes, Jean Laffan, Darren Ball, Justine Daly, Anne Becker

This panel will present several successful models of students learning Japanese via distance education. Schools are using online learning management systems, connected classrooms with video-conferencing and shared desktop as well as using Adobe Connect and traditional paper based models. Presenters will share their successful stories and invite discussion of the issues for schools using these methods.

Moving away from traditional languages methodology to literacy based language teaching: finding best practice

Monica Scully, Kate Spithill, Naomi Mori-Hanazono

The teaching and learning of Japanese language and literacy is underpinned by our vision of how we inspire our students to be able to use Japanese language as adults and for our students to authentically learn in two languages and through two cultures. With the introduction of the Early Years Strategy in Victorian schools in the 1990s, there was a distinct move from the teaching of English to the teaching of literacy, the teaching of mathematics to the teaching of numeracy. This significant pedagogical shift was underpinned by research into how adults ultimately used English and mathematics in their daily lives and workplaces. Similarly, in our move away from traditional LOTE methodology to literacy-based language teaching, we aspire for our students as adults to be able to move effortlessly in and out of Japanese and English as the situation arises. Over the past five years, the staff at Huntingdale have engaged in a number of projects and grants to research best practice in this area both here and overseas and synthesis this research into our pedagogy.

A multilingual literacy: linking literacy across languages (Japanese)

Kate Chandler

In this session I will highlight the research behind a multilingual literacy approach to primary languages education and the inquiry process used to implement this approach across South Australian government primary schools. I will make significant reference to the literacy general capability in the Australia Curriculum and I will share literacy and language teaching strategies suitable for Japanese language teaching and learning.

The Multilingual Literacy approach, based on research, theory and practice, engages primary languages teachers together with classroom teachers in reflective practice and the sharing of effective literacy strategies across languages. Initially the Multilingual Literacy approach focussed on second language programs (L2) from Reception to Year 2. However, the approach is now spreading across the primary years (3–7) and across complementary languages programs (such as first language programs and English as an additional language or dialect) with some schools including the approach in their whole-school literacy program.

School based evidence demonstrates improved learning outcomes for students, increased interest and engagement in language learning activities and a renewed focus for language learning.

Supporting student demand

Anne Fisher

The ongoing, though gradual, decline in the number of students undertaking Japanese language study in schools poses ongoing concerns about the future of Japanese language study in Australia. Anne Fisher draws on the work she undertook at the Asia Education Foundation on building demand for Asian languages in Australian schools, by taking a “student’s eye view” to look at where solutions might or might not be found to address this decline. In this brief session, she will:

- run through the factors that impact on the ability of students to continue with their study of Japanese language throughout their school life
- examine reasonable expectations and measures of success for students, teachers, programs and systems
- contextualise the role of curriculum and teacher quality in the student language learning experience
- stimulate discussion on areas for action and responsibility.

Using the Japanese-specific annotations of the *Professional Standards for Accomplished Teaching of Languages and Culture* to address the AITSL standards

Kylie Farmer

Professional Standards help us reflect on and plan for improvements in our teaching practice. This session will support teachers in addressing the AITSL Standards through the use of the Japanese-specific annotations of the *Professional Standards for Accomplished Teaching of Languages & Cultures* (AFMLTA), and through viewing some short film clips to demonstrate these in action in Japanese classrooms.

Japanese education in the global era: process and case-based approach for business communication

Aya Kondoh, Hyogyung Kim

What is the role of language teaching in the global era? In this panel session, we discuss business communication in Japanese language learning, together with the results of our research and Japanese teaching materials we have developed.

Firstly, we show qualitative research which indicated that current Japanese business language education in Japan, India, and China does not cater for learners' needs and competencies effectively. To improve this situation, further qualitative and quantitative research investigated the problems in Japan-India and Japan-China business interactions. Based on the nature of the problems identified, language resources necessary for effective business communication were developed.

We then introduce resources comprising a syllabus, educational resource lists, "Can-do Statements," and two textbooks, a "business process" type and a "case method" type. In the business process type textbook SWOT analysis, a tool used in the MBA and marketing domain, is effective for developing competencies. The case method type textbook is remarkably useful for solving problems and conflicts. Moreover, according to learners' self-assessment and interviews, it makes it easier to work in heterogeneous groups.

Finally, we discuss Japanese language teaching focusing on the learners' inner growth and their practical language skills. Although our data doesn't include Australian communication, we suggest these resources as tools for fostering "flexible and analytical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise".

JF Standards for Japanese Language Education 2010: a tool for planning of learning, teaching and assessment

Cathy Jonak

The development of intercultural communicative competence has become increasingly important in our global society, and both intercultural and language skills/understandings are essential in order to develop this competence. In recognition of this, The Japan Foundation has developed *The JF Standard for Japanese Language Education 2010*, which focuses on “Japanese language for mutual understanding”. The JF Standard is based on can-do statements, and is a useful tool for the planning of learning, teaching and assessment. In this session three major aspects of the JF Standard will be highlighted: 1) The JF Can-do Statements are based on CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), but have been reframed to be applicable to a Japanese language setting; 2) There is a useful “Minna no can-do” website where teachers can search for can-do statements and make their own statements tailored to their learners’ needs; and 3) The portfolio is recommended as an evaluation tool for use with the JF Standard, and samples of portfolios are showcased on the JF Standard website.

Participants in this session will familiarise themselves with the JF Standard, and consider ways in which it can be a useful tool for Japanese teachers in Australia.

Changing teacher practice: the impact of ICT on languages education

Naoko Araki-Metcalf, Carol Egan, Melissa Hughes, Glenn Voss

The use of ICT in everyday life is a necessity, and this is no different in languages education. The choice of whether or not a teacher incorporates ICT in the classroom is no longer available. Web 2.0 technologies, on-line language resources, interactive digital resources, applications and software programs are available for teaching and learning Japanese language. The choices are wide but are language teachers fully utilising the range of ICT tools available to them? Are they feeling limited by the specific programs they choose with a move back towards drill and practice and away from more creative ICT?

This panel discussion session provides an opportunity to discuss the effective use of ICT in Japanese language classrooms by presenting examples from both primary and secondary school teachers. Japanese teachers will present their action research based project, using their own digi-stories from the NALSSP ICT Professional Learning Project. This project aimed to increase the proficiency of teachers in using Web 2.0

technologies in the targeted Asian languages classes and ultimately expand the use of these technologies as a teaching and learning tool within languages education. The panel discussion will focus on the following points: the characteristics of action research cycle in language education, the journey of individual teachers incorporating ICT into their languages education programs, the outcomes of their journey from their perspectives and their students' responses, and where to go from here.

Global articulation, local articulation

Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku, Chihiro Thomson, Robyn Spence-Brown

This panel introduces the Japanese Global Articulation Project (J-GAP). This project was launched in 2010 by the Japanese Language Education Global Network, which is affiliated with Nihongo Kyoiku Gakkai (Society for Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language). The word articulation is used within language education to indicate coherent linkages among programs or courses in terms of course content and educational structures, and the degree to which learners at one level can make a smooth transition to the next. J-GAP aims to achieve articulation in Japanese language education worldwide, both within and across countries.

The project is led by Professor Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku, who will introduce some of the international projects taking place under this banner, many of which will be of interest to Australian educators. Professor Chihiro Thomson will discuss the activities of the Australian arm of the project. Professor Thomson and Dr Robyn Spence-Brown will present on the topic of *Encouraging learners to continue their studies to higher levels within and across levels of education: the role of motivation and educational structures*. There will be ample time for audience discussion of the major issues in articulation in Australia, and the ways in which they can be addressed.

Australian Curriculum, current curriculum

Anne Fisher

As Australian Curriculum Strategy Manager at the AEF 2010–2012, Anne Fisher worked with ACARA to provide input into the development of the learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities in the Australian Curriculum. In this session she will draw on the insights gained through this work and relate them to Japanese language learning in the Australian context. She will do this by providing a brief overview of:

- the Australian Curriculum in development
- highlights and issues with the Australian Curriculum as a whole
- the particular role of intercultural understanding in the Australian Curriculum
- comparisons with current practice in States and Territories, time permitting.

The session aims to equip Japanese language teachers with knowledge and understanding of the Australian Curriculum, including languages curriculum, to enable them to participate confidently in discussions in their schools or jurisdictions as the Australian Curriculum develops.

Factors influencing languages teacher retention

Shannon Mason

In 2001, 19 Central Queensland University students graduated from the Bachelor of Education (LOTE) program, an immersion degree designed specifically to train teachers of Japanese. The following year, 17 of the students were engaged in Japanese education in Queensland. Eight years later, it was found that only five graduates continued to teach Japanese, and of those, two had taken extended periods of leave to pursue other interests.

In order for languages to become an integrated, respected and accepted part of the educational experience of students in Australia, there must be sufficient numbers of qualified, quality teachers. Evidence suggests that appropriately staffing Language programs is a challenge for many sectors and states, and a review of the literature reveals that this can be attributed to a large extent to teacher attrition.

Research currently underway by the author seeks to find what factors influence Queensland Languages teachers' decisions to continue or leave the profession. Drawing on the themes that emerged from the literature review, the study aims to determine what impact demographics, motivations, education background, employment background, language experience and proficiency, teaching efficacy, school environment, support and professional development, and the promotion of languages have on teacher attrition. It is hoped that the study will give stakeholders further vital information on how to prepare for and support teachers' long and satisfying careers in Languages education. This paper will give insights into both the existing research, and the preliminary findings of the author's PhD study.

Using the notion of Gross National Cool to engage students

Chris Graham

Japanese popular culture has developed a universal appeal in recent years and Japan has emerged as a genuine cultural superpower in the twenty-first century. It has been suggested that Japan's influence as a cultural superpower is greater than as an economic superpower in the 1980s. It has been exactly a decade since an American journalist, Douglas McGray, coined the phrase Japan's Gross National Cool. It is useful for Japanese language teaching professionals to harness this appeal in school-based curriculum development. The pervasive influence of Japanese culture in Australia makes Japanese second language acquisition more relevant than many other regional second language choices.

In the classroom, there are abundant opportunities where unique aspects of Japanese culture, fashion, music, entertainment, design, sport and of course, food can be the springboard for engaging teaching and learning opportunities.

Using the GNC idea, this paper will suggest that Japanese language teachers reflect on their programming and actively incorporate and focus on "cool" elements of Japanese culture in their lessons. In particular, viewing texts provide interesting learning opportunities to engage students and highlight the appeal of Japanese culture. This approach is designed to maintain and reinforce the intrinsic motivation students enjoy when studying a distinctive language and culture.

Is using manga and anime to engage students ethical?

William Armour

Using my attendance at the annual SMASH! (Sydney Manga and Anime Show) as a springboard, this presentation begins to reflect on the ethical implications of using Japanese mass culture products such as “manga” and anime in the Japanese language and studies classrooms. I problematise how uncritical Japanese language educators have been in using Japanese popular culture as a kind of neo-Orientalist “hook” to lure potential students into learning Japanese language and culture. Drawing on my own experiences of using “manga” and anime and other ostensibly commercial products in my Japanese language and cultural studies classes, I argue that as a Japanese language/studies teacher I am in a significant way assisting a range of companies to advertise their products under the guise of using “authentic materials” to facilitate learning. I attempt to account for the ethical dilemma I am now faced with. In this presentation I ask three questions—How ethical was it of me as a university academic to ostensibly advertise to students the SMASH event, which could be construed as an event with overt commercial purposes? To what extent am I condoning events that, while they have relevance to my teaching, are nevertheless sites of commercial transaction? Have I become a pimp for big business that mass produces Japanese soft power and, perhaps more pointedly, Japan Inc. itself?

