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# INTRODUCTION

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This volume showcases a selection of ten papers, originally presented at the National Symposium on Japanese Language Education (NSJLE) held in Sydney in 2018, with the theme of 'Bigger, Broader, Better'. These papers reflect the positive and expansive vision of Japanese language education embodied in this theme, and the wide-ranging and inclusive scope of the symposium itself. They cover innovations at all levels of Japanese language education, from primary to tertiary, and include both shorter practice-based reports and research papers of a more academic nature. The authors also represent a wide range of perspectives, with participants based in both Australia and Japan, including Japanese language teachers, school principals, academic researchers and even librarians. As was the case for the symposium, this volume is bilingual, reflecting our bilingual Japanese language education community. There are six papers written in English and four in Japanese, each with an English abstract.

The first six papers describe cutting-edge developments in primary and secondary school programs, from the establishment of a new Japanese language program, to a variety of innovative pedagogical approaches. The remaining four papers relate to tertiary education. However, most of the papers have broader relevance to teachers at every level. Indeed, one of the aims of the symposium, and of this volume, is to promote cross-fertilisation of ideas and approaches across the different educational levels.

Paper 1 by **Nicholas Creed, Mandy O'Mara, Teresa Marnik** and **Steven Miyazawa**, *Establishing a high-quality Japanese program*, gives a comprehensive account of setting up a new secondary Japanese program which is thoroughly embedded in the school and its community. The paper describes how the program was designed to fully integrate into the educational mission of the school, to align with school ethos and goals, and to reach out to the local community and beyond. With the support of both school leadership and the school community more broadly, the program has been able to contribute substantially to the broader educational aims of the institution in ways that go far beyond classroom language learning.

In Paper 2, *Oh what a feeling! Using Toyota as a case study to teach Year 9 CLIL Economics and Business*, **Jessica Bretherton** describes an ambitious and engaging CLIL unit for Year 9 students in a regional high school. The program incorporated visits to Toyota dealerships and culminated in student-made TV ads using actual cars. The paper reflects themes which can also be found in the volume, including the benefits of incorporating other curriculum areas, and of boosting engagement and performance by setting more ambitious goals, rather than by dumbing-down or narrowing the focus of a program.

Paper 3 by **Yuji Okawa** and **Takuya Kojima**, *Parental engagement in their children's Japanese learning: language course for parents at a high school*, echoes some of the lessons learned by the school described in Paper 1, emphasising the positive results of engaging with the broader school community. It explores how the introduction of a language course for parents promoted a reciprocal and collaborative learning relationship between parents and children, which promoted achievement, led both groups to view Japanese learning more positively, and also enhanced parent-teacher relationships. It is a wonderful example of the many positive spin-offs which can result from an intervention that reaches beyond the walls of the traditional classroom.

Paper 4, *Using shuwa (Japanese sign language) gestures in the Japanese classroom* by **Kathleen Duquemin**, discusses the introduction of gesture-supported reading in a primary classroom, and the creation of an original text with which to use this approach. It shows how this increasingly widely adopted technique enhanced comprehension, retention and student engagement, and led to greatly increased outcomes for the students involved.

Paper 5, オーストラリアと日本の子どもたちをつなぐテレコラボレーションプロジェクト (Using telecollaboration to connect Australian and Japanese children: a case study) by **Shinji Okumura** and **Masae Uekusa**, describes a telecollaboration project with a cultural focus involving primary-level students of Japanese in Australia and students of English in Japan through the use of a social networking site (SNS). It is another example of how an ambitious program which expands beyond the classroom walls through the clever use of technology can enhance educational outcomes, and create meaningful authentic engagement across national boundaries. It will doubtlessly be very relevant to readers coming to this volume in a post-pandemic world.

In Paper 6, **Ayako Wada** describes the development and use of kits containing various cultural materials in 日本語学習者のための *hands-on* 体験型教材:「発見」体験を創出する教材をめざして (Developing hands-on materials for Japanese language learners: creating 'a-ha' moments with teaching materials). The author's experience using these packs in various places suggests that employing such resources can make cultural learning more concrete, promote discovery-based learning and enhance student motivation.

The final four papers relate to developments at the tertiary level. Paper 7, 日本語クラスで使用する新しい教材「ボイスサンプルプロジェクト」の提案 (Using voice samples in Japanese classes: a proposed teaching method) by **Nobuko Wang**, describes an innovation for advanced-level tertiary students in Japan which involved the use of texts produced as 'voice samples'. Students listened to and transcribed the samples, and then recorded themselves reading them aloud. The intervention was found to promote listening skills, pronunciation (including articulation and intonation) writing, and vocabulary acquisition.

In Paper 8, *Supporting mixed-group language learning through Communities of Practice and Boundary Crossing*, **Chihiro Kinoshita Thomson** and **Nagisa Fukui** describe the philosophy behind one of Australia's largest tertiary Japanese programs (UNSW) and the innovative activities which it includes. The program connects students at different year levels, and also fosters interaction between the students and local and international Japanese-speaking communities. This paper will be of interest to school teachers wondering about what lies ahead when their senior secondary students transition into tertiary study. It also argues for the relevance of a 'Community of Practice' approach at all levels of education. While the terminology and program details may be different, the lessons learnt about the importance of a whole-community approach within an educational institution, and the fostering of authentic connections with Japanese speakers, echoes the conclusions of several other papers in this volume, and will no doubt provide inspiration for teachers at all levels.

Paper 9 is entitled 図書館と日本語クラスの連携:情報リテラシー支援を通して図書館の言語教育現場への参加の試み (Bringing the library into the Japanese language classroom: enhancing students' information literacy), by **Akiko Hiratsuka**, **Shoko Ono** and **Hirofumi Yada**. It describes the information literacy support given to intermediate and advanced students of Japanese at the University of Technology Sydney, by the library staff at The Japan Foundation, Sydney. The program enhanced students' use of selected digital information services and thus their digital literacy and autonomy, as well as their performance on assignments. It is another example of the ways in which connections to outside organisations can widen perspectives and support both teachers and students in their endeavours.

Paper 10, *Graduates' use of Japanese language in the workplace* by **Rowena Ward** concludes the volume with a study of the use of Japanese in the workplace. Surveying graduates of Japanese language from Australian and New Zealand universities between 1997 and 2016, the study revealed that although improved employment opportunities was not the primary reason for enrolment in Japanese programs, graduates were using their Japanese skills in a range of roles and careers internationally, with 74% of those using the language reporting using spoken skills on a daily basis and 30% working in Japan. While the positive impacts of studying Japanese include many broader educational and cultural benefits, it is heartening to know that many graduates of Japanese programs are also able to use and continue to expand their skills in their working lives.

If there is one message that we can take away from the ten papers in this volume, and from many of the other presentations at the symposium where they were first presented, it is that a 'broader', more ambitious vision for Japanese, and approaches which reach out to other organisations and to Japanese speaking communities, have enormous potential to improve outcomes both for language learning, and for intercultural and other educational goals. The 'broader' visions described here include whole-school approaches to program design, and strategic inclusion of the wider community, both as a target of programs and a resource. The importance of leadership and collaboration shine through in many of the successful programs described. They also include the incorporation of wider curriculum content and goals, and a variety of innovative pedagogical approaches, including, but not limited to, the use of technology. Universally, more ambitious goals coupled with engaging content and innovative methods are shown to lead to 'better' results on a range of different measures. We hope that these papers, taken both individually and as a group, inspire other teachers to aim high, and to think creatively, ensuring that Japanese language education in Australia continues to become **Bigger, Broader** and **Better**.