

# BREEZE

*The Japan Foundation Language Center, Quarterly Newsletter  
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## **Japanese Language in U.S. High Schools: A New Initiative**

Ronald A. Walton

The National Foreign Language Center at Johns Hopkins University

For a number of years, Japanese has had the highest enrollment growth of any foreign language in the United States. The last decade has seen an increasing portion of this growth in Japanese language programs at the K-12 level, especially the secondary level. While this interest in Japanese language is long overdue and welcome, such rapid expansion is straining the capacity of the secondary education system to deliver instruction given the paucity of trained teachers, the lack of teacher training programs, the lack of appropriate instructional materials, and the absence of standardized tests to measure student progress and achievement.

The movement of Japanese language instruction into the high schools represents an historically unprecedented effort to bring a non-European language into a U.S. educational system traditionally dominated by the teaching of three European languages, French, German and Spanish. As such, it represents a new and exciting experiment in foreign language education at the secondary level, but it also brings both structural and pedagogical challenges for which there is no precedent. There is at present a lack of trained teachers, few states with teacher certification standards and procedures, few training programs, and little planning on how to integrate high school instruction with its continuation at the college level. There is a paucity of quality instructional materials designed exclusively for high school students, little national experience in designing curriculum at the high school level, no historical tradition of teaching methods at the high school level for such a difficult, non-European language, and no standardized assessment procedures to judge the quality of student mastery of the language nor of the effectiveness of programs. The Japanese writing system presents very special learning problems to

native English-speaking students and there is a persistent concern that the difficulty of Japanese grammatical structures and the writing system will occupy so much of the teacher's time and efforts that instruction in the cultural facets of communication between members of such different cultures will not receive adequate attention.

In the fall of 1991, the National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) at Johns Hopkins University, and the College Board were awarded a two-year grant by the National Endowment for the Humanities to develop a national curricular framework and a College Board Achievement Test for the teaching of Japanese in U.S. high schools to assist Japanese language teachers and programs in this era of explosive and rather chaotic growth. The NFLC also conducted a national survey of Japanese language instruction in the U.S., sponsored by the U.S.-Japan Foundation and the Japan-United States Friendship Commission, now published and entitled:

"Japanese Language Instruction in the United States: Resources, Practice, and Investment Strategy." The survey data clearly revealed a national need for a more coherent, uniform design of instructional programs as well as the need for a national, standardized assessment instrument that would allow students, educators and parents to evaluate the effectiveness of Japanese language instruction. The College Board had been planning to develop national achievement tests in a number of non-European languages and thus was eager to begin development of a national College Board Achievement Test in Japanese.

The curricular framework project has now been completed with the publication and national dissemination of the document entitled "A Framework for Introductory Japanese Language Curricula in American High Schools and Colleges," available

from the NFLC. This framework was developed by a four-member Task Force in consultation with a twelve-member national Advisory Board. The Advisory Board was made up of outstanding teachers and scholars from around the country and was evenly divided between high school and college teachers as well as between native Japanese and native English speakers. The Task Force was comprised of two high school teachers of Japanese; one a native speaker of Japanese, the other of English, and two college teachers, again one a native speaker of Japanese, the other of English. Jim Unger of the University of Hawaii served as Chair of the Task Force. The Task Force members were Fred Lorish of South Eugene High School in Eugene, Oregon, Mari Noda of Ohio State University, and Yasuko Wada of Charles Wright Academy in Tacoma, Washington.

For the College Board Achievement Test portion of the project, Akiko Hirota of the California State University, Northridge and Kazuo Tsuda of the United Nations International School in New York joined the four Task Force members to form a test Development Committee. The project was co-directed by Gretchen Rigol, Executive Director of Access Services at the College Board and Ronald Walton, Deputy Director of the National Foreign Language Center. Eleanor Jordan served as project consultant.

The purpose of developing a national curricular framework is to arrive at a uniform core of agreement on realistic goals and the instructional design and teaching approaches necessary to reach these goals. Ideally, this framework will assist teachers, particularly new teachers, and administrators in developing programs by giving focus and uniformity to curricular design, syllabus development, teacher training, the development of instructional materials, and the articulation of secondary Japanese language programs with their college-level counterparts. The framework is not intended to provide a national syllabus but rather to provide principled advice on how to develop syllabi according to the needs and capacities of individual programs around the country. At the same time, adoption of the framework by given programs is purely voluntary since they are intended only to be helpful to the secondary education field.

The College Board Achievement Test, for those schools which elect to utilize it, will provide a

national metric to inform students, teachers, administrators and college-level programs on the learner's language competency in Japanese. Equally important, the development of such a test by the renowned College Board lends national credibility and academic integrity to the study of Japanese at the high school level, putting it on par with French, German and Spanish as a mainstream language. The test will include a listening section, a reading section, and a section on general capability in Japanese.

The National Endowment for the Humanities has lent its vigorous support to this project not only in providing the much needed funds but in its on-going encouragement of the project. The project began with a planning conference held at Stanford University in February 1991. Since that time, the first version of the test has been developed and piloted in various programs around the country. The results of this pilot test are now being analyzed and will serve as a guide in developing the final version which is expected to be available in the Spring of 1993.

Just as the entry of Japanese language instruction into the secondary schools represents a new and hitherto unattempted endeavor, the development of a national curricular framework and a national achievement test represents an innovative attempt to assist language educators and strengthen the field. No doubt, much is yet to be learned in this new enterprise, but the NEH-funded project ushers in the early steps of what will ideally become a carefully structured planning process to ensure the success of both learners and programs in Japanese language instruction in U.S. secondary schools.

Address of NFLC:  
The National Foreign Language Center at  
the Johns Hopkins University  
1619 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Fourth Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20036

Queries about the College Board Achievement  
Test:  
College Board ATP  
P.O. Box 6200  
Princeton, NJ 08541-6200  
Tel: (609) 771-7600

## Activities in Japanese Fiscal Year 1992

The Foundation officially opened its Language Center on August 1, 1992. The Center is responsible for Japanese language-related programs in the United States.

The programs executed by The Center are twofold: first, the original language-related activities established by The Foundation will continue under authority of The Center. Second, programs originated by The Center are as follows:

- a) Consulting Services/Training Seminars
- b) Grant Programs and Other Services

### **a) Consulting Services/Training Seminars**

The Center has dispatched lecturers to Washington, Wisconsin, Georgia, San Francisco and Greater Washington to conduct seminars or training courses on Japanese language teaching methods. Beginning fiscal year 1993-4, The Center will conduct summer workshops for teachers of Japanese. This year, two 10-day courses are offered for secondary school teachers.

### **b) Grants Programs and Other Services**

The Center has assisted in conducting the following workshops by offering grants through "Workshops and Conferences Grant Program":

- Seminar for Japanese Teachers in Wisconsin

conducted by the Department of Public Instruction  
- Spring and Fall Workshops of Teachers of Japanese in Southern California

The Center assisted in the formation of the following associations of teachers of Japanese by offering grants through "Association Grant Program":

- National Council of Secondary Teachers of Japanese
- Northeast Association of Secondary Teachers of Japanese
- Southwestern Secondary Teachers of Japanese

The Center also offers "Travel Grant Program (Abroad)" and "Travel Grant Program (Within the United States)" to facilitate participation in workshops and conferences by Japanese language teachers.

The Center participated in the AASIATJ and ACTFL annual meetings. The Center hosted the Association of Teachers of Japanese (ATJ) mid-year board meeting and National Council of Secondary Teachers of Japanese (NCSTJ) planning committees. The Center assisted "Total Immersion Japanese Language and Culture Camp for High School Students" conducted by the Japan-America Society of the state of Washington and "Japanese Language Teachers Network Newsletter" issued by the Center for Improvement of Teaching of Japanese Language & Culture.

## How to Conduct Effective Classroom Instruction-- For Japanese Language Teachers

**Mr. Akira Murasawa**  
Senior Specialist of Japanese Language  
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JPCA)

In North American there is a diversification of Japanese language learners. More and more learners of Japanese descent do not speak Japanese at home. This is very disheartening to those parents and teachers who would like to see Japanese as an "inherited language" to be passed on to these children. Furthermore there are also instances where there are non-Japanese Americans who are even more eager to study the Japanese language, making the tasks of the teachers more challenging.

No matter what the setting may be, such as the Immersion School or Japanese language schools that meet once or twice a week, what is important in

Japanese language education is motivation -- having a reason for studying the language in the first place -- and continued and sustained efforts. In order to achieve these, there must be a relationship of mutual trust between teacher and learner. I would therefore like to share with you my thoughts on what Japanese language teachers ought to bear in mind.

1. Understanding the needs of the learners  
The first step towards being a "good teacher" is to know your students. We first have to recognize that there is a great deal of difference between Japanese language teachers and students who have chosen to

study Japanese in the classroom. In other words, unless you understand your students, it is not possible to hold a class in the true sense of the word. Another thing that we should not forget is that teachers themselves are a linguistic environment in Japanese language education.

So, what do we have to know about the learners?

A) The level of their competence in the Japanese language There are learners with absolutely no background in the language as well as those who have had some experience at Japanese language schools, at home, or their local school, for example. The teacher's task is to figure out the best way to start their learning process based on the learner's initial language skills and to devise a method by which to maintain their level of interest.

B) The needs of the learners There is a variety of needs arising from the different objectives of the learners. These include building reading skills, writing skills, speaking skills, vocabulary, etc. We must consider the steps necessary to provide a sense of fulfillment through class work, adjusting to the needs and levels of the learners. By so doing, we bring about instruction responsive to individual needs. Even in those cases where the learners are forced to attend class because of their parents' wishes, we must seek the best method of instruction so as to offer the learners a sense of objectives. And, we must also work on the way we provide a sense of motivation to the learners.

2. Classes should be hold at ""the children's eye level"

The following took place during an observation visit to a certain school. Having children from level 1 through 2 sit on the floor, the teacher conducted dialogue (greetings) practice, showing the children visual materials. A little boy sitting at the very front muttered. ""My neck is tired."" but the teacher didn't notice and kept on with the lesson. The enthusiasm of the teacher was felt, but s/he had become so involved in the lesson that the learners were forgotten.

We must not forget ""the children's eye level"" not only with respect to the form of the class, the presentation of materials and writing on the blackboard, but also in the case of creation of a curriculum and instruction plan. Lessons are for learners. If we forget "the children's eye level," no matter how ingenious and wonderful your ideas may be for making the learning more effective, they will come to nothing.

If the teacher does not come down to the eye level of the learners by doing things like bending at the waist, or sitting down, the class will be unenjoyable for the students. By sitting on the floor, the teacher is able to notice what previously could not have been seen -- "the sparkle in the children's eyes."

3. Instructions on Row to Learn Rather Than Row to Teach (Teaching Method)

Perceptions about the Japanese language and students of the language are changing. Therefore, it is only natural that teaching methods must respond to these changes. The communicative approach, which aims at the internationalization of the Japanese language, has recently been given considerable attention over the academic method of the audio-lingual approach. There are a variety of methods now being advocated, but it is the teacher's responsibility to make choices regarding the method based on the actual conditions of their current students and to put them into practice. Teachers can also combine several methods in the classroom. In short, the teachers must establish their own teaching methods.

The important things are:

- what is the right method of making the learners study?
- what is the right method to have learners internalize what they have learned?
- what is the right method of making learners able to put this knowledge to actual use?

In order to answer these questions, we must first consider the appropriate "right methods." The answers will serve as a basis for establishing a meaningful class.

#### **Actual condition of the students Preparation by the instructor and methods of instruction**

(motivation, level of efforts, comprehensive ability) (teaching materials, work, teaching plan)

Why don't you, for example, record your own instruction? By doing so, teachers will not only learn if their classes are good or poor, but they will also find out if the learners are not being given a chance to speak because the teacher is talking too much.

If learners are not given as much chance as possible to speak, the class cannot be called a language instruction class. Suppose the learners' verbalization is not smooth. Suppose further there are some grammatical errors, and errors in pronunciation and accent. Even under these circumstances, we cannot hope for the internalization of the knowledge by the learners unless we have them speak. Only by having the learners participate in the act of speaking by means of making utterances and by means of gesture and body language, can they develop a feel for the language.

#### **5. Eight Key Points for Improving Language Instruction**

1) Frequently observe the classes of teachers senior to you

- \* put into practice what you have learned
- \* it is not necessarily the case that new methods are good methods

2) Record your class and use the tape for self-examination

\* reflect, for example, on your language usage, pronunciation, reaction of the learners and how you in turn react to them, your particular habits, etc.

3) Make your teaching plan in detail, yet don't feel 100% bound to it when you are in the classroom

\* let the reactions of the learners dictate your teaching plan. Make slight adjustments when the occasion calls for it (make a class plan that is flexible enough to fit to the particular needs of a particular class)

\* classes that are precisely according to the class plan only serve to satisfy the teacher, and the students may be left feeling uninvolved

\* always be prepared for a panicky situation in the classroom (deal with it as the occasion warrants)

4) Praise and recognize the learners' endeavors

\* teachers who only correct the mistakes of their learners do not earn the learners' trust

\* look for and recognize the learners' good points, rather than their faults

5) Let learners have a feeling of accomplishment and attainment

\* at the end of the class, confirm what they have learned that day

We should not forget the relationships indicated above. Also, we should aspire to be teachers who can learn "the right methods" from the learners. That is to say, the attitude of the children reflects what kind of teacher s/he is, revealing a lack of language training. The same can be said for pet phrases used by the teacher. The continuous acquisition of feedback results in progress. What leads to effective instruction is not implanting knowledge into the students, but rather discovering with the students the right way in

which the learners themselves grapple with the task of language learning.

4. Does the teacher talk too much?

It is the teacher's duty to do things like giving directions and explaining things to the learners. Study methods, the presentation of teaching materials, grammar and vocabulary explanations are all things the teacher must talk about. However, if this is just one-way verbalization, the learners become passive and no progress is made. Even during question and answer periods, the teacher might end up talking over 50% of the exchange.

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6) Take the greatest possible care in distributing exercises, homework and so on

\* the efforts that the teachers make to make their classes effective + learners' preparation and review

7) Make it a point to use accurate Japanese

\* knowledge of grammar is necessary in order to respond to the learners' questions

8) Teacher should have an impartial outlook on all races, cultures and religions

\* work to develop a broad knowledge about Japanese culture and society

(After Mr. Murasawa retired from his position as the principal of an elementary school in Tokyo, he engaged in Japanese language education in the Dominican Republic and Canada, acting as Senior Specialist of Japanese Language of the JICA. He returned to Japan in January, 1993.)

## Textbooks for the Pre-Collegiate Level (1)

From this issue on, in this section, textbooks for the pre-collegiate level will be reviewed. The following is a list of the available textbooks in the United States for pre-collegiate students. These books are held in our library for library members.

### Japanese Textbooks Available for Pre-Collegiate Students

| <u>Title</u>                                 | <u>Year</u> | <u>Authors</u>              | <u>Publisher</u>                 | <u>Price*</u> | <u>Supplement**</u> |
|--|-------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Basic Japanese Level 1-2                     | 1992        | Lynn Williams               | Nat'l Textbook Co.               | \$19.95       | T W M               |
| Bunka Shokyu Nihongo I-II [in Japan]         | 1987        | Bunka Institute of Language | Bonjinsha                        | \$19.50       | T W M I O           |
| Hello in Japanese I-II (Konnichiwa Nihongo)  | 1990        | Keiko Inoue                 | Heian                            | \$14.50       | T W                 |
| Hiroko-san no Tanoshii Nihongo [in Japan]    | 1986        | M. Nemoto & E. Yashiro      | Bonjinsha                        | \$21.10       | W                   |
| Ikiteiru Nihongo Vol.1                       | 1992        | J. Lowry & A. Morimoto      | Nat'l Foreign Lang. Research Ctr | \$10.00       | W M                 |
| Japanese Book 1-4                            | 1978        | Alfonso                     | Curr. Development Ctr (Aust.)    | \$19.95       | T M                 |
| Japanese Made Possible Vol. 1 & 2            | 1988        | H. Takeuchi                 | Bonjinsha                        | \$30.50       | T                   |
| Japanese Now Vol. I-IV (Korekara no Nihongo) | 1982        | E. Sato et al.              | University of Hawaii Press       | \$16.00       | T W M               |
| Japanese 1 & 2 Textbook 「にほんご」               | 1991        | SERC                        | NDE/NETC                         |               | T W M               |
| Kimono I-III                                 | 1990        | H. McBride                  | EMC Publishing                   | \$18.95       | T W M               |
| Nihongo: Beginning Japanese Part I & II      | 1991        | A. Kakutani                 | Earlham College                  | \$12.00       |                     |
| Nihongo: Introductory Japanese Vol. I        | 1992        | Y. Sato & M.Y. Yamashita    | Bess Press                       | \$19.95       | W M P               |
| Nihongo Kantan Book 1-2 (Speak Japanese)     | 1988        | K. Saka & H. Yoshiki        | Kenkyusha                        | \$20.75       | T M                 |
| A Homestay in Japan 「日本との出会い」                | 1992        | C. Allen & N. Watanabe      | Stone Bridge Press               | \$16.95       |                     |
| Japanese for Everyone                        | 1990        | S. Nagara et al.            | Gakken                           | \$24.95       | T                   |

### Japanese Textbooks Available for Elementary School Students

|  |      |                        |                 |         |     |
|--|------|------------------------|-----------------|---------|-----|
| Nihongo Daisuki-Japanese For Children  | 1990 | S. Hirate & N. Kawaura | Bess Press      | \$19.95 |     |
| Nihongo-Introductory Japanese          | 1992 | California A.J.L.S.    | Seibido (Japan) | \$24.00 |     |
| Japanese for Children (Nihongo no Hon) | 1991 | Y. Kobo et al.         | Passport Books  | \$ 8.95 | T M |
| Tanoshii Kodomo no Nihongo             | 1992 | N. Yamada              | Bonjinsha       | \$18.25 |     |

\* Price=Price of Student Textbook, Vol. 1

\*\*T=(audio) Tape W=Workbook/Exercise Sheet M=(Teacher's) Manual/Guide I=Index O=OHP P=Picture Cards 3/93

## Library Service

The Japan Foundation Language Center Library offers library services in order to provide access for teachers of Japanese to teaching materials and resources. The Library also circulates materials by mail for teachers who are unable to come to the library.

### Library News

The library has started circulating back issues of magazines related to language education such as *Nihongo* and *Nihongo Journal*. A list of magazine titles is available.

A new shipment of books and audio-visual materials is expected from Japan soon. We are going to update our library materials list as soon as we receive the new materials. Please look forward to it!

### Library Information

#### Library Materials List

A list of our library holdings, including audiovisual material, textbooks, teaching material, magazines and others, is available for members upon written request.

#### Library Hours and Holidays

Monday through Friday 10:00 am - 5:00pm

The library is closed on the following days from April through September to observe these holidays:

|              |                   |
|--------------|-------------------|
| Memorial Day | May 31, 1993      |
| Labor Day    | September 7, 1993 |

#### Circulation Loan Period and Limits

|                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Circulation books      | 3 weeks, 3 items at a time |
| Audio-visual materials | 3 weeks, 1 set at a time   |

Items may be renewed one time only.

#### Library Membership

Teachers who are affiliated with the following associations are eligible for membership:

Association of Teachers of Japanese (ATJ)  
National Council of Secondary Teachers of Japanese

(NCSTJ)

Teachers of Japanese in Southern California (TJSC)

Applicants for library membership are required to provide the following:

1. Individual application form.
2. A copy of identification, such as a driver's license.
3. We may ask for proof of membership in the applicant's affiliated association if we are not able to verify such membership from our lists.

Information Service for Educational Video The Center for Educational Media (CEM) at Earlham College provides you with information on educational media materials related to Japan, including titles, brief content synopses, intended audience levels, and where and how the materials are obtained.

Please contact:

Center for Educational Media  
Institute for Education on Japan  
Earlham College  
Richmond, IN 47374-4095  
Tel: (317) 983-1288 Fax: (317) 983-1553

"Japanese-Language Education Around the Globe"

Fourth Call for Papers

The Japan Foundation Japanese Language Institute is now inviting contributions for the fourth volume of "Japanese-Language Education Around The Globe." Please submit theses in the field of Japanese-language education or Japanese-language studies no later than September 15, 1993 to The Institute. Their brochure is available from us.