

DECEMBER, 2017: BREEZE ISSUE #122

A FREE MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF JAPAN & TEACHERS OF JAPANESE



2017 J-LEAP REPORT BY MINOBE MASAKI

*Kearny High School
Kearny, NJ*

My name is Masaki Minobe. I was assigned as an assistant Japanese teacher at Kearny High School with Davis-sensei, my Lead Teacher. Kearny High School is located in New Jersey, just 30 minutes from New York City, by car. There are many students here with diverse cultural backgrounds; many of which have roots in Latin American countries such as Peru, Ecuador and Brazil. Therefore, I can occasionally hear students speaking Spanish and Portuguese as well as English, which gives me an impression that I live and work in a multicultural society.

Students at Kearny High School can choose which language to study, with a choice of Spanish, French, Italian, Latin and Japanese. Currently, Kearny high school offers 4 different levels of Japanese classes from Japanese 1 to Japanese 4 with more than 80 students. Now, we are planning to set up an AP Japanese class and will work to create a new curriculum for that. We are team-teaching almost all in Japanese so that students can learn Japanese in an environment close to an immersion program. Students in Japanese 3 and 4 will have a chance to visit Japan through a school trip in March and April of 2018. Thus, Davis-sensei and I teach Japanese phrases and expressions that are likely to be necessary when they are in Japan as tourists. Students will be able to use phrases and expressions, learned during classes, in real life situations when they actually go to Japan. In addition, I already contacted my alma mater and made arrangements for Kearny students to visit my high school during their trip in Japan. By organizing a Japan trip and a school visit in Japan, Davis-sensei and I are trying to give students an incentive to keep learning Japanese as well as provide exciting opportunities to make real use of their newly learned language.

Outside of the classroom, there are two things I usually do at school in addition to preparing lessons. One is to supervise Japanese club activities where I have been introducing some Japanese games that I would often play when I was young. I not only introduce Japanese games by myself but also help students to plan and prepare things. Every week, student club officers and I put our heads together and think about what we are going to do for each club meeting. My job is to make it possible for the students to do what they want to do by giving them instructions on the type of difficulties they might encounter and how they should prepare in advance during a particular session. Through the meetings, I try to make each Japanese club event as ready and organized as possible and, at the same time, I help the students become independent and acquire skills to plan and organize events on their own.

The other thing I do outside of class is talk to our students as frequently as possible. Even during my breaks, I sometimes go to the school cafeteria to talk to my students in Japanese. My intention is to give them every opportunity to use Japanese, which is not enough if they only use it in class. I often speak Japanese even to non-Japanese-learning students, who happen to be sitting next to my students in the cafeteria. This way, I try to increase the number of students who are interested in Japanese language and let other students know that Kearny High School has a Japanese program and a teacher from Japan.

Outside of school, I engage in some activities regarding Japanese language education. First of all, I attended an academic meeting conducted by NJATJ (New Jersey Association of Teachers of Japanese) and learned many things, such as how to use anime in class. Secondly, I participated in a program called “Japanese Table”, held at Princeton University. This is an event in which Japanese guests and university students, who are studying Japanese, talk about many things freely over dinner. Thirdly, I participated in the ACTFL (American Council on the teaching of Foreign Languages) Convention & Expo for the first time. There, I listened to many presentations made by leading language teachers of many different languages, from all over the United States. Their presentations gave me many hints about how to improve my teaching. I strongly feel that I can apply what I learned to my daily lesson planning and classroom management. I really want to attend the convention next year, too. Lastly, as one of the outside-school activities, I am planning to set up Japanese classes at a local library for people who want to learn Japanese, but do not have a place to study. This way, I can contribute to the expansion of Japanese language education in the area.

There are several goals I would like to achieve during my stay in America. The most important one is to increase the number of students who choose to study Japanese at Kearny High School without deteriorating the quality of education for each student. Next, I would like



come up with ways how I can make students grow as an active learner to be able to keep learning on their own. Last but not least, I would like to get involved in the local community more and deepen American people's understanding of Japan.

Breeze #122



Japanese Language Update #49

2017 J-LEAP Report: Minobe Masaki

2017 J-LEAP Report: Yoshiyasu Horino

Breeze #121



Breeze #120



Breeze #119

Breeze #118

Breeze #117

Breeze #116

Breeze #115



Breeze #114



Breeze #113



Breeze #112



Breeze #111

[Headquarters](#) [New York Office](#) [Center for Global Partnership](#) [Volunteer](#)
[ボランティア募集](#) [Japan Related Links](#) [Job Openings \(Updated\)](#)

5700 Wilshire blvd, Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA 90036
P. 323.761.7510

Annual Report

© 2019 The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles

Web Design.