



# WINTER, 2008: BREEZE ISSUE #34

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

## SUMMARY OF LICENSURE PROGRAMS IN US

*Data compilation by Mike Jaffe & Mari Izumikawa*

*Text by Mari Izumikawa*

This Summary of Licensure Programs in US was created as a resource for potential Japanese-language teachers of elementary/secondary and post-secondary levels. The chart provides contact information of institutions which indicated they offer a program to license its participants as Japanese-language educators based on a survey conducted by the Japan Foundation, Los Angeles.

The terminology, credential, is used in this survey report is used synonymously with the term licensure. Various states use different terminology to describe programs which certifies teachers to give instruction in a specific language, and this summary is based on collected data of using the two words as synonyms.

As of data collected March 2007, 29 institutions in the US replied indicating a program in a licensure program in Japanese-language instruction. Of these institutions, programs offered vary from one that leads to a master's degree, a bachelor's degree, or an add-on (post-baccalaureate). Most license programs are reflective of their state Department of Education's requirement to teach at the various levels, though degree programs are relatively more general and also likely to be a gateway to doctoral studies in education in a foreign language.

This chart should be used for reference purpose only to get you started. By no means, this list is comprehensive; though we strive to continue to provide the most updated information, please contact each school for further information.

In some institutions, the license is awarded by the department which Japanese-language is housed, while others are offered by the department affiliated with education.

To date, out of the institutions which offer a licensure in Japanese-language instruction, few departments are in close contact with one another. This leaves responsibility solely on the student to collect vital information from educational and Japanese-language ends, manage the obtained information, and constantly remain up to date with each division's program changes.

As with any teaching licensure in the US, license in one state does not always equate to eligible state to teach in another state. For more information regarding reciprocity in teaching license in the US, please see:

\*If your institution offers a program and is not on our list, please contact us so we may add you to our database for potential teachers: [jflaeducation@jflalc.org](mailto:jflaeducation@jflalc.org).

# JAPANESE FOR YOUTHS: WHY START IN K-5 BENEFITS OF THE JAPANESE-LANGUAGE

*By Mari Izumikawa*

A working knowledge of Japanese frees access to resources only available in Japanese for various fields that Japan is known to lead. Equipped with this large advantage, young students acquire global awareness and competitiveness to pursue further interests.

Japan leads in many fields vital to the well being and richness of the world. Contemporary culture of Japan such as technology, anime, fashion, and games, which are familiar with the younger students, have penetrated into the global cultures today.

Japan's modern & pop culture pay much tribute to traditional culture. The underlying philosophy, aesthetics, and inspiration in today's culture can be rooted back to centuries ago, which makes Japanese culture very rich and unique.

Not only is Japanese culture timeless, it is also borderless. Many Americans are drawn to the simplistic virtues of Japanese tea ceremony, amongst other Zen rituals such as ikebana (Japanese flower arrangement) and meditation. Practiced in Japan for hundreds of years, the aesthetics and logic of traditional Japan reach far beyond its time and is appreciated worldwide with no boundary.

Japan and the US share very similar values on aspects we find important to our daily lives. The positive US-Japan relation is largely due to "shared belief in freedom, democracy, market economy, and the rule of law and respect for human dignity\*." In our attempts for a continuous pursuit of better quality of life, we can turn to Japan and their R&D leadership in fields such as robotics, biochemical & environmental sciences, computer & nano-technologies, medicine, and consumer electronics.

Neon-bright illumination for night time Las Vegas and your neighborhood billboards can be credited to the discovery of the bright-blue LEDs invented by Shuji Nakamura, a Japanese scientist and professor at University of California, Santa Barbara. Since then, LEDs have found its way into color copiers, scanners, and printers, and Japan has been known to produce 40% of the world's photocopiers. There's a good change that the machines in your office and classrooms are a result of technology R&D from Japan!

Need a hand in the classrooms? It's not so long in the future robots that can perform chores or play a musical instrument will debut into our lives. Alongside humans, these robots can help support and care for the elderly at home, perform hazardous tasks, and make our daily lives more efficient, giving you more time with your students!

The door to Japan's rich history and culture, and their state of the art technology becomes infinitely available to Japanese-language learners. Understanding another language results in reflection and deeper understanding of one's own language, culture, and society. Students learning Japanese at a young age can acquire language skills, as well as reasoning and deducing skills, sharpened by observing Japanese culture through language and drawing comparisons between Japan and the United States

As our global community continues to intertwine and the distant made more accessible, communicative and comprehension skills become all the more essential for the future generations. Start early and give your students the opportunity to blossom.

# “WHY NOT SPANISH?” A PARENT’S PERSPECTIVE

*By Lisa Hodge*

“Why not Spanish?” This was the first question I asked when I moved to Great Falls in 1998, and heard that our Elementary school had an immersion program. At the time, I had a kindergartner, and was intrigued by the immersion concept. When I heard it was Japanese, I dismissed the idea.

Then, a few months later, at a dinner party, I met someone who had two children in Japanese Immersion. She could not say enough wonderful things about the program, and her experience. “Hmmm...” I thought, “Why not let Erin try it?” Truthfully, I didn’t expect her to last the year.

Well now, with two children in Japanese Immersion (4th and 8th grades), and a third who will begin JIP next year, I am one of the program’s biggest fans. And I now know what my children would have missed, if instead, they were learning Spanish.

Here’s what I have learned:

Japanese is a difficult, but fascinating language. Because it is so different from English, it challenges students to think and learn on so many different levels. And yet, children who are young embrace the challenge, and learn Japanese, just as they learn all the other subjects that are so new to them.

Japanese culture differs greatly from American culture. At first, I thought this was negative. Now I realize exposing our children to a culture so significantly different from ours is an enormous benefit. Children learn the nuances of culture that are so important to understanding people.

Japanese culture emphasizes traits important to success in life. The Japanese culture places great value on education, respect for others, respect for nature, team-work, and hard work. Clearly, focusing on these important attributes is beneficial to all students.

Learning and mastering Japanese is unique. Very few students are given the opportunity to learn Japanese. Therefore, in situations where a student is trying to separate themselves from the masses (i.e. scholarships, college applications, job opportunities), having been exposed to a unique and difficult language is impressive.

Being unique is empowering. My children who have experienced Japanese are very proud of this knowledge. They recognize that it is a unique experience that is not offered to everyone. Children in general respond with rapt attention when they see something different. I witnessed this in person at the recent book fair. When Sahara Sensei began reading in Japanese, the children were riveted.

Japan is a world leader in automotive and electronics industries. Understanding the language and more importantly the culture, of one of the world’s leading economic engines is advantageous to anyone...but especially to our elementary students who will grow up using so many Japanese products and services.

In addition, Great Falls Elementary has developed a strong relationship with the current Prime Minister and First Lady of Japan (who visited us last March), and Mr. Kake and the Kake Educational Institute. The relationship has literally been decades in the making, and provides unprecedented opportunities for Falls Elementary students.

Obviously my children have benefited a great deal from their participation the Japanese Immersion Program.

My one regret at Great Falls Elementary has been that we haven't integrated the Japanese Language and culture into the school-wide curriculum, so that all the children benefit from our Japanese resources.

I understand that through the County mandated FLES program, this may now be a possibility. It would truly be an enormous benefit for all the students of Great Falls Elementary School.

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