



## **SPRING, 2009: BREEZE ISSUE #38**

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

# **BUSINESS JAPANESE PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES : 2009 SURVEY REPORT**

*By Motoko Tabuse, Eastern Michigan University*

### **Introduction**

In the fall of 2008, the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit , Michigan , contacted me about the Japan-US Information Exchange Forum. At the forum, I was asked to report the status of Japanese language education in Michigan , including Business Japanese language education. So, I began to prepare for a report and started collecting data. I contacted the Japan Foundation to obtain the latest information on the status of Japanese language education in the United States . Right away, I received comprehensive study results. I then shifted my focus to the Business Japanese program and realized that I only knew one other institution?the University of Michigan (an institution near my university)?that offered Business Japanese courses on a regular basis besides EMU in the state of Michigan. Was this really the case? Frustrated, I contacted Tomoko Takami at the University of Pennsylvania , the chair of the Business Japanese Special Interest Group (BJ SIG) of the Association of Teachers of Japanese (ATJ), in hopes to obtain more information about the status of Business Japanese (BJ, hereafter) language education. She and I began working together on this survey and another project to organize a Business Japanese panel at the 2009 AAS/ATJ conference. We both realized that there was no up-to-date data for BJ language education in the United States . Thus, we agreed to conduct a survey study to obtain information about BJ programs.

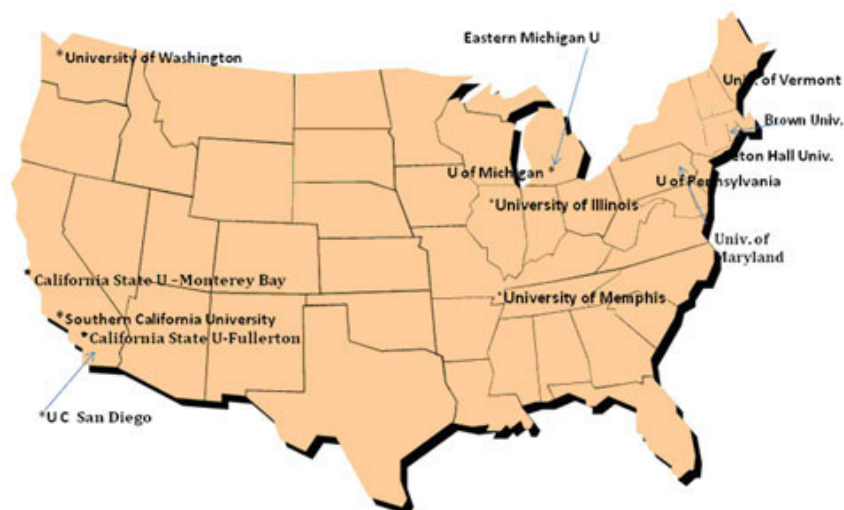
### **About the survey project**

The purpose for the survey was to obtain basic information about who, what, and where the BJ courses and programs in the United States were offered. The survey questionnaire was distributed to the BJ SIG members of ATJ via email in late 2008. Fourteen (14) institutions' representatives responded to the survey. The states represented in this survey were California (4), Illinois (1), Maryland (1), Tennessee (1), Michigan (2), New Jersey (1), Pennsylvania (1), Rhode Island (1), Vermont (1), and Washington (1). Table 1 shows the name of institution, the institutional or program information source, the contact person, and the level of BJ course or program offered.

TABLE 1: 2009 Business Japanese Program Survey Participants

Name of Institution	Institution or program or course information	Contact Person	Level of BJ
Brown University , RI	Department of East Asian Studies	<i>Yuko Jackson</i>	UG & GR
California State University Fullerton , CA	Academic Departments - International Business or Japanese	<i>Setsue Shibata</i>	UG
California State University Monterey Bay , CA	School for World language and Culture	<i>Yoshiko Saito-Abbott</i>	UG
Eastern Michigan University , MI	World Languages	<i>Motoko Tabuse</i>	UG & GR
Seton Hall University , NJ	Asian Studies	<i>Shigeru Osuka</i>	UG & GR
University of California , San Diego , CA	School of International Relations and Pacific Studies	<i>Eiko Ushida</i>	GR
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign , IL	Department of East Asian Languages and Culture	<i>Teruaki Muto</i>	UG
University of Maryland College Park , MA	Japanese	<i>Kazuo Yaginuma &amp; Makiko Inoue</i>	UG
University of Memphis , TN	Japanese	<i>Yuki Masuda</i>	GR
University of Pennsylvania , PA	Japanese	<i>Tomoko Takami</i>	UG
University of Southern California , CA	Japanese	<i>Yuka Kumagai</i>	UG in 2010
University of Vermont , VT	Japanese	<i>Kazuko Carlson</i>	On demand
University of Washington , WA	Technical Japanese	<i>Michio Tsutsui</i>	UG & GR

According to the response, twelve (12) universities offer Business Japanese courses on a regular basis. The University of Southern California is planning to offer Business Japanese courses starting in 2010. Also, the University of Vermont offers BJ courses upon request through the University's Center for Business Administration for area companies.



## Course information (Undergraduate)

Eleven (11) universities offer BJ courses or programs at the undergraduate level. Out of twelve (12) institutions, California State University, Fullerton (CSU-Fullerton, hereafter) and Eastern Michigan University (EMU, hereafter) offer programs where students can either major or minor in BJ programs. At CSU-Fullerton, International Business requires students to select a concentration area of language among Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese and Spanish. “Language and International Trade” major students will chose a language major in French, German, Japanese or Spanish with a Business minor at EMU. At the University of Washington (U of Washington, hereafter), BJ is an integral part of the Technical Japanese program and undergraduate students can minor in Technical Japanese, which includes BJ courses.

The total number of BJ student enrollment in 12 US institutions fluctuates between 350 and 390 per year. There are 21 courses offered under the “Business Japanese” category. EMU is the only institution that offers a 200 level Business Japanese course. CSU- Fullerton, California State University, Monterey Bay (CSU-Monterey Bay, hereafter), EMU, Seton Hall University, University of Pennsylvania (U of Pennsylvania, hereafter), and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (U of Illinois U-B, hereafter) offer 300 level courses. All 300 level BJ courses require at least 2 years of Japanese language course work. JPAN 381-382 offered at the U of Pennsylvania are equivalent to 4 th year Japanese courses. Four institutions?EMU, University of Michigan (U of Michigan, hereafter), U of Washington, and University of Maryland, College Park (U of Maryland, hereafter) offer 400 level BJ courses. Brown University offers JAPN 0920A Language for Specific Purposes: Business Japanese and is open for both undergraduate and graduate level students who completed 7 semesters of Japanese. The Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies at the University of California, San Diego (UC San Diego, hereafter) offers IRLA 412, but it is for graduate students. All 400 level courses require at least 3 years of Japanese course work. At institutions where students can major or minor in the BJ program, BJ courses are required, but for most of the institutions they are electives.

As for the course titles, 9 courses had “Business Japanese” within them. Others included “Japanese for Technical and Business Professions” (3 courses), “Japanese for Professions” (2 courses), “Advanced Japanese (Workplace)” (2 courses), “Japanese for Professionals” (1 course), “Japanese for Internatio Business” (1 course), “Japanese for International Trade” (1 course) and “Japanese for Professional

Purposes” (1 course). The number of students per class/section ranged from six (6) to thirty (30), depending on the institution. The frequency of the course offerings also varied from year to year, once every two years and once every three semesters.

### Course information (Graduate)

Brown University (Brown U), EMU, Seton Hall U, UC San Diego, University of Memphis (U of Memphis) and U of Washington responded that they offer graduate level Business Japanese courses. The total number of BJ graduate level student enrollment is around 100 per year and altogether 11 graduate courses were offered among these five (5) institutions?five 500 level courses, two 600 level courses, three 700 level courses and one course with 0920A course number.

As indicated earlier, Brown University offers 0920A Language for Specific Purposes: Business Japanese that is open for both undergraduate and graduate students. EMU offers a graduate certificate program where graduate students are required to take Japanese for Business Practices I and II courses. At least the Intermediate Mid-level of Japanese proficiency is required. Seton Hall University offers two cross-listing courses?JAPN Graduate Newspaper Reading I and II?with Business School MBA program. However, the courses do not use Japanese language for instruction. UC San Diego offers IRLA 412 日本のビジネス経営 and this course is for second year graduate students who are taking (or have taken) the “Business and Management in Japan ” course (a core class for Japan focus student), and requires advanced level proficiency. U of Memphis offers JAPN 7101-2 Advanced Business Japanese I and II that are exclusively for International MBA Japan Track students and LALI 7780 Individual Studies in Business Japanese where graduate students in various programs can take. U of Washington offers an inter-engineering master's program in Technical Japanese where students are required to take the two Technical Japanese sequences (27 credits?TC 561, 562 and 563: Advanced Japanese for Technical and Business Professions 1, 2, and 3) in addition to 24 credits of engineering coursework. They are also required to complete 3 credits of Japan internship for a minimum of 2 months.

### Instructional materials:

A variety of teaching/learning materials is used to teach BJ courses. Some programs listed commercially available books written in both English and Japanese. The Japanese language books listed include the book of *Keigo*, books that described business manners and etiquette, and the so-called business Japanese textbooks with business situational dialogues and exercises. The English books that were listed included “how to” books involving business with Japanese, as well as Japanese business etiquette and ethics. Some instructors indicated that they do not use commercially available textbooks at all. Almost all instructors utilized authentic materials including online resources. They used business-related reading materials and training manuals and videos in both English and Japanese. Detailed information as to how they used the teaching/learning materials was not included in the survey.

Many instructors also provide interactive opportunities for BJ students. They invite area business people as guest speakers and take students to visit local companies. Some programs such as CSU-Fullerton and EMU provide internship opportunities for students. The U of Michigan, for example, has a two-week credit-bearing program where undergraduate students travel to Japan and visit Japanese companies. In the inter-engineering master's program for Technical Japanese at the U of Washington, an internship in Japan (minimum of 2 months) is required.

### Instructional Format

The instructional formats used at the 14 universities are either a traditional classroom instruction format or a hybrid format. Nine (9) universities responded that they use 100% traditional classroom instruction. One institution (U of Washington) used to offer online Business Japanese courses in the past. Two universities (CSU-Monterey Bay and EMU) are currently offering hybrid (i.e., mixture of online and traditional classroom formats) Business Japanese courses where students receive instructions and/or engage in homework assignment and/or take examinations using the online format.

The use of target language in the classroom ranged from 0% to 100%. For undergraduate courses, the range was between 70% and 100%. Nine (9) university instructors use only Japanese to teach Business Japanese courses; 2 instructors use 85-90% Japanese; 1 instructor uses 80%; and 1 instructor uses 70% of Japanese to teach a 200 level Business Japanese course (but uses 95% to 100% Japanese for upper level courses.) The fact that many instructors use mostly Japanese to teach Business Japanese courses suggests that students who study Business Japanese possess relatively high proficiency level in the language. Detailed information regarding the expected Japanese language proficiency by the Business Japanese instructors was not obtained in this survey.

Within the undergraduate programs, seven instructors reported that they used the content-based instruction format where the instructors teach business subjects such as accounting, marketing, internet business, and international business. Three universities used the content-based approach to teach graduate level BJ. The contents for graduate courses include management, economics and internet business.

### **Instructors' backgrounds**

Most of the Business Japanese instructors have extensive experience in teaching Japanese language. The years of experience ranged between 5 and 30 years with the average about 15 years. When it comes to teaching experience in BJ, the range was between less than 5 years and 19 years. As for their educational background, six instructors hold a Ph.D., one holds an Ed.D, seven hold MA degree, and one holds a MS degree. The areas of specialization that are associated with their degrees are in Asian Studies, Foreign Language Education, Linguistics, Japanese Pedagogy, Japanese, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Almost all of them hold full-time or tenured positions at their institutions. In general, BJ courses are taught by veterans in relatively secure environments.

### **Challenges that Business Japanese instructors face**

In the constantly changing world of global economy, Business Japanese instructors face many challenges. The challenges identified by the 2009 survey respondents pivots around four major topics: (1) professional development (PD, hereafter), (2) curriculum modifications, (3) opportunities for students, and (4) advocacy.

Although most instructors who teach BJ courses have extensive experience in teaching Japanese language in general, many expressed the needs to improve their own knowledge of the teaching content, including how to effectively integrate Business content to Japanese language education. Some instructors expressed more concrete needs to understand about general business operations and how the notion of the globalization changes Japanese business and culture.

Another challenge for BJ instructors is the curriculum modifications to keep up with the current economic developments as well as the changes in Japanese business practices. In addition, at the BJ SIG meeting the 2009 ATJ annual meeting, many instructors agreed that when it comes to Business Japanese content, their Japanese language colleagues are not necessarily enthusiastic about engaging in discussion

Business Japanese course design, curriculum issues, and ways to affectively assess students' progress. Thus many BJ instructors feel as if they need to work on curriculum modifications in an isolated environment at their own institution.

For BJ instructors, providing realistic opportunities for students to apply their learned knowledge and skills often means going outside of the classroom and engaging students in activities and projects offered by academic service learning and internships that involve local businesses within the community. Unfortunately, such opportunities are often susceptible to economic conditions of a particular area and at present opportunities that have been offered to students have been diminishing.

Lastly, BJ instructors want to collaborate more with the business and the government sectors to advocate the importance of BJ language and culture training in their community. Survey respondents expressed the need for the BJ instructors to become proactive and constantly attempt to be connected to the area business in addition to their work within the institution. The collaboration with the business sectors in the community may very well provide realistic situations for students, as well as bring visibility to the Business Japanese courses and programs.

### **Desired professional development activities**

The desired professional development (PD) activities are highly correlated with the challenges expressed by BJ instructors. They revolve around having networking opportunities with others, BJ-specific material development, teaching effectiveness, gaining knowledge and experience on global business, and creating realistic situations and opportunities for students.

The most frequently listed item under PD wish list is networking with other BJ instructors. As previously stated, many BJ instructors feel rather isolated when it comes to discussing course/program/curriculum ideas with others.

BJ instructors prefer hands-on training opportunities over theoretical presentations to obtain information about useful learning/teaching materials including videos and DVDs that reflect the latest Japanese business situations. Due to rapid changes in the field, commercially available materials including videos tend to be outdated regarding its content. Many instructors are currently creating their own materials to satisfy the needs of a specific group of students at their institution.

BJ instructors appear to have already identified their specific PD needs regarding the instructional effectiveness. Their needs include; to share ideas on how to effectively integrate technology into their teaching, find ways to effectively teach groups of students with varied proficiency levels, motivational levels, and varied areas of business concentration, learn ways to skillfully blend Japanese language proficiency development and business content, find ways to make students actively participate in discussion and guide students to conduct professional-quality presentations, and lastly, to share ideas of content-based instruction specifically designed for Business Japanese language courses.

BJ instructors are eager to learn more about Japanese business operations in general. Some instructors suggest expanding the “network” scope, not only to include other Business Japanese instructors, but also to include people in the business sector. Some are even interested in business training opportunities and internship opportunities specifically for instructors to enhance their own knowledge of the business content areas.

The importance of receiving training on how to obtain and maintain job-related opportunities for students was also expressed by many instructors. Although some internship opportunities are available in Japan , many opportunities for students are usually in their own community and the number of such opportunities and their conditions usually reflect economic situations within the community. Thinking of ways to strengthen the relationship between BJ program and the area business sector will be crucial for the survival of the BJ program. The instructors need to know what kind of opportunities there are in their community. Involving people in their institution to work with the area business sector will also be very beneficial. The future PD activities may include hands-on workshops on how to build collaborative relationships to show examples and strategies.

## **Suggestions for the future of Business Japanese language education**

At the ATJ Business Japanese SIG meeting in March 2009 as well as the AAS Roundtable, many ideas to move Business Japanese forward were suggested.

I presented Michigan 's attempts to collaborate among the government, business, and education sectors, in addition to the 2009 Business Japanese Survey results. Tomoko Takami introduced the application of the Case Method which is used in many MBA programs to teach a BJ class. Yuki Matsuda stressed the importance of the Japanese cultural aspect through humor in BJ language curriculum and gave examples of *rakugo* or *kobanashi* to be used in classes.

At the AAS presentation, Muneo Takashi, Executive Director of JETRO in Chicago , talked about the current Japanese economic situation, and the advanced technical capabilities of the small to mid-scale business operations in Japan . Ken Masumoto from Michigan Economic Development Corporation described the economic changes planned in the state of Michigan and the state-government level collaboration between Michigan and Japan . I presented how the Japanese language education is connected to what Ken described and further expanded the collaboration with the Japanese government (i.e., the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit ). Setsue Shibata described of the current BJ curriculum and future issues of diminishing resources and opportunities. Michio Tsutsui described the technical and BJ language programs and the pros and cons about online course offerings at his institution.

During the SIG meeting, Michio Tsutsui made a suggestion to change the perspectives of BJ language education. BJ language education should not be considered as a field of study that is specialized or very hard, but as a field that all Japanese language students will utilize as they seek employment in whatever their desired job may be. We can proactively advance this idea within the same institution, particularly by combining the notion of future employment at the early stage of the student's learning. The lower level course content may include “work-related” situations as much as possible. For example, 1 st year level students will receive practice opportunities to greet people using different situations, including a situation between company workers of different ranks, as well as between students and the teacher.

Many students may begin their Japanese language study simply because they love *manga* , *anime*, J-Pop, or they had wonderful experience traveling in Japan . Younger learners may not be connecting their personal interest with their future employment. If we could guide them and give other reasons as to how and why they could benefit from continuing their study of Japanese, it would be more beneficial for all of us.

We may continue our discussion on the perception changes for BJ language education and the strategies to move forward with them. At the same time, we need to think about recruiting and nurturing future leaders to sustain the field of Japanese language study.

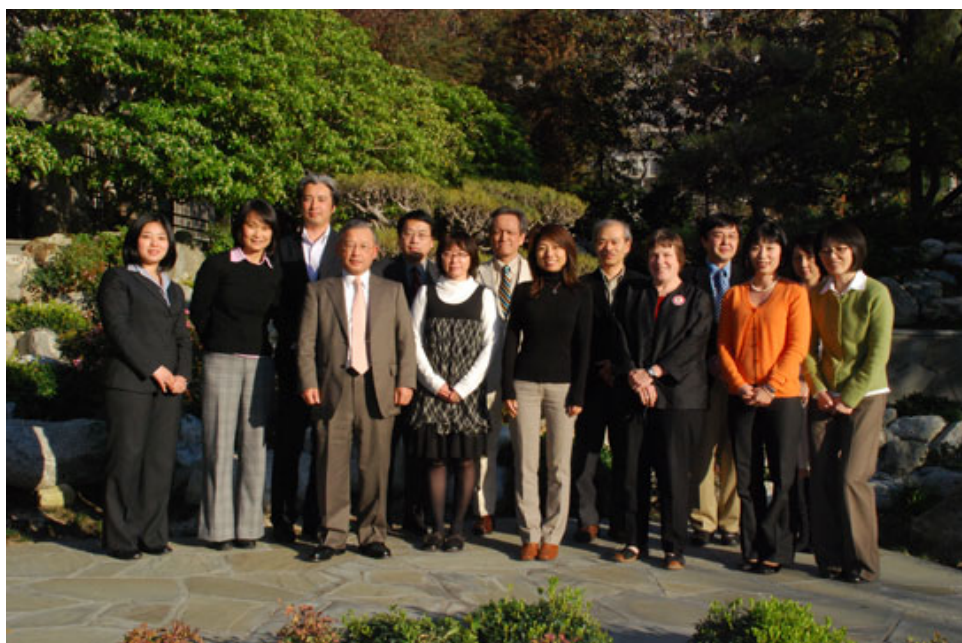
## The limitations and the need for future survey study

The obvious limitation of this survey is its size. Only 14 universities participated in this survey. We are fully aware of other institutions that successfully offer “Business Japanese” courses and programs. Some of them were identified and they became ATJ BJ SIG members in Chicago , but there are others who are not yet identified by us. I hope that this article will be read by someone who teaches Business Japanese or someone who knows teachers of Business Japanese in the United States . Please contact ATJ SIG, if this is the case.

1. The survey revealed the needs to add further. These questions should elicit information regarding the actual ways in which BJ language instructors use learning/teaching materials, what kind of pre-, during, and post activities they are using, etc. If readers have suggestions for survey questions please feel free to contact us at ATJ's email address.

## 2009 JLPT COMMITTEE MEETING

*By: Thomas Lin*



On March 7th, 2009, representatives from each of the nine test sites that currently host the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) in the United States met in Los Angeles to discuss the future of the exam. Representatives included Mizuki Mazzotta, Atlanta ; Nobuoko Chikamatsu, Chicago; Tatsuya Fukushima, Fayetteville ; Kazue Kanno, Honolulu ; Yuka Kumagai, Los Angeles ; Masahiko Minami, San Francisco ; and Masashi Kato, Seattle . The meeting took place under the directive of the Japan Foundation's Sakura Network and was attended by a member from The Japan Foundation, Headquarters as well as Consul Makoto Hirose from the Consulate General of Japan here in Los Angeles along with Susan Schmidt, President of the Alliance of Associations of Teachers of Japanese (AATJ). Topics discussed at the meeting focused on resolving issues experienced by each test site as well as explaining planned changes to the test. All the representatives felt that the meeting was extremely beneficial in understanding how the test is administered at different test sites and the unique problems that ever faced.



During the afternoon session, members from the Japan Foundation gave a presentation on the activities that are currently being conducted to support Japanese language education in the United States . This included an overview of the new Sakura Network, which was developed to unite all organizations involved in Japanese-language education in the United States and all over the world. Many of the representatives were unfamiliar with the work of the Japan Foundation and this meeting helped them better understand the role and services of the Los Angeles office. Everyone left the meeting with a clear idea of the Japan Foundations role in Japanese-language education in the United States and had a firm grasp over their responsibilities for the 2009 JLPT.

# **BRIDGING JAPANESE LANGUAGE AND JAPANESE STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: FORUM ON INTEGRATIVE CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

*By: Nobuko Chikamatsu and Matsugu Miho*

The purpose of this forum was to strengthen the linkage between Japanese language and area studies education in college-level programs. It was developed as a first step towards developing pedagogical and academic strategies to bring together teachers of Japanese-language and those of other Japan-related subjects. Participants in this forum included 14 invited university faculty members, 3 representatives from the Japan Foundation, 1 forum secretary, and 2 guests.

This project was initiated during the summer of 2008 when two faculty members from DePaul University proposed the idea of the forum and started planning with the Japan Foundation in order to host it during the ATJ Conference in Chicago . During the fall of 2008, the forum received a grant from the JCCC Foundation in order to fund this project as well as two others that they were working on. In December of 2008 invitations were sent out to 18 potential participants in the forum and 16 agreed to participate. A 2 page summary of each program from each of the fourteen participants was requested in February, 2009. Although there were originally 16 participants, 2 of them eventually decided not to participate. All 14 summaries were sent out to all the participants to read before the actual forum. On Thursday, March 26, 2009, the forum was held at Depaul University from 5:00~7:30PM.

Issues that were brought up for the forum focused on strategies and techniques to encourage Japanese-language students to also study Japanese cultural and literature and vice versa. This includes ways to introduce literature and culture studies from the beginner language courses and also the lack of materials for advanced level students. Other issues were also brought up such as the role of the librarian, dealing with Japaneseness, “ status of multiple dialects of the Japanese language (attributed to the variation of the language, Osaka-ben, and the use of Japanese as a translation medium for original Chinese and Korean works into other languages), perception of popular culture among faculty, institutional support/commitment, and increased involvement by Japanese Studies Faculty rather than just Literature.

Suggestions for the above mentioned issues included encouraging students to explore the language starting from the beginner level by using materials such as proverbs, folktales, and haiku; incorporate more language pedagogy into graduate literature courses and to use English materials to produce f and information in order to facilitate the uses of language to access cultural studies; focusing on otl

disciplines as well as literature to cater to students' interests and demands; developing textbooks with the collaboration of content specialists and language specialists; and finally collaborating with other Asian studies programs such as Chinese and Japanese.

Overall the participants thought the forum was a useful tool to discuss strategies on how to resolve issues related to bridging the gap between Japanese-language and Japanese-studies. This was also an excellent opportunity for participants to exchange ideas and learn about the work that is taking place in this field. There was also a wide range of participants from both fields making it a great forum to network. The general consensus was that there would be a follow-up forum, potentially in 2010 to have further discussions on the topic and to also publish the information gathered.

## TEXTBOOKS ON TEACHING JAPANESE WITH MANGA

*By: Thomas Lin*

With the rise of Japanese pop culture in the last 50 years and the current popularity of Japanese anime and Manga/Anime such as Bleach, Death Note, Dragonball, Naruto, and One Piece many students today are choosing to learn Japanese so they can read and understand these materials in their native forms. To help students learn Japanese and to be able to read Manga and understand the dialogue in Anime, Japanese-language teachers have to come up with new ways to present the language so it appeals to the youth. There are currently two books on the market that make learning the Japanese language fun and exciting where one uses Manga to teach the language and the other focuses on understanding the language used in Manga. Both are good supplements to the typical textbooks used in classrooms around the country and should be part of the reading materials available to all Japanese language learners.



## Doraemon no Dokodemo Nihongo

This book is for learners who have finished beginner level Japanese and is advancing to the intermediate level with the goal of being able to communicate in a practical setting. The materials were edited to meet the national standards requirements for lower intermediate to intermediate level Japanese set by ACTFL's language competency index based on the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. To motivate young language learners, new Manga featuring characters from the Doraemon series were developed by Fujiko F Fujio. The materials in this book were organized in a way so that learners would be able to develop expressions based on what they want to say. Through activities such as brainstorming, pair work, and role playing learners are able to develop their communication skills. The intention was to better balance fluency and accuracy to be able to acquire advanced linguistic competency. Emphasis was placed on activities to acquire cultural knowledge, learning/communicative strategies, improve recognition abilities through learning activities, and stimulate self studying/active learning. This book was desig

be used as either the main textbook or a supplement and will include instructor support on publisher's website. For more information regarding “Doraemon no Dokodemo Nihongo,” please visit the following URL:

<http://dokodemo.shogakukan.co.jp/>



## Japanese in MangaLand 1&2

“Japanese in MangaLand” is not your typical language course. For anyone interested in the language and culture of Japan , this book is an ideal alternative as it offers an entertaining way of learning the basics of the Japanese language.

Texts found in popular comics or Manga as they are called in Japan are the starting point for learning written and spoken Japanese. Whether or not you are interested in Manga, you can pick up the basics from lessons provided. There are a total of 30 chapters, with plenty of practical exercises and a mini-guidebook feature 160 essential Kanji.

The second volume builds on the first as the learner advances from elementary to intermediate level training. There are 15 chapters included in the second book and continues from the first book, chronologically following its numeration and gradually introducing more complex structures of the Japanese language. New features of this book include a set of “conversational lessons” with tons of vocabulary and useful phrases, which will be essential if you plan to travel to Japan . Another new feature is the “cultural notes” which give you valuable insight into the way things work in Japan . Finally, Romanji is no longer used forcing the reading to read Japanese like a native speaker.

After searching online, I found out that there is a third volume to this series and additional information will be included when that becomes available in our library. Workbooks for the first two volumes along with a Kanji book are also available as a supplementary study tools. If reading Manga and having fun is your motivation to learn Japanese, this would be an excellent alternative to a standard Japanese textbook.

# PAST PARTICIPANTS IN THE JAPANESE-LANGUAGE INSTITUTE, URAWA

*By: Thomas Lin*

The Japanese-language Institute, Urawa is an affiliate of the Japan Foundation that was established in 1989 to meet the needs of non-native Japanese language teachers outside of Japan . By providing support in the three areas of Human Resource Development, Teaching Resources Production, and Information Distribution; the institute is able to cater to a wide range of teaching and academic professionals giving them an opportunity to improve their language proficiency, attain teaching methodologies, and experience Japanese cultural in Japan. With these advance skills, knowledge, and experience; these individuals have the necessary tools to return to their home countries to share their knowledge of the Japanese language and culture with their students, which is essential to sustaining the development of the profession. Every year there are over 500 individuals from over 50 countries who participate in various programs offered by the institute. Language and culture training programs range from three weeks to nine months and include many extracurricular activities including local school visits, traditional Japanese performing arts, and home stays.

Sandra Garcia of Forest Grove High School was a participant in the short term intensive training program at the Japanese-language Institute, Urawa , in 2004. After completing the program, Garcia-sensei was nominated for the 2007 Pacific Northwest K-12 Language Teacher of the Year. In 2009 she was selected as a finalist for the 2009 ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year award. We are very proud of her accomplishments here at the Japan Foundation, Los Angeles , and were happy to learn that her training and experience in Urawa was instrumental in her success.

This year, Margaret Tsubakiyama of Culver City Middle School was selected by CLTA as a special candidate for the Japanese-language Institute's short term training program through a grant from the Japan Foundation. She will be leaving for the program during the summer of 2009 and we wish her best of luck during her studies.

Creating world class teachers to support Japanese-language education overseas is one of the main goals of the Japanese-language Institute in Urawa and we hope that every teacher in the United States has the opportunity to participate in this program and use the skills they learn to become effective Japanese-language teachers at their schools. For more information on the 2010 training programs, please check back on our website in September, 2009.

## ERIN'S CHALLENGE NOW ON UTB CHANNEL 18.2 IN LOS ANGELES

*By: Thomas Lin*



**Erin's Challenge! I Can Speak Japanese.  
Beginning Japanese-language television  
course/DVD teaching material for  
enjoyable learning  
Now Available Over the Air  
in Southern California**



[www.jflalc.org](http://www.jflalc.org)

[www.utbhollywood.com](http://www.utbhollywood.com)

“Erin's Challenge, I Can Speak Japanese” is currently being broadcast live on digital sub channel 18.2 in Southern California . This program was made possible by the cooperation between the Japan Foundation, Los Angeles and Universal Television Broadcasting (UTB) Hollywood . Prior to the original February 16th digital TV transition date, UTB had announced its plans to broadcast 24 hours a day. They wanted to provide their viewers with a wide range of programs for their diverse viewer base and The Japan Foundation thought that this was an excellent opportunity to introduce the Erin 's Challenge series for the first time in the lower 48 states. It is also being broadcast in Oahu , Hawaii by Nippon Golden Network (NGN) on cable channel 677.

The animated drama based Japanese-language instructional series airs Saturday and Sunday on digital sub channel 18.2 from 7:35AM to 8:00AM and repeated at 11:35AM to 12:00PM. Erin is a British foreign exchange student played by the up and coming actress Ellie Toyota. The series follows her daily life in Japan as she gets accustomed to being a Japanese high school student. Animated scenes featuring Honigon, Erin 's Japanese language tutor, and N21-J, the robotic assistant, are mixed into the live drama to help explain the language and culture lessons of the day. Footage from random individuals is also included to further elaborate on these points. This drama was produced by The Japan Foundation's Japanese Language Institute in Urawa along with NHK Education Corporation.

For Japanese language learners who are not in Southern California , you can buy the three volume series at your local or online Japanese bookstore for about \$35 not including tax or shipping. This comes with a workbook along with the DVD. The content of the Erin series is designed for upper beginner level through intermediate level Japanese language students. We hope you will enjoy learning Japanese while watching this drama series over the air in Southern California or on DVD everywhere else.

Past Issues (2020)



Past Issues (2019)



Past Issues (2018)



Past Issues (2017)



Past Issues (2016)



Past Issues (2015)



Past Issues (2014)



Past Issues (2013)



Past Issues (2012)



Past Issues (2011)



Past Issues (2010)



Past Issues (2009)



Breeze #39

Breeze #38

Breeze #37

Breeze Past Issues

Breeze Issues #1-#36 (PDF)

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5700 Wilshire blvd, Suite 100

Los Angeles, CA 90036

P. 323.761.7510

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