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

LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY: A PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

By Lorraine D'Ambruoso

Executive Director

California Language Teachers' Association



World language educators work in a discipline that is not generally accepted as part of the core curriculum. Despite the statement in the No Child Left Behind legislation that gives world languages core status, that status is not generally accepted. In fact, in this era of increasing emphasis on reading and mathematics, and the resultant testing, language teachers find themselves facing cuts in their programs, at a time when our world requires students who enter the work force while possessing the linguistic and cultural diversity that our courses help them attain. That is why world language teachers need to develop leadership skills. For this reason, CLTA and CFLP have invested much time and money in leadership training for its teachers.

According to Glen Thomas, now California's Secretary of Education, "The five keys to successful and sustained leadership are principles, passion, people, performance and perseverance." World language teachers operate from the principle (and not the only one) that all students should be entitled to a well-rounded education, which includes sustained and well-articulated language programs. They are passionate about the languages they teach, believing in the importance of what they teach, and this enables them to adhere to their principles.

According to Thomas, teachers are in the "people business." They deal with students, parents, administrators, colleagues, and the community at large. They must be ever vigilant in the means by which they engage and motivate these individuals. Teaching is about results. In languages, results are seen in the performance of the students. Teachers must move them along the language-learning continuum, so that they achieve ever-higher levels of linguistic and cultural competence. The final "p" is persistence, and in today's educational climate, with program and funding cuts, persistence may just be "the name of the game." We must fight to keep our programs alive. And this requires that language educators become leaders both within and outside of their schools.

World language educators must possess skills that enable them to take on leadership roles. Leaders must be good communicators. As they develop, they should pay special attention to their leaders. While there is no universal role model for leadership, true leaders all have something to teach developing leaders. True leaders are reflective. They continually question what they are doing, why they are doing it, what the potential results and disadvantages might be, and what changes might be needed. Once a teacher feels ready to step out of the classroom and accept the challenges that leadership imposes, then that teacher has become an advocate for the profession.

Most language educators shudder at the thought of advocacy. They believe that, first and foremost, they are teachers, are far too busy with the daily tasks required of good teachers. Yet I contend that advocacy is the responsibility of every professional education leader. In fact, world language is the only content area to have a standard that addresses advocacy. It is Standard XIV of the NBPTS (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards), entitled Advocacy for Education in World Languages. It states that "Accomplished teachers of world languages other than English advocate both within and beyond the school for the inclusion of all students in long-range, sequential programs that also offer opportunities to study multiple languages."

How one approaches advocacy depends upon the definition of the term. First of all, advocacy is a process by which one expresses a viewpoint or pleads for a cause. Advocacy must begin at home. We all have causes and viewpoints that we wish our leaders to understand and support. As professional world language educators, we must advocate to make these causes and viewpoints known. Advocacy focuses on informing, educating and building public understanding about an issue. The goal is to educate broadly and to develop public awareness of specific issues by relying on non-partisan analysis, research studies, reports and other relevant information aimed at informing and educating, colleagues the general public as well as policy makers.

I believe that there are two kinds of advocacy: *individual* and *associative*. (Please excuse me if I have invented a word.) We are all capable of individual advocacy while associative advocacy is the responsibility of the professional associations such as the California Language Teachers' Association (CLTA), California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE), American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), that represent us. We need both kinds of advocacy, because we must continually inform, educate, clarify, and expand public thinking about the importance of world languages and culture education. Advocacy is a bona-fide role for language educators to play, because we are the best pr

to explain what the community, the state, the nation and the world desperately need in the way of linguistic and cultural competencies. What remains is the question of how do we go about preparing ourselves to play this role responsibly and effectively. But it is really not that difficult.

Individual advocacy begins locally--as the old adage states, *think globally, act locally*. It has a broad and continuous mission, and functions in many arenas: school boards and administrative offices, local school districts, city councils, and local congressional district offices. As leaders, we should begin by taking the time, despite the already overwhelming demands on our time, to attend school site council and school board meetings, and to visit the local offices of our Congressional representatives. Our goal should be to make ourselves known as proactive educators **before** we need to request support of any kind.

In order to be effective Advocates, we will sometimes need to move toward the associative arena, where we work with our professional associations. Most states have a state foreign language association which is under the umbrella of the regional associations such as SWCOLT (Southwest Conference on Language Teaching). The regional associations are under the umbrella of ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages), the national association. California is different than most states, in that it has its own umbrella type of organization. CLTA (California Language Teachers' Association) is the state organization under whose umbrella, there are fifteen local affiliate organizations which function both independently and in concert with CLTA.

At the associative level, our leaders often engage in lobbying, which is the attempt to influence legislation at the political level. But this is an activity that only a few leaders become involved.

We must remember that in this day and age, "Politics is indeed the art of the possible" and those who do not advocate for their beliefs and points of view-- in both the public and policy arenas--are likely to be forgotten, and World Language education is far too important to our world to be either neglected or forgotten.

So yes, most of us are not able or willing to lobby. That does not mean that we cannot influence the profession. We can develop our leadership skills so that we all advocate for world languages and cultures. In short, language education needs leaders, Language education needs advocates. Language Education needs voices. Language Education needs YOU.

REVIEW OF THE JAPAN FOUNDATION'S LEADERSHIP TRAINING WORKSHOP

By: Thomas Lin



In 2009, the Japan Foundation, Los Angeles, conducted a two part leadership workshop with six up and coming individuals who are active members in their respective Japanese-language Teacher's Associations in the United States. The first part of this workshop took place at the JFLA's office from the 3rd to 4th of August and the second part took place during the ACTFL Convention in San Diego from the 20th to 22nd of November. This year we had teachers come from California, Georgia, Iowa, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Virginia. Presenters at the Los Angeles workshop included our Academic Specialist, Ms. Maki Watanabe Isoyama, President of AATJ, Ms. Susan Schmidt, and President of NCJLT, Ms. Suwako Watanabe. Topics covered ranged from Advocacy, to networking, to management of teacher's associations, and finally grant writing. Attendees were given assignments to complete after the initial workshop to be completed by the second part of the workshop in San Diego. The group reconvened at the ACTFL convention in November and participated in a wide range of activities including workshops hosted by NCJLT, booth visits, and the awards luncheon. This opportunity allowed select Japanese language teachers from around the country to meet with others in their field and learn from veterans who have been teaching for many years. Below we have invited two of the participants from this year's leadership workshop to share their insight and more importantly, what they learned from this invaluable experience.

Janet Ikeda

Washington and Lee University

The Japan Foundation's 2009 two-part Leadership Workshop began with an initial session held at the Japan Foundation's Los Angeles office in August of 2009 and was followed by an opportunity to attend the ACTFL Conference in San Diego in November of 2009. This was a rare chance to meet a small group of Japanese language teachers from around the U.S. who represented levels that ranged from middle school to college. The intimate setting, the like-minded group of people, the feeling of camaraderie, the strong feeling of commitment to the field of Japanese teaching and the desire to learn about how we may help change the direction of Japanese language education in this country - altogether this was a unique learning experience. At the ACTFL conference we were given the homework assignment of examining how advocacy worked for other languages. From the keynote address to panel discussions, from a scavenger hunt of the exhibition hall to receptions and informal gatherings, we focused our lens on the theme of advocacy. I particularly liked the image in several of the ACTFL presentations that showed a pair of eye glasses with a portion of the globe positioned in each of the lens. Teaching language, after all, goes beyond words. It is all about perspective.

At the Japan Foundation workshop in Los Angeles, we began with a metaphor that provided a template for our understanding of the state of Japanese language education in the U.S. From single trees planted here and there with no overarching strategic plan, the field has expanded and is now populated with groves of trees and even whole forests. Having first studied Japanese in a public Maryland high school that was known in the 1970s as the first of its kind east of the Mississippi River, I could identify with the early pioneering days when teaching and studying Japanese was still very much like an exotic *bonsai*. There was no forest of Japanese language learner during those days when my high school class mates and I found ourselves waving Japanese flags on the White House lawn to welcome the Emperor of Japan. The field of Japanese language is now at a historical turning point that demands reflection and self evaluation. In preserving any forest of imported trees, our focus must turn toward cultivation and conservation. In order to strengthen the forest, we need to look carefully for signs of disease and prune where necessary, strengthen root systems, apply just the right fertilizer and even master the secrets of grafting and creating hybrid varieties. The current economic situation and the proactive introduction of Chinese language teaching have shown us that no single tree can withstand a storm alone. We need to discard any vestiges of the silo approach and learn to share our growing secrets. Planted strategically, our trees will offer shelter and refuge for many generations to come. Other species of trees may seemingly invade our forest, but nature has a way of teaching us how to coexist.

As language teachers we now need to learn the new vocabulary of the twenty-first century. We once proclaimed that we were teaching students about the language and culture of Japan . At the pre-college level, teachers included in their curriculum lessons on Japanese food, origami, folk tales, traditional festivals and such. At the end of the twentieth century we all had to add a module on *anime* or *manga* and include lessons that reflected the pop culture of Japan , which our students knew much more about than their instructors. The ACTFL conference taught us that we need to utilize and understand the new social media tools or else find ourselves on the end of the utilized. We need to harness technology so that we can communicate with a generation that grows increasingly so different from our own.

I learned that we must employ the same successful learning strategies that we see in some of our best language students.

Precision and accuracy: we must maintain high standards of teaching and continue to offer a wide variety of teacher development programs. From workshops on technology and pedagogy to specialized study trips that allow teachers to walk in the footsteps of Basho, we need to teach each other.

Community: language is never spoken in isolation. We need to partner with others and listen carefully. The theme of the 2009 ACTFL conference, the “power of many voices” does not only mean raising our voices in unison with others in so much as learning to listen to each other and finding creative solutions. Just as our students cannot communicate in isolation, we cannot teach on an island. Using the social networking tools of the 21 st century we can find commonality among our disciplines.

Adaptability: this is measured by our ability to embrace transformation. No longer are we teaching foreign languages. The global citizenry demands that we teach the world's languages.

Mastery: finally, we must master a new vocabulary and move beyond memorizing jargon for the sake of convenience. We need to know how each word and phrase is used in a particular context and fully understand the usage and implications of a new paradigm. We are teaching about “interculturality,” helping our students gain a “global proficiency,” as we encourage employers to look for “translingual” and “transcultural” competencies in our learners. Alliances need to be strengthened between native and non-native language teachers, pre-college and college instructors, and regional associations need to fo

I look to those well known proverbs to sustain us in the face of future challenges. Even monkeys fall from trees and for that reason we must be mindful of what lies ahead. No matter how brilliant the syllabus, no teacher can use the same lesson plan from year to year. We need to find new ways to excite our learners and reformulate our learning objectives in order to respond to a new generation in a new age. After all, it took television and radio several years to gain a million users. Facebook had its first million in only nine months.

Miyuki Johnson

Elkins Pointe Middle School, GA

In August and November of 2009 I was invited to participate in leadership workshops hosted by the Japan Foundation in Los Angeles. A total of six representatives from local Japanese teacher's organizations were invited to attend this workshop. I am currently a member of the Georgia Association of Teachers of Japanese (GATJ), and have served as the president in the past. I am also a board member and committee member of the Japan Challenge and Speech Contest in Georgia. The workshop was not only a great learning experience for understanding service in a leadership position, but also provided wonderful networking opportunities where I could connect with local leaders and members from other associations of Japanese teachers.

Leadership Workshop in L.A., 8/3/2009-8/4/2009

As in many other states, the schools in Georgia are making budget cuts, and this has directly affected many teachers. Naturally, many of the Japanese programs in the United States are in danger. Advocacy is something that organizations of Japanese teachers need to focus on now more than ever. This issue was one of the main topics discussed in this workshop. A few examples designed to help advocate our program included the following: how to improve individual teaching skills, how to identify benefits of the program, how to make the program more visible, and instructions on forming networks with students, parents, schools, and the community.

As a result of this workshop, I feel that making our program more visible is something that myself and the teacher's organization I belong to need to put more effort into. For example, program familiarity between members is lacking. Due to this factor, there is little recognition of local Japanese programs in the community at large. In response, I believe it is necessary to first build a network between members that facilitates an increase in the recognition of our respective programs. Additionally, we could share the benefits of our programs by utilizing the Internet, and through a variety of events hosted in the community. However, there are teachers who prefer to work in isolation, and who have no interest in being actively involved in the association. Nonetheless, if each member makes an effort to communicate more with each other, it may encourage those who are hesitant to collaborate. Moreover, if each member continues to build a solid network with administration, teachers, parents, and the community, then I believe it will help our program and our organization become stronger. As a result, our roles in the community will become more prominent, and our actions will have more of an impact overall.

The leadership workshop also taught me how to lead the teacher's association in a direction that ensures a longer-lasting effect on the recognition of our programs. For example, the following were some of the topics covered: the successful ordering of meetings, the role of board members, the importance of websites in providing informative materials, and the benefits of articulation between K-12 and college teachers. This year, under the leadership of our current president, our teachers association is working more actively than ever, and we are changing and reconsidering many of our activities. The information presented at this workshop was very practical, efficient, and useful in outlining ways in which organizations can work towards smoother and more efficient operation in the future.

Leadership Workshop in San Diego, 11/20/2009-11/22/2009

The November leadership workshop worked in conjunction with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) annual conference. I had the opportunity to attend various educational sessions, focusing on National Council of Japanese Language Teachers (NCJLT) activities and advocacy. I also had a chance to visit foreign language booths, where I gathered informational brochures concerning advocacy ideas.

From these NCJLT sessions, I learned about the launch of the new Japanese Exam, the opening of the Japanese Honor Society to Middle and Junior High School students, and a variety of data and statistics from past to present Japanese programs. The NCJLT luncheon and reception were great occasions for sharing concerns and asking questions directly with other Japanese teachers and organization representatives from all over the country.

One of the ACTFL sessions I enjoyed the most was about advocacy presented by ACTFL panels. They provided suggestions for various activities that schools could employ to promote foreign languages, especially during the month of February, which is an ACTFL “Discover Languages” month. The following were some of their suggestions:

The use of stickers students could wear and post in their locker that displays the language they are learning;

Using morning announcements and the school newsletter as mediums for sharing facts and/or giving quizzes related to foreign languages;

Hosting contests using current technology such as YouTube, Podcasts, and/or graphical design tools for the creation of foreign language logos, posters, etc.

As in the previous examples, I learned that simple activities such as showing and talking about foreign language could help with promotion and advocacy of our program. The methods do not have to be unnecessarily complicated. After attending the session, I realized that one person alone could make a difference in foreign language advocacy.

What have I realized as a result of this workshop experience? More than ever, I understand the importance of advocacy and networking. Moreover, I feel compelled to pass on what I have learned from these workshops to other members of our association, so that the importance of active involvement and collaboration between members can be realized and employed in the service of promoting foreign language programs in the community. Lastly, I would like to thank the Japan Foundation. The benefits and knowledge I gained from this experience would not have been possible without their hard work in organizing and hosting these workshops.

2009 JLPT UPDATE

By: Thomas Lin

On Sunday December 6th, 2009, the Japan Foundation, Los Angeles conducted its annual Japanese Language Proficiency test at nine locations across the United States . This year, the test in New York and Georgia changed venues to Lehman College of the City University of New York and Georgia State University respectively. These changes were initiated to make sure that these two important states east coast would continue to be able to host the JLPT in 2009 and beyond. The Japan Foundation, Privacy - Terms

Angeles was again in charge of hosting the test here in our hometown and this year we had the highest number of registered test takers out of all the test sites in the United States . This is the fourth year we have used the USC campus as the Los Angeles test site and due to the large number of registered test takers, we separated the four levels into two buildings. Levels 1, 2 and 4 were administered in Von KleinSmid Center and level 3 was administered in Taper Hall.

In the United States , we had 3830 registered test takers and 2998 actual test takers this year, which is the highest number of registered test takers we have ever had in the history of the JLPT. This number represents a 3.85% increase compared to last year and shows a steady increase in the number of individuals interested in finding out their level of proficiency in the Japanese language. This year's test results were mailed out at the end of February, 2010.

For information on the 2010 test, please check back in June-July for more information.

LIBRARY ACQUISITIONS - BOOKS ON JAPAN

By: Thomas Lin

Have you ever wondered why Japanese people eat mochi on new years or the average mean temperature in Sapporo? I will be reviewing two books on Japan that covers the traditions and beliefs of the Japanese people and provides information on the geography of the island nation respectively. An abundance of information is provided in these two volumes and answers any questions you might have had about the traditional events or geography of Japan.



Japan: How we breathe & How our Hearts beat

This book was written by Kudo Tadatsugu and Goto Tamiko of the New Millennium Network comprised of senior Japanese members who wish to make useful contributions to society with their experience. The purpose of this book was to reintroduce the traditional Japanese events and ceremonies to a new generation of Japanese who may have forgotten who they are and also to introduce the intricacies of Japanese culture to anyone who wants to understand Japan beyond the superficial images that typi represent the country.

Starting with O-shogatsu (New Year) the author introduces every traditional Japanese holiday in chronological order with explanations on how the holidays are celebrated. This is followed by in depth notes detailing the whys around a certain aspect of the holiday. After introducing the Events of a Year, Ceremonies of life are explored to reveal important dates during the life of a Japanese person. Finally the seven scenarios of how Japanese should live to lead a long and happy life are explained. Interview sessions with specialist in certain Japanese arts and customs are also included within the three main chapters to further highlight cultural activities related to the Japanese. The information provided is very colorful with detailed explanations of everything you ever wanted to know about the tradition and cultural of Japan. This is a must need for anyone who wants to gain a better understanding of the Japanese people.



Discovering Japan: A New Regional Geography

If you are doing a report on Japan and need information or statistics from different regions, then this book is an indispensable part of your reading list. Detailed information along with graphics and beautiful images from Japan are provided along with data such as precipitation, industry, agriculture, etc. for anyone who is interested in learning about the current conditions. The first part of the book provides a general overview of the geography of Japan, followed by a brief history, and wrapping up with a general perspective of the lifestyle and culture. After the introduction, the latter chapters are divided by region where the main points are discussed in great detail. Information is listed in an encyclopedia or CIA world fact book format. What is most impressive is the abundance of statistics and pictures showing the distribution of resources and the difference in scenery from all across Japan.

2010 JLPT INFORMATION

By: Thomas Lin

This year, the Japanese Language Proficiency Test will undergo major changes to the format of the test. These changes were announced last year and the Official Guidebook and Sample Questions for the new test have been released (in English) on the Official JLPT Worldwide Website. Below are the links to that site, along with links to the sample questions as well as the official guidebook.

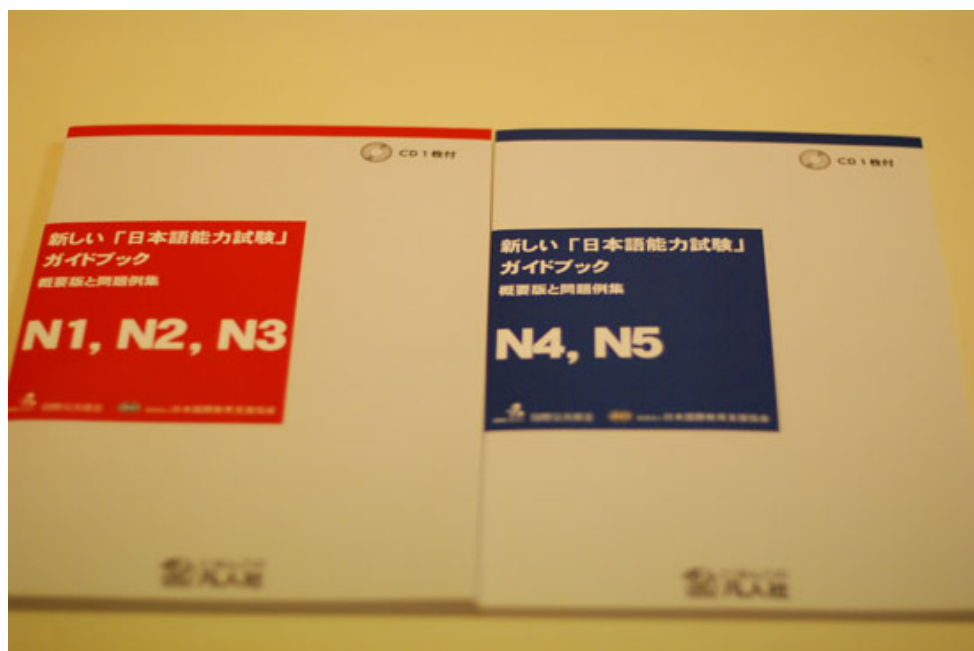


The summary along with the sample questions and listening section CD is also published by Bojinsha and is available for purchase in two volumes.

Title of books:

「新しい日本語の力試験ガイドブック 概要版と問題例集 : N1, N2, N3」 CD 付 (凡人社)

「新しい日本語の力試験ガイドブック 概要版と問題例集 : N4, N5」 CD 付 (凡人社)



You can contact any Japanese bookstore for purchase information.

Official Worldwide JLPT Website (English):

<http://www.jlpt.jp/index.html>

New JLPT sample questions (English):

<http://www.jlpt.jp/e/samples/forlearners.html>

New JLPT Official Guidebook (Japanese):

<http://www.jlpt.jp/e/about/index.html>

NO JULY JLPT IN 2010

By: Thomas Lin

In 2009 the JLPT was administered twice a year in select countries around the world. The inaugural July test was offered in Japan, China, South Korea, and Taiwan. Although the Japan Foundation has not released any additional countries that will be offering the July test in 2010, we will NOT be offering the test in the United States until December. This year, the JLPT will be administered on Sunday, December 5th, 2010, in the United States. Please check the official US website in June or July for registration information.

Official JLPT website for the United States (English):

[Click Here](#)

JFLA: FISCAL YEAR 2010-2011 GRANT PROGRAMS FOR THE UNITED STATES

By: Mamiko Nakai

Grant Program for Contests Designed for Japanese-Language Learners

This program provide educational institutions/organizations in the U.S. with financial support for their Japanese-language education related activities such as speech contests, quiz contests, and presentations, etc. that are intended to motivate learners of Japanese-language and promote the Japanese-language education in the region.

Application Deadlines

~~1st Deadline: March 1, 2010~~

(The 1st deadline is for contests which will be held between 4/1/2010 and 3/31/2011.)

~~2nd Deadline: September 1, 2010~~

(The 2nd deadline is for contests which will be held between 10/1/2010 and 3/31/2011.)

Japanese-Language Teaching Material Purchase Grant

This program is intended to assist educational institutions in the U.S. to purchase teaching materials for their Japanese-language courses by providing financial support maximum of \$1,000 (including tax and delivery charge).

Please note that the grant payment (a reimbursement check) will not be provided until the grant recipient submits the required documents such as proof of purchase (receipts, invoices, etc.) and a final report. The final report must include a sample lesson plan which has been developed using the newly acquired teaching materials.

The Japan Foundation (JF) used to purchase and donate teaching materials to Japanese-language educational institutions in the past; however, starting in fiscal year 2010, JF will no longer make the delivery arrangements but will be only sending out a reimbursement check.

Application Deadlines

~~1st Deadline: March 15, 2010~~

~~2nd Deadline: September 1, 2010~~

Grant Program for Japanese-Language Courses

This program is intended to assist educational institutions in the U.S. to initiate or expand their Japanese-language program by providing financial support for one year in order to supplement the instructor's salary. The grant support is given on the premise that the applying institution will continue to offer the newly created course(s) and keep the instructor's position even after the completion of grant support from the Japan Foundation.

Application Deadline

~~April 1, 2010~~

Special Grant Program for Professional Development Opportunities for Japanese Language Teachers

This program is designed to provide partial aid for seminars, workshops, and training courses that can provide participants with CEUs (Continuing Education Units), credits, clock hours, and/or certificate of professional development hours, etc., which are authorized to be used towards receiving/maintaining their teacher's licenses/credentials. The purpose of this grant is to support Japanese language teachers who need professional development opportunity to receive/maintain their Japanese teacher's license/credentials.

Priority will be given to projects that will be held in conjunction with conferences hosted by state/regional/national level teachers' organizations for foreign language education.

Application Deadline

~~August 1, 2010~~

Japanese Language Education Mini Grant

Our “Japanese Language Education Mini Grant” is an auxiliary type of funding administrated by The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles. The primary objective is to provide partial support to non-profit organizations (e.g., teachers’ associations, academic institutions, and higher educational organizations, etc.) which plan to carry out projects related to the Japanese language education in the U.S.

We target the following kinds of projects:

Workshops/Conferences for teachers' professional development,
Projects related to the Japanese AP Test (Advanced Placement Test),
Projects promote articulation between levels (K-16),
Projects enhance advocacy of Japanese-language education, etc.

Please visit the Japanese-language grants page on our website for more information regarding these grant opportunities.

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)



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