

FRAMEWORK FOR POST-BASIC JAPANESE LANGUAGE CURRICULA [DRAFT]

Association of Teachers of Japanese

Initial funding for the task force that developed this Framework was provided by the Ford Foundation through the National Council of Organizations of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL). Members of the task force included

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INTRODUCTION

This document was developed by the Association of Teachers of Japanese (ATJ) as a guide for teachers of Japanese at levels beyond the basic/introductory level which is addressed in the 1993 Framework for Introductory Japanese Language Curricula [ACTFL, 1993]. Students at the post-basic level often have uneven profiles in the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, a situation that affects the classroom learning environment as well as individual skills development.

The Framework document emphasizes the goals of foreign language instruction that have been articulated at a national level for all foreign languages: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and community. It uses the proficiency levels defined by ACTFL and describes the skills in Japanese that correspond to these levels. It also attempts to dovetail with and build on the *National Standards for Foreign Language Learning* as they have been adapted for Japanese.

The contents of the Framework are:

A. Definition of Post-Basic Japanese

This chapter defines the beginning post-basic Japanese learner as roughly at the ACTFL proficiency level of Intermediate-Low. This level is achieved only after exposure to all aspects of basic Japanese grammar, and it typically requires more than 300 hours of instruction. The chapter lists the skills typical of a post-basic student of Japanese in the four areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It defines concepts that are woven through the document such as learning strategies and styles, constructed versus authentic materials, learner-centered versus learning-centered instruction, bottom-up versus top-down reading styles, content-based instruction, intensive versus extensive reading and listening, and so on.

B. Curricular Goals and Tasks

This chapter outlines level-specific and skill-specific goals for learners at each of the post-basic levels defined by ACTFL: Intermediate-Mid/High, Advanced, and Superior. Learning strategies for all four skills at each level are discussed, as is the teacher's role in challenging the student to aspire to the goals of the next higher level. At each level, the learner's goals in speaking, listening, reading, and writing are defined in terms of use of Japanese in communicative situations. Although learners at all levels are in general more proficient in the passive skills of listening and reading than in the active skills of speaking and writing, it is important that all four skills be addressed at each level of learning. A major concern for teachers should be helping learners to develop strategies by which they can become independent of formal instruction and make progress on their own.

C. Resources and Strategies for Teachers and Learners

Post-basic Japanese instructors cannot expect a single textbook to fill all of their students' needs as they work to master the four skills. Thus teachers face the task of selecting additional materials for reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension. Materials available include printed, audiovisual, and interactive electronic resources. It is desirable to provide students with a mix of constructed and authentic materials, which should be slightly above the learners' level in order to challenge and stimulate. This chapter lists available materials and sources of information for teachers in finding and selecting materials, as well as discussing strategies for combining and making the best use of the materials chosen.

D. Japanese for Specific Purposes (JSP)

JSP refers to the subsets of the language used by specialists writing or speaking in particular content domains. These domains may be areas of specialization such as art, economics, science, or technology; disciplines with a recognizable or unique lexicon or presentation such as newspapers or patents; or pre-modern versions of the language such as classical Japanese. Acquisition of specialized language includes both vocabulary and presentation style. In addition to working with materials in the area of specialization, students of JSP may benefit from making presentations before colleagues and from translating into their native language.

E. Study in Japan

Study in Japan is necessary and desirable for all serious learners at the post-basic level. For a language like Japanese, advancement to higher levels of proficiency is usually only possible if the learner spends

time in the country where it is spoken. A well-designed study-abroad program offers not only a classroom component but an opportunity to use the language in everyday situations, a way to observe language in action, and a bridge from the classroom environment to the uncontrolled environment of self-study. This chapter discusses the types of study-abroad programs available, the preparation of students for the immersion experience, and the integration of in-country experiences with formal curriculum.

F. Evaluation and Assessment

Evaluation and assessment apply both to individual learners and to programs of instruction. Evaluation of learners' skills for placement purposes at the beginning of a course of study can take the form of proficiency tests or achievement tests. Assessment of progress during the course of study can be accomplished by vocabulary and kanji quizzes, unit tests, mid-term and final tests, oral proficiency tests, and out-of-class projects. For more advanced students, standardized tests like the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (Nihongo Nouryoku Shiken) are a good way to test the passive skills of reading and listening comprehension. This chapter also discusses the assessment of programs for their goals, effectiveness, appropriateness of levels, articulation, and results.

G. Instructional Technology

Today's fast-changing computer technology offers a wealth of tools for the post-basic student of Japanese. The computer makes individualized instruction possible. It also puts learners in contact with the real world of Japanese language use, via the Internet. This chapter outlines the uses in pedagogy of video technology, word-processing software, electronic dictionaries, e-mail and mailing lists, on-line chat, Internet telephone and teleconferencing, the World Wide Web, newsgroups, and instructional software, and guides teachers to resources for their use. The computer will not replace teachers any time soon, but teachers who are open to technology will have an advantage over those who are not.

A. DEFINITION OF POST-BASIC JAPANESE

THE BEGINNING POST-BASIC STUDENT

The typical *beginning* post-basic Japanese student is one who has been exposed to all aspects of basic Japanese—i.e., the grammatical patterns and lexical items introduced in the commonly used textbooks—and who performs roughly at the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency level of Intermediate-Low. Although there is wide variation from student to student and program to program, it takes the average learner about 300 hours of classroom instruction to reach this level.

Exposure to all aspects of basic Japanese does not necessarily lead to Intermediate-Low proficiency; similarly, a student may have attained Intermediate-Low proficiency without exposure to some aspects of basic Japanese.

Using proficiency guidelines to define post-basic Japanese is not problem-free, since we lack standardized tests to measure listening, reading, and writing proficiency. While oral proficiency interviews can be used to assess speaking proficiency, administering them individually to every student is an enormous task. Even considering these drawbacks, however, we believe the use of proficiency guidelines is the most important component of a definition of post-basic Japanese.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BEGINNING POST-BASIC JAPANESE LEARNER

(based on and adapted from the ACTFL Guidelines for Intermediate-Low Level Proficiency)

Speaking

- Can handle successfully a limited number of simple and basic, but interactive, communicative tasks (such as self-introductions, ordering a meal, obtaining and giving directions, and making purchases) and social situations.
- Communicates in sentences, rather than words or phrases.
- Maintains face-to-face conversation by asking /answering questions and by creating own sentences, rather than only by uttering learned and memorized material.
- Produces speech that is comprehensible to most interlocutors who are accustomed to non-native speakers, although the speech may be accompanied by pauses, repetitions, and various inaccuracies (phonological, linguistic, or social).

Listening

- Usually is able to understand, in an authentic environment, sentence-length utterances that consist of recombinations of learned utterances on limited topics supported by situational contexts. (Understanding is often uneven, and misunderstandings may occur frequently.)
- Comprehends discourse related to basic personal background and needs, everyday situations, and uncomplicated tasks such as getting meals or receiving simple instructions and directions (primarily in face-to-face interactions).

Reading

- Comprehends information in constructed materials of several connected sentences.
- Understands and follows events described in very simple passages in specially prepared texts dealing with basic situations, written with simple structures, and using limited numbers of kanji and vocabulary items.
- Comprehends main ideas and/or some facts in connected texts dealing with basic personal, daily, and social activities. Such texts are linguistically simple, with a clearly underlying internal structure such as chronological sequencing, and require no suppositions. Examples include personal messages, letters, public announcements, and instructions. Success of comprehension depends heavily on subject matter, number of unfamiliar words and kanji, and simplicity of style.
- Recognizes basic kanji and understands compounds made up of those kanji, as well as hiragana and katakana. (The choice of kanji is related to the communicative functions, contents, and contexts mentioned above.)

Writing

- Can meet limited practical writing needs using appropriate Japanese orthography. Can write short messages, postcards, and simple letters on topics related to personal experience. Can create statements or questions within the scope of limited language experience.
- Writes in hiragana, katakana, and a limited number of commonly used kanji, including compounds utilizing those characters; uses each of the orthographies appropriately.
- Writes samples that are generally understood by native speakers used to the writing of non-natives, but may contain orthographic, lexical, and linguistic errors.

KEY CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Articulation

Articulation refers to the degree of ease or difficulty of the transition from one level of instruction to another. A lack of articulation between levels causes difficulties for learners.

Bottom up / top down processing

Bottom-up processing and top-down processing are two separate but interrelated information processing modes in which different types of strategies are used in comprehending the message. In bottom-up processing, the reader focuses on specific information and details. In reading and listening, learners who start by paying attention to specific details and to decoding individual words and grammatical patterns are employing bottom-up processing.

On the other hand, when readers/listeners start with predictions based on general knowledge and search for information that fits their background knowledge, they are employing top-down processing. In other words, bottom-up processing moves from parts to the whole, and top-down processing moves from the whole to the parts. In comprehending texts, native readers/listeners usually use both bottom-up and top-down processes, shifting from one mode to the other, then back. On the other hand, beginning foreign language learners often use one mode of processing to the exclusion of the other.

Constructed materials / authentic materials

The term constructed materials refers to pedagogical texts, both written and spoken, made or modified specifically for the purpose of language teaching with careful attention to selection of orthography, vocabulary, grammar, and content. Normally, materials are constructed at an appropriate level of difficulty for learners. Authentic texts are typically written or spoken by native speakers of the language for other native speakers. However, materials written by or for non-natives may be considered authentic if they are accepted by most native speakers as authentic.

Intensive / extensive listening and reading

Intensive listening and reading require full understanding of facts (surface meaning), implications, and the relationships among ideas in a passage. It also entails being able to relate the content of the materials to one's own knowledge and experience (Muncie, 1979). Extensive listening and reading, on the other hand, does not require full comprehension but does require the skills to follow the structure, to comprehend the main ideas, and to understand the general intent of the text. A learner can cover a larger quantity of material in a set amount of time when employing extensive listening/reading.

Learning strategies

Learning strategies are specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that learners employ to enhance their language learning.

Learning styles

Each individual has a particular way in which he/she processes new information and learns new skills. The most commonly understood learning style differences are based on which senses an individual primarily relies on to acquire knowledge: visual, auditory, or kinesthetic; but there are other aspects of learning style as well – extroverted/introverted, global/particular, random/intuitive, and others.

Schemata

Schemata are predictable patterned structures in spoken and written language.

Standards

Standards describe what students should know and be able to do in a specific subject area. *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* was developed and published in 1996 by the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project. Following this generic document, individual foreign language organizations began to develop their own standards with modifications to the generic standards. *Standards for Japanese Language Learning* (1998), like the other language-specific standards documents, lists five goals of language learning—communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities; describes standards for each goal; lists sample progress indicators for each grade level; and appends learning scenarios, sample lessons that show how the Standards can be incorporated into classroom practice.

Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (1999, National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, ISBN 0-935868-86-2) includes both the generic *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* and nine language-specific sets of standards, including those for Japanese.

B. CURRICULAR GOALS AND TASKS

This section sets forth suggested proficiency **goals** for the **beginning** post-basic student (a learner who has completed approximately 300 hours of study and who demonstrates Intermediate-Low skills). Level-specific and skill-specific goals are indicated for each stage of post-basic learning, starting with Intermediate-Mid/High, and continuing to Advanced and Superior. Notice that, at all levels, the learner is typically more proficient in the passive skills of listening and reading than in the active skills of speaking and writing.

Generally speaking, every learner's goal should be acquisition of the skills required to reach the next level. The instructor is encouraged to challenge students with tasks belonging to a higher level.

IN ORDER TO REACH INTERMEDIATE-MID/HIGH LEVEL, LEARNER SHOULD AIM FOR THE FOLLOWING SKILLS:

Speaking: The learner can engage in a simple face-to-face conversation on “survival” topics, using single sentences, although making frequent distracting errors. The learner is a “sentence person” who can survive in the target culture but who relies heavily on non-verbal cues. His or her speech is best understood by an empathetic native listener who is accustomed to hearing the speech of non-native speakers.

Listening: The learner can comprehend simple questions and paragraphic statements, and can understand some authentic materials on survival topics using strategies of guessing. He or she may not comprehend details, and may misunderstand or misinterpret the finer points.

Reading: The learner can skim or scan narratives on familiar topics related to survival. He or she cannot comprehend details, and frequently misunderstands finer points. He or she tends to take a bottom-up approach—i.e., to rely heavily on lexical items, kanji, and grammar points.

Writing: The learner can write a short paragraph on everyday survival topics, including short messages, notes, letters, compositions, etc. His or her writings may be comprehensible only to empathetic native readers accustomed to writings of non-natives.

IN ORDER TO REACH THE ADVANCED LEVEL, THE LEARNER SHOULD AIM FOR THE FOLLOWING SKILLS:

Speaking: The learner can describe and narrate, using paragraphic discourse on factual topics in most informal and some formal settings. In other words, he or she not only can engage in the question-and-answer type of conversation, but also can keep talking by himself or herself while explaining, describing, or narrating, primarily on fact-related topics. He or she may be called a “paragraph person.” The learner at this level can perform complicated tasks like rephrasing. He or she can be understood without difficulty by speakers unaccustomed to non-native speakers.

Listening: The learner can comprehend face-to-face conversation and talk of paragraph length on non-survival factual topics, but still cannot always comprehend the details with a high degree of accuracy.

Reading: The reader can comprehend the main ideas and most details of non-technical factual discourse using contextual guessing strategies, with frequent use of a dictionary.

Writing: The learner can write several paragraphs on factual and concrete topics, including some formal correspondence using a dictionary. He or she can now rephrase an idea when s/he doesn't know how

to express it succinctly. His or her writings are comprehensible to native readers not accustomed to writings of non-natives.

IN ORDER TO REACH THE SUPERIOR LEVEL, THE LEARNER SHOULD AIM FOR THE FOLLOWING SKILLS:

Speaking: The learner can support an opinion, can hypothesize, can negotiate using extended discourse on both professional and non-professional topics in both informal and formal settings with no distracting errors. The learner at this level may be called a “multi-paragraph person,” with conversation sounding (almost) like native speech.

Listening: The learner can comprehend extended discourse in considerable detail on both factual and abstract topics related or unrelated to his or her field of specialization, using contextual guessing and top-down, as well as bottom-up, strategies.

Reading: The learner can comprehend the overall meaning and detail of extended discourse on both factual and abstract topics including technical reading materials, using contextual guessing and top-down strategies without relying much on use of a dictionary.

Writing: The learner can write coherent discourse on practical, social and technical topics for both formal and informal settings. He or she may not be able to tailor writing effectively.

GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY IN POST-BASIC JAPANESE

One of the main goals of students advancing through the levels of post-basic Japanese is to move from the simple sentence level to more complex sentences and extended discourse. Students must master some of the following characteristics of Japanese:

(1) In order to become sophisticated in complexity of sentence structure, the intermediate learner needs to learn to create complex sentences involving noun modification and subordinate and coordinate conjunctions. Noun modification in Japanese can be extremely complex and is thus an essential focus of post-basic Japanese instruction.

(2) It is essential for the learner of post-basic Japanese to learn to interpret and produce extended coherent discourse, including appropriate use of parallelism, anaphora, ellipses, repetitions, conjunctions, tense switching, formality switching, etc.

(3) Students must also grapple with lexical complexity such as that found in compound words—especially those words consisting of two elements which create a specific and precise meaning not always predictable from the meanings of each element, such as *nori-dasu*, *kiki-komu*, *kokoro-bosoi*, *naguri-kakaru*, and adverbs which serve to express shades of meaning in a more nuanced manner, such as *kaette*, *nanishiro*, *akumademo*.

(4) Post-basic learners should develop the ability to use fillers and more complex and varied *aizuchi* in socially appropriate ways.

KANJI

Knowledge of kanji is another crucial area of concern for the post-basic Japanese learner. Although every post-basic learner should control a foundation of several hundred kanji for both recognition and production, greater numbers of kanji are essential for advanced-level work. Many learners may be able to rely on word processors to write Japanese passages, and therefore students may be tempted to regard the ability to write kanji by hand as unimportant. However, hand writing kanji is an essential activity in kanji acquisition.

Recognition of a large number of kanji is also necessary for vocabulary development and reading fluency. We cannot specify a number of kanji to be learned, nor can we specify which kanji should be learned. Teachers, however, should encourage and assist students in steadily increasing their command of kanji.

INTEGRATING THE FOUR SKILLS OVER THE COURSE OF THE LEARNING CAREER

One of the issues that plagued Japanese language education frequently in the past was the question of how to proceed from basic to post-basic Japanese courses—in other words, the problem of internal articulation within a program. A typical pattern was drastic change from a speaking/listening concentration in the first year to a reading concentration in the second year. More recently, however, the trend has been to

integrate all four skills in the first year of Japanese study. As explicitly stated in *A Framework for Introductory Japanese Language Curricula in American High Schools and Colleges* (1993), the skill focus in introductory Japanese should be placed on speaking and listening, but without ignoring reading and writing skills. Similarly, a well-rounded post-basic course will involve more than just the study of written Japanese. At all levels, basic and post-basic, integration of the four skills is essential for progress toward superior proficiency.

C. RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS AND LEARNERS

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

The purpose of this section is to aid teachers and students of Japanese in selecting materials and resources appropriate for post-basic language study and in considering the uses of materials in mastering the four skills. Rather than recommending or endorsing specific materials, this section suggests the range of resources available.

Post-basic Japanese instructors cannot expect any one textbook to meet all of their students' needs in studying and mastering the four skills. No comprehensive textbook exists for the post-basic levels. This is due partly to increasing specialization on the part of post-basic learners, as well as to the extreme diversity and complexity of the tasks at the advanced levels. This is not to say that learners can or should approach only one task at a time. Ideally, multi-skill tasks will be included in every class and in assignments, because only by combining skills will learners be able to continue to progress toward mastering of Japanese.

The teacher of post-basic Japanese thus faces the task of selecting teaching materials that focus on reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension, while at the same time providing activities that will require the use of multiple skills.

Types of Resources

Teachers will want select a variety of materials useful in helping learners attain proficiency in the four skills.

- 1) Speaking
 - A) Textbooks featuring task-oriented speaking exercises, both for predictable social situations and for more complex social situations (negotiations, complaints, refusals, apologies, etc.)
 - B) Textbooks aimed at project and group work (which also enhance and integrate other skills)
 - C) Japanese how-to books or audio-visual materials that provide instruction on or models of professional presentations in various fields
- 2) Listening comprehension
 - A) Audio tapes or web-based audio versions of authentic materials (radio news, speeches, panel discussions) or constructed dialogues or discourse
 - B) Video tapes, laser disks, web sites, or CD-ROMs of authentic or constructed linguistic social interactions (TV programs, movies, skits)
 - C) Interactive software
 - D) Lectures by or discussions or interviews with native Japanese speakers other than the regular instructor, for the purpose of exposing learners to a variety of speech and interactive styles
- 3) Reading
 - A) Constructed texts aimed at non-native learners
 - B) Authentic texts in printed or handwritten form
 - C) Interactive software, including pedagogical software; e-mail; newsgroups
 - D) Written texts available on the World Wide Web
- 4) Writing
 - A) Texts that provide models of letters, essays, reports, summaries, and other genres
 - B) Interactive software, e-mail, and newsgroups
 - C) Textbooks or sections of textbooks that focus on writing
 - D) Word processing software
- 5) Multi-skill materials
 - A) Texts that provide suggestions for projects or group work
 - B) Role playing assignments

- 6) Reference materials
 - A) Dictionaries—printed or electronic
 - B) Grammar and vocabulary notes
 - C) Web-based encyclopedias and dictionaries

Issues in Selection and Use of Teaching Resources

1) *Inclusion of both constructed and authentic reading and listening materials.* Constructed materials, selected or prepared by the instructor, have the advantage of allowing students to work at an appropriate level without discouraging them. Authentic materials provide students with a challenge and bring them closer to the ultimate goal of communicating in and comprehending Japanese as used in a Japanese-speaking environment. When using authentic materials, however, it is important that the instructor guides the learner in the use of such material by assigning level-appropriate tasks.

The instructor may choose different approaches depending on the degree of difficulty of materials. For example, the instructor may devise a set of simple tasks for the students to accomplish when working on a challenging text, and more difficult and complex tasks when dealing with materials that are relatively easy for them. Students benefit from pre-reading/listening activities that prepare them for the topic and text type and activate schemata, and from post-reading/listening activities designed to check comprehension and build on what was learned. For practice of both top-down and bottom-up reading strategies, opportunities for both intensive and extensive reading and for scanning and skimming are also important.

2) *Inclusion of some materials above the level of the learner in order to challenge and stimulate.* To be successful, the instructor must first evaluate the students' level of proficiency, matching materials and task to that level. Then the instructor can gradually incorporate tasks and material from the higher level into the course. Although students may be overwhelmed or discouraged by materials that include, for example, a huge volume of new vocabulary or kanji, they may be guided to use such materials in specific learning tasks. Students can be introduced to strategies for coping with audio materials before they start to listen. For example, students should learn methods of listening for specific content and note-taking in advance of listening to a speech in Japanese.

3) *Responding to the goals of learners.* Non-language faculty (specialists in history, literature, religion, art history, economics, etc.) can be involved in the selection and presentation of specialized materials. In some educational settings, it may be possible for non-language faculty to incorporate Japanese texts in their courses. Language instructors might coordinate topics with those that the students are studying in non-language classes. In some schools, such collaboration across disciplines and departments may be a formal part of the curriculum, while at other institutions staffing and budgetary restrictions may dictate more informal cooperation. *Standards for Japanese Language Learning* encourages teachers to help their students use language to “connect with other disciplines and acquire information.” [See also the section on “Japanese for Specific Purposes.”]

4) *Introducing students to the necessary tools—i.e., basic reference works.* Knowing how to use a variety of dictionaries and other reference works (including electronic dictionaries and on-line reading aids) will be useful to students both in the classroom and later when they have completed their formal studies and are learning and using Japanese on their own. Teachers can also help students find reference works in their own fields of specialization, consulting with a specialist in that field if need be. Students can be encouraged to use the sample sentences in print dictionaries and grammar references to enrich their own writing and speech.

5) Introducing the tremendous diversity of styles of written and spoken Japanese, above and beyond the standard Japanese introduced in elementary textbooks. In response to specialized student interests and curricular needs, teachers may teach—or at least guide students to—resources concerning written styles such as classical Japanese (*bungo*), *kanbun*, and different types of orthography, including *kyūkanazukai* and *kyūkanji*, *hentaigana*, and hand-written Japanese. Students who plan to study or work in Japan need to be aware of regional varieties of Japanese and of the ever-changing nature of the spoken language.

Useful Instructional Strategies

1) *Providing students with opportunities to interact informally with faculty and other speakers of Japanese outside the classroom and office hours.* Language tables, happy hour or *ocha no jikan* (tea time), conversation partners, pen pals, etc., can be both enjoyable and educational.

2) *Involving native speakers in classroom activities.* Foreign students, other faculty, or people from the community who participate in classroom activities will broaden students' exposure to varieties of language and culture.

3) *Conducting classroom interaction in Japanese.* Maximum use of Japanese in the classroom is desirable. In some cases it may be possible to conduct a particular lesson entirely in Japanese. At other times some minimal use of English may be beneficial. For example, spot translation from Japanese to English can be a useful means of checking the learners' comprehension of complex sentence structure, meaning, discourse strategies, and particle usage, particularly when dealing with authentic texts. Care should be taken to distinguish between the use of translation as a means of checking students' comprehension and the teaching of translation techniques and theory—two related yet distinctly different processes. Teachers can introduce sufficiently advanced and interested students to resources pertaining to technical and literary translation and interpretation.

4) *Assigning project work.* The integration of all four skills can best be achieved by extensive use of simulation and/or project work, which can be designed to involve all four skills, thus facilitating their integration and synchronization. Even small-scale project work, such as making a class newspaper, is effective because it can involve speaking (in an interview), listening (to the recorded interview), reading (something related to the interview), and writing (an article based on the interview), for example.

5) *Creating a comfortable and positive learning environment in the classroom.* For example, if circumstances permit, you can move the furniture into configurations other than the traditional one to encourage interaction. The classroom atmosphere can be improved by a positive attitude on the part of the teacher. Research indicates that lowering the "affective filter" to some extent has a positive impact on learning.

6) *Encouraging students to be aware of learning strategies.* Explicit discussion of learning strategies helps equip students for lifelong learning. The transition to self-directed and independent learning should be gradual, with the learners taking an increasingly greater role in recognizing what they do not know and understand and in acquiring tools and strategies necessary to continue their development.

7) *Encouraging learner-managed learning.* As Galal Walker has noted, the "ultimate goal . . . is to train the learners to be independent of the learning environment, to give them the ability to increase their skills themselves . . . by using the redundancy of the macro- and micro-systems of the language and culture" (Walker, 1989:47-48). The instructor plays an essential role by providing learners with tools and strategies. Once students leave the classroom setting, motivation and self-discipline are the biggest factors in increased proficiency and comprehension. The learning- and learner-centered language classroom and curriculum by no means constitutes a threat to the status or importance of the teacher. At the post-basic level, the instructor continues to be an essential presence and a helpful guide, but no learner will remain in the classroom forever.

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are "specific thoughts and behaviors used [by learners] with the explicit goal of improving learners' knowledge and understanding of a target language" (Weaver and Cohen 1997:22). These include cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, social strategies, and affective strategies.

In other words, learning strategies are those behaviors and attitudes that learners can adopt, in the classroom or out, to help themselves become more proficient in Japanese. Teachers can also remind students of two other factors essential in becoming a successful language learner: motivation and self-discipline.

From the start, both teachers and learners are implicitly aware of the strategies used in acquiring a foreign language. Nonetheless, a language curriculum can be greatly enhanced if teachers explicitly discuss with students the wide variety of learning strategies that can be useful to learners with varying needs, goals, and skill levels. Discussions among students should also be encouraged.

Language *use* strategies differ from language *learning* strategies. Language *use* strategies are "the actions taken by learners to perform tasks in the language classroom, communicate in the target language, and retrieve information about the language already stored in memory" (Weaver and Cohen, 1997:22-23).

Examples of learning strategies

1) It is useful for students to identify journals and newspapers that will help them not only increase their understanding of Japanese, but also keep abreast of developments in other areas of study or specialization. Next—and this is the important part—students should make a point of reading something of inter-

est to them in Japanese every day, even if only for a brief time. Just ten minutes of reading a day will add up to several hours of reading practice each month. Even learners who are not in Japan can find texts in Japanese by using the resources of libraries, bookstores, and the WWW, or by subscribing to a magazine. In Japanese, as is the case in any language, “to become a very good reader you have to spend a great deal of time reading and be in the right mood to read” (Weaver and Cohen, 1997:118).

2) Having native speakers to interact with is a great asset. Native speakers are often willing to help. Students should be reminded, however, to be considerate of their time and do something nice for people who are willing to spend time answering questions about reading materials, for example, or speaking in Japanese when they might rather wish to practice their own English. Students should think about ways to work out a fair exchange with a language partner.

3) When in conversation with other Japanese speakers, learners should not accept polite silence as proof of their own proficiency. If learners wish to be made aware of their errors, it may be necessary to assure others that error correction done in a constructive manner will not be offensive.

4) Students will benefit from practicing with themselves in Japanese, whether by thinking through an interaction or practicing aloud. Talking to oneself in Japanese can increase confidence and make it possible to anticipate success in linguistic tasks that are pending. Errors and cultural faux pas should be regarded as challenges to do better next time, not as discouragement.

5) Students will benefit from considering ways to reduce the effect of anxiety, nervousness, and apprehension on their ability to communicate effectively in Japanese. Simple techniques to lower anxiety before speaking (or even writing) in Japanese include taking deep breaths, feeling (and being!) prepared, and engaging in “positive self-talk.” While speaking, learners can distract themselves from negative emotions or stress by monitoring themselves and feeling good about making self-corrections and actively using new vocabulary and patterns (Weaver and Cohen, 1997:138).

6) Learners should become familiar with a variety of schemata, or formats, for both spoken and written language. In the case of the former, discourse competence involves paying attention to and mastering the connection between sentences, paragraphs, and the overall organization of text types. Organizational patterns and rhetorical structure may vary among disciplines. Learners should anticipate differences in advancing an argument, stating a thesis, and even the point in a text where the main thesis is articulated. On a broader level, learners should be encouraged to peruse publications in their field in order to acquaint themselves with field-specific publication formats/schemata. In speaking and listening, students should be aware of the conventions for talk in particular situations and contexts.

7) Students should learn as much as they can about Japan. Native speakers of Japanese share not only common linguistic knowledge but also common cultural and social knowledge. Learners of Japanese will therefore be able to communicate better by becoming familiar with the set(s) of assumptions, perceptions, and common sense that underlie language conventions.

8) Some students may find it useful to keep a linguistic journal for the purpose of monitoring their own strengths, weaknesses, and progress in language learning and use. Through writing a language learning diary, the learner can identify problem areas, feel gratified at instances of successful communication and interaction, and plan strategies for improving performance in the future.

9) Finding a favorite author and reading his/her works extensively for pleasure or viewing movies or TV programs one really enjoys are excellent way to improve competence.

Guides to Resources

- A) Association of Teachers of Japanese
Campus Box 279, University of Colorado
Boulder, CO 80309-0279
Tel: 303-492-5487
Fax: 303-492-5856
E-mail: atj@colorado.edu
Web site: <http://www.colorado.edu/ealc/atj>

ATJ publishes a quarterly newsletter, which features a column on software and other resources for Japanese language learners. Also available is the MACTAVISH Report on Computer Aided Language Learning. *Japanese Language and Learning*, the Journal of ATJ (semiannual) includes reviews of textbooks and dissertation abstracts. All of these resources are also available on the ATJ Web Site: <<http://www.colorado.edu/ealld/atj>>.

- B) The Japan Foundation Language Center
333 South Grand Avenue, Suite 2250
Los Angeles, CA 90071
Tel: 213-621-2267
Fax: 213-621-2590
E-mail: jflalc@jflalc.org
Web site: <http://www.jflalc.org>

The JF Language Center offers two useful resources for teachers: the Nihongo Library, a lending library from which teachers can borrow textbooks and audiovisual materials either in person or by mail; and an English and Japanese language newsletter called “The Breeze.”

- C) Nihongo Kyoiku Gakkai (Society for Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language)
Toho Gakkai New Building, 2nd Fl.
2-4-1 Nishi Kanda
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0065
Tel: +81-3-5216-7552

The Society’s journal *Nihongo Kyoiku* is an important resource for teachers on issues of pedagogy and linguistics.

- D) National Council of Japanese Language Teachers (NCJLT)
P.O. Box 3719
Boulder, CO 80307-3719
E-mail: ncjlt@japaneseteaching.org
Web site: <http://www.Colorado.edu/ealld/atj/ncjlt/index.html>
- E) National Foreign Language Resource Centers
Web site: <http://nflrc.msu.edu>

The 14 National Foreign Language Resource Centers (funded under Title VI of the Higher Education Act) provide resources and training for foreign language educators. Several of the Centers specialize in East Asian languages, less commonly taught languages, and other relevant areas. For information on any of the NFLRCs, start with the web site: <http://nflrc.msu.edu/>

- F) On-line electronic user/discussion groups and web sites

The Internet is a rich resource for Japanese language teachers and learners. Sites are added daily, and any listing in print would soon be outdated. A site to start with is Keiko Schneider’s Bookmarks, which is updated regularly and links to on-line resources around the world for Japanese language education. <http://www.sabotenweb.com/bookmarks>

D. JAPANESE FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

Many learners at the post-basic level will want to broaden their language study to include one or more specialized content domains. One of the main reasons for continuing to study the Japanese language at this level and beyond is to develop the skills necessary to use the language as a tool for carrying out activities in or with Japan, conducting research, or gathering information from Japanese-speaking people and publications.

DEFINITION

The term Japanese for Specific Purposes (JSP) is used to designate the subsets of the language used by specialists writing or speaking in particular content domains. These areas of specialization may be defined quite broadly—science, business, politics—or with a great degree of specificity—psycholinguistics, integrated circuits, marketing. Any discipline or domain with a recognizable or unique lexicon and/or presentation format, such as economics, literature, journalism, or patent law, can be considered to fall under JSP. From a historical standpoint, pre-modern versions of the language, including classical Japanese, *kanbun*, and *komonjo*, also fall under this classification.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANGUAGE

Some aspects of the Japanese language are more likely than others to differ according to the field of specialization. Further research is needed to document the following assumptions, but intuitively one can say that from domain to domain pronunciation differs relatively little, and the orthography throughout consists of a combination of kanji, hiragana, and katakana, although the percentage of each may vary. The lexicon, on the other hand, varies significantly due, among other things, to domain-specific terminology. The basic syntactic structure does not differ, but some variations have been found in the forms of linguistic expression depending on the discipline (on Japanese for scientific purposes, for example, see Mills 1996).

In spoken Japanese, many of the linguistic situations a JSP learner needs to be able to handle are the same as those for a non-specialist. The ability to speak and act in culturally appropriate ways when meeting people, interacting with colleagues, making requests, apologizing, and in other everyday situations is important for all learners of the language.

In addition, certain situations peculiar to a particular field of specialization should be identified and addressed in the curriculum. For example, learners in certain JSP fields will need to make presentations to an audience. The language of such presentations will be more formal than that of individual interactions, and learners will benefit from instruction and practice in that special activity. A related activity is the formal self-introduction, which a specialist is often called upon to give to colleagues. The content and format are largely predetermined and can be learned and practiced in the form of a speech.

There are also discernible differences in written discourse between, for example, the more informal style of a technical document written for casual discussion and the more formal language of one written for publication. Moreover, there are stylistic differences between an explanation of a technical subject written for a non-technical reader and one written by a specialist to convey the results of recent discoveries to other specialists.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND APPROACHES

This section covers reading only. We recognize the need for more teaching material development for oral/aural proficiency in JSP.

Reading Materials

Constructed Materials: Learners at the early post-basic level can benefit from reading texts which have been written or altered specifically for instructional purposes. The use of such materials permits the repetitive practice of particular points of difficulty while limiting or eliminating other problem areas. However, such materials have limited use, and the post-basic learner should begin to read authentic materials as well.

Authentic Materials: The term “authentic” is used here to refer to unaltered texts taken from publications in the target field of specialization or from other materials written and used by specialists in that field. Items written or spoken specifically for non-Japanese can be authentic if they represent actual communication and are not written for pedagogical purposes. Depending on the mode and purpose of instruction, lists of words and phrases designed to assist the learner can be appended, as well as explanations of grammatical constructions and idiomatic expressions. Where appropriate, these can be given in Japanese.

Range of Materials: Within a field of specialization there is typically a range of styles and content among the written materials which a specialist in that field must control. In science and engineering, for instance, there are differences among texts written for different purposes: technically sophisticated articles in technical journals (*ronbun*), explanatory introductions to a particular subject (*kaisetsu*), summaries of papers for conference proceedings, and so on. Learners also need to be taught that not all sentences written by a target native are well formed, and that some are difficult, or impossible, for even a native reader to comprehend.

Translation: As a tool of instruction in reading at this level, translation of the target language into the learner’s base language can be very useful, provided the goal of instruction is accuracy of comprehension and the students share a base language. Checking a reader’s comprehension via discussion or question-and-answer in the target language is valuable in incorporating multi-skill activities into a reading-centered class. Such verbal interaction provides an opportunity for using new vocabulary and structural patterns, reinforcing the differences between written-style and spoken-style Japanese, and for expressing opinions

about the subject matter. However, verbal interaction alone often leaves various errors and misconceptions undiscovered. Learners can use clues from the reading passage or the question to formulate an acceptable answer, without fully understanding the content. Translation requires complete understanding of both the syntactic and the discourse structure of the original, and areas of uncertainty become readily apparent. It is important to note that there are different types of translation, varying with the purpose and the audience to be served. In the present context translation does not mean creating a polished product worthy of publication, but rather refers to providing an equivalent meaning in the base language which demonstrates that the learner clearly understands the meaning of the Japanese.

TEACHER AVAILABILITY AND TRAINING

The models available when arranging instruction for a JSP program involve using a Japanese language pedagogy specialist, a content domain specialist, and a combination of those two. Instruction by a language specialist is essential from the standpoint of effective learning of the language, but if the content is highly technical (whether spoken or written) the teacher may have difficulty comprehending and explaining it. One remedy is to use materials with less specialized technical content, but this may not be satisfactory to the students, and in any case it means that students will not be exposed to the styles used in the full range of materials in their field.

Instruction by a content specialist removes the problem of understanding the technical content, but in most cases means that explanations of the language will be less effective for the learner. Advanced learners need guidance and explanation concerning sentence structures and expressions, as well as help with strategies for continued learning, which a native speaker not trained in language pedagogy is not equipped to provide.

For these reasons, the optimal model is a team made up of a language specialist and a content specialist, with each conducting that part of the instructional process which utilizes their expertise and which maximizes the use of in-class time to the learner's benefit. Two or more teachers combining their talents and knowledge, while working together to complement each other's strengths, can provide a far better course than either could offer alone.

When designing a JSP course it is important to keep in mind that such a course is first a language acquisition class. The content may be broad or narrow, but the main goal and overriding purpose is the improvement of Japanese language skills in the particular JSP area. Students may expand their knowledge of the content through the class activities. However, keeping the class focused on the goal of enhanced language skills will make the study most effective.

LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS

At least seven types of knowledge/skills are necessary in order to pursue effective study of JSP in a particular field. The first four can and should be taught in language acquisition classes. The last three represent knowledge and skills that the learner brings from the outside.

1. Language skills knowledge refers to the knowledge of, and ability to use, those aspects of the target language needed to carry out the desired activities. Learners at the post-basic level have already acquired the fundamental skills and should be learning the structures, lexicon, and orthography needed to advance in the target domain.

2. Cultural knowledge refers to ways of expression and expectations of the speaker/reader which are important to an understanding in the target domain and are different from those found in the learner's culture.

3. Learning strategies include information which permits the learners to continue effective study of the language on their own without the help of professional instruction.

4. Formal schemata knowledge refers to knowledge of patterned structures in speaking or reading which, due to their predictability, can assist the learner in dealing more effectively with a new corpus. Examples of helpful schemata are news broadcasts, a scientific argument, a newspaper article, or a patent document.

5. Domain-specific knowledge is knowledge of a particular area of specialization which would be assumed by those writing or speaking about that specialization. Without a knowledge of economics, for example, the learner would not be able to comprehend a text in that field in his/her native language, much less in Japanese.

6. General world knowledge includes knowledge held in common by speakers/readers of a language about the world in general. This will be largely the same in all countries, but may include information specific to Japan's geography, social institutions, etc.

7. Cognitive skills refers to the ability to use problem-solving techniques and previously acquired knowledge about the target domain to understand difficult passages. It is believed that the lower the level of target-language skills, the more of the mind's active processing space is occupied with unfamiliar target-language cues, thus reducing the amount of cognitive activity that is possible (Koda 1992).

E. STUDY IN JAPAN

Study in Japan is desirable, even necessary, for all serious learners of Japanese at the post-basic level. A well-designed study-abroad program serves several purposes. 1) It provides students with an opportunity to use the language in actual communication and to develop the ability to function in everyday situations. 2) It gives students the opportunity to observe life, people, and language use in Japan. 3) It serves as a bridge from the structured classroom environment to the uncontrolled environment of self-study. For a language like Japanese—included by the Interagency Language Roundtable of the US government as one of a small group of Category 4 languages [Chinese, Arabic, Russian, and Japanese] that require an exceptionally long period of study to achieve mastery—advancement to higher levels of proficiency is usually possible only through a period of study in-country.

The best study-abroad program is not an uncontrolled and unstructured in-country experience. Students need more than a home-stay in Japan. In the ideal situation, study abroad is closely coordinated with the home program. At the very least, teachers should communicate regularly with the Japanese program to help their students gain the maximum benefit from it.

THE BENEFITS OF STUDY ABROAD

The texture of the learning experience in the study-abroad environment is potentially far richer than can be achieved outside Japan. Studies have shown that students make gains in a number of areas during study abroad; among them are language proficiency, fluency, and cultural knowledge and practice (Brecht and Davidson 1991, Freed 1995). In particular, it is in the study-abroad program that most students first internalize cultural appropriateness.

The study-abroad experience tests the effectiveness and usefulness of the skills taught in the home classroom; it solidifies those skills and builds confidence in using them. Teachers should be prepared to challenge returning students with materials and activities that build on their experience abroad.

The psychological benefits of study abroad are also important. An in-country experience has been found to be one of the most effective ways of building enthusiasm for language study. For many students study abroad provides the first opportunity to use Japanese communicatively in daily life. Students who study abroad in Japan usually return to the classroom with much greater motivation and determination than before.

TYPES OF STUDY-ABROAD PROGRAMS

There are a variety of different kinds of programs, and the choice among them depends principally upon the type of students participating in the program. One kind of program is the stand-alone or consortium program, which accepts students from a number of institutions and provides logistic support for them. Exchange study at a Japanese university, in which students establish their own course of study at a Japanese university, requires a high degree of student maturity. This kind of program is often chosen for students in graduate or professional programs, especially science and engineering students working in apprenticeships at a Japanese research facility. University programs for short-term students (one year or one semester) exist at many Japanese private and public institutions; their numbers are increasing rapidly.

In addition to established language and culture programs at Japanese universities, study abroad can also be constructed to fit the special needs of the students. For example, students who have a particular specialization or expertise could serve in an internship or field placement. Such situations have become increasingly common in science and engineering, but possibilities in other fields also deserve examination. These programs tend to be content-oriented, but it is important to incorporate language study whenever possible.

SELECTING PROGRAMS

Formal study in Japan should prepare students for the tasks and problems they will encounter in their daily lives. Students should seek programs that provide a balance between formal classroom study and experiential learning outside the classroom. Teachers should continuously monitor the balance and design of the curricula of overseas programs in which their students participate (including content courses taught in English) to ensure that the programs meet the needs of their students.

Another consideration is the degree of exposure to regional linguistic variations. Some instruction in the local dialect should be included in the program (at least for comprehension and survival-level production). Learning a dialect can be a positive experience.

Extracurricular factors should be included in these assessments. Since the environment outside the classroom is what makes overseas study unique, teachers need to consider the living accommodations provided for the students. Individual student profiles, personalities, and preferences can help determine whether students should be provided with a home-stay or housing in a dormitory setting with Japanese students. Either is preferable to housing in a facility that is predominantly occupied by other English-speaking students.

Despite the importance of extracurricular activities, classroom instruction remains a critical part of the study-abroad experience. The discipline of the classroom makes a great difference in the skills acquired in the overseas program. For students with sufficiently advanced language skills, participating in regular classes at a Japanese university may be possible.

Guides have been developed for evaluating study-abroad programs. These guides can be used by curriculum planners to compare overseas programs and to make recommendations to students.

TIMING

The optimal time for study abroad is when a student has a foundation of linguistic and cultural knowledge on which to build. Is the student prepared to manage the learning environment in ways that will lead to a meaningful experience? In general, students will gain the most if they have completed at least the basic level of instruction in the U.S.

PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION

Three areas of pre-departure preparation are desirable: training in learner-managed learning, linguistic preparation (especially in linguistic tasks necessary for daily living), and knowledge of Japanese culture and society. Study in Japan requires a greater degree of learner-managed learning than the home classroom. Interactions with the target culture require the student to control and guide learning strategies. Students go abroad primarily to learn through individual, direct contact with Japanese people and Japanese culture, and students should be prepared to do so.

Study abroad presents the student with an immediate and dramatic increase in uncontrolled, interpersonal communication. The student in Japan is faced with an immediate need to accomplish practical tasks in a different culture. This means that language training prior to going to Japan should concentrate on preparing the student to deal with everyday tasks.

Students will also benefit significantly if they take with them background knowledge about Japanese culture and society. Even the simplest conversations and interactions in Japan are informed by a shared geographical, historical, social, and cultural background. The study of these subjects is usually found in area studies programs, but it is often overlooked in U.S. language programs, although the *Standards for Japanese Language Learning* emphasize culture as one of the five areas of focus for instructors. Students should be encouraged to take courses in Japan's history, culture, and society. Materials that emphasize cultural knowledge should be integrated into language instruction whenever possible.

One resource for students and teachers, *Maximizing Study Abroad*, has been published by the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota (Paige et al., 2002).

TRANSFER OF CREDITS

A common difficulty in evaluating an overseas program is deciding how to quantify its academic value. How many credits, and for what courses, should be transferred back to the home institution? Because the curricular structure of the overseas program is often sharply different from that of the home institution,

the matching of courses for transfer credits can be problematic. The overseas experience itself will also produce different outcomes in Japanese-language ability, depending upon the individual student and the specific program. Solutions to the problems of transfer credits need to be worked out and clarified in advance. Teachers at the home institution can help by advising students carefully about these matters before their departure.

CLUBS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Teachers should encourage students to explore the possibility of joining Japanese student clubs or activities, where they can make friends and be part of a Japanese-speaking environment. Students should be made aware of the commitment of time and energy involved in some types of club participation.

Lessons in a traditional Japanese art or volunteer activities will also enhance students' linguistic skills and cultural understanding.

FUNDING

The expense of a study-abroad program is an important consideration for many students. Teachers can help students investigate scholarship opportunities, special loan programs, and other sources of funds through campus study-abroad offices, the Japanese Consulate, and the Association of Teachers of Japanese Bridging Project on Study Abroad. Students committed to teaching Japanese language on the primary or secondary level may be eligible for special scholarships for teachers. Establishing an exchange relationship with a Japanese institution opens the possibility of students receiving a Mombusho/AIEJ Scholarship through the Japanese institution.

RESOURCES

The Association of Japanese Bridging Project for Study Abroad in Japan offers comprehensive information on programs, scholarships, and other resources for study abroad in Japan:
<http://www.colorado.edu/ealld/atj/Bridging/abroad.html>

F. EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

I. The purposes of testing

Testing can serve a number of purposes: administrative (testing for placement, for certification, for promotion); instructional (testing for diagnosis, for evidence of progress, for feedback to the learner, for evaluation of teaching or curriculum); and research (testing for progress, curriculum, or materials evaluation, for experimentation, for knowledge about language learning and language use). It is helpful to determine the primary goal before selecting or devising an assessment instrument.

The major categories of assessment instruments are proficiency (most often used for administrative purposes) and achievement tests for assessment of instructional results. A combination of the two, called "prochievement" testing, is also possible.

II. Testing practices

Advances in language testing in recent years are related to the development of theoretical views that see language as having multiple components, and that recognize the influence of test method and test-taker characteristics on test performance. In addition, the increased teaching of communicative skills has led to the development of communicative language tests and an effort to assess "authentic" communication.

Current testing theories identify the following as good practice in language testing: broadening the scope of what is included in assessment from tests alone to a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques; using assessment measures to help students improve their skills; making sure the criteria for success on an assessment task are clear to the learner; returning assessments promptly and discussing the results with learners in class or individually.

Likewise, the following have been identified as questionable testing techniques: using tests as punishment; using tests as the exclusive measure for grading; testing material that was not taught; returning tests

without explanations; using only one testing method; giving tests the students do not know how to take; and taking too long returning tests.

III. Administrative testing

Placement tests

Two types of placement tests are possible: achievement tests and proficiency tests. When a majority of students in the class are from the previous level of the same institution, achievement tests may be given, as the students share a similar learning background. Placement based on achievement tests may take the form of a final examination at the conclusion of the previous level, i.e. intermediate level, often with B- or better grade as a prerequisite to place in the advanced level, or a satisfactory result on special test given at the beginning of the semester. On the other hand, if the class is composed of students with different learning backgrounds, a proficiency-oriented test may be given to give even ground for everyone. At summer schools, where the student body often consists of those from various institutions, a set of placement tests is given. Placement tests should cover all four skills.

Results of the placement test are sometimes difficult to correlate to program levels if a student demonstrates substantially different proficiency levels in different skill areas or has a special background—for instance, has lived in Japan, has studied or knows Chinese or Korean, or has grown up in a Japanese-speaking household may fit into this category. Another special case is the student who has studied only the written language. If class arrangements allow students to attend two different levels of Japanese classes—e.g., advanced for reading, and intermediate for speaking—there will be fewer problems for both the student and the instructor. Otherwise individually tailored assignments may be the best solution.

Standardized tests

Standardized tests are not appropriate for classroom evaluation, but may be useful for administrative purposes. They also provide an opportunity for students whose Japanese is at the post-basic level to gauge their skills. The Nihongo Noryoku Shiken (Japanese Language Proficiency Test) provides testing in reading and oral comprehension of Japanese. The test is given annually in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago through the Japan Foundation Language Center. The test results are widely used by Japanese universities for admitting foreign students. Other standardized tests include the SAT-II test and the Business Japanese test administered annually by JETRO.

Proficiency tests

CTFL's Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) provides a standardized assessment of oral skills for individuals. It takes a considerable amount of time to administer and is not well suited for testing a large number of students at once. It is particularly well suited to evaluating students from other institutions and students who have returned from study-abroad programs.

IV. Instructional testing

Quizzes

Regularly administered short quizzes (five minutes or so) focusing on specific items from a particular can be effective in two ways: one, to encourage students to study; and, two, to promote class attendance, since class attendance plays a crucial role in language learning. It should be emphasized that the items being tested should be in context rather than isolated. For example, dictation of a passage with kanji places the kanji within the context of a sentence and also incorporates both writing and listening skills.

Unit tests

A unit test gives both students and instructors a chance to see whether or not goals have been attained. In addition, a unit test provides students with an opportunity to review the materials they have learned, and the results tell instructors the effectiveness of their instructional practices. Students should know in advance the format and coverage of the test. In addition to providing feedback on student achievement, a well-constructed test will prepare students to solve problems and help them to develop appropriate strategies to cope with linguistic and sociocultural problems on their own. It is desirable to evaluate both oral and written skills: a task-oriented oral test gives students a chance to simulate authentic interactions, and an extended written passage with appropriate questions provides an opportunity to demonstrate critical thinking and judgment. It is most effective for the instructor to provide prompt feedback, either in class or in individual consultations.

Mid-term and final tests

Mid-term and final tests can serve a purpose similar to unit tests—that is, seeing whether or not the goals set forth at the beginning have been attained. Both the skills and the content covered in the test should reflect what was taught in class. The final test can be an achievement test or a proachievement test—a combination of achievement and proficiency—as the exercise is to examine how much students have learned and how effective the teaching was.

Projects and portfolios

Project work is an effective way to assess student abilities in various language skills. A project will require careful planning to insure that students take advantage of opportunities for using the language in real settings. With proper guidance, the exercise can encourage the integration of various linguistic skills. The assessment of student projects will reveal their strengths and weaknesses both in specific skills and in the ability to integrate them.

Another assessment tool that can be helpful for both teachers and students in reflecting on student progress is the portfolio. Portfolios contain representative samples of students' work from various points in their learning careers, possibly accompanied by students' essays on the development of their linguistic and cultural skills.

Encouraging students to do self-assessment of their progress toward their goals will help them to become more effective independent language learners. For example, the instructor might provide checklists of learning strategies or of course goals for linguistic skills so that students can monitor their own progress. It can be helpful for teachers and students to discuss self-assessments in individual conferences periodically.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

It can be helpful for a program to be assessed periodically in terms of effectiveness of instruction, appropriateness of goals at each level, overall program coherence, articulation between levels, goals and outcomes, and administration. An assessor can be a member or members of other departments in the same institution, or a group of instructors from outside institution. An outside evaluation can often reveal weaknesses and strengths insiders cannot perceive on their own.

G. INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

This section discusses technology as it applies to post-basic Japanese instruction and learning. Given the rapid rate of progress in technology, the information presented here will inevitably become outdated. ATJ plans an Internet version of this document, updated to reflect important developments in this area. Please check the ATJ Web site: <<http://www.colorado.edu/ealld/atj>>.

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION/LEARNING

I. The computer is not a replacement for a teacher

The computer is an instructional tool, something that teachers can exploit to make instruction more efficient, individualized, motivating, and fun. There is a commonly held misconception that the computer is (or may become) a substitute for teachers, and from this misconception derives the fear that it will eventually take over teachers' jobs. Since the computer is an interactive medium, it may appear that the computer is providing instruction, but it is in fact human teachers (and/or materials developers) who are providing instruction through the computer. Computers at this point cannot even handle very simple verbal interactions with a person, much less the highly complex process of language teaching. The computer does certain kinds of things extremely well. But one of its weaknesses is its need to know exactly how to do things in a step-by-step manner in order to actually execute them. Naturally occurring language interactions are infinitely variable, as are the processes by which they can be learned and taught. The day when computers will replace language teachers is not in the foreseeable future. It may be fair to say, however, that teachers who are open to technology will probably replace teachers who are not.

II. Highly individualized instruction is possible

One outstanding benefit of the computer is the high level of individualized instruction it can provide. It is a truism that some materials are best learned on an individual basis. Learning kanji is a good example.

Once certain kanji have been presented in class, it is not an efficient use of class time to keep drilling them, because quick learners will be bored and slow learners will not get enough time to practice. This is one type of situation in which computer-based instruction is useful. Individual learners can go at their own pace, working on their weaknesses while skipping already learned materials. The computer does not get tired or impatient but keeps interacting with them until the material is mastered. Another example is a computer-based oral interaction simulation system under development at Purdue University. It provides video (or audio) cues (i.e. questions) to which the learner is to respond. The learner's responses are automatically recorded and saved for self-evaluation and/or teacher evaluation. Although it is far from natural conversational interactions, learners can work on their oral production (and listening comprehension) skills on an individual basis in a private setting. This supplements classroom oral practice, of which an individual learner typically receives very little.

III. Technology can put learners in contact with the real world

The computer can bring, via the World Wide Web, up-to-date news and other types of information directly from Japan. Technology also allows learners to communicate with other speakers of Japanese worldwide, for example by joining in discussions on various topics via e-mail or newsgroups. Video technology brings vivid pictures and sounds of Japan and Japanese people into the classroom. These technologies give meaning and context to what is being learned in class and provide opportunities for real communication.

TV/VIDEO TECHNOLOGY

Video materials and TV broadcasts are important sources of "live" samples of language. Materials intended for native speakers become increasingly important as learners' proficiency advances. Japanese movies and documentaries on videotape may be appropriate materials for post-basic learners. Television broadcasts are also appropriate, although less readily available.

In addition to the intensive (as opposed to extensive) viewing typically done in the classroom, post-basic students can benefit greatly from the availability of a library of video materials and a self-access learning laboratory. Students can walk into such a laboratory on their own time, check out videotapes or TV broadcasts that interest them, and watch them. Post-viewing reports of some kind might be assigned to monitor students' progress.

Video technology is changing. Digital video prepared for delivery on the computer is proliferating; it can be stored on a storage medium like a CD-ROM and a DVD or on a video server to be delivered over a computer network.

COMPUTERS AND JAPANESE

Advancements in software technology have made it fairly easy and inexpensive to enable a personal computer to handle Japanese script—a process we can call japanization. A personal computer bought in the U.S., whether PC or Mac, is equipped with an "English system" and operates in the English-only mode. There are three ways to japanize a U.S.-system computer: (1) use of add-on software, (2) a localized operating system (in this case, a "Japanese system"), and (3) partial intra-application japanization.

(1) Add-on software in the form of a Japanese language module can be installed on top of the English system, providing Japanese fonts and an input method. Both Windows XP and MacOS 9 and X come with multiple language modules that are easily installed, and that make switching from one language to another for inputting extremely easy. The two major advantages of this approach are that (a) it is possible to retain the English operating environment, with system menus and system messages in English, and (b) it is much less expensive than the alternative. In a networked environment (such as a computer lab) where computers are maintained by people who do not speak Japanese, this is the only reasonable option.

(2) The second approach makes use of system software designed for Japanese users who do not necessarily know English. Examples are a Japanese language version of Windows and MacOS. This software is not installed on top of the English system; rather, it replaces the English system. If one wishes to retain an English environment as well, it is possible to install both systems on the same computer and switch between them. The advantage of this approach is that one can attain complete japanization. The disadvantages include the fact that (1) it is much more expensive than the alternative and (2) you have the added trouble of going back and forth between the English and Japanese modes. Each time the switch is made, it is necessary to shut down all running programs and use a "switch" command of some kind to reboot.

(Many English programs will run under the Japanese system, but in order to use one that does not, it is necessary to switch the system to run it.)

(3) There are a small number of application programs that have their own Japanese fonts and input method within them. These intra-application Japanese fonts and input method, however, are not available to other application programs. A well-known example of this is JWP, a Japanese word-processor.

I. Word processing

One of the basic functions of the computer is word processing or text editing. Once a computer is properly japanized a word-processing application program is required for serious writing work. There are a number of programs commercially available to choose from. For students' use, however, a full-featured program is often not necessary, especially if all they do is to write a page or two with little or no formatting.

Word processing is quickly becoming a standard method of writing Japanese in Japan. It is the standard way of preparing documents in business and government offices. Even word-processed personal correspondence is not uncommon. And this trend is likely to accelerate. Given this situation, it would be to the learner's advantage to have basic Japanese word-processing skills—or, more precisely, the ability to input Japanese text from the keyboard. Furthermore, the ability to input Japanese text is prerequisite to most other uses of computer technology, such as e-mail and the World Wide Web.

One great benefit of word processing is the way it allows the writer to correct or alter existing texts without having to retype the whole document. This feature translates into an instructional merit as well. Rewriting and polishing a text is an important learning process, but it is often not assigned because re-writing a whole draft by hand is so much work. Typically, teachers' (often painstaking) comments and suggestions for improvement are barely read or utilized. With word processing available, however, teachers need not hesitate to require revisions, and learners would benefit from opportunities to rework their writing guided by feedback.

Another useful feature of Japanese word processing is kana-kanji conversion. The computer is capable of converting strings of kana into a kana-kanji mixture (with varying degrees of accuracy depending on the input-method software). For the conversion to work correctly, it is necessary to spell words in kana accurately. This forces learners to learn the exact pronunciation and spelling of words. At the same time, the conversion operation, as long as it is successful, produces kanji that learners may not know. Does this kind of exposure to kanji help the learner acquire kanji? Is the use of conversion software that presents a list of kanji or compounds to choose from too overwhelming for learners? Further research is needed on the implications of using word processing software in Japanese language instruction.

This section has presented some arguments for use of word processing in instruction. This, however, is not to be taken as discounting the importance of handwriting, which is an important part of any curriculum.

II. Electronic dictionaries

One of the challenges of studying Japanese has been the time required to look up words in dictionaries. Even for native speakers, it takes a great deal of time to search for kanji. The advent of electronic versions of kanji and other dictionaries, with their rapid search capabilities, has been a tremendous blessing for learners (as well as for native speakers). It is no longer uncommon to see students with pocket-sized calculator-like dictionaries. Electronic dictionaries for personal computers are typically sold on read-only media, such as CD-ROM. Kanji dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, monolingual dictionaries (such as *Kōjien* and *Daijirin*), and a number of bilingual technical dictionaries and glossaries are widely available.

The advantages of electronic dictionaries include rapid search speed, compactness, and flexible search options. For example, a commonly available option is the ability to look up kanji compounds by a character other than the initial one.

Electronic dictionaries are very useful by themselves, but they are even more useful when used alongside other computer programs, such as an e-mail reader, a word processor, and a Web browser. The user can readily look up words in an e-mail message, for instance, by simply copying and pasting between the e-mail reader and the dictionary program. From a pedagogical viewpoint, too, electronic dictionaries are desirable because they are so fast and simple to use that the learner is not likely to be distracted as much from the learning activity at hand.

Despite the many advantages of electronic dictionaries, they do have limitations. Students reading specialized texts may find electronic dictionaries are insufficient. They may contain less complete English definitions and, unlike print dictionaries, do not permit easy browsing.

III. E-mail and mailing lists

By the time learners reach the post-basic level, they should be able to communicate, either in speech or in writing, with Japanese speakers or other learners on a variety of topics. E-mail provides them with a convenient way to reach out to native speakers interested in corresponding with people in other countries and to other learners who are eager to practice Japanese this way. Having a “keypal” gives learners a reason to use Japanese for a real purpose and is therefore motivating. This type of e-mail exchange gives learners a lot of practice in reading and writing.

E-mail exchange can take a variety of forms. It can be an individual activity or a class project. It can be done on a one-on-one basis or as a group. The content of communication can be totally free, or the teacher can give students tasks (problem-solving, fact-finding, etc.) to work on.

Implementing Japanese e-mail is not difficult. There are several programs (free and commercial) available for both PC and Macintosh platforms that can handle Japanese e-mail. There are also mail server programs (free and commercial) that allow teachers to set up groups (“mini-mailing lists”), so that students do not have to enter a long list of e-mail addresses every time they send a message to a group. One useful resource is *A Guide to Japanese E-mail* published at <http://www.sla.purdue.edu/fl/JapanProj/>.

A number of full-scale mailing lists (or listservs) specialize in Japan and Japanese. The Gakusei lists managed at the University of Hawaii, for example, provide discussion forums for learners of Japanese from all over the world. NihongoTalk is another. A teacher might have a whole class participate in one of these lists.

For teachers and teachers-to-be, JTIT-L (Japanese Teachers and Instructional Technology) and JSLAR (Japanese-as-a-Second-Language Acquisition Researchers) are good information sources.

IV. Internet telephone and teleconferencing

Audio and video data can be transferred over the Internet. Internet telephone uses this technology to simulate conventional telephone. Teleconferencing, in which a moving image of the speaker (or whatever) can be transmitted along with audio, is also possible on the Internet. CUseeMe, for example, is a freeware program for teleconferencing. In order to send images, a digital video camera, digital camcorder, or regular camcorder with video digitizing hardware is needed. We have not seen extensive use of these technologies in the teaching of Japanese yet, but they obviously have potential for instructional applications, especially in distance education.

V. World Wide Web

The popularity of the World Wide Web (or simply “the web”) has been enormous, so much so that in the minds of many, the web *is* the Internet. Information abounds on the web, from academic to commercial and of varying quality. A similar trend has been observed in Japan, resulting in an ever-growing number of web sites transmitting information in Japanese.

From the viewpoint of Japanese language teaching/learning, there are several ways to make use of the web. The first and most obvious way is to think of the web as a huge collection of reading materials. There are a number of newspaper and magazine sites updated regularly that learners can go to and practice reading authentic materials. Teachers might assign certain pages as homework, or learners can simply read on their own according to their interests. Such authentic materials may be difficult for less advanced learners. For such learners, it is recommended that programs like EDICT and MacJDic, a freeware bilingual dictionary program, be used alongside the web browser. The learner who needs help with vocabulary can highlight a word and look it up in the dictionary program without having to type in anything. Web sites that automatically generate glossary help for any Japanese text are also available (see www.rikai.com, for example).

Second, the web can be used as an information resource for various activities. Deguchi (1996), for example, created a virtual trip activity in which learners are given a budget to tour Japan. The purpose of this activity is to plan an itinerary including sites to visit, accommodations, and transportation based on information from tourist information sites, the links to which are given in advance. This could be implemented as an individual homework assignment or a pair-work activity in class. For other ideas, see Warschauer (1996) and tell.fl.purdue.edu/khatasa/IowaHandout.html.

Third, the web can also be viewed as a convenient place for on-line publishing. Web pages are written in a special document markup language called Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), but there are several what-you-see-is-what-you-get HTML file editors on the market which essentially work like word processors. With these programs, it is possible to create attractive pages with text, graphics, photos, sounds, and even live video. Some of these programs support the use of Japanese on web pages. Given this, various “real” writing tasks for students can be assigned, such as a personal profile page; a page introducing the program, department, school, or university; or a page about the student’s research. If arrangements can be made with the university webmaster, students might post a Japanese version of the university home page.

VI. Newsgroups

Newsgroups (previously known as Usenet) are non-real-time text-based discussion forums. There are thousands of discussion groups covering a wide range of topics. Newsgroups are similar to mailing lists, but there are differences. Newsgroups do not require subscriptions, so anyone can read or post messages in any group at any time. Unlike mailing list messages, news postings are not delivered to you; they simply sit in cyberspace until they are accessed by an interested reader. Newsgroups can be accessed with a dedicated news reader program. Some web browsers (e.g. Netscape) and e-mail readers (e.g. Outlook Express) have a news reader integrated in them.

Of particular interest to teachers and learners of Japanese are newsgroups conducted in Japanese. The names of these newsgroups begin with “fj.” meaning “from Japan”. There are several hundred of them, and a variety of topics are covered. They provide additional opportunities for learners to practice reading and writing.

VII. Instructional software (courseware)

A number of instructional programs are available, both commercially and in the public domain. This section discusses both types of programs briefly and also discusses useful criteria for evaluating them.

The quality of commercial programs varies greatly. The mere fact that a program is a commercial product is no guarantee of its quality. The most problematic are products that have apparently been designed without any input from a Japanese-language professional. It is important that Japanese language professionals take the lead in the area of instructional software development (see Fukada 1992). Since these programs can be costly, it is advisable to send for a demo version before making a purchase. Demo programs are increasingly available on the Internet. With respect to advanced Japanese, kanji and reading are two common areas commercial software have addressed so far. For reviews of selected commercial as well as public-domain programs, see <<http://www.sla.purdue.edu/fll/JapanProj/ACTFLreviews/>>.

Public-domain programs, while inexpensive, have their own problems. The quality varies widely here, too. These programs also tend to be experimental, and sometimes incomplete. Especially in the case of freeware, there is no guarantee that the software will work bug-free. Technical support is often not available, although many freeware authors are quite generous with their time.

It would be a shame if such problems were to limit use of instructional software and the computer. What is needed is systematic and concerted effort to develop readily usable computer-based materials designed on the basis of curricular needs. One way to accomplish this is through inter-institutional cooperation. For an example of this model of materials development, see

<<http://www.sla.purdue.edu/fll/JapanProj/CIC-JAPIR/>>.

Probably the most important thing to bear in mind is that instructional software is just another type of instructional material, and all the usual criteria for evaluating teaching materials are applicable. Appropriate medium selection and adaptability are particularly important criteria for instructional software evaluation.

Appropriate medium selection has to do with whether or not a material is implemented on an appropriate medium. A computer program that simply presents an electronic image of a textbook one page at a time—the proverbial “electronic page-turner”—is not a good program because it does not take advantage of the capabilities of the computer. (Besides, textbook content and format are optimized for the particular medium—a bound stack of paper—so it does not make sense to transfer it as is to another medium.) Another inappropriate use of the technology is a “multimedia” program that uses graphics, sound, and video in entirely frivolous and instructionally meaningless ways.

Adaptability refers to whether instructional content can be tailored in some way. Some programs have fixed content, while others are equipped with an authoring feature that allows the user to tailor the content

to varying degrees. In general, the more flexible and adaptable the program, the easier it is to integrate it into one's curriculum, and the more useful it is.

RESOURCES

Dictionaries and glossary systems

Kanji and JE-EJ dictionaries to be used in a web browser.

<http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~jwb/wwwjdic.html>

The same JE-EJ dictionaries to be used alongside a Japanese web page.

<http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~jwb/wwwjtrans.html>

MacJDic: A stand-alone freeware dictionary application for the Mac based on the same Kanji and JE-EJ dictionaries.

<http://www.boingo.com/dan/software/MacJDic.html>

AutoGloss/J: A freeware program that automatically generates a vocabulary list from supplied Japanese text.

<http://www.sla.purdue.edu/fl/japanproj/AutoGloss/AutoGloss.html>

DL (Dictionary-Linked system): Similar to AutoGloss/J except that it is web-based. The user supplies Japanese text, and the site presents an "annotated" version with glossary help links.

<http://www.jaist.ac.jp/~tera/>

Word processors

JWP: A freeware Japanese word processor for the PC. It runs on an English-only version of Windows having its own Japanese fonts and input method.

<ftp://ftp.uwtc.washington.edu/pub/japanese/IBM/JWP>

Mailing lists

Gakusei lists: For learners of Japanese, with three levels to choose from. For the first two levels, one can also select romaji or kana/kanji. For more information, visit:

<http://finc.utm.edu/~rpeckham/jlist1.html>

NihongoTalk: Another mailing list for learners.

JTIT-L (Japanese Teachers and Instructional Technology): For Japanese teachers/researchers and teachers-to-be.

JSLAR (Japanese-as-a-Second-Language Acquisition Researchers): Aimed at Japanese teachers/researchers interested in Second-Language Acquisition.

General

General information on computing and on-line resources for Japanese, as well as subscription information for a number of mailing lists including the above is found at:

<http://www.sabotenweb.com/bookmarks>

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