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## MEETING STUDENT NEEDS: PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHING JAPANESE FOR PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES

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### INTRODUCTION

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This issue of *Occasional Papers* presents a post-symposium report and a collection of individual papers presented at the “Symposium on Teaching Japanese for Professional Purposes (JPP)” held at the University of Pennsylvania on Friday, March 26, 2010, in conjunction with the 2010 annual conference of the Association of Teachers of Japanese (ATJ). It was generously supported by the Japan Foundation Los Angeles, Penn Lauder Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER), and the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. The half-day symposium featured seven presenters, and approximately 50 people attended.

The symposium was planned in response to increasing interest in the field of JPP, which I had observed as the founding coordinator of ATJ’s Japanese for Specific Purposes Special Interest Group (JSP-SIG), created in 2007. In three years its membership has increased to more than 70. Most of the members list JPP (including business Japanese) as their primary field of interest. Based on personal communications with members, it seemed that more than half of the members who have expressed an interest in JPP have never taught such courses but are interested in teaching them in the near future. This observation has led

to the idea that professional development for future JPP teachers is necessary. Meanwhile, current JPP teachers were also eager to have an opportunity to exchange pedagogical ideas and discuss issues of teaching JPP.

Interest in JPP and business Japanese is an interesting phenomenon. In the past, interest in these areas was strongly connected with Japan’s economic situation. In the U.S., interest in JPP courses peaked during the late 1980s and early 1990s, and it is very likely that this was boosted by the strong Japanese economy and the Japanese language boom. However, in the late 1990s, as the Japanese economy stalled, the number of business Japanese learners decreased, and quite a few business Japanese courses were canceled (Tanihara and Kuriyama, 2002:11; Tsutsui, 1999:11-14). The most recent survey of business Japanese in the U.S., conducted by Tabuse in 2008, recognized 14 universities which offer business Japanese courses (Tabuse, 2009). Tabuse’s survey did not include all schools with business Japanese classes in the U.S.; however, it can be speculated that not many universities with Japanese language programs offer JPP courses at present. Although Japan has maintained its status as one of the most economically powerful countries in the world, the

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recent performance of the Japanese economy has not been particularly impressive. Thus, the current increasing interest in business Japanese stems not from the strength of Japanese economy, but rather from globalization and the corresponding educational needs recognized in the global era.

In the international business world, foreign language proficiency is valuable, along with the skills needed to engage effectively in international and intercultural communication and the ability to work successfully in an international environment. *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (1999; hereinafter National Standards) proclaims that fostering students to be global citizens is one of the crucial goals in foreign language classrooms. This notion can be expanded in business language education, setting a goal of fostering students to become global businesspersons.

This expectation for business language instruction has been demonstrated by the Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBERs).<sup>1</sup> They were established by Congress under the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988; the U.S. Department of Education administers them and supports their mission of promoting international understanding and competitiveness. The Centers promote international business education, including business language instruction. CIBERs are now located in 31 universities across the United States, including the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Washington, the University of Wisconsin, and the University of Memphis.<sup>2</sup> These centers support international business education not only at their own institutions, but also locally and nationally. Their activities include organizing annual conferences and workshops on business language instruction at various levels K-16 and offering grants for research and curriculum and material development. These efforts to aid business language education are based on the view that foreign language courses, particularly business language training, play a crucial role in helping foster future global business leaders.

Under these circumstances, questions arise as to what goals JPP should aim to achieve and what function it serves. The traditional focus of various business Japanese courses—that is, learning vocabulary and appropriate conversational expressions used in business situations—would be insuf-

ficient (Kamiyoshi, 2009). JPP teachers need to explore these questions.

JPP teachers are facing the challenge of developing effective curricula and creating meaningful learning opportunities in their classrooms. The JPP curriculum embraces the integration of language, culture, and content; it is a consummately interdisciplinary field. Tabuse's paper in this issue suggests various avenues that JPP teachers can take collaboratively to achieve eminence. Tabuse, one of the keynote speakers at the symposium, presents the historical background, present conditions, and prospects for the field in the U.S. She perceives two areas of future development for JPP. One is the expansion of content. Although currently JPP content is often limited to business and engineering, other content areas should certainly be encouraged. For example, Japanese for academic purposes and Japanese for medicine have been taught in the U.S. In Japan, Japanese for nursing-care purposes is an emerging subject area. As it is strongly related to social needs, JPP should and will be expanded.

The other area for future development that Tabuse notes is the possibility that JPP may be included in the Advanced Placement Japanese Language and Culture (hereinafter AP Japanese) examination. If this happens, it will be a strong impetus to include JPP aspects in AP courses. Interestingly, CIBERs have taken rigorous outreach initiatives to enhance business language education in grades K-12 in the past several years (Centers for International Business Education, 2008), and thus inclusion of JPP in AP courses is by no means a fanciful notion. JPP in high school settings apparently needs to be adapted to suit students' purposes, needs, interests, and language proficiency, and a distinct and effective JPP curriculum could be created in accordance with a specific setting. Since Language for Specific Purposes (LSP), including business language education in the United States, traditionally has evolved mainly in higher education (Grosse and Vought), this will widen the horizon of the LSP and JPP field.

Matsuda, the other keynote speaker at the symposium, addresses several crucial insights for teaching JPP. One is the importance of investigating what areas the professional world wants to see developed in our students. She conducted research

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on CIBERs, please visit <http://ciberweb.msu.edu/about.asp>.

<sup>2</sup> The schools listed here are also institutions the presenters are affiliated with.

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by analyzing reports by and interviews with her international MBA students who had done internships in Japan and the evaluations written by their supervisors. Her findings, along with previous research on needs analysis, including that of Kataoka, Falsgraf, and Fujii (1994) and Kumayama (1997), provide us with valuable input as to what should be included and stressed in the JPP classroom.

Another important aspect of Matsuda's findings is the importance of teaching culture in JPP. As Grosse (2002) reports, one of the strongest pedagogical interests in the field of business language teaching has been the incorporation of culture into the language classroom. The importance of understanding how misunderstanding and miscommunication occur due to a lack of cultural knowledge and sensitivity has driven many business language teachers to develop curricula that integrate cultural components; yet questions about what kinds of cultural aspects should be included, how to teach culture appropriately and effectively, and how to evaluate students' culture learning are still being explored among business language teachers.

The papers by Tsutsui, Kishimoto, Davis, and Ushida in this issue present pedagogical ideas for JPP by demonstrating how they are teaching such courses at their own institutions. They identify the objectives of their courses, develop curricula and materials, and implement various activities, tasks, and projects. These pedagogical practices in a wide variety of settings—including undergraduate and graduate courses, intermediate and advanced levels of Japanese, and courses offered by Colleges of Arts and Sciences or Colleges of Engineering—manifest the depth and breadth of the JPP field.

Davis describes JPP programs in an engineering school. His program offers various JPP courses, including different levels of Technical Japanese, Japanese for Business and Industry, Japanese for Politics and Government, and Research in Japanese Technical Literature. Each course has specific goals; updated, authentic, and relevant content is offered, with an emphasis on improving reading and translation skills. This program also addresses collaborations and coordination between the language and engineering departments. It further explores delivering classes both in classroom settings and asynchronously to increase learning opportunities for learners and expand the pool of students.

Tsutsui demonstrates another model for teaching Technical and Business Japanese. His paper identifies several critical language skills needed and describes courses closely tied to developing them by focusing on reading field-specific topics, building conversational skills in business settings, and other project work. It is interesting to compare the approaches to reading skills taken by Davis and Tsutsui. Both argue that reading on field-specific topics is important; however, their methods of fostering reading proficiency are quite different. Tsutsui presents a scaffolded framework emphasizing skimming and scanning skills and integrating them with other language skills.

Kishimoto presents business Japanese courses offered in a humanities program for undergraduates, where not all the students have identified a specific professional field. Her courses are designed to equip such students with the more general professional skills needed in international business and to help them to think critically. The content covers a wide variety of topics, including Japanese business culture, work ethics, religion, history, and corporate organizations, which are incorporated in a content-based instruction (CBI) approach. She conducts two projects: job hunting and research on Japanese investment in South Carolina. Both projects use a scaffolded framework carefully developed around the 5 C's of the National Standards.

Ushida's case study concerns advanced-level business Japanese at a graduate school. Ushida implements a CBI approach incorporating the 5 C's of the National Standards. To make learning more meaningful and relevant, she connects the course content with that of courses of the Master of Pacific International Affairs program her students are taking. A successful project called company management meeting provides real-world simulations dealing with real-world issues so that students can integrate their content knowledge and language skills.

Although their teaching approaches and practices may differ, there is one common thread among the authors: they all focus on meeting their students' needs. All investigate their own students' needs and interests as well as the expectations of teachers, programs, and the related professional fields of their students. This helps them find the most effective approach and methodology for their own JPP courses and to successfully implement them in all of the various settings.

Many Japanese students today are coming into Japanese classes with integrative motivations<sup>3</sup> such as being interested in Japanese *anime*, pop culture, and computer games, and they do not have instrumental motivations such as finding a job in Japan, so we do not need to teach JPP. This argument is too simplistic and inward-looking. It is understandable that students taking Japanese courses for the first time, learning *hiragana* and *katakana*, do not yet see the professional opportunities for using the Japanese language that may lie ahead. However, many Japanese language learners may obtain professional positions in Japan or elsewhere that will take advantage of their knowledge of Japanese language and culture. As Tabuse (2009) suggests, teachers can give added value to those students who have not yet recognized those motivations.

Globalizing professional fields will require globally competitive individuals. Many qualities will be required, and foreign language education can contribute to fostering such individuals through language and culture instruction. Training for JPP teachers is needed, as well as places where teachers can exchange pedagogical ideas, engage in discussion, and disseminate their work. It is hoped that this ATJ *Occasional Papers* publication will stimulate inquiries and explorations in the development of the field of JPP.

### Acknowledgements

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<sup>3</sup> Gardner (as quoted by Brown) classifies two types of motivations in learning a foreign language. Integrative motivations are the ones coming from "a positive affect towards a community of its speakers," and instrumental motivations are those connected with "certain career, educational, or financial goals."

<sup>4</sup>Ms. Kondo published her presentation in the following: Kondo, Junko. (2009). "Business Nihongo course no ichi rei: chuujookyuu gakushuusha muke no jugyoo to taiken gakushuu jissen hookoku [An example of Business Japanese course: Teaching and study trip for intermediate/advanced learners]." In M. E. Hudson, ed., *Proceedings of 21st Central Association of Teachers of Japanese Conference*: 25-40. Michigan State University.

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# JAPANESE FOR PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

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“Knowledge has to be improved,  
challenged, and increased  
constantly, or it vanishes.”  
Peter F. Drucker

This article will begin with a reflection on the accomplishments of the field of Japanese for Professional Purposes (JPP, hereinafter.) It will then cover the most recent survey study of JPP followed by an outlook on the profession.

## **Historical Information: The Twentieth Century**

Japanese was considered to be one of the less commonly taught languages in the 1980s. A study conducted by the Japan Foundation indicates that the number of Japanese learners in the United States was 17,752 in 1982. By 1990, that number had increased to 68,840. Reflecting the growth of Japan as a global economic power, an increasing number of colleges and universities began to take an interest in offering business language courses at their institutions.

To respond to the needs expressed by the business sector, communities and higher education institutions, Eastern Michigan University (EMU) first hosted a conference on Spanish for Bilingual Careers in Business in 1982. The conference grew to accommodate more languages and evolved into the annual conference on Languages and Communication for World Business and the Professions in 1987. By 1993, Japanese language-related sessions and workshops were featured regularly.

Examples of the Japanese sessions and workshops offered at the conferences are “Cultural Aspects of Business Language Instruction: Examples from ESL, French, German, Japanese and Spanish,” by Motoko Tabuse et al. (1993); “The MBA and Japanese Language: Toward Proficiency-Oriented Language Instruction” by Yoshiko Saito-Abbott (1994); and “The Use of Case Studies to Develop Cross-Cultural Awareness for the Business Japanese Class,” by Toshiko Kishimoto (1995). During this same time, technical Japanese sessions and workshops led by Michio Tsutsui and Jim Davis began to appear ubiqui-

tously in the United States. After 1999, the 31 Centers for International Business Education and Research in the United States continued to offer language training opportunities including JPP.

## **Historical Information: 2000 to Present**

Let us widen the scope of this discussion and look at general Japanese language education since 2000. In the early years of the new millennium, Japanese language education appears to have gone through major changes. According to the Japan Foundation’s 2006 survey, there were 2,356,745 Japanese language learners worldwide in 2003, and 2,979,820 in 2006. However, in the United States the number decreased by 15.9%, from 140,200 in 2003 to 117,969 in 2006. The decrease appears to have occurred mainly at the K-12 level: according to the Modern Language Association, the number of Japanese language learners at the college level in the United States increased 27.5%, from 52,238 in 2002 to 66,605 in 2006. One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that K-12-level language education tends to be rather sensitive to changes in the global economy.

As for possible motives to learn Japanese, a public opinion study by the Japan Foundation indicates that younger people are interested in Japanese pop culture, *manga*, *anime*, and J-pop (music). Adult learners are interested in literary works by Haruki Murakami and Banana Yoshimoto as well as pop art. Heritage learners of Japanese also make up a significant portion of American Japanese language learners (2006 Japan Foundation Survey).

## **Current Status of JPP: Business Japanese Survey of 2009**

In the absence of surveys identifying the field’s needs and collecting current data on the development and the status of JPP, Tabuse (2009b) conducted a survey on the teaching of Japanese for professional purposes. Volunteers were solicited from among the members of the ATJ Japanese for Specific Purposes Special Interest

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Group. Fourteen colleges and universities that are or will be offering JPP courses participated in the survey. Of the 14, twelve institutions are currently offering a JPP-related course or courses. Two institutions offer either a major or a minor in Business Japanese, and most offer undergraduate level JPP courses. Twenty courses are offered under the “Business Japanese” category, and the total enrollments fluctuate between 350 and 390. The courses are offered at the 300 level, and the instructors use Japanese 70% to 100% of the time in class while teaching. These responses suggest that the undergraduate JPP students’ proficiency levels are at the Intermediate level on the ACTFL scale. Six institutions offer graduate-level JPP courses, and enrollments at the graduate level at the institutions that responded to the survey are around 100. JPP courses are generally taught by veteran teachers with an average of 15 years’ experience in relatively secure employment environments.

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

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

The instructional formats used at the 14 universities surveyed are either a traditional class-

room instruction format or a hybrid format. Nine universities reported using 100% traditional classroom instruction. One institution (University of Washington) offered online JPP courses in the past. Two universities (California State University-Monterey Bay and Eastern Michigan University) currently offer hybrids (i.e., a mixture of online and traditional classroom formats), particular for Business Japanese, where students receive instruction and/or engage in homework assignments and/or take examinations using the online format.

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

Within the undergraduate programs, seven instructors reported using a content-based instruction format, where the instructors teach business subjects such as accounting, marketing, Internet business, and international business. Three universities used the content-based approach to teach graduate-level JPP. The content of graduate courses includes management, economics, and Internet business.

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

Although most instructors who teach JPP courses have extensive experience in teaching Japanese language in general, many expressed a need to improve their own knowledge of the content, including how to more effectively integrate business into Japanese language education. Some instructors indicated a need for a more sophisticated understanding of general business operations and of how globalization changes Japanese business and culture.

Another challenge for JPP instructors is curriculum modifications to keep up with current economic developments, as well as changes in Japa-

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nese business practices. In addition, at the Japanese for Specific Purposes (JSP) Special Interest Group (SIG) meeting in 2009, many instructors agreed that when it comes to JPP/Business Japanese content, their Japanese language colleagues are not necessarily enthusiastic about engaging in discussion of the JPP/Business Japanese course design, curriculum issues, and ways to effectively assess students' progress. Thus, many JPP instructors feel as if they need to work on curriculum modifications in an isolated environment at their own institutions.

For JPP instructors, providing real-world experience opportunities for students to apply their learned knowledge and skills often means going outside of the classroom and engaging students in activities and projects offered by academic service learning and internships that involve local businesses within the community. Unfortunately, the frequency and quality of such opportunities often depend on the economic condition of a particular area, and such opportunities have been on the decline.

Lastly, JPP instructors want to collaborate more with business and government sectors to advocate the importance of JPP language and culture training in their community. Survey respondents expressed the need for JPP instructors to become proactive and consistently attempt to connect with area businesses in addition to their work within their respective institutions. Such collaborations with various business sectors in the community may very well provide realistic situations for students, as well as bring increased awareness about JPP courses and programs.

### **The Future of JPP: 2010 and Beyond**

To meet the needs of JPP instructors to enhance their knowledge and teaching skills, the Alliance of Association of Teachers of Japanese (AATJ) is planning to offer an online JPP course through its JOINT (Japanese Online Instruction Network for Teachers) program. JOINT is an online instruction program with training specifically designed for the professional development of Japanese language teachers. Participants may receive graduate credit from the University of Colorado. Please visit [www.aatj.org/joint/index.html](http://www.aatj.org/joint/index.html) for more information. For more information regarding JPP-related sessions and workshops at CIBER sites, please subscribe to the ATJ JSP-SIG newsletter.

At our own institutions, we may be asked to expand or adjust our JPP course content from tra-

ditional business and engineering/technical Japanese to other disciplines, such as environmental sciences, medicine, biotechnology, etc.

Let us take Michigan as an example to describe what one state is planning to do for the future. Taking advantage of a 40-year sister-state relationship between Michigan and Shiga Prefecture, Michigan and Shiga have been working together at the K-16 level (Tabuse, 2009a). Michigan high school biology teachers may participate in environmental science courses using Lake Biwa as a laboratory and apply the knowledge and know-how gained in Japan to biology instruction back in the U.S. There is also a facility in Japan called the Japan Center for Michigan Universities (JCMU), a consortium of 15 state universities in Michigan and several universities in Shiga Prefecture. Ken Masumoto (2009) of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation states that JCMU will be offering courses in health care and hospitality services in addition to intensive language training and possible internship opportunities. The Japan Business Society of Detroit (JBSD) also offers scholarships for American students who wish to study at JCMU. The state of Michigan is particularly active in facilitating collaboration activities among Japanese language educational institutions, state and Japanese government agencies, and local business sectors, and they will continue to work together to promote Japanese studies in the state of Michigan (Tabuse, 2009c).

Let us look at the likely future involvement of JPP in the Advanced Placement Japanese Language and Culture (AP Japanese, hereinafter) examination/program, which was first implemented in 2007. The AP Japanese examination is one of the 37 subject examinations that the College Board offers to the over one million students who took AP examinations in 2006 (Kluemper and Tabuse, 2008). In 2010, over 2,000 students took the AP Japanese examination. The impact of the newly implemented AP Japanese program has been multifold: It promoted articulation between high school and college-level educators, and it has been a great moving force toward standards-based instruction across levels, and it continues to influence the field. The College Board is currently revising its curriculum framework in world languages and is encouraging high school language teachers to use instructional design with six themes: Global Challenges, Beauty and Aesthetics, Families and Communities, Personal and Public Identities, Contemporary Life, and Science and Technology. (French and German Curriculum

Frameworks are available at [www.host-collegeboard.com/ap/coursechanges/](http://www.host-collegeboard.com/ap/coursechanges/).) The published curriculum framework for French and German states that one recommended context under Global Challenges is “economic issues” and one under Contemporary is “education and career.” Considering the push toward a view that world languages share the core values of standards-based classroom instruction, it is likely that the Japanese curriculum framework will also have economic and/or career aspects under the six themes in the future. Some colleges and universities have already benefited from the current AP Japanese program because students who went through the AP program at high schools are placing at higher levels in college/university courses, thereby increasing overall enrollment in such programs. More colleges and universities with JPP-related programs and courses will certainly benefit from the future implementation of the six-themed instructional design, making our students more capable in this competitive global economy.

### **Conclusion: Articulation and Collaboration**

One obvious aspect that makes JPP different from regular Japanese courses is the connection to the target profession. JPP courses, by definition, will need to incorporate different content knowledge, perspectives, and innovations while at the same time developing learners’ language proficiency. JPP teachers will also need to enhance their awareness and embrace cultural variations around the target profession. Some Japanese diplomats, bureaucrats, and academics agree that offering Japanese studies, including language and culture, to American students is crucial for mutual understanding between Japan and the USA (Dower, et al., 2010; Shinotsuka and Tabuse, 2009; and Takashi, 2009). Shotaro Nakahama and Motoko Tabuse (2010) recognize the importance of making the learning content relevant and current for students. However, they also assert that it is vital for JPP teachers to ensure that they include cultural components, products, and perspectives that are universal, basic, and timeless.

Many challenges lie ahead for JPP teachers. They need to guide learners to be more proficient in Japanese and incorporate the specific learning content while keeping up with current developments in both Japanese language education and the target field. Furthermore, collaboration and networking among JPP teachers and experts in the

target field are both rewarding and indispensable. Proactive participation by JPP teachers will surely contribute to the betterment of the field.

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## JAPAN THROUGH THE EYES OF AMERICAN INTERNS: NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR BUSINESS JAPANESE LANGUAGE PROGRAMS<sup>1</sup>

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Conducting a needs analysis is of foremost importance in developing a language curriculum (Richards, 2001). Knowing the needs of our students, potential employers, the business community, and the larger community, where a common culture and traits are shared, is crucial in developing a business language curriculum. In this article, as a preliminary report of my research on business Japanese curriculum development, I will present a needs analysis of American interns.

### Background

#### INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS IN JAPAN

Although internship programs are a fairly new concept in Japan, the government, businesses, and academic institutions, in recent years, have tried to promote internship programs for foreign students. For example, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology supports various programs for foreign students.<sup>2</sup> In 2006, the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry targeted the Tokai area, where *monozukuri* (manufacturing) industries are internationally known, and started a short-term internship program for foreign students who study at the area universities.<sup>3</sup>

#### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN U.S. AND JAPANESE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

Internship programs for U.S. students are still rare, and the majority of students who take advantage of internship programs in Japan are from

countries like China and Australia. JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization) pioneered an internship program (International Internship Program) that U.S. students could take advantage of, but this ended in 2008. Therefore, it is now hard to find a good internship program for our U.S. students.

One of the reasons we have such difficulty is that the internship concept is rather different in Japan and the U.S. While American companies use interns more or less as real workers, interns in Japan are treated as "students" and as such the companies feel obligated to offer some special educational programs for foreign students. Large companies like Panasonic regularly offer short-term educational programs, which are well designed to teach foreign students about the company, but smaller companies may feel that they cannot afford to spend time and money on such extra programs. In general, long-term internships for U.S. students are extremely rare, especially for those who are not science majors.

#### JAPANESE-OWNED COMPANIES IN THE U.S.

It is tremendously important for our students to experience internship programs in Japan. There are increasing numbers of Japanese-owned companies in this country, especially in the mid-south region. For example, Nissan relocated its U.S. headquarters from Southern California to Nashville, TN, in 2006. These Japanese-owned companies locally employ personnel, but sometimes the cultural differences cause conflicts between

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Prof. Tomoko Takami for organizing the "Symposium on Teaching Japanese for Professional Purposes (JPP)" at the University of Pennsylvania and the audience members who gave me valuable comments on my presentation. I also want to thank the University of Memphis CIBER for supporting my current research.

<sup>2</sup> One of the examples is FRIENDSHIP NETWORK ([www.ryugakuseishien.com/](http://www.ryugakuseishien.com/)).

<sup>3</sup> [www.chubu.meti.go.jp/jinzai/sesaku/houkoku2.htm](http://www.chubu.meti.go.jp/jinzai/sesaku/houkoku2.htm).

Japanese managers and U.S. workers. Those employees who had experienced internships or study abroad prior to graduation were much more successful in getting employment and sustaining their jobs in Japanese-owned companies.

### Previous Studies

#### SURVEY CONDUCTED AMONG JAPANESE COMPANIES IN JAPAN

Matsuda (2010) reported the result of a survey conducted by JETRO Atlanta in 2006 which targeted 18 Japanese companies that accepted U.S. interns through JETRO's International Internship Program. According to the survey, almost all of the companies involved commented on the students' behaviors, motivations, personalities, and attitudes; almost no company mentioned the language skills of the students. It appeared that they did not care as much about their communicative competency as they did about the students' personalities.

#### SURVEY CONDUCTED AMONG JAPANESE-OWNED COMPANIES IN THE U.S. (DETROIT)

A survey conducted in the Detroit area in 2005 confirms the findings summarized above. In Tabuse and Fujiwara (2005), 46 Japanese workers in 18 Japanese companies were surveyed. According to the results, 23 of the 46 said that U.S. workers need not know the Japanese language, but none said that they need not know Japanese culture. Specifically, most of the Japanese workers who were surveyed responded that U.S. workers should be familiar with such Japanese business practices as the *Ringi* system and how they perform *nemawashi*, an informal consensus-building process.

### Scope and Subject of the Study

#### PURPOSES

My study is designed to determine the students' needs by analyzing the students' internship reports. By identifying specific problems that U.S. interns encountered in Japan, it will pinpoint the areas where we should focus on teaching and utilizes the results for developing a business Japanese language curriculum.

#### METHODOLOGY

For this study, I used (1) the internship reports written by my International MBA students; (2) the analysis of interviews conducted upon their return

from Japan; and (3) written evaluations from their supervisors.

The International MBA program at the University of Memphis includes a Japan track option. During the first year, students study on campus; during the second year, they go to Osaka, Japan, to work for a Japanese company as an intern. During the internship, the students are asked to write a journal in both English and Japanese, and upon their return they submit a report in both languages. The journal and report contain formative and summative evaluations from their Japanese supervisors as well.

#### SCOPE/SUBJECT

I have introduced two previous studies that surveyed Japanese companies. However, as far as I know, there are few, if any, studies that analyze the insights and reflections of U.S. interns.

The subjects of this study are ten IMBA students at the University of Memphis. Their proficiency levels (cf. ACTFL OPI scale) prior to the internship and placement are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Pre-departure Proficiency Level of 10 Japan-Track IMBA Students (2009)**

Proficiency Level	IMBA students
Advanced Low	3
Intermediate Mid	5
Intermediate Low	1 (no prior experience in Japan)
Novice High	1 (no prior experience in Japan)

Table 2 shows the host industries of the interns.

**Table 2. Host Industries of the Interns**

Industry	No. of students
Computer hardware/IT services	5
Electric	1
Medical instruments	1
Steel manufacturing	1
Accounting office	1
U.S.-based paper manufacturing	1

### Discussion

#### RESULTS

In contrast to the results from past studies, a majority of the U.S. students indicated that linguistic problems were their topmost concerns and issues. Forty percent of the students studied pointed to language skills as the main problem that prevented them from performing well. Work-

related factors (content of work, their roles, and the work environment) follow language (30%). Interestingly, only 10% of the students indicated that a lack of Japanese business culture knowledge was the problem (see Figure 1).

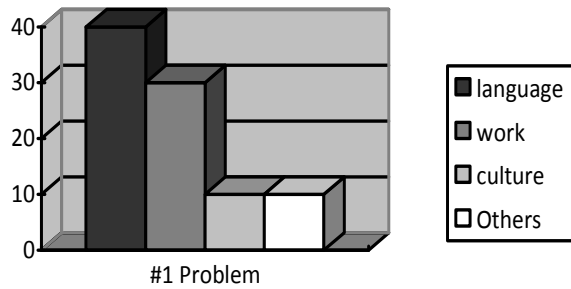


Figure 1. #1 Problem of U.S. Interns

POLITENESS LANGUAGE

Among the linguistic problems mentioned, politeness expressions and the writing system were the major problems that they encountered. These are what make Japanese one of the most difficult languages to learn for English natives and thus are not surprising issues. What is of interest is the discrepancy between the comments made by the Japanese companies and the students' reflections. The managers in Japanese companies indicated that they favored those who could behave the way the Japanese do, by exhibiting polite behavior and participating in group-centered decision-making. The U.S. students thought that if their Japanese language skills had been better, they could have had a better experience and received better evaluations from their Japanese supervisors.

This discrepancy makes perfect sense when we consider politeness language as a reflection of Japanese culture. Typically, memorizing the politeness forms of Japanese is not too difficult. What makes politeness language so difficult is its usage. In other words, it is very difficult to learn which forms to use, when, and to whom. Unlike other Asian languages, Japanese politeness form is dynamic and relative to situations, and it is thus very difficult to determine which form to use in a given situation. For example, talking about one's boss to one's colleagues requires one to use honorific forms, but talking about the same boss to clients requires one to use the humble forms. Such a "switch" is rare in other Asian countries with politeness forms. It is actually difficult for Japanese college students as well. Needless to say, it is extremely difficult for our U.S. students.

Japanese supervisors in this study were actually very nice and tried to take care of our students even outside of their work hours. However, when it came to business, they treated some of the students, whose proficiency levels were lower than Intermediate-High, as observers. Some of the advanced students took a significant part in marketing a new laptop to college students. Other students complained that they were not even given a chance to answer the telephone during the internship. One student said, "I was the only one who did not have a phone on my desk!" Having a phone is a necessity in the work environment, but when one is a guest or an observer it may not be needed. In reality, talking to someone over the phone is not difficult for most intermediate learners. However, in Japanese businesses there are many codes and specialized discourse patterns that must be followed.

I can cite one good illustrative example. I had a very advanced heritage student who had never lived in Japan or taken business Japanese courses. After receiving a degree in Japanese, he got a job in a local Japanese company. He was quite happy working as a successful mediator between Japanese managers and U.S. workers until, one day, he was asked to call the Japanese headquarters to order some equipment to be delivered to the U.S. right away. He was extremely shocked to find out that he could not be understood over the phone. To his embarrassment, the Japan side wanted to talk to a "real" Japanese person (not him!) to find out what exactly the U.S. side was asking. This misfortune of my former student was not caused by his "proficiency" level. In fact, he passed the top level (Level 1) of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test and typically had no problem talking to Japanese people at work. Indeed, most people think he is a Japanese native because he has no foreign accent. However, what he did not have was the knowledge of Japanese business discourse. What to say, when, and how constitutes discourse, which is a crucial aspect of Japanese business culture.

The result of the internship reports studied here indicated that language and culture go hand in hand and cannot be taught separately. Under this assumption, it makes perfect sense that those students who were above Intermediate-Mid level received much higher evaluations from Japanese supervisors, who emphasized cultural competency over communicative skills.

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## Conclusion

To summarize, the results from this preliminary study indicated that those who could act according to the norms of Japanese business culture had much more meaningful internship experiences. The study also suggested that cultural competency includes the knowledge of business discourse. Thus, we need to develop a curriculum that teaches business language and culture together.

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# DESIGNING JAPANESE LANGUAGE COURSES FOR PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES

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## Needs of the Professional

When designing Japanese language courses for professionals, it is important to keep in mind that gathering information is an important element of any professional's work. Much of this information is gained by reading, and much of the information that is gathered from Japanese sources will ultimately be translated from Japanese into the professional's own language. This means that the needs of many professionals are weighted more heavily toward reading and translation than toward listening, writing, or speaking, although all of these skills are essential. Most professionals are pressed for time during the workday and travel frequently. This means that synchronous instruction—making use of face-to-face class sessions at a fixed time in a fixed location—is unlikely to be an effective means of reaching professionals. In summary, the ideal Japanese program for professionals should incorporate field-specific content, should emphasize reading and translation, and should be delivered in an asynchronous mode, thus eliminating the need for a professional to be in a particular place at a particular time. In this paper we will consider what such a program might look like and what kind of courses could be offered.

## Cooperation between Professional Schools and Language Departments

Language departments are staffed by individuals who have detailed knowledge of linguistics, second language acquisition, and cross-cultural interaction. Thus, language departments are the ideal place for professionals to learn all aspects of communication in a foreign language. In contrast, professional schools are staffed by individuals who possess field-specific knowledge, are familiar with field-specific resources, and are well acquainted with professional practice. Thus, professional schools are well equipped to provide professionals with the field-specific content that professionals need in order to carry out their work. Bringing together the knowledge and skills that are found in both professional schools and language departments is essential for the development of a language program that is truly designed "for professional purposes."

## The Construction of an Integrated Language Program

An "integrated language program" is the product of the kind of cooperation described above. The characteristics of such a program include multiple levels, multiple entry points, and multiple paths. Ideally, the program would be designed for current professionals and for students who aspire to professional careers. At the University of Wisconsin-

sin-Madison (UW-Madison), we have attempted to create just such an integrated language program for Japanese instruction. The left and center columns of Table 1 list courses offered by the Department of East Asian Languages and Literature (EALL). The right column lists courses offered by the Department of Engineering Professional Development (EPD) in the College of Engineering as part of the UW-Madison Technical Japanese Program. (Titles in bold are cross-listed between the two departments.) In addition to a complete four-year sequence of Japanese-language courses, EALL offers one course—Japanese Business Communication—that has been designed specifically for students who plan to enter the business world following graduation.

EPD offers a four-year sequence of Japanese language courses in parallel with the EALL courses, but each EPD course is targeted to the needs of a specific group within the professional world. Each course has two objectives: to help the student develop a specialized vocabulary in Japanese within some professional field and to help the student learn some content related to that professional field. All eight of these courses are offered to current professionals, regardless of location, as part of the outreach program offered by the UW-Madison. Making use of distance education technology, professionals who live anywhere in the United States (or in any other country) enroll in the same EPD courses that are offered to undergraduate and graduate students on the Madison campus. Thus far, we have worked with professionals throughout the U.S., as well as professionals working in Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the Middle East.

**Table 1. Integrated Language Program for Japanese, UW-Madison**

EALL	EALL	EPD
7th/8th Sem. Japanese		Adv. Tech. Japanese Seminar; Research in Japanese Tech. Lit.
5th/6th Sem. Japanese	<b>Japanese Business Communication</b>	<b>Japanese for Business and Ind.; Japanese for Politics and Gov.</b>
3rd/4th Sem. Japanese		<b>Intermediate Technical Japanese I &amp; II</b>
1st/2nd Sem. Japanese		<b>Basic Technical Japanese I &amp; II</b>

Professionals who have never studied Japanese begin with Basic Technical Japanese I and work their way up the right-hand column of Table 1

over a period of four years. Professionals who have studied Japanese previously begin with Intermediate Technical Japanese I and work their way up the right-hand column over a period of three years. Engineering students on the Madison campus are encouraged to study Japanese for three or four semesters in EALL and then move from the left-hand column to the right-hand column, completing Intermediate Technical Japanese I and II. Students in business, politics, or international relations on the Madison campus are encouraged to study Japanese for five or six semesters in EALL and then move from the left-hand column to the center column (Japanese Business Communication) and the right-hand column (Japanese for Business and Industry; Japanese for Politics and Government). These multiple entry points and different paths for students with different backgrounds and different interests demonstrate the utility of this kind of integrated language program.

### The Importance of Credentials

Credentials not only encourage students to continue their study until they have reached a specific level of competence in a particular field, they also serve to reward students who acquire knowledge or skills outside their major fields of study. Table 2 lists the credentials that are awarded by the UW-Madison to professionals or students who have completed courses in the Technical Japanese Program. The Master of Engineering in Technical Japanese (METJ) degree is available to professionals who study at a distance and to full-time graduate students on the Madison campus. Over 90% of METJ recipients to date have been professionals who enroll as part-time graduate students and complete the degree requirements by taking one course per semester over a period of three or four years. METJ students begin with either Basic Technical Japanese I or Intermediate Technical Japanese I and move up the right-hand column of Table 1.

**Table 2. Credentials Offered to Students in the Technical Japanese Program, UW-Madison**

Master of Engineering in Technical Japanese (METJ)	24 cr.
Certificate in Japanese Studies for Engineering Majors	27 cr.
Certificate in Technical Japanese Studies for Professionals	18 cr.
Certificate in Technical Japanese Studies for Graduate Students	18 cr.

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The Certificate in Japanese Studies for Engineering Majors is available to undergraduate students on campus. Students complete three semesters of Japanese from EALL, then take two semesters of Intermediate Technical Japanese. Finally, they complete one other Japan-related course, such as Japanese history, Japanese literature in translation, Japanese art, or Japanese politics. Because the College of Engineering has no foreign language requirement, students who obtain this Certificate typically delay graduation by one semester in order to complete these requirements. The Certificate in Technical Japanese Studies for Professionals is awarded to professionals who enroll as non-degree students and complete at least six of the eight courses offered by EPD. Some of these professionals already possess graduate degrees and have no need for another degree. Non-degree tuition is lower than the tuition for part-time graduate students, so some professionals choose this Certificate over the METJ degree for financial reasons. The Certificate in Technical Japanese Studies for Graduate Students is available to graduate students on campus who complete a minimum of eighteen credits' worth of the courses listed in Table 1.

### **Basic Technical Japanese Sequence**

The Basic Technical Japanese (BTJ) sequence is offered to undergraduate seniors, graduate students, and professionals. BTJ I is designed for students who have never studied Japanese before; BTJ II is a continuation of BTJ I. All class sessions are recorded in the College of Engineering (COE) studio, and video files are uploaded to the COE website. Professionals who study at a distance may download the video files from home, from the office, from a hotel (if they are traveling), or from any other location with an Internet connection. Schedules are distributed to all students monthly, so each student will know in advance what material will be covered in each class session and what homework assignment will be due. This information is particularly important for professionals, who travel frequently and must balance homework assignments and exams with business trips and work-related deadlines.

Over the course of two semesters students are expected to memorize the katakana, the hiragana, and approximately 265 kanji. Emphasis is placed on reading for comprehension and on translation from Japanese into English. Class sessions include the introduction of characters and new vocabulary

items, as well as the explanation of essential elements of Japanese grammar. Students do not explore any single technical topic deeply. The goal is to provide students with a general context for the usage of the Japanese terms, not to teach detailed technical content. For homework and on examinations students are asked to identify Japanese technical terms, to identify Japanese verb forms and grammatical patterns, and to translate into English Japanese sentences and short essays on various scientific and technical topics. A textbook (*Basic Technical Japanese*) was written specifically for use in these courses.

### **Intermediate Technical Japanese Sequence**

The two courses in the Intermediate Technical Japanese (ITJ) sequence represent the heart of the Technical Japanese Program. These courses are required for every credential that is offered. In addition, the three major streams of students—professionals who have completed BTJ I and BTJ II, professionals who have previously studied Japanese for at least one year and are entering the program at the intermediate level, and undergraduates who have completed three or four semesters of Japanese in EALL and are moving from the left-hand column of Table 1 to the right-hand column—converge in ITJ I. Thus, at the beginning of ITJ I it is critical to ensure that students from all three streams have a common understanding of Japanese grammar and a minimum common vocabulary. The first few weeks of ITJ I are devoted in part to this task. Through systematic introduction of new content and appropriate reinforcement of kanji, vocabulary, and grammatical patterns, over the course of two semesters students are able to expand their technical vocabulary and gain exposure to a broad range of technical topics.

This breadth provides many benefits, but this approach is not without problems. Students may find that some technical topics are more familiar or are easier to understand than others. Thus, student performance may vary significantly from topic to topic. The key to success in courses of this type is to employ instructional materials that are substantial enough to offer valuable information to students with a strong background in a particular field without overwhelming those students who lack such a background. In order to provide this kind of instructional material, a two-volume textbook (*Intermediate Technical Japa-*

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*nese*) was prepared specifically for use in these courses. In contrast to the BTJ sequence, the essays that are used in the ITJ sequence are of moderate length—ranging from a few lines in early lessons to one or two pages in later lessons—and delve into the technical details of the topics presented. For homework, students translate into English example sentences related to Grammatical Patterns, as well as essays on scientific and engineering topics. Examinations require students to translate portions of essays. In place of a final examination in BTJ II students select an essay from the textbook on a topic of their choosing. The length of this Final Translation Project is adjusted, based on the difficulty of the content, to ensure that all projects require the same amount of effort.

### **Japanese for Business and Industry; Japanese for Politics and Government**

These two courses represent the third year in the four-year Technical Japanese Program. The primary objective in each course is to help the students develop a specialized vocabulary in Japanese within the scope of the topics mentioned in the course title. A secondary objective is to help the students learn something about the current state of affairs in Japan with regard to the topics mentioned in the course title. These courses differ from the BTJ and ITJ sequences in two important respects: 1) authentic materials are used, and completely new materials are introduced each year; 2) a very limited glossary is provided. These courses are advanced level courses, so it is reasonable to use authentic materials, rather than a textbook. From a practical standpoint it is impossible to produce an exhaustive glossary if completely new material is introduced every year. From a pedagogical standpoint it is necessary to gradually reduce the level of “support” that students receive in the form of glossaries as students move from intermediate-level to advanced-level courses. Instead of providing students with exhaustive glossaries, students are given information about online dictionaries and other resources that they must learn to use if they are to continue reading Japanese materials on their own in the future.

In order to make use of current authentic materials in Japanese for Business and Industry (JBI) and in Japanese for Politics and Government (JPG), a recently published book that is relevant to the topics of the course is used as the primary text in each course. For JBI, we generally choose

books that focus on the current state of the Japanese economy and problems that confront the Japanese financial system. For JPG, we seek books that focus on the history of the Japanese political system and the changes that have taken place in recent years. We normally select several chapters in an attempt to present material that stands together as a consistent whole for the students to read and translate. These courses are offered in a correspondence mode; there are no face-to-face class sessions. Students receive a semester-long schedule, which indicates which pages of the text should be translated by which date. Each student is responsible for submitting the specified number of pages’ worth of material by the specified dates. All translations are submitted as Word documents attached to email messages. The instructor provides line-by-line feedback on each translation that is submitted by each student throughout the semester. The writing style in the books that are used in these courses tends to be more complex than the writing style in the essays that students translated in ITJ I and ITJ II. Thus, there is a definitely a learning curve as students struggle to adapt to longer sentences, sentences that contain more modifying clauses, and sentences with references that are not stated explicitly.

### **Advanced Technical Japanese Seminar**

The primary objective of the ATJS is to provide experience reading and translating into English a set of papers that appeared in Japanese scientific or technical journals. Students who take the course are beginning their fourth and final year in the Technical Japanese Program. In JBI and JPG students were given very limited glossaries. In ATJS students return to the technical realm, and they receive no glossary of any kind. Each paper that is used in this course is no more than six months old at the beginning of the semester. This ensures that the students are reading up-to-date material. The instructor selects enough papers to allow a student to satisfy the minimum page requirement by translating entirely within one of the three disciplines (electronics, automotive technology, chemistry) or by “mixing and matching” among the three areas. The course is conducted entirely by email; there are no face-to-face class sessions. All translations are submitted via email; the instructor provides line-by-line feedback on each translation submitted by each student. The hallmark of the fourth year of the Technical

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Japanese Program is the greater degree of choice that is available to the student in selecting material to translate. This enhanced freedom of choice is tempered by the lack of any glossary whatsoever. This represents another significant step in preparing the students to read and translate on their own after they complete their final course in the program.

### **Research in Japanese Technical Literature**

In RJTL, each student selects his/her own technical topic and translates into English a series of technical papers or a portion of a technical book that is devoted to that topic. Some students, especially professionals who are employed by companies or government organizations, have ready access to Japanese technical materials in their respective fields. If a student does not have access to such materials, the instructor works with the student to find technical papers or books on a topic of interest to the student. Students continue down the path of increasing specialization that began with ATJS. In almost all cases the student knows more about the specific technical content in the papers or books than does the instructor. Thus, in this course the transition in the role of the instructor from lecturer—imparting knowledge to beginners who know relatively little about the subject—to tutor—providing feedback on the fine points of grammar and vocabulary to experienced learners—is complete.

### **Summary**

The needs of professionals with regard to foreign language instruction suggest that emphasis be placed on information gathering as well as communication. The kind of program that best serves current and future professionals is an integrated language program that offers multiple levels of instruction, contains multiple entry points to accommodate a variety of backgrounds, and provides credentials that are useful in the professional world. The content of the individual courses should become increasingly specialized as the professional advances through the various levels of instruction. The growth in knowledge and sophistication on the part of the student is accompanied by a shift in the role of the instructor from someone who imparts general knowledge to a group of students to someone who offers finely tuned feedback to individuals. The Technical Japanese Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is an attempt to provide such a program to current and future professionals who study Japanese.

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## **JAPANESE FOR TECHNICAL AND BUSINESS PROFESSIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON: CURRICULA AND SYLLABI**

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### **Background**

The University of Washington's Technical Japanese Program (TJP) was established in 1991 for the purpose of increasing the pool of technical specialists versatile in both engineering and Japanese. When it was launched, the program was limited to graduate students in engineering. However, later a small number of graduate students from the Business School, the Law School, and the Jackson School of International Studies, and some undergraduate seniors in engineering were

admitted to TJP courses on an individual basis. Because the number of students in other disciplines who wanted to take courses in Technical Japanese (TJ courses, hereafter) in order to learn practical business communication skills continued to increase, in 2000 TJP's curriculum underwent a major reform to accommodate both graduate and undergraduate students from a broader range of disciplines. The courses were restructured and the content was substantially revised, focusing on both technical and business Japanese.



## Courses and Curricula

TJP now offers 400-level and 500-level course sequences, each of which consists of three ten-week courses. They are *Japanese for Technical and Business Professions 1, 2, and 3* (400-level) and *Advanced Japanese for Technical and Business Professions 1, 2, and 3* (500-level).

TJP offers two degree programs, an inter-engineering master's program and a minor program. In addition, students in the Business School, the Law School, the Jackson School of International Studies, and Asian Languages and Literature can take TJP courses to fulfill their required language or elective requirements. The programs and their requirements are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. TJP's Programs and Their Requirements**

Program	Requirements
Technical Japanese Interengineering Master's Program	All 400- and 500-level TJ courses (23-27 cr.) Internship in Japan (3-7 cr.) Engineering courses in the student's field of concentration (25 cr.)
Technical Japanese Minor Program	All 400-level TJ courses (15 cr.) 10 credits from 500-level TJ courses or other Japanese courses that contain a business Japanese component
Other academic programs (master's and undergraduate major programs in International Studies, Global Business, Asian Law, and Asian Languages and Literature)	Students can take 400- and 500-level TJ courses to fulfill their language/electives requirements

## Course Objectives and Course Content

When we offer technical or business Japanese courses, one of the central questions involves the skills that should be focused on. Two things need to be considered when deciding on the target skills: (1) What skills are needed in the real world? and (2) What skills can be taught effectively with the given teaching conditions and available resources?

Regarding the first question, Tsutsui (2002) and Shimada and Shibukawa (1999) have identi-

fied the Japanese skills needed for technical professions and business professions, respectively. They include: daily communication skills with peers, supervisors, managers, and customers; reading skills for technical/business journals and documents, internal memos, e-mails, etc.; presentation skills; and information search skills. According to our interns' reports, e-mail communication skills are becoming increasingly important, and in some situations, translation skills and interpreter skills are also very important.

The following are the specific objectives and course contents of the 400-level and 500-level courses mentioned above (see Tables 2 and 3 for the main activities in these courses).

(1) 400-level: Japanese for Technical and Business Professions 1, 2, 3 (5 cr. each)<sup>1</sup>

### Reading

- To be able to read short newspaper/journal articles and sections of books accurately.

- For that purpose, to be able to analyze and understand the structures of complex sentences that appear in such readings as mentioned above.

### Oral

- To be able to function in Japanese at work.
- To be able to control speech levels according to the hearer.

- To be able to communicate over the phone at work.

### Other

- To be able to control basic Japanese grammar.

**Table 2. Main Activities of 400-level Courses (2009-10)**

Autumn Quarter	Winter Quarter	Spring Quarter
<i>Reading topics</i>		
Bioregenerative technology	Biometrics and privacy	Robots and our life
Communication in the IT age	Recycling and environment	Cryopreservation of dead bodies
Reform of the Japanese education system	Sleep and health	<i>plus</i> group research readings
	Declining birth-rate in Japan	
<i>Conversation topics</i>		
Greeting for the first time	Asking for confirmation re: some thing you have not understood	Conveying messages
Receiving/giving advice	Receiving/making calls	Making complaints
Making/receiving requests	Receiving criticism/apologizing	Greeting someone after a long time
Asking for permission	Stating opinions	
(cont'd.)		

<sup>1</sup> Students who have finished the 400-level course sequence can apply for internships in Japan arranged by TJP. This prospect gives students a strong incentive to study.

<i>Other</i>		
Reviewing honorific language Writing opinions	Oral reporting using charts Job interviews	Group research Group presentations

(2) 500-level: Advanced Japanese for Technical and Business Professions 1, 2, 3 (4 cr. each)

*Reading*

- To be able to understand the relationships among the paragraphs and the structure overall in long articles.

- To grasp the main points and issues addressed quickly and accurately.

*Oral*

- To be able to express opinions accurately and properly at meetings.

- To be able to give effective oral reports and presentations on topics in one's specialty field.

*Other*

- To be able to write e-mails, including requests, to strangers.

- To learn strategies when translating Japanese articles into English.

- To learn basic strategies when acting as an interpreter at work.

**Table 3. Main Activities of 500-level Courses (2009-10)**

Autumn Quarter	Winter Quarter	Spring Quarter
<i>Reading topics</i>		
Order-made medicine Applications of biotechnology Internet and television Content distribution and copyrights	Caretaker robots Electric cars and changing industry structure <i>plus</i> individual reading	Internet search engines User-centered design <i>plus</i> readings for individual research
<i>Oral</i>		
Oral reporting Information sharing and discussion*	Oral reporting Presentations on individual readings	Research presentations Impromptu speeches
<i>Other</i>		
E-mailing Interviewing a professional Translation	Summarizing articles Translation Consecutive interpretation	Literature search for individual research Research report

\*For this activity each student selects an article on a given topic (usually related to the topic of the reading he/she has just studied for class) on the Internet and gives a brief report in class in a meeting setting.

## Instruction: Issues and Approaches

This section focuses on two activities from those introduced in the above tables—i.e., office conversation at the 400-level and reading at the 500-level—and discusses issues and TJP's approaches in handling them.

### TEACHING OFFICE CONVERSATION SKILLS

Most students in this course can manage daily conversations without much trouble. However, they still have problems controlling different speech levels, especially the honorific forms, forms which are critical in business situations. Some students also have trouble controlling certain basic grammar forms. Furthermore, they have almost no knowledge of Japanese business culture and practices, e.g., how to disagree with a colleague, how to express opinions, and how to handle telephone conversation protocol. One way to handle these issues is to have students practice systematically dialogues that focus on speech levels while they are practicing the target functions. The dialogues should also incorporate the business culture and practices being taught. This systematic practice should include a review of problematic grammar forms, too.

In TJP, we use a set of house-developed multimedia dialogue materials with a software application called *Language Partner* (LP).<sup>2</sup> LP enables the learner to preview dialogues on the computer with (or without) the dialogue text or translation; practice Person A's or B's lines, line by line; and practice the dialogues with Person A or B on the screen. Practiced lines and dialogues can be recorded and reviewed later. There are usually three model dialogues for each topic (see *Conversation topics* in Table 2), and each one presents slightly different situations (e.g., a dialogue between peer workers and another between a worker and his manager; a dialogue requesting something with a positive response and another with a negative response).

After the introduction of the set of dialogues on a topic and a discussion of their grammar and culture points, students practice and memorize the dialogues using LP before practicing them in class. In class they first practice the dialogues with classmates and then practice role plays. Students must change speech levels according to their status relative to their partner's status. Quizzes are

<sup>2</sup> LP was developed by The University of Washington's Technical Japanese Program. The most recent version *Language Partner Online* is a browser-based program which students can access anytime and anywhere as long as they can access the Internet. More information on LP is available at <http://tjp.washington.edu/main/lp>.

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given to ensure that students come to class prepared: fill-in-the-blanks for the dialogues plus questions about the culture points. Student performances are videotaped occasionally for self-review and for instructor feedback. Achievement is tested through final exams.

#### TEACHING THE READING OF TECHNICAL/BUSINESS ARTICLES

It is common that students at this stage tend to read articles “intensively,” i.e., read sentence by sentence, paying attention to every detail. However, this reading mode is not very practical in real situations. It is also common that students cannot provide the main points of an article, especially after reading a long article. In work situations, however, it is expected that workers grasp main points quickly and accurately and/or find certain information quickly. Thus, the reading in 500-level courses focuses on reading skills that enable students to do the above.

A set of reading materials includes a relatively long article (typically 4-5 pages), a vocabulary list (including grammar items), and comprehension questions. One reading cycle usually involves the following activities:

*Pre-reading activity.* A brief activity to share the basic knowledge necessary to understand the article. This activity involves the students in the topic and motivates them in reading the article.

*Reading.* The article, a vocabulary list, and comprehension questions are provided via a courseware website. Before class, students read the article at home with the aid of the vocabulary list and answer the comprehension questions. When the article is 4-5 pages long, there are usually three sets of comprehension questions. Various types of questions are asked that make students focus on the key information and on how it’s structured. For example:

*Summarization/comparison of characteristics:* if the article is about two or more products, we ask students to summarize in table format their characteristics and compare them.

*Merits and demerits:* if the article is about a product, system, or method, we ask students to list its merits/demerits.

*Problems/issues:* if the article is about a product, system, or services, we ask students to list and discuss the problems/issues.

*Main points of paragraphs:* We ask students to state the main point(s) of a paragraph or a group of paragraphs.

*Paragraph grouping:* We ask students to group several paragraphs into closely-related groups and ask why the paragraphs can be grouped that way.

*Relationships between paragraphs:* We ask them in what way certain paragraphs are connected (e.g., one paragraph provides a more detailed explanation of a preceding one; one provides specific examples; one presents another problem; etc.).

In class we sometimes compare answers and discuss the questions in pairs or small groups before discussing them with the whole class. This gives students opportunities to talk and think more about the questions.

We do not read out or interpret each sentence in class. There is no time for that and, more importantly, this mode of reading would reinforce intensive reading.

*Translation.* For each article, a translation assignment is given. Usually a couple of difficult paragraphs are assigned. Not only does this assignment help students learn translation strategies, it also tells the instructor which sentence or word was problematic.

*Post-reading activities:* We do things like information sharing (see Table 3), discussion, and “sight reading” using a short article on the same or a similar topic. This reading is useful for scanning practice.

### Other Issues

#### MAKING TIME FOR FEEDBACK

Video-taping student dialogue performances and having the students self-review these performances is a highly effective method for providing feedback. This method allows students to see and learn from their performance and enables the instructor to provide more accurate and detailed feedback comments. Although providing feedback in this way is very time-consuming and may be limited when a class is large, giving students the opportunity to review what they’ve said and how they have said it is invaluable to their progress.

#### VOCABULARY BUILDING

A solid vocabulary base is highly critical at this level, as many comprehension problems are caused by vocabulary issues. For example, even if the meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary items are provided, if there are too many unfamiliar words, comprehension speed slows down, causing students to miss the main points and/or the overall structure of the reading. In real situations, in

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which no vocabulary list is available, this issue can be very serious.

In the 500-level courses, vocabulary lists sometimes contain more than 250 items. Even if the number of required items is reduced, the workload is still very heavy. There are online tools for vocabulary studies, such as smart.fm, but it takes an enormous amount of time and effort on the learner's side in any case. With no outstanding solution to ease students' workload, this is an ongoing challenge for teachers, too.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Despite challenges such as those mentioned above, the need for Japanese courses focusing on business/technical language is ongoing and will likely

be so into the future. Academic programs must meet this need. If a course or course sequence is not viable right now, integrating a business/technical unit or two into a regular Japanese course is a good first step.

### **References**

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- Tsutsui, M. (2002). "Japanese for Special Purposes: Teaching Japanese to Engineers and Scientists" (Chapter 9). In *Advances in Japanese Pedagogy*, H. Nara (ed.). National Foreign Language Center, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH: 281-313.

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## **A BUSINESS JAPANESE PROGRAM FOR UNDERGRADUATES: GOALS, METHODS, AND ACTIVITIES**

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### **B.A. Program in Language and International Trade at Clemson University**

Business Japanese is a part of Clemson's Language and International Trade Program. The program was founded in 1987 as a practical option for students who choose to major in foreign languages. Unlike international business degree programs at many other universities, the L&IT degree at Clemson is grounded in the humanities. Roughly equivalent to a double major in a foreign language (Chinese, French, German, Japanese, or Spanish) and international business, this is a B.A. program with strong components in foreign language, culture, and liberal arts. L&IT students leave Clemson with a solid foundation in general education, plus 34 credits in foreign language and 30 credits in the student's chosen professional option (Applied International Economics, International Trade, or Tourism Management). All candidates in the L&IT program must study abroad for at least one academic semester. Furthermore, all candidates are expected to do an internship in an international company to either enhance their language skills and/or acquire knowledge in the area of international business. It is important to note that as U.S. businesses have en-

tered the international arena, the demand for graduates with fluency in foreign language and/or international experience has increased dramatically. Clemson's L&IT program helps students develop the necessary skills to compete in the marketplace.

### **Language and International Trade, Japanese Track**

THE STUDENTS WHO TAKE L&IT  
BUSINESS JAPANESE COURSES

Most of the Clemson students who register for L&IT Business Japanese courses (Japn 316 and Japn 416) have already completed 210 hours of Japanese language instruction. This means that they have finished the beginning and intermediate levels of Japanese. Moreover, the majority have completed their study-abroad requirement in Japan. Their Japanese proficiency levels vary from Intermediate-Low to High. Although they are taking those courses as their major requirements, most of them have no clear idea which business field courses they should take. Additionally, many of them are seeking opportunities to teach English in Japan, such as through the JET program, before working for Japanese companies or Japanese-related American companies, since their proficiency level is not yet high enough for

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business. It is important to note that most students have no practical work experience even with American companies. In addition to the L&IT students, there is always a group of students who are not L&IT majors who are simply interested in Japanese language.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:  
WHAT THEY SHOULD LEARN

Our goal is to help students develop the necessary skills in international business, foreign language, culture, and the liberal arts to enable them to compete in the marketplace. Both Japn 316 and Japn 416 are designed for use in a content-based language instruction setting. Japanese is used for content learning and language development. The language level is set to be Intermediate-High or higher, since all of the students have already completed the intermediate level. It is necessary for students to learn the Japanese business management style, the Japanese way of thinking, and the Japanese corporate culture. To fill the gap in knowledge of American business practices, students are encouraged to obtain American corporate information to compare with the Japanese counterpart corporations. Critical thinking skills are important.

The course description in the catalogue is as follows:

Spoken and written Japanese of Japanese-speaking business and industry with emphasis on business practices, writing, translating business letters and professional reports. Cross-cultural references for comparative and contrastive analysis of American and Japanese cultural patterns in business settings.

Course objectives listed in the syllabi are:

1. To acquire basic business Japanese language skills:
  - a. To understand greetings and expressions encountered frequently in daily business practices.
  - b. To understand basic and simple business-related conversations.
  - c. To speak about simple business information.
  - d. To read and summarize business information.
  - e. To read simple documents, charts, messages, signs, etc.
  - f. To write business memos.
  - g. To describe simple charts and express comments on business topics.
  - h. To write using a Japanese word processor.

2. To acquire the minimum, essential politeness in a business setting.
3. To learn the Japanese business culture as compared to business practices in the United States.
4. To learn the Japanese way of thinking for a successful business negotiation.
5. To learn a basic knowledge of business terminology (including *kanji* words) and concepts.
6. To review important grammatical structures.

## Course Descriptions

Each course has 45 classes over 15 weeks. One class lasts 50 minutes. Japn 316 covers the introduction to Japanese business in general, with a mock job interview as a special project. Japn 416 covers actual Japanese business activities, and students are required to research Japanese investment in South Carolina.

The main topics of Japn 316 are:

- 1) Japanese Business Management Style (日本の会社経営); 2) Japanese Working Ethics (日本人の労働観); 3) Japanese Group Consciousness (日本人の集団意識); 4) Project Work: Job Hunting (就職活動).

The main topics of Japn 416 are:

- 1) Video “Kachoo” (ビデオ「課長」); 2) Internal Office Documents (社内文書); 3) Office Documents for External Use (社外文書); 4) Business Negotiation, Japanese Style (日本的ビジネス交渉術); 5) Japanese Cooperate Organization in Progress (変化する日本の会社組織); 6) Research: Japanese Investment in South Carolina (日系企業調査).

Under each topic, main reading material, additional information, and updated data are provided for better understanding. Occasionally, business news is used to increase students’ international business awareness.

## Examples of How to Use Authentic Materials

Since the courses use content-based language instruction, the majority of the course materials are authentic. Tables 1 and 2 describe how to use them and the kinds of activities that are appropriate for each example material.

**Table 1. Studying Japanese Working Ethics**

	Materials Provided	Resources	Activities
Main text	Japanese working ethics 日本人の労働観	「日本を探そう」 ジャパニタ イムス	Overview of the topics Reading comprehension Q & A Vocabulary building
Additional texts	a) Sekimon Shingaku 石田梅岩の石門心学 b) Confucianism 儒教に関する資料 c) Hierarchy in feudal times 封建時代の身分制度	司馬遼太郎 著「日本を創った 10人」より抜粋 「土農工商」 高校教科書より抜粋	a) & c): Reading by scaffolding method Summarize the contents Q & A b): Research by students Summarize the contents
Updated data	Annual working hours in several countries 労働時間の国際比較	Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare	Read and explain charts
Survey		Exchange students 日本人留学生	Survey 交換留学生に質問

**Table 2. Using News on Current Topics:  
The Toyota Automobile Recall**

Materials	Activities	Products
Newspaper articles TV news Editorials Materials are provided in both English and Japanese	Summarize and report in class Discussion: What are the problems? Analyze the opinions of U.S. Congress, President Toyoda and U.S. Secretary of Transportation Discussion: What should Toyota do?	Complete worksheets Short paper: What Toyota should do to survive, in the short run and the long run
Additional materials: Toyota's <i>kaizen</i> system (in English)	Discuss the essence of the Toyota System	Complete worksheets
Notes	All classroom activities are in Japanese	All the products should be in Japanese

## Project Work

Project work is an important component of the courses. Students are required to participate in two projects: job hunting (including a mock job interview) for Japn 316 and researching Japanese investment in South Carolina for Japn 416. These projects address the 5 C's of the ACTFL Foreign Language Standards.

### RESEARCH PROJECT: JOB HUNTING

Table 3 shows the relation of each activity in the job hunting project to the 5 C's.

**Table 3. Job Hunting (Japn 316):  
Relation of Activities to the 5 C's**

	Activities	5 C's
Pre-project	Learn the differences in job hunting style between U.S. and Japan Learn the differences in resume-writing Learn the Japanese way of thinking Write your resume	Comparisons  Cultures/ Comparisons Communication
Actual project	Research a company Decide which position to apply for Complete application/resume Learn interview manners Complete a mock job interview	Connections Communication/ Cultures Cultures  Communities/ Cultures
After-project	Receive comments from the interviewer  Write a thank-you letter	Connections/ Communication Communication/

This project is divided into three sections. One week is spent on understanding the Japanese job-hunting style. The second portion is used for researching a target company and preparing for a mock interview. Students look for job opportunities at their target company and fill out a real application and resume form. The last portion is the actual interview. Every year a Japanese businessman from a target company volunteers to conduct a mock job interview with each student. One day is used for after-project activities. It is rewarding for students to receive detailed comments from their interviewer.

### RESEARCH PROJECT:

#### JAPANESE INVESTMENT IN SOUTH CAROLINA

This project is a combination of researching and interviewing. The purposes of this project are: 1) to learn about Japanese business in South Carolina; 2) to learn Japanese speech levels in business

situations; 3) to learn various kinds of speech skills through an interview: make a request, start a topic, change a topic, extend a topic, confirm, repeat, and conclude; and 4) to improve presentation skills using charts and graphs. After studying a target company, students organize a questionnaire with questions such as the company's reasons for investing in South Carolina, incentives from the state of South Carolina, problems that the Japanese encountered, difficulties working with American employees, localization of a Japanese business, and a Japanese family's life in the U.S. Table 4 shows the relation of each activity in this project to the 5 C's.

**Table 4. Researching Japanese Investment in South Carolina (Japn 416): Relation of Activities to the 5 C's**

	Activities	5 C's
Research	Research a target company	Connections
	Summarize from English to Japanese	Communication
	Make a questionnaire for the interview	Connections
Interview	Make an appointment by e-mail	Communication
	Confirm by telephone	
	Visit the company	Communities
	Conduct an interview	Communication/ Cultures
	Write a thank-you e-mail	Comparisons Communication

Presentation	Summary of interview-recording Write a report paper Presentation	Communication
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### Outcomes

The course evaluations by the students show that they are highly satisfied with the two courses. They feel that the courses are very informative and challenging, though sometimes too demanding. They appreciate the opportunity to interact with Japanese executives through the two projects. I always receive thank-you e-mails from former students who are now working in Japan. They appreciate the way the contents of the courses helped them develop skills that they are using in their current jobs. They indicate they are able to impress their Japanese colleagues with their knowledge of current political and economic issues. Their Japanese proficiency is often not high enough, but their understanding of Japanese culture helps them in their work.

In the future, the curriculum should include general knowledge that an educated Japanese businessman would normally possess.

## A STANDARDS-BASED CBI APPROACH TO TEACHING BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT IN JAPAN

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The Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies (IR/PS) at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) offers a Degree called Master of Pacific International Affairs (MPIA). It is a two-year, full-time degree program which focuses on a professional's need to have a comprehensive worldview. Students in the program specialize in business, politics, economics, and public policies in the Pacific region. Due to its

Pacific Rim focus, IR/PS considers foreign language competency to be an indispensable skill for international relations professionals. It is for this reason that a foreign language requirement has been integrated into the MPIA curriculum.

Students admitted to IR/PS must fulfill the foreign language requirement in a language that corresponds to their elected region of specialization. This is usually done by completing, with a

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satisfactory grade, six quarters (or four semesters) of college-level language instruction from an institution comparable to UCSD. Beyond this basic language requirement, IR/PS offers more advanced language proficiency courses for students who choose to pursue further language study.

Depending on incoming students' proficiency levels, every quarter three or four Japanese language courses are offered. This report introduces an advanced level course offered, which focuses on business and management in Japan.

### **Japanese Language Instruction at IR/PS**

Most students come to IR/PS with some work experiences related to Japan. IR/PS has been particularly popular for those who come back from the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program to begin their next step in life. Additionally, we have started accepting students who come directly from college.

The Japanese language courses at IR/PS aim to prepare students for positions of leadership in government, business, international organizations, etc., by helping them increase specific content knowledge and attain a high level of Japanese proficiency that will be useful in their careers and as members of the global society. To achieve these goals, I have been implementing a standards-based content-based instruction (CBI) approach.

Among the Standards' 5 C's, the "Connections" goal area has often been reported as the most difficult to achieve. However, it can be effectively incorporated into the curriculum in the CBI approach as the content (i.e., other subject matter) is taught in the target language. This "two-for-one" approach has been well received by students because they benefit from linking their Japanese language instruction with other content courses that they are taking at IR/PS. Each Japanese course selects one subject area from a core curriculum that all of the students have to take during their graduate study, such as globalization, international politics and security, international economics, postwar politics in Japan, and business and management in Japan.

### **Japanese Language Proficiency C: 日本のビジネス経営 (Business and Management in Japan)**

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This Japanese course meets for 110 minutes twice a week for ten weeks. A content Japanese course on business has been offered for second-year graduate students because only they can enroll in the core subject course "Business and Management in Japan."

The goals of this course are to provide students with opportunities to learn about various topics related to Japanese business and management in the target language (i.e., Japanese) and to further improve their level of proficiency in all four skills to achieve an efficient command of the language for managing social and professional interactions with confidence. The course follows up with some consideration of the issues raised in the course "Business and Management in Japan," with examples drawn from current situations in Japan. Students are encouraged to become self-directed learners who can manage their own learning using available resources within and outside of the IR/PS community.

The core course "Business and Management in Japan" is taught by a Japan specialist; it introduces a number of important aspects of Japanese business and industrial/corporate organization, Japanese employment practices, the financial system, and so on. Topics introduced in the Japanese course are selected from the core course, depending on students' interests, to supplement information by providing Japanese perspectives through authentic readings for Japanese speakers (online, printed media) and exchanging opinions with native Japanese speakers.

#### **COURSE SCHEDULE AND SELECTED TOPICS (EXAMPLE)**

- Week 1 Management system in Japan
- Week 2 Main bank system and cross-shareholdings
- Week 3 Corporate governance
- Week 4 New owners
- Week 5 Employment system (1): Life-time employment
- Week 6 Employment system (2): Seniority system



Week 7 Employment system (3): Company unions  
Week 8 Case study: Sapporo (1)  
Week 9 Case study: Sapporo (2)  
Week 10 Company business meeting

#### COURSE MATERIALS

##### TEXTBOOK

新・日本の経営 (2004) ジェームス・C・アベグレン著、山岡洋一 (訳) 日本経済社。

##### SUPPLEMENTARY READING MATERIALS

「日本的経営の改革」加護野忠男 (manuscripts no longer available on the web).  
「日本的経営は死なず」ジェームス・C・アベグレン, *Nikkei Business*, 2005.1.3, p.74-77.  
「『日本の経営』こそ人材を生かす」, キヤノン社長 御手洗富士夫, *Nikkei Business*, 2005.1.3, p.62-63.  
「サッポロ HD 対スティーラ、想定される 4 つのシナリオ」永井隆, *Nikkei Business Publications*, 2007.2.26.  
[www.nikkeibp.co.jp/style/biz/feature/news/070226\\_sapporo/](http://www.nikkeibp.co.jp/style/biz/feature/news/070226_sapporo/).  
「プレミアムビールに関するアンケート」日経 BP コンサルティング, ニュースリリース, 2007.4.5.  
<http://consult.nikkeibp.co.jp/consult/release/bj070405.html>.

##### COMPANY WEB SITES

野村グループ [www.nomuraholdings.com/jp/company/](http://www.nomuraholdings.com/jp/company/).  
サッポロホールディングス株式会社 [www.sapporoholdings.jp/](http://www.sapporoholdings.jp/).

##### BOOK REVIEW SAMPLE

Reading 2 書評, *Yookoso! Continuing with Contemporary Japanese*, McGraw Hill, p.380-382.  
「コーポレートガバナンスと人的資本：雇用関係からみた企業戦略、小佐野広著、評者：岡部光明, *エコノミスト*, 2005.11.15, p.66.

##### JAPANESE DRAMAS

ハゲタカ (topic: new owners).  
ハケンの品格 (topic: employment practices).  
のだめカンタービレ (topic: bad loan 「不良債権」).

#### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance (5%), class participation (5%), homework (10%), quiz (15%), conversation partner project: learning journal (15%), book review

(20%), final: company management meeting (30%).

#### LEARNING ACTIVITIES/ASSESSMENT

##### CONVERSATION PARTNER PROJECT: LEARNING JOURNAL

After completing the assigned reading, students meet with their conversation partners (fellow IR/PS students whose first language is Japanese) and talk about the content of the reading. Then students keep a journal summarizing the main points of the reading, opinions, counter-arguments, and conclusions. Students turn in the journal four times during the term.

##### BOOK REVIEW

Students read a book 「新・日本の経営」, write a book review, and send it to <http://amazon.co.jp> as a “customer review.”

##### FINAL: COMPANY MANAGEMENT MEETING

In previous years, the final project was a research assignment. However, I replaced it with a real-life task that students may encounter after they graduate. For example, after consulting the current literature and my former students, I decided to do a company meeting as a final project to simulate students' participation. As part of the assignment, students need to provide a proposal for solving current problems and/or improving company management. The objectives of this project are to investigate and deepen understanding of what students have learned in class and to apply integrated content knowledge and language skills in a new situation.

I select a large Japanese company which is familiar to all the students and which has serious management problems during the course. Students make a formal business presentation using Power-Point, conduct discussions, and write a meeting memo. At the end of the project, students vote for the best proposal. Several people who work for the Ministry of Japan are invited to the presentation, and they participate in the discussion as well as in the decision-making process.

In the last three years I selected Sapporo, Sanyo, and Japan Airlines, respectively. In winter 2008, I selected Sapporo Holdings because most of the students in that year had had experience working with Japanese businessmen and had been frequently immersed in the “*nommunication*”<sup>1</sup> environment.

I assigned each student a different role to meet their interests and career goals, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Student Roles**

	Assigned Role	Reason for Role Assignment
Student 1	Sapporo Holdings (HD) consultant/outside board member of Sapporo HD	This student already had had a job as a consultant in Japan. His role simulated that of a character in “ <i>Hagetaka</i> .” <sup>2</sup>
Student 2	Steal Partners	This student was interested in doing business with Japan, not working in Japan.
Student 3	Asahi (as White Knight <sup>3</sup> 1)	This student was a heritage learner and liked Japanese companies.
Student 4	Kirin (as White Knight 2)	This student had come back from a year’s internship in Japan and liked Kirin beer.
Student 5	Diageo (as White Knight 3)	This student did not like beer but liked Diageo brand drinks such as Baileys and Smirnoff.
Student 6	Morgan Stanley (as Black Knight <sup>4</sup> 1)	This student already had had a job at Morgan Stanley, which does business with Sapporo in real estate.
Student 7	Secret Venture Capital (as Black Knight 2)	This student was interested in education, not business or management. Therefore, I advised him to create an imaginary venture capital project with a professor who researched beer at the University of Hokkaido.

I believe that identifying “good” roles for students to play was crucial for successful outcomes. If they are chosen well, the different roles each student takes can help stimulate individuals’ critical thinking skills, which are extremely important for graduate students to acquire. This project encouraged students to investigate two or more corporations in order to analyze management problems from various perspectives, synthesizing what they had learned previously in this course and the core course in order to come up with the best solutions. It may not be a truly realistic task, but it left enough room for students to exercise both flexibility and creativity.

After the project, one of the students who often delivers oral presentations privately said that he had never before spent such a long time creating a PowerPoint presentation. He paid attention to every aspect to make it look professional. Although his solution did not win the contest, he was satisfied with his outcomes. Students in this class have gained the confidence needed to work for, and with, Japanese companies after graduation.

“*Boys be ambitious. Beers be delicious.*”  
 ビールよ、おいしく飲んで健康に  
 (A quote from Student 7’s presentation)

<sup>1</sup> “*Nomunication*” is a compound word combining Japanese “*nomu*” and English “communication” used to describe a form of business communication because drinking is a part of business culture in Japan.

<sup>2</sup> The plot of this NHK television drama revolves around the increase in M & A activity and takeovers of Japanese companies by foreign funds. See more detail at: [www.stippy.com/japan-videos/new-nhk-tv-drama-series-hagetaka/](http://www.stippy.com/japan-videos/new-nhk-tv-drama-series-hagetaka/).

<sup>3</sup> In business, a White Knight means friendly investor, a corporation, or a person that intends to help another firm.

<sup>4</sup> The opposite of a White Knight.