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REEMERGING ARTICULATION INITIATIVES IN JAPANESE-LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN THE U.S.

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On Monday, March 17, 2008, a one-day forum¹ entitled “AP, pre-AP, and post-AP Japanese: Promoting better vertical articulation in the Washington metropolitan area” was held at the auditorium of the Japan Information and Culture Center (JICC) of the Embassy of Japan in Washington, DC. It was organized by Sufumi So of George Mason University in Fairfax, VA, in collaboration with the JICC and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Teachers of Japanese and with financial support from the Japan Foundation Los Angeles. A total of 27 Japanese-language educators participated: 11 were university faculty including one teaching at graduate school, two were engaged in adult and community education programs, and the rest were elementary, middle, and high school teachers. The participants came from not only the Washington metropolitan area but also such places as Southern Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. One participant was a professor of Japanese from a German university.

As the theme of the forum suggests, this professional gathering was prompted by the new AP Japanese Language and Culture course and examination² (“AP Japanese” hereafter). The primary and modest goal of the forum was to create space for Japanese-language educators of all educational levels to begin a conversation on issues surrounding AP Japanese and start building bridges across elementary, middle, high, and postsecondary schools. As organizers and participants in the first of a series of discussions on the subject, our focus was to share and inform one another of our own instructional practices. More specifically, a total of seven educators—three AP Japanese, one elementary-school partial-immersion, and three university teachers—discussed their programs, detailing the curricular objectives and content (e.g., skills and topics), teaching strategies, technology use, and assessment methods.

Prior to this forum and as part of its preparation, an online survey was distributed among Japanese-language educators, requesting them to list “THREE burning issues of vertical articulation that [they] think Japanese-language educators are facing right now.” There were 42 responses from Japanese-language teachers of all levels around the country, who discussed what vertical articulation meant to them.

The speakers’ presentations at the forum as well as the pre-forum survey results will be presented and discussed later in this report, following a survey of past efforts at articulation in Japanese and other foreign-language education.

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¹ No registration fee was required. The forum was eligible for .6 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) from George Mason University.

² Detailed information is available at AP Central, the College Board’s online home for AP professionals (<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com>). See Matts (2005) for an explanation of its inception.

Articulation Efforts— Japanese Language Programs

Since AP Japanese entered the College Board's AP Program under the banner of its World Languages Initiative in the academic year 2006–2007, both secondary school and college/university teachers have begun voicing the need for better articulation of Japanese-language instruction between high school and college levels. College/university teachers are not exactly sure where incoming students with AP credit (i.e., college-level learning experience) in Japanese should be placed in their Japanese programs. Naturally they desire to understand what AP students have learned in high school and what they have been tested on in the AP Japanese Exam. On the other hand, high school teachers teaching AP Japanese students want to know where their students are heading in their continuing Japanese-language study at college. Secondary school teachers teaching courses that lead to the AP course are compelled to make curricular changes in order to ensure a smooth transition from course to course toward the students' successful learning in AP Japanese. Such ongoing efforts in curricular renewal at secondary schools inevitably have an impact on instruction in elementary-school Japanese programs as well.

This renewed discussion on vertical articulation within the Japanese-language teaching profession in the U.S. differs from the articulation efforts of the mid-1990s as reported by secondary and postsecondary educators (Bringerud, 1995; Ito Watt, 1994; Kinoshita, Chikamatsu, Chikamatsu, & Kinoshita, 1994; Moorman, 1994; Tabuse, 1995; Tenney, 1995; Thornton, 1995; Wetzel, 1995, 1997) in a significant way. Simply put, for the current movement AP Japanese is acting as a catalyst, whereas the past efforts were largely bottom-up in nature. The latter began with high school teachers' concern about their graduates' transition to college-level Japanese study. The efforts focused on creating opportunities where K-16 teachers could share information on their curricular goals, teaching materials, instructional approaches, and assessment methods (Moorman, 1994; Tabuse, 1995; Tenney, 1995; Wetzel, 1995), finding facts about academic performances in Japanese courses of college students who studied

Japanese in high school (Ito Watt, 1994; Kinoshita et al., 1994), and developing a set of performance standards for secondary and postsecondary students (Thornton, 1995). Another concern along this line was the certification of Japanese-language teachers (Wetzel, 1997), as the preparation of future teachers is a crucial problem in articulation.

Prior to such work on articulation in the mid-1990s, *A framework for introductory Japanese language curricula in American high schools and colleges* (Unger, Lorisich, Noda, & Wada, 1993), an 87-page document, was published by the National Foreign Language Center (Washington, DC) in collaboration with the College Board and the Educational Testing Service. According to the project director, Ronald Walton, the document was “an attempt to assist the emergence of consensus on the pedagogical principles and practices that might best inform the design and management of introductory Japanese language instruction” (ibid., p. 6) at both high school and college levels in the U.S. This project was carried out in conjunction with development of the SAT subject test in Japanese. Other regional efforts toward articulating Japanese-language programs were also seen at the secondary school level around the same time (e.g., Brockett, 1994; Sandrock & Yoshiki, 1995; Washington State Japanese Language Curriculum Guidelines Committee, 1994³).

The momentum that gathered in the 1990s for dialogue on articulation among Japanese-language educators, however, did not lead to a full-swing national movement of articulating Japanese-language programs within and across educational levels that would seek “coherence and transparency” (Phillips, 1995) in the student's continuing experience of learning the language. What are then the prospects of the current reemerging interest in articulation prompted by the introduction of AP Japanese into the field of Japanese-language education?

Articulation Efforts—Foreign Language Programs at Large

Articulation is neither a new issue nor a problem unique to Japanese-language education. It has been a concern of professionals in more estab-

³ A revised edition of this document was produced by the Washington State Japanese Language Guidelines Committee with Chris Brockett as lead author under the title *A communicative framework for introductory Japanese language curricula* (Technical Report #20) and published by the Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, in 2000.

lished language programs for many decades (e.g., Freeman, 1947; Guerra E. L., 1965; Guerra M. H., 1958; Putter, 1955; Vocolo & Sheppard, 1966; Weigel, 1945) and “has long been recognized by the field as one of its chief challenges” (Welles, 1997, p. 2). Yet, it was still an “essentially unexplored” area of research in foreign-language education, receiving “almost no attention” in the early 1980s (Lange, 1982, p. 120). Since then, however, much work has been done demonstrating what can be done to establish coherent connections between and among institutions, programs, and levels.

Attention given to the problem of articulation in the 1990s was particularly remarkable, starting with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) declaring articulation to be a priority for the 1990s (Byrnes, 1990). A special issue of the *ADFL Bulletin* 26/3 (Spring 1995) was a result of a first national conference on the topic. The conference was organized by the Coalition of Foreign Language Associations⁴ with funding from the National Endowment for Humanities and held in Washington, D.C. in September 1994 under the theme “Achieving consensus on articulation in foreign language education.” It included discussions on challenges and obstacles in the educational and institutional realities of the day, as well as recommendations for future articulation endeavors (Welles, 1995). On that occasion the Coalition member organizations issued a statement of articulation to demonstrate their solidarity, (a) declaring their conviction that work in vertical, horizontal, and inter/multidisciplinary articulation⁵ was needed for students to become competent users of a language, (b) providing a common understanding of what they believed was needed by language teachers for articulation to take place as well as what resources were in place for this to occur, and (c) challenging the profession to work together toward the goal of articulation by implementing the national standards, developing dialogue across all levels and institutions, focusing on the learner and content,

and taking into account a variety of student accomplishments at every level (Statement on Articulation from the Coalition of Foreign Language Organizations, 1995; reprinted as the Appendix to the present report).

Further, the Modern Language Association (MLA) and the Coalition jointly sponsored eight two-year projects in different parts of the country with the goal of achieving better transition from secondary to postsecondary foreign-language programs (The MLA’s articulation initiative: High school to college in foreign language programs, 1998), one of which was the Japanese program articulation initiative in Colorado (Saegusa, 1999). More writings on articulation have since appeared in the continued issues of the *ADFL Bulletin* and other journals, as well as the edited books such as Lally (2001) and Barrette and Paesani (2005), not to mention technical reports, master’s theses, and doctoral dissertations. As Van Houten (2005) states, “both scholarly and action research, as well as the development and implementation of national, state, and local foreign language documents, have led toward some common beliefs about language learning that bridge many of the divides previously hindering our achievement of alignment. A look at the progress made, and improvements suggested, can show how far the profession has come and reveal what needs to be done next in the goal of language learning alignment.” Indeed, the MLA’s and the Coalition’s efforts proved great strides in advancing the profession’s long-standing quest for articulation. At the same time, however, we should take note of what Van Houten had to say in 2005, referring to the articulation work spurred in the mid-1990s: “On one hand, regretfully, much of what was said then is still the substance of discussion today.” Lally (2001, p. 26) spoke of the past efforts more bluntly: “Many articulation efforts have failed to live up to our expectations.”

We must ask ourselves the question posed by Welles (1995) over a decade ago: “Why, then, is articulation in foreign languages so difficult to

⁴ The Coalition included the Association of Teachers of Japanese and represented “some 70,000 teachers in the United States at all levels of instruction” overall through their respective organizations (The Coalition of Foreign Language Associations, 1999).

⁵ These are the terms used by Lange (1982) in explicating the notion of articulation, and they correspond to Lafayette’s (1980) terms of internal, sequential, and external articulation. Horizontal articulation seeks consistencies among language programs at the same level (e.g., all first-semester sections in a Japanese-language program following the same curriculum), while vertical articulation refers to coherent links between levels of instruction in which the student’s learning at each successive level builds on the prior knowledge and skills acquired (e.g., a secondary to postsecondary transition). Inter- or multi-disciplinary articulation describes connections between subjects as Japanese-language study takes place in conjunction with other subjects in interdisciplinary, global, and area studies programs at the college level, for instance. The need for work-related curriculum articulation concerning employment issues is also mentioned in Lange (1997).

accomplish, especially when the field agrees it is essential for effective language learning in school?” (p. 1). An abundance of experience and wisdom gained through the past attempts should be able to give important guideposts for tackling this fundamental problem and materializing sustainable articulation endeavors.

Particularly useful are the lessons on human aspects of the work offered by the people involved in articulation projects. The 6 Cs of articulation (A Foreign Language Project, 1999, p. 221) sum them up well and are cited below:

1. *Common concerns.* From the beginning it is important to define clearly the task and to agree to find some acceptable path for reaching it.

2. *Colleagueship.* Teachers need to be supportive of one another and need to work in an environment where their views, expertise, and experience are respected and valued. They can agree to disagree.

3. *Cooperation.* Articulation is a cooperative endeavor. It involves many different people at many different levels. Teachers need to be able to work with one another to complete assignments and to contribute to group work.

4. *Compromise.* Through compromise teachers can design a plan that is acceptable to *all* parties concerned. There may be times when consensus-building activities may be needed to end a deadlock.

5. *Commitment.* Teachers who are reluctant to change hinder the process for everyone else. It is important to seek the commitment of all persons affected by the changes.

6. *Constructive criticism.* Differences in philosophy and opinions must not be regarded as personal attacks on one’s credibility, integrity, and ability. Criticisms must be placed in the proper perspective and must always be accompanied by suggestions for remedying the identified concern.

Programmatically, Lange’s (1997) following points (paraphrased here) can be used as a guide:

1. The focus of articulation should be on the learner’s continuing development, which is crucial to the acquisition of language proficiency. The direction of learning should be agreed on across levels and institutions to ensure that the learner is the true beneficiary of articulated programs.

2. Articulation should take into account the learner’s physical, emotional, and cognitive developmental characteristics and link them to their learning. It is important to create a language-learning context where expectations are gauged to the learner’s development.

3. Goals, content, instruction, and assessment should be aligned toward building authentic communicative and cultural competence. Without this alignment within a course, articulation within and between programs is not possible.

4. It is important to understand the nature of language. Because language is involved in any aspect of knowledge, communication, and human activity, its connection to other aspects of the school or college curriculum provides a variety of foci to be exploited in developing language competence. Such connection extends the breadth of the learner’s experience and motivational potential to achieve higher levels of proficiency.

In concrete terms, articulation activities may include (a) networking and dialoguing among professionals of different educational institutions, (b) outreach to let students, parents, school administrators, other subject teachers, and people in business, industry and government know about the work in progress, and (c) development of national-, state-, or local-level curriculum (i.e., standards, goals, outcomes), assessment, and instruction or “the ultimate bearer of all curricular work” (based on the categories used for Lange’s 1997 analysis of the articulation projects).

As Van Houten (2005) observed, we have come “closer than ever before to achieving an aligned curriculum” thanks to our improved understanding of theoretical and practical dimensions of foreign-language program articulation and the development and implementation of national standards (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999), proficiency guidelines (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1986; revised guidelines for speaking and writing, 1999, 2001), performance guidelines (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1998), and language learner portfolios (e.g., *LinguaFolio*⁶).

Having seen the profession’s general acceptance of the *Standards* document⁷ (1999, 2006) as a base for their respective curricula, the current

⁶ This is a project sponsored by the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL). See <http://www.ncssfl.org/links/index.php?linguafolio>.

⁷ In fact, this document “provided the major impetus for many of the articulation efforts” (Byrnes, 2001, p. 164). Worth noting are Brynes’s (ibid.) critical assessment of the document in the context of program articulation and her suggestions for an

discussion of what needs to be done next for articulation appears to center around two issues. One is the need for continuing dialogue within the profession, and the other is the development of common criteria for a variety of standards-based performance assessments that reflect the profession's growing appreciation for language learning for various reasons and at varied expected levels of performance.

AP Japanese and Vertical Articulation

Two Ford Foundation-sponsored studies were conducted separately in 1951 to test the validity of the AP Program under preparation at that time and reportedly concluded: “[S]econdary schools and colleges could and should work together to avoid repetition in course work at the high school and college levels and allow motivated students to work at the height of their capabilities and advance as quickly as possible” (The history of the AP program).⁸ DiYanni (n.d.) quotes the comment in an article published in the *Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals* (NASSP) in 1960, which said, “The Advanced Placement Program has stimulated an appraisal of the program of studies at all levels—elementary, secondary, and higher education.”

It appears that this is exactly what is happening to the Japanese-language teaching profession right now, almost fifty years after the publication of this article. We are also reminded that the “most severe problem of all remains that of communication between AP and the colleges and universities,” as Rothschild (1999, p. 200) wrote in his article chronicling the history of the AP Program.

With this as a backdrop, when interest in AP Japanese began to surge in the Washington metropolitan area, So decided to organize an event that could afford Japanese-language teachers of all levels in the area conversational space to discuss

issues surrounding AP Japanese, one of the three types of articulation activities mentioned in the preceding section of this report (i.e., networking and dialoguing among professionals of different educational institutions). The idea was realized in the form of the one-day forum, “AP, pre-AP, and post-AP Japanese: Promoting better vertical articulation in the Washington metropolitan area,” in March 2008. Outreach effort, another of the three types of articulation activities, was also incorporated into this forum by having the director of the Embassy of Japan's JICC and the director of a Washington-based non-profit organization⁹ speak to the educator participants during the opening session.

The last of the three types of articulation activities—related to curriculum, assessment, and instruction—can be a long-range and daunting task, and it is multi-faceted, multi-layered work that can be done only through a cumulative process.

To engage the participants in discussion on the curricular aspects of vertical articulation at this first meeting on the topic in the area, the AP Japanese curricular requirements, which are “a set of expectations that college and secondary school faculty nationwide have established for college-level courses” (Japanese Language and Culture Course Requirements) used for the purpose of the AP Course Audit,¹⁰ were introduced, as follows:

Japanese Language and Culture Course Requirements¹¹

Curricular requirements:

- The course prepares students to demonstrate their level of Japanese proficiency across the three communicative modes: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational; at the Intermediate Mid to Intermediate Low range of the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*; and as articulated in *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (Standards)*.

articulated curriculum “that completely integrates in a coherent fashion, from the beginning to the end, content and language acquisition” (p. 176), one of the three themes that characterized the MLA's 1998 articulation initiative, “Content from the Beginning—Language to the End” (the other two themes were “Trust, not Turf” and “All Articulation is Local”).

⁸ See DiYanni (u.d.) and Rothschild (1999) for more on the history of the AP Program.

⁹ The organization aims to provide continued support and collaboration at the professional level for cultural and interpersonal exchange and study between the United States and Japan.

¹⁰ For information on the AP Course Audit, go to http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/courses/teachers_corner/46361.html.

¹¹ Companion resources to the set of course requirements are available at http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/courses/teachers_corner/152559.html: namely, Syllabus Development Guide (<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/SDG-Japanese.pdf>) and Annotated Sample Syllabi (<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/courses/syllabi/index.html>).

- In addition to **communication**, the course also addresses the Standards' other four goals: **cultural** competence, **connections** to other school disciplines, **comparisons** between the target language and culture and those of the learners, and the use of the language within the broader **communities** beyond the traditional school environment.
- The teacher uses Japanese almost exclusively in class and encourages students to do likewise.
- The teacher ensures that the selected themes and topics are developmentally and intellectually appropriate for the students.
- The teacher chooses from among both conventional print and aural materials such as textbooks, audiovisual materials, and Web-based content designed for language learning. He or she also makes use of materials generally used by native Japanese speakers, such as print and Web-based texts; animated computer programs; and video-, CD-, and DVD-based products. The teacher scaffolds students' experiences with these texts, particularly those that would normally be considered beyond the grasp of high school students.
- The course teaches students to develop both communication and language-learning strategies.
- The teacher plans and implements structured cooperative learning activities to support ongoing and frequent interpersonal interaction and employs a range of instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of her or his learners.
- Formative and summative assessments are frequent, varied, and explicitly linked to the Standards' goal areas. Prior to assigning an assessment task, teachers share with their students the criteria against which their performances will be evaluated.
- The course provides students with frequent opportunities to conduct Web searches and do word processing and e-mail in Japanese.

The next order of business was to have the AP Japanese teachers talk about their courses.

AP Japanese Course Profiles

[Note: Abrams and Thakur are experienced teachers of Japanese with Fairfax County Public Schools in Northern Virginia, and Moorman with Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland.

Their courses have received authorization from the College Board to use the "AP" designation through the Course Audit process. Both Fairfax County Public Schools and Montgomery County Public Schools are known for their students' excellent academic performances (Duke, 2005; de Vise, 2008).]

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)

Keiko Abrams, Lake Braddock Secondary School, Fairfax, Virginia

Fairfax County is located in Northern Virginia near Washington, DC, and its population exceeds one million. FCPS is the 13th largest school system in the nation and has a diverse student population in a suburban setting.

FCPS Japanese Programs

*Pre-AP.*¹² Currently seven out of 26 middle schools offer Japanese classes. Two schools have special classes for 7th and 8th graders who graduated from an elementary Japanese immersion program. Other schools offer Japanese level 1 of the high school curriculum for 8th graders as an elective course.

Eleven out of 25 high schools also offer Japanese classes as an elective foreign language course, and the number is slowly increasing. The curriculum is designed to match the FCPS Program of Study (POS)¹³ and is aligned with Virginia's Standards of Learning (SOL). The modern foreign language SOL¹⁴ was created based on the *Standards*. Currently all Japanese level 1 classes use *Adventures in Japanese vol. 1* (Hiroko Peterson and Naomi Omizo, 1999; Boston, MA: Cheng & Tsui), and many schools use the same textbook through level 3 or 4 (Pre-AP). Some schools use *Yookoso* (Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku, 1995; Columbus, OH: McGraw-Hill) from level 2. Each teacher creates his or her own lesson plans according to the POS and student needs, adding a variety of materials from different sources to the textbook to enrich the students' learning experiences.

AP Japanese. Most schools designate the 5th year as an AP class. Students without prior courses in Japanese may take an AP class if they possess sufficient levels of proficiency in Japanese. In the inaugural year of AP Japanese (2006–2007) six schools offered AP Japanese classes,

¹² Pre-AP refers to the program of study with a set of content-specific strategies designed to build rigorous curricula; promote access to AP for all students; introduce skills, concepts and assessment methods to prepare students for success in the AP Program; and increase the academic challenge for all students. More information on Pre-AP is available at <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/preap/index.html>.

¹³ <http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/OHSICS/forlang/pos.htm>.

¹⁴ <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/Language/flsol.pdf>.

and four schools offered it in the year 2007–2008 with the loss of two classes from the previous year. The trend is upward, however; a total of six to eight classes are expected to be offered in the year 2008–2009. At present two schools offer non-combined AP classes, with 19 and 14 students respectively. The other two classes are combined-level classes, with a total of 33 and 16 students respectively. As the number of AP Japanese classes increases, more combined-level classes are expected to emerge due to relatively small enrollments in AP Japanese, following the current nationwide trend.

The course objectives of the FCPS AP Japanese are aligned with the goals of the College Board's AP Japanese Language and Culture course. According to the specified goals, content, and skill levels, teachers developed their own curricula, and their syllabi have been authorized through the AP Japanese Course Audit. Main textbooks used are *Yookoso vol. 2*, *Nakama vol. 2* (Yukiko Abe Hatasa, Kazumi Hatasa, and Seiichi Makino, 1998; Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin) and *Adventures in Japanese vol. 4*. However, each teacher uses a variety of other materials including other textbooks, reference books, and authentic materials to enrich instruction and match it with the AP curricular requirements.

AP Japanese Course at Lake Braddock Secondary School

The Japanese program at Lake Braddock Secondary School has approximately 170 students each year in level 1 through AP courses with two teachers. AP students are placed in a combined-level class with level 4 students. There were eight AP students in 2007–2008; five had completed level 4 in the program, two had been allowed to skip level 4, and one was a native speaker.

Content and topics. *Yookoso vol. 2* is used as the main textbook. Because students have learned most grammar points and various topics in the lower-level courses, the focus is placed on improving proficiency in various skills as well as increasing vocabulary and *kanji*. Seven chapters of the textbook plus one additional chapter from a different book are used to study the following seven topics: travel and home, transportation, body and health, life and careers, communication and media, environment and society, government and global issues. The students spend about a month studying each topic.

Classroom instruction is focused on development of functional communication skills as well

as an understanding of cultural and social topics. Besides the main textbook, several other textbooks and other resources (listed at the end) are also used (as is the case for all other FCPS AP Japanese teachers).

Skills taught and instructional strategies. A variety of learning activities and teaching strategies are adopted for instruction to help achieve the targeted proficiency levels in all four skills: interpretive listening with such materials as CDs, DVDs, TV news and shows, movies, guest speaker lectures, and peers' presentations; interpretive reading with such materials as articles written for native Japanese readers, segments of literary works, stories, brochures, letters, schedules, announcements, emails, websites, and semi-authentic materials; interpersonal speaking through simulated dialogues, original skits, daily conversation with teacher and peers, question-and-answer sessions with guest speakers, and debate; interpersonal writing such as emails and letters; presentational speaking in the form of project presentations, speeches on current topics, narrations of experience, and storytelling; and presentational writing in the form of reflective journals, essays, reports, articles, and announcements.

Example tasks and activities for the topic of communication and media are listed below; they are often done as one coherent sequence of activities that require progressively higher-order thinking skills.

1. Vocabulary building through pre-reading and pre-listening activities.
2. Read articles on フリーター, おサイフ携帯, 世論調査, 流行, ファッション.
3. Listen to authentic (TBS ニュース, 朝日フロントライナー, ゲストの答え) and language-learning (チャレンジ日本語, 毎日の聞き取り 50日) materials.
4. Further practice of vocabulary words and expressions and preparation for a group survey project on communication or entertainment.
 - a. student–student questions-and-answers on ways of communication, favorite entertainment activities, important functions of cell phones, etc.
 - b. questions to guest speakers about ways of communication and favorite entertainment activities.
 - c. class discussion on entertainment choices of US and Japanese high school students.
 - d. discussion about questions used in a survey project.
 - e. asking survey questions.

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- f. debate on survey results.
 5. Write survey questions as an interpersonal writing activity.
 6. Oral presentation of the survey results using charts and other tools.
 7. Written report on the survey results and essays on fairness of journalism and the future of newspapers.

Assessment. A wide range of formative and summative assessments are done. Both the rubrics of the FCPS Performance Assessment for Language Students (PALS)¹⁵ and the AP Japanese Exam Scoring Guidelines¹⁶ are used to grade the students' performances. The following are sample assessments used in the aforementioned lessons:

- Formative assessment—vocabulary quizzes, kanji quizzes, worksheets for reading and listening activities, discussion and debate, survey question sheets, journal writing.
- Summative assessment—chapter tests, oral and written presentations of the survey project, essays, recorded speeches.

Instructional Resources

- チャレンジ日本語（聴解）日本留学試験対応（2004, Tokyo: Kokusho-kankou-kai).
- Everyday Listening in 50 Days. Intermediate vol. 1 & 2* (Yoshiko Ota et al., 1992; Tokyo: Bonjinsha).
- Asahi Front Runner. <http://doraku.asahi.com/hito/runner/list.html>.
- TBS News. <http://news.tbs.co.jp/>.

AP Japanese Course at Oakton High School

Yoko Thakur, Oakton High School, Fairfax, Virginia

Oakton High School is one of 25 FCPS high schools and has a student population of about 2,300. The school offers several foreign languages besides Japanese, including Spanish, French, German, Latin, and American Sign Language. There are a total of approximately 200 students enrolled in Japanese classes. The school started offering AP Japanese in Fall 2006, its inaugural year. Since the course is new and there are not many resources for the course yet, the instructor is constantly in search of instructional resources, strategies, and other useful pedagogical ideas. AP Japanese has had a positive effect on FCPS's Japanese programs at large, including the one at Oakton High.

The AP Japanese course is a logical extension of the Japanese program in the high school curriculum that could provide a solid bridge to college programs. AP Japanese is particularly suitable for elementary school immersion program graduates who have completed eight years of Japanese study before starting high school as well as for students who started Japanese in middle school.

Oakton High School offers the following classes in Japanese: Japanese 1, 2, 3, 4, and AP. The school also offers Advanced Japanese 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th for students who studied in Japanese immersion programs at the elementary school level. Currently the Advanced 9th class is combined with Japanese 2, Advanced 10th with Japanese 3, Advanced 11th with Japanese 4, and Advanced 12th with AP. In 2007–2008 there were 14 AP Japanese students: six were immersion students, two were heritage speakers, one was a native speaker, and the remaining five had taken Japanese 1 in middle school or skipped one year due to their advanced performance.

The primary goal of the AP course is for the students to succeed in the AP Japanese Exam taken in May and to develop language and cultural proficiency “comparable to college/university Japanese courses in which students complete approximately 300 hours of college-level classroom instruction” as stated in the AP Japanese Language and Culture Course Description.¹⁷ Furthermore, at the end of the course, according to the AP Course Description, the students' proficiency levels should reach the Intermediate Low to Intermediate Mid range as described in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*.

Course objectives. In line with the Course Description, the AP course at Oakton High has the following objectives:

- Use Japanese language all the time in the classroom.
- Learn Japanese through content-oriented, functional, and proficiency-based approaches to instruction.
- Learn Japanese language and culture with authentic materials.
- Use the materials to foster a cultural understanding.
- Study 410 *kanji* of the AP Japanese *Kanji* list (included in the AP Course Description).

¹⁵ <http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/OHSICS/forlang/PALS/>.

¹⁶ http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/exam/exam_questions/157014.html.

¹⁷ The document can be found at http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/ap/students/japan/ap-cd-japan-0708.pdf.

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- Make full use of technology (e.g., Japanese word processors, the Internet, websites, Blackboard, cable programs, CDs, DVDs, Audacity, Pure Voice).

Skills taught. Based on the 5Cs of the *Standards*, the students in the AP Japanese course develop their skills in the three modes of communication—interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. They work on their interpretive skills to grasp the meaning of authentic or quasi-authentic listening and reading materials. They also participate in conversations on the topics covered in the course daily to develop their interpersonal communication skills. Further, they learn 410 AP *kanji* and word-processing skills to write emails, essays, and short articles on computer to improve their presentational writing skills. The students conduct research on selected topics (e.g., Japanese celebrations, customs, historical figures) that incorporates Japanese web searches.

Content and topics. The topics suggested in the AP Course Description are covered in the seven units of the course: traveling in Japan (transportation, geography, family, house, food, weather, etc.); Japanese tradition and customs (gift-giving, use of chopsticks, etc.); traditional arts and literature (tea ceremony, martial arts, *haiku* and poems, etc.); technologies and communications (computers, the Internet, cell phones, etc.); future plans and careers (college, jobs, etc.); environment and social issues (global warming, recycling, etc.); and Japan and the global community (government and international issues).

Teaching strategies. In order to help students succeed in the course, the teacher uses various scaffolding techniques to give support for reading and listening to authentic materials as well as cooperative instructional strategies to enhance the students' learning experience. The students also compare Japanese language and culture with their own, correspond with their Japanese e-pals through email, and use the *kanji* study packet. Following is an example of connected learning activities for the unit on environment and social issues:

1. *Nakama vol. 2*, chapter 10, "Environment and Society": The activities include the study of topic-relevant vocabulary and *kanji*, speaking practice, and storytelling with *manga*. Pre-reading activities precede the reading on global warming, which is followed by post-reading activities.

2. *Living Japanese* (Karen Taylor, 2007, New Haven, CT: Yale University), chapter 13, "Ap-

proaches to Environmental Education" 環境教育：琵琶湖博物館の例 (DVD, authentic material): The activities include the study of the chapter's vocabulary and of the geography of the region in question as well as listening to interviews on DVD and reading and responding to teacher-generated questions on the material. The questions asked in Japanese are, for instance, *What is the purpose of the exhibit of the ecological system of a village in the past? How did the village people near Lake Biwa use the water?* and *What is the most serious issue Lake Biwa is facing today?* The students find the questions in their Blackboard course folder and write answers on the computer before submitting them to the teacher in hard copy. The teacher also helps the students with the use of reference materials in print and online.

3. Oral and written presentational activities to wrap up the unit. The assignment is to compare and contrast environmental protection issues in Japan and the U.S. The students do web searches, read newspaper articles and other writings, and ask e-pals via email to gather relevant data and information. They then organize ideas and essential vocabulary using a graphic organizer and through group discussion. Based on the prior work, they write an essay on the topic on the computer, which becomes a base for the subsequent two-minute oral presentation on how to protect our environment in our school and community (環境保護—学校とコミュニティーで). Their speech is recorded with Audacity for formative and summative assessment purposes.

Technology use. The classroom is equipped with 20 computers, more than enough for the 14 students in the case of the 2007–2008 class. The computers are used, for instance, to listen to CDs; watch DVDs; read online newspaper articles and other web pages; write essays, letters, and emails; take quizzes and tests; and record speeches and dialogues. Blackboard is used to post announcements as well as learning activities including reading and listening materials. Cultural videos and cable programs such as NHK World are also used as part of instructional materials.

Assessment and evaluation. The students in AP courses receive course grades at the end of the school year in mid-June. The FCPS grading scales stipulate that A is for 94 points and above, B+ for 90 to 93, B for 84 to 89, C+ for 80 to 83, C for 74 to 79, D+ for 70 to 73, D for 64 to 69, and F for

63 and below. The AP students receive an additional .5 for each course grade, meaning that an A in an AP course carries 4.5 grade points instead of 4 (for an A in a non-AP course); this is one of the incentives to take AP courses.

In the Foreign Language Department of Oakton High the course grade is based on performance in four quarters (2/9 x 4) and on the final examination (1/9). Each quarter grade consists of class performance (10), homework (10), a project (10), quizzes (20), and tests (50). The PALS that comprises speaking and writing tasks is given in each of the first three quarters as a formative assessment and at the end of the year as a summative assessment. The end-of-year PALS accounts for 50 percent of the final examination score. The students' performances are evaluated according to the PALS rubrics.

For the required course work, a typical homework assignment is to write a composition using newly introduced *kanji* or to read short pieces. In-class activities encompass various types of listening, reading, speaking, and writing exercises; for instance, listening to and then answering comprehension questions, reading a story and then writing a summary of it on the computer, making an announcement in Japanese, or writing a paragraph-length piece on familiar topics such as Japanese holidays. Vocabulary and *kanji* quizzes are frequent. Unit tests follow a format similar to that of the AP Japanese Exam, consisting of multiple-choice question items for listening and reading and free-response items for speaking and writing. The students' answers to the free-response questions are evaluated according to the AP Japanese Scoring Guidelines.¹⁸

The students sit for the AP Japanese Exam in May, and the results (on the scale of 1 to 5) will be sent to the school and the students in July. Each high school has its own AP committee chaired by the school's AP coordinator. The committee members, all the AP faculty included, analyze the exam results and discuss strategies to improve the following year's results.

Reflections. AP Japanese has had a positive impact on FCPS Japanese programs. Prior to its inauguration, Japanese was one of the so-called "less commonly taught languages" and was not regarded as vital to the student's college application or the school's academic standing. Because of its prestige and academic advantages, students of

Japanese are now motivated to prepare to take AP Japanese in their 4th or 5th year of Japanese study. More middle schools are planning to offer Japanese 1, which will make AP Japanese more accessible to more students.

Regardless, the best benefit of AP Japanese, in my opinion, lies in the fact that the students are provided with opportunities to strive for a college-level learning experience while still in high school. For continued improvement of an effective and successful AP Japanese course, I believe that AP teachers need to be acquainted with college-level instructional materials and strategies and engage in pre-AP, AP, and post-AP articulation initiatives.

Instructional Resources

Aspects of Japanese Society 日本を話そう (Nippon Steel Human Resources Development Co. and Japan College of Foreign Languages, 2001, Tokyo: Japan Times).

A Dictionary of Basic Japanese Grammar (Seiichi Makino and Michio Tsutsui, 1986, Tokyo: Japan Times).

Asahi Shimbun. <http://www.asahi.com>.

NHK World (a bilingual cable TV program).

AP Japanese Course at Walt Whitman High School

Yuki Moorman, Walt Whitman High School,
Bethesda, Maryland

Japanese classes have been offered at Walt Whitman High School for the last 37 years. I have been teaching at Whitman for 20 years and have taught levels 1 through 7. I have always had to teach combined-level classes to accommodate students of different backgrounds and proficiency levels. Although the majority of my students started Japanese-language study at level 1, some students with several years of experience living in Japan and heritage speakers started at level 3 or higher. Occasionally there are a limited number of students who are children of Japanese expatriates.

Student characteristics. There are two types of students interested in learning Japanese at my school. One group became interested because of their exposure to Japanese anime, toys, and other popular cultural entities in their childhood. Another group is composed of heritage speakers (with one parent who is a native Japanese speaker) and students who have lived in Japan for some time.

Students in the first group tend to struggle with reading, writing, and grammar in the first few years. However, they do develop a wide range of

¹⁸ http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/_ap07_japanese_sgs_final.pdf.

vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, and some level of mastery in Japanese literacy skills by the end of their high school education, provided that they maintain a high level of motivation and study skills. Students in the second group possess a higher level of proficiency in listening and speaking. They consider themselves to be fluent speakers of Japanese. However, their vocabulary tends to be narrow and mostly limited to family life. Often their grammatical errors are hard to correct.

Suggestions for curriculum development. The student's success in AP Japanese cannot be assured without clarity and coherence between levels within a program. The following are the ideas generated from my years of experience teaching Japanese to secondary school students in the U.S.

- Adopt the idea of a spiral curriculum. In this curriculum the same topics are treated at every level. Levels 1 through 4 students study the same topics each year but at differing levels of vocabulary and grammar and with different levels of depth. For instance, the words for a certain topic introduced to level 1 students appear again when the same students study the same topic in a level 2 class. In this way, their vocabulary increases in a spiraling and sure way. Such a cumulative learning model is particularly powerful for vocabulary and *kanji* study.
- Devise lessons so that oral practice is integrated on a daily basis. This can also be done in a cumulative fashion, starting with small chunks of utterance in the level 1 class and then gradually increasing the number of utterances, focusing on the what, when, who, how, etc., of a certain thing. Cue cards are useful for oral practice. Again this can progress from simple to more complex materials such as a set of four drawings or pictures based on which students compose a story.
- Do more listening practice. Have the students get used to materials with words that are not known to them and help them develop listening strategies.
- Have students at all levels set concrete goals of their Japanese study, which should be challenging but achievable with some effort. For instance, expose them to authentic materials (e.g., online news sites such as <http://www.fnn-news.com/>) and let them realize what they already know and what they have yet to learn. If this is done on a regular basis, the students are encouraged by their own progress in learning.

Reflections. For me, using the five Cs of the *Standards* to plan my teaching is not difficult. My challenges are developing a content-based spiral curriculum that ensures smooth transitions from level to level and teaching it in combined-level classes. My prime concern is vocabulary and *kanji* acquisition, which serves as a nexus of development of language skills and study of content matters. And this should be done in a cumulative fashion so that progress in learning becomes apparent to the students themselves.

University Japanese Course Profiles

Thakur commented during her presentation that “AP teachers need to be acquainted with college-level instructional materials and strategies” to make their AP courses successful. Such an AP teacher's desire was met by the openness of the three university faculty members at three private institutions in Washington, DC.

The Japanese Program at American University

Sachiko Aoshima, American University, Washington, DC

Our Japanese Program in the Department of Language and Foreign Studies at American University (“AU Japanese Program” hereinafter) had the good fortune to welcome to our third-year Japanese course (JAPN 314) in Fall 2007 a freshman who received the score of 5 on the inaugural AP Japanese Exam in June 2007. As her instructor, I was certain in the first couple of weeks into the semester that she could do well in the course. In fact, she was one of the best students in the class.

In this report I review the current educational settings and pedagogical conditions of our Japanese Program and consider possible ways to enhance our students' skills, abilities, and interest in Japanese language and culture while keeping prospective students with AP credit in mind.

Program overview. The AU Japanese Program is housed in the Department of Language and Foreign Studies. The department provides solid training in language skills and a great depth of cultural understanding in 14 languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, and Turkish. The AU Japanese Program is one of the larger language programs in the department. It offers seven courses as well as a

minor in Japanese. It also supports the university's study-abroad initiatives, which include an exchange with the Waseda University program in Tokyo and the exchange program of AU's School of International Studies with Ritsumeikan University (Kyoto) and Asia-Pacific University (Beppu, Oita).

The AU Japanese Program has four courses in the elementary- through intermediate-level sequence (JAPN 114, 115—Elementary Japanese I & II, JAPN 214, 215—Intermediate Japanese I & II). These 5-credit classes each meet for 75 minutes four times a week for fifteen weeks per semester. The instructional hours of these four courses total 300 hours, the exact number that is stated as the endpoint of an AP Japanese course (AP Course Description). The following courses are available after the basic language courses: JAPN 314, 315—Advanced Japanese I & II (each 3 credits), LFS390/490—Independent Study (1–6 credits). The common objective of the six language courses is to develop communication skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Japanese and an understanding of Japanese culture.

AP credit policy. Following the university's AP credit policy, six credits of Intermediate Japanese are awarded to students who have scored a 4 or 5 on the AP Japanese Language and Culture Exam.¹⁹ Students with AP credit who wish to be placed in an advanced-level course must take a placement test.

Basic language courses. *Genki vol. I* and *vol. II* (Eri Banno et al., 1999; Tokyo: Japan Times) are used in Elementary I and II and Intermediate I and II as main textbooks. While the program strives to develop all skills and competence in communication and culture, the enhancement of oral communication skills is particularly emphasized, so that students of Japanese can interact with native Japanese speakers in a culturally appropriate manner. By the end of the fourth semester (JAPN 215—Intermediate Japanese II), the students have mastered both *hiragana* and *katakana* as well as about 320 *kanji*, have a vocabulary of 1,200 or so words, and have learned approximately 120 grammar items including honorifics and causative-passives. By then the students are capable of communicating in Japanese with accuracy most of the time.

Advanced language courses. The advanced-level courses (JAPN 314, 315) continue to promote active use of Japanese in culturally authentic contexts. At the advanced level the student's vocabulary and *kanji* expand, their understanding of Japanese language and culture deepens, and their fluency and accuracy in using Japanese improve. Special emphasis is placed on sociolinguistic aspects of communication that reflect the intimate relations between language and culture. Students with AP credit in Japanese, like the aforementioned student who enrolled in 2007–2008, are most likely placed at this level.

Students' oral proficiency level at the end of JAPN 315 is expected to reach the Intermediate-Mid or higher, as described in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*.²⁰ Because of the special attention given to the oral component of language study, the program benefits most those who are particularly keen to improve their oral communication skills.

Technology use. Pedagogical use of technology (e.g., Blackboard, Language Resource Center, computer labs) is prevalent, and students are constantly encouraged to use computer technology as a tool to comprehend and communicate in Japanese.

Extracurricular activities and opportunities. There are plenty of opportunities to engage in Japan-related activities and experience Japan on campus. Anime Club, Asian Student Association, and Asian Movie Club are the student organizations particularly popular among students of Japanese. The Japanese–English Language Exchange sponsored by the AU Japanese Program provides opportunities for students of Japanese to meet with native Japanese speaker students for language and cultural exchanges.

The District of Columbia, where the school is located, allows easy access to Japanese art exhibits, concerts, film screenings, lectures, and other cultural events at Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Embassy of Japan's JICC, the Library of Congress, and the *Sakura Matsuri* or Japanese Street Festival during the two-week National Cherry Blossom Festival in April. Our students take advantage of these opportunities to enrich their

¹⁹ The same policy applies to all other languages in our department that have AP Exams, namely, Chinese, French, German, Italian, and Spanish.

²⁰ The Department recommends that students completing the sixth semester course (JPN 315 in the case of Japanese) take an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)-style test. The students' test performances are used for the purpose of the program assessment. See http://www.languageTesting.com/acad_opi.htm for information on OPI.

Japanese experience. Another locational advantage can be found in a range of opportunities to participate in Japan-related internship programs and volunteer activities.

Further study and job opportunities. Although the AU Japanese Program does not offer a major, students who wish to further their study in Japanese language or area studies may do so at other schools in the area through the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area, of which AU is a member. Our graduates often go to Japan on the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program, as English-language teachers at private language schools, or as matriculated or non-matriculated students of Japanese language and culture. Some others go to graduate school in the U.S. to pursue their Japanese study, sometimes in combination with study in business, sociology, or political science.

The Japanese Program at Georgetown University

Yoshiko Mori, Georgetown University, Washington, DC

Georgetown University is known for its long tradition of fostering international understanding and exceptional foreign language and culture studies. This tradition is embodied by rigorous academic programs under the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics (FLL) of Georgetown College.²¹ The FLL consists of seven modern foreign language departments, the Departments of Linguistics and of Classics, and the program in Comparative Literature. The FLL departments and program coordinate their academic policies and collaborate on their curricular planning and educational initiatives.

Established in 1949, the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures (EALC),²² one of the seven modern foreign language departments in the FLL, offers major and minor programs in Chinese and Japanese and a minor in Korean to undergraduate students. Our major programs provide four levels of language instruction (i.e., introductory, intermediate, pre-advanced, and advanced levels), upper-division elective courses taught in the target language, content courses taught in English, a senior seminar, and study abroad programs.

Program overview. In the year 2007–2008 over 120 students enrolled in Japanese language courses in Fall and approximately 100 in Spring. Roughly one third of them were majoring in Japanese, another third were from the School of Foreign Service (SFS; see note 21), and the final third with various academic backgrounds were taking Japanese to satisfy foreign language requirements.

The ultimate goal of our Japanese program is to prepare students for the challenge of handling authentic materials on their own, if not completely fluently, by the end of their fourth year. The acquisition of solid reading skills is particularly emphasized at the advanced level, as most intellectually challenging information comes in the form of written texts. In their senior year Japanese majors write a 25-page thesis on a topic of their interest in Japanese, and they are expected to cite at least one original document.

For students learning a foreign language for professional purposes, the acquisition of effective presentational skills in both spoken and written forms is also essential. Our Japanese language instruction is thus designed to satisfy the diverse academic and professional needs of Georgetown students of various disciplines.

AP credit policy. Parallel AP credit policies are applied to all the programs in the FLL but with slight variations across different languages. For the 2007–2008 academic year, the AP Japanese credit policy was as follows: With a score of 4 or 5 in the AP Exam and placement beyond Intermediate Level (i.e., JAPN 112: Second Level Japanese) on the Japanese placement test administered during freshman orientation, the student receives 6 credits for JAPN 112 and is exempted from the First and Second Level Japanese courses. For Georgetown College students, the credit satisfies their general education requirement in language. Students who are placed in JAPN 112 or below do not receive any credit. Thus far there have not been any students who came to our Japanese program with AP credit in Japanese.

Japanese language courses. The core language courses in our program (i.e., First, Second, and Third Level Japanese) are viewed as one instructional entity, rather than a collection of separate courses; the students progress from one stage to another in the course of their language study. In

²¹ Georgetown College is one of Georgetown University's four undergraduate schools; the other undergraduate schools are School of Foreign Service, McDonough School of Business, and School of Nursing & Health Studies.

²² <http://www8.georgetown.edu/departments/asian/>.

order to maintain consistency and coherence in our Japanese language instruction, I (Mori), as director of the Japanese Language Program, work with language instructors and coordinate their courses. Once the students complete the Third Level Japanese successfully or are placed out of it, they are allowed to take any upper-division elective courses.

The intensive introductory and intermediate courses (i.e., First and Second Level Japanese) are designed to build a solid foundation for Japanese language learning. First and Second Level Japanese are 6-credit courses, and each meets for 60 minutes every day, Monday through Friday, throughout a 15-week semester. In addition, the students attend a 50-minute drill session once a week in order to attain fluency in the use of newly learned grammatical structures. Thus, the students at this level receive a total of approximately 90 hours of language instruction per semester and 180 hours in an academic year.

Using *Situational Functional Japanese vols. I–III* (Tsukuba Language Group, 1991, 1994, 1995; Tokyo: Bonjinsha), *Basic Kanji Book 500 vols. I & II* (Chieko Kano et. al., 1989, 1992; Tokyo: Bonjinsha), and the first half of *An Integrated Approach to Intermediate Japanese* (Akira Miura & Naomi McGloin, 1996; Tokyo: Japan Times), the First and Second Level Japanese courses focus on the learning of basic grammatical structures, vocabulary, and *kanji* in order to prepare students for advanced learning in Japanese.

The pre-advanced level courses (i.e., Third Level Japanese) are considered a bridge from conversational to literary Japanese. We gradually introduce authentic materials and provide integrative language instruction as well as the study of a content area at this level. Using the second half of *An Integrated Approach to Intermediate Japanese* and selected chapters from *Authentic Japanese: Progressing from Intermediate to Advanced* (Osamu Kamata et al., 1998; Tokyo: Japan Times), the Third Level Japanese courses focus on the expansion of advanced grammar, vocabulary, and *kanji* as well as improvement in accuracy and fluency through various interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational activities. The 4-credit Third Level Japanese courses each meet for 75 minutes three times a week, which amounts to over 55 hours of instruction per semester. In 2007 Third

Level Japanese was selected as an exemplar of best post-AP practices by the College Board.²³

The upper-division electives are the most advanced Japanese courses offered at Georgetown. They are 3-credit courses each meeting for 75 minutes twice a week. Most of the upper elective courses provide content-based language instruction with a focus on the target subject areas (e.g., literature, linguistics, history, politics, society, cultural studies) by subject specialists.

Teaching approaches and learning activities and strategies. Given that classroom learners can receive only limited hours of instruction, our Japanese language instruction emphasizes the acquisition of foundational language knowledge and foreign language learning skills that help students to become independent and strategic learners. In order to promote the development of interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational skills in both spoken and written forms, our language instruction combines receptive and productive activities, and oral and written communication activities. In order to maximize students' exposure to Japanese, we incorporate various in- and outside-class activities, including guest speakers, interview/survey projects, Internet/library research, Japanese language table, language partner programs, and cultural activities.

As strategy instruction, classes frequently discuss study skills including study habits, foreign language learning skills, effective learning strategies, and effective use of available resources. We also promote students' awareness of structural and cultural differences between Japanese and students' primary languages and cultures through critical analysis of target grammatical structures and the course's cultural content.

Technology use. Online multimedia learning tools and Internet technology are an important part of our Japanese language instruction. Most students have laptop computers as Georgetown strongly encourages new students to purchase one at an educational rate. Most Japanese-language students come to the program with sufficient technological knowledge about displaying and inputting Japanese on their computers. Nonetheless, technical support is available on campus.

Most course documents and audiovisual materials for Japanese language courses are made available on Blackboard so that students can

²³ This refers to the studies conducted in all AP subjects by the College Board. The goal of the studies is to identify college courses that reflect "best practices" in their respective subjects so that revised AP course descriptions can emulate such practices. The one for World Languages and Cultures (including Japanese) took place in 2007–2008.

download and work on assignments on their own computers. Thus, Japanese word processing skills are essential in completing course requirements. Students start typing and emailing in Japanese as soon as they have learned *kana* and basic sentence structures in First Level Japanese, and a majority of them become proficient in Japanese word processing by the end of First Level Japanese.

In addition, we have been working on an on-line courseware project in which we language instructors create our own multimedia online lessons tailored to the content of the courses we teach. In those lessons students can review and practice learned vocabulary, *kanji*, and grammar in different contexts and work on listening and reading comprehension exercises.

Assessment and evaluation. Just before the fall semester starts, all new students who wish to be placed in Second Level Japanese or a higher-level course are required to take a placement test regardless of their learning backgrounds. The placement test consists of selected question items from the existing standardized written tests, the Simple Performance-Oriented Test (SPOT), (Abe Hatasa & Tohsaku, 1998; Kobayashi, Ford-Niwa, & Yamamoto, 1996), and an oral interview. Placement recommendation is made based on the results of these tasks against the baseline data collected from the Georgetown students in different level courses. The student's Japanese language learning background and preference are also taken into account in placement consideration.

Once they are in the courses, the students are evaluated according to multidimensional assessment schemes applied across different proficiency levels. Detailed grading scales are used and test and quiz scores recorded in order to quantify the students' classroom performances and achievement levels. The final course grade is determined based on a calculation of weighted proportions of course requirements including attendance and participation, daily assignments, daily or weekly quizzes, lesson tests, oral performance, written assignments, and midterm and final exams. The students' performances are also used to assess the effectiveness of our instruction.

All of the FLL departments offer an oral proficiency test to the SFS students twice a year. The SFS requires that their students attain foreign

language proficiency at a level that is applicable to professional service by the end of their fourth year. That is to say, the SFS students are expected to be able to read printed materials on such topics as international affairs and current events and discuss them in the target language even though the SFS does not have a foreign language requirement. The modified OPI (see note 20) is conducted to assess these students' proficiency levels with topics relevant to their specializations.

Reflections. Learning Japanese poses an intellectual and cultural challenge to students. However, it should be a rewarding undertaking for them. We make our program exciting by combining linguistic and cultural studies. Our language instruction emphasizes the development of foundational skills in oral and written communication and language learning skills that increase one's self-directed learning ability to improve linguistic knowledge and skills independently. Introductory and intermediate-level courses focus on the learning of basic vocabulary and grammar through various interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational activities, while pre-advanced and advanced courses provide integrative language instruction with more authentic Japanese materials.

We strive to create a learning environment so that students feel motivated to accomplish challenging tasks. The end-of-semester course evaluations by students indicate that our intellectually and culturally challenging Japanese courses are highly evaluated and the faculty's strong commitment to quality Japanese-language education is greatly appreciated. I believe that the Japanese program at Georgetown meets the needs of students who wish to attain high levels of language proficiency and pursue their Japanese studies for academic purposes.

The Japanese Program at George Washington University

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Washington, DC

Program overview. The Japanese program at George Washington University (GWU) is housed in the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures of the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences (CCAS).²⁴ It offers both a major and a

²⁴ The CCAS is one of GWU's nine colleges and schools, offering bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in the arts and sciences. The other establishments are: School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Law School, School of Engineering and Applied Science, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, School of Business and Public Management, Elliott School of International Affairs, School of Public Health and Health Services, and College of Professional Studies.

minor in Japanese language and literature. The Japanese program attracts students from not only the CCAS but also other schools such as the Elliott School of International Affairs and the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. A good number of students choose to pursue a double major across the schools.

There are six language-oriented courses: Beginning Japanese I & II, Intermediate Japanese I & II, Advanced Japanese I & II, Advanced Conversation and Composition I & II, Readings in Modern Japanese I & II, and Introduction to *Bungo* [classical Japanese]. The beginning- and intermediate-level courses each bear four credits while the other courses give three. There are also five content-oriented 3-credit courses: Japanese Literature in Translation I & II, Readings in Classical Japanese, Japanese Culture through Film, Directed Reading, and Proseminar Thesis. In 2007–2008 there were a total of 24 students majoring and seven minoring in Japanese, and a total of 228 students were enrolled in Japanese language- and content-oriented courses.

Furthermore, there are a number of Japan-related courses offered outside the Japanese program that students of Japanese can take. Such courses include East Asian Art; Buddhism; History of Modern Japan; The U.S., Japan, and East Asia Since 1900; Introduction to the Economy of Japan, Japanese Politics and Foreign Policy; International Relations–East Asia; International Foreign Policy; and Special Topics on Japan; all of these are 3-credit courses.

The requirements for a Japanese major are: (a) CCAS general requirements; (b) Beginning Japanese I & II, Intermediate Japanese I & II, or the equivalent as prerequisites to the advanced language courses; (c) Advanced Japanese I & II; (d) Introduction to *Bungo*; (e) Japanese Literature in Translation I & II; (f) 18 additional credit hours of 100-level Japanese courses; and (g) 9 credit hours in 100-level Japan-related courses offered outside the program as approved by the major program's academic advisor. The requirements for a Japanese minor are: (a) Beginning Japanese I & II, Intermediate Japanese I & II, or the equivalent; (b) Japanese Literature in Translation I & II; and (c) 12 additional credit hours of 100-level Japanese courses.

GWU has exchange programs with Waseda University in Tokyo and Kyoto University. Also,

many students take advantage of study-abroad programs in Japan offered by the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) and the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES).²⁵ Typically students go to Japan to study in their junior year.

AP credit policy. At GWU those who score a 5 on the AP Japanese Language and Culture Exam can earn up to 8 credits. However, advanced placement is determined based on the GWU placement test results. The student's preference is also taken into account in placement consideration.

There is a total of 240 hours of classroom instruction in the first two years of Japanese language courses—Beginning Japanese and Intermediate Japanese—the ultimate proficiency goal of which is targeted at the Intermediate Low to Intermediate Mid range as described in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*. This description echoes what the AP Japanese course is designed for (i.e., completion of approximately 300 hours of college-level classroom instruction in total and achievement of proficiency at ACTFL's Intermediate Low to Intermediate Mid levels). It can thus be inferred that freshman students who have successfully completed AP Japanese are commonly placed into a third-year course, Advanced Japanese I or Advanced Conversation and Composition I.

Course organizations and objectives. *Japanese in Context vols. 1–5* are a series of textbooks developed by GWU faculty (Shoko Hamano and Takae Tsujioka with Wakana Kikuchi). They are used as follows. *Japanese in Context vols. 1–2* are used in Beginning Japanese I & II, which each consist of two 75-minute lectures²⁶ and two 50-minute drill sessions per week for a total of 14 teaching weeks per semester, amounting to a total of approximately 120 hours in a year. The objective of Beginning Japanese I & II is to build a solid foundation in all four skills—speaking, listening, writing, and reading. A total of about 150 *kanji* are introduced in these courses. At the end of these sequential courses students should be able to (a) handle a limited number of interactive situations such as introducing themselves and friends, asking directions, shopping for familiar objects, giving and receiving invitations, and discussing schedules; (b) read linguistically controlled texts; and (c) meet limited practical writing needs.

²⁵ <http://www.ciee.org/> and <https://www.iesabroad.org/IES/home.html>.

²⁶ Although the term “lecture” is used, instruction does not constitute a teacher-led *lecture*; it is a student-centered, interactive class.

Japanese in Context vols. 3–4 are used in Intermediate Japanese I & II. The structure of these semester courses is the same as that of the beginning level courses—that is, a combination of two 75-minute lectures and two 50-minute drill sessions per week. The course objective also remains the same, a continuation of building a solid foundation in all four skills—speaking, listening, writing, and reading. A total of approximately 300 *kanji* are introduced. At the end of these sequential courses students should be able to (a) handle interactive situations such as explaining how to cook something, opening a bank account, talking about hobbies and sports, and explaining regulations; (b) read linguistically controlled texts on the topics relevant to the aforementioned situations; and (c) meet practical writing needs on those topics.

Japanese in Context vol. 5 is used in Advanced Japanese I & II. Unlike the beginning- and intermediate-level courses, these 3-credit courses each consist only of two 75-minute lectures per week for a total of 14 teaching weeks per semester, amounting to a total of 70 instructional hours in a year. The objective of Advanced Japanese I & II is to develop proficiency in the four communication skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing as well as cultural understanding. Approximately 300 *kanji* compounds are introduced in addition to what has been taught in the lower-level courses. At the end of these sequential courses students are expected to be able to (a) express their own thoughts without having to rely heavily on prefabricated or memorized phrases; (b) handle everyday social situations in a culturally appropriate manner; and (c) demonstrate a greater degree of elaboration and sophistication in oral and written use of language.

Advanced Conversation and Composition I & II follow the same course organization as Advanced Japanese I & II, with two 75-minute lectures per week. Their teaching materials comprise authentic materials from newspapers, movies, and TV programs. The objective of these courses is to provide integrated skills training in Japanese with emphasis on advanced vocabulary and *kanji* through a variety of interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational activities. At the end students are expected to be able to (a) read and comprehend authentic materials; (b) communicate with others orally and in writing with greater accuracy and fluency; and (c) express their own opinions and ideas while interacting with others.

Readings in Modern Japanese I & II are also offered in the format of two 75-minute lectures per week. The course materials include Haruki Murakami's short stories. The objective in these courses is to broaden the students' understanding of Japanese language and culture through contemporary literary texts and essays.

Introduction to *Bungo* is a 3-credit stand-alone course with two 75-minute lectures per week. It offers instruction in *bungo* or classical grammar and aims to develop the competence to read authentic materials such as newspapers published in the Meiji era and an awareness of remnants of *bungo* found in modern Japanese.

The overall goal of the program is to equip students with foundational skills in Japanese communication so that their Japanese study and use in professional settings may continue more easily beyond the school context. Another important point of the program's goal is that through learning Japanese, students develop a keener understanding of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural similarities and differences, analyze them, and use the findings from such analysis in their communication activities.

Assessment and evaluation. Course requirements differ slightly from course to course. However, in principle grades are determined on the basis of attendance and class participation, daily assignments, weekly quizzes, compositions, oral performances (e.g., skits, speeches, and oral interviews), and exams. The placement tests are given online and tailored to what is taught in respective courses. No proficiency or exit exams are given.

Teaching strategies. Language instruction at GWU places importance on incorporating authentic materials in all courses including the lower-level classes so that students can learn how to make sense of written and spoken texts in context from an early stage of their Japanese study. The program promotes task-based instruction that allows meaningful interaction in classrooms and facilitates active learning. Instruction focuses on the development of interpersonal and presentational skills—that is, the skills to interact with others in a socially and culturally appropriate manner and present one's ideas orally and in writing.

Technology use. Computer technology (e.g., Blackboard, Quia, iTunes U, blogs) is fully integrated into instruction in the GWU Japanese program. Blackboard is used to organize a course, posting announcements and grades and providing

students with access to the syllabuses, schedules, handouts, instructions for assignments, and listening materials.

Quia²⁷ is an educational technology website, which assists educators in creating customized instructional materials online with relative ease. While Blackboard also has a quiz-making function, Quia is more versatile, user-friendly, and suitable for dealing with foreign-language materials. The GWU Japanese program has created with Quia more than 600 quizzes and activities in listening, reading, *kanji* recognition, and grammar at all levels, and 60% of them are used as homework assignments. There are, of course, types of tasks that are better given on paper, such as compositions and *kanji* writing practice. Nonetheless, the online quizzes and activities not only help reduce instructors' workload thanks to the computer-based grading and tracking functions, but also provide an environment more conducive to learning for present-day students because of the vibrant colors, images, and sounds that can be easily incorporated.

iTunes U is a relatively new service that provides the unlimited capability—a big attraction considering Blackboard's space limitation problem—of uploading multimedia resources through the Apple's iTunes Store. Using iTunes U, students can log onto relevant courses and download materials directly onto their portable devices such as iPods. At present this service is used mainly to disseminate audio and audiovisual materials from the instructors to the students in the GWU Japanese program. iTunes U also allows students to upload their voice recordings easily and should be useful for oral performance assessment and self-evaluation.

The advanced-level classes at GWU (Advanced Japanese I & II, Advanced Conversation and Composition I & II) use class blogs.²⁸ Students are better motivated to write as their writings on the blog sites are read and commented by readers outside the GWU community. Other online materials are also being developed, such as the recently completed Visualizing Japanese Grammar.²⁹

Elementary School Japanese Immersion Program

Often neglected in discussion on the vertical articulation of pre-AP, AP, and post-AP programs is the population of students who began their language education in elementary-school language immersion programs—despite the fact that “AP Japanese is particularly suitable for elementary school immersion program graduates who have completed eight years of Japanese study before starting high school,” as Thakur noted during her presentation. Worland, a pioneer teacher at one of the FCPS Japanese Immersion Program (JIP) schools and a long-time first-grade teacher, discusses the program.

Japanese Immersion Program at Great Falls Elementary School

Mamiya Sahara Worland, Great Falls Elementary School, Fairfax, Virginia

*Overview*³⁰

In 1989, almost two decades ago, FCPS ran a total of eight pilot partial-immersion programs, one in French, four in Spanish, and three in Japanese. At present there are a total of 13 elementary school partial-immersion programs in FCPS. In the FCPS partial-immersion programs students learn mathematics, science, and health through the medium of the target language (French, German, Japanese, or Spanish) for half of the day. They also receive instruction in English for language arts and social studies during the other half of the day. Japanese language is not taught as a subject in the Japanese partial-immersion program. Rather, students acquire Japanese naturally through interesting and meaningful activities in the language as they learn the concepts of math, science, and health that are included in the FCPS elementary curriculum. The foreign-language immersion teacher teams with the grade-level English teachers to integrate the total FCPS curriculum. Math, science, and health were chosen for the beginning years of development of the foreign language because they use manipulatives and concrete, hands-

²⁷ See Hamano and Tsujioka (2007) for more on advantages and technical issues of Quia. Quia also comes with assessment and analysis tools as well as classroom management features.

²⁸ For instance, <http://gwadvjapncomposition.blogspot.com/>.

²⁹ This was developed by Shoko Hamano and Wakana Kikuchi. It is a website that provides links to 66 flash animations of various grammatical structures in Japanese: <http://www.gwu.edu/~eall/vjg/vjghomepage/vjghome.htm>. Further development of the site into a form of online animated grammar dictionary is planned in the near future.

³⁰ This summary is based on the information available at <http://www.fcps.edu/dis/OHSICS/forlang/partial.htm#whatis>.

on activities, both of which help with the process of natural acquisition of the target language.

Support for the immersion programs comes from empirical research of the last three decades showing that learning a foreign language at an early age has a positive effect on intellectual growth and leaves students with more flexibility in thinking, greater sensitivity to language, and improved listening skills.

There are three JIP schools in FCPS: Floris, Fox Mill,³¹ and Great Falls Elementary Schools. Unfortunately the Floris JIP is phasing out and stopped first-grade enrollment two years ago. The total JIP enrollments for the last three years are: 455 in 2005–2006, 456 in 2006–2007, and 433 in 2007–2008.³²

JIP First-grade Curriculum

Objectives and content. The following chart presents the language-specific objectives of the JIP first-grade classroom, even though language is not a direct object of study and its acquisition is expected to occur through natural exposure to and use of the language. The chart assists the teachers in controlling their language use and language input that the students receive so as to maximize the effectiveness of learning in the immersion setting.

Language-Specific Objectives of the JIP First-Grade Classroom	
Area	Specific Items
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math: numbers up to 100; ordinal numbers up to the 10th; money (penny, nickel, dime, quarter); one-digit addition and subtraction; 2-dimensional shapes; days of the week, seasons, and calendar; time to the hour and the half-hour • Science and Health: experimental design, sense; plants, animals, earth-worms, natural resources; liquid, light; weather; self and others; food groups • Special events: festivals; games; <i>origami</i> • Others: colors; classroom vocabulary; classroom management phrases; people and places

Kanji	一, 二, 三, 四, 五, 六, 七, 八, 九, 十, 百
Language structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirmative and negative statements (です／ではありません, ます／ません) • Question sentence with か • Interrogative pronouns (e.g., なに, どこ) • Suffixes (e.g., ~さん, ~くん, ~せんせい)
Language skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen attentively to teachers, TV, and recorded materials • Follow one-step directions • Pronounce each Japanese syllable clearly • Write <i>hiragana</i> according to the correct stroke order • Write numerals up to 100 in <i>kanji</i> • Recognize and write own name in <i>katakana</i> • Copy words and sentences using <i>hiragana</i> • Listen to Japanese stories and make connections between Japanese sounds and written symbols
Functional language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greetings • Courtesy expressions • Identifying self and others • Negotiation of meaning • Daily schedules • Classroom expressions • Songs

Teaching strategies. The JIP instruction can be characterized by the following seven points:

- Integrate language, content, and culture.
- Attend to continuous language growth and improve accuracy.
- Make input comprehensible.
- Create an L2-rich learning environment.
- Use teacher talk effectively.
- Promote extended student output.
- Attend to diverse learner needs.

Technology use. Such educational technological tools as SMART Board and Audacity are used to enhance classroom activities. The teachers have

³¹ A teacher from this school with 14 years of experience teaching JIP students in FCPS shared her experience and observation: “We have been able to successfully promote the JIP program and help our students achieve higher linguistic goals each year. We, the teachers, work collaboratively to develop teaching materials and share instructional ideas. Our professional commitment, I believe, is contributing to the consistently high level of student motivation and the students’ successful achievement in the listening, speaking, and writing skills in Japanese. However, it appears that not very many high school and university teachers are aware of such facts. The pressing issue that we are facing at present is how to improve the process of our students’ transition to a middle school where many of our graduates continue studying Japanese.”

³² In 2007–2008 there were a total of 93 students in the Japanese Foreign Language for Elementary Students (FLES) program in addition to the JIP enrollment of 433.

access to the language-specific Elementary Foreign Language Resources posted on Blackboard.

Language Immersion Students Assessment

*Background.*³³ Students in the FCPS partial-immersion programs are taught with the same curriculum as all other non-immersion students in FCPS. They do, however, acquire another language at the same time. While the SOL (see note 14) has been used to assess students' progress in each subject, no assessment instrument had existed to measure the immersion students' development of proficiency in the target language until the Language Immersion Student Assessment (LISA) was developed and implemented a few years ago.

Several years ago the FCPS Foreign Language Office decided to expand the existing countywide performance assessment program, which had been done for middle- and high-school students with the PALS speaking and writing tasks as formative and summative assessment as reported by the FCPS high school teachers at this forum, to include the elementary partial-immersion students. In June 2002 the LISA—or what was then called “Junior PALS”—was administered to the sixth-grade immersion students for the first time, and the results were used as baseline data for the measurement of young learners' language acquisition in the immersion setting. The ensuing assessment exercises with the fourth- and second-grade students concluded that the sixth and fourth graders should be able to handle a PALS-like test and that it would be more appropriate to test the second graders with an assessment instrument like the Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA).³⁴

In 2002–2003 a committee of teachers worked to develop the LISA based on CAL's SOPA and the *ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners*³⁵ but with the understanding that rubrics would have to meet the immersion program needs. The pilot LISA assessment program was implemented at the end of each academic year from 2002–2003 to 2005–2006. The LISA is currently used to measure the progress of each immersion student's skills in speaking and writing in the second, fourth, and sixth grades.

LISA tasks. For the second-grade students, the oral assessment is done with an interactive interview task between two students. The writing skills are assessed by having them respond in writing to

familiar sentence cues or pictures. For the fourth- and sixth-grade students, the oral assessment task is a one-minute speech on a topic taught in the immersion program with two minutes to prepare. The writing assessment task for this group is to spend 20 minutes to organize ideas on a learned topic and write a first draft, and then revise it to produce a final draft in the next 30 minutes. Oral performances are audio-recorded for later assessment. The teachers also take notes while the students are speaking, which may be referred to during assessment.

Implications. The LISA results provide valuable information to facilitate vertical and horizontal articulation as well as the refinement of partial-immersion programs for two main reasons. One reason has to do with the goal of this assessment—that is, to demonstrate that the FCPS partial-immersion students attain proficiency in the target language according to the reasonable expectations at each grade level and that they develop a sense of ownership of their language production and take pride in their progress. The other reason is the fact that numerous professional-development opportunities are provided to the teachers to ensure the proper execution of the LISA and the students' achievement of the goals.

Perceived Roadblocks to Vertical Articulation

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, an online survey was distributed among Japanese-language educators requesting that they list three critical issues of vertical articulation that they think Japanese-language teachers are currently facing. First, it should be mentioned that the importance of program articulation was not questioned at all by the 42 teachers of all levels around the country who responded to the survey. (Or perhaps only those who care about program articulation responded.) At any rate, the profession's re-emerging interest in articulation now seems real. It appears that one of the 6 Cs of articulation mentioned earlier, *Common concerns*, is established, to say the least, in a general sense.

The respondents' concerns were mostly about (a) a lack of cross-institutional and cross-level networking and dialoguing opportunities for educators and (b) insufficient common curricular,

³³The information given here is based largely on Preusse-Burr (2008).

³⁴http://www.cal.org/topics/ta/sopa_ellopa.html.

³⁵<http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3327>.

assessment, and instructional materials that can be used to iron out the progression from level to level, from program to program, or from institution to institution. These two areas correspond to two of the three articulation activity types mentioned earlier in this report. However, no one mentioned as an issue the outreach to inform students, parents, school administrators, other subject teachers, and people in business, industry, and government about the articulation problem. This may be a reflection of the classroom-teacher mentality: the sense among many teachers that they have little to do with the world outside their classrooms or beyond their day-to-day teaching. Or it may be that the idea—that is, Japanese program articulation—is still in the embryonic stage and not yet ready for such outward activity.

Networking and Dialoguing Opportunities

Most teachers recognized the importance of knowing curricular goals and content and instructional and assessment practices of different programs of the same and different educational levels. One respondent suggested monthly meetings for Japanese teachers of all levels while some encouraged an idea similar to what has been known since the 1950s as teacher inter-visitation, which is defined as “the visiting of a teacher within another school or school system” and is expected to provide “gain on the part of both the teacher who is visited and the visiting teacher” through “an opportunity to observe what is being done in other classrooms” (Guy, 1956, p. 74). However, many voiced time constraints as a major hindrance to putting such ideas into practice. Another one of the 6 Cs of articulation, *Commitment*, may be the key to overcoming such a problem.

However, lack of time and commitment may not be the only reasons that networking and dialoguing opportunities are lost. Some respondents’ questions—“How can college teachers collaborate with K-12 teachers?” and “In what ways can we help each other?”—point to another important factor, that is, a lack of systematic understanding of the nature of articulation work. As a matter of fact, several respondents simply asked, “What is vertical articulation?” One respondent’s suggestion that more workshops on articulation be conducted is really an apt one. Another respondent mentioned the need for people in our profession to willingly take on leadership roles in articulation endeavors.

One high-school teacher was looking for cross-level dialoguing opportunities as she wanted to

know how her former students were doing in Japanese classes at college. This comment may have been made purely on a personal level. However, if such a quest could be turned into qualitatively rich and descriptively in-depth case studies of college students of Japanese who have studied the language in high school, they could provide useful data in finding clear directions for vertical articulation work.

Development of Common Curricular, Instructional, and Assessment Materials

The responses that fall under this category are more or less equally spread across the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. It appears that many felt the lack of common curricular goals and frameworks or “concrete” curricular guidelines that delineate what should be taught at what level (especially in terms of *kanji* and grammatical structures). Some questioned the legitimacy of the proficiency goal set for the AP course, commenting that the goal might not be very realistic and could have a negative impact in articulating vertical curricular relations. A number of high-school teachers were concerned about the challenge of curricular revision within their own programs that was necessitated by the introduction of AP Japanese.

The respondents’ instructional concerns focused on the teaching of *kanji*, vocabulary, the writing process, and culture, as well as teaching with computer technology and authentic materials from the beginning levels. Some mentioned a lack of lesson samples and instructional materials that are appropriate to a range of different levels and for students of diverse backgrounds, that are fun and keep students motivated, that provide a balanced combination of oral and written communication practice, that are suitable for AP listening and speaking practice or advanced-level communication practice, or that could ensure the achievement of higher proficiency levels within a limited amount of time. Others were concerned about combined-level classes, scaffolding techniques, and learners’ retention of taught material and skills. All of these may be nothing but the teachers’ day-to-day concerns. However, such instructional issues are, as Lange (1997) noted, “the ultimate bearer of all curricular work” and cannot be ignored in discussion of articulation.

As for the issues related to assessment, the need for common assessment instruments, more assessment materials, placement tests capable of identifying multiple entry points at K-16 levels

reliably, and use of nationally recognized benchmarks was raised. Of course, none of the curricular, instructional, and assessment issues can be taken in isolation. Issues in one area can affect the other areas, creating a self-amplifying chain of events in program articulation. Where should we begin in dealing with such chain-reactive phenomena?

I should like to suggest that the AP Japanese curricular requirements³⁶ be used as a starting point for Japanese program vertical articulation. These requirements can serve as comprehensive bases for curriculum construction that recognize the true implications of the radical rethinking experienced recently by the foreign-language teaching profession as a result of a shift of great magnitude in perspective on foreign-language instruction (e.g., the *Standards*; MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007; see also Wasley, 2008, about continuing debate on the MLA's 2007 document). In addition, high school curricula will continue to be organized according to them, no matter what. One respondent to the survey asked, "Are we teaching to the AP Exam rather than strengthening basic skills?" My answer is that the curricular requirements in question do prepare students well for the AP Exam but can also do much more (see Cheng & Curtis, 2004, for a discussion of the complex nature of washback, defined as the impact that tests have on teaching and student learning).

Other Issues

The respondents were also concerned about the following issues:

- Lack of horizontal articulation particularly at the college level, which makes it difficult especially for transfer students. This issue could also affect the high school students' desire to continue Japanese study at college.
- Inconsistent AP credit and placement policies across universities and colleges, which may become a reason for some high school students not taking the AP Exam.
- Preparation of high school AP and non-AP students of Japanese for the challenge of continued

Japanese study at college. This may be helped with outreach activity in which college/university teachers visit high schools and talk about their Japanese programs.

- The wide range of individual differences in learners' aptitude, intelligence, and motivation and their effects on teachers and teaching. This point is recognized and reflected in the list of curricular requirements, one that says "The teacher (...) employs a range of instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of her or his learners" in particular.
- Decreasing enrollments in and elimination of some Japanese programs as a result of ongoing budget cuts and the recent huge surge of interest of the general public and school and government officials in Chinese.

CONCLUSIONS

This report presented an example of vertical articulation work in progress in the Washington metropolitan area, work that capitalizes on the wisdom and experience gained from wide-ranging work on foreign-language program articulation in the past and the ongoing transformation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment in language and culture study.

Our project will continue by (a) offering a series of networking and dialoguing opportunities for Japanese-language educators in the form of workshop and focus-group discussions; (b) reaching out to communicate relevant issues to such people as students, parents, school administrators, other subject teachers, and people in business, industry and government; and (c) discussing the viability of pursuing curricular alignment around the AP Japanese curricular requirements as well as related instructional and assessment matters.

The project will be sustained as long as we take full cognizance of both the human and programmatic dimensions of articulation—that is, 6 Cs for the former and the following focal points for the latter: the students' progress in language acquisition and their developmental characteristics as the core of the issue; alignment of objectives,

³⁶ The requirements may soon be revised as a result of the ongoing review of the AP World Language Course and Exam, the goal of which is to ensure that the AP world language courses—including AP Japanese—(a) embody a coherent conceptual organization for AP; (b) establish coherence within and across the AP world language courses by organizing curriculum, instruction, and assessment based on the *Standards*; (c) draw upon current scholarship in the discipline, in learning theory, and in assessment design; (d) clearly articulate the connections between the AP course and the corresponding exam; (e) maintain the continued validity of AP in preparing students for successful placement into higher-level college and university courses; and (f) foster improved achievement in AP courses for a broad and diverse range of students (http://www.Collegeboard.com/html/highered/forum_survey.html?ID=10337).

content, instruction, and assessment with development of authentic communicative and cultural competence as a goal; and an understanding of the fundamental nature of language and its connectedness to many other spheres of human life.

APPENDIX

Statement on Articulation from the Coalition of Foreign Language Organizations

Our pluralistic American democracy and global society need citizens who can function in more than one language. All students, whether they speak English or another language, whether they will make the transition from school to work or from school to further education, should have the opportunity to become fluent and literate in a second language.

We affirm the long-standing conviction among language professionals that to learn a language in school, students need planned sequences to study articulated vertically, that is, through elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education, and horizontally, that is, connected with other fields. By building on prior learning, articulated programs make efficient use of time and money.

When foreign language education is organized in extended sequences of instruction, teachers are able to plan and implement the most effective curricula to enable students to become competent users of a second language.

Articulation takes place when language teachers:

- communicate and collaborate across levels and among disciplines
- acknowledge common principles and common goals
- focus on the learner and the content of the curriculum
- take into account the variety of student accomplishments at elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels.

To facilitate collaborative efforts, educators can draw on many sources, such as:

- discussions of good teaching practices
- curriculum frameworks that reflect a range of language learning purposes
- national standards documents
- performance assessment guidelines
- local, state, and regional guidelines, standards, and frameworks
- results of state and regional articulation projects
- state and federal education reform policies

We urge educators to work toward the goal of articulated sequences of foreign language instruction so that the American educational system can fulfill its responsibility to its students and to the nation.

Members of the Coalition of Foreign Language Organizations

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