

## **ATJ JSP SIG Newsletter: Issue no. 18, March 6, 2015**

The ATJ JSP SIG Newsletter bi-annually highlights upcoming events and opportunities of interest. Notices appear under six headings:

- 1. JSP SIG Announcements**
- 2. Conferences and Workshops**
- 3. Grants and Awards Opportunities**
- 4. Other Information**
- 5. JSP Class in the Spotlight**
- 6. Member in the Spotlight**

If you have notices in these categories that you would like posted here, please send them to Tomoko Takami at [ttakami@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:ttakami@sas.upenn.edu). The next newsletter is scheduled to be published on September 30, 2015. Information received by September 20 will be included in this issue.

### **(1) JSP SIG Announcements**

This issue of the JSP SIG Newsletter includes information about the upcoming 2015 AATJ Spring Conference; JSP-SIG will have one panel. The *JSP Class in the Spotlight* is Yuki Matsuda-sensei of the University of Memphis. The *Member in the Spotlight* is Atsuko Takahashi-sensei of Smith College

I cannot wait for the end of winter. I hope spring will bring us much happiness and smiles!

Tomoko Takami, JSP-SIG Chair

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### **(2) Conferences and Workshops**

#### **The 2015 AATJ SPRING CONFERENCE**

The 2015 American Association of Teachers of Japanese (AATJ) Spring Conference will be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on March 26. The conference will be held in conjunction with the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) Annual Meeting. For more detailed information visit:

<http://www.aatj.org/conferences-spring>. A JSP-SIG panel was accepted and will be presented.

The titles of the panel and papers and the presenters are:

### **SESSION 3-E: JAPANESE FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES SIG PANEL [COLORADO ROOM]**

*Chair: Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku, University of California, San Diego*

**Panel Title: 「学習者の専門分野を合わせた日本語教育：多様化する学習者のニーズに対応するために」**(Japanese for Specific Purposes: To Meet the Needs of Diversified Learners)

「学習者の専門分野を合わせた日本語教育：実践共同体で学ぶメディア・リテラシー」 (Japanese for specific purposes: Teaching media literacy through communities of practice)  
Yuki Matsuda, University of Memphis

「学習者の専門分野を合わせた日本語教育：科学技術コンテンツを取り入れることの意味」 (Japanese for specific purposes: The significance of integrating technical content into Japanese courses)  
Michio Tsutsui, University of Washington

「学習者の専門分野を合わせた日本語教育：国際協同教育による将来のキャリアへの影響」 (Japanese for specific purposes: The impact of international cooperative education on future careers)  
Noriko Fujioka-Ito, University of Cincinnati

「学習者の専門分野を合わせた日本語教育：社会科学専攻の学生のための日本語教育」 (Japanese for specific purposes: Japanese language education for social science students)  
Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku, University of California, San Diego

### **(3) Grants and Awards Opportunities (no updates)**

### **(4) Other Information**

Business Japanese Proficiency Test: 2015 BJT ビジネス日本語能力検定試験 schedule is available at <http://www.kanken.or.jp/bjt/>

### **(5) JSP Class in the Spotlight:**

#### **Japanese for Professional Purposes Course at the University of Memphis**

Yuki Matsuda, Associate Professor of Japanese

At the University of Memphis, Japanese for Professional Purposes (JPP) courses (JAPN7101/7102 Advanced Business Japanese I, II) have been offered every semester since 1999 at the Graduate Level for those who are in the International MBA program at the Fogelman College of Business & Economics. The main goals of these courses are to prepare students for their internship experience in Japan. In fall 2011, the Japanese program in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures started offering additional JPP courses (JAPN4701/4702 Japanese for Professional Purposes I, II) for the undergraduate Japanese majors including non-business majors at the fourth-year level. These additions were created as the result of strong voices from within the community, the university, and in particular from among students.

#### **Community Needs**

In Tennessee, Japanese companies account for more than half of the foreign direct investment. Nearly \$14 billion in capital investment is credited with creating more than 35,000 jobs for the

state's residents in fields such as autos, electronics and renewable energy. Naturally, the community looks to the university to produce workers who are bilingual and function as a bridge between Japanese and local communities. Those students who possess not only linguistic skills but also cultural skills are in strong demand. At the same time, the students who grew up with Japanese pop-culture envision their future career as a media translator including animation, cartoons, and games, and as a professional working for marketing jobs or teaching English as a foreign language in Japan. Although the content they are hoping to learn overlaps with traditional Business Japanese courses, it is obvious that the contents should go beyond and include media-literacy and professional Japanese culture in an ever-changing global society. This is why the courses were named Japanese for Professional Purposes, rather than Business Japanese.

### **Curriculum**

To develop the curriculum for these JPP courses, we made full use of events and programs for our on-campus outreach center, the Japan-America Society of Tennessee (JAST). The center organizes various cultural and business programs with the local Japanese companies and the city government. It works closely with the Consulate General of Japan as well. As such, with any event and seminar they offer, the students have an opportunity to connect what they learned in classes to actual interactions with the Japanese speaking community. For example, on campus we have many exchange students from Japan. One of the units is to learn to interview Japanese people effectively to write an article for a newsletter published by JAST. The purpose of the newsletter is to act as PR for the university so that more exchange students will decide to come to the university to study English. My colleagues and I at the Japanese program strongly believe that successful learning takes place in actual social interaction, and thus the curriculum focuses on their social interactions with members of the Japanese speaking community.

The JPP courses focus on the students' development of three modes of communication skills (Interpretive, Interactional, and Presentational communication) stated in the National Standards for Foreign Language Education, along with other Cs (Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities). The objectives vary from semester to semester. The one offered in spring 2013 semester require students to: (1) critically analyze Japanese ads and think about how the Japanese media use various linguistic strategies to persuade the audience, and compare these strategies with the ones used in the U.S. media. (2) Be able to interview Japanese professionals to solicit their opinions regarding Japanese and American work cultures. (3) Be able to present oneself effectively in Japanese in gate-keeping situations such as a job interview. Teaching materials are mainly taken from authentic materials from newspapers, magazines, and social media for professional purposes and presented in a way the students can analyze by themselves. Some advanced textbooks such as *Tobira: Gateway to Advanced Japanese* (Kurosio Publishers) were adopted for introducing and enforcing vocabulary, structures, and expressions needed for communicative activities and interaction with native speakers.

### **Assessment**

For summative evaluation, we use performance-based evaluations such as a mock interview, a lecture by guest speakers, and publishing something for the Japanese speaking communities. For example, at the last week of spring semester in 2013, a mock interview by a Japanese manager and a Japanese HR person was conducted in class. The group interview session was videotaped

for the final evaluation. The semester had a focused content of "finding a job" in Japanese speaking communities and the students learned how to self-promote effectively in gate-keeping situations. Prior to the interview, the students submitted a resume and an entry sheet so that the interviewers knew the linguistic level and interests of the students. Based on the evaluation rubric (distributed to the students prior to the mock-interview), their performance were evaluated. Separate from the faculty evaluation, the Japanese guests had evaluated based on their own criteria in hiring and gave the result to the faculty who then integrated the feedback into the overall evaluation of the mock interview. Similarly, for the written communication, the students' article in a PR newsletter was evaluated based on the rubric (the grading items include the use of "voice" to attract student populations in Japan) prepared by the faculty and the feedback from the Japanese universities was integrated into the final assessment.

### **Outcomes**

In conclusion, the key to success in offering JPP courses has been the partnership with the outreach center JAST in connecting the classrooms to the community. As a result of offering JPP courses, the students became more confident in themselves by receiving some positive feedback from everyone including the local Japanese managers and schools in Japan of their performance. This positive feedback encourages them to build their new identity as a Japanese specialist in the local community and gives further motivation to keep learning Japanese for interacting with Japanese communities.

### **(6) Member in the Spotlight: Atsuko Takahashi sensei**

Atsuko Takahashi is a senior lecturer in Japanese in the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures at Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Textiles from Japan Women's University in Tokyo, Japan, and a Master's degree in Intercultural Communications in Language Education from the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. She has fifteen years' teaching experience between the U.S. and Japan. Before she came to Smith College in 2004, she had taught Japanese at the University of Pennsylvania and an introductory summer Business Japanese course for MBA students at Temple University. She has also taught at summer intensive Japanese programs at International Christian University in Tokyo and Hokkaido International Foundation in Hakodate, Japan.

Atsuko creates curricula in the belief that foreign language education actively promotes communication across countries and cultures, and provides students with the confidence and awareness to live and work in a global community. By emphasizing student-centered class interactions, her courses are designed to 1) promote students' language skills, critical thinking, and autonomy in learning Japanese; 2) help students develop a sense of intercultural sensitivity, awareness, and understanding in global society; 3) integrate information literacy skills in order to effectively and ethically use the information necessary for language learning. In 2010, she was awarded a grant from the Association of Asian Studies to start creating a Japanese learners' book section in the library at Smith College. By actively collaborating with the library resources and effectively using technology in her curriculum, she encourages students to continue learning beyond the classroom. She has presented her research at AATJ, Princeton Japanese Pedagogy

Forum, and CALJ about the collaborative pedagogical development between Information Literacy and foreign language education.

As part of her current research project, she has started integrating translation into her intermediate Japanese curriculum and plans to articulate the role of translation in foreign language learning.

Aside from teaching Japanese, she is a certified fitness instructor and Zumba instructor and loves to exercise and dance. In her free time, she loves growing vegetables and herbs, cooking and baking from scratch, indulging in various kinds of chocolates, and enjoying being a mom to her one-year-old son.



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