

ATJ JSP SIG Newsletter: Issue no. 21, October 18, 2016

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. The next newsletter is scheduled to be published on January 31, 2017. Information received by January 29 will be included in this issue.

(1) JSP SIG Announcements

I hope you all enjoyed the summer break and had a great start to the new school year.

I would like to continuously ask for your participation and help other JSP members by 1) sending any information that you think could help other JSP members to me by an email, so that I can share it in the JSP –SIG newsletter, email, and/or on the JSP Facebook. 2) helping with writing and composing for the JSP-SIG newsletters.

The issue includes information about the upcoming 2016 AATJ Fall Conference. The *JSP Class in the Spotlight* is written by Eiko Ushida-sensei of University of California, San Diego. The *Member in the Spotlight* is written by Soichiro Motohashi-sensei of Western Carolina University. I hope you enjoy reading their articles.

Tomoko Takami, JSP-SIG Chair

(2) Conferences and Workshops

2016 AATJ Fall Conference

The 2016 American Association of Teachers of Japanese (AATJ) Annual Fall Conference will be held on November 18-20 in Boston in conjunction with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Annual Convention and World Languages Expo.

(3) Grants and Awards Opportunities (no updates)

(4) Other Information (no updates)

(5) JSP Class in the Spotlight: Eiko Ushida-sensei

Japanese Professional Proficiency Course
School of Global Policy and Strategy, University of California, San Diego

At the University of California, San Diego, Japanese courses have been offered separately in the Japanese Studies Program and the School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS). Unlike in the Japanese Studies Program, all Japanese courses offered at GPS are graduate-level and are titled “Japanese Professional Proficiency”. Depending on the incoming students’ proficiency levels, two to four Japanese courses are offered each quarter (e.g., Low-Intermediate, Intermediate, Advanced, Superior).

These courses are specifically designed for graduate students who study at GPS but they also welcome graduate students from other schools, departments, and programs. These days students’ focus areas are more diverse than ever, ranging from business to arts, making it more challenging to design curriculum as graduate students’ career goals and reasons to study Japanese differ greatly. Some study just for personal interest while others need to gain fluency to get a job in the private sector or read classical literature for a doctoral study. I used to design content-based courses on professional topics such as Business and Management in Japan, International Politics and Security, and Postwar Politics in Japan (Ushida 2009, 2010), but recently I have been implementing a needs-based approach with a backward design in mind.

During the placement exam, I conduct a thorough needs-analysis examining not only student language proficiency but also why the student needs to take Japanese courses and what they would like to be able to do by the end of the course, through both an online survey and an individual oral interview. Based on collected information, I place students into appropriate classes and start designing curriculum.

First, I identify goals and objectives for each class, followed by designing a final assessment. I usually create a performance assessment, simulating real-life tasks as much as possible. It will be a final project. Then I select topics, learning activities, and look for learning resources and materials that could help students perform well in the project.

Final projects change every quarter depending on students’ professional and/or academic needs. In the past few years, we initiated a long-term friendship project with students in Fukushima after 3/11, simulated a government level discussion on the comfort women issue (慰安婦問題非有識者会議), invited Japanese bureaucrats who work for the Japanese government to our class, made a 30 minute TV program “Japan Has Never Left the Stage”, wrote bilingual articles to be sent to the Japanese press, made a joint-business proposal to a Japanese company, created a job search guide for GPS students, and made a poster presentation of doctoral research to be presented at an academic conference, just to name a few.

There is no single textbook we can use to fulfill our needs. After I design a final project, I gather information from different types of teaching resources including Japanese experts who know the topic, media, websites, and publications. Sometimes it requires me to conduct in-depth research

on academic topics that I am not familiar with, deepening understanding with students during class and/or office hours.

Students naturally improve fluency, proficiency, content knowledge, and the necessary skills required for their professional needs while working on a variety of learning activities and projects with a teacher, classmates, and Japanese experts throughout the course.

It has been a challenge to learn about different professional and academic areas and to put many independent studies into one class. But it has definitely been a “fun challenge” (one of my students’ comment on my course!) and a new learning experience for me to discover what “Japanese for professional purposes” really means for graduate students.

References

Ushida, E. (2009), “Content-based Japanese language courses for graduate students of international relations”, in Chikamatsu, N. & Matsugu M. (Eds.), *Bridging Japanese Language and Japanese Studies in Higher Education*, Association of Teachers of Japanese Occasional Papers, Number 9, p.24-26.

Ushida, E. (2010), “Standards-based CBI approach to teaching business and management in Japan”, in Takami, T. (Ed.), *Meeting Student Needs: Perspectives on Teaching Japanese for Professional Purposes*, Association of Teachers of Japanese Occasional Papers, Number 10, p.23-26.

(6) Member in the Spotlight: Soichiro Motohashi- sensei

Hello! My name is Soichiro Motohashi. I came to Western Carolina University located in Cullowhee, NC and started teaching as an instructor in the Japanese program of the department of World Languages this August. I currently teach language courses including JPN101 and JPN231. Moreover, I teach a freshman seminar course called Introduction to Pop Culture in Japan, which is the first content course for me to teach at the university level. In this course, we discuss various aspects of Japanese society and culture from well-known pop culture like fashion, entertainment and sports to more social topics like language, family-relationship, food, and school and work environment. The students are encouraged not only to enhance their cultural knowledge but also to develop their communication skills by engaging in interactive assignments, such as group discussions, short presentations, and micro-teaching projects. Also, they have enjoyed several cultural experience activities including a chopsticks competition and an emoji/emoticon contest. Next semester, I will teach a new course focusing on language, culture, and business between Japan and the U.S.

Furthermore, I really enjoy spending time with students outside of the classroom through extracurricular activities. We took a field trip to a Japanese festival in Georgia this past September and had a Japanese curry party this past October. I encourage my students to be independent and gain social skills as well as language and cultural competence. These skills are necessary even after they graduate from WCU in order to become successful individuals.

With regard to my background, I have been in various fields before coming to the field of education. After I earned a Bachelor’s degree in Mass Media from a Japanese University and spent 5 years working as a digital media director for a broadcasting company in Tokyo, Japan, I left the job and moved to Tallahassee, Florida to study sports management. While working on my Master’s program at Florida

State University, I started my Japanese teaching career as a TA. I gained my interest in teaching and decided to peruse my career in education. As a result, I moved to Tampa, Florida to earn my second Master's degree with Applied Linguistics / TESOL at University of South Florida. After graduation, I spent the year of 2015-2016 teaching Japanese as an instructor at Kalamazoo College in Michigan.

I spend most of my free time watching and playing sports. I recently started a soccer team called Mt. Fuji All Stars with the students in the Japanese program to play in the intramural soccer league on campus. In addition, I often enjoy outdoor activities like hiking since this area has many beautiful places to explore.



(Mt. Fuji All Stars)

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