



AATJ

NEWSLETTER



Ann Jordan

Message from the President

The “2020” Tokyo Olympics is over, but there’s still one medal to award. That’s the big gold medal that you each deserve for making it this far and continuing to meet the challenges that are still coming your way. Yay for Japanese teachers! It has been a productive summer for AATJ. The Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce kicked things off with three separate Town Hall meetings, giving members the opportunity to voice their opinions and offer suggestions regarding the Taskforce’s DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) recommendations. The rich discussion and thoughtful feedback from attendees helped shape the latest recommendations, and the executive officers will be discussing implementation of those soon.

July was a busy month. Takako Aikawa presented a great webinar on connecting synchronous and asynchronous learning environments to inspire us to “un-learn and re-learn” as we go forward into a new normal of language pedagogy. And speaking of “new normal”, we completed the 2020 AATJ/JFLA Leadership Training, the first one fully online. Each team reported on progress of their short-term and long-term plans. One special highlight of that final meeting was the presentation by a special guest, Mayumi Uejima-Carr, founder of the NPO Table for Two USA, whose annual “Onigiri Action” campaign is very familiar to many Japanese teachers.

Also in July, we partnered with JFLA and the Laurasian Institution for “Power Up Your Japanese Program”, to inform teachers about ways to develop and maintain strong programs and resources available when support is needed. I talked about Japanese program SOS (Strategies, Opportunities, Support), which is the focus of a series we are beginning in this issue on [page 15](#).

On August 7, thanks to the tireless efforts of Yukiko Hanawa sensei and Shinji Sato sensei, the fifth event in the Globally Connected Online Japanese Language Education series was a great success! The panel of Japanese language educators represented a diverse cross section of K-12 and Higher Ed teaching settings across the US, and their videos provided the jumping off points for deep, thought-provoking discussion among the participants who joined from all over the world. Links to those videos are in Junko Mori's report on [page 24](#).

Also in August, I sat down with ACTFL President and AATJ Past President Jessica Haxhi for a chat that included her thoughts on advocacy and how to expand the pipeline of potential Japanese teachers, and how model airplane racing and political unrest in Latin America in the 80's led to her career as a Japanese teacher (sort of). That interview is on [page 5](#).

Finally, I would like to leave you with some personal reflection. In July, I traveled on an airplane for the first time in over a year to Seattle for the arrival training of the newest group of J-Leap assistant teachers, who, just like the Olympic athletes, had put their lives and dreams on pause, waiting anxiously and wondering whether to keep hoping or give up.

Regardless of how we might feel about the wisdom of holding the games during a pandemic, I think we can agree on one thing. It has been a roller coaster full of emotional twists and turns, starting with the exciting official announcement on Sept. 7, 2013 that Tokyo would be the host city in 2020. Here in the US, Japanese teachers began making travel plans with their students and developing curriculum units, learning activities, and events large and small centered around the Olympics. One of those was the Tokyo Gorin Ondo 2020 Project, organized by JTAT and resulting in almost 200 Japanese language students across the state of Texas performing the Gorin Ondo. I certainly remember those amazing videos shared by JTAT teachers on social media, and we all caught gorin fever in some way.

But I also remember the darkening mood in Tokyo at the beginning of March 2020, the last time I was in Japan. In the U.S., people were just beginning to be aware of a deadly infectious virus, but in Japan, the topic on everyone's minds and every form of media was 新型コロナウイルス, and the steady rise in concern about the virus and the possibility that the Olympics might be canceled.

By the time the Olympics began, we had all been through so much, and I was, frankly, kind of "over it". I did feel like I should at least check out the opening ceremony, so I turned on the tv in my Seattle hotel room, intending to catch up on paperwork while the ceremony was on in the background. Soon, though, I couldn't take my eyes off the screen, and I felt a catch in my throat. It was not the Olympics anyone had envisioned eight years ago. Many hoped it would be a symbol of recovery from the devastation of the 2011 disaster, but it seemed to have become more of a symbol of disappointment and regret. As I watched the ceremony taking place in front of nearly empty stands, with masked athletes observing the moment of silence to remember those lost, I could feel

the regret and disappointment, but I was also moved by the power of human resilience and hope.

Most moving and surprising was watching the lighting of the Olympic cauldron. I am very comfortable with who I am now, but growing up in Japan and the United States, I was always self-conscious and sometimes ashamed to wear a face that didn't quite "belong" in either place. I know that there are still miles to go before biracial, mixed-roots people can achieve full societal acceptance as Japanese, but seeing Naomi Osaka light that cauldron gives me much hope that the possibility exists.

So as we all begin another school year that's a bit uncertain, let us all remain positive and focus on the possible.



Message from the Vice President

新型コロナウイルス感染症パンデミックに始まった副会長としての活動も残り五カ月の締めくくりの時期に入ってきました。大多数の学校が対面授業に戻り始め見た目はパンデミック前と変わらぬ状態になりつつありますが、感染力の強い変異型ウイルスの出現や教育現場での社会的距離やワクチン接種の有無など、いろいろな意味で不安を隠しきれない先生方が多いのではないのでしょうか。

AATJとJFLA（国際交流基金）が中心となって実施しているウェビナーは継続してまいります。また、既にオンラインでの開催が決まっているACTFL学会と並行する形でAATJ独自のプログラムも実施する予定です。さらに例年AAS学会と同時に開催しているAATJの春の学会も昨年同様オンラインで実施することになりました。オンラインとなったことでK-12の先生方も参加しやすくなっていますので、ぜひ参加をご検討ください。

また、AATJやJFLAだけでなく各地域の日本語教師会が主催しているウェビナーなどのイベントが一目でわかるようなカレンダーも運用可能となりAATJのホームページで簡単に検索できるようになりました。こちらの方も是非ご活用ください。また、各教師会独自のワークショップやセミナーなどこのカレンダーに含められるようなイベントがございましたらいつでもご連絡ください。日本語教育関係の様々な情報には目を配っていますが、拡散が妥当な情報がございましたら、フェイスブックやツイッターなど活用して協力させていただきますので、こちらの方もご遠慮なくお申し出ください。

パンデミックと相まって、日本語プログラムの継続が危機に瀕している教育機関があちこちに見られます。そのような教育機関や教育委員会に対してAATJとしてプログラム継続をお願いする正式なレターを準備するなど可能な限りの応援をしています。現況を把握するためのアンケートなども用意していますのでご協力をお願いします。

JNHS（日本語優等生協会、オナーソサイアティ）やNJE（全米日本語試験）に関しましても、まとめ役の先生方から皆さんに送られるアンケートに関しましてもご回答くださるようお願い申し上げます。

個人的には秋学期は日本語は全授業がオンラインで継続し、春学期から対面授業に戻ります。また、毎春実施しているスプリングブレイク京都花見研修、夏季5週間京都日本語研修も実施OKとの通達が大学当局から来ましたが、こればかりは日本の状況次第というところでしょうか。

地方の教師会に属していらない先生方やAATJの傘下に入っていない教師会の先生方のお話も聞かせていただきたいのでsatsutan@cod.eduまでいつでもご連絡ください。



**Shingo
Satsutani**
札谷新吾

Meet Jessica Haxhi, ACTFL President

Interview by Ann Jordan, AATJ President

Jessica Haxhi is a person of many “firsts”-the first Japanese teacher to serve as President of ACTFL and the first whose term will have been during a pandemic and fully virtual. Jessica was also AATJ Co-president with Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku sensei, during its first year after ATJ and NCJLT combined into one organization. She started the first Japanese program at Maloney Magnet School in Waterbury, CT, leaving after almost twenty years to become Supervisor of World Languages for New Haven Public Schools. We had a great conversation about teaching young children, language advocacy and addressing current challenges in Japanese language education, and even model airplane flying. Enjoy!



(Note: Parts of the interview have been edited for clarity.)

Ann: Let’s start with...Why did you become a Japanese teacher?

Jessica: I was very interested in Latin American studies because I had an excellent teacher in high school for the history of Latin America. I had been studying French in high school, but started Spanish in college, and in my junior year, wanted to go to Costa Rica to study abroad.

Back then, in 1988, parts of Latin America were pretty dangerous, especially in El Salvador and Nicaragua with Sandinistas and the Contras. Costa Rica was safe, but my father said he wasn’t going to pay to send me down to that area in the middle of a conflict. He said if I could find a safe country, I could study abroad. So I went into the study abroad office at Duke and asked, “What’s the safest country in the whole world”, and they said, “Japan”, and I said, “Sign me up!”

So you’re here today thanks to the Sandinistas and political unrest in Nicaragua. If things had been peaceful, your life would have turned out quite differently, it sounds like. But there’s a

model airplane connection to your Japanese study abroad experience. Tell me about that.

I had been flying and racing model airplanes competitively in the United States since I was twelve, and a Japanese American gentleman, Jim Shinohara from Chula Vista, had been a sponsor and mentor to me. He was like a grandfather figure to me. During the war, he had been in an internment camp. His family had a huge fruit farm business in Southern California, and he was a very very wealthy person, but so humble and always generous.

When I got to Kansai Gaidai in Osaka for study abroad, it turned out that all the model airplane companies were in Osaka. And I started getting calls inviting me to go flying on the weekends. I went every weekend to fly airplanes, and that's the reason my Japanese really improved. There was no English. I'd say two words in Japanese, and then I'd have to look up the next words in the dictionary. But the context was familiar because I knew about flying airplanes, so we had things to talk about. That was a really incredible learning experience for me.

And the best part of the whole story is that when I got back to the US, years later, I found out that it was Mr. Shinohara who had told the Osaka model airplane group about me, and was probably even sending money for them to take me out. He took care of me, from afar.

How did you meet Mr. Shinohara?

He sponsored a team called the "Samurai Racing Team", that was very famous in the model airplane field. He only recruited the best, and they won everything. They were at a national competition in



Massachusetts that I was working at when I was a young girl. I made a mistake and messed up their time, and I started crying. And Mr. Shinohara came over and said, "What's the matter? Don't worry about it. What's your name? You fly airplanes? We'll get you an airplane."

And a week later, a pink racing airplane showed up at our house in Connecticut. After that, he kept in regular touch and would pay for me to fly different places. Even when I was in college, he would call me. He would send me things like a ham at Christmas. He was just a real guardian angel. He had season tickets for box seats for the Padres and took me to a game. The first time I ate sushi was in San Diego when he took me to a sushi place probably 30 years ago.

So you returned to Japan after college through JET. Where did you go?

I went to Osaka again, to Hirakata-shi, which is where Kansai Gaidai is. It's so weird. I think I put Tokyo on my request form. But it turned out to be very fortuitous because I already knew people through the model airplane connection.

JET was really good for me. I had great co-teachers and I spoke Japanese almost all day, every day. At times, it was hard and I was homesick. There was no social media or email, and I remember my father said, "Don't call anymore. Our phone bill was 500.00 this month." But overall, JET was a great experience.

And right after JET, I returned to the U.S. and found a job teaching English to Japanese students in a special program that prepared them to enter the university. So I did that and then some part time Japanese teaching for a while, and then one of the principals encouraged me to pursue a shortage area permit where you can start getting a full time salary while doing coursework. So I taught high school, middle school Japanese, and even distance learning, would you believe? That must have been 1993. I would drive to one of three high schools to teach, and then use distance teaching for the others, using big awful TVs and Elmo-like overheads. It was really something!

At the end of 1993, my principal at that job told me, "You know, you really need full-time with benefits. There's this elementary position in Waterbury", and I literally said, "What are benefits?" When he said elementary, I also thought, "Kids can't learn Japanese in elementary school." But I went to Maloney and stayed 20 years. Elementary teaching became my passion. That's where I was before this job.

Up to that point, you had no experience teaching very young children, and you were starting the program at Maloney from scratch. Thinking back to those very first years 27 years ago, what stands out in your memory?



The number one thing, when I first started out teaching, was that we used to teach in topics. For example, I would teach colors, and the kids would learn all the colors, and we had all sorts of little games, and then we'd give them a little test. I would think, "They know the colors". So next I would teach the fruits. And so on.

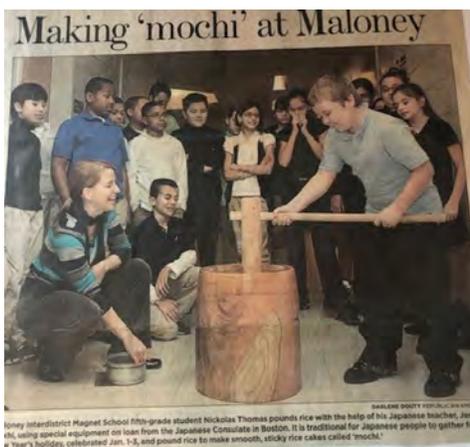
Then in about 1995, I started going to ACTFL, thanks to P.D. money through the Foreign Language Assistance Program grant. I went to ACTFL every year since 1994, and I think I only missed one year because I had my daughter.

I went to the National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL) breakfast, and next to me was Carol Ann Dalberg, who co-wrote *Languages and Children*, which is like the bible of elementary language teaching. I sat next to her and was so excited. I said, "Oh my gosh! Will you sign my book!?"

And she said that she could really use a Japanese demonstration teacher at the institutes that she taught during the summer. So for three summers from 1996, I went and taught with her in month-long methods institutes at Concordia College in Minnesota.

It was me and three others—a German teacher, a French teacher, and a Spanish teacher, who were all master teachers! And I got to hang out with them, and be in [Carol Ann's] methods class every day, and then teach an hour and a half of Japanese to children while other people watched me.

Being a demonstration teacher forced me to think through why I was doing each part of my lessons. And that changed me. It made me understand thematic planning, unit design, and by the end of that, I was creating units that were really rich, not just "colors" or "fruits". For example, one year I taught a unit centered around, "Where's the bear? Let's find the bear who's missing." And then we traveled to different countries to find the bear and asked things like "What color bear is it?" Everything was centered around a theme.



What was most rewarding about teaching that age group?

They're just endless happiness and love. Endless. You can have the worst day ever and some kid is going to hug you. I'd go in and the kids would give me energy. Once you get good at teaching young children, there's very little down side. You have to be in good physical health because it takes so much physical energy. Teaching high school, I feel, is the opposite. It takes much less physical energy. You could sit there if you want, but it takes a lot more mental energy. And they're not going to hug you.

Let's switch gears to talk about the merging of ATJ and NCJLT in 2012, when you and Tohsaku sensei became the first co-presidents of the newly formed AATJ. First, why?

I had been president of NCJLT earlier. And Tohsaku sensei, who's another one of those people who's cared for me in my career, pulled me in for this, and I was honored to be part of it. Almost all the other language organizations were K-16. Japanese was one of the only ones with K-12 still separate from Higher Ed and we knew that so many things can't get done when that's how you are. Unless you're one organization, you can't address those issues of articulation, teacher recruitment, pipelines for students, all those things.

Plus, we were all going to the same funders for support. You can't just keep going to the Japan Foundation asking them to fund all these separate organizations. Also, ACTFL worked with NCJLT as one of its cooperating partners, so NCJLT was controlling the ACTFL sessions. And ATJ was mostly going to AAS. So that caused a divide. Once we were able to pull together, there were ACTFL sessions from university to elementary. And that's really important on so many levels. I think it was 100% the right move. And we also had just one executive director, Susan, for all levels.

Next year marks 10 years since the formation of AATJ. In the co-presidents' joint message at that time, you and Tohsaku sensei said, "Faced with the constantly changing global situation, Japanese language education in the United States is at a crossroads." It feels to me that we are again at a crossroads, so I want to ask you about that.

The funny thing is that it's almost the exact same crossroads, except for the pandemic. Then, the crossroads was this notion that Chinese has more traction, so what does Japanese do about that in terms of advocacy. Some of the things that Tohsaku sensei was talking about then are even more true now, such as the fact that students are really attracted to Japanese culture.

If you ask students, they WANT to learn Japanese. The cultural draw to Japanese is probably even stronger than it was ten years ago. Anime is even more popular than it was. Everything Japanese. So I think we have this incredible opportunity to offer Japanese. I feel like it's that same moment that it always was, but now even more so. The problem is, do we have the teachers to meet the demand?

One challenge is certification. Tell me about the certification that you were describing earlier that sounds like what we in California call an emergency credential.

There used to be two options in Connecticut. You could be enrolled in a planned program like I was, but now they don't do that for Japanese. The only program accredited for non-traditional languages in Connecticut is the "Accelerated Route to Certification" (ARC), which is a year-long program on the

weekends. To participate in that, a school district has to commit to taking care of that person with a full salary while she's in the program. But if you are enrolled in the ARC program, and find a full-time position, you can be paid full salary while you work, under a "Durational Shortage Area Permit" (DSAP).

Something like that could be a solution to the challenge of finding Japanese teachers to fill positions. There is the visa issue, too, which requires a school district to be willing and able to be a visa sponsor.

And it involves lots of paperwork to get the H-1 visa, and teachers paying lawyers. Now they're being more strict, so the school districts have to pay the lawyers, and they don't want to do that. It's also a lot of advocacy on the ground. When I had teachers working under visas, it was me running around to different offices saying, "Sign this, sign this!"

Speaking of advocacy, many just don't seem to quite get to the heart of things, but the most realistic, spot-on advocacy session I've ever attended was yours a few years ago at ACTFL. How have you seen advocacy needs and strategies change since you started your career?

I'm still not sure what people think of as "advocacy". What I see from the perspective of a supervisor is that the number one thing that determines whether a school keeps a program is the quality of the teacher. And not only do you need to be good, but it's about the kids seeing success and about how they feel in your class. And you can't just be giving F's all the time. If half the kids are getting F's, you're not teaching right. You want to make it fun and engaging for everyone. We also have to be careful not to fall into the trap of thinking we only should have the "good kids".

And number two is the level at which the teacher says, "Yes". I know people don't like to hear that from a work-load perspective, but if you make yourself indispensable to a school, help out with other things, and when the principal comes to you, if you're positive and happy and not negative, they are more likely to keep you.

One of the concerns for a while which now seems to be increasing in urgency, is the shrinking pool of teachers and potential teachers just as retirements are starting to accelerate. And some of those retirements have been hastened by the pandemic. What are your thoughts about how we can address that?

I honestly think you have to think about the pipeline. You have all these kids in the US going into this funnel. So why aren't the people coming out of the narrow bottom of the funnel language speakers from diverse backgrounds? And it's because there are all these points along the way where there

aren't opportunities for them to continue. So first of all, I think it starts in elementary school. Are we offering Japanese in a diverse range of elementary schools? Not just the fancy districts, but schools like Maloney Magnet School. And then, if so, do the students have the opportunity to continue in middle school? And in Waterbury where Maloney is, the answer is no.

Do they have the opportunity to continue in high school? If they go to high school, do they have teachers who are telling them about becoming a teacher? Probably not. They probably are told about using their Japanese for business. Is anyone telling them they can become a teacher? Is anyone saying to them,



“These are the colleges that will give you credit for your high school study”? And then once they get to college, are they getting credit for what they've already done, what they can do? Or are students going in and being told, “Take this kanji test. Nope, sorry. You're back in level one.” If that happens to me, I don't want to become a teacher or even continue my study

I think there are all these potential entry points that we could examine and ask ourselves, “Is this a point at which kids are becoming discouraged? Is that a point?” How do we make that a smooth path? And even when you think about the non-native teachers, are they being told they can become teachers? Or is there this notion that only native speakers are good enough to become teachers? If so, that's a problem because I'm a firm believer that you need both. When Kazumi and I were at Maloney together, that was ideal. Because I understand what it's like to learn Japanese. So there are things that I can do for students that are just different. She knows everything about Japanese, and I know about parents in the U.S. I know about American culture. She knows about Japanese culture. So it's perfect.

There are all these ways we need to examine ourselves, and what we're encouraging kids to do as they come through our programs. If they're making it to Japanese 3 in a college program, are we starting to talk to them about becoming a Japanese teacher?

With your job overseeing all world language programs in the district, you probably don't do much direct teaching these days, but I imagine that you do have the opportunity to observe teaching, classes of all levels. Have you been able to do that in some form during remote learning?

Yes, to some extent. I try to give my teachers a lot of space. I didn't go in as much this year because I didn't want them to feel pressured. I did do some demonstration classes online to show some of the methods I might use. For example, on some of the student-fun days, I volunteered to teach Japanese classes, just to see if I could do it and include all of the pieces.

I think all the same things that work in-person pretty much work remotely, but it's much more exhausting. You don't have the energy of the classroom. The poor teachers—many kids never turned the cameras on, and teachers couldn't force them. I don't know how they're going to do it, if we have to go back to that. I really don't.

That seems to be a concern at every school, every level. But despite that, are there things you're hopeful and excited about for the future?

My daughter is nineteen, so I do get to see that age group a lot. They give me a lot of hope for the future. And I've interacted with high school kids a lot in my present role with the Seal of Biliteracy. First, I want to say that the Seal of Biliteracy is the single greatest thing to happen to World Language Education EVER maybe, in terms of advocacy. Aside from ideas about proficiency and standards, the Seal of Biliteracy has so much potential to be powerful, and we haven't even figured it all out. That's how great it is. Because now we have school districts saying, "Wait. We want that. How do we get that?"

And how do you get that? You get that by having long sequences of study. And how do the teachers get that? They get that by teaching to proficiency and not just teaching grammar and topics.

That can drive the quality of the instruction and the size and scope of the program.

Right. Teachers can go in and listen to how their students did on the AAPPL or STAMP test. The possibilities are really endless. You can use the Seal of Biliteracy for teacher professional development, so many things. There are just no negatives. And if you do implement it, you want to make sure that every language can get it, so you're including the heritage kids. So the Seal of Biliteracy gives me hope.

The other thing is that this generation makes me hopeful. Yes, they have their quirks, and they are on TikTok a lot. BUT they are very pro-others. They aren't just in it for themselves. I see it in my daughter's friends, I see it in the kids I come in contact with. They're very social justice oriented, very concerned with everyone having a chance, equity... all of it. And that makes me hopeful for the future, even though you can get very sad about politics and things nowadays. I think this generation of kids will change things.

Applications Open for Spring 2022 Bridging Scholarships

The Bridging Project offers scholarships to American undergraduate students participating in study-abroad programs in Japan. The [United States-Japan Bridging Foundation](#) funds scholarships through AATJ to help students study abroad in Japan for a semester or an academic year.

AATJ's Bridging Project and the Bridging Foundation have been carefully monitoring the situation in Japan, as well as US colleges and universities, related to study abroad. Although the border to Japan remains closed to international visitors (including students and scholars) as of August 2021, we anticipate that by the end of 2021 it will again be possible for students to obtain visas and travel to study programs at Japanese institutions.

We therefore are opening up applications to students who have been accepted and plan to study in Japan during the Spring 2022 term.

For information on applying for Bridging Scholarships, and to access the online application, please visit the [Study Abroad](#) section of the AATJ website.

Shared Calendar of Japanese Education Events Now Live

In collaboration with our regional affiliates and the Japan Foundation-Los Angeles, AATJ has created a shared calendar for events sponsored by our various organizations. Find out about professional development opportunities, activities for your students, conferences and workshops, and more!

You can see the calendar by clicking on the calendar icon on AATJ's home page, or by going directly to <https://www.aatj.org/calendar-aatjfla-events> . If you wish to import the entries into your own calendar, click on the link in the lower right corner.

To submit an event for the calendar, please contact the AATJ office or the officers of your local/regional affiliate.



HOW TO START A JNHS CHAPTER



Learn about existing
JNHS chapters

AATJ Newsletter Articles

8/2020 - 11/2020 - 3/2021 - 5/2021



Nominate students

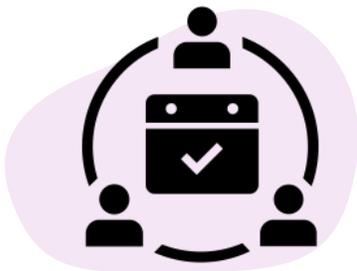
Pre-college: **Criteria & Process**

College: **Criteria & Process**



Form a team of
officers

Example of officer descriptions



Plan events and
have fun!

Example of events



Questions? Contact us!

jnhs@aatj.org



Japanese Program “S.O.S.”: Strategies, Opportunities, and Support

Ann Jordan, AATJ President

Starting with this issue, we begin a series aimed at addressing two challenges currently facing Japanese language education by outlining an approach we’re calling SOS (Strategies, Opportunities, Support). Our first article has more of a K-12 focus, but can also be applicable to some college programs.

Current Challenges in Japanese Language Education

Maintaining healthy programs and retaining and recruiting teachers has been a concern for the past several years, and not just in Japanese language education. According to data gathered by the U.S. government, teachers’ unions, numerous education policy think tanks, and media outlets, the need for teachers is now far exceeding the supply. In Japanese, we have seen the teacher shortage coming for a while, with retirements increasing at the same time the pool of new teachers to replace them has become smaller and smaller. Recent job postings have gone unfilled for long periods of time, placing survival of long-standing Japanese programs in danger.

This situation was already worrisome, but the challenges of the pandemic have led many Japanese teachers to retire earlier than they planned. It has also created financial burdens for schools that have led some schools, both K-12 and college, to begin reducing or phasing out Japanese language programs or to consider doing so in the future.

What Can We Do? SOS!

To address these challenges effectively, advocacy and support must begin early with proactive measures for ALL programs. By the time a teacher has sent the SOS distress call to AATJ and JFLA, a program may have passed the point of no return. But by approaching the problem in a more holistic way and rethinking what we mean by “SOS”, we can save more programs. So what do we mean by that?

S is for (proactive) STRATEGIES

You may be a dedicated, skilled teacher, but if no one outside of your classroom knows that, your program may not survive through tough times. Quality is important, but so is marketing. Japanese is almost always a choice, and your program needs to not just be good, but better than the other choices. So always be thinking of how to share good news; don’t wait until you’re in trouble. In addition to kuchikomi, there are some things you have to consider as part of the regular job of a Japanese teacher such as maintaining a high profile so that people know about the great things going on in your program. Notice, I didn’t say “classroom”. Your Japanese program is more than your classroom (virtual or in-person)— it is all of the experiences that students gain from taking Japanese

from you. It's also very important to be involved outside of Japanese, so that not only is your program vital to the school, but so are YOU!

How to Maintain a High Profile (just a few examples):

- Publish a newsletter and make sure to share it with parents, school administrators, and the community
- Create a website for your program (or have a student do it) and keep it updated
- Social media (Instagram, etc.) account for your Nihongo Program
- Be involved outside of your program
- Maintain communication with senpai of your program
- Toot your program's horn! About cultural events, activities, exchanges, JNHS, etc.
- Bring the community in, take the program out to the community

At the same time, make sure that you're collecting evidence. That can be as simple as just dropping evidence such as complimentary emails, news articles, school bulletin announcements, and photos of class activities and events, into a google folder. Information about how and when the program started should go into the folder. If you don't know, then now is the time to start finding out. All of this evidence is very helpful if you suddenly need a support letter from JFLA or AATJ. We can write a much stronger letter very quickly if we can cite specific details of your program.

Types of Evidence:

- Program history
- Enrollment data
- Student/parent surveys
- Program accolades
- Media mentions
- Photos
- Involvement in JNHS

S is also for (proactive) Retirement Strategies

If retirement is in your near future (5 or fewer years away), start planning now. It's really important to be actively engaged in finding your replacement so that the program you lovingly built can continue to thrive. Use your network of local AATJ affiliate colleagues, JET alum, former students, and others. You're now not only a teacher and marketing specialist, you'll have to become an HR director. When I knew that I would be retiring "in a few years", even before I had made a final decision, I tapped into my own local network of Japanese teachers and let them know that I was thinking of retiring. The program the next teacher would inherit was strong, with a high profile, so it was stable and appealing enough to attract interest. If you are isolated and without a local network, reach out to neighboring affiliates.

O is for OPPORTUNITIES

Seek out opportunities, recognize them, value, and nurture them. Most high school teachers of Japanese have heard their students say that being in Japanese is like being in a family. This may be true to some extent for college as well. Because a high school Japanese program usually only has one or maybe two teachers at a school, students experience something almost impossible in any other course of study: learning and growing together with the same group of students and the same teacher throughout all four years. No IB or AP exam can measure the value of this, but it's HUGE. And it is filling a social-emotional need that is so critical for young people, particularly now. Remember that you are not only building relationships with your students and they with each other, but your program is also building relationships.

Don't Miss Opportunities to:

- Build relationships with parents, community, and fellow teachers, so that they become invested in the Nihongo program family
- Involve students/JNHS/Japan Club members in building & promoting the Nihongo program brand
- Make your program accessible to ALL LEARNERS!
- Take advantage of JFLA grants, events, other opportunities and share this info with site/district admin
- **Be the best teacher you can be** by participating in ongoing professional development to keep your teaching engaging and current.

S is also for SUPPORT

It's important to recognize warning signs, to know whom and how to call for help. **Some warning signs** include:

- Trend of decline in enrollment
- Reduction of sections, even when interest and enrollment seem strong
- Not offering a Japanese 1 class, even temporarily

If any of these happen, or if something doesn't seem right, be vocal. Ask questions, find out what's going on. Is funding an issue? If so, look into applying for a JFLA program support grant. Be sure to give your local affiliate a heads up, so they can be ready to help, if needed.

The support stage is where having the backing of organizations like AATJ and JFLA matters. When teachers begin noticing signs of trouble, some are hesitant to speak out or ask for help. They may feel embarrassed or that the problem isn't really "bad enough". But the sooner you contact us, the sooner we can help you to act strategically and proactively.

A letter from AATJ and JFLA to your administration signals to the decision makers that the eyes of a national organization are focused on their local Japanese program. It helps shift their thinking

about the program as being small and specialized to one that's part of a larger entity. It also makes it a little more difficult to operate in secret.

Other Sources of Support Letters, Emails:

- Your local AATJ affiliate, local and state language teachers associations
- JNHS officers and students
- Supportive parents
- Community partners

I hope you found this helpful. In future issues, we plan to feature SOS success stories and advice from individual teachers, as well as more strategies for college programs. We welcome feedback and suggestions from all of you, so please feel free to reach out to Ann Jordan, teiann@gmail.com or Tomoko Takami, ttakami@sas.upenn.edu. For more about program advocacy and the Japanese language teacher pipeline, we invite you to check out these two great resources from ACTFL President Jessica Haxhi:

- [“Can-Do” Statements for a Diverse Japanese Teacher Pipeline](#) (*Japanese Language & Literature*)
- [Keep the Airplane Flying! Advocacy for Japanese Language Programs](#) (OATJ presentation video)

AATJ Executive Officer Nominations Now Open

Nominations are now open for two **AATJ Executive Officer positions**, to be elected this fall for terms of office that begin in January 2022:

1. A **President Elect**, who will serve one year and then become President for one year. (This officer may also serve one year as Immediate Past President following the year as President.)
2. A **Vice President**: Two-year term. The position alternates between K-12 and post-secondary members. This year a K-12 member will be elected to the position.

For details about the duties and terms of office of the officers, please see the [Bylaws section](#) of the AATJ website.

Nominations are requested for these two positions. To nominate a colleague (or yourself), please send the name by email to nominations@aatj.org, and a brief (one paragraph) explanation of why you think the nominee would be suitable for the position. The deadline for receiving nominations is **September 30, 2021**.

2021 Annual Fall Conference at Virtual ACTFL 2021

The 2021 AATJ Fall Conference will be held November 19-21, in conjunction with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Annual Convention and World Languages Expo. The format this year will once again be virtual. All presentations are pre-recorded and will be either Simulive or On Demand. During Simulive sessions, which occur on a specific schedule, attendees will be able to view the pre-recorded content and interact with the presenter through live Q&A, along with a chat feature. On Demand sessions will be available to view any time throughout the convention dates, and there is a function for participants to contact the presenter for follow up.

After the virtual convention, all Simulive and On Demand presentations will be accessible on demand to attendees until February 28, 2022 at 11:59 p.m.ET. During the virtual convention, attendees will be able to go into the Exhibitor module to visit with participating exhibitors. There will be dedicated time slots in the schedule for visiting virtual exhibits.

To register for the ACTFL Convention, please visit the [Registration page](#) and click the “Register Online” button.

Registration Category	Early bird (by 9/15/21)	Regular (9/16/21 ~ 12/31/21)
Member	\$165	\$215
Non-Member	\$265	\$315
Student	\$75	\$100

If you are a current AATJ member, be sure to scroll down the ACTFL 2021 Virtual Registration page and use “Convention Partner Organization Registration” under Option 2 in order to register at the lower member rate.

ACTFL Stipend Award Program

ACTFL will award a number of **\$100 stipends** to registrants who fall into three categories, including **first-time attendees**. Information is available at [the ACTFL Stipend Award Program page](#). Applications for the stipend must be submitted **by Wednesday, September 15, 2021**. *Please note: In order to apply for a stipend, you must be a member of ACTFL (not just a member of AATJ) valid through November 30, 2021.*

Stipend Categories:

- First time attendees who have **never** attended an ACTFL Annual Convention & World Languages Expo
- Individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC)
- New Teachers who are within the first three years of their teaching career

Applicants will be notified of the decision by Friday, September 29, 2021, and the recipient is expected to register for the Convention by Friday, October 15. Applicants must have met all the requirements before applying. Once your participation in the ACTFL 2021 Virtual Convention is verified, you will receive a \$100 credit back to your original form of payment.

AATJ-Sponsored Sessions for the ACTFL 2021 Virtual Convention

AATJ plans to sponsor two Simulive sessions (video with live presenters available for Q&A in a chat feature during the session) and eight On Demand sessions including three practice-oriented paper presentations and three research-oriented paper presentations. Because of the online format, the number of accepted papers and presentations sessions has been greatly reduced from past in-person conventions. The list of AATJ-sponsored presentations follows. There will also be a full line-up of ACTFL convention keynote speakers and general-interest sessions.

This year’s AATJ Teacher Award Ceremony and General Meeting will be held outside of the ACTFL 2021 Virtual Convention. We will notify members at a later date regarding these online events in the fall.

Two Simulive Sessions	
<p>Friday, 11/19 4:45 PM - 5:30 PM (ET)</p> <p>Fostering Social-Emotional Learning in Everyday Instruction: Why It Matters Junko Tokuda Simpson, Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku, and Izumi Takeda University of California, San Diego <i>(Language of presentation: Japanese)</i></p>	<p>Saturday, 11/20 1:50 PM - 2:35 PM (ET)</p> <p>Successful Reflective-Reflexive Approach for Self-Regulated Learning Mieko Avello Miami Palmetto Senior High School Kazue Masuyama California State University, Sacramento <i>(Language of presentation: Japanese)</i></p>

Eight On Demand Sessions	
<p>Equitable Grading Practices in World Language Classroom Mio Nishimura Alisal High School Yo Azama Salinas Union High School District <i>(Language of presentation: Japanese)</i></p>	<p>What's New for AP Japanese Curriculum and Exam? Kazue Masuyama California State University, Sacramento Tomoko Takami University of Pennsylvania Koji Otani Thomas Jefferson High School Mieko Avello Miami Palmetto Senior High School <i>(Language of presentation: Japanese)</i></p>
<p>Developing the 21st Century Skills Using Tasks in the Language Classroom Shinji Shimoura, Chizuru Imase, and Mako Nozu University of South Florida <i>(Language of presentation: Japanese)</i></p>	<p>Never Ending Journey: Advocating for Your Language Program Kumi Kobayashi and Yukiko Hara Los Gatos High School <i>(Language of presentation: English)</i></p>
<p>Designing Japanese Language, Food, and Culture Courses with CCBI Approach Yuko Prefume Baylor University Hideko Shimizu Vanderbilt University Tomoko Kato College of William & Mary <i>(Language of presentation: Japanese)</i></p>	<p>Ecology and Vitality of Language Programs: Advocating for Japanese FLT Elizabeth Brown Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts Amanda Lanier Michigan State University Tracie Whiting Kipper Kansas City Art Institute Yoshiko Paris Randolph-Macon College <i>(Language of presentation: English)</i></p>
<p>AATJ Practice-Oriented Paper Session Session Chair: Junko Tokuda Simpson University of California, San Diego English-Japanese Virtual Language Exchange (VLE) in Action Mariko Kawaguchi and Catherine Ryu Michigan State University <i>(Language of presentation: Japanese)</i> Blended Learning as the "New Normal" for Teaching Japanese Takako Aikawa Massachusetts Institute of Technology <i>(Language of presentation: English)</i> Developing Unit to Teach Culture using "Understanding by Design" Noriko Fujioka-Ito University of Cincinnati <i>(Language of presentation: Japanese)</i></p>	<p>AATJ Research-Oriented Paper Session Session Chair: Junko Tokuda Simpson University of California, San Diego The Texting Lingo: Online Written Socialization of L2 Japanese Learners Shinsuke Tsuchiya Brigham Young University <i>(Language of presentation: English)</i> More than a Test: On Adaptive Japanese Online Placement Test Design Catherine Ryu and Akiko Imamura Michigan State University <i>(Language of presentation: English)</i> Measurement Functioning of the AP Japanese Conversation Prompts Nana Suzumura California State University - Long Beach <i>(Language of presentation: English)</i></p>

Also, on the ACTFL Convention Program, there are a round table and an electronic poster session featuring AATJ Members.

Round Tables & Electronic Posters (On Demand)	
<p>Identifying Hidden Cultural Layers and Beyond: A Japanese Textbook Project (<i>Round Table</i>)</p> <p>Hisaaki Wake and Caroline Wake US Air Force Academy <i>(Language of presentation: Japanese)</i></p>	<p>Engaging Online Learners with Technology, Learning Activities and Care (<i>Round Table</i>)</p> <p>Yasuko Rallings Wake Forest University <i>(Language of presentation: English)</i></p>
<p>Teaching Interactive and Iterative Writing Process in Intermediate Japanese (<i>Electronic Poster</i>)</p> <p>Fukumi Matsubara North Central College <i>(Language of presentation: English)</i></p>	

Note: There may be more presentations which will be made by Japanese language educators or related to Japanese language education. For details, please check [the ACTFL 2021 Virtual Online Convention Program](#).

Call For Proposals: 2022 AATJ Annual Spring Conference

The 2022 Annual Spring Conference is scheduled to be held virtually on March 17-19, 2022. The online format will be similar to the 2021 conference, with live presentation sessions on Zoom. The sessions will be recorded for later viewing by conference registrants.

Proposals are invited for individual papers and panels. Individual papers are 20 minutes long with an additional 5 minutes for discussion. Organized panels are 100 minutes long and are limited to four active participants (four paper presenters, or three presenters with one facilitator).

A proposal should be in one of the following areas: (1) pedagogy*, (2) literature, (3) linguistics, (4) second language acquisition, or (5) special interest group (SIG) topics**.

*If your proposal is on pedagogy, please indicate on the appropriate section of the online submission form which subcategory you are interested in: Curriculum/course design and Implementation; Material development; Assessment; Language, Culture and Identity; Language and Technology; K-16 Articulation

****If your proposal is on a topic that is outside the main topic areas, please consider whether it might fit into one of the AATJ's SIG topics: Professional Development; Translating/Interpreting; Japanese for Specific Purposes; Japanese as a Heritage Language; Study Abroad for Advanced Skills; Language and Culture; Classical Japanese; Community College Training; Proficiency Assessment; AP Japanese**

If your proposal is on a topic related to one of the SIG topics, and if you would like to have it considered for sponsorship by the SIG, please indicate which SIG topic is addressed in the appropriate section of the submission form.

An abstract for an individual paper should be no more than 300 words in English or 700 characters in Japanese. For organized panels, a maximum 300-word or 700-character abstract is required from each participant, in addition to a maximum 300-word or 700-character abstract for the panel itself.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following characteristics: contribution to the field, originality, practicality, methodological or conceptual soundness, and clarity of writing. *Please note that each individual may submit only one proposal, as presenter, co-presenter, or panel member. This includes participation in SIG panels and presentations. It is not necessary to be an AATJ member to submit a proposal; however, if your presentation is accepted for inclusion in the conference program, you will be asked to become a member if you are not a member already.*

Proposals must be submitted online. For details and to submit proposals, please visit <http://aatj.org/conferences-spring>.

AATJ is committed to gender, ethnic, institutional, and professional diversity among presenters. Panel and co-presenter submissions reflecting diversity and inclusiveness in addition to quality will take precedence in the review process. Proposals on topics related to K-12 instruction and learning, and from K-12 educators, are encouraged.

The submission deadline for all proposals is 11:59 p.m. Eastern time, Tuesday, November 30, 2021.



Global Network Event Connects Japanese Teachers Around the World

Junko Mori, AATJ Immediate Past-President

As previewed in the May newsletter, AATJ hosted an online event titled 「多言語社会の日本語教育」 “[Japanese Language Education in Multilingual Societies](#)” on August 7, 2021. This was the fifth in the Globally Connected Online Japanese Language Education Series, established as part of [collaboration among 12 Japanese language educators’ organizations worldwide](#). The event was joined by more than 100 participants, who engaged in small group discussions to reflect on the reality of our everyday life surrounded by a multitude of languages, to critically examine the adjective “foreign” still often attached to language education, and to explore possibilities in Japanese language education moving forward. A little over 50% of the participants were from the US, but others joined the event from a variety of locations, including Argentina, Australia, Canada, France, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam.

This live discussion was preceded by a [virtual panel of Japanese language educators](#), which served to prompt participant reflection in advance. We are grateful for the following seven panelists who generously agreed to create thought-provoking videos on short notice:

- [Hanna Brandt](#) (Harding Senior High School, MN & Concordia Language Villages, MN)
- [William Collazo](#) (Deerfield Beach High School, FL)
- [William Matsuzaki](#) (All Saints Episcopal School, TX)
- [Carla Swick](#) (Palmer High School, AK)
- [Shuichiro Takeda](#) (Hunter College, City University of New York, NY)
- [Takami Taylor](#) (University of West Florida, FL)
- [Kazumi Yamashita-Iverson](#) (Maloney Interdistrict Magnet School, CT)

A word cloud was created at the beginning of the live event based on three keywords that the participants shared as takeaways from the panelists’ videos: “diversity”, “identity”, “community”, “collaboration”, and “connection” were among the words most frequently mentioned. These ideas were further expanded upon during the group discussions, and ideas such as “recognition and appreciation of each individual’s humanity”, “human-centered rather than student-centered teaching”, “shifting from teaching of grammatical rules to cultivating global citizens” emerged during the concluding discussion. Many participants conveyed their thoughts that two hours went by too quickly and did not give them sufficient time to delve into the issues further. We hope to maintain the momentum of this discussion and will consider fostering future opportunities for continuous discussion on these important topics.



Let's make Origami with Japanese friends!

Try Japanese traditional artwork and make Japanese Friends!

Sep 25
Sat

10:00~11:00 Sep 26 JST
18:00~19:00 Sep 25 PST
19:00~20:00 Sep 25 MST
20:00~21:00 Sep 25 CST
21:00~22:00 Sep 25 EST

NAVIGATORS



and more!

Do you know Origami?

Origami is a form of traditional Japanese culture that lets you to create various works of art using only a square piece of paper. In this event, you will work with Japanese students to create simple works of art with origami. You will be able to talk about Japanese cultures at the same time.

You don't speak Japanese? Don't worry. Japanese students will try to teach you in English. But if you're a Japanese learner, you can try your speaking ability too!

Event outline

Contents: Online International exchange with Japanese students.

Fee: Free

Eligibility: Applicants ages must be junior high school to university students or equivalent age / Must be fluent in English.

■ Apply here to join!

<https://bit.ly/2WvDzd5>

Inquires: sekaibu@gmail.com



U.S. Embassy Tokyo Grant Program



Global Talk!



Global Talk!

In Japan, there are a great number of students who seek for chances to practice their English skills and are also willing to connect with students in the U.S.! If you are a Japanese language teacher teaching in the U.S., join our program to provide your students with a virtual, cross-cultural, and inter lingual learning experience!

日本には学校や地域を超えて「アメリカの学生と交流したいです!」と手を挙げている学生(中学~大学生)がたくさんいます! 日本語の先生方、SDGsなどの社会問題から身近なアニメまで、クラス進捗に合わせたトピックや期間で交流が可能です。学生達にとって忘れられない国際交流を作りませんか?

How do the students interact? どんな交流するの?



A coordinating meeting between partner school(s) and Knox will be held before the exchange. The topic will be picked along with the class progress of the partner school(s).

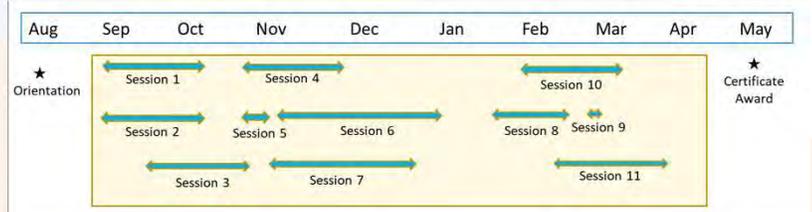
What kind of Japanese students will be interacting with my students? 交流する相手の日本人学生はどんな学生?

Japanese participants (from junior high to university students) will go through a selection process carried on by Knox. Participants take part from all over Japan.



What is the exchange period and schedule? 交流期間やスケジュールは?

A coordinating meeting between partner school(s) and Knox will be held before the exchange. The topic will be picked along with the class progress of the partner school(s).



Past Participating Schools in U.S..

- Harvard University, MA
- Brown University, RI
- United Nations International School, NY
- Global Online Academy, WA
- Bayside Middle School, VA
- etc.

Click here!



Program website: <https://globaltalk-knox.com/english/>
email: globaltalk@knoxenglish.com



**American Association of
Teachers of Japanese, Inc.**

Campus Box 366

University of Colorado

Boulder, CO 80309-0366



<https://m.facebook.com/AATJ2012/>



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If you have any news to share on our Social Media,

please email Noriko Otsuka at:

nivankeuren@fcps.edu