Letter from President of AITJ

Warm Greetings to All,

As always it was wonderful seeing so many of you at the conference in the fall. For those of you who were unable to attend, you missed some outstanding presentations. The range of presentations, from "Tips on How to Use the Nelson's Kanji Dictionary" to "Children's Songs with Games," was as impressive as the actual content of the many top-rate presentations. Thanks again to all of you who contributed and attended. Special congratulations go to Michael Peterson, who represented us so well and is the Foreign Language Teacher of the Year for Indiana. This year's Japanese Teacher of the Year is Dr. Yasuko Watt. We all appreciate you both for your ongoing contributions to our profession.

With the beginning of the new year, many of us have begun a new semester. It is refreshing to start a clean page in the grade book and it is a good time to reenergize ourselves and our students. It is also a time for us to give thought to and take action regarding next year's first-year Japanese students. Many of us are planning trips to Japan or to host Japanese students at our school. I wish all of you the best of luck with all of these important endeavors.

Japan Bowl 2004 is on the horizon as well. Center Grove High School is the host site. The event will take place from 1:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. Registration will be held from 12:30 p.m. until 1:30 p.m. The end time depends greatly on the number of participants. If you know of someone who has not received the e-mailings regarding this event, please let me know. Also, please let me know if your students are planning to present a cultural activity, as discussed at our conference. I especially need to know if someone is bringing DDR, as I will need to secure a special place and TV monitors for such an activity.

If you have thought about presenting at an IFLTA conference but do not know where to begin, let me know and I will help you get started. One way to get started is to think about a lesson or unit that you wish were available. You can start to create that unit yourself. You might even send out an e-mail asking if any of our members have related materials that you can incorporate into your lesson. There may be materials on a topic you feel is important, but the materials need to be expanded upon. You could create student activities that bring the unit to life. It can be great fun and very motivating to seek another teacher to work with. If I have inadvertently omitted a presentation, please let me know. We all appreciate our presenters and encourage members who have not presented to tackle some new material or expand on material already available. DEAI certainly provides many opportunities for lessons!!

We would love to hear your ideas for recruiting students! I see a presentation lurking in there. This year I joined our French and German teachers at an information session for 8th-graders during scheduling week. A 5th-year French student put together a power point presentation with photos taken by one of my students on our trip last summer. The French student did this as part of her computer class -- the night before we gave the presentation!! Collaboration is a wonderful thing. It's nice to have something ready to go for next year's presentation. We must get the word out on what a beautiful, practical, and learnable language Japanese is.

Please submit articles to the newsletter regarding your trips and host experiences.

I hope to see everyone at Japan Bowl on March 6.

Have a safe and joyful 2004.        -Jane McMurrer

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---NEWS, EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS---

--- TRIP TO JAPAN ---

This summer, I will be taking a group of students to Japan and Beijing. I'm planning on taking them on a roughly one week tour of Japan, one week of homestay experience in Akita-ken where I lived for three years, and then onto Beijing to get a taste of more of Asia. I'm having all of my students do an independent study credit while they are gone to make it a more richly educational experience and to help them process their experience earlier than might be normal. If you or some of your students would be interested in joining, please let me know. I'm hoping to finalize reservations the week of January 5. I've enclosed the itinerary proposal. The cost is $3000 all inclusive except for Chinese visa and souveniers.

Please tell your students to contact me if there are interested in joining us in the trip.

Michael Kluemper
Jasper High School
Japanese Immersion Program in Muncie
Karen Dowling

The students at Muncie Central and Southside High Schools are experiencing a year of immersion into the Japanese culture this school year. From Japan, through the APECT organization, two exchange students are in Muncie attending classes: Makoto Kumazaki from Kawasaki and Wataru Nabeta from Tokyo. Along with these two students, native Japanese, Aki Shiino, assists Dowling sensei in class with kanji and cultural lessons. These three have become very involved students and have added a lot to Japan Club cultural events.

In March, two teachers from the Utsunomiya-Indiana exchange program will come to the two high schools to present cultural activities and speaking practice. Muncie schools hosted two teachers last year through this program, directed by Earlham College, and had an incredible experience. This opportunity allows the Muncie schools and Muncie, as a city, to promote the Tochigi-Indiana sister state/prefecture program.

Starting in April, a visiting teacher from Japan, through the IIP -International Internship Program- will come to assist Dowling sensei until the end of the school year. This female teacher will present grammar, offer cultural lessons and speaking assistance.

In January, Karen Dowling was awarded a Robert Bell education grant from the Muncie Community Foundation. This grant entitled "Krazy Kimonos for the Culture Curious" will enable third-year students to attend Ball State University's exhibit on kimono and Japanese traditional arts as well as each student making his or her own kimono from bed sheets. The kimonos, homemade tea bowls and authentic foods prepared by Japanese students will be on display at the annual Japan Night held in the Muncie Central Student Center.

On April 29, Muncie Central and Southside's 2nd year students will partner with Keihin Aircon in Muncie for the International Career Connections Expo at the Horizon Center. This Expo promotes global economy and a variety of cultures. Over 2,000 students attend this Expo from around East Central Indiana.

--------- REPORT ---------

--------- ESSAYS ---------

私とポールスチート大学での日本語教育
桑名保智Kuwana Yasutomo

私は2003年3月に日本の大学院を卒業しました。そこでは、英語を勉強してきました。大学院を卒業した後、日本で英語を教えるつもりでした。しかし、私は今アメリカで日本語を教えています。

日本では、先生になるためにはテストに合格しなければなりません。しかし、残念ながら、私はそのテストで落ちました。私を見て困りました。そんな時、インディアナ州にあるポールスチート大学のTESOLのプログラムを知りました。私は正しい英語の先生になりたいですから、ポールスチート大学で勉強したいと思いました。私はあまりお金がないかもしれませんから、ポールスチート大学で勉強するためには、日本語を教えてなければなりません。

ポールスチート大学で日本語を教えることは私にとって期待と不安でした。外国で日本語を教えることができませんでしたから、アメリカでアメリカ人に日本語を教えることはとても魅力的でした。また、アメリカで日本語を教えることは私にとっていいことだと思いました。将来先生になるために、いい経験になるからです。だから、私はポールスチート大学に来るのが楽しみでした。しかし、また、私は少し不安でした。上手に日本語を教えることができるかどうかわからないからです。だから、ポールスチート大学に来る前に、日本語を勉強したいと思いました。私は本屋に行って、日本語の本を買って。そして、一生懸命勉強しました。

私は2003年8月にポールスチート大学に来ました。そして、日本語学科の先生たちと会話をしました。私は日本語301を教えることになりました。日本語301の生徒は、日本語を専攻する生徒です。私は不安になりました。最初の授業の日はとても緊張しました。でも、私は少し安心しました。日本語301の生徒はみんな私を歓迎してくれたからです。だから、私は日本語の授業の準備を頭張ろうと思いました。私はとても忙しかったです。TESOLの勉強もしなければならなかったからです。でも、私は頭張りました。私の生徒に日本語をたくさん学んでもらいたかったからです。また、私は私の生徒に授業を楽しんでもらいたかったからです。2003年の秋学期は私にとって初めての学期でしたから、大変でした。しかし、私の生徒はいつも私を助けてくれました。また、日本語学科の先生たちも私にアドバイスをくれました。とても助かりました。
The year 2003 was marked as the 150th anniversary of the US-Japan relationship on both sides of the Pacific. Strictly speaking, however, the official relationship was not established between the two countries until March 31, 1854, when the Treaty of US-Japan Peace and Amity was signed. Of course, it was with good reason that the year 2003 was chosen to mark the anniversary of the historical event: The fleet of the Black Ships led by Commodore William Perry arrived at Uraga on July 8, 1853, bringing to full view to the Japanese the enormous pressure from Western powers for Japan to end its self-imposed Sakoku seclusion policy and to open itself. From the US perspective, on the other hand, the effort to open Japan was put into action from even earlier.

Commodore Perry, leading his fleet of four steamed-powered navy warships, departed Norfolk, Virginia November 24, 1852. As is well known, that effort soon led to the opening of Japan and therefore constitutes the prelude to modern Japanese history.

The impact of the arrival of the Black Ships on Japan was enormous. The reactions of the Japanese when they first sighted the Black Ships are vividly captured by a poem composed anonymously only days after the arrival. It was a ky_ka, an offspring of waka poetry, characterized by its humorous tone and the playing of words. The following are two readings of the same poem. The humorous nature of the poem is obvious if we compare the two radically different readings housed inseparably in the same poem.

Watching the Black Ships
Anonymous, composed July 1853

First reading:
The Jokisen tea
Awakes the slumber
Of Mister _hira._
A mere four cups of it
Will keep him up overnight.

Second reading:
The steam-engined ships,
Break the peaceful slumber
Of the Pacific
A mere four boats are enough
To make us lose sleep at night.

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One Ky_ka Poem and Three Pictures:
Thoughts on 150 Years of US-Japan Relationship
Guohe Zheng

The year 2003 was marked as the 150th anniversary of the US-Japan relationship on both sides of the Pacific. Strictly speaking, however, the official relationship was not established between the two countries until March 31, 1854, when the Treaty of US-Japan Peace and Amity was signed. Of course, it was with good reason that the year 2003 was chosen to mark the anniversary of the historical event: The fleet of the Black Ships led by Commodore William Perry arrived at Uraga on July 8, 1853, bringing to full view to the Japanese the enormous pressure from Western powers for Japan to end its self-imposed Sakoku seclusion policy and to open itself. From the US perspective, on the other hand, the effort to open Japan was put into action from even earlier.
In 2001, thanks to the support of Indiana State Department of Education, I had the opportunity to visit Uraga and Shimoda, two of the places most famous for the role they played in the opening of Japan 150 years ago. The former place is where Commodore Perry’s fleet first landed; the second is the town where the Treaty of US-Japan Peace and Amity was signed and is known as “Kaikoku no machi,” or “the town that opened Japan.” The above is a picture of the big monument in a memorial park in Uraga commemorating the event. What follows is a picture of the statue of Commodore Perry and the replica of the Black Ship operating as a tourist attraction along the coast of the town of Shimoda.

The most salient ky_ka feature of this poem involve the use of two puns. The first is the word ____, which can be read either “_hira,” which would be a fairly common Japanese surname, or it can be read “Taihei,” which refers to the Pacific Ocean and by extension it means the long lasted peace that Japan enjoyed during the over 200 years of seclusion under the rule of Tokugawa Shogunate. The second pun involves the word “j_kisen.” Ostensibly, it refers to an expensive tea popular at the time, as can be from its written form in kanji, ____ , but its pronunciation makes it abundantly clear that it can also refer to steam-powered ships and therefore American warships, name the ___ when written in kanji. In this way, a traditional Japanese poetic form is used to preserve the immediate reaction of the Japanese when the country was forcibly thrust into the modern age. The picture on the previous page is an artist version of the Black Ships at the time. (See above picture.)

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Memorial Park of Perry’s Landing

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Business Japanese and K-16 Education
--A Research Survey
Sadatoshi Tomizawa

I have just finished a survey research entitled as “Japanese Skills and Culture Knowledge for American Workers.” The survey was sent to two different groups of firms operating in Indiana: one is American firms doing business with Japanese in Indiana and/or in Japan, and the other is Japanese firms operating in Indiana. The firms were identified by the Japan-America Society of Indiana by checking their membership list. The major purpose of the research was to find out how much demand there is for the skill of Japanese and culture knowledge among international/global firms. Fifty-three responded to the survey. The results revealed two significant findings: (a) there are a significant number of firms in Indiana where Japanese is used for their daily business activities although most of them are Japanese firms and (b) the level of Japanese they use is very high, at least the ACTFL Advanced level, which is characterized as the level of a native speaker of the target language.
program. This means the college level first-year Japanese has to be offered at the eighth grade and the learner at the level has to move on to the ninth-year level Japanese when the student is at his/her senior year at a college. Actually, it is even our dream as a college level Japanese teacher to teach the third-year level Japanese to freshmen so that they can learn the language at the sixth-year level (which is considered a graduate school level) when they are seniors although we cannot ignore those college students who want to learn Japanese for the first time. If this sequence of learning the language, from eighth grade to senior year at a college, were the case, their Japanese proficiency level could reach at the level of “employable” or at least the level at which a firm could hire them as a “prospect.” Additionally, the student has to have some extra course work outside or beyond the general language program; that is, the content based courses such as Business Japanese and Technical Japanese at a multi-level sequence. Technical Japanese Program at the University of Washington and Business Japanese Program at the University of Maryland are well established ones.

Mathematically speaking, this process of learning a foreign language for a long period of time is not something impossible considering the recent movement of the k-16 foreign language education as shown in Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (ACTFL 1999) instead of the sequence of the k-12. Additional four more years at the college level does make sense. The application of the concept of k-16 to the Japanese language instruction is in the same volume (pp. 325-360) under “Standards for Japanese Language Learning.” This new concept sounds very plausible and promising; however, it does not seem to be easy to implement it into practice. There are a few critical questions to be answered for actual practice of this concept.

1. Curriculum:
Is there any Japanese curriculum which is an equivalent of a nine-year sequence of the college level Japanese? Is there any series of Japanese teaching materials which fits in the curriculum? What about a good articulation between the k-12 and the college?

2. Scheduling:
Under today’s school scheduling, is it possible for the public school to offer such an intensive Japanese program as part of their regular courses from grade eight? Is it possible for the college Japanese program to offer the sixth-, seventh-, eighth-, and ninth-year level Japanese courses at undergraduate level? How many college Japanese programs can offer a two track Japanese programs; namely, general Japanese and a content based Japanese program?

3. Teachers:
Is it possible for the public school to have a Japanese teacher, whether a native Japanese or an American,
who can teach the courses from the first-year to fifth-year college level Japanese? Is the college level Japanese ready to teach Japanese beyond the forth-year level at the undergraduate level?

4. Credits:
What kinds of credits do the students studying Japanese at 8-12 grade level get under this nine-year or the k-16 Japanese program?

All of these questions are very hard to be answered and to put the answers into practice, but if we know the reality of the language level international/global firms require in general for a translator, or at least the level of proficiency suggested by my survey research, it is a must for us to adopt the concept of the k-16 seriously to the teaching of Japanese no matter how difficult it is. This is one of the very important things I found through my research regarding the concept of the k-16.

Reference


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http://www.educ.iastate.edu/nell

Manuscript submission:

For future newsletter please submit items by the following deadlines:

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Spring Newsletter: 15 February

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A Picture from the Snow Country

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