

GLOBAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
オレゴン大学日本語グローバルスカラーズプログラム：コンテンツベースの
日本語クラスの試み

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INTRODUCTION

Today's students are graduating into an increasingly interconnected world. Being proficient in a language is not enough: They need to demonstrate academic, professional, and linguistic knowledge on par with professional colleagues from other countries. The Japanese Language Program at the University of Oregon has developed and begun implementing the Japanese Global Scholars Program¹ in 2010 to prepare students to become global professionals and to succeed in this international environment. The Japanese Global Scholars Program is an innovative model of linguistic and academic training, involving content-based Japanese language instruction and cross-campus initiatives to aid students' learning experience. The essential aspects of the program are:

- Targeted recruitment of high school graduates with good Japanese language skills
- Intensive language training
- Regular university courses taught in Japanese
- Immersive living experience
- Direct enrollment in academic classes at a university in Japan
- Regular and rigorous assessment of student learning

Our goal is to produce students with full professional (ACTFL superior) proficiency, far beyond the level of most Japanese majors. By providing intensive language training and engaging faculty across campus to teach classes in Japanese, the Japanese Global Scholars Program hopes to position language study at the core of the liberal arts experience.

This paper describes the conceptualization of this program in the context of our Japanese Language Program and illustrates the program focusing on the content-based language instruction (i.e., intensive language training and university courses taught in Japanese).

BACKGROUND

Japanese Language Program at the University of Oregon

The Japanese Language Program at the University of Oregon, housed within the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures, has a long history (since 1975) and

¹ This program is supported by funding received from The Center for Global Partnership in Japan, The Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS) and The Center for Asian and Pacific Studies (CAPS) at the University of Oregon.

offers an extensive instructional program. Currently approximately 160 students major in Japanese, and 400-450 students are enrolled in the Japanese Language Program.

The University requires BA-track students to complete two years of foreign language instruction as part of the undergraduate degree requirements. In addition to these two years of basic instruction we offer three additional levels—third year, fourth year and fifth year courses—for a total of five levels. Our Japanese majors are required to fulfill four years of language instruction depending on their focus.

Our first through third year Japanese courses are taught as integrated courses targeting all four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (Table 1). We seek to have students achieve Intermediate-Mid on the ACTFL scale by the end of the third year course. Traditionally, the fourth and fifth years have been taught in two separate courses: one targeting listening and speaking skills, and the other targeting reading and writing. The goal is set such that students achieve Advanced-Low on the ACTFL scale by the completion of their fifth year course(s). The program structure and approximate number of enrolled students are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Previous Japanese Language Program at the University of Oregon

| Level | Skills taught | | Goal | Approximate # of students |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 st year | Integrated 4 skills | | Novice-High | 150 |
| 2 nd year | Integrated 4 skills | | Intermediate-Low | 120 |
| 3 rd year | Integrated 4 skills | | Intermediate-Mid | 80 |
| 4 th year | Listening and Speaking | Reading and Writing | Intermediate-High | 60 |
| 5 th year | Listening and Speaking | Reading and Writing | Advanced-Low | 10 |

Roughly 50 students graduate each year from the university with a Japanese major. Frequently some of these students go to Japan for work while others find work related to Japan or Japanese domestically. However, there has been growing concern regarding gradual attrition in the enrollment size of the upper division courses, especially the fourth and fifth year. The general tendency has been that some students cease taking Japanese language courses once they have earned the required number of credits to fulfill major requirements. In addition, there was an assumption that these upper division courses were merely preparation courses for those who need to read Japanese literature in Japanese. It became clear that the upper division of the program needed to be revitalized in such a way to support the changing needs of students, a growing number of whom seek to gain not only linguistic fluency but to strengthen it with academic knowledge and professional experience. At the same time, the program needed to retain and support non-Japanese majors by providing courses that could be used to fulfill their degree requirements and therefore also avoid the typical language-course versus major-course choice conflict.

Returning Language to the Core of the Liberal Arts Experience

In 2007, the Modern Language Association issued “Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World” that calls for a reconsideration

of traditional models of foreign language education. The report's introduction succinctly states the central conundrum:

At one end, language is considered to be principally instrumental, a skill to use for communicating thought and information. At the opposite end, language is understood as an essential element of a human being's thought processes, perceptions, and self-expressions; and as such it is considered to be at the core of translingual and transcultural competence. ("Modern Language Association" 3)

Traditional models of teaching language in the service of studying literature does not seem to appeal to or meet the demands of the current global world. Some colleges abolished foreign language departments (e.g., Drake University), or teach all beginning courses online (e.g., North Carolina). What is needed is to offer a language program that is rigorous but in tune with current practical demands. Instead of conceptualizing it as peripheral or as a pre-requisite to something else, it is important to restore the language program to a central place in university curriculum in order to successfully orchestrate and coordinate global learning.

Our model, the Japanese Global Scholars Program, meets the instrumental needs of students across campus by preparing them to be professionally proficient in Japanese in a field of their choice. The basic principles of the program are:

- The goal is to develop global professionals, defined as full professional (superior) proficiency coupled with rigorous academic training in a discipline.
- Content-based language learning is essential to achieving professional-level proficiency.
- Language instruction prepares and supports students' success in content classes.
- Students major in a discipline other than Japanese language and literature.
- Direct enrollment at a Japanese university is essential for full linguistic and academic excellence.

A feasibility study funded by the Japan Foundation and conducted in cooperation with California State University, Long Beach indicates that the UO can recruit fifteen to twenty students per year who possess solid intermediate language skills (Chinen, Douglas & Kataoka 2010). Students entering with less than advanced-level proficiency will take intensive upper-level Japanese language classes. These include content-rich classes focusing on the vocabulary and discourse strategies needed in humanities, social science, and natural science courses (Level 5). In addition, courses specializing in content areas (e.g., business), and team taught by a language instructor and a content specialist (e.g., a graduate student) are offered as a transition between language-based classes and content-based classes and prepare students for success in content classes (Level 6).

At the highest level, University of Oregon faculty, graduate assistants, and visiting scholars who are either native or near-native speakers of Japanese teach regular university courses in a variety of disciplines entirely in Japanese (Level 7). Ideally these courses fulfill general education requirements in order to appeal to a broader audience, and to help ensure students' progress towards graduation. Additionally, these classes

provide students with the professional and academic language skills they will need during their regular enrollment at a university in Japan during their junior or senior year, which in turn enables them to become true global professionals.

CONTENT-BAED INSTRUCTION IN GLOBAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Overview: A three-tiered approach

Content-based instruction (CBI) meets the objectives of our new model of the program: to prepare highly skilled students across campus to be professionally proficient in Japanese in a field of their choice. Numerous benefits of content-based instruction have been empirically attested, including grounding form and relevant meaning in a realistic context, promoting negotiation of meaning, increasing students' motivation, and co-developing general learning skills such as analysis and evaluation (see, for example, Grabe & Stoller 1997, Met 1991, 1999, Snow 2001). However, while it is innovative and beneficial, there are certain difficulties related to implementation of content-based language instruction.

One important challenge is bringing students' proficiency levels up enough so that they can benefit optimally from learning through content. In our particular case, students are expected to learn some of their university-required academic subjects in Japanese. While in theory this can be an extremely satisfying intellectual challenge, it is not difficult to imagine how extremely challenging this can be as well. Ultimately, careful and thoughtful curriculum and materials design are necessary.

To this end, the structure of the CBI instruction for the Japanese Global Scholars Program has been designed to include necessary scaffolding such that students receive rigorous and necessary training to progress toward full CBI academic courses (Table 2). The newly implemented program launched in the fall of 2010 is a three-tiered upper-division program that begins at the highest level of the existing Japanese Language Program (Levels 5, 6, and 7 in Table 2). This general structure was informed by the experience of the Chinese Flagship Program at the University of Oregon—a federally funded, content-based Chinese language program in operation since 2005.

Table 2. Current Japanese Language Program at the University of Oregon

| | Level | Skills taught | | Goal | Approximate # of students |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| General Japanese Program | 1 st year | Integrated 4 skills | | Novice-High | 150 |
| | 2 nd year | Integrated 4 skills | | Intermediate-Low | 120 |
| | 3 rd year | Integrated 4 skills | | Intermediate-Mid | 80 |
| | 4 th year | Listening and Speaking | Reading and Writing | Intermediate-High | 60 |
| Global Scholars Program | 5 th year | Academic CBI Prep | | Advanced-Low | 10 |
| | Level 5 | Academic CBI Prep | | Advanced-Low | 10 |
| | Level 6 | Partial Academic CBI | | Advanced-Mid | 5 |
| | Level 7 | Full Academic CBI | | Superior | ? |

General layout of this structure is as follows (Table 3). Students entering specifically to the Global Scholars Program with less than advanced-level proficiency will take Level 5 (Academic CBI prep) courses. Students who have moved up through

the general Japanese Language Program may also enter Level 5 Global Scholars courses. Level 5 courses taught by a Japanese language instructor provide content-rich classes focusing on the vocabulary, concepts, and discourse strategies needed in humanities, social science, and natural science (more on this below).

In the next level, Level 6 (Partial Academic CBI) courses specialize in specific content areas and are taught by a team of a language instructor and a content specialist. These courses are offered as a transition between language-focus classes and content-based classes. As described in the next section, courses at this level provide students with language tools (vocabulary, concepts and language strategies) for the topic, and at the same time, expose students to lectures and discussions conducted entirely in Japanese by a fluent Japanese content expert.

Courses at Level 7 (Full Academic CBI) are regular university courses taught by university faculty, graduate students, or visiting scholars who are fluent speakers of Japanese. A Japanese-fluent teaching assistant holds sessions with students to provide language aid. After these classes, students are expected to be ready for direct enrollment in Japanese universities (normally during Junior or Senior year), including active engagement in the academic activities required for each student’s area of specialization. Moreover, these courses also fulfill general education requirements effectively making them doubly practical.

Table 3. Overview of the instructional curriculum in Japanese Global Scholars Program

| Level | Type of CBI | Instructor | Content | Focus |
|-------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 5 | Academic CBI prep | Language instructors | General topics in humanities, social science and natural science | Fluency |
| 6 | Partial Academic CBI | Team of language instructor and a content expert | Specific academic topics (e.g., business, journalism) | Accuracy |
| 7 | Full Academic CBI | Content expert – professors or graduate assistants | Regular college courses on specific academic topics (e.g. art history, human physiology) | Fluency and accuracy |

First CBI Level (Level 5): Academic CBI prep

The first level of the Global Scholars Program (Level 5) begins where conventional language courses end, and is designed as the initial step toward content based courses. At this level we offer three courses, and each of the three courses provides *theme-based* language instruction on topics in the areas of the humanities, social science and natural science. Using general reading materials selected within these topic areas classes focus on building language skills (e.g., extensive reading, vocabulary building, report writing, presentations) as well as critical thinking skills (e.g., explaining,

analyzing, reporting). Specific topics covered and skills targeted in each course are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Topics and skills covered in Level 5.

| Course | Topics | Skills |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Natural Science | ビタミンの効用と発見の歴史 世にも美しい数学 言語の脳科学 自閉症とは 動物たちの意外な産まれ方 (生物学) | Describing Reporting Explaining Analyzing |
| Humanities | 知っておきたい日本の仏教 数奇の展開・浮世絵の流行 ノルウェーの森 (文学) 羅生門 (映画学) | Narrating Comparing Contrasting Stating opinions |
| Social Science | 外国語学習の科学 進化考古学の大冒険 フッドリバーの一世たち (移民学) ケンペルの見たトクガワ・ジャパン (歴史学) | Arguing Defending Hypothesizing |

Each of these courses is a rigorous four-skills course based on extensive reading. Students are expected to read 10-20 pages of text targeted for educated Japanese readers (*shinsho*), and be prepared to answer analytic questions before each class. A variety of classroom activities are designed in which students are required to use their newly learned vocabulary, concepts and knowledge garnered from the readings and then applied to key issues. The general flow of classroom activities is illustrated below in Table 5.

Each class begins with a twenty-minute lecture by the instructor accompanied by digital learning aids (power points, etc.). The lecture covers key pieces of information, issues, or opinions from the reading, and highlights important terms and concepts. This lecture serves to aid students' comprehension of the reading by re-enforcing the key content and providing visual aid related to this content. A quiz follows each lecture, and helps motivate students' attention. Following the lecture and the quiz, students work in pairs to check their answers to comprehension questions related to the assigned reading. This gives students a chance to revisit the key content in a self-paced setting (pair activity).

After students have had multiple chances to process the key content, a more challenging speaking activity is presented. In this speaking activity students work in pairs or small groups to practice reporting, explaining or discussing the main issue(s) covered in the reading and lecture (e.g., list the five major categories of nutrients, describe their function and in which food items they are found; describe the type of vitamin deficit which led to the discovery of an important nutrient [vitamin] in Japan). Following the group discussion, students complete a timed-writing or reading task on material parallel to the speaking activity.

As evident in the flow of the class, the topic and content are approached using multiple activities and incorporating all four skills, reinforcing students' comprehension and facilitating their language production. In fact, we have observed that in this short

period of time students quickly use the newly learned vocabulary and concepts, and engage in stimulating and lively discussion. The major part of assessment of the course involves (1) exams that address content-area understanding, reading comprehension and *kanji*; (2) a short research paper; and (3) a 20-minute oral presentation of the research.

Table 5. Flow of typical class in Level 5

| Activity | Description | Target skills |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 20-minute lecture and a quiz | - A power-point presentation by the instructor on the key points of reading | Listening |
| Comprehension questions | - A pair activity to check homework assignment | Speaking/listening |
| Thinking about issues | - A pair or small group activity to practice reporting/explaining or to discuss the key issues of the reading | Speaking/listening |
| In-class writing In-class reading Language exercise | - A timed writing or reading activity related to the covered topic - An exercise for vocabulary items and sentence patterns | Reading or writing |
| Assignment | e.g., Research and writing a report on a related topic, preparation for 3-minute speech on the covered topic | Writing or speaking |

Second CBI Level (Level 6): Partial Academic CBI

The second level of the Global Scholars Program (Level 6) is designed to be a bridge between theme-based, language-focus classes and full academic content classes. As such, this level combines content-specific language instruction (language support class) lead by a language instructor and content instruction by a content specialist. During the 2010-2011 academic year we offered a course at this level on Business and Economics. We continue to develop and add new courses, including a course on Journalism for 2011-2012.

Table 6. Topics and skills covered in Business and Economics offered at Level 6.

| Course | Topics | Skills |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Business and Economy | 経済のなりたちと金融 株式会社とは 会社の財務諸表の見方 株式と外国為替 ビジネス戦略 経営とマーケティングとは | Comparing and contrasting Summarizing complex information Describing using figures and tables Explaining in details using examples Making inference Analyzing and reporting |

Using content specific materials targeted at the undergraduate level, classes focus on building language skills specific to academic settings and the target topic, as well as provide content instruction. An important principle employed for curriculum design specifically at this level is that the content instructor determines the content materials. Thus, design of the curriculum is driven by the decision of what content needs to be covered to teach the very basics (e.g., see the topics covered in the Business and Economics shown in Table 6).

At this level, students meet with the language instructor twice and the content instructor once a week. For each class students are expected to read a substantial amount of text from various media written for educated Japanese readers with specific interest in the subject area. In language support classes, students check their comprehension of assigned readings and engage in speaking activities that require them to use the newly acquired information and language items. The activities are designed so that they challenge students to interact with the content and use critical thinking skills, such as summarizing, describing information with figures and tables, and explaining issues using specific references.

For example, in this year’s course on Business and Economics, students worked on tasks such as describing the general structure of a corporation, contrasting it to the structure of the East India Company, and explained their thoughts on how the development of corporations might have affected the development of economy thereafter. In the third class each week, the content expert (in this case a graduate student) gave a 30-minute lecture. The lecture was directly related to the readings covered in the language support classes, but it added new information on the topic as well. This structure provides an optimal opportunity for targeted but scaffolded learning: students have a chance to prepare themselves linguistically and academically with the language instructor, and then meet the challenge of learning related and new materials with a content instructor.

At the previous level (Level 5), instruction focuses on the development of language fluency. While fluency is an important element at Level 6, too—since students have achieved some high-level fluency—it is still important to consider the accuracy of their language use. Weekly assessment and quizzes are used to monitor students’ performance in terms of their understanding of the content and language accuracy. In addition, students are evaluated on the basis of a final research paper and presentation that they develop throughout the term. The assessment of the paper and presentation focuses entirely on the students’ understanding and engagement with the subject matter, simulating the expectation of an academic content course.

Table 7.

| Class | Format | Description |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Class 1 & 2 | Language support with a language instructor | - Checking comprehension of reading - Small group activities to engage students in higher order thinking skills (summarize, analyze, explain, etc) |
| Class 3 | Lecture by a content instructor Assessment | - Listening to the lecture which provided new information on the topic related to reading - Assessment of language skills and understanding of the content information |

Third CBI Level (Level 7): Full Academic CBI

The final level of the Global Scholars Program (Level 7) offers regular undergraduate academic courses taught solely in Japanese. Faculty members, visiting professors, or graduate students teach content areas of their specialization for these courses. Students are fully immersed in lectures, class activities, and assignments in Japanese, and are also expected to meet all requirements assumed for a regular

undergraduate academic course in Japanese. Students receive credit hours that satisfy their general education requirements. In addition to attending the course lectures, students meet with a teaching assistant who helps students with both content and language. The first course at this level, History of Manga (in Art History), is scheduled to be offered in the 2011-2012 academic year. Other planned courses include:

- Introduction to Journalism (Journalism)
- Introduction to Cognitive Psychology (Psychology)
- Introduction to Human Physiology (Human Physiology)
- Japanese Cinema (East Asian Languages and Literatures)
- Introduction to Japanese Linguistics (East Asian Languages and Literatures, Linguistics)
- Pacific War (History)
- Buddhism and Shintoism (Religious Studies)

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM

A program such as Japanese Global Scholars Program requires various initiatives and efforts outside language and academic instruction to ensure its success. This begins with target recruitment strategies of immersion high school students and other advanced-level Japanese speakers. To this end, CASLS conducts targeted recruitment across the United States via online seminars and interviews, conventional outreach activities such as regional school recruitment fairs, and specific relationships with pre-identified secondary immersion programs. Efforts include open and welcoming question-and-answer sessions with parents and students, close work with guidance counselors and language teachers, and normal marketing strategies.

In addition to recruitment, the University is committed to retention efforts including merging academic life with a supportive extracurricular framework. A major step in successfully achieving this comes from building a dormitory that will provide an immersive living experience for students of Japanese, alongside other highly motivated language students (currently Chinese and Spanish, but quickly expanding). Moreover, the residence opportunity directly supports other parallel edifying efforts: regular language exchange circles, peer mentoring, student-organizations (e.g. Taiko, Japanese Student Organization), colloquia and academic conferences, and even recreational activities and service learning projects.

Finally, to help students develop as many opportunities as possible, the program utilizes peripheral support to aid in student grant-writing for additional study or research abroad, internship opportunities, and career counseling and development.

CONCLUSION

The mission of the Japanese Global Scholars Program at the University of Oregon is to help students become academically, professionally, and linguistically competent individuals. In the pursuit of this mission, the program has adopted academic content-

based language instruction at the core of its instructional approach. Furthermore, a three-tiered model of content-based instruction has been designed and implemented to help students progress from rigorous high-proficiency language training to fully immersive content instruction to ensure students' optimal learning. It is our hope and plan that in four years, students will have progressed through our content-based courses, studied their majors at the University of Oregon and in a direct enrollment program at a Japanese university, written a thesis in Japanese, and will graduate and go out into the world as global professionals.

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