

JPN 604
Introduction to Japanese Language Pedagogy
Fall 2007
T,Th 0900-1045
Moore 224

Since I am sending this by email rather than Xeroxing, I will append a "few" comments , in a different font, here about the course.

First of all, a (kind of) apology. I was assigned this course in lieu of EALL 601, Teaching and Learning Asian Languages, on the assumption (not known to me at the time) that I could modify the contents from an Asian language focus ("CJK") to Japanese. In fact, that will be the basic approach I will take. However, I also learned only three days ago that I will be teaching Jpn 632 in spring 2008, so I need to make sure that there is not excessive overlap between 604 and 632. 604 will emphasize teaching and learning Japanese, 632 will take a much more critical view of the current state of Japanese teaching, referring more to current literature on applied linguistics and language learning.

I will begin the class with a rather lengthy self introduction for reasons that will become clear at that time. I would also like class members to reflect on what I say and to share their own introductions with everyone. Please wait until after Tuesday's class before composing and sharing your introductions.

I have created a mailing list, called "aogumi-l" (that is an "ell" at the end, for "list" not a "one"). Please post anything I ask you to share with the class to this list.

This course examines, applies, and – to some extent- critiques, various approaches to instruction in Japanese as a Second/Foreign Language. We will examine approaches to learning and instruction and their applicability in practical teaching situations.

Instructor: D. Ashworth, Assoc. Prof. Japanese. TP104.

Office Hours: W 0830 to 1030. TP104 and by appointment. (ashworth@hawaii.edu)

Textbook: Lightbown and Spada. *How Languages are Learned*. Third edition. Other distributed materials.

This textbook appears to cover much of the current concerns of the applicability of SLA (second language acquisition) to the teaching and learning of languages. There is a questionnaire at the beginning,(Introduction, pp xvii -xviii) and an entire chapter (Ch 7) that elaborates on the answers to the questionnaire. I suppose the writers intend for you NOT TO PEEK at CH 7 UNTIL YOU STUDY THE WHOLE BOOK, but this is like saying

"Don't think of a monkey!"

(Just curious - did you think of one after reading the admonition)

Another book, which I just got hold of a month ago, I find very interesting. It is *Language Play and Language Learning*, by Guy Cook, Oxford U Press, 2000. It is NOT about language teaching games. It is much in the realm of Daniel Levitin's *This is Your Brain on Music*. He is a neurobiologist who at the same time is an accomplished musician who has worked in Hollywood and elsewhere. See <http://www.yourbrainonmusic.com/>. I mention these books because in SLA there is a lot of discussion of the concepts of "input" and "intake" but it (SLA) very much misses a lot of things.

GOALS

- To understand and develop one's own approach to teaching by reflecting on teaching and learning experiences gained in class and through reading and observations.
- To experience various approaches to language learning and understand their rationales.
- To become familiar with approaches to teaching and learning that may be valuable in one's own future teaching.
- To understand the nature of issues in learning Asian languages specifically.

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Following my previous practice in other courses, I will spend some time on language learning experiences, including (most likely) some work with Russian and any languages you may know besides Japanese and English. (I wish I knew Navajo a lot better than I do at present - it would be an ideal language to experiment with - can you imagine why?)

REQUIREMENTS

- Weekly journal – reflections on class presentations and experiences, readings, own thoughts. (Due Mondays, **not** Tuesdays)
- Homework – usually preparation of a teaching task for implementation in this class or creation of exercise materials. Students are urged to acquire, borrow, etc. at least two different textbooks on their language. We will also read and discuss various articles on language teaching and learning.
- Examinations – there will be a final exam. However, class observations with reports may be substituted for this. (Report guide will be furnished)

Ahh, "requirements" ("What am I supposed to do????"). Funny question. I wish I knew the answer. I certainly would like to find out at the end of the semester how your perception has changed (or not changed) as a result of your own efforts in the course. The journal is to be shared (by posting to aogumi-l), and can be written in either English or Japanese - whichever you find most convenient for expressing yourself.

Week One (or so)

In the beginning, I want to find out as much as I can about your background, motivations, learning experiences as I place a lot of weight on where you are coming from. The textbook conveniently has seven chapters, but even though it is worthwhile to read through it linearly, I cannot promise my sequence will be the same. I see major issues in learning Japanese, especially reading and writing that cannot easily be addressed in a general text of this sort.

Some preliminary work for discussion

- Go to <http://www.govtilr.org/ILRscale1.htm> “Interagency Language Roundtable Language Skill Level Descriptions.”
(Just remember, these are the Feds –they may be watching you)
- In reading through the descriptions, think of what your level may be if the Asian language is not your native language. What kinds of teaching materials and procedures do you think would be useful in helping bring students up the “ladder?”
- Find some way to begin learning the *Russian alphabet* on your own and report what you are doing... ☺

I would like you to look at these proficiency definitions because the government uses them in two ways: to make decisions on job assignments that require language knowledge, e.g. to work with foreign nationals “in country,” and as a guide to curriculum development that will provide sufficient instruction to help a student reach a particular proficiency level. (“Washback effect” - what can you find on Google that explains this term in relation to language instruction?)