

上級日本語における個人教授法の試み

Individualized Instruction for Advanced Japanese

湯浅悦代 (オハイオ州立大学) ETSUYO YUASA (THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY)

According to the 2013 MLA enrollment survey, the number of Japanese learners in postsecondary institutions in the United States declined from 72,350 to 66,740 between 2008 and 2013 (-7.8%). This is a sharp contrast from the constant increase of Japanese learners between 1998 and 2009, and many Japanese programs are at a crossroads. At our Japanese program in a four-year university in the Midwest, we incorporated individualized instruction into our Level 5 Japanese in 2001-2002, and the enrollment quadrupled. This paper discusses the design of advanced Japanese in the individualized format, and examines how it successfully addresses the diverse needs of advanced-level learners and continues to attract students for the past 15 years.

Till the end of 1990s, our program offered Level 5 Japanese in the conventional classroom format. Although we used different materials from different textbooks, they were assigned to all students across-the-board. The one-size-fits-all curriculum did not accommodate the needs of students with different background well, and the enrollment suffered. In 2001-2002, we converted Level 5 Japanese into the hybrid of the individualized instruction and the classroom formats. Under the hybrid format, the activities of Level 5 Japanese courses consist of group sessions, individual sessions, and writing a term paper. While we assign the same materials to all students in group sessions, in individual sessions, learners meet with the instructor one-on-one for 15 minute every week and study materials that they have individually selected. To design effective individual sessions, at the beginning of each semester, learners separately meet with the instructor and negotiate session objectives, content, and materials following the notion of “negotiated syllabus” (Clarke 1991). They are also responsible for choosing and finding materials throughout the semester in accordance with their interests, specialization, and career plans. The paper will discuss the wide range of materials accommodated in individual sessions. It also shows that as the materials in individual sessions related to learners’ lives directly, these sessions become more meaningful and motivate learners to engage in their own learning (Keller 1987).