Professional Leave Report Cover Sheet

Name: Tomoko Kozasa

Department: Linguistics

College: Arts & Humanities

Leave taken: ◉ Sabbatical   ◯ Difference in Pay   ◯ Professional Leave without Pay

Time Period: ◯   Fall

◉   Spring 2023

◯   Academic Year

◯   Other

Your report will be sent to your Dean for your PAF and to the Library Archives.

Summary:

Inspired by the SAMR Model: Substitute, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinitions (Puentedura 2010), I have created a Product-Based learning curriculum for Japanese 1A (JAPN 1A), the first semester language course. In this course, the students will advance their study at their own pace and the instructor closely monitors their progress.

After a semester using this teaching method, I realized that students at a community university like Fresno State; particularly, in a class that teaches basic skills like JAPN 1A, still require personal interactions and the instructions in an analog way.

Description:

Instructions are given based on the textbook that the course uses. The students are informed the goals of each Lesson[1]. In class, the students practice mainly communicative skills to achieve the Lesson goals. They can use any materials and devices to study the language. There are no traditional assignments; that is, no homework assignments nor tests except for the final exam. Instead, the students perform what they learned in a Lesson at the end of the Lesson period. In addition, they keep weekly journal to report their study progresses.

Assignments:

for Formative assessment:

1. Three types of quizzes (Vocabulary, Scripts, Grammar) are provided on Canvas. The students can try taking each quiz up to five times and the best score is used for the course grade. These quizzes are mainly used for the students to confirm their memorization and understanding of the materials.

2. At the end of each Lesson, students will create lesson test questions. The test questions are categorized into five areas: Scripts, Vocabulary, Grammar, Translation, and Comprehension. The students select a single area for each of five Lessons. So that, by the end of a semester, all students create test questions on these five different areas. This test making assignment makes me assess if the students master the main skills of the Lesson and ready to advance their language studies.

for Summative assessment:

1. At the end of each Lesson, students will perform what they master in the Lesson. It can be a speech or a mini roll-play and done individually or in a group.

2. Final Examination, a cumulative examination. It includes filling blanks, short-essay questions, translation, grammar questions, and script writing.

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[1] In the course of JAPN 1A, we cover from Lesson 1 to Lesson 5 of the textbook, *Genki I*: *An Integrated course in Elementary Japanese, the 3rd Edition.*

other assignments:

1. Weekly journal: The students report 1) things discovered in lectures and in class activities, 2) activities outside class to learn the language, and 3) reflections and overall progress. Journal entry can include specific materials that the students produced, such as video/audio recordings, script practices, words/sentences in Japanese.

2. Video Reactions: A series of videos "Getting to Know the Japanese Language & Culture," which is designed to teach basic Japanese and cultural aspects in a fun way. The topic of each video links to the topic of the Lesson that we are covering in class. The students need to answer some questions that I created to make the students focus on the important aspects in the Lesson. The students also write a brief reaction to each video.

Reflections:

I was able to use this new method of teaching in the fall semester of 2023.

Advantages of this teaching method:
- The students are able to progress at their own pace without feeling stress or anxiety for taking a quiz or a test in class. Also, they enjoy learning the language because they can use any materials that they enjoy outside class.
- The students can try out new technology to create a video/audio recording at the same time learning the language.
- The students enjoy collaborating with classmates, they teach the language to each other.
- The students actively looking for a native speaker of Japanese on campus or through internet to practice using Japanese with them. Consequently, they establish strong friendships among them.
- I can closely monitor each student's progress and provide individualized advice.

Disadvantages of this teaching method:
- It is much more work monitoring each student's achievement and providing advice than traditional teaching methods.
- Some students who are not familiar with technology and/or less fortunate to obtain appropriate devices may get behind, which creates or increases the educational gap.

Conclusion:

This might be specifically the students in my classes, but they do not opt to be introduced to advanced technology as much as the way some media propose. I spent a lot of time explaining how to use apps and devices appropriately. In addition, for a class like JAPN 1A in which the students acquire a foundation of their future language studies, it seems that an analog type of instructions is more effective than using technology. This may work better for an advanced level of Japanese courses.

This was a fruitful project that I worked on during my sabbatical semester. I was able to create technology base teaching materials. It gave me an opportunity to realize that the characteristics of new generations, so called "Millennium" or "Z generation" students are no different than other generations' youth. Youth is youth, they want to try new trends and try to be different from other generations. However, in order for them to establish the basic academic skills, I believe, they do need personal interactions with the instructor and their peers as the way we have been doing in a classroom for decades.

Reference and Resource:

Integration Frameworks: Central Rivers, Area Education Agency,
https://www.centralriversaea.org/curriculum/technology-integration/lead/on-the-horizon/integration-frameworks/

Getting to Know the Japanese Language & Culture: Series I,
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLv00c3_lnogDMh25YCXFVbL2RY1K6qJ42

Section 1: Proposal

Summary:

I am requesting a semester sabbatical leave in order to create new teaching materials for elementary-level Japanese courses for the post pandemic era.

For this project I will create teaching materials, by using the SAMR Model: Substitute, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinitions (Puentedura 2010). The SAMR Model is an idea that is advocating educators to integrate the technology into education and to make teaching more suitable to the future generations. Through the use of technology, communication methods have drastically changed, and the pandemic has forced us to use technology to communicate with one another. However, language teaching methods have barely kept up with the development of technology. Developing teaching materials and methods, and redefining the goal of my language teaching are urgent tasks. This sabbatical leave will make it possible for me to work on and accomplish these tasks.

Description:

Since March 2020, I have been teaching Japanese courses in a virtual teaching mode. Although classes meet synchronously via Zoom, difficulties remain for the teaching of the unique Japanese writing system to the students, particularly to elementary-level of students.

Japanese uses three different kinds of characters, namely *hiragana*, *katakana*, and *kanji*. *Hiragana* and *Katakana* are characters that represent Japanese sounds, more specifically 'mora', a vowel or certain kinds of consonant or combinations of a consonant and vowel. The *kanji* characters are logographs that represent not only the sounds but also meanings. Understanding this complex Japanese writing system and mastering the use of these characters are the keys for the students to experience success in learning the language.

Contrary to more complex writing systems, the sound system of Japanese, particularly its syllable structure, is rather simple compared to other languages. Consequently, the Japanese language has many homophones. Learning *Kanji* characters can solve the ambiguity and confusion that may be created by homophones, which do make the Japanese writing system complicated.

However, the students no longer learn how to produce Japanese characters by hand these days. The students are able to write Japanese correctly with any electric writing device, such as computers, tablets, and smart phones, as long as they can recognize the correct form of the characters and spelling of the words. For this reason, I must teach them how to use these devices to write Japanese. This approach is much easier and less time consuming than having them memorize how to write hundreds of characters correctly. In other words, with this approach, the students do not need to spend time memorizing new kanji characters. Instead, they are able to spend their time learning more vocabulary and practicing other language skills such as speaking and listening.

I would like to develop the materials needed to also generally redefine the goal of Japanese language teaching, given that students now communicate with others by so-called 'text' or 'chat' tools in which sentences are much shorter than regular sentences, and sometimes sentences and words are truncated. Japanese people these days use the same means to communicate with one another.

Integrating technology into language teaching is now a crucial theme at various conferences and workshops in the U.S. My proposed project reflects up-to-date approaches to language teaching. For example, the *Northern California Japanese Teachers Association* (NCJLT) held a workshop in April 2021 and will hold their annual conference in October 2021, both featuring, "The Future of Japanese Language Teaching." The topic of the keynote speech at 2021 FLANC (the *Foreign Language Association of Northern California*) in July 2021 was, "Hybrid: the New Normal for L2 Teaching," by Dr. Robert Blake at UC Davis. I will present this project at one of the workshops or conferences I mention here.

Technology has been advancing rapidly and its speed seems to be accelerating day by day. Teaching 15 units every semester does not leave me time to carry out this project. A semester sabbatical leave will allow me to focus on the project and accomplish its specific objectives.

Language changes over time; thus, adjustment of the language teaching materials and methods need to be done continuously as technology advances. For this project, I do not need to travel or visit other sites because I am able to access advances in technology remotely.

Sections 2 & 3: Benefits to me as a faculty member and to the university:

This project directly benefits the Japanese studies program at Fresno State. The students will be able to learn the skills necessary to use technology to acquire the language. They will not spend their time memorizing characters, but will instead become able to communicate with others effectively by using Japanese.

Ever since I was appointed the Japanese Minor Coordinator in 2008, I have been working to make our Japanese program comparable to other institutes in California. Tokiwa University, one of our contracted universities in Japan, acknowledged that the Japanese skills of our exchange students had dramatically improved. Moreover, several alumni from our program are well prepared to work in Japan. This project will make our Japanese program more contemporary than it is now and suitable to the new normal.

Presenting this project at a conference in the field should inspire L2 teaching and well represent the Japanese studies at Fresno State. As Program Coordinator and Japanese instructor, I will be more confident that teaching the language at Fresno State will result in significantly improved outcomes for students.

Reference and Resource:

Integration Frameworks: Central Rivers, Area Education Agency,
https://www.centralriversaea.org/curriculum/technology-integration/lead/on-the-horizon/integration-frameworks/

Puentedura (2010). Substitution; Augmentation; Modification and Redefinition. Cited in Male,
Trevor. (2015). Digital Technologies: Implications for Education Organisations &
Settings in the 21st Century. 10.13140/RG.2.1.2337.3928.