

## J-CAN Workshop Report

By Minori Marken, MAATJ Articulation Coordinator

On July 8-10, 2016, the J-CAN Workshop was held at Old Dominion University. Lamberson sensei, Tsujioka sensei, Vaughan sensei, and I attended it, representing MAATJ.



Here is the report from Tsujioka sensei:

J-CAN, or *Japanese Core Practices Articulation/Advocacy Network*, is an innovative project that promotes better articulation among teachers of Japanese in the US through communication and collaboration based on the understanding of common core practices and mutual respect. Supported by the Japan Foundation, Los Angeles and the American Association of Teachers of Japanese, it was the first event of its kind where representatives from four different regional teachers associations—AFTJ, MAATJ, OATJ, and SEATJ—gathered to share their knowledge and expertise to work towards the common goal of promoting articulation in Japanese language education in the US.

In this three-day workshop, the participants were encouraged to:

1. clarify issues and goals of local Japanese education and make realistic action plans
2. interact and connect with teachers from other regional associations
3. become familiar with core practices of world language teaching and utilize them to build common ground for collaboration



The schedule of the workshop reflected these three goals well. On Day 1, we had ample opportunities to meet and interact with other participants through various guided activities. We also reviewed the basic tenets of the articulation project with Professor Mieko Kawai from the University of Virginia, and identified strengths and weaknesses in each local region. On Day 2, we participated in an in-depth workshop on three of the six core practices by Dr. Francis J. Troyan from Ohio State University, co-author of the influential “Implementing Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA).” Day 3 was dedicated to making concrete action plans for future articulation/advocacy initiatives with the assistance of AATJ President, Dr. Yoshiko Saito-Abbott.

As for the specific issues and goals concerning MAATJ, the need to strengthen networks and promote wider participation in the J-CAN project was highlighted. The workshop participants from MAATJ agreed to each form a small group to work on a project, such as forming an IPA study group, soliciting school introduction videos from local schools, and promoting Karaoke/Obento contests, etc. We have also discussed utilizing existing platforms such as FLAVA and J.LIVE Talk at GW to increase networking opportunities.



The workshop was a big success, for it was informative as well as enjoyable, being conducted in a friendly and collaborative atmosphere. The relatively small number of participants (17 total) made it possible for us to closely interact and connect with each other. It was great to exchange various types of information from issues at workplace to teaching techniques and resources, and receive feedback both within and across regional associations. I left the workshop feeling energized, with a positive outlook on the J-CAN project.

Many thanks to Marken-sensei for hosting the workshop!

Comment from Vaughan sensei:

Learning Core Practice was an eye opening experience for me. I understand that I should use the target language as much as I can during class, but I didn't know how to apply this concept. However, the instructor, Dr. Francis Troyan, showed us a couple of different ways to do this using French as an example. During this session, I was able to gain new insight from the perspective of a new language student because I have almost zero knowledge of French. Through this experience, I was able to come up with some ideas for maintaining use of the target language in my own classroom.



*The below is the link for the recorded lecture.*

[http://vs.odu.edu/kvs/interface\\_reach/video.php?cid=201530\\_July9JapaneseLanguageEducationWorkshopVS\\_95838](http://vs.odu.edu/kvs/interface_reach/video.php?cid=201530_July9JapaneseLanguageEducationWorkshopVS_95838)

Comment from Lamberson sensei:

The support from the administrator and the city for the foreign language teachers has been decreasing every year, and there are many obstacles facing Japanese language teachers, especially. (For example, schools do not let some of the courses open even though there is demand, which cuts the work hours of the teachers.) However, I was very much encouraged by the positive attitude of the colleagues who attended the workshop from the different areas. (I realized that we could make a difference, working together across the states.)

教師一般に対する風当たりは強くなる一方で、その中でも日本語教師はさまざまな障害に突き当たっています。早い話、今回のワークショップに参加させていただき、「ポジティブにがんばれば活路はあるんだ。」という姿勢に大いに感化されました。