

Curriculum Design for the Tourism and Hospitality Japanese Course at the University of Guam

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Summary:

The Japanese Language Program at the University of Guam developed and launched a new course JA 215 “Japanese for Tourism,” offered in the Spring semester of 2005 and 2006. This paper illustrates how JA 215 was developed and implemented using Turner’s curriculum development model with particular emphasis on curriculum design and the development of syllabus. A needs analysis was conducted through multiple methods which made it possible to establish goals of instruction and to identify the areas to be focused on and covered in this course. This process assisted in outlining and developing the JA 215 course curriculum, units, and lesson format. A barrage of student evaluation assessments led to many discussion forums, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Evaluations were carried out for the purpose of modification to increase the efficiency of the program for future students.

1. The Current Situation in Guam

The island of Guam is a hub for Japanese tourism. Therefore, developing a high level of proficiency in the Japanese language is a worthwhile skill for Guam residents to possess. There are potential career enhancement benefits and opportunities for those who have acquired Japanese language ability. The latter is important, due to the increased number of Japanese tourists who visit Guam each year. For example, in 2004, 1,206,676 people visited Guam, and some 81% (906,106) of these visitors were from Japan. Clearly, Guam is one of the most popular destinations for Japanese travelers. Due to its close proximity to Japan and warm weather, Guam also represents a resort of sorts for many Japanese who plan to marry or take short vacations. In addition, according to the *2004 Guam Statistical Yearbook*, 14,560 individuals were employed in the service industry on Guam. As seen in job advertisements, employers in-

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volved in tourism and hospitality normally seek to hire individuals who have some Japanese proficiency. Not surprisingly, due to the growing popularity surrounding the Japanese language, all five public high schools on Guam now offer Japanese language courses. Two of Guam's accredited institutions of higher learning offer Japanese language courses as well. The University of Guam, a four-year university, offers Japanese courses that are designed to develop all four linguistic skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as cultural knowledge. There are approximately 150 students who typically enroll in Japanese language classes, ranging from the first to the fourth year. Japanese is the most popular language that students choose to study (among Chamorro, Tagalog, Spanish, Chinese, and French) to fulfill their two-semester language requirement for general education. In addition, students can earn a minor in the Japanese Language by completing of three advanced Japanese courses. Offering "Japanese for Tourism" (JA215) adds variety to the selections of courses within the Japanese Program. It also builds strength in academics, and is greatly beneficial for the students who wish to gain advanced occupational training. Because of the nature of the course, the class emphasizes speaking and listening, and also cultural knowledge.

2. JA215 "Japanese for Tourism"

JA215 is a four-credit course. Each class is 100 minutes in length and is held twice per week. This is a one semester, 16-week course. As the title of this course suggests, the main objective of JA215 is to develop Japanese language proficiency for the tourism and hospitality sectors. The course focuses on improving occupational language skills in an academic classroom environment. Since JA215 falls into the category of Japanese for Specific Purposes (JSP), the focus of JSP is placed on specific skills as opposed to Japanese for Academic Purposes (JAP), which is based on general language development. In this regard, learners understand that the course was established to improve practical language skills, rather than to serve as a simple subject of study. At the same time, JAP was designed to be more process-oriented, under the assumption that communication involves language progression, instead of focusing on a specific area of the language. The JAP curriculum emphasizes communicative competence, which is developed through a set of learning activities and tasks. There is extensive research on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1991; Mackay & Palmer, 1981) around the world however few have studied the area of JSP (Mulvihill, 1992). The structure of curriculum development for JSP shown in Table 1 was designed based on the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) model. This model was brought to the academic forefront by Robinson. It highlights general views on JSP, curriculum/instruction, and the profiles of target learners. As JSP represents a version of ESP, the

pedagogical characteristics of both models are similar. In the end, the main difference separating ESP from JSP is the target language.

Table 1 Characteristics of JSP (modified from resources for ESP)

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A broad and diverse field of Japanese language is taught. ○ The program is limited in time. ○ Homogeneity (of subject background or profession) may exist.
Curriculum / Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A learning and learner oriented approach is used. ○ Authentic materials are often used in instruction. ○ Language skills focused on in during instruction are restricted. ○ The design is based on an analysis of learners' specific purposes of learning and needs. ○ The instruction is goal-directed. The language is to be used for "service" rather than merely as an academic subject. ○ Pre-ordained methodology is not specifically used.
Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Target learners are primarily adults. ○ Learners are generally at the intermediate or advanced level. ○ Basic knowledge of the language system is expected.

3. Planning and Designing JA215

Turner's model of curriculum development was used to construct the steps in building the entire curriculum of JA215 in the following order: Needs Analysis → Curriculum Development → Unit and Lesson Development → Program Evaluation. Appendix 1 shows the entire process of building JA215 and how each phase relates to the others.

4. Needs Analysis

Needs analysis sets the stage for the design of the entire JA215 program. This stage gives light to the "identification of language needs" of the learner (Johnson & Johnson, 105-106). It encompasses three types of analytical methods: (1) learner analysis, (2) task analysis, and (3) register analysis. These methods were not only used to identify learner language needs and objectives, but they also highlighted language function, explained content and established the objectives of the program. In the end, learner needs were assessed through interviews with qualified officials, from travel agents to individuals involved in the hotel industry. Existing textbooks for hospitality and tourism language instruction and books related to hospitality and service industries were also examined.

4-1. Learner analysis

For learner analysis, student profiles and needs were defined by Munby's framework (1978: 34-0), as illustrated in Table 2. As mentioned in the target learner profile (Table 1), learners were expected to have reached a novice-high to intermediate-low level before taking JA215. In the Japanese language, the relationship between interactants appears in the level of politeness of the speech, manifested through honorific forms. Understanding the honorific forms and customary expressions used extensively in the hospitality industry requires a prior basic knowledge of the structure of the Japanese language. According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines-Speaking (1999), learners at a novice-high level are able to perform basic communicative exchanges, and ask and answer simple questions. As for reading skills, learners at this level are able to read *hiragana* and *katakana* (the syllable based-sound systems of the Japanese language) and understand the main contents in simple material, such as menus (ACTFL, 1987).

Table 2 Learner Analysis for JA215

Category	Learners in JA215
a. Participant	English speaking university students/individual adults Novice-high to intermediate-low level of command of the target language
b. Purposive domain	Occupational language use which facilitates duties as hotel receptionists, restaurant wait staffs and shop clerks
c. Settings	Hotel reception, restaurants, department store (e.g., boutiques and shoe stores)
d. Interaction	Principally with customers, hotel guests, and reservation seekers
e. Instrumentality	Listening and speaking, face-to-face, and over the phone
f. Dialect	Understand and produce standard Japanese
g. Communicative event	Hotel receptionists, wait staff taking orders and serving, shop clerks dealing with customers, etc.
h. Communicative key	Serving customers using formal, courteous speech

4-2. Task analysis

The intention of task analysis was to define the specific language skills required in communicative situations and to measure learner language function in JA215 through interviews and an examination of existing instructional materials. Discussion and interviews with qualified officials, such as hotel service managers and travel agents, suggested that communication to assist Japanese tourists, standard practice in dealing with customers in Japan, consumer expectations, and sociolinguistic and sociocultural proto-

cols in promoting communicative competence should be included in instruction. Examining the types of activities and drills and pedagogical approaches adopted in the existing instructional materials, and scrutinizing their effectiveness helped to coordinate learner activities in upcoming instruction.

Concerning instructional materials for tourism-oriented Japanese in general, there are a few available for English-speaking learners in Hawaii and Japan, where tourism is a major industry. Many of these references adopt a register-based approach, focusing on grammar and lexis; however, they lack cultural information. In addition, the information provided is often substantially outdated. There are two textbooks (*Hotel Japanese: Practical Japanese for the Hotel Industry* and *Japanese for Hotel Staff*) mainly targeting to hotel workers. One displays Roman characters, translates them and gives some explanations in English. However, it lacks grammar explanations and expressions, which makes learning more complicated. Insufficient cultural information linked to hospitality in many existing references is a significant weakness as well.

4-3. Register analysis

Register analysis, conducted primarily through textbook analyses, revealed the topics, language situations, terminology and expressions, and pedagogical approaches that had been emphasized in tourism-oriented language instructions written for both ESP and JSP learners. The examination of numerous text forms (sentence patterns and lexis) and the gathering of linguistic information (vocabulary, phrases, and expressions) relevant to the topic assisted in the organization of lesson plans, especially in developing the course manuscript.

5. Curriculum Development

Curriculum goals, instructional level and language content were determined by developing the course outline. Some decisions in selecting content, expressions and vocabulary taught in the course were made at the discretion of the creator (Nunan, 1994). JA215 is taught in an academic environment, and institutional constraints (e.g., instructional time and number of students) needed to be taken into consideration. The JA215 course design was developed based on a series of analyses and professional decisions based on experience and research (see Appendix 2 for the official course outline).

A. Objectives

Students will demonstrate the following three communicative components in order to serve Japanese tourists and customers at tourist sites such as hotels, restaurants, and boutiques professional manner.

Linguistic Component:

Develop communicative skills; internalize and produce vocabulary, phrases and expressions at the appropriate level of politeness; be fluent in the customary and routine expressions used in service; comprehend and respond to the basic needs of customer or guest involving more complex tasks such as lodging, transportation, and shopping; and perform spontaneous face-to-face interaction (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines-Listening, 1985).

Sociocultural Component

Be familiar with Japanese social norms and cultural values; and learn verbal and nonverbal communicative behaviors appropriate to Japanese culture

Hospitality and Tourism Component

Understand protocols in hospitality and tourism; and be aware of the importance of using polite expressions

B. Target Learners

- English speakers who have received basic Japanese language instruction (approximately 120 hours) and have knowledge of the basic grammar of the Japanese language
- Learners who seek to advance their career opportunities by mastering tourism and hospitality Japanese

C. Level: Novice-high to intermediate-low

The Japanese employed in hospitality and tourism contains honorific expressions that encompass politeness, formality, and courtesy. A fundamental grasp of grammatical, lexical, and sociocultural knowledge of the target language facilitates a better understanding of the latter.

D. Language Functions

Students should be able to respond to inquiries and requests; recommend products; make suggestions; request, acknowledge, inform, apologize, and confirm

E. Length of instruction

60-64 hours (4 hours/week, 15-16 weeks)

F. Content

Hospitality-related jobs, specifically hotel services, food and beverage services, and stores

G. Method

Communicative language teaching encompasses situational and contextualized language used in the tourism and hospitality industry. Class activities such as role-play and simulation practices provide meaningful and personal language practice. They also aid students in making a smooth transition from what they have learned and practiced in the classroom to dealing with Japanese tourists in the real

world. Also, the use of *realia* (fast food restaurant menus, pictures of item of clothing from fashion magazines and catalogs, pamphlets for optional tours, etc.) helps create an authentic language learning environment. Feedback given by the instructor raises communicative effectiveness in interactions (i.e., whether the message is successfully delivered), rather than emphasizing on grammatical corrections alone.

H. Instructional Materials

An original course packet was developed for this course.

6. Unit and Lesson Development

This section provides detailed illustrations of the content adopted and implemented in the semester-long JA215 course, followed by an example of the lesson format for one class. First of all, the units, separated by the content of instruction, were created based on the curriculum, which had been developed through multiple methods of needs analysis, and in consideration of institutional constraints and other related matters. Appendix 1 shows all of the stages in developing JA215 and how each stage corresponds to the others (See Appendix 1). The following five units, Review (of the Japanese Language), Sociolinguistic Knowledge for Hospitality, Hotel Service, Food and Beverage Services, and General Customer Service at the Stores, were built into the JA215 syllabus. The first two units were intended as a means for learners to review basic grammar and vocabulary and build sociolinguistic knowledge regarding tourism and hospitality. This preparatory stage enabled learners to make a smooth transition to actual language learning experiences from Unit 3.

Unit 1: Review of the Japanese Language

Writing	Positional Words
Pronunciation	Names of Places and Buildings
Numbers	Adjectives
Time Expressions	Adverbs
Counters	Verbs
Greetings	Particles
Interrogatives	

Unit 2: Sociolinguistic Knowledge for Hospitality

Tips to Advance Your Knowledge of Hospitality Japanese
Variations between Japanese and English
Phrases that Need Special Attention

Making Your Conversation Natural

The Do's and Don'ts of hospitality Japanese

Unit 3: Hotel Services

Taking Reservations over the Phone

Check-in

At the Door

Money Exchange

Talking about Optional Tours

Room Service (Taking orders and delivering room service)

Taxi Service

Ground Transportation

Check-out

Holding Luggage for Customers

Unit 4: Food and Beverage Services

Restaurant (Taking reservations over the phone; seating; informing customers that seating is unavailable; at the table; at the cash register)

Fast food Restaurant

Self-service Coffee Shop

Unit 5: At Stores

Boutique

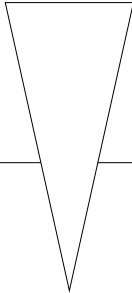
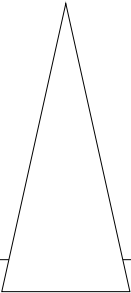
Jewelry Shop

Shoe Store

Cosmetic Store

The class activities designed for individual lessons of main language instruction for covering Units 3 to 5 reflected the three underlying principles (linguistic, sociocultural, and hospitality components) proposed in the learning objectives. (See Appendix 1.) Each 100-minute class was divided into two phases: language instruction and instruction on sociocultural knowledge and manners relating to Japanese hospitality. Lessons were structured in the traditional presentation → practice → production sequence. The presentation aspect of each lesson regarding the sociolinguistic factors that affect Japanese communication and service in hospitality was modeled from *Welcoming the Japanese Visitors* (Nishiyama, 1996). Table 3 shows an example of one 100-minute class session.

Table 3 Structure of the 100-Minute Lesson

	Weekly quiz for new vocabulary Review previous content <u>Presentation</u> (Schemata-building and presentation of new dialogues: Explanation of the dialogues and grammar explanation) <u>Practice</u> (with authentic materials) <u>Production</u> (Activities, simulation practice, role-play, etc.) Introduction to useful expressions and vocabulary (Introduction of new vocabulary for the following section/unit)	
	Activities that raise cultural awareness (Presentation/discussion of book chapters and lectures by guest speakers, etc.)	Sociocultural/ Hospitality/ Services

7. Program Evaluation and Assessment

Students were graded based on class attendance and participation, which represented 10% of their overall grade. This was followed up by two oral exams (20%), a final exam (20%), two quizzes (10%), interview projects (15%), reflection essays (10%) and presentations (15%). The two oral exams were performance tests that demonstrated the students' comprehension and production in contextualized situations, such as role-play in the target language (Bailey, 208-209). These were diagnostic tests that measured whether the students could demonstrate the skills they had learned in the curriculum. Role-play represented an invaluable opportunity for the students to demonstrate what they had acquired academically. Students, for instance, role-played working as front desk receptionists or shop clerks or Japanese tourist assistants. Meanwhile, the instructor played the role of a hotel guest or customer. First, the student-instructor interactions were video-taped, and then student performances, comprehension skill, accuracy, fluency, structure, and pronunciation, as well as their sociocultural knowledge applicable to the situation, were evaluated. The final exam, however, was designed differently. Students took the exam individually at separate times. On a sheet of paper, situational cues were given in English in different linguistic segments (words, phrases, and sentence-level) containing various linguistic functions, and the students' speech was audio taped. This was an achievement test that was comprehensive in nature, examining whether students had reached their learning objectives in this course. Students were evaluated on how well they could respond to certain situations, whether their utterances were embedded in sociocultural contexts, and on their speech delivery. Student understanding of grammar and vocabulary introduced in later units was also assessed, mainly through quizzes. Other class assignments, discussions, essays and interview projects raised student awareness of and sensitivity to better communication

with Japanese tourists. In class discussion, for instance, students selected one chapter from *Welcoming the Japanese Visitor: Insights, Tips, Tactics* presented and then led a class discussion on the topic chosen. For the reflection essays, a senior Japanese guest manager from one of the upscale hotels on Guam was invited to speak about hotel services and management issues. Students were asked to write what they learned from the lecture in English. For the interview project, each student was instructed to survey five employees working in the tourism industry. Then they interviewed at least three survey respondents, answering questions concerning their jobs, for example, challenges, advantages, and benefits. Finally, students analyzed the results of both the surveys and the interviews and summarized their findings in a report which was later presented to the class.

By and large, students who completed JA215 demonstrated improved skills relevant to the sociocultural and hospitality-tourism areas. Their achievement was acknowledged based on the reflection essay, the interview project report, the class discussion session and the oral exams.

For instance, the students reported the types of complaints that the interviewees had frequently received and discussed their possible strategies for the handling of those complaints in class. In essays, they elaborated the views that “trying one’s best to satisfy customers” and “providing the best service” could be accomplished by providing customer service with a sincere attitude (*seii*), which includes never saying “no” to the customers, apologizing even though problems were not their fault, and being respectful by using polite language. One student mentioned that providing service with *seii* could be productive in increasing “repeat customers,” a point made by a guest speaker. Student realization of sociocultural knowledge in hospitality also emerged into the use of bowing, *aizuchi* (back-channels), expressions that acknowledge customer requests (*Hai kashikomarimashita.*) and apology at the appropriate level of politeness during the oral examinations.

However, in terms of linguistic skills, some students did not reach the level of expected fluency. Since the prerequisite of JA215 is a novice-high to intermediate-low level of Japanese proficiency (See Table 2), one could reasonably expect students to reach a higher level of proficiency, say intermediate-low to intermediate-mid level. ACTFL Japanese Proficiency Guidelines define Intermediate-mid level as follows:

Speakers at the Intermediate-Mid level are able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. Conversation is generally limited to those predictable and concrete exchanges necessary for survival in the target culture; these include personal information concerning self, family, home, daily activities, interests and personal preferences, as well as physical and social needs, such as food, shopping, travel and lodging.

However individual students possessed different levels of Japanese proficiency and had different

amounts of exposure to the Japanese language and culture before taking JA215. Some students were superior in speaking; others had some experience working in the tourism industry. I observed, however, that some students struggled to demonstrate routine activities/tasks done throughout the day. This might translate into students not speaking effectively, and a disruption of a smooth verbal production.

Student feedback (course evaluation) on JA215 obtained at the end of each semester was largely positive. One student wrote in a 2005 evaluation that she applied the learned class skills to her workplace, and as a result, enhanced her job performance. Another referred to the strength of the content areas covered in the class as reasons for his success. More favorable comments given in 2006 included: JA215 provided useful material; contents covered in JA215 were applicable to real-life working situations in tourism; class discussions were quite helpful; and the class was well-organized and made learning easy. At the same time, constructive criticism was also taken into account in the aftermath of the course. Two students stated, for instance, that if a CD or recorded tape accompanied the course materials, it would have enhanced their learning even more.

8. Conclusion

This paper addressed how the JA215 course curriculum was developed, and highlighted needs analysis, organization of the course content, lesson development and the assessment and evaluation procedure. JA215 was offered in two semesters, with 8 students enrolling in 2005 and 9 students enrolling in 2006. Although course organization remained nearly the same, necessary modifications and adjustments were made in some areas of instruction in 2006. For instance, more quizzes were given, and more definitions regarding cultural terminology were added to both the quizzes and to the final exam. More diverse, task-based activities were also added. Table 4 illustrates details of the modifications made in 2006.

Table 4 Major Modification made for 2006

<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Changes made for 2006</u>
2 Oral exams	(No major changes)
Final exam	Added definitions of key terminology that portray Japanese culture and customs; e.g., “ <i>omiyage</i> ” (souvenirs) and “ <i>senbetsu</i> ” (monetary farewell gift)
Quizzes	The number of the quizzes was increased from 6 to 16. Vocabulary was examined through the writing of <i>hiragana</i> in 2005, which has changed to listening based identification (matching sounds and scripts written on the paper.) Added quizzes that measure cultural knowledge
Interview report	(No major changes)
Reflection paper	(In 2006, an assistant manager of one of major tour agencies talked about structure of travel agency and job descriptions of travel agents.)
Discussion leading	(No major changes)

For both years, the course was designed to be learner-centered with students engaging in interactive simulation practice (role-play) using authentic materials and practice sheets during class. The course was designed for students to promote the delivery of effective, meaningful, and contextualized oral production. However, it should be noted that some students did not excel in the development of linguistic skills. There are several possible factors that may have contributed to low performance in this area. A low level of confidence in speaking Japanese, an inadequate amount of practice and individual differences, such as nervousness and test anxiety, seemed to have greatly affected to student performance. Nonetheless, over time (with an adequate amount of practice), learners were able to overcome confidence issues and improve fluency in an effective and efficient learning environment.

In JA215, students relied on written materials. The course packet and the *Welcoming the Japanese Visitor: Insights, Tips, Tactics* acted as the main set of resources for the students. Many foreign language institutions support the adoption of technology as a means of delivering authentic material, which contributes to active learning and the development of maximum proficiency. The Internet, audio-visual aids, CDs and DVDs that supplement the course packet, allow students to experience a greater degree of authenticity in the classroom. For instance, the use of computers for simulated language practice maximizes the use of the target language in meaningful ways. This resource may even be used outside of the classroom, and it brings fluency to a student's speech production. Audio-visual aids allow students to better learn physical movements, gestures and manners for communication with Japanese tourists that are usually difficult to acquire from text-based learning materials. In their evaluations, students also mentioned authentic material and technology as ways of building their confidence and improving their weakness in performance.

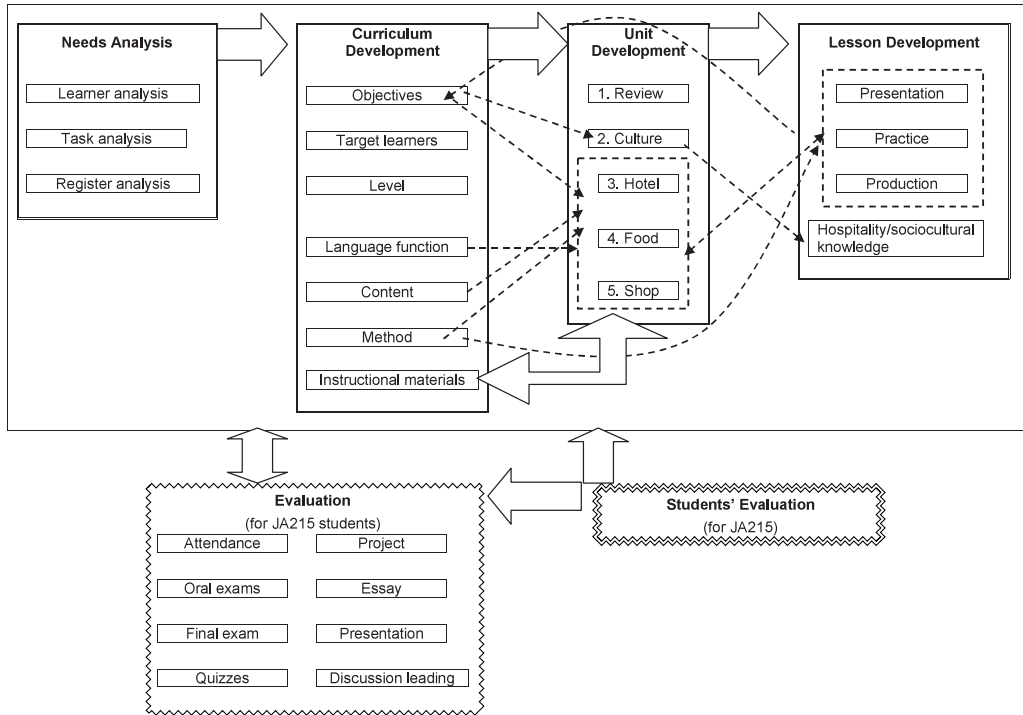
Finally, students learned not only about serving customers, but also that professionalism and understanding customer expectations both play a major role in hospitality. Students who completed JA215 successfully demonstrated the "emerging ability to distinguish between politeness and formality in most uncomplicated communicative tasks and social situations" described as Intermediate-high level speaking skills (ACTFL Japanese Proficiency Guidelines). As for future classes following the same curriculum, students may be more motivated and excited about learning if they are given the opportunity to apply skills they learned in JA215 to real-life situations, such as through internship programs and at places where students experience hands-on professional training. Of course, there are always challenges in learning in a classroom environment, even with contextualized settings to practice the language through activities with authentic materials. However, two semesters of JA215 show that any challenge can be met when the curriculum includes an effective/learner-centered environment and provides first-hand sociocultural knowledge about Japan. In the end, this is what made improving Japanese fluency realistic

and achievable for the students of JA215.

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Appendix 1. Overview of Entire JA215 Course Design



Appendix 2. The course outline formatted by the university

- CATALOG DESCRIPTION:** This course is designed to develop Japanese language skills and cultural knowledge for use in the tourism industry on Guam. Prerequisite: JA 102 with a grade of C or better or equivalent.
- COURSE CONTENT:** This course focuses on the development of vocabulary and expressions, increased knowledge of grammatical structures, and cultural knowledge to facilitate a better understanding of Japanese tourists, which allows students to expand competence in spoken Japanese for use in Japanese tourism.
- RATIONALE FOR THE COURSE:**
 - All Japanese courses currently offered are academic-oriented.
 - Guam is a hub for Japanese tourism.
- SKILLS AND BACKGROUND REQUIRED OR EXPECTED:** Elementary Japanese II (JA 102) with a grade of C or better or equivalent
- TEACHING METHODOLOGIES AND ANTICIPATED CLASS SIZE:** Audio-visual materials, intensive situational/functional oral practice, and field trips that allow students to gain practical skills in

dealing with Japanese tourists will be used. Anticipated class size is 20 students.

6. ADDITIONAL COURSE DESCRIPTION: None

7. LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS: Upon completion of the course, students will be able to communicate appropriately with Japanese tourists and customers at tourist sites, such as hotels, restaurants, and boutiques.

8. METHODS OF EVALUATION: Class participation, projects, journals, activities, and examinations.

9. REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND/OR STUDY GUIDES

○ Course packet

○ Nishiyama, K. (1996). *Welcoming the Japanese visitors: Insights, tips & tactics*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

10. SUBSEQUENT COURSES: Higher level (JA 201 or above) Japanese courses