

Aiming to Connect People Through Language Education

Implementing language education centered
on connections with society by complementing
vertical learning with horizontal learning

Traditionally, language education has emphasized learning for the purpose of knowledge acquisition. In this research, I implement an educational approach that integrates expansive learning both inside and outside the classroom. By combining vertical learning that focuses on knowledge accumulation, with horizontal learning facilitated through interaction with others, I aim to cultivate students' independence and autonomy. One example of such an initiative is Disaster Preparedness Town Tour. By having international students engage in activities in which they take action and learn alongside local residents, I am realizing my vision of connecting individuals through language education.



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“My goal is to further expand the possibilities of language education by collaborating with students to foster connections between diverse individuals.”

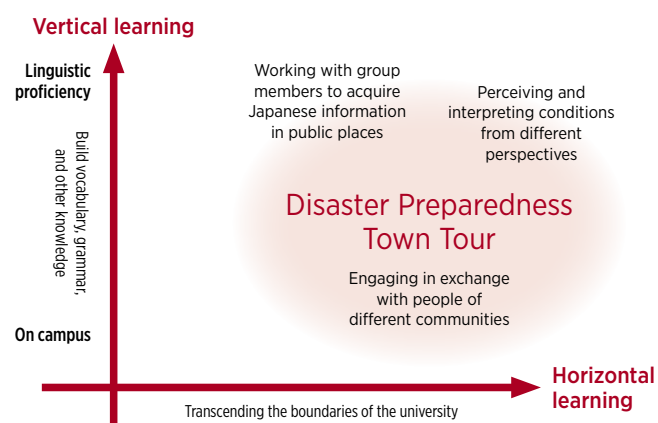
Aiming to build an environment in which students can utilize their agency to expand their learning through a practical approach

In this research project, I combine vertical learning that focuses on cumulative learning of grammar and vocabulary, with horizontal learning that expands learning through means such as opportunities to engage with diverse values, and implement an approach that broadens the framework of language education. International students in Japan immerse themselves in a new environment, where they meet different people and gain various experiences, and the conscious awareness and sharing of such encounters and experiences contributes to further learning.

One example of such a learning design is Disaster Preparedness Town Tour. In these activities, international students learn about disaster preparedness in the community by walking around town accompanied by local residents. By actively participating and connecting classroom learning to practical application in the community, students are encouraged to develop greater independence in their learning. Through engagement with the topic of disaster preparedness, which is a social issue, students discover their own role, supporting continuous learning. Furthermore, collaborative activities involving both international students and local residents spontaneously foster mutual understanding, and can be expected to help form new communities through Japa-

nese language learning. I believe initiatives like these show one of the potential approaches toward a new language education model for a society that embraces multicultural coexistence.

Conceptual illustration of vertical and horizontal approaches in Japanese language learning (when utilizing disaster preparedness community walks)



| Efforts Towards Community Outreach

Realizing connections with various individuals through language education and building a society that embraces multicultural coexistence

This research project has the potential to contribute to the realization of a society that embraces multicultural coexistence through language education. The operation of Disaster Preparedness Town Tour has gradually built connections between students, university staff and faculty, local governments, and general incorporated associations. As for expansion to other regions, similar initiatives have already begun at Utsunomiya University, where researchers in the fields of disaster preparedness and regional revitalization are engaging in collaboration. Regional areas in Japan are grappling with population decline, while foreign residents and inbound travelers are increasing, and the

need to foster connections between people through Japanese language education is therefore likely to rise in the future.

Furthermore, these activities are also expected to encourage collaboration among researchers and students of different academic disciplines. This research project has facilitated collaboration with architecture and civil engineering students and a construction company, while the collaboration in the aforementioned initiatives conducted by Utsunomiya University was led by researchers in the fields of disaster preparedness and regional revitalization.

In terms of collaboration with educational institutions, future joint efforts can be ex-

pected mainly in the form of courses and training programs that incorporate the principle of horizontal learning. I therefore would like to further expand practical research.



Throughout the Disaster Preparedness Town Tour, participants can gain various experiences by performing tasks. In the post-walk workshops, they also summarize and discuss their observations, and engage in other interactions.

