

University of Findlay Japanese Program

Newsletter Fall 2019

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Rural Communities in Japan: Challenges, Revitalization Strategies, and Future

This summer, I had the amazing opportunity to go to Japan with my fellow Japanese Majors, Valerie Jacksack and Amy Evaniuk, as well as my professor, Dr. Kawamura. Together, we created a grant proposal that outlined our research project, which was about rural communities in Japan, and the strategies these communities use to try and combat the problem of depopulation. We went to the prefectures of Fukui, Hokkaido, and Saitama, where rural depopulation is especially prevalent. The way we conducted our research was mostly through interviewing local government officials, college students, and other community members. We also did some community involvement, by going to festivals, seeing the most famous spots of the area, and attempting to see what we heard about in our interviews in action.

It was amazing to not only learn more about some of the intricacies and problems of the country and culture I've learned so much about since high school, but to be able to use the Japanese I've learned in class. For example, there was a point where Amy and I were in

Sapporo on our own, and we had to ask various attendants at the train station for directions on how to get back to the city we were staying in. We had learned all about train culture and how to ask directions in Japanese class, so it was great to use it in the real world. It's experiences like this that remind me how great learning Japanese is, and how much I'd miss out on if I didn't choose to pursue it!

Garrett Brown,

4th Year Japanese, Japanese and Computer Science



From Our Alumni

Hello, my name is Kaylynn Noriega, and I am a Findlay alumnus who majored in Japanese. I am currently living in Hokkaido, Japan through a program called JET where one can apply to become an assistant language teacher or a coordinator for international relations. My job consists of assisting Japanese teachers with teaching English and introducing cultural differences to students.



Having studied Japanese at The University of Findlay, I am able to speak about my ideas and feelings with coworkers in Japanese as well as understanding my students in the classroom setting when questions arise. I still study on my own and with friends as I am still trying to reach fluency, but I am very happy with where I am comprehension wise compared to where I was when I first started studying at Findlay.

In my honest opinion, choosing The University of Findlay was one of the greatest decisions of my

life. Since the program was smaller than other schools, I felt that I would be able to have a more personal relationship with my professors as well as many chances to speak in Japanese throughout my college career, and I was right. They had helped me grow not only in my Japanese speaking ability, but as an individual as well. Without their constant support and encouragement, living in Japan would feel more like a dream than reality.

After JET, I hope to find a job in Tokyo that will make use of my Japanese speaking ability and other skills that I have gained from my past jobs with the help from those at Findlay. I am truly thankful for all the opportunities I gained through this program, and I can't wait to see what will happen next on my journey.



Kaylynn Noriega (2018), JET Instructor

Hello!

My name is Tanya Schubert and I did an undergraduate in Japanese at the University of Findlay from 2008-2010. When I graduated I went to Japan and taught English for a year while working on improving my Japanese language skills. After a year, I returned to Findlay in 2012 and began to work on my Japanese teaching license as well as my Masters in Education. During that time, I also started working for one of the local Japanese companies here in Findlay, Ohio BAPM (Bridgestone APM). I worked as a translator and

interpreter for BAPM and supported the Japanese associates as well as their families. It was a rewarding experience that allowed me to use and grow my Japanese in a totally different way than when I was teaching in Japan. In 2015 I left BAPM and started my teaching career down in Marysville, Ohio. I taught primarily at the middle school but also taught a period at Marysville High School. During my time at Marysville, my translation experience helped me with the Cultural lesion piece of the job. I left Ohio in 2017 and moved to the Tacoma, Washington area. I taught Japanese at Graham Kapowsin High School for two years. I had never thought about moving back to Ohio, but when I heard that there was a potential program starting at Findlay High School, I knew I wanted to be the person to create and grow the program. It has been amazing being back in

Findlay, I am grateful to the University of Findlay for providing me the skills to become not only a proficient speaker in Japanese but a culturally appropriate one. The Japanese program at UF prepared me for many unique contexts that other universities simply don't provide. I am excited that my current position at FHS provides me the opportunity to partner with the University of Findlay so that we can work together to advocate for Japanese language in the City of Findlay. I absolutely love my job and my students, and I'm excited to see where this new chapter in my life leads

me. If you are considering studying Japanese at the University of Findlay, I can give you my wholehearted recommendation. You will leave the program not only with Japanese language skills but with connections that will help guide you and support you to find your authentic Japanese speaking self. #GoOilers

*Tanya Schubert (2010),
Instructor of Japanese at Findlay High School*



Hot News



Congratulations, Ciminillo-san! Our third-year Japanese student, Allex Ciminillo, is going to Washington D.C. to compete in the final round of J. Live Talk 2019 on November 10th. J. Live Talk is organized by George Washington University and the participants compete to test their presentation and communication skills in Japanese. Allex has worked very hard to win the preliminary and the second round. His achievement is most worthy of acknowledgement and is a source of pride for all of us! Let us join in cheering him on to victory by saying, "Gambare, Ciminillo-san!"



*From
the Instructor*

Warm greetings from the University of Findlay! My name is Rie Aoki, and I am an instructor of Japanese. I would like to share my great experience teaching in Hokkaido, Japan for two months this summer. I taught an intensive Japanese language course in which the participants aim to finish a one-year curriculum in two months. The participants were intermediate Japanese learners. There were students from Stanford, Harvard, Yale, Northwestern, University of Michigan, Swarthmore, and other schools. Most of them joined the program in order to be able to skip one-year of Japanese at their home institutions

through passing a placement test. They studied hard each day to keep up with the fast pace of the class, but they were also able to deepen their cultural awareness through their homestay experience and various kinds of cultural workshops such as *Ikebana* (Japanese flower arrangement), *Kendo* (Japanese sword martial arts), and even one in making *udon* and *soba* noodles. Teaching new people in a different environment helped me obtain new perspectives on my teaching methods. I hope to be able to apply what I have learned during my summer experience to my classes at UF.

*Rie Aoki
Instructor of Japanese at the University of Findlay*