

OERs and Indigenization in a Japanese Language Class: Introducing Ainu Culture to Japanese Language Students

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Purpose

The UBC Strategic Plan of 2018 identifies Indigenous Engagement as a significant area of transformational potential. How can this potential be harnessed in a Japanese language class? Our purpose is to bring the commitment to reconciliation into the Japanese language curriculum by introducing students to the Ainu Indigenous Peoples of Japan.

Goals

- Provide cultural and historical context through readings and learning objects
- Provide authentic examples of Ainu voices
- Have students improve linguistic abilities while gaining insight into Ainu worldview
- Produce Open Educational Resource textbook

Our Plan to Achieve Goals

- Establish an online open textbook through BC Campus Open Ed
- Instructors establish relationships with Ainu collaborators and Syilx advisors
- Instructors and Undergraduate Academic Assistants research, write, record and illustrate contextual material modules
- Instructors create vocabulary, kanji, grammar, reading and listening comprehension activities for each module
- Instructors create modules that focus on Ainu voices telling their own stories
- Context experts check material
- Textbook is published on BC Campus
- Instructors and students from UBC and other institutions freely use the OER

Indigenous Voices

“Never [teach] about us without us” (Bear, in Abe)

- Importance of using authentic voices → making relationships and getting permission
- Authentic texts
 - Collection of newspaper articles by Ainu author
 - Public domain collection of traditional stories translated by Ainu translator
 - YouTube videos produced by Ainu students

Sito Channel Ainu Class (YouTube)



Respectful Engagement

- Engagement with the Foundation for Ainu Culture
- Relationship with contemporary Ainu activists, artists, teachers
- Acknowledgment of the Syilx Okanagan Peoples, as caretakers of the land on which the learning takes place
- Reciprocity – what can we as instructors and students contribute back to the community?

Learning Objects and H5P

- Reading passages on Ainu history, traditional and contemporary culture and lifestyle, supplemented with vocabulary, kanji, grammar and comprehension exercises built with H5P software
- H5P = HTML5 Package - plugin for 51 templates to create online interactive games, exercises, graphics, videos, presentations
- Audio recordings supplemented with listening comprehension exercises
- Videos supplemented with interactive questions
- Learning objects can be downloaded, revised, shared by other users
- H5P available through BC Campus and (soon) UBC Canvas

H5P Learning Object Examples

Drag and drop words/images

Word search

Fill in the blank

Challenges

- Non-Indigenous team – no claim to Indigenous Knowledge
- Using authentic voices in a lower-level language class (authentic text/speech is high level) → extensive need for scaffolding without simplifying or ‘speaking for’ the subject
- Finding appropriate open access graphics, videos and texts

Opportunities

- Student participation - contribution to textbook (class assignments, paid work)
- Bring local Indigenous teachers into conversation
- Inclusion of Indigenous pedagogy (relational, holistic, kinesthetic, place-based)
- More inter-institutional instructor collaboration, peer review and sharing

Reference / Bibliography

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3. “Shaping UBC’s Next Century”. 2018. https://strategicplan.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2018_UBC_Strategic_Plan_Full-20180425.pdf
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