

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

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UBO OER Grant Program

## 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

## Process

- Instructor establishes relationships with Ainu collaborators and Syilx advisors
- Establish Pressbooks account through BC Campus Open Ed
- Instructors and Undergraduate Academic Assistants research, write, record and illustrate learning modules focusing on Ainu history and culture (currently 35 modules)
- Instructor creates vocabulary, kanji, grammar, reading and listening comprehension activities for each module using H5P (currently 71 exercises)
- Instructor creates modules that focus on Ainu voices telling their own stories
- Content experts check material
- OER Pressbook published and promoted
- Instructors and students from UBC and other institutions freely use the OER, improving linguistic abilities while gaining insight into Ainu worldview

## Indigenous Voices

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

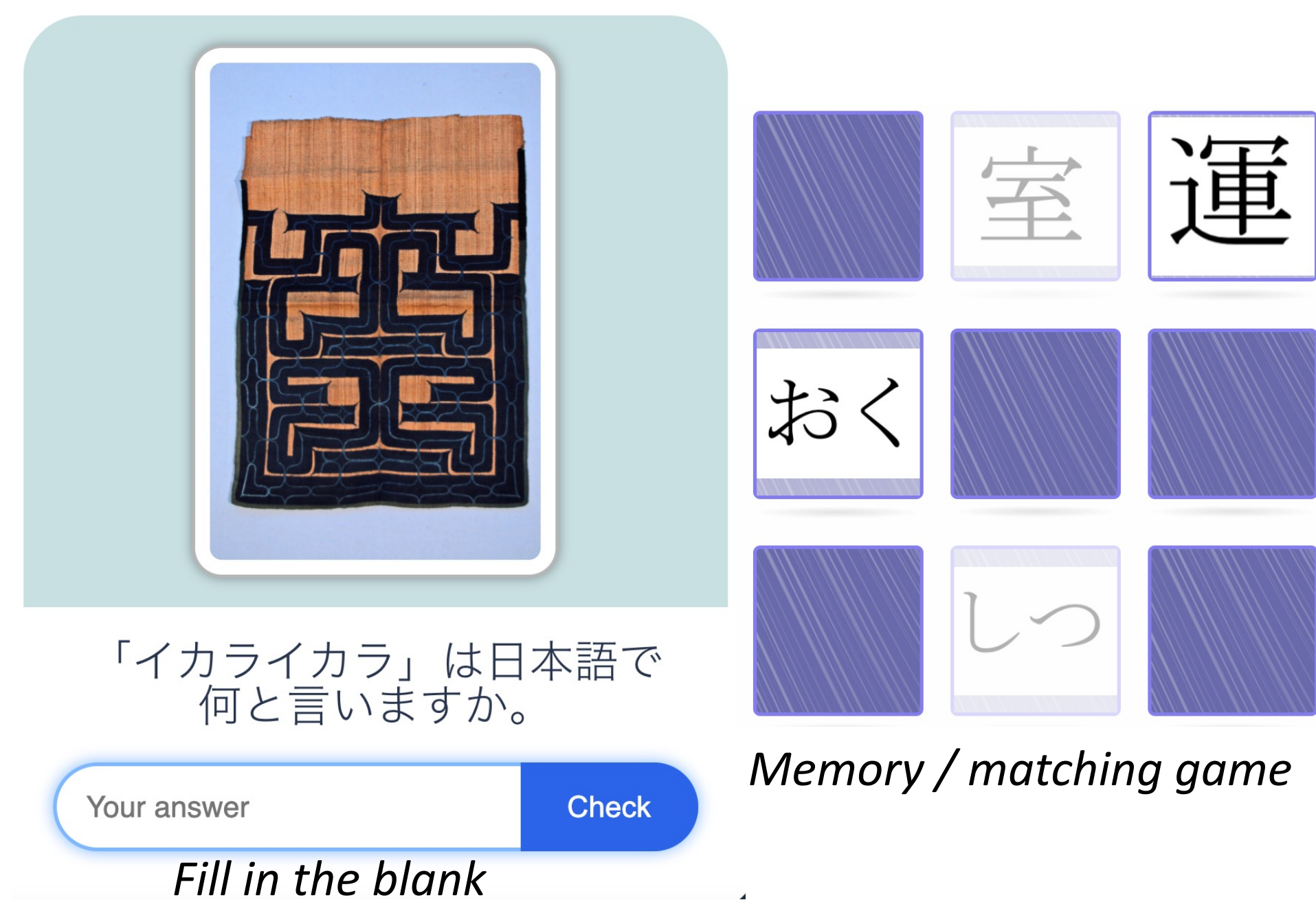
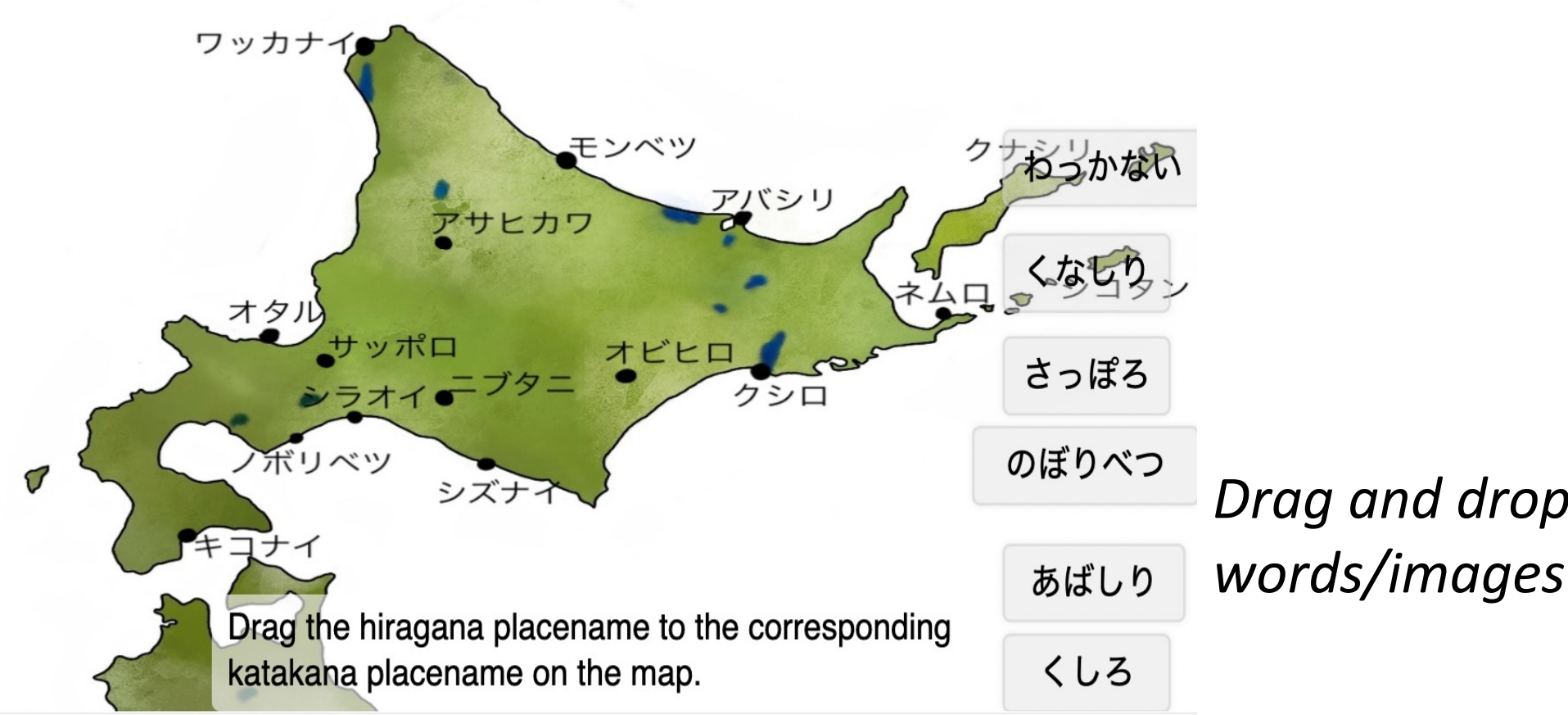
- Importance of using authentic voices → making relationships and getting permission
- Authentic texts:
  - \* Collection of newspaper articles by Ainu author
  - \* Public domain collection of traditional stories translated by Ainu translator
  - \* YouTube videos produced by Ainu students



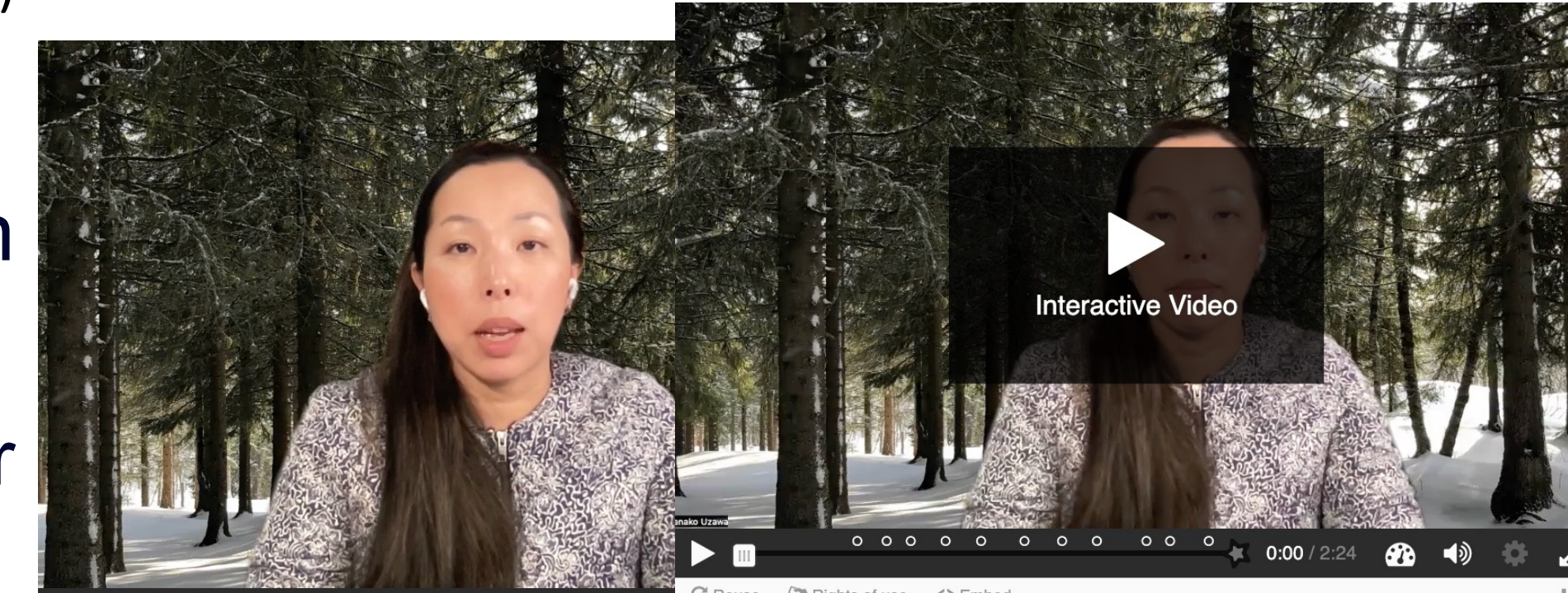
Ainu Language Class  
YouTube channel  
Created by  
Maya Sekine

## H5P Learning Objects

HTML5 learning objects (51 templates) can be downloaded, revised, shared by other users



## Annotated and Interactive Self-Introduction Video by Kanako Uzawa, Ainu Scholar and Artist



みなさん、こんにちは。アイヌ語ではイランカラプテ！  
私の名前は、鵜澤加那子と申します。私の出身は北海道平取町二風谷です。

## Impact

- Total Visits since July 2023 = 843
- Unique Visits = 554
- Page Views = 2,271 (includes UBCO and external learners and instructors)
- UBCO JPST 200 students used 6 different modules on Ainu history, culture and lifestyle
- Page views by instructors and learners outside UBCO in Japan, United States, Europe, the Middle East and Southeast Asia

## Challenges

- Using authentic voices in a lower-level language class → extensive need for scaffolding without simplifying or ‘speaking for’ the subject
- Student buy-in for some aspects of content
- Finding appropriate open access graphics, videos and texts for specific content
- Creating indexes in Pressbooks
- “Finishing” the project – open-ended

## Future Directions

- Create more active, rather than passive, exercises for language learning
- More student participation - contributions to Pressbooks website (class assignments, paid work)
- Bring local Indigenous teachers into conversation
- Inclusion of Indigenous pedagogy (relational, holistic, kinesthetic, place-based)
- Encourage reflection on sensitive subjects in an open but non-threatening manner
- More inter-institutional instructor collaboration, peer review and sharing

## References / 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](https://strategicplan.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2018_UBC_Strategic_Plan_Full-20180425.pdf)
4. UBC Okanagan Indigenous Engagement. Accessed April 27, 2022. <https://ok.ubc.ca/about/indigenous-engagement/>

## Assisting Team Members

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