



Sasakawa USA/USJETAA Grant Final Report: JETAA Florida

Event: JLPT Florida, Hajimemashite!
Organizer: US-6 JET Alumni Association of Florida
Date: September 25 – December 4, 2016
Place: University of South Florida in Tampa and Florida International University in Miami
Attendees: 9

DESCRIPTION

For the first time ever, the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) was offered in the state of Florida in Miami (December 2016). In efforts to engage JET alumni and other community members interested in Japanese language as well as support the test being offered within the state again in the future, the “JLPT Florida, Hajimemashite!” project was proposed. This multi-event project included informing the community of the JLPT, providing resources and a space to prepare for the test, and providing transportation to the test site (from Tampa).

After securing the Sasakawa USA/USJETAA grant on September 15, 2016, project coordination began immediately due to the sensitive time frame. That is, the deadline for the JLPT registration was on October 3, 2016 and the JLPT test was scheduled to be on December 4, 2016; it made the most sense to hold the information session before the registration deadline (within two weeks of receiving confirmation of the grant) and start planning the logistics of the practice test sessions as soon as possible due to the number of partners involved with the project.

Within the first week of receiving the grant, the project director confirmed instructor and venue availability, created and distributed a flyer to advertise the project (events), and met with the instructor from the Association of Florida Teachers of Japanese (AFTJ) who agreed to help facilitate the events.

The project was advertised via Florida JETAA, the Consulate General of Japan Miami, the AFTJ, and the University of South Florida (USF) Japanese Club. Japanese language instructors at University of South Florida and University of Tampa were also contacted. The project appeared to be well-received initially. In addition to the interest expressed in the Tampa Bay Area, individuals from Orlando and Jacksonville

also expressed interest and hope that this project would be offered again in the future in more cities. Because of the logistics and perhaps short notice of the first event (the information session), attendance was low. However, the project director received several inquiries for information. As a result, the number of attendees listed below do not accurately reflect the interest of the community.

After the first event, the project director and instructor worked together to obtain the materials (textbooks and copies) for the upcoming events based on the information provided by interested parties. The participants of the project prepared for a range of test levels from N5 to N2 and included JET alumni as well as students from USF and Eckerd College. Practice test sessions lasted approximately two hours; vocabulary, grammar, and reading sections of the JLPT were simulated. After each test simulation, the instructor quickly graded and informed participants of their scores for the sections administered, offered them the correct answers for study purposes, and audio files for listening practice.

Due to a change in time of the JLPT as well as the capabilities of the transportation service that was hired, participants of the "JLPT Florida, Hajimemashite!" project traveled to Miami the day before the test, stayed in a hotel (coordinated by the project director but funded by each participant), took the test the next day, and traveled back to Tampa after the test.

Although the JLPT Florida, Hajimemashite! Project supported a small percentage of total test takers at the Miami test site (according to 2016 JLPT Miami Test Site Information, 141 people registered for the test), Florida JETAA and AFTJ are happy to have been able to coordinate and provide resources (including transportation) to those who otherwise would not have taken the test. Participants expressed gratitude as well as hope for this project (i.e. these resources) to be offered again. This project could not have been done without the Sasakawa USA/USJETAA grant, and everyone that has been involved with this project are most grateful.