



Research and practice of credit-based cross-school study models for Japanese language majors

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Abstract: The *National Standards for Teaching Quality in Foreign Languages and Literature* states that foreign language majors are an essential part of China's higher education in the humanities and social sciences. Each university needs to formulate reasonable training objectives based on its own educational practices and talent development goals. Additionally, the *Guidelines for Teaching in Foreign Languages and Literature Majors* issued in recent years put forth various competencies that Japanese language majors should possess, including Japanese language proficiency, information technology application skills, self-directed learning abilities, and practical skills. In light of these guidelines and the policy of improving the credit recognition system for online open courses, promoting the mutual recognition of credits, and advancing the construction and sharing of high-quality resources, Liaoning Province has been developing high-quality teaching resources and collaborative commissioned projects, continually deepening the reform of higher education teaching. This paper takes cross-school credit-based study in Japanese language majors as an example, summarizing the current credit teaching model, analyzing the issues that have arisen during practical implementation, and providing recommendations for the reform of teaching in Japanese language majors' high-quality resource construction and sharing projects.

Key words: cross-school study; Japanese language major; teaching reform; teaching practice

1 Introduction

The *National Standards for Teaching Quality in Foreign Languages and Literature*, promulgated in January 2018, emphasizes that foreign language majors are a crucial component of China's higher education in the fields of humanities and social sciences. The foundational disciplines include foreign languages, foreign literature, and regional and country studies. The training objectives aim to cultivate well-rounded individuals with a strong foundation in foreign languages and relevant professional knowledge and skills. Graduates are expected to have the necessary linguistic proficiency and expertise in their respective fields to meet the demands of China's foreign exchanges, national and local economic and social development, various foreign-related industries, foreign language education, and academic research.

In April 2020, the *Guidelines for Teaching in Foreign Languages and Literature Majors* introduced competencies that Japanese language majors should possess, such as Japanese language proficiency, information technology application skills, self-directed learning abilities, and practical skills. In the same year, the Ministry of Education provided further

interpretations on the development of new liberal arts disciplines, emphasizing the need to promote interdisciplinary and deep integration. In terms of teaching models, they encouraged the exploration of open course teaching and digital humanities teaching models, the establishment of teaching quality standards and evaluation systems, and the cultivation of students' abilities to grasp, extract, argue, and address contemporary issues.

2 Current research status

Liaoning Province's Department of Education launched a pilot program for cross-school credit-based study in ordinary colleges and universities in 2014, achieving preliminary success [1]. In January 2018, the *Notice on Implementing the Spirit of the National Conference on Undergraduate Education in New Era National Universities* emphasized the need to strengthen the institutional integration of modern information technology and education. It proposed the improvement of the credit recognition system for online open courses and the promotion of mutual credit recognition. In this context, Liaoning Province has been continuously deepening the reform of undergraduate education in general higher education. In the 2022 academic year, it conducted research on 395 commissioned projects for the construction and sharing of high-quality teaching resources. Currently, the Liaoning Higher Education Smart Education Platform offers 1,048 first-class online courses. Through years of practical exploration on platforms like Super Star and Rain Classroom, it has received positive feedback and achieved significant teaching results.

3 Reform methods

Research findings indicate that students participating in cross-school credit-based study place significant importance on course content, teaching methods, and feedback. They favor learning materials that slightly exceed their own abilities and provide a sense of challenge rather than overly simplified content. Regarding platform usage, students believe that increased interaction through methods such as messaging and communication with teachers enhances their learning experience.

Furthermore, a longitudinal comparison of students' needs during cross-school credit-based study across different subjects reveals their high demands for the online learning environment and technical support from the platform. Students also have specific requirements for the content of cross-school credit-based study courses and the selected materials. Their needs exhibit a phased nature. In the early stages of learning Japanese, students emphasize consolidating and improving basic knowledge. In the intermediate stages, they focus on knowledge expansion and skills practice. In the advanced stages, students hope to acquire advanced professional knowledge and practical skills through cross-school credit-based study, aligning with the phased trends of the Japanese language teaching and training program.

To improve the current situation where the cross-school credit-based study model for Japanese language majors does not fully meet students' needs, it is necessary to introduce courses based on students' needs and guide them to study the course content systematically [2]. This requires both course providers and course users to actively participate in students' cross-school credit-based study processes, establish a rational knowledge framework, arrange teaching content reasonably according to the learning characteristics of Japanese learners at different stages, and continuously improve the cross-school credit-based study model through enhanced communication and feedback with students.

Furthermore, course users should use the courses as a means to disseminate knowledge and enhance students' practical skills. This ensures that Japanese language majors possess a solid foundation in language skills, strong collaborative and communication abilities, and diverse humanistic qualities to achieve the goal of cultivating high-quality foreign language professionals. Comprehensive reforms should improve the effectiveness of course usage, make appropriate adjustments to course content, provide sufficient class hours, arrange class hours reasonably during the semester, emphasize important content, gradually increase the level of difficulty, primarily use task-based teaching

methods, use a variety of teaching methods, and adopt a comprehensive assessment method combining in-class and out-of-class evaluation. The learning outcomes should be evaluated at various stages to establish a solid foundation for Japanese language learning at different stages.

4 Exploring teaching methods for cross-school credit-based study models in Japanese major

4.1 Theoretical teaching methods suitable for cross-school credit-based study models in Japanese major

4.1.1 Task-based teaching method

The task-based teaching method relies on tasks as the foundation, where students continuously accumulate language and cultural knowledge, enhance their Japanese comprehension and communication skills, and achieve teaching objectives through the introduction of tasks, pre-tasks, task cycles, post-tasks, and assignments.

4.1.2 Cooperative learning method

Implementing this learning method can transform the teaching model, improve the teaching atmosphere, reduce students' anxiety, and enhance students' self-directed learning abilities. It is essential to explore the introduction of cooperative learning to improve learning outcomes in cross-school credit-based study courses.

4.1.3 Communicative approach

The communicative approach focuses not only on "learning" but also on "applying what is learned" and "learning how to use language." Its fundamental goal is to enable students to gain communicative competence. This approach can be appropriately applied in cross-school credit-based study courses for Japanese majors. For example, during cross-school credit-based study courses, it is possible to enhance learners' cross-cultural communication skills by discussing theoretical knowledge or cultural phenomena, applying various modes of expression to interpret Japanese cultural phenomena, and improving learners' cross-cultural communication skills.

4.2 Comprehensive teaching methods suitable for cross-school credit-based study models in Japanese major

4.2.1 Blended teaching method

Combining online and face-to-face teaching optimizes learning outcomes by integrating self-directed online learning with collaborative offline learning. The main purpose of blended teaching is to combine the strengths of traditional classroom learning and online learning. This teaching approach helps students choose unique learning styles and content from their surrounding media, textbooks, and information sources according to their learning preferences. For teachers, it involves optimizing and reassigning various resources to achieve ideal teaching objectives.

4.2.2 Enhanced task-based teaching method

This teaching method seamlessly combines reading and writing, and it incorporates a "problem-solving mentality" throughout the cross-school credit-based study curriculum. It emphasizes practical skills and experiential training through language practice activities, aiming to develop students' basic skills and communication abilities, cultivating Japanese language cross-cultural communication professionals.

4.2.3 Heuristic collaborative teaching method

During the cross-school credit-based study process, the offline classroom teaching should adopt a teacher-guided heuristic approach, progressively introducing platform training tasks from basic to advanced levels. This approach encourages students to think critically. By engaging students in mutual assessments and multi-dimensional interactions, and addressing issues with targeted summaries and Q & A sessions led by the teacher, this method enhances both student language abilities and interpersonal collaboration.

4.2.4 Multimedia teaching method

To address the different knowledge modules of Japanese language majors at various stages and the language and

cultural knowledge required at each stage, multimedia teaching uses online resources such as videos, audios, and PPTs available on course provider platforms. It uses a variety of teaching methods to improve teaching effectiveness and focuses on cultivating students' ability to produce language using comprehensive knowledge [3].

4.2.5 Experiential teaching method

The experiential teaching method, conducted through the training process of "course development → course selection → course organization → student practice → student collaboration → teacher evaluation → student feedback," enhances students' practical problem-solving skills, innovative thinking, and cross-cultural communication abilities. By organizing students' participation in course competitions for Japanese listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation, this method continuously improves learners' practical skills and creativity.

5 Issues and countermeasures

5.1 Identified issues

5.1.1 The need for improvement in the teaching methods of course providers

The fundamental principle of online learning platforms is to prioritize student self-directed learning, with teacher-led classroom instruction as a supplement, adopting an open interactive teaching model. However, in this teaching process, offline classroom teaching primarily employs a single teaching method. While emphasizing the transfer of theoretical knowledge, it is essential to introduce shared course content and engage in effective discussions. It is necessary to seamlessly integrate online and offline teaching, leveraging the strengths of both.

5.1.2 The necessity of adjusting traditional teaching assessment methods

Presently, some assessments between schools mainly rely on process-based scoring and test-based scoring. Online learning, in addition to traditional in-class sessions, practice assignments, and final exams, includes components such as viewing educational videos, submitting online exercise assignments, online discussions, offline group discussions, etc. Comprehensive assessment of assignments presents certain challenges. Furthermore, the proportion of online and offline testing, the specific evaluation methods, and the criteria for assessing students' comprehensive capabilities need refinement.

5.1.3 Enhancing students' self-directed learning capabilities using cross-school learning platforms

The convergence of information technology and education necessitates students' competence in utilizing shared platforms for learning Japanese major knowledge. Learners should possess a degree of information literacy, actively apply information technology, and collaboratively complete the learning process and exercise tasks through collective learning. However, during cross-school credit-based study, some students limit their learning to passive utilization of software, logging into courses as needed, showing a lack of self-discipline and proactivity.

5.1.4 The need to enhance teaching management efficiency

Students require mentor assistance when enrolling in courses, completing online exercises, assignments, and online discussions. In the process of cross-school learning, course instructors can monitor and oversee students' progress online, including online exercises, revisions, homework, and interactions with students, simplifying the management of the teaching process. However, teachers are required to address platform login issues while confirming students' exercise assignments, discussions, and more. As a result, teachers' workload increases, and the teaching process's management methods need to be improved.

5.1.5 Constraints on the planning of course resources

Online learning demands that students study chapter contents at their own pace during their free time. Prolonged or extensive videos can diminish students' confidence and interest in online learning, resulting in sub-optimal learning outcomes. Furthermore, utilizing limited offline class time to extract knowledge points from shared courses has time

constraints. Testing the effectiveness of inter-school course exchanges within the class while efficiently displaying the concept of combining online self-study with offline interaction presents certain challenges [4].

5.2 Proposed solutions

5.2.1 Strengthening guidance during the learning process and providing timely feedback on learning outcomes

Students use post-class or in-class time to complete portions of chapter content, necessitating teachers to arrange course tasks in the form of teaching task points. Teachers should actively participate in open teaching seminars and include them in their weekly teaching schedules to facilitate effective utilization of courses between teachers and students. Through communication and collaboration between course creators and course instructors, a thorough assessment of teaching outcomes can be achieved, which includes teacher instruction, student self-study, teacher-student discussions, and assignment testing. By analyzing teaching effectiveness in stages, identifying deficiencies in the teaching process, and providing timely guidance and support to students, teaching models can be continuously explored and improved.

5.2.2 Establishing a scientifically effective cross-school credit-based teaching evaluation mechanism

By designing teaching objectives based on different chapter compositions and module contents and connecting the key points of each chapter, organizing classroom discussions, increasing students' understanding of key knowledge, and enhancing their problem-solving and teamwork abilities, the proportion of cross-school credit-based courses in overall and final grades needs to be adjusted. Piloting a mode of separating teaching and evaluation, and incorporating shared course content into regular and final exams, can direct students' attention to daily learning and foster gradual learning habits [5].

5.2.3 Cultivating students' information literacy

In a higher education environment where curriculum teaching and information technology are interconnected, the cultivation of information literacy provides students with the ability to effectively utilize shared platforms for learning Japanese major knowledge. Students should be adept at using information technology to improve the effectiveness of fundamental and specialized courses. By using online platform resources, they can enhance self-learning and collaborative learning abilities, gradually setting planned and targeted self-learning goals. Through teacher-student collaboration, comprehensive progress can be made in the research and teaching reform of cross-school credit-based teaching models.

5.2.4 Fully leveraging the leading role of course instructors and establishing a student-centered learning model

During cross-school learning, teachers play a leading role in the design and implementation of classroom teaching. They actively participate in the interaction between students and course creators and platforms. For students who are new to cross-school credit-based study, teachers need to explain the login methods and platform usage to students and empower them to take initiative in their learning. In terms of teaching design, teachers should organically integrate the offline classroom courses of course instructors with the online platform courses, effectively leveraging the strengths of both, and rationally designing and planning teaching content. Furthermore, teachers should provide timely feedback on the platform's usage to course creators and online course developers to enhance teaching management efficiency.

5.2.5 Focusing on the key point of course content and providing knowledge explanations in spare time

Students frequently engage in learning cross-school credit-based courses during fragmented periods. Therefore, it is essential to refine teaching objectives for different stages and different subjects, compact and extract the core content of the course, establish an independent yet interconnected knowledge system for online and offline courses, and maintain concise and clear course content with a distinct emphasis on fundamental knowledge, grammar explanations, chapter elucidations, exercise explanations, and comprehensive applications [6]. The course design time and distribution frequency should be scientifically allocated, ensuring that students complete their learning tasks, develop an interest in learning, and achieve a sense of accomplishment.

6 Conclusion

In summary, the cross-school credit-based teaching model for the Japanese major, based on different stage-specific subject content, defines teaching objectives as "general", "advanced", and "higher-level" teaching. This approach achieves targeted and personalized education according to each student's needs.

The cross-school credit-based teaching model for the Japanese major promotes the integrated use of various teaching methods, combining classroom instruction from course providers with cross-school credit-based course selection. It encourages the fusion of language and culture. It goes beyond the theoretical understanding, nurturing students' intuitive comprehension of the subject matter. The utilization of multimedia in cross-school credit-based platform teaching combines in-class and out-of-class learning, providing students with rich learning resources. With the guidance of teachers, students learn efficiently and purposefully, expanding their knowledge and honing their information acquisition and analysis skills. Moreover, it progressively refines the assessment methods for Japanese major courses through a diversified analytical approach.

Through the cross-school credit-based model, Japanese major students obtain course credits via cross-school and cross-regional learning, harnessing the complementary advantages of high-quality resources among universities in Liaoning Province. The ongoing challenge is how to further refine the sharing and construction of the smart teaching platform based on the unique characteristics of the Japanese major.

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Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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