



Sustained Excellence  
in Tertiary Teaching  
General Category

Dr Masayoshi  
Ogino

Department of Global,  
Cultural and Language Studies  
University of Canterbury

**“My passion is to help my students explore new ways of thinking about a world of diverse peoples and cultures – my mission is to transform their lives and I do this by teaching them Japanese.”**

Masayoshi Ogino believes that learning an additional language broadens people’s horizons and enriches their world and professional career. In his teaching, he strives to develop life-long communicative competence and social and cultural awareness in his students and encourages them to forge connections with their communities.

His approach has evolved over more than twenty years’ teaching at secondary and tertiary institutions in Japan and New Zealand. His first position as a high school English teacher in Japan required exam-focused teaching, motivating him to pursue a more communication-focused language teaching. This he achieved at Hamilton Girls’ High School as an exchange teacher in 1994-1996 and immediately saw the potential of this approach in providing a genuine and lasting experience for his students.

Masayoshi’s start at the University of Canterbury (UC) coincided with the 2011 earthquakes, which had drastically affected enrolments, on top of the already decreasing number of Japanese learners in NZ since the late 1990s. These challenges provided incentives for him to be creative and innovative in his teaching practice and revitalise the Japanese programme. The resulting upturn in enrolments made his the most successful language programme in the College.

The cornerstone of Masayoshi’s teaching approach is nurturing the Christchurch Japanese learning community by fostering connections and promoting student engagement. He sees his role as three-fold; a designer of effective environments, a facilitator of learning, and a connector. He links communities of learners, teachers and native speakers at all levels and situations. His mission is to enable students to function competently and confidently outside the classroom and, later, in a community which may be linguistically and culturally different from their own.

To facilitate such communication, Masayoshi runs mentoring sessions where learning is shared between 100- and 300-level courses. These enrich the Japanese learning community by embracing the diversity of students’ backgrounds and boosting students’ confidence through acting as role models. Masayoshi has also developed online communities using social media, such as Facebook.

To make connections and develop learning communities beyond this, Masayoshi’s classes host Japanese students at UC’s affiliated English school (150 students and teachers in 2018) and groups from Japanese schools and universities. Since 2015, he has arranged a yearly visit of Japanese children affected by the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake through the Support-Our-Kids (SOK) organisation. Another initiative is a Bilingual World Café forum, a structured conversation process for knowledge sharing with native speakers of Japanese who are learning English.

For the past six years, Masayoshi's students have acted as teaching assistants and mentors in an NCEA Japanese workshop for 350–400 secondary school students from over 15 local schools. This is the largest event of its kind in Oceania. In his Independent Course of Study, students are required to find, contact and interview a local Japanese immigrant and write an article about them in Japanese. Some students also write short essays for the Kiwi Time Magazine, which targets NZ Japanese readers.

Masayoshi harnesses the power of technology to bridge the gap between diverse groups who share common interests across nations. This makes his students' learning relevant, digitally advanced and inspiring, taking them 'out of the classroom' and 'into the wider world'. He regularly organises annual online Japanese guest lectures, with speakers including professional interviewer and writer Miyuki Chiba and photographer Ryosuke Mori, which provide students with direct and valuable expert knowledge and career ideas. Since 2017, he has co-organised an extension of online World Café forums using an advanced video-conferencing system, involving Japanese learners at UC and three other universities in Korea, Japan and Thailand.

Masayoshi's teaching and assessment process balances both 'knowledge acquisition' and 'learning community participation'. As the latter requires a shift away from traditional language teaching practices, he combines different types of assessments, such as Facebook-based tasks for communication and interaction within the community and essay writing for linguistic skills and knowledge. His students have received many national scholarships, awards and prizes. Over the past four years, Masayoshi has given over 15 presentations and keynote talks and organised online workshops. He has also invited successful New Zealanders in a variety of fields who use Japanese in their professions to be keynote speakers.

The impact of Masayoshi's leadership extends beyond UC and New Zealand, with his innovations found to be applicable and transferable to a range of institutions and disciplines. For instance, colleagues at UC, as well as in Australia and America, have incorporated his modifications to the UC Japanese language programme into their own curricula.

Masayoshi has recently pioneered online World Café forums for Japanese language educators, attracting 45 educators from 12 countries in 2017 and 60 educators from 15 countries in 2018. He has presented his findings from this initiative at five national and international conferences and workshops. He has further contributed to Japanese studies by serving on the executive of Japanese Studies Aotearoa New Zealand (JSANZ), co-establishing and chairing the annual JSANZ Tertiary Japanese Language Speech Contest in 2015–2017, and acting as the main driver in the successful bid by JSANZ to join the Global Network of Japanese Language Education in 2016.

Masayoshi was the chief editor of the book, *Creating New Synergies: Approaches of Tertiary Japanese Programmes in New Zealand*. He has received several awards including the College of Arts Excellence in Teaching Award and Lecturer of the Year in the College of Arts by UC Students' Association in 2017; and the Inaugural University of Canterbury Outstanding Teaching Practice Award; and a Certificate of Commendation from the Japanese Ambassador, in 2018, for his distinguished service in contributing to the deepening of mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and New Zealand.

"I will continue my efforts to improve my teaching practice and inspire students and fellow teachers by strengthening connections and developing multilayered learning communities."

Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards administered by



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Ako Aotearoa National Office  
PO Box 756  
Wellington 6140  
P: 0800 692 5669  
info@ako.ac.nz  
www.ako.ac.nz