

The Use of E-mail for Distance Japanese Language Learning and Teacher Training

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We can now handle Japanese script on any computer using Japanese word-processing software on the Dos/V(IBM), Kanji Talk 7(Mac) or Japanese Language Kit(Mac) platform, making it possible for even an ordinary Japanese language teacher without special knowledge in using the computer to exchange Japanese messages by E-mail.

In Japan, it is very difficult for the students in training programs for teachers of Japanese to learn what will be actually going on in the classes. On the other hand, outside Japan many institutions need native Japanese teachers. If we connect classrooms of Japanese language overseas with the teacher training programs in Japan, we can solve one of the main problems of each of these related fields.

Since 1993, E-mail in Japanese has been exchanged regularly between the University of Tsukuba in Japan and the University of Stirling in Scotland. The students learning Japanese at Stirling send their compositions to the students of the teacher training program of Tsukuba. They correct the compositions and return them with explanations and personal letters.

Up to the present, an increase in motivation, in understanding of the differences between the two cultures and in the realization of the importance of cooperation and of taking responsibility to develop this project has been observed.