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TEACHERS' FORUM

Reframing Self-Introduction for Social Justice: Identity and Diversity in Intermediate Japanese

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While traditional language textbooks often present Japanese society as racially and culturally homogenous, students increasingly seek to navigate complex questions of identity and diversity in advanced courses. This practical report showcases a social-justice-oriented unit designed for an intermediate Japanese course to move beyond the fill-in-the-blank self-introduction approach toward a more nuanced discourse that affirms identity and diversity. Utilizing backward design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), the unit was developed with both language and social justice learning goals in mind (Learning for Justice, 2022).

The unit reframes self-introduction through three key features: (1) framing the curriculum with essential questions and identity category brainstorming; (2) decentering mainstream Japanese and American perspectives using authentic, multimodal texts featuring Indigenous Ainu and *Zainichi* Korean voices; and (3) scaffolding a "difficult self-introduction" where students explain a non-conventional aspect of their own identity. Drawing on instructor reflection, questionnaires, and student interviews, this report demonstrates that students found the unit effective in developing their understanding of diversity and expressing their identity. The report concludes that reframing foundational communicative tasks through a social justice lens empowers learners to tell their stories and engage with diverse speakers. While situated in a Japanese context, the principles and features of this redesign provide educators of other world languages with strategies for incorporating social justice into intermediate courses.

Introduction

We were already dealing with issues of why we were learning Japanese ... can we ever, you know, be Japanese, like, can we ever be accepted? (Marina)

In my 2018 interview study, which explored students' perspectives on reading and discussing minoritized voices in Advanced Japanese, Marina (pseudonym), a Latine student who studied abroad in Japan for one year, expressed her appreciation for the class discussions that addressed the burning questions that she and her classmates had about their identities as Japanese users. Other students also endorsed discussing their own and Japanese residents' identities.

However, our program stopped offering this advanced course in 2021 because of a curricular restructuring from a four-year sequence model to a model of flexible content-based courses after fifth-semester Intermediate Japanese. In the newly developed advanced content-based courses, I observed students attempt to discuss their diverse identities and realized that the lower-level courses focused

on building basic skills but that they did not prepare them to talk about race, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality in Japanese.

I developed an intermediate unit oriented towards social justice that focused on identity in order to meet this need of preparing fifth-semester Japanese language students to tell their stories. It was built on the foundation of a self-introduction model from a textbook that we were using, but it was reframed to reflect on the identities that may be absent in the textbook. By moving away from an uncritical fill-in-the-blank approach to self-introduction, juxtaposing the textbook model with examples of nuanced self-expressions by minoritized Japanese residents, and asking the students to reflect on their own multiple identities, the unit aimed to help students express their chosen aspect of identity with more nuance and preparation. The following practical report showcases a model for and key features of this unit, offering a transferable framework for educators of other world languages who are seeking to integrate social justice into their own intermediate courses.

Representation of Diversity in World Language Education

World language curricula often present a single standard at the expense of minority varieties; this can lead to essentialism that reduces a people or culture into a homogenous group. Language textbooks tend to either omit diversity entirely or misrepresent diversity as static facts regarding a homogenous group (Canale, 2016). Even when multiple identities are represented, textbooks tend to take what Herman called the “Kaleidoscopic approach” of celebrating the diversity of food and festivals while excluding the perspectives of real people or the realities of colonial histories and contemporary social issues (Herman, 2007; Holbrook & Accurso, 2026).

Japanese language textbooks tend to present Japanese speakers as racially homogenous, even though Japan has never been homogenous, with Indigenous people, minoritized groups such as resident Koreans, and an increasing number of foreigners living in Japan (Befu, 2001). While there is one notable exception of an advanced-level textbook designed to “counter/challenge the popular myths surrounding Japanese people, language and culture” (Iwasaki & Kumagai, 2016, p. xi), an essentialized representation prevails in beginning and intermediate-level textbooks.

Identity and Diversity in World Language Education for Social Justice

Attention to teaching world languages for social justice has increased in recent years (Goodspeed, et al., 2023; Kong, 2022). Social justice is here understood as “a philosophy, an approach, and actions that embody treating all people with fairness, respect, dignity, and generosity” (Nieto, 2010, p. 46). While teaching for social justice takes many forms and addresses various topics, it needs to be developed from reflections on teachers’ and students’ identities (Osborn, 2006) and make sense in the school community, curriculum, and local culture (Kong, 2022).

Identity and diversity are among the potential topics suggested in sourcebooks on teaching world language for social justice (Glynn et al., 2014; Osborn, 2006). They are also two of the four dimensions, along with justice and action, of the Social Justice Standards, a framework for anti-bias, multicultural, and social justice education (Learning for Justice, 2022). At the foundation of the framework is identity affirmation; students develop a positive identity by realizing that they, as well as others, are members of multiple groups simultaneously. This helps students recognize diversity and learn to approach other people with respect and a curiosity to understand their histories and lived experiences. Relating to people as individuals and learning about historical and ongoing injustice become the basis of their action for social justice. World language education can help accomplish this by exposing students to the diversity that exists within a people or a culture.

Studies also highlight the importance of using authentic materials with multiple and especially marginalized perspectives (Goodspeed et al., 2023) for identity development (Di Stefano et al., 2021). As aforementioned, beginning and intermediate textbooks commonly lack diverse perspectives, and I address this in the redesigned unit by incorporating texts from a variety of sources.

Identity and Diversity Through Self-Introduction

Self-introduction is a foundational communicative function and is therefore often a first task in novice language courses. In these introductory courses, the approach is commonly a fill-in-the-blank template, focused on presenting basic information like name and age. The topic is then often repeated at an intermediate level with more detail. I chose this point as the most productive place in our curriculum to prepare students to tell a nuanced story about their identity.

The first chapter of *Preadvanced Japanese* (Konomi, 2018), an open textbook that we use for fifth-semester Japanese, is about self-introduction. The six-paragraph-long main text is the script of a comprehensive introduction by a U.S. college junior studying in Japan as an exchange student after studying Japanese for four years in the U.S. It covers a range of topics such as educational and family background, interests, and future goals. It does not, however, touch on identity categories such as ethnicity, race, gender, and sexuality. By excluding these categories, students do not learn how to express these aspects of their identity in Japanese, thus limiting the types of diversity they recognize and discuss.

Unit Planning

I reframed the four-week-long self-introduction unit as an opportunity to reflect on the many aspects of our identities. As resources to discuss the identity categories that are not discussed in the textbook, I incorporated short, authentic, and multimodal texts in which diverse residents of Japan talked about themselves. I started this redesign at the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) week-long summer institute in 2023. While I had experience using materials representing diversity at the advanced level (Iwasaki & Kumagai, 2016), I had never done so at the intermediate level, where language learning goals need to be front and center. I describe the design process in what follows.

Following the Backward Design model (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), I first chose unit learning objectives, including those selected from the Social Justice Standards (Learning for Justice, 2022).

Language and Content: Students will ...

- be able to express their multiple identities in Japanese.
- learn the perspectives and experiences of various users of Japanese.

Social Justice: Students will ...

- develop language and historical and cultural knowledge that affirm and accurately describe their membership in multiple identity groups.
- respond to diversity by building empathy, respect, understanding, and connection.
- analyze the harmful impact of bias and injustice on the world, historically and today.
- express empathy when people are excluded or mistreated because of their identity and concern when they themselves experience bias.

I then designed the unit-end assessments, one each for the interpretive, presentational, and interpersonal modes of communication.

- Interpretive mode: Students watch and understand the 2020 Nike commercial, which was controversial for its portrayal of racially diverse youth in Japan.
- Presentational mode: Students write a draft and present a “difficult self-introduction.” More details are explained below in Key Feature 3.
- Interpersonal mode: Students discuss how to talk to a hypothetical exchange student from Japan who voices a race-evasive view of Japan's homogeneity.

To prepare students for these unit-end assessments, I chose authentic texts, such as short videos and short sections of comic books, that represented marginalized voices and could complement the textbook. The texts were selected for their accessibility in terms of language and their utility in introducing the identity categories that students often discussed in English. As students interacted with the texts, they engaged with comprehension and discussion activities. See examples below in Key Feature 2.

Class meetings based on the textbook and class meetings discussing the authentic texts were alternated to juxtapose the two and to position the marginalized voices as an important focus of the unit, without leaving them as merely an add-on. The structure of the new unit is presented in Appendix A, and the texts are in Appendix B.

The three key features of this unit are (1) framing the unit with essential questions and brainstorming identity categories, (2) decentering both Japanese and American mainstream perspectives by listening to minoritized Japanese residents' voices, and (3) reflecting on our own identities and preparing a “difficult self-introduction.” While the examples come from a Japanese course, these key features provide a framework that can be translated into other world language courses. I discuss each in more detail next.

Key Feature 1: Framing the Unit with Essential Questions and Brainstorming Identity Categories

The first key feature of the unit is to start with essential questions, which frame the following unit activities. I present them first in Japanese and then with their English translation.

1. What makes up our identity?
2. How do people in Japan talk about their identity?
3. Which part of your identity do you talk about with a person when you meet them for the first time? Which parts do you not talk about? Why?

The first question serves as a jumping-off point for the first activity where students are invited to brainstorm in pairs all the identity categories that they can think of, drawing on their lived experiences. After first listing as many as possible with their partner, I compile a collaborative list with the entire class. Students are invited to contribute in Japanese or English, which is necessary as some identity categories are rarely discussed in the Japanese language curriculum and students may not know the vocabulary for them (for example, race or social class). I translate them into Japanese as I add them to the list. See Appendix C for the list that was generated by the students in the Fall 2024 course.

Generating the list enables students to realize that the self-introduction example in the textbook that appears to be comprehensive does not necessarily go over all the identity categories that exist. It also introduces that idea that we do not necessarily disclose all the aspects of our identity to

everyone; we make choices depending on audience and purpose. Sometimes these omissions reflect social norms. Some authors of the chosen authentic texts help tell stories of less conventional aspects of their identities, which sets up the discussion of the “difficult self-introduction,” to be explored further in Key Feature 3.

Key Feature 2: Decentering Japanese Mainstream and American Perspectives

The second key feature of the unit focuses on decentering Japanese mainstream perspectives that incorrectly equate nationality and ethnicity and American assumptions about citizenship that are not universal. Because of the question my previous students have asked me —“Can we ever be Japanese?” — I focused on choosing authentic texts that center on nationality and ethnicity. These texts regarding what it means to be a “Japanese person” decenter both Japanese mainstream perspectives and American perspectives by showcasing diversity within each group. Below are two examples from Indigenous and colonial perspectives.

Indigenous Ainu Perspective

Following the identity category brainstorming activity, I present a cartoon video *Motto shiritai! Watashitachi no koto* [Let's learn more about ourselves!] created by the Foundation for Ainu Culture (2022). The cartoon video discusses four high school students' identities, narrated from the perspective of an elderly Ainu man. The identity descriptions push against the Japanese myth that equates nationality with ethnicity (see Figure 1 for the four profiles).

Figure 1

Screenshot of a Cartoon Video 'Motto shiritai! Watashitachi no koto'



The video uses vocabulary that is uncommon in the mainstream perspectives. The first character, Yuto, has wajin parents, and the elderly man explains, “We use it [wajin] to refer to Japanese people who aren't Ainu.” “Wajin [person of Waj]” is a term that was used in premodern times before the Ainu were assimilated into mainstream Japan. The common term here that Yuto uses is nihonjin [Japanese person], an ambiguous term commonly used for both nationality and ethnicity. The word wajin decenters the Japanese mainstream myth, creating space for diverse ethnic heritages of Japanese

citizens. The video also refers to the father of another character, Rina, as “*igirisu-kei amerikajin* [British-heritage American],” another unusual term that de-naturalizes a white American identity.

Pausing the video after the elderly man introduces the four characters, I ask the students to explain what they understand about the four characters’ ethnic and national identities, to check for comprehension and build their vocabulary around nationality and ethnicity. This clear distinction between nationality and ethnicity decenters the taken-for-granted Japanese mainstream perspective and helps students reflect on the negative impact of such discourse for those whose ethnicities and nationalities do not align.

Zainichi Korean Perspective

Zainichi [resident] Koreans are another long-term minoritized group in Japan whose historical origin dates to the Japanese empire’s colonization of the Korean peninsula in the early 20th century. At that time, many Koreans were forced or coerced to move to Japan. Some returned to Korea after the end of WWII, but many remained in Japan because of the political, social, and economic instability in Korea due to the Korean war, the division into two countries, and the dictatorships. *Zainichi* Koreans faced discrimination and exclusion by Japanese nationals, but despite this some established their lives in Japan.

Today’s *Zainichi* Korean youth, born in Japan from Japan-born parents of Korean heritage may still be non-Japanese citizens, as Japan’s nationality law follows the *jus sanguinis* principle that attributes citizenship by parentage, unlike the U.S. where citizenship is determined by birthplace (*jus soli*) and residence (*jus domicilii*) (Kashiwazaki, 1998). Japan also prohibits dual citizenship, and many Koreans have historically associated naturalization with abandoning their Korean identity. The pressure to assimilate upon naturalization was strong, such as an expectation to adopt Japanese names, although this practice changed in recent years (Tai, 2004).

I chose a chapter in an educational comic book about minoritized students (Editorial Board of “Stories of Children Connected to Foreign Countries,” 2012), *Yuhe no monogatari* [Yuhe's Story], as it explains this historical circumstance through accessible language and drawings from the perspective of a *Zainichi* Korean junior high school student. In the story, Japan-born Yuhe, who uses a Korean name and has retained her Republic of Korea (South Korea) citizenship, tells her family’s history to her classmates who thought she would speak Korean.

Students answer comprehension questions as they read the story to check their understanding of the key ideas and to establish background knowledge about the ongoing injustice for discussion. Below are the questions in my English translation.

1. What is Yuhe’s nationality?
2. What language does Yuhe speak?
3. In which country was Yuhe born in?
4. When did Yuhe’s ancestor come to Japan? Why did they do so?
5. According to Yuhe, about how many people from the Korean peninsula stayed in Japan?
6. According to Yuhe, why do many resident Koreans hide their roots and ethnic names?

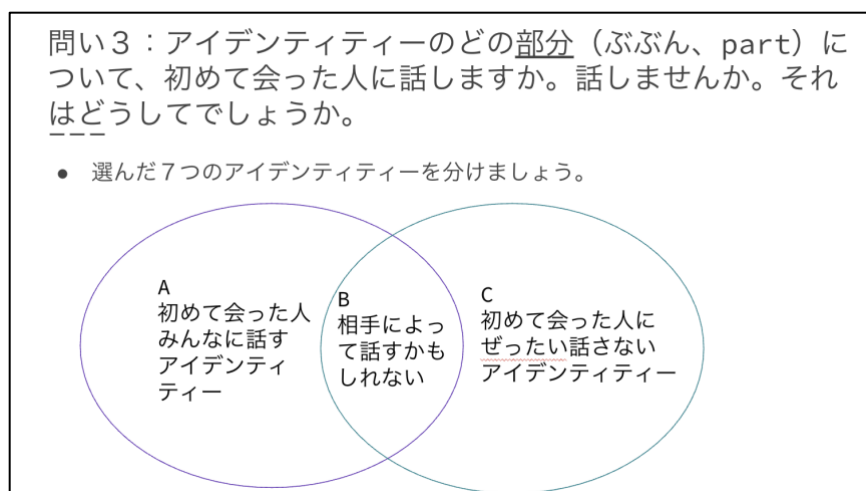
This story not only decenters the myth of an ethnically homogenous nation but also decenters American students’ taken-for-granted birthplace- and residence-based conceptions of citizenship and the increasingly common status of dual citizenship. By focusing on the story of one junior high school student, students can reflect on the historical injustices that have had lasting impacts on minoritized residents of Japan.

Key Feature 3: Reflecting on our own Identity and Preparing a “Difficult Self-Introduction”

The third and final key feature of the unit asks the students to write and present a “difficult self-introduction,” shifting the focus onto the students’ identities and stories, using the diverse stories they read earlier as inspiration and reference. To guide their choice of topic, I present the collaborative class list of identity categories (Appendix C) and ask students to choose the seven identity categories that are most important to them. I instruct them to write each one on its own notecard, clarifying that they will not be asked to share, to create a safe space that honors students’ agency over what they choose to disclose. After they write on the notecards, I show them the slide in Figure 2 and ask them to sort the seven notecards into three piles: (A) identities that they would share with anyone they meet for the first time, (B) identities that they may share with a selective audience, and (C) identities that they would never discuss in a first encounter.

Figure 2

Slide with a Venn Diagram to Prepare for the “Difficult Self-Introduction”



I again tell students that they will not be asked to share what goes into each pile. However, afterward, students discuss in small groups their thoughts about the activity and their overall observations of their experience sorting the cards.

Next, I explain that for the “difficult self-introduction,” students are expected to discuss an aspect of their identity that they categorized in the (B) or (C) pile, as the identities in the (A) pile are likely too straightforward. I then share the assessment guidelines (see Appendix D). This self-introduction is not a fill-in-the-blank template. Students may consider one of the topics seen in the textbook model to be personally difficult, for example if they have a complicated family background. Rather than replicating the model discourse, students decide what they want others to understand about one aspect of their identity that they consider important to them. Before they start writing as homework, I check in with each student.

After receiving my feedback on their written drafts, the students present their difficult self-introductions in small groups, rather than to the whole class, as telling and listening to these stories may take place with a selective and small audience. This format also leads to repeating their presentations, therefore providing more opportunities for students to practice sharing their stories.

Instructor Reflection & Student Perceptions

I piloted this unit in Fall 2023 and observed an overall success; the variety of “difficult self-introductions” impressed me, including evidence of reflection and writing for a select audience. At the same time, I noticed some areas for improvement in the design of the unit, such as clearer framings and a stronger connection between the textbook model and the authentic texts, as well as the choices of authentic texts. I taught the unit with such updates in Fall 2024, when I committed to write down my observations daily in field notes, conducted a post-unit anonymous questionnaire using Google Forms (see questions in Appendix E), and interviewed two students after the project (see questions in Appendix F) to document the teaching and learning process and to seek student perspectives.

Instructor Reflection

My daily observations capture some of the updates I made. For example, after the first day, I wrote, “I think it went well that we took the time to address the unit’s essential questions and especially that we connected how people living in Japan talk about identity with how that relates to the way we talk about our own identities.” After the class in which I used authentic texts, I wrote, “We started by reviewing yesterday’s reading, specifically what identity categories were mentioned in the model self-introduction. I then introduced today’s texts as the model did not discuss nationality and ethnicity.”

Questionnaire Responses

All seven students who took the course in Fall 2024 responded to the anonymous questionnaire. The responses to, “How effective was the unit for each learning goal?” are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Questionnaire Response on the Perceived Effectiveness of the Unit

Learning Goal	1	2	3	4	5
Vocabulary and expressions to discuss and express various identities in Japan	0	0	1	1	5
Grammar structures to discuss and express various identities in Japan	0	0	0	6	1
Identity Goal: Students will develop language and historical and cultural knowledge that affirm and accurately describe their membership in multiple identity groups	0	0	0	3	4
Diversity Goal: Students will respond to diversity by building empathy, respect, understanding and connection	0	0	0	1	6

Justice Goal: Students will analyze the harmful impact of bias and injustice on the world, historically and today	0	0	1	1	5
Action Goal: Students will express empathy when people are excluded or mistreated because of their identities and concern when they themselves experience bias	0	0	0	1	6

Note. 1 = Not effective at all; 2 = Not very effective; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Somewhat effective; 5 = Extremely effective.

I set six learning goals, with the first two goals focused on language, and the other four on social justice. Overall, students rated the social justice goals higher than the language goals.

Interview Responses

Two of the students (see Table 2) who took the course shared their thoughts on the social-justice-oriented identity unit in a semi-structured interview (Questions in Appendix F).

Table 2
Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Background	Gender	Class	Major(s), minor
Alexis	U.S. domestic, white	Female	Senior	M: English m: Japanese
Minjun	International, from Korea	Male	Senior	M: Economics, History m: Japanese

I asked the interviewees to talk about their overall thoughts and experiences of the unit before discussing the class materials. Alexis explained that the topic was familiar to her in other contexts, and she appreciated learning to do this in Japanese.

For the identity unit, we have a lot of conversations in other types of classes about identity ... but never in a class where I was having to talk about it in a second language. And so, I feel like not only was I able to have that conversation and see it from Japanese people's perspectives, which is really interesting, but also being able to fit your language learning skills around talking about your identity. And from my perspective, I think that a lot of parts of how Japanese people identify themselves are different from how Americans identify themselves. (Alexis)

She emphasized her interest in engaging with identity descriptions from Japanese perspectives, highlighting specifically the deviation from her assumptions about citizenship, which she called the “American mindset.”

“Yuhe’s story” was the first text that both Alexis and Minjun talked about. Minjun, an international student from Korea, has a *Zainichi* Korean friend in college, from whom he had already

learned a lot of the historical background explained in “Yuhe’s story.” Alexis attributed her enjoyment of the story to learning this historical background.

Yuhe went through a whole history lesson. I really enjoyed learning about that because I did not have the context for it. I knew that Korea was at one point a colony of Japan. And like because of that, there's still some prejudice against Koreans in Japan. But I didn't know the extent of that. So, I thought that was really interesting to learn because I feel like every country has their own specific reasons for prejudice. (Alexis)

Alexis explained that the story helped her connect her knowledge of historical facts and provided a context for the current injustices. She decentered American perspectives and demonstrated awareness that learning local historical circumstances is necessary for social justice.

One of the most well-developed “difficult self-introductions” from the two semesters was Minjun’s. He chose to talk about his political orientation, developed in Korea, which he felt was often at odds with his peers in the U.S. He hoped to be able to explain his stance better.

I talked about my political identity, which is not the best way to introduce most of the times, but ... while writing, I learned a lot about myself. ... And that process made me realize that it actually goes back to my family history and it was really fun to revisit my roots. And at the same time, what this ultimately accomplishes is that ... it also helps me understand others’ political identities... every person comes from a different background, different family history and different belief system in families, and where they grew up in. (Minjun)

Similar to “Yuhe’s story,” he reflected on his family history to explain his current views and realized that it was very important to listen to people with different perspectives because everyone has roots that have shaped their beliefs.

Pedagogical Implications and Conclusion

Self-introduction is an essential function in getting to know people and building personal relationships. This is why it is always taught in language classes. However, the fill-in-the-blank approach that may be appropriate for novice students is too narrow and often reinforces an inaccurate, homogenous view of people and cultures. Students at the intermediate level and above would benefit from developing a more diverse linguistic repertoire. By reframing the intermediate-level self-introduction for social justice, this unit attended to students’ identities and highlighted the minoritized voices absent in textbooks.

Students found the topic of diverse identities to be relevant and interesting. Minjun said in the interview that this unit embodied a fundamental and humanistic approach that encourages listening more intently to others and advocating for themselves. Being able to affirm their identity in a second language and present a less conventional aspect of their identity can help students engage in discussions on a variety of topics grounded in their identity. I observed that students who took my advanced content-based course in Spring 2024 following this course were more eager and fluent in discussing the class content from their perspective; to my unexpected delight, for example, international students from China discussed cultural diversity within the country in ways that challenged the homogenous perception of Chinese students.

While this case study comes from a Japanese course, I believe that this model is relevant in other languages as well. Textbook representation is necessarily limited and static, and every language has diverse speakers, some of whom—especially those without powerful backing like citizenship

status, racial majority, or economic power—may be outside the imagination of conventional textbook producers. I hope this report provides a resource for developing world language teaching about identity and diversity for social justice in various languages.

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Appendix A

Unit Structure of the Identity Unit with the Topics for the 12 Meetings

Meeting	Purpose / Text type	Text / Activity
1	Introduction, Video	Essential questions, Brainstorm identity constructs, Indigenous and diverse identity in Japan with Ainu educational video (Foundation for Ainu Culture, 2022)
2	Textbook 1/3	Major, study abroad, place of origin. Based on textbook paragraphs (Konomi, 2018)
3	1-page comic	“What person” based on a one-page comic (Hoshino, 2019)
4	Textbook 2/3	Family, personality, hobbies. Based on textbook paragraphs (Konomi, 2018)
5	6-page comic	Histories and experiences of a resident Korean student through a comic book chapter (Editorial Board of “Stories of Children Connected to Foreign Countries,” 2012)
6	Textbook 3/3	Work, horoscope, blood type. Based on textbook paragraphs (Konomi, 2018)
7	10-page comic	Experiences of a gay man in Japan through an excerpt of a comic book memoir (Nanasaki & Tsukizuki, 2021)
8	Film excerpt	Experiences of biracial people in Japan through clips of a documentary film (Nishikura & Takagi, 2013)
9	Unit-end assessment	Preparation for “difficult self-introduction” writing and presentation
10	Unit-end assessment	Nike Japan TV commercial (Nike Japan, 2020)
11	Unit-end assessment	Continue preparation for “difficult self-introduction”
12	Unit-end assessment	Roleplay with a hypothetical exchange student from Japan

Appendix B

Materials Used in the Unit

- Editorial Board of “Stories of Children Connected to Foreign Countries”. (Ed.). (2012). *Kurasumēto wa gaikokujin. Tabunkakyōsei 20 no monogatari* [My classmates are foreigners. 20 Stories of Multiculturalism] (N. Minami, Illus.). Akashi Shoten.
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Appendix C

Collaboratively Created List of Identity Categories (Fall 2024)

Japanese	English translation
年齢	age
ジェンダー	gender
クラブ、スポーツ、趣味	club, sports, hobby
教育、大学、学生かどうか	education, college, student status
仕事	occupation
家族、子供がいるか、結婚しているか	family, parenting, marital status
生活スタイル	lifestyle
文化	culture
障がい	disability
人種	race
国籍	nationality
民族	ethnicity
言語	language
政治	politics
性格	personality
ファッション、見た目	fashion, appearance
出身	place of origin
階級	social class
宗教	religion
食べ物	diet

Appendix D

Difficult Self-Introduction Guideline

In Unit 1, we discussed our own identities and the identities of various people in Japan. For the Unit 1 essay, please write an essay in which you clearly explain your own important identity in a situation that matters to you.

1. Choose an important (high-stakes) person you will get to know, such as your graduate school mentor, supervisor at work, roommates that do not share an important part of your identity, family of your significant other, who happen to speak Japanese. You want to explain an aspect of identity that may be hard to understand or are often misunderstood if not explained carefully (not what you would tell everyone in a public self-introduction). You may imagine the situation to happen in several years (not necessarily now), and you may imaginatively change a part of your identity accordingly.

2. Make sure to have at least one paragraph for each.

- Beginning or general introduction
- The identity you want the reader/listener to understand (including common misunderstandings, why sometimes you do not share, why this is important to you)
- Wrap up & what impressions to leave?

3. Consider incorporating the vocabulary and grammar structures we have studied so far, such as そうだ、ようだ、らしい、かもしれない、はずだ、に違いない、だろう、ていく・てくる、一はじめる・おわる。

4. Submit as a Google Doc link or a file attachment in .doc or .docx format.

5. Talk to your instructor, the teaching assistant, the classmates, or the peer tutor for brainstorming and help. Please do not consult digital sources or other speakers of Japanese (i.e. Japanese speaking friends) in drafting the composition.

6. The first draft is due on Friday, October 4 (after using a part of Wed. Oct. 2 class for working on it), and the second draft is due on Monday, October 16. You will orally present the difficult self-introduction in class on Monday, October 14.

Rubric:

Criteria	Exceeds expectations	Meets expectations	Approaching expectations
Paragraph organization	The paragraphs are well-structured and clearly organized, with a logical flow of ideas and connection words.	The paragraphs are somewhat organized, but the flow of ideas is not always clear. Connection words are not effectively used.	The paragraphs lack organization and the flow of ideas is confusing. Connection words are missing.

Expression of identities	The writer effectively expresses an aspect of their identities, including common misunderstandings and the reasons why they sometimes do not share. The importance of this identity is clearly conveyed.	The writer partially expresses an aspect of their identities but may not fully address common misunderstandings or the reasons for not sharing. The importance of this identity is somewhat conveyed.	The writer struggles to express an aspect of their identities and does not address common misunderstandings or convey the importance of the identity.
Purposeful intention and nuance in grammar use	The writer demonstrates a high level of proficiency in using the grammar structures studied so far, incorporating them in a purposeful and nuanced manner to enhance the self-introduction.	The writer demonstrates some proficiency in using the grammar structures studied, but there may be instances where their use lacks purpose or nuance.	The writer did not incorporate the grammar structures from this course and does not contribute to the purpose or nuance of the self-introduction.

Appendix E

Survey Questions

Unit 1 on Identity has been redesigned recently, developed with a focus on integrating social justice themes while maintaining the same language learning goals as the original unit. This research questionnaire is a part of the research project with the goal of assessing the effectiveness of this approach and gathering your perspectives to further improve the unit.

You are invited to fill out this anonymous survey regarding your experience in the unit and your perception of how effectively the learning objectives were met. No names or identifying information will be collected. Your participation will help improve the unit and advance understanding of social justice informed world language education, but your participation is voluntary; Whether and how you participate or not has no effects on the course grade in any way.

1. Looking back at your study in Unit 1, how effective do you think the unit materials, activities, and assessments were in learning **the vocabulary and expressions** to discuss and express various identities in Japan and in your classroom? (5-point Lickert Scale)
2. Looking back at your study in Unit 1, how effective do you think the unit materials, activities, and assessments were in learning **the grammar structures** to discuss and express various identities in Japan and in your classroom? (5-point Lickert Scale)
3. Looking back at your study in Unit 1, how effective do you think the unit materials, activities, and assessments were in achieving **this social justice goal: "Students will develop language and historical and cultural knowledge that affirm and accurately describe their membership in multiple identity groups"**? (5-point Lickert Scale)
4. Looking back at your study in Unit 1, how effective do you think the unit materials, activities, and assessments were in achieving **this social justice goal: "Students will respond to diversity by building empathy, respect, understanding and connection"**? (5-point Lickert Scale)
5. Looking back at your study in Unit 1, how effective do you think the unit materials, activities, and assessments were in achieving **this social justice goal: "Students will analyze the harmful impact of bias and injustice on the world, historically and today"**? (5-point Lickert Scale)
6. Looking back at your study in Unit 1, how effective do you think the unit materials, activities, and assessments were in achieving **this social justice goal: "Students will express empathy when people are excluded or mistreated because of their identities and concern when they themselves experience bias."**? (5-point Lickert Scale)
7. Please rate your perceived usefulness of the following materials and activities in achieving above goals 1-6. (5-point Lickert Scale)
8. Please add any comments to explain your responses above. Please also feel free to add any thoughts on the materials, activities, and assessments of the unit. Any suggestions for future revision are also welcome. (Open-ended)

Thank you so much for your participation. If you are interested in talking about your experience in the unit, please also consider participating in the interview.

Appendix F

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about yourself, like how you got interested in Japan and Japanese, and what else interests you besides Japan and Japanese?
2. Let's start from your overall thoughts and experiences on Unit 1 Identity Unit. What do you remember from the unit? What engaged you? What did you learn, from your perspective? Did some aspects of the course confuse you or fail to engage you?
3. Can you comment on any of the materials we read in the course? (A copy of the materials is provided.)
4. What was your experience of writing a difficult self-introduction like?
5. Do you have any suggestions to improve the unit?