

Learning by Personal Goals and Reflection Using a Portfolio
 個人的学習目標の設定とポートフォリオによる振り返りを活用した授業の実践報告
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1. Introduction

This presentation shares a new curriculum that meets learners' diverse learning styles, interests, and proficiency levels in a third-year college-level Japanese class. Anyone who has taught a third-year language class would agree that the learners' proficiency levels in the target language differ significantly when they get to a third-year class. To address students' different proficiency levels and diverse learning styles and interests, the new curriculum included individualized learning goals alongside the course learning goals. The course was a hybrid of in-person, face-to-face classes twice a week and asynchronous class time twice a week. The students used the asynchronous class time to work on their personal goals set at the beginning of the semester and every two weeks. This curriculum encouraged autonomous learning and self-regulation by using a learning portfolio to set goals, record learning activities, and reflect and reevaluate goals. According to previous studies, merely setting goals does not improve achievement (Schunk, 2003). The students had to reflect on their goals and learning activities every two weeks to set new or revised goals. This paper describes the course structure, data collected from a survey, and the instructor's reflections about the course.

1.1 Background

Many of the ideas implemented in this study came from *LinguaFolio*, which was introduced to the author at the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) Summer Institute program titled "Meaningful Portfolio Implementation: Using Goal Setting, Reflection, and Thinking" in 2021. *LinguaFolio* is an ePortfolio tool developed at the University of Oregon for second language learners. According to Clarke (2013), using *LinguaFolio* develops the capacity for self-regulated learning. In creating a new curriculum in Japanese 302 in this study, the author tried to emulate many concepts from *LinguaFolio*, although the class did not use it as their portfolio tool. A student portfolio is defined as "a purposeful collection of student work that tells the story of the student's efforts, progress, or achievement in (a) given area(s)." Many studies suggest that a student portfolio is an effective tool for learning and assessment when implemented well (Arter & Spandel, 1992; Russo, 2015; Scully et al., 2018; Ziegler & Moeller, 2012; Zubizarreta, 2009). The Japanese 302 curriculum consisted of regular classroom instruction, self-regulated learning, and an ePortfolio. Knowles (1975) defines self-regulated learning as "a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes." Brown and Hudson (1998) categorized portfolio-based assessment as a personal-response assessment. Personal-response assessments require students to produce language allowing each student's responses to be unique. It allows students to communicate what they want to communicate. Based on the literature, they summarize three advantages of portfolio assessment: 1) it may strengthen student learning, 2) it may enhance the teacher's role, and 3) it may improve testing processes. They also, however, discussed five disadvantages of portfolio assessment found in the literature: design decisions, logistics, interpretation, reliability, and validity, all of which the author struggled with as she planned and executed the course.

2. Curriculum Design

Japanese 302 is a 4-credit course, whose requirements are as follows:

- Class Participation 5%
- Portfolio 40%
 - Initial self-evaluation (3%)
 - Goal activities/strategies (14%)
 - Evidence (artifacts) (10%)
 - Bi-weekly reflections (10%)
 - Final self-evaluation and reflection (3%)
- Sharing What You Learned 5%
- Equity, Diversity, Inclusiveness (EDI) Projects (Research 15% Survey 10%) 25%
- Unit Assessments 20%
- Oral Proficiency Interview 5%

As you can see, the self-regulated learning portion (“Portfolio”) makes up 40 % of the course grades. The class met in a face-to-face class twice a week on Wednesdays and Fridays. Tuesdays and Thursdays were asynchronous, designated for self-regulated learning time. The students and the instructor also had a 15-minute individual meeting on Tuesdays every other week to discuss student progress and give feedback. Table 1 below illustrates how the class was formatted.

Table 1: Class format

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-regulated learning: personal goal activities. • Individual meeting with the instructor every other week (15 min) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F2F class activities according to Unit topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-regulated learning: personal goal activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F2F class activities according to Unit topic

This paper mainly focuses on the self-regulated learning portion of the course, but below is a brief overview of what the rest of the course covered. The common units had four topics, and each unit had a few goals expressed as “can-do” statements. When the students chose their personal goals, they were not bound by the unit topics.

Unit 1 Dreams and Plan

- I can discuss future plans, such as where I want to live and what I will be doing in the next few years, with sufficient details. (Adv-mid Interpersonal communication)
- I can make a presentation about future plans with sufficient details. (Intermediate high, Presentational speaking)

Unit 2 Social Changes

- I can compare and contrast life in different locations and in different times. (Adv-low, Interpersonal communication)
- I can exchange factual information about social and environmental questions, such as retirement, recycling, or pollution. (Adv-mid, Interpersonal communication)
- I can write a letter of advice or letter to the editor on a social, civic, or political issue. (Adv-low, presentational writing)

Unit 3 Marketing a product

- I can write a poster or brochure for customers. (Adv-mid, Presentational writing)
- I can make a presentation promoting an event, a service, or a product. (Adv-low, Presentational speaking)

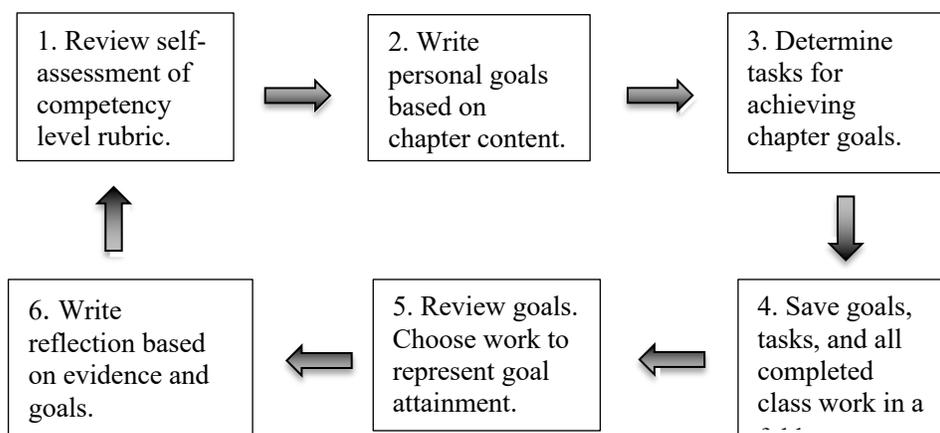
Unit 4 My Favorite

- I can present in detail the plot, setting, characters, etc., of a film or book. (Adv-mid, Presentational speaking)

3. Self-regulated Learning Structure

The author adapted the LinguaFolio cycle of implementation shown in Figure 1 to structure self-regulated learning. First, the students self-assessed their competency level. For step #2, the author changed “Write personal goals based on chapter content” to “based on your interests,” and for #3, she changed “Determine tasks for achieving chapter goals” to “achieving your goals.” The remaining steps were kept as they were. In step 4, the students saved goals, tasks, and all completed work in a folder. In step 5, they reviewed goals and chose work to represent goal attainment, and in step 6, they wrote a reflection based on evidence and goals.

Figure 1: LinguaFolio Cycle of Implementation (Moeller et al., 2012)



In the first step of the cycle, the students in this study self-assessed their competency level using ACTFL "Can-do statements" in interpretive listening, interpretive reading, presentational writing, interpersonal speaking, and presentational speaking. After the self-assessment, the students explored language learning strategies using a learner guide adapted from Cohen et al., 2002 (see appendix). The learner guide listed various learning strategies in Listening, Vocabulary, Reading, Writing, Kanji, and Translation and instructed the students to indicate ones that they had tried before and worked well, ones they had tried and didn't work well, and ones they would like to try, by putting a star next to them, drawing a line through them, and highlighting them, respectively. For example, if they had tried "attending a speaking event in a new language" and it did not work well for them, they drew a line through the first one under Strategies to Increase My Exposure to the Target Language. If they wanted to try listening to a podcast in the target language, they highlighted the second one, and so forth.

The next step was to write personal goals. Figure 2 is the beginning portion of the worksheet for goal setting, which was adapted from LinguaFolio.

Figure 2: Goal-setting Worksheet

Spring 2022 Japanese 302
Goal Setting Activities

After completing this guide, you will have ideas of different ways to advance your Japanese study.

Self-Assessment

Refer to the self-assessment (can-do statements) you completed while brainstorming ways you can advance your Japanese.

Brainstorm

Let's brainstorm some ways to advance your Japanese study in the following categories. Fill in several ideas of how to practice your Japanese in each so that you can move toward the next level of proficiency! A few examples are provided in each category but make sure to add some more of your own ideas.

Listening (Interpretive)

- Listen to News Web Easy (<https://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/easy/>)
- Watch/Listen to Youtube videos
-
-
-

First, the students reviewed their self-assessed "can-do statements." Then, the students brainstormed ways to advance their Japanese in Interpretive listening, reading, Kanji reading and writing, Interpersonal speaking, Interpersonal Writing, Vocabulary, and Cultural knowledge. The worksheet gave them a few examples for each area and asked them to add more.

After the brainstorming, the students came up with a list of goal activities they wanted to work on during the semester and filled out the table below. It asked their goal activity, why they chose it, and how they would know how well they performed.

Table 2: Goal-setting

Goal Activity	Why I chose it	How will I know how well I performed?
Example: Listening-Watch instructional videos on YouTube	I like to watch YouTube, and I like DIY crafts. I want to see how well I can follow instructions in the language that I am learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I follow the tutorial and complete the DIY • When I don't understand the words, I can use images from the video to follow along. • I learned a new word based on context clues.

For example, if they chose "listening" for a goal and decided to watch instructional videos on YouTube, they wrote why they chose it and thought about how they would know how well they performed. In this example, they would know that they performed well if they could complete the DIY by following the tutorial, if they could use images from the video to figure out the words they did not understand, or if they learned a new word based on context clues. The following are some of the goal activities the students listed.

- Watch anime without subtitles.
- Read manga in Japanese.

- Listen to Japanese interviews.
- Plan a trip to Japan in Japanese
- Watch a Japanese cooking show
- Watch more films with decreasing reliance on subtitles.
- Create a fixed routine practicing increasing sets of kanji on rotation.
- Make friends with someone from Japan.
- Listen to Japanese songs.
- Play games in Japanese
- Watch a documentary about Japanese culture
- Read and learn kanji from News Web Easy
- Research on culture

For step 4, the students were given two weeks to work on their goal activities and produce some kind of artifact as evidence of their learning. As for the tools for ePortfolio, the author shared different portals such as Google Sites and Edublogs to compile their work, and they chose what worked best for them. In the end, most students used Google Drive, and one used edublogs.

Table 3 shows some examples of the goals, goal activities, and evidence the students chose. In the left column are some of the goals and the activities performed to achieve the goals, and in the right column is the evidence the students turned in. For example, one student chose to listen to a Japanese song for listening, and they turned in a translation of the song and a recording of them singing the song as evidence.

Table 3: Examples of Goal activities and Evidence

Goal: Goal activity	Evidence
Listening: Listen to a Japanese song	Translation of the song Audio recording of singing the song
Speaking: Talk about my hobby (game)	Instruction video of how to play the game
Listening: Watch more films with decreasing reliance on subtitles.	Two plot summaries, one watched without subtitles, one watched with subtitles
Vocabulary: Learn a word of the day	A story made with words learned during the weeks
Culture: Research on culture	PowerPoint presentation, Drawing

At the end of the two weeks, the students uploaded what they worked on and a reflection. They were graded on their efforts in the process, the evidence/artifact, and the reflection. In case they could not complete their artifact during the two weeks, they were allowed to turn in their work in progress as their artifact.

The reflection cycle took place every two weeks. According to Schunk (2003), merely setting goals does not improve achievement, and the reflection step is important for self-regulated learning. The students answered the following questions in their reflection: What did you learn? Why did you learn it? How did you learn it? What strategies did you use? What worked well? How successful was your learning? How did you demonstrate your learning? Was it appropriate? What are you going to do next? Why? How will you know how well you performed?

Clarke (2013) states that engaging the students in goal-setting and self-assessment that fosters metacognitive processes in students about what they need to improve and also why they are doing it stimulates independent and active learning. These processes lead the students to independent learning. The reflection questions above are meant to help students choose appropriate and effective learning resources and strategies, plan their learning time, and monitor their cognitive activities.

4. Students' Feedback

The students were asked to complete an online course evaluation survey at the end of the semester, and all five students responded. The survey included some open-ended questions and multiple-choice questions about the overall curriculum and various components of the course. One of the open-ended questions asked, "In addition to the course-specific content and objectives, you set your own personal objectives in listening, reading, speaking, and writing at the beginning of the semester. In your opinion, did you achieve your objectives? Please explain your answer." All of them said that they achieved some of their objectives, as shown in their comments below (comments are kept exactly as they were written).

"I think I achieved some objectives, but I had a hard time keeping up with everything because we had a lot of work to do."

"On the whole, I achieved the majority of my objectives. I am less confident in how my own progress would hold up compared to other students."

"Yes, I strongly believe I achieved some part[sic] of my objectives. Specially in the writing part, I learned the way of formal writing in Japanese, different essay style[sic], and rules as well. At end of the day, my objective was to learn and gain new stuff."

"Yes, I feel a lot more prepared in my speaking, conversations, and presentations."

"I believe I achieved a lot of my objectives, but due to the nature of heavier course loads from other classes, I didn't complete a lot of them in the way I wanted to"

Some things to highlight are that a student expressed insecurity about their own progress compared to other students, another student had a hard time keeping up, and another said they did not complete their goal activities as well as they wanted to.

In response to the question "What are the advantages of this course, compared to Japanese 101 to 301 in which everything you had to learn was determined and provided by your professor?" students commented on being able to learn things they were interested in, easier to commit to and keep motivated, and liking being able to choose what they wanted to work on. One student expressed that it would have been better if they had a different theme each week to prevent them from simply working on what was easy. (See Table 4 for their exact answers.)

Table 4: Advantages of the New Curriculum

I think we got the chance to learn Japanese in places that aligned more with our interests and we had the freedom to come up with our own projects.

It was far easier to commit to plans that better fit my schedule.

Different room and it was more private and smaller classroom size.

I liked how it opened up a lot more and was a culmination of everything we have learned. I liked how self-led it was and how we got to choose what we wanted to work on.

I think the advantages are choosing your own projects makes it very easy for you to keep motivation[sic], but I wish they had some sort of theme each week so I wasn't tempted to keep doing what was easy

In terms of the disadvantages of the course, the students raised the difficulty of staying on top of things due to the freedom they had, failing to use class time appropriately, less learning of kanji, and lack of time to talk with their classmates, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Disadvantages of the New Curriculum

It was harder to stay on top of things because we had control over what projects and assignments we did, and the writing and speaking was[sic] a lot more complicated.
I failed to use class time appropriately. My relative inability to speak has worsened this semester, likely due to less rigid use of class time.
Not sure.
Not too many, I feel like maybe my kanji learning suffered a little bit due to not learning many new kanji.
The lack of time to properly talk with other classmates

The survey asked some Likert Scale multiple-choice questions. The quantitative results are for information purposes only, as the number of respondents is too small to make any generalizations. All five respondents agreed with the statement "I developed learning strategies through this course that I can use to continue learning Japanese on my own in the future." Four respondents agreed with the statement "I was able to further develop my strengths in Japanese," and one disagreed. Three agreed with the statement "I was able to improve on my weak points in Japanese," and two chose "not sure". The answer to "I learned more in this course than in Japanese 301" varied most: two agreed, two chose "not sure", and one disagreed.

Table 6 shows students' reactions to keeping the portfolio. All five students thought keeping the portfolio was a good way to reflect on their learning goals; four students said it helped organize their learning and track their learning progress; three students thought keeping the portfolio was a good way to see their own growth; two thought it helped review materials. One student commented that it was more difficult than they thought and time-consuming, but it was worth the time. Nobody thought it was more time-consuming than it was worth.

Table 6: Keeping the portfolio was:

#	Answer	%	Count
1	more time-consuming than it is worth.	0.00%	0
2	helpful for organizing my learning.	21.05%	4
3	helpful for reviewing materials.	10.53%	2
4	useful for tracking my learning progress.	21.05%	4
5	a good way to reflect on my learning goals.	26.32%	5
6	a good way to see my own growth.	15.79%	3
7	Other:	5.26%	1
	Total	100%	19

Lastly, Table 7 presents the students' suggestions. Concerning the course-wide activities, suggestions included fewer writing assignments and more grammar instructions, adding kanji homework, adding a fifth unit to make the course progress faster, and more time to talk with classmates. As for the self-directed learning portion, one student suggested setting goals such as

speaking, writing, and presentation for different weeks and requiring the students to work on them as their personal goals.

Table 7: If you were to take this course again, what would you like to see changed?

I would like the writing assignments to be a little less frequent and I would like to work a little more on grammar and sentence structures in class.
No changes imo.
I still want to have the structure[sic] kanji writing homework from Jap301 class.
Not much, I really enjoyed this course overall and would recommend it. One thing I might change is having a fifth unit and making everything take place a little faster.
More time to talk with classmates. Vague goals for the weekly projects, ie speaking, writing, presentational, but operating within that

5. Discussion

The author's subjective impression as the course instructor is that the students appeared more confident about their Japanese skills by the end of the semester. The students who used to be quiet when speaking in Japanese spoke up more. One student sent the author an email during the summer break saying they started working at a Japanese restaurant in their hometown because they felt more confident in their speaking skill. The same student had always expressed a reluctance to speak Japanese in the past. The instructor also had a much easier time getting the students to use more varied words and sentence structures. When she taught Japanese 301 in the previous semester, it was very hard to have some of the students use new words and sentence structures introduced in each unit in their production, whether it was in writing or in speaking, despite having frequent vocabulary quizzes, grammar quizzes, and being told to use new sentence structures as a part of grading rubrics. The instructor also saw that the students were making more connections among themselves, to the target language community, and to their academic majors. One student joined a Japanese Facebook group that discussed films, and a programming major student demonstrated and explained the steps of 3D printing in Japanese in one of their artifacts. As for kanji, the students did not seem to have increased the number of kanji they could write from memory, but they used many kanji when they typed. Only one student mentioned kanji in their personal goals, and one suggested including kanji homework in the course requirements.

On the other hand, there are many things the instructor did not do that she would consider doing in the future. The students did not formally share their portfolios among themselves. Feedback from their peers would have been helpful for developing their self-regulated learning strategies. Although they shared what they were working on during class informally and orally from time to time and had one presentation that was designed to share their artifacts, there was no consistent sharing of their portfolios or peer evaluation process. The author also felt unsatisfied with the reflection cycle in this study. She met with each student individually every two weeks and discussed what they had done, but she could not effectively help them choose new personal goal activities based on their reflection. While some students varied their goal activities to address different skills every two weeks, some repeated similar activities every two weeks. One student had a hard time deciding what to work on and how to structure their self-regulated learning time, and as a result, they did not upload anything in their portfolio for a long period. As a final comment to the online survey, one student wrote that it would have been better if they had had a different theme each week to work on to prevent them from working on the same things. Bishop et al.'s (2014) study on student resistance to learner-centered environments found that the students would like to say that learning was the goal of taking a class, but in reality, they were more focused on getting a good grade. Their study suggests balancing various delivery methods to reduce student resistance to learner-centered environments. After taking student feedback into

account, reflecting on the quality of the portfolios the students produced, and further learning from research, the author would like to spend more time to better guide students in their self-regulated learning in the future.

6. Conclusion

To summarize, this paper discussed a 6th-semester Japanese class curriculum that incorporated self-regulated learning and student portfolio. In conclusion, the students found using a portfolio was a good way to reflect on their learning goals, and they felt that they developed learning strategies that they could use to continue learning Japanese on their own in the future. However, letting the students set their own learning goals yielded mixed results. While the students appreciated the freedom to focus on their own interests and choose their method of learning, the same freedom caused some students to not use their time well. It is also apparent that some students need more help with varying activities appropriate to their learning goals. Despite these shortcomings, there were also some positive but less quantifiable results that the instructor noticed during the semester or that happened after the semester was over. Hence, the author hopes to keep exploring different ways of incorporating self-regulated learning into the curriculum to meet different student needs.

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Appendix

Language Learning Strategies: Learner Guide (Adapted from Cohen et al., 2002)

The following strategy guide is designed to help you determine what strategies work best for you when learning a language.

Strategy Guide

Read through the language learning strategies below. As you read, you must:

- 1) Highlight the ones that you would like to try,
- 2) Put a star (*) next to the ones you have tried in the past and worked well,
- 3) Draw a line through the ones that you have tried in the past and didn't work for you.

Listening Strategy Use

Strategies to Increase My Exposure to the Target Language

- Attend a speaking event in a new language.
- Listen to a podcast, watch a TV show/YouTube video, or see a movie in the target language.
- Listen to workers in a restaurant or store where the target language is spoken.
- Listen in on people having conversations to get the main idea of what they are saying.

Strategies for Learning New Sounds in the Target Language

- Practice sounds in the mirror from the target language that are different from my own language.
- Look for similarities between sounds or words or phrases in the target language and your own language.
- Imitate the way that native speakers talk.
- Ask native speakers questions about unfamiliar sounds.