

## **Case Study – John Leggott Sixth Form College**

School:	John Leggott Sixth Form College, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire
Teacher:	James Laming, Director of Languages, Frederick Gough Language College. (Teaches Japanese and Chinese at John Leggott as part of community outreach language bid.)
Course name:	Oriental studies – Japanese and Chinese language course. Also includes aspects of political, economic and cultural studies.
Course type	Enrichment subject option chosen in addition to A-levels.
Number of students:	20 sixth formers
Course length:	Twelve weeks, September – December 2007 (Japan-focused part)
Assessment scheme:	Asset Languages, (OCR exam board)

### **James Laming says:**

I find there's a great deal of interest in this part of the world, not only because of the great salary incentives for rare oriental specialists. These are bright kids taking a wide range of A level subjects - they're not necessarily linguists - but many have expressed an interest in taking some sort of combined Oriental Studies course at university as a result of their interest in this field. The issues which we raise and discuss with regard to South East Asian geopolitics are fascinating and go as far back as the origins of the Second World War. We look at how various political systems have risen and fallen over the years to mould the world order as we know it today.

During the course, I made use of an extensive range of source materials including articles from magazines such as *'The Economist'* to try to give students a flavour of contemporary life in South East Asia. Towards the end of each twelve-week block, the students make a presentation on a topic of their choice.

They all made good progress learning the basics of Japanese over the first 12 weeks. I used Asset's Japanese Teacher Assessment Pack (TAP) at the introductory level (Breakthrough) to guide the choice of topics. We covered topics such as greetings, numbers, likes and dislikes etc. After 12 weeks, the students were able to say a few simple sentences and could recognise imperatives.

The fact that Asset allows you to test skills separately is useful for languages such as Japanese and Chinese where learning the characters tends to be the hardest part. For beginners, you can concentrate on making progress with listening and speaking.

In this instance, I chose the classroom-based assessment which was tailored to the skill areas which we concentrated on during the brief 12 week period,

i.e. listening and speaking. Although we covered some aspects of writing it did not merit an assessment. The Asset assessments therefore allow a great deal of flexibility in terms of planning and assessing the scheme of work and finding the most suitable skill set and level to assess the students.

In some instances, I could see students excelling in one skill area more than others so I could offer a Grade 2 assessment differentiated to their higher level whilst the others opted for a Grade 1 assessment.

We completed both listening and speaking assessments in one lesson as it was so informal and simple to carry out and it therefore felt like a normal part of the lesson. They found Breakthrough easy and were pleased to achieve Grade 1 in listening and speaking. As an accredited teacher for Japanese with Asset Languages, I was able to present Grade Award certificates to reward students for their achievement. The certificates are really appreciated, even by this age group.

I offered the assessment to his students after a term's study for two reasons. Firstly, I believe that memorising a few key phrases and being able to reproduce them in front of their peers is gratifying and perpetuates the desire to keep learning. Secondly, the OCR certificates they achieved also provide tangible evidence of progress over a short period of time which is impressive, not only in UCAS interviews, but also for prospective employers. This is the second school where I have run this type of course. Feedback from the students shows that choosing languages like Japanese and Chinese gives them a unique edge over other candidates in all fields of study and places them in a strong position in UCAS interviews.

The students are now learning about China in the second half of the course and making interesting comparisons between the two languages.

### **Information about Asset**

Asset's Teacher Assessment Packs provides material for classroom-based assessment while the scheme also offers external assessment of language skills, leading to nationally-recognised qualifications.

Teacher Assessment Packs contain material (including CDs) to assess the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing at one of the six benchmark stages on the Languages Ladder. The Ladder is the framework set up by the government to describe language proficiency, ranging from beginner up to complete fluency. The first Breakthrough Stage TAP is further subdivided into three grades. To give teachers and learners an idea of what level is involved at each grade, there is a simple 'Can Do' statement which describes in practical terms what level learners should be capable of before they take the relevant test.

Specifications for external and teacher assessment of Japanese at Breakthrough are available on the Asset Languages website at <http://www.assetlanguages.org.uk/about/specs.aspx>. The specifications cover

language purpose and functions, grammar and linguistic structures, as well as some vocabulary topics to allow teachers to fit the material around current classroom activity.

The relevant Can Do statement for listening at Breakthrough grade is “I can understand a few familiar spoken words and phrases”. For speaking, the Can Do statement is “I can say/repeat a few words and short simple phrases.” The tasks for Grade 1 (three for listening, two for speaking) can be adapted to suit the needs of a particular group of learners.

Asset Languages Teacher Assessment Pack costs from £103.86, plus post and packaging. To order a pack, call 0870 770 6622. For a general information pack about Asset Languages, please email [assetlanguages@ocr.org.uk](mailto:assetlanguages@ocr.org.uk) or visit our website at [www.assetlanguages.org.uk](http://www.assetlanguages.org.uk).