

Japan Foundation Sydney Seminar

by Carl Bidois, Massey High School, July 2018



“The three and half day Sydney Intensive Seminar hosted by Japan Foundation was an amazing opportunity and lived up to its name “intensive”.

The majority of our time there was speaking, listening and writing in all things Japanese. For myself and the other attendees, this seminar has made a definite impact on our pedagogy and has helped to consolidate and extend our language knowledge, boost our proficiency and confidence in our teaching.

The culture classes were a particular highlight for me. For example; how to do and explain calligraphy in Japanese that junior classes would be able to understand was awesome, as was learning about the versatility of Furoshiki wrapping. The culture topics not only introduced us to familiar things, but also unfamiliar ones as well. Chikyu ni yasashii was built and recycling and comparing Japan and Australia/NZ’s way of doing things, past and present.

Initially, I thought there is no way that I could teach such a topic to my Year 9 classes, the language and structures are way too hard. But as I listened to the presenters, I realised it’s not so unfamiliar for my students and the language and reinforcements the instructors used were actually things that I could use in my class (lightbulb moment).

In line with the presentations, the online resources have been a major plus. But at the end of the day, meeting so many other teachers passionate about teaching Japanese in Australia and New Zealand was my biggest thrill. Being able to share ideas and hear about their triumphs and obstacles made me feel that I not teaching in isolation. This seminar is definitely something I would implore and encourage other Japanese teachers to attend in the future.”