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Unit Design and Teaching Practice of Ceramic Culture Theme Teaching in Basic Japanese Courses

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ABSTRACT
Driven by the construction of New Liberal Arts and the "Greater Foreign Languages" education concept, basic Japanese teaching needs to break through the single language skill training model and achieve deep integration of Japanese language learning and cultural inheritance. Using the Shinpen Nihongo textbook as a carrier, this paper focuses on the curriculum design and implementation strategies for integrating ceramic elements into thematic teaching units. By analyzing the intrinsic connection between textbook unit themes and ceramic culture, it extracts a three-dimensional integration path of "textbook unit - ceramic cultural elements - language skills." Based on teaching practice, a questionnaire survey was conducted to optimize the strategies for integrating ceramic culture into basic Japanese courses, aiding in the cultivation of interdisciplinary talents possessing both Japanese language proficiency and ceramic cultural literacy.

KEYWORDS
Basic Japanese; Ceramic culture; Unit design; Teaching strategy; Cultural inheritance

1 Introduction

Ceramic culture, as a crucial link in Sino-Japanese cultural exchange, provides rich cross-cultural material for basic Japanese course teaching. However, existing research is scarce, and systematic design and practical operational strategies for specific course units are still insufficient, leading to fragmented and superficial cultural integration.Shinpen Nihongo, as a core textbook for Japanese majors in universities, covers diverse unit themes including social life, cultural exchange, and technological development, offering numerous points of convergence with ceramic culture. This paper takes the third volume of this textbook as the research object, deeply exploring the unit design logic and implementation paths for ceramic culture theme teaching. It aims to achieve organic articulation between the textbook unit themes and ceramic culture, utilizing ceramic culture as characteristic teaching material to significantly enhance students' comprehensive Japanese application abilities.

2 Literature Review

In the research on cultivating "Foreign Language + Ceramics" interdisciplinary talents, a certain system has been formed in English, covering directions such as ESP teaching, cross-cultural translation, and aesthetic education integration (Qiu Hui, 2020; Hou Xiaohua, 2022; Wang Lisha, 2023; Gao Qian, 2024, etc.). In contrast, related research in Japanese is extremely limited, with only two publications found by Feng Shuping (2019) and Wu Yan (2022). Both focus on macro-level conceptions of advanced course reform or industry-education integration, failing to delve into the level of basic Japanese teaching and lacking discussion on specific teaching implementation and classroom practice. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by constructing a practical and operable cultural theme teaching path suitable for the basic stage, providing a practical basis for the deep integration of "Japanese + Ceramics".

3 Principles for Designing Teaching Units with a Ceramic Culture Theme

Thematic Relevance Principle: The ceramic culture content must be closely aligned with the textbook unit themes. For example, the "Shanghai World Expo" unit can be connected to the "Jingdezhen Ceramic Expo," while the "Digital Camera" unit can extend to "Appreciation of Ceramic Photography," avoiding forced or disjointed integration of cultural elements.

Tiered Objective Principle: Each unit should establish three levels of objectives—foundational (language knowledge), intermediate (cultural understanding), and advanced (practical application)—forming a progressive cultivation chain that builds on knowledge, enhances capabilities, and elevates competence.

Cultural Comparison Principle: Emphasize comparative analysis of Chinese and Japanese ceramic cultures. For instance, compare the craftsmanship and aesthetics of Japanese "Ko-sometsuke" (古染付) with Chinese "Jingdezhen blue-and-white porcelain," highlighting the profound influence of Chinese ceramic culture on Japan and fostering students ' cross-cultural perspectives.

Ideological Integration Principle: Uncover educational elements within ceramic culture. For example, transmit the spirit of craftsmanship through stories like "Tong Bin sacrificing himself to the kiln fire," and cultivate national pride using cases such as ceramic trade along the "Belt and Road" initiative.

4 Unit Design Framework for Ceramic Culture Theme Teaching

Based on the unit themes in Shinpen Nihongo Volume 3, a "Four-Dimensions-in-One" unit design framework is constructed, encompassing: textbook unit analysis, ceramic culture integration points, three-dimensional teaching objectives, and teaching content integration (Table 1). The specific elements are as follows:

Table 1 "Four-Dimensions-in-One" Unit Design Framework

Design Dimension	Core Content
1. Textbook Unit Analysis	Interpret the connotation of the unit theme, language knowledge points (vocabulary, grammar), cultural context, and identify convergence points for integrating ceramic culture.
2. Ceramic Culture Integration Points	Select ceramic cultural elements matching the unit theme, e.g., the "Meeting" unit linked to " Sino-Japanese Ceramic Exchange Conference".
3. Three-Dimensional Teaching Objectives	Language Objective: Master unit knowledge and Japanese expressions related to ceramic content.Cultural Objective: Understand the connotations of ceramic culture and Sino-Japanese differences. Educational Objective: Foster cultural confidence and craftsmanship spirit.
4. Teaching Content Integration	Integrate language materials (ceramic terminology, sentence patterns), cultural materials (history, craftsmanship, industry trends), and practical materials (cases, tasks).

Furthermore, the teaching process design is divided into three stages: pre-class autonomous learning, in-class interactive exploration, and post-class extended practice. It incorporates flipped classroom and project-based learning, utilizing platforms like Rain Classroom for auxiliary teaching. A combination of formative assessment (classroom performance, task completion, Rain Classroom exercises, and audio assignments) and summative assessment (reports, presentations) is adopted. The various dimensions of the aforementioned "Four-Dimensions-in-One" unit design framework are closely interrelated and organically unified. Additionally, the teaching process design (pre-class, in-class, post-class) and the diversified evaluation system (combining formative and summative assessment) serve as supplements, ensuring orderly teaching implementation and effectiveness verification.

5 Demonstration of a Typical Unit Design Case

Using Lesson 1 of Shinben Nihongo Volume 3, "Shanghai Ekusupo" (Shanghai World Expo), as an example, the specific design for ceramic knowledge-related content is as follows:

5.1 Analysis of the Connection between Unit Theme and Ceramic Culture

The unit revolves around "International Exhibitions," covering scenarios such as exhibition reports and volunteer experiences. This highly aligns with the context of the "Jingdezhen International Ceramic Expo." Through the common theme of "international exhibition," a natural extension from the "Shanghai World Expo" to the "Jingdezhen Ceramic Expo" is achieved.

5.2 Three-Dimensional Teaching Objectives

Language Objective: Master sentence patterns like「がたい」「づける」, distinguish the usage of「では」「でも」; learn ceramic exhibition-related terminology such as "陶博城（とうはくじょう - Tōhakujō）", "出展（しゅってん - shutten）".

Cultural Objective: Understand the history, scale, and international influence of the Jingdezhen Ceramic Expo, compare the similarities and differences between Chinese and Japanese ceramic exhibitions, and be able to communicate and express these in Japanese.

Educational Objective: Through cases of Ceramic Expo volunteers, cultivate students' sense of responsibility for disseminating Chinese culture externally and enhance national identity.

5.3 Teaching Process Design

Pre-class Autonomous Learning (Online Preview and Practice)

First, push materials through the Rain Classroom platform. These include Japanese news reports about the Jingdezhen Ceramic Expo, a bilingual (Chinese-Japanese) Ceramic Expo Exhibition Guide, and a glossary of terms related to ceramic exhibitions. Second, have students complete tasks like adding furigana readings to ceramic terms (e.g., "博覧会（はくらんかい - hakurankai）", "職人（しょくにん - shokunin）") and simple translation exercises (e.g., "景徳鎮陶磁器博覧会は毎年開催されます - The Jingdezhen Ceramic Expo is held every year"). Online assignment correction and feedback help students self-check their basic understanding. Finally, use guiding questions: Answer in the Rain Classroom comment section, "Have you ever participated in the Jingdezhen Ceramic Expo? What do you think is the main function of an international exhibition?" to pave the way for in-class discussion.

In-class Interactive Exploration

Adopt a blended teaching model of "BOPPPS Model + Flipped Classroom" to integrate ceramic culture throughout the

teaching process. First, in the introduction, play a video of the Ceramic Expo opening ceremony and pose the question: "What are the similarities and differences in function between the Ceramic Expo and the World Expo?" Second, in the language learning segment, combine the textbook content to find relevant reading materials and analyze the content of related Japanese articles about ceramics. Finally, in the teaching practice activity, conduct a "Ceramic Expo Volunteer" role-play, where groups simulate a scene dialogue for "Japanese Businesspeople Inquiring about the Exhibition Process." Through group collaboration and task-driven teaching methods, enhance classroom interaction and improve students' language application and cross-cultural communication skills.

Post-class Extended Practice (Rain Classroom Audio Upload)

First, ask students to use Rain Classroom to record a Japanese audio clip of about 1 minute, introducing basic information (time, location, features) of the Jingdezhen Ceramic Expo to Japanese tourists. They upload this to Rain Classroom for teacher correction; excellent audio clips can be shared with the class. Second, have students write a short essay in Japanese: "The Jingdezhen Ceramic Expo in My Eyes," submitted via Rain Classroom. This combined speaking and writing approach comprehensively enhances students' Japanese application ability and cross-cultural communication literacy in the context of ceramic culture dissemination.

6 Integrating First and Second Classroom Activities to Enhance the Effectiveness of "Japanese + Ceramics" Teaching

To improve the effectiveness of "Japanese + Ceramics" teaching, this course adopts a collaborative education approach by integrating the first classroom (formal curriculum) and the second classroom (extracurricular activities). In the first classroom, industry elites from the ceramic field are invited to deliver lectures aligned with unit content. In the second classroom, students participate in ceramic-related competitions, industry-academia-research activities, and other practical initiatives to strengthen their language application and cultural communication skills.

(1) Inviting Industry Elites to the Classroom: Ceramic industry experts, including intangible cultural heritage inheritors and cross-border e-commerce managers from ceramic enterprises, are invited to lecture on topics such as ceramic painting techniques (e.g., famille rose and enamel paints) and cross-border e-commerce trade. During these sessions, students observe ceramic production processes up close, document operational steps and technical features in Japanese, and directly combine language learning with cultural immersion. Activities also include simulating Japanese product promotion events for ceramics, designing product descriptions tailored to the Japanese market, and experiencing cross-border e-commerce communication scenarios in Japanese (e.g., email correspondence and online inquiries).

(2) Full Participation in Competitions: Taking the "Changnan Cup" Ceramic Foreign Language Communication Competition as an opportunity, a comprehensive training approach covering pre-competition, during-competition, and post-competition phases is implemented. Before the competition, students receive guidance in preparing Japanese speeches or short videos on themes such as "History of Jingdezhen Ceramics" and "Features of Jingdezhen Ceramic Attractions." During the competition, all students are organized to attentively listen to participants' Japanese speeches on ceramics, collectively enhancing their Japanese expression and cultural understanding. After the competition, outstanding Japanese works are shared via the Rain Classroom platform, and students are encouraged to engage in comments and discussions in Japanese, further deepening their understanding and mastery of ceramic culture dissemination methods.

(3) Field Research in Industrial Settings: During Ceramic Practice Week, students visit ceramic museums and factories to conduct research on "Japanese Practice in the Ceramic Industry." They enter production workshops to observe processes such as raw material selection, shaping, glazing, and firing, while learning Japanese expressions for technical terms like "glaze" and "kiln" .

7 Implementation Effects and Reflection

7.1 Implementation Effectiveness

After conducting a one-semester teaching experiment in the Class 1, Basic Japanese, Grade 2023, a questionnaire survey was administered. The results indicate that the teaching practice of integrating ceramic culture into the basic Japanese course achieved multi-dimensional effectiveness, mainly manifested in the following three aspects:

Improvement in Language Ability and Practical Application: 61.54% of students believed that the ceramic culture content was somewhat helpful for Japanese oral expression. With regular practice and audio feedback via Rain Classroom, students gradually mastered ceramic-related Japanese vocabulary and could use the textbook's sentence patterns for thematic expression, showing improved adaptability in Japanese writing and speaking scenarios. Although 46.15% of students were still not proficient with ceramic vocabulary, the overall language application ability showed a positive development trend. High Learning Initiative and Course Recognition: Over 65% of students held a positive attitude towards overall course satisfaction (as shown in Figure 1, 46.15% satisfied, 19.23% very satisfied). 73.08% of students recognized the rationality of combining ceramic culture with Japanese learning, and 69.23% were willing to continue learning related content. The instant feedback and resource convenience of Rain Classroom, coupled with the students'

preferred video learning method (84.62% choice), effectively improved pre-class preparation completion rates, and the basic willingness to participate in classroom interactions significantly increased.

Initial Results in Cultural Cognition and Interest Cultivation: Students showed clear interest in the core content of ceramic culture: 65.38% were interested in ceramic history and production techniques, and 69.23% were highly interested in practical themes like the Jingdezhen Ceramic Expo. 85% of students could roughly explain the differences between Chinese and Japanese ceramic culture. Simultaneously, ideological education through cases like the "Tong Bin story" proved effective,with students demonstrating cultural confidence in related Japanese expressions.

7.2 Problem Reflection

Insufficient Depth of Classroom Interaction and Participation: 65.38% of students participated moderately in class discussions, and 19.23% reported not participating actively, indicating that the attractiveness of the course's interactive design needs improvement. Although 38.46% found the ceramic content interesting, the overall level of interest was still perceived as average (46.15%), suggesting a need to incorporate student suggestions such as adding interactive games and group tasks to overcome the "passive reception" dilemma. Need for Optimization in Vocabulary Teaching and Exercise Design: 46.15% of students reported insufficient mastery of ceramic-related vocabulary, with some noting that the exercises were "relatively high in difficulty and lacked engaging elements." Although 53.85% considered the difficulty level acceptable, it is necessary to further align exercise design with real-life contexts—such as incorporating multiple-choice questions and situational application problems—and to reduce the barrier to learning terminology by providing pre-class micro-lectures on vocabulary and comparative materials featuring physical objects.

Adaptability of Teaching Resources and Formats Needs Strengthening: Students preferred video learning (84.62%) and practical experience (69.23% favored scenarios like the Ceramic Expo). However, current resources primarily rely on online pushes, with limited offline practical opportunities. The data analysis and learning status warning functions of Rain Classroom were underutilized, and needs for physical object teaching and on-site explanations were not fully met. There is a need to further integrate a linkage mechanism of "online resource library + offline research learning".

8 Conclusion

The questionnaire survey on the teaching effectiveness of integrating ceramic culture into the sophomore-level basic Japanese course shows that the combination has achieved certain results while also revealing areas for improvement, providing clear directions for subsequent teaching. Based on the above results, the integration of ceramic culture content into basic Japanese courses will continue, optimized from the following aspects: First, enrich teaching forms by increasing the proportion of video resources and collaborating with local cultural institutions to expand offline practices (e. g., research trips to the Jingdezhen Ceramic Expo), enhancing classroom interactivity and practicality. Second, optimize teaching content by focusing on themes students care about, such as ceramic cross-border e-commerce and ceramic production techniques, designing diversified exercises based on real-life situations, and strengthening contextualized teaching of ceramic-related vocabulary. Third, improve the evaluation system by combining formative assessment and practical performance to more comprehensively test teaching effectiveness, ensuring the deep synergy between ceramic culture integration and Japanese language learning.

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