

Professional Development Report: Japan Foundation PD – 24 July 2025

On Thursday, 24 July 2025, nine enthusiastic Japanese language teachers from Darwin and Alice Springs gathered at the Darwin Language Centre (DLC) for a professional development day presented by the Japan Foundation. The event provided an engaging and culturally rich opportunity for teachers to deepen their understanding and explore innovative approaches to Japanese language education.

The day began with an insightful session titled "Okome – Rice, Our Soul Food", which explored the deep cultural significance of rice in Japan. Teachers learned about rice's historical, social, and spiritual role in Japanese life, gaining ideas for integrating this topic into classroom activities in a meaningful way.

A highlight of the day was "Escape and Learn: A Language Adventure", where teachers returned to the student seat in a playful and challenging language escape room. Guided by cute Japanese monster characters, participants had to solve puzzles in Japanese to unlock the room. Every team successfully escaped, and the activity sparked discussions on how immersive, gamified experiences can enhance student engagement.

The session "What's New in Japan" focused on the Osaka Expo. Teachers explored how events like the Expo can be used to teach contemporary Japanese society and technology.

The final session, "Bringing Annual Events into the Classroom", promoted discussion on how to use cultural events to teach critical thinking. Teachers shared strategies for encouraging students to compare cultures, question assumptions, and reflect on global perspectives through Japanese festivals and traditions.

We sincerely thank the presenters from the Japan Foundation, Adachi and Chiba Sensei, for their expertise and support. It was a rewarding day of professional growth, connection, and inspiration for Japanese teachers in the NT. A special thank you to Akane Sensei, Chee and our president Bee for their support to make this event a success.

Japanese Representative
Virginia Price

2025 NORTHERN TERRITORY JAPANESE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

On July 24th, teachers from the Japan Foundation, Sydney, provided a full day of professional development to Northern Territory Japanese language teachers at the Darwin Languages Centre. It was a wonderful and insightful session themed around 'Okome – Rice, Our Soul Food.' Teachers were engaged, thoughtful and enthused as we shared tales of our experiences in Japan, our favourite rice dishes, as well as classroom resource ideas. We also learned some amazing facts about the history of rice in Japan and how and why rice is considered such a soul food in Japan, as well as in other cultures. Teachers immersed themselves into an Escape Room team activity, finding clues and hunting for hints. Fun was had by all and lots of ideas were generated for future escape room themes and problem-solving ideas to use with our students. Teachers also delved into the future while exploring the endless possibilities for language lessons inspired by the current World Expo in Osaka. N.T. teachers were surprised at some of the high-tech inventions that are now in use!

This was an amazing opportunity for Territory Japanese teachers to immerse themselves into what's new, relevant and engaging for students of the Japanese language. Interesting and important cultural aspects are always relevant and such a fun way to learn about the people and language. This day of professional learning was one of shared passion, creative approaches and valuable tools which will benefit our teaching and our students' learning of Japanese language and culture.

Jasmine Rizvi

Reflection on Japanese Language Workshop on the 24th of July

Attending the Japanese language workshop was a valuable professional learning experience that deepened both my understanding of the language and my approach to teaching it. The sessions provided me with practical strategies to engage students more effectively and to make Japanese lessons both meaningful and enjoyable. I appreciated how the workshop balanced cultural knowledge, language practice, and classroom pedagogy, which allowed me to reflect on my own teaching and consider new ways to motivate learners.

One of the highlights of the workshop was the hands-on “Escape Room” activity. This activity combined reading and writing in Japanese with an exploration of cultural themes, particularly the concept of Japanese apparitions and spirits that protect the land, people, and community. It was an excellent example of how language learning can be embedded within cultural context, making lessons more relevant and memorable for students. The Escape Room also required teamwork and problem-solving, skills that are important not only in the classroom but also in preparing students for broader life experiences. I can see how this kind of task would bring excitement into my lessons and encourage collaboration among students.

The workshop also encouraged me to reflect on my own teaching practice, especially through discussions with other language teachers in Darwin. Sharing ideas and hearing about different approaches gave me a wider perspective on pacing lessons, scaffolding activities, and ensuring students have opportunities to review and consolidate what they learn. This professional dialogue reminded me of the importance of continually developing my practice and staying connected with other educators.

Overall, the workshop was inspiring and motivating. It reminded me of why I enjoy teaching Japanese and gave me renewed confidence to try new approaches. I look forward to applying what I learned to create a more engaging, interactive, and culturally rich classroom environment for my students.

Kiyo Goble