

Re: Does anybody else think that learning to write kanji is over-prioritized in language classes outside of Japan?

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On Mar 28, 10:48 pm, "moon.neko" <moon.n...@xxxxxxxx> wrote:

practical application (...that and people laughing at my childish scribble).

Some Japanese people (like Kenzaburo Oe) have really (and I mean _really_) bad handwriting, so don't worry about it.

generally quite happy to forget how to write it.

That's inevitable. But I'm talking about learning them the first time.

reading, or found writing kanji to be overwhelming. Obviously,

I know. A lot of people take Japanese thinking it might be slightly more difficult than French. I remember one TA in college ranting about how difficult Japanese was, reciting all sorts of statistics about how many more "class hours" (or something) it took to learn than other languages. He was obviously looking for an excuse to explain how bad his Japanese was, and it was pretty pathetic.

You have to be realistic. In my limited experience, I can only think of a couple of languages that might actually be a taller mountain to climb than Japanese for native anglophones, and those languages are pretty rare. (The Inuit languages definitely look more difficult.)

can quite confidently read a kanji, and distinguish it from other similar kanji, I think this should be sufficient.

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I doubt the confidence.

So do you feel to reach a reasonable level of Japanese fluency, it's necessary to remember how to write a kanji as well as read it?

Yes, but not directly. You need to be able to read kanji to achieve fluency in Japanese (thought experiment: imagine trying to acquire French vocab without ever reading it), and the quickest way to learn the kanji is to write them out.

Don't get me wrong, though. Nobody in their right mind would claim that maintaining mastery of written kanji is useful, because it isn't. Nobody writes them these days. Writing the kanji is the best way to learn them. Once you've learned them, you forget them without constant practice.

your Japanese level is far above mine – do you personally find there's many kanji that you can read, but not write, or are you quite meticulous about this?

Well, I've actually started studying for the kanken (I posted about this before), so I'm working my way back, but the only time I write any kanji these days is in shopping lists for my wife, so the gap has grown from when I was learning the kanji. I could write all of them then, but now, it's pretty iffy. And in fact our trip to Japan this year has been moved back, so I'm not going to be able to take the kanken, and my enthusiasm in practicing has waned a bit.

Marc

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