

# Voices

## Resources for Learner Autonomy



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#### Guiding Principle:

As a person engaged in secondary education where students are at an age of intense curiosity, I am keenly aware in my Japanese-language classes that my job is not simply to transfer what I know to them, but more importantly to encourage them to develop autonomy, both as students and as human beings. By developing learner autonomy, I mean getting the students gradually to perform independently the information-gathering, study, and review tasks needed to plan, carry out, and evaluate a large part of their learning activities. They need to grow out of the old pattern, found in many traditional classrooms, of over-reliance on the teacher. In *Kisetsu*, a textbook series in the production of which I am currently collaborating, we are trying to create a curriculum that emphasizes students' proactive participation based on self-awareness and self-responsibility.

Learner autonomy can only be achieved in a gradual process, and to make it possible appropriate environments must be created. A fuller array of teaching tools that are attractive to students and easy to use is needed. On this point, Deai has assumed a pioneering role and is truly an epoch-making teaching resource. Pivoting on the use of photographs as a medium that stimulates student interest and imagination, Deai is approachable and easy to adapt for learning tasks because its point of departure is encounter with individuals of the same generation. Learning about the Deai students—their daily lives, hobbies, family, hometown, and so on—prompted new interest and fresh questions in my students, which we are now developing into an assortment of projects. At this stage, research by the students themselves becomes necessary. Students interested in finding out about the town where a Deai student lives, for instance, must collect and analyze basic information about the town, including statistics, etc. It would be good if they could make use of the city or town's website in such a case, but since the students' knowledge of kanji is limited, it is difficult for them to locate the information they seek. If there were some sort of pseudo-website that would be easier for them to navigate, focusing on basic information, it would be extremely useful in encouraging the students' independent efforts at research and also act as a bridge to the bona fide website. On the Deai Website, fortunately, there is a "Reference" section where related information and links appear. At present, this section is a part of "Teacher Support Information," and I think it would be wonderful if this could develop into a kind of resource bank for students as well. The cooperation of many teachers and students would be necessary to achieve this, but considering Deai's value as a resource for promoting learner autonomy, the effort would certainly be rewarding. I will continue, in my daily teaching practice and other work, to support efforts to increase resources that will make it easier for students to pursue their studies independently.

日本の世界遺産(せかいいさん)

■日本の世界遺産リスト

□自然遺産(しぜんいさん, natural heritage)

白神山麓(しろかみさんろ)	秋田(あきた)	青森(あおもり)
屋久島(やくしま)	鹿児島(かごしま)	

□文化遺産(ぶんかいさん, cultural heritage)

法隆寺(ほうりゅうじ)	奈良(なら)
姫路城(ひめじじょう)	兵庫(ひょうご)
京都(きょうと)の神社や寺、邸など	京都(きょうと)、滋賀(しが)
白川郷(しろかわごう)	岐阜(ぎふ)、富山(とやま)
秀景(ひなばく)ドーム	広島(ひろしま)
厳島(いつくしま)神社	広島(ひろしま)
奈良(なら)の寺など	奈良(なら)
日光(にっこう)の神社や寺	栃木(とちぎ)
琉球(りゅうきゅう)王国の跡あとなど	沖縄(おきなわ)

もっと知りたい人はこちら(出典)→世界遺産のホームページ  
<http://www.ganicities.co.jp/Playtown/0630/isan.htm> (Japanese)  
<http://www.unesco.org/whc/heritage.htm> (English)

JAPAN:

- 1993 Buddhist Monuments in the Horyu-ji Area
- 1993 Himeji-jo
- 1993 Yakushima
- 1993 Shirakami-Sanchi
- 1994 Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto (Kyoto, Uji and Otsu Cities)
- 1995 Historic Villages of Shirakami-go and Gokuyama
- 1996 Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome)
- 1996 Itsukushima Shinto Shrine
- 1998 Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara
- 1999 Shrines and Temples of Nikko
- 2000 Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu

Sample page from "Reference" section in Deai Website: In Himeji, where Yoshida Kojiro lives, there is Himeji castle, a treasure of World Heritage. As related information to the Himeji castle, the World Heritage list in Japanese and links to related website are provided.