

Getting an Asian Studies Bachelor's degree at Old Dominion has helped me become more culturally aware in terms of learning about Asian history, cultural perspectives, and language. Specifically, I had studied Japanese and Chinese history, art, and language. These classes had provided me information about workshops and events in which I could attend to enrich my understanding of these cultures. I had participated as a volunteer for Japan Day at Old Dominion in 2019, attended a calligraphy and flower arrangement workshop, taken a judo class and participated in the numerous activities provided by JASA (Japanese and American Student Association). These activities include Japanese-style chocolate making, origami making, onigiri making and interaction with the Japanese foreign exchange students.

My dream for the future is to teach Japanese and Chinese in high school. I believe these experiences have helped me grow in my understanding of Japanese and Chinese culture, which are very much important when trying to learn these languages. I hope to use my experiences with JASA to provide my future high school with a Japanese club they can also enjoy, as I had in my university.

From my courses, I had developed discipline, diligence, and an improvement in my communication skills. One challenge I faced was my first Japanese language course at Old Dominion: JAPN 312. This was an intermediate Japanese writing and reading class that also incorporated Japanese speaking activities like Talk Abroad. I had not taken a formal Japanese class or used the language in four years. In that time, I had also taken a Chinese class, which my advisor had warned me about getting some of the elements of these languages confused.

I had taken a Japanese placement exam and was surprised to see that I had been placed into the JAPN 311 and 312 classes, an intermediate level. I had taken Japanese in high school for three years, but I did not expect to be placed so high. My instructor told me it would be best if I could take JAPN 311 first, but it was not provided for the Spring semester. So, I took JAPN 312 before 311. I remember on my third day of class, I told her that I did not think I could do well in the class. It was a speak only Japanese class, her assignments included a lot of Kanji, and my classmates had already taken JAPN 311. They knew grammar and vocabulary that I was not familiar with yet. She told me she believed in me from how I did in my placement exam, so I decided to work hard to catch up to my classmates' level. To do so, I reached out to her and my classmates to help me study.

At the time, I was working two part time jobs and taking other courses, including a Kanji class. It almost seemed impossible to do well. With a certain amount of time-management, discipline, diligence, and effort, I was able to do well in the class and exceed my expectations. I remember thinking that a C was enough for me. At the end of the semester, I received an A. I was so proud of myself.

In the future, if I start doubting myself as a teacher, I want to keep these memories in mind. I also want my students to know that they can come to me if they need help in my classes. If they start to doubt themselves, I want them to know that they can do anything they put their mind to. I want to have faith in my students as I needed to have faith in myself. I am grateful for my experiences at Old Dominion for helping me grow intellectually and interpersonally.

