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Reporting on Training

1. Introduction

I participated in the 2011 Hiroshima Board of Education Teacher Training Program from July 20 to August 8 2011. We were going to depart from Japan on July 19 but a typhoon delayed the program one day. But the next day we could take an airplane to go to Hawaii. I felt relieved.

I applied for this program because I wanted to improve my skills to teach English, to listen, speak, read and write English and to experience Hawaiian culture. Before going to Hawaii, I was very excited, but I was also worried about the program because it was my first visit to Hawaii and my first experience to study abroad. So I wondered whether I could accomplish my goals on this program. But about three weeks later, I finished the program successfully.

I'd like to write about what I learned and felt through the experiences that I had in Hawaii.

2. What we learned at KCC

2.1 Kapi'olani Community College (KCC) of the University of Hawaii

I spent about three weeks at Kapi'olani Community College (KCC). KCC is located at the base of Diamond Head. There is a wide grass strip at the center of the campus. Around the strip there are many buildings, which are named after Hawaiian plants. I enjoyed looking at cactus gardens every morning on my way to the cafeteria from the bus stop. I was very happy to study English in such a beautiful college.

2.2 English language teaching workshop

I learned CBI (Content-Based Instruction) from Professor Malm, who was the main teacher in this program. I didn't know what CBI was before attending this workshop. CBI is a significant approach in second language acquisition. When I saw ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Language) lessons, I was very impressed. Students made their own concept maps about civil rights and explained the maps in groups of three. After that, they made new concept maps in groups. In another lesson, students made posters about slow food in groups of three. They had already learned vocabularies and some topics related to slow food. They wrote about benefits of slow food and reasons why slow food was better than fast food. After that, they did a poster session. A speaker from each group spoke about slow food confidently in front of the audience.

In CBI, a teacher decides one theme, prepares many materials related to the

theme and teaches them to students. Students try to understand unfamiliar vocabulary or grammar. If students can't understand the new points, the teacher gives them hints. While students are making concept maps or posters and speaking in front of the audience, the teacher gives them feedback. Though I can't introduce CBI into my lessons through the year, I'll try to do poster sessions. And I'll give my students a lot of feedback when writing and speaking English.

I also learned how to motivate students to study English and how to teach speaking, listening, reading and writing effectively from Professor Malm and Professor Dudzik. We reflected on the ways of teaching we did before coming to Hawaii, and then they gave us improvements to consider.

2.3 Teaching philosophy

"Teaching philosophy" was very difficult term for me. According to the web site "ANNIKERIS--- A Research for Students, Teachers and Parents," "teaching philosophy is a statement of the core beliefs and values that guide your professional practice" (2010, p.1). In writing a teaching philosophy, there were 12 questions that I keep in mind. With reference to these questions, I began to write my teaching philosophy. I wrote about "Why do I teach?" "What can I do as a teacher?" "What can I do to achieve my school's mission?" To write a teaching philosophy was a chance for me to reflect on my career as a teacher.

2.4 Research paper

I wrote a research paper as a conclusion to this training program. It was my second time to write a research paper in English. It was about 20 years ago that I wrote a research paper written in English for the first time, so it was very difficult for me to write the paper. But Professor Malm and Professor Dudzik gave me much feedback and it helped me finish writing the research paper.

My theme was "A Method of Teaching Reading to Increase Motivation." Last year I taught 9th graders. In the third term, I had found students had difficulty answering reading questions. I asked the students why they couldn't answer and I found there were two kinds of reasons. One was that they didn't have enough time because there were many unfamiliar words. The other was that they didn't try to read English and gave up at once. I worried about this problem for a long time.

In this training program, I recognized motivation was very important to study English in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) situation like Japan. Could I motivate students to study English? I always focused on finishing the textbooks at the end of the third term. So my lessons might have been boring for students. I also learned some methods and approaches to teach reading. In this research paper, I wrote about the motivation to study English, the definition of reading and effective approaches in teaching reading, and made a lesson plan so that students could

understand the meaning of a text. From the next term, I'll try the lesson plan and research its effectiveness.

2.5 Presentation

I gave a presentation about my research paper at a conclusion of this training program. But speaking English in front of the audience was a challenging task for me. I had to speak without notes. Professor Malm said, "When you give a presentation, you should turn your eyes toward the audience. Your presentation will become interactive." First, I often stopped my speech because I couldn't remember what I wanted to say. But Professor Malm gave me an encouragement and some advice. She emphasized that the beginning of the presentation was very important. I practiced many times at my hotel room at night. On the morning of August 5, Ms. Kodera and I gave our presentations at last. Many guests came to see our presentation. I was very nervous but I made a confident presentation. Because the audience often nodded their heads at my presentation and I felt encouraged. So I was very happy. I learned many important points when I spoke using Power Point through that presentation.

2.6 Demonstration lesson

I made a teaching plan according to the teaching methods Professor Maim and Professor Dudzik taught us. In the afternoon of August 5, we introduced some of the activities from our teaching plans and shared our ideas. In my lesson plan, I reviewed the grammatical points students had already learned and made them understand the meaning of the text. I made two kinds of worksheets. One was for practicing comparative and superlative degrees. The other was for understanding the meaning of a text. After introducing activities I got some advice from Professor Malm and Ms. Kodera.

3. Visit of DOE (Department of Education)

On July 25, we visited DOE and learned about the public education system in Hawaii. In Hawaii, many parents want their children to enter private schools in order that their children acquire great scholastic ability. So private schools are popular in Hawaii. On the other hand, public schools have some serious problems: students' behavior, scholastic ability and quality of teachers. DOE is struggling with these problems.

4. Homestay

From Friday, July 29 to 31, we had a homestay. My host family lived in Kailua. Kailua is in the eastern part of Oahu Island. Barack Obama, President of the United States, likes Kailua and once stayed there with his family during the Christmas and New Years vacation. My host mother was 67 years old. She usually lived by herself,

but her grandson, a university student in Oregon, stayed with her during summer vacation. My host mother was Okinawan and her parents and grandparents were all Okinawan. She was a woman who had seen a variety of careers. She had worked at public elementary schools in the mainland of the United States and at an English conversation school in Japan. Until recently, she was a principal of a private elementary school. She was very sociable and she often told me about her family, her career and Okinawa.

On Friday evening, my host mother cooked Hawaiian food: *loulou* and kalua pig. After dinner she showed me how to cut a pineapple and a papaya. On Saturday, there was a birthday party for her granddaughter on Ala Moana beach and I left her house with her grandson early in the morning to prepare for the party. Her son and his family, her daughter and her family and their friends came to the beach. We ate lunch, and enjoyed talking and swimming in the ocean. In the afternoon my host mother had to go to the funeral of her friend. She suggested I attend the funeral and I agreed. There were many differences between a funeral in Japan and that in Hawaii. For example, attendees didn't wear black suits or dresses. My host mother told me that funerals in Japan were melancholic, but funerals in Hawaii were usually bright. On our way home, she took me to Pali look-out and Kailua beach. On Sunday, I went to the church and a flea market. In the church I attended a Japanese sermon. I sung songs and heard preaching. The flea market was held at Aloha Stadium. Around the stadium there were many street stalls. They sold food, accessories, T-shirts and so on. The goods were very cheap and I bought many things as souvenirs. I had a wonderful time with my host mother and her relatives. I could experience the Hawaiian way of life. Thanks to her, I can tell my students many things about the Hawaiian way of life in my lessons. I want to keep in touch with her after coming back to Japan.

5. Field Trip

We visited the Plantation Village and the Bishop Museum with Professor Malm. At the Plantation Village, we learned about the history of immigrants to Hawaii. We saw some plants immigrants grew, reconstructed buildings and other exhibitions. I could understand why Hawaii was a multiethnic region. Many people from many countries immigrated to Hawaii to work on farms or in factories, helped each other and built new communities.

At the Bishop Museum, we learned about the history of the Kingdom of Hawaii. After we saw the exhibition, we attended a Hula lesson. I learned that each motion of Hula had a meaning. Hula is like a sign language. Dancing Hula was very difficult, but it was a precious experience for me. Through the field trip, I became increasingly interested in Hawaiian history.

6. Conclusion

The first day I stayed in Hawaii, I was afraid I couldn't accomplish my purpose on the

training program. I couldn't understand what the professors said very well. When the professors asked me questions, I often couldn't answer fluently because I couldn't remember what I wanted to say. But the professors and my colleague, Ms. Kodera helped me. Gradually I could understand the content of the lectures. I also became familiar with reading English articles. I think it is important for English teachers to study abroad for improving English proficiency and teaching skills. I could have enough time to think about my English proficiency, teaching skills, the Hawaiian way of life and the people around me by being apart from Japan and my family. Professor Malm, professor Dudzik, our coordinator professor Tsurutani, and other KCC staffs supported us and were very friendly. Mr. Gaston, one of the KCC staff, was always kind to us. He took us to a restaurant with her Japanese wife, KCC farmers' market and the National Military Cemetery. Ms. Kodera's uncle, who lives in Hawaii, invited us to dinner and took us to Tantalus. Tantalus is famous for its night view. It was very beautiful.

At the graduation dinner, we got certificates for the completion of the program. Mr. Tsurutani said to us, "You are now a member of the *Ohana* of KCC." *Ohana* means "family" in Hawaii. I was very happy and I wanted to stay in Hawaii a little longer. The people we met were always very kind, open-minded and accepting of us. I'll approach students like Hawaiian people approached us.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to the Hiroshima Board of Education, the professors and coordinators at KCC, and everyone who supported my participation in this training program.