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## **Reporting on Training**

### **1 . Introduction**

I participated in the 2012 Hiroshima Board of Education Teacher Training Program at Kapi'olani Community College (KCC) in Hawaii from July 24 to August 13 and had many precious experiences. I had two purposes when I joined this program:

- (1) To improve and develop my English and my English abilities
- (2) To find effective materials and ways of teaching

Before visiting Hawaii, I felt very nervous because it was my first time studying abroad and I wasn't sure if I really could get through this program. However, I could learn lots of teaching approaches to motivate students to learn and provide them with more opportunities to express themselves in English. Therefore I also got a chance to think about my teaching philosophy. For example, "As a teacher, what is the most important thing to do every day? What motivates students to learn and improve?" I had never previously considered these so deeply, and it was a good challenge for me. In this report I would like to look back on my training at KCC.

### **2 . My Teaching Philosophy**

I hope that each student will experience an "aha" moment and feel "I get it!" or "I can do it!" in my class. However it is difficult to attain an increase in their success rates. To achieve this goal, I think that it is important to motivate students to learn and improve both during class time and through independent study outside class time. Therefore it is necessary to provide students with more opportunities and activities to use English in writing and speaking, both in class and through homework assignments. In order to do that, I have to bring more activities into my class that provide students with opportunities to practice oral and written output. Consequently, I have to find more time to plan and prepare new activities and integrate them into my existing lessons. I really want my students to enjoy learning English and to feel successful. I believe that giving them more opportunities to practice interacting and expressing themselves in English will result in more positive experiences and attitudes among my students.

### **3 . What I learned in KCC**

KCC is located at the foot of Diamond Head. It has beautiful cactus gardens and we could sometimes see mongooses running through the cactus gardens. We also enjoyed its rich nature, such as a big lawn, beautiful blossoms and pretty birds. I felt lucky to study for three weeks in a place surrounded by such a wonderful

environment.

My instructor was Prof. Malm. She was very kind. She provided me the opportunities to use English and express myself, so I had lots of opportunities to read or listen to newspaper reports, to write stories on drawings or cartoons and to discuss things in English. For me, the first week was the reading week, the second week was the writing week, the third week was the speaking week and during this three week period it was my time for thinking in English. In this program we finished the English Language Teaching Workshop, the Advanced Language Development Seminar, Issues in Education Seminar, Computer Lab and so on. After that, we were required to accomplish these tasks:

- (1) Write a personal teaching philosophy
- (2) Design a lesson plan and give a demonstration
- (3) Carry out a mini-research project related to English teaching and write a research paper
- (4) Give an oral presentation on the research using PowerPoint

It was very hard for me to accomplish these tasks in three weeks, but thanks to Prof. Malm's help I managed to finish them.

## **4 . Impressive activities in KCC**

### **4 . 1 Brainstorming**

Prof. Malm started the first class with a brainstorming activity. We had a brainstorm about what our biggest challenges and problems in the classroom are. Then we listed them up on a large piece of paper in turn. We shared the problems and realized that both high and junior high school teachers have similar problems. This list turned out to be the basis of our research. Prof. Malm put it up on the wall and often suggested to look at it to remind us of the problems that we faced and should solve in our real situation.

### **4 . 2 Feedback**

I was impressed by the process of "feedback." There were some types of feedback like teachers-to-students, students-to-students. Through this activity, they had an opportunity to improve their English abilities like listening, speaking, and thinking skills. "Feedback" is one of the effective activities to promote students' motivations.

On the other hand, I need to tell my students that practice is a time to make mistakes and get better. My students are often afraid of making mistakes. If they don't know the precise meaning of new words, how to read the words and how to make a sentence using a new grammatical point, they ask me to tell them the answer immediately without trying to look it up. Sometimes I need to give them the answer right away. For example, "Just in time" feedback is important, so in many cases I need to show them some examples and give them some hints. Nevertheless, I must

not automatically provide the answer until after they have had the opportunity to try a little by themselves.

### **4 . 3 Free-writing**

I think that “free-writing” is one of the effective activities to improve students’ writing skills. At Prof. Malm’s class, I enjoyed writing a short story without using a dictionary. After writing we exchanged our story and did feedback. It was very interesting to me. The goal of “free-writing” is to focus on “fluency.” Students don’t have to worry about making grammatical mistakes. They only continue to write what they want to write. Through this activity, students can enjoy writing and motivate themselves.

I also found this activity useful for making my ideas clear after brainstorming or discussion. It is also useful to improve writing skill after a lecture or reading articles, turning input into output, for students can use some useful expressions from what they learned.

### **4 . 4 Poster Session**

Poster session is a very effective activity. Prof. Malm explained how to make a poster session and I was interested in the process:

- (1)Students make a team of 2 or 3 people
- (2)Students do brainstorming
- (3)They exchange their own ideas
- (4)They discuss it more
- (5)They use the Internet and magazines when they need to research
- (6)They make a poster and report on it

Poster session is an individual presentation and a team presentation. Through this activity, students can practice effective oral presentation several times and can increase their vocabularies. They also can practice listening to catch the information because it needs integrated skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking skills). Therefore it is a good way to provide students (even in my small class) more opportunities in oral communication for pleasure. I would like to adopt this activity in my class.

## **5 . Outside the classroom**

### **5.1 Homestay**

I experienced homestay in Kaneohe, a city located at the foot of mountains from August 3 to August 5. There were 4 children in my host family. They all were very cute, kind and cheerful. Three of them can play the violin and they practice it every day. The youngest child is 2 years old. He can’t speak any words, but his face shows what he wants to say. The eldest child, an 11-year-old boy, is in the baseball team

and we went to watch a baseball game. After the game, we went to a beach. If we were lucky, we could see some turtles in the sea, but they have never seen them there; I heard that in the car. To our surprise, Very luckily, we could see three turtles swimming in the sea! We got very excited and took lots of pictures of them. Then they took me to other wonderful beaches and lookouts. I enjoyed the beautiful nature and views. I had one more precious experience. On the morning of August 5, my host family went to church with me and I had a chance to take part in Sunday Worship. We sang some hymns with the organ together. After Worship, some people talked to me and I enjoyed talking with them. I had a very worthwhile time.

As soon as I came back to Japan, I sent an email with pictures to my host family and I got a return mail. If they come to Japan, I will take them to my house in return.

## **5.2 Visiting some interesting places**

Prof. Malm took me some places. The first place we visited was Plantation Village. I learned the history of immigrants, plantation life and houses. The second place we visited was the Bishop Museum. There were a lot of exhibitions of Kamehameha dynasty. There I saw hula and learned the meaning of it, its spirit and the instruments that people use when they danced hula. The third place was Waimanalo Beach Park. I enjoyed swimming and body boarding but I was very surprised at the strength of the waves. I also enjoyed seeing the concert and eating Hawaiian food there.

## **6 . Conclusions**

The keywords for this program were the 3Cs; communication, collaboration and confidence. When I heard these keywords in Hiroshima, I was not sure that I would be able to gain confidence through this program. Now I can say that I am more confident in myself than I was before. It is because Prof. Malm and the other people always encouraged us to use English and gave us positive feedback. They were excellent model teachers. I realized how teachers' attitudes affect students' motivation. This program was a great opportunity to reflect on my English classes and also gave me a variety of ideas to improve them. It is time to think about how to apply them to my real teaching situation. I feel a strong need to continue to study English and teaching skills.

Finally I would like to express my special thanks to the Hiroshima Board of Education, professors and coordinators at KCC, and many people who gave me opportunities to have a wonderful experience in Hawaii.