

海外實地學習課程補助案心得成果報告

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課程名稱：英語教學實習(兒英四)、國小英語教學實習(兒英碩二)、英語教材教法(兒英碩一)

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海外學習期程：113年1月21日至113年2月4日

海外學習地點：日本鹿兒島

海外學習單位：鹿兒島大學附設實驗中學

心得報告日期：113年3月1日

## English Class Observations: The Japanese Approach to ELT

During the two-week internship at a Kagoshima affiliated junior high school, my five student teachers and I had the opportunity to observe the teaching methods of all four English teachers. We discovered that these educators consistently begin their lessons by listing the objectives on the board, clearly outlining the focus areas for the students. They highlight the significance of note-taking, resulting in blackboards filled with essential information by the end of each session. Additionally, the importance of collaborative learning is underscored through pair and group activities. Students are encouraged to engage with their peers, rearranging their desks as needed for discussions in groups of six. A common pedagogical strategy among these teachers involves the use of flashcards, with English terms on the front and their Japanese translations on the back, accompanied by three repetitions of aloud reading. This approach is a staple routine for vocabulary learning in Japan.



Maki Sensei's English Class: drawing of characters for listening



Higashi Sensei's English class: grammar, visuals, and key concepts





Six people group activity of listen and pick the right card  
**Jennifer's Class on the Blue Mountains World Heritage Site**



Jennifer had great interaction with the students. She was able to call out each student by their names. Her instructions were clear and the activities were well structured.

My suggestions:

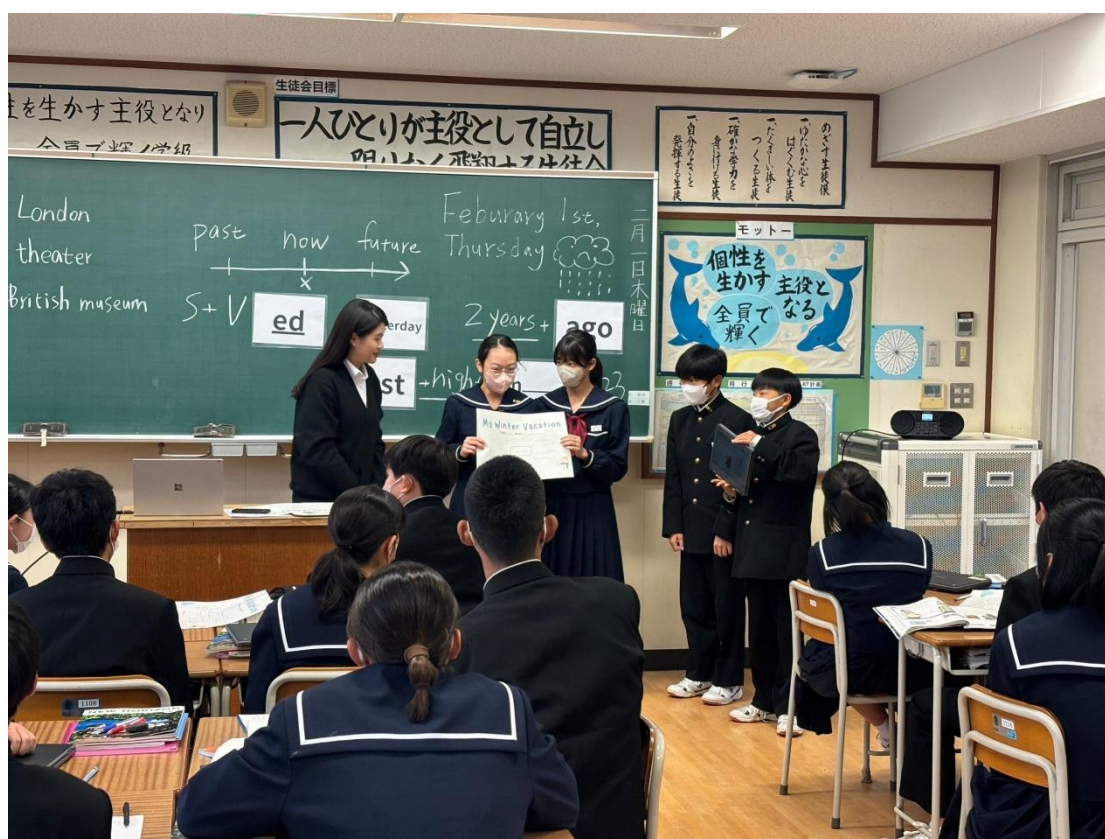
During students read aloud, I have observed that students needed more practice on the word "preserve." It's nice that you showed them the meaning of the word via flash card, but they needed more read aloud practice for this word. This would be a great time to teach them how to pronounce it, that it is a two syllable word, and the stress is on the second syllable. While you were explaining the definition of the word "preserve" in English, it would be nice to provide some examples and non-examples related to students here. For example, Kagoshima people preserve the way of making a special fish cake called Satsuma-age (薩摩揚げ) using recipes that have been in their families for generations. If they can provide an example of what needs to be preserved and what doesn't, then that would be an indication that they understand. This is especially important since this is part of your main task, discussing why blue

mountains needs to be preserved.

For question 4, students did think-pair-share. Please give students chance to share their answers instead of showing your answers to the class and ask them to read aloud. Some students have really good answers.

For the content retell, make sure to give students feedback on their grammar. Use 2 minutes to teach them how to present "The blue mountains are listed as a world heritage site," because for most of the students, the be verb is missing. They said "the blue mountains listed as a world heritage site."

In all, I can tell most students demonstrated their understanding of the dialogue and were able to do retell confidently.



### **Judy's Class on my winter vacation**

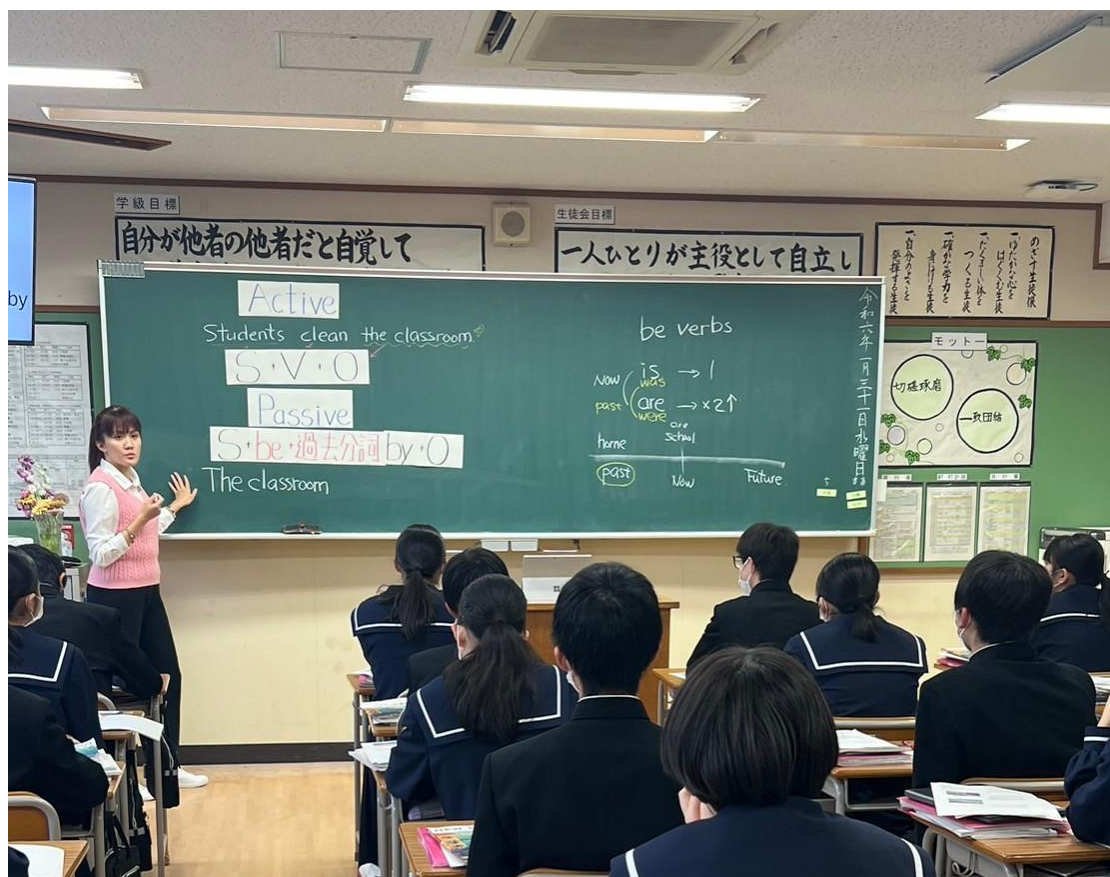
Besides asking students to circle the past tense verbs and sharing in pairs, Judy should've also asked them to find past tense indicators since Judy taught them phrases such as "3 years ago, in 2023, last night, and for how long..." By doing so, what was taught was reinforced while they do close reading of the text again circling the indicators for past tense.



For the “my winter vacation” part, at first you stressed on telling a story about "a character's" winter break. While going to each group to monitor students' progress, make sure their past tense verbs are correct, for example "gived anpan for children" -> "gave anpan to children," "Mr. Jam oji maked bread." -> made bread or baked bread.

Remember what was taught should be reinforced in the production group projects "\_\_\_\_\_ 's winter vacation." Therefore, stress on having students use... "Last" winter vacation, or to include the time when the story took place.

In the end, Judy accidentally said that the story was students' winter vacation plan... A plan is for the future, but a story is told in past tense. Be sure to be consistent that the students were telling a story they created. =)



### Cindy's class on World Heritage Sites

Cindy focused a lot the teaching of passive voice. Although the grammar points was explained clearly, Yamaguchi Sensei thought that students would benefit more from more open ended discussions or oral practice.

The following is the feedback on Cindy's lesson.

Introduction:

- Great initiative with starting the class with 10 questions and pair work. This approach effectively engages the students from the beginning.

Grammar:

- Students need to know why they are learning passive voice before teaching them the grammar rules.
- Your explanation for using the passive voice is good. It would be beneficial to list all your sentence examples on the board. This allows students to take notes effectively and reinforces their learning.
- I would use the sentence from the textbook first.

Or like Higashi Sensei, introducing the sentence pattern with five most famous world heritage sites favored by Japanese: Himeji Castle was selected as a world heritage site in 1993. Itsukushima Shrine was selected as a world heritage site in 1996.

Vocabulary:

- Before asking students to define new vocabulary, ensure you have introduced and explained the meanings. This foundational understanding is crucial for their learning process.
- Utilizing flashcards with both English terms and their Japanese translations will greatly aid the students' comprehension. Visual aids are particularly effective for language learning.
- When introducing abstract terms like 'cultural,' providing context or visual aids, such as pictures related to cultural activities or dances, can significantly enhance understanding. This aligns well with the concept of multimodality in teaching.
- In your sample sentences, adding more context will help students grasp the meanings more easily. In the sentence 'Everyone is unique,' emphasize the correct pronunciation by stressing the second syllable in 'unique.'"
- For the sentence 'I will have a precious memory here,' ensure grammatical accuracy by omitting 'in.' It's essential to model correct usage in examples.

## Rod's English Class on The Celebration of New Year



Rod initiated the class by pairing students to discuss their New Year's Eve activities. He then unveiled the lesson's content through slides enriched with visuals, encouraging students to read the text aloud. Following this, vocabulary review was conducted using word cards of past tense verbs displayed on the board. A standout feature of the class involved inviting students onstage to listen to key sentences from the text and compete in identifying and tapping the keywords on the board. The lesson concluded with students sharing their favorite travel memories.







### Susan's Lesson on World Heritage Sites

The lesson was a dialogue between two people who were talking about Blue Mountain, a World Heritage Site. Susan did a great job in utilizing the blackboard more, listing the objectives of the course, writing down key sentences to explain passive voice, and using visuals to provide context for the dialogue in the text. At the end of the lesson, her students worked in groups of three to present different heritage sites, with the image in the front, and presentation information written in the back.

Discussions and modifications of Susan's lesson plan:

Reading comprehension questions based on the text about the Blue

Mountains:

1. What is the Blue Mountains?
  - The Blue Mountains are a mountain range that is listed as a World Heritage site.
2. Where are the Blue Mountains located?
  - The Blue Mountains are located in Australia.
3. Why do the Blue Mountains look blue?
  - They look blue because of an oily mist that comes from the eucalypts leaves.
4. What can you find in the Greater Blue Mountains Area?
  - In the Greater Blue Mountains Area, you can find 91 species of eucalypts, showing a great ecological diversity.
5. Who are the Gundungurra people?
  - The Gundungurra people are the aboriginals who have lived in the Blue Mountains for thousands of years.

These answers will help assess if the students have understood the key points from the text.

### Vocabulary Introduction

Let's learn some new words from our reading about the Blue Mountains.

1. Let's look at the first word, 'World Heritage site.' A World Heritage site is a place that is very important to the world, chosen by UNESCO. Can anyone think of a World Heritage site in Japan?
2. Next, we have 'mountain range.' This means a series of connected mountains. The Blue Mountains are an example of a mountain range.
3. Now, 'elevation.' Elevation is how high something is above sea level. The Blue Mountains' elevation is 1189 meters.
4. Eucalypts. These are types of trees found in Australia. They are special because they make the air look blue.
5. The term 'ecological diversity' refers to many different types of plants and animals living in one area.
6. Finally, 'aboriginals.' This word describes the first people who lived in a place, like the Gundungurra people in the Blue Mountains.
7. Please repeat after me," followed by repetition of each word using the flash card practice following Higashi Sensei's approach.



The feedback provided to Jennifer, Judy, Cindy, Rod, and Susan reveals common areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in their teaching approaches. Here's a summary highlighting these aspects:

### **Strengths:**

1. **Engagement and Interaction:** Jennifer was praised for her strong interaction with students, including addressing them by name, providing clear instructions, and structuring activities well. Cindy's initiative in starting the class with questions and pair work was noted as effectively engaging students.
2. **Use of Teaching Aids:** The use of flashcards to explain vocabulary was appreciated across the lessons, highlighting the importance of visual aids in language learning. Susan's use of the blackboard to list objectives and key sentences, along with visual aids for context, was also commended.
3. **Content Understanding:** The feedback highlighted that students demonstrated understanding of the dialogue and were able to confidently retell stories, indicating effective teaching methods that facilitated comprehension.

### **Opportunities for Improvement:**

1. **Practice and Pronunciation:** Jennifer was advised to provide more practice on specific words, like "preserve," focusing on pronunciation, syllable stress, and usage examples to enhance understanding.
2. **Student Participation:** Encouraging more student participation in



discussions and sharing their answers was suggested for Jennifer's class to enrich the learning experience.

3. Grammar and Vocabulary Teaching: It was recommended for Judy to reinforce taught grammar points through activities, and Cindy was advised to ensure students understood the purpose behind learning grammar rules, like the passive voice, before delving into them.

Emphasizing the need for clear explanation and contextual usage of new vocabulary was a common suggestion.

4. Consistency in Teaching: Judy was reminded to maintain consistency in her teaching approach, specifically in ensuring that students understand the narrative time frame (past tense storytelling versus future plans).

5. Enhancing Understanding through Context: Providing more context for abstract terms and ensuring grammatical accuracy in examples were highlighted as areas for Cindy to improve on. Susan was commended for her effective use of visuals and context in explaining vocabulary and grammar.

Overall, the feedback emphasized the importance of interactive teaching methods, clear and contextual explanations of vocabulary and grammar, and the need for activities that reinforce learning outcomes. This experience of observing and learning from Japanese English teachers at the junior high school level has been invaluable. It provided us with the opportunity to exchange and learn from each other's methodologies in teaching the English language.