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The Center for Asia-Pacific Exchange(CAPE) Workshop for Asian-Pacific Teachers of English and the possibilities for Kumamoto

Joseph TOMEI

Abstract

This paper outlines the Twenty-ninth Workshop for Asian-Pacific Teachers of English, sponsored by The Center for Asian-Pacific Exchange (CAPE) and held in Honolulu, Hawai'i from 31 July to 10 August 2001, attended by the author, and discusses the results of a questionnaire administered to the participants. The primary purpose was to investigate the possibilities of hosting a similar workshop at Kumamoto Gakuen University. A discussion of the history of CAPE, the elements of the workshop and the participant reactions to the workshop will be presented, pointing to the conclusion that an annual event of a similar scale would not be possible given the infrastructure needs and the motivations of the potential population of attendees.

In 2001, the author was fortunate enough, thanks to a generous grant from Kumamoto Gakuen's Institute of Foreign Affairs, to participate in the Twenty-ninth Workshop for Asian-Pacific Teachers of English, sponsored by The Center for Asian-Pacific Exchange and held in Honolulu, Hawai'i. For any event to be held twenty nine times speaks to an admirable level of interest and organization and my aim was to create a similar event at KGU. To understand the success of the workshop, it is first necessary to be familiar with the history of the Center for Asian-Pacific Exchange.

Due to some various difficulties, this report is appearing over a decade after the event. However, the Center for Asian-Pacific Exchange, despite various economic difficulties, is continuing to carry out this and other workshops and updated information for both the upcoming workshop and other programs has been included.

CAPE

The Center for Asia-Pacific Exchange (CAPE) was originally established in November of 1980 as a non-profit, publicly supported, educational institution by Jai-Ho Yoo, a professor at the University of Hawai'i, Honolulu. The Center draws on the faculty of the University of Hawai'i as well as bringing in various outside experts to provide programs ranging in length from 5 days to several weeks covering topics including language study, area studies, professional development and cross-cultural training. The linkage to the University of Hawai'i is important because the University provides logistical and administrative support, as well as providing an academic sanction for the events, often necessary in order for visas to be issued and leave to be granted by the home institutions of the participants. Programs include the previously mentioned workshop for English teachers, focused workshops for participants from a single country and for particular groups of teachers, workshops on eldercare, mental health nursing and clinical nursing, American studies as well as programs aimed at university students from various countries. CAPE has also been able to, through government and private financial support, provide scholarships to encourage participation of participants who would normally not be able to attend.

CAPE has memberships for both individuals and organizations, which help raise operating funds for the organization, and also receives support from the University. It also has the support of various organizations in Honolulu, which permit the Center to include visits to related institutions. For example, the previously mentioned eldercare seminar included visits to Kapiolani Women's Center, Queen's Medical Center, and One Kalakaua Senior Living. The support of prominent members of society also helps the Center and the current Advisory Council members include a U.S. senator, a state politician as well as business leaders while the Board of Directors has a similar representation.

Another important aspect is that The Center aims to make a contribution to the local community by "making Hawai'i a focal point for international training". The Center's publicity notes that over 7,000 international visitors have come to attend programs put on by the Center from periods ranging from five days to four weeks. What is left unstated is the economic impact of those participants, who are shopping and supporting the local economy and ideally encouraging their colleagues and students to attend programs there.

The publicity also notes that the programs are designed not only to bring in

international students and scholars, but are also set up with the purpose to provide information to local residents about various Asian countries. The format seems to be very similar to Kumamoto Gakuen's *kozai koka* programs in that they are specifically designed to provide information and viewpoints to the local residents. The first is the annual "Language and Culture Seminar". The lectures are, according to the Center "designed to enhance knowledge of Asian languages and cultures, familiarizes participants with the social and business customs appropriate for effective interaction with residents of various Asian countries". The speakers are drawn from the university faculty from a wide range of subjects. A second lecture series, entitled the "Asia Today" lecture series, deals with contemporary issues affecting the cultures and societies of various Asian countries. For this course as well, speakers are drawn from the various departments of the university.

While I am not privy to the finances of the Center, some very interesting facts stand out. The Center is successful enough to offer the above programs free of charge to Hawai'i residents. The Center also grants a number of fellowships to local residents and secondary school teachers to conduct their research and other scholarly activities. In addition, the Center offers some fellowships to seminar participants, particularly from Asian countries where the currency exchange rate would make participation very difficult. Furthermore, the Center has endowed several scholarships at various academic departments at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, including the Department of Human Resources, the School of Nursing and with the Department of English as a Second Language, with a fourth scholarship for the Department of American Studies in the process of being approved. This suggests that the combination of local donations, tuition from programs and aid in kind from the university is an excellent way to reinvest into the university and shows the possibility of paying future dividends.

This work has also been recognized by local and state government. The center's publicity reports

CAPE has been honored by commendations and resolutions from the Hawai'i State Legislature and by the City and County of Honolulu. In 1990, the House of Representatives passed a resolution recognizing the work of its president, Dr. Jai-Ho Yoo, noting his "commitment to make Hawai'i a focal point for international training and to promote peace and understanding among Asian and Pacific people". In 1994 the City and County of Honolulu awarded Dr. Yoo a certificate commending

him for his leadership of the Center for Asia-Pacific Exchange and his effectiveness in developing East-West relations. In 1995, the State Senate passed a similar resolution of commendation.

All of this seems to have begun with the workshop I attended, the Workshop for Asian English teachers, so it is useful to examine the schedule and set up of that workshop.

The Workshop for Asian-Pacific Teachers of English

The workshop is a semi-annual program, and in order to match up with summer and winter breaks in the majority of Asian countries, it is held in January and August. The publicity material says that the workshop will provide the chance “to learn about the latest developments in the theory and practice of foreign language education, while deepening their knowledge of the U.S.” (<http://www.cape.edu/programs/teachers/index.html>) The tension between theory and practice will be discussed later in the paper.

The basic pattern of the workshop was two morning sessions lasting until 12:20 with the afternoons and weekends free. The workshops were conducted by faculty members and graduate students from the University of Hawai'i and included topics such as teaching particular skills, motivating learners, testing and evaluation, computers as well as an opportunity for the participants to make a presentation. Many well-known researchers from the university took part, including Dr. Richard Schmidt (who was the main presenter for the summer 2001 workshop) and Dr. Richard Day. All of the sessions took place at the University of Hawai'i campus and the professors were very generous with their time in meeting with participants outside the workshops.

All the sessions were, owing to the multicultural composition of the participants, conducted in English. Ample support, both in the forms of extensive handouts and a format that encouraged impromptu questions from the participants, was given to make sure that non-native speakers would not have difficulty, but from my perspective, all of the participants had no problem understanding and participating. In addition, the sessions were devoted to primarily introductory presentations, often summarizing the foundational principles of the area in question, which ensured that none of the participants would be at a loss.

One session towards the end of the workshop permitted the participants to make

presentations to the workshop on topics that they were working on. This served the secondary purpose of providing some participants further access to grants from their institutions as the paper presentation could then be listed as a conference presentation.

The first notable point is that the infrastructure of the university provides an essential element for the workshop and utilizes the university facilities at a time when there are no classes being held on campus. This utilization of the physical plant, while commonsensical, very rarely occurs here in Japan, but is very common in the US. During any given summer vacation, university campuses are overrun with high school students participating in band and orchestra camps, cheerleading camps, sports seminars and the like. Obviously, this is not possible in Japan, where high school students have much more rigorous schedules, so my initial hope was to develop a program for foreigners who might be interested in coming to Japan during the vacation, and providing the aegis of university sponsorship. If this program were successful, other participants, ideally Japanese high school teachers, would be integrated into such a program, creating opportunities for cross cultural communication.

A second notable point is that the human capital of the university is also utilized, as can be seen in the course listings below, from the same web page. Both of these points function to advertise the university to the participants in a way that would not normally be possible.

In 2005, the program was the same as 2001, but in 2012, two courses are offered, a 10-day course (that was the focus of this grant) and a 4 week course.

The schedule for the 2012 10 day course is presented below, taken from http://www.capealoha.org/workshops_teachers/course_descrip.htm. Approximately half of the courses are similar to the ones offered in 2001, but the other half are new or revised.

Classroom Assessment by Sandra McKay

This session will focus on classroom assessment as opposed to standardized tests. We will begin by discussing the various purposes of classroom assessment and then explore specific strategies for assessing learning in all four skills.

Developing a Philosophy of Language Teaching by Graham Crookes

Increasingly, teachers of all kinds are being asked to specify their

philosophy of teaching. Identifying key values and beliefs, as well as their practical implications, is a useful way for language teachers to develop. This presentation will present some central historical trends that feed into language teaching, from the point of view of their values and central concepts, and also identify other main features of a philosophy of teaching, such as “aims.” This presentation will be followed by a discussion period in which participants will begin to explore this important topic, while simultaneously extending their command of advanced professional English.

Extensive Reading: Helping Students to Become EFL Readers by Richard Day

This workshop introduces the participants to extensive reading, an approach to teaching EFL reading that allows students to have exciting, meaningful experiences that motivate them to read even outside their EFL classes and, at the same time, prepare them for academic reading.

Communicative Activities for EFL Learners by Robert Gibson

This workshop will be concerned with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Several interactive communication activities and strategies will be demonstrated followed by information about how they can be applied in a comprehensive approach to language learning. We will illustrate how the activities can be used to foster both fluency and accuracy. We will also show how a “focus on the forms” of English can be a natural extension of the communication activities. By the end of the session, participants will have several new communicative activities and will have experience in creating new ones that are appropriate to their students’ proficiency levels and interests. Readings and materials will be provided.

Culture and English as an International Language by Sandra McKay

This seminar will explore the role of culture in the teaching of an international language in an Asian context. The seminar will begin by describing the characteristics of English as an international language. Then we will discuss how culture plays an important role in language teaching in the teaching of vocabulary and language appropriateness, the development of language materials, and the choice of teaching methodology.

Strategies for Teaching Vocabulary by Sandra McKay

This seminar will explore various ways of presenting new vocabulary in both beginning and intermediate level English language classes. We will begin by discussing what it means to know a word. Then we will examine various

ways of introducing and using vocabulary items including semantic mapping, lexical phrases, and vocabulary notebooks.

Approaches to Teaching Writings by Sandra McKay

This workshop begins by introducing four major approaches to the teaching of composition. It then describes various strategies for promoting writing in the language classroom. The last part of the workshop presents various principles for responding to students' essays.

Motivating Foreign Language Learners by Richard Schmidt

This workshop session reviews current theories and findings regarding motivation and second language learning, with a special focus on what teachers can do to more strongly motivate their students.

Attention & Awareness in Language Classrooms by Richard Schmidt

This workshop session will review what is known about conscious and unconscious processes of learning as they apply to second and foreign language learning, with particular focus on the roles of attention and awareness. Connections will be made between cognitive processes and instructional interventions such as task-based and content-based language teaching, input enhancement, recasts, and other techniques for making form-meaning connections salient to learners.

The content of these lectures is primarily theoretically based, which highlights the gap between theory and practice. This was one of the points raised in the survey responses and one which I will discuss later.

While the faculty for the program are primarily drawn from the University of Hawai'i, Sandra McKay a well respected applied linguistics researcher, is participating in the 2012 workshop and previously Jack Richards, another well respected applied linguistics researcher, has participated.

An arrival orientation and farewell party were included in the tuition fee, which was a very reasonable \$500 (60,000 yen where \$1.00=120 yen or a more reasonable 40,000 yen at the current rate of \$1.00=80 yen). (Amazingly, the tuition for the program remains the same in 2012) Voluntary excursions were organized for various tourism sites on Oahu, often at a nominal fee and the voluntary excursions included trips to the Polynesian Cultural Center and other tourist destinations. This highlights the powerful advantage of geography that the island of O'ahu holds, making

all of the voluntary excursion sites within 1 hour driving time so the schedule, which has sessions during the morning and the afternoons free for excursions and personal research, places no time limitations on participation.

One deep disappointment I had was that the University of Hawai'i library facilities were being renovated during my participation in the workshop, as one of my aims was to use the library resources. However, that was the only major disappointment I had with the workshops.

While it was possible to simply attend the workshops, the Center had an excellent arrangement with the Pagoda Hotel to provide accommodations for participants at a very reasonable price. The Pagoda Hotel was located near the Ala Moana Shopping center, and a regular bus service to the campus permitted the participants to easily travel between the hotel and the campus. Cost for the hotel was \$35 (4,200 yen) a night for a double occupancy room (where the participant would be housed with another participant of the same sex) or \$75 (9,000 yen) a night for a single occupancy room. Meals were not included. (This cost has increased and is currently \$51 a night for double occupancy and \$102 for single occupancy. However, this is a reduction from the standard tariff of \$79 dollars)

Survey

In order to gather more information about the possibility of holding a similar workshop in Kumamoto, a questionnaire was distributed to the participants (Appendix 1). The following discusses the results of that survey.

Twenty people (fifteen women and 4 men) participated in the twenty-ninth workshop and they came from Japan, the Philippines, Hong Kong, China, and Thailand. I was the only native speaker of English participating in the workshop, so this gave a total of nineteen responses to the administered questionnaire

The first question asked for the institutional affiliation of the participants. The majority of the participants (15) taught in tertiary education. Two (both from Japan) were senior high school teachers. One (from Hong Kong) worked at the Department of Education while pursuing a Ph.D while another was a Pilipino women who was working for private Teacher Training Center in Japan.

The next question, dealing with how participants found out about the program, revealed a diversity of sources. Among the ways participants learned about the program were teacher education magazines, circulars from the local US embassy or

consulate, direct mailings, previous participation by colleagues and acquaintances, as well as through internet surfing.

After this, the participants were asked if they had received institutional support to attend. Eight of the participants or over one-third, indicated that they were receiving either total or partial support to attend.

The next question asked those participants who were receiving support what form that support took. This also revealed a wide range of funding sources, including direct grants from the university, scholarships from the Center, and grants from affiliated organizations. All this support covered different aspects of the workshop, including travel, hotel, and tuition so no generalizations could be made on what aspects were subsidized more than others.

The follow up question asked if there were any requirements for receiving the support. Some participants needed to only file paperwork, while others were asked to file a report on their return. Two of the participants had to, as a condition for receiving support, give a presentation at the workshop, which they did during the previously mentioned open session that closed the workshop.

The next section of the survey inquired if similar programs existed in their home countries and if they had participated in any kind of program that bore a resemblance to the CAPE workshop. The participants all replied that while there were similar programs in their home countries, they were all conducted under the official auspices of the government. They also mentioned other programs that they had attended in various locations, however, the majority of those programs were related to language improvement, while the CAPE program had teacher training as a principal motivating factor. A follow-up question asked if the participants had previously participated in CAPE sponsored workshops and four had. This was despite the fact that several of the topics remained basically the same from year to year. From discussions with people affiliated with the program, this repeated participation was not uncommon.

The final question of the survey asked for the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Among the strengths listed were the range of participants, both in terms of cultural background and the population they taught, the opportunity to sightsee, the relaxed nature of the classroom, as well as practical aspects including low tuition and ease of application. Some of the weaknesses listed were that the sessions lacked focus, that no provision for the issuance of credits was made, and a lack of practical skills training.

This survey was shared with the CAPE office and the previously mentioned 4

week course seems to have been developed to deal with the shortcomings mentioned in the survey responses. The 4 week course consists of 60 hours of instruction and training. With an additional 20 hours to observe American classrooms. In addition to those 80 hours, there are various assigned activities to explore American and Hawaiian culture. The program is designed with three 'layers' (<http://www.cape.edu/programs/teachers/fourweek/objectives.html>) The first layer is the immersion environment, which takes advantage of the unique opportunities that exist in Hawai'i. The second layer is the lectures by the University of Hawai'i faculty on current developments in foreign language education theory and practice, while the third layer is the opportunity for both classroom observation and micro-teaching.

Summary and Conclusion

I attended this workshop to gauge the prospects of holding a similar 10-day workshop in Kumamoto at Kumamoto Gakuen University. My thought was that if it were held during the vacation period, bringing together a variety of participants to explore the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language, it would not only provide publicity and exposure for the university and the Kumamoto area, but would provide an potential economic boost as well as heightened awareness of the Kumamoto area. However, given the addition of a Japanese language certificate program, the possibility for a Japanese teaching course, giving participants an opportunity to develop Japanese teaching skills under a similar 10-day schedule might be a possibility. But as the initial research was to determine the feasibility of a CAPE style TEFL course, one should first note that there are several challenges that would have to be overcome to carry out such a plan.

First, we would have to accept that the immersive environment offered in Honolulu would not be replicable in Kumamoto. However, if the target audience were people from other Asian countries, there would be some element of immersive study involved and steps could be taken to provide as much English as possible to the participants. Furthermore, if a mix of participants from several Asian countries were active participants, the necessity of communication might make English a lingua franca.

Second, cost of living considerations would make it difficult to offer a similar level of prices for the same basic workshop. I considered Kumamoto Gakuen's Nishigoshi facility as a location for the participants to stay, but it is too far removed

from the center of the city and dining facilities for a workshop even half the length of the one under discussion would be impossibly limited. If arrangements with a local hotel could be made, or alternatively, some grant or financial support from some outside source, this would make it possible. Another possibility would be home stays, but that would add a large amount of administrative overhead to such a program.

While Kumamoto does not have the rich tourist infrastructure that Honolulu or Oahu has, it offers a number of excellent tourist opportunities that could be taken advantage of. As previously noted, all of the excursions were within one hour of the hotel where participants stayed. While the standard list of possible destinations of interest in Kyushu, such as Nagasaki, Kagoshima, Miyazaki, fall outside of the one hour range, a large number of more local attractions, including Aso, Yatsushiro, and Minamata are right at an hour's traveling time and city attractions, including Kumamoto castle, the Jane's Mansion and Suizenji would be excellent afternoon excursions.

Obviously, Gakuen cannot offer the names and reputations of the researchers at the University of Hawai'i but my original thought was to offer a workshop based on more practical aspects of teaching, utilizing Gakuen students as 'guinea pigs' to demonstrate and try out various classroom techniques. A big challenge, given the current state of comparative Asian economies, would be assembling the same mix of participants that makes the CAPE workshop successful. A more modest program, perhaps focusing on teachers in the Kyushu area, would not suffice because the multicultural nature of the participants is a key for maintaining English as a lingua franca, as well as being a vehicle for bringing together various viewpoints and experiences. Still, with support from the East Asian faculty, perhaps enough teachers from different countries would be willing to attend so as to 'force' the use of English as a lingua franca.

An alternative to a TEFL based workshop would be a workshop to help participants develop and write up research ideas with an aim to publication. If this idea were taken up, an option that may be worth bearing in mind would be to hire native speaking part time teachers to work in this program. As the part time staff are paid by the class during the regular school year, the possibility of employment during the 'dead' time of summer vacation would probably be very welcome and the opportunity to have native speakers work with eager participants to develop and hone not only their research writing, but also their research abilities, might be very attractive. A research development workshop would draw not only on language

teaching professionals but might also draw faculty looking to write and present research in English. Then, sessions on not only research and research writing, but also presentation skills and how to make poster presentations would form the content of the majority of the sessions.

One point in the university's favor would be our advanced library and computer facilities. If use of those facilities could be arranged as part of this program, and rather than a focus on TEFL, but a focus on assisting participants to develop, write up and present that research, with native speakers as guides and writing assistants, could be set up, the university would be able to take an active role in the production of TEFL research in East Asia. Participants could be encouraged to add an acknowledgement to Kumamoto Gakuen University in any published work, an acknowledgement that would help both advertise the program as well as publicize the university.

If either the TEFL program or the research development program were undertaken, support from the city and the prefecture could make this an opportunity for a partnership between the university and local government. While economic conditions make it very difficult to provide a comfortable level of support, making this a Kumamoto program rather than a Kumamoto Gakuen University program would have obvious benefits. If this were made as a Kumamoto consortium program, with staff and resources drawn from all the schools in the consortium, other benefits might be realized.

In conclusion, I'd like to thank the Institute of Foreign Affairs for its generous support and I hope that the suggestions here find some fruitful ground at the University.

Appendix 1

Questionnaire concerning Institutional support

This survey is for a report on the CAPE Asian Pacific English Teachers' workshop for the Foreign Affairs Institute of Kumamoto Gakuen University. Though I've asked for names and host institutions, this information will not be included in the final report. This is just so I can ask you follow-up questions. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!

1. Name
2. Institution (if applicable)
3. How did you find out about this program?
4. Are you receiving institutional support to attend this workshop?
5. If so, what form does that support take? (travel, hotel, registrations fees, grant)
6. What are the requirements for receiving such support? (Please include both paperwork and any reports or articles that must be filed when you return)
7. Were there any difficulties in applying for this program? If so, what were they?
8. How did you learn of this program? (for institutional support)
9. Does this type of workshop exist in your home country? If so, could you describe them?
10. What is your particular area of research or teaching in your home country?
11. Have you attended one of these CAPE programs previously?
12. If so, why are you attending again?
13. Have you attended other programs similar to this one at other institutions? If so, please list them.
14. If so, what were the key differences between those programs and this one?
15. Could you list the strengths and weaknesses of this program?

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