The first two years of a new TEFL Certificate programme

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Introduction

In the Department of English Language and Literature, Beppu University now offers one-semester training in TEFL (the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language), a programme set up for students from Britain. This paper outlines the rationale, the design considerations and the experience gained from initial implementation. The description is provided from a personal perspective – my own, as tutor of two of the three taught course modules and tutor with joint responsibility for the practice teaching component.

For each of the last several years a successful arrangement between Beppu University and Winchester University, UK, has allowed about a dozen of our English Department students to spend a full academic year in England, receiving credit for courses taken there. Beppu University was keen that this should involve exchange of students, for UK students to benefit from having a part of their curriculum in Japan, and so that our students of English could have regular contact on the Beppu campus with students who are proficient users of English, even beyond the period that some of them spend in Winchester.

There would be an attractive symmetry in British exchange students coming to Japan to study Japanese, but it is nowadays sadly true that not many UK universities offer Japanese courses. From the comparatively young age of 14, the learning of a foreign language is optional for most UK students, which tends to reduce the pool for enrolment on university courses in foreign languages. In the context of contemporary Britain, it is not surprising that Winchester University no longer has Japanese as a

degree subject. Mitchell (2003), in her survey of rationales for foreign language learning, notes that, while, in many other countries, learners of the global foreign language, English, feel that they need it as a matter of practical necessity,

> [foreign language] programmes in English-dominant society cannot benefit from this type of strategic contextual support, or the social consensus among parents, employers etc. which reinforces it. UK learners [of languages foreign to them] can switch off and drop out in ways that learners of EFL [English as a Foreign Language] cannot, without obvious immediate penalties in terms of their life chances. (Mitchell 2003: 124).

How then, to induce UK students to come to Beppu University for part of their studies? Professor Kenji Ueda, Head of Beppu University's English Language and Literature Department, came up with a good solution. He saw that a TEFL qualification taught in the EFL environment of Beppu, was likely to be an attractive prospect. A TEFL certificate can qualify its holder for the first rungs of rewarding jobs in many countries. UK exchange students coming here would be learning the theory and practice of TEFL in a setting where they could observe EFL teaching and interact daily with EFL students. Beppu University recruits substantial numbers of students from other East Asian countries, notably China and South Korea. This offers additional breadth for TEFL training. There was already good accommodation for students coming here from abroad, such as the self-catering facilities built into the upper floors of the modern Beppu University train station. The UK students could conveniently stay there and have good opportunities to meet an interesting range of students, most of whom use English as an international language.

In 2004, the details of Professor Ueda's proposal were worked out and approved by the two universities. Speedy passage from planning to

implementation was greatly facilitated by the co-operation of Dr Mick Jardine, Head of the Winchester University Department of English, and judicious advice on course content from Ms Debbie Thompson, principal teacher of the tailored English language courses that Beppu students take at Winchester University. Two pioneering UK students successfully completed the Beppu University TEFL Certificate in Semester 2 of the academic year 2005−6 and the next group of three did so in Semester 1, 2006−7.

The following section is a synopsis of education in Japan, to establish that it is a complex and interesting environment for TEFL training and to set the scene for Beppu University's Certificate programme. Before outlining and offering an appraisal of the programme, I also sketch the possibilities and constraints arising from characteristics of this university.

In the rest of this article, to make clear which category of learners I am referring to, I shall call students who are enrolled on the one-semester TEFL Certificate programme (*TEFL*) *trainees*, and use the label *students* for other students, for example undergraduates on Beppu University's four-year degrees and − in line with general usage in Japan − to refer to primary- and secondary-school pupils.

The Japanese educational context

Years in formal education are apportioned as follows for the majority of Japanese students:

primary	6 years in elementary school
secondary	3 years in junior high school
	3 years in senior high school
tertiary	4 years at university, or 2 years in junior college

Compulsory schooling ends after junior high school, but over 95% of students stay on for senior high school, and a large proportion continue into the tertiary level. Many children go to kindergartens prior to elementary school. There is also a substantial private education sector providing supplementary extramural classes attended by large numbers of primary- and secondary-level students, and even catering for 1—3-year-olds (on the latter point, see Hendry 2003: 89; and see the rest of her Chapter 5 for a concise and sensitive account of education in Japan). English is very often a subject taught in these additional classes, at all levels.

In schools, the study of English generally starts at the beginning of the junior high school years, though pilot schemes introducing it into the elementary-school curriculum have been running for several years now. Communication with the rest of the world is the official reason for studying English. Fraser (2006: 80) cites the following from a 2003 action plan of Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology: "For children living in the 21st century, it is essential for them to acquire communication abilities in English as a common international language". On the same page Fraser also notes that "there is much enthusiasm for *kokusaika* (internationalisation) from the media, politicians and the population at large, who see it in their interest to become functional in English". I concur, on the strength of informally gained impressions, and there are indeed many Japanese people who do use English in international trade, diplomacy, tourism, cultural exchange and other contexts, within Japan and overseas. Nonetheless, it also appears to me that many Japanese people go through most of their lives having very little need to use English communicatively. Short forays abroad are not uncommon, but one Japanese guide with English skills can look after a tour group of 30 who will, then, not themselves have to negotiate anything complex with foreigners.

For many – perhaps the majority of Japanese – the pressure to study English arises not so much from the demands of international communication but is rather a consequence of English being the language that is at the focus of such a widely accepted goal. As Shillaw (2004: 264) rather tellingly puts it:

> In Japan, the country that coined the phrase 'examination hell', assessment is a way of life from the earliest stages of learning ... Success in Japanese society is a reflection of excellence in tests, and English has been a significant factor in educational evaluation for many years.

In 2006, it was widely reported in Japan that hundreds of senior high schools had been neglecting to provide lessons in certain supposedly obligatory subjects, such as international history, in order to allow more time for the teaching of mathematics and English, because proficiency in these two subjects is seen as crucial for success in university entrance examinations. Smith and Imura (2004: 31) refer to an:

> overall focus on sentence-by-sentence translation of connected texts into Japanese which continues to form the mainstay of typical English teaching at all levels of formal education, in particular senior high schools and universities.

While many Japanese students do succeed in gaining a good command of English, achieved standards are often unimpressive. Scores on the long-established American TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) offer some substantiation of this. Shillaw (2004: 273) observes that, while "Speakers of Japanese are consistently the largest single group to take the test annually", "Unfortunately, the average scores for Japanese candidates are low compared to almost every other national and linguistic group."[1]

International communication is a utilitarian goal. There is an important strand of educational thought in Japan, however, which justifies the study of English principally as mental training (Smith and Imura 2004: 45), in much the same way that generations of European pupils were required to learn Latin for its value as an intellectual discipline, rather than in expectation of communicating with Romans! Writing, rather than the oral medium, is often the main concern (Shillaw 2004: 267).

Japan's education system is directed from the centre, but issuing guidelines does not by itself transform educational practice. Since 1987, the Ministry has promoted a communicative approach to English language teaching in Japan's schools, calling for more speaking and listening, while maintaining the teaching of the written medium (Smith and Imura 2004: 36; and see Griffiths 2005: 35－8, for a short account of communicative approaches). But Smith and Imura believe that communicative teaching has been marginalised in Japan's schools and that:

> the core teaching of English ... goes on broadly unaltered. Many relatively academic schools are reported anecdotally to have ignored MOE [Ministry of Education] directives regarding oral-aural proficiency, even during timetabled Oral Communication lessons, and the situation has not been helped by the failure of the MOE-sponsored 'Center' university entrance examination to incorporate a listening element. (2004: 38).

There has recently been one notable change in the situation: since January 2006, the central university entrance examination mentioned in the quotation above (センタ試験), has included an English language listening test, but there is as yet no speaking test, and private universities usually have their own entrance examinations, generally without an oral-aural component[2], so there is no certainty that this will greatly affect

teaching methods.

In 1987 the education ministry inaugurated the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) programme that has brought in thousands (currently around 12,000 annually) of young university graduates from North America, Europe, Australasia and Southern Africa as short-term language teaching assistants, most of them first-language speakers of English. A research survey of the JET scheme by McConnell (2000, cited by Smith and Imura 2000: 37−8) found that it had "been successful in terms of internationalization (in the sense of Japanese people in all walks of life coming into contact with foreigners and the programme giving Japan a better press abroad)" but Japanese teachers have shown widespread professional reluctance to change "and occasional team-taught lessons [with a JET assistant] appear as a diversion for the students (and teachers) from the 'serious business' of exam-oriented grammar- and translation-focused core English teaching, which continues unchanged." Learning about English in Japanese can seem to have priority over learning the language itself.

In Japan's schools, large groups are the norm, which reduces opportunities for oral training. Makarova, Bradford and Lambacher (2004: 116) point out that:

> As opposed to other layers of language, pronunciation requires not only the ability to understand, memorize and apply the inventory and functions of a certain number of distinctive linguistic units, but also involves a complex of articulation (muscle) control, hearing, and imitation (mimicking) abilities. Developing and establishing automated neuro-control over more than 200 speech muscles takes time and effort.

Smith and Imura (2004) analyse three major attempts to reform the

teaching of English in 20th century Japan, the final one being the Education Ministry's push for communicative teaching mentioned earlier. None of them achieved the radical changes aimed at. In Smith and Imura's balanced assessment, they suggest that the status quo may be a reasonable adaptation given the circumstances in which most Japanese teachers work: examination pressure and big classes (both mentioned above), parental and community views – probably much influenced by the examination systems – on what should be taught in English classes, as well as the fragmentation of the English-teaching community among different professional organisations and the fact that the training of a large proportion of Japanese teachers of English had not prepared them for doing things differently.

The self-deluding confidence of many who have wanted to reform English-teaching in Japan has tended to be self-defeating too. Note the resigned irony in their conclusion about outsider attitudes:

> with regard to communicative language teaching and team-teaching, there is a commonly-held assumption among ALTs (and other non-Japanese teachers in Japan) that their practices are superior to the 'old-fashioned' methodology they see being put into practice by Japanese colleagues. However, it is also clear that mere expression or explanation of this belief fails to result automatically in uptake of their ideas by Japanese teachers themselves. (2004: 40).

There is also an interpretation according to which, in its own terms, traditional Japanese teaching of English can claim some success. This line of thinking is suggested by the following acknowledgment from Mr Inazo Nitobe, distinguished diplomat and author of the book *Bushido*, which for a long time was a central plank in Western understandings of Japan. He deprecated the piecemeal text-translational approach, but, writing in 1929 about the use and study of foreign languages in Japan,

nonetheless conceded that: "It must be said to its praise that students who are trained in this way usually have a more accurate and precise comprehension of what they read . . ." (cited by Smith and Imura 2004: 30).

Smith and Imura also list gradual changes that did occur within English teaching in Japan during the 20th century (2004: 43−4), and which can probably be traced back to reform initiatives:

* control of textbook vocabulary, to represent plain English rather than literary English
* the widespread use of phonetic transcription in textbooks
* the incorporation of communicative goals, post-1987
* comprehension questions based on larger pieces of text than single sentences
* junior high school classes now offering rather more dialogue practice and oral and communicative exercises than there previously was anywhere in the system.

Smith and Imura advise that: "reformers need to be satisfied with evolution and limited, possibly indirect influence rather than 'revolution' and direct, dramatic influence . . ." (2004: 43).

Factors to be taken into account at Beppu University

Beppu University is part of a kindergarten-to-graduate-school integrated institution. It was expected that opportunities could be organised for observation and teaching practice at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. This is an important advantage in relation to many other providers of TEFL training, who are usually able to offer any given trainee experience in only a limited range of classroom types and levels.

The fact that the TEFL certificate teachers also teach university courses in spoken and written English allows us to offer graduated introductions to EFL classroom practice on campus – starting with observation – before the trainees are placed in the schools.

Several times each year there are 'open days', when high school students come to campus to sample what it might be like to study here. The TEFL trainees gain more experience by assisting in the conduct of the mini classes that figure in these events.

In the West, practice teaching arrangements involving co-operation between a university and a school would generally be the subject of an agreed and signed memorandum of understanding, specifying the dates and periods of time, the responsibilities of the participants and the conditions to be adhered to. Japanese conventions, instead, favour soundings-out combined with face-to-face meetings of all who will be involved, leading to an ad hoc and informal agreement based on impressions gained and views expressed by all. This inclusiveness and openness to renegotiation is one source of the tranquillity that outsiders often find admirable about modern Japan. But a consequence for the TEFL training is that the timing of the other components of the programme has to be very flexible and has so far required sudden revisions to plans. For the first two trainees it was possible to get three weeks in the schools associated with the university, but scheduled early, before they had had much time to study methodology, while the second set got only two weeks, timed for so late in the semester that it was a struggle for them to complete the related assessment write-ups before their return to Britain.

It was to be a one-semester programme, making use of an existing two-semester TEFL Context course, as well as two-semester courses in grammar and phonetics. A way had to be found of covering the

essentials of course content that was scheduled for the particular semester when a specific cohort of visiting UK TEFL trainees was not in Beppu.

With only a small intake of trainees, some funding was available for book and journal purchases, but not for a resource room. (Such a room would have workspace for trainees and would hold a small TEFL-theory library and collection of teaching texts and materials, together with equipment for study and materials production: computers connected to the internet, a printer, a photocopier, facilities for making videos and audio-recordings and for transcribing recordings.) Professor Ueda has kindly video-recorded set-piece practice-teaching classes in which the TEFL trainees have participated. And he has provided a video playback machine for use in my office, but it does not have a counter or anything that would make it usable for serious transcription and analysis.

On-campus access for English Department students is poor at Beppu University[3]. Average computer literacy levels are consequently rather low. For instance, only about three out of every ten students in my classes admit to knowing how to do word processing, and even the few willing to try to access English-language websites for which I supply URLs usually say that they failed to get through. The students do their written work in pencil, which precludes classroom use of everything from spell-checkers and computer-administered quizzes through to concordancing- and speech-analysis-software. Chalk and talk still appears to be the predominant method for presenting lessons in Japan, even at tertiary level.

So far, the TEFL trainees have had to rely for their own computing mainly on whatever they have been able to bring with them from Britain together with the facilities in an Oita City internet café, some 18km distant from campus.

Thus it is not currently practicable at Beppu University to do much exploration with the TEFL trainees of the mass of self-instructional and learning-support material available on the internet (for instance as regularly flagged up in the *ELT Journal*'s Website Review column; see Eastment 2006 for a sample).

Content

Cambridge ESOL, an entity affiliated to Cambridge University, oversees and certifies the Cambridge CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults), which they justifiably claim to be "the best known and most widely taken initial TESOL/TEFL qualification of its kind in the world" (Cambridge ESOL 2007). Indicative of this status is the fact that it is taught at approved centres in 49 countries. Our TEFL Certificate has similar goals to those of the CELTA: that students should experience TEFL learning contexts and gain practical teaching- and lesson-planning skills, together with relevant analytical knowledge of language, specifically of the lexicon, grammar and phonology of English; and that they should also develop a professional understanding of the nature of teaching and learning and of the international contexts of TEFL.

However, the two qualifications offer a different balance between, on the one hand, learning through experience and, on the other, study in the abstract. The Cambridge CELTA stipulates a minimum of 120 hours of instruction for trainees, compared to 90 hours on the Beppu University TEFL Certificate, but whereas the CELTA specifies six hours of teaching practice and six hours observing experienced teachers conducting classes, our TEFL trainees have two or three times as much teaching practice and, in addition to four or more hours of classroom observation, the TEFL trainees share 54 hours of their formal learning in classes with Beppu University students, giving them extensive opportunities for informal EFL classroom observation.

Beppu University's TEFL Certificate comprises the following six components:

TEFL Methods
TEFL Context
English Phonetics (unassessed)
English Grammar (unassessed)
Japanese Society and Culture
Practice Teaching

The goals, content and presentation of these components are now summarised.

TEFL Methods

The aim is to prepare students for initial teaching in EFL classes: for planning EFL lessons, understanding classroom dynamics, providing useful feedback on the work of learners, evaluating, adapting and devising teaching materials, and assessing levels of achievement. There are some lectures on principles and concepts, but most classes take the form of workshops and discussions (for example discussing the marking of typed-out versions of authentic EFL student compositions that retain student errors, but not the original tutor's corrections, or analysing the contents lists of locally-available EFL textbooks and trying to understand their rationales).

The main course book set for the students is Ur (1996), which is strongly practical in its orientation. Students are set further specific papers to read, such as Makarova, Bradford and Lambacher (2004), on the teaching of pronunciation, and Thompson (1987), on characteristic profiles of Japanese learners of English; and they are encouraged to browse in the *EFL Journal*. Assessment of trainees' achievement by the end of the

course is on a portfolio comprising:

lesson plans,
an EFL test and
an analytical report based on classroom observations.

To achieve the practical aims of the Methods course, trainees will usually — depending on previous experience and study — need to extend their explicit knowledge of the structure of English and of the nature language in general. They are therefore normally expected to audit whatever semester of the two-semester second-year English Phonetics and English Grammar courses happen to be running (see under the relevant headings, below). Relevant phonetic and grammatical information and concepts from the semester when the trainees are not in Beppu are introduced as and when needed in the Methods course. To acquaint them with other aspects of language, especially vocabulary, the trainees are set some basic linguistic readings, such as Griffiths (2006) and the Words chapter in Bloomer, Griffiths and Merrison (2005), and introduced to the compact and very serviceable word frequency dictionary of Leech, Rayson and Wilson (2001).

The TEFL Methods course was the only one in which I met the TEFL trainees by themselves, not in shared classes, so it was the only venue in which I could do some teaching of sections of the two-semester TEFL Context course (see below) that were not covered in TEFL Context classes running in the then-current semester. This is not an entirely felicitous admixture of theory into an otherwise practical course, but I can see no other workable solution. Trainees are also set Griffiths (2005) as pre-course reading.

TEFL Context

This course was already being taught for third year Beppu University students. It is a series of lectures surveying the international TEFL enterprise, why it arose, what its characteristics are, its terminology and the theories that underpin it. The course was established to give our senior EFL students practice in following academic English pitched at a level above casual conversation. TEFL is an appropriate subject area because all of the students have experienced it, on the receiving end, and a fair proportion of them goes on to become teachers of English.

The topics covered are the following.

Semester 1:

* Introduction.
* English in the world.
* TEFL, TESL and TEIL.
* What is learnt?
* Error analysis.
* English and Japanese compared.
* 'Interlanguage' knowledge.
* 'Interference'.
* Quantitative studies of English vocabulary.

Semester 2:

* Review of Semester 1 work.
* Language learning styles.
* Language learning strategies.
* The Audiolingual Method.
* Syllabus design.
* Communicative approaches.
* Social issues in language learning.

* Feedback and correction.
* Language testing.

Bearing in mind that the TEFL trainees have only one semester in Beppu it can be seen why, as mentioned in the subsection on the TEFL Methods course above, a plan had to be made to fill them in on the topics not included during their time in Beppu. It is feasible to do so, because the course is not all that dense or deep, being aimed at upper intermediate level EFL students.

The recommended course book is Carter and Nunan (2001). Assessment of the TEFL trainees is by a 40-minute formal examination that is also taken by the EFL students.

English Phonetics

This course was also already being taught, for second year Beppu University students, an obligatory credit for those of our students aiming to get a teacher's licence. It is on the phonetics of English, but occasional comparisons are made with sounds from other languages. Consonants are the focus in Semester 1 and vowels in Semester 2 (again making it necessary to offer a summary in the one-semester TEFL Methods course, of some of what is dealt with in the other semester's phonetics classes). The aims are that students should understand how speech sounds are made, become proficient in articulating speech sounds that may be unfamiliar to them and in perceiving distinctions between sounds. The chief learning outcome is that they should acquaint themselves with the International Phonetic Association (IPA) chart and be able to transcribe sounds using the IPA alphabet. There is a transcription exercise every week. Some consideration of English phonology is included and a few differences are pointed out between the pronunciation of General American and South-Eastern British Standard English. McMahon (2002) is

recommended for anyone who wants to read independently.

The TEFL trainees audit this course and do the exercises. They are not assessed on it. (Beppu students are assessed in a 40-minute formal examination that includes the transcription of taped, single-word stimuli.)

English Grammar

This course on the main sentence patterns of English is for all second year students in the Department. It aims at teaching English language grammatical terminology to equip them to understand what is written in grammar books. In Semester 1 the concern is with the phrase structure of simple sentences and syntactic categories of words. The Semester 2 course is on the structure of complex sentences. There are analysis exercises every week. Towards the end of Semester 2 the exercise material derives from authentic text. Again, because of different facets of English grammar being dealt with across the two semesters, some catch-up teaching has to be done for the TEFL trainees, in their TEFL Methods classes.

The recommended reference work for this course is the sizeable grammar appendix in the *Collins Cobuild New Student's Dictionary* (2002).

The TEFL trainees audit this course and do the exercises. They are not assessed on it. (Course assessment for EFL students is a 40-minute formal examination, mainly calling for analysis and labelling of the constituents in English sentences.)

Japanese Society and Culture

Professor Martin Brennan's statement of goals for this course includes

the following: "Although [the TEFL trainees] are learning how to teach English as a foreign language in a variety of countries, it will be useful for them to study Japanese society in order to give them cultural insights and an understanding of how culture is mediated through language." One of the intended learning outcomes is that they should be able to compare the UK and Japan.

In the Japanese Educational Context section of the present paper, I recounted Smith and Imura's (2004) analysis of reform attempts foundering in part because of cultural hubris. Encouraging the trainees to develop some understanding of one culture different from their own is a start towards an interest in cross-cultural communication that is essential for sensitive EFL teaching anywhere. Notice the following point made by Makarova (2004: 298) in the conclusion to her edited volume on English language teaching in Japan:

> In terms of a special recommendation to foreign teachers of Japanese students we would like to suggest that the teachers need to become more open to the possibility that their expectations and visions of happenings in a language classroom may be different from those held by their learners. For example, superficial impressions like 'passivity' often assigned to Japanese students may be a reflection of a difference in understanding of the role of learners formed within the native education system.

Books prescribed for the course include Hendry (2003) and Smith and Beardsley (2004). The assessment task is a 3000-word essay.

Practice Teaching

Practice teaching ranging from assisting the class teacher to being responsible, under supervision, for one or more class activities, to

planning and implementing a full lesson, again under appropriate supervision, has taken place mainly on campus and in Beppu University's associated senior and junior high school, with some additional opportunities in the associated elementary school. The university classes have been Professor Brennan's and mine: English conversation – at three different levels – and second year English Composition, plus an orientation day for first year English Department students and, as mentioned earlier, Departmental open days for high school students.

It is the practice teaching in schools, arranged by Professor Ueda and which I assessed, that trainees have tended to view as the climax of their programme: a situation considerably different from their previous experience – as my outline of Japanese education was intended to suggest – and the opportunity to use techniques discussed and practiced in the Methods course, together with knowledge from their other courses.

The class teachers provided on-site supervision in the schools, and the teachers generously gave time to the trainees and provided much helpful guidance. The majority of trainees to date would have liked to participate in even more school classes, however, the teachers have examinations to prepare their students for and not many classes can be spared for English lessons that trainees without a reasonable command of Japanese could usefully participate in.

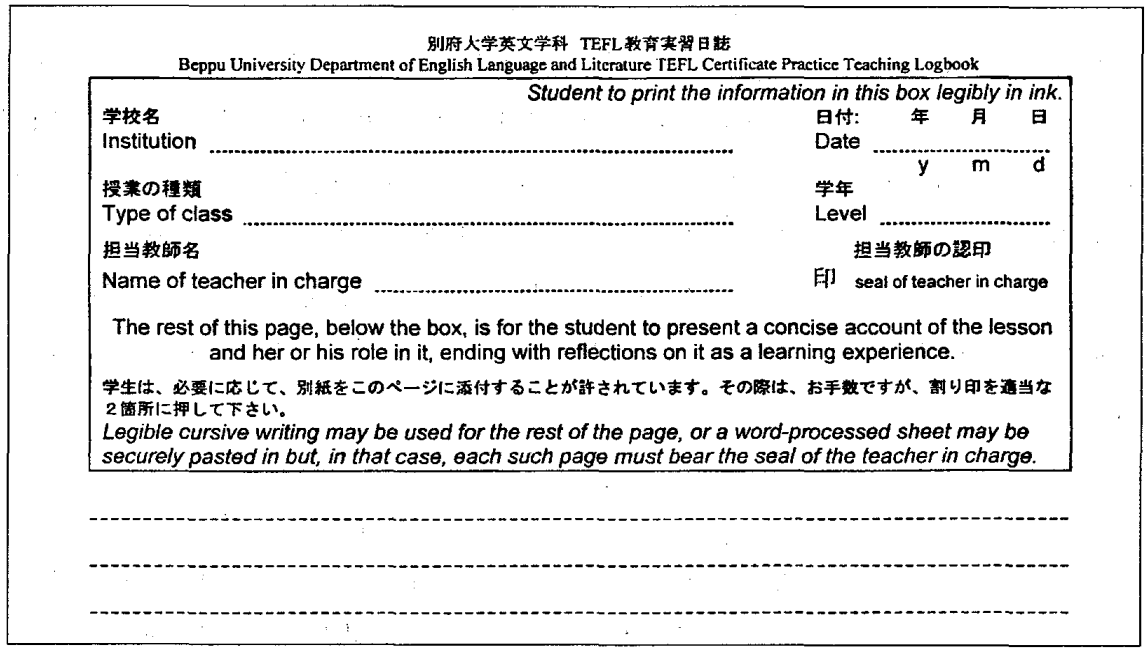
Assessment in the first year of the TEFL certificate programme was based on Beppu University's standard logbook for practice teaching. The instructions and rubric in this logbook are, naturally, in Japanese. Though the wording was orally translated to the trainees, it was a source of some anxiety for them. Of course, English was used by the trainees for entering their reports on each of their class sessions. The supervising teacher of each class then added appraisal comments in English to each trainee report page, and this must have been burdensome for the

teachers. I read the reports, wrote a narrative assessment on each student and assigned a grade.

In the second year of the programme three changes were made:

1. The class teachers were asked merely to certify on each logbook page that the student had participated in the class as written up.
2. A bilingual logbook was printed specifically for the TEFL Certificate programme. See Figure 1.
3. The logbook was used for all of the practice teaching, on campus as well as in schools.

It is hoped that the logbooks will be a useful record for trainees and something that they can present when applying for EFL teaching work, if they choose to.



別府大学英文学科 TEFL教育実習日誌
Beppu University Department of English Language and Literature TEFL Certificate Practice Teaching Logbook

Student to print the information in this box legibly in ink.

学校名
Institution .....

日付: 年 月 日
Date .....
y m d

授業の種類
Type of class .....

学年
Level .....

担当教師名
Name of teacher in charge .....

担当教師の認印
印 seal of teacher in charge

The rest of this page, below the box, is for the student to present a concise account of the lesson and her or his role in it, ending with reflections on it as a learning experience.

学生は、必要に応じて、別紙をこのページに添付することが許されています。その際は、お手数ですが、割り印を適当な2箇所に押して下さい。

Legible cursive writing may be used for the rest of the page, or a word-processed sheet may be securely pasted in but, in that case, each such page must bear the seal of the teacher in charge.

Figure 1. *Part of a TEFL Certificate teaching practice logbook page. The A4-sized pages have 24 dotted lines below the boxed text, for the student's account of each class.*

Evaluation

All five trainees who have been through the Certificate programme filled in anonymous questionnaires for me in their final week at Beppu University. The questionnaires were handed over to one of my colleagues in sealed envelopes and returned to me only after I had formally submitted the trainees' course grades for transmission to Winchester University. Five separate parts of the questionnaires probed analytically for information about the trainee's perceptions of the TEFL Methods and TEFL Context courses, but invited only shorter comments about practice teaching and the two audited courses, phonetics and grammar. Here is a brief summary of the responses (brief because no big conclusions should be based on only five responses):

Practice Teaching

All five trainees used strongly positive expressions, such as "extremely valuable", to describe this aspect of the programme. They saw it as an opportunity to apply what they had been preparing themselves for. Three specifically mentioned that gaining practice in classes on campus before going into schools had been a useful preparation. Two would have preferred the school experience at a different point in the semester. One judged the teaching practice to have been stressful at times, even though the same person also described it as "very useful – invaluable".

TEFL Methods

The TEFL trainees reported that they found the course work relevant and interesting, and several of them particularly appreciated working in a small seminar group appropriately paced for them. Three would have liked more specific information about the teaching practice in schools before they embarked on that part of the programme. Problems noted by one student in each case were (with

the points coming from different students): confusion stemming from the compensatory teaching of TEFL context, phonetics and grammar that was included – as previously explained – to make up for the trainees being able to attend only one semester of those two-semester courses; some difficulty over access to supplementary reading; vagueness over what was expected in the portfolio assignments; and the large number of handouts that they had to read. (It relation to the last of these, it must be said that all the trainees marked the handouts and other supporting material on this course as "5", the highest rating on the scale.

TEFL Context

This course was rated as clear and the content interesting and relevant, but all five respondents found the pace too slow, even though they recognised that it had to be like that to be accessible to EFL students. One of the trainees felt that it would have been better to have a separate TEFL Context course, just for the TEFL Certificate takers. Two – despite adverting to the slow pace – appreciated this course as an opportunity to get to know other Beppu University students.

English Phonetics

Four trainees reported finding the phonetics course useful. The fifth conceded: "I can see that it would be a useful thing for me to learn if I want to seriously teach EFL", but said it was "really hard to understand". One trainee, for whom this was revision of a subject studied previously, found the pace too slow.

English Grammar

All five trainees' answers indicated that they regard this course as useful, but two found it difficult. The same person who found the learning pace slow in phonetics, had previously studied grammar and

felt that fewer classes would have sufficed.

I was gratified by the high level of commitment shown by the trainees on all parts of the course. Though I saw little evidence of serious background reading, independently of what I had specifically set as preparation for classes, they all acquired a fair amount of knowledge needed for English language teaching. All of them showed impressive development in teaching skills. Some were confident at the outset; by the end of the programme all were. I am sure that all five of these first holders of the Beppu University TEFL Certificate could pull their weight in initial TEFL appointments. The large amount of time spent on observation and practice in a range of different classes is surely the key factor behind this success. They all learnt a great deal about Japan too, making friends and enjoying the experience most of the time. This gave them perspective on their own language and culture.

In my opinion, Beppu students sharing classes with the TEFL trainees benefited both in motivation and from having additional competent users of the language to interact with.

It may be that the undercurrent of discontent — not a strong one — about the pace of the three courses shared with EFL students, should be reacted to. I am considering a change to the attendance requirements on the TEFL Context course, the one most often rated as too slow. I could specify five key lectures that the trainees should attend, instead of 12, and then offer them three additional sessions, scheduled at a different time, to present the remainder of that semester's TEFL Context course and an outline of the topics covered in the other semester. This would relieve the TEFL Methods course of some extraneous material.

Notes

[1] It must be emphasised that Shillaw's comment pertains to averages. A Japanese undergraduate in the Beppu University Department of English recently scored 945 on the TOEFL, very near the top of the scale. Not everyone is average.

[2] At Beppu University, Professor Kenji Ueda and Professor Martin Brennan have begun to use cassette tape recorders in some of the English Department entry procedures, to record samples of applicants reading English aloud and for a pilot listening test.

[3] Beppu University has very recently built and is now fitting out a large new media centre. It is to be hoped that this will make it easier for students here to use computers in classes and more generally. It will probably also lead to the wider use of other up-to-date audio-visual facilities.

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