

Report on NCEA Japanese workshop at the University of Canterbury

Thursday 6 June 2013

In 2011, Dr Masayoshi Ogino from University of Canterbury Japanese Programme first approached Japanese teachers in the Christchurch area with the idea of a workshop at UC for students studying NCEA. UC was prepared to host students and teachers during their semester break. Masa and Linda Tappenden worked on the initial planning at the start of 2012. A large group of Japanese teachers volunteered to help and we received over 180 student registrations. Unfortunately, it snowed on the planned day of the workshop and UC was closed, so we had to cancel the workshop for 2012, as there was no alternative date.

With much of the initial planning already done, we set a date for 2013, anticipating that it could not possibly snow again. We received registrations from over 220 students at 13 schools. A large group of 13 secondary school teachers, 6 UC staff, one CPIT staff member and 16 UC students were enlisted to help teach and do planning and organisational tasks before and on the day.

The workshop began with a plenary session in a large lecture theatre. It was the first chance for most high school students to experience arriving at university and sitting in a lecture theatre. The workshop was opened by Susan Bouterey, Head of School of Languages and Cultures. Mr Toshikatsu Aoyama, Counsellor and Consul at the Consular Office of Japan then addressed the students. He invited them to call in to the Consular Office to look at the Japanese resources they have available there. The keynote speaker was Dr Rachel Payne of UC who spoke enthusiastically about her introduction to Japanese language and culture in the UK.

Teachers met two months before the workshop to discuss the focus for each level and to share ideas about possible activities for their lessons with the groups. One teacher was in charge of each level and contacted the other level teachers to support them during the preparation period.

After registrations were decided, students were placed into groups with no more than 2-3 students from the same school in the same group. The groups stayed together for the day in the same classroom. Teachers came to them, just like in Japan. Students enjoyed the sushi that was provided for morning tea. In the final session, the UC volunteer students (Stage 3 and honours students) spoke to them about their experience of learning Japanese.

Students moved back to the lecture theatre for the final plenary session, receiving a small gift as they entered. While waiting, they enjoyed “Ninja Warrior” on You Tube. There was an amazing *wadaiko* (Japanese drum) performance by *Takumi*, Canterbury Japanese

Drum club. The workshop finished with feedback by Ms Tomoko Semba, National Language Advisor for Japanese, who entertained the students by interviewing the leader of the *wadaiko* group. Students who completed their evaluation form were entered in a prize draw of small gifts, dictionaries and Language Perfect vouchers (for their school). The day concluded with *tejime* (hand-clapping ceremony) by Dr Masayoshi Ogino.

Students completed an evaluation form which will be used to complete a more detailed report later. Comments from the students were very positive. They found the intensive nature of the sessions very beneficial. They were able to use their Japanese in many different contexts during the day. They were also able to experience different teaching methods and styles, and take home a selection of useful handouts for their NCEA study. They also enjoyed meeting and interacting with students from other schools. Students were surprised by the large number of attendees at the workshop. The plenaries gave them a chance to enjoy shared intercultural experiences. The student evaluations will be used when planning the proposed 2014 workshop.

The workshop provided secondary schools in Canterbury and UC with an opportunity to work together for secondary school students. This contributed to strengthening the connection between them and enhancing the Japanese learning community for a stronger Japanese language education.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Sasakawa Fellowship Fund for Japanese Language Education for their valued support and donating resources for this workshop.