

マス伊先生のご退職に寄せて

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長い間非常勤講師として全学共通科目の英語に携わってこられたマス伊・デボラ先生が昨年(2023年)の夏にご退職されました。そこで鳥取大学での40年間を振り返っていただき、本号にご寄稿いただきました。本学の学生だけでなく、小学生からシニアまで、様々な校種や職種の多くの生徒に英語を教えてこられたマス伊先生。私は、まず生徒としてお世話になり、本学に着任してからは同僚として大変お世話になりました。豊富な知識と経験からくるマス伊先生のアドバイスに何度も助けられました。非常勤講師室に行ってもマス伊先生とお話できないのは寂しいですが、今後は学外からアドバイスをいただくと幸いです。長くなりすぎる前にこのあたりで前置きを終わりたいと思います。ではマス伊先生の手稿をご覧ください。

A Part-time Communication English Instructor's Experience at Tottori University

Deborah Masui (Part-time English Teacher)

My boss, Professor Kobayashi asked me to share some of the experiences I had at Tottori University over my time there. I began working at the university as a part-time instructor, in April, 1983 and I left that position last July, 2023. I'd like to begin by saying, thank you. Tottori University gave me the opportunity to do the thing that I loved best, teach and a community that supported and allowed me to do just that.

Forty years is a long time and looking back I can't begin to compare what the teaching situation was like then, to what the teaching situation is like now. The other staff members and I were given a free reign on how we conducted our classes. We were however, required to teach a class of 60 students or more for a 90 minute period and to give a first, second and third semester test. There was no grading information or criteria but it was understood that most students would pass. I was never asked to discuss what I was doing in class or was I required to attend any meetings. I put it down to the fact that I was only a part-time staff member. Of course, things changed over time but finally, the situation greatly improved when the university hired two very talented teachers: Trevor Sargent and Kip Cates. Under Professor Sargent's guidance and management, his department (Communication English), was able to bring in more full time staff members, which were sorely needed, plus many more part-time instructors. As they continued to build and strengthen the program, our ideas started to coalesce, common goals were set and collective successes followed. That transformative process continues today and I feel very lucky to have been a part of it from the beginning.

I was also employed throughout the Fuzoku system; Fuzoku Sho Gakko, Fuzoku Chu Gakko, and Fuzoku Yogo Gakko, which provided me with a unique perspective and opportunities to learn from, team teach with, and share knowledge and experiences at different levels of Communication English teaching. In the beginning we started from the same position as at Tottori University; no textbooks, no materials, just a need that had to be met. The only difference, however, there was a community. I had the full support of the entire teaching staff, PTA, and principals who enabled the teacher's and I to put together a program, that we would tweak and make changes to over the years, to suit our students' and the teachers' needs and abilities.

I was very lucky in my career at the university because although I was part-time I was able to take on more classes than some of the other part-time teachers. Furthermore, because of my connection to the Fuzoku system I was able to see the importance of joining after school activities, festivals, and concerts which connected me more closely to the student community, and in turn gave my students and I more common topics to talk about. Of course at the university level it's a bit more complicated but I tried by promoting sporting events in class, buying tickets for and attending concerts and taking an interest in things outside the classroom. For example, attending Fumonsai, watching the performances, (street dance being one of my favorites), eating at as many food stalls as possible and buying rice from my Agriculture students.

I also had more time to spend with the full-time staff, as well as the other part-time staff members. That access helped me immensely when I encountered a problem or could help someone if they had one of their own. However, I was very fortunate to have been able to build a very close working relationship with Assistant Professor Takinami. We had very different ideas on what to expect from our students and that made our relationship at times somewhat contentious but it had a balancing effect. We would discuss what textbooks we should use, what kind of questions were best for a test, or how far to push our students. This process allowed us to come to decisions that in the end, not only greatly benefited our students but ourselves as well. We also had the luxury of teaching the same students in different courses which gave us insight into what works for each of our classes, and depending on what we were teaching, better ways to reach our students. All in all, it was one of the best working experiences I had in all my years of teaching.

The doors were always open on the 2nd Floor, in B Building where the Communication English offices and the part-time teachers' room are located. The community I shared with my fellow teachers there, made my experience at Tottori University a successful and memorable one. It's an exciting time for teachers with all the technology, textbooks and materials that are out there. I hope that you will continue building the relationships needed that will in turn benefit the program and the community, I left behind and most importantly, for the students. Thank you.