

NOTES FOR WRITING THE RESEARCH REPORT

Please prepare your Research Report in English or Japanese written within three to four pages in length.

1. Items to be included:
 - (a) Outline of academic activities Discussions, lecture tour, etc.
 - (b) Impressions and thoughts on the present state of science in Japan in your field
 - (c) Comments or suggestions to HUTE, especially concerning this program
 - (d) Other comments
 2. If available, please attach photographs of yourself taken during your academic activities, such as experiments, discussions or research trips in Japan.
 3. You are required to submit this Research Report within one month of the end of your fellowship period in Japan through your host researcher.
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First, I wish to express my appreciation and gratitude of being awarded with the Hute Short-Term Fellowship. Funded by the fellowship program, I visited The Hyogo University of Teacher Education between January 18 and 25, 2014.

A central aim of visiting Professor Matsumura was to discuss new directions in research on teaching and learning which are of mutual interest to us (e.g., effective teacher-child interactions; teacher professional development) and how research findings can best be implemented in teacher education. During the one-week visit I was invited to join the activities and meetings of Professor Matsumura's research group. It was a great pleasure to meet the lab members and discuss the ongoing research projects. For example, with Professor Matsumura and Mrs Naomi I discussed a recently developed tool to assess students' behavioral self-regulation, the Head-Toes-Knees-Shoulders test. Mrs Naomi explained the results of the Japanese sample and we exchange the experiences with the test and data analysis strategies. With Mrs Joan who was so kind to translate my lecture to Japanese I exchanged ideas for her master thesis project and how she could implement observation procedures to analyze the qualitative data.

Professor Matsumura also arranged several visits to kindergartens and elementary schools for me which were very interesting and inspiring. These visits provided me with first insights about the Japanese school system and the approaches to learning and education in pre-primary and primary education. Together with Ms Akiko I visited the University Kindergarten (Jan 21, 2014) and the Kasai City Preschool (Jan 24, 2014). During the visit of the University Kindergarten, I observed outside and inside child-initiated play activities and enjoyed to see how many different opportunities were available

for children. Most children engaged in activities that enabled them to explore the nature around them (for example, with pets, sand, water, etc.). Teacher provided individual support when needed but children were the leaders of the morning activities. During the visit of the Kasai City Preschool, we were invited to join teacher-lead activities and lunch. We were asked to participate in the ongoing daily routines and classroom procedures which was a great pleasure. During lunchtime, all children of the preschool came together in the dining hall and participated in lunch preparation and lunch routines. I was fascinated by the effectiveness of the routines and the joyful engagement of all children. Mr Makoto joined me during my visit at the University Elementary School. I was impressed by the open and light architecture of the classrooms with windows on both sides and no fixed arrangement of the students' desks which seemed to give teachers a lot of freedom to adjust the classroom setting to the specific instructional needs. Students in all three schools were extremely well behaved and showed a clear understanding of classroom routines and demands. Teacher-child interactions were positive and supportive and students enjoyed the learning activities.

On the last evening, I had also the opportunity to visit the Harborland Campus and meet with Professor Matsumura's student there. During the meeting we discussed the possibility to submit recent research for presentation at the EARLI European Association of Research on Learning and Instruction SIG5 "Challenges for the Future in Early Childhood Education" conference which takes place in August 2014. This is a peer-reviewed conference. In case our submissions will be accepted for presentation, I look forward to continue our discussions during the conference.

The lecture was scheduled on Jan 22, 2014 and was attended by many students of Professor Matsumura's class and research group. The title of the presentation was "Observing Interactions in German Preschool Classrooms". After the lecture I had an intensive discussions with students about effective teacher-child interactions. Identifying and defining distinct dimensions of teacher-child interactions was one major topic of the discussion. Another topic concerned ideas of how teacher-child interactions can be improved and implemented in classroom settings. Moreover, students were interested in how this topic can be integrated in teacher education and teacher professional development.

Overall, it has been a very fruitful and successful visit to The Hyogo University of Teacher Education and Professor Matsumura. I was impressed by students' and faculties' curiosity and interest for scientific research. Unfortunately, research findings from Japan are underrepresented in the international literature on teaching and learning. One reason might be the limited fluency of students in English. To enhance the visibility of Japanese educational research I would suggest to increase efforts in the use of English as language of instruction and to establish international student exchange

programs.

I wish to thank you again for this unique opportunity and I look forward to continue the discussions and collaboration with Professor Matsumura's research group.

Photographs

Lab meeting with Professor Matsumura's research group



Lecture





Visit to Kasai City Preschool



Visit to University Kindergarten



Visit to University Elementary School

