

**Program To Offer Opportunities
to Practice Teaching Japanese in Local Government
- The Report and the Future Questions -**

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Since its inauguration in 1990, the Hyogo International Association (hereafter HIA), a nonprofit foundation affiliated with the Hyogo Prefectural Government, has made great efforts to organize a wide range of Japanese language education programs as part of its projects supporting non-Japanese residents in Hyogo. As one concrete manifestation, the HIA has appointed a Japanese Language Supervisor, which is not a common case on the local governmental level, and she has been engaged in programs such as making arrangements for and running Japanese courses; training efficient Japanese teachers; and, has acted as a mediator to form the Japanese language education network.

One of the Japanese education programs of the HIA is titled "Program to Offer Opportunities to Practice Teaching Japanese in Local Government". Participants of the program are mainly university and graduate students in Hyogo Prefecture who major in Japanese language education.

As far as university curriculums are concerned, knowledge and theory are given the first priority, and teaching practice, which is indispensable in becoming an excellent Japanese teacher, is not treated seriously. The program started in 1991 after university and graduate students of the Japanese Department of the Himeji Dokkyo University requested the HIA to offer opportunities to practice teaching. Since

1994, we have developed the program according to an official request from the university authorities.

The HIA carries out the teaching practice program by making use of the Intensive Summer Japanese Course for Foreign Students. The main reasons why we utilize this course are as follows;

- a) the course is free of charge;
- b) it is offered in the summer vacation;
- c) it is a short-term intensive course;
- d) well-experienced teachers of private Japanese language institutes take charge of the course;
- e) learners are hardworking foreign students;
- f) four levels from primary to advanced are arranged, and so on.

Following is the outline, the means and the cases of the past practice teaching programs which were carried out from 1991 to 1994, as well as their results and the future questions.

With regards to teaching practice, needless to say, it is of great importance for student teachers to receive practical training from experienced teachers in the field, in addition to what they have learned at university. Furthermore, it is a good opportunity for student teachers to learn what Japanese teachers do by observing at individual types of teachers with their own eyes listening to their opinions.

It is also a good opportunity for teachers to view their own work consciously and objectively by evaluating themselves and by observing classes taken by student teachers and making comments on their performance. The more opportunities they have to instruct and carry out the program, the more own performance increases.

It is also a good opportunity for students to promote friendly relations with student teachers because both are at the same level of

education.

By offering opportunities in teaching practice, the local government contributes to the progress of both quality of teachers and student teachers concerned with the program. They also play a leading role among teachers of local organizations, as well as volunteer teacher groups in the community. Therefore, the Japanese language education system as a whole will be greatly improved in quality.

Therefore, through the teaching practice program, a network, which consists of university students, student teachers, foreign students, teachers of private Japanese language educational organizations and the local government, is formed. This network is not a static one in which one gives information and the other receives - a dynamic through which they exchange some information and have the opportunity to influence each other.

The HIA does not consider the teaching practice program as just one of our programs. In the future, it is our great hope, as well as our goal, to lay the groundwork for mutually beneficial contact in the community by forming a dynamic network of Japanese language education in the whole Hyogo Prefecture.