

The Effects of JLP (Jeollanamdo Language Program) English Immersion Workshop

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ABSTRACT

Koreans have been spending billions of dollars on overseas English education. In 2002, Korea's foreign education expenditure deficit was \$1.41 billion(USD). Now its amount is increasing more and more. This deficit could be reduced if domestic English immersion programs were promoted. JETI(The Jeollanamdo Educational Training Institute), for example, promotes its JLP(Jeollanamdo Language Program) English Immersion as an alternative to overseas English education. The majority of JETI's and the JLP's money stays in Korea, and JETI's simulation of an English language and western cultural environment proves that Koreans can stay in Korea to learn English and be exposed to foreign cultures.

I. Introduction

Koreans spend billions of dollars(USD) on English Education overseas, causing an education expenditure deficit and a large amount of money filtered out of the Korean economy. Korean families spend a significant portion of their family income on English education overseas, also causing significant financial stress to parents and families. Korea is increasing the scope of its domestic English immersion programs as a means of reducing this national education expenditure deficit and reducing stress caused by trainees studying English overseas. Recently, various in-service teacher training programs, including a 6 months intensive training program, have been conducted nationwide in Korea.

II. The Recommendation about English Immersion Programs by JETI

The Jeollanamdo Educational Training Institute (JETI) is an in-service training institute for Korean teachers supported by the Jeollanamdo Educational Office in Korea. JETI is the ideal environment for focused learning, away from the day-to-day pressures of school lives and usual distractions. Here trainees can take advantage of our specialist learning resources and reinforce the training sessions with our full-time native instructors.

We live in a knowledge and information-based society. We need to improve our English communication abilities and adapt ourselves to this new age. Speaking English is a key to opening the door to the global village and dealing with the best players on the global field. Nowadays many students and English teachers in Korea want to go abroad to learn English. We think it is often not so useful, because trainees are not properly prepared. Though we are not opposed to studying English abroad, we think it's better to prepare and study English before we leave.

For this reason, JETI provides trainees with foreign language training conditions similar to those of English speaking countries. If trainees have a desire to learn English, they can

accomplish the goals here in JETI. We have carefully planned an activity-based English learning program and skill-based teaching methodology program. The hope is that these skills based programs will provide Korean English teachers with a better foundation from which to learn and teach English. Moreover, we are making an effort to give trainees many opportunities to meet foreign English teachers and learn about their cultures.

III. The Overview of JLP Level-based English Immersion Workshop

JLP English immersion program aims to increase English fluency and communicative abilities and to extend the skills of teaching English through English. It also aims to practice various kinds of teaching-learning methods and to provide the trainees with foreign language training conditions similar to that of English speaking countries. Trainees learn English from various units of the JLP curriculum, which include the four basic language skills. They listen attentively and learn from special lectures presented by prominent Korean English instructors on topics which include English teaching methods and English pronunciation. They also participate in and learn from various evening activities including games, skits, outdoor activities, movies, and discussions. They are also asked to carefully prepare and present a lesson plan for a teacher demonstration, essay/journal writing, a short speech and a formal interview. Field trips are planned for educational purposes and trainees act as amateur tour guides to foreign instructors. All the activities and daily life are done alongside the English native speakers. Here are examples of the in-service workshops offered at JETI.

1. 2 Week teacher trainer workshop

This is designed to extend the skills of teaching English through English and to be a teacher trainer (instructor) for JLP workshops. For this workshop, high-level English teachers are recommended to attend. We have a customized offshore course curriculum. Instructors are special guests from overseas institutes and Universities, prominent English book authors and experts.

2. 1 Month in-service workshop

The goal of this workshop is to increase English fluency and to increase communicative abilities. Participants include newly appointed young or inexperienced English teachers. The curriculum is theme based developed by JETI instructors/ special guests/ JLP English teachers.

3. 2 Month in-service workshop

The goal of this course is almost the same as those of the 1 month in-service workshop. The trainees are mid-level English Teachers. Its curriculum is a topic and skill based one developed by JETI instructors.

4. 6 Month in-service workshop

The goal of this program is to increase English fluency, increase communicative abilities and to improve abilities to TEE(Teaching English in English). The participants are low-level secondary English teachers. There are three sessions. The 1st session is to focus on English

fluency and communicative abilities, the 2nd session is on teaching methodology and the 3rd session is overseas training/Practicum/TESOL course. This 6 month workshop includes:

1) Session 1: Skill Based Learning

The first 8 week session is designed to improve the trainees' communication skills. Trainees take preliminary listening, reading and writing tests and are interviewed to determine which of 4 homeroom classes they will join. Their days begin at 7am and end officially at 10pm and include six core skill's classes and as many as four additional language activities.

There are eight native English speaking instructors, teaching four core classes: speaking, listening, reading and writing and an additional class in TESOL skills. Two listening sections are taught. Likewise, speaking and writing are divided into two sections. Speaking covers conversation strategies and public speaking skills. Writing covers creative and academic writing. Reading gives trainees the opportunity to read extensively for pleasure and intensively to improve their English comprehension and vocabulary. TESOL is an essential preparation for the trainees' overseas training.

Many of the trainees are perfectionists with high expectations, and they work hard and long, but they remain kind and helpful toward one another. The older trainees lend their experience and the younger ones bring enthusiasm. Sometime the roles are reversed. What matters most is that they share their knowledge, and their success shows.

At first, fear of speaking in English can make them freeze and forget how to speak. When that wears away, trainees begin speaking in English without thinking about what they have to say or what they are going to say next. It becomes more natural. One of the trainees even said that on the weekend she unconsciously begin to speak to her children at home in English.

By the end of the first eight weeks, the trainees have gained confidence and ability in creating a solid foundation to learn and practice teaching methods offered in the second session. The instructors in turn, learn a lot from the trainees and their positive attitude, long work days and willing smiles.

2) Beyond Academic Classes

In addition to their academic classes, trainees have many opportunities to engage themselves in mind-stimulating activities in the form of reading club and special lectures. Reading club is held twice a week for one hour. This time allows trainees to read books according to their level and subject of interest and challenges them to not just read, but think critically and interact with the material they encounter. The reading club hour is intended for trainees to spend the majority of the time reading and making notes on new expressions or meaningful quotes. A small portion of the latter part of the period is for trainees to write in their reading club journals noting what they have read. The prompts for these journal entries stimulate trainees to relate to the reading text in a variety of ways, such as writing from a character's point of view, analyzing parts of the story, or expressing an interpretation of some aspect of the book through visual representation.

Trainees also take part in special lectures offered by both JETI instructors and invited guests. Topics cover a wide range of subject matter, from culture, to education, to the history of developing disciplines (in film and practical psychology, for example) and their relevance for us today. Perhaps one of the most practically relevant issues pertaining to trainees is that of

preparing for their journey to and study in other countries.

Trainees are given a special lecture from our JETI instructors as to what they might expect from a cultural and relational standpoint. They are also given contact information of their home-stay families to begin correspondence with them through email in advance. Efforts are not only taken to prepare trainees for cultural issues, but the TESOL course taught by our JETI instructors get them on the right track and in the right mind set for their academic studies abroad.

3) Session 2: Teaching Methodology

The point of Teaching Methodology is not 'how to teach', but how to adapt the skills and activities they learned in the first session to their own classroom. The high school teachers are especially challenged with stringent administrative, textbook, and exam requirements. The question becomes not how to teach, but how to teach both; or simply put, how can the activities and skills learned in JETI be applied to existing scholastic textbooks.

With the help of the native English teachers, trainees use the textbooks from their own schools to develop practical lesson plans in reading, writing, listening and speaking, that would be effective not only in actively engaging the student but also in improving their examination skills. The trainees then put these lessons plans to the test through live, in-class teaching demonstrations that are evaluated by the native English teachers and critiqued among their peers. Finally, each classroom is given the opportunity to present their best lessons for a group teaching demonstration that incorporated all four of the English skills.

4) Self-Learning

Another great aspect of the JETI program was that trainees are provided with ample time in which to direct their own learning. While the trainee's days are filled with teacher lead classes, the evenings provide them with a time to participate in self-learning. Preparation for assignments, reading time, and study groups are all included during this valuable time.

Though the trainees have many assignments they have nights dedicated solely to work on the given assignments. Trainees need time to prepare for activities such as speeches, teaching demonstrations and various homework assignments. Therefore they are given time during the evenings to prepare, as they see fit for the various coursework. Trainees work and support one another as they complete these assignments. As many people have pointed out; learning does not have to be an individual endeavor. The trainees take full advantage of one another's encouragement and are better able to produce quality work.

One of the more important evening activities for trainees' is 'reading time'. Obviously reading is an important aspect of the 6 month program but a lot of the reading involves reading with purpose due to an assignment or reading club journal entry. Reading time during the evenings provide trainees an opportunity to read for the pleasure of reading. Many trainees tell they greatly appreciated this opportunity as when they were at their schools they have little or no time for reading books of any language. However evening reading is a relaxing time to enjoy and benefit from reading in English.

5) Session 3: Overseas Training for TESOL Certificate IV

The TESOL course Is an essential part for the trainees' overseas training. If they complete

this course and pass required tests, they will receive TESOL Certificate IV.

IV. Effects of JLP English Immersion Workshop

There are a lot of promising results from the program in terms of improving English education in Korea. First, publicly funded domestic English education helps keep money inside the Korean economy. Second, trainees who experience immersion English in Korea can avoid the stress that is related to overseas study. Third, most trainees have a lot of confidence and self-esteem in their classroom when they return to their school after the workshop. Finally, they are encouraged and instructed to change their teaching style from a teacher-centered to students- oriented approach.

About the Presenter

kyung-hwa Choi, a supervisor of International Education Department in JETI. Graduated from Ewha Womens University. Studied English education and earned a B.A. in 1986. Completed M.A. and Ph. D coursework on English Education at Chonnam National University. Interested in brain-based teaching approach and speech act theory. Preparing Ph. D. thesis on brain-based English Teaching · Learning. Has worked for teacher education in JETI (Jeollanamdo Educational Training Institute) since March 2009.