

# Project Based Learning at Hirosaki University —A New Path to Cultivate Tomorrow’s Leaders

## 弘前大学におけるプロジェクト・ベースト・ラーニング ～未来のリーダーを育成する新しい道～

Shari Joy BERMAN\* and Megumi TADA\*

バーマン シャーリー ジョイ・多田 恵実

### Abstract

In recent years, both educational institutions and businesses in Japan have been backing leadership-oriented experiences for students. For approximately a decade, Hirosaki University has conducted subsidized, short-term, *glocal*-development programs, sending learners abroad, as part of a PBL (project-based learning) system. *Glocal*-development, an enduring term of the 1990s, which refers to the dialectic between the global and local (see Bauman, 1998), still has important implications for present day English education in Japan. This is particularly true for universities in rural areas that have not been selected for MEXT’s Global Program 30. These universities have developed programs to promote greater dialogue between the local areas and the global community through an educational platform. In this report, we describe an ongoing program that incorporates a PBL (project-based learning) system that aims to provide students the opportunity to develop global leadership skills while at the same time promote the local culture. Specifically, we describe a specially funded short-term course that provides students at Hirosaki University a chance to visit Hawaii and engage in project-based learning activities such as visiting hospitals, health care centers, farms, and other such places. The goal is for the students to interact with the locals and learn from these overseas experiences, but also at the same time to promote Hirosaki local culture in Hawaii. In order to continue to improve this program, we reflect on our experiences with cohorts over the past three academic years with an aim to enhance PBL programs for all those involved.

**Keywords:** Project-based learning, PBL, experiential learning, flipped classrooms

### Background

“Experiential learning” is a term that has been in use for almost a century, but it has been defined and applied differently depending upon the discipline, the era, and the specific educational context. Kolb (1984) describes experiential learning as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (p. 41). This definition, albeit abstract, is often cited to describe it in an academic manner. For the purposes of this paper, however it should be noted, that the influences driving the authors predate Kolb and have their roots in the “hands-on” subset of humanistic education and cultural immersion taught in the teacher training program at the Experiment in International Living’s

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\* Center for Liberal Arts Development and Practices, Institute for Promotion of Higher Education, Hirosaki University  
弘前大学 教育推進機構 教養教育開発実践センター

School for International Training. As stated on its website, “For more than 50 years, School for International Training has prepared students to be effective leaders, professionals, and citizens through experiential education and intercultural exchange” (SIT, n.d.), and our PBL course has similar aims.

In 1932, Dr. Donald Watt left Syracuse University to begin his own educational project. He began to send US students to places in Europe on summer programs abroad. Watt quickly noticed that students returned, having made great friends with one another, during the long journeys by ship, but they seemed only to have absorbed cultural information and the ability to communicate in the target language at a surprisingly superficial level. Theorizing that offering more hands-on experiences would yield better language learning and cultural competency, Watt devised the very first “homestay” programs. True to his hypothesis, it was obvious to their teachers and parents that the next generation of learners returned with a noticeably greater understanding of the French people and their culture, for example, after living on a farm with a French family and stomping grapes. The conclusion that Watt arrived at, which was subsequently passed down to thousands of students and teachers, is that offering opportunities to learn by doing is a highly effective way to maximize cross-cultural/language training.

These main principles of experiential learning continue to be important in the twenty-first century. Consider the following quote from entrepreneur and philanthropist Richard Branson (Virgin Air, n.d.): “...you don’t learn to walk by following rules. You learn by doing, and by falling over.”

In order to provide learners with actual opportunities by which they could create their own knowledge through the process of transforming experiences, over the past several years, Berman and Tada (see 2018d) have developed a number of experiential learning situations that take learners outside the classroom. These classes offer them hands-on, real-world experiences studying overseas where they have the chance to interact with employees in various fields and, at the same time, maintain the goal of returning to their home university and sharing their experiences in an effort to enrich the local community.

Expanding upon Hirosaki’s subsidized, short-term, *glocal* (act global think local) PBL (project-based learning) program, the authors created a 30-hour pre-departure course and an 8–10 day stay in Kona, Hawaii, which required students to research and create solutions for real problems, thereby giving them “opportunities to construct knowledge by solving real problems through asking and refining questions, designing and conducting investigations, gathering, analysing, and interpreting information and data, drawing conclusions, and reporting findings” (Blumenfeld et al., 2000, p.150).

As we have concluded in previous reports, live, hands-on exposure to the subject matter is the highest form of experiential learning (Berman & Tada, 2018d). To be able to offer three-dimensional opportunities to students is a dream come true for teachers who advocate experiential approaches. PBL programs at Hirosaki University were specifically designed to offer a select number of students stays in various overseas venues where they could put their skills to work and absorb cross-cultural and work-related information in real time. We have determined that even with study abroad programs, where students do get to apply their skills in live situations, they need ample predeparture opportunities to practice in order to be able to reach their potential. Students who are only exposed to classroom English, may not have a chance to use any of the skills they learn before beginning their careers; and, more likely than not, they will have forgotten much of what they were taught by the time they actually enter the workforce. Our contention is that a strong hands-on experience, especially through the PBL system, will become imprinted on students, raise their English level, and pique their desire to maintain their skills, thereby giving them a leg up when compared with those who do not participate in special programs.

The PBL system, however, is not without its drawbacks. If students are only exposed to hands-on situations/experiential learning, they may be lacking in the necessary facts and basic theories required to speak and write about academic subjects. To this end, the authors have created a hybrid learning experience. This is a unique combination

of an overseas project coupled with Liberal Arts classes. Specifically, this hybrid class requires students to do outside research; visit the university's language center, the English Lounge (EL), (Nakamura, et al., 2015); and make regular contributions to the learning management system, Moodle, thus making it somewhat of a flipped classroom situation (Berman, 2017). In most of the cohorts, students also received a gift of EnglishCentral (see URL in the References for more information regarding this online learning software).

In the iteration of the program for Cohorts 2 and 4, from selection to final home-based presentations, students are involved for nine months. In this milieu, they have numerous opportunities to 1) acquire basic knowledge, 2) establish their own themes, 3) conduct research, 4) make presentations to each other, to other university groups, and to the public, and 5) practice overall language skills. All of these are elements of a single course that culminates with a trip abroad, but this process does not stop by simply serving as information for their own edification and their own future. Students offer presentations to the general public both at home and abroad; and, in doing so, they receive immediate feedback (Berman & Tada, 2018b).

The series of PBLs, which Berman began in 2017, all look at life in Aomori versus life on the Island of Hawaii. Kona, the southwestern coast of the island of Hawaii, and Aomori, a prefecture in northern Japan, clearly have different climates, but both are rural and remote. The Hawaii-bound PBL programs were all formulated on finding information that could be shared between the two locations. Thus, while sunny Kona and snowy Hirosaki may seem to have little in common on the surface, both are considered remote areas that are often overlooked and overshadowed by their respective governments. Students seemed to understand this immediately and were able to focus on what information they could offer people in Kona as well as what they could learn and bring back that would be of use to Hirosaki. For each cohort, Berman and Tada provided strong mentoring to the students and overall vision for the program. The goal was to get students to consider how to do small things that could make the world a better place, learn something they could not have learned at home, and pay their experiences and knowledge forward, both at school and in the communities, both local and abroad.

In the first two cohorts, students experienced job-shadowing at a hospital, a private clinic, farms and gardens, and government offices. In the second session, in addition to similar venues, a lot of time and prior study was focused on the aquaculture and energy projects at the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaiian Authority (NELHA). For Cohort 4 (the current cohort at the time of writing), which is likely to be the final in this particular series, students are learning about various aspects of community infrastructure, from local informants, in both locales, in the areas of health/nutrition/welfare; agriculture/aquaculture/food supply; alternative, sustainable energy; general/eco-tourism, government policy-making and local business models, to name a few.

Cohort 4 is officially called "Global Society/Economy-Tomorrow's '*Glocal*' Citizens Incorporating Hawaii Community Infrastructure." Both projects this school year, for the first time, include students from the faculty of Humanities. When Berman began this program, she primarily focused on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students in the medical and health science fields, who, as a rule, do not have much time or opportunities to go abroad during their academic careers. Even though community infrastructure has always been a big part of the projects, the involvement of Humanities students has necessitated an even stronger focus on governmental agencies, local economies and local culture.

At least six of the students, one from Cohort 1 and five from Cohort 3 were hoping to become public officials in the future, so many of these students are the very definition of future leadership. Leadership and government have been a constant focus. All four cohorts have had assistance from the local government in Hawaii through the Office of Aging. Cohort 1 received a document from the Mayor of Hawaii Island thanking them for their visit and their contribution to *glocal* issues and mutual understanding.

Cohort 4 is currently receiving a series of lectures from local experts. They have had a lecture on nutrition

from the Japanese perspective, one on foreign tourism from an employee of the local tourist bureau in Hirosaki, a visit from the Mayor of Hirosaki, himself, is coming up, along with a lecture from the main researcher on longevity issues in Aomori.

Throughout this process, the focus has been on how to use information gained on one side of the Pacific Ocean to benefit people on the other side and how to bring out leadership qualities in the participants. This can sometimes be difficult to quantify (Berman & Tada, 2019a). Some of the lessons come from cultural differences and some from cultural similarities. In many ways, the cultural sensibilities in Hawaii feel very familiar to the Japanese. From removing one's shoes at the door, to calling strangers "Auntie" and "Uncle," modern day Hawaii has been heavily influenced by its Japanese American population. The governor is Japanese American, and one of Hawaii's senators is the first national representative to be born in Japan. Augmenting students' awareness of the many contributions of the Japanese American community is another aspect that has been stressed in these cohorts.

By the end of the series, in February 2020, Berman will have been involved in all four PBL cohorts on the Island of Hawaii. Tada will have been a co-organizer for two, Cohort 2 and Cohort 4, and an advisor for Cohort 1. Although Berman was not the principal name, she organized all Hawaii-based activities for Cohort 3, as well as the follow-up lecture in the Hirosaki language center, the EL. Berman accompanied the group to Hawaii Island at the behest of the group's economics professor, Young-Jun Lee. His five seminar students, all from the Faculty of Humanities made up Cohort 3. This group had a substantially different focus; they were looking at creating a sustainable economy to end child poverty/relative poverty. They did a significant amount of volunteering in Hawaii. Since Berman made all the original contact with people there for this purpose, she has added one similar activity to Cohort 4. With Cohort 4 still to come, the instructors wish to use experiences and lessons-learned from the first three to make the last in the series the best possible experience it can be. They intend to share some of the previous triumphs and pitfalls with the six students in Cohort 4; for this purpose, the instructors have documented the highs and lows of the six students from Cohort 2 below. One of the goals of this PBL was to improve upon what had worked in Cohort 1 (Berman, 2019a).

### **Methodology**

Much of the data that informs the Teacher Reflections section was collected throughout Cohorts 1, 2 and 4, in class, as well as in flipped-classroom style, with work being completed outside of the classroom and documented on the Learning Management System called Moodle, along with emails to the instructors and individual consultations. Cohorts 2 and 4 had a 30-hour (15-session, 2-credit) class associated with them, as well as some extra meetings outside of class, while Cohort 1 had a number of weekend and afterschool seminars. In Cohort 3, students practiced during their regular seminars and gave a presentation upon their return in the EL. The courses for Cohorts 2 and 4 focused on doing local research, including input from local speakers in Cohort 4, establishing individual topics and learning about the culture of Hawaii, the Island of Hawaii (Kona) in particular. Cohort 4 has been blessed with a rather erudite list of experts in/from Aomori and someone in Hawaii on Skype, serving as guest lecturers during the regular class period. Cohort 2 just had one short Skype meeting with someone in Hawaii during class. Unfortunately, we found out about the guest lecture budget after the deadline for that Cohort. The instructor(s) observed the students in class and seminars, outside of class, and during the experience in Hawaii.

## **Description of the Cohorts**

### **Cohort 1**

Organizer/facilitator: Shari Joy Berman (Berman)

Title/focus: "Tomorrow's 'Glocal' Citizens Incorporating Hawaii Community Infrastructure."

Number of students: 5

Recruiting method: From the instructor's Liberal Arts English and Medical English classes, as well as from regular attendees of the EL.

Preparation: Participants studied with online materials—EnglishCentral and attended several predeparture afterschool and weekend seminars.

Demographics by faculty: Two from Science and Technology; one from Education, one from Health Sciences: one from Medicine.

Activities: Job-shadowing at County of Hawaii Office of Aging, Kona Office of the Mayor; job-shadowing at Ali'i Health Center, Kona Community Hospital; Observation of community college classes at Palamanui, (West Hawaii branch of Hawaii Community College); farming and gardening; chocolate-making; volcano tours; marine tour; short homestays; and Honolulu city stay.

Upon return: Student presented findings in the EL.

### **Cohort 2**

Organizer: Berman; Facilitators: Berman, Megumi Tada (Tada)

Title/focus: Giving Community Wellness an Injection of Glocal Experience

Number of students: 6

Recruiting method: From Berman's Liberal Arts English and Medical English classes, as well as from the EL.

Preparation: Participants studied with online materials, EnglishCentral, and attended a 30-hour, 2-credit course, and gave predeparture presentations in the EL, two weeks in a row, during their class period.

Demographics by major: Two from Science/Engineering; one from Agriculture & Life Sciences, one from Health Sciences: two from Medicine.

Activities: Tour of NELHA (Natural Energy Laboratory Hawaiian Authority), meetings with researchers at NELHA, Kona Community Hospital; job-shadowing at County of Hawaii Office of Aging, job-shadowing at Ali'i Health Center, Kona Community Hospital; Job-shadowing at NELHA, local farms; Observation of community college classes at Palamanui, (West Hawaii branch of Hawaii Community College) and planting of protective trees and shrubs; marine tour; full homestays; professional presentations. The group was divided into two subgroups for a professional day, with one group focusing on energy, agriculture and aquaculture and the other on medicine. Each group had a local leader for that day. The professional presentations were also given on separate days, by subgroup, and one member of the opposite group introduced each speaker and gave a short introduction to the speaker's topic. Upon return: They gave post-departure presentations at both the Health Sciences campus and in the EL.

### **Cohort 3**

Proposal: YoungJun Lee (Lee)

Organizer: Berman

Facilitators: Lee; Berman

Title/focus: "Food Loss in Japan—Ideas for Future Sustainability"

Number of students: 5

Recruiting method: All from Lee's 3<sup>rd</sup>-year seminar in economic sustainability, Labor Law majors (future public officials)

Preparation: Only one student, with a long history as a steady EL attendee, was gifted with EnglishCentral, but all participants prepared presentations and practiced in English, with Berman attending their class twice, as part of their regular seminar session.

Demographics by major: All from Humanities.

Activities: Meeting at the County of Hawaii Office of Aging, volunteering at the Kona (West Hawaii) and Hilo (East Hawaii) Food Basket (food banks); volunteering as St. James Church's soup kitchen in Waimea, volunteering at Kona's Meet 'n Eat soup kitchen at Kealahou Intermediate School in Kona, where students also gave formal presentations.

Upon return: They gave a post-departure presentation in the EL.

#### **Cohort 4** (Upcoming, February 7–16, 2020)

Organizers: Berman, Tada; Facilitators: Berman, Tada

Title/focus: "Global Society/Economy-Tomorrow's 'Glocal' Citizens Incorporating Hawaii Community Infrastructure."

Number of students: 6

Recruiting method: From Berman's Liberal Arts English and Medical English classes, as well as from the EL.

Preparation: Participants studied with online materials, EnglishCentral, and attended a 30-hour, 2-credit course, and were required to make predeparture presentations in the EL. For this cohort, the students were exposed to a variety of paid and unpaid local speakers including the Mayor of Hirosaki and "big data" health literacy longitudinal researcher, Shigeyuki Nakaji, M.D.

Demographics by major: Two from Humanities; two from Agriculture and Life Sciences; two from Medicine.

Activities: Tour of NELHA (Natural Energy Laboratory Hawaiian Authority), job-shadowing at County of Hawaii Office of Aging, job-shadowing at Ali'i Health Center, Kona Community Hospital; Observation of community college classes at Palamanui, and planting of protective trees and shrubs; marine tour; full homestays; whole group professional presentations.

Upon return: Everyone will present their findings in a formal university situation, as well as in the EL, during the 2020 Academic Year.

#### **Teacher Reflections, Cohort 2**

##### **Teacher Reflections 1**

Student 1 (**S1**) gave presentations that were highly organized and thought-provoking. He received positive comments from students, teachers, professionals and other attendees both in Hawaii in Hirosaki. Early in the course, due to illness, he was absent from class without initial explanation and gave the instructors cause for concern. However, he regained his momentum, became proactive, and showed he was capable of handling responsibility. He had begun volunteering in the local community as a high school student, and what he shared with the group was important and socially relevant. As a first-year medical student it was assumed he would pick a topic having to do with physical health, but he chose a sociological idea that was more closely related to mental health. In a very creative manner, he introduced the notion of finding a "third place," a concept that could work in both Hirosaki and Hawaii. This notion has to do with discovering a locale to spend time relaxing somewhere that is neither 1) home nor 2) work/school. Creative research from a young person like **S1** embodies the purpose of this PBL series and shows someone

taking the lead. He spoke about something that can make a difference in someone's quality of life. It was apparent, each time he spoke, that he was reaching his listeners and thereby expanding the minds of those in the audience. He generated a thorough level of research and excelled at the practice presentations he made throughout the course. He became the model for the other students to emulate when they gave their presentations. He had one of the most challenging homestays, because his host mother had taken a stressful part-time job that required traveling for part of his stay. His host father was a bit unused to spending time away from home but supported him and attended one of the presentations. Although he dealt with some issues out of his control, it was a learning experience for him, and he remained positive.

### Teacher Reflections 2

**S2** was a fourth-year student, making him the oldest male in a group that was two-thirds men. He took his role as "big brother" very seriously. His knowledge on many subjects, particularly those of a scientific nature was truly impressive. He had also taken a presentation-making class and wanted to be of help to others in that way. He was ready to take in information on a wide variety of subjects and offer solutions to various problems. He was very helpful with navigating the island during the overseas portion, as well. One issue, however, was his failure to choose a research area that resonated in both locations. He was interested in growing vegetables in geothermal water. In Japan, that involves using hot springs. Hawaii Island has warm ponds, but no hot springs to speak of, so there was an issue of cross-cultural relevancy. Hawaii does have some geothermal energy projects, which he was aware of, so the instructors would have liked to see him put together a more specific plan that people on the other side of the ocean could use. Both in terms of mentoring and general behavior, he took another student with a very similar first name, **S6**, under his wing. They were together at the same homestay (farm stay), and he seemed to want to make the other fellow his protégé. They were not so different in age, but **S6** had begun university later, so he was a first-year student, and seemed almost too willing to follow, rather than lead. His story appears at length at the end of this section. Another issue with **S2** was that it took him a long time to understand that the course also had a cross-cultural component, meaning that learning about Hawaiian lifestyle was part of the package. People in Hawaii picked up on his obsessive need to be in control. He went to someone in charge to talk about some issue and she said to him. "Too much information...(TMI)" He reacted in a scientific manner trying to explain why all of his anxious musings were important, necessary information, but TMI, in US culture, means "You are telling me much more than you need to be, so shut up." It might be translated into Japanese as *kukiyomenai* 空気読めない。

### Teacher Reflections 3

**S3** was an older student, as well. She had already completed a psychology degree and spent ten years in the workforce before returning to study nursing, so she was a rather atypical first year student. She was the only clear adult in the group and was worried about her English level, at first. She almost did not apply because she was concerned about taking the opportunity away from a younger student. Compared to other participants, she put forth a good deal of effort and her work with the self-study component, a course called "EnglishCentral," amazed the instructors. In private conversations, she explained that she had taken English conversation lessons in Hirosaki previously. In fact, she was recruited after taking many months of weekly seminars in the EL, where she consistently demonstrated better listening skills than her classmates. When it came to speaking and writing, however, even before the actual trip she openly expressed concern and hesitation about her active language skills. The other students and her homestay family were somewhat put off by her reticence, however. One point is that as someone in her 30s, she was more set in her ways compared to the others. The fact that she was an adult made her a good role model at times, but the fact that she was so painfully shy, and an obvious perfectionist was somewhat

detrimental at other times, her homestay experience being case in point. Her host mother was a nurse and the nurse said that when **S3** talked about something in the medical field she was interested and engaged, but that she seemed extremely uncomfortable with everyday small talk. When **S3** got the slightest bit uncomfortable, she stopped trying by either nodding blindly, or going back to her room. In this way, the instructors mourned the many lost opportunities that **S3** would have had, had she been more involved. The family invited her to go with them to their personal club-like activities and she declined saying she needed to stay home and practice her presentation speeches. Even though her actual English level is much higher than she believes, **S3** had a bit of a complex about her language abilities. She had been to conversation schools and had enviable listening and reading skills, but the fact that she was far less confident in her speaking and writing manifested the type of frustration and withdrawal often seen in false beginners. Her research work, after she decided she could write in English, after all, was good, however. With a little prodding she figured out how what she had found out before departure and observed and learned abroad could be combined into a concrete proposal to affect change back in Hirosaki. Hopefully, she will emerge a leader and continue in this vein in the future.

#### **Teacher Reflections 4**

Having a Filipino background on his mother's side of the family, **S4** was highly motivated to learn English. Although his parents switched from English to Japanese as their main language of communication during his childhood, he kept up his language skills of his own accord and already sounded native speaker-like, which raised the bar for everyone else in the group. His English was easy to listen to when presenting and his easygoing personality gave him a natural, relaxed demeanor when speaking to an audience. The instructors were concerned, however, because, not unlike other first-year medical majors, he thought freshman year was a time to coast and, at times, he didn't seem to be carrying his weight. His overall personal research was not as detailed as it should have been, and when he partnered with **S3** on a local project early on, he was willing to let her do most of the work. The instructors were also anxious about him because his holding back was not only with the research, but in the work done in groups and pairs in the beginning of the course. However, from the latter half of the class through the overseas part of the project, **S4** came out of his shell and exerted himself appropriately. The connections he made with local Hawaiian-Filipinos, as well as contact with relatives living in Hawaii, made the trip especially precious to him. It did not take much to figure out that, although the instructors would have loved to see more from him academically, the trip clearly changed his life, and those moments will help him affect change when he begins his career as a pediatrician.

#### **Teacher Reflections 5**

**S5** was always cheerful and proactive throughout the trip. She makes friends easily and that was helpful to her at every turn. In all the cohorts where Berman was the principal name on the program, she included one student who had also experienced the university honors' program, "Haybusa College." **S5** was the one in this cohort. With such breadth of experience, **S5** was a good role model for the rest of the group. She has friends around the world and, it seems, was able to plant the seeds of such a lifestyle in others. She loves to share and jumps at the chance to talk to people, finding the best in everyone. She has come a long way in her English ability. The instructors had seen her make many presentations in the past, but her contributions to Cohort 2 were her most polished and professional. In the past, her English could be all over the place, but she has finally learned certain skills to refine it. Her role in the group was always to ease the tension and find something relevant to say. **S5** was the first to make a field trip on her own, researching sustainable energy, something also useful to her, in general, as that is her major. The experiences of the semester devoted to Cohort 2 appeared to boost her confidence; she was able to get into a

summer program on wind power in Europe in 2019, one that few Japanese students participate in, and something she had been rejected from a year earlier. In Hawaii, she and her host mother visited a very isolated windfarm. The skills she refined go beyond anything she could have done in a traditional class setting. She is another shining example of a future leader.

### **Teacher Reflections 6**

**S6** was a first-year Science and Technology student. In addition to having a lot of energy, he had a very broad range of interests. He was fascinated by the coffee industry while he was in Kona. He also learned about composting and shared that when he came back to Hirosaki. For his individual research, he hoped to find ways to recycle seashells in Hawaii, the way fisheries do in Aomori. One problem with this is that the amount of potential shell waste is much lower in Hawaii. Unlike the scallop business in Aomori, firms using aquaculture with abalone, crabs and lobsters are recycling some of the shells onsite or selling products to various consumers, with the shells on, making it difficult to collect enough shells in one place to create a viable recycling system. The natural shellfish population of Hawaii has been greatly overfished, and some of the most popular shellfish, such as opihi (*cellana exarta*) are caught by those who eat them and are much too tiny to recycle in a meaningful way. In addition to issues with his research, he also withstood a good deal of the aforementioned “influence” from **S2**. While some of it was encouraging and helpful, the instructors thought that the potential leadership abilities of **S6** were somewhat hindered by his association with **S2**. It was already stated that he was not a typical 18-year-old freshman; but, despite being somewhat older than some of the other freshmen in the group, he was used to getting a lot of assistance. He had overcome health issues before starting university and he seemed the most comfortable person in the group when it came to following someone else's lead. Since one of the missions of the project was to bring out leadership qualities in participants, the questionable pair-up of these two is something that is informing pair assignments for Cohort 4.

### **Discussion**

Cohort 1 was extremely busy, and the students were quite diverse. Much of what they learned on that trip is hard to put into words. Nonetheless, one of the participants visited Berman recently and talked about how that experience had affected him at a visceral level and how he wanted to take what he had learned and apply it to an upcoming short-term research project in another country. He was the youngest member of his group, but he has matured and is finding ways to take what he experienced and lead with it. This is an example of what happens after seeds are planted. In all walks of life, reflection is key to development (Berman, Tada & Tsuchiya, 2018a) and the pace at which people develop clearly varies (Berman & Tada, 2018c).

Cohort 4 is largely based on combining all of the good, experiential aspects of the previous cohorts with new avenues of local research, Aomori study, so that the students can share information about their current home with confidence when they arrive on the Island of Hawaii. They have had a plethora of knowledge presented in the classroom. Students have still had much of the same training with an overview of Hawaiian culture and language use, as well as homestay etiquette, and so forth. On the last day of class, they will also get a modified version of the above teacher reflections to consider more deeply some of the dos and don'ts for getting the most out of the PBL experience. One possible issue to overcome is that Cohort 2 had sufficient down time/reflection time, but Cohort 4 is going to be shorter with fewer breaks. Students will need to gear up for the intensive nature of the experiential part of the program. They will, however, be armed with a great deal of prior knowledge, so the outlook is good. All of them will make presentations to the student body and to the community in the formal Japanese presentation. The instructors hope to keep the twinkle in their eyes and give them an opportunity to use what they have learned in the future.

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