Parting Thoughts

It's that time of the year again when many teachers in the ELI will be moving on to new places. We asked this year’s departing teachers to tell us about their future plans, and to share some advice for incoming ELI-ers. Here's what they said:

Roman Delgado
* Future Plans:
Become an ascetic in the desert of the UAE or continue being an INGLORIOUS.... gaijin, at some other unlucky Japanese university. As yet undecided.

* Advice:
Follow the rules...

* Parting Thoughts:
It's a really great job, cherish the 2 (or possibly) 4 years you've got.

Jenn Holland
1. What are your future plans?
I am planning to travel for about 6 months and end up in South America. I'd like to find a teaching job there, or I may go back to the U.S., attend culinary school and become a pastry chef.

2. What advice can you offer to the next batch of newcomers to the ELI?
Ask questions - ELIers are generally very friendly. Speak up if you're not happy about something. If you don't like research, learn to or find another job. Take time for yourself even if work is crazy. Be sweet to Nana, Ayumi and Maki. If you're a teacher, learn about the SALC and encourage your students to talk to the Learning Advisors.

3. Any other parting thoughts?
I will miss all of the wonderful friends I've made here. Thanks for the memories. :o)

Andrew Kidd
Words parted:
1. What are your future plans?
Next year I'll be doing a Graduate Diploma of Education in Brisbane with a view to becoming a high school teacher in the areas of History, Spanish and ESL.

2. What advice can you offer to the next batch of newcomers to the ELI?
'Publish or perish' is the name of the game. Use the opportunities you're given here and meet with the research consultants. Ask lots of questions and don't feel like you should know everything already. There's probably another teacher who's been here longer than you and who has less an idea of what's going on.

3. Any other parting thoughts?
This is an environment where you can achieve as much or as little as you want to. Two, three, or four years will go by so fast you won't have time to kick yourself for wasting time.

Julie Matsubara
1. What are your future plans?
I won't know exactly what I'll be doing until Spring 2010.

2. What advice can you offer to the next batch of newcomers to the ELI?
My one piece of advice would probably be: Don't lose perspective, the big picture. As my favorite quote goes, "Beginnings are scary, endings usually sad, but it's what's in the middle that counts."

3. Any other parting thoughts?
Will miss Kanda very much.

Alun Roger
1. What are your future plans?
1. I’m lucky enough to be joining the team at Sojo down in Kumamoto. I think the potential for a decade’s worth of work (4 at KUIS, possible 6 at Sojo) in the university EFL world in Japan is pretty comforting for those who might be more concerned with employment security. I think this is especially true for exiting KUIS members who are usually still working towards doctorates and therefore unable to go for tenure positions.

2. What advice can you offer to the next batch of newcomers to the ELI?

Four years goes extremely quickly. If you’re thinking of staying on the university circuit in Japan then you need to be thinking about your future employability from year one. From my recent experiences in the job hunt there are 2 very important things you should be trying to add to your CV- publications and Japanese language skills.

Most places want to see a minimum of 3 publications. The submission process can be lengthy and someone who has 3 publications forthcoming but nothing in the bag at interview might sound alarm bells!

Interviews often have a Japanese language section which could be anything from "please introduce yourself in Japanese" to "Explain an aspect of Japanese culture in Japanese" to "Compare and contrast TOEFL and TOEIC and explain the benefits and drawbacks of each for the university student in Japanese"!!! So dust off those hiragana flip cards...

Chris Stillwell
1. What are your future plans?
I’m looking forward to continuing to work with several other ELI teachers in a new English program in Kumamoto.

2. What advice can you offer to the next batch of newcomers to the ELI?
Never forget that the great thing about teaching is that you are surrounded by other teachers, people with different experiences and insights. If you can find a way to tap into that, you are well on your way to making the most of working with 50+ other ELI teachers, as well as experienced teachers throughout the rest of the university.

3. Any other parting thoughts?
When I visit other places and talk about Kanda, people are always impressed by the situation we have- motivated students, experienced peers, and plenty of resources and support. It’s good to appreciate what we have, and to make the most of it!

Chris Wyle
I want to thank all my students and the great people I’ve met here over the past 4 years at KUIS. I’ve been very happy to get to know you, forge great relationships and learn from you as well - I’m a richer person for it. Enjoy your remaining years at Kanda, use your time to the fullest, experience as much as you can and continue learning new things, even after you leave! All the best, Chris W.