

First, before I start, I want to apologize because my speech is very disorganized. I spent a long time trying to collect my thoughts, and this is the best I could do. So, sorry, but you have to bear with me.

When I came to Japan I had just graduated from university. I knew that I was interested in foreign language education, but I didn't know exactly in which way. I was not sure if I wanted to be a foreign language teacher, or if I wanted to do research about foreign language education. However, after being here for two years, I know without a doubt, that I want to be a teacher. Helping you students grow and mature, inside and outside the classroom, has been the greatest pleasure of my life.

More than anything right now, I want to say, "thank you." So allow me to give some thank you's. First, to Serena. Serena, thank you for being the best teammate I could've ever asked for.

I want to say, "thank you," to my students for always working so hard. Seeing you work hard every day gave me the energy I needed to survive far away from my home and friends and family.

I want to say, "thank you," to my fellow JTEs for always being patient with me. You always waited on me even though I am so slow at my work.

To the office staff, "thank you," because you always reminded me of what I needed to do, and took care of me as I prepared to leave. This would have been impossible without all of you.

And to everyone else here, students who I didn't teach, other teachers, principals, and nurses "thank you." Being invited to club performances, onto the teacher teams for school events, being a dance competition judge, or even

just little conversations at lunch time helped me feel like a *real* member of this high school family.

On that note: I'd like to give some parting wisdom. First, to the teachers. Please, include the next ALT often in school activities. Being an ALT may be harder than you think. Maybe our work is not as long and heavy as yours. However, living in a foreign country, where you are learning the language, and have to make new friends, and have no family is a difficult task. We don't need any more reasons to feel excluded, all we want is to feel *included*.

Next, 1<sup>st</sup> years. "You get out what you put in." These are some of the best words I have ever been told. I know you may not be interested in everything that happens in high school, but I assure you that it will be better if you give it your all. If you put in little effort, you get little rewards. If you put in great effort, you will get great rewards. Every time.

Next, 2<sup>nd</sup> years, start to ask yourself "why? how?". Students are great at answering the "what?", but not as good at answering the "why? how?". These are the big questions, and to grow as students and as people you need to start asking yourselves & and others them.

3<sup>rd</sup> years, I know you must feel nervous about your future. The truth is, I am quite nervous for my future as well. However, I want to tell you, from my experience, do not worry. If you don't know what you want to do in the future, that's okay. For now, just put yourself in the best position to succeed, so that *when you do* decide, you are ready to act.

With that, I have given you all I can. I hope that during these two years. I could have a positive impact on your lives. I know that you had one on mine. I will miss each and every one of you so much. Thank you.