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Reflection Essay

As I have stated in my presentation, this was a life changing experience for me. I feel like through this PBL I was opened up to a whole new positive look on all of the dilemmas that I had been struggling with for the last many many years. This program has intrigued my interest in two places, demographic, and educational concerns. I did not think that I would be as interested in demographics until learning more about the problems, which Japan is facing particularly about the significantly low fertility rate, after my presentation with Emily during the first week at Berkeley.

I feel like this experience has opened many doors for my future in that I have finally been able to see how I personally would be able to live comfortably in Japan. Moreover, I personally wish to open or work at a school similar to the Hamamatsu Brazilian school. I do not wish for other returnees and second generation, third generation, foreigner children to have to face the same conditions and experiences which I have encountered. Rather I really wish to solve and be an active member in breaking down the walls and barriers between Jun-japa and non-Japan-originating children.

I feel that I was able to personally grow in multiple ways. This PBL was one of the most emotionally, physically, and mentally draining experiences, but at the end I was also able to experience a great catharsis. I feel that by publicly admitting to my fears and struggles, though it was a smaller audience, I was able to overcome my true fears, and have officially overcome and concluded the identity crisis and search of my life. Despite the fact that I will still have to make the decision of what to do with my dual citizenship in the near future, the Filipina women and the Japanese –Brazilian students reminded me of the fact that I am human, a factor which I had practically

forgotten the last several years. Feeling socially unaccepted, invisible, judged, for many years had simply left me feeling inhumane. However, meeting people who were experiencing even more hardships, and yet still being able to look at the next day optimistically really reversed my mindset.

The only thing that I regret is not having more time to interact with all of the students individually. I really enjoyed the fact that I had the opportunity to room with Japanese students, and get to know them on very personal levels. I think my connection with each student was another factor, which helped me overcome my fears. I also wished that I could've had more chances to room with the Berkeley students.

As for organization of the overall program, I think that one factor that it lacked was information. For example, the Japanese students weren't aware of the fact that we would be going to Hamamatsu until the first week at Berkeley, or that we would have to go to the bookstore and find the textbooks. I think it was partially our faults for assuming that they would already be prepared. I think that it would've been easier for the students if the field trips and the lectures were mixed up so that we didn't have a full week of activeness and a full week of lectures. Once again, I really appreciated how the professors were always around for consultation or extra help. The thing that I really enjoyed about this PBL was that everyone was each other's support system. Every student had each other's back, and I think that is one of the key reasons it was so successful. I also wish that there 'd been more time for the students to be able to exchange notes. I suggestion could be throwing in free discussion time. If I could take this program again, I would love to do it. I wish I had the opportunity to again. I felt like through this PBL I was able to meet so many inspirational figures, that it has motivated me to work harder in the future.

