

英語再教育(3)

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English Re-education (3)

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The author has introduced some plans to improve the English education for his students in engineering majors at Fukui University of Technology (FUT) since 2003. In 2006 he gave the opportunity to his students to use English by organizing a program by inviting the health investigating team of Linfield College (LFC) from the USA. This report provides an overview of the program and what he observed from his students, and explains and justifies his ideas of English re-education.

1. Preface

The Mombukagakusho released a strategic plan to cultivate “Japanese With English Abilities” in July 2002, and I also introduce some plans to cultivate my students with English abilities. However, the survey conducted in my first year students in 2003 found about 90% of them described English classes as boring because of their bad learning experiences in the past. (Uchida, 2004) They said it was impossible to use English because they had had few chances to practice using the language though they had been taught a lot of words and complicated grammar rules. Fortunately, the survey also showed they had a strong drive to acquire English skills. They realized their future careers would increasingly require them to communicate with people from other countries and wanted to learn English from the basics. This is why I began to endeavor to give them better English re-education in 2003.

In 2004, to create students' interest and involvement in English classes, I improved my classes, responding to their requests. In 2005 to expose students to natural English Mr. Shane Goulding and I sent several students to the summer English seminar at Southern Cross University in Australia, which highly changed their learning attitudes for the better. Their attitudes also had an influence for the better on other students. In 2006 I organized a program of inviting the LFC students to English class to stimulate our students, supported by FUT. This report explains how the program started, supported and how our students' attitudes changed.

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2 How the program started

The program to have the Linfield College Health Investigation Team visit our university and Fukui prefecture was triggered by an e-mail dated on 25 May 2006. It was from Dr. Dawn Graff-Haight, who is a professor and chair of the department of health, human performance and athletics at Linfield College, Oregon, USA. The mail is as follow:

Dear Mr. Uchida,

I spoke with Mr. Koichi Nariyama, who is Professor of Kyoto Bunkyo University, today by telephone.

He has told me of your generous offer to visit Fukui University of Technology when I am in Japan.

I look forward to my stay, and to meeting with you.

I am very excited to learn more about the longevity of people in Fukui, and visiting Fukui University of Technology. Mr. Nariyama has sent me links to the university and the hotel. I look forward to seeing you and your colleagues, and your generous offer to stay at the beautiful hotel and onsen.

In the e-mails dated May 26, Dr. Dawn Graff-Haight added the activities in Fukui that her students might find interesting as follows:

- visit a shoyu or soy sauce, tofu or bean curd factory
- visit an onsen or hot spring
- martial arts demonstration and practice
- presentation from public health departments about Fukui longevity
- nursing home field trip, or visitations with Fukui elderly people
- tour local tourist attractions
- attend a Buddhist, Shinto or other religious ceremony
- visit schools

On reading these mails, I felt it necessary to have a positive attitude toward doing my best and to cooperate to see the realization of this program. At the same time, it struck me that this could be a good opportunity for our students to use English because I had dreamed to provide a concrete exciting situation to communicate in English for

them. I had found students sometimes felt impatient and misery over the fact that they could not express themselves in English, although they had spent quite a lot of time and energy on learning English. It seemed very difficult to make a program which met Dr. Graff-Haight's requests to the full, but I decided to take the first action to help the project on May 26. I believed the words: "A man can succeed at almost anything for which he has unlimited enthusiasm. Action may not always bring success, but there is no success without any action. (Charles M. Schwab, 1862-1939)" This is how the program started.

3. How the program was supported

The Chinese character I like most is "人, hito", which means human being. It is composed of two slanting lines supporting each other. This letter seems to teach us that we, human beings, must always help each other and a good human relationship can be a great power. The letter looks as if two men are standing, helping each other, not fighting.

After the program to have LFC visit our university was approved by the executive office of FUT, through Mr. Nariyama we visited the Department of Health Welfare of the Fukui Prefectural Government, and asked them to support the Linfield College Health Investigation Team. They gave us a promise to support the LFC Team. Coincidentally, it was at the time when the Fukui Government had just began the campaign to boast their second longest life expectancy for both men and women in all of Japan as one of the projects to economically develop the Fukui area.

Thanks to their encouragement we succeeded in getting a lot of assistance from many people of various fields in different communities, such as Fukui Prefectural Hospital, public healthcare facilities, a miso factory, a farm store, Zen sect temples, Fukui East Rotary Club, schools and the mass media. Without this help we would never have created such a large plan which met to the all the LFC students' requests. Putting a great deal of effort into the planning by exchanging information thorough e-mail and phone with the people in Tokyo, Kyoto, the USA and Fukui Prefectural Government, I sometimes came to dead ends, but when I remembered the words which gave me energy: "if you can imagine it, you can achieve it. If you can dream it, you can become it." Finally, I completed the schedule as follows:

Welcome to Fukui University of Technology (FUT)!

SCHEDULE

Date	Activities	Places	Lodging	Transportations	Persons in charge
Jan. 6	14:00 Arrival	Academia Hotel(AH)		Chartered Bus	Uchida & Shane
Sat.	15:00 Orientation		AH		
Jan. 7	9:30 Health Facilities	Shimizu-cho, Fukui-city		FUT Bus	Uchida
Sun.	12:30 Nursing-care center		AH		
Jan. 8	8:30 Sightseeing	Kanazawa, Ishikawa P.		Chartered Bus	Uchida
Mon.	18:00 Welcome dinner	Restaurant Mameda		Walk	
		AH			
Jan. 9	9:00 Courtesy call , FUT	FUT		FUT Bus	Uchida
Tue.	10:00 Meet FUT students	FUT Tower 15F.			
	13:00 Hospital visit	Prefectural Hospital			
	17:00 Martial arts clubs	FUT	AH	Walk	Uchida & Ricky
Jan.10	8:30 A:Miso factory visit	Komego		Chartered Bus	A: Shirasaki
Wed.	9:10 B:Courtesy call	Government Office			B: Uchida
	11:00 Farm visit	Sun Sun Farm			
	13:30 Eiheiiji temple	Eiheiiji	AH		
Jan.11	8:15 Elementary school	Imajyo		Chartered Bus	Graff-Haight
Thu.	11:00 Soba making				
	14:00 Zen Temple	Kongoin, Takefu	AH		Volunteers
Jan.12	Until 12:00 Packing, Free				
Fri.	12:30 Welcome lunch	AH Tatami-mat room		AH 2nd Floor	Fukui Rotary C.
	15:00 Home stay	Host's house		Host's car	Host family
Jan 13	Home stay	Host's house		Host family	Host family
Sat.	Free				
Jan 14	Home stay	Host's house		Host family	Host family
Sat.	Welcome mochi making	Asahi community hall		Town hall	
	Return to AH by 19:00	AH		AH	Graff-Haight
	Baggage collection		AH	AH Lobby	Uchida
Jan.15	Home stay	AH			Host family
Mon.	8:30 Checkout			FUT Bus	Host family
	9:00 Leave FUT			JR	Graff-Haight
	9:47 Leave for Kyoto	Kyoto		Thunder Bird	Uchida & Shane

4. The Activities started

At two o'clock on January 6 2007, the LFC delegation consisting of 15 students and Dr. Dawn Graff-Haight, arrived at the Academia Hotel in a chartered bus. On the previous day they arrived at Kansai International Airport and stayed one night in a hotel there, so they were all in good shape. The weather was unusually fine even though the weather forecast had called for heavy snow and strong wind. Assisted by the warm weather, the ten-day-activity started.

There were more than 20 activities to approach the mystery of longevity in Fukui Prefecture, which would cover areas as diverse as diet, lifestyle, environment, health promotion and leisure among the people in Fukui. They were trying to find the secret to longevity by comparing Japanese and American lifestyle and cultural factors. Here is a tiny portion of the activities they had whilst at FUT.

4-1 Orientation

As soon as they got the hotel, before check-in, Mr. Goulding and I gave an orientation seminar which we thought was a must for their safe, fruitful and comfortable stay in Fukui. This worked well and they had a really good time. Here are a few of things we thought of, that might have helped them not only have great experiences in Fukui but provide them to be hassle free too:

4-1-1 About Kanai Gakuen or Kanai Educational Institution (KEI)

Kanai Educational Institution was founded in 1995 by the late Mr. Kenzo Kanai, who is the father of Dr. Ken Kanai, present chairperson of the KEI board of directors. KEI is famous in the Hokuriku District for its comprehensive educational institution, consisting of Fukui University of Technology(FUT), Fukui Senior High School(FSHS), and Fukui Junior High School(FJHS).

4-1-2 The Sprit and Establishment of KEI

"We will grow a patriotic spirit based on the history and tradition of the everlasting Japanese people, bring up a character which highly regards courtesy, endeavor to study by profound scientific technique, and therefore make a contribution to the promotion and welfare in human society."

4-1-3 About the Academia Hotel Onsen

The Academia Hotel has its very own onsen. The hot water is almost clear. Fukui-ken Sanitary Research Institute analyzed the hot water, and the results were as follows:

- The temperature of hot spring : 47.7 °C
- The quantity of gushing out : 650 liter per minute
- The perceptual test: colorless and clear, weak salty and odorless
- pH : 8.76
- Water matter: sodium, calcium - sulfate, chloride hot water, low alkaline spring water

4-1-4 Onsen to Japanese

Some onsen have spa baths, artificial waterfalls and saunas too. The water in an onsen must be from a "volcanic spring". People often travel to an onsen with work colleagues, as a way to help break down some of the hierarchical stiffness associated with the Japanese work place. However, onsen are not only for work groups but also friends, couples and families.

4-1-5 How to enjoy onsen

At an onsen, guests are expected to wash their bodies and rinse themselves thoroughly before entering the hot water. Entering the onsen while still dirty or covered in soap can be very unsettling for others and may even cause an uproar. Each person's onsen etiquette varies slightly. However, to avoid any problems follow these few simple steps:

1. Enter the changing room through the correct door:

女 For Women 男 For Men

2. Remove your clothes and put them in the basket or locker provided. Take only the small wash towel. This can also be used to provide a modicum of modesty when moving about between baths in the onsen.
3. Keep yourself covered with the wash towel, enter the bathing area and close the door.
4. Wash your body using the showers before entering the bath with the small towel and be sure to rinse it of soap completely.

5. Soak for a short while being careful not to get too hot.
6. Was your body a second time and leave or try having a second bath and then get out.

It is against the custom to immerse or dip towels in the onsen bath water, since this is considered unclean. People normally set their towels off to the side of the water when enjoying the baths.

4-1-6 Restaurants around FUT

You may want to try some of the restaurants around FUT rather than just convenience store 'bento' boxes. There are a few places that will either have a menu with pictures, English, or staff member who can speak English.

4-1-7 How to catch a city bus

The City bus toward the station leaves from outside FUT near the main gate. Coming back toward the Academia Hotel, catch bus number 12 from bus stand 4. Get on the bus from the rear and take a little ticket from the machine on the left. Get off at the front of the bus and place the money (200 yen each way) and ticket in the collection machine at the front next to the driver. If you do not have 200 yen in coins you can change a 1000 yen note at the collection machine. Bus number 12 will drop you off opposite the hotel. If you do get stuck in town, take a taxi. It will only cost you 1000-1400 yen. Simply tell the driver 'Academia Hotel', or 'Kodai' and they will know where to take you.

4-2 Visit to FUT

Finally the day came when the LFC team visited our university.

4-2-1 Courtesy call to FUT

First, they paid a courtesy call to the executive members of FUT in the meeting room of the FUT tower. They were welcomed warmly by Chairperson of the board of directors Dr. Ken Kanai, executive director Mr. Ryoichi Sato, general manager Mr. Takeharu Yamada, vice-presidents Dr. Yotaro Morishima and Dr. Masahiro Jyono, dean of students Dr. Koji Tada, director of the administration office Dr. Motomu Fujii, and deputy director of the administration office Dr. Yoshinobu Yoshimura.

This call served as an opportunity to exchange fruitful opinions about education and to begin discussions about an ongoing partnership between LFC and FUT. I felt there would be a lot of possibilities for a meaningful relationship, such as exchanging some of our students for a semester in a special language and cultural program, in sports matches, faculty and administrator short term visits and others.

4-2-2 Visit an English class

Fifteen LFC students visited my English language class, with 12 juniors and seniors in the department of electronic engineering and space communication engineering. It was the very first exciting experience for the students of both universities to attend class together and talk in English without any teacher help.

I had told my students about the program six months before and asked them if they were interested in having class together. They showed much interest in it and I found their learning attitude improve after seeing my own enthusiasm. Soon I began to spend some time training them to be able to do self-introductions in easy English. I was really happy to find some students began to study by NHK radio or TV English programs and some began to practice doing self-introductions in English among classmates as follows:

4-2-3 Self-Introduction Practice

Hi! My name is (). Call me (). Nice to meet you. How do you do?
I am () years old and I am a (sophomore) at Fukui University of Technology. I major in (). I would like to be an (engineer) after graduation. I am from () prefecture. My hobbies are (listening to music). I belong to the () club. / I don't belong to any club.

The campus of my university is not very large, but there are several tall buildings, Japanese style buildings and gardens. Our university has seven departments and for advanced research, it has post graduate master's and doctor's courses. Class starts at 8:40. I usually get up at (seven), eat a simple breakfast in my apartment and arrive at the college at 8:35. We have two classes in the morning and three in the afternoon until 5:30. I sometimes stay after school to do some experiments with my friends and my professors.

4-2-4 What they talked about

The basic practice worked well, and the class started smoothly. Soon they began talking and smiling without the fear of making mistakes. It was one of the happiest moments to see our students using the target language. LFC students had prepared "Longevity and Lifestyle Interview 18 Questions" about general health, food, activity, living arrangements and other habits to survey our students' lifestyle as follows:

- *When comparing yourself to others in your age group, describe how healthy you are.
- *If there is one thing about your health that you could improve, what would that be?
- *What beverage do you drink most during the day? How much of this beverage do you drink during the day?
- *What do you think is the most important thing that leads to a long, healthy life?

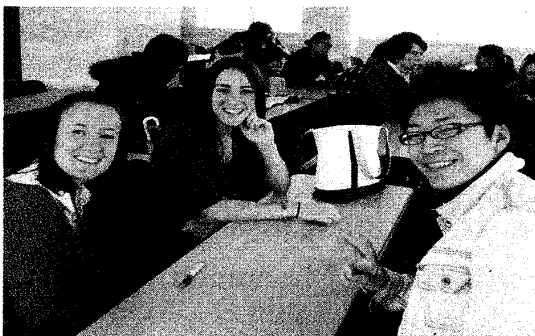
It was rather a hard activity, and both of them struggled but were able to communicate. After the class they had a campus tour and enjoyed lunch at the cafeteria together. The three-hour meeting was long enough for our students to be stimulated to swear greater effort to learn English in the future. LFC students also had time to meet with the FUT kendo club.



Courtesy Call to FUT



Exchange with the FUT Kendo Club



Visit English Class



Lunch at the FUT Cafeteria

5. Conclusion

When the LFC students left FUT after the ten-day-stay in Fukui, they gave heartfelt letters of thanks to FUT and me. The FUT and LFC students learned and stimulated each other through the program introduced as English re-education. Here are some of the LFC student comments:

We appreciate all the trouble you went through to accommodate us. You made us feel very welcome. I was very impressed with the intelligence of the university students we met as well as the university facilities. Your staff was very inviting, and I thoroughly enjoyed my experience there. Good luck in the future! (Meghan Palakiko)

Thank you so much all of your kindness and helpfulness throughout our stay in Fukui. I especially enjoyed showing you my summer job in Alaska. Someday I can treat you to an Alaska wildlife cruise in my home. We learned a very important, momentous truth from you: THIS MOMENT IS THE TRUTH. I will always try to live my life in the present. Thank you for all of your knowledge and assistance. You will be missed. (Julie Richardson)

Nothing is more important than stimulating students who learn a foreign language and pleasing them in communicating in a target language. My students' experience of communicating with the LFC students was the clearest example of the drastic change in their learning attitude. Though it was only a short exchange, it was long enough for both students to be inspired to aim for higher goals of learning languages.

Lastly I would like to express my gratitude to Chairperson of the KEI Dr. Ken Kanai, the board of directors of KEI, the Fukui Government, and Mr. Shane Goulding for supporting and truly understanding what this program was all about.

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