Practical Use of the TOEIC® Program for High School Education

Training Program for New Teachers Aims to Expand Knowledge Base, Cultivate Practical Leadership Skills and Install a Sense of Mission

The one-year training program for new teachers has a number of aims that include expanding teachers' knowledge base and cultivating their practical leadership skills and sense of mission. Under this program at SPEC, subject-based training is conducted for new high school teachers five times per year. English courses under the program combine lectures with exercises and discussion, with around an equal proportion of lectures to exercises and discussion. For the lectures, teachers begin with learning the essentials of teaching, and then move on to learn more about changes in society and in mindsets regarding English and some technical aspects of language. The exercises and discussion, meanwhile, aim to foster the teacher's practical skills in terms of creating lesson plans and teaching materials through the use of information and communications technology (ICT). Teachers also learn how to create teaching materials utilizing "oral introductions," whereby teachers introduce class content in English, as well as "micro-teaching" techniques (simulated lessons).

Hideaki Watanabe, who is in charge of the SPEC training program for English and serves as a guidance counselor, explains the background of the program to train new teachers: "English instruction has changed drastically since the time I began teaching at high school. The ‘Five Proposals and Specific Measures for Developing Proficiency in English’*1 and ‘English Education Reform Plan’*2 announced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) both emphasize the necessity to develop teachers with adequate English ability and teaching skills to respond to changing needs. This means that English teachers will be required more than ever in the future, and the higher the quality of their teaching, the better.

Using the TOEIC® Test and TOEIC® Speaking to Train New High School Teachers
~ IIBC Training Program Helps to Raise Teachers’ Awareness ~

The Saitama Prefectural Education Center (SPEC) plans and administers various training programs based on the Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education in Saitama, which aims to improve the classroom skills of elementary, junior high, and senior high teachers within the prefecture. In 2015, SPEC introduced an Institute for International Business Communication (IIBC) program for foreign language training within the center’s new teacher training program for high school teachers. The program’s objective is to improve teachers’ English and teaching skills by having them take the TOEIC test and TOEIC Speaking (TOEIC S). Here we take a closer look at SPEC’s program to train new teachers, its future objectives, and the results of the training courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1 (May 13)</td>
<td>SPEC</td>
<td>9:30–12:00</td>
<td>Lecture, exercises, discussion</td>
<td>The Course of Study, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2 (June 24)</td>
<td>IIBC</td>
<td>9:45–11:00</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>TOEIC test and language education around the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11:00–12:00</td>
<td>Exercises</td>
<td>TOEIC facility tour / TOEIC Speaking Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13:00–15:00</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Setting learning goals and the CAN-DO list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15:00–16:15</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Teaching plans and simulated lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3 (September 16)</td>
<td>SPEC</td>
<td>9:30–12:00</td>
<td>Lecture and exercises</td>
<td>Oral introductions, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 4 (October 28)</td>
<td>SPEC</td>
<td>9:30–11:30</td>
<td>Exercises</td>
<td>TOEIC test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11:30–12:00</td>
<td>Lecture and exercises</td>
<td>Foreign language education using cooperative learning, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to expand their skillset, including the use of ICT, and adapt their teaching methods. From now on, teachers will need to have a variety of knowledge and skills to draw on."

*1 “Five Proposals and Specific Measures for Developing Proficiency in English for International Communication” announced in July 2011
*2 “English Education Reform Plan corresponding to Globalization” announced in December 2013

**IIBC Training Introduced in 2015 – TOEIC® Speaking Helps Raise Teachers’ Motivation**

Last year, training administered by IIBC was introduced at SPEC for its program to train new teachers. Watanabe explains some of the reasons for requesting IIBC, “We thought this was a way for new teachers to sense the significant changes taking place in society; that is to say, we wanted them to get a better idea of social transformations and what sort of people will be needed to respond to those changes as well as what they should do, specifically, as teachers.” He also notes that having an external organization handling the training is intended to enhance teachers’ English ability and positively influence their educational skills. Watanabe also believes that improving the English skills of teachers will contribute in indirect ways to the academic abilities of students. For instance, when an English teacher paraphrases difficult expressions during an interactive activity, students are able to understand concepts more easily.

A major benefit of this external training was the chance for teachers to take the TOEIC S. Watanabe recalls the feedback from the teachers: “There were various reactions from teachers who took the test. Some said it gave them a better idea of what they needed to do, while other teachers were disappointed or shocked that they were not able to answer some of the questions. As English teachers, they obviously have some confidence in their English skills. However, even though they have considerable English knowledge, if they are unable to actually use it, they will not be able to fully utilize their teaching abilities. I believe the training program reinforced this point and has prompted their desire to learn more as English teachers.

Furthermore, the test results have revealed that teachers tend to lack opportunities to speak English and made us better aware of the consequences of that situation.”

The training lectures conducted by IIBC covered global topics in English and the TOEIC test itself. Other useful information provided included views on the practical use of external training at universities and companies as well as methods for ensuring the reliability, suitability, and fairness of test questions. In the future, as Watanabe points out, research training will also be needed for teachers concerning test-related issues since creating exams is one of their responsibilities.

**Teachers’ Impressions after Taking TOEIC® Speaking**

- Taking the test has made me realize what I need to do now.
- It made me feel that I want to enhance my skills.
- It was a good opportunity to improve my English skills.
- I was disappointed in myself because I was so nervous and couldn’t answer the questions well.
- It made me feel I want to enhance my skills.
- I want to challenge myself by taking the test again.

**Fully Use the TOEIC® Test for Teachers to Assess Their Own English Skills**

For the program to train new teachers, the TOEIC test is administered to the teachers as a language exam exercise. “I tell teachers before the exam that this test is not to compare yourselves to each other,” explains Watanabe, “but rather for them to assess their own English skills. Taking the TOIEC test is the first step of their new teaching life, and I hope that after that they will continue to enhance their skills by taking the exam periodically, with a new set goal each time. In addition, with the future reforms of university entrance exams, it is important for teachers to take external exams so that they can provide better information to their students.”

In terms of the future aims of high school English education, Watanabe notes the need to develop the four skills equally and improve teachers’ knowledge regarding English use, while recognizing the particular importance of reading skills. He also points to the need to devise and improve the method of developing and teaching these skills so that students can grasp English directly in the classroom rather than through Japanese translation.

Nurturing the up-and-coming generation of Japanese who will be living in a global era, it will be necessary to offer students classes where they can actively use English. Watanabe emphasizes that the need for this sort of active learning is not limited to English classes, and that classes for other subjects need to be devised to foster independent thinking and communication.
Exposure to Practical English through the TOEIC® Program to Encourage Continuous English Study as a Part of Lifelong Learning

Akita Prefectural Araya High School adopted the TOEIC program five years ago. First-year and second-year students take the TOEIC Bridge® to gauge their improvement in English ability after one year. The TOEIC® test is mainly taken by third-year students who want to prepare for the university entrance examination. Araya High School uses the TOEIC® test to stimulate students’ interest in English by exposing them to practical English that is different from the kind of English they learn for the university entrance examination and to encourage students to study English as a part of lifelong learning. Araya High School also utilizes the TOEIC® test as a way of improving students’ reading and listening skills, with an eye to preparing them for the university entrance examination.

Education That Nurtures a Willingness to Contribute to the Local Community – Exposure to Practical English through the TOEIC® Program

Akita Prefectural Araya High School, which was founded at the strong request of local residents, is active in volunteer and exchange activities with the local community. The school also has built up a nationwide reputation for its extracurricular activities in the fields of sports and culture, thereby meeting the high expectations of local people.

Rissei Sasaki, the principal of Araya High School, had the following to say about the school’s education philosophy: “Students at our school are characterized by a strong desire to contribute after their graduation to the region, whose members strongly support the school, referring to it as ‘Oraho no gakkō’ (Our school). We aim to develop human resources who are eager to contribute to the region and to their community, wherever they end up playing an active role, but at the same time have a broad outlook. Toward that end, our curriculum including English education emphasizes the need for students to be able to convey their intentions.”

Araya High School has been using the TOEIC program for the past five years based on three main reasons. The first is the desire to provide students with an opportunity to be exposed to the sort of English that is useful in everyday situations, which tends to be different from English that appears in the university entrance examination. The second reason is to encourage students to study English as a part of lifelong learning. The third and final reason is to use the TOEIC program as a measurement tool to prepare students for Japan’s national university entrance examination.

Hiroyuki Ishii, a teacher of Japanese who proposed adopting the TOEIC program in his capacity as a career guidance director, explains more about how the program prepares students for the university entrance examination: “An ability to read long English sentences quickly and grasp the gist of the meaning is necessary for the reading passages in the National Center Test for University Admissions. One effective way to develop that rapid reading ability is to train one’s listening ability as well so that the ability to understand English in the order of hearing is improved. We believe that the abundance of listening items and the speed of the TOEIC program make it an effective measurement tool to prepare students for the National Center Test and cultivate their ability to read English reading passages quickly.”

All First- and Second-Year Students Take TOEIC Bridge® – Students Take the TOEIC® Test on a Voluntary Basis

At Araya High School, TOEIC Bridge is given to all 365 students in the first and second years (as of the 2015 academic year), and the TOEIC test is given to any student who wants to take it. All first- and second-year students take TOEIC Bridge because it is appropriate for anyone who wants to improve their English, no matter how low their level, and students who achieve a high

### Akita Prefectural Araya High School: Number of Students Who Took the TOEIC® Test at Least Once (Interested Persons and Number of Examinees)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduates in 2012</th>
<th>Graduates in 2013</th>
<th>Graduates in 2014</th>
<th>Graduates in 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The TOEIC test is given three times a year (July, October, and February).
score are then recommended to take the TOEIC test, which is one step higher.

Ishii points out some of the benefits of having students take TOEIC Bridge: “The TOEIC Bridge is given in September, which allows us to gauge improvements in English ability between the students’ first and the second year. If test results are indicated as a variance, the result for an individual student can be lower even if that student studied hard and developed his or her English ability, provided that other students made even more improvements by working harder. I think that TOEIC Bridge naturally motivates students because the results of their hard work can be clearly reflected in the score.” First-year students prepare for the TOEIC Bridge through methods that include completing problem exercises during their extended homeroom class.

Students who excel in English and third-year students who plan to submit a TOEIC score for university admission take the TOEIC test. In the case of students preparing for an entrance examination, having a TOEIC score can be a positive evaluation factor when applying for a university that has set a standard TOEIC score for the admission of students applying on the basis of teacher recommendations. Taking the test can even be useful for those applying to universities that do not require a TOEIC score, as Ishii explains: “A student who took the entrance exam of the Japanese Red Cross Akita College of Nursing told me that she was praised for taking the TOEIC test at the interview because only a few local high school students had taken it. In addition, it becomes a clear advantage when looking for a job. A student who scored 670 points on the test was employed for counter operations at Akita Airport and, shortly thereafter, was transferred to the flight dispatching service at ANA because of her strong English ability.”

**Award System for TOEIC Bridge® Established to Encourage English Study**

Araya High School has established a school award system for TOEIC Bridge. The school grants the top award to the student who achieves the highest score each year, as well as awards for excellence to students who score 140 points or higher. An English dictionary is presented as an additional prize for the top award. The award system aims to encourage students to study English by commending those who have worked hard, similar to how students are praised for outstanding extracurricular activities.

A future challenge is to develop students’ ability to convey their opinions in English by cultivating their speaking and listening skills. Araya High School is increasing opportunities for students to use English in English classes through presentations, discussions, and other activities. The school also prepares a “CAN-DO” list for students, and activities in English classes and the school’s own speaking and writing tests are designed to respond to the goals on the list.

Yoshihiro Shibuya, an English teacher, explains more: “If we demand too much accuracy when students’ communicative ability, including vocabulary, is insufficient, it can cause them to develop a dislike of English. As a first step, I like to see students to able to talk about themselves in English.”

Opportunities to use English are increasing all over Japan. Ishii wants students to become comfortable with English and continue studying it, with an eye to their future careers, instead of seeing it as just another subject on the entrance examination. He hopes that students will regard the TOEIC test as a tool toward that end.

**School Profile**

Name: Akita Prefectural Araya High School
Establishment: 1984
Student body: 568 (as of November 2015)

Araya High School is a coeducational general high school located in the west of Akita City. The school, which celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2014, offers education and career guidance that is geared to the particular needs of each student and aims to nurture their rich spirit and individuality. Students also excel in extracurricular activities. The brass band and Japanese archery club, for instance, have won national high school competitions and the school’s badminton, football, kendo, softball, track and field, and literary clubs have participated in national and Tohoku regional competitions. We also produced professional sports players from the baseball and soccer clubs.
Keimei Gakuin Junior & Senior High School is carrying out distinctive initiatives that take advantage of its integrated education program that spans from junior and senior high school to university. Given the school’s environment, where English is used on a daily basis because of the foreign students enrolled and students returning to Japan after living overseas, the school provides guidance to improve communication and presentation skills in English classes. With respect to external testing, the school adopted the TOEIC test in the previous academic year at the request of the students, in addition to the EIKEN Test in Practical English Proficiency. The TOEIC score is analyzed with the students as a tool for them to develop their own study plans.

### Well-Rounded Human Education Centered on Camp Education, Fostering Human Resources Oriented toward Social Entrepreneurship

One characteristic of Keimei Gakuin Junior & Senior High School is its well-rounded educational approach centered on its Camp Education. This approach has won the school praise, including its designation as a Super Global High School (SGH) in the 2015 academic year.

Tomoyuki Sato, a teacher of Japanese who leads Camp Education explains more about its objective, “Our distinctive Camp Education seeks to foster the attitude encapsulated in the school’s motto, ‘Training ourselves to serve God and others.’ At camps, students interact with each other in an open manner and are encouraged to undertake challenges and become more self-reliant and open to cooperation. Our SGH vision aims to foster global leaders oriented toward social entrepreneurship.”

The strength of Keimei Gakuin Junior & Senior High School, which has established an alliance with Kwansei Gakuin University, is that it offers students 10 years of integrated education, spanning from junior high school to university. Accordingly, the high school focuses on academic abilities needed at university, such as research skills and academic writing. The school has also gained a reputation as a school with the characteristics of an international school, even though it is not an international school per se. This is because around 10% of the student body is made up of students who have returned to Japan from living overseas, along with the many foreign students who are enrolled. In addition, every year around 15 students go abroad to study. It has thus become common for Keimei Gakuin students to communicate in English since there are always foreign students among the classmates. Moreover, the school regards English education as one of the pillars for cultivating the fundamental academic skills required for university.

### Emphasizing “Meaning-Focused Output” and Strengthening Listening and Speaking Skills

Keimei Gakuin has put in place a learning environment that is conducive to English learning, including its four full-time and two part-time English teachers who are native speakers and its bilingual teachers. In addition, the school has incorporated a method of foreign language instruction called “meaning-focused output,” which aims for improvements in speaking and listening skills. Shuji Kojima, one of the school’s English teachers, explains more: “Meaning-focused output is one of the four strands of our English curriculum. The term refers to the ability to talk about a new discovery or meaningful information in

### Results of Questionnaire on the Adoption of an External Test and the TOEIC® Score

#### Q. What do you consider to be the most suitable criteria for judging the English ability needed at the university level?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result of the 2015 Student Questionnaire</th>
<th>TOEIC Score</th>
<th>Result of the 2014 Student Questionnaire</th>
<th>TOEIC Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Choice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Number of Students</strong></td>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIKEN Grade 2 only</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL only</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIKEN Grade Pre-2 and TOEFL</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>score of a certain level</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIKEN Grade Pre-2 and TOEFL</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>score of a certain level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing the school’s own English</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ability test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL Jr Comprehensive</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IETEC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The table shows the relationship between the answers to the questionnaire that was implemented when students took the TOEIC IP test and their TOEIC scores. The percentages (%) of students taking the questionnaire and the scores are rounded to the nearest whole number.*
Tomoyuki Sato  
Teacher

Shuji Kojima  
Teacher

your own language, rather than viewing output as a simple speech act based on recitation and fixed forms.”

A typical example of meaning-focused output is an optional English class on presentation skills taught by Kojima. The classes focus on how to use language according to the communication situation and content rather than on simply speaking English correctly. For class assignments, students are provided with an example that includes the points to cover, in such formats as a chronological report or some sort of process, and this example serves as a framework. While referring to this framework, students decide on a topic to research and then present their findings in a video format. The feedback following the presentations is also important. After sharing the evaluation criteria with the students in advance, the teacher points out the good points of each presentation as well as aspects that require improvement.

“The reason why the evaluation criteria are presented in advance is to ensure transparency and fairness, reflecting our aim for students to develop themselves into proactive learners through a series of study cycles such as the presentation activities,” explains Kojima. “This is the same for not only the English class but for other subjects as well.”

“Do girls have better linguistic abilities than boys?” — Gender differences in awareness were compared on the basis of that question, using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

“How has bread become popular in Kobe?” — This topic was addressed with a presentation that included a chronological report on the history of Kobe and bread in the format of a 4-minute video. Students energetically engaged in this project. We became aware of their amazing potential for producing a presentation, in terms of form, content, and delivery.

Adopting the TOEIC® Test as a New Goal
Analyzing Problems in a Review after the Test

Keimei Gakuin Junior & Senior High School has set the acquisition of Grade 2 of the EIKEN test as a requirement for admission to Kwansei Gakuin University. In the 2014 academic year, 95% of third-year students had acquired Grade 2 or higher. The school also adopted the TOEIC test to offer students a new goal for English study, as Mr. Kojima explains:

“When we conducted a questionnaire survey of students about the adoption of an external test, the top choice among them was far and away the TOEIC test came. The reasons for the test’s popularity, apparently, were that it can be used at universities for placement or to receive credits, and that a student’s progress in English study is easily reflected in the test score. On top of this, the test is positively viewed by parents and also has good cost-benefit performance. For all those reasons, we decided to introduce the TOEIC test.”

Although only third-year students took the TOEIC test in the first year it was administered, second- and third-year students took it after their summer vacation in the current academic year. No advance test preparation was given to the students in their English classes, but the results were reviewed to identify problems the students face and devise a plan for their self-learning. Kojima explains more about the benefits of the TOEIC test. “The test allows us to provide positive feedback to all student, regardless of their level. Even if a student has a low overall score, for instance, we can provide positive feedback if his or her listening score is high and also encourage those who have a high score to seek an even higher score.”

As for the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Tests, Kojima says that the school “would consider using it if we were able to provide students study material for learning on their own since we are looking for ways to provide our students with effective writing instruction in the years ahead.”

The TOEIC® Newsletter is published quarterly by the Institute for International Business Communication (IIBC) in Japanese. It features examples of how the TOEIC program is used effectively by companies, universities, and other institutions. It offers the latest case studies of TOEIC program usage to our clients, helping them to take full advantage of the TOEIC program within their organizations. The newsletter also introduces trends for global human resource development and globalization in Japan.

TOEIC Newsletter No. 128 (issued: March 2016) has been translated into English by IIBC for readers around the world.

ETS, the ETS logo, PROPELL, TOEIC, TOEIC Bridge, and TOEIC BRIDGE are registered trademarks of the Educational Testing Service in the United States, Japan, and other countries and are used under license.

The Institute for International Business Communication (IIBC)
Sanno Grand Building 2-14-2, Nagata-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0014, Japan
Telephone: 81-03-5521-5012 Fax: 81-03-3581-5512
Official website: http://www.toeic.or.jp