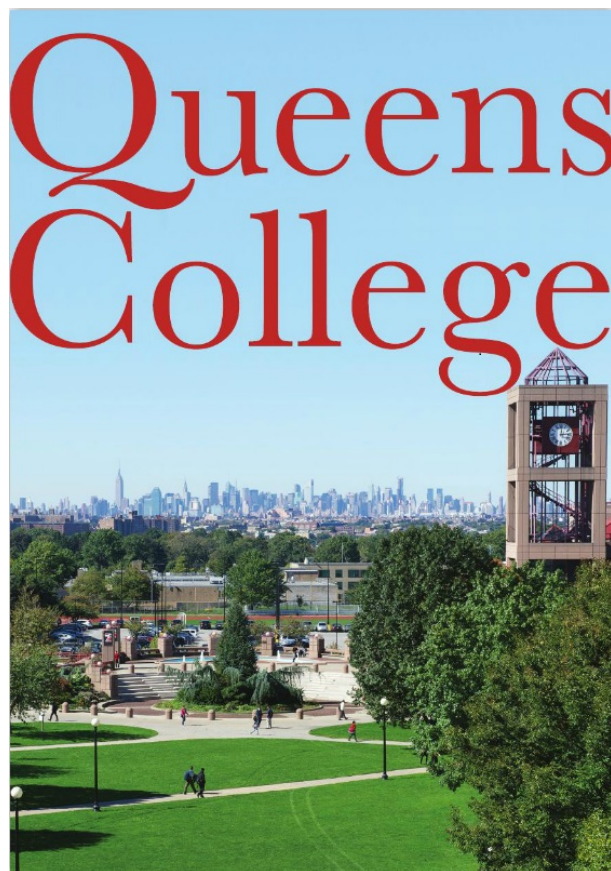


**Toyohashi University of Technology,  
Institute for Global Network Innovation in  
Technology Education**

**News from QC**

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## ■ Reports

### Small Attempts

Tomoya Matsui, Toyohashi University of Technology

The Outline of the Global FD program was introduced in previous my report, I'd like to write about my action in Queens College (QC).

Attending this program was a big challenge for me. The reason for this is that I am terrible at English. To tell how low my level is in English, I got a score that a person could get with their eyes closed and their ears closed on the TOEIC, which I took in April for the first time. I thought about what I learned and how do I learned it with my English skills during my six months.

I knew the level of my English skills and methods of learning English in training in Toyohashi Univ. Tech. from April to June. I took an English conversation internet lesson (Rare Job) every day as one of Global FD programs. It was useful to get used to making conversation in English. I began to take the Rare Job again to increase my opportunities of English conversations from September.

I moved to New York at the end of June, and I took English classes provided by the ELI (English Language Institute) of Queens College for six weeks. I was assigned to the second level class from the bottom in five class levels (basically seven level), which is an intermediate level. Everyone but myself seems to be able to listen English in this class. I find the characteristic of English education in a Japanese school is that it places importance on English for an exam although I don't know recent English education in Japan. I tried to say to someone, "What did you do on the weekend?" on Monday to make conversation. This conversation sometimes finished right away, and sometimes connected to another topic. I

went to museums, Central Park, The Statue of Liberty, and looked at some architecture during this period in order to make small talk.

The fall semester of Queens College began at the end of August. I attended lectures of Differential Equations, Our Changing Planet and Our Planet in the 21st Century. I think the style of the lecture depends on the instructor and the contents of the lecture. Some instructors use blackboard, some instructors use slides. And some instructors speak at natural pace (it is fast for me), and one instructor speaks very slowly with simple words, repeatedly and carefully. And I found that all instructors interact with the students many times in lecture. Instructors often confirm and ask if students understand lecture. And instructor say to students who answer or ask a question "Thank you (student's name)", "Good try, but it's wrong" and so on. Attending these classes provided me with helpful information on teaching methods.

Meanwhile, I attended a Japanese Culture Club to get opportunities for conversation. But I didn't actively think of finding a language exchange partner. Because I think my vocabulary and reading skills are not good enough, and I had studied them intensively. But whenever I met a member of the Club on campus, he said to me, "Did you find a language exchange partner?", "You should look for someone since American people are shy." (He is from Dominican Republic) So I tried to advertise for a partner on Facebook of Japanese Culture Club. As a result, I

found a partner at the next meeting. We practice English and Japanese with each other one or twice a week.

For another attempt, I expect to make conversation in English about soccer as a common topic, I tried to go to play soccer at a park in Brooklyn with a QC student and a ELI student (he introduced us to the soccer group that he found from Meetup of SNS). But all of us played soccer for about one hour without substitution, since there were only fourteen members. After that, all the members except us continued to play soccer, so there were not conversation opportunities at all. Unfortunately, I was sorry that my expectation of another small try was disappointing.

Finally, my inconsequential actions are written in this report. I think that one needs to accumulate small attempts in order to achieve a big challenge. I'm looking forward to a good result by my accumulation of small attempts in the future.



With classmates of ELI



Study meeting with language exchange partner

## Classes and my research activity in QC

Kenji Moriya, National Institute of Technology, Hakodate College

This letter reports my classes and my research activity in QC.

### 1. Classes

CUNY (City University of New York) supports students very well by web systems. Students can check various kinds of information (e.g. their grades, scholarship) by the CUNY web site by themselves. CUNY has adopted BB (Blackboard) as their LMS (Learning Management System); BB is adopted not only in each college but in all of CUNY. Additionally, QC provides their own app for

students; it's interesting.

Because National Institute of Technology, KOSEN, also adopted BB, the effective utilization of BB in QC could be useful for us. I think that whether the LMS is effectively used or not depends on each professor. This problem might also occur in our institute or my college.

Next, I'd like to talk about classes in QC. I feel the following points: firstly, homework is significantly important for both students and professors. Students have a ton of homework, that is, students really (have to) study, which is the key to their comprehension. Professors can



Blackboard, which is adopted as LMS in CUNY.



The QC app for the Android OS.

focus on difficult or special topics with the assumption that students study well before and after class. Secondly, students usually have an active attitude; students often ask questions and have good discussions. Even if that question is not focused on the point of discussion, professors don't prevent students from asking it; professors wait until a student finishes speaking. Finally, professors seem to prefer a lot of speaking and/or interactive discussions than a lot of writing.

Professors' lesson styles are also interesting and helpful for me. When a professor of mathematics explains equations, he prefers to say "This guy." And, he always has eye contact with students and uses the word "right"; according to my perception, he adds "right" to 90% of the end of his sentences. I love his passionate and humorous expression; I feel he really loves math. I think such a frank style attracts students' interest and induces more active discussions. I'm really enjoying and learning from my classes in terms of both

students and professors.

Professors who are in charge of the GFD project in QC are going to give us opportunities to audit many types of classes in QC. I'm looking forward to attending those classes.

## 2. My laboratory and my research activity

Cooperative research is one of the main aims in the GFD project. Thus, we have tutor professors in both TUT and QC. However, in QC, finding a tutor professor who has the same research field as that of each member was difficult. Fortunately, professor Fan, who researches recognition brain science and bio-signal measurement, which are near my research field, was willing to be my tutor professor. The lab has only postdoctoral research staff and doctoral course students, so, they are committed to their research. Honestly, because I don't have enough time to tackle our lab project than the other members, I hope to stay here for a longer period. I hope that I could dedicate myself to research by getting another opportunity as an overseas research fellow...someday.

By the way, because lab members conduct their experiments and analysis without chatting, I think that I can't have a lot of English conversation which is good practice. (It's my opinion; it's only in my lab case.)

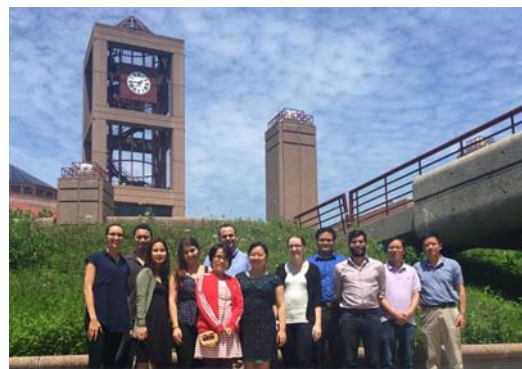


Photo) With the lab members. The person at right end is Prof. Fan.

### 3. Daily life at the summit apartments

I'd like to introduce a part of our daily life although it doesn't directly relate to our project's mission. We live in the Summit Apartments of QC, which is the university dormitory. Because the summit is on the QC campus, and there are supermarkets and restaurants near QC, it is really comfortable except one room is shared by four persons (If you are interested in details of the summit, see the QC letter Vol.3).

Due to a previous GFD members' kindness, fortunately, we have a television in the common space. The many professors said "If you have unknown words, don't use a dictionary. You should try to guess them from the context." and "Watch a TV show and movie every day and familiarize your ears with native speaker's English." Therefore, I have been watching TV dramas and movies in order to improve my listening skill by streaming channels such as Netflix and Hulu; let me say again I do it "in order to improve my listening skill".

I also like watching sports. Although I can understand what happens from the pictures,

listening to the play-by-play in sports is really difficult, because of following reasons: the speaking speed is very fast due to real-time explanations: the commentator is excited: the spectators' cheers prevent from hearing his/her voice. I was delighted that I could watch the NFL kickoff game in real-time. I'd like to continue to watch the sports and dramas in order to improve my listening skill.



Photo) The NFL kickoff game. He is Tom Brady, who is the QB of the NE PATRIOTS; and, the PATRIOTS are the previous champion team of the Super bowl. the PATRIOTS seem good due to his activity. Go! The NY GIANTS!

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