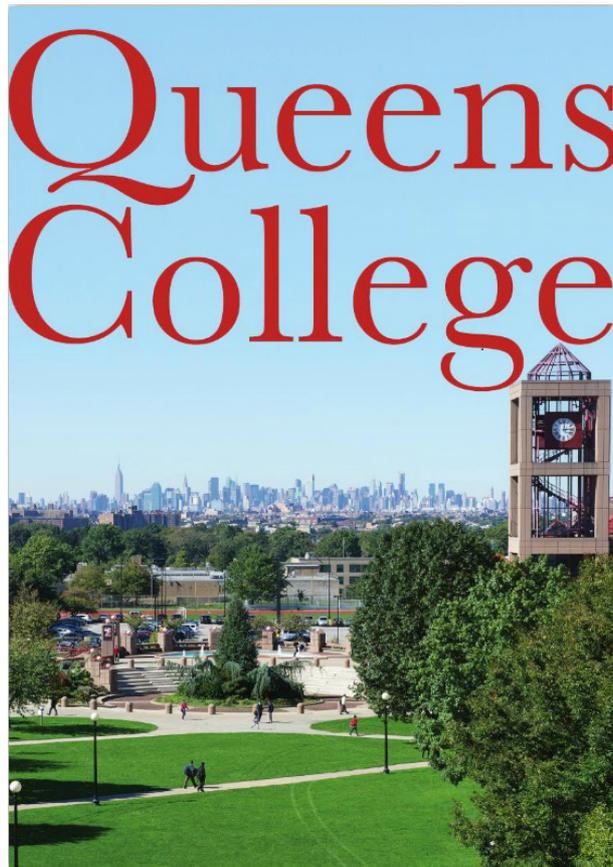


***Toyohashi University of Technology,  
Institute for Global Network Innovation in  
Technology Education  
News from QC  
(Vol. 23 2016/11/11)***



## ■ Reports

### From Akita to Queens

Kazuhiko Uebayashi, National Institute of Technology, Akita College

#### From Akita to Queens

MOVING FROM AKITA PREFECTURE, where Namahage<sup>1</sup> is well-known as folklore, and then Toyohashi city, which prospered from Tokaido-do and water transports in the Edo era, finally I've been to Queens, where Spider-Man was born. Leaving Narita Airport on 26th June, the other Japanese professors and I arrived at JFK Airport on the same day. While I was on the flight, I could not sleep well, so I watched several movies: "Olympus Has Fallen", "Youth - La Giovinezza", "Fathers and Daughters", "Kung Fu Panda 3". The visual images helped me understand the contents. Three months have passed since that day...

#### In the Summer Term

For one and a half months from the end of June, we took a course in English as a second language (ESL) as our training program in the daytime at the English Language Institute (ELI)<sup>2</sup> of Queens College (QC)<sup>3</sup>.

Every summer from the end of May to August is a summer term in QC. I heard that some QC students will study abroad or will take an internship at a company during the term. Ten students from the City University of New York (CUNY)<sup>4</sup> including QC also used the term so as to study at Toyohashi University of Technology, Japan, from the end of May to the middle of June. However, QC accepts students



**A prospect from the highest floor in Queens College to Manhattan Island, 5th October 2016**

from all over the world and holds a lot of basic courses in many fields. The course of ESL is one of these courses. After our arrival, we took a placement test; then we were assigned several levels of proficiency, respectively.

I was placed in 7A, the highest level in the ELI. There were twelve students in the class. We learnt four skills: Writing (Ws), Reading (Rs), Listening & Speaking I (LSIs), and Listening & Speaking II (LSIIs). Each skill had two classes from Monday to Thursday; the class was a three-hour class with a 15-minute break. Since the class consisted of twelve students, which was smaller-scale than ones in Japan, we were able to talk to each other easily including the instructors. In Ws, we learnt grammar, academic vocabulary, writing a summary and an opinion of an article in the New York Times (NYT)<sup>5</sup> and writing an essay after a debate on a topic with pros and cons. In Rs, we did intensive reading of articles from NYT & Revisions<sup>6</sup>, a novel, and quotes from

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1 <http://videolib-akita.jp/namahage/>

2 <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/pcs/programs/EnglishLanguage/>

3 <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/>

4 <http://www.cuny.edu/>

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5 <http://www.nytimes.com>

6 <http://revisions.qwriting.qc.cuny.edu>

well-known people as well as sharing our opinions. In LSIs, we learnt idioms and phrasal verbs and took dictation from the instructor, and each student gave a speech on his/her cherished things/memory. In LSIIIs, we read several articles on life, environment, art, and science and engineering, and then we checked our comprehension in our conversation. Additionally, we made debates and team and individual presentations on these topics. Although the four instructors were all different, my classmates were even more varied than the four: young Chinese students who were going to study for a degree in the USA; students from Korea, Taiwan and Mexico who wanted to improve their English proficiency during summer; a Korean man who was brushing up on his English after emigrating here with his family; Japanese instructors with the support of TUT; a Japanese exchange student who was going to stay here for one year; a Chinese woman who stayed here during her daughter's summer holiday. With such classmates, we could always enjoy talking during lunch. We also had a cultural outing in the course. That day, we went to see the musical "New York Spectacular" with the Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall. The story is about a lost sister and brother who go to well-known places in Manhattan before meeting their parents in front of the Statue of Liberty. After the play, we went to lunch at Bryant Park and the visited the New York Public Library. We happened to see an exhibition on Alexander Hamilton who founded the financial system in the USA. Speaking of shows, when we also went to see a modern version of Shakespeare's "Troilus and Cressida" at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park at the beginning of August, though I could not understand its whole story, I was impressed by its stage setting and the actors' and actresses' expressions. Eventually, even though I had a

hard time in the summer term of ELI, I survived the whole course with the instructors and the classmates. I would like to show my appreciation for their support and participation in the term.

In the evening of that term, I also observed Multivariable Calculus (MATH201) from Monday to Thursday. We could learn parametric equations, vector analysis and multiple integrals. These topics are usually taught in KOSEN except for Serret-Frenet formulas, which is important to understand a curvature in space. There were a variety of students from QC and CUNY whose major is mathematics, computer science and economics. Besides, it was a pleasure for me to have a lunch meeting with my research host professor, So Takei, on Fridays during the summer term in order to find our joint perspective on research.

### **In the First Half of the Fall Term**

After a week break, the fall term started on 23rd August. We have to take a one-credit course in this term, so I have been taking Intermediate Methods of Mathematical Physics (PHYS233). Besides, we could choose several course observations, and thus I have enrolled in Electromagnetism I (PHYS310), Physics for Computer Science (PHYS204), Research and Writing in the Sciences (PHYS320W), Communication Skills (CESL284). Each course also has two lectures from Monday to Thursday. Besides, we have been involved in two special training courses on Fridays: Teaching in English and Academic Language Support Course.

In PHYS233, we are learning non-homogeneous 2<sup>nd</sup> differential equations and vector analysis. Just before writing this newsletter, I took a midterm examination, but I could not solve all the problems because of the shortage of time. In PHYS310, we are learning

statistical electromagnetism. My host professor teaches this class, and there is a lot of conversation between the lecturer and the students, so it gives me a lot of ideas for my upcoming English lecture in Japan. He kindly gave me a chance to give a lecture while he was attending a conference. In PHYS204, we are learning non-linear physics with several experiments for computer science. This lecture gives the students a video clip of every class to review the contents via Google drive. The students can move anywhere inside the class with a mobile combo desk to discuss the material with each other. The programming and its video explanation are prepared as assignments. In PHYS320W, there are several assignments related to writing, and we often discuss these with each other and the instructor. It surprises me that the instructor shows the

actual interactions between authors and reviewers in a well-known journal. In CESL284, which was highly recommended by one of my ELI classmates, we are discussing news articles and episodes of TV shows in a dialog. The instructor also helps us with listening and note-taking skills in college lectures.

### **From Now**

IN THE CLASSES AND MEETINGS from the summer term to the first half of the fall term, I have just recognised the difficulty of conveying what I want to share with others. In the next half of the fall term, I hope that I will acquire the proficiency to express difficult concepts in English in various ways. In addition, I hope that I will bring a new research collaboration among QC, TUT and Akita into the world.

## **A Report on Lectures in QC**

Iori Nakaoka, National Institute of Technology, Ube College

### **1. Outline of Training**

After completing the training at Toyohashi University of Technology started in April, we arrived at QC on June 26. It has been three months to attend the training in QC. In this report, I will describe some courses in the training.

### **2. English Courses at the ELI**

During the first one and a half months, we participated in the English training program at ELI (English Language Institute). The classes had been held 6 hours a day, four days a week (from Mon. to Thur.). We always have home works after lectures. In ELI, four kinds of classes: speaking, listening, writing and reading are rotated to develop general English abilities. I am Level 5b and in the class I was assigned,

there are about 10 Chinese and one Vietnamese, Columbian and Italian (Chinese) students. I felt no difference from their writing, reading and grammar skill with me but they had higher listening and speaking skills than me. The following contents are the details of the lessons that are most impressive.

In the writing lesson, we learned much English grammar especially the adjective clause and adverb clause. A 30-minute short essay exercise with different subjects was added every week in the second part of the course. The titles of the subjects were, for example, "Boys and girls should attend separate class?" and "It is sometimes said that borrowing money from a friend can harm or damage the friendship." etc. The format of the essay begins with answering whether I agree with the

title or not, then follows by two or three reasons for the answer, and close with the conclusions. In short, the format is the same with the TOEFL writing. These issues seem to be adopted from samples of TOEFL test, although I realized it later.

The exercise of speaking is added a 10-minute presentation besides ProCon that have already been reported. In my class's ProCon, we debated about "use of the tablet as a teaching tool in the classroom" between favor group and opposite group. On the other hand, the presentation theme was optional so that the Columbian student presented the reasons why study abroad, Vietnamese student introduced about Vietnam and one of Chinese students introduced the Yoga.

In the Japanese education system, PBL and active learning became popular in recent years. I noticed the improvement in the education system, and it was very helpful to me because I did not have a presentation in my class when I was a student.

All the professors had to take the same kind of final exam as the placement test after the summer classes ended. All the evaluation scores (aural, structure reading cloze and composition) increased in my case.

### **3. Courses on Fall Semester**

I am participating in one credit course and two other courses as an observer in the fall semester. I belong to the Department of Business Administration at Ube College now. Its students often wish to enroll in the Faculty of Economics at Kyushu University and the Department of Economics at Hiroshima University. Therefore, I selected "Introduction to Macroeconomics" as a credit course because if I learn economics, I can help my students. There are about 30 students in the course. The course, as its name suggests, introduces

economics. However, the professor conducts the course as if each student already knows the meanings of the common technical words and symbols often used in economics. If I don't know the words, I can't keep up with the course. Therefore, preparation is necessary using the course documents which are all uploaded on Blackboard as an e-learning system. This course has four exams in total, and I already took the first exam. The exam was multiple choice and had five questions. Fortunately, I was able to answer all the questions correctly, but I felt the challenge of the exam in English.

In addition, I have attended two courses as an observer. One of these courses is "Data Mining / Warehousing" with a mentor professor at QC. There are about 20 students in the course, which is given a lecture using textbook written by the professor. The construction of data warehouse and the differences between database and data warehouse were introduced at the beginning. Recently, the professor introduced entropy as information theory and conditional probability. I think the Japanese students often listen to the class passively, and don't often participate. Conversely, these QC students are the opposite side in my impression.

The other observation course is "Marketing Research." There are about 10 students. The class is for students who already have a basic knowledge of marketing. It consists of both lecture by professor and group work. In group of 3 or four members, we will do actual marketing research based on the contents of the class. My group members are working on the iPhone, and we are using "Survey Monkey" as a web marketing service. "Questant," which is provided by Macromill has a similar function in Japan. Because all the members are student, it is difficult to determine how well we will work together.

In my overall impression, I am (often)

surprised at the difficulty of learning in English and aggressiveness of American students. I am currently participating in some events related to

my academic field other than daily courses, but I will describe this in my next QC news.

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