

**Toyohashi University of Technology,
Institute for Global Network Innovation in Technology
Education
News from Penang
(Vol.13 2017/10/25)**



Reports

Lectures in Malaysia

Masanao Yamada, National Institute of Technology, Kushiro College

We, the global FD members, gave lectures at two Polytechnic schools (PSP, PTSB) and one university (USM) in Malaysia. When we had email-based discussions before coming to Malaysia, one of the Polytechnic schools proposed a lecture topic that deals with LTI systems, including Fourier transform, Laplace transform, and Z transform. It is too large to cover in one or two lecture sessions. After discussing in person, I decided to talk about signal processing in relation to music because music is familiar to people in every culture.

Immediately after I started my first lecture, it turned out that the students were not able to read music scores since they didn't have music classes in elementary and junior high school. It means that my lecture prepared was not appropriate for the Malaysian students. Then, I focused on physical properties not on a musical side. After the lecture, a student asked me which aspect today's lecture can be used for in our daily life. From the question, I learned that Malaysian students have strong interests for practical applications. In the second lecture, I changed the plan and talked on basics of acoustic engineering and its applications.

At PTSB, in addition to lectures which are arranged in light of the lessons learned at PSP, I gave students an assignment. It was a mini-project, in which students make a short sound clip. In spite of time constraints, each student made their own work, creating and combining sound materials. Eventually, they presented their work. The result of the students' evaluation for my lectures at PTSB was quite good, and I got a comment from a staff member at PTSB that my teaching skill was good and I was friendly and close to the students.



Fig.1 Group photo with PSP students



Fig.2 A scene at PTSB. Students are watching PR movie of Kosen.

I delivered two lectures at School of Computer Science, USM. One of them was in a class named Mathematical Method for Computer Science for first-year undergraduate students. I talked about fundamental concepts of Fourier transform. At the end of the lecture, Professor Mandava, who was a professor in charge of the class, commented my talk as "Beautiful lecture!" I was glad to hear that. Although some students pointed out in the questionnaire that a part of my English pronunciation was not clear, the overall rating in the feedbacks from the students were favorable. The other lecture at USM was a class in

Advanced Algorithm and Complexity for graduate students. I talked on the algorithm of Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) as an example of computational complexity reduction. I assumed a certain level of knowledge regarding signal processing for the students, but actually they came from diverse fields of undergraduate courses and the level of the students was in a large range. I explained the concept and answered questions from the students as plainly as possible. It seemed, however, difficult for some of the students to understand the contents.

Throughout the lectures in Malaysia, I learned that the students are strongly conscious of applications with regard to what they are learning. Even though NIT (Kosen) in Japan puts more emphasis on practical training and applications than universities, Malaysian students were more than that. I believe the application-oriented attitude when teaching and learning can be applied to educational activities at my college.

Fruitful one-year FD program

Masanao Yamada, National Institute of Technology, Kushiro College

This global FD program was a dreamlike opportunity to learn English as much as I wish. I have taken TOEIC tests since 2001 and put my best efforts on learning English over the last eight years. When I started participating in this program, I decided to focus on improving speaking and writing skills because I have already learned grammar, vocabulary, and listening to a degree through taking TOEIC tests. I remember an ALC lecturer commented on my speaking as “Awkward English” in a class at the Toyohashi University of Technology. It was a result of my exam-oriented English learning. After coming to NY, however, I learned a lot of colloquial expressions and phrases. I guess my English is now not so awkward. During the ELI classes I took in the summer, homework was assigned every day. Essay writing was the hardest part of the assignments for me and I always spent a long time to compose sentences and paragraphs. Especially, I struggled with coming up with supports for the essays. Language education in Japan did not put importance on training to express opinions on grounds. This is a difference in educational focus between Japan and the U.S.

While staying in QC, I learned English a lot from

Danny, an American student at QC. He was my language exchange partner and is my best friend in the U.S. My question about English to him was sometimes difficult for native speakers to answer, but he always gave me sincere feedbacks. I also learned English from Ann, who taught the Academic Language Support Course. She was the best English teacher ever I met. Besides English, I also learned teaching styles, educational systems, and school cultures in the U.S.

In Malaysia, I gave lectures at two Polytech schools and a university. To speak English in lectures was comfortable thanks to the experiences in NY. The academic level of the students was lower than my prior assumption and I sometimes had to change the contents in tune with the students. Students in Malaysia are aware of applications regarding what they are learning. While the attitude works as a good source of motivation, they seem to disregard the importance of fundamental or theoretical side of their subjects. Looking at Malaysia from a viewpoint of English learning environment, people can buy English newspapers at a low cost (1.5RM, about 40 yen) at convenience stores, and listen to English radio

programs, which broadcast not only talks of professional announcers but also interview comments of local people, who are not necessarily good English speakers. I believe that such an environment easily accessible to English is important for learning the language. In that respect, English learners in Japan seem to be in more challenging situation than Malaysia.

Finishing this program, I acquired improved pronunciation, colloquial expressions, and speaking fluency. As for grammar, now I have a better

comprehension of articles and tense than before. I keep in touch with Danny and started discussions on the possibility of collaborative research with USM faculty members. On top of that, connections with the other members established through this program is a great asset for me. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to every single person who supported this program.

Toyohashi University of Technology
Institute for Global Network Innovation in Technology Education
Center for International Education
1-1, Hibarigaoka, Tempaku-cho, Toyohashi, Aichi, Japan
Tel: +81-532-81-5161
Mail:unireform@office.tut.ac.jp