

ENGLISH TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION
of
WESTERN HARIMA



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GREETINGS!

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Welcome everyone to the October edition of the English Teachers' Association of Western Harima Newsletter. Students have been kept very busy with Mid-term exams, club activities, and extra-curricular activities in which to enhance their knowledge and experience. One such activity was the 36th Nishi-Harima Senior High School English Speech Contest which was held in Himeji, on the 13th of October. It was a privilege to attend the event, and hear such excellent English spoken about a range of topics of great importance to the students.

It was wonderful to see English Teachers, ALTs, and parents in attendance, encouraging the students, and being so supportive of them. Not all the students could win, but knowing that they have such support and encouragement from their teachers and parents, gives them the confidence to continue to take new challenges, taking broader steps into becoming independent adults.

As English teachers we can broaden the student's exposure to internationalization, by encouraging them to learn more about foreign cultures and feel an

affinity with people from around the world. On the 28th of October in Yamasaki, an International Festival was held, with lots of international food available from many countries, as well as providing opportunities for greater interaction between the locals, and people from the international community. Many young people were in attendance, and it was great to see the ease with which the young people could relate with people from around the world.

It's great that we can share such happy experiences together.

IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

Thank you for your continued support of the English Teachers Association of the Western Harima Newsletter.

In the first article of this edition, Mr. Yusuke Ohtsuka explains the fascinating aspects of Shikama Technical High School, where in 2003 they started a new section called "Tabusei". The school offers a multiple section system, providing students the options of studying in the day time as normal, or having the option of studying classes in the evenings. Students also have the options of studying over either a three or four year period in different subjects. The flexibility and options

available at Shikama Technical School is rare in Hyogo Prefecture.

The second article leads on from last month's introduction of Kenmei Girls' Junior and Senior High School, this time discussing English communication education at the school. The article discusses the process of English education through the grades, starting with basic introductions, leading to more complex discussions and debates, increasing student's abilities to express ideas and opinions individually.

The third article is part two of the English Tales of Haga: Last Bullet – A Story of an Old

Matagi. Part two sees Ryuichiro beginning his search for the great bear, while he considers the meaning of his final hunt.

Following that, the impressive 36th Nishi-Harima Senior High School English Speech contest is discussed, with the results of the contest provided.

Finally the English Teachers' Association of Western Harima's General Assembly is reviewed. The General Assembly was considered a great success, providing wonderful insights into English Teaching.

We hope you thoroughly enjoy the articles and find value in them.



WHAT IS SHIKAMA TECHNICAL, ESPECIALLY TABUSEI ?

By Yusuke Ohtsuka

Introduction

Do you know anything about Shikama Technical High School? In 2003, we started a new section called “Tabusei,” meaning multiple section system. You must be wondering what we mean by “multiple.” Let me go on to talk about this unique system which is adopted only by four schools in Hyogo Prefecture.

The school system of Shikama Technical

It may be difficult for outsiders to understand this complicated system of Shikama Technical High School. To put it simply, we should call it “One school, two time zones and three systems and branches.

This school has Zennichsei (day-time) and tabusei (part-time) sections. Tabusei is divided into two time zones, daytime (section 1-2) and night-time (section 3). Section 3 is also divided into two time zones. The first is for the students who want to finish three year courses.

They come to school at 3:40 p.m. and finish schoolwork at 8:50 p.m. by taking six lessons a day, as daytimes students do. The second is for the students who try to complete a four year course by taking four lessons a day. They start their schoolwork at 5:35 p.m. and finish at 8:50 as three year students do.

Zennichisei students and tabusei 1-2 students look almost the same. They wear the same uniforms. “Almost” means even the teachers can tell daytime from part-time students only by the lines of their school shoes.

Why do we call them part-time students even though they look the same as day timers? Tabusei originates from four year night high schools. The current Tabusei section 3 upholds this original part-time (teijisei) system. Part-time 1-2 and Part-time Section 3 three year courses started with the concept that they add two periods to the original teijisei four periods a day and finish their study in three years. Most other night high schools keep the original form of studying four periods at night and finish in four years.

What students study at this school

Daytime section has three departments, Machinery, Electric and Information, and Environmental technology. The Environmental Technology department used to be called “Industrial Chemistry”, and students mainly study chemical subjects and how it can contribute to the promotion of good social conditions and environmental protection. Students apply for Zennichisei section at the entrance examination and are divided into each department after half a year of study.

Tabusei section has only one department, “Basic engineering.” This is divided into three “branches.” However, what students study at each branch is basically the same as what they study in the Daytime Section. In Tabusei the focus is set on teaching student basic skills and knowledge that are required in the current society, especially in the field of manufacturing.

The branches and how students select their branch are the same as the daytime students. The merit of Tabusei basic engineering course is acquiring minimum essentials by dealing with the needs and academic skills of each student.

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WHAT IS SHIKAMA TECHNICAL, ESPECIALLY TABUSEI ?

By Yusuke Ohtuska

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In some classes two teachers are assigned. Its purpose of this system is to do team teaching in which one teacher leads the main lesson and the other helps the students that have difficulty understanding. In many cases teachers use handouts which students can fill in according to the instructions, and then attach them to their notebooks. Through this process students organize their knowledge and teachers can check students' schoolwork by collecting notebooks at each exam period. This is one of the most effective feedbacks. Of course, most schools adopt this style, but under the small group study of Tabusei, I am sure this system works very well.

Future Career

Shikama Technical has an excellent reputation in terms of the quality of students. In other words, local companies have a sound trust on students' abilities. Actually Daytime students have 100% success rate for job interviews. Tabusei students have about 90% success rate at the first trial in September. The actual job opportunities for each student is about 5 in job post numbers and 3 for one company.

For the success of student's job hunting and to let the students have the future perspective for their career, Shikama technical encourages its students to take as many qualifications as possible. There are many kinds of qualification exams in Japan, such as Eiken, Kanji, news literacy, numerical skills, and information technology. As this school is a technical one, we facilitate students to take the exams of numerical calculation, information technology and drafting. Those who acquire more than five licenses are given bronze, ten for silver and fifteen for gold prizes by Technical High School Principals Association.

On top of that, in July and March, we have career guidance for first and second year students. Staff of a career guidance company come to this school and give lectures to students. Students can go to the booths of miscellaneous schools and actually talk with the staff of various schools to know what they should do to enter job hunting in the final year of high school.

Through these activities, we seek to keep a high rate of success in job hunting so that the students could survive in possible recessions in the future.

Club Activities

Generally in the vocational schools like ours, club activities are very active. In Zennichisei, Track & field, basketball are very strong. In T&F, in 5000m walking, students won the national championship two years in a row in the past. In Tabusei, the judo team had won national championships for ten years in a row in the national part-time high school tournament. Cycling club does its activities as a mixture of Zennichisei and Tabusei sections and this year one student advanced into the national sports event (Kokutai).

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WHAT IS SHIKAMA TECHNICAL, ESPECIALLY TABUSEI ?

By Yusuke Ohtuska

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Through this kind of “intelligence and physical strength”, Shikama technical keeps a high degree of trust from the local area and companies.

Adult class

One of the selling points of this school is “being open to society.” One project that is based on this concept is adult classes. This year we have four courses: art, calligraphy, woodcraft and English. English classes are taught by an ALT and a JTE of Tabusei 3. The number of students in each course is about 15, besides 4 in art. Participants really enjoy these classes and I am sure these courses meets the requirement of local society.

Discipline

One of the things we emphasize in education is discipline, especially through greetings and physical education (PE) classes. Students are trained to greet the teachers in loud and clear voices. And PE classes are very tough, to the extent that sometimes I feel as if I am working for a college of physical education. Students seem to be relaxed after PE classes and we know how tough the PE classes are.

Most of the PE classes, especially when newcomers enter this school, are spent on “group action,” which practically means drill exercises. At the beginning of the first year, students go to Shimanami Village in Hiroshima prefecture to do drill exercises staying for one night. Through this training, students can be “real” Shikako (short form of Shikama Kogyo) students.

On sports day, usually held in September, students do “radio exercise Shikako edition,” the NHK Radio Exercise arranged in Shikama Technical way. This looks a little braver and tougher than the original version of the Radio Exercise, such as making strong sounds with the arms strongly hitting on the side of the body. This has become a kind of “brand name” of this school and many parents leave the stadium after this Radio Exercise ends, although all the other events follow. This became more famous after some parents put the videos on YouTube.

English Education

Last, but not least, I have to talk about English education of this school. Based on the principle of Tabusei, we set the goal that the students acquire the basic skills of English. At the beginning of each class of one school year, all students introduce themselves in front of all their classmates. Of course they can read their handouts and be helped by the teacher. Next we encourage the students to greet in English. At the beginning only saying hello is OK. But as time goes by, we ask students to add teachers’ names with the surname “Mr. ~.” or “Ms. ~.” I tell them not to say “○○teacher” when they address to teachers. Does anyone who read this story write 「○○T」 on top of an internal memo to other teachers? You get an F in my class.

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WHAT IS SHIKAMA TECHNICAL, ESPECIALLY TABUSEI ?

By Yusuke Ohtuska

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Fortunately, as in most schools, our regular classrooms have 52 inch monitors in front. Using this device, we can show some visual aid to appeal to the sense of students based on the idea of “seeing is believing.” Students seem to be happy when they see the pictures and presentation slides given by ALTs and JTEs. We would like to make the most of ICT devices so that students get the sense of English both in terms of physical and visual senses.

We sometimes take students to the PC room to let them do the research study together with our ALT. The ALT can give students effective advice on how to use the internet browsers and databases for the students to achieve their goals of study.

By gauging the degree of achievement of each student, and making the most of small group education entitled in Tabusei, we would like to keep on working to get the most of students potential by seeking the best way of education.

Conclusion

Coming closer to the end of this report, the readers will not be able to understand the difference between Zennichsei and Tabusei. The only difference is “basic”? Yes, of course. Look back on the life of yours so far. The real winners in the social and academic world must be those who appreciate the basics, those who have never neglected the basics, those who get surely what they can get. This principle is really necessary for the students to become the winners in today’s world. We would like to keep on seeking the best way of education to produce the best human resource based on the study of this school.



COMMUNICATING IDEAS AND OPINIONS IN ENGLISH

By Lauren McRae

Last month, Ms. Matsui at Kenmei Girls' Junior and Senior High School described their educational policy and over-all introduction of the school. This month, Ms. Lauren McRae, an ALT of the school, focuses on English education and some other activities for international understanding.

High School Oral English Classes

At Kenmei, students continue oral communication English classes into high school. Once a week they take part in a lesson with a Japanese English teacher and an ALT. The main goals of high school oral English classes are for students to enjoy communicating in English and be able to express their opinions. High school oral English classes are conducted only in English. Students are supported by the Japanese English teacher to express themselves and are encouraged to use English throughout the lesson.

High School First Grade

For first year high school students, they begin the year with talking about themselves, this is an important step as they can feel confident speaking about a topic they know well. Classes involve a lot of pair and group work so students are able to listen and speak to each other.

Students work together on dialogues and use their imagination to create what comes next. The dialogues are real life situations so students are able to practice meaningful English. Students will also create presentations and reports, using their iPads to find information and pictures.



First year students begin to experience and practice mini-debates where they have to express their point of view, listen to other students' opinions and create refutations. The topics are simple but the key point is to understand what are good reasons and how to refute. It is the first step towards more serious debates which will happen the following year.

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COMMUNICATING IDEAS AND OPINIONS IN ENGLISH

By Lauren McRae

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High School Second Grade

The main goal for second year high school students is to work on expressing their opinions and own ideas in English, leading to debates. Classes involve a lot of pair work and group work so students are able to listen and speak to each other.

Each class students sing an English pop song. Students can learn new words, practice pronunciation and enjoy English while singing. Learning English songs is a great way to foster students' interest in English.

Furthermore, students have a chance to practice Eiken interview questions. Eiken questions involve giving opinions and also help students prepare for the Eiken interview test. It is a good chance for students to express their ideas with their partner and get feedback from the teachers.

Throughout the year students discuss topics related to school and their daily life before moving on to current global issues. Students share their own ideas and opinions on various topics. They have the chance to use their iPads to work on various research tasks and share their findings to the class or in small groups.

Towards the end of second year, students will work on formal debates. Topics consist of pro / con questions and students must find information to support their opinions. They will understand the parts of a debate and be able to work in teams to prepare well structured reasons and refutations.

Overall the main focus of high school oral English classes are to continue to foster an interest in English, to enjoy using English and to be able to express opinions and ideas while understanding how to take part in a debate.



THE ENGLISH TALES OF HAGA:

Last Bullet - *A Story of an Old Matagi* - Part 2

Written by Mokutaro Sugatani & Translated by Futamu Kishimoto

(Continued from last month issue)

The next morning, he left the house, telling Haru that he would go to the mountain to prune the trees (*edauchi*). Outside it was freezing cold, but there was no wind. The low, heavy clouds worried him: Snow might fall soon. If the mountains were coated in a fresh snow, he wouldn't be able to move freely.

As Ryuichiro passed through the ravine where he had met the big bear five days ago, his hunting dog, Taro began moving in circles with its nose to the ground. Strangely enough, after only five days, all traces of the bear's scent were already gone. What was the point of bringing a hunting dog if it couldn't pick up the scent? Ryuichiro was even more determined than before, but his piercing eyes were beginning to show the air of impatience and irritation. Ryuichiro had never before seen a bear disappear without leaving a scent or footprints. A wind blew through the leafless trees around him, and he heard a distant sound like the rumbling of the earth. The thought that he might never find the bear again made him anxious. Depending solely on his intuition and many years of experience, Ryuichiro began walking in front of his dog. However, he was met with difficulty and despair. At long last he found footprints, only to suddenly lose sight of them. Taro, unable to catch a whiff of the bear's scent, moved in circles and barked in anguish.

Finally Ryuichiro said, "Let's start again tomorrow, Taro! We must get down the mountain." Taro was panting feebly with exhaustion beside Ryuichiro, who sat down for a rest. His decision to return home was not because Taro had lost the bear's scent. It was because he knew that, if he wanted to continue to pursue the bear, he would have to deceive his wife again about going into the mountains, and so he couldn't stay out too late today. Even though, until now, Ryuichiro had been chasing after the bear, as if possessed, he still retained a bit of reason. Something that was neither pride nor stubbornness but rather an overwhelming desire like a blue flame was driving him beyond the limits of his physical strength.



An image of *matagi* and a bear.

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THE ENGLISH TALES OF HAGA:

Last Bullet - *A Story of an Old Matagi* - Part 2

Written by Mokutaro Sugatani & Translated by Futamu Kishimoto

(Continued from page 8)

The next day, Ryuichiro again went deep into the mountains but with no better luck. On the third day, only a sense of fatigue remained. Why am I doing this? Even if I succeed in shooting down that bear, what on earth will I gain? Ryuichiro thought. I'd just be shunned as a hunter who used his rifle during the off season. I'd have nothing left. Cloaked in a sense of emptiness, Ryuichiro began to hate himself. Smoking, with his eyes closed, he tried to push away the thoughts of chasing the bear. He was exhausted. The wind was howling. The scarf from his grandson was flapping in the wind, and the sweat on his back felt cold. Each time he closed his eyes, he saw the bear glowering down at him. Thinking of that moment, Ryuichiro could no longer suppress the blue flame which began to flicker again. He flicked the cigarette butt away and stamped it out.

Out of nowhere, it occurred to him: I'll bet that bear is in that cave by the steep rocky slope. Along the northern slope that rose 1,300 meters above sea level and formed the border between this prefecture and the next, there were several rifts and grottoes. Ryuichiro tingled with excitement at the thought which was close to conviction. With no confusion or hesitation, and without looking for the foot prints or a scent, he headed directly for the rocky tracts. When he reached the rocky northern slope, the vermilion sun was about to set behind the ridge to the west. Finally Ryuichiro caught sight of animal tracks around thirty centimeters wide, just in front of a cave.

At the mouth of a cave, Taro whined, looking terrified. Weighing on Ryutaro's mind was the fact that, once he lured the bear out of its hiding place, if he couldn't shoot it down, he himself would be killed. Or, if he shot the bear in the cave but the bear turned out not to be the big bear he had been looking for, he would have to give up the idea of chasing the large bear.

Feeling somewhat sentimental, Ryuichiro loaded his gun with the last bullet, the last bullet in his fifty year of hunting. The big bear that the Ryuichiro had met only once had began to take various forms inside of him. He was sure the bear was observing him now from inside the cave. The bear showed no signs of movement, even as Taro continued to whimper. Ryuichiro's position was no good for shooting. He looked for a spot that might offer him some protection, but there was nowhere to escape because of the steep cliff. Even critically wounded, a large bear would probably counter attack with its sharp claws and the weight of the body.

Ordinarily, Taro would have entered the cave to lure the bear from its hiding place, but today Taro planted his front legs to the ground and continued to whine, refusing to go forward.

In the past, Ryuichiro had once entered a cave, came face to face and succeeded in shooting it down.

(To be continued on to the next issue.)

The 36th Nishi-Harima Senior High School English Speech Contest Proved Its High Level of the Area !



On October 13th, Saturday, 22 young leaders of Nishi-Harima gathered at Himeji City Culture Center to talk about their hope, interest, anxiety, friendship, dream, and their future in English. The performances of the students fully attracted the audience and they themselves actually proved to be up and coming young leaders of our society in Nishi Harima. Though we would like to give all the contestants the first prize equally, we announced the result of this year's speech contest as follows:

The 1st Place : Ms. Furukawa Juri : The High School of University of Hyogo
 The 2nd Place : Mr. Inoue Taichi : Aioi High School
 The 3rd Place : Ms. Trisha Jane : Kotogaoka High School
 The 4th Place : Ms. Mahiro Yamagata : Himeji Higashi High School



* The top three students will attend the Hyogo Prefectural English Speech Contest on November 4th in Akashi.



THE ETWH GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2018

At Himeji Commercial Senior High School
On October 25th, Thursday
ENDED IN A GREAT SUCCESS !

The English Teachers' Association of Western Harima (ETWH) held the 2018 General Assembly at Himeji Commercial High School on October 25th. With two English demonstration lessons by the teachers at the school, in the afternoon Professor Ken Tamai at Kobe City University of Foreign Studies gave us a lecture and workshop on "Super Active Grammar Teaching." As we foretold in last month's issue here, all the attendants had a lot of eye-popping and eye-opening experiences to acquire new insights and perspectives on teaching and learning English. Many teachers at the seminar were deeply inspired by the magical talk of the professor and decided to apply what they learned here to their English classes from tomorrow.

Also, we were delighted to have such an active symposium after the demonstration lessons in the morning. Thanks to the creative demonstration lessons by Ms. Shakuto, Ms. Tsuchida, and Mr. Dugwyler, we enjoyed observing two lessons at the same time, getting a lot of hints and smart ideas for our own English teaching. In the symposium after the lessons, many teachers presented their questions and opinions over the lessons, creating a constructive atmosphere for the further development of English education in Nishi Harima area. We must also mention our surprise to find a state-of-the-art visual device at the front of each classroom, which might be called "iProjection." The new projector clearly symbolized the future of our classroom.

Last but not least, we would like to express our hearty thanks to Mr. Kenji Usui, principal, and all the staff of Himeji Commercial High School. Thank you very much.

