

To Develop Students' English Competences

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First, on behalf of the Tokushima Prefectural Board of Education, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and respect to the English teachers and ALTs for their efforts in promoting English education in Tokushima. Also, I would like to express my respect for the Foreign Language Association to improve students' English language proficiency through various initiatives, such as the Tokushima Prefectural High School English Speech Contest, the Essay Writing Contest, and the English Debate Tournament.

This year, the current Course of Study has been fully implemented in high schools through annual progression. The Course of Study aims to "develop students' communicative competences through the language activities" throughout elementary, junior high, and high schools. In particular, the key words in the high school goals are as follows: "Integrated language activities which combine listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills," "appropriately in accordance with the purposes, scenes and situations in which the communication is to take place," and "a willingness to communicate proactively and autonomously." Based on these perspectives, each school and teacher has been continuously working to further improve their classes to achieve the goals. Also, at the Annual Tokushima Prefectural High School English Teachers' Meeting this summer, some examples of such practices were reported. To achieve these goals, and to further enhance foreign language education, specific numerical targets were identified in the Fourth Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education (June 16, 2023). As for "Fostering Human Resources in the Global Society", the measurement indicators in high schools are as follows.

- Regarding English proficiency, an increase in the percentage of high school students who achieved CEFR equivalent A2 level or above by high school graduation. (Target to be achieved by 2028: more than 60%)
- Increase the percentage of high school students who have achieved the equivalent of CEFR level B1 or above by high school graduation (Target to be achieved by 2028: 30% or above), especially for those expected to play an active role on the global stage.
- Increase the number of Japanese high school students studying abroad to 120,000 by 2033.
- Increase the number of Japanese and other overseas students, especially those studying abroad for medium- to long-term credit or degree, to 380,000 by 2033. Of these, the target is 150,000 for long-term study-abroad students.

In Tokushima, students' English proficiency is getting better. However, in order to realize further improvement and achieve the above goals, it is necessary to make efforts to improve the following areas: (1) Enrichment of language activities, (2) JTE's English use, (3) JTE's English proficiency, (4) Out-of-class activities with ALTs, and (5) Effective use of ICT, which are announced in the results of the 2023 English Education Implementation Status Survey. To this end, Tokushima Prefectural Board of Education is conducting the following projects.

(1) Workshops for practicing teaching (For Teachers)

Teachers in each school participated in the workshops with the aim of improving classes, including the enrichment of language activities, and further enhancing the English language competences of English teachers. The participants discussed language activities and questioning using textbooks used at their schools, and shared ideas through micro-teaching.

- Part 1: Creating classes utilizing textbooks (for integration of teaching and evaluation)
- Part 2: Enhancing Teachers' English Proficiency
- Part 3: Observing classes at junior high schools
- Part 4: Classroom Practice through micro-teaching

(2) English Education Leaders Project based on elementary, junior high and high school cooperation. (For Teachers)

This project aims to develop students' ability to communicate (especially "speaking") through better connection between each school, focusing on upgrading language activities in all school types, teaching and evaluation methods, and improving the connection between elementary and junior high schools and between junior and high schools. Two English education leaders are selected from each school type, and they share the current situation and issues of classes, performance tests and more in each school type, and observe classes in other schools to discuss what kinds of teaching and evaluation are required in each school type.

(3) Tokushima Glocal Leader Project (For Students)

This project is divided into two stages with the aim of enabling Tokushima high school students to become aware of the world while thinking about the hometown Tokushima and themselves with a broader perspective, and with the aim of supporting high school students who want to learn in the world such as studying abroad or continuing their education overseas. The themes of each stage are as follows: Stage 1(Part1~3), Stage2 (Part4~6).

- Part 1: Sightseeing tour with international students from Korea and Taiwan.
- Part 2: A university professor's class on the theme of education around the world.
- Part 3: Online World Tour.
- Part 4: What is required for study abroad or higher education abroad.
- Part 5: Practice looking at yourself and expressing your thoughts in your own words.
- Part 6: Essay Writing Challenge.

Tokushima Prefectural Board of Education will continue to support teachers and students through various activities such as above.

Finally, the Foreign Language Association and each teacher are playing a key role in further improving the English language skills of the students and helping them to achieve their goals such as studying abroad and entering higher education overseas. Then, the Tokushima Prefectural Board of Education is committed to supporting the association by sharing the latest information of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and providing information on advanced practices and more. I hope for the further development of this association and ask for your continuous efforts for the further development of English language education in Tokushima.