

Original Article

A Practical Research on Fostering “Global Human Resources” Part II — Through Conducting “Okayama English Village” Events —

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This paper reports how “Okayama English Village 2013” events were programmed and conducted especially focusing on how they were improved according to the results of the questionnaires by the participating pupils. It also discusses how the events were evaluated by the participants and instructors/assisting staff and then proposes how they can be further improved. According to the evaluations, the events in 2013 were even more successful than those conducted the previous year, but there are still several points that should be improved for the subsequent years. Among these are:

- to reconsider and plan the activities to allot enough time to each activity
- to plan the whole event so as to let the pupils speak more English, desirably between themselves

Key Words: Elementary School, Foreign Language Activities, English Language Education, Events

Introduction

Matsuhata et al (2013) reported and discussed the “Okayama English Village” Events in 2013 and concluded that the events achieved a good result, but they should be improved in order to give the participating pupils better opportunities to experience the English language, foreign cultures, nature, and group work. The Okayama City Government and Chugokugakuen University/Chugoku Junior College continued collaboration to conduct “The Executive Committee for Okayama English Village Project” in 2013. The two main objectives of this project have not changed from the previous year’s and are:

- 1 creating a location for elementary school 5th and 6th grade pupils to experience the English language, foreign cultures and local nature in a place distant from their homes where English can

be predominantly used.

2 to foster the following qualities in the participating pupils:

- better communication skills, mainly in English;
- an enhanced understanding of foreign cultures;
- improved self-direction, cooperation and other qualities necessary for working in groups and
- an enhanced awareness and attitude toward nature

Programs and evaluations

The activity timetables for each event are shown in appendices 1 and 2 and the evaluations are shown in appendices 3 and 4. The number of participating pupils was 27 at Inujima and 46 at Fukutani (it was 27 at Inujima and 47 at Fukutani). The number of staff (instructors, organizers, assistants and a nurse) was: 48 at Inujima and 70 at Fukutani, including those who only partially participated.

Among the Inujima event participants, responses to the three summative questions were as follows. Statements in square parentheses show the responses

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of the previous year's evaluation:

- 1 Have you become more eager to learn English?: All but one said "Yes" [All but one said "Yes"]
- 2 Have you learned a lot of English and about international cultures?: All but one said "Yes" [All said "Yes"]
- 3 Would you like to join again next time?: All but one said "Yes" [All said "Yes"]

Among the Fukutani event participants, the responses were:

- 1 Have you become more eager to learn English?: All but one said "Yes" [42 said "Yes" and five said "No"]
- 2 Have you learned a lot of English and about international cultures?: All said "Yes" [44 said "Yes" and two said "No"]
- 3 Would you like to join again next time?: All but one said "Yes" [42 said "Yes" and four said "No"]

These responses show that the events were mostly successful, and at Fukutani, they were more successful than last year's.

After each event, the instructors / assisting staff had meetings to evaluate the events, especially from the viewpoint of whether the evaluations of the previous year helped to make this year's events better. Among their reflections, the staff gave the following suggestions in order to further improve the project:

- (Inujima and Fukutani) Comparing the activities that were common in both years, this year was as successful as last year, or more successful in the Fukutani event.
- (Inujima) In response to last year's feedback the schedules were not as full as last year's, which allowed instructors and pupils to take a rest between activities, to take time for the preparation of the next activity, to watch over the pupils more carefully, and ultimately to make each activity more fruitful.
- (Inujima) There were some activities that were given good responses by the pupils who did not have English learning experiences outside their schools. Those activities (drama preparation like mask-making, star-gazing, and museum visit) should be in the schedule again next year.
- (Inujima and Fukutani) We accepted a wheelchair-bound pupil. This was wonderful. The staff and the pupils learned a lot.

- (Fukutani) More time was necessary for the outing, which still remains a matter to be settled.
- (Fukutani) The pupils were heard to speak more English than last year. The main reason for this was the native speaker instructors whom were allotted to each group of pupils. This was also stated in the pupils' evaluations.
- (Fukutani) It took longer than expected for the whole group to go through the reception, which made the time for the morning activity shorter. The instructors decided to skip one game instead of hurrying through all the activities as planned. This worked well to let the pupils enjoy the session better.
- (Fukutani) This year lunch was served. The local community group made the lunch using the products of the Fukutani area. The idea was good as was the meal's content. However, the pupils should have been told more clearly that the local community assisted the event and how the people of the area adored the place, products, environment and, eventually, the English Village Event.
- (Inujima and Fukutani) The cultural experience sessions in the afternoon were very good. They were great opportunities for the pupils to directly experience foreign cultures. Some of the presenters prepared a powerpoint presentation or posters, and others brought toys, sweets, national flags, costumes, musical instruments, etc. The presenters contributed a lot to the high quality of the activities.

Conclusion

"Okayama English Village Project" starts its third year in April, 2014. It is strongly desired that the events be continued while the programs are revised and instructions are improved. Also, it is time to start considering the way of continuing the program. Until the end of this third year, the Okayama City Government and Chugokugakuen University/Chugoku Junior College share the expenses and the staff, but from the next year the funding and style of the collaboration should change as the budgetary planning including personnel planning may change on the part of either or both parties.

References

Village" Events —, Chugokugakuen Journal 12, pp. 1-8.

Matsuhata et al. (2013) *A Practical Research on Fostering "Global Human Resources" Part I — Through Conducting "Okayama English*

Accepted March 31, 2014.

Date: AUG 11-12, 2013 Volunteer staff: 6 Okayama Gakugeikan SHS students (both days)
 Fee: ¥5,000 4 Chugoku Junior College/University students (11th only)
 Participants: 5 and 6 graders at elementary schools
 30 children are divided into 5 groups
 Place: Inujima Shizen no IE (Inujima, Okayama city) NI=Native (speaker) Instructor(s)

SUN., AUG 11

Time	Activity	Place	Staff	Activity outline	Notes
7:30	Staff meet	Hoden Harbor			Meet at car-park
8:10	Participants meet	Hoden Harbor			Boat leaves at 8:30
8:30	Boat --> walk				Boat arrives near Shizen no Ie
9:00	Reception Immigration	Lobby Lecture room	NI	Check-in and Brief Orientation	
9:30	Opening Ceremony Self-introduction of staff Self-introduction Activity, Songs	Lecture room	MC: Jay Nago + NI	Opening Address Self-introductions with group members, "Hello! Song"	One NI and one SHS student are allotted to each group
10:00	Pancake Cooking	Lecture room Canteen	NI+ Nago	-Introduction of Australian pancake - Introduction of Australian "Bills" restaurant -Cook pancake	College/University students function as assistants: helping kids, demonstrating
12:00	Lunch	Lecture room			Each participant and staff bring their own lunch
13:00	Short drama "Urashima Taro" (intro)	Lecture Room	NI+Nago	-Introduction of the story to motivate the participants	
14:00	Drama practice (1)	Lecture room	NI +Nago	- start practicing in groups	
15:00	Drama Preparation (making masks etc)	Craft room	NI+Sumida	-Make things which are necessary for drama performance	
17:00	Dinner	Canteen	Inoue+Ohno		
18:00	Indoor games: Waku-Waku summer night sky games	Lecture room	NIs	-Listen to star stories -Enjoy games using picture cards and get interested in star-gazing	Introduction of vocabulary concerning night sky: stars, constellations, etc..
19:00	Bath time		Inoue+Ohno		
20:00	Star-gazing	Astronomy room	Staff at Shizen no Ie	Mixture of English and Japanese	If rainy, lecture using displayed pictures
21:00	Bed making and others	Each room	Inoue+Ohno		
21:30	Lights Out		Inoue+Ohno	22 : 00 Staff meeting	
22:00	All Lights out				

Fig. 1-Day 1 Inujima English and Cultural Experience Event 2013

MON., AUG 12

Time	Activity	Place	Staff	Activity outline	Notes
6:30	Rise		Inoue+Ohno	Rise, Ablutions	
7:00	Breakfast Cleaning	Canteen	Inoue+Ohno	Health check Children clean their own room	
8:00	Drama practice(2)	Lecture room	NIs	Practice drama performance	
9:30					
9:45	Inujima Art Project Seirensho (copper refinery) museum	Shizen no Ie>harbor> museum (Walk)	Ohashi	Rain or shine, -Seirensho museum tour in 2 groups (1 hour):no guide this year	During this period, presenters of "International Culture Exchange" start to arrive. Welcome them and do some briefing before lunch (lunch is offered).
12:00	Lunch	Canteen			
13:00	Drama Performance	Lecture Room	Board of Judges	-Short rehearsal -Performance (total 30 mins) -Prize-giving	
14:00	International culture exchange	Canteen & other places	Fukuhara Akamatsu	-Six (or seven) presenters introduce their country, culture and others at their 'booth' -Children visit each 'booth' and greet and communicate with the presenters in English	-Presenters stamp or sign each child's 'passport' Japanese staff are to be allotted to each booth as helpers
15:30	Summary of event	Lecture room	Ohashi	-Write comments, impression etc. -Questionnaires	
16:00	-Cleaning -Closing ceremony -Immigration -Photo	Lecture room & other places		-All participants clean the area	-Never be late in leaving Shizen no Ie for the boat -Boat leaves at 16:30
16:30	From Inujima to Hoden			Hand the children to families at the car-park at Hoden Harbor	
17:30	End of event				

Fig. 1–Day 2 Inujima English and Cultural Experience Event 2013

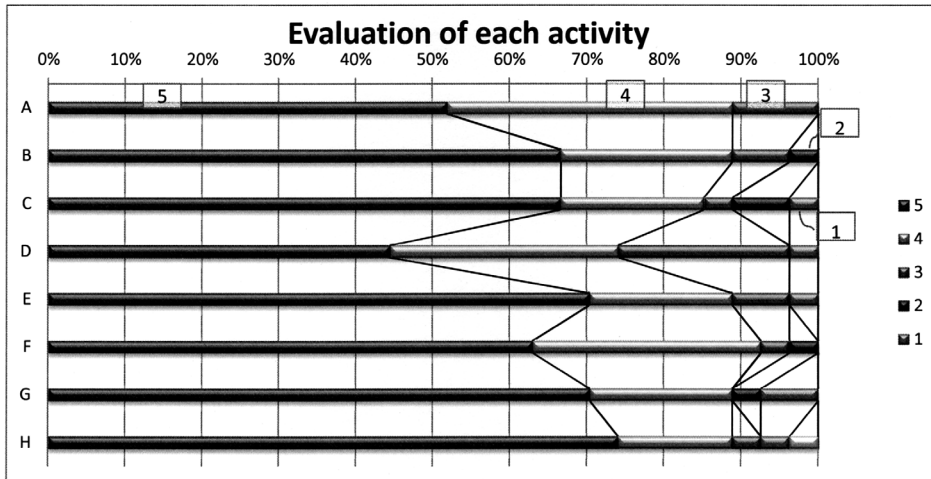
Date: NOV 23rd (holiday) Volunteer staff: Chugoku Univ. / Junior College students
 Fee: ¥1,800 Notre Dame Seishin Univ. students
 Participants: 5th and 6th graders in elementary school Okayama Gakugeikan Students from Australia
 50 children are divided into 10 groups NI=Native (speaker) Instructor(s)
 Place: (former) Fukutani Elementary School (Kawahara, Okayama city)

SAT., NOV 23

Time	Activity	Place	Staff	Activity outline	Notes
8:30	Staff meet	Fukutani ES			
9:00	Participants meet	Fukutani ES			
9:10	Reception	Gym		Check-in and Brief orientation	
9:30	Immigration Opening ceremony Self-introduction of staff Self-introduction activity	Gym	MC: Shironouchi	Opening Address Self-introduction by staff Self-introduction with group members, Song	One NI and one student are allotted to each group
10:00	Thanksgiving Day Activities + Bingo	Gym	NI + Akamatsu, Fukuhara	-Introduction of Thanksgiving Day -Enjoy games -Enjoy bingo game using vocab concerning the people and things in the kids' daily lives,	College students function as assistants: helping kids, demonstrating
12:00	Lunch	Gym & other places			Each participant and staff brings their own lunch
12:45	Outing & craft	Fukumitsu Farm +Gym	Okayama City ESD staff		
14:30	International culture exchange	Rooms in the school building		-Presenters introduce their country, culture and others at their 'booth' -Children visit each 'booth' and greet and communicate with the presenters in English	-Presenters stamp or sign each child's 'passport'
16:00	Summary questionnaire	Gym	MC: Ohashi	-Write comments, impression etc -Questionnaire	
16:30	-Cleaning -Closing Ceremony -Emigration -Photo	Gym	MC: Shironouchi	-All participants clean the area	
	End of event				

Fig. 2 Fukutani English and Cultural Experience Event 2013

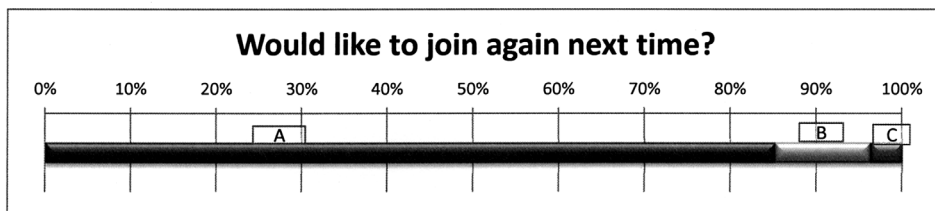
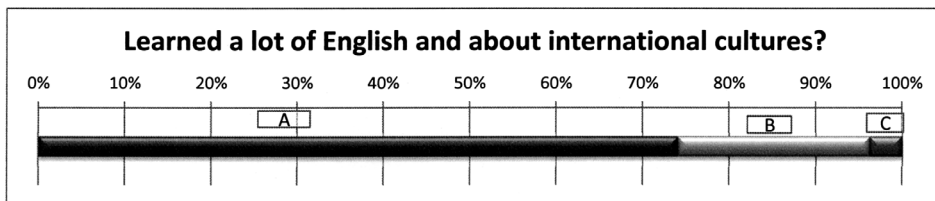
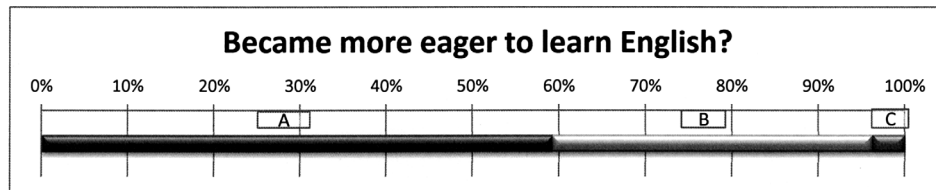
Participants' evaluation (Inujima)



A	Self-introduction & songs
B	Cooking
C	Practice of drama
D	Making costumes & others
E	Indoor games
F	Star-gazing
G	Museum visit
H	Culture exchange

5=I got very much interested in English.
 4=I got interested in English.
 3=I am not sure.
 2=I didn't get very interested in English.
 1=I didn't get interested in English at all.

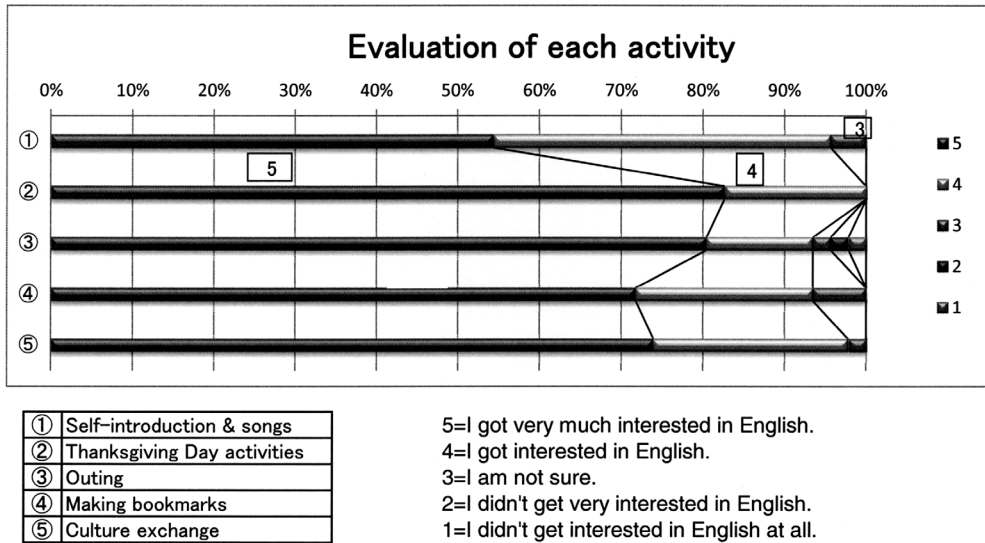
Overall evaluation



A=Yes, very much so. B=Yes. C=Rather not. D=Not at all.

Fig. 3 Evaluation

Participants' evaluation (Fukutani)



Overall evaluation

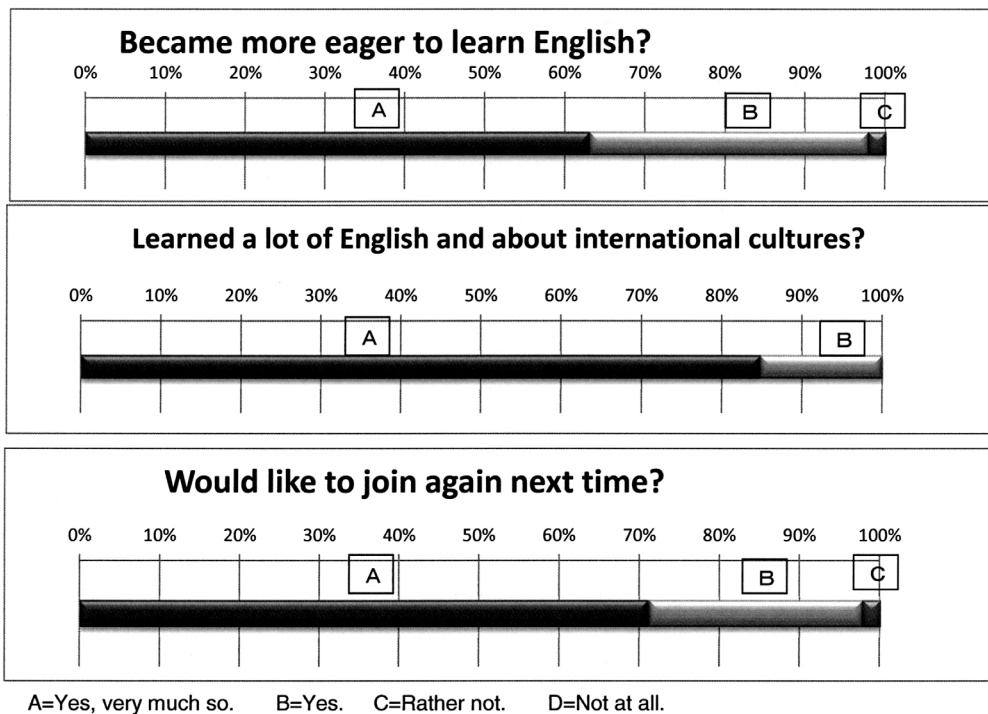


Fig. 4 Evaluation