

English IIIA Challenge Course: Students' TOEIC Goals and Actual Outcomes 学科選抜クラス「英語 IIIA」(夏季集中授業) 報告：受講者の目標と実際の結果

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1. Introduction

English IIIA and B are elective courses for second through fourth year students who wish to better their business English and TOEIC scores. A new initiative in 2012 was the English IIIA Challenge Course which was held as an intensive course during the summer months of August and September. The English IIIB Challenge Course will be offered during the spring vacation in February and March of 2013. This report will describe the teachers, participants, methods, and results from the English IIIA Challenge Course.

2. Methods

The goal of this course was to motivate students to learn English through self-chosen goals, self-study, and guidance which will lead them to measurable improvement. The instruments used to measure improvement were tests included in the NetAcademy 2 e-learning course and a combination of the students' goals and TOEIC scores.¹ Five teachers taught lessons of the English IIIA course. In April and July, orientation sessions were offered to explain the course to interested students. In total 12 students registered, and 10 students participated and completed the course. These 10 students were from 5 departments: Socio-Transportation, Oceanic Architecture, Aerospace, Materials and Applied Chemistry, and Math.

The course was scheduled with 3 days of study, followed by approximately 1 month of self-study, and then 2 more days of study, including a TOEIC IP test (Fig. 1). English IIIA was divided into reading and listening classes. Two native Japanese speaking teachers taught the reading section, and three English speaking teachers taught the listening section. The textbook, *Tactics for TOEIC: Listening and Reading Test*, and NetAcademy 2 were used for both reading and listening development.² The reading group also made use of other TOEIC materials and websites. The listening group made use of the TED website for listening comprehension and discussion activities as well as bottom-up listening skills development through dictation tasks.³ Communication tasks, such as the Marshmallow Challenge, were also performed.⁴ On Aug. 9, a workshop was held where students completed a self-study plan to help guide them toward the self-chosen TOEIC goals with which they were challenging themselves. Throughout the course, blended learning occurred through activities and resources on a Moodle website.⁵ Students and teachers communicated via email and forums, especially during the self-study period.

English IIIA Schedule		
Date	Period	Lesson Focus
Aug. 7	1	Guidance/Evaluation 1
	2	Reading
	3	Reading
Aug. 8	1	Listening
	2	Listening
	3	Reading
Aug. 9	1	Reading
	2	Listening
	3	Listening
	4	Workshop
Self-study		
Sept. 6	1	Reading
	2	Reading/Listening
	3	Listening
Sept. 7	1	Evaluation 2
	2	TOEIC IP

Figure 1. Course Schedule

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3. Results and Discussion

Two instruments were used to measure English improvement. NetAcademy 2 tests were used to measure gains within the course, and a comparison of goals and post-course TOEIC scores was also valuable. NetAcademy 2 tests were given on Aug. 7 and Sept. 7. On average, scores improved 108 points with 8 students posting gains (Fig. 2). The TOEIC was taken on Sept. 7, and the average gain was 51.5 points when compared with the TOEIC scores students stated they had achieved. Again, 8 students posted gains (Fig. 3). The self-study period may be an issue as 7 of 10 students marked this as fair or too short on a post-course survey. ETS states that “Native speakers of languages from other origins (e.g., in Asia) should probably wait at least 100 hours (before retesting).”⁶ This means 100 hours of study is suggested for test-takers to achieve significant gains, and it is unclear how many hours of study the participating students logged. Only 20% of the students achieved their TOEIC score goal. On average, students set goals 126.5 points above their stated scores. This could be an optimism bias, but assisting students with goal setting is a need to be addressed.⁷

	NetAcademy 2		
	Pre-course	Post-course	Improvement
P1	540	500	-40
P2	580	660	80
P3	580	560	-20
P4	540	620	80
P5	480	740	260
P6	500	680	180
P7	440	640	200
P8	740	860	120
P9	500	540	40
P10	600	780	180
Average Improvement			108.00

Figure 2. NetAcademy 2 Test Results

	Stated Score	Goal	Post-course TOEIC	Improvement	Diff. from goal
P1	490	610	540	50	-70
P2	520	650	565	45	-85
P3	450	600	485	35	-115
P4	530	650	535	5	-115
P5	495	600	620	125	20
P6	470	700	565	95	-135
P7	455	600	535	80	-65
P8	740	780	910	170	130
P9	480	650	445	-35	-205
P10	595	650	540	-55	-110
Avg.	522.50	649.00	574.00	51.50	-75.00

Figure 3. Goals & TOEIC Results

4. Conclusion

This report discussed the English IIIA Challenge Course instituted during the 2012 summer term. Results were positive as gains were made by 80% of the students on NetAcademy 2 tests and on the TOEIC. One area of concern is realistic goal setting by students, and this will be addressed in the English IIIB Challenge Course which will be held in February and March of 2013.

5. References

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