



# How to improve English skills of high school students in Okinawa

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## Current situation of the problem

We found an EIKEN article saying that Okinawa's English proficiency was the lowest among all the other prefectures. However, we wondered that high school students' English proficiency in Okinawa was the lowest since the EIKEN test does not assess speaking skills' assessment.  
 (The Nikkei online News 16<sup>th</sup> July 2016)



## Research methods

- To conduct interview survey
- To pay a visited to Okinawa prefectural government
- To conduct questionnaire survey at Nahakokusai High School
- To participated in international exchange meetings in English



## Findings

By doing interview survey, Okinawan high school students understood what the English speakers wanted to say but they cannot respond to them. They claim that there are not enough opportunities to use their English orally. We, therefore, concluded that Okinawan high school students' foreign language skills are not sufficient. In addition, Okinawa board of education has many International exchange programs to facilitate the students' communication skills, but these Prefectural programs are not meant for those who don't have sufficient English language skills.

## Suggestion

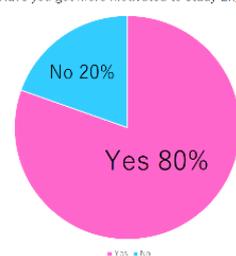
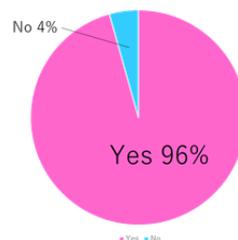
We thought that giving these opportunities to students is very important. We hypothesized that hosting international exchange meetings for students to attend leads to improvement of foreign language capabilities.



## Observations

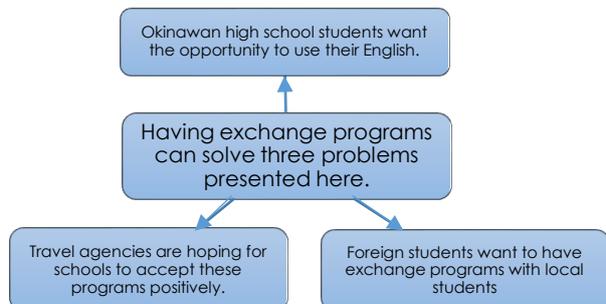
On October 13, our team and 42 first-year students studying in the international course at Nahakokusai participated in the exchange program with Thai students who were visiting Okinawa. After the exchange program, most of the students said that they want to learn English more and harder.

Q. Did you become more interested in foreign cultures ?      Q. Have you got more motivated to study English ?



Respondents: first-year students studying at Nahakokusai

We arranged an interview with JTB, a travel agency who organized the exchange meeting with Thai students. According to them, the number of people who come to Okinawa is increasing year by year. In addition, the number of people who come to Okinawa on educational trips will be gradually increasing. The Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau is also proceeding with the project of accepting such educational trips and our research will be beneficial for the prefecture. The problem is that school have already set schedule for the whole year. Therefore, they cannot include new programs easily. To respond to the increasing demand of international exchanges, high school students plan to contribute their time and efforts to make this plan possible.



## Planning

We plan to create activities for groups of students visiting Okinawa from abroad in our homeroom periods or after school for club activities and relay this information to travel agencies. We can interact with schools that are attracted to the plan. By informing the travel agencies of our planned activities, we help them create travel itineraries and, in exchange, we can introduce our school to foreign students. Though this, we hope even those students who do not like English language. We hope that, in the future, all high schools in Okinawa will adopt similar plans as ours.

## Conclusion

To this end, improving English skills has a lot of benefit for tourism. Okinawa has great opportunity now and beyond 2020 to attract foreign visitors to build Okinawa as a premier tourist destination in Japan. Let us work together to realize this favorable circumstance.



## References

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