An Educational Collaboration between Ratchasuda College in Thailand and Tsukuba College of Technology, Teaching Practicums

Masahiko SUTO and Mariko TAKAMAURA
Research Center of Higher Education for Students with Disability, Tsukuba College of Technology

Abstract: The authors were invited to Ratchasuda College to give teaching practicums. They are Japanese deaf education, teaching English as a second language for deaf people and an elective course in Japanese Sign Language. The contents of the lectures are summarized. The importance of mutual understanding about culture and language teaching similarities and differences between two nations were experienced through the collaboration.

Key Words: higher deaf education, language teaching, practicum

Introduction: Ratchasuda College at Mahidol University in Thailand and Tsukuba College of Technology (TCT) in Japan have the goal of providing a well-organized educational curriculum and an understanding of the needs of people with disabilities. The two colleges have been working closely to foster a better educational settings for hearing and/or visually disabled people based on the idea of their leading productive lives according to their Abilities. Ratchasuda College, founded in 1992 is located close to Mahidol University Salaya campus. The college aims to develop a wide range of rehabilitation self-help models, higher education and productive employment. The collaboration with Ratchasuda College goes back to a few years ago, when TCT sent faculty members to Ratchasuda College, who are specialists of educational audiology and deaf education. These two colleges have been also collaborating with each other and cooperating with other institutes at the international level, e.g., NTID (National Technical Institute for the Deaf, NY, USA) to continue providing new technology and techniques for people with disabilities.

Courses Offered at Ratchasuda College and its contribution

Certificate Program in Teaching Thai Sign Language: The college offers several programs for deaf people and professionals in the deafness field. Since 1998 Ratchasuda College has been offering an undergraduate/certificate program in Thai sign language instruction. The Certificate of Sign Language Interpreting Program is offered to those who want to become interpreters or current interpreters who need to brush up skills.

B.A. Deaf Studies: In the year 2000 Ratchasuda College, in cooperation with La Trobe University in Australia, began to offer a BA degree program in Deaf Studies.

MA degree in Rehabilitation Services: The MA degree in Rehabilitation Service for
Persons with Disabilities offers specialization in rehabilitation counseling, access technology and administration. A Post-graduate certificate program in academic support services for people who are blind or have low vision is also prepared.

**Student Support Service:** The college academic support service units provide a model of rehabilitation services. The Resource Center provides computer-assisted educational aids to the students and integrated disabled students as well as notetaking and interpreting. Ratchasuda College also supports several specialized courses in independent living skills for disabled people in Thailand.

**Social and academic contributions:** Deaf studies and sign language research at Ratchasuda College have been contributing to the better understanding of deaf people. Research on deaf culture found significant cultural differences between the deaf and hearing communities in the country. The work contains deaf history, the culture of the Thai deaf community and the impact of different educational policies on Thai deaf children. Research at the college has shown that Thai sign language is a distinct from spoken/written Thai language. It is said that deafness is not a deficit for the deaf people, but a socio-linguistic difference similar to that of other linguistic communities. The college provides non-formal education for deaf adults, teaches Thai sign language in the community. The practicums that the authors gave were for these training programs.

**Authors’ practicums**

**English teaching and Deaf Education (SUTO)**

The author taught the following two courses with two English-Thai sign interpreters from 17-20, February 2004 at the College. In these courses some topics that were supposed to be covered during the presentations were “Teaching English as a Second Language for the Deaf” and “Deaf Education in Japan”. Both of them were scheduled as 6-hour lectures with discussions.

**RSDS 466: English teaching Practicum**

At the beginning of the demonstration class of English teaching to the deaf students, the author started self-introduction with voice and sign languages to about 40 deaf college students and the teachers of the deaf schools across the Thailand. The Power-point slides used in the courses are shown below.

- **Contents:** greetings, name, nationality, hobby, sign names, dream, principle: easy to complex, words to phrase, phrase to clause, sentence.
- **English and ASL:** availability of introducing ASL to English words teaching & learning.
- **Japanese sign and American signs:** difference and similarity.
- **Carrying words (ASL) game between two groups:** example “Long time no see”
- **Closing sentences**
An Educational Collaboration between Ratchasuda College in Thailand and Tsukuba College of Technology, Teaching Practicums

Self-introduction

- Hello!
- My name is Suto.
- Nice (to) meet you!
- I'm from Japan.
- I like sports. I like baseball best.

How are you?

- (I am) fine, thank you.

- (Do) you have sign name?
  My sign name is ... Guess!

Students' Introduction

- What is your dream?
- My dream is a good teacher.
  When I was a child, I liked a bus driver.
- My dream was (to be) a bus driver.

English and ASL

- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday...
- Family, Class, TV, High School etc

Japanese sign and USA's

- Different
- coffee
- know
- friend
- father/mother
- Same
- drink, sleep, sit etc
- Similar
- make, take, think
- sign

Let's play games!

Communication game,

- carry 4 words correctly!
- into 2 groups + teachers

Answer!

- Long time no see!

  When do you use this expression?
  Imagination is important!

Finally

- Keep studying English!
- Your dreams will come true!
- Deaf can do all except hearing!
RSDS 467: Deaf Education.

To the Ratchasuda College students and teachers of the deaf schools across the country, the author explained about present and past Japanese deaf education in general, including our college program and back to the history of Japan and the world, including its methodologies. The Power-point slides used in the course are shown in Appendix.

The author summarized Japanese ordinal 9 year-compulsory education at elementary school and lower-secondary school, and optional three year upper-secondary school and college/university education in Japan. Recently the number of deaf students who apply to colleges and universities is increasing. As a result, educational supports, including interpreters or notetakers (or computer-assisted notetaking), are highly requested by the deaf students themselves in ordinary colleges or universities in Japan. In the 1970s the total number of deaf children at all Japanese deaf schools was more than 20000. Now its total number is less than 7000 students. This is because of some reasons; one is less new born babies, another is their integration into ordinary schools. Our college is expected to play multifunctional roles as a higher educational institute and support center for the other schools or colleges which deaf or hard of hearing students enroll in.

JSL teaching (TAKAMURA)

Even though Thai sign language shares many of the same signs with ASL, this turned out not to guarantee that the students would easily learn the material in the lessons. Various techniques were used to enable the students to learn the lesson material well.

The lectures were from 9 am to 4 pm for one week, between Nov. 24 and Dec. 1. There were 31 hearing students and 6 deaf teachers from Ratchasuda College in the class. Most students had taught in Deaf schools as teachers for many years before enrolling in the one-year program. They came from many different areas across the country and stayed in the dormitory. The six deaf teachers conduct classes of Thai sign language and its culture, and are young and are graduates of the college. A few went to Australia to receive a MA.

Nov. 24 lesson

On the first day of the lecture, Nov. 24th, in the morning the author introduced herself and started to tell about background...how I became Deaf, attending hearing schools as usually the only deaf person and receiving oral speech therapy, starting to love writing because I could easily express myself, and reading books which helped me to get knowledge about various subjects and issues. How I learned sign language at the age of 14, went to an American university and how my eyes became more opened as I learned ASL and other things which broadened my view of the world and enabled me to work on the various projects that I have in the later part of my life.

The communication tools I used were ASL, gestuno, gesture, writing English on the blackboard and having two Deaf teachers as interpreters. Many students have knowledge of English. About 50% of Thai sign language signs are similar to ASL and BSL. The two Deaf teachers interpreting really helped a lot. One teacher had been to Japan, and the other had been to America, therefore they had knowledge of JSL and ASL.
After introductions, all the students introduced themselves using JSL. First, I wrote down in English in an “A and B conversation” style, your, name, what? Deaf or hearing? Live where? Nice to meet you”. And instructed how to sign in JSL during the conversation. They practiced with me, students paired off and practiced the conversation, finally they showed their conversation skills in front of the class.

In the afternoon, for their enjoyment, a sign song was demonstrated. I used the famous song SUKIYAKI. Most students know the song. When I performed it in JSL, they stood up, tried to copy it and performed it together. They said they loved it so I taught how to directly translate into sign language the words in the lyrics. For example., Aruko (let us walk)”. you don’t have to use fingers in a real sign showing the word. To help people more easily understand and make it more visually clear, you can just use your legs and pretend that you are walking.”

Nov. 25 lesson

On the second day of the lecture, Nov. 25th, in the morning first I reviewed the previous day’s lessons by asking the students some questions. Second, they learned family-related things and what they like to do (hobbies). They learned how to sign father, mother, grandpa, grandma, daughter, son, brother, sister, etc. While they learned how to sign their hobbies I also taught them at the same time how to sign other words such as “like”.

Their hobbies were listening to music, watching TV and movies, sleeping, sports, gardening, reading books, writing poems, eating, chatting, etc.

In the afternoon, students strongly wanted to have sign song practice again. I taught how to sign the same song more beautifully, for the first time emphasizing the use of facial expressions and teaching them additional steps and movements. They made a couple of groups and then showed their ability after they practiced for a while. After the SUKIYAKI practice, students showed their favorite Thai song with Thai dance steps and we continued doing that for a while. One of the students brought his notebook computer and installed music, and used it as a Karaoke machine for their performance.

Nov. 26 lesson

On the third day of the lecture, Nov. 26th, in the morning they learned “drink” related words as an A and B conversation.

A: you, what, drink       B: me, coke,
A: oh I see, me, thirsty, where, drink, buy, can
B: overthere (pointing finger), you, drink, buy, can
A: thank you.

As they practiced the dialog at the same time they learned different kinds of drinks.
ex, coffee, tea, green tea, milk, orange juice, apple juice, etc.

In the afternoon, I introduced how to sign emotions. Such as, sad, happy, enjoy, funny, and angry. I also taught how to enjoyably learn these words by using a game called “Don’t do that”. In the game, a person who is “it” stands with their back to the other people. “It” then suddenly turns around and makes a sign. The other person must also make a sign. If one of the other people makes the same sign as “it” one of the other people (chosen by paper-sissor-rock if more than one) then becomes “it”. For example,
If “IT” shows "sad" sign, you must sign “happy” or “funny” or “angry”. If you also sign "sad" you then change places with “it”.

After that game, I introduced a sign poem using handshapes. I divided the students into 6 groups and each group were offered 20 min. in order to create a story and practice how to sign their poems. Each group showed a high level of creativity. For example, one group used the “U” sign and showed a story of someone from the birth of love to a broken heart.

**Nov. 27 lesson**

On the morning of Nov. 27, they learned “eating” related words as an A and B conversation.

A: me, hungry (watashi, onaka, suita)
B: me, hungry, too (watashi, onaji, suita)
A: you, what, eat, want (anata, nani, tabetai)
B: me, curry, eat, want, you, what, eat, want (watashi, curry, tabetai, anata, nani, tabetai)
A: me, curry, too (watashi, onaji, curry)

As they practiced the dialog at the same time they learned different kinds of foods. Example, sushi, udon, ramen, onigiri, spaghetti, etc. then they learned color signs, such as green, blue, brown, red, pink, orange, black, white, yellow. In the afternoon, I lectured about Deaf culture and we played a game I call “The Imagination Game”: There is a door. Each student has to think about what kind of door they want to use in the game, then they open it and have to perform what they see in the door using JSL.

**Nov. 29 lesson**

On the morning of Nov. 29, we reviewed what we had covered previously in the class. After that, they learned how to sign counting numbers and played a game to learn how to memorize the numbers. First, an answer word is chosen, e.g., LOVE. Students don’t know the answer at first. I ask 1+5 in JSL is what? I then say it is L. Then students have to put L on the right number and go on like 7+3 is what? I say it is V. I used English for answering since all students have basic English knowledge. Students then came to the blackboard and created their own answers and had other students try to guess them.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the afternoon, we played the game, “What is Love?” Each student said something using one sign about what they imagine or feel about Love, e.g., the first person says love is beautiful and next person might sign that love is beautiful and suffering. And the following people add more and more. All students memorized the words well. The last student, a Deaf teacher (the 34th person!) remembered each word and showed them so poetically, he really impressed me.

**Nov. 30 lesson**

On the morning of Nov. 30th, I taught word opposites.

Examples. love vs hate, beautiful vs ugly, bored vs enjoy, good vs bad, strong vs weak, heavy vs light, happy vs sad, young vs old, new vs old.

In the afternoon, a review of our previous lessons was done.
Dec. 1 lesson

On the morning of Dec. 1, I gave the students an examination. The examination included self-signing a long story to more fully test their sign comprehension. During lunch time I checked the exams with the help of one of the deaf teachers, and in the afternoon, I returned the exams to the students.

Conclusion

When Thai sign was expressed, 50% of them are same as ASL, communication with them seemed smooth. But it was wrong. Definitely there are many of the same signs in ASL like “why”, “remember”, “forget”, “happy”, “understand”. Sometimes the students expressed they understood during the lessons, but seemed a little unsure. I used the help of two deaf teachers for interpreting. When they used their mouth, mouthing Thai words and doing Thai signs in explaining, and the students more fully understood. The author tried to not use lip movements but use large facial expressions.

Using games or sign songs were good for helping students memorize well. Added to that, sign poem stories or imagination stories were good for them to get all the students’ attention and keep them from becoming bored.

Basically most students had already had experience with deaf people and knew Thai sign language. This means they had some understanding of Deaf culture and other foreign sign languages. They didn't have any hesitation. They had enthusiasm and motivation for work in the field of the Deaf. Therefore, their attitude was serious and focused on learning Japanese sign language.

A six hour lecture in one day was hard. But students said for concentration such short term heavy hours are good. They might be making a good point, it might be better to keep their brains clear if the time were shorter. Two hours in the morning and two in the afternoon are good, from experience.

Their examination results were good. Most students received As, a few Bs or Cs. It proved they had an understanding of what they had learned. Especially since a long story was included in the exam, and it not only required their remembering JSL but also required them to use their imagination in reading the story teller's expression. Six students got full points for the long story.

Our college (TCT) is also located in a suburb area in Japan. It is expected that TCT will continue to make the efforts to provide disabled people with better lives that have not been commonly available before. The authors hope to expand the relationships with other domestic and international institutions for the deaf and hard of hearing people in order to continue to provide new technology and techniques in services for the people by exchanging knowledge and experiences.

TCT also has been promoting in-service training for teachers of the deaf. The authors believe that we are expected to explore the QOL of the deaf and hard of hearing people. As Ratchasuda College and TCT have been accumulating educational research and practice, we have had lots of experience to share. Periodical and continuing educational collaborations are highly required.

Acknowledgements

The teaching practicums were supported by Thai Education Ministry and the responsible faculty member was Dr. Jitprapa Sri-on, who was dedicated to this course
Appendix: Deaf education

### Japanese Education System (1)
- 6 (Elementary) + 3 (Lower Secondary) = 9 years compulsory but...
- About 95% go to Upper secondary now.
- Kindergarten (1-3 years), 9 years' Compulsory Ed., 3 years upper SS.
- Problem is Post Secondary School!

### Majors (3)
- Industrial Design: product design, CG
- Machine Engineering: CAD, Mechatronics
- Architecture: Planning structure
- Electronics: Basics including IC
- Information Science: Office Information Tech.

### Characteristics (4)
- Accessible information & communication
  - Japanese sign, written letter, caption

### History of Deaf Education (5)
- Before 1879, some private elementary schools for hearing kids of rich people.
- 1879 KYOTO School for the Deaf/Blind
  - Used sign language and written letters and pictures
- 1880 Milan Conference for the Deaf Education

### Diversity of Deaf Education (7)
- Deaf Study, better ID, enlightenment
- Bi-lingual/ Bi-culture methods, interpreter ED.
- TCT, Ratchasuda College were born.
- For Multiple handicapped students
  - 107 Deaf Schools in Japan (1 national, 1 private, and 105 public schools)

### For work preparation (8)
- Greeting, Basic academics and Application
- Internships, Practice for job interview, Self-Help
- 1.8% Policy: Employment rule by Government, But Self-Help is your challenge is necessary! for Enlightenment and real understanding the deaf by ordinary people.
- We are always supporter to help their dreams come true! In Japan and Thailand.