

## Class Observation at Manor School

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### I. Introduction

Before I went to the UK, I heard that students in the UK and other foreign countries are more active than students in Japan and they express their opinion immediately in class. In fact, I was surprised when I actually attended year-10 classes at Manor School. It was because they were more active than I had expected and they really enjoyed studying each subject. Sometime, I felt the lessons were a little bit noisy, but I was really excited to attend the classes. Then, I noticed some educational differences between Manor School and schools in Japan. Through class observation, I found four interesting educational characteristics at Manor School: developing students' independence and responsibility, developing students' intellectual curiosity, making comfortable atmosphere for students to study, and introducing rich electronic devices.

### II. Interesting educational features seen in classes

#### A. Students' Responsibility

Through class observation at Manor School, I strongly felt that students at Manor School are more independent than students of that age in Japan, and the educational concept at Manor School fosters students' responsibility. There are two reasons why students can take care of themselves and have sense of responsibility.

It can be said that "Planner" is one of the reasons why students can support themselves. In the morning gathering, students read their own books silently. And when finishing reading, they record in their own planner how many pages they have read their book. They record not only their assignment, but also they put on the stickers they get when they do a good job in each class. I was really impressed by this "Planner" system at Manor School on the following two points. By using "Planner", students can manage their school life easily and effectively. When they see their own planner they can easily understand their academic progresses. It is also helpful for their parents to understand what their children learn and how they act at school. Moreover, it can be said that "Planner" is a great motivator for students to study.

Another example that shows students' responsibility is that in "Food Technology" class, each student brought their own ingredients and baked banana cakes by themselves. This style is completely different from Japan. In Japan, the teacher prepares all ingredients which are used in the class and the students in groups cook some dishes together. Through the class, students in Japan can acquire to work in cooperation. On the contrast, students at Manor School can acquire a sense of personal responsibility. Moreover, I found an interesting poster which says "Forgotten Apron = 20p. No 20p = E in Planner." If students forget to bring their apron, they should pay 20pence to school. In Japan, students never pay money to school. It can be said that Manor School teaches students a sense of responsibility in this way.

For these points, students at Manor School are independent and have a sense of responsibility.

#### B. Developing students' intellect 1:Teacher using computer

At Manor School, teachers do not explain too much, because the teachers want the students to think over each topic carefully and lead a conclusion through their thinking. I also thought that students at Manor School study very interesting and difficult topics. In "Child Development" class, they learn and think about multicultural society. For example, the teacher asked the students "People can be prejudiced towards people of their own race. Suggest three reasons why people may be prejudiced?" I think that there is no clear answer to this question and the answers are various depend on each student. By asking open-end questions like this, students' intellectual curiosity and ability will improve.

#### C. Making comfortable place to study for students

##### 1. Teachers try to be on good terms with students

Teachers at Manor School try to create lovely atmosphere for students to study hard and try to be on good terms with students. They always support their students in various ways. Students are active and enjoy studying every subject. In "Science" class, teacher walked around the classroom and paid much attention to each student. And students raised their hands and asked a lot of questions, and they had chances to talk to their teacher personally. Moreover, teachers say that "working noise" is very important for students. In

this way teachers can have good relationships with their students. On the contrast, most students in Japan are constraint and hesitate to ask their teachers. And most teachers do not like noises made during the lesson. Because of these, they also think that making mistakes are shameful and if they ask their teacher, some help they would destroy the atmosphere in the classroom. These features of Japanese students are caused not only by teacher's way of coaching, but also by Japanese culture. Thus, this character cannot be changed easily.

## **2. Student-centered lesson**

Most lessons at the Manor School are student-centered. For example, in "Child Development" class, the teacher asked her students open-ended questions and then the students answered the questions freely. She carried on the class based on the students' answers. In contrast, most teachers in Japan tend to have teacher-centered lessons. Teachers hardly ask their students questions, so there is not much conversation between them.

It seemed that the teachers really respect their students' identities at Manor School. Because of this, the students can study without being afraid of making mistakes and they have positive attitudes toward learning, so no one fell asleep and got tired of studying at Manor School.

Thus these two points are really important to make comfortable atmosphere for students to study. And I thought that teachers at Manor School are cooperative together to improve the whole atmosphere of the school.

## **D. Rich electronic devices**

Manor School introduces rich electronic devices. For example, all teachers have their own iPads in order to manage students' attendance and academic results. Moreover, most classrooms have a PC for teachers. It also works in order to manage students' attendance and their performance. In "P.E." class, I see the teacher sit on the bench in the locker room and take attendance and keep it on her PC. It is interesting for me, because most teachers in Japan do not take attendance with their PCs. They always bring paper-based attendance books. In my opinion, electronic devices should be introduced to schools in Japan in order to manage students' information effectively.

## **III. Conclusion**

Through class observation, I noticed some educational differences between Manor School and Japanese schools. These four points are really important to make fulfilling lessons. Thus, I would like to utilize these points when I become an English teacher in the future. Experience in the UK is one of the most important recollections for me.

## **Field Experience in Education (UK) Observing Classes at Manor School**

**Hiroko Tai**

### **I. Introduction**

What are right and best ways of teaching for students? This has been my question since I started to study the teaching-training course at Osaka Jogakuin University (OJU), because the growth of students is determined by teacher's competence. Of course, students' motivation also matters, but it is teachers' role and responsibility to provide students with opportunities to develop their abilities and skills. Therefore, teachers always need to seek for better ways of teaching students their subjects. Even if teachers think of their students well, sometimes their teaching may not be effective.

Here I would like to describe some differences in terms of teaching methods between Japan and the U.K., which I found at Manor School, and explain some points I found in four classes (French, Math, Science and ICT) I observed there.

### **II. French Class**

French class was the most impressive for me, because I have been studying how to teach English at OJU. I was interested in how other languages (not English) are taught in schools in the UK. English is "a major foreign language" for most students at junior high schools or high schools in Japan, so studying English is hard for some Japanese students.

The way of teaching French at Manor School was unique; for example, I thought that PowerPoint animation slides deepened students, understanding of the target structures. I thought this way of teaching effective when the students answered the appropriate words quickly enough in French class. The students enjoyed answering words by the time a mouse runs into a house. In addition, the teacher showed a slide showing the process of studying. By checking the process, the students understood what was important in the

day's class and confirmed their accomplishment. Many students in Japan study English using mainly textbooks and some teaching materials, for example, handouts teachers made. However, students at Manor School did not use any printed handout, and they shared French textbooks, which were distributed by the teacher.

### **III. Math Class**

This class was also impressive for me, and I enjoyed observing. Students are passive in math classes in Japan and they often copy solutions on the blackboard the teacher writes. It is boring for the students, and I also did not like Math, when I was a junior high school or high school student. However, Math at Manor School was different from Japanese one. First of all, the teacher in the class showed the day's lesson objectives, "By the end of this module, students will be able to solve quadratic and cubic equations by successive substitution of values". Surprisingly, the students studied in some groups, and it is less common in Japan. At the beginning of the class, the teacher distributed mini-white boards to his students. He gave them some questions, and they quickly wrote the answers on the white board and showed it to him. Students solved the problems with the help of the teacher, so the teacher made much of students' point of view. The teacher did not say the answer soon, and he led the students to the correct answer step by step. It seemed that the teacher wanted students to find the way to solve the questions for themselves, so the students enjoyed seeking for the answer.

### **IV. Science Class**

This class was similar to Japanese one, and students did not only listen to the teacher's talk but also did an experiment. When I was a junior high school or high school student, students watched the teacher's model experiment gathering in front of the teacher before we did it. Therefore we occasionally forgot the right procedure. In addition, if the experiment was complicated or difficult, we did not comprehend what it was. However, students at Manor School saw the teacher's experiment magnified on the screen. In the classroom, I also found many posters written & drawn by the students, "How can I improve and get a grade?" Students realized their weak points and set some aims on the posters. Reflecting what they acquired and making a conscious effort are necessary and good steps for students.

### **V. ICT Class**

ICT is the class to study how to use computers. Recently, the Internet has become familiar to us. At the same time many students sometimes get involved in the Internet crime including cyber bullying. Therefore, students need to study about safety in use of the Internet. Monitors are set between students in a computer room in Japan, but there was only one monitor screen in front of the students. I thought it was inconvenient for students, but it had an advantage in getting students' concentration.

### **VI. Some special features found in classes**

I found some good features in four classes. First, the teachers used PowerPoint more often than at Japanese school. It has advantage in having students understand the points quickly and clearly. In addition, it saves time to write on the blackboard. However, we must be careful it leads to fast-paced class.

Second, group study was a general study style at Manor School. In my experience, group study gives an impulse to myself and encourages some competitive spirits in a group and among groups, because we tend to compare ourselves with others.

Third, teachers had good relations with their students. That is, the teachers keep an appropriate distance from the students. Many teachers praised when students answered correctly or work quickly. In addition, teachers gave a sticker to students as a reward for doing their work. On the other hand, I sometimes saw some students scolded by the teachers. The teachers stimulated their students to think for themselves because of promoting their independence.

Fourth, the students at Manor School are not afraid of making mistakes, and they are very proactive in expressing themselves. In addition, nobody took a nap during classes. Japanese students including me tend to think making mistakes in front of other people is embarrassing, and we hesitate to answer or express our opinions when we are not confident and afraid of making mistakes. Most of the students at Manor School were positive in studying, which remained in my mind.

### **VII. Conclusion**

Through the observation of four classes at Manor School, I realized again that class is not for teacher's satisfaction but for the growth of students. Students think why they must study. They may figure out well that their studying now will help them in the future. If students do not appreciate the purpose of studying, they won't be motivated to study. I also thought that students should study in an enjoyable atmosphere. If I become a teacher of English in Japan, I would like to teach fun of studying English.