



The Union of University Part-time Lecturers in the Tokyo Area

“Mr. Humpty Dumpty, Are You Still Sitting on the Wall?”: The School of Commerce’s Plan to Replace Business English with Tutorial English

The School of Commerce has disclosed its plan to replace Business English courses with Tutorial English, which will be taught by tutors from Waseda (University) International Corporation (WIC). A professor at Commerce explained that the plan has nothing to do with the *koma*-reduction directive from the administration. However, the timing of the revelation of the plan and the School’s past reluctance to adopt Tutorial English indicate otherwise. The part-time lecturers who teach Business English were not informed that their classes are going to be discontinued until quite recently, even though the School had a very good opportunity to do so at the meeting of full-time faculty members and part-time lecturers at the end of March, just before the new semester began. In addition, the School of Commerce has never used Tutorial English during the nearly ten years since the foundation of the Waseda International Corporation in 2004. The School of Commerce explains its decision to replace Business English with Tutorial English as a curricular “improvement.” Some full-time faculty members, however, have confided their doubts about Tutorial English to part-time lecturers, though they now seem to have decided to stick to the department line. It is also known that, at the Second National University Corporation Subcommittee Meeting (October 20, 2008), an executive trustee of Waseda University proudly explained to government officials how effective the outsourcing of Tutorial English is as a means to cut back on cost.¹

Moreover, the outsourcing of Tutorial English to WIC is likely to be illegal. If Waseda University directly gives instructions on how and what to teach to the tutors at WIC, they will be violating the stipulations of the Employment Security Act and the Worker Dispatching Act. These laws are there to prevent *giso ukeoi* or “fake outsourcing.” However, if it doesn’t give or have any authority to give any instructions directly to the tutors to

Saving money, not curricular “improvement,” is the primary reason for outsourcing.

Outsourcing university classes is either “fake outsourcing” or in violation of the School Education Act.

1 “Kokuritsu-Daigaku-Hojin Bunka-Kai, Dai 2 Kai Gijiroku” is available online at <<http://www5.cao.go.jp/koukyo/kanmin/kokudai/2008/1020/081020-3.pdf>>. At the meeting, Mr. Kobayashi stated that, if the university was to directly employ tutors, it would cost 80,000 yen per student [per course], while outsourcing cost only half, because students would shoulder half the cost. In 2013, students have to pay 43,000 yen to take a Tutorial English course in addition to regular tuition (<<http://www.w-int.jp/gogaku/course/general.html>>).

comply with the aforementioned laws, it amounts to dereliction of responsibility by the university to direct and supervise its teaching staff. This violates the School Education Act. Either way, using WIC in this manner is illegal.²

Considering the fact that the proposal to abolish Business English has been made under questionable legal and moral grounds, is academically dubious, and was presented with shameful timing, the School of Commerce must give up its plan to replace it with Tutorial English and reinstate all the part-time lecturers in charge of the course.

In 2007, three foreign lecturers who taught English filed a lawsuit against Kobe Shoin Women’s University. They were either fired or lost some classes because of the “fake outsourcing” of English classes to private English conversation schools. News of the incident was broadcast on television (<<http://blog.livedoor.jp/fmwwewmf/archives/50953389.html>>). Several years ago, a union member remembers, a university in Saitama Prefecture outsourced English classes which had been taught by foreign part-time lecturers to private English conversation schools and told them that the university could continue the contract with them, but on one condition that they had to agree to be employed by those English conversation schools. That meant lower pay and decreased job security. Since Waseda International Corporation is a private company, which is financed by Waseda University Group Holdings, Inc., what the School of Commerce is planning to do is essentially the same as what those other universities did.³

If Waseda University gets away with this illegal outsourcing, a similar practice will probably soon spread to other universities and become the norm, so our fight here at Waseda is very important. It is not only for us and our present situation, but for our future and for part-time lecturers at other universities.⁴ And it is probably not entirely unrelated to those who work in other industries as part-timers or otherwise. Even for our children, perhaps, as we would leave to posterity an example of fighting injustice, which has not always been encouraged throughout Japanese history in order to maintain the most valued virtue – harmony. We believe that the law is definitely on our side, but numbers count in getting the law enforced appropriately. So if you are still sitting on the wall, please come down and join our campaign to protect our lives and improve our future.⁵ There are a lot of things we can do together.

- 2 In the union’s view, all the teaching staff, including tutors at WIC, should be directly employed by Waseda University. As a matter of fact, Japanese language instructors, who used to be dispatched from WIC, are now directly employed by Waseda University under the instruction of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology.
- 3 The fact that the holding company’s stock is 100% owned by Waseda University doesn’t make things any better.
- 4 Hosei University decided to retract the termination of the contract with one of our union members even before a scheduled collective bargaining session. It has probably learned a lesson, seeing what is happening at Waseda University.
- 5 To join the union or ask any questions, please send us an email at <daigaku_hijoukin@yahoo.co.jp> or visit our website at <<http://hijokin.web.fc2.com>>.

Lawsuit against Kobe Shoin Women’s University

Outrageous case of “fake outsourcing” witnessed by a union member

Don’t let Waseda go scot-free.

