

PASEO - A Model Pre-Academic Language Program

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1 Introduction

Chubu University has long been aware of the importance of English language education to the successful development of its students, their careers, and ultimately, the future of Japan. Consequently, Chubu has invested much time, effort and funding to provide its students with a supplemental English language program, called Preparation for Academic Study in English Overseas—PASEO. This multi-faceted, pre-academic English program serves to complement and support the general English language education system already provided by the standard academic curriculum. Most importantly, PASEO has been designed to enhance Chubu students' major academic fields of study and provide students with flexibility and control of their own English language education.

Daily operation of the PASEO program is the responsibility of faculty of the Ohio Program for English Language Teaching (OPELT), the result of a collaborative effort between Chubu University and its sister university, Ohio

Chubu Language Center

University, in the United States. Since 1990 OPELT has served Chubu University by providing highly qualified, native-English speaker TESOL

Center for International Programs

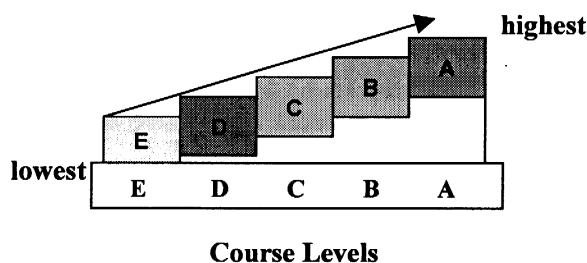
professionals in their general English classes. OPELT's mission changed in 1998 when the PASEO program was established and OPELT was placed under the direct administration of the Chubu Language Center (CLC). The CLC provides vital support in a variety of registration process, compiling data tests, and maintaining the PASEO areas including assisting with the course from course evaluations and placement records database. The CLC also assists the PASEO faculty with translations, university procedures, and technical support, among many other areas. In addition to the CLC, PASEO works administratively with the Center for International Programs (CIP) in the areas of office and instructional material acquisitions and other budgetary matters.

Ohio Program for English Language Teaching

2 General Program Features

PASEO is not a terminal language program -- students can continue taking courses throughout their entire career at Chubu. The PASEO program is divided into five distinct proficiency levels (E, the lowest, through A, the highest). Students advance in level depending on their determination and effort to meet the set proficiency criteria, and

instructor evaluation. PASEO levels are based on professional standards established by the internationally recognized Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) organization. Levels are also set in accordance with the American Council on Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL) guidelines. All PASEO courses are offered during time slots that do not conflict with the students' regular academic courses.



3 Three Goals of PASEO

The three principal goals of the program are outlined below:

- 1) To provide high quality, comprehensive, English language instruction to Chubu University students, faculty, and staff to assist them in their academic and occupational pursuits
- 2) To promote internationalization and greater cross-cultural understanding by providing opportunities to explore American culture and gain valuable experience using English outside the classroom
- 3) To empower students with the necessary skills and confidence to work, travel, and/ or study abroad

Goal 1: High quality, comprehensive English language instruction

In many ways the PASEO program attempts to simulate an American university pre-academic Intensive English Program (IEP). Specifically, PASEO was modeled after the IEP at one of Chubu University's oldest educational



partners, Ohio University. Within the PASEO program, there are two types of courses offered at all proficiency levels, one type focusing on academic skills and the other on content-based learning. The skills courses (listening and speaking, and reading and writing) each meet twice a week for two ninety-minute sessions each. Students can opt to take up to two additional courses from the Wednesday content-based course selection as well. Wednesday

offerings include such titles as English for Travelers, Business English, TOEFL Preparation, The History of Rock Music, Pronunciation Workshop, and American TV Shows, to name a few. PASEO classes are limited to 25 students, but average class size hovers around 17. This small class size creates an ideal learning atmosphere as the instructor has more time to dedicate to each individual student. In the small class scenario students are provided ample opportunities to use English in class to communicate with classmates and a native speaker instructor, and this also allows instructors to understand each student's learning style, which in turn helps to strengthen and vary the mode of instruction.

Goal 2: Internationalization

Chubu University offers many opportunities for students to gain international experience through study abroad. PASEO students frequently participate in study abroad programs to Hong Kong, Australia, England, and the United States. Not only does PASEO serve as a natural catalyst for internationalization on campus through its language program, but it also provides support for study abroad students from the Humanities Department by offering pre-departure workshops in English.



These workshops are designed to help students to increase their awareness of potential cross-cultural pitfalls, to practice using survival English for daily life, and to develop strategies for not only surviving, but for thriving in an English-speaking culture. In addition, PASEO organizes a number of social and cultural events to encourage English language use outside the classroom.

Goal 3: Empowerment

“Chubu University students have the opportunity to compete for full scholarships to attend Ohio University in order to pursue graduate work.”

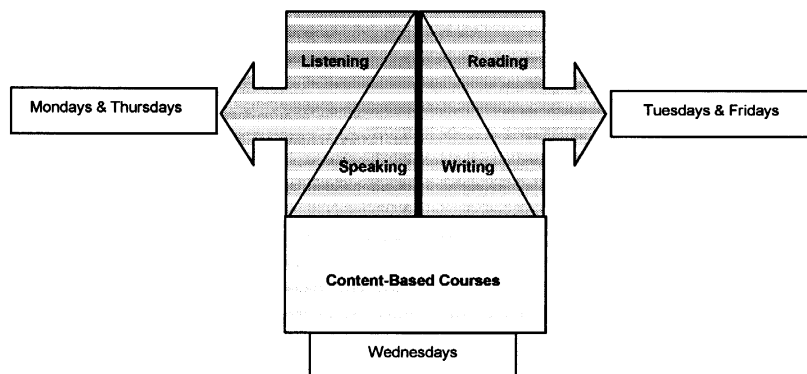


The PASEO program is also active in helping prepare graduate-level Ping scholarship recipients to Ohio University to compete successfully with native speakers in a graduate school academic setting. Since the inception of this important scholarship program, all scholarship awardees have studied in PASEO. While the majority of PASEO students may not bid for this particular scholarship, many others decide to go overseas to continue their study of English, while still others benefit from a solid knowledge of English to compete in the job market. PASEO students graduate from Chubu with a firm English language foundation upon which they can build and continue to succeed. It is a generally known fact that, compared with their non-PASEO counterparts, PASEO students feel more confident in their ability to use and communicate in English. PASEO students are renowned for their active participation even in the general English courses offered by Chubu. Further, they seize every opportunity to participate in language club activities, as well as campus-wide events such as English speech contests.

4 Implementation System

To participate in the PASEO program, students are required to attend a pre-term orientation, after which they must pre-register and take a placement test to determine levels for listening and speaking, and reading and writing. Students then select courses appropriate to their abilities and needs for the given term. Final course placement decisions are based on a variety of factors including previous study-abroad experience, previous PASEO experience, number of courses requested and placement scores.

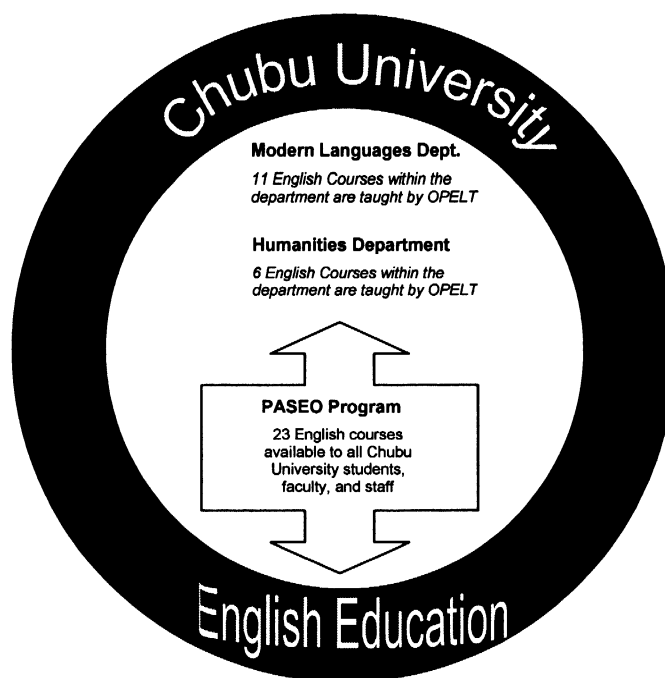
Courses Are Divided At Each Level into Two Groups of Academic Language Skills



After lists are finalized and posted, PASEO classes begin one week after the start of regular university classes to accommodate student scheduling of major courses. At the end of a semester, PASEO instructors produce a detailed performance report to provide students feedback on their progress. Instructors also use these reports as a reference for future level placements. When a student meets the expectations at a certain level as defined in the program curriculum, that student is generally advanced to the next level if teachers are in agreement.

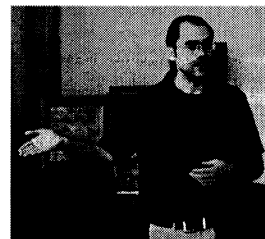
5 Linking PASEO to the Chubu's Educational Ideals

English language education opportunities at Chubu University can be found in two areas: the College of International Studies, including the Modern Languages Department, and the Humanities Department. Of the nearly 8,300 students at Chubu University, 732 have English as a component of their academic field of study. Chubu University values and promotes English education by supporting the PASEO program, which is available to all academic areas, thereby providing students a valuable resource despite restrictions in their mandatory course loads.



6 Measuring Success

One of the most salient signals of PASEO's continuing success is its consistent increase in enrollment, from a total of 487 students in 1999 to 716 in 2004. It is noteworthy that this dramatic increase in enrollment has come at a time when Japanese university enrollment in general is on the decline. Furthermore, test scores are evidence of a steady increase in student achievement. In frequent polling and surveys on issues ranging from future course offerings to program modifications, students have consistently responded with positive feedback regarding PASEO. Since 1999, a majority of students surveyed in course evaluations have stated that their English ability and confidence had improved as a result of studying in PASEO. Recently, in a separate survey, 99% of PASEO students stated that they believed PASEO was a useful and beneficial resource for Chubu students.



“PASEO's emphasis on production and interaction with native speakers produces much more confident English-speaking students.”

To ensure that PASEO teachers and courses continue to meet academic standards, they are evaluated regularly by an outside monitor from Ohio University's intensive English program. In addition, students provide feedback about the program every term in the form of course evaluations. The evaluations are compiled for each instructor and are reviewed by the OPELT director, PASEO instructors, members of the Chubu administration, and Ohio University's IEP director. Frequent review of PASEO enrollment figures, curricula, instructional materials and methodology is conducted to ensure the program continues to successfully fulfill its educational goals.

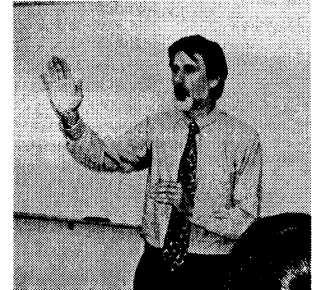


7 Realizing Educational Goals

Japanese university students at Chubu University are fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in a unique pre-academic style language program as PASEO. To maintain and ensure high quality instruction, PASEO continues to review and modify its curriculum on a regular basis to keep current with student needs and professional standards. Instructors find additional time to pursue course development projects that provide students with high interest course options. PASEO continues to offer special events to promote vital social interaction, authentic language use and program unity. One such event is the PASEO retreat, where students participate



in a two-day, overnight trip to the Chubu University Ena campus lodge. At the retreat students interact with study-abroad students from Ohio University, as well as other native-speaker international students. Together they engage in cross-cultural and recreational activities designed to develop skills that enable them to better express their ideas and opinions, to instill a greater awareness of their role in the global community, and just to relax and have a fun time together. Another popular event is the PASEO Summer Fun Party. Students from all levels take the opportunity to get to know one another and develop close friendships, as well as to practice using their English in an authentic, social setting. PASEO also celebrates American holidays from time to time.



8 The Future of Chubu and PASEO

Chubu University continues to support PASEO through its resources and facilities directed specifically to the promotion of English education. PASEO remains dedicated to engendering an environment in which instructors and students can take optimal advantage of the newest innovations in English language learning. Continued University support for PASEO will further enhance the development of unique and creative content-based course offerings for students. Future developments might include teaching methodology workshops, or a high school version of PASEO, which could serve as a model pre-university language program. Funding and qualified faculty would be the only limitations for the potential innovations in English language teaching through PASEO.

