

Enhancing the Accessibility of Postsecondary Educational Institutions in Japan

: Addressed by PEPNet-Japan

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Summary: To enhance the accessibility of postsecondary educational institutions which accept students with Deaf or hard of hearing, NTUT has developed the support network among 13 pioneer institutions in 2004. This network called PEPNet-Japan has grown in few years. Now there are 16 partner institutions and 163 partners in list serve across Japan. In this report, the outline of this network project and the new program that NTUT has just started will be shared. The outline of this paper is the following...

1. The outline of PEPNet-Japan project

- 1) Developing materials to educate universities and colleges
- 2) The Symposium to share the experiences of each institutions
- 3) The training seminars for service coordinators
- 4) Sharing information within partner institutions and others across Japan
- 5) Investigations on the support system in the advanced country

2. From network to outreach center

1. The outline of PEPNet-Japan project

The Postsecondary Education Programs Network of Japan (PEPNet-Japan) is the collaborative network among 16 pioneer universities and colleges which provide effective services for Deaf or hard of hearing individuals. It is established in October 2004, called by National University Corporation-Tsukuba University of Technology (NTUT) which is the only university for Deaf or hard of hearing individuals in Japan. The mission of PEPNet-Japan is to develop the best support models for individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing, and assist other institutions using know-how developed by them. To accomplish these missions, PEPNet-Japan has been provided various training programs and materials to the institutions across Japan. In this paper these achievements of PEPNet-Japan will be shared.

1) Developing materials to educate universities and colleges

One of the main projects of PEPNet-Japan is developing materials to advocate and educate universities and colleges. In the year 2007, following materials had been developed.

PEPNet-Japan Tip Sheets

To let people know how to support individuals with Deaf or hard of hearing, PEPNet-Japan Tip Sheets has been developed over three years. The idea of PEPNet-Japan Tip Sheet came from NETAC Tip Sheets in USA. It is one page double sided printing brochure explaining on a topic about support service for individuals with Deaf or hard of hearing, such as “what is hearing loss?” or “What is interpreting service?” etc. By the end of year 2007 19 topics of Tip Sheets had been developed. The newest topics developed in year 2007 are following.

Paper presented at the Exploring Instructional and Access Technologies Symposium
National Technical Institute for the Deaf
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<http://www.rit.edu/~techsym>

- Sign language interpreting service
- How to find interpreter to work effectively in higher educational settings?
- Coordinating in the first step
- Assisted listening devices

Information packet: The process to develop support system for individuals with Deaf or H/H

To provide knowledge how to develop support system in each institution, the information packet to explain the process to set up and grow support system was published in June 2007. In this booklet general process to set up support system was explained, followed by 7 typical examples of developing systems in real universities and colleges. To provide variety of examples, different size of institutions, number of students, major, and number of individuals with Deaf or hard of hearing were selected.

Online training: Student service for the first step

Based on the training seminar for staff members to start support service for students with Deaf or hard of hearing, the online training material had been developed by July 2007. This is the training material for staff members who want to start providing services to the student with Deaf or hard of hearing. Following topics were included in this training.

- Basic knowledge of hearing loss
- Various services to enhance the communication accessibility
- The process to provide the student service
- Case study: Waseda University
- Case study: Tokyo University
- Developing service based on students' needs

A hand book to provide notetaking service in postsecondary educational settings

To let people know how to develop the system providing notetaking service in each university and college, a hand book illustrating the tips to collect and train notetakers was published in October 2007. The contents of this hand book are following.

- Notetaking: Why it is needed and how it is provided?
- Basic training: How you can train notetakers?
- After the training: What your university should do?

A guide book for starting speech to text service: Let's try text interpreting!

In response to the institutions which would like to introduce speech to text service, a guide book to illustrate the steps how to start text interpreting was developed in March 2007. In this guide book, the equipments needed for text interpreting, settings and connections between computers and basic skills for text interpreting was instructed.

2) The Symposium to share the experiences of each institution

Making a change in nation wide scale, spreading information and increasing people involved in this area are very important. For this reason PEPNet-Japan has been hold a symposium once a year. In year 2007, the third symposium was taken place at NTUT. In this symposium, 180 people including faculties, staff members, students with Deaf or hard of hearing, interpreters and the other people concerned were joined. Three workshops on “Developing student service in your institution” “Enhancing class room communication” “Advocating students with Deaf or hard of hearing” were held in the morning, and it was followed by poster session and plenary session. The talk show inviting guests from PEPNet-Northeast in U.S. and the panel on “Building strong network in your institutions” were also held in plenary session.

3) The training seminars for service coordinators

Developing skills of service coordinator working in universities and colleges are also significant issues in Japan. To meet the demand of these coordinators, PEPNet-Japan held a training seminar to develop their skills as coordinator. This was the first training seminar for service coordinator in Japan and it was in very high repute among participants. The topics covered in this seminar were following.

- Introducing speech to text technology into your institution
- Notetaking experience and training method
- Blush up communication skills with students who are Deaf or hard of hearing

4) Sharing information within partner institutions and others across Japan

To share information on effective method of supporting students with Deaf or hard of hearing, PEPNet-Japan has been arranged various type of meetings within partner institutions or others across Japan. Here is the example of these meeting held in year 2007.

Information exchange on specific topic within partner institutions

This is the meeting among partner institutions and hold usually after or before the meeting of steering committee. In year 2007, following topics were covered.

- Sharing information from the study tour to U.S.: focusing on the usage of technology in the field of student support
- Sharing information from the study tour to U.S.: focusing on the interpreter training program in Rochester Institute of Technology and Northeastern University

Information exchange project among service coordinator in partner institutions

Besides of the meeting within steering committee, the service coordinators in partner

institutions are also aspire to get information on this field. To meet the needs of these coordinator PEPNet-Japan have started providing opportunities for the service coordinators to communicate each other and build strong network within them. Toward this end four meeting has been hold in this year covering following topics.

- What the coordinator has to do at the beginning of school term?
 - What can the coordinator do to brush up notetakers' skill?
 - How to use new technology? : Voice recognition, Speech to text, and Remote interpreting
- Coordinator conference on student service for individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing**

Not only PEPNet-Japan partner institutions, but also other institutions in Japan have started hiring service coordinators for supporting students with disabilities recently. According to newest investigation on this, it is revealed that there are 40 universities and colleges hiring service coordinators to support students with disabilities. To create linkages between these coordinators, PEPNet-Japan held a fist conference of all coordinators across Japan in October 2007. In this conference coordinators could get a chance to see each other in face to face, and communicate each other as a first start to create information exchange network among them.

5) Investigations on the support system in the advanced country

To learn from the practice in advanced country like America, PEPNet-Japan has organized several study tours since 2004. These study visits were supported by PEN-International (grant form Nippon Foundation in Japan, located at Rochester Institute of Technology / NTID) in aspects of coordination, arrangement and founding (2004-2006). The topics covered in there tours were following, and recently it is focus on more specific topic than general support service.

- Support program in Rochester Institute of Technology
- The goal and project of PEPNet / PEPNet-Northeast
- Student service in universities and colleges in NY
- The usage of technology in student service
- Interpreter training program

2. From network to the outreach center

Based on these progresses addressed by PEPNet-Japan, NTUT Research and Support Center on Higher Education for the Hearing Impaired started new program building outreach center called T-TAC for students with Deaf or hard of hearing in institutions across Japan. This is the five year project from 2007, founded by Japanese ministry of education. The mission of this project is providing outreach services to the institutions which support students with Deaf

or hard of hearing and researching the method to support effectively to the students based on the strong network developed by PEPNet-Japan. In this program following project has been addressing.

- Outreach service and technical assistance for institutions accepting students with Deaf or H/H
- Providing interpreting service through remote interpreting system developed by NTUT
- Providing communication service for students with Deaf or H/H
- Holding training seminar on/off campus
- Researching and developing skills to support students with Deaf or H/H
- Developing stronger network through PEPNet-Japan project

3. Conclusion

Establishment of student service program in each institution had been a significant issue for a long time in Japan. However after the foundation of PEPNet-Japan in 2004, the situation surrounding individuals with Deaf or hard of hearing has been rapidly changing. Going with the tide of these trend, it is significant to establish outreach program in NTUT. Inquiries to outreach center asking help to set up new support service has been increasing. To provide better assistance for these institutions, the growing up of NTUT outreach center has been expected.

NOTE

PEPNet-Japan and T-TAC are the programs managed by NTUT, founded by Japanese ministry of education. At the establishment of PEPNet-Japan, it had been supported by PEN-International (a grant program of Nippon Foundation, located in Rochester Institute of Technology / NTID).