Preliminary Research on Overseas Internships in Singapore

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Small and medium sized companies are expanding their business overseas as global trade increases and the yen rises. They are faced with the problem of securing human resources that are dispatched abroad. In order to foster students’ ability to work in a global economy, we have embarked on basic research on students’ overseas internships. For our preliminary research, we took three students to experience workplaces in Singapore during the summer vacation in 2011. They were given a lecture by a Japanese management consultant living in Singapore on the country’s economy, culture, languages and also business customs on the first day. Next, they experienced a real estate company, a construction company, and a ramen shop for three days in total. Through these experiences, the amount of English the students spoke increased dramatically. They believed this was a result of their rapid improvement in their listening skills after they were exposed to English all day long. According to the reports they wrote after returning home, all of the students stated the internship positively influenced their motivation for learning in general and they felt the necessity of improving their communication skills.

On the other hand, the host companies pointed out that it was unclear the extent they were expected to teach and give opportunities to the students during the short period of the internship. However, they had a very favorable impression of this kind of project and promised to accept more students in the future.

In order to promote further study, the following three problems have emerged:
1) How to enhance educational content prior to the internships in terms of communication skills as well as rudimentary knowledge of the business world.
2) How to set the exact goals of the internships.
3) How to help students stay motivated to study English for their future career.

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