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Interview

Advocating for stress-free, lifelong English learning

鳥取県立岩美高等学校の校長を務める辻中孝彦さんは、バドミントンの 国際審判員としても活躍する。学生時代から好きだったバドミントンと英語を 続け、英語は教えるだけでなくコミュニケーションツールとして使い、楽しく 学びを続けているという。小紙の長期読者でもある辻中さんに話を聞いた。

Takahiko Tsujinaka is the kind of English teacher that many wish they had when they were in school. "Japanese classrooms could do with a bit more cheer, especially during English. Neither teacher nor students are native speakers so we're all in this together. Everyone can learn and benefit from English classes regardless of who they are or what they do," says Tsujinaka. "An enjoyable and relaxed atmosphere will go a long way in terms of language acquisition. I'm of the opinion that teachers and students don't have to suffer through lessons about **precision** grammar and sentence structures."

Tsujinaka taught high school English in his home prefecture of Tottori before becoming the principal at his alma mater two years ago. He's also a former badminton player and current international technical official of that sport, which requires him to attend international meetings and assist with translations of rulebook updates. "English is a valuable asset to have in all walks of life. It's a tool you can hone as you go through the journey of life. It can broaden your perspective and help you meet people."

Tsujinaka liked English when he first came in contact with the language as a freshman in junior high, at the same time he started playing badminton. English, however, didn't like him back as much as

badminton did. "I loved the classes because the teacher was a fun person but my grades were really bad. And I often **ghosted** badminton practice. In short, I just wasn't serious enough about my two passions."

Tsujinaka says English was the least stressful and most interesting subject for him, and he thought he'd like to work with the language once he reached adulthood. "But it wasn't until I got to high school that I decided to buckle down and do some serious studying."

High school was also the time when Tsujinaka stopped ghosting and started practicing his chosen sport in earnest. "I worked hard on both English and badminton and got into Chukyo University, where I met a professor who conducted all his classes in English. That style of teaching was an eye-opener. Actual English communication in class was so fun and rewarding. I used the same style in my classes."

Tsujinaka acknowledges that English education in Japan has long been geared toward passing tests and exams. "Too many tests consisted of questions with only one right answer. It's far from ideal when acquiring language skills or getting students interested. It's a shame because English offers so much more. But things are changing, with more tests focusing on cognition and other aspects."

(Kaori Shoji)

Advocating 提唱する。 cheer 明るさ。 go ... way 効果がある。 precision 正確な。 alma mater 母校。 technical official 審判員。 in ... life あらゆる職業や立場で。 ghosted ~ をさぼった。buckle down まじめに取り組む。in earnest 真剣に。eye-opener 目から うろこの体験。has ... toward ~ 長年~に注力してきた。cognition 思考力。



辻中孝彦 (つじなか たかひこ) 鳥取県出身。中京大学文学部英文学科 卒業。予備校の英語講師をする傍ら、広 島のアジア大会でバトミントンの競技 通訳業務に従事。1997年、32歳で教員採 用試験に合格し、鳥取西高等学校での 12年間の勤務をはじめ25年間英語教諭 として教壇に立つ。2000年バドミント ン国際審判員資格を取得、東京五輪の 審判員も務めた。2021年より母校鳥取

県立岩美高等学校校長を務める。



COURTESY OF TAKAHIKO TSUJINAKA

Words to live by

The wall that you climb over becomes your greatest fortress.

「乗り越えた壁は最強のとりでになる」。私は隙間時間を見つけて勉強す るタイプです。1日15分でも勉強を積み上げれば身に付くものがありま す。誰にでもできる当たり前のことから始めて楽しく学びましょう。

*本欄インタビューのロングバージョンはウェブでお読みいただけます。

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