

IT Training in India

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Japan is probably the only one country in the world where you can work in the IT field, using a non-English language only. Maybe because of this, Japanese IT professionals' English proficiency is probably much lower than many of the non-Japanese IT professionals.

That might be a welcoming fact, demonstrating the power of Japan as a country. Still, this situation may not last for a long time in the future.

Moreover, you cannot ignore the fact that most of the IT books and articles are just translated versions of English ones. Translated information is just limited portion of all the information available in English worldwide. Also, many people publish their technical information on their blogs, most of which are in English. Only selected major information is available in Japanese, but again, majority of them remain not translated into Japanese.

Those of you who want to excel in the technology field should be able to absorb knowledge from English media. That is a must-have skill. For those of you who agree with my idea, I recommend you to start learning English as your first step. It won't take too much time to get technical knowledge from English sources, such as English books or English blogs on Internet, if you are university graduates.

After learning how to learn technical information from English media, try learning technical knowledge from conversational English. Japanese tend to think about going to English conversational schools or to schools/universities abroad for that purpose, but that is not so smart idea. Forget about going to schools or to read English reference books for the sole purpose of learning English. Please leave such an idea to students.

To those who had already graduated from schools already, I recommend you to learn professional knowledge using English. That way, as a good side effect of improving your technical skill, you can naturally improving your English, not knowingly. I wish IT engineers will choose to acquire IT knowledge in English, at the same time working worldwide using English. I suggest going to India and take IT training lessons there. Excellent Indian instructors will teach you IT technologies in English extensively. And the cost of the lessons is surprisingly low.

So I am going to report my IT training class experience in May 2006 in India.

I took a one month course of MCSD (Microsoft Certified Solution Developer) at Koenig. Saturdays were also lesson days, so, it was 4 weeks x 6 days = 24 days total in duration. Including the accommodation cost of hotels and meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner), it totaled to approximately US \$3,000. The hotel was not one of the cheapest rank places, but the business-hotel level. Considering the cost of staying at such a hotel for a month (30 days), it was really like a bargain.

You can take courses in several places within India, but I choose Delhi; it was the cheapest option. At the Delhi airport, a driver was waiting for me, holding my name sign. The driver took me to a normal business hotel. It was a relief that the hotel was a reasonable level one. From the next day, the same driver picked up the students staying at the same hotel, including myself, every morning to the classroom. The course I paid for was not a one-on-one training, but a three to four student course. But then it turned out to be a one-on-one training because nobody was taking the same course. Maybe Koenig was trying to expand its business and it had just employed many instructors back then. They might have been training many newly employed instructors.

MCS D is the certification for software developers using Microsoft technologies, and you need to pass five exams of .NET basics, C#, ASP.NET, SQL Server, Architect, etc. I had to pass all of these five exams within one month. Each class was about three to four days. Every three to four days period of each class, I had to extensively read a 300 pages of thick textbook and take the exam. I studied really hard.

Every day, from 9 am to 5 pm, I took one-on-one classes, then went back to the hotel and solved practice questions. I had never studied this hard before, even when I was a student. The exams are in English, plus, the exams require you to solve many questions in such a short time. In the beginning, I felt anxious, but thanks to my effort, I could pass all of the exams on the first attempt.

Different subject was taught by different instructors. Some instructors lacked some experience so I requested Koenig Solutions to change the instructor. The SQL Server instructor was really great. But the other instructor was not that good. I asked Koenig Solutions to change the instructor to the SQL Server instructor. Their reply was, "The instructor is in Shimla, the famous summer retreat spot, which is in one day bus ride distance from Delhi. If you'll move there, you will be able to learn from the same instructor."

Delhi in May is the hottest season. The daytime temperature exceeds 40 degrees centigrade. Classrooms were air-conditioned, so the temperature did not bother me during the class. But it was really hot outside. I was delighted to hear the option of going to Shimla. I spent one Sunday, which is the only off day in a week, to travel from Delhi to Shimla.

I could not enjoy the bus trip so much because I was solving sample exam questions to prepare for the exam, which I would take as soon as I would arrive at Shimla. However, Shimla was a totally heavenly place! Delhi was the collection of the India's worst things; it was hot and beggars bothered me. In addition, the whole town was full of noise. Totally opposite of that was Shimla. Being at 2000 meters above the sea level, people were wearing jackets and coats. There was no need for air conditioning. I was most delighted to see no beggars there. When India was the British colony, Shimla was said to be the temporary capital during the summer. I could see it in this very fine and clean environment.

All lectures were one-one-one. I never had a class with other students, but I could meet other students during the breakfast, during the car ride to the classroom building, or during the lunch hours. Of course there was no Japanese there. When I asked them whether any Japanese had been there before, they said several were there in the past.

Most students were British. Young people, middle-aged people, and a woman were there. The lady was Indian British - she was British with her Indian roots. Nobody was sent from a company. Everyone was paying for the cost themselves. Some were there before a change of career and some were there in-between project periods, to earn certifications. A student from Nigeria had a government job and was sometimes wearing African traditional clothes.

An IT engineer who works in a company in Japan may find it difficult to get a 30 day vacation to take an IT training. But if you talk in a good way, you might be able to convince the company to pay for the cost. If so, you can take a 30 day course without worrying about the financial matter. It won't be a bad idea for the company also because the skill of an employee will improve dramatically just with 300,000 yen.

If you are a contract engineer or freelance engineer, you probably can easily find a 30 day free time in between projects. Even if you are paying for the cost yourself, it will be a useful investment of 300,000 yen to increase your market value.

Previously, I had some experiences in India before. About 25 years ago, I had been traveling in India for about two months. Also, I was once working in an Indian system integrator company of a Japanese office. I felt some sort of close connection with India, which is why I did not hesitate to take the course in India so much. For those people without such an Indian experience, India might be a totally strange country. They may be afraid of India and it may be such a high hurdle for them to take courses in India. I can only say "be courageous" to them.