

# Walking in Someone Else's Shoes - Experiences from the Class

## Participative Learning in the Region

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A native to a city moves through her/his own environment without much thought and in accordance with their learned experiences. A non-native, no matter how easily adaptable, often times feels a sense of insecurity while moving through a new city, and needs to double check the signage and maps more often, or even ask questions to make sure they are on the right track. Therefore they need more time to navigate the space and surroundings. Naturally, this sense of navigation is exemplified if one is in a foreign culture where the dominantly used alphabet and language are not known to them. This class proposed active student participation on various locations in the city, while learning about the potential struggles that foreign visitors may experience when moving through Nagoya and making concise proposals for organized routes within the city.

Keywords: Participation • Walking in the City • Routes • Sign and Symbol Design

### 1. Introduction

This class was designed as an attempt to walk around various locations in Nagoya in the shoes of foreign visitors who aren't necessarily fluent in reading Japanese, or even used to the Japanese writing system. On our walk in Nagoya Station, the students were asked to undertake a few exercises that would help them better understand the struggles of travellers and observe the signage guiding them through their known environment much more closely than usual.

### 2. How to Walk in Someone Else's Shoes

#### 2.1. Exercise No.1

We split in two groups, one that followed the signage while walking from point A (Shinkansen Exit) to point B (City Bus Terminal), and another group that completely ignored the visual sign systems and only communicated verbally with the station staff in order to be assisted to reach point B from point A. We measured and compared the times in which the walk was completed by both groups.

#### 2.2. Exercise No.2

Imagining that we are visitors with suitcases that have just arrived at the City Bus Terminal in Nagoya Station we were headed towards Meitetsu Line to "catch" a train for Centerair Airport. Although this route was shorter than the first one, we stumbled upon portions of the route that had no continuous signage to guide us and finding an elevator that would help us unload our "luggage" straight to the Meitetsu platforms for Centerair Airport showed to be an additional challenge.

### 3. Results

Once faced directly with these struggles that foreign visitors may have in Nagoya Station, the students were asked to write up a report in which they would outline their experiences. The format - a written letter in English, to a foreign friend who is about to embark on a trip to Nagoya. Below is the report submitted by student Ken Ishizu.

Dear friend,

I write this letter to you, to explain the way to the Kita-chikusa campus of Nagoya-city university from Nagoya station. I recommend you to take a bus after you get to Nagoya station. So let me explain you the way from the north(or south) ticket gate of Shinkansen to Nagoya-bus terminal at first.

1. When you'll pass through the north(south) gate, you'll see a silver clock in front of you. Then turn left(right) and go straight to the opposite end of the station.
2. After you walk a while, you will see a golden clock. Turn left and look for a bus symbol.
3. Go straight following the signs
4. When you get to the bus terminal, look for No.10 bus stop.
5. Ride any bus that leaves from No.10 bus stop.

Next, let me explain the way how to get to the ticket gate of Meitetsu-line from the bus terminal in order to take the train to Centrair-airport(Japan central airport).

1. After you get off the bus, turn left and go straight until you reach the end of the way.
2. Turn left and across the crosswalk.
3. You'll see the elevator symbol.
4. Following the symbol, turn right and take the elevator to B1F.
5. After you get off the elevator, you'll see the ticket gate. Then, look at the board and check which train leaves for Centrair Airport(Japan central airport).
6. When you are able to see which train leaves for Centrair-airport on the board, don't forget to check the platform number.
7. You'll see the elevator inside of the ticket gate. I recommend you to use it.
8. After you get off the elevator, check the time and platform number on the board.
9. Take the train that leaves for Centrair-airport.

### 4. In Conclusion

The aim of this class was not to merely give a clear answer to the question whether Nagoya is really a friendly city to foreigners, but to propose a change of perspective for our freshmen students, stir their empathy and activate them within the daily life context, on a subject matter that they may not normally have to deal with. In the following years, the class will aim to continue to explore the social fabric of Nagoya and the role that foreign residents and non-residents play in it, as well as engage within that community, well beyond our students campus life.