FY2026 Tokunoshima Town Overseas Language Study Program Implementation Report

~ From Remote Island to the World: Nurturing Autonomous Next-Generation Agency and Rediscovering Local Value ~

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Introduction: Opening the Future for Next Generations through Hometown Investment

We extend our deepest gratitude to the residents of Tokunoshima Town and to the donors across the nation who have warmly supported our municipality through the Hometown Tax program (Furusato Nozei). The precious financial resources entrusted to us are strategically invested in improving our town's educational environment and nurturing leaders for the next generation. The result of these efforts is the 4th commencement of the Overseas Language Study Program.

While the geographical isolation of an island brings wonderful blessings such as rich nature and traditional culture, it has also been a factor causing physical educational disparities compared to urban areas regarding access to information and international exchange opportunities. The Tokunoshima Town Board of Education has strongly promoted this initiative so that children can gain world-class educational opportunities and direct experiences without being constrained by such limitations.

In light of recent unstable international conditions and rapid changes in digital infrastructure surrounding children, the program location was completely shifted this fiscal year from New York, USA, to Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. Brisbane is a premier global city receiving immense attention as the host of the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, offering exceptionally high public safety and infrastructure security. Below is a detailed report of the 18-day journey experienced by our students.

Chapter 1: Background and Objectives — Education of Trust and Letting Go Towards Independence

In modern society, where globalization has reached extreme levels, what children need goes beyond simple 'knowledge input' or 'exam-oriented language skill improvement.' There is a crucial demand for **Agency[1] (the ability to transform actions autonomously)**— the power to think, judge, collaborate with diverse backgrounds, and overcome difficulties independently in unfamiliar environments.

Conventional packaged study-abroad programs often fall into **Over-Inclusion[2] (an overly protective framework)** under the banner of safety management, where chaperones constantly accompany students, proactively assisting with transportation, meals, and problem-solving. Under such excessive care, students remain passive 'tourists,' raising strong concerns that opportunities for autonomous growth are hindered.

Therefore, this year's study abroad program emphasized an 'Education of Trust and Letting Go,' where adults intentionally step back and trust the students' latent capabilities. By intentionally eliminating over-chaperoning, students autonomously utilized daily life apps and resolved friction with host families using their own words. The overarching goal of this report is to evaluate how this 'educational design of trust and letting go' awakened the students' raw intelligence and proactive problem-solving abilities.

> **[Key Educational Concepts]**
> [1] Agency: The ability to think, judge, and pave one's own path independently.
> [2] Intentional Elimination of Over-Inclusion: Warmly stepping back and trusting students without adults stepping in prematurely to fix everything.

Chapter 2: Program Structure and Multi-Layered Learning Environment

This program took place over the course 18 days, from July 17 to August 3 (including a 15-day stay in Brisbane). To stimulate student transformation, the educational environment was designed in multiple layers, providing distinct types of challenges and opportunities.

Layer 1: Multinational Collaborative Learning at Charlton Brown
Students studied alongside peers of diverse backgrounds from around the world (South America, Asia,

Europe, etc.) at Charlton Brown language school. In this practical curriculum, they shared their cultural heritage while utilizing English as a 'living communication tool.'

Layer 2: Special Integration at John Paul College (JPC)
Students participated twice in special integration sessions at John Paul College (JPC), one of Queensland's premier private elite schools offering K-12 education. Each student was matched 1-on-1 with a local buddy, attending regular classes (such as chemistry and technology) side-by-side. This built a deep, authentic collaborative educational relationship beyond event-driven tourist interaction.

Chapter 3: Dynamics of Student Psychological Transformation and Autonomy Development Shown by Data

To objectively verify the educational transformation of this project, the text entries from reflection journals written daily by participating students were quantified on a 10-point scale (1: extremely low, 10: extremely high) according to educational psychology standards and mapped chronologically.

> **[Data Visualization Summary]**
> Chart: 18-Day Student Psychological Transformation Curve
> Shows a dramatic decline in anxiety index alongside a sharp rise in autonomy and self-confidence over the 18 days.

Analysis revealed a dramatic inverse dynamic within the students' inner state. In the initial phase (Stages 1–2), due to language barriers and unfamiliar surroundings, student 'Anxiety / Homesickness' reached an extreme peak of '9.0,' with students expressing deep distress and asking 'to return to the island as soon as possible.'

However, following the introduction of autonomous commuting using digital transit apps (Stage 3) and the moment they independently resolved an unexpected bus delay (Stage 4), the situation transformed dramatically. Student 'Autonomy / Initiative' surged from an initial '2.0' to a maximum of '10.0.' Correspondingly, the anxiety index plummeted to '1.5,' and 'Confidence' in communication reached '8.0.' This data clearly confirms that adult 'trust and letting go' empirically fostered a dramatic leap in students' self-efficacy.

Chapter 4: Detailed 18-Day Activity Log

Days 1–3 (July 17–19): Departure and Arrival in an Unfamiliar Land

• July 17–18 (Departure Ceremony & Travel via Narita to Australia): A departure ceremony was held at Tokunoshima Airport amidst warm support. After one night in Kagoshima, students flew to Brisbane via Haneda and Narita Airports.
• July 19 (Arrival, Host Family Meeting & Living Preparation): Arrived in Brisbane early morning.

Experienced the seamless DX Smart Gate at immigration. After orientation at Charlton Brown, students purchased 'go cards' for public transit and moved to host families, expressing awe at the beautiful neighborhood streetscapes.

Days 4–5 (July 20–21): Language School Commencement & First Autonomous Ordering

• July 20 (Charlton Brown Placement Test): Students commuted via public bus by checking location apps carefully. They took placement tests in math and English, adapting to differences in math terminology and proper/improper fraction notations while interacting naturally with multinational peers.
• July 21 (Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary & Autonomous Ordering): Visited Lone Pine with local buddies, learning about koalas and environmental protection. At the kiosk, students successfully ordered food and paid electronically completely on their own without chaperone help.

Days 6–7 (July 22–23): Visiting Prestigious JPC & Exploring Historic Heritage

• July 22 (John Paul College Integration Session 1): Transit decisions shifted fully to students. Matched 1-on-1 with JPC buddies, attending regular classes and enjoying pizza while discussing Japanese trends and hobbies.
• July 23 (Brisbane City Hall Museum & Clock Tower): Explored historic documents in City Hall Museum and rode the antique elevator to the clock tower, taking detailed notes on civic heritage before returning independently to language class.

Day 8 (July 24): Exploring Indigenous Aboriginal Culture & Preparing Local Presentations

Learned about Aboriginal history, music, and tradition, creating authentic dot paintings. In the afternoon, researched native Australian animals and prepared digital slides in English, combining them with Tokunoshima guidebooks brought from home to present to multinational classmates.

Day 9 (July 25): Student-Led Independent City Exploration & First Self-Reflection

Executed self-planned weekend excursions via public transit to Sir Thomas Brisbane Planetarium, South Bank, and Neville Bonner Bridge. Student reflection journals recorded deep insights comparing local environmental conditions:

> **[Student Reflections]**
> "The strong winter sun highlighted global warming. Seeing the green, turbid Brisbane River made me realize that the pristine clarity of Tokunoshima's ocean is not a given, but a miraculous blessing maintained by islanders' constant efforts."
> "Observing police sirens and litter in the city made me rediscover Tokunoshima's moral safety, where children play freely without locking doors."

Day 10 (July 26): Long-Distance Travel to Gold Coast & Authentic Theme Park

Traveled 2+ hours to Gold Coast via bus and train, adapting easily to electronic ticketing. At Warner Bros. Movie World, students split into thrill-ride seekers (DC Rivals HyperCoaster) and relaxed explorers. Students analyzed park operation efficiencies compared to Japanese amusement parks.

Day 11 (July 27): Autonomous Bus Delay Resolution & English Presentation

When a bus delay threatened morning attendance, female students autonomously used the 'Translink' transit app to locate real-time alternatives and rerouted successfully before school started. In the afternoon, students delivered confident digital presentations on Australian wildlife and Tokunoshima's natural heritage to high acclaim.

Day 12 (July 28): From Fear to Jubilation! Brisbane River Kayaking Experience

Overcame initial fears of cold water and swimming to enjoy solo kayaking on the Brisbane River guided by local instructors. Students noted how taking action dispels anxiety. After class, they enjoyed frozen yogurt (yo-chi) with international friends.

Day 13 (July 29): Elite School Chemistry Lab & Analysis of Tech/Cultural Differences

Second JPC visit. Students noted technological differences in chemistry labs (digital heating devices vs. traditional gas burners) and strict lab safety rules. Male students participated in a game-based tech class analyzing Smash Bros statistics mathematically.

Day 14 (July 30): Queensland Museum Mission & Multilateral Language Exchange

Explored Queensland Museum, completing educational scavenger hunts on native wildlife with multinational peers. During lunch, students taught each other greetings in Chinese, Korean, Taiwanese, Japanese, and Tokunoshima dialect.

Days 15–18 (July 31 – August 3): Tearful Graduation Ceremony & Journey Home

• July 31: Delivered final Tokunoshima tourism presentations at Charlton Brown. The graduation ceremony ended in emotional tears and warm hugs with international friends.
• August 1–3: Spent quality final moments with host families before departing Brisbane on Aug 2 and returning to Tokunoshima on Aug 3. Students returned with dignified confidence and leadership qualities.

Chapter 5: Awakening of Agency and Analysis of Self-Efficacy Transformation

The awakening of student agency was driven by three main educational pillars:

1. Eliminating Obsession with Perfect English: Students strategically used smartphone images, translation tools, and non-verbal gestures to overcome communication barriers, building communication resilience.
2. Assertive Communication in Homestays: Moving away from passive endurance, students courageously negotiated laundry and food preferences directly with host families.
3. Problem-Solving via Translink App: Resolving transit delays independently provided 'Enactive Mastery Experiences' (Albert Bandura), cementing strong self-efficacy.

> **[Communication Concept]**
> [3] Assertive Communication: Expressing one's thoughts and needs respectfully and clearly while caring for the listener.

Chapter 6: Reflective Illumination of Local Identity Through Boundary Experiences

By placing themselves in Brisbane, students experienced a 'Reflective Illumination[4]' of their local identity through Boundary Experiences[5] (Kolb's Experiential Learning Model):

• Environmental Preservation Contrast: Seeing the turbid Brisbane River highlighted the preciousness of Tokunoshima's pristine ocean.
• Safety & Moral Standards: Experiencing city crime concerns and litter made students value Tokunoshima's warm, safe, and close-knit community.

> **[Identity Concepts]**
> [4] Reflective Illumination & [5] Boundary Experience: Experiencing the outer world acts as a mirror to re-evaluate the true value of one's homeland (Tokunoshima).

Chapter 7: Global Educational Model for Nurturing Next-Generation Leaders

This program established a successful model for nurturing future leaders. Students no longer feel constrained by island geography, developing strong career aspirations to study, work internationally, and contribute back to Tokunoshima.

Ultimately, Tokunoshima Town's Overseas Language Study Program demonstrates how Hometown Tax revenue can be refined into a high-impact educational investment, serving as a sustainable global talent development model for local municipalities nationwide.