

Random Thoughts 72

Where there is a will there is a way¹

The current norovirus epidemic is having far-reaching consequences. Primarily this is due to the fact that so little is known about it. It is quite different from other viral infections, most noticeably in the fact that someone may be infected without showing any symptoms for a week or so and as a result unconsciously spread the infection to others just by close contact. It also is not known whether once infected and supposedly cured whether the person then becomes immune to getting it a second time. There have been reports of the same person getting it twice.

Governments around the world are struggling to find ways to stop its spread, the primary method being the request or in some instances laws, requiring people to stay at home and to avoid group gatherings. This has led to schools being closed which raises new problems for working parents who have school-aged children. Until now, instruction has traditionally been in the classroom with a teacher. A few progressive schools have introduced online lessons, but the number has been small. Yet, the technology now exists to enable anyone to take lessons online rather easily. This is especially true for language learning.

I agree that being able to meet in a group, as we do every Friday, is best because of the free unrestricted exchanges we all can share. Conversing in person is of course more enjoyable than conversing electronically. But, if it comes down to a choice of not having lessons at all or having them online, then I think online lessons are the way to go! Now that everyone is being encouraged to stay at home, online lessons are an ideal way to not only continue English lessons, but also a good way to alleviate boredom.

There are two ways to do it: one-on-one lessons or group lessons. The former is the easiest because it does not require much technical knowledge. Perhaps you have used or heard of Skype. This is a free program that enables people to have video chats with others. I often use it to talk to my former colleague who lives in America. We can see each other on our PC as we talk. In the past I have given private conversation lessons using Skype. It also has the function of enabling the participant to record the lesson which can then be reviewed later. For these private lessons, all that is needed is to determine a time for the lesson ahead of time. This really gives the student great flexibility! Group online lessons are a bit more complicated, so I'll explain how those are conducted at another time.

So, if you want to continue practicing English conversation with me, I am happy to do so – at no extra charge – if you can use Skype! If you are interested, but don't know how to use Skype, I will happily explain. Just email me at richard@ram-inter.com! It is easier than you might think! And once you get the hang of Skype, you can use it to video chat with family and friends, too!

¹ 意志があるところには道がある