

# FD News-N-Things



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## Good Tests=Good Teaching=Good Learning

M. William Steele, Dean, CLA  
(Division of Social Sciences)

I can't pretend to be an expert on testing and assessment, but what I do know is that the ability to make a good test is part of what it takes to be a good teacher. Many of us pride ourselves on the time we spend with individual students, and we work on our abilities to communicate clearly and make the complex easy to understand. In the classroom we are enthusiastic about our subject and we try to motivate students to become inquisitive learners. We spend a great deal of time designing our courses and preparing lecture notes, but how much time do we spend on devising methods of assessment appropriate to our courses? Students don't like taking tests and faculty don't like making them, let alone do all the grading and calculations necessary to give out grades. Tests and methods of assessment need to be seen in a more positive light, and as responsible educators, we need to take the testing process seriously.

It is important to remember that assessment is part of learning. Tests are not simply something that comes at the very end of the course that allows the professor to assign students grades. Tests are important learning tools. Experts tell us that there are at least seven good reasons to give tests:

1. To provide a record for assigning grades.
2. To provide a learning experience for students.
3. To motivate students to learn.
4. To communicate to students their level of understanding of the course objectives and serve as a guide for further study.
5. When utilizing pretests, feedback is provided regarding the knowledge students bring to the content.
6. To assess how well students are achieving the

stated goals and course objectives.

7. To provide the instructor with an opportunity to reinforce the stated objectives and highlight what is important for students to remember  
(<http://www.lansing.cc.mi.us/cte/resources/onlineworkshops/testingtechniques/lesson1.html>)

Here we see that assessment is far more important than simply helping us fill out the grade sheet. Tests can tell us if the students are learning what we want them to learn. And tests also help teachers influence the way students learn. According to Barbara Gross Davis, students study according to the way in which they think they will be tested. "If they expect an exam focused on facts, they will memorize details; if they expect a test that will require problem solving or integrating knowledge, they will work toward understanding and applying information." ("Quizzes, Tests, and Exams," in *Tools for Teaching*, 1993; see UC Berkeley's Office of Education Develop website: <http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/quizzes.html>) Tests are also a useful and necessary exercise in "quality control." If students do poorly in an exam, it may mean that the material is not being presented well. Finally, tests can help the learning process by showing students areas in which they need to work harder. Now, ask yourself, which of these functions are your exams performing? How much effort do you put into making your tests? Do your tests match the content of what you are teaching? Are your tests reliable? Do you use a variety of testing methods? What are you testing beyond simple recall of information?

Students in all courses should be subject to multiple forms of assessment. In most (all?) cases, students should not be graded simply on the basis of one exercise or one exam. My rule of thumb is that the final exam should count for around 30 percent or at

most 40 percent of the grade. As Dean I hear complaints from students about so-called “one-shot” (一発勝負) classes where ten weeks of work are graded on the basis of one test. Some students have not attended class and deserve to fail; but some attended class regularly and still failed because 100 percent of the grade depended on one test. Without multiple forms of assessment, we do a disservice to our student and ourselves. Students need to be informed of their progress, and teachers need to be sure that their message is getting across. ICU aims at rigorous education. Therefore we should give our students frequent assignments and make extensive, constructive comments on them. If we are really interested in “learning” (as opposed to “teaching”) what value is there in grading students on the basis of a final exam that students will not see until weeks or even months after the class is over and on which there are no marks other than a simple letter grade?

Education experts stress that impartial evaluation of students and the quality of examinations is essential to good teaching. According to Shirley Ronkowski of the University of California at Santa Barbara, when it comes to making exams, good teachers make sure that:

- concepts emphasized in class are those emphasized in exams
- exams cover material on which students expect to be tested
- exams require student to do more than recall factual information
- exams allow student to adequately demonstrate what was learned in the course
- exams require synthesis of various parts of the course
- the instructor tells students how they will be evaluated in the course
- grades are based on a fair balance of course requirements and content
- students are satisfied with the way they have been evaluated
- students are quizzed frequently
- instructor announces tests and quizzes in advance
- instructor uses more than one type of evaluation device

(website: <http://www.oic.id.ucsb.edu/Resources/Teaching/GoodTeaching.html>)

As Dean I am of course concerned about grade inflation. Too many A's is not good for any academic institution, but neither is too many E's. At the beginning of every term, the Assistant Dean and I

interview over 40 students who are suffering from low grades. Why do students fail? I think that the faculty must take some share of the blame. Do we as educators devise our courses in such a way that will maximize the learning process? I urge faculty members to take a look at Kathleen Brinko's checklist of questions when designing courses, located on the website of the Instructional Resources Center (IRC) of the University of California at Irving: (<http://www.irc.uci.edu/trg/28.html>) She requires us to make choices about course goals, student performance, class activities, instructional support, types and frequency of assignments, and criteria used to determine/measure student success (or failure). Above all she stresses that the choices, once made, must be made clear to the students. Methods of evaluation and course grading policy are important parts of the course syllabus.

During the course there are many things that faculty can do to help students prepare for exams. In my case, for example, I give out a copy of last year's final exam for use as a study guide and hold a special review session at the end of the course. Here are some other useful hints.

1. Give more than one exam, and make the first exam relatively easy. This builds confidence and gives the instructor important feedback.
2. Give students plenty of advice about how to study. Encourage students to form study groups, hand out review questions, and give early clarification of the types of questions that will appear on the exam. Exams are not supposed to be surprises.
3. Encourage students (on an individual or group basis) to come to office hours for additional help and even schedule additional office hours at the end of the term, especially to help students prepare for their exams.
4. The students should be assured that the exam will cover material emphasized in class, the readings and the homework.
5. In some cases, it may be wise to allow students to use their textbooks, their notes, or at least one sheet of notes during the test. This helps reduce anxiety, and emphasizes that the instructor is more interested in comprehension and analysis than simply memorization of facts.

Finally, I have to admit that there is no one formula for perfect testing. ICU's curriculum is made up of many different kinds of courses and necessarily methods of assessment must be similarly diverse.

Some teachers rely on written assignments, others on quizzes and examinations. Some have take-home finals, some allow students to bring in one page of notes, others prohibit any materials to be used during the exam. Some teachers use multiple choice questions, others “fill in the blanks,” others short answer and others force the students to write lengthy essays in response to a limited number of questions. This variety is fine, as long as we are aware of what we are testing and that the method of testing is appropriate to the overall goals of the course.

Again Barbara Gross Davis’s essay on “Quizzes, Tests, and Examinations” provides much useful information. Her essay is far more informative than anything I can write and I urge anyone interested in improving their testing (and that means anyone interested in improving their teaching – and that means anyone interested in improving student learning) to read her essay on the UC Berkeley website: <http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/quizzes.html> Davis provides general strategies for testing and information on types of tests, alternative testing modes, and on how teachers can construct effective exams. She notes that all too often faculty test recall of information rather than higher levels of learning so stressed in a liberal arts education. While knowledge of specific information is important, if we are really concerned to develop our student’s critical thinking skills, we need also to test for comprehension and application. She adapts B.S. Bloom’s taxonomy for test development as a convenient guide to help faculty construct tests that will help students learn.

- To measure *knowledge* (common terms, facts, principles, procedures), ask these kinds of questions: Define, Describe, Identify, Label, List, Match, Name, Outline, Reproduce, Select, State. Example: “List the steps involved in titration.”
- To measure *comprehension* (understanding of facts and principles, interpretation of material), ask these kinds of questions: Convert, Defend, Distinguish, Estimate, Explain, Extend, Generalize, Give examples, Infer, Predict, Summarize. Example: “Summarize the basic tenets of deconstructionism.”
- To measure *application* (solving problems, applying concepts and principles to new situations), ask these kinds of questions: Demonstrate, Modify, Operate, Prepare, Produce, Relate, Show, Solve, Use. Example: “Calculate the deflection of a beam under uniform loading.”
- To measure *analysis* (recognition of unstated assumptions or logical fallacies, ability to distinguish between facts and inferences), ask these kinds of questions: Diagram, Differentiate, Distinguish, Illustrate, Infer, Point out, Relate, Select, Separate, Subdivide. Example: “In the president’s State of the Union Address, which statements are based on facts and which are based on assumptions?”
- To measure *synthesis* (integrate learning from different areas or solve problems by creative thinking), ask these kinds of questions: Categorize, Combine, Compile, Devise, Design, Explain, Generate, Organize, Plan, Rearrange, Reconstruct, Revise, Tell. Example: “How would you restructure the school day to reflect children’s developmental needs?”
- To measure *evaluation* (judging and assessing), ask these kinds of questions: Appraise, Compare, Conclude, Contrast, Criticize, Describe, Discriminate, Explain, Justify, Interpret, Support. Example: “Why is Bach’s Mass in B Minor acknowledged as a classic?” (Excerpts, including the above, from Barbara Gross Davis, *Tools for Teaching* (1993) are included on the University of California’s Office of Educational Development website: <http://teaching.berkeley.edu/teaching.html#tools>)

I have discovered much in the process of preparing this essay and I know that I will be changing some of the ways I teach and test my students. Some of this information is obvious and common sense; but I realize that I have not thought deeply about how and why I test my students. I invite other members of the faculty to similarly make a self-evaluation of their testing practices. If we are serious about teaching and learning, we must also be serious about testing.

## Testing

Tomoyuki Yoshida

(Division of Languages)

As Professor Steele has contributed an article discussing testing from a Dean's standpoint, I would like to take this opportunity to write about the hard-fought battles that I have had in one of my courses as a teacher. While hesitant about reporting the course that I still try and figure out along the way, I hope to receive feedback, comments and suggestions, from my fellow professors, and make the best of this chance to improve my teaching, along with the Teaching Effectiveness Survey results. It is my understanding that unlike many other Japanese universities, our FD activities have aimed at the so-called "bottom-up style," rather than the "top-down" one. In that way, sharing information on course content or testing among the faculty members should be encouraged and as an experience of a former FD Director, taking up my courses for discussion and evaluation, one of the attempts during my service, was not really far from the principle of our FD activities. At least, I would like to allow myself the liberty of interpreting so.

### L105 Fundamental Language Systems (Fall term, 3 units)

The course I have chosen for this essay is L105 Fundamental Language Systems, one of the Language Division Foundation Courses. This course would be equivalent to Introduction to Linguistics taught in universities in the United States and other countries. This being a required course in the new student year, around 130 students including sophomores and above of other divisions register for the course annually. The course purpose is, "By introducing students to the traditional subsystems, word formation systems, sentence structure systems, and meaning, they engage in analytical exercises to help them understand not only what the systems are, but also how they work." In the nature of the course, the purpose and content should not be altered according to the instructor in charge. Furthermore, as this course is a prerequisite for many other area major courses of Language Division, it is crucial that this course thoroughly helps the students establish the basics of their studies, otherwise their studies would be hindered in the process of further

studying in other Foundation Courses. When teaching this course in the past, I was really thrilled to see the extremely high willingness and attendance rate on the part of the students as well as the practice exercises which most of them turned in by the deadline. Questions and discussion topics suggested by the students in and out of the classroom and sent to the course's mailing list were very advanced, which naturally got me caught in the excitement as the instructor teaching this course. Below are the "do's and don'ts" that I especially try to bear in mind when teaching this course.

### The Course Process

Assuming that L105 perhaps comes as the first "challenge" that new students of the language division face after they join ICU, I set a uniform pattern to the course process so as to give each class rhythm. Why the "challenge?" Because many of the non-science major students find the course content giving out scientific odors. In particular, this course focuses on four sub-fields of linguistics (1. speech sound and phonological system, 2. the study of the make-up of words, 3. the study of how phrases and sentences larger than the word are constructed, 4. the study of meaning). To ease the challenge for most of the students who have never been exposed to systematic, scientific as well as academic approaches to human languages, I try to present the materials chosen for the course in a systematic order, as shown below. You might worry that courses developing a certain pattern may end up being "monotonous," but in this case, as the students rush through the aforementioned four different sub-fields, I have heard some students say that the pattern actually helped them much in following the course.

1. Presentation of specific language data indicating certain linguistic phenomena and detection of regularity
2. Explanation about analytical techniques, basic concepts and terms of the linguistic phenomena
3. Application and exercises based on the data analysis of other languages

Introducing technical terms at the very beginning and presenting what appears to be difficult and exclusive, the students quickly lose interest and motivation to study. I think this applies to disciplines other than linguistics as well. My course invites the students to study language phenomena that they have never realized and encourage them to find regularity hidden in them. Once the students find the surprising regularity lurking in the everyday language that they so casually use, they find it easier to pay attention to explanations of their analysis methods, basic concepts or terms. That is why I am very careful when choosing examples of language phenomena that are as familiar to the students as possible. This course is the same with other courses in that the students haven't really understood anything if all they do is to learn from what data provides or what is merely taught in class. I often hear the students say that, though they thought they understood the course when it was taught, when they get home and think again, they are as lost as they were before attending the class. That is where in-class exercises and homework come in: the exercises help the students cultivate their understanding and application skills. I take time to explain difficult exercises in detail and also encourage the students never to give up and to put effort into solving even the smallest things until they understand, by actively utilizing the office hours and the mailing list.

### Tests

As L105 is a prerequisite Foundation Course that leads to other area major courses, it is obvious that the more students who understand thoroughly, the better for the Language Division's area major courses. That is why I believe that not only the course content and materials, but also testing should be devised. For many of the students who are not yet familiar with study approaches adopted in college, I make sure to tell them in advance how they will be evaluated (the form, points stressed and aims of the test), thus getting rid of any unnecessary anxiety. I also prepare and provide extra exercises and accept questions on them by actively using office hours and the mailing list.

Among several things that I pay extra attention to when designing tests, what I consider the most important is to clarify why the test should be conducted at all. In the cases of Foundation Courses, in the

process of designing them, I consider testing and lectures as one package, as these classes occupy important part of our curriculum. I make sure to test whether course purposes have been accomplished. For L105, I recognize that testing serves two purposes; one is to test understanding and application of the basic concepts and terms covered in class. Second is to test understanding of the analytical approaches covered and application for other language data.

When testing understanding of basic concepts and terms, I avoid multiple choices or a fill-in-the-blanks style. However time-consuming essay-style tests may be, they work so much better to see if the students really understand the course. I don't mean to deny everything that the multiple choices or the fill-in-the-blanks style offer, but it doesn't take much to imagine that the way a student prepare for tests is easily influenced by different test forms. I believe I can get my point across by assuring them that they will be tested in the essay style test. In particular, whenever important concepts or terms are introduced in class, I encourage the students to use their own words and examples to explain them in test.

When making questions that test analytical approaches and application for language data, I always try to remember that the questions should be given in a way that help the students find fresh discoveries and promote greater understanding. Here, I have intention of teaching the students to adopt an attitude that tries to analyze unknown language data using the analytical approaches taught in class, hoping that they will be further motivated to discover other language data. In reality, however, things do not work out as well as I wish and I still teach this course through a trial and error process. And yet, what I do aim is to provide tests that don't merely allow me to assign students grades but gives the students the pleasure and wonderment to apply their learning in class, which further leads them to discover even more profound regularity. As tests should certainly not contain questions never taught in class, the students should be shown the analytical directions that they are expected to follow. I try to present my tests in a way that once they read and understand the instructions, they know how to perceive and answer them without any difficulty.

### Grading and feedback

The ratio of the final grading in this course is exercises (20%), the mid-term exam (40%), and the final exam (40%). Since the course purpose is clearly shown, grading depends on whether the students can do language analysis at a certain level with the basic concepts and terms covered in class within a given frame (I don't take attendance in this course, therefore this is irrelevant to grading). The in-class exercises are submitted right after each of the four sub-fields is covered in class and are returned before students forget what they are tested on. Sample answers are shown both in the mid-term and final exams and data are collected so that I will be prepared to answer any questions concerning the methods of testing and evaluation. I especially spend a great deal of time commenting on the mid-term exam. This is to give the students a chance to make whatever alternation they need in their studying approaches for the final exam. In essay type questions and others analyzing language data, the evaluation criteria should be clearly set to avoid any cases that they find hard to accept. Comments such as "Minus five points if your answer does not include this particular point," or "Points should be deducted according to the degree of the

inadequacy of your explanation, even though your final answer is correct," should be made clearly and encourage the students to come forward if they are unsatisfied or have questions about the way they have been tested. They are also notified that in case points are unfairly deducted even though their answers have filled the set criterion, their marks should be corrected. This allows more and more students to come ask questions and me to communicate with them as well. When a mistake is made on my side, I feel that I gain more trust from them by sincerely dealing with them. It is difficult to give detailed feedback in a class that so many students take, but when I think what an important part Foundation Courses play, I believe the faculty as well as the students needs to work to achieve our goals. I also believe that teaching tools such as feedback, office hours or mailing lists can enhance our communication with the students and further motive them to study.

I have written at great length and many of you may have already been thinking and practicing what I've just written. I'd be more than happy to receive your feedback, comments and ideas in order to improve my classes, including the one I have introduced here.

(translation provided by the FD office)

## From Classrooms

### Teaching Foundation and General Education Courses

**Masako Takahashi**

(Division of Natural Sciences)

Talking about area major courses, many of math and science instructors are much concerned with the former and not many attempts and discussions on the latter have ever really been pursued. This, I had almost never been aware of until I came to ICU, though I had taught at a university of science and technology for a long time. Furthermore, apart from some exceptional cases, having taught only area major courses was yet another reason that I had not really reflected on courses other than area major ones, to be honest. Coming to ICU, however, I learned that Foundation as well as General Education has wide-ranging courses. Teaching in the university's curriculum that offers host of various

courses and their unique teachings deployed, I have come to think that they are one of the factors accounting for high degree of student satisfaction with studying at ICU.

Thus, looking back on my earlier days, I was not prepared at all to teach Foundation or General Education courses. It was not until I started devising concrete subjects and teaching approaches that I realized that it was so much more difficult to prepare for Foundation and General Education courses of math and science than I had expected. This was probably because of my discipline that is still relatively new and shows a tendency to interdisciplinary study. Yet, unable to find materials that I wished to refer to or people to talk to for advice who had time on their side to discuss these kinds of matters with me, I ended up searching for answers all by myself. In the process of developing ideas for my new courses, I found the task



as creative and challenging as research activities in my specialized fields.

One of the things that I tried to bear in mind in the process was to value the basic that places students in the heart of education as the lead role, and be engaged in teaching that would bring out their possibilities that yet remained unrecognized, while not giving preference to my own conveniences over theirs. I am aware of the take on this kind of attitude that some people show, complaining that it will only indulge the students. I don't agree with this notion because, though different situations of different universities should be taken into consideration to a certain extent, I thought universities like ICU had environments that actually put my idea of teaching into reality and had the faculty and students work together for better classes. ICU students are not turned off when they find themselves bored in class or face tasks hard to overcome: they remain undaunted when expressing their boredom and fear verbally and in a befitting manner. Conversely, for matters they find challenging and are eager to solve, they come to me to ask questions as many times as they have to until they thoroughly understand. My experiences tell me that teaching with an emphasis on the students does not necessarily degrade the level of courses, through of which I catch a glimpse of the depth that education possesses.

Let me tell you what I tried to do in my Foundation and General Education courses specifically. My challenge was to have the students learn to clearly explain the intriguing characteristics of computers and the reasons behind them in a manner that does not require technical terms. Examples of those characteristics are; a) Why do computer of our time increase their activities one after another, unlike machines and tools that we have previously known? b) By what principles are the computers activated in the first place? c) How were the computer principles devised in the old days at all when there were no applications such as the Internet? Legitimate accounts for these kinds of questions would further invite them to more cultivated understanding of the essential qualities of computers. This goal of mine, if achieved, would help my students acquire appropriate techniques necessary for their own purposes and situations and make their own decisions.

It has been about seventy years since the basic principle supporting the modern computers was

discovered and was published in a mathematical journal as an article on mathematical logic. While this work is well known among researchers in the field and there is abundance of related materials available, there has never been any satisfactory account written in a way that makes sense for those on the outside, as far as I have looked. This unfortunate discovery set the stage for me to develop ideas for my courses.

I devised an easy and understandable way to explain the basic computer principles with a touch of their historical background, which became an introduction. A Foundation Course (two out of three units) then covered some of mathematical topics such as the logical reason why the binary system was adopted to the contemporary computers, classical or modern programs and algorithms. On the other hand, in my General Education course (two units), a similar introduction (the simplified mathematical aspects of the former) was followed by lectures that traced the history of logical thinking from ancient times to the present, thus introducing logic as an academic discipline that bore out the discovery of the computer principles. Moreover, as related matters, cultural topics such as the progress of semiotics in mathematical science with its relation to computers, and Chomsky's linguistic theory with its relation to computer science, were covered. In the second half of the term, the students did presentations of their research on how profoundly contemporary computers have revolutionized our ways of life, society and academic approaches or what new concerns and problems they have resulted in. We had discussions on the outcomes that they brought to the class.

Honestly, I find it too much of a burden on one instructor to plan all these things alone. I believe efforts based on a variety of ideas and candid exchange of opinions among the faculty should be encouraged.

(translation provided by the FD office)

## Our Efforts in Physical Education

**Shin Takahashi**

(Department of Health and Physical Education)

## The PE Registration Procedure

I would like to begin by briefly explaining the registration procedure, for I think many of you are not familiar with Physical Education Exercise (PE Ex.) courses. Students are required to take two PE Ex.

units. One-third unit being allocated to one course per one term (one hour in a week), the students take PE for six terms in total. Two of the six courses, Basic Exercise I and II, are required to be taken in the spring and fall terms of the first year, while the remaining four courses are elective ones. The spring term Basic Ex. I helps students to develop physical strength in order to have a fulfilling life through aerobic exercises such as jogging and swimming. Aiming for coactions with fellow students and communication experienced through physical activities, the fall term Basic Ex. II mainly concentrates on team sports.

For the other four terms, students themselves make choices in Pre-Registration. The PE courses offer a wide range of choices including soccer, swimming and tennis as well as social dancing and *wadaiko*. The courses enable students to have a broad exposure to sports culture and broaden their horizons over physical education as refinement.

### The Aspects

One important aspect of the PE Ex. lies delivering matters not only in words and print, but also in having the students realize these matters through their 'bodies (five senses).' It is important that they realize only through moving their bodies, so the key to what makes the courses successful depends on how the students feel in class and digest their learning as something accompanied by specific senses. Thus, in some cases, I even design my courses predicting feelings that my students may have when coming to class. That is why perceiving human beings from a holistic viewpoint underlies the basis of PE. Ex. courses.

### The Facts

By taking my Basic Ex. I as an example, let me illustrate our concrete efforts.

As I mentioned above, in this course, the students are expected to learn ways to improve physical strength on the individual level and to adopt exercise to everyday living in order to make it more fulfilling. This course does not test athletic ability levels. Jogging and swimming (long distance), the students practice means for fitness most appropriate for individual physical capacity, by measuring the postexercise heart rates.

What I consider important here is a sense of purpose that realizes why and for who these physical exercises are. In the in-class questionnaire that I conducted in

1996, about 60% of the male and 40% of the female students answered that they "liked" PE, while 70 to 80% of both sexes supported sports and physical exercises in general. The students have received PE since elementary school and not a few of them have come to see it passively, as something that they are only obliged to do.

It does not take much to imagine how the freshmen who thus regard PE react, when they are told they will be jogging or swimming in class. Despite their reluctance, I believe that the whole purpose of exercising is for the benefit of exercisers and that moving one's body is pleasant. Once they realize the intended purpose and delight of exercise, and are shown how they exercise specifically, they start exercising on their own initiative. Their attitudes toward PE are altered beyond recognition.

I consider it the very first task to converse the image that the students had had of PE until they came to ICU, which includes the understanding of PE as something for themselves and as part of liberal arts education. To put into practice this task, I take preparatory exercise as an example and begin the class by introducing critical thinking in PE. Just like any other disciplines, PE is no exception in that it suffers from so many things that people take for granted and yet in reality, are incorrect. I invite my students to various anecdotes and doubts such as, "When stretching your Achilles' tendons, it is really the calf muscles that are stretched the most," or one elemental question, "Does exercise really help you stay in good health?" Moving their bodies, the students can realize the link between knowledge and exercise, which is accompanied by the real thrill and pleasure of knowing. I believe that being exposed to these kinds of feelings will be more and more important in the future.

### Communication

As stated above, understanding both in mind and body is important. Simply conveying knowledge and skills is not enough: appealing to students' emotions and having them actually move their bodies, I have to teach the students how to learn the things presented as movements that come with actual feelings. Therefore, I, as an instructor, have to pay constant attention to and anticipate how they are feeling. I teach my classes continually pondering how I should speak so as to have them understand my ideas or what kinds of movements best help them learn the way I expect them to.



Furthermore, PE Ex. courses are taught in different places-outside and inside- and in various environments. There are things to keep in mind when trying to help the students listen in the most natural way, understand and participate in class.

First of all, to avoid any distraction, I stand blocking the sun, wind and anything moving such as people or cars, whenever I need the students to gather together. Moreover, I speak clearly and yet am careful to choose positive words, as I hope to disprove the widespread, heavy-handed image imposed on PE instructors. I try to insert familiar topics that I hope may interest my students and I speak smiling and by means of gestures.

Though we teachers find it hard to refrain ourselves once we start talking, the students want to exercise in their heart of hearts, which is also the main issue of PE Ex. courses. I try to make my lectures as short as possible so as to make the most of the class time on exercise. Likewise, as a certain amount of information should be given so that they are able to exercise

independently, specific information such as a course goal, process, exercise approaches, how to use and prepare for tools and how to put them away is provided.

### In Summary

There is only one PE class a week, only seven to nine classes in a term. The time given to us is really limited. This creates some of the challenges we face; can we really get across the brilliance, real thrill and joy that each sport or exercise activity offers in this short period of time? How can we work this out? Despite our wish to spend a little more time, this limitation always compels us to tackle each of our classes in real earnest.

Through PE courses, I hope that a number of students learn the enjoyment of exercise and feel the splendor of experiencing sports culture. I hope their learning provides intellectual nourishment in life.

(translation provided by the FD office)

## New Teaching Staff



**Mikiko Kurokawa**

(Japanese Language Programs)

This summer, I was given a chance to teach in the ICU's Japanese summer courses for the first time. And I have been teaching as a Tokunin Koshi in the JLP since September. In a wonderful environment surrounded by greenery, I am delighted every day that I am growing with international students from all over the world. Unlike ICU, known for its longstanding, excellent Japanese language programs, and many of its undergraduate and graduate students who aspire to becoming Japanese teachers, I had gone a long way around until I arrived here. I still recall that, upon graduating from college and getting a job in a company, I spent my very first and entire bonus on enrolling for a corresponding Japanese teacher-training course. While working, I continued my studies and passed the Japanese Language Teaching Competency Test. And yet, lacking in confidence in actual teaching, it was my fifth year at the company that I found the courage to go back to school. After receiving an MA, I taught in a private Japanese school during the daytime

and attended nighttime seminars organized by the Society for Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language. Meanwhile, I pondered how I would provide classes that would attract students.

Since September 2000, I was given a chance to teach as a Japanese teacher at Edinburgh University of Scotland for three years, assigned abroad by the Japan Foundation. Because of the exchange program arrangements between the university and ICU, which allowed the university to send students to ICU every year, and also the beginners' textbook designed by ICU that the university adopted, ICU became very familiar to me. And now, I thank God for this opportunity to teach here and also for the wonder of walking past my students from my Edinburgh days. I consider it an honor if my previous experiences would contribute not only to the development of the Japanese language education but also to those who aim to become Japanese teachers.

"I have never experienced a place as international as ICU," those words of an Edinburgh student studying at ICU once sounded very striking to me. It is of course for studying the Japanese language and culture that the international students gather from all over the world to

this country, but the company of peers with the same purpose in mind, I think, is also a treasure cherished and irreplaceable in later life. While leaning Japanese, you also get to know different countries and their cultures such as Republic of Lithuania, Republic of Kenya or Union of Myanmar. All the more reason, it is precisely because it's ICU that this kind of experience is possible. The teaching widely adopted in this university with the focus on small-size courses and interaction, also allows students to learn from and stimulate each other. I will do all I can to make the best of this benefit so as to provide a learning environment that surpasses mere language acquisition. That is why I'm determined to try different approaches in my teaching.

Based on my overseas experience, I feel that living abroad gives you a chance to look back on your previous life. In the training prior to my work in England, I was told that when living abroad, you'd face your vulnerability and come to appreciate that many people support you, which is essential in nurturing human qualities. It is certainly important for you to

accept your weakness and appreciate the support from others. What I believe we really need to experience after going through the stage of appreciation is, however, to contemplate what "foreigners" can contribute to countries where they live. The foreigners are often treated as the weak and find themselves given instead of giving, but it is giving rather than receiving that enriches human qualities and helps deepen affection for others. ICU embodies tradition of volunteer and service learning activities rooted in Christianity. In teaching the international students, I would like to seek for possible teaching approaches that embrace this spirit, in the hope of helping them leave something valuable behind and by doing so, they themselves come to hold lifelong pride in this country. There are still things that "ICU beginners" like myself find unfamiliar with and I don't have any specific ideas to offer at the moment. Yet, I will reflect on what I can do for ICU, as I'm supported by my fellow professors. I'm looking forward to meeting you all.

(translation provided by the FD office)

### Editor's Note

'Testing and Assessment' was the topic we chose for this issue, and asked Professor Steele, CLA Dean, and Professor Yoshida, Former FD Director to write from different points of view. The ultimate goal of quality testing and assessment is not the rigorous grade but to improve and support students' learning.

If I am asked whether I am an enthusiastic teacher, I do not hesitate to say "Yes." However, I cannot say that I am always concerned about students' quality of learning. In order to improve students' learning, we need to know students' view such as their expectation, methods to study, how to prepare for exams, and what stimulates them in class. The Teaching Effectiveness

Survey (TES) is a great source of such information. I believe that reviewing the results of the TES of your class is not enough. Let us be more interested in the feedback we obtain from the survey.

The articles in "From the Classrooms" provide you information on other classes, which also serve as an essential part of the education of ICU. I hope that we can share thoughts on the education at ICU with our colleagues.

With many thanks to your contribution to the mission of ICU.

Hiroshi Suzuki@Faculty Development & Support