



*Dialogue*  
Creating the Next 60 Years

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**Project Report**

November 29, 2014  
Symposium: English Education at ICU



**60th Anniversary Project**  
**INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

MEXT "Go Global Japan" Project  
Cooperation: Eiken Foundation of Japan



On November 29, 2014, ICU hosted a symposium entitled, “English Education at ICU: Teaching Approaches and Students’ Perspectives for Development of Global Human Resources” at the Kiyoshi Togasaki Memorial Dialogue House. The following is a summary of the presentations and panel conducted during the symposium.



## Presentation 1: Outline of the English for Liberal Arts Program (ELA)

### **Yuko Iwata, Professor, Director of the ELA**

The ICU campus is a bilingual community. Both English and Japanese are used in meetings and publicly released documents. In addition, as 34% of professors hold foreign citizenship, many classes are conducted in English. Therefore, the ELA is designed to help students acquire the English proficiency necessary to pursue their studies in this bilingual community. The students learn to understand classes offered in English, write reports and essays in English, and participate in discussions and make presentations in English. The ELA has two objectives: to help students acquire the academic English skills they need to succeed in their four years of university, and to help them to acquire the critical thinking skills which are necessary in a liberal arts education.

In the ELA, class sizes are small. Topics covered are interdisciplinary, students are streamed, and the program is intensive. Tutorials are also provided. In addition, all classes are conducted in English.

Students are streamed into four Streams based upon their English proficiency. Many factors are considered in streaming students, including placement test scores, entrance exam results, experience of living abroad (especially in English-speaking countries), experience of learning academic writing skills, and interview results. The academic workload differs among each of the four streams but students in all streams take Research Writing as their final course in the ELA.

The core courses in the ELA are Academic Reading & Writing (ARW), three times a week, Reading & Content Analysis (RCA), twice a week, and the final ELA course, Research Writing, three times a week. Core courses are taught only by full-time instructors. Tutorials are provided to meet the needs of each student in each of the core courses. In addition, Lectures for Liberal Arts (LLA) classes are offered once a week to deal with the interdisciplinary topics covered in ARW and RCA classes. These interdisciplinary topics taught in the ELA can help students choose their major. In addition to the core courses, Academic Skills (AS) classes are offered to help students improve their English.

Students are expected to apply the English skills they have learned in the ELA throughout the rest of their university studies. The effects of the ELA Program can be observed in various aspects. For example, students are able to participate in the bilingual community and use academic English skills and critical thinking skills when they take courses in their major. Many students take part in exchange programs in their third year. They also take courses taught in English after they finish the ELA.

Approximately 30% of students write their senior theses in English. Many students use their English abilities in their careers while many other students go to graduate schools.

We have two tasks in the future. One is to meet student needs, as our student population becomes more diverse and our society changes. The other is to look for better methods of measuring students' improvements. We have to adjust our program to accomplish these tasks. We also believe it is necessary to conduct both short and long-term evaluations and to review the educational content of our program.



## Presentation 2: Teaching Reading **Atsuko Watanabe, Lecturer**

People often tell us that ICU is different and that our achievement is attributed to the types of students we attract, those who are already skilled at English. However, I believe that our achievement is fulfilled not because “we are different,” but because of the efforts made by each and every student and of the contribution from us, the instructors.

We offer two types of reading courses: an intensive reading course, Reading & Content Analysis (RCA), which is taught by Japanese instructors, and an extensive reading course which in principle is taught by non-Japanese instructors, Academic Reading & Writing (ARW). The objectives of these courses are not only to teach students how to read, but also to help them acquire the skills and strategies to learn. Instructors help students to accurately understand ideas, to think critically, to conduct academic research, to express their own ideas, and to resolve problems. In RCA, students learn to grasp the meaning and the logic of a text, and distinguish facts from opinions. They also acquire the ability to analyze a text from its genre, structure, tone, and social and cultural context of the text. In ARW, students acquire critical thinking skills and learn to express their own opinions effectively through writing and speaking (through essays and discussion). The syllabus for each course describes the course objectives, assignments, and grading rubric, which encourages students to make plans for their own learning.

The ELA Reader includes readings on topics from a variety of academic fields and its organization takes into consideration the trajectory of learning in the first year in the ELA. For example, in the spring term, students polish their critical thinking skills by reading pieces that send the message that students shouldn't trust everything their instructors tell them, and that learning is about thinking for one's self. In autumn term, students read an essay on Japanese non-verbal communication written by an American academic, thereby learning how people from other cultures see those ideas that they take for granted. They also learn that race is nothing more than a convenient category, and this gives them the opportunity to redefine themselves. Finally, in the winter term, students are asked what they think of bioethics, and they read a paper on Human Security. They are asked to think about the difference

between national and human security, and learn how to live up to their obligation as responsible, global citizens to aid those suffering around the world. They are also encouraged to imprint within their hearts the desire for lasting peace.

The students engage in discussion regularly, through which they express their own opinions regarding a topic they are studying. Having enough opportunities for discussion allows them to learn how to express their own opinions and to allocate roles, an important aspect of group discussion. They also learn that other students may not have the same opinions, which leads them to cultivate a more multi-faceted point of view, and they learn problem resolution skills through negotiations of different opinions.

In the activity of “(Who) said (what) (to whom) and (why),” students learn to examine the author’s background (who), audience (to whom), and purpose (why), in understanding the message (what) of a text.



## Presentation 3: Teaching Writing **Izumi Watanabe-Kim, Instructor**

The process of academic writing involves: choosing a topic, planning, searching for sources, reading and synthesizing sources, data gathering and analyzing, in addition to attending lectures and participating in discussions. Through these activities, students acquire English language skills as well as critical thinking skills.

As in most liberal arts universities, writing is considered to be one of the most important academic skills. All students (including returnee students who are fluent in English) are required to enroll in Academic Reading & Writing (ARW). Since the majority of students have never written (or even seen) an academic paper prior to entering ICU, it is important that they begin by learning the fundamentals of academic writing. They must learn that an academic essay is neither a composition nor a summary. It is about presenting a persuasive argument, logically and objectively, using academic register and supporting details.

Academic writing is a communication tool for scholars. It is used to communicate findings, opinions and arguments. Being able to write in such a way enables one to think in such a way as well. The first step is to learn to write a coherent paragraph. At this point, students are asked to respond to simpler questions such as “Why did you come to a university?” As students learn to write longer pieces, they are given more abstract topics, which will require them to conduct research. They must also learn how to incorporate sources into their writing by learning how to paraphrase and cite sources.

The next step involves writing five-paragraph essays. A basic five-paragraph essay includes an introduction with a thesis statement, three body paragraphs with a topic sentence and supporting

details in each, and a conclusion that reinforces one's argument. Students are also advised to write clearly with an audience in mind.

Essay drafts are read by peers and instructors to provide feedback. Students not only receive valuable comments from others, but also learn how to make constructive criticism about other people's writings. In addition to exchanging drafts in classrooms, drafts are uploaded on the web, providing more opportunities for feedback outside the class. When it comes to evaluation, the writing process is weighted more heavily than the product because the aim of the writing instruction is for students to engage in the process of academic writing and to develop their critical thinking skills.



## Presentation 4: Tutorials

### **Masuko Miyahara, Instructor**

ELA tutorials are conducted with three key ideas in mind: individual guidance, support, and autonomous learning. Tutorials are mainly offered to support the two core courses in ELA, ARW and RCA. One of the ARW tutorials is scheduled on a once-per-week basis. As for the second tutorial and one tutorial for RCA, students make appointments with their instructor depending on their individual needs.

RCA is basically an intensive reading course where students learn how to read academic texts. They start out by attending a lecture related to a specific topic, and then they practice reading academic texts by learning how to use a variety of reading skills and strategies necessary to analyze the texts. However, for some students, this is not an easy task, and thus, tutorials offer opportunities to provide the necessary guidance tailored specifically to meet their needs. In principle, tutorials are conducted in English, but students with low confidence are allowed to select the language of their choice.

On the other hand, in ARW classes, the end product is to formulate an academic paper. As with RCA, they first receive a lecture on a particular topic to obtain background knowledge of the subject. Students then work on developing their ideas through discussions in class with their peers and instructors. These ideas are then incorporated into one coherent paper. In this process, a large focus is placed on developing the students' critical thinking skills. They are encouraged to use their tutorial hours to ask questions and seek guidance, but instructors do not simply spoon feed the students with answers. Tutorials are opportunities for students to engage in a dialogue with their instructors to explore and ponder on any unresolved issues. Instructors are facilitators who guide the students to help them consolidate their ideas. In other words, through discussions at tutorials, instructors aim to develop their students' autonomy.

Students not only receive guidance on material and writing, they are also able to express concerns about other issues, such as being unable to keep up with the speed of the instructor's English, being unable to fully participate in discussions, or being unable to express themselves in English. Regardless of the issues, the student controls how the tutorial is conducted, not the instructor. Learning is a

lifetime pursuit, and the goal of the ELA is for students to acquire the ability to learn on their own.

Thus the three core key ideas, namely, individual guidance, support, and fostering autonomy, forms the basis for tutorials in the ELA. Tutorials provide students opportunities to reflect on their own learning and cultivate critical thinking skills that are essential to nurture autonomous learning.



## Presentation 5: W-Courses – Academic Writing for Specialized Fields

### **Akiko Fukao, Lecturer**

Students who have completed the ELA are considered capable of taking courses conducted in English. At this point, students need more specific academic writing skills that go beyond the general level. This is why “W-Courses” were first introduced in the 2013 academic year to students who had finished the ELA Program. The W-Courses – with the “W” representing “writing” – go beyond the basics of academic writing to provide students with further learning and practice opportunities of the skills they need to write academically in specialized fields. These courses build a bridge between the ELA and the time when students write their senior theses, enabling ICU to provide them with a rich English environment throughout their undergraduate careers.

In 2013, W-Courses were offered for history, literature, and psychology, and the following year courses in linguistics, economics, and philosophy were added. Students in W-Courses learn discipline-specific features of writing while acquiring content knowledge. By doing so, as they work on writing assignments that reflect features specific to the discipline, their knowledge is immediately put into practice. Built on the academic writing practices in the ELA, students receive further instruction from the W-Course instructors to improve their academic writing skills. Moreover, designated writing tutors will assist them in tutorials in which students can freely ask questions and discuss specific assignments outside of class.

In addition to an extensive student support system, W-Course instructors receive support in a variety of ways. A specialist writing instructor provides assistance in creating teaching/learning materials, through discussion on how to build an effective bridge between what students have learned in the ELA and the W-course. As a result, various class activities and materials have been incorporated such as a peer review of drafts using a standard grading rubric, and sample papers highlighting discipline-specific features. The writing instructor also provides training for W-Course tutors, supporting the dialogue among the students, W-Course instructor, and W-Course writing tutors.

After offering several W-Courses over the last two years, certain outcomes and issues have become clear. One positive outcome is that a number of students have increased motivation and confidence in academic writing through W-Courses. From an instructor’s point of view, it takes time to prepare

for the W-Courses, but the end result has been the increased effectiveness of the courses. Issues that need to be resolved include how writing tutors can be more actively utilized by more students, and how different types of support for W-Course instructors may need to be sought. It is hoped that W-Courses will continue to try out different innovations in order to create a curriculum that fosters students' academic writing skills for the four years of their learning at ICU, leading to more students writing their senior theses in English.

## Panel Discussion: Learning through the ELA

A panel of current students and alumni was convened following the presentations. ICU's Vice President for Academic Affairs Anri Morimoto served as moderator, and the panel discussed their impressions of the ELA (former ELP) and what they gained from it. The following is a brief summary of the panel discussion and subsequent audience Q&A session.

\*ELA was reformed from ELP (English Language Program) in AY2012.



### Panel

Ryo Watanuki – Graduate of 5-year BA/MA program

Yukiko Mori – MA student and ELA Teaching Assistant

Hajime Akiyama – Undergraduate

Komomo Tamba – Undergraduate

### Why study at ICU?

Morimoto: Someone who simply wants to learn English can attend a college which specializes in English education or enter a university overseas in the English-speaking world. In addition, the number of Japanese universities that offer English-only courses is rising. Why did you choose to study at ICU in particular?

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Akiyama: I felt that English education at ICU had a really strong focus on providing liberal arts in an academic environment. It is not solely about improving English abilities; they provide us with critical thinking and other skills that allow us to conduct academic activities in English. I believe that is where the benefit of an ICU English education lies.

Tamba: We read about culture, bioethics and other topics in the ELA Reader. I'm actually an arts student, but the Reader made me interested in other topics, and this year I took a course in life science. Looking back, I find that this year at ICU has provided me with an even deeper learning experience.

## **How has English influenced how you think?**

Morimoto: The ELA gives students practice in communicating ideas in English, but I would like to know if English had any influence on how you think?

Akiyama: I think each language has its own way of looking at things. I believe that learning different languages gives us a broader perspective of different worlds, and as a result, we can deepen our sensibility towards other ideas.

Tamba: There are many exchange students from other countries living in my dormitory. My being able to communicate with them in English has allowed us to bridge the differences between us. However, I often feel strange when speaking with my friends in my hometown, even though we are all speaking Japanese. I do not know if it is because the concept of critical thinking has been drilled into me, but even when we have a normal, fun conversation, I end up thinking too deeply about it.

Morimoto: Maybe that is because the ELA has given you experience in thinking more clearly about ideas. In Japanese society, having the ability to think about things in English implies that you have a different framework in which to think. One must translate one's thoughts into the framework of the language spoken by the person you are talking to. Perhaps your discomfort when speaking with your friends is connected to that learning process.

Mori: I also feel that using English affects my thinking process. As I went through the ELP Program, English has become one of the academic tools to think logically and critically. Also, since English is not my first language and its language system differs from Japanese, I use it more for communicating my thoughts and ideas than for expressing my own identity such as emotions and feelings. That would be one reason why I got a more outside perspective when I read the ELP Reader, which is written in English, than when I read in Japanese.

## **What have you gained from learning English?**

Morimoto: It seems that you all share the opinion that learning English has cultivated greater thinking abilities within you, but learning a second or third language also involves a great deal of hardship. That hard work could be seen as a waste, but it could also be seen as



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being necessary to understanding one's self and clearly communicating one's ideas to others. People generally look upon ICU students as having been particularly proficient in English before they arrived, but in fact, that is not true. How have you found the experience?

Watanuki: I enjoyed the courses I have taken with foreign professors, and I think wanting to keep up with what they were saying had an effect on my desire to improve my English.

Akiyama: I have been interested in international relations, and I am studying the various regional organizations around the world. There is a lot of Japanese research into the European Union (EU), but there is little literature available on other bodies, such as the African Union (AU), my area of research. In order to study the AU, I have to read the literature in English. For me, English is an extremely important tool.

Morimoto: So, essentially English was a necessary skill for you to conduct specialized research. It is important to come in contact with different ways of thinking to learn how to think critically and logically. You could say that people who only know one language know nothing about language at all. Things that one person believes are natural may not be communicable to someone from a different culture, and experiencing that leads to a realization that there are different ways to think about an idea. I believe this too is an important component of the liberal arts.

## Q & A Session

Q1: The ELA provides students with both critical thinking and problem resolution skills, and I think that it has some points in common with the International Baccalaureate. Is this something you have consciously attempted to achieve?

University-Secretariat: We do consider International Baccalaureate grades when we evaluate international students for study at ICU. I have heard that the ICU philosophy has much in common with that of the International Baccalaureate, but we haven't consciously attempted to create any overlap when structuring the ELA curriculum.

Q2: I understand that you use TOEFL scores to stream students in the ELA, but are there any relations between TOEFL and IELTS?

Iwata: TOEFL ITP results are one of the factors we consider in determining which stream students are assigned. The IELTS consists of interviews and written exams as part of the components and I believe it serves as a good benchmark for measuring English ability. However, I don't think it is an appropriate measurement in streaming our students because its scores are provided in a band score, not in numerical scores. Even though we are not using IELTS in streaming, we are actively promoting our students to take IELTS, since it is one of the global standard tests.

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- Q3: First year students at ICU obtain a thorough English education, but are any unhappy that they aren't able to start taking courses in their major sooner? Also, it seems that the instructors are being overworked, so I was wondering if any of the instructors feel any sense of dissatisfaction.
- Akiyama: We deal with a variety of advanced topics in the ELP. In my case, I wanted to study international relations, but once I entered the program, I noticed that my interests were broadening. Also, in the first year, I read an academic article about human security in the ELP Reader, and it ended up being very useful when I started doing research in my major.
- Tamba: I knew ICU was a liberal arts school when I entered, so I wasn't unhappy about it at all. I knew I wanted to get involved in work in developing countries in the future, but I wasn't sure exactly what I wanted to do. I thought it would be good to learn a variety of things at ICU and discover what I really wanted to do. We touch upon a variety of subjects in the ELA, gaining more knowledge as we go, and I believe the program instills in us a strong sense of intellectual curiosity.
- Morimoto: I think it is a given that people will find it difficult to decide upon their future at the age of 18. It is better to make a decision after experiencing what different university classes have to offer. Students at ICU gain a liberal arts education before they choose their path, and I truly believe this is how it should be done.





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- Watanabe- The material in the ELA Reader is extremely advanced, with a great amount of  
Kim: specialized information, and even the instructors get together to study the material  
beforehand. The students are looking for high-quality education, so it is necessary for us  
to prepare. Perhaps we are being overworked, but learning new perspectives every year  
through the materials, structuring the curriculum, and thinking about how we can best  
help the students learn gives us a lot of motivation as well.
- Q4: I imagine some students find it difficult to follow the ELA Program.
- Iwata: Some students have difficulty in keeping up with the ELA Program and miss classes for a  
variety of complicated reasons. Some find it difficult to wake up in the morning. Others  
are not good at communicating with instructors and classmates. Some others do not  
attend classes because an assignment was too difficult for them to finish. There are no  
simple solutions for these students, but we support them through counselling and other  
means, aiming to make the drop-out rate as low as possible.

VPAA Morimoto wrapped up the symposium by thanking both the panelists and the attendees, and reminding the audience that ICU's efforts to nurture the global citizens of the future had led to its selection as a SGU (Top Global University), but the desire to achieve that goal is one shared by many other educational institutions. He expressed his hope that the attendees would find some use for the information presented during the symposium in their own English language programs.