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## Moving Online: ICU Initiatives in Light of Current Trends in Academic Writing Support Services

**Ibuki AIBA**  
**Research Center for Global Language Education**

### Introduction

Improving students' writing skills is an essential part of university education, and it requires various types of support outside the classroom. The coronavirus pandemic, whose end is still not in sight, not only pushed classes online last year but also had a major impact on writing support services at universities. In this article, I discuss the ongoing development of ICU's Writing Support Desk (WSD), with reference to material from my presentation "The New Normal for University Writing Centers: Academic Writing Support through Individual Consultations," which was hosted by the [Research Center for Global Language Education](#) on October 10, 2020.

### 1. Academic Writing Support at Universities and the Online Transition

Writing support centers have only been established at Japanese universities since the 2000s, beginning with Waseda University's Writing Center in 2004.<sup>1</sup> ICU's WSD was established in 2010 with the aim of promoting the growth of writers. Originally part of the ICU Library services,<sup>2</sup> it was brought under the rubric of the Center for Teaching and Learning in 2018. The WSD employs graduate students who offer peer support, focusing on fostering each writer's awareness through discussion rather than simply making corrections.

Institutions that provide writing support are generally called "writing centers," but their scale and function differ greatly depending on the university. They might be known under a different name, such as a "writing support desk" or a "writing lab." It is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of university writing centers in Japan. The Writing Centers Association of Japan (WCAJ) website, for example, currently lists 17 schools, including ICU High School,<sup>3</sup> and based on the links provided on the website there seems to be a total of 26 writing centers.

From a study of each school's website, I noted the following trends in the online transition of their services as of October 8, 2020. Since the first semester (equivalent to ICU's Spring Term) of 2020, 15 of the 26 schools have been providing online writing support. Two of these also provide some face-to-face support, and one had already been providing online support since before 2020. Zoom is the most used tool (7 schools), followed by Google Meet (3 schools), Microsoft Teams, Webex, and Skype (2 schools each), and Moodle's Blackboard Collaborate (1 school). Note that this summary is based only from information available online, and there may well be more universities that have decided to make the transition to online writing support.

### 2. ICU's WSD: Activities and Developments in 2020 (up to Autumn Term)

With the transition to remote learning in the 2020 Spring Term, all the WSD's support services moved online. In March, we decided to use Google Meet, as staff were already familiar with it. However, since Zoom became common for classes and students were accustomed to using it, we started providing individual support via Zoom mid-semester. From the Autumn Term, all online sessions have been conducted on Zoom.

Although writing support shifted from in person to online, there were no major changes in the nature and procedures of the support provided by the WSD. Sessions are reserved online, and questionnaires are also administered online. The reservation-free walk-in system for face-to-face tutorials was not available in the Spring Term, but from the Autumn Term they were offered at lunchtimes via Zoom.

The online transition led to a change in the method of sharing resources. Specifically, documents that were previously shared by tutors and students in hard copy are now shared using Google Drive, and links to references searched online are shared using the chat function on Zoom. Both the WSD tutors and users have provided positive feedback on these changes, noting their convenience once they had

become used to them. Both the WSD tutors and users have provided positive feedback on these changes, noting their convenience once they had become used to them.

Initially, there was some concern that the number of users would decrease due to the online transition, but the 2020 Spring Term users exceeded those of the previous year (Fig. 1). The total number of users in the 2019 Spring Term was 144, compared to 164 in 2020, an increase of about 14%. This trend continued in the Autumn Term, with the total number of reserved sessions (i.e., excluding walk-in sessions) being 229 in 2019 and 259 in 2020, an increase of about 13%.

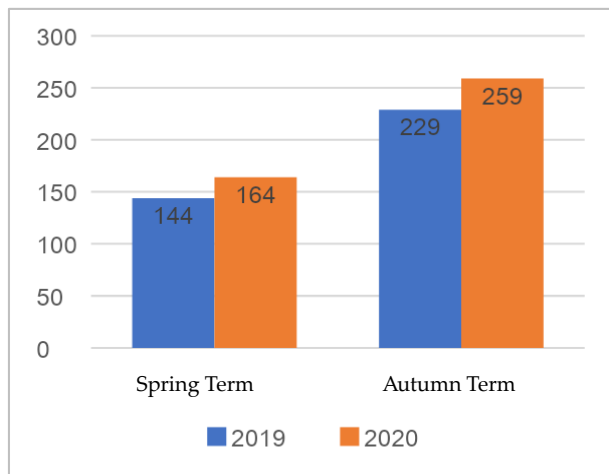


Fig. 1. No. of WSD Reserved Sessions

One reason for the differences throughout the year is that we receive a high number of consultations for the senior thesis from fourth-year students in the Autumn Term. Furthermore, the number of first-year students using the WSD increased dramatically in 2020 compared to 2019 (Fig. 2). Every year, the number of first-year students had been low, but we saw a sudden increase in the Spring Term from 14 in 2019 to 45 in 2020. Similarly, in the Autumn Term, there was an increase from 48 in 2019 to 67 in 2020. In particular, in the 2020 Spring Term, many first-year students who had not been able to even visit the campus since matriculation were looking for assistance in improving the quality of their reports. This increase in the number of students who have been studying remotely from their first year has given us much food for thought in considering the future role of the WSD.

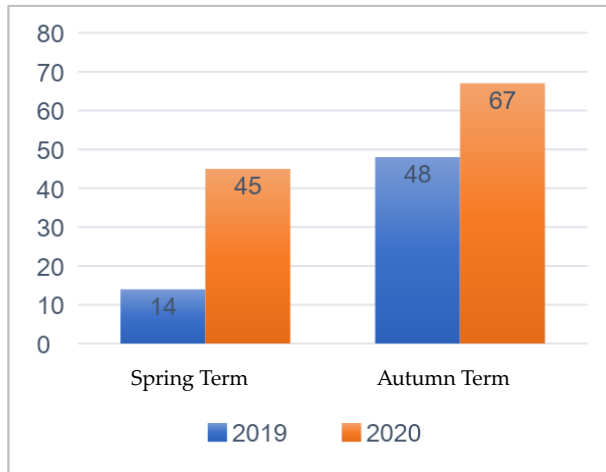


Fig. 2: No. of First-year Undergraduate Students Using the WSD

### 3. Survey of WSD Tutors and Users

In view of the above changes, we felt the need to explore the pros and cons of the WSD’s online writing support based on the opinions of both the tutors and the users. We distributed questionnaires using Google Forms, asking the participants to respond by email after each session in the Spring and Autumn Terms. The results are summarized in Table 1. Note that due to space limitations, the questions and answers shown are only from the Spring Term questionnaire.<sup>4</sup>

The survey found that both tutors and users responded positively to the WSD’s online writing support and expressed a desire to continue using the service in future. The problems, where noted, were mainly technical, such as computer issues, rather than with the actual writing support. In addition, some users commented that there were fewer barriers online, suggesting that it is more convenient than a face-to-face session.

The reason low response rate to the questionnaire was partly because some students returned to their home countries or graduated at the end of the term; moreover, this questionnaire was optional among others that the WSD administered. Although not all the students responded to the questionnaire, the results gave us a good indication for the potential direction of the WSD in the future.

### 4. Future Prospects

Based on our transition to online writing support so far and the survey results, I would like to offer some suggestions for the future development of the WSD:

### 1. Continue the online tutorials even after ICU resumes face-to-face classes

Offering both online and face-to-face tutorials enhances the convenience for both the tutors and the students.

### 2. Respond to diverse needs

The WSD should consider learning support for first-year students, enhancing self-management skills and fostering a sense of belonging to the ICU community, and supporting the changes to written assignments in line with the switch to remote learning.

### 3. Collaborate with writing support centers of other universities

Online meetings can increase opportunities for exchanging information with writing support centers (tutors, staff, and faculty) at other universities.

“Enhancing self-management skills and fostering a sense of belonging” in the second suggestion was taken from an interview with two unique users, which was conducted on July 10, 2020, to augment the questionnaire. The interviewees noted that regular use of the WSD helped to replicate the campus environment even during remote learning. The third suggestion stems from the October lecture by the Research Center for Global Language Education, where several participants expressed a desire for further collaboration and information sharing with the WSD.

Even if we continue with the online format, the WSD’s objective to promote the growth of writers will remain unchanged. By further developing the online option, we hope that ICU students will incorporate the WSD as part of their learning strategy and use it to enhance their growth as writers.

## Conclusion

Currently, the WSD employs 27 graduate student tutors from various backgrounds. From the Winter Term, support for ELA (English for Liberal Arts) Program assignments will be provided by three undergraduate tutors for the first time.<sup>5</sup> Although it is not possible for us all to gather in person in the current situation, our tutor meetings and training on Zoom feature a lively exchange of opinions in Japanese and English. I hope that the value of the WSD will be seen not only in its original objective to provide writing support, but also as a place that embodies the diversity of ICU and helps to alleviate

the anxiety of students who might be feeling isolated by remote learning.

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1. Sadoshima, Saori, and Ota, Yuko. 2013. *Bunsho chūtaringu no rinen to jissen: Waseda daigaku raitingu sentā de no torikumi* [Philosophy and practice of writing tutoring initiatives at Waseda University’s Writing Center]. Tokyo: Hitsuji shobō.
  2. Hatakeyama, Tamami. 2011. “Raitingu sentā: Kōsōkara jitsugen e” [Writing Center: From concept to realization]. *Jōhōno kagaku to gijutsu* 61 (12), pp.483-488
  3. Writing Centers Association of Japan, <https://sites.google.com/site/wcajapan/>
  4. The questions in the 2020 Autumn Term questionnaire were almost identical to those of the Spring Term, but we asked respondents to compare their online experience with previous face-to-face tutorials as well as the Spring Term online tutorials. Their results showed similar trends to those of the Spring Term, and the feedback from both tutors and users were generally positive about the WSD’s online writing support.
  5. Undergraduate tutors are required to have completed the subject “ELG301: The Foundations of Tutoring Academic Writing” in the 2020 Spring Term.

Table 1: Survey on Online WSD Writing Support Services

	Spring Term 2020	Autumn Term 2020
Survey Period	July 8–17, 2020	November 24 – December 2, 2020
Respondents	Tutors: 8 (out of 28) *15 active tutors Users: 12 (out of 48 students)	Tutors: 11 (out of 27) Users: 25 (out of 128 students)
Language	Japanese or English	Japanese or English
Questions & Answers (Spring Term)	<p><b>1-a. (For tutors only) Did the preparation and the time you spent before online tutorials differ from those for face-to-face tutorials?</b> Replies: Yes 37.5%, No 62.5%</p> <p>Reasons for answering “yes”: Sharing files in advance meant that more time was spent on reading; internet connection and bookings caused some additional stress, etc.</p> <p><b>1-b. (For users only) Have you used face-to-face writing support at WSD before this semester?</b> Replies: Yes 8.3%, No 91.7%</p> <p><b>2. Did the flow and content of online tutorials differ from those of face-to-face tutorials?</b> Replies from tutors: Yes 62.5%, No 37.5%</p> <p>Reasons for answering “yes”: Long silences felt uncomfortable so tutors asked more questions in online tutorials; technical issues consumed a great deal of time and attention, etc. Replies from user (i.e., the one respondent who replied “yes” to 1-b) : Yes 0%, No 100%</p> <p><b>3. Did you find any difficulties in online tutorials that you did not have in face-to-face tutorials?</b> Replies from tutors: Yes 75%, No 25%</p> <p>Reasons for answering “yes”: Need for more verbal explanations from students; no opportunity to consult with staff or other tutors; unable to see the students’ facial expressions because the screen froze, etc. Replies from users: Yes 16.7%, No 83.3%</p> <p><b>4. Did you find any advantages for online tutorials compared with face-to-face tutorials?</b> Replies from tutors: Yes 87.5%, No 12.5%</p> <p>Reasons for answering “yes”: Less fuss; no commuting time and no need to arrange sessions on days when tutors happen to be on campus; there were hardly any latecomers for online tutorials compared to face-to-face tutorials; the convenience of screen sharing, etc. Replies from users: Yes 58.3%, No 41.7%</p> <p>Reasons for answering “yes”: Access to support even during the pandemic, etc.</p> <p><b>5. Do you think that online tutorials should be continued as one of the styles of writing support at WSD even when the university goes back to regular face-to-face class style in the future?</b> Replies from tutors: Yes 100%, No 0%</p> <p>Reasons for answering “yes”: It’s not that different to face-to-face tutorials once you get used to it; it’s convenient and might encourage more students to use the service, etc. Replies from users: Yes 91.7%, No 8.3%</p> <p>Reasons for answering “yes”: Fewer barriers online, etc.</p> <p><b>6. Please tell us any useful tools you used for online tutorials. (Computer functions, websites, apps, books, articles, etc.)</b> Replies from tutors: Online chat, email, Google Docs, Google Scholar, ICU library, and e-books Replies from users: Google Docs, file sharing, and screen sharing</p> <p><b>7. What support would you need for future online tutorials? Please feel free to mention anything you would like us to improve.</b> Replies from tutors: Feedback from students; better communication and cooperation between tutors and the office; use of Zoom instead of Google Meet Replies from users: None</p>	



### About the Writing Support Desk

[The Writing Support Desk](#) at the Center for Teaching and Learning is designed to provide wide-ranging support for students writing in any field, from class papers (including ELA class paper), theses and essays. The tutors are graduate students, and each one-on-one tutorial session is 40 minutes long.\* Students receive advice on topic choice, structure, writing conventions, and research skills. English- or Japanese-language support can be provided for subjects taught in either language.

In addition, we also offer an [English-language proofreading service](#) for undergraduate students. Our proofreaders help students to express their ideas and arguments more clearly in English, advising on appropriate expressions and style.

ICU faculty members, please inform your students about our WSD services. For further information, contact [wsd@icu.ac.jp](mailto:wsd@icu.ac.jp).

\*From the 2020 Winter Term, the WSD tutors have also included undergraduate students who have completed the course “ELG301: The Foundations of Tutoring Academic Writing (English)” in the Spring Term. They provide tutorial support only for undergraduate ELA courses.



## Writing in English with the Grammarly app



**Simon EVANS**  
English for Liberal Arts Program (ELA)

### An Introduction to Grammarly Premium

Grammarly is an online tool allowing users to check written English for a range of language errors and inappropriacies. The basic Grammarly service is available for free. However, all students and staff at ICU have access to Grammarly Premium, which offers a greater range of functions when checking writing. This article briefly outlines what students are taught about Grammarly Premium in the English for Liberal Arts (ELA) program and also reconsiders some of its apparent limitations.

### Background

Grammarly Premium has been available to ICU staff and students for several years. However informal conversations with a number of ELA students in 2017 revealed that usage of the tool was very limited and in fact, many did not know anything about it. Thus, with my ELA colleague Asa Brinham, we developed a series of teaching activities for students as part of the Freshman ELA course, Academic Tools and Strategies (ATS). The activities were first used in spring 2018. Almost all of the 600+ ELA Freshman students are required to take the ATS course in spring, meaning that by the end of the 2021 spring term, the vast majority of ICU undergraduate students who have studied in the ELA will have been taught the following:

1. how to access Grammarly Premium,
2. the Grammarly Premium settings most appropriate for academic writing,
3. what Grammarly Premium can do to check academic writing,
4. the limitations of Grammarly Premium when checking academic writing.

The rest of this article is based around topics 1-4 identified above.

### 1. Accessing Grammarly Premium

To create a Grammarly Premium account, ICU staff and students can visit [the ICU Library homepage](#) and look for “Tools/ Reference”/ “お役立ちリソース・ツール”. From there, follow the prompts carefully. ICU staff and students need to use their ICU gmail account to access Grammarly Premium. (Please note that if there are problems creating the account, users need to contact the ICU Library.)

### 2. Adjusting the settings

Having set up a Grammarly Premium account, and having created a new document in Grammarly Premium, users paste their text into the document. The following prompt appears, allowing users to adjust the settings depending on the purpose of the text (see Picture 1)

Picture 1: Settings adjustment in Grammarly Premium

**Set goals**  
Get tailored writing suggestions based on your goals and audience.

**Audience** General Knowledgeable Expert  
Expert: May require rereading to understand.

**Formality** Informal Neutral Formal  
Formal: Restricts slang and colloquialisms.

**Domain** Academic Business General Email Casual Creative  
Academic: Strictly applies all rules and formal writing conventions.

### 3. What Grammarly Premium can do

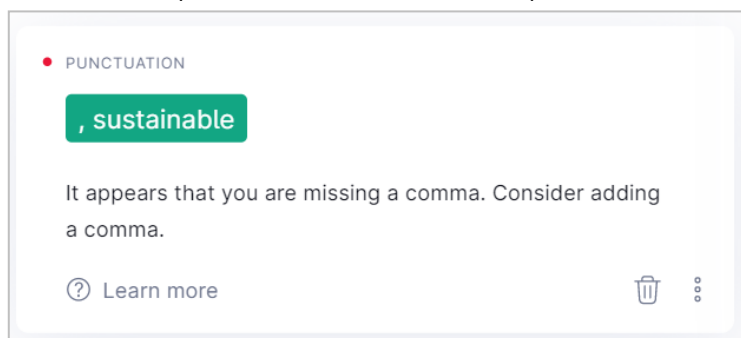
Grammarly analyses the text and generates a number of ‘alerts’ (see Table 1).

Table 1: Grammarly alerts and error types identified

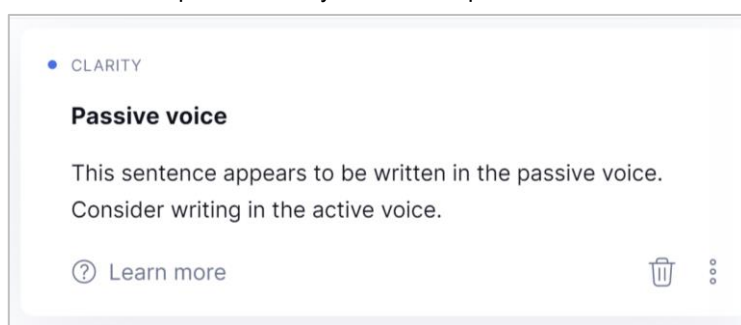
Alert type	Examples of possible error type
<a href="#">Correctness</a>	grammar, spelling, punctuation, words not in the Grammarly dictionary
<a href="#">Clarity</a>	wordiness (overly long sentences, overly long paragraphs), passive voice
<a href="#">Engagement</a>	word choice in terms of the accuracy of the intended meaning, over-used words, appropriacy of words
<a href="#">Delivery</a>	tone and formality, use of contractions (e.g. <i>don't vs do not</i> ), personal pronouns, certain writing forms (e.g. using <i>etc</i> in academic writing)

Each alert is identified and the user is given a short explanation as to the *possible* problem (see Pictures 2-5)

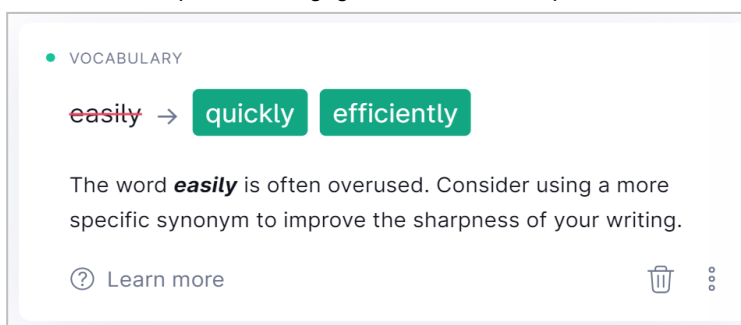
Picture 2: Example of a ‘correctness’ alert and explanation



Picture 3: Example of a ‘clarity’ alert and explanation

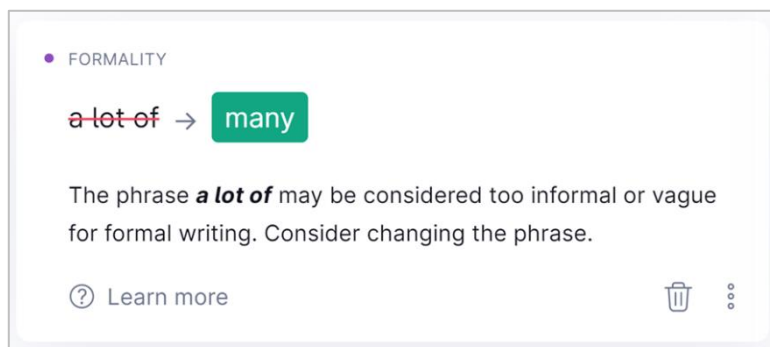


Picture 4: Example of an ‘engagement’ alert and explanation





Picture 5: Example of a 'delivery' alert and explanation



It is important to note that alerts are almost always framed as *suggestions*. In other words, the user has to decide whether to accept or reject the suggestion. Many alerts come with a green suggestion box and clicking on this amends the text (as seen in Pictures 2, 4, and 5).

#### 4. Limitations?

The main 'limitation' of Grammarly Premium is that it does not provide answers and instead, offers 'suggestions'. Sometimes these suggestions may be inappropriate. This point is stressed to students in the ATS course. In particular, Grammarly invariably suggests avoiding passive structures, preferring active structures instead (see Picture 3). For example, the following passive sentence from one recent student paper received a 'clarity' alert, which the student asked me about:

*In fact, only 1% of disposed of clothing is ultimately recycled into new garments.*

When I amended the sentence and rewrote in the active form, Grammarly did not generate an alert:

*In fact, companies recycle only 1% of disposed clothing into new garments.*

However, in the context of the paper (problems associated with Fast Fashion), the passive sentence is completely appropriate, highlighting as it does the extremely low rate of recycling.

More importantly, in some disciplines, passive structures are almost unavoidable, such as when writing the Methods in a Lab Report.

I recently conducted a brief survey about student use and perceptions of Grammarly Premium. Of the 38 respondents, only one reported that s/he did not use Grammarly and this was because of technical problems.

When asked why they used Grammarly, one typical response reported, "*Grammarly always suggests many advices that I cannot come up with or be aware of*". Significantly, six respondents reported that they used it because they lacked *confidence* in their academic writing abilities.

Another question asked respondents about their reactions to the suggestions, and whether they found them confusing. A number did report that it was a little confusing and that they then chose whether to accept the advice or not. As one student wrote, "*Sometimes, the suggestions from Grammarly were inappropriate, so I decided whether I accepted them or not depend on the situation.*"

I would suggest this apparent limitation can be seen positively in the sense that students become more sensitive to the nuances and subtleties of language use. Additionally, confusion in itself is not necessarily negative. Presumably, the confusion arises because of contradictory messages from the student's working knowledge of language and that of Grammarly. This should therefore raise questions in the student's mind about which is more appropriate in a given context, thus creating a desire to know more. This desire may only

be temporary. However, it may be safe to assume that if the same question arises a number of times, then the desire to know becomes stronger. If the student eventually asks someone, such as their teacher (as in the fast fashion passive sentence discussed earlier) or a [Writing Support Desk](#) / [Proofreading](#) tutor, learning may occur.

### **Conclusion**

ELA students, and therefore the majority of ICU undergraduates, are aware of Grammarly Premium and have basic information about its strengths and weaknesses. In addition, ELA teachers constantly remind students to check their formal written work in Grammarly Premium before submitting and some classes have added it to the grading rubric for writing assignments. However, Grammarly Premium does not mean error-free writing will become the norm, for some of the reasons discussed above. Fortunately, data suggests that ICU students are relatively comfortable with this and so I would encourage all professors to remind their students to use Grammarly before submitting written work in English.

## Engaging Students in Online Classes Using Slack



**Seunghun J. LEE**  
**Department of Psychology and Linguistics**

### 1. Background

Slack is an online platform designed for teamwork so that communication between members of a team is done effectively. When ICU made a decision to move all classes to an online platform in April 2020 due to the pandemic caused by COVID-19, the first two weeks were designated as reading based lectures. This designation posed a challenge to my course titled, "Introduction to Linguistics 2 (LNG102)" since the first two weeks focus on the philosophical background of the discipline which is complex for most students. As such, reading-only classes focusing on email communication was not ideal both for the students and the instructor.

When I started looking for a possible platform supporting simultaneous direct communication with students, Dr. Julián Villegas at Aizu University suggested that I try a platform called Slack. Slack is an effective communication platform for students working together on diverse projects. I soon realized that the platform would be a good complementary tool to Moodle which I use for sharing reading materials, receiving assignments, and administering and grading online exams.

Using Slack in spring 2020 was successful by streamlining and organizing class communication with students. This report documents and shares how Slack was utilized during the first 2 weeks of the LNG 102 class.

### 2. Features of Slack

The free version of Slack is downloadable from [www.slack.com](http://www.slack.com). After registering to the Slack platform, users have three options to use Slack:

using a web browser, installing a desktop application, or installing a cellphone application. Slack is organized by workspaces that form the basic unit of a project, or in my case a class. The Slack interface is currently available in eight different languages, including Japanese.

When using Slack for classes, I mainly use three types of function shown in Figure 1 (p. 11): open channels, private channels, and direct messages.

Open channels are created with a hashtag (#) and allow theme-based channels to be created. These channels are used for students to ask questions and also to foster discussions among students.

The private channel marked with a keylock is created to communicate with the teaching assistant so that any issues regarding the class can be raised there.

Direct messages (DM) are used instead of email communication between the students and the instructor. Online classes meant an increase in email communication, and using Slack made it easy to keep track of communication with students.

Some tips need to be shared for those using Slack for the first time. Slack can be accessed via a web browser or applications on a desktop or a cellphone. I found that managing more than three workspaces becomes easier through the applications since workspaces on a web browser require individual tabs to be open.

While images can be used as an icon for a workspace, when Slack automatically generates an icon, the first letter of the first two words is used. As such, naming workspaces using the word for academic years (AY2020) and course numbers (LNG) would result in all workspaces being represented as AL. Avoiding this naming practice will make it easier to distinguish one workspace from another.

Slack allows users to customize settings and preferences in a particular workspace. I found changing two default features make it easier to use Slack.

The default interface for sending a message involves pressing the return or enter key after typing a message. This interface creates difficulties when someone wants to repeatedly send multi-lined messages via Slack. An alternative setting for

sending messages involves using CTRL and Enter keys on Windows computers, or Command and Return keys on Mac computers. Using this alternative setting makes it easier to send messages that need multiple line changes.

Inviting students to Slack is straightforward. Students can either be sent an invitation email, or they can join a workspace directly using a link generated by Slack. This link is usually valid for only 30 days.

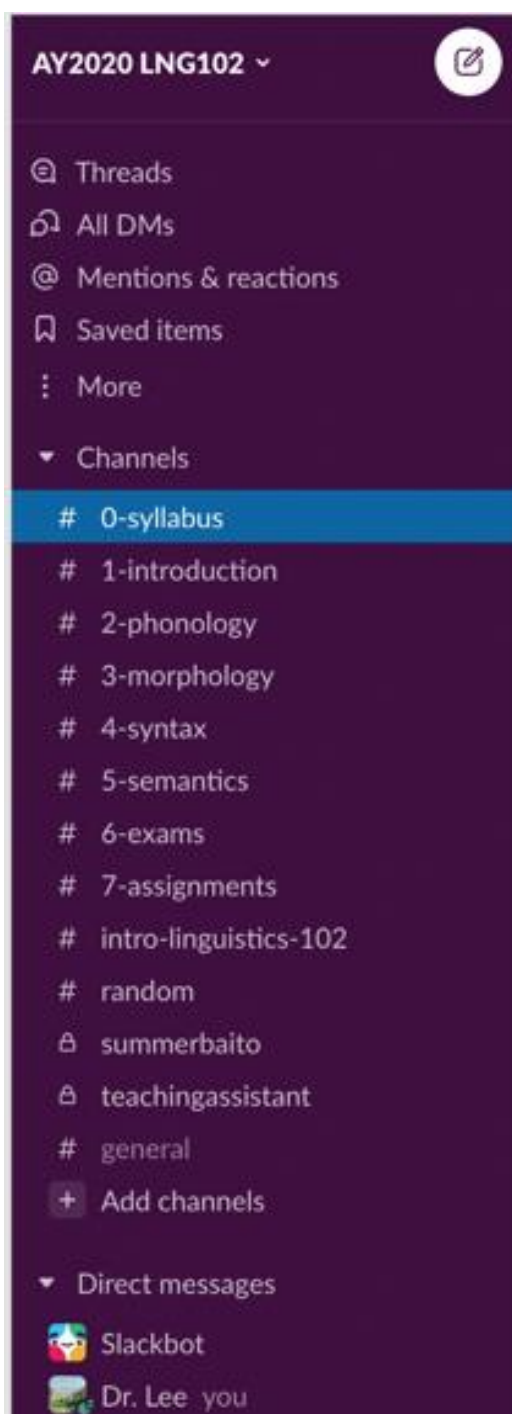


Figure 1. Channels and DM

### 3. Case studies: LNG102 in Autumn 2020

The first day of class began with messages as shown in Figure 2. The teaching assistant also left messages. Moving between channels also allowed students to have access to various information such as class planning. The syllabus and schedule were also shared via a link to Moodle so students can have access to both Slack and Moodle for the course.

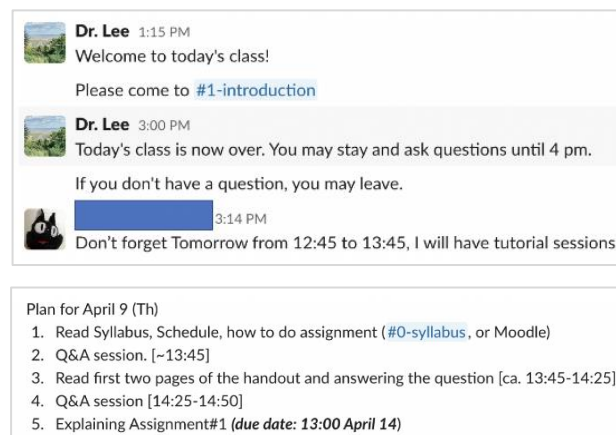


Figure 2. First day of class greetings (top) and announcing class organization (bottom)

After reviewing the assignment handout on the first day of class, students started asking questions using the open channels or through direct messages. Each message was answered by myself.

When questions arrived as a direct message, I copied the message to the open channel without the name of the student to protect their identity. Responses were created as a reply message to each question. The response threads could then be expanded by other students who asked follow-up questions on similar topics.

This format also encouraged students to interact with one another. Figure 3 is an example of student communication on a topic that was posed by one student who asked me questions about the ambiguity of a Japanese sentence. I told them to ask their classmates about the ambiguity and soon a thread with 24 replies thread was created.

On the first day of class when everything was held online, students were focused and engaged on the classroom topic. At the end of this first-class, the teaching assistant expressed pleasantly surprised to see student engagement thriving in the yet unfamiliar online environment.

The first class that I fully taught online was the Introduction to Linguistics 2 class taught in spring 2020. Using the Slack platform made it possible to

maintain active engagement by students and also facilitated real-time direct communication with students by reducing the number of email correspondences for various communication.

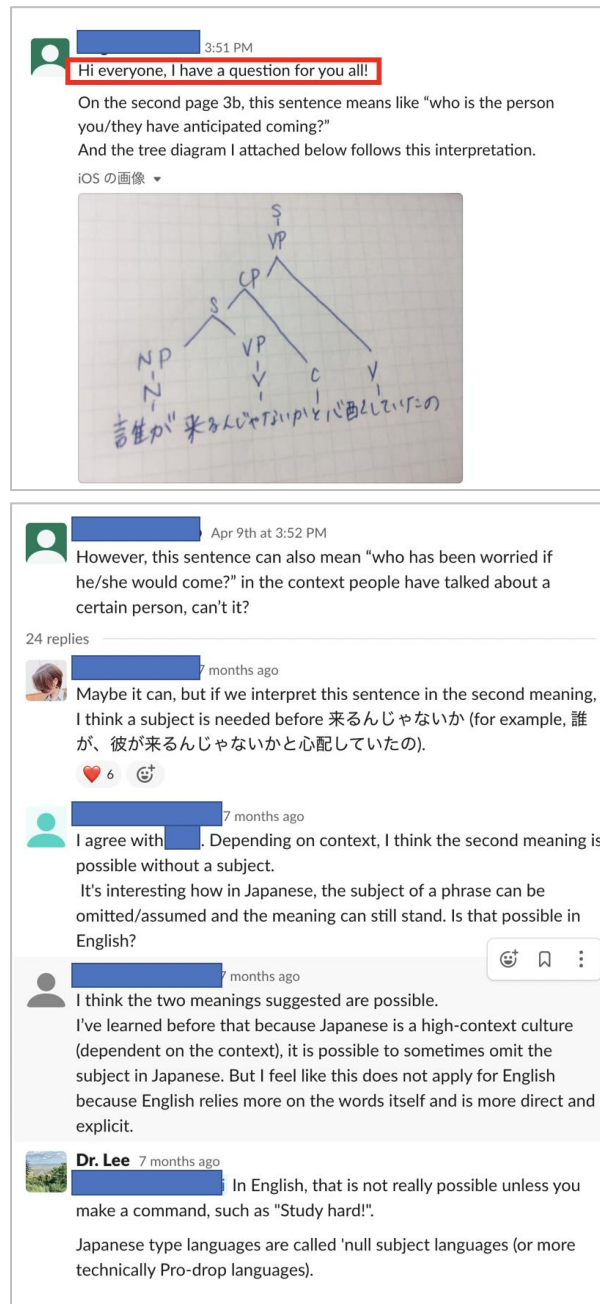


Figure 3. An example of student communication

#### 4. Moving forward

After completing the first online class using Slack, Moodle, and Zoom, I learned that students were flexible using diverse platforms.

Slack was useful because it drastically reduced the number of direct email communication with students while making sure that students questions were organized in a manner that was also searchable. The channel-based communication also increased direct communications among students.

Even so, Slack has its weaknesses when considering other aspects of classroom management. Slack does not provide an integrated platform for managing assignments and tests, and there is no grading function. Students cannot ask anonymous questions using Slack, and it is not possible to directly collaborate on a paper or a presentation, which needs other methods such as Google Suites that offer documents, spreadsheets, and presentation options.

In this report, I have presented various aspects of Slack and how it can be used for managing classes. Increased direct communication between students and the instructor concerning the class contents was one of the most welcoming aspects of Slack. The Slack interface is comparable to other social network services such as Instagram or Facebook. As a result, this familiarity likely led to the successful integration of Slack in teaching courses among students.

In Autumn 2020 as well as Winter 2020, I am using Slack to facilitate discussion amongst students and also integrate questions in classrooms.



## 6th Brown Bag Lunch & Learn: Connecting the Real and Virtual Worlds with Interactive Whiteboards

On Friday, November 13, toward the end of the Autumn Term, Professor Hiroyuki Aoki (Dept. of Education and Language Education; CTL Steering Committee; FD Committee) moderated our sixth Brown Bag Lunch & Learn session. It was a hands-on session on interactive whiteboards attended by participants from multiple locations – at home or from various locations on campus.

Professor Aoki began by showing us the features of ICU's new interactive whiteboard (Sharp BIG PAD 50V Touchscreen Display). At first glance it seems like an ordinary large screen display, but it has multi-touch features like a tablet, which enables us to use Windows and Mac screens more intuitively. The Microsoft Whiteboard app can be used on this interactive whiteboard. Features include the following:

- Besides using a pen to write or draw, we can also create sticky notes and lists, and import images, text, and slides. As we can make a limitless number of notes, the digital canvas feels like a gigantic whiteboard.
- A digital canvas can be shared online among users, who can submit their ideas using the "can edit" feature or use the like button to vote on content.
- Using your fingers, you can navigate, move, and resize the canvas. Use two fingers to pinch or double tap to zoom in and zoom out.
- The sticky note feature makes it easy to summarize ideas.
- A completed whiteboard can be saved and exported as an image.

Next, Professor Aoki showed us two examples of how to use the sticky note feature on the Microsoft Whiteboard app.

### Example 1: Voting on Content

Using the topic "Preferred Pet," the participants were given two sticky notes: "Dog" and "Cat." Each participant tapped on the sticky note they preferred and pressed the like button on the menu.\*

\* The like button was only available in the app, not in the web version.

### Example 2: Brainstorming Ideas Collaboratively

Using the topic "Pros and Cons of Lessons," the professor created two categories: "Lessons Using Slides" and "Lessons Using Ordinary Whiteboards," and then participants posted sticky notes with their ideas around them. As we could observe other participants making notes, we felt motivated to write something too, which made the activity livelier by increasing participation. On the app, we could differentiate the categories by using red sticky notes for the pros and blue sticky notes for the cons. There is also a feature that enables us to summarize and convert many different sticky notes into a list.



### Other Examples:

- There are settings for drawing shapes such as rectangles and creating tables. Notes can be grouped together using "lassos" or sticky notes.
- The Microsoft Whiteboard app on smartphones (iOS version) can be used to take photos and collect handwritten notes on the interactive whiteboard  
→ Student feedback can be collected in hybrid lessons.
- With the Windows version of the Microsoft Whiteboard app, images can be found online through Bing image search and imported to the whiteboard.

→ This enables us to utilize images spontaneously rather than on prepared slides, which is useful for lessons in real time. The sticky note feature makes it easy to summarize ideas.

- We can also use the web version on our browser without installing the app, but the functions are more limited. It is best to avoid using templates, lists, and grids, as they are not viewable in the web version.
- Professor Aoki also showed us the Surface Hub 2S hardware (interactive whiteboard installed on Windows computers) and the similar Google Jamboard, which enables optimal use of the Microsoft Whiteboard features.

In addition, Professor Aoki gave examples of how the interactive whiteboard can be used in the classroom, not only to convey information via slideshows but also to make lessons more dynamic by encouraging student engagement and feedback. As online and hybrid learning is likely to continue in future, we expect that interactive whiteboards will be utilized to promote more interaction with and among students.

Center for Teaching and Learning

### Information for ICU Faculty

- The interactive whiteboard BIG PAD is usually in Room 215 of the *Honkan*. Please contact the Honkan Help Desk if you wish to use it. Note that Macs will need to have the driver installed first.
- ICU faculty and students are licenced to use the Microsoft Whiteboard app (Windows, iOS, and Web versions) with an ICU Net ID. The licence cannot be shared with non-ICU users.
- A recording of the Brown Bag Lunch & Learn session (approx. 50 min.) is available on [ICU-TV](#).

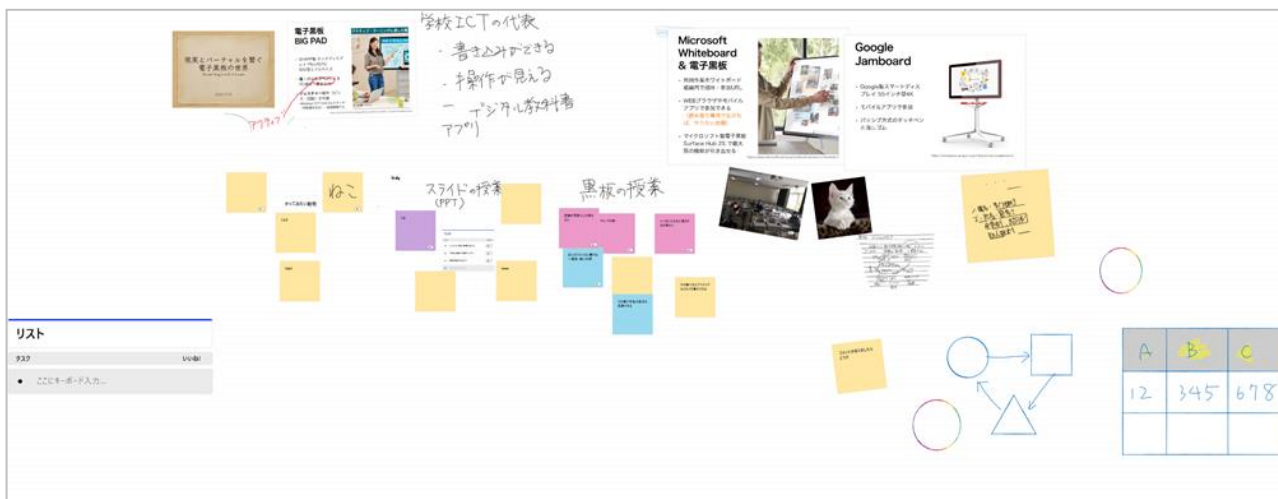


Figure: An image file exported from the entire paper created in the example

## Oxford EMI (English Medium Instruction) Training Program



The Oxford EMI Training Program was held online in September 2020, and Ozawa-sensei participated from ICU. This program aims to improve classes taught in English in countries where English is not the first language. It features lectures on methods for teaching in English by Oxford EMI Training instructors. We asked Ozawa-sensei to describe how the program went and what she thought of it.

The program was held at ICU in August 2018 and March 2019, but since March 2020, ICU faculty members have attended the program offered online by Oxford EMI Training. The online program for Japan that will take place in March 2021 is also scheduled to be attended by ICU faculty members.



**Ikumi OZAWA**  
Japanese Language Programs (JLP)

As described in the participant reports of previous newsletters, the Oxford EMI was a practical, analytical course on how to adapt and design our lessons to enhance student learning. My course had 11 participants – lecturers employed at universities in Japan and South Korea with different specializations, careers, and primary languages. It was a valuable opportunity to reflect on my own teaching by observing the language use and techniques of the course instructors from the perspective of a student and through discussions with my fellow participants. The experience of being a student was particularly helpful for thinking about ways to support my JLP students as they tackle synchronous and asynchronous tasks in a foreign language while dealing with the various problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like the previous course in spring, this was also online, which impressed me with how important and

challenging it is to foster a learning community among intensive course participants who are meeting for the first time online. Before starting synchronous lessons, it is essential to engage with each other through asynchronous tasks, and we also need to forge a sense of camaraderie early in a synchronous session. As the course participants were all lecturers and all highly motivated to learn, this may have been quite easy for us. I am aware that in our own teaching we need to be more creative, and I am devising more ways to engage my students before and after the start of my courses.

Moreover, as pointed out in past reports, EMI training is not about teaching instructors how to teach fluently in English. Rather, the focus is on how the language we use can encourage or hinder students' learning and thinking. This is applicable to classes taught not only in English but also in Japanese and other languages.

At ICU, students who are taking or have completed the JLP course are attending other courses taught in Japanese, and there also seems to be an increasing number of students in the ELA stream who are not confident about their Japanese language skills. EMI made me realize that it is not only important for students to gain solid Japanese skills in the JLP but also for all instructors to adapt their undergraduate and graduate courses to enhance student learning. I think this approach could be applied effectively to subjects taught in languages other than English and Japanese, such as French and Korean.

I also think instructors would benefit greatly from sharing their ideas and discussing ways to increase student engagement, critical thinking, and development, regardless of the language of instruction. Such a group could be led by ICU faculty members who have already attended the EMI training course, as well as those who specialize in this field.

**Oxford EMI Training:** <https://www.oxfordemi.co.uk/>

**Other articles on the Oxford EMI Training Program:**

FD Newsletter [Vol. 25 No. 1](#), [Vol. 24, No. 1](#); [Vol. 23, No. 2](#); [Vol. 22, No. 2](#); [Vol. 22, No. 1](#)

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## Editor's Note

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“That darn Corona!” This sad refrain of many seems to ring relentlessly in my ears every day. The coronavirus may now be regarded as the root of all evil, but the word itself is derived from the Latin *corona*, which means “crown.” The name refers to the crown-like appearance of the surface projections of the virions under electron microscopy. So far, 6,590 species of viruses have been identified, but there are only six species (or seven strains) of coronaviruses that infect humans. Four of these coronaviruses are responsible for the common cold, with generally mild nasal symptoms, but the other two—SARS and MERS—have caused much tumult in the 21st century. The origin of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) has not yet been clarified, but the sudden emergence of this tyrant is changing our world as we know it. The current issue of our *FD Newsletter* is no exception, as many of the articles make reference to the virus. We are finally embarking on a new year, but our battle against this virus is expected to continue for some time.

We may call it a battle, but our adversary is invisible and not human. If we become too caught up in virus measures, we might forget what it is that we are fighting. The physicist Torahiko Terada once said, “To fear too much or too little is easy, but it is no mean feat to fear properly.” So too must we address the coronavirus problems for higher education “properly,” lest we lose sight of that which is essential. This is where I believe the strengths of ICU’s liberal arts outlook will shine, as we understand the value of considering issues from multiple perspectives to grasp their essence. I welcome your thoughts and feedback on how we can work together to continue supporting our students through these challenging times.

**Hiroyuki KOSE**  
**Director, Center for Teaching and Learning**

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