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Stanford and ICU Linked Classrooms and Students

Doing Liberal Arts and Academic Writing Across Continents and Time Zones

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John Peterson speaking to ICU students from his Stanford classroom

To cross borders in a globalized world, to participate in a shared liberal arts dialogue, to collaborate in writing with peers at another university, and to have some fun and enjoy a change of pace in our research and writing classes, the authors brought two groups of students

together—at Stanford and International Christian University—in an online international exchange. This brief article is the one we wish someone else had written and which we could have read before we launched our own two-class interaction (scroll down for the promises, perils, and pitfalls).

Educational Context and Literature-Review-in-Brief

Transcending boundaries to bring online learners from various backgrounds together on a global scale is one of the liberating features of modern technology. Yet despite the early promise of innovations such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and other scalable online instruction, lack of personal connection is one of the causes of their high attrition rate (more than 83 percent of students typically drop out of MOOCs, with some estimates as high as 96%) (Ford, 2015;

Onah, Sinclair, & Boyatt, 2014). Videoconferencing with Skype or Google Hangouts—combined with smaller classes—better leverages telecommunication for face-to-face interaction and learning (Bonsignorio, Labhart, Lueg, & Pfeifer, 2014). Research on online collaborative writing (OCW) similarly shows that interpersonal contact is as important as technical tools (Limbu & Markauskaite, 2016). The challenge, then, for OCW, online learning, and exchanges like that between our ICU and Stanford classes is to skillfully orchestrate interpersonal communication and writing pedagogy—bringing separate communities together into one learning space—through the strategic use of technology.

Course and Classroom Background

With these issues in mind we (Paul and John, with Dan's expert tech assistance) hosted two "live" globally-distributed video exchanges between our classes, using both Skype and Google Hangouts platforms. Our writing and research courses focused on several of the same key readings and themes, in particular, the role of liberal arts versus specialized knowledge and self-exploration versus job-preparation in university education. We had previously co-written an article using our own international exchange via Google Docs and email, and published our piece as an opinion-editorial on liberal arts that appeared in the Japan News of the *Yomiuri Shimbun* in February 2016. With this international collaboration as a model, we prompted students to consider intercultural perspectives on liberal arts education and to collaboratively compose short pieces on the same theme with their student counterparts across borders and universities.

Both of our courses were required for 1st-year students. The ICU freshmen were from ELA Stream 1—the 20 or so students with the highest English proficiency among April students—and they were taking Research Writing in their second term at ICU. The Stanford students were in their first term of university study and taking a Program in Writing and Rhetoric (PWR) course with a similar emphasis on reading, writing, and research.

In addition to our idealized goals above, our practical objectives were to have our students engage in a stimulating class-to-class exchange,

personal dialogue in small group to small group interaction, and further collaboration in yet smaller groups and pairs as they wrote about their diverse perspectives on the value and function of higher education. In other words, as they continued the debate and dialogue we ourselves engaged in, wrote about, and emphasized in our courses.

Set up 1

Students read "What is College For?" from William Deresiewicz's *Excellent Sheep: The Miseducation of the American Elite and the Way to a Meaningful Life* (2014) and prepared questions for their counterparts across the Pacific. They formed Google Hangouts teams so they could connect in smaller groups via laptops in face-to-face discussion. The day before the first exchange, John (Stanford), Paul (ICU), and Dan (ELA tech expert) set up equipment, tested microphones, plugged in and adjusted cameras in their ICU and Stanford classrooms, and did a test run with Skype and then with Google Hangouts (Hangouts was technology Plan B in case the Skype connection failed).



Paul Wadden and ICU students welcome Stanford students to ICU and Japan

Class 1 (70 minutes)

Paul welcomed Stanford students to Japan, offered a brief description of ICU, and gave an overview of Japanese secondary and higher education, noting that Japanese students typically choose a science or humanities track in high school and then must select a related area for their university study (their *gakubu*) prior to entering university. He noted that liberal arts colleges in Japan are much rarer and even less understood than in the U.S. Students introduced themselves

and broke into groups of three or four clustered around a laptop to ask questions to their overseas counterparts. They talked about their high school experiences, college admissions ordeals, entrance exam hells, parental expectations, societal assumptions, questions raised by the readings, and their own evolving opinions and values. They changed the groups they were connected with twice to meet more of their counterparts. At the end, the groups returned to the whole class and briefly shared across the two connected classrooms the most interesting insights they had gained during their small-group exchanges.



Stanford and ICU students connect in small groups and exchange opinions on liberal arts, their first-year college experience, and the question, "What is college for?"

Set up 2

The following week, students read and annotated our co-written article "Education Proposals the Opposite of Workforce Needs" published in the Japan News (see [here](#)). Then, online in a Google Doc, they browsed through five brief passages from course texts expressing a particular view of university education, and they signed up for a team to co-write an opinion-editorial blog in response to one of them. Their instructions were to "consider

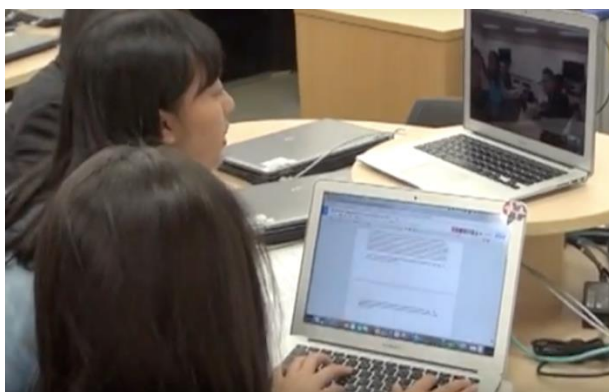
one of the positions... and develop a position of your own, either adopting some thinking from a passage, extending ideas in a passage, opposing the position in a passage, or offering alternative viewpoints to the ideas expressed in the passage."

Class 2 (70 minutes)

John welcomed ICU students to California, spoke briefly about Stanford's undergraduate and graduate education and recounted how more than a decade ago as its graduate programs in engineering, computer science, medicine, law, and business grew more prominent and powerful, the university decided to renew its focus on undergraduate liberal arts study. He mentioned how the brand new Stanford president, inaugurated just the week before, had emphatically reaffirmed this commitment to the liberal arts. Students then broke into teams of four or five clustered around a laptop and began discussing with their counterparts their views on the passage they had chosen. They also logged on to shared Google Docs to begin the initial drafting of their critical responses. Their instructions were: "Think of the initial writing as a draft that will eventually become a brief opinion piece in the form of a blog entry to be printed along with other blog entries.... Work together to generate ideas and sentences that you might eventually craft into more refined blog entries a few hundreds words long."

For several days after the class, Stanford and ICU students worked in groups, sub-groups, and sometimes individually to compose opinion pieces which were then published on a webpage created by Stanford students and linked to the university's Program in Writing and Rhetoric website. (Click [here](#) to see the op-ed blogs they created that are in the process of being published.)





ICU students collaboratively composing critical responses with their Stanford counterparts

Promises Achieved

We were glad to observe energy and enthusiasm across schools and borders, positive student exchanges of thoughts on liberal arts and college life, the sharing of students' personal experience of courses, dorms, and extracurricular activities, and an enjoyable and meaningful change of pace for all of us. Students collaboratively created thoughtful posts and positions on their views of higher education.

Perils (problems for the most part avoided).

At 9 a.m. in Tokyo, it's 5 p.m. in California, so it's practically impossible to schedule shared sessions during both courses' regular meeting times. The ICU class started at 8:50 a.m. (1st period) and the Stanford students generously came in outside of their own scheduled class periods just before 4:50 p.m. USA Pacific Time. Thanks to luck and care during equipment set up, cameras functioned fairly well and the big screens captured the scenes within each of the classrooms. Audio volume was decent but microphones were weak at the back of both rooms. Unfortunately, students and lecturers can't connect between ICU and Stanford using ICU Gmail addresses or the ICU Google platform because both are restricted to the ICU community. To circumvent the ICU system, all ICU students needed external Gmail accounts to use Google Docs and Google Hangouts to connect with their Stanford counterparts. As a result, although the exchange was held in an ICU computer room with hardwired computers—which worked well for the class-to-class interchange—students had to use their own

laptops operating on university WiFi in order to have smaller group-to-group interactions.

When using more than five or six laptops in the same area, ICU's WiFi system sometimes slows to a crawl during uploading, downloading, streaming, or when accessing a website. That bandwidth issue was partly avoided by having students use the 3 separate ICU WiFi systems (note: the new ICU WiFi system recently introduced is more robust than the previous two). In addition, when more than three students huddled around the same laptop, it was hard for all of them to be visible within the frame of the laptop camera; several resourceful students solved this problem by slipping fish-eye lenses over their computer cameras, and for the second session they brought enough fish-eye lenses for every laptop. Also, when some groups of students were unable to connect on Google Hangouts, they switched to Skype, but getting in touch with the other group using this backup method chewed up time.

Pitfalls (problems to correct next time)

Although we had hoped to keep students in the same classroom, the feedback of high-pitched whining sounds from Google Hangouts caused by devices being used at close proximity made it impossible. (The HelpDesk in the ILC Building has headphones with microphones that can be toggled together and might reduce or eliminate this problem, though there will still be considerable voice noise in the background.) For the first session, groups of ICU students simply left the room and sat on the ground around the ILC in order to escape the electronic feedback and the background conversation noise so that they could talk to and be heard by their overseas counterparts (Stanford students similarly escaped to hallways in their building). For the second session, only a single additional room in the ILC was available so one group of students used that classroom, another used the original classroom, another used Paul's office on the third floor of the ILC, and another used an ILC lounge area (John at Stanford was able to get four rooms in close proximity, although four still weren't enough to reduce the group sizes to a more ideal, smaller number). Obviously, a cluster of rooms with robust internet access would be best

for the exchange, and groups of two to three students would be preferable to groups of four to five. Moreover, even though discussion groups were set up in advance, there were still contact and connectivity problems; if possible, student teams should initiate and confirm contact between each other before the class begins.

Further Recommendations

If you are planning a similar exchange at ICU, we recommend trying out ICU's designated V-CUBE application which is designed for interactions such as ours (full description of V-CUBE [here](#)). Since we as lecturers were already regularly using Google Docs and Skype—and we planned to have the students do their writing collaboration on Google Docs—we wanted to go with software that was already set up, we were familiar with, and our students were accustomed to using. But V-CUBE might be a better alternative for other exchanges. While John orchestrated this exchange from his side at Stanford using only his personal laptop (one of his goals was to keep the interaction simple and to avoid the involvement of tech staff), Paul was grateful to work with his ELA colleague Dan Ferreira who videotaped both sessions, who was more familiar with the Japanese Windows operating systems installed on the computers on the only computer room available at that time, and whose support allowed Paul to focus more fully on the students, the classroom, and the group interactions.

Acknowledgements: The HelpDesk in the ILC, true to its name, was a real asset in setting up the equipment and we recommend utilizing them. Paul and Dan also found that the CTL (Center for Teaching and Learning) to be a new and effective resource for facilitating these kinds of projects (as well as being the publisher, translator, and distributor of the *FD Newsletter* and this article). We want to express our special thanks to Professor Jeremiah Alberg (Director, Center for Teaching and Learning), Kobayashi-san (CTL Assistant Director), Shibuya-san (CTL staff), and Miura-san (HelpDesk technician).

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Report on FD Activities (1)

My Experience with the EMI Oxford Course for University

Takuya Kaneko

Department of Economics and Business

My name is Takuya Kaneko from the Department of Business and Economics. Last summer, I participated in the EMI Oxford Course for University Teachers. Taught by staff at the Oxford University Department of Education (OUDE), the course aimed to improve the efficacy of English as a medium of instruction in countries where English is not the primary language. Although it was only two weeks long, the course offered up one eye-opening insight after another in a densely packed curriculum every day, and I felt as though the scales were falling from my eyes. The course has had a huge impact on my approach to teaching and my understanding of pedagogy.



The Head of the River, a restaurant located near my accommodation in Oxford, Hertford College.

I joined the ICU faculty in 2013 to teach courses in statistics and finance, drawing from my experience working in the finance sector. Although at first I lectured only in Japanese, from 2015 I decided to change my language of instruction to English in three of my undergraduate subjects (Corporate Finance, Capital Markets, and Risk Management). To be honest, I find teaching in Japanese requires much less effort – psychologically and practically in terms of lesson preparation – because it is my native language. In recent years, however, the financial world has become increasingly interlinked globally. Owing to time zone differences, events that occur overseas might not be translated in time for the Japanese morning editions but can still influence market trends on

that day. This means that I cannot explain live market trends without incorporating English articles and footage accessed online. In addition, lecturing in English makes classes more accessible for international students, and allows me to make use of the constant flow of financial news from information hubs such as Bloomberg and Reuters. I can even use a document camera to project articles directly from the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Financial Times* in class.

So far, I've made it sound as though there are only advantages to the use of English as the language of instruction, but of course there are problems as well. First of all, since I was not accustomed to teaching in English, I had to prepare considerably for my lectures, with regard to both speaking and writing. In preparing the Corporate Finance course, for example, which focuses on comparing the financials of several companies, I spent a great deal of time determining which companies to compare and identifying key issues for discussion based on in-depth analysis. I selected electronics manufacturers, such as Panasonic, Toshiba, and Hitachi, and automobile manufacturers, such as Toyota, Nissan, and Honda, all of which are well-known Japanese corporations. I printed out financial statements and relevant documents, made copies for all my students and distributed them in class. In spite of all my efforts, however, the course content did not generate as much interest as I had hoped. I could not figure out why the students did not engage in lively discussion or debate.



Sunset on the Thames: Another view not far from Hertford College

The EMI Oxford course taught me a very simple but effective point: "To some extent, just let your students take the lead." This requires the creation of an environment of mutual trust between the teacher and students, and among the students themselves. I learned that, in order to encourage active participation in class discussions, I need to be respectful of my students and acknowledge their opinions. Students will inevitably retreat into passivity if they feel that a teacher responds negatively to their comments or puts them down. Therefore, I began to relax my own attitude and stopped preparing my lessons so intensely or single-mindedly.

The companies to be compared also changed significantly when I left the selection to my students. They chose emerging companies such as Netflix, Airbnb, Amazon, Facebook, Twitter, Apple, Uber, and Tesla. I decided not to fuss over trivial matters like sorting them by industry. Given that the students selected the companies themselves, they were keen to research them and discussions became very lively. Seeing their selections also made me realize how mismatched my own interests had been to those of my students. Considering the recent scandals of Toshiba, for example, it struck me that my students' generation is perhaps able to view corporations in a more objective light. My generation, however, seems to misread the current situation because we fall into the trap of evaluating corporations in light of their impressive history.

In addition, I decided not to prohibit the use of cell phones by students. While this might be a point of contention for some, I made this decision based on my understanding that dialogues among students today are not bound by time or place. I also stopped downloading financial statements of companies and other related research myself, making the students do it all online by themselves. I started checking attendance by using the Kahoot! platform, an interactive survey and quiz maker that requires students to log in from their cell phones. I figured that students can't be absorbed in online conversations if they need their mobile devices to participate in class. These are just some ways in which I have been able to significantly improve my teaching after participating in the EMI Oxford course.

This invaluable learning opportunity was made possible by the kind support of Professor Jeremiah Alberg, to whom I would like to express my deepest gratitude.

(English translation provided by CTL)

Report on FD Activities (2)

Let's Think about Disability Support, ICU Style

Hiroyuki Kose

Department of Natural Sciences

I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation to all the ICU faculty and staff for their cooperation and understanding with regard to the support of students with disabilities.

ICU was one of the first universities in Japan to provide support for students with disabilities, establishing the Office of Special Needs Support Services (SNSS) in 2002. The number of students supported by SNSS has been increasing in recent years (42 students as of April 20, 2017). In addition, significant changes in the physical and social environment for people with disabilities today have led to an urgent need for CTL and SNSS to establish a comprehensive disability support system at ICU based on an inclusive perspective. Our services extend to students with disabilities as well as those who don't apply to SNSS for assistance, but may still benefit from some kind of learning support.

Institutions in Europe and the United States are leading the way in working towards creating equal learning opportunities for all students by applying the principles of universal design. I recently participated in a study tour of the University of Washington (UW) and Seattle Central College (SCC), as part of the Japanese Government's Top Global University Project. I hope that my observations and lessons learned from this tour will help to inform discussions of how to improve disability support services at ICU.



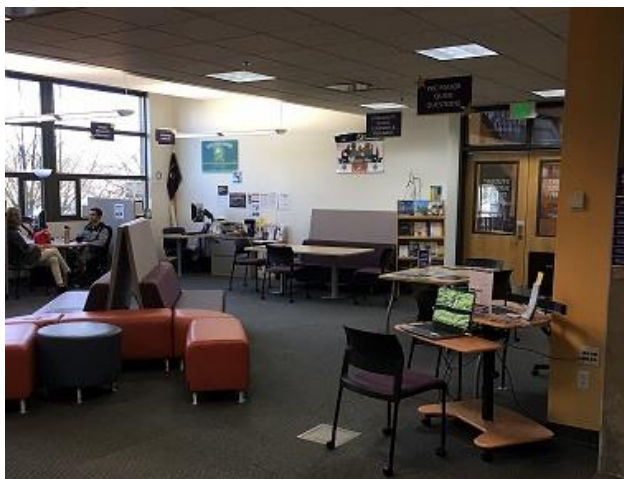
The Student Success Center at UW Bothell

There is still a deep-seated prejudice toward mental illness.

This was pointed out by Alfred Souma, a counselor and instructor for Disability Support Services at SCC. The only college in downtown Seattle, SCC has a student population of about 7,600, of whom approximately 400 are registered for disability support. Mr. Souma said that although prejudice against physical disabilities has effectively been eradicated in the United States, there is still a lack of understanding across the faculty regarding the needs of students with hidden disabilities such as learning disorders, ADHD, and dyslexia. At ICU, we often field questions from faculty as to just how much disability support is fair and appropriate. Similarly, even at SCC, it seems that it is not uncommon for faculty to question whether requests from such students for extensions of exam time or assignment deadlines, and special consideration for absences, are really fair for others. In order to improve awareness, SCC's specially trained staff holds educational seminars at faculty meetings every semester. While consensus building by means of extensive dialogue is just as important in Japan and the US, a crucial point of difference lies in the latter's clear academic integrity. In Japan, if students with disabilities do not achieve satisfactory academic results, their grades might sometimes be adjusted at the discretion of the professor. At the institutions I visited on this tour, reasonable consideration is determined through mutual agreement when required, but all students are ultimately subject to the same standards for assessment. In other words, if students do not study hard, they will fail or even drop out.

For example, the deadline for a paper might be extended for a student with writing disabilities, but the word count would not be reduced. Thus, a disability cannot be used as an excuse to lower academic standards. From a Japanese perspective, this may seem somewhat harsh, and it is easy to imagine situations where such a rule cannot be

blindly applied, but it is a perfectly logical idea considered in the light of academic integrity. The guarantee of fairness in assessment should not be restricted to students with disabilities. CTL as a whole needs to continue reflecting on these issues and consider strategies for improvement at ICU.



Inside the DO-IT Center at UW Seattle



With Ms. Rosa Lundborg from the Division of Student Affairs at UW Bothell

Our role is not to guarantee the success of students with disabilities. Our role is to ensure equality in terms of the transmission of information and access to information.

This idea, expressed by Scott Bellman of the Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology (DO-IT) Center at UW Seattle (see below), was a common theme that I encountered on this study tour. It is based on the idea of removing the barriers caused by one's physical or psychological characteristics to enable easier access to information and create an equal environment for everyone. In addition to Braille, text-to-speech software, and note-taking services, students with

dyslexia are granted extensions and students with noise sensitivity are provided with a quiet room. Yet once an agreement is reached regarding the nature and degree of consideration required, academic achievement is regarded separately as the responsibility of the individual.

For example, if disability leave is granted for mental health reasons, a reasonable number of absences is decided at the beginning of the semester; further absences are not accepted in principle and are treated in the same way as ordinary absences. At UW Bothell, about 200 students (8% of the total number of students) require disability support, but the dedicated support office only has two full-time staff. Although some tasks such as note-taking are undertaken by student volunteers, the office is able to operate smoothly owing to mutual understanding and agreement between the students, staff, and faculty regarding reasonable adjustments for support.

Be creative

The DO-IT Center at UW Seattle campus was established in 1992. The center aims to equip students with disabilities with the necessary skills to become self-reliant in the community. It organizes various activities not only for college students, but also for pre-tertiary students and those entering the workforce. For example, the DO-IT Scholars program is designed to prepare local high school students to become future leaders who can help to create a more friendly and accessible world for all. About 20 senior high school students with disabilities are selected each year for the program, which includes live-in summer sessions at UW where they acquire skills in using adaptive technology and software, learn about the concept of reasonable accommodation at school and in the workplace, and meet working professionals with disabilities. As the ultimate goal is to promote independence for people with disabilities, the center said that it places special emphasis on internships. Even in Japan, the number of companies that offer internships for people with disabilities is on the rise, and we hope that SNSS will be able to promote this trend further.



The Access Technology Center at UW Seattle

Dr. Sheryl Burgstahler is the founder and current Director of the DO-IT Center. In relation to the visual barriers to totally blind students, such as using microscopes, Dr. Burgstahler said it's important to "be creative" and use your imagination. She told me about a UW student who wanted to take a meteorology class. Meteorology requires the ability to read and interpret numerous maps and graphs. The lecturer had flatly refused to provide any special consideration. Indeed, many professors tend to say, "This student has such and such disability, so they won't be able to do such and such task. Therefore, any kind of support would be meaningless." Dr. Burgstahler, however, says "it is the student who will need to find employment, not the lecturer. Our job is to consider the aptitude of the student." When she talked with the student in question, she saw a person with outstanding mathematical abilities who was interested in the mathematical analysis of weather data. That student later entered the doctoral program, and she is now working as a meteorologist.

In addition, Dr. Burgstahler emphasized the importance of giving students with disabilities clearly defined roles. For example, during practical sessions in microscopy, she advised that a student who is totally blind could still contribute to the whole learning process by taking responsibility for note-taking. I felt that "be creative" expresses a wish for us all to put our heads and imaginations together to come up with flexible ways for students with disabilities to participate and contribute in class.

This tour reminded me of the importance for constant dialogue from both sides to devise tailor-

made solutions for each individual. I think that this is very much in harmony with the principles upon which ICU's educational mission is founded. Moreover, the determination of reasonable accommodation and consideration is essential for preserving academic integrity, and it is an issue we certainly need to address in continuing our efforts to improve disability support at ICU.

(English translation provided by CTL)

Report on FD Activities (3)

Working Towards a Universal Campus

Mizue Sugita

Center for Teaching and Learning and Office of Special Needs Support Services

ICU has a proud history of supporting visually impaired students. Nevertheless, when I began working at the Office of Special Needs Support Services (SNSS) in 2013, we had less than 10 applications for support, and the majority of the applicants had a physical disability. Applications have suddenly increased owing to a combination of factors, including a growing number of students who are diagnosed with (or display certain characteristics of) a developmental disorder, and the Law to Eliminate Discrimination against People with Disabilities that took effect in 2016. The SNSS office now has over 40 students using its services, but we often find that our existing system is inadequately equipped to meet their needs. Therefore, I welcomed the opportunity to learn from staff at the University of Washington (UW) and Seattle Central College (SCC), which are both institutions at the forefront of disability service provision in the higher education sector.

Responding to the Increasing Need for Disability Support

Rosa Lundborg, coordinator of Disability Resources for Students in the Division of Student Affairs at UW Bothell, said that she had faced similar challenges in being overwhelmed by the increasing need for disability support. Among a student population of roughly 5,500 at UW Bothell, there are about 200 students who require disability support services, which are all coordinated by Ms. Lundborg and just one assistant. By moving most of their system online, including the application forms for support and for special consideration, they are able to manage with a small staff. Moreover, colleges in the United States usually outsource services such as notetaking and sign language interpreting for hearing impaired students, and Braille and large print transcription for visually impaired students. Ms. Lundborg's

office is responsible for coordinating these services provided by external service providers. Although this differs from the situation in Japan, where each university must train students and staff in notetaking and document conversion, I think that moving more of our system online would certainly improve efficiency.

Support from faculty is also indispensable. If teachers can develop their course materials in line with the principles of universal design for learning, to make them accessible for everyone, students with disabilities would be able to participate in classes without having to seek special consideration. While this may seem like a burden for faculty, the fact that course content would not need to be adapted for each student with a disability is advantageous for both the teacher and the student. At ICU, we need to convert texts for visually impaired students into Braille or via voice recognition software. As this is a very time-consuming process, we ask faculty to provide course materials a few days before each lesson. However, if the original materials were created in a format that is compatible with reading software, the conversion time would be greatly shortened, though the lesson preparation time may take longer for faculty. In addition, removing the need for third-party intervention helps to ensure greater accuracy.

The Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology (DO-IT) Center, which is based at UW, provides a wealth of information on how to create learning materials that apply the principles of universal design. In collaboration with the DO-IT Center, the SCC utilizes these resources to conduct FD seminars every semester. The SNSS Office also held an FD seminar on universal design at ICU last year, and we intend to continue our focus on providing further resources on universal design in education.

Support Tools for Students with Disabilities

Dan Comden, Manager of the UW Access Technology Center (ATC), talked to me about the practical support they provide for visually impaired students. He said that ATC asks publishers to provide texts in alternative formats that are accessible for visually impaired students. Some Japanese publishers have also recently started to provide electronic texts or PDFs for people with visual impairments, but most publishers are still not very cooperative. Given this situation, the ICU Library has been purchasing e-books as part of its efforts to create a more inclusive learning environment. As a result, visually impaired students are now able to access books more easily than before, but there are still not enough texts. Mr. Comden also told me that they need to negotiate with publishers to obtain texts in alternative formats and not all publishers will provide them, so the university plays an important role in continuing to pressure publishers in this regard.

Also, in recent years there are few users of Braille, as almost all the students are using voice recognition software on their PCs. The use of software designed for science subjects is increasing, with recent innovations such as Central Access Reader (CAR) and InftyReader, which have helped to facilitate the reading of mathematical expressions. Not only visually impaired students but also many students with learning or developmental disabilities benefit from this technology. In particular, a software called NaturalReader, which has a helpful highlight function, has demonstrated good results for students who have difficulties with reading or concentration.

Conversely, Mr. Comden noted there are hardly any users of speech recognition software because speech impairments can decrease its accuracy. Students with physical disabilities sometimes use speech recognition software such as Dragon NaturallySpeaking, but even more students prefer to use a special keyboard or mouse, so ATC installed a range of assistive devices in its computer room (see photo). The software and devices have since been installed in other

computer rooms throughout the campus, further improving accessibility.



Special equipment set up in a PC room at ATC

Considering that ICU was a forerunner in Japan in providing support for students with disabilities, the support system is relatively established, but it cannot be denied that there are still areas for improvement if our goal is to guarantee equal access to all students. While acknowledging that there are challenges in adapting some of the strategies at UW, SCC, and the DO-IT Center to the ICU context, I am determined to continue working steadily towards improving our current system to create a more inclusive and flexible learning environment at ICU.

(English translation provided by CTL)

Teaching and Learning Support

Report on the AY2016 FD Seminar, “Improving Services for Students with Disabilities from a Universal Design Perspective”

Hiroya Banzono

Center for Teaching and Learning and Office of Special Needs Support Services

Introduction

In accordance with the “Basic Policy for Students with Special Needs,” ICU provides assistive equipment, learning support, and reasonable accommodation in order to ensure that all students have full access to learning regardless of whether they have a disability. These efforts involve input from each member of the university, including faculty, staff, and students, with a focus on those students who need support. The role of faculty in creating a friendly and accessible learning environment is particularly important.

To this end, ICU holds annual FD seminars that provide information on universal learning environments and disability support for students. This year’s seminar, on January 24, 2017, was concerned with how to improve services for students with disabilities from a universal design (UD) perspective. Our guest speaker was Professor Yasushi Nakano (Faculty of Economics, Keio University), whose research lies in the field of psychology, particularly in the support of people with visual impairments and other disabilities, as well as barrier-free design and UD. He is Japan’s leading researcher into support for people with low vision (amblyopia).

The seminar focused on three main issues: (1) the fundamental concepts of disability; (2) reasonable accommodation to remove social disadvantages caused by disability; and (3) the use of ICT tools and UD in education to provide reasonable accommodations. An outline of the seminar is provided below.

Outline of the Seminar

(1) Fundamental Concepts of Disability

Disability was traditionally perceived to be a problem arising from a physical condition intrinsic to an individual’s body or mind. More recently, however, disability has come to be regarded as a disadvantage caused by the negative interaction between an individual’s physical or mental functions and society, thus shifting the focus from

individuals to their social environment. The former view can be described as an individual or medical model of disability, whereas the latter is a social model of disability. The social model of disability can be traced back to the disability rights movement in the 1960s. It is the foundation of our understanding of disability today, having influenced official definitions such as the WHO’s revision of the 1980 International Classification of Impairments, Diseases, and Handicaps (ICIDH) into the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) in 2001.¹

The important point here is that the social model of disability brought about a change not only in how we perceive disability but also in our problem-solving approach, which now targets the disability (social disadvantage) rather than impairment (mental and physical conditions).² This shifted the focus from people with disabilities to society’s failure to accommodate them. The concept of reasonable accommodation is based on this attempt to resolve disadvantage by changing the society in which people with disabilities live.

(2) Reasonable Accommodation to Remove Social Disadvantages Caused by Disability

Reasonable accommodation is defined as “the necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.”³ In other words, the idea is not to treat people with disabilities in the same way as other people, but to ensure equality by making modifications and adjustments that are appropriate to the circumstances of each individual. The crucial element is constructive dialogue between the party seeking a reasonable accommodation and the party providing it, in order to make every effort to ensure the rights of people with disabilities while giving due regard to any financial, physical,

human, and time constraints.

For example, a reasonable accommodation for a visually impaired student could be the conversion of textbooks and lesson materials into Braille or using speech synthesis software. However, if there is a large amount of material, it is difficult to convert it all at once. In such cases, we consult with both the student and the instructor, and determine the priorities before proceeding with the conversion. In assigning priorities, it is important to ensure that the student's learning opportunities are guaranteed to the utmost while balancing their needs with the instructor's lesson plan.

Another important factor is finding ways to improve the provision of reasonable accommodation while giving due regard to the various resource constraints that may exist. Professor Nakano suggested that ICT tools and UD can provide useful direction in this regard.

(3) The Use of ICT Tools and UD to Provide Reasonable Accommodations

Professor Nakano introduced the example of UD browsers,⁴ which are iPhone- and iPad- compatible applications to support the reading of textbooks and teaching materials by the visually impaired. UD browsers have various default display formats between which users can seamlessly transfer, enabling texts to be read according to different needs. UD browsers are also advantageous for faculty because they reduce the amount of work required for conversion, freeing up more time to prepare course materials. Although UD browsers cannot be used in every possible situation, they can be an extremely effective tool in streamlining and expanding the range of support that can be provided.

Another point Professor Nakano discussed was the implementation of UD on campus. Whereas reasonable accommodation aims to make modifications and adjustments in line with individual needs, UD is concerned with the design of systems and products based on the premise that they will be used by people with diverse needs. The goal of implementing UD is not only to ensure accessibility for students with disabilities but also to improve efficiency for students who don't have disabilities. Professor Nakano pointed out that even if full UD implementation is not possible, it is important to always include at least one UD option. For example, even if all the courses for a particular major are difficult for students with

disabilities, preparing even one UD pathway to graduation in the curriculum is important. Indeed, by offering UD options, disability would no longer be a reason for students to abandon a major, and the range of options for all students will be expanded.

Conclusion

The number of university students with disabilities has been increasing across the country,⁵ and we have seen a corresponding rise in applications for disability support at ICU every year. Currently, more than 40 students are provided with some form of reasonable accommodation and support to facilitate their student life at ICU. The actual figures are presumably higher if we consider the students who have some barriers to learning but have not formally applied for assistance. The theme of this seminar, improving the efficiency of disability support services for students, was highly relevant for ICU's urgent challenge to ensure more opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in higher education.⁶ Applying UD principles at ICU will expand options not only for our current students but also for students with disabilities who are considering applying to our university in the future. Therefore, in line with Professor Nakano's recommendations, I believe that the implementation of ICT tools and UD are the two key factors that will point the way forward for ICU.

¹Even the Japanese Government's understanding of disability is based on a social model of disability, as seen in current measures such as the Basic Act for Persons with Disabilities and the Law to Eliminate Discrimination against People with Disabilities.

²The social model of disability distinguishes the terms "impairment" and "disability" in English, which are both usually translated as *shōgai* in Japanese. Impairment refers to the physiological or psychological condition of an individual and disability refers to the social disadvantage brought about by the negative interaction between an individual's impairment and his or her social environment.

³Article 2 of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

⁴<http://web.econ.keio.ac.jp/staff/nakanoy/app/UDB/>

⁵The number of students with disabilities in undergraduate courses increased to 13,045 in 2014 (0.41% of the total students), 19,591 in 2015 (0.64%), and 21,721 in 2016 (0.68%). Within the last 10 years there has been a fourfold increase. Japan Student Services Organization, *2016 Survey on Support for Students with Disabilities at Universities, etc.* (Tokyo: JASSO), 2017.

⁶In the United States, undergraduate students with disabilities make up 11.1% of all students. US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). *Digest of Education Statistics: 2014*. Although an accurate comparison is not possible owing to the differences in how disabilities are categorized and measured across countries, it is still reasonable to predict that numbers in Japan will (and should) grow from the current figure of 0.68%.

(English translation provided by CTL)

Report on FD Seminars

Report on the 9th Symposium on Writing Centers in Asia held at ICU

On March 6, 2017, ICU hosted the 9th Symposium on Writing Centers in Asia. This symposium is a yearly event organized by the [Writing Centers Association of Japan](#) in conjunction with the host institution for each year. The symposium brings together writing professionals from around Japan and Asia—researchers, teachers of writing, and writing center administrators and staff—for the purpose of discussing the teaching of writing and the development of writing centers. The first symposium in 2009 featured 6 presenters and a panel discussion. The symposium this year at ICU featured 22 presenters, 3 poster presentations, and a panel discussion on *The Day to Day Management of Writing Centers: Problems and Solutions* with panelists from Nagoya University, Obirin University, Waseda University, and the University of Tokyo. The rapid growth of the symposium over the last eight years directly reflects the increased awareness and importance of writing centers and writing-oriented curricula in promoting excellence in academic writing.

The theme for this year's symposium was *Directions in Academic Writing: Issues and Solutions*, which attracted presentations on a wide range of topics, from coherence techniques to collaboration technologies, from teacher grading to "crowd grading," from Google Classroom to Google Translate, from primary research to empirical research, and from the challenges of teaching undergraduates at ICU's Writing Support Desk to the challenges of teaching JDS and ABE students in ICU's graduate program. To see summaries of all the presentations, please click on the program for the 9th Symposium [here](#).

Of particular interest are the presentations from ELA instructors, ICU High School, and ICU Library's Writing Support Desk as they offer valuable insight into how writing is being taught in the ICU academic community. Any of these presentations would be well suited for future

Kenneth Enochs R. English for Liberal Arts Program
Guy Smith A. English for Liberal Arts Program

faculty development workshops. Therefore, the presenters, titles, and links to summaries are listed below:

Daniel Brooks (ELA) — [Involving Students in the Assessment Process through "Crowd-Grading"](#)

Ken Enochs and Guy Smith (ELA) — [Tips and Tricks for More Effectively Using Google Classroom and Apps](#)

Dan Ferreira and John Peloghitis (ELA) — [Instructional Design and Collaborative Technologies in Academic Writing: From Theory to Practice](#)

Michael Kleindl (ELA) — [On Teaching Coherence in Academic Writing](#)

Guy Smith and Ken Enochs (ELA) — [Using Google Classroom to Streamline and Enhance the Teaching of Writing](#)

Kimiko Tonegawa (ICU Writing Support Desk) and Abdullah Al Yusuf (ICU graduate student) — [国際基督教大学図書館Writing Support Deskの事例研究：発展の条件と課題, The Experience of a WSD Tutor: Psychological Approach to Tutoring](#)

Paul Wadden (ELA) — [Primary Research and the Empirical Research Report: Doing Da Vinci and Dewey](#)

Jennifer Yphantides (ELA) — [Issues in Teaching and Advising Graduate Students at ICU](#)

大森 由季子 (ICU High School) and 廣畑 光希 (立教大学社会学部 4 年 / 国際基督教大学高等学校ライティングセンターチューター)

[高等学校におけるライティングセンター設置の意義-国際基督教大学高等学校の実践を通して-](#)

In closing, we wish to thank all those from the ICU community that made hosting this symposium possible. This includes the ELA Office, CTL, Help Desk, cafeteria, and, of course, our colleagues who presented, helped, and attended the symposium.

Good ICT Tools

Empowering Self-Directed Learning with e-Rubrics

Daniel Ferreira

English for Liberal Arts Program

Helping university learners to critically evaluate their own academic performance or engage in self-directed learning are the hallmarks of the student-centered approach. Traditionally, rubrics have been used by instructors to assess the quality of student performance on a learning event based on evaluation criteria. A set of indicators in the rubric provide detailed information that explains what a student has to do to demonstrate proficiency on particular skills. Recent research has shown that when students are involved in formative assessment, rubrics (especially e-rubrics) have the power to guide the learning process and promote self-directed learning (Reddy & Andrade, 2010; Rivas, De La Serna, Martinez-Figueira, 2014).

Goobric is a third-party add-on that works with G-Suite and is available for free. Any teacher at ICU can use Goobric to grade any assignment. The following is a list of instructions on how to use Goobric to grade an assignment posted to a class in Google Classroom.

Creating a rubric

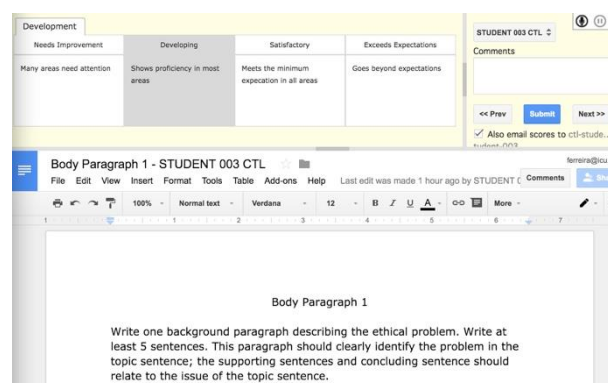
The first step is creating a rubric. It is a good idea to create a folder entitled "Rubrics" for easy retrieval. Within that folder, create a new Google Sheet and give it a title—for example, "Body Paragraph 1 - Rubric". Leave cell "A1" blank. From cell "B1" towards the right designate points, letter grades, or general descriptors such as "Needs improvement", "Developing", "Satisfactory", "Exceeds Expectations" (see Walser, 2011, for encouraging performance that exceeds rubric expectations). From cell "A2" downwards create your categories; to the right of each category will be your list of descriptions.

Using Goobric for grading

After an assignment has been made available in Google Classroom, create a folder with the title of the assignment; for example, "Body Paragraph 1"

(Note: more than one Google Classroom may require a better system of organizing documents). Open a Google Sheet within that folder and entitle it "Body Paragraph 1 - Grading". Go to "Add-ons", then "Get add-ons...", and search for "Doctopus", and click "+ FREE". Then from "Add-ons", choose "Doctopus" from the drop-down menu and choose "launch". For "--Select mode", choose "ingest a Google Classroom Assignment". For "--Select Class", choose your class to which you have assigned "Body Paragraph 1". For "--Select Assignment", choose the "Body Paragraph 1" assignment and then click the "Ingest assignment". After a few seconds, the sheet will populate with information about the student, a link to the assignment, and "Turned In Status", among other details. Under "Doctopus Assignment Tools", click "Attach Goobric" (user authorization may be requested at the initial setup). Select your rubric entitled "Body Paragraph 1 - Rubric" from "My Drive", click "Attach rubric" (other check-box options such as "Allow self/peer assessment" are beyond the scope of this write-up).

Once the rubric has been attached, a new "Goobric Link" category will appear in the "G1" cell location; click "Assess document".



The above image illustrates how Goobric works with a Google Docs assignment. The rubric appears at the top. At this point the instructor has several options. Notice the combination of category and descriptor underneath; when the instructor clicks a

category/description area, it turns grey. There are other options available one may want to consider before submitting this assessment. At the top right is an area to type comments. Above that, is an audio recording feature. Below the submit button, is a check-box option to “email scores”/assessment” (it is checked by default). Once the assessment is done, all the instructor needs to do at this point is click “submit”.

Pedagogical tips

In addition to filling the rubric, an instructor can take the time to add comments within the assignment. Doing so can not only contribute to a deeper understanding of the expectations contained within the categories/descriptions of the rubric but can also reduce the amount of writing in the comment section. Another idea that can empower students to use the rubric as a guide for learning is to add hyperlinks to each category of the rubric. Note that when a Goobric is attached to an assignment, an email is sent to the student. If students receive that email at the beginning of the assignment cycle, then they will know in advance what it is they will be evaluated on. Moreover, when creating the rubric, it is possible to hyperlink the category to other documents such as exemplar texts. For example, the above rubric, which the student receives as an email, can have a link to examples of what successful students of the past have produced.

Final thoughts

In the two years that I have been using Goobric and Google Docs for writing, my students have been producing first draft assignments that in the past would have required tutorials, exhaustive comments, class lectures, and at least several drafts of writing. That being said, harnessing that learning potential did not happen overnight. Incorporating a peer review system and blending the online writing assignments with face-to-face classes is ideal for fostering a community of learning. Moreover, teacher reflection—individual and peer—has contributed significantly to materials development and teaching methodology. If the promise of integrating technology into

teaching and learning is to enhance student learning outcomes and engender self-directed learning, then Goobric could be one of those tools to achieve that goal.

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Editor's Note

It is with great pleasure that we present this issue of the *FD Newsletter*. We would like to thank all those who helped to make this issue possible.

This issue features three articles on disability support for students. ICU has a long history of supporting students with disabilities, starting with support services for visually impaired students in 1978. From the beginning, our aim has been to provide universal support while recognizing the needs of each individual. The university focuses on creating a universal environment, not limited to disability support services.

In fact, a consideration for everyone – facilitating accessibility and convenience for all, without discrimination on the basis of factors such as nationality, sex, gender, age, disability, region, or culture – is a common thread woven throughout ICU's learning environment. It is also evident in this issue, which includes articles that offer practical advice for providing a universal environment. We hope you will find it useful.

Regarding our *FD Newsletter*, we have been working tirelessly over the past six months to make it a biannual publication. Since coming under the purview of the Center for Teaching and Learning, the newsletter has switched from a printed booklet to an electronic publication; however, the publication process remains the same. We still conduct editor meetings, call for submissions, and proofread and translate accepted articles. The same is true of the content, which is still made up of original article submissions. We look forward to receiving your submissions for the next issue of our newsletter.

As always, we welcome your feedback on our newsletter. Please feel free to email us with your comments, suggestions, and questions at ctl@icu.ac.jp.

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