

Case Study: International College of Liberal Arts: Creating Global Citizens in Japan

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1. Background

Today, Japanese society stands at a major historical crossroad as it faces economic, political, cultural, demographic, and geo-physical tremors that are altering Japan's future. This point in time may be no less important than two other key turning points in Japanese history: the Meiji Restoration and the early post-World War II period. Both periods saw the emergence of young, ambitious, highly spirited visionaries, who steered the country to a new future. Notable figures from the Meiji-era include statesmen: Okubo Toshimichi, Saigo Takamori, Kido Takayoshi, and educators and entrepreneurs: Fukuzawa Yukichi, Shibusawa Eiichi, and Sakamoto Ryoma; and from postwar Japan, Yoshida Shigeru, Matsushita Konosuke, and Honda Soichiro. What kind of education system produces such leaders?

The economic and political vitality of a society is largely determined by the nature and quality of its education system. The education system is an influential force in creating and sustaining a nation's culture. It also has the power to change national culture, albeit slowly. Key features of Japanese national culture have been discipline, harmony, patience, loyalty, moderation, teamwork, a strong work ethic, and respect for seniority. Such values and norms produced one of the world's largest economies and most stable political systems.

The awkward challenge for Japanese education today is to leverage Japan's traditional culture while producing a young generation of leaders capable of critical, creative, independent, global, and entrepreneurial thinking, combined with high proficiency in English, to lead Japan to a bright future – as their great ancestors once did in the years leading up to and during the great Meiji Restoration, and in the tradition of the exclusive pre-World War II high school system (旧制高校) that provided a liberal arts education to elite students in preparation for entrance into the prestigious Imperial universities.

According to the influential, former president of Akita International University, Mineo Nakajima, by the early 1990s, liberal arts education had almost completely disappeared from the Japanese higher education landscape as university curricula became more and more specialized. As education became more specialized it tended to produce university graduates that were narrow in their thinking – exactly the opposite of what is being called for in today's rapidly changing and globalizing world, where the capacity for critical, creative, independent, global, and entrepreneurial thinking are critical factors to sustain a healthy economy.

2. The Meaning and an Illustration of International Liberal Arts

The central features of a liberal arts education are wide breadth of the curriculum and the concept of interdisciplinarity. What makes liberal arts international is the introduction of cross-cultural undercurrents in the curriculum that run through the various disciplines, and, in the case of iCLA, the fact that the entire curriculum is delivered in a foreign language. iCLA is located in Japan and yet nearly all courses except for Japanese language courses are taught in English on a campus populated by a high percent of international students and faculty. Also contributing to the internationalization of liberal arts education at iCLA is the requirement that all iCLA students must study abroad

for a period of at least one year.

Courses in the typical liberal arts curriculum are clustered into five distinct areas of knowledge: Humanities, Social Sciences, Quantitative Reasoning, Natural Sciences, and Health and Physical Education.

- (1) *Humanities*. Courses in the Humanities, along with the Social Science courses, constitute one of the two pillars of a classical liberal arts education. Humanities include Language Arts, Arts, Performing Arts, Music, History, and Philosophy and Religion. They have in common that they all involve the study of the way that we, as human beings, understand and record the world of human experience.
- (2) *Social Sciences*. The Social Sciences are the other pillar of a classical liberal arts curriculum. Social Sciences are comprised of Economics, Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology, and Psychology. These areas of knowledge have in common they all are concerned with how societies and members within societies develop and interact.
- (3) *Quantitative Reasoning*. This part of the curriculum is comprised of courses in statistics and mathematics and is intended to develop the capacity in students to think logically and apply mathematical concepts and skills in the solution of real-life problems.
- (4) *Natural Sciences*. This area of the curriculum is comprised of Biology, Chemistry, Astronomy, Physics, and Earth Sciences. The inclusion of the Natural Sciences in liberal arts curricula dates back at least to the medieval times with the inclusion of Astronomy as part of the *Quadrivium*.
- (5) *Health and Physical Education*. Health and physical education was not a formal part of a classical liberal arts education, but has become an important part of liberal arts curricula in modern times and is often a required course at liberal arts colleges in the United States.

The curriculum at iCLA includes three additional areas: English for Academic Excellence, Foundation Courses, and Japan Studies.

- (6) *English for Academic Excellence (EAE)*. Courses in this cluster are intended to prepare non-native English speakers for a university education in which nearly all courses are taught in English. At iCLA, all non-native English speakers must pass through the EAE program. The EAE program develops English reading, listening, speaking and writing skills to a level where students are ready for rigorous university-level content courses taught in English. Native English speakers and other students with exceptional English language skills, however, may be permitted to waive the EAE Program.
- (7) *Foundation Courses*. The primary aim of courses in this cluster is to more fully develop students' capacity for critical, creative, independent, and global (CCIG) thinking, improve their computer skills, and prepare them for graduate studies or careers following graduation from iCLA. Most Foundation courses should be taken prior to or in conjunction with introductory liberal arts courses.
- (8) *Japan Studies*. The iCLA curriculum includes a Japan Studies Program (JSP). JSP comprises Japan Area Studies (JAS) and Japanese Language Program (JLP) courses. JAS courses introduce students to Japanese culture and society. These courses are imbedded in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Health and Physical Education parts of iCLA's liberal arts curriculum to provide a rigorous academic framework and perspective for Japan Studies content courses. JPL courses are Japanese language courses and, with one exception, are intended for international students only. The exception is Professional Writing in Japanese, which is intended for native Japanese speakers to develop their Japanese writing skills to a level expected of university

graduates in Japan. International students are expected to be nearly fluent in Japanese by graduation. To develop advanced writing skills, help desks are located in iCLA's Language Acquisition Center (LAC) and are staffed with professional English and Japanese teachers.

Finally, there is one especially unique part of the curriculum at iCLA, which we refer to as "workshops."

- (9) *Workshops*. In addition to academic courses, iCLA offers a wide range of creative, experiential "workshops," where students have opportunities to actually apply concepts and theories from traditional lecture courses. Workshops range from Sculpting, Playwriting, and Directing to Japanese Traditional Theater, Tea Ceremony, Calligraphy, and Flower Arrangement. The Fuji Culture workshop, which is offered during our special winter semester. In 2013, Mt. Fuji became a World Heritage Site and will be one of the main sites for the Fuji Culture workshop. Other sites include Japan's Southern Alps, with world-class ski runs. Yamanashi prefecture is the center of Japan's wine industry and vineyards populated the hillsides surrounding campus. Another site for the workshop is the 8th-century Buddhist Daisatsu temple in Katsunuma, where visitors are greeted by the giant Bosatsu statue holding a bundle of grapes are served wine rather than the traditional o-sake. The University even has its own wine label. The Field Studies and Immersion in the Local Community workshop gives students an opportunity to develop their entrepreneurial aptitude by working with local businesses, government, and other community organizations. Unlike other workshops, this workshop will award three credits for successful completion. Students earn one credit for workshops, while three credits are awarded for academic courses. One of the most popular workshops is expected to be "Experiencing Zazen," which

includes a 3-day pilgrimage to Eihei-ji, the head temple for the Soto School of Zen. This workshop will be jointly led by members from various areas of the iCLA faculty.

At iCLA, there is ample freedom for students to concentrate in areas of their interest. The table below shows the weight of different parts of the curriculum as a percent of graduation requirements. iCLA requires that students accumulate at least 124 credits to graduate. Students may earn as few as zero credits in EAE or as many as 27 credits, which represents 0-22% of iCLA's graduation requirements. Students must obtain a minimum of 21 credits in the Humanities, 19 credits in the Social Sciences, 12 credits in Japan Studies, 12 credits from Foundation courses, and at least 7 credits in Quantitative Reasoning and Natural Sciences. However, there is still substantial latitude to "concentrate" in particular areas of interest. As many as 44 credits for graduation can come from "free elective" courses.

Academic Area	Min/Max Weight	Credits	Timing
English Camp	-	-	April~August
EAE	0~22%	9~27	Before iCLA content courses
Foundation Courses	10%	12	1 st semester after EAE to last semester before graduation
Humanities	≥17%	≥21	1 st semester after EAE to last semester before graduation
Social Sciences	≥15%	≥19	1 st semester after EAE to last semester before graduation
Quantitative Reasoning & Natural Sciences	≥6%	≥7	1 st semester after EAE to last semester before graduation
Japan Studies	≥10%	≥12	1 st semester after EAE to last semester before graduation
300- & 400-level Electives	≥36%	≥45	5 th semester after EAE to last semester before graduation
Free Electives	9~35%	11~44	1 st semester after EAE to last semester before graduation
Total	100%	124	

*iCLA Japanese language requirements for native English speakers reduces the weight of electives in their graduation requirements.

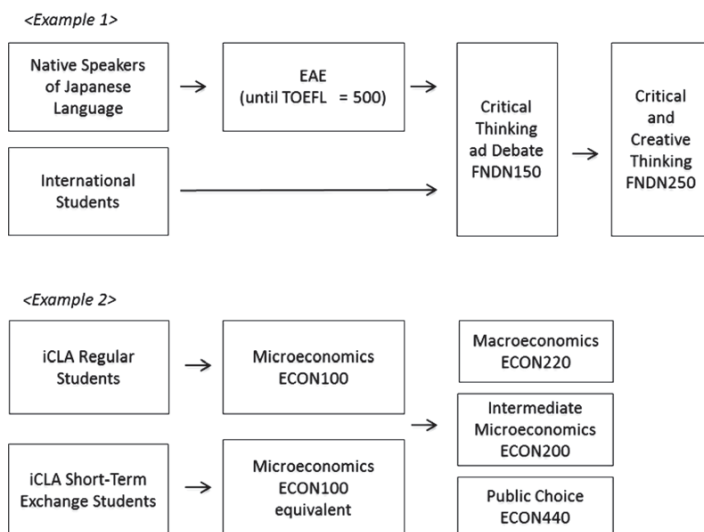
iCLA has designed a course numbering system to help guide students in their course planning so that they may build a course study plan analogous to building blocks that many of us played with as children. The idea is that new knowledge is constructed on top on previously acquired more basic knowledge while progressing toward higher and higher levels of understanding.

iCLA uses a combination of alphabetic letters and numeric digits to identify the courses in the curriculum. The alphabetic letters indicate the academic discipline to which the course belongs. ECON indicates that the course is in the field of Economics. HIST indicates that the course is in the area of History. Three numeric digits follow the alphabetic letters. Courses where the first digit is “1” indicates that the course is an introductory course, appropriate for students early in their study in a particular area. Typically, 100-level courses do not have any prerequisites. Courses where the first digit is higher than “1” indicates that the course is not an introductory course. The higher the first digit, the more advanced the course. Courses where the first digit is “4” are the most advanced courses in the iCLA curriculum and often require that students have completed one or more preparatory courses (prerequisites) before enrollment is possible. The second and third digits have no particular meaning other than to distinguish among courses at the same level within a certain discipline.

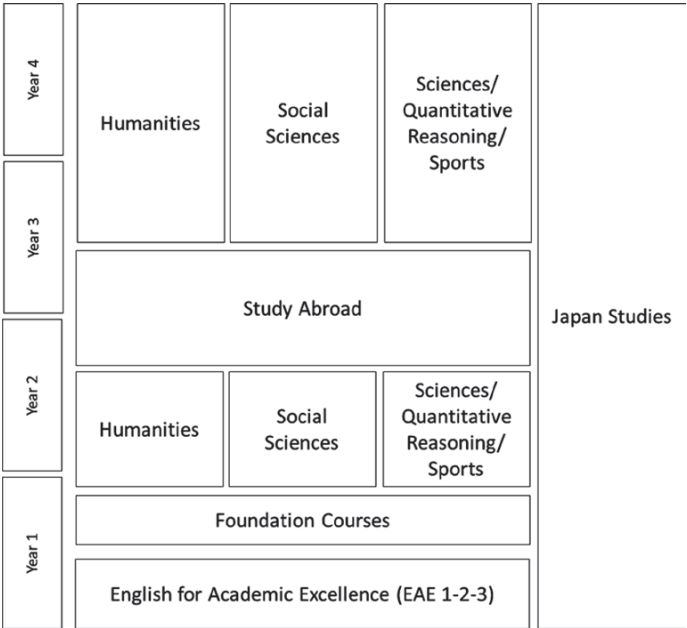
Prerequisites are used to ensure that the student has an adequate preparation before advancing to greater depth in a subject area. Course syllabi and the course catalogue used by students to select courses will indicate whether there are prerequisites for particular courses. The logic for the need for prerequisites is learning is like a pyramid. Students first need basic knowledge of a subject before they can move to higher levels of understanding. If the base knowledge is weak or incomplete, the clarity at higher levels of understanding will suffer. The most obvious use of prerequisites in iCLA’s curriculum is in the EAE program. The EAE program is divided into three levels: EAE1, EAE2, and

EAE3. TOEFL scores and other measures of the student's English language ability – reading, writing, listening, and speaking – are assessed before the student is allowed to move to the next level of study. iCLA's entire curriculum is structured in this way. Students must demonstrate sufficient understanding of basic courses before they are permitted to take more advanced courses. The measure of a student's readiness to proceed to the next higher level course is measured by the student's having received a passing grade in the prerequisite course. One example is Critical Thinking & Debate, which must be successfully completed before students are allowed to take Critical & Creative Thinking. Note that the numeric indicator for Critical Thinking & Debate (FNDN150) is higher than the numeric indicator for Critical & Creative Thinking (FNDN250). Another example is Career Design (FNDN290), which is a prerequisite for Career Design (FNDN490). The diagram below illustrates how the prerequisite system works at iCLA.

Prerequisites at iCLA



As illustrated in the diagram below, iCLA students progress through the curriculum from the bottom up. All non-native English speakers must pass through iCLA’s English for Academic Excellence (EAE) program. Most Foundation Courses would be taken before advancing into content courses in the Humanities, Social Sciences, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Sports. Many courses within each of these clusters of knowledge are arranged in a hierarchy from introductory-to-advanced. The clusters themselves stretch across the four years. Most of the advanced courses have prerequisites. Study abroad typically occurs at earliest in the second semester of the second year of studies, although students with weaker English proficiency upon admission are encouraged, or required in some cases, to spend their first semester studying intensive English in an English-speaking country. The Japan Studies Program spans the four years.



To qualify as a liberal arts institution, it is not enough to offer a wide curriculum – from the Humanities to the Natural Sciences. Also, students must be required to actually experience the entire breadth of the curriculum. Furthermore, there should be mechanisms in place that reinforce the connectivity of knowledge, i.e. interdisciplinarity. Institutions that do not require that students to experience the full breadth of knowledge, nor create ways to reinforce connectivity across the curriculum, are not liberal arts institutions in the truest sense.

It could be further said that true liberal arts education should go beyond intellectual development to include the education of “the whole person” (see L.P. Jacks, *Education of the Whole Man*, 1931), the “whole” being the intellect, body, and spirit. This is the liberal arts philosophy that underlies education at iCLA, within an international context.

3. The Connection of Liberal Arts Education and Sustaining a Healthy Economy in a Globalizing World

One of the easiest ways to distinguish a liberal arts education from other kinds of education is to imagine the opposite of liberal arts. The opposite is vocational or technical training.

The objective of vocational and technical training is to provide specialized skills that can be applied to specific occupations. In contrast, the major objective of liberal arts education is to broaden the mind. It is not aimed at any particular career. A liberal arts curriculum is a rich mixture of “right brain” and “left brain” courses – from dance, theater, art, music, and sport to mathematics, physics, natural sciences, and philosophy. The true liberal arts institution requires that students take courses across the entire range of the curriculum. Over the four years, as students at liberal arts institutions move back-and-forth between the arts and the sciences, they form intersections across disciplines

within their own minds. Some of these intersections may come easily, such as the crossing of math and economics. Some of the intersections that form may be less obvious, such as the crossing of theater and political science. These intersections can be sources of great inspiration and creativity. One of the important distinctions of good liberal arts colleges is their ability to institutionalize this “connectivity of knowledge.”



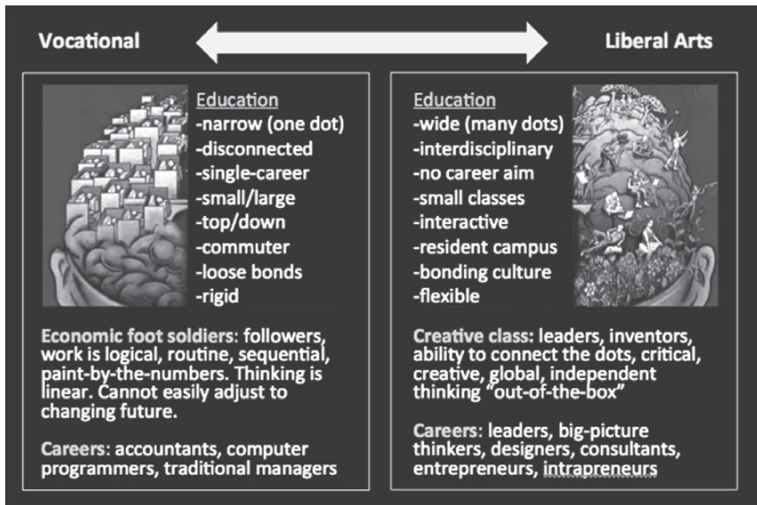
When liberal arts education occurs in an international environment, i.e., an atmosphere of cultural, ethnic, and national diversity, the number of “dots” greatly increases and the opportunities to connect knowledge are greatly expanded. Apple Computer’s Steve Jobs famously observed that as the number of “dots” that a person possesses increases (by “dots,” he meant distinct areas of knowledge and experiences), the opportunity to make new connections increases. It could be said that creativity is largely a function of the number of disparate dots that we possess; the greater the number of dots, the more the opportunity to make intersections and be creative. What is the secret behind

Apple Computer's success at introducing "products that makes people's hearts sing?" According to Jobs, "it is the intersection of technology and the liberal arts." Shortly before his death, Jobs illustrated this point with his "Technology Street" and "Liberal Arts Street" street sign, above. One could argue that when liberal arts disappeared from Japanese university curricula, the opportunity to make these important intersections between "left brain" and "right brain" also disappeared and the education system lost its capacity to nurture broad-minded students just at a time when the economy was crying out for such youth as Japan fell deeper and deeper into economic recession.

While it may be possible to internalize both technology and liberal arts within one mind, it isn't necessary that these two skill sets reside within the same individual for society to benefit. A society needs both to function well. This is achievable as "left-brainers" work together with "right-brainers."

"Left-brain courses" are the domain of vocational and technical schools. There, education is narrow (one or few "dots"), it's disconnected, it aims at a single career, instruction tends to be top-down, students commute to campus, and students have loose bonds to the institution. The curriculum tends to be rigid (few "electives"). Graduates of "left-brain" institutions tend to be job-fillers, not job-creators. They are trained for logical, routine, sequential, paint-by-the-numbers type work. There, thinking is linear. They cannot easily adjust to a changing future. They become accountants, computer programmers, and traditional managers. They are programmed to follow.

"Right-brain courses" are the domain of liberal arts colleges. Education is wide (many "dots"). Learning is interdisciplinary. The best liberal arts colleges institutionalize the connectivity of knowledge. The liberal arts curricula does not aim at a single career. Classes are small. Learning is student-centered, interactive, and multi-directional. Students live on campus and form close communities. They bond with each other and with the institution. Curriculum



requirements tend to be flexible (more “electives”). “Right-brain” institutions produce inventors and leaders. They give students lots of dots and help students connect them. They develop the capacity in students to “think out-of-the-box” in critical, creative, independent, global, and entrepreneurial dimensions. Often, graduates become entrepreneurs, consultants, lawyers, medical doctors, designers, artists, and teachers. They are programmed to lead.

A healthy economy needs a young generation that can think in creative, critical, independent, and global dimensions. It needs youth who are entrepreneurial. These aims lie at the very core of an international liberal arts education and form the mission of iCLA designed to education the “whole person” into a well-rounded being.

A recent influential survey in the United States found that 75% of American employers and nearly 66% of American adults believe that “being well-rounded with a range of abilities is more important than having industry expertise because job-specific skills can be learned at work.” These results are consistent with other surveys, such as those discussed under section 15, below, which

suggest that the ability to think creatively and critically, and excellent oral and written communication skills are more important for university graduates than narrow training and industry-specific skills (see Chronicle of Higher Education article titled *Employers and Public Favor Graduates Who Can Communicate, Survey Finds* dated September 18, 2013).

http://chronicle.com/article/EmployersPublic-Favor/141679/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

4. Mission and Purpose of International Liberal Arts Education

The primary mission of iCLA is to provide students with an education that will develop their capacity to think broadly and in critical, creative, independent, global, and entrepreneurial dimensions. We refer to this as CCIG thinking. iCLA aims to deepen students' familiarization with their own culture and with practices and behaviors, values, beliefs and norms, and assumptions that underlie societal systems in other parts of the world that are different from their own.

iCLA's 21st century global liberal arts curriculum and pedagogical approaches are led by a diverse group of highly talented faculty and staff to achieve the stated objectives above, consistent with the logic of the preceding paragraphs. In designing the iCLA curriculum and approach to education, iCLA has benefitted significantly from an awareness of practices at Williams College, Amherst College, Swarthmore College, Wellesley College, Middlebury College and other excellent liberal arts colleges in the United States. However, iCLA has added elements that may make it more international than these venerable institutions. For example, as already described above, nearly all courses at iCLA are taught in a foreign language – English. And all iCLA students must study abroad for at least one year. All iCLA students will fulfill their study

abroad requirements under conditions of one-for-one exchange at universities in a wide range of countries, which will result in iCLA's campus and its classrooms and dormitories being filled with students from all over the world making iCLA one of the world's most international institutions of higher education. Many of iCLA's international exchange students will come from the world's most rigorous universities. Such students are accustomed to highest academic standards and their presence on iCLA campus will serve as a severe measure as to whether iCLA is providing a high global standard of education.

5. Yamanashi Gakuin University (YGU) as an Attractive Incubator for International Liberal Arts

YGU is an institution with nearly 70 years of experience in higher education. The YGU "family of schools" serves the entire vertical of education from kindergarten to graduate studies. This provides a rare opportunity to inject foreign language and liberal arts education into the full-range of education, from young children to young adults. The YGU campus is located in Sakaori region at the outskirts of Kofu city, where there are fewer distractions from studies than in large city environments such as Tokyo and Osaka. The owner and management team at YGU is strongly committed to internationalization and to upgrading the academic rigor of the YGU family of schools to a high global standard.

YGU is privately owned. Nearly all liberal arts colleges in the US are privately owned. Because they receive less taxpayer financial support than public universities, they are especially vulnerable to market forces. This requires that they be efficient, while delivering a high quality education. Liberal arts institutions tend to have small enrollments and small classes. The average total enrollment for liberal arts colleges in the US is less than 2,000 students. Tiny economies of scale at liberal arts colleges create a high cost structure.

Therefore, tuition at liberal arts tends to be higher than at large, public institutions. YGU has demonstrated strong financial stability over the course of its nearly 70-year history and has demonstrated that it knows how to survive under severe conditions.

YGU has established a strong international reputation in the world of sport, with 41 Olympic champions among its graduates and faculty. In the recent London Olympics, female students from YGU were awarded three medals in swimming. Other sports where YGU has a long history of excellence are martial arts, wrestling, speed skating, track, and field hockey.

YGU's long history of excellence in Japanese martial arts. It's dominance in Judo began in the 1950's with the friendship of YGU founder and the great Judoka, Mifune Kyuzo. The founder of YGU was a 5th dan Judoka, who practiced at Japan's famous Kodokan. Mifune, a 10th dan in Judo, was a native of Iwate, but had ancestral roots in Yamanashi. Mifune was an honorary instructor in Judo at YGU. The son of the founder and current president and chairman of YGU studied under Mifune when he was a junior high school student.

The current manager of YGU's Judo Club is Nishida Takahiro. Nishida was all-Japan Judo Champion five times. YGU is also strong in Karate. The current manager of YGU's Karate Club is Katada Takashi, who received the gold medal at the World Karate Championship in 2002 when he was a college senior at YGU.

Martial arts training at YGU emphasizes both physical and spiritual aspects of personal development. When Mifune came to YGU, he created two calligraphies. One is 文武一道 (master of sword and letters), which is displayed at the front of YGU's massive Dojyo. The word "sword" represents physical and spiritual development achievable through the martial arts. The word "letters" emphasizes the simultaneous importance of intellectual development. Together,

these words declare that the mission of YGU is L. P. Jacks' notion of "education of the whole person." iCLA's mission and purpose is to nurture strength in mind, body, and spirit. The other is 一機一瞬起行 (one chance, one moment, act now), which is displayed in the Dojyo on the second floor. Both were written in master Mifune's own hand.

With the establishment of iCLA, Aikido will be introduced at YGU. One of the iCLA faculty members has a 7th degree black belt in Aikido. Aikido will be part of iCLA's Japan Studies program. YGU's Sakaori campus is located in the heart of the former domain of Takeda Shingen, the birthplace of daito-ryu aikijujutsu, the precursor to Aikido.

Near the main gate of YGU campus stands an effigy of a great, faceless warrior. The statue is devoid of nationality and gender. The inscription on the statue reads 勇者の詩 (soul of champions). The statue is an award from the Japan Olympic Committee to celebrate YGU's excellence on the world stage of sport. This "soul of champions" spirit is deeply imbedded in the culture of YGU.

6. Vision, Goals, and Nature of iCLA's Educational Program

The vision of iCLA is to be recognized eventually as one of the world's best "international" liberal arts colleges. Our goal is to nurture in each student:

- broad, interdisciplinary thinking
- critical, creative, independent, global, and entrepreneurial thinking
- knowledge and appreciation of their own culture
- familiarity and tolerance for other cultures
- outstanding oral and written communication skills in both Japanese and English

We are creating a culture where students are front and center. iCLA exists for students. Its *raison d'être* is to provide a learning environment where each student can maximize his or her unique aptitudes to achieve his or her own ambitions while becoming productive members of society. Part of becoming productive members of society involves the civic responsibility to be well informed and actively engaged in democratic processes. iCLA's broad interdisciplinary liberal arts curriculum and highly diverse classrooms and residential campus prepare students for active engagement in civic life. On a practical level, students have opportunities to develop civic responsibility in iCLA's mostly student-governed and managed, globally integrated dormitories.

iCLA's wide-ranging liberal arts curriculum is designed to foster the development of a broad mind. By exposing students to a wide range of knowledge, students have opportunities to discover their own passion and ambitions. The curriculum is flexible, so, if students wish, they can concentrate more deeply in areas where they have particular interest.

The learning environment at iCLA provides for balanced growth – intellectually, physically, and spiritually. It develops in each student the capacity to think in critical, creative, independent, global, and entrepreneurial dimensions. It cultivates oral and written communicative skills in English, but also advances the communicative skills in Japanese for both Japanese international students.

For Japanese students, iCLA's Japan Studies courses raise awareness and appreciation for their own culture and an understanding and tolerance for other cultures. For non-Japanese students, the Japan Studies Program (JSP) provides training in Japanese language and understanding of Japan's cultural, political, economic institutions and history.

A mostly international faculty, and highly diverse student body, integrated courses and dormitories, and the requirement that all students study abroad

promote peaceful, global co-existence.

Entrance to iCLA will be highly competitive. Preference will be given to candidates who exhibit entrepreneurial spirit, a zest for life, an eagerness to learn, and higher-than-average intellectual aptitude. These qualities will be assessed through interviews, essays, and standardized tests. Academic performance expectations will be severe. Counseling services will be provided to help students manage stress. However, it is expected that some students will not be able to survive iCLA's rigorous program. Unlike many other Japanese universities, iCLA will not follow "no child left behind" policies.

As our name suggests, and as paragraphs above have already alluded to, the International College of Liberal Arts is a liberal arts institution. The word "college" connotes a small, 4-year, residential, undergraduate institution.

Individuals have diverse interests. Societies have diverse needs. Therefore, societies need a wide range of higher education institutions. At both individual and societal levels, vocational and technical schools serve narrow purposes. Liberal arts colleges serve wide purposes. A liberal arts education teaches students how to acquire, synthesize, apply, connect, and communicate knowledge across a wide range of academic disciplines. It teaches students how to learn – for a lifetime of learning.

Although a liberal arts curriculum and pedagogy aims at no particular career, it serves an important purpose in the professional world. Immanuel Kant described Art, an important part of a liberal arts curriculum, as being "purposive without a purpose." A liberal arts education is like that. While societies need specialization, higher education in Japan in the last three decades has swung too far in the direction of specialized education. There are signs that it is now swinging back. Specialized education does little to contribute to the formation of a broad mind. Ideally, specialization should be constructed on top of a broad knowledge base. It is our expectation that many iCLA graduates will build on

the broad knowledge base that they have built during their years at iCLA and study abroad by attending graduate schools, and the often they will choose to do their graduate studies abroad.

It has been observed that many Japanese high school students who choose to skip the Japanese higher education system and enroll in a liberal arts college abroad have difficulty finding a job with good Japanese companies when they return to Japan. This is true even of Japanese students who have graduated from top liberal arts colleges such as Williams, Amherst, and Swarthmore. One possible explanation is that the Japanese public, and Japanese companies in particular, are not familiar with liberal arts colleges abroad – not even the ones that are world famous. Another possible explanation is that Japanese students who graduated from those schools lost important aspects of their Japanese culture and identity or perhaps never fully developed Japanese values before their departure from Japan. As a result, when they return to Japan and interview with traditional Japanese companies, they do not know how to behave properly in a Japanese context and are judged in the company interview process as being unfit for a Japanese work environment; they do not know how to get along with members of their own culture.

One recourse is to build international liberal arts colleges in Japan that provide not only a high-standard education in English, but also educate Japanese students about their own history, identity, and culture, through our Japan Studies Program in the context of a global liberal arts curriculum. At iCLA, Japanese students will be required to create a portfolio of term papers in both English and Japanese that supports their graduation thesis. iCLA's Language Acquisition Center (LAC) will include faculty-staffed writing centers to help students advance their English and Japanese writing skills.

7. Fields of Study, Concentrations, Required and Elective Courses, and Logic of the Curriculum

All graduates of iCLA will receive a Bachelors of Arts (BA) degree in International Liberal Arts. Within this degree, students will have an opportunity to “concentrate” in one or more particular disciplines. Students must achieve a minimum of 30 credits in a particular subject area, excluding credits from prerequisite courses, to receive a “concentration.” This may be important for students who want to proceed to a graduate program, which requires deeper knowledge of a subject area, or for students who have already a very clear idea of what kind of knowledge they need for their future professional life. Furthermore, concentration areas might help students to better organize their studies (the choice of courses would have a purpose). On the other hand, the voluntary character of the concentration areas would not prohibit other students to strive for a truly generalized Liberal Arts education.

If the student is successful in completing the requirements for a concentration, ideally this would be reflected on the student’s graduation diploma. For example, if a student decided to “concentrate” in Music, and had earned the required number of credits, the graduation diploma would read “Bachelor of Arts in International Liberal Arts, with Concentration in Music.” Students may complete “concentration” requirements during study abroad. In that case, the international institution where they fulfilled a minimum percent of credits required for the “concentration” would be listed on the graduation diploma. For example, “Bachelor of Arts in International Liberal Arts, with Concentration in Music from The Julliard School, New York City.”

iCLA offers students a wide range of “concentration” possibilities. Some concentration requirements can be fulfilled within iCLA’s curriculum. For example, iCLA offers a sufficient number of Economics courses “in-house” to achieve the required number of credits for the concentration. For some other

concentrations, such as the example of Music in the preceding paragraph, iCLA does not have a sufficient number of courses “in-house” to satisfy credit requirements, therefore they must be fulfilled partly with credits transferred to iCLA from study abroad.

Some concentrations are possible within a single discipline, such as Political Science. It is also possible to achieve an interdisciplinary concentration. If a student chooses to combine different subjects, he or she can freely mix arts, humanities, and social sciences (e.g. performing arts with sociology and anthropology) to create an interdisciplinary concentration. These kinds of opportunities are one of the great strengths of a liberal arts education and maximize the achievement of one of iCLA's core objectives – nurturing in students the capacity to think broadly and in critical, creative, independent, global, and entrepreneurial dimensions.

Students who choose to do a concentration must take the seminars in all subjects of the concentration, and their graduation thesis will be evaluated by the faculty from all chosen subjects. This implies that the students with a concentration area have to get at least 6 credits in each subject before they can enter the seminars.

The major areas of iCLA's curriculum are: English for Academic Purposes (EAE), Foundation Courses, Humanities, Social Sciences, Quantitative Reasoning and Natural Sciences, Health and Physical Education, and Japan Studies.

Various strategies will be employed to institutionalize interdisciplinarity (connectivity of knowledge) across the curriculum. One way is through themes or learning approaches that run across the curriculum. iCLA has four themes or learning approaches (later, we will refer to some of these as “undercurrents”) that help connect the curriculum: historical, comparative, global, intercultural, and creative thinking. For example, History of Economic Thought (from the

Social Sciences) shares with the History of Western music (from the Humanities) a historical emphasis and approach to learning. Comparative Economic Systems (from Social Sciences) shares with Cross-Culture Studies (from the Humanities) a comparative emphasis and approach to learning. While Sculpting and Creative Writing Across Genres both foster creative thinking. The curriculum was designed to give students a sense of the historical, comparative, global, and intercultural aspects of the subjects they are studying – while cultivating a capacity to look at these subjects with a critical mind.

The curriculum is structured hierarchically using “prerequisites” similar to universities and colleges in the US. This building-block approach to education ensures that students have adequate basic knowledge before they are permitted to advance to the level of learning.

Courses in iCLA’s curriculum award one, two, or three credits. Three credits are awarded for lecture courses, one credit for workshops (with one exception), and two credits for seminars (which have to be taken for two semesters). iCLA does not apply the typical two-credit system for lecture courses in Japan because two-credit lecture courses do not provide enough time to cover the content and to develop students’ capacity for critical thinking. It is important to give the students time for presentations and participation in discussions without sacrificing content. Three-credit lecture courses will be offered twice a week for 75 minutes (total 150 minutes), which is 15 minutes more than the expected teaching time of 135 minutes ($90 \text{ minutes} / 2 \text{ credits} \times 3 \text{ credits} = 135 \text{ minutes}$). The longer class allows time for lecture and as well as student activities (e.g. presentations and discussions).

In contrast to lecture courses, the aim of the workshops is to give the students the opportunity to learn through practical experience. For example, students can write, act in, or direct a play, take part in political simulations, or participate in a wide range of activities in the field or local community. In this case, the role

of the instructor is to support the students in their creative pursuits. One-credit workshops will be offered once a week for 100 minutes ($100 \text{ minutes} \times 15 = 1500 \text{ minutes}$). The exceptions are the science laboratory, which will be taught once a week for 150 minutes in the first 10 weeks of each semester ($150 \text{ minutes} \times 10 = 1500 \text{ minutes}$) and the Field Studies and Immersion in the Local Community workshop, which is a 3-credit course.

Finally, the role of seminars is to support the students' individual research projects. Students have the responsibility to present their research at different stages of their project. Problems and challenges experienced with the research project will be discussed in the seminar (by all participants and not only by the professor). Such discussions give the presenters an opportunity to see their research from different perspectives and to learn from the advice of peers as well as from professors. Furthermore, through such interactions students may discover how to avoid problems in their own projects. Seminars will be offered once a week for 75 minutes.

Most courses in iCLA's curriculum are "elective courses." There are very few courses in the curriculum that have to be taken by all students. For example, Computer Literacy, Critical Thinking & Debate, Introduction to World Issues, and the Graduation Research Project provide the basic skills or knowledge essential expected of all graduates of a Liberal Arts education. Other courses like Microeconomics and Integrated Science are required for all students because they are the foundational courses in their respective parts of the curriculum, and iCLA students are required to experience all subject areas of the iCLA curriculum.

The number of "required courses" is not large in order to provide students to pursue their own interests. However, a good liberal arts education requires that students experience a wide breadth of knowledge. To accomplish both objectives of free choice and exposure to all areas of the curriculum, iCLA

students are allowed to choose from a group of courses. For example, students have a choice among five workshops in the Arts, four workshops in the Performing Arts, and four workshops in Music. In the Philosophy section of the curriculum, students have to take at least one course from among Philosophy, Culture & Civilization, History of Western Philosophy, or History and Philosophy of Science. Those courses are listed in the curriculum as “elective courses,” although in essence they are “required elective courses.” Other courses, which only fulfill general requirements, as for example the 21 credits in the Humanities or the 12 credits in Japan Studies, are also classified as “electives courses” (which are truly “elective” courses).

The only course classified as “free elective course” is the Internship, which is—because of its vocational nature—not a necessary part of a Liberal Arts curriculum. The iCLA curriculum is nevertheless awarding a credit for Internships, because of the important personal and social benefits that are likely to result from this experience.

8. Internationalization at iCLA

iCLA will be one of the most global departments in Japan and will help globalize Yamanashi Gakuin University. Well over half of the iCLA faculty will be non-Japanese and will represent a wide range of countries. A high percentage of the “regular students” (enrolled in iCLA for four years) will be non-Japanese, representing a wide range of countries. Nearly all “content courses” will be taught in English. All students, including international students at iCLA, will be required to study abroad for at least one semester. iCLA will be a globally-integrated residential campus, with Japanese and international students studying and living together on the Sakaori campus.

Initially, iCLA may have a few one-way study abroad arrangements with universities and colleges in the US, Europe, and Asia, and two-way, one-for-

one, student exchange programs under conditions of cross-waiver of tuition and fees with a large number of universities and colleges all over the world.

9. Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs)

Recently, edX, a joint venture founded by Harvard and MIT universities, and now including famous universities from many other countries, including Japan, began offering online a wide-range of courses taught by famous professors at top universities all over the world. Other major suppliers of MOOCs are Coursera, Udacity, and Udemy.

See www.edx.org, www.udacity.com, www.coursera.org, www.udemy.com.

“The American Council on Education, which advises college presidents on policy, has evaluated eight MOOCs—four from Coursera and four from Udacity—and recommended that students who pass those courses be awarded transfer credits.”

See http://chronicle.com/article/A-Universitys-Offer-of-Credit/140131/?cid=wb&utm_source=wb&utm_medium=en

In a very recent development, MITx, the MOOCs provider at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, announced that from fall semester 2013 it will offer a sequence of seven courses called Foundations of Computer Science. The sequence of courses take six to 24 months to complete. Once completing the sequence, students would receive a special certificate similar to a mini graduation diploma. Until now, MOOCs providers offered only single courses. This development puts MOOCs providers more directly in competition with traditional brick-and-mortar higher education providers.

In a recent article published in the online version of the Chronicle of Higher Education titled “The future is now; 15 innovations to watch for,” it was reported that at Stanford University medical school about 70% of the formal instruction occurs online. The author of the article predicts that Web-enhanced,

blended classes will spread to other areas of universities in the future.

Since iCLA students will have highly developed English skills, iCLA will be able to use English-based MOOCs for “blended learning” in some of its courses, at the discretion of the instructor. This will be indicated in the course syllabus. “Blended learning” could be accomplished in a number of ways. For example, the instructor of an introductory course in economics at iCLA could require students to watch online lectures by a famous economist at Harvard University. In class at iCLA campus, students could discuss the contents of the lecture, led by the iCLA instructor. Alternatively, students could be instructed as part of a homework assignment to watch the Harvard professor’s online lecture in groups, then discuss the contents of the lecture amongst themselves. In addition to being a MOOCs user, iCLA plans to be a MOOCs supplier. Courses from our Japan Studies Program, such as our Manga and Anime Studies course and Japanese Martial Arts and Spiritual Ascent course, are candidates for MOOCs supply.

10. Importance of Japan Studies at iCLA

According to a recent survey by the Japan Foundation, in 2012 there were a record 3.98 million people studying Japanese language outside Japan. That was 9.1% more than the last survey three years earlier. The reports states that the reason for the increase is increased interest in Japanese history and culture. The report specifically mentioned a demand to understand animation and manga in the original language. For the first time, the largest number of Japanese language learners were in China, which accounted for a little more than 25% of Japanese language learners outside Japan. The number of Chinese learning Japanese language increased 26.5 percent from three years earlier. Indonesians ranked second with 872,000 Japanese language learners. Followed by South Koreans at 840,000. South Korea topped the list three years ago. Learners in

East Asia, including Taiwan, and Southeast Asia, including Thailand and Vietnam, accounted 82% of all people learning Japanese language outside Japan.

iCLA will place high priority on attracting excellent international students. Our world-class Japan Studies Program, including a first-rate Japanese language program, will act as a powerful magnet to attract excellent international students. The opportunity to live and study with excellent international students will enable us to attract excellent Japanese students. Therefore, our Japan Studies Program (JSP) is extremely important for strategic reasons. The JSP has two components: a world-class Japanese Language Program (JLP) and a small number, but very high-standard Japan Area Studies (JAS) courses.

11. Institutionalizing Interdisciplinarity

A key feature of liberal arts education is the concept of interdisciplinarity or crossing disciplinary boundaries. Although liberal arts colleges often talk about the importance of interdisciplinarity, it seems that few have figured out how to actually institutionalize it. Some of the ways to accomplish this are: dual-teaching, a “program-based” rather than a “course-based” curriculum

For example, see www.evergreen.edu/ “Writing-Across-the-Curriculum,” and www.writing.ucsb.edu/faculty/mcleod/documents/mcleodCV.html.

At iCLA we will employ a variation of the latter whereby students graduating from our EAE program will upon enrollment in the compulsory “Introduction of World Issues” course select one theme from a list of “world issues,” such as world poverty, world peace, gender inequality, or environmental sustainability. Thereafter, for all iCLA courses, with the exception of Health and Physical Education courses, the course requirements will include writing a research paper in English looking at the theme through the lens of that particular course. For example, if the student has selected “gender inequality,” part of the course

requirements for Integrated Science will be a short theme paper written in English that looks at gender inequality through the lens of Integrated Science. When the student enrolls in Statistics, the student will do the same, researching gender inequality using statistical methods. Students who are native Japanese speakers will also be required to summarize in Japanese all the English papers that they have written during the year. As the student progresses through the curriculum they will be constructing English and Japanese writing portfolios based on their analysis of their theme from many different perspectives. This process is beneficial to students in several ways: it helps students connect knowledge across a wide range of disciplines, it deepens their thinking about important global issues, and helps them develop their writing skills in English and Japanese. Writing labs in our Language Acquisition Center will be staffed by faculty to help students with their writing assignments.

12. Faculty Credentials

A high percent of iCLA faculty will have a terminal degree in their discipline. Ordinarily, that will be a PhD. Occasionally, as in the case of someone teaching Law, the terminal degree may not be a PhD. In the case of Law, it would be a JD. For our language faculty, at least a Master's degree and exceptional teaching skills will be required.

iCLA is a liberal arts institution. At liberal arts institutions, the most important role of the faculty is to facilitate learning. In a recent Ted Talks presentation, Sir Ken Robinson, stated that "teaching, properly conceived, is not a delivery system. Teachers are not there to just pass on received information. Although great teachers do this, they also mentor, stimulate, provoke, and engage students. Education is about learning. If there is no learning going on, there is no education going on." At iCLA, they emphasis is not on "teaching," which places emphasis on the instructor, but rather on "learning," which places

emphasis on the student.

13. Lifelong and Self-Initiated Learning

An important objective of iCLA's approach to liberal arts education will be to teach students how to learn and how to teach themselves for a lifetime of learning. Our most visible initiative for "self-initiated learning" is our Language Acquisition Center (LAC), where students will be able to study English, Japanese, and other foreign language on their own, under the guidance of members of the faculty and support staff.

14. Graduate School as an Exit

We expect that upon graduation a large percent of iCLA students will decide to continue their studies in graduate school. Since they will be fluent in English, they will have the option of doing this in English outside Japan. Some will enter law school abroad. One US study found that the top ten majors with highest acceptance rates for American law schools were philosophy, anthropology, history, and English. Other iCLA graduates may decide to enter medical school in the U.S. or other English-speaking countries. Recently, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) reported that the acceptance rates for entry into medical school were 51% for Humanities majors, 47% for Physical Science majors, 45% for Social Science majors, and 43% for Biological Sciences majors. Other graduates may be interested in entering an MBA program, but for these students, it is advisable to first get a few years of experience in the working world before entering a graduate program. iCLA will encourage as many students as possible to pursue graduate studies. But, probably more than half of iCLA graduates will enter the working world both in Japan and internationally directly after undergraduate studies.

15. Shushoku: What the Business World Wants and Needs

According to a recent article in the Chronicle of Higher Education (CHE), “Giving Employers What They Don’t Really Want,” educators misunderstand what the business world wants and needs. The article begins with “Often what we think other people think is not what they think.” The article alleges that there is a disconnect between what educators think employers want in college graduates and what employers really want. According to the article, what educators think employers want are: (1) students with “college majors that provide them with readily transferable job knowledge and skills. The more professional the major, the better,” (2) students who were “taught by the most famous scholars in the world,” (3) students “who have demonstrated, through grades and standardized-test scores, that they are high achievers. In addition, employers want evidence of knowledge acquired in college.”

The authors find that “none of these three assertions holds up well, at least according to two recent surveys of what employers really want, one conducted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) and the other by The Chronicle of Higher Education (CHE).”

So what do employers want? According to the AACU survey: (1) 93% of companies surveyed want college graduates who have “demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems.” Company recruiters believe that this is more important than what the student majored in in college; (2) 90% of companies are attracted to students who “demonstrate ethical judgment and integrity, intercultural skills, and the capacity for new learning;” and (3) 75% want universities to give students more opportunities to apply knowledge in real-world settings.

“Employers want (students to possess) the knowledge and skills that will be crucial not only to a student’s first job, but also to his or her second, third, and fourth jobs. They want students who have learned how to learn and how to

adapt flexibly to rapidly changing (world).”

The CHE survey found that “college graduates are most lacking in written and oral communication skills, adaptability and managing multiple priorities, and making decisions and problem-solving.” 78% of the companies surveyed stated that what college graduates majored in is not the most important consideration when recruiting college graduates. Only 19% of the companies surveyed look for specific majors and will not consider students who do not possess that major. The CHE study concludes that this is not to say that for employers the student’s major doesn’t matter, but rather when considering the employability of college graduates, other factors – creativity, critical thinking, strong work ethic, and knowing how to learn and a lifelong learning attitude are more important than a student’s particular major.

16. “Eight Reasons Why Over 50% of Colleges (in America) Will Fail By 2030”

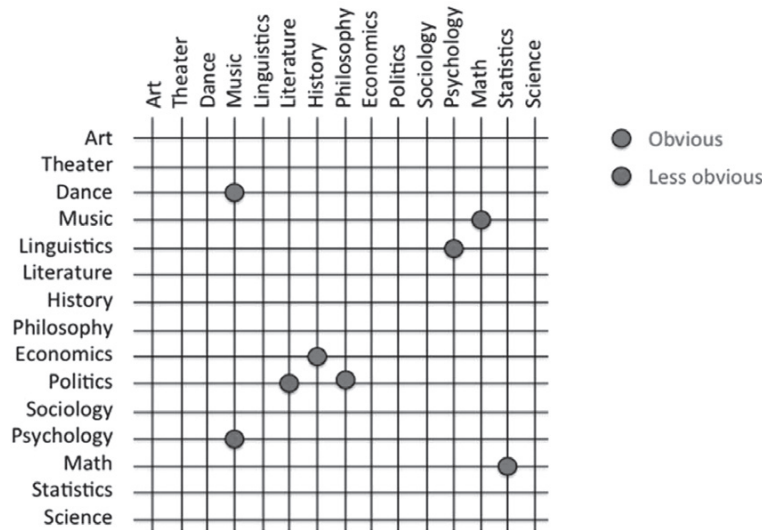
On July 12, 2013, an article appeared in the *The Futurist*, a bimonthly magazine published since 1967 by the World Future Society, titled, “Eight Reasons Why Over 50% of Colleges Will Fail By 2030.” The article focused on universities in the US. The eight reasons for expected failure were: (1) excessive overhead costs, (2) substandard teachers and classes, (3) more visible rating systems that allow the public to make it easier to make meaningful comparisons among universities, (4) inconvenience of location and timing of classes, (5) pricing competition, (6) credentialing system competition, (7) relationships formed in universities will be replaced by other ways to build relationships, and (8) the realization that “the emperor has no clothes.”

Most of these are self-explanatory and some are more relevant to Japan than others. Number eight refers to the Hans Christian Andersen tale of two weavers who create for the emperor new clothes that are visible to only “worthy people.”

The message is society is trusting that what universities are doing creates a more valuable workforce and better society. Increasingly, this trust is being questioned. As more and more people conclude that “the emperor has no clothes, colleges will find themselves in a hard-to defend downward spiral.”

17. Interdisciplinarity Revisited

It was mentioned earlier in this paper that one of important distinguishing features of liberal arts education is the concept of interdisciplinarity or connectivity of knowledge. As explained above, iCLA requires students to experience the full breadth of the iCLA curriculum. As students do this, it is natural that they begin to see connections between what they are learning in one course with what they are learning in another. As the diagram below attempts to illustrate, some of these connections will be obvious – as with dance and music, politics and economics, physics and math, statistics and mathematics, and economics and politics. Exceptionally creative students may be able to “connect



dots” that are less obvious, such as those between psychology and music, or even mathematics and music.

According to one of my colleagues, “the ability to articulate one’s thoughts deeply and clearly in writing should be one of the basic requirements for university graduation and is one of the most valuable skills for life following graduation. Research on writing and cognitive development has revealed that writing in itself is a process of discovery and learning, not merely a passive ‘recording’ of knowledge. Different sections of the brain are activated during the process of writing so it is clearly not merely a process of transcribing oral language on paper. Rather, writing supports the development of higher cognitive processes: the transfer of knowledge, judgment, and conceptual thinking (Bazerman, C. et. al., “Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC),” *Reference Guides to Rhetoric and Composition*, Parlor Press (2005) and WAC Clearinghouse: <http://wac.colorstate.edu/books/>). There is a neurological basis for why writing things down helps us remember things, even when we don’t have immediate access to the written document. (Kellogg, Ronald, *The Psychology of Writing*, Oxford, 1999). Seminal works in WAC, such as William Zinsser’s *Writing to Learn*, were instrumental in establishing WAC programs in colleges and universities throughout the United States and stressing the importance of clear written expression in all disciplines, not just in ‘English classes.’ ”

Two fundamental distinctions of a liberal arts education as opposed to education at a typical, large comprehensive university are: (1) liberal arts students are required to take a very wide distribution of courses, and (2) students learn how to “connect the dots” across disciplines. WAC is a principal mechanism that iCLA uses to help students connect the dots, or in other words, to institutionalize interdisciplinarity.

WAC applies to all iCLA students. The WAC program assures that iCLA

graduates will achieve an acceptable level of writing proficiency to communicate at a level expected of college graduates.

Most iCLA students will begin developing their academic-English writing skills in iCLA's English for Academic Excellence (EAE) program. Students who have been waived from EAE requirements will begin development of their English writing skills in Composition 1, Composition 2, or Expository Research Writing and other writing focused courses in the Language Arts section of the iCLA curriculum.

All courses in iCLA's curriculum will have a writing component, except Workshops and Health and Physical Education courses. And, as a matter of academic policy, faculty members when awarding course grades will take writing performance into account. For purposes of determining course grades, the weight of writing components will depend on the nature of the course. For example, writing assignments in mathematics and sciences could be less formal and briefer than those in the humanities or social sciences. However, the course instructor will ultimately decide what kind of writing assignment will be used and how it will be assessed.

WAC writing assignments fall into one of three categories: 1) fixed-theme "academic paper" culminating in the senior seminar and Graduation Research Project (GRP); 2) variable-theme "academic paper"; and 3) other kinds of less formal writing such as the "reflection paper."

The fixed-theme academic paper refers to writing assignments that are connected to iCLA's Graduation Research Project (GRP). At the end of the first semester in the iCLA program, students choose one theme and write one paper per semester on that theme from various perspectives as part of course requirements for one course per semester. Students select from a list of twelve themes or design their own theme and stay with that theme throughout their four years at iCLA. All students must participate in this process. The process is

explained beginning in the sixth paragraph below.

Variable-theme papers are also academic-style writing assignments that are part of course requirements. But they are not restricted to a particular theme. As with fixed-theme academic papers, they must be at least five pages in length. At the discretion of the instructor could be longer. They will constitute at least 5% of the course grade. The instructor of the course will grade the paper and may determine to make the weight of the paper higher than 5%.

The third type of writing assignment is the “reflection paper. For humanities and social science courses, the five-to-ten page “academic paper” will be the norm, but for science and math courses, at the prerogative of the instructor, students may be assigned a two-page “reflection paper” that addresses the student’s experiences in the course and how learning in the current course relates to learning from other courses she or he is taking or has taken.

Academic fixed-theme, variable-theme, and reflection papers are all rigorous in nature, but they train the minds of students differently. Reflection papers tend to be more right-brain in nature, requiring more esthetic and emotive responses, while the academic theme papers are more left-brain, calling for more analytical logo-centric responses. But academic and reflection kinds of writing blend left-right brain functions and both are essential to a well-balanced WAC program.

What is most important in both “academic” and “reflection” types of writing assignments is that students are expressing their ideas and experiences in written assignments and held accountable for clear, grammatically acceptable language, as well as coherent and cogent content. Students need guidance and feedback on their writing, just as they need feedback on other aspects of their academic work. Whatever the nature and length of the writing assignment, the writing each student does throughout their university career, will be collected and preserved in the student’s writing portfolio as a requirement for graduation.

iCLA will regularly hold Faculty Development (FD) sessions. Some of these

will focus on various techniques to support iCLA's WAC initiatives. One such technique is the use of "templates." My colleague describes templates as "suggestions for instructors on how 'reflection paper' writing assignments can be structured. Templates are less useful for "academic papers" papers since these traditional forms of writing assignments are familiar to the experienced faculty member. But many faculty members are less familiar with "reflection" writing assignments and this is where templates can be useful. Templates clarify for students what they need to do and can facilitate both assignments themselves and the assessment of them. In keeping with the iCLA's emphasis on critical thinking, interdisciplinarity and metacognitive awareness, an example of a template that cuts across disciplines and requires a liberal arts' kind of reflection is a series of questions requiring succinct but personal responses to the experience of learning. Students would be asked to confine their answers to each question to 50 to 100 words. It is much harder sometimes to write two good pages and than ten."

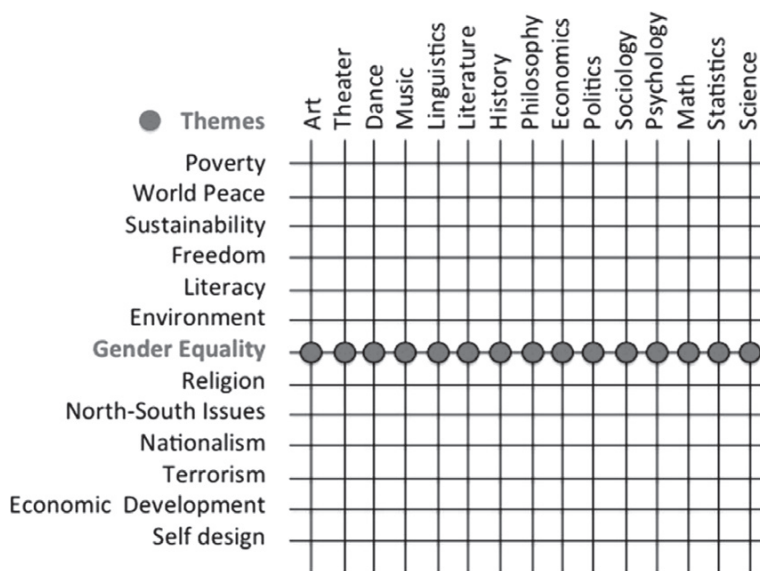
The challenge for the liberal arts college is how to foster the connectivity of knowledge. "Connecting the dots" can become profound sources of creativity for students. iCLA institutionalizes interdisciplinarity through Writing-Across-the Curriculum (WAC) and the Graduation Research Project (GRP); historical, comparative, global, and Japan Studies undercurrents in curriculum design; the interdisciplinary nature inherent in courses; and dual-teaching.

It should be noted that the iCLA curriculum was carefully designed so that interdisciplinary does not compromise deep understanding of each subject area.

To foster and develop interdisciplinary thinking and sophisticated written expression, all students are required to complete a Graduation Research Project (GRP). The GRP is the integration of "academic papers" around a chosen theme across a wide range of disciplines culminating in the senior seminar and a graduation thesis. Students who have completed or have been exempted from

EAE requirements must take “Introduction to World Issues” (IWI) in their first semester. This course is essentially a sociology course that focuses on major world issues. At the end of the semester, as part of IWI course requirements, students will select from the list of “world issues” (refer to the left side of the diagram below) that will become the theme of their senior seminar and GRP graduation thesis.

The list includes “world issues” such as poverty, world peace, environmental sustainability, and gender inequality. To help students choose their GRP theme, during the semester, IWI class sessions will focus on the various world issues. Expert guest speakers may be invited to IWI class sessions to speak about particular world issues. If students are unable to find a GRP theme that interests them, they will have an opportunity to “self-design” a theme, such as youth unemployment, world hunger, or global education in consultation with iCLA faculty members and their academic adviser. Students will not be permitted to



change their GRP theme.

After students have completed IWI and Composition I, they must write a paper in one course each term for the remainder of their degree program on the GRP. These papers will be placed in their writing portfolios and will culminate in the Graduation Research Project.

The dots in the diagram above illustrate how the GRP helps students connect knowledge across the curriculum. Imagine that at the end of the IWI course, the student informs the instructor of IWI that she has selected Gender Inequality as her GRP theme. From that point forward, until graduation, she is required to write a short paper looking at Gender Inequality through a different lens for one course each term until graduation. For purposes of illustration, assume that this student chooses the following courses during her second term at iCLA:

<Fall 2016>

Traditional Japanese Art (3)

History of Western Music (3)

Japanese History (3)

History and Systems of Japanese Psychology (3)

Microeconomics (3)

In consultation with her adviser, she chooses the History of Western Music to examine her GRP theme. She then is required to write a short essay in English analyzing Gender Inequality through the lens of the western music history.

The GRP concept provides the student opportunities to view their theme from the perspective of different disciplines. As the writing portfolio grows, their knowledge and perspectives of their GRP theme should deepen and widen in support of the GRP, while improving their writing skills. Finally, the GRP writing portfolio concept help connect the curriculum in a meaningful way

within the mind of each student.

Interdisciplinarity across different subject areas is achieved through study perspectives that act like undercurrents that run through much of the curriculum. One undercurrent is historical perspective. Another is comparative perspective. Another is global perspective.

Another colleague provides the following examples “All students are required to take World History in their first year. In the second year most subject areas offer one or two classes related to history. Students have not only the opportunity to learn the historical progression of knowledge in different subject areas, but also the prospect to link it to the progression of knowledge in other subject areas. From the World History course, students will be familiar with the Age of Absolutism (1614-1789) and with religious conflicts between Catholics and Protestants in Europe. They should be able to connect this to concepts from the History of Western Art course, such as Jules Hardouin-Mansart’s Palace of Versailles, which is an important symbol of art as a weapon in religious wars, and the work of Johann Sebastian Bach, who was working for several local princes in this period.”

“In our History of Economic Thought course, students should be able to connect Absolutism to the Mercantilist school (1620s-1776). The rise of Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) connects to the Age of Enlightenment. Similarly, Isaac Newton’s *Principia Mathematica* (1687) connects to our Math for Liberal Arts course. This historical undercurrent creates a cross-fertilization of knowledge across the curriculum and is a central feature of a high-quality liberal arts education.”

The second undercurrent is global perspective. Many of the Social Sciences courses are offered in the third year of study and share a global perspective: Peace and Trauma Studies, International Trade and Economics of Globalization, Global Politics, Sociology of Globalization, World Religions, World Englishes,

and Major Themes in World Literature. They are interdisciplinary in the sense that they expose students to a wide range of different national, cultural, political, legal, and economic influences. Again, students will have opportunities to “connect the dots.” Furthermore, they expose students to alternative research lenses: sociological versus economic analysis. Of course, the subjects themselves are important and future global leaders should understand them in their full complexity.

The third undercurrent is the comparative perspective. Many of the courses in the first two years of the curriculum provide students with an introductory understanding a various subject areas, referring to either Japan or Western countries for application. For example, in the introduction to Political Science, the instructor and textbooks will either refer to the political system of the United States or Japan, to bring the theories and concepts to life.

When students reach the third and the fourth years of the curriculum, they are ready to start viewing subject areas from a comparative perspective. In doing so, they develop an inter-disciplinary understanding of the subject matter. They then are able to recognize major cultural similarities and differences between Japan (and Asia) and the West. “For example, the strong emphasis on autonomy in Western cultures, as is introduced in the Cross-Culture Studies course, and the development of individual human rights and liberalism, as is introduced in the Comparative Political Thought class, could be linked to Martin Luther’s proposal to eliminate the priest as an intermediary between the believer and God, which the student would have encountered in our World Religions class.”

The historical, global, and comparative perspectives are complementary, reinforcing, and inter-disciplinary. For example, the comparative perspective can be regarded as an extension of the global perspective because it is transnational by definition. However, the global perspective is broader, whereas the comparative theme is deeper.

Several courses are inherently inter-disciplinary, such as Peace and Trauma Studies, which connects deeply to other areas of the iCLA curriculum, including Aikido, which has at its core the concept peace and conflict resolution, as it physically demonstrates winning without fighting, and directly imbues the mind behind it.

The course “Music of the World” is also inherently interdisciplinary as it is an investigation of the place of music in several different cultures and civilizations. The course requires that students study the relation between music and several different societies, including choral music during Renaissance Europe; North African music using frame drum, voice, and other instruments; and African-American jazz, blues and rap. The course includes an experiential component whereby each student is required to build a simple version of an instrument used in one of the cultures studied and will design, build, and then learn to play the instrument that instrument or one that they have invented himself or herself. By the end of the semester they play in ensemble and give a concert on campus. Each student prepares a portfolio of learning to document the work and the insights gained.

Within the Social Sciences area of the curriculum, “Public Choice” analyzes political processes through application of economic theory. In doing so, it bridges Political Science to Economics. In another example, “Environmental Policy and Natural Resource Management,” a course offered in the Economics part of the curriculum connects to a course from the Philosophy part of the curriculum, “Philosophy and Environmental Issues.”

Similarly, “Creativity in the Sciences, the Arts, and Jazz” combines Philosophy, Natural Sciences, Art, and Music.” And “Social Policy” links Sociology with policymaking in Political Science.

Several courses in the curriculum present subject matter through contributions of “great thinkers” to the subject matter. Courses where this

approach is especially prevalent include: “History of Economic Thought,” “Appreciation of Literature,” “Traditional Japanese Art,” and “Western Film & Theater.”

18. Concluding Remarks

This paper began with the assertion that Japan stands at a major historical crossroad and that there is great need for a new generation of young, high-spirited visionaries to lead Japan to a brighter future. “What kind of education system will produce such leadership?” This paper argues for the establishment of a number of international liberal arts colleges in Japan offering an education at a “high, global standard.” An excellent way to measure whether a particular institution is in fact achieving a high, global standard is to listen to the voices of its own excellent international students. This requires that the institution be receiving excellent international students. Therefore, it would be necessary for the institution to enter into exchange agreements with a number of top universities around the world. Their incoming students are accustomed to excellence at their home universities and if the Japanese institution is not providing equally excellent education, these students can be expected to make their dissatisfaction known. This is one of the cornerstones of the strategy that made Akita International University a role model in the eyes of some educators in Japan and is one of the important strategic initiatives at iCLA.