ICU 60th Year — FD Newsletter

Creating a Truly Global University

ICU Selected for Top Global University Project

In autumn 2014, International Christian University (ICU) was chosen for the Top Global University Project (Super Global Universities) by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan. As part of this project, in April 2015, it opened the Center for Teaching and Learning and established the SGU Office. Kenya Kubo, Director of FD and Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, interviewed President Junko Hibiya about the changes ICU will see in the future and expectations for faculty and staff.

From left: President Hibiya and
FD Director Kubo

SGU office opened in the Administration Building. There is a space accessible for those who wish to hold a meeting related to SGU.

A Call To Apps

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Over the last year I've given faculty development educational technology workshops for teachers at the British School in Tokyo, Mahidol University International College in Bangkok, JALT's[1] Technology-n-Teaching pre-conference, and attended and presented at the Learning 2.0 conference at NIST International School in Bangkok, the 21st Century Learning conference at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (and attended the Teaching and Learning Expo which was held concurrently at the same venue), the Google GAFE[2] Summit at the Canadian Academy in Kobe, and I was one of the organisers of the EdCamp Tokyo Unconference at Jingumae International Exchange School in Harajuku, Tokyo. So I have a fairly good idea of what is going on in the educational technology world and how it is being implemented in the international school sector in Asia, and to some extent in some prominent universities in the Asia Pacific region.

The best international schools in Asia have almost all introduced 1-1 programs of some sort for their students. These usually take the form of 1-1 iPad programs for all elementary students, and 1-1 laptop programs (MacBookPro's in most cases although some are on a BYOD[3] plan) for junior and senior high school students. Indeed Yokohama International School went further than most and became one of the first schools in the world to set up a 2-1 program where all students have both devices in recognition of the different roles tablets and laptops play in modern education. In addition most of these schools also have very robust wifi systems in place which effectively makes all classrooms computer labs as all students have some form of computer device, and the wifi networks are strong enough to support all students being online

simultaneously. In addition many of these schools have interactive whiteboards and all this makes for a very connected and modern learning environment in class for the students with digital distribution of course materials being commonplace. This is in sharp contrast to what we are currently doing at ICU. We have no requirements for incoming students to have any devices at all, still have blackboards and chalk in the classrooms, and in the ELA at least, we still use an old style paper based reader instead of delivering readings digitally to better leverage modern learning apps.

Some of these schools' wifi coverage even extends to their sports fields to enable students to make use of video capture and sharing apps on their iPads in sports class, and to drama studios for similar reasons. Continuing with collaborative, ubiquitous, and asyncronous learning sees Google Apps For Education in fairly widespread use throughout the international school network, and its implementation is not usually subject to any of the apps and sharing limitations that ICU's new GAFE implementation has. In these forward thinking schools students' work is freely viewable online by all as they take what I call a "creating for we" rather than the old "writing for me" approach to students' work. Here students make full use of multimedia content in their project work

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1 JALT: The Japan Association for Language Teaching
2 GAFE: Google Apps for Education
3 BYOD: Bring your own device

and share it openly on the Internet with the world via student created websites that host their work. The potentially global Internet audience is the "we" mentioned above and this acts as a motivational tool for students to improve their work. This is in sharp contrast with the old style approach, which mainly utilises text only and is usually written for their teacher and printed on paper, the so-called "me" approach mentioned above. This multi modal writing for 'we' is an approach that I have been doing at ICU for the past six years, however although this is very common in the best international schools, few others are emulating this approach at ICU or other Japanese universities from what I've observed. Indeed the way our GAFE accounts have been set up at ICU makes much of this modern approach impossible.

From all these events I've attended, and from conversations with educators at and after the events, the key educational themes that are most prominent

are collaborative, communicative, creative, and visible styles of learning. Furthermore these are being combined with 21st century ideas of learning like 'the expanded classroom', and its pedagogical corollaries 'blog journalling', 'flipped learning', 'just in time teaching', 'project based learning'. They also utilise implementation strategies like the SAMR[4] approach and the various iterations of TPACK[5] along with introducing students to the concepts of PLE's[6] and PLN's[7] for their own self directed learning. The students who attend these types of 'super' international schools in the Asia Pacific region mentioned above, are also 'global' students in terms of their outlook and their school education experiences where they are surrounded by students of many nationalities and modern technology. And now that ICU is a Super Global University we need to take action if we are to seriously try and attract those high performing and modern minded students as they are unlikely to come in large numbers if our facilities and approach are outdated compared to their school experiences. So we should start to implement some of the approaches outlined here in our approach to delivering education to our students in the 21st century. The mindset and experiences of the next generation of globally minded students has changed, so we need to change our educational delivery system if we are to attract the best of them.

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4 SAMR: Substitution Augmentation Modification Redefinition
5 TPACK: Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge
6 PLE: Personal Learning Network
7 PLN: Personal Learning Environment