

The report of the six-week intensive English course in ELI at Yale University

The six-week intensive English course in English Language Institute (ELI) at Yale University, which was my first experience to live and study abroad, was quite a productive experience for me. I attended this course mainly to improve my English ability; however, I could learn more than expected through the classes. Therefore, I am going to explain about my classes in ELI.

This course provided regular classes and elective classes. The regular ones were consisted of three classes; reading & vocabulary class, writing class, and speaking & listening class, and all of them were conducted in the morning on weekdays. And the students were allocated to the proper level class according to the results of the test and the interview on the first day in ELI. On the other hand, we could take elective classes in the afternoon on Mon & Wed or Tue & Thu without any test. One should choose at least one class from the ten to fifteen classes.

In reading & vocabulary class, our class used the book composed by many essays and articles, and it proceeded mainly through discussing about the topic in the article among students. Therefore, one should read articles before class and decide own attitude toward the topic for preparing the argument in the class. It was totally different from the reading class in Komaba campus, but it seemed to be better than just reading the textbook and listening to the explanations by the teachers.

In writing class, we learn the strategies for academic writing chiefly through the five paragraph essays. We usually wrote essays out of the class as assignments, and had lectures about the essays in the class. The class put emphasis very much on introduction paragraph because the quality of an essay extensively depends on the quality of the introduction paragraph. This class provided a lot of suggestions to improve my writing quality from the view point of Americans.

In speaking & listening class, the main activity was to deliver speech to others or to listen to other's speech. We prepared three to five minutes speech every week and had a chance to present it in the class. Though it was hard to tell the people from other back grounds about the traditional cultures of Japan, it surely trained my English ability. In addition to the activities in class, our class had a lot of extra activities on Yale campus. The lecturer repeatedly gave us the topic and the opportunity to speak to the people on the campus and experience the American English in the same generation. It certainly expanded the comprehension to the American culture.

As elective class, I chose "Pronunciation class" because I felt some difficulties in pronunciations, especially in "th" sounds. In the class, the lecturer taught us about the

characteristics of American English and how to pronounce each sounds correctly. Through the lecture, I could recognize my weak points and erroneous in some sounds. It certainly contributed to my improvements during the six-weeks.

As stated above, I think that one could say with confidence that classes in ELI was worth to attend.

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Report

At Yale University English Language Institute, I took Professional Communication for International Students course, which was designed for professional and graduate students. Most of students are around twenty-five years old.

We had three classes every day; Writing, Pronunciation and Speaking and in each class I had three different professor. The professor of the writing class asked us to write an essay or a report almost every day. In the pronunciation class, we learned how we could change our style of speaking, and to speak English similar to a Native American English speaker. The professor in the speaking class showed us how to act in academic situation, conduct the discussion and perform presentation in English.

I am planning to conduct my Ph.D. research abroad either in the United States or in the United Kingdom. This program helped me to improve my speaking skills, which is necessary to complete my research abroad. Besides, it was useful for me to know academic culture in the United States. I learn how to argue and criticize other researchers' opinion in a polite way, and this is a basic, but essential skill for researchers. Among all of the classes, the writing class was the most enlightening. My research takes historical approach, though history is based on facts, history is not just a mere collection of facts. Historians usually required rhetorical skills more than other fields to describe society vividly. The professor in the writing class taught us creative writing, rather than academic writing. He encouraged us to write topics freely and dynamically, using several different kinds of rhetorical devices. Through his lectures, I became more conscious of my writing style.

In Pronunciation class, the professor assigned us homework to record Native American English speakers and to mimic how they speak English. In his theory, this imitation practice helps us to speak like native speakers. When I faced this homework, I was very surprised because I had never tried such method before. I am not so sure if this method improved my pronunciation drastically, but I really enjoyed it, and learned a technique to speak freely. Because I could not construct English sentences as fast as Japanese, and sometimes I could not find words, even very simple words, I could not conduct conversation in the same way as I do in Japanese. When I talk in English, I was forced to change my style of speaking and behavior. This experience was usually frustrating for me. In Japanese, I am a talkative person and I can speak for an hour without stopping.

In English, I do not have such skills; I am not talkative anymore because I cannot express myself in a short period of time. I listened to my friends' conversation

much longer than I talked. I sometimes felt like I became a different person, and it was not a pleasant moment for me. This experience was, however, what the professor demanded us to do. In my professor's class I mimic someone and acted like a totally different person. I enjoyed this performance the most in this program. Through this practice, I familiarized speaking and act as if I was a different person.

I have to say for the last two weeks of the speaking class, when I learned how to make presentation; it was not impressive to me, although I learned many important techniques in academic situation from my professor. It was delivered by lecture style, and because I was a Ph.D. student, I knew the basic strategy on how to present presentation. I need to practice on how to manage Question-Answer part in English, but we did not have enough time to do it. We just did the presentation once and I could not do what I had learned in the lecture.

This was my first time to stay abroad and talked in English every day. This experience in the United States was too short for me to improve English enough to speak fluently, but it gave me a confidence to manage conversation in English. Actually, I did not speak English very well, but I made many friends there. I absorbed many things from my friends as well as from classes. Sometimes, very tiny things surprised me; my European friends always shake hands when I met them and I was not so used to do this greeting. At first, I could not shake hands naturally, this kind of cultural habit is not easy to learn in Japan, and so I really appreciate this opportunity to learn English abroad with international students.

The report on Yale Summer Program

The six weeks at Yale University is one of the most memorable experiences in my student life. This is my first time to study abroad, so I can't compare it to another one, but I'm sure that it is one of the best programs for those who want to improve their English ability.

English Language Institute (ELI) offers us some courses such as Intensive English Course, Law Seminar and Business Seminar and I joined in Intensive English Course. In this course, on the first day, all the students took the test for six weeks and our regular class was decided on the basis of the result of that test.

We had two types of classes: regular morning classes and afternoon elective classes. The regular classes consist of reading class, writing class and speaking class and they focus on the improvement of basic skills, while elective classes have various kinds of themes such as poetry, social media, law, sports and so on. However the contents of regular classes depend on teachers, so they still have some varieties, for example, in reading, my class's text was *The Bluest Eye*, which is very famous novel in USA and probably not in Japan, while my friend class's was *The Great Gatsby*. In respect of elective classes, we were supposed to choose at least one and I took TOEFL preparation class and Broadway Musical Class.

The daily homework was so much that we had to spend a lot of time

to finish it. The most of it came from regular classes, for instances, answering the questions on the reading text, writing essays on various kinds of topics and preparing for presentation or discussion.

But, this is about weekdays and in weekends we had free time and went to New York, Boston, Niagara Falls, or some great places and we really enjoyed it. Every weekends, ELI itself offered us their own tours at a very low price, for example, trip to MLB game, Broadway Lion King or the headquarter of United Nations.

Thinking of the participants of this program, most of them were Asians or more precisely East Asians: Japanese, Chinese and Korean. For that reason, most of my friends in this program are Chinese and Korean. We are from the same region and have some knowledge about one another, so it was very easy to make friends with them. Moreover, we lived in Yale's colleges and the students joining in another program also lived in there, so sometimes we had chance to get to know one another. We often talked about our own culture or the relationship of our countries between an interval of our studies. That experience was very profitable for me because it was the good practice of speaking and listening and in addition it deepened the understanding of our neighbors.

Now, I can feel the improvement of my English skills. Before this six weeks, probably I couldn't write this report at such a high speed and in my daily life, I can read New York Times faster and listen to BBC news more

precisely. Therefore, I'm certain of the value of this great program and fully satisfied with the outcome.

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The Summer Program at Yale

The summer program I enrolled in was Professional Communication Course organized by the English Language Institute of Yale University.

Our course consisted of three compulsory morning classes, that is, sound and structure, speaking, and writing, and one elective class in the afternoon. The sound and structure class was especially useful; the professor who was a linguist introduced us a comprehensive method to correct our pronunciation. His accurate and specific instruction in my pronunciation enabled me to realize how wrong I'd pronounced and to understand how to re-learn the right way.

Both the morning and the afternoon classes enhanced my ability to communicate and express thoughts in a more effective way. In particular, the afternoon class focused on practical scenes such as a job interview and negotiation through which I could learn a lot of manners and customs that should be kept in mind in the U.S. Such cultural differences were what I wished to learn and wouldn't be able to realize without help of native speakers.

Thanks to this program, I'll be able to have more confidence than before to manage the situation, if I have an opportunity to study abroad or to work in the international environment in future. Since the professors introduced me several useful sources and methods that I could look up appropriate expressions or enhance speaking skill by myself, I can continue developing English skill after coming back to Japan.

Besides taking classes, the time I spent with my classmates and suitemates was also precious. Especially, a small trip to Boston with the suitemates is a great memory. I couldn't imagine that I could have such good friends only in 6 weeks who I'd keep in touch with after the course.

If there is anyone who wishes to join this program, I recommend an active participation so that the summer will be very fruitful.