

Study Abroad at NUCB — A Decade of Success

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Abstract

Nagoya University of Commerce and Business (NUCB) has a range of study abroad options that it offers students on arrival at the university. It also plays host to a growing number of overseas students. This article chronicles and celebrates this rich international success over more than a decade. It also focuses on one particular program, the Frontier Spirit Program (FSP), by giving background to its development, and details of the past and current course content. Some feedback from both participants and their host families is provided as well.

INTRODUCTION

Nagoya University of Commerce and Business (NUCB) has been very active in developing international contact over the years. This has resulted in a mature portfolio of study abroad programs, which have helped hundreds of NUCB students experience periods living in other cultures, and developing both their language skills and knowledge of the world. In this article the writers would like to look at what has been achieved in this university in regard to international relations over more than a decade. The writers will do this by describing the programs that are available to NUCB students. These include the Frontier Spirit Program (FSP), the International Volunteer Project (IVP), the Gap Year Program (GAP) and the Exchange Program with the Chinese University of Hong Kong. In the case of the FSP a focus will be given to the actual contents of the program over the years. The researchers will also be looking at how our students have felt about their study abroad experience. This is followed by comments of host families in Manchester having had a Japanese student in their home.

In the ongoing process of internationalization, NUCB has also fostered an increase in the number of international students who are studying at the university for one or two semesters. In the whole context of internationalization a further initiative has been the establishment of the Center for International Affairs (CIA), which has become a focal point for the university to build on its success in study abroad.

Motivation and internationalization

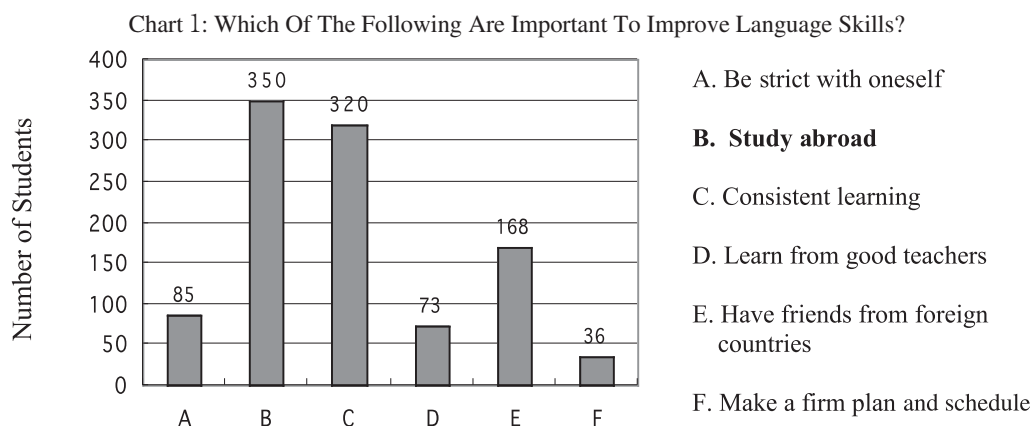
Study abroad programs are not a new phenomenon. They have been part of the educational landscape of schools and universities for many years. Moreover, there has been ongoing discussion and debate about their effectiveness in terms of motivation as regards the study of foreign languages and learning about other cultures (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen & Hubbard, 2006; Churchill & DuFon, 2006; Kinginger, 2008; Harris, 2010; Kim & Yang, 2010, et al.). A great deal has been published on research

into the whole field of study abroad and the variety of methods employed to gauge the impact on foreign language learning motivation, etc. (Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Hadis, 2005; Goldstein & Kim, 2006; Chirkov, Vansteeniste, Tao & Lynch, 2007; Fryer, 2012, et al.). In a recent summary of a number of research projects on study abroad Newfields (2012) concluded that it is probably naive to assume that study abroad programs will automatically enhance the motivation to study a foreign language or culture “unless participants interact with members of a target group to an extended degree over a period of time.” Further to this, he argued that a sense of “ownership” in the study abroad decision process may be important in enhancing motivation. That is to say those who are forced to study abroad to fulfill some academic requirement and those who do so on a more voluntary basis will have differing initial levels of language learning motivation, with the latter being more effective. Most study abroad programs at NUCB have followed the latter path in that they have not been a requirement of a course as such, but have been undertaken on a voluntary basis.

A further issue over the past decade has been internationalization and globalization. This has taken center stage not only with regard to the economic growth of countries and multi-national companies, but also in the field of education. Many universities have moved towards forming alliances and seeking accreditations in an effort to demonstrate their openness towards globalization. NUCB has been very active in the process of internationalization by entering partnerships with other business schools in the world and by fostering what is termed a “Frontier Spirit” among the student body. This involves encouraging as many students as possible to participate in the international programs on offer (Nae, Fraysse-Kim, Ishii & Tangsirithongchai, 2010).

Positive response

NUCB students have always seen participation in a study abroad program as one of the major ways of improving their language skills. For example, Chart 1 gives the results of a questionnaire completed a decade ago by 524 NUCB students in April 2003. The students could have two choices out of 6 options. It is noteworthy that 350 students chose *study abroad* as important in the improvement of language skills. Choice B was closely followed by choice C: *consistent learning*. Having friends from foreign countries was also seen as important although the score was only about half that of the other two



(Mimura, Monk & Ozawa, 2003).

The FSP itself has always been popular. In fact students have often stated that they decided to enter NUCB because of their desire to go on this program. In response to the same April 2003 questionnaire, 65% of the students said that they would like to participate in either the FSP or the IVP. A further 32% answered that they had an interest and a sense of need but did not feel capable of doing so. This was mainly because they felt that the criteria in terms of the TOEIC requirement, GPA and attendance figure necessary for the FSP were beyond them at the time the questionnaire was given. Underlying these responses is the common acceptance among NUCB students that study abroad programs will improve their language skills. Only 3% of the students showed no interest in either the FSP or the IVP (Mimura, Monk & Ozawa, 2003).

NUCB STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

Below are given details of the requirements and duration of the study abroad programs that NUCB offers. We start by focusing on the FSP, which is the oldest of our study abroad programs. A large number of students have taken part in this program over the past decade (see Appendix 1).

Frontier Spirit Program - English Language

Location:	The University of Manchester	
Course:	(1) April - June (former)	(2) September - November (former)
	(1) April - July (current)	(2) September - December (current)
Internship:	(1) June - July	(2) November - December
Requirements:	TOEIC 500, 95% attendance, GPA 1.8 and interviews in Japanese and English	
Student numbers:	9 in Fall 2013 (See Appendix 1 for more details)	
University pays:	Return airfare, tuition, and accommodation during the schooling period	
Credits:	Maximum 20	

The FSP takes place twice a year at the English Language Centre of the University of Manchester. To apply for the program students are required to have a TOEIC score of 500, plus 95% attendance and a GPA of 1.8. Interviews are then held in Japanese and English to select participants. Originally the FSP consisted of a homestay, a language course, and a choice between an internship or travel in Europe. Under that system the Spring Semester language course started in April and ended in June. This was then followed by the period of internship or travel. In the Fall Semester the language course started in September and finished in November. Because of stricter UK immigration regulations in recent years, internships can only be undertaken if the necessary language requirements for the specific visa are met before entry into the country. The language course has consequently been extended in both the Spring Semester and Fall Semester, followed by the continued possibility of travel within Europe. The Spring Semester language course now ends in July and in the Fall Semester it finishes in December.

Course content

Much of the content of the program over the years has been similar in terms of general, academic

and business English, the cultural and social visits arranged for students, and accommodation in the homes of local families. The one major difference, as has been stated above, has been the introduction of more stringent requirements regarding the internship aspect. The original FSP was held at the University of Salford, which is located to the west of the City of Manchester. It consisted of a 9-week language course that aimed at improving the overall communicative ability and language level of the students while equipping them with English for the specific purpose of functioning in a business environment. The ethos of the study abroad experience was to be in line with NUCB's motto "Frontier Spirit". The desired intensity of the program was clear from the start during the one-week induction. This comprised of:

- Welcome lunchtime buffet for students and staff
- Evening reception for students and their host families
- Introduction to the course
- Diagnostic testing
- University and department orientation/registration
- Library and information technology orientation
- Introduction to living in Greater Manchester
- Safety talk by campus policeman
- Two-day excursions (the Lake District, Chatsworth House)
- An evening activity, e.g. theatre trip

The students received 20 hours of tuition per week, divided into the following components:

Component A - Academic English (12 hours per week)

Following a diagnostic test, the NUCB students were placed in mixed nationality groups appropriate to their level. The levels ranged from pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate.

Component B - General English (4 hours per week)

This was for NUCB students only and focused on skills development, especially listening and speaking for everyday purposes, vocabulary extension, and development of independent learning strategies.

Component C - Business English (4 hours per week)

This again was for NUCB students only and focused on developing skills specific to a business environment such as presentations, participating in meetings, telephoning, business correspondence, general business terms, and vocabulary related to finance, marketing and human resources.

The following is an assessment of the Salford language course given by an FSP student from the Fall 2001 program. He is recalling the experience in June 2013:

I enjoyed studying at Salford University. Every minute in the school was precious. For an individual project, I researched the education system in the UK. It was a perfect opportunity for me to improve my academic writing skills, which became extremely useful when I worked on my thesis.

Work placements

One of the main reasons for basing the FSP in Manchester was the strong industrial and commercial profile of the region. For example, YKK, the zipper manufacturer, was the first Japanese enterprise to

invest in manufacturing facilities in the UK. It established its factory in the area over fifty years ago. The UK headquarters of both Sharp and Brother, which have factories in the North West of England, are located in Manchester. Also, 80% of the Financial Times top 100 companies are represented in the region. The Japan Centre, which is within the University of Manchester, has strong links with both the Japanese and British businesses in the area. It arranged work placements for four to eight weeks for students who wished to take up the option. Internships proved a valuable experience for NUCB students acquainting them with the world of work through the medium of the English language. They included placements in: retail outlets, offices in Japanese or British companies, restaurants, hotels, museums, cultural centers, travel agencies and football stadiums. Some of the most popular placements were in fashion companies/outlets in Manchester and London, the Beatles Museum in Liverpool, the Manchester United Football Museum, and the Japanese Shop in York.

The following is an assessment of the work experience given by an FSP student from the Fall 2001 program. He is recalling the experience in June 2013:

I did an internship at a theatre. It was one of the coolest theatres in the city. I helped my colleagues in the box office and I enjoyed it very much. Even answering phone calls, booking and processing a credit card payment were not easy for me, but I strongly felt that I was learning. Because my colleagues were the same age as me, we often went out for dinner and drinks. It was an unforgettable time.

Educational visits

The language course also included educational visits. The students received tuition in communicative language tasks, which they were expected to carry out during their time at the destination, thus making the visits integral to the overall language learning experience. For example, the following were included:

- The historic City of York and its various museums
- Bradford Museum of Film and Photography
- Quarry Bank Mill (an industrial heritage museum)
- Cadbury's World (a chocolate factory tour)

Social program

Alongside the educational visits, a varied social program was available during the weeks of teaching. Host families were often invited to attend events on the social program, which included day trips, social and cultural evenings, and sporting activities. These varied according to availability and the interests of the student group. A rich social program continues to exist on the current FSP. Moreover, additional help has always been given in arranging further informal activities, such as visits to pubs, restaurants, cinemas, theaters, clubs, and football matches in order to make the stay as enjoyable and broadening as possible. As the FSP is based on a large university campus within a dynamic city, students continue to have abundant choices regarding their social lives.

Accommodation

In the original Salford FSP students could be accommodated in either student hostels or homestays. With the current English for University Study Course at the University of Manchester only the homestay option is offered. All the families and houses are carefully vetted in accordance with the Association of Recognized English Language Services (A.R.E.L.S.) guidelines. Students are provided with their own room, within which there is a bed, a table for private study, and adequate hanging and drawer space. Families provide breakfasts and evening meals, use of a washing machine, daily showers or baths, a change of bed linen each week, and all other household facilities as required. The aim has always been for the students to be treated as full members of the family, eating meals together and sharing common living areas, with help and support available when needed.

The following is an assessment of homestay given by an FSP student from the Fall 2001 program. He is recalling the experience in June 2013:

Life in Manchester was amazing. Homestay was the best opportunity for me to understand how people in the UK spend time with their family at home. David and Leah made so much effort for me so that I could experience and understand their culture. David and I often watched Manchester United's games on TV and he even showed me how to play pool. Leah was very good at giving me advice on my assignments. They also took me to the Old Trafford Stadium to see a football match and I still cannot forget how exciting a time it was.

Additional facilities

In addition to the timetabled elements of the course the students have always been able to make use of university facilities during their stay, including libraries and sports facilities. They also have access to well-equipped self-access centers containing textbooks, journals, magazines, newspapers, satellite TV, and CALL materials specifically selected to aid language learning. The students are encouraged and helped to focus on their own particular needs, and to develop language-learning strategies best suited to their individual learning styles.

English for University Study Course

The current English for University Study Course at the University of Manchester runs for thirteen weeks. There are 21 hours of tuition per week. The students are placed in mixed nationality classes at various levels after a diagnostic test. The NUCB students are usually placed in the intermediate and upper intermediate groups, with some occasionally in the lower advanced group. The four skills, speaking, listening, reading, and writing are practiced, and these are assessed at the end of the course. A final report is then produced. The grading system in Manchester is based on a scale from 0 to 9, with 0 being the lowest score and 9 the highest. Most NUCB students score between 4.5 and 6.5 at the end of the course. The descriptors for each skill include the following:

1. Speaking — the student is aiming to interact effectively with no lapses in fluency and express ideas well.
2. Listening — the student is aiming to understand extended speech on topics of a general and/or more academic nature.
3. Reading — the student is aiming to understand a range of texts of a general and/or academic nature.

4. Writing — the student is aiming to communicate fluently with no strain on the reader.

At the end of the course an overall score based on all four skills is also given out of 9. In addition, a score is given for Study Skills as the students are encouraged to become autonomous learners during their time on the program

Students also take classes in a Target Module. The choice of modules available includes: IELTS Preparation, Topics for IELTS, Skills for University (English for Academic Purposes), Intermediate Skills and British Culture, Advanced Skills and British Culture, and English for Business and Management.

Finally, at the end of the course students receive an overall assessment of progress. The evaluations are: Fair, Good, Very Good and Excellent.

Students' reasons for participation

When applying for the FSP, students are asked to give their reasons for wishing to participate. This is done both in written form, in a short application essay, and then orally at the interview. Reasons for applying have remained relatively consistent over the years. They relate primarily to: language skills, travel and culture, previous study abroad experience, positive reports from peers, developing as a person, future career, meeting different people, sports and music. For readability the qualitative data is presented in list form.

1. Language skills

The most common reason given for application is hoped for improvement of language skills in general, and conversational fluency in particular. It is generally felt by applicants that this will be achieved more productively by studying in a foreign university for a period of time. Some students also like, or are specifically interested in, British English.

2. Travel and culture

Many students applying have never travelled outside Japan. They state that they would like the opportunity to live in another country, and experience both British and European culture.

3. Previous study abroad experience

A number of the candidates have been on school trips to other countries while at junior high or senior high school. This often included homestay. Also, former participants on one of NUCB's other study abroad programs, such as the GAP or the IVP, are often incentivized to improve their TOEIC scores and try for the FSP.

4. Positive reports from peers

It is common for students to hear positive reports from their peers about study abroad. The FSP is usually highly regarded by former participants. This positive reputation encourages other students to apply.

5. Developing as an individual

Students often state in their application essays and interviews that they would like to “change themselves”, meaning that they would like to develop as people. They feel that they are immature and that the program will help them to become more independent adults.

6. Future career

Many students feel unsure about their future careers. They think that a period abroad will help them to make decisions about this. Other students have already made the decision, such as to be an interpreter, and feel that the period abroad will help them towards their goal.

7. Meeting different people

The fact that students will be staying with British families is seen as a valuable experience. Also, many welcome the opportunity to be in classes where students will be from many other countries, not just Japan.

8. Sports and music

It is quite common for students to state that they have watched the English Premier League on television or that they like the music of British bands such as the Beatles, and that this is a contributing factor in their desire to go on the FSP.

Weekly reports

While on the FSP students are asked to write regular weekly reports on their experience. These are sent back to Japan by e-mail. From the reports it is possible to monitor student reaction. Below we give some of the comments made. Again, data is printed in list form.

1. Multinational classes

Most students appreciate the fact they are in classes with other nationalities. This creates challenges that they have not experienced before such as understanding a new accent or comprehending a different cultural approach to the world. It also has great benefits in that NUCB students learn about many cultures while taking part in the program:

This week, I studied about education. I talked about it with a woman from Saudi Arabia. ... I was surprised about compulsory education. There is no compulsory education in Saudi Arabia.

Even conflict in the class often has benefits:

I'm locked in a conflict with my classmates same as usual, but actually I'm thankful to my classmates because I think such an opportunity does not occur every day. I can't do that in Japan. That's why I'm enjoying study English in my highly satisfying class.

2. Grammar and vocabulary

Many NUCB students become aware that they either have a limited knowledge of English grammar or that they cannot activate the knowledge they have. There is often a comparison with classmates from other countries:

I have studied grammar such as subjunctive and past perfect and so on ... It is not difficult for me to understand because I studied in Japan. However, even if I understand them, I cannot explain or use them in English. My classmates can explain and use them, so I feel frustrated.

The frustration also applies to limited vocabulary, one participant notes:

I have another problem of class activity. This is a lack of vocabulary. This is a serious problem for me. I know simply word, but I don't have specialty word.

3. Inability to readily express opinions

It is common for our students to bemoan the fact that they cannot express their opinions as fluently or re-

spond as readily as their classmates from other countries. This weakness that they perceive in themselves is often, as mentioned above, from a lack of grammar or vocabulary. It is also because of a lack confidence in the new classroom setting or lack of practice in expressing ideas:

I talk about school a little. We always learn about writing and speaking, and listening. Also, we have a lot of homework. I have to try it. Learning at class is not difficult for me. However, speaking my opinion to other people clearly is so difficult for me. I must try it.

Sometimes the students in this context admit that they have never previously thought deeply about the topics being discussed. There is usually an expression of determination to rectify the situation by improving their fluency, overcoming their reticence and learning more about the world.

4. Lack of knowledge about Japan.

Students regularly write that they are very often embarrassed by the fact that they know very little about Japan when questioned by their teachers, their fellow students or their homestay families in Manchester. This applies particularly to subjects like Japanese politics or the economy:

I am stupid absolutely. I should learn about my country. Other countries students know about their country culture. I respect them. I don't want to lose to them.

5. Communication with families.

Most students seem to have a pleasant homestay experience, one participant responded:

My host family has tender heart, and they always care about me. I have to thank them.

Another claimed:

My host mother told me many things. I was so lucky. Every time when we have dinner, she asks me about my school life. She saw through my character first few days, and spoke to me voluntarily.

Occasionally there are language problems or complaints that there is not adequate time for communication as the family members are busy.

6. British knowledge about Japan

Some of the participating students are surprised at how knowledgeable their host families are about Japan on subjects such as food, culture, history and Buddhism, etc. This is explained to a degree by the fact that many of the families have previously hosted Japanese students and learned from them.

7. Manchester students

NUCB students often have exchange classes with students of the University of Manchester who are studying Japanese. The NUCB students are regularly surprised at how fluent their counterparts are in Japanese:

I went to MJS (Manchester Japanese Society) party. There are a lot of people who are studying Japanese. Some people speak Japanese fluently. I could make a lot of friends!

8. Buildings/industrial heritage

Students notice that a lot of the buildings in the UK are made of brick. Also, the fact that many of the buildings were built at the time of the Industrial Revolution gives a character to Manchester, with which some Japanese students are not familiar. Also, there is a mixture of old and new buildings, which gives the city a particular character. In addition, the use of some buildings has changed:

In a part of the city where many people gather, I can find buildings in modernistic designs. I can also find old buildings. As time passed, moves of offices or closedown were done in these buildings due to failure. However, even now these buildings remain. That is because they are recycled. For example, there is a fine building, which was used as a bank. But now, it is used as a restaurant and a pub. If I entered these fine buildings, I could find people eating and drinking. I thought that nobody in the old days expected such a scene was seen here.

9. Visits/travel

Trips to other cities are generally commented on favorably. The students regularly travel to Liverpool, Edinburgh, Chester, York and the Lake District, etc. Also, most students make at least one visit to London. Most visits receive positive feedback:

After that I went to walk in the streets. The streets were really beautiful, and I liked a mood in there. I bought some tea, and postcards. And then, I went to York Minster. It was so huge. I have never seen this size of church.

For some students their lack of confidence in the classroom is reflected initially by a lack of confidence in things like everyday commuting and knowing the right bus stop at which to alight. The more they travel, the more confident they become.

The cost of train travel in the UK is sometimes complained about, this includes the daily expense of commuting.

10. Accents

Various British accents do cause a certain amount of difficulty. Students also become very aware of the difference in accents on their travels from Manchester to other cities such as Edinburgh and Liverpool:

I think the Scotland is a great place to spend the holiday, but I think their pronunciation is different in Manchester and Edinburgh. Edinburgh pronunciation is fast, and there is an interesting accent.

11. Food

Food and diet are common topics. This ranges from the predictable, as one participant commented:

As you know, food is not delicious and calorie is quite high, so if I continue this diet, probably I will be fat.

To the pleasantly surprised, notes another student:

I talked about cooking with my host mother because the meal that she made was very delicious.

With still further endorsement:

Last week, I took a survey. The survey was conducted among 26 overseas students. In my group, the questionnaires were about British food. We went to two classes to take some questionnaires. I asked people that do you agree with British food is tasteless. I wanted to ask this because I don't think British food is tasteless.

The cultural diversity of the University of Manchester and the city itself means that students are able to taste all sorts of food, on which they have also commented positively.

12. Exercise

During their time in Manchester some students feel that they are putting on weight. They often visit the university sports center to practice sports, which they may not have done before, including aerobics:

This week I went to sports center and I did aerobics. It was first time for me to do aerobics. I thought aerobics are not so hard. However, it was really hard that I sweated in first ten minutes! Finally I was so tired and my legs were quite stiff.

13. Unsettled weather

Inevitably the weather and how changeable it can be is a common subject for part of many reports:

At that moment, it began to rain. This is Manchester!

There are sometimes more reflective comments on Manchester's famous weather:

I'm going to talk about the weather in Manchester. Speaking of it, this was rainy in my image before I came. In fact, it was right formally, but it was different from my image. I'll tell you why. In Manchester, I think almost all day have a rain. However, It was not a heavy rain that I had to use an umbrella, but a light rain or a shower. Everyone here doesn't care about it. So I don't use my folding umbrella very often. But I was surprised when a hailstorm happened. I think a problem about the weather here is changeable weather. I went shopping last week. It was fine weather, but a hailstorm blew up suddenly. The weather had improved 10 minutes after the hailstorm.

The fact that Manchester actually has good weather as well comes as a surprise to some:

Manchester's weather is getting hotter. Much more people wear short sleeve T-shirts.

Another student notes:

It is great weather lately. I love that. I can play with children. It is good experience for me. I like it. I always want to do BBQ. Today, after lunch, I play badminton with children.

A contrast with other areas of the UK is sometimes also noted:

Then I have seen everywhere in London. It is good view. I like it. On the weekend, London weather is so good. It is sun. I want to go there again.

14. Football

Most program participants go to visit the Manchester United Ground and the museum. Some also go to a football match. This is always commented on positively, one observes:

I was so busy and tired last week, but I lived a full life. I went to watch Champions League that was Manchester United v Otelul Galati. It was one of my great pleasures during this program, so I was very happy. There were many marvelous footballers in the match, and I could see their play.

15. Pop music

Some are very pleasantly surprised by the variety of music that is available in Manchester and go to concerts of pop musicians that they have been familiar with in Japan:

I'm going to talk about my fantastic night on Thursday ... I was so excited ... One Republic gave a concert on April 25th. I could hardly believe my eyes when I found that the date showed today, the location where the concert held was near university, and tickets were available ... while listening to their music, I was so happy.

16. Limited time

Many of the students become aware of the fact that their time in Manchester is limited and they must make the most of it, one says:

This experience reminds me of what I was said by my host mother, which was that every students said at the end of their homestay that they wished they would have gone to many places. I think now I can understand what it means. Time is limited. I should make good use of my time in the UK.

Another notes:

57 days have passed since I came to Manchester. One week has gone rapidly. I can't believe how quickly the time has gone and it is already the beginning of June. Consistently, I've been living a fulfilling life in UK.

Feedback from host families

The researchers have always been interested in monitoring the reactions of the British families hosting participating Japanese students. This includes general feelings about Japanese students and what has been learnt about Japanese culture. At the end of the Spring 2012 and Fall 2012 programs the host families were asked to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix 4). The results are given below:

Question 1

All the families reported that they had hosted overseas students before. The length of time they had been hosting overseas students ranged from one to thirty years. They all also reported that they had been host families for students from other countries as well.

Question 2

The families had hosted from 5 to 109 students of many different nationalities over the years.

Question 3

In answer to the question asking whether the students had been easy to deal with, all the families wrote "yes". The most common words and phrases to describe the students were: polite, courteous, friendly, clean and tidy, helpful, lots of fun, adaptable, willing to help, good ambassadors, hard working, respectful, keen to engage in family life, very accommodating.

Question 4

The host families were asked if they had learned many things about Japan from the NUCB students. The families included the following: food, recipes, tea ceremony, family culture, traditions, the wearing of the kimono, some of the festivals, coming of age day, Japanese pop culture, Japanese politics, business and work patterns and expectations, transport, leisure, education, about earthquakes, chopsticks, origami, and a few words of Japanese, etc.

Question 5

When asked if the families would be willing to host Japanese students again, the answer was a unanimous "yes". Some comments were:

1. They have all been lovely.
2. I always have a good experience with Japanese students.
3. I look forward to meeting each Japanese student as they come. I can rely on them fitting in with other members of the household.
4. I enjoy their company and to see their progression and confidence in the language and ways of Europeans.
5. Excellent young people, very polite and good company.
6. They have all been cheerful, friendly and positive.
7. I like them. It's very pleasant to have them. They are very respectful.

Question 6

The host families were asked to make any additional comments about hosting a Japanese student. Common

responses were positive, a few claimed:

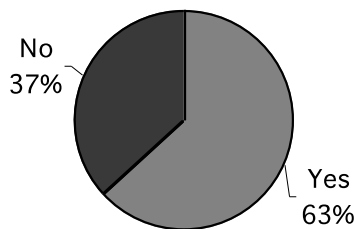
It's always been a positive experience. It's always been a bit sad when they have to go but we still keep in touch with many of them. Thank you for encouraging your students to stay with families. It has enriched our lives in various ways. The reason we have continued to host students.

As already mentioned, I have always found Japanese students to be polite and friendly. I now have only Japanese students in my home.

Before and after the FSP

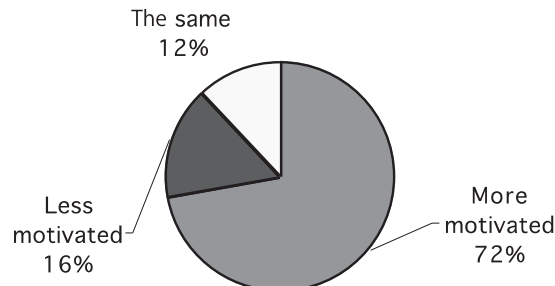
In terms of language learning strategies this qualitative study found that, unlike the majority of the students in the Faculty of Communication, FSP students respond that they do have definite strategies for studying the language *before* they start the study abroad program. This is illustrated in Chart 2 where 63% of those questioned in 2003 answered “yes” to the question “Did you have any strategies before the FSP?” (Mimura, Monk & Ozawa, 2003)

Chart 2: Did You Have Any Study Strategies Before The FSP?



Motivation as an effect of taking part in the FSP has also been regularly monitored. For example, Chart 3 shows that 72% of those who had already been on the FSP in April 2003 felt more motivated towards language study when questioned. Also, 12% answered that their motivation remained the same and 16% said that they felt less motivated. This drop in motivation can be explained in part by the fact that those students no longer took any language classes.

Chart 3: Motivation After Completing The Frontier Spirit Program

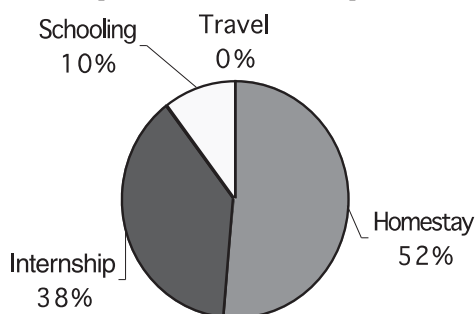


In our most recent survey of May 2013 (see Appendix 5) we questioned the FSP students who had taken part in the Spring and Fall 2012 programs. We were interested in an assessment of the experience given the passing of a period of time since a program's conclusion. All the students responded that they

were glad that they had taken part in the FSP. Only one student left question 2 concerning improvement of English skills unanswered. In answer to question 3 on continued motivation to study English, the same student wrote that he had become interested in other subjects besides English. The other students still felt more motivated to study English because of the FSP.

FSP students have been regularly asked to evaluate what part of their experience of study abroad had most helped to improve their language skills. Chart 4 gives the responses at a time when the internship was an integral part of the program (Mimura, Monk & Ozawa, 2003). Notably, 52% chose homestay and 38% said the internship had had the most beneficial effect. On further questioning regarding their choices, students stated that being in an English-speaking culture had forced them to speak. They felt this most strongly in the contexts of the homestay and internship. Despite certain difficulties, this had given them a sense of satisfaction and enjoyment as it gave meaning to their study of English. Interestingly, the formal schooling component of the program was only chosen by 10% of those questioned as being the most helpful.

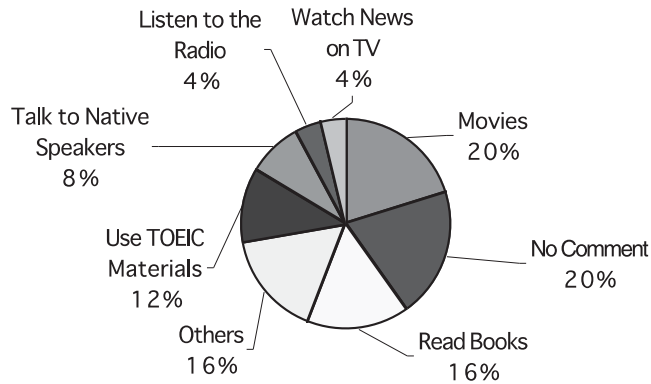
Chart 4: What Helped You The Most To Improve Your English?



In the May 2013 survey, all students responded that they had liked their English classes in Manchester. Only one student did not like his homestay. In the same survey, 20% of the students chose the English classes as being the most helpful to improve their English, 25% chose the homestay and 55% chose a combination of both the classes and homestay. Three students also added that talking to friends and other students in the school had very much helped them to improve their English.

Chart 5 illustrates the FSP students' strategies for language learning on their return from study abroad in April 2003. *Watching movies* was the most popular strategy at 20%, although *no comment* achieved a similar figure. *Reading books* was the next most popular strategy at 16%, then *using TOEIC materials* at 12% and *talking to native speakers* at 8%. Both *listening to the radio* and *watching the news on TV* were at 4%. This could be due to the fact that students get most media online.

Chart 5: What Are Your Present Study Strategies?



In May 2013, 90% of the respondents said that they had more strategies for studying English after the FSP. With regard to their current strategies for studying English they were allowed to make as many choices as they liked. The results were: 70% for *using TOEIC materials*, 55% for *watching movies*, 35% for *talking to native speakers*, 25% for *watching the news on TV*, and 15% for both *listening to the radio* and *reading books*.

Finally, the students completing the May 2013 were asked to add further comments. Students wrote that they would like the program to be longer. They also wrote that it was very useful and they would recommend it to other students. In addition, the FSP gave participants the opportunity to make international friends, which can be difficult in Japan. A further comment was that they were able to study with students of a very good educational level and background.

Other Study Abroad Programs

Frontier Spirit Program - Chinese language

Location:	Beijing Foreign Studies University
Course:	(1) March - May (2) September - November
Internship:	(1) June (2) December
Requirements:	95% attendance, GPA 1.8 and interviews in Japanese and Chinese
Student numbers:	3 in Fall 2013 (See Appendix 1 for more details)
University pays:	Return airfare, tuition, and accommodation during schooling period
Credits:	Maximum 20

The FSP (Chinese Language) takes place twice a year at Beijing Foreign Studies University. To apply for the program students are required to have 95% attendance and a GPA of 1.8. Interviews are held in Japanese and Chinese to select participants. The language course runs from March to June and from September until December. This is followed by an internship in June in the Spring Semester, and in December in the Fall Semester. See Appendix 1 for the number of participants over the years.

Exchange Program - Hong Kong

- Location: Chinese University of Hong Kong
Course: September - April
Requirements: 95% attendance, GPA 2.2, and interviews in Japanese, Chinese and English
Student numbers: 5 from September 2013
University pays: Return airfare
- Participants are exempted from paying tuition at CUHK
 - Knowledge of Chinese is not necessary.

The exchange program with the Chinese University of Hong Kong has been long-running and popular. See Appendix 2 for the number of participants. As this is an exchange program students from the Chinese University of Hong Kong also come to study at NUCB during the period from September until April. NUCB students wishing to participate need 95% attendance and a GPA of 2.2. Interviews are held in Japanese, Chinese and English. Knowledge of Chinese is not necessary to take part in the program. As part of the exchange participants are not required to pay tuition at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The number of places is limited by the reciprocal arrangement.

The following comment is from a student who went on the Hong Kong exchange in 2000. He is recalling the experience in June 2013:

During the exchange program at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) in 2000, I was very fortunate to spend time with a lot of smart and talented students. Students in CUHK not only study very hard but also speak Cantonese, English and Mandarin fluently. As a student who was majoring in English, I was very embarrassed as I could not even speak English very well. It was the moment that I determined to go to Manchester to study English intensively. I came back from Hong Kong in May 2001. I was very lucky to be chosen to go to Manchester in September 2001.

Korean Language and Culture

- Location: Korean Language Institute, Yonsei University
Course: (1) April - September (2) September - March
Requirements: Applicants must be studying Korean at NUCB
95% attendance, GPA 2.4
Student numbers: 2 in Fall 2013 (See Appendix 2 for more details)
University pays: Return airfare and tuition

The major Korean language program is held twice a year from April to September and from September to March at the Korean Language Institute of Yonsei University. To take part in this language program students must have studied Korean at NUCB. They must also have 95% attendance and a GPA of 2.4. The university pays both the return airfare and course tuition. See Appendix 2 for the number of students who have participated in this program.

International Volunteer Project

Requirements for scholarship:	95% attendance and GPA 1.5
University pays:	Up to 150,000 yen to selected students
Credits:	After taking the International Volunteer Course participants will be able to obtain 1 credit.
Deadlines:	Interviews for scholarship are scheduled around March. Students should finish their application process through the CIEE website by the end of April.

The IVP is a summer program, as part of which students may undertake volunteer activities in other countries. It is not a language program as such, although students will need to be able to communicate during their travels and volunteer work. The IVP is of a much shorter duration than the language programs, usually lasting only two to three weeks. There are no specific criteria for participation except a desire to work in a foreign country. The university provides some financial support in the form of travel scholarships. NUCB has consistently had large numbers of students who have taken part in this program (Appendix 2) and is very often in first place in the national rankings. Appendix 3 gives the countries that NUCB students have visited on the IVP.

The following are comments made by a student from the Faculty of Management who went to Germany while still a freshman in summer 2012. Her volunteer work included mowing grass, making road signs for hikers, building wooden steps, etc.

The time I spent in the project changed me a lot. First, I became more able to express my opinion. During discussions with members from other countries, if I do not speak out my opinion, I would be considered as not having one at all. I realized that it is important to be confident about what you are. You should not worry too much about what the others say and do, which prohibits you from doing what you really like to do. The second point is the importance of having your own goal and a positive attitude toward it. I had a tendency to follow others — I was dependent on decisions made by the other people. However, all the members I met in the work camp were highly motivated toward their own goals. I realized that it is what makes you strong and responsible for your life.

Gap Year Program

Orientation:	April
Follow-up:	July
Travel (Europe):	April - June
Student numbers:	Open (14 in 2013)
University pays:	Return airfare, Eurail Pass, insurance, 20 nights at youth hostels, and accommodation for the first three nights in France.
Credits available:	Maximum 10

The GAP was started in the year 2005. This is not primarily a language program but rather focuses on individual development and self-reliance. During the interview process candidates are vetted for their

initiative and clear comprehension of what the program entails. Students are required to research and develop a given topic while on an itinerary in Europe. The orientation course, which usually lasts for about three weeks to a month, includes classes and lectures on the culture and history of Europe, consultation about travel plans and choice of project, individual preparation time, and classes in practical English for traveling. During the program the students travel on their prepared itineraries using a Eurail Pass. They gather the data they require for the report and at the same time become acquainted with the life and culture of countries in Europe. On their return to Japan students are required to complete both a written report and an oral presentation on their chosen topic. A period of time is allocated for this. Since its initial introduction the GAP has matured and become a very successful part of the study abroad portfolio. See Appendix 2 for student numbers.

The following are comments made by a student from the Faculty of Communication who went on the GAP while still a freshman in 2012. Her theme was: Japan as a tourist destination — what Europeans are interested in.

People I met during the Gap Year Program helped me a lot when I was troubled. When I was lost, they kindly helped. When I spoke to them with my poor English, they carefully listened and tried to understand. When I had no money in a small town in France, somebody lent me some money to go back to Paris where I could use an ATM. In this program I was studying how Japan can become more attractive as a tourist destination from European people's perspectives. I found that kindness of the people in the country is as important as various other factors. Are we welcoming enough to foreigners? Do we know about our own country well enough so that we can guide them? This experience has made me aware of these things, and I started working on what I can do everyday, like helping foreigners in town as much as possible.

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (CIA)

With the expansion and development of the study abroad programs for our students and the increase in the number of international students coming to NUCB, it became clear that there would need to be a center that could act as a focal point for all the activities related to international affairs. In January 2011 we made a proposal that a Center for International Affairs (CIA) should be established. This subsequently became a fact within a year. Below are some of the main points of our original brief for the center's establishment.

The center has two principal functions:

1. As a source of information for NUCB students about travel/study overseas
2. As a source of information for visiting students about life in Japan, Nagoya and at NUCB

For NUCB students, information is available on the following:

1. Countries by region and interest
2. Programs we run
3. Student experience
4. Partner schools
5. Examinations (TOEFL, TOEIC)
6. Volunteer and internship opportunities, etc.

For international students, information is available on the following:

1. Japan (posters, brochures, guidebooks, Internet access)
2. Nagoya (maps, guidebooks)
3. Courses we run
4. Student experience
5. Activities they can take part in, clubs they can join, etc.

Regarding layout, the Center for International Affairs has:

1. Resource and display areas
 - a) Library resources on countries and cities
 - b) Files/filing cabinets with study abroad information
 - c) Display boards with posters and travel/course information
 - d) Desks for individual planning
 - e) Computers for Internet access
2. Accessible location - near to main student thoroughfares
3. Welcoming environment - open-door policy

Publicity

The Center for International Affairs plays important roles in:

1. Internal publicity - increasing information flow to students
2. External publicity - informing the public of the university resources through inclusion in brochures and Open Campus tours

Other activities

A whole range of cultural events and activities organized at or by the CIA and the Global Communication Club (GCC).

CONCLUSION

The aim of this article has been to chronicle in part what has been achieved over more than ten years in study abroad and international affairs at NUCB including the expansion of our programs and the establishment of the CIA. In the numbers of students taking part in the programs, there is reason for a great degree of satisfaction. Although some would argue that short-term overseas programs are limited in their effect, there are indications that study abroad programs offer students the opportunity for self-reflection, cross-cultural contact and understanding of international issues (Nae & Fraysse-Kim, 2012). Moreover, at the end of their international experience, it has been argued that the participants show an increased acceptance of other cultures and peoples, while at the same time coming back to their country feeling proud to be Japanese citizens and appreciative of aspects which otherwise they would have taken for granted, such as people's manners, the economy and technology (Nae, Fraysse-Kim, Ishii & Tangsirithongchai, 2010).

Over the years we have continually noticed that the effect of study abroad has been extremely beneficial and positive. Students returning from the FSP, the GAP and the IVP, etc. all display a greater degree of maturity in the way that they approach their studies and their lives in the university in general. This effect very often continues in the lives of those individuals even after leaving the university. This is well illustrated by the following quote from one of our former graduates, Masayuki Shintani, who

went on the Exchange Program at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) in 2000, and then on the FSP in September 2001:

Now, I am 33 years old and working in New Zealand as a Team Leader of a Finance Team. I manage nine staff members and solve complex problems every day. As a part-time student, I am studying accountancy in a post-graduate school to become a chartered accountant. I strongly believe that I am having a wonderful life in NZ because NUCB gave me huge opportunities to make my life more interesting. Without NUCB's assistance, I wouldn't have been able to enjoy this interesting life. I would like to say a huge thank you to NUCB for giving me wonderful opportunities when I was a student.

This experience is not an isolated one. Many students who have been on a study abroad program say how grateful they are for the experience and how much they have learnt from it. Therefore, in conclusion, let us celebrate these past successes and look to the future to build on this rich inheritance.

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Appendix 1**Frontier Spirit Program Student Numbers****University of Salford** = (Salford)**University of Manchester** = (UM)**Beijing Foreign Studies University** = (BFSU)**Koryo College - two-year college** = (Koryo)

Spring		Fall	
2001	14 - Salford 9 - BFSU	2001	13 - Salford 9 - Manchester 8 - BFSU
2002	22 - UM 2 - BFSU	2002	11 - UM 6 - BFSU
2003	16 - UM 4 - BFSU	2003	17 - UM
2004	21 - UM	2004	20 - UM 4 - BFSU
2005	14 - UM 5 - BFSU	2005	16 - UM 4 - BFSU
2006	19 - UM 2 - BFSU	2006	15 - UM 4 - BFSU
2007	14 - UM 5 - BFSU	2007	9 - UM 5 Koryo - UM 2 - BFSU
2008	14 - UM 2 - BFSU	2008	9 - UM 3 Koryo - UM
2009	11 - UM,	2009	6 - UM 1 Koryo - UM 2 - BFSU
2010	8 - UM	2010	7 - UM 2 Koryo - UM 1 - BFSU
2011	14 - UM 1 - BFSU	2011	10 - UM 2 - BFSU
2012	12 - UM 3 - BFSU	2012	10 - UM 1 - BFSU
2013	7 - UM	2013	9 - UM 3 - BFSU

University of Salford: 27**University of Manchester:** 331**Beijing Foreign Studies University:** 70**Grand Total:** 428

Appendix 2

Other programs

Chinese University of Hong Kong = CUHK
Korean Language and Culture = YONSEI
International Volunteer Project = IVP
Gap Year Program = GAP

	CUHK	YONSEI	IVP	GAP
2001	3	4	28	-
2002	3	9	35	-
2003	0	7	34	-
2004	3	6	35	-
2005	4	10	45	36
2006	3	10	60	26
2007	7	6	67	22
2008	3	5	60	20
2009	3	0	48	12
2010	3	2	77	13
2011	6	1	39	12
2012	4	0	82	10
2013	5	3	68	14
Total	47	63	678	165

Grand Total: 953

Appendix 3

International Volunteer Project countries visited

Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Iceland, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, Philippines, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Vietnam

Appendix 4

FSP HOST FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRE

- Have you hosted overseas students before? Y/N
If yes,
 - How many years have you been a host family for overseas student?
 - Approximately how many overseas students have you received into your home?
 - Which countries have the students been from?
- How many students have you hosted from JAPAN/NUCB?

3. In general have you found Japanese/NUCB students easy to deal with as guests in your home?
Y/N
4. Have you learned many things about Japan from the Japanese students who have stayed with you? Y/N
If yes, what have you learned?
5. Would you be willing to have other Japanese students stay in your home? Y/N
In either case, could you please give reasons.
6. Do you have any additional comments about your experience hosting a Japanese student?

Appendix 5

FSP - RESPONSE TO THE PROGRAM

I went to Manchester in: **Spring 2012** **Fall 2012 (Circle)**

You have now been back from the Frontier Spirit Program in Manchester for some months and had time to think about the experience. Could you answer these questions for us?

1. I am glad I went on the Frontier Spirit Program. Y/N
2. I think the FSP improved my English. Y/N
3. I still feel more motivated to study English because of the FSP. Y/N
If NO, why not?
4. In general I liked the English classes in Manchester. Y/N
5. I liked my homestay. Y/N
6. What helped your English to improve the most?
1. English Classes 2. Homestay 3. Both Classes & Homestay
Other(s)
7. Do you have more strategies for studying English after the FSP? Y/N
8. My current strategies for studying English. Circle as many as you like:
a. Reading books d. Listening to the radio
b. Using TOEIC materials e. Watching the news on TV
c. Talking to native speakers f. Watching movies
g. Other(s)
9. Anything else? Is there anything you would like to write about the FSP?

