Losing EIU (Education for International Understanding)
·And the future of education at Ehime University·

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In this paper, we intend to discuss the Education for International Understanding Program and what ramifications phasing it out may have on education at Ehime University. First of all, however, we should probably go over some preliminaries with regard to the authors, along with some of the terminology and naming conventions used.

The authors will be referred to as DRB and RV, respectively, in the paper. DRB is a professor in the Faculty of Education and one of the faculty members in charge of the EIU program at Ehime University. RV is also a professor and associate director of the Office of International Planning of the Institute for International Relations (IIR) at the university. The IIR’s responsibilities include planning international strategy, expanding the university's international network, and developing and supporting both incoming and outgoing educational programs. The Institute is also central to academic exchanges. The authors have collaborated on a variety of activities over the years, but most often on those concerning the EIU program and its students.

The official name in Japanese of the program we will be discussing is Kokusai Rikai Kyoiku Kōsu—an interdisciplinary major—which directly translates into "Education for International Understanding Course". We will, however, be using "Program" for "Course" in the paper.

"Course" can be a bit broad; it can mean a particular class, a program of study (as in this case), or even a broader curriculum. The word katei in Japanese is also often translated as "course", and here at Ehime University the EIU "Course" is actually part of the larger Integrated Human Development Course (or Sōgō Ningen Keisei Katei in Japanese) in the Faculty of Education.

And finally, we would also like to thank the office staff in the Registrar’s Office and the Career Resource Center for furnishing us with some very useful data.

PRELIMINARIES

PRESENT SITUATION

In this paper, we will be discussing the EIU (Education for International Understanding) Program in the Faculty of Education at Ehime University. Beginning with the 2015 academic year, the program has ceased accepting applicants, and at present (the 2017 academic year), only the juniors and seniors remain enrolled.

This major change was reportedly influenced by "guidelines" for education reform handed down from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT). In 2015, (MEXT), in discussing education reform, states:

At teacher training universities and faculties, we are meanwhile working to raise teacher quality while reducing student quotas, based on factors such as expected demographic dynamics and teacher demand. To that end, we already have a policy to "abolish" courses in the teacher training universities and faculties which do not focus on acquisition of a teacher certificate.

This policy marked the end of the EIU Program, as it was one of the courses slated to be "abolished".
WHAT IS EIU?

While the EIU Program at Ehime University only began in 1999, Education for International Understanding itself actually has a long and distinguished pedigree, and, in order to discuss the EIU Program at Ehime University, we need to look at it in an broader context: that is, how EIU emerged on the world stage and then how it subsequently came to Japan.

The concept of EIU dates back at least to 1945 and the UNESCO Constitution. One paragraph in the Preamble (UNESCO, 1945) reads,

For these reasons, the States Parties to this Constitution, believing in full and equal opportunities for education for all, in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth, and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge, are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other’s lives.

Somewhat later, in another UNESCO document (1964), which outlines suggestions for the use of EIU in the classroom, we see in one of the guiding principles for the aims of Education for International Understanding that, "unless steps are taken to educate mankind for the world community, it will be impossible to create an international society conceived in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations," making a strong case for the use of EIU in education.

You can find some very differing attitudes on what EIU represents or should fall under. For instance some view EIU as an aspect of peace studies or peace education. L'Escola de Cultura de Pau (n.d.) provides an example of this sort of view in:

Education for international understanding can be considered as the macro-social side of peace education. It looks at peace at the world level, armed conflicts, and relations among peoples. Global education provides basic tools to critically evaluate global relations and dynamics.

Education for international understanding focuses most heavily on positive peace and armed conflict.

On the other hand, there are those who prefer to tie it in with Education for Sustainable Development. We can see this in (APCEIU):

In order to promote Education for International Understanding (EIU), "It aims to instil [sic] a culture of peace that encompasses individuals, communities, nations, international/global systems and a sustainable relationship between humanity and nature.

APCEIU emphasizes a pedagogical approach to EIU that integrates knowledge and understanding with the development of values and attitudes underpinning a culture of peace.

To put it in more succinct and easier to understand terms, however, A. N. Maheshwari (n.d.), in discussing the use of Education for International Understanding in Teacher Education in India, frames EIU nicely by stating that "people will have to learn to 'learn to live together.' Education for International Understanding (EIU) is an expression of the will of the human society for living in harmony."
EIJ IN JAPAN

In this paper, we need to be looking at EIJ through a Japanese filter and should, therefore, first discuss how EIJ came to play a role in education in Japan. For that, we can turn to Ozaki’s (2004) discussion of KRK. He uses the Japanese initials KRK in his review on the usefulness of Education for International Understanding in international language education. For him, KRK is both a concept and a form of education, adopted in various subjects, including English, Japanese, and Social Studies. He separates the Japanese and English terms. KRK stands for Kokusai Rikai Kyoiku, which is essentially a word-for-word rendering of Education for International Understanding. According to Ozaki, the "foundation of KRK was established with Education for International Understanding (EIJ) proposed by UNESCO in the late 1940s." KRK itself started in the 1950s in Japan but did not really become a very important issue until the 1970s. (Ozaki, 2004)

Kamibeppu (2016) provides a brief rundown and some nice insight as to how the so-called zero-men (a category to which EIJ belongs) programs came into existence at various faculties of education in Japan.

The Japanese MOE (Ministry of Education, now MEXT) officials were facing decreases in their budget allotments due to the shrinking school-age population brought about by the falling birthrate in Japan. They needed new ways (programs) to maintain the total budget level. This led them to turn to lifelong education and international programs.

The declining school-age population was also adversely affecting the employment opportunities for graduates as teachers at elementary and secondary schools in a big way. To deal with this problem and to avoid possible further losses in student numbers, you began to see teacher training programs offering a new program called zero-men katei ("zero-licensure course"). (Kamibeppu, 2016) Yoshimitsu (2017), notes, that beginning in 1987, teacher-training faculties introduced various new courses, including "those on lifelong learning and international cultures.

We need to point out that the term zero-men katei is somewhat of a misnomer, at least in the case of this university. The zero, of course, comes directly from the English "zero" and the men is an abbreviated form of menkyo "license" (in this case, referring to a teaching license or certificate). Kamibeppu (2016) states that students of such a course (or program) "graduate without receiving teaching certificates and seek general job opportunities." However, what is actually true of such courses is that they "do not REQUIRE [emphasis ours] students to obtain a teaching certificate to graduate" (Yoshimitsu, 2017), and, at least at Ehime University, students are able to obtain teaching certificates and quite a number of EIJ students do get their certificates and go on to become teachers.
The program at Ehime University, in its present iteration, accepted its first students in April, 1999. Originally, five (of the seven) faculty members from the Department of Japanese Language Education and all six from English Language Education were responsible for running the program in addition to their responsibilities for the students in their respective departments in the teacher training courses. DRB, joined the university faculty in the fall of 2005, replacing one of the professors in the English Language Education Department, although, as his background was not in English, his main classes in the program were focused on ITC and International Understanding. It should also be noted here that faculty members from the Institute for International Relations (IIR), including RV, also have taught classes, advised students for their senior research papers, and provided support for the students in the program in many other ways.

When the program first began, 10 new students were accepted each academic year. This continued for eight years until April, 2007, (a year and a half after DRB had started working at the university), when the Faculty of Education underwent some changes that year and required that the program begin accepting 15 rather than 10 students each year, without any increase in the number of faculty members to run the program. In fact, over time, the number of faculty members actually decreased. At present, there are eight faculty members–four from each department–in charge of the program. From 2007 until 2015, the total number of students from all four years in a particular academic year was typically just over 60, but now the number has shrunk to about half of that, at slightly over 30. (Students from the EIU course often go overseas for exchange programs, study programs, and for other International activities, and when they return, they add to the number of students presently enrolled.)

STUDENT REACTIONS AND SURVEY

Because we had been hearing rumblings from the students regarding the closure of the EIU program over the last couple of years, we recently decided to get a better grasp of what the students thought about the program and its closure by conducting an informal survey. DRB created the survey in the form of a Moodle questionnaire and asked the students remaining in EIU and who were still in Japan to fill it out.

The survey began with one Likert scale question in which students were asked to rate 10 items on a 1-5 satisfaction scale, with 1 being the lowest and 5, the highest level of satisfaction. The items to be rated were: "Program as a Whole", "Courses", "Teachers (Knowledge)", "Teachers (Helpfulness/Approachability)", "Students (Level)", "Students (Atmosphere)", "Diversity/Variety", "Preparation for Future", "Contribution to Society", and "Termination of the Program in a Year and
a Half". While most of these items are probably self-evident, we should probably explain that the "Teachers (Knowledge)" one concerns how knowledgeable the faculty are in their fields or in the subjects they teach. The Japanese expression is somewhat more clear about this, and the students did not mention having any trouble understanding it.

The Likert-scale rating question was followed by five open-ended ones that the students could answer in their own words. The items they were to comment on were: "What does "EIU (Education for International Understanding)" mean?; "What things about EIU have you found to be good?"; "If EIU were to continue or ever start up again, what improvements would you like to see?"; "How can the EIU Course Contribute to the Japanese and Global Society?"; and finally, "Any other comments?".

All of the items and instructions were given in both English and Japanese. The respondents were free to use Japanese in their responses. The submissions were also anonymous in order to elicit responses which would be as honest as possible. A replica of the actual survey can be seen in Appendix 1 at the end of the paper.

The students were given a very limited timeframe within which to complete the survey, but 14 students managed to submit their responses before the deadline.

RESPONSES TO THE SURVEY

In this section, we will discuss how the students responded to the survey, first in the rating question and then in the five open-ended questions. For the latter, nearly all of the students responded in Japanese and what we show here are rough translations made by DRB of their responses.

One student did consistently answer these questions in English, and we indicate that by bracketing those responses in [Original] … [/Original] enclosures, to show that they were left as is. (In one case DRB did add a comment in brackets as to what he thought might have been intended.)

**Likert-scale ratings:**

As faculty members either responsible for the program or else deeply involved with it, we were hoping that the students would be relatively satisfied with the program, and we were gratified to see an average rating of 4.64 for the first nine items, which reflected a rather high degree of satisfaction.

As a major impetus for this paper had been the grumblings we had heard from the students about the program being closed down, we expected a low level of satisfaction for the tenth item, and, with a rating of 1.77, these expectations were born out. To be honest, however, we had thought
the rating would be even lower and were surprised to find that two of the students had given it a "Five", the highest level of satisfaction. In examining the responses of those two respondents, however, we can note some factors which put the "Five" rating into question.

One of the students who gave the "Five" rated everything a "Five" and provided no responses to any of the open-ended questions, leading to concern about how well they understood the survey and the tasks. The other student did answer all the open-ended questions and was quite positive about the program; in fact, they went out of their way to bemoan the termination of the program in Open-ended Question 6, stating "I don't want the program to be done away with." (Response #6) Such an attitude, to put it mildly, does not jibe very well with a "Five" rating for the Program Termination item.

We are not throwing out these two ratings; we just want to point out that the two respondents may not have adequately understood what they were rating. In any case, a rating of 1.77 points to a rather low level of satisfaction with the closing down of the program among the EIU students. A chart of their responses to the Likert-scale question can be seen in Figure 1.

Open-ended Question 1: What does EIU mean?

Based on remarks heard later from the students, they found this question rather difficult to answer, but, in looking at their responses in (1), some of them thought quite deeply and provided some insightful comments. It was rewarding to find that most of those responding took this survey seriously. A lot of ideas expressed in the responses correspond closely with the original goals laid out by UNESCO. Diversity is mentioned a number of times, which was also a common theme the authors (and probably most, if not all, of the other faculty members) liked to stress in their classes.
and other interaction with the students. It is rewarding to see that the students have picked up on that, because, for us, diversity is the essence of EIU.

(1) Students' responses to Essay Box 1: The meaning of EIU

1. Education involving learning about culture and language of Japan and foreign countries, learning that there are diverse races and ways of thinking, understanding and accepting this, and developing human resources who can be active around the world.

2. Training human resources who can accept differences in culture and ways of thinking and who can coexist with each other while respecting one another.

3. Education to cultivate children who are interested in the world, able to think internationally, and can play active roles.

4. [Original] To me, EIU is literally where I belong. All the friends I made mean so much to me and I couldn't have met them if I didn't come to the EIU course. I'm very grateful for that.[/Original]

5. Learning ways of thinking and methods for building a better world without regard to race, nationality, culture, etc., and with mutual respect among all peoples of the world.

6. Education to develop human resources capable of accepting all kinds of diversity through foreign language, cross-cultural learning, and interaction with international students.

7. I believe that it is education which aims to deepen interest in and understanding of various languages and cultures in the world and to cultivate attitudes for accepting and deepening one's understanding of their own culture and identity. Also, I think that not only classroom learning, but also overseas study and other activities greatly help a person recognize the value of diversity and delve deeper into learning about it, and hone the ability to think independently.

8. Globalization and international understanding are indispensable, and EIU teaches us international understanding.

9. Teaches about differences and deepens one's understanding of them. By calling attention to all the various conditions and situations around the world and broadening our horizons, [the course] cultivates talent which will contribute to Japan and the world.

10. EIU is education which tackles learning through a process of "knowing" about the present state of the world regarding issues on a global scale, "thinking" about the issues, and "doing" what one can to help out

11. Education to cultivate internationalists. Education which enables you to look at Japan and other countries objectively. What is common sense in Japan, our homeland, is not necessarily common sense in other cultures. In order to coexist with people from around the world, it is necessary to accept the culture of other countries while maintaining our own identity as Japanese. EIU entails learning about the cultures of other countries and studying and understanding the differences, while still being proud of being Japanese.

Open-ended Question 2: What things about EIU have you found to be good?

All but one of the 14 students who participated in the survey responded to this question—the best response rate of any of the open-ended questions—and found at least one good thing about the
program. The one student who did not answer did not respond to any of the open-ended questions and only answered the Likert-scale question.

In looking for common themes in the answers, we see that many of the students commented positively on the flexibility of the program and on the good relationship between the students and faculty and among the students themselves. Chances to have contact with other cultures—either through going abroad or through interaction with international students here—also appealed to the students.

(2) Students' responses to Essay Box 2: Good things about EIU

1. Being able to freely interact with the students ahead of us (upperclassmen).
2. The flexible environment allows students to do what they want to do.
3. The interpersonal relationships among the students (whether in the same year or not) is not found in other programs. Not a lot of distance between faculty and students. Small classes.
4. [Original] Flexibility. You can get a teaching certificate if you want to but it’s not necessary. That helps students study abroad without feeling pressured to stay in Japan to study for a teaching certificate[/Original]
5. You can attend classes which allow you to interact with international students from all over the world. Close relationship between faculty and students and among the students themselves.
6. Not being tied down with "You have to do this", but rather being allowed to choose what you want to learn and experience.
7. First of all, you can study a wide range of both Asian and Western cultures and languages. Also, many of the students have a keen interest in studying abroad. I believe one of the features of this program is that you learn about the experiences of students who are ahead of you and have gone abroad, and learn while receiving stimulus from each other. I feel that a good point of the course is that it provides a friendly atmosphere with its small number of students and having faculty who are easy to consult with.
8. Its wide range of subjects to study makes for a wide range of paths to follow after graduation.
9. I like that many of the teachers have classes in which students give presentations on issues. I feel it is really helpful for the students to experience many opportunities for public speaking. I think the small number of students is also a good thing. It is also good that the students had their own space starting in their freshman year where they could talk about class preparation and review with each other. The vertical connections are strong, allowing many opportunities to talk with students who are ahead of you in school. Also, it is easy to talk with those who are already out in society.
10. The small number of students allows for individual study. (It also allows for presentations and expressing your opinions.) There is also a close vertical relationship among older and newer students, allowing friendly completion and all sorts of information exchange. Because everyone is interested in international relations, consciousness and goals are high.
11. You can become aware of global issues and work together to come up with solutions.
12. You can take classes you want to take.
13. Having only 15 students enter each year not only makes for close relationships among students from the same year, but also those from different years. Everyone gets along. In addition, we have opportunities to interact with international students in our classes.

**Open-ended Question 3: Suggested Improvements**

10 students responded to this question, and, of those, four stated that they could think of nothing in particular that they would want to be changed. Response #3 to this question was particularly telling; the one thing that the student would like changed is for EIU not to be discontinued. The remaining areas of concern can be boiled down to two major aspects: the attitude of some of the students and a need for more specialized classes. All in all, however the students appear to be very happy with the program.

(3) Students' responses to Essay Box 3: The meaning of EIU

1. Nothing in particular.
2. Because there is such a high degree of freedom, some students show a lack of of planning with regard to classes and and student life.
3. The fact that the program will be discontinued in a year and a half.
4. [Original]Nothing in particular [/Original]
5. Adding more upper level courses for improving one’s English such as those found in the English Proficiency Program.
6. I believe this is a problem on the part of the students’s awareness, but there can appear to be a difference in motivation between students wanting to be teachers and those who do not, especially in the teacher training classes.
7. I want to learn more about international understanding, I think we need more upper level classes.
8. Nothing in particular.
9. There are some people with low awareness.
10. Nothing in particular.

**Open-ended Question 4: EIU contributions to Japanese and Global Society?**

In adding this question to the survey, we realized that it might be a difficult one to answer, and, therefore, were pleasantly surprised at how seriously the students replied.

4) Students' responses to Essay Box4 : Contributions to Japanese and Global Society

1. Participation in Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) programs
2. Looking at the paths earlier students have taken—many have become school teachers, participated in JOCV programs, gone to work for companies expanding internationally, etc.—I feel the contribution to society is significant. Many students have gone to many different countries on study abroad programs, for example, spreading the word about Japan.
3. [Original]There are too many ways [=“things”? : DRB] to write down. Some people become a teacher, some people work for JICA, some people work for a
Japanese company. They all contribute to the Japanese or/and global society at certain degree, I think. [Original]

4. Students belonging to this course actively engage in short- and long-term study abroad programs and learn a variety of things. When the student enters society, they can help solve problems, etc. by using the knowledge and values they acquired in various situations while they were students and thereby contribute to society.

5. I think, that in any line of work you pursue, you will be able take advantage of the ability to see things from multiple points of view and be flexible in your thinking with regard to diversity in people. In addition, I feel that you can be active as an international person, both in Japan and overseas, by actively participating in such things as overseas assistance and promulgating Japanese culture around the world.

6. I believe that international understanding is really a necessary force in this present-day global society and that by propagating it, we can build a world without prejudice and discrimination.

7. [It] cultivates people who can understand and accept various ideas and values, and then launches them into society.

8. Many graduates find work in jobs that play a role internationally and that develop human resources, thus contributing to society both in Japan and around the world.

9. Each individual can contribute to society responsibly.

10. I travel abroad a lot and spend a lot of money. Through the encouragement of one of our classmates, we [I?] have been sending unneeded textbooks to developing countries.

11. As an individual, take pride in being Japanese. Become someone who can introduce Japanese culture to people from other countries. Become a tolerant person who understands cultures of other countries, and accepts and derives pleasure from things which are different from Japan.

Open-ended Question 5: Other Comments

We did not really expect much in the way of responses to this question because so much had been covered in the previous questions. However, six students did respond, and, at the risk of sounding a bit biased, the attitudes expressed here were essentially glowingly positive toward the EIU Program and glaringly negative about the phasing out of the program.

(1) Students' responses to Essay Box 5: Other Comments

1. EIU is a wonderful course with a good atmosphere among the faculty and students, and where individuals have freedom in choosing what they want to do.

2. It is really sad that there will be no students after us. I feel that it is really disappointing because having the EIU program is very important for today's international community.

3. There is nothing we can do about it, but doing away with it is a terrible thing.

4. It is a terrible waste that EIU is going to disappear. I feel there is no other environment in which I can learn with such a high level of awareness together with my peers.

5. [Original]It is sad that international [sic] is over[/Original]

6. I don't want the program to be done away with.
**FINAL OBSERVATIONS**

The results of the survey suggest that the students in the EIU Program at Ehime University generally feel positive about the program and are genuinely sad to see it go. And, in fact, they really do not understand why it should be phased out. The authors share this concern.

One point we need to mention here regarding responses to the survey questions is that some students mentioned small class size as a positive aspect of the program. This is, of course, not specifically inherent in EIU itself. However, we do feel the related diversity, variety, and freedom occurring as a common theme in the student responses are, in fact, part and parcel of EIU and manifest themselves in a variety (no pun intended) of ways.

First of all, the very fact that there are other cultures entails diversity, and studying about them requires a flexibility in one's way of thinking. It is logical to assume that some of this openness to others translates into the good atmosphere noted by the respondents between the students and faculty and among the students themselves. Although the faculty members from Education were from just two departments, their fields and areas of interest were quite varied, and, in fact, being a part of EIU often had the effect of broadening the horizons of the faculty members themselves. Great latitude has been given to the students in their choice of topics for senior research, and the faculty quite often end up learning as much as the student, spurring them to enter new areas of research. Also, the contributions by IIR faculty added much greater variety to the mix.

Going back to the cessation of the program, it does not appear that the demographic trends that led to the creation of this and related programs in Faculties of Education have really changed; the population of Japan is still aging, and the population of school-aged children does not seem to be on the rise again. Why, then, phase out programs that allow students to choose paths other than becoming a teacher. And with an aging population, life-long education opportunities should actually be in greater demand, not less.

All in all, it is the variety, flexibility, and open-mindedness that have allowed participants, both student and faculty, to readily adapt to an ever-changing world.

![Fig.2: Employment rate averages](image-url)
Another demographic bandied about concerns the marketability of the graduates. Figure 2 compares the job search success rate over the last five years of EIU graduates to graduates from the Faculty as a whole. The dotted line, representing the EIU graduates' job placement percentages shows greater variance than that of those from the Faculty as a whole (including EIU), but that can be attributed to the low number of EIU graduates as a whole. The average successful employment rates are within a percentage point of each other, hovering at about 94%.

Globalization and cross-cultural understanding are, if anything, becoming even more important for the future of Japan. One of the points made by Higher Education Bureau for MEXT (2015), in discussing the "Societal Role of National Universities" is the Japan faces the challenge of "developing human resources capable of tackling globalization." It does appear that terminating the EIU at these same national universities runs contrary to facing such a challenge.

The Ministry obviously, at least on the surface, considers globalization to be an important issue in education. For example, in Chapter 3 "Responses to Critical Issues facing Japan" of their 2016 "White Paper on Science and Technology", two of the sections are entitled "Contributing Solutions to Global Issues" and "Strategic Development of Global Activities in an International Context", respectively.

In the foreseeable future, it is no doubt highly unlikely that there will ever come a time where EIU is reestablished within the curriculum of the Faculty of Education. Perhaps, however, those in decision-making positions will someday realize its value and find some way to introduce it in some other fashion.

In fact, DRB and one of the other faculty members of the EIU Program had, about ten years ago, proposed the idea of expanding EIU into a university-wide interdisciplinary program with even closer ties to IIR. However, the university at that time was not receptive to that suggestion and it fell through. One possibility for the future would be to perhaps institute EIU into General Education thereby making it accessible to all students.

In any case, we sincerely hope that those making decisions about the future directions education will take will reexamine the need for EIU.

REFERENCES


Appendix 1: Survey Form

Q1  Please give a satisfaction rating for the following items, where
(1: low satisfaction  <=>  5: high satisfaction)
次の項目に満足度を付けてください。
(1：低い満足度  <=  5：高い満足度)

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<td>Courses</td>
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<td>Teachers (Helpfulness/Approachability)</td>
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<td>Students (Level)</td>
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<td>Students (Atmosphere)</td>
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<td>Termination of the Program in a Year and a Half</td>
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Q2  What does EIU (Education for International Understanding) mean?
EIU (国際理解教育) というのはどういう意味ですか？

Q3  What things about EIU have you found to be good?
EIUの良いところは？

Q4  If EIU were to continue or ever start up again, what improvements would you like to see?
EIUの改善すべきところは？

Q5  How can the EIU Course Contribute to the Japanese and Global Society?
社会（日本、世界）への貢献は？

Q6  Any other comments?
他のコメント？