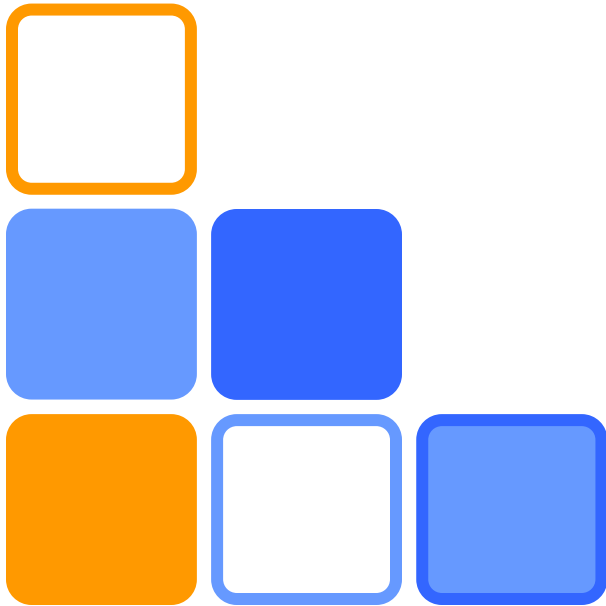


# Assessing Japanese Students' Readiness for Global Citizenship



March 13, 2023

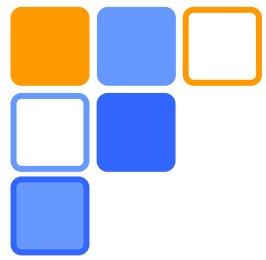
57<sup>th</sup> RELC International Conference

Kahoko Matsumoto (Tokai Univ.)

Toshihiko Takeuchi (Surugadai Univ.)

Shogo Kato (Tokyo Women's Univ.)

Yuuki Kato (Sagami Women's Univ.)



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# 1. Background

1. Japanese Ministry of Education's new initiative to produce “**future global human resources**” with grants (2013–)



Universities are creating new programs with a stronger focus on English, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. + Increasing CLIL-type/EMI-type and global skills courses.



# 1. Background

2. There has been a pressure from the business/industrial sector which faces new challenges from globalization.



More and more companies in Japan have either adopted or been promoting an “English as the priority language” policy in the workplace.

(global human resources/global elites  
→ global citizens)

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# 1. Background

However, different institutions and organization have different goals/ objectives, and there is little consensus about the requirements for global citizenship.

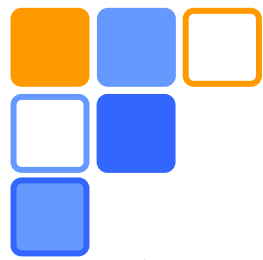


# <Initial List (100 items) Creation: Reference + Professional Input + Focus Group Interview>



- Dr. Byram’s ICC Model (1997)
- ECML’s FREPA (Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures)
- +
- Existing Critical Thinking criteria in North America
- +
- OECD’s Core Competencies and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills

\* Emphasis is placed on a lifelong growth of a “global citizen”, living in a diverse plurilingual/pluricultural environment.



## 2. Previous Research (First Stage)

### 1. Purpose

(1) To investigate/ascertain what people who work in the international arena actually consider necessary skills for “global citizens”

(2) To compile the final list of the items proposed as components of global citizenship for future Japanese workers

### 2. Subjects:

408 workers (132 are in managerial positions) with ages from 20s to 60s.

### 3. Method: Online questionnaire survey + selective Interview



# <40 Descriptors: 4 Major Areas>

1. **Knowledge** of language and culture
  - Items 1–5 English–related
  - Items 6–10 Other foreign languages–related
  - Items 11–15 Culture–related
2. **Attitudes** toward intercultural communication
  - Items 16–17 Acceptance–related
  - Items 18–19 Motivation–related
  - Items 20–24 Action–related
3. **(Critical Thinking) Skills** for learning language and culture, and intercultural communication
  - Items 25–28 Acceptance–related
  - Items 29–30 Negotiation–related
  - Items 31–32 Learning–related
4. **Generic Competencies** typically skills included in the “21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills” (Items 33–40)





## Appendix: 40 descriptors ascertained and verified in this study

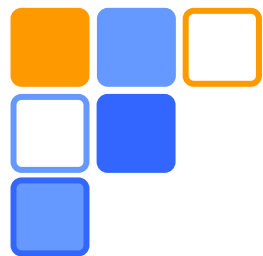
**<Knowledge>** The asterisk (\*) means that the descriptor is used in the essay-test specification

### ● English-related

1. (A person) knows **the basic rules** of English being studied incl. prosodic, lexical, syntactic aspects.
2. Has **high scores of proficiency tests** (such as TOEIC® and STEP)
3. Has sufficient **background knowledge** (=historical, social and cultural background) of English.
4. Has **a high communicative competence** of English and can use it flexibly based on various situations and contexts.
5. Has the awareness of the fact that there are **a variety of Englishes used** in the world, and knows their characteristics.

### ● Other foreign languages-related

6. Has experience learning a foreign language from **a native-speaker teacher**.
7. Has **some knowledge of a foreign language other than English and can do basic communication** by it.
8. Can **carry out work by a foreign language other than English** to some extent.



## <Knowledge–continued>

9. Knows that each language has its own rules and systems with complex relationships among them, thus literal translation doesn't always yield the same meaning.
10. Knows that language deeply relates to culture and one's identity, so being communicative doesn't only consist of linguistic skills.

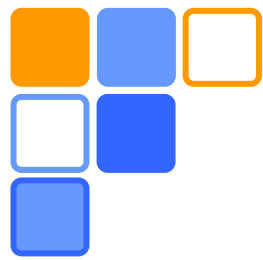
### ● Culture–related

11. Knows that many cultures as well as languages co-exist in the world, which often causes tension and conflicts.
- \*12. Knows that each culture has complex values and norms, which influence and reflect on people's world view and ways of thinking.
- \*13. Knows that misunderstandings may happen in intercultural communication because the interpretations of an action or phenomenon can vary between people with different cultural backgrounds.



## <Knowledge-continued>

14. Knows that **culture is not static and is constantly changing** by frequent contacts, especially under the present globalization.
15. Knows that there is **no superiority or inferiority among cultures** though some may have more power and expansion.



## <Attitudes>

### ● Acceptance-related

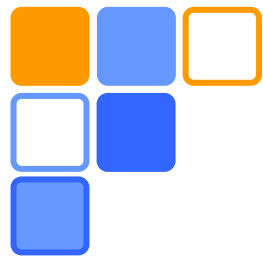
16. (A person) can try to understand different languages and cultures, accepting the differences naturally as they are.

17. Can accept different values and ways of thinking without resistance and prejudice, including ambiguities and intermediacies deriving from different languages and cultures.

### ● Motivation-related

18. Can willingly get involved in the situations with intercultural communication, even outside one's work, having keen interests in other languages and cultures.

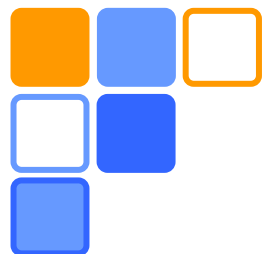
19. Can find value and significance in contacts with various languages and cultures, even outside one's work, giving equal respects to all of them.



## <Attitudes – continued>

### ● Action-related

- \*20. Can build a close relationship with people having different cultures, embracing their identities as equal to one's own.
- \*21. Can make objective and fair judgments on the issues related to both one's own and other cultures, knowing the relativistic quality of cultural values.
- \*22. Can view and discuss both one's own and other cultures critically, avoiding preconceptions and overgeneralizations.
- \*23. Can try to solve problems encountered in intercultural communication with persistence and strong will in order to explain one's opinion while understanding different ways of thinking.
- \*24. Can deal with new and unfamiliar intercultural situations with confidence and flexibility, having learned from the sufficient "trial and error" experience in the past.



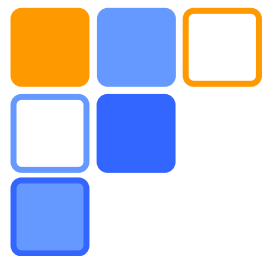
## <Critical Thinking Skills>

### ● Acceptance-related

- \*25. Can observe, understand and analyze the components of different languages and cultures objectively.
- \*26. Can systematically classify the components of different languages and cultures based on categories and genres.
- \*27. Can compare the similarities and differences of various languages and cultures by consistent, objective procedures.
- \*28. Can explain one's own language and culture fully and objectively, and also express opinions and views on other cultures appropriately and objectively.

### ● Negotiation-related

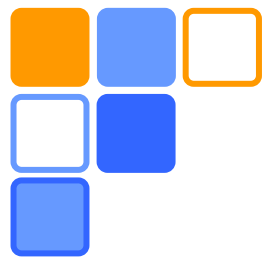
- \*29. Can build constructive intercultural communication by constantly tuning into and considering the possible linguistic and cultural differences.
- \*30. Can choose the ways of communication most appropriate to the given situation, making use of one's accumulated knowledge and experience with learning a new language and culture.



## <Critical Thinking Skills – continued>

### ● Learning-related

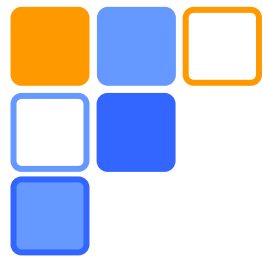
- \*31. Can learn effective ways of communication by creating hypotheses based on either the first language or other languages acquired, and comparing and verifying the rules and characteristics in light of them.
- 32. Can continue to improve one's ways of learning about different languages and cultures throughout lifetime by constantly reflecting upon their effectiveness in real-life practice.



## <Generic Competencies>

- \*33. Can understand complicated problems objectively by grasping the relationships between the overall picture and discrete points/elements.
- \*34. Can analyze complicated problems logically by identifying discrete points/elements involved in them.
- \*35. Can make a proper judgement based on the objective understanding and analysis of the problem.
- \*36. Can propose the best possible solution based on logical grounds, after evaluating different people's opinions critically.
- \*37. Can derive a persuasive conclusion after drawing different opinions from one's peers democratically.
- 38. Can try out various ways based on one's past experience and resources without fear of failure, when facing complicated problem-solving situations.





## <Generic Competencies – continued>

39. Can achieve a common objective by involving and persuading people with opposite opinions in a situation where collective efforts towards a shared goal are required.
- \*40. Can lead discussion and take an action strategically in order to consider various ways to accomplish a goal.



# Creation of Measurement Tool

1. Studied different possibilities of the test format.
  - North American Critical Thinking Tests: Ennis–Weir Test, Insight Assessment Test, etc. ETS’s iskills Test (discontinued in 2016), etc.
2. The essay– type test (4 parallel sets with 3 items for each, and full score of 60) was developed.
  - We can use the actual situations of intercultural misunderstandings/conflicts from the previous grant–in–aid studies) and ask students to analyze them objectively and explain their proposed solutions. → **A well–designed rubric is needed.**



# Sample 1

\*Each essay–test has 3 test items like this.

One international student often comes late for club meetings. When the leader told him to be more responsible, he said, “I do all the work with responsibility just like all the other Japanese members. On top of that, why do we have to have so many meetings? Once we create a clear plan with assignment of roles, I don’t see much meaning in these meetings. Your meetings are just for chatting and relationship–building. I propose to reduce them.

- \* State with your own words where the sources of misunderstanding or conflict are. (#21, 22, 25)
- \* What would you do if you were the leader? (#23, 24, 29)
- \* Propose a solution, explaining why it is an appropriate way to handle this problem? (#20, 28, 30)



# Evaluation Criteria

## 1. Comprehension

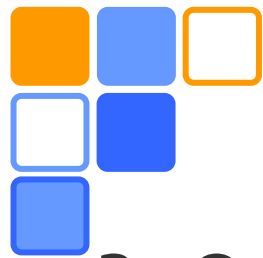
- Understanding of the situation
- Knowledge of the culture(s) or socio-pragmatic factors involved

## 2. Attitude

- impartiality/objectivity
- acceptance/tolerance of difference
- willingness to communicate/cooperate
- patience and flexibility in finding a solution

## 3. Thinking Skill

- categorization/factoring
- objective comparison
- quality of analysis
- integration and synthesis



3. Qualitative–evaluation list (Can–do list) was created for all the 40 descriptors, which will be used both for self–evaluation and objective evaluation by teachers/superiors.

(Ex.) Descriptor #18

18. I (or the subject) can willingly get involved in the situations with intercultural communication, even outside one’s work/study, having keen interests in other languages and cultures.

Answers: by 4–point Rickert Scale (for example, 1. cannot do at all, 2. cannot do so well, 3. can do fairly well, and 4. can do well)



## 2. Previous Research (3)

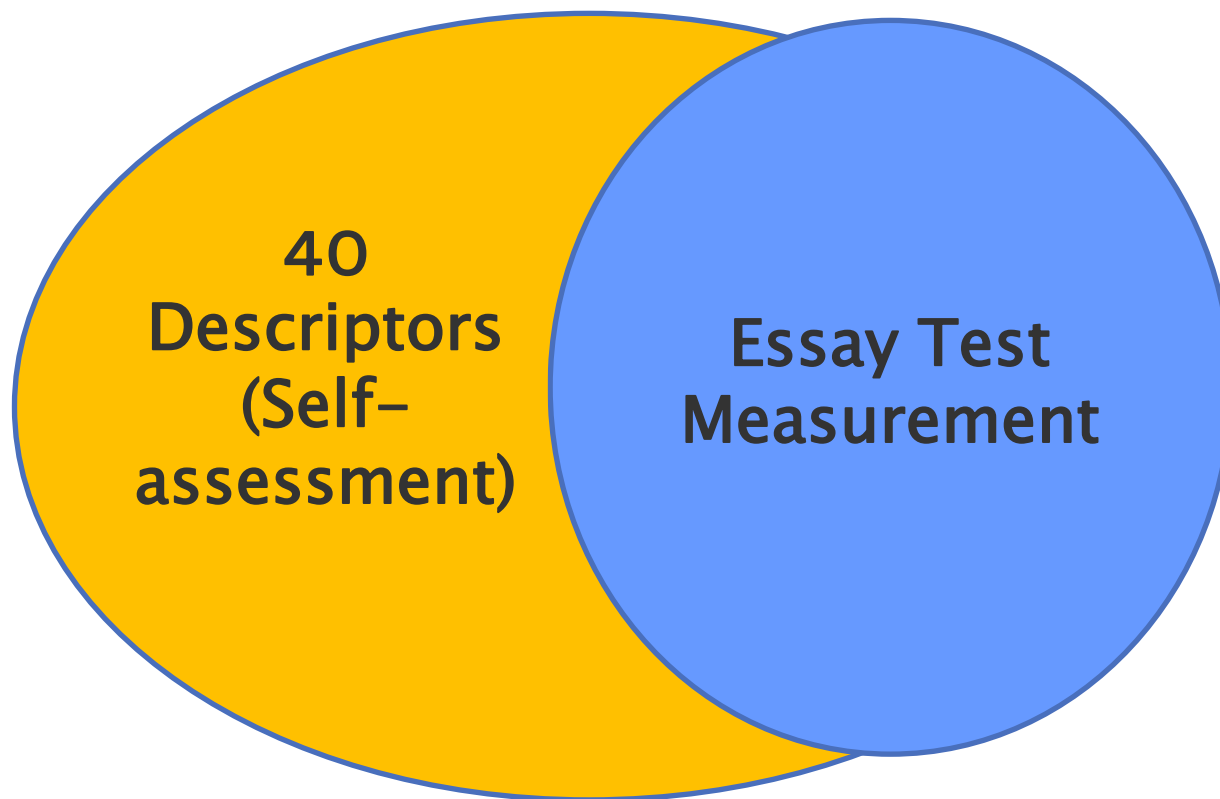
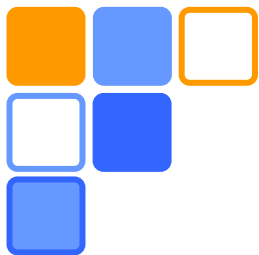
### 1. Purpose

- validation of essay-type tests by checking inter-rater reliabilities of 10 measurement aspects
- investigation into the correlation between self-assessment and objective evaluation by either the teacher (in students' cases) and the superior (in workers' cases).

### 2. Subjects

- 183 university students of 6 English classes and their teachers
- 32 company workers and their 5 superiors for an ad-hoc comparison

So far, quite good results have been obtained, and further accumulation of data and fine-tuning is going on to increase the accuracy of measurement.



With various kinds of statistical investigation, we are trying to produce a valid predictive diagnosis for global citizenship for each student.



### 3. Present (On-going Experiments)

**Purpose:** An attempt to create a measurement tool for younger students.

**Subjects:** 38 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade junior high school and 29 5<sup>th</sup>- and 6<sup>th</sup>-grade elementary school students and their teachers

**Material:** The number of descriptors was reduced to a half (20 items) while both the essay test (reduced to 2 items) and Can-do checklists were simplified.





### 3. Present (On-going Experiments)

Ex. #13 (→#6)

Knows (=Can be aware) that misunderstandings may happen in Intercultural communication because **the interpretations of an action or phenomenon can vary** between people with different cultural backgrounds.



Can be aware that people from different cultures sometimes misunderstand each other because the same actions and events have different meaning in different cultures.



### 3. Present (On-going Experiments)

Situations used for essay tests were also modified using those that can happen in younger students' lives described in simple words.

1. The question about the importance of meetings and concepts of time and work assignment was changed by using some extra-curricular activity situation.
2. The situation where an Islamic girl wants to wear a hijab in the dance competition was changed to the girl who has to bring a lunch box when non-halal ingredients are used in school lunch.

A decorative graphic consisting of seven squares arranged in a 2x4 grid. The top row has an orange square, a blue square, and an empty square with an orange border. The bottom row has an empty square with a blue border, a blue square, and a blue square.

## 4. Tentative Results

1. Though the average inter-rater reliability (among 3 raters) was 0.81, when we looked into inter-rater reliabilities for 10 evaluation points, it varied from 0.57 (for categorization/factoring) to 0.92 (for understanding the situation). All reliability indices were lower than the previous study, which seems to be attributable to the lack of linguistic expressive ability. The average scores of elementary school students were quite low for most aspects (overall score: 8.3 for elementary school students vs. 12.1 for junior high students out of 40 points), and there were cases in which raters couldn't determine the scores due to lack of evidence.



# <Correlations bet. Checklist Evaluation and Test Scores> → Need improvement

Category	Correlation
Knowledge of Language (Items 1 – 3)	0.45
Knowledge of Culture (Items 4 – 8)	0.48
<b>Intercultural Attitude (Items 9 – 13)</b>	<b>0.59</b>
<b>Critical Thinking Skills (Items 14 – 16)</b>	<b>0.68</b>
<b>Generic Competencies (Items 17 – 20)</b>	<b>0.66</b>

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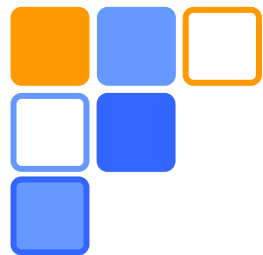
## 4. Tentative Results

2. Overall, students' evaluation and teacher evaluation by the checklist exhibited sufficient correlations (0.74) with little difference between junior high school and elementary school students. Compared to the results of university students and adults in the previous study, the correlation patterns were similar, but more agreement was seen so far. Quite often, Asian students report their abilities lower than the reality, but such tendency was not so apparent among younger students.



## <Future Directions>

2. Now we are in the process of fine-tuning the essay-test items that have been constructed for younger students. We will improve them, taking the characteristics of younger subjects into account as well as reexamining the representation of descriptors in each essay-test item. It is hoped that the accumulation of more data from different age groups will help us seek the best combination of these 2 assessment devices for more accurate diagnosis of each person's readiness or potentials to become a global citizen. As data accumulates, our final aim (though difficult) is to construct a computer-based diagnostic system for global citizenship.



# Thank you so much for listening!

email address: [mkahoko@tsc.u-tokai.ac.jp](mailto:mkahoko@tsc.u-tokai.ac.jp)