

# **Active Education: a report on Campus Creative Discussion at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies**

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([www.creativediscussion.org](http://www.creativediscussion.org))

## **Introduction**

An experiment with small group discussion outside of class is being carried out at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies involving students whose major or minor foreign language is English. This is now the second year and involves some 200 students who have volunteered in the classes of 10-12 teachers who have offered to promote these discussions.

Campus Creative Discussion provides university students the opportunity of meeting regularly on campus in small groups for the purpose of discussing “important ideas”. Where a foreign language is being studied, this language will generally be used in these discussions.

Students are allocated to a group so as to maximise diversity among the members, where possible one student from each year, mixed male and female students, and from different departments or faculties. The members of the group meet once a week in their own free time and wherever is convenient, most commonly while having lunch.

This paper is virtually written by the students. For most of the paper I let the words of the students speak for themselves. Even the choice of topics is determined largely by the issues students referred to in their reports on Campus Creative Discussion. I simply put them together in a logical order and let them express their feelings and motivation.

This approach in fact reflects the purpose of Creative Discussion itself which is to let the students speak for themselves, among themselves, in a way that serious topics can be discussed in a cooperative manner.

I have not indicated the name or gender of each contributor (each group was mixed, with at least one male student). I have however indicated the academic year as this is often an important element in understanding the roles within the group.

I have made minor changes to some of the texts – to avoid the reader being surprised by idiosyncratic expressions, and to avoid distracting from the message conveyed by each group participant.

## **General principles**

### **Active education**

**Education requires the active participation of the student.** In the classroom, interactive discussion groups allow the students to maximise their active participation. Outside the classroom, students can continue their education process by participating in creative discussion groups.

The same basic principle of **active, creative, participatory education** applies to both. In the classroom this can be provided by the **Plain Pair Group** approach to classroom management (for lecture class or communication class). Outside the

classroom, **Campus Creative Discussion** groups bring together students from different academic years to share their knowledge and discoveries in learning.

In a foreign language university, students are encouraged to use the **foreign language(s)** being studied in discussion groups both in the classroom and on campus. Where foreign languages are not central to the study programme, discussion groups in lecture classes and on campus would generally take place in the first language.

The same principles can apply to faculty development/teacher development. Interactive discussion groups can provide a dynamic participatory element to **peer faculty development** sessions, following the Plain Pair Group process.

For information on Plain Pair Groups and Campus Creative Discussion see:  
**[www.creativediscussion.org](http://www.creativediscussion.org)**

With Campus Creative Discussion (as also with Plain Pair Group Teaching), every student makes a **presentation** every meeting (or every class). They also **listen attentively** to several other presentations, watching for new ideas or **'insights'**, thus developing their **creativity**.

### **Plain Pair Groups**

In the classroom, an **intense teacher-centred lecture or presentation period is alternated with entirely student-centred small group discussion**. Each student belongs to a **'home group'** (unchanged during the semester) where they deepen their understanding of the lecture or present the results of their own research during the week. Each student then joins a **'pair group'**, made up of one member of each 'home group'. Here they widen their knowledge as each person presents the 'best ideas' from their own group.

Students in a class using the Plain Pair Group method will be able to present the 'best ideas' from the class discussions to their Campus Creative Discussion group. The campus group then becomes the 'pair group' to the 'home group' in class. **If the teacher integrates Campus Creative Discussion into his/her class**, there may be a short period where students present the 'best ideas' from the campus discussion to the class 'home group'.

Students in Campus Creative Discussion groups are invited to **form other discussion groups, on campus, at home, among their friends**. Each student would then bring ideas from that group back to the campus discussion group – and vice versa. Each group would thus become a 'pair group' to the other. This process would **create an expanding network of creative discussion groups**, and of individual and collective creativity.

The same process can also apply to teachers. Small **informal and voluntary 'peer faculty development' discussion groups** who meet following the same principles of creative discussion and pair groups could generate a **dynamic of educational awareness** which would be of great benefit to the university and the students.

## **Campus discussion**

### **Advantages**

Students see a number of specific advantages from taking part in creative discussion.

I think this creative discussion gives us a good opportunity to speak in English, think something important, and talk with students of other years we haven't met because we usually don't have an opportunity like this in our daily lives. It was good that all of us could learn something through the discussion. (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)

### **Outside of class**

A notable factor is that these discussions take place outside of a structured class environment and that the student chooses to take part, unlike attendance in class where learning is obligatory and directed.

Joining Creative Discussion gives us a good opportunity to speak English voluntarily. (1<sup>st</sup> Year)

Campus Creative Discussion brings both language learning and education into their personal life.

We can have good opportunities to state and express our opinions freely, other than in classes. It is important to speak English in class, however, I think it is not enough to do so. In other words, we need to make it a rule to practice speaking English not only in class but also in our daily lives. (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)

Although many would like to bring their foreign language(s) into their daily communication with friends on campus, this is often not so easy.

I enjoy having a discussion with my members because I like to speak English. I try to talk with my friends in English, but many of them aren't interested in it, so I am happy to have the opportunity to speak English and improve my speaking ability because of this discussion group. (1<sup>st</sup> Year)

The most efficient means of learning a language is to make communication in that language a 'natural' part of one's interactions, especially with people we interact with anyway.

I thought it was important to talk with not only native speakers such as teachers of PUT, but also students of about the same age. We are the same age, so we have a lot of common topics, for example, living alone, studying abroad and so on. Therefore, now I enjoy this group discussion. (1<sup>st</sup> Year)

### **All departments**

A university campus tends almost inevitably to become divided along departmental or faculty lines. Communication between students studying quite different courses is often very limited. Providing a means to cross this barrier can be seen as enriching.

Our group also has another department student. This was first time to talk with Chinese department student. (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)

It also provides an opportunity for a student to practice their second foreign language, and to access topics and ideas discussed in other courses.

It is too difficult for me to speak English because I major in Chinese now. But talking about my ideas in English is very interesting. We have discussed many things. For example, the global warming and official approval of English. I knew the ideas of each person. It was valuable for me! (1<sup>st</sup> Year)

### **Meeting others**

During their four years on campus a student tends to meet others and make friends in the fairly narrow range of course and year they belong to. It is often not very easy to make contact with other people.

If there were no chance to do Campus Creative Discussion, I would not have met and talked with my members of the group through my campus life. Now, I have got a great opportunity to meet some students who I did not know at all. Knowing others that you might pass in the corridor is miraculous. Also, getting interested in the members and spending time together is wonderful for us. (4<sup>th</sup> Year)

The various clubs to some extent provide the opportunity to widen one's group of contacts within the context of the club activity and social structure, but not all choose to join a club.

I think it is a very good place to exchange a lot of information. Because I don't belong to a club in this university, I'm happy to meet my juniors. I want to get along with them more and discuss various things in English. (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)

The informal nature of a discussion group provides a setting in which students of different years can meet and interact in a way that does not reinforce roles of seniority or even primacy of knowledge.

I think this creative discussion gives us a good opportunity to speak in English, think something important, and talk with students of other years we haven't met because we usually don't have an opportunity like this in our daily lives. It was good that all of us could learn something through the discussion. (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)

In this way students have the opportunity to make a wider range of friendships which can be an invaluable support in many ways.

It was a good chance to make new friends who are not the same grade or who we normally can't communicate with. I think we sometimes should have this situation at university. (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)

## **The group**

### **Organising the group**

In the present format, students receive a list of group members and each person is asked to make contact with the others in order to decide when and where to meet. This in fact is not an easy step for many to take, although in most groups one person at least managed to take the first step to enable the group to start meeting. This process of making contact with others was presented as a good means of gaining additional experience which would be useful in searching for a job at the end of their degree and in future employment.

At first I didn't want to do the discussion because I wasn't sure if I would be able to talk well with students who I didn't know. What was worse, I myself had to contact the members because they didn't start to contact. I succeeded to do that, but I was so nervous before the first discussion. However, the members were good, though our grade was different, and we could talk delightfully. (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)

### **Preparation**

At the very beginning it takes a while for the group members to establish a means of functioning.

This week, I had a meeting with two members from my group. We had forgotten that we had a meeting that day. So no one brought a topic. We talked about how we spent the weekend. Then we made up our mind to discuss our future and country we had been to or want to go to. These topics were rough topics but we could develop them and it was so nice to get to know each other. We have just begun campus creative discussion so we are not sure how to organise this but I'm trying to lead them. It is a good chance for me. (4<sup>th</sup> Year)

Most students seem to have understood that these discussion groups offer possibilities that are quite distinct to the NUS "Language Lounge" which provides an excellent

opportunity for informal conversation, among Japanese students and with exchange students. Campus creative discussion on the other hand has a more specifically educational component. It is concerned with ideas, with a choice of 'serious' topics. As a result a certain preparation is necessary.

I think creative discussion is very useful, because we can exchange new information. Last time, I wanted to speak English, but I do not have much vocabulary, and also my preparation was not enough. Therefore, I thought preparation is important to speak English fluently. (3rd Year)

I learned I should decide the topics I want to talk about before the discussion so by thinking about the topic in advance I can concentrate on just speaking in English during the discussion. (2nd Year)

Developing discussion skills does of course take time and student awareness of their own shortcomings enable them to find ways to improve in the future.

Next semester, we'll decide the following week's topic after discussion finishes. We try not to just have a talk, but to make a more active discussion. (3rd Year)

For some students, this is already the second year they have been involved in discussion groups outside of class. The experience gained definitely helps them when they join a new group the following year.

In creative discussion last year I met with two third year students (student writing was then 2nd Year). They were very cute and kind. We talked about our class, part-time jobs, studying abroad, etc. When I met them the first time, I was nervous. However, I could socialize with them. I was accustomed to contact with members of creative discussion this year, because I did it last year. (3rd Year)

As a way of helping students to make initial contact with their groups and also to give them advice on how best to conduct their creative discussion meetings, all groups meet at the same time (in a large lecture theatre) once or twice each semester. Here they can receive useful information about the purpose of creative discussion and the best ways to proceed.

I went to a creative discussion on Wednesday. It was held by Mr. Plain, with our group and other groups in the same classroom. We have 4 people in our group. We spoke about school life, ourselves, and so on. Mr. Plain talked about the goal of creative discussion and how we can best do a creative discussion. (unknown)

### **Getting together**

Organising meetings among a large number of students is not without its difficulties. One of the most intractable for students is finding a moment when all members are free to meet.

We have a problem. It's a little difficult that all members meet at the same time. (3rd Year)

For an individual student this can sometimes be solved by changing places with a student from another group. One spontaneous solution which emerged is to occasionally join two groups.

Last Friday, I had a creative discussion. Five people took part in it. Two other people from my group could not come this time. Actually another group joined with my group. (3rd Year)

What is important however is that someone meets each week, even if only two people can come.

Unfortunately, two of us couldn't come this week but we didn't cancel. The other student was a freshman, so we talked about school life. I hope that everyone can come next time. (3rd Year)

## Results

### Education

Campus Creative Discussion allows students to meet students in other years, to make new friends, to learn to communicate much better in the foreign language – and to have fun. However, creative discussion is concerned principally with education.

Campus creative discussion is a very good opportunity for us to exchange ideas and practice speaking in English. We focus on one important topic every week, so it's also good for us to know important news or things. We should think about them even in Japanese. We can broaden our horizons. (3rd Year)

Discussing 'serious topics' (chosen by the students themselves) is not always easy, but students are generally aware of the importance of increasing their knowledge about a wide range of areas. In the discussion groups, each person often encounters, and becomes interested in, ideas outside of those they normally meet in their own reading, following current events, etc – and even outside of what they meet in their classes, whether in the foreign language or in Japanese.

We get together and talk about a few topics on Thursday at lunchtime. Most of the time the topic of discussion is very difficult, so it is hard to talk in English and sometimes we use Japanese. And sometimes someone can't understand what we are talking about even in Japanese maybe because they aren't interested in those kinds of topic and don't like to watch TV news. But we all have our opinion and discuss about it. We were very positive in the discussion, and I could learn many things. (2nd Year)

A group of people who meet regularly for discussion will inevitably find that people have different opinions, and that the beliefs that I hold can easily be challenged, above all by myself. This process of challenging my own views, listening attentively to those of others – and thinking – is an integral part of education.

One thing is that we can broaden our ways of thinking by exchanging thoughts and opinions with each other. We have our own schools of thought on everything, and more or less we are confident our own thoughts are probably right. However, in the discussion, I heard different kinds of opinions I have never thought about, even if we set only one topic, and I noticed this discussion is quite meaningful not only for speaking in English but also for expanding our horizons. It doesn't matter whether our opinion is right or not. (3rd Year)

Discussion groups are not only a part of education while at university, but can also help the student prepare for whatever role they wish to take in the future, and to understand the world they will live and work in.

There was a student who wants to work as a teacher in a poor country, but she said that she has no idea what to do for now. I thought it is a good chance for her to know how our world is moving or working now by giving her basic knowledge about world problems. I want to use creative discussion not only to discuss something but also the opportunity to think about our future and to broaden my horizon. (4th Year)

### Language

Campus Creative Discussion is a means of promoting education through peer interaction in small groups outside of the classroom. The communication and education process can take place in any language. Creative discussion groups could thus be formed in any department and the language used would be the language taught in that department – English, French, Chinese – or Japanese. Students could also choose to join a discussion group in their minor language. The principle of creative discussion could just as usefully be applied to a university campus which does not teach foreign languages but wants to foster autonomy in educational development across the campus, joining students of different faculties and different

years. This would take place in the national language of the university, in whatever country.

On a foreign language campus, developing communication skills in the foreign language is essential. Students are aware of this and in these groups show they are willing to take every opportunity to use the language they are learning even if “the teacher is not watching”.

My group members are very friendly and positive about talking in English. The 4th year student can speak English very well but the freshman and 2nd year student are not so good but they speak English very positively. Most people are at first ashamed to speak in English but now they are having a lot of fun speaking English. (3rd Year)

The challenge of using a foreign language for a complex discussion is of course considerable, and the goal of using only that language may take some time to reach.

Our 1st year student is very cute and I like her. She cannot speak English fluently, but she tries to speak a lot. We do creative discussion every Thursday lunchtime. We try to speak English as much as possible, but sometimes we speak Japanese when we talk about a difficult topic. I think we speak 80% English and 20% Japanese. Creative discussion gives us a more positive attitude to speaking English. I did not like to speak English to Japanese students, but I try to do my best because I am the oldest person in the group. (3rd Year)

Sometimes using the first language is inevitable, and is in itself a natural part of communication in what is in effect a bilingual context.

My group's topics were sometimes difficult. Of course, we tried to speak only in English, but sometimes we couldn't translate thoughts or opinions from Japanese into English. We asked each other how to say so-and-so in English. However, when we couldn't find the words, we spoke in Japanese occasionally. (3rd Year)

Although most will use the foreign language, it is not necessary that each person use English (in this case). Communication can work well even if one person continues using Japanese. The topics discussed can be on a level of complexity that they even bring about the need for periods of silent thought – remember that the topics are chosen by the students themselves.

A 3rd year girl and I use English, but one girl uses Japanese a lot. Recently, we talked about education problems and the meaning of job hunting. A 3rd year student has many ideas and knowledge, so I enjoyed her talk. All three of us have own idea in every opinion, but topics are too difficult and sometimes we stop our conversation and go to “thinking time”. (2nd Year)

However everyone seems to be “doing their best”.

I think that it is good for students to have a creative discussion. We seldom have an opportunity to talk with friends in English except classes, so we can get used to speaking English in this discussion. We sometimes use Japanese to explain difficult things when we don't know how to express them. Also, we try to explain what we want to say with a lot of words and we change the way to express the word with other English words in order that everyone can understand what we are talking about. We can exchange our information and know a lot of things. (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)

And helping each other.

My group's topics were sometimes difficult. We talked about problems of the national anthem, education free from stress and studying abroad. Of course, we tried to speak only in English, but sometimes we couldn't translate thoughts or opinions from Japanese into English. We asked each other how to say so-and-so in English. Sometimes we were at a loss for words, but we had a good discussion. (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)

The other students except me are freshmen, so I often advise them. We sometimes use Japanese, but only when it's difficult to say in English. All students enjoy this discussion. (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)

### **Sharing ideas**

An essential aspect of Campus Creative Discussion is that it is a sharing of ideas, looking for new ways of thinking. It is not a way to “sell” our own ideas, to debate, to convince.

We could know other people's thoughts and feelings, so we could deepen our knowledge. Everyone has their own decided opinions. There were neither right answers nor wrong answers in our discussion, so everyone could give opinions without a shade of hesitation. I think that was good. (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)

Even more important than presenting one's ideas is listening to the ideas of others, searching for new ideas, which is a principle component of creativity. The actual moment of discovery, the realisation that a new idea is particularly relevant is the moment of insight and is recognised by some students who have more experience in this process.

In addition, by sharing topics and ideas, it is possible that our mind gets some stimulus for insight. (4<sup>th</sup> Year)

Both communication and creativity are a cooperative endeavour. Helping each other is an integral part of this, which often involves the senior student in the group.

Helping others to express their ideas is difficult, but not impossible. In Campus Creative Discussion, I sometimes help other members to express their ideas by asking questions which help the speaker to express the idea more easily and effectively. In my group, there are two freshmen, and they cannot speak actively. Therefore, I often ask questions. As I do so, they tell me their opinion. Moreover, their opinions are interesting. Senior students can provide the equal opportunities of speaking in English to all members by asking or by other devices. (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)

## **Individuals**

### **Sharing experience**

Campus Creative Discussion permits close ongoing interaction among students from different years. Ideally each group has a 1st Year, a 2nd Year, a 3rd Year and a 4th Year student, with a total number of 4 or 5. As these groups are made up of students who have volunteered to join, not all years are always represented but it has been possible to have quite a range of years in each group. This is seen as important by the students.

I could enjoy discussing with students who are in a different grade from me. (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)

This is seen as a positive experience in both directions. The younger students welcome the chance of meeting older students and obtaining help and advice.

I'm glad to talk with seniors. They gave me advice about many things. Our relationship is very good and we have a good discussion. (1<sup>st</sup> Year)

There is one more thing which I am pleased with, that is this activity gave me a chance to get to know seniors. I have few chances to meet the seniors, so I am happy with my situation, too. They are more experienced than me, so I can ask them about school life and so on. (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)

The 4<sup>th</sup> year student has been abroad, so she can speak well. Listening to her experience is good for our campus life. (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)



The older students also are glad to be able to share their experience with those who are just starting. They often remember the problems they had and hope to help others to avoid the same problems.

Thanks to the creative discussion, I had a good opportunity to meet students from earlier years. In this discussion I understood some worries they had. I realized that when I was a freshman, I had the same problems. I advised them about these worries. (3rd Year)

The discussion groups also allow the senior student to give specific advice to the younger students which can be very helpful.

One of the members was confused about reports for homework. The form of homework in the university is different from high school. We need to find bibliographies. I recommended going to the library and reading the newspapers there. Another member worried about living alone near the university. We thought that society became more dangerous. I told her to be careful to leave the room door locked and not to go out at midnight. (3rd Year)

Being the older student in a small ongoing group develops a sense of responsibility in older student.

Actually, I feel pressure in the creative discussion because I have to lead my group. My group has 4 people, 2 first year students, 1 fourth year student and me. The 4th year student has to go job hunting, so I know I have to take the lead. (3rd Year)

However the structure of the creative discussion group does not give the senior student a role of authority. Each person soon realises that good ideas can come from anyone in the group.

In the creative discussion, I'm the only senior student. First, I felt a pressure that "I have to lead them!". However, last time it went well when I listened to their talks and asked questions. When I ask a person what he/she is interested in, they can talk easily and I can know more about them. So, I'll try to be a good "listener". (3rd Year)

These meetings are seen as a good opportunity which students are happy to find before their studies finish.

I think creative discussion is a good opportunity to talk to other students such as 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students. We 4th grade students normally do not have a chance to meet students who are younger than us except club activities. I can learn about how different their classes are from my own classes which I took before and what they think about the university or issues like politics and environmental problems. In addition, it is also a good chance for young students to get useful information from older students about classes, clubs, and school facilities. Creative discussion is a good opportunity to receive new thoughts and ideas from others. (4th Year)

### **From strangers to friends**

Meeting other students you don't know, joining a group with older or younger people, was for many a source of initial difficulty.

First I was very nervous to have a conversation with unknown people because I am a shy girl. But when I met them, I felt okay because they were so kind and we talked about ourselves and part-time jobs and school life and so on. (2nd Year)

Before the first discussion, I was so nervous because it seemed hard for me to have conversations with people that I had never met before, but after talking for minutes we became more and more friendly. (3rd Year)

The fact of speaking English outside of class can also be seen as unusual. For some speaking English is in itself is the source of difficulty.

I felt it is a little difficult to talk in English outside of the class. Also we didn't know about the group member so much. So we were very embarrassed talking with them in English. (3rd Year)

When I speak English, I am so nervous that I always speak so quickly. (1st Year)  
 However, even if fellow students can be seen initially as complete strangers, this feeling soon disappears.

I do not like to talk with strangers, because we do not know each other very well. Last week was the first time we met. We introduced ourselves to each other. It was really fun for me to meet students of other grades. (3rd year)

However the various difficulties of meeting new people are soon replaced by pleasure.

I really enjoyed it. (2nd Year)

I enjoy meeting members of my group for lunch. (1st Year)

I'm happy to recognize the pleasure of speaking English with fun through this discussion. (1st Year)

And friendships soon emerge from the meeting

Though the others in this group are first year students they are good speakers and I really enjoyed this discussion. A few weeks ago, one more member joined our group. First, she was so shy that she spoke English very little, but we soon become good friends during discussion. (2nd Year)

Another good point of this discussion is that the group members were unknown for me, therefore we have a lot of topics to talk about. Also through the discussion I can make new friends. (3rd Year)

## **Topics**

### **Choice of topic**

The Campus Creative Discussion group is not simply a place to meet and have a conversation in English. The principle element is a presentation of one's ideas, each person taking their turn, while the others listen attentively, looking actively for new ideas.

The choice of topic then is very important. A deliberate decision has been made to avoid giving a series of topics which "should" be discussed, and to leave the choice of topic purely to each individual. In fact, in general it is better for each student to choose their own topic each week rather than having the group choose a single topic in order to avoid one or two people deciding for the others.

The purpose of creative discussion is to provide a discussion forum which is free of all forms of authority, not only of the classroom and teacher, but also of the person organising the creative discussion system.

Giving total freedom to choose can be initially difficult, at least in a few groups.

It was very difficult for us to decide our topics, because we have different knowledge and experiences. Discussions were not so exciting but we tried to express our opinions or ideas as well as we could. This is very important for studying English, and it is also useful to enrich our way of thinking. (3rd Year)

For most groups however, there was no initial difficulty and a very wide range of topics immediately presented themselves.

In the last creative discussion, we talked about our plans for summer. Everyone had a wonderful plan for the summer vacation. For example, go for a trip, to the sea, camp, summer festival and so on. We talked about the countries we have been to and the countries we want to go in the future. (3rd Year)

I chose smoking for my topic for Creative Discussion. It is because a few weeks ago there was a campaign of stop smoking so I think it is a good topic. I explained why I disagree with smoking. First, smoking is bad for our health, in fact my grandfather

suffered from throat cancer. Second is the smell of cigarettes. I dislike that. Third, children might be harmed by the person who is smoking. (2nd Year)

We talked mainly about movies. She liked watching movies very much and knew a variety of movies. When I listened to her story, I was tempted to watch movies. Watching movies is a useful tool to improve my English, so I'm going to do it more. (2nd Year)

We talked about diet. There are both good and bad ways of dieting and diet by eating nothing or using medicine are not good for our health. Eating healthy foods, keeping regular life, and doing exercise are better. I think there are many dieters who don't need it actually but many people want to be more beautiful. Although I want to be beautiful and thin, it is difficult for me to keep doing a diet. (2nd Year)

I had a discussion with one of my members on peace this week. She is a fourth year student and takes a class on peace. So, she has a lot of information about it and her opinion. The issue is difficult to find the answers. I told her about a TV program on what peace is. It may help us by thinking about peace deeply and deeply. (2nd Year)

In creative discussion, we talked about globalization. He was interested in globalization and said that he sometimes researched about it. In his opinion, he thinks it works as world peace. He said that if we can share and understand the cultures and the thoughts, we can make a better world. I agreed with part of his opinion, but it is difficult to realize, because globalization is connected to economics. When one country thinks of making huge profits, other countries have to be poor. We have to think of a way of happy life for all the people. (4th Year)

### **University programme**

One suggestion for choosing a topic is to take interesting ideas from lectures or other classes. By making the link between the subjects studied in class and the discussion group outside of class, creative discussion is more obviously a part of educational development.

The members of the creative discussion meet every week at lunchtime. We are supposed to discuss some topics in English. For the first time I felt that this was a little bit difficult. However gradually I began to realize that this is a very good chance to exchange some good ideas that we bring from our discussion in the original class. (3rd Year)

Not only can ideas come from the classes, but the classes and the teachers are themselves an interesting topic of discussion.

We talked how school was going on and what we learn in English classes. We could exchange our opinions about English classes and teachers, because there are people from different grades. (2nd Year)

Last week's creative discussion, we were talking about the school program. The 1st year student did not know about the school curriculum and teachers very much, so the 2nd year student and I explained what is oral and writing advanced classes. I want her to try the advanced class next year. We also talked about teachers. There are many teachers whose class I have never taken. We want to choose teachers, and this can help us. (3rd Year)

This discussion can help students to better choose their university programme or make use of other programmes offered by the university.

Last year I did Creative Discussion. All of my group members were older than I. They told me about their experiences in NUFS and foreign countries. The story helped me to choose this year's seminar and classes, and to think about studying in foreign countries. This time, I am senior to my group members, so I would like to help them. (3rd Year)

### **Career and part time job**

Discussions were also concerned with what students do outside of university and what they will do when they finish their studies. Part time jobs are frequently discussed, and good advice can be very useful.

We talked about our part-time job. Another member works at a bar, so she comes back home very late and she does not have enough time to sleep. In my opinion, a part-time job is a good chance to learn about society but we should not work too hard because we are students, so we have to study the most. Some students do not understand this, therefore they sleep in classes. She said that she wants to quit her job, which I hope she can do. (3rd Year)

Many also discussed their job hunting and the process of choosing a future career, and how best to make use of university facilities to help with the search for a particular job. In this area older students often have specific knowledge which can be very helpful.

We talked about our dreams. Actually I want to be a Passenger Service Agent at the airport. I go to vocational school making use of a special plan in this university. One girl wants to be a cabin crew, and another is also interested in working at the airport, so I advised them how to learn and which public test to take. (3rd Year)

Again it is not only the older students who help the younger, the senior student can often learn much from the younger.

There are 4 members from each year in my Creative Discussion Group. I am the oldest, so I am interested in what younger students think and say. Now, I am in a difficult period of job hunting, so I asked them what they want to be after graduation because I did not have some specific dream when I was a freshman or sophomore. However, each member has some dreams for the future. To my surprise, one of them has already started studying to be a teacher. And a third-year-student started facing her future and gathering information to be a wedding planner. I really think that it is interesting to listen to others. (4th Year)

In addition, participating in creative discussion groups in itself would provide experience and increased skills in organising and communicating in groups, in thinking about and presenting ideas, and in regular interaction with others about serious topics. All of this will be of help in their future life, both at work and in their private life. It would also make an interesting addition to their portfolio when they go for a job interview.

### **Conclusion**

Campus Creative Discussion can be an important part of students' education and can help them to improve their language skills. Some students have reflected on their role in the discussion groups and are aware of the benefits they can obtain.

Through the Creative Discussion, I have talked about various kinds of topics and shared a really enjoyable and meaningful time with my group members. Thanks to this discussion, I learned two important things to improve my English skill. I believe they will support and continue motivating my English study now and in the future. One thing is that we can broaden our ways of thinking by exchanging thoughts and opinions with each other. Another thing is that we can have a good opportunity to state and express our opinions freely outside of classes. I really enjoy this discussion and I believe we can surely improve our English skills while enjoying talking with our group members. So, this discussion is now an essential occasion for me to make my English better and better. (3rd Year)