

ELI at Eastern: 25 Years of Excellence

By Erin Long-Kytonen

Dongheon Jung was anxious. It had been a long flight from Korea to Spokane. He and his family were jet-lagged and nervous about what would await them on the ground.

The purpose of the journey was clear in his mind – he had come to study English – but how would he and his family adjust to a new language, different food and a new way of life?

There was a friendly face at the airport. This person, an international peer advisor (IPA) from Eastern, helped Dongheon's family with their luggage, housing paperwork, utilities, grocery shopping – even took them to lunch.

“Due to his help, we finished our first day in the U.S. without trial or error,” Dongheon says. “My family and I will never forget that.”

Thanks to the English Language Institute (ELI) at Eastern, more and more students and professionals from around the world are coming to EWU.

“Eastern offered so many advantages – the availability of excellent teachers, a fine library, an excellent language lab, a beautiful campus – that I thought we could provide a wonderful opportunity for students to come here to improve their English language abilities,” said Ed Yarwood, who started the program in 1979 and today serves as the executive director.

The ELI now celebrates its 25th year of offering exceptional English language instruction to international students.

There's plenty to celebrate. Eastern's ELI was one of the first three programs in the nation to be given national accreditation by the Commission on English Language Accreditation in 1999; five years later, it's the only program to be going through reaccreditation. Add to this a prestigious

membership to the UCIEP (University and College Intensive English Programs) and it's clear that this is a program to be proud of.

The ELI's mission is to prepare students for further academic study or professional arenas where knowledge of English is needed.

Offerings include graduate level courses in business English skills and MBA preparation, as well as a core curriculum of intensive grammar, writing, reading and conversational English. Students typically complete the five-level program within three quarters, at which point many enroll in a degree program at Eastern or elsewhere.

Seventy-five percent of ELI students

plan to move into Eastern classes when their English ability reaches a desired level and, each quarter, 10 to 15 students do just that. In fact, the ELI is the main gateway through which most international students come to Eastern.

Such is the case for Dongheon, who completed his ELI study and is now two quarters into his MBA coursework at Eastern.

Having been a successful telecommunications professional in Korea, he found the writing component of the ELI of particular help to him.

“I was proud of my Korean writing and was once an editor for a publishing company,” he says. “But that ability was useless in English.”

“Study abroad is a life-changing experience for everyone. Once you've studied abroad, and studied another language, you're not the same.”



A sunny day on campus for Dongheon Jung and his wife Young-Ju, along with Mary Brooks, and the Jung children (front row, from left) daughter Ji-Won, 12, and son Gyung-Hwan, 14

The ELI instructors, he says, changed all that. "Their prompt response to questions were very appropriate, exact and practical," he remembers. "That kind of quality teaching leads to improvement of students' skills."

Eastern reaps a benefit, too, through the presence of an internationally diverse student body on campus. Seven countries are currently represented in the ELI, including students from Costa Rica, Romania and Cameroon. ELI students have come from more than 50 countries over the years, and there are usually 75 students enrolled each quarter.

Unfortunately, the aftermath of 9/11 has been detrimental to programs like the ELI, with a 25 percent nationwide decrease in international student enroll-

ment. Mary Brooks, ELI director, worries about the unintended consequences that strict homeland security measures have on study abroad programs.

Megan Mulvany, director of the Asia University America Program and former ELI instructor, agrees: "I can't imagine what my university life at EWU would have been like if I had not met and become friends with students in the ELI Program. Because of them, I ate my first piece of sushi, learned to barbecue Korean Bulgoki and ate from a communal plate with students from the Middle East."

Although Brooks travels extensively to recruit for the program, some of the best recruiting comes from ELI alumni. Dongheon was so pleased with the pro-

gram that his wife enrolled. The couple then brought their niece over from Korea so that she could go through the program, too. The family has enjoyed their experience so much that they've decided to stay in Cheney longer than originally planned. Their children attend Cheney schools.

In fact, many students like Dongheon regard their ELI study as a defining moment in their lives, which comes as no surprise to Mary Brooks.

"Study abroad is a life-changing experience for everyone," she says. "Once you've studied abroad, and studied another language, you're not the same."

There are roughly 650 university and college-affiliated English Language Programs in the United States.

ELI Student Finds Future at EWU

By Erin Long-Kytonen

Atsushi Inoue came to Eastern looking for his future — and he found it.

Originally from Kyoto, Japan, Inoue chose study abroad as his next step after graduating from high school in 1984. He knew little about international study, but had a feeling it would be "a cool thing to do." After researching several programs, Eastern's ELI program stood out to him as the best choice.

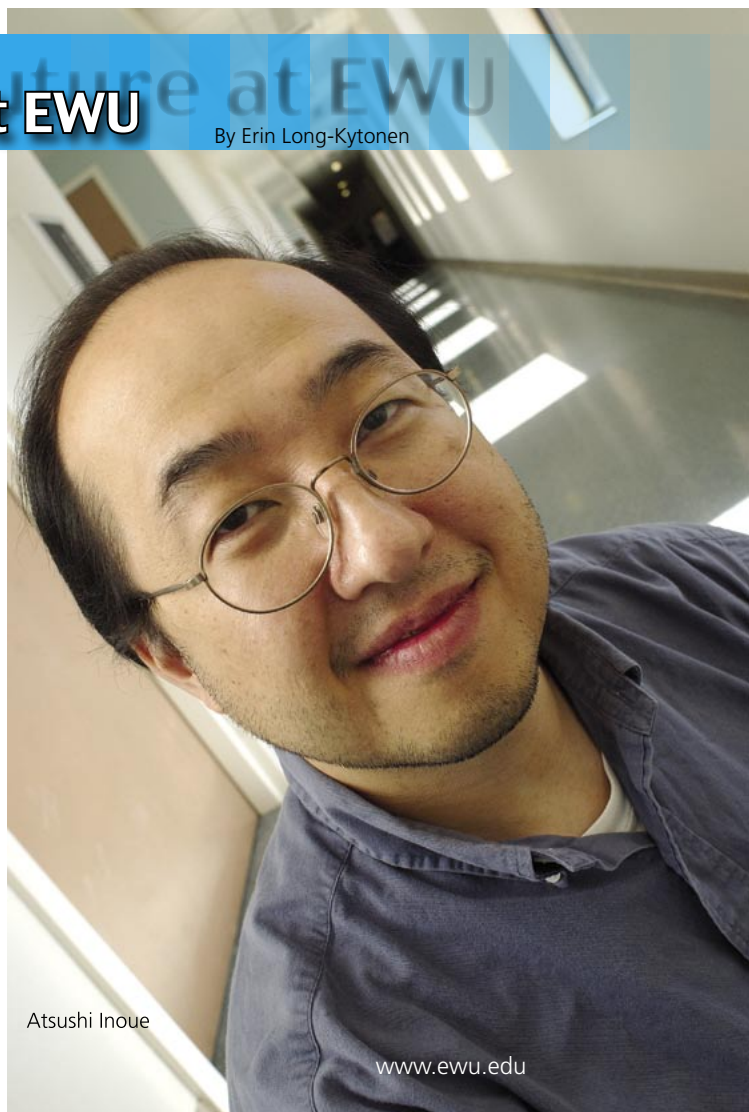
While his intention was to study English, he soon found that the ELI offered much more.

"Their mentoring was so extensive about American life in general," Inoue remembers. "They helped me figure out what would be best for myself."

He decided to continue his study at Eastern, finally returning to Japan after earning a BS ('89) and MS ('90) in computer science — but he never forgot about the quality of life he had experienced here.

As a result, he took the first opportunity to return to EWU after earning his doctorate from the University of Cincinnati — this time returning as a professor of computer science, specializing in fuzzy logic.

Now, 20 years after he first stepped foot on Eastern's campus, Atsushi Inoue seems to have found his future — a few buildings away from where he originally started looking for it.



Atsushi Inoue