



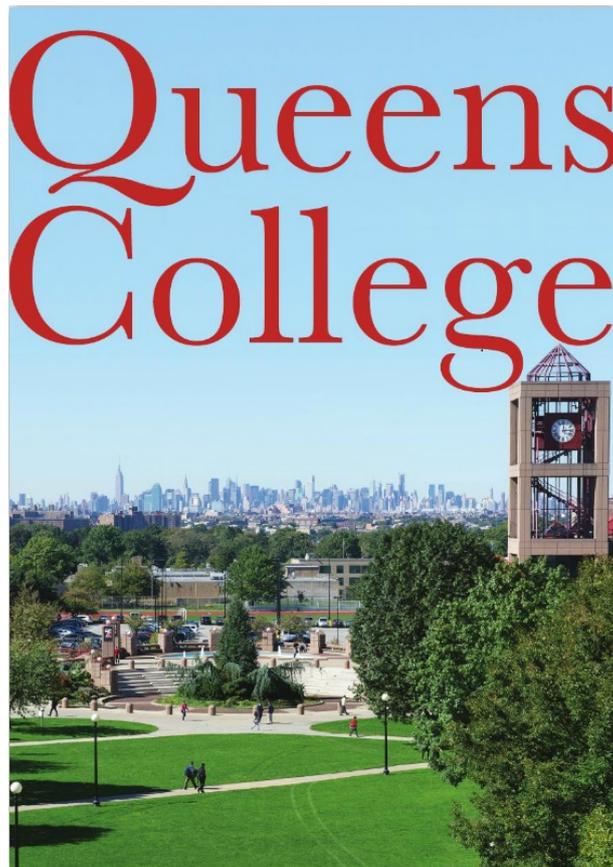
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Institute for Global Network Innovation in Technology Education

**Toyohashi University of Technology,  
Institute for Global Network Innovation in  
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**News from QC**

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## ■ Reports

### Memories of New York Life

Yuko Ichikawa, National Institute of Technology, Tokyo College

We have already finished the training program in Queens College. In New York I spent priceless time; I met many people, experienced various things and strengthened bonds between the colleagues. These six months was a dreamy time for me. From among what I experienced, I'm going to write in this report about the wrap up presentation, studying with students and playing the piano.

#### (1) Wrap up Presentation

In our training program we attended the course named "Teaching in English". In this course under the theme of "Teaching in English" we discussed about how we embrace the diversity of cultures and how we use the educational technology, and we listened to the speech from the Japanese professors who are teaching in Queens College. And we had a 15 minute presentation with a free theme as a final assignment of the course. We already had had a 15 minute presentation at the end of the training in TUT. At that time I felt fear for talking in English in front of people but this time I didn't feel fear and prepared for it. We practiced the presentation in the TIE class just before the real stage. We borrowed a classroom and also practiced it voluntarily outside of the class. Prof. Jennifer Valad took care of us and advised how we could improve it. The title of my presentation was "Mathematics in Music." I started talking about the relation between sine curves and sound, just intonation and equal temperament, why sound chords sound beautifully, and I introduced that these are the bridge to the Fourier analysis. My efforts paid off then and thanks to Jennifer, I had my best



#### Wrap up Presentation

presentation in the real stage and I was satisfied about it. I became to have a confidence to speak in English in front of people. I felt that I got closer to our goal that is teaching in English.

#### (2) Studying with students

My credit course was "Linear Algebra II", which was taught by Prof. Kenneth Kramer. He taught the classes with precise writing on blackboard and proper talking without a textbook. It was a shame that only less than ten students took this wonderful course. I got warm welcome from them and we gradually became to talk frankly. One day he asked me "Yuko, do you know the Japanese mathematician Hironaka?" Why don't I know? He told me that he learned calculus from Heisuke Hironaka, one of the most famous mathematicians not only in Japan but also all over the world.

During the semester we had two midterm exams, one report and the final exam. One of the classmates asked me "Hey Yuko, we are going to study together for the exam. Do you want to join us?" I said yes because it must be a good chance for English conversation. We studied together several times: in the classroom during weekends, in a common room of the

math department, and in the library. I mainly taught them because I'm a math teacher. "Yuko, check my proof," "I can't understand this proof" and so on. They tried hard to understand my poor English and said "Okay, I understood what you want to say." I still can't speak English fluently but anyway I could convey what I wanted to say.

By the way Prof. Kramer invited me to a party for the math department. At the party many people gathered in the common room and enjoy eating China food and talking. I had a lot of fun. Some students who studied with me were there. At the end of it when the chair professor of the math department addressed, one of the student said to me "Yuko, you should make a presentation to him, then you can get a job and stay here." I was very happy to hear that and thought if I were 20 year younger, I would do that.

### (3) Piano

Another thing I worked on other than English is playing the piano. Queens College has a music school: Aarons Copland School of Music. Since I would like to take piano lessons from one of the professors at that school, I asked Prof. Steven about it. He introduced me to Prof. Jane Cho, who is the dean of the music school. She arranged things so that I could take a lesson from Prof. Konstanza Chernov.

In the Summit apartment where we lived there are two music rooms with grand pianos. Students who live in Summit may use them freely. In the music building there are many small practice rooms with an upright piano and several studios with a grand piano. I negotiated to use them and got a key to those rooms.

In the piano lessons Prof. Konstanza described how to play in many ways and always asked me, "Do you understand what I mean?" So I never confused at any time in her

lesson. Those were very good occasion for English communication.

After I went to New York I had many chances to introduce myself and always said, "Playing the piano is my favorite activity." One day Jane emailed Prof. Eva Fernandez and me: "Yuko, Please let me know if you would like to extend your concert to others... Eva would like to hear you play and so would I..." I have not had own recital except for the concerts in which I played as one of many participants. I'm not a professional and it was sheer arrogance to think that I should have my own recital. But Konstanza said, "It is your decision." So I made up my mind to have it. I decided pieces to play and started preparing for it. The fact that I



## Recital

**Yuko Ichikawa**

Friday, December 11, 2015 6:00 pm  
Aaron Copland School of Music  
Queens College, CUNY

Recital Hall

*Piano Sonata No.21 in C major, op.53* L. v. Beethoven  
III. Rondo. Allegretto moderato – Prestissimo

*Kinderszenen, op. 15* R. Schumann  
VII. Träumerei

*Ballade No.1 in G minor, op.23* F. Chopin

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**Beethoven: Piano Sonata No.21 in C major, op. 53 (Third Movement)**  
One of Beethoven's great middle-period works, this sonata is one of his most famous. It was dedicated to Count Ferdinand Ernst Gabriel von Waldstein and has thus acquired the nickname "Waldstein" as a term of endearment. At 543 measures, the 3rd movement is the longest in all of the Beethoven's sonatas. This C major work is powerful, clear and bright.

**Schumann: Kinderszenen, op. 15 (VII: Träumerei)**  
Träumerei is the seventh piece of *Kinderszenen's* 13 pieces and the most famous of them. Träumerei means "dream." It is small, but very lovely.

**Chopin: Ballade No.1 in G minor, op. 23**  
The *Ballade No.1* is the masterpiece of Chopin's early period. Composed in his Paris era, it is nostalgic for his hometown in Poland. Of Chopin's four Ballades, each of them very poetic and dramatic, the *Ballade No.1* is the most popular of them.

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**Yuko Ichikawa** is a mathematics professor at the National Institute of Technology, Tokyo College, in Japan. She took piano lessons between the ages of 4 and 17, but stopped playing when she enrolled a college. About ten years ago, she started playing again, and is currently taking lessons with Professor Konstanza Chernov of Queens College.

could play even late at night made me able to practice much longer.

The location and date were decided at the beginning of December. I emailed and invited all the people who I knew in New York. At the recital about 30 people gathered and enjoyed my piano. After my performance, Prof. Kobayashi played her accordion and people also enjoyed it as well. To tell the truth, I was not satisfied with my performance so much because I had made some mistakes and I was not at my best. But I really enjoyed playing. It might be the only chance to have my own recital. I really appreciate everybody's help. Thank you for your help! Thank you for

coming! It is definitely the most precious memory during my New York Life.

One of the teachers who attended this training course last year said to us "You should read 'Banana Fish'<sup>5</sup>" before you go to New York." So I dared to bring 12 comic books in the carry-on baggage. During six months, we lived in the scene of this story. I can imagine the scene; "The local train of F line to Coney Island stops running from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m..."

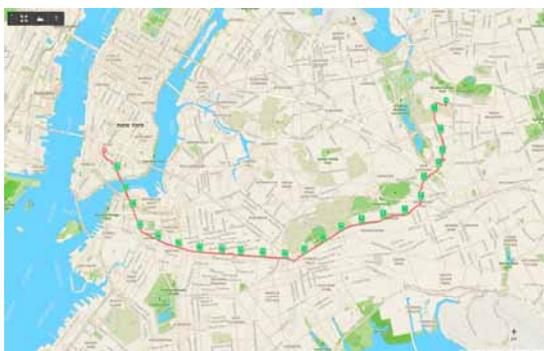
Thank you very much.

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<sup>5</sup> Akimi Yoshida, 1985-1994, Shogakkan. The hard-boiled story in New York City.

## Wrap-up our roundabout walking in New York

Tomoyoshi Akiba, Toyohashi University of Technology



Today's walking route.

*Since the morning following the thanksgiving day was fine, I decided to walk to Manhattan again. Indeed, I had already had a walk from Queens Collage to Manhattan three times, so it was my fourth trial. In this time, I planned to take a roundabout way to walk along with the J/Z line, which goes from southern part of Queens through the center of Brooklyn to Lower Manhattan. At the beginning, I started to listen to one of my favorite*

*podcasts<sup>6</sup>, as is usual with my walking. However, at that time, I suddenly changed my mind, stopped playing it, and started to think about the thesis for this article. "What have we done in New York?"*

We first came to Queens College on June 28th, and started to join the English learning courses given by English Language Institute (ELI). We attended two sessions a day, Monday to Thursday a week. On Friday, we also attended the special lectures on various research topics provided just for us by the faculties. We built relationships with our ELI teachers, classmates, QC faculties, and students who came to be known at the campus. Through these classes and daily lives, we were exposed to English every day and, I suppose, improved our skills day by day.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://allearsenglish.com>

*After walking to south from Queens College to Kew Gardens for nearly an hour, I turned to west toward Manhattan. From here, the route was along with the J/Z line of New York metro, which goes not underground but on an elevated railway on the way at Queens and Brooklyn. The shopping street is also running below it, which is one of my favorite scenes in New York. I enjoyed seeing a variety of shops and kept walking.*

Our turning point was at the end of the ELI classes, the middle of August. After finishing the final exam of the summer semester, we felt a sense of fulfillment of completing our first mission at Queens College. We enjoyed a short holiday and started to prepare our forthcoming challenges.

*The road came into a residential area where I saw many old-fashioned apartments built of bricks, then into a beautiful shopping street crowded with a lot of people. So, I noticed that I was already in Brooklyn, which meant I had passed the halfway.*

From the August 27th, our second mission was started. It was to attend the regular courses in fall semester given by Queens College from Monday to Thursday. We also started to attend special English courses given just for us, GFD members, on every Friday. Through these classes, we learned the English skills focused on teaching. Furthermore, some of us attended the evening courses of ELI in order to improve our English further, while some joined extracurricular activities in Queens College to make further connection with English speakers. Each of us tried to grope our own training plan to increase the effect of our study.

*Though I had had a lot of roast turkey at the thanksgiving party at Jenn's home yesterday, I found I was starving when I was almost by the Manhattan Bridge, which I had to go through to step into Manhattan. So, I decided to have my late lunch at a restaurant<sup>7</sup> that is famous for serving its original cheesecake. I ordered the famous steak burger and a glass of craft beer<sup>8</sup>, both of which were my favorite I have found during my stay in New York. From there, I found that the street was illuminated with Christmas decorations. But, I knew that I would not be here in New York on Dec. 25th...*

November, then December came. We noticed that we had almost run out of our time in Queens College and started to feel impatience with the end of our staying. We also began to sum up our achievements to present them at our final wrap up presentation on Dec 18th.

*After finishing my lunch, I started to walk again and reached to the Manhattan Bridge. I was thinking that my trip would be completed when I got to the other end of the bridge. At the middle of it, I saw the great Brooklyn Bridge standing between the Long Island and the Manhattan. Behind it, I saw also the Statue of Liberty standing in the far distance and the western sky glowing with the setting sun. I was standing there and looking at them for a minutes, then, slowly walked towards the very end.*

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.juniorscheesecake.com>

<sup>8</sup> <http://brooklynbrewery.com>



The Brooklyn Bridge at sunset. Can you find the Statue of Liberty standing far behind it?

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