

Okayama Prefectural Tsuyama High School

SSH Project

10th Annual U.S.A. Science Camp
(Online)



研修の概要

1. 目的

本校 SSH の研究開発課題である「高い専門性とグローバルな視点を兼ね備えた次世代トップサイエンスティストの育成」に向け、海外に出向き、世界でのトップレベルの大学において研究者・学生との交流を行う。また世界トップレベルの研究機関・研修施設において本物に触れることで、自然科学研究に対する意識を高揚し、国際的な視野を広げるとともに科学的コミュニケーションの実践能力を育成する。これらを通して研究者になるための明確な目的意識を育てる。

2. 研修（オンラインで実施）

①令和4年11月12日（土）生徒企画トークセッション

講師： Christophe Hendrickx 氏（古脊椎動物学者 Unidad Ejecutora Lillo — CONICET）

②令和5年3月4日（土）オンライン研修

講師： 五十嵐 祐花 氏

（マサチューセッツ工科大学コンピュータサイエンス学科 博士課程）

③令和5年3月11日（土）生徒企画トークセッション

講師： Jenova Chen 氏（thatgamecompany CEO、クリエイティブ・ディレクター）

水谷 立 氏（thatgamecompany リード・オーディオ・デザイナー）

3. 参加者

2年次生選抜生徒 12名（男子4名、女子8名）および担当教員2名

生徒 2年次	普通科	濱田 椿	津村 朋伽	高橋 勇成				
	理数科	小林 善晴	坂手 清太朗	山本 壮真	飯綱 音羽			
		岡 碧	武田 真依	西下 安子	西原 果穂	西原 茉穂		

担当 草加 翔一（海外研修委員長・英語） 近藤 真衣（2年次担任・英語）

4. 事前学習・GSO・事後研修

・事前学習：5月下旬から3月上旬まで毎月1～2回実施。オンライン・トークセッションの企画、準備。

実施日：5/27、6/10、7/15、9/16、10/21、11/4、11/18、1/13、1/27、3/3

・GSO：年13回、指導者（外国人を含む）4名による英会話、プレゼンテーション指導。

実施日：6/3、6/24、7/8、9/2、9/30、10/7、10/28、11/11、11/25、12/9、
1/20、2/3、3/17

・事後学習：レポート作成、SSH成果報告会での発表。

①11月12日 古脊椎動物学者 Christophe Hendrickx 氏とのトークセッションの様子

講師のクリストフ・ヘンドリックス博士は、アルゼンチン在住のベルギー人である。専門は、恐竜の化石である。

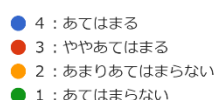
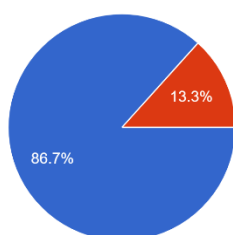
12時間の時差があるため、現地時間で、金曜夜の9時からの開会となったが、恐竜化石に関する最新の研究について講義をしてくださった。また、講義後には、生徒からの質問に丁寧に対応してくださった。参加した生徒全員にとって、好きなことを突き詰めていく楽しさ、小さい頃からの夢を叶えるための努力の大切さ、世界で活躍する研究者からにじみ出る誠実で温かい人柄を感じられる機会となった。

このトークセッションの開催にあたり、海外研修生徒自らが講師を探し、連絡を取り、日時や内容の交渉を複数回数か月に渡って行い、実現した。

以下は、参加生徒へのアンケートに対する回答。

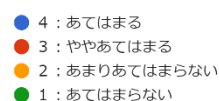
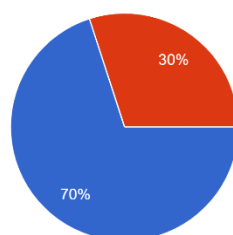
1. 国際的な視野が広がった。

30件の回答



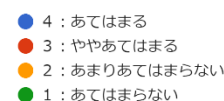
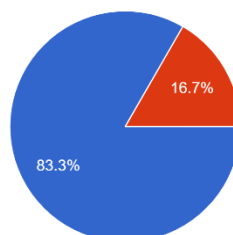
2. 将来への意欲や決意が高まった。

30件の回答



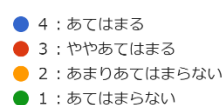
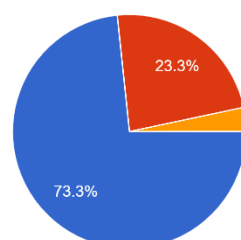
3. 挑戦する姿勢が向上した。

30件の回答

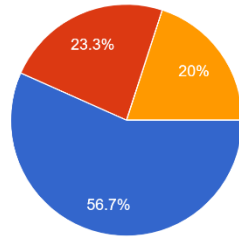


4. 科学に関する興味関心が高まった。

30件の回答

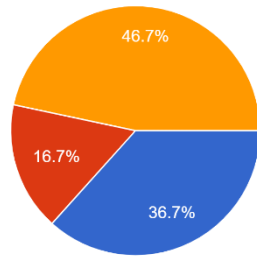


5. 将来は国際的な舞台上で活躍したくなった。
30件の回答



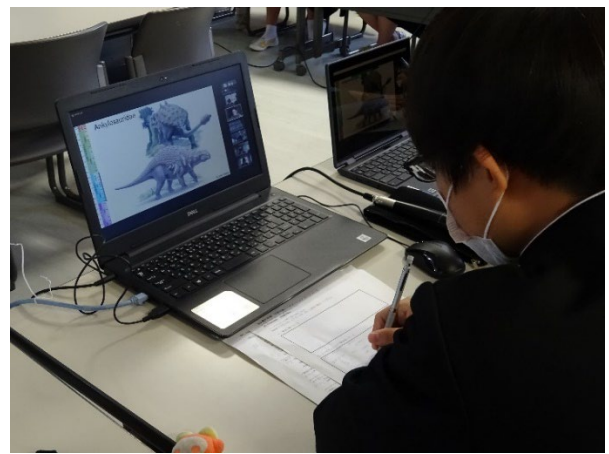
- 4: あてはまる
- 3: ややあてはまる
- 2: あまりあてはまらない
- 1: あてはまらない

6. 今回の研修に参加して自分の中で、V (=視野の広がり)、G (=粘り強さ)、R (=科学的探究心) のうち、どれが最も成長したと思いますか。1つ選びましょう。
(30件の回答)



- V (=視野や考え方の広がり)
- G (=粘り強さ)
- R (=科学的探究心)

最も成長したものに「科学的探究心」を挙げた生徒が多くいた。自分の好きなものを、もっと知りたいという意欲を持って研究に打ち込む熱意をヘンドリックス博士から感じたことが影響していると思われる。また、最初から最後まで英語で行われたため、細かいところまで理解が及ばなかったことで、かえってもっと知りたいという生徒の意欲に火をつけたと思われる。

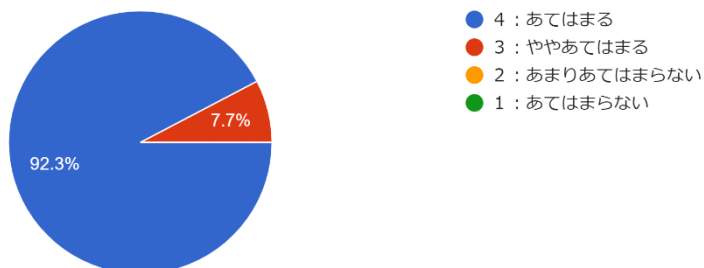


②3月4日 マサチューセッツ工科大学 五十嵐 祐花 氏とのオンライン研修の様子

英語と日本語によるご講演で、留学の様子や研究内容についてお話しくださった。対話式を進めてくださり、参加生徒は楽しく参加することができた。実際に世界を舞台に活躍されている日本人研究者のお話は、今後の進路や人生を考える上で、大きな刺激となった。自分の実力を過小評価しないこと、努力の大切さ、柔軟であることの大切さ、実際に経験することの大切さを改めて感じる事ができた。ボストンなどの美しい写真を見せてくださり、留学をしてみたいという気持ちを強くした生徒も多かった。日本語や英語で全員が質問をして交流することができ、この1年間における生徒の科学的コミュニケーション力の成長が感じられた。

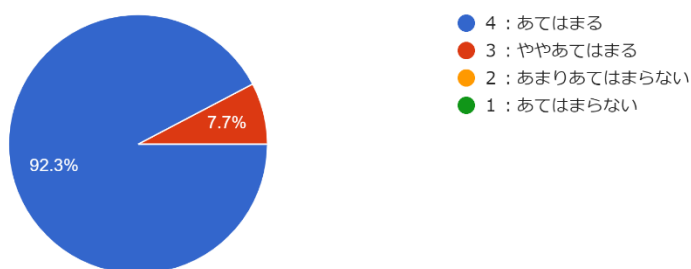
1. 国際的な視野が広がった。

13件の回答



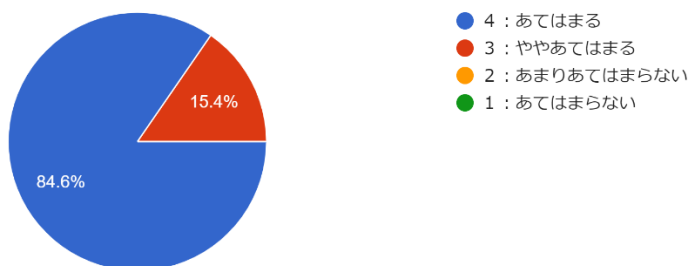
2. 将来への意欲や決意が高まった。

13件の回答



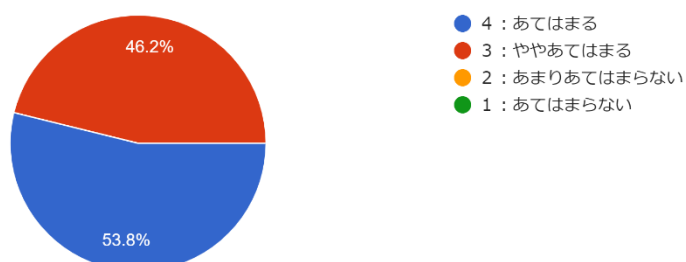
3. 挑戦する姿勢が向上した。

13件の回答



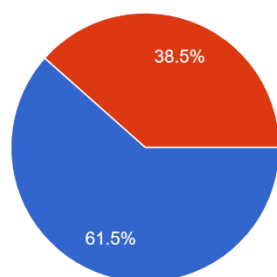
4. 科学に関する興味関心が高まった。

13件の回答



5. 将来は国際的な舞台上で活躍したくなった。

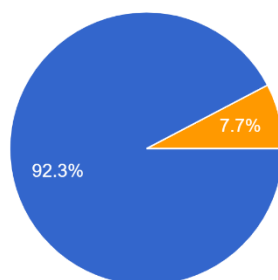
13件の回答



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- 2: あまりあてはまらない
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(13件の回答)



- V (=視野や考え方の広がり)
- G (=粘り強さ)
- R (=科学的探究心)

最も成長したものに「視野や考え方の広がり」を挙げた生徒が多くいた。日本とアメリカの両方の大学を経験しておられるからこそ、考えさせられるお話ばかりで、日本という国内の世界の外に、広い世界が広がっていることを生徒は改めて感じたようである。



③3月11日 Jenova Chen 氏、水谷 立 氏とのトークセッションの様子

thatgamecompany はアメリカのゲーム会社である。代表作のひとつである『Sky 星を紡ぐ子どもたち』は、世界で1億 6,000 万ダウンロードを突破し（令和5年3月当時）、また数々の賞を受賞するなど、世界的に評価され、愛されているゲームである。今回は、このゲームに込められている作品づくりのモットーやメッセージについて、ご講演いただいた。

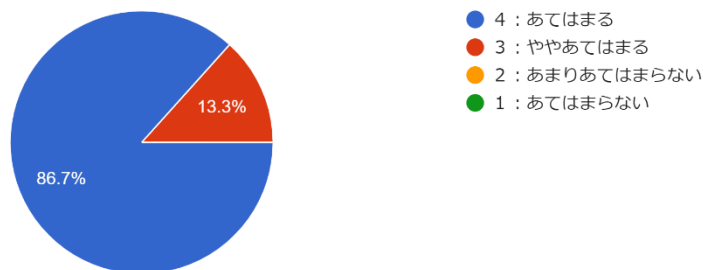
チェン氏からは、ゲームを人々が本当につながれる場所、絆を強められる場所、そして本当の自分でいられる場所にしようとしているというお話を聞き、生徒たちは感銘を受けていた。水谷氏には、オーディオ・デザインの奥深さについて、実際のゲーム映像を交えながら、英語でご講演いただいた。世界観を大切にしつつプレイヤーにとって遊びやすい配慮がされており、生徒たちはオーディオ・デザインに込められた思いやゲームとプレイヤーへの愛情を感じていた。また、英語と日本語で質疑応答が行われ、大いに盛り上がった。

世界で活躍され評価されている方々が、どんな思いで仕事と向き合い、世界をどのように見ているのかを知り、自分の進路や人生をより深く考えるきっかけになった。

このトークセッションの開催にあたり、海外研修生徒自らが講師の方にオファーし、日時や内容の交渉や打合せを複数回数か月に渡って行い、実現した。熱意を持って自ら粘り強く行動することで成し遂げられることがある、ということを経験できた。

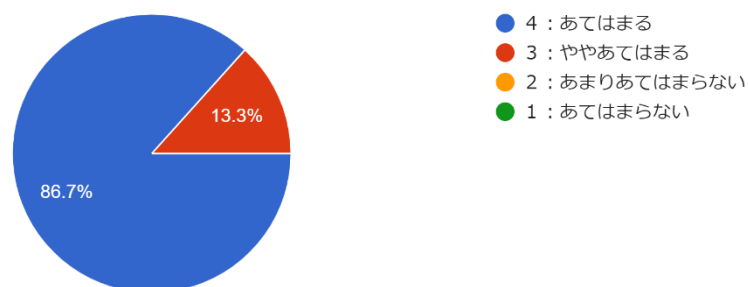
1. 国際的な視野が広がった。

15件の回答



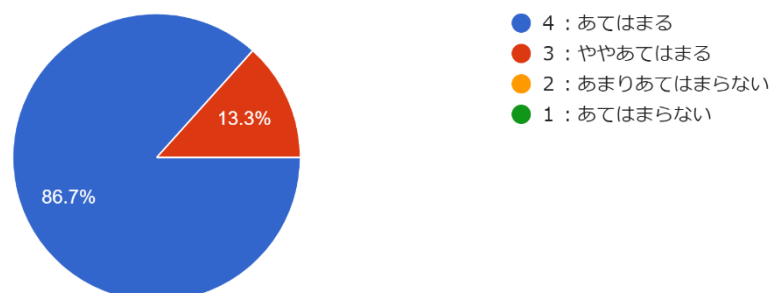
2. 将来への意欲や決意が高まった。

15件の回答



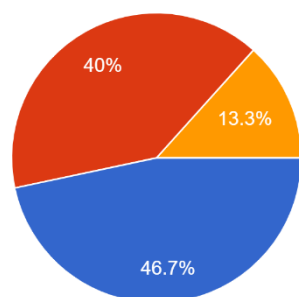
3. 挑戦する姿勢が向上した。

15件の回答



4. 科学に関する興味関心が高まった。

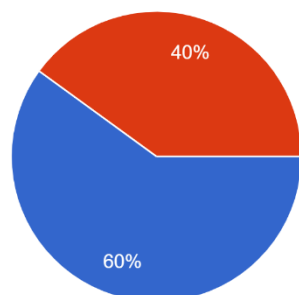
15件の回答



- 4: あてはまる
- 3: ややあてはまる
- 2: あまりあてはまらない
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5. 将来は国際的な舞台で活躍したくなった。

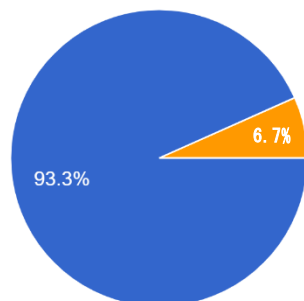
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(15件の回答)



- V (=視野や考え方の広がり)
- G (=粘り強さ)
- R (=科学的探究心)

「挑戦する姿勢が向上した」とする生徒が多くいた。理念を持って仕事に打ち込んでおられることを強く感じ、自分も強い意志を持って頑張りたいという意識が強まったと思われる。





研修の様子 (3/11)

5. GSO および最後のセッションでの発表の様子

GSO では様々なトピックが取り扱われ、生徒たちはそれらに関する自分の意見を英語で表現したり、他の人の意見を聞いて考えたりしてきた。時には自分の考えをうまく表現できず、もどかしい思いや悔しさを感じることもあった。しかし、講師の先生方のサポートを受けながら戦い続け、科学的コミュニケーション力を高めることができた。最後の GSO では、自分の好きなことや情熱を注いでいるものについてプレゼンテーションを英語で行った。生徒たちは、GSO で鍛えた、伝える力を存分に発揮した。また、トークセッションやオンライン研修で知った、好きなものを好きと言えることの大切さや、好きなものに情熱を注ぐ姿の美しさを、自分たちのプレゼンテーションを通して示してくれた。



Encountering the Unknown

Tsubaki Hamada

I participated in this program because I wanted to improve my English skills and also broaden my horizons. SSHs are known for their science programs, so as a humanities major, I was learning a field that was largely unknown to me. I was very anxious about whether I would be able to keep up with the SSH program because of my devastating lack of ability in science subjects, but I participated in this program because I thought it would be a challenge to be exposed to research in a different field. Furthermore, since I am aiming to go on to an overseas university, I thought that the talk session in English would be good practice for my future, when I will probably have to attend classes in English.

When it came time for the overseas training program to begin, it was a series of unknowns that exceeded my expectations. The group I was in was good because it was about the humanities, but the other group's topics were all in the sciences, especially medicine, and they were all about words and events I had never seen or heard. However, contrary to my expectations, the people in the group explained words I did not understand or put them in terms that were easier to understand, until we all understood them. So I was able to show interest in what they were doing, and gradually I became more aware that I was a member of the program with everyone else.

At GSO, I had discussions with many teachers on different topics each time, and we acknowledged each other's opinions. They took our opinions seriously and sometimes asked detailed questions about our view, so we had to have our own opinions and present them with confidence, even if they might be wrong. In every discussion I learned something new. I remember a topic "What is freedom?" Everyone had a different opinion, and some expressed opinions exactly opposite of each other. In that moment, we learned the importance of having our own opinions about things we don't know, and of not letting them go unspoken.

We encountered many unknowns in each of the talk sessions. However, the lecturers incorporated visual information such as diagrams and pictures to make them easy to understand even for those of us who were completely new to the field.

In summary, the overseas training gave me a lot. It gave me a sense of accomplishment in creating a project with my teammates, a flexibility in thinking that allows me to listen to and accept the opinions of others, and above all, a lot of new knowledge that I had never known before. I would not have gained all this knowledge had I not participated in this program, so I can confidently say that I am happy to have participated in this wonderful program.

Finally I would like to end my report by thanking the teachers who guided us during our overseas training, the GSO teachers, and all the lecturers who willingly agreed to appear in our talk sessions.

Through the Program of USING English

Tomoka Tsumura

Participating in the Overseas Study Program has brought about many changes in me. I originally joined this program to improve my skills in "using" English and to broaden my horizons, and throughout the year, there could not have been a better opportunity to achieve these goals.

During the talk sessions, I was able to speak with Mr. Hendrickx, Ms. Ikarashi, and Mr. Chen and Mr. Mizutani. I don't think I would have been able to participate in the sessions as proactively as I did without this program, and I don't think I would have been able to ask questions or moderate the sessions. Personally, the talk session with Mr. Chen and Mr. Mizutani was particularly impressive. I was one of the moderators and was able to experience a job that required flexibility. During the talk session, I almost made a mistake due to my own carelessness, but all the members supported me and we managed to proceed smoothly. Everyone's kindness at that time calmed me down, and I'm very grateful for that. In addition, I think that the talk session helped me acquire not only English language skills but also the skills to think of questions and ask them questions related to what was said in the presentation. I saw other students were able to relate the questions they thought of to the presentation, and I kept that in mind and was able to do it myself.

I also think that GSO helped me improve my use of English as a means of communication. The teachers listened to what each student tried to say, corrected any mistakes, asked questions to deepen the conversation, and gave us hints on how to speak in English. We hear English, our non-native language, and we respond in English. It is natural that a perfect response is difficult. Rather, it is about how confident you are in your English, how much you can express your desire to communicate, and how much you can try to communicate. I think this is the point in which I grew most in GSO and one of the most important points in our attempt to speak a foreign language.

After completing the program, I'm proud that I took a step forward and joined the program and that I made it through the whole year. One decision I made in my first year of high school has made a huge difference to me.

We will face many decisions in the future. Participating in the program gave me the courage to take the first step. And it taught me about English as a means of communication. I would like to conclude by expressing my greatest appreciation and respect to all the teachers involved in this program, to everyone who participated in the talk sessions, and to all the members who worked so hard together for a year to make it through the program.

What I Liked About This Program

Takahashi Yusei

I decided to participate in this program because I wanted to go to America. I wanted to go to a foreign university and experience studying abroad. However, due to the coronavirus, I was not able to go. I was very sad when I found out that I could not go to the US. However, I did have some useful experiences throughout the year, and I think I grew a lot as a result.

The first one was GSO. This was a program designed to help students learn to speak English abroad, and it consists of speaking with about 4 teachers in English. I was very tired at the beginning because I had to speak English for about two hours. However, I got used to it after speaking many times, and my pronunciation got better and better. The teachers were kind and funny, which made me like English even more. I also needed to improve my English skills because I was planning to apply to a university overseas. I was not very good at speaking, so I had a lot of trouble at first. However, I was able to improve my speaking ability and get a perfect score in the GTEC. This helped me a lot.

The second was the talk sessions, in which we directly asked researchers or companies to give a lecture in the field we were interested in. We held three talk sessions, and now I will write about the first one, because I hosted it and I will write about it in detail. First of all, I am interested in dinosaurs and other paleontological organisms, and I was thinking of studying paleontology in university in the future. So I thought I would ask Mr. Christophe Hendrickx, who actually studies dinosaurs in Argentina, to give a lecture. I wrote an email in English and sent it to him. He immediately sent me an email agreeing to give a lecture. After two months of meetings with him, we were able to have the lecture remotely. He spoke slowly and used a lot of slides so that I could understand his lecture. I also appreciated the time he gave us to ask questions individually after the lecture. There were quite a few students who attended the lecture. The media also came to the lecture, so I think it was a pretty big event. This experience can only be had at Tsuyama High School, so anyone interested in overseas and research should definitely participate!

What I Learnt From This Program

Yoshiharu Kobayashi

As for myself, I have learned many things during the year through this training program. I was not good at English at first, and I was not used to the English used by native speakers, and I did not have good listening and speaking skills. I have been able to listen to a wide variety of English from different English-speaking countries. What I felt was that the same English can be completely different depending on the country you come from. Therefore, I think it was a good thing that I was given the opportunity to be exposed to English from various countries.

Next, I would like to talk about the talk sessions. We had three talk sessions in total, and when I participated in the first one on fossils, I found that my English was not at all practical. I remember that the other student used a lot of technical terms, but even excluding them, I could not understand what I needed to understand. The second talk session was with a Japanese speaker. It was indeed a difficult subject, but I was able to understand enough to be able to broaden my interpretation of English from the first session to the second session. The third talk was given by the creators of a game that I play, Sky, and they were concerned that we were not fluent in English, so they responded in Japanese even though they were from overseas.

Through each of these experiences, I learned something. Through the GSO activities, I have learned that it is important to express your thoughts clearly and to use your English well even if you are not good at it. I think I have learned through this year that if my English skills are not good enough, I should use gestures. And what I lack in English, I should make up for with something else, instead of just using English for all conversations.

What I Learned in the Program

Seitaro Sakate

I have gained many things through this program. These are mainly communication skills, bonds with fellow students who have shared the hardships of the program, and, of course, improving my own English ability.

Due to the coronavirus, I was not able to travel to the U.S. this time, but there was an activity called GSO, in which English speaking teachers came to the school every two weeks and spoke English for about two hours. I was very anxious about whether I would be able to speak English properly with the teachers in GSO, but when I got stuck or had trouble understanding a word, the teachers helped me out and taught me what to say. I was not so good at English, but I was able to participate in the discussions with confidence. I was also able to improve my English skills through long conversations in English with the teachers, which is something I could not do in school.

In the online talk sessions, students were divided into groups according to their areas of interest, and each group sent an e-mail to the person they wanted to talk to. As a result, three online talk sessions were held. Some of the talks were very technical, and we could not understand everything perfectly. However, we were able to have a very productive time thanks to the fact that we had done our own research and thought of questions about what was going to be talked about beforehand, and the people who gave talks spoke in a way that was easy for us to understand.

Although I felt that participating in the program kept me very busy and was very demanding at times, I really gained a lot from it and had many valuable experiences.

Precious Experience in This Program

Soma Yamamoto

I decided to participate in this program because I wanted to improve my English. I had never studied English properly, so I was worried about whether I would do well when I participated in this program. I was also concerned that I might not be able to do as many activities as I wanted because of the coronavirus. When I participated in the program, I realized that my English skills were not good enough. So I decided to study English properly, and my motivation to learn English increased.

This training program includes a program called GSO, where you can speak with people from overseas in English. I had rarely spoken to people from English-speaking countries, so I could not express what I wanted to say at all. However, as I went through the GSOs, I was able to speak English much better than I could at first. Also, GSOs are about two hours long each time, so you will be very tired after completing them. However, the instructors prepared interesting stories and topics for each GSO, so I was able to enjoy the GSO.

In this program, we mainly prepared emails to be sent to people we would like to talk to at the talk sessions. This was a chance to talk to people I would never talk to under normal circumstances, so I took the plunge and sent an email to Mark Zuckerberg, although I did not receive a reply.

About the talk sessions, we were lucky enough to have two talk sessions, the first one was with Mr. Hendrickx, who is a dinosaur researcher. The second talk was given by Mr. Chen and Mr. Mizutani of "thatgamecompany". They are involved in the development of the world-famous "Sky" game, and they spoke passionately about Sky and its sound.

We also had the opportunity to hear from MIT student Ms. Yuka Ikarashi. I have always wanted to be involved in the field of information engineering, so it was a very valuable experience for me to hear directly from someone who is on the cutting edge of the field. It was refreshing to hear from someone who has actually gone on to graduate school overseas, and it broadened my international perspective.

I was sad when I was informed halfway through the program that I would no longer be going to the U.S., but I think the value of this program more than made up for it. I gained many things from the program, such as speaking skills that I could not have developed just by studying English normally, and the chance to have talk sessions with people I was interested in.

I still cannot speak English fluently at all. However, this program has given me the motivation to keep working hard in English. I will make the most of this experience in my future.

What Made Me Grow A Lot

Otoha Iizuna

The main activities during the program are GSOs and workshops. GSO is an opportunity to gather on Fridays for two hours to talk with four GSO teachers.

I enjoyed speaking English with the teachers at the GSOs. Of course, there was some nervousness of having to speak in English, but the teachers were kind and funny. When we don't understand them, they speak in a way that is easy to understand. I became very good at listening. I also learned to communicate in English, so I was able to present my research in English.

At the last GSO, we had a "show and tell". It was fun to hear about the members' important things at the end. It was also an opportunity for me to realize that my English skills had improved. I was also happy to hear the GSO teachers praise us for a year of hard work. I will keep in mind the advice I received from them and continue to do my best in English.

One of the workshops was MIT training. Ms. Ikarashi, who lives in the US, gave us a talk. She is studying computer programming. She spoke both in English and in Japanese about studying abroad and about her research. The story about Boston fascinated me. Boston has four seasons, and is a pleasant place to live in. Public security there is good. Moreover, one can enjoy orchestras, plays, sports and shopping there. I would like to live in Boston someday.

During this program, I sent an email to a doctor overseas. I never received a reply, but it was a good experience for me to send an email to someone requesting a lecture.

Two out of three teams successfully organized lectures. The first of these lectures was given by a researcher on dinosaurs. I didn't know much about dinosaurs, so it was difficult for me to understand his lecture in English. But I enjoyed watching him give his enthusiastic lecture with his love for dinosaurs.

The second talk was from a company called "thatgamecompany". They talked about the audio of their game "Sky", and I understood the attention that the creators paid to the game. They varied the footsteps and background music according to the movements of the characters and the scenes to create the appropriate atmosphere. The video of the actual game showed us how different pitches could affect the atmosphere of the game. The images were also very beautiful.

I could not go to the US, but the program was a good experience for me. I was really glad to participate in this program and work hard with these members. In the future, I would like to make great use of these experiences.

Finally, thank you so much to everybody who supported us.

What I Learned Through This Program

Midori Oka

I had never been good at public speaking or using English until I joined this program. I had always wanted to overcome this problem. I decided to participate in this program because I wanted to see if I could grow myself in an environment that was completely different from the one I was used to. I gained a lot through this program, and I am grateful to my friends and parents who pushed me. Although I participated in this program, we couldn't go to the U.S. this year due to the coronavirus pandemic. I was really disappointed. Also I was not able to speak actively at the talk sessions. I realized that only participating in the program is not enough and how important it is to be proactive.

All of the teachers in the program were incredibly passionate about what they were doing, and each of the four teachers at GSO did their best to help us improve our English speaking skills. The talk session speakers, Mr. Hendrichx, Ms. Ikarashi, Mr. Chen, and Mr. Mizutani, were all interesting and passionate about what they do. The stories I heard during the talk sessions made me want to go abroad. I want to interact with people with different values and broaden my horizons.

During this training program, I had the opportunity to communicate with Mr. Mizutani of thatgamecompany on behalf of the group. I was happy when we could realize the talk session. I felt like I was rewarded for my hard work in cooperation with my group members.

This overseas training program gave me the impetus to move forward with my future. Also, as I write this now, I think I still have room to grow. I want to develop my ability to express my thoughts in English. Facing my shortcomings over the past year has made me think again about what I can do. I have learned that it is essential to pursue my aspirations and continue to face reality. Beyond college life, I would like to push forward with an unwavering commitment to what I want to do.

What I Got in This Program

Mai Takeda

The reason why I participated in this program was I wanted to break out of my passive character. I always couldn't act on my own initiative anytime even though I really wanted to. Abroad, I thought there would be many inspiring things, and I could change my character. However, because of the coronavirus, I couldn't go to the U.S. in this program. I was really frustrated to hear the news. I thought I couldn't change my character and I could only get the skill of talking in GSO. I was very happy to discuss various things with GSO members and many teachers. But I would have really liked to go abroad.

After that, I worked hard to get great speaking skills in GSO, and I prepared an email to NASA. I wanted to take actions. I still remember the feeling after sending an email to NASA. I was really happy to act for myself. However, after many email correspondence, I couldn't make a talk session with NASA happen. I experienced the difficulties of completing a project with a big company abroad. It was a very valuable experience for me in my life. But I really felt down because I worked so hard to connect with NASA.

When I talked with Ms. Ikarashi at the talk session, I spoke my mind to her. Then, she told me "You don't worry about that. I was surprised that you took action by yourself. It is a great thing." For this word, I felt more confident in what I had done and realized that it was not in vain.

I had only seen the world through the lens of school or on the Internet, but I was glad to be able to see it from a completely new, third-party perspective. Although I did not have the opportunity to actually visit the U.S. or meet and talk with people in person, the talk sessions made me feel strongly that I was glad to have participated in this program.

I was able to acquire higher discussion skills in GSO, and at the final show and tell, I was able to properly tell others in English about my favorite things, and I was also able to expand the conversation with my friends. I was very happy to see my growth and I was able to communicate with my friends in English about what I like to do.

Talking with the creators in the talk session was exciting, because I learned that there are many different people in the world, and I wanted to dive into the wider world. When I actually took the microphone, and spoke, and received a response, I felt the real thrill of talking with them who are actually competing on the world stage, and at the same time, I felt a sense of accomplishment that I had made it this far with the help of my friends, high school students.

From now on, I would like to make use of the experience and knowledge I gained this time to connect with more people around the world.

What I Gained

Yasuko Nishishita

I have had a lot of opportunities to speak in English because I participated in this program. I really like to speak in English so it was very fun for me to learn English by speaking it. But it is not only the opportunity to learn English that I have gained through the program.

One of the best things about participating in this program was the opportunity to work with highly motivated friends. We were not able to actually go abroad, but the members were a great group of people with the goal of learning a language in a foreign land. Of course I felt impatient and inferior when I saw my friends conversing with teachers in English using words I did not know and having very smooth conversations with their teachers, but more than that, I received a lot of good stimulation. It made me want to be able to speak English more like them.

The stimulation I have received through this activity is not limited to English-related matters. There were people who had something they liked so much that they wanted to contact people overseas and ask them about it, like people who were wondering about going to universities overseas, and people who knew about games I didn't know about and could talk about them with people from overseas companies as if they were actually involved in the project. I saw how hard these people work every day. Every time I saw them, I felt like I had to do something too.

And this is also true with regard to those who participated in the talk session with us. I could not sit still when I saw that these people, who are fully grown adults in my eyes, are also striving to live their lives day by day just like us.

When I was not sure whether or not to participate in this program, I talked to my teacher about it. He told me that I would gain something more valuable by participating in this activity apart from the improvement of my English skills.

Now that I have completed all of those activities, I think that the "more valuable thing" is the stimulus I received from watching the efforts of many people and their attitude to continue their efforts, as I mentioned above. When I see these people who can cherish each and every day and work hard without wasting time, I sometimes compare myself with them and get depressed, but I will do my best, never forgetting what the teacher who taught us English said at the end.

No matter what anyone says, I am me. I would like to continue to build up the efforts I can make, without forgetting to take a break from time to time.

Precious Experience Through the Program

Kaho Nishihara

This program has motivated me to improve my English language skills.

When this program started, I was not very good at speaking English. There were three reasons. First, I was not good at expressing myself, because I did not have any skills or hobbies that I felt proud of. Second, I did not have the English skills to communicate anything to others in English. And the most important reason was that I was afraid of making mistakes.

At first, I was reluctant to participate in English conversation lessons given once a month by a foreign instructor. However, as the number of lessons increased, I gradually became accustomed to English. I had not had many opportunities to speak English with my friends before, but through this program I was able to experience it a lot. I realized that if I worried about every mistake I made, I would never be able to have a fast-paced conversation. This program has helped me to ease my fear of making mistakes.

Also, by trying to explain things that I could express in Japanese but were difficult to express in English using my own vocabulary, I was able to form connections between words. In this process, I think I developed the ability to look at a single issue from multiple perspectives and to communicate this to others.

In this program, I attended three talks in English. One was by a researcher on dinosaurs, another was with a Japanese student living in the U.S. who had various experiences abroad, and the third was by a developer of popular video games. I was able to hear stories that I would not normally hear, such as the joy of pursuing one's own interests, the pleasure of living in a different world, and the fulfillment of creating something that makes people happy. It was a very valuable experience.

In all three of the talks, I was very disappointed in my inability to translate what I wanted to ask into English, and in my inability to fully understand what the other participants in the talks said. These desires to understand what was being said and to know what kind of world exists on this planet motivated me to learn English.

Today, I am still not very good at speaking English. However, I believe that it was my experience in this program that motivated me to make an effort to improve my English speaking ability. I would like to make the most of this experience and continue my efforts from now on.

What I Learned From the Program

Maho Nishihara

I have experienced many things that I would not normally learn or be able to do through this program.

The first is that I was able to communicate a lot in English. The class took two hours, and I had never had conversations in English for such a long time, sometimes it was really hard work for me. At first I sometimes felt frustrated because I could not understand what the teachers were saying, I could not translate what I wanted to say into English, or I saw other students speaking English more fluently than I did. However, over the course of the classes, I began to somewhat understand the English accents of the teachers, which made the time more enjoyable. The teachers had many unique topics, so they were really worthwhile for me.

Second, I had the opportunity to talk with people from companies around the world. I believe this was an experience that I could only have gained in this program. To make appointments with companies, we had to write emails in English. I didn't know how to write emails officially, we had to research and think about the contents, which was considered the perfect distance from the company. Fortunately, we could have three talk sessions, and all of them were so precious and interesting.

The first talk session was about dinosaurs. Since I didn't know much about dinosaurs, it was difficult to understand what he said (he said many technical terms), but thanks to the slides he made, I could understand a little bit of it. The second talk session was held by Ms. Ikarashi Yuka, a student at MIT. She told us about life in the U.S and answered our questions. She told her story to us in a way that was very easy to understand and relatable to us high school students.

The last talk session, which was the most impressive to me, was produced by Mr. Ritsu Mizutani, and Mr. Jenova Chen, members of 'thatgamecompany', a game company which created "Sky: Children of the Light". They told us about that game, the concept of it, and the techniques which are used in the game. Also they asked us some questions since we were players of it, I was so lucky and honored to answer those questions. Furthermore, Mr. Mizutani can speak Japanese, and he helped us to have deeper conversations with Mr. Chen.

Those talk sessions were completely beyond my knowledge, so they expanded my horizons and my desire to work internationally became much stronger.

I have gained a lot of valuable experience, and I hope to make the most of this experience in the future.



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