

I participated in the short-term exchange program at Elms College for two weeks. My purpose of the program was to learn American culture and to enjoy conversations with the local people. I've learned and experienced so much in America. This report is a record of my experiences in short-term exchange at Elms College. I describe my thoughts on the good and bad points, what I learned, and how I have changed based on this experience.

When we arrived at Elms College, Elms students warmly welcomed us. We introduced ourselves and exchanged handshakes. And they asked me, "How was your flight?" , "Where did you go sightseeing?" and so on. I was very nervous before I met them because I am shy at first but I'm relieved that they've treated me kindly to me. I realized Americans communicate with each other for the first time and close to each other. I thought that it was very good because they can get to know each other well. I think Japanese don't communicate much when they meet for the first time because they culturally hesitate to talk by themselves .

In English class, I learned about race , Civil Right Movement and so on. I thought American history was interesting . I could read English sentence , but I could not listen to English. When I asked Elms students what I didn't understand , they made it easier for me to understand. I realized Elms students were actively participating in the class and said my opinions. They raised their hand when they have questions. What impressed me most was that when teacher asked Kochi student "Do you have any questions?" , I didn't ask even though I had a question. Because I was worried whether I could ask a question in English. Teacher told Kochi students, "Don't be shy ." Then I regretted asking a question.

In American Holidays, Elms students told me many kinds of holidays in America. There were a lot of American holidays that I didn't know. I enjoyed dressing up in disguise , painting Easter eggs and dancing. Elms students told me that they love Christmas the most. They asked me, "What is your favorite Japanese holidays?" I said "New Year's Day." . They were interested in Japanese holidays but I couldn't explain them well because I didn't know any details about Japanese holidays. I realized that there were a lot of things that I don't know about Japanese culture. I thought I need to know more about my own culture.

In Japanese cooking party at Joyce sensei's home, my group made makizushi, inarizushi and nikuziyaga. Other group made warabimochi, tofu and so on. I was happy because Elms students said they were delicious. Inarizushi was the most popular in Japanese foods we made. After that, Kochi students and Elms students played a gesture game and illustration guessing game. It was very fun. I liked watching that Americans are rich in emotional expression.

In Japanese festival, we set up the hina doll in cafeteria. After that , I did calligraphy with Elms students. I taught them how to write calligraphy. I thought of kanji for the name of Elms students and I wrote them in calligraphy. It was difficult for me to convert foreign names into kanji, but I was happy that name of kanji made Elms students happy. I was surprised at the popularity of calligraphy.

In Bow elementary class, we taught elementary school students how to do origami. I made a crane and turnip with origami. The crane with origami was especially popular, and I was told students wanted them to be made. The kids were so cute and healed.

I thought communication in English was the most difficult in the program because there isn't much of an opportunity to use English in a daily life in Japan. I realized that I was not good at listening and pronunciation in English. I could not do that, so I asked Elms students so many times to repeat that. I thought I did not understand what they said completely. Sometimes ,I'm glad I can make myself understood in English. Elms students were interested in Japanese culture, especially anime, so I talked a lot about it. They said they wanted to watch Japanese animes without subtitles.I am interested in gesture they using, so they taught me gestures. I thought Americans often use gestures. I thought that using gestures could convey the contents of the story to the other person. I thought Americans face was so expressive. I thought when I went to America, the reaction became bigger than when I was in Japan.I realized Japanese doesn't translate into English well such as “itadakimasu “,”otsukaresama”and”syouganai”. These are the common words used in Japan. Even if you can translate them, they have different nuance. So I was annoyed. At the same time, I realized how wonderful the Japanese language is.

What I regret is that I talked a lot with a person who could speaks Japanese in the middle of the program. Because I didn't have confidence in my English.But I thought I have to change something, I did my best. My roommate was not from America and her first language was not English. But she speaks English with fluently. I got advice from her on how could speak English. She said ,”～advance step by step.”. I could keep trying because of that word. My Elms friends study Japanese for many years and they can speak Japanese.So I became stimulated by that. I realized that trying to express things is important even if I could not speak well English.

I learned many good things in the program. I'm so glad that I'm able to experience something wonderful like this. I would like to apply what I have learned to the future.When farewell, It's hard to say goodbye to Elms students. We had a breakup hug.

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Nursing 194032 Kanan Saiki

I was glad to have met Elms students. I'd like to value my relationship with them. After returning from my exchange program in America, I became motivated to master English.

I want to go to America again! Thank you for everything. (1006 字)



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