

ASEP 2020 Reflection

Yua Shimmura

Nanzan Kokusai High School

This was my last ASEP, but also felt like the first time since it was held online. So many things were different from the past ASEPs, which made my entire experience this year so much more different. Past years we actually met in real life to discuss and create presentations but this year because of COVID, we collaborated only online which made some steps in creating the presentation difficult.

Firstly when we were creating the presentation, we had trouble planning out the meetings. We couldn't hold many meetings since we had final tests, which in turn made us rush our drafts and our ideas. But in the end, I am proud that I was able to learn and make a presentation with an interesting topic.

Another big problem happened on the day of the Q and A session. I checked my microphone and camera beforehand to check if it was working but when I joined the zoom call, my audio was not working. I tried various methods to try to fix this, but nothing worked. Thankfully in the end my teammate was able to cover for me and answer the questions. During the Q and A session we as a team discussed what questions to order over text messaging, and thought of ideas together to come to an answer. I learnt a good lesson that you can never be too careful, and should check and prepare beforehand more than you think is necessary.

I was able to learn new topics and viewpoints from watching other presentations, and overall this ASEP 2020 was a very educational and enjoyable experience for me.

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Takumi Tsujimura

Nanzan Kokusai High School

ASEP2020 was an inspirational event that gave me the opportunity to interact with students from other countries. The main topic of our presentation was cyberbullying, which is relatively a new problem that the world is facing. During preparation, not everything went the way we wanted it to, owing to the outbreak of COVID-19. We, the participants from Nanzan Kokusai, could not work in the same room with our counterparts from Shute High School. In the midst of this event, we had other things to do, like studying for our midterm tests, and so on. It wasn't until the last few days before the due date that we had finished making our videos, and I remember that we had to meet up after school almost every single day to finish our project. Through this experience, it really hit home with me the importance of working on something as soon as possible and to anticipate that we may come across an unpredicted problem. Although this was my first time joining this event, I'm glad that I was able to discuss this modern problem with a lot of people. I'd like to thank all the teachers who made all this possible, even during the pandemic.

ASEP 2020

Risako Suzuki
Nanzan Kokusai High School

This was my first time attending ASEP. I have experienced WYM before, so I was used to the internet presentation style.

One of the things I had trouble with was the video making process. I get nervous very easily so I felt that if I mess up, the whole video presentation will become a mess. My face and body were so stiff during the presentation and it was very embarrassing for me to watch myself standing so serious and stiff in front of the camera. Compared to my other team members, I couldn't give face expressions or hand gestures during the presentation. But because of this I have learned to speak more freely and more confidently in front of cameras. I have learned that instead of speaking so serious and stiff looking in front of the camera, I would rather be confident looking in front of the camera and make a few mistakes. English is sometimes about the attitude you show. By showing how confident you are, the audience will adapt more to what you are trying to explain.

If I were to attend the ASEP next year, I would like to fix some points about my presentation. Firstly my attitude. I will try to speak more confidently and I will also try to adjust my voice volume on important words or phrases. When I watched myself speak in the video, I couldn't really understand what I was saying. I was talking way too fast and since I didn't adjust my voice volume on important words or phrases, I couldn't really understand the main point on what I was explaining about. Secondly I would like to make my slides more easy to see. I had rushed too much to get it done and I didn't notice myself making the slide filled with words. I felt that I should have made a more simple slide where the audience will focus more on what I am saying instead of trying to read the slide. I've noticed all of my flaws on seeing my presentation video and also seeing the question section. While I was reading the questions, I thought that I should have highlighted that part or I should have explained that part more detailed. For this, the question section was a nice motivation for me.

Lastly I would like to say that this was a wonderful experience for me. I got to see other points of views and related on some parts with other groups of different countries. Even though this year was a little different and we had the presentations on the internet, it was still fun and exciting for me. I could just imagine that it will be more fun to directly talk about our thoughts in person. I hope that next year, I will be able to discuss more with each other in person. But overall this was a very memorable ASEP for me.

My impressions about participating ASEP

Nanzan Kokusai High School

Ai Hashimoto

It was my first time participating in ASEP. Though, thanks to my teammates, it was very exciting and was a great experience for me.

About preparing for the presentation, it was actually very hard. Because we had a regular examination, we had to prepare the presentation quickly. Although, both Nanzan Kokusai students and Shute students had great teamwork, we were able to finish the video in time. To make the script, I tried hard to write the words in an easy way, so that the audience can understand easily what I'm saying. We were taking the video until the very last minute. I don't usually have some opportunity to memorize and make a presentation in English, so it was a little hard. Maybe our presentation wasn't perfect, but I think both Nanzan Kokusai students and Shute students have done our best! And I am very satisfied with the result of having a Gold Prize!!

About the actual day, it was very fun. I participated as a questioner. It was a little hard to think of a question while watching the video. But in the future, I think there will be many opportunities when I have to think about things immediately, so it was lucky for me to have experienced it this time. It was very fun to watch a variety of videos. There were many videos which were talking about things that I didn't know. For example, "filter bubble" was a word that I heard for the first time. I had a strong empathy with this presentation. It was a great learning opportunity.

Through participating in ASEP, I thought that I have to keep a little distance from social media, so that I won't have a life bound by it. As my teacher advised me, not everyday, but I would like to gradually increase the days to read the newspaper.

I hope that I can participate in ASEP next year too.

Asian Student Exchange Program 2020

Yukino Yamamoto

NanzanKokusai high school

This was my first time participating in ASEP. I've heard that this year was very different from last year because of the pandemic. We used online to hold the ASEP. When I heard about that, I was disappointed at first. However, participating in ASEP online was full of momentous experience and I was able to enjoy it a lot.

We made a video about cyberbullying. I knew the word 'cyberbullying', but I didn't know it exactly. As we searched about cyberbullying, we found a lot of information. There were some that I know, but there were some that I didn't know. Furthermore, there were also some that I was misunderstanding. This led me to realize the risk of using the word, which you don't know exactly, as if you knew it. It causes not only an embarrassment by pretending like knowing it, but also a trouble from misunderstanding each other with your fellow. I resolved never to pretend as if I knew the word. I will be careful not to be a know-it all.

Watching videos of other groups was so much fun too. Their contents of the videos were substantial and I was able to learn a lot. However, the most impressive thing I learned from their videos was their ingenious ways of presentations in the videos. There were some groups that presented like a news show, and also there were some groups that presented like a conversation in daily life. Both ways of presentation were interesting and I was able to understand the contents of it easily. Before watching those videos, my opinion was "Simple is the best" in making presentations. However, after watching those videos, my opinion has changed and now my opinion is "Simple is the best but there should be some ingenuity". I strongly believe that in making a presentation, we should think about the audience, make it simple and think it out to make it easy to understand.

It was a very productive time participating in ASEP. I think ASEP made me mature. I hope we can hold ASEP in Taiwan and we can meet in person next year.

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Nanzan Kokusai High School

Kyoka Zaitso

This was my first time participating in ASEP2020. I experienced WYM2020 before and even though it had many conflicts both its team and myself, I wanted to participate. The members in my school also experienced WYM so I had confidence with my team for this time.

Usually ASEP is held in Taiwan and our Japanese members visit there but because of COVID-19, we couldn't have that chance. But the quality and skills of presentation hasn't changed. I had enough energy to create a presentation well. All of the members had the same mind so during the meeting, there were many incredible ideas that I couldn't imagine. This is the best thing about it. I like to share ideas to everyone and learn from everyone's new ideas. It influences my thoughts.

Of course we had conflicts such as that we couldn't figure out the solution, not easy going to communicate and understand our partner, Shute's members. Also my English skills were poor so I think I made a lot of trouble. But I did what I could do and if I had some trouble, I consulted the members. I really thank them and they are the best. At the end, we could overcome the conflicts and we tight one team.

On the day of presentation in ASEP2020 was held online. From Nanzan Kokusai, two members, Yua Shinmura and Takumi Tsujimura, were parted in a Q & A session. I know it was not an easy thing but they did so well and I respected them. I was part of asking questions to other teams' presentations. All of the presentations were video so sometimes I couldn't hear their voices clearly, but I sent two questions to other presentations. What I think this is interesting about is "Filter Bubble". I always checked SNS and sometimes showed up ads that related to my favourite topic. I didn't imagine that it worked by an AI from the organization and named "Filter Bubble". It was very interesting and I was nodding so many times during the presentation.

In the closing ceremony, our team got a gold prize and 6th place of all. I was surprised but soon I was glad. I'm proud of my team and I'm happy that I could be one of the members of this great team.

Throughout ASEP2020, totally I could have fun and inspired many new ideas to my thoughts. One thing that I regret is that I couldn't communicate with Shute's members so often. They did great work as well so I wanted to say thank you to them directly. If I participate next year and am able to visit Taiwan, I will execute it. I appreciate all of the members, teachers and those who are related to ASEP2020.

After all, I want to go to Taiwan

Ryo Nishi

Nanzan Kokusai High School

After all, I want to go to Taiwan

Some of my students reported, "Even though it was online, I was able to collaborate with Taiwanese students to make a presentation video.", "I was in charge of asking other teams questions. I learned a lot from watching various presentations. Then I was also able to give questions to several teams."

However, most of the students reported, "Next year, I want to go to Taiwan, actually meet Taiwanese students and give a presentation together."

We couldn't do obvious things

The words, "It was online, but it went well," might have the meaning of the words, "Although there were some things that didn't go well, because it was online."

Some of teachers reflected, "My students couldn't deepen communication with the students of the other school. I think so too. "I wanted to say something like..." or "It doesn't mean that I completely agree with their opinion. But I couldn't say that." Students may have thought that they had no way because of online. If they were to meet in person, talk and play together, they would be able to say what they wanted to say, even if it was hard to say. Because they have the same goal of making the presentation. There is a kind of communication that can only be deepened by spending time and space in person, not online.

So couldn't we have taken a more communicative approach, based online? Taking our school as an example, we were not able to do the most important thing. It's to know the names of students from other school. Both our school and the other school had the same members who gave their opinions in front of the camera in online meeting every time. We were familiar with the names of the members, but we had a hard time remembering the names of other members. "Recognizing the person's name and face." We had not been able to do such an obvious thing.

After all, with online communication, there must be a way to make communication go smoothly. Something we were able to do without being conscious of it when we were actually meeting. For example, each student should write a self-introduction with a photo on a communication tool (such as Google Classroom). After checking it, they reply to it. I think it is necessary to consciously do such obvious things. Also, before the online meeting, students post their thoughts on the communication tool. Then, students get a better understanding of the other school's ideas in advance. For example, by using Zoom on smartphone, students take a tour of each school. In the tour, they ask questions like, "What do you do in there?" or share opinions like, "Students at your school are so friendly!" I think that the importance of such obvious communication influences the direction of the meeting towards the goal of making a presentation.

やっぱり台湾に行きたい

南山国際高等学校

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やっぱり台湾に行きたい

本校の生徒のレポートには「オンラインだったけど、台湾の生徒たちと協力してプレゼンビデオを作ることができた。」「Q&AのQuestionを担当しました。他チームの様々なプレゼンを見てたいへん勉強になりました。複数のチームに対してQuestionをすることもできました。」と書かれてあった。ただ多くの参加生徒が最後に「来年こそ台湾に行って、実際に会ってプレゼンしたい。」と書いた。

相手を知ることができなかった。それを前提に相手を知るには？

「オンラインだったけどうまくいった。」の裏には「オンラインだったからうまくいかないこともあったけど。」という意味が含まれているのではないだろうか。

複数の教員が「例年と違って相手校の生徒とのコミュニケーションを深めることができなかった。」と振り返っていた。私もそう思う。「本当はこうやって言いたい。本当はこのアイデアに100%賛成ではないのだけどうまく言えなかった。」オンラインだから仕方がないと思っていたこともあるのではないか。実際に会って、一緒に語り、遊び、しかし同じ目標である「プレゼン作成」のためには言いつらくても言いたいことを言う。空間と時を共に過ごすからこそ深められるコミュニケーションがあるはずだ。

それではオンラインを前提にコミュニケーションを深める工夫をすることはできなかったのだろうか？本校では、最も大切な「相手の名前を知る」ということができていなかった。オンラインミーティングでカメラの前で意見を言うメンバーはお互いほぼ毎回同じであった。そのメンバーの名前はよく知っているが、カメラの奥の方に座っているメンバーの名前はなかなか覚えることができなかった。「相手の名前と顔をしっかりと認識する。」そのような当たり前のことが今回できていなかった。

やはりオンラインコミュニケーションでは、それに応じたコミュニケーションを円滑にする方法があるのではないか。実際に会っていた頃は意識しなくてもできていたこと。例えばコミュニケーションツール（Google Classroom など）におのおのが顔写真付きで自己紹介を書く。それに対して必ず何か返信をする。そのような一見当たり前のことを意識的に行う必要があるのではないか。その他にも、オンラインミーティングで議論する内容に関しては、事前にアイデアをコミュニケーションツールに掲載しておく。そこで相手校のアイデアについて事前に把握した上でオンラインミーティングにのぞむなど。例えばスマホのZoomを使ってそれぞれの学校を案内し、「その教室は何をすところ？」「生徒さんたちフレンドリーだね。」などとお互いに質問を投げかけたり意見を言ったりする。そのような一見誰でも思いつくような身近な当たり前のコミュニケーションを大切にすることが、プレゼンを作成するという目標に向けたミーティングの方向性を左右するのではないだろうか。