The Effects of Study Abroad: An EMU Case Study

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THE EFFECTS OF STUDY ABROAD: AN EMU CASE STUDY
留学の効果に関する研究：EMUのケーススタディー

By
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A Senior Thesis Submitted to the
Eastern Michigan University
Honors College
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation
with Honors in Japanese and International Trade, Department of World Languages

Approved at Ypsilanti, Michigan, on this date April 4, 2013
To my Mamm, you left this world far too soon. Love you forever and always.

To Tabuse-sensei, Kubota-sensei and all of EMU’s Japanese faculty, without you I would’ve never gotten this far. Thank you so much.

本当にありがとうございました。
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There are three Japanese major programs at Eastern Michigan University: Japanese Language and Culture, Japanese Language and International Trade and Japanese K-12 Certification. All of the majors are required to study abroad in Japan for at least a semester. The goal of this study is to investigate the effects of study abroad on those college students and the ways in which they change. The content of the study includes but is not limited to the student’s language development, cultural awareness, satisfaction of the current study abroad program, and self-development. It is hypothesized that students who participate in study abroad will not only improve their proficiency-level while in Japan but also change as a person with wider perspectives of the world. By participating in study abroad it is also hypothesized that students will mature personally. It will be evidenced by their responses to the questions in the interview. This maturity will be accelerated due to the fact that they are forced to live independently and through this they will also develop leadership skills being a foreigner who stands out. Having finished the interviews the results will be analyzed and measured both quantitatively and qualitatively.
1. 本研究の目的

外国語を勉強する学習者にとって、留学とは何を意味するのであろうか。また、留学する学生が留学に期待していることは何なのであろうか。さらに留学経験は体験者一人一人にさまざまな変化をもたらすと考えられるが、どのような変化なのであろうか。そして、留学経験者はその変化に自分で気づいているのであろうか。本稿はBMLで留学を経験した日本語専攻または副専攻の大学生を対象に、インタビュー調査を行い、留学前と後の変化を調査する。

2. 先行研究

2-1 ヨーロッパとロシアへの留学に関する留学研究のまとめ

2-1-1 留学期間についての研究

Carroll (1967) は第二言語能力習得を予想できる要因として、留学の期間、つまりどのくらい留学するのかを挙げている。留学期間が長ければ長いほど、学生の言語能力は上達するのだ。次に、読解、作文、会話そして聴解の4技能においては、Willis, Doble, Sankarayya and Smithers (1977) がドイツとフランスに留学したイギリス人の2つのグループを対象に調査を行った。2つのグループは全てが上達したものので、読解、作文、会話、聴解の中では、読解と作文の能力が他より上達度が高かったという。一方、Monhle and
Raupach（1983）は、フランス語を勉強しているドイツ人の学生とドイツを勉強しているフランス人の留学の効果を比較した。ドイツ人の学習者は、一分ごとの発話量も増加し、会話の中で言葉を間違える回数が少なくなることがわかったが、ドイツ人学習者とフランス人学習者の両方の総合上達度を考慮すると、上達の度合いは本人の母語と学習する言語によって違いが出たという。Opper, Teichler and Carlson（1990）の研究によると、留学の経験が学習の自己査定（self assessment）で読み、書き、会話、リスニングの全ての能力に対し自信がついたという結果が明らかになった。

2-1-2 文法の上達度に関する研究

文法の上達度に関する研究については、一貫性がまだ明らかにされていない。例えば、Guntermann（1992, 1995）は、スペイン語の文法‘ser/estar’と‘por/para’のペアに注目し、留学した学習者と留学しなかった学習者は上記の文法事項の習得順序が違うという研究結果を報告した。Regan（1995）は、フランス語の否定形に注目し、文法の構造によっては、留学の影響はないという結果を出している。

2-1-3 プロフィシェンシーの研究

Verguez（1984）とO’Connor（1988）の研究では、留学する前と後の成果を調べ、
アメリカ人の学生が1学期から1年間留学するとACTFLのプロフィシェンシー（0 PI）のスケールが1つ向上する可能性が高いという結果が出た。スペイン語とフランス語の学生で留学した学生は、母国で学ぶ学生よりもプロフィシェンシーが向上した結果が出ている（Foltz, 1991 and Freed, 1995）。
DeKeyser (1986) は、接続語の使い方に関して留学した学生の異言語学習が生徒の習熟度が優位であることを明らかにした。留学しない学生に比べ、留学した学生の会話能力（Lafford, 1995）と語彙の発達の優位性（Milton and Meara, 1995）が観察された。

2-1-4 留学先での住居状況の研究

2-1-5 留学先での母語の使用および効果的な授業

留学先での母語の使用に関しては、留学中に学生がフランス語よりも英語を使ったのに対し、逆に自国での集中講座では英語よりもフランス語を使ったという結果が出ており（Freed, Segalowitz and Dewey, 2004）、海外にいるよりも、
対象言語を自国の特別な環境で学習することの方が効果があるという研究もされている。Pellegrino (1997)は、教室における教育も大切だが、学生にとってはその国の人と自由に話せることで言語の習得がもっと効果的になるのではないかと示唆している。この研究では、約87％の学生がロシアに留学する前にネイティブスピーカーから学ぶ方が効果的であるという予想があったが、帰国後は、その数値が91％に増加していた。授業の仕方によっても効果が違うということがBrecht and Robinson (1995)の研究で分かっている。この研究では、約半分の
学生が授業は役に立ったと考えているが、半分は授業は全く役に立たなかったと
している。

2-2 日本へ留学した留学生対象の先行研究

2-2-1 第二言語教室の不安についての研究

志田は、第二言語教室の不安について研究した（2006年）。カナダ、
台湾、韓国、アメリカ、イギリス、フランス、ドイツ、フィンランド、ノルウェイ、そしてフィリピンから来た学生たちが日本語を学ぶ時、何が彼らに不安をも
たらすのか調査した。日本語不安尺度 (JLAS) と自由記述の設問を用いた調査結果によれば、教室内で周りの学生を意識し、自身の能力を比較する事が最大の不安原因だという事が明らかになった。また学習者の教室内不安の傾向を概した長期的に保持されることも明らかになった。つまり、学生たちは、クラステメートにเห鏡されることや否定的な評価を受けることを恐れているようである。しかしき、聴解に関してはその不安度は徐々に減少したという。これはJSLの環境にいることが不安要素を減少させているらしい。つまり、「習うより慣れる」だ。

2-2-2 異文化体験が日本語の将来に与える影響

諏訪（2009）は日本に2週間滞在したオーストラリアのJFL高校生6名を対象に、異文化体験が彼らの日本語の将来に与える影響について調査した。2週間の内、1週間は国内旅行をし、後半の1週間はホームステイをした。生徒たちは旅行からもホームステイからも影響を受けていたと結論づけている。1週間のホームステイでは生活が安定し、安心感が増したようで、後になるにつれて、日本人とのインターアクションが増え、発話数も増加した。諏訪は留学のプログラムを向上させるために、次の2つの提案をしている。まず、出発前の準備は新 viruses。つまり、留学先の情報を与え、不安要素を減少させることが必要なので、留学先のホストファミリーとSKYPEをしたり、高校の授業の様子を知ったりすることで受け入れ先にスムーズにとけ込むことができるよう指導するべきであるという。次に、受け入れ先体制の充実：留学生と受け入れ側の生徒との異文化交
流れ計画すれば、その感心も高まるのではないか。最後に、帰国後の学習意欲維持のための体制作り：留学した生徒が留学しなかった、またはまだ留学していない生徒のために、日本での経験を発表する場をたくさん作り、それを授業に取り入れたりすることで学習維持ができると言っている。

2-2-3 日本でのインターンシップ経験に関する調査

Kurasawa & Nagatomi(2006)は、日本でのインターンシッププログラムに参加したマサチューセッツ工科大学(MIT)の学生を対象にインタビューおよびアンケート調査を行った。集められたデータは言語管理理論(ネウストブニー, 1995)を使って分析された。言語管理理論とは、「(1) 規範(norm)からの逸脱(deviation)から始まり(逸脱段階)、それが(2) 留意(note)され(留意段階)、(3)留意された逸脱が評価され(evaluation)（評価段階）、(4) 評価された逸脱の調整(adjustment)のための手続きが選ばれ、（調整計画段階）、(5)その手続きが遂行(implementation)される（調整遂行段階）という構造」である。Kurasawa & Nagatomiはインターンシップをする、または、した学生のために次の6つのアクティビティーを提唱している。(1) エピソードディレクター：特にインターンシップ中に問題があった内容を振り返りクラスで発表する。(2) 電話対応：教科書を使わない電話対応を練習すること。(3) メカニック・ドリル：ドリルを使って関連
２-2-4 一般的な日本留学に関する研究

Dewey（2007）は、日本留学に関する研究をまとめたが、言語的な共通点としては（1）日本へ留学する学生は、モチベーションが高い（2）読解力と語彙向上がすべての研究に見られる、（3）留学先で、学生は日本語の使用しているものの、全体としては日本語よりも英語を使用している。社会言語学的な面においては、敬語の上達が見られ、ホームステイに関しては、言語的な交流はあるものの、個人的な親密な関係を築くところまではなかなか発展しないようだ。ここでDeweyはいつかの共通のパターンは見え始めているものの、今の所は一般的な日本留学の研究結果として解釈するには、日本留学に関しての調査・研究はまだその数が少ないと指摘している。

２-2-5 留学前と留学後の言語上達度および期待度の変化

Iwasaki（2007）はアメリカ人学生を対象に、アメリカで1-2年間日本語を勉強してから日本に留学した学生が、どのように日本語を上達したか分析する研究を行った。この研究の目的として（1）言語能力の上達度を量り、（2）留学前に立てた自己の留学目的と期待が、留学後、どのぐらい予想と合っていたのかを調査した。ACTFLOPIと日本語能力試験（JLPT）の問題集を使用して上達度を測った。数値的な分析では、上達度が見られるものの、漢字、語彙、読解力、文法
においての全体的な上達度に関しては、個人的な差異が大きく、一般的に研究結果を出すことはしなかった。

2-2-6第二文化習得に関する仮説

Noda（2007）は文化知識、特に第二文化について論文を発表した。Nodaによると、母語を使用しても文化の概念の写実は非常に困難で、海外で獲得しようとする文化知識に関しては、どのぐらいの学習効果があったかを測るのは容易ではないと言及する。

NodaとWalkerは2000年に文化知識の発達とパフォーマンスを繋げ、特定の時間、場所、相手、聞き手、そのコミュニケーションの目的や役割によって第二文化の習得が絶え間のないコミュニケーションの循環の中で行われているのではないかという仮定を立てた。様々なパフォーマンスをカタログ化することによって、文化知識を留学前と後に分け、留学経験から得た文化的意識を質的に評価できるのではないかと論ずる。例としては、コオロギを挙げ、文化によってコオロギの解釈が違ってくるという。アメリカでは厄介なもののが、中国ではペットとして飼い、タイでは食べ物と見なされている。こういう知識をPerformed Knowledge（実行知識）と特定し、文化の理解度を比較することにより文化の習得を質的に評価するのである。

国内での集中講座のようなプログラムに関しては、海外留学のほうが多様な
パフォーマンスを学習者に経験させる機会を供給すると提起する。ただし、言語の上達度は学習者により様々なという。多様なパフォーマンスには本人が予期できないような困惑な場合もあるが、それにどう対応すればよいのかというフィードバックは、国内でのプログラムのようではないという短所もあるが、集中プログラムでは言語習得の効果が具体的に見えるという長所もある。

留学は言語の上達度に個人差があるものの、自ら立てた目標をやり遂げる可能性が大きくなると言及している。最後に、Nodaは文化の熟成度は帰国後の言語能力の測定だけでは不十分なので、学生の母語によるインタビューも行うとより正確な情報が得られると述べている。

3. EMUでの留学の効果に関する研究

3-1 Eastern Michigan University（以後EMU）の日本語専攻プログラム

EMUにはJapanese Language and Culture Major, Japanese K-12 Teacher Certification Major, Japanese and International Trade 3つの日本語専攻プログラムがある。日本語専攻の学生は、最低1学期間の日本留学が必須科目として決められている。EMUと提携している大学および教育機関は、2013年現在Japan Center for Michigan Universities
（ミシガン州立大学連合日本センター）、関西外国語大学、東京学芸大学の3つだが、将来はもう少し増える予定である。他の大学や日本語関係の教育機関に留学する事もできるが、殆どの学生は、提携校または教育機関に留学する学生はEMUに授業料を支払い、日本で学習するという有利点を利用して、上記の教育機関に留学するのが現実である。EMUの特徴として、仕事をしながら通学する学生が多い大学で、学生の年齢も平均的に他大学より少し上のような。

日本語専攻プログラムの詳細については、EMU catalog参照のこと。

3-2 調査対象者

本調査の対象者はEastern Michigan University（以後 EMU）で日本語を学習する20名の学部生で、専攻は日本語専攻の学生が15名、3名の学生が日本語を副専攻している。性別の内訳としては、女性9名、男性11名で、年齢は21歳から29歳までに渡るが、平均年齢は24歳だった。全員シニアまたは、すでに卒業した学生で、大学生活は4年から6年に渡っている。留学先は、JCMUが8名（内1名はJCMUと東京学生に2度留学）、関西外大11名、東京学芸大学2名だった。留学期間は、4ヶ月から11ヶ月の間で、一番多かったのは11ヶ月（6）で、次に多かったのは4ヶ月（5）だった。表1に調査対象者のデータを掲載する。
<table>
<thead>
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<th>年齢</th>
<th>性別</th>
<th>専門</th>
<th>本専門</th>
<th>留学先</th>
<th>留学期間</th>
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<td>JCMU</td>
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<td>JCMU</td>
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<td>25 F</td>
<td>JPNEk-12</td>
<td>TESOL</td>
<td>JCMUと東京学芸</td>
<td>1年4か月</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 M</td>
<td>スペイン語</td>
<td>Creative Writing</td>
<td>関西外大</td>
<td>4か月</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 F</td>
<td>JPLCと言語学</td>
<td>一般ビジネス</td>
<td>関西外大</td>
<td>4か月</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3-3 調査方法

20名の学生に次のような質問をし、留学前と留学後の情報をインタビューの形で収集した。インタビューは、まず日本語で聞き、相手の反応によって日本語か英語で続行した。インタビューの長さは12分から40分の間と差で、すべてのインタビューは録音したあと、日本語または英語で書き換え、文章化した。（付録を参照のこと）インタビューの質問は大学内でのCollege of Arts and SciencesのHuman Subject Review Committeeの審査を経て許可を得た。
インタビューオの開始前には許可書に署名をもらい、インタビューの内容が学生の成績に全く影響を与えない事や、インタビューを続行したくないと感じた場合は即辞退できるということを明確に伝えた。

3-3-1 インタビューに使った質問事項

本研究の著者が、下記の質問を使って各人一人ずつインタビューを行った。

1. 何年生ですか。
2. 何歳ですか。
3. 専攻は何ですか。
4. 副専攻は何ですか。
5. 日本語のクラスは何を取りましたか。
6. 日本語を勉強するきっかけは何でしたか。
7. 将来日本語を通して何をしたいですか。
8. 日本はどこに、どのくらいいきましたか。（誰といきましたか。）
9. 日本に行く前に、どんなことを期待していましたか。
10. 日本に行って、期待していた事と実際に住んでみた時と違いがありましたか。同じでしたか。
11. 日本とアメリカの友達を比較して、友達の関係についてあなたの考えに変化がありましたか。
12. アメリカに帰ってきて自分が変わったなあと思いましたか？
   では、どう変わったか説明してください。
13. EMUの留学プログラムで、留学する前にこれがあればよかったと思うことがありますか？
   あればどういうことですか?
14. EMUの留学プログラムで、留学している間にこれがあればよかったと思うことがありますか？
   あればどういうことですか？
15. EMUの留学プログラムで、留学した後にこれがあればよかったと思うことがありますか？
   あればどういうことですか？
16. 留学先の留学担当の人との人間関係はうまくいきましたか、仲がよかったですか？
17. 留学する前に留学担当教官などとスカイプなどで話せたとしたらどのように留学経験が変化したと思いますか？
18. 留学している間に不安や心配を感じたことがありますか？何が不安や心配をおこしたと思いますか。
19. 留学してから自分の日本語能力が上達したと思いますか？日本語の、書く、読む、話す、聞くの中でどのスキルが上達したと思いますか。
20. そのスキルをどうやって上達させたのですか。
21. EMUに帰ってきてから、どのように日本語を保とうとしてますか？
3-4 データ分析

インタビューに使用した質問に沿って、データ分析をするが、本調査では
質問の１から15までを中心に分析した。16番以降は、留学した学生により
意見がさまざまで、また内容がはっきりしない返答が多かったためにこの研究
の範囲には入れなかった。ただし、質問19の言語能力の向上に関する自己評
価についてはこの研究で言及する。

3.4.1. 調査対象者の情報

1番から9番の質問に関する情報は、上記X-2の「調査対象者」に記載
済みであるので、それを参照のこと。

3.4.2. 留学前の期待と実際の経験

10番の質問「日本に行って、期待していた事と実際に住んでみた時と
違いがありましたか。同じでしたか。」に関しては、表4にあるように、学生
がそれぞれ期待していた事がちがっている。しかし、留学する前に期待する事
がはっきり分かっている学生は、留学を振り返って期待通りだと言うケースが
多く、留学全体の満足度に繋がるのではないかと推測される。将来は、留学す
る前に学生にどんな事を期待するのか教師が質問をし、気づかせるといいので
はないかと考える。
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>年齢</th>
<th>性別</th>
<th>留学前の期待と実際の経験</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>日本の習慣に慣れ、新しい友達を作ることを期待していた。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>友達が増えたことを期待していた。期待以上だった。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>あまり期待していなかったが、典型的な日本のイメージを想像しながら行った。もっと友達を作ることを期待していたが、それほど新しい友達はできなかった。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>日本語がもっと上手になること。もう少し大人になることを期待していた。期待通りだった。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>新しい友達と横浜での経験を期待していた。まあ期待通りだったと言える。アメリカに戻ってから自分の故郷よりも懐かしいと思う。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>もっと日本語を使うこと、ホストファミリーと暮らすこと、関西から出ること期待していたが、結果的に殆ど期待通りだった。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>特に期待していなかった。日本では日本人にじっと見られたりしたが、日本人との対処には慣れ、普通に話ができるようになった。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>あまり期待していなかった。自分が外人だということを受け入れてくれることを期待していた。期待通りに、いい人間関係を築くことができた。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>旅行ができる事を期待していた。旅行ができたので、期待通りだった。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>今回の留学の前に、日本に行ったことがその時の印象がよかった。留学期間を一学期だけにしようか二学期にしようと踏替えしていた。行くと、大好きになった。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>留学を楽しみにしていたが、あまり期待してなかった。I Miss Youというフレーズが日本語にはないのが面白かった。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>日本文化、日本語をもっとマスターすること。文化知識が増えたが、言語能力はあまり伸びなかった。日本人の中で偏見を持っている人が多いのに驚いた。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>カルチャーショックや旅行を期待していた。経済的な理由であまり旅行できなかった。留学先での宿題の重さに驚いた。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>留学先での授業の方がGMUよりももっと難しいと思っていたのが、実際はそうではなかった。留学先でももっと日本語を使わなければならない場面が多かった。他のアメリカ人留学生は欧州の留学生を含め外国人が全て英語を話すと思って行動していたので、恥ずかしかった。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>日本がおしなべて清潔だった事や、日本人の丁寧さ、やさしさに驚いた。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>あまり期待してなかったが、日本人の丁寧さ、そして自転車の錠が小さいのに驚いた。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>もっとしゃべられると期待していたが、本当はそうですなかった。コミュニケーションの取り方がやっぱりアメリカと違うなと思った。英語での雑談が楽しくなった。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>もっと日本語を使えばよかったのにと反省し、結局英語のほうを優先してしまった。日本人の友達をもっと作ればよかったと今になって思う。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>日本の生活に慣れないだろうと思い、あまり期待していなかった。期待はずれでもなく、期待通りでもなかった。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4.3. 友人関係に関する情報

11番の質問「日本とアメリカの友達を比較して、友達の関係についてあなたの考えに変化がありましたか。」の質問に関しては、あまり答えがでて来なかったので、数名の学生の返答を記述する。関西外大に留学した23歳の男子学生は奈良に行った時の経験を語る。奈良にアメリカ人と日本人の学生のグループが一緒に食事をする場所を探していた所、あるアメリカ人の女性が急に腹痛を訴え、結局皆が行きたかったレストランに行けなくなってしまった。その時に、日本人の女性が「グループが行きたかったんだから、我慢すれば良かったのに」と言うのを聞いて少し変だなと思ったという。これは、日本社会がグループ中心なのでに対し、アメリカの社会は個人を重んじるという事の表れではないだろうか。この学生は、その違いについてアメリカの大学の授業で学んだ知識を留学先で実際に体験したと考えられる。

JCMUに留学した23歳の女子学生は日本に行って初めて友情の有難さを認識したと言う。この女子学生もやはり、日本の社会がグループを中心として機能しているということを認識したそうだ。

一方、関西外大に留学した24歳の男子学生は日本の友達を通して贈り物の習慣の特異性に気づいた。贈り物をあげたりもらったりする時には、相手からもらいための贈り物の質や価格、そして思いやりをよく考えてお返しをしないと相手が傷つ
いうことがを体験したという。これらは、やはり留学ならではの体験だといえる。

3.4.4. 自分の中での変化

12番の質問「アメリカに帰ってきて自分が変わったなあと思いましたか？」
どう変わったか説明してください。」という質問には、20名の内19名が変わったという返答をした。変わらなかったと答えた1名は、インタビューした学生の中では最年長者（29歳）で、自分はもともと落ち着いた性格であると説明した。どう変わったのかという質問には、異文化に対する認識と適応性、自立心、そしてリーダーシップの向上という答えが一番多かった。表2に学生の説明をまとめた。

表3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>年齢</th>
<th>性別</th>
<th>変わったか</th>
<th>どう変わったか</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>日本ではよく歩いた。アメリカでも歩きたいと思うようになった。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>文化的な適応性ができたと思う。自己認識もできるようになった。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>LADAS officerが作られたらしい。</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>リーダーシップが以前よりつき、JSAのオフィサーの仕事も率先してするようになった。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>文化的認識が強くなり、異文化に関してセンシティブにもなった。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>故人関係のスキルが向上した。自分に自信が持てるようになった。</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>やせた。日本語のパートナーと一緒に言語プロジェクトを考察中。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>自立心がついたと思う。頼れる人物になったと思う。日本の習慣がついた</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>日米の違いがよく分かるようになった。日本が自分に近い存在になった。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>自立心、自分でできるという気持ち、独立心</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>友達関係がよくなった。日本語のコミュニケーションに関して自己</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16
| 4 | | 意識が少なくなり、緊張しなくなった。 |
| 2 F Y | 逆労務ーシャッター、外見に関する感心、リーダーシップが向上した。 |
| 2 F Y | 日本語を話すのが心地よくなってきた、自分の周りにあるものをもっと大切だと思うようになった。 |
| 2 M Y | 友情に対する考え方、言語学ぶ必要性、グローバル市民としての自覚。 |
| 2 M Y | 自分が学生であることに対して、ありがたい事だと思う。日本研究、文化などをもっと勉強しつづけたい。 |
| 4 F Y | いろんな人との付き合い方が学べたし、社交的になったと思う。自分の健康を考えるようになった。また、新しい食べ物にも挑戦できるようになった。 |
| 3 F Y | 他人にやさしくなった。文化的な興味が増し繊細になったと思う。大人になった。授業で学んだ知識を実践に移すこともできるようになった。 |
| 4 F Y | 以前より楽天的になり、自分への信頼度が高くなった。独立心も増え、おそらく何でも一人でできると思うようになった。 |
| 5 F Y | 独立心がついた。笑顔で対応することが多くなった。将来の計画を作り、いろんな事に挑戦できるようになった。 |
| 2 M まままあ | 南アメリカの人と友達になったので、南アメリカの文化と一般知識が得られた。異文化に対する考え方を宽容になり、日本社会がどのようにものかが分かった。 |
| 2 M まままあ | 日本では少し社交的になったが、帰って来てから、日本に帰りたくて仕方がない。日本に戻りたい。 |

3.4.5 留学前、留学中、留学後を振り返って

ここでは、留学前、留学中、留学後を振り返ってこれがよかったと思うものを挙げてもらった。ミシガン州立大学連合日本センターに留学した学生の中では、留学前のオリエンテーションがよかったという意見が多かった。このオリエンテーションは参加者全員を対象にミシガン州立大学でプログラムを長年コーディネートしているスタッフによって行われている。BMUでも当時のAPA（Academic Programs Abroad）オフィスのスタッフの一人がオリエンテーションを行ったが、そのスタッフの評価もよかった。留学中は、勉強や生活に忙しかったのと、自分の留学先が留学生の世話に懸命していることもあり、あまり問題なかった。しかし、留学から帰ってきた学生の殆どが、デブリーフィングの必要性や
、留学後のインターアクションの不満を挙げている。表4に学生の返答をまとめた。

表4 留学前、留学中、留学後にあったらよいと思うものは何か。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>留学前</th>
<th>留学中</th>
<th>留学後</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>東京学芸</td>
<td>留学先の情報</td>
<td>別になし</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>関西外大</td>
<td>別になし</td>
<td>震災後の居残り選択</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>関西外大</td>
<td>学習のベース等に関するアドバイス、留学先での追加費用</td>
<td>震災後の居残り選択</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>JCMU</td>
<td>5千ドルの追加費用、APAの対応は悪かった、留学先のchoice</td>
<td>別になし</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>JCMU</td>
<td>彦根の地図</td>
<td>死別された先生の代替教員</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>関西外大</td>
<td>オリエンテーションは別に必要なかった</td>
<td>別になし</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>JCMU</td>
<td>オリエンテーションははっきりしていた</td>
<td>他の留学先のように、食費も出せればよい。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>関西外大</td>
<td>APAはもっとオーガナイズして欲しい。</td>
<td>クラスの移動</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>関西外大</td>
<td>留学先での医療に関する情報</td>
<td>保険の情報</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>関西外大</td>
<td>オリエンテーションはよかった</td>
<td>別になし</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>JCMU</td>
<td>オリエンテーションはよかった</td>
<td>APAでの返金問題。借金が増えた。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>JCMU</td>
<td>オリエンテーションはよかった</td>
<td>諸費用、料金に関するコミュニケーショ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>関西外大</td>
<td>APAアドバイザーガがひどかった。</td>
<td>別になし</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>JCMU</td>
<td>オリエンテーションはよかったが、費用の情報が不足</td>
<td>問題なし</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>関西外大</td>
<td>アンさんはとてもよかった。</td>
<td>別になし</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 24 | M | JCMU | 日本語を知らない学生のためのオリエンテーション | 別になし | 帰国者のためのオリエンテーション。留学した人たちのためのグループや集いがあればよい。
| 25 | P | 関西外大 | オリエンテーションはよかった。 | 留学生センターによく面倒をみてくれた。 | デプライフィングと学生からの留学に関する感想や意見。
| 25 | P | 東京学芸 | 留学先の研究の選択情報、オリエンテーションはよかった。 | 別になし | APAオフィスは留学している学生を忘れてはいけない。
| 22 | M | 関西外大 | APAのオフィスの中の人事異動が頻繁で、混乱した。 | 授業にもっと日本人を呼んできてくれれば友達もできるし、いいと思う。 | デプライフィングは要らないが、クラスのトランスファーの問題、同学部の上級生の問題。学生からの留学に関する感想や意見。
| 23 | P | 関西外大 | オリエンテーションはよかった。 | 別になし | デプライフィングと学生からの留学に関する感想や意見。

3-4-6 言語能力の向上に関する自己評価

日本語能力の上達に関しては、「留学してから自分の日本語能力が上達したと思いますか？日本語の、書く、読む、話す、聞くの中でどのスキルが上達したと思いますか。」という質問をし、聴解力、会話力、読解力、書く力の4技能について分析した。日本語能力全体に関しては全ての学生が上達したと答えた。中でも聴解力が一番上達したという学生は19名で、半分以上の学生は、書く力が、あまり上達しなかったと感じているようである。留学先と4技能の自己評価の情報は表3にまとめた。学生によって、答え方が様々であったので、本論文の分析には、以下の方法を使用した。○は「日本語能力が伸ばした」、△は「まあ伸ばた」、×は「伸びなかった」という意味表示を表し、数字は、1が一番伸びたと思う技能、4があまり伸びなかったという意思表示を表す。
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### 4. 研究のまとめ

本調査で得た学生からの回答はその内容が様々なものの、学生たちは大体自分の留学経験に満足していると言える。留学経験のある学生によって改善点が指摘されたので、これからの課題として、APAオフィスや日本語プログラムの参考になればよいと考える。JCMUが留学先の学生は、JCMUのオリエンテーションが非常に役に立ったということを言っている。一方、EMU、APAオフィスの留学担当者の頻繁な人事異動が、留学のプロセスに悪影響を及ぼしていることがはっきり見られた。APAオフィスでは、留学のシステムをしっかり把握し、学生の面倒を留学前、留学中、留学後にも見るようにスタッフが切望される。EMUの学生の面倒を
留学生がEMUに帰ってきてからもっと参加できるイベントやJCMUで行われるオリエンテーションのようなDebriefingを行うべきだという声もたくさんあった。

日本語専攻の学生が留学するのを必須としてるEMUの日本語プログラムは、全米でも珍しいそうだが、留学がもたらすものは日本語能力の向上のみならず、学生の異文化に対するセンシティブティーや、自己認識、自信につながり、人間としての成長を助長するので、続けるべきだと考える。

言語能力としては、基本的に全技能が上達したという自己評価の結果が出ているが、中でも、聴解力が最も上達したようだ。これは、上記先行研究にも言及されており、留学先でのインプットが豊富な環境によって聴解力の向上に繋がるのであろうと考えられる。

言語以外の成長については、自立心やリーダーシップ、異文化への適応性、そして自己認識が学生の返答として多く出ってきた。これは、留学というシステムが、言語的にも文化的にも未知の環境で一人で生活する事を半ば強要するので、学生も自分でやらなければならないことが多く、自分の責任や今まで考えたこともなかった自分の生活能力に気づく傾向があるのではないかと考えられる。

またEMUと留学先の授業携帯に関しては、留学先の授業がEMUの授業よりベースが速くて難しかったという学生もいれば、留学先での宿題の多さに驚く学生もいたのが、興味深い。これは「学ぶ」ということに関する日米の相違を表しているのではないか。留学の期間が長ければ長いほど、言語および学生の人格成長にもっと変化が起こる傾向がみられた。
5．今後の課題

本調査では、質問の16, 17, 18, 20, 21を研究分析範囲に入れなかったが、
その原因としてはこれらの質問に対する返答がかなり曖昧で、理解しがたい内容
のものもあったことにある。今後、同様の調査を行う時には、質問作成時に、答
える側の視点から再考察し、焦点や目的をなるべく積極してから、データを得る
ような研究にしていきたい。また、このような調査は長期的な視点で定期的に行
うとよりよいデータが得られると考える。この調査を参考にして今後も同様な研
究ができたればよいのではないかと考える。

そして、学生が留学から帰ってきてもからどのように対処すべきかをAPAオフィス
と日本語課の先生方に考えて頂きたいと切に思う。上記まとめの部分にも言及し
たが、学生がよかったという思ったもの、たとえば、JCMUでのオリエンテーショ
ン等には是非EMUのスタッフや先生が参加し、成功例をもとにEMUのシステムの向
上をすればよいのではないかと考える。


(26) Shida, Ayumi. 2006. Second Language Classroom Anxiety of the Students of Japanese Learning in the One-year Program at Ritsumeikan University. —A Longitudinal Study to Identify the Learners’ Anxiety Factors—


資料：インタビュー・データ

学生１

では、インタビューを早速致しましょう。今何年生ですか？

あのう、四年生。でも、六年生。

あ、そうですか。で、何歳ですか？

宜しければ、年齢を聞くなんてちょっと。。。　

二十三歳。

二十三歳ですね。で、専門は何にしていますか。

あのう、国際貿易。

あ、そうですか。

と、日本語。

あ、なるほど。日本語を中心に国際貿易を。で、副専門は？

あのう、副専門はGeneral BusinessとTESL。

はい、わかりました。で、日本語のクラスは何をとりましたか？

International Trade and Japanese①と343。

あ、それは一年生のときから何をとりましたか？

二年生のとき、日本語を始めた。

そうなんですか。

げんき一から全部の授業が取った。

あ、そうですか。では、日本語を勉強するきっかけは何でしたか。きっかけはMotivation, what made you want to study Japanese？
ああ、はい。あのう、外国人に会いたい。あのう、旅行することが好き。先生になりたい。英語の先生になりたいので、あの。

日本での先生になりたいというわけですね。
日本いろんなところ。

ああ。

そして、でも、ほかの言語を習いたい。

あ、そうですか。ほかの言語を習いたいということですね。で、将来日本語を通して何をしたいですか。

来年日本に行きたい。JETのプログラムをしたい。

それは、あの、英語のほう。
その、なrightarrowご覧の通り、田舎の方に英語を教えるほう？それとも、オフィスで書類とか翻訳したりする仕事ですか？どちらですか？二つあるんじゃないですか？

英語を教えるほうですね。

で、日本はどこでどのぐらいいきましたか？
東京行って五ヶ月。

日本に行く前にどんなことを期待していましたか？

新しい友達を作ったかった。あの、新しいもの、Customs and way of life and feeling. I wanted to learn. Languages are so tied to culture. I don’t how to say this in Japanese. I just wanted to learn how they are mixed and where they are coming from. If I ever want to teach Japanese people, even in America, i need to know them, their culture.

A language is a different way of thinking. Going to Japan were there any differences in your expectations?

I don’t know if there were any expectations that weren’t met. I enjoyed it. It was just hard to adapt.
How was it hard?

It was overwhelming. Oh, I want to eat a certain food, but you can’t find it anywhere. And you know, it’s like little things. The biggest thing for me was food.

そうですか。Well, what things met your expectations then?

Well, at least in the town I lived in, the people were friendly, and that really met my expectations because I had heard Japanese people were very friendly, especially in a rural setting. In cities, I think most people are cold, in any city that you go to they all have their own agendas. But in the small cities, like Higashikurume where I lived.

That’s still relatively in Tokyo, in a city area. If you would talk to anybody else, they would say that is the city.

I mean, that was about as rural as I got. I went to Nagano and that was pretty rural, but in Higashikurume if I stopped anyone they would turn right around and take me to where I needed to go. It was very nice.

Did you feel that that was, sort of in my opinion very surface. They were just trying to

To me, surface would just be pointing and saying, “it’s over there.” But to have someone stop and take you to the building you needed to go to, especially if they are obviously going the other direction. I mean, that really, it happened once, but it was very nice.

Of course, it stays with you. You don’t forget that.

After you went to Japan

今、まだ日本の友達と話しています。いつもスカイプをして、大好き。あのう、去年、あの、友達、彩ちゃん、日本でであった。去年、彩ちゃんは留学生だった。CarthageのThanksgivingでMy houseにつれてた。I picked her up at the train station in Chicago. She was spending the break in Chicago. Even those in Japan, I keep friends in Japan. Some friends here we don’t talk
much anymore. And other friends we just picked up where we left off and it just shows you what kind of friends are your real friends. In Japan some friends understood what kind of relationship it was going to be and what kind of work you need to put in to keep the relationship going, I am still friends with today. And a lot of friends I had in America before I went, you learn who are your closer friends.

My only thing that I noticed when I went to Japan was, hm, I think it might have been a personal problem. I don’t know. I found Japanese relationship to be, kind of, like they would give me their phone number and nothing would come out of it.

That would happen with me too.

But there were a few friends that I made in Japan, maybe they were more they liked international students. It really depends on their personality.

Oh, of course. Everyone is different.

My friend Aya, was in my dorm. She is my little sister’s age. We got to be really good friends. She even came to visit here. We still stay in contact. And then, I was friends with this Japanese girl, but she was really busy. She used to live in America and wanted to live here so badly. She wants to study abroad here, but her parents won’t let her because she already lived here. They want her to be Japanese. Friends like that I am fine with, of course Eri Matsumoto we still talk. But other than that, making newer Japanese friends, a lot of us we didn’t hang out all the time.

All right. Coming back to America, did you feel that you yourself changed a lot? And if so, how did you change?

I wanted to walk everywhere more. I was stuck with my car. Parking is such a pain, I wanted things closer together. I found myself going out of my way to walk everywhere more, even if it was far.

To almost Japanize your world a bit.
It was nice to walk to the grocery store whenever you wanted. I missed that so much. So I walked the 3 blocks to Meijer but then again buying American food and having it be farther away. And you tend to buy a bigger amount at an American store so you have to lug all that back.

Well, I brought a backpack with me and even then it wasn’t enough, necessarily so I like... It just wasn’t the same. I guess I like grocery shopping in Japan where I buy what I want for the next two days and I go often to the grocery store as opposed to once a week and I like having fresher foods in smaller amounts. Um, I guess it’s also because you have a variety, instead of what you are stuck with for the whole week. I also found myself, trying to be more adventurous, I guess. Going to another country it takes a lot of guts and then you realize like, wow, I can do all of these things and I wanna get out there and do stuff, so I had a lot of energy when I came back.

Really? You had a lot of energy?

Yeah, I just wanted to do everything.

See, I am still in this awful funk right now where I have little motivation, things like that. I feel like Japan almost burnt me out and I came back home and I’m just ugh, and then I am working on top of that, I think it’s just different for everyone.

But for me when I came back, there was so much that I wanted to do. Probably because my experience was a little different, I got stuck.

Yes, do you mind explaining that?

I was studying abroad at Tokyo Gakugei and I was supposed to be there for a full year, two semesters. And in between semesters, I came home for a doctor’s appointment. It was a stipulation of being able to go. And on top of that, my birthday was the month and my boyfriend wanted to see me, so everything just fell into place. Perfect timing. So I was going to be home for the month of March and go back at the end of March. And then the earthquake happened on the eleventh, my tenth day home and I could not return. And it was a big let down. I felt like my time definitely wasn’t finished, I was really worried about my friends and I

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was kind of bummed out because I didn't have any opportunities to like study on campus. For one, I didn't have a car at the time. My car had broke like the month before I left for Japan and I didn't replace it, so I couldn't commute back and forth to campus all the time and there weren't really many people wanting to meet and stuff to study. It just would've been really hard to coordinate. And so I just worked all the time when I came back to save money for a car.

All right, now to go back before you studied abroad was there anything you wanted EMU to do for studying abroad? That you thought that they should've done for you before you left so you would be better prepared?

Definitely they could've told me where I was staying. I didn't know. I had barely any information when I went, because I was like the 3rd person to ever go to Tokyo Gakugei. I couldn't tell my parents where I was staying. I couldn't tell them who was picking me up, none of that was communicated to me, so my parents were very worried. So, I wanted that information. That would've been nice. Like, a time schedule before I went would be nice, as opposed to getting there and having them tell me in Japanese what was going on, after the flight and being really scared and nervous and tired. A schedule in advance for me to look over would've been nice.

OK, and then once you were there, was there anything you wish EMU or that TGU would've done for you?

Well, as for me, I thought they did a really great job at TGU when they had the students, like they told us what time to meet up and they were going to walk us around, help us do all of these things, help us fill out our paper work. And I really liked that, I appreciated that. I thought that was great. I didn't really have any major concerns with anything. It was really just the preparations in advance before going there that I was worried about.

You felt you got off to a rough start? I felt the same thing, because when I went over there, I didn't know what classes I could take.

I didn't know. I just felt really unprepared when I got there. Kind of confused. Because when you get there, there is just so much running through your mind, it's hard to focus. People would ask me questions before I went and I would have no answer because Eastern didn't tell me
anything. I don't know if it was Eastern or bad communication between TGU or what not, but I didn't know. I didn't know how much things would cost. I wanted like a cost breakdown, I wanted to know what classes would be available, I wanted to know where I would be staying, what the time line was and I was really worried about that. Like I know that when I went my dad called the university multiple times to try and figure out what was going on just because I had been gone two days with no word and then when I got there, the big thing was I had no internet or any way to contact home to say that I had got there.

Yes, I remember that. You have to get an Internet contract and everything.

And that took about a month to set up and everything, so my parents were really worried because I couldn't contact them in any way whatsoever. Like I didn't have a phone, anything. So I guess maybe having a way to set that up, like shoot a quick email to my parents would've been nice.

All right, and then after your study abroad was there anything, I know that yours was ended abruptly and you a special case, but is there anything you wish Eastern would've done for you after studying abroad? Like something maybe not just for you, but for other students as well.

I mean, I volunteered when I got back because I wanted to help other students. I worked with Anne Barthel while she was here because I felt like there was so much Eastern could've done. So I volunteered a lot and she had me work on a handbook and talk to other students. I think I spoke to you before you left. But I was working that whole summer and really busy with jobs, so I was completely overwhelmed when the semester started back up again at Eastern. My Japanese was so horrible, because I forgot it all from working and not keeping up on it, so I was like completely stressed out my first semester back. So maybe, I mean for most students that are coming back right before the semester starts, they would be OK, but I had a huge break, so something to help with my Japanese would've been nice. Just something to keep up on it. It was hard. But, for me I am a special circumstance. Maybe some more student involvement of those who have already studied abroad, or more opportunities to volunteer.
Definitely. Now we already touched on this earlier, but your relationship with the people over at TGU went totally fine? You had no problems with them whatsoever?

Oh yes, you know Arisawa-san was the director of the ISEP program while I was over there and she was great. I didn’t have any problems with any of them. The only thing was I was late to my Japanese class often, because HKM was rather far, so I thought they saw me as the typical American being late all the time.

No, I remember HKM being far; I didn’t live there personally, but I remember all of the other students that were there. I would commute to class everyday.

One guy rode his bike.

I knew some who did that, but I didn’t want to because I didn’t want to be all sweaty and panting all through my first hour of Japanese.

Now, before you studied abroad, if you would’ve been able to use things like Skype to talk with the heads of TGU and see the classroom and stuff like that, do you feel that your experience would’ve changed at all?

Well, yea maybe because I would’ve already seen it and it would’ve been as new to me.

Do you think it would’ve made your experience better?

I don’t know about better but maybe more comfortable in a way, shortened my adjustment period.

Maybe not just the classroom, per say, but just talking with the people over there?

Yes, I feel like it would’ve made my adjustment period a bit shorter.

And they could’ve given you more information, because they’re right there.
So then I could've known what just to expect a little. Everything is just so new when you go over there; you're a little overwhelmed, so any little bit would've been nice.

OK, and while you were over there, I know I for one felt very anxious and worry while I was over there. Just random worries. I mean, it wasn't really about Japan, like Japanese people and things like that, outside forces. I felt that it was more internal. About my own ability. Did you feel that yourself?

Definitely, I was really nervous. I was over-judging myself; I always kind of do that. It is a lot of internal struggle, because a lot of times you are alone. You don't know a lot of people.

You were the only person who went, weren't you?

I was the only one from my university, so you don't have anyone to like vent to. Everyone else around you is completely new.

Did you have any other Americans while you were over there?

They were from the University of Hawaii.

Oh, so they already probably spoke some Japanese.

One of the girls was very good, she had a lot of Japanese friends in Hawaii and everything, so she was great. Um, and the other girl was very shy and she was kind of a shut-in, so those were the two Americans. Kind of extremes. And then a third was, I don't know different. Like a hippie?

So what do you feel caused your anxiety and your worry?

I feel like it was being alone and not having anyone familiar to talk to, if I am having like the slightest concern, I feel comfortable if I have someone familiar to talk to. As opposed to being alone, where you're just left in your own mind to think about it. So a lot of my worries were just me being by myself. You get used to it and build friendships while you're there and that's nice, but it takes time, so at first you have a lot of anxiety. Also, it's a lack of comfort and
different sleep schedule, I think. All of that affects your anxiety.
You know, trying to adjust to all of that.

How long do you think it took you to adjust?

Actually my sleep schedule when I first got to Japan, I really liked it
because I would wake up early. But then over time I ended up adjusting
_and sleeping in and getting tired, so actually in the beginning was
perfect.

Alright. So after studying abroad do you feel that your Japanese has
gotten better?

ちょっと、たくさん日本語を忘れちゃった。あの、帰りとき、日本語は話せません
でした。いつも働きました。So, I didn’t use it. I felt like I forgot a
lot of it. And while I was there I found myself saying a lot more
little things that I don’t say now that I probably have even forgotten.
Just little phrases and words that I would use with friends that were
common there that I know that I have just completely forgotten them and
now if people say them, I am like, “Hey, that sounds familiar,”
but I guess I wasn’t there long enough to really instill it in my mind.

Yes, I understand. I know what you mean. But out of all these things,
reading, writing, speaking, listening what do you think got the best?

I think probably my listening. Because a lot of the times while I was
in Japan, even if I wasn’t speaking I was listening. I was trying to
absorb it, trying to get used to it, so definitely my listening. My
speaking not so much, because I was still afraid to speak and I felt
like that would have gotten better the longer I was there.

What about reading and writing?

Not so much writing, maybe a little bit, but my reading is better. My
reading is definitely better.

Was that through TGU or just through being in Japan?
It might've been through TGU because we did a lot of Kanji work and so a lot of it became more familiar to me. I didn’t do well in the Kanji class because of my messed up schedule.

What level were you in at TGU?

I was in level 4, but the Kanji class was twice a week, but it was after my normal Japanese class because I had Japanese like everyday. But one of the days was at the same time as the mandatory ISEP class, so I couldn’t make it. And when we wanted to study we would try and do it at the kitchen table in the common room of the dorm because that’s where Americans study normally, but there was no central heating at HKM, so we were freezing trying to study in there, but it ended up not working out.

You said listening and reading got better. I have a question here asking how did you improve those things?

Just being in the environment. My reading definitely improved because everything I was given was in Japanese and I had to read it. So I would just look at it, and try to translate some things and try to read what I could. Little pamphlets in the trains and what not. I feel that that’s part of the study abroad experience. Also in class we did a lot of reading. We used the みんなの日本語 textbook. One of them was all in Japanese and the other was all in English giving explanations. So the textbook we used in class was in Japanese and then we had our English book to go with it. Everyone in the class had their textbook in their own language to go with it to help explain the grammar and what not.

Perfect. This will be the last question. After coming back to EMU, how are you trying to maintain your Japanese?

I try to use a lot of Facebook with friends in Japanese, especially my friend Aya, because she was studying abroad here, so we were on the same time schedule almost. We would Skype a lot. I don’t do as much speaking. I try to stay away from that. It’s kind of like a personal thing, I just try not to speak.

But you’re very articulate in English.
Well, I love speaking in English. And I think that’s my biggest problem is that in Japanese I know I am not, so I don’t.

Well, if you don’t, then you’re never going to improve.

Well, that’s why being in Japan helps more so, at least I am in the environment where it’s OK to speak Japanese which is why I am doing JET. But being here, I at least try typing in Japanese when I can to my friends, even those who I didn’t speak to much while I was in Japan, on Facebook I will try to communicate to them in Japanese if they message me or something, I message them in Japanese. Which is nice because they stay speaking in Japanese for me, even though sometimes they would try to speak in English, at least in writing they do so in Japanese, so that helps me. For a while I was trying to write notes and letters with my boyfriend everyday.

That’s what I did with my friend in high school. That’s how we learned Japanese through giving notes to each other.

That’s what I tried to do, but it just fizzles out.

Alright, thank you very much.

Thank you.

学生2 & 3

Alright, #1, how old are you?

I’m twenty.

Alright, what year are you?

I’m fourth year.

What’s your major?

I’m double majoring in Japanese Language and Culture and Apparel and Textile Merchandising.
OK, and your minor?
Don’t have one.

OK, and what Japanese classes have you taken?

All of them, besides the senior seminar?

OK, so you started right from the 100 level?

Well, I skipped the 100 level courses. I started in 200.

And what was your motivation, what made you study Japanese?

Um, kind of the joy I got from it.

And what was that?

In terms of, well, I really like Japanese music and tv and stuff. So as I studied more, I could understand more and that was probably my motivation for learning more.

#2, how old are you?

I am 23.

And what year are you?

I am just barely starting my 6th year.

What is your major?

Double major Japanese Language and Culture and English Literature.

OK, no minor then?

No minor.

And what Japanese language classes have you taken then?

I have taken every single class for the undergraduate level.
OK, and what made you want to study Japanese?

I didn’t know what major I wanted when I came here and they had Japanese classes here. I really liked Japanese music in middle school and high school; that’s why I started it and then I enjoyed it a lot. So you studied before you got into college then?

I didn’t actually really study before college; I don’t know. I mean, I listened to Japanese music, so if you want to count that as studying.

So in the future with Japanese what do you both plan on doing? I can go with either one of you, with #1 or #2.

I think I am probably going to do something more in the fashion field, with like my fashion major and then kind of use Japanese somehow. Maybe be a fashion buyer or someone who translates for fashion buyers or something like that.

Alright, and #2?

I definitely want to teach English for a couple years. That’s just something I have always wanted to do. But after that I want to get a job in higher education student affairs somewhere with high school students and/or college students.

In Japan or America?

It would be really cool to do something with international admissions or something like that. For international students.

OK, and both of you went to the same university. How long did you go for?

We were there for seven months.

From August to March.

You had the same situation as that one girl did, then?
Yes.

And where did you go?

We went to Kansai Gaidai.

And is there any differentiation between students at KGD if you’re an exchange student? Because at TGU you were either an ISEP student which means you don’t speak much Japanese and they have English classes and intensive Japanese classes or you’re a student, where you’re basically just a general student.

I mean, sort of. You’re basically just an international student, so you would take definitely at least a speaking class; you would be placed into a certain level. You didn’t have to take a reading and writing class if you didn’t want to, but they offered those for each level too. And you had to take electives which were generally in English, but if you were in the top level, you could do classes that the Japanese students would take in Japanese.

OK, and how many levels were there then?

From one to seven, seven being the highest.

And what did you both place into?

First semester, four. Second, five.

Before you went to Japan, what kind of things did you expect? What were you hoping for? What were you wishing for? Was it your first time? It wasn’t #1’s first time.

Yeah, it was my first time. (#2) I don’t know. I didn’t have too many expectations necessarily. I wanted to go in with an open mind, so I didn’t have this idealized picture of what Japan would be like. And then if you get there and it doesn’t live up to that expectation, you could have a worse time with your experience, I feel. I don’t know. Just the normal stereotypical kind of stuff. Crowded buses and trains.
Not so much physical things. Well, obviously physical expectations. But what were you expecting when it came to personal relationships? Anything?

I was expecting to make more friends. Know people, not just Japanese people, but people from all around the world. That kind of experience. Definitely improve my speaking.

And then once you were in Japan, did the things you expected and reality coincide or were they completely different?

Slightly.

Alright. #1?

What I was going to say as for my expectations when it came to meeting people and stuff, I planned on having Japanese friends. And this sounds really weird, but I kind of prepared for making Japanese friends in a way.

You felt like you deserved to make Japanese friends?

No, no no. Not like that.

Like you had made Japanese friends before and you thought it would be easy?

No, I would kind of work on my colloquial Japanese. And read the news and learn what people were talking about and what was popular.

So you could be ready before you went over. And then it didn’t work out that way?

No, it kind of worked the same way. I made friends and they were talking about what I would expect them to.

Did you make mostly Japanese friends or a mix?

It was a mix. Because I lived where I lived, in the international student dorm, there was mostly international students and maybe 8 to 12 Japanese students. I was really close with one of them and would go
everywhere with her, but other times when we would go out, we would go with a group of maybe 4 or 5 people from my dorm.

(towards #2) Were you part of that group then?

No, actually I was in a different group. I made more international friends. Not to say that I didn't make a lot of Japanese friends. I felt that it was a lot easier to make international friends than Japanese friends because...

You didn’t have a language barrier?

Well, that too, but mostly because you were in class with them, so that made it easier. My seminar house was smaller than #1’s, so we had less Japanese people.

Oh, you were in a different dorm?

Our was what, a third of yours?

(#1) Something like that, yeah.

And what determined that? Was it basically random?

You could choose which one you wanted. Like it gave a description of how many people and what not.

(#2) because friends that I had that went to Gaidai before said they lived there and they really enjoyed it, so that’s why I picked that place.

Now I know Gaidai offers a homestay program, right?

Yeah.

What made you both choose the dorm instead of the homestay program?

(#1) For me the kind of experience that I wanted to have in Japan I didn’t think I would be able to have in a homestay.

Why is that?
For one homestay is kind of random; you don’t know what kind of family you are going to get.

Have you ever homestayed before?

Yes, I did my first time in Japan, but I’ve heard that in homestays they can expect you to be home at a certain time and plan activities for you to do. You find yourself with a lot of downtime in the house.

But then at the same time, you are probably learning a lot of Japanese.

You’re probably learning a lot more Japanese and using a lot more often, but I guess like I said it was different from the experience that I wanted, different from what a homestay could offer me.

And was that the same for you, #2?

Sort of the same. I heard that they could have really early curfews depending on the family and I mean, there’s definitely a lot of benefits to that but I didn’t necessarily want to benefit more on language learning, because you can do that, well up to a certain point, but you can do that anywhere. It’s the cultural things and like, getting out into Japan, those are the kinds of things you can’t get.

Well, I feel that they are two different things, because you could have a host family that takes you out. I had a German friend who had a very nice host family and she went all around Japan and they are still wonderful friends. I think it is just luck in the end.

(#1) I guess what I am saying is that because I am more interested in like kind of the pop culture aspect. And then if you get a homestay, and you have a host mom and dad that are like 60 years old and they say, “Hey let’s go to this calligraphy class” I would say, “thanks, but I want to go shopping.” And so the way it worked at Gaidai was I made a lot of friends who were my age and took me out to do things that they would do, so I was experiencing culture from more of the youth perspective.

Did you feel being gay did anything while you were in Japan? I feel that that could’ve played into how much girls liked me.
They liked you a lot then?

Yeah, they thought, “oh, how cute; how different.” You know what I mean? But I don’t it had a ton to do with it.

I was at TGU and someone was asking about a text in my phone “who is it, who is it?” and I finally said, “it’s a guy and I am dating him” and they just flipped out, looked away and didn’t talk to me for a while. It took like two weeks before they started talking with me again. You didn’t experience anything like that?

Nothing like that.

Ok, alright. I guess that it was just that one instance possibly.

Maybe because we were in Osaka, I don’t know.

American and Japanese friend relationships, did you notice any differences between them? What, having gone to Japan and making Japanese friends did you notice anything different? Like your friends at home and your friends in Japan?

There were only a few instances where any differences came out. There was one really specific situation. We went to Nara with a mix of American friends and Japanese friends and it got around to like getting food and stuff and one of our friends was really sick, her stomach was hurting her really bad and stuff.

American friend, right?

Yes, my an American friend. And we stopped at this one place and were like, “oh, how about this?” and she said that she didn’t think she could eat there, her stomach wouldn’t be able to handle that. “Can we pick somewhere else?” We were all fine with it. I was hanging out at the back of the group and one of the Japanese girls said that she should’ve just went in there anyways; the group wanted to go there. She should’ve just sacrificed what she wanted because most of the group wanted to go. It was weird. I can understand why you would think that, but at the same time... That was only one difference.
Did you notice anything different, #1?

Like not even specific differences. Like personally, I felt, and I think it was mostly my own problems with just being me, I guess. I felt that Japanese relationships were way too shallow and things like that. And then even coming home, I still feel this. I think that it's just anywhere I go, so I am still looking for an answer for that, but in terms of American/Japanese relationships how would you compare them?

(#1) The way I put it, I think I personally have shallow relationships either way. My relationships in Japan may have been shallow, but I kind of think some of my American ones are too. Like I have some friends that we have fun and hang out all the time, but that's kind of the basis of the relationship and there were friends who were like that. So I had Japanese friends that I would go out with and I would have those who I would talk about my family with. And this is kind of the same way in America. So I think it depends more on the person than on the nationality of the person.

Alright, this next question may be very broad to you. Having come home from Japan, do you feel that you've changed? I think I am looking for more things that have changed internally. What is different with you now?

(#2) I feel like I have definitely come out of my shell a little bit more. Like in high school I was really quiet and would follow whatever the group was doing, but now I'll take charge of a situation if I have to. I don't know if that is all because of Japan, but it definitely came out more after I got back.

So it strengthened it, if anything?

Definitely.

Alright, in what way?

Like right before I left for Japan I got hired in to do do tours for Eastern. So you're basically leading a group. Well, actually I got hired in for Fast Track first. So you take a group of what would be
freshmen next year and take them around, giving them tons of information about EMU. And I was kind of a little bit more timid, leader-wise, but after I came back, I became more involved with the job, I felt more personally responsible for my job. I took charge a little bit more, especially those coming into Eastern that year, making sure they knew what they were doing, taking care of them, I guess. Sort of like a 先輩/後輩 relationship, I guess?

And for you, #1?

For me, I would say I have become more aware of myself, if that makes sense. I think it partially has to do with dorm I was living in having so many people. I mean, you’re moving into a dorm where you don’t know anybody and there are around 90 to 100 people, so you get to know about yourself and what you are capable of and being in a foreign country by yourself kind of has to do with that. I was really young at the time when I went; I was 19, well, 18 turning 19, so there was a lot of growing up happening while I was there and because I was growing up while I was on my own, it was like kind of a double whammy in terms of things.

So do you feel that interaction was a big part of going over there? You didn’t obviously interact the same way you did in America as you did in Japan. And then coming back, you kind of had both country’s ways of interacting with people?

(#1) Yeah, well for me, I definitely agree. Because there is kind of a different set of expectations, I guess, with Japanese people and different skills that you learn to adjust to it. So you come back here and are able to adapt to any kind of situation.

(#2) I completely agree.

(#1) And you can kind of think of things that the normal American wouldn’t think. Like as an example, let’s say you have an obstacle in front of you. You just kind of keep going until you like push through it. Where like, maybe being in Japan, I can try and go around or go under, so it’s kind of like that mindset strengthened, I’d say.
Now, with EMU's program, do you feel that there should've been anything before you went for you? To have a better experience, like, if this had've been there, I would've had a better experience.

(#2) Comparatively to other universities, I know they are changing the program now, so what I went through with the lower levels isn't what the lower levels are experiencing right now, but they go a lot slower, especially with like the Genki books. I mean, I went a year later than what they recommended for the program so I had a little more preparation than say a student who went during the year that they were supposed to.

I am actually talking about the study abroad office, not the Japanese program. Like communication or orientations or what not.

Well, we didn’t know too much about the fees that we had to pay for once we got there.

(#1) But I don’t think that is Eastern; I think that could be just a Kansai Gaidai thing.

(Zack) Shouldn’t you know about those things?

(#2) Because I asked other people who went to Kansai before and they ran into the same problem. Because the way I was told, everything was already covered, but then there were like deposits on the dorm and stuff that you had to pay when you got there. I mean, Gaidai was already set up for those situations; they would give you a loan until you got your stipend to pay it back and everything.

(Zack) But at the same time, you wish you would’ve known?

(#2) Yeah.

And while you were there was there anything you with EMU or Gaidai would’ve given you?

(#2) Let us finish.
(Zack) Well, that aside, any communication with Eastern that you might’ve wanted? Anything that you wanted while studying abroad? If not, that’s perfectly understandable. I, personally, didn’t need much while I was there.

(#1) I mean, I kind of feel the same way. I didn’t need that much, but when I did need something, say I shot them an email or something, they were good about responding. When I did need anything answered, yea.

And then after studying abroad, I know yours was cut short, but was there anything you wished EMU’s program would’ve done for you?

(#1) Ours is a really terrible case to ask, but imagining that things went differently, even now this semester there are things in place that were there, as compared to when we were there to try and deal with the returning student because they are kind of ignored at Eastern. And after you study abroad, that’s really it, but after you study abroad you grow so much as a person and there is so much that you want to let out because you just went through such a big life experience and I think that Eastern kind of ignores that. And they have been doing better this semester with things in place.

Such as?

(#1) Well, there was the thing that the study abroad coordinator, as of this summer, and me and her were working on a program where we would link the returning students to incoming students where they studied abroad in. It was kind of experimental this year.

Zack I think it is a good idea, but it’s just hard to keep communication between people.

(#1)- Like it would’ve gone better, but she left. So, now it is just me. And with her we had the pull to have things done by the advisors, like hey, we need to make an event. So we were going to try and have weekly events or even monthly events to meet with your partner, like an ice cream social or bowling to kind of let off that passion. And then you got to speak in the language you are studying, all kinds of things.

Zack- #2, did you notice anything coming back?
#2- Pretty much what #1 said. You are pretty much, I wouldn’t say you personally, but the returning students as a whole are pretty much ignored. I mean, ours was a special case so we had a couple meetings afterward about how credits were going to transfer and how we were going to finish the semester, but beyond that it wasn’t anything.

#1- Do they do that normally?

Zack- They had nothing for me.

#1- Because that’s what I am thinking they should do, have sort of a debriefing meeting. Oh, you did this, you made these credits and

Zack- Credits haven’t transferred over, but I know that from what I heard, there are only two people in the study abroad office now.

#1- Yeah, they are really held back.

Zack- Moving on, were your relationships with the heads of Gaidai good relationships? Do you feel like you knew them?

#2- I actually had the head of the study abroad program at Gaidai as my professor. Professor Shigota. I mean from what I saw she was pretty approachable, she was pretty cool, but I personally never had any reason to go talk to the head people. If you went into the office, there was the office for international students and they had workers in there and they always knew what was going on, where to go, what to do, so they were really helpful.

And do you feel that if, before study abroad, you had the option to use Skype or whatever to talk with people over at Gaidai, do you feel that you would’ve had a better experience?

Well, if we did it that way, the information would definitely be first hand, straight from them. The way that I did it to feed my curiosity was I would go on YouTube and look at videos of people who had gone before as they were right there getting off the bus at Gaidai. So by using their experiences as information it helped. But yea, if you used Skype I feel like there would be nothing to wonder about.
#2- I mean, I think we have a really cool opportunity because it is an exchange program with the university, so we have students that come here, so we don't even really necessarily need to go on Skype, because they are already here. We will probably have friends who go over there before we go, because that's what happened when a friend and I went over. We stayed with one friend who studied abroad here. We left a month early. She lived in Hirakata, so I got to see the lay of the land and get used to everything.

While you were studying abroad, did you feel anxious or worried at all?

#1- Only time I ever did was when I was feeling sick and that's nothing to do with study abroad; it's just me being sick and having not the best doctors at the time, but otherwise no. And if I ever did feel maybe uneasy or under the weather, there were always people who I could talk to or go do something fun because there was always stuff to do.

#2- Probably just with tests and that's just normal stress.

Do you feel that your Japanese has gotten better since you've studied abroad?

#2- Speaking wise, no, and that is partly my fault. I probably should've spoke more Japanese while I was over there, but listening comprehension definitely went way up. Reading, writing, went way up.

#1- I'd agree for the most part. Like my speaking did get better, probably not as good as it should be, because I didn't necessarily take the time out to practice as much as I should have and especially since how long it's been until now, maybe I was better while I was there and not so awesome now, but as a whole the experience did. I guess what it did more is took my Japanese to a different level, in terms of book Japanese, conversational Japanese because I was speaking to Japanese people more often. And maybe I would learn new slang terms and my accent got better, so my Japanese got more natural if anything.

#2- I was going to say, further than that, social cues that you are can only pick up when you're speaking.

#1- you learn a lot that I feel that you have to be there to learn.
So you’re saying listening got the biggest boost out of all of them?

#1- I would definitely say that.

#2- Mhm.

That’s what most people say anyway. And how do you feel that you improved those skills?

#2- Like I said speaking I didn’t practice as much as I really should have. I did practice it and use it outside of classes. Reading, especially with Kanji, I tried to not look at the English if it was there. I tried to get used to just reading the Japanese.

And now coming back from Japan, what are you doing to maintain your Japanese now?

#1- Funny story, I am not doing the best job maintaining it. I Skype with friends fairly often about every week or so. And I still listen to Japanese music all the time and watch Japanese TV all the time, so I guess that is also building on my listening skills, while my speaking is not. And I’ll speak every now and then, but definitely not as much as I should.

#2- Same, except I am adding studying for JLPT level 2 which is taking a lot.

Is there anything else that you want to add?

#1- I feel that honestly that situation would change anyone, in terms of like, especially if you’ve never been outside of your frame of reference before. Let’s say I’ve grown up my whole life in Ypsilanti and then all of a sudden you drop me in Japan. I am going to change. Because I have to adapt a new skill set to like survive efficiently, so whether that be like getting better at language or getting better at people skills, learning how to talk to people I don’t know, you gain a new skill set from being in a new environment whatever that environment is.
Zack— I sometimes feel that I changed for the worst having gone to Japan. I feel extremely unmotivated and burnt out a lot, stressed a lot easier.

#2 You just came back this year, right? Maybe it’s cuz we are looking at it from a long term perspective that might just be like that. Very severe reverse culture shock. You probably aren’t prepared for it.

What year are you?
I’m a fifth year.

How old are you?
I am twenty two.

And what is your major?
Japanese language and culture with a minor in communication.

OK, and what Japanese classes have you taken up until now?
I have taken every classes at Eastern except for the higher levels. 440 and another one.

What was your driving force that made you want to study Japanese?
I would have to say my sister because she got interested in Japanese but I have had Japanese people living in my house since I was two. I have had a lot of exposure to the culture and what not.

Could you tell me a little bit about your sister then because that is obviously a very important factor?

She started when she was around 12 years old and had the opportunity to go over to Japan on a program called MIFA which is through University of Michigan and I think everyone goes to 滋賀 and she was there for two weeks, was really interested and from that point she decided she was
going to study Japanese. So then she went to EMU and graduated through our program.

And she is how much older than you?

Ten years. Really big gap.

So she was sort of, she kept you under her wing when it came to studying Japanese and what not.

Yeah.

I see.

Through Japanese what would you want to do in the future?

Actually I only just came to this realization recently, but I want to work in a university in an office for international students and be like an advisor.

SO for incoming international students? Particularly from Japan, I am guessing?

From Japan or just from anywhere, because I just love international students in general.

Wonderful, so then you want to use your Japanese now at that job? I would love to actually work in a Japanese office and then work in an American office, so I would have both under my belt.

Perfect. Where in Japan and how did you study? And who did you go with?

I studied in Japan technically for 7 months because I had to go home because of the earthquake, but I was there for a total of 8 months with 2 weeks with my sister and 2 weeks with my girlfriend at the time.

Ok, where did you study?

JCMU in 滋賀.
Alright, and do you know who particularly did you go with? I know you all went in a big group over to JCMU, but who did you really go with?

Actually most of my friends didn't go to JCMU. Most of them went to 外大. I went basically alone. I knew maybe one or two of them.

But good, good friend-wise, you basically went alone?

Yeah.

Alright. Before you went to Japan, what kind of things were you expecting, were you hoping for?

A better command of the language. I actually wanted to spend a lot more time with my girlfriend. That was actually my main purpose for going that time.

So this was not your first time to Japan?

No, I went when I was sixteen just for two weeks to visit my sister.

So how long has your sister lived in Japan now?

About ten years. She is married and has kids.

With a Japanese person?

Yeah.

Alright, what other things did you expect? Actually to make me grow up so I can mature. And actually when I came back, I had my parents tell me that I did mature a lot.

Ok, going to Japan did things you expected and reality coincide or were they different?

Well, I didn't expect to drink as much as I did. I think everything was on track. Everything I expected really happened. At one point I felt my Japanese language wasn't as good as I thought it was.
We always do.

But eventually I overcame that.

Comparing your American relationships and Japanese relationships (friend-wise) what would you say changed having gone to Japan?

Well, I actually met some people who attended Eastern that I had never met before and when we came back we had a really strong friendship because we had that study abroad experience together, so when I came back everything was sort of the same.

As it was in Japan? Or as it was at Eastern?

As it was at Eastern. So I still had those experiences with everyone before. But there was a big gap when I came back from Japan, like...well, I changed. Definitely I changed. So, I started hanging out more with Japanese people here and I became more active in our Japanese Student Association and now I am vice president, so people feel that I am not as social with the friends I had here before studying abroad as I am with the people I did study with and the Japanese friends that I made.

So you feel you’ve changed for the better then? More towards, um, more of an inclination towards Japanese relationships as opposed to American relationships now having gone to Japan?

Actually, since that I have had more of an inclination to have international relationships.

Having come back from Japan, and you have already mentioned this yourself, do you feel that you yourself have changed and how did you change really?

My views on a lot of things have changed. I have a lot of friends who make a lot of jokes about everything. Actually I have a friend who makes a lot of jokes about Japanese and Asian people even though he himself is Asian-American and he doesn’t really identify with his Korean culture. But he would always make fun of my Japanese friends and I could
stand it for a little bit, but eventually I just got so tired of it because I don’t want anyone bad talking my friends. Whereas before I would probably think it was funny and that he was just being himself.

And what I am seeing even more so is how you didn’t explode or say something to him; you just ignored him and just don’t talk to him anymore. I see the American way would be to blow up, have a little fight and then ignore them and not talk anymore, but you just ignored him, right?

Yeah.

You didn’t do anything; you just stopped talking to him completely. I would say that would be more of a Japanese way of handling things. Anything else that you’ve noticed on how you’ve changed?

I feel like I respect my parents more.

Now did they help you study abroad then?

Yes, they pay for my college and they helped me over there and recommended that I stay for a year and its importance.

My dad helped me through that whole thing as well. Now this is more towards EMU now, within the EMU study abroad program was there anything that you with the APA should’ve done for you?

Not really on Eastern’s side, but JCMU requires $5000 in a bank account set aside in order for you to be able to study abroad.

Sort of like an emergency fund?

Like if you can’t pay, they have that money set aside to take.

Like a contingency plan?

Yeah.

You didn’t have any problems with EMU then? Not a lack of information or anything?
I didn’t really have that big of a problem. Actually through Eastern right before I was applying my GPA was 2.49, .01 from actually being able to enter and they wouldn’t let me in unless I took spring and summer courses to boost it up. And I was passe the deadline, but they allowed me to still go, so they were very lenient about letting me go. But actually from what I’ve heard about this year, compared to last year, is that the study abroad program has completely changed because the coordinator has changed, so a lot of people would say that the person in charge right now completely doesn’t know what they are talking about or know what they are doing.

So maybe I should try and interview students who have been trying to study abroad more recently because I mean, people that I have talked to already have gone to universities that are not directly connected to Eastern, like 外大 and 東京学芸. I mean they are connected through like a sister school kind of bond, but it’s not like JCMU. But, as for JCMU, there weren’t any problems, really?

The only thing that I would want Eastern to do would be to have more options available, because

More study abroad options in Japan, you mean?

Yes, because if you were to look at Western, which doesn’t even really have that big of a Japanese program, but they have like 10 schools you can go to: so many more options.

And Eastern’s Japanese program is huge. It’s one of the biggest in the state. And you look at University of Michigan and they have 東京大学; they have the biggest school in Japan over there. Eastern is probably second, if not above University of Michigan in its Japanese language program. Look at how many Japanese teachers it produces.

During study abroad do you feel like there was anything Eastern or JCMU could’ve done for you?

They only problem I had was how they dealt with the earthquake because a lot of us wanted to stay after for a few months because we had places to stay.
And then again you were in 滋賀.

I was nowhere near anything that was happening. But because of JCMU and Eastern, they said, "If you don't come back now, we are not going to give you your credits for studying abroad." And so everyone that day booked a ticket home.

You included?

Me included. And after spending obscene amounts of money, because everyone was leaving during that time and it was a big shock because in one week you have to get out all of your things and can't really say goodbye to your friends, cancel plans you had made; it was a mess.

So that was your only problem during your study abroad?

Yeah.

And then after studying abroad, I heard a lot others that Eastern often ignores its students that have studied abroad, basically tell them to go back to class and take their credits. They were talking about getting sort of a debriefing which would find out what everyone did, this is how their program went, what went well and what didn't and improve.

There is nothing like that. I know one thing that our last study abroad adviser did. When people came back she was actually really concerned that we all had to come back on bad terms, so she threw together all of these mini events to get everyone together and talk about things.

She was a great person and I am sad that she left.

Well, she got a better job.

We need someone like that. And now, you've already mentioned this yourself as well. The head of JCMU, the organizers, you felt that your relationships were bad?

I didn't really have a relationship with them.
Do you feel that you could talk with them whenever you needed to?

The Japanese or the American side?

I guess both?

I could talk with the Japanese advisor anytime I wanted, because his office was right in the academic building and he was a very carefree man and invite you to come in for an appointment. You could talk with him easily. However, I guess on the American side, because I never had to talk with the American side, I don’t really think I would send them anything, because I don’t think they could readily serve me, because they are in America.

Before studying abroad do you feel that if you had the opportunity to use Skype or what not to get first hand information from JCMU or the place you were going to study abroad, do you feel that it would’ve helped your experience?

I knew a couple people over there before trying to go so I always tried to Skype them. But yea, I would’ve liked to. Especially talk to people around JCMU in general because there was 滋賀大学 and the prefectural 滋賀大学 and so I would’ve really like to talk with students from there, so we could kind of form a bond before going there because this last year before Anne left she organized this program called ATLAS program.

Is that the one where it kind of connects two people together?

Yeah, and I had a girl from 関西外大 and we talked a while before she came and I picked her up from the airport.

Actually wasn’t that guy helping with that?

Yeah, he was.

Alright, while you were abroad, did you feel anxious or worried about anything?
Actually, no. I felt perfectly at home. It was just really my grades and trying to do my best every single test and if they weren’t good, I felt anxious.

I felt for one that I wasn’t good enough, that I needed to do better. Stress that seemed to come from nowhere. I got so stressed that I came down with shingles. I guess people take it differently. It felt that it was more of an internal problem.

I am an independent person and like having control over my environment. I only got homesick once around Christmas time when everyone at JCMU either went home to the US or went traveling because I was just for three days all by myself. It sucked.

One question that I forgot to write down on here. Homestay. Did JCMU offer a homestay program?

They do. They offer a few options to do a homestay. You need to interview for it, so they can make sure you are compatible with the homestay family and if you didn’t want to do that, if you wanted to stay in the dorms, they offered a weekend homestay, so you could go visit a family for one weekend and if you guys liked each other, you could go back and visit again. Me, myself I didn’t participate because my, when I went there I lived with my sister’s family for a little bit, and so I already had that sort of homestay kind of family experience, because I was living with a Japanese family, because she was living with her husband’s parents.

Oh OK, so you definitely had that homestay experience. So would you suggest that to others?

I would, well, there are actually two ways about thinking of doing it. I would absolutely, but if you have, I know in the, I know it’s really hard to get the dorm experience too, because when I went there if I didn’t stay in the dorms, I wouldn’t have known anyone like I do now. So, it is kind of a win-lose situation?

So you’re going to be, you’re not going to be invited to all the parties.
You sort of need to weigh your options, is what you're saying?

OK, alright. Let's see. Having studied abroad, do you feel that your Japanese ability has improved and what do skill do you feel has improved the most?

Definitely my speaking, and I would say my listening as well. My writing and, well actually my reading as well, has improved more since Japan. For me, writing is not the most important; I think that Eastern views it like that as well, that the writing part isn't important as the speaking or listening.

Of course.

And, so I've, whereas I can read a lot of Kanji, I cannot replicate it. I can't write it down.

Now did JCMU hold those values as well, the speaking as opposed to writing then?

Um, a lot of speaking, but then there was a lot of writing as well. So, if you knew a Kanji, you were expected to write it down. As well as we had essay four times throughout the semester and they are like the big compositions.

Alright, but you do say that your speaking and your listening improved the most. And what did you do to improve all of those skills?

I had multiple Japanese friends from the local university, so we would always hang out. As well as, well, actually that was it. We would go to bars and talk with locals who knew no English and we would just try and speak Japanese as much as possible, because we were in a dorm environment where we're all Americans and it was really hard to try and speak Japanese with them, whereas at 外大 you have Japanese roommates that you can talk with, I guess.

But then at the same time, they have a bunch of classes in English and that can hinder progress.

Yeah, I was really surprised to hear that. I was surprised that their Japanese classes were in English.
It was their elective classes and yeah, I was surprised too. Alright, then having come back to EMU what are you doing to maintain your Japanese?

Well, being vice president of the JSA, I can speak Japanese most any time I want, but they are here to learn English so I mostly speak English.

To accommodate them, right?

Yeah, um, I watch dramas on TV if I want to help my listening. I take all the Japanese classes I am supposed to, I talk with my Japanese teachers, and actually taking an independent study course to prepare for the JLPT this semester. I want to take another one next semester.

And what are you doing in the independent study?

Speaking and actually it's mainly reading comprehension. Because actually, reading comprehension tips in kind of how to find the answers to the problems quickly.

We offered a class called like 速読 or something. It was a book called 速読

I haven't heard of it.

Well, I definitely suggest it. What is the purpose of study abroad?

I would say the main purpose is to study and gain culture. I think a lot of it is culture and to know the world, because I feel if a person just stays in their own country, then they can't know about other cultures, unless let's say there are different cultures within the US, but going internationally is a big part in learning in general, so I think study abroad should be required for every student. And another thing that is to just be a representative of your country and to study abroad.

So not just for yourself, but you can then use your experience to help other people so that they should see another culture as well.
That's my goal when I work as an international student adviser.

So I think we are about done here; thank you.

What year are you?

5th year senior

How old are you?

22

What is your major?

Japanese language and culture

Do you have a minor?

Psychology

What Japanese classes have you taken?

122-448 + 2 semesters at JCMU levels 3 and 4

Why are you studying Japanese?

I was bored in 7th grade and now I'm in too deep to quit. I originally was interested in anime (how gross) and then moved onto music, which is still one of my main motivations

What would you like to do in the future using Japanese?

Not entirely sure, I think I'd like to do freelance translating

Where did you study in Japan for how long?

8 months in Hikone, Shiga-ken at JCMU
Did you feel alone in Japan?

No, I traveled alone initially but the first evening I arrived I met up with a friend from Japanese classes at school, who really helped me to be more outgoing and to make new friends, since I already had someone I knew there. I do feel I wouldn’t have gotten such experience from it as I did if he hadn’t been there for me.

What kind of things did you expect, hope for, wish for?

New friends and a wide range of experiences in Japan, since I had dreamed about living there since I was 12 or so, but mostly to expand on my Japanese skills through using it in everyday life situations (grocery shopping, using the train system, etc). For the first few weeks I made a point of asking the people around me for help when I needed it, for example when I couldn’t read the timetables at the train station, or when I couldn’t find a particular book at the bookstore.

Was there a difference between your expectations of Japan and what actually happened?

Not really, as I didn’t have too many expectations to begin with. I thought it would be better to go in not expecting much so that I wouldn’t be overwhelmed or disappointed. I did have sort of an image of Japan as being all like the A crossing in Shibuya though, for some reason, and Hikone being a small town in the middle of relative nowhere was a bit of a shock. However I quickly grew to love the town and now I miss it more than my own hometown, which I didn’t expect at all.

日本とアメリカの友達を比較して、友達の関係についてあなたの考えに変化がありましたか。

I didn’t really make any Japanese friends…?

Do you feel that you have changed since your study abroad experience, and if so, explain how?

I myself can’t really tell if I’m different or not; I have been told that I’ve changed, but since it was apparently such a gradual process I didn’t notice anything. I have noticed that I’m less hesitant to ask
for help in a public situation, yet I'm more self-sufficient not only in everyday situations but in class as well. I'm also far less willing to take shit from people.

Do you feel that there was anything more EMU could/should have done for the Japanese exchange program?

Well since JCMU is run through MSU, there wasn't much EMU could do. However, since I flew into Narita airport across the country, it would have been nice to have an actual map with actual train station names, since there is no transportation to Hikone/JCMU from Narita and students must make their way themselves. I did have difficulties getting to Hikone, and I know of several other students that also got lost on their way to the school.

Was there anything during the course of the program that EMU or JCMU could/should have done?

Finding a teacher that actually knew how to teach would have been nice, since the third-year teacher (my teacher) passed away in late November. Class setups were disrupted for the rest of the term, and when they finally brought in a replacement for the new semester it was clear she had never really taught before, and was therefore a detriment to that semester's third year class. However, that was JCMU/MSU's responsibility.

Anything after?

Not really. Maybe complimentary depression counseling, as near everyone I knew at JCMU had problems readjusting to American life.

Did you feel that you had a good relationship with the staff at JCMU?

For the most part, yes. Nishikawa-sensei, before she passed away, gave me some of the highest praise I've ever received regarding Japanese, and Aizawa-sensei and Melville-sensei both encouraged me greatly. (also the tiny cleaning lady was adorable and so sweet)
If you had been able to communicate with the staff at JCMU prior to your study abroad, do you feel it would have changed your experience at all and in what ways?

I can’t really say for sure, since the class experience varied widely from “wow I can’t wait to go to class today” to “kill me so I don’t have to go to class today”. I’m not sure whether the teachers telling me just how intensive the study was would have motivated me or convinced me to drop out.

Did you ever feel anxious or worried while in Japan, and if so what was the cause?

Well for one I have an anxiety disorder and moderate depression, so. It took six or seven months to get even a little bit homesick, but when it hit me it hit hard. There were issues with friends, issues with class, issues with my medication being seized without notice at customs. I was pretty stressed almost the entire time, but thank god I also had some great friends to help me through it.

Do you feel your Japanese has gotten better through your study abroad, and if so what aspect improved the most?

I definitely feel my vocab and kanji recognition has gone up, since I used so many words everyday and saw so many kanji in a variety of places. I also became slightly less self-conscious about my speaking ability, but that has since come back as I’m not using Japanese in an immersive setting anymore.

Coming back to EMU, what have you done to keep your Japanese Not much in terms of studying (depression will do that to you) but I have kept listening to a variety of Japanese music and watching movies, reading manga etc. I also practice with a couple of friends on a semi-regular basis.

学生6

How old are you?

I am twenty nine.
And what is your year?

I am a senior, I have a couple more classes to finish.

And your major?

Anthropology

Do you have a minor then?

Yeah, Japanese is my minor.

What Japanese classes have you taken?

I've taken beginner, intermediate, and then conversation, composition.

So the 300 level?

Yeah, and my study abroad.

Now, is that required for your minor?

It's not required for a minor, but it was just something I wanted to do.

Alright, and then what made you want to study Japanese?

I don't know; I've always liked other cultures.

Hence your major in anthropology.

And specifically Japanese I guess. I don't know what started it, but.

There wasn't anything in middle school or high school that made you want to study?

Well, I guess anime in high school, but I was interested in everything, like architecture, I think it looks really cool.

Kind of an all encompassing interest of Japanese culture?
Pretty much.

Alright. Where in Japan did you study, how long and when did you study?

February of this year until May, for four months at 関西外大.

Ok, did you go with anyone in particular, like a group of friends?

Um, I knew some of the people that went there but it was more of a solo thing.

Before you went to Japan what things did you expect?

I wanted to get a lot better at Japanese, be able to travel around the country and not just stay in the 関西 area, even though I ended up staying in the area, I know I wanted to have a host family and..

To kind of get the full experience.

Now going to Japan, did the things you hoped for and reality, did they coincide or?

For the most part, like I did feel that I got better at Japanese, but then I am not taking any Japanese classes this semester, so I’ve forgotten a lot of what I have learned. In fact, I really haven’t spoken much Japanese since I’ve been back which was from May til now, so.

The summer break is the killer for most people; they don’t have anybody to keep in contact with.

So I’ve forgotten a lot of it, but once I started studying again, it shouldn’t be too hard. A lot of that will come back. Right now its just really hard. As far as traveling around, I went to some places like Hiroshima and Okayama.

Did you end up seeing Kyoto as well?
Yeah, I went around Kyoto, Osaka; I spent a lot of time in the Kansai area, but I didn’t end up going to Tokyo or Hokkaido or anything like that.

So they were basically the same except for traveling. Um, and then you said you had a host family then?

Yeah, I did.

You lived with them the whole time then?

Yep.

Oh, really? You’re the first person I have interviewed who had a host family. What made you decide to have a host family?

I guess being an anthropology major, I just was more interested in experiencing the daily life and kind of seeing like the family life aspect, instead of just living with other international students in a dorm.

Yes, because most people said that they wanted like the pop culture experience; they wanted the young person experience of Japan. I guess I can understand their point of view, but I can understand yours as well. What, because you are the first person that I have interviewed who has done a homestay, do you mind going into a little bit of detail about your homestay?

I was a little disappointed at first, to be honest. I was expecting a bigger family. The family I got has done homestay for a while now. It was actually just a host mother that I had, because the host dad had passed away the year before and she was like in her sixties.

He must’ve died young too then?

The were relatively close in age. He was in his seventies. I think he had cancer.

Did that affect the environment that you were in?
A little bit. It wasn't a big family. For the most part, it was her, her forty year old son, who was working a lot of the time.

Did he live at the home as well?

He lived there and helped with house stuff. And then we also got a lot of visits from her daughter and her kid, her granddaughter. But during the week, it was just myお母さん and me.

Now did she speak any English?

She actually didn't speak any English at all. Her son, myお兄さん, he was pretty decent at English, but he wasn't around all the time, but sometimes it would be quicker for him to clarify things.

Now did he speak good English then?

Yeah, he spoke pretty well, but I guess he hasn't used English as much in the last 5, 10 years, so he was... Kind of rusty?

Yeah, he was kinda rusty, but it was definitely sufficient. It would help. Otherwise, I would have to bust out my辞書 and sit there for like 10 minutes just trying to get our point across.

Were there any hard times not being able to communicate or anything like that?

No, I didn't really have too much difficulty.

Being that you lived with a host family, did you make Japanese friends outside of the family or not really?

Um, a little bit. It was a little harder, because a lot of the time I would after class just end up going home.

Did you have a curfew or anything?

They were pretty lenient; I did have a kind of curfew but basically if I told them, as long as I told them in advance, they didn't care.
Now I met a German girl who had a wonderful host family she said and they bought her all this stuff, she stills talks with them, she still keeps in contact with them every time she does back to Japan they take her out to dinner and for her birthday and all kinds of stuff. Do you feel that that’s your relationship with your host family?

Um, they were really nice; I haven’t kept in contact with them really. I wrote a really nice letter when I was leaving. I gave it to my お母さん right before I left, like the day before I left and she seemed to really appreciate that; she seemed touched by that. But other than that, they ended up writing me once. But it was a short, basically someone had ended up sending me a post card while I was there, but they didn’t receive it til after I left, so they pretty much forwarded the post card to me and wrote a short letter with it.

So do you feel that if you do go back to Japan that you will visit them?

Oh yes, I would definitely go visit them. I haven’t kept in contact with them since I’ve been back though.

Now I had the presumption that most people would’ve been in the dorms, so I made this question comparing Japanese and American friend relationships. I guess I could ask you family relationships. Did you notice anything different between your Japanese family and your American family?

Child raising. They kind of, I am not really entirely sure how it works there, but they seem to be a lot less strict with their children as they are growing up. They kind of just let them do whatever and they don’t punish them so much; they kind of just ignore them.

Now was that just with this family or did you see other families doing the same thing?

No, and I’ve talked with other people and that’s kind of how it is. They had a two year old daughter and she would just throw the biggest fits in the world and scream and cry. We were out at a restaurant and when you’re leaving they always have those little areas to buy toys and stuff. She would go up to it and want one, but they wouldn’t buy it because it was way over priced. They would tell her no, but she
wouldn't put it back and tried to leave the store with it and crying, throwing a fit and making a big deal about it. It probably took like 15 minutes for us to leave and they had to drag her out.

But they would just ignore her? Unlike an American parent would either spank the kid or tell them to stop it or take them to a different room to yell at them, but the Japanese would just ignore it.

Yeah, they would. I don't know. It was weird. And it happened all the time if she wasn't getting her way at home especially they would just kind of ignore her.

Did it work?

I don't know. It didn't really seem to to me.

But that was probably the biggest difference that you saw in family life?

Yeah, I'd probably say so.

Alright, so after coming home from Japan, did you notice that you yourself changed? The is the main purpose of this research paper to see how people change through study abroad. Did you notice anything different about yourself?

I suppose I probably did change, but I can't really say that I've noticed anything.

Did you have anyone like point things out to you about something different about you?

I kind of lost some weight because I had been eating a bit healthier, probably less portions. And then I also rode a bike to school everyday. Probably a thirty to forty minute bike ride. No body has really said that I act really differently. I guess I've always been a reserved, shy person.

Alright, let's see. Now this is more on the study abroad program itself. Do you feel that before studying abroad if there were certain things you
would've had a better experience, things that should've been there for you.

I went to the really brief orientations before I left, but I didn’t really feel like I learned all that much from them. I don’t know, I guess I just kinda threw myself in there, so I was a little nervous when I was going. I just said, “Ok I am doing this.” Just sort of winged it as I went.

But you didn’t feel like there was really something that you needed? Anything lacking? Not just for you, but for other people?

Nothing is coming to mind now really; sorry.

While you were over there was there anything that you felt should’ve been there as well?

I am sure there was at the time, but I can’t think of anything right now.

Did you have any communication with Eastern while you were over there?

I think I had to do my taxes while I was over there and I had to request Eastern to mail you something. Yeah, it ended up working out. It was a little confusing and frustrating at the time, but I guess it worked out.

And then after studying abroad, the exact same question. Do you feel like there should’ve been things in place after you came back from studying? Like a debriefing or things to keep your Japanese up or something like that. Many students say that Eastern’s APA sort of ignores them.

I haven’t even talked with the study abroad program since I’ve come home. Maybe like a follow up thing? Might not have been bad. But like everybody came back at different times. Some even came back right after the semester.

But even still they could send an email saying to come to the study abroad office or what not. Give them some feedback about host families and stuff.
I think Kansai Gaidai does more stuff with host families, but yeah, there wasn’t really anything. But actually, talking before hand, I am doing a project and I just thought of this, but one thing that might be helpful beforehand and after is the conversation partner program. If you want to let’s say learn more about Japan, the culture and what not, before I go there, then you can request a Japanese speaking partner. And then you make friends with this person and you can practice your Japanese with them. And then coming back you have a new person or that same person. That might be a way to keep a little link.

I think that they had one somewhat started by a guy named Matt Hughes where you’re bound to a student from the university you are intending to study at.

One of the parts of my project was to design a flyer that the international students could give to the study abroad office to give to students. Like anyone that comes in that is interested in study abroad the semester before they go, tell them to check out the speaking partner program.

Kind of like a tandem thing?

It might help you make decisions, learn about the culture, a little bit more about the country before you head out there.

Do you feel that your relationship with the people over at Gaidai went well?

No, not really. The CIE was pretty helpful. I didn’t really need it that much; tried to be as independent as possible, but they seemed really helpful.

Skype??

Kind of like a penpal?

More standardized really. Have everyone supposed to go to Gaidai in a room and have the head of the program talk with them just so you know who they are and feel less anxious.
I guess that could've been helpful for some students.

While were you over there did you feel anxious or worried at all?

A little bit. It was more personal problems. My girlfriend was still in America. We moved in together a few months before I left and I felt really bad for leaving her for 4 months, for such a long time. We'd Skype when we could, but I think it was really hard on her.

That was really the main thing that caused problems?

That was probably the worst thing.

Alright, and after studying abroad you do feel that your Japanese has improved?

It did improve.

What do you feel improved the most? Reading, writing, listening speaking?

All of it, but I would probably say listening and speaking more than reading/writing. My reading and writing still improved, I’ve always been better at it, but being there kind of forced me to speak more and listen a lot more.

Did the family you were staying with help with reading and writing and what not?

No, I never really asked for help.

Having come back to EMU, what ways are you maintaining your Japanese?

Not really to be honest. I have a conversation partner, but we haven’t met very much and I only need two more classes in Japanese to graduate, but neither of them are being offered right now, so I am not taking any classes. Not really, I guess. Japanese people in general are really helpful, very kind and supportive. Especially when I am speaking. As far as family relations, I guess its changing a little bit but in
general they have the women stay at home while the men work. My mom did everything, cleaned cooked and what not. I did help with stuff, but not much.

Unless there is anything else you'd like to add?

Maybe it’s just me, but as far as friendships I found them to be really superficial and want to talk with me and get to know me. I guess I take longer to open up and get to know people. I have lots of friends, but only a few good friends that I feel comfortable around. But it seemed like every Japanese person was really eager to hang out. I understand some of it because they want to meet international students due they themselves studying abroad to practice their English and get better about it. There was something about it that was superficial.

I think it was ind of the luck of the draw.

I guess it’s cuz I am older.

You don’t look old.

I didn’t live in the seminar houses and felt disconnected from the Japanese students, because they were younger.

Alright, thank you very much.

学生

Ok, so what year are you?

I am a sixth year.

And how old are you?

I am twenty-three.

And your major?

Anthropology.

Anthropology? I did not know that. And your minor?
And what Japanese classes have you taken up until now?

I have taken almost all of them. I have gotten up to 361.

361. That’s the business one, isn’t it?

Yeah, that’s the international trade one; we were together in that class.

Yes, that’s right; I am sorry. I just felt that you had been studying Japanese a lot longer than me. What was your motivation to study Japanese?

I think, basically I always wanted to learn a second language and I got into Japanese music really early, since I was about eleven. So I decided, hey I listen to the music, why not learn the language? And I just grew to love it.

Ok, perfect. And then in the future what do you plan on doing with Japanese?

I think I might go into JET and teach English; I’m not so sure, but I definitely want to do something with my Japanese that I’ve spent hundreds of dollars to learn.

So in the near future you want to teach English, but in the long term you don’t really know?

Yeah, pretty much.

So where when and how long did you study abroad?

I was at JCMU and I was there for about 6 months.

And what year did you study?

2010.
And who did you go with? Was there anyone that you would consider your
group?
No, I was actually by myself. I didn’t really know anybody.

Before going to Japan what sort of things did you hope for, did you
expect?

I expected good food and some weird stuff maybe. I expected to see
noodles machines everywhere, which there were. And I expected to get
stared at, because everybody kept telling me that I’d get stared at
because I am a foreigner.

Did that happen?

Oh, yes. Definitely. And I expected everyone to be really fashionable
and they were.

And were there any personal expectations like goals that you set for
yourself or things you were afraid of before you went?

For me I expected to be a bit more outgoing as far as trying to speak
Japanese to Japanese people. I think I gained that basically. I am not
afraid to talk in Japanese with people anymore.

And then going to Japan, did the things that you hoped for and the
things that happened pretty much coincided?

Yeah.

Everything basically came true then.

Yeah.

Was there anything that didn’t that you were kind of taken aback by?

No, not really.

Did you notice any differences between Japanese and American
relationships when it came to friends?
That’s a good question. Not really, I feel like everyone was the same as far as friendships. They were all pretty close and they called each other all the time. I didn’t really see any differences.

Before I started doing these interviews I felt that Japanese relationships were kind of superficial and that I didn’t like it, that I felt that they were really shallow. And then I started these interviews and one person made a good point saying that they have it in both American and Japanese relationships. It doesn’t matter about the nationality of the person, it’s the people themselves.

I feel that some Japanese people wanted to be friends with me because I was foreign and not just because they thought I was cool, but eventually you kinda weed those people out because you realize that they are not trying to hang out with you for you, but for those who did start off because you’re foreign and you actually have something in common, I thought that was really cool. But other than that there wasn’t really anything different.

Coming back from Japan, did you notice that you yourself changed?

Yeah.

In what way?

I think I was a lot more confident when it came to doing things on my own, because I never really had to do much without going to my mom and asking what she thinks. But now I basically only ever think for myself as far as like big decisions now. And, um, I hate cars. I wish we had a better transportation system as far as buses and trains now and I find myself walking a lot compared to when I used to.

I’ve heard that from more than one person now. Was there any sort of a lag period when you came home? Like you came home and you felt the opposite of what you feel right now? You said you feel confident right now, that you can go out and do things for yourself, but when you came home did you feel like a reverse culture shock period? Where you felt really unmotivated and what not?
I didn’t want to go outside my room. I didn’t want to leave my house because going out in public and seeing Americans again just made it so much more that I was back in America and I didn’t want to be there. And I thought that everybody was just so loud. I just needed to be some place quiet. The habit I picked up, like when you go to restaurants you fold your napkin into tiny little pieces, I totally picked that up in Japan because everyone kept doing that. And also carrying my trash everywhere. You know how here we would just throw it where ever, but ever since Japan I always keep it in my purse until I get back, so I don’t litter as much as I used to.

Alright, so just random little things here and there that you felt had changed. Alright, now this is more towards the EMU study abroad program, now you did yours a few years ago, so it might be totally different now, but before you went was there anything you felt that should’ve been in place sort of like to prepare you for study abroad? Was there anything like a better orientation or more information about the school you were going to, do you feel like there should’ve been more in place. I know you went to JCMU which is basically like a direct link, so there might not have been as much as Gaidai or Gakugei, but was there anything?

This didn’t happen to me but it happened to a friend of mine. He got there a few days earlier than he was supposed to and the school would just not accommodate him at all and told him to go someplace else to find a hotel to stay in for the next three days because they couldn’t let him move in yet. And no one was even there. People had already gone home, why couldn’t you let somebody stay? I thought that was really weird, but as far as EMU? EMU was pretty direct, I thought.

Because most of that JCMU stuff is handled through Michigan State, right? You go to an orientation at State, they tell you everything about what’s going to happen.

I wish that they would’ve had an orientation here, instead of just at State because I couldn’t go to State because it was too far away. I wish that they would have some sort of a JCMU thing here as well, because quite a few of us came from Eastern. A big chunk. Maybe more people from Eastern than from MSU and yeah, they definitely should do something like that here.
There might already be something in place now, I don’t know for sure, but we might as well put it in the interview just in case. Alright, and what you were studying abroad do you feel that there was anything that Eastern could’ve done for you or that JCMU could’ve done for you?

We could’ve had some sort of meal stipend. We didn’t have one; we had to basically fend for ourselves. Like Kansai Gaidai got a stipend; we didn’t.

Neither did I.

At Kansai Gaidai.

No, I went to TGU.

Oh, yea I think they should give us stipends. They put so much into Kansai Gaidai, because apparently a lot of people just want to go there, that they completely forget about the other two. I am sure a lot of people went to Tokyo, but most people want to go to Gaidai, because most know people from Gaidai, everybody’s been there already, so they all come back with great stories, but they should definitely do a lot more for TGU and JCMU.

Either connect it with your student loan or something so you have it there so you won’t feel lost when looking for food, because if you’ve never been to the country before, how are you supposed to know how to budget for food.

They tell you to bring like $3000 a semester, but people don’t do it. They should definitely give us some sort of meal stipend, or like a meal plan of some sort.

Especially at JCMU because it is supported by Michigan universities. It’s not like you have to go through the bureaucracy of a Japanese school, it’s a Michigan university.

We should have a meal plan or something, so a couple thousand dollars like they did at Kansai Gaidai.

There’s a cafeteria and what not there, right?
No, it's actually like our own little mini-apartment. You walk in and there's a kitchen, a bathroom and two bedrooms for us to share.

After studying abroad do you feel that there were things that Eastern could've done for you? Other people said that they were ignored.

Exactly.

They said why can't we do some sort of debriefing to figure things out.

I think that's the problem that they don't do that. They don't have anyway to make the program better, because there is no feedback and they don't ask students how it went, what they liked and what they didn't like. So everything just stays the same. And also, the people in the study abroad office, they don't know anything about the programs half the time or they don't know as much as they should.

There was one lady at the office; she was wonderful. I don't know if you worked with her.

I didn't have her.

She was a really helpful person and then she left for State. Now there's like only two people in the study abroad office.

They knew nothing.

Alright. While you were there do you feel that your relationships with the people that headed the program went well?

Oh, yeah. It was like family. There were only like 30 of us students.

I mean the teachers.

That is what I am saying. There were so few students, and some of the teachers actually lived with us in the dorms. I guess Iiga-san, she was basically our RA and she was so helpful. Whoever was sick she would drive us to the hospital and help translate. She was basically like our
mom. Even up to the director himself, he lived there too with his family and we saw him all the time. Very laid back.

Alright, alright, wonderful. Here is another question: before studying abroad, do you feel that if you could’ve used Skype or what not to talk with the people over at JCMU, do you feel like you would’ve had a better experience? Not just for yourself, but for other people that might be a little more timid. You’re not a timid person.

I think that talking with him and talking with other students that were going there too would help, so that by the time you got there, you would know. But I think before I even left, they were adding me to the JCMU facebook, so you met people through facebook already and you got to talk with them and see that they look like, so by the time you got there it was really nice. But I feel that Skype would’ve been even better.

Perfect. Now, did you ever feel anxious or worried while you were over there?

Yeah, about money. All the time I kept thinking about how am I going to eat. Money, money, money. And I had to keep asking my family to send more money because of food and living expenses. And you know, you want to do stuff while you are there. You want to get out and go meet people and have fun and go to amusement parks and stuff like that.

Yeah, for some people this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and they are never going to go back to Japan. Some people don’t ever plan on going back.

That was actually my second time. I went by myself once for a month and stayed with a friend.

That’s pretty bold. How old were you at the time?

I was around 19 because I wasn’t able to drink.

But they didn’t card you there, did they?

No, I didn’t drink at all. I just decided to follow the rules.
So, your main worry was money, then? Nothing else?

Nothing really else, because I was confident catching the train, I could read, I could speak, I got lost a couple times, but I just asked where I was going. And I had to catch the 新幹線 all the way from Tokyo to Osaka when I got there and it was really easy to know the area because I had been there before.

And then, having studied abroad, do you feel that your Japanese got better?

Oh, yes. Definitely. What I did was, when I went to JCMU, I tested into the highest level they offered at the time, the 3rd level, but with third level, you’d have to sit there and study all day so you were ready for the class the next day. So you didn’t really get out and it was stressful for a lot of people who stayed, so I didn’t stay. I decided to drop down to the second level, because I was lazy. And so it was just a refresher course, but I felt that it really cemented Japanese more into my head and I had a lot more time to go and explore, so you could use your everyday Japanese and learn through experience, so definitely I think my conversational skills got better.

Alright, and then having back to EMU what ways are you keeping your Japanese?

That’s funny, because I am really not. I still watch Japanese drama here and then and I don’t really speak it as much as I used to, but I try to study sometimes when I can.

Taking the JLPT or anything?

I am going to take it. Not coming up now, but maybe next year.

Well, it is so close now.

And I would actually have time to study for it, because I don’t really right now because of my 400 level classes.

Alright, thank you.
学生B

はい、では、インタビューを早速開始いたしますよ。では、カリリさん、今年何年生ですか。

私は四年生です。
四年生ですか。はい、で、何歳ですか?

二十一歳です。
あのう、専門は何にしてますか?

日本語と文化です。
文化というと、その日本文化ですね。で、そのマイナーありますか。

マイナーはTESOLです。

はい、な、何で、どうして笑ってますか?

何でザックと敬語使ってるところちょっとわからないんですが、

インタビューですから、

インタビューを受けてるから、じゃ、丁寧語で

はい、お願いします。で、日本語のクラスは何をとりましたか?

え、もう一回言って。

日本語のクラスは何をとりましたか。今まで、大学の一年生から

343, 344。

飛び級したということ?
飛び級した、その一年生、二年生、その、なんていう100と200を飛び級した?

飛び級した。
OK。あのう、日本語をする、日本語を勉強するきっかけは何でしたか。

きっかけは、中学校二年生のときの先生がきっかけでした。

そうですか。

はい。

もっと説明してくださいませんか？

その先生はあのう、すごく賢くて
日本語の先生でした？

日本語の先生でした。アメリカ人なのに、日本語がすごくしゃべれて日本語の能力がすごくてなんでか、引かれた。それで、あの人がJETやっててそれを見て「あ、やっぱり、このような人生がいいな」と思ってきっかけになりました。

なるほどですね。はい、で、将来日本語を通じて何をしたいですか？

JETに入って日本で英語を教えていiedy。

あ、はい。で、その後に？

その後に、アメリカに戻って大学院入ってTESOLか日本語かもっと勉強して日本に戻って仕事をするつもりです。

はい、永住ということ、日本に永住する気がありますか、それとも。

まあ、まあ、将来の、どうなるかまだ分からないんですが、できれば日本で働きたいです。

はい、わかりました。日本はどこに、どのぐらい行きましたか。あの、この最近の留学ですね。

最近の留学は大阪の立命館で二学期間留学しました。

はい、わかりました。で、それは関西外大ですね。

関西外大でした。
はい、でグループとして誰と行きませんでしたか。なんていう、もちろんEMUの学生と一緒に行くことはもう、なんです、確かであるです、確かであるんですが、なんていうその友達として行ったんですか。

いや、一人で行きました。

一人みたい、一人のような感じで

行く前にほかのEASTERNの留学生があまり知らなくて本当に一人で行ったような感じでした。

はい、わかりました。で、日本に行く前にどんなことを期待していましたか。きっと、なにか。どういうことを望んでいた。どういうことをホープしていますか。何を求めていましたか。日本に行く前に。

まあ、私、何回も日本に留学したところがあるから。

はい。

留学行く前に、あまり望むのがよくないなぁと思ってなんというその機会の経験を100％もらうために

はい。

あまり望まないように頑張りました。

はい、わかりました。

で、あの、ちょっと、なにか、違う話なんですかけど、勝手に英語になってもいいんですよ。よく日本語でいえないことなら、英語でいいですよ。

ありがとうございます。でも、日本語で

はい、お願いします。で、日本に行って期待していたことと実際に住んでみたときと違いがありましたか。同じでしたか?

やっぱり、前言ったように、あたし、何回も日本に留学したことがあります。今までのあった経験で日本に慣れたと思っていて行ったんですがやっぱり私、外国人だなんて気づいていました。まあ、別にそんなに悪い意味じゃなくてただ、
一生頑張っても本格的な日本人になるわけがない？そういうことですね。

イヤ、別に日本人になりたいんじゃなくてただ、思ったより日本の文化とかにあまり慣れていないと思って。やっぱり私が外国人だなって思って。そう気づいてきました。

でも、逆にアメリカの、アメリカ文化なんていう本当に詳しいって思ったこともあるんじゃないですか。

うん、思います。

はい、よかった。で、日本とアメリカの友達を比較して、友達の関係についてあなたの考えに変化がありましたか。

日本の？

日本とアメリカとの、なんていうその友達関係、なんていうその、違いがあるということに気づきましたか。それとも、同じだと思いますか？

もう一回聞いて。

はい、日本とアメリカの友達を比較して、友達の関係についてあなたの考えに変化がありましたか、留学してから。

変化かな。

変化という言葉が一番この卒論のために出てくるから

なんか思った、でもやっぱり、アメリカの友達の関係と日本の友達の関係が違うんだなと。

どう違いますか？よろしければおっしゃってください。

アメリカ人は、私にとっては、アメリカ人はなんかすごく仲良くなりますよね。

早く？早めに？

うん、早めに仲良くなれますし、本当に自分が思っていることとか、まあそんな、すぐに言えますが、日本で、まあ、びっくりしてなかったけど、驚いたのはどん
だけ仲良くなってきても、自分が本当に思っていることを言う。。。壁がありますよね。

あ、なんか、まだなんていう距離が置いてある。その、自分とその友達の間になんか距離が置いてあるみたい感じで。

結婚してるカップルでも、友達でも、なんか、壁がありますよね。別に、悪いと思ってないんですけど、やっぱり文化が違うなって。

はい、わかりました。で、アメリカに帰ってきて自分が変わったなと思いましたか？

変わりました。

だとしたら、説明してください。

やっぱり、日本人みたいになってしまいましたよね。アメリカに帰ってきてアメリカ生活とか、うん、本当に、久しぶりに見て、びっくりしてしまいました。

もっと深く説明してくれないですか？それはちょっと、表面的な答えなんですかから、ちょっとわ、自分もそう思いましたが、ただ、なんていう、日本にいたとき、超アメリカに帰りたくて帰りたくてたまらなかったけど、やっぱりなんていう帰国してから、やっぱり日本が一番いいって気づいてしまった。

あたしは別に帰りたくはなかったんですが、こっちに帰りてきってアメリカの生活が、ちょっと例を出そう。例えば、男の人がシャツなしに道を歩いてたり食べる分がすごくでかいこともありますし、なんか、そんなびっくりしました。やっぱり日本と違いますね。

違うんですね。

で、これはちょっと違う話題なんですねけど、EMUの留学プログラムで、留学する前にこれがよかったと思うことがありますか？

あれば、どういうことですか？

Organization。

もっと組織が必要だった。そうですか。ちょっとめちゃくちゃだったんですね。

ぱらぱらだったんで、すごく
なんか情報が足りなかったんだよ。

いや、なんか曖昧な答えとか、あのう、そんな人がたくさんあってイヤでした。

なんか、その外大についての情報がゼンゼン足りなかった？

授業のTransferのこととか

それは留学の後ですね。

留学の前にやらなきゃいけなかったんですが、なんでやらないってもいいって言われたから、ここっちは帰ってきても大変な状況になってしまってもっとOrganizationが必要だった。

組織という事ですね。あ、そうか。そうか。

まあ、同じような意見が出てきましたね、前のインタビュー。で、留学している間に、これがあればよかったかなと思うことがありますか？

全然ないんです。何も

で、留学した後に、これがあればよかったかなと思うことがありますか？

何も思ってないんです。

ほかの人から、留学してからその留学プログラムは、なんていう、自分を無視するとかおっしゃってたんだけけど
自分を無視する？どういうこと？

なんていう、その留学生を無視することになるといったんですけど。ただ帰ってきて、「もう授業に戻りなさい」みたいな感じ。

それ、全然大丈夫で、
だって、改善するわけがないですよ。その留学プログラムを改善させることができないんじゃないですか？その、なんていう、帰ってきてこれで終わりって　

でも、エッセイ書かないといけませんでしたけどね

私、書かなかったんですよ。

91
え、そんな。やらなくても。外大生だけがそうだと思う。

あ、そうか。で、あの、留学先の留学担当の人間関係はうまくいきましたか？仲が良かったですか。それとも？

よかったのです、本当に。

留学する前に留学担当教官などとスカイプなどで話せたとしたらどのように留学経験が変化したと思いますか。

外大の人と話してないね。

えっ、一回も？

一回も

そうですか。あっなら、やりたいと思いますか。

別に。関西外大のプログラムはすごくいいので、いや、なんかそんな全然必要ないと思います。

関西外大だったらね、東京学芸は知らないですね。

たぶんある必要があると思います。留学してる間に、不安や心配を感じたことがありますか。何がそん心配や不安を起こしたと思いますか？

あまり留学についての心配はないんですが、それより、もっとパーソナルの心配が。

そうなんですか

ストレス与えました。影響がありました。

で、留学してから自分の日本語能力が上達したと思いますか？

上達したと思います。

その日本語能力の書く、読む、聞く、話すの中で、どのスキルが上達したと思いますか。
What else do you think you need to say?

Like anything that you feel like how you changed or anything

Do you want me to answer in English or in Japanese?

Yes, in English, please and thank you.

Well, from, what I changed from study abroad I believe that I’ve definitely changed as a person, I’ve grown as a person. Through my experience of study abroad, regardless of what it had to do with the study abroad experience itself or personal experiences that I had during the study abroad, I believe that I have grown as a person. I’ve learned a lot of different things. Because of this, it only justified the fact, it really, I don’t know, encouraged me to go further in my studies with Japanese and my plans that I have for the future. Um, I would recommend study abroad for anyone, regardless of whether or not it is Japan or anywhere.
Or even if they are not majoring in a language.

Yea, just study abroad. Get out there; it’s one of the greatest experiences you can have when you’re a student and I believe that anyone and everyone should do it if they can. That’s all I got.

どうもありがとうございました。

いいえ。

学生9

Alright, so what year are you this year?

I am fourth year.

How old are you?

21.

And your major?

My major is Japanese and Animation.

Ok, so that's, so that means you are double majoring, meaning no minor?

No minor.

Up until now what Japanese classes have you taken?

Um, I have taken of course the beginning Japanese courses and one intermediate class here at Eastern, and then I went to Japan of course and.

We will get to the classes you took in Japan; just the classes you have taken at Eastern.

Other than that I am currently taking a survey of Japanese Literature.
And then what made you study Japanese? What was that driving force, that one specific instant that made you want to study Japanese?

I mean, more so when I was younger, I really had a lack of knowledge of Asian culture, in general.

Well, don't most Americans? I would say unless you are an Asian American you have little to no knowledge of Asian culture. So what made you want to obtain that knowledge?

What made me want to?....I don't know. So I made a friend who was of course Japanese and I really enjoyed their personality and the way they presented themselves, the way they thought. And even on TV as well, I just am always interested in knowing deeper than what I see on TV without seeing everything.

And in the future, through Japanese what do you plan on doing, job wise or pursuing further education or what not?

After I graduate, I want to be involved in the JET program.

As an English teacher or a CIR?

I want to go for CIR, but I am also willing to go as a ALT as well. I want to do that for a long time, I just want to better my Japanese, so I am going for 3 to 5 years. 5 years I could definitely do it in my life. And after that I want to become involved I the movie industry, video game industry and animation industry and I want to be able to work with those companies, both through America and Japan, drawing the cultures together to make more diverse movies.

Where in Japan did you study, how long did you study and who was the, like, group of friends that you went with? I mean obviously things are going to change while you are over there, but did you really go with anyone?

On my way to Japan I went with one of my friends. He was nice and everything, but we just traveled together, to that degree.

Where did you go?
We went to Kansai Gaidai University, in Hirakata, Osaka, Japan.

And how long were you there for?

I was there for a year.

Alright, and before going to Japan what kind of things were you expecting?

Um, hard to say. More to so, are you asking if I was expecting something back or good?

Like what things were you wishing for, looking forward to having, like basically what did you expect? Whether they are good or bad things.

Well, I mean, I had always a positive mind about going to Japan. I knew I was a foreigner and I just wanted to make sure that people were open to accepting of who I was, not just as an American, but also as an African American, which I don’t know, maybe they don’t see as much. And when I got there, I experienced people really just interested, just willing to know, understand who I am and where I am from.

So, did you expect anything else then other than that?

Biggest thing I was expecting was just building relationships, building strong bonds and friendships, you know, more so just being able to connect with people because that is what I enjoy doing. I enjoy connecting with people from all over.

And then going to Japan did the things that you expected and reality did they coincide or were they relatively different?

Um, let’s see. Like my perspectives of it?

The things you expected and the things that actually happened. Were they the same or were they different?

Um, it’s really hard to say, because...
Well, you said that you were expecting to build relationships and that you wanted people to look past what you were on the outside.

I guess I was surprised, I really was in that situation I was very surprised. I really got to connect with people much faster and better than I thought I would. I mean, I was able to talk to somebody just randomly, maybe on my way to school, on the streets somewhere, and it was just a wonderful relationship, completely different from what I am used to in America.

Ok, alright. Then that brings me to the next question, comparing Japanese and American relationships, obviously there was a change in your opinions towards those issues. What kind of changes happened other than you being able to talk with people from not really even knowing them at all?

Maybe just changes within myself. I guess I became a little more confident. Maybe sometimes while I was there a little too confident, but definitely I felt more confidence in trying to get to know people and walk up to people. I never really had too much worry if there was something I didn't know in trying to meet them.

And then coming back to America, do you feel that you yourself have changed?

Yes, I am sad cuz I want to go back to Japan.

How do you feel that you have changed?

How do I feel I have changed? Uh, let's see. I feel like, well, when I went there that was my first time outside of my own country, so of course, I feel like that was a very adult move in my opinion, a very mature, adult move, living on your own, having to cook for yourself, staying with different people sometimes. It was an amazing experience and it was something that definitely made me just more of a man, more of an adult now because I've experienced that lone experience in a new world. The challenges were different.
But, how are you different? Saying that you’ve grown up really
doesn’t...that a really surface kind of answer. How did you change?
What do you see yourself doing now presently?

Maybe like, well definitely like study habits or stuff like that. It’s
definitely improved. Before I went to Japan, I didn’t study as much,
but because of the structure and the way different students seem to put
more into their study time, I gained that experience, I adapted into
that experience. I’ve always had good manners, but I feel like I’m very
more observant of being good with manners, being nice and just trying to
be very polite and pay attention to things, more focused to certain
situations. The Japanese lifestyle just changes me in how I act in
those ways, that’s how I feel.

Alright, and then through Eastern’s study abroad program do you feel
that there were things that should’ve been in place before going, such
as orientations, um, things like that, um, better information regarding
the program, um, do you feel that there should have been more in place
for you?

I feel like there should be more information with medical stuff, like
when you’re going abroad and stuff, I feel like they should definitely
have easier ways for students to connect when it comes to, like if I am
sick or if I have a problem, not that that was like my big issue there.
I just felt like people did experience some things.

Yeah, I mean you’re bound to get sick when you’re over in a new country
for a while. So I understand what you mean by that. I definitely feel
that at least in my dorm’s case, there was a lot of paperwork and what
not that you had to fill out. If there was only like a way to either, I
mean, there were people that didn’t speak any japanese when they went
over there, so they didn’t know how to fill out these documents and they
had to have their hand held throughout the whole thing. If they
would’ve had this information prior to going over there, it would’ve
made a whole lot easier, so yeah, I understand what you mean when you
talk about medical things.

Medical stuff, insurance, things like that.
Insurance! Definitely, because then they had to pay the insurance for things like that and they didn’t know how they were supposed to pay it and what not, so that was another problem.

Um, while you were over there was there anything that you felt Eastern or the place that you were staying should’ve done for you? While you were over there.

I mean, I don’t know, it just keeps coming back to that one thing, because a lot of the other things I felt I was ok with, but the insurance. I wish there was like a better connection with making the payments for stuff easier through the insurance companies you’re with.

What do you mean? Are you talking about like connecting your American insurance to your Japanese insurance because I went completely through the national insurance of Japan.

Well, in my case, I didn’t have Japan National Insurance. It was a company here that was helping throughout abroad and stuff.

You mean through Eastern's program?

Yeah, it was through Eastern's thing. It was definitely through them.

Because I went over and I technically had that in place, but I think they forced you to get Japanese insurance, they force you to.

Well, at least for us, they gave us an option. They said would you like to? And I didn’t know. I didn’t know what to say, should I say yes or no...

So they should have more in place obviously for that. But that was your only problem when you were over there then?

I mean, at least I felt, there was really nothing else that hit me as a problem, because transportation was easy, getting around was easy.

Well, that has nothing to do with the study abroad program.
After you came home, do you feel like there should’ve been something in place? Not even just for you, but for the betterment of the program? Many other people already have said there should be a debriefing.

Actually, I didn’t put that into perspective, but yes. I do feel like after going abroad a lot of the students should be able to come back together and connect more, because then again, it helps. Sometimes you learn something different from that place that you’re at, and if we come together, we can end up helping each other towards graduation. We can help each other with other connections in case we want to return to Japan, so I would promote that idea at most.

Now do you feel that your relationship with the people over at Kansai Gaidai went well?

Yes, I believe everything went very well. Is there anything more you would like me to add?

Well, if you feel that it went well and that you don’t have anything else to say, then there isn’t much more to ask. Do you feel that if you were able to use Skype or what not before going to Japan to talk with those people over at Gaidai, do you feel that it would’ve changed your experience?

Yes, I think it would’ve gave me at least more of a heads up on who I would be connected with. I wouldn’t have to search for anybody or.

You would know who.

I would know who, exactly. It would be just more of an easier connection. Plus you build a nice foundation on your relationships before arriving there.

Now did you stay in a dorm or a homestay?

I stayed in a dorm, but I did experience a little bit of a homestay privately with friends.

Um, what made you choose a dorm instead of a homestay?
To be honest, it was really because I kinda wanted to be able to leave and go when I wanted from the dorm. I am not much of a party-er, but I did want to experience more of a free access of moving around life, free access of inviting people or just access to hang out, just stuff like that.

While you were over there do you feel that you felt any anxiety or worry? And if so, what caused that anxiety or worry.

I don't know. My personality is strange in my opinion. I didn't really exactly feel anxiety so to say or worries, more so. I didn't even really feel homesick. I was one of the people who actually really just mostly in general felt comfortable where I was and adapted well.

You didn't feel anything whatsoever then?

No, I feel I adapted very well to my environment.

Alright, after study abroad do you feel that you Japanese has gotten better? If so, what facet of Japanese (reading, writing, listening, speaking) got the biggest boost?

Well, I kind of always put myself down in terms of my Japanese progress so far, but in my opinion, Kansai Gaidai is a great school, but I do feel like because of the environment you're in, a lot of students will come to you with English, more often than Japanese. I feel that sometimes it hinders the process of actually being able to learn.

So what do you feel got better though while you were over there?

Well, I would say honestly just my knowledge of the vocab.

So that would be your listening then? You would hear it and understand it or?

Knowing, just more so knowing, more so being able to use a word when I create a sentence in Japanese.

So that would be speaking.
Yes, speaking.

So speaking would be the biggest thing that improved while you were over there then?

Yes.

Ok, what do you feel you did to improve those skills then?

Interacting, talking to random people, whether they were strangers, whether it was an old person when I was lost, I actually always wanted to just interact with somebody.

Alright, and then having come back to EMU, in what ways are you trying to maintain your Japanese?

I guess, well, it is lucky for me that I was able to keep of course some friends from Kansai who are actually here now. And of course, I am rooming with one of them and the other I am pretty close to.

Oh really?

They are all really nice and try to help me. Once in a while we have Japanese conversations and it's really good, a good experience.

And then is there anything else that you'd like to add in terms of a change in yourself that you've noticed throughout this interview that kind of came to mind?

Change of myself? Um...

Maybe like what some people have pointed out about you, like oh this or that is different from what you used to do, things like that.

Um, I guess more so, uh, it's really hard to say. I definitely changed a lot, but um, I feel like I am a little more quiet.

Ok
I’m not as, maybe I used to be a little bit louder when I was talking. But I feel that I am a quieter person because you know being in Japan there was probably a lot of moments where I felt like a person needs to be a little conservative to themselves and a little more passive in a way as I used to be way more aggressive when it comes to like starting a conversation and things like that.

I understand.

So I am very outgoing in the long run. That hasn’t really changed.

So you’ve sort of, I don’t want to say toned down, because that sounds kind of mean.

More of an observer now. I am from the perspective of an observer.

More from a speaker to a listener, to take a couple steps back and kind of observe the situation before you actually say anything or do anything about it. Alright, that makes sense. Alright, thank you very much.

Thank you.

What year are you?

Year 5.

And how old are you?

I am 24.

And your major?

International Affairs.

What does that consist of?

It’s mostly political science, talk about sort of international relations. It’s more of what it is based on.
So is there some sort of language requirement?

Yeah, there is a language requirement so I’ve been doing Japanese and Chinese for that.

Ok, and then your minor?

I actually don’t have a minor right now, but I am thinking of getting Japanese as a minor.

Ok, and then what Japanese classes have you taken up until now?

Here I’ve taken the first 2 years, four semesters worth, up until like 212, I believe it is.

Alright, and what made you want to study Japanese?

Just growing up I enjoyed Asia in general and I had a lot of Japanese friends growing up. So it just kind of clicked.

Did you grow up in Michigan?

Yeah, I grew up right in Ann Arbor, so I had like Japanese friends and I got interested in like Power Rangers, the Japanese version of them, things like that when I was little so,

Ok, Alright. And then in the future what do you plan on doing with Japanese?

I am thinking about doing international business, or maybe embassy work even if I can score a job like that.

Alright, and then where in Japan did you go, how long did you go and who was the group of friends that you went with?

I went to Kansai Gaidai, I was there for a year. In terms of friends, I didn’t really go with anybody, just with the EMU program, but lots of friends there, both Japanese and foreign.

How long were you there, you said a year. From when to when did you go?
It was from August of 2011 until June 2012.

Alright, so quite recently. So before you went to Japan what kind of things were you expecting?

The biggest thing was to just improve my Japanese, that was my main goal for going. And then just networking, making lots of friends while I was over there.

Alright, that was what you expected for yourself. What did you expect of Japan itself?

I think I was expecting to just do a lot of traveling and see all the historical sites.

Was that your first time in Japan?

It was actually my second. I went there right after high school I went to Tokyo for about two weeks just to tour around, so.

Ok, and then going to Japan, the things that you anticipated and what really happened, did they coincide or were they different?

I think they coincided pretty well. I did get a lot of instances to travel around, to go to places like Hiroshima and a lot of Kyushu, so Nagasaki, Kumamoto, etc. Even Okinawa for a little, so that was a lot of fun.

Alright, and then having gone to Japan, was there any change in your thoughts about friendships?

I don’t think so. I had pretty much the same mindset about friendships going there, so yeah, I don’t think I had a whole lot of change.

Alright, and then coming back to America (this is probably the biggest question of the whole interview) do you feel that you yourself changed and if so in what ways giving the most detail that you can?
How I've changed. I am a lot better at keeping contact with my friends. Before I think I was a little lazy about things like Facebook or email, if they were gone somewhere else or I didn't see them everyday, I kinda just lost contact with them. It was not that I didn't want to, it just...

Sort of happened?

It just happened, but I felt like I got a lot more motivated to keep contact with friends once I got home, so I really felt like the relationships I made over there were a lot more important to me, I guess?

So then you achieved your goal of not just improving your Japanese, but networking and things like that as well?

Yeah, I think so.

So you feel like that was the biggest thing that changed?

Yeah, I think also just my comfort level with trying to speak Japanese with people. Before going to Japan I was really conscientious about speaking Japanese. I would kind of just try to avoid speaking it unless I was in the classroom, because I was just really nervous about screwing it up or whatever, but once I was in Japan, I kind of just spit it out even if I got it wrong, but it helped me learn it a lot faster.

Alright, perfect. And now switching over to the EMU study abroad program itself, before you studied abroad do you feel like there should been things in place for you?

I don't think so.

You didn't experience any, I don't know, like any, hm, I kind of felt lost before I went and didn't have enough information about Tokyo Gakugei. I just feel that it was really unorganized and there should've been a better orientation, because they threw everyone that supposed to be going abroad, not just Japan, told us about culture shock, ok good job, good luck, bye.
That is true, they did do that.

I just feel like they should've been a little more organized.

I think with me they had us meet with people that were at Kansai Gaidai, so they were able to give us a little heads up about the basic, I guess, dos and don'ts of the area, you know, places they recommended to go, so I think maybe with Kansai Gaidai I had a little bit more help. I felt pretty ok when I went there.

Ok, and then while you were there, was there anything you found that they should've done for you?

No, I mean everything was pretty well established. They had all the forms that I needed to go like register my bicycle and stuff.

But that was through Gaidai. I am saying through Eastern.

I guess once I was there it was all through Gaidai.

You didn't worry about EMU, ok. And then coming back do you feel like there should've been something, like kind of a debriefing to kind of find out what you guys actually did at Gaidai, what should've been there, obviously right when you come back your memory is going to be fresh, you're going to know exactly what you felt was poor and what was good. If there was someway to report those things they can then tell Gaidai so they can maybe fix it.

It's true, they really didn't have us do anything; they had us write the paper for the Japanese thing, but that was about it.

I never had to write any sort of paper.

Really? The only thing I really got was an email asking us to maybe participate in the study abroad fair, but that was maybe a few months later or what not.

And that's nothing, that's nothing in the end. I feel like it was kind of just thrown together.
I was interested that I didn't anything about international students coming here or anything, having us like come meet them, having international students meet others like them who are here at EMU, stuff like that, help them adjust. I don't know; maybe I missed the email or something.

I don't think there was anything really set in place.

Before study abroad do you feel that if you had the chance to maybe Skype with the people at Gaidai do you feel that it would've made your experience better?

I personally don't think I would've really needed it, I would've been ok. I am used to being abroad, I lived in Hong Kong for two years beforehand, so I was kind of used to the idea of being in a country where I have no idea of what was going on.

Alright, perfect. While you studying abroad did you feel anxious or worried at all?

No, actually I was just really excited the whole time. Just cuz, I knew, I guess cuz I had the feeling that the program was pretty well established. It wasn't some new thing or whatever. I was just excited to go check it out and explore.

But I am guessing the first time you studied abroad you felt something?

Yes, because the first time I went abroad I went as a missionary, so I had to learn Cantonese beforehand and then go out and start talking to people on the street and that was a little more nerve wracking for me, so going to study abroad just for fun was just a blast.

Alright and then coming back to America do you feel that your Japanese language ability has improved?

I do, yeah.

In what aspects (reading, writing, speaking, listening)?

I think my speaking improved the most out of the categories. Um, I was getting better with listening especially with my first semester with my
host family; they helped me a lot with that, but I think just helping me get over the fear and spit it out was the biggest change for me.

What made you decide to stay with a host family?

I think again just the language thing. I wanted to make sure I was immersing myself in the language, because I knew I would get trapped in the situation of if I stayed in the dorms I would just start speaking English with everybody and just start avoiding practicing my Japanese, so I wanted to make sure that I didn't do that and end up wasting my time there.

Ok, alright. And then having come back to EMU, in what ways are you maintaining your Japanese?

I still Skype with my friends, try to hang out and keep in contact with my Japanese friends from Kansai Gaidai that are here now and things like that, so... At least that's what I've had time for. Just work and school, so.

Alright, and that's it. Thank you very much.

No problem, thank you.

What year are you?

I am a senior, but not like the senior...

How many years have you been at EMU?

EMU or just college in general?

EMU.

Since winter 2010

So you're a transfer student from?
And how old are you?

I am going to be 24 next week.

I thought you were going to be 22.

Oh, thanks.

You're very welcome.

And what is your major?

Japanese Language and Culture and English Language double major.

Two majors, so no minor then, I am guessing?

Right.

And what kind of Japanese classes have you taken up until now? I guess we can include OCC as well if you'd like.

Basically like, just the basic Japanese courses. Beginner, Intermediate, International Trade, and then I have Business 1 this semester and next semester I will take Business 2. I took Japanese Literature and Japanese Culture.

So you've taken a lot of Japanese classes.

Yeah.

And then what was your spark of inspiration that motivated you to study Japanese?

Um, like there is a lot of things. I could take the more traditional route and say that I was a big fan of anime when I was like 9 to 14. But I think it started when I was even way younger than that. My mom would for Thanksgiving or Christmas always invite students over that couldn't go back to their home countries, so most of the time we would
get Japanese or Korean students. And sometimes Chinese, but usually they were from Asia. So growing up I had a lot of, well I am from Brighton, so there is not a lot of diversity there. It’s like 99.9% white.

But that’s different that your mom would invite students over like that.

Right, but actually her parents did that as well when she was growing up, so she kind of just carried on the tradition and I think it was really good because me and all three of my siblings are more rounded because of that, I feel. And it kind of led to a gateway for me to kinda get into it. And then in high school I made friends with the Japanese exchange students and in middle school I had Japanese pen pals and stuff.

Perfect. Now in the future what do you plan on doing with Japanese?

Well, first I have a lot of student loans, so I am planning to do the JET program or something like it. I am applying for the JET program right now.

Me too.

Yeah, rivals. But I’d be happy with like Peppy Kids Club or something like that. Just something to get me over there.

To escape your student loans or to pay them back?

Pay back my loans and for tax evasion, legal tax evasion.

I don’t blame you.

Yeah, that takes a lot of money away.

And then after JET do you plan on still using Japanese?

Yes, ideally I would like to have a job where I could use it and I don’t really know what kind of job I could get into. I’ve always sort of worked with kids, like my mom ran a daycare at my house when I was
little growing up and I’ve been babysitting since I was like 13 or so. And so

You’re kind of used to that.

Yeah, I am kinda used to always being around kids. And so, like JET is kind of an addition to helping me pay back my student loans it’s kind of like for me to see if I like the teaching aspect of being around children. And if I do, which I am assuming that I will, after I finish JET (2 or 3 years) I’ll come back and get my master’s in teaching and then teach.

So that being said you didn’t teach while you were studying abroad then?

I had like an internship thru JCMU, but it was only Saturday mornings and it was like an alternative English school, but I would kinda like to experience the full on school.

So like adults?

It was like little kids. The first one was like 3 to 7 years old. And the second was like 8 to 11. Just like a bunch of younger primary school age kids.

Now where did you go in Japan (you already mentioned JCMU), how long did you go and what was the time span?

Ok, I’ve been 3 times. The first time I went, like I mentioned I made friends with exchange students from high school, so after I graduated high school I went to college for a year and at that point I had studied Japanese for like 2 years, so I was passed 200 level, which I later forgot all of that, but that happens. So after I finished my 4th semester of Japanese I went to visit my friends and their families there and one friend lived just north of Tokyo, and I stayed with her for like 3 or 4 weeks and the other friend lived in Uji, in Kyoto and I stayed with her for like 3 or 4 weeks

That was all one trip??
That was all one trip. I think I was gone for like 7 weeks altogether. And I spent like 3 days in Nagoya by myself.

How did you get all the money to do that?

I saved. This was like obviously before I started drinking, I was only 18 years old. I love how you mention that.

Like clearly like that’s the only roadblock that keeps me from saving money now and the exchange rate was a lot better then. It was pretty much even, like .96 or .94. Really even and that was probably the only time I came back from a trip with a ton of money left over. So I went then and then I went to do study abroad in Hikone at JCMU.

Through Eastern?

Through Eastern, in fall 2010 winter 2011. So we got sent home after the earthquake and obviously I went like all over the place. I went to Iwate prefecture like over Xmas break and that was like really powerful when the earthquake happened. And so I went to like Morioka and I even took a Shinkansen over to Akita for like a day and a half and obviously I went to Osaka and Kyoto a lot. And then I went this summer again for 2½ weeks and stayed with my friend in Esaka, in Osaka and so mostly I just stayed in and around Osaka, but one of my friends got a job in Toyama, so I went up there for a few days and then another one of my friends, his hometown is in Hiroshima prefecture so I went down there for like 2 days.

So you’ve been to Japan a lot...and seen a lot of things. I haven’t seen much at all.

So before going to Japan what kind of things did you expect? But seeing that you’ve been to Japan so many times I guess this most recent time?

The first time I went because I traveled by myself and both of my friends were college students by that time one went to Kansai Gaidai and the other to Waseda and they were busy all the time, even with part time jobs. So I hung out with them but also I ended hanging out with their moms a lot. The rest of the time I ended up wandering around by myself
a lot. It got really kind of lonely and when I went that time it was right at the end of golden week and I stayed til the end of June. Because it was so hot and the rainy season.

The middle of Tsuyu.

It was so muggy and alone all the time, so by the time I left I said, "Ok, I did Japan and I never want to come back here." And then like later I was gradually getting to the point of transferring to Eastern and thought about what I should study. I was all over the place, studying theater and things, so I decided to try and go back to Japanese. And obviously through Eastern it's basically required for you to study abroad. I'll sign up for two semesters but I might stay for one. And so I went there and it was almost immediately I was having the time of my life and I ended up loving it and it had a really strong social network that I hadn't had the first time.

Yes, you said that you felt alone. So you weren't really expecting that, it sort of just happened?

Yeah, I wasn't expecting that.

You were just expecting to go for a semester. You said sign up for two. So having gone to Japan (you basically answered it for yourself) the things you expected and the things that actually happened were obviously different. You expected to go only for a little bit, but it ended up being better than you thought. So do you feel that there was any change on your thoughts of American and Japanese friendships?

Not really, because the friends that I made in high school I am still friends with to this day and we like throughout my life most of my friends have been guys and I have kind of been used to that kind of friendship, but these were both girls and that was...

They were kind of like your first real girlfriends?

Yeah, we did like girly stuff all the time.

And you felt that that was kind of different. So you want to keep them, they are really important to you?
Yeah, so in that respect, it's kind of different, but between going to study abroad or even going there I didn't, it didn't change my idea of Japanese friendships.

And having come back to America, do you feel that you yourself changed? And if so, how?

Yeah, well I think that it was really hard coming back because we came back so suddenly. Pretty much everyone that came back with me got like really bad culture shock. Like I remember my mom was driving me through Ann Arbor and I was thinking everyone is in a hoodie with jeans, I can't. Everyone is so fat, I can't handle this. It was just because I got into the zone of like in Osaka where everyone is stylish and dressed and of course you would get that in NY or Chicago but not in Ann Arbor where everyone was just whatever. I don't want to say that I got more judgmental of myself or other people, but I got more self aware of my image.

Just keeping yourself up when you're out in public. I understand, I know what you mean. And that you feel was the biggest thing? Coming home so abruptly and being given this huge culture shock? You didn't just get back so you've had some time to kind of sort of adjust back to American culture.

Almost two years.

Looking back on yourself do you feel that that was the biggest thing?

Yeah, in addition, when I left Japan I was dating this guy for a month when I left and we decided to do long-distance for about 4 months after that. And that kind of like changed my, it kind of helped me, it didn't really change how I saw relationships, but it helped me grow a little bit and put more effort into it. Because before I would just sort of follow and be told, "you do this and that" We would like send each other gifts and stuff and letters.

Perfect, and so through Eastern's study abroad program do you feel that there should've been things in place before you left for JCMU?
I mean they had orientation.

Do you feel like it was sufficient? Like you were ready? I know you had already been to Japan...

I can't really say because of that. I can say though that if I had an orientation before I went the first time then I think I would've been more prepared.

So putting yourself in someone else's shoes, you feel that you would've been more prepared if a better orientation had been there?

Yeah, yeah.

In what way?

I mean they answered all of my questions and there weren't really people who got homesick while we were at JCMU, but I feel like some people had a harder time adapting to not so much the food, but grocery shopping. Because when you have this idea of like eat hamburgers all the time, you're going to spend so much money because of the price of it over there. But when I went everyone would get together and cook a bunch of food, nabe parties and stuff like that. So I think the biggest thing was, sure they said that things over there were more expensive, but they didn't spell it out.

So prices of things and what not. Alright, so during your stay in Japan do you feel like there should've been things that EMU could've done for you? Most didn't say much about it.

Yeah, I had a problem the 2nd semester with my refund, because they gave me my refund first and then they charged me for classes. They sent me an e-bill, but I hadn't gotten one before, so I deleted it thinking it was spam. So I didn't pay any attention and so by the time I got back and realized that I owed like over $150 or so in interest. And then I owed like $3000 of the refund that I spent, that they gave me.

I think that might be less through the study abroad program and more through Eastern itself. The study abroad program should've kept better contact with you though. Did you send an email to study abroad telling
them to tell Eastern that you were in Japan and couldn’t do anything about it?

I didn’t even find out til I got back. I had gotten like a driving ticket for like failing to yield and I went to go pay it and I looked at the balance and thought it was a little funny and there was a notice on my card. I found out I owed around $4000; guess I won’t be taking classes this semester.

Oh, gosh. After studying abroad do you feel that there were things that Eastern could’ve done for you? Like some sort of debriefing or a feedback meeting.

For us it was really different because of that. There was one lady who was the study abroad person at the time and I thought she did a phenomenal job. She didn’t even help us get there; she came in while we were there and so like most of us had never met her, but she put her all into it. She was amazing.

And now she is gone.

And now she went to State. But whatever. In that respect, I think maybe they should’ve done more of a follow up or encourage people more. I think maybe they did have a follow up to the post-earthquake thing.

Well, for non-earthquake students, I really didn’t hear anything from them. Oh, you should volunteer at the study abroad fair. That’s it? The study abroad fair does nothing. Sure, people go to it and get some information, but you don’t get everyone. I feel like there are some kinks that need to be worked out. I am guessing that your relationships with the people over at JCMU went pretty well?

Yeah. I had some not so favorable roommates. The first one we didn’t get along.

I meant the people in charge at JCMU.

Oh, the people in charge? I loved them.

Perfect, while you were over there did you feel anxious or worried?
No, not really. I mean, even this one time I lost my wallet at a corner club in Osaka, and I kept telling myself that someone will turn into the police station.

And they did?

And someone did. They really cared.

You didn’t do homestay while you were there?

I did a weekend homestay while I was there and it was a really good experience. I only did the weekend homestay because I had already spent a lot of time over there, so I just wanted a refresher. I still talk to my hostmom on facebook; she just had a new baby, so cute.

Having come back from study abroad do you feel that your Japanese language ability improved?

Yeah, I had a really tough time with 3rd year at JCMU because it was such a big jump from 2nd year and I just barely got in to it. And so I was studying everyday and because I wasn’t going anywhere, I have low blood pressure and I didn’t have time to go exercise and get the right foods so I was tired all the time, slept in 20 minutes through a test and I am the type of person to wake up an hour before a test. My teacher called my room to wake me up to get me to the test. It was because my blood pressure was so low. I got kind of gloomy and depressed I was still learning though.

That applies to your anxiousness and worry, doesn’t it?

Oh yeah, that does. But because I was still in that state it was hard to put it to use. To keep it in order. It was all up there I didn’t really use it. But because I started dating that guy a few months before I left, when I was there he would make me do my homework and help me. And even when I went home because it was long distance, we would be skyping. He didn’t have a job, was just going to school and I was just working part time during the summer to pay off that money. So we would talk for like 3 hours every single day on Skype. And I would write big long letters to all my Japanese friends and in that respect I learned so
much. But everything that I learned 2nd semester that I was only kind of able to use I really got good at.

What do you feel improved the most then?

My conversational skills, really.

Listening, speaking then. Reading and writing improved too then?

Conversational writing.

So you’re thinking in conversation mode and writing it out, I got you. And then coming back to EMU what ways are you keeping your Japanese? Doing the same things that you said or?

Kind of, I, every semester I have at least one advanced course in Japanese and then I watch dramas a lot. I go on Skype.

Are you still with that guy?

No, I am not. But we are still friends. I mean, it’s not, I am not using my Japanese conversational skills like I was that summer, but I feel like I am still pretty good.

Ok, alright, perfect. That would be it.

What year are you?

I am a senior by credits and a fifth year.

How old are you?

23.

And what is your major?

Japanese and International Trade.
And do you have a minor with that?

Yes, Management.

And what Japanese classes have you taken?

I have taken all the basic Japanese language classes, Japanese writing, literature, Japanese Business 1 and 2 International trade as well as some history courses, Buddhism in Japan as well as a business course focused around Japanese culture but it was in English.

And then what made you decide to study Japanese?

I took a gateway language course in elementary school that introduced German, Spanish, French and Japanese, and at the time I was heavily influenced by my brother’s girlfriend who was really into anime and art styles of Japan and I found Japanese to be the most different out of all of those languages. Very interesting, the writing was completely different and having English as my native tongue; it’s French, German or Spanish. Very Germanic, so it just appealed to me in that way.

And then in the future with Japanese what do you plan on doing?

Hopefully obtaining a job in anything related to...I am interested in automotive parts because my family has been very closely tied to the automotive industry from my grandparents on my mom’s side and uncles on that side of the family, they have all worked for Ford. Despite them having some sort of animosity towards the idea of having Japanese cars part of the US economy that is the way the world is going and I am willing to run with it because Toyota is currently the biggest automotive sales giant in the world.

Ok, where in Japan did you study for how long did you go?

For 7 months I studied at the Japan Center for Michigan Universities.

And who did you particularly go with? A group of friends.

No, I had several groups of friends who I would spend time with there. Each semester there would be different groups and people that were
remaining from the first semester rolling over to the second; maybe I wasn't as close to them first semester but the second we got closer and spent more time together or what not.

Alright, perfect. And then having gone to Japan the things that you expected, hoped for and what actually happened was there a big difference between the two or were they about the same?

You know I had been dreaming about going to Japan since elementary school and you know, I really don't think I set any expectations.

You didn't set any?

No, I was just so excited for the experience and anything that could come my way. I don't think I had anything that was...

That you were expecting? But was there anything that made you step back or say, "oh wow, this is really different."

There's no way to say, "I miss you." There is 会いたい, I want to see you, but it's not the same to me. I found out there is really almost no way to say that, so I found that really interesting.

That's interesting that you bring that up without any hesitation.

Moving on, comparing relationships between friends in Japan and America, do you feel that having gone to Japan your opinions or the way you feel about friendships has changed?

Yes, definitely.

In what way?

Um, I feel like before I went to Japan, I don't feel like I really appreciated my relationships and friendships as well as I should have. Going there I realized how well people treat one another, maybe just out of a habitual sense more than an actual desire to go out of one's way to make that relationship strong, but relationships mean so much in Japanese society, like building strong relationships that eventually become ties to getting a job, or just having a good circle of friends a support group and I feel like I have always bounced around.
Like you said with JCMU.

Exactly, I feel like I always have bounced around with friends and never really dedicated myself to that one group, everyone seemed to have a set group.

I wouldn't say that it's bad. I would consider myself the same way, so don't put yourself in a confined category, I think it is a lot of people.

Exactly, I have been doing that since I was young and then once going to Japan relationships there are just so well taken care of. 大切に守る

You're really sort of locked it, once you have that friend.

And then in that sense in Japan you don't stray from that group ever. That is your group of friends. And maybe that's why they do that, take care of the group. Because if they do stray they get alienated and they don't have anybody, so that's kind of interesting. Alright, and having come back to America do you feel that you yourself changed?

Yes, there were several ones. There was a moment when I was in my language class and my teachers just casually talking to us and we are going over the workbook and exchanging answers and I am just sitting there absorbing it and able to completely understand what she was saying and I was like oh my god, I get it. I finally have it. I am not struggling. It's like second nature now. It was absolutely the best feeling ever and it just hit me, after years of doubting myself. Understand what she was saying 100%, it blew me out of the water.

And you feel that that was the biggest change then for you?

Um, that was the first one that came to my mind. Personality changes, or about who I am?

Just in general, anything. Obviously if that is the first thing you bring up that is going to be the most, the thing that made the biggest impression to you personally, but do you see anything else that changed?
Yeah, like I said with relationships, taking care of not just people but of everything, just having respect for the things around me.

Like inanimate objects, you're saying?

Like inanimate objects, the things around me, yeah the Buddhism class made my think about that a lot.

Now you took that in Japan?

Yeah, it was at the local university.

Shiga University?

Not Shiga, it was Kendai and it was a 45 minute bike ride away from class, but it was a beautiful ride and seeing the mountains and lakes alongside was excellent and the class kind of put myself in perspective with the world.

It's very, very good to have that.

Yeah, having a connection with the things around you; it's not all about you and you have to do your part to take care of what's around you. Like looking at this couch I am thinking, "wow, look at this couch; it's really dirty. Who would let it get that trashed?"

You wouldn't have thought about that if you hadn't.

No, I wouldn't. And so before it was like, "well, it happens," and now it is like, "Well, somebody wasn't taking into consideration the cost of our tuition to buy things like that and now it is really scummy, so it's unfortunate that people have to suffer a loss or suffer a consequence of somebody else's actions that they were just careless about.

Perfect timing, within EMU's study abroad program, do you feel that there should've been things in place before you went over to study abroad? Do you feel that they could've done more for you, informed you more, something like that?
JCMU’s orientation program has been fine tuned many times.

But it’s not through Eastern, right?

It’s through State, MSU, yeah. That really prepared me the most, and because they know that that program has a really good orientation, they don’t focus on it as much here, yeah. It’s a little big like putting the work load on someone else, but it was...if they tried to do it themselves, it would’ve been redundant.

Pointless, right? Just a waste of time.

Yeah, I worked a lot, I had to take time off of work specifically to go to these orientations, so I appreciate that they didn’t waste my time with more stuff. I do have one issue with the study abroad office is the turnover of the employees in that office that are supposed to take care of issues in the study abroad office; it’s very hard for them to be familiar with the program and what goes on, but they can’t hold on to the employees. Whatever it may be, compensation, pay, assistance, workload, whatever it is, they don’t seem to like their job and they quit. During my time there have been 4 or 5 people who have been at that job.

When did you go over again? That was one question that I forgot to ask, the time line.

It was September 2010 to March 2011.

Well, that sucks. I’ve interviewed a couple people who have already told me that and that cut you right off.

While you were over there do you feel that there was anything that EMU or JCMU could’ve done for you? Communication or what not?

They run a tight ship. Communication in terms of billing, though. I went again in May for a short program from at JCMU because they issued a 1000 dollar credit for people who suffered a loss and had to go home.

Oh, wow. I didn’t know that.
Yeah, they gave a $1000 credit to return and do another program, because
that didn't really help because I didn't get to finish my Japanese
language acquisition. I was very upset and my teacher ended up passing
away, so it was very unfortunate, because she was probably the best
Japanese teacher that I have ever had. So that was unfortunate, but I
got to do back with the $1000 2 weeks in Japan for a Japanese business
course which was run by business professors here at the College of
Business here at Eastern. And they had no idea what they were doing; I
shouldn't complain because they did pay for my ticket, because they had
a good idea that I knew what Japan would look like.

Yeah, but you didn't get anything out of it, right?

Not particularly. In terms of business communication in a cross
cultural sense, yes. In terms of Japanese, not really. But going back
to the crediting issue, the program was only supposed to cost $2000? I
was supposed to get the $1000 credit, plus a scholarship of $200 and a
$100 refund from my application, so it should've only been $700. I get
a bill from Eastern saying that had no idea. I saw the invoice from
JCOMU saying they sent it to Eastern, saying exactly $700. So I went to
the study abroad office and asked what the problem was. They said that
they would look into it and I got an email a few weeks later saying it
looks like someone thought that that didn't look correct and just went
ahead and put a different charge on there. So I was blown away that
they would just assume something like that and thought to myself, “wow,
you wouldn't think to look into the matter 'why was she charged that
little amount’” Well, that ended up screwing my account up hard
because my financial aid was decreased because they saw that I had a
$1000 credit in my account which decreased my aid for this semester
which is why I am in financial straits right now. Sorry for the
ranting.

No, not at all. And then so this obviously ties into it, before, middle
and after, after the program, both financially and just in general, I
have had a lot of people say that the study abroad office just goes,
“You're back? Go to class.” You have no way to give back.

Even time to adjust?
Not even time to adjust, they don't have anything set up, they should make it mandatory people are saying that you explain what happened while you were over, what was good, what was bad, what should be fixed, improved, things like that.

I heard that if you did study abroad in the Japanese program you had to turn a Japanese paper about your experience there, people said you had to do it and turn it into Kubota-sensei. I have never seen anything like that followed through, but I am guessing that was to see how far you came with the language.

But that is just with the Japanese program, we are talking about the study abroad program in general. In general I think the prior lady who was working and took care of JCMU. She had a seminar especially for the people that came back from the earthquake. She had like a relief kind of thing, saying how she understands and that we feel upset and you can come and talk about it whenever you want. Comfort sessions and tissues and the Snow Health center had a speaker come in and talk about re-acclimating yourself to an American lifestyle and it lessened the effects of reverse culture shock which I had really bad. I had it really bad. I kind of lost touch with a lot of my friends afterward. It just was really hard to get back. I was just in a bad mood, a really foul mood, and I don't think people wanted to be around me and I don't blame them, but

I can sympathize with that.

And unfortunately I didn't take the offer up for that Snow free counseling. I should've, I didn't, and now I kind of regret it, because I sort of feel like it is too late. I feel like it's sort of water under the bridge; most of those feelings have already died, some I am still harboring.

Do you feel that your relationship with the people over at JCMU went well?

Yeah, I came under two different administrations with the two programs I went over, the 7 month one and the 2 week one. The 7 month one the head administrator was a really nice guy, but he didn't know what he was doing. And he got fired for it. The new guy they got, he is absolutely
100% efficient in Japanese, he has been a lawyer in the Detroit area for a long time, he does all the Japanese litigation he works for all these Japanese companies and clients, very very educated. Too educated in some sense. He likes to condescend and for kids who really want to learn Japanese.

He kind of belittles them?

Yeah, and Japanese culture kind of attracts a certain type of person, I would say. And a lot of those people have trouble socially adjusting to people just in an everyday sense and so I feel like to belittle people like that who were really sensitive was cruel. A little bit discouraging.

Do you feel that before you studied abroad if you had some sort of way to talk with the administrators over there with Skype or something like that that you experience would've changed?

To meet the teachers before I got there? No, they are much better met in person. The actual teachers there are so good at what they do, they are very skilled and amazing teachers. They are a good support system, they really have your back; they want you to succeed. And I wish I could see the same kind of thing in other teachers. They are not by any means easy professors, but they are very supportive in helping you.

Now do you feel that when you were studying abroad you felt worried or anxious?

Before or?

While you were there.

When I was in Japan, worries and anxiety was mainly attributed to the workload and worries, not so much. I never really had culture shock, even though a lot of people say that they get it pretty bad and they feel homesick, but I never really got it. Not until the earthquake happened and the week we had after the earthquake, like everyone was still going to class but we were fried because of the Fukushima plant, no one knowing what was going to happen and it was really high stress in that situation and a really high stress level from the workload from
class, so that was probably the biggest stress point of my time there
and if they hadn't sent us home, I would have probably wanted to go
home. I didn't even get a chance to want to go home, but it was
probably coming up at that point.

Understandable, and after studying abroad do you feel that your Japanese
ability improved and if so, what of those skills, reading writing
speaking or listening?

Everything improved tenfold. Going to Japan I could barely speak one
sentence competently, leaving Japan I could barely think of something to
say in English, so my biggest and still remaining skill, even though
it's been so long and I haven't been studying as much as I used to, is
listening. It's probably my biggest ability currently. Right after I
came back I would say my best ability was speaking and being able to
formulate my own sentences and if I didn't know the word, I could figure
out a way to figure out what I wanted to say in other words and then if
I was missing a particular word, the listener could fill it in. And so
it was effortless. And I bet those skills aren't even there anymore;
it's been so long.

Well, I mean, if you don't use it you lose it, you lose it kind of
thing.

Exactly, which is why I am dying to go back.

How did you improve those skill while you were over there?

While I was over there I got out of the dorms as much as I should
because JCMU was kind of its own mini America.

Very secluded.

Yes, very secular. I had class in the morning from like 9 to noon and
then I would hang out with my friends or I would go to the local
university's cafeteria, so cheap and delicious and find my friends. I
joined an ultimate Frisbee team while I was there, so I got to learn
with them and we all went out and traveled together and played
together. I made tons of friends in the community. Whenever I got
lost, I knew what to say. I used to actually purposely go out with my
friends on our bikes and get lost and force ourselves to ask how we get back home and that improved our Japanese.

Because you took a very, took it seriously. You found some motivation. A lot of people went over there and said oh I didn’t do anything, I didn’t improve.

I thought that was such a shame.

And then you’ve already sort of answered this question yourself: having come back to EMU how do you feel you are maintaining your Japanese?

My job and my classes of course. Anything beyond that, not as much as I should be. I do try to go to JSA now that my job doesn’t interfere with it. I have no excuse and I should go; I do. But I don’t speak Japanese there and I want to, but I feel that my speaking skills have weakened so much.

You’re just nervous?

Yeah, I am very reserved with it now. My job is the same way, because if I don’t know how to say something correctly, I am not going to waste time fumbling over words.

It’s a different environment than JSA. You don’t want to waste time.

In JSA I should, by all means, relaxing without the pressure of a job on my head, but at work it’s like if I don’t know how to say it, most of the Japanese I use there is all listening. I listen, they ask me questions and I answer back in English. That’s usually what I do. It’s unfortunate.

Well, hey, you still have that skill set there and you get JET or something else like that and you’re back over in Japan

I guess, in addition to listening that I have maintained a lot would be Japanese mannerisms and like cultural dos and don’ts. That helps a considerable amount at my job, just knowing status of bosses in the office. How to speak to people if I do speak, whether it be 丁寧語, 敬語 or use 謙譲語, when should I use those and most of the time they
are not that formal, but I do notice it in the office a lot that my bosses will speak short form with me, among themselves, but when they talk to their boss it is very polite and he is short form, completely. So it is very interesting how they do that. So cultural mannerisms too, just being able to enter in a room, kind of thing, those things definitely help.

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What year are you? Or what year did you graduate?

I graduated in September of 2012.

And how old are you?

I am 24.

And what was your major?

I double majored in Japanese language and culture/K-12 education, and English language arts, secondary education.

Ok, leaving you with no minor then?

No, I did not have a minor. Well, I had minors, but they didn’t do anything to my field, so...

Ok, and what Japanese classes did you take?

Uhm, I took pretty much all of them. I took all the Japanese language classes, the business ones, the composition one except I skipped a few when I went to Gaidai. I even took a literature class with Tanno Sensei.

I remember. I took that one with you.

Oh, yeah that’s right. You did take that with me.
I think that was our only class together.

I think so too.

And then what made you want to study Japanese?

A multitude of things. I grew up not knowing how to speak English because I had ear infections and I am half deaf, so I had a language problem growing up, so when I went into college I wanted to major in a language to prove to myself that I could continue learning languages on my own. And also, my grandfather, not my real grandfather but my grandfather in my family is Japanese. He was born in Japan and came here and was in the internment camps here in WWII, so I wanted to talk with him in Japanese even though he doesn’t know that much Japanese... or didn’t. He is dead now, but I still wanted to do it with him. I chose that over French.

And level of school then? College?

Yeah, I started in college. I never took anything; I mean, I only took Spanish in high school for 2 years and then I stopped.

And then in the future what do you plan on doing with Japanese?

Well, maybe sometime in the future I will get a Japanese language job in conjunction with my English language job, but right now I am starting the Japanese club at the middle school that I teach at?

Where in Japan did you study, from when to when and who in particular did you go with?

I went to Kansai Gaidai, in Osaka in the winter of 2010, basically I was there from the oil spill to Lindsey Lohan going to jail. I went with EMU students but I didn’t know any of them, so I didn’t hang out with many of them. But, I did meet with EMU students while I was there like Johanna and Kim. Just stuff like that.

Ok, and before going to Japan what kind of things did you expect, anticipate, hope for?
Well, I expected to become more of a master of Japanese language and culture. The culture part I got, the language part not as much as I wanted it to be.

I think that is everyone so don’t worry.

I expected people to be less stereotypical. I didn’t expect it to be as racist as it was, or homophobic. I expected it to be crazy, but not that crazy. Like lights everywhere, the culture seeing stuff in vending machines that can’t be in vending machines, so like the lolita girls and stuff like that. It was cool, but kind of weird.

Alright, and then so going to Japan, the things that you hoped for, expected and the things that actually happened were different then?

Yes.

Could you go into more detail perhaps?

Yes, well, I identify as a homosexual, so I expected Japan to be a little more liberal in that aspect, from all the craziness that I see in anime and manga and stuff like that because everything is so hyperbolized in their literature.

And it is a pretty liberal country in itself.

Well it’s liberal in air quotes, but it was just a lot of racism and nationalism. I remember when we were there, they had these black cars that would go around on the speakers saying, “Get all the foreigners out of the country.” I remember that. I talked to a friend about that. And people were just not trusting of us Gaijin, like when I went on a bus the first time a lady I was going to steal her bag just because I am not Japanese. I told her I am not going to steal her bag, but I mean it was just stuff like that. Obviously they only care about Japanese people; it’s very nationalistic in that sense.

Makes sense: I mean, a lot of countries are like that. Let’s see, upon going to Japan, if you were to compare Japanese relationships with
friends and American relationships with friends how do you feel that it changed?

It changed my perception of friendships and my responsibilities and duties of friendships. In Japanese friendships you have to give gifts and receive and give gifts back. It's like a constant give and take, give and take and I didn't know that when I went over so my good friend Taka, he got me a gift and I felt like I had to get him one too, because that is how I am. I got him one and I guess he got really upset, but he didn't tell me he was upset. He did the whole indirectness about being upset, like Japanese people do. It was because my gift wasn't on par with his gift because my handwriting is atrocious, so it looked like I didn't put a lot of time into it, but I did. I don't know, it was just the perception of now I know what I have to do with Japanese friends, like give and take in relationships. It helped me also with my American friends, because it helped me be more focused on gift giving and more responsive.

Ok, alright, makes sense. Having come back to America, do you feel that you yourself changed? If so, please explain.

Um, well I changed because I realize that the world is bigger than I thought it was. That globalization and culture has made it so it is impossible to learn only one language and know only one language to exist in this world...or if you do then you're just ignorant, because there is just so many things out there that are changing day by day. I think it really made me more responsible as a global citizen, I guess? Like I read more national news and global news now, not right now because I have too much going on, but it made a better person because it made me understand that people come from other places and their lives might be more difficult than mine. Like why people don't come out to their family and the way they interact with the world in which they exist and how they are not like me or have people like a family.

Alright, makes sense. Now, moving on with EMU's study abroad program itself, do you feel that there should have been more in place before you went?

Yeah, the study abroad program didn't do a lot before I left because the guy was going to leave to a different job so he didn't care. He ruined
a lot of relationships with other Japanese schools and EMU's program, so I feel like I got the short end of the stick being prepared because I have too much stuff I took over. They didn't say not to bring so much stuff. I didn't feel safe enough to go. They didn't warn me to be safer, even though Japan doesn't have guns they should've warned me to be safer than how I was. I didn't have any contact with EMU, no one sent me an email to check to see if I was alright or alive. Just stuff like that. Basically I treated myself as a student of Kansai Gaidai and not a student from EMU. I didn't feel like one.

That makes sense, if you feel that Eastern didn't set that up for you.

Now was there anything else? I know you've mentioned to me before about the Japanese program; would you mind talking to me about it?

Eastern's Japanese program?

Yes, because you had a good amount to say.

Enter rant now. It's different for me because I went through the K-12 program with Japanese, but I am still to this day baffled why I had to take business Japanese classes when I am never going to use that ever, ever in a classroom unless someone taught a business Japanese class at my school, because I don't even know it. I was really frustrated in that regard because that was 3 or 4 classes that I could've focused on education or the pedagogy of teaching Japanese. Like I had a foreign language teaching courses but it wasn't specialized for Japanese. It was for all foreign language teachers take this class. I mean, I learned a lot in that class but Japanese is drastically different from German, from French. The way you teach it and the culture in itself is different and I feel like I didn't get enough drive to do that in Eastern's program and that's why I went there, because it said it had the reputation that it had, but I constantly was going to Harada-sensei asking for advice, going to Tabuse-sensei asking for advice, but it just felt like here was the Japanese program on one side and then the education program on the other and they never talked with each other. I remember being frustrated as crap because I had to go talk to the people in the education building and then walk all the way over to Tabuse to ask her the question and then she'd fill out some paperwork. Then I had to take that paperwork to the education office and it was
like, “Why do they not talk to each other more intricately? I remember just saying to myself how this was just crap.

I see that same problem with the study abroad office and the Japanese office; you’re running back and forth and here and there. I remember doing that too.

Yeah, and I said the last time there is people who is going to Germany for the language and France for the history and those courses are not the same. If you’re going to some place for the history program you aren’t going for the language and the language program is a whole lot different than the history program. I don’t know. It just seemed like it was piss-poor. Guess it’s just Eastern.

Do you feel like you wish you had something from the study abroad program once you came back?

Yeah, I remember the only thing I had to do was write a paper for Kubota-sensei. I remember I had to write a two-page paper on anything I wanted to write about on study abroad. It was generalized as crap and I talked about only one thing, like tea or something. It didn’t transition me to get back into the program. I didn’t know what stuff I had to study for to test out of the classes, which was why I went to Kansai Gaidai in the first place. It wasn’t threaded together in the way I wanted it to be. I just felt stranded, because on top of that the culture shock was pretty bad too. Seeing things in English again is pretty hard. Eastern was kind of like ok go back to class.

I have heard that from a good number of people, actually. Where they didn’t much time or feedback to really improve the program itself, so...

You mentioned before that there needs to be more of a streamlined process between the study abroad office and the language program. Because in the end, they only can do so much. They aren’t only looking at the Japanese program but all of the other.

That’s what I said before; it’s not the study abroad office’s job to plan everything. They are just there to make sure that you’re ok, that your visa is ok, that you’re not in jail, that you’re not doing things that you shouldn’t be doing. It’s the programs themselves. Tabuse-
sensei and everyone else is going to have to be more intricate with the
Japanese universities. It's just how it is going to be. Just like the
French teachers are going to have to take care of the ones that are in
France. I don't understand how one person can be in charge of all the
programs and all the countries and all the language programs and all
that jazz when it's like being a jack of all trades. Yeah, you know a
lot but you are not an expert in one thing.

Exactly. Let's see. Do you feel that your relationships with the
people at the university you were at went well or?

I think it was bitter-sweet, but I also felt like they weren't open
each other countries; everyone else just thought we weren't there at
all, like we didn't exist. And I didn't have a lot of Japanese friends;
I thought I was going to have more. I mean, it's not like I wasn't
doing stuff, I was constantly traveling and doing things with Japanese
students. It just was really weird seeing people coming back and having
lifelong with a bunch of Japanese people and I only have like 3 or 4,
some that I still contact today. I had a good personable relationship,
but just not the way I wanted it to be.

Before studying abroad do you feel that you should've skyped with your
teachers in order to change your experience?

Um, yeah, but I think it would be more helpful if you had a buddy system
to take you on as a buddy to make sure that you're ok, that you're going
out and doing things in Japan, that you're not just hiding in your room
or studying too much. Yeah, you should study, but you're there in Japan
for more than just that. I know that at Eastern we have that office for
international affairs, so it's more of just like why don't they have a
buddy system. So my buddy would be Taka, making sure I am studying,
that we have coffee meetings, make sure I am learning, that I am seeing
that country. Because I don't know when I am going to be back in Japan,
this time is what I had in my experience in Japan. And it was 2 years
ago, but that's what I still hold on to. Even the news that I read or
see I still filter it through that lens from 2 years ago.

Yeah, that makes sense.
I don't know. It just seems like we do more for our students who are foreign than they do. And I don't understand why they don't because Kansai Gaidai has like one of the largest foreign exchange colleges in Japan, so?

It is the largest.

That's what I thought. I just don't understand why they didn't have a buddy system.

I remember Tokyo Gakugei having one, like a tandem program, but you had to take it upon yourself to get things done.

Give us a list of biographies with their hobbies to make friends. Someone who offers up their time. But there was nothing there and you had to find it on your own and hope that it worked out. And they are not direct about things, so they aren't going to come up to you; it's up to you to go and get the friends. At least that was my experience, they were all so shy.

Did you ever feel anxious or worried while you were over in Japan and if so, what caused that?

I was a little bit anxious because the overall feeling for gay people wasn't very positive, so I started to worry a little bit about my safety and why I was being outcasts-ed, ostracized, that was a little bit of an anxiety problem. And like I told you, my good friend Taka, who is gay, he had to take me across campus into like the top floor of one of the buildings in the last boy's bathroom to tell me that he was gay and all that stuff. It was just weird. I was in Tokyo and I heard gunshots, even though Japan doesn't have guns, so I was a little worried because I was lost at the time too and I couldn't find my hostel and stuff like that. Because I couldn't find directions while I was in Japan. So much kanji, everywhere. I only had one class. One Japanese class before I went to Kansai Gaidai.

Oh wow...

Just one or two...No, it was two. I had Harada-sensei and a newer teacher who left. Only 2 classes before I went and then I went to Tokyo.
and I couldn't read anything. I didn't even know the Kanji for meat was while I was over there and I am a vegetarian, so that was an issue too. I was a very stout vegetarian at the time and I kept getting sick and I lost a lot of weight. When I came back from my Japan, my liver was actually pretty bad when I had my check-up because I wasn't getting the nutrients that I needed. I was nothing but skin and bone. I lost like 25 pounds, I think. I was well in the danger zone of under-weightness. It was anxiety because of all the signs and things that I couldn't read, in a country that I had never been to.

Having studied abroad do you feel that your Japanese language ability has improved and if so what of the four, reading, writing, speaking, listening improved the most?

Um, it did improve. I tested out of two classes when I came back, but it was just the lower level classes. I'll put it this way. I learned a lot but I wasn't ready to take the 300 level class with Oketani-sensei. I was not ready for the composition class when I came back from Japan. So, I felt displaced. And then I felt displaced for the entire time I was in the program for the last two years. And I think, Tabuse-sensei and Harada-sensei knew that.

Displeased or displaced?

Displaced. I felt so, because since I went to Japan I was a year ahead of people who I started with, but I felt like I was a semester behind everybody. Like the literature class with Tanno-sensei, I was not ready for that class; I don't think most of us were ready for that class. I think it was the hardest class I have ever taken, besides my foreign language acquisition classes for teaching. I just never felt prepared for anything once I came back from Japan and it's not like I didn't talk in Japanese. I spoke all the time. I just didn't stay in Eastern's campus. I was a...what was that word?

Commuter?

Yeah, thank you. So I didn't have that much time to be on campus. And you know, you know, that our Japanese exchange students do not talk that much Japanese.
Mmmmm, I wouldn't say...

Every time I see them they were always talking in English, unless they were talking with each other.

No, I guess I have some sort of luck when it comes to that...I have a bunch of friends. I guess it's just the way that you approach it.

Well, I tried approaching them, but they would never talk with me in Japanese. Or they did and I had no idea what they were saying or had time to just sit there and devote time to a conversation. And I know that all comes back onto me that I make sure they talk with me in Japanese and not in English. But you know my schedule and have I ever had time to just sit back and relax? I didn't, I took college seriously. I had two majors and minors to do.

I am in the same boat right now. I don't have time to study Japanese either; it's basically just wing it when Japanese comes in that I don't understand.

Having come back Eastern in what ways are you maintaining your Japanese? Or rather, once you came back to Eastern what else did you do? I mean obviously you were trying to speak with Japanese people, but let's instead of right now, when you came back from Kansai Gaidai what did you do?

When I got home from Japan, I started listening more to Japanese music because I am a very music person. That's how I taught myself English, through music. So I tried to do the same thing with Japanese, so like I told you I am half deaf so I can't listen to all the strings of syllables and understand every word, so I tried doing it like I did with English, but it didn't work. So I started watching more anime with subtitles so I could get the meaning, but I just got sick and tired of it. I tried manga, but I couldn't read the manga because of the kanji; took me like 4 hours to read one page. I just stuck with studying more with my friends who were in the Japanese program. I just tried to do my best. You can't say I didn't study. My mom can tell you, I had a board in my room, a dry erase board and that's how I study words. The only way I learn how to write things is through muscle memory, it just does it. So I did study, but when it came down to it, I also had my
education classes and all that, so I didn't devote as much time as I wanted to to the Japanese program which is my loss.

What happens, happens. You've obviously found yourself in a good place right now and I would consider you in a good place, as long as you're happy. You say you love your kids, they are your life, I don't know. I feel that just because you gave up Japanese, you learned Japanese, but learning Japanese in itself is a learning experience. Not like the language, I am saying.

No, I don't regret it. Not at all. I still speak Japanese once in a while. When I went to England this summer I ran into Japanese tourists and I spoke with them for a hot minute; I actually gave them directions back to the airport. So it's not like I never used it; I am glad I have it and I am not your typical American who knows only how to speak English. I like knowing that I have at least a basis of knowing how to communicate with someone else in a different language. But I am nowhere near what I was in college with my job right now. I'd rather give my time to my students.

Understandable.

Life happened.

Unless there is anything else you'd like to add about anything, whether it be about you changing, Eastern's Study abroad program, anything in general about studying abroad, if not then I think we are just about done.

I just want to say, so it is on the record that I love the Japanese programs, and all of my sensei, especially Harada-sensei, I owe her all the money in the world, but I just feel like the program can be better, I don't know if it will go in the direction that they want it to go with the new book. They got rid of Genki and got a new book.

No, it's still Genki.

Not when I left, they were changing the books.

I think it's still Genki, if I am not mistaken.
Like Nakama, friend.

It might have been changed to Nakama.
Yeah, because everyone had Nakama instead of Genki and like I just don't know if that's...like I told you, you can't learn a language through functions. You can learn vocab like "at the beach" and vocab like "at the post office" that's not how language works. I think EMU's program needs to make its own book, their own 100 book, their own books for whatever comes next, they have to make their own stuff. And I do that everyday for my students. We have no textbook, because that's not how kids learn. Everyday it's through a Prezi or a powerpoint or through me acting it out. I made waffles for my kids because they need to understand how to be informative. If they miss a step, the waffle is not going to turn out good. Like I mean, I feel like Eastern's professors are just going to have to suck it up and make a book for themselves. It's just not how you learn and language and I don't think they are going to see the results that they want especially with the OPI, which don't get me started on that, they won't. And I think that is why they are frustrated. And I see it on Tanno-sensei's statuses all the time that he is not happy with how the program is going either and that he wants to change it. I am just saying that if that want that program to be the best, then they are going to have to put more elbow grease into it. And I know they work harder than any program on that campus, I see those people there all the time, and they love their program. I know they love their program, but it just has to change. It's just how it has to be.

Yep, I think they have been changing things around. It is definitely changing.

I hope.

But your the first person to really say something about the Japanese program as well as the study abroad program which will definitely be good insight for all the teachers. Because this is just for my senior thesis it's going to also help the study abroad program and the Japanese program, the teachers are going to see all the different things.
I hope they are going to take my word seriously. I know they love me and I love them. I know I was not the most easy student on the planet, but It is what it is.

I think all of your opinions, everything you said is justified. If you are paying all this money for it, you should be able to have a say in how you are taught and what not.

Exactly.

Alright, thank you so much.

Thank you too.

学生14

Alright. What year are you?

I am a senior.

How many years have you been at EMU?

5.

And how old are you?

I am 27.

And what is your major?

Japanese Language and Culture.

And do you have a minor?

Yes, Psych.

And what Japanese language classes have you taken up until now?

All of them, I'm taking the last one now.
So you didn’t skip out of anything, you didn’t take it all the way through?

No.

Alright, and what made you want to study Japanese?

Kind of on a whim; my friend was taking classes privately and he wanted me to go with him. He offered to pay for it and everything and so I said ok.

Here.

No, no, no. Back home, before I came to EMU. The year before.

And in the future what do you plan on doing with Japanese?

I hope to be able to go over to Japan to teach English and eventually become good enough in Japanese that I could go to grad school in Japan for psychology, cross-cultural psychology.

Alright, where in Japan did you study and for how long?

I was in Hikone for one school at JCMU.

From when to when was that?

September to April.

And did you have a knit group of friends while you went over there?

No, not really. There was only one person I knew.

Before going over to Japan what sort of things were you anticipating, expecting, looking forward to?

Of course I read things about culture shock in terms of like food and language acquisition and things like that, but I didn’t really have a lot of preparation other than what other people said to me before I went over, people who have already been there. Not a lot, actually.
There wasn't anything in particular that you were looking forward to?

Well, of course. The different places and things that I had known about beforehand. Like 伏見稻荷 was one of my goals the whole time I've known about Japan. No, I tried keeping as open of a mind as possible because I didn't want it to lead to eventual disappointment.

Ok, and then upon going to Japan, the things that you expected and what actually happened while you were there, were there any differences? Were they the same? Was there anything that you were taken aback by?

I think the main difference was the schoolwork was so intense that I wasn't able to experience things the way I had thought I would, because I was always studying inside and I didn't really have a lot of money to travel a lot. My main purpose was to learn Japanese and so that's what I focused on mainly. But no, everything that I experienced was very new.

Comparing relationships between friends in Japan and America were there any changes to that, like your thought process?

Absolutely. The main thing was this feeling of community that was built up based on survival, I would say. Because everyone was in the same situation. Of course we would hang out with people that we got along with best and clicks were formed, but on the whole, the community of my school was rather friendly.

Ok, and then outside of the school, Japanese people friend-wise? Not necessarily just between you, but Japanese friends themselves. Did you see any difference in the way you perceive friendship now or the way you see relationships between people, because obviously, it's kind of insular, JCMU, not to be rude.

Absolutely.

You're a bunch of foreigners in the middle of Japan.

Um, I think that when I would make friends that were Japanese, the overall thing I noticed was patience, at least within the people that wanted to be friends with me. Because if they were not good at English
or they only understood Japanese, they would take the time to be patient and listen to what I was trying to say in Japanese and we would figure out a way to communicate together, so... in terms of communication, I would say not necessarily more of a deeper level, but more of a purposeful conversation. Because when you’re over here with your friends you can say anything you want because you understand English 100%. So on that level you become deeper connected, but it can be any purpose, really. With Japanese friends, it was language-based, specifically.

Ok, alright. And then coming back to America do you feel that you have changed?

Absolutely.

And what do you feel changed?

I definitely became more of a serious student, not just in terms of studying but in actually appreciation the language acquisition and the opportunity that I have to be studying this language in the environment that I have it in.

Meaning at EMU or Japan?

At EMU. Like coming back home, I have more of an appreciation of Japanese study. And culture in general really.

Like not just Japanese culture, but international culture, culture in general?

Yeah, exactly. And I think that I sort of gained an appreciation of being able to understand a culture firsthand, so that it is very important for other people go and travel the world and experience those differences, because it is a unique experience for everybody. You’re never going to be able to fully prepare yourself for going to another country.

And now we are going to get into the nitty-gritty stuff. This concerns the study abroad program and like what you feel about it. So EMU's
study abroad program, do you feel that there should've been anything in place before you went?

The person that we had taking care of us had just been hired on and she didn't have any specific information on hand that she could just call up quickly and stuff; I think that she worked really hard for all of us and she made it very clear and plain what we needed to do to get over there.

You didn't have any problems with things that you felt that you didn't have enough information on?

I think that the only thing that I could thing of was cost. There wasn't really a clear amount of what it was going to cost me and so I was underestimated and the actual cost was way more, so I had to compensate for that like three days before I left for Japan and I was freaking out a little bit about that.

And while you were there was there anything that you felt like should've been done for you by the study abroad program?

Um, no. I mean I think that everything that was provided for us was pretty good. The structure at JCMU was very good.

Yeah, they've worked all the kinks at JCMU; they've been doing it for a while. And having come back, do you feel that there was anything that the study abroad program could have done for you?

No, I don't think so.

Alright, do you feel that your relationships with the people running JCMU went well? Or times that you could've had more information or things spelled out for you?

I would say for most of the time that I was there, everything was pretty good. But at the end, I started having a really rough time with the material that was being taught to me and the pace of the class. I even started breaking down mentally a bit and they weren't not very accommodating for that really at all. And so I got into trouble actually because I couldn't handle the last few weeks of school well, or at least as well as I had handled everything else up until that point and they called me out for it, and I thought that was a little unfair.
Other than that, no. The relationships I made with the professors were very good relationships, I would say.

Ok, before studying abroad do you feel that if you had the chance to talk over Skype to talk with the teachers do you feel that your experience abroad would’ve changed?

Probably.

In a good way or bad way?

In a good way, because I would be able to know what they expect of the students, like only using Japanese to explain themselves and it would give me more of a serious outlook on going beforehand I think.

And then while studying abroad did you feel any anxiety or worry? And if so, what caused them?

Absolutely. Before I went to Japan my Japanese was not the best, so I had a hard time communicating when I first got there and as a result there were kanji everywhere and people around me were always speaking Japanese, so it was a little overwhelming. The classroom for the first semester was pretty good. I learned a lot, it was at my level. Second semester there was a lot more anxiety, because there was a lot of new material for me. The class I took first semester was pretty much review and it was more of a hammering down the basics. But when I entered 三年级 it was just so fast and I was worried about my grades.

Because they are direct transfers back over to Michigan universities, aren’t they?

Yeah, there was a lot more pressure.

And what else was I going to ask you, do you mind explaining the levels at JCMU.

Yeah, sure, there are 4 levels at JCMU. 1st year deals with Genki 1, 2nd year is Genki 2 and a little bit of Tobira and then 3rd year is Tobira Chapters 1-10, I believe and then 4th year is a lot of compilations of
articles and presentations and things like that, so I don't think they actually had a text.

Alright, and then what level, you were in 2nd and 3rd level then?

Yeah.

Upon coming home do you feel that your Japanese language ability improved?

Absolutely.
What improved the most do you feel? Reading, writing, listening, speaking?

Everything improved, really. I would say that my reading capacity improved the most. My kanji, for sure and I don't know and as a result of being able to read everything and understand everything and the way that they handle things grammatically my writing improved. And there were times in Japan where I had to use Japanese to speak, so I became more comfortable in that sense too. It's very difficult to say what improved the most.

But you feel that your reading ability improved the most then?

Probably, probably?

And then how did you improve those skills?

Through rigorous study, everyday. I would get together with other students and we would get together at a restaurant next door, Coco's and have study parties there, sitting for hours writing kanji and going through kaiwas and stuff like that. But other than that, going out into Kyoto or Tokyo and stuff and being able to use Japanese in everyday situations really helped out.

Ok and then after coming back to EMU in what ways are you maintaining your Japanese?
You know the usual, class. I watch anime, I do read the textbook that I got in Japan and I thought that it was very helpful. Songs, dramas, things like that, I do try to pay attention to stuff like that.

Alright, and is there anything else that you would like to add before we close this interview.

Not that I can think of, no.

Alright, thank you very much.

学生15

What year are you?

I believe I am a senior.

How many years have you been at EMU?

I've been here since the beginning of 2009, so 4 years after transferring.

Transferring from where?

Wayne county.

And how old are you?

I am 25.

And what is your major?

My majors are Japanese language and culture and English literature/writing.

And does that mean that you don't have a minor then?

I have no minor.

And up until now what Japanese classes have you taken?
Up until now I have taken required classes for the major, except for the ones I am taking now; the seminar and business Japanese II. I haven't skipped any of the classes.

What made you want to study Japanese?

Well, after transferring I needed a major and I looked down the list and said I don't know what I want to take. I saw Japanese and said that I would take it.

And prior to that you had never studied Japanese?

The only other language I have studied was French in high school.

So there wasn't really any particular reason at all?

I enjoy manga, so I guess that's something. But I guess it was less of a desire to learn a foreign language, but a desire to get away from anything involving math.

Alright, that's a good enough answer in my book.

In the future what do you plan on doing with Japanese.

Currently in the future, my only plans with Japanese, well I intended to travel or work with some sort of publishing firm involving Japanese, but currently since I plan to move to Canada once I graduate college, I am probably just going to just end up using Japanese to teach my children.

Alright, moving to Canada then, does that mean that the job you will have will be centered around Japanese?

It will probably be focused on my English major, because I don't know what the job market is for Japanese speaking jobs in the Calgary area.

Oh, so you've already picked an area?

Yes, because that's where my girlfriend is currently residing.
And where in Japan did you study, how long did you study and from when to when did you study?

I studied at Kansai Gaidai and I studied from August of 2011 to June 2012.

And before going to Japan what things did you expect, wish for, hope for?

I anticipated, let’s see in regards to the actual Japan, I expected... the classes compared to here to be a lot harder. And I expected to be forced to use Japanese a lot which in Hirakata actually did not seem to be the case. I tried to use it as much as possible, but places like the Yakiniku places and they just end up pulling out the English menus when I knew the other menus.

And that was Japan itself?

Yeah.

Was there anything else that you expected?

Let’s see, well I wanted to improve my Japanese and that was my first solo living away from home, despite how old I am, so I expected to be able to get used to that lifestyle more. Other than that the only thing I expected was to be embarrassed by other 外人.

And were you?

Yes.

And then upon going to Japan the things that you expected and what actually happened, did they coincide or were they different?

I mean, there was a lot less need to use Japanese for everyday life, because aside from having to ask questions at the store or at a restaurant there wasn’t much need and yeah, everything else pretty much coincided. I didn’t have any culture shock going there or coming back.
And then if you were to compare friends in America and friends in Japan were there any changes with that?

Well, it was easier to make friends in Japan because you have a large group of people with similar interests clustered together and I found myself a lot more willing to interact with them than here. Anyway, I think it pretty it was just that I had more in common with the people and more things to do in general, so more chances to interact.

And then upon coming back to America do you feel that you changed and how do you feel that you changed?

I haven’t changed that much, I have become a little more outgoing, but other than become slightly more outgoing, I have become more willing to try new foods.

Ok, so you were a picky eater before going?

I was a picky eater, but I will pretty much try anything now as long as it doesn’t have cheese in it. I wouldn’t try anything with cooked vegetables in it before going.

Alright, anything else?

In relation to that question?

Yes.

What was the question again?

How did you change?

More outgoing, more into trying food, the only other thing that I noticed was I became more fit, because Kansai Gaidai has an informal running club.

And then, as for EMU’s study abroad program do you feel that there should’ve been things that they should’ve done for you before you left?
At least for the lady who was in charge at the time, I think she covered everything that I needed EMU to go over for me. I don't think they specified...the only thing that wasn't specified was if the writing class was necessary to take there or if we just had to take the speaking class, but it was good to take anyway.

While you were over there do you feel like there were things that EMU should've done for you?

No, I don't think so. I mean there were...everything, the only thing I ever needed was copies of the insurance information which they sent over and everything.

Alright, and then after you were back from Japan was there anything that you feel the Study abroad program could've done for you? Maybe not just for you, but for all of the students in general.

I, let's see, um, I mean the only thing they didn't provide would be the information around Hirakata in general, but I don't really think they should be expected to do that as much as Kansai Gaidai should, which they did.

Even once you got back then?

Even once I got back, I was fine. I didn't have any problems.

Do you feel that your relationships with the people over at KSGD went well, that they had everything in check?

I think that they had everything in check; I mean there was, some people had confusion in regards to what was required of them before going over. I had a friend who was concerned about that who is over there now. But yeah, other than that....

It went pretty well?

Yes, it did,
And then before going over to Japan, do you feel that if you had the opportunity to use Skype to converse with the teachers over at Gaidai do you feel that it would’ve changed your experience over there?

I don’t think direct communication would’ve changed anything for me. I do think that the only thing that communication could help would be a more clear understanding of foreknowledge of the different levels there as opposed to knowing that certain span of levels 1~3 are Genki and after that there is just intermediate and advanced. If they gave a little more detail in regards to that, but other than that, I don’t think I could’ve gotten much out of talking to them.

Alright. While you were abroad did you ever feel any anxiety or worry and if so, what caused that?

The only time I ever felt anxiety was I felt anxiety when using the trains, because I’ve never used public transportation before and there’s nothing like getting lost in a foreign country and not having enough money to get back, but I never had anything as bad as that. The only other anxiety was caused by other international students going, seeing other caucasian people and having to automatically go to English and thinking that they should’ve been going to Japanese because this was Japan and a lot of white people don’t speak English. Happened at 伏見稻荷, they asked someone in English to take a picture for them and the guy looked European and I tried telling them that he probably didn’t speak English; he didn’t. I think he was Swedish. But yeah, that is it.

After coming back from Japan do you feel that your Japanese language ability has improved?

Um, I feel that it’s improved slightly; I didn’t study nearly as much as I should’ve in Japan, so if I had studied I would’ve had seen more of an improvement. I mean I am more willing to speak in Japanese than I was, but the main Japanese person that I hung out with felt awkward speaking with 外人 in Japanese, so she would always speak in English.

Ok. So you said that you are more comfortable speaking?
I am more comfortable speaking and I have the bonus of knowing extra grammar, but...

You don't feel that your writing, reading, speaking, listening, you don't feel like they improved?

I feel that probably my listening skills improved the most, but other than that I feel that everything improved a minimal amount, far less than it probably should have, but that was all my fault.

But you were over there having fun, right?

Yeah, but that's because I was over at Kansai Gaidai and not JCMU.

How did you improve those skills?

Like in what way? Because I mean...

Yeah, how did you improve them?

I guess, I am better able to guess things in their context when I hear grammar or words that make no sense to me, because before I probably would just shut down as opposed to figure out what they were saying and so that helped me in listening and speaking, any improvement was just being forced to. And coming to terms to everything in Japanese is probably going to result in me failing so, fail with style and gusto as opposed to being quiet.

And then having come back to EMU, in what ways are you maintaining your Japanese?

Um, I have been mainly trying to keep up with my Japanese listening skills by trying to listen to Japanese radio programs or the news programs, NHK. Or I occasionally listen to the Japanese QVC, is that what it's called, the shopping network.

Yes, it is called QVC.

I occasionally listen to that.
How do you find that?

I found a link online, I don't know if it still works. I was a little sad because the last time I tried it it didn't work.

Yes, it's always entertaining to watch Japanese people trying to sell vacuums, great for your Japanese skills. Yeah, I think that is pretty much how I am maintaining it. Aside from the DS games, I am currently trying to play the color card captors sakura game and it is not turning out so well.

Because it is in Japanese or just the game itself?

Because it is in Japanese and one of the characters talks in Osaka ben. The little stuffed guy and I have never been good at Osaka ben.

Some words are just completely different, and you can't look them up in dictionaries because they don't exist in dictionaries. Alright, is there anything else that you'd like to add?

Um, I can't think of anything else that I would like to add, except that I feel that if you're dating a Japanese person you should make them speak more Japanese to you, at least a little bit.

I dated a Japanese person while I was over there and that was our mandate. I was in Japan; they were going to speak in Japanese.

I did speak to her parents mostly in Japanese, well the father only in Japanese because he couldn't speak English and I mean I then there's always the Japanese becoming better if you get drunk. So there's all the singing of the songs in Japanese while I was drunk, but that's probably not important. And then like marriage proposals and what not going on.

Oh, wow.

Yeah, I was sitting with her parents and said, 娘さんをください。They found it amusing for me to drink, because I apparently can hold my liquor better than they could.
Alright, thank you.

Alright, what year are you?

Senior.

Senior? So how many years have you been at EMU then?

Since 2007, so almost 5, 6 years.

And how old are you?

24.

And what is your major?

International business and Accounting.

And so, what is your minor then?

I don't have a minor, just two majors.

Alright, and then with International Business, I myself was teetering between international trade and business, are you doing Japanese then as the language?

I am doing Romanian as the language.

Really?

You can use your own language, if you have your own language.

And how do you work that out? Do you have to write papers in Romanian then? What do you do?

You have to talk to the Dean and he will provide a test, but he will need an official member of the Romanian community to say that I have the ability to speak and write it.
Perfect, alright and what Japanese have you taken up until now?

I've taken them all at JCMU which I think equals one year.

So nothing taken at Eastern then?

No.

Alright. And what made you want to study Japanese?

The culture, their culture is very interesting and their business is very unique, so if I could combine that with what I know and learn the language I could learn the culture too.

Um, and what do you plan on doing with Japanese in the future?

Learn more so I can develop the language. Of course I want to do business in Japan, that's for sure.

So you would want to live then in Japan?

I would want to do business; I don't know how long I would want to live there, maybe a few years, but not indefinitely.

Alright, where in Japan did you study, how long did you study for and when to when did you study?

So I studied at JCMU, in Hikone. I studied for four months, September to December.

And what was the last question?

You answered it. It was this past September, right?

Yep.

Ok, perfect. Did you go with a group of friends or did you basically just go by yourself?
To JCMU?

Yes.

By myself.

And then before going to Japan was there anything you expected, hoped for, wished for?

Um, no. Well, not really, that doesn’t sound right. I had a lot of expectations, very crowded. I did not expect it to be so clean as it was. I was scared of the food, because I am a picky eater, so I was afraid it was going to be all seafood or raw food.

And was it?

No, there were lots of different kinds of food, very good food to be exact.

Alright.

I didn’t expect the people to be so, so nice. I heard that they were nice, but I didn’t expect that.

Alright and then going to Japan the things you expected and what actually happened was there like a difference between them or were they pretty much the same?

Um...

Because you seemed surprised by a bunch of things, so...

The one thing I was really shocked about was how clean the country was; there is rarely any trash cans. You could walk 15, 20 minutes and not see one trash can, yet it is super, super clean. The other thing was I met some people and the first day I met them, they let me use their iPhone, to keep for a whole semester. They didn’t even know me and they let me use it because mine broke, so they let me use it for the whole semester, on the first day they met me.
Really? And where did you meet them? Was this person at the school or?

They were Japanese people at a different school. A school that I went to eat or do whatever, so it had nothing to do with JCMU at all.

And this was a phone that had a plan and everything on it, so you could use it to call?

No, it was just their spare phone, I guess. They didn't use it so I was just using it for Wifi.

Wow...huh. Ok and then comparing friends in Japan and America, do you think there was a change in your opinions about friendships?

Yeah, I guess when I went to Japan I noticed a change in a lot of people. I guess the one change I definitely noticed in me was caring about the things that I do. Like in Japan a lot of people went out of their way to do things for me. I feel like even though I was good friends with people over here, I never actually did as much as they did over there for me, so I am changing by treating my friends better. Being more involved, being more caring about their lives and stuff; I think it has made me a better friend.

Perfect. So you'd say that relationships in Japan are more so emphasized? Taken seriously? They value them more in Japan?

Yeah, for example in America, most of the time friends won't spend as much time once they got involved with you. Like in the beginning they will hang out with you all the time, but eventually they just drift off and they don't really care. But over there they put in a lot of effort the whole time they know you. So it's not like it slows down. Even if they are not your good friend they will still put in a lot of effort.

And then this is perfect, it leads right to the next question: having come back to America do you that have changed? You've said yourself that you have, how other than friendship have you changed?

My mind opened a lot more to the way I see things, culture most of all. I am more careful about the culture.
Like stepping on feet, faux pax and what not?

Yeah, considerate to different culture. I have been exposed to the Romanian and Japanese culture, but now seeing how different the culture, I am now more careful of other cultures too and interested in them, so that opened my mind. I feel like I matured a lot too. I was childish as first, but now I am not.

In what way?

Like for example, school, I didn't care as much. I mean, I still studied and did what I had to do, but I didn't study to study, I didn't study to actually know, I studied to get the grade and that's it. But now I have realized that after going to Japan that the stuff you study, it actually has use. I had to do that in one of Japanese classes, my business economics class. I had to compare it to real life; everyday we had to do that, so it made me realize that even now I am studying stuff that I can relate to real life and I can retain it better and it makes me a better person and I can actually talk about these things.

So you can utilize it, you can actually put it to daily use.

Yes, that's it.

Ok, perfect. And then this is more towards Eastern's Study Abroad Program, do you feel that there should've been things in place before you left for Japan? Like they should've informed you about certain things or I don't know, were there things that they could've done to better prepare you?

I guess my case was unique; I went to Japan with zero Japanese, not even こんにちは. I didn't even know that, so I wish that they would've... Even though the JCMU program says that they accept zero Japanese right from the beginning, they are more intense than the other schools, so I wasn't prepared at all for this school. I learned the alphabets the first day, the first two. It took me like a week, but that was already quickly behind, so I wish they wouldn't accept people with little experience, or if they did, at least give them the first chapter or a syllabus so they know what to expect from the school. But that is just unique to my case.
And while you were there do you feel like there could’ve been anything that Eastern should’ve done for you?

I was ok. Didn’t need any help.

And once you got back do you feel that there should’ve been anything, not just for yourself but I guess for the program, do you feel like there was anything that they could’ve been doing to make the program better?

In the beginning they have orientations that they do, but I feel like they should also have an end, to gather everyone and get feedback from it and learn because everyone is there at the same time; it’s also a reunion for all the people you met over there, so the friendships could last, because you are going to keep some but not all.

Alright and do you feel that everything went pretty smoothly with the people over at JCMU, the people running the program?

They were very, very nice.

This question is kind of out there. Do you feel that if you could have used Skype or what not to talk with the teachers over at JCMU before you went, do you feel that it would’ve made your experience better or anything?

Uh, it depends on the person and personality. I don’t think even if I had the opportunity that I would’ve utilized it because I am very shy talking to professors even here, so I wouldn’t utilize it, but maybe there are some students. Well, actually if I weren’t as shy, I would’ve contacted them asking what I would’ve needed before school so I can prepare, because I have zero. And maybe that would’ve helped.

Ok and while you were over there did you feel ever anxious or worried and if so what caused those emotions?

The only worry I ever had, it was very little, not the possibility to have a job there. You have for so many months a limited amount of money. If you have something happen that takes a large amount of money then you’re expected and let’s say your family can’t help you, what are
you going to do over there? It would cause a panic. So I would say maybe not being able to work or do some kind of part time job.

Ok, so you ran into a financial crisis for a little bit then?

I personally didn’t but I am one of those people that thinks a lot into the future about risks and things like that, so I planned thinking about the what ifs and then I panicked.

Alright, I ended up getting a job while I was over there, but then again I was there for a year.

It also depends on the school. You were at 関西外大?

東京学芸.

Oh, Tokyo.

After getting back from Japan, do you feel that your Japanese language ability improved?

Yeah.

Which do you think improved the most, reading, writing, listening, speaking?

Speaking and listening, but listening the most.

And how did you improve those skills?

I improved them? How did I improve my Japanese listening skills?

I guess what did you do? You started from day one.

Well, the classes started all in Japanese from day one, so zero understanding in class one because they were only talking in Japanese. That made me listen more, not only to how they were saying things, but their hands and their movements. So actually I could understand everything that was happening in class just by the way the teacher was explaining things and how people were responding. The only thing I
could do was repeat what the person before me said because I didn’t know what I was saying. But because it was so basic they didn’t know I did something wrong, so it made my listening better because I had to remember what the other people were saying because I had never heard it before. So listening changed completely, but also in learning a language, from when you’re born listening is what you learn first. You understand things more than you can speak.

Now when you came, let’s see, you were born in America or?

I came over in year 2000.

Oh, ok. And you already knew English before you came, right? No, my mom taught me English while she was learning English in California before we moved over here.

Ok, so how old were you when you started then?

11.

11, wow. And English is radically different from Romanian then, right?

Not radically, not as Japanese is. There are a few universal words, but it is different, compared to like French or Spanish.

So do you feel that you having English kind of in your belt, did that kind of help you learn Japanese faster then?

Yeah, I had number one the pronunciation, there were some Americans who were there that took it once before and were still learning how to pronounce things, so I think that learning for the first time because I had already learned a language before I sort of knew how to learn or what to focus on or how to practice, so I had faster rate of learning.

Alright, I just find that really interesting that you had absolutely no Japanese experience whatsoever and you got over there, wow. I just think it’s really interesting.

And then having come back to EMU in what ways are you maintaining our Japanese?
I have many Japanese friends and a girlfriend so I try to speak with them. I have some friends that try to push me to speak it which I appreciate. Yeah and then I keep looking at the Japanese writing and watch some anime sometimes. So I keep listening, hearing it and sometimes I write in Japanese just so I can keep the alphabet in my mind. Not as active as I was in Japan, but...

And you plan on keeping it where it is now or getting better with it?

Well of course, I love languages, so I am definitely willing to improve it. I, for the short term only want the listening and speaking, I don’t see any need to focus on the reading and writing, just for the business, so would just like the conversational skills to improve.

Alright, thank you very much.

Thank you.

学生17

何年に卒業したんですか？

2010年に卒業して、留学の経験は2008年でしたね。

そうですね。今は何歳ですか？

今は二十五歳です。

で、留学した時は何歳でしたか。

あの、二十歳だった、丁度。

あ、そうですか。あのう、専門はなんでしたか？

専門は両方、あのう、二つもあって、まあもちろん日本語は一つだったけど、あのう、放送映画。。。。

放送映画ですか。

映画学科ですね。
あ、はい。で副専門はありましたか？
副専門はなくて、なんかその代わり、メジャーが専攻が二つもあった。
はい、わかりました。よくありますね。で、日本語のクラスは何を取りましたか？
その、最初から最後まで取ってたんですか？それとも、飛び級したんですか？
あのう、ちょっと待ってください。あのう、ちょっとだけ飛び級したんだけど、
なんか一番最初のレベルは、覚えてないな。たぶん211がうちの最初だったかな。
211？あ、そうですか。
211かな。まあ、覚えてないな。なんか、テストを受けてゲータさんは高校時代
に日本語を勉強したらから。。。飛び級してもいいよって。
うん。言われました。
ああ、そうですか。で、日本語を勉強するきっかけはなんでしたか？
まあ、最初では、自分の高校には、なんか日本語の授業があったんですね。
うん、そうですか？
うん。で、うちの家族ではですね。あのう、うちの姉はフランス語、母がドイツ
語、パパがイタリア語。では皆が西洋の言語でしょう。
そうですよね。
で、それで、一番変わってる、一番エキゾ、まあ、エキゾチックな言語学びたい
なあと思って、で、日本語にしました。それにね、あのう、セーラームーンには
まってたんですね。
さすがですね。
けどさ、本当はさ、アニメ全体じゃなくて、セーラームーンとかパワーレンジャー
の二つに超はまってて、そうですね。
あ、そうなんですか。なるほどですね。で、将来日本語を通して何をしたいですか？

えっと、将来はいろいろやりたいんですが、えっと、映画の字幕の翻訳者、英語の翻訳者になりたいなぁと思ってて、で、あとはその、文部科学省の国際交流員頑張ろうかなと思ってて。

あっ、そうですか？

はい。

で、行けそうですか？その翻訳者になることとか？

あ、行けそうなん。行けそうです。はい、頑張ります。

ええ、それはもしかして、日本で？それとも、アメリカでやりたいですか？

まあ、どっちかな。たぶん両方がかな。

ああ、行ったり来たりして？

うん、そうそうそうそうそう。

あ、なるほどですね。

まあ、本当は好きでアパートとかマンションを買いたいんだけど、なんかずーっと暮らしてて永住することにするよりは、なんか少し行ったり来たりしたほうがいいかなと思います。

ああ、なるほどですね。で、その留学のことですが、日本のどこに、どのぐらい行きましたか？それに、誰と行きましたか？

そうですね、あのう、関西外国大学に一年間ぐらい、あのう、ホームステイで暮らしてたんだけど、あの、誰行ったという質問なんだけど、自分の大学Eastern Michigan大学の仲間4人と一緒に飛行機に乗って行きました。

はい、で、何年から何年まででしたっけ？何月から？

2008年の9月から2009年の5月まで、はい。
はい、わかりました。で、日本に行く前にですね、どんなこと期待していましたか？

あ、日本はどんな感じみたいですか？

そうですね。まあ、悪いことでも、良いこともいいですから、ただ何を予感とか予想

そうですね。えっと、まあ、日本のニュアンスは礼儀正しいとか技術がすごいですとかなんかそういう感じかな。なんか、子供の時に、なんか、小学校の時に、いろんな本を図書館から借りたり読んだりしたんだけど、なんかステレオタイプとか強いイメージはありませんったんですね。ただ、日本に行くと、技術がすごいです。人が丁寧ですとかそういうステレオタイプ。

それ、なんていう、アメリカ人が良く思っているステレオタイプじゃなかったということですか？

ン、まあ、丁寧という言葉もステレオタイプとなるかもしれないけどな

まあ、いいステレオタイプじゃないですか？いいステレオタイプと思ってもいいですね。で、次なんですが、日本に行って期待していたことと実際に住んでみた時と違いがありましたか？同じでしたか？

ほぼ同じだったかなー。なんか、その辺はあまり期待していないからさ。なんか、悪い意味ではないで、ただ、あ、日本だとか。。。ああ。

なんか、がっくりはあまりしなかったかな。

あ、そう。で、びっくりしたことはありましたか？

まあ、あったあった。あのう、まあ今は全然平気なんだけど、あのう、ちゃんっこ、自転車の鍵とかなんか、その使い方ではないんだけど、なんか授業中に人がなんか自分のチャーリーをなかったら、駐車場の、駐車場かな、駐車場に置いてあってそのままかいつらい鍵で締めるだけでしょう。ここで、棒にチェーンとか使ってそうやって鍵を買ってるんでしょう。

そうですよね。
で、日本で混棒が簡単に運ぶ、運べる感心かな。それびっくりしました。一番、なんか、授業の最初の日に自分のチャーリーが心配し過ぎて授業が終わった後すぐに確認に行っちゃったんだけなね。取られたかどうかを。盗まれてはいなかったけど、その小さい鍵だけで大丈夫ですかって感じ。

ん一、なるほどですね。まあ、アメリカより安全じゃないですか。日本？

あのう、日本の詐欺師はアメリカより高いかも。で、うちのホームステイ先なんですけど、宗教に入ってて、キリスト教のモルモン教なんだけどな。それで、日本住んでいる人が住んでるなと思った。ステレオタイプとしては、日本人がみな同じみたいなイメージをしていたんだけど、実際に行ってみると、いろんな人が暮らしているとわかってきた。

なるほどですね。で、日本の友達とアメリカの友達を比較して、友達との関係についてはあなたの考えに変化がありましたか。

変化があったんかな。ちょっと待ってね。まずは日本人の友達の数がアメリカ人の友達より多い気がするんだけど。

日本人のほうが。それはなぜですか？

なぜだろう。まあ、最初は、まあ、高校時代に本当にシャイな人だったんで、声をかけるのがまあ、恥ずかしかったんだけだね。

あ、はい。

で、日本人に日本語で声をかけてしまうと、結構返事を優しくしてくれるんです。わあ、日本語お上手ですね」とほめてくれるでしょう。

まあ、そうですね。

で、それが、シャイな人にとってはなんだか楽な関係じゃないかと。

それが同時に励ましあとしてなかったんじゃないですか。励ましあしたいになったんじゃないですか。

まあ。。。それは。

「お上手ですね」と言われてあ、自分が上手だと。
「そんなことないよ」と

まあ、励ましてくれたんじゃないですか。「上手ですね」と言って

まあ、はいはい。優しかったんですね。当時、全然日本語しゃべれなかったけど。
お世辞だったと思うけどね。けどまあ、向こうが優しかった。しかも、興味も
、興味というか、趣味も合ってたような。。。なんか本当は最初は全然違う趣味
を持ってたくせに、まあ、日本についての興味は日本人がわかっていてるんだろう
と思ってて。自分の趣味としては、ちょっと変わってると思うけど、なんか
高校時代に日本中のただの国ではなく、興味みたいな、趣味みたいなトピック
だったんだ。で、どんなことが好きですかって聞かれたら「あっ、そうですね。
私は、日本が好きです」とか簡単に答えてた自分がいたんだけどな。まあ、オタ
ク系の人もそうだと思うけどね。で、それで、文化が違うからさ、ちょっとより
優しくミスを許したりしてくれるみたいな感じ。なんか、失敗、社会的な場面で
失敗しちゃっても「まあ文化的違いかな」にしてくれるって思いながら友達と暮
らしたんだけどな。

なるほど。で、次なんですかと、アメリカに帰ってきて自分が変わったなと思い
ましたか。

変わったかな。うん、あの、より楽観的に。

あ、楽観的ですね。

で、それに、人に頼るよりは自分に頼ってしまうということ。

あ、自立するんですね。

そうそう、自立。

それはどうしてですか。

まあね、海外に行くとね、自分に頼れるしかない時もあるのかな。なんか、セミ
ナーハウスって知ってる？なんか、寮みたいな。留学生が暮らしているところ。

あ、聞いたことがあるんですけど、見たことはないんです。

あのう、ホームステイだったんだけど、あのう、その学校の学期の間に、休みが
あるだけだけど、なんか冬休みとか。
はい。

で、その時にホームステイしてる子がすぐあのう、いきなり寮に移ってください。
ホームステイには泊まってはいけませんとか言われて、あのう、寮に出された
なんだけどね。で、あのう、しかも、クリスマスの時期だったし、あのう、まあ、
留学生のほとんどが自分の国に帰ってきたんだけどね。で、なので、まあ、人数
が少なくてあのう、十人ぐらいあの寮に暮らしてたんだけど、一か月ぐらい孤独
という感じだった。ちょっと病院の感じがしたんだ。

ああ、わかりますね、わかります。で、それが自立させられたということですか？
その経験？

本当に自分でやっておかないと誰もおらないとわかってきました。まあ、そういう
、ちょっと暗いというか、あのう、まあ、自分の人生を変えたくなけ
ど、あの寮の中、正月の、なんか正月でもないんだけど、正月の前の前の日、な
なんか本当に人が少なくて、で、自分の布団で寝てる時に、なんか急に思いがつい
たこと。「あ、もしこの寮でうちが死んじゃったら、うちの死体を発見する人
がなんか、まあ用は時間がかりすぎるとわかってきました。説明あまりできないん
だけど、もしこの寮で死んじゃったらさ、自分の死体を発見するには、あのう
、三週間くらいかかるなと思っていた。なんかルームメイトもおらなかったし、
まあ、ルームメイトはおったんだけど、なんかアメリカ人に帰ってきて、クリス
マスの時期に、でその担当の人も、なんか部屋を全然確認してないし、授業にな
ったなら、向こうが「ああ、なんでチェルシーが授業に来てないの」ってなるけ
ど、なんか、その前は全然誰もわかってないっしょ。

まあ、それはそうですね。

で、発見されてもさ、向こうのアメリカの家族にメールとかしてもさ、時間がか
かるんでしょ。

そうですね。

そういう暗い考え方があったということなんだけどね。それより、自立的な人に
なってきたなぁと思ったけど。

なんか、自分の生き方を整えなければならないみたいですか？

そうですね。自分の力で頑張っておかないと、誰もおらない。
なるほど。面白いですね。ちょっと暗いけど、まあ、面白い。それなりに面白いです。

まあ、本当なんだけど、海外にいるとき、あのう、家族と連絡を取ることが大事だと思います。

はい。で、次なんですけど、BMUの留学プログラムで、留学する前にこれがあれ
ばよかったと思うことがありました。

あ、あるかな。なんか、留学する人のサークルを、まあわかんないけどな。なん
か、コミュニケーションを増やしたいなと思ってたんですよね。なんか、そのまえ
にあのう、覚えてない。会議じゃないんけど、発表があったんだね。

あ、オリエンテーションですね。

ありがとうございます。オリエンテーションという言葉忘れちゃった。それがあって
五人ぐらいの人と出会って積極的になってメールアドレスを交換したんだけど、その
あとはその人と全然あてられなかった。なんか、日本にいても、なんか外大では一
回もあの人が見なかった。どこに行ったかはわからないけど、寮はコミュニケー
ションを大事にしましょうと。うちとしては、四人で飛行機で行ったんだけどね
、もし一人だと大変だったと思います。

そうですね、で、あのう、その留学している間に、これがあればよかったと思う
ことがありましたか。

あまりなかったんですね。その外大の国際交流センターが本当に良かったと思い
ます。なんか「どんな小さいうえでも相談しに来てね」と言われたし、結構優し
かったんですね。

なるほどですね。

で、なんかスピーキングパートナーのプログラムもあったし、なんか日本人の友
達も、まあ外大生の友達もすぐにできただし、なんか楽だったなんか。

なるほど、よかったじゃないんですか。で、留学した後に、これがあればよかった
たなと思ったことがありますか?

あります。なんか、あの、これが言いすぎなんだけど、なんか英語の言葉で言う
と「Debriefing」の言葉なんだけど、なんか、はい。アメリカ帰って何もなかっ
たんですね。

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そうですね。
オリエンテーションとかミーティングとか何もないんです。なんか、メールはもらったんな。アンケートぐらいかな。よく覚えてないな。
今でもないんですね。アンケートぐらいは私はいただいてないんですよ。
うちもアンケートぐらいはいただいてないと思いますね。それよりも、番号で自分の経験を評価しようとみたい。
全然なかったんです。その「Debriefing」もなかったんですよ、今でも。
大変でしょう。
ちょっとね。
なんか、自分で勝手にDebriefingの？？？？を作ったんですよ。元外大生に詳しいアンケートを作っちゃって、あのうその手前が帰国プロジェクト。
なるほど。
なんか、本当に外大だけじゃないけど、戦争から帰ってきた少年たちと同じような気持ちだったんです。
あ、そうですか。
家族とか周りの人が全然変わってないでしょう、日本のこととか。こんなにしゃべっても向こうがあまりわかってくれてないという感じやんない。しかも、周りが疲れてるんですよ。なんか、「あっ、また日本のこと話してんのか」とか。
うん、なるほどですね。わかってもらえないんです。ま、関係ありますよ。それは、同自分が変わったかとつながってますから。
関係あります。なるほどね。
で、たぶんもうおっしゃってると思いますが、留学先の留学担当の人との人間関係はうまく行きましたか？
うん、うまく行きました。なんか、連絡はありませんかったけれども、そのセンターや担当はその学生が働いてたんだけれど。で、その学生をいろんな、なんていうのかな。本当に申し訳ない雰囲気だったんだ。

なるほど。

なんか、「すみません、食堂の入力教えてもらいですけど」みたいなどうでもいい質問でも優しく答えます。

なるほど。次ですねけど、留学する前に、留学担当教官とスカイプなどで話せたとしたら、どのように留学経験が変化したと思いますか？

なんか、自分としてはですね、留学もあって、で次回の、なんていうのかな。また留学したのね、あの専門学校に

そうですか？

まあ、それは留学というよりは自分で留学したと大阪市内の。。。なんか去年したんだけど、2011年。

で、それは自分自身で行ったということですか。

うん、そうそう。で、言ったことそれは別の関係ないんだけどな。では、その話をなしなにして、言ったことそれは女性なんだけれど、いろんな変な人にナンパではないんだけど、セクハラでもないんだけど、外大、外大じゃないんだけど、寮は日本ではもっと気を付けましょうと言われたほうが良かったかな。残念なイメージなんだけど、女性の知り合いの中で、なんか変な奴に話しかけられたりとかストーキングされたというそういう経験が結構あったらしい。

なるほど。

で、なんか日本人が丁寧で優しいというイメージがあるからさ、なんかすぐに断れないという感じかな。このアメリカ人の私が断るとしたら失礼になるのかなとか。

ああ、そういう考えがあったということですね。

あったよ、あった。本当に玉人の知り合いがストーキングされてた。で、大学時代のオフィシャルな公式的なアナウンスもあったんだけれど、セミナーハウスの辺では、なんか無駄とか結構いたらしいけど。
うちの寮にもいました。警報もたくさんあったんですけど。注目してください。

なんか、日本のほうがアメリカより安全かもしれませんが、外国人ですから気を付けましょうね。

そうですね。次なんですけど、留学している間に、不安や心配を感じたことがありますか？

なかったかな。なんかホームシックにはあまりならなかったな。まあ、大丈夫だったのかな。

で、不安とか心配は全然なかったんですか？

まあ、心配はなかったかな。お金の心配でもなかったのかな。まあ、心配はなかったけど、お金のおろし方かな。けど、それは心配にはならなかったのかな。なんか、説明とか説明会あったし。まあ、そんなにしなかったね。まあ、世間知らず、あたし。ことわざがあるんだけど、「知らずは仏」たぶんあってないと思うけど。

それは「知らないことを知らないままにして」ということですか？

ことわざがめちゃくちゃ間違ってるから、すみません。

じゃあ、英語で言って、普通に英語で言ってもいいから。

日本語のことわざなんだけどな、なんか意味は知らないほうが安全かな。

なるほど。

英語のことわざで言うと、「What you don’t know can’t hurt you.」的な。

了解です。ホームステイ先もめちゃくちゃ近かったし、なんかチャーリーで十分ぐらいいかかったし、なんか本当にずっと枚方市の安全なところに暮らしていて本当に問題なかったんです。

で、あのう、なんでホームステイにしたんですか？
あの、それは日本語を身に付けたいと思ったからさ。どうせ日本に行くのなら、ホームステイにしてみたいなと思ってたんです。

なるほどね。

しかも、セミナーハウスに暮らす人はよく日本語ではなくて英語でしゃべてるんですね。ですから、ホームステイにしたかっただけですね。

留学してから、自分の日本語能力が上達したと思いますか。

ん、はい。なんか、話しやすくってきたかな。なんか基本はわからないんだけど、なんか本当の知識が増えたかわからないんだけど、話せるようになってきた。なんか、その前は恥ずかしそすぎてあまり声かけなかったんだけどね。

まあ、言ったとおりね。

で、実際に日本に行ってみると、なんか日本語を、まあショックではないけど、周りの人がわかってくれないし、本当にしゃべるしかないとわかってきて、しゃべるようになった。

で、その日本語の書く、聞く、話す、読むの中でどのスキルが上達したと思いますか。一番上達した。

話すかな。最初は高校時代は話す相手があまりいなくてあのう、文字が得意だったんだ、最初は。

一緒一緒。

で、今はその逆なんだけどな。

まあ、ギャップがありますね。その、上級レベルと上上級レベルですね。もっと上に行けばいくほど、さらに難しくなるから。

で、そのスキルをどうやって上達させたのですか？

あのう、まあ、ホームステイ先でずっと日本語でしゃべってたし、はい、で今はしゃべる機会があったらすぐにしゃべっちゃうんだけどね。要は勇気を身に付けることね。言語の能力よりは勇気ができちゃいました。

あ、勇気ですね。
これはニューヨークに暮らして、日本人が結構住んでますね。で、全然知らない人に声をかけることもあるし。

私そうですが。

それは留学のおかげかなと

いいですね。

で、最後なんですか、EMUに帰ってきてからどのように日本語を保とうとしていますか？

まあ、授業いっぱいといってスピーチコンテストに挑戦したんだけですね。で、そのSymposiumに参加してなかったんですか、参加してよかったのにと思います。

そうですか。ということは卒論書かなかったんですか？

書かなかったんですね。そのお氏はわかってないんだけどね。なんせ書かなくてもまだ卒業できるみたいですね。

Honors Collegeに入ってたんですね

あ、はいはい。なんか、入ってたんです。Universityのもあって、Departmentalのもあって、なんか本当はより詳しいやつを知りたかったんです。ただ、なんか四年生になって、ああたぶんご存知だと思いますけれども、あっちゃんじゃ忙しくてきて彼氏もできたり、時間があまりなくて結局そのより一般的なUniversity Honorsにしてしまいましたね。卒論は書かなくてもいいと言われたのです。

はい、わかりました。で、そのほかに、言いたいことがあれば、どうぞご自由に。

そうですね。将来の夢とか聞かれたら、迷ったんだけでも、国際交流員にも行ったんですけど、映画関係の字幕の翻訳とか、カウンセラーでもないんですけど、国際交流員みたいなカウンセラーと思ってるんですけどね。日本人と日本に住む外国の方の間にいる仕事がいいなと思っております。そのためにフィリピン語を少し習ってます。

そうですか。頑張ってください。
Alright, what year are you right now?

I am a 5th year.

But you are a senior this year, right?

I am.

And how old are you?

I am 24, just turned 25, had to think for a minute.

And what is your major?
My major is teaching Japanese, focusing on secondary, but I am debating on whether I will teach middle school or high school.

And what is your minor?

My minor is TESOL. Do you know what TESOL is?

Uhm, teaching English as a second language?

Somewhat like that, yes.

And then up until now what Japanese classes have you taken?

Right now I am taking the last Japanese class; I’ve taken them all, including some of the ones that I took studying abroad.

And then what made you want to study Japanese?

Actually it was in high school; I don’t know what actually peaked my interest, but I think it was a documentary on TV like National Geographic or something that was on Asia.

And then in the future what do you plan on doing with Japanese?

Me? Truthfully I want to maybe become an interpreter, but my real dream is to become an actress, so may if I can incorporate Japanese and acting that would be ideal.

Perfect. And then where in Japan did you study, how long did you study for and who did you go with?

I went by myself for all of them. The first time I went I went to Hikone at JCMU for the summer intensive program which was like 3, 4 months and then came back and found out that I was accepted to Tokyo Gakugei and I went there for a year which was in the Kokubunji area.
So you went to both through Eastern’s program then?

Yes, I got accepted to two. I did apply to all three, but after I found out about the one, I didn’t apply to Kansai Gaidai.

Wow, so what made you want to go two times then?

Well, I lacked confidence; I didn’t think I was going to be able to get into any of them. But because everybody was freakin g how Tokyo Gakugei was intensive and how they only accept a small number of people, so my advisor said I could apply for more than one and so I ended up getting into two.

How did you save up that much money?

Actually it was financial aid and actually Tokyo Gakugei had a scholarship program for a research student, so I got a stipend of $1,500 a month, so they pay for a good majority of stuff, my air plane ticket, it was all paid for.

Wow, good job.

It required a lot more work, but it was worth it.

Before going to Japan what sort of things did you expect?

What did I expect? That’s hard because I had never been to another country, so I expected to be able to communicate better because, well this is going to sound silly and I laugh at it now, but because I had finished Genki I. I thought that well since I had finished Genki I, I can at least talk to people, but that wasn’t the case.

And that was before you went to JCMU then?

Yeah, that was before I even went to Japan.

And then having gone to Japan, the things that you expected and the things that actually happened, I am guessing they were different.
Um, yeah. It wasn’t exactly what I expected, but I noticed things I didn’t notice before. Like for example, how people socialize. I didn’t think about it before I went, but when I was there I noticed how people don’t really communicate with strangers unless you really have a reason to talk to them, like if they drop something or something like that. You don’t really say, “hey I like your scarf” or talk to people on the train or bus. And even when I was in America, before I went to Japan, that kind of thing would really annoy me because I take the bus all the time, but when I was in Japan, I missed it.

The small talk?

Yeah, I missed the small talk and I could never envision myself missing that. So that was something I hadn’t expected.

Anything else?

Hm, it was mainly the way people communicated. I found that I had a really strong interest in it, because after I went to Japan, my major was just Japanese and my minor was theater. And then after I came back from Japan, I ended up changing it to teaching Japanese and minoring in TESOL, because I really got interested in language after that.

Alright, perfect. And then if you were to compare, you’ve already mentioned this, friends in America and in Japan, how would you say that those are different? Obviously you’ve said that the communicate differently.

Yeah, hm. As for relationships. That’s pretty hard. Like just how they communicate with each other?

Well, no. Just in general. If you were going to compare Japanese friendships and American friendships, obviously going to Japan your thoughts on relationships in general is going to change? How did it change?

To me, it showed me how friendship really is, because it was really my first time ever leaving my family. I never, I live 15 minutes away from my house from Eastern, so I’ve never lived away from my family before, but it
shows me how strong the bond is. Even though I was gone for a year, my friends kept in contact, they kept me updated, they even had parties at my house, my parents said it was OK, without me. They would Skype me to try and include me. It was really cool. I guess it goes back to the way people communicate, because they communicate different still even among friends between Japanese culture and American culture. I feel like my American friends are more honest and more blunt and Japanese are more reserved.

Indirect?

Yeah, Indirect and even when they were planning events and things like that you learned what they meant when a “yes” meant “no” after a while, because they would postpone things later on, instead of just saying no.

And then having come back to America, do you feel that you changed yourself?

Yeah, I do. I feel that I am more independent, because I had never experienced it before, so I never could envision it. Even people at my church they couldn’t believe that I was going to another country. Maybe another state, but they could never envision my going to another country. And it showed me how much I really do love being in other cultures. When I was in Japan I made a lot of friends from different countries and I went to Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Korea. I didn’t make it to China. Oh, and Thailand too. Even though I didn’t know really anything about Indonesia or Thailand, I really did enjoy myself. And I learned so much. Well, thankfully you had the opportunity to go there and get out of just Japan. And do you think there was anything else that you noticed about yourself changing?

Let’s see. I smile a lot.

Since going there?

No, I just noticed how much I smile from seeing people posting to me how much they miss my smile. I never realized that before. That was completely random, but yeah. As for how I changed, I think it’s really that I have become more independent and that I have realized more of what I want to do definitely something that incorporates language and culture. I really want
to go to countries like Thailand or even Cambodia, even I don't really know the language I think it would be really great. It brought out my adventurous side.

And this is more on the study abroad program itself, do you think there should've be anything in place for you before you left for you to transition to life in Japan better?

I guess for like the research program, if they explained more details, because it was all in Japanese and we had to do more research projects as well and I felt very pressured and nervous, because I couldn't understand a good deal of what they were saying because my Japanese skills weren't that high. And they spoke hardly any English. I wish they would've incorporated better explanations along the way. That would've made me feel more comfortable. Other than that, I had no problems paying bills, or getting around. They did a little thing about how to travel.

I really meant Eastern's program itself.

Oh, I didn't know what program you meant. Yeah, if they could've explained that too. Let me think about JCMU.

Before you answer about JCMU could you tell me what years you went to them?

It was 2009-2010. The summer of 2009 for JCMU and the fall of 2009 for Tokyo Gakugei.

Perfect.

As for transitioning, I didn't feel that I was uninformed. The conference at MSU was enough for me. It was common things about getting used to the language and culture and stuff, but they can't explain everything, so I think it was just fine.

And then you've already started talking about it, but you said they could've told you more about the research project.
Because there was only like 20 students in the program and it was really intense, almost like what you are doing now, writing a paper in Japanese and doing research. We did a lot of other events and had to write papers on them too, like Sumo events, so I just really felt like pretty pressured, because my Japanese level wasn't high enough to complete it, but I finished with an A, so I am happy with it.

And after coming back do you feel that there were things that Eastern could've done?

They could've not forgotten about me. Yeah, because the person who was there at the Study abroad office, so they were transitioning, so they kind of forgot that I was there. My mom said they she received, she called the office to ask about something and they said that they hoped I had a good time in Japan and she told them that I was still there. But nothing bad happened, so it was perfectly fine.

So you feel that your relationships went just fine with the people over at JCMU and Tokyo Gakugei.

Yeah, I feel like it went just fine. All the professor and teachers over there were very helpful.

Perfect. And then before studying abroad if you had the ability to Skype with the teachers over there do you think it would've changed your experience?

Like before I went over?

Yes. Probably not. It probably would've made me more nervous.

And then while you were over did you ever feel anxious or worried and if so, what caused those things?

Anxious or worried? Like are we talking about just living in Japan?

Just in general, if you felt any anxiety or stress or anything.
Um, other than passing classes, not really. I was debating about whether I should bike to school or take the train and I tried to bike, and it took me a little over an hour to get there.

Were you in 東久留米 then?

Yeah. In the summer I almost passed out, so that was probably the most stressful part of it all. I found out that my body couldn't handle the heat and humidity, so after that I started taking the train, but it was just mainly time. I always felt like if I had one hour or two hours more in a day I felt like I could get more done because of the commute. I wasn't used to having to commute two hours every day. That was the most stressful thing. As for communicating and socializing with people, not so much. It was just, I didn't know how to communicate with strangers my age. Older women and what not, they don't mind talking. It was just people my age that I wanted to talk to as well, but I found that sort of difficult, because it's not part of the culture. So that was the main thing.

Alright, and after studying abroad do you feel that your Japanese language ability has improved?

Yes, I feel that it has. I feel like I gained more of how to become more of an independent learner, picking up new strategies.

And what do you feel improved the most out of reading, writing, listening, speaking?

I feel like my listening has definitely improved the most. As for speaking, my friends have told me that it has improved, but I guess I am just judging myself maybe. I still feel like I translate too much English still, so I don't get as much of the correct cultural expressions in a way. I am looking at myself harder than my friends are.

That's how we all are.

Yeah, but to me I feel like listening more than my speaking has gotten better.
Alright, and how do you feel that you improved all of those skills?

So, basically just by being diligent and trying to give myself as much exposure as possible. Like right now, I am helping doing a bit of an exchange with a Japanese speaker. I help them for an hour with their English and they help me with Japanese. It’s just getting that constant exposure that is critical. They don’t go to Eastern, but some of them are in the Michigan area. Some of them I Skype and meet with at a coffee shop. It’s just being diligent and finding time to study.

Perfect. And then having come back to EMU, you’ve already sort of answered the question, in what ways are you trying to maintain your Japanese?

Yeah.

That’s the main thing then?

Yeah, that’s the main thing that I am doing. It’s also hard to do it, but finding a teacher that will do an independent study, so I am doing that too. It’s just trying to keep it up, because if you don’t use it, it goes away. Kanji, I seriously don’t remember all the ones I learned over there. It was the first thing that went.

I am assuming they were just cramming them into your head. I remember one Russian girl was doing the research project before and she was doing some pretty intense work.

Yeah, it was just information overload. I would remember it just for that instance and then forget it.

What did you do your research paper on?

I did mine on television shows, like 罰ゲーム, do you know that I am talking about?

Yeah.
I did it on those kind of shows and think of the point I was going for them. Basically I was just seeing how people viewed them and why they were popular as punishment games. Because to me it showed a different side of Japanese culture than what people on the other side of the world thought of Japanese. I just wanted to get more of the Japanese view on them.

And then a follow up to that would be how those shows make it over to the US, you know?

Yeah, actually in 2010 when I was in Japan that was when the show Wipeout came out, my mom was telling me just about it when I was doing my project. Just like Ninja Warrior and things like that. But no one knows that it comes from Japan.

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Not really; I think you hit everything.

Alright, thank you so much.

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Alright, when did you graduate?

2012.

And how old are you?

22.

And what was your major over at Eastern?

Spanish and a minor in Creative Writing.

And what was your minor?

Creative Writing.
Oh, that’s right. I am sorry. Thank you. And what Japanese classes did you take?
I took Japanese 121, 122, to the 200 level classes and the 300 level classes in Japan.

Alright, and what made you want to study Japanese?

Uhm, well originally I was a double major of Japanese and Spanish, and I don’t know. I took judo in junior high, so yeah I had a little bit of a base of Japanese. Stupid, erroneous assumption, but whatever.

Alright, so you would say that judo was kind of your motivation to continue learning Japanese then?

Yeah, Japanese martial arts.

Ok, and then in the future do you plan on doing anything with Japanese?

I would like to continue my studies in Japanese, but probably not.

Where in Japan did you study, how long did you study for and from when to when did you study?

I was at Kansai Gaidai University and it was for a full semester and it was 2010, it’s been a while.

2010? Ok. And then before going to Japan what kind of things did you anticipate whether they be good or bad?

Uhm, I really didn’t know what to expect, because I really didn’t know a lot about the culture in Japan before I went, and I was going, I lived in a dorm-type housing, so I didn’t really think I would need to know a whole lot for living, I guess.

Alright, what made you want to live in a dorm instead of a homestay?

Honestly, I really hate fish and I didn’t want my aversion to be an inconvenience to my host family.
Oh, ok. And then having gone to Japan, the things that you expected, hoped for, wished for, were there any differences between the two or were they the same?

I kind of expected to use more Japanese and make more Japanese friends. What ended up happening was I made friends from all over the world and not necessarily from Japan and our common language was English, because you had to be able to use English to study at Kansai Gaidai; however, not everyone had the same level of Japanese, so often everyone would just switch to English.

You would just switch to English, alright. So was that kind of a let down then?

Uhm, that was. It kind of was, but that was more so my own fault because I could've actively done more to use my Japanese.

So that would be, you would say that was the biggest difference having lived there that kind of struck you?

That was the biggest difference in my expectations.

Alright, and then was there any change your opinions on friendships in Japan and friendships in America having gone to Japan?

Well, it was really interesting. I had a lot of friends from South America, because obviously Spanish is my major and I speak Spanish, and so we would speak Spanish, Japanese and English together and we would spend a lot of time together and I noticed we were a lot more tactile than I am used to here in the US. So there was a lot more friendly touching and hugging and stuff like that. And I kind of had this preconception that most Japanese are not very contact friendly, but a lot of my Japanese friends were very very contact friendly, giving each other hugs and stuff like that.

Ok. And then having come back to America do you feel that you have changed? And if so, in what ways did you change?

I know how to use the public transportation better. I guess I am more culturally aware. I've learned quite a bit about how society is run in
Japan and the cultural norms and things. I don't know, for the longest time, I would always for some reason take pictures anime style with the peace sign up. I don't really think I have changed that much I guess. I am aware of things now, I know more now.

Ok, alright. And then pertaining to Eastern's study abroad program itself, do you feel that there should've been things in place before you went to study abroad that they could've done for you?

The only problem I had with the program was when I was applying they were going through changes in the department, and so I was working with several different people over the course of my study abroad experience and it would've had more stability with those people because somehow it was missed that I needed to preregister for classes and nobody bothered to tell me this in the office. That was my biggest problem.

And then while you were over there was there anything you wished they could've done for you?

I think instead of having classes, like my Japanese language classes, with other foreign exchange students, I wish there would've been more Japanese students in those classes, because I made my friends in class, but we were all non-Japanese natives.

Ok, alright. And then after studying abroad do you feel that the Study Abroad program at Eastern should've done something for you?

I mean, I really didn't need a re-immersion back into American culture or anything. My problems don't lie with the programs to and from; my problems lie with the Study Abroad Department at Eastern.

Oh, ok. Meaning what?

Basically getting my classes transferred and having financial problems.

Well, that's a problem in itself. It's not necessarily just pertaining to you getting there and you getting back. It pertains to the program itself and what they should've done for you, so it does have relevance.
Well, with my classes I just had they didn’t transfer well or actually at all and that is part of the reason why I dropped Japanese as a major and I just didn’t know what to take, what I was supposed to take, what I should be doing with my classes and what I should be taking so I could get relevant credit when I came back.

Ok, alright. And then over at Kansai Gaidai you were able to get along with the people that ran the program?

Um, it was kind of interesting. The people were nice, because I actually tested into a lower classes level than I should’ve been in. And when I went to go in to talk to them about it, they basically told me I couldn’t really switch to what I was supposed to. But I guess in Japan you go to ask for permission and they tell you no you say thank you and do it anyways. So I ended up switching classes anyways. They told me I basically didn’t know Japanese well enough to move up even though I I had already completed the class that I was tested into and instead of, they were nice though and just told me I didn’t know enough Japanese and I said ok and switched anyways.

Alright, well I guess it worked out in the end. And then before studying abroad do you feel if you had the ability to converse with the teachers over at Gaidai on skype or something like that, would it have changed your experience over there and if so in what ways?

I am not sure. The teaching style at Kansai Gaidai is very similar to the teaching style here at Eastern because most of our professors, actually a lot of our professors come from Kansai and use, well at the time used the same Japanese textbook, so the classes in Japan were almost the exact same thing that I was used to at Eastern.

So you really don’t think you would’ve needed some way to communicate with them before you went over? You felt that you were totally prepared?

I was prepared, but that was just because of the way our program at Eastern is set up.

And then while you were studying abroad did you ever feel anxious or worried and if so what caused those feelings?

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Actually early on in my program I was anxious because I didn’t have access to my account for buying food. I didn’t have access to that until October and just had the cash that I brought over and a lot of that had to go to dues and fees the day I arrived at Kansai. And so I didn’t have a lot of money and no access to the money which should’ve been there for my meal plan.

Was that like the stipend that they give you over at Gaidai?

Yes.

Ok, alright and did that have to do with the study abroad program not doing something in order for you to get it on time?

It usually doesn’t come in until the second of August. It was just really weird because you have to set up a bank account with them and it would have been nice if they could’ve made accounts prior to our going to Japan.

And then after studying abroad do you feel that your Japanese language ability has improved and if so what of the four categories (reading, writing, speaking, listening) improved in your opinion?

My Japanese did improve a little bit, not as much as I hoped. The most would be my spoken Japanese, listening would be my second, and I still can’t read Japanese to save my life.

And how do you feel that you improved those skills?

Well, the grammar classes obviously helped, the staging classes and that was helping because the writing and reading classes and oral classes were separate so I could focus on just the writing part and the other classes the spoken part. And then outside of class, though I didn’t use as much Japanese as I should have, I used it with some of my friends, with other students. Though I did find that when I would use Japanese in stores, they would use English back at me.
I remember that happening to me more than once. And then after coming back to EMU in what ways did you maintain your Japanese and then now as well?

Well, I really have tried to maintain my Japanese being that I dropped it as a major, but I still try and speak Japanese, like with trying to keep contact with my Japanese friends on Facebook and a lot of the times I will just translate things in Japanese while I am randomly talking. I should be doing more to try and preserve my Japanese, but it’s just difficult because no one around here speak Japanese.

And you’re back home for more school or you’ve moved to a different area?

I am currently living with my parents to look for a Bachelor-level job.

And I am guessing that will be international too because of the Spanish major?

Possibly.

Alright, and then if there’s anything else that you’d like to add?

I think that’s about it.

Alright, thank you very much.

What year are you currently?

Technically a senior, but this is the end of my 5th year.

Alright, and how old are you?

I am 23.

And your major?

Japanese and Linguistics.
Alright, and do you have a minor then?

Yeah, I minored in General Business. No cohesion at all, but yeah.

You did complete it though, so you will graduate with it. And what Japanese classes have you taken up until now?

I feel like I have taken all of them, goodness.

You didn’t skip any?

No, not that I am aware of.

Alright, and then what made you want to study Japanese?

Um, when I first got into college I didn’t know what I wanted to do. I knew I liked Japanese from listening to the music and I thought that I would take as something fun to do as I had learned a bit of the language already anyway. I ended up really liking it and since I didn’t know what I wanted to do I decided to pursue that.

So then, you said that you liked it because of the music, so you had been listening to it before college. So what got you into that music?

My brother was really into watching anime, so I would watch it with him and they always had those fun little songs with them.

Oh, the theme songs.

BoA got me into it, go figure.

And then in the future, if any, is there anything that you would want to do with Japanese?

I don’t know about Japanese specifically, but I know I want to go to grad school for speech pathology. And I guess instead of working in speech rehabilitation, I would try and work with speakers who are trying to get rid of accents.
Hence you studying Linguistics, what field of linguistics are you thinking of going into? I know right now you are probably going over all of the fields.

It's really broad, yeah. I haven't decided that. I know I don't want to do research.

Alright, and then where in Japan did you study, how long did you study for and from when to when did you study?

I studied at Kansai Gaidai in Hirakata. I was there, I went there two years ago. The end of, fall of 2010, just four months.

Oh, so before the earthquake then.

Yeah. The semester before it.

And when you went did you go with a specific group of people?

Yeah, I knew a lot of people, 3.06

And then before going to Japan, did you have any expectations or anything?

Not really anything specific, I expected to feel really out of place and I expected the food to be different, but not anything really beyond that.

And then having gone there, the things you expected and the things that actually happened, was there a difference between them, like did ever find yourself really shocked, whether it be good or bad?

Not really, no. I guess, everybody emphasizes how polite people are while you're there, but I didn't notice them being overly polite, which is what I had been expecting, so other than that not really. I didn't really go with a lot of expectations.

Well, that is sometimes better, because then you let yourself down if you go with expectations. And then comparing Japanese and American
friends, was there a change in the way that you think about friendships having gone to Japan?

Um, Not really a change per say, but I definitely work better on my communication, since I found my Japanese friends; I have to work harder to get a point across or I just to have any kind of discussion since my Japanese is not very good and sometimes their English wasn't the best, so....

Alright, to be honest I didn't catch much of that, but he caught it for you, so let's move on. Alright, having come back to America do you feel that you yourself have changed and if so, please in detail.

I do notice a change in myself since before, I don't know if it is positive. Like I found that when I got back I got really depressed, I just didn't want to be here at all. Everything, I couldn't listen to the music I listened to in Japan anymore, I couldn't have discussions with the friends I made over there because I missed them so much, so I don't know. And it hasn't really gone away even though it has been two years, so it's made being here and finishing the program really difficult, like I haven't done my study abroad paper yet, and it's been two years. I can't graduate until I do it and like I don't want to do because I don't want to think back on it, so there's that.

Hm... alright. Is there anything else that you would like to say about how you have changed?

I've become a little bit more outgoing than before. Before I was super shy and I wasn't good at making friends from different backgrounds, but going over there and being around people from all over the place, not just America or from Japan, they were from everywhere, so there's that.

Alright, and this is more technical, I would say. Talking about EMU's study abroad program, do you feel that there should've been things in place before you went to Kansai Gaidai to prepare you for going?

I was pretty ok with it; they do give you the little intro section that you have to go to, going over all the papers that you are going to need; I felt that was adequate. I mean, I feel like I needed a debriefing afterward telling me that I was going to get super depressed,
but you can't do anything about it. But nothing as far as being prepared to go there.

Alright, and while you were there do you feel like there was anything that you needed?

Yeah, I was fine.

Ok, and this is a before-middle-and-after kind of question set, so after you said that you wish there would've been some kind of a debriefing?

Yeah, I guess that is probably why they have you do the study abroad paper.

To have you just ball up all those emotions, put it on paper and ship it out, kind of.

Maybe that is supposed to be your closure.

Like a little love letter to break up with it.

Alright, ok and do you feel that your relationships with the people over at Gaidai went well, the people that ran the program?

Mhm. I loved my professors; they were awesome, so there were never any issues there. I enjoyed my host family too.

Oh, you stayed with a host family.

No, no. My seminar house mom and dad.

Alright, and before going to Kansai Gaidai do you feel that if you had the ability to talk on Skype with you teachers and what not that it would've changed your experience there? Would you have wanted to do that or do you feel that it wouldn't have been a big deal?

Do you mean talk with the teachers here?

Talk with the teachers over at Gaidai on Skype while you're still here before you went.
Um, I don't know if I would be able to do it; I get really nervous when talking to professors, but I think it would be an interesting option for people who would want to do that.

Alright, and while you were studying abroad did you ever feel anxious or worried and if so, what caused those emotions?

I know there was a period there where I didn't want to go out or do anything. I don't really know what caused it, but I know right after that I got really sick, which didn't help anything, so I don't know about that. It might've just been like leading up to me getting sick, I don't know.

Just stress building up on itself probably.

Yeah.

And that was probably the worst time while you were over there? That was it?

Yes.

Ok, and then after studying abroad do you feel that your Japanese language ability has improved?

I am definitely better at comprehension. My speaking is still utter crap, but my comprehension went up for sure.

So you're saying listening and reading went up for sure?

Yes.

And then writing and speaking not so much?

Yes.

I am better at taking it in than putting it out.

How did you improve those skills?
I think I benefited a lot from the speaking partner program. When you went over there you got asked if you would like a speaking partner and so I had one over there, she was awesome.

Ok.

And then when we were in the classes if it was one of the Japanese classes the professors never spoke any English at all, so you just sort of had to get used to it. Plus interacting everyday with people at restaurants and places like that.

I noticed now that I went into the seminar class. They were speaking English....this is 400 level and they are still speaking English: what is going on here?

Um, I am not sure. I took the class with Tanno-sensei, last year, yes, last winter that it was offered and he never spoke English, unless it was clear that we were not getting it, he never did.

That's good.

But I feel that with Oketani-sensei, she is much more lax and she is kind of coming down to our level.

Final question, having come back to EMU in what ways are you trying to maintain your Japanese?

Nothing, to be perfectly honest. No, I was off and didn't take any classes last semester because I was waiting to take the seminar class again; I had gotten a C- when I needed a C+, so right now it is just the class, studying for that and yeah.

Does that mean that you are sort of burnt out with the language?

I am very burnt out.

I don't want to ask that if it is a touchy subject, but I mean if you are...
I am burnt out. I mean, I still like it, I love it, but I have trouble finding the motivation for it. It's hard to keep up with it when you can't really see a reason to.

Alright, is there anything else that you would like to add?

No.

Alright, thank you very much.