

ICoME Abstract Submission

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Session Type:

Round Table Session (Students / Graduate students)

Title:

Using SNS and Face-to-face Communication to Build Relationships in a Collaborative Project between Japan and Hawaii

Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to identify how Japanese and American university students built relationships using Skype and face-to-face communication in a collaborative project, called the Kai Yama Project. In Hawaiian, Kai means ocean and in Japanese, Yama means mountain. This project studied environmental problems in the mountain and ocean in Japan.

In the 21st century, people often communicate on SNS and through the Internet. However, communicating face-to-face frequently is a problem when there is physical distance. For example, the distance between Hawaii and Japan is very large, so it is difficult to communicate face-to-face.

Students from Kansai University (KU) in Japan and University of Hawaii, Kapiolani Community College (KCC), used Skype to get to know each other. However, the data showed that only superficial relations were formed through Skype communication. However deeper relationships were formed by facial expressions, gestures, and physical presence in face-to-face communication, while KCC students were in Japan.

Data was gathered from reflections and field notes taken by Japanese students. Students found that both types of communication, Skype and face-to-face, are important. However, this research showed that face-to-face communication was essential to build deep relationships.

The data seemed to present Internet communication such as Skype and SNS as inferior alternative to in-person communication. However, sometimes to form relationships and to

converse with people who are far away from each other, these relatively new communication methods provide a necessary alternative to people who are unable to physically speak with each other. In conclusion, students found that they needed face-to-face communication for deeper relationships and that Internet communication is better as a supplement to face-to-face communication.

Keywords:

Kai Yama, Face-to-face, Communication, SNS, collaboration