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2# EDITION FEATURE

*A look into the student
lives of IB students and
graduates in the
Faculty of Education*



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1. Why did your Faculty decide to take IB students?

Society is becoming increasingly globalized and multicultural. It is no longer unusual to see students from different social and cultural backgrounds, or with different values and ways of thinking, learning together in a classroom. Teachers themselves need to be able to react sensitively to such changes in education. Therefore, the Faculty of Education has decided to accept IB students in the hope that they will have experienced a diverse social and cultural environment and have acquired the qualities to cope with a global society.

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Q & A with Prof. Kuwabara

2. How have the IB students in your Faculty fared so far? (How have they impacted and changed your Faculty)?

Unfortunately, there are still not many IB students who have enrolled in the Faculty of Education. The three students who will appear later in this article, are the IB students who have enrolled in the Faculty of Education so far. Although the number of IB students are few, they have had a great impact especially on the teachers of the Faculty of Education.

Every year, the Faculty of Education holds a training session for teachers about IB. In those training sessions, we had invited lecturers from outside the university to speak. However, since IB students enrolled in our school, we held a training session where we asked IB students to explain what they had learned and to recreate the actual classes they had taken in the IB diploma program. I believe that the teachers in the Faculty of Education gained a deeper understanding of IB by actually becoming students and experiencing the process of learning that IB students experience, rather than just hearing about it.

The IB students have also had a positive influence on other students in the Faculty of Education. Young people in Japan tend to be rather reluctant to express opinions that differ from those of others, or avoid taking leadership roles in groups. However, IB students are great models for other students, by firmly expressing their opinions in discussions and taking leadership roles in groups. Their attitudes and actions are a good inspiration for other students in the Faculty of Education.

3. What do you find attractive about the IB curriculum?

I am a researcher in pedagogy. From that standpoint, I find the IB curriculum very attractive. Just by looking at the IB curriculum, one can understand what the IB is aiming for, how the IB views the future of society, and what qualities the IB wants children to acquire. I also think it is wonderful that the specific learning method in IB, is structured as a process of knowledge creation by the students themselves, rather than the transfer of knowledge from the teacher to the students.

Students research, discuss and search for answers to their own questions. In the process, they create new knowledge and reshape their own ways of thinking. Students who have acquired new ways of thinking will be able to see society in a new framework and discover and pursue new issues. I believe that Japanese school education should learn from this cycle of independent learning, which allows students to continue learning without getting bored.

4. Could you give several examples of how IB students have made an impact in your class. (Are they motivated by their learning)?

Ms. Ayuko Sugai, who will appear later, graduated from the Faculty of Education, went on to the Master's Program of the Graduate School of Education, and is currently doing research on global citizenship education in my seminar. Due to the spread of the new corona infection, she has not yet been able to realize her original dream of studying abroad, but she is preparing to do so as soon as the infection is under control.

The master's program at the Graduate School of Education offers students the opportunity to experience practical learning under a curriculum with PBL (Project Based Learning) as its core. Ms. Sugai is also continuing her learning, not only in the classroom, but also by connecting with the local community and the global society through various means, even in the midst of a challenging environment where her actions are restricted, due to the pandemic. There are many international students in my seminar, not only from Asia but also from Europe and Africa. Ms. Sugai is doing a great job communicating with these students and making our seminar activities more exciting.

The other two IB students have also played a very active role in my classes. They took the initiative to lead the discussions in the class when we were divided into groups. The IB students have inspired me not only in the classroom, but also in various aspects of education and research activities in the Faculty of Education.

5. Do you think that more IB students should study at Okayama University?

I think that Okayama University should become more diverse. I hope that it will become a place where students from various backgrounds can learn together, transcending differences in values and ways of thinking. In other words, I feel that Okayama University itself will become a global society. To this end, I hope that students from all over the world who have studied at the IB will gather at Okayama University.



IB STUDENT
LIFE

With Keita Nomura

1. Self-introduction: Hi to all!

Hello, everyone!

I am currently working as an IB teacher after obtaining a teaching license in Japan from Okayama University's Faculty of Education. Working as an IB teacher in a Japanese school, I am confronted with a variety of issues related to the promotion of IB education. I would like to contribute to the promotion of IB in Japan in the future by utilizing my experience as an IB teacher in Japanese schools.

2. Cross-cultural understanding and English activity volunteer

During my studies in English education at the Faculty of Education of Okayama University, I was most interested in the field of cross-cultural understanding. Cross-cultural understanding is a concept that has received a lot of attention in IB education, but at that time, students including myself, did not understand how to teach it in school. In order to explain why cross-cultural understanding is important, I had to have a deep understanding of it myself, so I spent a lot of time researching cultures, traditions, and unique customs around the world.

The lessons on cross-cultural understanding that we developed were presented to junior high and high school students, who participated in English activities that we had designed as part of a volunteer social education project. I was very happy to see that, by learning about foreign cultures, these students paid more attention to Japanese culture and came to like English.

**3. What is education for?**

Education is provided not only in Japan but also in other countries around the world. I hope the Faculty of Education provides an opportunity for Okayama University students to think about what education is for, to share their ideas with other students, and to rethink education in Japan. Japanese schools have traditions and cultures that have been passed down from generation to generation, and educational methods that have been optimized by that history. Although the number of schools introducing IB education is increasing in Japan, there are often problems between teachers who provide education unique to Japan and those who provide IB education. In addition, some schools offer a variety of educational programs, and there are reports of conflicts occurring between each educational course. The key to resolving these conflicts lies in the understanding of the teachers working in the schools, about the differences in educational objectives and the changes they bring about.

Different educational objectives create differences in the goals of education and the roles required of teachers. I hope that Okayama University students will pay attention to this point and learn from it.



IB STUDENT LIFE

With Ayuko Sugai

1. Self-introduction

Hello! My name is Ayuko Sugai, and I'm a first-year master's student at the Graduate School of Education. I have been teaching English at a nearby high school from this April. I graduated from Gyoshu High School in Shizuoka Prefecture, and came to Okayama University to study education.

2. Memories of activities in the Faculty of Education and research at the Graduate School of Education

Here is a little about my student life. Many of the classes in the Faculty of Education were required courses, and most of them were conducted in Japanese. However, since I was taking "Global Human Resource Development Program (グローバル人材育成特別コース)" as my minor, I had many opportunities to take classes in English with international students from EPOK and students from other programs. I was also able to stay in Ireland for about a month for language study. Unfortunately, I had to give up studying abroad in senior year. due to COVID-19, but I plan to try again in graduate school.

When I was an undergraduate student, I volunteered to teach English to local junior and senior high school students together with an IB student from the same faculty. The program, named "Tamano Student Guides", aims to develop human resources who can guide foreign tourists at the Setouchi International Art Festival. Last year, we got the SDGs Encouragement Award at Okayama University.



3. Future expectations from the Faculty of Education to promote the IB

I think that IB is not well recognized among the teaching staff of our faculty. If there is a need to study education, I hope there will be more opportunities for students to study education broadly, not just Japanese public education. Also, I feel that classes in the Faculty of Education are often one-way, and there are few opportunities to utilize the discussion skills I acquired from the IB. So, I would like to see more classes with interactive exchanges.





IB STUDENT LIFE

With Maho Yamabe

Hello everyone! My name is Maho Yamabe and I am from the Faculty of Education. I am currently in the third year. I am in the Karate club at university and I love to read novels. If you know any interesting novels, please let me know! Nice to meet you all!

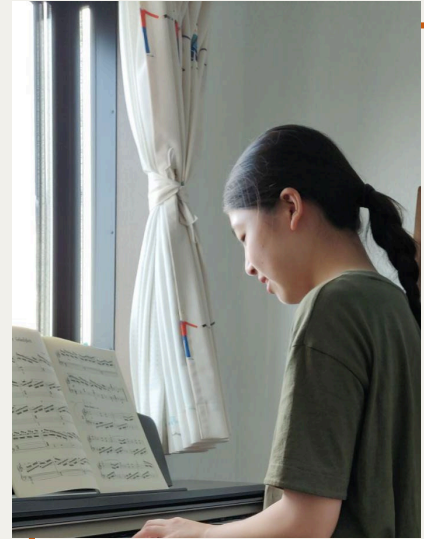
My interests at Okayama University

I have been studying Korean by myself since I was 14-15 years old. It would take a long time if I start talking about why I started to do so, but anyways, I am still studying Korean after I entered the university. I am planning on studying abroad for half a year in Korea next year. In order to do so, I will be taking the upcoming Korean exam next month. I feel lucky for being in Okayama University since they offer us so many chances to study in and outside the school.

As I mentioned before, I am currently in third year and I have decided which “ゼミ” to be in. I chose to study about Japanese education (国語教育) and I am studying about picture books now. Although it is tough to prepare for the graduation thesis, I hope the skills that I learned in IB, would help me in writing it.

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When I entered the university, it was difficult for me to adjust myself into a huge community. Now that I spent more than two years, I got used to the system and I enjoy my campus life. I hope we can go back to campus soon.

What I hope for the Faculty of Education

I hope our faculty can promote IB education by informing teachers and students in our faculty about IB. Especially, our faculty is a place to learn about education, which I think is important to learn and know about different kinds of education as a part of the Faculty of Education.

Although there are few IB students in our faculty, however, I hope we can bond as a community and help each other to promote IB. I hope we can act as a team and if we can, I would like to interact with IB students from other faculties. I believe that our teamwork would be the key in promoting IB at Okayama University.

Dear readers,

Thank you for reading my page. If you have any questions about anything, please contact me! I would love to talk with you! I hope you all will be safe and have a nice day!

