

Learning about SDGs in English classes

小田原高校英語科における SDGs への取り組み

In 2020, the second-grade students learned about SDGs. Some of them got engaged in writing activities, some made speeches and some tried presentations. The following are some of them.

令和2年度は、2年次の英語の授業でSDGsに関わる学習をしました。そこで学んだことをもとに、生徒はWriting, Presentation, Speechに取り組みました。

1 Writings about “LGBTQ” (LGBTQ について)

[Student 1]

I didn't know much about LGBTQ until I learned about it in an English class. I started to think about them for the first time in my life. I heard that LGBTQ is one of the expressions of sexual minorities. Sexual minorities are the persons whose sexuality is different from that of the majority for some reason. I knew there were such people, but I didn't know their community faced serious problems. LGBTQ is made up of five acronyms for sexuality. L means lesbians, G means gay, B means bisexual, T means transgender and Q means questioning. When I knew about it, I wondered what “questioning” meant. According to some sources, “questioning” is sexuality that a person doesn't know his/her gender identity and sexual orientation. In other words, there are some persons who can't decide whether they are a boy or a girl. I think questioning means that they are asking themselves about their identity. I became interested in the topic while studying about LGBTQ people. So I decided to make the most of this winter vacation and watched a movie about LGBTQ. I watched a movie named “Any Day Now.” The setting of this movie is in New York. It's a story about a gay couple raising a child who has a disability. The two men fight hard to protect their child. However, the world is very cruel to them. They are regarded as weird people and don't get the justice because they are different from the majority. The first thing I thought about when I saw this movie was “They are no different from us” and “They are not special.” They fall in love with someone normally and seek happiness. I think we must not discriminate against them because their sexuality is different from that of the majority. I was very sad to see them being discriminated against and sworn at in the movie. I think we must eliminate the consciousness that “there should be no such persons” in order to fully overcome such prejudice. All people should understand everybody is different from each other. I'd like to make the most of what I've learned,

[Student 2]

- Among the G8 nations, the same-sex marriage and partnership are inadmissible in Japan and Russia.
- Same-sex partners could not get any explanation about the treatment of their partners at hospitals because they are not recognized as family members.
- They are called by their registered name at hospital even if they don't want to.
- They cannot feel free to come out their sexual orientation.
- Solutions

- Changing the laws by social movement and signature activities.
- We should accept people different from us. Japan is not as liberal as other countries, especially with LGBTQ communities. That's why LGBTQ people feel uncomfortable.
- To enable them to live with their preferred name.
- We have to prepare the environment where LGBTQ people can come out without hesitation. In order to realize such a society, we need to give a lecture about LGBTQ at school.

2. Speech about Plastic wastes (プラスチックごみについて)

[Student 3]

“Impossible Is Nothing.”

How do you throw away the plastic bags you used? How do you throw away plastic bottles? Of course, most people throw them away in the trash can appropriately. But, unfortunately, there are a lot of people who throw them away in the river or in the sea. In fact, these plastics pollute the sea eventually. Nowadays, it has become a serious problem. Today, I'll tell you about this problem and I want you to keep it in your mind.

The other day, I took part in an information meeting about SDGs. Have you ever heard of “SDGs”? It stands for “Sustainable Development Goals.” It has 17 big goals to make a better future. I listened to the presentation by the foreign students of Yokohama National University and I learned about the environmental problems.

According to them, it is sad that eight million tons of plastic wastes flow into the sea per year. It's a huge amount. These plastics have a bad effect on the creatures in the sea. For example, sea turtles mistake the plastic bags for jellyfish. Then they eat the plastic bags and die.

Furthermore, we have more serious problems. It's about micro plastics. The micro plastics are very small. So may small creatures in the sea eat them by mistake. The small creatures are eaten by bigger fish. The bigger fish are eaten by human beings. In other words, through such a food chain, the micro plastics accumulate in our body. Can you believe it? Micro plastics have a bad effect not only on the creatures in the sea but also on human beings.

Amazingly, the quantity of plastic wastes in Japan is the second largest in the world. One person produce about 32 kilograms of plastic wastes per year. When I heard this, I was very shocked.

What shall we do? What can we do to improve the situation? I think we can do only one thing. This is refrain from throwing plastics away in the river or in the sea.

As I have explained so far, this plastic waste problem is concerned with one of the SDGs. That is to say, each person has to act and solve this problem on a global scale. Don't wait for someone else to solve it. This is up to all of us. I'll say it again, “Never throw away plastics in the sea.” I believe we can save the earth. Lastly, I would like to share this phrase with you, “Impossible is nothing.”

3. Presentations about Poverty (貧困について)

< From the presentation slides the students made >

What is poverty like? (貧困とはどのようなものだろうか?)

[Student 4]

If I could not live in a house because of poverty, I would probably not live in a hygienic place.
If you could not go to hospital because of poverty, how would you feel?
I would always feel the fear of death.

What causes poverty? (何が貧困を引き起こしているのだろうか?)

[Student 5]

I searched about the poor areas in South Africa. I was shocked at the current situation of children there. I think the main causes of poverty there are lack of government support and safety nets and lack of education. I learned about the reproduction of poverty. In order to reduce or solve poverty we have to break this cycle of poverty.

[Student 6]

Most of the poor remain poor. I mean, if your grandfather is poor, your mother will most likely be poor and perhaps you will be poor, too. I think this situation is likely to be generated because of industrial and social structures. So I can say the first cause of poverty is a failure in changing industrial and social structures. The second cause of poverty is lack of education.

[Student 7]

In Japan, about 1 in 7 people suffer from poverty. This is one of the worst situations in developed countries. In addition, the poverty rate of single parent families is about 50%, which is quite high. So I think Japan should support them. Lack of education for poor children creates a vicious circle, so it is necessary to create an environment where children can receive sufficient education.

What can Odawara High School students do? (小田高生は何ができるだろうか?)

[Student 8]

Odawara High School students should learn more about poverty and share information about it. High school students don't have much money to donate, but having much information about poverty will lead us to a future in which we can reduce or solve poverty.

[Student 9]

Odawara High School should collect the belongings that students no longer need and send them to poor countries. I think we can help people in poor areas by donating things.

[Student 10]

We will be able to spend plenty of time learning and thinking about poverty more often if the student council do a fund raising activity every year. I am also interested in micro-financing like Grameen Bank.