

The

Take Voice

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For the last few months we have had a wonderful ALT at our school, Ms. Micklewright. The English Club's ICC section sat down with her and asked her some difficult questions. We asked her about Takezono, music, and studying at Oxford University.

Q: What do you think about the atmosphere of Takezono English classes?

A: I think in some classes students are very scared to speak English. I ask a question and they look away and they're scared to speak English. That is the only bad thing. Otherwise, everyone seems happy to be there; students work really hard. I'm enjoying teaching so far. Everyone is a great student. Except some students still won't answer. They hide. And I understand but everyone should speak.

Q: How was your high school life in England?

A: I went to a school that's quite similar to Takezono in that it was an academic school. We started at age 11 and went all the way through to age 18. We did tests when we were about 10 years old and the students were picked for the school; they picked the top 100 students after the test. There were about 100 in a year; an all-girls school, so different from here in that. For club activity at school, I did orchestra: I did band. Because I played the saxophone. Band and orchestra: saxophone and violin. In my year, about 500 students took the test and the top 100 joined the school. Something like that. I am sure it's the same for you. So, one in five.

Q: What is your favorite thing about biology? (because Ms. Micklewright studied biology at university)

A: I like to understand how things work and why the living world is like it is. I really enjoyed studying evolution because that explains why everything is the way it is. I studied that in relation to plants and in relation to bacteria. I really enjoyed that side of it; the evolution side of things. That was probably my favorite.

Q: How was your life in Oxford?

A: I had to study a lot. I had a lot of work to do, but I also had a lot of fun. Do you know the phrase, "Work hard, play hard"? You have to do a lot of work but also have to have a lot of fun. In my first year of university, I had 10 hours of lectures. Plus we have things called tutorials where you write an essay for a professor; you sit down with the professor and you talk about your essay. They look at your essay and say, "Why did you write this here?" And sometimes you say, "I don't know." I thought that was the right thing to write. We had to do one of those a week, so a new essay every week.

We had dinners in our hall. It was quite pretty. We had dinners for special events. We had a Scottish dinner for Burns' Night. We had an Irish dinner for St Patrick's Day. We got to have a big dinner in the hall with lots of courses of food and things like that. I also played with the jazz band and the orchestra; so, "Work hard, play hard."

Q: How many people were in your orchestra?

A: In my college orchestra, we were quite small so maybe 25. That's quite small for an orchestra. The orchestra when I was at school was maybe 60.

Q: What are some words that surprised you?

A: That's a really difficult question. I don't know. Probably, "Do your best" and "Enjoy what's in front of you at the moment." Something like that. That's what I think.

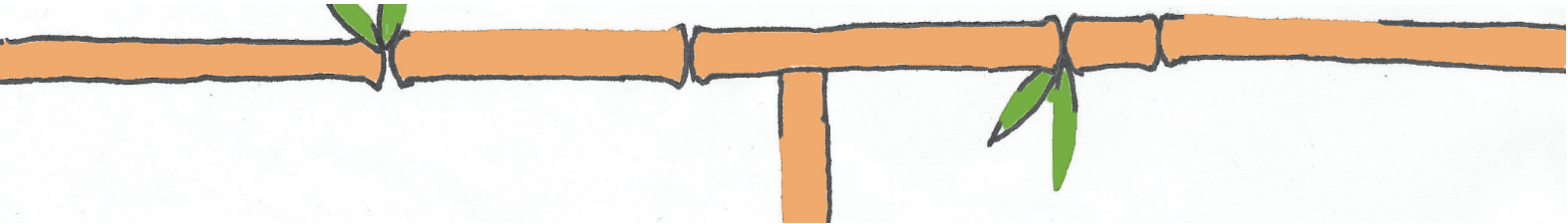


Q: Who is a person you respect?

A: You ask really difficult questions. There are a lot of people. There is a scientist. In the 1950s, she discovered something that no one believed until the end of the 1990s. Her name was Barbara McClintock. She discovered something about genetics that no one believed for a long time. I admire because even though no one believed her, she had evidence to support what she thought. Most of the people I admire are probably scientists, but let's see My parents as well. People closer to home you always respect. I think it's important when you meet a person to find something you admire about them because most people have something that you admire about them even if there are also things you don't admire. There's a little bit in everyone. You ask me difficult questions. You're making me think.

Q: What is the benefit of going to a University like Oxford?

A: I can only tell you about my university. The benefit of Oxford University is something called tutorials. In a tutorial you'll write an essay. We wrote one every week on a subject we might know nothing about. So the first week when we got there, we got the first essay you think, "I have no idea what this is." And we had to write an essay on it in a week. And then you go and to talk about it with a professor who is really interested in researching and knows a lot, and you sit and talk for maybe an hour about your essay. And they say, "You wrote this; why did you say that exactly?" "What



does this mean?" "Can you explain this a bit more?" And usually, it's maybe, three people and one professor, but sometimes one person talks to one professor about their work. So you really have to understand otherwise you go there, they ask you a question and you can't answer. So you always understand the topic you are talking about. Also, in science we had a lot of good labs to use. We had a lot of experiment time, and library is huge... it's a really really big library. They have a copy of every single book that's in copyright in the UK. Every book that's ever been published in the U.K. they have a copy of it. I think almost every book that's been published in English they have a copy of it somewhere in the library. So if you want to read a really rare book, you can do that. So the library is huge, and it has a lot of facilities. And you get to really learn a subject; really study it. Which is why you have to love it, because you spend a lot of time studying. You spend a lot of time talking about it, presenting about things; talking to friends who are studying the same subject.

Q: Please tell us how to study to go to a high-level university like Oxford.

A: The important thing is that you study something because you want to study it. Not because someone says, "You must study this." You study something because you want to study it. And when you're studying, you'll remember things more because you are interested. And you'll read more things because you are interested. If you study something you don't like, it could crush you. Just studying and studying... Why am I studying this? Because something you really really care about, you'll just study it

without noticing. Make sure you study something you're good at. And do a little bit when you have to. Doing all of it the day before the exam is not good studying.

Q: Do you think Takezono High School students can go to Oxford University like you did?

A: Yes, of course. Of course! Why not? I think you can. You are all very smart students. You all work very hard. You are all very dedicated. All you have to be able to do is talk about a subject you love. We do an interview to get in. During the interview you have to talk to people about a subject you really love, because you are studying one subject at university, so you have to prove you are really interested and you really want to study this. You could do that. You are all very smart students, I am sure you can do it. Why not?

*From everyone in the English Club
(and Ms. Micklewright)
Have a very Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year!!!!*

