

Practice of Science Partnership Program (SPP)

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Science Partnership Program (SPP) has been implemented since 2002 as the central measure of We Love Technology and Science Plan, by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), aimed at enriching the education of technology/science and mathematics. This program has been put into practice by junior high schools and high schools in cooperation with universities, public research institutions and private enterprises to provide advanced education of technology/science and mathematics through such projects as Invited Researcher's Lecture, Education Partnership Lecture and Teachers' In-service Training.

Our school held Invited Researcher's Lecture in 2003 and 2004, collaborating with Tokyo Metropolitan University's Graduate School of Science, and the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST)'s Institute of Geoscience. Reviewing this project, we investigated the possibility of utilizing both human and material resources of the universities/institutions specialized in earth and planetary science, for the geoscience education of high school students, and also examined the results and effects of the project.

In our school, we set up themes, Explore the Formation Process of Our Native District; the Geography and Geology of Sagaminoin 2003, and Explore the Formation Process of Our Native District; Sagamino and Hakone Volcano in 2004, respectively. In both years, we studied crustal movement, volcanoes, earthquakes, and actual cases of global environmental changes and disasters, mainly on field excursions, but also through laboratory tests, workshops and lectures, and the students gave presentation on the summary. The constructive study based on the latest information under the guidance of university lecturers, institute researchers, and other staff including graduate students have helped increase our students' interest, attention, and understanding toward earth and planetary science considerably.

We could confirm that, in the domain of earth and planetary science, the observation of nature and the experience in the field made students realize not only the size of actual landscape, but also the scale of time and space, as well as giving them more global point of view, all of which would have never been possible in a classroom.

SPP was thus a valuable experience, unavailable in regular classes, for our school, precisely because it gave us the opportunity to get to know science researchers. From their reaction, we could also gather that our students were satisfied at a higher level of exploration and deepened their understanding. On the other side, the universities and research institutions could also have an opportunity, in the midst of this huge trend of the administrative reform and the university reform, to show the latest findings by the leading researchers to the school's educational scene, thus making social contribution in the same way as open lecture and open laboratory. SPP was indeed very fruitful for both high schools and universities/ institutions.

SPP is also relevant in understanding and promoting earth and planetary science, but its continuous implementation is essential to make it really significant. For the further development of Japanese technology, not to mention that of earth and planetary science, both schools and universities/institutions need to make a serious commitment. In order to facilitate the participation of both sides in this program, it is also desirable to take a measure, such as this joint meeting, which provides a meeting place for potential partners.