

[論 文]

Project-Based Learning to Promote a Geopark by University EFL Learners Practical, Proactive, and Collaborative Learning through Industry-Academia-Government-Private Cooperation at the Hakusan Tedorigawa UNESCO Global Geopark

大学生EFL学習者によるジオパークの普及を目指すプロジェクト学習
－白山手取川ユネスコ世界ジオパークでの産学官民連携の実践的・主体的・協働的な学び－

Yukari KIMURA^{*1}, Kazuhisa TOMIOKA^{*2}

Abstract

This paper investigated how a student club at a private university in Japan undertook a promotional project for the Hakusan Tedorigawa UNESCO Global Geopark in 2023 and 2024. The Geopark was designated as a UNESCO Global Geopark on May 24, 2023. In areas rich in nature, however, public transportation is limited, and measures to accommodate foreign tourists are essential. This project allowed university EFL learners to use English in an authentic situation and put into practice what they learned in their field of study. Through collaboration among industry, academia, government, and the private sectors, students could learn practically, proactively, and collaboratively. The numerous activities included practising English conversation outside the classroom, using English to disseminate information on social networking sites, researching nature experience programs, participating in geo-guide training, and branding traditional crafts. The project aimed to learn English while using it in the Geopark community. By taking an interest in learning about the local area and being able to act proactively, collaboration with the local area developed, and practical activities to solve issues were promoted.

キーワード：EFL learners／Hakusan Tedorigawa UNESCO Global Geopark／PBL:problem-based learning／project-based learning／industry-academia-government-private cooperation

1 Introduction

On August 28, 2012, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) released a Central Council Report entitled “Towards a Qualitative Transformation of University Education for Building a New Future-Universities Fostering Lifelong Learning and the Ability to Think Independently and Proactively (Report).” According to the report, to advance the qualitative transformation of

university education, a shift from traditional classes that focus on the transmission and infusion of knowledge to active learning, where students and faculty communicate with each other, work hard together, and create a place for mutual stimulation and intellectual growth, where students can proactively discover problems and find solutions, is necessary (MEXT, 2012).

Matsushita (2018) states that students also need deep learning, which focuses on content and quality of learning, especially in Japan, where active learning mainly involves learning methods. According to Cambridge Dictionary, deep learning in education is “a complete way of learning something that means you

^{*1} KIMURA, Yukari

北陸学院大学 社会学部 社会学科
ビジネス・イングリッシュ、インテンシブ・リーディング

^{*2} TOMIOKA, Kazuhisa

北陸学院大学 社会学部 社会学科
キャリアデザインⅡ

fully understand it and will not forget it.” Problem-Based Learning (PBL) or Project-Based Learning, one active learning and deep learning method, is not passive learning such as memorization and transmission of knowledge. PBL is effective in helping students acquire the ability to discover and solve problems proactively and collaboratively.

On the other hand, according to the “Good Practices for Developing and Evaluating Comprehensive English Proficiency after University Entrance (tentative translation),” released in May 2024 by the University Education and Entrance Examinations Division of the Higher Education Bureau of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), the following is the outline of good practices: “expansion of opportunities to use English,” “raising the overall English proficiency level of university students,” “developing advanced human resources who can play active roles internationally,” and “integrating specialized education with English education.”

A good example of this is PBL using English, which fosters learner initiative and practical skills that can be applied in the workplace. Problem-solving skills and teamwork are believed to improve when learners are interested in issues and work on them in cooperation with other learners.

A framework for addressing regional issues is a Geopark, where local residents learn about the region's geological heritage and take the initiative in taking pride in their own region. Oike (2016) describes the educational power of Geoparks as “learning and studying” rather than “teaching and nurturing” and that local citizens learning for themselves will lead to genuine development of geoparks.

As a case study of PBL, this paper reports on the project undertaken by the Hakusan Geo Club of Hokuriku Gakuin University to promote the Hakusan Todorigawa UNESCO Global Geopark (hereafter referred to as the “Geopark”) in fiscal years 2023 and 2024. This project was adopted by the University Consortium Ishikawa [1] under its FY2023 “Regional Issue Research Seminar Support Project: Regional

Issue Identification Category.” As a collaborative project with the Hakusan Todorigawa Geopark Promotion Council, Ishikawa Nature School, Hakusan City Tourism League, and ANA Holiday Inn Kanazawa Sky, the Club worked on a research to encourage foreign tourists to Kanazawa to visit the Hakusan Todorigawa Geopark.

In FY2024, the Hakusan Geo Club's project was selected for the Consortium's “Regional Issue Research Seminar Support Project: Co-Creation Category.” In cooperation with the Hakusan Todorigawa Geopark Promotion Council, the club conducted a survey on the attractiveness and recognition of the area surrounding the Geopark, investigated multiple access routes from the surrounding area, and planned a monitoring tour. The main activities are to conduct a survey on the awareness of the Geopark among foreign tourists and to disseminate information on the highlights of the Geopark via social networking services (SNS). Both of these activities provide opportunities to use English in practice.

As a result of the spread of regional activities through industry, academia, government, and private cooperation, this activity has developed into a variety of practical, proactive, and collaborative learning. This report will introduce it as an educational activity that has worked towards solving regional issues while utilizing the framework of Geoparks, which aim to achieve coexistence among nature and humans and sustainable development.

2 Educational activities in Geoparks

2-1 What is a UNESCO Global Geopark?

The term 'geopark' combines the words 'geo', meaning earth or land, and 'park'. According to the Japan Geopark Network, a geopark is “an area managed based on a comprehensive approach that includes the protection, education and sustainable development of sites and landscapes of geological significance”. It is also a place where you can learn about the geological heritage of the area, where local residents can take pride in their area and take the

initiative in activities, and where new sources of income and employment such as geotourism can be created.

The Japan Geopark Committee screens geoparks in Japan and makes recommendations to UNESCO in accordance with the UNESCO Global Geopark criteria. As of October 2024, 47 “Japan Geoparks” designated by the Japan Geopark Committee (JGC) in Japan exist, and 10 of these have been recommended by JGC and designated as “UNESCO Global Geoparks” by the Global Geoparks Network (GGN).

2-2 Examples of Geopark Educational Activities

One example of educational activities at universities that use Geoparks is the Tottori University of Environmental Studies, which has a partnership agreement with the San'in Kaigan Geopark Promotion Council. According to Niimi (2019), the practice of university education in Geoparks, if there is an educational strategy, promotes mutual learning among students, teachers, and local residents, and a mutually complementary relationship between the university and the local community is established. From FY2013 to 2015, the university collaborated with a local diving company to conduct research on the underwater topography and marine life of the San'in Coast, and also participated in local collaborative projects such as volunteer activities and symposiums, and the learning benefits of both sides were recognized (Niimi, 2016).

In the North Ibaraki Geopark Plan, Ibaraki University carried out the following activities: (1) design of geoparks and geotours, (2) creation of guidebooks, signs, etc. based on that design, (3) implementation of geotours, (4) creation of a framework for an information network related to geopark projects, and (5) training of interpreters (Amano et al., 2011). It is thought that students can improve their practical communication skills by carrying out such geopark activities in university education.

According to Oike (2016), in the Oita Himeshima Geopark and the Oita Bungo Ohno Geopark, children from Himeshima Island, which is surrounded by the

sea, and Bungo-Ono, which is surrounded by mountains, visited each other and experienced the nature of each place. Through this, they learned to “recognize the valuable global heritage of the region where they live.”

3 Hakusan Geo Club Project Report

3-1 Establishment of Hakusan Geo Club and Outline of Activities

Hakusan Geo was initially a volunteer group that was selected for the University Consortium Ishikawa “Overseas Visitor Attraction Challenge Project” for FY2019. Under the theme of “A Project to Increase the Number of Foreign Tourists Experiencing the Hakusan Todorigawa Geopark,” the group worked to effectively spread information about Ishikawa Prefecture to foreign tourists. The main activities involved surveying the places of interest in Hakusan City that are popular with foreigners, disseminating information via social networking services, and creating English-language video content (Kimura et al., 2021).

In May 2023, the Hakusan Geo Club (hereafter, “the Club”) was established. As of November 30, 2024, the Club had 21 members in their first to fourth year of study at the Faculty of Education (including the Department of Childhood Education), the Faculty of Nutrition, and the Faculty of Sociology. The members have a variety of majors, but they are all students with an interest in “English,” “tourism,” “regional revitalization,” “nature,” “children” and “different cultures.” Around 90% of the members live outside Hakusan City, and they aim to rediscover the appeal of the Geopark from an outsider's perspective.

In FY2023, the project was selected for the “Regional Issue Research Seminar Support Project: Regional Issue Identification Category” and conducted a survey to encourage foreign tourists visiting Kanazawa to also visit the Hakusan Todorigawa Geopark. Hakusan City, included in the Geopark, was formed in 2005 through the merger of one city, two towns and five villages, but the characteristics and traditions of each region still remain strong. The Club

worked to discover ways to access and enjoy the different charms of the area from the perspective of young people, and to create model plans that would make foreign tourists visiting Kanazawa want to visit the area. The organizations cooperating with the Club were the Hakusan Tedorigawa Geopark Promotion Council, the Hakusan City Tourism League, the Ishikawa Nature School, and the ANA Holiday Inn Kanazawa Sky.

In FY2024, the Club was selected for the “Regional Issue Research Seminar Support Project: Co-Creation Category” and worked on “developing a concrete plan to encourage foreign tourists to visit the Hakusan Tedorigawa Geopark when they visit Kanazawa”. The Hakusan Tedorigawa Geopark Promotion Council was the cooperating organization, and they helped the Club decide on their action plan and supported their initiatives. The council's international relations coordinator and other staff members accompanied the Club in their activities, and were also involved in surveys of awareness among foreign tourists and support for hands-on activities.

3-2 Current Status and Issues of the Hakusan Tedorigawa UNESCO Global Geopark

The Hakusan Tedorigawa UNESCO Global Geopark (hereafter “the Geopark”) was designated as a Japanese Geopark on September 5, 2011, and as a UNESCO Global Geopark on May 24, 2023. According to Hakusan City, which includes the entire city in the geopark, the geological and topographical value of the area, including the Kuwajima Fossil Bluff, as well as the educational and tourism initiatives that make use of these features, were highly recognized (Hakusan City, 2023). However, in areas rich in nature, ensuring access is a challenge when it comes to attracting tourists. Also, in this Geopark, public transport is inconvenient, especially in the mountain foothills area, and measures are needed to deal with the increase in foreign tourists expected as a result of being designated as a Global Geopark.

4 Practical, proactive, and collaborative learning

This initiative involves using English to improve English skills, gaining experience in international exchange, and making the most of what is learned in specialized education. Through cooperation among industry, academia, government and the private sectors, the participating students can achieve practical, proactive and collaborative learning.

Practical learning includes practicing English conversation outside the classroom, disseminating information on social networking sites in English, and other promotional activities. As proactive learning, there is research into nature experience programs, holding events to commemorate the designation as a Global Geopark, selling local products from the Geopark at the university festival, participating in “Geopark Guide Training”, volunteering at “*Kansei Nobi Nobi Geo Saturday* (Developing Sensitivity on Geo Saturdays)”, and writing articles as a local contributor on the “Gurutto Hakusan.” As collaborative learning, the Club members volunteered at events organized by local groups, branding of prefectural designated traditional craftwork cypress weaving, and planning of inbound monitor tours.

4-1 Practical Learning

4-1-1 English Conversation Outside the Classroom

In FY2023, the survey was conducted five times(6/11, 7/16, 8/5, 8/6, 11/18) at tourist spots in Kanazawa City, which are popular with foreign tourists (Kenrokuen Garden area, in front of Kanazawa M'za



August 6, 2023:Survey in Kanazawa Station

Department Store, inside Kanazawa Station). The Club received responses from 547 people, including 220 foreigners (from 24 countries) and 332 Japanese. For the surveys on July 16 and August 5-6, the Club received guidance from Ms. Susan May, International Relations Coordinator of the Hakusan Tedorigawa Geopark Promotion Council.

In FY2024, Ms. Susan May continued to supervise the survey and increased the number of questions on the questionnaire to collect more detailed data. The Club conducted the survey twice (6/9 and 11/17) in front of the Shiino-ki Cultural Complex and at Komatsu Airport. They received responses from 36 foreigners (from 12 countries). Table 1 shows the results of the survey.

Table1: Results of geopark awareness survey

Date	Number of responses	Location
2023/6/11	32 (18)	In front of Kanazawa M'za
2023/7/16	67 (59)	Around Kenrokuen Garden
2023/8/5	58 (44)	Kanazawa Station
2023/8/6	390 (95)	Kanazawa Station
2023/11/18	5 (5)	In front of Kanazawa M'za
2024/6/9	20 (20)	Shiinoki Cultural Complex
2024/11/17	16 (16)	Komatsu Airport

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate overseas residents.

As the survey was conducted by interviewing foreign tourists, it also provided a valuable opportunity for EFL learners to practice their English conversation skills. In 2024, the students practised English conversation expressions that would be useful in the survey and practised explaining the highlights of the Geopark in English by organizing the “Geo English” lesson, which was held about once a month at the English Education and Research Support Center on campus with the supervision by Ms. Bridget Hosey and Mr. Ian Lawrence. Regarding “Geo English,” students commented that “it was a good way to study English in the club,” “there were many new discoveries, not just everyday words,” and “it was

difficult to think about how to make learning fun.”



April 26, 2024: Geo English

As part of the high school-university collaboration, 13 students from the ESS club at Hokuriku Gakuin High School participated in 2023, and 7 students participated in 2024. The participating students commented that they “rediscovered their local area” and were “happy to be able to contribute.”

4-1-2 Posting on SNS in English

In FY2023-2024, the Club covered restaurants, tourist attractions, and workshops in the Geopark, and posted on the Instagram “Hakusan Geo” (106 posts as of November 30, 2024). They wrote short articles in both English and Japanese, and posted photos and videos (stories and reels), and sometimes created collaborative posts with other accounts. For example, ANA Holiday Kanazawa Sky and the Hakusan Tedorigawa Geopark Promotion Council had collaborative posts with Hakusan Geo as well as some restaurants in the area that they had visited while researching the geopark.

As an improvement for FY2024, since there was a lack of consistency in the posts made by multiple members, a small group of people in the club created thumbnails and tried to make them eye-catching. The logo mark on the thumbnail screen, was designed by a student and is based on the three peaks of Mt. Hakusan, with the green representing the mountain,

the light blue representing the river, and the white representing the snow.



Logo designed by a student

The Club initially planned to use Japanese, English and Chinese in the posts, but after receiving advice from the staff at the ANA Holiday Inn Kanazawa Sky, who said that the majority of their inbound guests could understand English, they decided to use only Japanese and English.



June 27, 2023 ANA Holiday Inn Kanazawa Sky

As of November 30, 2024, the account had 248 followers, with the largest age group being 18-24 (25.4%), and the gender ratio (male/female) being 48.6% and 51.3% respectively. By region, 81% of the followers were from Japan, with the rest from Turkey, Italy, Portugal, Nigeria, etc.

To promote the “Hakusan Geo” account among foreign tourists, the Club designed and produced an advert card and asked that it be placed in two tourist information centers, one hotel, two tourist attractions, and one department store in Kanazawa City. They also show the card and explain the purpose of their

activities when conducting interviews in the Geopark and nearby areas.



Hakusan Geo Introduction Card (front and back)

In FY2024, the Club posted content from Instagram on Trip Advisor in English as “Hakusan Geo” (5/11 “Shinsahonpo”, “Kanazawa Bikazari Asano”, 6/27 “Tsurugi Station”) to increase the visibility and exposure.

4-1-3 Other PR activities

In December 2023, the first online cultural exchange was held with Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University in Turkey. During the planning stage, Ms. Susan May of the Hakusan Tedorigawa Geopark



December 20, 2023 Online cultural exchange

Promotion Council suggested some possible topics related to the Geopark and how to proceed. On the event day, there were 6 students from Japan and over 20 students from Turkey. As an ice-breaker, the first online exchange event included Q&A, a drawing test, and dancing over the screen. The real-time verbal online exchange was a meaningful opportunity for students from both countries to communicate, and they all showed willingness to communicate.

In July 2024, three students appeared on a local radio program, “Students Jam R” by FM Ishikawa, to report on the activities of the club. It was a 40-minute program that broadcasted the students’ passionate thoughts, and the announcer gave them guidance on how to speak in a way that would be easy for listeners to understand while listening to the radio.



T-shirts designed by students to promote the Geopark

The T-shirts worn by the university students during the survey were designed by the students themselves. The front features a photo of the Tedorigawa River illuminated by moonlight (courtesy of photographer

Kyo Taniguchi) and the club's Instagram QR code on the back.

In FY2024, the activities of the Hakusan Geo Club were featured in the Ishikare 2024 guidebook for universities in Ishikawa Prefecture (a booklet is distributed free of charge to all third-year high school students in Hokuriku and nearby regions), in the feature story, “Hakusan Tedorigawa Geopark is Hot!”

4-1-4 Summary of Practical Learning and Challenges

The survey among foreign tourists was a valuable opportunity for authentic English conversation and high school-university collaboration. The Geo English lessons that began in 2024 aimed to improve the skills needed for practical application. They also allowed students who want to become teachers in the Faculty of Education to plan and implement lessons in team teaching with native English-speaking teachers. However, the results of the survey have only been tabulated, and the analysis is not sufficient. In the future, we would like to conduct data analysis, including text mining of qualitative data, to identify the factors affecting the awareness of the Geopark, and formulate specific strategies to improve awareness.

While gathering information for writing SNS posts, students became “listeners” in the local community, learned about the attractions of the Geopark, and disseminated information in English that was easy for foreign tourists to understand about how to enjoy the area. The students who participated in the research and writing said that “the way stories are constructed is different for Japanese people and foreigners.” Through trial and error in writing, photography and layout with an eye to English-speaking readers, the students honed their writing skills to communicate with a global audience.

One issue is that the “Hakusan Geo” account is not reaching enough foreign tourists. While the followers include foreigners living in Europe and Africa, about 80% are residents of Japan (including foreigners living in Japan). In the future, it would be effective to investigate and analyze the followers' attributes, set the optimal target group, and use SNS advertising.



Ishikare 2024 (University Consortium Ishikawa)

Students are actively expanding their circles of interaction both locally and globally. However, online interaction with overseas universities is difficult to sustain due to time differences and students' class schedules. For example, we hope to continue the interaction by reviewing the methods used, such as exchanging videos in which students present what they have learned by researching about the geoparks in their respective regions.

4-2 Proactive Learning

4-2-1 Survey of nature experience programs



May 14, 2023: Working at the community farm

In order to attract foreign tourists to the city of Kanazawa to visit the Geopark, the key selling point is the “abundant nature” that is found in Hakusan City. In FY2024, the Ishikawa Nature School instructors offered nature experiences such as peony bud picking, forest bathing and Japanese herbal tea, mushroom woodland exploration, walnut cracking and walnut



October 22, 2023: Forest bathing

woodland walks, the chestnut tiger butterfly migration survey, and winter forest snowshoe hikes. All of these activities make use of the terrain and features of the Geopark.

In the “Peony Bud Picking” event, the students picked peony buds grown on a community farm and heard from local people about the issues they are facing, such as depopulation due to an outflow of population and the community's attempts to deal with this.

The “forest bathing experience” is an event organized by the TABITAIKEN Net group at a tree park in the geopark. The group is active with the aim of “drawing attention to the nature at our feet in the city and the people who live locally” and “wanting to make experience and tourism take root in this area” (TABITAIKEN Net <https://www.tabitaiken.com/about>).

The “Satoyama Mushroom Hunting” and “Traditional Snowshoe Hike in the Winter Forest” events were organized by the Kaga Hakusan Yogozaata tourist volunteer guide group. This group grows mushrooms in the *satoyama* mountains of Kawachi using an owner system and offers programs for experiencing traditional snowshoe hiking and playing in the snow in the winter forest, using the snow that is a blessing of Hakusan.



November 4, 2023: Satoyama mushroom hunting

Mr. Akio Nakamura who conducts research on the chestnut tiger butterfly lead the migration survey. For the “Walnut-cracking Experience and Walk in the

Walnut Grove” Mr. Nobumichi Hasatani, an instructor at the Ishikawa Nature School based at the Senami Guest House, lead the event.



December 23, 2023: Walking in a walnut grove

Philip Cadzow from New Zealand lives in the Geopark and accompanied the Club on a survey of spots, such as the Hakusan Shirakawa-go White Road and the Tedor Canyon Road, which could appeal to foreign tourists.

4-2-2 Commemorating the global geopark designation

On June 9, 2024, an event to commemorate the first anniversary of the Global Geopark designation, “Enjoy! Hakusan Geo,” was held at the Shiinoki Cultural Complex (Kanazawa City) (co-hosted by the Hakusan Todorigawa Geopark Promotion Council). Students selected and sold local products from the Geopark.



June 9, 2024: “Enjoy!Hakusan Geo” leaflet

4-2-3 Selling Geopark’s local specialties at the university festival



October 26, 2024 Hakusan Geo Cafe at the university festival

Hakusan Kilimanjaro Coffee was served at the university festivals held in October 2023 and 2024. In addition, the students selected local businesses from among the products sold at the roadside station, and arranged for price negotiations and orders for procurement. The products that were left unsold at the event were sold on campus during the lunch break.

4-2-4 Geopark Guide Training Course

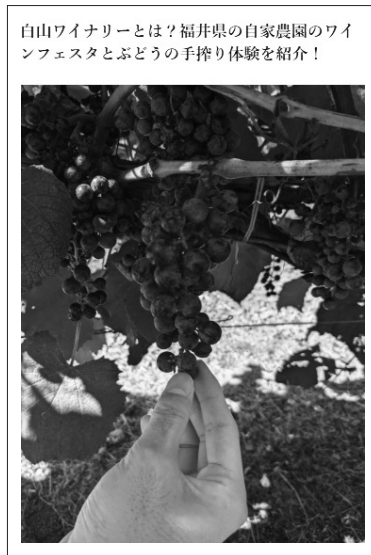
In FY2024, one student attended the Hakusan Todorigawa Geopark Certified Tourist Guide Training Course organized by the Hakusan Todorigawa Geopark Promotion Council. There were a total of 13 lectures and training sessions from June to November 2024. Those who complete the course and pass the certification exam held after the course can register as a certified tourist guide. The student who attended the course was able to share what they had learned with other members and use it to cover local attractions and develop routes.

4-2-5 Volunteer support at Geo Saturday

In FY2024, four students provided volunteer support at the Hakusan City Board of Education-sponsored “Developing Sensitivity on Geo Saturdays.” This experiential learning program, with the theme of ‘the relationship between water and people’, is for fourth, fifth, and sixth graders enrolled in elementary schools in Hakusan City. The experience of supporting

children's learning in extracurricular activities is extremely valuable for students who aim to become teachers after graduating.

4-2-6 Local writer for “Gurutto Hakusan”



“Gurutto Hakusan” Local writer's story

As writers for the “Local Writer's Blog” on the Hakusan sightseeing website “Gurutto Hakusan,” five students wrote three articles, introducing the “Hakusan Winery, a wine festival and grape-pressing experience at a private farm in Fukui Prefecture” (Ono City, Fukui Prefecture), “Asano Taiko drums and Ushikubi pongee! Eight Traditional Crafts of Hakusan” (Hakusan City, Ishikawa Prefecture), and “Five Recommended Cafes in Hakusan City [Hakusan Tedorigawa Geopark Area]” (Hakusan City, Ishikawa Prefecture). The client was the Hakusan Wide-Area Tourism Promotion Council, and the writer's office was the Planning Division of Daiwa Printing Co.

With the extension of the Hokuriku Shinkansen line to Tsuruga Station in Fukui Prefecture in March 2024, further growth of foreign tourists to Hokuriku Region is expected. Various accesses to the Geopark may attract even more attention in the future, including the Matto area, a 10-minute train ride from Kanazawa Station; the Torigoe area, a 30-minute car/taxi ride from Komatsu Station or Komatsu Airport; the Shiramine area, a 30-minute drive from Katsuyama City, Fukui Prefecture; and the Chugu area, via the

Hakusan Shirakawa-go White Road from Gifu Prefecture. Mount Hakusan Biosphere Reserve (BR), which is another UNESCO program, covers an area spanning four prefectures (Toyama, Ishikawa, Fukui, and Gifu). The Club expanded their activities while paying attention to the BR framework for the conservation and utilization of tourism resources surrounding Mt. Hakusan, not only within Ishikawa Prefecture, but also in the wider region.

4-2-7 Summary of proactive learning and challenges

By investigating seasonal nature experiences, we identified the attractions and challenges in commercializing these experiences for foreign tourists. Using these findings as a reference, we were also involved in planning a monitor tour for foreign tourists, which will be held in February 2025 under the Hakusan City Tourism League for wealthy foreign tourists. Thanks to the warm guidance of the Hakusan Tedorigawa Geopark Promotion Council and local residents, we were able to participate in the monitoring tour and enjoy nature that we had researched and found attractive.

Publicity for the commemorative event included two local newspaper articles in the Hokkoku Shimbun and two articles in the Chunichi Shimbun, the Ishikawa Style website (over 100,000 users), the Hakusan City Line (23,347 registered users as of June 2024), students and faculty at Hokuriku Gakuin University (644), and the distribution of 2000 flyers. While a certain amount of publicity and strengthening of regional cooperation seems to have been achieved, the event was transitory and did not lead to increased recognition of the Geopark by foreign tourists. If targeting foreign tourists, it would have been more effective to hold the event in Kanazawa Station, for example, where there is a lot of traffic. Another idea is to aim for a synergistic effect by participating in other events rather than holding a stand-alone event. We would like to consider this when holding promotional events in the future.

The experience of selling local products at the university festival, participating in geo-guides training,

supporting the Geo Saturday as volunteers, and writing for a local website were not closely related to English learning, but all helped to deepen understanding of the Geopark's history, food culture, geography, and other aspects.

4-3 Collaborative learning

4-3-1 Volunteering at events organized by community organizations

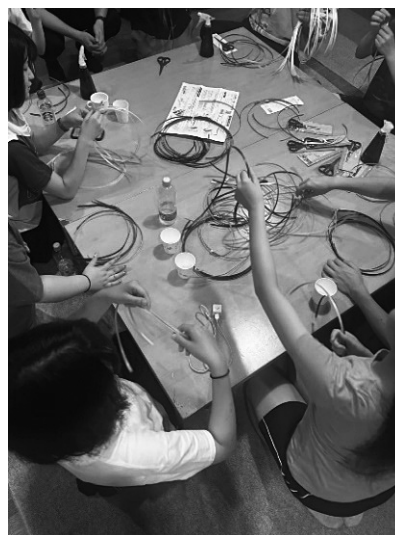
In FY2024, students volunteered at the Yoshino Village of Craft, one of the Geopark's highlights, on three occasions: the first was the “Yoshino Valley Moon Festival” on September 21 (organized by the Yoshinodani Valley Festival Executive Committee), where 11 students created and conducted a Geopark-related riddle solving game, “Mischievous Fairy and Magic Tree Memories,” the second was the “Yoshino Village of Craft Festa” on November 3 (commissioned by Hakusan City), where six students volunteered to



September 21, 2024
Volunteering at “Yoshinodani Valley Moon Festival”

serve as staff. The third event was the November 23 “Enjoy with the Senses:Yoshino Village of Craft JAZZ Night” (organized by the Hakusan Yoshinodani Tourist Association), in which eight students participated and volunteered to help light up the 700-year-old Obokesugi cedar tree.

4-3-2 Branding of cypress weaving, a traditional craft



August 7, 2024: Students learning cypress weaving

In FY2023, seven students participated in a *hinoki-zaiku* (cypress weaving) workshop under the guidance of cypress weaving artist, Ms. Hisayo Katsuki at Yokomachi Urara-kan. In FY2024, two students served as instructors and taught 10 other students how to make coasters in August.

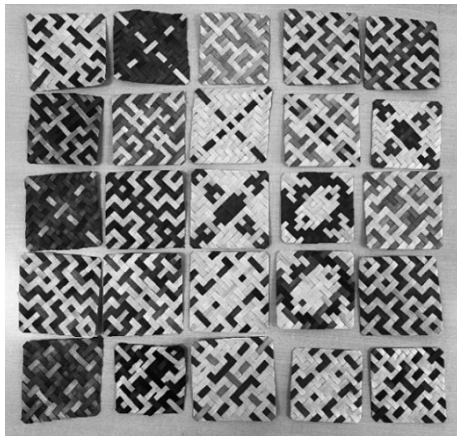
The coasters created by the students were used when the Geopark's local specialties were served at the



November 17, 2024: Ms. Susan May teaches cypress weaving

school festival in October 2024. In November, Ms. Hisayo Katsuki and Ms. Susan May taught the students cypress weaving, respectively.

From January to February, as an industry-academia collaboration, the coasters will be used when serving *sake* in the lounge at the ANA Holiday Inn Kanazawa Sky. In addition, Yoshida Sake Brewery, which makes a local *sake* called “Tedorigawa,” will give away the coasters made by the students with every purchase made at the store.



Coasters made by students

A story supported by basic research on geological heritage can be a rigid framework for demonstrating the relationship between the geopark and traditional crafts. The Club decided to create a mini picture book with an explanation of cypress weaving. The content was reviewed by Ms. Naomi Chikaoka, a coordinator at Hokuriku Gakuin University's Regional Education Development Center and a native of former Fukaze, Oguchi Village, where cypress weaving has been



A storybook on cypress weaving

handed down from generation to generation. The text was written in Japanese and English, and the English translation was supervised by Ms. Susan May. The mini picture book will also be distributed at the ANA Holiday Inn Kanazawa Sky and at the Yoshida Sake Brewery.

4-3-3 Monitoring tours for inbound visitors

The plan is to organize a “Traditional Snowshoe Hiking” tour in the Senami area in February 2024 with Ms. Susan May. If the weather permits, the participants will walk through the forest on snowshoes. In case of inclement weather, the participants will experience nutcracking and bake a nut pizza on a wood-burning stove. This is an opportunity for students to introduce what they have researched and experienced to the outside world. In recruiting participants for the monitoring tour, the club will ask for the cooperation of ANA Holiday Inn Kanazawa Sky, an inbound visitor attraction to Kanazawa City. The hotel was a cooperating organization in the FY 2023 activities, and provided them with support for awareness surveys, SNS, inbound handling, and other guidance. The results of the monitoring tour will be used as a reference for the planning of accommodation packages in FY2025 and beyond.

4-3-4 Summary of Collaborative Learning and Challenges

The organizations involved requested that the students volunteer staff at events hosted by local organizations, brand cypress weaving, and support for monitoring tours. In collaboration with local businesses, the following comments were made: “I was impressed by the positive attitude of the students,” “I would be happy to work with them on various projects,” and “If we can get the younger generation involved in activities that revitalize the local community, the awareness of the Global Geopark will increase.”

In depopulated areas, the number of young people is decreasing significantly. Student volunteers can contribute to the community by responding to local

needs. Respecting the wishes of the local people is essential in attracting foreign tourists. To make our activities pleasing to the community, we would like to listen to the community on a daily basis, spend time with the community, and think together with the community about the future that the community desires.

5 Limitations and Implications

In this project, the goal was not to learn English as a language but to acquire it practically while using English in local activities within the framework of the Geopark. In speaking in surveys and exchanges with overseas university students, and in writing for information dissemination on SNS, the students honed their output skills while being aware of the presence of recipients.

In addition, as students deepened their learning through interviews, nature experiences, and training in the region, they accumulated background knowledge of the Geopark, which helped them disseminate information. The students' interest in learning about the region and their ability to act on their own initiative helped develop regional partnerships and fostered practical activities to solve problems.

Since it is important to understand the intentions of the local community in order to tackle local issues, the students worked in good faith to volunteer to clean up event sites, for example, which at first glance may not seem related to attracting inbound visitors. The two years of activities have further promoted collaboration with the local community and have had a synergistic effect on practical and proactive learning.

For future improvement, it would be desirable to conduct a quantitative survey on how the various out-of-classroom activities affected the improvement of students' English language skills. For example, if a rubric was used to examine the students' perceived speaking and writing skills before the activities, the changes after the activities could be discussed. It should be noted, however, that this is an out-of-class activity that does not require students to earn credits, and participation varies from student to student,

making it difficult to analyze cause-and-effect relationships. In addition, since such changes may take time, a longitudinal study is desirable to investigate each case in detail.

6 Conclusion

Hakusan Tedorigawa UNESCO Global Geopark was designated a Global Geopark in May 2023 and is scheduled for revalidation in 2026. The students will continue to interact with stakeholders in the local community and hope to contribute to the realization of a sustainable society, which is the ultimate goal of the Geopark, by widely disseminating the geopark's attractions in the form desired by the local community.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to Ms. Susan May, Ms. Kaori Otowa, Ms. Soshi Murai, Ms. Kotomi Mae at Hakusan Tedorigawa Geopark Promotion Council, Ms. Yoshiko Funatsu at Hakusan City Tourism League, Ms. Naoko Inoue at the Ishikawa Nature School Office, Mr. Kazuo Kaneko and Ms. Anna Nakano at ANA Holiday Inn Kanazawa Sky, and all the local people who helped us with the activities of Hakusan Geo Club.

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- mountain” in Swahili), by simply drinking coffee.

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- [1] The University Consortium Ishikawa is a public interest incorporated association established by all higher education institutions in Ishikawa Prefecture.
- [2] Hakusan Kilimanjaro Coffee is an environmental conservation project to protect two “white” mountains, Hakusan and Kilimanjaro (meaning “white shining