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The importance of international practice for people studying English

Nowadays one of the most interesting and unusual things in our life is communication with people from different countries. It especially concerns those who study foreign languages. It is not a secret that the best way to improve language skills is speaking with foreigners. So there is a great practice all over the world that almost every country has to work to keep good relations and help each other to organize various international programs, and the USA and Russia are no exception.

In Russia, international practice is spread all over the country and there some programs in Vladimir region and in Murom too. Firstly, I would like to note American Home in Vladimir. I had no idea what American Home was. I just knew that some students from the USA lived there. This fact excited me immensely as soon as I heard about it. When we came to The American Home, I was full of emotions. I was astonished by its likeliness with American ones. This house stood out among the typical Russian buildings. When we came in, the host, a very kind woman, met us. Before our program was started we had looked the house inside. All the walls were covered with different pictures and photos. They looked really interesting and beautiful. The sitting room amazed me not less than the whole house. It was a usual American living room as I have seen in some American serials and movies. After that, the English teacher told us the history of that place and then we acquainted with the foreign students. What is more, our new friends organized an excursion about the house. I think the interior was perfect and cozy. The best moment of visiting American Home for me was the sit-round gathering in the kitchen. We were sitting at the table, drinking tea with sweets and talking to each other. All the American guys turned out to be very sociable and outgoing and, moreover, we had no problems with understanding their speech. The atmosphere was so fascinating and warm that for a few seconds I felt as we were in the USA.

International practice is also more useful than educational practice, because it gives great opportunities to communicate directly with foreigners. The participation in project «Alternative Spring Break» is invaluable experience for students. Last year two girls from the USA came to Murom by that program. They spoke a lot about their country, culture, their styles of life and, of course, themselves. The girls were in Murom for a week and we tried to spend each day with them to improve our speaking skills. We went on an excursion around the town. Moreover, we visited The House of Russian Folklore to teach the American guests our national Russian culture. We saw ancient Russian dolls and the Middle Aged weapon there. For the first time in my life, I have realized that there might be misunderstandings between two foreigners and we must be prepared for such moments. I asked one girl about American radio and she answered me about literature. I cannot even tell if it is a pity or a funny situation!

There are some more projects too like «Cross Cultural Communication, an Issue for Research», which provide not only the communication with foreigners, but also an experience of reporting before an unfamiliar audience. The conference was the first part of that program, and I participated in it as a presenter. As it was my first experience of speaking before an audience, I was very nervous, so much so that I even considered leaving! In fact, when I started to present my topic, I became calm and my fears vanished. The foreign guests were good listeners, and this gave me confidence. The most difficult part of that conference for me was answering questions. At times I didn't understand some sentences, but then again I am still relatively inexperienced in communicating with people from the USA. After the conference finished, we went on an excursion in small groups. My two group-mates and I organized a tour of our town for Christine Herrmann. She was an English teacher in The American Home in Vladimir that year. She came here to see the most famous sights of Murom and we tried to make a good impression on her. First of all, we looked around and visited some monasteries. Christine was interested in Murom history and

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Russian folklore, so we told her some legends of the town. Fortunately, I had no troubles with understanding her speech. We spoke with Christine the whole day on different topics and there was no silence even for a minute. The atmosphere between Christine and us was very friendly and warm we laughed about funny situations in our life and spent good time together. It was my first time speaking English for the whole day and now I want to repeat it. When I came home, I realized that the communication with an American girl had influenced my mind greatly. All evening my thoughts were in English, which astonished me.

Having analyzed all projects, I came to the conclusion that people should pay more attention to such international programs. It is a very good practice for improving speaking skills. Besides, people learn different ways of communication with foreigners. Every time people speak with foreigners, they will avoid absurd situations and misunderstandings. I hope that my article will encourage people to study foreign languages more carefully and not to lose opportunities of international practice.