



**KYUSHU
UNIVERSITY**

Interview with Kyushu U 3MT Competition 2021 Winners

On July 30th, Kyushu University hosted its first 3MT virtual competition. 3MT competition is a research communication contest where Ph.D. students are using one slide and present their research in English to non-expert audience.

It starts in 2008 at the University of Queensland, our partner university, and now is held at over 600 universities in almost 90 countries and regions worldwide.



l e f t _ **Yawen Song** (People's Choice, 1st year, Doctoral Course, Graduate School of Engineering)

m i d d l e _ **Mariia Ivonina** (First Prize, 3rd year, Doctoral Course, Interdisciplinary Graduate School of Engineering Sciences)

r i g h t _ **Ryota Sakamoto** (Runner's Up, 3rd year, Doctoral Course, Graduate School of Science)

Interviewer _ **Prof. Konomi Natalie** (Global Strategies Office)



1. What led you to enter the 3MT Competition?

Yawen(Y): For Challenge. It's my first time to join like this kind of competition. I was really excited about it.

Ryota(R): I challenged myself. It's stressful to show up in front of someone. My research field is interdisciplinary at the intersection between physics and biology. I found it's very interesting to practice myself to present my research to non-specialists. I have never done like this.

Mariia(M): I really wanted to develop such soft skill in myself. It's really important to be able to show what's I'm doing and why it is so important and other people can appreciate it and you can get more sample and more funding. That's my goal to show science is important, interesting and worth the attention.

2. How did you know this competition?

R: I received the email from Student section.

M: Same as Ryota-san. I didn't know what 3MT is, but it sounds very interesting.

Y: Same.

R: This competition is only for Ph.D. students. I've never heard of that kind of competition.



3. What was the first impression that you had?

Y: I hadn't had such a chance that I can contact to other researcher and people all around the world to share my research and idea. It's exciting. I was also excited to listen to other participants' presentation. That was a very exciting experience for me.

R: When I started my preparation, I think "It is fine because I have already experienced many presentation", so I was going to reuse the material I already had. But, when I heard that it's only 15 seconds that I could show my slide on the screen, I was panicked. I needed to reorganize the manuscripts and figures. It was very hard. But, it was a really nice pressure commit to come up new vision how to show contents.

M: It's only three minutes and around 400 words. I asked myself "What is the most important in my research?" This is the question to select the most important and impressive point of my research. We, Ph.D. students, have a lot of experimental data and methodologies to talk very interesting about how I did this. But, the most important point is that the non-specialist people can understand why we actually do this research. "Why am I so passionate on this research topic?", this is the question we need to ask ourselves and we answer in our presentation.



4. When did you start your preparation for presentation? How did you prepare?

M: One month before. I started from watching lot of the past 3MT presentations and tried to understand what the common is between the winners' presentation. What is the formula of the success? And then, I got it. The slide must be simple, attractive,

and there is a point. It should be only one idea on the slide. The only one idea is that people look and understand. It's like an approaches. When I started to write the script, I asked all of my friends. I got really harsh comments sometimes and I rewrite several times. The last one is the best one. After that, I tried to memorize word by word. I think it is preferred to present like talking to friends, like the camera is a friend. My difficulty here I need to explain the difficult parts of the research in the simple terms. I spent much time to find metaphor.

R: When I come to explain my research to non-specialists, I simulate that I talk to someone just walking in a street. It's like "Hi, my research is" I imagine like this situation. Actually, this way works really well for me.

Prof.Konomi (K): Like mental training. That's very good strategy as well.

M: I worried a lot. But, it was actually very nice atmosphere and judges were very friendly so that we were just enjoying this event basically. I personally felt enjoyment.

R: It was a bit weird situation because we usually present and Q&A face to face. So this situation made me nervous. But one of the judges gave me positive comment and I felt very happy. I could find that non-specialists understood my research. It is a nice experience.

Y: It's something nice for me. In the Q&A, one of the judges asked me what I have never thought. I could have a new point of view. I have to consider new issue about my research from the time of Q&A.

M: I also found that we could understand what non-specialist got from our presentation and were interested in at the Q&A. It shows us what is important for us to research.

R: We could acquire new perspectives. That's very nice.



5. What would you tell the people who are actually considering to enter next year's 3MT Competition?

M: I would say "Go for it!" This is a great opportunity to summarize your research for yourself. Even if you are in the first year of Ph.D., it's also important because you will understand perspective of your research from the beginning. You can recognize that other peoples have different mind and point of view and this is what

you should know. It's really helpful for you to defend your thesis successfully.

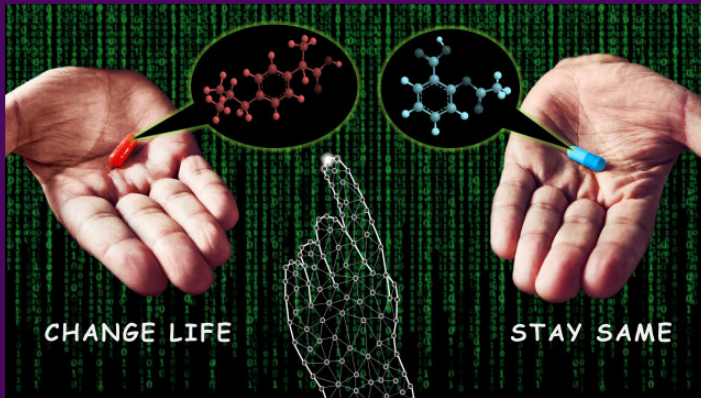
R: First just decide to participate, and the think. At first, I always hesitate a bit in such a situation. But, I found that there are much nicer ways to explain about my research even if I have researched for long time and have a lots of presentation experiences. So I would say "Just decide first."

Y: Go for it! Just do it! It's just three minutes presentation. Even including Q&A, it's just five minutes. Don't worry about anything. You will have very precious experience from this competition.

M: Yes! You are not losing anything.

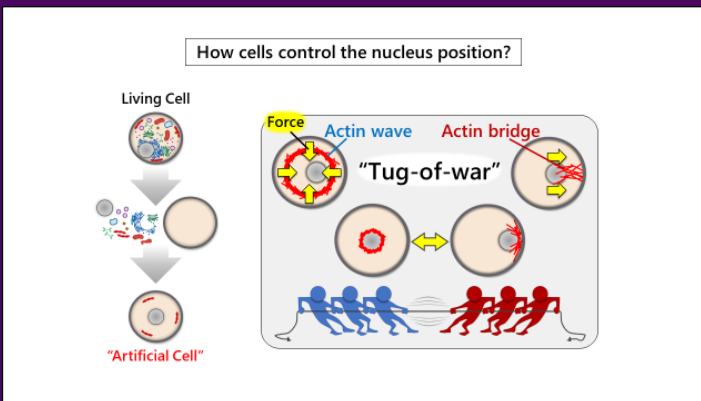
K: Wonderful messages! Thank you very much for this wonderful interview. I think many people are really interested in the competition and probably more Ph.D. students will join next year.

Winners' Slides



First Prize
Mariia Ivonina

<Title>
Neural Networks for drug discovery: Hope,
not Hype



Runner's Up
Ryota Sakamoto

<Title>
Tug-of-war at the heart of symmetry:
May the forces be within your cells



People's Choice
Yawen Song

<Title>
Fence for Marine Litter's Re-pollution