Informational Interview Project – Essay

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a.) What did I learn from this interview?

Before conducting the interview, I was interested in the entire IT field such as big data and artificial intelligence. Professor Jang Seung-Hye, who is being interviewed, majored in computer science and mathematics in Michigan, worked for Microsoft and Samsung, and is currently teaching at a university.

Through this interview, I became interested in algorithms because she studied and worked in algorithm related department. The prejudices that come from the word algorithm itself have been resolved. Lectures and books often explain algorithms in a grand manner. So, the algorithm was recognized as a complex structure handled only by very high-level experts. However, through Professor Jang, I realized that algorithms were just designing processes. I have wondered how a more complex form of algorithm is implemented in that even a conditional statement or iteration statement used basically in a programming language can be an algorithm. Although it was difficult to explain in interviews because it required a fairly high level of knowledge, it was interesting that the program defines and processes all codes or conditions by itself, not by humans, by implementing machine learning or artificial intelligence.

b.) How does what I learned fit with my own interests, abilities, goals, or values?

In fact, when I first sent an e-mail to the interviewee, her reply confused me. She introduced herself as not an IT expert. Rather, she introduced herself as closer to pure computer science and theoretical algorithms. However, her experience with Microsoft and Samsung, and the projects she worked on, were definitely the answers I wanted. She was an expert on algorithms, my core area of interest, and discussions with her increased interest in algorithms.

She became my role model after hearing about her career and challenges. Her attempts to study abroad and various experiences have made me reflect on myself, who is currently devoted only to ITM department programs. Her values were similar to those of my parents. "Various experiences." Throughout the conversation, I could feel her career at home and abroad, her enthusiasm for study, and her intellectual curiosity. In this process, I felt that I wanted to be a person like her, and I could clearly feel why my friend actively recommended the professor as an interviewee. I was impressed by her youth when she went to the top university in Korea and decided to study abroad at Michigan University because she did not suit her aptitude and adapted to life abroad without anyone knowing. Her academic depth and interest in computer science and mathematics were a great motivation.

The restrictions on activities caused by the Pandemic seem to have kept my vision only in ITM. With internship experience from university majors, I expanded my eyes from Korea to overseas and from ITM to internship experiences to consider various possibilities.

c.) What additional information would be helpful to know?

I learned Python last semester, and I’m learning Java and SQL this semester. Through this project, I learned what direction to study programming language. The interviewee strongly recommended that I learn C++. C programming languages such as C++ are said to be the basis of most programming languages. However, I learned my first programming language in python, and it was not easy to access Java and SQL grammar and semantics. Furthermore, Java is a language that improves the inconvenience of C++, so I actually had no plans to learn C-related languages (C, C++, C#). However, I added C++ learning to my bucket list after hearing that Big-Tech prefers developers who mainly use C++ and greatly helps improve the performance of applications. It was very helpful for career concerns in that I was able to increase my skill category and set one goal.

d.) What plan of action should I take next?

After the interview, I'm going to proceed with my own project as she recommends. She said that the number of tasks and projects given in college classes and the evaluation system was not sufficient to improve problem-solving skills through coding. Therefore, she strongly recommended that the project be carried out through various online sites and offline channels. She informed me that there are online sites that share project ideas at various universities such as Stanford, Berkeley, and Utah, and I also visited an offline coding community in Korea. In particular, he discovered a project called "42 Seoul" and planned to prepare for and take the first-stage test to work in "42 Seoul" through summer vacation or winter vacation. 42 Seoul has a curriculum that runs for about one to two years while conducting various personal projects and tasks based on C languages (C, C++, C#). After passing this year's '42 Seoul' entrance examination and solving the military problem, I have the idea of running it in parallel with the ITM program.