

2022 Symposium Debriefing

Introduction

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The theme of the 2022 symposium was derived from the Courses of Study, which were implemented in AY2020 at elementary school, in AY2021 at junior high school, and in AY2022 at senior high school. These national curriculum standards demand transitions in approaches to teaching and learning on both teachers' and learners' sides with the words of 'Active Learning, i.e. proactive/autonomous, interactive/dialogic, and deep/in-depth learning' and 'fostering the ability to think, judge/make decisions, and to express oneself.' Why are these words necessary? As background, globalization has been expanding at a high speed and AI technologies have been replacing parts of humans' jobs. In anticipation of accelerated globalization and digital transformation (DX), approaches in English language teaching have been explored in different ways. In this symposium, it was expected that we would find some clues to practicing English education in this new era and develop our teaching with new approaches that include elements of 'intercultural', 'interactive', and 'in-depth learning' (Three Is).

Under the symposium theme, "English Language Education From Global Perspectives With Three Is: Intercultural, Interactive, and In-Depth Learning," presenters from each level of education explicated their pedagogical or research trials and their results. Otomo Serena san, senior student of the Course for English Language Teachers, Akita University, designed an exchange project based on the framework of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) for elementary school students. Kotake Masashi sensei, teachers' consultant at Tarui-chō Board of Education in Fuwa, Gifu, introduced his practice, at a junior high school where he used to teach, that integrated 4 skills with frequent interactions in a reading class while making the reading material intriguing for his students. Nagasato Kanako sensei and Glenn Timoney sensei at Homei Senior High School in Akita, reported on their school's online intercultural communication project with their sister school in Thailand during the COVID-19 pandemic, where their students talked about their interests more casually than in the exchange before the pandemic. Hatakeyama Ken sensei and Higashikata Yuhei sensei, former colleagues at Hachinohe Institute of Technology, presented "artistic research" in Vietnam in 2021 and suggested the significance of intercultural understanding in non-English speaking as well as English speaking environments.

Basically, the three Is have been fundamental elements in education in general, but in English education in Japan, they have not been considered seriously enough due to a much stronger focus on forms such as grammatical accuracy and rote memorization of words. Globalization and DX may become game changers by transforming Japanese English education into one that prioritizes meaning.