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Abstract

As a response to global competitiveness in the international marketplace, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has increasingly been focusing on the need for Japanese students to develop creative and critical thinking skills through the learning of English. However, it is only more recently that MEXT is calling for classroom-based pedagogies that focus on student engagement, particularly cooperative and problem-based learning strategies, through active learning. MEXT has been promoting active learning as a strategy to engage students, and to help them develop the ability to vocalize their opinions and their problem-solving skills, which are skills that are deemed of importance in international interactions and promote the development of student's competitive mindsets. However, what is active learning actually, and how is it developed within the foreign language classroom at the university level? This chapter will first address how

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active learning has been defined by MEXT in its educational policies. Then the case study presented in this chapter will introduce visual thinking skills, as a possible way to integrate active learning through stimulating students' development of their creative and critical thinking skills. Here, the aim of this pedagogy is to aid students in gaining wider cultural perspectives developing from their own cultural understanding, which subsequently promotes the development of what it means to be a global citizen. The examination of pedagogy enables a deeper understanding of how policy development, regarding the internationalization strategies of higher education, can be understood in practice. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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