

Teaching Academic Discussion: Testing a Pedagogic Method with Japanese Undergraduate Students

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Currently, the number of Japanese students studying abroad is increasing, but many are resistant to the idea. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2017), language proficiency is a factor, and although active learning is encouraged, the level of students is very low because active learning and discussion are rarely introduced, and based on this, the discussion level of Japanese students has been the objective of raising the level of discussion among Japanese students was formulated. As a methodology, constructivism was used as the theory, and as a data collection method, a research class was conducted with an intervening pre-test and post-test. After the research class, a questionnaire was distributed to all students. The recorded participants' statements were categorised into 1) feelings and opinions, 2) feelings and opinions plus reasons, 3) experiences and sources of information, and 4) chains of claims, evidence and assurances, which were subdivided into three categories: claims, evidence and assurances. The results from the research lessons showed that there was little difference between pre-test and post-test and little improvement in discussion. The reasons for this were, firstly, that students did not have sufficient time to master discussion. Secondly, students' low knowledge and awareness of discussion was a major

problem, and it was considered desirable to start learning before university entry and, if possible, from primary education. This is because the earlier students start learning, the easier it is for them to acquire the skills (Smith, 2020). The lack of logical and critical thinking among the Japanese was also attributed. The main reason for resistance to discussion is differences in thinking styles. In the multicultural and highly heterogeneous US, a linear way of thinking that makes sense and is logical is necessary, but in the highly homogeneous Japanese culture, this becomes a value system. Because there is so much to share, it becomes a broad and to the point form of thinking (Kaneko & Kimizuka, 2007). Furthermore, the language barrier certainly stood in the way. When conducting discussions in English, non-native English speakers or those who have few opportunities to speak English invariably encounter a language barrier. To avoid this, it is important to engage in discussions in English as early as possible. Through this survey, we were reminded of the difficulties faced by university students in master's discussions. As most students have no experience in discussions and there is a language barrier, long-term learning is necessary from as early a stage as possible. Learning theory is also essential, as most students have no experience and do not know what a discussion is or how to conduct one. There are many opportunities to engage in discussions after graduating from university and entering the workforce. I believe that by mastering discussion, you will have a more fulfilling working life.