

Objectives of English Education of Japanese Elementary School

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I want to encourage students to :

- be informed and active citizens, because these type of citizens can help communities and governments enact measures without missing a unique opportunity to express their opinions in global society.
- have world class thinking and mental toughness to approach different countries and cultures, because it can give Japanese an advantage over other countries in business and politics.
- be able to make decisions that consider the long-term future and equity of all countries and nations.
- have the ability to express their thinking styles with a courteous manner and understand different thinking styles, because it enables them to team up with people from other countries.

Therefore, in English education of elementary school we should:

- realize input-rich class supported by teacher talk which includes a variety of meaningful contexts.
- create lesson topics which are able to make students aware of multiple ways of thinking in global society.
- encourage student-centered communicative activities to overcome the weaknesses of Japanese students such as inhibition to speak out and a passive learning habit.
- implement activities in pairs and teams focusing on both individual and team thinking.

Why are we going to promote team-teaching in elementary schools? Is it just for making up for the deficit of English speaking skills of Japanese teachers?

In the "Nara Municipal English Project", we want to promote good team teaching between homeroom teachers and assistants(ALTs).we have to work together not only taking an advantage of ALTs but also taking a risk to share new lesson ideas and curriculums with them. Homeroom teachers are able to learn from ALTs how to solve cross-cultural problems analytically and gauge the needs of others. It benefits us to go forward with world class thinking and mental toughness to different cultures. Moreover, to have students feel a sense of equality of all humans, it is essential for homeroom teachers to show an equal team-teaching relationship with the ALT and an open mind to every visitor to their classroom.

If English education of elementary school is successful,:

then it may give a greater impact to junior and high school. It is possible to break up a conservative sense of value and rebuild an innovative education policy and teaching style.

Based on my research and "Usage-Based Theory of Language Acquisition"

particularly on age of puberty we need to focus on children's cognitive learning which includes pattern finding through sound input. Children have already experienced how to access both meaning and form through the sound input in their mother language at when

they were 2 years old. First language learning can give a positive influence on second language learning. On the other hand, second language learning can give a positive feedback on first language learning. In English activities, I'm sure that children, 6 graders are listening to chunks analytically. This cognitive skill is expected to be used for the whole second language learning stage.

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