

# Toward Foreign Language Education That Fosters Global Human Resources

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Education is now undergoing a major change. To nurture the ability to create new knowledge in an era of unpredictability, the emphasis is on more integrated, interdisciplinary, and problem-solving inquiry-based learning, which is also changing the way students learn. The new curriculum guideline was introduced sequentially from elementary schools in 2020. In addition, the importance of creating a sustainable society has been pointed out everywhere, and the needs for SDGs promoted by the United Nations have been increasing.

The Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education approved by the Cabinet in June of this year clearly states the need to develop "global human resources." With such demands for qualities and abilities that meet the needs of the times and society, now is the time for every English teacher to think about education to develop global human resources. I believe that the know-how of global education can be widely utilized for English classes.

The goal of global education is to cultivate an awareness of global citizenship. When I used to walk around the streets of England, I saw stores here and there with signs of NGOs such as "Oxfam" and "Save the Children." When I went inside the stores, I found many fair-trade products. There were cards that read, "Health check for child: 6 pounds," "Safe water for 50 people: 50 pounds," and so on. Customers were supposed to choose a card with the content they supported and pay for it on the spot. I was strongly impressed by the fact that international cooperation was rooted in the community. Such global education seems to have three goals.

- To improve critical thinking skills by asking questions
- Recognizing the complexity of global issues
- Providing young people with the knowledge and skills to take actions as active citizens.

It is still fresh in our minds that active learning has become a hot topic in the revision of the Courses of Study. The term "active learning," which is now used to describe learning that is proactive, collaborative, and aimed at finding and solving problems. This goal is to cultivate the ability to relate and deepen their knowledge in the learning process of acquisition, application, and exploration. I think global education leads to active learning. This can be understood as an expression of a sense of crisis regarding knowledge transfer-oriented education.

The curriculum guidelines also emphasize "deep learning." It refers to learning in which

students think deeply about events and issues, and in which individual studies are connected and related to each other, leading to a broad and deep understanding, and thinking. Global education has the power to create such deep learning. Moreover, it is learning that is accompanied by a sense of excitement and a sense of personal growth.

"Global" and "international" do not necessarily focus on topics that are "outside" or "outside of oneself." It is not only about what is outside or foreign, but also about what is related to oneself. It is also possible to deepen self-understanding and learning by developing familiar themes and relating them to one's own way of life, and to implement practices that emphasize connection and a sense of ownership. In school education, global education plays a role in fostering human nature and qualities necessary to realize a just, peaceful, and sustainable society, as well as comprehensive academic skills. In addition, global education from multiple perspectives will not only broaden students' career choices but will also bring beneficial perspectives to their lives. In other words, by gaining a diverse view of things and a global and broad perspective, students can broaden their outlook on life and the world, have a rich heart for others and life, and enhance their own potential.

Global education can be provided through all subjects, but for many students, their first foreign language "English" class is the gateway to the world. Therefore, by linking English and global studies, and by encouraging students' interest in global issues such as human rights, peace, and the environment, it will be possible to cultivate a sense of global citizenship. The goal of the foreign language course is to develop students' ability to communicate in English. This is not the ability to speak English, but the ability to "communicate" with people.

In this global age, we want our students to have not simply superficial English conversation skills, but also the ability to learn about various issues in the world, respect diverse cultures, acquire a global perspective, and take action to solve various cultural problems in society. In other words, the purpose of foreign language education is to conceive of classes as nurturing communication skills as global citizens to create a better world, to live in harmony with people around the world from a global perspective. Global education can be applied to foreign language education. I would like to make a concrete proposal for the creation of such a class.

◇Active learning style classes - have students express their own opinions.

Passively listening to a teacher's one-sided talk does not foster the ability to think, judge, and express, and it is likely to be a boring time. In English classes, we should combine techniques such as pair / group work, discussion, speech, presentation, and self / peer assessment, and develop an active learning style class in which students are involved in activities such as listening, reading, writing, communicating, and presenting. The positive aspects of learning with peers in a school classroom lie within the cooperative and collaborative learning. This allows students to activate their thinking, to relativize their own ideas through exposure to the opinions of others, and to

deepen their thinking and understanding by gaining new insights.

#### ◇Content (Global Issues) oriented class recommendations

When teachers deal with teaching materials, students can develop global classes by focusing on and deepening the content and message of the text. Examples include Content-Based Instruction (CBI) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which are communication-oriented approaches, and aims for mastery of both subject content and language. CLIL has features in common with global education: it is student-centered, uses materials that change learners' perspectives, encourages awareness, and emphasizes the learning process. CLIL is also characterized by its emphasis on thinking, in which students think deeply while interacting with others, acquire knowledge, and apply their language skills to communicate. This type of English class would contribute to the development of human resources exactly as required by the global society.

#### ◇Examples of content-oriented English communication activities

Depending on the teacher's point of view and approach, English textbooks can be a treasure trove of subjects for global education. Almost every unit in the textbooks is related to their respective SDGs. We want to go beyond just new vocabulary, grammar, and content understanding to help students become internationally educated and think for themselves. By having students think deeply about the background and content of the issues and asking for their opinions on what they think and what they would do if they were in their own position, we expect to develop their ability to think and express their judgment. For example, the lesson titled “A Village of One Hundred People” introduces the world situation and the gap between the rich and the poor that comes to light when the world is reduced to a village of 100 people.

The main language material is the use of infinitives and a provisional subject (it). Based on the content, when conducting language activities, including syntactic and grammatical usage, following sentences can be read and written by students.

(e.g.)

It is very important for every child to have a school education.

To live without safe drinking water is impossible.

It is necessary for us to have access fresh water.

Using the language material to express such meaningful content will increase its educational significance and make it memorable for the students. The following questions can be used to raise students' global awareness.

☐Text: Most children go to primary school, but not everyone can reach the last grade.

■Teacher's prompt: Why can't everyone reach the last grade?

☐Text: Will you be surprised to hear that fifteen adults in my village cannot read?

■Teacher's prompt: If you cannot read, what difficulties would you face?

■Additional questions by the teacher: I know most of you want to go to college, right? In the village of 100 people, how many people have a college education? (Have students talk and answer.) Only one has a college education. How about in Japan? (Let students talk and answer, then present the data.)

In this activity, questions are asked, students are asked to think, they exchange opinions with each other and present their ideas to the whole group, and feedback is given by the teacher. The teacher will then give feedback. In addition, supplementary information on the current state of the world will be given to the students in response to the questions posed. At the end of the lesson, students are asked to summarize and present their opinions on the following questions in English.

■Question: What surprised you most about the story of this lesson?

It is not enough to prepare materials and task worksheets written in English in every class, through which students simply receive information. It is important for teachers to create proactive activities for students in class.

In recent years, the globalization of society has progressed rapidly, and there are many transnational issues such as the environment, poverty, conflict, and sustainable development. The need for solutions that transcend national and cultural frameworks and a way of life that is aware of who we are as members of the Earth are being called into question. It goes without saying that education is the key to nurturing young people who will be able to survive and thrive in an age when everyone has access to AI. However, education is still knowledge-oriented, focuses on university entrance exam, and tends to end up just cramming knowledge into students' heads. However, this is no way to develop perspective, judgment, or awareness of issues.

One way to overcome the current situation is through "foreign language education" and "global education." Recently, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has expressed concern, stating that the current education system is mass producing young people who are inward-looking, narrow-minded, and lacking the ability to act, and has begun initiatives to nurture global human resources. Riding on this "tailwind", I hope that a new wave of education will further increase within Tokushima.