

Effective Implementation of Japan's New National Curriculum Standards

Shun Shirai
Director, Office for Curriculum Planning,
MEXT, Japan



文部科学省

MEXT

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
CULTURE, SPORTS,
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY-JAPAN

“Active learning”

- “Active learning” is already prevalent in many elementary and lower secondary schools.
 - But not prevalent in upper secondary schools and universities and colleges.
- “Active learning” is a basic concept of pedagogical approach, but it doesn’t imply specific pedagogies.
 - However, there are teachers who misunderstand government’s intention of “active learning”
 - “proactive, interactive and authentic learning”
 - To promote “Active learning”, teacher’s expertise on teaching will be more important
 - Totally depends on students’ situations and the nature of each subject/topic

“Epistemological approach”

- “Discipline-based epistemological approaches” have been clarified in all subject.
- In case of Geography, for example,
 - To understand societal phenomena, focusing on its location and space,
 - in the framework of regional environment and connections among regions,
 - consider the relevance between societal phenomena and human activities
- To promote “deep learning”.

Teachers' professional development

- In-service teacher trainings are done at many levels and multi-layered;
 - Prefectures, municipalities
 - “Shido-shuji” play key roles for dissemination
 - Schools
 - “A chief training teacher”, together with a school principal and a vice principal, plays key role in each school
 - Teacher groups
 - Individual teachers
- Pre-service teacher training system is now aligned with a new curriculum.
 - Inclusion of active learning, curriculum management etc in the curricula of teacher's colleges is now a legal obligation for teacher's college. (Effective as of April 2019)

Assessment

- Assessment framework has been under discussion
 - The final report of the assessment framework will be publicized by the end of FY 2018.
 - Multi-stakeholders approach has been taken.
- Assessment of “competencies”
 - Active learning is no more than a pedagogical approach.
 - Assessment will be done from the view point of three pillars of competencies, whether each student achieve the goals set out in curricula.

Analytical assessment

Knowledge and skills	Consideration, judgment, expression	Attitudes to learn pro-actively
Student A understands XXX. Student A is able to do XXX.	By applying discipline-based epistemological approach, student A can consider, make judgment and express his/her thoughts.	Student A is trying to understand XXX and/or to consider, make judgement and express his/her thoughts.
A/B/C	A/B/C	A/B/C