

# **The Effect of Dialogic Art Appreciation in Japanese Language Class: A Case Study of Malaysian Pre-university Students**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This practice is based on Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS), an educational art appreciation program developed by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in the 1980s. VTS encourages participants to engage with artwork by discussing their observations and interpretations without relying on prior knowledge. It has been reported to promote observation skills, critical thinking, verbal expression, and communication abilities. In recent years, VTS has gained attention not only in art education but also in diverse fields, including medical and foreign language education. This study focuses on 44 Malaysian pre-university students who possess an intermediate to advanced level of Japanese. These students participated in both individual and group discussions centered around *Chōjū-jinbutsu-giga*, a famous Japanese picture scroll. Through the implementation of this activity, along with the analysis of students' appreciation worksheets, and a post-activity survey, this study highlights the effectiveness of dialogic art appreciation activity in Japanese language classroom from the following three perspectives:

### **1. Development of Japanese Communication Skills**

The VTS-style questions—“What do you see that makes you say that?” and “Why do you think so?”—help learners articulate their impressions and thoughts logically to others.

### **2. Collaborative Learning**

Group dialogue provides learners with new perspectives and interpretations that they may not have considered individually. This collaboration facilitates their ability to observe and analyze from multiple angles.

### **3. Intercultural Understanding**

By using Japanese art as a subject, students deepen their understanding of Japanese culture and allows them to compare it with their own Malaysian culture. It also serves as an engaging introduction to art appreciation, which is often perceived as inaccessible.