

Curriculum Center for Teachers
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Warm Learning Place to Promote Undergraduate Teachers to Improve

Masami Kuroha, Director of Center for Cooperative Research and Development on School Education, Faculty of Education, Gunma University

Is it only this author who cannot escape the somewhat top-down and cold impression about FD of general universities to evaluate teachers' educational activities and completely improve their educational methods and classes?

In contrast, this university's FD center aims to be a warm learning place for undergraduate teachers and our affiliated schools to work in collaboration to support newly appointed undergraduate teachers by resolving their questions and concerns so that they can be devoted to fulfilling their education and research activities. In other words, this center is set up within the affiliated school, aiming to enhance the qualifications and capabilities of undergraduate teachers and improve the organization by action learning consisting of three steps: fieldwork, reflection, and sharing. The main actions include briefing sessions for systematical teaching practice programs, open class workshops, educational salons, all teacher participatory teaching practice, educational activity observation workshops, and proposed class workshops. Here, because of space constraints, I would like to describe only some of the educational activities observation workshops and educational salons.

First, the educational activity observation workshop held in September was a place in which student teacher A's educational activities, teaching practice activities, and training for producing study guidance plans after school were observed and opinions for them were exchanged at the affiliated elementary and secondary schools during A's teaching practice duration of five weeks. Through actual opinion exchanges, participants were able to broaden their recognition: "teachers need teaching skills appropriate to children's developmental stages and it is important for them to promote themselves to improve," "I had never known that we had student teachers instructed in such a careful way until this time." Next, the educational salon is a place where the affiliated teachers and the university teachers have a table together to discuss comprehensively how the university teachers' specialty is applicable to student guidance with tough love compared with the affiliated teachers' views of educational materials and guidance mainly in teacher training. At the educational salon held last January, cross-disciplinary teachers including newly appointed teachers used their reflection sheets "After visiting the practice school to see their students do teacher training," briskly exchanging their opinions related to research

classes, information exchange with managers, and research conferences, associated with their own specialty. Newly appointed teachers and undergraduate teachers were able to make a warm learning place, particularly addressing "colleague awareness that is necessary to improve and grow together" such that "observation and exchanges further approaching the reality of school operation such as scenes of a teacher instructing a student teacher, preparation for experiments, teacher meetings, cleaning, and lunch time are necessary to develop teachers' abilities."

Finally, for conclusion, I'd like to introduce the episode of Mr. M, an undergraduate teacher, who participated in the FD program. Mr. M came to this department three years ago after he had worked for a private university's medical department for 22 years. Attending the open class workshop held in June (an art class "to give a proverb a shape") honestly said "I had never known that teachers gave lessons based on a "so-called study guidance plan" until this time." He added, "I was surprised to know that the plan only for a 50 min lesson included detailed information of each student as well as the systematics of this lesson and relation with lessons of Japanese language." Regarding his feelings when he had observed a student teacher teaching and stated his opinion, he said with feeling and in breathy voice, "I was astonished." At the educational salon after teaching practice, he added, "it is very difficult for a university to have future teachers acquire all the power of educational execution, so they can only learn it through practice. However, the training to improve readiness, originality and ingenuity, and ability to think required for teachers facing various challenges should be done at a university." I think Mr. M's story holds the key to solving the problems of FD in teacher training universities. In other words, Mr. M has richness of self-awareness to feel "his own powerlessness and immaturity" as a person on the position of bringing up teachers, such as "what he knows or does not in the field of education" and "what he can do and cannot" as a subject special teacher. Through such self-awareness, our attitude to work faithfully in our field of specialization might have educational effects on our own students, and might also deepen our recognition of our own advantages and disadvantages and then encourage us to strive to improve and reform them consciously.

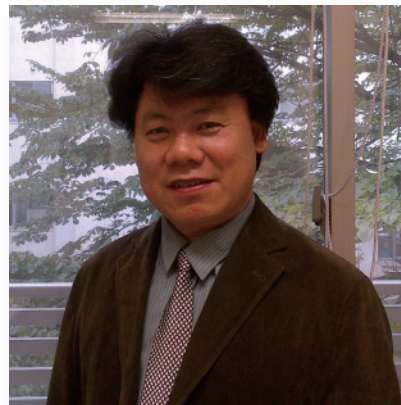
Introduction of a Guest Professor of 2013 Fiscal Year

The Teacher Training Curriculum Development Research Center has the privilege of hosting Professor Li Guang from Northeast Normal University as a Guest Professor of 2013 fiscal year since December. He will be studying the curriculums of teacher education mainly at our center until next May.

I have been learning and studying in the field of teacher education and curriculum development since I entered Yongji Normal School in Jilin, China, in September 1985. In July 1993, I received a Bachelor of Education, majoring in psychology at the School of Education, Northeast Normal University. Additionally, I received a Master of Education and Doctor of Education at School of Educational Science, Northeast Normal University in July 2001 and July 2008, respectively. During that time, I have learned as a foreign student at the Center for Clinic in Education, Miyagi University of Education from October 1999 to October 2000. Furthermore, I have continued to study as a Visiting Researcher at that same institution from October 2005 to August 2007. Now I am a Professor at the Department of Education, Northeast Normal University. At the same time, I serve as an office director in charge of Northeast Teacher Education Reform Experimental District.

I have been tackling China-Japan teacher education comparative research, different culture comparative research about China-Japan elementary school national language programs, and studies related to building of the Northeast experimental district for teacher education reform and producing the "U-G-S" teacher education model. As my typical research results, I can refer to the following: my doctoral dissertation, "Different Culture Comparative Research about Value Trend in China-Japan National Language Program" (2008); the book, *Harmony and Wrong: Polar Opposites of Japanese Culture*; papers such as "Different Culture comparative Research about China-Japan Elementary School Children's Reading Response" (Educational Method with Course Educational Materials, 2013 January), "Different Culture comparative Research about China-Japan Elementary School Children's Themes" (Global Educational Vision, 2013 February) and "Research about Making Teacher Training Model called U-G-S: Practice and Thought of building Northeast Experimental District for Teacher Training" (Teacher Education Study, 2013 January).

The projects that I have been addressing these years are as follows: research about evaluation of elementary schoolchildren's national language sophistication as a 2011 ordinary item for "the 12th Five-Year Plan" science research program of Chinese National Language Commission, intercultural comparative research related to China-Japan elementary national language textbooks as a 2011 emphasis support theme for "the 12th Five-Year Plan" educational science program of Jilin, China, the different culture comparative research about the value trend of China-Japan elementary school national language courses as a 2011 ordinary item for Social Sciences and Humanities Study, Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, and research about a cooperative teacher education model of "normal



universities through local governments to secondary and elementary schools" as a 2011 ordinary item for sociological funds in Jilin, China. From October 2013 to March 2014, I, as a Guest Professor of this center, will be deep in study with the staff about the themes below.

First, the provision of information about trends of the latest teacher training and teacher education policies in China (particularly addressing the policy trend of teacher training and teacher educational systemic reforms).

Second, the provision of information about teacher training programs of Northeast Normal University in China (particularly addressing curriculum design and research and development of teacher training courses).

Third, the research and introduction of the teacher training model called U-G-S in Northeast Normal University and construction of the Northeast experimental district for teacher training reforms.

Fourth, the provision of basic information related to school teachers in China (particularly addressing data of quantitative and qualitative changes of school teachers).

Fifth, analysis and suggestions about the teacher training curriculum of this university.

Sixth, comparative research about a survey of knowledge of China-Japan secondary and elementary school teachers.

Finally, Tokyo Gakugei University is a prestigious university known around the world. Above all, its accomplishments in the teacher education field are known worldwide. It is the highest honor to me that I have been invited to this center as a Guest Professor. I would like to make efforts to promote exchange and cooperation of teacher education between China and Japan further. I'll be grateful for any help I can receive here. Furthermore, I'm looking forward to having good experiences at Tokyo Gakugei University.

Li Guang
Department of Education, Northeast Normal University

To Construct a “Japanese Way of Accreditation” : The Project on Quality Assurance for Teacher Education Institutes

Tokyo Gakugei University has been tackling the “Project on Quality Assurance for Teacher Education,” which was granted four-year special expenditures since FY 2010. Bringing the whole of teacher training accredited universities (about 600 BA level universities with approximately 1,400 faculties) into a cross-cutting view, it is aimed at producing a system to accredit teacher education institutes above a certain level based on self-governing peer review (Japanese Way of Accreditation). The “Project on Quality Assurance for Teacher Education” consisting of members of about 40 specialists (of whom some are selected from the public) inside and outside this university, presided over by this university’s Vice President of Education, has four divisions: a professional standards division, an accreditation organization division, an accreditation standards division, and an on-campus specialty division. Three members of the center, the Director of the Curriculum Center, Dr. Takeshi, Prof. Iwata, and Dr. Uesugi (from the second division) are participating in the project.

Against the backdrop of this project is awareness that the conventional, policy-induced measures for maintaining the level of teacher education institutes have limitations with respect to qualitative improvement. Because accreditation administration is likely to maintain a minimum standard of teacher education institutes based on external indications, enforcing its operations cannot give rise to qualitative improvement (in other words, all are certified not as superior teacher education institutes). This recognition is shared among academicians in charge of teacher education in Japan as well as officials of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, (MEXT) (Higher Education Bureau and Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau).

However, this system has no similar example in Japan. Whereas the accreditation has the limitation described above, conventional college evaluation (certification evaluation and field-specific evaluation) is not appropriate

for ascertaining the actual conditions of teacher training education conducted at Japanese universities in a cross-sectional manner. Consequently, using (1) the overseas trend of evaluation of teacher education (in the U.S., the U.K., Germany, China, Korea, Russia, and Hong Kong) and (2) the national awareness survey of the people engaged in teacher training (such as the dean of an approved faculty) to design a draft proposal for accreditation, this project has conducted trial evaluations on three universities including Tokyo Gakugei university, as well as Tamagawa University, and Okayama University. Moreover, based on the trial evaluation report, an open workshop was held on November 17. At the same time, to organize a new system to assume accreditation after the next financial year, we have started a dialogue with related bodies such as the Institute for the Evaluation of Teacher Education, Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA), Japan Association of University of Education (JAUE), and The Japan Association of Private Universities for Teacher Education.

The criteria of accreditation that have been under development specifically stipulate “independent-minded and consensus-based initiatives for teacher training,” with “recruiting of suitable personnel engaged in education” and “career support for teaching professions” (from entrance to graduate for students) on the vertical axis and with “operation of teacher training curriculum as part of university education” and “relationship between issues of children’s education and university education” (meaning that teacher training institutions should combine the nature of “university” and the nature of “teacher training”) on the horizontal axis, which has been favored by a considerable number of people of vision in charge of teacher training at many national, municipal, and private universities. The project will have been completed in next March and will be prepared for the next step of actual operation of accreditation.

(Yasuyuki Iwata)

Terminology of Teacher Education 13

New courses

Since the late 1980s, ‘new courses’ have been introduced to universities and faculties for teacher training in which students are not required to obtain a teacher’s license for graduation. Initially, they were designated as “zero-license courses.” Thereafter, however, as an increasing number of universities have been certified to offer optional teacher training programme, they have come to be called “new courses.”

These new courses were established for the following reason: they anticipated a shrinking birth rate and therefore decreased the fixed number of teachers in training courses (that required students to obtain a teacher’s license for graduation) while responding to the second baby boomers’ entrance of universities. Using the resultant academic resources, they increased new courses without a direct purpose of teacher training. They are generally divided into two categories to cultivate human resources for education-related fields such as adult/community education and for area studies and interdisciplinary educational research such as that related to environment and information.

However, these “new courses” were ambivalent because they did not aim directly for teacher training despite belonging to the faculties for teacher training. That ambivalence created an identity crisis. Now, in the “redefinition of mission” of national universities, they are considering that they will be abolished in principle within the third medium-term target duration (2016–2022).

(Yasuyuki Iwata)



Overview of TGU–NENU Joint Research Visit

Under brisk and splendid fall weather, we visited Changchun City for the first time in a year in late September, 2013. We held a joint research meeting with Northeast Normal University following the Eighth International Symposium for Universities of Education in East Asia, which had been held until the prior day. Three presenters of each university read their papers under the theme of “The Systems, Contents and Methods of Teacher Training in Intellectual Societies.” At that meeting, I explained the outline of practice teaching in Tokyo Gakugei University, introducing actual cases of basic practical training, which our students in the math department experienced in the affiliated junior high school, high school, and combined junior high and high school. To me, the most impressive of the questions after my presentation was “How are the teachers who instruct the students taking part in practice teaching instructed and trained?” In Japan, even if student teachers are generally presumed to be guided in the stages of “observation, participation, and practice,” concrete instructions are left to real-world teachers. Actually, no college offers careful instruction and training. On this occasion, I became aware of this viewpoint, which is crucially important for training more practical teachers, again.

(Center for the Research and Support of Education Practice, Akio Yajima)

Sites Where Teachers Are Nurtured No. 13

Sumio Sano

Principal, Koganei Minami Junior High School, Tokyo
(Member of the Advisory Board
for the Curriculum Center for Teachers)

This school has been promoting class improvement and organizational reform. Additionally, it has been addressing the challenges of enforcing and improving combination among schools, families, and communities. However, against the backdrop of baby boomers' mass retirement, this school has received many newly appointed teachers in recent years. Consequently, an important matter for promoting reform is to let them understand the characteristics of this school and maintain the quality of education throughout the school. For that purpose, they have participated in "training appropriate to careers" and "skill-building training" to improve their own abilities.

However, using only moderate development based on conventional education, it has become more difficult for school education to respond to a changing society and to meet parents' and students' needs. Consequently, the leading challenges to reconstruct schools by being aware of risk management consciousness and conducting school-wide class improvement and organization reform might be the following: "to change teachers' consciousness," "to share training achievements within a school," and "to promote families and communities to participate in school education."

(1) Teachers who are unmotivated for reform Teachers' motivated activities boost the effects of school education. Most teachers understand the continuity and moderate development of conventional educational activities and are willing to make an effort for them. However, some teachers do not understand the change of thinking and introduction of new methods. That decreases the pro-reform power of the entire organization. For teachers to play a willing and subjective role in schools, they must fully understand situations that surround school education and the necessity for reform. When they understand the operation policy and become willing to work for it, I'm

sure that what has been at a standstill so far will move ahead and that school education will also change dramatically.

(2) The results of training have not been reflected in class improvements

Parents have a high expectation for "straightforward classes" and "guidance that is appropriate for individuals" and are very interested in students' academic abilities. To meet that expectation, we have tackled class reform by making class reform promotion plans and in-school workshops. Furthermore, we have prompted teachers to attend "training by selected challenges" by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. They have contributed their energy to improve classes. However, compared with the energy contributed to the training, no system to reflect the results of training in the entire school has been established. Many teachers are wholly focused on knowledge-injection classes. We must make efforts such that the results of each teacher's training can be the treasure of the entire school and be reflected in daily classes to improve the school.

(3) It is not easy for families and communities in general to participate in school education

First, it is important that the PTA understand, and be supportive of, school education and also that neighborhood associations in school districts be willing to do something for it. The problem is that some people on the PTA committee bear excessively heavy burdens. Even if most parents are gentle and potentially cooperative, I truly feel that families with increased awareness of their rights and decreased educational ability have been rising year after year. Under such circumstances, if crimes and accidents, which are likely to cause parents to lose their trust, occur in schools, most of them might develop a sense of distrust and the schools might therefore become isolated. By encouraging many silent parents to participate in school education through enhanced combination between schools and communities, we must construct mutually supportive relations to win the understanding of parents for school education and to support family education.

In an ever-changing society, I would like to motivate teachers and create "a school in which students lighten up every class" and "a school that cooperates with families and communities based on a relationship of mutual trust."

2013 Fiscal Year Event Calendar

Wednesday, January 22, 2014
Open Workshop
by Guest Professor Li Guang
Tuesday, March 11, 2014
Open Symposium
for Japan-U.S. teacher training reform

Editor's Notes

We asked Professor Kuroha of the Gunma University to write some thoughts related to concrete practices of FD for university teaching staff in charge of teacher training education for this newsletter. Faculty development for teacher educators will be increasingly important.

(Kenji Maehara)

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