



Curriculum Center for Teachers  
Tokyo Gakugei Univ.

Creative Curricula & Teaching  
Newsletter

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## Beyond the Curriculum Address at the Inauguration of the President of the Center

**Shigeki Mayama**

Director of the Curriculum Center for Teachers, Tokyo Gakugei University

The teacher education curriculum is the framework of a system for effective cultivation of knowledge, skills, and abilities required by those students who want to be teachers. Furthermore, the framework is fleshed out by various classes that are supported by university teachers' high degree of specialization. In older styles of education, quality was sufficient when these were solid.

In the present day, when the qualitative transformation of university education has been questioned, our university has made a certain amount of effort. With the development of syllabuses and the introduction of the CAP system (which sets the upper limits on the number of credits obtainable in one academic year) and the course registration chart system, we have improved the quality of students' learning. Furthermore, providing introductory seminars for new students and Practical Seminars for Teaching Profession for fourth year students, we have improved the curriculum to enhance the entrance and exit of teacher education. All of these are reforms to foster better students in university systems.

How about reforms by university teachers themselves? Group study classes that are implemented as Faculty Development make teachers improve their class contents and teaching abilities. Nonetheless, the reality is that the use of the system has not been disseminated much.

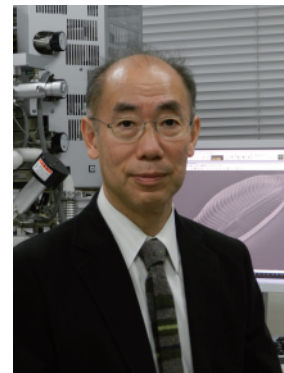
Even after the necessity of active learning that encourages students' independent learning has been urged, many teachers are groping in the dark about what to do, or they are looking on with folded arms. I myself have tried to conduct classes in a subject for four years to make students think independently. In the first year, with my inexperience and clumsiness, negative comments for the class were written in 60 percent of the responses to the post-class questionnaire survey. However, positive comments gradually increased, and positive comments for the class accounted for more than 80 percent four years later. Nonetheless, the frequency of independent learning before and after the class only slightly affected the scores on the final examination. I am wondering if the positive comments that 80 percent of students wrote on the

questionnaires are nothing more than their self-satisfaction, or if the effects of independent learning are simply not appearing rapidly. Further research is necessary for evaluation. Still, it is an indisputable fact that active learning has strengthened their motivation.

Active learning will not necessarily be sufficient to have students hold group discussion and do group work. Inquisitive learning that has often been conducted in science is one part of active learning. It might be rather natural that the teaching method to have students learn actively differs depending on the subject. What active learning aims at is to cultivate competencies such as those to think, apply, and create. The key to achieve the goal is, after all, teaching methods in the class. However, university teachers who are not familiar with teaching methodology are quite numerous, including myself.

Study meetings on the class are often held in elementary and junior high schools. At the meetings, there is a place to exchange views on the content and methods. Moreover, advice is given from supervisors. In addition, plenty of handbooks are available to conduct better classes. By contrast, the group study class is the only place prepared for most teachers at our university to improve educational methods.

Even if a wonderful curriculum exists, without teachers' teaching ability, positive results would not be produced. As a university, it might be necessary to provide organizational support to give advice to university teachers on improvement strategies, such as teaching and evaluation methods, as well as to gather information about effective teaching methods for each subject. What to do beyond the curriculum — I think that this will be an issue that is connected directly with universities' ability to educate.



## Reality and Problems Surrounding Teacher Education in the Faculty of Education at National Universities

Hirotohi Fukushima

Associate Professor, Hirosaki University  
Member of the Advisory Board for the Curriculum Center for Teachers



When considering the reality and problems of teacher education in the faculty of education at national universities, the National University Reform Plan is a context that cannot be ignored. One concern over the plan is weakening of the organizational basis for teacher education, or the decline of the centripetal force of the faculty of education. First, with a national policy that emphasizes the faculties of sciences and which makes the functions of the faculty of education be specialized in teacher education, the quota of students for the faculty of education has been reduced by abolishing courses for which a teacher's license is not a requirement for graduation. Consequently, a reduction in the number of its faculty members has occurred. When the roles of the faculty of teacher training, such as the emphasis on regional contributions described later, are expected to increase, a reduction in the number of faculty members is probably a hindrance in many ways. In addition, corresponding to the reorganization of education and research organizations which has been advanced in many national universities, each faculty member has come to belong to an organization, such as the institute for education and research consisting of systems and disciplines based on the fields of study, while they undertake education and research at the faculty. In the case of a faculty with teachers from various fields of study, teachers can belong to different systems or disciplines, which can engender the fragmentation of organizational identity, and by extension to the decline in a sense of belonging to the faculty centering on education. Furthermore, with the introduction of the annual-salary system and the development of the performance evaluation system, undergraduate education in which individual achievements are difficult to present might be slighted, and greater importance could be placed on achieving good research results. In addition, the foundation of the institute for education and research is accompanied with the integrated management of personnel affairs of teachers. Particularly with regard to the personnel affairs of subject-specialized teachers, when there is a teacher of the same discipline in other faculties, it is expected that the

discipline in other faculties, it is expected that the necessity as a full-time teacher at the faculty of education will be subject to severe scrutiny and the filling up of vacancies becomes difficult.

Another concern is the fluctuation of "teacher education at universities," or the growth of a centrifugal force that is the demand of educational policies and school sites. By redefinition of the mission, one might emphasize the occupancy rate of graduates of the faculty of teacher training in terms of elementary school teachers who are newly employed by the prefectural government administering the area in which the faculty is located. This might lead teacher education to be more oriented toward the teacher employment examination. The mission also states clearly that the ratio of faculty members with teaching experience increases and that all teachers involved in teacher education must have some sort of practical teaching ability, which might weaken the orientation toward research. Furthermore, Professional Schools for Teacher Education have been established one after another in Faculties of Education at national universities. Conventional masters' courses at the graduate school of education have been reduced. Also, reorganization in the future has been considered. It is increasingly difficult to produce teachers who have systematized academic specialization.

The report of the Central Council of Education released December 2015, "Korekara no gakkō kyōiku o ninau kyōin no shishitsu noryoku no kōjo ni tsuite (Improvement of Quality and Ability of Teachers Who Shoulder the Responsibility for Future School Education)" is to strengthen the centrifugal force and demand for the faculty of education at national universities further to play a larger role. The report conveys the necessity for national universities and faculties of teacher training to take the initiative in implementing efforts to support new educational issues. Additionally, it is expected to play a certain role in the foundation of the council for fostering teachers, the formulation of indexes for fostering teachers, and the development of teacher training plans. As long as these regional contributions are illustrated as the evaluation index of grants for operating expenses, probably there is no other choice than to be involved in them.

Amid the fluctuation of teachers' organizations (decline of centripetal force) and the growth of external demand for teacher education (growth of centrifugal force), it is considered important to have a series of discussions on how to do "teacher education at university" as the faculty of education, facing with students who aim to be teachers. The foundation of the council for fostering teachers could, in a sense, make "teacher education at university" more meaningful and lead undergraduate graduates to grow as teachers who maintain the continuity with their university days. Internal collaboration opens the way to external collaboration — I will make efforts keeping this in mind.

## Implication for Reforms of Teacher Education from Germany: Dilemmas between teachers' "Professionalism" and 'Professionalism'

Kemma Tsujino  
Associate Professor, Joetsu University of Education

The Curriculum Center for Teachers has invited Professor Dr. Axel Gehrmann from Technische Universität Dresden as a visiting professor from February of this year. We asked Associate Professor Kemma Tsujino at Joetsu University of Education who continued research exchanges with Dr. Gehrmann to tell us the significance of knowing the reality and problems of teacher education in Germany.

In Germany, major reforms have been taking place across the entire education system since the "PISA shock" in 2001. Teacher education at university also has experienced a historic change. I am currently working at Professional Schools of Education and feel that I am in the middle of the vortex of educational reform in Japan as well. Therefore, I shall summarize what I feel based on research in Germany.

In Germany, a sharp ideological distinction exists between "pre-service training" provided before becoming teachers and the "in-service education" provided after being hired. The "pre-service training" of teachers consists of the completion of a master's course at graduate school (the first stage) and the subsequent probationary service (the second stage), which is a two-stage training of professionals similar to the legal profession. However, most "in-service education" is left to each teacher's independent judgment because they are regarded as autonomous professionals who have completed the training.

In Professional Schools of Education in Japan, the "pre-service training" of young students who want to be teachers in the future and the "in-service education" of teacher-students who already have experience as teachers coexist under the common degree structure with many compulsory subjects based on the national regulations and the "Master of Education (profession)". Furthermore, it is necessary to assume the responsibility of fostering future's school leaders. It can be said that the difficulty lies in the structure that guarantees teachers' 'professionalism' by those unified systems in a single uniform manner.

They might all be described using the word "teacher", but in reality they are extremely diverse, including the types of schools, such as elementary, lower and upper secondary, and special needs schools, and the subjects, and "professionalism" is regarded as different for each. For that reason, I feel that the attempt to guarantee the 'professionalism' in a uniform manner rather causes a paradoxical situation in which such various "professionalism" of teachers cannot be dealt with.

Additionally in Germany, various systems, including the formulation of standards and the school evaluation system, have been developed in the policies after the "PISA shock" which assigned emphasis to the "output" of education. In a quite a few of them, the contradiction or difficulty became readily apparent after the implementation. However, what I feel interesting through a filter of "Germany seen from Japan" is that when standards for schools or teachers were formulated in Germany, there was also a movement to demand for standards for public administration of the country (states) and districts (municipalities). After all, this had not happened. However, because schools have only limited authority in terms of human resources, materials and assets, and the content of education, it is considered reasonable to ask for proper responsibility to agencies with the authority for them, including the State Ministry of Education, the State School Supervisory Agency, and municipalities.

The reform ongoing in Japan has become a megatrend not only for Professional Schools of Education but also for the entire school system. Some concern exists that although the direction of the reform is clear at the first sight, the relation between the authority and the responsibility is extremely vague in reality. It is necessary for teachers to make an effort to improve their "professionalism", but how to guarantee 'professionalism' simultaneously is a territory with which individual teachers have nothing to do. Which body has the authority and responsibility for which territory in public education? I myself feel like pursuing it as my future research topic.

### Terminology of Teacher Education Internship

Amid growing demand for practical teaching competency, internship-like programs in pre-service teacher education in Japan have been increasing in recent years as an opportunity for students to have experience in the field in addition to teaching practice. According to a survey in the "Model Core Curriculum" project by Japan Association of Universities of Education, there were only five cases in 2005 in which "internships" had been introduced into universities/faculties of education. A report of the Central Council of Education released in July 2006, the year following, clearly stated the importance of internships. Another report of the council in December 2015 indicated that "school internships can be assigned to part of teaching practice". They are expected to be part of the credits necessary for licenses when the Teaching Personnel Certification Act is revised next time.

The contents of internships vary depending on the situation of the school at which the internship is organized. However, they differ from teaching practice in some points: (1) long and continuous attachment in school sites; and (2) including numerous participation in scenarios other than the teaching of subjects (club activities, school events, etc.). Because they have not been standardized as well as the practice has, they are apt to supply an unpaid, supplementary work force to schools. To make internships a beneficial program for students, consideration of the contents and implementation systems is expected to become an issue.

(Yasuyuki Iwata)

### Latest publications from the Curriculum Center for Teachers (all in Japanese)

- Annual Report of Curriculum Center for Teachers, Vol. 15 (2016)
- Record of the 16th Annual Symposium "21st Century Academic Ability and the Role of Teachers" (2016)
- Activity Report of the Division of Research and Development for In-Service Teachers, Curriculum Center for Teachers 2015 (2016)

A list of other publications from the Center is posted on the Japanese version of the website. If you wish our publications to be mailed to you, please contact us at [currict@u-gakugei.ac.jp](mailto:currict@u-gakugei.ac.jp).

### Introduction of Advisory Board Members

This year, we received guidance and advice from the following external members of the Advisory Board for research activities of the Center.

- FUKUSHIMA, Hiroto (Associate Professor, Hirosaki University)
- ISAKA, Shuichi (Principal of Kanagawa Prefectural Hakuyo High School)
- MORITA, Masaki (Professor, Ritsumeikan University)
- OTA, Keiko (Principal of Kokubunji City Daigo Elementary School)
- TAKANO, Kazuko (Professor, Meiji University)

## Sites Where Teachers Are Nurtured

### The Project for Curriculum Reform at Primary Level of Basic Education in Myanmar

Masuda Tomoko  
PADECO Co., Ltd.

In Myanmar, a much-talked about country where a new government was adopted recently, a large-scale education cooperation project is ongoing by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). "The Project for Curriculum Reform at Primary Level of Basic Education" is to support the development of textbooks for all subjects in primary education, which PADECO Co., Ltd., International Development Center of Japan Incorporated (IDCJ), and Kyoiku-Shuppan Co., Ltd. take responsibility for the implementation. In addition to the development of primary textbooks, the project provides the support in teacher education such as dissemination training on the new primary curriculum and the revision of teacher education curriculum along with the support to the policy dialogue among stakeholders in teacher education.

Professor Yasuyuki Iwata of the Curriculum Center for Teachers of Tokyo Gakugei University has kindly supported the teacher education component of the project from the beginning as an external advisor by sharing his research and thoughts in a teacher education symposium held in Yangon and by accepting the visit of a permanent secretary of Myanmar Ministry of Education to his university.

The problems that teacher education in Myanmar must confront are complicated. For memorization-based education in Myanmar, which has the primary objective of transferring knowledge, the emphasis is likely to have been placed on "which knowledge" to learn rather than "what for" and "how" to learn. For this reason, awareness of the importance of subject teaching methodology is quite low, and teacher education itself has been paid little attention to. Currently pre-service primary teacher education is a one-year course and middle school teacher education is a two-year course for high school graduates,

which are the shortest teacher education programs among the ASEAN countries. The need to extend the teacher education courses to four-years had been discussed but remained unclear without the concrete target year and measures for realization for the last few years. However, with a command of the new government inaugurated in April this year, a policy was announced to introduce a four-year system to some schools from the new school term starting in December 2016. Some observers are skeptical about the realization of the substantial institutional reform, specifically how the curriculum will be improved and how teacher educators will be fostered and deployed in such a short period of time.

While the quality improvement of teacher education is one issue, the quantitative expansion of teachers is another. In 2014, a policy was adopted that the number of teachers per primary school was to increase to at least five, irrespective of the number of schoolchildren. The policy was welcomed in rural areas, where many small-scale schools provide multi-grade teaching. However, it was dealt with by hiring numerous temporary daily-wage teachers at once without any teacher training: 80,000 teachers were hired in two years, which has caused another problem such as how to respond to the vast needs of in-service teacher training and how to cope with the imbalance of the teachers' age structure.

The promotion system by which teachers are promoted from primary school teacher to junior high school teacher, and then to high school teacher has created circumstances that teachers who have little experience or who are unable to be promoted always take charge of classes at primary schools: 40 percent of primary school teachers have three years of experience or less. This means that teaching experience and the outcomes of in-service teacher training are not accumulated in teachers who teach at primary schools.

Teacher education reform is not an easy task because problems of quantity and quality of teachers and teacher management such as promotion and deployment system are closely linked. Under such circumstances the project continues to exert efforts to strengthen teacher education focusing on nurturing practical ability to conduct lessons through reforming subject teaching methodology.

### Events Calendar

**Saturday, July 16, 2016 13:00-16:00**

Visiting Professor's Lecture  
"Report on Education" at each level of federal, state, and local governments in Germany"

Professor Dr. Axel Gehrmann (Technische Universität Dresden)

**Saturday, November 19, 2016**

Workshop for Practicing Teacher Education

**Saturday, December 3, 2016**

The 17th Annual Symposium

All events will be held within the Koganei Campus of Tokyo Gakugei University. Detailed information related to the holding of the events (in Japanese) will be posted on the website of the Center as needed. If you need information in English, please contact the Center.

### Staff of Curriculum Center for Teachers

Director  
MAYAMA, Shigeki  
(Professor, Phylogeny and Taxonomy)  
Center Researchers  
[Division of Curriculum Research and Development]  
KANEKO, Mariko  
(Associate Professor, Educational Sociology)  
[Division of Teacher Preparation Research and Development]  
IWATA, Yasuyuki  
(Professor, Historical Studies on Teacher Training)  
UESUGI, Yoshimi  
(Associate Professor, Media Education)  
[Division of Research and Development for In-Service Teachers]  
MAEHARA, Kenji  
(Professor, Educational Administration)

The CCT is produced by the Curriculum Center for Teachers, Tokyo Gakugei University.  
Editor: Yoshimi Uesugi  
Designer: Tsukasa Aoyama and Emi Oura  
(Aoyama Lab., Calligraphy and Arts, Tokyo Gakugei University)  
Curriculum Center for Teachers, Tokyo Gakugei University  
4-1-1 Nukui-kitamachi Koganei, Tokyo 184-8501 Japan  
Tel: 81-42-329-7776 Fax: 81-42-329-7786  
Email: [curriect@u-gakugei.ac.jp](mailto:curriect@u-gakugei.ac.jp)  
Website: <http://www.u-gakugei.ac.jp/~curriect/english/index.html>