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Another Hidden Reform Principle

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Regarding teachers' capability formation and professional difficulties, the criticism has arisen that some teachers have insufficient qualities and abilities or practical leadership. In the wake of that criticism, it has been some time since the reform of teacher education at colleges and teacher training after recruitment began to be discussed. Many local governments have also participated in teacher education directly or indirectly at colleges. In the name of reform, the institutionalization of teacher education and training has progressed. It seems that the greater the degree to which the content is formally consolidated, the longer the training term becomes and the more the content becomes "specialized." Before the results of one system are fully validated, another system is envisioned.

In the mid-80s, quite some time ago, I participated in a collaborative study that specifically examined teachers graduating from Nagano Teacher's School in 1931. The study subjects' age exceeded 80 years by the time of the study. The teachers had lived through the historical turbulence of the Showa Era: they received elementary school education influenced by liberal education during the Taisho Era, experienced economic depression while in education school to the period of beginning their respective teaching careers, and were engaged in wartime education through war defeat to postwar education as middle-career teachers. Later, they advanced into managerial positions during boom times and left their respective careers. The study in which I participated was designed to elucidate some moments or factors in their experiences for younger teachers to foster their competency. It was compiled into the Teachers' Life Course, edited by Tadahiko Inagaki (University of Tokyo Press, 1988).

Around Nagano Prefecture, I was able to elicit many noteworthy findings. For example, a group of teachers in charge of students of the same school grade in a school was examined: the teachers grew based on the

school; they met their model teachers such as senior colleagues; they reconfirmed the meanings and roles of a school by being engaged in rural education; their encounters with children with disabilities brought some change into their images of children; scholarship and art were respected apart from studying educational materials; they were also developing themselves even if they got into middle management; and they had been thoroughly trained in a leading school in a community. Conclusively, the starting school was found to have had an important meaning for each teacher's development.

I do not think that the findings with no change are true of the modern education not only because ages and conditions differ but also because the paradigm of education has changed greatly. Nevertheless, some principles appear to be common among the concrete findings for teachers to develop their competency (not only when they acquire their educational skills but also when their ideas of teachers, children, classes, educational materials and human beings are diverted and deepened by their actual experiences). They are three principles: self-motivation, formality, and concreteness. After all, they want it from themselves, not always informal scenes, and consistently in a concrete way. They can be aware of their own problems, can approach them not superficially but multilaterally, and can realize them easily, leading to the depth that allows them to reform themselves. Therefore, "how education should be" is a subject of exploration as well as "how to teach."

After all, "forced practice" in an obscured power relationship does not result in players' qualities and abilities. From my experience as director of the university baseball team winning the All-Japan University Baseball Championship last year and from the current circumstances in which fellowship in a school and "team school" are required, it seems that they need to guarantee another hidden reform principle for people and organizations to develop themselves.

New Graduate School of Teacher Education at Tokyo Gakugei University Focusing on the Program for Teaching Subject Areas

Tokyo Gakugei University is planning to reorganize the Graduate School of Teacher Education in 2019. There, the “program for teaching subject areas” is to be newly established. We asked Dr. Kenji Hara, who is in charge of subject specific subjects at the university, to summarize and outline of the program and the background of its establishment.

The movement to shift the role of school education from “the acquisition of content” to “the fostering of competency” is now accelerating on a global scale. In Japan, the School Education Law was revised in 2007, in which the so-called “three elements of academic ability” were given legal force. This has invited discussions in various places on the new theory of academic ability and the roles that school education should play. The content was organized in “Ikuseishubeki shishitsu/noryoku o fumaeta kyoikumokuhyo/naiyo to hyoka no arikata ni kansuru kentokai (Investigative Commission on Educational Goals and Contents and the Assessment Based on Competency to Be Fostered)” established in December 2012 and reflected in the amendment of the Education Personnel Certification Law (November 2016) and the revision of Course of Study (notified to elementary and junior high schools in March 2017 and to high schools in March 2018).

Amid the educational reform, how universities of teacher training should be in the future was discussed at “Kokuritsu kyoinyoseidaigaku/gakubu, daigakuin, fuzokugakko no kaikaku ni kansuru yushikishakaigi (Expert Panel on Reform of National Teacher Training Universities and Faculties, Graduate Schools, and Affiliated Schools)” (“the expert panel”) established in August 2016 and summarized in the form of problems and countermeasures toward “Kyoin no genshoki ni okeru kyoinyosei/kenshu kino no kyoka ni mukete (Toward Strengthening of Functions of Teacher Education and Training during Declining Demand for Teachers)” (August 2017; hereinafter “the expert panel report”). The expert panel report describes that future graduate schools of teacher education must play the following roles: (1) take the lead in enhancing all educating functions at the university, including faculties; (2) support professional growth throughout one’s teaching career, not only strengthening pre-service teacher education, but also education and training functions for in-service teachers; (3) to provide various places of learning responding flexibly to demands of society, such as setting up courses to educate management and courses to learn subject areas; and (4) to be a base to improve the quality at school sites through solving problems that schools actually have using the “coming and going between theory and practice” approach, which is a feature of graduate schools of teacher education.

In light of the domestic trends explained above, I think that the reorganization into the new Graduate School of Teacher Education aims to clarify the stance of the university that plays a leading role in educational reform in Japan by re-equipping maneuverability and practical workability to cope with the so-called “realization of a curriculum that is open to society.”

The new Graduate School of Teacher Education is expected to consist of the following 5 programs and 17 subprograms (from the 2018 information session for the Graduate School of Teacher Education.)

- (1) Program for school organizational management
[※ In-service teachers only]
- (2) Program for comprehensive educational practice
- (3) Program for teaching subject areas [Japanese, social studies, mathematics, science, music, art, calligraphy, P.E., technology, home economics, English, information, kindergarten, Yogo teacher]
- (4) Program for sophisticating special needs education
- (5) Program for education projects [Problems of school education, international understanding/multicultural coexistence education, environmental education]

The program for teaching subject areas offers a curriculum that aims to foster practical teaching ability connecting the subject contents and the teaching methods at a high level, in addition to specialized understanding of sciences and fundamentals forming the basis for subjects and areas (from the 2018 information session for the Graduate School of Teacher Education.) Requirements for completion are school attendance for two years or more and earning of 46 credits or more.

- [1] Major compulsory subjects [10 credits from 5 subjects]
 - Area (1): Area related to the organization and implementation of curriculum → “Curriculum design”, etc.
 - Area (2): Area related to practical teaching methods of subjects → “Lesson practice and research”, etc.
 - Area (3): Area related to student guidance and educational counseling → “Understanding and support for children”, etc.
 - Area (4): Area related to classroom management and school management → “School organizational management for teachers”, etc.
 - Area (5): Area related to how school education and teachers should be → “Social roles and career development of teachers”, etc.
- [2] Program compulsory subjects [6 credits from 3 subjects]
 - Basic subject, Seminar I and Seminar II
(The aim of Seminars is to review teaching professional practice and connect its contents with project study)
- [3] Advanced elective subjects [3 to 5 subjects from each program and subprogram]
 - Distinctive specialized subjects (elective) are offered for each program (subprogram). Taking subjects crossing programs and subprograms is possible.
- [4] Teaching professional practice [10 credits]
- [5] Project study [4 credits]
 - Students themselves set up the awareness of the issue and problems from school sites, do exploration to improve and solve the problems, and organize the results.

The expert panel refers to the need for courses in which one learns the contents of subject areas at a graduate school of teacher education, calling them “a matter to be promptly addressed.” Attention must be devoted to the fact that the subject area course is regarded as different from the existing master’s “course to learn the content of an individual subject prefixed the name of the subject” because it is the “course to learn the cross-subject or combined-subject content in conformity with the actual situations of children.” (p. 22 in the expert panel report). Psychology clarifies that human intelligence and learning depend strongly on the context and situation and that they are therefore not so easily used in different situations. This inference in turn suggests that even if excellent knowledge and skills peculiar to each discipline are taught, they cannot be transferred to graduate students’ ability as teachers without doing something. In addition, the wording “cross-subject or combined subjects” is regarded as based on the revised School Education Law that defined generic competency as “academic ability.” For new demands of society such as this, how should the new Graduate School of Teacher Education and the program for teaching subject areas be substantiated? I expect the Curriculum Center for Teachers to take the lead in answering that question.

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Possibilities and Challenges of Institutional Research Related to Teacher Education

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The term “evidence-based” has increasingly been used in the field of education. The evidence-based label signifies that something is established on scientific grounds, such as verifiable statistical data, in policy-making and decision-making.

This article specifically addresses possibilities and challenges, with emphasis on “institutional research (IR)” specialized in teacher education as an attempt at research practice based on evidence.

By presenting results of data analysis, IR aims to support higher education institutions in making decisions to improve teaching and learning as well as management. The general role of departments in charge of IR is to amass existing data related to entrance examinations, grades, employment, and financial affairs, and survey data from students and to present results of analysis according to the request of the institution.

In fact, IR related to teacher education was considered in a pioneering way in the “Institutional Research Division” of the “HATO Project/Teacher Education Renaissance: Building a Support System to Advance Teacher Education through University Partnership”, a project supported by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology through a Grant for Strengthening National University Reforms in February 2013. Project HATO was an acronym, formed of the first letters of each of Hokkaido University of Education, Aichi University of Education, Tokyo Gakugei University, and Osaka Kyoiku University. The author was personally involved in the practical business at Tokyo Gakugei University from October 2013 to when the project was completed in March 2018. Actually, IR in the HATO project was aimed mainly at improving teaching and learning, with concentrated efforts on designing and implementing questionnaire surveys for universities of education. Regarding survey design, efforts were made to combine items comparable with general university students (e.g., learning experiences, living hours, worries) and items specialized in teacher education (e.g., choice to be a teacher, reasons for application, teacher efficacy).

Possibilities of IR related to teacher education lie in guaranteeing the autonomy of universities for quality assurance of teacher education. Not only is IR compatible with the PDCA cycle; it can serve simultaneously as a lubricant. For example, discussions related to interpretations of analytical results provided by IR (e.g., the number of would-be teachers declines during the sophomore year), as well as discussions aimed at formulation of further goals, engender autonomous decision-making for quality assurance of teacher training education. When teachers and other staff members face to the principle of “teacher education at university” seriously, IR will be an important tool. After the HATO project was completed, it was expected to expand the improvement of teaching and learning more broadly based on IR-like approaches for other universities offering teacher education programs. Forming the basis of autonomous improvement in universities without losing the diversity and individuality of teacher training education is a possibility and a challenge of IR.

Future challenges are to relativize characteristics of one’s own university and to collect highly objective data. Although many universities of education practice IR, relative understanding of characteristics of own university will persist as a challenge into the future. For that reason, implementation of collaborative surveys aimed at comparing one’s own university with other universities is needed in terms of student surveys. It is certain that cooperation with other competitive universities will present difficulty. Even so, means of cooperating should be sought to collect comparable data continually.

The “evidence” that the term “evidence-based” originally indicated is objective and scientific fact grounded on the premise of causality. By contrast, students’ awareness and behavior asked in questionnaire surveys of the HATO project do not go beyond subjectivity. To verify teacher education scientifically from now on, what should be regarded as “evidence”? IR in the field of teacher education, in which the HATO project was the first instance, is probably the first step to spark the debate.

Terminology of Teacher Education Teachers’ Capability Index

The Central Council of Education’s report (December 21, 2015) proposed that “teachers’ capability index” should be set up in counsel between education boards of prefectures and government-designated cities that have authority over personnel issues of teachers and neighboring universities that offer teacher education programs. This aims to consider the teacher development, appointment, and training of teachers in a unified manner and to support their learning through their whole career. It is intended to clarify the characteristics and abilities that should be acquired in each stage of pre-service education, appointment, starting career, and thereafter, and to demonstrate them with their support policies. In accordance with the report, the Special Act for Educational Personnel was enacted in November 2016. It was drawn up mainly by each educational board. Because some are based on what had been discussed between an educational board and a university from the early 21st century, such as “Teachers standard in Fukushima,” and others organized conferences to begin discussing them after the enactment, their approaches vary depending on the region. (Yasuyuki Iwata)

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.

Hirotohi Fukushima

(Professor, Hirosaki University)

Shigemi Hatano

(Principal, Hanakoganei Minami Junior High School)

Kazuo Maeda

(Professor, Rikkyo University)

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Sites Where Teachers Are Nurtured

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My teaching career started in 1989. I fondly recall learning many things from experienced teachers and many things that I have learned together with students while facing many difficulties. As a music teacher, I have worked for 22 years not only teaching lessons, but also lending guidance to school brass bands and choruses while educating younger teachers. Education of younger teachers was not conducted in a systematic way at that time. Because each junior high school had only one music teacher, I educated younger teachers through workshops outside school and joint concerts with the neighboring schools. From serving as a subject (music) researcher in the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and producing results in club activities, I began to have confidence in myself. After obtaining evidence to back up my thought that my own unvoiced opinions formed during practicing teaching were not wrong, I became conscious of educating younger teachers. I wanted students to feel the joy, inspiration, and energy of music through lessons and club activities. I also wanted to let younger teachers know teaching methods that led students to believe that music is attractive and led them to be involved in it throughout life. In reality, my guidance was not conveyed so easily to younger teachers, which brought me no actual feeling that I was educating teachers. Even so, I feel pleased that student teachers and

students whom I met every day will grow up to become good teachers later on.

Today, after moving into a managerial position, I give guidance or advice to younger teachers while being conscious that it will help them be active as my work partners. I am conscious of the following points in the process of developing human resources.

It is important for teachers to practice daily life guidance, to understand students, and to create calm learning environments, as well as to produce schools in which students can feel secure. I would like teachers to impose tough guidance on wrongdoing, but to consider the emotions that underlie and cause the acts and keep watch until one is able to confirm whether the student is convinced by the guidance.

Next, teachers are expected to introduce the specialized nature of subjects and the attractiveness and depth of their teaching subjects and to provide dreams for students. To this end, teachers must have willingness to learn about the points necessary to improve their specialization further. At the same time, they are obligated to acquire teaching methods and skills that convey that specialized nature of subjects and the attractiveness and depth of their teaching subject to students.

I hope teachers acquire abilities not to nurture students within a framework, which is the way it should be, but to challenge and open the way by themselves with positive conceptions and ideas. However, if the ability to think various possibilities is missing, then it could be a mere reckless run. Although the ability to think might be improved through various experiences, they are likely to become nervous.

I would like teachers to be human beings who are warm, trusted, and respectable, and to be humble and challenging of themselves. Going further, I think that the highest caliber of human beings themselves might be teachers.

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