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Problems in Policies for Teacher Education from the Perspective of a Private University

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Reform plans for teacher education have been presented in rapid succession in recent years. Nevertheless, a solid, comprehensive picture of the reforms remains unclear. Universities involved in teacher education seem to have been in a situation for a long period during which they have continued to wait in fear and trepidation awaiting the plan to be proposed next. It is desirable to conduct active discussions related to better teacher education corresponding to changing times. Thereby, the overall quality of teacher education, including in-service education, can be improved and sophisticated. However, I, who am involved in the operation of a large-scale teacher training course at a general private university on a regular basis, often feel doubt. What do policymakers think about the roles of private universities with achievements in teacher education? I wonder if they might not understand the actual circumstances of private universities because the logic of universities and faculties of teacher education is used as the implicit assumption in their debates.

It is also true, of course, that even though it is called teacher education at private universities, programs vary, making it difficult to discuss them collectively. Furthermore, when considering teacher education in baccalaureate degree programs at a private university, one sees different things depending on whether thinking centers only upon the education conducted within the category of the Educational Personnel Certification Law or whether it includes the abilities acquired through the overall baccalaureate degree program education. For example, numerous active learning and Project-Based Learning type lectures, response to globalization, experience in various educational programs other than professional education, and peer support between students beyond the boundaries of faculties and departments are the part that is not usually recognized as a so-called teacher training course (teacher education). However, such learning must be playing a salient role in building capacity as teachers. At the risk of being misunderstood, I will say that efforts in the domains at private universities might be more advanced. The organic linkage of these many different kinds of

learning and learning in teacher training courses can produce teachers with diverse capacities. It might be the role of private universities and the strong point.

As many have pointed out, the tightening of regulations at the entrance, course approval, has limitations as the quality assurance of teacher education. Furthermore, it can take away the room to challenge teacher education reform independently and autonomously from particularly private universities with large-scale teacher training courses that are unable to "adapt quickly to new circumstances." In that sense, too, "Research Project on the Evaluation and Development of Teacher Education," which is currently being examined mainly by Tokyo Gakugei University, was started last year. I am looking forward to the coming of an era in which various ways of teacher education on which each university works are shared through peer review from a wide perspective, irrespective of whether they are national, public, or private universities.

Teachers bear a heavy burden by assuming responsibility for the future of children. The cultivation of teachers capable of responding to school education in the new era will be a pressing issue. Therefore, it goes without saying that universities involved in teacher education must improve and refine the quality of teacher education through constant effort, whether they are private universities or national university corporations. Recent teacher education reforms that advocate the radical overhaul of post-war teacher education are still halfway through. It will take some time to implement all the reform plans. Nevertheless, no matter what the reform, if private universities have a decreased educational ability of teacher education as a result, then teacher education in Japan as a whole might move the vector in a negative direction. It is certainly true that this is the era in which the attitudes of private universities toward teacher education must be called into question. Even so, I hope that they will be the policies for teacher education that satisfactorily added the situation of "sites" at private universities for those universities addressing teacher education to be able to work toward teacher education, demonstrating their distinctive characteristics.

Backgrounds and Characteristics of the Establishment of “Educational Support Course” in Tokyo Gakugei University

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Tokyo Gakugei University reorganized the educational system in 2015. Specifically, the liberal arts program consisting of five courses was abolished and instead “Educational Support Course” was newly established. Here, I would like to introduce the backgrounds and characteristics briefly.

In recent years, “the networking of education” is developing in places of elementary and secondary education. For example, educational issues are becoming increasingly diverse and complex, which has brought to schools various educational supporters other than teachers, such as school counselors, school social workers, learning support assistants, and support assistants for ICT, foreign language education, and sports. Furthermore, widely various volunteer personnel have come to schools from local communities and business enterprises. Furthermore, educational policies designed to spread the movement of “Team Gakko (school)” (Inquiry to the Central Council for Education, 2014), by which various people, mainly teachers, and organizations form networks and educate children. This trend will be strengthened increasingly in the future not only by so-called “pull” factors such as the increasing busyness of teachers and the social environment surrounding schools, but also by “push” factors in the sense of new development of educational guidance in the middle of which the acquisition of key competency and 21 century skills is becoming a global issue.

However, this situation is nothing less than a sort of paradigm shift for universities that take on the function of teacher education. Conventional teacher training universities and faculties have believed that it is “teachers” who support schools as public education and have considered the professional ability of the “teachers” on the assumption of a “solo approach (that is, “You only become a full-fledged teacher when you can do everything by yourself.”). For that reason, the training of educators involved in schools is first and foremost the training of teachers. Emphasis is assigned to fostering “a teacher who can do everything independently.” However, in the present day, when the “networking of education” described above is developing, what we are being asked for is the conversion to a state in which we grasp the professional ability of teachers on the assumption of a “team approach” i.e. “It is only natural to work through cooperation and collaboration.” It is also to train teachers to have “capabilities as a team member” and members who are engaged in education for children using their specialization responding to widely various educational issues in collaboration with teachers.

Also in this sense, simultaneously, we should not think exclusively about school education as education that is conducted at a “school” as a facility (of course, study outside of school has existed); it is also necessary to understand schools and local communities or homes in continuity and to reimagine school education as education that guides and supports children and students to study using various

social resources independently. For such a trend of education, I think that if we do not train new types of teachers and educational supporters with full of coordination ability, then universities as higher education institutions cannot respond to or guide social needs for human resources development. Reorganization of the education system in Tokyo Gakugei University is an effort that includes awareness of issues as backgrounds.

As explained above, the educational support course that aims foster “educational supporters who form teams with teachers” has seven courses (see Table 1). The composition of the courses is the result of an examination of social needs, constellation of an actual career, employment situation, and further seeds of universities, and also shows the domains of “professional competence” required for educational support personnel. Additionally, we assign importance to the cultivation of “coordinating ability” as the capacity of human resources common to all courses.

Table 1 Courses in Educational Support Course

Lifelong Learning Course
Social Work Course
Information Education Course
Lifelong Sports Course
Counseling Course
Multicultural Education Course
Expression Education Course

From that perspective, the curriculum of the educational support course has “Educational Collaboration Seminar”, “Educational Network Seminar”, and “Educational Management Seminar” in which students of the teacher training course jointly study, in parallel with practical training in the field for each course. It aims at making students learn the effectiveness of responding to widely various issues in a collaborative manner from the undergraduate stage and have a high level of practical skills there. This is of course adopted in other programs. Particularly, Project-Based Learning aimed at students’ active learning is expected to be developed.

We aim to lead reorganization to the development of human resources embracing “independence and collaborative ability” and fostering creativity by students who aim to be teachers and who aim to be educational support personnel by studying through a team approach, interacting mutually from the undergraduate stage.

*This article was reprinted from “[Kyoiku no sogodaigaku toshite do koseika o hakaruka — ‘Kyoiku kei’ ‘Kyoyo kei’ kara ‘Gakko kyoiku kei’ ‘Kyoiku shien kei’ e: Soshiki saihei no haikai to kaikaku no jissai —](#)” (published in SYNAPSE, vol.44, April, 2015) after substantial modifications.

Roles of International Consortium for Universities of Education in Eastern Asia

Takeshi Fujii

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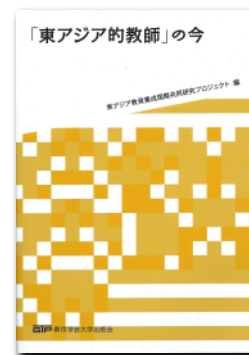
Details of the International Consortium for Universities of Education in eastern Asia can be found in "Higashiajia Teki Kyoshi" No Ima published by Tokyo Gakugei University Press in 2015. The activities have continued for nearly a decade, since 2006, when the term "consortium" was not yet used in the name, to the present. During that period, I have been involved since 2013, which means that I am, so to speak, a newcomer. Consequently, while asking you to read the book for details, this presentation can express what I have thought after my two years of involvement.

First, I think that it is significant that presidents of universities in eastern Asian countries and regions involved in teacher education come to gather every year and exchange information, and that researchers from those universities present their research results. Teacher education cannot simply be compared because it has both national and global aspects. However, the most fundamental theme is common: What do we think about children's education and its implementation? Actually listening to the talks, I found that educators in these countries and regions face contemporary educational issues and that they have largely similar problems. The question of what teachers we need to develop for the issues has much in common, which was of help to me. The consortium has functioned realistically as a framework to exchange such information.

However, with regard to research, it has left something to be desired. At the symposium, some presentations have emphasized only the benefits of their attempts. I saw some cases in which questions and answers did not correspond well and made discussion

and answers did not correspond well and made discussion difficult to advance. In addition, it appeared, on some occasions, that there might be excellent researchers for the given themes at universities not participating in the consortium. Taking up the research presentation only, I think that the consortium still has room for improvement.

Although the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology terminated the special expenditure which was the basis of the consortium in 2014, the consortium itself is to be continued in the direction of extending its scope from eastern Asia to whole Asia. Even so, in my opinion, it should emphasize "eastern Asia" a little more. That is true because common characteristics of education and teachers in the region, eastern Asia, have not necessarily been clarified yet. Personally, I am interested in whether there is an eastern Asian view of education equivalent to the view of education in the Christian cultural sphere. Additionally, it is difficult to say that specific educational circumstances in each country and region in eastern Asia have been understood in detail. I think that International Consortium for Universities of Education in "Eastern" Asia has not met its whole roles yet, and it should be oriented toward "whole Asia" after understanding them.



Terminology of Teacher Education Subject Specialty

The term refers to the group of "subjects related to school subjects" specified in the appended table under Article 5 of the Education Personnel Certification Act as well as university faculty staffs and educational organizations that are in charge of them. In universities and faculties with teacher training courses, it is commonly used, as in "professors of subject specialty." However, the usage cannot work in universities in general that obtained approved courses for teacher education other than that. University professors who are in charge of law or economics at the faculty of law or economics that obtained approved course for lower secondary school social studies are not usually called "professors of subject specialty." Nonetheless, even jurists or economists are positioned as "professors of subject specialty of social studies" in faculties with teacher training courses. Because the correspondence relationships vary among disciplines and subjects, the positioning of the "subject specialty" is complicated. The group of "subject specialty" and teachers in charge are particularly needed on a large scale in wide-ranging subjects such as social studies, sciences and home economics. In fact, those of "subject specialties" reached about 70% of the fixed number of teachers before reorganization of the national universities as independent administrative institutions in 2004. Therefore, the result has been the added phenomenon that although it is a faculty of education, pedagogists became the minority. (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.

- FUKUSHIMA, Hirotooshi
(Associate Professor, Hirosaki University)
- ISAKA, Shuichi
(Chief of Education Service Department, Kanagawa Prefectural Education Center)
- MORITA, Masaki
(Professor, Ritsumeikan University)
- OTA, Keiko
(Principal of Kokubunji City Daigo Elementary School)
- TAKANO, Kazuko
(Professor, Meiji University)

Sites Where Teachers Are Nurtured

Kanagawa Prefectural Education Center

Shuichi Isaka

Chief of Education Service Department, Kanagawa Prefectural Education Center

Member of the Advisory Board for the Curriculum Center for Teachers

To realize the philosophy of “Kanagawa Education Vision” (adopted by Kanagawa Prefectural Board of Education in August 2007), the Kanagawa Prefectural Education Center has been engaged in current education of teaching staff based on the “Basic Plan for Securing and Developing Teaching Staff Resources” (made by the same board in October 2007). The center has regarded the following as its three pillars: (1) Development of excellent human resources for education; (2) Implementation of investigation and research to support schools; and (3) Implementation of educational consultations responding to the needs of residents and schools of the prefecture. With respect to the development of human resources, we define educators’ “First Career Stage” as the first 10 years in education. We provide training for beginners and for educators with one year, two years, and five- years of experience. Additionally, we conduct complete basic mandatory training for educators with 10 years, 15 years, and 25 years of experience, defining the 11th year and thereafter as the “Career Up Stage.”

In Kanagawa Prefecture, the early development of younger and mid-career teachers and the continuation of educational ability are urgent issues that must be addressed in this era of mass retirement and mass employment.

For that reason, particularly in training for the “First Career Stage,” we position the three-year period after employment as the period dedicated to the development of young teachers. As such, we are devoting a great deal of effort to the following practical training:

- 1) “Visit to another school of the same education level” and “Visits to another school of the different education level”

Course participants from prefectural schools visit another high school and a neighboring elementary or junior high school.

- 2) “School visit support” in the training for educators with one year of experience

Supervisors visit schools of all course participants,

providing guidance and advice.

- 3) “Visits to another school of a different type” in training for educators with two years of experience
- To promote inclusive education, course participants from prefectural high schools visit a special needs school, whereas those from special needs schools visit a high school.

In addition, in the “Career Up Stage” training, we are making efforts to promote organizational collaboration across grades and subjects by all course participants conducting “practical research.” The research was conducted for participants to help them solve problems in their own schools by informing their schools of their findings.

In response to new educational issues, since this year we have been striving to improve management capabilities in a systematic manner from the training for beginning teachers to the training for newly appointed principals based on the perspective of organizational management in schools. Furthermore, in addition to dealing with contents pertaining to “inclusive education” in all basic training, we are undertaking efforts to enhance the knowledge and skills in “Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT),” which supports educational guidance aimed at the development of the abilities to think, judge, and express oneself independently.

Additionally, for head teachers, who constitute the core of school administration, we have implemented mandatory training that targets the newly appointed management and head teachers. This year, the “Vice-principal Candidate Training Course” has been newly established to support their performance in posts after they are promoted. Moreover, as training courses (elective training) for self-improvement of teaching ability, we provide 58 courses covering various contents including teaching ability, skills for supporting students, and special needs education skills.

Moreover, we are striving to secure and develop excellent human resources in education by implementing the “Training Course for Educational Consultation Coordinators”, which is a mandatory training to develop human resources who will constitute the core of special needs education in schools, “Kanagawa Teachers’ College” for would-be teachers and the pre-employment training: “Fresh Teachers’ Camp.”

Considering the change of the educational environment with respect to timeliness and the direction of the government, we are currently examining additional practical training systems, methods, and contents.

Events Calendar

▽Monday, September 7, 2015

Special Lecture “The Gift of a Commercial-Free Childhood”

Susan Linn, Ed.D. (Harvard Medical School)

▽Saturday, November 21, 2015

Workshop for Practicing Teacher Education

▽Sunday, December 13, 2015

The 16th Annual Symposium

“21st Century Academic Ability and the Role of Teachers”

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