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Shizuoka-style Teacher Education Council

Toshio Mizumoto

Executive Director of Administration Bureau, Shizuoka Prefectural Board of Education

With the promulgation and enforcement of the "Act for the Partial Revision of the Special Act for Education Personnel, etc.," prefectural and ordinance-designated city boards of education have become obligated to formulate indicators for quality improvement of principals and teachers from this year. The revised law also prescribes that formulation of the indicators shall be done based on the consideration in a "council" in which universities undertaking teacher education participate. We asked Mr. Toshio Mizumoto, an executive director of Administration Bureau, Shizuoka Prefectural Board of Education, to contribute an article to this issue on efforts of the council in the Board of Education.

<Multiple relationships leading to the Shizuoka style>

Shizuoka Prefecture, whose population is less than 3.7 million, has two ordinance-designated cities of Shizuoka City with a population of 700,000 and Hamamatsu City with a population of 800,000. Therefore, the prefecture has three appointing authorities: the local government and two ordinance-designated cities. In April of this year, all authority, including remuneration for teachers and other staff working in schools, was transferred to the two ordinance-designated cities.

The prefecture has two universities that have a large-scale teacher education faculty and graduate school: Shizuoka University and Tokoha University. Most teachers employed by the prefecture and the two ordinance-designated cities are graduates of the two universities.

We designate the existence of three appointing authorities plus two universities as a "multiple relationship."

<Relationship to date>

The relationship has demonstrated many possibilities and benefits in various situations, as well as many opportunities. We sent numerous in-service teachers to both universities' professional schools for teacher education every year and have received guidance and advice on various matters, including evaluation of educational administration, solutions for businesses, preschool education, and educational informatization, at advisory council and committee meetings.

Under such environments and circumstances, the establishment of "teacher education councils" and the formulation of "indicators for fostering teachers" can be said, in a sense, to fall under the categories of expectation and necessity.

In fact, concomitantly with preparations by each of the three appointing authorities toward April 2017 when teacher education councils are to be enforced and established by law, "Ken, seirei-shi, koku-shiritsu daigaku no renkei ni yoru 'Shizuoka ken ban kyoin ikusei shihyo' no moderuka ni kansuru chosa kenkyu" (commissioned by MEXT) was conducted during the previous year by a call of Shizuoka University.

In the research, views were exchanged related to "teacher education councils" and the way and framework of "indicators for fostering teachers," including at the time of university graduation, through confirmation of the vision of personnel selected by the three appointing authorities at the time of employment, questionnaires of city and town boards of education and universities (teacher training course) in the prefecture, and interviews with newly appointed teachers.

At the same time, the staff members of the prefectural Comprehensive Education Center have advanced research related to indicators for fostering teachers after employment, with an eye toward teacher training plans.

<Relationship in the future>

Given such a multiple relationship and history, Shizuoka Prefectural Teacher Education Council started with three sectional meetings specialized in fostering, employment, and training as the components. Members of each sectional meeting included representatives from the two ordinance-designated cities: Shizuoka and Hamamatsu. The subordinate organizational framework shared by the three meetings is called the "Shizuoka-style Teacher Education Council." Additionally, in the two ordinance-designated cities, teacher education councils started, and provision and sharing of information among the three parties' councils are recognized as important requirements.

Paragraph (3) of Article 22-5 of the revised Special Act for Education Personnel prescribes that "Members of the council must respect the results of the deliberations with regard to the particulars on which an agreement has been reached at a council meeting."

I hope that to "respect the results of the deliberations" will define and ensure the direction and value of future council, based on the multiple relationship to date.

Core-curriculums for Pre-service and In-service Education of English Teachers

—Aiming at contributing to the growth of teachers—

Project Leader : Kyoko Kasuya

Humanities and Social Sciences Division, Tokyo Gakugei University



Commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Tokyo Gakugei University has worked on “the Survey and Research Project to Enhance English Teachers’ English Ability and Teaching Ability” for two years since 2015. At the symposium held in March 2017, we presented “Core-curriculum for Pre-service Education of Elementary School Teachers” “Core-curriculum for Pre-service Education of Lower and Upper Secondary School English Teachers” “Core-curriculum for In-service Education of Elementary School Teachers ” and “Core-curriculum for In-service Education of Lower and Upper Secondary School English Teachers.” These core-curriculums are expected to be used as a reference for the approval of teacher education programs at universities by the MEXT.

The core-curriculums were created by the team of university faculty members specializing in English education, elementary school teachers, lower and upper secondary school teachers of English, and board of education supervisors on the basis of the results of the surveys of universities and boards of education, opinions of academic societies and experts related to English education, and opinions of experts on English teacher education in Taiwan and South Korea.

This large-scale project would not have been accomplished without the support of the university administration, including the organization of an administrative team for this project. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for their support and assistance.

Each core-curriculum consists of the overall objectives and learning contents (general goals, specific learning items, and specific goals to be achieved).

In pre-service elementary school teacher education, students acquire knowledge and skills required for lesson practice in “Methodology of Foreign Language Teaching ” and English ability and background knowledge related to English in “Specialized Matters Related to Foreign language Teaching.” Pre-service lower and upper secondary school teacher education deals with curriculum/syllabus, teaching to improve students’ ability, lesson planning, learning assessment, and second-language acquisition in “Methodology of Foreign Language Teaching” and English communication, English linguistics, literature in English, and cross-cultural understanding in “ Specialized Matters related to English Language Teaching.”

In-service elementary school teacher education provides knowledge and skills required for teaching, English ability, and lesson study, whereas in-service lower and upper secondary school teacher education covers knowledge and skills (teaching skills, lesson planning, and specialized knowledge) required for teaching, English ability, and improvement of lesson practice.

In the New Course of Study for Elementary School that is scheduled to be implemented in 2020, “Foreign Language Activities” will be introduced into the third and fourth grades and “Foreign Languages” will be introduced into the fifth and sixth grades as a regular subject. In response, English education at lower and higher secondary schools is going to be modified to a great degree. It goes without saying that fostering competent teachers is the key to achieving English education reforms.

It is noteworthy that we proposed the goals and content of the core-curriculms for pre-service and in-service education of English teachers in an integrated fashion. It is hoped that these core-curriculums, which connect elementary education to secondary education as well as connect pre-service teacher education to in-service teacher education, will be administered effectively.

My sincere hope is that, in addition to ensuring the improvement of English ability and teaching ability through the core-curriculums, the originality of each university and board of education will be demonstrated and various pre-service and in-service teacher education programs will be provided while sharing the core.

Toward Course Improvement in Subject Specific Subjects for Elementary Teacher Education

The Center has been working since last year on a research project to review courses of science as subject specific subjects necessary to obtain an elementary school teacher license from a perspective of fostering competencies. We asked some members of the project to raise issues related to education of teachers who teach science.

Issues in elementary school science in
teacher education viewed from actual scenes

Yusuke Kusunuki
Koganei Elementary School Attached
to Tokyo Gakugei University

When working at a public elementary school, I served as a lecturer for the city's science workshops. The situation there made me aware of two salient issues related to teacher education. The first issue is "a lack of experience in handling experimental instruments." When observing stones and rocks or water fleas under a microscope at workshops, teachers often give shouts reflecting joyous enthusiasm such as "Beautiful! Like jewels" or "The heart is twitching!" It can be inferred from observing teachers who are absorbed in making observations that the teachers themselves appear to have little experience. Everyone learns adjustment of aqueous solutions, such as hydrochloric acid, and waste liquid treatment for the first time. To make experimental observations safely, they need to have opportunities to be fully familiar with using experimental instruments. The second issue lies in the "understanding of teaching methods for science particularly addressing problem-solving." They are ways of presenting phenomena, relations between expectation and consideration, organization of outcomes, and discussion to engender a conclusion. How can we foster abilities to solve problems and scientific ways of thinking in children? There are many teachers who are teaching with problems of how to ask and develop questions in lessons. It is important to promote the improvement of curriculums and lessons to acquire practical teaching ability for elementary school science that are used effectively in actual scenes, considering the solutions for such issues. In addition, I feel the need for conscious teaching of "the ability and sense to perceive children's learning properly," "the change of the viewpoint from a learner to a teacher," and "the understanding of logic of children who are learners" at the level of teacher education. I would like to continue to promote the project from an elementary school teacher perspective and devote myself to enabling many students to grow as those who can contribute to the promotion of science education and play active roles at actual elementary school sites.

An attitude survey equivalent
to a physics version of competencies

Masuaki Matsumoto
Natural Science Division, Tokyo Gakugei University

In my field of specialty, physics, a survey of attitudes about physics has been conducted mainly at universities of education, as originally undertaken in the United States. Items to be investigated are items other than physics-related knowledge, such as learning attitude and interest in physics to learn physics, as well as relations between physics and the real world. The criteria for judging whether it is desirable behavior, or not, are based on responses to the same questions from researchers and educators of physics. It can be said that the survey is a physics version of competencies "based on the surveys of persons who have achieved a high level of accomplishments, behavioral characteristics, including unseen parts such as motivation, a sense of values, and a sense of mission, are organized." Although academic performance in physics is not necessarily determined by likes and dislikes, motivation, and learning attitude, there is no doubt that it is influenced by them. The fact that many physicists have a similar attitude toward physics is interesting. Results of surveys conducted to date have revealed that when students take conventional lecture-style lessons at university, learning attitudes of many students are likely to shift in an undesirable direction. In my questionnaire survey, which is conducted among students who specialize in science soon after entering university, students who answer that they dislike physics account for about 40% every year. The results seem to suggest that lessons provided at high school and university might make them dislike physics and lower competencies. At present, U.S.-style active and interactive lessons, such as peer instruction and tutorial, are being introduced. The situation is expected to improve somewhat. We must develop techniques that are unique to Japan, while continuing and extending the survey.

Terminology of Teacher Education Education specialist

Education specialists are those who undertake developmental support for students in and outside schools from a specialist perspective, in collaboration and cooperation with school teachers. Because it is becoming more difficult to address educational issues that become complicated and diversified only by school teachers, they draw increasing attention. Typical professions include school counselors and school social workers, but the scope is not necessarily clear.

A policy has been announced by which the New Courses (see Issue No. 10) in teacher training universities and faculties in Japan are abolished, in principle. However, there is a movement underway at some universities of teacher education, to establish an educational organization aimed mainly at fostering education specialists, in the faculty of education by rearranging the new courses. For example, Tokyo Gakugei University established the "Education Specialist Course" in 2015 by replacing the existing "Liberal Arts Course" (new courses). Nonetheless, the fact remains that no stable labor market for education specialists has been formed. Concerns persist about career choices of graduates. (Yasuyuki Iwata)

Sites Where Teachers Are Nurtured

Graduate School of Teacher Education, Teikyo University

Hatsuo Mitsuishi

Dean, Graduate School of Teacher Education, Teikyo University
Visiting Professor, Tokyo Gakugei University

This year marks the ninth anniversary of the establishment of the Graduate School of Teacher Education, Teikyo University. The graduate school has entered a period of looking back at itself and creating a design for education and research in the near future. The admission policy of the graduate school is "to foster teaching practitioners with a high level of professionalization and practical teaching ability that can integrate practice and theory and which can accurately deal with diverse and complex problems occurring at actual school sites." After the start of professional schools for teacher education, more than 50 professional schools for teacher education across the country might now be facing a fundamental question of what is "a high level of professionalization?" How about at Teikyo University?

Professional schools for teacher education must confront issues such as the "sophistication" of compulsory subjects including the "Fields Related to Curriculum Organization and Implementation." There are many cases that confirm changes in the Courses of Study, investigate, report, and discuss current and future issues by group, and work on making the course of study in the near future. There, not only do the investigation and consideration depend on new and old Courses of Study and Internet search. They must also add a process that explores verifiable methods, pooling examples of learning and living conditions of actual learners in a careful manner, extracting issues in educational practice, and looking up clues for the solution in past as well as domestic and overseas practice and theory. Experience of the exploration and research process that reels in answers to the following questions (e.g. going back to the original) is expected: What are the discussion and awareness of the issues in the report by the Central Council for Education that is to be the guideline for revision of the Courses of Study?, what are set as issues and points in question? Are they appropriate? What are the keywords to overcome the problems? What are the source and background? For the last three years, the graduate school has worked on development of training programs to foster middle leaders in cooperation with the board of education and

the integrated learning center in the neighboring S city. This year, school teachers who have completed graduate school and graduate students started to join in the development of improvement programs for curriculum and lesson practice in pilot schools. How are graduate students involved in curriculum organization and research at schools and what do they capture? Teachers and graduate students at the graduate school and teachers at the schools are confronting issues of "how competence of curriculum research improves," in a triangle formation, by action research.

Another issue is the fostering of practical teaching ability in practice teaching, etc. I often see that not only undergraduate students, but also graduate students without teaching experience, are struggling with preparation of teaching plans. It seems unlikely because they have no time or have no experience with preparation of teaching plans. They are unable to sense students' speech and behavior and predict the developing process of cognition or sensitivity. They "are seeing but not looking" and "know the method to decide which students to examine specifically and make an observation, but are unable to use it." Even knowing a grasp of actual conditions, organization of issues, setting of challenges, preparation of teaching plans, practice, and analysis of practice (PDCA), they are unable to find students' fundamental developmental tasks or an opportunity to make a leap of recognition. Recently, as part of "Cooperation between Education and Medical Care," practical training in the Trauma and Critical Care Center of the School of Medicine has become possible. At the center, 14 teachers from the School of Medicine, the Faculty of Pharma-Science, and the Faculty of Medical Technology, as well as doctors from Teikyo University Hospital divided 21 graduate students into six groups and gave team instruction. At that time, six teachers from the graduate school agreed that graduate students were quite intensively expressing learning at graduate school. Different from the undergraduate level, professional schools for teacher education assign year-around, long-term practical training. However, this is not sufficiently persuasive as a program to foster teachers with a high level of professionalization. A large amount of practice lesson teaching does not necessarily mean an ability to acquire practical teaching ability. I keenly felt that practical training requires a meticulous program and reflection in accordance with individual situations. Practical training in the School of Medicine suggests the need to consider the mode of educational practical training, consolidation of programs for fostering practical teaching ability, and consideration of multifaceted teaching systems. Consideration of "highly practical" teacher education will start in earnest from now.

Staff of Curriculum Center for Teachers

Director
MAYAMA, Shigeki
(Professor, Phylogeny and Taxonomy)
Center Researchers
[Division of Curriculum Research and Development]
KANEKO, Mariko
(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)

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Editor: Yoshimi Uesugi
Designer: Tsukasa Aoyama and Emi Oura
(Aoyama Lab., Calligraphy and Arts, Taxonomy, 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
Website: <http://www.u-gakugei.ac.jp/~curriect/english/index.html>