

New Challenges for Teacher Education Deep-Rooted East Asian

Concept of Teacher in an Increasingly Globalized World :

A Plan of Research Project for International Comparative Study on Current Conditions and Perspectives of Program Design and Quality Assurance System for University-Based Teacher Education in East Asia.

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I. Introduction

It is needless to say that public education is one of the fundamental state undertakings, and teacher education underpins the foundation of public education. Recently, the enhancement of quality levels of teacher education has been the big issue around the world. Many countries and regions have tackled a number of issues of university-based teacher education in their respective demographic, social, institutional, and cultural contexts. East Asian teacher educators and researchers at universities of education and normal universities have been getting down to these challenges, too.

Under these circumstances, we have begun to start in an international collaborative academic research-based project of a comparative study on current conditions and perspectives of program design and quality assurance system for university-based teacher education in East Asia, focusing on individual university's challenges, in order to deepen mutual understanding and to accumulate and organized knowledge which contributes to improvement of the system and its operation, and ultimately, to aim at quality assurance and its enhancement in university-based teacher education in East Asia.

II. Outline of Research Project

1. Purpose

The project aims:

To deepen mutual understanding the current systems and actual conditions of program

designs and quality assurance for university-based teacher education in East Asia, through comparing and analyzing the data that participants of this project offer about their own areas.

To accumulate and to organize the useful and meaningful knowledge about notable program designs, quality assurance systems, and their practices and so on in a certain common format, which would contribute to improvement of university-based teacher education in East Asia, through the way of case study, focusing on individual university's challenges.

To develop some international currency graduate programs for teacher education and teacher educator education common to universities of education in East Asia, through synthesizing the above-noted two research activities.

2. Objective

The objectives of the project cover as follows:

Topics of program designs and quality assurance systems in education for general teachers in elementary and secondary schools.

Topics of program designs and quality assurance systems in education for educational leaderships, such as principals and supervisors.

Topics of program designs and quality assurance systems in education for teacher educators in charge of general teacher and educational leadership education at universities.

3. Organization

The project organizes, according to the objectives:

The first research group on program designs and quality assurance in education for general teachers in primary and secondary schools. This group may be sub-divided into elementary and secondary teacher groups.

The second research group on program designs and quality assurance in education for educational leaderships.

The third research group on program designs and quality assurance in education of teacher educators at universities.

It would be made sure that graduate students at participant universities are actively involved in the research activities of each research group, although they are not official members of these research groups.

4. Timeline from Fiscal Year 2011 to 2014

FY 2011 (April 2011 to March 2012); Confirming the program of research, researchers from East Asia will be divided into the three groups in line with the target of each group, report the present state and the issues of the system, operation, and actual condition of program designs and quality assurance in university-based teacher education in each areas, and aim to come to a common understanding within each group, through sufficient deliberation

FY 2012 (April 2012 to May 2013); Researchers will continue the tasks from the previous year. Considering the progress status, we will hold a joint seminar by the three groups in Tokyo Gakugei University in November 2012, organize outcomes of the research activities at the time, and share a common recognition of subsequent tasks as a whole.

FY 2013 (April 2013 to May 2014); Researchers in line with the target of each group, will report as case studies on notable and progressive approaches to program design and quality assurance in university-based teacher education in each areas. After sufficient deliberation, the case studies will then be collected and accumulated in a standardized format. The third research group with other two will try to develop international graduate programs for teacher education and/or teacher educator education which aim to be applicable to universities of education in East Asia.

FY 2014 (April 2013 to May 2014); Continuing to collect and accumulate case studies and to develop international graduate programs, we will summarize the fruits of the four-year research and publish the report as a book in four kinds of language.

III. Framework of Problems about Quality Assurance of Teacher Education in East Asia

1 . Who is Teacher? : East Asian Concept vs. Western Concept

According to the summary tables made by the Project researchers in each area, it seems to suggest the common framework of two major problems about quality assurance of university-based teacher education in East Asia. Broadly speaking, one major problem represents a conflict of the East Asian peculiar concept of teacher and education with the inclination to accept the higher education's institutions of Anglo-Saxon societies in a process of globalization.

Most of East Asian people share the similar concept of teacher. It differs from the Western concept in which, under the Christian culture, teacher is reminded as the specialist of instruction whose main job is to instruct the objective truth, namely scientific knowledge and so on to younger generation. Comparing with this, East Asian concept of teacher has broader meanings than the specialist of instruction, emphasizing on the personality aspect of whom we call a teacher. In East Asian peculiar concept that may be under the influence of the Confucianism culture, teacher is reminded as the master of way to live whose main job is to suggest the proper way of living through her/his own living as a learning person to youngsters. The parents and children's respect toward teachers that their authority has been based on, depends upon their personality as a model who has good quality and behavior that younger generation should copy.

The fact that this concept of teacher has been sharing among teachers, children, and parents in East Asia areas is one of the most important reasons why children in this area can get the highest level of some international achievement tests such as PISA.

At the same time, it should be clear that, it is more difficult for East Asian people to establish some kinds of evaluation standards for teacher education within the context of their peculiar concept of teacher, because of its' broader meanings including with the personality aspect.

On the other hand, the globalization has been one important factor in discussing the quality assurance of university-based teacher education. While the term is interpreted "a wide variety of phenomena which have been much facilitated by the easier and cheaper contacts made possible by modern communications and transport" (Ronald Door, 2003), the effects of it on higher education in each area, actually means the Anglo-Saxon Americanization, and have cultivated the mentality around the globe that is the inclination to accept the institutions of Anglo-Saxon societies such as the

accrediting system as somehow “normal”, a norm which other countries’ institutions are deviations.

When we recognize the problem for teacher education we face in this framework, the challenge for us to tackle must be clear, that is, the development of program designs and quality assurance systems for teacher education deep-rooted East Asian concept of teacher and peculiar cultures in an increasingly globalized world. We should analyze and review the case of individual university’s challenges that would bring us the useful and meaningful knowledge about notable program designs, quality assurance systems, and their practices and so on, from this viewpoint.

2. What is the Normal Type? : Diversifying Providers of Teacher Education

Another major problem for the quality assurance of teacher education common to East Asian areas seems to represent the diversification of its providers. Some institutions transfer the emphasis on teacher education from undergraduate to graduate level, others stay at junior college or high/technical secondary school level. Some teacher education’s institutions take account of the orientation to deep level understanding certain disciplines of knowledge for knowledge-based society, others emphasis upon the orientation towards high standards of craft practice as a teacher. Generally speaking, it is likely that the differences among each individual institution are gradually distinguished, and the range of quality of teacher education among each institution has been increasing.

There seems to be some correlated contexts that the diversification of teacher education’s providers originates in. These contexts can be surveyed as follows;

The first is the demographic context. The numbers of school age children in each area of East Asia have been decreasing, and the demand on teachers has also been decreasing. In many areas, therefore, the labor market of teachers has been saturated. Universities and colleges as teacher suppliers have been coming under pressure to react to the difficult conditions.

The second is the social context. The public school system in each area has been facing tremendous problems at the turn of the 21st century. On one hand, the school social environment was rapidly changing, generating many hurdles to overcome. On

the other, further pursuits of quality education in terms of the child's individuality and personality were called for. The better qualified teachers as well as the better principals with their own managing sense were needed to meet and solve these complicated and many-sided problems. There has been a demand on better teacher education to improve teacher's qualifications, and calls for better teacher education at graduate schools including professional schools as one of the alternatives.

The third is the institutional context. The traditional closed and independent teacher education system in each area has been transformed into an open system, since the end of 1940's Japan to the middle of 1990's China. It is reasonable to suppose this institutional change offered the foundation for diversifying teacher education's providers. For example, in the case of present Japan, according to the number of institutions to provide teacher education leading to certain teacher licenses for each kind of schools, the average ratio of the universities of education to all providers is only less than one seventh.

The universities joining in this research project must be classified into the top group of teacher education's providers in each area. In other words, we do not represent the entire group of providers of teacher education in each area, but we are the particular group of them. It seems to be important for us to realize this fact, in accumulating and organizing the useful and meaningful knowledge about notable program designs, quality assurance systems, and their practices which would contribute to improvement of university-based teacher education in East Asia, through the way of case study, focusing on individual university's challenges.

IV. Task of International Research Conference

This international conference aims to perform two tasks as follows:

One is to fix the members of three research groups, that is, on education for general teachers in elementary and secondary schools, education for educational leaderships, and education of teacher educators at universities.

Another is to fix the rough procedures and schedules of three research group activities up to the 7th Symposium of ICUE which will be held on November 3 to 4, 2012 in Tokyo, and the main theme will be "Quality Assurance of University-Based Teacher Education in East Asia".