

昔、学ぼうとしたこと

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以下の文は、英国ロンドン大学大学院博士課程に入学を申請したとき、添付資料として提出した文です。20年近く前に書いた文ですが、読み返すと関心領域が今とほとんど変わっていないことに驚きます。若い先生がたの参考になればと思い、今回チャート・ネットワークに掲載させていただくことにしました。

I'm planning to study about the education for excellent students, that is 'the education for the gifted'. I'd like to approach it from various points of view. The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (I.E.A.) reports that the average scholarly competence of the Japanese is superior to that of any other country in the world. However, I have to admit with much regret that the best Japanese students are not comparable to those in the West. Many Westerners describe the Japanese as 'short of creativity', 'devoid of individuality' and 'lacking in their own principle'. I think these phrases are the most applicable to the best Japanese students. Therefore, it is of great significance to know how the gifted in the West are educated and what the curriculum for the gifted is.

What I will study

(1) Curriculum in general

In order to understand the curriculum of 'the education for the gifted', I first have to deepen my understanding about the curriculum in general. In the West, there is not a rigid nation-wide standardized curriculum, thus the

teachers conduct their lessons based on the curriculum of their own making. To help the teachers to fulfil the responsibility effectively, universities in the West do much research on curriculum and offer many courses which deal with curriculum and curriculum development. In this way, would-be teachers learn how to develop curriculum before graduation. On the other hand, would-be teachers in Japan do not have to take lessons dealing with curriculum. This is mainly because the Ministry of Education develops a standardized curriculum and the teachers in turn have only to follow it. Thus, in the field of curriculum, the West is much further along than Japan. Therefore, first I want to learn more about the curriculum, especially how to develop curriculum, in the West.

(2) Curriculum for the gifted

Second, I'd like to focus my attention on the curriculum for the gifted. Japan doesn't have a special curriculum or a special system for the gifted because the government has endeavoured mainly to raise the average scholarly competence. On the other hand, the West has curriculum for the gifted, so it is worth investigating this curriculum. Using some prestigious schools in the West, I will collect data about various aspects of the curriculum — the intended curriculum, the implemented curriculum, and the attained curriculum.

In particular, I will concentrate my research on two subjects: one is the subject which teaches 'how to learn' and 'how to think', and

the other deals with the history of 'knowledge and science'. I want to investigate how these subjects are taught at schools and what kind of training the teachers who teach these subjects receive at universities.

If there is something which works in the Japanese context as well, I'd like to introduce them as an optional curriculum.¹⁾

Where I will study

In order to study about the education for the gifted, I've chosen Britain out of many Western countries. The reasons are as follows:

- (1) Britain and the United States have succeeded in producing many world-class leaders such as the Nobel Prize winners and great statesman.
- (2) After the Second World War, Japan modeled her law on that of Britain and the United States. In addition, the Japanese youngsters are learning English at schools. Thus the Japanese have grown more familiar with their way of thinking more than that of other Western countries. Thus, when I find some useful ideas and decide to introduce them to Japan, we will meet with less resistance.
- (3) During the past four years, I spent the summers in North America studying about the education for the gifted. I've enclosed the paper I wrote about this. So this time I've decided to study about the education for the gifted in Britain.

Which position I will take

I'd like to add a few more words. Recently more Japanese have begun to take interest in the education for the gifted. However, I'm sorry to say that their line of thinking is similar

to that of WAKON-YOUSAI 'Japanese spirit with Western learning' at the MEIJI era. Namely, they pay attention only to the superficial aspect such as curriculum, and they tend to import it in its original form to Japan. It is true that this way produced excellent results in the field of technology in the MEIJI period, but it will not bear fruit in education. Therefore, in my research I'll take an educational anthropologic position.²⁾

As a high school teacher in active service, I have a keen insight in the curriculum. Besides, since I have passed through the main stream educational system in Japan, I have the experience which will allow me to compare the Japanese educational system with the British educational system. This will help me as I conduct my research in Britain.

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- 1) Some Japanese are always criticizing Japanese education, yet I think her system has lots of fine qualities—for example, success in fostering high scientific and mathematic literacy. So it will be of no use to substitute the curriculum for the gifted in the West for the traditional Japanese curriculum. Instead, I'm thinking of introducing the curriculum for the gifted as a second curriculum which will be used outside the formal schools.
- 2) This position states that education and its system are rooted in its peculiar culture, so in order to grasp an educational system we have to fully understand the culture comprehensively, including religion and history.

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