

English Abstracts

Development of an Educational Learning Program to Enhance Capability and Awareness: Active Learning Promotes the Diversity and Deepening of Thought

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This study discusses the concept and effects of an educational learning program developed to enhance capabilities, awareness, and competency in liberal arts education. Since the qualitative transformation from teaching output to learning outcomes was reported in the Central Council for Education, higher education in its entirety required to grapple with active learning. While various practical applications of active learning have been identified, certain problems have arisen during the implementation of these learning methods.

This study focuses upon what to learn, and not only how to learn, by way of active/deep learning. “Logical thinking” and “imagination” in particular, are important capabilities for graduates to acquire, in addition to the fundamental objectives declared in the Nagoya University Academic Charter. Consequently, four workshops on the topics of “Leadership,” “Management,” “Team Building,” and “Employability” have been newly provided to foster capabilities and the learning through awareness.

In this paper, the aims, background, concept, distinctive characteristics, course outlines, and outcomes of an educational learning program organized as common graduate courses, are summarized.

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Poor man's Flipped Classroom

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This report introduces the active learning techniques employed by the author. Among a variety of active learning pedagogical methods, this report focuses on a flipped classroom. A lecture given during class time is self-learnt outside of a school hours, and typical learning that is completed outside the classroom is performed during in-class time.

The spread of massive open online course (MOOC) promotes short video lectures to be viewed by students at home, and it is often seen as the key element in the flipped classroom. However, the production costs of the video lectures are usually high. So the author attempted a so-called "poor man's flipped classroom." Given it is an on-going trial it is too early to evaluate it; however, the author has a generally positive feeling about it.

Various methods are available for active learning, and one may turn his or her thoughts to the meaning of related pedagogy. Those thoughts lead to questions about what we should be teaching and what students should learn at university. In this report, I also include my opinion with regards to the question.

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On-Site Research Training for Clinical Environmental Studies: Towards a New PhD Researcher

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This paper introduces “On-Site Research Training for Clinical Environmental Studies (ORT),” a doctoral course educational program that aims to develop professionals in their abilities to coordinate and produce interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research. Coordination takes place throughout the process of diagnosis and treatment of environmental problems, towards establishing a sustainable society. Students identify sustainability issues in the designated region, develop a cross-cutting research team, plan and execute a research plan, and feed the research outcomes back into local society. The experience of ORT assists the participating students by broadening their perspectives, attitudes, and understanding of the methods necessary for practical research. There was one case where a post-doc contributed to post-disaster relief and development by the student utilising his experiences of ORT. The skills the students learn through ORT are transferrable to non-academic works. Namely, this refers to interdisciplinary coordination on environmental problems, communication across disciplines and between researchers and various stakeholders, and research activity management under constraints. The ORT is an attempt to revisit the role of the university in a society and to create new PhD researchers required by society, as well as to demonstrate the significance of transferrable skill development in graduate education.

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Designing a First-Year Seminar with a Critical Thinking Focus: A Preliminary Experiment Introducing Tutorial Teaching

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This paper examines the effectiveness and relevance of tutorial teaching in a first year seminar at Nagoya University, a research-oriented university in Japan. Tutorial teaching was originally derived from Oxford Tutorial and consists of two learning activities; preparing an essay and tutorial session.

In this preliminary experiment course, students needed to prepare an essay for a tutorial session, with a logical structured discussion and clear conclusion in around 4000 characters in Japanese. In the tutorial sessions, one instructor met with three students and asked various types of questions to stimulate critical thinking on the essay topic. The main findings are as follows.

First, the course design in this experimental seminar was effective in fostering the ability to select and evaluate appropriate literature in preparation for writing the essay. Intensive orientation and supervision before tackling the essay is a critical component. Second, writing essays contributes to the development of students' abilities to think deeply and critically on the issues raised in their essay. This is one of the most effective ways of teaching in first-year seminars at a research-oriented institution.

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The Duality of “the Strengthened Steering Core” in the American University

YOSHINAGA Keiichiro

In this paper, the author first reviews an existing study of academic administrators in the United States and confirms that American universities have already established Burton Clark’s concept of “the strengthened steering core” with provosts and deans. According to several national surveys, they are given strong authority and support staff, and are distinguished from faculty members (separate jurisdiction). Thus the autonomy of faculty members is limited to academic issues inside their departments; they only participate in university management nominally through faculty senates (shared governance).

To further study the roles of “the strengthened steering core,” the author conducted semi-structured interviews with 13 academic administrators at six Eastern doctoral/research universities in 2011 and 2012. The interviewees included provosts, deans, department chairs, and faculty senate leaders. To follow are the findings of the interviews: (1) Top researchers sometimes choose administrative careers because of their sense of responsibility and affection toward their institutions. (2) In spite of their high level of authority, they respect faculty autonomy and collegiality as much as possible. (3) Their duality as administrators and faculty members mitigates the conflict between management and academic values. (4) Clashes between academic and management authorities occur regarding department chairs.

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An Investigation into Students' Reflection Process at a Service Learning Program

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This paper clarifies the reflection processes of students who participated in an experiential-learning based class in rural India. We created the following categories: “knowledge,” “experience,” “emotion,” “recognition,” and “interpretation,” and, through processes of change in the Trans-theoretical model in the field of Health Behavioral Science, developed an analytical framework to determine the reflection process of the students. The case study of two students demonstrated that they felt rushes of “emotion” from various “experiences” during their student trip. By the end of the trip, one of the students had obtained “recognition” and reached an “interpretation” but the other had not.

From the perspective of educator support for the students' reflection processes, two important principles were derived from this research. First, students' past personal experiences were important for encouraging the reflection process in the experiential-learning type of educational practice. It triggers transformation; from “experience” to “recognition,” via “emotion,” in their reflection process. Second, educators must recognize the risk that their assumptions, based on their past experiences and knowledge, can degrade understanding of students' reflection processes.

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Activities for Supporting Students in Finding Jobs after Graduation in French Universities

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This paper examines the impact of the Law of University 2007, 'Liberty and Responsibility of Universities,' on university education and career guidance services.

The findings of this paper are as follows:

1. Law of University 2007 meant the inclusion of career guidance services and helping students to find jobs. Special new offices were established in each university. Prior to 2007, the main activity of the service was to provide information for education.
2. Based at the special offices, universities began to implement activities, for example, the provision of special lectures, assistance with future planning, and offering information and opportunities for internships.
3. Career guidance services have promoted discussions among members of the universities. Students determined that internships should be one of the components of formal courses. Professors and activity providers insisted that the activities have a close relationship with specialized education. Specialized education was regarded as more important than job seeking assistance.
4. Law of University 2007 presented universities with new challenges. Universities members are now faced with the question of how to organize career guidance by taking account of traditional missions, economic and social conditions, and benefits for stakeholders.

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Policy Making Process of the Certified Public Psychologists Act in Japan

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This article describes the policy making process of the Certified Public Psychologists Act (CPPA) in Japan. CPPA passed national diet in September 2015. Studies of higher education have since seen an increase in demand for graduation programs in clinical psychology. Some studies have analyzed the political process and regime over certification for clinical psychologists. However, it remains on the research agenda to analyze the policy making process of CPPA and the changes to the regime over certified clinical psychologists in the past decade.

In this research, I examined the policy making process of CPPA with resources published by the Japanese Society of Certified Clinical Psychologists. Consequently, this article explained characteristics of the CPPA regime in terms of three points of view. The first is the importance of the consensus-building efforts among professional groups. The second is the influence of an established profession as a vote player. The third is the efficacy and limitation of the previous certification by professional associations themselves. These findings are highly suggestive of other new occupations that seek future designs in terms of their educational curriculum and certification system.

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The Dawn of Alumni Associations in Japanese Private Universities

HARA Hiromi

This study clarifies the relationship between a university and its alumni association, focusing on the alumni association's establishment and development, and the roles for alma mater and alumni.

The research was conducted through the analysis of historical documents, university history, public relations, and alumni association articles from 1890 to 1941, of alumni associations of four targeted universities: Kansai University, Kwansai-Gakuin University, Doshisha University and Ritsumeikan University.

The following are the results on the roles of alumni associations:

1. Some features are common in the establishment's process. There are internal factors (e.g., expectation for their alma mater from alumni) and external factors (e.g., the death of a founder and promotion of status from high school to university).
2. Alumni associations were the key providers of university management and connecting alumni and alma mater.
3. Alumni Associations provide the embodiment of educational philosophy for alumni and support the establishment in their social activities.

This paper concludes that alumni associations have built mutually beneficial relationships between alma mater and alumni right from an early stage of its establishment. This relationship supports the various activities of students in Japanese private universities.

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An Analysis of the Policy for Improving the Effectiveness of Governance Reforms

YOSHITAKE Hiromichi

Since the mid-2000s, the term, “governance”, has frequently appeared in the context of university reforms, although this term also appeared in the 1998 report of the University Council as well as the 1963 and 1971 reports of the Central Council for Education. Currently university governance reforms are implemented due to the strong economic demands of the world. Nonetheless, while cooperative governance aims to uphold the management’s decisions, university governance emphasizes the leadership of the university presidents.

The most distinctive characteristic of a university is its dual structure including cooperative and management bodies. However, (1) the old convention—the cooperative body is primary and the management body is secondary—persists; (2) the management body is not very active; and (3) the methods of managing the educational body are not fully established. These problems hinder the implementation of effective reforms.

The issue surrounding the leadership of university presidents is related to their power. The university presidents should be given more power. However, this recommendation is not enough to solve the issue. This paper argues that the universities should cultivate the talent of those who can adequately demonstrate their leadership qualities, irrespective of their positions. Such an organizational culture is indispensable for the universities to grow.

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Developing a Shared Understanding of Higher Education Learning Outcomes: The Test Item Development Project

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The focus of quality assurance in higher education has shifted from securing optimal conditions for teaching and learning to assuring student acquisition of the knowledge and skills expected at the higher education level. This trend presents a challenging question regarding optimal ways to develop a shared understanding of expected learning outcomes in higher education, and how to design learning outcomes-based degree programs. This paper documents a pioneering effort aimed at tackling this question.

As a pragmatic approach to advancing learning outcomes-based internal quality assurance, the Tuning Project provides important implications. One such implication is that the success of learning outcomes-based quality assurance depends on the expert judgement of those faculty members responsible for teaching and learning, student assessment, course evaluation, and program review.

The OECD Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes Feasibility Study focused on whether it was possible to develop international tools for the assessment of higher education learning outcomes. However, it also proved that test item development was an effective activity for engaging faculty in concrete level discussions about learning outcomes, and to generate shared and practical understanding of abstract level competence statements. The Tuning Test Item Bank Project at the National Institute for Educational Policy Research (NIER) has built on this finding, aiming to develop a sustainable system for the enhancement of faculty expert judgement on higher education learning outcomes.

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The Situation and Challenges of the Learning Support System in China's Universities

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In recent times, the massification of higher education has brought about diversity among undergraduate students in terms of their ability to learn, which exemplifies the importance of learning support systems for universities. Even though China universities have various learning support systems, very few empirical studies on their effects on students have been undertaken.

This paper analyzes the content and features of the learning support systems of universities in China through a questionnaire survey. Learning support systems are expected to enhance the quality of higher education while meeting these three goals; ensuring high adaptability, acquiring knowledge, and enhancing the scope of application. To achieve these goals, the Chinese government encourages faculties to use learning support systems. Consequently, new methods have appeared, such as e-learning, class adviser systems, and student creative innovation projects.

However, the survey revealed that learning support systems are not necessarily positively accepted. According to the survey data, many students regard it as a redundant system. Given the diversity of students in their grades and GPA, universities should design more efficient learning support system by optimally using their various resources.

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Strategic Support for International Students Experiencing Academic Difficulty

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This paper aims to outline problems within the support systems for international students who are experiencing difficulties with their studies or research activities.

While Japanese universities have recently been striving to increase their intake of international students, they have also recognized that some of them experience problems in their studies or research activities. Although countermeasures have been geared towards this issue, more serious cases seem to be increasing.

Voluntary members of international student advisors at Nagoya University have formed a working group to seek better solutions to the problem.

The case examples shared by the members have led to something of a stalemate. They infer that the current lack of a systematic support system may be worsening and prolonging such problems. Proper understanding of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act indicates that universities may need systematic support for preventing such problems from increasing.

We have suggested a possible future support system with respect to other universities that have been investigated by the working group. A particular action plan for undergraduate students is demonstrate of a concrete example.

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Comparing IR Offices at a Medium-sized U.S. State University and Japanese Universities

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This study compares the role of institutional research (IR) offices at a medium-sized U.S. state university and several Japanese Universities. There are various types of IR offices in Japan and those that are responsible for university accreditation or evaluation often tend to collect qualitative or narrative data. However, in the U.S., the IR office mainly focuses on quantitative data in order to support senior administrators in their decision and policy-making. This includes the development of student recruitment and retention strategies that are related to the university operation.

In the near future, such data-based decision-making, with support from IR offices, will become more important to Japanese universities. In the U.S., the IR office has been conducting and analyzing data with clear purposes.

It is crucial to define the roles and responsibilities of the IR office to make similar things happen in Japan. Securing and training IR personnel is another challenge for Japanese universities. It should also be noted that a system which shares knowledge and experiences for each of the Japanese university's IR activities would be beneficial.

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Development of a Step-by-step Teaching Method of Academic Writing to Encourage Proactive Learning

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This paper introduces the “Step-by-step Teaching Method of Academic Writing to Encourage Proactive Learning.” It has been developed by authors and describes outcomes from the introduction of this method in the Department of Management, Faculty of Economics of Niigata University.

This method has two stages. The first stage is for first-year students. In the first stage, the students experience processes of report writing, including a topic search, report writing, a presentation, and an improvement of their report. In the improvement of their report, they use report evaluation sheets as the “advance organizer.” In addition, they make improvements to their reports in groups as well as with the correction by higher level students.

The second stage is for students in second-year and onwards. In the second stage, the students learn academic writing through the correction of other students’ reports. By correcting the reports, they can review their own academic writing skills and may be helpful for their thesis writing in the future.

Consequently, this teaching method is able to assist the students in improving their awareness of academic writing and help them promote “proactive learning.”

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