

How Prospective Teachers Grow in the Era of Globalization? - an action research on a pre-service program with short-term tour from Tokyo to Hong Kong

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this presentation is to consider how prospective teachers grow through an undergraduate program with short-term tour abroad.

According to the globalization in recent schools, teachers are required to have enough competencies to deal with such ‘globalized’ classroom affairs. Though most of the Universities of Education in Japan have been arranging programme with long-term and/or short-term stay in the institutes abroad, they only attract a few students with high motivation for internationalization while most of the students in teacher training course are willing to join programme with practical experiences in domestic schools and rather reluctant to go abroad.

In this context, Tokyo Gakugei University has set up a regular subject in undergraduate teacher training course (2 credits for 3rd year students) including 8-days tour to Hong Kong SAR since 2013. The contents are (1) text reading about teachers and education practices among Japan and East Asian Regions (in Tokyo), (2) lectures on Hong Kong education by Hong Kong professor and students exchange activities (3) observation and participation at primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong (making up lessons to introduce Japanese culture in front of Hong Kong students). Students’ reports show how they have got their global perspective.

Keywords: Globalization, Teacher Education, East Asia, Curriculum, Prospective Teachers

1. Globalization as an Issue of Pre-service Teacher Education

1.1 Requirements of Teachers’ Competency for Globalized Era

In Japan, as well as in other areas, globalization has been spreading everywhere. Concerning on primary/secondary schools in Japan, students with foreign cultural backgrounds are increasing, so lots of new types of school affairs have been realized –

such as ‘how to educate children whose mother tongue are not Japanese’, ‘how to communicate with parents who have foreign backgrounds’, and so on. Facing to these kinds of new school affairs, teachers have been required to have more competencies to deal with such global matters in recent schools.

Central Council for Education (CCE), an advisory committee of the Minister of Education, Science, Sports and Culture (MEXT) also asks for teacher education in Japan to promote globalization, so as to enhance teachers with enough competencies for school affairs related with global or multi-cultural trends.

1.2 Prospective Teachers’ Tendency against Globalization

Actually, Universities of Education in Japan haven’t done nothing about the globalization issues. For example, Tokyo Gakugei University (TGU) has agreement for academic and student exchange with 57 foreign Universities/Institutes and not a less exchange students inbound/outbound have been learning among global network. In addition, TGU has been in charge of an organization of International Consortium of Universities of Education in East Asia (ICUE) since 2009.

In fact, there are certain amount of students in Universities of Education in Japan who have rich motivation for globalization and will to go abroad. However, a problem exists – most of the student of this type with global motivation are rather reluctant to become school teachers while most of the prospective teachers (students with high motivation to be school teachers) are not so willing to go abroad.

There seems to be several reasons why prospective teachers are not willing to go abroad and have a domestic tendency. As Uesugi (2008) has pointed through her research of students in Universities of Education both in Japan and Korea, there are reasons related with students in teacher training sources as follows.

- (1) Since their pre-service teacher education curricula contain lots of ‘practical’ programme at nearby schools, they are usually too busy to go abroad.
- (2) They do not recognize that foreign language skills are crucial, though globalization among primary/secondary education is rapidly going on.

Moreover, since teachers working at municipal schools both in Japan and Korea have status as public servant, they are regarded as stable profession among domestic employee and more students with local (or domestic) interests select universities of education than those with global interests.

1.3 An Idea of an Action Research

In this context, the author has come to an idea for setting up study tour abroad (or short-term overseas exchange) with contents focused on prospective teachers who are learning in teacher training courses of TGU. Fortunately, TGU has rich network among

Universities of Education overseas as mentioned above, and one of the missions of ICUE is ‘to promote international exchanges among students who aspire to become teachers’. So Office for Promoting International Strategies in Tokyo Gakugei University (Opis-TGU) has started to arrange various exchange programme among East Asian Regions such as Mainland China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), Taiwan, and Korea. A plan of short-term study tour from Tokyo to Hong Kong SAR has been designed as one of the exchange programme, supported by the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd), a member of ICUE and the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), with whom TGU has made an agreement since 1999.

A report of prospective teachers’ development through an action-research during the programme which include short-term study tour abroad is as follows.

2. Design of Shor-term Study Tour to Hong Kong

2.1 Short-term Tour Abroad as a Curriculum Content of Teacher Education

TGU has made a curriculum reform of undergraduate courses from 2010 students and some subjects with new concepts have been newly introduced. Then a subject named ‘Seminar for Teaching Profession’ with 8-days study tour to Hong Kong SAR has set up as a selective one (among subjects for graduate requirement) for students in teacher training courses.

Major concepts of ‘Seminar for Teaching Profession’ is to consider about ‘teachers’ from various aspects including comparative method and to gain deep understanding enough for re-consider on teachers in Japan. So it is necessary for students to have chances to observe Hong Kong schools where teachers are working, as well as to learn by textbooks and/or lectures. Concerning on the programme at Hong Kong SAR, colleagues in HKIEd and CUHK have strongly supported. They have recommend (and even have made contact with) several primary/secondary schools and kindly provided some lectures for TGU students about Hong Kong education - education system and school affairs, teachers and teacher education, and so on.

Syllabus of the program is as in [Table 1].

Considering the sequence, this subject has been set as a selective one for mainly 3rd year students (2nd year students also can participate), since there is a subject ‘Gateway for Teaching Profession’ for 1st year undergraduate students which includes one-day school visit and observation at nearby local schools. So actually the programme have started from FY 2012, when 2010 students have come to the 3rd year. However, on FY 2012, it was impossible to contain 8-days study tour to Hong Kong SAR since there have been no financial support. Only 4-days optional study tour has planned and held besides regular class activities

Table 1
 Syllabus of 'Seminar for Teaching Profession' (2014 Autumn Semester)

Seminar for Teaching Profession		2 credits, selective
Autumn Semester	For 2 nd year students or above	
Aims and Targets	This program aims to gain global perspective about school teachers and teaching profession, through students' participation in primary/secondary schools among East Asian Region.	
Textbook(s)	Curriculum Centre for Teachers, Tokyo Gakugei University (Eds.), <i>How East Asian Teachers Grow?</i> Tokyo Gakugei University Press, 2008	
References	References will be shown in the class as the program proceeds	
Schedule	(1) Introduction & Guidance (2) Textbook Reading: On Teaching Profession in Japan and East Asian Regions (3) Textbook Reading: About Education System in Hong Kong SAR- compared with Japan and Mainland China (4) Textbook Reading: About Teachers and School Affairs in Japan and Hong Kong SAR (5) Preparation for Study Tour to Hong Kong SAR (6)-(14) Study Tour to Hong Kong SAR [as in Table 2] (15) Reflection & Wrap-up	
Key Words	Teachers' Image, East Asia, Practice in Education, Globalization	
Evaluation	Mainly based on final reflection report (50%) and group work performance (50%, particularly during the study tour to Hong Kong SAR)	

2.2 Financial Matters

Concerning on the financial matters, it is crucial to get certain kinds of financial support for study tour abroad, since most of prospective teachers learning in Universities of Education in Japan have not come from rich families. On FY 2012, Opis-TGU could get no extra funding related to this program, so the program had to organize without a study-tour abroad that requires high costs (usually, a tour to Hong Kong SAR from Japan for 1 week costs 100,000 JPY or more).

On FY 2013 and FY 2014 (also on FY 2015), Opis-TGU have successfully got scholarship for short-term overseas exchange (up to 70,000 JPY per head, 14-20 persons) from Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO). Though 70,000 JPY is not enough for all the expenses during student's stay in Hong Kong SAR, it may be adequate in case she/he could book and use cheap airline services and accommodations. In fact, most of the participants have added their own expenses to a certain amount.

2.3 Programme Arrangements

Since the financial support is not enough, it is impossible to organize a tour of full service package – using same full-service flights together, dining at a certain restaurants together, moving with hired coach together, etc. Students participating this program are required to book their flights and accommodations by themselves and to move by public transportations using ‘Octopus’, an IC card commonly used among Hong Kong for transportation payment. However, this condition has occasionally made it possible for students to ‘do as Hong Kong people do’ and they have had chances to feel real Hong Kong life.

Since JASSO scholarship requires at least 8-days programme abroad, the outline of the study tour has been fixed as 8-days. It is not appropriate to organize longer programme, as they are usually planned during TGU autumn semester (and, of course, the financial matter does not allow longer tour).

Whole schedule of 8-days study tour is shown in [Table 2]. The programme contain a couple of lectures by Hong Kong professors (done with English) and a couple of school visits to various primary/secondary schools – two primary and one secondary, two public fund aided and one directly substituted. In addition, a couple of periods have been set for TGU students’ presentation such as introduction of Japanese culture at ‘general studies’ period in primary school.

Table 2
Schedule of Study Tour to Hong Kong SAR (2014 Autumn Semester)

	Day 1 Jan. 4th Sunday	Day 2 Jan. 5th Monday	Day 3 Jan. 6th Tuesday	Day 4 Jan. 7th Wednesday	Day 5 Jan. 8th Thursday	Day 6 Jan. 9th Friday	Day 7 Jan. 10th Saturday	Day 8 Jan. 11th Sunday
	Departing from Japan Orientation	Lecture(1) and students' joint session	School observation (1) and lecture(2)	School observation (2) and fun with students	School observation (3) and experience	Lecture(3) and visit to EDB Kowloon Centre	Independent Study	Departing from Hong Kong
Areas	Kowloon	NT MTR 'Tai Po Market' & Bus 74K	NT MTR 'Fanling' and 'University'	NT MTR 'Ma On Shan'	Island MTR 'Chai Wan'	NT/Kowloon MTR 'Tai Po Market' & 'Kowloon Tang'		Lantau Island MTR 'Airport'
AM	Arriving at Hong Kong Int'l Airport	10:00-12:00 Lecture 'Education in Hong Kong' by Dr. TANG Yee Fang at HKIEd	09:30-12:00 School Observation Ka Fuk Wing Chun Primary School	11:00-12:45 School Observation TWGHs Wong Fung Ling College	10:00-11:55 Teaching Experience(1) HKUGA Primary School	10:00-11:30 Lecture 'Teachers' Career in Hong Kong' by Dr. LAI Kwok Chan at HKIEd C-LP-02	Independent Study	12:00-13:00 Debriefing at HKIA
Lunch		HKIEd	NT (Fanling)	TWGHs Wong Fung Ling College	HKUGA Primary School	HKIEd		
PM	18:00-20:00 Briefing at Tsim Sha Tsui 'The One'	13:30-15:30 Students' Joint Session HKIEd-TGU Dr. YIP Chi Wing (coordinator) at HKIEd	14:30-16:00 Lecture 'Teacher Education in Hong Kong' by Dr. MAK Kwan Win at CUHK Room G4, Ho Tim Building	14:00-16:25 Campus Tour Fun with Students TWGHs Wong Fung Ling College	13:15-14:30 Teaching Experience(2) HKUGA Primary School	14:30-15:45 Visit to EDB Kowloon Tang Education Centre / Hong Kong Teachers' Centre		Departing from Hong Kong Int'l Airport

3. What Prospective Teachers Have Learnt

3.1 Participants

As in [Table 3], suitable size of students (28 persons in total) have been

participating the programme with 8-days study tour to Hong Kong. All of undergraduate students are in teacher training courses and most of them are willing to become teachers at primary/secondary schools. Among 9 undergraduate participants of FY 2013 tour who have already graduated, 7 persons have got employments as primary/secondary school teachers (77.8%, including part-time employee). In this respect, the programme have been successfully held for prospective teachers.

Table 3
Participants of Short-term Study Tour to Hong Kong SAR

Students	FY 2013	FY 2014
2 nd year undergraduate	2	4
3 rd year undergraduate	8*	10
4 th year undergraduate	1*	0
Postgraduate (MA/MEd)	2*	1
Total	13	15

*already graduated by March, 2015

In following three sections, the author would like to describe how prospective teachers have learnt from their experiences during the study tour programme to Hong Kong SAR, by quoting some paragraphs from their reflection report. In the following description, students' names are replaced by alphabet such as *St 2013a*, *St 2014c*, etc. and translation into English are made by the author (not by students themselves).

3.2 What Prospective Teachers Have Learnt (1) – Similarities & Differences

Most impressive findings by them are about similarities and defences between education in Hong Kong and those in Japan.

As they have learnt from lectures provided by Hong Kong professors, both Japan and Hong Kong have marked high scores at recent PISA tests. However, the high scores are not based on students' high motivation to learning.

According to PISA results, Hong Kong marked high average in readings. But in fact, children do not like reading so much. In other words, children are good at 'countable' abilities though they do not have enough motivation or interests for reading. For Hong Kong children, learnings are so-called 'preparation for the tests'. (St 2013e)

And this kind of high achievement score is usually supported by private instruction besides primary/secondary schools in Hong Kong as well as in Japan.

In Hong Kong, as in Japan, private instructions are highly developed. However, from what I have heard from Hong Kong teachers, there are some differences between Jukus in Japan and in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, schools usually provide much homework to students and they usually do their homework at Jukus under Juku teaching staff's support. Everyday, students have to tackle with their homework for 2 hours or more. So it is properly possible to mark high scores at PISA, since children have a kind of discipline for daily studies. (St 2013g)

Of course, issues of school education are different between Hong Kong and Japan. For example, issues of 'gifted education' are quite new to Japanese students since this topic is not so common among school education in Japan.

This is my first experience to hear the word of 'gifted education' and observe the actual conditions in Hong Kong. Compared with Hong Kong, Japanese education puts an emphasis on 'bottom up' of under-achievers rather than promotion of high-talented children..... From my observation at a secondary school, science class are divided into small groups according to each student's achievement, and different contents (even different language) are provided to each group. As the principal said, teachers have made a point of raising up high-talented students. (St 2014o)

3.3 What Prospective Teachers Have Learnt (2) – Global Perspectives

At the same time, some of them also have come to get global perspectives for education.

From this study tour, I have got much wider perspectives on education. Before then, I have tried to see many things from various viewpoints, but my perspectives have been limited within Japanese education..... For example, teachers in primary schools in Japan usually teach all the subjects. But Hong Kong primary teachers teach specified one subject and they have been taken aback when we have talked about it. They said 'We cannot take care of children with all the subjects. Teachers in Japan are marvellous!' However, I also am not sure whether I can take care all the children with all the subjects. (St 2014j)

Particularly, lots of students have come to think about English and multi-cultural communication.

I have got many issues on language education since languages in Hong Kong SAR is so complicated among three – Chinese Mandarin, Cantonese and English. Students in Hong Kong have to learn these 3 languages. In addition, higher education in Hong Kong is not as populated as in Japan, most of the students are willing to go universities overseas. Upper-class families usually ask for high-level English, so some primary schools or even kindergartens are providing high-level English lessons. To get high skills of English through high level English education is a key to get high social status. This may easily cause social divide between upper class Hong Kong people and immigrants or minorities. (St 2014l)

As I have heard from Dr. LAI's lecture, Hong Kong people used to be English citizens in a past but now they are Chinese citizens. In such a complexed cultural backgrounds in Hong Kong, I feel it is difficult for Hong Kong people to live with solid national identities at present. (St 2013b)

3.4 What Prospective Teachers Have Learnt (3) – Re-consideration of Education in Japan

Moreover, some students have become to re-consider on education and teachers in Japan.

An important thing to think about education system in Hong Kong and Japan is that most of the compulsory education schools in Japan are municipal (run by local governments) while most of the schools in Hong Kong are established by various board – hospitals, charity group, churches and so on. There are many schools in Hong Kong with public fund aided, but teachers in this kind of schools are not employed by the government directly. In Japan, since most of the teachers have status as public servants, it is hard for them to organize or participate in political demonstration, while Hong Kong teachers are very active in political movements such as in recent protest against 'patriotic education' by Beijing Government. Patriotism in education is also a keen issue in Japan, but the position of teachers in Japan are not as strong as in Hong Kong. (St 2013f)

Teachers' overwork is an important issue. Teachers in Hong Kong work 61 hours per week in average while teachers in Japan work 54 hours per week in average. Both teachers are overworking but the contents have some differences. In Japan, major reason for teachers' overwork is a large amount of office work. In other words, Japanese teachers are too busy to prepare everyday classes, while Hong Kong teachers are too busy in preparing for everyday classes. (St 2014i)

4. Conclusion

4.1 What Prospective Teachers Have Learnt - Conclusion

Besides the reports quoted above, participants of the study tour have learnt a lot of topics: usage of ICT tools, English education for primary school children, and management of schools, equipment and facilities in Hong Kong schools, and so on. Their reflection reports show each participant's deep understanding and consideration about education and teachers among East Asian areas. In addition, it is crucial thing that most of their reflections have come from their direct experiences in Hong Kong – talk with Hong Kong local teachers, observation at various schools in Hong Kong, inter-action with Hong Kong primary/secondary students, etc.

4.2 Future Issues

However, the programme have some challenges for future. For example, JASSO scholarship programme may change according to recent education policies in Japan, though stability in undergraduate curriculum is quite important. Opis-TGU has to seek for alternative way to secure financial basis.

In addition, TGU also should provide more programme including this kind of short-term study tour abroad. So more staffs – both faculty staff and secretary staff are needed for the future.

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Concerning on the quotation of students' reports as contents of this paper,
participants of study tours (both FY 2013 and FY 2014) have given permission to the
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