

JLT300 School Education in Japan

3rd and 4th quarters, Junior

Instructor	TERAOKA HIDEO
Style of Class	Lecture
Number of Credits	2
Day and Period	To be advised

Course Description

The principal fields of school education in Japan are curriculum and teaching/learning (lessons). This course deals with these two fields, with the addition of the field of teacher education as advanced in recent years. Our study of curriculum covers developments in curriculum reform around the world, the background to them, and the history of reform within Japan, while in relation to “lesson study” (the study of teaching/learning practice and professional development) we introduce actual studies including the practices of private sector educational research organizations in Japan, as well as making reference to the related problem of scholastic ability. We study teacher education by linking it to shifts in curriculum and teaching practice, and examine the idea of the “reflective practitioner”, which is becoming a key concept in teacher education, and the practices of professional education related to that concept using the activities of professional teacher training graduate schools as case studies.

Course Objectives

Students will:

- (1) Understand trends in curriculum reform around the world today
- (2) Learn about the history of changes in educational curricula in Japan
- (3) Investigate lesson study while reading records of teaching practice
- (4) In relation to the above, investigate the problem of scholastic ability and recent views on scholastic ability, including trends of PISA and other methods of evaluating scholastic ability
- (5) Learn about the professional nature of teachers, who have primary responsibility for curriculum, lessons, and the reform thereof
- (6) Learn about the formation of teachers’ specialist competencies and the development of schools based on professional collegiality, using the activities of professional teacher training graduate schools as case studies.

Prerequisites

None in particular.

Class Materials

- (1) Dewey, J., *Gakko to shakai* (The School and Society), Kodansha Gakujutsu Bunko (1998)
- (2) OECD/PISA 2012 Survey Report 5: *Ikiru tame no chishiki to gino* (Knowledge and Skills for Living), Gyosei (2013)
- (3) Omomo Toshiyuki et al., *Kyoiku kaikaku no kokusai hikaku* (International Comparison of Education Reform), Minerva Shobo (2007)
- (a) Bruner, J., *Kyoiku to iu bunka* (The Culture of Education), Iwanami Shoten (2004)
- (b) National Association for the Study of Educational Methods, *Kyoiku hoho kenkyu handobukku* (Handbook for the Study of Educational Methods), Gakubunsha (2014)
- (c) Itakura Kiyonobu, *Kagaku no keisei to ronri* (Formation and Logic of Science), Kiseisusha (1973)
- (d) Ginbayashi Ko, *Kodomo wa doko de tsumazuku ka* (Where Do Children Trip Up?), Kokudoshu (1972)
- (e) Nagano Prefectural Ina Elementary School, *Tomo ni manabu tomo ni ikiru* (Learn Together, Live Together), Shinshu Kyoiku Shuppansha (2012)
- (f) Schön, D.A., *Shosatsuteki jissensha towa nanika* (The Reflexive Practitioner), Ootori Shobo (2007)

Course Method

Classes are conducted in lecture format. Depending on class content, students may also pursue independent research, group discussions, etc.

Evaluation/Assessment

Response Papers (RP):

At several junctures during the course, students will be required to submit a short report (1-2 A4 pages) stating their opinions on class content.

Analysis Paper (AP):

Toward the end of the course, students will submit an Analysis Paper of several pages in length presenting their analysis of an aspect of class content in which they are interested. The content of this paper may include a critique of the materials and ideas discussed during the course, an outline and presentation of viewpoints on certain issues, or an in-depth analysis focusing on one issue. Each student will conduct an individual presentation on their paper.

Grading

Response Papers (RP): 40%

Analysis Paper (AP): 60%

Course Schedule

Week 1: Trends in curriculum reform around the world: United States

An overview of the course. Background, aims, and content of recent initiatives in curriculum reform in the United States of America.

Week 2: Trends in curriculum reform around the world: Other countries

Trends in curriculum reform in other countries, continued: specifically the United Kingdom, Finland, Asian countries, etc., and comparison thereof.

Week 3: Historical development of educational curricula in Japan

Content and features in the development of formal educational curricula in Japan, especially from the postwar period to the present.

Week 4: Lesson study in Japan (subject areas)

The actual status of lesson study in Japan, through case studies of organizations making major contributions to lesson study in the postwar period (the Hypothesis-Verification-Through Experimentation Learning System and The Association of Mathematical Instruction) and exploration of the meanings arising therefrom.

Week 5: Lesson study in Japan (integrated studies, etc.)

To complement the cases of good practice in subject-specific educational studies seen in the discussion of lesson study last week, we examine initiatives in integrated studies at Ina Elementary School in Nakano Prefecture, exploring the meanings of those initiatives and the organizational basis that enables them to be sustained and developed through generational changes in teaching personnel.

Week 6: Changing outlooks on learning and literacy

The formation of an information society demands that prevailing ideas of literacy be dismantled and re-constructed, and that outlooks on learning are changed in alignment therewith. Here we look at the types of literacy now required, and approaches to reforming curricula and teaching accordingly

Week 7: Consideration of OECD/PISA

The OECD/PISA survey has provided major momentum for the changes in literacy, outlooks on learning and teaching as examined last week. Here we explore the survey through concrete examples and analysis.

Week 8: New trends in research on scholastic ability and evaluation

The changes at various levels examined thus far require redefinition of the scholastic ability and pose problems in terms of the best evaluation approach. This week, we examine developments in research on assessment methods, mainly in North America. We also compare them with Japan and critically explore problems in the Japanese case.

Week 9: Mini wrap-up

Students undertake mini-reviews of the content covered in Classes thus far, and exchange their ideas in small group to deepen their insights.

Week 10: Teachers as the principal actors in reform

Teachers themselves, and the collegial organizations of teachers within each school, are the principal actors in the curriculum and teaching reforms currently being pursued in schools in connection to the changes in literacy, learning outlooks and teaching examined thus far. This Class explores issues in relation to these teachers and organizations.

Week 11: Case studies of collaborative school reform by teachers

Research and reflection on some of the cases discussed last week in which the teachers are leading the processes of reform within their schools in a collaborative manner.

Week 12: Visit to and analysis of a base school for a graduate school of teacher education

Continued reading and reflection on practical case studies. We also visit a base school for a graduate school of teacher education, observe the school in action, conduct interviews, and produce summaries.

Week 13: Teacher professionalism (1)

In light of the reform initiatives examined thus far, we read D.A. Schön's work *The Reflexive Practitioner* to gain further insight into models of teachers as professionals.

Week 14: Teacher professionalism (2)

Continued reading and consideration from last week to deepen insight, as well as a review session in preparation for next week (the final Class).

Week 15: Review and presentation

Review of matters studied in the course; presentations.

Preparation and Follow-up

1. Class topics correspond with the topics presented in the text/reference books. Read the applicable parts before attending class (preparation).
2. After class, deepen your understanding of the topics in the text/reference books together with the content covered and materials distributed in class (follow-up).