Some Thoughts on Designing a Global Studies Curriculum
for a Japanese University

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Abstract

This paper sketches an undergraduate global studies program for a Japanese university. It first examines the context of the developing notions of global education and its current status. It then examines the appropriateness of the curriculum for global human resources development at Japanese universities, which passes widely as global education in Japan. It then shows why a new global studies program may be necessary by exposing the contradictions inherent in the programs of global human resources development taken as global education. The paper concludes by proposing a global studies curriculum to implement on the lower division level of a Japanese university.

Keywords: globalization, global education, global studies curriculum, global human resources development, Japanese education

I. Introduction

Currently, many endeavors under the rubric of global education are being carried out at Okayama University. Most of the faculties are engaged in some sort of activities to get internationally linked and to promote the exchange of information, faculty, or students across national boundaries, but it is faculty-like units such as the Center for Global Partnerships and Education and the Institute for Global Human Resource Development that are more conspicuously engaged in global education. In this paper, I will consider the status of global education at Okayama University through the examination, particularly, of the Special Program for Global Human Resource Development offered by the University's Institute for Global Human Resource Development. The reason why I focus on the Special Program in relation to global education is that I consider the Center for Global Partnerships and Education as geared more into administrative than academic missions.

The Special Program for Global Human Resource Development (hereafter Special Program) or the "G Course" as the program is popularly known has been in existence since the Institute for Global Human Resource Development was created in 2014. While the majority of students admitted to it are still around, the Special Program already graduated two cohorts in the last two years. Some graduates landed on jobs which had been hitherto rarely considered within the reach of Okayama University students, testifying to the Special Program's attractiveness and efficacy. As it passes the fifth-year mark—a point of viability—and enters into the sixth year, however, the university would do well to

address questions surrounding the program's internal organization and purposes. Of course, my presumption here is that the concerned constituencies' perception of the Special Program as a major beacon of global education at Okayama University is a valid point of view.

The Special Program's curriculum has been evolving since the first year of its operation. The current curriculum has a look of a global studies program as much as the imperatives of global human resources development would allow.[1] In this paper, in light of critiques of the program of global human resources development, including mine own (Kim, 2017), I would like to propose—sketch, really—a global studies curriculum for the Special Program that is befitting to the current, more or less settled notion of global education. We will start by looking at the development and the current status of the notion of global education in the next section.

II. The Development and Current Status of Global Education[2]

The first wave of global education goes back to the 1970s when the United States experienced local movements in the 1970s that gave rise to the term "Global Education." The early advocates of global education such as R. Hanvey, L. Anderson, and J. Becker claimed that the traditional approach termed "International Education" and "Area Studies" should be revised to improve understanding of the world. Influenced by this new educational idea which encouraged all citizens to participate in—rather than merely understand—the world, the United Kingdom's One World Trust started a project in the 1980s to develop curriculum and teaching methods for World Studies.

Global education has predecessors in education for international understanding, development education, multicultural education, and peace education. Articulated in the Preamble to UNESCO's Constitution in 1945, education for international understanding was popularized by UNESCO when it made curriculum proposals to the member states.[3] From the end of 1950s, the international discourses increasingly turned its focus to development education aimed at addressing world inequality: it was deemed that international cooperation rather than international understanding was necessary. By the late 1980s, again, attention began to turn to multicultural education when such societies as the United States and the United Kingdom were grappling with the growing problems of immigration. By the end of 1980s when these societies began to face difficulties in the implementation of multicultural education—it was alleged to strengthen prejudice, stereotype and even racism against the minority students—ideas about education for peace emerged to incorporate some elements of education for international understanding, development education and multicultural education.

These four education ideas or movements can be said to be on the continuum in that they all share the belief that understanding other people(s) leads to the construction of a better world. By the late 1980s, as all of these ideas or movements experienced conflicts with the national interest or otherwise

had become lip-service repertoires of governments, official interest in the international dimensions of education itself declined.

It was not until the 1990s that the second wave of global education—in its current form—made a comeback as interest in the international themes of education was revived in major countries. The motivating factor for this lies in the new readings of the world, which was now increasingly being understood as "global." The change of vocabulary—from "the international" to "the global"—marks the shift in ideas and perspectives about the world. Before the 1990s, the world and international social system had nation states as its core units, and relationships between them were widely considered to be the key element to define the possibilities for peace (and war, for that matter). The new perspective increasingly questions the feasibility of the conventional international system of states and puts more importance on other actors including transnational companies, international and regional organizations, non-governmental agencies, and individual citizens.

The acknowledgement of the changing nature of international system is renewing earlier educational aspirations and is generating educational imperatives to teach about the new world. Thus, global education has emerged in a new and contemporary form. The 1991 ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) Yearbook, Global Education: From Thought to Action defines:

> Global education involves learning about those problems and issues which cut across national boundaries and about the interconnectedness of systems—cultural, ecological, economic, political, and technological. Global education also involves learning to understand and appreciate our neighbors who have different cultural backgrounds from ours; to see the world through the eyes and minds of others; and to realize that other peoples of the world need and want much the same things. (Tye 2003)

III. The Curriculum for the Special Program for Global Human Resource Development

In the 1980s and 1990s, major corporations put pressure on the government of Japan to develop "education for global competitiveness." This movement led to official policy that supports international educational exchanges of various kinds, promotes international understanding in the curriculum, and calls for improved foreign language instruction (Tye 2003). And this policy eventually took the shape of the Project for Promoting Global Human Resources Development, in which the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) selected 11 university-wide programs and 31 faculty/school-based programs in 2012 to support leading practices among universities.

Like other universities implementing global human resources development programs, Okayama University embarked on its Special Program in response to Japanese government's call for the

national, economic, and social development of the nation. Since the first year of its existence, the Special Program's curriculum has been constantly evolving, to include now such innovative courses as "Creativity, Critical Thinking and Innovation" and "Global Studies 3" which feature explorations of global issues and their solutions. And the current curriculum has a look of a global studies program as much as the Special Program's circumstances would allow.

Nevertheless, the fact that the curriculum's construction is predicated on the value position behind the policy idea of global human resources development[4]—i.e. the use of Japanese people as tools for the national, economic, and social development of Japan—seems oddly out of tunes with the spirit of global education that encourages students to see themselves directly in the world sphere, not necessarily through the lens of the nation (Parmenter 2014).

The primary goal of global education is to prepare students to be effective and responsible citizens in a global society. Toward this end, students need to practice real-life skills, gain knowledge of the world, and develop expertise in viewing events and issues from diverse global perspectives (Merryfield & Kasai 2004). This holds true for the students in higher education as well as for the students in primary to secondary education. Clearly, adjusting the Special Program's curriculum along this line seems a better course of action because it will address the individual as well as the national interest in our age of globalization.

Despite much talks and writings about the globalization of curricula, and of higher education generally, we do not have and cannot expect to have exact formulae for action (Burn 2002). In that sense, the current Special Program's curriculum is as good as any as a starting point for global education. For one, it has many liberal arts components in it. A liberal education exposes students to a variety of human thoughts and achievement. Our aims for global education are no different (New York Times, 2000, p. A31, recited from Burn 2002).

IV. A Few Considerations for Global Studies Curriculum Design:

In designing a global studies curriculum for a lower-level undergraduate division at a Japanese university, I believe, it is worthwhile to pay attention to, among other things, paradigms of globalization, the interdependent and interconnected nature of the world, the primacy of culture and multiple perspectives in global education, and the presence of Western-bias in Japanese education.

1.　Paradigms of Globalization

Globalization tends to be thought of as in opposition to nationalism. However, this is not a constructive paradigm to rest a global studies program on and one which has the following undesirable effects:

(1) If successful, it would drain the vitality out of the rich diversity of local traditions and the accumulated experience of centuries.

(2) It creates conflict between global forces and local populations

(3) It creates conflict between different peoples as each attempts to ensure its norms become dominant in the new global order.

(4) It ensures the temporary defeat of globalization as local traditions and loyalties reassert themselves.

Bad Consequences of a bad paradigm

An unfortunate result of this paradigm is the de-emphasis of national traditions and focus exclusively on the global era. Since the current global culture is relatively new—only beginning in the 19th century and only hitting full stride in the late 20th/early 21st century. This means that the focus is predominantly on the economic aspects of education. The de-emphasis on students' learning their own national tradition also creates a passive resistance on the part of those wanting to retain a distinctive national culture. Lip service is paid to globalization, but it is not embraced because it is considered a threat to the national culture.

A major empirical study on the curriculum of global education in 100 countries found that throughout the world, schooling is still seen as a major force in the building of national loyalties (Tye 2003). This is true despite the inexorable movement toward the regional and international interconnectedness of the global systems mentioned in the definition above (**II**).

A new paradigm for globalization

In a new paradigm, local and national traditions should be given full weight. Students shouldl be taught the glories of their own kings and heroes, their own philosophers and thinkers—their own national narrative. Then, they will be shown how to integrate that understanding of themselves and their nation into the larger world community. They will be shown how they must be part of a new global class that, while retaining their own national characteristics, will nonetheless have a sense of membership in the larger global community

2. The Interconnected or Interdependent Nature of the World

Scholars in the field of global education have developed both substantive differences and perceptual differences vis-à-vis traditional approaches to the study of cultures, world geography,

national history, foreign policy, and the history of world civilizations. Substantively, the world is seen as integrated systems in which technological, ecological, economic, political and development issues can no longer be effectively addressed by individual nations because the issues become global as they spill over borders and regions (Merryfield 1998).

Because of these interconnections or interdependence between students, their communities and other peoples, global education includes the goals of decision-making, participation, and long-term involvement in the larger world beyond our borders as well as in the local community. Scholars have also included other elements, such as global history, the changing nature of world actors and transactions, persistent global problems and issues, and cross-cultural experiences (Merryfield 1998). A new global studies program that emphasizes the interconnected or interdependent nature of the world would be a great service for Japanese students whose thinking has been formed along national lines.

3. The Primacy of Culture and Multiple Perspectives in Global Studies

The various groups of teachers engaged in global education agree on the primacy of culture and multiple perspectives, of relating global content to the lives of students, and connecting knowledge across time and space (Merryfield 1998). Some consensus seems to be forming among them about the theory and practice of teaching global perspectives. Culture is the central component from which other elements in global education develop. The study of culture begins with those of the students in the teacher's class or school and expands to diverse cultures in the local community, the nation and the world.

Those global issues most often mentioned by the schools responding to the aforementioned empirical study (Tye 2003) were ecology/environment, development/sustainability, intercultural/multicultural relations, peace, technology, human rights, democracy/civic education, international organizations, population, health (including AIDS), racism and gender discrimination, and global citizenship. A new global studies program would do well by starting with the study of cultures and civilizations and applying multiple perspectives to the global issues.

4. The Presence of Western-bias in Japanese Education

In Japan, the term 'international education' had been more commonly used than 'global education' (Zhao, Lin & Hoge 2007). The concept of international education, as introduced by UNESCO, came to be known to the general public in 1954 when UNESCO adopted the recommendation concerning "education for international understanding and co-operation" and Japan adopted and promoted similar proposals to those of UNESCO. Since then this form of education has been called 'Education for

International Understanding' in Japan.

　While finding international education in Japan popular and progressing, scholars also detect that the knowledge of and attitudes towards the world that are being structured in schools are, in reality, very Western-biased (Parmenter 1999; Zhao, Lin & Hoge 2007). Also, as the languages of Japan's closest neighbors and largest foreign groups, the study of Chinese and Korean could be assumed to be more useful for international understanding than the study of French or German. MEXT, however, retains its bias towards the West (Parmenter 1999). The situation is not much different in higher education. Knowledge and culture of Asia and other nationals are largely ignored (Zhao, Lin & Hoge 2007). A new global studies program had better correct this bias.

V. Designing and Implementing a Global Studies Curriculum

　In light of the considerations in the previous section, I would like sketch a very tentative curriculum for a global studies program for lower-division undergraduate Japanese students. The curriculum will consist of three phases spanning over 4 quarters, roughly the length of an academic minor at a Japanese higher education institution like Okayama University.

Phase One:

Japanese Civilization (2 College Quarters; Equivalent to Western Civilization – Sources of Japanese Civilization might be a good guide to essential passages)

- Political
  - Secondary Source Texts - Brief Narrative Historical Overviews, Manga versions of Japanese history,
  - Primary Source Texts – Passages from: Heike Monogatari, Hogen Monogatari, various historical chronicles

- Philosophical/Religious – Shinto, Confucianism as adapted for Japan, Buddhism as adapted for Japan (Pure Land Sect, Amida Buddhism Sect)
  - Primary Source Texts– Kojiki, Japanese Sutras, Any political philosophy
  - Secondary Source Texts – Brief summaries of major philosophical schools, interesting stories about any of the founders, any Manga that is on topic

- Literary
  - Primary texts passages from Yoshitsune, Tale of Genji
  - Secondary sources – some brief outline of Japanese Literature, Manga

Directed studies for those interested in specific topics/texts may be an option.

Phase Two:

Asian Civilization (1 College Quarter)

- Survey of East Asian Civilization
- Relationships under traditional order – Chinese and Indian Culture Spheres, Tributary world of China, Occasional wars between China/Korea, Japan/Korea, China/Japan, China/Vietnam
- Relationships under new order – Sovereign nations vs tributary relationships; History wars, Role of history in legitimizing/delegitimizing nations and empires
- Relationships with the West – Development of a new modern civilization distinct from the West

Phase Three:

Global Civilization and Global Citizenship (1 Quarter)

- Background
  - Development of new Global Civilization - Mapping and exploration, Colonialism, Independence and cold war, rise of Asian tigers as alternative locus of 1st world modernity. Third World - Much of world clearly not traditional anymore, but without being first world and fully modern.
  - New Global World: United nations, World Bank, NGOs, Political groupings and economic groupings that are more that national alliances— NATO, OPEC, ASEAN, European Community, Silk Road Initiative; Trans-pacific partnership and other free trade blocs; Governance as opposed to Government

- Rise of a global class and its characteristics
  - Attenuated nationalism/patriotism/religion
  - Focused on the financial

- Outlining a new ideal for a new class – historical examples and paradigms
  - Rise of the professional bureaucrat in traditional China and rise of the Confucian scholar/official
  - The early medieval barbarian warrior class of Europe and the rise of Chivalry
  - The Samurai Class the rise of Bushido
  - Failure to develop a distinct high ideal for industrial bourgeoisie, middle class, Yuppie

- Developing a new ideal for a new global class

> ➢ Obligations of Global Citizenship and the new Global Class
>> ✧ Rootedness in local traditions/dangers of deracination
>> ✧ Participation in Global culture/dangers of provincialism
>> ✧ Obligation to be an economically useful part of the Global Civilization (Foundational and currently the only fulfilled virtue)
>> ✧ Obligations to the those who are not part of the new Global Class/dangers of neglect of other classes
>> ✧ Obligations to maintaining a high civilization/Dangers of becoming homo economicus-living for shallow amusements and material things
>> ✧ Obligations to environment
>> ✧ Transcendent ideals

These are merely initial thoughts – for the program's effectiveness, research will need to be done to determine:

① How much of these topics were covered in students' previous education.

② How much is covered in required courses at the university.

③ How much of what was covered is retained.

For example, does the average Japanese student know something about his history? Can he identify the Amaterasu, the Heian Era, the Gempei wars, Ieyasu, the Tokugawa Shogunate, the Meiji Restoration. In what depth do they know these things? On the one hand the program should not rehash what they already know or duplicate what they are learning elsewhere at the university. On the other, the program should not assume they know these things in virtue of being genetically Japanese. The ignorance of young people can be quite shocking sometimes.

VI. Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I have attempted to design a global studies program for a lower-division undergraduate level of education at a Japanese university in the context of the development and current status of global education. Such a program would be not only possible but also profitable for Japanese students whose thinking has been formed along exclusively national lines but paradoxically has also not been nurtured by the study of even their own cultural tradition, much less the traditions of their immediately neighboring countries. Provision of such a program would depend on favorable administrative and financial conditions, as well as the will of the university's leaders and various constituencies. However, dreaming of an improved global studies program is the first step toward creating one.

Appendix

The Special Program's 2018 Curriculum

【For students admitted in 2018 and afterwards】					
Course Classification	Course Title		Required/Elective	No. of Credits	Required for completing the program
Special Program for Academic English (SPAcE)	IGS	Introduction to Global Studies	Different requirements for each group of students (See a separate table titled "2018 SPAcE curriculum")		
	ISC	Independent Study Class			
	AC1	Academic Class 1			
	AC2	Academic Class 2			
	TP1	TOEFL Preparation Class 1			
	IP1	IELTS Preparation Class 1			
	IRC	Intercultural Relations and Communication			
	RWC	Research Writing Class			
	TP2	TOEFL Preparation Class 2		1	
	IP2	IELTS Preparation Class 2		1	
Global Core Subjects	Global Core Subjects 1	Cross-cultural understanding 1	Compulsory elective	1	1
		Cross-cultural understanding 2		1	
		Cross-cultural understanding 3		1	
		Understanding Japanese Culture 1	Compulsory elective	1	1
		Understanding Japanese Culture 2		1	
		Understanding Japanese Culture 3		1	
		Millennium Nature & Science 1	Compulsory elective	1	1
		Millennium Nature & Science 2		1	
		Millennium Nature & Science 3		1	
		Communication Skills Development 1	Compulsory elective	1	1
		Communication Skills Development 2		1	
		Intro to Special Program for Global Human Resource Development	Elective	1	8
	Global Core Subjects 2	Global Studies 2	Compulsory elective	1	2 (Two subjects required)
		Global Studies 3		1	
		Creativity, Critical Thinking & Innovation		1	
Short-term Summer/Spring	Global Overseas Short-term Training		Compulsory elective	1	1 No restriction for the Advanced Study Abroad (ASA) Group

Study Abroad	Global Domestic Short-term Training	Elective for ASA	1	
Long-term Study Abroad/Overseas Internship	Study Abroad or Overseas Internship (Long-term) ※For 6 months or more	Compulsory elective	2	1
	Study Abroad or Overseas Internship (Short-term) ※For 8 weeks or more		1	
	Seminar on Studying Abroad	Elective	1	
Total				13

2018 SPAcE Curriculum

【For students admitted in 2018 and afterwards】

※The Required Courses and Credits for The Special Program for Academic English (SPAcE)

Group Classification / Courses		Advanced Study Abroad	Study Abroad I	Study Abroad II	Short-term Abroad
Introduction to Global Studies	1	Not required	Not required		1 and more (Up to 2)
Independent Study Class	1				
Academic Class 1	1			1	2 and more (Up to 4) 5
Academic Class 2	1			1 and more (Up to 2)	
TOEFL Preparation Class 1	1			6	
IELTS Preparation Class 1	1				
Intercultural Relations & Communication	1	3 and more (Up to 4) 4	3 and more (Up to 4) 5	2 and more (Up to 4)	
Research Writing Class	1		1 and more	Not required	Not required
Total		4	5	6	5

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[1] See the Appendix.

[2] This section has been informed mainly by Fujikane (2003) and Tye (2003, 2014)

[3] [that] Their national education systems should include (a) the provision of accurate knowledge of other countries and cultures to promote friendly relationships, (b) learning about universal human rights to foster human morality, and (c) the study of the United Nations to understand the international system of nation states.

[4] As defined in 2011 by the Council on Promotion of Human Resource for Globalization Development, an advisory council directly under the Prime Minister and his Cabinet (Yonezawa 2014), global human resources development aims at acquisition of:

Factor I: Linguistic and communication skills;

Factor II: Self-direction and positiveness, a spirit for challenge, cooperativeness and flexibility, a sense of responsibility and mission;

Factor III: Understanding of other cultures and a sense of identity as a Japanese national.