Issues and Initiatives for Overseas Training in Japanese University Education:*

−Changes in Japanese Students' Learning Culture and Education from Passive to Active−

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<Outline>

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1. Introduction

Along with increased globalization, there have been radical changes in a

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variety of fields in society, changes that could not have been imagined 10 years ago (Kajiwara, 2011). The needs of society have also changed drastically to include the ability to think about things from perspective wide enough to transcend national borders, cultures, and languages (Binkley et al., 2009; Griffin, McGaw, & Care, 2012). These drastic changes also include the ability to synthesize one's own and others' existing knowledge and experiences in order to further create new things (Shimizu, 2012; Matsushita, 2015). This is also true for education.

Movements for revising educational policies have become common in regions throughout the world (Matsushita, 2015; Katsuno, 2013). For example, the Assessment and Teaching of Twenty-First Century Skills (ATC21S) was established in 2009; in 2010, Australia, Finland, Portugal, Singapore, the U.K., and the U.S. all joined the project. The ATC21S first defined "21st century skills" as essential skills for navigating education and the workplace in the modern world. Naming ten skills within four categories (Table 1), the ATC21S particularly emphasizes "collaborative problem solving" (CPS) and "learning [to use] digital networks" (Binkley et al., 2009). It also argues that current educational learning environments and assessments must be changed significantly in order to help students develop 21st century skills (Griffin, McGaw, & Care, 2012).

This paper first summarizes the importance of "generic skills" and changes for education globally by reviewing literature and then reports an overseas training program as a practical example. In the first chapter, based on the literature review, it discusses the changes to the environment of university education globally and in Japan and explains "generic skills" in more details. In the second chapter, it reports the status and issues with overseas training programs at Japanese universities. Furthermore, in the last chapter, it introduces an overseas training program carried out by Japanese university students in Korea as an example to change students' learning attitudes from passive to active.

<Table 1> KSAVE model based on the ATC21S framework

Categories	Skills
Ways of thinking	1. Creativity 2. Critical thinking, problem solving, decision making 3. Learning and innovation
Ways of working	4. Communication 5. Collaboration
Tools for working	6. Information and communications technology (ICT) 7. Information literacy
Living in the world	8. Citizenship 9. Life and career 10.Personal and social responsibility

(Binkley et al., 2009)

2. Changes to the Environment of University Education, and the Importance of "Generic Skills"

Parallel to changes in education in other countries, Japanese education has been experiencing a shift. Regarding Japanese educational content, curricula have been prescribed by administrations for high school and below, and curricula for universities have been implemented at the discretion of each individual university. However, the 2008 Central Council for Education report "Toward Forming a Bachelor Curriculum Education" clarified the skills that should be learned at universities and strongly demanded guarantees of educational quality so that students could acquire common skills at any university. To provide context for these changes, we need to mention "universalization" (more seats at universities than applicants enrolling). Until recently, only a limited number of eligible people were able to continue onward to institutions of higher education such as universities, with over 50% of the college-age population enrolled in universities since 2007 (The Japan Association of Private Universities and Colleges, 2012). With the approaching "age of universalization," there is a rush to reconsider the

education of the younger generation, who will be the leaders of the future.

Furthermore, until now, only a small fraction of supervisors were sent to locations overseas, but in recent years, along with the intensification of societal competition in the current global and international circumstances, companies that send more representatives overseas are increasing. This has resulted due to a period in which prolonged economic stagnation and a substantial drop in the working-age population due to declining birthrates mean that economic activities cannot be carried out within Japan alone. One can see remarkable liberalization and predominance of markets, the expansion of globalization, and intensified competition beyond national borders.

Accordingly, the Japan Business Federation published the "Proposal for the Education of Global Talent" in 2011. The proposal emphasized the necessity of businesses, universities, and the government to fulfill their roles while mutually cooperating for strategic engagement in the education of talent that can address the global social climate as an issue for citizens. Furthermore, the report cited important skills for flourishing in society, from the perspective of each field.

The Central Council for Education (2008) considered generic skills as abilities "essential for intellectual activity, and for work life and social life" and additionally as general-purpose skills. The five specific abilities listed as generic skills are "communication skills," "quantitative skills," "information literacy," "logical thinking," and "problem-solving skills." These skills are understood as necessary for the practical application of foundational studies or for learning technical skills and gaining expertise rather than developing only a theoretical understanding of them.

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry brought up "basic workforce skills" and "employability" as skills that the business world wants students to acquire before entering the workforce (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, 2006). "Basic workforce skills" are based on generic skills as understood overseas, particularly those of Britain and Australia, who define these as "skills transferable to any occupation" and as skills that emphasize

employability (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, 2006). "Basic workforce skills" include 12 skills sorted into three categories: "ability to move forward," "ability to think thoroughly," and "ability to work in a team."

Universities are also starting to work on education for the development of people who can respond to these kinds of needs. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) announced the "Plan for Implementing University Reform" in 2012 to respond to the needs of the 21st century. In the plan, it specified desirable talent as "people who can continue lifelong learning, think independently, and take action," "people who flourish in a global society," "people who innovate," and "people who can communicate beyond differing languages, generations, and standpoints." These kinds of skills that people have may differ in name from those defined as "generic skills," "basic workforce skills," and "employability," but they share many points such as being general-purpose, involving a comprehensive ability to think (such as with logical thinking and problem-solving skills), and requiring communication skills.

Additionally, university education in Japan is pursuing dynamic changes for a more active and hands-on education over conventional instruction models. Kariya (1998) and Kobayashi (1998) express this change as one from "passive knowledge" to "active knowledge." With an emphasis on development rather than a passive learning approach of memorizing existing knowledge, students discover new meanings and issues from existing knowledge and strive to actively solve problems. At universities, it is essential to convert to an education style in which active learning plays a central role' and to a project-based learning model in which students grow intellectually while giving each other mutual encouragement.

3. Current Status and Issues with Overseas Training at Japanese Universities

While study abroad worldwide has been increasing along with

globalization, the numbers of Japanese students studying abroad is trending downward in comparison with foreign countries. Japanese students studying abroad numbered 83,000 in 2004 and 58,000 in 2010, showing a decrease of 30% (MEXT, 2014). One reason is that with declining birthrates, the number of university-age students has decreased even more than usual, but the younger generation is less aware of the merits of studying abroad due to structural insecurities such as the economic burden, effect on job searching, and authorization of credits at their home universities.

However, Kawai (2011) points out that based on cooperative agreements between universities within Japan and those overseas, the number of students sent overseas from Japanese universities is gradually increasing. In order to promote study abroad based on this trend, and because there is a need to systematically and purposefully send students abroad, MEXT implemented the Go Global Japan Project in 2012 rather than wait for student interest to develop. The Japan Revitalization Strategy, which was devised by the Cabinet in 2013 in order to strengthen people's abilities to respond to globalization and other changes, revealed that they would increase the number of Japanese students studying abroad within 10 years from 60,000 in 2010 to 120,000 in 2020. While implementing financial support for study abroad through such programs as "Tobitate! (Leap for Tomorrow) Study Abroad Initiative," larger numbers of the younger generation is being provided with study abroad opportunities. Furthermore, they have started the "Student Exchange Support Program (Short-term Study)" initiative, providing scholarships for sending program participants overseas for fewer than three months, thus giving students a first experience through short, overseas stays.

Through such support, more and more universities are incorporating overseas training into regular curricula and extracurricular education in recent years (Kakimoto 2012; Ikeda 2014). Overseas training programs are a way to send students overseas who are otherwise unmotivated to study abroad, and make them experience the world; these programs are

thought of as an ideal place for hands-on use of "active knowledge" (Kariya 1998; Kobayashi 1998). Short-term overseas training programs in particular, because of merits such as the comparatively lower participation cost and the fact that students can graduate in four years without having to extend their period of enrollment, are attracting significant attention focusing on ways to widen their coverage of students who can become the target group for overseas study. Furthermore, they can also assume the role of building bridges to long-term study abroad by creating overseas experiences even in the short term (Kobayashi 2013).

However, just because universities have conducted several overseas training programs and sent large numbers of students overseas, it is necessarily the case that they have cultivated global talent (Kobayashi 2015). The experience of staying overseas or lack thereof is not itself an indication of global talent; the key is whether and in what way the students were able to transform the experiences and realizations they had overseas into personal lessons. Issues such as those below must be considered in order to implement overseas training that is effective for this kind of learning.

First, is the process for effectiveness and appreciation gained in overseas training? Ikeda (2014) states that many training programs incompletely grasp the educational effectiveness of overseas training and that only a few are comprehensively inspected. Kudo (2009) points out that many only focus on positive results. Rubin and Sutton (2001) attempted to measure effectiveness by classifying the results gained in overseas training into academic results (the development of knowledge and skills) and non-academic results (emotional, behavioral, and personal growth). However, non-academic growth differs from person to person; further, it is difficult to measure because results are not always the same in all participants, and personal growth in non-academic categories cannot be seen in a short period of time (Yamauchi 2015).

Next, there is also the issue of positioning the training program within

the university. It is unclear how to integrate into academic departments the foreign-culture experiences included in overseas training and the outcomes and efficacy of it (Adachi 2011; Kakimoto 2012); additionally, there are differences among universities.

Moreover, the rigor of training materials, including pre- and post-study, is an issue. In overseas training, it is expected that students will come to acquire wide-ranging skills, including cross-cultural understanding and the ability to interact with foreign cultures. However, these skills will not develop by simply going to a foreign country and placing oneself in a foreign culture (Bennett 2008). The outcomes vary widely depending on the student's foreign language ability, instruction or training before and after the study abroad program, and the contents of that instruction (Bennett 2008; Adachi 2011). Komatsu (2015) points out that being sent overseas has not only positive results but also "negative effects," stressing the importance of thoughtful implementation of instruction before and after the program. In order to maximize learning in overseas training, it is essential to define the learning goals ahead of time and to give sufficient background knowledge and tools for analysis and self-reflection (Adachi 2011).

In the next section, we will analyze the implementation of overseas training in South Korea at Yamaguchi Prefectural University since 2014, based on the previously described status and issues with overseas training in Japan.

4. Yamaguchi Prefectural University Overseas Training Trials in South Korea using PBL

Yamaguchi Prefectural University was selected in 2013 for the "Go Global Japan Project Type B (Faculty/School Specific Type)" promoted by MEXT, and the university plans to expand its educational contents even

further. Regarding Type B (Faculty/School Specific Type) for which this university was selected, there were 111 applicants from among national, public, and private universities across Japan, of which 31 were selected (which included three public universities, including this university). After being selected, the university has been running 10-13 short-term, overseas training programs, including language programs and long-term foreign exchange activities. Program locations are in a variety of countries, but the PBL (Project-Based Learning) has been used in South Korea since 2014. There are two types of PBL approaches: Problem-Based Learning and Project-Based Learning. According to Yuasa et al. (2011), in Problem-Based Learning, the learning process is specifically defined and the objectives are built into the activities; on the other hand, in Project-Based Learning, the learning process varies by individual. The program has been carried out based on the theme of "regional revitalization." In particular, students learn about regional issues such as depopulation and the decline of traditional local shopping areas. The program also emphasizes the learning process for reaching specific goals with student-centered learning activities. Therefore, the program has been conducted by taking the Project-based Learning approach.

The training program, is carried out in Changwon, South Korea, for nine days in the second half of September during summer vacation. On-site learning activities involve attending 1) regional flea markets, 2) a Japanese cultural experience booth, and 3) a Japan-South Korea cooperative seminar (for specific activity details, refer to Lim, Morihara and Yoshida 2015; and Lim, Morihara and Jung 2016).

In the 2014 academic year, the general skill acquisition was measured through self-evaluations by students before pre-study, after on-site learning, and after post-study, and these were used as evaluations of the training program. The results were that 1) because PBL is a learning method that stresses process, it was effective in achieving skill-building and educational goals; 2) by doing self-evaluations before, during, and

after the learning process, students' own abilities became visible and metacognition became possible; and 3) it was implied that the skills acquired differed depending on study content before, during, and after the program. From this, it was clear that providing continuous footholds that support students' learning is essential, and that skills do not continuously improve through the study experience alone—each learning material and activity affects students' skill acquisition (Lim, H. and Morihara, A. 2015).

Based on these results, the program focused on "providing continuous footholds" and made improvements in evaluations by clearly demarcating time to reflect, every day during the period of on-site training, and so on. Specifically, reflection time was set for 15 minutes per day, and we ensured that the students reflect on their own actions and thoughts for that day, make action goals in line with the following day's activities and schedule, and write them in their own notebooks, in order to allow them to objectively grasp their own independent sense of "what I am able to do." These reflections and records were popular with students because they were able to record the little things that they thought and felt while at the training close at heart without forgetting them.

This training program not only gave students versatile learning opportunities, but we can assess that by maintaining time to reflect every day, it allowed students to objectively see their own roles and their own transformations, and became a "foothold" inviting them to their next steps (Lim, Morihara, Jung 2016).

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we discussed efforts at Japanese Universities to educate developing talent and all-purpose generic skills that the people should ideally maintain, as demanded by all of society. Furthermore, we introduced the overseas training programs carried out in South Korea for

two years by Yamaguchi Prefectural University as one example of efforts to promote the development of these kinds of general skills. Simply sending a large number of students overseas will not directly lead to the development of global talent. In order to implement training that prompts students' personal growth, it is important to have a sense of balance between student "independence" and "support" for students and for participants themselves to create educational results by continuously being self-reflective (Kudo 2011). Furthermore, we think that the content of overseas training should not have vague objectives such as those involved with merely sending students to a foreign country and making them experience its culture; instead, it should include training content that can only be done overseas.

To that end, it is essential to enrich pre-travel guidance and post-return follow-up, including guidance before and after the program. Issues going forward will be the creation of structures and assessment methods for students to be able to objectively, and over the long-term, grasp their own changes and growth process in order for the skills learned in the program to be maintained.

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<要旨>

日本の大学教育における海外研修の課題と取り組み
－受動的な学びの文化から能動的な学びへ-

森原彩・林炫情・鄭恩姫

加速度的なグローバリゼーションに伴い、社会では教育も含め、様々な分野において想像もできなかったような急激な変化を伴っている。国境や文化、言葉を越えた広い視野で物ごとを考える力や、知識や経験など自身や相手が持っている既存のものを統合させ、さらに新たなものを創出する力など、社会が求めるニーズにも急激な変化がある。このような世界的な変化に対応するためには、伝統的な受け身の教育文化から能動的な教育文化へと変わっていく必要がある。

本稿では、まず、21世紀のグローバル人材に求められる「ジェネリック・スキル（汎用的能力）」とその育成のための世界の動き、そして日本の大学における検討課題について述べる。また、それを踏まえ、大学生の能動的な学びや人間的成長を促すために、筆者らが2年間韓国で行ったPBL(Project Based Learning）型海外研修を紹介するとともに、その有効性と課題を示す。筆者らの取組からPBL型海外研修はグローバル人材に求められるスキルの形成や学びの足場かけとして非常に有効であることが明らかになった。しかしながら、学生の人間的成長を促す研修を実施するためには、学生の「自律」と教員の「支援」のバランスを意識し、参加者自らが振返りや内省を継続的に繰り返す場を設けることがカギとなる。つまり、参加者自らが教育的効果を認識できる環境設定が重要な課題となる。

Issues and Initiatives for Overseas Training in Japanese University Education: Changes in Japanese Students' Learning Culture and Education from Passive to Active

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Along with increased globalization, there have been radical changes in a variety of fields in society, including education. The needs of society have also changed drastically to include the ability to think about things from perspectives wide enough to transcend national borders, cultures, and languages. These drastic changes also include the ability to synthesize one's own and others' existing knowledge and experiences in order to further create new things. In order to adapt to the changing social needs in the world, it is crucial for the education system to respond flexibly and appropriately.

This paper first considers the "generic skills" demanded in the 21st century by the global economy and then will review the current educational state in the world, and issues at Japanese Universities for cultivating those skills. Furthermore, it introduces an overseas training program as an example of its effectiveness. The program has been carried out in South Korea for two years by authors aiming to foster university students' learning autonomy and personal growth. The analyses of the participants' self−evaluations show that the program was effective for developing students' generic skills and was able to become a students' "learning scaffolding". The results also show that in order to implement the program that prompts students' personal growth, it is important to keep a good balance between students' "independence" and teachers' "support", and offer students time or situations to reflect on what they have done. In another words, it is crucial to provide a learning environment in which participants can recognize their growth and changes.