

Abstracts

Changing Industry Demands for Individual Abilities and University Education in Postwar Japan

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This paper presents an overview of the historical change of industry demand for individual abilities and university education, especially related to liberal education, in postwar Japan by analyzing over 250 papers published by Japanese industry since the 1950s. Demand can be divided into four periods. In Period (1) Japanese industry had a strong need to secure middle-class technicians, such as plant managers, who required an education different from university education. In Period (2) (late 1960s-), demand began to change to a qualitative one, even though expectations for university education were not strong. In Period (3) (1980s-), Japanese industry began to realize the importance of creativity and personal qualities that produce creativity to survive in the future internationalized world. This period was the greatest milestone. In Period (4) (1995 onwards), this importance and need for creativity and personal qualities gained momentum. The number of papers published also increased rapidly. At this point, the industry required and recognized the importance of the abilities of critical thinking and problem finding/solving to solve future situations. These abilities have been and are an important part of liberal education and will be more important in the global world of the 21st century. This means that there is and will be a match between the industry needs and the aim of liberal education. This paper also overviews the changes of liberal education in Japanese universities after 1990 and considers the future of liberal education.

The Changing Labor Market and Reform of University Education

Tatsuo Kawashima (Kobe University)

The typical life course of the Japanese is changing tremendously along with progress in the shift to a knowledge-based economy and globalization. In the past, the individual life plans of the Japanese were formed based on the assumptions of lifetime employment and the presence of a seniority system, enterprise-specific labor unions, and on-the-job training. However, as economic competition among nations has heated up, the personnel policies of enterprises have changed dramatically. Graduation from university no longer guarantees regular employment. Even if one is blessed with a regular employment contract, a great change has taken place in the situation of employment such that those who graduate from school no longer work at the same place until retirement. It has become commonplace for workers to leave their job or transfer to a new job. Japan has become a "portfolio society" in which an individual's life now comprises a variety of jobs and professions. In addition, along with an increase in the number of people continuing on to higher levels of education, the connection between the specialty one studies at university and one's profession and position after graduation is becoming rarified or diversified. As a result, even if one studies the knowledge and skills of a specific field, in a society where separation from work and job transfers are commonplace, the validity of field-specific knowledge and skills is negated. For these reasons, moving forward, the labor market will strongly demand university educations that teach generic skills which are transferable once learned and which can be utilized in any career. However, with the organization of today's universities centered on instructors specializing in their own individual fields, there is a limit to the extent they can offer generic skills education. In the future, there will be strong demand for universities to undertake organizational initiatives on education such that they can train students in not only general education, but also in specialized educations that develop generic skills.

Functional Differentiation of the University and the First-year Experience: Based on a Data Analysis of First-year Students

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Universities and colleges in Japan have experienced sweeping and sudden changes during the last ten years. Actually, many Japanese universities have introduced first-year

experience program (FYE) to allow students to adjust smoothly to college life. In recent years, a majority of universities have introduced FYE. On the other hand, it is hypothesized that university students have become more diverse and therefore the contents of the FYE should be more diversified under the framework of the functional differentiation of universities. This paper analyzed the first-year student data of the Japanese Freshman Survey conducted in 2008 in order to examine the diversification and differentiation of students and explore the issue of the future direction of FYE in the framework of functional differentiation of the university. The result of the analysis showed that students of high academic achievement studied longer hours than students of low academic achievement at the time of third year of high school. Also, it becomes clear that while there are more study-oriented students in selective departments and universities, there are less study-oriented students in non-selective departments and universities. This might influence the future direction of the FYE in many universities and departments.

The Politics among Industry, MEXT, and METI regarding Higher Education Policy since the 2000's: Neo-liberalism, Globalization, and the Falling Birthrate

Aya Yoshida (Waseda University)

The aim of this paper is to analyze the politics among industry, MEXT, and METI regarding higher education policy since 2000's in Japan. As a result of analysis, the main findings are as the following three points: 1) industry expects universities (specifically doctorate courses in the field of engineering) to train students as global human resources, 2) MEXT tries to acquire a competitive budget by following industry's requests, and 3) METI plays a roll to bridge industry and MEXT. These three agents have moved toward enhanced alignment in order to exercise their power in training global human resources as much as possible since the 2000's. They have their own reasons for doing this. Industry faces economic globalization and hopes universities will educate the next generation. MEXT faces the falling birthrate and has to protect universities. METI is losing its power in economic policy and looking for a new policy arena (human resources). According to the survey, many Japanese companies, however, do not necessarily have ideas to employ so-called global human resources and Ph. D. holders at present. Under such a circumstance, universities should consider their future over the mid- and long-range without being swayed by these temporal higher education policies and budget.

[訂正]

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