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The Culture of Teaching in Japan

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Abstract

This paper is based primarily on my ethnographic research conducted during May 1994-January 1995, which focused on the Japanese culture of teaching. Data were collected at elementary and middle schools in Tokyo. The themes of the culture of teaching analyzed include teaching as a craft, schooling as a holistic enterprise, cooperative management, ethnopedagogy, and intensification of teaching. Teaching is grounded on the assumption that skills, knowledge, and the frame of orientation requisite for teaching are intrinsic to the culture of teaching. The main feature of teacher development is a process of improving teaching largely inherent in the reproducion of the culture of teaching. Ethnopedagogy, a folk theory of teaching shared among Japanese teachers is essential to the craft of teaching.

Therefore, academic research and scholarship are hardly brought to bear on the professional development of teachers. Teaching in Japan is also characterized by its inclusiveness, which contributes to the intensification of teachers' work and the decline of teacher authority at the secondary level.

Keywords

culture of teching, ethnopedagogy, teaching as a craft, ethnography, cooperative management

Introduction

This report is based primarily on my research conducted during May 1994-January 1995, when I served as a visiting researcher at the National Institute of Multimedia Education. I was invited to contribute to a project directed by Professor Yusaku Otsuka identified as "Research and Development of Support Systems for Evaluating Learning and Instruction." It was assumed that the project's main concentration on higher education and my research focused on

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the elementary and secondary education would be complementary in our interest in understanding characteristics of instruction and the culture of teaching in Japan. Given this broad framework of complementarity, Professor Otsuka encouraged me to pursure my research.

My research was also part of a larger research project on the Japanese culture of teaching directed by Professor Hidenori Fujita at the University of Tokyo and me. Following the planning initiatives we undertook during 1993-1994, including meetings at the University of Tokyo and the University of Western Ontario in Canada, our project was launched in the spring of 1994, and it continued through 1995. A national questionnaire survey was administered in the fall of 1995 and data from the survey is currently being analyzed.

Our project was started as part of the international studies of teachers' work in changing social contexts involving a group of scholars from eight industrialized nations identified as a research network on Professional Actions and Cultures of Teaching (PACT). PACT is directed by Andy Hargeaves at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and Ivor Goodson at the University of Western Ontario in Canada. Participating countries include: Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Hargreaves and Goodson assumed the leadership in organizing PACT during the annual meetings of the American Association of Educational Research held in San Francisco in April 1993. The latest PACT meeting took place in London in March 1995, where Japanese project members presented a research progress report.

The main purpose of the Japanese PACT project was to study the Japanese culture of teaching in a changing social context. To collect data we took ethnographic and sociological approaches. Because we have not yet consolidated our ethnographic and survey database, as of now I do not yet have full access to the database. Consequently I chose to base my report largely on the ethnographic data I collected as a member of the Japan PACT team during 1994. I selected several themes for discussion, among others, that represent salient aspects of the Japanese culture of teaching, instead of presenting a comprehensive analysis of the subject. The themes include teaching as a craft, schooling as a holistic enterprise, cooperative school management, and ethnopedagogy. Additionally, I will briefly discuss the intensification theme that characterizes teaching at the middle school level and changes in the culture of teaching with respect to teaching methods and teacher authority. From time to time I compare the Japanese culture of teaching with the American culture of teaching to illuminate distinct features of the former.

At the outset the culture of teaching needs to be defined as it is used in this report. The culture of teaching is elusive (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). The literature indicates that teaching hardly possesses a shared technical culture

(Sarason, 1971 ; Lortie, 1975). Moreover, the fact that teachers differ considerably in age, experience, social and cultural background, gender, subject matter, academic preparation, and competence does not provide a cogent, empirical basis for a consensual definition of the culture of teaching. These problems contribute to the difficulty of conceptualizing teaching as an occupational culture.

But teachers share work-related beliefs, knowledge and practice. What Waller (1967) calls stereotypes are developed on the basis of observation of habitual teacher behaviors. His observation relates to Hammersley's (1980) notion of "typifications of situations and lines of action" that occur in the sphere of teachers' work. David Hargreaves (1980) addresses the occupational culture of teachers in terms of themes that each has micro-macro linkages between the work places and its environment. The culture of teaching is embedded in teacher reference groups, as pointed out by Pollard (1982). Thus, "teacher culture acts as a means of protecting teachers from the difficulties of their role in many ways" (Pollard, 1982, p. 25). As Andy Hargreaves (1986) puts it, the culture of teaching representes "the shared characters" or teachers' experiences and "perspectives" that evolve from them. Thus, arising from teachers' shared educational biographies and perspectives, the culture of teaching is characterized by "its own socially approved ways of thinking, feeling, acting, and believing in relation to educational matters" (Hargreaves, 1986, p. 139). These beliefs, knowledge, stereotypes, reference-group credo, and shared perspectives do not constitute the technical culture of teaching, but typify teaching as an occupation. In this report, based on ethnographic data I am interested in exploring how teaching is typified in terms of teachers' shared beliefts, perspectives, experiences, and knowledge.

Research Methods

As mentioned, we employed an ethnographic approach and a survey to collect data. The majority of our time, from April 1994 to March 1995, was spent collecting ethnographic data through extensive observations and intensive interviews at four elementary chools and three middle schools located in Ota, Shinagawa, and Shinjuku wards, Tokyo and one elementary and one middle school in Kariya City, Aichi Prefecture. In addition, we videotaped a variety of school events and classroom activities to offer a microethnographic analysis of typical events and teaching.

Our approach was designed to focus on ongoing events in a natural setting, the linkages between these events, and their social and cultural context. We were interested in capturing social actions taking place in the classroom and the

school setting as they occurred, and we paid special attention to the meanings of these actions to the actors. We inductively sought patterns of actions and learned cultural principles that govern everyday life in the classroom and school setting, as well as relationships between events in the classroom setting and events at other system levels. The ethnographic approach was best suited to gathering data pertaining to these aspects of life in schools. Interviews were employed to elicit teachers' views of teaching and student guidance, life-course, and accounts of events.

Our project team consists of 10 researchers including : Hidenori Fujita at the University of Tokyo, Nobuo K. Shimahara at Rutgers University, Kiyoka Nagoshi (as advisor) at Fukui University, Suk-Ying Wong at International Christian University, Sawako Yufu at Fukuoka University of Education, Akira Sakai at Nanzan University, and four graduate students at the University of Tokyo. I teamed up with Suk-Ying Wong and focused on one mid-size middle school (609 students) and a relatively small elementary school (336 students) in Ota Ward and a very small elementary school (128 students) in Taito Ward. My analysis in this paper, however, is based solely on my own field notes. To protect their identity, we assigned pseudonyms to the three study schools, respectively : Okuma Middle School, Shiromatsu Elementary School, and Kita Elementary School. A total of 25 teachers and administrators at the three schools participated in our interviews.

In addition to ethnographic data, in the fall of 1995 we collected sociological data from a questionnaire survey administered to 127 elementary and middle schools in 8 prefectures. Because survey data is currently being analyzed it cannot be presented in this paper.

Teaching as a Craft

One of the themes that have emerged from our ethnographic study is that teaching is a craft learned through apprenticeship, inservice education, identified as Kenshu, and interactions with colleagues. Our life course interviews reveal several stages of career development embodying the mastery of different aspects of the craft. Traditionally crafts have been transmitted to neophytes through apprenticeships involving prolonged observation, "stealing skills" from experienced craftsmen, and practice without systematic and explicit instruction. This generic notionn of occupational socialization for craftsmen still applies in significant measure to the field of teaching in Japan. It is assumed that skills, knowledge, and the frame of orientation requisite for teaching are intrinsic to the culture of teaching shared and transmitted by teachers and modified through practice. A conceptionn of teaching that teacher

learning is based on craft knowedge places relatively little emphasis on a theoretical and or scientific base for teachers' work. The content of professional development is derived from the shared repertoire of practice, rather than from research and academic scholarship.

The notion of teaching as a craft has significant implications for the role of universities in teacher education and inservice education. The primary responsibility of universities is commonly viewed as providing preservice education. Only in the 1990s did the number of universities that offer advanced degree programs for full-time teachers on the job begin to increase gradually (Shimahara, 1995, p. 180). Once preservice students have completed their education, however, most of them become disconnected from universities and education professors. Suffice it to point out that our research participants invariably fell into this category. Likewise university professors are rarely involved in studying and improving teaching at the elementary and secondary levels. Their scholarship is often unrelated to practice in the classroom. This is apparent during student teaching, when the university supervisor generally serves as a liaison but not a mentor or researcher, while the cooperating teacher assumes total charge of student teaching exposing student teachers to the culture of teaching.

The notion of teaching as a craft places priority on inservice education as a dominant mode of learning to teach effectively. Inservice education is organized mostly by practitioners and instruction supervisors, Shidoshuji, at the education centers who are on leave from their teaching positions. The mandatory one-year teacher internship for beginning teachers begun in 1989 reveals the basic premises of teaching as a craft (Shimahara, 1995 ; Shimahara & Sakai, 1992). Mentors for beginning teachers are generally experienced teachers or head teachers under whose supervision the beginners are expected to enhance teaching competence through a program developed by the mentors. That program typically includes : the mentor's observation of interns' classes, interns' observation of experienced teachers' lessons, developing classroom management, learning to construct lesson plans, and a variety of other responsibilities such as committee work defined in each school's division of labor, Komubunsho, and school events. As we saw at our study schools, what is actually emphasized is the interns' enculturation into teaching, in which they learn to teach through a multiplicity of intersubjective relationships involving observing and talking with experienced teachers (Shimahara & Sakai, 1995). The interns are also obligated to participate in the programs organized by the education centers, whose lecturers and consultants are experienced teachers, school administrators, and practitioners outside teaching and/or university professors. University professors' participation in the internship program, however, is quite limited, reflecting internship orientation and policy as a form of apprenticeship.

In the following pages I will discuss common factors in elementary teachers' life courses that influence their professional development in teaching s a craft. From our field notes we can glean at least six interrelated domains of influence brought to bear upon teachers' work and professional growth: senior colleagues, warm and supportive environment, critical events, interaction with teachers from other schools, assumption of major roles, and inservice education including both in-house and out-of-school programs.

Beginning with senior colleagues, our research participants offered us a shared perception that senior colleagues were invariably influential on their growth, especially in the first school where they first started teaching. Senior colleagues were seen as a source of pedagogical knowledge and skills — the shared cultural knowledge of teaching upon which our participants could draw to improve their teaching. One participant pointed out that it is essential for beginning teachers to actively seek advice and assistance from experienced teachers. He saw it as part of the apprenticeship, "Minarai", through which beginning teachers are inducted into teaching. Senior teachers were seen as an indispensable source of socioemotional support on whom they could rely relative to a gamut of professional and personal matters they encountered. One female teacher even identified her senior teachers in fictive kinship terms as "brothers and sisters" when she recollected her relations with them.

Related to the first domain of influence is a supportive intersubjective environment, of which our participants invariably described as critical throughout their professional growth. That environment had a pivotal impact on our participants, especially in the first several years. As neophytes, they recalled, they were given the freedom to concentrate on their classroom. One of them said in her first school where she taught "recklessly" just to learn how to teach science. Another teacher suggested that a sense of solidarity created by her senior teachers at her grade level was indispensable as an anchorage in her work. Solidarity, another teacher suggested, is an essential condition for advancing inservice education.

The third domain of influence on professional development is interactions with colleagues, especially teachers from other schools. Our participants identified interactions outside their own work place as a source of intellectual as well as emotional stimulation and fresh ideas. These interactions also entail the social construction of teaching contributing to self confidence. Group interactions result in the development of a reference group that helps to define individual teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and values and guide their action.

Our teacher life-course interviews show that our participants invariably benefited from interactions with colleagues outside their schools. For example, one fourth-grade teacher saw the value of his participation in a Tokyo municipal study program. Although his group was officially to meet once every month,

it informally met at least once a week, involving not only discussions on mathematics education, his specialized interest, but also dinner and drinks. He also referred to a related anecdote. When he received his first appointment at a school in Shinagawa, which had a competitive teacher volleyball team, the most beneficial experience at the school, he recalled, was the fact that he was exposed to many teachers from other schools through volleyball practices and games. That exposure helped to broaden his perspective as a teacher, affording occasions to discuss with them a variety of concerns in teaching. These anecdotes and other related ones, which were told us, suggest that one important vehicle through which teachers construct the image of teaching is interactions with colleagues in the form of conversation. As sociologists Berger & Luckmann (1966) remined us, "the most important vehicle of reality-maintenance is conversation" (p. 152). Conversations play a critical role in transmitting pedagogical knowledge and constructing their relevance structure of teaching.

Critical events that teachers encountered constitute the fifth domain of influence. They are events defined in the context of personal experience that augmented teachers' professional growth entailing sustained self-reflection, construction of metaphors, and enhanced confidence. Many of the teachers interviewed recalled such consequential events. For example, one elementary teacher told us that the birth of her child was a very positive experience in her career as a teacher. Her experience of raising her child enabled her to gain a deep, enduring insight into child psychology that she would not have learned sufficiently otherwise. She was able to improve teaching using mothering as a metaphor for teaching. Another teacher told us of his experience in assuming total responsibility for organizing Idokyoshitsu for three fifth-grade classes in his third year. It involved inspecting the site, constructing the program, assessing safety measures, determining transportation, and developing measures of evaluating students's field experiences. Although he was initially overwhelmed by the responsibility, that experience became an important foundation for his later years by boosting his confidence in undertaking responsibilities beyond the management of his own classroom.

The fourth theme relates to shifts that occur in teachers' roles during their life course. These shifts each represent an extension of professional space and an augmentation of intersubjective relationships. And each shift epitomizes professional development in teaching. Most elementary and middle school teachers saw the first several years as a stage of coping and exploring, concerned solely with teaching in the classroom. Identity formation as classroom teachers, involving a process of "sink or swim", occurred during this phase as they tried to learn every relevant element of their craft from experienced teachers, students, and their own "reckless" explorations and mistakes. This process typifies much of their experiences in their first school. The second phase of development

involves broadening their perspectives on teaching and assuming a variety of responsibilities, including committee work. Teachers gained confidence in classroom teaching and management and were able to offer assistance to younger teachers. Their involvement in in-house inservice education became more substantive and focused. This phase by and large evolves in the second school in their career course. It may be noted here that their professional growth more often than not coincided with their transfer to another school that represented a new environment, including students, colleagues, and responsibilities.

The third phase involves assumption of key roles within the school, a third or fourth school in the standard teacher's career, such as chairperson of the study promotion committee or the directorship of school programs, Kyomushunin, overseeing activities and events that cut across grade and classroom boundaries. Teachers who reach this level in their professional development are typically in their 40s and considered veteran teachers. In Okuma Middle School, we studied grade-level coordinators, Gakunenshunin, especially the ninth grade coordinator, who played a significant role. These teachers' views on teaching are broadened to encompass the oversight of the entire school. They spend a substantial amount of time coordinating schoolwide activities.

Finally, the fifth source of influence is inservice education, which assumes centrality in Japanese teachers' professional development. Its contribution to Japanese teachers' professional development looms much larger than to American teachers' because in America graduate education as a means to upgrade teaching qualifications is more common and widespread than inservice education. Consequently over 37 and 43 percent of American elementary and secondary school teachers have the master's degree, respectively, compared with 3 percent of comparable Japanese teachers. Our research also suggests that inservice education in Japan is much more current at the elementary level than at the middle school level.

Our research participants participated in the following types of programs: in-house study programs identified as Konai Kenshu developed by individual schools; ward-level programs organized by subject-specific associations of teachers; programs organized by the ducation center to rotool teachers on a periodic basis, including the internship program for beginning teachers; municipal research programs in which teachers voluntarily participate; programs of national associations; and finally privately organized study groups. The degree to which teachers and schools are involved in inservice education varies considerably. Our research, however, reveals that elementary schools take much more active initiatives in promoting in-house inservice education than middle schools. The latter tend to be constrained by the relative lack of common interest among teachers, who are specialized in particular subjects,

and the intensification of teaching. Each school, however, has a study promotion committee charged with constructing an inservice program focused on a particular theme each year. It involves all teachers in planning the program, organizing demonstration classes to which an outside advisor, such as a veteran principal or an instructional supervisor, is invited, and critical reflections on demonstration classes.

As an illustration of teacher participation in inservice education I will refer to a first grade teacher who is in her mid-40s. When she was in her first school, she participated in a study program offered by the Tokyo Municipal Research Center (Token) for one year. In her second school she joined a privately organized study group whose focus was to transform the teaching of the Japanese language and vocabulary use. The group sponsored circle discussions and demonstration classes throughout Tokyo. In the early 1980s she was chosen as a study member by Token and granted a one-year leave from her school to study children's self expression. In her present school she is in charge of the Japanese program and represents her school in the ward-level Japanese language association of teachers. It meets twice a month and sponsors demonstration classes at selected sites throughout the ward. Within her school, she actively participates in a study program on science education. It requires planning and organizing demonstration classes, observing colleagues' classes, and evaluations. Her lower grade-level teachers meet twice a month for these purposes. It should be pointed out that the middle school teachers we interviewed by and large followed similar types of inservice education.

In short, teachers are expected to improve teaching through inservice education that reproduces and refines the culture of teaching by sharing ideas, skills, beliefs, and practical innovations.

Schooling as a Holistic Undertaking

One of the prominent features of schooling in Japan, in contrast to schooling in the United States or Britain, is its holistic character. In the United States emphasis at the elementary and middle school levels is decidedly on the cognitive process of teaching and learning within the context of the classroom, whereas in Japan it is inclusive, encompassing the cognitive as well as social, moral, and other noninstrumental dimensions of children's experience (Shimahara & Sakai, 1995). The inclusiveness of schooling in Japan makes Japanese education unique when viewed from Anglo-American perspectives and is deeply embedded in the Japanese culture of teaching. Our participants saw the holistic nature of their work as an embodiment of Japanese pedagogy, part of their cultural knowledge of teaching.

The holistic theme is symbolized by the inclusive goals of education as stated in school catalogues. For example, Shiromatsu Elementary School aims to foster:

strong and robust children;
children who can think deeply and are creative;
and children with rich hearts.

The goal of Okuma Middle School is to foster:

persons who are rational and live just lives;
persons who can perform responsibly without hesitation;
persons who take initiatives, have a cheerful disposition, and are healthy.

Compare the above goals with the goals of an American elementary school in New Jersey (Shimahara & Sakai, 1995):

We recognize the importance of our children as individuals with specific needs, and we strive to provide a strong educational program that meets those needs at each step of development …… In order to implement this philosophy, we focus on the following goals:

1. *To provide a strong foundation in math, reading, and language arts;*
2. *To help children to explore and investigate the world through science and social studies;*
3. *To help each child communicate in the most effective ways possible through oral and written language.*

To realize the broad goals of schooling, our participants at both the elementary and middle school levels were expected to promote school programms that encompassed a wide spectrum of activities including: academic lessons, physical education (at the elementary level), moral education, supervision of lunch service, cleaning, club activities, swimming, home visitations, and such school events as ceremonial events, Idokyoshitsu, excursion trips, and athletic festivals. In addition, at the middle-school level, ninth grade Tannin were extensively involved in student guidance and paperwork involving applications for high schools or employment — a very heavy responsibility combined with a normal teaching load. Moreover, our middle-school participants were engaged in counseling forcused on bullying, school violence, and other types of deviant behavior, which are normally the domain of responsibility of specialized counselors at both the elementary and secondary levels in the United States.

Club activities are part of what is described as special activities encouraged at both the elementary and middle school levels. The Ministry of Education's course of study defines clubs as collective activities organized to enhance students' interests related to cultural, athletic, and creative dimensions of student life at school. While at the elementary level club activities are normally offered once a week, at the middle school level they are much more extensive, taking place daily, and even on Saturday and sometimes Sunday.

Our participants valued club activities as an extracurricular program providing a unique space in the entire school program that enables them to develop close relationships with students and know them better. The director of academic programs, Kyomushunin at Okuma viewed these activities as "significantly contributing to the development of children's interests and their initiatives in organizing and promoting their own activities." He served as the supervisor of the guitar club, which won many awards for outstanding performance in local and national competitions. He devoted nearly four hours to the club on Saturday. Likewise many teachers selflessly provided their time for extracurricular activities, but some teachers reluctantly felt that such activities are part of their collegial obligation. It is obvious that club activity constitutes a very significant part of teachers' work. Although the course of study provides the official raison d'etre of that activity, it is embedded in the culture of teaching — a collectively shared belief that it is part of teachers' work.

Another part of Japanese teachers' work that contributes to the inclusiveness of teaching at the middle school level is guidance and counseling, which are considered the areas of homeroom teachers, or Tannin. As the staff coordinator of ninth- grade teachers at Okuma told us, ninth grade teachers have a special mission because they have major responsibility for placing students in high schools and employment. That made his colleagues' work highly intensive, surveying students' career aspirations, student advisement, conferences with students and parents, preparing students' applications, and visiting high schools to seek information. Consequently, a substantial part of teachers' work at school in the scond term and January was devoted to guidance, frequently requiring them to stay in school until late in the evening.

In contrast, in the United States such student guidance comes under the purview of guidance counselors at the high school level. At the middle school level, however, that type of guidance is not offered by virtue of the fact that student advancement to high school does not require it because high school education is compulsory.

Counseling is another aspect of middle school teachers' expected work. Homeroom teachers must assume the entire responsibility of attending to students' personal, interpersonal, and emotional problems, often involving bullying and school violence, which are the responsibility of counselors in American elementary and middle schools. Since the late 1970s when students' deviant behavior became a source of teachers' fixation, Tannin's responsibility has often become onerous for several reasons. First, teachers are not trained to deal with such problems ; second, because they have a normal teaching load, counseling is an extra responsibility ; third, they cannot rely on their colleagues for assistance unless incidents are identified as gradewide or schoolwide problems. Yet Okuma teachers assumed that responsibility as intrinsic to their work

— an assumption that it is an integral part of teaching, revealing a characteristic of the Japanese culture of teaching.

Incidentally, both the principal and teachers at Okuma identified their school as a "very stormy" school where school violence was excessive and uncontrollable in recent years, reminiscent of the early 1980s when the nation was gripped by widespread adolescent deviant behavior. We were told that school violence peaked in 1993 at Okuma and that it was declining in 1994 reflecting the changing student culture and improved relationship of trust between teachers and ninth graders. Thus, when we were studying the school, teachers still appeared weary and jaded and looked incredulous about the improvement.

As Okuma teachers saw, counseling is a process in which Tannin or a group of teachers intervenes in an incident. It entails immediate interventions in incidents, investigations, consultations with parents, and resolving problems. Teachers described counseling as time consuming and emotionally draining. But only in extraordinary situations were incidents referred to outside specialists.

Turning to another unique feature of middle school education that addresses holistic education, we will briefly consider the staff organization. In the United States and Britain teachers are organized into department units of specialities. In such a structural arrangement, subject-matter subcultures are likely to develop. In contrast, Japanese middle school teachers are organized into grade units cutting across the boundaries of specialities to deal with common problems and tasks pertaining to a particular grade level. From an organizational point of veiw the grade-based structure places priority on students' needs, the satisfaction of which requires faculty coordination and commitment, over faculty needs for discussing and developing curriculum materials in particular subject areas. Although Okuma teachers had subject-area groups that could have addressed such needs, they met infrequently, partly because the curriculum in each subject area is standardized nationally requiring little curriculum material development and coordination. In comparison, in the United States and Britain teachers have the responsibility of constructing the curriculum necessitating strong departmental faculty.

Okuma faculty were grouped into three grade units, each of which constituted a functionally separate entity coordinated by a senior teacher. The ninth-grade unit of teachers, for example, addressed as its common bojectives a gamut of tasks: guidance; school events, such as excursion trips, sports festivals, art and music festivals; counseling; supplementary drills for entrance exams; and the like. Consequently each grade unit constituted a strong subculture based on close interaction on a daily basis, geographical proximity within the staffroom, and shared work and perspectives. Especially in 1993, ninth grade faculty developed a strong sense of cohesion and shared collegial responsibility

as they were collectively confronted by common problems of school violence. They stayed in the school late handling and discussing problems and often dined and drank together before they went home.

The Japanese notion of schooling as a holistic undertaking is more readily integrated into the functional pattern of teachers' work at the elementary level than the middle school level, where the division of teaching responsibility is undifferentiated. As we have seen, the division of work at the middle school is not differentiated beyond teaching in the classroom.

From an organizational point of view it can be suggested that the functional division of teaching has not yet been developed well. The rationale for the lack of differentiation, however, appears to be embedded in the Japanese notion that both schooling and teaching should be inclusive.

Ethnopedagogy

Ethnopedagogy is a cultural theory of teaching grounded on time-honored collective beliefs embodied in the Japanese culture of teaching (Shimahara & Sakai, 1995). Teachers have resorted to these beliefs to encourage, inspire, and exhort students to meet their expectations. These pedagogical beliefs are considered elemental to schooling in general, although they are more often enunciated at the elementary level and they are less prominent at the secondary level as teaching becomes more focused on academic subjects.

Ethnopedagory is a "folk" theory of teaching shared among Japanese teachers as a frame of orientation. Ethnopedagogy is not identified as a scientific concept or as a field of study in teacher education or in scholarly circles. Instead, it is intrinsic to the craft of teaching invented by practitioners and reproduced through self-discovery, casual conversations, and inservice education. The significance of ethnopedagogy resonates among supervisors of beginning teachers, administrators, and officials of boards of education and the Ministry of Education. This suggests that it is a cultural concept widely accepted throughout Japan and learned independently of the teacher education offered at college. Japanese teachers' cultural knowledge, identified here as ethnopedagogy, is a widely accepted principle of schooling in our study schools. Teachers are a fiduciary agent of ethnopedagogy and interpret teaching competence in terms of its application to the motivation of children.

Ethnopedagogy concentrates on ligature, close interpersonal relations, as the primary condition for effective teaching and learning. This central concept of ethnopedagogy is often alluded to as Kizuna or Kakawari, intense ligature. Kizuna is believed to foster empathy and what is characterized as the "touching of the hearts." It is "attachment" in Rohlen's (1989) term, a notion that is

universally stressed in Japanese culture.

As our elementary school teachers saw, the starting point of ethnopedagogy is the appreciation of the feelings by teachers that shape children's lives — emotional commitment by teachers to children, which leads to the fostering of the bond between teachers and children. The attachment that evolves from this bond is marked by shared feelings of inclusiveness and trust. Teachers commonly shared the cultural knowledge of teaching that effective teaching is governed by the ligature and that developig it takes precedence over technical competence in teaching. Because the ligature creates an environment where chilren can trust teachers, it enables the teachers to inspire the children to meet their expectations. Because of the significance of the ligature, as both elementary and middle school teachers invariably suggested, the most important aptitude, Shishitsu teachers must possess is that they like children — a priority placed on the emotional dimensions of teaching.

Our participants at both levels often spoke of Kokoro, the heart as a basis of education. For example, a veteran teacher at Shiromatsu said : "My focus is on developing children's Kokoro — an important concern throughout my teaching career. Another thing is to foster their ability to empathize with others, Omoiyari. I have wanted to create a classroom environment where every child feels comfortable and relaxed." A veteran teacher at Kita Elementary echoed his pedagogical belief by hinting that he spent 40 percent of his teaching time on classroom management to develop relationships of trust between children and himself and among his children. A first grade teacher also commented that the teacher's heart and sensitivity toward teaching are critical parts of teacher competence. She continued to assert that "my challenge is to broaden my receptivity to children, to accept and understand a variety of children."

Likewise, teachers and administrators at Okuma Middle school highlighted the ligature between students and teachers as an underpinning for developing order in the school. Teachers shared the view that teachers' personal knowledge of students and the bonding developed between the two are critical in controlling students and gaining their trust. Consequently, the school made it a general policy for teachers to teach the same cohort of students for the three years in which students advance from the seventh through the ninth year. Teachers, according to a social studies teacher, would be able to "grasp [understand] children's Kokoro" through the bonding they developed over an extended period. In the view of the principal at Okuma, "reading the students' Kokoro" is critical to offer effective counseling. It requires teachers to observe them, learn their needs, and develop strategies to handle their problems.

Teachers' use of the word Kokoro suggests its ontological status, the child's state of being seen from an expressive perspective. The child's sense of well-being and relationships with the world in their view — peers, teachers, and

other human objects — are revealed and controlled by the heart. A social studies teacher at Okuma commented on developmental changes from elementary to middle school years:

In an elementary school a Tannin teacher and her children become a single entity developed through intense interactions. For middle school students, we emphasize developing their sociability broadly. They grow up by exposing themselves to different peers and teachers, and by doing so they can broaden their hearts.

In summary, as stated earlier, ethnopedagogy is a widely shared cultural theory of teaching. It is a propos to note that there is a significant degree of consistency in the application of ethnopedagogy between the elementary and lower secondary levels, regardless of significant differences in students' psycho-emotional as well as physical development. Moreover, there is an immense difference between the two levels in how teaching and learning are structured. Both elementary and middle school teachers spoke of Kizuna and Kokoro as a "root image" of ideal social relations and a window through which the students' universe may be understood, instead of students' independence and rights, which are a primary concern for American secondary teachers. Japanese emphasis on Kizuna and Kokoro is a cultural attribute, not fundamentally a means to an end. It differs from what Jackson (1990) characterizes as the "intensity of emotional involvement" by American elementary teachers, which is guided by the explicitly instrumental purpose of developing students' individuality.

Cooperative Management

Cooperative management, the fourth theme, epitomizes a distinct characteristic of teaching in Japan. The essence of cooperative management is that Japanese schools' programs are constructed and implemented by faculty whose primary responsibility is teaching. The faculty's responsibilities are charted in Komubunsho, the operational framework of division of work essential to run every Japanese school. It is an infrastructure supporting schooling that involves every teacher, but is not always directly related to classroom teaching. There is no such structure of work in American schools where personnel responsibilities are clearly differentiated, in constrast to Japanese schools characterized by the diffuseness of teachers' work. In the United States nonteaching functions are largely fulfilled by administrators (principal and assistant principals), curriculum coordinators, guidance-counselors, and school staff. But in Japan such functions are inclusive responsibilities of classroom teachers.

To appreciate salietn characteristics of cooperative management, we now review the organizational structure of the school. The principal is situated at

the head of the organization and is assisted by the head teacher ; below these two administrators the organization is a flat structre of teaching staff. This flat structure plays a key role in the operation of the school.

The following division of work is typical in Japanese schools : academic programs, special activities (Tokkatsu), life guidance, health, public relations, and business management. Each division has numerous subdivisions, and except for business management, which is run by full-time business staff, all other divisions are staffed by teachers who are expected to provide a broad range of planning and paper work. For example, the division of academic programs entails many subdivisions requiring paper work related to : curriculum, school events, instruction, moral education, inservice education, ordering textbooks, audiovisual equipment, library, and the like. Each school also has several directors : the director of academic programs, Kyomushunin ; the director of inservice education ; the director of life guidance ; the director of health ; and the director of special activities (at the middle school level). These directors constitute the hub of school operation. At Shiromatsu the principal called a brief meeting of the directors every morning before classes begin to review events of the day.

Among them, the director of academic programs is pivotal in cooperative management and responsible for integrating and coordinating all academic and nonacademic activities at the school, including class schedules, school events, special activities (Tokkatsu), and a broad range of events proposed by faculty committees. The principal appoints the director, a veteran teacher from the ranks of the teaching staff. The director, however, does not receive a reduced teaching load despite his/her demanding coordinating duty. The director usually chairs an operation committee, the most vital planning committee in the school, which consists of the principal, the head teacher, the director of life guidance, the director of inservice education, and the coordinators of teaching staff at various grade levels. The primary function of the operation committee is to review and plan various programs and events at its weekly meeting as well as to advise the director of academic programs.

In such a school as Shiromatsu Elementary School, where inservice education is a top priority, the director of inservice education is an influential position. The director is appointed by the principal, which reflects the schoolwide significance of her role. She heads the committee of inservice education identified as Kenkyu Suishin Iinkai, consisting of teachers who represent each grade level and the principal as an ex officio. Its primary responsibility is to organize and implement an inservice program. At Okuma Middle School, where student guidance was a critical concern because of frequent school violence, the director of life guidance plays an important role.

These nonteaching functions of the school are a major concern for all

teachers because they mut allocate time to discharge their assignments after school. Because Komubunsho is the same for all schools, in big schools where the teaching staff is large each teacher's charge is relatively light, whereas in small schools, such as Kita Elementary School, it is quite weighty. Above all, the directors, especially the director of academic programs, bear a heavy burden.

Japanese cooperative management has a merit and a demerit. It is meritorious in that it is a form of participatory management where teachers are extensively involved in various aspects of school operation. The demerit of cooperative management is that it is inefficient because of the absence of specialization, and it contributes to the intensification of teachers' work. For example, the director of academic programs is not a specialized curriculum coordinator who received training in the field ; the director of life guidance and the members of his division are not trained counselors. They do not have expertise in the work with which they are charged, and by necessity they have to learn the job through practice — trial and error. In Japanese schools, curriculum coordination and guidance-counseling are considered as part of the craft of teaching to be learned on the job, the theme we explored earlier. Further, as many teachers pointed out, teachers are periodically overburdened by their non-instructional work, forcing them to stay at school until late in the evening.

Intensification of Teachers' Work

Intensification of teaching is a common theme in the United States and Britain (Hargreaves, 1994 ; Apple, 1989). It refers to both an increasing loss of teacher autonomy caused by prescribed programs, mandated curricula, and step-by-step methods of instruction, combined with pressure to respond to various innovations and a diversification of students' academic and social needs. In the American and British contexts, the intensification of teaching accelerated in significant part as a result of school reforms to improve student performance, which mandated higher academic standards and newly introduced state or national tests in the 1980s and 1990s.

In constrast, in Japan the intensification of teaching at the mddle school level is by and large caused by pressure stemming from the realm of teachers' work outside classroom teaching. That realm encompasses a variety of work, including Komubunsho, handling student deviant behavior, providing the guidance to place students in high schools, and club activities. As pointed out earlier, this realm of teachers' work is part of Japanese schooling as a holistic undertaking. It presents a sharp contrast to American schools where it is not the responsibility of classroom teachers. In general, intensification of teachers' work in Japan

is a phenomenon intrinsic to the culture of teaching, especially at the middle school level.

As I have already discussed, classroom Tannin are expected to handle student deviant behavior and offer counseling to students; in addition, ninth grade Tannin's indispensable responsibility is to place students in high schools, a highly labor-intensive process, while they carry a full teaching load. Especially from November through January teachers' work is intensified frequently, prolonging their work hours to 9:00 P.M. or sometimes to 10:00. The ninth grade coordinator at Okuma commented that he would spend 60 percent of his time at school doing placement-related work during these months.

Moreover, Tannin must intervene in student school violence, bullying, and other forms of deviant behavior when they occur. Teachers' duty for intervention in such problems is also extended to lower grade levels where deviant behavior also occurs. The ninth grade coordinator commented on teachers' expectations related to the duty:

Every year students are different. In fact I had good years and bad years. When we had bad students, as teachers we had to handle them with a sense of mission. I felt I just had to cope with the problems because that was a fate, Shukumei in teaching.

As referred to earlier, another cause of intensification of teachers' work is supervision of club activities. At Okuma, more than 50 percent of the teaching staff were involved in club activities although not required, mostly in the afternoon from 4:30 to 6:00 or 6:30, except Wednesday when a staff meeting was scheduled. They also offered a club schedule on Saturdays in preparation for interschool competition. In the Kariya middle school practically all faculty assumed the responsibility of supervising these activities for 45 minutes in the morning and two hours in the afternoon every day. Suffice it to say that clubs are stressed and demand teachers' significant commitment, which contributes to the intensification of their work at the middle school level. By comparison with middle schools, at the elementary level a club schedule is offered only once a week for upper grade children and demands considerably less time of teachers.

In addition, middle school teachers have pressure stemming from high school entrance examinations although we did not see much evidence that teachers at Okuma organized their lessons to drill students for entrance exams. However, they offered short vocabulary tests useful for entrance exams at the beginning of lessons and volunteered to monitor students' self-organized exam exercises consisting of commercially published materials. They also regularly offered a summer drill session for one week for students interested in participating in it.

These constraints common to middle schools, however, are not evident at the elementary level. Intensification of work at the elementary level is largely a function of teachers' involvement in inservice education. If schools actively

promote inservice education, teachers are expected to devote a considerable amount of time to it. For example, Shiromatsu Elementary School, which is considered one of the best schools in Ota Ward, has a reputation as a "study" school. The Ministry of Education designated it as a national pilot school during 1989-90 to explore life science, or Seikatsuka, a newly introduced subject for first- and second-graders. During that period, the whole teaching staff diligently collaborated to construct the curriculum and teaching strategies. It organized a series of demonstration lessons to which teachers and instructional supervisors from Tokyo and other prefectures were invited to observe. In 1991-92 the Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education named the school as a pilot school to further explore the new subject. During those four years many teachers frequently remained at school until 9:00 or 10:00 P.M., and, as a result, the school became known as a "lantern school" in the Ota ward, or Chochin Gakko. The school continued to emphasize a study program focusing on science education. Teachers built and shared an enduring ethos underscoring the value of study, dedication to teaching, and self renewal through participation in study programs. In 1994 when we were observing teachers at the school, many teachers were still working until after 7:00 P.M. every day. Such a pattern of teachers' work, however, was not evident at Kita Elementary School.

Changes in the Culture of Teaching

Finally I will address changes and challenging issues in the culture of teaching. I have pointed out that in Japan teaching is considered a craft learned through apprenticeship, inservice education, and interactions with colleagues, and that the content of professional development is derived from the shared repertoire of practice, rather than from research and academic scholarship. Because the culture of teaching is transmitted through the time-honored, ubiquitous pattern of occupational socialization and renewed through broadly shared social mechanisms, it is not readily predisposed to change. It is generally distinguished by qualities of permanence and persistence. The culture of teaching, however, is gradually altered when the social context of teaching changes. I will discuss two important changes that began to occur in this section.

One is a decline of traditional teacher authority at the middle school level leading to what one teacher characterized as the onset of a "revolution of teacher consciousness," or Ishiki Kakumei. The other is a gradual change taking place in teaching methods. I will briefly present how teachers saw this authority diminish.

The past two decades have witnessed immense social changes in Japan: globalization of the economy, internationalization of society, diversification of

individual needs and values, and an information revolution. These changes have had a tremendous impact on both adults and children and their views of authority, including teacher authority. A comment by the principal at Okuma Middle School illuminates the impact:

When I look at current children's families, I am inclined to find warmer, less authoritarian fathers than fathers of my generation. In the process of growing up, today's children rarely encounter absolute authority in their families. In the past parents used to view teachers as absolute figures. They often invoked the teacher as anauthority figure to whom they would report when children were not obedient to them. Now it is different. In the family the teacher is not an absolute figure ; instead, he tends to be a subject of jokes or criticism.

The principal's remark was shared by his teaching staff revealing how extensively, in their view, teacher authority has been decling. The director of academic programs at Okuma reinforced the point: "If you simply assume students shoudl follow you because you are a teacher, no students would follow you. Their view of teachers has immensely changed." They, he continued, hardly show any constraint in rebelling against adults through some collective form of resistance and violence.

Teachers in leadership positions at Okuma received their first appointment elsewhere in the late 1970s when students' rebellion against school authority and school violence became a national obsession. They recalled that they tried to put down rebellious students by resorting to authoritarian control, the ethos of traditional teacher authority. That, however, resulted in only intensified conflicts between teachers and rebellious students who were challenging authoritarianism. These teachers still encounter students' rebellion at Okuma, but what is different now is the fact that their emerging strategies to handle students seem to display an important metamorphosis from authoritarianism to accom modation. Accommodation, according to the director, dictates teachers' self-conscious efforts to gain students' trust by demonstrating such essential attributes as competent teaching, personal warmth, thoughtfulness, and understanding. Accommodation signifies the decline of traditional teacher authority and anticipates a redefinition of that authority. This is the onset of the revolution of teacher consciousness, epitomizing an important change in the culture of teaching. How widespread this revolution of teacher consciousness is in Tokyo is unknown, but teachers at Okuma are shrewdly aware of it.

The second change in the culture of teaching is a slow but significant shift in teachers' perspectives on instructional methods. Elementary teachers are by and large critical of whole-class teaching with emphasis on transmitting knowledge to students, although they still extensively practice it. It is now fashionable to advocate an instructional approach with stress on individual students and problem solving. That shift is more evident at the elementary level than the

middle school level. In all the schools we studied, however, we did not see classes where teachers have individualized instruction. But what we did see and hear about is teachers' instructional strategies to enhance the method of learning focused on problem solving and to attend to individual students in the context of whole class teaching or small groups.

Our elementary teachers invariably emphasized the importance of teaching students how to learn. The shift toward the new perspective on instructional strategies, accoring to our informants, started around 1980. Teachers' everyday vocabulary reveals their awareness of the shift. For example, a first grade teacher at Shiromatsu commented:

When I was a beginning teacher in 1974, whole-class teaching was pervasive. But gradually teachers began to recognize individual students' differences, requiring them to consider a different approach. Then my problem was how to make my teaching responsive to each child.

A fifth-grade teacher mentioned that she learned a method of problem solving as an instructional approach for the first time in her second school in 1978. "The underlying principle of my teaching," she suggested, "is to emphasize that every child in my classroom understands the material I present." In the demonstration classes we saw, teachers invariably used small groups to work on tasks and solve problems rather than whole-class teaching, and teachers served as facilitators of student learning. A comment by a fourth grade teacher at Kita Elementary School echoed the emerging trend in elementary physical education in which the main purpose of PE is no longer for students to acquire skills but to motivate students toward realization of personal goals that they set for themselves. He elaborated on his comment stating: "In the past we stressed a group. We used to think that unless students achieved a group goal they were failures. But now attention is given to individual differences. You must zero in on their needs."

All in all, our observations suggest that there is a gradual shift in the paradigm of teaching at the elementary level from whole-class teaching concentrating on knowledge transmission to an approach that recognizes students' diversity in ability and interest and the essential need to teach them how to learn. Such a shift is not yet seen at the middle school level. Whole-class teaching, involving teachers' presentations, recitations, and seatwork was pervasively evident in all classes we observed at Okuma. Although the science teacher who spoke of the revolution of teacher consciousness expressed his view that the teacher needs to focus on each student, such a view does not yet reflect a shift in teaching strategies at the middle school level.

Conclusion

What I have presented above is based on limited ethnographic data and therefore cannot be generalized. Moreover, my report represents an only preliminary analysis of the data we have collected during 1994-1995. However, given this caveat, I believe my analysis of our ethnographic data illuminates distinct dimensions of the culture of teaching in Japan at the elementary- and middle-school levels. I have identified several themes that typify the culture of teaching: teaching as a craft, schooling as a holistic undertaking, ethno-pedagogy, and cooperative management. I have also discussed the intensification of teaching at the middle school level as a related concern.

I will conclude this paper by pointing out two critical issues of teaching among others, stemming from my analysis. The first relates to the notion of teaching as a craft. It is grounded on the assumption that skills, knowledge, and the frame of orientation requisite for teaching are intrinsic to the culture of teaching. Therefore academic research and scholarship are hardly brought to bear upon the professional development of teachers. Teacher development is enhanced within the framework of the culture of teaching, and it involves apprenticeship, inservice education, and interactions with colleagues. Put differently, the main feature of teacher development is a process of improving teaching largely inherent in the reproduction of the culture of teaching. Therefore, teacher development is likely to be contained within the parameters of the reproduction of teaching. This notion of teacher development limits teachers' exposure to theoretical knowledge and academic research on teaching.

Related to this problem is the weak link between teaching as a profession and the university. Generally, because teachers regard the university as a preservice training institution, they rarely draw upon its resources and academic scholarship to improve teaching. Conversely, university professors are predisposed to distance themselves from the classroom where teaching occurs and various forms of inservice education. In other words, the university's role in teacher development is ineffectual and unsubstantial, to say the least.

If teachers are to seek the professional development of teachers broadly, it is vital that they ground it in collaborative endeavors between two domains — practice and research. I believe that effective teacher development is predicated on the continual renewal of the culture of teaching, rather than the reproduction. This is a major issue in teaching in Japan. Likewise, the professional development of teachers is a chief concern addressed, especially during the past decade, through education reforms in the United States. To promote greater continuity between theory and practice, a number of research institutions in the

United States have taken the initivative in developing Professional Development Schools in collaboration with local schools (Darling-Hamond, 1994). PDS stresses the partnerships between schools of education and schools designed to enhance both preservice students' clinical experience and the professional development of teachers.

The second issue concerns counseling at the middle school level. The typical work performed by counselors in American elementary and secondary schools is still part of classroom Tannin in Japan, who have no professional education in counseling. Moreover, Tannin who have a normal teaching load and a student placement responsibility have little time if any for counseling. Consequently they tend to deal with student behavioral problems piecemeal at best and have few methodical strategies to handle them. Such situational responses to complex problems, in my view, constitute a primary source of ineffectiveness in handling such windespread phenomena as bullying and school violence. If couseling is to be rendered effectively, it is requisite to consider placing full-time counselors in each school. In this sense, the Ministry of Education's new policy to assign counselors to schools on a trail basis is wise.

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日本語要旨

この論文は、1994年４月から1995年１月にわたって、日本の教師文化に焦点を当てて行ったエスノグラフィク研究に基づいている。データは東京における小中学校で収集されたものである。ここで分析した教師文化のテーマは、クラフトとしての教職、包摂的な学校教育、集団的学校経営、エスノペダゴジーと指導の多忙化である。日本の教職は、それに必要な技術、知識、志向的枠組みは教師文化に特殊的なものであるという前提に基づいており、教師の力量形成は、主に教師文化の再生産を通して行われるプロセスである。そして教師の間で形成されたエスノペダゴジーは教職に必須な「民衆理論」である。したがって、学問的な研究は教職の改善に余り寄与していない。更には、日本の教職はその包摂性に特徴づけられており、教職の多忙化の原因となっている。また、中学校のレベルでは教師の権威の低下が目立っている。