

## **9. Study on the Development of Curricula for Integrated Studies Classes Modeled on Multicultural Education**

Leader: Tomoaki Matsuo (Senior Researcher, Department for Elementary and Secondary Education Research)

### **1. Where problems lie**

As academic knowledge is becoming more and more cross-disciplinary, specialized, and segmentalized, people have come to recognize it increasingly necessary to foster higher-level mental capacity and judgment, as well as the comprehensive ability to resolve problems from diversified points of view. Therefore, research on curriculum development for integrated studies classes is extremely important in considering the future course of Japanese school education curricula.

However, although unique curricula for integrated studies classes have been devised by schools nationwide, there are various problems concerning the preparation of the overall program for integrated studies, the establishment of the curriculum theory, and the objective assessment of students.

In working on these problems, we focused on multicultural education in the United States. Multicultural education is the educational idea of seeking coexistence and symbiosis of diversified races, ethnic groups, and cultural groups in a multicultural society so as to establish social justice from the viewpoint of minorities. Based on this, education has been provided and reformed for the purpose of realizing the idea.

Multicultural education shares a large part of its content with integrated studies, such as international understanding, welfare, environment, media, human rights, and regional issues. In its half-century history, various trial efforts have been made and cross-subject curricula have been developed. Multicultural education is also very interesting from the viewpoint of curriculum study.

This study aims to reconsider desirable curriculum design for integrated studies classes through examining curriculum models of multicultural education in terms of educational goals, content, method, and assessment.

### **2. Purpose and method of the study**

This study aims to work out a model to innovate curricula for integrated studies classes in Japan, based on the theories of multicultural education and how they have been put into practice in the United States.

Specifically, we intend to understand the theories of multicultural education and how they have been implemented, and, based on knowledge accumulated in the United States, we aim to

examine curriculum models of multicultural education in terms of educational goals, content, method, and assessment, and thereby obtain some suggestions for developing integrated studies curricula in Japan.

We examined past studies on multicultural education curricula for their respective educational goals, educational content, educational methods, and educational assessment. We also examined documents regarding integrated studies from the viewpoint of curriculum design. Furthermore, we conducted surveys in the states of Washington, California, Wisconsin, and New York in the United States so as to collect multicultural education-related documents, interview experts, and hold discussions with personnel at schools that are making advanced efforts, during school visits.

### **3. Results of the study**

Based on Sleeter's framework (the establishment of educational goals, selection of knowledge, organizations for educational activities, and educational assessment; 2005), we examined desirable curriculum design for multicultural education. The following are our findings for improving curricula for integrated studies classes.

- (1) When each school establishes educational goals and prepares educational content, they should conduct a survey in advance to academically prove their effectiveness, and try to realize the goals using the Know/Do/Be Bridge, thereby making the educational activities meaningful.
- (2) For educational content, a spiral-structured scope and sequence should be established, with a large concept in its core, and a content paradigm should be prepared. When arranging concrete curricula for learning activities, curriculum mapping will be helpful.
- (3) Reflective approaches and problem solving approaches are effective as educational methods. The former encourage reflection on one's own perspective, and the latter consist of the following stages: formulating the scene of a potential problem, the emergence of the problem, activities to formulate a hypothesis and verification of the hypothesis through such activities, and formulating a scene where the problem has been resolved.
- (4) Objective educational assessment should be sought by utilizing a variety of assessment information and materials, as well as rubrics, and aiming to integrate the assessment with teaching and learning. In addition, curriculum assessment needs to be planned.

There is also a need to actually design curricula for integrated studies classes based on the models obtained through this study, and verify the effectiveness of such curricula by conducting demonstrations. We leave this as one of the challenges to cope with in the future.

### **4. Reports on this study**

- “Report on Research Results under the Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research” (June 1, 2010)  
<http://kaken.nii.ac.jp/ja/p/19530740>
- Tomoaki Matsuo, March 2010, “Education in Multicultural Society and Curriculum Design,” ed. Tokyo Gakugei University Center for Research in International Education, *Curriculum Design for Education in Multicultural Society (Report of the Cross-Cultural Understanding Curricula/R&D Project)*, pp.19-31
- Tomoaki Matsuo, January 2010, *Reform of Present Education in the United States – The Light and the Shadow of Standards and Accountability*, Chap. 14 and Chap. 15, Toshindo, pp.157-181
- Tomoaki Matsuo, March 2010, “Curricula and Children,” ed. Kiyoshi Takeuchi *Children and School*, Gakubunsha, pp.62-75
- Tomoaki Matsuo, June 2007, *A Restructuring of Multicultural Education in the United States – From Cultural Pluralism to Multiculturalism*, Akashishoten, pp.1-209