

© 2009

Nobuhiko Hamamoto

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

JAPANESE MIDDLE SCHOOLS' ADAPTATION OF THE INTEGRATED STUDIES:

A CASE STUDY

by

NOBUHIKO HAMAMOTO

A dissertation submitted to the

Graduate School-New Brunswick

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in Education

Written under the direction of

Catherine A. Lugg

and approved by

New Brunswick, New Jersey

May, 2009

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Title JAPANESE MIDDLE SCHOOLS' ADAPTATION OF THE INTEGRATED
STUDIES: A CASE STUDY

By NOBUHIKO HAMAMOTO

Dissertation Director:
Catherine A. Lugg

In 1998, Education Ministry of Japan announced the enactment of the periods of the Integrated Studies (IS) at all public school levels. The IS is defined as interdisciplinary, project-oriented learning activities which aim to promote students' problem-solving abilities and self-learning skills. In spite of teachers' active involvement in the development of various educational activities for the periods, research indicated that teachers faced various barriers to implementing the IS. Generally, the middle school teachers were unsupportive to the IS due to their lack of resources for the curriculum development. Despite the constraints, how was the IS implemented in the middle schools? What kind of roles did the IS take in the curriculum? How did the teachers view the constraints to their implementation of the IS?

By taking "adaptation" perspective for educational policy implementation (McLaughlin, 1976b), this study examined the realities of the middle schools' implementation of the IS based on a multiple case study of three middle schools in Osaka.

This study analyzed the data from my five months of field research in the schools, which included interviews with the teachers, observation of the teachers' implementation of the IS, survey of the teachers as well as collection of school documents.

The research findings are summarized as following. First, the analysis showed the IS periods assured the room for the schools' autonomous development of projects with specific sociocivic themes and increased the opportunities for various new learning styles (e.g., self-inquiry, presentation, and various hands-on activities). However, a large part of the IS periods was utilized for the schools' existing practices like career guidance or school events reflecting the middle schools' needs on sustaining its traditional curriculum. Consequently, the space for new learning styles was dispersed across the three years' curriculum, and tended to decrease in the higher grade.

Finally, the comparison of the three schools sheds light on the difference of the attitudes to the implementation of the IS across the schools. The analysis attributed this difference to some factors including shared pedagogy of the IS, longitudinal experience of collaboration, organizational context like school-size, and the degree of students' behavioral problems.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this study would not have been possible without the assistance of the education scholars in the United States and Japan; Japanese teachers, administrators, board of education personnel; and my family and friends.

I would first and foremost like to acknowledge the enduring assistance and patience of my advisor, Dr. Catherine Lugg, at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Dr. Lugg provided me with ongoing guidance and moral support throughout my academic work at the GSE of Rutgers University.

I would like to gratefully and sincerely thank three of the dissertation committee members, Dr. William Firestone, Dr. Sharon Ryan, and Dr. Gerald LeTendre for their guidance for my doctoral work. Dr. Firestone, the chair of the Education Policy department at the GSE, assisted me to construct the theoretical framework of this study and encouraged my whole doctoral work in the department. I owe my consideration of the design of this field research to Dr. Sharon Ryan. She gave me a lot of advice to my building of the research plan, and her moral support was helpful for my continuation of this study. Dr. Gerald LeTendre, a professor at The Pennsylvania State University, gave me plenty of advice for my research methodology and analysis from his standpoint as a specialist on Japanese education. Finally, I appreciate Dr. Katrina Bulkley, a professor at Montclair State University, for her guidance on my early stage of the doctoral work.

I owe a considerable debt to some of Japanese scholars and administrators in Japan who helped me accomplish my fieldwork in Osaka. Especially, to Professor Kokichi Shimizu, Osaka University, who assisted me in selecting a school for my case study and gave me moral support during the data collection. I thank Mr. Hirozou Imazu

and Mr. Kazuhisa Mikami, both of whom are now administrative positions in the schools of Osaka Prefecture, for their introductions to key informants of the research sites. I appreciate the support of Mr. Takashi Fukami, a teacher of Matsubara Dai Nana Middle School, who gave me a lot of information on the current tendency of the Integrated Studies in schools. I also thank for the continued moral support of Mr. Masaji Okada (principal, Momodani High School), Mr. Takashi Asahina (principal, Matsubara Daini Middle School) and Mr. Katsunari Nakamura (head teacher, Matsubara Daini Middle School).

The list of Japanese teachers and administrators, who assisted me with my fieldwork in the three middle schools are too numerous to mention. I thank all of you for your kind and thoughtful reception and cooperation, providing me unfettered access to classrooms and teachers' offices.

And, thanks to my family— my mother (Terumi Hamamoto), grand mother (Tazuko Hamamoto), grand father (Tsukiho Hamamoto), my aunt (Ikuyo Ikeda), my uncle (Kiyoshi Ikeda), and two cousins (Tomoyo Ikeda and Kazumi Ikeda)— whose cooperation and patience made the completion of this study possible. I also thank Shizuka Oyama for her encouragement and shiny smile.

Finally, I appreciate Professor Hiroshi Ikeda at Osaka University, who passed away on February 2004. Dr. Ikeda advised me during my graduate work in Osaka University and recommended me to study education in the U.S. Prof Ikeda's passion for educational research that I touched from his mentorship continued to motivate me for pursuing this long, intellectual journey.

Table of Contents

	(page)
CHAPTER ONE : Introduction	1-17
Statement of the Problem	1
The Policy Context of the Curriculum Reform	8
Historical Background of the Revision of National Curriculum in 1998	8
Characteristics of Integrated Studies in Course of Study	11
A Hasty Reexamination of the Revised Curriculum	13
Summary	16
 CHAPTER TWO : Literature Review	 18-52
Middle School Teachers' Attitudes to the Integrated Studies	18
Pilot Study	21
Curriculum Integration	24
Research on Curriculum Implementation and Development	32
Curriculum Implementation as Mutual Adaptation	32
School-Based Curriculum Development	33
Factors that Influence on SBCD	34
Context of Japanese Middle Schools	39
School Culture and Curriculum Implementation	39
Japanese School Organization and Culture	41
Possible Influences of the Middle School Context on the Adaptation of IS	45
Summary	50
 CHAPTER THREE : Research Design	 53-78
Conceptual Framework: Adaptation of IS in Middle Schools	53
Research Questions	55
Research Methodology	56
Multiple Case Study Design	56
Research Site—Profile of the Prefecture of Osaka	59
Site Selection	60
Data Collection Methods	63
Collection of Documents.	63
In-depth Interviews with Curriculum Leaders.	63
Observation.	67
Teacher Survey.	67
Data Analysis	69

Procedures to Enhance Validity	73
Internal Validity.	74
External Validity.	75
Limitation of the Research	76
Summary	77
CHAPTER FOUR : Profiles of the Three Middle Schools	79-104
School Backgrounds	79
Nichu	79
Icchu	81
Rokuchu	82
Teachers' Evaluation of the IS: Results from Survey	84
Curriculum Development Process of the Three Schools	86
Nichu—Precedence in the Curriculum Innovation	87
Icchu—Failure in Radical Change and Success in Slow Adaptation	91
Rokuchu—Challenge of Students' Motivation and Instability of the Projects	96
Summary of This Chapter	101
CHAPTER FIVE : Form of the Middle Schools' Adaptation of the IS	105-123
Details of the Content of the IS Activities in the Case Schools	105
The 1 st grade	105
The 2 nd Grade	108
The 3 rd Grade	110
Characteristics of the Middle Schools' Adaptation of the IS	112
Local Context of Human Rights Education	112
Complementation of the Career Guidance Activities	113
Utilization for the School Events	116
Problem in Continuity in the Learning Activities	118
Discussion	119
CHAPTER SIX : Teachers' Views of the IS at the Three Schools	124-199
Teachers' Perception of the Challenges to the IS	124
Nichu – The Unique Pedagogy and its Challenge	128
Overview	128
Nichu's IS pedagogy	130
Instructional Aims— Group-building and Empowerment.	130
“Group-building” to Build students' Comfortable Relationship.	131
Empowerment of Individual Student within the Group Activity.	135
“Group” as Safety-net for Students' Promotion.	138

Close Relationship to the Student Guidance.	140
The Perspectives of Human Rights Education.	143
Practices Aiming at the Prevention of School-Crumbling.	146
Problem in the Inheritance of the Legacy	148
Other Problems in the Implementation of the IS	152
Summary of Nichu	154
Icchu -Challenges to a Large-size School in Implementing the IS	155
Overview	155
Organizational Challenges to the Implementation of the IS in a Large Middle School	156
Challenges in Organizing the Learning Activities	156
Use of Limited Learning Resources	157
Lack of Instructional Capacity	159
Students' Behavioral Problems in the IS	162
Conflicting Views on the IS activities	167
The Supportive Views of the IS	168
Teachers Critical of the IS activities	171
Relevance on the Students Awareness on Career	174
Common Ground in the Teachers Views on the IS	176
Summary of Icchu	178
Rokuchu – The Views of the IS in a “Tough” School	175
Overview	179
Ambivalence of the teachers views on the IS	180
Teachers Who Supported the IS.	181
Difficulties in Organizing the Classes of the IS.	183
Problems to Prepare the IS Activities to Students with Low Motivation.	189
The Past IS Activity Highly Evaluated by the Teachers	193
Difference of the Learning Condition among the Grade-levels	195
Summary of Rokuchu	198
CHAPTER SEVEN : Conclusion	200-218
The Characteristics of the Implementation of the IS and the Roles of the Introduction of the IS	200
How Did the Teachers Perceive the Challenges to Their Implementation of the IS?	204
What Kind of Influence Did the Introduction of the IS Have on the IS?	208
Policy Implications	211
The Contribution of This Study and the Problems for the Future Study	217

References	221
Appendix A Interview Protocol: Curriculum Leader (Principal / Teacher)	230
Appendix B Questionnaire on the Implementation of the “Period of the Integrated Studies”	232
Appendix C Profile of the Participants of the Curriculum Leader Interviews	236
Curriculum Vita	237

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

Table 3.1	Plan of the Data Collection
Table 3.2	Profile of the Respondents of the Teacher Survey
Table 3.3	The List of Categories Utilized for Coding on the Teachers Views on the IS
Table 4.1	Profiles of the Participant Middle Schools
Table 5.1	Current Themes of the IS of Each Grade-Level at the Three Case Schools

Figures

Figure 2.1	A Conceptual Map of SBCD
Figure 3.1	Conceptual Framework of the Middle School's Adaptation/Development of IS
Figure 4.1	Teachers' Perceived Importance of the IS in the School Curriculum
Figure 4.2	Teachers' Satisfaction with their IS Activities
Figure 4.3	Teachers' Perceived Cost-Effectiveness of the IS Activities
Figure 6.1	Teachers' Perception of the Challenges for the Implementation of the IS (A Result from the teacher survey)
Figure 6.2	Teachers' Perception of the Challenges for the Implementation of the IS (Classified by Schools)
Figure 7.1	The Factors Determining the Instructional Capacity of the IS (Based on the Framework of Cohen & Ball (1997))

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

In 1998, the Education Ministry of Japan introduced “the Period of Integrated Studies” (*Sougou Tekina Gakushu*) as a part of the revised national curriculum. The period of the Integrated Studies (IS) is defined as instructional periods for interdisciplinary, project-oriented learning activities which aim to promote students’ problem-solving abilities and self-learning skills. Promoted since the 1980s, the gradual introduction of the IS was a product of the long-term curriculum reform toward “relaxing” public school education (Motani, 2005). Reflecting on the past criticisms of the cram-style and uniform education in public schools, this curriculum reform stressed that Japanese education of the 21st century should foster students’ problem-solving abilities, self-learning skills, and motivation for learning as new goals for teaching in schools (Bjork & Tsuneyoshi, 2005; Cave, 2001).

Including these new abilities, skills, and motivation, the Education Ministry defined the “zest for living” (*ikiru chikikara*) as the new vision of the students’ achievement in the reformed education system. The Central Education Council’s 1996 report, which was a blueprint for the curriculum reform, summarized the general direction of the reform in a passage, that “(the reform) sets the development of ‘zest for living’ as its foundation, and aims for the transformation from the education that tended to drill knowledge into students one-sidedly, to one where children independently learn and think” (CCE 1996, part I, ¶ 2). In this way, in the words of Tyack and Cuban (1995), the Education Ministry planned to radically change the Japanese “grammar of schooling,”

especially in the ways to learn and teach in schools. And, as a measure to promote this change, the Ministry introduced the periods of the IS in the national curriculum for the elementary and secondary schools.

The introduction of the IS required the schools to autonomously develop activities for a specific number of class hours in the yearlong curriculum (105~110 class hours in each grade of the elementary level and 70~110 class hours in the middle level). Given this unprecedented degree of freedom concerning curriculum development, teachers began implementing the IS in 1999, with a mixture of hope and uneasiness. So far, various programs have been implemented based on teachers' active involvement across the country (MacDonald, 2006; Motani, 2005).

Since 1999, the schools have designed their plans of the IS activities and experimented using diverse learning activities for their students. For the schools, which had implemented the instruction aligned with the guidelines of the national curriculum and the standardized textbooks, the school-level design of the learning activities to foster students' abilities to "independently learn and think" was an unprecedented effort.

The national guidelines illustrated some interdisciplinary themes to be learned in the periods of the IS, which included "environment," "international understanding," "welfare," and "information," and recommended the schools' introduction of various new learning styles (students' inquiry, presentation, group discussion, hands-on activities, and so forth) (Education Ministry, 1998). While the Ministry published some sample programs of the IS activities, at present, hundreds of examples of learning activities for the IS have been introduced by educators and researchers. By utilizing various

information sources and professional development opportunities, all the schools have started fully implementing “the periods for the IS” within their curriculum.

Unfortunately, despite this significant change in the education of the public schools, there is little research that has carefully examined how the schools were changed by the introduction of the IS. As one of the few empirical researchers on this issue, MacDonald (2006) notes the impact of the introduction of the IS on the public school education through his long-term fieldwork in Japanese schools:¹

Perhaps one of the most significant outcomes of the integrated curriculum is the increasing role of civil society in the Japanese educational process. ... A primary purpose of the integrated curriculum was to open the doors of the schools to community, bringing human resources into classrooms, and permitting students to explore beyond the school walls. All of the approaches described have provided opportunities for Japanese teachers to intersect students with civil society, bridging the gap between school and community, community and nation, and nation and world. This approach has fundamentally changed the way in which Japanese children learn, helping teachers overcome a criticism that Japanese schools are classroom kingdoms (*gakko okuku*), isolated from community and society. (pp. 138-139)

In addition to this increased contact between the students and the civil society, MacDonald (2006) also proposes that schools introduced various learning methods to foster students’ independence that were liberated from the traditional en-masse instruction.

The integrated curriculum has permitted teachers the freedom to permit independent student exploration. Teachers expect that students will leave the school to investigate the local community and beyond. They have provided

¹ In the excerpt below, MacDonald (2006) used the term of “integrated curriculum” as the translation of “Sougouteki na Gakushu,” (IS in this thesis).

students with greater autonomy to conduct research and explore. There is also evidence to suggest that students are taking ownership of knowledge. As students collect information through research, interview, and actual experience, they become content experts who then share their expertise with teachers and peers through individual and small group presentations. (pp. 139-140)

These significant changes that were pointed out by MacDonald (2006) appear to fit the direction of the reform promoted by the Education Ministry. Although MacDonald (2006) himself argued that teachers' engagement varied in implementing the IS among the schools, the changes described above were probably the ones that all the schools more or less experienced through the implementation of the IS. The government's attempt to "grammar of schooling" has been realized, setting aside question of the size and depth of this change.

However, it is difficult to evaluate this curriculum reform as "successful" because the teachers, especially in the middle schools, appeared quite pessimistic about it. The change of "grammar of schooling" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995), by the introduction of the IS appeared to give various challenges and uncertainty on their jobs. Several survey studies (Education Ministry, 2005; Mimizuka et al, 2003) indicate that school teachers are quite unsupportive to their implementation of the IS. While some teachers indicated that the IS enables various students' hands-on activities under some themes, the majority of middle school teachers doubted the educational benefits of the IS to students (Education Ministry, 2005; Kurebayashi et al, 2006). In addition, the results of these survey studies show many teachers have difficulties in managing the time for preparing the IS practices in their already busy work schedule. Furthermore, many teachers report their lack of resources (staff, expertise, etc) to implement the IS (Education Ministry, 2005; Mimizuka et al, 2003).

These survey results imply a “mismatch” between the implementation of the IS and existing practices of middle school education. As the surveys indicated, the lack of resources for the implementation of the IS may be an important factor behind the teachers’ (especially, of middle schools) pessimism on the IS (Education Ministry, 2005; Mimizuka et al, 2003). However, there might be the other reasons for the pessimism derived from the relationship between the implementation of the IS and the existing cultural and institutional contexts of the middle schools. Generally, as literature on Japanese education shows, middle school teachers’ instruction and guidance gravitate toward the preparation for the high school entrance exams, and their instruction is more teacher-centered and control-oriented than those in elementary level (Fukuzawa, 1994; LeTendre, 1994; 1995). Therefore, it is questionable if the IS fits the middle schools’ conventional practices and beliefs, in the ways recommended by the Ministry.

Given these possible factors, the realities of the IS’s implementation in schools appear to need more in-depth research. Previous research has heavily relied on surveys, and consequently lacks the in-depth exploration on the school-level implementation of the IS, the roles of the IS, and the challenges to the teachers’ implementation of it in the schools. These aspects of the schools’ implementation of the IS are still in the black box and have not been fully examined. Also, due to the lack of empirical and in-depth analysis of the implementation of the IS, there were few valid research-based strategies of the improvement for the IS available for the schools. In order to address these issues, I established the following main research questions on the middle schools’ implementation of the IS:

- How was the IS implemented in the middle schools?

- What were the roles of the IS activities implemented in the middle school curriculum?
- How did the teachers perceive the challenges to their implementation of the IS?

In brief, these questions were concerned with the aspects of middle schools' implementation of the IS: the characteristics of the implementation of the IS, the roles of the IS introduced in the middle school curriculum, and the challenges to the implementation. The investigation guided by these questions regarding middle schools' "adaptation" seems crucial both for educators and policymakers to consider the ways to improve the present curriculum as well as evaluate the meaning of the ongoing curriculum reform from a policy analysis perspective.

The more theoretical question of this dissertation was concerned with the relationship between middle schools' implementation of the IS and the cultural context of middle schools (regularities of teachers' job, conventional instructional and guidance practices, organizational structure, teachers' pedagogies and perceived needs):

- What kind of influence did the introduction of the IS have on the middle school education?

According to the research literature on curriculum implementation, teachers' existing beliefs or practices are often become the scheme for understanding the introduced innovation, and the teachers tend to assimilate the new components into their present practices (Spillane, 2004; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). For this reason, the existing regularities or grammars of teaching practices remain unchanged in spite of the introduction of a reform (Sarason, 1971; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). In other words, the schools tend to *adapt* the introduced policy to their existing contexts or practices

(McLaughlin, 1976; Fullan, 1982). To fully understand the realities of the implementation of an educational policy, a researcher should pay careful attention to such interaction between the policy and the contexts of the schools. Therefore, as an attempt of policy evaluation, I will investigate the impact of the curriculum change on the middle school education by integrating the findings of this research.

While the IS was introduced all levels of public schooling, this research focused on its implementation in middle schools. This focus reflected the prevailing problems of middle schools' implementation of integrated studies and was motivated by social interest in examining the validity of the IS practices in middle schools. While the interdisciplinary or integrative curriculum is gaining popularity as part of public school curriculum in many countries across the world,² it is interesting how it works in the unique context of Japanese middle schools. As Shimizu (1992) argues, the Japanese middle school is positioned as the last stage of compulsory education. Like elementary schools, middle schools still emphasize the nature of "whole person education" and are responsible to foster students' full abilities and social qualities for the participation in the adult society. Meanwhile, the middle school is also the stage where "competition" for the hierarchically ordered society starts, and many school activities are driven by the high school entrance exam. While this latter characteristic (large incentives from high-stakes exam) is common feature of secondary schools in East Asian countries, it is interesting to look at how the approach of integrative or interdisciplinary curriculum works in such unique cultural context of Japanese schools. The findings from this research contribute to

² As shown in the case reports of the current educational reform in the *International handbook of curriculum research* (Pinar, 2003. ed.) shows, many countries in Europe, South America, East and South Asia includes some components of interdisciplinary learning activities in their national curriculum.

the literature on the implementing an integrative or interdisciplinary curriculum in secondary schools, as well as contribute to the literature on Japanese educational reform.

For the present study, I conducted multiple case studies on three middle schools' adaptation of IS. This research was conducted in the Prefecture of Osaka, one of the largest metropolitan areas in Japan. Before elaborating on the design of the proposed research, I will explore the historical context of the curriculum reform in the rest of this chapter.

The Policy Context of the Curriculum Reform

Historical Background of the Revision of National Curriculum in 1998

In Japan's centralized educational system, the largest reform of public education is provided by the Education Ministry's revision of the Course of Study (*gakushu shido yoryo*), a guideline for the national curriculum. Based on the reports by governmental advisory councils on education, this revision is conducted approximately every 10 years by Education Ministry officials (Azuma, 2002; Okano & Tsuhiya, 1999). The IS appeared in the latest revision of the Course of Study promulgated in 1998 (full implementation in 2002). The pedagogies behind this revised curriculum emphasized "relaxation" of schooling and the development of students' "zest [power] for living" (*ikiru chikara*). As I show below, this view seems quite "progressive," particularly given the decades of conservative policymakers' strong control of the educational system (Cave 2001; Motani 2005).

The policy stream leading to the 1998 curriculum revision derived from the increased public dissatisfaction on the status of the school system in the 1970s, which corresponds to the end of the high economic growth period in Japan (Cave, 2001; Horio,

1997). One criticism of Japanese education was the prevalence of various youth behavioral problems (e.g., bullying, school violence, school refusal), which were attributed to the highly control-oriented education in schools, as well as the pressure from the high-stakes entrance exams (high school and college) (Beauchamp, 1991; Schoppa, 1991). The mass media claimed that such pressure from the school system dampened students' learning motivation and alienated many students, and criticized it as sources for various students' behavioral problems (Fujita, 2000; Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999). Business leaders also criticized the educational system. They were concerned about the extremely uniform and cramming nature of education in schools. This style left little room for students to think independently or exercise their creativity, and was seen as insufficient for fostering future excellent workforces for the global economic competition (Cave 2001; Horio 1997; LeTendre 2002).

In response to these concerns, the government initiated a large-scale curriculum reform during the mid-1980s. In particular, the establishment of the Ad-Hoc Council on Education by then Prime Minister Nakasone in 1984 and the publication of subsequent reports established the agendas for comprehensive educational reform (Azuma, 2002; Cave 2001; Tsuchiya & Okano 1999). Clearly reflecting the educational demands of the business communities (and very little from parents or teachers), the reports' key themes for reform included: *internationalization*, *information technology*, *lifelong learning*, and *emphasis on individuality* (Azuma, 2002; Schoppa, 1991). Of these four themes, especially, *lifelong learning* and *individuality* were influential as pedagogical assumptions for later revisions of the national curriculum. By invoking the theme of "lifelong learning," the government emphasized students' abilities to learn independently

on the basis of their interest or problems. In brief, it referred to students' "self-education abilities" (jiko kyoikuryoku) (Ozaki 1999), which would support their continuous learning in response to the needs of the changing society. Also, the principle of "individuality" meant educators should pay more attention to developing individual students' unique abilities and personalities (Ozaki, 1999; Schoppa, 1991). This view advocated design of educational activities based on students' interest and motivation as well as provision of more course options for students within a school curriculum (Cave, 2001).

Following the Ad-Hoc Council reports, another important report on educational reform was released in 1996 by the government's chief educational advisory body, the Central Council on Education (CCE, 1996). Reexamining the agendas set by the Ad-Hoc Council and reflecting the increased concern regarding students' behavioral problems in schools (bullying, school refusal, classroom chaos, and etc), this report stressed the need for significant change in Japanese education (Cave 2001; Motani 2005; Tsuneyoshi, 2000). In brief, the report portrayed Japanese students as neither sufficiently well-socialized nor as creative and self-motivated as they should be. Students should have more opportunities of exploratory and experience-based activities rather than being exposed to uniform, cram education. The Council used the term "zest for living" as new vision of the students' abilities and qualities that should be fostered in the educational system and especially emphasized students' abilities "to learn and to think independently" (CCE 1996, part I, ¶ 2). Based on this ambitious goal, the report recommended a package of reform proposals including a slimmed-down national

curriculum, the introduction of the IS, and more elective subjects in schools (Bjork & Tsuneyoshi, 2005; Cave, 2001).

The idea of the IS first appeared in the Central Council on Education report of the Central Council on Education (CCE, 1996) and was defined as a part of the national curriculum in the revised Course of Study published in 1998. The Course of Study stated that the IS was to foster students' "zest for living" and especially it should contribute to the development of problem-solving abilities, skills to learn and judge by themselves, and better understanding of the way of living (Education Ministry 1998). Another role of the IS expected in the reform blueprints was to interconnect various knowledge from subject areas and connect them with students' real life situations (Curriculum Council, 1998, part I, chap 1). Under these general aims, each school was required, at its discretion, to design and implement the IS for specific periods defined by the Course of Study.³

Characteristics of Integrated Studies in Course of Study

The revised Course of Study defined that, "[In the period of the IS] a school should conduct its own special, individually-crafted educational activities which respond to the circumstances of the community, school and children and represent opportunities for learning about interdisciplinary themes or themes based on students' interest" (Education Ministry, 1998, chap.1, section 4, ¶ 1). The Course of Study also defined two aims of instruction: (a) "to cultivate the qualities and the abilities to discover issues independently, to learn and think for themselves, to judge independently, and to solve problems well;" and (b) "to help children learn how to learn and reason, to develop their minds for independently and creatively coping with problem-solving activities and/or

³ According to the revised Course of Study, elementary schools should have 105~110 class hours in each grade while middle schools should implement it for 70~110 class hours of it.

enquiry, and deepen their understanding of their own way of life” (Education Ministry, 1998, chap.1, section 4, ¶ 2). In brief, the IS should foster students’ skills to think and learn about the problems that they face. Based on these instructional aims, the Course of Study recommended following three types of themes for the learning activities of the IS; (1) interdisciplinary themes including international understanding, information, environment, welfare, and health, (2) themes based on students’ interest, and (3) themes related to the unique characteristics of the community and school⁴ (Education Ministry, 1998, chap.1, section 4).

The Course of Study also recommended that the IS activities should incorporate various hands-on and problem-solving activities, including “outdoor activities, volunteer activities and other social experiences; observation and experimentation; field trips and research; speeches and debating; and handicraft and production activities” (Education Ministry, 1998, chap.1, section 4, ¶ 5). To introduce these activities in the IS, the Course of Study encouraged collaboration of teachers within school, as well as cooperation with parents and community members.

In this way, the Course of Study broadened the latitude for learning activities for the period of the IS. Additionally, schools were expected to create their projects toward the promotion of students’ proactive engagement in learning. However, from a different angle, this wide latitude for IS activities without setting any guiding principles for organizing learning appears to obscure the goals of IS. The Education Ministry emphasized students’ acquisition of the ability to “learn and think independently” as well as interdisciplinary learning experiences in the period of IS. However, the Course of

⁴ These themes are just an illustration of the types of activities desirable for the IS. As Amano (2000) suggested, the school’s plan of IS do not have to include all the three themes and is permitted to conduct any other themes (p. 81).

Study did not propose any concrete directions for promoting these important aims. While such non-regulative descriptions of IS might enable schools' autonomous "adaptation" of the IS into their school curriculum, it also could allow schools' utilization of the IS periods for existing special activities (e.g., school excursion or sports festival) or even drilling of subject areas⁵ (Azuma, 2002).

A Hasty Reexamination of the Revised Curriculum

Despite the government's ambitious educational goals and the schools' gradual adjustment to the reform, there has been great public concern regarding the implementation of the revised national curriculum (Bjork & Tsuneyoshi 2005; Motani 2005). A part of the public who questions the direction of "relaxed education" has criticized the large-size reduction of the educational content in the curriculum and its possible influence on declining student academic achievement (Ichikawa, 2002). Such concern and criticism emerged around the time that the new Course of Study was announced in 1998. As the time of its full implementation approached, Japanese mass media, university professors, and business groups, who were concerned about the decline of academic achievement, gradually strengthened their criticisms to the Ministry (Ichikawa, 2002).

Initially, the Education Ministry was defensive and continued to advocate the general direction of the reform. However, responding to the increased criticisms from various sectors of the society, it abruptly announced a policy correction right before the full enforcement of the revised curriculum in 2002. In January 2002, the Education

⁵ For example, MacDonald (2006), in his multi-site case studies of the IS in schools, actually observed an elementary school which used considerable portion of instructional hours of the IS for students' independent work of subject areas (p. 33).

Ministry published an appeal (Education Ministry, 2003a)⁶ to inform the educators of the importance of students' acquisition of basic academic abilities right before the full enforcement of the revised curriculum. After this announcement, the Education Ministry began to emphasize the students' acquisition of basic academic abilities and knowledge (Bjork & Tsuneyoshi, 2005; Ichikawa, 2002). In 2003, the Education Ministry announced the partial amendment of the national curriculum based on a hastily-written report of the Central Council of Education (Education Ministry 2003b). This curriculum set the cultivation of "solid academic abilities" (*Tashikana Gakuryoku*) as the goal for the public schools. The ministry explained these "solid academic capabilities" included both basic academic abilities (knowledge and skills) and the students' abilities to learn and think independently (Education Ministry 2003c, p. 2). This did not mean the Ministry totally dismissed their previous goals of educational reform. The officials explained both students' academic basics and their abilities to "think and learn" by themselves were integral part of their "zest for living" (Education Ministry, 2003c), and continued to support implementing the IS in the schools. Rather, the Education Ministry added more detail in the amended Course of Study to ensure the local implementation of the IS in the manner that the Education Ministry originally envisioned.⁷

⁶ This announcement was published in a form of a short booklet, "Suggestions for Learning" (*Manabi no Susume*) (Education Ministry, 2003a), as their "urgent appeal." They also published the content of this booklet on the Ministry's website.

⁷ In particular, this amendment demanded that schools pay attention to the connection of the activities of the IS to the subject areas and other school activities. Also, responding to the local distortion of the IS in the implementation (e.g., the use of the hours of IS for the supplementary classes for the basic subject areas like English and mathematics or for students' learning of "English conversation" or "basic computer skills"), the partial amendment above in 2003 required the schools to set the general goal and content of the projects of the IS of each school. It also demanded that the school should articulate the school level plan of the IS. The local education boards were responsible for the check of the goal and plan of each school's activities of the IS.

Even after this policy change, public concern on declining student achievement grew, bolstered by findings that indicated students' decline in academic achievement as measured by international educational assessments (PISA 2003; TIMSS 2003). This increased concern pushed the Education Ministry toward the more comprehensive reexamination of the curriculum.⁸ However, the IS has already penetrated the school curriculum across the country and also has taken a significant role in giving students opportunities to study some themes that the government treats as very important (e.g., information, international understanding, environment, and career education). Therefore, it is unlikely that the government will completely remove the IS from the curriculum in the near future⁹.

As shown above, the Education Ministry is trying to reexamine the past direction of "relaxed education" and increasingly emphasizing the improvement of students' academic achievement in schools. In this stream of policy change, the IS, a product of the "relaxed education" movement, has been publicly discussed regarding its relevancy in the present national curriculum. As I will review in the next chapter, many middle school teachers do not support implementing the IS and hope that the number of instructional hours of the IS will be reduced. One big problem for the policy discussion on implementing the IS is the lack of empirical research of the IS in the middle schools, as

⁸ The public concern of the decline of students' achievement was increased by the publication of the results of PISA and TIMSS at the end of 2004. These results indicate a decline in student achievement, especially in reading. These results also strengthened the Ministry's attitudes to reexamine the direction of the national curriculum in 2002, and finally the Education Minister (Mr. Nakayama) mentioned the possibility of deleting the IS in the next revision.

⁹ The recent report from the CCE (Central Council of Education) (2005), which prepared for the next revision of the national curriculum, also articulated its support for the continued implementation of the IS in public schools and provision of various support for it (chap 1, section 2). However, there is still a possibility that they may reduce the amount of instructional hours for the IS in the next revision of the national curriculum in response to the public demands to restore more time for basic subject areas.

well as other school levels. Also, there is little research regarding the organizational factors that support the successful development and implementation of the IS. Therefore, despite the growing criticisms on the direction of the curriculum reform, little is known about the various roles of the IS in the middle school curriculum and the system to support its implementation in schools. This study can supplement the current lack of the empirical research regarding the implementation of the IS in the middle schools and will produce new knowledge that contributes to the improvement of IS activities in the current middle school system.

Summary

This chapter introduced “the Period of Integrated Studies” (IS) as a product of a radical curriculum reform initiated by Japanese Education Ministry during the mid-1990s. Although the implementation of the IS appeared to provide significant change in learning activities in Japanese schools, the schoolteachers, especially in middle schools tended to report many difficulties to implement it. However, the increasing public concern regarding the decline in academic achievement allegedly caused by the “relaxed education” has prompted questions on the relevance of the IS in the national curriculum. Behind this educational policy context, this study focuses on Japanese middle schools, where the teachers appear to have many difficulties in their implementation of the IS as shown in the recent survey researches. The purpose of this study is to examine how the middle schools adapted the IS into their curriculum by eliciting schoolteachers’ views of the roles of IS in the school, its benefits to the students, and the constraints to its implementation.

The latter half of this introductory chapter provided an overview of the historical process of the curriculum reform in Japan and the definition of the IS in the government's curriculum framework (course of study) as well as the recent policy change of the Education Ministry to clarify the policy context surrounding the implementation of the IS in schools. Despite the rapid change of the political environment of the implementation of the IS, the ongoing discussion of the curriculum reform still lacks empirical knowledge on the implementation of IS. The present study will supplement the research by providing an in-depth insight on the realities of the middle schools' implementation of the IS.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

In this chapter, I review two types of literature (across five total sections) that are relevant for the present research. The following two sections review the findings from the research that investigated the implementation of the IS in middle schools. The first section involves the survey researches on the implementation of the IS and the second section summarizes the findings from my pilot study in Osaka. The succeeding three sections review the literature whose concepts and findings are the essential parts of the conceptual framework for this study. These three sections review the research on curriculum integration, research on curriculum implementation and development, and research on Japanese middle school's context.

Middle School Teachers' Attitudes to the Integrated Studies

Though the introduction of IS gave space for teachers to autonomously develop curricula, one problem is that most teachers did not have the expertise or experience with curriculum development due to the long history of teacher obedience to the standardized curriculum (Motani, 2005). The government also provided little support (e.g., staffing, budgets, or materials) to facilitate this innovation in schools. Furthermore, the recent policy change of the Education Ministry, which has shifted their focus onto students' better acquisition of basic academic abilities, appears to make it difficult for teachers to understand the governmental aims of implementing the IS. In this way, while the environment for teachers' implementation of IS seems insufficient, how have middle schools teachers implemented the IS? How do they perceive their efforts?

According to the Education Ministry's report, the themes that were most frequently studied in the IS in middle schools in 2004 and 2005 were "environment," "welfare and health," and "international understanding" (Education Ministry, 2005). Under each theme, an IS project typically provides students with a series of learning activities including students' research on library materials/internet, lectures from guest speakers related to the theme, and some fieldwork in the community. Furthermore, responding to the government's current press for career education, now most middle schools conduct "career experience learning"¹⁰ as a part of IS activities (National Institute for Educational Policy Research, 2005).

According to the survey research, another tendency of middle schools' implementation of the IS is that middle schools' efforts were more weakly connected with the instruction of subject areas than compared to those of elementary schools (Kurebayashi et al, 2006; Mimizuka et al, 2003; Ochi et al, 2005). Rather, the practices of the IS in the middle schools tended to be connected to these schools' special activities and career guidance activities (Kurebayashi et al, 2006; Mimizuka et al, 2003). This kind of unique connection seems to reflect the needs of middle schools to preserve or amplify such traditional activities by connecting to the IS.

The recent surveys also show that many middle school teachers were not receptive to implementing the IS. First, the surveys indicate majority of those teachers believed their IS activities are not particularly beneficial to students. Certainly, most teachers agreed that the IS can provide students with various hands-on experiences (e.g., outdoor experiences and social experiences) or opportunities to learn interdisciplinary

¹⁰ This is students' short internship to workplaces in the neighborhood, coupled with a series of students' learning of the world of work.

themes that transcend the boundaries of subject areas (Education Ministry, 2005a).

However, many teachers seemed skeptical of the complementary relationship between the students' learning in the IS and that of academic subject areas.¹¹ They were also afraid of students' decline of academic achievement due to the reduction of instructional hours in the traditional subject areas (Education Ministry, 2005a; Mimizuka et al, 2003).

Furthermore, the surveys examined the impact of implementing the IS on teachers' work in schools. The positive aspects involved the expansion of teachers' ingenuity in curriculum development and the increased cooperation among teachers. However, as for the negative aspects, most middle school teachers reported that their increased work-load increased when the IS was introduced. The majority of the teachers reported they lacked planning time and other important resources (e.g., expertise, staff, and budget) for implementing the IS (Education Ministry, 2005a; Mimizuka et al, 2003; Ochi et al, 2005).

In sum, teachers' general receptivity to the IS seems very low. They tend to underestimate the educational benefits of the IS to students' development and report a lack of resources to support its full implementation. One aspect of middle school teachers' low receptivity to the IS is that most respondents in the surveys asked for either the hours of the IS in the curriculum to be reduced or the IS to be eliminated (Education Ministry, 2005a; Mimizuka et al, 2003).

¹¹ In the survey of Education Ministry (2005, p.48), only one third of the middle school teachers agreed with the statement "the students can apply knowledge and skills that they learned in the subject areas into the real situation [through the IS]." On the other hand, 73.1% of them supported that, "[the IS] just give experiences to the students, and they cannot acquire achievement because of the insufficient connection to the subject areas (p.52)," and 81.0% of the teachers agreed with the statement that "by the instructional hours of subject areas decreased, the students' learning of the basic and foundational content would be neglected" (p.53).

Pilot Study

Prior the present study, I conducted a pilot study, which examined Japanese middle school teachers' beliefs regarding the "zest for living" and their perceptions of the implementation of the IS in their schools (Hamamoto, 2007). This research was mainly based on semi-structured interviews with 12 middle school teachers from different subject areas (math, science, and social studies) in the spring and summer of 2006. This pilot study also included collection of curricular documents regarding the IS and short interviews with the principals. Because the findings from this exploratory research provided some insights that helped me to bridge the literature from different areas and to construct the conceptual framework of the present study, below I briefly overview the findings of the research.

The four middle schools had their own program of the IS across the three grades. Though the degree of school's engagement in the IS activities varied, similar themes were observed in the four schools' projects. For example, responding to the Osaka Prefecture Education Board's guidance to promote "career education" in schools, all four schools had "career experience learning" (students' short internship in neighborhood workplaces, coupled with learning activities about the world of work) by using a part of the semester in the 2nd or 3rd grade. Additionally, each school had similar set of thematic projects including "international understanding," "cultural diversity in the community," "social welfare," "human rights," "environment," and "future life course." Not all these components of the IS were newly developed since the Education Ministry's announcement of the IS, and the schools' project of the IS were a mixture of the past and new activities of thematic learning. Also, all four schools in this research included

traditional special activities (e.g., school excursion, sports festival, choir contest) as a part of the IS period.

Most of the participants of this research regarded their practices of the IS as important because they could prepare various hands-on learning activities (e.g., volunteering or short internship in the community and communication with outside people) that could not be promoted during other periods of schooling. The teachers mainly expected students' moral and social development through the hands-on activities in the IS. While there was considerable variance in teachers' individual beliefs of the elements of skills and attitudes that should be promoted in the IS activities, many emphasized the promotion of several specific skills and attitudes including communication skills, independence, awareness of career, and endurance. These skills and attitudes were similar to the middle school teachers' values depicted by the literature on Japanese middle school culture (Fukuzawa, 1994; LeTendre, 1994; Okano & Tsuchiya, 1998) and also appeared to be consistent with the middle schools' emphasis on "seito shido" (teachers' guidance for students' social and moral development) and "shinro shido" (career guidance).

While this finding implies the teachers' *adaptation of* the IS so that it met their existing values of middle school's practices, the analysis of the interviews indicated that the IS also provided the teachers with the instructional opportunities responding to student needs that were not fully satisfied in the past school curriculum; for example, cultivation of students' communication skills with adults or students' independent decision in learning activities. However, some teachers questioned the benefits of their IS activities to students' development in these social and moral aspects. The main reasons of

this skepticism were as following; first, the brevity of hands-on activities in the IS seemed insufficient for providing lasting effect on students' development, and secondly the students' development in those aspects largely depended on their readiness to the independent engagement in the hands-on activities.

While the participants emphasized the social and moral aspects of students' development in their IS practices, few of them showed any interest in connecting their IS activities to students' knowledge and skills in specific subject areas. Building a complementary relationship between the IS and the academic subject areas was one part of the Education Ministry's vision of implementing IS. However, at least the teachers in my initial research did not support such a focus in their design of IS, and most of them could not propose any concrete examples of the connection between the IS and learning of the subject areas. A few participants pointed out the difficulty to design an IS activity based on students' individual interest and motivation, mentioning students' weak academic interest and knowledge to conduct their independent project. Furthermore, the other difficulty reported by a few teachers was insufficiency of the staffs and material resources to support it.

Most teachers also reported that it was difficult to prepare the IS activities in their extremely busy work schedule, and a few explained the introduction of the IS increased their workload beyond their specialty. In addition to the lack of time for preparing the IS, some of the participants reported insufficient conditions for its full implementation, including lack of expertise in curriculum design, weak support from the community, and difficulties in constructing a shared vision regarding the learning activities.

In sum, the analysis in this research identified at least three categories of factors influencing teachers' design and implementation of IS; (1) the middle school teachers' needs and pedagogical beliefs, (2) resources for innovation (e.g., time, expertise, material), (3) characteristics of students (e.g., their readiness to the independent learning activity).

Curriculum Integration

The IS in the Japanese national curriculum, which is a focus of this study, is a type of curriculum approach categorized as an interdisciplinary curriculum or a form of curriculum integration. Today, the practices of the interdisciplinary curriculum or curriculum integration is observed in many countries (both in the West and the East), and it can be treated as one of the streams of worldwide change in public education. The United States' educational efforts and research on interdisciplinary curriculum or curriculum integration appear to be one of the main roots for those world-wide initiatives.

The American tradition of interdisciplinary/integrated curriculum derives from the efforts of progressive educators since the end of the 19th century (Beane, 1997, Wraga, 1997). The early movement to promote integrated/interdisciplinary curriculum in schools largely reflected the progressive educators' perceptions that curriculum reforms needed to address various issues in public education: the expansion of knowledge in a changing society, the problems of fragmented knowledge in the separated-subjects approach, the provision of learning opportunities fit for the adolescents' concerns, the promotion of citizenship through common and meaningful learning experiences for a democratic society (Tanner & Tanner, 2007). As represented by the Eight Year Study and the Dalton

Plan in 1930s, the progressive educators' efforts of integrated/interdisciplinary curriculum development were most active in the era prior to the World War II.

However, when the federal government began to prod an educational movement toward a rigid separate-subject approach of the curriculum—especially after the curriculum reform responding to the Sputnik shock in the 1950s—the efforts towards implementing interdisciplinary curricula began to wane. In the 1990s, the integrated/interdisciplinary curriculum drew renewed attention in the context of nationwide standards-movement. Middle schools were seen as a particularly important site in need of this curriculum approach by a part of educators (Beane, 1993; Manning & Bucher, 2001; National Middle School Association, 1995). However, the increased influence of state accountability systems has redirected the teachers' attention to the instruction of tested subject areas and has restrained the expansion of integrated/interdisciplinary curriculum in schools (Kysilka, 1998; Tanner & Tanner, 2007; Vars, 1993).

In spite of this history of “non-mainstream” position of the integrated/interdisciplinary curriculum in the U.S., this tradition of progressive educators' efforts has provided waves of influences on prior Japanese educational reform.¹² Most recently, responding to the government's announcement of introducing the IS in the national curriculum, some leading educational scholars often cited the theories of

¹² Historically, while Japan has experienced several movements to promote child-centered, interdisciplinary teaching, all of these movements were theoretically supported by John Dewey's theories of education. These efforts were also supported by progressive educators in the U.S. Even in the case of the IS, when it was firstly appeared in a policy proposal from a Japanese teachers' union in the 1970s, the originators of the concept of the IS were the leading scholars of Dewey's theory of education. (Mizuhara, 1992)

curriculum integration of American progressive education scholars like Beane (1997) or Vars (1993) to provide a theoretical base for the implementation of the IS in schools.

Here, I briefly review the idea of integrated/interdisciplinary curriculum integration and the issues involving implementation. American advocates of the integrated/interdisciplinary curriculum have proposed this approach towards school curriculum as an alternative for the traditional, separate-subject approach of teaching in schools. The recent scholars of integrated/interdisciplinary curriculum (Beane, 1997; Jacobs, 1989; Vars, 1993) have especially emphasized the needs of reorganizing curriculum to meet the exponential growth of knowledge and technology in the changing society, as well as to address the problems of fragmentation of knowledge in learning in schools. Those scholars criticize the traditional, separate-subject approach of curriculum for its fragmentation of knowledge, lack of relationship between the knowledge in schools and their experiences in every day lives, and its slim responsiveness to youths' interest or concern. To address these problems, scholars of integrated/interdisciplinary curriculum propose the methods of interdisciplinary/integrated curriculum, where the various learning activities are sequenced to let the students integrate their knowledge and skills through their exploration under a certain overarching theme. These scholars assume such an approach can facilitate students' intellectual development in a more relevant way for students without being restricted by the existing structure of classroom instruction arbitrarily separated into several subject areas.

A few of the progressive education scholars like Beane (1997), who are strongly concerned with the sociocivic role of schooling in a democratic society, also argue the importance of curriculum integration as the places for fostering youths' citizenship and

their concerns on society. Therefore, Beane (1997) contends activities of curriculum integration also should include an aspect of “social integration,” where the students acquire sense of “common values” or “common good” through the collaboration in a diverse learning community (p. 5). From this perspective, Beane (1997) treats curriculum integration as “a curriculum design that is concerned with enhancing the possibilities for personal and social integration through the organization of curriculum around significant problems and issues” (p. xi).

There are different models of integrated/interdisciplinary curriculum according to the levels of the connection between subjects and the types of activities. For example, Jacobs (1989) proposes a continuum of five models: discipline-based (non-integrated), parallel disciplines (marginally integrated), interdisciplinary units (integrated disciplines), an integrated day approach, and a complete program model (subject matter wholly integrated). These models are designed based on the varying level of connection between content and student interests. Fogarty (1991) proposes 10 models: (1) fragmented, (2) connected, (3) nested, (4) sequenced, (5) shared, (6) webbed, (7) threaded, (8) integrated, (9) immersed, and (10) networked model. Each of these models is determined by the level of connection among topics within a subject or across subjects.

The model labeled as “(curriculum) integration” is a model where students individually or cooperatively engage in project to explore the problems under a certain social issue/theme based on teachers’ collaborative planning (Fogarty, 1991). According to Kysilka (1998), this is the most common model used in American middle schools. In this model, teachers of different subject areas collaboratively work to find overarching themes and concepts, around which they can plan and implement projects that the

students join. In this planning, the themes to be studied should have enough validity for each of the subject areas integrated to enable students to deepen their understanding of each subject area (Jacobs, 1989). The design is also required to fit the youth's personal concerns in social lives and major social issues (Beane, 1997; Vars, 1993).

The teachers' work in organizing an effective project of curriculum integration should carefully consider the project's relevance for students' needs and interests, their learning of subject areas, and society's needs. By following such approach, the curriculum integration can provide students with learning activities organized around the real-life problems and issues significant to both young people and the society, interweaving knowledge and skills from various subject areas (Beane, 1997, Vars, 1993).

This kind of curriculum development is a highly "intellectual" process (Jacobs, 1989) and requires abundant time for collaborative planning (Tanner & Tanner, 2007). The teachers also need an expertise and sufficient understanding of this approach, and should be equipped enough resources to facilitate students' spontaneous learning activities (Beane, 1997; Tanner & Tanner, 2007). Furthermore, trust among the teachers' team and their organizational skills are essential for an effective collaborative planning to enable creative design of curriculum integration practices (Jenkins & Tanner, 1992). Consequently, the design and implementation of curriculum integration is highly resource-intensive. Lack of such resources becomes a predicament for the teachers' sustained work of that approach. Beane (1997) summarizes the common problem of designing a curriculum integration project as following;

Some teachers are reluctant to get involved in curriculum integration projects because they are unsure of how to proceed. That teachers would be unfamiliar with what curriculum integration looks like or how it is done is not surprising

given the dominance of the traditional separate-subject, teacher-centered curriculum in schools and teacher education programs. While there are teachers willing to push ahead without a road map, many more desire help and support through workshops, study groups, visits to other schools, or partnerships with teachers who have done curriculum integration. Where such opportunities are not available, teachers simply cannot be expected to dive in. (Beane, 1997, p. 74)

As described here, the lack of resources can increase the teachers' sense of uncertainty and weaken their involvement in the creative design of curriculum integration. This is a point supported by other scholars of curriculum integration (Martin-Kniep, Feige & Soodak, 1995).

Beane (1997, p.74) also argues involving teachers into a curriculum integration approach risks provoking teachers' antipathy by challenging their "subject-based professional identities." Teachers with strong attachments to their disciplines are more likely to resist to the curriculum integration efforts (Hargreaves, Earl & Ryan, 1996). This explains why secondary school teachers, who have their own disciplines to teach and often work within the disciplinary department, are less likely to be interested in curriculum integration than elementary teachers (Hargreaves, 1994). Teachers' pedagogical beliefs on or attachment to "separate-subject" teaching, formed by their pre-service training and years of teaching experience, are often very strong and hamper their deep understanding of the idea of curriculum integration (Chan, 2003). Jenkins and Tanner (1992) suggest that providing professional development opportunities and building of professional learning community may mitigate such antipathy to that approach.

Kysilka (1998) proposed several reasons that the movement of the curriculum integration approach has failed to gain popularity in the U.S. despite the renewed

attention to its idea in the 1990s. The first is the increasing influence of state's accountability system on the teachers, which is also discussed by other authors (Beane, 1997; Hargreaves et al, 1996; Tanner & Tanner, 2007; Vars; 2001). Under accountability systems, students are expected to demonstrate specific levels of achievement on standardized tests in specific subject areas. In such a situation, teachers feel wary of restructuring the school curriculum and are guided toward the traditional, separate-subject approach of instruction.

The second reason is lack of time, which some educational scholars often treat as the most important material resource for this curriculum change (Jacobs, 1989; Tanner & Tanner, 2007). Despite ample time for collaboration among teachers from different subject areas, "most teachers do not have the time and most administrators will not provide the time for the teachers to work together" (Kysilka, 1998, p. 207). Another inadequate vital resource was teachers' "weak knowledge base for the innovation of curriculum integration" (Kysilka, 1998, p. 207). Because of the separate-subject training in teacher education, most teachers lack the skills and knowledge to "blend" content areas in meaningful ways (Chan, 2003; Martin-Kniep et al, 1995).

The final reason that Kysilka (1998) proposes is parents' resistance to the change. Parents are often unsupportive of practices that differ from their traditional image of a "real school" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Especially, they are unlikely to support a curriculum change that deviates from the practices linked to their notions of academic achievement. As is discussed by Beane (1997) and Hargreaves and colleagues (1996), such parental concern can weaken teachers' full participation in the practices of curriculum integration.

In addition to those factors proposed by Kysilka (1998), there are also issues regarding the students' progress and the evaluation of it (Hargreaves et al, 1996). Though the empirical research regarding the effectiveness of the curriculum integration is still limited, Beane and Vars's (2000) review of the past evaluation indicated, "students in any type of interdisciplinary or integrated curriculum do as well as, and often better than, students in a conventional departmentalized program (p. 5)." In addition to the possible effects on students' achievement, advocates of curriculum integration insist its educational advantages—like fostering students' problem-solving abilities or communication skills—giving relevance for students' learning in schools, or enhancing students' awareness of the social problems and their own living issues (Beane, 1997; Jacobs, 1989; Vars, 1993). However, these elements of students' development as goals of curriculum integration are less tangible and more difficult to assess than the achievement as measured by standardized tests of specific subject areas. For the evaluation of students' progress in integrated/interdisciplinary curriculum, the educators are usually recommended to use authentic assessment (Marsh, 1997; Tchudi & Lafer, 1996). This type of assessment is more time-consuming than traditional assessments, and also the intangibility of the aimed development may increase the uncertainty perceived by the teachers involved in the curriculum integration. In line with this thinking, the curriculum integration approach in schools needs a shared focus on such intangible aspects of students' progress for its practice and evaluation. However, this is also an endeavor to foster such shared view among teachers of different subject areas or with different philosophies of teaching.

In sum, curriculum integration is a tentative leap from the traditional framework of curriculum and instruction in schools. However, the external influences (e.g., accountability system and/or parents' expectation) and the unchanged internal conditions (e.g., teachers' knowledge) as part of that traditional framework become constraints to educators making the leap.

Research on Curriculum Implementation and Development

In this section, in reviewing the research on the curriculum implementation and development, I examine the characteristics of the process and the factors impacting on it. These will be help to set the conceptual framework for the investigation of Japanese middle schools' adaptation/development of the IS.

Curriculum Implementation as Mutual Adaptation

While this research focuses on Japanese middle schools' implementation of IS, it is not an easy task to analyze the success/failure of the local implementation of this effort. Because each school is required to develop its unique curriculum of IS, it's not appropriate to assess the efforts from a "fidelity" perspective, in which the practices of local implementation of a policy is evaluated by their closeness (or fidelity) to the unitary model set by the policymaker. The practices of IS can and should vary based on the teachers' creative utilization of the time depending on the needs of the school and community. Therefore, in the case of analyzing the implementation of the IS, it seems more appropriate to take the perspective of "mutual adaptation" (Fullan, 1982; McLaughlin, 1976a; Snyder, Bolin & Zumwalt, 1992), which involves local educators' active modification of a policy so that it meets the needs and interests in the local educational settings. This perspective of "mutual adaptation" views the local

implementation of a policy as the interaction between the government's initiatives on the policy and local educators' adaptation of it to their settings. The research on this perspective tried to illuminate the active process of local educators' sense-making and translation of a policy into their change of educational practices. In this perspective, the success of the school-level implementation of a curriculum is assessed by its roles *for* the school, in other words, by how the locally adapted curriculum satisfies the needs and interest of the school. This perspective is useful to capture the changes of Japanese middle schools by the introduction of IS in the frame of policy analysis.

The researchers who focus on the mutual adaptation aspect of curriculum implementation identify several factors related to the local adaptation of a reform. Based on his comprehensive review of past implementation research, Fullan (1991) proposes several factors of different implementation levels which impact on implementation of a planned educational change. While Fullan (1991) argues some characteristics of the proposed change itself (e.g., level of clarity of goals or degree of conflicts in the vision) have crucial impacts on the success of its local implementation, he also proposed some school-level and district-level factors determining educational change. Fullan (1991) lists six factors of district-level; the district's history of innovative attempts, the effective adoption process, district administration support, staff development and participation, time-line and information systems, and attitudes of the board and community. As for school-level factors, he emphasizes the role of the principal, teacher-teacher relationships, and teachers' capacity and orientation.

School-Based Curriculum Development

While I hold this perspective of mutual adaptation as a rather macro framework for this research, I would like to approach the middle schools' implementation of IS from different perspective. The schools' implementation of IS is much more autonomous and creative endeavor than the "adaptation" of an assigned curriculum. IS is "a subject without textbook," and each school has to design all of their own projects with few regulations from the government. This kind of school-level, autonomous development of curriculum is called as "*school-based curriculum development*" (SBCD). Skilbeck (1984) defines SBCD as "the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of a programme of students' learnings by the educational institution of which those students are members" (p. 2).

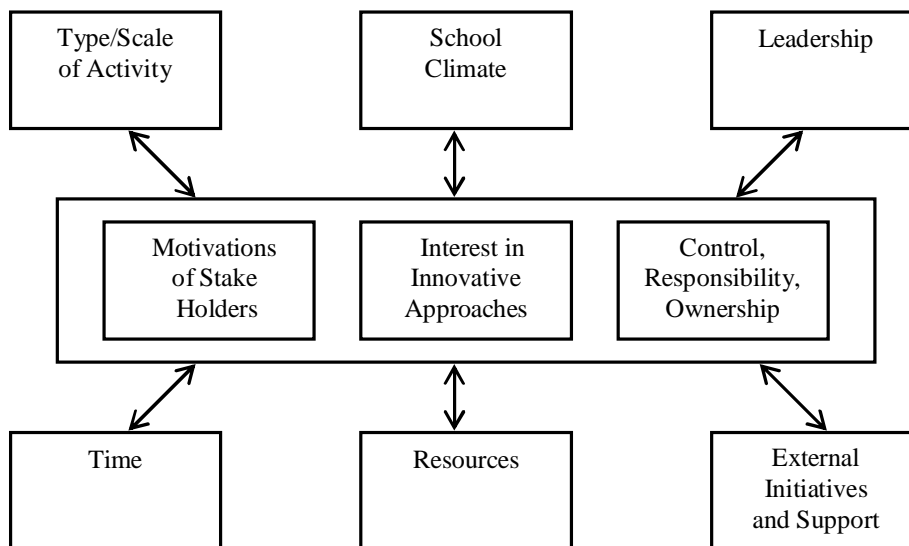
In sum, the implementation of the IS as part of the Japanese national curriculum can be seen as "adaptation" in terms of mandated incorporation of the period of interdisciplinary learning activities in school curriculum. However, the process of the developing and sequencing of the content of the IS, like other cases of curriculum integration approach, is quite autonomous and can be seen as curriculum development (or SBCD). Therefore, while the focus of the present research is on middle schools' *adaptation* of IS, I will often use the term "development" as synonym of "adaptation" hereinafter.

Factors that Influence on SBCD

Given the dynamics within the process of curriculum development, there are various factors that influence that process. For example, based on the findings from the

case studies of SBCD efforts in four countries, Marsh et al (1990) depicted the relationship of the influential factors as shown in the conceptual map (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1. A Conceptual Map of SBCD



Cited from Marsh et al (1990) P. 176

Because SBCD involves faculties' sustained, autonomous efforts of curriculum design and implementation, the faculties' internal driving forces like *Motivations of Stake Holders* and faculties' *Interest in Innovative Approaches* become essential in the efforts. While such engagement in innovation usually increase uncertainty in the faculties' jobs, "most teachers strive for stability, routines and practices that work" (p. 176). Therefore, to let the endogenous activities toward curriculum development happen, it is necessary that the faculties are aware of the needs of participating in the innovation for school improvement. Especially, the principal's leadership is significant to involving the faculty, jolting staff out of their routine, and enhancing their interest in the innovation (Marsh et al, 1990; Tanner & Tanner, 2007). Also, opportunities for professional development on

innovation and the past experiences with the innovative approach also contribute to promote faculties' motivation and interest (Fullan, 1991).

To sustain curriculum development and its aligned instructional changes, the faculties need to have sense of *Control*, *Responsibility*, and *Ownership* (see Coburn, 2000). Even in the approach of SBCD, a possible situation is that curriculum design is held by a few leaders in the school and the majority of the teachers merely implement the assigned curriculum. For example, Chan's (2003) case study of curriculum integration efforts as a form of SBCD in Hong-Kong middle schools described how the top-down decision-making from the principal to the teachers weakened the teachers' sense of ownership and responsibility of the sustained curriculum development process (Chan, 2003). Marsh et al (1990) emphasize constructing ways to promote full participation of the faculty in the curriculum development and to empower them in the process.

Type/Scale of Activity is the characteristics of the SBCD effort. Marsh (1997) explains the schools' practices of SBCD vary according to the axis of "type of activity" (e.g., creation, adaptation, selection of curriculum), "people involved" (individual teachers, pairs of teachers, groups, whole staff), and "time commitment" (from 'one-off activity to 'long-term plan'). *School Climate* means the characteristics of the professional community including principal supportiveness and social cohesiveness among teachers. This can be thought as the status of "social resources" or "social capital" (Gamoran et al, 2003) that enable teachers' collaboration and successful teacher learning for the innovative approach.

The importance of *Leadership* in curriculum development or other school reform initiatives is discussed by many scholars (e.g., Fullan, 1991; Gamoran et al, 2003; Tanner

& Tanner, 2007). Marsh et al (1990) emphasize the roles of principal's leadership, which involves "setting vision," "monitoring the success," "developing interpersonal and organizational skills among his/her staff," "providing resources and information," and so on (pp. 185-186). These roles of leadership should not be thought solely as restricted to principals, as is pointed out by the recent concept of "distributed leadership" (Gamoran et al, 2003; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004). Leadership capacity is distributed within and outside the school community, and some teachers with skills and knowledge also can and do participate in initiating the innovation in schools. Marsh et al (1990) also propose some special skills necessary for "change agent" in SBCD, which include "expertise in curriculum development practices," "sound academic background in a number of subject areas," "finely tuned administrative and organizational skills" (p. 59). To acquire for these skills for taking leadership in SBCD, the change agents need substantial periods of special training (Sabar, 1983).

Finally, the last three factors are concerned with resources to support teachers' design and implementation of the school curriculum. *Time* is the most important material resource for curriculum development, as well as for other school reform efforts (Gamoran, et al, 2003; Marsh et al, 1990; Tanner & Tanner, 2007). According to Marsh and colleagues (1990), most schools are governed by tight schedules and "time spent on non-teaching activities can be a very real cost" (p. 188) for individual teachers. The increased cost of time and energy spent for the SBCD efforts can threaten the teachers' perception of adequacy. Therefore, the leaders and administrators have to ensure adequate time for collaboration to plan SBCD. *Resources* (other than time) includes "financial grants," "materials," "expert advice/modeling," "timetabling assistance," "information

retrieval/circulation” as well as various opportunities of professional development. These can enhance faculties’ capacity for and their sensitivity to the curriculum change, and also contribute to promote their collegiality by facilitating their communication on the change (Gamoran, et al, 2003; Marsh et al, 1990). Finally, the *External Initiatives and Support* is a factor of administrative support mainly concerned with coordinating and ensuring the resources described above to facilitate teachers’ capacity building and engagement in curriculum development as well as their sharing of visions.

While I reviewed the factors influencing the effort of SBCD proposed by Marsh and colleagues (1990), inadequate resources or other inhibiting factors can easily limit the faculties’ active engagement in SBCD. Marsh (1997) proposes following common problems that principals and teachers experience in undertaking SBCD efforts (p. 149).

- lack of time: to plan, to reflect, to develop curricula
- lack of expertise: knowledge, understandings, skills
- lack of finance: for materials, for teacher relief days
- externally imposed restriction: by employers, parents
- a threatening school climate: numerous resisters, lack of effective leadership.

In addition to these common problems, Marsh (1997) points out a few more “deeply rooted” issues in SBCD efforts. Firstly, “if curriculum policy (planning) and action decisions (implementation) are both devolved to schools, teachers can not cope with both tasks without considerably more funds for professional development and relief teacher assistance” (1997, p. 149) and “there are considerable numbers of teachers who are not

interested in SBCD, seeing their role as confined to teaching curricula devised by others” (1997, p. 149).

In this section, I reviewed the concept of the adaptation/development of a curriculum and the factors that influence on that process. These concepts appear to be applicable to almost all types of decentralized, autonomous initiatives of curriculum development. Furthermore, most of the initiatives of the curriculum integration take the styles of SBCD because the curriculum integration is basically developed by schoolteachers’ autonomous collaboration in schools. The process of curriculum adaptation/development and influential organizational factors on the process will be incorporated in to this study’s conceptual framework and these will be carefully focused on during the data collection and the analysis.

Context of Japanese Middle Schools

School Culture and Curriculum Implementation

As reviewed in the first section of this chapter, a large portion of Japanese middle school teachers appear to be unsupportive of the implementation of the IS. In comparison with elementary school teachers, middle school teachers’ receptivity to the IS seemed lower and were more likely to report some organizational predicaments (e.g., lack of resources) for implementation (Education Ministry, 2005a). One possible explanation for these middle school teachers’ negative attitudes towards the IS is a possible “mismatch” between the culture of middle schools and the philosophy driving the IS. Also, it can be inferred that there were few efforts to mitigate such “mismatches” (e.g., provision of resources for implementation or change of work conditions) and this lowered the teachers’ receptivity to the IS. Though resources and other organizational issues are

important to consider the success/failure of any policy implementation (Fullan, 1991; McLaughlin & Berman, 1978; Spillane, 2004), I would like to pay attention to the aspects of “school culture.” This is because a perspective on “school culture” can illuminate some problematic aspects of the implementation of the IS, which may not be reduced to the problems of insufficient organizational conditions like lack of resources.

Sarason (1971) provided a theoretical discussion regarding the problems of school culture undergoing the process of school reform. Sarason (1971) focused on “behavioral and programmatic regularities of instruction” as important components of a school culture. These regularities of teaching are continuously practiced to produce some intended outcomes defined in the school culture (Sarason, 1971. p. 89). Because the legitimacy of such intended outcomes and their connections to the regular practices is rarely questioned by practitioners in the culture, those regularities can be strongly maintained even in the reform process.

The behavioral and programmatic regularities in Sarason’s (1971) discussion on school culture seem almost synonymous with “grammar of schooling” in Tyack and his colleagues (Tyack & Tobin, 1994; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). By the grammar of schooling, Tyack and Tobin (1994) meant, “the regular structure and rules that organize the work of instruction...for example, standardized organizational practices in dividing time and space, classifying students and allocating them to classrooms, and splintering knowledge into ‘subjects’” (p. 454). Such grammar is “a product of history” (Tyack & Cuban, 1995. p. 86) and its continuity on instruction “has puzzled and frustrated generations of reformers who have sought to change these standardized organizational forms” (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 85). The authors explained that the grammars persist because they make the

complex practices of instruction predictable, controllable, and also labor-saving (p. 86). Furthermore, once established grammar of schooling constructs the common image of “real school” accepted by both the educators and the public.

Both Sarason (1971) and Tyack and his colleagues (Tyack & Tobin, 1994; Tyack & Cuban, 1995) argue that most reforms that attempt to change the instructional practices of teachers have been ignored or marginalized being hampered by the “regularities” or “grammars” held by teachers. Additionally, some of the reform components are often assimilated to the previous patterns (Tyack & Cuban, 1995. p. 83) and lose their intended effects to change local practices. Given the resiliency of the “grammar of schooling” (Tyack & Cuban, 1995), policymakers should not ignore these elements of school culture. They must predict possible contradictions and paradoxes between the components of the reform and the existing school culture to design and implement a policy successfully.

Japanese School Organization and Culture

Then, how can this consideration be applied to the case of implementing the IS in Japanese middle schools? What are the regularities in the middle school system (or grammar of schooling) that should be carefully considered for the implementation of the IS? Below, I overview some important aspects of Japanese middle school culture based on the review of past research on Japanese middle schools.

Japanese middle schools, with three academic grades that correspond to grades 7-9 in the U.S. system, serve 12- to 14-year-old students. Approximately 92% of a total of 3.66 million middle school students attended public middle schools in the academic year of 2004-2005 (Education Ministry, 2005c). The Japanese public middle school plays an unique role in the whole educational system. It is a transitional period “from the caring

and nurturing primary-school environment to the systematic academic studies of high school” (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999. p. 60). Also, middle school is the last stage of compulsory education, where “competition” for the hierarchically ordered society starts (Shimizu, 1992). Fukuzawa (1994) gives a good portrait of the general characteristics of the schooling in Japanese public middle schools:

Middle schools are accurately labeled. They mark a key transitional point in Japanese education. From preschool through the university level knowledge is increasingly specialized and in this process the middle school is the point when for the first time teachers are subject specialists. In Japan middle schools also reinforce a division between the academic and non-academic sides of the curriculum. Japanese education focuses on the development of the whole person. The curriculum includes a wide variety of nonacademic activities—music, art, sports, field trips, clubs, ceremonies, homeroom time—designed to enhance the full development of the (“whole”) person. In fact, the very definition of teaching encompasses not only responsibility for the transmission of explicit knowledge, but also counseling, guidance, and disciplines—tasks which in the United States are either viewed as parental or beyond the scope of teachers who are not counseling specialists. Middle school thus retains the elementary school’s emphasis on the whole person, but also puts increasing emphasis on an efficient, teacher-centered approach to instruction geared to future entrance exams. (Fukuzawa, 1994. pp. 61-62)

As described above, Japanese middle schools emphasize the nature of “whole person” as a part of the last stage of compulsory education to prepare the students for their participation in adult society. The “whole person” education is an important characteristic of both elementary and middle schools in Japan, and it is assumed various students’ social and moral qualities are cultivated by their participation in the group lives in schools (Lewis, 1996; Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999; Tsuneyosi, 2000; Wray, 1999).

However, as some ethnographers like LeTendre (1994, 1995) and Fukuzawa (1994) have depicted, middle school teachers' ways of instruction and guidance are quite different from those of elementary schools. Middle school teachers' classroom instruction is more formal and teacher-centered (Fukuzawa, 1994), and their ways of guidance on students' moral aspects take more controlling and rule-laden manners (LeTendre, 1994). While one reason of this rigidity of instruction and guidance derives from the middle school's role to introduce children to "hierarchical organization and adult patterns of teaching and learning" (LeTendre, 1994, p. 57), another reason is to maintain the order of school system to educate active adolescences. However, despite this formal and rigid form of instruction in middle schools, the teachers still try to build strong emotional relationships with students especially in their homerooms for their desirable assistance to the students (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999; Shimizu, 1992).

There are some additional characteristics of middle school teachers' jobs. Public middle school teachers do not work in a departmentalized environment. Most of the faculty works in a large staff room. The desks of same-grade teachers are gathered to construct a block, which facilitates communication between teachers and strengthens the social ties among same-grade colleagues (Sato & McLaughlin, 1992). As for their instruction, the teachers follow the standardized national curriculum and use textbooks examined by the government. The close alignment between textbook content and the high school entrance exam directs the teachers' instruction toward textbook-centered (Fukuzawa, 1994). Also, the incentives from the high school entrance exam prod the teachers to focus on the repetition of basic manipulation of formulas or memorization of facts—especially in tested subject areas (Fukuzawa, 1994; Shimahara, 2002). Even after

the curriculum reform in 1998, there was no significant change in the exam system, and those incentives on teaching remain basically same.

Furthermore, teachers are “generalists” (Tsuchiya, 2000) who cover not only instructional jobs but also wide-ranged administrative works to manage school organization (Sato & McLaughlin, 1992; Tsuneyoshi, 2000). Due to the wide-ranged and diffused roles of middle school teachers, their work is usually overwhelming¹³ (LeTendre, 1994; Okano & Tsuchiya, 1998) and they often lack the time even to prepare for their own subject areas.

Ethnographers studying Japanese middle school education especially have focused on the teachers’ unique ways of engagement with students called as “*shido*” (Fukuzawa, 1994; LeTendre, 1994; Shimizu, 1992). While *shido* is a general term for teachers’ engagement with various aspects of students’ schooling (instruction, guidance, counseling, and etc) (Shimizu, 1992), especially, ethnographers have paid attention to its two aspects— *seito shido* (student guidance or life guidance) and *shinro shido* (career guidance) – as distinguish features of middle school teachers’ work.

Firstly, *seito shido* are activities to foster students’ social and moral qualities and support students’ adjustment to group life in schools. This involves teachers’ guidance and supervision of diverse group activities for students including daily routines at homerooms, special activities (sports festival, cultural festival, chorus contest, etc.), and even extracurricular activities. It also includes counseling individual students as well as addressing students’ behavioral problems. Especially, as for the students’ development of

¹³ Japanese teachers have to work as “generalists” (Tsuneyoshi, 2000) and their job includes various administrative tasks and active communication with parents and community members. These various tasks make the teachers very busy and often reduce the time to concentrate on the preparation of teaching subject areas.

social and moral qualities (e.g., cohesiveness, diligence, persistence, responsibility in group, enthusiasm for activities), the teachers hold an unique “groupism” or group-oriented pedagogy in which students are assumed to cultivate those qualities through the participation in various group activities in school (LeTendre, 1994; Sakai & Shimahara, 1995; Tsuneyoshi, 2000). However, such cultivation of social and moral qualities through group activities is usually conducted by assigning pre-determined group roles to the students. The room for students’ voluntary or free actions is quite limited (Fukuzawa, 1994).

While one side of teachers’ *seito shido* is their social support for students’ school lives, another side is the “crackdown” of students’ problematic behaviors (Shimizu, 1992). The latter aspect includes checking of students’ uniform or use of appropriate language. Teachers try to prevent students’ delinquent activities by careful supervision and inculcation of school rules (LeTendre, 1994).

Another important aspect of shido activity is “*shinro shido*,” which involves teachers’ guidance and counseling to help students prepare for high school enrollment (LeTendre, 1995; Shimizu, 1992). One crucial role is that middle school teachers will push the students to the high schools. In the upper grades of middle schools, teachers’ shiro shido activities become more frequent and individualized for each student. While shinro shido involves counseling with individual teachers and homeroom guidance on career selection or preparation for the entrance exam, there are many related school activities to help students think about their careers. For example, LeTendre’s (1995) field research of middle schools in the 1980s indicates that many of researched schools

provided students' learning opportunities of their family history or parents' occupations as introductory steps for later shinro shido activities.

Possible Influences of the Middle School Context on the Adaptation of IS

To conclude this chapter, I will summarize the possible contextual influences of the Japanese middle school organization and culture on the adaptation of IS based on the literature on Japanese middle schools and the recent findings on the implementation of IS. First, the high level of collegiality and active communication of teachers at the same grade-level (Sato & McLaughlin, 1992; Shimahara & Sakai, 1995) have helped to establish teachers' cooperation across the subject areas in various school activities. Therefore, this grade-level collegiality and long-history of teachers' cooperation across the subject areas may provide stronger organizational conditions for a collaborative planning for curriculum integration than those who separately work in departmentalized environment like the majority of American middle schools. Furthermore, generally the middle school teachers enthusiastically get engaged in various school activities other than the instruction of his/her subject areas (Sato & McLaughlin, 1992).

However, because of the wide-range of teachers' roles, they are constantly busy (LeTendre, 1994). This contributes to their lack of the time for planning the IS, which is already suggested by the recent surveys and my pilot study (Hamamoto, 2007). Time is the most important resource for teachers' curriculum development (Marsh et al, 1990), especially in an effort of curriculum integration, whose design requires highly innovative and creative collaboration of teachers (Beane, 1997; Jacobs, 1989).

Also, some strong orientations of instruction within the middle school system are probably influential in teachers' adaptation of the IS in schools. One of the influential

orientations is teachers' emphasis on *shinro shido*, guidance activities mainly to prepare students for high school entrance (LeTendre, 1995; Shimizu, 1992). Such guidance activities become more intensive in the higher grades of middle school, while the classroom instruction of subject areas emphasizes preparing for the entrance exams (LeTendre, 1995). Therefore, it seems difficult for teachers to design an IS activity that is not related to the orientation of *shinro shido*, especially in the upper grades. Rather, the teachers may incorporate the IS for the activities aligned to such orientation.

Furthermore, the high school exam also strongly influences the teaching of subject areas, with teachers needing to center on the repetition of basic manipulation of formulas or memorization of facts in their classroom instruction (Shimahara, 2002). As I have already reviewed, the existence of high-stakes testing tends to direct teachers' instruction toward discipline-centered pedagogy and often inhibits teachers from engaging in interdisciplinary teaching (Bean, 1997; Kysilka, 1998; Tanner & Tanner, 2007). In Japan, there has been no significant change in the high school exam system. As predicted by LeTendre (2002), this unchanged situation "will continue to provide impetus for teachers to ignore or diffuse the reforms that are perceived to have negative consequences for student performance" (p. 31). This implies that middle school teachers would not willingly participate in a restructuring of school curriculum, though the Education Ministry originally expected transforming of learning in schools by actively correlating the IS and subject areas. Additionally, the IS is the only subject that is not aligned to the public high school entrance exam. This absence of alignment may enable the teachers to use the period of IS freely and creatively, ignoring the incentive from the exam. It also can be a reason that the teachers undervalue the meaning of the IS.

Another possible influence of middle school context regarding the adaptation of IS is the cultural aspect of teachers' instruction. Some implementation scholars argue (Spillane, 2004; Tyack & Cuban, 1995) that teachers often interpret new components of a reform based on their existing framework of instructional practices. In the case of Japanese schoolteachers, a possible influential framework of instruction is their unique group-oriented pedagogy or "groupism" in the instruction and guidance in school, identified by some scholars (Shimahara & Sakai, 1995; Tsuneyoshi, 2000). In particular, middle school teachers emphasize various types of group activities to cultivate specific social and moral qualities valued in the school system. LeTendre (1994) notes that plugging a reform derived from Western society into such groupism shared by Japanese schoolteachers may not be particularly appropriate:

The elements of guidance encode the notion that individuals share a path and that coordinated efforts assure success for all. It is too simplistic to assume that many Western educational innovations have failed in Japan because they are based on an "individual" culture and Japan has a "group" culture. Rather, the reason lies in the images or symbols of learning in Japanese culture that show that people on one path succeed as a group, but fail as individuals. (p. 57)

One of the Education Ministry's aims in the curriculum reform (IS) is individualization of learning in schools and cultivating students' self-education skill or problem-solving abilities. The IS was assumed to meet this aim. However, if the groupism is a crucial aspect of teachers' pedagogical beliefs shared in schools, it can influence on how teachers' understand the idea of the IS. For example, Sato (1996) argues that teachers' emphasis on hands-on or group activities tends to ignore the aspect of students' intellectual development. Furthermore, the provision of such activities is

seen as the goal of learning. Sato notes that teachers may use the period of the IS just for giving plenty of hands-on activities that the students can enthusiastically participate without careful consideration of its significance to students' intellectual development (p. 448). My pilot study with middle school teachers in Osaka also supports Sato's (1996) observation. Most of the interviewed teachers were not interested in the relationship between the IS activities and students' learning in subject areas (Hamamoto, 2007). In this way, it is interesting to think about how Japanese teachers' pedagogical beliefs influence on their adaptation of IS or how they understand the idea of IS.

Finally, one additional possible contextual influence is the students' behavioral problems and teachers' daily responses to them. As pointed out by Ball and Cohen (1999), the context of the students themselves is an important component of teachers' instructional capacity. In other words, what the teachers can instruct in the classrooms more or less depends on the conditions of the students. Especially, in many Japanese middle schools, students' truancy is prevailing, and it is also common that a middle school has several cases of class disruption (*gakkyu hokai*) (Tsuneyosi, 2000). For many middle schools, maintaining classroom order and coping with students with low normative consciousness and emotional instability are ongoing concerns. Middle schools are struggling to maintain even the traditional framework of instruction and guidance of students (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999). Also, due to the public discourses regarding the achievement decline and the increasing students' problems, the public trust of the school system has been declining.

In my pilot study (Hamamoto, 2007), a few participants expressed their beliefs that it is difficult for middle schools with tough discipline problems to fully organize the

period of the IS. One teacher explained her difficulty to organize students' self-learning process in the period of IS, mentioning that there were some students who thought the period of IS as "play hours" partly due to its more relaxed mood than other classes of subject areas. However, a few teachers believed the students' progress through meaningful hands-on learning experiences in the IS could mitigate students' behavioral problems in schools and supporting students' better adjustment to school lives.

In this way, there seems to be a variance in teachers' beliefs of the relationship between the students' disciplines/behavioral problems and the implementation of the IS. This relationship has not been examined in the literature of curriculum integration or interdisciplinary teaching and is an interesting topic to examine. At least, middle school students' disciplinary issues should be considered one of the contextual influences on teachers' design and implementation of IS.

Summary

This chapter first reviewed the literature that investigated the implementation of the IS in middle schools. As introduced in the first chapter, the latest survey research showed middle school teachers are more likely to report their perceived difficulties to implement the IS, which includes lack of time for preparation or staff to support it (Education Ministry, 2005; Mimizuka et al, 2003). While the teachers appear to admit the importance of the period of the IS where they can provide various opportunities of hands-on activities for students, many of them express their skepticism of the educational benefits of the IS to the students' intellectual development. Many of these findings from the survey research are also supported by my pilot study based on interviews with middle school teachers in Osaka. More importantly, the findings of this pilot study implied the

relationship between such middle school teachers' responses to the IS and their unique contexts of teaching in middle schools. In sum, the review proposed (1) the middle school teachers' needs and pedagogical beliefs, (2) resources for innovation, (3) characteristics of students (e.g., their readiness to the independent learning activity) as possible influences on middle school teachers' implementation of the IS.

These findings on the implementation of the IS in middle schools guided another type of the literature review that contributed to construct the conceptual framework of this study. Two sources of the literature were selected, because each of them corresponds to the characteristics of the practices of the IS in Japanese curriculum. One source of the literature was from the research on interdisciplinary curriculum/curriculum integration. The other source of the literature involved the research on curriculum implementation/development research, especially the study on school-based curriculum development (SBCD). Both the curriculum integration and the SBCD are highly innovative in comparison with the traditional ways of curriculum approach in schools, and the researchers of these initiatives identified several organizational factors (e.g., resources, school climate, leadership and etc) that sustain them within and outside the schools.

Finally, the literature on Japanese middle school education was reviewed to identify the unique school context for implementing the IS. The finding from some ethnographic studies proposed some characteristics of the culture of Japanese middle school education. While Japanese teachers' strong grade-level relationship may become an advantage for IS planning across the boundaries of subject areas, their extreme busyness due to their wide-ranged job in school may hamper their creative design. Also,

as implied in my pilot study (Hamamoto, 2007), their emphasis on the “shido” activities and the group-oriented pedagogy may influence their ways of adapting IS in school activities. The discussion and findings from these sources of literature will be incorporated into the conceptual framework shown in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

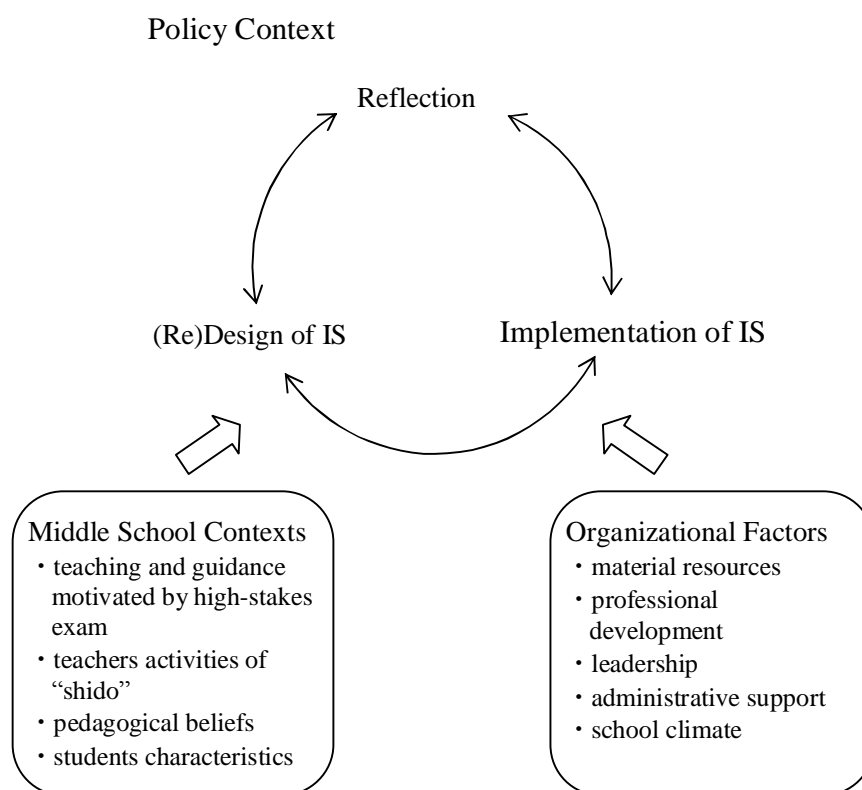
Research Design

Conceptual Framework: Adaptation of IS in Middle Schools

The main research interest of the present study is in Japanese middle schools' *adaptation* of the IS, in other words, how the middle schools adapt the IS as a part of Japanese national curriculum. In line with this research interest, I set three foci of this research: the *characteristics of the adaptation* of the IS in the middle schools, the *roles* of the IS in the middle schools, and the *challenges* to the teachers' implementation of the IS. By integrating the literature and the findings of my pilot study, I constructed a conceptual framework to approach these three foci of the present study. This conceptual framework guided the research questions and methodology of this study.

As I described above, the schools' implementation of the IS in the Japanese National Curriculum has an aspect of SBCD because of the autonomy given to the schools in their designing and implementing the IS. This allows the schools to take various forms of adaptation of the IS based on their needs, interest, and capacity of curriculum development. Especially, the school faculties' needs and interest in the curriculum development strongly affect their process of the development of the IS projects. Also, as Marsh et al (1990) proposed, factors like faculty's capacity, available resources and leadership can influence their process of designing and implementing IS. Therefore, to identify the characteristics of schools' adaptation of the IS requires examining how those organizational factors –teachers' perceptions of needs and interest, resources, leadership, etc – interacted in the faculty's decisions in the development of the IS.

Figure 3.1. Conceptual Framework of the Middle School's Adaptation/Development of IS



In addition to those school-level organizational factors, the context of Japanese middle school is also a critical factor in the school's adaptation of the IS. I have already overviewed the possible influences of the Japanese middle schools' organization and culture on adapting the IS. The "regularities" of middle school teachers' work aligned with the larger educational system of Japan (e.g., practices for high school entrance exam or pedagogical beliefs in seito shido) could be possible large influence on the adaptation process. Especially, the teachers' traditional beliefs of teaching and their sense of responsibility as middle school teachers could mediate their understandings of the IS and the ways to translate it to their practices. Actually, the government's loose control

regarding the schools' implementation of the IS could allow various ways for schools to understand the idea of the IS. This also enables the teachers to preserve their pre-existing framework of school curriculum. On the other hand, the harried nature of teachers' work in school or their lack of expertise on curriculum development might limit their active engagement in the creative development of the IS in their schools. Finally, the students' characteristics (e.g., their discipline problems or a lack of readiness for the independent learning activity) could be seen as an influential context of the adaptation of IS.

In sum, as depicted in Figure 3.1, both the school-level organizational factors (e.g., resources and leadership) and Japanese middle school context could be seen as possible, significant influences on the faculty's conception and development of the IS. To investigate the characteristics of the middle school's adaptation of the IS, I needed to explore how these factors influenced the ways of the school faculty's development of the IS, as well as carefully examine the teachers' present practices and beliefs of the IS in schools.

Research Questions

Based on the conceptual framework above, the following four main research questions guided the present study:

- How was the IS implemented in the middle schools?
- What were the roles of the IS activities implemented in the middle school curriculum?
- How did the teachers perceive the challenges to their implementation of the IS?
- What kind of influence did the introduction of the IS have on the IS?

The first three questions addressed the issue of the middle school's adaptation of the IS. The first one was concerned with the present characteristics of the IS activities implemented in each of the case schools. The second one was concerned with the roles that the IS played in the middle school curriculum. If the teachers believed the IS plays some roles in the middle school, what were they? What were the benefits of the IS for their students? And, thirdly, if there were some constraints to their ways of implementing the IS in the schools, what were they? Because this research investigated these aspects of the implementation of the IS from an "adaptation" perspective, I approached it mainly by illuminating teachers' beliefs regarding the IS.

The fourth question was more concerned with the evaluation of the introduction of the IS into the middle school curriculum from a policy evaluation perspective. What was the influence of the policy of introducing the IS in the middle school curriculum?

The investigation guided by these questions would lead to a better understanding of the complex realities of the teachers' implementation of the IS in the middle school settings. Also, the investigation tried to elicit Japanese middle school teachers' unique pedagogical beliefs or ethnopedagogy (Shimahara & Sakai, 1995) that they had for their implementation of curriculum integration activities.

Research Methodology

Multiple Case Study Design

To investigate these research questions on Japanese middle schools' adaptation of the IS, I designed a case study, which is a type of qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 1998). One reason I employed this type of qualitative inquiry was that there was little "emic" research, in other words, study which investigated the adaptation of the IS from the

perspectives of the “natives” (schoolteachers). Also, a qualitative inquiry can establish the “school” as unit of analysis and describe the dynamic interaction of influences from the school context and other organizational factors on the adaptation of the IS. These aspects have not been examined in the past survey research that has mainly investigated teachers’ attitudes to the implementation of the IS.

While there are several definitions of “case study,” a case study targets “a bounded system” (Smith, 1978) as its unit of analysis (a case) and tries to “provide an intensive, holistic description of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit” (Merriam, 1998, p. 41). Yin (1994), characterizing the case study in terms of its research process, defines it as, “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). As Yin (1994) explains, the advantage of a case study is that it can describe a researched phenomenon (e.g., policy implementation) fully covering its contextual conditions. Furthermore, by its “thick description” of a phenomenon and its context within a case, a case study can uncover the interaction of significant factors influencing the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). A case study is also appropriate for the investigation of “process” (Merriam, 1998). And, due to this perspective on a process of a phenomenon and interaction of influences, Yin (2003) argues a case study has a distinctive advantage for the investigation for “how” and “why” questions of the phenomenon.

In this way, a case study can describe the characteristics of a social phenomenon situated in a specific context and illuminate how a social phenomenon is influenced by its context and various factors within a case. Due to these strengths, Merriam (1998) argues

a case study is “a particularly appealing design for applied fields of study such as education” (p. 41) and it “has proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for informing policy” (p. 41). The features of this approach is well-suited to the aims of the present research, which explores the implementation of the IS (phenomenon) in middle schools (cases) and the influences of the middle school context and other organizational factors.

Among several types of case study designs, I adopted a *multiple case study design* (Merriam, 1998) for this research. A multiple case study design uses several cases as targets of investigation. This enables comparative analysis among the cases as well as holding its holistic description of each case. In particular, the comparative analysis can identify both the similarities and differences of the characteristics or influential factors of a phenomenon studied. In turn, the similarities and differences found across-cases contribute to understanding how and why a certain phenomenon occurred in a single case (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Also multiple case studies is a “common strategy for enhancing the external validity or generalizability” (Merriam, 1998, p. 65) of a research finding.

As for the data collections methods, a case study basically uses multiple sources of data to investigate a researched phenomenon (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Such triangulation of different data collection methods (interview, observation, document analysis, survey, and etc) is desirable to capture multi-layered realities of a case and contributes to a plausible explanation of the case which reflects such complexity of the realities (Mathison, 1998). Given this advantage of the triangulation of methods, I included various data collection methods for my multiple case studies.

Research Site—Profile of the Prefecture of Osaka

This research was conducted in the prefecture of Osaka, one of the largest metropolitan prefectures in Japan. The public school system of Osaka served approximately 1.1 million students (from kindergarten to high school) in 2,722 public schools during the academic year of 2006. At the middle school level, which was the focus of this research, there are 527 public middle schools with approximately 240,000 students and 15,000 educators (teachers and administrators (Osaka Prefectural Board of Education, 2006) .

Osaka has a unique history of public school education. After WWII, responding to the active social movements of the oppressed minority people (Burakumin and Korean Japanese) and their allied educators, many Osaka schools developed the projects of Dowa Education. Dowa Education involved various activities to learn the human rights issues of socially oppressed people as well as teachers' enthusiastic support for the schooling of those minority students (MacDonald, 2005; Shimpo, 2004). The Dowa Education has recently been called "human rights education" (*jinken kyoiku*) because of its expansive perspectives on whole human issues, and it includes various hands-on and communicative learning opportunities to enhance students' awareness of the issue of human rights and their reflection on differing ways of living. Though such initiatives of human rights education is not a common practice for all public schools in Osaka, its educational practices on various social issues has provided a rich source for teachers' design of implementation of the IS in many schools (MacDonald, 2006).

However, Osaka schools recently have faced various crucial youth problems reflecting the characteristics as a metropolitan area. In particular, the Prefecture of Osaka

experiences the highest degree of students' school truancy (*Futoko*) and high school dropouts, as well as several types of student criminal behavior. Addressing a part of these issues, the Education Boards of Osaka Prefecture expressed the emergent need to incorporate effective career guidance activities in middle schools in its "Education Reform Program," issued in 1995 (Education Boards of Osaka Prefecture, 1995). In response to such needs, now almost all of Osaka middle schools implement "career experience learning" as a part of their IS activities.

Site Selection

I selected three public middle schools in the prefecture of Osaka as the sites for this multiple case study. These schools were three of the four middle schools that I conducted my pilot study in the spring and summer of 2006. In my pilot study, those schools were purposefully sampled (Patton, 1990) based on information drawn from some key informants, including the staff members of the Education Board of Osaka Prefecture and some districts. The criteria for selecting these schools were difference of location in the prefecture and the orientation of the school change in response to the current government's reform initiatives. Later, the data collection and analysis of the pilot study indicated a considerable difference in their orientation of implementing the IS. The difference was seen in the ways each school faculty understood the IS activities. The schools appeared to be different in the faculty's enthusiasm developing the IS and their perceptions of the problems in implementing the IS. Taking this difference in the school's orientation of implementing the IS as sampling criterion, I determined to conduct more in-depth case studies in three of the four middle schools.¹⁴ Such criterion based on the

¹⁴ I selected three schools to increase the "transferability" (see Marshall & Rossman, 1999) of the research findings as much as I can within the limit of the time and budget for the present study. On the

differences of the cases match the idea of “maximizing variation” in sampling (Creswell, 1998). While there was a possibility that inviting other schools might increase the variation of the characteristics of the samples, my pilot study implied further investigation of those case schools could more fully cover common issues of implementing the IS in the middle school level. Below, I briefly overview the differences identified in each school’s implementation of IS. (All the names of the schools, cities, and names shown in this thesis are changed to the pseudonyms due to the issue of confidentiality.)

The first school, *Nichu*,¹⁵ was a middle school that was the most enthusiastic in its development of the IS of the pilot schools in my sample. This schools had a history of autonomous development of hands-on learning activities prior to the announcement of the IS by the Ministry. It had created many fieldwork opportunities in the neighborhoods based on the framework of “human rights education.” *Nichu*’s enthusiasm for curricular innovation was also found in the fact that it developed “career experience learning” earliest in the prefecture of Osaka. The school faculty emphasized students’ developing a sense of “co-existence” awareness of some critical human issues, development of communication skills and reflection of ways of living. The participants in my pilot studies expressed their strong pedagogical belief that their practices of the IS were

other hand, I dropped one of the four middle schools from the sites for the present study. This is mainly because the IS activities of the dropped school were quite similar with one of the selected schools.

¹⁵ The three case schools’ names—*Nichu*, *Ichu*, and *Rokuchu*—are shown by their abbreviation of the real school names, which were utilized by the school faculty. *Nichu* is an abbreviation of “Dai-Ni-Chugakko” (No.2 Middle School of the City). *Ichu* is an abbreviation of “Dai-Ichi-Chugakko” (No.1 Middle School of the City), and, similarly, *Rokuchu* is “Dai-Roku-Chugakko” (No.6 Middle School of the City). These numbers within the school names usually indicate the historical order of the foundation of the school within the school district. Also, a part of the schools does not have such numbers within their names.

essential to foster students' attitudes and contribute to students' better adjustment to school life.

Icchu, a large-sized middle school, started its IS activities after the Ministry's announcement of the IS like the majority of the public middle schools. While this school shares some learning activities with the other two schools (e.g., "career experience learning"), their scale of implementation is smaller than the other two schools. The main goal of this school's IS activities was "to learn the future career and ways of living," which tried to provide the students with opportunities to touch the world of professional work and to think about the knowledge and skills necessary for their future jobs. However, their curriculum development process responding to the IS was not so comprehensive and tended to utilize the periods of the IS for their existing practices of the IS. Also, various organizational challenge derived from the large-size of the school organization appeared to give some limitations on the teachers' innovative engagement in the IS.

Finally, *Rokuchu* also actively worked in implementing the IS, with an orientation rather different from those of the other case schools. While the Nichu held its unique orientation of thematic learning activities (human rights education), Rokuchu had more closely followed the Ministry's idea of the IS and teachers had tried to translate it to their practices. More specifically, the school tried to foster students' ability of self-thinking skills and to develop activities based on their motivation and interest. Each grade of the school actively participated in the planning and implementation of the IS. However, they still have the problems in forming a common vision across the practices of the IS and their program was still unstable. One major challenge for the implementation of the IS

was the students' disorder and lack of motivation shown in the periods of the IS. The participant teachers in my pilot study were not satisfied with the present activities of IS and also reported their lack of various resources to fully implement IS activities.

Data Collection Methods

Collection of Documents.

Throughout the field research in the three schools, various documents related to the design and implementation of the IS were collected to facilitate a complete understanding of the characteristics of the IS activities of each school. The documents for collection included the annual plans of the IS, schedules of IS activities, the newsletters for students and parents that introduced the school's IS activities, collection of students' written work in the IS activities, teachers' materials for the school-level or district-level professional development, and so forth. I gained access to these materials by permission of the school principal and/or the district office. These materials enabled me to see the general features of each school's IS activities including; the themes to be studied, the types and scale of learning activities, and their sequences. In particular, a close investigation of the school's annual plans for the IS also indicated the transition of the IS activities over time. The collection and analysis of these documents was conducted in the early stage of the field work, because it provided background knowledge in understanding the teachers' narrative accounts in the interviews as well as helped with narrowing the foci for observation or other data collection methods.

In-depth Interviews with Curriculum Leaders.

Another data source for this phase came from in-depth interviews with the teachers and school administrators, who initiated the curriculum development of the IS

during the period between 1998 and 2008 as “change agents” (Marsh et al, 1990) of each school. Hereinafter, I call these participants who took leadership roles in the development of IS as “curriculum leaders.”¹⁶ Formally, most of the middle schools started their implementation of the period of IS in the academic year of 1999. However, my pilot study showed that all of the three case schools had some thematic learning activities preceding the implementation of IS. Therefore, the time span for the investigation of the IS adaptation slightly differed across the case schools according to the history of such learning activities. One difficulty in tracing a school’s adaptation history was that there might be no school faculty who knew the entire history due to the faculty’s regular transferring system in a prefectural public school system.¹⁷ Therefore, to capture the early years of implementation and its history in each school, the investigation needed to expand the participants to the teachers or school administrators who transferred to other schools.

While I planned to interview all the school administrators (principals and head teachers) of the case schools who worked during the implementation period, the interviews for teachers who were curriculum leaders required a specific sampling method. Generally, all middle school teachers participated in developing the IS. However, there might be differing degrees of leadership in that process among the teachers. For this interview, I focused on the views of the “curriculum leader,” the school faculty who took the leadership roles in developing each school’s IS.

¹⁶ “Curriculum leader” is a term that I developed for this specific study. This term refers to the school faculty (school teacher or administrator) who initiate the curriculum development process (in this study, the development of the IS activities) within each case school. It is a synonym of “change agent,” (Marsh et al, 1990) in the school-based curriculum development.

¹⁷ Teachers usually transfer to another school every five or six years, while school administrators have shorter interval of transferring (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999).

Table 3.1. Plan of the Data Collection			
Types of Interviews	Target	Scheduled Time of the Interviewing	Number of Interviewees in each case school
Collection of the Documents	Documents related to the implementation of the IS	September 2008 -January 2009	N/A
Curriculum Leader Interviews	Principal	September-October, 2008	1~2
	Teachers	September-October, 2008	10~12
Observation	Teachers' planning and instruction of the IS	September 2008 -January 2009	N/A
Survey	Teachers	September-October, 2008	102 full-time teachers

I used a snowball sampling method (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) to determine the participants. First, I asked the school principal the name of the teacher who currently organized the IS activities, and this teacher became the first interviewee. After one or two interviews with this teacher regarding the adaptation process, I asked him/her the names of two other teachers who initiated the development of the IS. These two teachers became next interviewees. As for the teachers who transferred to other schools, I checked their present working schools by asking the school administrators and contacted them to request permission to interview them. This same process of interview and reference of next interviewee was repeated until I confirmed that any period of each school's history of IS implementation was covered by the interview data of multiple curriculum leaders. To ensure such coverage of the whole period of the implementation of IS and a few years of precedent history by interviews, I speculated that the study needed at least seven

interviewees for each case school. The profiles of the interviewees were shown in Appendix C.

For each of these sampled teachers and school administrators, I set two interview sessions, both of which focused on the development process of the IS. The interview protocols for two sessions are shown in Appendix A. The first interview session was mostly conducted in the Fall of 2008. The interviews took place in a school or administrative setting. The planned length of an interview session was 90 minutes. However, if a session could not cover the whole interview protocol that I planned to use, I set extra session(s) with the participant. All the interviews were audiotaped, with the permission of the participant, and the recorded responses were transcribed. Also, prior to these interview sessions, the protocol were piloted with a teacher from a non-participating district to ensure the appropriateness of the questions (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982).

In the first session, the style of interviewing was semi-structured and the participants were asked to talk about their years of experience in designing and implementing the IS in the period in response to some preset questions. Especially in the interviews, I paid attention to the faculty's *decision-making* that led to a change in the design or method in implementing the IS, and I asked him/her to provide the reason for the decision. The session also included a few questions on their interpreting of the idea of IS, understanding of the educational views of the Education Ministry and their perceptions of the students' engagement in the IS activities as well as several questions on the factors that influenced the process of developing IS in the school. For the factors that influenced the development process of the IS, the protocols included "teachers'

needs,” “motivation in innovation,” “leadership,” “opportunities of professional development,” “time,” “materials,” “administrational support,” “characteristics of community,” “students characteristics.” Also, I asked how the context of middle school system influenced the adaptation of the IS.

Observation.

For the third method of data collection, I observed the teachers’ planning and their classroom implementation of the IS. Snyder et al (1992) observes the limitation of the past research on curriculum implementation because of the large reliance on the educators’ “self-report” data, like survey or interviews, often lack the in-depth insights of the realities of implementing a specific curriculum. The aim of including observations in the present study was to approach the realities of the practices of the IS in schools, as well as to examine teachers’ views implementing the IS in their natural settings. In particular, the observation of the classroom practices of the IS (though they sometimes occur outside the school) provided opportunities to see the teachers’ actual ways of instruction, as well as students’ attitudes and behaviors in the period. While my pilot study implied that there might be some similarity in the themes studied in the periods of the IS among the three case schools, I planned to observe classroom practices to examine if there was any difference in the styles of instruction and learning in the IS across the schools.

I visited each of the case schools approximately once a week between September 2008 and February 2008. I mainly observed the teachers’ planning sessions and the classroom implementation of the IS. Throughout the observations I took descriptive notes

of those practices in the field on my notebook, and wrote up complete field notes on the computer after the observation.

Teacher Survey.

In addition to the data collection methods above, the researcher surveyed the teachers of each school. The main aim of this survey was to clarify the school-level characteristics of the teachers' views on the implementation of the IS activities. The questionnaire (see Appendix B) included questions regarding teachers' satisfaction with their IS activities, perceived importance of the IS in the curriculum, the content of the IS activities in the schools and the problems in their implementation of the IS.

Table 3.2. Profile of the Respondents of the Teacher Survey (Distributed in September, 2008/ Total N=102, Response Rate: 96.2%)				
	# of Full Time Teacher	# of Respondents	Sex of Respondents (% of Female)	Age of the Respondents (% of each age range)
Nichu	28	27	55.6%	20's:22.2%, 30's:11.1% 40's:22.2%, 50's:44.4%
Icchu	44	43	34.9%	20's:18.6%, 30's:23.3% 40's:27.9% 50's:30.2%
Rokuchu	34	32	46.9%	20's:15.6% 30's:18.7% 40's:46.9% 50's:18.8%
Total	106	102	44.1%	20's:18.6% 30's:18.6% 40's: 32.4% 50's:30.4%

In order to assure the appropriateness of the content of the questionnaire, the questionnaire was piloted in a group of teachers of another middle school. In addition, the content of the questionnaire was checked by the administrators of the schools before its distribution to the teachers. Because the focus of this survey was to investigate school-level perception of the implementation of the IS, it was desirable to get responses from all teachers of each middle school in the survey. The questionnaire was distributed by the

researcher to all of 106 full-time teachers of the three case schools. The questionnaire was distributed to the teachers at a whole-faculty meeting of each school at the end of September 2008, and the responses were gathered by a head teacher after a few days. Only four teachers (one from Icchu, one from Nichu and two from Rokuchu) refused to respond the questionnaire, and the total response rate was 96.2%. More details on the profile of the respondents of the survey are shown in Table 3.2.

Data Analysis

As suggested by some methodologists of case study research (e.g., Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003), there is no formalized system of data analysis. While these methodologists propose some useful options regarding strategies for data analysis, each researcher should determine his/her most appropriate way to transform and interpret the data based on the research questions and the theoretical orientation. Despite this flexibility of the data analysis method, the combination of three aspects of data transformation—description, analysis, and interpretation—proposed by Wolcott (1994) seems to be a typical process in most qualitative inquiry.¹⁸ I used these three aspects as steps of data transformation to examine the characteristics of the middle school's adaptation of the IS. Also, as suggested by some methodologists of qualitative research (e.g., Bodgan & Biklen, 1992), the data analysis proceeds in tandem with the data

¹⁸ Despite this flexibility of the data analysis method, the three aspects of transformation of qualitative data—description, analysis, and interpretation—proposed by Walcott (1994) seems a typical process in most qualitative inquiry. The first aspect, description, involves capturing the general characteristics of the phenomenon to be studied, addressing the question of “What is going on here?” in a nonjudgmental manner. The technique in this aspect often includes the simple record of the target event or chronology of the events.

collection process in the field. Following this suggestion, my data analysis methods below was an ongoing process that began from the start of the data collection.

While the interviews with curriculum leaders and the collection of curricular materials was scheduled at an early stage of the data collection, I analyzed these first to grasp the process of adaptation of the IS in each school and its present characteristics.

For one focus of this research (form and process of adaptation), constructing a chronology appeared to be a good strategy to explore each school's process of adapting the IS over the past decade. A chronology is one of the strategies of case study analysis (Yin, 2003), which elicits various variables that have influenced the phenomenon to be studied. While building a valid chronology of a phenomenon is the crucial point, Creswell (1998) recommends "analyzing the multiple sources of data to determine evidence for each step or phase in the evolution of the case" (p. 153). Following this, I used collected curricular documents and interview data from curriculum leaders as the source for the chronology.

First, I carefully reviewed the annual plans for the IS and other documents while taking notes on what kind of changes of IS activities happened at a certain time. These notes were then summarized in a form of chronological table which showed the facts in approximately a decade of development of the IS activities of each middle school.

The next step was the analysis of interview transcripts of curriculum leaders (teachers and school administrators). After reading each transcript multiple times, teachers' statements on critical events, which involved change of design or ways of implementation, was identified and marked. Chunks of interview data which included the critical event, its reason(s), and teachers' statements of the meanings of the event were

coded and gathered for the brief description of the events was inserted into the chronological table. I repeated this same process for all the interview transcripts and this procedure culminated in a thorough chronological table of the development for each school, which covered the period from the pre-implementation era of the IS (before 1999) to the present (2007).

The transcripts of the curriculum leader interviews were also coded in terms of unique characteristics of the IS and factors that influenced the development process of the IS. For this analysis, some pre-established categories like “characteristics of the IS activities,” “resources for implementation,” “leadership,” “middle school context” was used. I also inductively developed new codes for other influential factors on the school’s adaptation/development of the IS in the analysis. The coded data for each category was stored and organized at school level. This coding process was conducted by using Microsoft Word. By reviewing and interpreting the coded interview data, the chronological table, field notes from observation, and the memos from the document analysis, I developed a case summary of the process and status quo of each school’s adaptation/development of the IS.

For the analysis of teachers’ views on the aspects of their implementation of the IS in the school (IS’s roles, benefits to students, constraints in implementation), I mainly used the data from the curriculum leaders’ interviews and observation. First, these textual data (transcription of interviews and field notes from observation) were read multiple times to get a sense of the “whole.” Then, I coded the chunks of the data into three pre-set categories—the IS’s roles (relevance), benefits to students, and constraints in implementation—at each school level. Though this first phase of coding was deductive, I

inductively developed codes within the data categorized by those three codes to identify the characteristics of the teachers' shared views on the roles and their unique pedagogical beliefs regarding the IS. The list of the codes for this analysis is shown in Table 3.2.

Finally, the findings from this within-case analysis with the multiple foci were described as *case summary* of each middle school.

After the completion of the case summary, *cross-case analysis* (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 1998) was conducted on several aspects of the schools' adaptation of IS. Based on the comparative analysis of the cases, the cross-case analysis enabled the researcher to "build a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases, even though the cases will vary in their details" (Yin, 1994, p.112).

Table 3.3. The List of Categories Utilized for Coding on the Teachers Views on the IS	
Pre-established Codes	Inductively Developed Codes
the IS's roles (relevance)	Social & Moral Development Promoting Cooperation Human Rights Education Career Guidance Implementing School Events Integrating Curriculum
benefits to students	Group-building of Students Communication Ability Hands-on Experience Independent inquiry Skill to organize and present findings Promotion of Independence in learning Social & Moral Development Awareness of Career
constraints in implementation	Lack of Time Lack of Learning Resources School Size Exam System Lack of Continuity Basic Academic Achievement Learning Motivation Behavioral Problems Problem in Teachers' Cooperation

In the context of the present study, the comparison illuminated the difference in the adaptation process and factors that influenced on that process as well as of teachers' instructional practices and beliefs of the implementation of IS. Also of interest in this comparative analysis was the identification of similar characteristics of adapting the IS in the three middle schools. In particular, the similarities in some aspects of the schools' adaptation of IS might reflect the context of the middle school. As mentioned in the Introduction, *how* the context of Japanese middle school on the influences on the schools' adaptation of IS was one of the main concerns of this study. Therefore, I tried to carefully examine such similarities from various angles in the analysis.

More specifically, this cross-case study was facilitated by the comparison of the case summaries of the three schools as well as scrutiny of the aggregated coded data (from interviews and field notes) with careful look on the similarities and differences of the adaptation of the IS across the cases.

Procedures to Enhance Validity

It is extremely important in any type of qualitative inquiry to ensure various techniques to enhance the validity of the research. Though the validity can be thought as an essential element of the general credibility of a research, the typical features of a qualitative inquiry and the elusive nature of the researched social phenomenon always challenge the building of that validity. The validity of a qualitative inquiry has two aspects: internal validity and external validity (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Merriam, 1998). Internal validity addresses the question of “how do the research findings match reality” (Merriam, 1998. p. 199) and “refers to the extent to which scientific observations and measurements are authentic representations of some reality” (LeCompte & Goetz,

1982, p. 32). External validity deals with the question of “how generalizable are the results of a research study?” (Merriam, 1998, p.207), and is concerned with “the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations.” (Merriam, 1998, p. 207). The methodologists of qualitative research have proposed various strategies to enhance both types of validity of a qualitative study (e.g., Creswell & Miller, 2000; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Merriam, 1998). By following their suggestions, below I shows the methods to enhance both the internal and external validity of the present study.

Internal Validity.

Creswell and Miller (2000) argue that use of multiple lenses (or viewpoints) for data collection and analysis can enhance this aspect of the internal validity. Triangulation of multiple research methods can diversify the lenses available to a researcher for his/her analysis, and the checking procedures from the research participants or the persons outside the research project can be another lens. Furthermore, it is also important to clearly describe the researcher’s own lens—research interest, worldview, and theoretical orientation—as a possible bias for a whole process of the research.

I adopted three strategies to enhance internal validity following the suggestion of Merriam (1998) and, though the extent to exercise them in the research differs. First, this study’s most advantageous feature regarding the enhancement of internal validity was *triangulation* of multiple sources of data. As described above, this case study included various data collection methods (curriculum leader interviews, observation, survey, and gathering documents). This triangulation of methods aimed to capture multiple layers of realities in the school’s adaptation of IS. According to Mathison (1998), such triangulation of multiple methods may produce a more inconsistent or contradictory data

than relying on fewer methods. However, the researcher's effort to propose a plausible explanation that fully reflected the emerged inconsistency or contradiction of the realities enhanced the validity of the findings.

Secondly, in the present study, I also established several opportunities for *member checks*, which involved "taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible" (Merriam, 1998, p. 204). Two types of documents that were checked by the participants were interview transcripts and the case reports. Such member checks contributed to improve the accuracy and credibility of the raw data, as well as the researcher's tentative interpretations from the perspectives of the participants. It could also help to establish trust between the researcher and the participants by ensuring that they had the authority to exclude anything in the text that they thought as undesirable.

The third strategy was *prolonged engagement in the field*. As is suggested by Creswell and Miller (2000), through the rapport strengthened by prolonged engagement in the field, a researcher can gain more pluralistic perspectives from the participants and better understandings of the context of participant views. The present study included continuous observation in each of the case schools at least once per week for six months.

External Validity.

While the external validity is concerned with the generalizability of a study, the generalizability of findings from qualitative inquiry is still a controversial issue (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). Some methodologists of qualitative research have approached the idea of generalizability of qualitative research in the ways different from that of quantitative method. For example, proposing a concept of "analytic generalization," Yin (2003)

argues that “case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes” (p.10). Also, Lincoln and Guba (1985), focusing on the application of a finding from a qualitative research to other site/group, have proposed the ideas of “transferability” of a research.

Merriam (1998) proposes three strategies to enhance the external validity of a case study:

- *Rich, thick description*—providing enough description so that readers will be able to determine how closely their situations match the research situation
- *Typicality or modal category*—describing how typical the program event, or individual is compared with others in the same class, so that users can make comparisons with their own situations
- *Multisite designs*—using several sites, cases, situations, especially those that maximize diversity in the phenomenon of interest

While the third strategy was already included in the design of case study, I employed the first two strategies in the process of data collection and analysis as well as display of the findings.

Limitation of the Research

The strength of this case study is the variety of data collection methods to examine the school’s adaptation of the IS. It shed light on approximately a decade of middle school’s adaptation of IS, as well as carefully examine the micro-level realities of implementing the IS in the middle schools from the eyes of the school faculty.

However, this case study also had some limitations. Because one researcher conducted the field research in three middle schools for the periods (six months), the data

collected might have difficulties in conducting in-depth exploration of teachers' beliefs and practices regarding their actual implementation process of the IS. Also, while the adaptation process was examined based on the curriculum leader interviews, it might overlook the perspectives of other teachers regarding the same process. Finally, due to the small number of sampled schools, I could not cover other possible patterns of adaptation of the IS in Japanese middle schools. This fact can give a considerable limitation on the generalization of the findings from this study.

Summary

This chapter described the design of the present study. A conceptual framework was constructed based on the discussion and findings of the literature reviewed in the previous chapter. This framework hypothesized the possible influences from both the context of Japanese middle school and some organizational factors of curriculum development on the middle schools' adaptation of the IS. Guided by this framework and the research questions, multiple case studies, which explored three middle schools' adaptation of the IS, were designed. The three case schools were purposefully selected from the Prefecture of Osaka based on their differences on the orientation of the implementation of the IS in school. To examine each school's characteristics of the implementation of the IS, its adaptation process, and the roles of the IS in the culture of each school, various qualitative data collection methods—collection of curricular documents, interviews with curriculum leaders, observation of teachers' implementation of IS, and teacher survey—were incorporated in case study of each school. The data from those multiple methods enabled an in-depth analysis of the realities of each school's adaptation of the IS, and also the comparative analysis of the three case schools

illuminated both the commonalities and the differences of the adaptation. Various procedures to enhance the internal and external validity of the research were also employed as shown at the end of this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Profiles of the Three Middle Schools

Before presenting the three chapters of findings, this chapter describes each case school. These descriptions include the profile of the school settings, a part of the results from my survey, and the short history of each school's development of the IS. These aspects of the schools' profiles provide background information for the in-depth analysis of each school's implementation of the IS.

School Backgrounds

First, I will show brief profile of each of the three case middle schools— Nichu, Icchu, and Rokuchu. Demographic information of the three schools is shown in Table 4.1. The data shown in the table is that of the academic year of 2008.

Table 4.1. Profiles of the Participant Middle Schools

	Nichu	Icchu	Rokuchu
Number of Students	523	924	675
Number of Home Rooms	15	24	18
Number of School Faculty	38	61	40
Characteristics of the Schools	A medium-size school located in a suburb of south Osaka. The school's history of developing integrated curriculum is long.	A large school located in a central area of a city in south Osaka.	A medium-size school located in a suburb of north Osaka. The school has a relatively many students' behavioral problems.

Nichu

Nichu was a municipal, middle-sized middle school of Matsuo City. Matsuo City is close to the central city area of Osaka Prefecture. The city developed as a commuter town for the workers who worked in the central area of Osaka Prefecture during the

1960s. Especially, the neighborhood around Nichu was a residential area whose population increased rapidly in the mid-1960s. The neighborhood had a bustling shopping street that was led to the train station and a private university campus. The rest of the neighborhood was filled with the houses, apartments, agricultural fields, and some factories. The district of Nichu included two elementary schools and some kindergartens. Also, there was an active partnership between the schools and the community. For example, the stores of the shopping street and the factories cooperated with Nichu's career experience as well as other initiatives of the middle and elementary schools' initiatives of the IS. Also, the neighborhood leaders held the annual cultural festival of the district by using Nichu as its site. This festival was the largest community event of the neighborhood, and every year more than 5,000 residents attended it.

While the neighborhood was quite lively, some of Nichu faculty said the average economic status of the students was lower than the city average. A substantial part of Nichu students received some educational assistance (for the low-income family) from the city.

However, against this relatively low economic status of the community, one characteristic of Nichu was that it experienced fewer student behavioral problems and truancy. The school administrators and the teachers believed that Nichu was an *Ochituita Gakko* (a calm school) in comparison with other neighboring middle schools of the city, which appeared more affluent than Nichu. One reason that Nichu teachers thought of their school as *Ochituita* was that students rarely disturbed their lessons. My observation of the classes supported this view of the teachers. Usually, the students in the classrooms

calmly participated in the lesson. However, despite their generally good attitudes to the classes, the teachers said the students' basic academic abilities were low on average.

The teachers of Nichu worked in a mutually cooperative atmosphere. Because Matsuo City is an area that actively promoted human rights education, Nichu also had many teachers who were interested in such practices. In the latter half of the 1990s, the teachers got enthusiastically involved in the school's curriculum reform. The present teachers took over and sustained most of the practices produced by the previous curriculum reform. However, as I will explain later in this chapter, the crucial problem of this school was the difficulty of sustaining the past innovative instructional efforts due to the rapid generational turnover of the teachers.

Icchu

Icchu was a large-sized school of Kaida City, which was located at the southern area of Osaka Prefecture. Icchu was founded in 1947 as the first middle school after the revision of the educational system after the WWII. It served a wide neighborhood of the central area of the city which included most of the municipal service buildings and the downtown around the local train station. The neighborhood that Icchu district covered also had new and old residential areas, factories, and agricultural fields. The old residential areas had hundreds of years of history, and the neighborhood enjoys a variety of traditional festivals in the fall.

Icchu, which served a broad residential area, was a large-size middle school where approximately one thousand students attended. The district included three elementary schools and several kindergartens. Thanks to the strong transportation infrastructure of the neighborhood, the residents' population (and the numbers of the

children) remained stable for decades. According to the school faculty, the economic level of Icchu's neighborhood seemed higher than the city's average. Most parents were education-minded and tended to invest much in their children's learning outside of school. However, actually, the large-size student body included students with various backgrounds. More specifically, there were some delinquent students, and the teachers had continuously tackled their behavioral problems. Especially, in the 1980s, the school experienced a hard era of students' violence and classroom disorder.

As for the educational practices of the Icchu, the teachers of this school and other ones that I met during my fieldwork believed that Icchu had not engaged in any innovative effort that could attract the attention of those educators. Due to the large-size of the school organization, it might not easy to collaborate toward a specific reform goal. In brief, Icchu appeared to be a typical middle school except for its characteristics as a large-sized school.

Because Kaida City emphasized human rights education like Matsuo City, Icchu had spent a part of the instructional periods on human rights education. Also, the teachers had created the practices of peace education that were aligned with the third graders' excursion to Okinawa.

Rokuchu

Rokuchu, a middle-sized school, was founded in 1963 in the southeast area of Takahama City. Takahama City, which is located in the northeast of Osaka Prefecture, rapidly developed as a commuter town for both Osaka City and Kyoto City. The student population of Rokuchu has rapidly increased since the 1960s, and later four middle schools' districts were separated from the original area of Rokuchu.

Unlike Nichu and Ichichu, Rokuchu's neighborhood was far from the train station and consisted of new residential areas, commercial areas, and agricultural fields. It included three elementary schools whose graduates attended Rokuchu. According to the teachers, the economic level of Rokuchu's neighborhood appeared to be relatively lower than the average of the whole city. There were many apartments that served for the low-income families within the district. One teacher mentioned, "Though I am not sure that it is an influence of the economic condition of the neighborhoods, currently, we face a lot of parents who do not have sufficient ability to care and discipline their kids."

Reflecting the community backgrounds, Rokuchu always experienced student behavioral problems. Rokuchu was a school called "*shindoi gakko*" (a tough school), which was forced to deal with various student behavioral problems. According to the teachers, Rokuchu students' behavioral problems were the most severe among approximately twenty middle schools of Takahama City. Also, the economic level of the students' families was in the lowest level in the city. This situation forced the teachers to devote enormous energy to their daily practices to cope with the students' problems and to prevent classroom disorder.

Despite the plight of the teachers' work, the teacher morale of Rokuchu appeared to be very high. The teachers of each grade level had a cooperative and energetic attitude regarding their work with the students. Also, the school enthusiastically conducted reform on improving instruction under the support of the City Education Board. The Education Board continuously assigned opportunities for research on curriculum and instruction for this school, and these opportunities promoted the professional development for the teachers as well as the teachers' lesson study activities.

Teachers' Evaluation of the IS: Results from Survey

Before starting the in-depth analysis of the IS's implementation, I would like to discuss a part of the results of my survey in the three case schools. The three graphs below show the teachers' evaluation of the IS activities that they implemented. The three graphs indicate the different attitudes of teachers to the IS across the three schools.

The first graph (Figure 4.1) shows the teachers' response to the question, "To what degree do you agree with the statement that 'the present practices of IS take an important role in the school curriculum?'" Their responses substantially differed among the schools. The percentage of the teachers who responded "strongly agree" or "fairly agree" to this question at Nichu, Icchu, and Rokuchu were 81.5%, 57.7%, and 28.1%, respectively. While the majority of Nichu teachers believed their IS was important part of their curriculum, fewer teachers at Icchu and Rokuchu believed so. In particular, the results indicate that the majority of Rokuchu teachers did not consider their IS activities as important.

Figure 4.1. Teachers' Perceived Importance of the IS in the School Curriculum

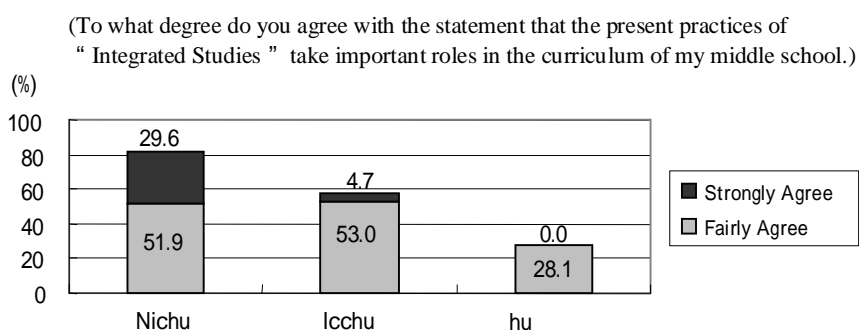


Figure 4.2. Teachers' Satisfaction with their IS Activities

(To what degree do you agree with the statement that I am satisfied with the present content of the “ Integrated Studies. ”)

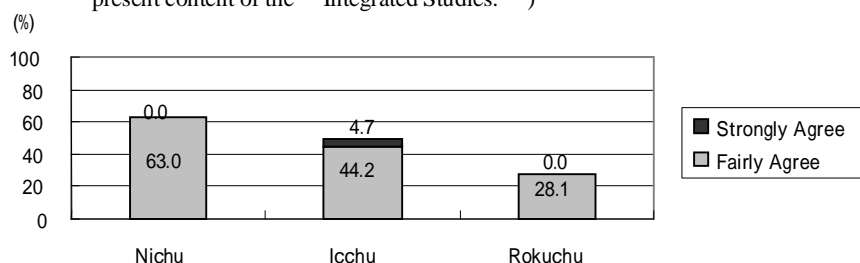
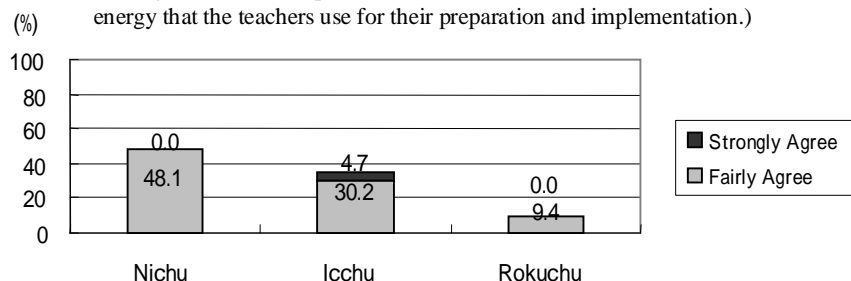


Figure 4.3. Teachers' Perceived Cost-Effectiveness of the IS Activities

(To what degree do you agree with the statement that the present practices of ‘ Integrated Studies ’ provide educational effect that is consort with the time and energy that the teachers use for their preparation and implementation.)



The same tendency was observed in the second and third graphs. The second graph (Figure 4.2) was concerned with the teachers’ perceived satisfaction with their present IS activities. While few teachers responded “strongly agree” with their present IS activities, the proportion of the “fairly agree” clearly differed as well. The result shows the level of the teachers’ satisfaction was the highest in Nichu and the lowest in Rokuchu.

The third graph (Figure 4.3) also shows a remarkable difference in the teachers’ perception regarding the cost-effectiveness of their IS activities. The question was “To what degree do you agree with the statement that the present practices of ‘Integrated Studies’ provide educational effect that is consistent with the time and energy that the

teachers use for their preparation and implementation.” While approximately a half of Nichu teachers responded “fairly agree” with the statement, only 9.4% of Rokuchu teachers answered so. The percentage of the Icchu teachers’ response was positioned in the middle of the other two schools.

In sum, the teachers of these three schools had substantially different views regarding their IS activities. The majority of Nichu teachers viewed the IS as an important component of their curriculum and were also satisfied with their current practices of the IS. In addition, a half of Nichu teachers reported they felt some educational benefits of the IS that met their time and energy. On the contrary, the majority of Rokuchu teachers did not feel their IS activities as important and were dissatisfied with their present practices. Also, few teachers of Rokuchu believed that their IS activities had any educational benefits that met the time and energy that they spent for them. In brief, the majority of Rokuchu teachers were pessimistic regarding their implementation of the IS. The three types of the responses of Icchu teachers were positioned in the mid between Nichu and Rokuchu.

This result regarding the teachers’ views on the IS proposes an interesting question: why did the teachers’ attitudes to the IS substantially differed among the schools? This is a question that I will investigate through the comparative analysis of the three case middle schools.

Curriculum Development Process of the Three Schools

Below, mainly based on the data from the collected documents and the curriculum leader interviews, my analysis focused on eliciting the development process of the IS at each school.

Nichu—Precedence in the Curriculum Innovation

From the mid of 1990s, teachers in Nichu had a sustained effort to develop hands-on learning projects in cooperation with community members. As a result of this effort, the teachers had created a large part of the present IS activities before the nation-wide implementation of the IS began. This development process of the activities was led by an English teacher (Mr. Fukada), who was transferred to Nichu in 1995. That year, Mr. Fukada became a 1st grade home-room teacher and started the design of various learning activities with his colleagues for their grade students.

Mr. Fukada had previously worked in schools that actively implemented human rights education. Based on this past experience, Mr. Fukada had a strong interest in school reform through the curriculum development oriented for human rights education. Mr. Fukada left Nichu a few years before my fieldwork. In his new school assignment (in the same city district), Mr. Fukada was in the leadership position of the curriculum development and still contributed to creating the innovative instructional practices that attracted the educators across the prefecture.

At the time of Mr. Fukada's arrival at Nichu, the school's instruction for students was strongly control-oriented and the teachers were closed to the community members' involvement. In addition, the teachers' community held intense political conflicts due to the coexistence of the two different teachers' unions in the school. Because of these political conflicts, the school did not have an atmosphere which could cooperate for improvement of the curriculum. Mr. Fukada, on the basis of his experience of developing instruction in his previous schools, intended to design various learning activities to foster students' sociability as well as their awareness of human rights by the cooperation of the

neighborhoods. In 1995, while collaborating with his colleagues, Mr. Fukada first implemented a “welfare and disability learning project” for his first-grade students, which prepared several courses to learn with community members with a disability. Responding to the success of this project, next year (1996), the teachers implemented “career experience learning” which included one-day student internship in neighborhood workplaces.

For both learning projects, which included cooperation with the community, Mr. Fukada and other teachers coordinated and developed their neighborhood network which supported their activities. Especially, the career experience learning was an effort that had few precedents among the prefecture’s schools at that time. This underscores the innovativeness of these teachers’ endeavor. Mr. Fukada explained the reason of this success of the curriculum development within the crusty atmosphere of Nichu that, “... my grade fortunately did not have such political conflict among teachers. My colleagues were quite supportive to my intention and energetic in the effort.”

However, there were mixed reactions to the activities developed by Mr. Fukada’s grade within the school. These efforts did not gain sufficient appreciation from the conservative teachers and the later grade did not continue the project. Therefore, despite the endeavors of Mr. Fukada and his colleagues, their learning activities were not sufficiently shared within the school and were not formally integrated into the school curriculum.

One development that promoted the sharing of these learning activities was that the city education boards commissioned a curriculum research/development project for Nichu in 1998. Thanks to this commission, Nichu advanced their research/development

of the curriculum under a unique theme and to present its outcomes at the end of the second year. This event helped all of the teachers of Nichu to focus on the curriculum reform. Reflecting the situation of that time, a few teachers mentioned:

Ms. Matsuoka: The assignment of the research project made us step into the stage where we discuss together what we should value in our practices.

Ms. Kawaramoto: Before the project, we were in the situation where each grade-level teachers did not know the efforts of the other grades. By our engagement in the research project, we created the common foundation for the practices across the grades.

The period of this research project of Nichu was also the time that the Education Ministry announced the introduction of the IS into the national curriculum. This Ministry's announcement captured the teachers' attentions and facilitated their discussion on the creation of the school's unique IS project. Mr. Fukada talked that how the government's announcement of the IS provided the tailwind to the school's curriculum innovation.

Mr. Fukada: The Ministry's announcement of the introduction of the IS were really fortunate for our efforts. For example, we came to have no criticisms on our efforts to take the students outside the schools any more because the teachers admitted such practices as a part of the IS. In the past era before the announcement, such practice was really controversial, and many teachers said loudly, "how do you manage to escort them?" But, now we could make it more smoothly. Also, we could ensure the time for the practices that we invite the community members as the guest-teachers for students' activities. Now, we could have the room available to our new efforts within the school curriculum.

In this way, with the support from the research project as well as the government's announcement of the IS, Mr. Fukada initiated this teacher collaboration toward renewing

the curriculum. He succeeded in incorporating their design activities into the school curriculum as IS projects. After working collaboratively on the development of the IS for several years, the teachers came to share the method and the philosophy for their practices— in other words, the *pedagogy* for their IS practices.

Even after the commissioned research project, Nichu's curriculum development continued and it provided more opportunities to interact with the neighborhoods within its IS projects. Several factors supported Nichu's sustained curriculum reform. One is many energetic and experienced teachers' transferred to Nichu around the year of the commissioned research in 1998. These new teachers supported the curriculum development and engaged in the curriculum improvement until the mid-2000's. On the other hand, the community members' continuous support also contributed to Nichu's sustained curriculum development. Mr. Fukada described the outcome of the years of their curriculum development as following:

The researcher: How did the school change by the development and the implementation of the IS?

Mr. Fukada: I think our practices changed Nichu, the whole school. Especially, the school had more outside people who got involved in our education than before. Such interaction between the school and the community deepened the connection of Nichu to the larger society. From another angle, Nichu became the school that many community members support.

Receiving successive national and prefectural curriculum development projects, Nichu continued to improve their IS activities and gained the attention of the educators in the neighboring area. However, recently, the leaders of Nichu shared a sense of crisis especially on how the school could sustain their developed learning activities. The school

faced large turnover of teachers, where the senior experienced teachers had left Nichu and many young teachers were arriving. The existing IS projects, which required great preparation, skill, and motivation on the part of teachers, appeared to give new teachers a crushing workload. Many teachers were afraid that the school might fail in transferring their legacy of success to the new teachers, and actually, the downsizing of their efforts had begun. For example, the course learning activities that were developed for all the grades in the years around 2002 were reduced to the one implemented in the 1st grade. I will examine this issue of Nichu in more detail in Chapter 6.

Icchu—Failure in radical change and success in slow adaptation

In 1999, just after the government announced the introduction of the IS, Icchu started preparing to implement the IS. The following interview excerpt from one math teacher is helpful to understand the teachers' concern when they first faced the announced change and their preparation for it.

Ms. Masuda: Well... first, we faced great uncertainty on “what will our practices look like after 2002?” or “what kind of instruction should we conduct from 2002?” Such conversation gradually began around the year of 2000. From this period, we had many opportunities to discuss and study about the IS together. You know, as for our curriculum, the present four lesson periods for the math were reduced to three like other subject areas. The periods created by this reduction became the room for the IS. Wondering about the outcome of such change, anyway, we prepared for it. The meaning of the term “zest for living” was quite vague. What is “zest for living”? We teachers believed, the basic academic abilities are necessary. We thought it was the zest for living. While reducing the periods for the subject areas, now they (Education Ministry) argued “we should promote the students' abilities to research independently or to present what they learned.” But, we were really confused by such direction and concerned about what we gonna do.

As above, many teachers were first perplexed by the idea of the curriculum change and concerned about how they would develop their IS. However, through the continuous discussion, they gradually came to find the way to adapt the IS to their curriculum.

Ms. Masuda: Despite such concerns, you know, our city was the one where each school steadily had been engaged in the practices of the human rights education. For example, our school had the practice that the students study about the world peace toward the 3rd graders' excursion to Nagasaki. Through the discussion, we came to the conclusion that we can develop our IS largely by transferring such existing efforts into the periods of the IS. Therefore, we did not have so many activities that we newly introduced, while we still continue to elaborate the parts of our program.

As narrated here, the teachers coped with the task of developing the school's IS program by mixing their past efforts with the newly introduced activities. This mixture constructed the foundation for the present IS practices at Icchu. However, this preparation process in the early stage was not so smooth, unlike the way briefly described by Ms. Masuda above. Below, let me trace Icchu's process of developing the IS in more details from the views of the leaders.

In the early stage of developing the IS, around 2000, the person who took the central role in the process was Mr. Suzuki who was transferred to Icchu from another city in that year. Mr. Suzuki had strong interest in the new idea of the instructional change that the government proposed. While at the beginning of 1999 the city district offered a series of professional development sessions for developing the IS, Mr. Suzuki was one of the two teachers from the dozens of teachers of Icchu that voluntarily participated in the sessions.

Consequently, Mr. Suzuki and his colleague became the teachers who were the most knowledgeable regarding the government's idea of the IS. When Icchu founded a small committee for preparing IS activities responding to the national-level movement of educational reform, Mr. Suzuki and his colleague became central members of the committee. While the teachers of the committee were puzzled by how they should promote teacher collaboration for developing the IS at the outset, they gradually started their preparation by gathering information on the IS and sharing it with other teachers.

First, to grasp the image of the IS activities for Icchu, Mr. Suzuki and his colleague actively engaged in collecting information on the implementation of the IS. For example, Mr. Suzuki observed the IS activities of the university-affiliated middle schools (research schools) and observed their open lessons modeling the IS.

Mr. Suzuki and his colleague wanted to share their newly acquired knowledge with other teachers of Icchu. By using the opportunities for in-school professional development, Mr. Suzuki and his colleague showed the videos of the IS activities of the leading schools and presented their model lessons. According to Mr. Suzuki, the majority of the teachers were quite passive and unresponsive in these sessions. As the next step, Mr. Suzuki and his colleague invited all the teachers into a series of group work. The teachers were divided into small groups and engaged in a group project on a certain theme on the culture of the neighborhood. After this series of professional development, the teachers were organized into several groups across the grades and each group started the planning of the IS activities for each of the three grades.

In 2001, the first year that the IS was implemented, all the three grades started their IS activities. According to a survey distributed to the students in the previous year,

the theme of the IS activities of each grade were “international understanding” for the 1st grader, “career experience” for the 2nd grader, and “environment” for the 3rd grader. The IS activities of each grade included many small-group research, hands-on activities, and presentation.

While the teachers’ efforts appeared to be successful, by the end of the year, a lot of criticism emerged. The main criticism was the crushing workload caused by the preparation for the activities. Especially, due to the large number of the teachers, it was difficult to hold many whole grade-level meetings to prepare for the IS. In addition, that year the school had many student behavioral problems that the teachers had to address. This situation cast doubt on the large amount of the time spent for IS innovation. In 2001, at the end of the academic year, Mr. Suzuki was transferred to another school.¹⁹ After he left, the IS activities of Icchu had comprehensive reexamination at each grade level.

Mr. Inohara: Finally, we agreed those practices (that were planned in 2001) were really tough to implement for us. Even before the practices of the IS, we have already had some thematic learning activities like human rights education, career experience, and interviewing with the graduates as part of career guidance. Without using the activities on the new themes like international understanding or environment, we agreed that we would build our IS based on such existing themes.

Large parts of the previous years’ efforts were reduced and the teachers reconstructed the IS activities by arranging the existing school events and included some fieldwork-based learning activities like career experience or peace education. Ms. Nakamoto, a social studies teacher, was assigned to a leading role to rearrange the IS

¹⁹ This transferring of Mr. Suzuki had no relationship to this failure in his initiative of curriculum development. Rather, it was simply a result of the district boards’ decision toward the balanced allocation of teachers across the city districts.

activities of Icchu. She engaged in the laborious task to describe the overarching goals of the IS projects. While discussing with other teachers, Ms. Nakamoto set the general goal of Icchu's IS project as "To learn future career and way of life." Also, she sequenced each grades' activities under this goal, especially centering on the second grade's effort of "career experience."

Ms. Nakamoto: Though I carefully thought about the design.....ultimately, it might be appropriate that we set the IS activities centering on the career experience, which consumed the time the most. In sum, we conduct the career experience at the 2nd grade. Then, in the 1st grade, we mainly conduct "skill learning" as preparation for the 2nd grade. Here, the students exercise various skills like the way to research with internet, to organize the findings to a wall paper, or to interview with other persons. It also includes the learning on manner and language. By this kind of activities on skills and the visit to "My Job Museum" as an excursion, we let the students have interest on the issue of career and job. Then, in the 3rd grade, the students are engaged in the school excursion to Okinawa which included learning on war and peace. Also, the students have activities on researching the high schools and the selection of the career paths. In sum, the overarching goal of Icchu's IS is for the students to reflect on their future. To think about their way of living in the future as well as their future goal on career. This was set as the goal for the IS of this school.

In addition to sequencing the leaning activities on possible careers, Ms. Nakamoto and the other teachers also utilized the rest of the IS periods for a short-term learning activities on human rights themes, international understanding, sex education, and so on. Actually, in the past national curriculum framework, the periods for these themes were not sufficiently assured. A part of the IS periods were also used for preparing the school events like sports festivals or a school excursion. Reflecting this kind of variety with the

IS, Mr. Inohara commented that “In my school, the periods of the IS are utilized really ‘conveniently’ for us.”

After establishing the general plan around the year of 2002, the school has maintained the almost same sequence of IS activities, while some details of them were adjusted every year. A part of the teachers who supported the implementation of the IS tried to improve their IS activities so that the students had more opportunities to inquire the agendas and present their findings independently. On the other hand, because some teachers have been critical of the IS’s implementation, the relevance of the IS activities in the curriculum has been sometimes swayed. For example, there was a year that one grade used part of the IS period for supplementary lesson for the subject areas.

In Icchu, a few of the interviewed teachers who took formal leadership roles in the school organization mentioned they doubted the relevance of implementing IS activities, particularly at the high cost of their energy and time. Also, many teachers mentioned the large numbers of the students at each grade and the limited in-school facilities for the students’ inquiry were major hurdles for the implementation of the IS project.

Rokuchu—Challenge of Students’ Motivation and Instability of the Projects

Like Icchu, Rokuchu started preparing for the IS after the Education Ministry’s announced the new national curriculum. Before this curriculum development, Rokuchu had few opportunities for the Interdisciplinary/hands-on learning activities. In 1999, Rokuchu’s teachers undertook their IS activities of “international understanding” for their 1st grade students as well as start the implementation of “career experience learning” for the 3rd graders. Rokuchu’s teachers developed their IS activities with “international

understanding” theme because Rokuchu included a small number of Korean students. The teachers thought they should emphasize the coexistence of diverse cultures in their IS activities. In this first year, the teachers implemented a series of lessons on Korean culture and implemented a half-day field-trip to Korea Town located in Osaka city. In the second year, the same students had more opportunities to learn cultures of foreign countries. Later, for this second grade, various themes and learning activities emerged based on the intentions of the teachers in charge of the grade, and finally they have failed to fix the project. For example, one year, the teachers implemented a learning project for welfare which included a short internship in nursing homes for the elderly, while another year they conducted a project on environment.

One change that occurred around the year of 2002 was the adoption of the “concentrated scheduling” of the periods of the IS. Usually, the schools had a block time for the IS activities in their weekly schedules and distributed the periods of the IS around the year. By the “concentrated scheduling,” Rokuchu allocated most of the IS periods in several weeks before and after the summer vacation. In these “IS weeks,” all the afternoon classes were used for the IS activities and the students successively conducted various hands-on activities, inquiry activities, and made presentations. In addition, responding to this change, the teachers also decided to set the students’ fall cultural festival at the end of the “IS weeks” and made the festival as a place for students’ presentations on the IS activities. This change of scheduling was their ingenuous response to the students’ low motivation in the IS. As for the advantage of this “concentrated scheduling,” one teacher mentioned as following:

Ms. Konno: If you conduct the IS once a week, you know, for the students the next activity will be after one week. In this case, the kids are required the ability to sustain the inquiry activities for several weeks, while the teachers, of course, need to plan and prepare a long-term plan. Such “weekly” sessions may be OK for the bright kids. But, for the other kids, they cannot understand the connection between the present activity and the previous one, saying “I don’t know!” For this kind of kids, “concentrated scheduling” might be effective. In this scheduling, the teachers and the students were relatively busy, but the students appear to pursue the activities together within an exciting atmosphere. This is like as if the students get involved in a special event.

Ms. Yamazaki: In the case of Rokuchu, we have a lot of tough students. Even in the usual lessons of the subjects, there are a lot of kids who cannot settle on the seats during the periods. If that were the case of IS, which is not a lecture, what would happen? And, if we would have it every week...it could disturb the atmosphere of the classes. Therefore, we adopted “concentrated scheduling.”

The teachers’ decisions regarding the IS periods were derived from teachers’ consideration of students’ low academic motivation. In Rokuchu, the students’ frequent behavioral problems and their lack of concentration in the classrooms were the teachers’ main concern. Based on their reflection on the students’ attitudes in the past IS activities, the teachers thought letting students engage in the activities intensively in a short period might be more effective than doing it intermittently throughout the year. During my fieldwork in Osaka, I heard that a few middle schools adopted the similar scheduling strategy of the IS, and all of these schools were “tough” schools. Additionally, In Rokuchu, the teachers thought that setting the cultural festival as the final stage for presenting the outcomes of the learning could heighten the students’ awareness of the goals and stimulate students into the activities.

Although this approach seemed to work for the students, various problems emerged during its implementation. First, in such intensive scheduling, the teachers needed to let their students' pursue a series of learning activities leading toward the final presentation. To efficiently sequence the students' activities, regardless of the variance in students' participation, the learning activities gradually shifted from student-centered to teacher-centered.

Ms. Yamazaki: The concentrated scheduling has a good aspect...for example, the students could perform a play which presents the findings of their inquiry by intensive practices...However, year after after, the teachers tried to add their ingenuity for their practices. The teachers got tired, and the practices became more and more "teacher-centered" eventually... In the 1st year, we spent time for listening to what the students want to do and for planning the activities based on such students' needs. However, after we set the Rokuchu festival as our goal of the students' presentation, it became gradually as if the making of good "show" on the stage itself was our ultimate goal. To make the presentation at the festival in September, the teachers need to prepare the whole flow of the learning activities and to accelerate the students' learning. Consequently, we had to proceed without sufficiently considering the original idea of the IS that we should facilitate the process for the students to research independently, organized the findings, and make a presentation as well as the students' interest in inquiry.

In addition to this difficulty of implementation, the "concentrated scheduling" also made the teachers' classroom management more difficult. In the IS weeks, the students participated in the afternoon activities of the IS in a relaxed mood, but this appeared to weaken their concentration during the morning subject area classes. One teacher mentioned that "When the in-school exam (at the end of the 1st semester) and the students entered the period of the "concentrated" IS week without the lessons of subject, the students appear to feel 'idle.'" Another teacher explained this situation in more detail:

Mr. Harada: The concentrated scheduling was reexamined in terms of the management of the classes. In sum, because we allocated events too much in the first half of the year, in the period the teachers had difficulty to let the kids take the lessons calmly and to have enough conversation with the kids. You know, Rokuchu is a school with challenges on the aspect of students' life guidance, so we concentrated those various events including the IS in the first half of the year. That is because we wanted to finish those events as early as possible and to concentrate on teaching subjects. However, consequently, the teachers had difficulty to form the students' discipline that they take the lessons calmly before the end of the 1st half of the semester. Such weakness in the discipline sometimes influence on the atmosphere of the latter half.

The researcher: Do you think the concentrated scheduling has an adverse effect?

Mr. Harada: In the concentrated scheduling, there was no class of subjects from the 2nd week of July, after the final exam of the 1st semester. Also, in September, the afternoon periods were spent for the IS activities. For a part of the students who tend to think the IS as "play" cannot concentrate on the activities.

With such dilemmas with scheduling, the teachers tried to enrich the learning activities of the IS and spent a great deal of time and energy on the implementation. However, despite their efforts, they could not perceive sufficient educational effect of their IS activities on students. Consequently, their sense of fatigue increased. While the "concentrated scheduling" appeared to be problematic, it was not corrected for several years because the teachers could not find any alternative scheduling method.

Another problem emerged during years of implementation of the IS was the lack of "continuity" across the IS activities. Except for a few fixed events (e.g., fieldwork in Korea Town or career experience learning), each grade implemented different activities

every year, especially in the second grade. Due to this fluidity, the IS activities of the three grades lacked sequence as well as an overarching goal for students' development.

Mr. Harada: It's strange that our IS practices change in one way or another way every year. Also, it's unusual the practices of the 1st grade, 2nd grade, and 3rd were conducted under different aims. If the aims of the IS changes everyday, it means the school's policy is unstable. That's our status quo. Also, such fluidity of the practices requires teachers' ingenuity every year and can exhaust them.

One recent stimulus for teachers to reconsider their IS approach in Rokuchu was the city education board's introduction of "two semester system." Responding to this large change of the yearlong curriculum, the teachers reexamined the "concentrated scheduling" of the IS and tried to change it to the year-around efforts. Additionally, Rokuchu received a research/development project of "career education" in the 2007 academic year. Thanks to this commissioned research project on "career education," the school was trying to rearrange the IS activities under an overarching theme of "career education." However, the school continued to have the problems with student motivation and behavior. Also, there was controversy among the teachers about the balance between the teaching of subject areas and the IS activities. The teachers were still in the trial-and-error stage of reconstructing their IS project.

Summary of This Chapter

In this chapter, first, I showed the brief profiles of the three case middle schools. Secondly, I presented a part of the survey result regarding the teachers' evaluative views on their present IS activities. The result indicated substantial differences regarding teachers' perceptions of the IS on the three aspects (perceived importance, satisfaction, and cost-effectiveness) across the schools. While Nichu teachers appeared to value their

IS activities, by contrast, Rokuchu teachers seemed especially pessimistic regarding their implementation of the IS. Actually, this finding seems important because the findings of the past survey researches did not focus on this across-school differences of the teachers' attitudes to the IS. Consequently, the result of the past survey research created an impression that the middle schools were generally pessimistic on the implementation of the IS. Therefore, the difference of the teachers' attitudes to the IS observed in my survey propose the needs for detailed comparative analysis of the realities of the three schools' implementation of the IS. This is an issue that I will further explore in Chapter 6.

In the latter half of this chapter, I described the curriculum development process of the three schools. Responding to the government's 1999 announcement of the introduction of the IS in the national curriculum, the three case schools have faced the challenging task of developing of their own IS program. More specifically, the teachers of each school tried to understand the government's message of the IS (and the concept of the "zest for living"), to translate it to their practices of curriculum development, and to introduce new learning activities including the students' inquiry on various sociocivic themes (welfare, international understanding, career, environment and etc) and various hands-on activities. While a part of the teachers initiated such development at each school, the three schools' development process of the IS substantially differed.

In the case of Nichu, the teachers' initiative to developing a series of new learning projects preceded the announcement of the IS. The teachers developed various learning activities based on the partnership with the local community. At the outset, these activities were implemented by only some of the teachers in the school. However, the city district's assignment of the curriculum development research project on this school and

the government's announcement of the introduction of the IS captured the attention of all the teachers to such innovation and facilitated the sharing of those activities toward the construction of the integrated program of Nichu's IS.

Unlike Nichu's precedence in the curriculum development, Icchu and Rokuchu started their development of the IS after the government's announcement of the IS like most of the other public schools. In both schools, the schools founded a small committee to prepare for the development of the IS.

In Icchu, some of the teachers who were interested in developing the IS first initiated the teachers' professional development and the succeeding collaborative planning of the IS. However, their original efforts were controversial due to the workload to prepare them within the limited resources in the large school. After the reexamining their original plan, the teachers reconstructed the IS activities by mixing their past practices (e.g., human rights education, peace education) and the new activities (e.g., inquiry on job and career-experience).

In Rokuchu, many teachers enthusiastically participated in the development of the IS at all the grade-levels, but their process of the IS development faced various challenges. The main challenge was how to adapt their IS activities to the school's context where many students' academic motivation was quite low. As I have already described, the concentrated scheduling was devised to address this challenge. However, this effort could not ameliorate the issue of low student motivation. Furthermore, it increased the teachers' sense of fatigue while implementing the IS. Consequently, unlike the other two case schools, Rokuchu failed to stabilize their IS program.

In sum, although many teachers of each case school got involved in the development of the IS responding to the revision of the national curriculum, the development process of each school differed by the unique context of each school. There were also various challenges to developing the IS that included the teachers' increased workload, barriers of grade-level sectionalism, students' motivation, as well as the continuation of the existing educational practices. The school context and the challenges more or less determined the teachers' way of implementing the IS. In the next chapter, I will carefully examine what the present IS activities of the three schools look like.

CHAPTER FIVE

Form of the Middle Schools' Adaptation of the IS

In this chapter, I provide more detailed descriptions of each school's IS activities based on my fieldwork during the academic year of the 2008. To grasp the general transition of the IS activities across grades below, I describe the IS activities of the three schools summarizing them by grade-level.

Table 5.1. Current Themes of the IS of Each Grade-Level at the Three Case Schools

	Nichu	Ichu	Rokuchu
1 st Grade	Learning from war experiences / Experience of welfare for the elder and the disabled people	Learning of work and skill	International understanding / learning on welfare
2 nd Grade	Cross-cultural understanding / Career experience	Career experience / Peace education (centering on Okinawa)	Environment / Work / Career experience
3 rd Grade	Peace education / Learning of career and life course	Learning of career and life course / Peace Education	Learning of career and life course / Peace Education

*Details of the Content of the IS Activities in the Case Schools**The 1st grade*

The first semester of the 1st grade is the period for students to adjust to their middle school lives, and usually the teachers' instruction emphasizes the formation of the students' learning community—especially in a HR class. Various school activities were

conducted for this aim in the three case schools, and the IS periods were used for them, too. The three schools had a two-day “HR camp,” where students and teachers went to a camp and experienced a group life. The aims of this camp were to promote students’ adjustment to the group life in the school and to strengthen the friendship among students as well as establish the teacher-student relationship. The IS periods were used for the pre-instruction and follow-up activities of the camp.

Under this same goal of forming students’ community, the succeeding IS activities differed among the schools. For example, Icchu used two hours for understanding the situations of disabled classmates by listening to the talk of a parent of a disabled student and class-room discussion for supporting disabled students in the class.

On the other hand, Nichu, following the activity of the HR camp, started the activities to consider the issue of students’ bullying in the school and dignity of the life. This series of activities were produced from some incidents of bullying occurred among the students. The teachers prepared the IS activities to let the students reflect on the problem of the bullying and to note the importance of creating mutually supportive relationships. Specifically, the activities included classroom reading of a story on a child’s suicide caused by bullying, students’ writing of his/her life history from the birth to understand various support from family and friends, classroom discussion on the issue of life, and so forth. In the latter part of the 1st grade, these schools had different learning projects. Actually, this period (the 2nd and 3rd semester of the 1st grade) was the space that the teachers could design the IS activities most freely without considering the external requirement on their instruction like the high school entrance exam. Therefore, much variety was observed in the IS activities among the three schools.

Nichu started its learning project on welfare for the disabled people. The project started from studying the issue of disability with some texts in the classroom. This study proposed a question of what the society should do to support the disabled persons and create an equal society. After this study, the students were divided into six courses around welfare and disability issues (“visually disability,” “auditory handicap,” “sports for the disabled”, “workplace for the disabled,” and “life-support for the elderly”). Each course included students’ group inquiry on the issue and held hands-on learning experiences with the invited community members (e.g., learning of sign language) or short field trip to the related neighborhood facilities.

Icchu conducted a series of learning activities to study the world of work. The teachers assumed these activities would introduce the career experience learning in the 2nd grade. The activities started from students’ inquiry of an occupation at school library. After this pre-activity, they had fieldtrip to “My Job Museum”²⁰ in Kyoto prefecture, after the fieldtrip they wrote individual newspaper to summarize their experience in the museum. The school also invited community members of various jobs, and the students had opportunities to hear their speech on careers and question the speakers on their ideas on working.

Rokuchu’s project focused on the theme of international understanding. At the beginning, the students of each class were given opportunities to conduct a small-group activity to study culture of a specific country using library documents or the internet. After this activity, the students entered the study about Koreans living in Japan. The teachers and students spent a few hours for reading and discussing the historical and

²⁰ This museum is a large facility founded by the government in 2003 for the purpose to promote career education of the schools. In the museum, students can participate in a hands-on experience of various jobs with the staffs. Today, many middle schools utilize this museum as their field trip.

cultural backgrounds of Koreans living in Japan including the past incidents of Japan's oppression towards them. Following this study, the students had a one-day field-trip to Korean Town located in Osaka City and learn Korean culture by communicating with the people in the town. After this field trip, the students were given opportunities to have small-group work to design a poster to summarize their findings on an aspect of Korean culture. The project culminated in the grade-level contest of the posters, where the students evaluated the design of the posters each other.

The 2nd Grade

Like most of other middle schools in Osaka and other prefectures, career experience learning and its pre- and post-instruction was the core of the 2nd grade's activities of the IS in the three case schools. The main purpose of this activity was to let the students directly feel the adult world of work through the short internship and deepen their thinking on their own careers. The activity also let students reflect on the importance of parental support for the students' lives. Also, the teachers expected students' improvement of sociability and disciplines through this work.

While a small number of the middle schools, like Nichu, autonomously developed and implemented career experience learning, most schools introduced the career experience learning in response to the government's initiative to expand it. Around 1999, the Education Ministry treated this activity as an effective effort for students' career selection in the middle schools and recommended that the local education boards across the country that the schools implement it. Therefore, the implementation of the career experience in Icchu and Rokuchu in 1999 was a response to this policy.

In these three schools, the pre-instruction of the career experience learning included various activities—students’ interviewing of parents, hearing lecture of parents and community members on working, watching videos on the gender inequality of working, making appointment to the workplaces by phone, and instruction on students’ appearance and manners in the work places, and so on. The students were allocated into each of 40-60 workplaces in the neighborhood, and they experienced a full two-day internship. The project ended with students’ presenting their experience in the workplaces and sending a letter to the workplaces to thank for their acceptance.

While each of the case schools used one semester to implement the career experience learning and related activities, their IS activities for the rest of the year differed. Nichu, which conducted the career experience in the second semester, tried a series of activities under a theme “to think about the meaning to learn.” This project, mainly depending on the videos and lecture of guest speakers, paid attention to the aliens in Japan and their hardship in adjusting to Japanese society including the problems of language. It also included student representatives’ visit to “night middle school” where many illiterate elders and immigrant adults learn Japanese at the evening time. This series of activities intended to let the students reflect on the meaning of learning by communicating with people who continued to study despite their hardship in the lives.

Icchu, which conducted career experience in the 1st semester, allocated the periods of the IS to different short activities including learning about the “Buraku issue,” “gender equality” “disaster prevention,” as well as the class-level discussion to prepare for some school events (e.g., sports festival and chorus contest). In the 3rd semester, the students of Icchu were involved in the small-group activity to inquire about Okinawa,

which was the place for the 3rd grader's school excursion. Each of the small groups in the class studied different social and cultural aspects of Okinawa (food, music, traditional activity, the issues of American bases in Okinawa, and so forth) and made poster presentations on them.

Rokuchu had not fixed the project for the rest of the 2nd grade. For example, while the 2nd graders of 2006 had welfare experience learning, they had a project on the environment in 2007. In 2008, the school received a government's research/development project on career education, and they had an opportunity to collaborate with a nonprofit organization and a corporation. Under facilitation of a curriculum coordinator of the nonprofit organization, some staff members from a company (Mitsubishi Heavy Industry) were invited to the school. By the support of these outside staff, the students had a series of simulation activities to design a robot for human support. Each small group of students discussed their concept of robot, drew the figure, and made its paper dummy for the presentation. The activities culminated in the group presentation and contest to select the best design of the robot.

The 3rd Grade

The most important goal of the teachers for the 3rd grade was to guide all the students to graduation and to their selected career path (mostly, high school) without leaving any students behind. The activities of career guidance (*shinro shido*) increased its weight in the curriculum. As for the IS, it became very difficult to introduce activities unrelated to the career guidance or the traditional school event like school excursion.

All of the three case schools had a school excursion in the first semester. The students of Nichu traveled to Nagasaki, while those of other two schools went to

Okinawa. Nagasaki is a city that was destroyed by an atomic bomb during the WWII, while Okinawa experienced a devastating U.S.-Japan battle at the end of that war. The three schools treated the travels to those cities partly as opportunities for peace education. So, the travels included students' visit to historical places in the war and opportunities to listen to the residents' speech on the miserable incidents in the war. Some of the IS periods were used for the preparation for the school excursion in all the three schools, and especially Ichu spend several hours to study the historical process of the U.S.-Japan battle in Okinawa. Getting back from the excursion, the volunteers of the 3rd graders presented a play to express their encounter with the issues of the war in Okinawa and their hope for the peace to the whole students.

During the rest of the semester, the IS activities of the three schools were mainly used for career guidance activities. The activities included teachers' lectures on the system of the high school entrance, listening to the speech of the graduates about the schooling of the high schools, students' writing of their vision of their future careers, students' visits to the high schools, practice interviews with the principal to prepare for the entrance exam, and so on. Some hands-on elements (interviewing or listening to the graduates' speech) in those guidance activities were newly introduced during last several years. However, most of the career guidance activities of the 3rd grade were teacher-initiated lectures in the class or in the whole grade-level meeting, which followed the traditional ways that career guidance had been conducted for decades. Especially, from the fall of the 3rd grade, the whole grade's preparation for the entrance exams proceeded and the room for the new types of learning activities decreased.

To challenge the rigidity of the career guidance activities, Nichu previously tried an innovation by introducing students' self-inquiry as an effort of the IS. The activity involved students' individual field trips and interviewing of the adults who held occupations in which the students were interested. The teachers thought this could help the students envision their career path by gaining advice from the adult workers. In some of the past years, the 3rd grade teachers tried this activity and succeeded in its implementation. However, some teachers criticized the implementation of this activity due to their increased workload at a time when the students should concentrate on preparing for the exam. Therefore, this activity has not fixed in the 3rd grade's curriculum of Nichu.

Characteristics of the Middle Schools' Adaptation of the IS

Here, based on the description of the IS activities above, I examine some characteristics of the middle schools' implementation of the IS from the perspective of "adaptation."

Local Context of Human Rights Education

As observed in the themes of the IS projects at the three schools, the three schools implemented learning projects under some sociocivic themes—welfare for the disabled people, international understanding, peace education. These themes are correlated with a larger theme of human rights. As MacDonald (2006) reported, the common characteristics of the IS implementation in this region are associated with the context of human rights education, which has been promoted in this region since the 1950s (MacDonald, 2005; Shimpo, 2004). One of the pedagogies of the human rights education is to let the students reflect on the problems of human rights and discrimination in the

society and to foster their keen sense of the human rights through the inquiry into such problems.

The three case schools' selection of some sociocivic themes also appeared to be related to the context of the human rights education. Especially, the three cities, where each of the case schools was located, included schools that were actively implementing human rights education, and they were publicly viewed as the cities that had promoted the implementation of human rights education.

While the influence of human rights education on the IS activities of each school was a local cultural context of the adaptation of the IS in the case schools, below my analysis of the IS activities tries to elicit some more structural characteristics of the implementation of the IS as a component of the general curriculum of the three middle schools.

Complementation of the Career Guidance Activities

As described above, in the higher grades (2nd and 3rd grades), teachers' space for freely designing the IS decreased and their activities were more closely related to the students' selection of careers. In brief, the IS was partly adapted by the schools to complement their function of career guidance. As a result, the higher the students' grade become, the more similar the content of the IS activities become across the three schools. The following two factors explain this tendency of this *homomorphism* of the three schools' implementation of the IS.

The first factor is the influence of the high school entrance exams. In the higher grades, especially in the 3rd grade, the weight of the preparation for the high school entrance exams increases, and the room for activities unrelated to the exams narrows.

Some school events, like “school excursion” and “sports festival,” remain even in the highest grade because they are important to promote students’ cooperation and morale for schooling. However, spending several hours on learning “environment” or “international understanding” probably does not suit the students’ activities of the highest grade and may diffuse the teachers’ energy and time to encourage students toward the exam. Therefore, in the three schools, many of the instructional hours of the IS were used for the career guidance activities in the third grade.

Although teachers tried to modify their ways of career guidance as activities of the IS (e.g., listening to the graduates’ speech on learning in the high school). Most of the career guidance activities conducted in the 3rd grade were the ones that took over the middle schools’ traditional activities. These activities were largely same as the ones that LeTendre (1996) or Shimizu (1992) observed in Japanese middle schools in the 1980’s.

Finally, as for the high school entrance exam, it seems that the current exam system does not reflect students’ performance in the IS activities in the middle schools unlike the cases of the subject areas. For example, one social study teacher mentioned that the students’ performance in the IS was rarely evaluated in their high school entrance exam as following;

Mr. Umebayashi: Actually, a part of the students were not enthusiastic in their participation in the periods of the IS. Also, I hear a few voices from my colleagues that question how worth our IS activities (for the students). This is because the high school entrance exam does not reflect the students’ grade in the IS or the elective courses while it reflects the grades of the nine subject areas. Therefore, to our parents, it doesn’t matter if their kids get “A” or get “C” in the IS or the elective courses.

The researcher: So...you mean the description about the students' engagement in the IS in the school's report card (to high school) does not influence on their result of the high school entrance exam.

Mr. Umebayashi: Yes, it has almost no influence (on the exam). Well, some teachers may write something on their students' engagement in the IS in a space of the report card. However, it is rarely considered. For example...only if there were several students whose test scores in the high school entrance exam were same, such description could be considered by the examiners of the high school...like "oh, this student voluntarily worked in the periods of the IS! He may be good. Let him pass the exam." In this way, students' engagement in the IS has little influence in the high school exam and its information is rarely utilized.

The situation mentioned above appeared to restrain teachers' enthusiasm in developing the IS activities in the higher grades. Also, it could provide an incentive for the utilization of the IS periods for the traditional career guidance activities.

A second factor is the implementation of the "career experience learning" as the government's policy. As I described, the two of the three case schools introduced this activity in response to the city education board's direction for its implementation. The career experience learning was the most intensive and largest hands-on activity among the IS activities in the middle schools. This off-school activity required community members' cooperation at a maximum within the three grades' curriculum of the middle schools. Due to intensive nature of this activity, the career experience learning was positioned as the core of the three years' IS projects of the three schools.

Though the career experience learning was introduced in a top-down way in two of the three case schools, in my interviews, many teachers were supportive of it. This is because this activity was an effort that the teachers could find the students' lively

participation in the work. This activity also could be an introduction to the final grade's career guidance component by letting students reflect on their future careers through their actual work experience. In the three case schools, the career experience learning had already become an important component of the school curriculum and its operation (e.g., the method to distribute students to each of the work places) was highly systematized.

From a different viewpoint, the sweeping introduction of the career experience as a policy also contributed to the homomorphism of the IS activities across the middle schools. The policy more or less determined the core part of the sequence of the IS activities in middle schools due to the large amount of the instructional periods required for the implementation of the career experience. Consequently, this policy narrowed the space for teachers' creative and autonomous design of the IS activities and made the middle schools' programs of the IS similar.

In sum, the three case schools implemented the IS so that it met the middle schools' traditional institutional goal to foster students' ability to select career, and the IS activities reinforced the guidance activities in the schools.

Utilization for the School Events

The periods of the IS were utilized for pre- and post-instruction for the school events like school excursion, camps, field trip, or sports festivals. For example, in the case of the school excursion of the 3rd graders, Icchu conducted a series of peace education activities as the pre-instruction for their excursion to Okinawa. These activities included students' self-inquiry of the historical facts of the war in Okinawa during WWII. On the other hand, Nichu also utilized the IS periods as the pre-activity of the school

excursion, but in this case, they simply employed the time for confirming and deciding the details of the plan of the excursion.

Before the introduction of the IS, those school events and their pre- and post-instruction were implemented by using the “periods of the special activities” or the “moral education,” while the school sometimes had to sacrifice hours of instruction in the regular subject areas to find such time. The national curriculum revision of the 2002 included the large reduction of the general instructional hours by the full implementation of the five-days schooling, and this reduction urged the schools to decide on their continuation of some of the school events. The case schools of this study decided to maintain most of the traditional school events. However, for such continuation of the events, they need to utilize a part of the IS periods for their implementation. In this difficult situation, there were a few teachers who simply believed that the IS periods were introduced by the government to implement those various school events outside the teaching of subject areas.

Mr. Murano: Well, we have been doing various events. For example, sports festival, field trip, school excursion, and so forth. Each school arranged many school events at its discretion. Sometimes, we had to utilize even the time of subject areas to hold such event. However, now we adopted a full five-day school week and we have to reduce the whole instructional hours in the direction of the Ministry’s “relaxed education.” Now, if we try to maintain the same events, some schools may eat away at the instructional hours of the subjects. To the Ministry, it’s not good in terms of provision of the uniform education throughout the country. Therefore, the Education Ministry proposed, “OK. Let’s set a time named as ‘IS’,” and “you can do those events in the period of the IS”. I believe this was the true aim of the Ministry’s introduction of the IS. Of course, they don’t formally admit such reason, and they just say “Foster ‘zest for living’ of students” by using the IS and other periods like moral education and home room

... Anyway, then, what we do is include most of those school events within the period of the IS.

It is difficult to judge if the Education Ministry's "true" aim that this teacher believed is true or not. However, the Ministry's loose definition of the IS can allow such incorporation of the traditional school events into the period of the IS.

On the other hand, in this utilization for the school events, it was not true that the school simply used a part of the IS periods as substitute for the periods for the special activities. As seen in the example of the pre-instruction of the school excursion in Icchu, the teachers sometimes changed the pre- and post activity of the school event as students' opportunity for group inquiry treating it as part of the IS.

In sum, a part of the IS periods of the case schools were used to conserve the existing school events of the middle schools, while this utilization of the IS for the events sometimes added a new element of students' independent learning activities to the events. This connection of the IS to the school events is also an aspect of the middle school's adaptation of the IS based on the emerging needs of the middle schools.

Problem in Continuity in the Learning Activities

Reflecting their needs and interest on instruction, the case schools utilized the IS periods for several different parts of the curriculum—learning projects based on specific sociocivic themes that each school set, career experience learning, career guidance activities, and school events. Certainly, the IS periods became the space for newly designed educational activities, which especially focused on students' abilities "to learn and think by themselves." However, at the same time, they took the role to complement the traditional educational activities of the middle schools responding to the demands of the school. And, one problem caused by this spread of the IS periods among the different

aims was the difficulty in producing continuity in the newly introduced ways for students learning.

The problem of continuity in the IS activities across the three grades was observed in all the three case schools. For example, in the 1st grade, each school provided students with the opportunities to learn the ways of research by books or internet, to have a group discussion, and to make a presentation through their IS projects. In particular, two of the three case schools, emphasized the students' acquisition of the learning skills through their IS activities of the 1st grade. However, these learning skills that appeared in the 1st grade could not be necessarily used in the 2nd grade. In the 2nd grade, the main activity of the IS was the career experience learning and its pre- and post-instruction, where the students participated in the orientation initiated by the teachers. While the 2nd grade still had the room for students' independent inquiry on some sociocivic themes in the three schools, the 3rd graders had few opportunities for such learning style due to the increased time devoted the career guidance activities. In this way, though the IS periods were allocated at each part of the calendar of the school curriculum, the dispersion of the periods for the different activities prevented the continuity of the newly introduced learning style. This dispersion appears to weaken the impact of the introduction of the IS for the change of existing "grammar of schooling" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) of the case middle schools.

Discussion

Based on the analysis of the characteristics of the adaptation of the IS above, here I examine the implementation of the IS in response to my first research question of this study, "how was the IS implemented in the middle schools?"

As the description of the IS activities of this chapter showed, in the three schools, the IS periods assured the room for the schools to introduce and sustain a series of activities with the new learning style that the traditional middle school curriculum rarely had. The change that the introduction of the IS produced for the three case schools were generally consistent with that MacDonald's (2006) research have already pointed out. In the case schools, the implementation of the IS activities increased the students' opportunities to engage in the self-inquiry, presentation, group work, and various hands-on activities. Also, it promoted the interaction between the students and the community members through learning projects of certain sociocivic themes and contributed to diversify the middle school educational activities.

In other words, the introduction of the IS in the curriculum of the three case schools gave small but sure change to the "grammar of schooling" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) by introducing new thematic learning opportunities and new types of learning activities. Despite the small amount of the instructional periods allocated for the IS in the school curriculum, the impact of the introduction of the IS on the middle school curriculum appeared to be significant. Given the past historical dominance of the teacher-centered, en-masse classroom instruction aligned with periodic exams among the academic work of the middle schools (Fukuzawa, 1994), the various types of the learning activities appeared in the periods of the IS were notable changes in the Japanese middle school curriculum. As I pointed in this chapter, such opportunities for new activities seemed not to be sufficiently systematized. However, it is a fact that the middle school curriculum of the 2007 had more opportunities of students' self-inquiry, expression of the findings, hands-on experiences, group learning, or contacts with the community members

than that before the year of 1997 (when the IS was not introduced). At least in terms of the variety of the academic work in the schools, the IS made the curriculum of the three middle schools richer than before. Here, of course, I put aside the issue of if the teachers themselves perceived their curriculum richer than that of the past or not.

However, despite such important change that the periods of the IS provided, viewed from the general picture of the school curriculum, such change were not so comprehensive and radical. In brief, the IS periods were partly “incorporated” into the traditional grammar of schooling in the three case schools due to the common organizational demands of the middle school education. Specifically, within the periods of the IS, a large part of them was utilized for the middle schools’ existing activities like career guidance or school events, and the newly introduced activities used the rest of the periods. This form of implementation was a result of the middle schools’ adaptation of the IS reflecting the middle schools’ needs on sustaining its traditional regularities of education. Actually, this utilization was promoted by the two traditional educational demands in the middle school education. One was to foster students’ awareness of career selection especially toward the high school entrance exam. Especially in the 3rd grade, it was very difficult to introduce the new learning activities for the IS due to the grade’s concentration on the career guidance. Needless to say, this emphasis on career guidance is motivated by the external influence of the exam system. The exam system has motivated the instruction of the subject areas toward the rote learning of the facts and formulas (Fukuzawa, 1994; LeTendre, 1994). The current exam system does not reflect students’ performance in the IS activities in the middle schools unlike that of the subject areas. This situation provides an incentive for the utilization of the IS periods for the

traditional career guidance activities and weakens teachers' autonomous development of the IS activities in the higher grades.

Another educational demand of the middle school curriculum was to foster students' sociability or cooperativeness through their participation to the school activities, including various school events. Also, the reduced periods due to the full implementation of the five-days schooling from 2002 created a situation where the school faculty needs to seriously think about how to ensure the time for implementing traditional school events. In this way, the teachers were forced to utilize a part of the IS periods for preparing and implementing the school events.

Consequently, due to this adaptation, the space for fostering new ways of learning in the school were dispersed across the three years' curriculum and tended to decrease in the higher grade. This implies a lack of continuity of the IS activities in terms of learning methods, where the present activities of the IS were not systematized across the three grades for fostering students' skills to "independently learn and think."

In sum, as a result of the middle schools' adaptation of the IS to the school setting, the change introduced by the IS was not so radical. However, as I argued above, it is also true that the introduction of the IS contributed to the diversification of the learning methods and themes within the education of the three middle schools.

In this way, because the implementation of the IS included the aspects of both "change" and the "status quo," it might be somewhat difficult to evaluate the meaning of the IS. Then, the next question is "how did the teachers perceive such meaning of their implementation of the IS?" The results of the recent surveys showed the teachers' pessimism on the implementation of the IS. Actually, as the analysis of next chapter

revealed there were many teachers in the case schools that were quite pessimistic to their implementation of the IS. However, as the result of my survey in the case schools showed in Chapter 5, there were difference of the views on the implementation of the IS across the three schools. Also, I observed many teachers' voices that were supportive to the IS. The teachers' perceptions of the IS seemed complex and multi-faced. In the next chapter, I will provide more in-depth insights to such teachers' perspectives on the meaning of the change provided by the introduction of the IS.

CHAPTER SIX

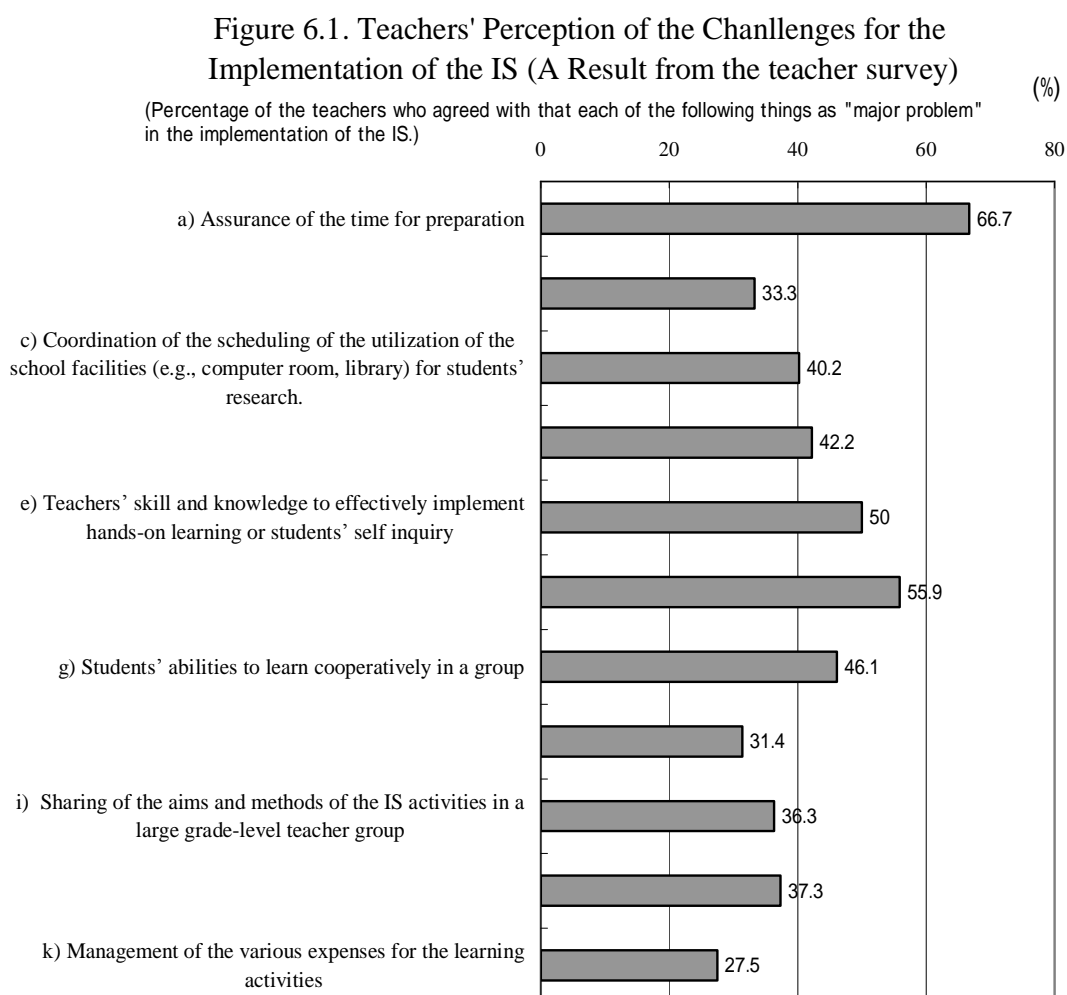
Teachers' Views of the IS at the Three Schools

The previous chapter described the unique characteristics of the case middle schools' implementation of the IS periods. Reflecting the institutional contexts of each specific school, the implementation of the IS appeared to hold the aspects of "change" and "unchange." This complex reality of implementing the IS makes evaluating the relevance of the IS in the middle school curriculum somewhat vague. Then, how did the practitioners of the IS—the teachers of the case middle schools—perceive the implementation of the IS? More specifically, how did the teachers believe their IS activities benefitted students? What roles did the IS play in the middle school curriculum? Also, what constraints to their implementation of the IS did they see? In this chapter, by shedding lights on the teachers' views of their IS activities, I will provide in-depth analysis of the multiple realities of the middle schools' implementation of the IS.

Teachers' Perception of the Challenges to the IS

Before presenting the in-depth analysis of the teachers' views on the IS at each case school, I would like to show a part of my survey results that may give a general picture of the teachers' perceptions of the IS. At the beginning of Chapter 4, I presented the survey results regarding the teachers' perceived importance of the IS activities, their satisfaction with them, and their perceived effectiveness of them. Here, I would like to overview possible challenges on the teachers' implementation of the IS from my survey data (see Figure 6.1 in the next page). The graph shows the summative result of the teachers of the all three schools.

The first major challenge reported by the teachers in the survey was the lack of time for preparing the IS. Approximately two thirds of teachers reported this “lack of time” as problematic. Actually, in my interviews, many teachers mentioned their extreme busyness in their daily work schedule and reported they were given insufficient time to discuss and prepare their IS activities.



In addition to this lack of time, other resource limitations for implementing the IS involved teachers' skills and school facilities. In the survey, approximately 40 % of the teachers treated these as “major problems” (See Item “c” and “e” in Figure 3). Some interviewed teachers mentioned their lack of the specialized knowledge to effectively

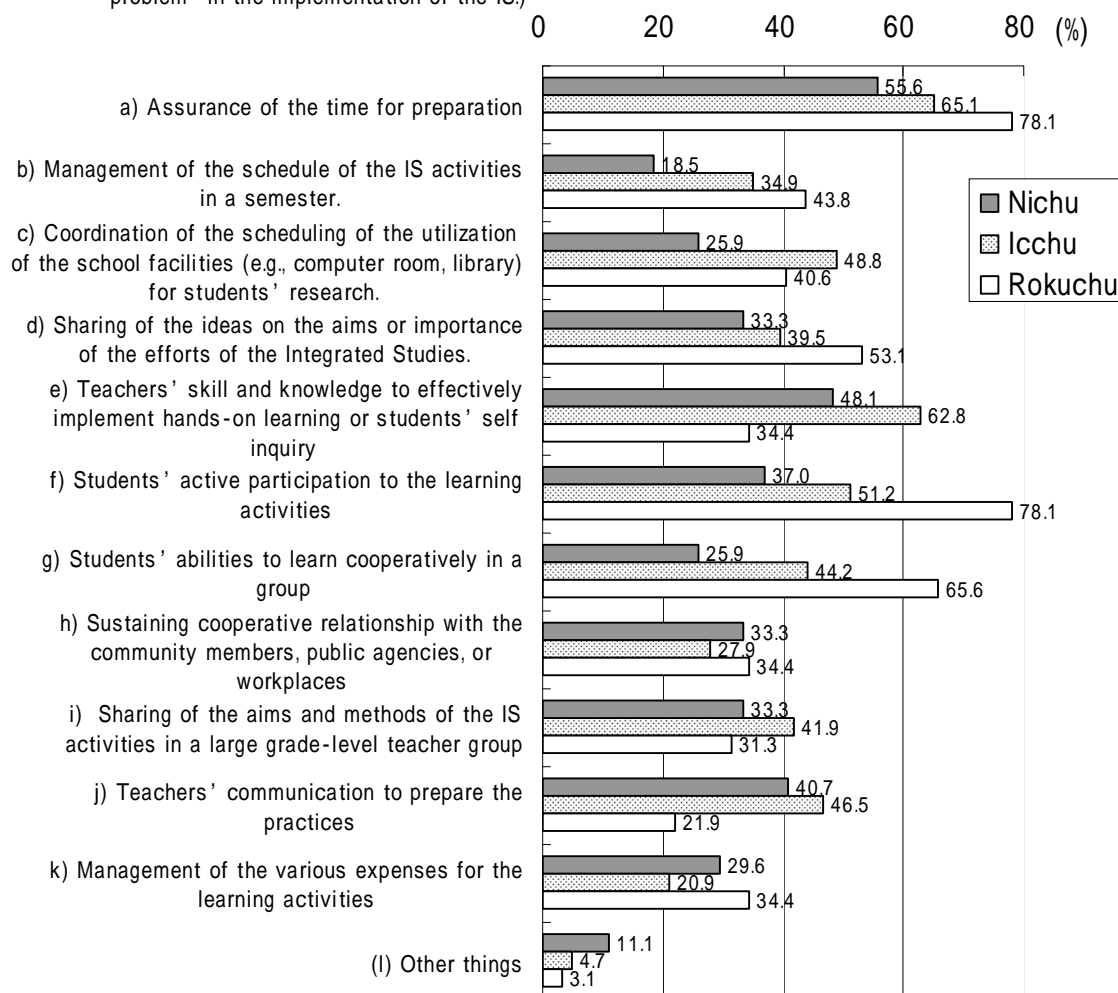
design and implement the IS. As seen in the case of Nichu in Chapter 4, the school's loss of the experienced teachers and the increase of inexperienced teachers could lead to a "downsizing" of their IS in the curriculum due to its difficulty to sustain. On the other hand, as is shown later in this chapter, the limited facilities for students' inquiry (a small library and limited numbers of computers) coupled with the large student body were the main problems in designing the IS activities at Icchu. Furthermore, the students' attitudes appeared to be an influential limitation on the teachers' IS development. Ball and Cohen (1995) argue the student himself/herself is an important component of instructional capacity. As shown in the items of "f" and "g," teachers also treated students' participation in the activities and their abilities to cooperatively work in a group as problems. Furthermore, the students' attitudes appeared to be an influential limitation on the teachers' IS development. Ball and Cohen (1995) argue the student himself/herself is an important component of instructional capacity. As shown in the items of "f" and "g," teachers also treated students' participation in the activities and their abilities to cooperatively work in a group as problems.

Figure 6.2 shows the same survey results that are classified by the three schools. This figure tells the unique aspects of each school teachers' perception of the challenges on the implementation of the IS. By comparison, in most of the items, the percentages of Nichu teachers' report of "problem" were less than those of the two other schools. This implies Nichu's school system appears to provide less hurdles on the teachers' operation of the IS in comparison with the other schools. While more than half of Nichu teachers reported that the assurance of time for planning (in item "a") as problematic, they showed

less perception of challenges regarding the students' participation and cooperativeness (in item "f" and "g").

Figure 6.2. Teachers' Perception of the Challenges for the Implementation of the IS
(Classified by Schools)

(Percentage of the teachers who agreed with that each of the following things as "major problem" in the implementation of the IS.)



On the contrary, in Rokuchu, the issue of students' participation and cooperativeness (in item "f" and "g") appear to be the teachers' major concern. The percentages of teachers' response as "problem" on these items are prominent among the three schools. As described in the case of Rokuchu in Chapter 4, the students' low motivation had brought into question the teachers' design of the IS projects, and the consequent perception of the ineffectiveness of their design led to the instability of the IS activities in that school's curriculum. In addition, Rokuchu teachers' concern on "assurance of time" (item "a") was the highest among the three schools. These aspects of Rokuchu teachers' perceived challenges as well as their pessimism on the IS (see Chapter 4) are the points that my further analysis will focus on.

Finally, as for Icchu, the percentages of teachers' perceived challenges on "utilization of facilities" (item "c") and "teachers' skill and knowledge" (item "e") were the highest among the three schools.

Keeping these findings from comparative view in mind, below I will approach the schools' realities of the implementation of the IS from the teachers' perspectives based on the data from my field research. The questions that will guide the analysis are as following; How did the teachers give meaning to their IS activities? How did they perceive the roles of the IS in their middle school education? While I will elicit the teachers' distinguish views on the IS at each school in details, my analysis also tries to reveal some school-specific factors that differentiated the schools' attitudes to the implementation of the IS from a comparative perspective.

Nichu – The Unique Pedagogy and its Challenge

Overview

As described above, Nichu's IS was a product of the teachers' collaborative curriculum development over several years. This development process was initiated by a few teacher leaders like Mr. Fukada, who intended to reform the whole school through curriculum development. This reform strengthened the connection between the school and the local community and diversified the students' learning activities based on the school-community partnership. Several years of collaborative development of the IS led to a shared vision of the IS among Nichu's teachers. Although my fieldwork revealed there were a few teachers who did not support implementing the IS, my fieldwork indicated the majority of the teachers appeared to view their IS activities as meaningful and important in their school curriculum. What is more important was that the teachers shared a set of educational goals and strategies— which can be called as “pedagogy”— regarding their practices of the IS. Such sharing of the IS pedagogy was a unique phenomenon of Nichu, which could not clearly observed in the other two case schools.

As I describe in detail below, Nichu's pedagogy was centered on the idea of “group-building” (*shudan zukuri*) with the students, which emphasized students' social and moral development by building strong ties among students, as well as building the connection between the students and the community. In this educational idea, the students were expected to develop their moral and social qualities through expanding their human relationships with others. In terms of the Western educational tradition, this pedagogy seems somewhat analogous to citizenship education. According to Beane (1993) its idea was also close to the “social integration” as one of the four dimensions of curriculum integration (see Chapter 2).

To teachers, such promotion of the students' social and moral development had much to do with the students' "student guidance," as well as classroom management. The students' development as individuals and group members was thought to support students' active engagement in the school life, including the classroom study as well as to contribute to the easygoing environment of the grade or the school. Also, some teachers believed that the success of "group-building" could foster students' positive attitude toward preparing for their future career, especially their enrollment to the high school. Because of the IS's important roles, Nichu's teachers perceived their IS activities as an effective tool in the school curriculum. Based on this pedagogy, the teachers continued to produce various IS activities over a span of years.

However, one big problem of the Nichu was that the teachers had difficulty maintaining the IS's pedagogy due to a large generational change of teachers. While the main IS activities are still reproduced at each grade, many experienced teachers were concerned about the decline in the IS activities.

Nichu's IS pedagogy

Instructional Aims— Group-building and Empowerment.

During the IS period, Nichu implemented various learning activities like course-learning on disability, interviewing parents, and career-learning activities. Especially during the implementation of the small-group, hands-on learning activities, the teachers whom I interviewed mentioned several instructional aims. Among those goals, the most important ones were "group-building" (*shudan-zukuri*) and the "empowerment" (*enpawamento*) of students. These aims were closely related to the IS activities. As the

start of the interpretation of the Nichu's IS pedagogy, I would like to discuss the aims behind their IS activities.

“Group-building” to Build Students’ Comfortable Relationship.

Some of the interviewed Nichu teachers emphasized “group-building” as an important aim of their IS practices. In its Japanese term “*Shudan-zukuri*,” “*shudan*” means “group,” while “*zukuri*” means “making” or “formation.” Interviewed teachers also mentioned the following synonyms: “*nakama-zukuri*” (making of friendship) and “*ningen-kankei-zukuri*” (making of human relationship). Quite simply, “group-building” refers to building students’ cooperative and friendly relationships. Although the literal meaning of the term seems very clear, its implication in the context of the teachers’ practices was quite deep and complex.

Group-building was not only the aim of the IS at Nichu. As illustrated in the interview excerpt below, “group-building” was treated as an important goal of the whole educational activities of the school.

Mr. Matsuzaka: You know, because the kids lived within groups, how the students behave depends on how the group is. So, even in the activities like this (the IS activities), group-building must steadily proceed. I believe that’s necessary. ... Therefore, to promote the group-building, I have heard (from other teachers of Nichu) we must do it by relating such (IS) activities, students’ learning, and students’ lives. Reexamining students’ classroom learning and the aspects of their lives, we do those big activities. Even though the kids do not have such awareness, we teachers must always have it, I believe.

In this way, the teachers believed “group-building” was one of their missions. The practices of the IS was one of the places to promote it.

As demonstrated in the literature review, one unique characteristics of Japanese instruction is its “groupism,” which emphasizes students’ moral and social development through their participation in various group activities (LeTendre, 1994; Sakai & Shimahara, 1995; Tsuneyoshi, 2000). In this idea of Japanese teaching, the students are expected to acquire some qualities like cooperativeness and responsibility. Although the idea of group-building can be thought as a distinctive form of the “groupism,” this idea is deeply rooted in the local practices of the human rights education movement. In the context of the human rights education, group-building was thought as the teachers’ method to empower the students from disadvantaged backgrounds, like the ones from Buraku community, the Korean Japanese students, or students with disabilities. In the idea of group-building, the teachers tried to build strong ties between the alienated, disadvantaged students and other ones through continuous dialogue and sharing of the challenges in the class or the grade.

The group-building was generated from the practices of the educators in the Buraku liberation movement (Umeda, 1988). One big aim of this group education was to invoke the whole students’ “awareness of liberation” (from discrimination) based on the strong human relationships with the disadvantaged students. This kind of educational practice was actively developed, especially in the schools which included the Buraku community, and they have been active in the Western part of Japan centering on Osaka (MacDonald, 2005). However, those activities with a specific ideological tone have also been criticized by other political groups of educators that they gave favorable treatment for the students from Buraku community. Consequently, even in Osaka, the core practices of human rights education including group-building were only implemented in

a limited number of schools, though those ideas have been widely known around the prefecture. Recently, in the context of human rights education, the concept of group-building appears to have lost its past ideological tone, and has become a relatively more general pedagogical idea, that emphasized the development of students' communication skills and self-esteem (Mori, 2000).

Returning to the IS of Nichu. Mr. Higashi, a teacher leader in charge of the professional development at Nichu, emphasized “group-building” as an important agenda of the IS as well as of the whole school educational activities. As seen in the next excerpt, the main goal of group-building through the IS was to facilitate cooperative and mutually-caring relationships among the students.

Mr. Higashi: What we conduct in the period (of the IS) is making human relationships. Though I think it's not easy to get the ball rolling, we have involved various activities to foster students' compassion for their friends. When such an activity started, many students would notice “the school is interesting!” or “it's fun, because I have lots of connections with friends!” I want to value this kind of students' discoveries. Then, based on such discoveries (of the mutual relationship), for example, when some bullying happens among them, the students have to be able to think about it together or to take care of their friends. Though it's not the agenda only for the IS, if the students' had good impression like “Oh, it was good because we tackled it together,” they can become able to solve those problems in a better way. We cannot make this only through the IS, but we would like to lead the IS in such a way.

In sum, though there was a variety of IS activities in Nichu, it mainly tried to create a cooperative and caring community of students. By facilitating such a community, the students could enjoy their schooling and become familiar with school life. In other words, the students could feel as if their schools were their “home” (ibasho). In addition, through

various IS activities, students were expected to develop their social qualities and to acquire the abilities to solve problems in the groups. Compared with the other case schools, one characteristic of the Nichu's IS pedagogy was that the teachers tried to foster the ability of the "group" of students –classroom-level or grade-level— through their IS activities, while they paid careful attention to individual student.

Then, how was group-building set as the aim of specific activities of the IS at Nichu? For example, in the first grade, the teachers' intention of group-building was shown in their IS activities. During IS period of the first semester for the first grade, the new students participated in the home room meeting where they would encounter with other students. In the later periods, students learned about and discussed the issue of bullying. The students also participated in writing a "life-history newspaper" to think about the support from their family and friends. In this very first stage of the middle school education, the teachers were greatly concerned with group-building and they fully utilized the IS period to facilitate the students' adjustment to the school's group life. However, according to the teachers, the barriers of group-building at this early stage were students' previous experiences of bullying. Actually, a few of the students had experienced truancy because of they had been bullied during their elementary school years. Some students might experience such incidents and become reluctant to participate in the group life. Ms. Matsuoka discussed how the IS aims at the promotion of the group-building at this early stage.

Ms. Matsuoka: Because I heard (from the elementary school teachers) there were some students who refused to come to school. Due to such experience, they may have difficulties to adjust to the new life in the middle school...we thought that their adjustment to the group and their continuous attendance were

very important. We were aware that it could be one of the main goals of this first semester. Then, we expected that the students would create a new group as early as possible by removing the bad parts during their elementary school days. We hoped that the students (formerly truant) would notice that they are connected to other students, and also feel the school would be their “home.”

On the other hand, to fully promote the group-building, Ms. Matsuoka emphasized that teachers should work to ensure that students are clearly aware of anti-bullying.

Ms. Matsuoka: To eliminate bullying, all the students have to understand the basic premise that bullying must not be tolerated. And, both the children who bullied and those who were bullied at the elementary school must understand how wrong bullying is. We expect that they never construct same relationship in the middle school and learn not to harm their friends any more. For this aim, I believe the students learn about the value of life through the IS.

According to Ms. Matsuoka, in the Homeroom meeting and the series of learning activities about bullying, the students shared some of their hard experiences of being bullied. According to Ms. Matsuoka, a few students who were bullied in the past talked of their positive expectations in their new school.

I observed the final presentation session of this sequence of learning for life. Within a large multipurpose room, the students made some group presentations based on their findings from the hands-on learning on “welfare and disability,” and the students, as a whole, attentively listened to the other groups’ presentations. Praising the successful group presentations, Ms. Matsuoka concluded this gathering in her words to the all 1st graders by stating, “Now students, saving your life means attending and enjoying the school every day! And, to save your life, you need to care your friends as well as yourself.”

Empowerment of Individual Student within the Group Activity.

As seen in the interview excerpt of Mr. Higashi in the previous section, the teachers planned the activities so that the students could enjoy them as part of their group lives. Mr. Higashi argued, “A student can think the school is interesting when he finds something where he can shine...It may be a class of a subject or other activities. The activity of the IS also should be such a place.” The IS activities that the students could actively get involved with would support the students’ feeling of school as “home” and it also would strengthen the connectedness of the students’ group.

However, my fieldwork revealed that implementing activities that the students enjoyed was just one aspect of the group-building pedagogy in the IS. According to my data, another educational aim in the IS group-building practice was “empowering” individual students. Actually, in my interviews with the teachers, I encountered the word “empowerment” of students only once. However, in my analysis of the interview data regarding the teachers’ views on the IS, I found many teachers’ ideas that seemed appropriate to be categorized by the term “empowerment” (of individual students).

“Empowerment” as part of the group-building means creating students’ opportunities for “self-expression” within the group activities. While, generally, the ability to express one’s opinion to others is thought as one of the goals of the IS activities, some Nichu teachers viewed “self-expression” as an important part of group-building. They believed if a student’s “self-expression” was listened to and accepted within the group it could become an important chance to change the relationship between the students.

In this pedagogical aim of group-building, the Nichu teachers did not treat the students in a same way. Rather, the teachers tried to pay attention to the individual

characteristics of the students and facilitated their “self-expression” in the way that fit the individuality of each student. For example, Mr. Higashi explained the importance of the teachers’ engagement to let the students select the method of report what they learned in the manner that fit their characteristics.

Mr. Higashi: After all, it is very important to draw out the individuality of the children in the stage of reporting the results of the study. This requires a lot of teacher ingenuity. For example, for the students who are not shy speaking before audiences and who enjoy it, we should prepare a place where they can be quite lively in their presentations. On the other hand, for a quiet student, it is Okay to have a very formal and scripted presentation. In this way, it’s important to find a kid’s role or the place of their best effort that fit each kid’s individuality and personality,

In addition, there were two types of students who the teachers kept in mind when planning the “empowerment” of the IS. The first type was the student who was “in shade” (*medatanai*) in the daily classroom activities. These students may be the ones who were not active in the classroom study due to their low-achievement or who were marginalized in the social relationship in the classroom due to his/her low social skills. These students may also show some behavioral problems in school. The teachers believed these “in-shade” students were an important core of the group-building. In the IS activities, the teachers often tried to provide this type of “in-shade” students with some important role in the group activity (e.g., a presenter of the group learning), and coordinated their efforts so that his/her self-expression would be welcomed in the group meeting. For example, Ms. Ohkawa, in her explanation of course-learning, mentioned about the effect of the chance of “self-expression” of such “in-shade” students:

Ms. Ohkawa: Among the students, there may be a fixed vision on a student in a class ... like “he is not good,” “he doesn’t study,” or “he is always scolded by teachers.” However, in the course learning, the situation can change a bit. As one student says something before the audience, the student can get a spotlight. If it succeeds, other students may think “he is doing well!” Then, the students’ vision of him can change. We can expect such an effect.

In addition, the teachers not only encouraged these low-visibility students but also tried to inculcate leadership of a part of students. This was because group-building requires student leaders who could promote the cooperation of the group. With the “in-shade” student, the teachers intentionally tried to provide these students with leadership skills, as well as with some opportunities to show their leadership in the group work.

“Group” as Safety-net for Students’ Promotion

“Group-building,” as an important aim of the IS, was also believed to be closely related to the issue of a student’s career, especially of being promoted to the high school. Like most of the other middle schools in this study, the students’ promotion to the high schools was a key educational goal. However, the third grade often included some students who have already given up on enrolling in the high school, mainly due to their low achievement. Generally, these students who gave up, tended to lose their motivation in the classroom as well as in other school activities. This meant they might be marginalized in the class. A few teachers who I interviewed mentioned the importance of “group-building” as safety-net for all students’ as they prepare for their careers. Ms. Matsuoka’s observations represented such teachers’ vision for the IS.

Ms. Matsuoka: I think the IS is the time when the kids can actively behave. Now, I strongly believe that making their “home” within a school is our basic aim. Also, in a literal sense, (in the period of the IS) I hope the students acquire

integrated abilities through the activities ... Again, having a “home” means they think of the school as fun. Not having friendly relationship (with other students) means not feeling the school as “home.” In addition to this, if the students have difficulty in their achievement and feel that they cannot understand the lessons, it means they have no room in the school. Now, I understand such thing has much to do with the issue of students’ careers. If they don’t have a vision toward their future career, they may lose their “home” in the school.

In brief, the teachers believed the continuous group-building effort was important to maintain the condition where all the students held positive attitudes to their near future career. For this aim, the IS activities were regarded as important to sustain the students’ learning community which shared the motivation for the efforts to prepare for the career.

In addition to “group-building” as safety-net for promotion, the latter half of the three years’ of IS activities included many activities related to students’ career guidance. While the details and the sequence of these activities were reviewed earlier in this dissertation, the activities included “career experience” in the neighborhoods, its pre- and post-instruction activities, visiting the open campus of the neighboring high schools, hearing speeches by Nichu graduates regarding high school life, and students’ self-inquiry with a community worker about a job. In the latter half of the sequence of the IS activities, the teachers provided the students with many opportunities to think about the meaning of their future jobs and academic study, as well as the vision of their future careers through various encounter with parents, community members, and the Nichu graduates. According to the teachers, these activities would more or less help the students to think about their own careers from various angles and set their mind on the path toward the preparation toward the high school entrance exam.

In particular, a few teacher leaders believed their IS activities on the theme of career could give effective stimulation for the students with lower motivation toward high school enrollment. The students' experience during the activities often gave a shock to their own views on career, and also the activated student-student conversation could raise their interest in the future. Below, one leader teacher mentioned the relevance of their career activities in the third grade.

Ms. Kawaramoto: There are some students who have difficulty in study and lack foresight on their career. If we have a lot of such students who think “I don’t need study,” the grade would be likely to get disturbed. Those students may think they can easily get money by some part-time job. However, in our activity of the IS (where students individually inquire about his favorite job by interviewing a local worker), as the student goes to the neighbor workplace to hear the voice of the adult worker, the worker often says him or her “your plan is not so easy.” Such a voice can give a kind of “sway” on their thinking. Then, he may wonder if he will be really fine with his decision of not going to the high school. I believe such a shock and thinking is the most important thing. By this activity of the IS, the students who face real academic challenges, they can confront the severe aspects of their career and reach the awareness that “I have to study for my goal.” This is the reason that we teachers tackle this activity in the busiest schedule of the third grade.

While the teachers believed such students' hands-on activities were relevant to promote all the students' motivation toward the high school entrance, the success of these activities also depended on the condition of the students' group of the grade. Ms. Kawaramoto explained, “We can provide “sway” in diverse ways in the activities as group. After all, how the group is formed makes it difference.”

Close Relationship to the Student Guidance.

The various learning opportunities in Nichu's IS also were used to support the student guidance (*seito shido*) of the students--although this was not official aim of the IS. For example, the IS sequence had many opportunities for the grade-level students to meet, as well as meeting in Homeroom. During these meetings, the teachers often gave notices on complying with a school rule by mentioning an incident where some students deviated from the rule. In such situations, the teachers talked the issue of the rule, relating it to the theme of the IS activities at hand.

For example, during the grade-level gathering of the 2nd grade for the pre-instruction of the career-learning, one female teacher often talked to over 100 students, "Hey, there appears to be some students whose uniforms are untidy. Also, a few students wore some hair accessories that are not permitted by the school. If you cannot follow such rules, you will not be able to be accepted by the local work places." Later in this series of pre-instruction for the career-learning aspect of the IS, one male, older physical education teacher lectured the students for more than ten minutes regarding the present disarray of their school lives. In this talk, the teacher stated how he was disappointed with some reported bad behaviors of students – bringing prohibited food or items, students' words and behaviors that harmed other ones, and so on. The teacher scolded the silent students saying, "Your current behaviors are getting bad. We teachers like all of you. But, your behaviors betrayed us. You may think that's Okay unless your bad manners will not be witnessed by the teachers. Such manners are, you know, very much like the company's mislabeling of the foods in the TV news, right? I am really anxious about if you students can really succeed to complete this project (the career experience). Unless each of you doesn't reflect your own behavior carefully, some of you may

produce big failure in the activity.” These actions of teachers appear to play the role of “tightening” of the group life of the students by directing their attention to the rules.

As is shown in the interview excerpt of Mr. Matsuzaka in the former section, the school leaders of Nichu stated that the learning activities including the IS and the teachers’ instruction on students’ lives should be closely related. The teachers’ discussions in the above examples indicate they utilized a part of the IS activities to discipline the students by relating the message to the learning content of the IS. These kinds of teachers’ messages were transmitted in quite strict and serious tones. Some people may think their manner appears to be indoctrination. However, the teachers believed such disciplining was an important component of their group-building and, they thought it might be effective to make a “connection” between the students’ learning content of the IS and the important rules of the students’ daily group life.

A similar type of teachers’ life guidance activity connected to the IS was observed in the last meeting of a series of course-learning on “learning of life” in the first grade. After the several presentations of the students’ groups and the concluding talk of Ms. Matsuoka, Ms. Kawaramoto (head of student guidance) appeared before the students. She praised the students’ cooperation and variety of presentations in this gathering. Relating the topic of “protect the lives,” she discussed two things: first, students should refrain from bringing tools to school that could hurt other students, and secondly, the students should not say hurtful things that could damage the others’ mind. After mentioning recent incidents of these issues, she enthusiastically mentioned that the students need to think about what they really protect when they follow the school’s rules.

Later, in the interview session, remembering this talk, Ms. Kawaramoto discussed the importance of the efforts to connect the students' discoveries in the IS and their thoughts on their daily school lives.

Ms. Kawaramoto: At that time, I addressed it after hearing some incidents in the 1st grader's condition. Now, our students are learning in the IS periods. But, I think the children cannot change suddenly, even though the students were engaged in the activities for one hour, two hours, or eight hours... When the students encountered a good person, he may be an influence. Such encounter can give a chance for the student to reflect on his own life. But, basically, the biggest influence that a student receives comes from what he experiences at home and the school. Therefore, even when our students get some hints to think about or good encountering with people that impresses them, that's we teachers' role to let the students reflect the issue deeply or acquire something helpful to them by say something to them in our classes or other places.

As expressed here, the teachers assumed the close relationship between the IS and their guidance activities. More specifically, the teachers believed that the students' experiences from their IS activities could be important chances to encounter the moral issues in their lives and that the teachers should expand these experiences to their moral and social development through their daily instructional activities.

The Perspectives of Human Rights Education.

I have previously explained the idea of "group-building," which served as the core of the Nichu's IS, was developed in the tradition of Human Rights Education (HRE). The reason that Nichu emphasized human rights education was that most of the teachers who initiated the development of the IS had taught in the neighboring schools that had actively promoted human rights education. According to MacDonald (2006), this kind of connection between the IS pedagogy and human rights is widely observed in Kansai area

centering on Osaka. Due to the long tradition of HRE in Osaka, the IS activities in this area often have the ideas of HRE as its foundation. Nichu is one of those Osaka schools whose ideas of the IS was strongly influenced by the HRE tradition.

However, in my fieldwork, I observed some variation in the teachers' awareness on how much their IS activities were involved in the HRE. Some teachers rarely mentioned the connection between their IS activities and HRE in the interview sessions. On the other hand, there were a few teachers who believed that Nichu's entire IS was based on HRE. For example, Ms. Ohkawa mentioned that "my aim of the IS has been to create an interesting HRE." In my analytical view, the reason of this different attitudes to the connection between the IS and HRE was that the idea of "group-building," which has become an ideologically-neutral concept that tolerated the different views of the teachers.

In the history of curriculum development at Nichu, it was the teachers who had long-term experience with HRE that initiated the development of the pedagogy of the IS. Therefore, the pedagogical aims of Nichu's IS reflected the ideas of the HRE in various aspects.

For example, Mr. Higashi, one teacher leader of Nichu, discussed his vision on the relationship between the IS and group-building (and, making friendships) in the context of human rights education.

Mr. Higashi: What I think as important is, "people," "encounter," and "human rights." By encountering the others, a person thinks about his life. Then, through such encountering and thinking, he will acquire sense of human rights. I wonder this process may be one of the forms of the IS. Rather, in my mind, it's a form of education that includes the IS. Therefore, I believe such processes should be connected to all the parts of the school, including friendship-making or students' lives. It's not good to separate one thing and another in a school.

For example, when we think about what is necessary to conduct friendship-making and group-building, we come to the idea that we should foster students' keen sense of human rights. Or, we also need to let the students meet various people. In line with thinking, after all, this is the thing that we must evaluate the most as our core. We must do group-building well and foster students' keen sense of human rights. For this aim, what is necessary? As the method, we may provide the opportunities to let the students meet the community people or let them go out to the community.

As demonstrated by the excerpt above, the teachers did not expect the students to acquire the constitutional knowledge of human rights, but instead develop a "sense of human rights." Based on my interpretation of this term, the teachers wanted the students to think about the importance of individual life by teaching them the idea of human rights. In other words, the teachers tried to let the students know the preciousness of themselves and others. The teachers also wanted the students not only to know such preciousness as knowledge but also to behave in caring ways about themselves and the other students. For example, Ms. Ohkawa explained that "acquiring sense of human rights" means "that the students come to understand others' emotion." In this way, a sense of human rights was thought to be a base of human communication, which enabled "group-building."

In order for the students to acquire the sense of human rights, the IS activities of the Nichu included a variety of themes including disability or of the foreigners living in Japan. By learning from the lives of historically marginalized people, students were expected to think about the issues of their human rights and the care for the others.

As described above, the pedagogy of the Nichu's IS was based on the aims of group-building and empowering individual students. The teachers believed the results of the IS activities would contribute to the students' learning community, where each

student could feel it as their “home.” Also, the teachers expected that the group-building as the result of their IS and other educational activities would motivate the students in preparing for their future careers, especially, high school entrance exam. Those pedagogical aims were thought to be derived from the ideas of human rights education. Some teacher leaders of Nichu believed that these activities aimed at the development of the students’ sense of human rights, which also constituted a base for the group-building practice.

Practices Aiming at the Prevention of School-Crumbling.

A substantial part of the teachers’ idea regarding the IS derived from the tradition of the human rights education. But, there appeared to be another concern of teachers which facilitated teachers’ development of the IS activities which emphasized students’ group-building. It was teachers’ (especially seasoned ones’) risk awareness against the crumbling (*are*) of the school. During the last decade, Nichu has maintained a calm and orderly educational environment, where teachers could control and organize the classes with little trouble. Currently, this kind of long-standing peaceful condition of a middle school is increasingly rare. In various locations of Osaka, as well as other prefectures, it is often heard that many middle schools are in plight where the teachers have difficulty to organize the students’ learning. Even in the city where Nichu was located, Nichu teachers mentioned a few of the neighboring schools had more trouble in managing their school due to their problems in students’ discipline. Historically, almost all the middle schools of the city experienced a hard era of school disturbance during the 1980s and the early 1990s. Therefore, of the teachers of Nichu, especially the middle and older teachers had strong risk awareness against the school-crumbling, because most of them had directly

experienced this complex situation. This awareness probably facilitated the teachers' collaboration to develop the educational activities including the IS in Nichu.

Ms. Kawaramoto: Even before the development of the IS, Nichu teachers had the atmosphere of cooperation and tended to cooperate at each grade-level by setting some focus of the grade-level group-building, like students' autonomous activities or moral education classes. That was because the teachers believed the kids would go into troubling situations without that grade-level connected efforts of teachers, even though the teachers differed in their beliefs. Many of our teachers faced a kind of breakdown in the time when all the schools of this city had such tough situations. Based on their experiences coping with this crumbling, the teachers are convinced that we cannot implement any wonderful educational efforts if we let the students remain troubled.

A few of the middle-aged female teachers talked to me about their experiences of the crumbling before transferring to Nichu.

Ms. Tsuchiura: (At that time) every teacher came to the school before 8 A.M, and it was quite early to go home at 8 P.M. You know, we older generation teachers know the reality of the school-crumbling.

Ms. Ohkawa: Like...the windows were broken, we could not control the class, or the students who smoked in the building.

Ms. Tsuchiura: But, I think only a fine line exists between such situation and the current condition of our students (of Nichu). Sorry to say that. If something goes out of gear, even our school can roll into the breakdown... Therefore, when it comes to the way to prevent it, we really would like to spend our energy towards building a more constructive manner to stimulate our kids, rather than spending the same energy to cope with the students' problems until 10 or 11 o'clock at night.

In this way, the teachers have tried to prevent the possible breakdown of their school by their educational activities. A part of the "constructive manners" was the group-building

and empowering students to foster students' cooperative learning community. As seen above, Nichu's IS activities also focused on the students' group-building with a variety of learning activities. This implies the IS activities of Nichu were thought to help prevent the breakdown of the school's learning community by its group-building role. This can explain why Nichu teachers regarded the IS activities as important in the whole curriculum as indicated in the questionnaire of this study.

Problem in the Inheritance of the Legacy.

In the prior sections, I described Nichu teachers' pedagogy in implementing their IS as well as its important role in the school's whole curriculum. The present IS activities were thought to play an important role in forming the students' active learning community within the school. Also, the IS activities were crucial places to connect with the local community, which diversified the students' learning activities. Trying to make the most of the IS periods, the teachers collaborated to create their unique pedagogy and various instructional techniques based on the pedagogy since the mid of 1990s.

However, a major problem in implementing the IS that Nichu teachers currently faced was sustaining the IS pedagogy due to the rapid generational change of the teachers' community. As pointed out by the study of Shimahara and Sakai (1995), in the cultural context of Japanese schools, the new teachers' acquisition of pedagogy is a long process of socialization mediated by the apprenticeship relationship with experienced teachers. However, according to the Nichu teachers, the transmission of the IS pedagogy from the experienced teachers to the new ones had not been well-conducted because the school could not assure such an apprenticeship process because of the accelerated generational change of the teachers.

Let me explain more about this rapid generational change of the teachers in Nichu. At the beginning of the 2000s, the majority of the Nichu teachers were seasoned teachers in their 40s and the 50s. Only after a few years, the situation would change to the one where the majority of them will be in their 20s and the 30s. There are two factors that are facilitating this rapid change: one is a national-level issue, and another is Nichu-specific. The first factor is the mass retirement of the baby-boomer generation teachers (who were born in the 1950s) and the consequent, mass hiring of young teachers. Recently, this trend has generated national concern with the rapid drain of the experienced teachers from the schools. Though the degree of shift in age composition varies among the schools, Nichu was one of the schools in the city district whose change was the most drastic. In addition to this trend, there was another reason that the Nichu's generational change was so accelerated. Their change began somewhat earlier, starting in 1997. As a result of reshuffling of teachers, many experienced and reform-minded teachers came to Nichu. These new teachers facilitated the curriculum development process in the school. However, as a custom in Japanese public school education, usually the teachers have to transfer from one school to another with a period of approximately seven years (6~8 years). Therefore, the group of experienced teachers who promoted the reform was required to leave the school. Worse, the mass transfer in the late 1990s made the degree of teachers' turnaround in the mid-2000s quite sharp. One leader teacher mentioned this situation.

Ms. Maeda: After the curriculum development project, we gradually constructed a large picture of the IS. Then, a decade passed ... and, we entered into the time of new large turnover. When I came to this school a decade ago, the school had a large-size transferring. Now, a decade has passed, and many

new teachers have come here, one after another. To foster the young teachers who will participate in operating this school is the emergent agenda of our school system.

The experienced teachers tried to transmit the IS pedagogy through the collaboration process to implement the IS in each grade. However, reflecting the current status of the IS implementation, some of the teacher leaders argued that “our implementation of the IS seems to be just doing the ‘form’ of the past practices and it seems somewhat shallow.” These teachers were especially critical of the current status of the IS implementation and pointed out the slim connections between the IS activities and the group-building efforts by the teachers when compared to past practices.

The experienced teachers stressed their lack of time to fully discuss with the young teachers the meaning of the IS activities and the micro strategies to connect the activities to the formation of the students’ group. However, there was also a reason for this lack of time on the IS activities. In this rapid generational change, the first priority for the school system was to pass on the various school routines to the younger generation. If the teachers were to be able to operate the organization of the middle school, much of the time and energy of the faculty had to be spent on that matter rather than on enriching the IS activities. One female teacher leader commented about this situation:

Ms. Ohkawa: The “veteran” teachers can deal with each of the increased school events smoothly, understanding the main points of the job. However, now, while we are gradually passing the jobs to the new teachers, we cannot go beyond merely transmitting the “form” of the event. In the reality, the young teachers were overwhelmed by their jobs every day, and often cope with it by working until 8 or 9 o’clock. Due to such hard situation of young teachers, the

content of the IS activities with them become shallow, and we can transmit only the “form” of the activities. We really want to discuss more on it and to tell of our passion on the activities. For example, (we want to transmit) what kind of aim we should have when we let the kids act (in the periods) or how we let the students grow up through these activities...and etc. We really lack the time to transmit such a really important part. I believe that’s the biggest problem. The too many meetings on our administration or too many school events...these might be a problem, too.

Another teacher also mentioned the difficulty to transmit the pedagogy of the IS to the young teachers.

Ms. Matsuoka: The inheritance of the activities themselves is proceeding thanks to the past documents stored in the computer. When you open the computer, you can tell the minimum requirements to prepare for the (IS) activity. However, while the computer can show the manual, it cannot show the most important thing in the activities. So, we should not just depend on it. Not only the flow of the activities...like the goal of it, how to facilitate the actions of the kids, what kind of kids we should focus in such actions...such things are really difficult to tell and take long time. If it were the situation several years ago, which was our golden age, the things have gone much more smoothly. Now, we should make more efforts to transmit it.

In this way, the experienced teachers mentioned that they wanted more discussions with the young teachers regarding the pedagogy before they transferred to other schools. The principal of Nichu also argued that the inheritance of the pedagogy was an important agenda and mentioned his plan of professional development for the teachers to reexamine the meaning of the IS.

Mr. Asahida: The efforts of Nichu reached the peak. However, now we face the time when those veteran teachers leave. There is a possibility that our important ideas of education may decline. I would like to stop it. We would like

to inherit the things that we have built up and transmit to the next generation (of teachers).

Despite these intentions of the school leaders, the gradual reduction of the IS activities had begun due to the weakness in the teachers' capacity and the lack of planning time. For example, during the last several years, the teachers stopped implementing the course learning of the 2nd year, as well as the individual inquiry on future job in the 3rd grade. Both were a part of the activities implemented in the "golden age" of Nichu.

Other Problems in the Implementation of the IS

A few other teachers mentioned about the problems in implementing the IS other than the issue of the inheritance of its pedagogy. The numbers of the voices were not as many, but I would like to overview them below.

The teachers of the Nichu, like the ones in the other two case schools, had difficulty managing the time to prepare for the IS. For example, Ms. Ohkawa discussed their lack of the time and the resulting pressure on them.

Ms: Ohkawa: In the IS, teachers have to spend a considerable time to prepare for the matters outside their specialties, so it increases their busy-ness and it's very tough....I'm relatively good at the work of the IS, but there are a part of people who feel terrible with it. You know, we have teaching of the subject areas, homeroom activities, club activities [extracurricular], and now the integrated study, wave after wave in a day. Unless you have an attitude to devote your all energy to the school's education, you cannot make it successfully.

In particular, preparing for the "climax" part of a series of IS activities took longer meetings. Just after the career learning days in the 2nd grade, one young teacher

mentioned that, “last week, I was surprised. For a few days, our time to leave the school was almost 9 or 10 o’clock because of the deliberate meetings on the career experience.”

Though some Nichu teachers mentioned their “busyness” in implementing the IS, from my view based on the comparison of the three schools, the Nichu’s situation in preparing for the IS appeared to be better than those in the two other case schools. The flow of Nichu’s practices of the IS were mostly patterned, and during the real implementation, the teachers could concentrate their time on the discussion for adapting the flow to the students of their grade. In addition, the Nichu teachers could prepare for the IS relatively more smoothly due to the lower degree of students’ behavioral problems in the school and to the strong support from the local community members for the IS activities.

On the other hand, a few teachers felt other parts of the school’s jobs were compressed due to the time and energy that they spent on implementing the IS. A few teachers mentioned that they had less time for the classroom management including their guidance with individual students than before. Mr. Fujita, a seasoned physical education teacher, observed:

Mr. Fujita: These days, it becomes more difficult to build a relationship with the students. I think this cannot be attributed only to the trend of the students’ sense. I think, now in Nichu, the teachers lack time to speak with the students. I believe individual communication with the students after school or outside of the lessons is important. In the place of group-level instruction like our classes, our guidance of students tends to be strict with an imperative tone. However, I believe the real relationships of trust are formed in one-to-one communication where the teacher listens to the students and encourages them. The increased meeting for the events (including the IS) is depriving our opportunities to communicate with the students and has made such bonding difficult.

As for the lack of time due to the IS preparation, another teacher mentioned that he did not have enough time to provide the after-school supplementary classes of mathematics. Despite his concern regarding the decline of students' basic abilities due to the reduced instructional hours in the national curriculum guideline, he felt irritated about the situation where he could not provide the opportunities for supplementary lessons due to the busy scheduling to prepare for the IS.

Summary of Nichu

Nichu's teachers were enthusiastically engaged in their IS practices. As a result of their continued collaboration on improving their IS activities, the teachers shared an unique pedagogy that was centered of the idea of "group-building" and "empowerment" of students. They believed such practices contributed to the formation of students' cooperative learning community and facilitated the students' adjustment to the group life in the school. The teachers also thought success of their activities would lead to the prevention of various students' behavioral problems including bullying and truancy. In addition, the teachers believed that only their IS activities independently could play such roles of "group-building" and "empowerment," and they argued that the IS activities should be correlated to other elements of the middle school curriculum to provide educational benefits to the students.

Although the advantage of Nichu's practices of the IS was the unique pedagogy shared by the teachers, the main concern of Nichu's teacher leaders was that they might fail to sustain their shared pedagogy by the generational alteration of the teachers. Because the change of the teachers was quite rapid, the teacher leaders felt difficulty to transmit their pedagogy as well as their instructional methods to the young teachers.

Icchu –Challenges to a Large-size School in Implementing the IS

Overview

As described in the previous chapter, Icchu's IS activities were almost patterned since the reorganization of the IS in 2002. The activities were sequenced over the three years under the large theme of "to learn the job and the way of life," centering on the career learning in the 2nd grade. The periods of the IS were also "conveniently" used to provide short-term learning opportunities regarding some sociocivic issues like human rights education, sex education, education on disaster prevention, and so on.

While the teachers had gradually acclimated to implementing the IS by the repetitive practices of it over 5 years, their practices were complicated by the school's large size. The "large-school" problems in the IS included difficulty in using the in-school learning resources efficiently, the challenge in coordinating scheduling, the difficulty to control a large number of the students, and so forth. Also, Icchu, as a large school serving a broad regional area in the city, had coped with student behavioral problems, and their behavioral status at each grade appeared to influence the potential success of the IS activities.

As one of the characteristics of the large public school, the teachers of Icchu had various attitudes regarding the IS. Some of the teachers were strong supporters of the IS and actively engaged in improving each activity. But, some teachers were more conservative and did not perceive their IS activities as meaningful. Due to these somewhat conflicting views on the relevance of the IS, it was doubtful that the teachers shared their pedagogical practices of the IS. Furthermore, it was challenging to

implement the IS in such a large school, and in particular to construct a consensus among the teachers with different educational beliefs.

Organizational Challenges to the Implementation of the IS in a Large Middle School

Unlike the description of Nichu, here I will first depict the teachers' perceptions of the challenges in implementing the IS, and then I will elicit the teachers' visions of the IS. This is because I think understanding of the organizational challenges of the large school would give a better explanation of the teachers' awareness of their IS practices as its background.

Icchu was the biggest school among the five schools in its city district, and it held about 900 students within the 24 home-rooms. Many of the interviewed teachers mentioned that the large-scale of this school impeded the operation of their IS activities. The teachers thought they had more hurdles in implementing some types of hands-on activities in the IS periods than in other smaller schools. Below, I will overview such challenges specific to the large-size school.

Challenges in Organizing the Learning Activities.

According to the teachers leading the IS activities in Icchu, the large number of the students limited the types of IS activities. A female teacher observed:

Ms. Yoshioka: Because we have so many kids...if we had fewer kids, our activity could be more varied. Though the large size may have some strength, the problem is that we have some difficulty in directing their activities. Therefore, even if we want to introduce this or that activity, we often have to reduce our plan considering the students' numbers.

As this excerpt indicates, the number of students made it difficult for teachers to manage some group activities beyond the usual units of Homerooms. Usually, in the periods of

the IS, the teachers tried various ways of grouping of the students for the learning activities within the grade-level. However, if each grade had about 300 students like Icchu, the students' movement to the different courses would take time and could be difficult to control. Also, the teachers of Icchu were afraid that some students would quarrel during the move.

In the interview session, one teacher leader of Icchu mentioned an incident. His plan of students' activities to organize the findings from the career experience was denied by his colleagues. The teacher leader proposed that the teachers would break the students into the groups of the same type of job and let them cooperate in writing a large wall paper within each group. However, in the planning meeting, other teachers of the same grade-level did not support this plan because of the loss of instructional time and the difficulty in facilitating the students' group from various Homeroom classes. As this implies, the large student body gave a limitation to the teachers' design of instructional activities of the IS.

On the other hand, the large student body also made the whole-grade meeting at the end of the project a logistical nightmare. The only place that the entire grade could gather was the gym (or the ground), and even the gym was often difficult to reserve for this gathering due to the already scheduled physical education classes.

Due to these impediments, the teachers tended to avoid the flexible grouping for the IS activities as was observed in Nichu. Rather, to utilize the time efficiently, the teachers basically implemented their IS activities at their home rooms.

Use of Limited Learning Resources.

Many teachers mentioned the difficulties in using the learning resources within the school, especially the school library and the computer room. For example, even if the 1st grade students entered the stage to inquire about the job using the PC room, the room only was available to one class for one period. As for the use of these learning resources, one teacher observed:

Mr. Inohara: The challenge was that this school has a lot of students. Therefore, when we want to let the students search something, how can we do that? To the 300 students of one grade, we have only 40 PCs connected to the internet. Our school library is also very small compared with the size of the school. The opportunity of the IS that we have to use the computers the most was our Okinawa study before the school trip of the 3rd grade. The coordination of the use of the computer room is the problem that we should tackle with.

To ensure all classes have the opportunity to use a PC, the classes of the 1st graders required to have special IS scheduling. However, such scheduling required a deliberate coordination within and out of the grade-level in the complex weekly timetable of the large school. Although even the smaller schools can have this kind of challenges in the coordination on the use of the in-school learning resources, it is less troublesome than in a large school like Icchu.

The third challenge, in this large school, was the difficulty in building consensus among the teachers' group about their activities. Needless to say, a large school not only has many students but also many teachers. While I will focus on this in the later section, the relatively large size of the teachers' group meant there were a variety of teacher attitudes regarding education, and this variety sometimes made building consensus very difficult.

Actually, in Icchu, each grade-level had two teachers in charge of implementing the IS, and these teachers designed the semester's draft plan of the IS activities for the collaborative planning based on the past files on the IS. However, due to the difference of the teachers' attitudes to the IS, the planning sometimes did not go smoothly. Mr. Mukoyama, a teacher in charge of the 2nd grade's IS, mentioned:

Mr. Mukoyama: If that's the case of a small school...for example, the one with two classes in a grade. So, all the teachers of the grade are three or four. In such a case, one planner (of the IS) can lead the activities as he or she plans. However, in a large school like Icchu, we have eight HR teachers (and some non-HR teachers) and some of them can be very critical of the planners' ideas. For example, basically, the teachers in charge (of the IS) propose all the draft plans regarding how to facilitate students' learning activities, how to let the students' organize their findings, and so on. However, the perception of the plan differs among the teachers. In my latest case regarding the career experience, thought I proposed many materials and plans, the discussion became entangled with various attacks from a few teachers. In the other case, there was a teacher who proposed their own papers against my draft plan, saying that, "I like this way better than yours." Actually, she implemented her own plan in her HR. Anyway, this may be the challenge of implementing the IS in a large school.

In this way, the collaborative planning within a large-size teachers' group did not go so smoothly. And, the innovative ideas tended to be weakened by other teachers' criticisms. It is not necessarily the case that all the large schools would face such tough planning process. However, in the case of Icchu, the teachers frequently faced that troublesome discussion due to the different attitudes to the IS activities that I will describe later.

Lack of Instructional Capacity

Above, I overviewed the several organizational challenges of Icchu in implementing the IS in a large school. In addition to these challenges, some of Icchu

teachers felt they lacked the instructional skills required to pursue various hands-on learning or project-based learning of the IS. According to the teachers, these skills were different from the ones that they usually used in the subject areas, and therefore, a few of them regarded them as "out of their specialties." Because they perceived that they did not fully learn such skills, they felt insecure in implementing the new types of learning activities that could fully motivate their students. Below is one teacher's observations regarding his lack of the instructional skill on the IS activities.

Mr. Taniyama: Well, they say, in the periods of the IS, it is most important to let the students find their own agendas to study and inquire by themselves. But, I wonder how we can help the students discover their agendas. That's Okay for the kids who can do it well. But, how about other students? How can we support those kids? It may be better for us to learn such skill about the IS. If we teachers do not have such knowledge, the students in the activities can easily say, "Hey, Sensei (teacher), I don't know what I should do in this period." They are very keen (about the teachers' attitudes to the activities). To be honest, some teachers of this school, including me, lack the foundational skill on the IS activities. We are short of it. If we could study them, our IS periods could become more beneficial for the students.

Another mathematics teacher also mentioned that the knowledge required to facilitate the IS was his "out-of-specialty."

Mr. Shinozuka: My specialty is mathematics, and Ms. Yoshioka's is English. I don't think of the IS as the "on-the-side job," but our practices may have difficulties (because they are not in their fields). If our school could have a specialist on the IS, it might make a difference. By his or her professional job (on the IS), the ways to implement the IS can change in the school.

In this way, some Icchu teachers felt they lacked the instructional skill to implement the IS and consequently they were unsure if they could successfully facilitate the IS activities

for their students. To compensate, many interviewed teachers proposed to have a specialist-facilitator for the school's IS activities. The Japanese schools usually have some directors (or chief officer) on some important divisions of school administration like curriculum management, student guidance, and career guidance. According to the interviewed teachers, such allocation of the IS director might plan and show the effective implementation of the IS among the teachers with his/her specialized knowledge. Also, his/her job could coordinate the teachers and the resources for implementing the IS, and it might reduce the teachers' loss of time for the preparation of the IS within the large school organization. Ms. Nakamoto, a teacher leading the IS activities in the 2nd grade, mentioned:

Ms. Nakamoto: I must prepare for my social studies teaching in the 2nd and 3rd grade. Other teachers also teach the elective courses. Actually, just such preparation for teaching is tough. In addition, we have our HR job and other work of each administrative division. In my case, I am in the student guidance (division). Now, in this kind of tough era for the school, I feel as if I am coming to the school just for doing the daily student guidance work. After the students go home, our other job, the preparation of the IS, starts...that's the reality of our job. Then, in a conversation of the other day, some teachers felt that "the government should allocate a director of the IS at each school." It was not a serious argument. But, we have director of student guidance as well as of career guidance. The role of the director is to prepare the work with specialized knowledge, gather information on it, and partner with the outside agents without having classes to teach. If we think of the IS as important, such allocation of the director is necessary. I have repeatedly heard this kind of proposal from other teachers for these years.

During my field work, I heard the same demand for allocating the IS director or specialist in the school from the other two case schools. However, in Icchu, due to its complexity in

implementing the IS in its large school organization, the teachers appeared to desire such coordinator role on the IS more strongly.

Students' Behavioral Problems in the IS

Another aspect of this large public school is that it held students with various backgrounds. According to my informal talk with Icchu teachers and other schools' teachers during my fieldwork, the degree of the students' behavioral problems here was better than the average level of the schools of the city district. My observation supported this view, and I was convinced that Icchu was relatively an "ochitsuita" (calm) school as a whole. For example, in my observation of the period of the "morning reading" (students read a book in their HR class for 10 minutes before the morning lessons start) in one day, I saw all the students concentrated on reading a book at their seats in quiet classrooms. Also, in some whole-school gatherings in the gym, I did not see students disturbing the process of the gathering, and the teachers' concerns regarding the students were rare.

However, historically, Icchu has had waves of student disruptive behaviors. Even at the time of my fieldwork, the calm teachers' office was often filled with the tense atmosphere by the information on the students' delinquency including the in-school smoking or students fighting. A substantial proportion of Nichu students did not follow the school dress code. Though not prevalent, the behavioral problems were always smoldering. The teachers were constantly on-guard for small flash-points of student problems. In addition, like many other middle schools, bullying and truancy were also major problems to be addressed in Icchu.

The issue of the students' behavioral problems was also somewhat related to the implementation of the IS. The students' behavioral status of the grade sometimes influenced teachers' on how they shaped their IS activities. For example, the teachers' discussions about the IS activities in the 3rd grade are illustrative. In the 1st semester of the 3rd grade, Icchu prepared a gathering where the students listened to the speeches of a few high school students who graduated from Icchu. The main topics of the speeches were their future high school lives and the students' preparation for the entrance exam. While Icchu has implemented this activity for years, a few years ago the 3rd grade teachers of the time did not implement it. One teacher explained that, "that was up to the students' attitudes at that time. There was a situation where a part of the students could not listen to the others' speaking. Other students were Okay, but it might be quite annoying to the invited high school students if they faced the rough behaviors of our students. So, we canceled it."

During my fieldwork in Icchu, I sometimes observed some student disorder during the periods of the IS, especially at some classes in the 1st grade. According to the teachers, the 1st graders had produced many behavioral problems since the start of their enrollment, and the teachers had difficulty in having the students acquire the group discipline. For example, I observed the following situation in a 1st graders' class of the IS which let the students conduct a "role play" of the interviewing.

The students are seated as a group of 5 or 6 in the classroom. A female physical education teacher facilitated this "role play." And, each student was paired with the neighboring student, and conducted the "role play." One of the pair interviewed the other on their interest in job. The students questioned each other on the rule written in the handouts. This is look like a game, and the students were actively involved in this activity. Now, the time for the role play ended

and the teacher announced them of the end of the sessions. However, a part of the students continued to chat, and the classroom was still noisy. As the teacher waited for a while, the students gradually got quiet. The teacher said, “Now, let me question you what you talked in the session.” The teacher asked some of the students about the content of the interviewing. However, during this interaction of the teacher and the students, a part of the students began to chat. “Be quiet! You must listen to your classmates now.” Some students continued to talk. “Be quiet! You know, we cannot listen clearly because of your noise.” For a while, the students got quiet. But, the silence was just temporary one, and a few students resumed to talk. The setting of the seats was different from the usual lecture style. Five or six students’ tables faced each other. Therefore, a part of the students showed their back to the teacher, and these students appeared not to receive the teachers’ instruction carefully. This style seemed quite different from the usual style that the strict physical education teacher instructed, and the teacher appeared to have difficulty in controlling whole students. “Shut up, guys! When will you become quiet? How many times do you make me alarm on it?” Finally, the teacher screamed to the students. Though this strong alarm made the students silent for several minutes, the students’ chatting continued intermittently after the teacher’s word.

In this way, the IS period which let the students conduct autonomous learning activities could be quite vulnerable to the students’ low normative consciousness and their obstruction. Therefore, the teachers believed that it was essential to instill the normative consciousness on learning to all the students from the early stage of the middle school education to establish their IS activities as well as their teaching of the subject areas. For example, the next interview excerpt shows how one leader teacher interpreted the factor of the success of an IS activity (here, career experience) from the students’ writings on their work experiences.

Mr. Mukoyama: Last semester, our 2nd grade students finished the career experience. Each student wrote a short report on their experience in the work

places. We organized a part of the students' reports into a booklet and distributed it to all the students. So, this booklet was a summary of the students' experiences at the 60 workplaces of our neighborhood. While we picked up well-written reports for the booklet.....As for the students of this grade, their content of the writing were good on average. I rarely found the very short reports which just said "that was fun" or "that was very tough." From their writings at this time, I could feel the students' attitude that "I have to write" or "I have to learn."

Then, Mr. Mukoyama explained the background of this relatively good result from the students' career experience:

Mr. Mukoyama: I guess such students' awareness that "we should study" is well-established in these 2nd graders. And, it derives from...umm...discipline. It's a bit difficult to express, but, actually, it is based on the students' discipline. I think the awareness that "we should value our lessons" was strictly implanted in every student as they were in the 1st grade. The degree of such disciplining varies among the teachers' group of the grade. There is a grade which is a bit lenient to the students. But, our grade teachers might be too strict because our student guidance teacher, Ms. Nakamoto, is an extremely strict person, you know. She does not compromise about discipline. In the lessons, she can always strongly tell "your outfit is wrong!" or "you must value the class more!" something like that. I think our grade have many teachers like her. Therefore, there seems to be no atmosphere among the students that they underestimate the lessons. That's the issue of student guidance, but it has much to do with the matter of the IS.

As represented above, some interviewed teachers believed that the discipline students acquired was the prerequisite for implementing the IS. And, to establish such discipline, the teachers argued that they had to instill the discipline from the beginning of the middle school education. In other words, the 1st grade teachers' important task was to build the students' group that could diligently be involved in the learning. Ms. Nakamoto, who

was mentioned in the interview excerpt above, described the content of the disciplining at the 1st grade as following.

The researcher: I thought the students' attitudes to the gathering were very good.

Ms. Nakamoto: We instructed them as if we spend the whole 1st year for their discipline. For example, in a large gathering, I often screamed, "don't sit cross-legged," "look at the front," or "everyone, face up." We have continued to say those words since the beginning of the 1st grade. If we failed in this disciplining, they would become not to listen to our speech at all. Because we heard from the elementary school teachers that the freshmen included a lot of naughty kids, we conducted our student guidance from the outset of the 1st grade by the power of all the teachers of this grade. Though there are some problems individually, our grade's students can conduct some collective actions steadily. I think they understand they must not trouble the others.

Ms. Nakamoto believed that the relatively smooth and cooperative process of the IS activities in her 2nd grade was the result of the teachers' continuous efforts of the student guidance and discipline. However, to sustain the current settled status of the grade, they must continue their efforts of student guidance until the students' graduation. Finally, Ms. Nakamoto supplemented her explanation

Ms. Nakamoto: So, you know, this is the reality of our school. If our school's status were much calmer, we would have liked to engage ourselves in the various types of the IS activities by introducing more ingenuity. I also have a lot of things that I want to try for our students. But, it's not so easy to do it in our current situation.

She also mentioned that the curriculum revision of the 2002 increased teachers' workload and they were already very busy in their daily instruction for the students.

Ms. Nakamoto: To be honest, the introduction of the elective course and the IS doubled the teachers' workload on the instruction. In addition, because the government implemented "full five day schooling," now the teachers are required to complete everything for five days from Monday to Friday. By this change, our instruction of the subject areas does not have any breathing room. I hear a lot of teachers' voices that it's very hard. So, you know, I want to ask, "when can we prepare for all of these?"

In this way, the teachers who wanted to promote the IS, like Ms. Nakamoto, faced a dilemma between their motivation for improving the IS and the challenges from the students' behavioral status as well as the organizational problems mentioned above. As a solution to cope with this dilemma, some teachers supported the idea that they would have a specialist teacher on the IS who initiate the implementation of the IS of each grade.

Conflicting Views on the IS Activities

In the previous section, I described the challenges in implementing the IS in this large public middle school from the perspectives of the teachers. Taking these challenges into consideration, below I examine how the teachers view their IS activities, especially on their relevance on the students' development.

One finding from my fieldwork was that there was a substantial variance in the individual teachers' ways that gave meaning to their IS activities. To be more exact, the school included the pro-IS teachers, the anti-IS teachers, and the ones with no particular attitude. Historically, the pro-IS teachers led the development and improvement of the IS activities at a very slow pace, and the anti-IS teachers provided a brake on this change so that it did not become so radical. As a result, the pace of improving the IS activities was quite slow, and so the people outside the school who I met during this fieldwork (e.g., the faculties of the city education board or the teachers of other middle schools in the city)

had a common impression that “Ichu is not so enthusiastic on the IS.” Below, I would like to examine the conflicting views on the relevance of the IS by focusing the supportive views and the negative ones.

The Supportive Views of the IS.

The teachers who supported the IS were more likely to emphasize the advantages of the IS activities--that it could foster the students’ various abilities that the teachers could not develop it in the other periods of the curriculum. The first advantage of the IS that teachers mentioned was that the activities could foster students’ ability to present what they studied. The traditional Japanese middle school education, which mainly consists of the lecture-style lessons and other special activities that were usually conducted as a group, rarely provided opportunities for students to present their learning content. Rather, as was pointed out by the literature (Fukuzawa, 1994), in the middle school classroom, the students were quite passive and silent in the “en-masse” instruction. To the teachers who questioned this students’ passiveness in the classrooms, the periods of the IS were important opportunities to foster students’ independent expression.

Mr. Yasunari: Well, I think the ability to speak before the audience is a skill that can be fostered within the IS. If the students have more experiences with it, they can develop the ability. It’s significant to have such place for speaking because they rarely have opportunities to speak in public within the school. Especially in the core five subject areas, they sit down and listen to the lecture one-sidedly. Such status is the basic of the middle school life and it dominates their day. In such situations, it is difficult for them to state their opinions by putting their hands up. It may be easier for them to write the solutions of math problems on the blackboard or to read a passage of a textbook. In my opinion, to organize his or her own idea about a specific thing and to explain it explicitly as a representative of a group in a limited time will be extremely important

when they entered the adult society. Fostering the skill to express individual idea before the others in the periods of the IS is quite helpful for their future.

Ms. Masuda: What we call “zest for living” in the activities like IS is that the students investigate by themselves and exhibit [what they learned] by themselves. When we were children, I feel we rarely had such experience and just studied all the time. But, maybe partly because of such activities in the IS, they learn how to make presentations and seem good at expressing their opinions. This maybe the thing different from our age and I wonder it’s an outcome of the current education.

In addition to fostering the students’ ability of self-expression, some of the teachers pointed out the relevance of the IS was that students could develop communication skills through various hands-on activities within and outside the school. The sequence of Icchu’s IS included several group-work opportunities like the group research on Okinawa’s culture in the 2nd grade. Mr. Mukaiyama, a teacher leader, mentioned that, “I believe that it is important for them to interact, cooperate, and get the ability to connect each other.” Also, Ms. Masuda, who believed such social communication skill as an important element of “zest for living,” argued the importance of its development in the IS:

Ms. Masuda: Because the students have few opportunities to communicate with the outsiders like the community members...what kind of response they get when they talk with them...I think such way of communication is a part of zest for living. After all, when they will enter the society, they have to interact with various persons, right? I think they are learning such communication skill unknowingly in the activities [of the IS].

According to these teachers, the current students lacked such communication skills mainly because of decreased communication at home or in their neighborhoods. In brief,

they were concerned about students' lack of the opportunities for "socialization."

Especially, among the IS activities of Icchu, the teachers mentioned the importance of the career experience. Through the short but direct participation in the neighborhood workplaces, the students were expected to foster their ability to interact with the others in the community as well as learn the social mores and appropriate behaviors of the adult world. As for this career experience, even the teachers who were critical of the whole IS activities supported this experience because such hands-on learning of social mores and behaviors had much in common with the teachers' intention in their daily student guidance. Actually, in the pre-instruction of the career experience, the teachers spent a lot of time teaching the appropriate language and behaviors to the students, often letting them reflect on their usual disarray in the school life.

Finally, a few teachers argued that the IS was relevant because it fostered students' awareness of their career. As already described in Chapter 4, the central goal of the IS in Icchu was to let the students reflect on working and the way of living. Though there were not so many teachers who mentioned this aspect regarding the relevance of the IS activities, a few teacher leaders pointed out the contribution of the IS activities for that goal.

Ms. Nakamoto: It is important for students to have various experiences, to find their own aptitude, and to have the abilities to carve out their own life course. They need the experiences to have a goal and to think about the way to approach his or her own goal. Also, toward the career or the job that each of them wants to have, they have to think about the process required to approach it. It's not a kind of simple thinking like "That's Okay for me that I will go to the high school where I can go by my current grades. Rather, I expect the IS activities to provide the students with the hints for thinking how their enrollment to the high school will link to their future. In line with this thinking,

it's very important for them to have the career experience or to visit the "My Job Museum" in the periods of the IS.

At least a part of the teachers believed in the educational benefits of the IS in terms of the students' development on self-expression, social communication skill and awareness of career. As demonstrated in the excerpt from Ms. Masuda, some teachers thought those abilities or awareness were a part of the "zest for living" of the students, and their IS activities could provide a positive contribution to fostering it.

Teachers Critical of the IS Activities.

My fieldwork revealed that Icchu also included teachers who were critical of the IS implementation. Considering the large variety of teachers in this large school, the existence of such type of teachers is not surprising. One finding from my research was that there were some older teacher leaders who were critical of the IS activities (while there were also several older teacher leaders supportive to the IS).

For example, one of the teachers who was critical of the IS was Mr. Kitamura, who was a chief teacher (*shuseki kyoyu*) of Icchu. He played a central leadership role within the teachers' community. Mr. Kitamura had a conservative view of middle school education that emphasized the traditional model of teaching centering on the instruction of subject areas and the student guidance. According to the content that he mentioned in the interview sessions, he believed that the main goal of the middle school education was to insure that students acquired the basics for the social life, which included the basic academic abilities, moral, and the appropriate language and behaviors. He argued that the school should instill these basics regardless of the students' individuality through existing educational activities.

Mr. Kitamura: Such things like individuality or spontaneity should be fostered later, shouldn't they? In the learning of art of flower-arrangement, the art of tea ceremony, or the Japanese art of fencing, individuality is not emphasized at all at its first step. Everything starts from copying [of the master's way] uniformly... Every art has its own basics and doesn't emphasize the individuality or personality. If you stand the side of the advocating students' individuality from the first step, you will create self-indulgent children. Rather, giving more basic way of studying compellingly can foster the zest for living! (Mr. Kitamura)

For this teacher, who believed in the students' acquisition of the common basics, it was undesirable to create a space named as "IS," which promoted students' individuality within the disciplined curriculum. In particular, Mr. Nishumura felt it was difficult to accept the idea that the activities of the IS should be planned on the basis of the students' interests and concerns, which was often emphasized by the government.

Mr. Kitamura: While I know there are some good aspects in IS. However...the government's guideline firstly said our design of the IS activities should be based on the students' motivation, interest, and concerns. In other words, we must start various efforts from what the students want to do. That's the aim of the Education Ministry at the outset. But, that is a big mistake of the government. Because the kids just have the experience from their nursery school to the elementary school. With such a limited experience and knowledge, it's impossible to induce their interest or motivation. While we had a few years of trial and error in the implementation of the IS following that government's aim, ultimately I am convinced that it's impossible to design a productive activity exclusively based on the students' interest or concerns.

Also, to Mr. Kitamura, the preparation and the implementation of the IS was very time-consuming. Mr. Kitamura's impression of the IS was a "mountain of labor."

Another teacher leader who was critical of the implementation of the IS was Mr. Inohara, who was the curriculum director of the Icchu and had the most years of working

in the school. Mr. Inohara had coordinated the scheduling of the curriculum over the three grades, and also supervised the early stage of the teachers' curriculum development process of the IS in the past. Despite his past active involvement in developing the IS, Mr. Inohara was not so supportive to Icchu's present activities of the IS. Unlike Mr. Kitamura, Mr. Inohara did not criticize the concept of the IS itself and he liked the learning activities to let the students research and think by themselves. His point of dissatisfaction was that their current activities were not designed well enough to let the students act and think by themselves.

Mr. Inohara: Our teachers tried to make efforts so that the children can think by themselves independently. We designed it to let the students conduct research and think by themselves. It's good, but, the practices were not enough. In the middle school level, you know, it is difficult for the students to think independently. I think our IS method was not as effective as we aimed at the beginning.

Mr. Inohara argued that one main reason of the "weak" implementation of the IS in Icchu was lack of capacity in teachers.

Mr. Inohara: Ultimately, the reason is the teachers' lack of the capacity. If our teachers had such ability and idea for the IS, we had made more effective practices. However, we did not have such persons with such ability, and we could not do it so well. Rather, we utilize much of the periods of the IS for managing our existing school events.

Besides the issue of teachers' instructional capacity, Mr. Inohara also thought that the ambiguous policy goals of the IS provided uncertainty to the teachers who were involved in implementing the IS.

Mr. Inohara: While this is my personal opinion...we teachers aim at a certain goal, know the method, and then can improve the instruction. That's the way of teachers. However, we don't have capacity to instruct the things without a clear aim as well as the method. Therefore, in the reality, I think this explains why the implementation of the IS is not going so well in most schools. If we don't have a goal, we really have no idea what we should do.

Actually, as Mr. Inohara talked above, many teachers with whom I spoke during my fieldwork at the Icchu were not very confident regarding the goal of the IS as a whole. Sometimes, a few teachers and the principal asked me what the "real" goal of the IS was. Except for a few teachers, Icchu teachers felt somewhat uncertain of what was the general goal of the IS.

Certainly, through my classroom observations, I often had similar impressions regarding the sequence of the IS activities in Icchu. For example, in the 1st graders' inquiry activities on job, I could not comprehend what ability or skill the teachers tried to develop in students through the sequence of the activities. In other words, the pedagogical goal for students was quite uncertain. When I asked the teachers about the next step of the activities at a hall way or at the teachers office, many of them were often unsure because they conducted each step of the work by just following the direction of the few teachers in charge of the IS for their grade. The series of the activities probably included a variety of hands-on activities that were much richer than those in the past content of the curriculum. However, these activities were not sequenced under the specific goal shared by the teachers, and the teachers appeared not to have the attitude to promote the students' awareness toward a specific target. This is the problem of goal sharing as well as the problem of capacity for teachers to organize the IS activities.

Relevance on the Students Awareness on Career.

Despite the uncertainty of the IS's general goal, the school did have a clear, specific goal for their IS activities. As I repeatedly cited, the goal was to let the students reflect on the issue of job and way of life. In other word, career education is the overarching goal of the IS of Icchu. However, there were also a few teachers who criticized the IS because they questioned the relevance of the IS on fostering students' awareness of their future careers. Mr. Shinozuka's following statement represents this view:

Mr. Shinozuka: I think the theme to think about the career may be too early for the middle school students. Even in the case of the 3rd grades last year...to my question, "what will you want to do?" most of the students answered "nothing." Certainly, they don't see their surroundings, and don't know at all about what kinds of jobs there are. Then, and 2nd graders, and those activities do not fit the status of the students. though they go to the career experience...For example, when they come to the school, the job that they can do is just a part of the teachers' job. I am not sure what they can experience in such a situation. On the other hand, now the high schools were diversified trying to meet the different needs of the students. However, when the students come to the stage to think about which high school to enter, the achievement level comes to the first criteria to select. Considering such their criterion to select the high school, I don't think the IS activities of the 1st and 2nd grade have effect on the students' awareness of the career. The issue of the career may be too early for the 1st graders.

While I am not sure how many Icchu teachers agreed with Mr. Shinozuka, I also had the same impression from my classroom observation that many students were not particularly interested in studying about possible careers, at least in the 1st grade. The students were actively involved in the in-class activities using the commercially available materials. However, when they came to the stage where they researched about a specific

job in the library, or each of them wrote a small wall paper to organize their findings from the visit of “My Job Museum,” I observed many students who did not start their work and looked dazed, while others chatted with classmates. Also, in the work of “job lecturing,” the students of each class showed relatively good attitudes in listening to the speech of the invited adult workers. However, as they started to write their impression of the speech on the sheet, a lot of students did not write anything. Although the students’ lack of the ability to think independently or to write might be one of the reasons for the “weak” involvement in the activities, most of these 1st graders also appeared unenthusiastic in these work on exploring the issue of career.

Common Ground in the Teachers Views on the IS

Above, I showed the contrasting teachers’ views regarding the IS between the supportive ones and the critical ones. However, despite this contrast, there appeared to be common ground in their perspectives on the IS. It was a perspective that values the students’ experiences during the career experience. For example, even the conservative teachers who were critical of the IS in Iccchu also emphasized the importance of the career experience for the students’ development. The following is an excerpt from the interview with Mr. Kitamura.

Mr. Kitamura: Actually, I would like to let the students experience the work longer, maybe...about one week. But, it is difficult due to the problem in the status of the community workplaces who accept the students... Well, within the school, the students live only in the world of their friends at the same grade. However, when they go to the society through the career experience, they can find more diverse human relationships. And, you know, here you can find your position within the society more clearly.

The researcher: How do you think of the effect of the activity?

Mr. Kitamura: As for its effect, that's the matter of the heart...or of the invisible human development. So, it's difficult to answer. But, there should be their development of the mind. They also develop their attitude to the others and the sociability. In the workplaces, they must not be rude to the customers and have to take responsibility to some degree. They also learn the adults' attitudes towards their jobs. Even for the two days, they have a lot of things to learn. I believe such learning will become food for their mind and enrich them, though it's invisible.

The same view on the career experience was mentioned by other teachers.

Ms. Masuda: Because the students have few opportunities to communicate with the outsiders like the community members...what kind of response they get when they talk with them...I think such way of communication is a part of zest for living. After all, when they will enter the society, they have to interact with various persons, right? I think they are learning such communication skill unknowingly in the activities [of the IS].

Despite the differences in the attitudes to the IS activities, there appeared to be common ground in the teachers' views valuing the career experience. As seen in the discussions regarding the relevance of the IS by both Mr. Kitamura and Ms. Matsuzaka, the teachers assumed that their middle school students were not well-socialized within the limited school relationships, and then believed that the short, but direct, participation in the adult world in the career experience could support the students' socialization, especially in terms of their communication skill with the others. Also, they argued that their participation in work places could transmit the moral of the adult world to the students. In my view, this relevance of the career experience also seems to have the common ground with the teachers' pedagogical beliefs of student guidance and career guidance. The effort of the career experience could complement the teachers' practices of the student- and career guidance in a way that the traditional in-school instruction could not.

In other words, the career experience was an IS activity whose educational relevance was apparent on the existing cultural and institutional context of the middle school education.

Summary of Icchu

One of the characteristics of the teachers' views on the IS in Icchu was that there were multiple ways of give meanings to the IS activities. In this section, I elicited the multiplicity of Icchu teachers' views on the IS by the contrast of the perspectives of the teachers with supportive attitude to the IS and the ones with critical attitude. While one of the reasons of this multiplicity of the vision derived from the large number of the teachers of this school, it can also be attributed to the lack of school-level professional development and research to collectively discuss and understand the goal and method of their IS activities. In other words, Icchu's teachers did not have a shared IS pedagogy—common knowledge and philosophy for the implementation of the IS—like the one found in Nichu that I presented in the previous section. Due to this lack of professional development, although many teachers more or less believed that the implementation of the IS was necessary, at least a part of the teachers felt uncertain of the goal of their IS activities and unsure of the benefits of their activities for the students. In addition, the teachers also perceived various organizational challenges due to the large-school size on their implementation of the IS.

Despite that lack of the shared pedagogy on the IS, I found that there appeared to be two common views among the teachers regarding the IS. The first one was the perspective that valued the students' hands-on experience in the career experience. While there were multiple attitudes to the relevance the IS, many teachers emphasized the importance of this effort because it could support the students' socialization and building

of awareness of jobs in the way that the traditional instruction inside the school could not provide.

Another area of common ground for the teachers' views was the relationship of the student guidance efforts to the implementation of the IS. The teachers believed in the importance of the students' shared discipline at the grade-level as the foundation for the implementation of the IS as well as the teaching of the subject areas. Especially in the periods of the IS, the students were given more autonomy than in the lecture-style lessons of the subject areas, and so the success of the implementation of the IS more or less depended on the degree of the discipline that the students had already acquired. Interestingly, this teachers' belief was supported by the condition of the in-class group learning activities of the IS that I observed. In the 1st grade, where the teachers felt they had relatively more behavioral problems, the learning activities were chaotic and I observed many students who did not concentrate on the task of the period. However, in the 2nd grade, where the teachers had confidence regarding the results of their ongoing student guidance efforts, the students behaved more actively and cooperatively in various group activities.

Rokuchu— The Views of the IS in a “Tough” School

Overview

As the result of the questionnaire showed, Rokuchu teachers showed the lowest degree of the perceived importance of the IS, satisfaction of its activities, and the feeling of the effects on the students. Despite these lower teacher expectations for the IS, through my observations I found that the teachers were quite enthusiastic in implementing the IS. Also, according to my review of Rokuchu's history of the IS's development, the teachers

had been actively engaged in elaborating the work to let the students exercise their independent work in the IS periods.

Despite their enthusiasm in developing the IS, their IS activities had not developed into a specific sequence until the time of my investigation—unlike the other two case schools. While there were several reasons for this instability of the IS curriculum activities, one main reason appeared to be that teachers were unsure that their IS activities fit the students of Rokuchu. Reflecting the background of the neighborhood, the Rokuchu was a school with many student behavioral problems. The teachers had struggled in student guidance as well as organizing their lessons of the subject areas. Furthermore, some of the Rokuchu students considered the periods of the IS as “play time,” because the students were given more freedom than in the controlled atmosphere of the subject lessons. As a result, the places of the IS activities often became chaotic where the students were not motivated. Also, accompanied with the students’ high degree of behavioral problems, the teachers had various challenges in implementing their IS activities. There is a possibility that their perceived workload in preparing the IS might lessen their perception of valuing the IS within their curriculum.

In this section, I describe how Rokuchu teachers perceived their IS activities within the school setting where there were many problems with students’ guidance. Furthermore, I also examined how the problems of students’ behaviors and other challenges related to the school’s background influenced the teachers’ ways of implementing the IS—from the teachers’ perspectives.

Ambivalence of the Teachers Views on the IS

My research in Rokuchu revealed the ambivalent teachers' attitudes to their IS practices. As was shown in the history of the IS's development, the teachers were enthusiastic in creating IS activities. Also, in my interviews with the teachers, each of teacher admitted the unique contribution of the IS activities to the students' development. On the other hand, despite this enthusiasm in implementing the IS, Rokuchu teachers were generally dismayed in their current practices of the IS. More specifically, the teachers were quite uncertain of the educational benefits of their IS activities for students since many students were unmotivated during the IS activities. Below, I will focus on this ambivalence of the teachers regarding the IS based on the data from my fieldwork.

Teachers who Supported the IS.

In my interviews with the teachers, each interviewee mentioned the importance of the IS activities on the students' development which was not attained by the traditional middle school practices. For example, one female teacher argued the relevance of the IS as following.

Ms. Yamazaki: What I thought since I got involved in the IS was...I think the kids might think as if only the studying about the textbook of the subjects were the learning at school. Like the study of language arts or the study of math. When I was a student, I also learned at the school in that way. However, (in the periods of the IS) the students can see the links between the knowledge from various subject areas. That's the advantage of the interdisciplinary effort. The students may feel engaged when they find that they can utilize what they learned in their practice. Also, we can introduce several activities that we could not do in the old, lecture-style teaching. For example, the students can make a Powerpoint presentation before the audience about what they learned. When I was a child, I never did such a thing. I think such training is required for the present society because there are many opportunities where you have to convince the others effectively.

Ms. Yamazaki also mentioned that one interesting characteristic of the IS is the style of activity, where the teachers and students cooperatively build the learning process.

Ms. Yamazaki: You know, that's the basic (policy) of the IS that ... while the teachers as designers plan the activities, the teachers take the role of supporter of the students in the classrooms. We teachers are not the specialist on it as well. Therefore, with the students, we create the activities together. For example, when the students are making portfolio, we take the role of facilitator of the activities and can give advice to them watching the students' works. I think this kind of fun is the unique thing, only found in the IS.

What I found in the interviews with Ms. Yamazaki and other teacher leaders were some innovative ideas regarding the IS— for example, “interdisciplinarity of the IS” or “teachers’ role as facilitator”—in their discussions, which I did not observe in the interviews of other two cases.

Additionally, the teachers often emphasized that they needed to utilize the IS activities to enhance students’ independence or spontaneity in the learning. This awareness of necessity appeared to reflect their perception that the students were quite passive in the daily classroom learning and other school events. A few Rokuchu teachers mentioned their need to foster students’ ability of “self-decision” through the IS activities. Their emphasis on the “self-decision” appeared to be translated into their design of the IS activities. For example, during Rokuchu’s career experience in the 2nd grade, the teachers required the students to directly seek permission from the community workers for their acceptance of short internship. This way differed from the other two case schools, where the teachers allocated each student to the specific workplaces where the teachers had already made appointment. In addition to such emphasis on fostering students’

independence, there were other teachers who valued the students' involvement in various hands-on activities to enhance their social abilities.

Another characteristic of Rokuchu teachers' beliefs regarding their IS activities was that many of the teachers considered the IS as a separate element from the other parts of the curriculum. In other words, they thought that the IS held a unique place where they should conduct the activities that they could not do in the traditional classroom instruction or during other school events. For example, one female social studies teacher talked about her belief on the IS as following:

The researcher: What kind of students' ability do you want to foster through the IS?

Ms. Onohata: You know, the periods of the IS are the chances that you can try the things that were not constrained with the framework of the subjects. Therefore, essentially, the teachers should foster something that is different from the ability that the teaching of the subject areas fosters. In line with this thinking, we need to develop students' mutual relationships, their perspective to view their future, the ability to act independently, and so on... However, [this is] easier said than done.

As represented in this excerpt, the Rokuchu teachers' views on the IS were unique in that they believed their IS activities should foster what the other parts of the curriculum did not develop. This view was quite different from Nichu teachers' perspective which emphasized the integration of the IS into the whole curriculum under the same pedagogy.

Difficulties in Organizing the Classes of the IS.

While the teachers had high expectations on the role of the IS, the teachers also knew such expectations were betrayed by the realities of implementing the IS in most cases. The teachers often faced low student motivation in the activities as well as the

difficulties in controlling unruly students. For example, when I visited a class of the 2nd graders' IS where the students were making an individual newspaper to organize their inquiry on the job, the conditions of the students' work were as following:

When I walked into the hallway that faced the classrooms of the 2nd graders, each of which implemented the IS activities of the job inquiry, one physical education teacher stood alone outside his HR classroom. He looked somewhat embarrassed. The two doors of the classroom were closed. I asked him, "Hello. How is the activity going?" He answered, "Well...the inside is really chaotic. I am standing here so that nobody go out to other places." I said to him, "Really? Can I enter?" He answered "Yes, please go ahead. But, I would say the inside is like a zoo now." When I entered the room, the condition was chaotic. There were many students walking around the room and the students chatted loudly here and there. I barely identified some groups around the large paper, but only a part of the students got involved in the activities to design the wall paper. Many of the other students were chatting joyfully. Some of the students actively talked to me as I approached. I observed the similar situations at the other four classrooms. At one classroom, a group of the male students just chatted about a TV program on last night around a desk. One female music teacher, who got angry by their languid attitudes, screamed to the students with a flushed face. "Hey! Why do you guys do nothing?" One of the students answered "I didn't bring any material for the presentation". "Why did you bring nothing? Yesterday, I said to you that you have to prepare the material for today!"...At the only one classroom that was relatively calmer, the students were individually designing their own sheets to organize what they researched on job. One young English teacher instructed this class. He posted some good samples from the past work of the students on the blackboard so that the students could model them. While a few male students chatted, mostly the students were engaged in this work individually.

I also observed some grade-level gatherings as part of the IS activities. At the beginning of the gatherings, the teachers spent much time and energy to create the

students' atmosphere to listen to the speaker. A few teachers screamed "Hey, guys. Shut up!" to the students, and sometimes they took one or two noisy students to another place. In this way, in preparing for the IS activities, the teachers had to deeply consider not only the interesting composition of the activities but also how they control the level of disorder of the students for proceeding the activities smoothly. After each group activity of the IS, usually the teachers appeared really exhausted due to their workload to control the group activity of the students.

Then, how did the teachers perceive their IS activities? Did they believe their IS was beneficial to the students? To understand the answers for these questions, let me pick up the following excerpt from the teachers conversation that I observed in the teachers' office.

The researcher: How do you think of the role of the IS in this middle school?

Ms. Konno: I am working on it while still questioning whether it is beneficial to the students or not... Well, I think the activities were really good for the bright kids... you know, I guess that's good time for those kids who are capable of expanding their own work independently. However, on the contrary, it seems difficult for the kids with whom the teachers must intervene a lot.

The researcher: What's the difference between them?

Ms. Konno: I think the kids with poor achievement cannot easily find the activities interesting. Unlike the subjects like math or language arts, the IS does not have a clear goal line (of knowledge) that should be attained. It's the period where the kids independently investigate something, organize the knowledge, and acquire the skill to present it. In this type of activity, you know, the students often can find the attainment of their work until they completed some output, like "Oh! I could make good wallpaper!" It takes a bit longer time than the thing like mastering a calculation. But, the low-achieving students are not so

easy to be satisfied with it. To make those kids proceed (in the IS), the teachers have to craft each step of their activities deliberately. I guess that's the tough task.

In this way, these teachers believed there was a difference in the students' attentiveness in their involvement in the periods of the IS. They thought that the students who lacked the motivation and skill to advance their learning activities independently were left behind. Especially, lower achieving students appeared not to be motivated in the IS. As mentioned above, one of the problem of low motivation in the IS activities for the low-achieving students was the less-visible results in the IS when comparison with subject area lessons.

Ms. Konno: You know, even if you tried hard in the IS, you could not get any increase of the test scores. For example, if a poor kid increased the score by 20 or 30 points in a test, he might have thought he got it. However, in the IS, there is no pass mark. So, the result is invisible for them. We need to consider how they get the sense of attainment by their small progress in the activities...like becoming able to organize the information or to improve the skill to use PC. Therefore, our challenge is how to make our IS so that the low-achieving kids can perform. It's really difficult.

Also, as for the status of the students' work in the periods of the IS, one teacher mentioned.

Mr. Wakuyama: The degree of the involvement of the students depends on where it is group work or individual work. In the group work, there are some roles for the individual students. Some of the students who don't like to consider such roles or how to cooperate with the other students may decrease their motivation in such work...It is difficult for the present students to work independently or spontaneously. It's really difficult.

The researcher: Do you mean the teachers need to support the students a lot?

Mr. Wakuyama: Yes. A part of the students say “it’s not interesting,” “I can’t do it,” or “I don’t like it.” This type of kids is the worst pattern (in their involvement) among the students. Though they are only small percentage of the students...10 or 15 % of the kids at most, these kids are really difficult to approach. They appear to think “for what purpose do I have to research it all the way?” and do not show their interest in our activities.

In this way, to advance their IS activities without leaving them behind, the teachers had to consider and give various supports for the low-achieving students. In sum, the Rokuchu teachers’ central problem in the IS was how do they implement it in the situation where many of the students have basic academic challenges as well as in the motivation in learning activities.

Ms. Konno: I’m sorry to mention the negative aspects a lot. However, tough schools are more likely to have such problems. In my previous school, which had more students with a strong academic foundation, most of the students could continue to perform some independent research well every week.....But, this school is really tough. We face the challenges in the students’ basic learning motivation or concentration. When we try to let the students inquire into something, the students says “I have no idea” to us right away. Or, we face the questions like “how can I read this?” and “what’s the meaning of this?” from them. There might be a problem of basic academic abilities before starting such inquiry.

The teachers discussed in detail about the situation of group work in the IS. While the following excerpt from teachers’ conversation is long, it is helpful to understand their perspectives regarding the realities of the IS activities.

Ms. Tanaka: (The students are often) saying “what can I do?”...many of them look dazed.

Ms. Konno: First, they ask “what will we do?” So, I say “do this!” and “do that next!” In this way, I guess half of the students cannot go ahead without such step-by-step advice, right?

Ms. Tanaka: I believe one-third of the students can advance by themselves, and another one-third can follow the activities if the others surrounding them were working. Then, the last one-third was the kids never do anything (without the teachers’ intervention). Is this correct?

Ms. Konno: You know, this is the reality for us. This is why all the teachers are skeptical of the relevance of the IS. We sometimes say, “it might be better that our kids achieve more in the lessons of the subject (not in the periods of the IS).” Actually, there are so many kids that make us convinced of this saying.

Ms. Tanaka: Exactly.

Ms. Konno: For example, I sometimes wonder these kids should spend more time in mastering calculation in math.

Ms. Tanaka: We have a lot of things that we want the students to learn before they dive into the periods of the IS.

Ms. Konno: So, I think it might be good to use the periods of the IS for fostering students’ basic academic abilities.

The researcher: Really?

Ms. Konno: That’s the real intention in our minds.

Ms. Tanaka: I believe the students should acquire adequate academic abilities to enrich their activities of the IS. They also need to learn common sense.

Ms. Konno: That’s right. I believe most teachers of tough schools like us would agree with this idea.

As mentioned in this excerpt, the teachers faced the realities of Rokuchu in that they have few self-starters in the classroom. Consequently, the teachers must “haul” the students to

establish their “independent inquiry” in the IS. The teachers attributed the main cause of this contradictory situation to the students’ lack of basic academic abilities. Therefore, while they believed the activities of the IS were important, they thought it was better for the students if they spent more time in learning subject areas rather than in the periods of the IS. Actually, after this conversation, these teachers mentioned that some schools where their friends worked utilized the periods of the IS for the supplementary lessons of the core subject areas like math or English.

Problems to Prepare the IS Activities to Students with Low Motivation.

As described above, the teachers of Rokuchu believed that it was difficult to design and implement the IS in a manner that motivated the low-achieving students. These low-achieving students required more supports than the self-starting students. Consequently, when the students participated in some projects under a specific theme, each class needed more teacher support to conduct these activities. However, within the public school system, the limited numbers of teachers forced them to instruct dozens of students in the IS activities regardless of the school condition. Ms. Konno argued that “we should have more staff to conduct our activities of the IS.”

Thanks to the limited numbers of teachers to take care of the students’ projects in the IS, the teachers said their instruction tended to become didactic and teacher-initiated. More specifically, if the teachers tried to let the students complete the work by the limited staff and time, the teachers had to prepare well-designed steps for the sequence of the activity. Also, they had to encourage and lead all the students toward the goal rather than giving the students full autonomy.

Mr. Harada: In sum, we don't have the time to let the students think. There is no "playing catch" between the teachers and the students on the making process (of the projects). We are forced to one-sidedly direct the students to the predetermined form saying "Hey, start!"... You know, our way of students' research is a kind of inquiry just for their presentation, and so the students participated in the activities under the predefined theme and method.

Mr. Harada also explained that another reason of this "one-sided" approach of the IS was the teachers' lack of time to collaboratively design the activities.

Another aspect of the problems in implementing the IS was the poor student behavior in the periods of the IS. For an instance, when I observed the classes of the IS activities in the 2nd grade, there were many students who did not concentrate on the group work. I saw many students who chatted with the other students, ones walking around the back of the classroom, ones drawing graffiti on the other student's desk, or the ones who read a novel or prep book for the subject. Teachers differed in how to cope with these aberrations. While a few teachers were quite strict with students, it appeared difficult for one teacher to constantly crack down on all of the disruptive behavior. This method of control might totally interrupt the activity during the limited hours, as well as exhaust the teachers.

The students' unruly behavior also happened during the IS assemblies. According to the teachers, the students attitudes to listening to the other students' presentations of what they learned in the IS were quite bad. In the past, documents of the teachers' meetings after the IS activities, there was a record that one teacher proposed an opinion that "there were some students who gave a strange sound." Even in my visit of the whole-school gathering during the Rokuchu festival, I observed the teachers loudly warning the students not to speak during the presentation.

Also, the students' bad manners occurred during their activities outside the schools. Ms. Onohata, a social studies teacher, lamented their bad behaviors of the students when they visited the Korean Town as the part of the IS activities on the international issue. "Our kids are quite noisy in the trains...they were just going to Korean Town for sightseeing!" Another teacher mentioned the Korean Town visit as following;

The researcher: What are the challenges for the teachers to implement the IS?

Mr. Wakuyama: Well, what I recently think as a challenge is the increase of the kids that don't know their manners. For example, in the case of Korean Town visit, the past students more or less shared the awareness that they entered the place that had a distinctive culture or life style. And, when they interviewed the persons in the shops of the Korean Town, they were respectful. However, our recent kids appeared to think they are just going to shops. They think they are not rude on say anything to the clerks, because they paid to the shops...Such lack of manners is one of our challenges in the IS.

This kind of poor student behavior also shaped the teachers' preparation of the hands-on activities outside the school. For example, in the career experience and the hands-on activities regarding the social welfare, students were accepted by many neighborhood agencies. However, due to the bad behaviors of some Rokuchu students in the past, there were some neighborhood workplaces and welfare agencies that refused to accept Rokuchu students for their internship. Ms. Yamazaki, a female English teacher, mentioned the past difficulty in recruiting neighborhood welfare agencies to permit the students' two-day experience of social welfare.

Ms. Yamazaki: One difficult point in the implementation of the welfare experience is the acceptance of the community welfare facilities. We need to

find the places that accept more than 100 students for two days. There are problems of the students' manners. Because there are a lot of aged people in those places, as well as the issue of privacy, there are some places that refuse our internships.

This kind of trouble in coordinating the community agencies for the IS increased the teachers' workload.

Due to the variety of the challenges, including the students' disorder in the classroom implementation of the IS, the teachers believed that their limited numbers were not enough to fully implement their IS activities.

Ms. Konno: To conduct the IS, especially caring for the low-achieving kids, the challenge is the staff. The Education Ministry should provide more help on it without just saying "do it!" ... You know, the tough schools commonly have such needs on staff in order to improve the quality of the learning activities.

Ms. Tanaka: Exactly. They are just saying "go ahead" without ensuring the staff as well as the facility and the money.

In addition to this issue of the staffing, the teachers also had the crucial problem of inadequate time to prepare their IS. Because of the increased time spent for coping with the students' daily behavioral problems, the teachers were short of the time to collaboratively discuss the content of the IS.

The researcher: Do you have enough time to discuss the IS?

Ms. Wakuyama: I would say it's almost "zero" at least until just before the implementation. A few years ago, we conducted them in an intensive-scheduling way. We often said "what shall we do?" when the week was approaching closely.

In Rokuchu, this lack of the planning time was caused partly by their coping with the behavioral problems in the school. It also deprived them of the opportunities to evaluate the IS activities after implementation as well as to share the practices across the grades. Also, the lack of such opportunities made building the common, sequenced program of the IS very difficult.

The Past IS activity Highly Evaluated by the Teachers

In this way, the teachers were pessimistic regarding their implementation of the IS due to the multiple challenges. Certainly, as I described, many teachers recognized the importance of the IS activities to the students. Yet, the teachers faced various hurdles in their efforts to implement the IS as they envisioned. Mainly due to the weak student engagement in the IS, at least some teachers believed that it might be better to utilize the IS periods for the acquisition of the basic academic abilities rather than conducting the current projects.

Then, did Rokuchu teachers flatly deny their practices of the IS? The answer is probably “No.” There were a part of the teachers who positively evaluated a part of their practices of the IS. According to the data from the interviews, some teachers believed that the practices of the “experience of welfare” were beneficial to their students. As I have previously explained, this effort provided the students with the opportunity of a two-day internship in the neighborhood welfare agencies (mainly for the aged people).

Ms. Konno: At the first day, the staff of the facilities provides an orientation for the students, and then the students participate in caring for the customers and other activities. While the majority of the students went to the welfare facilities for the elderly, others went to the hospitals. Some of the students were accepted to the facilities for the blind. The activities differ among the places. Some students talked with the elder persons by supporting their wheelchairs. The kids

who went to the hospitals were given opportunities to help care for the patients. For example, the students helped the patients have a meal or played with them in the recreation activities.

The teachers who supported this effort believed that the direct interaction between the students and the elderly in the neighborhoods gave what their students needed for their social development. Below, I highlight some of the teachers' voices who evaluated this "experience of welfare."

Ms. Konno: The kids who came back from the welfare experience pleasantly discussed their communication with the elderly. They showed good faces filled with the sense of accomplishment. Even the naughty kids willingly talked about what they did in the welfare facilities. So, I believe the actual place has the power to really develop the students. There are a lot of things that the students learn from the place. In the pre-instruction lessons of this effort, even the low-achieving students were strongly engaged and tried to follow the rules... Therefore, if possible, we want to have longer stays in the facilities without limiting it to two days.

The researcher: Why do you think the activities are good for students?

Ms. Konno: I think the welfare experience has an advantage that the career experience did not have. In the welfare facilities, the students met the people that require the other persons' various help. By providing help to the elderly, I think the students get a sense of accomplishment. This may be an experience that they usually cannot have at the school... This is an effort that the periods of the IS enables us to implement.

Another teacher also positively evaluated the welfare experience as following;

Ms. Yamazaki: Now, most of the kids live in nuclear families, and rarely communicate with the elderly. However, in the experience of the welfare facilities, even a student who previously said he did not want to go there, could feel happy by getting a lot of "thank you" from the elderly by their help. Some

students were cherished by the customers as if the students were their grandchild. The students could please the elderly only by making a small “origami.” In this way, this welfare experience provides us with the precious opportunity that enables us to see the world that we rarely touch in our daily lives.

In addition to these teachers’ evaluations, a few teachers emphasized the importance of the welfare experience in terms of learning about human rights. The students’ experience in the welfare and medical facilities can deepen the students’ understanding of the various hurdles for the daily lives of the elderly and disabled people. For example, some students could understand that even a small gap on the road could become a large barrier for people who use a wheelchair. The teachers assumed that the students become aware of the problems of the living through the hands-on activities with the people in need of special care.

As above, during the welfare experience, the teachers could find the students’ active engagement in the activities that they rarely observed in other inquiry-oriented activities of the IS. The teachers positively evaluated this welfare experience because the contacts with the elderly or the disabled could more or less facilitate the students’ social development. However, this effort was not continued during my research due to the flexibility of the program of the IS at Rokuchu.

Difference of the Learning Condition among the Grade-levels

The description of Rokuchu teachers’ perspectives on the IS above may give the readers the impression that their implementation of the IS largely failed for their students. Actually, when it came to the issue of the IS, the teachers always expressed their pessimism on their practices. However, my observation of the practices of the IS revealed

that this was not the entire story. The condition of the students' engagement as a whole depended on the status of the students of each grade-level.

Certainly, at the time of my fieldwork, the condition of the 2nd graders implementing the IS was the instance that supported the teachers' pessimism. For example, in the students' work on the issue of job, each classroom was chaotic with many students who deviated from the learning activities. To make the students concentrate on the work, the teachers often berated the students who chatted or walked around in the classroom. There were some students who said to me, "why did you select this kind of disturbed school for your research?" or "I want you to recommend that you will not become a teacher in the school like this. It's really stressful." My observations were like the one teacher comment that "the students thought of the periods of the IS for their 'play time'."

However, in another building of the school, which accommodated the 1st graders, there was quite a different situation in the IS periods. The students were more enthusiastically and cooperatively engaged in the work designed by the teachers than the 2nd graders. The following is an excerpt from my fieldnotes:

As soon as I opened the door of one classroom of the 1st graders, I heard the cheerful voices of the students. The students were broken into seven groups, and the students of each group were engaged in designing a wall paper. Some groups discussed on the arrangement of the pictures or the draft of the articles around the large white paper on the desk. On the paper, I saw some pictures that the students took of the Korean town and the rough sketch for the wall paper drawn on another small sheet. There were other groups that had already started to design the paper on the floor while crouching around it. At all the groups, the students talked loudly and joyfully on the design of the wall paper. Because the students actively worked in every nook and cranny in the classroom, it was

really difficult for me to walk around and observe them. Most of the students did not notice this “stranger’s” (me) visit to the classroom until I approached each student quite closely. When they noticed me, a part of the students welcomed me and answered to my questions in a shamefaced way. One HR teacher was also walking around the groups and monitoring them. She sometimes stopped and gave advice on the design of the wall paper. Because each of the students proactively cooperated in the work, the teacher appeared quite relaxed and calm. She only had to give encouraging words to a few students who looked dazed at each group. Also, she left the classroom for a several minutes probably to conduct some business. Even during this temporary leave, the students continued to work together on making their wall papers... While I observed the other four classrooms of the 1st grade in the same period, I found the students of the other classrooms also cooperatively worked for this task in the same way.

As above, I observed the students’ active engagement in the IS activities of the 1st grade. At the end of this series of the IS activities on the learning of Korean Culture, each group of the students showed a presentation at each HR classroom. Using the wall paper that they made, the students smoothly presented what they researched on the culture. The students in the audience were quite calm unlike the past situation that I heard from the teachers in the interviews. Actually, the good manner of these 1st graders was not just in this case of the IS. According to the school faculty, the 1st graders showed good attitudes in the subject area lessons. One school administrator of Rokuchu said, “Though I don’t know why, the building of the 1st looks like ‘another school.’”

This difference of the students’ attitudes in the periods of the IS between the 1st graders and the 2nd graders was a phenomenon that was similar to the situation that I observed in Icchu. As I showed previously, there was a similar difference of the students’ attitudes to the IS among the grades. While it is not easy to give a complete explanation

for such difference, one lesson from this phenomenon is that the success in implementing the IS depended on the characteristics of the students as a group, especially their collective focus on learning. In the IS periods, the students were given more autonomy than in the subject area lessons. However, the degree of the students' engagement in this autonomous space was partly influenced by the degree of the discipline on learning that was acquired by the students. From another angle, the time of the IS might be more vulnerable to the students' behavioral problems than that of the subject areas.

Summary of Rokuchu

The schools like Rokuchu is usually called as “shindoi (tough) school” (*shindoi gakko*), which means the schools had challenges in the aspect of the students' behaviors. My investigation here focused on the teachers' views of the IS in a “shindoi gakko.” Probably, the energy that Rokuchu teachers spent on the IS activities was no less than that of the teachers in Nichuu or Icchu. Also, in some parts their IS activities, Rokuchu teachers' ingenuity outpaced the activities of the other two case schools. However, as shown in the questionnaire, the Rokuchu teachers' self-evaluation of the IS activities were the lowest among the three schools. My research revealed at least one part of the reasons for this low evaluation of the IS: Many of the teachers had to confront the poor engagement of the students in the IS periods and were quite uncertain of the benefits of its practices for the students. The perceived challenges in implementing the IS derived from the students' behavioral problems also appeared to strengthen such pessimism regarding the IS. Considering the balance between the relevance of the IS and its workload, some of the teachers believed that it might be better to invest their time and energy on the instruction of the subject areas rather than on the IS.

One thing that I think was a problem in Rokuchu teachers' implementation of the IS was that teachers' viewed the activities of the IS as separate from the other elements of their curriculum. More specifically, the teachers thought they should implement something new in the periods of the IS (e.g., independent inquiry or group work), and especially this was quite different from the teachers' belief at Nichu. This collective belief of the IS could be a strong motive for the teachers' ingenuity in the design of the IS. However, at the same time, partly due to this teachers' innovative thoughts on the IS, their practices appeared not to fit well with the students' needs. More specifically, many of the students did not catch up with the relatively advanced ideas of the IS activities and the teachers' expectations. It may be better that the teachers should discuss more appropriate adaptation of the IS for the students, especially those with low-achievement.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

My analysis of the three case middle schools elicited the multiple aspects of the realities of the middle schools' implementation of the IS. The findings were acquired just from my three case schools, which were selected from the schools of Osaka that had unique cultural background in Japan (MacDonald, 2005). Due to the characteristics of this qualitative inquiry, the generalization of these findings is difficult (Merriam, 1998). However, considering the common institutional and cultural backgrounds that these Japanese public schools shared, the findings from my three case schools can provide unique and important preliminary hypothesis to explain the realities of the implementation of the IS, especially, the plight the middle school teachers faced in their practices of the IS. Here, as the conclusion of this thesis, I will reexamine the findings from my analysis in line with the four main research questions of this study.

The Characteristics of the Implemented IS and the Roles of the IS in the Curriculum

Let me start my reflection on the cases from the first two research questions regarding the implementation of the IS. How was the IS implemented in the middle schools? What were the roles of the IS activities implemented in the schools?

The first important point regarding the implementation of the IS in this study was that at least a part of the teachers of the three case schools actively tried to understand the government's idea of the IS and to translate it to their educational practices. While there were a variety of teachers' attitudes to the implementation process, many teachers diligently participated in this implementation process without disregarding the policy. Actually, by the partial revision of the national curriculum guideline in 2003, the schools

were obligated to hand in their plans of the IS to the district administration (See Chapter 1). Therefore, they could not totally ignore the implementation of the IS. In this case study, each case school constructed their present activities of the IS considering their prior educational activities, the background of the community, and the condition of the students. Despite the limited resources for the development, a part of the school teachers of each case school initiated this school-level curriculum reform by taking the role of “change agent” (Marsh et al, 1990). Such activism and strong interest in the sociocivic projects is really noteworthy because it was autonomous work of curriculum development by teachers who believed the relevance of the curriculum change to the students. On the other hands, the role of the school administrative (especially, the school principal) was not so prominent in this process and they indirectly supported the development process by coordinating the support from the community members and other outside resources.

As described in details in Chapter 5, the real content of the implemented IS activities at each school was a mixture of the newly introduced activities and the old educational activities of the school. In the words of Tyack and Cuban (1995), the introduction of the IS was partly incorporated into the existing “grammar of schooling.” However, it also partly changed the “grammar” by producing the room for new types of learning activities. First, let me summarize the aspects of the “change” of the grammar of schooling by the introduction of the IS. By utilizing the periods of the IS and responding to the government’s direction, the schools tried to build several learning projects on some sociocivic themes including welfare, international understanding, working, environment, and so on. Under these themes, the teachers introduced various learning activities like

students' self-inquiry on internet or other materials, group-discussion, presentation. Also, the schools actively introduced the activities that involved the students' direct participation in the local community agencies like the career experience or welfare experience. These changes observed in the three cases were coherent with the findings from the fieldwork of MacDonald (2006).

This introduction of new type of learning activities that were rarely implemented in the traditional school curriculum appeared to reflect the needs that at least a part of the teachers felt for their students. In the interviews, some teachers emphasized the importance of the students' self-inquiry and presentation due to the students' usual passiveness because of the lecture-style teaching in the schools. Also, some teachers valued the students' involvement in the community agencies in the opportunity of career experience or the welfare experience to facilitate students' socialization as well as foster their awareness of the career and the ways of living. As I described in the previous chapter, when the teachers explained the relevance of the IS activities, they tended to emphasize the students' social and moral development rather than their cognitive aspects. This emphasis on social and moral aspects of the students' development was also consistent with the culture of Japanese teaching that the literature on Japanese education has already pointed out (Lewis, 1996; Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999; Tsuneyosi, 2000; Wray, 1999). On the other hand, especially in Nichu, the teachers tried to utilize the practices of the IS for "group-building" of the students to support the students' adjustment to schooling and to prevent the disturbance of the school.

As MacDonald (2006) has depicted, the IS also changed of the grammar of schooling that the schools came to develop wide partnerships with the community

agencies in order to implement the various learning activities. Actually, the case schools investigated in this study developed and sustained various network with many community agencies to implement their IS activities.

However, these changes were not comprehensive in each of the three schools. A part of the periods of the IS were “conveniently” utilized for the existing educational activities of the schools. Here is the “incorporated” aspect of the introduction of the IS in the grammar of schooling. For example, due to the schools’ preparation for the high-school entrance exam, many of the 3rd grade IS periods were utilized for the traditional career guidance activities or the preparation for school events like school excursion. In other words, responding to the institutional context of high school entrance exam, the 3rd graders were rarely involved in the new types of learning activities that I introduced above. Even in the 1st and 2nd grades, at least a part of the periods of the IS were utilized for students’ preparation for the traditional school events like sports festival. This utilization of the IS for the existing school events was the crucial aspect of the middle schools’ “adaptation” of the periods of the IS.

My in-depth analysis of the IS revealed that many parts of the IS were coupled with the teachers’ practices of the student guidance and the career guidance. For example, the teachers spent a lot of time for teaching the appropriate manners, language, and appearance in the adult society as part of the pre-instruction for the career guidance. Furthermore, my analysis revealed that, the middle school teachers usually focused on the aspects of students’ moral and social development in their IS practices rather than the cognitive aspects of the students (e.g., development of knowledge or acquisition of specific learning skills). This teachers’ emphasis was similar to the one that they applied

to their daily student guidance activities (LeTendre, 1994; Sakai & Shimahara, 1995; Tsuneyoshi, 2000).

In addition, many periods of the IS activities were used to stimulate students' awareness and knowledge on the issue of careers and future life course. The literature on Japanese middle schools showed the significance of this career guidance (*shinro shido*) as one of the central tasks of the middle school education (LeTendre, 1995; Shimizu, 1992). Including the activities of students' inquiry on job, the excursion to My Job Museum, the career experience in the neighborhood, and the more direct learning opportunities in the 3rd grade, a substantial part of the IS periods of each school were used for students' learning of their career options. A few teachers doubted the educational effects of these efforts on the students' awareness of the career, because many students still tended to select their high school to enroll with their test scores. However, those efforts regarding career were intentionally arranged to let the students reflect on the issue of their career and to motivate them on the high school entrance exam. In other words, these activities were closely coupled with the traditional practices on career guidance.

In sum, a large part of the introduced periods of the IS was adapted to the middle schools' existing cultural practices activities of student guidance and career guidance. While the degree of such adaptation varied, the practices of the three schools were quite similar especially in the latter half of the three years program of the IS.

How Did the Teachers Perceive the Challenges to Their Implementation of the IS?

As I explained in Chapter 1, several studies showed many teachers were pessimistic regarding the implementation of the IS (Education Ministry, 2005; Kurebayashi et al, 2006; Mimizuka et al, 2003). The surveys showed the teachers held

various challenges on the implementation of the IS. One of the aims of this multiple case study was to provide a more careful exploration of this problem in the teachers' implementation of the IS. Also, the comparison of the cases revealed the schools had both common and different problems in implementing their IS activities across the schools.

Each school's IS development process involved the teachers' collective sense-making of the government's idea of the IS. As Spillane (2004) explained, such sense-making of policy itself is resource-intensive. To find the appropriate way to translate a policy to the school's instructional practices, the school had to bring various available resources (time, material, human capital, and etc) to the collaboration. The process also required the long-term back and forth between the planning and the classroom instruction.

Among the three schools, Nichu had several research opportunities on curriculum development where the teachers needed to cooperate to develop and reexamine their IS activities for a few years. These opportunities helped the school to concentrate the resources including their time for curriculum development and activated some teachers' leadership on the collaboration across the grade-levels.

However, the opportunities of the administration's assignment of the curriculum development research were limited to just a part of the schools. Most of the public schools like Icchu and Rokuchu had to plan and implement their IS activities without getting such special opportunity. The teachers of these schools were annoyed by their scarce of the time to collaboratively design the IS. Also, their development process faced the strong barriers of the grade-level sectionalism.

According to my interviews and observations, the teachers still had inadequate resources in implementing the IS. In particular, the lack of the time was crucial in

preparing the activities in their really busy work schedule. As literature indicates *time* is the most important material resource for school-level curriculum development, and its lack become a large barrier for the teachers' collaboration for the development (Gamoran, et al, 2003; Marsh et al, 1990; Tanner & Tanner, 2007). In Rokuchu, teachers' daily coping with the students' behavioral problems appeared to deprived the teachers' time to concentrate on IS preparation. This can explain why Rokuchu teachers' perceived challenge on "assurance of time" was prominent among the three schools in the survey result of Chapter 4.

As another aspect of "assurance of time," because of the large number of the teachers at each grade, Icchu teachers had frequent difficulty to set a whole-grade teachers' meeting. Also, the case of Icchu proposed other issues regarding lack of resources, which included the limited in-school resources (computer room or library) for the students' inquiry and presentation.

Furthermore, in the interviews, some of the teachers also mentioned they were insecure on implementing the IS due to their perceived lack of the capacity to plan and instruct the new learning activities in the IS periods. Actually, except for Nichu, the teachers were not given intensive professional development opportunities implement the IS.

Finally, my analysis of the data showed that the teachers, especially in Icchu and Rokuchu, mentioned that the students' behavioral problems were also a crucial challenge for implementing the IS. The teachers of the three schools believed that the students' sufficient motivation and discipline for learning were the basic conditions for operating a variety of learning activities in the periods of the IS. In other words, the teachers believed

such basic motivation and discipline were the “readiness” for conducting new types of learning of the IS. If the students did not acquire such “readiness” for the learning, the periods of the IS were easily disturbed by the behaviors of the students who were not interested in it.

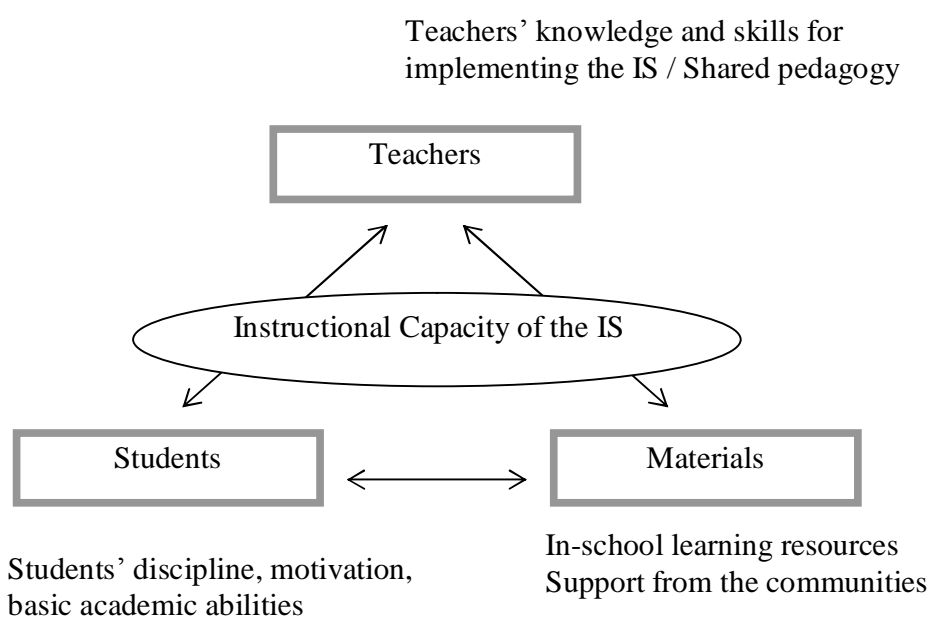
In sum, these findings regarding teachers’ challenges in implementing the IS implies that the conceptual framework of “instructional capacity” proposed by Cohen and Ball (1999) can be useful to view the conditions for establishing the activities for the IS. Cohen and Ball (1999) argued that the “instructional capacity” is based on the three essential contexts that were “teacher,” “materials,” and “students.” These contexts interact each other and shape what can be instructed by the teachers. The interesting point of this framework was that the instructional capacity –what can be taught— was determined not only by the teachers’ teaching abilities and the materials available for teaching but also by the context of the students (e.g., students’ motivation or students’ socioeconomic background). Actually, the previous research literature on interdisciplinary teaching (e.g., Beane, 1993; Jacobs, 1989; Vars, 1993) has not paid careful attention to this influence of the students’ context and exclusively focused on the issue of the other two contexts.

My comparative analysis of the three case schools sheds light on the influence of this context of “students.” Teachers were keenly aware of the relationship between their practices of the IS and the students’ behavioral conditions. Actually, in Rokuchu, teachers were quite pessimistic regarding their IS practices due to the classroom disorder that derived from the students’ lack of motivation and basic academic skills. Similar concerns were held by a part of the teachers in Icchu, too.

However, my case study also indicated that the teachers believed that what they could instruct in the IS periods was not one-sidedly determined by the condition of the students. Rather, the teachers of Nichu tried to utilize the activities of the IS to shape the context of the students themselves. More specifically, Nichu teachers, with their unique IS pedagogy, tried to form the cooperative learning community by their practices of “group-making” and “empowerment.” In brief, one of the finding of this study was that it illuminated the dynamic relationship between the teachers’ practices of the IS and the issue of the students’ context.

To summarize, the teachers’ challenges in their implementation of the IS are categorized into the three types of “contexts” depicted in the framework of Cohen and Ball (1999). I summarized those challenges in the Figure below.

**Figure 7.1. The factors determining the instructional capacity of the IS
(Based on the framework of Cohen & Ball (1997))**



*What Kind of Influence Did the Introduction of the IS Have on the Middle School
Education?*

Above, I have described what the implementation of the IS looked like in the three case schools as well as the challenges that the teachers of each school faced. As I have argued, the content of the IS was the mixture of the new activities and the old activities reflecting the teachers' needs of middle school education and the limited resources. Such a mixture of the new things and the old was the result of the several years of teachers' adaptation of the IS into their school setting. Some researchers (e.g., Cave, 2008) bemoan this small size of the change that the middle school education saw by introducing the IS as a whole. As a result, the modest change of the ways and themes of learning appeared to be the nature of implementing the IS in the middle schools for a decade.

Despite the small size of change, the introduction of the IS periods certainly created a variety of the new learning themes and activities into the traditional rigid middle school curriculum. While the other learning activities were regulated by the national curriculum guidelines and the high school entrance exam (Fukuzawa, 1994; LeTendre, 1994; Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999), the IS periods continued to be a room in the middle school curriculum where teachers could freely bring their ingenuity for making their educational activities. The two of the case schools (Nichu and Icchu) had a stable sequence of the three years' program of the IS, while Rokuchu experienced fluidity especially in a part of their IS program. Even in the former two schools, the teachers still continued to bring their ingenuity in the details of the activities, and the activities

appeared to slightly differ every year under a similar theme. While the periods allocated for the IS within the total instructional hours were not large, the IS periods were still a dynamic space with little governmental regulation.

Through my analysis of the data, I noted that a substantial part of the IS was coupled with the existing practices of student guidance and career guidance in the middle schools. However, of course, this does mean more than that a part of those past practices were just conducted in the periods of the IS. For example, in career guidance, the schools adopted various students' opportunities for a short internship and self-inquiry with materials that let the students consider the issue of career selection more independently.

My investigation, however, revealed that a large part of the middle school teachers still questioned the relevance of their IS activities. As my survey revealed, a large number of teachers in the three case schools did not feel that their IS activities provided sufficient educational benefits to the students, particularly in light of the time and energy that they spent on implementation. While the teachers held a variety of expectations regarding their IS activities, the teachers also believed the IS was a curriculum component that consumed a lot of their organizational resources. While the teachers prepared various rich hands-on and students-initiated activities for students, they needed to spend much more time on the grade-level collaboration for preparing the IS, more time than their teaching in the subject areas.

In brief, the IS in the middle school was a "double-edged sword" which held both advantages and drawbacks in its implementation. And, how many degrees the teachers feel the advantage (and disadvantage) of their IS appears to depend partly on the condition of the students' engagement. For example, in Rokuchu, many teachers

questioned whether they needed to spend much energy and time for implementing the IS for the students who were not so motivated in the activities. How to support the teachers' improvement of the IS especially in "tough" schools like Rokuchu and to alleviate the teachers' negative views on the IS is an emergent agenda for the policymakers.

Finally, it is still unclear how the introduction of the IS influenced the teachers' instruction of the subject areas. Though I did not carefully examine this point in the findings chapters, some of the teachers mentioned their teaching of the subject areas did not change much even after the introduction of the IS. In the activities of the IS, there were few teachers who were concerned about the connections between the content of the IS and the content in the subject areas. On the other hand, the reduced periods for the subject areas created the situation where the teachers were forced to accelerate their teaching of the textbook content in the classes. In my interviews, a few teachers mentioned that "our teaching became much more 'rote learning' due to the reduction of the periods." Throughout my fieldwork, I did not observe any evidence that the introduction of the IS and other elements of the curriculum revisions changed the instruction of the subjects toward the direction of "think and learn independently."

Policy Implications

I believe the most significant contribution of this study was that its in-depth analysis of the three case schools uncovered the complicated situation where the teachers were located in their implementation of the IS. The past literature on the implementation of the IS, which were mainly based on the surveys, appeared to propose a simplified picture for the reasons of the teachers' pessimism on the IS that attributed the teachers' pessimism on the IS to their lack of resources (e.g., time). While this study supported this

view that the teachers' lack of various material resources were crucial, my analysis proposed more complicated relationship of the factors that the teachers had to concern about as shown in the second section of this chapter. In addition to this lack of material resources, some teachers were aware that they did not have enough skills to implement the IS activities. Finally, the teachers continued to seek how they guide their adolescent students into various new learning activities, and sometimes struggled to instruct their students who did not show the motivation for the activities. Also, in the three case schools, the teachers had to carefully consider their way of adaptation of the IS periods by balancing the needs for the new types of learning activities and the traditional institutional needs of the each grade-level stage of the middle school. This study illuminated this hybridity of multiple factors that the teachers faced in their implementation of the IS.

Given these findings from this study, the policymakers need to consider the effective support for the local schools' improvement of the IS activities carefully considering such hybridity of the factors as well as the difference of the schools' contexts. Here, I would like to show some concrete implications for the support for the schools' implementation of the IS.

Firstly, let me start from the aspect of the resources. Among the issues of the resources, the crucial problem was teachers' lack of time for planning, which was the most important material resource for curriculum development (Gamoran, et al, 2003; Marsh et al, 1990; Tanner & Tanner, 2007). While the teachers worked in very busy schedules due to many administrative jobs of the school organization and some extracurricular activities, the students' behavioral problems also could erode the small

amount of the teachers' planning time. In a tough school like Rokuchu, the teachers had to prepare the IS in an overwhelming job schedule. One of the reasons for this teachers' busyness can be attributed to the relatively small number of the school faculty (teachers) against the number of the students. Also, this situation made the teachers' support of the individual students' work in the periods of the IS quite difficult. Consequently, their instruction tended to become the "en-masse" method even in the students' individual or small-group learning activities. In this kind of situation, the teachers can easily lose the control of the students in their classrooms. To enrich the content of the IS, the government should assure sufficient time for the teachers' planning of the IS by an effective policy on improvement of the staffing of the schools.

The second implication was concerned with the issue of the teachers' capacity for the implementation of the IS. In my research, at least a part of the teachers that I interviewed reported they were short of the knowledge and skills for implementing the IS and felt unconfident of the practices of the IS.

However, few teachers of Nichu reported their lack of instructional capacity of the IS. The advantage of Nichu on this point was that they could build a common pedagogical idea and methods through their collaborative development of the IS, especially during their work for the opportunity of the curriculum development research assigned by the city district. Due to this sound common knowledge base for the teachers' instruction of the IS, Nichu teachers were more confident on their implementation of the IS than those in the other two schools.

As this illustrates, for the increase of the teachers' instructional capacity of the IS activities, the teachers should be given more sustained opportunity to collaboratively

discuss their planning and the results of their classroom implementation. Through such collaborative effort for several years, the teachers could share the goals and methods regarding their IS practices and also collectively developed their capacity for their implementation.

However, just having an opportunity for the curriculum development research cannot assure the capacity-building for the implementation of the IS. My case study suggests such development process requires the activation of the leadership as well as investment for the long-term transmission of the capacity to the new teachers. As for the leadership issue, the three schools' development process of the IS were mainly initiated by a part of the enthusiastic teachers who took the role of "change agents" (Marsh et al, 1990). However, as argued by some scholars (Gamoran et al, 2003; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004), actually such work of leading the development of the IS was distributed to various faculty in the school. For example, while the role of the school principals were not so prominent in the curriculum development process of the three schools, the case of Nichu indicates the importance of the principal's role to activate some teachers' leadership toward the collaboration in the school. Actually, the assignment of the research opportunity in Nichu was planned by the principal, and the principal gave various indirect support for the curriculum development process by coordinating the human capacity within and outside the school.

Also, as one policy implication for the enhancement of the school's capacity for the IS, I would like to suggest the allocation of "specialist" on the management of the IS activities as one school role. Actually, through my field research in the schools, many teachers proposed the idea to me that the government allocate an IS specialist to each

school, who could take the leadership role in the general planning of the IS, as well as provide practical advice for the classroom implementation of the IS. In my opinion, such allocation of a specialist might be effective for improving the quality of the IS activities by reexamining the present content of the three years' program of the IS at each school. However, just adding an IS coordinator in a school and assigning one teacher for that role may not make significant difference in the current situation. The specialist requires his/her specialized knowledge and experiences on the planning and implementation of the IS. The training of such an IS specialist probably requires intensive professional development courses and some on-site practical experiences. By allocating this staff member with specialized knowledge on the IS, the other teachers in a school could directly learn from him/her on the ways of effectively implementing the IS. In other words, the specialist can be a catalyst for the teachers' creation of pedagogy on their existing IS practices and facilitate the curriculum innovation of each school.

On the other hand, the creation of the pedagogy for the IS through teachers' collaborative work do not necessarily assure the sustained practices of the IS in the school. The case of Nichu indicated their possible decline of the shared pedagogy due to the turnover of the schoolteachers. Actually, under the current prefectural educational system, the teachers were transferred to the other school periodically (approximately 6 years), and this ongoing shuffling of the teachers appeared to make the teachers' sharing and transmission of the pedagogy of the IS difficult even in the schools like Nichu that were enthusiastic in the practices of the IS. While it may be difficult to change this traditional "shuffling" system only for the implementation of the IS, one possible solution to prevent the fade-away of the pedagogy was that the school leaders should become keen

of such decline of the pedagogy and to invest enough time to discuss their ideas of the IS activities and to socialize the new teachers toward their shared practices.

Finally, to alleviate the uncertainty of the relevance of the IS in the middle schools like Icchu or Rokuchu, the government should invest more on the research on the effective IS practices. Especially, as the case of Rokuchu implies, the teachers of the tough school seem more likely to doubt the relevance of the new types of learning activities and to think they should spend more time on teaching in the basic subject areas. In other words, the teachers of tougher schools more easily feel the gap between the pedagogical ideas of the new types of learning recommended by the government and the real needs of the students. During my investigation in Osaka, I heard many cases that some middle schools used a part of the IS periods for the supplementary lessons for the subject areas. Recently, Cave (2008) showed 40 % of the middle schools which responded to his survey distributed at some prefectures around Osaka Prefecture reported they used a part of the IS periods for the supplementary lessons of the subject areas.

One solution that the government could implement to enhance the teachers' perceived relevance of the IS is that the government facilitate the research on the effective efforts of the IS. Especially, the research should focus on the relationship between the IS activities and the students' cognitive development and motivation. If research can provide several models of the IS activities that can support students' cognitive development and motivation in learning, more teachers would reconsider the meanings of the IS in the middle school curriculum. In addition to showing the effective IS models, the researchers should conduct more empirical research on the educational effects of the IS on students' development. This is a point that MacDonald (2006) argued

in his thesis, too. Due to the variance of the activities implemented in the IS periods, it is very difficult to gauge the effects of the IS in a uniform method. However, as this multiple case study showed, the schools were still in the slow process of the adapting and improving the IS within the school curriculum. Many teachers were still concerned about the issue of implementing the IS and needed knowledge for the effective utilization of the IS for students' learning. For these teachers' interest and needs in curriculum development and improvement, the government and researchers should tackle with the continued production of micro case studies that evaluate the benefits and challenge of the IS.

The Contribution of This Study and the Problems for the Future Study

This multiple case study focused on the realities of the teachers' implementation of the IS in the middle schools, where the implementation of the IS was the most controversial among the educators in Japan's public education system. However, so far, there were no in-depth case studies of the middle schools' implementation of the IS in the literature. So, despite the small size of the sampled schools, the contribution of this study is significant because of detailed elicitation of the multiple realities of the middle school teachers' implementation of the IS that were mostly invisible in the past literature.

The analysis of the development process of the IS and its content revealed the mixed nature of new learning activities and the existing middle school practices. It is also the result of the schools' adaptation of the IS reflecting the schools' limited resources and the needs of middle school curriculum. By approaching such realities from the teachers' perspectives, the analysis found that teachers were ambivalent regarding the IS – expectations for the new types of learning and perceived challenges in the

implementation. Such ambivalent attitudes can provide a preliminary explanation for the middle school teachers' pessimism on the implementation of the IS shown by the past survey researches (Education Ministry, 2005; Kurebayashi et al, 2006; Mimizuka et al, 2003).

Furthermore, the comparative analysis of the case schools with different backgrounds revealed that the teachers' attitudes to the IS differed according to the context of the schooling. My analysis of the cases also provided some explanation for this difference of the teachers' attitudes across the schools. This finding seems important because the findings of the past survey researches (Education Ministry, 2005; Kurebayashi et al, 2006; Mimizuka et al, 2003) did not focus on this across-school differences of the teachers' attitudes to the IS and, consequently, implied that the middle school teachers were "generally" pessimistic on the IS.

However, one aspect that I could not fully focus in this study was that the issue of teachers' ways evaluating the students' learning activities in the IS. Responding to the government's direction, the students' performance in the IS is not evaluated by the numerical grading system unlike that of the subject areas. As a result, in the current public education system, the students' performance in the IS is not incorporated into a part of the integrated numerical grade reported to the high school at the time of its entrance exam. In brief, as one teacher mentioned in Chapter 5, the students' performance in the IS seems not to be sanctioned by the high school entrance exam unlike the cases of other subject areas. Given that Japanese middle schools' classroom learning and evaluation is strongly sanctioned and shaped by the high school entrance exam (Fukuzawa, 1994; LeTendre, 1994), this "un-sanction" for the IS may provide different

orientation for the teachers' ways of instruction and evaluation of the IS activities, especially in the middle schools. However, despite the importance of the relationship among the high school entrance exam, evaluation, and instruction, my data collection and analysis at this time could not fully focus on it. This is the next agenda for my future research, and further detailed investigation on the relationship between the evaluation and the implementation of the IS probably produce interesting findings on Japanese teachers' instructional practices in the current situation.

This research also contributed to the literature on the interdisciplinary teaching. As I explained in the previous section, the past research on the interdisciplinary teaching did not pay careful attention to the issue of the context of the "students" (e.g., Beane, 1993; Jacobs, 1989; Vars, 1993). More specifically, this literature did not examine the influence of the students' background on implementing interdisciplinary learning activities. This point appeared to be a limitation of the research regarding the validity of the interdisciplinary teaching approach in the classrooms with various socio-cultural backgrounds. One important finding of this research was that the success of implementing the interdisciplinary learning activities in the periods of the IS partly depends on the condition of the students. Also, the finding from my comparative analysis of the three case schools implies that the teachers at the schools with more students' behavioral problems were more likely to minimize the relevance of the IS activities.

Yet, my research just shed a little light on the relationship between the implementation of the interdisciplinary teaching and the students' contexts. In the future, much more empirical research, which investigates the influence of the students' readiness and other sociocultural backgrounds on the form and the effectiveness of the certain

interdisciplinary teaching, should be accumulated. Given the worldwide expansion of the interdisciplinary teaching approach in the present era, there appears to be global needs for the findings from such new empirical research. On the other hand, these empirical investigations on interdisciplinary teaching should pay enough attention to the environment of the learning where the new learning methods are implanted. As my case study in Japan illustrated, the new learning activities tend to be incorporated into the existing educational practices, in other words, “grammar of schooling” (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). By carefully looking at the settings of the schools, the future research should explore how the interdisciplinary teaching influences on the traditional “grammar of schooling” of each society.

References

- Amano, M. (2000). *Sougouteki gakushu no karikyuramu kaihatsu to hyouka* [Curriculum development and assessment in integrated studies]. Kyoto: Koyo Shobo.
- Azuma, H. (2002). The development of the course of study and the structure of educational reform in Japan. In G. DeCoker (Ed.), *National standards and school reform in Japan and the United States* (pp.5-18). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Beane, J. A. (1993). *A middle school curriculum: From rhetoric to reality* (2nd ed.). Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association
- Beane, J. (1997). Curriculum Integration: designing the core of the democratic education. New York : *Teachers College Press*.
- Beane, G. A., & Vars, G.F. (2000). Integrative Curriculum in a Standards-Based World, ERIC digest. ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, Champaign, IL.
- Beauchamp, E. R. (1991). The development of Japanese educational policy, 1945-1985. In E.R. Beauchamp (Ed.). *Windows on Japanese education*. New York : Greenwood Press.
- Berman, P., & McLaughlin, M.W. (1978). *Federal programs supporting educational changes, Vol. VIII: Implementing and sustaining innovation*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand.
- Bjork, C., & Tsuneyoshi, R. (2005). Education reform in Japan: Competing visions for the future. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 86, 619-626.
- Bogdan R.C., & Biklen, S. K. (1992). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods. (2nd ed.). Boston : Allyn and Bacon.
- Cave, P. (2001). Educational reform in Japan in the 1990s: "individuality" and other uncertainties. *Comparative Education*, 37, 173-191.
- Central Council on Education. (1996). *Nijuu isseiki wo tenboushita wagakuni no kyoiku no arikata ni tsuite-Daiichiji Tousein* [The model of Japanese education in the perspective of the twenty-first century-Vol.1]. Available online at: http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/12/chuuou/tousein/960701.htm (accessed 17 February 2007)
- Central Coucil on Education. (2005). *Atarashii gimukyoiku wo souzousuru: Tousein* [To create a new compulsory education: a report] Available online at http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo0/tousein/05102601.htm (accessed 18 February 2007).

- Coburn, C. E. (2001). Collective sensemaking about reading: how teachers mediate reading policy in their professional communities. *Educational Evaluation & Policy Analysis*, 23, 145-70.
- Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, California. Sage.
- Creswell, J.W., & Miller, D.L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39, 124-130.
- Curriculum Council. (1998). *Youchien, shogakko, chugakko, kotogakko, mogakko, oyobi yogo gakko no kyouiku katei no kijun no kaizen nituite: toushin* [Summary on the improvement of standards of curriculum for kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, high school, blind school, deaf school, and school for disabled schools: a report] Available online at : http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/12/kyouiku/toushin/980703.htm (accessed 19 February 2007).
- Education Ministry. (1998). *Chugakko gakushu shido yoryo* [the Course of study for middle school]. Available online at: http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shuppan/sonota/990301c.htm (accessed at 17 February 2007).
- Education Ministry (1999) *Japanese government policies in education, science, sports and culture 1999*. Available online at: http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpae199901/index.html (accessed 17 February 2007).
- Education Ministry. (2002). *Shin Gakushushidoyoryo Panfuretto-Hogosha muke* [Brochure on the new courses of study-for Parents]. Available online at: http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shuppan/sonota/020501.htm (accessed 16 February 2007).
- Education Minsitry. (2003a). *Shogakkou, chugakkou, koutougakkou touno gakushushidoyoryo no ichibu kaisei tou nituite-Gaiyo* [Summary of the partial ammendment of the course of study for elementary school, middle school, high school, and other school-an overview] Available online at: http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shuppan/sonota/03122608.htm (accessed 17 February 2007).
- Education Ministry. (2003b). *Manabi no susume* [Suggestion for learning] Available online at: http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/14/01/020107.htm (accessed 17 February 2007).
- Education Minsitry. (2003c). *"Taschikana gakuryoku" to "yutakana kokoro" wo kodomotachi ni hagukumu tameni* [Toward the development of children's "solid academic abilities" and "enriched mind"] Available online at :

- http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/actionplan/03071101/009.pdf (accessed at February 18 2007).
- Education Ministry. (2005a). *Gimukyoiku ni kansusru ishikichosa houkokusyo* [Report of Suvery on the Attidues to the Compulsory Education]. Available onlin at: http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/17/11/05112502/houkoku.pdf (accessed 16 February 2007).
- Education Ministry. (2005b). *Monbukagaku hakusho* [White paper on science and technology]. Avelable online at: http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpba200501/index.htm (accessed 17 February 2007).
- Education Ministry. (2005c). Gakkou Kihon Chosa. [Basic Research on Schools]. Available online at: http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/toukei/001/05122201/index.htm (accessed 17 February 2007).
- Education Ministry. (2006). *Monbukagaku hakusho* [White paper on science and technology]. Avelable online at: http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpba200501/index.htm (accessed 17 February 2007).
- Fogarty, R. (1991). Ten ways to integrate curriculum. *Educational Leadership*, 49, 61-65.
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2000). The interview: From structured questions to negotiated text. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 645-672). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fujita, H. (2000). Education reform and education politics in Japan. *American Sociologist*, 31.42-57.
- Fukuzawa, R.E. (1994). The path to adulthood according to Japanese middle schools. *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 20, 61-86.
- Fullan, M. (1982). *The meaning of educational change*. New York : Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Fullan, M.G. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change*. 2nd ed. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gamoran, A., Anderson, C.W., Quiroz, P. A., Secada, W.G., Williams, T., & Ashmann, S. (2003). *Transforming teaching math and science: How schools and districts can support change*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Hamamoto, N. (2007). Constrains to designing “Integrated Studies” in Japanese middle schools: Teachers’ perception of interdisciplinary link. A paper presented at the

- 51st annual conference of the Comparative and International Education Society, Baltimore, MD.
- Hargreaves, A. (1994). *Changing teachers, changing times: teachers' work and culture in the postmodern age*. New York, N.Y. Teachers College Press.
- Hargreaves, A., Earl, L., & Ryan, J. (1996). *Schooling for change: Reinventing education for early adolescents*. Washington, DC : Falmer Press.
- Horio, T. (1997). *Gendai shakai to kyoiku* [Contemporary society and education] Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.
- Ichikawa, S. (2002). *Gakuryoku teika ronso* [The debate on achievement decline] Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.
- Iwama, H.F. (1989). Japan's Group Orientation in Secondary Schools. In J.J. Shields. (Ed.) *Japanese schooling : patterns of socialization, equality, and political control*, (pp.73-15). University Park : Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Jacobs, H.H. (1989). The growing need for interdisciplinary curriculum content. In J.H. Heidi (Ed.), *Interdisciplinary curriculum: Design and Implementation* (pp.107-120). Alexandria, VA : Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Jenkins, J. M., & Tanner, D. (1992). *Restructuring for an interdisciplinary curriculum*. National Association of Secondary School Principals, Virginia.
- Kato, K. (1997). Kyokakan ni okeru Sogoka no igi to susumekata [The meaning and implementation method of integration across subject areas]. In K. Takaura (Ed.). *Sougou gakushu no riron* [The theory of integrated studies]. Nagoya: Reimei Shobo.
- Kurebayashi, ,N., Kawamura, A.,& Ochi,Y.(2006). A Study of Teachers' Organization and Practice of "Sogo-teki-na-gakushu-no-jikan" in Primary Schools and Junior High Schools. *Journal of the Faculty of Education, Shinshu University*. 117, 171-182.
- Kysilka, M. L. (1998). Understanding integrated curriculum. *The Curriculum Journal*, 9. 197-209.
- LeCompte, M.D., & Goetz, J.P. (1982). Problems of reliability and validity in ethnographic research. *Review of Educational Research*, 52. 31-60.
- LeTendre. G. (1994). Guiding them on: Teaching, hierarchy, and social organization in *Japanese middle schools*, 20. 37-59.
- LeTendre, G. (1995). Disruption and reconnection: counseling young adolescent s in Japanese schools. *Educational Policy*, 9, 169–184.

- LeTendre, G. (1996). Constructed aspirations: decision-making processes in Japanese educational selection. *Sociology of Education*, 69, 193–216.
- LeTendre, G. (2002). Setting national standards: Educational reform, social change, and political conflict. In G. DeCoker (Ed.), *National standards and school reform in Japan and the United States* (pp.19-32). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Lewis, C. (1996). Fostering social and intellectual development: the roots of Japanese educational success. In T.P. Rohlen & G.K. LeTendre (Eds.), *Teaching and learning in Japan* (pp.79-97). New York : Cambridge University Press.
- Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- MacDonald, L. (2006). *Curriculum reform as a reflection of tradition and change: Japanese teachers approach to dimensions of difference via the integrated curriculum*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park.
- Chan, K. J. (2003). Integrating the curriculum: How do secondary school teachers' beliefs influence the integration?. Doctoral dissertation, the Chinese University of Hong-Kong.
- MacDonald, L. (2005). Education reform and social change in Japan: The case of Osaka. *Human Rights Education in Asian Schools*, 8, 79-88.
- Martin-Kniep, G. O., Feige, D.M., & Soodak, L.C. (1995). Curriculum integration: An expanded view of an abused idea. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 10, 227-249.
- Mathison, S. (1988). Why triangulate?. *Educational Researcher*, 17, 16-17.
- Manning, M. L. & Bucher, K. T. *Teaching in the Middle School*. (2001). Columbus, OH: Prentice-Hall.
- Marsh, C. (1997). *Perspectives: Key concepts for understanding curriculum*. London: Falmer Press.
- Marsh, C., Day, C., Hannay, L., & McCutcheon, G. (1990). *Reconceptualizing school-based curriculum development*. New York, Falmar Press.
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, G.B. (1999). *Designing Qualitative Research*. 3rd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McLaughlin, M. (1976a). Implementation of ESEA Title I: A problem of compliance. *Teachers College Record*, 80, 69-94.
- McLaughlin, M. (1976b). Implementation as mutual adaptation: Change in classroom organization. *Teachers College Record*, 77, 339-351.

- Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco : Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Miles, M.B., & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.), Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Mimizuka, H., Hida, D., Nishijima, O., et al. (2003). *Daisankai gakushu shido kihon chousa houkokusyo* [Report of the third basic research on curriculum guidance]. Tokyo: Benesse Corporation. Available online at: <http://www.crn.or.jp/LIBRARY/SHIDOU/HOUKOKU.HTM> (accessed 17 February 2007)
- Mizuhara, K. (1992). *Gendai nihon no kyoiku katei kaikaku*. [Curriculum reform in contemporary Japan]. Tokyo: Kazama Shobo.
- Morgan, D.L. (2002). Focus group interviewing. In J.F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.). *Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method* (pp. 141-159). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Motani, Y. (2005). Hopes and challenges for progressive educators in Japan: Assessment of the 'progressive turn' in the 2002 educational reform. *Comparative Education*, 41, 309-327.
- National Middle School Association. (1995). *This we believe: Developmentally responsive middle level schools*. Columbus, OH. National Middle School Association
- National Institute for Educational Policy Research. (2005). *Kouritu chuugakkou syokuba taiken jishi joukyou chousa* [Research on the implementation of career experience learning in public middle schools] Available online at: http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/career/05010501/003.htm (accessed 19 February 2007).
- Ochi, Y., Kurebayashi, N., & Kawamura, A. (2005). The Effects of "Sogo-teki-nagakushu-no-jikan" in School Education. *Journal of the Faculty of Education, Shinshu University*. 114, 157-168.
- Okano, K., & Tsuhiya, M. (1999). *Education in contemporary Japan: Inequality and diversity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Osaka Prefectural Board of Education. (1999). Kyouiku kaikaku program [Education reform program] Available online at: <http://www.pref.osaka.jp/kyoisomu/programn.htm> (accessed 25 March 2007).
- Osaka Prefectural Board of Education. (2006). Osaka no gakkou toukei: Heisei 18 nendo ban. [School Statistics of Osaka Prefecture, 2006] Available online at: http://www.pref.osaka.jp/toukei/gakkou_s/index.html (accessed 25 March 2007).

- Ozaki, M. (1999). *Nihon no kyoiku kaikaku* [Japanese educational reform]. Tokyo: Chuo Kouron Shinsha.
- Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation Methods*. Newbury Park, CA. : Sage Publications.
- Pinar, W.F.(Ed.). (2003). *International handbook of curriculum research*. London : L. Erlbaum Associates.
- Roesgaard, M.H. (1998). *Moving mountains: Japanese education reform*. Aarhus : Aarhus University Press.
- Sabar, N. (1983). Towards school-based curriculum development: Training school curriculum coordinators. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 15, 431-434.
- Sarason, S.B. (1971). *The culture of the school and the problem of change*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Sato, M. (1996). *Karikyuramu no hiho: Koukyousei no saikouchiku he* [Critique on Curriculum: Toward the reconstruction of the publicness] Yokohama: Seori Shobo.
- Sato, N., & McLaughlin, M.W. (1992). *Context matters: Teaching in Japan and in the United States*. Phi Delta Kappan, 73, 359-366.
- Schoppa, L. (1991). Education reform in Japan: Goals and results of the recent reform campaign. In E.R. Beauchamp (Ed.), *Windows on Japanese education*, (pp.51-75). New York : Greenwood Press.
- Shimahara, N. (1991). Teacher Education in Japan. In E.R. Beauchamp (Ed.), *Windows on Japanese education*, (pp.259-280). New York : Greenwood Press.
- Shimahara, N. (2002). Teacher professional development in Japan. In G. DeCoker (Ed.), *National standards and school reform in Japan and the United States* (pp.107-120). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Shimahara, N., & Sakai, A. (1995). *Learning to teach in two cultures: Japan and the United States*. New York : Garland Pub.
- Shimizu, K. (1992). Shido: Education and selection in a Japanese middle school. *Comparative Education*, 28, 109-129.
- Shimpo, M. (2004). Fifty years of human rights education in Osaka. *Human Rights Education in Asian Schools*, 7, 37-41.
- Singleton, J. (1989). Gambaru: A Japanese cultural theory of learning. In J.J. Shields. (Ed.) *Japanese schooling : patterns of socialization, equality, and political control*, (pp.8-15). University Park : Pennsylvania State University Press.

- Skillbeck, M. (1984). *School-based curriculum development*. London: Harper and Row.
- Snyder, J., Bolin, F., & Zumwalt, K. (1992). Curriculum implementation . In P.W. Jackson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on curriculum* (pp. 402-435). New York: Macmillan.
- Spillane, J.P. (2004). *Standards deviation: How schools misunderstand education policy*. Cambridge, Mass: London: Harvard University Press.
- Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J.B. (2004). Towards a theory of leadership practice: a distributed perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 36, 3-34.
- Stake, R.E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage.
- Takaura, K. (1997). Sougou gakushu no igi to susumekata [The meaning and implementation method of integrated studies]. In K. Takaur. (Ed.). *Sougou gakushu no riron* [The theory of integrated studies]. Nagoya: Reimei Shobo.
- Tanner, D & Tanner, L. (2007). Curriculum development: Theory into practice, the 4th edition. New Jersey: Pearson Merrill/Prentice Hall.
- Tchudi, S., & Lafer, S. (1996). *The interdisciplinary teacher's handbook: Integrated teaching across the curriculum*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.
- Tsunesyohi, R. (2000). *The Japanese model of schooling : comparisons with the United States*. New York : Falmer.
- Tyack, D & Tobin, W.(1994). The “grammar” of schooling: Why has it been so hard to change?. *American Educational Research Journal*, 31. 453-479.
- Tyack, D.B., & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering toward utopia: a century of public school reform*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Vars, G. F. (1993). *Interdisciplinary teaching: Why and how*. Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association.
- Vars, G. F. (2001). Can Curriculum Integration Survive in an Era of High-Stakes Testing?. *Middle School Journal*, 33, 7-17.
- Wolcott, H.F. (1994). *Transforming qualitative data: Description, analysis, and interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage.
- Wray, H. (1999). *Japanese and American education: Attitudes and practices*. London : Bergin & Garvey.
- Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.) Thousand Osaks, California: Sage.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed.) Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Appendix A

Interview Protocol: Curriculum Leader (Principal / Teacher)

Introduction of my project: I am interested in your perspective on the implementation of IS, how the activities of the IS in your school are designed, and what the roles of the IS in your school are. The interview is intended to be non-invasive and confidential. While I developed the following interview questions so that they will not disturb or embarrass subjects, especially on the authority of the school faculty of this school, you are free to stop the tape recorder and/or the interview at any time.

Information on the participant	How long have you worked in this school? What is your official position in the school?
Participant's role in the development of the IS	How have you been involved in the development and implementation of IS of this school? What kind of role have you played in the development process?
Organizational system to operate the IS	What kind of organizational system does your school use for the operation of the IS now?
Start of the IS	When did your school start the development of the IS?
Prior Activities of Interdisciplinary Learning	Was there any similar learning activities (thematic learning/hands-on learning/students' fieldwork or volunteering outside the school, etc) prior to the start of the IS?
	Are those activities (mentioned above) incorporated in the present project of the IS of this school?
Discussion in the development of the IS	How has the school faculty discussed on the development of IS? Please describe the process of the discussion so far?
The first content of the IS	What did the content of the IS during the first year of the implementation look like?
Goals of the IS at the start point	What were the main goals that the faculty set for the project of the IS?
Change by the implementation of the IS	Was there any change in students or teachers by the implementation of IS? (If yes) What is it?
Changes in the theme or general content	What were the changes in the theme or activity in the IS after you started to work in this school? When was it?
	(About each change mentioned above), how was the change determined? What was the reason for the change?
Changes in the instructional methods	Was there any change in the instructional method in the project of IS in the specific grade? (e.g., the thing newly introduced, stopped, omitted)

	(About each change mentioned above), how was the change determined? What was the reason for the change?
Changes in the evaluation method	How do you conduct the evaluation of students' work in the IS? Was there any change in the method of evaluation so far?
Role of the IS in the school	What do you think of the roles of IS in this middle school?
Continuity of the learning experiences the IS project across the grades	How do you think of the continuity of the students' learning experiences the IS project across the grades?
Evaluation of the IS	How are you satisfied with the present activities of the IS in this school?
Comparison from the other school	How does this school's IS compare with your previous school?
Problems in the development of the IS	What were the problems in developing the IS? * resource (materials/facility *knowledge/skill * human support * support within/outside the school
Problems in the student learning in the IS	What is the problem of the students' engagement in the IS now?
Resources to support the development of the IS	What was helpful for the development of the IS in this school?
Resource	I guess, you might have various things within and outside the school that help your development of IS. If you had, what were they?
The IS in the framework of the IS	Does the existing framework of middle school education (e.g., instruction of subject areas, guidance for students, high-school entrance exam) influence on the implementation of IS?
External influences on the development of the IS	Were there any external factors that shaped the activities of IS? (e.g., the public opinion of the education, parents' voice, community members' voice, the initiative from the city (district) or the prefecture)
Understanding of the government's idea of the IS	How do you think of the Education Ministry's idea of IS? How are they understood in this school?

Appendix B

Questionnaire on the implementation of the “Period of the Integrated Studies” (English Translation)

Introduction

I have been conducting a field research project on the implementation of your school’s implementation of the “Period of Integrated Studies” since last September. I appreciate many faculty’s cooperation so far on my interviewing with teachers and observation of the classroom instruction. This questionnaire is a part of the research project and will ask your perception of the practices of the “Integrated Studies” in your school. This questionnaire is distributed to all the teachers of your school and other two researched schools.

Your responses in the questionnaire will be utilized solely for my research study. I assure that nobody will identify an individual or the school from the result of the questionnaire. While I developed the following interview questions so that they will not disturb or embarrass subjects, especially on the authority of the school faculty of this school, you are free to withdraw from responding to the questions. Finally, I will submit a short summary of the results of the questionnaire to your school so that you can utilize it for the evaluation of the present curriculum of your school, but individual responses will not be included. I appreciate your cooperation for responding to this questionnaire despite your busy schedule.

Questions

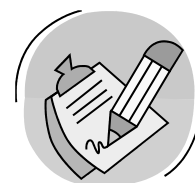
Please read each question carefully and answer accurately as you can. For your response to the following questions, you will normally answer by circling the number of the statement that you think that is “right” for you.

1. Demographic Information

Please answer your age, sex, and grade that you teach now.

Age : 1. 20’s 2. 30’s 3. 40’s 4. 50’s

Sex : 1. Male 2. Female



2. General evaluation of the efforts of the “Integrated Studies

The following questions is about the general aspects of the current activities of your school’s “Integrated Studies.” Please answer how you agree with the following statement.

	Strongly agree	Fairly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagreed	Not sure
a) I am satisfied with the present content of the “Integrated Studies.”	1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5
b) The present practices of “Integrated Studies” take important roles in the curriculum of my middle school.	1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5
c) The present practices of “Integrated Studies” provide educational effect that is consort with the time and energy that the teachers use for their preparation and implementation.	1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5

3. Present content of the activities of the “Integrated Studies”

Please identify all the learning methods that is included in the activities of the Integrated Studies of your grade for this academic year (2007-2008).

1.	Students by themselves conduct a research using reading materials or computer and organize the findings.
2.	Students individually make a presentation on what they learned.
3.	Students as a group cooperatively research and make a presentation.
4.	Parents or community members are invited to the school for lecturing to the students.
5.	Students are divided into the groups (courses) across the homeroom classes for their learning activities.
6.	Students experience some hands-on learning in a facility outside the school.
7.	Students experience some hands-on learning for several days interacting with the community members within the school district (E.g., career experience learning).
8.	Students make a presentation on what they learned in the homeroom class.
9.	Students make a presentation on what they learned as a whole grade together.



4. Problems for the implementation of the Integrated Studies

Various hands-on or problem-solving activities are introduced in the Integrated Studies. What are the problems to prepare and implement such learning activities in your school as the activities of the Integrated Studies? Please identify to what degree you think each of the following aspects of the implementation of the Integrated Studies as problematic.

	Big problem	Problem	Not a problem
a) Assurance of the time for preparation	1-----2-----3		
b) Management of the schedule of the IS activities in a semester.	1-----2-----3		
c) Coordination of the scheduling of the utilization of the school facilities (e.g., computer room, library) for students' research.	1-----2-----3		
d) Sharing of the ideas on the aims or importance of the efforts of the Integrated Studies.	1-----2-----3		
e) Teachers' skill and knowledge to effectively implement hands-on learning or students' self inquiry	1-----2-----3		
f) Students' active participation to the learning activities	1-----2-----3		
g) Students' abilities to learn cooperatively in a group	1-----2-----3		
h) Sustaining cooperative relationship with the community members, public agencies, or workplaces	1-----2-----3		
i) Sharing of the aims and methods of the IS activities in a large grade-level teacher group	1-----2-----3		
j) Teachers' communication to prepare the practices	1-----2-----3		
k) Management of the various expenses for the learning activities	1-----2-----3		
l) Other things (Please write in the right blanc)	1-----2-----3		

5. Recognition of the governments' idea of the IS

a) To what extent do you know the direction of the government' idea of the IS?

- 1 . know very well
- 2 . know fairly
- 3 . don't know so much
- 4 . don't know at all



b) Please identify by what media you have known the government's idea of the IS so far.

1.	I read a government's brochure on the idea of the IS.
2.	I read the prefecture's brochure on the idea of the IS
3.	I participated in the prefecture's professional development on the implementation of the IS.
4.	I participated in the school district's professional development on the implementation of the IS.
5.	I participated in the in-school professional development on the implementation of the IS.
6.	I got some explanation from my colleagues or the administrative leaders (e.g., principal).
7.	I checked the information of the government's website.
8.	I got some information from the newspapers or magazines.
9.	Other way ()

Appendix C

Profile of the Participants of the Curriculum Leader Interviews**Principals**

ID	School	Name	Sex	Subject Area to Teach	Age
1	Nichu	Mr. Asahida	Male	N/A	50s
2	Nichu	Mr. Shiraishi	Male	N/A	50s
3	Icchu	Mr. Minami	Male	N/A	50s
4	Rokuchu	Mr. Shindou	Male	N/A	50s

Teachers

ID	School	Name	Sex	Subject Area to Teach	Age
5	Nichu	Ms. Matsuoka	Female	Social Studies	50s
6	Nichu	Ms. Kawarabata	Female	Language Arts	50s
7	Nichu	Ms. Maeda	Female	Music	40s
8	Nichu	Mr. Matsuzaka	Male	Social Studies	50s
9	Nichu	Mr. Fukada	Male	English	50s
10	Nichu	Mr. Higashi	Male	Arts	50s
11	Nichu	Mr. Fujita	Male	Physical Education	50s
12	Nichu	Ms. Ohkawa	Female	Science	40s
13	Nichu	Ms. Tsujiura	Female	Home Economics	50s
14	Nichu	Mr. Takagaki	Male	Math	50s
15	Icchu	Ms. Masuda	Female	Math	50s
16	Icchu	Ms. Kitamura	Male	Science	50s
17	Icchu	Mr. Suzuki	Male	Math	40s
18	Icchu	Mr. Inohara	Male	Science	50s
19	Icchu	Ms. Nakamoto	Female	Social Studies	40s
20	Icchu	Mr. Shinozuka	Male	Math	20s
21	Icchu	Ms. Yoshioka	Female	English	30s
22	Icchu	Mr. Taniyama	Male	Social Studies	40s
23	Icchu	Mr. Mukoyama	Male	Math	30s
24	Icchu	Ms. Muro	Female	English	50s
25	Rokuchu	Mr. Konno	Male	Language Arts	50s
26	Rokuchu	Mr. Murano	Male	Science	50s
27	Rokuchu	Mr. Harada	Male	Science	50s
28	Rokuchu	Ms. Onohata	Female	Social Studies	40s
29	Rokuchu	Mr. Wakuyama	Male	Special Education	40s
30	Rokuchu	Mr. Yamazaki	Male	English	30s
31	Rokuchu	Ms. Tanaka	Female	Social Studies	40s
32	Rokuchu	Ms. Nakano	Female	Physical Education	40s
33	Rokuchu	Ms. Kaizu	Female	Music	40s

Curriculum Vita

Nobuhiko Hamamoto

Education

2009 (May) Ph.D., Education; Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey

2002 M.A., Osaka University

2000 B.A., Osaka University

Professional Experience

2005-2006 Part-time Lecturer of Japanese Language

Department of Asian Languages & Cultures, at Rutgers University

2004-2005 Research Assistant

Center for Educational Policy Analysis (in Graduate School of Education), at Rutgers University

2003- 2004 Part-time Administrative Assistant

The Education Board of Osaka Prefecture, Japan

2002-2003 Part-time Lecturer of Sociology

Osaka College of Medical Secretary and Welfare, Japan

2002-2003 Teaching Assistant

Graduate School of Human Sciences, at Osaka University

Publication

Hamamoto, N. (2005). Present Status and Some Problems of the Accountability System in the No Child Left Behind Act – A Case Study of New Jersey, *Journal of Japanese Association for the Study of Education Administration*, 47.