COLLEGE OF EDUCATION: IN BETWEEN ACADEMIC STUDY AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

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INTRODUCTION

This article examines the meaning of literacy in colleges of education, which take two roles: teacher training and academic research. In 2010, the Science Council of Japan issued a document discussing the quality of higher education. With the term “Bachelor’s Literacy”, which all undergraduate students should acquire, the Council tried to establish a reasonable standard for all undergraduate programs. According to the document, Bachelor’s Literacy consists of two kinds of ability: academic literacy, achieved through a liberal education, and practical literacy, achieved through vocational training. Although the group agrees that connecting academic literacy and practical literacy is important, they exempt medical schools and colleges of education, because these schools have no dichotomy between career preparation and academic training. The document assumes that students who go to medical schools and colleges of education have clear career plan. As a result, academic programs in these schools are consistent with vocational training for students’ future careers.

This article shares with the Science Council of Japan the same assumption that it is important to discuss the connection between career preparation and academic training in colleges of education. However, it does not share the idea that colleges of education already effectively connect academics with their careers via the institutional program. Rather, it presumess that colleges of education have been divided by two cultures: the traditions of normal schools as vocational schools, and the traditions of academic institutes as universities. It is true that the social expectation

1 This paper is a part of a research project entitled Kyouikugaku Kyouiku no Rironteki Dodai no Saikyouchiku ni Kansuru Tougouteki Kenkyu — Riron to Jissen no Togo no Kantenkara, funded by Jisedai Kyodo Kenkyu Project at Soka University, Japan in 2010.
3 Ibid. 51.
4 Ibid. 50.
of colleges of education is to provide both vocational techniques for prospective teachers and academic experiences for highly educated people. However, it is an oversimplification to believe that the vocational and academic aspects of the training are marginalized in colleges of education because of social expectations. This article begins with the presumption that although the combination of teacher training and academic study is one of the most pertinent issues for colleges of education to discuss, this discussion has not been done yet at the philosophical level. Therefore, this article attempts to explore a way to integrate these two cultures by re-conceptualizing “Bachelor’s Literacy”.

To explore the relationship between the two cultures in colleges of education, I analyze a past debate over the role of these colleges in the United States, specifically that between Arthur Bestor, a history professor in the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and progressive educators in 1950s. I have chosen this particular discussion because (1) policies for post-World War II education in Japan were mostly led by the United States, (2) the epicenter of the debate was the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the United States, and (3) David Stoddard, the president of the university at the time, was a reformer of the University of Illinois, as well as of Japanese education after World War II. So, in order to explore this debate, I first look at Bestor’s understanding of the role of colleges of education, and then contrast it with that of William Kilpatrick. I then introduce the third position in the debate, represented by Francis Keppel. Through the comparative analysis of these thinkers’ arguments over the role of colleges of education, I examine the foundational character of Bachelor’s Literacy, which integrates intellectual training and vocational training through the ideas of democracy.

5 There are three reasons to focus on the debate. First, the United States and Japan have a characteristic connection in terms of teacher education. Normal schools established during the Meiji period were an import from the United States. Second, The United States took over educational reform in Japanese after World War II. As a result of this reform, normal schools were upgraded to university-level educational institutes. Third, Arthur Bestor was a professor of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign while he engaged in the debate. The head of Education Mission, David Stoddard, is also the president of University of Illinois, who was influential. Stoddard cites from the education mission’s document in his speech to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. It indicates that Bestor’s debate and teacher education has some connection to the issue in Japan. In addition, the head of the higher education reform mission was Roger Adams, who was also the chair of the Department of Chemistry at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. These major players in reforming Japanese education were also the influential professors of the debate originally started from the department of education and Bestor in University of Illinois.
CRITICIZING COLLEGES OF EDUCATION AS UNQUALIFIED UNIVERSITY INSTITUTES

In the 1950s Arthur Bestor, a history professor, proclaimed the academic weakness of colleges of education. His ideas related to the debate over the quality of teacher training at the national level. Bestor protested vigorously against colleges of education because they seemed to him to place too much emphasis on vocational training. Bestor claimed that "...the professional educators began to get very confused about the fundamental purposes of education..." For Bestor, colleges of education insult the liberal education that is foundational to a university education. In his view, colleges of education are not intellectual, for several reasons. For Bestor, departments of education are isolated from other academic disciplines, neglects their mother disciplines, and do not promote critical thinking.

Bestor believed that progressivism, the mainstream principle in colleges of education, was the cause of problem. To clarify the problem, Bestor distinguished between two terms: education and pedagogy:

This process has been facilitated by a misuse and misapplication of the word education. The Department of Education actually concerns itself with "the art, practice or professor of teaching; especially, systematized learning or instruction concerning principles, learning or instruction concerning principles and methods of teaching." The quoted words are the dictionary definition, not of education, but of pedagogy. What calls itself a Department of College of Education is, properly speaking, only a Department of Pedagogy.

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7 "Education Getting Worse: Bestor Assails Sloppy Thinking Habits." Champaign-Urbana Courier, November 27 1956.
9 Ibid., 118.
10 Ibid., 144.
According to Bestor, colleges of education were not really serving their responsibility as educational institutes, because they focused on vocational training only. However, Bestor notes that this does not mean that pedagogy is bad. He says “Pedagogy itself — that is to say, the careful investigation of the process of teaching and learning — is a legitimate field of research.” He means that pedagogy can be academic if it provides the student with a liberal education. He also says that “every department in [the university] is a department of education in the legitimate sense of that word. My own department is actually a Department of Education in Historical Thinking,” and the Department of Education should be Department of Education in Pedagogical Methods.” By re-distributing the meaning of education campus-wide, Bestor tried to reform the role of colleges of education as a part of higher education. This also indicates that colleges of education should emphasize liberal education, being the common ground of university institutes.

Furthermore, Bestor identifies progressive education as the antithesis of liberal education. He explains the importance of a liberal arts education as follows:

The issue in American education today is not drawn between those who believe in scholarship but are indifferent to good teaching, and those who believe in good teaching but are indifferent to scholarship. The issue is drawn between those who believe that good teaching should be directed to sound intellectual ends, and those who are content to dethrone intellectual values and cultivate the techniques of techniques of teaching for their own sake, in an intellectual and cultural vacuum.

Bestor’s concern is that without good intellectual training, nobody can be a good teacher. Bestor admits that schoolteachers are not professional scholars. Nevertheless, he emphasizes the importance of intellectual training for prospective teachers because “liberal education is the education appropriate for freemen.

14 Ibid., 81.
15 Ibid., 82.
17 Ibid., 111.
is thus a reciprocal relation between liberal education and freedom. Liberal education is not for learning vocational techniques, but for developing one’s own thinking. For Bestor, critical thinking is a literacy one must acquire before learning any vocational techniques at the university level.

To establish more academic colleges of education, Bestor suggests reforming the system of teacher certification. He says “the question that is asked is not whether a man or woman is a good teacher, but whether he or she has course credits in pedagogy.” Bestor claims that course credits for teaching certificates are not guaranteed to produce good teachers, because those courses are not intellectual and do not develop critical thinking. Hence, for him, teaching certificates should be issued to those who pass an examination that guarantees teachers’ intellectual ability.

PROGRESSIVISM IS THE WAY FOR GOOD TEACHER EDUCATION

Among various reactions to Bestor’s criticism, Kilpatrick provided a key argument in the debate. In 1957, the New York Times Magazine published the debate over teacher education between Kilpatrick and Bestor. In the article, Kilpatrick defends progressivism without directly criticizing Bestor’s ideas. Kilpatrick’s intention is rather to clear up society’s misunderstandings about progressive education. Kilpatrick claims that it is inappropriate to blame progressive education as anti-intellectual, because it provides better results than past educational methods. These better results prove that progressive education actually provides better teaching methods.

In addition, Kilpatrick writes that “as to the charge that the modern school allows children to do as they please, this again is not true.” It is a misunderstanding that progressive education controls students by pleasing them and old-fashioned education controls students by punishing them. Kilpatrick explains that the aims of progressive educators are “(1) to support and improve society that people may live helpfully, and not hurtfully, together; and (2) to develop each individual to the

18 Ibid., 179.
19 Ibid., 131.
20 Ibid., 157.
22 Ibid., 112.
Kilpatrick admits that students learn with pleasure in progressive education. However, it is not because teachers try to please them. It is because social context is important in progressive education. Students can learn with pleasure in the progressive education approach, because learning is closely connected to the social context and students’ experiences.

Thirdly, Kilpatrick says that the idea that progressive education is indoctrination is a misapprehension:

For mind is not merely intellectual, and intellect is not merely memory or even the grasp of what someone else has said. Intellect runs through all content of life, not merely information. It concerns itself also with attitudes, with values, with all that one cares about. Primarily, intellect takes all these things into account when it carries thinking into overt action. This is what is meant by “acting on thinking.”

Kilpatrick does not share Bestor’s understanding of the meaning of intellectual learning, because for him the concept of intellectual learning is reformed in the context of progressive education. The understanding of intellectual learning in progressive education is that students can apply acquired knowledge to improve their lives by thinking for themselves. For Kilpatrick, Bestor’s understanding of intellectual learning is the one at risk of indoctrination. Kilpatrick says, “according to modern psychology, only actual behaving can build real character. The older outlook seemed to hold that memorizing a rule would build obedience to that rule into one’s character. We now know that this is vain hope.” For Kilpatrick, Bestor’s old type of education controls students’ thinking by focusing on knowledge whose subject matter is strictly framed.

FOR THE SAKE OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

School and Society published several articles engaging in the debate in 1953 and 1954. Keppel, the Dean of the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University, was one of participants. Unlike Kilpatrick, Keppel directly criticizes Be-
Keppel shares Bestor's dissatisfaction over the quality of some schoolteachers.

Keppel's position on the debate is to examine whether or not it contributes to the improvement of schools, saying "we wish simply to help in this improvement of the quality of the public schools, and to make sure that by our actions the academic civil war does not interfere with carrying out our responsibilities as educators." In Keppel's view, Bestor and progressive educators misunderstand each other as if they were in conflict. For Keppel, they basically share the same goal, i.e. improvement of the public schools. However, Keppel is concerned that if too much emphasis is placed on the disagreement between the two positions, it no longer contributes to school reform because the two parties are only concerned with attacking each other. Keppel says, "The controversy between certain professors of liberal arts and certain professors of education has been costly in energy and wasteful of talents desperately needed in the development of the schools." Therefore, his major concern over the debate is that it mistakes the means for the end.

By analyzing the debate in terms of school improvement, Keppel provides critical analysis of Bestor's argument. Firstly, Keppel is suspicious of whether Bestor's argument is academic. Keppel says, "Dr. Bestor's position does not assume too much for the intellectual's role. When it comes to his definition of the study of education, which he would prefer to describe as 'pedagogy,' the opposite question is appropriate: Is his position intellectual enough?" Keppel points out that Bestor's argument is not intellectually sufficient enough in his understanding of acad-
Dr. Bestor... has not clearly decided whether to discard careful theories as well. He seems to welcome in the teaching of education only the results of investigations in one rather narrow aspect of the psychology of education, though his book bristles with problems which should be handled by historians and philosophers, political scientists and sociologists, as well as psychologists and experienced educators.

For Keppel, Bestor’s arguments show inconsistency. Though Bestor only accepts pedagogical expertise in forming teaching theories, his arguments use material from multiple disciplines. When establishing his argument, Bestor thus makes his own mistake. If his critique is correct, he should only be able to establish historical arguments, because history is the discipline to which he belongs academically.

Secondly, Keppel points out that Bestor’s argument is one-sided. Keppel mentions, “I emphasize the importance of full-time membership because with regret, I must report my impression that Bestor underestimates the difficulties facing his colleagues whose primary interests are in college teaching and research when they try to focus their attention on the problems of the schools.” Bestor overlooks whether the department to which he belongs agrees with his ideas. If Bestor wants to reform colleges of education as “Departments of Education in Pedagogical Methods”, he also needs to reform his department of history as a “School of Education in Historical Thinking.” Keppel suspects that it is easier for Bestor to persuade professors in history than to attack professors in education. Keppel suggests that if colleges of education were reformed as Bestor idealizes them, without reforming the departments of history, no department would care for teacher education. As a result, the quality of schools and teachers in public schools would decline.

Thirdly, Keppel disagrees with Bestor’s idea of issuing teacher certificates by examination — “where the education of teachers has come almost completely under the control of departments or colleges of education, so-called, which are affected little, if at all, by the educational thinking of the rest of the university facul-

32 Ibid., 41. school and society
33 Ibid., 41. He says, “But is it likely that his proposed pattern of organization will focus enough of the attention of these professors on the problems of the schools to accomplish his aim?”
34 Ibid., 41-42.
Keppel believes that issuing teacher certification by credit is the appropriate way to continue. Keppel writes, “an ironic observer might even suggest that the result of his proposal would be to change the guard, not to free the prisoner.” Bestor proposes that academic examination for teachers’ certificates would guarantee teachers’ academic ability as well as release students in colleges of education from the strict curriculum. However, Keppel suggests that examination is not the way to solve the problem because the exam could create another kind of regulation for prospective teachers’ learning — they would focus on studying techniques to pass examinations.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

These three thinkers, Bestor, Kilpatrick, and Keppel, understand “Bachelor’s Literacy” differently. For Bestor, Bachelor’s Literacy is the acquisition of traditional intellectual knowledge. From his viewpoint, colleges of education are the guilty parties because they seem not to take on the foundational responsibility of higher education — instead, they focus too much on vocational training. Kilpatrick, however, does not share the meaning of “Bachelor’s Literacy” with Bestor. For Kilpatrick, Bachelor’s Literacy should be conceptualized within the context of the students’ lives. For Kilpatrick, Bestor’s idea of literacy separates knowledge from people’s experiences because of an unbalanced traditionalism.

Keppel gives us another tool to understand the idea of “Bachelor’s Literacy.” He says that “it is not that two parts of the academic world — the liberal arts and the ‘professional educators’ — are hopelessly separated in their aims or procedures.” Rather, both Bestor and Kilpatrick share the same assumption that there is a hierarchical relationship between academic knowledge and experience-led education. For Bestor, intellectual knowledge is superior to experiences. On the contrary, for Kilpatrick, daily experience is foundational to education. Keppel denies the hierarchical relationship altogether, claiming that the presumption that these two types of literacy are comparable items leads to unproductive debate. Therefore, for Keppel, the debate did not engage in the conceptualization of Bachelor’s Literacy, but merely justified certain ideologies. On the other hand, Keppel does not

37 Ibid., 40.
propose a way to understand the two types of literacy as one.

In addition to the idea of Bachelor’s Literacy, Keppel, Kilpatrick, and Bestor emphasize the contribution of democracy to higher education. Again, although their arguments are developed for the same goal — American democracy — their understandings of that democracy are different. Kilpatrick defends progressive education as the democratic way of learning. He explains that the purpose of schools is “to support and improve society that people may live helpfully, and not hurtfully, together.” The school is for realizing a peaceful society and, “in democratic America, our aim must be the development of all. Each to the extent of his native ability and the extent that he can be induced to put forth the necessary effort.” In order to develop every single citizen’s ability, learning and teaching should be widely available. And Kilpatrick believes that progressive education is the best way to contribute to democracy.

However, Bestor asks, “is this democratic?” He criticizes the fact that even though progressives praise democracy, they do not practice it in their teacher education. As a result, schools are not engaged in democracy. Bestor says that a “democracy... should make intellectual training available to every citizen, whether poor or rich. So great would be the benefit to the state from such a diffusion of knowledge and intelligence that it was legitimate to support the authority of law to compel every future citizen to secure an education by attending school for a substantial period of time.” Bestor agrees that the purpose of schooling is democracy, but he does not believe that progressive education is democratic. This is because Bestor believes that traditional intellectual knowledge is the way to sustain the democratic structure of society.

Keppel also believes that schools should contribute to democracy. However, his interest is in whether the debate itself contributes to democracy. He would answer no. For Keppel, the stakeholders of this debate argue not to improve the schools but to win the debate. For example, Keppel criticizes Bestor’s understanding of democracy as follows: “Life in the schools would be much simpler if the local communities agreed with Bestor.” Keppel suggests that if the debate simplifies
the complex in public schools, it does not engage enough to solve the problems. Keppel expects that “the task is difficult, and likely to become more difficult as year follows year. We do not much care about organizational patterns or titular responsibility.” Keppel believes that when issues in schools are unpacked, it is obvious that people can see the point of the debate does not engage democracy because the participants conflict with each other over minor issues, without caring about the foundational issues facing schools.

A WAY TO DISCUSS BACHELOR’S LITERACY

As described above, Bestor, Kilpatrick, and Keppel share an interest in democracy when developing their arguments about Bachelor’s Literacy. They also share the idea that teaching critical thinking is important to sustaining democratic society because it avoids indoctrination. This indicates that democracy could be a way to evaluate the debate in the United States, because democracy is a featured value. It is also the absolute value in the country’s international affairs. For example, the United States took initiatives to reform Japanese education after World War II. At that time, democratization was the core principle in reforming Japanese education. The report created by the United States Education Mission lead by George Stoddard, a president of the University of Illinois, says “as we answer these questions we shall succeed in giving other nations a sound view of democracy at work.” In order to reform Japanese education, democratic education is emphasized not only in mandatory education, but also in higher education. For example, an educational reform document says that “the first objective, then, of the Higher Education Unit was to increase the number of people who would be trained for the responsibilities of citizenship in a democracy.” The United States had a clear intention that higher education would also be for the realization of a democratic society.

In this context, normal colleges of education were upgraded to university level in Japan. According to one document, “a fresh breeze will blow into the educational world when persons educated in such an open atmosphere enter the field of

43 Ibid., 42.
45 “In Support of the New Four Year Daigaku.” In Trainor’s paper box. Stanford, 1948.
teaching. In order to destroy militaristic features in Japanese schools, the United States engaged to destroy bureaucratic characteristics in education, including the structure of normal schools. Then, both Japan and the United States made a policy agreement that “elevation of the normal school education to university level will provide better teacher training and give the teachers wider knowledge that before.” In addition to vocational training, liberal education is required for the preparation of teachers in post war Japan.

However, in 2010, the Science Council of Japan discussed citizenship and Bachelor’s Literacy without democracy. Rather, the Science Council of Japan evaluated educational policies during the occupation period as colonialism. The Council evaluates that the notion of citizenship as put forward by occupational policy is not only outdated, but also established in ignorance of Japanese culture. The Council suggests that the educational reform related to Bachelor’s Literacy during the occupation period should not be applied to contemporary reform of higher education.

A sentence in the report of the United States Education Mission says that they “found out how much can be allowed rather than how much can be forbidden.” The idea seemed not to be colonial but to be very liberal, democratic, and reasonable. At least, Stoddard himself seemed to believe that the idea of democracy and educational reform suggested to Japan was not colonial. For example, Stoddard as the president of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign cited sentences from the Education Mission’s report in a congratulatory address given on the ascension to office of the new president of the University of Florida. He said:

48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
52 Ibid., 36.
I shall cite one paragraph from the report of the Education Mission. It defines the purpose of a university. While intended for Japanese ears, it may not fall too harshly upon our own. “The University is the crown of every modern educational system. In a free society it discharges with equal concern three great functions. First, it guards as a treasure beyond price the tradition of intellectual library, stimulates freedom of thought, perfects methods of inquiry, promotes the advancement of knowledge, cultivates science and scholarship, nurtures love of truth, and serves as a source of perpetual enlightenment to society. Second, it prepares young men and women of talent, through acquaintance with the best thought and finest aspirations of all ages and peoples, for positions of leadership in the improvement of family and community life, in the more efficient and humane conduct of industry and government, and in the fostering of understanding and good will among the nations. Third, it trains selected young men and women for technical proficiency in both old and new professions, being ever sensitive to the changing and emerging needs of society.”

Stoddard could apply the same idea gifted to Japan as a goal of the universities in the United States. However, the Science Council of Japan evaluates the same idea as colonization. This is because even though the content was democratic, its application was not democratic in the Japanese context. As a result, even though higher education and teacher education in Japan had been reshaped as the United States guided, it just changed some institutional names and social statuses, and the undemocratic structure has not yet been reformed. This historical fact gives another character to democracy and education — that democratic education is possible only if it take hold in a democratic way.

CONCLUSION

I examined the foundational issue of the discussion of Bachelor’s Literacy in Colleges of Education, through the prism of the 1950s debate in the United States. I concluded that Bachelor’s Literacy should be discussed as a feature of education in the endless process of democracy. It means that both teacher training and aca-

ademic learning are continuous processes, regardless of any acquired degrees or teacher's certificates. Rather, it is a responsibility of Bachelor's Literacy to recognize education as an endless activity. Moreover, through the case of Japanese educational reform, I pointed out that even though democracy is a key to examining Bachelor's literacy, democracy cannot be realized it by undemocratic methods. This is because implanting good idea within a hierarchical relationship sets it against critical thinking.