

Lecture I

Framework and Task of the ESD Study Tour Promotion Project -Aiming at Constructing Platform Learning Theory

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Abstract

This speech aims at showing the framework of ESD Platform program in Kobe University, focusing upon the past, present, future projects. It consists of the following two parts.

First, it will explain the past and present projects concerning ESD where we have made efforts for building the platform of ESD both in Kobe University and in the local community in Japan. In the second part, it will propose a new idea regarding an international platform-building project, which facilitates learners to get the more global and broader ESD perspective.

1. Past/Present ESD platform in Kobe University

Since the beginning of UN Decade of ESD, we have adopted three approaches to developing ESD: the innovation of formal education in university, the creation of non formal education from university, the management of networking among citizen activities concerning ESD in Hyogo-Kobe.

As the innovation of formal education in our university, we have established ESD sub-course for undergraduate students. This course will be expanded both vertically and horizontally not only to all the faculties in Kobe University but also to the level of graduate school.

And secondly we have made much effort for producing non formal education on the basis of our resources. Referring to the new educational theories, we have been creating and developing such new educational undertakings as ESD volunteer promotion project, Science Shop project etc.

In the third domain of our projects, we have cooperated with many organizations both nationally and internationally to activate the community activities concerning SD or ESD. For example, Action Research Center for Human and Community Development (HC Center) in Kobe University is being designated by UN University as the base of RCE-ESD Hyogo-Kobe (Regional Center for Expertise on ESD in Hyogo-Kobe area). Our RCE consists of so various stakeholders as the local authority, NPOs, private companies, mass media, schools, and so on. Kobe University is being expected to have the initiative to promote the study and the practice concerning ESD in cooperation with them.

Thus, we have advanced ESD in these domains, where many stakeholders, scholars, teachers, students and the citizen gather. It creates chances of encountering each other. Some of our projects integrate those who don't know each other even in the same university or the community and combine their separate activities as well. The function of platform may engender in the process of implementing these projects which are organically interrelated but once in a while independently done. In other words, the platform can function as it does by 3 domains engaging each other.

We have accumulated the experience which may be useful for developing the platform. Some important findings can be pointed out as follows,

- 1) Project-centered approach is necessary in any case, above all, joint fund-raising may be much effective to networking teachers in university
- 2) Benefit of each stakeholder has to be prioritized and centered in its process
- 3) It is essential that every educational endeavor has to be implemented for the purpose of activating the informal education which foster the subjectivity and positiveness in learners
- 4) Designing and managing the learning process including the formal curriculum together with all concerned can bring about the strong linkage among them.
- 5) Platform can be the most developed by the learner. Learners can be the subject of managing and promoting the platform.
- 6) Empowerment process of learners must be situated in all phases of platform-building
- 7) Firsthand experience of the transboundary actions by all the learners and staff is essential
- 8) Staff with good facilitation skill is necessary to move learners into action

2. Future project for building the International Platform for ESD

Nevertheless, some weakness in our projects should be pointed out as well. First, the range of our platform is still narrow. The learners and supporters of the platform are

limited to the persons in the university or no less than the local community around Kobe. This may lead to learning in a limited content, confined in a specific community or nation which should be denied in the context of ESD. Second, the outcome of learning which the ESD Platform has produced looks vague or invisible even if in the short term. If we restrict the outcome to the personal and psychological change, it is natural that the outcome looks vague. But ESD partially demands the change on the level of collective behavior, community and society. Visible change such as designing a new SD projects by students is much expected as the outcome of learning about ESD.

Therefore I would like to propose the ESD Study Tour Promotion Project as one of the effective solutions, in which

- 1) many study tour programs which are separately carried out by the different organizers in different areas are put on the same platform,
- 2) information about each program is to be shared among the organizers and participants of tours,
- 3) so that any learners can easily select the favorite program and voluntarily transfer to the other, moreover, they can choose plural programs as much as possible,
- 4) mutually heterogeneous tourists as learners can encounter each other beyond the boundary of their nationality on the way to global ESD world,
- 5) learners can design and manage valuable undertakings and enterprises such as social business, fair trade benefiting the poor producers, in cooperation with stakeholders of SD or ESD
- 6) learners can be motivated and facilitated and supported to reflect themselves in a certain curriculum which have to be developed in cooperation of international academic society of ESD

Not only Kobe University but also other university in the world should have planned and implemented a plenty of study tour programs for their own students. In my proposal, those disparate study programs are to be integrated or mutually related in a line of ESD. Study tour program definitely changes its participants to be more inspired or more critical to the problem. We will be able to construct the global network for ESD by connecting several kinds of study tour programs, where we will be able to foresee the International Platform-Building project. The participants of this project will be expected to definitely play a crucial role to build the international platform of ESD, supported by many stakeholders and the cooperative.

Short Biography

Koji MATSUOKA has been a professor of Human Development Department at Kobe University since 1996 and a director of RCE HYOGO-KOBE in Japan since 2009.

He specializes in the theory of lifelong education, especially emancipatory education, influenced by Paulo Freire. Matsuoka is pursuing a new type of ESD by coordinating various volunteer activities, non formal education which the local NPOs manage to practice, and formal curriculum in the university, both as a leader of ESD Volunteer Program (name: Volaban) and as the main staff of ESD Sub-Course of Kobe University.