

# Report on the 66th Annual Tohoku/Hokkaido Regional Universities Conference for General Education

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The 66th annual Tohoku/Hokkaido Regional Universities Conference for General Education took place this year on August 25 and 26. Alternating each year between Tohoku and Hokkaido university campuses, the venue for this year's conference was Hokkaido University of Education. The main theme for this year's conference was "Aiming for quality assurance and a systematic approach to higher education."

## 1 Conference Day 1

Similar to past conferences, the first day commenced with a keynote lecture, presented by Hokkaido University of Education president Haruo Jaana. The focus of this lecture was "The Establishment of Educational Management" (教学マネジメントの確立).

Following a break for lunch, the symposium was split into three subcommittee sessions. Each meeting consisted of anywhere from six to eight 30-minute presentations. Conference participants were encouraged to choose one of these sessions when registering for the conference (Please see below (表1) for a complete listing of the presentations offered in these sessions.) The theme of the session I attended focused primarily on the need for greater internationalization amongst Japanese universities and the manners in which the individual presenters' universities were approaching this task. Included among the six presentations were topics such as the efforts one university was making to better educate its international students about Japan, methods through which universities could be more environmentally sound, the importance of English and various methods in which student prowess of such could be improved, and an introduction to one university's Wild Animal Medical Center (野生動物医学センター).

On the evening of the first day, many of the participants met for dinner at the Chateraise Gateaux Kingdom resort hotel. This afforded them the opportunity to discuss and

exchange ideas concerning the topics of the day's events in a more informal atmosphere.

## 2 Conference Day 2

The second day of the conference also got underway with a keynote lecture, presented by Toshiyuki Hosokawa, professor in Hokkaido University's Institute for the Advancement of Higher Education. The title of this address was "A Systematic Implementation of Educational Institutional Research and Curriculum Reform" (教学 IR の組織的導入とカリキュラム改革). This was followed by an announcement concerning next year's venue (Tohoku University) and an introduction of the organizing committee members.

## 3 Impressions

This was my first time attending this conference and I found a number of the presentations interesting and thought-provoking. As noted previously, the presentations I attended during the afternoon sessions of the first day mostly focused on the importance of internationalization in the Japanese universities. I certainly agree that this is a worthy goal to strive for but at times felt there was somewhat of an over emphasis on the importance of mastery of English. It appeared as if improvement in students' English skills was being equated with internationalization. To their credit, the presenters skillfully presented their ideas and I agreed with most of what was said throughout. Moreover, being an English

instructor myself, I of course also believe it important that students become more skilled in conversing and communicating in English, be it through oral or written means. Nevertheless, "English ability" should not be mistaken for "internationalization." True international understanding of course extends far beyond prowess in one certain language.

Additionally, although again it is important to emphasize that the presentations I attended were of great value, I was slightly disappointed with the manner in which the afternoon sessions on the first day were organized. When registering for the conference, participants were asked to choose which one of the three subcommittee sessions they would prefer to attend. The expectation appeared to be that upon making this choice, participants would attend only the presentations in the session they chose. I think this was a lost opportunity to introduce participants to a greater variety of presentation ideas and believe that it would be of value if future conferences could offer more leeway. Although I was mostly drawn to the session on internationalization, there were on the other hand presentations in the other two sessions that also appeared of considerable interest and I would have appreciated the opportunity to attend them. Toward that end, I believe more flexibility would make for an even more successful conference and would be greatly appreciated.

Those points aside, the conference and the organization itself provide a great service to higher academia in Japan. It champions the value of liberal arts education, which is of great importance especially now, during a precarious time in which Japanese universities are seemingly being encouraged to downgrade their liberal arts programs considerably. Medical universities in Japan are no exception to this disturbing trend, so it is gratifying that conferences such as this continue to be held, indicating that there are still many in Japanese academia that understand the importance of liberal arts education and how it can shape university students, including those in medical universities.

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表1 分科会の話題

第1分科会	第1分科会「高等教育における人材育成－大学の国際化と人材養成プログラム－」
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 地域住民と国際共修：東北大学の伝統文化の授業での実践</li> <li>2. Obihiro University getting "GREENER": transforming universities into sustainable campuses</li> <li>3. ICT 作品制作ワークショップによる技術・文化の相互啓発</li> <li>4. 国外学生を対象にした野生動物医学研修と日本人学生への波及効果</li> <li>5. グローバル時代の教育をリードする教員養成：北海道教育大学グローバル教員養成プログラムの現状と今後の展開</li> <li>6. 北海道教育大学札幌校における特別支援教育関連科目の必修化の現状と課題</li> </ol>
第2分科会	第2分科会「革新的な教育の取組とその成果－アクティブラーニングなどの取組を通して－」
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 学生の実態に応じたアクティブ・ラーニングへの段階的な取組</li> <li>2. ツールミンの議論モデルと問題発見・解決型学習</li> <li>3. 協同学習を取り入れた教養化学の授業展開 (2)</li> <li>4. 物理学の大人数講義型授業におけるアクティブラーニング</li> <li>5. 教育学生が「アクティブラーニング」の果実を得るために乗り越えるべき壁とは －北教大函館校「地域プロジェクト」での取り組みをもとに－</li> <li>6. 講義を通じた温かい人間関係作りの実践</li> <li>7. 福島大学における学生の主体的学習促進に向けて一方策 －ラーニング・コモズを核とした「教職学協働」での学習環境整備の取組み－</li> <li>8. アクティブラーニングの理論と実践－役割体験学習論に基づく AL 実践－</li> </ol>
第3分科会	第3分科会「学士課程教育の新たな評価－ステークホルダーなどの多様な視点から－」
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 卒業的の学修成果の可視化を目指した「In Folio (アイフォリオ)」の開発</li> <li>2. 福島大学における Institutional Research の取組－教学 IR を中心に－</li> <li>3. 東北大学の教育・学習活動に関する IR の導入・実践・課題</li> <li>4. 大学間・地域連携による教育プロジェクトの実践と学外者を交えた評価改善システム</li> <li>5. 酪農学園大学教職課程履修学生の教育職への育成 －中学・高校時代の部活動経験調査から見えてきたこと－</li> <li>6. 初年次教育科目「アカデミックスキル」についてのルーブリック構築 －北海道教育大学札幌校芸術体育教育専攻音楽教育分野の事例をもとに－</li> </ol>

