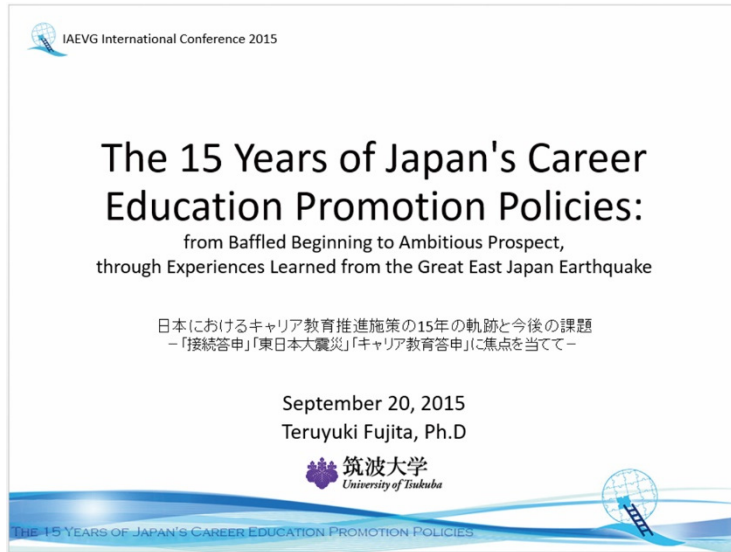


[講演録]

The 15 Years of Japan's Career Education Promotion Policies:  
from Baffled Beginning to Ambitious Prospect,  
through Experiences Learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake\*

Teruyuki Fujita (Faculty of Human Science, University of Tsukuba)



Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. It is my highest honor to be here with you today. My presentation today will be in English. However, before I start, I'd like to say a few words in Japanese to my Japanese colleagues.

筑波大学の藤田でございます。本日は貴重な機会を与えてくださいましたことに御礼申し上げます。今回は、日本におけるキャリア教育推進の動向を外国からご参加の皆様にお伝えすることを主眼とし、英語で発表をさせていただきます。お聞き苦しいところが多々あるかと存じますが、どうかお許しください。では英語に戻ります。

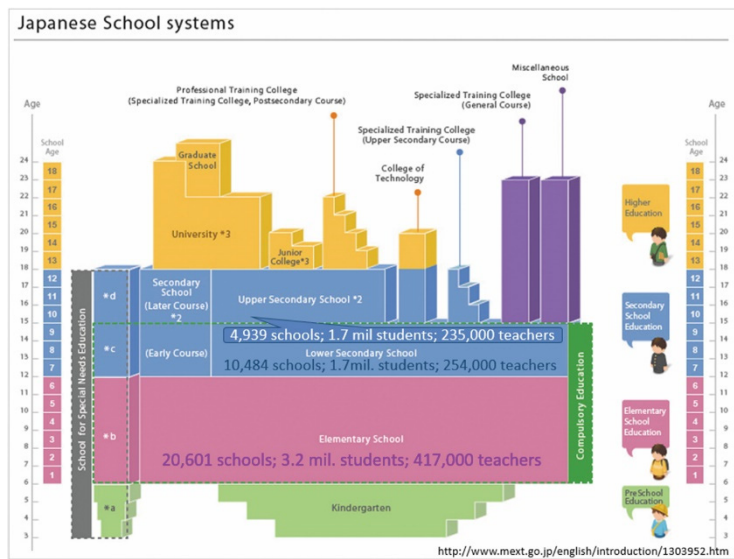
Thank you for waiting. First let me introduce myself. It's been already 22 years since I was first appointed as an assistant professor at a small private university. During these 22 years, I was working mostly as a faculty member at universities, except for the five years in the National Ministry of Education since 2008. I was a principal researcher at the Guidance and Counseling Research Center, one of the research division of the National Institute for Educational Policy Research of Japan. I concurrently served as the senior specialist for student guidance at Student Affairs Division in the Ministry of Education.

At the Ministry, I led the team responsible for national career education promotion policies, and published a series of teachers' manuals and guidebooks on career education. Some parts of my presentation today will be based on my experiences at the Ministry. Also, I have been living in the city of Tsukuba for more than 30 years since I was a freshman at the University of Tsukuba. So I can share with you a great amount of information on good restaurants and bars, or sightseeing spots in the city. However, I am not going share these nice information with you today. Instead, I am going share with you important information on how the career education promotion policies were

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\* Keynote Speech #4 at the IAEVG International Conference 2015, organized by International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance, September 18-21, 2015, at Tsukuba International Congress Center, Tsukuba, Japan; with the theme "Restructuring Careers over Unexpected Powerful Forces"  
This speech was made in the afternoon on September 20, 2015. Only the selected slides from the actual PowerPoint presentation have been inserted in this audio tape transcription.

established and have developed ever since in Japan.



As an introduction, please allow me to make a really brief overview on Japanese School system. There are about 20 thousand elementary schools, 10 thousand lower secondary, commonly translated as junior high schools, and 5 thousand upper secondary schools or senior high schools in Japan, nationwide. The total of 9 years of education from the age of 6 to that of 15 is compulsory. That is equivalent to elementary school education and lower secondary school education. On the other hand, upper secondary school education,

that is senior high school education, is not mandatory. However, more than 98% of the junior high school graduates go on to senior high schools. In every prefecture, there is a unified entrance examinations for public senior high schools. In senior high schools, a little more than 70% of the students are in academic or general courses. About a half of the high school graduates go on to universities and junior colleges. 20% would find some kind of employments. And 30% will participate in various vocational training programs.

## Before the Outset

Now, I guess we are ready to go to the main topic. Implementing career guidance and counseling in schools in Japan have never been easy. Among the complicated backdrops, we cannot disregard the following three factors:

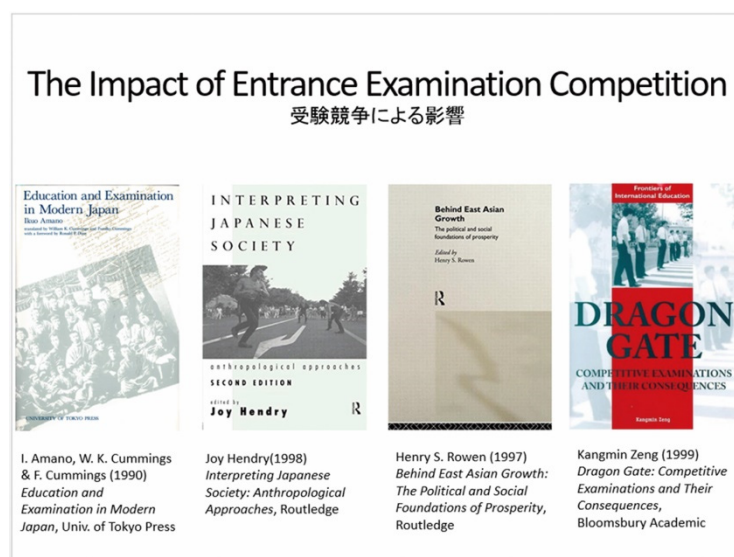
1. American Roots and Japanese Society,
2. The Impact of Entrance Examination Competition, and
3. Practices without Professional Staff.

The principles and philosophies that made up the basis for Japanese career guidance have developed from those brought over from the United States of America. Insufficient attention was paid to the features of Japanese school-to-work transition based on lifetime employment systems: for example, the simultaneous en-masse recruiting of new school graduates, the system of firm-wide on-the-job training subsequent to employment, and the periodic transfer of employees within companies.

Larger companies are particularly prone to transferring their clerical and administrative employees between departments, and for this reason it did not matter to the employers whether or not students had an individual career plan. Rather, they would prefer it if employees simply gave them free range to do as they wished, without having any expectations to perform particular duties. Industrial Labor Report published in 1991 states that the principle of recruitment is the recruitment of new graduates. They do not have either professional experience or skills. This is the common understanding regarding the recruitment. However, the Japanese asset price bubble, known as the Bubble Economy

in Japan, ended in 1991. As the aftermath, many of the larger companies have diminished the firm-wide in-service training programs for unskilled new graduates. During the last two decades, the realities in school-to work transition in Japan have extensively been diversified.

Now let's focus on the Reason 2. In post-war Japan, the most companies have hired only new graduates without any professional experiences or skills, and train them from scratch. The trainability has been the key factor which enables a jobseeker to secure a position. Top-ranking university students are considered to have stronger trainability because of the fact that they passed very competitive entrance examinations at least twice: once somewhere at K-12 level, mostly at senior high school level, and the second time at university level. Both students and their parents did not pay much attention to the career plans. The entrance examinations have long been the major source, quite often only source, of worry for them.



In my presentation, I will skip the detailed discussion on the examination competitions and leave them to these remarkable previous studies.

However, here again, the situations have been changing since the collapse the Japanese asset price bubble in early 90's. Also, there are gradual decline of the youth population in Japan. Various evidences show that so-called "academic qualification-based society" has loosened its hold in recent years. However, for instance, the parents of junior high

school students still hope to see their children enter high-level senior high schools if at all possible through competitive entrance examinations.

And the third reason "Practices without Professional Staff" is, I would say, very Japanese. There are striking differences between Japan and other countries, especially western countries. Within American schools -particularly high schools- the school counselor plays a central role in operating a range of programs to support students in career development. As you can see, The American School Counselor Association states that helping every student develop competencies in career planning is one of the fundamental missions and goals for the school counselors. Finnish secondary schools' the activities center on a career counselor known as *Opinto-Ohjaaja*. As the Finnish Minister of Education and Culture mentioned in 2006, at the primary and lower secondary schools, there are qualified full-time counselors to give guidance. In England, career formation support is, or I should say "was", provided through partnerships between schools and advisors that belong to regional organizations known as Connexions Services. This is the website provided by the Leicester City Council. In Europe, in fact, many countries provide career support through partnerships with organizations outside the schools. Particular examples of this are the UU-centers (*Ungdommens Uddannelsesvejledning*: youth guidance centers) in Denmark. UU-centers are established across the country. Also in Germany, BIZ (*Berufs Information Zentrum*: job information centers) have been

active in cooperation with the schools.

On the other hand, Japanese schools give the responsibility for career guidance and counseling to the members of school teaching staff, each of whom has their own subject to teach. This situation comes about mainly because of the "class teacher system" universal throughout primary and secondary schools in Japan. An educational activity known as "class activity" or "homeroom activity" takes place once a week in all schools. This involves group work and discussion-based activities, during which students learn how to form positive relationships, plan how to enjoy class and school activities, and think about their own futures. The person leading these activities is the class teacher. Emotionally, the class teachers are truly "in loco parentis" for the students in their classes.

## The Baffled Beginning of Career Education Promotion Policies

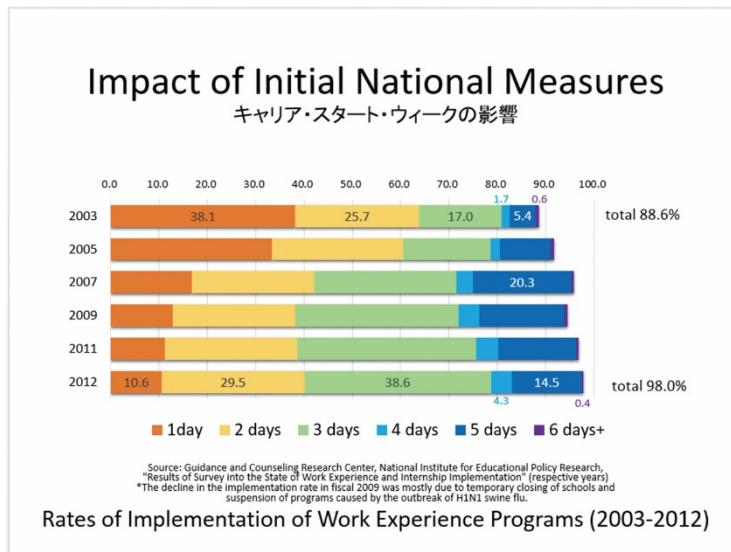
Now, I will move to the second phase: The Baffled Beginning of Career Education Promotion Policies. A strong awareness of the need to promote "career education" as a national policy matter arose in December 1999, when the Central Council for Education; the most comprehensive consultative agency to the Minister of Education called for the implementation of career education from elementary school level. It reads "there is a need to implement career education from the elementary school level, in line with each stage of a child's development, in order to provide smooth transitions between school and society, and between different levels of schooling. This education should help students to gain a desirable perspective of employment and work, as well as knowledge and skills related to work itself, and at the same time, encourage them to understand their own personalities so as to foster their abilities and attitudes and allow them to select their own careers independently.

The main backdrops of the proposal were the increasing number of young people out of work, and those who spend their time on part-time, mostly unskilled work, who are known in Japan as "Freeters". The report points out the following in regard to this: An increasing number of new school graduates show an interest in becoming "Freeters", and currently around 9% of senior high school graduates leave school without progressing to higher education or entering employment. In addition, according to a survey by the Ministry of Labor, 47% of new senior high school graduates and 32% of new university graduates leave their employment situation within three years. The reason why part-time work and high frequency of job changing drew serious attention from the government is the fact that so-called lifetime employment practices were deeply rooted in Japan as I mentioned earlier in my presentation. It had always been assumed that young people would move from full-time study directly to full-time work. Yesterday, I am sure that many of you learned the situations in detail in the Keynote made by Dr. Reiko Kosugi.

However, the first reactions were very unreceptive. Primary schools showed almost no interest. Junior and senior high schools did not see any necessity to change the practices from the traditional career guidance. Especially, many of the top-notch academic senior high schools disregarded the idea of career education. Many of them were afraid of losing the time for the cramming-type of instruction designed to make students prepared for the university entrance examinations.

And in 2005, the Ministry of Education launched a nationwide campaign to promote five-day work experience programs at all junior high schools. The campaign had a strong emphasis as the

countermeasures against the unstable youth employment situations. This continued until fiscal 2008. A budget of 460 million yen was allocated during fiscal 2005, and the total of more than 1.1 billion yen were apportioned over the four years till fiscal 2008.



Prior to the proposal of Career Start Week, almost 90% of all junior high schools already implemented some sort of work experience program, but around 40% only offered the program for a single day. One-day implementation did not produce the anticipated results.

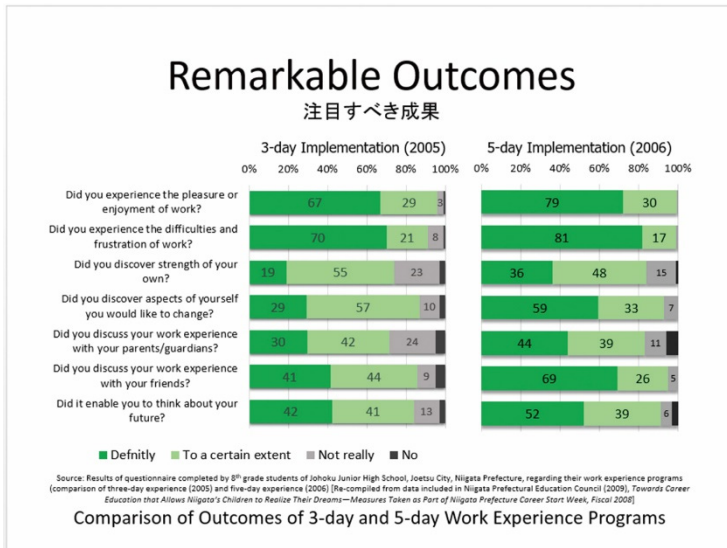
Firstly, this was not significantly different to the workplace visits implemented broadly across elementary schools. Secondly, the more cooperative the workplace to school visits, the more likely they were to try to create an

enjoyable experience for the students; treating them as guests and entertaining them. If the students were visiting a bakery, for example, the staff may prepare Danish pastry dough, and prepare the bread right to the last stages, so that when the students arrived they were given egg to wash onto the top of the bread, dark cherry compote to place inside the pastry, before being offered the finished product to taste. The students would write in their reports that "we made our own Danish pastries and they were delicious", but in fact they did not make anything at all. They did not touch the day-to-day reality of a baker.

Thirdly, and in complete contrast, there were some cases reported where businesses took the line that "since they stay here only for a single day," the students should only be shown the most peripheral aspects of work. For example, cases were reported of students who visited a wholesale fish market, or a nursing home, but the only "experience" they were given was that of weeding the outdoor garden. Now, the percentage of three-day or longer work experiences is around 60%, with five days or longer around 15%. This should be acknowledged as success.

The majority of prefectures and municipalities established committees or councils for work experience programs. Typically, such committee at a local municipal level is comprised of the specialists from the board of education; director of principal association; officers from the municipal office; and representatives from industry and commercial sectors. The two central roles common to the most of the committees are to increase the number of participating business enterprises, and to adjust the schedules of work experience programs held by different schools. Also, many made original stickers or banners to be distributed to the participating enterprises to strengthen the presence and recognition of work experience programs in each community.

With these local endeavors, longer work experiences allowed students to touch the day-to-day running of a workplace at first hand, and contributed to their internal development. This Figure shows some of the outcomes of 5-day work experience program for 8th grade students in 2006



compared with those of 3-day program in the previous year at the same public junior high school. 5-day implementation led students to much deeper self-understanding and social recognition. We can find apparent differences in the results by the questions such as "Did you discover strength of your own?", "Did you discover aspects of yourself you would like to change?", and "Did you experience the difficulties and frustration of work?"

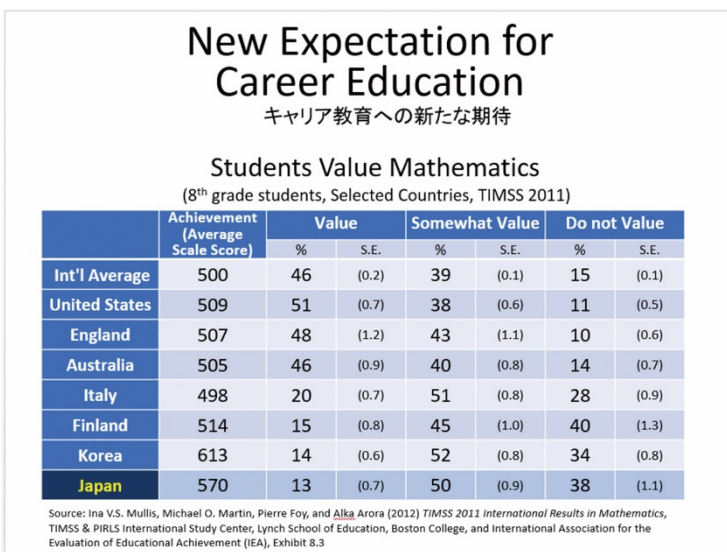
Nevertheless, I should say it was the Baffled Beginning. There were spread of

the misunderstanding of career education. Many of the teachers took work experience as the principal and crucial programs in career education. Less attention was paid to systemic approach through entire school curricula. Also, junior high school level was taken as the central stage. Some elementary schools and senior high schools placed themselves to "the safe zone" where erosion by time and energy-consuming career education is blocked.

### New Direction of Career Education: The Shift from Countermeasures against Youth Employment Issues toward Education Initiatives

However there was a new move in the direction of career education. That was the Shift from Countermeasures against youth employment issues toward education initiatives. The first change occurred in 2008 when the Ministry of Education started the revision of the national curriculum standard. The Central Council for Education pointed out that the students need the competencies necessary in the knowledge-based society, especially the motivation to learn. I will quote: While there are changes in the employment conditions such as increase of non-regular workers, and changes in the university entrance with declining enrollment, students are losing motivations to learn and are failing to develop good study habits, due to the strong anxiety for the future and low visibility of the

significance of learning in connection with their own prospects.



This statement was based on the evidences from international studies such as TIMSS and PISA. This table shows the results for the TIMSS 2011 Students Value Mathematics scale in the selected countries. The scale addresses following six aspects of valuing mathematics:

- I think learning mathematics will help me in my daily life;
- I need mathematics to learn other

school subjects;

- I need to do well in mathematics to get into the university of my choice;
- I need to do well in mathematics to get the job I want;
- I would like obtain a job that involves using mathematics; and
- It is important to do well in mathematics.

Internationally, on average, 8th grade students placed a high value on mathematics. Japanese students, however, ranked at the very bottom among all participating countries and regions. Around 80% of the 8th grade students in Japan do not wish to obtain a job that involves using either mathematics or science. In achievements, both in TIMSS and PISA, Japan is and has been above many countries. But, most of the students do not have motivations to learn. For them, learning has presumably been dreary burden inevitable only to pass the entrance examinations, disconnected with their own prospects.

Also, the Status quo of Youth Employment has been changed. In 1999, the Central Council for Education found that there was an increasing number of new school graduates showing an interest in becoming "Freeters" However at present:

- Students who wish to be a part-time workers directly after completing initial school education are quite rare.
- Among young people labeled as "Freeters" or NEET, the percentage of new school graduates are gradually decreasing.

Then in January 2011, the big change was brought forth. The Central Council for Education changed the definition of Career Education. I will quote the new definition: Education which encourages career development by cultivating the competencies and attitudes needed to raise the social and vocational independence of individuals. This definition is based on the understanding that all persons live their life while playing various roles, such as that of a professional, a family member, a member of the larger community; and that these roles change, accumulate, and interact over the period of lifetime. Also, the Council reconfirmed that career education program should be implemented at all schools from pre-primary to tertiary levels, and the practices through each school's overall educational activities are crucial.

Also, the Council proposed a clear recommendation on the competencies to be fostered through career education as "the Basic and General Competencies". The Basic and General Competencies consist of four group;

1. Competency to establish relationships and community.
2. Competency to manage and understand oneself
3. Problem-solving Competency. And
4. Career-planning Competency.

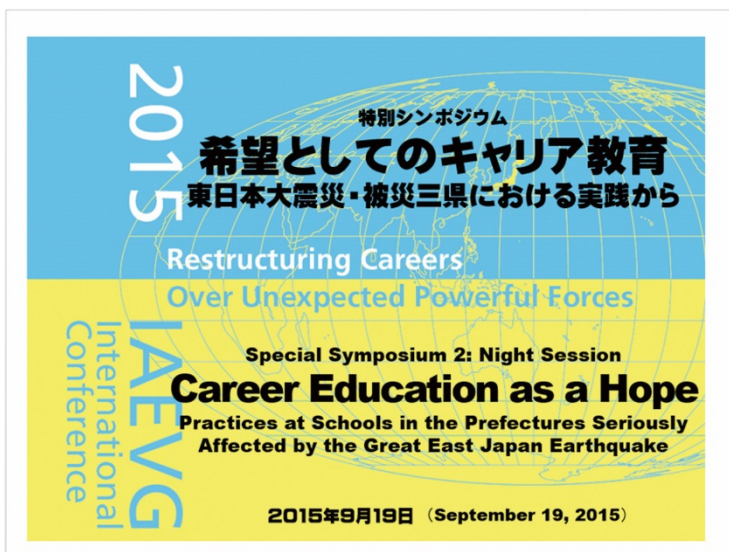
As you can easily see, all of the competencies are indispensable in both life and professional career in the 21st century. But, as I explain later in my presentation, The Group 1: Competency to establish relationships and community is crucial in the social context in Japan today.

## Experiences Learned from the Unprecedented Earthquake and Tsunami Disasters in March 2011

It was only 2 months later when Japan had to face the devastating experiences through the Unprecedented Earthquake and Tsunami Disasters. There was the outbreak of the Great East Japan Earthquake at 2:46 p.m. on March 11 in the year 2011. The earthquake directly hit the Northeast of Japan, the Tohoku Pacific District. The magnitude was 9.0. It was the largest earthquake recorded in Japan. Then about 40 minutes later from the outbreak, the Tsunami hit the Pacific Coast. The maximum height of tsunami was at least 14 meters.

Japan is one of the earthquake-prone countries. So many of the buildings and houses, especially those build in the last forty years, are earthquake-resistant. It was the Tsunami that killed more than 15 thousand people. Then soon after the Tsunami, a nuclear power plant accident occurred in Fukushima prefecture. These disasters suddenly changed the daily life of entire Japan, especially Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima Prefectures. The disasters have left devastating experiences to the people living in the affected areas. I will not go into the details. However, most of the areas in the pacific side of the Tohoku region was overwhelmed by Tsunami.

We, the Japanese nationals, never forget the great support of the international community. Please allow me to take this opportunity to reaffirm our gratitude and express our sincere appreciation for the international assistance.



Last night, the special symposium was held regarding the career education practices in the seriously affected regions. The title of the night session was "Career Education as a Hope". We had four excellent presenters from Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima Prefectures. What they described was the remarkable recovery processes and impressive career education practices and their results. We should be proud that career education truly is a hope not only for the students but also for the entire communities in the regions.

So, in my presentation. I would like to focus on the situations immediately after the earthquake disaster. These two pictures are taken on the first night at Otsuchi Senior High School. People once swept away by the tsunami and other victims were carried to the public facilities used as shelters. Among such shelters, school buildings and facilities played significant roles. School building constructions were based on the most rigorous building standards and wide indoor spaces such as gymnasiums were suitable as shelters. Yes, some of the school gymnasium was used as the morgues in the overwhelming situations.



Teachers immediately gathered to schools including those who could not yet confirm the safety of their own family members and those who lost their house swept away by the tsunami. They did their best to confirm the safety of the students. And the students gathered to the schools as well. They provided clothing to the victims. They used everything from gym uniform or windbreakers left at school. They tore off the curtains from the classrooms and provided as a substitute for a blanket. It always goes below the freezing point at night in March in the Northeast of Japan. Students did all this by their own independent decisions.



These pictures are taken a few weeks after the disasters. The Swimming pool was used as a laundry and for drying clothing. The gymnasium was divided into small cubicles using thin clothes and used as family bedrooms. Of course, there was no privacy protection devices available. The victims and evacuees had to spend days in fear and despair

However, we learned that career education practices had amazing effect. As many of us can remember the TV broadcasts that reported the order and

humane warmth at the shelters. People world-wide witnessed that many primary and secondary school students made a substantial contribution for the evacuees and victims. The students exhibited the competencies learned through career education programs in the overwhelming situations. It was the students who gave the courage and the hope to the entire people in the shelters.

Also, we must not forget the secrets that gave order to chaos. The administrators and teachers at schools, and the local residents knew each other through the experience-based career education programs at the workplaces. They knew each other by name. So they were able to form a team and became united soon after the disasters. However, at a few shelters, there were struggles over the relief supplies, quarrels among evacuees, and robbery cases. Such regrettable incidents happened only where the Career Education Promotion Councils were not organized. We learned that community-based career education programs, such as work experiences, can unite the community as a whole.

Also, we have to remember the risk from unexpected natural powerful forces is always behind us. It was only ten days ago, we had a terrible rain. It started in the evening of 9th and continued to the morning of the next day. It caused a flood in the city of Joso located approximately 15 km away from this Congress Center. It only takes 20 minutes if you drive.

Career education practices alone can never prevent the natural disasters. However, we have to justifiably recognize that career education initiatives can play many significant roles in human resource development and community rebuilding afterwards.

## Ambitious Prospect

### Continuing National Efforts

今後も継続される推進施策

- National In-Service Training Programs for the Leaders in Career Education
  - 5-day intensive program (approx. 250 participants nation-wide: teachers, administrators, supervisors selected by the prefectural boards of education)
  - Twice a year (120-130 participants each time)
  - Collaborative program with the Ministry of Education(MEXT) and National Center for Teachers' Development (NCTD)



Now, please allow me to describe some bright prospects for the future for career education practices in Japan.

First, I should mention that we already are able to make some bright prospect through the current continuing national efforts. For instance, the National In-Service Training Program for the Leaders in Career Education is in place for 15 years. It was started soon after the recommendation for the national career education promotion policies was announced in 1999.

The forerunner of this in-service training program was called National Program for the Career Guidance and Counseling which dates back to 1960s. So I would say that the programs have the history spanning more than 50 years. The pictures shown on this slide is from the program in 2012.

At that time, I was working for the Ministry of Education and was in charge of this collaborative efforts with the Ministry of Education and the National Center for Teachers' Development headquartered in the city of Tsukuba. This is the 5-day intensive program. We receive approximately 250 participants nation-wide. This includes teachers, administrators, supervisors selected by the prefectural boards of education. We divide 250 into two groups. We repeat the same program twice on a different schedule, about 130 participants at a time. We provide the variety of units during the 5 days, including lectures, group discussions, workshops for developing career education programs under the given school conditions, and workshops for individual and group career counseling.

Here is another example of the continuing national efforts. The Ministry of Education together with the National Institute for Educational Policy Research have been publishing guidebooks and booklets for the quality practices. These English versions of two booklets are in your congress bag. If you still have your bag with you, please take them out and have a look, especially the back cover

of the green one. These guidebooks and booklets were published after the important change was made. The important change here means the shift in the base concept of career education changing from the countermeasures against youth employment issues to broader education



initiatives. These publications were distributed to every single school; three to five copies to each. Also the entire pages are open to public on the official website of the Ministry of Education.

Now, let's look at some of the new national Initiatives for sustainable community-oriented career education. To further encourage the participation of business enterprises in career education, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry started two new programs in 2011: the authorization of the training and certification programs for the career education coordinators, and the commendation ceremony of the Career Education Award to recognize excellent education support activities by enterprises.

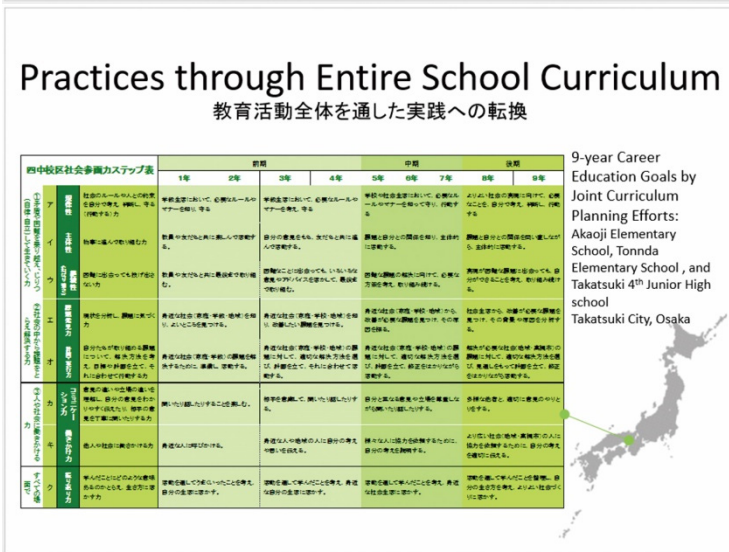
The first one mushroomed to the establishment of The Consortium of Career Education Coordinators. The aim of the consortium is to build networks among individuals interested in career education, enterprises, NGOs schools, administrative agencies in order to create wide-range opportunities for learning. Today the consortium is authorized to provide the training and certification programs for the career education coordinators.

On the other hand, in the same year, the Ministry launched the Career Education Award to recognize enterprises and business organizations that are making efforts in career education. At the commendation ceremony of the first Career Education Award held in 2011, six excellence award winners presented their activities and Panasonic Corporation's "Social Studies and Environment Learning Program: *Eco-Monogatari* (Eco-Story)" was selected as the grand award winner. Furthermore, in 2012, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Education jointly established the new award: Awards for Partnerships for Career Education Promotion to recognize pioneering comprehensive collaboration projects for career education conducted between educational institutions and regional and business organizations. The Table on this slide presents the winners of the major awards in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

We can find the wide variety of programs run by the Career Education Awards winners. For example, the Fukui Young Entrepreneurs Group (YEG): Job Expedition "Entre-Kids", offers various lectures and hands-on experiences to primary school children at school settings. YEG prepares a "magic manual" so that any person of any age from any size of company can easily become a lecturer. Thus, managers and employees of small and medium enterprises in the region are telling children about the severity of jobs, great benefits of working and excellence of industries rooted in the region.

Program run by Sony Life Insurance is also a good example. The company provides lessons about life planning mainly at junior and senior high schools in many regions, taking advantages of their branch offices throughout Japan. During the 2-hour program, a life-planner will consult a group of students about having a future prospect and dream from a professional perspective including various risks and opportunities in society, help them build a simulated life plan, and lead the discussion for the self-reviews on the plan.

Furthermore, in 2012, Ministry of Education launched a portal site: Bridging Students with Society. The site allows business sector users to register their programs to support educational activities with various search criteria such as program characteristics, target age groups, geographical availabilities, etc. Also, school personnel can register their specific needs and requests with the same



criteria mentioned above. Any visitors can search the registered programs and school needs. However, since new similar systems have been developed by many of the prefectural and local boards of education, the current number of registered programs is very limited. But, I would like to say that the website triggered the following similar endeavors in many parts of Japan.

As I mentioned earlier is my presentation, the Central Council for Education reconfirmed in January 2011 that career education program should be implemented at all schools from pre-primary to tertiary levels, and the practices through each school's overall educational activities are crucial. Some schools, I would not say the majority of schools, have already created systemic programs. This is the 9-year Career Education Goals established through the joint curriculum planning efforts at one of the school district in Osaka. Two public elementary schools and one junior high school have cooperatively created

the original career education goals for the students in the area.

This is another example of a result from the cross curriculum management efforts for career education at one public elementary school in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture. I am sorry that all of the detailed information is in Japanese. However, career education at this school is no longer limited to job shadowing or work-site visits. The traditional delivery system of career education at schools in Japan that puts regular teachers as the central figures is now becoming an advantage in realizing the comprehensive career education programs.

According to some newspapers, a special team in the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan, the political party in power, is ready to submit a bill tentatively entitled "Career Education Promotion Act" to the current session of the national Diet. The bill requires that both national and local governments to establish their career education promotion plan and organize career education promotion councils. Career education in Japan is just about to enter a new era.

Thank you very much for your attention.