

Can second-order concepts change Japanese history classroom ?

A case study of Japanese history teachers

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Background

-Second-order concepts have been regarded as key concepts for disciplinary history education
-disciplinary history education has resolved around two struggles:
(1)'usefulness and boring' history teaching which was dominated by dictation and board-copying (Keating and Shldon, 2011)
(2)counter-reaction toward traditional history telling 'Grand Narrative' of the nation to shape collective memory (Seixas, 2000)

This educational approach is suited to the education of critical citizens in a liberal democracy (Seixas, 2000):
strong influence by western culture?

Research Method

RQ1:What role do Japanese history teachers use second-order concepts in their own classroom practice?
RQ2: What is the rationale used in such a role?

Findings

a) The roles

Teacher A

- 1) a means to an interactive and interesting class
- 2) a tool for encouraging learners to think independently

"I've never informed the students which concepts should be chosen. I always let them decide for themselves which concepts to choose and analyze the resources. That is quite important"

Teacher B

- 1) As a perspective for encouraging learners for deeper historical interpretation
- 2)As a tool for teachers' own lesson preparation

"I thought they(=concepts) were a useful perspective to get students to explore more deeply, and they also gave me a good perspective to look for good examples when I preparing."

Discussions

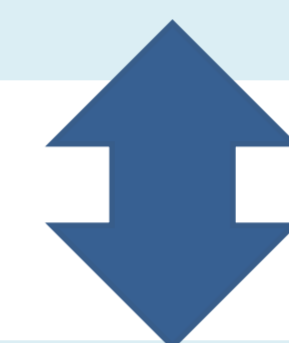
- Second-order concepts were used as a tool for content-oriented, passive history education reform
- Depending on the teacher's beliefs, which concepts are chosen used in the classroom varied
- Less focus on critical aspects, which related to examine the 'Grand narratives' (depoliticization)
→reflected by the tradition of Japanese history?

Context: Japanese history education

Traditional history class

-content-driven curriculum

-the characteristics of Japanese history education (comparing to Germanys): '(focusing) on **the empirical building blocks of history**'
-bureaucrats who emphasizes on maintaining the **neutrality** controlled the official curriculum



New national curriculum (2018-)

-competency-based curriculum

-'*Mikata-Kangaekata*' (the way of seeing and thinking about society)
-In history curriculum, **second-order concepts were newly introduced as key concepts of *Mikata-Kangaekata***
-critiques about teacher education are not well-prepared

- Purposive sampling: two secondary school teachers
- Case study (Stake, 1995)
 - Document (teaching resources, lesson plan)
 - Semi-structured interview
- Interview questions: 1)How do you use second-order concepts and why? 2) How do you explain the advantages and disadvantages for using those concepts

b)The rationales

- ✓ Teacher's belief that personal relevance to history is important for history education
- ✓ History for developing active citizenship
- ✓ The close relationship between in- and out-of-classroom
- ✓ Teacher's belief that historical inquiry is important
- ✓ History for developing deeper historical interpretations
- ✓ The focus of high-stakes testing (university entrance exams)

References

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