

[Dialogue between Speakers and Participants: Session 2]

Akira Ninomiya (Hiroshima Study Center, the Open University of Japan)

We have heard three different scenarios and if I may, I would like to make a few comments before we open the floor for questions. First the scenario of Mexico given by Dr. Sylvia Schmelkes, I think, is what we call the personalized education scenario so that in her case, the future schooling can be categorized as personalized learning. And then Dr. Abdul Rashid Mohamed of Malaysia taught us the importance of responding to changes in society. What he said seems to be very familiar to Japanese people as we have observed there are trends in society, and education must respond to those changes. We also know there will be many changes in the coming days so education must be prepared for them. And now we can see that in Malaysia they are having discussions on whether we should reform or transform, and in that way they are creating future scenarios. And although this may be different for African countries, Dr. Pierre Kouraogo outlined the challenges that face his country, Burkina Faso, as they contemplate 2015 and beyond. I would like to thank each of the presenters, and before I ask the audience to give us your own scenarios or visions of future schooling, I would like to take just a minute to ask Dr. Carol Mutch two questions. First, what impression do you have of these three scenarios that we just heard? And as for the final scenario, do you think it is possible for a country to jump from the 1st to the 4th quadrant?

Carol Mutch (Government of New Zealand)

I'll answer the 2nd question on whether it is possible for a country to jump from the 1st to the 4th quadrant. My feeling would be if you wanted to go from fragmentation to where you are designing your own curriculum, the questions that would need to be answered are: 1) Do you have the infrastructure?; 2) Do you have the leadership?; and 3) Are your teachers well enough prepared to make the necessary decisions on inclusive education from a wide range of possibilities? If you have teachers who haven't had intensive teacher training programs, how do they prepare themselves to jump from quadrant 1 to 4 without going through the identity-building process or having a national commitment to common goals? It is a very risky undertaking. We need to get some countries to slow down and see that they need to move through the phases and not to jump too quickly because the training isn't available, and the personnel don't have the skills of our model.

Akira Ninomiya (Hiroshima Study Center, the Open University of Japan)

Can I ask the participants your own ideas? This is not the matter for asking questions. This is just for asking your own visions. You don't make any critical comments on that. But you do give us your ideas on how you view the schooling for tomorrow especially in developing countries. If we can have three scenarios on the table, then the policy people here or JICA people can make a choice so that they can design how they can make an input into the educational policy development process. For example, the design in school space or buildings as suggested by Dr. Mohamed's scenario. If you chose a different scenario for 2015 or 2020, what might it be? So you are really free to share with us your own scenarios whatever they may be.

Question 1

Thomas Henry Meglasson III (Chiba Prefectural Government, Japan)

I work as a coordinator for International Relations and I don't know if this is a scenario not just for developing countries but even for America and Japan. Parental involvement is a problem in America and Japan, and by that I mean especially in regards to expectations. Everybody has different expectations on what is the teacher's responsibility and

what are the parents' responsibilities for almost everything. What morals are the teachers supposed to teach? What belongs in the classroom? What belongs at home? And the newer trend and I don't think it is a trend in policy but you see more and more parents who leave everything to the school with an attitude of "my kids are your problem." Then you have "monster parents" in Japan who really push their kids but put a lot of pressure on the school if their children fail, and then it is the teacher's fault. It seems you need to address this in community-building in which the parents are involved and everyone has the same responsibilities.

Response from the panelists

Akira Ninomiya (Hiroshima Study Center, the Open University of Japan)

Thank you for a very nice scenario. The relationship between the family and school or how this relates to the community is very important. If we have the scenario that parents will express their own ideas, and parents' involvement is more and more likely to occur, the policy leaders, while maintaining their own future scenarios as a base of their activities, must also be aware of this trend.

Carol Mutch (Government of New Zealand)

Can I comment on that as well? That is an issue we faced in New Zealand. Because exactly with every right there is a responsibility, so with the devolution of power in New Zealand, each school now has its own governing board made up of parents, and external evaluation organization reports go to the governing board. So the responsibility for decision-making is a joint responsibility between the educational staff and the parents who make up the governing board, and they indeed make a lot of resource decisions.

Dr. Abdul Rashid Mohamed (Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia)

I think that was a very good observation. In the case of Malaysia if a student gets excellent results in public exams, it is the student who is smart. And if the student fails, it is her teacher's fault. School students' academic performance is normally based on and measured by performance in public exams. Exams have become the central issue of schooling. Students are trained to perform well in public exams. This is because they are the main yardstick used for university entrance and job opportunities. We are supposed to evaluate intelligence, but we seem to forget that intelligence is multiple in nature and that the power of memory is just one. Most of our exams measure memory work or recollection of what has been taught or parroted in class. We should also be appraising competency, capability, ability, aptitude, proficiency, skills and experience. We should be thinking how we could do this accurately as this is definitely a better measure and a fairer reflection of a student's true ability.

Question 2

Kengo Takahashi (University Student, Japan)

I am a student studying psychology. I don't know if this is a scenario or not, but earlier there was a question on how pedagogy can change with the times. But I believe that although some aspects of education may change over time, there are aspects that must never change. Of course, in any time or age you need to look at the circumstances. You also need to listen to people and monitor statistics. I don't know how I should put this, but regardless of the time or age there should be one solid consistent pillar. If you have that pillar, you can implement good quality education. What do you think are the aspects that must never change with the changing times?

Response from the moderator

Akira Ninomiya (Hiroshima Study Center, the Open University of Japan)

There are several scenarios in OECD future schooling. Yours can be described as the “status quo” scenario. The system or the way of teaching and learning may remain as it is. Let me remind the audience that this forum will issue a report so your scenario will be distributed to the readers in the world. Please let us hear some more from the floor.

Question 3

Yuko Kato (Sophia University, Japan)

I'm a freshman majoring in Education Science. Your presentations made me think about my own scenario, and that is to focus on teachers and why they are important. At home, parents support their children's growth, but outside the home, teachers are the only adults who support children's growth. So they should not be just teaching professionals. They must be able to focus on children's growth. To nurture such high-quality teachers, I think that teachers must be trained to see individual children so that they can teach them in the optimum manner.

Response from the moderator

Akira Ninomiya (Hiroshima Study Center, the Open University of Japan)

Who is the teacher of the teacher? Anyone in the audience care to answer?

Prasad Sethunga (University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka)

So this is a real comment. I also think about teacher education and what kind of teacher will be needed for a certain child's development all the time. We are talking about child-centered education, but according to your opinion it is so complex that we have to think of not only the child but also the subject content and also the other skills taught in the teacher training. That is why I presented a policy document that asks how we can become reflective teachers through teacher training. We had three ten-week teaching practice opportunities for our teachers whom we gathered from all four universities in Sri Lanka and tried not a top-down approach but development of best practices by the teachers. From the schools, senior teachers shared extra curricular activities, and using this mentoring system, we are trying to develop our teacher training. It is very difficult, but we put the name “reflective teacher” as a frame for a teacher like this.

Akira Ninomiya (Hiroshima Study Center, the Open University of Japan)

Indeed her proposal is about how she defines the role of teachers in the future and what responsibility teachers should be given by the school system. We have about five more minutes, which is plenty of time to hear from a few more of you.

Question 4

Masafumi Nagao (International Christian University, Japan)

I would like to ask Prof. Ninomiya and the panelists about the theme of this forum: Collaboration toward Greater Autonomy in Educational Development. This theme hasn't changed for the last seven years with the basic assumption behind that being that educational development should be thought of first in national terms from the viewpoint of national policy. However, what I heard today from the keynote speakers gives me some apprehension that national systems will not be adequate for many states or even developed countries. In an evaluation conducted in secondary schools in Hiroshima this year, there were so many problems that wouldn't fit any of the stable scenarios found elsewhere. So my apprehension is that the framework given by Dr. Mutch is still in national terms. I wonder if any

of you would comment on collaboration among states or different parts of the states or systems in different countries, which may shed some light as to where we are in the disparities found in education and other social activities.

Response from the panelists

Carol Mutch (Government of New Zealand)

I think as long as countries' political systems have a national focus that gives us a unit that is of a size we can work with. I don't think we're ready to operate in a world of permeable boundaries until we're more stable. Support for minority language and ethnic groups won't be lost by operating through national systems. If we go too quickly to a global world, there will be groups that won't have a strong enough voice to remain viable. So I think the national unit is the one we need to deal with at the moment. In the long term I think you may be right that we are moving towards more collaboration among systems. And if I may make a second comment, collaboration is also an inward-looking process. That is collaboration that looks internally within schools, states, districts, and international cooperation plays a huge role in that. Education for all, if I can use that phrase, ensures that we all have the same chance at life.

Sylvia Schmelkes (Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico)

The world is very heterogeneous. Education is called upon to build up into what Dr. Fay King Chung was saying this morning. We need to ask what kind of development we want for the African states and realize that it is not the same as what I may want for Mexico. But there is still a need to comply with the development goals. Since countries are very different, there are many different pathways towards development. To understand how to make education comply with development, I believe, when we think about the future, intersectoral policies that bridge agricultural development, educational development and social development are called for to respond to these needs. It is within a heterogeneous world that they will be enriched.

Akira Ninomiya (Hiroshima Study Center, the Open University of Japan)

Thank you very much, and with that let us end the session.