

Expectations for the School Subject ‘Home Economics’ — Focusing on ‘Independence of Children’—

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Abstract

This lecture lays out my expectations for the school subject ‘Home Economics’ under the next National Course of Studies in Japan. It is based on my long-time belief and hope for ‘Home Economics.’ I believe that the subject ‘Home Economics’ should be necessary in the school curriculum and needs to transform its teaching goals, contents, methods and processes in order to ensure ‘Children’s Independence’ which must be an original or unique aim and role of ‘Education.’

Despite the form or shape of ‘home’ to change in the future, I believe the role or function of ‘home’ must be basically unchangeable. It is thus very important that ‘home’ as the basic unit of the individual life has its functions of consuming, preservation environment, raising children, leisure or rest, learning, food, clothing, and housing.

Though I know ‘Home Economics’ has long been concerned with ‘Children’s Independence’, its concern has been directed mainly to various skills needed for independent life like cooking, clothing, housing, gardening, and manipulating personal computers. However, as the general aim of ‘Education’ shall be ‘Independence or autonomy’, the role of ‘Home Economics’ should be examined not by those skills but by its philosophy or social ideas of ‘Independence in Human Life’. ‘Education as the fact’ is not the same as ‘education as the philosophy or ideal’. The former means ‘Achieving Independence’ of younger generation including that among animals, birds or fish, the latter means some kinds of the ideal like the ‘Whole Person’, ‘All Abilities-Developed Person’ or ‘The most Self-realized Personality.’

In my opinion, ‘Independence’ includes the meaning that children must have an ability to judge freely and by herself or himself as ‘the sovereign’ politically and to accept the others’ freedom to judge independently. I have called this ‘the freedom of children to create their own society’, not to be forced to adapt to any adult’s society. The term ‘Education’ has a critical difference in this point from ‘indoctrination’ or ‘training’, and, in the former, we can guarantee the dignity of children’s character or humanity.

The subject ‘Home Economics’ needs to focus and examine its contents in order to be more directly connected with the original educational goal of ‘Independence’ than with skills for it, even though the form of ‘home’ is to change in the future.

Key words; home economics, children’s independence, indoctrination