

International Symposium  
Rethinking Teaching: Toward the Reconstruction of (Philosophy of) Education

Broadly speaking, it seems that the discourse of education has been centered on learning since the rise of New Education. This trend still continues worldwide, Japan being not an exception. As typically shown by the report of the Central Council of Education with the title, “Nature of Japan’s Education Prospects of the 20 Century” (1996), learning occupies the central place in the contemporary educational discourse in Japan and “learning, thinking, judging, and acting of one’s own initiative” is expected from the future children. Learning, surrounded by other related concepts such as autonomy, self-realization, and the power to live (*ikiru chikara*), constitutes the major constellation of the contemporary educational ideas in Japan. Teaching, on the contrary, retreats into the background as something that supports learning that is characterized as “a journey in search of the self”. The active learning, which is much talked about now, can also be placed in this trend.

However, this trend is not flawless. For example, it can easily be connected with the neoliberal thinking, running the risk of degrading education to a service industry that provides the customers with the merchandises.

In this situation, it is the task of the philosophy of education to examine the trend critically (as did Socrates 2500 years ago) instead of providing fashionable ideology to it. This might mean the deconstruction and (if necessary) the reconstruction of the constellation of learning, autonomy, self-realization, and the power to live in the educational discourse.

The reexamination of teaching can play an important role here. This does not mean that we should reintroduce authoritarianism and compulsion into education. As long as we are bound with such old ideas, we can never get out of the vicious circle of learning and teaching. What is sought after is to liberate teaching (and learning) from this closed sphere of dichotomy.

In this symposium, by inviting Professor Gert Biesta, the author of *The Rediscovery of Teaching* as a guest speaker, we would like to deepen our discussion about this problem.

Moderators

Morimichi Kato (Sophia University)

Masamichi Ueno (Sophia University)

Presenters

Gert Biesta (Brunel University)

Shigeo Kodama (The University of Tokyo)

Fumio Ono (Doshisha University)

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