

## Online Seminar at RIHE in Hiroshima University

### ■ Date

2 February 2021, 14:00-16:00

### ■ Venue

Online seminar via Zoom (English)

### ■ Theme

Junior academics in Japanese universities: their experiences and challenges

### ■ Abstract

Systemic efforts to encourage junior academics to integrate universities and academia have been expanded. However, there are limited studies to explore what they are experienced in their classes, academic communities, or daily lives. Therefore, the seminar would be an excellent opportunity to share the recent studies about academics in Japanese universities focusing on junior scholars who have different backgrounds such as gender, foreignness, or international academic and educational career. Through the seminar, we will try to understand who they are and which challenges they face and find some potential ways to embrace them in Japanese universities with the perspective of diversity beyond the policy initiatives. Dr. Jongsung Kim as an international faculty member will present his experiences in the class with Japanese students based on his self-study. Dr. Yusuke Sakurai will share his research about the academic development of junior international academics working in Japanese universities. Dr. Yangson Kim and Dr. Machi Sato will discuss the experiences and challenges of junior female academics in Japanese universities.

### ■ Program

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|-------------|--|
| 14:00-14:05 | Introduction<br><i>Yangson Kim</i>   |
| 14:05-14:30 | A Korean Stranger in a Japanese Classroom: Being a Better Teacher Educator in a Foreign Country<br><i>Jongsung Kim (Hiroshima University)</i>  |
| 14:30-14:55 | Japanese academia for the scholarly development of foreign early career researchers<br><i>Yusuke Sakurai (Ochanomizu University) and Shannon Mason</i>   |
| 14:55-15:20 | Exploring academics in socio-cultural contexts: focusing on experiences and challenges of junior female academics (JFAs) in Japanese universities<br><i>Yangson Kim (Hiroshima University) and Machi Sato (Kyoto University)</i> |
| 15:20-16:00 | Discussion   |

This open seminar is being held with the research grant from JSPS (20K13906: PI-Yangson Kim, Toward a dynamic academic society: Integrating a new academic generation in Japan).

## **A Korean Stranger in a Japanese Classroom: Being a Better Teacher Educator in a Foreign Country**

*Jongsung Kim*

In this presentation, I describe the challenges and struggles I experienced as a Korean “stranger” who has tried to become a better teacher educator in a foreign Japanese classroom. Through a process of self-study and reflection spanning two years, I have tried to understand the impact of perceptions of my ‘self’ as a stranger on my teaching practice. The self-study highlighted that I was a stranger not only as a Korean in Japan, but also as a newcomer to teaching in Higher Education. By following a process of self-study, I could deliberate the aim of my teaching, accept my vulnerability in teaching and reevaluate my foreignness as an asset to maximize pre-service teachers’ learning. This also meant that I could grow as both, a culturally sensitive educator and as a reflective practitioner. This chapter argues that developing and identifying ‘self’ is an essential element to reflect on when attempting to improve one’s teaching and that self-study is a suitable approach for an Early Career Teacher (ECT) to use to connect themselves and their teaching.

Jongsung Kim is an Assistant Professor at Hiroshima University, where he teaches social studies methods courses and runs international research projects and student exchange programs. He is interested in designing school-based interventions that support students to overcome the national discourse gap between countries and achieve mutual understanding. Furthermore, his research extends to educate pre-service and in-service teachers who can cross cultural and national borders with their students.

## **Japanese academia for the scholarly development of foreign early career researchers**

*Yusuke Sakurai and Shannon MASON*

Abstract

The mobility of early career researchers is commonplace worldwide, and it is also the case in Japan. Our project is currently collecting survey data addressing the scholarly development of foreign early career researchers in Japan. To date, we have collected around 300 responses from foreign early career researchers in Japan. In this seminar, we will share our updates and insights from the data considering what we know from prior nationwide projects. Our talk will exclusively focus on the Japanese academia as a career development arena for foreign early career researchers. It will further report who are in struggle in developing their scholarly expertise in Japan by sharing the summary of our survey dataset. We hope this seminar will be an opportunity to share challenges and possibilities for exploring healthy career development opportunities of foreign early career researchers in Japan.

Dr. Yusuke Sakurai is Lecturer at Ochanomizu University, Japan. He received a PhD in education from the University of Helsinki, Finland. His main subjects are students’ learning in international settings, pedagogy in higher education, and support for early career researchers. For the past 12 years, he has studied, taught, and worked as a researcher in several foreign countries, including Thailand, Australia, Malaysia, Egypt, and Finland. He is currently appointed as a junior board member of Japan Association for International Student Education.

## **Exploring academics in socio-cultural contexts: focusing on experiences and challenges of junior female academics (JFAs) in Japanese universities**

*Yangson Kim and Machi Sato*

### Abstract

This study examines the experiences of female academics in Japan, focusing on those in the first stage of their academic career at university. The concepts of productivity and competition are important issues for a successful academic career and will guarantee competition in higher education institutions in a neoliberal policy context. However, diversity and inclusiveness are also critical. This study assesses the experiences of JFAs as they comprise one of the minor groups of academia, and national and institutional policies have clear limitations in terms of their treatment. Seven JFAs in the field of social sciences were interviewed using semi-structured questions. These focused on their academic career experiences, including their doctoral program and current job, work-life balance, and future career plan. At most, the interviewees had spent five years working as academics after they gained their last degree and were either in their 30s or 40s. Five were married, and two were single. Four of those that were married had children. We believe that this study could help to encourage the increased participation of females in the diverse settings of academia by assessing the current status and identifying the challenges that are faced by JFAs.

Dr. Machi Sato is an associate professor in the Center for Promotion of Excellence in Higher Education at Kyoto University. Dr. Machi received her D.Phil in Education from the Oxford University. Her areas of interest include academic identity, academic profession, professional development of academic & graduate students, and higher education policy in Asia-Pacific countries.