

Developing Mentoring Programs Supporting Curriculum Design by Japanese History Teachers

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The objective of this paper is the development and proposal of a mentoring program to help novice high school teachers of Japanese history build expertise for designing overall history curriculum. Learning history, and Japanese History B in particular, presuppose a chronological curriculum; thus, there are limits on the extent to which novice teachers can reconsider the meaning of learning history in their chronological history curriculum. Consequently, the support of a mentor can allow Japanese history teachers to continually reassess their objectives and reflect on their teaching, such that they can reconstruct their curricula, which have come to make the learning history itself their primary purposes.

The mentoring program proposed here is comprised of three phases: I. Creating awareness of the practical purposes of one's classes, II. Increasing alternatives within one's classes, and III. Developing a meta-cognition of one's own growth. There is a five-step mentoring process that is shared by these phases. This fundamental process is: ①Class observation → ②Surveys → ③Dialogs → ④Providing resource materials → ⑤Follow up. This mentoring program has been revised based on the results of a pilot survey that took a prototype developed by the author and implemented it with the collaboration with novice teachers in the same prefecture. The final version has also been adjusted following advice from colleagues and specialists. Since the repeated dialogs on "objectives", which form the nucleus of the mentoring program, are carried out in an on-going process over a fixed period, it allows teachers to form critical consciousness of their own rationales of class, which they would not be able to do over the span of a single session. Hence, we can expect growth for these teachers, who serve as the gatekeepers designing their Japanese history courses, with an understanding of the issues inherent to a chronological history curriculum.

The significance of this paper is that it seeks to specify and visualize the aims of each phase of the mentoring process, which has been something of a "black box" to date. Furthermore, it is also possible to apply the diverse and concrete intervention methods in the mentoring program for Japanese history teachers to other subjects' teachers, as well as guidance for student teachers.

Key Words: Mentoring Program, Teaching Gatekeeping, Curriculum Design, Chronological History Learning

1. Location of the Problem

1.1. The Current State of the Professional Growth Process for History Teachers, and Problems Therein

In schools, where young history teachers develop their professional skills, the following three major problems currently exist.

First, there are fewer opportunities for young teachers to grow. A cause here is the changing circumstances surrounding teachers. Wakimoto (2015) has presented the data on the changing demographics of teachers, increasing workloads, and changes among children and parents/guardians, showing that, in many cases, it is difficult for senior teachers to support younger teachers.

The second major problem is that classroom improvement measures tend to be disproportionately in favor of techniques and approaches that can be immediately implemented. For instance, these include accumulating ideas or stories that will elicit student interest, learning more beautiful ways of writing on the board, creating easier to understand printouts, utilizing ICT more effectively, practicing better ways of stimulating discussions and presentations, etc. Although improving teaching skills is important for teacher development, it tends to be difficult to connect this with deepening the approach to the subject being taught and asking, “Why am I teaching this?” “Why are students learning this?”

The third major problem is that the ideal that young teachers strive for is founded upon their personal experience as students. This is a pronounced problem in history education. What many students think is a “good history (World History/Japanese History) class” is one that “completely,” “efficiently,” and in an “easy to understand (or fun) way” gives a historically linear knowledge of events covering voluminous facts from the past. This is what Osaka & Kusahara (2015) call an “internalized model/ideal” (p.191). If there is no meta-cognition or reflection provided on the classes teachers have taught, it results in going no further than reproducing the “good history classes” that teachers had (or wanted to have) once

as students.

1.2. Possibilities for Mentoring in Teacher Education

In recent years, mentoring programs have received attention for boosting professional skills during teaching training. In the past, the standard training model was to support teacher development through on-the-job training in which young teachers were guided on a daily basis by their senior colleagues and strove to improve their teaching abilities and skills in the workplace. As mentioned earlier, however, this has become more difficult as circumstances surrounding teachers change. Consequently, programs are increasing that provide support through mentoring as part of approaches such as training for first-time teachers and in-school programs for educating young teachers.¹

Within Schön’s context of the “reflective practitioner,” Iwakawa (1994) has redefined the apprenticeship system in education, stating that mentoring is supervision and support by an experienced specialist who fosters the development of a new specialist.

Implementation examples have also been reported of so-called private mentoring that is separate from systematized mentoring and is intended to boost specialization in the subject being taught. For example, Mikami (2006) has proposed an English teacher training program utilizing a mentoring approach. The program basically involves pairs, mentors and trainees, who work on English pronunciation. Mikami himself is actually part of the program, putting in place a mentoring framework requested by mentors seeking support. This teacher training program assumes a four-month term focusing on guidance in English pronunciation and comes under the umbrella of action research aiming to foster better instructors. The current research covered in this paper here is meaningful for its proposal of a teacher training methodology that specifies objectives, thematic focus, and duration. Since the content of Mikami’s mentoring is “weekly e-mail reports by the trainees to their mentor candidates conveying the progress of their action research and any questions or concerns over the implementation of

that research” (p.49), a black box still remains as to whether teacher development would be enhanced based on different timing and different content of the mentor candidates’ advice and support.

Imai et al. (2015) have tried to clarify that support for protégés from mentors in middle school science classes alters their problem solving processes. Protégés have the same lessons (on sunlight and how leaves grow) observed by two mentors, with one of the lessons chosen for discussion by the Classroom Research Committee. It was shown that protégés’ classes improved from the planning stages, thanks to input from mentors given during the observation period and at the meeting of the Classroom Research Committee. The practical research of Imai et al. is significant for its concrete information about the mentoring process—it clarifies the areas in which mentors intervened with protégés and it discusses which comments by mentors impacted which parts of the protégé’s classroom elements, if there was an impact. However, an unbalance can be seen in favor of improving the processes, methods, and techniques for laboratory experiments, such as “identifying a problem,” “observing and experimenting,” and “summarizing results and strategies.” The research does not take into account how protégés can utilize mentoring to reflect on their classes and reassess their objectives. A remaining issue is how mentoring affects the future direction of the class and its content.

Kawamura & Nakayama (2005) have tried to clarify the trajectory of growth for home economics teachers resulting from lesson observations, post-lesson discussions between observers and students (aiming to encourage reflection by students), and interpretations of changes in the statements made by instructors. Although Kawamura et al. do not directly comment on mentoring, it is reasonable to describe the relationship between students and observers as essentially a mentor-trainee relationship. Kawamura et al.’s practical research goes further than simply improving classes, but can be evaluated in terms of how it uses mentoring to deepen instructors’ reflection on the class’ goal of “reconsidering the subject of home

economics.” However, although the research comments on the results and offers discussion on mentoring, concrete support for trainees is only provided as a side effect. If concrete proposals could be added, such as specifying situations, the manner of support, and the nature of expected growth from intervention through mentoring, the approach could become one able to constitute a program for supporting the growth of teachers.

Development of concrete, deliberate mentoring programs that overcome the above issues of prior research (“lack of clarity regarding the growth process for teachers,” “insufficient ventures beyond the improvement of teaching methods and techniques,” and “lack of clarity regarding intervention processes during mentoring”), bears significance as a method for incorporating a focus on reflecting on objectives of the subject being taught and for supporting the improvement of the pedagogical skills of young teachers.

2. Objectives and Methodology of This Study

The objective of this study is the development and proposal of a mentoring program to help young, high school teachers of Japanese history improve their skills for curriculum design in their classes.

For history classes, and Japanese History B in particular, it is standard to follow a chronological history learning² based on textbooks that describe each era or field of history. Behind this approach to the chronological history learning is the philosophy that “cause-effect relationships in history are consecutive and it requires chronological awareness of history, one period after another.” (Okuyama, 2000, p.227). Since this perspective of history is accepted as norm in Japanese history classes, there are limits to how deeply teachers can critically reassess the meaning of studying history by themselves. It is here that the encouragement of supporters (i.e., mentors) helps instructors continually reconsider and reflect on the principles and objectives of their pedagogical approach to Japanese history, such that instructors proactively notice events in their classrooms and re-orient themselves with

regard to their goals set to teach chronological history. Arguably, mentoring becomes an opportunity to improve classes for the sake of achieving the learning objectives of Japanese history.

The mentoring program this study proposes has been devised after completing the following steps:

- (1) The author developed a prototype plan referencing the results of the aforementioned prior research.
- (2) The prototype plan was implemented from May to November 2016. The author acted as mentor and interacted with two young teachers within the same prefecture who agreed to participate in the trial program.
- (3) The prototype plan was revised based on the results from a pilot survey. Recommendations from colleagues and specialists were also incorporated when redesigning the plan. This additional input was instrumental, given that the author acted simultaneously as both developer of the program and a mentor implementing the program.

3. Overall Design of the Mentoring Program

3.1. The Three Phases Comprising the Mentoring Process

Table 1 shows the overall design of the mentoring

program, which is comprised of three phases.

Phase I involves trainees reflecting on their classes and specifically noticing their individual goals. The objective here is for trainees to explain to their mentors what they have emphasized in their classes and why they have emphasized these points, in addition to noticing their perspective of their subject that has informed how they teach their classes. This allows them to reacquaint themselves with what they value in their classes vis-à-vis the particular circumstances of their school.

Phase II involves trainees increasing the breadth of optionality in their classes. For this phase, the objective is to have trainees compare their classes with those of similar content at other schools. They try to notice any differences, explain why there are differences, and relate this to designing classes other than the ones they have already taught.

Phase III involves trainees developing a meta-cognition of their individual transformation. The objective is for trainees to recognize the goals of their units or classes and reflect on whether they have selected, from the available lesson plans, approaches that are suited to circumstances in their class, while also noticing the way those units or classes are situated within year-long

Table 1: Overall Plan for the Mentoring Program

Mentoring	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
Aim	Creating awareness of the practical objectives of one's classes	Increasing optionality in one's classes	Developing a meta-cognition of one's individual transformation
Rubric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being able to explain what one emphasizes or values in one's classes. - Being able to notice why those elements are being emphasized and to demonstrate an awareness of one's experiences to date. - Being able to explain why one values those elements in class and how they fit within the context of one's school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being able to notice differences between one's own classes and those of other instructors. - Being able to explain how and why these difference exist. - Being able to design approaches to classes other than those one has already taught. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growing an awareness of the objectives of the current units or classes and being able to design classes suited to objectives, choosing from among multiple class plans. - Being able to design units or classes so that they are situated within overall, year-long plans. - Being able to design units or classes with an awareness of the objectives of overall plans.

programs. This helps teachers gain an awareness of how the classes themselves, and their approaches to classes that they direct on their own, are transforming or evolving.

Note here that the relationship between Phases I, II, and III is not necessarily an ordered progression.

For instance, if a trainee does not feel that there are any issues with his or her classes, he or she can begin from Phase I and reflect on their classroom approach. Or, if they are already aware of certain issues and would like to change them, it would be effective to begin from Phase II and then circle around to Phases I and III. Furthermore, if instructors have experienced diverse classes, but have recognized a desire to more fundamentally transform their classes, Phase III can be taken as the starting point to look back on how their teaching has evolved, after which, cycling back to Phase I or II can be considered. Each phase can be chosen targeting the needs or considerations of the trainee, and no fixed path need be followed from any one phase to the next.

As such, Figure 1 shows a graphical representation of the connections between phases.

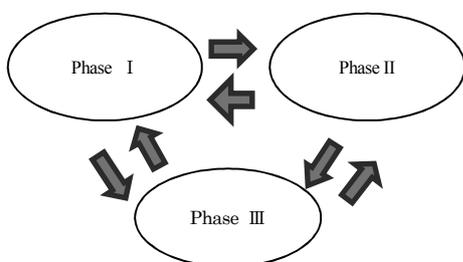


Figure 1: Phrase Relationships

3.2. Five Steps Comprising Each Phase for Mentors and Trainees

The following shows the fundamental mentoring process common to each of the three phases.

- ① Class observation → ② Surveys → ③ Dialogs → ④ Providing-resources → ⑤ Follow-up

Class observation ① is intended as an opportunity for mentors to share their experience ahead of dialogs and

follow-up efforts, while also being a chance for mentors to listen to trainees so that they can interpret their views.

Surveys ② are separated into those carried out at the first and final classes, and those carried out for each mentoring session. The survey for the first class draws on past class experiences, while the surveys for each mentored class draw on results and challenges faced during that particular class. The final class survey takes a comprehensive look at the mentoring overall. In every case, the mentor gathers together the topics that will spur dialog and uses the surveys as a means for understanding the trainee’s awareness of problem points. The objective is also to have the trainee record his or her efforts and reflections.

While surveys allow trainees to contemplate their classroom approach from their own perspective, dialogs ③ have the objective of collaborative reflection between mentor and trainee. Topics of dialogs, which are at the core of the mentoring process, can be chosen in line with the aims of each phase.

Providing resources ④ is carried out in response to the problems the trainee is aware of vis-à-vis the results of surveys and dialogs. To further encourage reflection, mentors can furnish suggestions for instructing students, supplementary materials, and specialized research or scholarly works that help to achieve the goals of each phase. Surveys and dialogs alone are not sufficient for deepening and expanding introspection, given that they are framed by the viewpoints of the two parties, by the flow of the classroom environment, and by the relationship between the two parties. Theoretical data and case studies are called for in order to step outside the mentoring pivot, reflect on class from a “balcony” position, and engage in analysis and comparison. The content and volume of materials that are provided should be selected in line with the trainee’s circumstances. The content of materials can be used as topics for each day’s dialog and follow-up consultations.

The follow-ups described here ⑤ are implemented in person or via e-mail and involved

exchanging opinions related to the resource material with the objective of supporting the design of future classes, units, or annual plans. The follow-ups should especially strive to bring third-party viewpoints from resource materials to bear on the mentor-trainee relationship so that opportunities are created to reconstruct outlooks and reassess the design of classes and curricula. Furthermore, they are chances to encourage the progression toward additional mentoring or to smoothly transition between mentoring phases.

These steps, ① - ⑤, are repeated for each mentoring phase, with approximately one-month gaps left between phases so that trainees can reflect without feeling rushed. Consequently, the mentoring process can be assumed to span approximately six months.

4. The Mentoring Process in Each Phase

4.1. Phase I

Table 2 provides details on the mentoring process during Phase I.

① Class observation:

The objective here is for mentors to understand

their trainee’s outlook on the class and the academic subject. It is not simple for young trainees to reflect on their classes and articulate what they find. It is here that mentors are instrumental in observing classes while preparing questions that will encourage personal insight in dialogs after each class. Mentors should utilize video and note taking to record aspects of the class. These records should be passed on to trainees at the end of the mentoring program and used as material for noticing personal growth.

② Surveys and ③ Dialogs:

The objective here is for trainees to form an awareness of the goals and aims of their classes. However, it is exceedingly difficult for trainees to respond to a sudden question from a mentor such as, “What is your personal outlook toward your classes?” Results from classroom observations and survey answers should be used as hints for launching into a discussion focusing on what a trainee emphasizes and values in his or her class. A mentor should use questions intended to deepen the trainee’s reflection. These can include, “Do the classes you teach resemble or differ from those you had when you were in high school?” “Is there an instructor whom you

Table 2: The Mentoring Process in Phase I

Target situation	Encouragement provided
① Class observation	To determine the aims of the class To provide notes on the class at a later date
② Surveys ③ Dialogs	Primary themes of dialogs: class objectives taking into account the circumstances of the students at the current school Inquiring about the results and challenges of the class Inquiring about the school and the students - Targeting the characteristics of the school, the circumstances of the students, and the desires for progress after graduation - Targeting the pedagogical processes for geography and history classes - Targeting what teachers want to teach students through Japanese history classes
④ Providing resources	Research papers related to teachers’ gatekeeping capacities: Examples: - Kusahara, K. (2016). Mokuhyou-wo Ishiki Shite Naiyou-wo Kosei Dekiru Kyoshi-no Shitatakasa [A Challenge of Teacher who can Reconstruct the Contents with Considerations of Aims] . <i>Social Studies</i> , 688, 12-15. (in Japanese) - Watanabe, T. (2016). Gakushu Shido Yoryo-wo Iksu-mo Korosu-mo Koko-no Kyoshi Shidai [Depending on Teachers How to Deal with the National Curriculum] . <i>Social Studies</i> , 688, 16-19. (in Japanese)
⑤ Follow-up	The mentor and trainee read the two research papers and trade opinions on them during the follow-up meeting. - Targeting thoughts about “gatekeeping by teachers” - Discussing what type of gatekeeping the teacher personally engages in

aspire to be like?” “Have your classes changed or evolved from your previous school to your current school?” etc. The mentor should ask questions like these but refrain from specifying good points, bad points, or areas to improve upon. The purpose here is to stoke expectations for what the trainee can gain from personal reflection and to clearly convey to the trainee that the dialogs are not times for “guidance” or “direction.”

④ Providing resources:

Trainees are led to recognize the elements that they emphasize and value in their classes and are provided with material that supports reflection on the reasons behind those value choices. Resources should specifically be chosen that cover the concept of teaches as gatekeepers and their concrete implementation of gatekeeping.³ Kusahara (2016), for example, writes that “it is certain that once an instructor abandons his or her individual goals, the class becomes an exercise in simply conveying the indicated material and is something far removed from a directed learning experience” (p. 14), and “the importance of teaching social studies can be amplified to an unlimited degree based upon the gatekeeping of the instructor” (p. 14). Watanabe (2016) has shown that the objectives of the instructor can impart a substantial influence on the content of a unit, and how a unit develops. In his descriptions of two classes studying the period around the Onin War, the first class was designed with the goal of “learning the past” and therefore placed its emphasis on including all events, while the second class was designed with the goal of awareness through discussing current society, and therefore placed its emphasis on the structure of historical periods. Kusahara expounds upon the principles of teachers as gatekeepers, while Watanabe treats the practical aspects. Reading these two research papers as a set stimulates recognition of one’s own decisions and intentions that are intrinsic to one’s role as a gatekeeper and to daily approaches to teaching, while also stimulating reflection on one’s pedagogical perspective. Note that resources provided in Phase I should be selected for their easy accessibility, such as non-specialized/mass market

education periodicals with comparatively shorter articles.

⑤ Follow-up:

Using e-mail exchanges, the mentor and trainee should exchange their opinions regarding the trainee’s philosophy of gatekeeping and personal implementation of gatekeeping. This situation differs from the dialogs in that the mentor accepts the trainee’s ideas while also providing his or her own as well, thereby putting the focus on having an equal footing for exchange of opinions. Perspectives should especially be extracted dealing with the gatekeeping that typically has broad control over Japanese history classes (including the ideas that the course of history should be taught without any omissions or lacunae, that the teacher should use lively presentations that bring scenes to life, and that scenes should be reproduced using realistic props and teaching materials should be used).

For Phase I, the elements shown in Table 1 (“Being able to explain what one emphasizes/values in one’s classes, ” “being able to notice why those elements are being emphasized and demonstrate an awareness of one’s experiences to date,” “being able to explain why one values those elements in class and how they fit within the context of one’s school”) should be covered until each is achieved and a sufficient judgment can be made to move on to Phase II. Furthermore, the trainee should propose ways to expand and design his or her class with content choices cognizant of the class’ objectives.

4.2. Phase II

Table 3 provides details on the mentoring process during Phase II.

① Class observation:

Touching on the mentoring progress made in Phase I, classes should be observed to see whether the trainees are teaching with an awareness of their objectives. In actual practice, it is not predicted that classes will achieve great changes in a short period of time. Notes should be taken so that, in subsequent dialogs, trainees can check whether there is any disconnect between their stated goals and the actual classes.

② Surveys and ③ Dialogs:

While referencing survey responses, mentors ask trainees about the results and challenges of the course. Mentors should focus on how much the effects of the dialogs and follow-up from Phase I are evident, particularly as to whether trainees are learning to evaluate themselves vis-à-vis their individual goals.

Mentors provide instructional suggestions and supplementary resources targeting the next class that will cover the same historical period or events. These items could include the mentor’s own previously used materials, those of other teachers, publicly available resources, etc. Whatever the case, items should be selected that were designed based on different objectives than those the trainee had used for that particular class. Opinions should also be exchanged here as to how the new suggestions differ from previous classes and why those differences exist. Once this has been discussed, mentors should ask,

“Could a different agenda actually be implemented for this class?” and, “What are the objectives of adopting that type of different agenda?” While clarifying the contextual differences, the interaction should review the possibilities for common goals.

④ Providing resources:

Provide trainees with research papers that will challenge their views of Japanese history classes and that discuss the pros and cons of the chronological history learning. The following three papers are concrete examples. Kurokawa (2014) argues in her paper that “it is indispensable to have middle and high school classes teach chronological history following the content of textbooks” (p.46) and is critical of the decreasing number of subject-specialized classes (History, etc.) in teacher training programs. The paper holds that the number of teachers with insufficient specialized knowledge is increasing as a result of the introduction of practical, project-based classes.

Table 3: Mentoring Process in Phase II

Target situation	Encouragement provided
① Class observation	To observe classes from the perspective of “is the teacher proceeding with class with an awareness of the class objectives?” To provide notes on the class at a later date
② Surveys ③ Dialogs	Primary themes of dialogs: targeting possibilities for other kinds of class agendas/plans Inquiring about the results and challenges of the class Exchanging opinions on the other plans suggested - What are the differences with the current class’ plan? - What are the reasons for the differences? Inquiring about possibilities for other kinds of class agendas/plans - Is it possible to implement another plan? - What are the aims of adopting that new plan?
④ Providing resources	Research papers on the chronological history learning Examples: - Kurokawa, M. (2014). The Issues in Training Teachers for History Education. <i>Historical Journal</i> , 774, 46-54. (in Japanese) - Yui, D. (2012). Koko Rekishi Kyoiku-no Kaikaku-to Shikoryoku Ikusei [Reforming the History Education in High Schools and Advancing the Thinking Skills] . <i>Historical Journal</i> , 749, 34-43. (in Japanese) - Moriwake, T. (1986). “Rekishi” Dokuritsuron-no Mondaisei : Genriteki Kosatsu [Problem of “History” as Independent School Subject; Theoretical Consideration] . <i>Bulletin of Japanese Educational Research Association for the Social Studies</i> , 34, 78-88. (in Japanese)
⑤ Follow-up	Reading research papers - Which paper do you most closely associate with? - Which elements of the argument resonate with you? - Which points will you reference when designing future classes?

Yui (2012) takes the standpoint that “it is essential in the systematic teaching of Japanese history to overcome the tendency to seek for the single, correct-answer” (p.43). In comparison of history education in the U.S. and Japan, the U.S. has emphasized the importance of cultivating critical thinking skills by showing students possibilities for varied developments in the past, and the existence of multiple interpretations of the past, while in Japan, the strong trend toward systematic history education has favored a representation of history as a single (linear) path of development. Criticizing this approach, Yui argues for the importance of reforming high school history education into a critical thinking approach more suited to a global society.

Moriwake’s paper (1986) convicted “a chronological history imbue classes with their individual values” (p.86) and it is therefore critical of instructors using this approach. Moriwake argues that teaching a chronological approach to history a single value-injection. This creates a challenge that exists on a fundamental level for such ways of teaching.

The effective judgments of these research papers represent different conceptualizations of chronological history curricula. Kurokawa takes a defensive stance toward linear history teachers, Moriwake adopts an opposing, critical stance, while Yui argues for a dual approach in history education that incorporates a systematic perspective and the cultivation of critical thinking skills. The differences in standpoints toward chronological history are rooted in divergent views of the academic subject and dissimilar philosophies of Japanese history education. Consequently, reading and comparing these papers should provide trainees with an opportunity for reflecting on the fundamental question of “Why am I teaching Japanese history?”

⑤ Follow-up:

After a set period of time, the mentor inquires about the trainee’s impressions from comparing the three papers. The mentor specifically asks, “Which paper do you most closely associate with?” “Which elements of the

arguments did or did not resonate with you?” and “Which points will you reference when designing future classes?” Furthermore, while asking trainees to situate their own approaches to teaching Japanese history within the context of the arguments made by the research papers, the mentor encourages the reconsideration of meaningful objectives for the subject, given that the majority of high school students will not necessarily go on to major in history.

4.3. Phase III

Table 4 provides details on the mentoring process during Phase III.

① Class observation:

This step in Phase III examines how trainees are proceeding with class with an awareness of their objectives, and carries forward class observations focusing on changes following Phases I and II. Since some changes can be expected after three to four months have passed since beginning the mentoring process, mentors should strive to notice these changes and take notes on them.

② Surveys and ③ Dialogs:

In Phase III, opinions should be exchanged on the topic of chronological history as it relates to the class being taught. Specifically, among “the historical flow of the periods,” “the structure of historical era,” “the characteristics of historical periods,” “comparisons between historical periods” and “the relationship with our current age,” trainees should be asked which of these their class objectives emphasized. Additionally, the different standpoints on chronological history and the study of history seen in the resources provided in Phase II should be referenced as the merits and demerits of chronological history learning are discussed.

To this should be added examples of classes that have been attempted within this chronological history framework, asking the trainees which ideas (and to what extent) they might like to extract regarding the possibilities for redesigning classes that had used this approach to the study of history.

④ Providing resources:

There are two types of resources to provide. There are notes on the mentor’s own attempts to teach history from a chronological perspective and there are specific notes from each mentoring step (notes taken during class observation, notes on survey responses, post-class dialogs, follow ups, etc.).

The former—concrete examples of trying to redesign the chronologically historical approach—should be provided with two contrasting samples. One sample, aiming to discuss “characteristics of historical periods,” is a proposal for instructing students on *masu* (measuring containers) in the Middle Ages (Ishikawa, 2014). This class did not target a compendium of historical phenomena, from political to social, economic, and cultural events, but rather targeted the conceptualization of society in the Middle Ages from the perspective of “separation of powers.” This approach had students read and interpret a material showing how different size *masu* were used from

region to region and manor to manor. This made students recognize the significance of *kyomasu*, which instituted a nationwide standard.

Another sample is the study of “the imperial system in modern Japan,” aiming for a meta-analysis comparing and contrasting historical discourses running through each period in Japanese history (Ishikawa, 2007). Students are often not necessarily clear about the simple question of why the emperor, who had unimpressive influence in the Middle and Early-Modern Ages, suddenly gained justification as the ruler of Japan from the Modern Age onward. Since textbooks and classes in Japanese history uniformly use the term *tenno* (literally, “heavenly ruler”) for the emperor, it is accepted as fact that the imperial system is the traditional political system of Japan. However, it should be expected that it was a considerable political challenge for the Meiji government to earn the people’s understanding and acceptance for a new ruling

Table 4: Mentoring Process in Phase III

Target situation	Encouragement provided
① Class observation	To observe classes from the perspective of “is the teacher proceeding with class with an awareness of the class objectives?” To provide notes on the class at a later date
② Surveys ③ Dialogs	Primary themes: possibilities for redesigning chronological history curricula Inquiring about the results and challenges of the class Exchanging opinions on chronological history learning - Among “the flow of historical periods,” “the structure of historical periods,” “the characteristic features of historical periods,” “comparisons between historical periods,” and “the relationship with our current age,” which of these did their class objectives emphasize? - The merits and demerits of a chronological history learning - Is it possible to realistically redesign the chronological history approach?
④ Providing resources	Class that has redesigned the chronological history learning Examples: - Material for a class covering “ <i>Masu</i> (measuring container) in the Middle Ages: conceptualizing the characteristics of historical periods” - Material for a class covering “the imperial system in modern Japan” (said material including instructional suggestions, print outs, material to hand out in class, class analysis, etc.) Notes on each class, survey answers, transcripts of post-class dialogs, e-mail messages exchanging opinions
⑤ Follow-up	Inquiring about comprehensive reflection - Did the trainee’s thoughts change (or not change) regarding class objectives and selection/composition of class content? - Where there changes in how class was implemented? - If there were the above changes, of what nature were they? - If few or no changes occurred, what were the reasons? - How would the trainee like to redesign curricular for classes or units going forward?

system to replace the shogunate in Japan. Hence, having students analyze the process of how the government has won support and not only produced the emperor as a modern symbol but also as a ruling system of an “unbroken imperial line” from antiquity, is arguably an opportunity to reconsider, within chronological history, the roles and functions of an emperor that has always been seen as accepted fact in Japanese history.⁴

The purpose of giving these two concrete examples is to demonstrate, even with a linear approach following the textbook, the possibilities for curriculum design in terms of (1) grasping the structure of a period and (2) engaging in meta-analysis of historical discourse, rather than subsuming phenomena under their respective fields, or pursuing the flow of historical events in order from period to period. Based on the mentor’s experience and track record, he or she should offer the trainee a broad array of options for methods and objectives conducive to redesigning a chronological approach to history. By providing these resource materials, a situation should be created for the trainee allowing the consideration of measures for redesigning these curricula.

Aside from records of classes taught, other notes from previous mentoring should also be made available. At the final follow-up session, the trainee should be allowed to use these references as material for Phase I to III reflections on his or her classes.

⑤ Follow-up:

Here the mentor thoroughly assumes the role of listener while asking the trainee questions to facilitate reflection on the mentoring process. The first questions should ask whether there have been changes in the trainee’s ways of thinking and ways of implementing class, e.g.: “Did your ways of thinking regarding class objectives, content selections, and composition change?” and “Were there any changes in how you implemented your classes?” Next, trainees should be asked to reflect on the reasons for these changes, if there were changes. Last, they should be asked, “How would you like to redesign curricula for classes or units going forward?”

The trainee’s responses to these follow-up questions should help him or her to objectify their growth and engage in self-evaluation. The mentoring cycle ends when the mentor, at a later date, analyzes these dialogs and provides final feedback on his or her perspective of changes in the trainee’s ways of thinking and ways of implementing class.

5. Significance of and Possibilities for the Mentoring Program

Prior approaches to mentoring have aimed to provide support for solving individual concerns and challenges for trainees under diverse circumstances, while systematized individual mentoring arguably has not been well suited to the school workplace. In Japan, the scholastic culture has had experienced, veteran teachers interact with new, young teachers in order to provide advice and professional growth. However, the status quo apparently has been for this guidance and advice to mainly come from experiential and intuitive knowledge, with mentors reproducing the guidance they themselves received without a great deal of reflection or examination. Hence, the primary significance of this paper is to target the “black box” that mentoring has been and to urge practitioners to clarify and visualize the mentoring process so that it can be reassessed in an intentional, deliberate manner.

In this mentoring program, mentors and trainees have repeated dialog over a fixed period. This dialog is based on the observations made during class and target “why the material is being taught,” “why the specific material was selected,” and “why the chosen approach is being used.” Additionally, mentors and trainees repeatedly interact using the records and notes each has taken, as well as the experiences they have had. This reflection may also incorporate input from third parties adding specialized knowledge and reference materials. By systematizing these interactions into three clear phases, mentoring can contribute to voluntary improvement and transformation of classes and of the teacher’s perspective on his or her

academic subject. In light of the issues for curricula for the chronological history learning, another meaningful aspect of this paper is that it has developed a mentoring program for supporting curriculum design for teachers as gatekeepers independently utilizing and reconstructing those curricula.

The diverse methods of intervention and support by mentors in this mentoring program hold possibilities for applications not only to other academic subjects, but also to guidance for student teachers. However, this program is still no more than a prototype based on the results of a limited pilot study. It is necessary to carry out further full-scale research surveys in order to grow this into a program that can be applied to diverse cases.

Notes

1. In the city of Yokohama, “mentor teams” have been established in each school from the fiscal year 2006 in order to foster the development of first-time instructors and instructors with little experience, as well as to build systems for on-the-job training (Yokohama Board of Education, 2011). Although not specifically labeled as “mentoring,” the Ishikawa Prefecture Board of Education has, also since 2006, established groups of one advising instructor and three to five young trainees in a program titled “Project for Boosting Classroom Ability by Learning from Veteran Teachers.” These groups cover multiple schools and involve discussion and practice with teaching techniques through the study of teaching materials, the study of classrooms, and group training sessions (Shimada, 2007).
2. The “chronological history learning” is used in this paper following the definition by Okuyama (2000, p.227): “The chronological history learning is the comprehensive examination of history across all periods, regions, and fields of history.”
3. See Thornton (2012) for details on “gatekeepers” and “gatekeeping.”
4. See Harada (2008) for details on this class.

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