

# The Ideal Education to Support People for Lifelong Career Building

We reviewed the current situation and challenges in education and employment in the previous section.

Regarding the problems encountered in the "transition from school to mainstream society/one's occupation" and the "social and vocational independence" of young people, it is necessary for all parties, who make up society to understand it as a structural problem through the entire society. It should not be viewed as a problem limited only to young people. Doing this will help all to recognize each party's role, and to cooperatively work together to find solutions.

Further, in view of problems found in corporate human resource development and an increase of non-regular employees, it is vital to foster an environment where employees can learn about job opportunities over a lifetime and can take a proactive approach to career building.

In this section, in light of supporting lifelong career building, we will discuss the various challenges faced in career building support and the basic trend towards improving this area from the perspectives of career education, vocational education, and lifelong learning while in school.

## 1 Basic Direction

All parties who make up society need to understand one another's' roles and work together in order to support others in lifelong career building.

School education plays an important role in this regard, and it is essential to foster career education and vocational education at schools in order to facilitate smooth transition from school to mainstream society / their occupations and raise the social and vocational independence of young people, as well as assist people in career building over their lifetimes.

The Central Council for Education conducted discussions for about two years since December, 2008 on the ideal format of career education and vocational education at future schools. Through these discussions, they published a Policy Report entitled, "Future vision on career education and vocational education at school" (hereinafter referred to as "Policy Report") in January, 2011.

(Visit: [http://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo0/toushin/1301877.htm](http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo0/toushin/1301877.htm))

The Policy Report defines career education and vocational education as given below, and proposes measures regarding the ideal format for career education and vocational education to be in accordance with the following three basic directives from the perspective of encouraging peoples' career building over their lifetimes.

Career education	Education which encourages career development by cultivating the abilities and attitudes needed to raise the social and vocational independence of individuals.
Vocational education	Education to develop knowledge, skills, competencies and attitude required to work on a certain or specific job.

### (1) Promotion of Systematic Career Education from Early Childhood through Higher Education

The term "career," referred to in career education at school, means "a sequence of continuous efforts that allow one to recognize the value of their role, and the relationship between themselves and their role over their lifetime." For example, we play various roles in our social life, such as being a professional, a family person, and a member of the larger community. In other words, we are living out roles that we repeatedly choose or create by proactively judging their relative value and relationship to the other roles mentioned above. As humans, we are involved with others and the larger society through the roles which we adopt, and the various distinctions of such involvement will characterize "our own style of life."

The term "career development" means the entire "process of achieving one's own life to live by playing one's unique role in society." Of course, career development cannot be automatically achieved just by reaching

a certain age. It is a process associated with mental and physical growth that is being gradually developed as each child and young person learns and experiences what is necessary to set their course in life by connecting themselves and the roles they have to play in society at large during each stage of their lives.

Today, with dramatic changes occurring in the economy and society, many are expressing a strong desire for intentional and continuous development in their abilities and the attitudes necessary to hasten their career development. Thus, it is vital to undertake systematic career education from early childhood through higher education.

In that regard, children and young people must be able to develop basic and general abilities. These are discussed later.

Also, it is necessary to focus on the relationship between society and occupations, and to enhance practical and experiential activities.

## **(2) Emphasis on Practical Vocational Education and Reassessment of the Significance of Vocational Education**

The technical knowledge and skills necessary for a job are to be continuously acquired over a lifetime. Therefore, vocational education at school must develop in students not only the technical knowledge and skills of the chosen professional field, but also the ability to apply knowledge and skills, and develop the willingness and attitude to do a job well.

Particularly, in terms of skills, since they cannot be acquired without practice, more emphasis must be placed on practical workability when acquiring skills at school, although to what extent will depend on the type of school involved.

Moreover, vocational education plays an important role in supporting Japan's economic and societal growth. We must evaluate and recognize the fact yet again.

## **(3) Encouraging Career Building from the Perspective of Lifelong Learning**

Acquiring technical knowledge and skills needed for each job when engaged in it is key, and learning for that very purpose will continue even after one transitions to their working life.

Various opportunities and methods for learning how to do specific jobs after one graduates from school at young age are available. These include vocational training in companies above and beyond self-directed learning. As primary players in this process, schools in particular need to enhance their abilities to support career building from a lifelong-learning standpoint by leveraging their own educational resources. (See **3** in this section)

## **2 Measures to Enhance Career Education and Vocational Education that Primarily Target Young People**

### **(1) Trends in the Promotion of Systematic Career Education That Is Appropriate to Each Stage of Development**

Based on such situations, the Policy Report points out the followings as factors included in required abilities for social and vocational independence and a smooth transition from school to mainstream society / one's occupation.

Among these, basic and general ability, in particular, is the competency necessary as a foundation for social and vocational independence regardless of the business field or job category, and it ought to be at the heart of career education.

#### **◆ Required abilities for social and vocational independence and smooth transitions from school to mainstream society / one's occupation**

- Fundamental/basic knowledge and skills
- Basic and general ability

- The ability to think logically, creativity
- Willingness, attitude and a set of values
- Professional knowledge and skills

◆ **Basic and general abilities**

Ability to establish relationship and community	Ability to establish relationship and community The ability to understand one's own situation, to participate in society through cooperating and collaborating with others while playing a vital role, and to proactively build the nation's future society as well as to understand ideas and situations of various other people, to listen to others' opinions and communicate accurately one's ideas to them. Examples: Ability to understand another's character, ability to encourage others, communication skills, teamwork, and leadership
Ability to understand and manage oneself	The ability to control one's thoughts and emotions, as well as take positive, proactive steps that take into account such ideas as one's own future potential, and to learn willingly for future growth while maintaining a mutual relationship with society, while considering one's own sense of "what I can do," "what I value," and "what I wish to do." Examples: Understanding one's own role, possessing the ability to keep looking forward, remaining self-motivated, maintaining one's patience, managing stress, and being proactive
Problem-solving Ability	The ability to discover and analyze various problems at work, to work on them by setting out an appropriate plan, and to resolve them. Examples: Understanding, selecting, and processing information, understanding the essence of the problem, pursuing the cause, discovering problems, planning, summoning the energy to act, evaluate and improve
Career-planning ability	The ability to make a proactive decision to shape one's career by understanding the value of "work," defining "work" as it links with various positions and roles that one assumes in life, and properly selecting/using various information about diversified lifestyles Examples: Understanding the value and role in learning and working, understanding diversity, planning for the future, making selections, taking action and carrying out improvements

The Report also suggests that educational policy and its position with regard to curriculum, important educational content, methodology, evaluation and improvement be taken into consideration to encourage motivation and teacher leadership to support the Policy's implementation as a concrete measure for systematic career education appropriate at each stage of development.

*Column* **No. 15**

**Aiming to Cultivate Students Who Are Able to Thrive (Terajima Junior High School, Sumida city, Tokyo)**

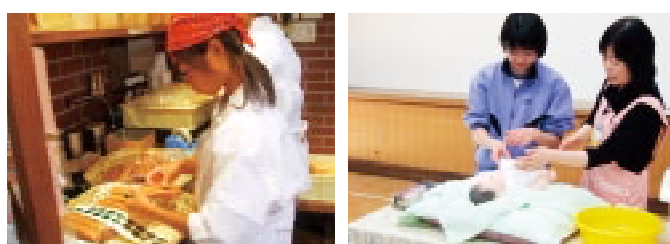
Terajima Junior High School makes concerted efforts to enhance their instruction by organically linking career guidance, educational guidance, and student guidance from a career education standpoint.

At the beginning of each school year, the school gives all students and their parents or guardians a booklet which summarizes responses to the questions, "Why you should learn this subject?" and "How will your learning at school help you in the future?" for each area of study, with the goal of encouraging proactive learning through an understanding of the value of learning itself.

In the Period for Integrated Studies, the theme, "Make yourself live fully – both now and in the future," characterizes the entire three-year junior high school experience. They conduct classes which aim "to improve to the ability to establish human relationships and exercise adaptability" and "to consider one's way of living from the perspective of a lifetime (life span)." In concrete terms, they conduct experiential learning activities such as a five-day experiences in the workplace to Improve Career Guidance activity, visits to higher-level schools, relationship-building (wheelchair experience, interactions with schools for special needs education, and so on), and experiences involving traditional crafts. They also provide periodic opportunities to review those activities so that the students can think about "what they learned" and "what their takeaway was." Further, the school has also created opportunities so students can think more intentionally about their future occupation, work, family and nursing care through the class by using a booklet entitled, "Thoughts on Lifelong Living" and through experiential learning activities such as giving them a

personal experience of caring for children in an effort to enable each student to develop clear "life purpose" rather than just viewing one's working life as a means to simply satisfy one's own personal needs and wants.

As described above, they aim to develop students who can live with intention by promoting systematic and planned learning activities as an entire three-year curriculum that considers the students' futures beyond graduation.



## (2) Challenges and Trends in Improvement of Career Education and Vocational Education in Upper-secondary Education

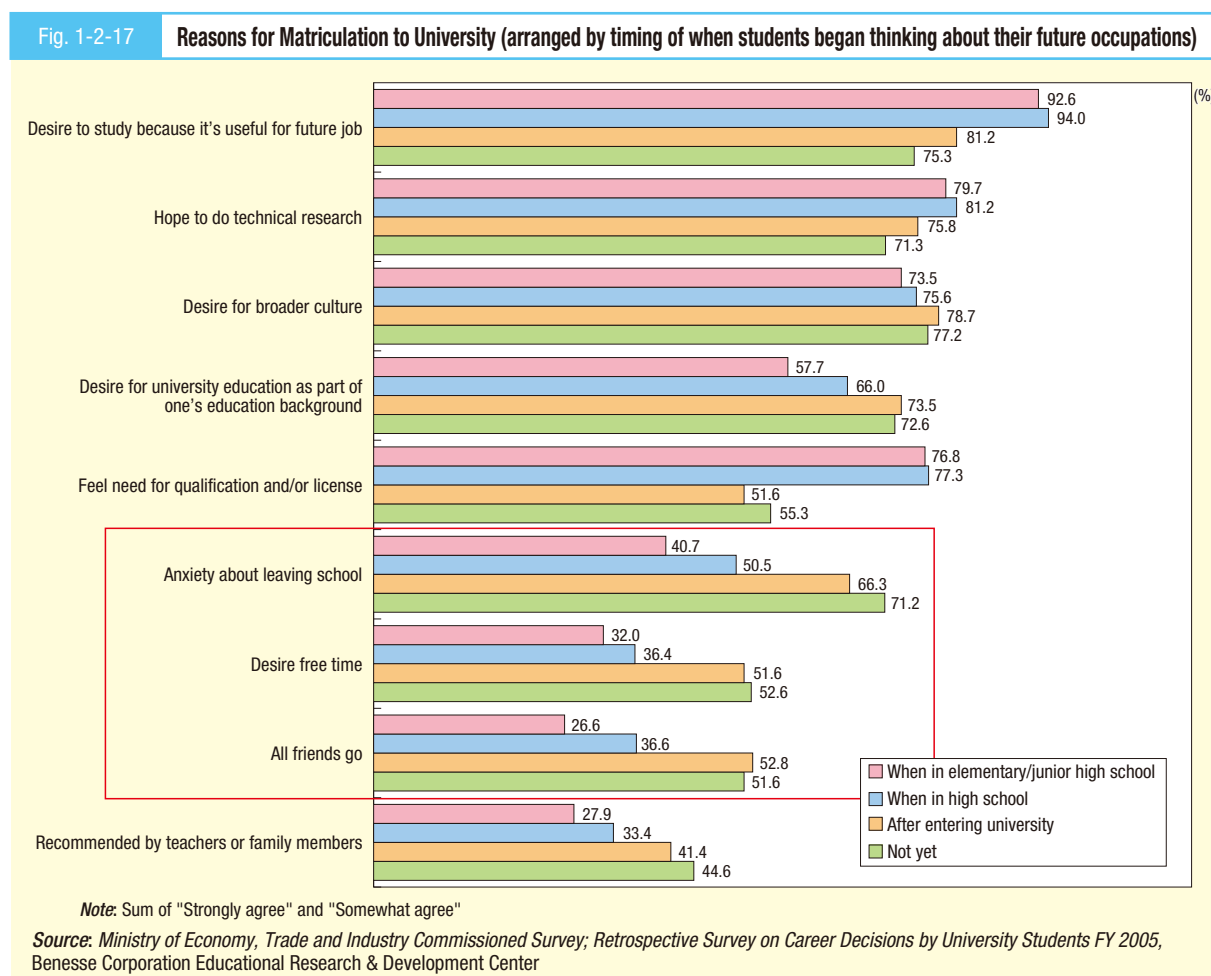
Today, the rate of matriculation for upper-secondary education is about 98%, and, as suggested by the Policy Report, it is necessary to have children and young people acquire abilities and attitudes generally needed for a variety of lifelong career building experiences by the time they complete their upper-secondary education. Another aim is to develop children and young people who can form and establish values such as attitudes concerning work and attitudes concerning occupation by cultivating those abilities and attitudes.

Further, upper secondary education is the stage where vocational education begins. The importance of vocational education during upper-secondary school is that it facilitates a smooth transition from school to mainstream society / employment, and also leads to more future options including matriculation to higher education institutions. Therefore, enhancing such educational activities is vital.

For this reason, it is desirable to hasten efforts to overcome challenges in career education and vocational education at the upper-secondary school level, and move toward measurable improvements.

### 1) Career education in upper-secondary education

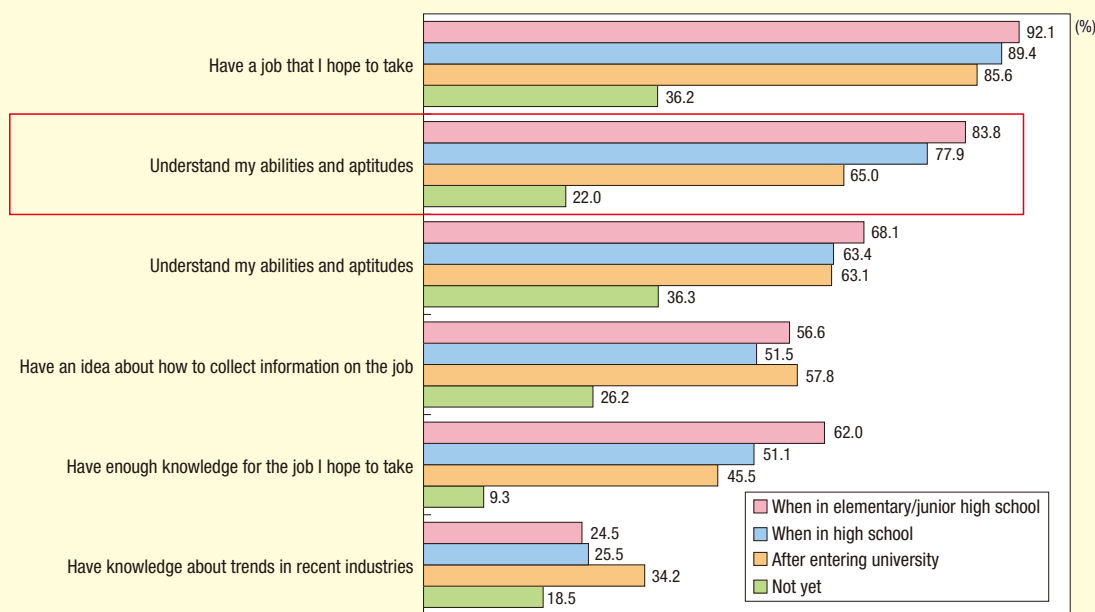
In Part 1 of Section 1, we can see that survey results, which reveal that about 31% of university freshmen had not thought about jobs until graduating from high school, imply that a number of people cannot even imagine their future in society nor their career path at the time of matriculation. And, as shown in **Fig. 1-2-17**, regarding the reasons for matriculation, the later they became aware of the need to consider actual employment, the more they tended to attribute "anxiety of immediate exposure to society / 'real life'," "desire to keep my free time," or "because all friends go" as reasons to continue on to university.



Furthermore, as **Fig. 1-2-18** demonstrates, the group of university students who were more thoughtful about their future occupation prior to high school graduation rated much higher in possessing "a clear goal for

the future" than the group of students who did not think much about their future occupation until after entering university or those who had not given it any thought yet. This implies that thinking about one's future occupation before graduating from high school leads to having clearer future goals.

Fig. 1-2-18 University Students' Sense of Vocation (by the time when they became aware of their future career)



Note: Sum of "Strongly agree" and "Somewhat agree"

Source: Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry Commissioned Survey; Retrospective Survey on Career Decisions by University Students FY 2005, Benesse Corporation Educational Research & Development Center

Moreover, a number of challenges in general courses at the high school level have been observed. For example, as shown in Fig. 1-2-19, according to survey results from general course students, the replies "expect to deepen my character" and "expect to study what I want to do" were only around 12%, while 60% responded with "appropriate education level for me" to the question about their motivation for entering high school. This implies that the choice of the general course is not well linked to their individual characters and to learning they desire. This result is quite different from that of vocational course students.

In addition, it can be seen that those students who matriculate and dominate the general course tend to defer thoughts about their future life and work style as well as their career choice/decision. Moreover, Fig. 1-2-20 shows that the employment rate of general course job applicants tends to be lower than that of job applicants from other courses.

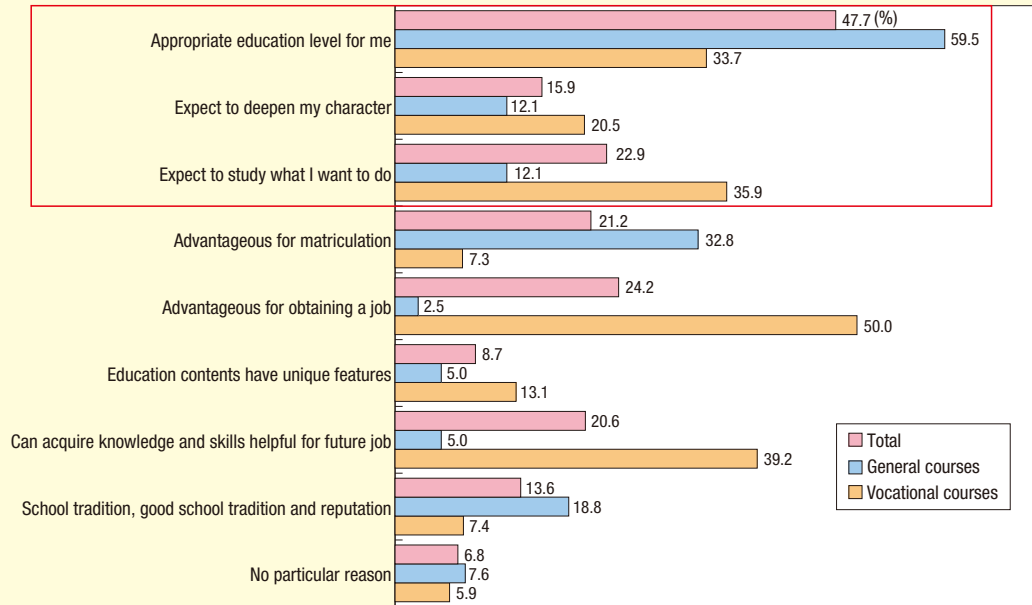
As a potential factor behind these results, it is noted that career guidance for those who undertake the general course tends to be biased towards those who pursue higher educational institutions, particularly highly selective universities as their top priority.

Based on these circumstances, MEXT is set to work on the publication of a "High School Career Education Manual" to ensure that the policy of career education based on a new Course of Study is followed, representing a concrete measure to enhance career education at the upper-secondary educational level. MEXT also established the "Research Survey Collaborators Meeting on the Practical Use of External Human Resources in Career Education" to research and survey the measures which enable schools to actively implement career education making practical use of external human resources and effectively use internship project opportunities.

Moreover, career guidance is originally an educational activity which aims at building character for the long term, considering such aspects as the ideal goal for one's character and lifestyle; its goals are nearly identical to those of career education. Thus, it is necessary for each school to revise their career guidance from the perspective of career education which considers the actual situations of children.

Fig. 1-2-19

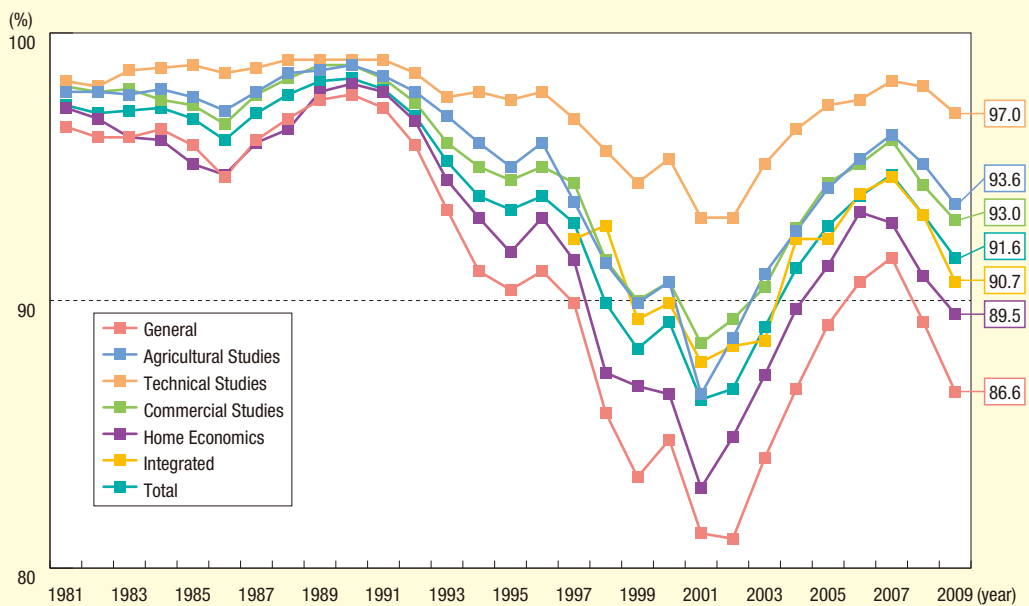
Motive to Enter High School (by course)



Source: Comprehensive Factual Survey on Career Guidance in Junior High School and Senior High School (March 2006, commissioned by MEXT), JAPAN CAREER GUIDANCE ASSOCIATION

Fig. 1-2-20

Trends in Employment Status of New Graduates from High School by Course



Source: Survey on Employment Status of Graduates from High School, MEXT

## 2) Vocational education at upper secondary education

Specialized senior high school courses (commercial studies course, technical studies course, agricultural studies course, and others) need to be enhanced by taking the path to higher education into consideration since the matriculation rate of the graduates to institutions of higher learning has been increasing and currently reaches 50%.

About 40% of graduates get jobs, and there is still strong demand among local industries for graduates from specialized courses at the senior high school level. Meanwhile, they point out problems such as insufficient measures for diversifying their occupations and advancing in the technical knowledge and skills necessary as professionals.

Taking these issues into consideration, future specialized courses must enhance their vocational education components, aiming to develop two types of human resources: those who will enter higher educational institutions to acquire more advanced knowledge and skills to work as future professionals, and those who will get jobs after graduation and be responsible for local industries and society.

To make these resource developments happen, MEXT plans to enhance educational content by revising its senior high school level Course of Study, and also plans to improve vocational education by sharing and disseminating information about outcomes from practical education activities nationwide. Examples of this include long-term on-site practice with local companies, assignments of people with business experience as teachers, and efforts collaborating with universities.

Regarding integrated courses at the senior high school level, several problems exist. Among them are the tendency for students to select subjects without considering their potential future career, a poor understanding and awareness among junior high school students as well as their parents or guardians and teachers' insufficient understanding, and the burden placed on teachers because of the introduction of a variety of new curriculum/subjects. Therefore, the education environment must be improved by promoting better understanding of integrated courses, and educational activities and system enhancements to enable students to gain a sense of purpose.

Based on these points, MEXT will conduct a survey to better grasp students' sense of purpose related to the vision of the integrated course in an effort to support needs from students, their parents or guardians, and the local community / general society in FY 2011.

Furthermore, facing an employment rate of just over 20% for graduates of special needs high schools, MEXT has revised the curriculum for vocational education to open up training that will meet today's requirements.

Moreover, regarding courses at specialized training colleges (upper secondary course), making inroads to the institutionalization of "credit-based courses" and "correspondence courses" to support various learning requirements according to the actual circumstances students face is needed. With this in mind, MEXT has held "Research Survey Collaborators Meetings on Promotion Measures in Specialized Training College Education" since November, 2009. It has repeatedly conducted investigations by experts, and has declared a design draft for the system, introducing correspondence courses and credit-based courses at specialized training colleges in its March, 2011 report.

### **(3) The Challenges and Direction of Improvement in Career Education and Vocational Education in Higher Education**

#### 1) Challenges in career education and vocational education

Currently, almost 80% of all students go to higher educational institutions (university, junior college, colleges of technology, and specialized training colleges (postsecondary course). And for many Japanese young people, higher education is the final educational step immediately before joining the workforce.

Under such circumstances, as reviewed in Part 1 of Section 1, there are a number of students and school children who are unable to transition smoothly into mainstream society/their occupations. For example, there are a measurable number of unemployed young people (referred to as "NEET") and a high level of early job turnover. Consequently, the development of abilities and attitudes which form the basis required for social and vocational independence and enhancement in practical, vocational education has emerged as a clear challenge. Another challenge is to enhance vocational education to support various demands such as those for Lifelong Learning, and societal acceptance of working adults.

On the other hand, regarding university, **Figs. 1-2-7** and **1-2-8** reveal that not enough education which satisfies students' needs is available in some cases.

Further, as seen in **Fig. 1-2-12**, the percentage of university students 25 years old or more is only about 2% in Japan, in contrast to the 21% average among OECD countries.

#### 2) Direction of improvement in career education and vocational education

Regarding career education, as discussed in (2), by the time children and young people complete upper-secondary education, they must seek to acquire abilities and attitudes generally required for various types of lifelong

career building, and aim to develop young people who can form and establish a sense of value including attitudes concerning work and attitudes concerning occupation through in the fostering of those abilities and attitudes.

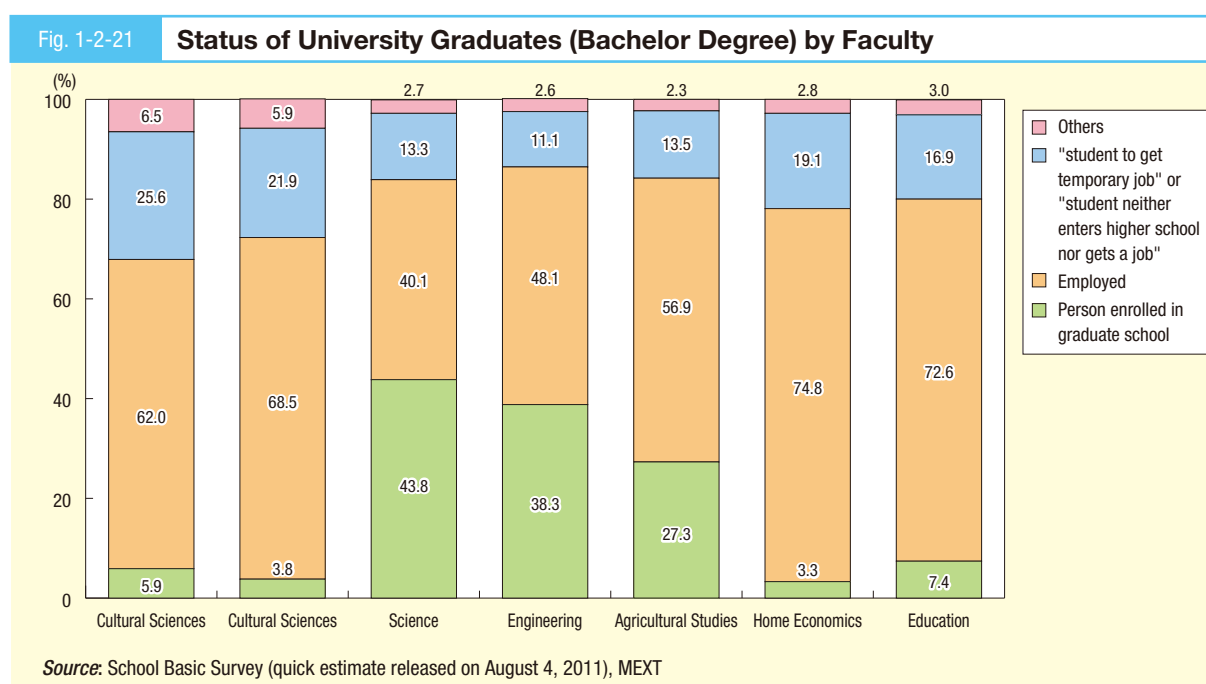
Higher education is a period in which students expand their vision, develop a concrete idea of their future career, and expand/deepen the abilities/attitudes they have acquired in the past by learning special fields, making it necessary to improve and enhance career education based on this premise. Therefore, based on the educational function and policy of each institution, every higher education institution needs to define its policy on career education, try to build shared understanding among teaching staff, and then conduct career education in a systematic and comprehensive manner both inside and outside of the curriculum. Also, it is important to effectively apply experiential learning activities such as internship projects and learning through problem-solving activities.

To address these issues, regarding university and junior college education, the Standards for the Establishment of Universities and Standards for the Establishment of Junior Colleges were revised in February, 2010. These Standards set to organize the system to work on instruction aimed at social and vocational independence both inside and outside of curriculum at all schools from April, 2011. According to the revision, MEXT is hastening various supports, such as promoting a support project in workforce training for university students, and for comprehensive execution of measures across grades and for systematic guidance during the period from entrance through graduation, aiming towards the social and vocational independence of the students.

Also, regarding integrated five-year education after junior high school graduation with respect to colleges of technology, MEXT is conducting finely-tuned career education in a gradual and continuous manner which is appropriate for each step in a student's growth.. It also encourages enhancement in class subjects which focus on building broader vocational consciousness and other educational opportunities in a variety of special fields.

It is necessary to have specialized schools that accelerate career building appropriate for each student so that he/she can choose the job suitable to his/her aptitude among various jobs available in the specific field. In addition, such schools allow them to gain sufficient understanding of the realities and necessary competencies for each job, as well as have a clear sense of purpose for their learning at an early stage after their entrance to the program. To achieve this goal, MEXT is promoting training of teaching staff to improve their skills of helping students acquire the ability to proactively plan their career over their lifetime.

Further, as shown in **Fig. 1-2-21**, when looking at the employment status of university graduates by faculty, especially among faculties in the fields of humanities and social science, rates seem high for "students to get temporary jobs" or "students neither go on to a higher-level of school nor get a job." This suggests the importance of field-specific, fine-tuned guidance and consultation for students as they explore and pursue their career paths.





### 3) Direction of improvement in vocational education

Higher education faces challenges such as advancing and diversifying the knowledge and skills required for a job, changing the traditional way of resource development based on the assumption of vocational training in companies, and the severe situation when students/school-children transition to mainstream society/their occupation.

Under such circumstances, it becomes important to develop independent professionals and to have them move smoothly into mainstream society and their occupations, and to foster higher education with vocational education.

In addition, it is important for higher-education institutions on the whole to meet the demand for vocational education for diversified needs, as well as encourage improved human resources for various job and industries. To do so, these institutions must enhance vocational education by leveraging each institution's best features after defining roles, functions, and setting targets for resource development.

Furthermore, it is important for both educational circles and industrial circles to share the future vision of industries and employment, and target the resources and abilities required. It is also vital to build a system of cooperation for resource development, and to enhance education so that the competencies necessary for a job under such a system can be fostered.

Accordingly, regarding universities and junior colleges, in the case where universities and junior colleges are differentiated by function, it is necessary to enhance vocational education with clear definition of target resources and the competencies which should be developed, to implement practical education in cooperation with companies, and to fulfill the needs for lifelong learning that allow for continuous learning of the skills needed for a particular job. MEXT is supporting measures aimed at the social and vocational independence of students, such as fostering a problem-solving approach to learning, to enable each university and junior college, working together with companies, to implement practical educational programs.

Moreover, regarding colleges of technology, MEXT is promoting efforts to lead vocational education in cooperation with local industrial circles, enhance educational content and methods, and foster the educational organization necessary to open up new fields based on local and nationwide needs.

Furthermore, regarding specialized schools, it is necessary to enhance the educational environment so that these schools are tailored to various learners' lifestyles and support their learning needs, such as promoting improvement in the vocational ability of employed people, and relearning for those who lost their jobs. Based on these criteria MEXT declared a design draft of the system, one which introduces correspondence courses and credit-based courses at specialized training colleges in the report of the "Survey Research Collaborators Meeting on Promotional Measures in Specialized Training College Education" in March, 2011.

In addition, the policy report points out the need for future detailed investigation into the improvement of a "specialized framework for practical vocational education" to teach practical knowledge and skills based on superior or proficient business experiences. This would involve (1) creation of new type of school and (2) active use of existing higher educational institutions as a means to enhance vocational education at higher educational levels.

## Observing Practical Higher Education in France and South Korea



### Vocational Bachelor's Degree (*licence professionnelle*)

Universities in France offer vocational bachelor's degree (*licence professionnelle*) programs that provide practical education. It is a one-year program for those who have completed two years of higher education or an equivalent (includes working adults), and a bachelor's degree is awarded at completion of the course.

While two-year courses following graduation from *lycée* (high school) have been available for some time, the vocational bachelor's degree (*licence professionnelle*) was created in 1999, as a degree program equivalent to a bachelor's degree, offering practical higher education. One background factor for its creation was an increase in the number of job positions between engineers and managers, which required more cross-sectional adaptability. Programs are offered across a wide range of fields, including agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and manufacturing industries as well as commerce and management, health and welfare, information and culture, and the service industry.

The vocational bachelor's degree (*licence professionnelle*) was established through cooperation between universities and companies/industrial circles. The curriculum focuses on practical use and practice, and at least 25% of the courses are led by business professionals. Also, the program requires 12 to 16 weeks of vocational training (*stage*) each year. The program also provides professional knowledge and job theory, general

education, such as foreign languages, ICT skills, and tutorial classes.

Basically, those who enroll in the vocational bachelor's degree (*licence professionnelle*) aim to head into the workforce, but it is also possible for them to move on to courses at higher levels of tertiary education after completion. The vocational bachelor's degree (*licence professionnelle*) started with about 200 programs and has increased to 1,818 over 10 years. About 38,000 bachelor's degrees are awarded through the program each year (2008 figures).



#### “Associate Degree”

In South Korea, there are two–three year junior colleges that serve as shorter-term higher education institutions offering associate degrees at program completion. Sometimes the Korean junior college is viewed as the institutional equivalent to Japan's junior colleges combined with professional training colleges. They are organized into faculties and departments subdivided by fields, and provide practical and professional vocational education that can lead directly to jobs.

The junior college was created in 1979 and, as of 2009, 146 colleges (including 136 private colleges) have been established nationwide, with about 760,000 students total. At the beginning, they were introduced as a means to develop middle class experts in response to Korea's rapid economic growth. They include small-sized, single-department colleges and also an "integrated" junior college with a broad spectrum of courses ranging from humanities and social sciences, to natural science and engineering. Some large-scale junior colleges have more than 6,000 students enrolled. The established departments are mostly in the fields of engineering and management/business, as well as a good number in nursing/health and design. The students study following the curriculum, with a focus on practical education over general education. They not only are able to obtain various job-related qualifications, but they also can receive associate degrees at graduation, and they also are often able to transfer into the third year at a four-year university. With the employment rate among graduates sometimes higher at these schools than those at four-year universities, some of the "prestigious" junior colleges in Seoul have become very popular and are more highly competitive when it comes to the entrance examination. Also "company-commissioned education," which is employee training that is commissioned by a specific company, is very common, especially since institutions are expected to re-train and educate their workers.

Although the junior colleges took root on Korean soil, recently some colleges have had a hard time in student recruitment partially due to Korea's declining birthrate. Further, the government has issued a policy to increase financial support to junior colleges which have a higher graduate employment rate and better industry-university cooperation by "selection and concentration." Therefore, each junior college is urged to work on further improvement in their operations.

## (4) Challenges and Direction of Improvement in Cooperation with Relevant Organizations to Enhance Career Education and Vocational Education

In order to sufficiently foster career education and vocational education, it becomes important to encourage efforts made through cooperation among school, home, the local community, enterprises, economic organizations/ professional associations, and NPOs, with a mutual understanding of one another's various roles.

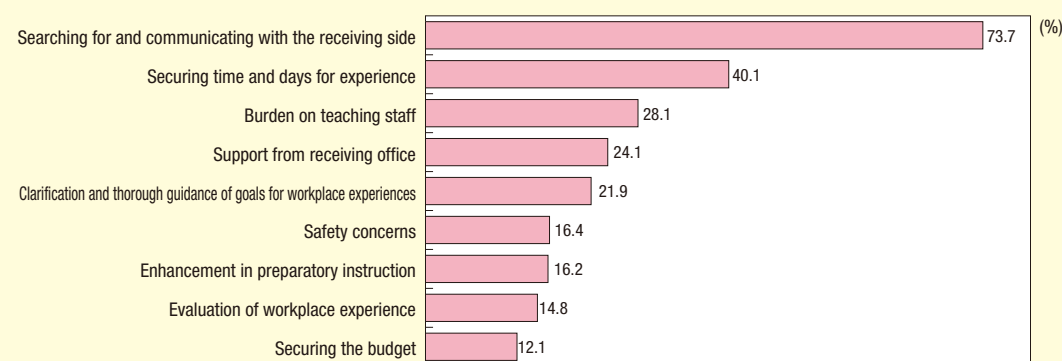
### 1) Cooperation with the local community and industrial circles

With regard to experiences in the workplace and those in employment for example, schools claim that it is "difficult to have confidence that other parties will respond," as shown in **Figs. 1-2-22** and **1-2-23**. Meanwhile, enterprises claim that they receive "no request for support from the school side," stating that it is the biggest reason why enterprises do not carry out educational support activities. This response is shown in **Fig. 1-2-24**, indicating a significant problem in coordinating programs between schools and other parties.

To address such issues, effective cooperation among local school, community and industrial circles is underway, such as the establishment of a council with the help of parent-teacher associations (PTAs), principal's

Fig. 1-2-22

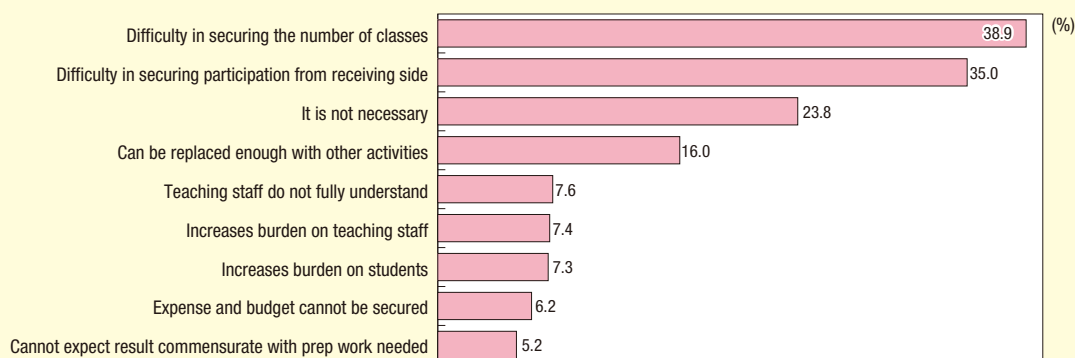
**Challenges in the Workplace Experience at Junior High Schools**



Source: Survey to Understand the Current State of the Workplace Experience and Internship Projects (2004), National Institute for Educational Policy Research Guidance and Counseling Research Center

Fig. 1-2-23

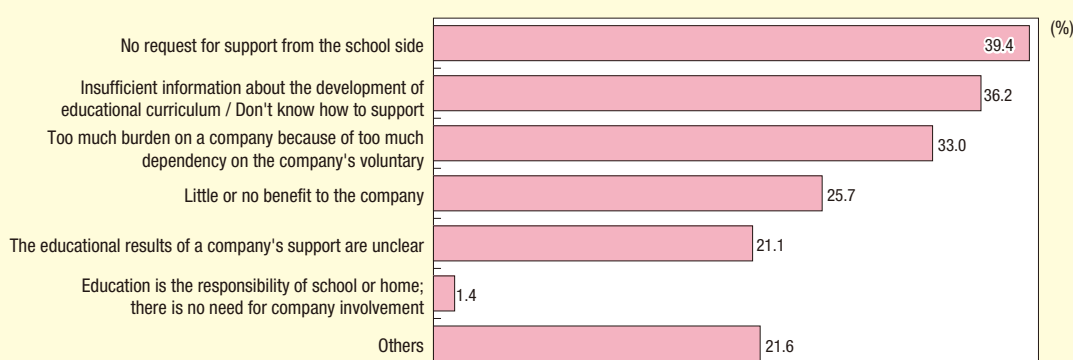
### Reasons Why High Schools Do Not Conduct Work Experience Activities for Their Students



Source: Survey to Understand the Current State of the Workplace Experience and Internship Projects (2004), National Institute for Educational Policy Research Guidance and Counseling Research Center

Fig. 1-2-24

### Reasons Why Enterprises Do Not Conduct Educational Support Activities



Source: Survey on Education Support Activities by Enterprises (2010), Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry Committee on Education Questionnaire

associations, neighborhood councils, economic organizations / professional associations, and NPOs. Such cooperation must happen in more locations, however.

Also, in order to make such cooperation more effective, one possibility is to assign resources, such as specialized teaching staff to schools and Boards of Education, and to assign designated staff to the above-mentioned Council.

In addition to the establishment of the Council and the assignment of specialized teaching-staff as described above, MEXT has deliberated over how to build systems and make practical use of measures at school and Boards of Education when introducing external human resources for career education, and MEXT released an interim report on this subject in June of the same year<sup>\*5</sup>.

## 2) Cooperation with home and children's parents or guardians

Home is an important place to support children's growth and development and to encourage their independence, and parents' perspectives on work significantly affect their children's career development. Thus, it is very important for children's parents or guardians to encourage their children at home.

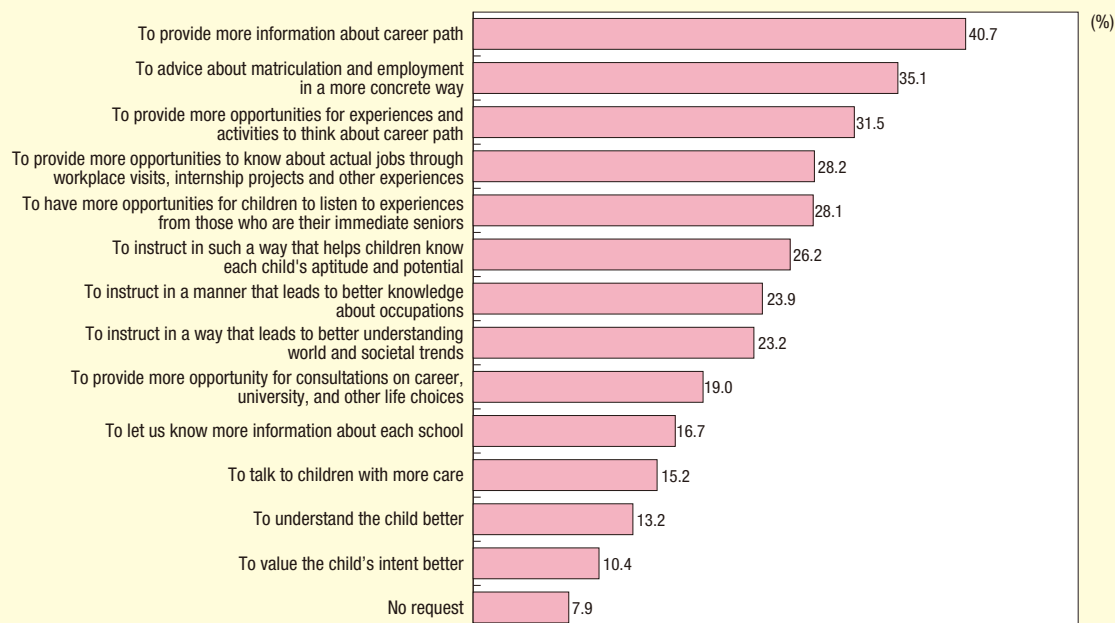
It is vital for the school to share an understanding of each party's roles and the significance of their impact upon career education with the home and the children's parents or guardians. Based on indicators that children's parents or guardians are unable to receive sufficient information about their children's career and job, as indicated in **Fig. 1-2-25**, during that time the school is required to provide realistic information through taking into account the various environmental developments related to employment and matriculation.

It is also important for children's parents or guardians to understand the school's efforts and to support children's growth and development in tandem with the school. It is expected that the school will proactively en-

<sup>\*5</sup> Interim Report of the Research Survey Collaborators Meeting on the Practical Use of External Human Resources in Career Education ([http://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/houdou/23/07/1308761.htm](http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/23/07/1308761.htm), Japanese only)

gauge children's parents or guardians, and that the children's parents or guardians are to participate in school activities through leveraging their own experiences as working adults and professionals.

Fig. 1-2-25 Requests from Children's Parents or Guardians for Career Education and Career Guidance at the High School Level



Source: Survey on the Awareness of High School Students and their Parents or Guardians about Career Paths (2009), National High School PTA Joint Association and RECRUIT Co., Ltd.

## Column No. 17

### Minister of MEXT Awards for Career Education

MEXT grants Minister of MEXT Awards to Boards of Education, schools, enterprises, and PTAs which make significant achievements in contributing to the development and enhancement of career education. This program aims to further promote efforts to improve career education.

In FY 2010, MEXT gave awards to 112 parties total, comprised of schools (elementary/junior high/high schools, 75 total), Boards of Education (12 boards), and Enterprises/PTA (25 parties). They were recognized for their significant contribution to foster career education. The award ceremony was held during the January, 2011 "Career Education Promotion Forum." (For list of awarded schools, visit: [http://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/houdou/22/12/attach/1300497.htm](http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/22/12/attach/1300497.htm))



## Column No. 18

### Manual/Pamphlet on Career Education

MEXT and National Institute for Educational Policy Research is producing manuals and pamphlets which aim to contribute towards improvements in career education at every school and on every Board of Education.

Materials can be downloaded from the web site listed below. (In Japanese only)

#### Pamphlets

- Elementary School [http://www.nier.go.jp/shido/centerhp/syoukyari/shougakkou\\_panfu.htm](http://www.nier.go.jp/shido/centerhp/syoukyari/shougakkou_panfu.htm)
- Junior High school <http://www.nier.go.jp/shido/centerhp/21chuugaku.career/chuugakkou.panfu.htm>
- Senior High School <http://www.nier.go.jp/shido/centerhp/21%20koukou.career/koukou.panfu.htm>
- Boards of Education [http://www.nier.go.jp/shido/centerhp/kyouiku\\_career/yakuwari.htm](http://www.nier.go.jp/shido/centerhp/kyouiku_career/yakuwari.htm)

#### Manuals

- Elementary School [http://www.mext.go.jp/a\\_menu/shotou/career/1293933.htm](http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/career/1293933.htm)
- Junior High school [http://www.mext.go.jp/a\\_menu/shotou/career/1306815.htm](http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/career/1306815.htm)
- Senior High School (To be published in FY 2011)



### 3 Enhancing Support for Career Building from the Perspective of Lifelong Learning

As seen in 1 (3) of this section, it is essential to acquire technical knowledge and skills to get a job, and such learning efforts continue over a lifetime after moving into working life.

Also, various types of learning over a lifetime is a key factor in responding to significant changes and various challenges that Japan faces, and to building a vibrant social economy. Learning, in its various forms, also serves as the source from which individuals can explore a full life.

Therefore, it is important to cultivate an environment where people can learn about job opportunities and engage in career building over their lifetimes.

#### (1) Support of Learners after They Move to Mainstream Society / Employment, of School Dropouts and of Those Not Engaged in Work

##### 1) Support of learners after they move to mainstream society / employment

As for learning after one transition into mainstream society / employment, there can be various learning needs. These include learning to acquire a new specialty for a different job, learning to return to a job after a hiatus due to childbirth and / or child care, as well as learning which enables one to acquire and improve specialties needed for one's current job.

Moreover, with increased liquidity in the labour market, opportunities enabling people who wish to learn to learn anytime are vital to allow them to maintain or improve their working life, or to get a new job by acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills.

For that purpose, various educational programs are expected to be available through a range of locations and opportunities in response to learner's needs and the demand from the local community and society at large.

In the past, institutes of higher learning have led numerous initiatives such as opening up entry into degree programs, introducing a system that allows auditing students to receive credits, short-term programs and offering extension courses.

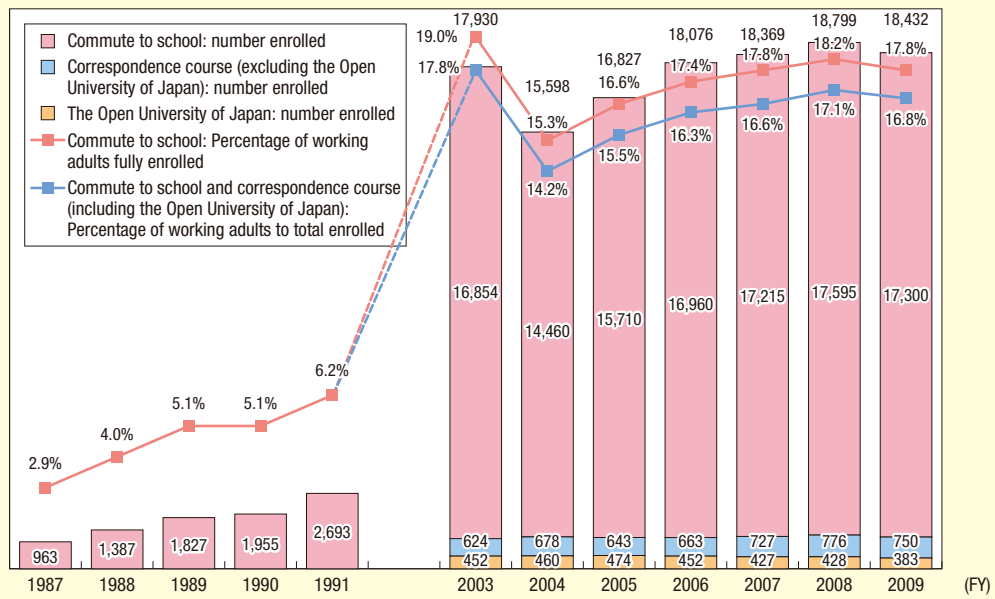
Regarding entry into regular courses, as discussed in 2 of Section 1, the those who are 25 years old or older make up only around 2% of all university students in Japan, while the average level among OECD countries is around 21%, as shown in Fig 1-2-12. Also, the number of working adults who enter universities / graduate schools remains nearly flat, as seen in Figs. 1-2-26 and 1-2-29. Issues such as the challenge of securing a budget and time to learn to handle both working life and learning, the content of educational programs provided, and support from the company are behind such results.

It is crucial for Japan to boost learning opportunities that raise competencies among adults, viewing them as intellectual capital who form the foundation for social growth and revitalization of the economy in the future. Therefore, higher educational institutions are expected to make broad efforts which aim to foster the environment where working adults can learn easily by providing such opportunities as educational programs which meet the variety of learning needs among working adults, making classes available at night or during holidays, and providing classes via ICT.

Companies are also expected to make efforts to support smooth Lifelong Learning experiences for their

employees.

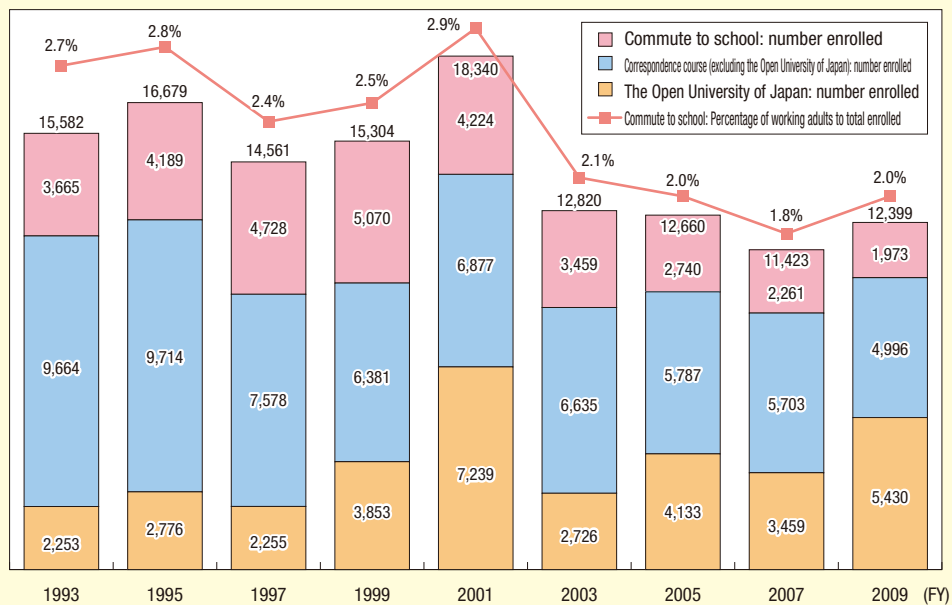
Fig. 1-2-26 Trends in the Enrollment of Working Adults (graduate school)



\* "Working adult" is one who is employed, i.e. one who has a job from which one receives salary, wages, compensation, or other recurring revenue as of May 1 of the year (includes those who are retired from their company, etc., and housewives).  
 \* The enrollment of working adults in correspondence courses and at the Open University of Japan are estimated values. (The values were divided proportionally, with the rate of employed students in correspondence courses based on School Basic Survey).

Source: Survey by MEXT

Fig. 1-2-27 Trends in the Enrollment of Working Adults (undergraduate)

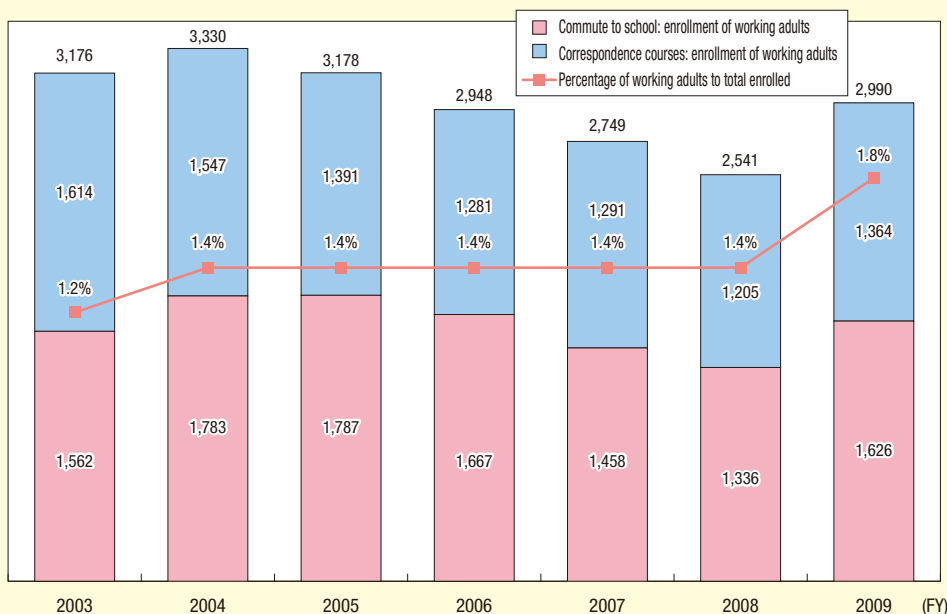


\* Enrollment of working adults in correspondence courses is referred to as the "Enrollment by special enrollment selection of working adults" in the "Implementation status for the selection of national, public and private university students."  
 \* Enrollment of working adults in correspondence courses is referred to as the "Enrollment by special enrollment selection of working adults" in the "Implementation status for the selection of national, public and private university students."

Source: Survey by MEXT

Fig. 1-2-28

**Trends in the Enrollment of Working Adults (junior colleges)**

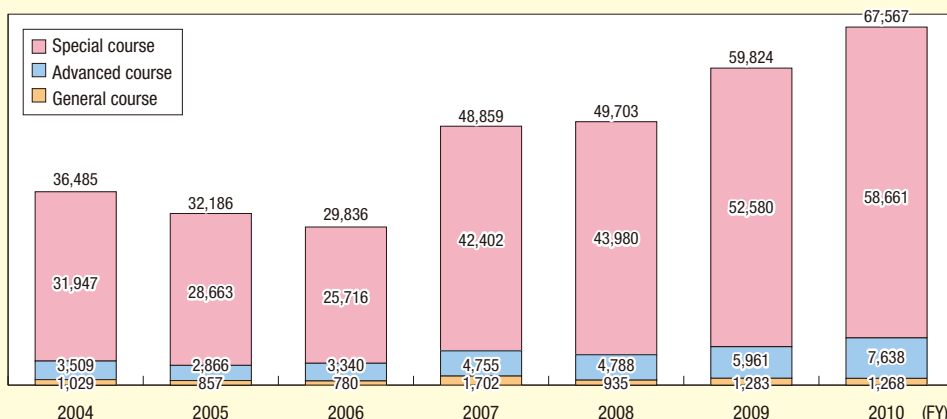


\* Enrollment of working adults in correspondence courses is referred to as the "Enrollment by special enrollment selection of working adults" in the "Implementation status for the selection of national, public and private university students."  
 \* Enrollment of working adults in correspondence courses is an estimated value. (The value was divided proportionally by the rate of employed students in correspondence courses based on the School Basic Survey.)

Source: Survey by MEXT

Fig. 1-2-29

**Trends in the Status of Accepting Working Adults (specialized training colleges)**



\* The survey group is private specialized training colleges.  
 \* "Working adult" is one who is employed, i.e. one who has a job from which he/she receives salary, wages, compensation, or other recurring revenue as of May 1 of the year (includes those who are retired from their company, etc., and housewives).  
 \* Note that simple comparisons do not make sense since the survey methodology was changed in 2007.

Source: Survey by MEXT

*Column* No. **19**

**Education Program to Develop Agricultural Professionals (Agri-pro) at Iwate Agri Frontier School (Iwate University)**

Cooperating with Iwate Prefecture and Iwate Prefectural Council of Comprehensive Support for leader of farmers, Iwate Agri Frontier School (IAFS) was established in the Faculty of Agriculture of Iwate University. It targets certified farmers, farmers aiming to be certified, farming-related parties such as prefectures/municipalities/agricultural associations as its prospective entrants. Its goal is to develop "agri-pros (agricultural professional)" who are strong in management skills and possess sharp business sense while making efforts to establish local agriculture. Three-hundred-thirty-eight people ranging in age from their twenties to their seventies entered the school between FY 2007 and 2010.

The education system of IAFS is comprised of the following three courses: "Agri-Career Course" for developing management skills, "Agri-Frontier Course" for developing advanced-technology competency, and "Marketing-Innovation Course" for developing marketing skills. Also included is a "Business-Planning Step" to build a strategic plan. Lectures, practices/exercises, and field surveys are adopted and used as part of the education approach in these courses.

As one of the remarkable features of IAFS, the qualification of "Agri Manager" is granted to one who completes three courses of the education program, writes a master's thesis, and passes the final examination. This "Agri Manager" qualification was granted to 109 students between 2007 and 2010.

The students who qualify as "Agri Managers" are expected to leverage their learning at IAFS and to actively work to promote local agriculture.

This includes developing agriculture independent from rice, along with deciding to introduce new crops or to enter the processing and sales business, expanding sales through the management of direct sales, assuming the role of a member of various committees and taking the responsibility for leading agriculture and the agricultural community.



## Column No. 20

### Special Course Reemployment Targeting Beauticians Who Have Temporarily Left Work (Takasaki Beauty Mode Professional Training College)

Takasaki Beauty Mode Professional Training College provides a special course for reemployment to beauticians who temporarily left their jobs due to childbirth or childcare. The obstacles to reemployment of people who temporarily leave their job are 1) anxiety over losing their skills due to their absence, 2) insufficient information about job offers and training, and 3) anxiety about the working environment and terms of employment. The course is designed to solve these problems in order to support their reemployment.

The course spans a four-month period and contains both "technical training courses" (30 hours of mandatory classes and some optional classes), and "career-guidance courses" (24 hours of mandatory classes).

In the "technical training courses," experienced teachers, who are knowledgeable in the field, give technical guidance for haircuts/permanent waves/hair dyeing/makeup/manicures, and allows the students to acquire practical techniques and skills needed for their field.

By providing career counseling conducted by teachers in charge of employment measures as its base, the "career guidance courses" let the students come up with their own selling points and their reasons for application by conducting self-analysis, and also provides instruction for acquiring communication and interview skills.

Also the school offers information such as notifications of job offers, and it also makes efforts to help solve the anxiety students often face towards their work environment and terms of employment.

Since the course program focuses on narrowing the gap between the existing skills students possess and the skills for this field required in today's world, while aiming to brush-up and renew skills and knowledge, the curriculum is developed in cooperation with beauty parlors and related enterprises.

By valuing the character of each student and by providing tailored support, 18 out of 22 students of this course got jobs as beauticians in FY 2010.



#### 2) Support for school dropouts and those not engaged in work

Along with what is discussed in 1), people who need support in career building are those who haven't been able to make a smooth transition from school to mainstream society/employment, such as school dropouts and those not engaged in work, as well as those who are no longer employed due to a quick-turnover decision or for various other reasons.

According to numerous surveys between 2007 and 2010, the estimated numbers of such people, including those who enter higher school or to get employed, are about 20,000 from the lower-secondary education stage, about 240,000 from the upper-secondary education stage, and about 410,000 from the higher education stage, as shown in **Fig. 1-2-30**.



And, as seen in **Fig. 1-2-14**, many of those who quit their school education by dropping out tend to be unemployed for longer periods of time or become non-regular employees, so they naturally face difficulty in social and vocational independence.

Taking these factors into consideration, a social mechanism is needed to enable people to overcome the challenge of getting a job at any stage in their life. To make this happen, companies and administrative organs must make efforts to help them get a job, and also schools are expected to play a major role by providing educational programs for employment and responding to consultations on career, university, and other life choices.

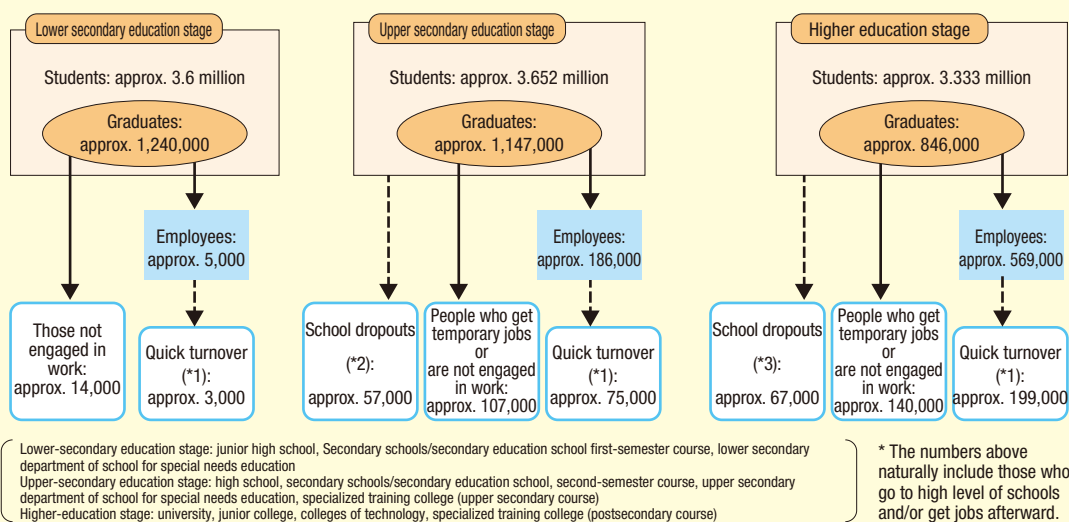
It is necessary for high schools to understand what actually happens to school dropouts afterwards, to conduct additional appropriate guidance such as counseling, and to provide such people with as much career building support as possible.

Higher educational institutions must provide educational program for young people who neither have a job nor go to school due to various reasons and must enhance their efforts to support employment by making practical use of their own educational resources.

Specialized training colleges have played a role in supporting those not engaged in work to become independent, such as the creation of a course to enable those not engaged in work acquire the basic skills necessary for vocational independence in cooperation with public vocational training. Colleges are expected to continuously play a role in this process.

Moreover, schools and boards of education need to cooperate with other organizations which support the social and vocational independence of young people, such as labour-related departments, the Public Employment Security Office (Japanese government employment agency), and Regional Youth Support Stations, and they are to promote comprehensive support for social and vocational independence. By doing so, they demonstrate an understanding of the movement to support the independence of young people by society as a whole, as shown through the passage of the “Act on Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People.”

**Fig. 1-2-30 Status of Graduates and School Dropouts at Each Stage of Education (partial estimate)**



\*1: Estimation based on the rate of turnover within three years after graduation among graduates in March, 2007 from *Survey on Employment and the Turnover Situation for New Graduate Employees*, MEXT  
\*2: High schools only. *Source: Survey on Various Problems in Student Guidance such as Undesirable Behavior in Students of FY 2001*, MEXT  
\*3: Universities/junior colleges/colleges of technology only. Estimation based on *Status of Unpaid Tuition and Dropout (End of FY 2007)*, MEXT  
Source other than listed above is the *FY2010 School Basic Survey*, MEXT. Note that "not engaged in work" means "person other than listed above" in the survey.  
(Note that the career status of specialized training college is estimated from the MEXT survey.)

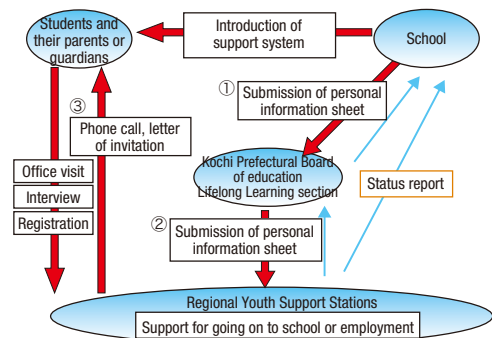
## Aiming at Continuous Support from the School (Kochi prefecture, "Wakamono Habatake Net (Fly, the Youth Network)")

If students leave school without deciding the course they will follow, it will often become difficult for them to get the information needed to take the next step of their career because they are isolated from organizations. This readily ends up resulting in NEET (not in education, employment or training) and social recluses, and schools often don't recognize such a situation is taking place. Therefore, schools need to provide continuous support.

Kochi prefecture built a system to respond to such a situation. In this system, prefectural schools and municipal boards of education provide the prefectural board of education with the personal information of the students who need special support, such as students who have not decided the course they will follow by their graduation from junior high school, or those who dropout from high school, and then such information is provided from prefectural boards of education to Regional Youth Support Stations. Then these Support Stations help the students and their parents or guardians to enter school or the working world. Additionally, prior to receiving Support Station help, members of the board of education join the lead of these Support Stations in their efforts to visit the schools and discuss how to provide support in tandem with the schools to ensure continuous support.

Further, in order to make the support effective, Support Stations set the period from service start through decision of career as six months, and generate a standard support program that divides the period into three phases.

Deployment of this program resulted in an 82.7% improvement rate (as compared to 35.6 % in FY 2009) and a career-decision rate of 57.7% (as compared to 10.5% in FY 2009) among participants just six months after registration.



Flow of personal information for individuals who have not decided their courses of action at the time of dropping out of high school

## (2) Formation of a Foundation That Supports Lifelong Learning about Employment

As a foundation to support lifelong learning about employment opportunities, it is necessary to define and guarantee the competencies required for each job and the quality of the educational program needed to acquire them, and to keep the relationship between these systematic and clarified.

In other countries, an emerging approach is a phased improvement to raise competencies required for jobs in various fields – such as the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), for example.

Under such circumstances, the June 18, 2010 Cabinet Decision "The New Growth Strategy Blueprint for Revitalizing Japan" declared the introduction and dissemination of a "career-ladder" which focuses on an emerging field (creation of the Japanese version of NVQ) and the establishment of a learning program through cooperation with specialized schools and universities.

Accordingly, the government established "the strategy for practical career advancement" with the participation of experts, and decided that the following industries would serve as their focus for the first three areas selected: "services of long-term care for the elderly," "services of reducing energy consumption and greenhouse effect gases" and "food businesses." They then established "the basic plan on the strategy for practical career advancement" in May, 2011.

The Basic Plan sets out to establish an evaluation and accreditation system (the career-ladder system) for practical vocational abilities by targeting the emerging fields where future employment growth is expected, while both enhancing and promoting the entire system. This includes enhancement of educational programs and labor market mobility based on this strategy and mechanisms for achieving smooth acquisition of vocational abilities to realize "practical career advancement strategies" in an integrated and comprehensive manner.

# Employment Support for New Graduates

## 1 Efforts by Related Parties in Response to the Employment Status of New Graduates

As seen in **Fig. 1-2-2**, the employment situation in Japan, particularly among new graduates from universities and high schools, is extremely severe.

To deal with these conditions, related parties in areas such as government and industry are taking steps to overcome the challenges.

### (1) The Government's Efforts

The government created the Task Force Team for the Employment of New Graduates in accordance with a directive from the Prime Minister in order to facilitate stronger government efforts in response to this harsh employment environment in August, 2010. The taskforce team established "emergency measures related to the employment of new graduates" which involve an increase in career counselors and job supporters at universities, and the establishment of the Headquarters to Support Job Search by New Graduates, representing members from all parties concerned, such as the Japanese government employment agency, local governments, labour circles, industrial circles and schools. Headquarter offices are to be established at all Prefectural Labour Bureaus. As a response, the Cabinet adopted a "The Three-Step Economic Measures for the Realization of the New Growth Strategy," which includes emergency measures related to the employment of new graduates, as a Cabinet Decision in September, 2010. Further, in January, 2011, the Task Force Team for the Employment of New Graduates decided to put into effect a Final Intensive Pre-Graduation Support Program which brings high school and university career counselors and job support personnel together to share information with a Japanese government employment agency in an effort to intensively assist new graduates who do not yet have a job to find employment.

In these circumstances, at the university level MEXT is supporting efforts to strengthen the employment support system through means such as employment counseling that is tailored to the ability and aptitude of each student. It does so through assigning career counselors from its Program for Promoting University Education and Student Support. In addition, working cooperatively with the University Students Employability Support Project, MEXT also backs superb efforts which aim to cultivate social and vocational independence in students beyond their graduation, such as fostering problem-solving approaches to learning and problem-solving methodology in cooperation with industrial circles.

At the high-school level, MEXT has requested prefectural Boards of Education to proactively assign career counselors and hire practice assistants at specialized schools through the practical use of funds created from the emergency employment creation measures of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. MEXT also urges high schools and job supporters at Japanese government employment agencies to cooperate with one another even more.

Besides the employment support for new graduates mentioned above, a "request for the employment of newly graduating students" was sent jointly from the Minister of MEXT, Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare and the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry to major economic organizations. In it, these parties sought out cooperation to 1) expand the number of employment opportunities and submit extra job offers; 2) accept applications from those who graduated within the past three years; and 3) correct recruitment activities which have taken place too early (i.e., the need to carry out recruitment activities in consideration of the school calendar). Furthermore, in an effort to improve job recruitment at universities, a "Discussion Group on Job Hunting of Recent Graduates" was held in November, 2010 to exchange opinions about employment problems encountered by university students as they interact with universities and industrial circles.

We also have been working on measures to preserve the employment environment for new graduates af-

ected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and prevent it from further deterioration. (See "Measures on the Great East Japan Earthquake" 3 (3) in Section 2)

## (2) Efforts in Universities, Industrial Circles and among Other Parties

Universities are working on efforts to seek cooperation from companies based upon the agreement regarding employment and recruitment activities for students who will graduate in FY 2011 (in March, 2012) through the Discussion Group on Employment Problems, which is comprised of representatives from national, public and private universities. Further, the Standards for the Establishment of Universities was revised in February, 2010 to include an upgrade of the system for universities to work on instructions both within and outside of the curriculum which aim to increase social and vocational independence. These Standards have also considered the issue of student employability at each university in response to the government's above-mentioned efforts.

Furthermore, in July, 2010, the Science Council of Japan made a suggestion regarding the "ideal connection between university and employment" that advocates an improvement in the vocational value of university education and a reconsideration of how employment activities are undertaken as answers to deliberative requests from MEXT.

Meanwhile, following the government's above-mentioned request and efforts underway at universities, industrial circles are making efforts to increase the number of jobs and also submit extra job offers so that they can hire as many new graduates as possible given the severe economic environment. They view this as their part in maintaining and strengthening Japan's future competitiveness.

Taking the school calendar into consideration for recruitment activities, in November 2010 the Japan Foreign Trade Council, Inc. proposed that the public relations campaign about recruiting shall take place *after* spring break (in the February – March timeframe), immediately before the final grading period, and companies shall accept applications from all recent graduates from the last three years who have not yet found a job. Following this decision, economic organizations offered various proposals about how to improve recruiting. For example, in January 2011, the Japan Business Federation announced that they had revised the "Charter of Company Ethics about Employment Selection for Prospective Graduates from Undergraduate and Master Course" and decided the following. Regarding the recruitment of new graduates who will enter a company in FY 2013, the public relations campaign shall start after December 1st of the year before the final grade and actual hiring shall start after April 1 of the year of the final grade. They also put into place year-round recruitment and summer / winter recruitment as provisions of recruitment opportunities for graduate.

Since many parties concerned such as companies, universities and students are involved in the challenge of employment for new graduates, it is extremely important for these parties to cooperate as they aim to overcome the problem. Therefore, a Discussion Group on Job Hunting of Recent Graduates was established as the place where parties from universities, corporate organizations, labour organizations, and relevant ministries could get together to exchange opinions about employment and recruitment, and *JUKU-GI* about "recruitment" was held nationwide by concerned parties such as students, companies and universities. Senior Vice Minister of MEXT, Mr. Suzuki and others from MEXT participated.

Column **No. 22**

### **Empower Your Future! Job Hunting for Parties Concerned <JUKU-GI>** (see Topic in Part II Chapter 1 for a summary of JUKU-GI.)

There are many problems related to job hunting which have been pointed out, such as a "mismatch in employment," "job hunting which takes place too early," "resource company demands for and the goal of university education," and so on. Additionally, various measures are being considered such as establishment of the Policy Report (Future vision on career education and vocational education at school) in January, 2011.

In the meantime, a number of the parties concerned – such as students, companies, schools, parents and guardians, and the local communities – are involved, and it's essential that these parties gather their ideas together to build a vision for a new job-hunting paradigm in order to solve these problems.

Based on these ideas, real *JUKU-GI* about job hunting has taken place numerous times under the auspices of student groups and universities in the past. In response to such practical activities, MEXT took a leading role to carry out the following measures with the parties concerned.

1) Job hunting <JUKU-GI> Kick-off round-table talk (March 1, 2011)

Business managers, students who have hosted REAL JUKU-GI and Senior Vice Minister of MEXT Mr. Suzuki got together and had heart-to-heart communication to conduct <JUKU-GI> about what should be done by "enterprises," "students," "universities," and the "government administration," respectively. (See Photo)



2) "Job hunting" Live Talk (March 8, 2011)

There was a talk among universities that were actively making efforts to support job hunting, general trading companies which have been popular places of employment, small and medium-sized enterprises that have developed their own advanced technologies, and Senior Vice Minister of MEXT Mr. Suzuki. Each party submitted a message on measures to solve job-hunting problems from their points.

3) Survey on job hunting (From March 3 through 31, 2011)

A survey on job hunting was undertaken on the website "Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry Idea Box," and this survey gathered a wide range of opinions "from the heart" expressed by students, enterprises, schools, and parents and guardians. Then, MEXT attempted to understand how each concerned party was thinking and as well as the gaps in thinking among them by using cross tabulation by properties of students and enterprises.

4) <JUKU-GI> KAKEAI (March 3 through 31, 2011)

Along with the survey described above, MEXT came up with a set of concrete actions, seeking to promote cooperation among the concerned parties representing enterprises, universities and students by conducting <JUKU-GI> with specific participants who had participated in previous REAL <JUKU-GI> about job hunting through the MEXT <JUKU-GI> KAKEAI website.

## 2 Aiming at More Opportunities to Match Company Job Offers with New Graduates

Mismatch between company job offers and new graduates is pointed out as a challenge in the employment of new graduates.

Here, we discuss the direction of measures aimed at increasing opportunities for matching company job offers with new graduates, as well as take a look at the challenges and background in mismatching between new graduates and jobs. We do so by using an opening-to-application ratio for university graduates, relying on "the number of company employees" or "type of industry," and other data involving recruitment by small and medium-sized enterprise, and data which shows the reasons why young people lose their jobs.

### (1) Mismatch of Company Job Offers and New Graduates from Universities

As shown in **Fig. 1-2-31**, for students who are to graduate in March, 2012, the opening-to-application ratio for university graduates by number of company's employees is 3.35 in the group of companies with employees less than 300. This is a high amount. In contrast, the ratio is less than 1 in all three other groups, that is, "300 to 999," "1,000 to 4,999," and "5,000 or more."

The result points out the problem known as the "mismatch in company size."

Fig. 1-2-31 Trends in Opening-to-application Ratio by Size of Company According to Number of Employees (university graduates)

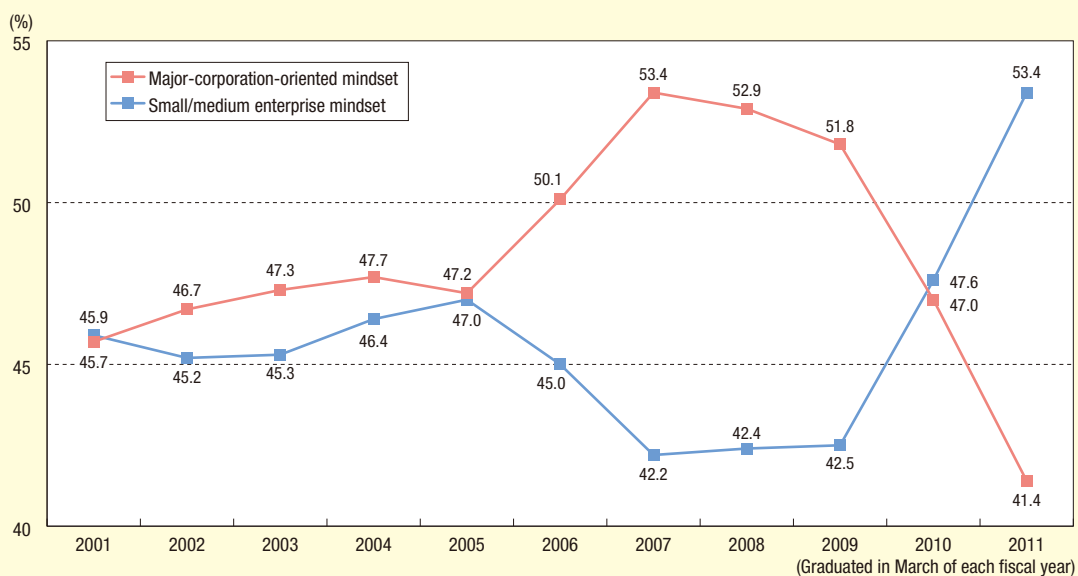
	Graduated in March 2010	Graduated in March 2011	Graduate in March 2012
Less than 300	8.43	4.41	3.35
300 to 999	1.51	1.00	0.97
1,000 to 4,999	0.66	0.63	0.74
5,000 or more	0.38	0.47	0.49
Total average ratio	1.62	1.28	1.23

Source: 28th Works Survey on Ratio of Job Openings-to-Applications for Employment among University Graduates (2012 graduates), RECRUIT Works Institute

It is well known that in the past, most graduates have an orientation or mindset towards applying to major corporations. As shown in **Fig. 1-2-32**, however, some survey results show a declining trend in the inclinations of university/graduate school students to care about the scale of a company when considering it as a place of

employment. This indicates that many students may no longer necessarily possess a major-corporation-oriented mindset.

Fig. 1-2-32 Inclination of University/Graduate School Students towards the Size of Enterprises for Their Place of Employment



\* Major-corporation-oriented mindset: Total of "Definitely major-corporation is better" and "Major-corporation is better if I can get my preferred job"  
 Small/medium enterprise mindset: Total of "Medium-sized and small enterprise are preferred" and "medium-sized and small enterprise are fine if I can get a job I value"

Source: MAIKOMI Survey on Employment Consciousness of University Students, Mainichi Communications Inc.

Having such a situation in mind, what can cause such a mismatch between small / medium-sized enterprise and students?

Along with changes in company recruitment procedures due to widespread internet and PC use as a result of ICT progress these days, we can see in **Fig. 1-2-33** that the "use of a recruitment portal site" (approximately 71%) and "generation of own website" (approximately 67%) are common means for major corporations to recruit candidates.

At the same time, over 80% of the students referred to a company or organization's website and other recruitment-related websites while job hunting in FY 2010\*<sup>6</sup>.

This indicates that many students can access information about those major corporations, obtain the necessary information, and apply for employment.

In contrast, small and medium-sized enterprises still mostly use "job offers through the Japanese government's employment agency" (approximately 75%), but fewer use a "recruitment portal site" (approximately 14%) and "generate their own website" (approximately 22%). Therefore, students have difficulty accessing the recruitment information of small and medium-sized enterprises, so consequently they cannot obtain sufficient necessary information, making it more difficult to apply to a job offer.

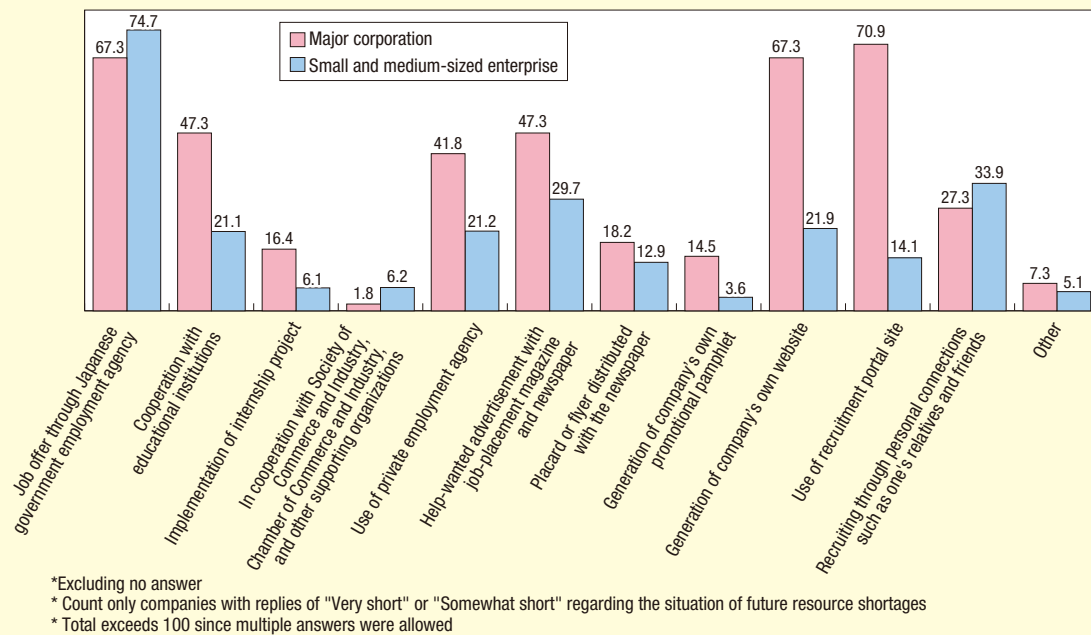
Furthermore, regarding the question about whether or not they "cooperate with an educational institution," approximately 21% of small-to-medium-sized enterprises said "yes," but 47% of the major corporations responded "yes;" this shows the difficulty small-to-medium-sized enterprises face in organizing cooperative partnerships with educational institutions because they offer fewer positions but represent a larger number of enterprises.

Such a distinction between major corporations and small-to-medium-sized enterprises in providing methods of recruitment information explains one of the causes for the mismatch mentioned above.

\*<sup>6</sup> Source: Japan Productivity Center Survey on "Working Consciousness" (2010)

Fig. 1-2-33

**Method Considered as Recruiting Resource**



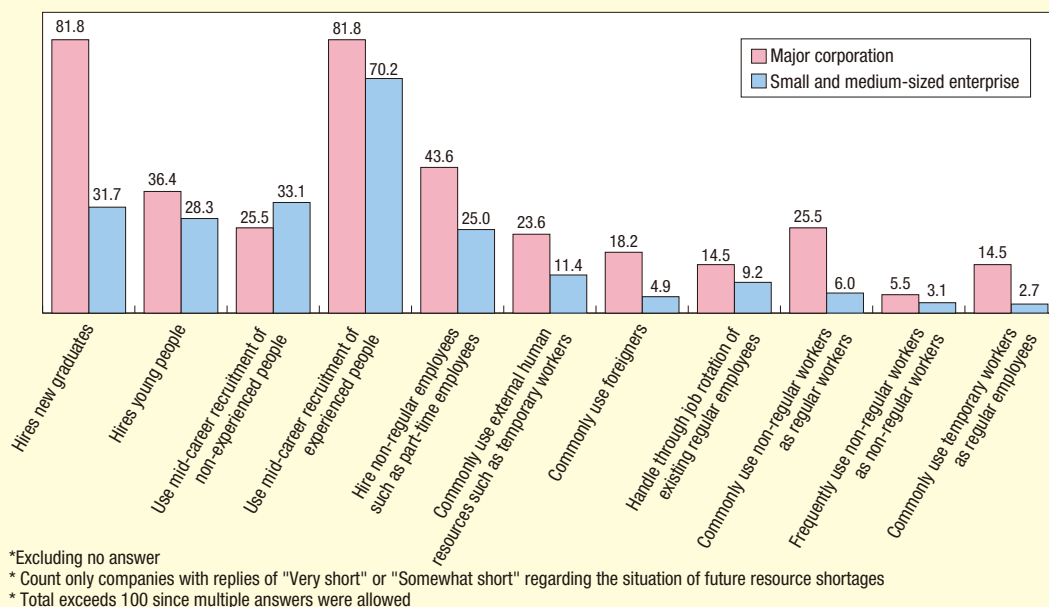
(Reprinted from FY 2009 White Paper on Small and Medium-sized Businesses)

Source: Survey on Practical Uses of Human Resources in Enterprise Activities (November 2008), Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting

Regarding recruitment to fill human resource shortages, **Fig. 1-2-34** shows that major corporations mostly choose "new graduate recruitment" (approximately 82%) as well as "mid-career recruitment among experienced people" (approximately 82%), while small-to-medium-sized enterprises choose mostly "mid-career recruitment from experienced people" (approximately 70%), but choose fewer from the "new graduate recruitment" (approximately 32%), which indicates the situation that not all small and medium-sized enterprises value the hiring of new graduates, which we need to keep in mind.

Fig. 1-2-34

**Type of Resource to Hire or Actively Used to Compensate for Human Resource Shortage**



(Reprinted from FY 2009 White Paper on Small and Medium-sized Businesses)

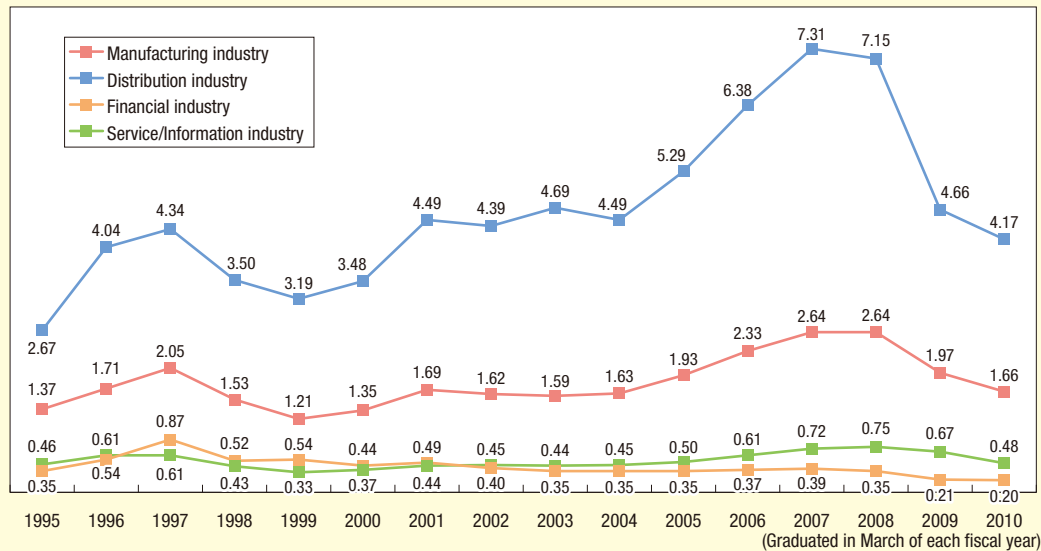
Source: Survey on Practical Use of Human Resources in Enterprise Activities (November, 2008), Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting

As seen above, behind the mismatch between small-to-medium-sized enterprise and students are many factors in addition to a major-corporation mindset among students. Other factors could be that students are

unable to get as sufficient information about employment from small-to-medium-sized enterprises as they are from major corporations, and also the fact that small-to-medium-sized enterprises take a different recruitment approach than that taken by major corporations.

Furthermore, as shown in **Fig. 1-2-35**, the job opening-to-application ratio for university graduates varies a great deal among industries, which suggests that there would be a mismatch between industries that have high hiring demand and industries in which students hope to work.

**Fig. 1-2-35 Trends in Opening-to-application Ratio by Industry (university graduates)**

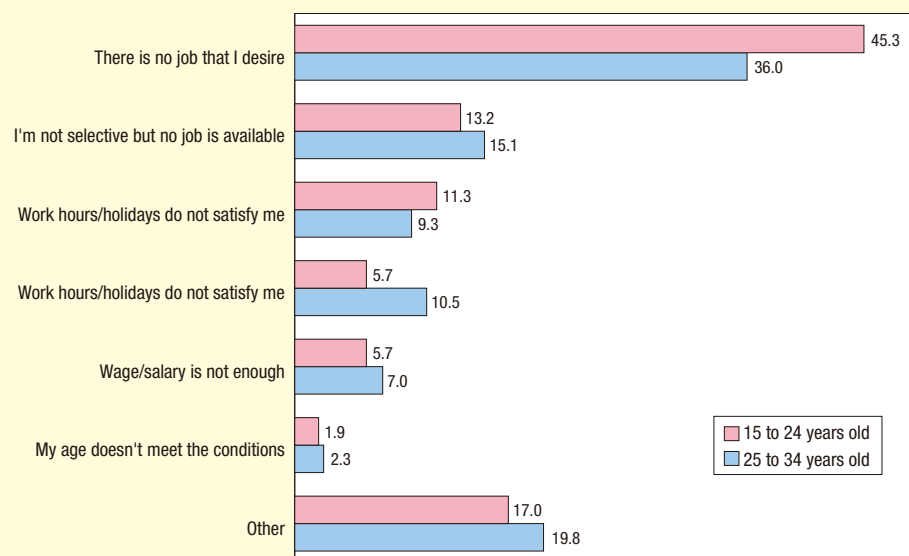


\* Manufacturing industry: agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and mining, general contracting, food, textile, steel, nonferrous metal/metal, semiconductor/electronics/electrical components  
 Distribution industry: trading companies, department stores, specialty stores (western clothes and accessories, Japanese clothes), specialty stores (automobile related), specialty stores (appliances)  
 Financial industry: banks, securities, life insurance/non-life insurance, and credit card companies  
 Service/Information industry: telecommunications, broadcasting, real estate, electric power/gas/water/energy, restaurant, medical/welfare, advertising agencies

Source: 28th Works Survey on Job Opening-to-Application Rates among University Graduates (2012 graduates), RECRUIT Works Institute

Moreover, as shown in **Fig. 1-2-36**, the most common reason why unemployed young people cannot get a job is "Desired job/work is not available," and there often is a mismatch between young peoples' desire for jobs and the demand for young worker resources.

**Fig. 1-2-36 Status of Mismatch between Young Peoples' Desire for Jobs and the Demand for Young Worker Resources (annual average in 2009)**



Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Labor Force Survey (detailed aggregation), Replies from the fully unemployed when asked the reason why they cannot get a job



## (2) Trends in measures which aim to increase matches between company job offers and new graduates

### 1) Provision of information from universities to new graduates who are job hunting

Based on the discussions above, it is vital to make it easier for students looking for a job and people who provide career counseling or employment support to get the necessary information to search for companies and industries/types of occupations in order to find the highest job opportunity potential for each graduate. This is necessary for improved matching opportunities between company job offers and new graduates since some small-to-medium-sized enterprises and some certain industries face shortages in the labor force but still have a high demand to hire new graduates.

As shown in **Fig. 1-2-33**, since small-to-medium-sized enterprises in particular use recruitment portal sites and generate their own website much less frequently than major corporations do, they have difficulty in hiring new graduates.

Currently, the government is promoting measures to, for example, arrange face-to-face meetings between students and small-to-medium-sized enterprises through making use of the Internet, and hold joint meetings focusing on small-to-medium-sized enterprises. Local governments also seem to be making efforts like these with local small-to-medium-sized enterprises as well.

Furthermore, the government provides experimental employment subsidies to companies that have successfully transferred university graduates within the past three years to regular employee status through employment for definite term training, and ones that have provided university graduates with long-term on-site practice (known as internships project) at small-to-medium-sized enterprises with an interest in hiring.

In addition, the government allocates job supporters at the Japanese government employment agency and has them work intensively on matching new graduates with small-to-medium-sized enterprises in cooperation with universities.

In order to increase matching opportunities between job openings at companies and new graduates, it is necessary to provide fine-tuned support, for example, to provide appropriate information to students who are looking for a job. It is expected that schools, industrial circles and the government can work together and build such an environment to foster such measures.

With an increase in the acceptance of foreign students, some companies hire foreign students in order to secure talented people. In terms of employment support for foreign students, information about recruitment in Japan is provided, for example, by the Japan Student Services Organization which has published "A Job-Hunting Guide for Foreign Students."

### 2) Implementing educational activities in tight cooperation with industries and local communities

In order to facilitate matching opportunities between company job offers and new graduates, it is necessary not only to provide information but also to try matching skills required for the workplace and competencies acquired through education.

The skills required in the workplace, however, vary depending upon the job. And the skill needs change from time to time, and will no doubt continue to change all the time since industrial structure and employment structure are constantly undergoing dramatic change.

Another fact is that each region has different dynamics with respect to their industries and employment conditions, as well as their demand for human resources.

Therefore, it is necessary for schools to understand what kind of abilities the industries and region expect from human resources by strengthening their relationships with industries in the region, to project what will happen after students' "transition from school to mainstream society/their occupation," and to conduct their educational activities while verifying the skills which students must acquire at school. During the activities, it is critical to offer vocational education with a focus on organizing and improving curriculum, implement practical vocational education activities, and involve high-caliber business people in these activities by working closely with the local community and relevant companies.

In addition, considering that the skills required at work vary by occupation, and that society will continue to change, it is also important to focus on the development in basic and general abilities as discussed in **2** (1) in Section 2. Therefore, it is necessary to promote not only vocational education but also systematic career education from early childhood through higher-level education.