

The Seisa Model for Teacher License Renewal (TLR) in Japan: An Action Research Project to Develop Kyosei in the Arts Curriculum

Richard Keith Gordon

Seisa University, Japan & California State University, USA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study focuses on developing kyosei in the arts curriculum of Teacher License Renewal (TLR) at Seisa University. The TLR program at Seisa University utilizes a unique practice known as kyosei, the symbiotic relationship between individuals and the world around them. By employing action research methodology, the team of researchers planned the practice, conducted TLR at Seisa for in-service teachers (n=300), checked the practice, and applied it to high school students (n=16). Classroom communication and interdisciplinary form of arts helped to collaborate on different units, ages, and ability of learners; thus, it became a great opportunity for kyosei practice. On the other hand, for students, dealing with others and uncertainty presented challenges. Playing with others, participating the artistic activities and learning from each other turned a great training for kyosei.

INTRODUCTION

In 2009, the Japanese government revised its teacher license renewal policy (TLR). The purpose of TLR revision was to provide affected teachers with updated pedagogical knowledge and instructional strategies. After the revision, Japanese teachers are now required to complete a total of 18 hours of university provided professional development courses over 10 years for their teacher license renewal.

TLR critics see it as having an excessive amount of hours. Additionally, it is thought that the new TLR does not address practical and critical issues in teaching and learning. Studies indicated that participants in TLR programs are somewhat satisfied with their learning experiences during their training (Kaaba, 2009; Higashiyama & Hara, 2010). Having such a weak level of satisfaction was a reason for Seisa University administrators to review their TLR training program. To address TLR concerns and to improve the TLR experience at Seisa University researchers set about to observe a small component of TLR policy and practice in the Arts. The research question guiding these observations was whether an Arts Camp experience would fulfill licensure requirements while simultaneously provide an enriching and creative experience for students that novice and experienced teachers could observe.

This study describes how TLR drove researchers to reimagine professional development practice for K-12 arts teachers by utilizing an imaginative curriculum model to guide instructional planning. This model of teaching and learning known as the Instructional Template (Gordon, 2008) integrates proscribed objectives with the social demands children experience in daily classroom life. The Arts Camp experience provided a fertile investigative environment for teachers and students.

Ingrained in the TLR program at Seisa University is a unique practice known as *Kyosei* (共生). *Kyosei* means and represents the symbiotic relationship between individuals and the world around them. In teaching and learning as well as all avenues of life, *Kyosei* is thought to influence daily interactions. *Kyosei* practice in Seisa TLR programs, cover all licensure areas. *Kyosei* practice at Seisa represents an interdisciplinary as well as interpersonal approach to the curriculum. The TLR requirements as well as *Kyosei* ideas are integrated with the life network science curriculum, the communication curriculum, the sports curriculum, the arts curriculum and the teacher education curriculum.

The study explores how practitioner-researchers designed and integrated TLR requirements in the arts with *Kyosei* philosophy. The art disciplines studied were, dance, graphic arts, video-making, theatre, musicianship, and cooking. The study aims to present a model for attaining TLR certification that incorporates *Kyosei* practice through artistic activities.

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