An attempt of field work for middle and high school students to comprehend an “area” in an integrated manner

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In the school education, things in our daily life and society are subdivided into subjects to study. Specialized teachers teach in the classes of middle and high schools and students tend to attend a class passively. However, the real things are mixture of contents dealt in various subjects. To solve emerging problems in our society, we need an ability to cooperate perseveringly with people having various background.

Based on this perspective, the authors launched a course named “General Field Exercise” for students between third-year of middle school and second year of high school. Approximately 15 students voluntarily attended the course, which lasted for two years. In this course, we focused on an “area” as the study target. Participants who have various background explore the “area” to comprehend the “area” in an integrated manner. Teachers of various subjects including earth science, Japanese history, Japanese language and etc. in charge of the course tried to study with the students from their point of view. Before going out to the “area”, teachers and students had a discussion in the classroom to share targets to solve in the “area”. Based on the proposals and preferences of the students, we set “area” and made contents of the course. The first “area” set in the course was Shinagawa, where is adjacent of the school and the Shinagawa’s religious connection led us city of Fuchu where we had three excursions. During the summer break, we went Osaka to have a field excursion of three days and two nights.

In Osaka, we walked around the Uemachi Hills to watch its morphology and historical heritages and visited Shitenoji temple, which have a history longer than 1400 years. On the approach to the temple, the earth-science teacher explained the relationship with fault activity that uplifted the Uemachi Hills and a slope seen in west of the approach. After that, the teacher of Japanese history led students to watch historical building and a monument of Ansei Tokai Earthquake and tsunami (1854) in the temple. The monument was built by townspeople of the area to commemorate victims of the earthquake and tsunami. The students started to read epigraph on the monument and discuss on the content with teachers. A discussion on tsunami caused by the Ansei Earthquake was led by teachers of Japanese history and earth-science. After the visit to Shitenoji temple, someone proposed to walk and see other temples on the way down from the temple.

As shown in above, we eliminated barrier between subjects and the students realized that the things they were facing were mixture of history and morphology. The teachers gave general direction of the excursion; however, the teachers exchanged their roles with the students. The teachers and students both learned deeply and independently.

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