

Reforming Educational Scene in University by Soetanto Method (STM)

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1. Background

It is observed that many Japanese university students are spending their university life without thinking logically and critically, thus falling under the condition of “un-growing.” The intelligent level of university students is declining severely, with 20% of the students presently make mistaken behaviors in elementary-level fraction problems because of the neglect of logical thinking (Okabe, Nishimura & Tose, 1999). 70% of university students major in humanities spend their time without a life goal or without confidence that their study helps to accomplish better future (Kaneko, 2013, page 83). The fall in students' logical thinking ability is one of the reasons for the decline of success in Japanese society, since it means Japanese universities are cultivating academically undeveloped workers to society.

There are several past researchers who have provided the standing point of this idea. Abraham Maslow (1943) created the theory of meta-motivation. William Authur Ward (1968) introduced the idea of motivation and influence into education theory. “The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.” is one of his famous quotes. Edward Deci (1972) showed that people have inner motivations to learn, undertaking new challenges, and connected the idea of motivation with work efficiency. Apart from theories, Daniel H. Pink's (2010) Technology Entertainment Design (TED) conference talk went viral by making reference to new styles of motivation and their application in everyday lives. All these previous studies support the importance of motivation in education.

The desire to learn in Japanese college students is diminishing, compared to students from other countries. Taking the viewpoint that the function of college professor not only as a lecturer but also as a researcher, Soetanto, who is a faculty at Waseda University, has sought to foster the confidence and motivation in these students. In addition,

We have taught classes in many different fields of subject at several universities and we also give lectures in many countries. Our lectures, which deal with our personal stories as the story telling in bringing about the greatest potential from our students, have been characterized in this way, “his lectures exudes a enormous amount of energy, they have impressive ability to change one's attitude and outlook.” Against this background, this study aims to examine how Soetanto Method has motivated students' desire in learning, in which the result is instructive for strengthening educational approach in universities.

2. Soetanto Educational Philosophy and Soetanto Method (STM)

2. 1. Recharged Knowledge that Continues to Discharge in College

We did not take long to discover that most students come to college solely to get a diploma or get easy credits for graduation. Today many students not only have low spirit of learning but their desire to learn is also poor. More crucially, many of them are Japanese students. We feel it is indeed strange that Japanese students have not utilized the educational environment that they were provided for studying harder. Many students spend enormous time in playing smart phones. Also we are even surprised to see many students who have the nerve to sleep in the first row of the classroom while teacher was teaching. Education up to high school in Japan is always rated among the top in the world. In this reality, we have to ask “why then do college students choose to “discharge” the knowledge that they had hardly been “charging” during their first 12 years of school?”

2. 2. Opportunity is Something You Must Chase After

Soetanto was close to graduate from TUAT, when there was news from home country Indonesia that the Chinese business

complex stores of 5000 units had been vandalized and burning down, among them was his brother's business corporation building. Consequently, he received a call from his brother telling him to return home. One of the reasons was the financial difficulty that no longer able to support him to finish university education in Japan, which was in that time the Japanese living standard was 10 time higher than Indonesia one.

After a deep consideration, he answered: "No, it's not the time for me to return to Indonesia". There was an uneasiness that quickly came over him as he was reminded his brother financial status and unlike others who had received scholarships or financial aids, his finances came from his own pocket money and partly from his brother.

However, it could not have happened at a more perfect time. A new scholarship fund was being created by an International Scholarship Organization part of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT, previously known as Mombusho). Since he had taken as many courses in the period of semester and as 220 plus credits, almost doubled the required credits for graduation. He was lucky to be able to graduate from TUAT and later got a Doctor of Engineering degree from Tokyo Institute of Technology (Tokyo Tech).

2. 3. In Need of Consistent Efforts to Better Empower Yourself

Although he had received a doctorate degree from Tokyo Tech., he was unable to find a job in Japan. One of the senior advices him, "if you were obtained another doctorate degree, then you build yourself with a bigger weapon", he thought as he looked forward with a positive attitude. He believes that an opportunity is something that you must chase. You can't just sit there and wait for it to come around you. He decided to challenge it and as a result he obtained the second doctorate degree in Medicine from Tohoku University.

2. 4. If Japan not Good, there is Another Country

When the environment (situation and condition) are not that supportive, you need to wait for another chance or jump to another New World. Although he was lucky in having two doctorate degrees from two different top universities of Japan, unfortunately there was no job offer for him. One day, with the recommendation of a professor, he was given a chance to submit an application for a research associate position in Japan. He was so excited and ecstatic at the same time he had trouble sleeping the night before he submitted the application form. By neurotically he checked his resume over and over again for mistakes. When he came to submit the application the next morning, however no one would even give him a time of day in the office.

"Please tell me why there is no one wanted to accept my form?" He proceeded to ask the receptionist to make sense of

this situation. At that moment from a far, the professor who had given him a recommendation later earlier appeared and said, "Soetanto, I'm suggesting that you do not submit your application!" "Every one of us finds it is awkward to have a Southeastern Asian person teaching our Japanese people". Soetanto felt distraught and mortified, tears flowed from his eyes, after hearing the professor's comment.

In fact, Soetanto was born by no choice in Indonesia, he is a foreigner in Japan, but more important, it is because he is an Asian. If he is a White, maybe it would be a different story. Professor continued saying, "If you were to teach Indonesian, then there is an open position for you. How do you think?" Being to teach Indonesian - any Indonesian could have done that. What about all the 14 years of gaining two high technology doctorate degrees? Naturally, he could not accept and declined the offer without a doubt in his mind.

"Was it a mistake to have come to Japan?" He questioned himself as he became overwhelmingly exhausted. One of his Indonesian friends said, "Japan may no longer be the Japan that exists in Asia". On the other hand, going back to Indonesia was no longer what he wanted, he would be seen as another Chinese Indonesian just as he had been before leaving for Japan 14 years ago. At that moment, he had made a crucial decision, despite opposition from his formal mentor and doctorate supervisor of Prof. Okujima and Prof. Ohtsuki, he decided to go to United states to challenge the New World by participating in an International Conference at his own expense.

He was called to a meeting by the leading professor in the field of Ultrasound Medicine Technology, and soon became a research assistant professor in Drexel University, Philadelphia, US, in 1988. He became research associate professor in 1989, and being an adjunct associate professor at Thomas Jefferson Medical School. The group he was in was awarded of over US \$ 1 million from the NIH (National Institute s of Health, USA), which gave him the ability to pursue his research activities in US.

During that period, he committed himself to return the gratitude to US for the opportunities that it had given to him and worked vigorously and energetically. One day, he suddenly received a phone call from his former mentor, Prof. Okujima, to return to Japan for a faculty position. Due to his circumstances in US, he was unable to give a quick response as his mind was filled with confusion and overwhelming feelings. However, something strange came over him, that he could not deny the offer. As soon as he heard the Japanese language again, his nostalgia for Japan, and his Japanese came out from the heart. He decided to accept the offer as a full professor from the Toin Yokohama Univeristy (TYU), and return to Japan in 1993.

3. Japanese University Students

3.1. Why the Japanese Students are Lacking of Desire to Study?

Firstly, Japan has seen a remarkable economic growth in the last fifty years after the War. Parents who grew up during this period do not want their children to suffer and also have the tendency to be swallowed by this era of happiness and fertility and thus end up spoiling them.

Secondly, even when their part time jobs and the student clubs' activities take precedence over their classes, they are still to earn their courses credit by merely reviewing the materials obtained from previous years classes right before the final exams. With this repetition, they are able to graduate normally: this is the problem that appears throughout the Japanese university system.

Thirdly, another problem lies on the corporate side. Generally speaking, college students from all over the world look for jobs in their senior year, when they are nearly finished with their education. But in Japan, the companies have a hiring system which starts their search for job prospects within the students' junior year and shows very little concern that the students are still wrapped up in their education. Although there have been some improvements recently, the corporate side still attaches too much value and emphasis on the name of the alma mater, rather than the students' credentials and accomplishments during their undergraduate year. This has raised a strong question to whether the companies are, in fact, devaluing the importance of college education.

Lastly, the problem lies with the educators. For the most part, teachers come across students who have done well through high school and even if they can educate those who are naturally good students, the problem lies with how to educate the poor academics students, and whether they will readily accept them. University professor has the function of both as a researcher and as an educator. Often an impression one receives is that Japanese professors "teach to the black/white board". In other words, they do not look at the students' faces when teaching and do not appear to show any concern for the students. This responsibility lies solely with the professor how to handle the class. Consequently, he decided to take some action not only to teach but also to care every student.

4. University Educational Principle

Compared to junior high and high school, students in college enjoy an increasingly free environment. Consequently, the lecture attendance diminishes and talking amongst the students has become more prevalent, more and more students use their smart phones during the class and even sleep in the class. Such things create an unpleasant atmosphere between the professor and the students.

Therefore, there is a need to find a way to revive their interest not only is effort needed from the professor's side, but also needed to create a place to enable the students to rediscover their goals. A college lecture should be a place where students and professors work together enjoyably and perform research and experimentation in a professional manner. Through this process, the students will gain confidence as they jump out into the real world. The author objective is to find out a way for them to boost this confidence and knowing their goals.

Soetanto will not leave behind anyone of the students! He does not care whether that are good students or poor students. He treats them seriously as long as they attend the lecture; that is his principle. He wants them to value this moment, this instant, between him and them, and not dwell on the past. That is what he needs from them, in order to have a deep and enriching lecture. However, both sides must work together, not just the professor side.

5. The Rule of the Class

The authors proceeded to set some basic rules for the lectures and asked the students to follow the rules: firstly failure to attend at 70% of the lectures makes a student ineligible for any evaluation; secondly, denial of entry into the lecture room if over ten minutes late; thirdly, talking during class is prohibited, are some of the rules. He would fail anyone who did not abide the rules regardless whether student obtained perfect scores on his final exams. This may have been unexpected by them, but he let them know from the very beginning of the lectures.

At this time, we promised them, "We will absolutely and unconditionally teach you all the materials in an interesting and exciting way. If you attend the lectures with the utmost seriousness for one semester, or one year, you will become a respectable engineer or a scholar and a first-class researcher." This is our promise.

Furthermore, as part of the teaching method, the lectures were given in Japanese while in the case of in TYU, with the text and other written materials, middle and final exams were all in English, on the other hand, in Waseda University lectures are conducted in English.

6. Results and Discussion

Since, there are many who are highly spirited and independent, the American teaching method concentrates on those who are highly motivated, not those who are academically unmotivated. It is rather simple, from the educator's perspective, to focus only on those students who do well. However, that is a mistake. The authors prefer to put the strength into those who are both academically unmotivated and those who are motivated and work together to achieve a successful outcome. As matter of fact, it is quite a difficult task to stimulate everyone when their

interests are so different from one another; however, it was able to devise a lecture style that would appeal to each and every one of them.

The authors were taken by surprise, but the students said, how grateful they were to have a teacher who paid attention to them. In today's age, we live in a society where neither family nor the society disciplines one another. As a result, the youth are increasingly losing sight of themselves. The authors were glad to know that, beyond his words, the students are able to see our concern and care as their professors.

Moreover, there was a case where a male student who was doing his job search, but he came crying to one of us and said, "you are a horrible professor." What had happened was this student has asked to miss a lab seminar to attend a company seminar, which at that time was his priority, but unfortunately the professor did not allow him to miss the seminar. Then he explained to this student, "I am receiving a high tuition from you for your college education. Moreover, we, the educators, have the responsibility to guide and educate you firmly. Later,

professor felt it necessary to call the person in charge of the company and explain the situation to him. As the result, that student was employed several months later, and the director of the company and the student purposely visited one of us and said, "This student is very reliable. In facts, we never had much expectation from college graduates, but now I can start to believe in them".

Finally, for further detailed study of the Soetanto Method (STM), the Inter-operation Control (IOC) to the class, and how to bring change in every student who attend one of our class of MIE (Motivation Studies in Education), and a case study of a specific student as called the Monster student who has changed from extrinsic motivation (EM) to intrinsic motivation (IM) of his lifelong goals. The analytical results are documented in "Goal Setting & Case Study of the 'Monster' Student's Change in Professor Soetanto's Class: From performance to mastery."

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Abstract

Reconsidering the use of traditional methods, this paper examined how the authors have developed and revolutionized an unconventional style, a new pedagogy in guiding each and every one of their students to be motivated and to realize his limitless potential to be an active learner; in doing so their lectures has been appraised as, the lecture that deeply touch ones heart. The pedagogy and the outcome/effect has been coined, the Soetanto Method (STM) by the media and their students. In this study, the reaction of the students to the STM, the results and the change by the use of comment sheets will be examined. The STM method contributes not only to the learner's level of the motivation, but also inspiring them to become an active learner.

Keywords

Soetanto Method (STM), motivation, touch one's heart, comment sheet, active learner

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