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## Social Studies and Civic Education Practice in Japan : A Case Study of Human Rights Learning through Participatory Approach in Junior High School 3rd Grade

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menekankan karakteristik studi sosial dan praktik pendidikan kewarganegaraan di Jepang melalui studi kasus praktik sekolah menengah pertama kelas 3 “pembelajaran hak asasi manusia melalui pembelajaran partisipatif” dan untuk menunjukkan sudut pandang komparatif tentang studi sosial di Indonesia. Poin-poin berikut menjadi jelas sebagai hasil dari penelitian ini. Pertama, melalui unit studi sosial dan pendidikan kewarganegaraan, siswa dapat bersenang-senang dan menyadari nilai hak asasi manusia dengan mengadopsi pendekatan pengalaman partisipatif untuk belajar dengan memasukkan lokakarya dan uji coba simulasi. Poin ini adalah salah satu karakteristik penting kewarganegaraan dalam masyarakat demokratis. Kedua, dalam pelajaran sosial dan pelajaran pendidikan kewarganegaraan, siswa secara aktif menghormati pendapat orang lain dan belajar dari satu sama lain dengan berpartisipasi aktif dalam kegiatan kelompok dan diskusi. Poin ini membentuk dasar kewarganegaraan yang diperlukan untuk membentuk masyarakat yang demokratis. Dua poin di atas dianggap memiliki implikasi untuk studi sosial dan pendidikan kewarganegaraan di Indonesia.

**Kata kunci:** Studi Sosial dan Praktek Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan, Pemulangan Hak Asasi Manusia, Pendekatan Partisipatif

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## **1. Purpose of the research**

The purpose of this research is to emphasize the characteristics of social studies and civic education practice in Japan through a case study of the learning approach in junior high schools and show comparative viewpoints on social studies in Indonesia.

Nasution (2016) argues that a new curriculum in Indonesia, designed in 2013, aims to foster ethical values and scientific thinking in social studies. In this paper, by clarifying the social studies citizenship education practice in Japan, I aim to conduct a comparison with social studies and civic education practice in Indonesia.

Generally, it can be said that social studies education has played an important role in fostering democratic citizenship in Japan. Above all, the junior high school civic education in Japan plays a significant role in teaching democracy during the compulsory education stage. By demonstrating such characteristics of Japanese junior high school social studies and civic education, we thought that it would be possible to give a suggestion on social studies and civic education in Indonesia.

Therefore, in this paper, I will use the concept “human rights learning through participatory hands-on learning” as a case study to clarify the characteristics of the practical aspects of civic education in social studies in Japanese junior high schools. I had worked on this project while teaching third grade of junior high school in 2008. I will also make suggestions for the improvement of civic education practice in social studies in junior high schools in Indonesia.

## **2. Research method**

In Japan, the curriculum guidelines prescribe the conduct of human rights education through educational activities in schools. Especially in Japanese junior high schools, social studies and civic education play a large role. This is because learning to “question a way of life aimed at a symbiotic society” is desired. In doing so, the students not only understand their basic human rights and acquire knowledge of the rights of people but also realize the diversity of opinions through participatory hands-on learning. It is important to learn the importance of making presentations based on the students’ opinions and the difficulties of discussions.

“Participatory hands-on learning” refers to learning that incorporates students’ independent activities, such as workshops, simulations, and role plays. The use of these activities in social studies and civil education classes is an effective means of making the students realize the value of human rights in real life. Furthermore, we considered that participatory hands-on learning was positioned as a part of the curriculum of civic learning, and by continuing to practice the lessons, students could independently become aware of the value of human rights.

In addition, in education on human rights, it is necessary to foster an attitude not only to make the students attentive to basic human rights issues but also prepare them to take action to resolve those issues. Therefore, although it is possible to teach human rights as “rights that human beings have by nature” through instructional lessons, it is hard to say that every student has been able to internalize the learning that allows them to be conscious of human rights. Therefore, through “participatory hands-on learning,” we wanted to make students aware of the value of human rights while sharing “the joy of learning.”

### 3. The case of the unit “Respect for Human Rights and the Constitution of Japan”

#### (1) Unit structure

In one such attempt, in the third year of junior high school citizenship and learning of the unit “Respect for Human Rights and the Constitution of Japan,” we practiced workshops and games in the flow of units (Material 1). In class, I tried to conduct not only activities but also classes while being conscious of the connection between the aims of social studies and experience. For this reason, participatory experiences are positioned in the introductory part, the students' consciousness is focused on human rights values, and discussions on human rights are held based on experiences. While clarifying the focus of classes as social studies, I gave lessons in consideration of time allocation.

#### Material 1: 【Position of participatory learning in the unit “Respect for Human Rights and the Constitution of Japan”】

Unit flow (9 hours)	
▪ Workshop: Living in everyone	1
▪ History of human rights: Let's think from the part-time job	1
▪ Basic principles of the constitution	1
▪ Test of pacifism	1
▪ Equality rights: What are the complaints of leprosy patients?	1
▪ Living together ①:Discrimination issues remaining in modern society	1
▪ Living together ②:Discrimination against women and people with disabilities	1
▪ Right to freedom: What do you think? SMAP trial	1
▪ Let's think about basic human rights from the “rights” hot-air balloon game	1

#### (2) Lesson 1— “Workshop: Living in everyone”

As an introduction to the unit, I wanted to conduct a workshop and learn about the differences in values in a fun-filled way. Therefore, by conducting an “auction of ‘rights’” (Material 2), we learned that the rights that everyone wishes to purchase are different, and in order to live in society we must recognize each other's values. I wanted to emphasize its importance.

#### Material 2: 【“Auction of ‘rights’” document】

Q: "If you have 100,000 yen (all your property), what would you buy from the following? Use the full amount to make a budget."

○ Property items

1. beautiful character, 2. heart to believe in something, 3. sports versatility, 4. friend of opposite sex, 5. ability to assist others, 6. success at work, 7. good looks, 8. drum set, 9. honest heart, 10. ability to get along with friends, 11. health, 12. heart that likes to study, 13. ability to guide others, 14. musical talent, 15. ability to turn around, 16. world peace, 17. Prime Minister's chair, 18. height, 19. parents who recognize themselves, 20. a peaceful future, 21. ability to read, 22. notifications of aspiring schools, 23. free time, 24. language power, 25. occupation that you want to be in, 26. free school

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**Material 3 【State of auction activity】**



**Material 4 【Reflection of the lesson by student A】**

**<Impression of today's lesson>**

I was disappointed that I could not spend my free time. I wanted to take advantage of this kind of time to get what I can't buy with money. But it seems that everyone had the same idea. It would be cheap if world peace was available in 100,000 yen. Even 100,000,000,000,000 yen is cheap. You can't buy world peace, because if you get free time, someone else will lose it.

**<Comment from teacher>**

Rights are made up of various relationships.

In the lesson, student A seemed to notice that rights such as "freedom" and "world peace" were dependent on various relationships, and that "if one person gets money, someone else would lose it" (Material 4). In the introduction stage of the small unit, the experience-based activity, called auction, was effective in terms of enabling one to notice the difference in values.

**(3) Lesson 2— "Let's think about basic human rights from the 'right' hot-air balloon game"**

In this lesson, the "hot-air balloon game about 'right'" (Material 5), which allows one to explore the value of basic human rights, was incorporated into the learning activities. By asking "Why do you think this right is important?" I encouraged students to think about the universal right of humankind.

### **Material 5 【 “Right” hot-air balloon game】**

Imagine a scene in which you ride a balloon and relax in the air. There are 10 rights (from A to K) on the hot-air balloon. The “right” is a weight that prevents the hot-air balloon from rising too high. However, suddenly the hot-air balloon began to descend from its altitude, and I had to throw out the “right” to reduce the weight on the balloon.

A) my own bedroom, B) beautiful air, C) pocket money D) loved and loved, E) not controlled by boss, F) have time to play, G) different, H) enjoy holidays every year, I) food and water, J) play time, K) to hear the story

### **Material 6 【Consultation activities in the group】**



### **Material 7 【Reflection of the lesson by student A】**

#### **<Impression of today's lesson>**

In the hot-air balloon game, we thought that the results of our teams “3” and “4” next to us were similar. By the way, I have a question: Rice cakes are thrown at shrines near the house every year, but Brazilians and Chinese adults in the neighborhood bring so many rice cakes. I live in this area, so I have the right, but I'm afraid that they won't pay for the festival. I think it is bad to have prejudice in this way, but the amount we bring is not odd (and many people). Is it a violation of human rights? If it is not that full, and if it is held down a little more, I'm not biased. I mean, do you eat that much mochi? ! !

#### **<Comment from teacher>**

You are thinking about human rights because you are familiar with them.

Through the counseling activities in the group, the students seemed to understand that the rights that they considered important were linked to the Constitution of Japan. From the discussion about the right to be “different,” Student A seemed to be interested in the problem of foreigners in the area (Document 7). However, there is a prejudice against foreigners in student

A's consciousness. I think it is important for future learning to learn to think deeply about these familiar problems.

### Material 8 [“‘Right’ hot-air balloon game” lesson plan]

1 Unit: Human rights and the Constitution of Japan

2 Lesson instruction: Let's think about basic human rights from the hot-air balloon game of “rights”

(1) Aim:

• Collaborate with fellow team members to understand basic human rights and deepen their interest in human rights

(2) The highlight of this time

• Was participatory experiential learning effective for students to feel and understand their own basic human rights?

(3) Deployment

Learning activity	Teacher support/Points to keep in mind
<div>What are human rights? Can you explain?</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rights given to humans</li> <li>- It is okay to do~</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Check the purpose of the lesson.</li> </ul>
<div>Let's play a “‘right’ hot-air balloon game.”</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Set up the scene and consider the right list.</li> </ul> <div> <p>Imagine a scene in which you ride a balloon and relax in the air. There are 10 rights on the hot-air balloon. The “right” is a weight to prevent the hot-air balloon from rising too much. However, suddenly the hot-air balloon began to lower down its altitude, and I had to throw out the “right” that was a weight.</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create a group of five to six people near the desk and hold group discussions based on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distribute the worksheets and make them feel that they are in a critical situation where life and death are divided.</li> <li>- I don't know if I will die or survive, but I will explain that I should throw away the weight of right without giving up my last hope.</li> <li>- Distribute the examination list, and the “rights” are 10 (A to J) written on the worksheet. Carefully read those rights, and rank the right that may be thrown first. Then, instruct them to draw a line between what can never be discarded and what can be discarded.</li> <li>- Instruct the team to rank.</li> <li>- Perform a desk-to-desk inspection and give hints to the group that is not active in discussions.</li> </ul>

<p>individual opinions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ One chairperson and one record for each group.</li> <li>○ Announce the study results of the group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Write down the table of rights items and group names and prepare for the announcement of the results.</li> <li>▪ Instruct to check the rights that cannot be abandoned based on the Constitution of Japan, and confirm that each right corresponds to a basic human right.</li> </ul>
<div>Why did this “right” remain at the end?</div>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Compare the results of each group and find common points. In particular, we will clarify what rights remain at the end.</li> <li>○ Understand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage students to explain specific situations.</li> </ul>
<div>Is not there a situation where basic human rights are deprived?</div>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Child abuse</li> <li>▪ Bullying</li> <li>- Buraku discrimination</li> <li>- Gender discrimination</li> <li>- Prejudice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To help you deepen your thoughts on what you can do, ask, “It is easy to say that you should not discriminate, but what should you do to actually eliminate it?”</li> </ul>
<div>What is important in solving human rights violations?</div>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Write your thoughts on the worksheet.</li> <li>- I think it is necessary to know each other well.</li> <li>- I think it is important to cooperate.</li> <li>- First of all, it is important to notice oneself.</li> </ul>	

### 3 Evaluation

- Is it possible to deepen your interest in human rights through participatory experiential learning? (Speech/Worksheet)
- Are you able to understand the rights that you consider important based on the Constitution of Japan? (Worksheet)

#### **4. The case of the unit “Modern Democratic Politics and Society”**

##### **(1) Unit composition**

In the study of the unit “Modern Democratic Politics and Society,” the concept “participatory experiential learning” was positioned as follows (Material 9). In students' remarks, recent political issues such as the resignation of former Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and the establishment of the new cabinet of Taro Asou can be seen in the remarks, indicating their interest. However, the meaning of the terms heard in the news and the actions of the Diet and the Cabinet are only fragmentary, and it is hard to say that they fully understand them. I think this is because the students are not able to see politics as having something to do with their lives. Therefore, I thought it was necessary to position “participatory experience learning” such as role play and debate in the unit and deepen the students' thinking about the political system while having a real feeling.

##### **Material 9 【Positioning of hands-on learning in the unit “Modern Democratic Politics and Society”】**

Unit flow (10 hours)	
Politics and democracy : Let's think from the ballot	1
Let's do a mock vote	1
Role of a political party	1
What is the privilege of Diet members?	1
Activities of Diet	1
Cabinet and administration : What can you tell from your face photo?	1

##### **(2) Lesson 3—“Let’s make a simulated vote”**

In the lesson “Let’s do a mock vote,” students are aware of elections and politics, and they realize that politics is in action by selecting a representative by their voting, and they participate in politics to solve human rights issues. The aim was to make people understand that it is necessary.

Regarding the pledge of the mock voting, using the worksheet (Kouichi Kato “Citizens’ Class Print” Jishinsha, p. 59, 2003), we conducted a single-seat constituency system and a proportional representation system.



**Material 10 【Plenary seat for each single candidate and single-member constituency】**

**Candidates for “Yamakawa 1 Ward”**

<b>Nobunaga Oda (Unification Party)</b>	<b>Ieyasu Tokugawa (Oedo Party)</b>
<b>&lt; Pledge &gt;</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Repair roads and bridges in the constituency.</li><li>- Construct Shinkansen and highways.</li><li>- To develop science and technology, each junior high school will provide a computer to each student so that they can use the Internet.</li></ul>	<b>&lt; Pledge &gt;</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Build a hospital locally.</li><li>- Maintain nursing homes and parks.</li><li>- Promote barrier-free areas in the town so that people with disabilities can live comfortably.</li><li>- Increase the number of nurseries.</li></ul>

**Material 11 【 “Looking back on the class: Student A”】**

**<Impression of today's lesson>**

Now, Japan has various problems, such as pension issues, environmental issues, aging society issues, declining birthrate measures, and international issues. I often see people on TV complaining about such issues. We thought we should know the opinions of various people, even if they are not directly related to them.

**<Comment from teacher>**

You are aware of human rights issues in the area.

After a discussion such as “Did you do?” Student A wrote, “I thought I should know the opinions of various people, even if they had no direct relationship with them.” Through experience, I understand that the solution of human rights issues such as pension problem, environmental problem, aging society problem, declining birthrate problem, and international problem in modern society is related to my actions. It seemed to have been done.

**(3) Lesson 4— “Judge system role play”**

In the lesson “Judge System Role Play,” we considered the trial system and the judge system through simulated trials (Material 12). The lay judge system was introduced in 2009, and students could be involved in the judiciary in future. At that time, I think it is necessary to raise awareness about human rights in order to make a fair decision and fully fulfill the role of a citizen. While making use of the trial experience activities, I tried to develop classes so that each student can clearly have one’s own values.

### **Material 12 [“Let’s make a mock trial” lesson plan]**

1 Unit: How does the country's politics work? (What is the judge system?)

2 Lesson instruction: “Let’s make a mock trial” lesson plan

(1) Aim:

- Participate in mock trials and discussion activities, and you can work together.
- People can have their own ideas about the significance of participating in the trial and the lay judge system.

(2) The highlight of this lesson

In lessons focused on textbooks, it is difficult for students who have little interest in the subject to realize what they are learning by connecting it to their own lives. Therefore, through mock trials and discussions with friends, I want students to be aware of what they have learned, be able to link it with things familiar to them, and think about it.

(3) Deployment

Learning activities	Teacher support / Points to keep in mind
<div>What does a judge do?【10 minutes】</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Choose from the people to participate in the trial.</li><li>- We judge whether we are guilty or not guilty.</li><li>- Is it different from the judge?</li></ul> <div>Let's try a mock trial【20 minutes】</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Mock trials will be conducted with three judges, one prosecutor, one lawyer, and one defendant. Other students listen to the trial as judges.</li><li>○ Divide into groups of five or six people, and write down on the worksheet based on what you hear, whether you are guilty or not guilty,</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Use the collection of materials to explain to students who do not have a thorough understanding of the judge system.</li><li>- Determine the role in advance and give a script to practice so that you can concretely imagine the situation of the trial.</li><li>- Add explanations before the discussion about the parts related to actual criminal law such as</li></ul>

<p>and if guilty, how much punishment is appropriate.</p> <p>○ The group representative announces the judgment and sentencing with a reason.</p> <p><b>Let's discuss the judge system【15 minutes】</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is good because you can feel the case close to you.</li> <li>- The image of the trial has deepened.</li> <li>- I want to actually participate when I grow up. - It is difficult to make a judgment.</li> <li>- Is it possible for an amateur to judge a person?</li> </ul> <p><b>Let's look back on today's class【5 minutes】</b></p>	<p>sentencing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Don't just make "guilty, how many years of imprisonment" but make them think about the grounds for making that judgment.</li> <li>- Write the students' opinions on the board so that they can spread awareness about it and express their opinions in relation to each other.</li> </ul>
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#### (4) Evaluation

- Are you able to have your own idea about the judge system? **【Thinking/Judgment】**  
(Judgment based on statements/worksheet description)
- Were you able to understand the judge system through a mock trial?  
**【Knowledge/Understanding】**(Judging from statements/worksheet descriptions)

### 5. Future practical tasks

As a result of this research, the following two points have become clear.

First, through the unit of social studies and civic education, students could have fun and realize the value of human rights by conducting participatory experiential learning, such as workshops and simulated trials. In the case of the unit "Respect for Human Rights and the Constitution of Japan," the students appeared to enjoy the value of human rights through the "Workshop: Living in Everyone" and "'right' hot-air balloon game." In the case of the unit "Modern Democratic Politics and Society," through "Let's make a simulated vote," some students noticed that they were familiar with human rights issues. This point is considered one of the important citizenships in a democratic society.

Second, in the social studies and civic education lesson, the students actively respected others' opinions and learned from each other by actively participating in group activities and discussions. In the case of the unit "Respect for Human Rights and the Constitution of Japan," the students appeared in "Workshop: Living in Everyone" and "'right' hot-air balloon game" while observing the value of human rights and respecting others' opinions. In the case of "Modern Democratic Politics and Society," through "Let's make a simulated vote," the students appeared

to learn from each other in solving human rights issues. This point is considered the basis of the citizenship necessary to form a democratic society.

The above two points are expected to have implications for the practice of social studies and civic education in Indonesia.

In the future, I will continue to position participatory experiential learning as a part of curriculum for citizens and keep in mind lessons that encourage students to be lively. Then, problems such as time allocation of one hour for a lesson and how the students recognize the universal value of human rights will become important issues.

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