

Curricular in Geography Teacher Education in Korea*

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1. Introduction

The role of teacher education has become increasingly important in the broader society in recent years as public concerns with the quality of education in secondary schools have been extended to the colleges and universities. Particularly, in geography, such concerns have been increasing because of the rather low status of geography among subjects in high school social studies and its relatively poor public image in this country. Ineffective classroom teaching is often blamed as a primary reason for students' lack of interest in geography, if we disregard the major effect of a highly competitive national college entrance examination in which geography is not considered a major subject. Some of this blame should be shared with colleges and universities where teachers are trained.

Enthusiasm for the subject in school can be brought about by preparing good prospective teachers at college. Teacher education is not simply for delivering knowledge in the classroom. Effective teaching is dependent upon the dynamics of the teacher who conveys to the student his or her delight in learning and wealth of knowledge. It is in the college of education that the major objectives are to train prospective teachers who are able to convey effective of teaching and learning in a specific subject, and by pre-

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paring comprehensive knowledge on the particular subject in relation to a broader social and cultural context. Most of the studies in geography education in Korea have been concerned mainly with primary and secondary school levels, few studies have been focused on undergraduate and graduate levels to improve geography education in secondary schools.

This study examines characteristics of geographic education in both undergraduate and graduate programs in Korea. Particularly, the study emphasizes reorganization of curricula by intensifying subject-matter pedagogic subjects in geography education in the college of education.

Surveys were conducted in September of 1991, to obtain data on geographic education courses offered by geography education departments in both undergraduate and graduate schools in this country.

II. General Characteristics of the Teacher Education System in Korea

A. Undergraduate Programs

Secondary school teachers are primarily educated in colleges of education in both undergraduate and graduate programs. Secondary teacher education is also carried out in liberal arts by the faculties of education of various universities. In the former system, all students in colleges of education are required to take courses in two major categories: 1) courses in basic common pedagogic courses that are offered by the education department; and 2) courses in curriculum and in teaching methods in geography (that is, subject-matter pedagogic subjects) that are offered by individual departments within the college of education. In this system, students in the college of education are prepared for a teaching career, and there is a strong sense of identity with the teaching profession from the beginning of college life.

In the latter system, by contrast, education courses are required only to those who want to apply for a teacher certificate. In this system, the total professional effort is only a small part of the preparations for teaching.

Both systems in the above require clinical experiences including student teaching and class room observations for four weeks. Teaching certificates for middle and high schools are awarded by

the Ministry of Education on the recommendation of the college or the university. Passage of a national proficiency examination in both education and specific academic disciplines is required to get a teaching job after obtaining the certificate.

Students are enrolled by individual department from the beginning of college entrance, and they are restricted from transfer from one department to another once they enter a college. This restricted regulation in both inter-department and inter-college transfer is much the same throughout almost all higher education institutions.

Traditionally, the college of education has been the major source of teacher education in this country. A college of education consists of a department of education as well as such individual departments as geography education or history education according to academic fields. The College of Education, the Seoul National University, for instance, is divided into 15 departments.

Pre-service teacher education has been the major role in college geography, and many of the most prestigious universities have teacher education programs. The earliest geography department in the nation, the Dept. of Geography Education in the Seoul National University, was established in the college of education, and even at present 19 of all 27 geography departments in the nation are for teacher education in a college of education.

B. Graduate Programs in Geography Education.

Geographic education programs in graduate schools have two systems. One is a system in which both undergraduate and graduate programs are operated by a single department. It is adopted by the Dept. of Geography Education, Seoul National University.

The other approach is that undergraduate and graduate programs are functionally separated; that is, the graduate program is administered by the graduate school of education. This system originated at the Seoul National University, however, when the university established the nation's first Graduate School of Education in 1962, although this university closed its graduate school of education to reorganize and changed to the first system in 1975. Almost all other schools that established their graduate programs in education in later years adopted much the same system as that of the Seoul National University in 1962.

The primary purpose of the first establishment of the graduate school in 1962 was to train teachers and scholars who would be

able to serve education by conducting researches and by applying the results for educational development to meet society's needs (Committee on the 30th Anniversary of the College of Education, Seoul National University 1975). Three objectives were set up to accomplish the above goal: to train secondary school teachers and administrators in education; to train specialized scholars in teaching methods and in subject-matter; and to educate scholars in education in general. The establishment of the graduate school was an important milestone in extending the curriculum from four years to six years in teacher education. It also provided a systematic approach to produce qualified scholars to build foundations and develop the techniques of their profession (Committee on the 30th Anniversary of the College of Education 1975). The first graduate school of education was not divided among individual departments. Rather, many major programs such as geographic education and history education were established under a single department in the graduate school. There was no direct relationship, however, between the undergraduate department and the graduate programs in the same major field.

III. Geographic Education Curricula

Curricula in the geography education department take four categories of courses in:

- 1) general education;
- 2) basic common pedagogic subjects;
- 3) subject-matter pedagogic subjects in geography (courses in this category is called as 'courses in geographic education' hereafter); and
- 4) major curricula subjects in geography.

The geographic education courses are generally represented by teaching methods and curriculum studies in geography. The degree of emphasis among these geography education courses varies from one department to another. A wider diversity is found in the graduate than in undergraduate programs. While some consider that a student cannot be a good teacher without a good knowledge of his subject, some other schools see the question differently. Should it be emphasized that to be a good teacher a student must know better pedagogy and subject-matter in geographic education than geography as an academic subject in geography or

vice versa, or any other combination? This question is further related to a question of what is the function of a geography education department in comparison with a geography department in the liberal arts.

This functional question comes from a university system in which some major national universities have two geography departments: one is a geography education department in the college of education and the other is a straight geography department in the college of social science in liberal arts. Curricula of these two departments are separate, although students are encouraged to take courses in both departments. The existence of such a dual system can be understood by historical developments. As indicated earlier, college geography programs started in the college of education in this country, and the pattern was followed by many other institutions. As society changed and demanded geographers other than teachers as well, some schools established another geography department in their own college of liberal arts (or of social science). Pre-service teacher education, however, has not responded readily to such circumstances. Qualitative improvement by strengthening educational courses in geography, and by emphasizing diverse educational purposes in specific educational knowledge has been introduced partially, but not in general.

Teacher education is to generate highly talented and motivated teachers for the nation. In considering this goal, there can be many conceptions of what pre-service teachers in geography should be prepared to do and how this preparation should be conducted. In the survey of all geography education departments in undergraduate and graduate schools, most of the departments offer courses of geographic education that focus on three fields: theories in geographic education; teaching methods in geography; and curriculum development in geography (Table 1). Theories in geographic education was the most common course, frequently followed by courses related to teaching methods.

In undergraduate programs, a few departments offer as many as four or five course or geographical education studies, while others provide only two: theories in geographic education, and teaching methods in geography. The government mandates these two courses in undergraduate programs to apply for a teacher's certificate from the Ministry of Education.

In addition to these courses from the geography education department, students in the college of education are required to take

TABLE 1
 UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION COURSES
 OFFERED BY A TOTAL OF 22 UNIVERSITIES

Courses	No. of Courses	% of Total
Theories in Geographic Education	24	39.3
Teaching Methods and/or Subject-Matter Pedagogic in Geography*	20	32.8
Curriculum Study in Geography**	13	21.3
Learning Theories in Geography	1	1.6
Education Policy in Geography	1	1.6
History of Geography Education	1	1.6
Edu. Technology in Geography	1	1.6
Total No. of Courses	61	99.8

* When a course with a similar name is listed in both undergraduate and graduate programs, it was counted individually.

** This course is rather a collective or group name because actual names vary from department to department.

several courses in education, that is, courses in basic common pedagogic subjects, that are provided by the department of education as a part of general education throughout the four-year pre-service preparation. The college of Education of the Seoul National University, for instance, requires a minimum of 13 credit hours (equivalent to six or seven courses) in total among seven courses offered by the education department. Its Department of Geography Education offers seven geography education courses in subject-matter pedagogic subjects in undergraduate and graduate programs (Figure 1).

In graduate programs in the nation, there is a wider diversity of geographic education than in the undergraduate. The diversity ranges from schools that offer no single course in geographic education to schools that offer as many as seven geographic education courses. It is harder to find any particular trend in doctorate programs in geographic education than in the Master's programs. It is an advantage of graduate programs to offer diversified subjects, however, and it is the unique characteristic of the graduate school.

In brief, then, there are three major patterns in which geography education curricula evolved in teacher education programs. One is those geography education departments that offer no single geographic education courses, but require courses in basic common pedagogic subjects from the education department. Depart-

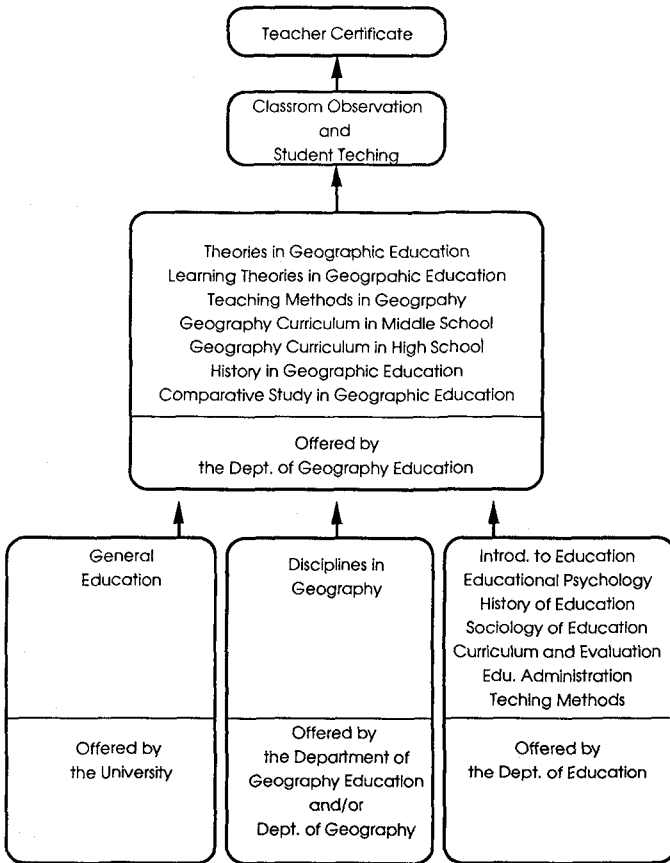


FIGURE 1
A TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM IN GEOGRAPHY IN THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, SEOUL NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

ments in the second pattern provide a minimum number of geographic education courses. A third group of schools teaches as many geographic courses as possible. Undergraduate students in all groups are required to take basic common pedagogic courses from the department of education. Current undergraduate geographic education programs have fared well because a minimum of two geographic education courses have been secured by the government's mandate to apply for the teacher certificate.

IV. The Role of Geographic Education Courses

A major concern here for a department is how to integrate three core categories of disciplines in major curricula subjects in geography; in geographic education; and in common pedagogic subjects. A balanced curriculum of these three studies is necessary to effectively train prospective teachers. The varying emphases on these three groups of courses indicate differing views of individual schools.

An important reason to offer many geographic education courses in some schools is that a prospective teacher has to be able to show his competence in the subject, but to know it well is not enough to prepare for being a teacher. The teacher has to build good knowledge of pedagogy and an ability to convey his knowledge to students. Although a good teacher cannot concentrate less on his subject, how that subject is experienced and conveyed to his students is very important. There are methods and processes, modes of access to such approaches. A curriculum require a structure that is sturdier than simply a major and general distribution requirements. Knowledge of majors is not the place where the construction of a curriculum should begin (Association of American Colleges, 1985, p. 15).

It can be considered that those departments with few geographical education courses insist on a change from the circumscribed and highly technical orientation of the normal school to a broad knowledge base grounded in the disciplines. Should the major for the prospective teacher include the same requirements as that for the future geography scholar in liberal arts, or what kinds of geography should the future geography teacher study?

The problem with curricula offered by liberal arts classes is that they offer too much knowledge, but too little attention to how a particular body of knowledge, can be taught effectively and what is essential and appropriate to a certain level of class. In this regard, some departments providing many geographic education courses either at the undergraduate or graduate level programs to strengthen their departments' function as the traditional normal school. This approach focuses the methods and processes on an understanding and judgment of what is essential knowledge and how to convey the teacher's knowledge in the classroom in a

specific discipline (Lee 1991).

Geographic education courses are largely composed of three related, but somewhat different approaches in teaching methods, learning methods and curriculum in geography. In fact, it is difficult to consider that any teaching method can be developed without systematic understanding of the contents of a specific discipline. Traditionally, it has been assumed that both colleges of liberal arts and of education can train teachers because subject-matter preparations in a discipline can be provided by liberal arts classes without any direct relationships with teaching methods of that particular field (Lee 1987). At the same time, it could be assumed that the major role of teacher training in geography was supposed to be a mere delivering of geographic knowledge to students, and that it is the role of the education department or college of education to provide general theories of teaching and learning. In this regards, the content has been considered as a task of the geography department, not of geography education department, and teaching methods as a task of the education department.

There should be a difference of roles between a geographer and a geography teacher. Both of them are concerned with geographic knowledge, but the teacher always works with students, not with another geographer of a public which has already learned geography. Therefore, the geography teachers must have additional ability to understand pedagogical principles, and theories of teaching and of learning geography. The teacher also needs to build an ability to comprehend the relationship between geography and related subjects, and the role of geographic knowledge in a broad social context. The goal of teaching is to help student's intellectual development which will enable them to participate in inquiries into subjects ranging from the natural world to the ideas, beliefs, and values of our own and other peoples (Ball and McDiarmid 1990). The teacher is not the person who conveys mere geographic knowledge, but a person who can provide with students a creative thinking, giving helpful explanations, asking productive questions, and evaluating students' learning. All of these depend on the teacher's understanding of what it is that students are to learn and how it can be delivered to them. The learning process is complicated, and requires professionalism. As a professional, the teacher should have an ability which any common geographer does not have without proper preparation.

Whether or not teaching is a profession is an often debated issue. Why is it so difficult to proclaim that teaching is a profession? It is because society perceives that a graduate from a liberal arts curriculum teaches similarly to the person who graduated from a college of education (Lee 1987). Being a teacher has been an easy profession. Employment opportunities have been favorable. Teacher certificates could be awarded with one or more academic specializations from liberal arts, and the required professional preparation is relatively easier than most of such recognized mature profession as medicine or law. If we accept the agreement, however, that teaching belongs in the company of the mature professions, we have to prepare to meet professional standards. Among prerequisites to claim to full professional status. The first is that specific and much more rigorous criteria of professional competence have to be met (Howsam et al. 1976). It is the responsibility of teacher education institutes if the society does not see much difference between a teacher who had training from an education institution and a teacher who studied in the liberal arts.

V. Summary and Conclusion

Curricula in geography education in colleges of education are composed of three major categories in: (1) education foundations for pedagogical knowledge; (2) subject-matter pedagogic knowledge in geography including geography specific teaching methods and learning theories; and (3) geographic knowledge as the major curricula subject. The first one is offered by education department, and courses in the second are provided by the geography department within the college of education. These two categories of courses are provided by minimum requirements, but in different degrees depending on different schools. The third one, disciplines in geography as the major in teacher education, is not much different from those in liberal arts. The unique characteristics of content and curriculum for a teacher education program can be found only in the subject-matter pedagogic preparations in geography. A question is arisen of what is the major function of the geography education department in comparison with a geography department in liberal arts, and whether just any liberal arts student can be a teacher. To this last part, it is hard to an-

swer no. It is difficult to strongly proclaim geography education as a profession because of some structural weaknesses in curricula. A teacher can be a teacher when he or she has professional ability which any person with liberal arts can not perform, at least not easily.

In regard major efforts to improve geography teacher training programs have to include curricula reorganization by emphasizing courses in subject-matter pedagogic subjects in geography. Teaching is neither simply delivering a content of knowledge, nor providing lessons in effective method alone. The goal of teaching is to assist students in their development of intellectual resources that enable them to see the world and their environments and to participate in solving problems in their societies and environments. It also help students to inquire about the beliefs and values of their own and other peoples, and to understand other cultures. Curricula in geography education have to be able to grab the above approaches because a liberal arts education is not for any specific end, but for the sake of knowledge itself in most cases. Efforts for curricula developments in geographic education in colleges arise not only from a desire to better serve pre-service teachers but also from differentiating roles of education in the college of education from those in the liberal arts. Curricula development is also necessary in the course of time as the role of education changes with respect to broad historical trends, social context and professional needs.

This study has emphasized curriculum reform in geography education departments by intensifying subject-matter pedagogic preparations not as a general education in the education department but as core courses in a geography education department within the college of education system. A teacher can be enthusiastic in his profession not only good knowledge of his subject, but by well trained skills of how to convey that knowledge effectively and by relating that knowledge to broad pedagogical principles, and historical social and cultural contexts.

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