

Social Science and Humanities: Social Environment Studies for Sustainability

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Oral presentations for the Social Science and Humanities were held on August the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth. Our session proved a great success with the participants, eighteen professors and two students. We had fourteen oral presentations and one poster presentations. There was lively debate amongst all the presenters and students.

The focus of the two Humanities sessions covered a wide range of areas: language acquisition, student exchange programs and other areas of the presenters' research. Ideas and research from both Japan and Thailand were presented and commented on. It was very beneficial to listen to and compare our areas of research from varying perspectives. Furthermore, as a result of our collaborations until now, we also found research issues in Thailand parallel to those we are facing in Japan.

1) Human geography

Based on the 'Living Spaces' project further development of collaboration is expected in future.

Furthermore, extra research in the future will be with the Mae Khong river regions as the base research study. Another work is about the successful Kagawa community enterprise model and trying to use this model in OTOP management in Thailand.

2) Special Needs Education Collaboration

Focusing on 'Resource Rooms' in Japanese schools, and the screening processes in place in Japan for selecting students for early intervention and guidance. We hope to continue

a focus on this area. The CMU Faculty of Education has an Early Childhood Education and Special Needs course – this is one area for further research and collaboration in the future, a focus on SNE in Japan to match the students' developmental stages from kindergarten through to high school. What kind of developmental educational support is needed before intervention and what kind of on-going support is needed? It is essential to locate issues at an early stage in infants in order to provide appropriate support before the problems become severe and to continue this until it is determined that assistance is no longer required. Approaches to these issues vary from country to country, and more effective solutions can be found through joint research.

Resource Rooms are a special feature of SNE in Japan. Robust Special Needs Education Systems can be brought about by combining the best of what is available internationally. Accordingly, a hands-on approach is essential and affiliated schools at both our institutions can be expected to play a part in this.

3) Joint student exchange programs.

We have three types of Joint student exchange programs. JASSO funding has enhanced two program – providing funding for both the CMU and the KU students. KU students go to CMU in September and March for two weeks. CMU students come to KU in July for one month and get credits for their course here.

4) Possible future collaboration with the Japanese Centre at CMU.

KU students majoring in Japanese as a second language will be teaching at the center at CMU. This is one field of possible future development.

Finally, as a result of this session in the social science and humanities, we can hope for further increased collaboration and cooperation between our two universities and it is hoped that the fieldwork and links with other institutions that were included in the program this time will also prove to be beneficial to all participants in the future.