

# Conflicts and Coincidences between Views of Ability in Educational Practices and Policies: Discourse on Ability in the late 1950s and 1960s in Japan

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*This paper extracts the characteristics of the view of ability in educational practices during the period of rapid growth in Japan, focusing on the influence of these perceptions on the Ministry of Education's educational policies. The analysis draws on the debate about "vocational aptitude tests" and "observation guidance." Teachers' critical perceptions of "vocational aptitude tests" and "observation guidance" depend on their views of desirable ability.*

*The main findings obtained are as follows. Since the 1990s, attention has been focused on non-cognitive ability; a similar view of ability (expansion of the view of ability) can be seen in educational practices in the 1960s. However, this expansion of the view of ability does not only appear in educational practices. According to the analysis of "ability and aptitude, etc." included in a reference document on observation guidance (presented by MoE, based on the French observation curriculum), an expansion of the view of ability can also be confirmed to be present in educational policy. The view of ability in educational practices may even coincide with that in educational policies.*

**Keywords:** ability views; vocational aptitude tests; observation guidance; career guidance; discourse analysis

## 1. Introduction

This paper investigates views of ability in educational practices prevalent during the period of rapid growth in Japan, focusing on the influence of these perceptions on the educational policy of the Ministry of Education of Japan (MOE). This analysis centers on debates over vocational aptitude tests (VAT), which measure the aptitudes that are required for certain positions, and observation guidance (*kansatsu shidō*; OG), as presented by MOE, based on the French observation curriculum, as reflected in the teachers' views on ability.

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Ability has been the subject of heated debate since the 1990s, involving terms such as key competencies and twenty-first-century skills (Rychen & Salganik 2003; Griffin, McGaw, & Care 2011). James Heckman's research (2013) increased public interest in non-cognitive abilities; the number of books that focus on the word non-recognition is on the rise<sup>1</sup> (Oshio 2021). These discussions emphasize the importance of not only the cognitive aspects of ability but also such traits as cooperation, creativity, and initiative. The meaning of ability is expanding; the trend referred to here is expanding the view of ability (EVA).

Both proponents and opponents of this perspective agree on certain things. While it may give a rather simplistic picture, this paper highlights hyper-meritocracy (Honda 2005) and the new competencies (Matsushita 2010) to clarify the ideas at issue. Although there are differences between hyper-meritocracy and the new competencies, two main facts should be kept in mind: (1) EVA became pervasive after the 1990s, and (2) this change was driven by factors exogenous to education (e.g., demands from the economic world and generalized response to the development of the global knowledge society).

Even so, these discussions can still be called into question. For (1), both Honda and Matsushita argue that debates over non-cognitive ability existed before the 1970s (Okitsu 1995, Matsushita 2010). Furthermore, Matsushita points out the similarity between the competency model and the Japanese model of achievement that held sway from the 1950s to the 1970s, suggesting that new competencies are not a particularly new entity in this area. Given this, EVA may already have been a widespread educational practice before the 1990s.

For (2), educational practices are typically portrayed as mirrors of broader social trends. Is this appropriate? Can the educational system be understood as merely a passive institution that responds to external forces, such as the market in general or the global knowledge society? Just as teachers have relative autonomy to change the academic knowledge they deliver while nevertheless conveying educational content (Katayama 2016), educational practices can also drive discussions of ability from an autonomous position. This fact can be shown by observing the ability considered desirable to educational practices.

This paper examines whether EVA was present in educational practices before the 1990s, a crucial step for determining whether there is congruity between ability views in educational practices and those in corporate society and, if so, to what extent. Previous research suggests that since around the 1960s, teachers' and educational researchers' views of ability have conflicted with educational policies of MOE which were shaped by the demands of corporate society in Japan (Horio 1979, 1994). However, Kumazawa (1993), focusing on industrial relations and educational practices, notes a strangely consistent link between their views of ability and the needs of the corporate sector. Thus, the view of ability that is seen as contrary to educational policies within educational research is considered complementary when seen from an external disciplinary tradition. Although this might appear paradoxical, this paper proposes that EVA made this relationship possible.

Teachers' views of ability are illustrated through an analysis of the records of the Career Guidance Subcommittee (Shinro shidō bunkakai) at the National Educational Research Conference (Zenkoku kyoken shūkai) and annual conferences of the Japan Teachers' Union (Nihon kyōshokuin kumiai; JIU), in the 1950s and 1960s. At that time, the JIU was taking a critical stance toward national education policies.

This analysis investigates teachers' critical discussions of VAT and OG, and clarifies their views of ability. VAT is an assessment tool that consists of several different tests, such

as intelligence tests and the Vocational Preference Inventory, but this paper will not discuss the differences between them.<sup>2</sup> OG, which emerged in the mid-1960s, is a guidance method based on close observation of the ability and aptitude of junior high school students which is used to help them select their career paths.<sup>3</sup>

The structure of this article is as follows: The following section presents the analytical perspective and the data, which track changes in teachers' perceptions of VAT. The section after that draws on the debates over VAT and OG to analyze (i) EVA in educational practices and (ii) similarities in ability views in educational practices and the policies of MOE. Finally, the findings are summarized in conclusion.

## 2. Analysis Perspectives and Data

### 2.1 Teachers' Views of Ability and Coincidence with Those of Educational Policies

Several studies have been conducted on the understanding of ability in postwar Japan (Inui 1990, Honda 2005, 2020, Matsushita 2010), but here we provide a perspective on teachers' views of ability during the 1960s.

According to Kariya (1995) and Aizawa (2003), in the 1950s, teachers did not hesitate to measure children's intelligence and discuss its possible application in educational practices, although they questioned intelligence tests. This view was underpinned by the desire of teachers to provide equal educational opportunities in harsh social environments such as poverty. However, Aizawa hypothesizes that in the 1960s, a view of competence out of touch with reality became dominant.

Kariya (1995) identified a shift in teachers' images of ability in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when critical views of deterministic theories of ability became dominant. However, the view of ability at issue in this paper is Horio's, a repeated critique of ability-based policies of the 1960s as fixed/genetic determinism/emphasis on the intellectual sphere (1979, 1994). While noting that MOE policies were based on cognitive criteria, he emphasized a holistic view of ability that guarantees children's developmental potential, not limited to cognitive ability. However, it is unclear whether Horio's views were widespread in educational practice in the 1960s. If so, what was the background logic? The first task of this paper is to examine the logic of EVA and its spread into educational practice.

EVA may not have been confined solely to educational practices. Because job performance criteria such as adaptability and cooperativeness were emphasized during the period of high economic growth in Japan (Ishida 1990, Oguma 2019),<sup>4</sup> the dominant view of ability in the corporate sector may have inadvertently influenced ideas in educational practice (Kumazawa 1993, 2006).

It is doubtful whether the similarities between ability views in educational practices and corporate society have been examined. At that time, the JTU did not have the tools to critique the logic of labor demand, so any links between education and corporate society would have been ignored (Kumazawa 2006, Hamaguchi 2009). However, it is difficult to verify the coincidence between ability views in educational practices and corporate society. Therefore, as the next best solution, we focus on the educational policies of the 1960s, which reflect the demands of corporate society. The second task is to examine whether there are any similarities between the view of ability found in educational practices (EVA) and those found in ed-

educational policies.

## 2.2 Analysis Period and Target

Regarding the above issues, the debate over VAT and OG provides valuable materials.

The 1960s marked a turning point in career guidance in schools. Several vital trends became manifest during this period, including the appearance of the term *nōryokushugi* (translated as meritocracy or ability-ism) in policy papers, the introduction of the term *tekikakushugi* (denoting where admission is not suitable for those who are unlikely to be able to complete high school) in admission criteria, and the introduction of OG.

The 1960s were also crucial for the JTU. This was when the Career Guidance Study Group (Zenkoku shinro shidō kenkyūkai, a study group of teachers and educational scholars organized to establish a theory of career guidance and put it into practice) was formed at the 12<sup>th</sup> National Educational Research Conference (1963), which became a prominent critic of educational policies. Its critiques were made from various perspectives, but the association strongly opposed *nōryokushugi seisaku* (meritocratic policies) and VAT. For example, books written by teachers in the 1960s are very critical of VAT (Kikuchi 1966, Gotō 1968).

However, the reaction to VAT had not always been adverse. For example, the Survey of Vocational Guidance in Junior High Schools (1952) found that nearly half of junior high schools used VAT. According to Azegami (1958), more than 80% of schools administered VAT in the 1950s. Although these data are fragmentary, teachers' attitudes toward VAT appear tolerant, given the scrutiny on testing in the 1960s.

The above implies that a change in the perception of VAT occurred in the early 1960s. Therefore, this paper focuses on the perceptions of VAT and OG<sup>5</sup> to identify teachers' changing views on students' abilities.

The data used in this paper are drawn from the records of the Career Guidance Subcommittee published in *Nihon no kyōiku* (Education in Japan), as submitted by the JTU, and the records of *kyōiku kenkyū zenkoku shukaikiroku* (prefectural reports on education) by teachers' unions in each prefecture. Because the unionization ratio of the JTU was declining throughout the 1960s, it may be thought that the debates in teachers' unions were not necessarily representative of the views on ability at the time. However, few documents provide such a long-term overview of educational practices. Discussions within unions, which maintained a critical stance toward educational policy even in the 1960s, are among the best sources for drawing similarities between the views of ability in educational practices and those of educational policies, which are often seen as opposed. Quotations from the records of the Subcommittee are cited in the format volume number: cited page, and those from Prefectural Reports on Education are cited as prefecture name, volume number: cited page.

## 3. Career Guidance as a Way of Handling Distortions

Looking through the transcripts of the Prefectural Reports on Education, we notice that teachers used the terms “distortion,” “wrinkling,” and “strain” to describe problems. These expressions also form the framework that directs career guidance. This paper categorizes these expressions as “distortions” and examines the changes in teachers' views of VAT in this and the next section.

The term “distortion” has been in regular use since the 1950s to refer to two types of phenomena. The first is social distortions, or the unstable labor market, including early leave-taking, nepotism, and unrealistic expectations, such as parents’ preferences regarding their children’s jobs.<sup>6</sup> The second type of distortion focuses on educational and economic policies (policy distortions).<sup>7</sup> For example, the expression “distortions caused by *dokusen*” (monopoly capitalists or monopoly capitalism) was used to criticize educational policy.<sup>8</sup>

The following section takes a closer look at these distortions. Until the early 1960s, social distortions were dominated, with a gradual shift to policy distortions after that period.

### 3.1 Discrepancies between the Career Guidance Subcommittee and Prefectural Reports on Education

The themes of the Subcommittee varied, but the focus of the 7<sup>th</sup> National Conference (1958) was VAT. The 1958 Conference held discussions on the aptitude principle in occupational placement and the reliability of VAT. Kiyohara Michihisa, a chair at the session, made the following remarks about VAT.

It would be a great mistake to use problematic tests even for testing apparent ability as a predictor of a child’s ability to develop. (7:322)

This statement seems to indicate that in the late 1950s, a largely negative view of VAT prevailed in the Subcommittee. However, an examination of the Prefectural Reports on Education shows that the opinions expressed differ from the above statement. The following text from a report in Tochigi exemplifies this tendency.

If intelligence tests, aptitude tests, and other tests are conducted and recorded from the time of admission, they will help teachers understand their students, and at the same time, they will help students understand themselves. That is why these tests are indispensable for correct career guidance. (Tochigi, 9:12)

Teachers believed that VAT helped obtain a scientific understanding of students’ aptitude. Some reports, of course, were critical of VAT. However, prefectural reports up to the early 1960s showed more reports in favor of VAT than those against it.<sup>9</sup> What accounts for that situation?

### 3.2 Social Distortions and VAT

Social distortions can explain teachers’ positive views of VAT. For example, early turnover and the lack of understanding from parents led teachers to examine students’ aptitude. In the late 1950s, teachers submitted several reports on the causes of early turnover, arguing that identifying student aptitude was the key to preventing early turnover. They also recognized that their parents often overlooked students’ aptitude, a significant factor in children’s early turnover.

Reports in all prefectures showed that teachers struggled to cope with students at the mercy of social distortions.<sup>10</sup> It is not surprising, then, that they turned to VAT in response. Although the records of the Subcommittee in the late 1950s contained critical comments about VAT, not all teachers were critical.

## 4. Career Guidance as a Way of Resisting Distortions

### 4.1 Conflict between Policy and Practice

The intensity of the opposition to the policies of MOE rose sharply at the 8<sup>th</sup> National Conference (1959), but contemporary reports show that teachers' criticisms were not specific.<sup>11</sup> However, as time went on, certain expressions became more common. This shift can be tracked through observing the prevalence of keywords—"sifting (sorting or assigning)" "making children give up" and "obedient workers."

Discrimination was an important issue in the Subcommittee. Until the 1950s, it was either a practical problem (e.g., a sense of discrimination from students in advanced-track classes against those in vocational-track classes) or problems understood as social distortions (e.g., employment discrimination). From the mid-1960s, however, the problem of discrimination began to be seen in terms of policy distortions. There was also a concern that career guidance would become a tool for sifting or making children give up.<sup>12</sup> This type of discourse continued to appear frequently from the mid-1960s onward, for example in the debates on OG.

The background to the introduction of OG was the limitations of VAT and the understanding of children's interests and motivation (Hiratsuka and Sawada 1968; Okuda, Sawada, and Hori 1969, etc.). However, OG was heavily criticized by teachers after its introduction. The following excerpt expresses this criticism:

For junior high school education, OG introduces discrimination and selection into the education system and is not only a disruption of normal education but also sacrifices students to politics and capital, which should never be allowed... It is easy to predict that this will hypnotize students and result in career guidance making them give up. (Fukushima, 18:6)

OG was criticized for making children give up, and bringing discrimination and selection into public education.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, it was argued that the demands of corporate society were the driving force behind OG, in characterizations as "the logic of capitalists that requires obedient human beings" (Tottori, 17:8).<sup>14</sup> Teachers were concerned that OG would turn children into obedient workers.

This increasing conflict between teachers and educational policies can be inferred from the frequency of discourse such as "fight", "confrontation", and "breakthrough".<sup>15</sup> The dichotomy between career guidance in educational practices and policies was becoming prominent.

During the mid-1960s, teachers' criticisms of policy distortions and confrontation with educational policies became more vehement. As their criticisms intensified, views of VAT also changed.

### 4.2 Policy Distortions and VAT

As teachers' perceptions of policy distortions became dominant, negative comments about VAT became more frequent. A typical clear rejection of VAT was, "It has become clear that psychological tests should not be expected to play a decisive role in career decisions" (Saitama 16:13).<sup>16</sup>

The opposition was even more marked in its expression of sifting or giving up, as expressed in statements like "There is an increasing tendency to selectivity in education, includ-

ing unscientific aptitude tests, to meet the demands of corporate society for human capital” (Gunma, 19:1). On this view, for companies that demanded obedient workers and education policies that responded to this demand, VAT was a tool to discriminate between children, channeling them into career paths or making them abandon their goals. This perception was broadly shared among teachers.<sup>17</sup>

Although the 7<sup>th</sup> National Conference (1958) recorded criticisms of VAT, these views were not necessarily shared by all teachers at that time. However, as awareness of “policy distortions” grew during the mid-1960s, career guidance promoted by MOE came to be seen as a method for creating docile employees and VAT as the tool for doing so.

## 5. Views of Ability behind the Criticism of VAT

Having examined the shift in perceptions of distortions and forms of criticism expression, how did the discourse reflect the teachers’ insights about ability?

The 1960s saw a growing opposition to a fixed view of competence in conjunction with criticism of VAT. For example, one teacher asked, “Are the intelligence tests, Vocational Preference Inventory, etc., that teachers administer to children meant to discover and develop children’s potential?” (Saitama, 15:20).<sup>18</sup> This reflected skepticism about VAT, which took a fixed and predictive view of ability.

The emergence of EVA was linked to this skepticism. The core criticism of VAT and OG was that they judged ability as limited to cognitive elements that in themselves did not show students’ true potential. This criticism is based on a view of ability that includes non-cognitive elements. The following excerpt from the text follows a statement of doubt about VAT.

When the self is seen only in terms of intelligence, and the emotional side of ego is ignored, there is no room for guidance that encourages the growth and development of the individual, and students are considered commodities. (Iwate, 15:10)

It expresses the concern that VAT limits ability to cognitive elements.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, the concern that students are to be treated as docile workers (i.e., commodities) can also be read.

Similar criticisms can be found in other records. For example, a Yamanashi report (Vol. 12, 1963) criticizes VAT for “overlooking the ego-emotional dimension in professional adjustment.” Additionally, a Shimane report (Vol. 15, 1966) also criticizes the inference of “individual abilities as academic and intellectual skills” via VAT.

This criticism can be found in opposition to the concept of *tekisei jūshi no shidō* (guidance based on aptitude) promoted by MOE. The following statement is one example of this opposition:

I feel that guidance based on aptitude places too much emphasis on the intellectual element. In other words, it is knowledge-only. We must not forget that aptitude is made up of personality traits. (Kumamoto, 14:8)

The criticism notes that ability can be defined solely by cognitive traits to the exclusion of other elements as well.

It should be noted that ability, as measured by VAT, is not, given the nature of the tests, limited to cognitive factors. However, teachers' negative perceptions of the educational policies assumed that VAT only measured cognitive ability.

On the other hand, even if non-cognitive ability was measured through VAT, such ability remained difficult for teachers to accept. Companies looked at non-cognitive traits such as "politeness, discipline, will to work, and positive attitude" (Shiga, 12:8) and "seriousness and persistence" (Saitama, 17:6), but teachers were reluctant to sift their students according to their non-cognitive ability as measured by VAT. They felt that doing so "risks the denial of children's whole personality" (Shiga, 9:1-2). In the 1960s, there was a rapid increase in terms taking a holistic view of ability including both cognitive and non-cognitive elements, such as "holistic development" (Gunma, 10) "unlimited human development" (Saitama, 13), and "harmonious and all-round development" (Kagoshima, 17), to avoid viewing ability as a discrete factor (such as linguistic ability, dexterity, and extroversion).

Thus, in the 1960s, a holistic view of ability (i.e., EVA), which was not limited to cognitive elements or based on individual factors, spread among educational practices. However, was this view unique to educational practices?

## 6. An Overlooked Similarity

### 6.1 A View of Ability Hidden in OG

From the 1960s on, the conflict between educational practices and policies became more apparent, but were views of ability confrontational? This article examines OG, focusing on the background to its introduction and two relevant reports: Nagano (Vol. 18, 1969) and Chiba (Vol. 19, 1970).

Both reports dealt with OG and were the subject of heated debate at the Subcommittee. Nagano explored practices of assisting students in understanding their ability and aptitude in order to decide on their career paths. This report indicated that teachers' observations could reveal students' capabilities, and VAT could enhance this understanding. However, the Subcommittee criticized the report for supporting OG, which "promotes discrimination in the name of ability and aptitude" (18:321).

Over the following year, Chiba's report became the center of discussion at the Subcommittee. It provided examples of practices using OG and VAT but OG was criticized as a "termination point of selection and discrimination" and as "a means of getting children to give up" (19:321).

Although several factors (such as the emphasis on adaptation<sup>20</sup>) were behind the criticisms of the Nagano and Chiba reports, this article focuses on EVA. These reports and the opinions expressed during the Subcommittee disagreed over OG, but were they also at odds over their ability views?

The Nagano report was criticized for having a "fixed view of ability." However, the report clearly states the contrary, as shown in the following passage:

The new view of ability is not based solely on the ability to memorize (mainly intellectual ability) demanded by high schools but on discussing and dealing with concrete problems, such as holistic competence (cooperation, responsibility, perseverance, etc.).



(Nagano, 18:3)

As described above, the Nagano perspective includes non-cognitive factors such as cooperation, responsibility, and perseverance. Although the specific expressions of the view of ability differ, the similarity between the Nagano view of ability and EVA, as identified in the previous section, is apparent. Although the Nagano report was criticized for emphasis on cognitive ability, it also points to the importance of non-cognitive factors. Thus, the view of ability described by the Nagano report and that of the Subcommittee were not opposed but equivalent. The same was the case with the Chiba report, which gave examples of practice based on personality traits and interests.

However, these reports were perceived to be pro-establishment, to the extent that Nagano had to defend itself. Similarities in perspective were not a subject of discussion.

The 19th National Conference (1970) also showed that the ability emphasized by OG was incompatible with that of the Subcommittee. However, the practice of OG was widespread, as stated in the records of the Subcommittee, “What appeared in the Chiba and Nagano reports is going on everywhere in Japan” (19:322). This may be because certain aspects of OG resonated with the ideals sought by teachers. This paper holds that these aspects are rooted in EVA.

## 6.2 Ability and Aptitude, etc.

To introduce OG, MOE set up a research council in 1967, which submitted its report the following year. This report set out a fundamental approach to OG, along with a reference document that included a glossary of the terms “ability and aptitude, etc.” (see below).

When guiding students on their career pathways, besides “ability and aptitude,” we must consider their interests, motivation, personality traits, career views, sense of values, and sense of mission. Therefore, in this council, we have decided to use “ability and aptitude, etc.” as the general term for each student’s subjective aspects.

This commentary indicated that the reason for adding “etc.” to the phrase “ability and aptitude” was to include non-cognitive factors such as interest and concern. Mizutani, who had been involved in policymaking on career guidance, explained that “ability and aptitude, etc.” was chosen to avoid the misconception that the career guidance promoted by MOE was limited to cognitive ability. At first glance, this may seem like a minor change, but the idea has since permeated educational policy (Mizutani 1981).

It can be seen in policy documents on career guidance as well. For example, Table 1 shows the number of words used for ability in *Shinro shidō no tebiki – Chūgakkō gakyūtanin hen* (Guidebook for Career Guidance: Classroom Teachers in Junior High School). In the 1961 Guidebook, before the introduction of OG, ability is described by the single term “ability,” but after the introduction (1974, 1984, 1994), various expressions are used, such as “ability and aptitude, etc.” and “ability and attitude, etc.”

Table 1 Uses of the Term “Ability” in the Guidebook for Career Guidance (Figures are word frequency)

year	1961	1974	1983	1994
ability	14	17	17	15
ability and aptitude, etc		12	13	12
ability and aptitude		2	3	2
ability and attitude, etc		7	7	8
ability, aptitude and interest, etc	1	5	4	5

What is the reason for this diversification? One was the problem of terminology. According to Fujita (1997), MOE was loose in its definitions, as evident in the Guidebook for Vocational Guidance (*Shokugyō shidō no tebiki*). This argument is plausible, but this paper focuses on the “etc.” As noted, this expression includes both cognitive and non-cognitive ability elements, and the scope of the meaning is extremely vague. Thus, “ability and aptitude, etc.” is ambiguous and can incorporate a wide range of factors that may correspond to various abilities. The looseness pointed out by Fujita applies not only to the use of terminology by MOE but also to the notion of “ability and aptitude, etc.”

It may explain why there were several reports on OG at the Subcommittee. Many teachers sought to carry out educational practices developing cognitive and non-cognitive abilities. It was around this time that OG was introduced, and teachers may have perceived some similarity between “ability and aptitude, etc.” and their views of ability. Of course, some teachers were wary of OG. However, teachers were familiar with understanding students through observation, which may have assuaged their concerns. Therefore, the interpretation of this paper is that the introduction of “ability and aptitude, etc.” along with OG, created a congruence between teachers’ views of ability (i.e., EVA) and those of educational policies.<sup>21</sup> We refer to the title in this section as overlooked because, in the criticism of the OGs, little reference was made to “ability and aptitude, etc.”. Therefore, the meaning behind the change of words may have been ignored.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper set EVA as a holistic view of ability that includes non-cognitive elements and examined its dissemination in educational practices.

Since the 1990s, attention has been focused on non-cognitive ability, but this view is not new. In the 1960s, teachers’ interest in EVA was widespread in educational practices.

However, EVA does not only appear in educational practices. According to the analysis of “ability and aptitude, etc.” EVA can also be confirmed to be present in educational policy. The view of ability in educational practices may even coincide with that in educational policies. The coincidence here refers to the expansion of the concept, not to its elements. Just as teachers were opposed to turning children into docile workers, educational practices and educational policies were in opposition when it came to the elements of adaptation. However, even though the elements were opposed, there was agreement on expansion of the ability’s

container (or form). Additionally, there may have been a degree of congruity between the view of ability in educational practices and that of corporate society, as educational policies of the 1960s reflected the demands of corporate society. However, further work is needed on this point.

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### Notes

- 1 Some studies have focused on non-cognitive ability before the 1990s. For example, Correspondence Theory (Samuel & Harvard 1976) focuses on personality traits. Western researchers who have observed school education in Japan have noted cooperation and discipline (Cummings 1980, Rohlen & LeTendre 1995).
- 2 . One dictionary defines VAT as follows (Konno, Arai & Kojima 2003). “Vocational aptitude tests are used to understand suitability for a particular job. The term “vocational aptitude test” may refer to aptitude for a specific job, or to the essential qualities that lead to skill development in many jobs” (p.418).
- 3 There are not many pedagogical dictionaries that define OG, but one dictionary defines it as follows (Horiuchi, Yaguchi & Watanabe 1971). “The idea is to observe the vocational aptitude and academic ability of junior high school students and to guide them in making the necessary choices in high school. The method of observation is to understand the personality of each child by observing their daily life, to discover their talents, and to use the results of various psychological tests to understand the child accurately” (p.106).
- 4 The period of high economic growth in Japan refers to the period from the late 1950s to the early 1970s.
- 5 These criticisms are validated by books published by Zenkoku shinro shidō kenkyūkai (Ikegami 1968).
- 6 Cases are found in the Prefectural Reports on Education of Iwate, 7; Aomori, 7; Kagawa, 7; Miyagi, 8; Niigata, 8; Saitama, 8; Akita, 10; and so on. In the following notes, the same format is used.
- 7 Kumamoto, 12; Nagasaki, 14; Mie, 15; Shiga, 16; Fukuoka, 16; Aomori, 18; etc.
- 8 Osaka, 9; Kochi, 9; Yamagata, 14; Yamaguchi, 14; etc.
- 9 Saitama, 7; Aichi, 7; Miyazaki, 7; Kagawa, 8; Nagasaki, 9; etc.
- 10 Gunma, 7; Kagoshima, 7; Aomori, 8; Akita, 8; Gifu, 9; Iwate, 10; etc.
- 11 However, researchers have critically examined career guidance policies (e.g., Kiyohara 1964).
- 12 Examples of “sifting” are found in Akita, 12; Aichi, 12; Shiga, 13; Yamagata, 16; Fukuoka, 17; etc.; “make children give up” in Shizuoka, 12; Miyagi, 17; Fukushima, 17; Nagasaki, 18; etc.
- 13 Shimane, 16; Toyama, 18; Shiga, 18; Miyazaki, 18; etc.
- 14 Tokyo, 15; Kanagawa, 18; Fukushima, 19; Aichi, 19; etc.
- 15 Shiga, 13; Aichi, 14; Kochi, 15; Fukuoka, 17; etc.
- 16 Shiga, 13; Aomori, 15; Okayama, 15; Miyagi, 18; etc.
- 17 Shiga, 14; Kumamoto, 15; Tokyo, 18; Yamanashi, 19; Saitama, 19; etc.
- 18 Hiroshima, 11; Iwate, 15; Tottori, 17; etc.
- 19 Yamanashi, 12; Fukushima, 16; Saitama, 16; Kanagawa, 18; etc.
- 20 The Nagano report emphasizes the importance of cooperation and perseverance, and the Chiba report is about adaptable career choices.
- 21 Regarding Japan Vocational Guidance Association conferences, which were at odds with the Subcommittee, this ability view seems to have been widespread among teachers outside the JIU. For example, in the early 1960s, there were no presentations on OG, but at the 1969 conference, 10 out of 33 reports were on OG.

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