

Akabayashi Seminar

Dr. Hideo Akabayashi

Specialty: Applied Micro, Economics of Family and Education

(Interviewer: 小野・小原)

『The Economics of Family and Education: How is Academic Ability Formed?』

What is your research specialty?

My main research interest is to measure and analyze the effects of Japan's educational policy using various approaches. To measure the effects of educational policies, we cannot ignore the effects of families, so I analyze the effect of families at the same time.

Unfortunately, in Japan, the question of how academic ability is formed and changed over time has not been properly researched. I am currently managing a research project to track such changes, specifically, to examine the interrelationships between changes in academic ability and social and economic life over the long term.

Other studies I have published include "Does smaller class size really work?" and "Does reducing high school tuition deter high school dropouts?"

『The most important thing is *diversity*! 』

Please tell us your educational philosophy

I believe that all Keio students have their own areas of expertise, so diversity is definitely important. I would like to take students from different regions and faculties, as well as international students and students with various backgrounds. Behind such diverse backgrounds, everyone grew up with a different education and family environment, so of course, opinions that each student hold would differ. I want to see discussions among such students. Especially in a field like ours, discussions among students with similar backgrounds are almost meaningless. But every year, the competitive ratio is not that high, so it's not like I can be picky...(laugh). Anyway, we give everyone a chance to speak up during the seminar, and we try to provide education that emphasizes motivation and diversity.

『Taking the longer path! Starting as a student focused in the science field』

Please tell us about your school days

I used to be a science student. I used to think that I should study in the science field during university and study topics related to humanities when I graduate from university. I had the tendency to take the longer path, but since I couldn't decide on what I wanted to do, I studied various topics related to science.

Towards the middle of my university life, I began to have interest in the field of economics, but I also realized that I need to pass an economics exam to get into the graduate school in the field of

economics. I thought “I can’t do this with just a little bit of study...what am I going to do...?” I decided to take an examination for a science-related job at the public office to observe the field of economics. Since it was a science-based position, there was no economics exam. However, I was disappointed because economics was not used at all in the office at the time.

That is when I started to set my sights on a graduate school abroad. I heard rumors that in the overseas, it was possible to enter graduate schools without any prior knowledge of economics. The University of Chicago that I got into was actually not my first choice. At the time, the University of Chicago had a bad reputation, but since that was the only university that gave me a scholarship offer, I entered the university thinking ‘this is my fate’. I felt at ease in the sense that I was a ‘minority’. It was my way at the time to be in the minority and not get compared nor recognized. And then! From that year on, students at the Chicago University began to receive series of Nobel Prizes, and the university quickly became the center of attention. I, once again, thought ‘this is my fate’. I also thought this would help me get a job (laugh). But one thing I can say is that I have always been one step off the path from others. From that time on, I had a niche mindset. Then why am I at such a famous university like Keio...?

『We’re waiting for students who are motivated and who have something to offer!』

Q. What are you looking in a 2nd year student applying to the Akabayashi Seminar?

Students who have taken the longer path are welcome! I have taken the longer path myself (laugh) I am sure that such experience will come in handy somewhere. I want to raise awareness of the issues among students who have had different experiences. I want people who have studied at least a minimum amount and who are motivated! We are actively introducing English this year, so people who want to improve their English skills are also welcome. People who believe that they can accomplish if they try and have an excessive self-consciousness that “I’ve got something!”. I think that’s a good thing (laugh). To sum up, I would say “motivation, diversity, and basic academic skills”.

『Be curious and change your world! 』

☆ Finally, please give a message to the 2nd year students. ☆

I’m not good at this kind of thing but...yes. I would like you to get some social common sense. I want them to have a broad view of the world, be curious and to be aware of every corner of the society. It is no good if you only know Tokyo or Japan. If you take an interest in every corner of the world, I think your world will change.