

## **Differences in Education between Finland and Japan: Education Reform of Japan**

Recently, in contrast to Japan's unsuccessful educational reforms, Finland has risen to the top of the world in academic achievement, and its education is highly regarded by many countries. In Japan, "the cramming education" started in the 1960s, which led to a passive and a uniform education, so the "pressure-free education" and "de-pressure-free education" were implemented to foster abilities of self-expression and free thought, but the essential problem of cramming education still remains. In contrast, Finland has achieved a high level of education through liberalization of education, cross-curriculum systems and others. Japan's education system has the problems of being passive, uniform and cramming, but it can solve these through adapting to Finnish high level of education strategies such as innovative education system and enhanced welfare.

Japanese education is not highly regarded especially by Japanese people despite the high level of academic achievement. According to Professor Kageyama's survey, 31% of the respondents answered that Japanese education level is low compared to other countries, while 24% answered that it is high (2016). These results show that more people think Japanese education level is low. Despite this image, Japan ranked second in the world in scientific literacy and in mathematical literacy (PISA 2015). The reason Japanese has a negative image of education may begin in their education systems history. In Japan, compulsory education began in 1872, and later pressure-free education was implemented with reducing class hours and emphasizing on individuals, but as learning time and reading comprehension declined, cramming education was implemented again, with more learning contents and emphasizing on memorization. Japan has been changing its university entrance examinations and adopting active learning programs to improve these passive, memory-based cramming education, but these reforms -have not been successful. Japan needs

education that fosters “the ability to live “ including the ability to learn , think, and express oneself independently, and Japan must adopt a new more effective system for this purpose.

While, Finland has a high grade in PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) and it is highly evaluated by other countries for education. One of the factors behind the development of Finnish education is the quality of teachers. In Finland, there is much competition for entering faculties of education and universities require 312 hours of practice teaching, furthermore, the recruitment rate of teachers is low at less than 10%, so the quality of teacher inevitably improves. In addition, the educational curriculum can be decided by the school and teachers because of decentralization of education, and there is no test except university entrance exams. Moreover, cross-curriculum class which associate a subject with other subject is carried out.

With these systems, Finnish education has become more focused on self-expression in which each person can develop their skills, rather than just cramming education and learning knowledge.

Also, since there is no tuition fee from preschool to graduate school, everyone has an equal right to education. In this way, Finnish education is improved by tackling various aspects of the system.

However, in order to improve Japan's passive and uniform cramming education, it is necessary to adopt innovative education system such as Finish education. Japan differs from Finland in that education costs are free only up to compulsory education, but the rate of advancement is high, so welfare is substantial. In terms of education, it is important to train

high-quality teachers, improve the educational environment, and adopt a cross-curriculum. For that purpose, it is necessary to enhance practice teaching and increase the budget. And since it is said that one of the causes of failure of the pressure-free education that was once conducted is that there was not enough preparation period, so it is important to have enough preparation period to implement these measures. Japan must also decentralize education and create an education system for children to learn by themselves like Finnish education.

Passive cramming education has been practiced in Japan for a long time, and various improvement measures have been tried. However, none of them succeeded, and the situation is still continuing now. In order to solve this situation, Japan needs to reform education through training teachers, improving the education environment, and raising the budget while setting enough time by referring to Finland's decentralized education. Japanese people have to change the Japanese conventional value that everyone should learn the same thing and have the same academic ability. In addition, Japan needs to adopt the Finnish idea that each person is different and they have each value. It is also important to support each person so that they can develop their own strengths. Through this research, children who will lead the next generation may be able to create a new world by developing their own personality and acquiring the ability for living on their own.

(790words)

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