

「学び方改革」国際視野で点検

石川秀夫 米国学校法人 日米教育学園 JUST

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日本の国際的な強みを伸ばす教育が望まれる

教育は、能力を開花させるツールであり、夢の実現の源泉だ。この点を見過ごすと意欲的な学びは成立しない。「日本経済の失われた30年」とは、教育と労働の両面で方向性とスピードを失い、世界から遅れをとった帰結である。

この30年、大学進学にAO入試が採り入れられ、推薦入試で日ごろの学習の充実ぶりを進学に結び付ける傾向は強まった。しかし、進学塾は勢いを増し、親は塾に子どもを通わず経済的必要性に駆られて、共働きを迫られる。家庭は子どもの創造性や意欲を高める基盤のはずなのに、頼みの両親が家を空けていることになる。

教育が所得格差を正当化・固定化するツールとなり、入試の傾向と対策に精通することが、将来の安穩を手にする源泉となる事態に、どう立ち向かえばよいのか。一義的には、教育が本来持つ高い価値と意義を確認できる、入試制度の変革しかない。

この問題に直面しているのは日本だけではない。アメリカは統一試験「SAT」を大学志願要件から外す傾向が昨年から強まっている。中国は「学習塾禁止令」で、教育を営利の道具にすることを2021年7月から禁じた。知識量の多寡だけを優劣の前提にするなら、子供は黙って長時間机に座り、知識をシャワーのように浴びて蓄積する教育がはびこるだろう。その受動的な学び方を問題視するなら、自ら調べ知識を自分なりに体系化することを促すことになる。さらに、その体系化が外部に正しく示されなくては宝の持ち腐れだから、相手に自分の考えを分かりやすく、筋道立てて伝える術を身に付けることが必要になる。だが、この学び方改革のどの段階においても「身に付けたい」という意欲が学ぶ側になければ、小手先の制度変更を繰り返すだけだ。

地球規模で進む多様性の時代に合わせて、入試改革や入学後の評価方法の変革は必須だ。重要なのは「減点法ではなく加点法の導入」「日本の国際的な強みを伸ばす」ことである。受験生が独力で関門をクリアできるようにしているかも大事だ。「総合型選抜」や「学校推薦型選抜」は、この点を見落としてはいけない。これらの検証を怠れば、日本経済は「失われた40年」へと進むことになる。

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Accelerating "Learning Reforms" from an International Perspective

Hideo Ishikawa, Ph.D.
President, JUST Institute

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Education plays a pivotal role in nurturing individual abilities and transforming dreams into reality. Unfortunately, in Japan, the emphasis on motivated learning has often been overlooked. This oversight has contributed to what is known as "The Lost 30 Years of the Japanese Economy," a period marked by a lack of direction and stagnation in both education and employment.

Over the past three decades, Japan has introduced initiatives like the AO examination and endorsement-based examinations for selected candidates to enrich daily learning experiences. These initiatives have increasingly become associated with academia. However, the prevalence of preparatory cram schools across Japan has surged. Parents are compelled to send their children to these schools, not out of choice, but as a social necessity driven by the need to secure funds for tuition fees. Ideally, the home should serve as a foundation for nurturing children's creativity and motivation, but parents often find themselves away at work for extended periods.

Education has now become a tool to perpetuate and exacerbate income inequality, with an undue focus on entrance examinations dictating trends and countermeasures. To combat this shortsighted approach of using one's educational background solely for financial gain, the primary solution lies in reforming the entrance examination system. This would create a fairer and more effective educational system.

Japan is not the only nation grappling with these challenges. In the United States, the standardized SAT test, once a mandatory requirement for university applications, has become optional as of last year. In China, cram schools were banned, leading many of them to close their doors after July 2021.

If knowledge acquisition alone were the measure of superiority, children would be confined to their desks, passively absorbing information for extended periods. Recognizing this as an issue, we should encourage learners to investigate and systematize knowledge in their own unique ways. Furthermore, the ability to communicate thoughts clearly and logically is essential. However, at every stage of the learning reform process, learners must maintain a strong desire to "learn."

Reforming entrance exams and reevaluating post-admission assessment methods are crucial in an era characterized by global diversity. Key aspects of these reforms should include adopting affirmative encouragement over punitive evaluation and fostering the development of Japan's international strengths.

Equally important is ensuring that students take proactive steps in their learning journey. Initiatives like "The Comprehensive Selection System," which has recently been renamed from the AO examination, and "The Endorsement-Based Examination for Selected Candidates" should not lose sight of this critical aspect. Neglecting these considerations may hinder Japan's economic recovery from the stagnation experienced during the "lost years."