

平成 31 年度

小 論 文

13 : 30 ~ 15 : 10

国際教育学科
一般入学試験

注 意 事 項

1. 合図があるまでこの冊子を開いてはいけません。
2. 合図があったら受験番号を解答用紙の指定の欄に記入しなさい。
3. 落丁、乱丁、印刷不明、汚れの箇所があった場合は、すみやかに申し出てください。
4. 解答は必ず解答用紙の指定された解答欄に記入しなさい。
5. この冊子は持ち帰ってください。

以下の英文を読んで、問に答えなさい。

Among the 34 nations in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development¹, Japan has always been among the bottom three when it comes to public spending on education as a percentage of GDP. In 2011, Japan was the worst at 3.8 percent, followed by Slovakia and Italy — against the OECD average of 5.6 percent. Countries that come on top in this category are Denmark, Norway and New Zealand.

Of course, to be fair, the ratio of student numbers to the total population needs to be considered with respect to this data. Japan, in fact, has the second-lowest ratio at 15.5 percent, sitting between Chile, the lowest, and Italy. The OECD average is 22.2 percent.

Looking at the ratio of spending on education to total general government spending, the OECD average is 12.9 percent. Again Japan ranks low, coming in second to last at 9.1 percent, just above Italy at 8.6 percent. At the top is New Zealand with 21.6 percent.

In summary, Japan does not invest heavily in education. This creates financial pressure on (1) as they try to provide fundamental education to their children, particularly in the underfunded² areas of preschool and higher education. Data show that when it comes to household expenditures³ for pre-elementary school education, the top five spenders are Japan, Australia, South Korea, the United States and Spain. For higher education they are Chile, South Korea, the United Kingdom, Japan and the U.S.

In all of these countries, a large number of households bear heavy financial burden for these two important stages of education.

In the case of Japan, we see that annual government spending per head⁴ is quite unevenly distributed — people in their 70s and 80s receive far more, for example, than newborns to 16-year-olds because of the heavy cost of (2) programs such as financial benefits after retirement, medical services and nursing care.

While this lopsided distribution has long been the case, the government is now seeking to shift resources more toward the younger generation. It plans to provide more public funding for preschool education, and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Liberal Democratic Party is considering the introduction of a scheme⁵ to ease household costs for higher education similar to the HECS-HELP system in Australia, in which the government issues an interest⁶-free loan on behalf of students to pay tuition fees directly to higher education providers.⁽⁴⁾ This loan is subject to indexation⁷ but charges no real interest. Students begin to repay the debt once their income is above a minimum threshold⁸.

These are good initiatives⁹, but are they enough? There are other factors that should be considered as well, and one very important issue is class size and diversity of students per class. As far as elementary schools are concerned, countries with the largest class sizes are Chile, with an average of 30.4 students, followed by Japan with 27.9 and Israel with 27.3. The OECD average is 21.2. For junior high schools, the average in South Korea is 34.0, while in Japan it is 32.7 and for Israel it is 28.7. The OECD average is 23.3 students per class.

It must be noted that the numbers for Japan include schools in severely depopulated areas¹⁰. There can actually be up to 40 students per class in any public school (except for the first grade, where the maximum is set at 35). This means populated areas generally have classes with far more students than the average. This is particularly problematic because these are the areas in Japan where students are more likely to be socio-economically and academically at risk.⁽⁵⁾

In Japan, there are 631,000 students identified as having developmental disabilities¹¹ in the public elementary and junior high schools. This translates to 2.5 students out of the maximum class size of 40. One out of seven students comes from a household of relative poverty¹², or 5.7 out of every 40. Among public elementary school students, 13.4 percent, or 5.3 out of every 40, say classes are too easy and boring. Another 15 percent, or six out of every 40, say classes are too difficult and that they have difficulty understanding the content. There are 80,119

non-Japanese students in public or state schools, from elementary to high school, who need intensive Japanese lessons. This is a distribution of 0.3 students per class.

Overall, there is likely to be a considerable range of students in any one large class. Surely this must impact the likelihood of effective teaching.

Reducing class size to increase student achievement has been debated and analyzed for several decades. Smaller class sizes are generally welcomed for allowing teachers more time to spend with each student and less time on classroom management. This means the teacher can provide better teaching, tailored to each student's individual needs, to ensure maximum success. In this respect, smaller class sizes may be viewed as an indicator of the quality of a school system.

An influential and credible study of the effects of reduced class size is the Student Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) study carried out in the U.S. state of Tennessee in the late 1980s. In this study, students and teachers were randomly assigned either to a small class, with an average of 15 students, or a regular class, with an average of 22 students. It was found that a smaller class size increased student achievement by an amount equivalent to¹³ about three additional months of schooling over four years. A long-term follow-up survey of participants into adulthood showed that they were about 2 percent more likely to be enrolled in college at the age of 20.

International studies also provide evidence of the positive effect of class-size reduction. Israel, just like Japan, has a limit of 40 students. Researchers there found positive effects from smaller fourth-and fifth-grade classes.

Why then, do we in Japan, continue to maintain a class size limit of 40 when in the U.S., U.K., France and Germany the limit is around 30? Of course, to some extent the answer is related to decisions about the careful use of taxpayer money and considerations that it be used most productively without undue¹⁴ waste. Perhaps, because of historical and cultural factors, it has been easier to have larger classes in Japan. For instance, a Confucian¹⁵ heritage means that teachers are

highly respected and easily obeyed, and thus less affected by larger class sizes.

The OECD points out that data from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)¹⁶ suggests that high-performing education systems, such as those in Japan and South Korea, prioritize (6) rather than (7). Catherine Rampell, writing in the The New York Times, also points out that South Korea and Japan, which have some of (8) in the world, also have the biggest (9). Both of these reports are right and we should be proud of our achievement and (10). However, even with our Confucian roots, it is growing ever more difficult for a single teacher to meet students' individual needs in today's educational contexts.

As far as I am concerned, I would support having my tax contributions spent on providing better educational environments suited to student needs. Why not start by aiming to achieve the OECD's average number of students per class by limiting class size to 30 students? I do not think I am alone in thinking that one of the best investments for the future is to invest in our children's education.

[Adapted from "Education: Best investment for our future" by Ikuko Tsuboya-Newell, Nov. 26, 2017 Japan Times (<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2017/11/26/commentary/japan-commentary/education-best-investment-future/#.WzLVBa09yqA>)]

語注

- 1 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD、経済協力開発機構
- 2 underfunded 十分な資金を供給していない
- 3 expenditures 支出
- 4 per head 一人当たり
- 5 scheme 計画、構想
- 6 interest 利子
- 7 indexation 物価スライド制(物価に応じて返済額が変動すること)
- 8 minimum threshold ここでは、人間として生活するために必要な最低限の収入の水準を指す
- 9 initiatives 戦略
- 10 severely depopulated areas 過疎地
- 11 developmental disabilities 発達障害
- 12 relative poverty 相対的貧困
- 13 equivalent to と同等の、と同程度の
- 14 undue 過度の、必要以上の
- 15 Confucian 儒教の
- 16 the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)
OECD による国際的な学習到達度調査

問 1 (1)に入る英単語を文中から探して1語入れなさい。

問 2 (2)に入る最も適切な英単語を以下の選択肢から一つ選んで、A～Dの記号で答えなさい。

- A. health
- B. security
- C. monetary
- D. welfare

問 3 (3) lopsided の文脈上の意味に最も近いものを以下の選択肢から一つ選んで、A～Dの記号で答えなさい。

- A. upside down
- B. up and down
- C. two sided
- D. unevenly

問 4 下線部(4) the government issues an interest-free loan on behalf of students to pay tuition fees directly to higher education providers を日本語に訳しなさい。

問 5 下線部(5) This is particularly problematic because these are the areas in Japan where students are more likely to be socio-economically and academically at risk の This の指し示す内容を明らかにしながら、日本語で下線部の意味を説明しなさい。

問 6 (6)～(10)のそれぞれに最も適切な表現を以下の選択肢から一つずつ選んで、A～Eの記号で答えなさい。

- A. class size
- B. class sizes
- C. the high quality of our teachers
- D. the quality of teachers
- E. the highest-achieving students

問 7 (1) なぜ日本では少人数学級を実現しなくても高い学力が達成されているのか、筆者が提示する仮説を日本語で説明しなさい。

(2) 日本政府が教育支出を増額するとしたら、その予算は特にどのようなことに使用するべきだと思いますか。日本の学校教育の課題について記事の中で示されているデータをもとに、400～500字の範囲で、できるだけ具体的に論じなさい。