

日本の学校では、高度成長期に受験教育がかなり過熱したこともあって、校内暴力や不登校などの学校病理現象が頻発するようになった。その反省から、1980年代ごろから「ゆとり」が言われるようになり、1998年の学習指導要領では内容が大幅に削減され、教育方法も自力解決を重視した問題解決型が重視されるようになった。ところが、相前後して学力低下や格差の増大が指摘されるようになり、大きな論争が繰り広げられた。

こうした時代を経て、2000年代以降は、習得－活用－探究といったフレーズに見られるように、基礎基本的な知識と、思考力や表現力などのバランスに配慮した教育がなされるようになっていく。PISA 調査の影響を受けて、全国学力調査では基礎的な知識を問う A 問題と、生活場面への活用力を問う B 問題とが出されている。これは2008年改訂の学習指導要領の目指す学力の在り方を学校現場に強く示すこととなった。

そうした教育施策の結果として、基礎学力、活用力ともに、明らかな向上のきざしが見られる。これは望ましいことではあるが、むしろ問題はここである。いうまでもないことだが、PISA や B 問題といってもペーパーテストゆえの限界があり、実践的問題解決力、探究力、創造性、コミュニケーション力などのパフォーマンスを測定しているわけではない。人間の成長発達を広い視点でとらえ、どのような資質能力をどう育成するかが検討されなくてはならないだろう。

Keynote Address

## **The Future Roadmap of Japanese Education:**

### **Beyond Pressure-Free Education and the Debate on the Decline in the Academic Performance**

**Shin'ichi Ichikawa**

During the post-war Japan's high economic growth period which lasted for about two decades until 1973, the overwhelming emphasis was placed on competition with a goal of successfully passing the entrance examinations to the top universities. This has triggered series of pathological phenomena in schools including classroom violence and truancy.

Reflecting the widely held concern that schooling was too intense, creating excessive stress on students, the need to introduce more Yutori, free from pressure, into the educational arena was echoed in 1980s with an aim of rectifying the alarming phenomena. In 1998, in response to these trends, the Gakushu Shido Yoryo, the designated "Courses of Study" created by the Ministry of Education, Sports, Culture and Technology (MEXT) for Japanese elementary schools, junior high schools and senior high schools, were revised with reduced school hours and the number of hours devoted to academic subjects. Teaching method was to be reoriented toward encouraging students to engage in independent problem-solving.

At around the same time, problems such as decline in academic performance and widened gap in achievement were raised, fueling a debate over the right course of Japanese education.

From the beginning of the 21st century, emphasis has gradually been shifted to more balanced acquisition of the basics & fundamentals of knowledge, and ability to think and express oneself. The key words such as acquisition-application-exploration were voiced.

Affected by the results of PISA studies, standardized testing (National Survey on Educational Performance) was introduced, consisting of two types of questions; Type A for the assessment of the basic academic skills of the students and Type B for the assessment of the students' ability to apply their knowledge to various scenes in life. This became a strong reminder to schools of the basic ideas behind the 2008 Revision of the Courses of Study which emphasized the holistic growth of body, mind and heart including academic prowess driving zest for life.

As a result of the new education policies, we have been witnessing a clear enhancement in both basic academic competence and abilities to apply the knowledge among Japanese students. This is quite a welcoming trend.

However, a major challenge of "What's next?" remains to be addressed. We are aware that the tests such as PISA and Type B questions in Japan's National Survey have their own limitations in the area of the measurements of the practical problem solving capabilities, inquisitive and creative mind, as well as the ability to communicate in real life. Our task, therefore, is to further our efforts to design a wide perspective on the entire process of human growth, identify the essential abilities to be evolved, and define how best to cultivate such talent in each individual.