Summary of the Teaching of Philosophy in Japan

Philosophy in the National goals of Education
The central aim of education is “the full development of personality, striving for the rearing of people, sound in mind and body, who shall love truth and justice, esteem the value of the individual, respect labour and have a deep sense of responsibility, and be imbued with an independent spirit, as builders of a peaceful state and society.” The National Council of Educational Reform furthermore emphasizes individuality. It is “defined by the Council as the most important aspect to be considered in all aspects of the educational reform, encompasses the principles of dignity of individuals, respect for personality, freedom and self-discipline, and individual responsibility. This principle, defined by the Council as the most important aspect to be considered in the educational reform, presupposes the elimination of the existing negative characteristics of education in Japan: uniformity, rigidity and closedness, and therefore necessitated review of the whole education system, including content and methods of teaching, educational structures and government policies in education. The importance of fostering children creativity, thinking ability and powers of expression, avoiding emphasis on memorization, was also stressed.”

The Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture (MEXT) is responsible for education in Japan. The municipal superintendent of education adopts textbooks for elementary and lower secondary


Gross Enrolment Ratio

Primary: 100 (2006)

Percentage of GDP invested in education: 3.5% (2005)
Percentage of government expenditure invested in education: 9.5% (2005)

The GER is used in the education sector and by the UN. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics the definition of the GER is the “total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the eligible official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school year.” Its purpose is “to show the general level of participation in a given level of education. It indicates the capacity of the education system to enrol students of a particular age group. It can also be a complementary indicator to net enrolment rate (NER) by indicating the extent of over-aged and under-aged enrolment.” It is calculated by dividing “the number of pupils (or students) enrolled in a given level of education regardless of age by the population of the age group which officially corresponds to the given level of education, and multiply the result by 100.”

4 Ibid.
5 http://www.ibe.unesco.org/
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.

This draft country briefing was prepared for comment by RUSHAP, UNESCO Bangkok. Comments are welcome to rushap.bkg@unesco.org
schools and every school must demonstrate its distinctive features by forming and implementing curriculum unique to the school.

Education is compulsory from 6 to 15 years old and includes 6 years of primary school and 3 years of lower secondary school. An increasing number of children is also going to kindergarten (61 % of 5-year-olds in 2000). The Social Studies, Geography and History, Civics, Science, and Moral education programme, as described by the curriculum council have several philosophy related goals.

Social Studies, Geography and History, Civics

“Great emphasis is placed on the development of children's capabilities required as Japanese in the international society. The capabilities include mind and ability to study both domestic and international incidents from various angles and then to make judgments in a fair fashion, understanding and love of their country and its history, and the spirit of international cooperation. Thus, schools will encourage students to learn how to study and research and to participate in hands-on learning activities and problem-solving activities, rather than placing too much emphasis on students' knowledge of all matters. History classes should help students respect Japanese culture and tradition and deepen their understanding and love of its history. Historical events and phenomena taught at elementary school will be selected more carefully, and the focus of history classes will be the learning of achievements by historical figures and typical cultural properties. In history classes at lower secondary school, students will study Japanese history together with world history as background knowledge. Japanese history will be shown in large sections, so that students can grasp the major flow of the history. The students will also be expected to view things from different angles by learning how to study and examine history. Considering the consistency with lower secondary schools, upper secondary schools will help students deepen their understanding of Japanese and world history and develop their ability to think from a historical point of view.”

Science

“Science classes should be well related to children's experiences in the environment and daily life and encourage children to make observations and experiments for their own purposes. The emphasis will be placed on children's development of intellectual interest and inquiring mind toward the environment, and abilities to solve problems and view things variously and comprehensively. At elementary school, experiments and observations of the environment in the neighbourhood and learning related to daily life will be prioritized. Lower secondary schools will conduct more of outdoor observations and exploratory activities. Upper secondary schools will establish three new subjects as an elective required subject. One is "Basic Science" that will help students learn science history and the relation between human life and science in order to develop their scientific perception and thinking. Another is "Comprehensive Science A" for researching natural phenomena closely related to daily life including

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The importance of the emotional education is focused on under such problematic behaviour as bullying among children, their refusal to go to school, juvenile delinquency and children's poor morality and sociality. In addition, it is pointed out that teachers do not well understand the significance of moral education nor make much efforts. It is also mentioned that schools are less active to practice the moral education.

material and energy, and the other is "Comprehensive Science B" for studying biological phenomena and natural phenomena on the global environment."¹⁰

Moral education

“It is important for moral education to touch children’s hearts through hands-on learning activities and to enhance itself in cooperation with families and communities. Great emphasis is placed on the promotion of such moral education that encourages children to tackle problems by themselves and think together for the better future. Thus, the approach will be improved so that children can cultivate mind to respect life, an independent spirit, a sense of responsibility, basic morals including knowing good and bad, mind to respect and develop Japanese culture and tradition, a spirit of international cooperation, and practical ability to develop their own lives and the society for the future. The approach should be suitable to the stage of child development in the moral class and other moral education at elementary and lower secondary schools. Specifically, at elementary school, the first and the second graders will be repeatedly taught until they learn social rules and acquire the knowledge of good and bad. The third and the fourth graders will learn the importance of studying cooperatively and of helping each other, and the fifth and the sixth graders will be encouraged to develop an independent spirit and understanding of Japanese culture and tradition. Lower secondary school students are helped to lead a well-disciplined life, realize themselves as a Japanese citizen and cultivate a spirit of international cooperation. At upper secondary school, civics class, homeroom activities and other activities should be improved in order to help students independently study what life one should lead and how as a human being and develop themselves successfully. Thus, great emphasis will be placed on their development of mind to fulfill their own duty and responsibility, volunteer spirit, and moral sense as a member of the better nation and society.”¹¹

Special activities

Special activities will emphasize that students have desirable human relations, acquire basic morals and social rules, develop independent and practical mind to cooperatively build a better life, and cultivate practical mind. It is necessary to improve the functions of student guidance and develop rich hands-on learning activities. In addition, students are encouraged to foster their Japanese identity and cultivate a spirit of international cooperation, and thus the meaning of the Japanese flag and anthem will be taught widely. In consideration of the stage of child development, children are encouraged to develop mind to consider what life they should lead in the future and ability to independently make a right choice. The function of student guidance will be improved in order to help children adapt themselves to the school life and build a sound relationship with others.¹²

Primary education

Goals for elementary school education:

- Acquire knowledge, skills and mind to have a healthy social life as an individual as well as a member of the society/nation
- Develop rich humanity
- Recognize their own charm and individuality through interactions with others

• Foster self-esteem

Professor Takara Dobashi and Professor Eva Marsal have worked intensively together since 2003 on an international research project, ‘Das Spiel al Kulturtechnik’, part of which concerns P4C. In August 2006, the German-Japanese Research Initiative on Philosophizing with Children (DJPFPK), a cooperative research effort based at the Karlsruhe University of Education. The goal of their work is to create a solid theoretical base for P4C, drawing on Western philosophers such as Socrates, Hume, Goethe, Rousseau, Kant and Nietzsche, and on the Eastern philosophers Takaji Hayashi, Shûzô Kuki and the pedagogue Toshiaki Öse. Marsal and Dobashi reconstructed P4C as archetypical play (Urspiel), based on Plato, Nietzsche and Huizinga, and as archetypical science (Urwissenschaft), based on Socrates and Hayashi’s theory of clinical pedagogy. The classroom approach combines the clinical approach to teaching of Hayashi with the didactic theory of the German professor Ekkehard Martens (especially his concept of a ‘Five-Finger Method’), and with Lipman’s concept of a ‘community of enquiry’. One of the principal interests of the project is to establish intercultural comparisons between the anthropological concepts of children in Japanese and German primary schools. Dobashi reformulated the Japanese lessons of teachers Takeji Hayashi and Toshiaki Öse, then reproduced them in a German context to examine cultural differences and similarities between the anthropological concepts of primary school children in the two countries. For the project, Marsal and Dobashi reproduced Takeji Hayashi’s P4C lesson based on the riddle of the sphinx from Homer’s Odyssey. In 2006, thirty-five years after Hayashi originally gave the lesson to a third-grade class at the Tsubonuma primary school in Japan on 3 July 1971, Hayashi’s pictorial material and questionnaire were again used to stimulate philosophical thinking in a third-grade class at Peter Hebel primary school in Karlsruhe, Germany. This approach allowed them, through qualitative research methods, to compare how Japanese and German children structure their arguments, and to compare the contents of their dialogues.

Excerpt from Philosophy: a school of freedom (UNESCO, 2007)

The weekly time allocation for subjects can be seen in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japanese language</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life environment studies</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral education</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on a school year consisting of 39 weeks.

Assessment
National achievement test are administered in grade 5 (V) and 6 (VI) in Japanese, social studies, mathematics and science.

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Case studies of philosophy teaching in primary schools: Identified courses called “philosophy” in schools
Not available at this moment.

Case studies of philosophy teaching in primary schools: Philosophy related teaching in schools
At Yanagikawa Primary school in Ibaraki prefecture some examples of moral education can be found on the website. For example, during grades one and two, teachers use an animal story to educate their pupils about telling the truth. Just before a football match the ball was gone. A few animals noticed that the big bear used the ball last time. Some of them mention this to the big bear but the bear denies it. The bear looks and behaves very intimidating in class, which scares the other students and makes them afraid of telling the truth about him and the ball. The question remains then if they should tell the truth so that the bear will admit what he has done.

Ex 1. Courage. Telling the truth or not

みんな：「あれ。サッカーボールがないよ。」
みんな：「どこへ行っちゃったんだろう。」
みんなは大騒ぎです。
みー子：「そうだ、くまおさんが最後に使っていたんじゃないかしら。」
くまお：「ぼくじゃないぞ。いい加減なことを言うな。」

体が大きく力持ちのくまおは、時々乱暴をします。
ともぞう：「本当のことを言ってくれ。」
きり子：「誰からも言わんよ。」
ともぞうは、本当のことを言おうとしたが、胸がときどきして言い出せませんでした。

後半部～

帰りの時間になりました。
ともぞう：「やっぱり本当のことを言おう。」
きり子：「おれに文句でもあるのか。」
くまおは、二人を突き飛ばしました。
きり子は、泣き出しました。
ともぞう：「ぼく、見たんだぞ。くまおさんがサッカーボールを校庭の隅へ飛ばしてたじゃないか。」
みんな：「ぼくも見たよ。」
くまおは、黙って下を向いてしまいました。そして、
くまお：「ごめん」
ともぞう：「おれに文句でもあるのか。」

They also questioned the pupils about courageous acts they have done. The effect the story had on their answers can be seen in the box below.


This draft country briefing was prepared for comment by RUSHAP, UNESCO Bangkok. Comments are welcome to rushap.bgk@unesco.org
Three months before the animal story

What is something courageous you have done in the past?

・あなたの勇気を教えてください。
・What is something courageous you have done in the past?

○犬にさわれること。
・Touching dogs.
○手をあげて発表すること。
・Presenting opinions in class.
○手をあげて質問すること。
・Asking questions in class.
○友だちや先生にあいさつすること。
・Greeting friends and teachers.

A few days after the story

What is something courageous you have done in the past?

○落ちていたごみを拾ってごみ箱に捨てた。
・Picking up and throwing away trash into trash can
○ごめんと自分からあやまった。
・To apology from my side.
○正直に本当のことを言った。
・Telling the truth honestly.
○おじいちゃんと席をゆずった。
・Diving a seat to elderly man
○「けんかはだめよ。」と言って，けんかを止めた。
・Stopping the fight of others.

Secondary education
Goals for lower secondary school:

• Acquire knowledge, skills and mind to have a healthy social life as an individual as well as a member of the society/nation
• Develop rich humanity
• Recognize their own charm and individuality
• Cultivate mind of self-reliance

Goals for upper secondary education:

• Students learn to appreciate the meaning of their own life
• Develop mind and ability to choose career
• Deepen understanding of society

The weekly time allocation for subjects during lower secondary education can be seen in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japanese language</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral education</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective subjects</td>
<td>0-38</td>
<td>64-135</td>
<td>135-212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periods for integrated</td>
<td>90-128</td>
<td>90-135</td>
<td>90-167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example:

Introduction to Philosophy in year 11 (First Semester - 5 periods/week)

The aims of this course are to develop in students their ability to:

• ----
• ----
• ----
• ----

Students will achieve these aims by:

• ----
• ----
• ----
• ----

http://www.ibe.unesco.org/
Based on a school year consisting of 39 weeks.

**Assessment**
National achievement test are administered in every grade in Japanese, social studies, mathematics, science, and foreign language.

**Case studies of philosophy teaching in secondary schools: Identified courses called “philosophy” in schools**

**Case studies of philosophy teaching in secondary schools: Philosophy related teaching in schools**
In Sakuramachi Junior High school during grade 9 pupils learn ‘the way of living your own life’ during moral education through a story from a moral education textbook. The main character “I”, who is a junior high school student realizes the importance of proactive decision-making and making a effort for decisions with responsibility in his/her life by reading a poem of Kotaro Takamura. This material stimulates the student to realize the importance of creating their own life through hardship and difficulties by identifying themselves with the main character. Showing the anxiety that comes with being different from others, conflicts with parents, having their own dream and how he/she overcame those struggles stimulates the pupil’s development.

**Questions in class: Is it more important to be the same with others than your own dream? Does your decision go wobbly just because it is different from others?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>道程</th>
<th>Doutei</th>
<th>Journet, Path length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>高村光太郎</td>
<td>Kotaro Takamura</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>僕の前に</td>
<td>There is no road in front of me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>道はない</td>
<td>I can create a path behind me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>僕の後ろに</td>
<td>Oh, nature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ああ</td>
<td>Oh, father</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>自然よ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>父よ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>僕を</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>一人立ちさせた</td>
<td>Oh, magnificent father, the one who left me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>広大な父よ</td>
<td>standing alone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>僕から目を離さなくても</td>
<td>Please don’t take your eyes off me but protect me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>する事をせよ</td>
<td>Have me always ingratiate my father’s vigour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>常に</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>父の気魄を僕に充たせよ</td>
<td>For the sake of this long journey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>この道い</td>
<td>For the sake of this long journey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>道程のため</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>この道い道程のため</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identified programmes to provide teaching materials in philosophy
The educational committee of Ibaraki prefecture create materials to be used in moral education classes. Below is an overview of story titles, which are used in moral education classes. The first one deals with science, technology and people’s happiness. Number 16 is about a Japanese diplomat who saved 6,000 people from the Nazi’s during the Second World War. In the second column number 26 mentions death as a possible topic and number 33 highlights the idea of ‘give and take’.

Links


http://shop.tokyo-shoseki.co.jp/shopap/10001054.htm


http://www.wes.org/ewenr/05may/practical.htm (World Education News and Reviews (WNR))


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