

Masaru YAMAMOTO  
Kanda University of International Studies  
Prince Takamado English Essay Contest

An Internship in School in Canada:

The Window to the Further Advancement of Japan

“We need society that recognize diversity as a source of strength, not as a source of weakness.”

This powerful and hopeful word is a quotation from Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s speech. As the leader of one of the most diverse countries in the world, he named the ethnically diverse and gender-balanced cabinet that looks like Canada last year. Trudeau’s decision clearly reflects his word and Canadian identity as a multilingual and multicultural country that distinguishes Canada from other nations. More importantly, it seems that the cabinet implies how diversity should be treated in the twenty-first century to the world. Canada as the most diverse multicultural nation surely receives much attention from all over the world as a good example of how diversity strengthen the nation itself. Needless to say, I am one of those who has a strong interest in multiculturalism and multilingualism of Canada, and my ideal internship is closely related to such rich diversity in Canada in relation to future educational directions of Japan.

Then, what is my ideal internship? The answer is: an internship in school in Canada which enables me to experience and learn about education in Canada. As a future English teacher in Japan, I am strongly interested in the Canadian educational system that successfully offers an internationally highly reputable education to various kinds of people with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and needs. Canadians may wonder what I

am saying, but as a citizen in a traditionally virtually homogeneous and monolingual country, I guess that the majority of teachers, as well as students, in Japan are not ready yet to deal with such a situation where the classroom is ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse even in 2016. It might be natural for Canadian students to study in such a diverse classroom, but it is not the case with Japanese classrooms. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology-Japan (2011) (henceforth MEXT) shows that the number of people from overseas doubled over the past two decades, leaving a significant increase of various needs, such as linguistic, cultural, and religious support. It seems that the MEXT's data suggests that Japanese teachers, as well as the government, immediately take action to deal with such a new tendency. Some teachers under unfamiliar circumstances may be seeking ways of coping with the drastic change. However, most of them would find it difficult, at least not easy, to handle such situations that are no 'one-size-fits-all'. Due to ongoing globalization and the forthcoming Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, moreover, there is a strong possibility of a more rapid and significant growth of the number of people with ethnically, culturally and linguistically different backgrounds. It will lead Japanese teachers and the educational system to address the increasing needs from various kinds of people. In other words, we need to be well-prepared for the forthcoming substantial changes in schools to guarantee the high-quality education of students with different languages, backgrounds, and needs.

I thus strongly believe that internship in school in Canada will definitely be the important key to such new, unfamiliar, and complicated circumstances to be addressed in future Japanese society. My ideal internship would then allow me to experience and learn about how Canadian ways of education make the country rather powerful and competitive in the world with its diversity. It would also help me to successfully cope with problems in a classroom. Furthermore, the introduction of Canadian ways of education to Japan would

enable my colleagues as well to learn how to address such unfamiliar circumstances.

Integrating my expertise in (language) education into teaching and learning experience from the internship program in Canada, I would also be able to contribute to the development of education in Japan. Education has as enormous potential as diversity does to change society. Then, what do you think would happen if a country offered an education that regarded and valued diversity as a source of strength and potential? The country must be much more powerful, drawing attention from all over the world. More precisely, it is Japan that has a possibility to play a more globally significant role in the twenty-first century if its society better recognizes the potential of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity as its own internal power. Once recognized and treated as its asset, the growth of diversity in Japan will foster new ideas, generate creativity, and boost its own strength as an internationally influential nation.

The twenty-first century requires a new sort of education that enables both teachers and students to learn and sense different cultures, perspectives, and languages, leading them to the fundamental notion of diversity. Then diversity will open a window to the further development and advancement of Japan that respects and utilizes its internal strength. And, I want to be the one who opens the window to the bright future of Japan and the world.

Considering the future educational directions of Japan in relation to diversity, the simplest but most important and effective action may be telling students about the importance and potential of diversity in the classroom. Teaching diversity will not only get students open-minded toward differences but also expand their possibilities and potential broadly. I do believe that such small actions can make big changes in our life that creates another action and change in the future. This internship program to Canada will be the very first step to the next changes to come.

---

Signature