Chapter 4 Three Educational Approaches Responding to Globalization in Japan



Aoi Nakayama

Abstract There is a pervasive idea of Japan as an ethnically and culturally homogeneous nation despite the country being home to several ethnic minorities and increasing diversity brought about by internationalization and globalization. This chapter examines how educational policies respond to globalization and analyzes three fields of education: citizenship education in social studies, education for international understanding, and education for living together. As citizenship education is taught partly within the subject of social studies, its curriculum guidelines and textbooks are examined.

Education for international understanding was introduced just after Japan became a member of UNESCO in 1951 and emphasized the importance of education in a global society. As the number of foreign children increases, the importance of education for living together is progressively recognized among teachers and policy-makers. This chapter analyzes these three approaches to education by identifying their contradictions and possible links. Whether the belief in a homogeneous national identity is transmitted through education will also be examined.

Keywords Citizenship education · Globalization · Diversity · National identity

Introduction

Japan is often portrayed as a monoethnic nation by both Japanese and international authors. Indeed, although the percentage of foreign residents has gradually increased since the reform of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in 1990, it remains comparatively low (2.2% in 2018). Nevertheless, increasing numbers of children of mixed marriages and naturalized parents have enhanced cultural diversity in schools even though they have Japanese nationality. Furthermore, taking into consideration the history of integration/assimilation of minorities such as the Ainu and the Ryukyu people, the myth of Japanese ethnic and cultural homogeneity

A. Nakayama (⊠)

Osaka Kyoiku University, Osaka, Japan e-mail: aoi@cc.osaka-kyoiku.ac.jp

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should be critically examined. As pointed out by Oguma (1995) the Japanese self-image of mono-ethnicity is a political construct. This sense of national identity has been inculcated by state schools and consolidated through national ceremonies (Yosino 1997). Nevertheless, this identity construction and perceived uniqueness could potentially hinder international communication and understanding (Sugimoto and Ross 1995).

Firstly, rapid globalization and internationalization have emphasized the need to adjust to a more interconnected world. In social studies¹ courses in lower secondary school, the key aims are to foster basic competencies for citizens with wide perspectives, live proactively in a globalized international society, and create a peaceful, democratic state and society. (MEXT 2017a). Considering citizenship education is partly taught within social studies (Kobara 2011) and aims to foster citizenship in a globalized international society, this chapter will analyze how social studies textbooks address the topics of internationalization, global issues, and diversity in Japan. Moreover, how Japanese national identity is perceived and whether it is incompatible with the Japanese multicultural context are examined.

Secondly, this chapter analyzes the principles and practices of education for international understanding implemented by the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO in response to educational challenges related to internationalization.

Thirdly, education for living together in the Japanese educational system will be examined. Given the growing number of children with a foreign background in Japan² (Ministry of Justice 2018), teachers and educational policy makers recognize JSL (Japanese as a Second Language) and education for living together as increasingly important.

The final part of this chapter will analyze the controversies arising from these three approaches and their possible synergy. Whether the discourse of a Japanese homogeneous national identity is conveyed by Japanese education in a global world will also be examined.

Citizenship Education within Social Studies

The need for civic education was widely recognized following the General Election Law of 1925 that granted all men older than 25 years the right to vote regardless of the amount they paid in tax. In the 1930s, civic education therefore replaced the subject of law and economy in secondary school curricula (Matsuno 1997). However, as the war between Japan and China and the Second World War

¹MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) determines the Courses of Study as broad standards for all schools, from kindergarten through upper secondary schools, to organize their programs in order to ensure a fixed standard of education throughout the country. The Courses of Study are generally been revised once every 10 years.

²The number of foreign residences was 1,686,444 in 2000 and 2,637,261 in 2018 (Ministry of Justice 2018).

intensified, civic education programs were considerably influenced by imperialistic policies. At that time, civic education and moral education (*Shuusin*) strongly emphasized the duty of loyalty to Japan and its emperor.

After the Second World War one of the most important roles of education in Japan was the reconstruction of a democratic society. Under the occupation of the U.S.A forces, the educational system was reformed and the 1947 Fundamental Law of Education was promulgated. A crucial element of this reform was the removal of *Shuusin* from the curriculum. However, after having been strongly influenced by the North American model, the school curriculum was redesigned to reflect Japanese culture as soon as the occupation forces were removed (Cogan 2011).

Within the current Japanese curriculum, citizenship education is taught through social studies in primary education and is integrated with geography and history courses. In junior high school, citizenship education is taught in the third year after studying geography and history in the first two years. It is interesting to note that the key goal of social studies has evolved over time and its objectives expanded with every Course of Study revision. In 1947, the main objective was "to give young people an understanding of civil life and to develop an attitude and capacity to contribute to the development of society" (Kobara 2011, p. 79) whereas in 1989, the goal was "to raise interest in society from a wider perspective, make multilateral and multidimensional considerations based on various inputs, deepen the understanding and love for the country and its history, nurture the basic education of citizens and develop civic qualities appropriate to the future builders of a democratic and peaceful state and society, while living in the international society" (MEXT 1989).

It should be noted that the concept of "love for one's country" appeared for the first time in the 1989 Course of Study. In 2017, the "love for one's country" and "civic qualities of the democratic and peaceful state" remain key components but the approach to "living in the international society" was changed to "live proactively in a globalized international society" and "thinking socially and pursuing and resolving problematic issues" was added.

As for the field of citizenship education, the Course of Study defines four main study areas: (1) modern society, which covers themes such as globalization, information society, declining birthrate and aging, traditions and culture. (2) economy, (3) politics and (4) the international community, where the themes include international institutions, cooperation to deal with environmental issues and poverty in the world, and sustainable development.

The four most popular citizenship education textbooks³ cover all the above themes and describe globalization in terms of the increasing mobility of people,

³ 『新しい社会 公民』東京書籍 (New Social Studies: Civics, Tokyo Shoseki, 2016)

[『]中学社会 公民的分野』日本文教出版 (Social Studies for Junior High School: Field of Citizenship, Nihonbunkyo Shuppan, 2016)

[『]中学社会 公民 ともに生きる』教育出版 (Social Studies for Junior High School: Civics: Live Together, Kyouiku Shuppan, 2016)

[『]社会科 中学生の公民 より良い世界をめざして』 帝国書院 (Social Studies: Civics for Junior High School Students seeking for Better World, Teikoku Shoinn, 2016).

goods, money, and information as well as the mutual interdependency of nations. All four books, therefore, emphasize the importance of intercultural understanding. The textbooks also mention how popular Japanese culture is in other countries, for example the popularity of Japanese food, and they emphasize the importance of understanding Japanese traditions and culture. This aspect is directly linked to the Course of Study objective for students to understand the influences and importance of cultures in modern society and be interested in Japanese traditions and culture. One of the textbooks states that before opening up to new cultures, Japanese should acquire their own culture and then exchange with other cultures in foreign countries. It may be one of the features of citizenship education in Japan that in order to understand other cultures, students should first understand and be aware of the importance of Japanese culture and traditions.

Regarding Japanese traditions and culture, all textbooks cover various regional cultural events, the art and crafts heritage to be passed on to younger generations and point out the importance of cultural inheritance. In this respect, globalization seems to promote a sense of localization in Japanese textbooks. Although the four textbooks mention the diversity of local Japanese culture, only one textbook refers to the Ryukyu Islands' specific history and traditional culture. The situation of the Indiginous Peoples of Hokkaido, the Ainu is discussed in lessons on human rights and they are described as a minority suffering from discrimination. The issue of discrimination towards people who are of Korean descent and first-generation Korean immigrants is also raised in all four textbooks. However, they are not described as people who have contributed to the richness of Japanese culture. Despite the recognition of diversity, only two textbooks use the word "multicultural society" when referring to Japan.

The Course of Study states that in order to realize world peace and to preserve the welfare of human beings in the context of international interdependence, students should recognize the importance of cooperation among nations and approve their sovereignty. They should acknowledge the importance of love for their own country and its peace and prosperity. It is important to point out that although there is a clear aim to promote cooperation with people from other countries, Japan's ethnic minorities are not mentioned. In this respect, Japan's internal diversity is once more omitted. This confirms Moto's (2004) arguments that education in Japan has contributed to the sense that the nation state should consist of only Japanese and that multiethnic/multicultural diversity has been hidden since the Meiji Era. She adds that the Japanese Course of Study works on the assumption that all students are Japanese without considering that some of the students have more than one nationality or are non-Japanese (Moto 2004). As confirmed by Minei (2010), "Japaneseness" is emphasized in school education in Japan. However, this leads us to question what it means to be Japanese and whether the conception of Japanese identity embedded in the curriculum is obliging ethnic minority groups such as Ainu people or Japanese of Korean and Chinese descent to conform to Japanese identity and culture.

Overall, we can observe a contradiction between the Course of Study's aims to promote cooperation with people of other countries and the strong emphasis on Japanese traditional culture that overlooks the diversity of people living in Japan.

Education for International and Global Issues

In 1951, a year before the Allied occupation ended, Japan became a member of UNESCO and education for international understanding was introduced into the curriculum. To support this initiative, UNESCO's Associated School Networks (ASPnet) designed activities and the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO published the "Education for International Understanding" handbook (UNESCO 1959).

The 1974 UNESCO's "Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms" challenged the Japanese National Commission to integrate education for global issues into Japanese citizenship education (Minei 2015). At the same time, the Japanese Central Educational Council advocated education for Japanese living in the international community. Its priorities centered on learning foreign languages, international exchange, and education for Japanese students returning from foreign countries. The Japanese Council's policy emphasized the concept of living in an international society rather than global issues. As Japan became an economic powerhouse, the need to educate Japanese youth to play an active role in the international community was widely recognized. Fujiwara (2011) pointed out concerns about Japanese students returning from foreign countries and their adjustment to life in Japan after having been immersed in different cultures.

The 1996 report of the Japanese Central Educational Council "Education in Japan looking forward to the 21st century" was also responsive to the challenges of internationalization (Ishii 2003) and aimed to (a) foster wide perspectives, attitudes and competencies to understand and respect other cultures and live together with people with different cultures, (b) increase self-awareness in order to deepen international understanding, (c) promote communication skills such as basic foreign language competencies and the ability to express opinions in international society. The report placed great emphasis on understanding Japanese history and traditional culture in order to live in the international community. In other words, these educational policies emphasized, on the one hand, intercultural competencies to understand other cultures and communicate in foreign languages, and on the other hand, knowledge of Japanese traditional culture and history. These are thought to be the two pillars of international understanding in Japan.

In 2005, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) defined international education as education to foster the attitude and competencies needed to act independently with a global perspective in the international community. The term "international education" is used to widen the concept of education for international understanding in Japan.

In the current situation, the variety of terminologies and overlaps between educational approaches such as education for peace, human rights, sustainable development and global citizenship education (GCE) create some conceptual confusion. Nevertheless, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) teacher survey showed that terms such as international understanding, peace education,

environmental education and human rights education were all widely recognized, although the most popular one was undoubtedly international understanding (JICA 2014).

In practice, international education is dealt with in Social Studies, Moral Education, Special Activities and Integrated Study which was introduced into the curriculum in primary and secondary education in 2002 (JICA 2014). According to another JICA survey, the most popular themes among teachers are "lives and cultures in other countries" (75%), "understanding of other countries" (50%), "relationship between Japan and world" (48.8%), and "English learning activities" (48.8%). The survey also shows that the most popular themes of Integrated Study were "intercultural understanding" (69.6%), "English learning activities" (67.9%), "international exchange" (45.5%), "Japanese traditions and culture" (35.9%), whereas "human rights, environment and peace" (20.2%) and "poverty and the north-south problem" (6.3%), were much less popular (JICA 2014). This study demonstrated once again that a strong feature of the Japanese approach to international education is the inclusion and promotion of Japanese traditions and culture, viewed as an important tool to build understanding of other cultures by both MEXT and school teachers.

In 2015, a MEXT advisory committee published a report promoting international education in primary and secondary education. The report included three aims for international education: to accept people from other cultural backgrounds and to live together, to build identity rooted in traditions and culture of their country, to express their opinions and act accordingly. The establishment of a Japanese identity should be one of the important pillars for international education in Japan as well as acceptance of others. However, as the number of children of first- and second-generation immigration has increased in Japan, this approach can be questioned.

NGOs and teachers have promoted educational approaches that relate to sustainable development since the 1980s, notably by the Development Education Association and Resource Center (DERA). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and JICA have also supported development education. After the introduction of Integrated Study in schools in 2002, development education has been actively carried out in some schools. Another factor behind promoting development education in Japan was the UN Declaration of the "Decade of Education for Sustainable Development." However, the percentage of schools that made use of the support provided by NGOs and JICA was less than 10% (JICA 2014).

This situation could be ascribed to the educational policy of international education, which gave priority to learning foreign languages, international exchange and education for the Japanese students returning from foreign countries over other global issues. Another reason could be the lack of clarity between various definitions and terms related to international education. Therefore more prominence should be given to education for global issues in teacher training and in the curriculum of teacher education.

Education for Living Together in a Multicultural Society

Over the last three decades, the diversity of people living in Japan has been growing. Besides Japanese ethnic minorities, the number of registered foreigners has increased by approximately 2.8 times since the 1990 Reform of Immigration Control and the Refugee Recognition Act that allowed, amongst others, Japanese immigrants living in other countries such as Brazil and Peru to work in Japan.⁴ Between the Second World War and the normalization of diplomacy in 1972, many Japanese people who could not move back to Japan resided in China. When allowed back to Japan, some were no longer able to speak Japanese and brought their foreign spouses and children with them.

Diversity has also been growing due to an increasing percentage of international marriages. Not only has the average marital age increased along with the percentage of people who do not get married, it is more and more difficult for men, especially farmers in the countryside, to find a spouse. As a result, the number of men marrying foreigners from other Asian countries has grown. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (2015), 1 out of 30 newborn babies has one or two parents who hold a foreign passport (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare 2015). Moreover, MEXT announced in 2018 that they plan to increase the number of international students in higher education to 300,000. International students are encouraged to stay and work in Japan after their studies to make up for labor shortage⁵ (Ministry of Justice 2016). This situation is likely to expand due to a decline in the country's population and globalization.

In 2006, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications presented the "multicultural coexistence promotion plan" that recommends local governments promote multicultural coexistence where different people recognize each other's cultural differences and live together as members of the community while trying to build equal relationships. This initiative was followed by a "committee for improvement of education for foreign children and students in primary and secondary education" organized by MEXT in 2008. In its report, it is stated that, in the near future, acceptance of foreign children may be an important educational issue in all the regions of the country. Furthermore, it pointed out that teaching foreign children Japanese as well as the knowledge and skills necessary to live as members of Japanese society is an essential condition for them to realize a happy life in Japan. This is particularly necessary as foreigners now stay longer or settle in Japan, and it is considered to be an important condition for the stability and development of Japanese society (MEXT 2008).

⁴Brazil is the country where the largest number of Japanese immigrants live in the world, and 250 thousand Japanese have immigrated to Brazil since 1908. It is said that about 1.5 million people with Japanese ancestry live there. (Associação Nipo-Brasileira 2019).

⁵For example, international students can apply for "employment support project for graduate students" (Ministry of Justice 2016)

Therefore, it is indisputable that the number of students who need Japanese language instruction has also increased since the 1990s. MEXT reported more than 43,000 primary and secondary school students needed Japanese instruction in 2016. Those students include both foreign students and Japanese children who have one foreign parent. Integration of non-Japanese speaking children or children with limited Japanese language competencies continues to be challenging for schools and teachers (MEXT 2017b).

The committee also concluded the desirable attitude of a person living in the international community should be nurtured by Japanese children learning together with foreign children (MEXT 2008). Both Japanese language instruction and learning together are described as important in the report. Foreign children are seen as resources for Japanese children to acquire desirable attitudes towards living in the international community. For instance, some schools encourage children to greet foreign students in their mother tongue or invite parents of foreign students to present their culture to encourage students to take an interest in their foreign classmates. Today, the words "living together in multicultural society" or "education for living together" are becoming popular among teachers and educational institutions. This represents a small but significant step for Japanese education with its long history of assimilation of Korean people living in Japan.

However, Sato (2001) shows that foreign children in Japan tend to adopt the marginalization acculturation strategy described by Berry et al. (1992) since it is difficult for them to keep their cultural identity and cultural characteristics as well as build relationships with other groups with different cultures. Sato (2001) ascribed one of the reasons for their marginalization as the dominant value and structure of the school which requires foreign children to be assimilated. In order to achieve the goal of living together in a multicultural society, it is necessary to rethink the dominant value and the structure that supports it (Sato 2001).

Another challenge for education of foreign students is that students who have already acquired BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) but have not yet acquired CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) still need support. Furthermore, there is few access to mother tongue education in public schools. Finally, because foreigners have no obligation to attend school in Japan, support for foreign children who are not schooled is also an important educational task.

Since 2003 MEXT has conducted specialized training in Japanese language instruction for the teachers and instructors in charge of the education of foreign children. Some universities also offer lectures on JSL (Japanese as a Second Language) and education for foreign students. However, training and lectures emphasized teaching Japanese language rather than multicultural or intercultural education. Nieke (1995) categorized intercultural education in Germany into two approaches. One is "education for encounter" and the other is "conflict education" (translated from German). The former includes for example, getting to know the culture of immigrants and mutual cultural enrichment. The latter includes eliminating prejudice and ethnocentrism, equal chance and fighting against xenophobia. Like Japan, Germany was not perceived as a country of immigration but has nevertheless accepted a large number of foreign workers and refugees since the Second World

War. Nieke (1995) analyzed intercultural education in Germany and described its four stages: I. initial support for education for foreign students, II. criticism of specific education for foreign students, III. intercultural education and differentiation from compensational education, IV. extension to ethnic minorities. Within Nieke's (1995) model, intercultural education in Japan could be considered to be at the first stage. In teacher training, the focus is on education for non-Japanese speaking children but often fails to train teachers in intercultural education.

Conclusion

This chapter focuses on education responding to globalization in Japan. The first approach is citizenship education within social studies at the national level. MEXT and the Courses of Study have emphasized the importance of understanding of other cultures and the interdependency of global society. They promote students' love for their country and their understanding of Japanese culture and traditions. One of the features of Japanese citizenship education might be the belief that knowledge of Japanese traditions and culture is a fundamental precondition to understanding other cultures. However, as the diversity of people and cultures has increased in Japan, there is a need to redefine what Japanese culture is in today's society.

The second approach is education for international and global issues. International education has its origin in UNESCO and emphasizes the understanding of one's own culture and foreign cultures as well as the communication skills necessary to live in an international society. Again, Japanese traditions and culture are recognized as important to establish the identity of Japanese living in international society. Tsuneyoshi (2016) criticizes this "global human resource" model promoted by the Japanese government as it limits itself to English communication skills and to Japanese identity which seeks to protect Japanese national interests rather than promote a global identity. Furthermore, the question of how Japanese identity can be inclusive of Japanese immigrants remains. In addition, education for global issues ought to address issues related to poverty, the north-south divide and sustainable development.

The third approach is education for living together in Japan. Since the 1990s education for children who need Japanese language instruction has been recognized as important. Teacher training and lectures focus on how to teach JSL (Japanese as a Second Language) or how to accept children whose mother tongue is not Japanese. However, intercultural education should also be promoted for all students in order to advance an inclusive society and foster 'living together'. Moreover, there is considerable disparity in social status between Japanese and foreign residents, especially when comparing the percentage of white-collar workers. It is thought that the disparity experienced by the first generation could be reflected in their children's educational attainment, perpetuating socio-economic disparity (Korekawa 2012). Therefore, teachers should encourage foreign parents to get involved in school.

This chapter has highlighted the common hidden agenda that underlies the three approaches, namely fostering Japanese identity. This raises the question of how this conception of national identity promoted by the government and schools could integrate a sense of global citizenship. This analysis of the Japanese educational responses to globalization has pointed to a contradiction in foreign language policies. Although MEXT and the Japanese government stress the importance of English proficiency and intercultural communication skills for living in a global society, the educational system does not promote bilingual education for migrant students nor does it recognize their potential to become a "global human resource" (Tsuneyoshi 2016).

As the diversity of people living in Japan is highly likely to increase in the near future, all the approaches above need to draw links with each other and promote education for diversity and interculturalism. In fact, the second approach of education for international understanding is often integrated into the first approach of social studies (JICA 2014). The first approach could be connected to the third approach when addressing the topic of globalism. For instance, migrant parents or members of the community could share their knowledge of various cultures and their experience of migration. Another idea could be to promote language awareness programs that are transversal to the second and the third approach. Finally, fostering knowledge and understanding other cultures and history should aim to build good relations with neighbouring countries such as China and Korea.

The image of a homogeneous Japanese identity described by Anderson (2016) as an "imagined community" and conveyed by MEXT needs to evolve to a more inclusive Japanese identify. Furthermore, the three approaches discussed in this chapter should take into account growing cultural and ethnic diversity in Japan.

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