

No Borders: School for Everyone

I have a dream. I want to be a teacher-not just to teach, but to also bring about change in our education system. Currently, in Japanese education, disabled and healthy students are supposed to take classes in separate places. Many people in Japan take this for granted. Once, I also assumed that disabled and healthy people were completely different, and I used to think that disabled people were a nuisance. However, two people changed my way of thinking drastically.

First, when I was in junior high school, I had a disabled friend since elementary school. One day, after she enjoyed playing in my class, she said to me, "I don't want to go back to my original classroom." Despite her request, and without thinking about her feelings, I told her that she should leave right away. She looked so sad. Then a feeling of regret suddenly crept within me. "Does this style of education really have beneficial effects on people?"

A year later, an overseas student came to my school from the U.S. Soon I got along with her. One day, when we were talking, the disabled student came to us. To my surprise, the American student accepted her without hesitation. Then, the student asked me why the disabled and the healthy students were in separate

classes. I couldn't answer her logically, and this question struck my heart. She also taught me that all students take classes within the same place in America. Then I began to feel the difference between our cultures, and came to think that Japan's education should be changed so that all students can help each other regardless of their physical disability. In a way, she was also moved by what I had taught her. I told her that students in Japan are supposed to clean the classrooms by themselves. Cleaning can cultivate public pride. Both of us had realized the education systems from our own countries. As a result, we took action. When I was in third grade, I got an opportunity to talk to the principal. I told him what I learned from the American student. I courageously told him, "Our school should adopt the type of education that allows all students to take classes in the same classrooms." Fortunately, he did so. Later on, he told me that he wanted to continue this plan because children came to help each other more than before.

On the other hand, the American student, after returning to U.S., explained to her classmates the way of cleaning classrooms in Japan. She moved the hearts of the American students. After that, students came to clean classrooms by themselves like us. This is how we affected change in each of our communities.

Second, when I became a high school student, I met an English teacher and once

more my heart was struck again. He told me that unlike Japan, most students in America enter nearby high schools without strictly regarding to academic ability. It means that all students are treated equally. On the other hand, now in Japan, students are separated by differences in academic ability and presence or absence of disability. Through hearing his talk, I came to realize that Japan's schools should be changed as I expected.

Specifically, in my schools of elementary, junior high school, and high school, healthy students rarely do anything with disabled students. On the contrary, some of them sometimes bully disabled students. This situation should be changed.

Experiencing these, I finally had a clear goal: I am desperate to be a teacher. I want as many schools as possible to have a greater sense of equality. Therefore, in order to achieve this goal, I should enter college, I'll definitely study about other countries' education, and I'd like to develop a system of inclusive education.

This is my dream. A dream that cannot be done alone. A dream, that if fulfilled, can break the boundaries of the education system. A dream that needs you and me.

Would you join me in making this dream come true? [677 words]