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National News

Japanese high school kids love their textbooks, don't want to talk in class: Int'l survey

Some 70 percent of Japanese high school students enjoy textbook-centered classes, the highest rate among the students of four countries surveyed in a recent study.

The survey, conducted by the Japan Youth Research Institute and other groups, found that Japanese high school students enjoy textbook-based classes more than their counterparts in the United States, South Korea and China, where the majority of students said they enjoy lessons where they are asked to speak in class. Only about 30 percent of Japanese students said they liked classes where they had to talk, highlighting a preference for passive learning.

"There are very few Japanese high school students with the desire for broad study," says institute head Tamotsu Sengoku. "The parents, too, do not get involved, and there is a strong tendency to think, 'Oh, whatever.' Both adults and children have become docile and quiet."

The study was carried out from June through November 2009, and queried 6,173 students in the four countries. Some 71.4 percent of Japanese high school students said they liked "Classes where we can learn through precise instruction on textbook content." The rate was also high in China with 64.9 percent, but low in both South Korea and the U.S., with 39.6 percent and 31.2 percent, respectively.

Meanwhile, 91.4 percent of Chinese high school kids said they enjoy classes that put high importance on field trips, followed by the U.S. with 88.6 percent, and South Korea with 77.7 percent. Japanese students were least enthusiastic about trips outside school, at 64.6 percent.

Furthermore, 91.6 percent of Chinese students said they liked classes where they had to talk, compared to 73.4 percent of U.S. students and 52.4 percent of South Korean students. Japanese students were far behind with only 33.4 percent of the high school kids surveyed saying they enjoyed classes where they had to speak their minds.

Japanese students also claimed that only a small minority of mothers and fathers were extremely interested in their grades, at 38.9 percent and 19.5 percent respectively -- both the lowest rates among the four countries surveyed.

JP Click here for the original Japanese story

(Mainichi Japan) April 8, 2010

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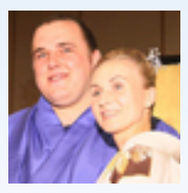

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