Improving Entrance Exams in Japan
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How Can We Improve the System?
(excerpt from a longer paper)

It is obvious that the current entrance exam system needs improving and does not evaluate students well. How can we change and improve the current entrance exam system? We would like to suggest some possibilities.

What can we do to improve Japanese entrance exams? Firstly, making interview tests longer is important. Even if it costs much, it will be good for schools to choose students in the future. Students are the ones who mostly make schools what they are and schools should be careful to select wisely, based on students’ real personalities, potential and willingness to study. We think interview tests do a better job as an entrance exam. We think that a paper-based entrance exam system, as most schools have now, is not effective. Instead of the paper-based test, we should have more interview tests and something that requires students’ critical thinking skills, creativity and problem solving skills so that it can evaluate students more deeply.

Secondly, it is helpful to follow the basic idea of the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (http://www.apa.org/science/programs/testing/standards.aspx) which is adopted in the United States because it evaluates students’ personalities and communication skills more than Japanese tests. It will be consequently better than the existent test system. Thirdly, it is necessary to change the entire focus of schools on entrance exams. Schools put a priority on how they can let students pass entrance exams. Thus, schools make students study for the entrance exams in early stages in spite of the fact that students want to study different things. As long as this tendency exists, it is difficult to improve the system.

Moreover, we think that universities should have some tests for graduation and make their graduation more difficult. In Japan, sometimes students don’t need to write even a graduation thesis if they have enough credits. It is very easy to graduate, and students may not make much effort in their college life. That’s a big problem. It is ridiculous that students expend so much energy on entrance exams and may acquire little from their university life.

If it is difficult to graduate from university, students will make a great effort to study subjects that each university teaches technically, and we honestly believe that it will help students to survive the modern world. In addition, if we can reduce people’s burden of the entrance exam, the life is going to be better, and many students who really want to study can get an opportunity to study. Reconsidering the entrance exam system and the very basis of education can help Japanese society to develop with great young human resources.

Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS)
We had an interview with staff at our university, Kanda University of International Studies, to find out our university’s entrance exam system. Finally, we want to share something from here.

KUIS’s goal is to bring together students who have various skills. For example, some have great speaking skills, others have great writing skills. And, KUIS
gets these students in different ways, for example, recommendation examinations from some high schools or self recommended exams, using the center test and written examination. So, they can gather students who have different skills. Also, they take about 60% of the new students from interview exams and thus can have a better look at the whole person. Still we think the interviews and evaluations would be better if they were longer. At present, the students know many of the questions they will be asked and prepare the special phrases and words for this examination.

Conclusion
In conclusion, the current Japanese entrance exam system has many problems, and it might be changed in several ways. Japanese universities should have more interview tests to know their students' real personalities, potential, abilities and willingness to study. We should reconsider the focus of study, and change the idea that many people have that entrance exams are everything. Changing the attitude toward the entrance exams is definitely one of the key points that we should care about to change the current system. The current system has a bad impact on the human condition in Japan.

There are many countries that have entrance exam systems. Some are good, and some are similar to Japan. However, all countries that we mentioned have both some good points and bad points of course. Japan should learn from some other countries and should improve its own system.

Entrance exams should be a chance for everyone who really wants to get a higher education. Therefore, the system of the entrance exam shouldn’t have negative points that disturb people. We honestly believe that we can make the system better. We hope Japan will be one of the best countries that has a great higher education system, and a country in which people really want to learn can learn what they want to.