

## Comparing International Baccalaureate and Japanese High School Education

Mahmood Sabina \*, Satake Kyousuke, Iizuka Masaya, Tanaka Katsumi, Ueda Ichiro, Ishii Ichiro, Tahara Makoto

Okayama University, Admission Center, 2-1-1, Tsushima Naka, Kita Ku, Okayama 700-8530, Japan Tel: +81-86-251-7284; Fax: +81-86-251-7197

### **Abstract**

The International Baccalaureate Diploma (IBDP) is equivalent to a high school qualification. Presently there are 26 IBDP students at Okayama University of whom 5 belong to the Medical Faculty and additional 6 are joining in April 2018. Following feedback from IB students and Academic Advisors regarding difficulties in taking classes at University, a study was designed to observe an equal number of lessons at both IB schools (IBS) and Japanese High schools (JHS) in grades 10-12, to compare teaching methods and ways of student learning. Biology classes were observed in 5 Japanese High Schools in Okayama Prefecture and 5 IB Schools around Japan. The biggest difference observed, was the class size; (37-40) at JHS versus (2-16) at IBS, which provided more opportunity for discussions and interactions between the teacher and students at IBS. The next difference was cultural. At IBS, students were encouraged to voice their opinion freely and actively engage in class, whereas at JHS, classes were lecture oriented and the Japanese culture of listening more, expressing less and speaking when spoken to, was very prominent. Lastly, IBS prepares students for admission into Universities worldwide whereas, the JHS education system is targeted at scoring high on the entrance exam to enter Japanese Universities. So students are assessed mostly on their academic skills rather than other skills. In JHS, the teacher has the responsibility to provide tailor-made lessons, whereas at IBS, the responsibility lies mainly on the student while the teacher acts as a guide and resource for students to explore.