Finnish Students Learn Home Economics in the "kitchen classrooms"

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Cooking, housekeeping, financial management—would you let your child take such classes? Learning to cook? Learning to do household chores? Learning economic management? What exactly are these courses? It turns out that these are the three main themes of the "Home Economics" class that starts from elementary to middle school in Finnish education, where we deeply understand the educational philosophy of Finland, which is to insist on letting students learn abstract theoretical concepts in experiential settings, truly learning by doing. What important insights does this provide for parents and students in Hong Kong?

Actually, this course is not directly related to economics; it is originally a life education course aimed at letting children master the daily life skills of cooking, doing household chores, and managing family finances. Mastering these skills not only teaches them to live independently but also helps sustain the environment.

The first skill is "learning to cook," which includes cooking and baking. Students not only learn the knowledge and skills of food preparation and baking, such as preparing ingredients, understanding recipes, identifying the nutritional components of food, and using an oven to cook; they also learn about food culture, such as food safety, the food chain, dietary culture and religion, and how to properly set tableware, napkins, and cups. In practical operations, they gradually learn food knowledge and dietary culture.

Surprisingly, doing this small thing has become a venue for Finns to cultivate students' creativity and imagination.

To provide students with a real learning environment, every school has a "kitchen classroom." In the morning, the first and second periods are not academic theory classes, but cooking instead. The food prepared in class is what they eat for lunch that day, which is very interesting.

The second life skill is "doing household chores." The home economics class is not just about teaching children to do housework; it is also about cultivating sustainable living habits through these chores. Under the influence of this class, children develop the habit of promptly cleaning kitchenware, using the dishwasher to wash the family's dishes, and knowing how to hand wash dishes in a water-saving manner; they also possess environmental awareness, understanding the importance of cherishing food and waste sorting; at the same time, they can read the washing instructions on clothes and use the washing machine more effectively.

The third life skill is "managing household finances." This skill is profoundly meaningful: through these deeply involved household activities, children gain a comprehensive understanding of the structure of family consumption, how to plan, allocate, and arrange family life with limited money, instilling in them from a young age a sense of consumer awareness and financial management ability, thereby cultivating their financial intelligence.

It turns out that Finnish parents give their children an "allowance" every month, with some families distributing it weekly. If they take good care of their younger siblings or actively clean the house, they can also earn money.

For example, a pair of parents have five children. From the age of 10, they discuss with their children their own wages, how much money is needed to buy food, how much it costs to send their younger siblings to kindergarten, and how much money is left for hobbies. This way, the children can fully understand the structure of family consumption.

School teachers also teach students how advertisements can influence their shopping and how to better use the internet to be a rational consumer, to avoid being deceived by advertisements and buying things they do not need.

Finally, as family consumers, students start to understand a family's income, budget, and expenses from junior high school, which is beneficial in guiding them to use money correctly and develop financial and savings skills. At the same time, learning how to buy items that are both practically valuable and aesthetically designed with appropriate money is a very practical course that can make life sustainable.

Finnish students can go from "kitchen classrooms" to home economics classes, allowing them to personally experience, understand, and master cooking, housekeeping, and family financial management. Through the learning process, they fully acquire life instincts and self-management skills, enabling comprehensive development in their lives.

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