

# **A Sense of Effectiveness on Learning Early Childhood Education at University**

## **— Based on the interview survey of elementary school teachers**

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### **1. Introduction**

This study conducted an interview survey of elementary school teachers who sufficiently learned about early childhood education in the teacher training course at the university to ask about their sense of the effectiveness of learning while working at elementary schools. Based on the results, this study revealed the influence of studying early childhood education in a teacher training course on nurturing the students' abilities.

Explaining that some Japanese universities reviewed the effectiveness of their teacher training courses by surveying their graduates, Kohara et al. (2020) investigated the changes in students' ways of long-term learning in the curriculum by analyzing the students who graduated from 1951 to the most recent year. However, their reports didn't include items about teachers' licenses for the different types of schools (especially for preschool) and the content about preschool education.

Among the research about overseas countries except for Japan, Akai (2001) surveyed the graduates from the elementary school teacher training course at the District Institute of Education and Training in India and showed the results about preschool training and instruction (described in %) as a subject in "Subjects and Effectiveness," but it didn't show the details.

### **2. Method**

This study conducted an individualized semi-structured interview with five graduates who studied in the university teacher training course, obtained both elementary and preschool teachers' licenses, graduated within the past five years, and had working experience of at least one year at an elementary school. The interview was from November to December 2022. The evaluation items were (1) their sense of the effectiveness of learning early childhood education for working at elementary schools and (2) their concerns and troubles working at those schools. As the ethical considerations for the interviewees, they were fully briefed on the interview and asked to submit the consent forms before having an interview. Also, this study was approved by the Tokoha University Research Ethics Code. The content of the interview survey was recorded verbatim, and the linguistic data was analyzed using M-GTA. To generate a theory for practical application, it was considered a suitable analysis method for this study.

### **3. Results**

By analyzing the content of the interviews, this study found that the results were categorized into three groups: (A) the sense of the effectiveness of learning at university, (B) the things they wanted to learn at university, and (C) the involvement with the university.

Regarding the results of the sense of the effectiveness of learning at university, the interviewees said (A1) learning practical techniques of reading and singing while playing the piano helped their classrooms at elementary

school; (A2) learning about the five areas of childcare helped them understand the developmental needs of children and respond to diverse types of children; (A3) they applied teaching methods at university, like group discussions, to their classes; (A4) the communication with professors gave some hints about dealing with parents; (A5) they recognized the importance of early childhood education when they experience the cooperation with preschools.

As for the things the interviewees wanted to learn at university, they said that (B1) they needed more practical learning for teaching, such as mock classes, preparing lesson plans, and writing on a blackboard; (B2) they also needed more practice in student guidance and other skills playing piano, using a sewing machine, and conducting science experiments; (B3) they liked curriculum with visiting classes in different university and wanted more classroom visitation elementary schools, (B4) they needed examples for a good relationships with others.

Regarding the involvement with the university, (C1) they needed support and learning opportunities at the university while teaching at schools to improve their abilities of teaching, classroom management, and student and parent guidance; (C2) a good relationship with professors is necessary for things that they hesitated to talk with their colleagues such as career and mental issues; (C3) they showed interests in learning things useful for their work but were unable to do because they were too busy and tired.

#### 4. Discussion

The results of (A) the sense of the effectiveness of learning at university and (B) the things they wanted to learn at university overlapped to some extent, such as practical skills and communication. This suggests that they felt the effectiveness of learning at university sufficiently, making them want to learn more to be a good teacher. Also, it can be said that the teaching experience at school greatly impacted their motivation for learning.

Although the results showed that interviewees wanted to learn while working at school, they were too busy. As guided by the Ministry of Education (MEXT), the reform of working practices at schools is now undergoing to improve the business of teachers. This reform is expected to bring more opportunities to teachers who want to keep learning while teaching at school and increase the number of teachers who can do it soon.

#### 5. Conclusion

This study conducted an interview survey of the graduates who were elementary school teachers, and the results showed that they felt the effectiveness of learning about early childhood education at university. However, the interviewees in this study were teachers with five years or less of teaching experience. So, a further study needs to survey teachers with a broader range of teaching experiences, and a comparative survey with a control group is necessary for further research.

#### <References>

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