

“Comprehensive Study on Pre-service Training and In-service Training of Teachers in ‘Next Generation Schools’ and Strengthening of the Functions of Management” (FY2017 - FY2018)

Summary of the Research Report on the Competency Standards of Teachers in the Teacher Training of Other Countries

1. Purpose and summary of the study

(1) Purpose of the survey

With the advent of a knowledge-based society, one major international issue is how to increase the academic ability of all of the students, and the global trend is now heading towards teacher education reform, which aims to raise the competency of the teachers, who are the leaders of this knowledge-based society. In Japan, integrated reform of pre-service teacher training, recruitment and in-service training is also being promoted in order to support professional growth throughout the teacher’s teaching career while valuing the teacher’s expertise. Amid this reform, a movement to develop teacher training indicators with a shared vision of teacher training has been gaining momentum prompted by the amendment of the Act on Special Measures for Public Officers in Education and other laws, and it is expected that one future issue will be the manner in which the indicators are to be used and now the indicators are to be developed. The purpose of this study is to conduct basic research in order to gain an inkling of what the teacher training indicators should be like and how they should be used in Japan through an international comparison survey on how the teacher competency standards in other countries are being utilized, with a particular focus on teacher training.

(2) Summary of the survey

In the investigation of the teacher competency standards in the teacher training of other countries, a survey was conducted by education experts in each country, and a comparative analysis was conducted through conferences and emails. The 10 countries targeted in the survey were the UK, Germany, France, Finland, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Korea and Japan.

[Project Period: FY2017, Research Project Leader: Yuji Saruta (Director of the Department for Elementary and Secondary Education Research)]

2. Summary of the research findings

An analysis was conducted with regard to the utilization of teacher competency standards from the perspective of (1) standards as targets, (2) standards as criteria, and (3) standards as a base point for the education system.

(1) Standards as targets

- Standards as targets function, as a key to education reform, to develop content standards at a national level in the target countries, except for Finland and Korea, and as a means to direct all educational practices in the teacher training.
- Standards as targets also function, through the setting of desired goals, to link diverse educational practices in the spatial axis such as between regions, between universities and related organizations or groups, between teacher training programs, and courses or lectures in a program, or else in the time axis such as recruitment, pre-service teacher and in-service teacher training.
- In terms of the Japanese teacher training indicators, these indicators can be viewed as aiming to construct a grand design of teacher education by improving the content standards spanning the entire teaching career, and connecting the goal of improving teacher competency horizontally and vertically along a time axis and spatial axis.

(2) Standards as criteria

- The standards as criteria function as criteria to judge whether or not the targets have been achieved. Countries such as the UK, Germany, the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore have developed performance standards with which to capture the competencies of aspiring teachers in terms of performance, and one challenge is to devise ways to reflect these results in the program assessments.
- In the case of Japanese teacher training indicators, since these indicators secure the foundational and basic competencies, and have been systemized to enhance the strengths and individuality of the teachers, the standards cannot go as far as being set as criteria.

(3) Standards as a base point for the education system

- The standards as a base point for the education system function as a key to pushing for continuous improvement throughout the PDCA cycle with the aim of improving the education standards. For example, the fact that the standards in the United States have developed from an indirect evaluation of the pre-service teacher training programs to being based on substantive outcomes which attempt to assess the actual competencies of the aspiring teachers is useful as reference.
- In Japan, the focus is on the function of the standards as content standards which are the goal, but whether the function will be expanded in the future to an education system which is based on these standards is a point of interest.

Summary

It is clear that the development of teacher training indicators in Japan which connect pre-service teacher training, recruitment and in-service teacher training looking to the teacher's entire lifelong teaching career and corresponding to the needs of the region is an excellent idea which is useful even from an international perspective. Meanwhile, looking at future trends in other countries, the following direction may be helpful for future use.

- It is important to pay attention to ensure the targets function substantively as targets, and do not fall into standardization. What is required is to promote education and teacher training reform to foster teacher competency and to devise a system design which encourages proactive attempts and enables the development of diverse programs tailored to the needs of the school so as not to be reduced to slogans and litany.
- It is thought that the standards can be developed as criteria in order to assess whether the targets have been achieved. One challenge will be to consider the standards not only as targets but as criteria, and to devise methods of assessment that substantively capture the competencies.
- It is thought possible to expand the system design to an education system that is based on the standards. One suggestion is for the standards to be expanded to a seamless standard education system, which connects recruitment, pre-service teacher training and in-service teacher training to foster teacher competency spanning the teacher's entire teaching career.

In utilizing the teacher training indicators, future expectations will most probably be of building an education system based on the standards, while learning from the know-how of other countries, in order to increase the effectiveness of the integrated reform of teaching careers.