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# Initial Teacher Education for EFL:

Accredited Higher Education Institutions Facing a New Phase

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# Initial Teacher Education for EFL:

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## Abstract

As of April 2014, more than 300 Japanese higher education institutions accredited by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology or MEXT provide the pre-service teacher education for English language. There has been a serious problem about student teachers having practicum trainings at school, particularly those acquiring a teacher's license only or those lacking fundamental skills or aptitude. Presently MEXT requires each institution to maintain or improve its teacher training education, seeking the standardization of teaching credentials. This paper attempts to clarify the dilemmas of initial teacher education programs for EFL at colleges or universities under the MEXT reforms of standardization of teaching credentials, as well as the gap between the MEXT guidelines and the realities that initial teacher education providers and secondary schools are facing from the perspective of a person who has been in charge of English pedagogy at university for nearly 20 years.

## 1 Introduction

MEXT has been shifting towards more stringent policies on accredited higher education institutions in order to guarantee the quality of teacher preparation programs in response to reports of the Educational Personnel Council and the Central Council for Education in the past two decades. Third Report 1999 released by the former council and Report 2006 by the latter council in particular gave a great impact on the accredited institutions providing teacher preparation programs. The Central Council for Education (2006) specifies the problems about initial teacher education (hereafter ITE) providers. Their argument can be summarized as follows:

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- not necessarily sufficient for understanding of the minimum skills and aptitude which student teachers should achieve through teacher preparation programs
- not necessarily sufficient for organizational and curriculum development of teacher preparation programs
- not necessarily sufficient for training for practical teaching skills

Usami (2011) points out that the MEXT reform on ITE could be greater than ever before, referring to the phenomenon of ‘schooling of university’ which is attributed to sharp decline in the standard of university students. Mass higher education is a global phenomenon and there is a dilemma between equity and excellence. Conversely, MEXT has been conducting inspections on ITE providers whether each provider meets the legal standard and maintains the accreditation criteria since 2001. Their inspection regulations have been revised for several times since then and have become more rigorous. MEXT states that a program can be withdrawn when an IET provider demonstrates no substantial compliance with the demands after an inspection.

## 2 Open System for Teacher Certifications and Selecting Teachers for Public Schools

Japan’s current open system for teacher certifications goes back to Education Personnel Certification Act 1949, which was introduced by the U.S. Occupation Government (Grossman, 2004), in response to School Education Act 1947. In those years Japan suffered a severe shortage of qualified teachers because of the aftermath of World War II. Since then the act has been enabled any public or private higher education institution to provide IET if it is satisfied with the requirements by MEXT. In due course of time the system increased the number of accredited IET providers, inflating the number of teaching certificate holders. From the point of view of improving teachers’ quality and quantity, Iwata (2008) argues that some defects can be identified in the ministry principles from the outset.

Under the current system, a teaching certificate is just an eligibility requirement to take a teacher employment examination conducted by a prefectural or municipal board of education, although there are some exceptions for administrative and specialist positions. The examination is considered to be relatively competitive, depending on the level of school, the subject, the municipality, etc. It is not a rare case that a full-time public teacher has taken the examination for several times while working at school as a temporary teacher

before being employed as a full-timer. MEXT (2015a) announced that 58.9% of students who have completed their undergraduate degrees at national normal schools including colleges and faculties of education in March 2014 were employed as full-time public school teachers; so were 73.6% of students who have finished graduate degrees at professional schools of teacher education in the same year. Thus, job market for public school teachers in Japan has been competitive and this trend is expected to continue in the future.

Here is another aspect of the working environment of public school teachers in Japan. According to Kaneko (2014), the number of non-regular teachers has been increased year by year and it accounted for 16.1% of all teachers at public elementary and junior high schools as of the year 2012. This tendency originated in budget cuts by local governments under the Koizumi Administration in the period between 2001 and 2006. As a result, some parts of regular teachers' jobs are taken over by those non-regular teachers. Kaneko points out that securing excellent teachers and appropriate deployment of personnel should be essential for the central government, local authorities and schools. In addition, Teaching and Learning International Survey or Talis (2014) reveals that Japanese teachers in lower secondary education are working in an adverse situation. It shows that Japanese teachers work 54 hours per week on average, which is the longest among the 34 OECD member countries, and most of them cannot afford to participate in professional development activities outside schools due to their heavy workload. Furthermore, there has been a growing number of Japanese teachers suffering from mental illness. According to MEXT (2013a), more than 5,000 teachers took leave because of depression and other mental disorders in the year of 2013. The figure is two times larger than it was a decade ago.

Referring to professional schools of teacher education, which have been strongly promoted for fostering high level professionals and technicians by MEXT, most of them have been suffering from the shortage of applicants since the establishment of each school in 2008. Seventeen out of twenty-five schools including six private institutions could not fill their quota of applicants in the year of 2014. It is noted that the situation has not been improved even though those graduates have an advantage of exemption from the first stage examination conducted by some prefectural or municipal boards of education. As mentioned above, most of the professional graduate schools of teacher education have been suffering from the shortage of applicants, especially new graduates or undergraduate school leavers.

There are a couple of concerns about the professional schools facing a shortage of applicants. One is their students' academic level. Those schools are more likely to accept applicants who are underqualified because of receiving government subsidies. Mitarai,

Matsumoto and Iida (2013) analyze students' motivation for enrollment in the 19 professional schools of teacher education. According to their research, majority of the new graduates or undergraduate school leavers decided to attend the professional school in order to acquire professional knowledge and skills, however, more than 70% of the new graduates who had failed the teacher employment examination entered the schools for some reason that they wanted to change themselves. They think that they would have an advantage to become a teacher, although there is no absolute to guarantee to become a teacher. What if those graduates are selected as applicants who are exempted from the first stage examination and become regular teachers? The examination usually includes written tests in general education and specialized fields and skill tests.

There is also an issue of educational inequality based on family income. MEXT is eager to proceed with the scheme for increasing the number of teachers completing a graduate program like other advanced countries in which teachers with master's degree are common. However, the situation varies from country to country. Finland, for example, is a well-reputed country for its high-quality education. Under the current system in the country, teachers are required to have a master's degree. It normally takes five years to complete: three years for bachelor-level degree and two years for master's degree. No tuition fees are charged, which is quite different from the condition in Japan. As to the tuition fees at national professional school for teacher education in Japan, graduate students will be charged more than 500,000 yen per year (admission fee excluded). In consideration of the cost of graduate school, the present Japanese system may give an unfair advantage to youngsters from families who have more financial resources.

Thus, a complex interaction of factors has been observed in the Japanese educational environment.

### 3 Initial Teacher Education and Transition of Measures by MEXT

MEXT has revised the Courses of Study or national curricula for preschool, primary and secondary schools periodically according to Reports submitted by Central Education Council. English language education seems to have been susceptible to the changes in the society and the time. Revising the Courses of Study affects learning and teaching in school along with pre-service teacher education at higher education institutions. Here is the list of the notable events concerning English language education for the past quarter century.

Table 1

Notable Events in Japan's English Language Education during the Period between 1987 and 2011

year	Course of Study	Notable Events
1987		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JET Programme started</li> </ul>
1989	revised in primary and secondary schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'communicative ability' and 'international understanding' emphasized</li> <li>• back to four lessons per week at junior high school</li> <li>• 'Oral Communication' introduced into senior high school</li> </ul>
1998	revised in primary and lower secondary schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'leeway' education started— Learning Contents reduced by 30%</li> <li>• five-day school week started</li> <li>• evaluation on an absolute scale introduced</li> </ul>
1999	revised in higher secondary school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• course titles and classification of high school English changed</li> </ul>
2000		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Period for Integrated Studies introduced into primary and secondary schools</li> <li>• 'English as an official second language' proposed by the premier's private advisory organ</li> </ul>
2001		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MEXT 'Practical Handbook for Elementary School English Activities' published</li> </ul>
2002		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Strategic Plan to Cultivate 'Japanese with English Abilities' released by MEXT</li> <li>• The Super English Language High School Programme or SELHi Programme started</li> <li>• 'English language education' R&amp;D primary schools appointed by MEXT</li> </ul>
2006		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a listening comprehension test added to 'English' exam by The National Center for University Entrance Examinations</li> </ul>
2008	revised in primary and lower secondary schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one lesson for foreign language communication activities per week for 5th and 6th graders started</li> <li>• four lessons for a foreign language (English) class</li> </ul>

		per week for all grades at junior high school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'leeway' education ended</li> </ul>
2009	revised in higher secondary school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Communication English I' became compulsory at senior high school</li> <li>• 'Teaching English through English' at senior high school demanded by MEXT</li> <li>• The Super English Language High School Programme or SELHi Programme ended</li> </ul>
2011		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foreign Language Communication Activities for 5th and 6th graders became compulsory</li> </ul>
2014		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Super Global High School or SGH Programme started</li> </ul>

Source: JACET SIG on English Language Education (ed.) (2012) *Atarashii Jidai no Eigoka Kyoiku no Kiso to Jissen—Seicho suru Eigo Kyoshi o Mezashite (Basic and Practical English Pedagogy in the New Era—for Self-developing EFL Teachers)*, Sanshusha

Obviously, nothing is more influential on Japan's foreign language education than the 1989 Course of Study, which placed an emphasis on developing students' communicative ability. MEXT explains that it was in response to internationalization and the information society. In fact Japan overtook West Germany as the second largest economy in the world in 1968 and strengthened its global position in the 1970s and 1980s. Under the circumstances, there sprang up a lot of criticism about English language education from various fields around 1970s. One of the most memorable things was a proposal for reform on foreign language education submitted to Policy Affairs Research Council of Liberal Democratic Party by Wataru Hiraizumi, then a House of Councillors legislator in 1974. He claims that there has been no progress in foreign language education in Japan because of inefficient teaching methods with too much focus on entrance examinations. His proposal for reform was that around 5% of the entire population should attain a high level of practical English proficiency in Japan. Shortly afterwards, it triggered a debate whether English language education should aim at 'practical' abilities or 'comprehensiveness' (Hiraizumi & Watanabe, 1975).

Since 1987 when The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme or the JET Programme, the team teaching between a Japanese teacher of English (JTE) and an assistant language teacher (ALT) has become common in English classrooms at secondary school in Japan. However, there has been a controversial issue of the ALT's raison d'être

from the beginning. Being different from English Program in Korea or EPIK, which is more successful in English language education, the JET Programme had started to require no TEFL/TESOL/CELTA of ALTs because the original purpose of the program was not for promoting foreign language education. It was related to a kind of solution to trade friction between Japan and the United States (McConnell, 2000). Anti-Japanese sentiment, so-called Japan bashing, peaked in the 1980s. It is no wonder that there have been large number of youngsters with no teaching qualifications employed as an ALT and their quality is different from person to person. Accordingly, it is even more challenging for student teachers to conduct classes as the 'main' teacher and co-teach with such an ALT. In addition, CRS Report for Congress (2009) states that "the Japan-U.S. friction decreased in recent years" (qtd. in Embassy of the United States in Japan, U.S.-Japan Relations), however, the JET Programme has never been reconsidered. On the contrary, MEXT (2014) decided to increase the number of ALTs in anticipation of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games slated for the year of 2020.

Furthermore, since 2002 when 'the Periods for Integrated Studies' were introduced into the national curriculum, foreign language activities, particularly English language activities have been conducted as part of international understanding in a large number of primary schools, which led to the necessity to ease the primary-junior high school transition in EFL learning. MEXT introduced compulsory Foreign Language Communication Activities for fifth and sixth grade in primary education in 2011. Currently it is even more important for secondary school teachers to understand how English language activities are conducted at primary schools.

Referring to upper secondary education, MEXT introduced the Super English Language High School or SELHi Programme in 2002 and the Super Global High School or SGH Programme in 2014. According to MEXT (2011), a total of 169 senior high schools were engaged in pioneering curriculum developments in the former program from 2002 through 2009. Each of these schools displayed its original approach to English education for the three-year duration of the project. The latter program has started with 54 schools as a SGH and 56 schools as a SGH Associate, aiming at developing innovative curriculum to foster capable leaders in the global society (MEXT, 2015b). The government will grant a subsidy up to an annual maximum of 16 million yen to each SGH for the five-year duration of the project.

Thus, Japanese foreign language education has been transformed one after another under the pressure from multiple fields including business, industry, diplomacy, etc. MEXT is likely to hasten the reforms, which causes confusion and apprehension to school teachers.



Particularly, introducing foreign language communication activities at primary school has been criticized by some specialists in linguistics and English pedagogy. Erikawa, Saito, Torikai, Ohtsu and Uchida (2014) condemn the education authorities for their measures from the academic point of view. Actually, 97.5% of homeroom teachers play the ‘main’ teacher in foreign language communication class as of FY 2010, however, 68.1% of them think that they are not good at teaching English (Benesse, 2010). It is the fact that only 4.7% of homeroom teachers have a certificate for teaching English at secondary school as of December, 2013 (MEXT, 2014). According to Kurosawa (2011), it is not mandatory for all the teachers who have a class of foreign language communication activities to receive a training which is provided by National Center for Teachers’ Development, a prefectural or municipal board of education, and those participate in a workshop or training program offered by a higher education institution or an academic society on their own free will.

#### 4 MEXT Requirements and the Realities of ITE Providers

As mentioned above, MEXT inspects ITE providers to confirm whether their principles, curricula, faculty organizations, facilities and measures are good enough to maintain or improve the quality of pre-service teacher education. The main features of MEXT inspections based upon the Report 2006 submitted by Central Education Council are as follows:

- whether or not an ITE provider clarifies their principles for pre-service teacher education
- whether or not pre-service education is being conducted under the leadership of the president and the dean of each institution
- whether or not an ITE provider makes use of the new compulsory subject, what is called ‘Educational Practice Seminar’ in order to develop and confirm caliber and capability of trainee teachers in their final stage
- whether or not an ITE provider improves the management of on-site trainings in cooperation with schools and boards of education
- whether or not an ITE provider offers careful training, advice and support to individual students through the overall pre-service teacher training program
- whether or not a teacher-training committee under the responsibility of the institution continuously improves the education by involving the faculty members of subjects related to teaching profession and the field of specialization

MEXT publicizes the annual inspection reports on ITE providers on their website. Special attention needs to be paid to their reports because similar matters can be found in

many institutions. To take an example of FY 2013 Report (MEXT, 2013b) along with some matters MEXT pointed out to the university the author works for, we can see obviously what MEXT demands from ITE providers.

Referring to the syllabi, they require more specific descriptions about subjects related to the field of specialization according to the Educational Personnel Certification Law. In addition, the handbook of the Course of Study can be given in the syllabus of the field of specialization as needed, however, the Course of Study ought to be given as well in the syllabus according to MEXT.

Another matter is that ITE providers need to avoid letting student teachers participate in practical trainings at their alma maters as a general rule. MEXT is strongly against on-site trainings at schools which student teachers graduated from because it could be unfair in evaluation of student teachers' work and an ITE provider's attitude towards their old schools. Accordingly, all ITE providers without their affiliated schools are required to explore new local schools which can accept their student teachers in cooperation with a prefectural or municipal board of education. In fact every accredited ITE provider made a partnership with a couple of schools when it applied for the establishment of teacher-training program. But those partner schools cannot accept all student teachers from a single ITE provider. The reality is that Japanese school teachers are overburdened with miscellaneous duties and supervising student teachers is another extra job. Therefore, most schools have accepted their graduates at most, although the situation is changing according to the general rule. Actually ITE providers without their affiliated schools surely struggle to form a partnership with multiple local schools. On the other hand those having affiliated ones are required to provide their student teachers with more on-site school choices by MEXT. In terms of 'nursing care experience', which has become mandatory for prospective trainee teachers to acquire a teaching license of primary and secondary education since 1998, each ITE provider in Ishikawa Prefecture, for example, collectively applies for the arrangement to Ishikawa Council of Social Welfare. If a prefectural or municipal board of education makes such arrangements for ITE providers as social welfare authorities do, student teachers should be allotted to schools more rationally and squarely.

Referring to the teaching and support system, each ITE is expected to take both holistic and analytic approaches by setting up what is called a 'Teacher Training Support Center' where the teaching staff shall be stationed for students all the time. Managing such a center is not necessarily easy for all ITE providers from the view point of finance and human resources. Of course, it is ideal to have more teaching staff involved in a center or committee, however, small or medium sized universities particularly find it difficult to do it.

Those institutions have been curtailing the personnel expenditure under the effect of declining birthrate. On the other hand, larger ones are likely to have difficulties in grasping individual students. At any rate, each ITE provider is undergoing a transitional period in which more cooperation and deeper understanding are needed in the entire faculty.

Since 2010, the 'student progress chart' along with the new mandatory subject, what is called 'Practical Seminar for Teaching Profession' has been introduced by MEXT. Many ITE providers have struggled to create their own chart, referring to the MEXT example which consists of two parts: student academic record for courses related to teaching profession and the field of specification as well as student self-reflection on capability of school teaching staff. Most of them connect it with an online student information system, which basically shows each student's cumulative academic record. Murata (2012) is skeptical that the progress chart would help improving the quality assurance of individual students earning a teaching certificate, pointing out some problems in terms of objectivity and reliability. Some self-reflection items of the MEXT progress chart are only appropriate for students who have finished an on-site training at school. The items should be carefully provided in stages. When it comes to information about students earning a teaching certificate of a foreign language, i.e. English, the following data should be more beneficial:

- their English proficiency test scores
- their contest results such as speech, recitation, drama and debate in English
- their overseas experience including study abroad programs
- their participation in programs for international understanding
- their volunteer activities using English

The author has been tracking the above data by asking individual students to add their own new information on a provided sheet at the beginning of each semester. Such information should be also digitized and shared in the whole university.

MEXT also expects prospective trainee teachers to actively participate in volunteer and other activities at school so that they could appreciate the teaching job and see whether or not they have the aptitude for teaching at early stages at university or college. To this end, each ITE provider is required to build a relationship with a board of education and schools. Some ITE providers have their students involved in a 'school support project' organized by local authorities, others have an internship program in partnership with local schools. Such whole-of-university approaches are more likely to be recommended by MEXT. On the other hand, individual faculty efforts are less likely to be positively evaluated by the ministry.

Apart from ITE providers, there has been an increasing number of prefectural and municipal authorities which offer special pre-teaching training courses to prospective trainee teachers since 2004. Some of them do this for the purpose of discovering and recruiting excellent human resources, others do it for would-be teachers in their municipalities or prefectures. For example, since 2013 Ishikawa Shihan Juku has been offering special pre-teaching training courses for the third year or junior students at university and the first year students at graduate school with the condition that they should plan to take a teacher employment examination administered by Ishikawa Prefecture as the first priority (Ishikawa Prefecture, 2015). The regular program includes lectures, workshop and 80-hour school activities during a period of 10 months. There is no preferential treatment in teacher employment examination for participants in the program, however, they can receive a free training from full-time teachers who are working at public school in the prefecture. Talking with on-site school teachers, the author realizes that they are more likely to show favorable attitude toward student teachers participating in Shihan Juku because they consider those student teachers serious candidates. Such off-campus programs could help lessen the gap between pre-teaching education at university or college and on-site trainings, however, some students participating in Shihan Juku tend to stick obstinately to the way they have learned there. It is better for ITE providers to grasp what they have learned from Shihan Juku through their portfolios.

## 5 On-site Trainings and the Realities

It is of great concern to ITE providers that their student teachers should complete on-site trainings with any trouble. The analysis of the questionnaire to 350 secondary school teachers conducted by JACET SIG on English Education (2006) is extremely useful for those who are in charge of English pedagogy at ITE providers. It reveals the minimum requirements for student teachers prior to on-site trainings. Student teachers must:

- aspire to become a teacher
- have enthusiasm for teaching jobs
- be equipped with the ability to understand students and guide them
- be equipped with common sense
- be able to write a lesson plan
- be able to prepare for a lesson plan
- be able to pronounce English correctly

It is the fact that student teachers with no intent to become a teacher or those who

lack fundamental skills or abilities also participate in on-site trainings, which is annoying to host schools. Under the circumstances, many ITE providers caution that students without an earnest desire to become a teacher ought not to take the teaching training program. Moreover, some ITE providers impose constraints on students taking the teacher-training course by using a general knowledge exam, etc. On the other hand, MEXT suggests that some subjects related to teaching profession be provided for the first year in the curriculum so that more students could take them.

Referring to student teachers of EFL, JACET SIG on English Education considers 'pronouncing English correctly' as an essential item at both junior and senior high schools, although it has reached a ceiling effect. It reminds us how important it is for student teachers to be more conscious of their own English pronunciation.

They also point out a subtle difference in the highest priority requirements between senior high schools and junior high schools: the former requires student teachers to have reading comprehension and grammar skills fully enough to deal with university entrance examinations, while the latter requires them oral skills to convey classes in English and to have a team teaching with an ALT.

Writing a lesson plan is a minimum requirement for student teachers. Most schools accept any lesson plan format as long as it includes key elements while some schools accept only their own format. Furthermore, majority of schools assign student teachers to write a lesson plan in Japanese while a small number of schools assign them in English. Therefore, those who are in charge of English pedagogy courses need to instruct students in the program how to write a lesson plan both in Japanese and English. In addition, apart from a regular session, individual counseling is also necessary because students' misunderstandings about the basics frequently can be found. It should be more enhanced by each ITE provider. Creating a lesson plan is the most important process before the actual delivery of a lesson. Swan (2006) claims that it is essential to link intensive input and output effectively in language teaching and student teachers should bear in mind that point when creating a lesson plan. In mock teaching sessions, as a matter of fact, the author recognizes that some students are likely to fall into spending too much time explaining grammar or sticking to the grammar-translation method, even though other various methods or approaches are introduced in English pedagogy courses. They insist on it because they say they learned English via the method at secondary schools. We cannot deny that all student teachers are more or less influenced by the way they were taught at secondary schools. MEXT (2009) declares that each English subject or class at senior high school in principle should be conducted in English, however, Communicative Language

Teaching or CLT has not been yet pervasive at school. Even after being trained to conduct a class in English at an ITE provider, some student teachers go back to the conventional style, focusing on mainly grammar and translation at on-site school. Obviously, CLT is being implemented at a sluggish pace at least at upper secondary school (Tahira, 2012). In addition, some student teachers find a classroom too crowded to do EFL activities due to restructuring schools in the region; others find a classroom insufficiently equipped with a computer or other electronic apparatus and what is more, some of them must deal with a class having a lack of interest, motivation or discipline. Facing the harsh realities which are quite different from mock teaching sessions at university or college, they lose their way. On the contrary, some student teachers dramatically improve their teaching performance within a few weeks. Furthermore, the number of teaching hours per student teacher varies from school to school. Although there exists such disparity among classes and schools, student teachers need to overcome various difficulties. Otherwise, they are not qualified for such a job according to a teacher at on-site school.

## 6 Findings from Student Teacher Journals

Student teacher journals are extremely valuable for an ITE provider to see what student teachers experience and how they reflect themselves each day during the period of on-site training. The faculty, in particular, teacher-training committee members at an ITE provider usually pay a visit to on-site schools to see how their students are doing. We observe student teachers' demo lessons, and talk to our student teachers, their mentor teachers and principals with limited time. After on-site trainings, student teacher journals are sent back to an ITE provider and circulated among the teacher-training committee members. We learn a lot from written interaction between student teachers and mentor teachers.

Mentor teachers give advice or make suggestions to student teachers from various points of view including pedagogical skills, teaching philosophy, classroom management and attitude. As JACET SIG on English Education points out, English teachers at upper secondary school tend to require more grammatical knowledge from student teachers. Here are some specific examples:

- should v.s. must
- can v.s. be able to~
- get dressed v.s. be dressed
- intransitive verbs v.s. transitive verbs

• participial constructions

Both upper and lower secondary teachers have common advice to student teachers: one is creating more student-centered lessons and another is making complicated concepts simpler.

## 6 Conclusion

Initial teacher education is a series of programs aimed to put theory into practice. Teaching practicum is an essential component of the pre-service teacher education and it is a great opportunity for prospective trainee teachers to experience working at school. Referring to English teaching skills, the author has observed a remarkable growth of some student teachers during on-site trainings even though they did not do well at mock teaching at university. On the other hand, those with relatively high English proficiency do not necessarily show a great progress in their teaching skills during the practical training contrary to expectations. Student teachers' growth is influenced by various factors. Among them, mentor teachers play a vital role in the development of student teachers, however, quality mentoring for student teachers has not been paid much attention in Japan. From the point of view of fostering individual student teachers, this field should be more developed. Quality education requires quality teaching. As mentioned above, there are many issues that need yet to be addressed in on-site schools as well.

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