

A Study on Current Status and Tasks of Evaluation for Early Childhood Teacher's Competence Development in Korea

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the present status and establish tasks of early childhood teacher's competence development in South Korea. The early childhood teacher evaluation for competence development is total assessment system for teachers working with young children in South Korea. For the aim of the study, related literatures and documents were investigated in depth. Current competence development evaluation system for early childhood education teachers in Korea was reviewed and suggested the tasks of evaluation for the future. This research offers ways in which teacher evaluation for competence development could be used as a tool of professional development for early childhood teachers in the future. And the evaluation system could applicable to other countries to develop and establish teacher evaluation system.

Keywords: *Early childhood teacher, Competence development, Evaluation, Korea*

1. Introduction

Contemporary society has been changed to be complicated and compound. It comes from high degree of science and technology, information and communication technology development, and complex awareness of members in a society. Due to the characteristics of these social changes, educational field has required change a lot with the current [1]. Early childhood teacher play an important role in educational field. Recently OECD and many countries have emphasized to produce outstanding individuals for forming the foundation for national development in 21st century and made investments in education increasingly at the same time [2]. OECD puts emphasis on the importance of quality control for early childhood education and care, especially the role of curriculum and teachers [3]. Following this tendency of the world, the Ministry of Education of Korea have developed Nuri curriculum as integrated early childhood education and care. Nuri curriculum refers to national level curriculum and is for any children who are 3 to 5 years old in Korea. That means a great deal in terms of the equality of education opportunity [1].

The Ministry of Education in Korea also has developed early childhood teacher evaluation system for competence development for many years. Most of professionals agree that teacher's characteristics and behaviors are ultimately what contribute most to the quality of early childhood education and its effectiveness for young children and their families [4].

The international early childhood education and care community has emphasized the importance of quality education and care through building up valid and effective quality rating and systems with professional development efforts that support teachers improve

the quality of teaching [5]. A lot of countries have been developed systems for teachers' professional development [6]. Continuing interest in raising qualities in early childhood education, especially in the recent two decades, aids a focus on early childhood teachers' professional development. This state of circumstance is itself largely the result of the aspirations of educational authorities worldwide for improving children's learning through enhancing teaching. It has been underlined that early childhood teachers should be qualified fully for competence to fulfill quality level improvement [7] because teachers are critical factor in learning and development of young children as well as decision quality of education [8]. In particular, the roles and qualities of teachers are of great importance since early childhood education has special features like developmental stage or curriculum and instruction unlike other education level [9]. Thus teachers have to possess their competence to teach and guide appropriately young children. Teacher competences help that teachers could fulfill needs in education and care for young children consistently [10]. Korea's evaluation system for early childhood teacher competence was developed systematically in 2009 and has implemented for the growth of teacher's competence development. The investigation of early childhood teacher evaluation system would offer basic data and new perspectives for development of early childhood teacher competence. The research would be able to suggest significant implications on teacher evaluation system of many different countries in future days. Therefore, the aim of this study is to figure out present situation of early childhood teacher evaluation for competence development in South Korea and suggest tasks for tomorrow through in-depth literature review.

The research questions for this study are as follows: How is current status and task on early childhood education teacher evaluation for competence development in South Korea?

How is the history of early childhood education teacher evaluation for competence development?

What are the contents to establish early childhood teacher evaluation for competence development?

What are the problems and tasks to establish early childhood teacher evaluation for competence development?

2. The History of Early Childhood Teacher Evaluation for Competence Development

The teacher evaluation for competence development in Korea has implemented since 2005 unlike existing efficiency and performance-based pay for personnel administration. The aim of teacher evaluation is to improve teachers' professionalism and to encourage the communication with consumers of education. In early childhood education field, the assessment was test-operated since 2009 according to promotion plan for education advancement by Korea government. The evaluation system based on promotion plan for professional development of teacher in primary and second education and reflects special features and situations of each kindergarten [11].

Ministry of education Korea designated three national kindergartens affiliated with national university as standing research schools for 2011 and then found ways to establish teacher evaluation system by setting conditions for desirable operation of assessment, rational evaluation enforcement, application plan for the evaluation. For 2012-2015, the teacher evaluation system has test-operated gradually depend on class size. The evaluation carried out for national and public independent kindergartens in 2012 and for national and public kindergartens which have three classes and voluntary private kindergartens in 2013. In 2015, the teachers of whole national and public kindergarten and voluntary private kindergarten were evaluated by stages. In addition,

policy research for recognition of problems and looking of improvement plans was paired with the assessment. Until now, the government has continued researches on specific reviews and reformation of teacher evaluation system. Table 1 shows the process of early childhood teacher evaluation for competence development.

Table 1. The Process of Early Childhood Teachers Evaluation for Competence Development

Period	Progression
Nov. 2009	Test-operated kindergarten by promotion plan for early childhood education advancement
Mar.2011-Feb.2012	Operation of three national kindergartens as standing research schools
Mar.2012-Feb.2013	Test-operated public independent kindergartens
Mar.2013-Feb.2014	Test-operated 958 national, public, voluntary private kindergartens
Mar.2014-Dec.2014	Test-operated 1,911 national, public, voluntary private kindergartens
Mar.2015-Dec.2015	Test-operated 2,696 national, public, voluntary private kindergartens

3. The Contents of Early Childhood Teacher Evaluation for Competence Development

The purpose of the evaluation for early childhood teachers' competence development is to improve the quality of early childhood education through professional development. The object of evaluation is for whole national and public kindergarten teachers and voluntary private kindergarten teachers. The types of evaluation are self-evaluation, peer rating, and parent satisfaction research. Peer rating evaluation is implemented by director, assistant director, head teacher, teacher each other. Parents participate in online satisfaction survey for kindergarten education.

The areas of evaluation are overall educational activities of teachers like guidance of learning and guidance of life, support for instruction and study activities, and management of kindergarten. However, the district office of education in each province or city can add contents such as job performance ability or teaching personality. Table 2 shows the contents of teacher evaluation.

Table 2. The Contents of Early Childhood Teacher Evaluation for Competence

Division	Area	Factor	Indicator
Head teacher	Instruction, Research, Support for Activities, Learning guidance, Life guidance.	Support for learning, Support for training and research, Learning guidance, Life guidance.	Class consulting etc. 6 indicators, Learning guidance, Life guidance.
Teacher	Learning guidance, Life guidance.	Preparing class, Implementing class, Assessment and utilizing, Counseling and information, Prevention and guidance for behavior problem, Guidance for life habit and personality.	Establishing strategies for instruction and learning etc. 8 indicators, Grasp individual young children's characteristics
Nurse teacher	Life guidance	Health enhancement for young children Health and medical service	Basic health plan etc. 3 indicators, Care for emergent

			patients etc. 3 indicators
Vice-director Director	Kindergarten management	Lesson plan, Supervision, Personnel management, Facility and Budget(except vice-director)	Kindergarten management and administration etc. 8 indicators for director and 6 indicators for vice- director.

The opinions of participant teachers for evaluation questions are gathered and then are opened to teachers in advance. The introduction for educational activities of teachers should be presented to peer teachers and parents. The methods of teacher evaluation for professional development are used Likert five point scales and free narrative description. Likert rating scale has example to choose such as very excellent, excellent, neutral, insufficient, and very insufficient in peer evaluation and very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neutral, somewhat satisfied, very satisfied in parent satisfaction research.

4. The Problems and Tasks of Early Childhood Teacher Evaluation for Competence Development

The problems for teacher evaluation were pointed out from the education field in process of review. The problems are that it is overlapping assessment due to efficiency rating system and performance-related pay, it is less reliable because of different evaluation for one teacher, and it is done on the basis of seniority.

In Korea, as the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development announced the evaluation of teacher competence development with the new teacher evaluation system in 2005, the evaluation of kindergarten teachers began to be applied to teachers of public kindergartens. However, the evaluation of teachers in the public kindergarten does not reflect the specialization and speciality inherent in early childhood education as a part of evaluation of elementary, middle and high school teachers. The evaluation of teachers in private kindergartens is still at a formal level, requiring the provision of support measures to contribute to the enhancement of the professionalism of teachers [12]. At present, kindergarten teacher evaluation is rarely performed. The current teacher competence evaluation aims to diagnose and improve the students' own abilities themselves, but it is difficult to achieve objective evaluation due to the subjectivity of the principal, principal and fellow teachers. It is a difficult reality that teachers' professional development can be achieved through teacher evaluation [13].

In fact, teachers who participate in the evaluation of teacher ability report difficulties in overworking. In the United States, both public and private institutions are encouraging teachers to participate in performance assessments, economic, emotional support, and mentoring. The issue of controversy and concern has been raised in the implementation of the evaluation of teacher competence development. In particular, the effective use of the results based on the evaluation results of the teacher ability development is very important as the part directly related to the professional growth of the teacher, which is the purpose of evaluation of the teacher ability development evaluation. In other words, how to systematically develop a customized program according to the evaluation results and provide it to the teacher will influence the successful operation of the evaluation of teacher ability development [14].

The specific problems of early childhood teacher evaluation for competence development are as follows. First, teacher evaluators are principle, vice-principle, fellow teachers, and parents. However, a principle of elementary school evaluates kindergarten teachers in the case of a kindergarten attached to elementary school without an exclusive

principle for kindergarten. It is difficult to be objective and reliable evaluation and a new and careful review of evaluator selection and evaluation methods should be undertaken. It is important that teachers who play an active role in educational activities have a proper awareness of the evaluation of teacher competence development. Second, the approach to children which is the subject of education is too ambiguous. The ultimate goal of teacher evaluation should be for young children, but the evaluation system assesses teachers to be inclined to teaching. Third, whether the normative nature of teacher development ability evaluation can help to enhance the professionalism of the teacher. When teacher evaluation and development evaluation is enacted and implemented at the school site, evaluation of teacher ability development plays a normative and administrative role beyond the instrumental role.

The teacher evaluation should provide the opportunity for the teacher to develop their potential ability, to improve the teachers' ability by enhancing the professionalism of the teacher, and the growth of the teacher should be the key [15]. It might be instigated ranking of early childhood teachers and the evaluation system makes the teachers to feel competitive for other teachers. Therefore, it should be offered that a more effective approach to early childhood teacher evaluation. The teacher assessment system makes teachers are diagnosed for professional level of role and function on guidance of learning, educational life, and instruction and activities. And the evaluation let directors and assistant directors are diagnosed for kindergarten management. The staffs in kindergarten could create foundation for professional development by smooth sharing of members' mutual experiences. It is also enables them support planning and enforcement of in-service training according to for evaluation result. Kindergarten teachers have big autonomy by their judgment on choice and organization of educational content. Early childhood teachers have an important influence on learning children unlike teachers in upper school level. The teachers who have professionalism is needed and for quality education. The professional development has to improve continually for development of early childhood education.

The limitations of professional development were realized and discussed by the early childhood teachers. Some teachers raised issues that tests needed to be gave up in evaluations for teaching young children and replaced by open class, while other teachers said that it was just those open class which restrained them from focusing on young children because the teaching lessons were planned based on the teachers' needs to give an impression to their investigators.

5. Discussion and Implication

The purpose of this research was to comprehend current status of evaluation system for early childhood teacher competence development and offer future tasks for improvement. The evaluation for early childhood teachers' competence development in South Korea has been developed and carried out through the process of application and revision.

Competence development is facilitated teaching and learning experiences that are transactional and designed to support the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions as well as the applicable of this knowledge in practice. It is also the key to build a high-quality early childhood education program [16]. The key components of professional development include: the characteristics and contexts of the learners, content, the organization and facilitation of learning experiences. The competences and skills of early childhood teachers should be improved and valued to a greater degree that actual competence. Early childhood teachers' professional development is a continuum of learning and support activities to prepare individuals for work with and on behalf of young children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work.

These processes lead to improvements in the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of early childhood professionals [17]. Enhanced early learning outcomes require that early childhood teachers have the skills, knowledge, and competencies needed to promote learning and development [18]. A well-designed teacher evaluation system for early childhood teachers should provide impetus to improve teaching practice and teacher-child interactions, increase child growth and learning, and inform the professional learning opportunities that early childhood teachers are provided [19].

The investigation of this study about the evaluation system of Korean early childhood teacher competence would offer the implications on early childhood teacher evaluation in other different countries. Because teaching is much more than tasks and involves values or assumptions concerning learning, education, and society, the concept of teacher competence may resonate differently in other national contexts.

Teachers' continuous professional development is highly relevant both for improving educational performance and effectiveness and for enhancing teachers' commitment, identity, and job satisfaction. Although teachers are interconnected with the characteristics and constraints of specific educational contexts and national education systems [20], teachers' competences have powerful effects on children's achievement [21].

To sum up, there is an advanced early childhood education curriculum that provides varied experiences for children regarding education. If designed and implemented well, evaluation for professional development can effect systemic improvements in early childhood programs and systems [19]. The implementation of the teacher evaluation systems in early childhood education could catalyze the development and adoption of more comprehensive education.

Based on this study's results, it could be implied that the features of kindergarten curriculum implementation in the United States could be applicable to Korean educational circumstance by change appropriately. If the applicable cases in Korean early childhood educational settings implement, the better curriculum would be provided and improve the quality of education. It is hoped that the study would be able to research implement curriculum to children in many age groups and in many different countries in the future. The significant goals of the educational authorities have been to develop competence development policies which provide early childhood teachers with guides to their learning and development and the frameworks within which teachers by degrees improve their ability with young children.

The goals of competence development of early childhood teachers are couched in terms of teachers' responsibilities for making effective changes in improving their professional work with children. The teachers are asked not only professional knowledge for young children, but also relationships with various other fields to connect with parents and local communities [22]. Therefore, the findings of this research offered that systems and opportunities of competence development provided effective means by which to help professional identities and responsibilities of early childhood teachers in the research.

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