

# A proposal for the way of supporting systems for young teachers with two to five years' experience who work in elementary regular schools to teach children with special educational needs

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**Abstract** The present study is to investigate the actual conditions of supporting needs in which young teachers with two to five years' experience require to educate children with special educational needs. Furthermore, based on our results, it is aimed to examine the supporting system fulfilling for young teachers. 980 young teachers located in the metropolitan area have received our survey. 311 young teachers have answered the questionnaire (31.8%) . The length of their career was the average of 3.20-year (SD=1.07) . According to the findings, it is showed that young teachers need supporting system of how to teach for children with problems in learning aspect and developmental disabilities. Moreover, it is also showed that young teachers need collaborating experts in developmental psychology. Therefore, a challenge is (1) to develop a training system for teachers to more appropriately teach children with special educational needs, and (2) to prepare educational internships for students in teacher training courses to support children with special educational

needs in regular schools.

**Keywords:** young teachers with two to five years' experience, children with special educational needs, supporting systems, intellectual disabilities

## Introduction

There is a large gap between the competence of novice teachers who learned in university as students and the capability which is required in actual educational field. Therefore, the main purpose for the training of novice teachers is to shrink this gap as soon as possible and to acquire competence in coping with a problem taking place in educational situations (Ito & Ishikawa, 2013) . Training program for novice teachers in Japan has begun in 1989. Now, the training program referred as in-school training and the out-of-school training have carried out about 300 hours and 25 days in a year respectively. Since 2003, one guidance teacher has been arranged for four novice teachers. However, in the real work situations, even if trained, many novice teachers ask for a rest due to the heavy amount of tasks for school (Mukuta, 2007) . These seem that they suffer a situation in which the acquired knowledge is not demonstrated appropriately.

It is able to improve their teaching skills through the training as its part of education courses from the second year on. But, the teaching support focused on bullying and truancy (children who have experienced long-term absence) is reduced compared to the first year which eventually depends on a great amount of manpower of teachers. In addition, it is estimated, in regular classroom of elementary school,

those 7.7% children who enrolled in special educational needs without intellectual disability (Ministry of Education, 2013) . For teaching children with special educational needs, it is required that the most appropriate teaching skills considering the individual characteristics of them. It is very difficult for young teachers who two to five years' experience to adequately for support to children with special educational needs. Moreover, it might be considering that the heavy office work for young teachers would lead them to the high risk of leaving their jobs (Kohashi, 2013) . It is also shown that younger teachers have more stress than novice teachers have (Mukuta, 2007) . In 2013, 914 young teachers who work for elementary school aged 24 to 28 have left his/her job. Within the teachers who have left his/her job for elementary school, 356 suffered from mental disorder (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Government of Japan, 2014) .

Nevertheless, in our country, it is unclear that what kind of support the young teachers need for educating children with special educational needs. Therefore, the present study was to investigate the actual conditions of supporting needs for young teachers who work in elementary school educating children with special educational needs. Also, based on the analysis of our research, we discuss the appropriate way of supporting systems for young teachers in Japan.

## Method

### Participants

980 young teachers with two to five years' experience for public elementary regular school located in the metropolitan area have received the survey.

## **Investigation period and recovery process**

From July to August in 2013, self-reporting questionnaires with unsigned format had sent via mailing.

### **Item contents**

For the present study, 4 types of questionnaire are used. The items consisted of (1) the area in which young teachers seek supporting, (2) experiences in teaching of children with special educational needs and provided assists of how to teach them, (3) supporters who are necessary for teaching children with special educational needs, and (4) further supporting systems that young teachers require. In addition, open ended question about the current issues of teaching children with special educational needs was used.

### **Analysis**

Simple aggregated numbers for the answers of multiple-choice questions were used. The results of open ended question were classified using the KJ method (affinity diagram) .

## **Results**

### **Recovery rate and characteristic of participants**

311 young teachers with two to five years' experience answered our questionnaire, the response rate of 31.8%. Young teachers' careers have been showed with average of 3.20 -year (SD=1.07) .

**Multiple-choice questions:**

**(1) Supporting area for young teachers to teach children with special educational needs**

Most of young teachers (n=287, 92.3%) asked for the support of how to teach education courses. 274 young teachers (88.1%) needed how to support for children with special educational needs. Classroom management was in the third rate (n=273, 87.8%) (Table1) .

**(2) Experiences in teaching of children with special educational needs and provided assists of how to teach them**

Most young teachers met children with learning problems (n=304, 97.7%) and children with developmental disabilities in the second place (n=272, 87.5%) .

Yong teachers felt it was children with learning problems that seek assists for learning the most (n=292, 93.9%) . Children with developmental disabilities followed second (n=279, 89.7%) (Table2) .

Table1. Supporting area in which young teachers require

	A great deal		Quite a lot		Only a little		Not at all	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
teaching education courses	154	49.5	133	42.8	21	6.8	2	0.6
teaching children with special educational needs	117	37.6	157	50.5	37	11.9	0	0.0
classroom management	130	41.8	143	46.0	35	11.3	2	0.6

Table2. Experience in teaching of children with special educational needs and supportive needs for their education

	experience				A great deal		Quite a lot		Only a little		Not at all	
	yes		no		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
	n	%	n	%								
learning problems	304	97.7	4	1.3	161	51.8	131	42.1	16	5.1	0	0.0
developmental disabilities	272	87.5	36	11.6	164	52.7	115	37.0	22	7.1	0	0.0
daily life problems	267	85.9	40	12.9	129	41.5	141	45.3	30	9.6	2	0.6
interpersonal problems	249	80.1	57	18.3	118	37.9	152	48.9	29	9.3	0	0.0

### (3) Supporters who are necessary for instructing children with special educational needs

It was showed that young teachers thought it would be more helpful if they have the opportunity of cooperating with experts to support children with special educational needs (n=223, 71.7%) . It was also showed that teachers in charge of the same grade or proximity grade would become helpful supporters for young teachers (n=180, 57.9%) . 174 young teachers (55.9%) felt that nurse -teachers would be supportive (Table3) .

### (4) Further supporting systems that young teachers require

Young teachers asked other teachers working in different schools and experts for advice the most (n=255, 82.0%) . On the other hand, it was only 185 teachers who required the internet supporting systems (59.4%) shown in Table4.

Table3. Collaborators necessary for the education of children with special educational needs

	A great deal		Quite a lot		Only a little		Not at all	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
experts	80	25.7	143	46.0	76	24.4	11	3.5
teachers of the same grade or proximity grade	101	32.5	79	25.4	92	29.6	39	12.5
nurse-teachers	68	21.9	106	34.1	100	32.2	37	11.9

Table4. Further supporting systems

	A great deal		Quite a lot		Only a little		Not at all	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
advices from experts	105	33.8	150	48.2	50	16.1	6	1.9
Internet supporting	48	15.4	137	44.1	111	35.7	15	4.8

**Open ended question:**

**Current issues of teaching children with special educational needs**

Table6 shows numbers of young teachers who answered the open ended question (57 answered, 18.3%) . Most young teachers seek for more understanding and improvement of other teachers insight into teaching children with special educational needs (n=13, 22.8%) . According to the gathered description, it was demonstrated that the issue required for the supporting systems was to raise awareness of sharing methods for teaching and each characteristics of children with special educational needs. Moreover, strengthen collaboration with experts was necessary for supporting young teachers (n=12, 21.1%) . In order to take continuous experts' advice about teaching methods for each case of children, young teachers required the way of creating more supportive and effective connection between experts and teachers; see Table5.

**Discussion**

Our findings indicated that teach education courses was the main area in which young teachers with two to five years' experience need support to teach children with special educational needs. This

Table5. Current issues on teaching for children with special educational needs

	n	%
to improve understanding of the other teachers	13	22.8
strengthening collaboration with experts	12	21.1
reduction of duties busy	8	14.0
relationship creating with parents	6	10.5
other	9	15.8

is consistent with the previous research (Ito & Ishikawa, 2013) . Moreover, most young teachers met children with problem in learning aspect. It is also showed that young teachers need supporting system of how to teach for children with developmental disabilities. Okumoto (2010) presented the teachers' stress corresponded to teaching those children. Therefore, it is showed that young teachers need collaborating experts in clinical developmental psychology. In fact, the qualification of teachers' certificate of regular schools in Japan are not compulsory the credit on supporting method for children with special educational needs. And so, a challenge for the future, in addition to the collaboration with experts, is to develop a training system for teachers to more appropriately teach children with special educational needs.

Moreover, heavy office work prevents trainings for support which lead to inadequate sharing information about children with special educational needs among teachers. To improve this problem, it is proposed that educational internships be implemented to support those children in regular schools. Students in teacher training courses who support them need to continue for several years under the instruction of school teachers. If this is achieved, the following advantages will occur. It will: (1) reduce the work load of teachers, (2) increase the teaching credentials of college students, and (3) improve children' s adaptation to school. With regard to future challenges, in order to provide more effective support for children with special educational needs, a more specialized curriculum for college students participating in educational internships must be developed (Miura & Otomo, 2015) .

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