OECD Initial Teacher Preparation study

Promising practice

Annual reporting of data on initial teacher education programmes in Japan

Country category: Japan
Teacher education pathway category(ies): Quality
Stakeholder category(ies): researcher; teacher educator
Date of publication: March 2018
This case study describes a “Promising practice” drawn from an OECD review of Initial Teacher Preparation in Japan from 5-9 September 2016.

The OECD Review Team – Hannah von Ahlefeld (OECD), Francesca Caena (University of Venice), Kjetil Helgeland (OECD) and Danielle Toon (Learning First) – identified a number of “Promising practices” in each country. These practices may not be widespread or representative, but seen in the context of other challenges, they represent a strength or opportunity to improve the country’s initial teacher preparation system – and for other countries to learn from them.

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgement of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org.

Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d’exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.
Promising practice 7.
Annual reporting of data on initial teacher education programmes in Japan

Context

A number of systems publish data about their initial teacher education (ITE) programmes. These data can be input or process measures such as number of enrolments and number of courses offered by the university, or it can be output measures such as certification results, employment outcomes, and candidate and principal feedback surveys. Often, data are collected and published as part of university accreditation and other accountability requirements (Darling-Hammond and Lieberman, 2012) (Tatto, 2015).

While there is some research evidence to suggest that increased accountability measures may contribute to improving the quality and outcomes of initial teacher preparation, the conditions under which this happens are not straightforward. Using data like employment outcomes, for example, may not be the best measure of programme quality because many factors beyond the programme influence the employment outcomes of ITE graduates (Tatto et al., 2016).

Which data are ITE programmes in Japan required to publish?

All universities in Japan are required to publish an annual report that contains data about ITE programmes, financial information, student enrolment and graduates’ employment destinations (Figure 1) for each ITE programme, for graduates in education faculties and those studying in the open system. Universities indicate whether these graduates are employed as teachers, public officers, continue their graduate studies, or secure other employment (Figure 2).
A number of universities report on their partnerships and projects such as dates of meetings with local Boards of Education; public forums (e.g. English Education Forum); activities targeting schools (e.g. in-school research support programme); activities targeting children (e.g. support project for high school students to become a teacher); joint research activities; professional development opportunities offered (e.g. special needs teachers); and lists of affiliated schools (Tokyo Gakugei University, 2017).

As these data are published and used by prospective students to select in which ITE programme to enrol, universities have a strong incentive to improve their programmes to ensure their graduates do well in the Teachers’ Employment Examination and thus secure employment as a teacher (see Promising Practice 5. Hiring the best teachers: The role of the Teachers’ Employment Examination in Japan). If a large proportion of graduates do not do well in the exam and thus do not secure employment, the reputation of the university’s ITE programmes is greatly diminished. For example, Tokyo Gakugei University responded to its graduates’ results from the Teachers’ Employment Examination by setting a goal for 2004-10 that 60% of graduates would progress through the hiring exam process (Iwata, 2004[5]).
Figure 2. Careers after graduation from undergraduate initial teacher education programmes in Tokyo Gakugei University (2016)

Source: Tokyo Gakugei University, 2016.
Why is it a strength?

The OECD Review Team in its review of Japan from 5-8 September 2016 concluded that the publication of ITE programme data is a strength in that:

- All ITE programmes must publish an annual report that contains information about their courses, financials, student enrolment and employment destinations, which makes it easy for prospective teacher candidates and other stakeholders to identify the universities that are more successful in preparing graduates for the Teachers’ Employment Examination and thus securing employment for their graduates.

How could it be improved?

The OECD Review Team also noted that:

- There are no formal structures to enable schools to provide more detailed feedback to universities to help improve their ITE programmes (e.g. current issues facing the school that should be covered or improved in training). The Ministry is working to improve collaboration between universities and Boards of Education through Joint Councils, so that universities have detailed, contemporary and practice-based information to improve their courses.

- There is currently no way to assess which universities are producing the highest quality teachers across all competencies required for teaching. For example, the Ministry could introduce a survey of principals to collect more nuanced information about graduate performance (as opposed to the content covered in the Teachers’ Employment Examination). The Ministry is working on a teacher competency framework to help address this concern.

For more information


Iwata, Y. (2004), Recent Trends on Teacher Education Reform in Japan.

