

Assessing Curriculum Alignment in Japanese
Elementary English Education

教科・領域教育専攻

言語系コース(英語)

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The purpose of this study is to investigate whether or not the elementary school English curriculum in Japan is aligned from the course of study to material, to classroom practice to evaluation. There are two points to consider. Does the teaching practice reflect the course of study? How does the course of study align with texts, teaching practice and assessment and evaluation?

Chapter 1 simply overviews the present study. It explains some reasons why this study is needed. It proposes the research questions based on some issues about curriculum alignment in Japanese elementary English education. It also introduces the conceptual framework of how to carry out this study by aligning different segments of a curriculum.

In Chapter 2, the researcher first revises second language acquisition theory and presents a communicative language approach for young learners. Understanding different theorists' different views on second language acquisition and how young learners think and learn is essential for the teachers as well as the curriculum instructors. Then, the term curriculum is examined and defined. It also presents the components of curriculum and its interrelationship. Understanding main components of curriculum and its interrelationship is a great help in developing curriculum as well as in aligning curriculum. Finally, elementary English education in Japan is briefly presented. Japanese elementary English curriculum was derived from the second language acquisition theory, accelerating globalization, CLT (communicative language teaching) and CEFR (common European framework of reference for languages).

Chapter 3 presents methodology of this study. Data collection methods, process of data collection and data analysis are detailed in this chapter. All the data were collected and analyzed collaboratively based on the theoretical framework proposed in Chapter I.

In Chapter 4, the results and discussions of analysis of the course of study, textbooks and teaching practice are discussed with the use of tables and graphs. This chapter provides evidence that elementary teachers in Japan are trying to use

the CLT approach in their teaching as much as possible and adjusting the teaching practice to the curriculum and textbooks.

In Chapter 5, foreign language activity- foreign language goals prescribed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Technology (MEXT) in the new course of study guidelines are presented as a “Can-Do list”. The curriculum can be evaluated with respect to theory and also by examining reflections and material created by both students and teachers.

As a conclusion, the final chapter summarizes how well the course of study guidelines, texts, teaching practice and assessment and evaluation are aligned to complete the whole curriculum.