

Current Status & Future of the Teacher Education Systems in Korea

Youngman Lee^{a*}

^aDepartment of Education, Chinju National University of Education

369-3, Jinyangho-ro, Jinju, Gyeongnam 52673, Korea

*ymlee@cue.ac.kr

ABSTRACT

Teacher education system in Korea has at least three characteristics. ① Separated education system for elementary school and secondary school teachers; National University of Education(NUE:教育大學校) is for elementary school teachers and Teacher's College(TC:師範大學) of comprehensive university is for middle and high school teachers. Formal teacher certificate can be taken only at a few department of Graduate School of Education(GSE:教育大學院) of TC. ② Undergraduate-based; Primary and secondary teachers are basically educated at the undergraduate level. Some departments of GSE have the teacher certificate courses, but the issued number of teacher certificate is decreasing. ③ Selection-test; To be a public school teacher, the candidates should pass the teacher selection test. But the competition rate of the secondary school is much higher than that of elementary school.

From long ago Teacher's College has been opening Ph.D. or Ed.D. courses which contributed to teachers reeducation and academic studies related to school education. Although teacher's university for six years (2+4 years) was proposed, recently Ed.D. courses(GSTP: 教育專門大學院) were started at two NUES.

When an in-service teacher get a master/doctorate degree, he/she can get additional points needed for promotion or professional position, etc.. The kind of teacher reeducation programs are provided at the level of in-school, regional and provincial education offices, and the ministry level.

Keyword: Teacher Education System, Undergraduate and Graduate School

Various policies about reformation of teacher education systems have been suggested every time a new government took over in Korea(MEHRD, 2006; Kim, I. K., 2009; Oh, 2004; Lee, 2009; SKTE, 2004a, 2004b). Since discussions over the reformation are mostly going through by the government, it tends to take on political intentions rather than rational agreements(Shin, 2009). But recently teacher education departments are contracting due to decreasing number of students and over-issuing of teacher certificates. This article introduces structure and features of teacher education systems of Korea.

1. Features of teacher education systems in Korea

Universities for teacher education systems are classified in two types: special-purpose and open. In Korea elementary teacher education is special-purpose type, and middle school teacher education is operating in a compromise type between special-purpose and open type. That is, elementary teacher education is charged by special-purpose college – NUEs, College of Ed.(Jeju NU), Dept. of Ed.(KNUE), Dept. of Elementary Ed.(Ehwa Women Univ.). But middle school teacher education is operating in compromise system, that is, a compromise between TC(special-purpose type) and various courses for teacher certificate & GSE of general Universities(open type). Under this background, features of Korean teacher education system to understand present state can be summarized to 3 kinds – **Separative, Focusing on undergraduates, and Excessive competition for Selection Exam.**

1.1 Separative

‘Separative’ speaks of dualistic structure which strictly separate targeting type forming around NUE or TC, and opening type operating in departments of education in general universities(Table 1). There was a time in the past that elementary teacher can become a middle school teacher through examination, but currently the departments operating elementary and middle school teacher education systems are strictly separated. Therefore ‘Separative’ is the main feature of Korean teacher education system compared to foreign systems.

Table 1. *Teacher Education System of Korea*

year	Elementary teachers	Secondary teachers		
7	(Graduate school of Education)	Graduate school of Education		
6				
5				
4	10 NUEs	Teacher's Colleges	師範係 (Dept. of OO Ed.)	Courses for teacher certificate
3	SOE of Jeju NU			
2	KNUE			
1	Ehwa Womens Univ.			

The GSE is established individually in elementary teacher education department and middle school teacher education department. But GSEs of NUEs have fundamental rule of permission only to current elementary school teacher or those who possesses teacher certificate, do not grants teachers' certificate. Only that the teacher who has 2nd class

teaching certificate gets master's degree in college of education, he/she can get 1st class teaching certificate. In case of TC the admission is a bit more eased and offers teachers' certificate limited to some majors but the number is not so large. However, students who want to enter GSE of TC for teachers' certificate are increasing due to recent youth unemployment. In sum, GSEs of Korea are operating simultaneously on in-service teachers' re-education and pre-service teachers' education, but focusing on the first.

1.2 Focusing on undergraduates

'Focusing on undergraduates' means that elementary and middle school teachers are trained in the level of undergraduates in NUE and TC each. In case of GSEs of NUE for elementary teacher(Table 2), the entrance quota between 2012~2015 are maintaining equally but some GSEs of NUE are not fully recruiting the entrance qouta admitted. Also because of the decrease of school age children, the government stood on the view that entrance qouta of NUE should also be cut down. However recent few years the capacity is equally maintained with reasons such as solution to youth unemployment and increase of voluntary retirements.

Table 2. No. of College & Entrance Quota for Elementary School Teachers

	category	No. of Univ.	No. of Dept.	Entrance Quota			
				2015	2014	2013	2012
Elementary	National	12	12	3,809	3,809	3,809	3,809
	Private	1	1	39	39	39	39
	Total	13	13	3,848	3,848	3,848	3,848

But in case of TC(Table 3), entrance quota of GSE is greater than that of undergraduates. In GSE of TC teachers' certificate can be acquired (limited to some majors) and the number of entrance quota with permission to teacher certificate acquisition is continuously decreasing.

Decrease of entrance quota of GSE of TC was caused by over-competition rate of selection test for secondary teachers, due to excessive issue of teachers' certificates. This is also confirmed by the elimination of entrance qouta of Course for Teacher Certificate in general University. Also the entrance quota of undergraduate is gradually decreasing.

As seen above, the focus of teacher education of Korea is on undergraduates. GSE is highlighting as the reeducation department of in-service teachers rather than pre-service or professional teachers.

Table 3. No. of College & Entrance Quota for Secondary School Teachers

			category	No. of Univ.	No. of Dept	Entrance Quota			
						2015	2014	2013	2012
Secondary	師範係	Teachers College	National	15	195	3,771	3,770	3,770	3,790
			Public	1	7	98	98	98	98
			Private	30	176	5,721	5,864	5,917	6,012
			Total	46	378	9,590	9,732	9,785	9,900
		(Dept. of OO Ed.)	National	1	1	15	15	15	15
			Private	13	22	774	789	789	797
			Total	14	23	789	804	804	812
		Total	National	16	196	3,786	3,785	3,785	3,805
			Public	1	7	98	98	98	98
			Private	43	198	6,495	6,653	6,706	6,809
			Total	60	401	10,379	10,536	10,589	10,712
	非師範係	Course for teacher certificate	National	29	686	Admitted quota 0	2,217	2,268	2,422
			Public	1	13		80	80	80
			Private	120	1,712		6,985	7,544	7,997
			Private 産業大	2	9		39	51	51
			Total	152	2,420		-	9,321	9,943
		Graduate School	National	23	461	4,689	4,742	4,797	5,199
			Public	2	25	252	252	252	252
			Private	87	853	9,302	9,473	9,868	11,172
			Total	112	1,339	14,243	14,467	14,917	16,623

1.3 Excessive competition for Selection Exam

‘Selection Exam’ is a new teacher selection test that must be gone through to be a public school teacher. As mentioned before, the competition rates of middle school teachers’ selection exam are much higher than that of elementary school teachers’. The official name of this exam is ‘Open Recruitment Competition Test’.

In the case of elementary school teachers’ selection exam (Table 4), the competition rate once rose up to 3~4:1, but 2.65:1 in 2012, and decreased to 1.45:1 in 2015, seems gradually stabilizing. However, the entrance quota reducing causes (ex. decreasing class numbers, and temporary position teacher adoption) and increasing causes (ex. decreasing students number per class, common resignation, and voluntary retirement) make this situation more complex and that affects new teacher adoption policy. In sum, the adoption of new elementary school teacher is gradually decreasing.

Table 4. *Competitive Rate of Examination for Elementary School Teachers*

region	2012		2013		2014		2015	
	admitted	applicants	admitted	applicants	admitted	applicants	admitted	applicants
慶南	498	1,010 (2.03)	475	820 (1.72)	425	602 (1.42)	394	454 (1.15)
慶北	254	463 (1.82)	282	536 (1.90)	470	623 (1.33)	550	535 (0.97)
釜山	210	482 (2.30)	268	598 (2.21)	288	499 (1.73)	322	612 (1.90)
蔚山	80	207 (2.59)	163	304 (1.87)	93	169 (1.82)	47	89 (1.89)
大邱	300	723 (2.41)	376	748 (1.99)	329	530 (1.61)	197	311 (1.58)
서울	776	1,998 (2.58)	930	2,681 (2.88)	930	2,104 (2.26)	564	1,536 (2.72)
仁川	235	492 (2.09)	283	667 (2.36)	291	419 (1.44)	400	543 (1.36)
光州	225	531 (2.36)	315	806 (2.56)	269	632 (2.35)	122	318 (2.61)
大田	240	551 (2.30)	366	799 (2.18)	206	414 (2.01)	131	289 (2.21)
江原	225	428 (1.90)	282	421 (1.49)	206	254 (1.23)	338	307 (0.91)
全南	393	776 (1.98)	465	742 (1.60)	420	525 (1.25)	588	612 (1.04)
全北	432	793 (1.84)	414	693 (1.67)	283	338 (1.19)	310	407 (1.31)
忠南	517	856 (1.66)	352	606 (1.72)	423	555 (1.31)	468	411 (0.88)
忠北	329	638 (1.94)	263	440 (1.67)	376	473 (1.26)	360	336 (0.93)
濟州	95	187 (1.97)	121	195 (1.61)	131	158 (1.21)	131	157 (1.20)
京畿	1,284	2,705 (2.11)	1,412	2,833 (2.01)	1,435	2,337 (1.63)	1,494	2,240 (1.50)
世宗	-	-	28	85 (3.04)	253	429 (1.70)	141	376 (2.67)
total	4,462	11,827 (2.65)	6,798	13,974 (2.06)	6,828	11,061 (1.62)	6,557	9,533 (1.45)

Middle school teachers' selection exam show considerably excessive competition rates(Table 5). Although there are fierce competition in case of partial subjects, there are more number of subjects which do not adopt new teachers than those which do.

Table 5. *Competitive Rate of Examination for Secondary School Teachers*

	average(2011~2014)			2015		
	admitted(a)	applicants(b)	(b/a)	admitted(a)	applicants(b)	(b/a)
total	3,584	43,327	13.21	4,426	37,884	8.56

2. Trials and current situation of establishing teacher education systems in the level of graduates

From long ago, TC has been a re-education and research institutes for elementary and middle school teachers, by establishing Master courses & Ed. D. courses in GSEs. After that, to elementary school teachers who enrolled at GSEs of TC, arguments such as commuting distance, the relation of lecture content and the field has been raised. Due to these arguments GSEs were established in NUE(Table 6) and is in charge of re-education and training of elementary school teachers.

Table 6. *No. of Entrance Quota of Graduate School of Education for NUE*

		Name of Univ.	2015 No. of Dept.	Entrance Quota of GSE			
				2015	2014	2013	2012
National		韓國教員大學校	12	reeducation/total entrancequota			
	教育大學	京仁教育大學校*	27	665	665	665	674
		公州教育大學校	21	230	230	230	230
		光州教育大學校	21	302	302	302	302
		大邱教育大學校	27	373	373	373	373
		釜山教育大學校	25	375	375	375	375
		서울教育大學校*	33	510	510	510	522
		全州教育大學校	21	188	188	188	188
		晉州教育大學校	24	230	230	230	230
		清州教育大學校	22	234	234	234	234
		春川教育大學校	24	283	283	283	283
	total		245	3,390	3,390	3,390	3,411
Private	一般大學	梨花女子大學校	1	special course/total entrancequota			
National total			257	3,390	3,390	3,411	3,248
Private total			1	-	-	-	
Total			258	3,390	3,390	3,411	3,248

* 京仁教大(9 個 專攻 18 名), 서울教大 博士課程(8 個 專攻 24 名) 包含 (GSTP)

There was a suggestion for establishing ‘Comprehensive University for Teaching Expert(CUTE: 教員養成綜合大學校)’ in the position of NUE to train both elementary

and middle school teachers, around 2000 when the competition rate of examination for middle school teachers and arguments about merging national universities with reducing the size of TC were so intense. The suggestions contain three kinds of model, '2+4 year CUTE Model' was especially suggested with detailed model as seen in <Figure 1>.

So the suggestion of training teachers from the level of UTE was an important issue of government's policy assignments and academic meetings in the middle of 1990s, due to securing professionalism of teachers and managing with social change(CCIE, 2006; Kim, et al., 2008; Kim, I. W., 2009; Ko, 2009; Park, et al., 2009). Also it was practical solution connected to the existence of NUE.

However, without clear completion of discussion about establishing UTE, recently two 'Graduate School for Teaching Professionalism'(GSTP: 教育専門大学院) that provide Ed. D. courses were established in Seoul and 京仁 NUE, operating with limited admission which is only given to in-service teacher, those who has elementary school teacher certificates and those who are working as an educational profession. This GSTPs offer lectures with reflection of the needs of schools or common academic lectures, trying to adopt curriculum reflecting professionalism of teachers which demanded by the field. In other words, GSTPs were realized focusing on accommodating the requirements of Doctoral course and the reforming to '6-year CUTE'. Other NUEs are also asking for establishing GSTP and operation of Ed.D course, but the realizable possibility is predicted to be very low. If this GSTP is established, it is expected not only securing teachers' professionalism but also realizing the purposes of CUTE hereafter.

3. Incentives through acquisition of Graduate Degree

In-service teachers' social incentives after master's and doctor's course are granting research points when the course they taken are related to their major, added points in the selection process of educational profession. Those added points are different depending on regional education office, and here is the case of Gyeongnam Office of Education.

In promotion evaluation of vice-principal, 3 points added with doctor's degree and 1.5 points with master's degree. But the added points merely affect the result because most vice-principal promotion candidates acquired master or doctoral degree, and the nominee qualification requires 200 points in total. However in selecting School Inspector(獎學士), Research Inspector(研究士) et al., Master's degree get 0.5 point, and the Doctor's degree get 1.0 point in total 3 points of research record points. Every research record points are limited to maximum 2 points except degree acquisition, added

points through the doctor's degree can affect the result to some degree. Some teachers with doctor's degree are appointed as professors of TC or NUE.

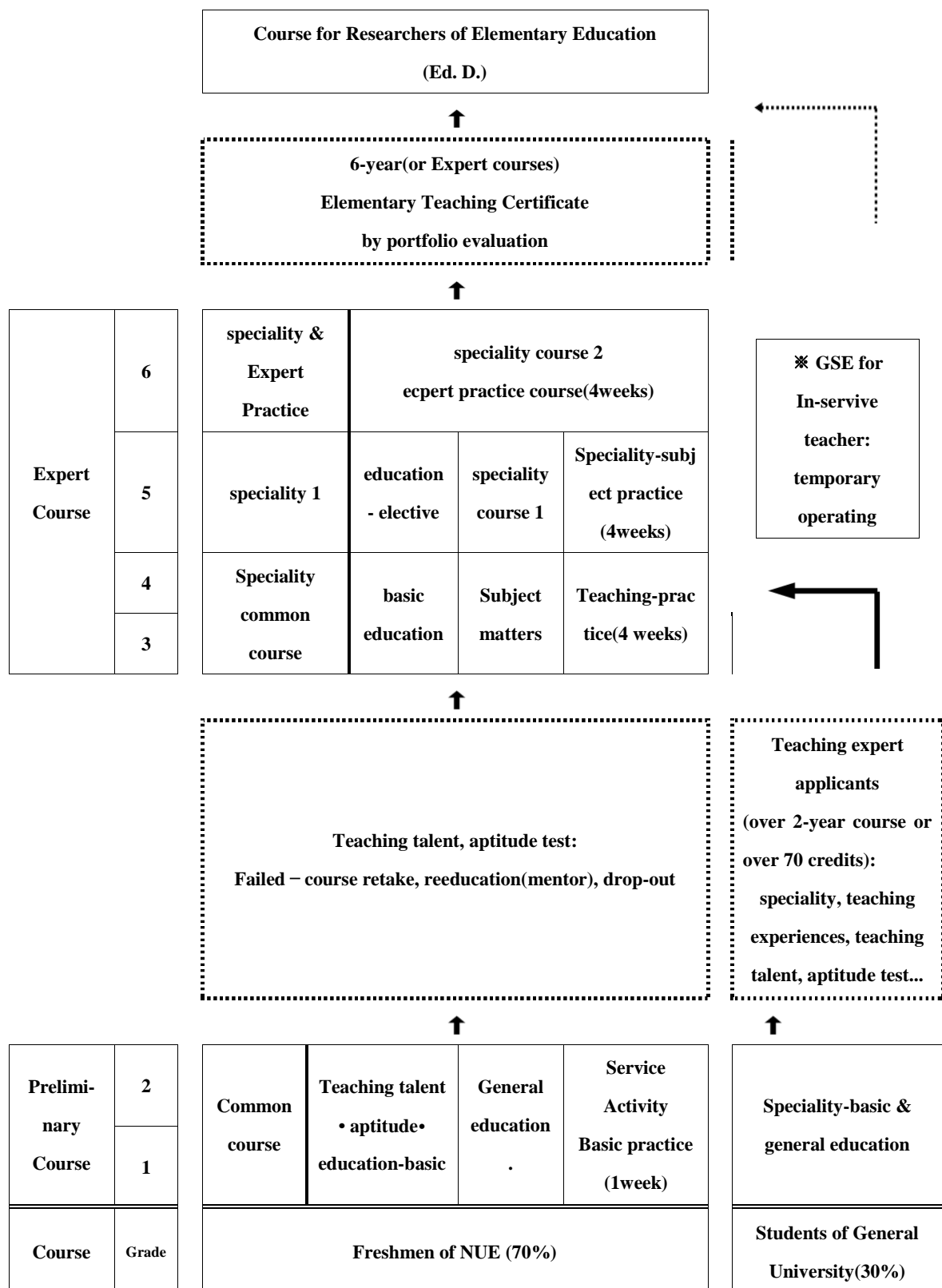


Figure 1. Model for '2+4 years' CUTE (by NUEs)

Degree of GSE is used to acquisition of 1st class teaching certificate who had already of 2nd class teaching certificate, and can also be connected to special instructor license or counseling teacher license in the major of special education or school counseling. But there is no financial benefit such as pay addition.

4. Conclusion

Current teacher education systems of Korea holds problems such as insufficient policy of teacher supply-&-demand, lack of ideal objectives of teacher education systems, nationwide unemployment, rapid increasing of non-regular employment in school, etc. Due to these and those difficulties, to establish and pursue a ideal future-oriented teacher education model or innovative solution is not easy. However, through attaching superb pre-service teachers and strengthening professionalism of in-service teachers, it is expected that these problems will be solved and also teacher education systems will be improved in the long run.

REFERENCES

- Committee of Counsel for Innovation of Education (2006). *Improvement of teachers' policy for enhancement of educational level*. Presidential Committee of counsel for Innovation of Education
- Kim, I. G. (2009). OECD Issues and political countermeasures of national system of teacher education. *Educational Development*, 167, 27-33.
- Kim, T. W. (2009). Why are Graduate School of Education Specialists needed? *Educational Development*, 167, 22-26.
- Kim, T. W., Choi, W. H., Ko, D. H., Park, S. H., & Park, I. S. (2008). *A study on the diversification of teacher education and appointment*. 2008 Policy Object-16 of Ministry of Education.
- Ko, J. (2009). Review on the Suggestion of the Professional Graduate School of Education . *The Journal of Korean Teacher Education*, 26(2), 345-364.
- Lee, K. H. (2009). Discussion for the supply and demand of future elementary school teachers and the implication. *Sourcebook of the 43th Forum for Educational Policy pf KEDI*, 79-86.

- Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development (2006). Improvement of teachers education system for educational influence of school..
- Oh, H. S. (2004). Reform plan for tical reform of teachers education system. *Sourcebook of 2004 Forum for Educational Policy pf KEDI*. 157-187.
- Park, N. K., Ko, D. H., Kim, G. S., Kim, S. H., Kim, Y. I., Yoon, H. J., Lee, Y. M., Cho, Y. K., Cheon H. S., & Han, D. H. (2009). Reform and development of the future teachers education system for elementary school. *Sourcebook of Seminar helded by Council of President of University of Education & Congressman Im, H. G.*
- Shin, H. S. (2009). A study for the directions of reform and strategies for teachers education system. *Korean Education*, 36(3), 53-78.
- Society for Korean Teacher Education (2004a). Directions of innovation of teachers education system for educational development. *Sourcebook of the 41th Spring Academic Forum of SKTE*.
- Society for Korean Teacher Education (2004b). Issues and directions of reform of teachers education system. *Sourcebook of the 41th Spring Academic Forum of SKTE*.