

Pre-service teacher education to promote education for sustainability in Japan

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Early childhood education in Japan

Pre-service teacher training

Education for Sustainability (EfS)

Pre-service teacher education for EfS

Issues and challenges



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Early childhood education in Japan

History

- 1876: The oldest kindergarten was founded.
- 1890: The oldest nursery centre was founded.
- 1926: The Kindergarten Law.
- 1948: Guideline for early childhood education and care.
- 1956: Course of Study for Kindergarten (National curriculum for kindergarten)



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Early childhood education in Japan

History

- 1965: National guideline for nursery centers.
- 2006: New type service was founded (Centre for early childhood education and care [CECEC]).
- 2017: Latest revision of three national guidelines for early childhood services.



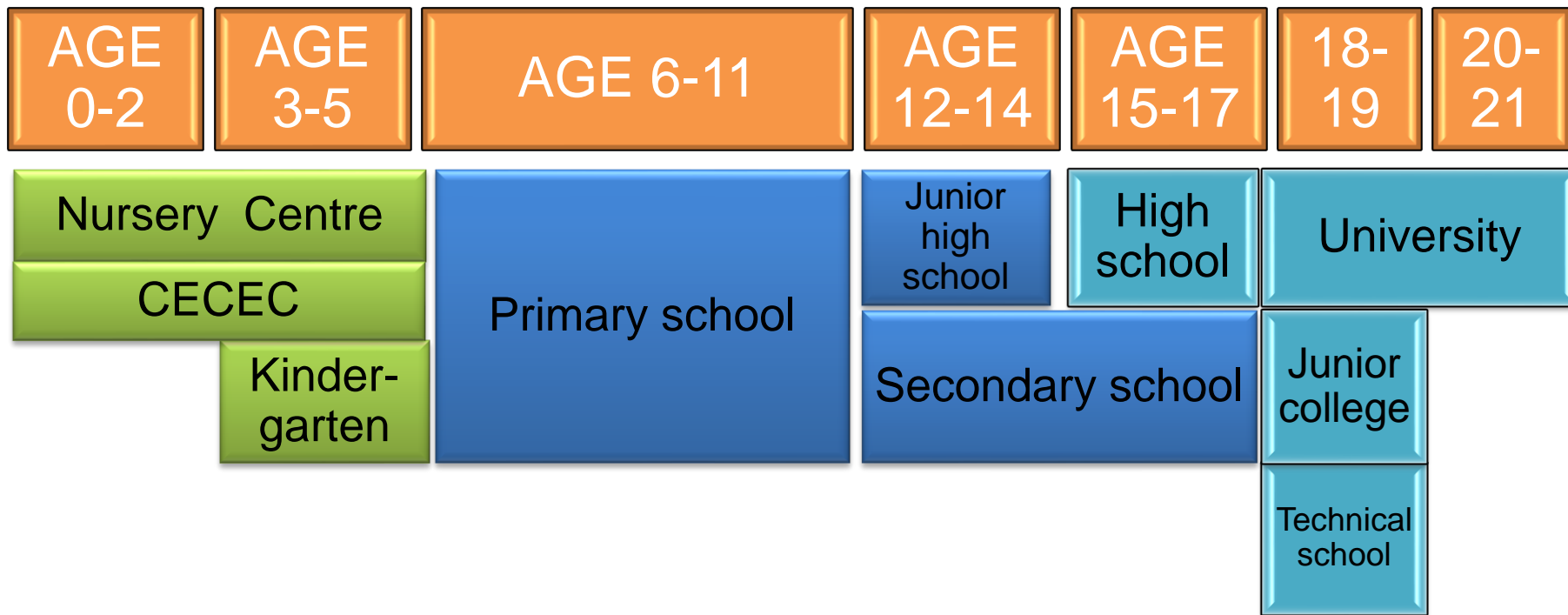
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Education system in Japan



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Number of early childhood services

Service types	Number of Services	Number of Children
Kindergarten	10,878	1,271,918
CECEC	5,081	689,781
Nursery Centre	26,265	2,041,764

(2017)



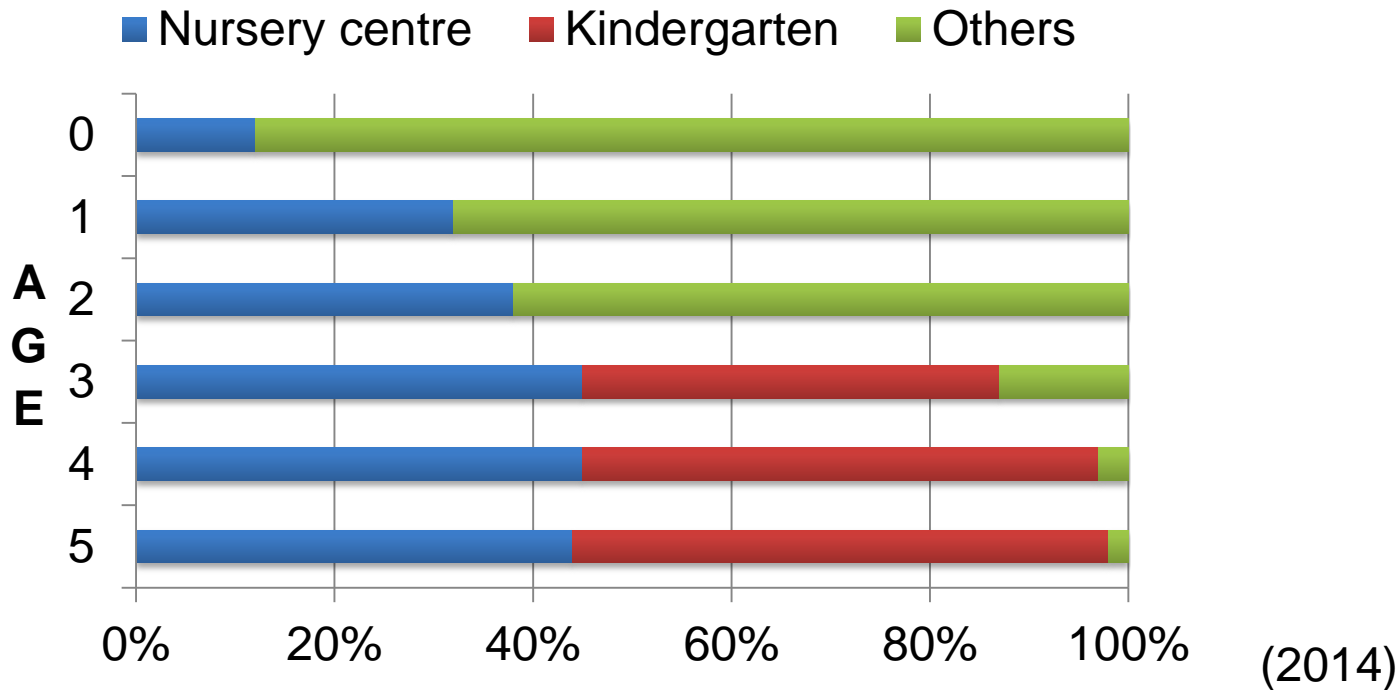
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Percentage of enrolment of young children



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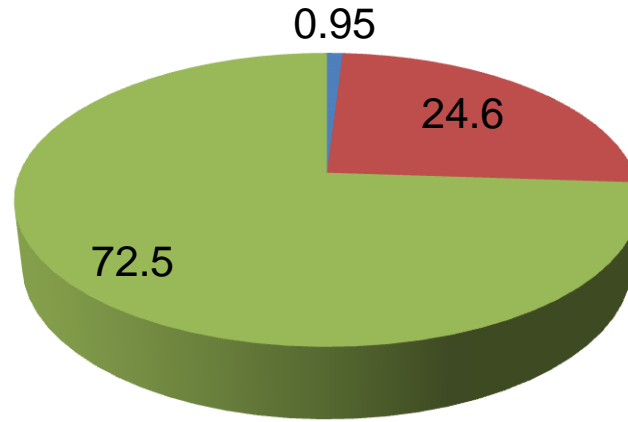
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National certificates for early childhood educators

	Kindergarten	Nursery Centre
Responsibility	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
Title	Education Personnel Certification	Qualification as a nursery teacher
Registered Training School	University (4 years) Junior college (2 years)	University (4 years) Junior college (2 years) Technical school (2 years)
Field experience	4 weeks	6 weeks

Educational background of kindergarten teachers



- Graduate school (M.S.)
- University (B.A., 4 years)
- Junior College (2 years)



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Laws and regulations for training of pre-service kindergarten teachers

Education Personnel Certification

- **Education Personnel Certification Act**
- **Act for Enforcement of the Education Personnel Certification Act**
- **Regulation for Enforcement of the Education Personnel Certification Act**



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Laws and regulations for training of pre-service nursery centre educators

Qualification as a nursery teacher

- **Child Welfare Act**
- **Regulation for Child Welfare Act**



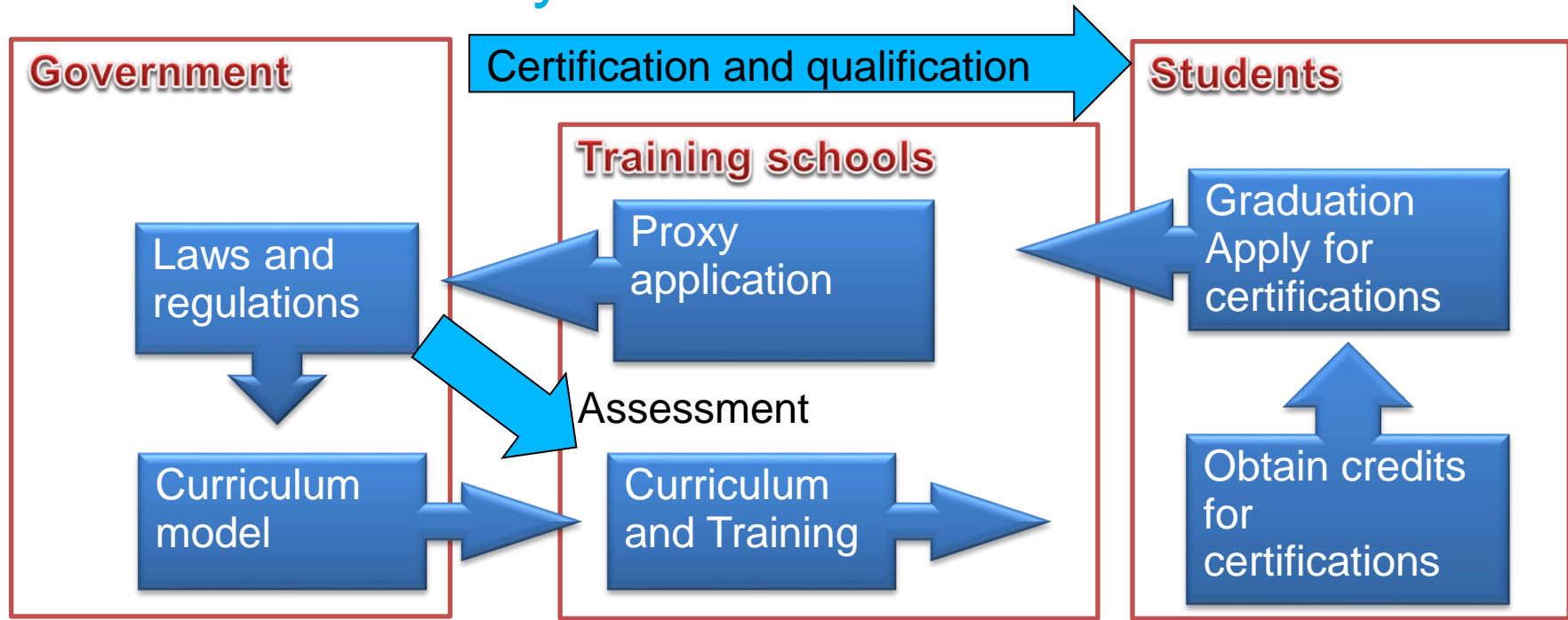
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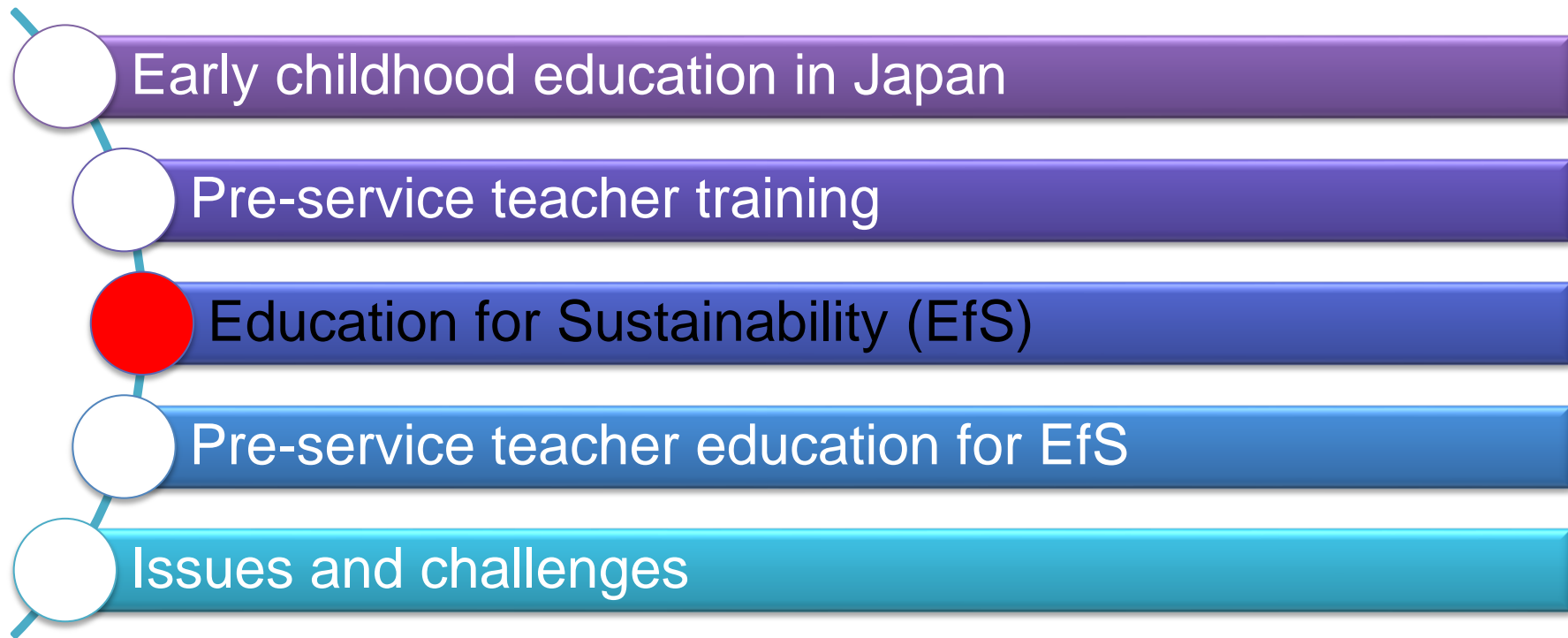
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Qualification system





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Environmental Education in Japan

1970s

Concept was imported from the West

1990s

Introduction to the national curriculum

2000s

ESD & Environmental Education Law



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Environmental Policy

Ministry of the Environment

- The Basic Environment Plan (1993, 2000, 2006, 2012, 2018)
Environmental Education
- Japan's Action Plan for the UNDES (2006) DES

Education

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

- Teacher's handbooks for environmental education (1991, 1992, 2007, 2014)
Environmental Education

Law

- Law for Enhancing Motivation on Environmental Conservation and Promoting of Environmental Education (2003, 2011) Environmental Education

National guidelines for early childhood services

- Course of Study for Kindergarten (1956) (rev. 1954, 1989, 1998, 2008, 2017)
- Guideline for nursery centres (1965) (rev. 1991, 1999, 2008, 2017).
- Course of Study for centres of early childhood education and care (2014) (rev. 2017)



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Description of sustainability in the guidelines for early childhood education in Japan

- **No description**
 - Sustainability
 - Environmental education
 - Conservation
 - Ecosystem
 - Our shared environment



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Teacher's Handbook of Environmental Education for primary school and kindergarten teachers (2014)

- Environmental education for young children
 - Nature-based activities
 - Learning about the surrounding environment



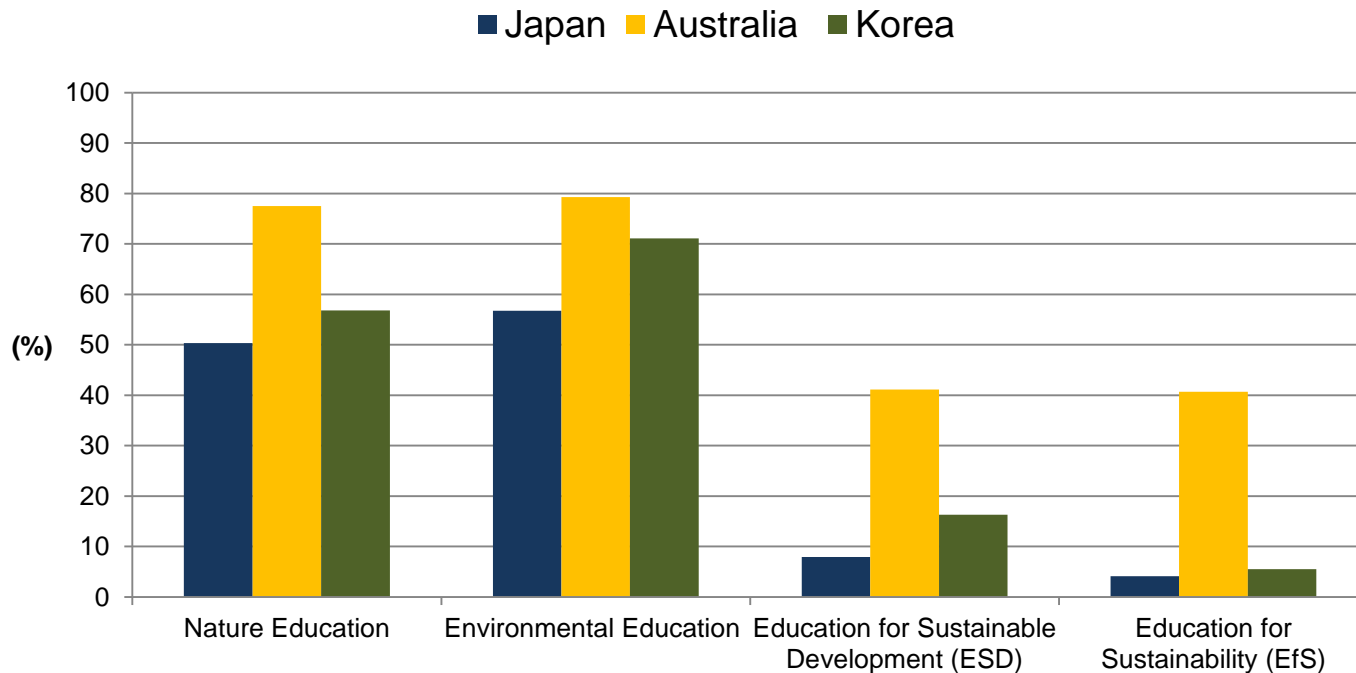
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Concept understandings (Inoue, O’Gorman, Davis & Ji 2017)



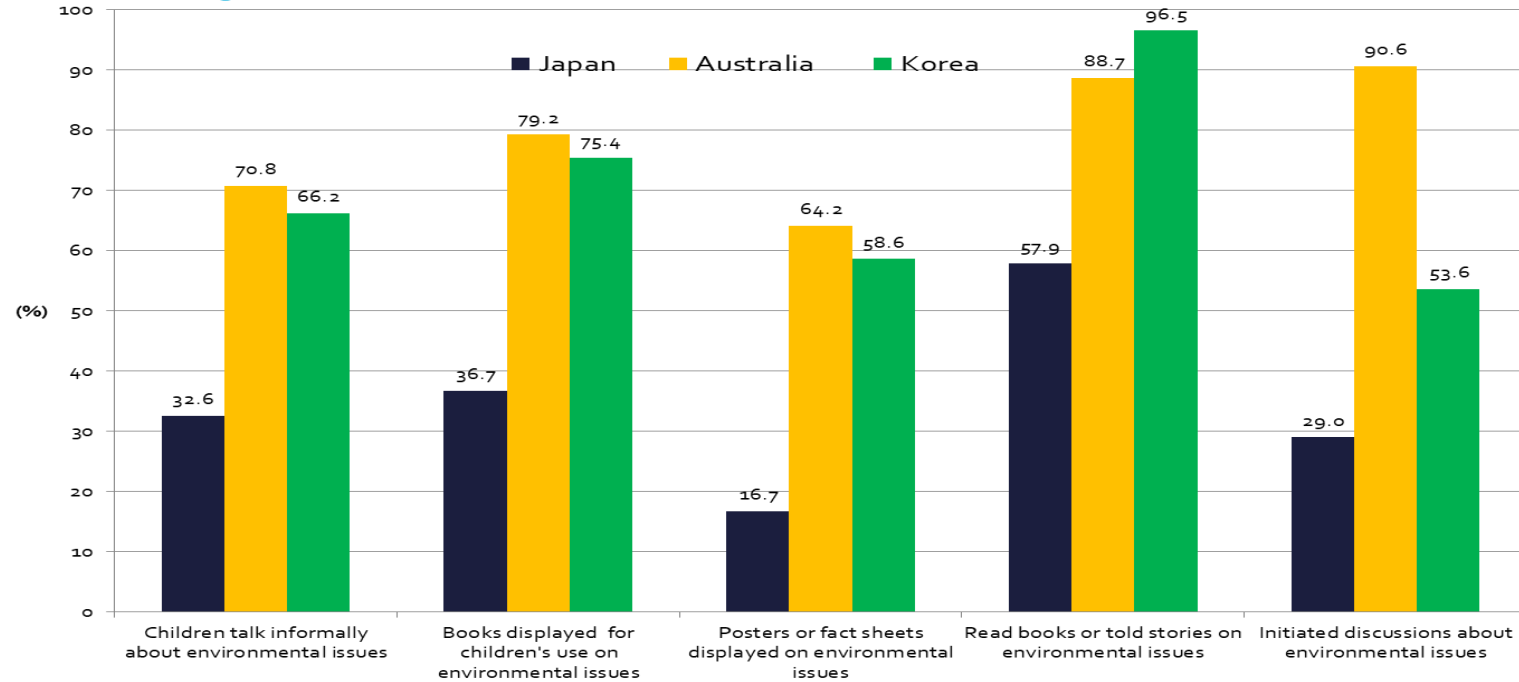
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Teaching environmental issues



(Inoue, O'Gorman, Davis & Ji 2017)



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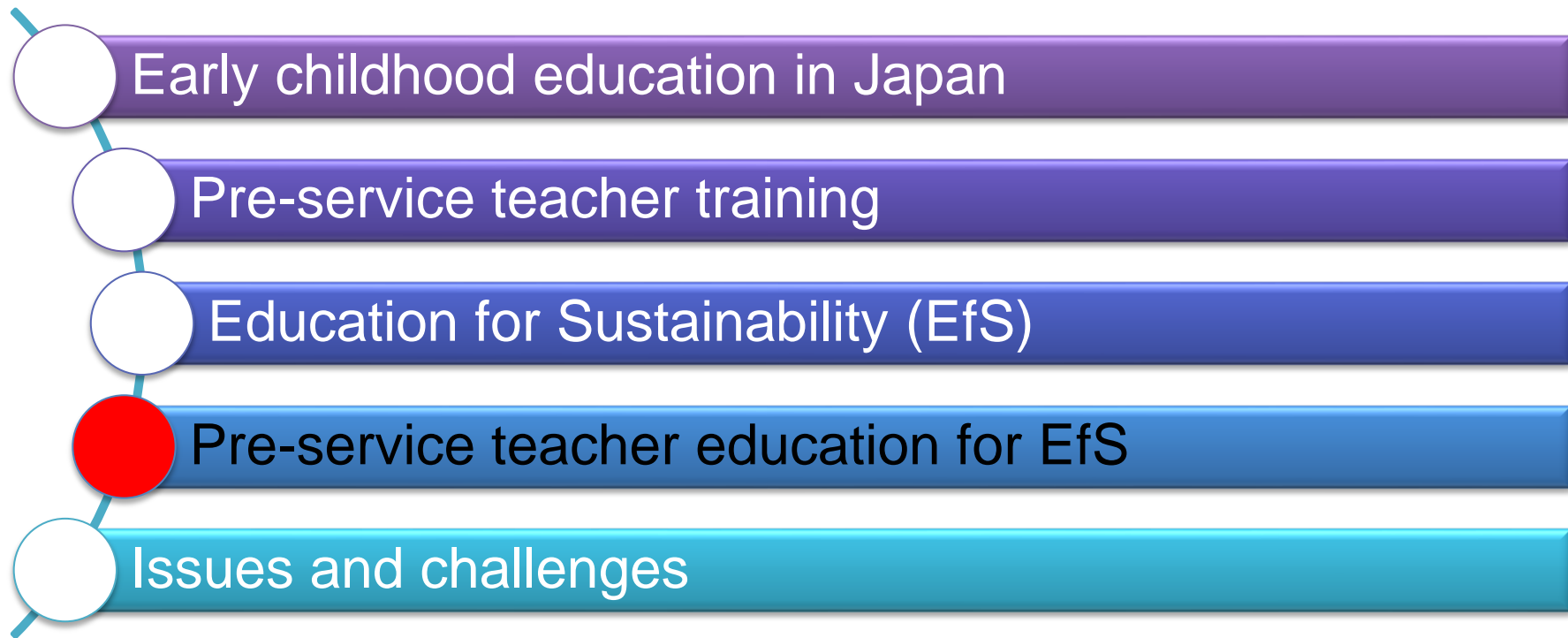
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Early childhood education for sustainability in Japan

- National guidelines: **No description!**
- Early childhood educators: **Low concerns!**
- Official handbook of environmental education:
Early childhood environmental education comprises nature-based activities.



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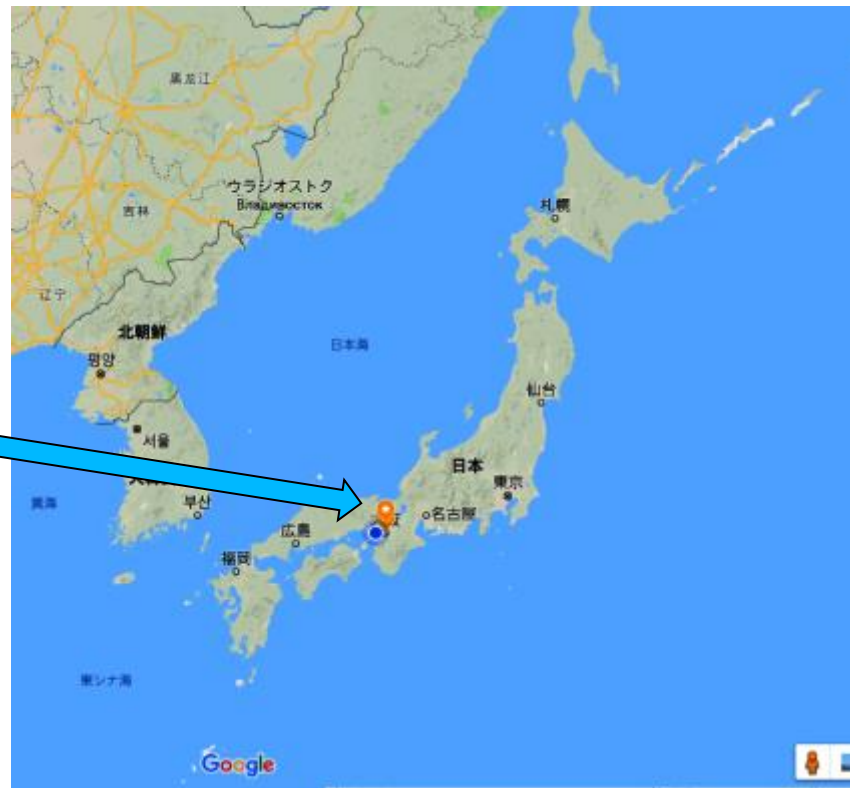
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Japan

- Osaka Ohtani University
- Tondabayashi City



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Osaka Ohtani University

- Small private university in the southern area of Osaka prefecture.
- Four faculties
- 3000 students



The Faculty of Education has three schools



Early Childhood Education



Primary and Secondary Education



Special Needs Education



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School of Early Childhood Education

- 120 students/year and 4-year training
- 11 teaching staff and 2 administration staff
- Bachelor of Education degree (B.Ed.)
- Two national certificates for early childhood education
- Education Personnel Certification (EPC)
- Qualification as a nursery teacher (QNT)



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Required number of credits in 4 years

Purpose	Number of credits	Number of students (2018)
Graduation (B.Ed)	over 128	118 (100.0%)
EPC (kindergarten)	59	109 (92.4%)
QNT (nursery centre)	70	106 (89.8%)
EPC (primary school)	+44	52 (44.1%)



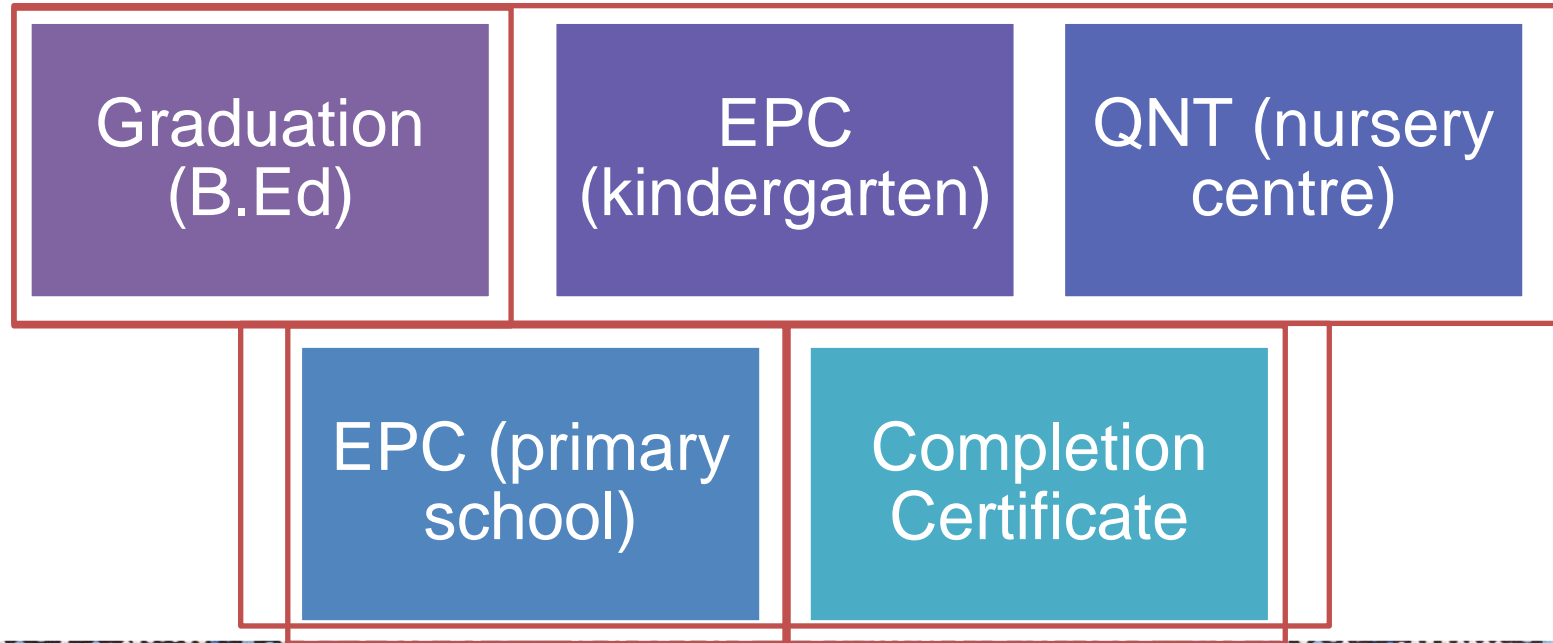
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Purposes to study in our school



Original training courses: Areas of specialization



Playful learning



Nature education



Family support



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Completion certificates

Course	Number of completion certificates
Playful learning	19
Nature education	8
Family support	16
Total	43

Students who complete all credits in the course subjects receive a completion certificate. In all, 36% of the students who graduated in 2018 received the certificate.



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Nature education course

- Grade 2 – 4 (3-year training)
- 40 students per year
- 3 lecturers
- 9 specific subjects



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What the nature education course fosters

- Teaching skills in outdoor play activities in nature spaces
- Understanding of the purposes of nature-based activities for sustainability
- Intimacy with the natural world through continuous direct experiences
- Understanding of the relationship between our ordinary lives and the natural world



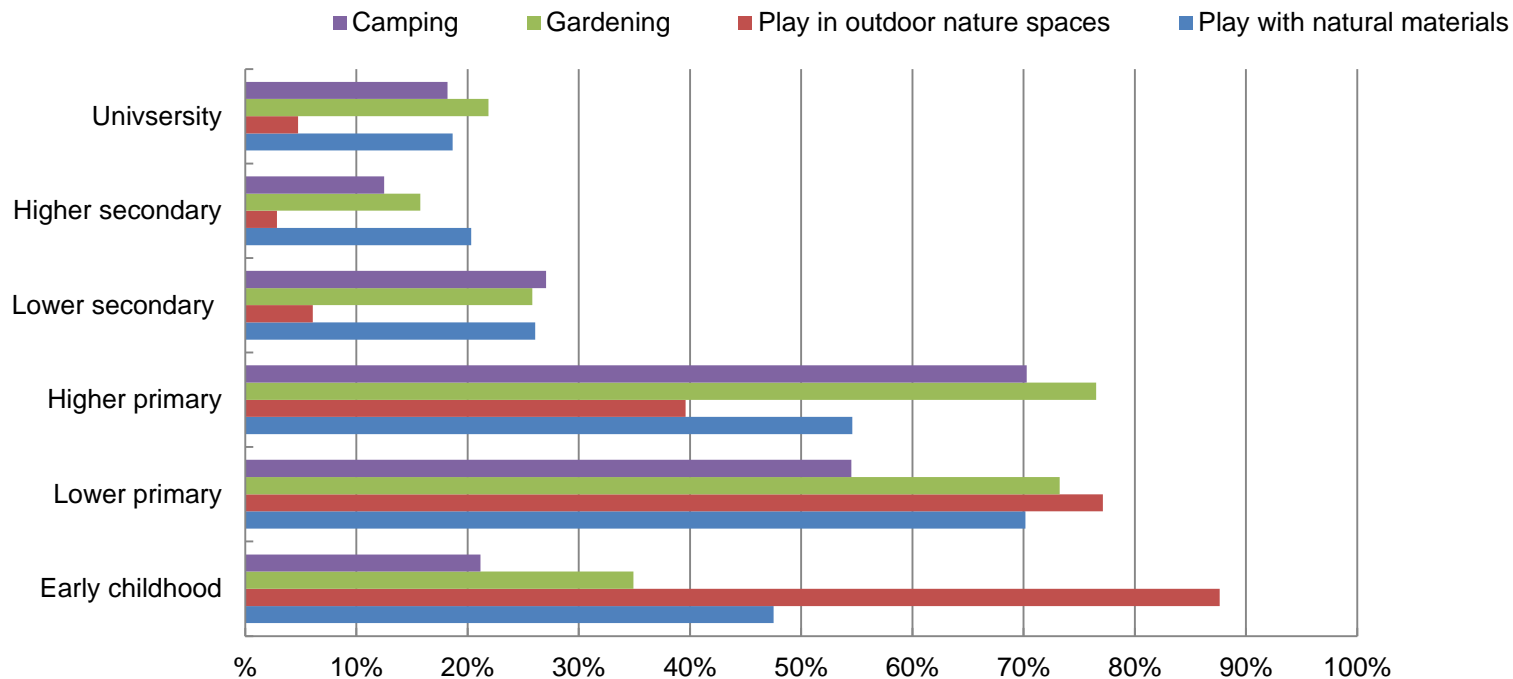
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Students' experiences (Inoue, 2011)



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Course-specific subjects

Grade	Subject	Requirement
2 semester 1 & 2	Basic seminar II	90 min x 15 compulsory
2 semester 1	Young children and plants	90 min x 15 elective
2 semester 1	Early childhood horticulture	90 min x 15 elective
2 semester 2	Teaching skills in nature play	90 min x 15 elective
2 semester 2	Practical training of nature-based activities I	90 min x 15 elective



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Course-specific subjects

Grade	Subject	Requirement
3 semester 1	Young children and animals	90 min x 15 elective
3 semester 2	Practical training of nature-based activities II	90 min x 15 elective
4 Semester 1	Environmental education	90 min x 15 elective
4 semester 1 & 2	Practical exercise B	90 min x 15 elective

Total: 9 course-specific subjects / 18 credits in 3 years

Most subjects are not required to obtain the EPC or QNT

Basic seminar II

- Grade 2
- Compulsory for graduation and for a completion certificate of the nature education course.
- 15 units (7 units in the 1st semester, 8 in the 2nd semester)



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Nature activity centre

PNLc profit group
Nature activity centre



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Basic seminar II: One-day field experiences

Preparation

Field experiences

Documentation

Presentation



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Basic seminar II: One-day field experiences

- People who know the value of nature experiences.
- People believe nature experiences contribute not only to children's development but also to sustainability.
- Child-centered pedagogy.

Basic



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Searching river wildlife



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All Hearing heart beating

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Basic seminar II: Outdoor cooking

- Why outdoor cooking?
- Baking *Baumkuchen* on charcoal bonfire.



Early childhood horticulture

- Growing flowers and vegetables
- Cooking vegetables



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Teaching skills in nature play

- Playing with natural materials
- Learning Japanese tradition



Practical training of nature-based activities I

- Qualification as Nature game leader
- Japan sharing nature association



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Group discussions



Talking with Skopsmulle!
Baking bread



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Practice

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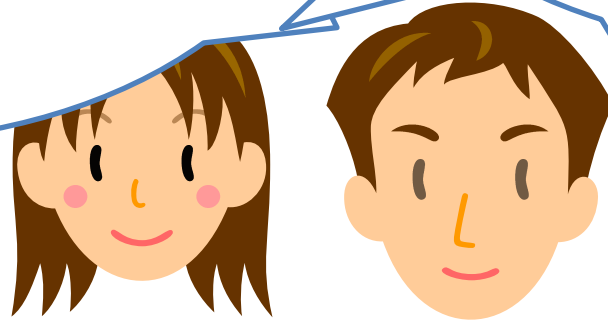
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I came to recognize the natural world elements, such as small wild flowers on the street in my ordinary life.

I did not know any names of plants and have playing skills. Now I know them.



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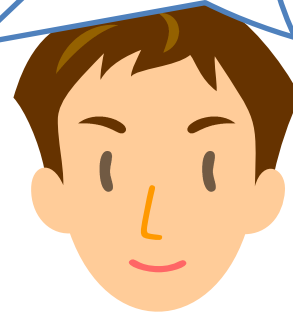
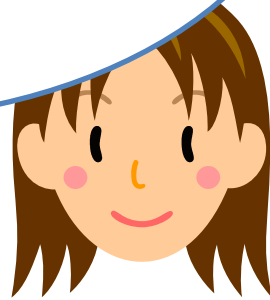
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I want to let children
use their five senses
to feel nature.

I want
sym
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I want to foster
children who
want to care
about our
shared natural
world.

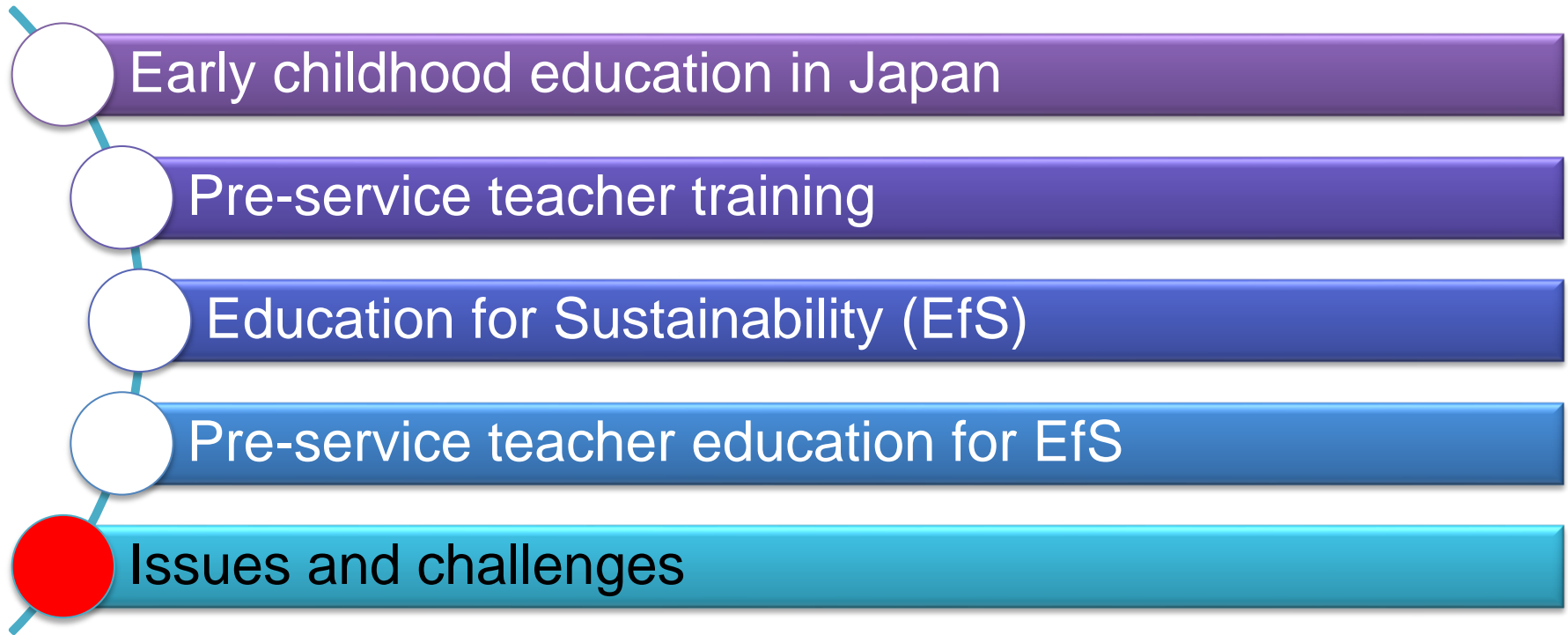


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Issues

- Strict regulation of the Government to get EPC and QNT
- Half of students want to get 2 EPC and QNT: this requires too many credits

Challenges

- Pedagogy improvement
 - More direct experiences
 - Connect theories and experiences
- Career support
 - Internship opportunities
 - Finding jobs for appropriate ECE centres



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!



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