

How does Geography Learning in Japan Deal with "Education for Sustainable Development?" : Analysis of the National Curriculum Revised in 2017/2018

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Background—Current Situation of ESD in Japan

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has been introduced into the 2008/2009 national curriculum(Nakayama, Wada, & Takata, 2015), and becomes due to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) more and more important educational activity in Japan. Especially, the latest revised national curriculum aims to develop citizenship for a sustainable society through all subjects, and geography within social studies is seen as one of the core areas of ESD in school education. The overview of social studies subject including geography are shown in table 1.

Purpose & Research Question(RQ)s

This poster presentation aims to clarify characteristics of ESD as a learning content in the Japanese national curriculum for primary, junior and senior high school.

- RQ1: What features has the revised national curriculum related to geography?
- RQ2: How and what does geography teach ESD ?
- RQ3: What characteristics are teaching of ESD in Japanese geography education?

Method

Content analysis of the national curriculum revised in 2017/18 related to geography

- 2017 curriculum for primary and junior high school
- 2018 curriculum for senior high school

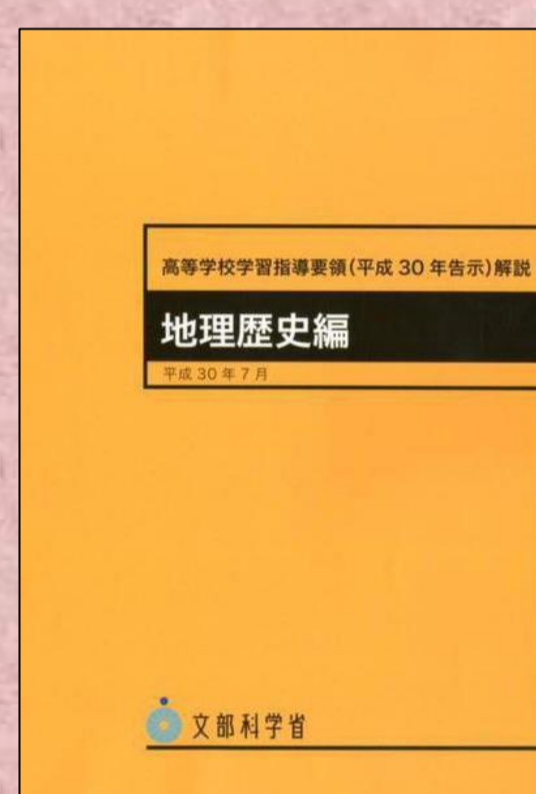
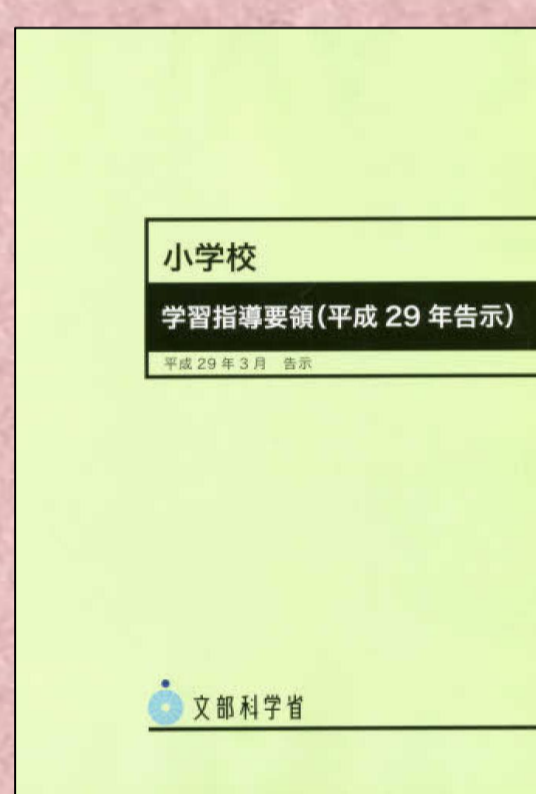


Figure 1. 2017/18 national curriculum (from left: primary, junior and senior high school)

Table 1. Overview of Geography/Social Studies and ESD related Contents in Japan (2017/18 Curriculum)

Schools/School Subject	Grade	Field(junior high school)/Subject (senior high school) and its learning units related to ESD				
Senior high school: Geography & History, Civics	12	Advanced Geography* • future land images of Japan in the modern world	Advanced Japanese History * • regions, Japan and world in the modern era	Advanced World Hisotry* • challenges in the World	Ethics*	Politics & Economy* • political and economic issues in the modern Japan • challenges in the globalized international community
	11	Geography • global understanding and cooperation • sustainable community lanning	Modern Contemporary History • globalization and us		Public • we as active citizens participating in the formulation of a better society • we as actors forming a sustainable society	
	10					
Junior high school: Social Studies	9	Civics Field • our economy • our issues in the internationa community		Hisotry Field		
	8	Geography Field • various regions in the world • various regions in Japan				
	7					
Primary school: Social Studies	6					
	5	• food production in Japanese agriculture and fishery				
	4	• heritages, cultures and forerunners' activitis within own prefecture				
	3					

*means selective subject.

Findings

Features related to geography in the new curriculum

- The national curriculum is influenced by ESD and emphasizes the competencies acquisition.
- Geography in senior high school has experienced several changes in the new curriculum; a compulsory subject "Geography(*Chiri-sogo*)", and a selective subject "Advanced Geography(*Chiri-tankyu*)" are newly introduced.
- The International Charter of Geographical Education, and the Lucerne Declaration on Geography Education for Sustainable Development have affected the latest curriculum, especially in high school geography(Yui, 2018).

Teaching and contents of ESD in geography

Teaching and contents marshaled from several points(units, scale, contents, method/process) are shown in the table2.

- The primary school emphasizes knowing of a way of sustainable industry and formation of attitude responsible for a sustainable society.
- The junior high school mainly focuses on an understanding of the causes and effects of issues from local to global scale. Besides, solution of local issues.
- The senior high school mainly focuses on the consideration and creation of a solution to global/local issues.

Table2. Teaching and Contents of ESD in Geography-related Learning

School	School Subject	Field/Subject	Learning Unit	Geographical Scale	Learning Contents	Learning Methods/Process
Senior High School	Geography & History	Advanced Geography	Future land images of Japan in the modern world	National	Geographical issues in Japan	1) Discovery geographical issues in Japan 2) Investigate solution to them and approaches to desirable Japan
		Geography	Sustainable community planning	Local	Natural disaster, local issues	1) Fieldwork & literature research in local areas 2) Discover local and geographical issues 3) Consider and create solutions for them
Junior High School	Social Studies	Geography Field	Various regions in Japan	Local, Prefecture, National	Local and egeional issues in Japan	1) Understand and consider regional issues based on specific geographical themes(natural environment, population and settlement, industry, traffic and communication, other geographical themes) 2) Understand current situation in local area and approaches to problem-solving of local issues, and consider and create solutions for them
			Various regions in the world	National, Continental	Global issue in each country and continental	1) Understand global issues merging around the world are influenced by regional characteristics and appear differently in each region and consider causes and effects of global issues
Primary School	Social Studies	5th grader	Food production in Japanese agriculture and fishery	National	Agriculture and fishery in Japan	1) Understand and consdier the food production system and people's efforts involved in food production
		4th grader	Heritages, cultures and forerunners' activities within own prefecture	Prefecture	Traditional culture and forerunners' activities in students' prefecture	1) Understand and consider that people's hope to traditional and cultural events and forerunners' activities who contributed to local development

Discussion & Conclusion

Characteristics of teaching of ESD in geography

- The teaching of ESD in geography learning emphasizes a deep understanding of geographical issues and problem-solving skills rather than knowing the contents or knowledge of SD and/or geographical issues themselves. → This is because that the curriculum emphasizes acquiring competencies, learning how to learn, and formation an attitude to resolve global/local issues in the real world.
- The primary school focuses on cases of sustainable way, on the other hand, the secondary school geography focused on geographical issues from local to global scales. → In other words, the principle of content organization related to ESD in secondary school geography is "issue-oriented."
- Each school type emphasizes the different learning processes: knowing, understanding and consideration of a sustainable way(primary school), understanding and consideration of geographical issues (junior high school), and inquiry and problem-solving of geographical issues (senior high school). → This may be because that the continuity of learning through primary to senior high school.

References

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