

Investigation into the Growth and Professionalism of Nursery Teachers, from their Narratives

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In 2001, the *Child Welfare Law* was revised to require nursery teachers to undergo a standardized national qualification. This change reflected the diversified and complicated changes in society's demands and requirements regarding nursery teachers. Despite such changes, their social status has remained low. While teacher awareness of their own professionalism is not enough, there are also few studies regarding such professionalism.

Therefore, this study examines how these teachers acquire professional skills and awareness along with what their specific roles and qualities are as professionals.

An analysis on interviews with 12 nursery teachers and a group interview with six nursery teachers shows that nursery teachers have rendered their professionalism through relationships and interaction with the various people around them. The results also show that they have not fully appreciated their own growth and learning.

In addition, their professional skills and awareness were deepened by accumulating knowledge and theories on the basis of their original outlook on child care. Through the narratives in this study, nursery teacher outlook on child care has been reconstructed.

Still at an unfledged stage, their professionalism will grow and deepen through their own reflective discussion regarding their work. They need be given more opportunities to talk with peer teachers.