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A smooth transition from early childhood education to primary school education focused on literacy education and explored through a comparative case study of Japan and the UK

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I would like to present a comparative analysis of a transition from Early Childhood Education (ECE) to Primary School Education (PSE) with a focus on literacy education. The countries to be discussed are Japan and the UK. Japan aspires to achieve a smoother transition from ECE to PSE in literacy education under its new National Curriculum guidelines. The UK has been an early mover in this field by developing coherent ECE and PSE assessment systems and curricula since 2008.

While drawing on theories of Vygotsky, Bakhtin, and Daniels as well as "play-based learning", this research is designed as case study research for us to obtain first-hand findings. Multiple school visits, observational surveys and semi-structured interviews were conducted in each country.

Similarities and differences in content, method, physical environment and assessment systems in ECE and PSE in each country will be presented. The presentation will be extended to discuss the challenges and the requirements of literacy education for a smooth transition. The discussion should foster pluralistic awareness and offer a cross-cultural viewpoint as to how a literacy education curriculum can support a smooth transition.