

Makoto Yoshida, Ph.D.

Director
Center for Lesson Study, College of Education
William Paterson University, Wayne, NJ, U.S.A

Founder and President,
Global Education Resources



Makoto Yoshida is a director of the Center for Lesson Study (CLS) at William Paterson University. In addition to his role at CLS, he also serves as a president of Global Education Resources (GER). Working at these two organizations, he helps elementary and middle school mathematics teachers to improve their content knowledge and classroom instruction and learning. He promotes and conducts lesson study as a core approach for professional learning of teachers and provides workshops and presentation to enhance the idea.

His doctoral dissertation on lesson study in Japan, presented to the University of Chicago, helped introduce lesson study to the U.S. Yoshida coined the term “lesson study” by translating the original Japanese term “jugyokenkyu” in this dissertation research. He is considered one of the foremost researchers and educators of lesson study in the U.S., and his work is cited heavily in Stigler and Hiebert’s book, *The Teaching Gap* (1999) (Chapter 7, *Beyond Reform: Japan’s Approach to the Improvement of Classroom Teaching*). In addition, Yoshida coauthored a book entitled “Lesson Study: A Japanese Approach to Improving Mathematics Teaching and Learning,” (2004) based on this dissertation research on lesson study in Japan with Clea Fernandez of Teachers College, Columbia University. He also co-edited a book entitled “Building Our Understanding of Lesson Study,” a comprehensive introduction to lesson study for teachers with Patsy Wang-Iverson. In addition, Akihiko Takahashi (DePaul University) and Yoshida’s paper on lesson study, entitled “Ideas for Establishing Lesson-Study Communities,” was published in NCTM’s journal, *Teaching Children Mathematics* in 2004. He oversaw the English translation of a series of Japanese elementary school mathematics textbooks (Grades 1-6) to support lesson study in the United States.

Born in Hiroshima, Japan, Makoto came to the U.S. to study at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, OR, where he received his B.A. in education and psychology. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. in education from the University of Chicago.

Lesson Study's Role in Making a Successful Transition to Implementing New Standards: Examination of the Lesson Study System, Role, and Historical Perspective in Japan and the U.S.

by Makoto Yoshida, Ph.D.

It has been over ten years since lesson study was introduced into the U.S. from Japan. Although some lesson study groups exist and are actively practicing and promoting lesson study in the U.S., it is hard to say that lesson study has established strong roots in the U.S. and is providing a significant impact on improving mathematics instruction and learning in classrooms.

In 2010, new standards called "The Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (CCSS-M)" were introduced in the U.S. and have been adopted by 45 states. Most of the states are currently in a transition period since the standards will not be fully in force until the 2014 school year. Many educators are excited about the new standards but the transition process has not been easy and many issues have arisen. For example, the lack of on-going professional development for teachers is hindering the understanding of both content and philosophy of the new standards making it difficult to improve teachers' content knowledge and pedagogy. In addition, lack of supporting materials, such as instructional guides for CCSS-M and textbooks that are truly aligned with CCSS-M are not completely developed. Even though similar problems were identified in the past when states introduced new standards the same mistakes are being made once again. It is as if teachers are left alone and it is up to them to figure out how to make this transition happen.

In 2008, Japan also introduced a new "Mathematics Course of Study." The transitional period started in 2009, and the transition was complete in April of 2011. Although the transitional period has not been easy for teachers in Japan either, textbooks were updated according to the course of study specifications. In addition, during the course of the transition teachers studied the new Course of Study, the Teaching Guide for the Course of Study, and the new textbooks through school based professional development with lesson study. Many public research lessons were conducted and discussed in order to educate teachers to make the transition successfully. This resulted in new ideas and changes in the Course of Study. Lesson study provided a way for Japanese educators to develop a systematic approach to dealing with the changes in the Course of Study and thus played an important role in this transition.

In this presentation, issues pertaining to lesson study's role in making transition to new standards will be discussed by comparing the practice of lesson study and support systems in the U.S. and Japan. Discussing lesson study as a means to facilitate and inform the adoption of new standards can help us think about the role of lesson study in the system of classroom practice during the process of making the transition to new standards.