

# CHARACTERISTICS OF INNOVATIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES: INQUIRIES FOR DEEP LEARNING

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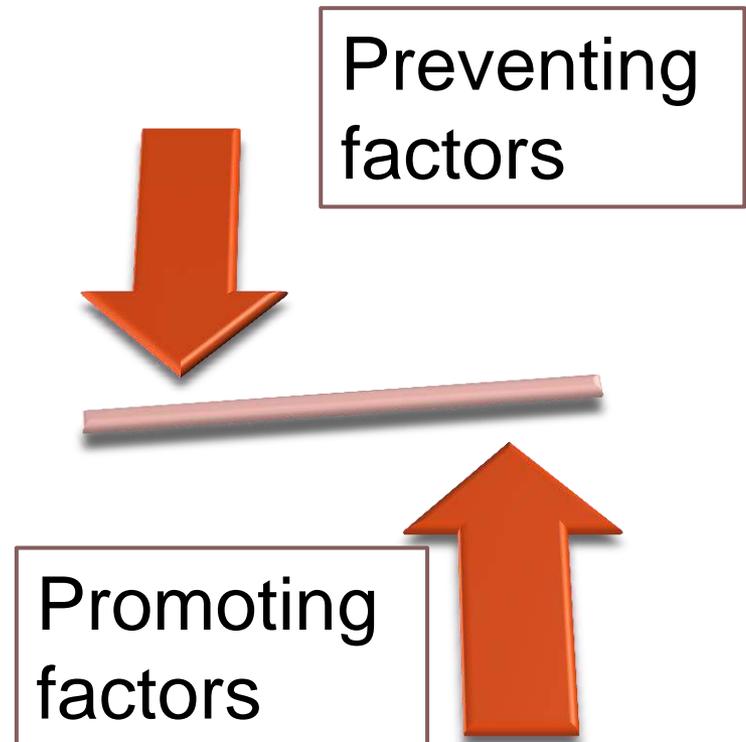
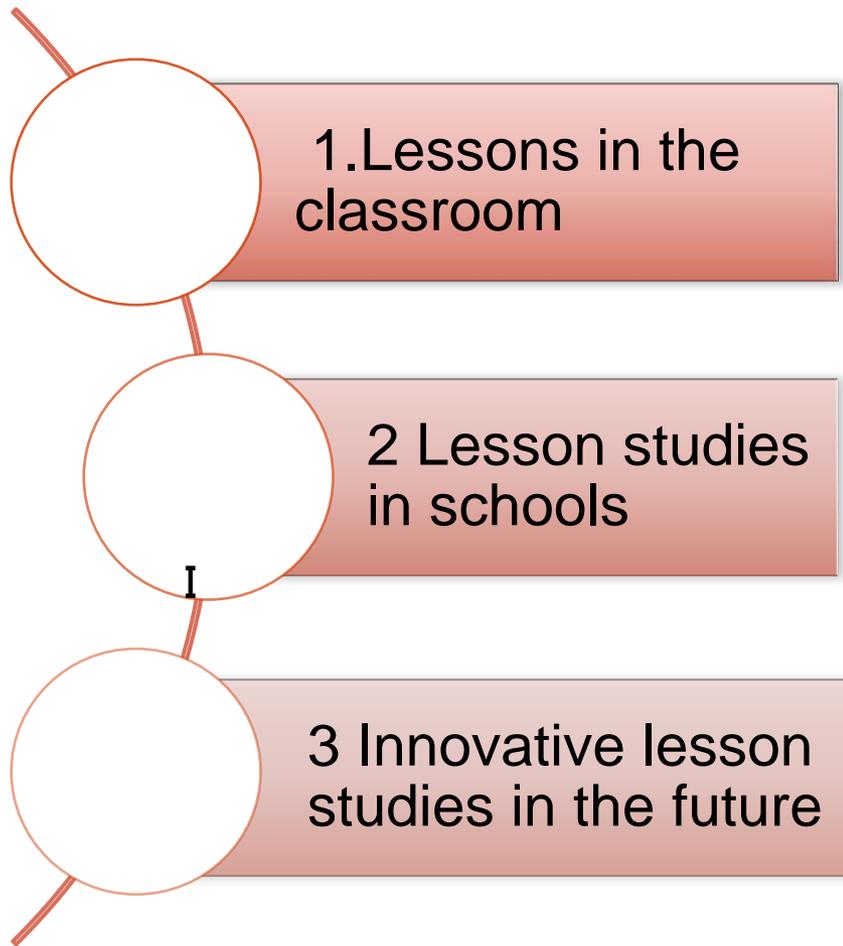
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# Congratulations for 10th anniversary of WALS!



# What is required for innovative professional learning communities?



# Innovative Learning Systems

(at the classroom, school, and support network levels)

## Lessons

- Task, Learning style
- Learning environment
- Communication,
- Teachers' role

## Lesson studies

- Focus of observation
- Communication style
- Participants' role

## Research on Lesson Studies

- Description, analysis



# 1. Background

## A. Characteristics of LS in Japan

## B. LS as PLC

# A. Characteristics of Lesson Studies in Japan

## History

More than 100 years

Top-down

Grassroots

## Variations

Style

Focus

Purpose

Theory

## Support systems

LGA support

Knowledgeable others

Tools

Artifacts

## B. LS as PLC in Japan twenty years

Guarant-  
eed  
deep  
learning

For all  
children  
and  
all teachers

Sharing the joy of  
learning  
Forming an  
identity as  
democratic  
citizens

Pedagogy of Listening and Relationship

# The pedagogy of listening and relationships

- They are valued, means that learning always occurs in between knowledge and is a process of construction by the individual in response to his/her relationships with others. (Rinaldi, 2006),
- Hence, teachers try to listen to children's voices, create and observe relationships between children, create a connection between children and the learning materials, and maintain continuity between preexisting knowledge and emergent ideas.
- Learning means learning from others, taking advantage of others' ideas and the results of their investigations” (Hiebert et al., 1996)

# Points

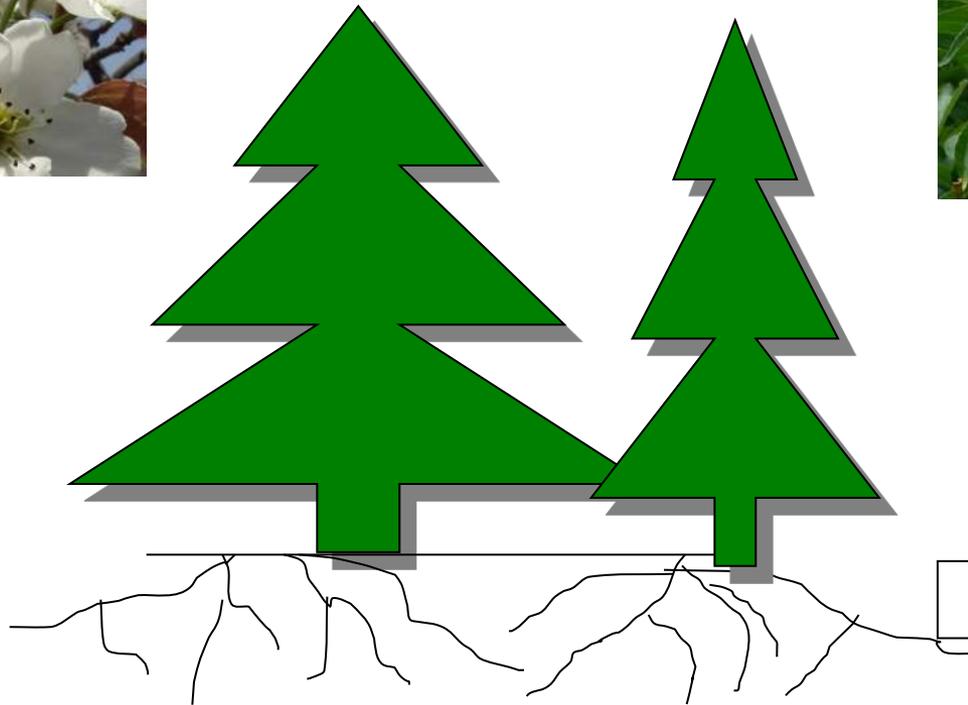
## A Sharing philosophy and vision

- Lesson studies are not a ready-made formula; rather, they are a combination of vision, philosophy, and activity through which a school guarantees the right of learning to all students and professional autonomy for teachers, as well as ensuring a democratic society.
- The ultimate goal of innovation is not the achievement of performance, but rather deep learning for the happiness of the students and the joy of lifelong learning for all children and teachers.

# Sharing visions and philosophies

Strategies and practices vary by school

Learning through difference among classes and schools.



Visions & Philosophies

# Points

## B Innovation for total educational activity system.

- Holding lesson studies as professional learning communities has created transformative change in children's classroom learning, in teachers' professional learning in schools, and in the relationships between practitioners and researchers in the local area.
- Transformative change refers to a constant process with no start or end points; i.e., it is a process of continuous movement in the accumulation of practical solutions to practical problems through variation and expansion (Moss, 2014).

# Cont.

## C. Focus on Learning

- The focus of lesson studies is on learning, not teaching; emphasis is placed on the innovation of design learning systems in the classroom.
- Image of learning

Both the acquisition of knowledge and skills and participation in the learning community in the classroom are emphasized, as well as the authentic world and the expansion of knowledge.

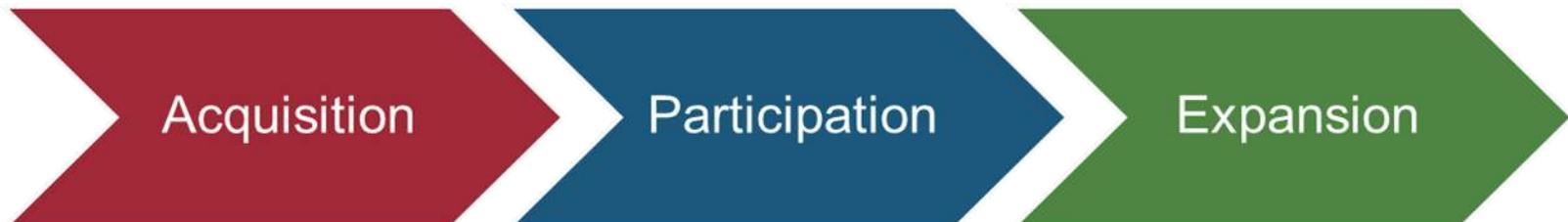
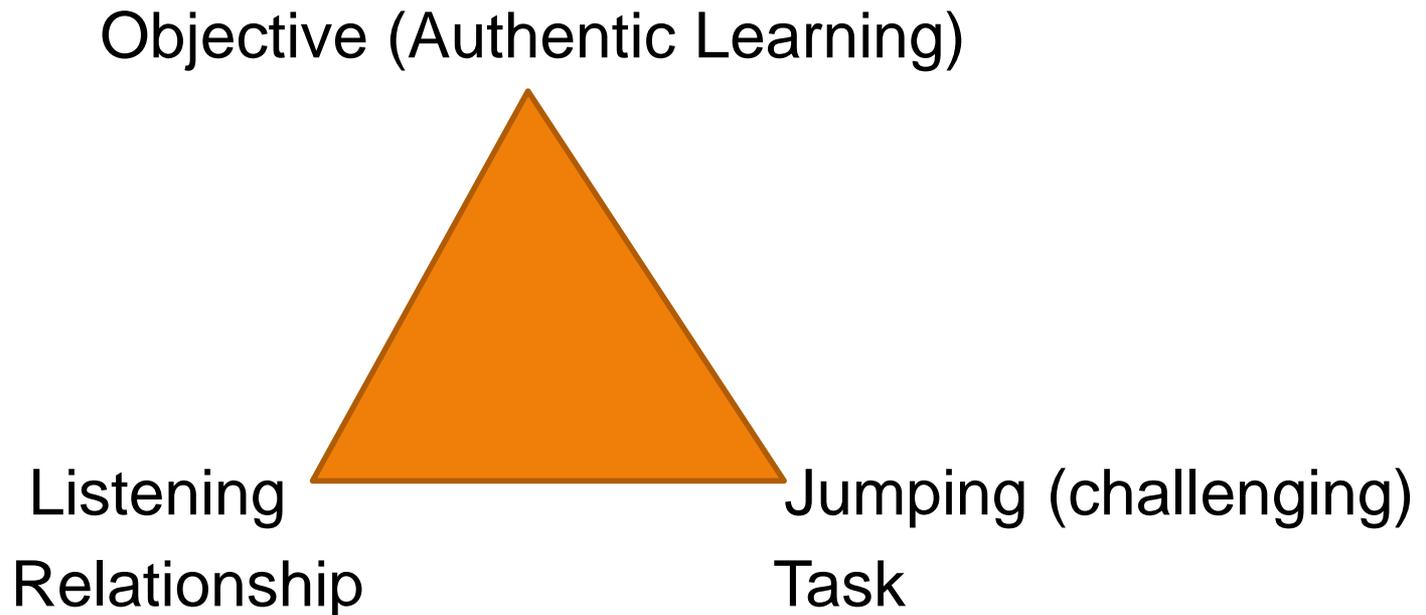


Image of Learning  
(Engestrom & Sannino, 2010)

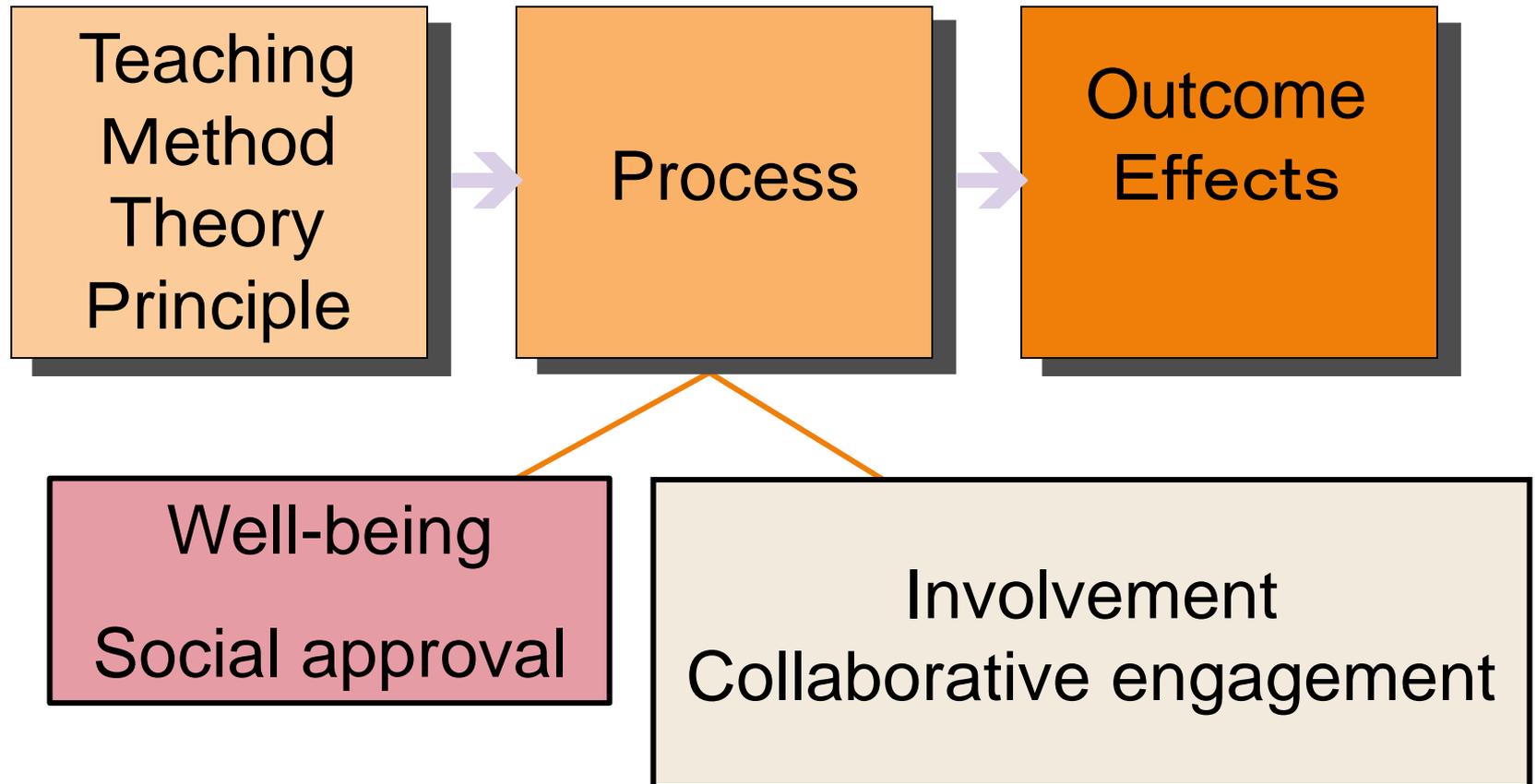
# Triad Conditions of Learning in a Learning Community



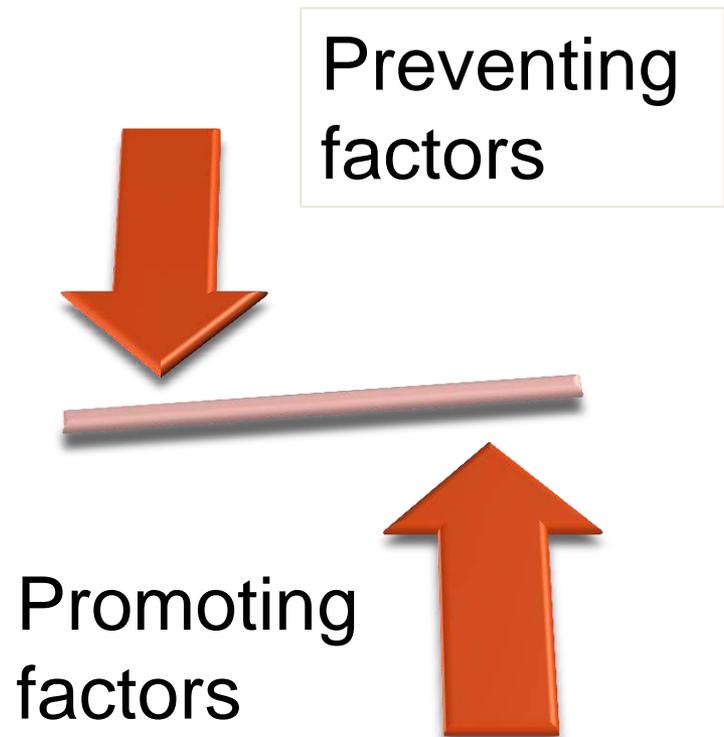
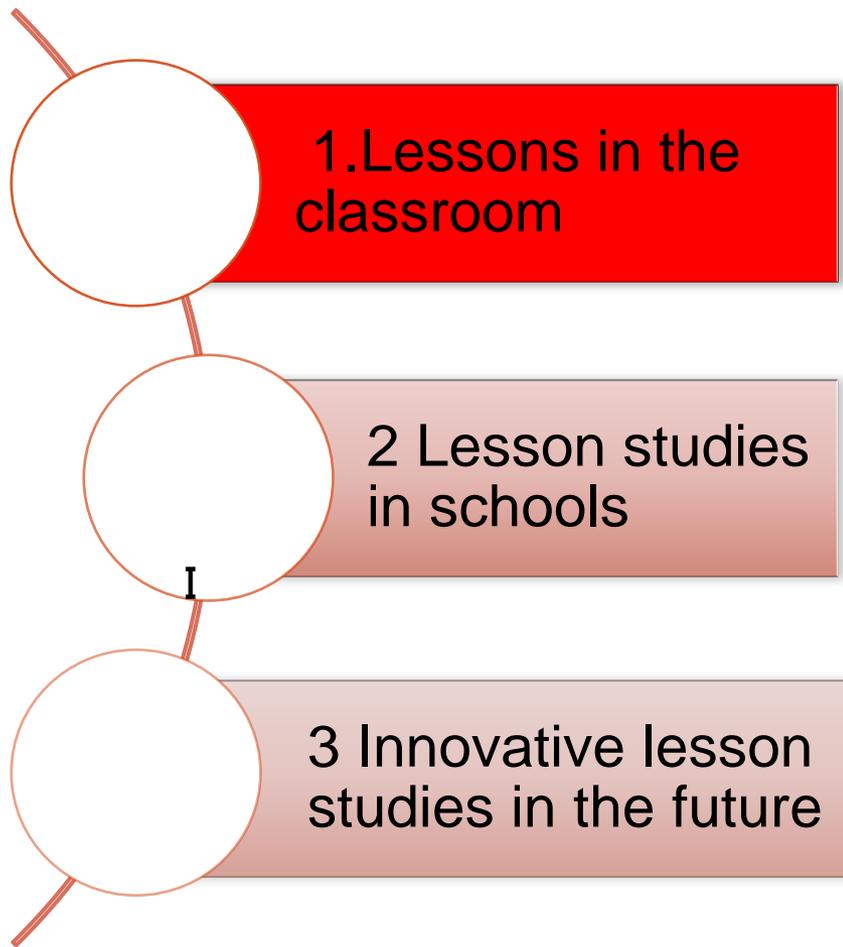
(Sato,2014)

# Process Quality From the Children's View

(Laevers,2006)



# What is required for innovative professional learning communities?



## 2 Innovation in lesson: Changing learning style and Designing challenging task

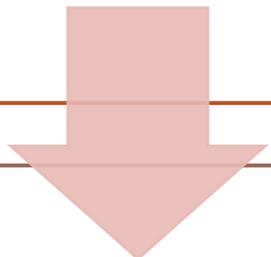
### A Introducing pair work

#### Case 1

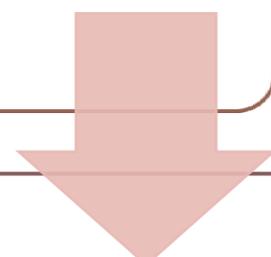
### B Starting point of Collaborative inquiry

#### Case 2

Before. Planning alone,  
Leaning by Individual  
He found the learning gaps between  
children in his class



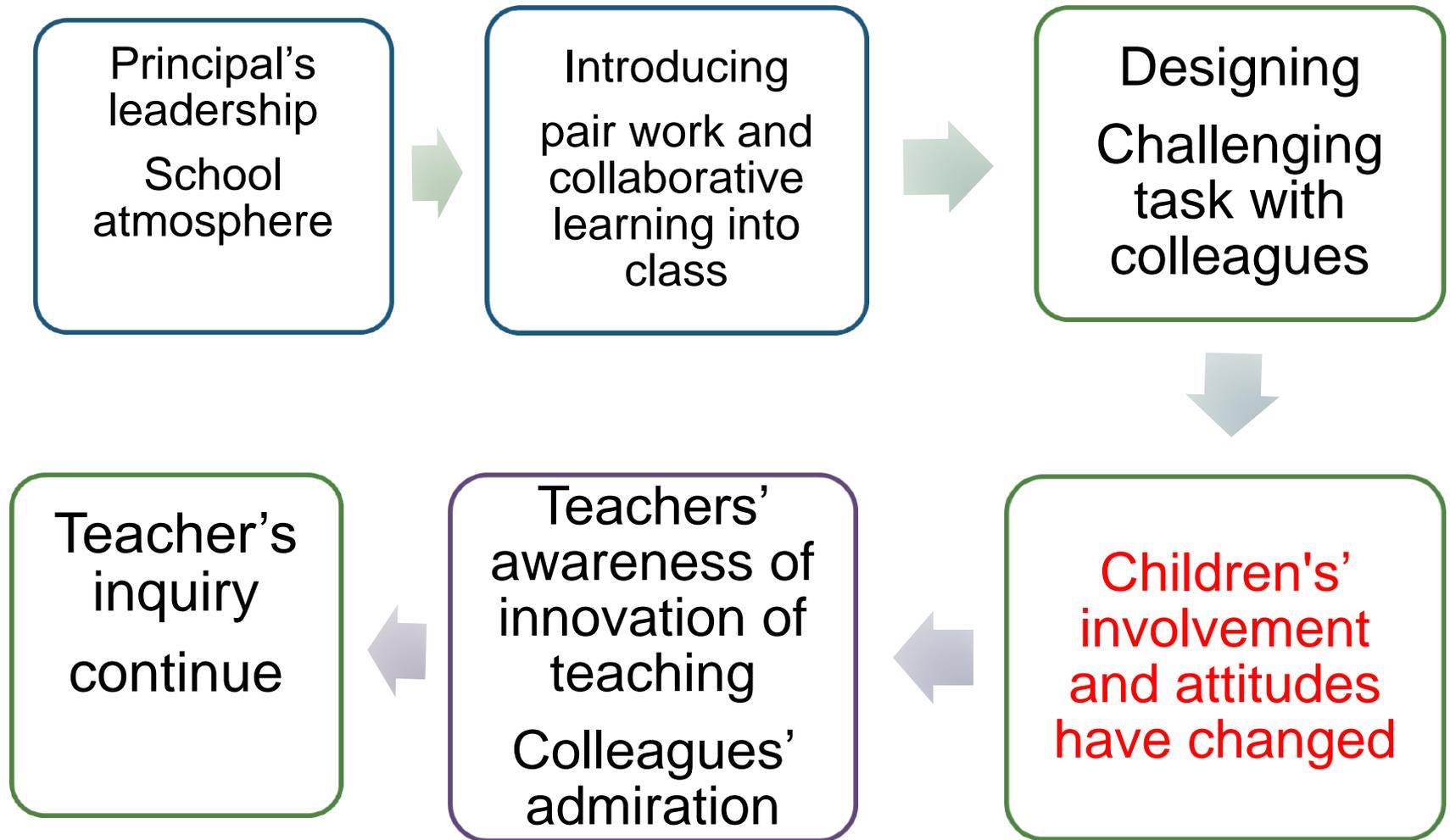
After designing with colleague,  
introducing pair work  
Children are more involved.



Mr. Nagai noticed good reactions from  
change his teaching style,  
He finds how his children are competent.

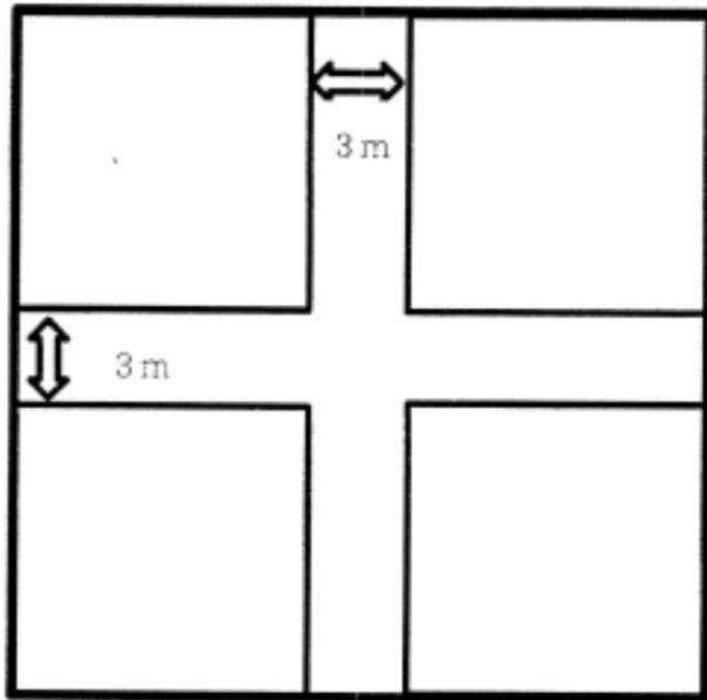
# The process of innovation in lessons

Mr. Nagai



**B Starting point of collaborative inquiry**  
**Case 2 sharing a child's question**

# Math Unit 'Area' 4th grader



A big square of land is divided into four small squares by a 3-meter road, as the figures shows.

The total area of the road is  $117 \text{ m}^2$ .

What is the area of the original big square?

# Video Clip: Research Lesson

## ■ Before starting the lesson

Children wrote in their math lesson diary about what and how they learned in the lesson. (as a part of their routine)

Reviewed the former lesson by showing their notebooks to each other

## ■ Starting the lesson

The teacher passes out a worksheet with today's task.

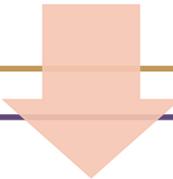
Children read and try to solve the problems by themselves, or with a friend in his/her group.

Teacher finds a child in trouble.

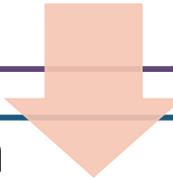
He asks the child to share his difficulties and they think together about a solution.

- Maxim Greene (1995, p. 6) pointed out that ‘The education task is to create situations in which the young are moved to begin to ask in all the tones of voice, ‘Why is this?’

Before: Teachers' role is checking and noticing the students who can solve the problem, who know the correct answer, and who can tell the solution.



After: His role is to listen to the voices and observe the children who have questions and difficulties in the midst of comprehension.



Results: Change of power relationship in the classroom. Deep learning through participation and elaboration, producing collective efficacy



The lesson is not prescribed on lesson planning sheets, but meetings take place for unexpected inquiry and authentic thinking

## Promoting factors are:

Image  
of the child

Image of the  
lesson  
process

Inquiry of  
challenging  
learning tasks

Teachers'  
mind set

Children as  
change agents



Open ended (avoiding closure)  
Open minded (welcoming the unexpected)  
Open hearted (valuing differences)  
(Moss, 2013)

# The process of innovation in lessons

1

- Observing other lessons and grasping concrete images
- Finding model lessons with aspirational aspects

2

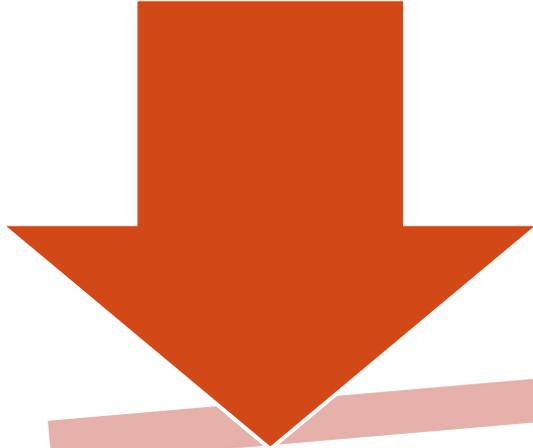
- Modeling such lessons by him/herself and feeling discouraged

3

- Designing the challenging a task by him/herself
- Finding the strength of the children in the class by myself and with my colleagues

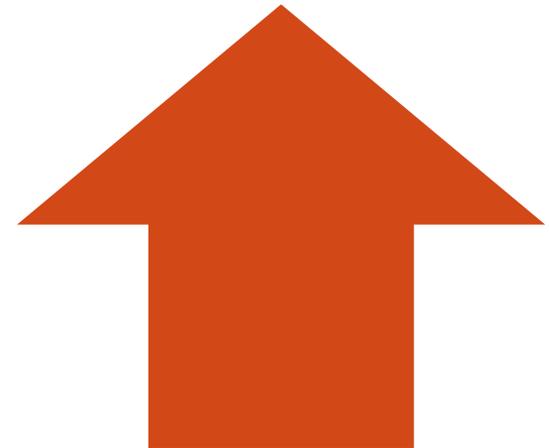
# Promoting and Preventing factors

(Ishibashi et al., 2016)

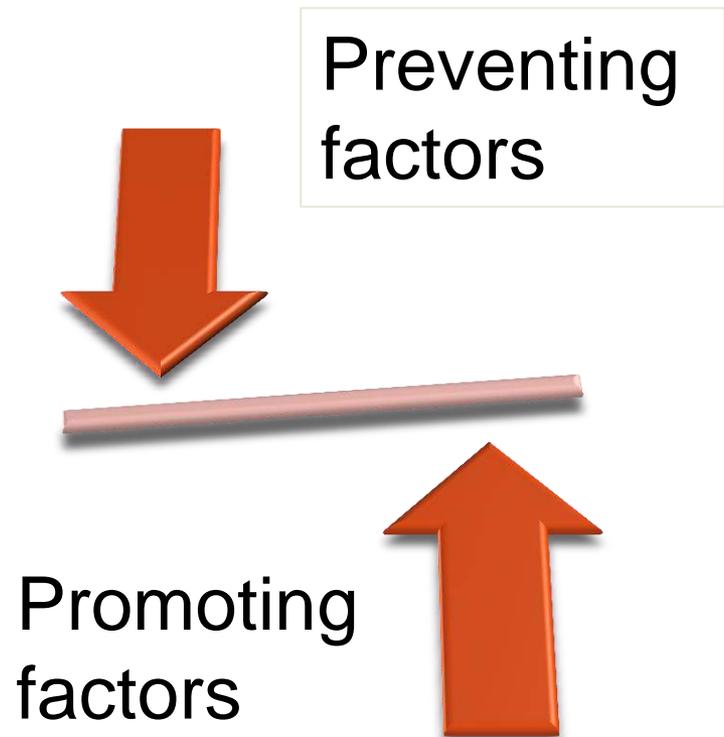
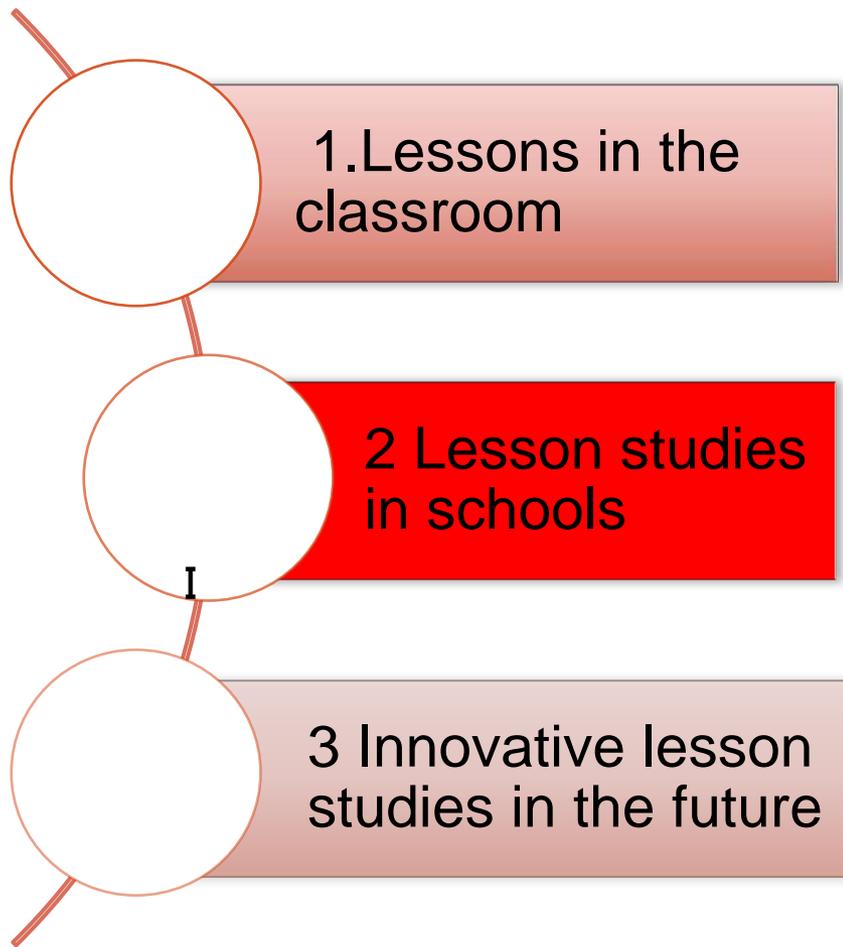


1. Effects on performance
- 2 Positive response from children
- 3 Good feeling

- 1 Unarticulated anxiety reluctance resistance to new method
- 2 Anxiety about effectiveness and performance
- 3 Anxiety about a lack of concrete strategies and skills
- 4 Anxiety about students' personal relationships



# What is required for innovative professional learning communities?



# Difficulties of LS (Akita & Mukuda 2014)

## Level 1

- Inactive. It is difficult to talk frankly.
- The teachers who talk is limited.

## 2

- It is difficult to coordinate, because there are different ideas and beliefs about the lesson.
- It is not beneficial for research lesson teachers.

## 3

- Active discussion, but practical knowledge is not accumulated in the school year by year.
- It is difficult to connect reflection to enactment of the next lesson.

### 3 Innovation in lesson studies at the school level

A Improvement in the quality of each step, to deepen professional learning

Case 3: Observing collaborative learning

B Pedagogical leadership and school culture

Case 4: Sharing learning stories

# Innovation of lesson studies in schools

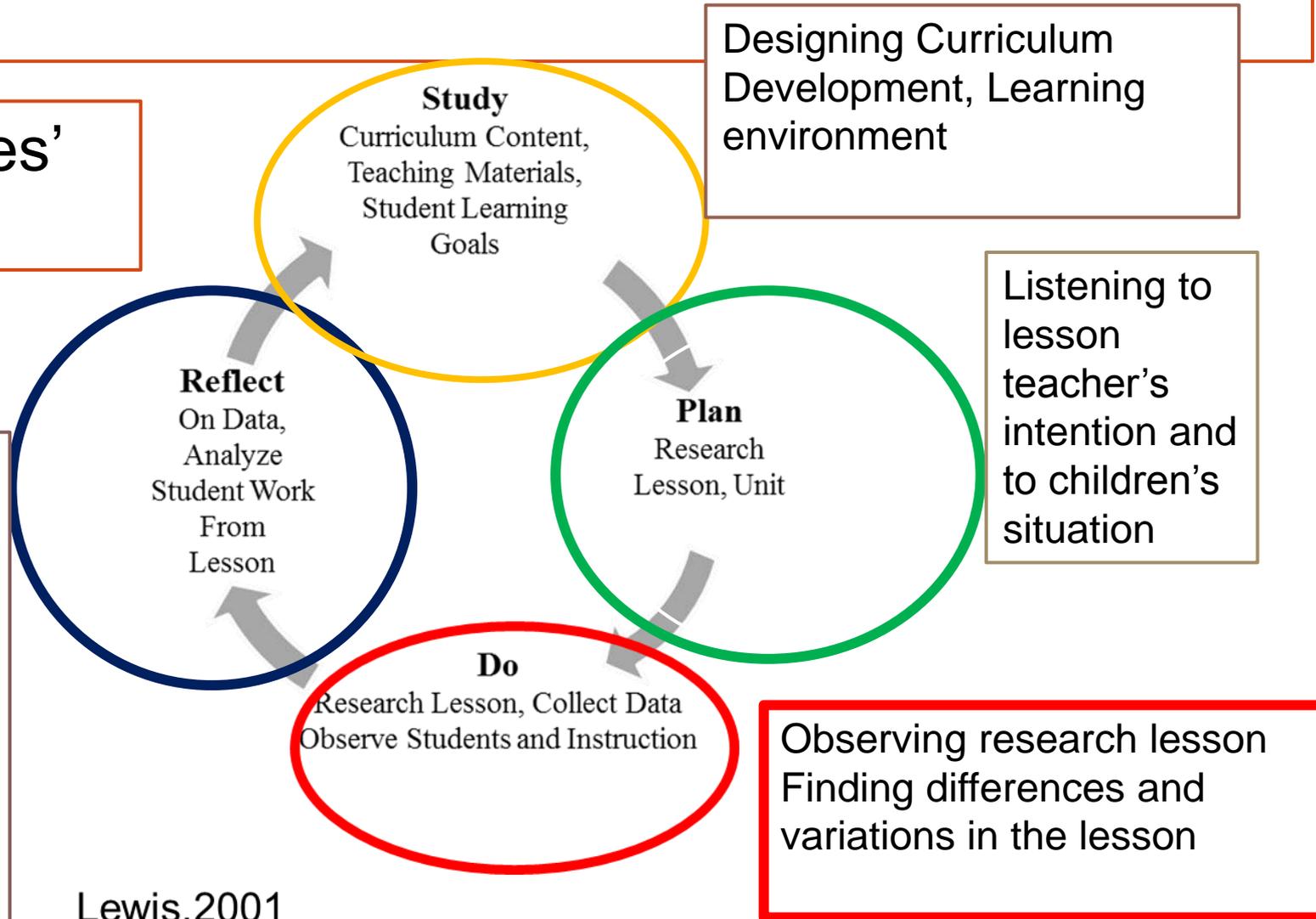
Level 1: Improving the quality of each step to deepen professional learning

## Colleagues' role in LS

Documenting children's stories

Making Images of ideal lessons and eliciting desired principles

Lewis, 2001



## Case 3: Social studies lesson at Komochi Junior High School, History unit "After World War I"

Unit: "Why couldn't Japan stop its war with China?"

### **A. Introduction part :**

Lesson study teacher explains the task. Students were asked to identify the factors related to the war, to write them on cards in advance, and to bring them to the lesson.

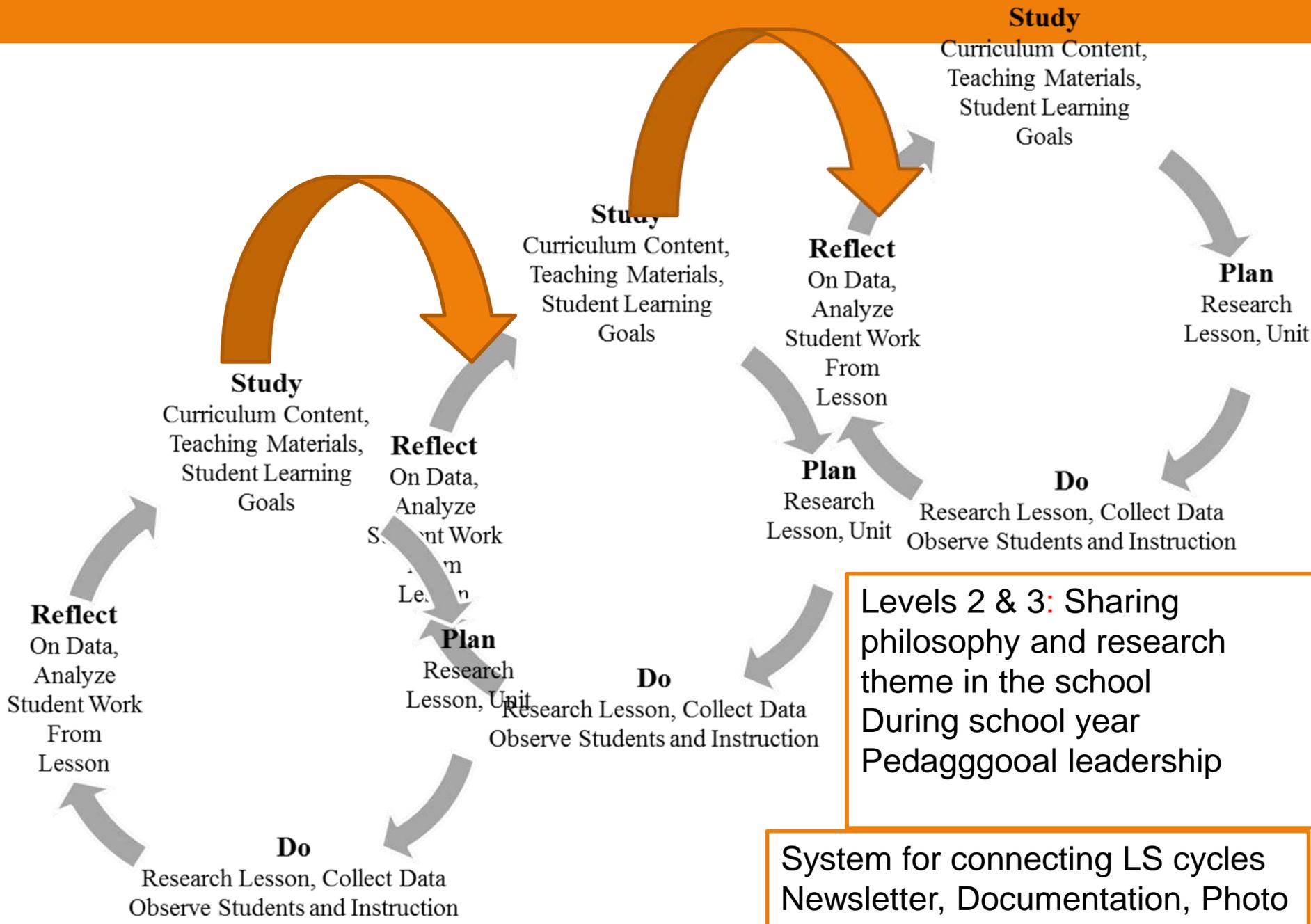
**B. Collaborative learning part :** Students pursue the task together in small groups

**C. Conclusion part:** The teacher appoints one group and the students introduce their ideas and discuss them together.

# What is observation ?

- Listening to children's animated voices as music and appreciating their hearts and minds as the harmony of orchestration. (Kurahashi, 1951)
- Observation means to see "invisible things," using "visible things" as cues; "interpretation of the child's behavior in front of you" means "how to accept the child's behavior," which reflects the observer's being and forces the observer to "continue being the observer." (Tsumori, 1974)
- Observation where an observer can relate intersubjectively with a child and become a child is required. (Kujiraoka, 1999)

B. Pedagogical leadership and school culture  
Case 4 Sharing learning stories



**Levels 2 & 3: Sharing  
philosophy and research  
theme in the school  
During school year  
Pedagogical leadership**

**System for connecting LS cycles  
Newsletter, Documentation, Photo  
ICT tools**

# A letter from a principal

- An e-mail from a principal in the area damaged by the earthquake and contaminated by radiation:

*‘Our school will start the school year from April 11<sup>th</sup>, five days later than usual. We suffered from a cut of our lifeline and feel anxiety about radioactivity, but we are gradually recovering our daily lives. Please come to LS on May 13<sup>th</sup>. It is our pleasure to do a lesson study with you, even in this unusual situation. The lesson study will be a spiritual nourishment of our school, and it is a chance to empower the teachers’ minds and hearts. Our mission is to take care of our children through lessons in the classroom.’ (Hozan Elementary School in Fukushima, April 1, 2011)*

- Since 1983, this school has voluntarily hosted an annual open research lesson conference, without financial aid from outside.
- It has been held every year for the past 33 years. The school culture has been passed from leader teachers to new comer and younger teachers.

# Learning stories (Carr, 2011)

point	Learning dispositions toward (observation)	Key competences
Belonging	Taking an interest in participation	Participating and contributing
Well being	Being involved Focus and flow	Managing oneself
Exploration	Persisting with uncertainty and challenges Resourcefulness	Thinking
Communication	Expressing ideas and feelings Dialogue	Using language symbols, and texts
Contribution	Taking responsibility Kindness	Relating to others

# Role of leaders: Experienced teachers

- Leaders of schools' LS teams help to make learning visible and point out critical moments by using photos and DVDs. They articulate what is happening & how it relates to each other. They identify the excellence of children and the teacher in every lesson.

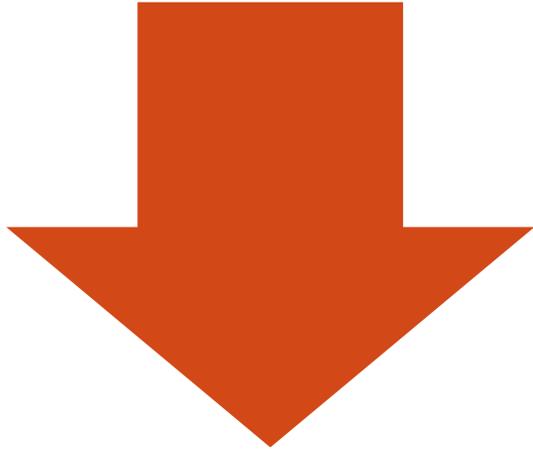
‘Hozan’s photo studio in LS.’ School identity

- The role of knowledgeable others in school and outside of school is important. Showing how to observe learning trajectories.
- To make schools' lesson studies sustainable, we must develop teachers' connoisseurship of how to observe relations, narrate children's learning, and place value on sharing the joy of observing children's important factors.

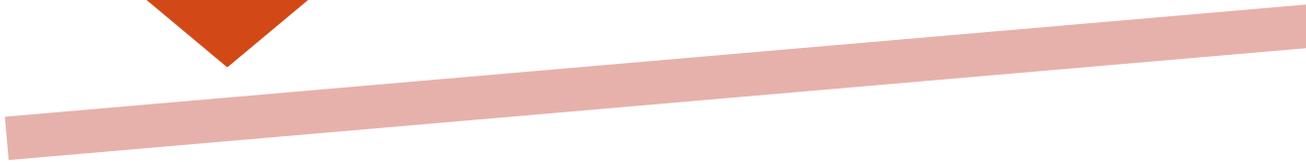
# Reflections on meaning-making

- The theory of learning continues to be based on the pedagogy of relationships and listening (Rinaldi, 2006).
- Teachers reflect on meaning-making for children in an embedded, emergent learning context and reflect on mediated academic tasks, learning materials and the tools used, and the learning environment where connections are readily made.
- Teachers reflect on their missions based on the cases of the research lesson by sharing their experiences, uncertainties, and concerns with one another.

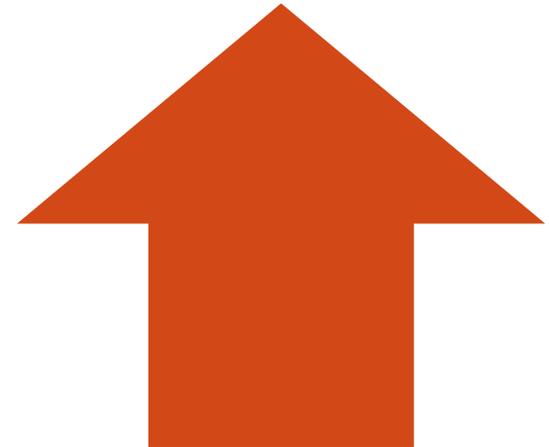
# Promoting and Preventing factors in LS



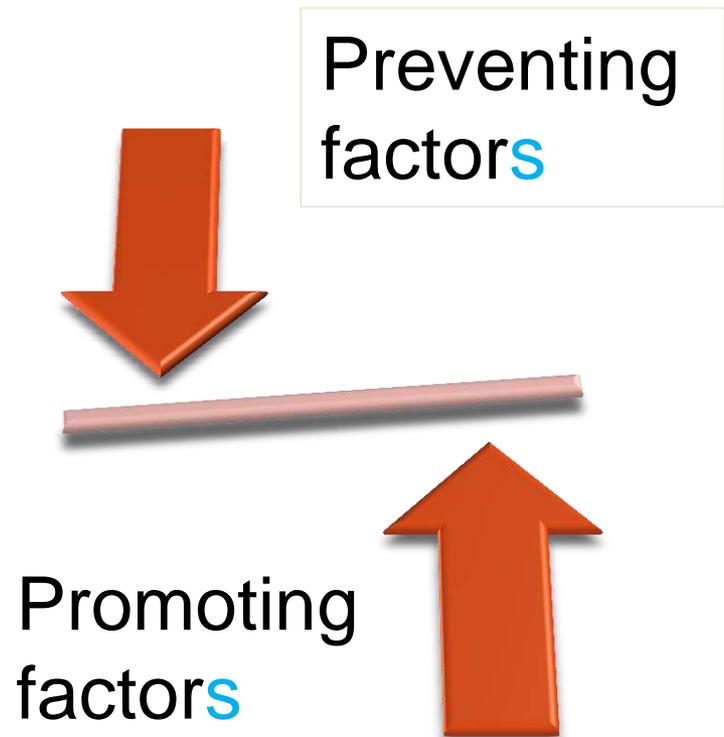
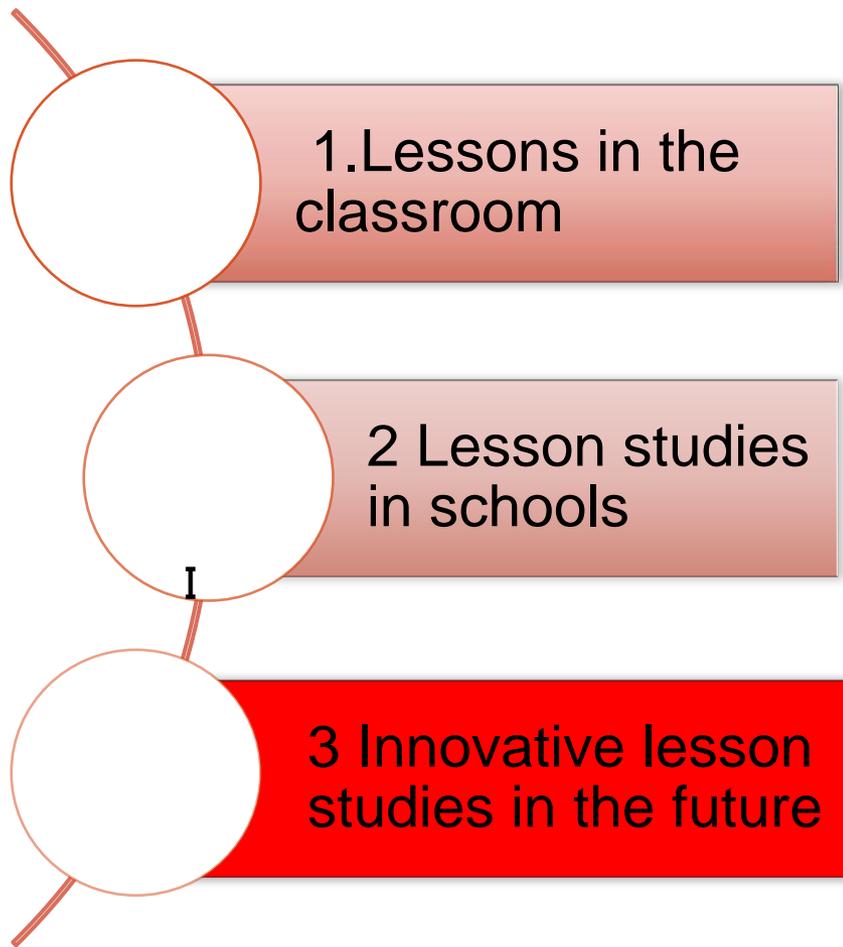
1. Pedagogical leadership
2. Collegiality among staff
3. Pride of School Identity



- 1 Too-high workload
- 2 Paternalism
- 3 tracking the top down movement



# What is required for innovative professional learning communities?



# Innovation of organizational systems

## time

- Time allocation and management
- Not Time as *Chronos* but to time as *Kairosi*

## place

- From Central to local, peripheral
- From Lesson as stage show to meeting place (interface place)

## group

- From deficit model approach to the positive potential approach,
- “becoming” with respect and trust

# Authentic, deep learning required

## “Problem solving” to “Problem setting”

Time

- Learning in a lesson
- Project-based learning

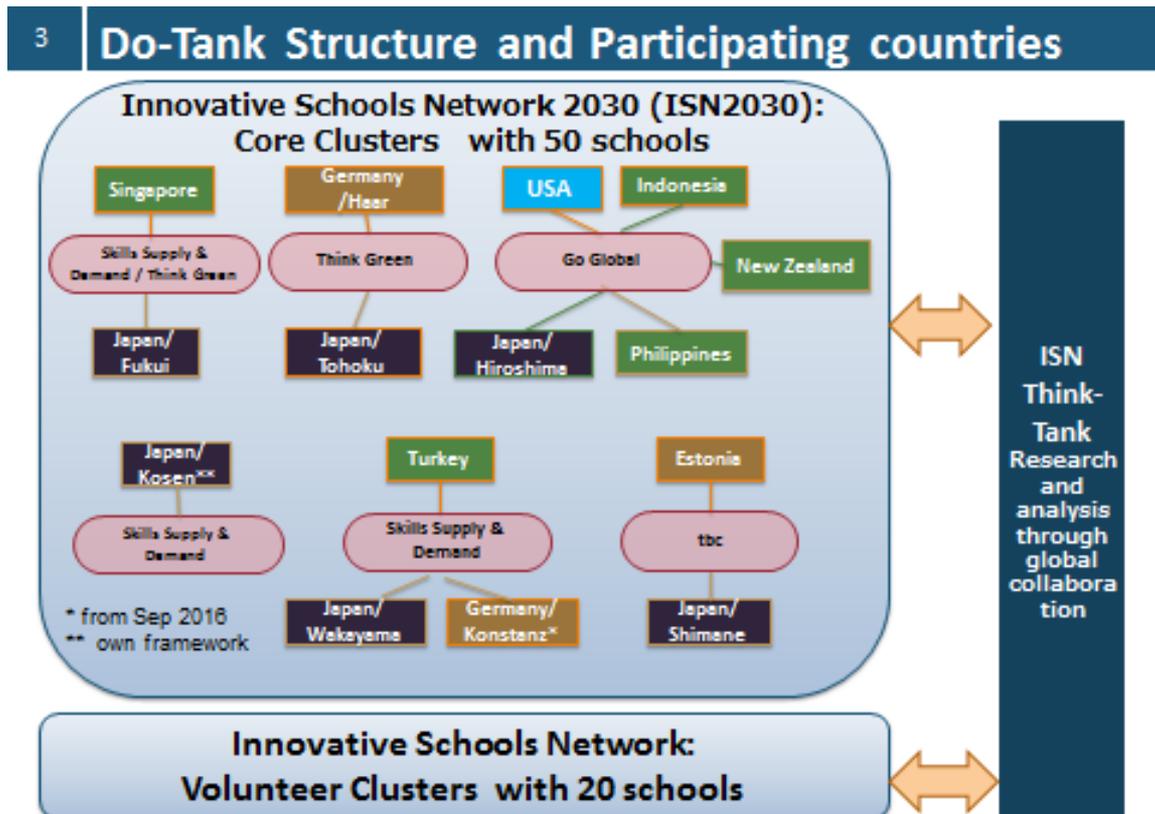
Crossing  
Borders

- Homogeneous group
- Heterogeneous group

# Project based learning

- Lesson study as project based learning:  
Documentation and Assessment

1c Round table  
3<sup>rd</sup> 13:00-14:30



# Conclusion and future issues

Innovation in lessons and lesson studies as PLCs are vehicles for making children's learning deeper and changing society in a democratic way.

There are many barriers in teachers' minds and within school norms.

- One principal told teachers after an LS conference,
  - “You cannot change any others and your work in the past, but you can change yourself and your lessons in the future.
  - Let’s build up lesson study for the children and teachers’ happiness and future.’



- Education is not the filling of a pail,
  - But the lighting of a fire.

--W. B. Yeats

Let's share our vision and professional wisdom at WALs as a worldwide PLC and challenge innovation collaboratively.



Thank you for paying attention!