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Exploring the Impact of Developing Collaborative Learning Communities through Lesson Study with Academics Seeking to Develop Shared Pedagogical Literacy

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Over recent years, in the United Kingdom, there has been considerable change within initial teacher education (ITE) and its taught content. This has been brought about by the changes in Government and the increased complexity in the number of different routes through which training can be provided. The Carter Review (DfE 2014/15) was commissioned to review effective ITE practice and went on to make recommendations as to where improvements needed to be made. One of the areas for improvement was ITE taught content due to the wide variation and potential gaps in provision. The Government produced a new framework for core content (DfE 2016).

With the increased challenge of securing well trained teachers ITE Higher Education Institute (HEI) Partnerships are exploring ways to develop their learning communities to enable flexibility and engagement in change. This change becomes more viable as infrastructures and processes create a mechanism for engagement, review and discussion (Lave and Wenger, 1998, Senge 1993).

This project was set up to explore the impact of lesson study in developing a shared curriculum narrative for those developing and teaching the ITE content at one Higher Education Institute. Whilst also exploring a methodology for developing these collaborative learning communities to facilitate development and change.

The initial research questions were:

What is the impact of lesson study on Initial teacher educators and their training teachers in the collaborative development and delivery of a core component of the ITE programme?

What shared pedagogical literacy could be developed through this process?

The three ITE practitioners engaged in this project were all aware of the lesson study methodology. The study focused on the planning and teaching of one core element, Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship, to 140 secondary training teachers. The planning sessions were recorded. The focus of the study was clearly articulated and the learning challenge and how training teachers' participation through lecture style could be facilitated was considered.

During the taught session two pairs of training teachers were observed and subsequently interviewed. The ITE observer subsequently interviewed the ITE practitioners who had co-planned and co-delivered the session.

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Designing Lesson Study Experiences for Prospective Teachers at University Level

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Lesson study has been recognized by many practitioners and educational researchers to have advantages in improving the quality of learning conducted by teachers. Thus, prospective teachers should be introduced and equipped with the concepts and experiences on how to implement lesson study in practice. Therefore, teacher educators should encourage prospective teachers to have curiosity and passion like the teacher educators have in striving for continuous improvement of learning quality through lesson study. In this study, I, as a teacher educator, designed two stages of learning experienced by the prospective teachers in a lesson study, namely introduction stage, and engagement stage. At the introduction stage, the prospective teachers became the object of the lesson study conducted by the teacher educators in each semester within the first two years. At the engagement stage, the prospective teachers were fully engaged in a set of activities in the lesson study conducted by the teacher educators for the courses they have ever taken.

Key words: lesson study, prospective teachers, university level

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Developing Active Learners with Critical 21st Century skills- Landscape Reports and Mutual Evaluation to Build Lesson Planning Skills-

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1 Introduction

Developing students' capacities to be active learners with 21st century skills is a key emphasis for educators in social studies and civics.

In Japan, an emphasis now placed on incorporating active learning, and it is encouraged by Ministry of Education in every school category.

In this paper, I posit that the best method for university students' social studies education is through field work, inquiry, and cooperative mutual evaluation.

Through this method, I show how students develop their ability to create materials for social studies lessons, especially regarding, geography education and design lessons for elementary school pupils.

2 Hypothesis

The Kolb's (1984) model is remarkable and useful not only studies for adult education studies but also for doctoral work.

The author incorporates mutual evaluation as a reflection of the social studies method lecture in a teacher teaching university.

3 Practice

The practice involved:

1) Goal of the lesson: active learning

The students learned the importance of using local region for making materials, to develop and implement social studies lessons.

2) Method

In my lecture on active learning, I asked the students to use the local region to develop lesson, which was due in two weeks.

3) Results

During the Golden Week, holiday in Japan, 43 students in my lecture engaged in this task. They generated the following reports.

(Student A)

Supermarket: Student A reported on various supermarket devices meant for consumers.

(Student B)

Student B reported that Yagoro-don is a monument of the great size legendary and historical person in Osumi-machi town, Kagoshima, South Kyushu area.

(Student C)

Student C reported that the regional industry center facilities have been instrumental in developing the regional economy.

(Student D)

Student D reported that the god of rice field: Tano Kansa, is revered in the South Kyushu area.

All students' reports of the landscape were very nice

They expressed honest feelings, and provided, good photographs of the landscape, as well as creating teaching materials that were effective for the study of course.

4 Students Impressions

The students gave positive feedback on the lesson, including:

‘Many photos made by colleague fascinated us, . . . , if we use them in elementary school, the children will enjoy and study a lot from these photos and questions in classroom as well ‘ and ‘ I learned a lot from other persons who had themes of place and landscape that I can't notice in daily life. ‘

The students learned from each other through mutual evaluation, which is a meaningful learning method in active learning like this.

5 Conclusion

In Japan, regional studies are covered in the third and fourth grades social studies textbook. Teachers in the elementary school, consistently say that this content is difficult to teach because of a lack of teaching materials, compared to, for example, the industry studies section in fifth grade or the history and civics content for sixth grade.

However, if the teachers work on development of materials in their local region, such as taking photos of landscape in order to make original teaching materials from daily life, teaching regional studies in the elementary school becomes much easier and more interesting.

In addition, based on Kolb's (1984) model, mutual evaluation as reflection can be utilized by exhibiting the landscape reports within the lecture.

University students need to develop the ability to design social studies lessons.

Landscape reports made by the students, combined with mutual evaluation are an example of good active learning to build skills for designing social studies lessons for students in the teacher training university.