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Images of Lesson Study in Three Japanese Schools in Fukui: Organising Professional Learning as a Multi-Tiered Learning Spiral

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Background of the Topic

Lesson studies in Japan vary widely in form, structure, and purpose. However, English-speaking audiences rarely get opportunities to see and understand these variations. We hope to capture some of the nuanced and unwritten variations and aspects of Japanese lesson studies. In particular, some Japanese educators structure professional learning in a learning spiral framework (see Theoretical Framing). In this roundtable session, we discuss the University of Fukui Department of Professional Development of Teachers' (DPDT) approach to this framework and how it is used to support lesson study in schools.

Purpose of Presentation

The purpose of this session is to share three cases of lesson study in Fukui, Japan. To provide images of lesson study in each setting, we ask, how is the activity of lesson study situated in each school? We look at how each case uses a multi-tiered learning spiral framework. Three cases (elementary, junior high, and high school) were purposefully selected to represent different approaches to lesson study and implementation of a learning spiral framework.

Participants will learn about a learning spiral framework as articulated by DPDT and lesson study in three settings. Discussants will facilitate small group discussions where participants will be expected to discuss the learning spiral framework as well as share their experiences with lesson study and organizational approaches to supporting professional learning.

Agenda for Session

- Introduction and Background of Fukui Lesson Studies (5 minutes)
- Introduction to Spiral Learning Framework (5 minutes)
- Discussion of Lesson Study in Each School (45 minutes)
- Small Group Discussions (20 minutes)
- Summary of Discussions and Spiral Learning in Each School (15 minutes)

Presenters and Roles

The moderator and discussants are educators from DPDT. These educators have various

school-based roles and work closely to support teachers and their assigned schools in engaging in reflective lesson study through a learning spiral framework.

Moderator:

Will introduce the session and discussants, keep track of time, and coordinate the session activities.

- Elizabeth Hartmann

Discussants:

Will share about the learning spiral and lesson study in his or her setting and facilitate small group discussions.

- DPDT Approach to the Learning Spiral Framework: Masato Kosaka
- Elementary School: Mai Kishino • Junior High School: Pauline Mangulabnan, Yoshiko

Hambara

- High School: Wataru Hanai, Wang Linfeng

Theoretical Framing: Multi-Tiered Learning Spiral

We use a learning spiral framework based on concepts from Dewey's (1938) experience and reflection, Schon's reflection-in-action (1983), and teacher learning documented in practice records (e.g. Yanagisawa (ed.), 1995) Drawing from these concepts, we support student, teacher, and school learning through lesson studies and DPDT's graduate programs organized in multi-tiered learning spirals with the components below (Yanagisawa, 2011).

- Engagement in/Identification of Problem(s)
- Planning • Construction
- Presentation/Expression
- Reflection

This learning spiral frames learning as a continuous inquiry-based process, where one learning serves as the basis for the next inquiry. Student, teacher, and school learning are each conceptualized using this spiral model and represent the three tiers in (or multi-tiered nature of) our framework. With this longitudinal approach to learning, lesson studies are part of a continuous cycle of inquiry and learning, not stand alone activities.

Findings and Contributions

This roundtable session complements purpose of WALS by 1) providing additional images of current lesson study efforts in Japan; 2) situating lesson study in each school's activities; and, 3) providing a framework for supporting teachers' longitudinal professional learning. Our findings, discussed in the session, provide images of how the same learning spiral framework is taken up in different ways across the three settings.