

The logo features the acronym 'EVRI' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Below it, the Japanese text '教育ビジョン研究センター' (Education Vision Research Center) is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The background of the logo is a light blue hexagon with a white geometric pattern of interconnected lines and dots, resembling a molecular or network structure. This hexagon is set against a larger background of a grid of hexagons in various shades of blue and grey, with a faint aerial view of a city visible through the grid.

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# Lesson Study Manual for Teacher Educators

International Edition



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### **EVRI研究プロジェクト叢書 Vol. 3**

#### **Lesson Study Manual for Teacher Educators International Edition**

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# Preface

## the purpose and background of the lesson study manual

The following simple questions can be posed regarding the purpose of this lesson study manual.

(a) Why did you create the lesson study manual in Japanese, English, and Spanish?


(b) Why are the pictures in the manual not Japanese scenes?

(c) Why did the Educational Vision Research Institute (EVRI) republish the lesson study manual in June 2020, after more than four years since the first publication in March 2016?

The official answers to these questions are presented in the "Conclusion" on page 35 of the manual. In this preface, nevertheless, I would like to provide my own answers to these questions.

Hiroshima University organized a large interdisciplinary project team from April 2010 to March 2016 to support a professional development program of the faculty of Educational Sciences at the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. I was literally the last member of the vast project team, who sat in the back seat. The project vision mentioned by the members at that time is as follows. "We would like to contribute directly to the educational reform in the Dominican Republic; however, owing to insufficient money, manpower, and time, we at Hiroshima University were not able to tackle this issue immediately. Therefore, we assigned high priority to professional development for empowering proficient educators to effectively educate teachers in the Dominican Republic. We aim to indirectly support the educational reform in the elementary and secondary schools by supporting the teacher education reform in the university. In other words, we believe that the change in Dominican education should be implemented by the Dominican teacher educators themselves. A lesson study seems to be a suitable methodology to achieve two goals. If Dominican professors can utilize the lesson study for their professional development, it would enable them to develop not only a sense of collegiality in the newly established Educational Sciences department but also greater interest in further improving the quality of elementary and secondary education on the basis of the experience gained through the lesson study by improving their own lessons."

Finally, the team decided to publish the lesson study manual during the final phase of the project in order to encourage the establishment of sustainable lesson study teams in the Dominican Republic. Thus, this manual serves as a



product of the international exchange. The original manual was written in Japanese by the Hiroshima University team; it was translated into Spanish under the supervision of Dominican professors and experts, and then into English. The Spanish edition was also expected to serve as a start-up kit for setting up a lesson study project in South American countries.

However, the lesson study manual, developed in three languages, lost its opportunity for dissemination owing to the sudden closure of the project, and it could not be promoted beyond the project members. There are two reasons for republishing the manual under the supervision of the EVRI. First, we wish to publish the valuable products that were developed by the international/interdisciplinary collaboration so that dual professional development can be realized for teacher educators and teachers. Second, we had recognized the lack of compact and well-organized materials for meeting the practical needs of the EVRI's international guests who are interested in the lesson study.

Fortunately, the authors of the first edition agreed with EVRI's proposal to republish the manual. I express my heartfelt gratitude to all the people who supported this publication, especially to the project leader, Dr. Kenji Tanahashi, on behalf of the EVRI. I sincerely hope that this manual will be further studied and utilized, and a revised version will be published soon.

Director of Education Vision Research Institute (EVRI)  
Hiroshima University

Kazuhiro Kusahara



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# 1. Introducing Lesson Studies

## The Structure and Use of this Book

This book aims to introduce lesson studies as a way of raising the quality of teacher education and improving the quality of lessons for incumbent school teachers. Potential readers are teacher educators, who are involved in training teachers at higher education institutions such as universities.

Lesson studies is simple. It includes lesson planning, implementation, feedback, and lesson development. All teachers engage in these activities as part of a daily routine, but a notable feature of lesson studies is that it should be implemented in collaboration with other teachers. Another feature is that it targets lessons for research. Therefore, the word “study” in the term “lesson study” means “to investigate.” There are three advantages to lesson studies implemented with other teachers. First, it makes it possible to develop our own lessons. Second, it allows us to investigate new teaching strategies and techniques as well as curriculum development to produce better lessons. Finally, it leads to the creation of a pedagogical culture as the educational foundation in each country, which promotes a sense of solidarity among teachers in schools and departments. The complete approach that exerts such effects is lesson studies.

This manual is intended to meet the various needs of teachers who aspire to use lesson studies in their classrooms. Therefore, we consider the needs of (1) teachers who will use lesson studies for the first time; (2) teachers who have already used lesson studies several times, and (3) teachers who want to acquire a good understanding of lesson studies. Chapter 3, which explains the steps of lesson studies in detail, is important for all types of teachers mentioned above, as it discusses the process of using lesson studies in six steps. These steps contain additional activities called “Key Elements,” which explain the sequence of lesson studies. Readers can also use them as checklists to determine whether they have achieved the goal of each step.

Each step is shown with the Key Elements with Comments that explain technical terms and concepts.

### **When should a reader start reading this manual?**

If you do not know anything about lesson studies, you should first experience it. We recommend that you read about the Key Elements in the six steps mentioned in Chapter 3. Steps 1 to 6 gives the basic order of lesson studies comprising Key Elements of teaching activities and strategies that teachers use in each step of their lessons.

Step 1 is the warm-up stage for lesson studies. This crucial step should be practiced in a group. We strongly recommend that you follow Step 1. After this initial step, if you feel like practicing further, you can proceed from Steps 2 to 5.

Step 2 is concerned with lesson planning. Step 3 explains how to conduct a lesson. Step 4 discusses the analysis of the research lesson as feedback from all participants of lesson studies. Finally, Step 5 shows how to develop further lessons on the basis of feedback received. Individual teachers are already going through these steps daily in their own manner. The aim of lesson studies, however, is for a group of teachers to conduct all of these procedures by following a prescribed format. After you perform Step 5, you should return to Step 2 again and practice it several times. Next, perform Step 6, which concerns how to increase the number of group members who are planning lesson studies. Whenever you add new group members, return to Step 2 and start again. What is important is that you try out and experience this process.

If you have already observed lessons given by your colleagues or allowed your own lessons to be observed, read the Comments given for each step of Chapter 3 “Tips” and “Columns 1-6.” This will help you understand the goals behind the teaching activities introduced in the Key Elements so that you can improve the quality of your activities. If you or your group members/colleagues have questions before or during lesson studies, see Chapter 5, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), which answers questions from overseas teachers.

If you wish to have a better understanding of or to develop lesson studies, we recommend that you read Chapter 1 and the Comments after each step in Chapter 3, which discusses the fundamental techniques and the teaching philosophy behind lesson studies and the Key Elements. As you read these sections, you should mentally compare the material with the teaching policy that is the basis for the pedagogical culture in your own country, because this material has been developed on the basis of the history of Japanese education. Hence, these techniques and this philosophy may not always be suitable for every context, such as problems that a school in a country faces and situations teachers have to confront, but they will nevertheless help you understand lesson studies.

As you actually practice lesson studies continually, many questions may come to your mind. You may wonder how to include the lesson studies approach in the context of teaching in your institutions or country. We hope that you will find solutions to these questions, but do not be disappointed if you do not find them. The fact that you cannot find the answers proves that you are on the path of creating your lesson studies.

Chapter 4 comprises concluding remarks, including the reason why this book was published and a message from the authors. As stated in this chapter, this manual is “the first step on a ladder to lesson studies, but it should be discarded later.” It is intended merely as a foothold for teacher educators to use in nurturing student teachers as well as themselves, who daily seek out and practice better educational methods. This manual was written to act as a “firm ladder” that would not break while readers’ climb it, in addition, it acts as a stable tool that allows readers to enjoy the



Lesson studies is a place where teacher present ideas, demonstrate, experiment, and inquire the better lesson.

changing scenery along every step. However, note that you should not be overly captivated by the philosophy and style of lesson studies introduced in this book. We expect that readers will construct their own original styles of conducting lesson studies that are appropriate for their local and sociocultural contexts. This book attempts to share the basic principles of lesson studies; therefore, it should not be considered as a manual that is fixed and absolute.

Now, let us start climbing the ladder of lesson studies!





## 2. Why Is Lesson Studies

### Necessary for a Teacher Educator?

#### **To Expand the Lesson Studies Community of Teachers Pursuing Better Lessons**

Why do teachers give lessons? They do so to nurture students. Lessons become meaningful only when students grow through them. When they begin to understand something they did not know before, they become happy and motivated to learn. In contrast, when they cannot understand anything that is taught in the classroom repeatedly, their eyes stop shining.

The purpose and role of teacher education is to nurture teachers who can provide better lessons. Thus, educating teachers leads to child development in the future.

Even though a student teacher may be “good,” it does not necessarily mean that he/she always delivers good lessons. A good lesson is the outcome of endless efforts to develop it. Teachers present good lessons only after they struggle with the question “How can I improve my lessons by overcoming underlying problems with them?” Therefore, it is essential to nurture teachers who continuously challenge themselves, no matter how difficult, to develop their lessons in order to educate students.

Let us understand a “lesson” further. A lesson is implemented by teacher’s contemplating the objective, the content, and the method because these factors deeply influence students’ learning behaviors. This means that to develop teaching techniques for creating better lessons, it is necessary to reconsider the objectives as well as the contents (curricula). It is therefore vital for teachers to prepare lessons that are in harmony with the objective, the curriculum, and the method; however, it is often difficult for teachers to assess their own lessons by themselves.

Most teachers wonder how they can offer better lessons. Simultaneously, they have their own teaching preferences and styles. Some emphasize the width and depth of subjects, while others focus on the quality of teaching and learning materials. Some seek out teaching methodologies, while others consider students’ learning methodologies. Therefore, teachers share their opinions on teaching and open up their classes for observation and discussion. Lesson studies are based on this principle. In Japan, teachers have been conducting research on lessons by voluntarily creating study groups for over five decades.

Even though student teachers conduct lessons daily, many of them may not understand the key points related to lesson studies that are discussed in this book. This is one of the reasons why the enhancement of lessons has not advanced despite

considerable effort by teachers. If teacher educators who practice lesson studies assume the role of instructing student teachers on the main aspects of lesson studies, these future teachers could develop their lessons by sharing constructive opinions with each other. When such student teachers who have learned to conduct lesson studies start teaching at primary and secondary schools, this method will be broadly disseminated. Thus, teacher education with regard to lesson studies contributes to primary and secondary school education through the development of teachers' potential.

Members of a lesson studies group should be equal, and it should be practiced democratically (i.e., everyone's opinion should be considered). This is the fundamental principle of lesson studies as developed in Japan. Many teacher educators and teachers mutually expand their pedagogical potential through lesson studies. In other words, breaking down the boundary between education researchers and practitioners is the only way to promote learning. We hope that academics and practitioners respect one another with the aim of developing lessons in the field of education.

### **Scientific Lesson Studies for Better Lessons**

Teaching is a profession where one must learn throughout their career in order to develop pedagogical expertise. Thus, excellently nurturing students is possible. However, it is necessary to consider how to educate teachers to constantly learn and develop their basic pedagogical knowledge and skills in teaching. Higher education must aim to develop this pedagogical foundation in teachers. For this reason, lesson studies must play a key role.

Lesson studies, as the name signifies, is the practice of examining teaching lessons. It includes analyzing the structure of a lesson, eliciting the reasons why it proceeds as it does, and assessing the effectiveness of the design as well as proposing new ideas for its improvement. Lessons should not be solely based on teachers' instinct according to their experiences but should be a scientific study based on objectively verifiable and reasonable criteria.

To make any research study scientific, it should follow a commonly accepted methodology regardless of the research field. Scientific research studies are often achieved through individual researchers who patiently practice their studies; however, greater advancement can arise through collaborative experiences. Academic conferences or study groups provide great opportunities for researchers to report and share their research. The validity of research findings are then verified through a process of asking various questions such as: "is the hypothesis meaningful?"; "is the analytical method appropriate for the hypothesis?"; "is it possible to say that the hypothesis was proved by this methodology?"; "will the same result occur if others replicate this research?"; and "are alternative hypotheses possible?". Only the research findings verified through such processes will be accepted and can be used in improving lives.

In the case of schools, a classroom can be illustrated as the “kingdom” and the teacher as the king. What the king says is absolute and nobody criticizes him. Teachers design and implement their teaching plans, which may depend on their individual values, experiences, and instincts. Unfortunately, there are little opportunities for them to have discussions regarding their plans with other teachers and teacher educators. Is this not the reality in the classroom? Lesson studies in groups, including planning, implementing, analyzing, evaluating, and improving a teaching plan through discussion should become a productive way to nurture teachers to provide better lessons. Discussion enables them to understand different concepts of teaching, viewpoints, and thoughts. It is also possible to discover advantages and disadvantages of their own teachings by analyzing the classes from multiple perspectives.

To acquire the research methodology to be used in the development of their lessons, lesson studies must be effectively applied in teacher education at universities as well as at in-service trainings at schools. If student teachers are equipped with the daily practice of lesson studies, their teaching quality will drastically improve, hence contributing to the education for the next generation, which is the foundation of the future society.



Various actors such as teachers, school administratives, board of education, university researchers work together in Lesson studies.

Classes on teacher education at universities could provide the data for lesson studies. This approach can lead to improvement in lessons on teacher education as well as the development of pedagogical and research skills. When teacher educators diligently research lessons in order to improve their skills, it is expected that this will contribute greatly to the advancement of pedagogical research, including lesson studies.





## 3. Steps in Lesson Studies

Step 1

**Organize a Study Group for Lesson Studies**

Step 2

**Pre-Lesson Meeting Before a Research Lesson**

Step 3

**Implementing and Observing a Research Lesson**

Step 4

**Post-Lesson Meeting**

Step 5

**Assessing the Lesson for Progress**

Step 6

**Increase the Members of Lesson Studies**



## Step 1

# Organize a Study Group for Lesson Studies



### Key Elements

1. Find teachers with whom you can easily share teaching problems.
2. Find teachers you respect, and if possible, who have an excellent reputation in teaching.
3. Form a study group comprising (1) and (2) with the aim of developing better lessons to contribute to both students' and teachers' development.
4. In the beginning, open your classes to each other whenever possible.
5. After a fixed time, schedule lesson observations by setting up dates and times.
6. After observing each other's classes, try their teaching techniques, initially secretly, then openly confess what you have learnt from them.
7. Consider what is behind the techniques, such as pedagogical beliefs and ideas (e.g. why you do such things).
8. Provide feedback for their development in teaching; build mutually beneficial relationships with the teachers.



### Tips for step 1

#### Objectives of Lesson Studies

Teaching aims to nurture children; if a lesson is well organized, then students will be effectively educated and nurtured. When they realize what they lack, their motivation for autonomous learning will be strengthened. Such children will become precious human resources in supporting localities, nations, and the world.



How can we provide better lessons? Lesson studies provides an opportunity to open a class for observation, analysis, and opinion sharing. There is a great responsibility in teacher education for developing quality lesson studies and establishing a network of such study groups to nurture better teachers for children.



Sharing opinions about the classes observed.

## Significance of collaboration with colleagues

In most cases, teacher educators at normal schools or in the departments of teacher education at universities come from various disciplines. This implies that they should not believe that a student will become a good teacher just because their own teachings are good. Rather, what one teacher educator can perform has limitations. Students do know which educators are excellent in teaching and which ones are not. In addition, if each educator contradicts others in their teachings, students will become confused. To avoid such confusion, it is important to open the classes for observation and discuss better ways of teaching so that everyone can cooperatively provide better education with a shared purpose.

## Techniques, Beliefs, and Ideals



Discussing the image of "better teaching" with peers.

What we can learn from other teachers is categorized into two dimensions. One is the visible dimension such as how they arrange desks, how they instruct students to discuss, and how well they utilize ICTs. Their usage is not restricted to specific subjects; rather these are general pedagogical techniques. Teachers can drastically improve their teaching by merely imitating techniques from skilled teachers.

The other dimension is philosophical. For example, you need to observe why a teacher designs a curriculum based on concepts A and B, or why she or he makes students give a presentation on a certain topic. The pedagogical beliefs and thoughts of respected teachers will be helpful for other teachers to rethink and rearrange their own pedagogical beliefs and philosophy.

## Step 2

# Pre-Lesson Meeting Before a Research Lesson

### Key Elements

1. After establishing a mutual relationship with the study group members, prepare an official research lesson.
2. Decide on the first teacher who will present. It is advisable that the head of the study group begins and that the group members take turns in presenting.
3. Before the research lesson, set up a pre-lesson meeting. Choose one person to lead a meeting; the leader could be the presenter, or each person can take turns to lead.
4. Propose a lesson plan. Try something new that is challenging.
5. At the pre-lesson meeting, the presenter explains his/her lesson plan.
6. The lesson plan should be recorded in the form of handouts or a slide show for sharing with other members.
7. The presenter should emphasize not only the goals of the lesson, but also the research purpose when explaining the lesson plan.
8. Observers should offer advice for the effective achievement of the teaching objective. Criticism should be provided along with advice.

### Tips for step 2

#### What is a “Research Lesson”?

A research lesson is a teaching lesson that is analyzed by the study group of teachers in lesson studies. It is important that a single teacher conducts the teaching lesson and that it is observed by colleagues for further discussion. Therefore, it is necessary to make and distribute a lesson plan beforehand to the group for observers to understand the aims, positions, and emphases of the lesson. It is desirable that the research lesson suggests new contents or methods for teaching. This must be verified and discussed with other colleagues collaboratively for the evaluation and improvement of teaching.

## What is a Lesson Plan? How to present it?

A lesson plan is a proposed teaching procedure, including the objective (for what purpose), content (what to teach), method (how to teach), and assessment (how to evaluate). It should be explained in detail so that people can visualize the entire structure of the lesson by reading it.

### i. The Objective of the Lesson

The purpose of the lesson should be specified in detail such as; this lesson aims to nurture students with an ability of  $\triangle\triangle$  through  $\circ\circ$ .

### ii. Procedure and Method

Select contents and methods necessary for achieving the objective of the lesson and specify them in the lesson plan. For example, if it is necessary to nurture students' assessment skill by analyzing, then analytical methods for classroom evaluation such as the analysis of recorded lessons at primary and secondary schools and demo lessons of student teachers should be added in the lesson plan. Such innovative activities energize the post-lesson meeting.

### iii. Assessment Criteria

Assessment criteria for the lesson should be established based on the achievement level of its objective. Evaluation sheets should be collected during the lesson. The timing of the collection should be specified in the lesson plan.

## Management of the Pre-Lesson Meeting

The preparation of the pre-lesson meeting and its actual implementation will comprise the following aspects:

### i. Preparation

The teacher who is presenting creates a lesson plan. The teaching materials and methods used for the lesson are reviewed according to the lesson plan.

### ii. Pre-Lesson Meeting (Presentation of the Lesson Plan)

For example, one of the observers should become the chair and the presenter will explain the lesson plan. The objective of the lesson, teaching materials and methods, and new trials must be explained in detail for others to fully understand the proposal.

### iii. Pre-Lesson Meeting (Discussion of the Lesson Plan)

The study group members, led by the chair, examine the proposed lesson plan. The participants share opinions, discuss unclear points, and make necessary amendments to the lesson. The chair needs to ensure that the discussion is not merely information sharing but must summarize and point out crucial elements in the discussion, thereby clarifying the main points of discussion at the meeting in addition to providing the group members the focal points of the observations.

### iv. After the Pre-Lesson Meeting

On the basis of the feedback received from the lesson plan analysis, the presenter amends the plan before the research lesson.

## Column 1

### The Structure of Lessons and Lesson Studies



Presenter gives the start point to get started.

There are two reasons why presenters must ask themselves questions about the frameworks of their research lessons. First, they need to determine how these lessons fit into the curricula. For example, suppose you research a lesson for the curriculum on teacher training. In that case, what kind of knowledge and skills are student teachers expected to learn throughout the whole curriculum? How effective are the courses in the curriculum for helping a teacher achieve the ideal image of a teacher? What status does the research lesson have within the whole curriculum? What kinds of competence are student teachers expected to be equipped with?

Second, it is also essential to explore the significance of a research lesson in terms of whether it meets the needs of the pupils. Teachers sometimes struggle to close the gap between their ideal image of lessons and the reality in the classroom. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to understand the actual situations of pupils in order to enhance his/her lessons. On the basis of their own learning experiences, even first-year university teachers in teacher training courses have views and opinions about pupils, students, teaching materials, and instructions. Their interests and learning stability also vary. The presenter, therefore, needs to plan a research lesson to encourage such student teachers to develop their pedagogical skills. The lesson plan is, in other words, a hypothesis. You should try something that you have never tried before that you want to apply in daily lessons. In order to close the gap between the ideal and the reality, what can you try and what can you suggest on the basis of the research goal?

After members of the lesson studies group build a collaborative relationship by showing their lessons to the group, it is time to prepare a research lesson. A lesson should be structured. When planning the lesson, it is important to consider its consistency and validity, including the objectives, contents, and methods. The key points of lessons may vary according to the teacher's preferences. Therefore, a presenter must plan a research lesson by emphasizing why he/she follows such a framework.



Presenter should clarify the pedagogical objective of lesson.

Presenters must identify the research purposes by investigating the objectives, contents, and methods by repeatedly asking themselves why they must follow what they have planned for their research lessons. During a pre-lesson meeting, they should explain not only the lesson plan but also the research purpose. Since the presenter repeatedly asked herself /himself before coming up with the answer, other members should not criticize the plan but give comments with respect.

The outcome of the pre-lesson meeting will become the main focus of lesson observation, in other words, the core of the post-lesson meeting, which will be discussed. Therefore, the lesson plan and the outcome of the meetings should be recorded so that they can be shared and studied later. Highlighting and demonstrating the policy and philosophy embraced by the presenters will be a great way of enhancing the lessons.

Lesson planning and the pre-lesson meeting mentioned in Step 2 should not be implemented customarily. It is essential to consider the objective and the whole structure of a research lesson in a group, and then apply these to Step 2.



## Step 3

# Implementing and Observing a Research Lesson



### Key Elements

1. The leader of the study group should notify the date, time, place, and purpose of the research lesson to colleagues, including the head of the school or organization.
2. It is advisable that the presenter arrives early at the classroom. Students need to be informed of the purpose of the research lesson.
3. Class observers should carry stationary for taking notes.
4. When observing the research lesson, observers should pay attention to the objective of the lesson and the research purpose, which the presenter emphasized in the pre-lesson meeting.
5. Observers should pay good attention to the presenter.
6. A detailed record of the lesson should be made, including who said/did what and when.
7. Observations should be recorded with reference to the lesson plan.
8. The use of audiovisual devices such as cameras and videos is effective for recording the lesson, and hence should be used.



### Tips for step 3

#### Viewpoints and Methods for Lesson Observation

Lesson observations can lead to the acquisition and development of the ability to plan and implement better teaching. Therefore, observers are not merely “outsiders” but “insiders” who acknowledge that lesson observation itself is a learning opportunity. In addition, they must respect the teacher who presents in lesson studies class and has accepted the presence of many observers under different environment and conditions

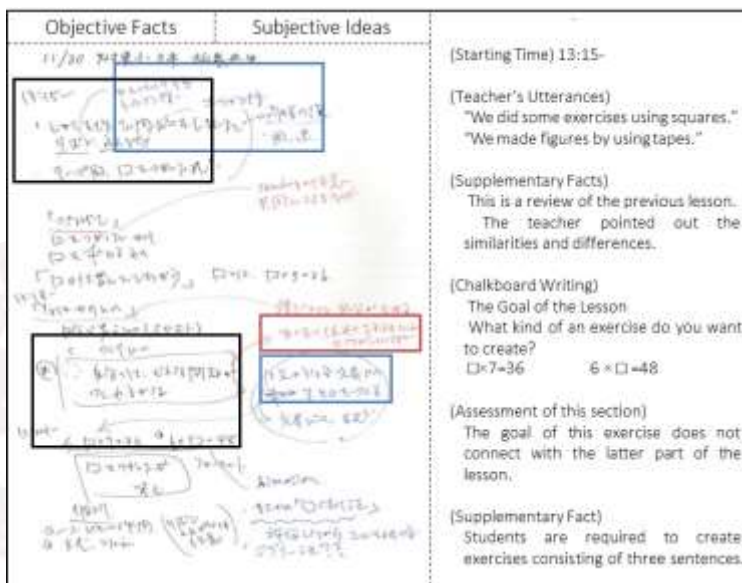
Lesson observation is more than just passively looking and listening to the research lesson. It is necessary to understand the objective and procedure of the lesson, teaching materials, and expected students' responses before the observations. In addition, it is crucial to check what kind of materials the teacher uses and how he/she instructs students for the achievement of the lesson. Simultaneously, it is also important to observe how the students react in their activities in response to the teachers' instructions. If there are differences between the lesson plan and the actual research lesson, these should be noted. All of the observations from the lesson should be recorded in a book.

Observers must prepare what to observe in the research lesson through their own research questions about lesson design and practice, which become the key elements for lesson observation. Then it is desirable to observe the details and facts of the lesson by considering the effectiveness and problems of the lesson structure, teaching methods, and materials, as well as the level of the students' understanding. After the observations, there may be a need to directly ask questions to the presenter in the post-lesson meeting, or to suggest problem-solving ideas or alternative teaching methods. These ideas along with concrete facts should be noted by the observers so that they will make the post-lesson meeting more fruitful and help all group participants learn more.

### Taking Notes in Lesson Observation

When observing a lesson, observers must effectively take notes for utilizing it during the discussion of the post-lesson meeting. There are various types of information in the classroom: letters and figures on the blackboard as well as responses and actions by the teacher and students. By focusing on the lesson objective and research purpose set by the presenter, the observers must note the objective facts, which are important for further discussion in the post-lesson meeting. Observers must also note their subjective ideas (e.g., what they thought while observing the lesson).

These points need to be categorized clearly to begin a productive discussion after the research lesson. For instance, divide a notebook into two sections or use colored pens for categorizing. Below is a sample recording of a Japanese mathematics class.



**Figure 1**  
An example of the record of a research lesson (Math)

Note: In this record, the observer uses three different colors. Black signifies objective facts, blue denotes supplementary descriptions of the facts, and red shows his/her assessment and opinions.

## Column 2

### The Purposes and Viewpoints of the Lesson Observation

The quality of observation and the recording of a lesson depend on the purposes and viewpoints of the observers. In other words, the purpose and viewpoint with which one observes and records a research lesson should be specified. The lesson observation requires a clear and organized aim and perspective, because a lesson follows a complex process. A lesson has many components such as the teacher's objective and the target of the lesson, his/her intentions behind the selection and organization of teaching materials, the students' backgrounds, the number of students, and their styles of learning and cognitive processing. It is, therefore, essential to clarify the purpose and viewpoint of a lesson observation.



Video Recording from backside of the classroom

Lesson observation and analysis have been conducted in various ways because a lesson involves a complex process. Generally speaking, the following framework is worth highlighting: "Objective-Content-Method-Assessment." First, it is important to consider the objective of a lesson. On the basis of the objective, the topics taught in the class should be examined as to whether they contribute to achieving the objective of the lesson. Furthermore, it is important to decide whether the method and assessment are appropriate for fulfilling the lesson objective and content. "Method-Assessment" means teaching methods that include group work and worksheets, and assessment based on whether they properly evaluate the outcomes of students' learning.



The objectives and viewpoints of a lesson observation focus on certain aspects of the “Objective-Content-Method-Assessment” framework. However, this does not imply that other components can be ignored, because they are all deeply interrelated with each other. Suppose you observe a research lesson in which the focus is on the effectiveness of group work for mutual learning and discussion. The effectiveness of the lesson depends on whether the content is appropriate for group work. Furthermore, it is necessary to observe whether the outcome of the group work leads to the achievement of the lesson objective and whether it is well evaluated.



Observers are kindly guided to chairs for hours watching

Identifying the objectives and viewpoints, therefore, allows one to have a clear aim for a lesson observation, with a proper way of recording what is seen in the class. Furthermore, with such objectives and viewpoints, comments on a research lesson at a post-lesson meeting should not merely comprise criticism based on the observers’ impressions but rather specific opinions grounded in the lesson procedure. However, an observer may be limited in examining various aspects of a lesson, which is why lesson observation in a group is effective.

The following is an example of a lesson observation from a course called “Teaching Philosophy” at a university. During the pre-lesson meeting, the teacher (presenter) explained his philosophy behind the lesson, the whole structure of the course, which comprised 15 lectures, and the topic and framework of the research lesson. After the discussion, each participant determined an objective and viewpoint for the lesson observation, such as “how does the teacher organize students’ mutual learning?” and “how does he give feedback?” During the lesson observation, the observers noticed the lesson through various ways: some observed from the back of the classroom in order to view the whole lesson; some approached the students to see their learning behaviors; and some walked around to observe both the teacher and the students. They recorded the lesson by writing notes or taking photographs. During the post-lesson meeting, the observers discussed how they examined the class with respect to their purposes, what they recorded, and their thoughts. This is an excellent illustration of a lesson observation because all the observers had different purposes and viewpoints, allowing them to notice the lesson from multiple dimensions.

## Column 3

### How to Record Lesson Observations

As mentioned at the beginning of the comments on Step 3, lesson observers are not merely “outsiders” in lesson studies. Therefore, it is necessary that they consider themselves “insiders” who can help improve the lesson, along with the presenter. It is crucial that observers record the objective facts in the classroom, such as the students’ learning abilities and the teachers’ behavior while observing the lesson. There are various perspectives and methods for recording the observed lesson. Table 1 summarizes the classroom record in lesson observation.

**Table 1: Overview of How to Record Lessons in Classroom Observations**

	Students’ Learning Behaviors	Teachers’ Behaviors in Instruction	Teaching Materials and Devices
Focus	Whether the students are acquiring knowledge and skills consistent with the lesson objectives	Whether the teacher instructs the goals, contents, and methods of the lesson properly	Whether the teaching materials and devices are suitable for achieving the goals and contents of the lesson
Recording devices	Students notebooks Photographs and videos Recorded interviews	Teachers’ lesson plan Photographs and videos Observers’ notebooks	Observers’ notebooks Photographs and videos Lesson plan and teaching material
Examples of the uses of recordings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze questionnaires (five-point scale or free descriptive survey-style evaluation sheets)</li> <li>Photos and videos recording students’ struggles and interviews with them regarding the reasons of their struggles, which will be analyzed for the development of the lesson.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to the lesson plan, record her/his teaching behaviors chronologically, particularly the teaching techniques such as classroom management, feedback, questions and the blackboard use. This will be used for the development of the lesson.</li> <li>Reflect the reasons for the teachers’ behavior by watching the lesson at the post-lesson meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use them as data for the development of teaching materials and as tips for improving lessons.</li> <li>Use them as data for lesson development by sharing them with colleagues.</li> </ul>



Each observer respectively prepares his/her own perspective with respective method

Table 1 presents the various focuses and methods for recording lesson observations. What is important, however, is the purpose and method of recording. This refers to the observers' aims of recording the lesson concerning the teacher presenter or students' acquisition of knowledge and skills.

Here is an example of how to record a lesson observation. Firstly, it is advisable for an observer to take notes chronologically by categorizing either subjective ideas or objective facts using different colors. Concerning the procedure of the lesson, sometimes a teacher instructs students by classroom walk-throughs. Simultaneously, the observer must record what route the teacher took for the face-to-face instructions of this supervision technique or the verbal instructions given. The conversations among students in a group and the shift of their raised awareness will be crucial proofs for reflection.

In this way, there are various ways of effectively recording lesson observations. Lesson studies is a collaborative learning opportunity to develop pedagogical expertise as a teacher. It is crucial for class observers to sincerely record multiple types of information to make these observations useful for further lesson improvement and for nurturing of students.

## Step 4

# Post-Lesson Meeting

### Key Elements

1. After the research lesson, quickly organize the post-lesson meeting.
2. The productivity of the meeting depends on the chair's coordination. Therefore, it is advisable to choose a reliable and capable person for the initial meetings.
3. The presenter again explains the objective of the lesson and the research purpose to the observers.
4. Next, the presenter assesses the lesson with regard to whether the objective was achieved.
5. The observers share their specific observations on the fulfillment of the lesson objective such as achievement and problems to be addressed without rejecting the lesson completely.
6. In the discussion, observers should give opinions supported by evidence noted on their records of the lesson.
7. When study group members point out problems, it is advisable that they suggest alternatives that may help achieve the lesson objective.
8. In suggestions, the observers should first view the problem from the presenter's perspective, and then aim for higher-dimensional goals.
9. Once the problems and alternatives have been confirmed and shared, discuss the result and significance of the research lesson from the perspective of the original intention of the research.
10. Finally, the chair summarize the discussion in the post-lesson meeting and state three points that may help observers improve their lessons.



Discussion using a matrix of a table that shows the chronological flow of the lesson.



## Tips for step 4

### Objectives and Procedures of the Post-Lesson Meeting

The purposes of the post-lesson meeting are: (a) to enhance the presenter's lesson; (b) for observers to gain ideas for the progress of their own lessons; and (c) consequently improve the students' competencies and capabilities. Therefore at the meeting, the presenter and the observers should generate ideas by discussing the research lesson. The meeting shall proceed in the following sequence:

- i. The presenter and the observers confirm facts observed during the lesson (Key points 3–6).
- ii. On the basis of the objective of the lesson outlined by the presenter, they should consider ways of improving the lesson (7 and 8).
- iii. Consider ways to improve the lesson on the basis of the observers' questions, interests, and the characteristics of the learners (7 and 8). Depending on the objective, the following step may be added.
- iv. Identify the outcomes of the lesson according to the research purpose (9 and 10).

### Reflection

The presenter needs to reflect on the fulfillment of the lesson objectives by observing the behavior, responses, and submitted work of the students. The causes and solutions of problems must be explored by observing the lesson objectively through video and other recorded measures, and these must be discussed in the group. The lesson observations and meetings are also beneficial for the observers to reflect on their own lessons. In this way, it is desirable to mutually propose ideas for the improvement of the lesson.

### The Role of a Chair

The role of a chair in leading a meeting is very important because he/she is not merely a timekeeper. In addition to managing the time, he/she decides the direction of discussion by giving feedback to the presenter regarding his/her lesson and eliciting the observers' comments and the participants' opinions at every part of the meeting. It is also his/her responsibility to lead the discussion and to properly summarize its significant points for the presenter and observer. It is not excessive to say that all of these matters depend on the chair.

Meetings may cause both presenters and observers to become nervous. Therefore, in order to have a successful meeting, a chair needs to create a friendly atmosphere in which all the participants can share their opinions freely. The use of humor can be an effective way to do this. The chair should not forget to point out both the positive and negative aspects of the research lesson that were observed. It is also necessary for him/her to ensure good relationship between the presenter and the observers by showing respect for both sides so that no conflicts arise. An effective approach is for the chair to help the observers understand the presenter's actions and schemes in the lesson, to ask the presenter to explain the background of his/her ideas, and to encourage the observers to think about how the presenter came up with such ideas.

After the meeting, the chair may organize a tea party or reception to express appreciation for all the work the presenter has done and to give all the participants an opportunity to talk frankly with each other. Such a setting establishes a trusting relationship among the members, which can lead to further successful lesson studies.

## Column 4

### Etiquette and Manners for a Discussion



Lesson Study is a collaborative work that etiquettes is indispensable!

The aim of a post-lesson meeting for all the participants in lesson studies is to collaboratively pursue better ways of producing lessons and improve their teaching practices. The discussion will be productive and the lesson studies will be meaningful only if the participants share their thoughts. However, commenting and discussing are “easier said than done.”

First, there may be many valuable aspects that the presenter planned and implemented in the research lesson to improve lessons or produce a new model of lessons. Participants should point out and offer comments on the pre-requisites from them, which can help the presenter examine the lesson outcome and the core of the underlying problems in the lesson. By discussing the observations on the basis of specific facts, information, and opinions, it is possible for the participants to understand and interpret the lesson objectively and comprehensively from various angles, consequently allowing them to explore better lesson practices.

The presenter must control the lesson by spontaneously making decisions according to unpredictable classroom situations in order to attain the lesson objectives. While observers can ponder instructional methods during one part of the lesson without any time limit, the presenter cannot do the same in a classroom. Under such restricted conditions, it is important to consider what the presenter did in which context, the ideas behind his/her decisions, and the problems he/she raised; this feedback from the presenter will be a significant aspect of the post-lesson meeting. Lesson observers must accept, understand, and share such feedback in order to show respect and appreciation for the presenter’s willingness to open up his/her class for lesson studies.

The primary functions of a post-lesson meeting are to (1) investigate the outcome and problems of the lesson; (2) explore solutions to the underlying problems; and (3) suggest alternatives for improving a lesson. Therefore, discussions must proceed according to the lesson objectives set by the presenter and the core points established during the meeting on the basis of the fact that if the objective changes, the lesson too must change. However, all participants have different opinions and knowledge about lessons and teaching; therefore, various thoughts and viewpoints about the lesson plan and lesson practices may emerge. Nevertheless, you must follow this basic principle. Furthermore, merely pointing out the gap between the lesson plan and the actual lesson will not improve the lesson. Even though the lesson may not work out as planned, it is only “a plan.” Thus, it is important for the observers to give comments on the basis of an understanding of why the presenter changed the plan by asking him/her about this directly.

On the basis of his/her reply, the participants should consider the effectiveness of and problems with the lesson plan and the instructional methods. If they identify a problem, then they should discuss it, seeking a solution or suggesting alternative ideas. At that time, every participant needs to think, discuss, share, and understand the problem by applying his/her theoretical and experiential knowledge about teaching and learning. This requires a productive discussion based on explicit facts in relation to the presenter's instructions and statements, and students' actions and activities in the actual lesson. By engaging in this process, we may attain advanced levels of lesson objectives (further possibilities for students to learn) or new ideas for lesson innovation. In such a case, the outcome of the post-lesson meeting will be more fruitful.

What components are necessary for implementing a successful lesson studies session and meeting? Above all, the participants need to have a strong motivation and an eager desire to learn about lesson practices in order to create better lessons and improve their teaching skills. In this sense, all of them are involved in the lesson studies; therefore, they need to rethink their pedagogical philosophy and knowledge by humbly listening to others' comments.

Thus, giving comments and engaging in discussion require skills, knowledge, manners, etiquette, awareness, and motivation, as well as skills in observing lessons. Therefore, this practice is "easier said than done." At the same time, this should be a skill that teachers pursue continuously. First, take one step forward, and then learn from this step.



Positive and negative points on tags.



Participants put heads together and work collaboratively



Presentation on the results of discussion with tags.



Organizer summarizes points that are articulated through presentation.



## Column 5

### Various Styles of Post-Lesson Meetings and the Role of the Chair

While post-lesson meetings can take various forms depending on the theme of research lesson, the chair's way of guiding the discussion, and the participants' skills, these can be categorized in two general styles. One is a presentation-type of meeting between the presenter and the participants for questions and answers or discussions, and the other is a workshop-style meeting comprising small groups. While the former style is beneficial in that it easily allows all participants to be on the same topic, it may be difficult for everyone to share their opinions. The latter includes small groups as "miniature post-lesson meetings" where participants can easily exchange and gather opinions, and organize these opinions using tables and labels. This is advantageous in allowing all participants to join the discussion; however, the chair needs to observe each group and occasionally provide advice when the discussion is not moving forward. In the post-lesson meeting, it is best to combine these two styles as needs dictate.

The time for the meeting is limited, thus the chair is often responsible for addressing key points and summarizing the participants' opinions to make the discussion productive and efficient. It is extremely important that the chair leads and monitors the discussion. The chair directs the discussion in agreement with the participants and it should be amended at an early stage if it drifts away from the main topic. In contrast, it is also important to lead the discussion to more innovative topics if he/she thinks that it will be productive. For example, the chair may focus on a specific problem, elicit ideas from the participants, and initiate a discussion concerning the same. The flexible attitudes of the chair will make the meeting a place for multiple discussions of one coherent theme. When summing up the discussion, it is advised to categorize opinions according to their major topics and then quote opinions exchanged during the discussion to help the lesson presenter and the observers to understand points clearly.

The main role of the chair in the post-lesson meeting is to (1) ensure that all of the participants understand the topics of discussion concerning the research lesson, (2) elicit participant responses by guiding the discussion, and (3) let every participant share the common fruits of the meeting discussion. This implies that the chair must have a clear vision in advising the presenter through observers and advising the observers through the presenter. For the chair to perform this, it is crucial that he/she understands the position of the research lesson within the curriculum, intentions, and the points of contrivance in advance. In other words, the chair is responsible for understanding the contents, materials, and methods of the lesson as well as having a prior knowledge of similar types of lessons. These will become useful tips for facilitating the discussion. The post-lesson meeting is not only



to point out the problems of the research lesson, but also to provide an opportunity for all to rethink their own lessons. It should be an opportunity to become aware of the participants to all the strengths of the lesson, effectively utilizing them for the progress of their own future lessons.

Ideally, the chair should be the one who has experienced a research lesson, because then the chair can understand the position of the presenter and the observers. It is also possible to have a rotating chair. If the relationship between the members is firmly established with frequent exchanging of opinions done, it may be easier to organize a meeting; however, there must be a certain level of formality. As the Japanese proverb stresses good manners is necessary even between friends, a chair needs to organize the meeting in the harmony of a relaxed yet formal atmosphere. An experienced chair is capable of understanding and analyzing the capacities of the teacher presenter and the observers. In the research lesson observation, he/she analyzes the lesson from multiple viewpoints such as the coherence between the lesson plan and its implementation, consistency between the objective and the content of the lesson, and the appropriateness of the teaching methods and materials for the learners (The observers are to do the same ideally). At the meeting, the chair ideally not only understands participants between the objective and the content of the lesson but also tries to understand whether these are the outcome of the analytical observations of the lesson in order to use them for future proceedings of the meeting.



Making a circle as a traditional way.



Tags are one of the most used tool for discussion:  
prepare big sheets and tags for groups.



Large scale post conference is also possible.



Participants become students and enjoy the lesson itself!



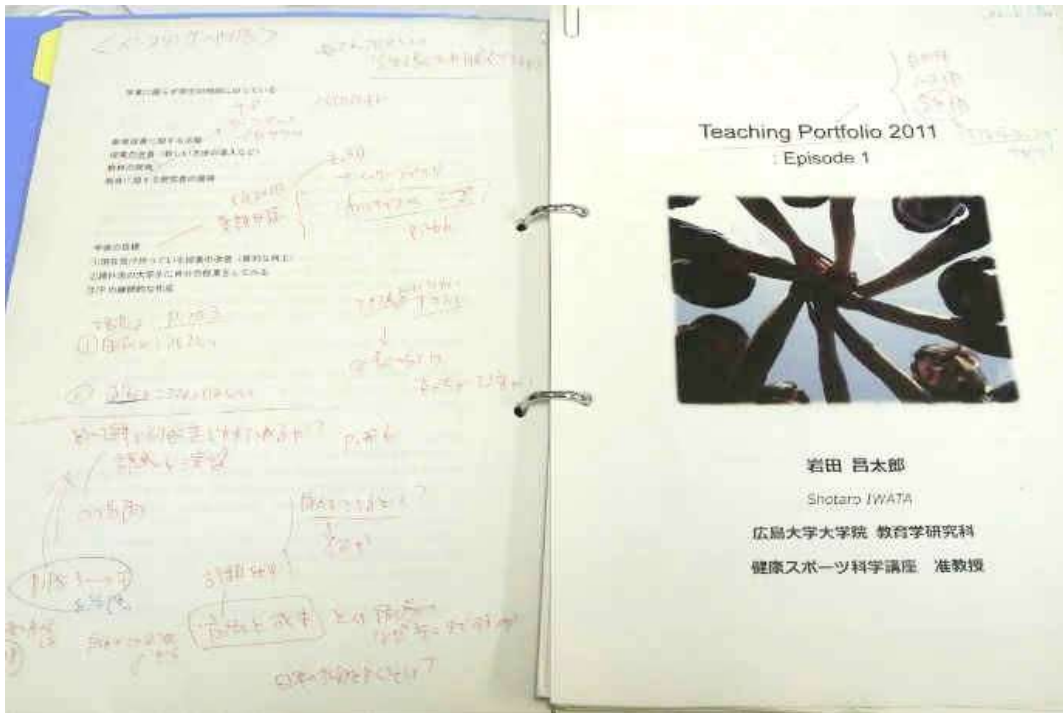
## Step 5

# Assessing the Lesson for Progress



### Key Elements

1. Assess your own lessons according to the outcomes of the post-lesson meeting. (Applicable to the presenter and the observers)
2. Try to find some useful techniques for lesson enhancement and use them to see if they work.
3. List advanced teaching techniques that you want to master within the next 6 months.
4. Note innovative thoughts of the teaching philosophy that you want to practice within one year.
5. Inform your colleagues about what you have achieved and what you want to try.
6. Keep the memos of what you have told your colleagues. Notify them via SNS.



Reflection by Teaching Portfolio



## Tips for step 5

### Assessment of Lessons according to “Techniques” and “Teaching Philosophy”

Both the presenter and the observers are expected to learn something through lesson observation. For example, advice about the lesson is useful for the presenter, whereas imitating someone’s techniques or skills will be the first step of lesson enhancement for observers. However, realizing the fact that not everything in human behavior can be imitated is also important.

For example, it is easy to copy visible techniques such as how a teacher instructs students in speech and behavior. However, note that these “how-to” techniques are based on a teaching philosophy. This implies that it is crucial to understand the pedagogical belief by questioning, “why did the teacher instruct in such a way?” Teaching philosophy should be developed individually. You may sympathize with others thoughts, but should not copy them. It is you that reflects upon your education policy, lessons, and subjects by practicing and observing lessons. Developing a teaching philosophy takes time, so it is essential to always consider and discuss your lessons through assessment.

## Step 6

### Increase the Members of Lesson Studies

#### Key Elements

1. Advertise the outcomes of lesson development regularly. Hence, publish the results
2. Explain your satisfaction with the lesson progress by talking, publishing, and using SNS to encourage others to join lesson studies.
3. It is also a good idea to present a research paper on the outcomes of the lesson studies.



Publishment of action plan by the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic

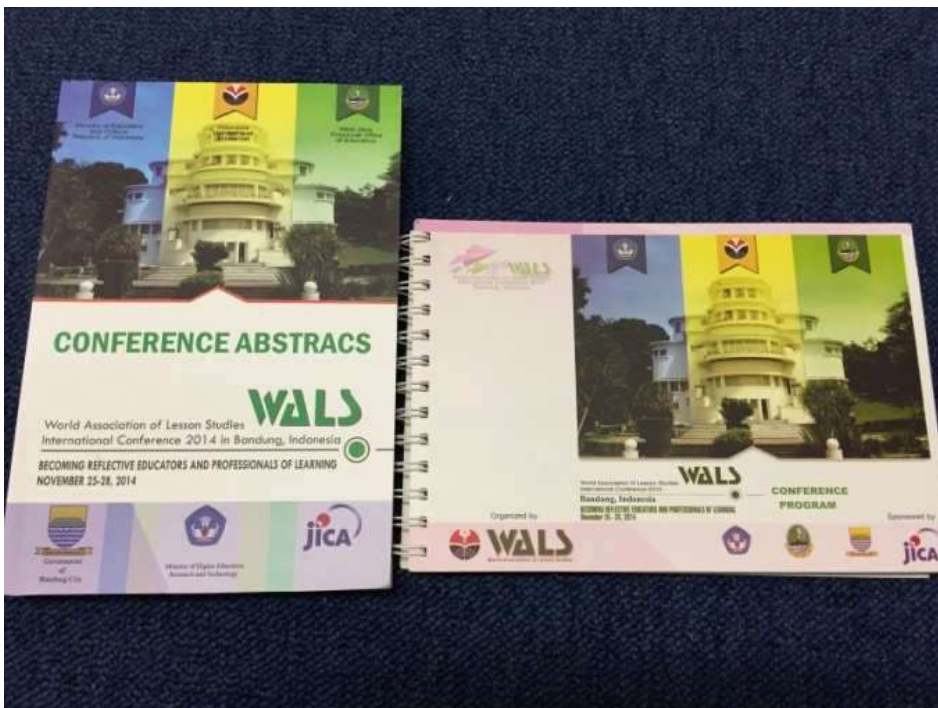
## Tips for step 6

### Making a Lesson Studies Report

Writing a report after implementing a session of lesson studies is very important for reflecting on and enhancing lessons. The report must contain an overview of the lesson (theme, date, information about the observers, etc.) and describe the process of preparing the lesson by the presenter on the basis of objectives (including the discussion from the pre-lesson meeting). It is also advisable to note the discussions during the post-lesson meeting and comments received from professionals. The lesson plan should also be attached in an appendix.

### Writing a Research Paper

Presenting a research paper to demonstrate the outcome of lesson studies is required for researchers in the field of pedagogy. There are various types of papers, for example, a practical report on a lesson studies group, a paper on an action research outcome, or a paper that is a critical analysis of someone's lesson practice. Through writing and presenting papers, we can share the outcomes of and issues related to lesson studies so that teachers can more actively implement the practice of the lesson studies. We hope that lesson studies will become a pedagogical discipline in the near future.



Let's try to make a presentation at global conferences:  
Congress Program of the World Association of Lesson Studies



## Column 6

### Five Minutes a Day! How to Make Time for Lesson Studies

It is not easy to make time daily for lesson studies because teachers have other responsibilities, which are part of his/her busy schedule. However, lesson studies can never be implemented unless time is made for discussion. Here are some tips on how to use lesson studies and methods on how to make time for lesson studies.

#### <Tips for Using Lesson Studies>

In order to implement lesson studies regularly, (a) all teacher participants must understand the significance and value of lesson studies, as well as the necessity of using them, and (b) it is important to start using lesson studies by investing the least amount of work needed, and then slowly increase the frequency with which lesson studies is used and deepen its contents.

#### <Methods to Make Time for Lesson Studies>

**i. Use e-mails and SNS**

If assembling all of the group members is difficult, then using e-mails or SNS for discussions is an effective solution. Teachers can then discuss lesson plans and teaching materials and methods freely without worrying about the time required. The disadvantage of this method is that although it is convenient, it is difficult to deepen the discussion.

**ii. Easy Start: Attaching a Discussion to Other Meetings**

Communicating via e-mails and SNS lets members have more time for discussions. There is a possibility of creating a little time after other meetings. For example, 10 minutes of group discussion or sharing of opinions after a meeting would not present a big burden if all teachers complied. This strategy enables them to easily and regularly conduct lesson studies.

**iii. Set up an Official Date for Lesson Studies at a Certain Point**

Teachers may wish to have more time for discussions in order to continue the 10-minute mini-meeting. In that case, they should set up an official date for lesson studies, with rules such as “having lesson studies once in two weeks” and “having three lesson studies during a semester.” In order to make this a regular practice, it is better to have a meeting that the group members or all the teachers must attend, even though it may be slightly difficult for them. At that time, it will be important for everyone to gather to share their opinions about teaching materials and daily lessons for at least 10 minutes.

These methods are only examples. There may be additional ways of producing lesson studies. In any case, lesson studies are most effective when they are conducted regularly.

## 4. Conclusion



In 2010, the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic asked the Graduate School of Education, Hiroshima University, for advice on how to organize their newly created Faculty of Educational Sciences, which formerly belonged to the School of Humanities as the Department of Education. We found it helpful to suggest the use of lesson studies. In the Dominican Republic, there is great concern about developing the learning ability of children. By providing students and teachers with better teacher education, they will become competent in pedagogy so that they can eventually contribute to the enhancement of children's learning ability.

First, we set up small lesson studies groups by subject. Second, we organized workshops on the methodology of lesson studies. Through the teachers' coordination with their colleagues, the lessons were improved in this tightly-knit learning community. Furthermore, to expand these activities, we were asked to publish an introductory textbook on lesson studies that could be distributed to beginners. Therefore, we started working on this manual.

It may be difficult for us to recognize that the concept of lesson studies has a cultural basis that we take for granted when we deal solely with Japanese teacher education. This cultural background, however, can cause a great hindrance to teachers abroad when they apply this method in their own countries, which have their respective social and cultural contexts. Therefore, we have tried to simplify it and make it neutral for as many educational contexts as possible by eliminating culture-specific characteristics of lesson studies. However, this may result in the explanations being too simple to convey the depth of this research approach. This task of simplifying the material can result in conflicts among the participants in a group, because the views and concepts related to lessons and lesson studies sometimes represent the authors' teaching philosophy, in which they take great pride. We would therefore appreciate you letting us know whether this brochure is still culturally biased in terms of the essence of lesson studies and its cultural features, because we lack a model for an introductory manual on lesson studies in a universal context. Hence, we are willing to revise the brochure on the basis of your feedback.

Lesson studies is difficult to conduct because teachers are observed and exposed to criticism. In fact, the project in the Dominican Republic did not follow all the procedures discussed in this manual. The process of its reception was not simple. In many cases, the institutional presuppositions were different from those in Japan. Considering the historical and cultural diversity of different countries and locales, it is natural that there will be opposition toward the implementation of lesson studies and toward transferring its methodology to other contexts.



Lesson studies is an approach that teachers learn through practice. Therefore, if they do not practice it, they will not understand its significance nor learn the method for applying it. We believe that by starting to learn and implement lesson studies on the basis of the information in this manual, teachers will begin to understand the issues that need to be addressed in their educational setting. This book, however, is intended to function only as a ladder for positioning them a step higher in order to observe the current teaching conditions. In other words, they should discard it after reaching their goal. This suggests that limitations of this manual will also become visible after they practice lesson studies in their classrooms.

When you advance a step further, leave the manual aside and explore the higher quality of the lessons. There will be no manual at this point, but your students, philosophy, beliefs, and colleagues, who are learning together with you, will be your guides. Let us continue our quest for better teaching methods together.



Group photo after the Collaborative Lesson Study at the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (September 1, 2011)

# 5. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



## [Questions on Lesson Studies]

Q1: How often do we need to conduct lesson studies?

A1: There is no fixed rule regarding the frequency of lesson studies, it depends on the members for the frequency. For example, when new members are added, it can be practiced annually. Or it may be effective to organize an annual conference for teachers to present the benefits of lesson studies. In that case, they should arrange small groups to prepare for the presentation.

Q2: Is it a prerequisite to open a lesson for observation?

A2: The core of lesson studies is to examine a lesson on the basis of factual elements. Therefore, it is crucial for all the members of the study group to observe the lesson live. Opening a class is the most important step for lesson studies. If the group cannot set up a date for lesson observation due to difficulty in organizing the members' schedule, then it can be recorded and watched later. In any case, lesson observation is essential.

Q3: Many teachers are reluctant to practice lesson studies because of time constraints. How can we persuade them?

A3: Lesson studies does consume time, but you will gain greater benefits later. If all the participants get used to it, the process will go more smoothly and the time needed for lesson studies will reduce. To begin with, try not to spend too much time on it for all teachers to easily join. As mentioned in A9, you do not have to always cover all of the 6 steps explained in this brochure. It may be difficult to observe a research lesson due to the members' busy schedule. In such cases the teachers should watch the video whenever it is convenient (see A2).

Q4: Teachers require incentives for participating in Lesson Studies. Although in Japan it is free, it is impossible to do it in my country.

A4: Lesson studies is not a job forced by others, nor a charitable activity; it is for yourself. It is important for teacher participants to realize that it equips them with pedagogical abilities and skills for lesson design and implementation, analysis, and teaching. If you need to give incentives to teacher participants due to the country's situation, it should not be for their attendance but for the lesson enhancement. This will motivate their interest and participation in lesson studies.

Q5: How many times should we practice lesson studies to experience progress? How can we recognize its effects?

A5: The lesson's progress depends on individual teachers and the ways in which lesson studies are conducted. Generally speaking, the more you practice, the greater the effect. Sometimes, however, teachers' attitude toward lesson studies may improve even after they experience lesson studies just once because they understand the procedures and the key elements. This leads them to establish what to do in the classroom concerning how to set up goals, how to select and organize teaching materials, how to predict and react to students' questions, and how to phrase questions. Lesson studies also builds teachers confidence toward their lessons.

### **[How to Organize the Study Group]**

Q6: It is difficult to set up a study group. How can we do this?

A6: To begin, form a small group comprising teachers who are interested in lesson studies as well as those who have already practiced it. There may be several reasons that cause them not to attend the group. Therefore, it is advisable to ask them to just observe the activities to understand what it is like. If their concern is resolved, there may be some who will be interested in joining you regularly.

### **[Questions about the Pre-Lesson Meeting]**

Q7: What is the significance of investigating a lesson plan in a group? Why is it not sufficient to perform it as an individual teacher?

A7: It does not mean that a lesson plan should be examined only by many people. Checking a lesson in a group, however, is beneficial to exchange multiple opinions from various perspectives because there are many points regarding "what is a good lesson". It is easier to create a good lesson by an appropriate number of teachers than by an individual teacher. In reality, however, teachers must design lessons by themselves, which makes it indispensable for each of them to examine the lesson seriously even in group activities.

Q8: Does the lesson improve if the lesson plan is developed? Do you think we can provide better lessons when we design good lesson plans?

A8: Designing a good lesson plan is necessary, but it is not sufficient. This means that even though you can write a good plan, you cannot guarantee a good lesson. A lesson includes many components, which a designed plan cannot predict as long as you are facing students in a real classroom. It is impossible to plan the way, tone and timing of teachers' behavior as well as the spontaneous student

reactions toward them. A lesson plan is only a framework of the actual lesson. But at the same time, if it is not well planned, then there will be no foundation for a good lesson.

Q9: We are too busy to arrange the pre-lesson meeting. Can we skip the pre-lesson meeting and move on to lesson observation right away?

A9: It is possible to skip the pre-lesson meeting. Lesson studies does not always have to cover the entire process, including setting up a study group, the pre-lesson meeting, the assessment of the lesson, and reorganization of a group with new members. Of course, the function of a pre-lesson meeting is significant, thus it is desirable to conduct it if possible. If the teacher presenter completes the designing process of a lesson by themselves, however, it is still beneficial to observe the implementation of the lesson plan and share the outcomes of the lesson observation for assessment. The problem is that people may give up on lesson studies after spending too much time for all the steps suggested in this brochure. It is better to start what you can perform, one step at a time, and make yourself accustomed to it.

## **[Research Lesson]**

Q10: There is no teacher who offers a lesson for observation. Is it possible to conduct lesson research by observing demo lessons of student teachers?

A10: Lesson studies by demo lessons by student teachers are also effective. If you cannot find any teacher to offer a lesson for observation, using a demo lesson is one way to solve the problem. It is important for teachers to get used to lesson studies by participating in demo lesson observation. We expect that this will gradually reduce their difficulties in practicing lesson studies according to their own lessons so that they may eventually feel comfortable enough to show their lessons in the future.

Q11: Should we distribute a lesson plan before lesson observations? If possible, we would like to skip it.

A11: The effect of lesson observation differs depending on whether the observers know the plan. If they know it beforehand, they can understand the reason for each activity as well as the entire structure of the lesson. Therefore, it is advisable to distribute it to all of the observers for grasping the significance of the lesson. On the other hand, there is a fact that students always take lessons without knowing the plan. If it is unavoidable, teachers may observe the lesson from the student's perspective without the plan.

## [Post-Lesson Meeting]

Q12. Do we need to organize a post-lesson meeting right after the research lesson?

A12. The meeting can be organized either right after the lesson or later. A post-lesson meeting requires that documents necessary for lesson assessment and analysis be prepared. If you need time for such preparation, the meeting can be held later. It is better to organize the meeting on the same day.

Q13. Do we definitely have to conduct a post-lesson meeting? What can result from such a meeting?

A13. The functions of a post-lesson meeting are to share information, reflect, and promote development of teachers' skills. Teachers can contribute to analyzing the lesson efficiently by sharing information related to the research lesson, including the objectives, the actual teaching of the lesson, and the positive and negative aspects. This will lead to improvement in their lessons.

Q14. What is the difference between the post-lesson meeting and the lesson assessment? Why should we not assess the presenter?

A14. During the post-lesson meeting, the teachers should consider the content proposed in the course of the research lesson. Participants need to understand the intentions behind the suggestions that are made and show respect to the presenter. Their observations should comprise analyzing the teaching materials, bringing up problems, and suggesting directions for improvement in the future. By sharing this information during the post-lesson meeting, participants can recapture the experience of the presenter, which will help enhance their own lessons. Merely assessing the presenter will not help the other teachers improve their lessons. What is important is to improve lessons through assessment of lessons. During the post-lesson meeting, therefore, teachers should evaluate the suggestions of the presenter, not the presenter herself/himself.

Q15. How can we use the video recordings?

A15. You can use them during the post-lesson meeting to observe the contents and scenes that will be analyzed and discussed. It is useful to review the teacher's statements and the students' responses. If the presenters choose to use these tools for further professional development, an effective approach is to determine whether the lesson was different from what they expected or whether it went according to the lesson plan.

Q16. Is it possible to organize the post-lesson meeting on another day besides the day of the research lesson? For the meeting, do we definitely need to have the video recording of the lesson?

A16. If you have no option but to hold the post-lesson meeting on another day besides that of the research lesson, then you need to refresh and share your memory of

the lesson observation. Therefore, the video recording will be very helpful as a reminder of what took place during the lesson. If you do not make video recordings, then you can take shorthand notes of the research lesson record and photocopy them for later use. Photographs of chalkboards are also useful.

### **[Feedback and Analysis (Individual and Group)]**

Q17. I do not know how to analyze my lessons.

A17. Lesson analysis consists of observing daily lessons objectively in order to come up with some ideas for improving them. However, it is difficult to analyze lessons by yourself. Start with an easy step, by obtaining feedback from other teachers who observe your lesson. It is effective to have a study group with other teachers for lesson observation. This will enable you to identify the positives and negatives in your lessons, as well as develop the skill of providing feedback.

Q18. I have no time for reviewing my lessons.

A18. It is difficult to review your lessons if you think you can do it only when you have time. Therefore, it is advisable that you set up a date for lesson observation and invite multiple teachers to come to your class. If you have no time for a post-lesson meeting, obtain feedback from the teachers just after the lesson and give your opinions then, thereby sharing ideas for lesson improvement. By doing these things slowly, you will develop analytical skills that you can use in order to review your own lessons.

### **[Expanding the Lesson Studies Community]**

Q19. My institute (school and department) does not offer any support for our activities. At the very least, we want them to offer a place to meet and to cover the expenses for photocopying and printing the reports.

A19. It takes time to begin to see the results of using lesson studies. If the majority of teachers' and students' knowledge and skills improve by their patient practice of this approach, then their passion will persuade your institution to support you in the future. We encourage you to familiarize other teachers with the method of lesson studies in order to promote their understanding of it and to support them along every step.





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