

Lesson Study:

International Perspective on Policy and Practice

Edited by M.Matoba, K.A.Crawford, Mohammad R.Sarkar Arani



教育科学出版社

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Introduction

Many Japanese educational practices have been examined by western educators for possible application in the United States and other nations in the world; some, such as cleaning classrooms, longer schools years and serving lunches to younger peers, are actually quite trivial. However, the on-going professional development of teachers is a very important area which has real meaning.

Jugyou kenkyuu is one area that we believe has been overlooked and yet has the potential to make a significant impact upon teaching and learning. Jugyou kenkyuu is a collaborative research on the teaching and learning process. The Nagoya University group translates jugyou kenkyuu as collaborative research on classroom activities, American and British scholars use the term "lesson study". Recently a number of American researchers and educators have suggested that jugyou kenkyuu might be a very beneficial approach for teachers who are interested in critically examining their classroom practice. In addition, since 2000 the Learning Study Center at the Hong Kong Institute of Education has been examining jugyou kenkyuu as a powerful tool for teachers' professional development.

Jugyou kenkyuu created widespread interest in the late 1990s with the publication of Stigler and Hiebert's *The Teaching Gap*, which discussed the findings from the Third International Mathematics and

Sciences Study (TIMSS) Video Comparison Study in an anecdotal, narrative manner. Although jugyou kenkyuu did not directly emerge from TIMSS, the authors introduced and popularized it within an argumentative framework. Jugyou kenkyuu in Japan provides various opportunities for change and enriching classroom practice, for teacher professional development and for improving the quality of the school learning environment.

An examination of the Japanese model of jugyou kenkyuu offers teachers in other nations the opportunity to learn from their Japanese colleagues. Japanese teachers view professional development and the enhancement of their teaching skills as a lifelong pursuit; they recognize that experience, self-study, critiques of teaching by their colleagues and self-reflection are important parts of this process. Rather than taking part in single workshops on the latest educational topic they are engaged in a "long-term" process of self-reflection and development.

In developing countries jugyou kenkyuu brings an alternative perspective to teacher professional development in theory and practice. For example, a jugyou kenkyuu project, the "Enrichment School Project", was developed in 38 elementary schools in Tehran. Here Iranian teachers recognized that they could learn from each other, especially, through self-reflection and group-reflection on their classroom practice.

We believe that teachers in many nations would respond positively to this kind of career professional development. The chapters that follow provide an international perspective on jugyou kenkyuu and the form in which it is practiced in different nations. We

are not suggesting that teachers and policy-makers in one nation copy uncritically the practice of *jugyou kenkyuu* that is operating within a different cultural context. However, we are of the view that the different views and experiences described here provide both a fascinating glimpse of teacher professional development at work in other nations and invite readers to critically re-think their own professional practice. Lying at the heart of our agenda in the pages of this book is the goal of working towards the achievement of a high quality teaching and learning environment—we owe our students and our teachers no less.

In Chapter 1 Catherine Lewis explores the development and effectiveness of lesson study in North America. Like others in this volume Lewis points out that there are many challenges facing lesson study, including the need for a rich and broad curriculum, research models and definitions of expertise and the need for a broad, cross-site learning community that would enable lesson study practitioners to learn from one another. In Chapter 2, Mohammad Reza Sarkar Arani examines the role of lesson study as scheme for enriching classroom practice, teacher professional development and school improvement. The chapter explores what Iran can learn from Japan's experience of lesson study and what can be applied to the Iranian educational context. The chapter also discusses the process, progress and challenges of incorporating *jugyou kenkyuu* into Iranian teacher training. The author examines how Iranian teachers and school administrators incorporate the essence of lesson study as a shared professional culture that requires teachers to engage in a cycle of questioning, planning, reflecting, acting, observing, reflecting and

re-planning.

In Chapter 3, Takeyuki Ueyama returns to the Japanese context in his study of Japanese teachers' perceptions of current teacher education policies exploring how the involvement of experienced teachers in school-based mentoring is vital in improving pre-service teacher training programs. In Chapter 4, Kazumitsu Nakano explores how educational methodology in Japan originated from the work of Wilhelm Rein in Germany in the late nineteenth century and in particular its relationship to pedagogy and how lesson study in Japan forms an essential part of educational methodology.

The next two chapters explore lesson study within a Chinese context. In Chapter 5, Gao Xia explores the manner in which lesson study has developed within a context where the improvement of educational quality through the reform of in-service training presents a number of challenges. Gao Xia's paper provides striking similarities between problems in China and other nations compounded by the size of the country, teacher workload, the voluntary nature of in-service etc. Within this context it is school-based lesson study that is an important means of cultivating teacher capacity to implement new curriculum demands. As a result, obvious changes are taking place in connection with the objectives, content and forms of lesson study.

In Chapter 6, Lo Mun Ling illustrates that lesson study in Hong Kong has a recent history but that its potential as a powerful tool for teachers professional development has been quickly recognized. In this chapter Lo Mun Ling analyses the success of lesson study within the context of education reform and concludes that the future development of lesson study rests upon its contribution to pre-service

education, teachers' continuing professional development, research and development in education and in improving the status of the profession as a whole.

Although the concept of lesson study within its Asian and North American context does not exist in the United Kingdom initial teacher education and the in-service training of teachers has for many years drawn heavily upon the principles and practices of learning through classroom experience including the vital element of collaborative reflection. In Chapter 7, Keith Crawford outlines the models of initial teacher education and INSET that exists in England and Wales pointing to the manner in which a structured and co-ordinated approach to teacher professional development is an integral element of learning how to teach. In the following chapter, Chapter 8, Marion Jones explores how the concept of mentoring has come to occupy a crucial place in the professional development of teachers in England and Wales. Jones explores the mentoring phenomenon in depth by critically examining the issues arising in relation to the mentor's role, the professional knowledge base that informs practice and the culture prevailing in the various contexts within which mentoring occurs.

The development of lesson study in Europe, and in particular Germany, is the subject of the final two chapters of this volume. In Chapter 9, Friedrich Gervé and Astrid Kehder-Mürle provide a survey of teacher training and in-service education in Germany. Starting with a brief description of the structure of the German school system, the chapter includes an analysis of the principles and practices of school based in-service education concluding with a discussion of issues, themes and problems the authors consider vital if lesson study is to

continue to impact upon teacher professional development. Finally, in Chapter 10, Hans Christoph Berg and Tilman Grammes introduce the concept of Lehrkunst as a model of curricula and teaching in Germany. They explain aspects of Lehrkunst and compare it with lesson study before analysing the possibility and potential of Lehrkunst as a Germany version of lesson study.

Finally, the pages of this book vividly illustrate that lying at the heart of the process of education is a commitment to high quality student learning. Teaching and learning are not always the same, however the significance of lesson study, as a research-based collaborative and reflective process, is that at its core is the aim of creating a tangible and deeply rooted relationship between teaching and learning informed by the critical analysis of both theory and practice, in this sense it is both process and outcomes driven. In addition, lesson study also helps answer the catalogue of criticisms that have merged internationally that much educational research is divorced from the experiences and practices of classroom teachers. In their depth and diversity the chapters in this volume are a celebration of outstanding research and practices and illustrate the real potential that lesson study has to substantially enrich the professional development of teachers and the education of their students.