

## EXPLORING LESSON LEARNED FROM LECTURERS' EXPERIENCE ON IMPLEMENTING LESSON STUDY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** In the ever-evolving landscape of education, the importance of innovative teaching methodologies cannot be overstated. One such approach that has gained substantial traction in recent years is Lesson Study. This study aims at investigating lecturers' experience on implementing lesson study, specifically the lesson learned from lesson study. This study employed case study which involved five lecturers at higher education level as the participants. The data were gained through open ended questionnaire, interview, and documentation. The results indicated that the lessons learned that confirmed by the participants are: enhanced creativity and innovation, targeted student - centered teaching, cultivation of reflective practitioners, and building a supportive community. In conclusion, lesson study is not only gives new experience for lecturers but also new insight that can be useful for their teaching improvement.

**Keywords:** lesson learned; lesson study; higher education

### INTRODUCTION

Lesson study is an educational approach that originated in Japan and has gained popularity worldwide due to its effectiveness in improving teaching practices and student learning outcomes. Lesson Study is not merely a teaching technique; it's a trans-formative journey that fosters a collaborative environment among educators (Baricaua, 2016). At its core, Lesson Study entails a group of lecturers working closely to design a lesson plan, implement it in a classroom setting, observe its execution, and subsequently, fine-tune the lesson based on reflective feedback. This iterative process allows educators to tap into the collective wisdom of their peers, leading to an enriched teaching experience that benefits both lecturers and students alike.

Lesson Study is a collaborative professional development process used by educators to improve teaching and student learning. It involves a cycle of plan, do, see, and redesign (Saito et al, 2014). In the first stage, plan, the lecturers identifies a specific learning goal or area of focus for the lesson. This could be related to content, teaching strategies, student engagement, or other aspects of teaching and learning. Then, designing a detailed lesson plan that outlines the structure of the lesson, including the learning objectives, teaching materials, activities, and assessment methods. The plan should be well thought out and aligned with the learning goal.

In the second stage, do, the role model lecturer teaches the lesson while the other team members observe. The lesson is conducted according to the planned activities and strategies. During the open class, the observing team members carefully watch the lesson, taking notes on student reactions, engagement levels, teaching strategies used, and other relevant observations.

The third stage, see or reflection, the team gathers after the lesson to discuss their observations and impressions. They share what they noticed about student learning, lecturer actions, and any unexpected outcomes. Based on the analysis of the lesson, the team identifies areas that can be improved or adjusted to

better meet the learning goal. The team revises the lesson plan based on the insights gained from the observation and analysis.

The last stage, redesign, the team decides whether to implement the revised lesson plan. If they choose to do so, the lecturer who previously taught the lesson re-teaches it with the modifications. Then, the team shares their findings, reflections, and insights with other educators within the school or educational community. This could be done through presentations, workshops, or written reports.

Lesson study has many advantages that beneficial for teaching and learning process improvement (Sarimanah, 2016). First, lesson study promotes a culture of collaboration among lecturers. Educators work together to plan, teach, observe, and analyze lessons. This collaborative process allows lecturers to share their expertise, learn from each other, and collectively develop best practices.

Second, it focuses on student learning. Lesson study places a strong emphasis on student learning. lecturers design lessons with specific learning objectives in mind and continuously refine their teaching methods based on the observed outcomes. This leads to lessons that are more engaging, effective, and tailored to students' needs.

Third, in-depth understanding. Through lesson study, lecturers gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter they teach, the diverse needs of their students, and the most effective instructional strategies. This understanding helps lecturers adapt their teaching methods to cater to different learning styles and abilities.

Fourth, reflection and Iteration. Lesson study encourages lecturers to reflect on their teaching practices and make improvements based on evidence (Sarimanah, 2016). After observing a lesson, lecturers engage in reflective discussions about what worked well and what could be enhanced. This iterative process leads to continuous improvement in teaching methods.

Fifth, evidence-based approach. Lesson study is grounded in evidence-based practice. The collaborative planning, observation, and analysis of lessons are based on real classroom experiences and student interactions. This approach allows lecturers to make informed decisions about their teaching methods.

Sixth, professional growth. Engaging in lesson study fosters professional growth among lecturers. They have the opportunity to experiment with new strategies, receive feedback from colleagues, and refine their skills over time. This leads to a sense of professional fulfillment and a commitment to lifelong learning.

Seventh, Contextual Adaptation. Lesson study allows lecturers to adapt teaching methods to the specific needs and contexts of their classrooms. Lessons are not generic; they are designed to address the unique challenges and strengths of the students they are intended for (Syarifah & Emiliasari, 2019).

Next, cultivating lecturer leadership. Lesson study can empower lecturers to take on leadership roles. lecturers who excel in planning and facilitating lessons can become instructional leaders within their schools, sharing their expertise with peers and contributing to school-wide improvement efforts (Nurwidodo et al, 2018).

Then, engagement with research. Lesson study encourages lecturers to engage with educational research and theories. As lecturers experiment with new strategies, they often incorporate insights from pedagogical research, enhancing their teaching practices with evidence-based principles.

Last, positive Impact on student outcomes. Ultimately, the primary goal of lesson study is to improve student learning outcomes. By focusing on the quality of instruction and continuously refining teaching methods, lesson study contributes to increased student engagement, understanding, and achievement (Ng et al, 2022). Incorporating lesson study into a school's professional development strategy can lead to a more dynamic and effective teaching environment, benefiting both lecturers and students alike.

Lesson study can be considered as an effective method for enhancing teaching practices and promoting student learning. While lesson study itself may not explicitly focus on 21st-century skills, it can indirectly contribute to the development and promotion of these skills (Hobri et al, 2018). First, collaboration and communication. Lesson study is a collaborative process where lecturers work together to design, implement, and analyze lessons. This encourages lecturers to communicate and share their ideas, expertise, and experiences. Through these interactions, lecturers can develop better communication skills and learn to work effectively in teams, which are essential 21st-century skills.

Second, critical thinking and problem solving. During lesson study, lecturers analyze student learning outcomes, identify areas of improvement, and adjust their instructional strategies accordingly. This process requires critical thinking and problem-solving skills to identify the root causes of learning challenges and to develop innovative approaches to address them (Saadah & Irvan, 2019).

Third, creativity and innovation. Lesson study encourages lecturers to think creatively when designing lessons that engage and challenge students. They often need to come up with innovative teaching methods and activities to cater to diverse learning needs, fostering creativity and innovation in the classroom.

Next, technology integration. In the 21st century, technology is a vital component of education. While lesson study itself might not directly focus on technology, the collaborative nature of the process can provide opportunities for lecturers to explore and integrate technology into their lessons, enhancing their digital literacy and technological skills.

Then, global and cultural awareness. As lesson study gains popularity globally, educators from different cultural backgrounds collaborate and share their teaching practices. This exposure helps lecturers develop a broader perspective, fostering global and cultural awareness among both lecturers and students.

In addition, adaptability and flexibility. Lesson study involves continuous reflection and adaptation based on real classroom experiences. This process cultivates adaptability and flexibility in lecturers as they learn to respond to unexpected challenges and changing student needs.

Last, lifelong Learning. Lesson study encourages lecturers to engage in ongoing professional development and learning. Lecturers who participate in lesson study become accustomed to seeking out new information, strategies, and best practices, demonstrating a commitment to lifelong learning.

While lesson study is not explicitly designed to teach 21st-century skills, its collaborative, reflective, and learner-centered nature aligns well with the development of these skills. To maximize the promotion of 21st-century skills through lesson study, educational institutions and policymakers can incorporate these skills explicitly into the goals and outcomes of lesson study initiatives. This can ensure that the process not only improves teaching effectiveness but also nurtures the skills students need to succeed in the modern world.

## **METHODS**

The study was conducted in three universities in West – Java Province. Participants involved in this study were five lecturers who have implemented lesson study. Data collection techniques were used to collect the fact for this study, namely: open ended questionnaire, interview, and documentation of syllabus and implementation of lesson study. Open ended questionnaire were used to obtain the data related to the implementation of lesson study in higher education. An Interview was employed to gain a clear portrait of the lecturers' experience (Creswell, 2016) related to lesson learned from lesson study. The participants implemented lesson study in two-three cycles during the study. It consist of four stages namely plan, do

(open class), see (reflection), and redesign. The documentation were all administrative document during the lesson study activity.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Findings*

Based on the data obtained from observation and documentation, the lesson study was conducted in two-three cycles which consist of four stages namely plan, do (open class), see (reflection), and redesign. In the first stage, the lecturers design the lesson planning for open class. The role model lecturer explained the lesson plan and the other lecturers gave some suggestions based on their perspective. Second, the role model lecturer taught in her classroom and the other lecturers observed the teaching and learning process that more focus on how the students learned during the the teaching and learning process. Third, after open class, all of the observers and the role model lecturers gave reflection for future teaching betterment. Last, after knowing what should be improved the role model lecturer tried to redesign the lesson plan based on the suggestions given. Thus, the lesson study, during its' process give many insight for the lecturers oh how to do better in their teaching.

The data obtained from the interview indicated that there are some lesson learned from the lesson study that noticed by the lecturers. They are:

#### 1. Enhanced Creativity and Innovation

Through Lesson Study, lecturers are empowered to think outside the box and experiment with novel teaching approaches. This collaborative endeavor creates a platform where educators can share diverse perspectives, sparking a creative synergy that results in innovative pedagogical strategies. By incorporating various teaching methods and leveraging technology, lessons become dynamic and engaging, ultimately enriching the students' learning experience. It can be seen in the following excerpt:

L1 : *In a traditional teaching setting, I doubt we would have been able to create such a comprehensive and multi-faceted project. Lesson study not only empowered us as lecturers but also empowered our students to think outside the box and develop solutions that had a real impact. It was a clear demonstration of how collaborative lesson study can enhance creativity and innovation in education.*

#### 2. Targeted Student-Centrist Teaching

Lesson Study compels educators to meticulously analyze the impact of their teaching methods on students' learning outcomes. This heightened focus on students' needs ensures that lessons are tailored to individual learning styles and preferences. As lecturers continually refine their approaches based on real-time observations and feedback, the classroom becomes a space where every student's potential is nurtured, leading to more profound educational growth. It can be seen in the following excerpt:

L2 : *Incorporating lesson study is a way to enhance our teaching methods and truly make learning centered around our students. One particular lesson study experience stands out to me.*

#### 3. Cultivation of Reflective Practitioners

The cyclic nature of Lesson Study encourages a culture of reflection and continuous improvement. lecturers collaboratively review their lesson plans, identify strengths and areas for enhancement, and implement changes based on evidence-based insights. This reflective practice transforms educators into proactive learners who consistently refine their teaching methodologies, resulting in an ever-evolving educational landscape. It can be seen in the following excerpt:

*L2 : After the lesson, we sat down and discussed what we had observed. The students' reactions guided us in making adjustments to the lesson. We decided to incorporate more group activities where students could discuss and apply algebraic concepts in their chosen scenarios. Additionally, we planned to provide extra resources for those who needed more help, like one-on-one sessions or online tutorials.*

*L3 : The next time we implemented the lesson, we saw a noticeable difference. The students who had struggled before seemed more engaged and confident. They were actively participating in discussions and were excited to share how algebra applied to their interests. It was clear that the adjustments we made based on our lesson study observations had a positive impact on their learning experience.*

*T5 : Definitely. Lesson study empowered us to step back, reflect, and refine our teaching practices. By centering our approach around our students' interests and needs, we were able to create a more meaningful and effective learning environment.*

#### 4. Building a Supportive Community

Lesson Study transcends the isolation often associated with traditional teaching methods. Through collaborative planning and observation, educators establish a sense of camaraderie and mutual support. This sense of community fosters an environment where lecturers can openly share challenges, celebrate successes, and collectively elevate the quality of education provided.

*L4 : Absolutely. Lesson study has been a trans-formative experience for our school community in terms of fostering collaboration and support among lecturers. One particular instance that comes to mind is when we decided to focus on improving our approach to teaching problem-solving skills in mathematics.*

#### **Discussion**

Lesson study is an instructional improvement strategy that originated in Japan and has gained popularity worldwide as an effective method for enhancing teaching practices and promoting student learning. In lecturers' perspective, there are many lessons learned from lesson study. In the findings, based on the interview results, there are four main lessons learned from lesson study viewed from lecturers' perspective.

First, it enhances creativity and innovation. Lesson study promotes collaborative teamwork among

educators. lecturers with diverse backgrounds and experiences come together to collectively plan and refine lessons. This collaborative environment encourages the exchange of ideas and the sharing of different teaching techniques, fostering creativity through exposure to new perspectives. This is in line with Nurwidodo et. al (2018) who mentioned that lesson study can support collaborative environment that emphasize on innovation and creativity. Lesson study encourages lecturers to think creatively when designing lessons that engage and challenge students. They often need to come up with innovative teaching methods and activities to cater to diverse learning needs, fostering creativity and innovation in the classroom.

Then, lesson study is also more focus on students centered in the teaching and learning process. During our initial planning phase, we all brought our perspectives to the table – our varied teaching styles, experiences, and insights. As we delved into designing the lesson collaboratively, we found ourselves engaging in deep conversations about the best strategies to make the material accessible to all students. Hobri (2018) and Ng (2022) explained that lesson study is aligned with 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning purposes that emphasizes students as the centre of learning. In addition, Saadah and Irvan (2019) and Syarifah and Emiliasari (2019), the used 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching models such as problem - based learning and project - based learning encourages the students' center teaching and learning process.

Third, it enable the lecturers to cultivate the reflection from practitioners or other lecturers. The remarkable part was that each of us was open to learning from one another. We shared our concerns, brainstormed solutions, and even debated certain aspects of the lesson. This process not only allowed us to pool our collective knowledge but also created a sense of trust within the group. We knew that our opinions were valued and that our goal was to elevate each other's teaching practices. As the lesson was taught, we all observed and took notes on different aspects – student engagement, the effectiveness of different activities, and even our own interactions with the students. After the lesson, we reconvened to discuss our observations, which were often quite diverse. But instead of seeing these differences as conflicts, we treated them as opportunities to refine our approach further. Saito et al (2014) and Saito at al (2015) agree that lesson study involves continuous reflection and adaptation based on real classroom experiences. This process cultivates adaptability and flexibility in lecturers as they learn to respond to unexpected challenges and changing student needs.

Last, building a supportive community. Lesson study encourages lecturers to engage in ongoing professional development and learning. lecturers who participate in lesson study become accustomed to seeking out new information, strategies, and best practices, demonstrating a commitment to lifelong learning. Sarimanah (2016) explained that this was where the real magic of building a supportive community through lesson study happened. Instead of feeling defensive about our teaching methods being critiqued, we were genuinely curious to understand how and why our colleagues approached things differently. This led to rich discussions where we could learn from one another and adapt our methods based on evidence from the classroom. Baricaua (2016) mentioned that as lesson study becomes a regular practice in a school or educational institution, a culture of continuous improvement and innovation develops. This culture permeates not only teaching practices but also administrative processes, curriculum development, and overall school improvement efforts.

Ultimately, the changes we made to our teaching based on these insights had a positive impact on student learning. But beyond that, the lesson study process solidified the bonds among us as lecturers. We became more than just colleagues; we became a community that shared a common goal of improving student

outcomes through collaborative learning. Lesson study not only improved our teaching practices but also nurtured a culture of respect, learning, and continuous improvement. We're not just supporting our students; we're supporting each other in our professional growth journey.

## CONCLUSION

In a realm where education is paramount, Lesson Study emerges as a beacon of pedagogical excellence. By embracing collaboration, innovation, and reflection, educators stand to transform their teaching practices and, consequently, the lives of their students. The lesson learned from Lesson Study is clear: a holistic approach to teaching, centered on continuous improvement and student empowerment, paves the way for a brighter and more enlightened future. The lecturers agree that lesson study gives them lessons learned namely enhanced creativity and innovation, targeted student - centered teaching, cultivation of reflective practitioners, and building a supportive community. In conclusion, lesson study is not only gives new experience for lecturers but also new insight that can be useful for their teaching improvement.

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## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest of any personal circumstances or interests that may be perceived as inappropriately influencing the representation or interpretation of reported research results.

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