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Lesson Study, what can a world association bring to local stakeholders?

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Introduction

Lesson Study (LS), in Japanese “Jugyou Kenkyuu”, originated in Japan in the 1890s and gained popularity in the 2000s after international comparisons reported in *The Teaching Gap* (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). LS was introduced in the USA as a professional development approach for improving mathematics teaching and learning (Lewis, 2002). LS has since been gaining increasing recognition worldwide, particularly in mathematics education (Clivaz & Takahashi, 2018; Huang et al., 2019; Quaresma et al., 2018).

LS is a cyclic process consisting of various phases. The process begins with a group of teachers identifying a difficulty in teaching and learning. They analyse the curriculum, plan a lesson together, implement it in one teacher’s classroom, and observe its impact on student learning. They may then plan a modified version of the lesson and repeat the cycle. The results of this iterative process are disseminated in the form of a lesson plan and professional journal articles (Lewis et al., 2019; Lewis & Hurd, 2011).

Since the process begins with the questions and the need of teachers, the importance of local communities that practice LS cannot be overstated. These communities create an environment that promotes teacher collaboration and inquiry-based learning, which is critical for the success of LS. Moreover, local communities play a crucial role in sustaining LS practices over the long term, ensuring that teachers continue to develop their skills and knowledge through ongoing collaboration and learning.

International collaboration between local communities that implement LS is also essential. By sharing their experiences and expertise, these communities can learn from each other and adopt best practices to improve LS implementation. International collaboration also helps to broaden the scope of LS and promote its use in different educational contexts.

The World Association of Lesson Studies (WALS) is a global organisation that plays a crucial role in promoting LS at the international level. WALS provides a platform for LS practitioners, researchers, and policymakers to share their experiences and knowledge and collaborate on improving the quality of LS implementation worldwide.

This text will highlight some of the roles of WALS in promoting LS at the local level. Specifically, it will explore how WALS supports local communities in implementing LS, the benefits of international collaboration between these communities, and the impact of WALS

on LS development globally. By doing so, this article aims to provide insights into the potential of LS as a tool for teacher professional development and improve educational outcomes both locally and worldwide.

Connecting with the world

To connect with the world and promote LS at the international level, WALs offers various resources and platforms to its members. These resources include a comprehensive website (www.walsnet.org) that provides information on LS, its implementation, research, and related activities. The website offers a wide range of resources, including news, events, webinars, publications. It also provides links to related websites relevant to LS, including academic organisations, research centres and networks around the world. WALs also publishes a regular newsletter that keeps its members updated with the latest news, research, and events related to LS and maintains an active presence on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook.

WALS has an Executive Committee (ExCo) and Council that provide leadership and governance for the organisation. WALs also has a group dedicated to supporting PhD students and early career researchers in LS. The group provides networking opportunities, mentorship, and resources to help these researchers develop their skills and knowledge in LS. It also maintains on its website a database of LS doctoral students that provides a platform for students to connect with each other and share their research.

WALS offers a series of webinars that provide a platform for LS practitioners and researchers to share their experiences and knowledge and engage in discussions on LS-related topics.

Another way of sharing LS-related experiences and research for WALs is the publication of a peer-reviewed journal, the International Journal of Lesson and Learning Studies (IJLLS). Members can access the IJLLS articles free of charge through the WALs website. Along the same line, WALs also publishes a book series on LS in collaboration with Routledge. The series features books that explore various aspects of LS, including its practical implementation, research, and impact.

By offering these resources and platforms, WALs aims to connect LS local communities, practitioners and researchers worldwide, promote LS as a tool for teacher professional development, and improve educational outcomes globally.

The WALs yearly conference

The World Association of Lesson Studies organises a yearly conference that takes place in different regions of the world. This conference is an opportunity for participants from all over the world to come together, meet with local educators, and share their experiences with LS. The conference is attended by different stakeholders, including teachers, researchers, teacher educators, and school administrators.

The conference is not just a place to attend presentations on research and Lesson Study experiences; it is also a place for attendees to participate in workshops, listen to keynote speakers, and visit local schools where LS is being implemented.

The next conference will occur in Zwolle, the Netherlands, from November 27 to November 29, 2023. We encourage everyone interested in LS to attend this conference and learn from the experiences of others. Please register for the discussion and participate in this wonderful opportunity to connect with the global community of LS practitioners.

Conclusion

WALS, the World Association of Lesson Studies, helps promoting LS internationally as a tool for teacher professional development, and improving educational outcomes globally.

Local communities are the origin and the achievement of LS, and international collaboration between communities experiencing LS is essential to promote its use in different educational contexts. WALS plays a crucial role in promoting LS at the local level by supporting local communities, enhancing international collaboration and providing resources and platforms to connect LS practitioners and researchers worldwide.

The yearly conference represents an opportunity for LS stakeholders to share their experiences, participate in workshops, and learn from others' experiences. It is an excellent occasion for anyone interested in LS to connect with the global community of LS practitioners and learn how LS can be used for teacher professional development and improve educational outcomes worldwide. To know more and to participate, consult the WALS website, www.walsnet.org.

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