
TEACHERS' IMPLEMENTATION OF LESSON STUDY TO PRESCHOOLERS

Ghitha Loka Yuniar, Risty Justicia

Early Childhood Education Department, School of Postgraduate Studies,
Jl. Dr. Setiabudhi No. 229 Bandung 40154 West Java, Indonesia

Corresponding e-mail: lokamuonline@gmail.com , justiciarisy@gmail.com

Abstract: The point of departure in this article is to describe pre-schoolers' learning during the study and the teachers' expectations of each child learning experience through lesson study. Lesson study is a tool for building and sharing practitioner knowledge which the teachers are part of the research; they do planning, teaching, observing, and discussion about the lesson applied in a classroom. In Indonesia, lesson study is started to be commonly implemented in elementary to university level. But nowadays, preschool level is also improving to make the lesson study for early childhood education proper to be applied. One of preschool in Bandung which has opened a class for lesson study is Gagasceria preschool Bandung. In this case, qualitative descriptive, as a design, to describe the phenomenon, was utilized to get information on how the activities in the classroom carried out. The data were obtained from observation, field notes, and photos, as the units of analysis to research and understand the way teachers create meaning in their aims in teaching. Analysis of observation data showed that lesson study implementation of pre-schoolers is conducted by implementing the sequence of activity that generally can be divided into one set of preparation, before, during, and after teaching. By conducting lesson study, not only the pre-schoolers who got fun and meaningful learning, the teachers also got many benefits to improve their skill in teaching. With the references to findings, it is recommended that lesson study to preschool level is implemented to provide teaching-learning improvement in preschool.

Keywords: Lesson Study, Implementation, Preschoolers

1. INTRODUCTION

Pre-schooler is a great period which certainly contains of the influences for children's development in the future (UNICEF Early childhood Development, 2001). This period also has right to have good education, such as Play Group and Kindergarten. Those institutions belong to Early Childhood Education. Early Childhood Education means a formal institution that serves to develop the potential of early childhood in giving readiness to enter primary schools (Depdiknas: 2004). Becoming readiness, children need to be implemented a good lesson. Lessons are usually given by the institutions providing knowledge, skills and attitudes to the children in full accordance with what children's needs. All these institutions will not function effectively if the components of the school system are not running well. It is because the most influential component in the learning process is the teachers.

Teachers' community is the most important component in school learning. They seem like

wheels under a big car body. Teachers are required to manage such a way that classroom learning is ongoing actively, innovative and fun. But becoming a professional teacher is surely not easy. It needs teachers' professional competence to improve teachers' learning performance. One of teachers' professional development programs is able to be taken by lesson study.

Lesson study has been grown since the 18th century in Japan and into Indonesia in 2002 through a program Indonesia Mathematics and Science Teacher Education Project (IMSTEP) and in cooperation with JICA, the program is also working with the government in this case the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) in collaboration with the Teachers Working Group (KKG) and Subject Teachers Council (MGMP) to boost the performance of teachers in Indonesia.

This program was introduced in lesson study in secondary schools (SMP) and from high school to see the effectiveness of this lesson study. Results from the trial lesson study

developed in junior and senior high schools in some schools in Bandung, showed significant results. Lesson study program was evidently able to improve the effectiveness of learning in middle and high school teachers in Bandung (Depdiknas, Depag dan JICA, 2009). Thus, GagasCeria pre-school, in this case, was realized to implement lesson study as a habitual teaching-learning process. Besides, this program was also predicted to be able to influence good education in the future, especially for preschool level.

Lesson study developed in elementary school teacher refers to the process taking a strategy in teaching material in subjects. Unlike in kindergarten, the lesson study process is necessary to see how the behavior and development of children in learning to find solutions together to improve child development. Lesson Study provides a way for teachers to improve learning systematically (Podhorsky & Moore, 2006).

Besides, this lesson study program becomes the answer for pre-school teachers' issues in education reforming with the aims. It was also able to achieve an increase in the acquisition of a child's learning adequately. A program of teacher professional development, like lesson study, requires facilities that can provide opportunities for them learning how to learn and to learn about teaching. The facilities in question, for instance lesson study (Santayasa: 2009).

Lesson study is very important for teaching-learning process in preschool. The teachers' learning ability is aimed by observing the children's development. Observation means to see "invisible" things using "visible" things as cues and and "interpretation of the child's behaviour", which reflects the observer's being and forces the observer to "continue being observer" (Tsumori, 1974 who is cited in Akita, 2013). The teachers work together with planning, teaching and also observing a lesson developed cooperatively. Meanwhile the teachers are implementing the lesson designed; the observers record and analyze the children's phenomenon in the classroom.

GagasCeria preschool is one of institutions using the lesson study program to see the teachers' performance during teaching-learning process. In addition, the performance itself was to see how the teachers solved children's developmental problems. The solutions were found out by collecting information according to institution community' experiences (teachers, staffs, and principal). One of them is about

teaching strategy. Thus, the strategy of teaching through lesson study is also a good potential solution for teachers in preschool to develop their skill in teaching (Lewis, 2002; Lewis, *et al.*, 2006).

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Lesson study has been grown since the 18th century in Japan. In Japanese, lesson study known as "jugyokenkyu", which is a combination of two words, namely "Jugyo" meaning lesson or lecture, and "Kenkyu" which means the study or studies (Akita, 2013). It is in line with Garfield (2006) who states that lesson study is a systematic process used by teachers of Japanese to test the effectiveness of teaching in order to improve learning outcomes. Thus, it can be also interpreted as a model of professional development of educators through collaborative learning and assessment continually based on collegiality and mutual learning to build learning communities.

There are several steps that must be done by the teacher in enhancing professional development practices. Mulyana (cited in Rusman, 2010: 395) states that there are four stages in implementing lesson study, as follows:

1) Planning Phase

In this stage, the teachers get along in a collaborative study in planning the lesson design. Planning is started from the analysis of the needs and problems encountered during the teaching-learning process.

2) Implementation Phase

In this stage, the implementation of learning activities is carried out by teachers and the other teachers and observers do some analysis in classroom phenomenon.

3) Phase Reflection

This phase is provided in discussion session. It is followed by all participants of lesson study guided by any person in charge. Discussion is started by conveying observers' impressions of teachers who have teaching practice. Differentially, for preschool level, this session only discusses about children's development or behavior. Furthermore, all observers submit comments or suggestions wisely to the learning process that has been implemented which is supported by evidences according to observations, not based on his/her

own opinion. This is what called by future efforts to improve the teaching-learning process.

4) Follow-up Phase

This stage is the last stage in the lesson study as a form to follow up the results of a reflection on lesson study activities. Follow-up is aimed as an effort by improving the next teaching-learning process.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Qualitative method was employed to answer the statement problems of this study. This study was aimed by analysing and revealing the phenomenon during teaching learning using lesson study. This is relevant to Geertz 1973's study (as cited in Cohen et al., 2007, p. 254) who says that qualitative method attempts to portray 'what it is like' to be in a particular situation, to catch the close up reality and 'thick description' of participants' experiences and thoughts about and feelings for a situation. Related to the Geertz's statement, Dyer (1995) also adds that qualitative encloses descriptive and detailed, with a narrow focus, combining subjective and objective data (Cohen et al, 2007, p. 254). Thus, the writers chose specifically qualitative descriptive, as a research design, was utilized to explain information on how the activities carried out during preparation, teaching-learning process, and reflection session.

3.2 Research Site

The study was undertaken at GagasCeria Pre-school, Bandung. The first reason for choosing this level is that teaching in kindergarten level has been wrestled by the writers for more than two years so it made them easier to do the research in the same level of this school. Another reason for choosing this school was familiarity because the writer has been teaching at GagasCeria Discovering English for almost 3 years. So, she has been familiar with the school, the teachers and the children as well. Moreover, to make the observation conducted by the writers ran effectively, some classes in Play Group and Kindergarten were taken to be observed. They were pre-schoolers whose ages range between 3 and 5 years old. The important thing, in this study, was the presence of teachers because they had control to create preparation, before, during activities, and reflection session ran well.

3.3 Data Collection

To collect the data, the writer relied on a qualitative method to find out the teacher's implementation of lesson study to pre-schoolers. Classroom observation, observation journal, interview, and documentary data were being the main sources of data collection and each of which is described below:

3.3.1 Observation Journal

The use of observation journal helps the writers to observe what phenomenon happened during the preparation, before teaching and in class activities. The journal itself is indicated as one of several approaches to narrative inquiry method (Conelly & Clandinin, 1999 cited in Cohen et al., 2007). Narrative inquiry was used in this research as the reflexive process of moving from field (with starting points in telling or living of stories) to field texts (data). Clandinin & Huber (in press) also add, from their journal entitled *Narrative Inquiry*, that field texts can include transcripts of conversations, journal notes, family stories, memory box artefacts, photographs and other texts that are composed by narrative inquirers and participants to represent aspects of living experience. In line with Clandinin and Huber (in press), Cohen et al. (2007) also assert that journal notes, diaries, and field note can be taken as the writer's documentary.

3.3.2 Interview

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992) interview allows researcher "control" over the line of questioning and provides "indirect" information filtered through the views of interviewees. This is in line with Silverman's (2000) statement cited in Heigham and Croker (2009) interview can provide important insight into respondent's experiences, beliefs, perceptions, and motivations. Furthermore, the writers asked some questions to Principal of GagasCeria Pre-school informally. Respondent was interviewed about the history of official implementation of lesson study, how the institution manages this program, how the teachers implement it. Every time the pre-school community (teachers, staffs, and principal) and observers had finished the reflection session, she

would be interviewed. The interviews were conducted six times.

3.3.3 Documentary Data

In this research, classroom records were conducted for almost 6 sessions of ‘open class’ for lesson study. By doing so, the writers of this study were able to implement every activity that has been set out to be observed (Cohen et al., 2007). During the activities the video-recorder was used to take on everything that was going on the teacher’s class until the class finished.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analyses and interpretation were based on data mainly from observation that consist of observation journals; interview; and documentary data. Thus, all data was transcribed and subsequently categorized and interpreted in a strong body of information (Alwasilah, 2002, p. 229). In this case, the categorization and interpretation are described by the frameworks below.

Categorization

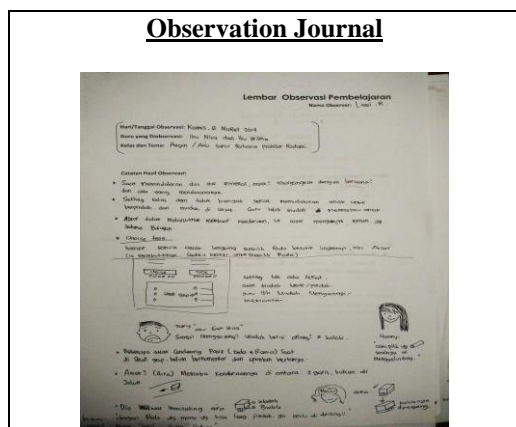


Figure 3.1 Example of Forming Categories from the Excerpt of Observation Journal

Interpretation

General Procedures for Lesson Study	Stage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Planning Lesson Design The teacher made some lesson plan to maximally organize the activities that are going to be applied in the classroom. The teachers were helped and give some inputs by observers. 	<p>1 Preparation before Teaching</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Introduction in class activity Introducing new vocabularies to kindergarten children could be implemented through song and games. Moreover, children’s vocabulary mastery could be assessed by using big pictures cards. 	<p>2 Before Teaching</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Asking children to join in the activities Hiding or even pointing interesting pictures of the picture book brought was the teacher’s 	<p>3 During Activities</p>

strategies to make children curious with and want to join in main activity.	
✓ Discussing and Analysing during teaching-learning process	4 Reflection Session
What phenomenon happened while children collaborated in making or doing something. How to solve children’s problem. What supplement which is able to help their necessary.	
Adapted from Brewster, J & Ellis, G. (2003). <i>The Primary English Teacher’s Guide (2nd ed)</i> . p. 194-195	

Table 3.1 Example of Framework of Lesson Study Implementation

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section is focused on how lesson study was implemented in preschool level. In this level, lesson study’s implementation has one different perspective with the implementation in a school setting. It could be seen while the observers were concerned on “invisible” things using “visible” things as cues and “interpretation of the child’s behaviour”, which reflects the observer’s being and forces the observer to “continue being observer” (Tsumori, 1974 who is cited in Akita, 2013). Thus, observation was focused on pre-schoolers’ development, **not** what subjects or materials conducted in the classroom.

4.1 The Implementation of Lesson Study in Pre-school

Related to teachers’ professionalism improvement, the implementation of sustainable lesson study is believed to improve the practices of everyday learning. Teaching practices improvement will lead to the quality of student learning processes and products. In teaching practice, operationally lesson study can be implemented through 6 (six) phases, as follows: (1) Building lesson study community; (2) Focused on lesson study; (3) Planning lesson design; (4) Teaching and observing lesson design; (5) Reflection Session, and (6) Redesigned the Next Lesson (Santayasa, 2009).

4.1.1 Building Lesson Study Community

In the first stage, there are four steps of activities that can be performed, as follows.

(a) Pre-school leader recruited some members of the teachers’ group, who were interested and willingness to innovate and improve the quality of education, to open the class for lesson study. At the first time, GagasCeria preschool in 2009, teachers’ requirements were so hard to be pleased to teach. It really needed pre-school leader’s power to ask them to open a class for

lesson study. Amazingly, because of habitual to open class, the teachers now usually tag the schedule fast for lesson study.

(b) Preschool leader made a commitment to provide a specific time (teaching slot in curriculum) in order to achieve or implement the lesson study. Thus, Gagasceria pre-school make the group members usual hold regular meetings either annual open class for lesson study.

(c) Preschool leader decided to develop specific meeting schedule for teachers. It was considered that the meeting was very frequent and varied. Therefore, schedule is also very useful in managing all the tasks associated with the teachers, including regular teaching duties.

(d) Preschool leader approved the rules of the teachers on how to take decisions, how to divide responsibility among community, use of time, and how to convey advice. In giving advice, lesson study community in Gagasceria pre-school avoided criticizing dictions, they tended to say "I learn...". Thus, politeness were building in reflection session.

4.1.2 Focused on Lesson Study

At this stage, there are three steps to do activities, as follows:

(a) Pre-school community (principal, staffs, and teachers) agreed with research themes for lesson study. Research themes were chosen by considering with three things. Firstly, in planning discussion session, teachers raised the issue being a trending topic in the classroom and asked for other teachers or any observers to see in different perspectives. Secondly, preschool had a certain program, such as character development, etc. Thirdly, or research theme could be referred to lesson plan provided. They all were aimed by supporting the goal is achieved.

(b) In school setting, choosing subjects for lesson study is usually a must step. In this case, children development, such as their behavior, was a guide to choose the subjects. It considered using the following questions. Firstly, what children issue rose up in the classroom? Secondly, what special program did exist in an institution? Thirdly, what was the goal of today's lesson plan? Basically, the subject would be chosen as long as a teacher could control and understand the goals.

(c) Selecting a topic and lessons usually came from a new phenomenon in last meeting which had not finished to be discussed yet. The selected topic always referred to deal with children development or preschool environment.

4.1.3 Planning Lesson Design

In planning a lesson design, the observers should be joined in or collaborated with the classroom teachers. Thus, the observer knew well what activities and what topic of observation would be ongoing conducted in the classroom.

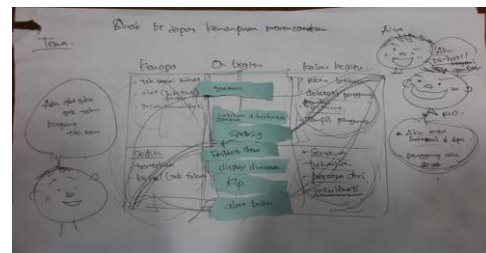


Figure 4.1 Teacher's Note for Designing the Lesson.

Basically, lesson design was aimed by: (a) reviewing the lessons are taking place or existing; (b) developing a plan to guide the study. Creating lesson design, to guide the implementation of learning, observing, and discussing about uncover phenomenon that emerged during the lesson study, was the hardest step. It was a complex thing. Therefore, it is helpful to consider three steps of "Kenapa-Oh Begitu-Kalau Begitu". Those could be main questions to thinking deeply. Firstly, why 'this student' does something? Secondly, 'S/he' might need 'treatment' to meet 'her/his' needs. Thirdly, so 's/he' will react 'something' if 's/he' is given "this treatment". Moreover, the following question bordered those previous main questions, such as *what is currently understood by children on this topic? What one wants to understand the children at the end of the lesson? What is "drama" or series of questions and experiences that will encourage children to move from an initial understanding towards the understanding that it would be desirable? How children will answer questions and move on learning? What are the problems and misconceptions will arise? How teachers will use the ideas and misconceptions to improve these lessons? What will make this lesson capable of motivating and meaningful to*

the children? What evidence of student learning, motivate children, student behavior that should be collected so that teachers can discuss lessons learned and discuss it in a broader research theme?

Furthermore, GagasCeria pre-school frequently invites experts from Japan, named Ryo Suzuki. He has been teaching using the lesson study as a learning tool in Japan for more than 20 years. Experts were not only from native, but also psychologists, senior teachers, professors, or researchers who have knowledge of the field of study, or even sharing along with the teachers amazingly has been a habitual in GagasCeria pre-school.



Figure 4.2 Japanese Expert of Lesson Study (Ryo Suzuki) was invited to design the plan with the teachers and surely observers were allowed to join in.

4.1.4 Lesson Observation

At the first time GagasCeria pre-school enforced the teachers continually opened a class for lesson study, almost of them got highly nervous and overwhelmed. So, when the teachers conducted the lesson, they mostly unnatural. They expected to be a perfect one. Here was a challenging for the teachers. They had to learn to change their mindset, focus on the steps of lesson and what each child's thought during the teaching-learning process. Amazingly, along the time goes by, the teachers in GagasCeria pre-school were very usual in teaching during observing.

It could be seen from the children, who were influenced, became very enjoy the teaching-learning process without feeling disturbed by many observers inside the classroom blending with children. Besides, to make lesson study habitual, policy maker (pre-school leader) decided constantly to hold the lesson study as a tool in teaching-learning process in GagasCeria pre-school.



Figure 4.3. Classroom Situation during Observed for Lesson Study.

4.1.5 Reflection Session

When lesson design had been implemented, it needed to be discussed and analyzed, also called reflection. Reflection session was provided on the same day. In that session, nicely the teachers said "our" instead of "my" learning. It meant that when the class was opened for lesson study, not only teachers who could learn from the phenomenon happened, but also the observers learned that so. The observers learned to analyze the unusual phenomenon in the classroom through learning observation sheet.

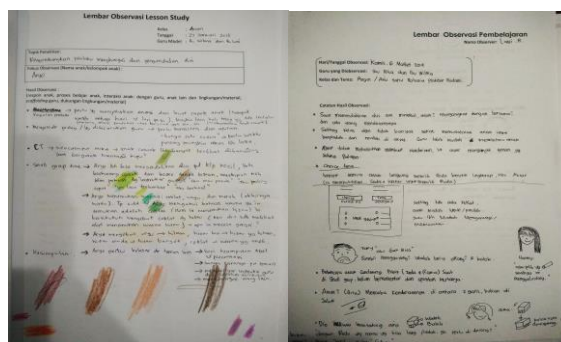


Figure 4.4 Examples of Learning Observation Sheet.

Reflection session also discussed on what the differences between the plan and what had been accomplished. The discussion focused on the data collected by observers as Figure 4 shown. The important one was when all the sessions were done effectively and on time. At the last session, GagasCeria pre-school lesson study community and also observer decided what next planning is. It could be inspired by today's unusual phenomenon happened in the classroom.

4.1.6 Redesigning the Next Lesson

In order to improve the lessons, redesigning was aimed by accomplishing it for the next teaching-learning process in the classroom.

These lessons' improvement was not only for specific classroom which joined open the class for lesson study, but it was able to be implemented in other classrooms regularly. Thus, the teachers also got new knowledge in improving on how the teaching-learning process should be professionally applied in their own class.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Lesson study is an alternative teacher professional development through collaborative activities and sustainable. The principle of collaboration facilitates teachers to build learning communities effectively and efficiently, while sustainable principles provide opportunities for teachers to become a lifelong learning society. Two things are very important for teachers in their role as a role model and trusted by children in school.

This study has portrayed the teachers' implementation of lesson study in Gagasceria pre-school ongoing basis helped accelerate the teachers' professionalism improvement. The indicators, improving the teachers' professionalism through the implementation of lesson study, are the development and implementation of lesson design which always demanded innovative learning and implemented the cycle of plan-do-see allowing teachers to develop critical and creative thinking about teaching and learning, the process of sharing the learning experience-based observations provide opportunities for teachers to develop openness and increased social competence.

Lesson study, here, implemented the teaching-learning process through a cycle of plan-do-see for the five stages: (1) Building lesson study community; (2) Focused on lesson study; (3) Planning lesson design; (4) Teaching and observing lesson design; (5) and reflection Session including the re-planning for next open class. Those stages of lesson study activities were facilitated well for the teacher's quality improvement and also student learning outcomes.

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