



Lesson study in initial teacher education

principles and practices

edited by

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Phil Wood is Reader in Education at Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln where he is the Programme Leader for doctoral studies. His research focusses on pedagogic and organisational change using complexity theory, process and time. He has focussed on the use of lesson study in higher education and initial teacher education.

Preface

This book results from an ongoing dialogue between three universities, each of which is dedicated to initial teacher education. They share a mission and a passion for an inquiry focus to initial teacher education, not just a standards or competency-driven view of what student-teachers should be engaged in during their preparation programme, be this undergraduate and typically four years long, or a postgraduate programme of one year. We believe that learning to teach involves much more than learning to use a repertoire of strategies and that teaching requires much more complex, context responsive and flexible expertise than can be represented in a list of discrete competences. The development of teachers' research literacy needs to be embedded in initial teacher education, with opportunities that allow student-teachers to explore the complexity of the classroom and get true glimpses of what it means to be a teacher who can respond to the needs of learners in diverse settings.

Our dialogue began over a conference meal in Gothenburg where a number of the contributors were attending the world conference of the World Association of Lesson Study (WALS) in 2013. This chance meeting has led to a number of exchange visits, collaborative projects and publication of academic work. Eventually, at the 2016 WALS conference in Exeter, the idea for this book was born. After three years of interaction and sharing of experience, this seemed like a natural next step, given our common use of lesson study in the context of initial teacher education.

Lesson study has seen a rapid growth in popularity across the world over the past two decades, since the publication in 1999 of Stigler and Hiebert's *The Teaching Gap*, leading to an expanding research base, publications and interest from educators beyond the lesson study community. This is no less true of the use of lesson study in initial teacher education. However, whilst there is an expanding literature focussing on the use of lesson study in this context, we could not identify a publication in an English medium which attempted to engage with, and discuss, the process of lesson study in initial teacher education, including some of the possible challenges involved. We accept that a possible limitation of the book is that it engages predominantly with research written in English, and that we therefore have not utilised research written in Japanese or other Asian languages; this is a limitation we are very much aware of and for which we can only apologise.

Initial teacher education is becoming an ever more complex sector, with demands on student-teachers relating to the need to become reflective practitioners, engage critically with research evidence, develop their own research literacy,

and demonstrate a growing expertise in the classroom. At the same time, in many jurisdictions, there is a desire for ever closer working between schools and universities to improve the quality of new teacher preparation. These changes have led to the need to build structures and processes which support student-teachers and school-based mentors in gaining the most from the limited time they have together, often in placements that may last from 4 to 10 weeks, depending on the programme. If becoming confident, research-literate and reflective practitioners is the aim of initial teacher education programmes that involve more time in schools, then some consideration needs to be given to how inquiry into practice is built into student-teachers' formative experiences. Lesson study is one way in which those involved in initial teacher education can meet these challenges and can help begin to point to further areas for development as young teachers begin their careers. It is with this in mind that we hope you find this book useful in helping you to develop lesson study further within your own teacher education contexts.

The book offers a theoretical overview on the characteristics of lesson study, exploring both principles and practice. It is not directly a how-to book, of which there are a growing number in Europe and North America, and not just in English (Dudley, 2011/2014; Lewis, 2002; Munthe, Helgevoll, & Bjuland, 2015; Rauscher, 2019). However, we include discussion of examples of how lesson study has been applied in initial teacher education contexts and consider what has been learned from our experience and that of others. The book is informed by research carried out by the growing lesson study community, to whom we owe a debt of gratitude. In addition, it is informed by our own initiatives to use lesson study in initial teacher education, each of which we have mutually evaluated during our six years of collaboration. We believe that these exchanges of information, expertise and experience have enriched our programmes, leading to our conviction that lesson study is a powerful vehicle for practice development in teacher education.

Thus, the book's purpose is to raise awareness of the power of lesson study to contribute to the preparation and development of new teachers and to consider how related challenges can be addressed.

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