

## **Exploring the Lesson Study Strategy for Learners' Dividends and Teachers' Professional Development in Language Education**

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**Abstract :** The question of attaining the functional competency in the target language among English as Second Language (ESL) learners may not be a one-method-fits-it-all approach. Researchers and educators will continue to beam search light on every possible perspective in order to arrive at a working strategy that can assist in ameliorating the constraints of functioning in a Second Language acceptably. Lesson Study (SL) according to Ellen R, (2008), originated from Japan where it has recorded significant impact before being introduced in the United State of America. It is to be seen as a matter of concern that Lesson Study seems not popular among the teeming population of Nigeria Educators. This view came up as result of the Conference on Higher Education Transformation, Organised by the National University Commission (NUC) in collaboration with the University of Sussex, UK, at Nile University, Abuja. (2017) where only about 5% of 120 workshop participants had heard about Lesson Study before the conference and none of the 5% were using it. The purpose of this article is to increase awareness on Lesson Study and sensitize the teachers about its' functioning mechanisms vis-a-vis the dividends inherent in Lesson Study. Education is quite dynamic and new dimensions will continue to be explored in order to identify what educational methods, strategies or techniques will be of significant assistant to teachers and learners.

**Keywords:** Lesson Study, Research Lesson, Collaboration, Evaluation, Feedback and Pedagogy

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### **I. THE LESSON STUDY MECHANISM**

Lesson Study is a collaborative teaching strategy which starts from formation to execution, and covers evaluation to remediation of the entire processes. It is based on exploration of a team research lesson where everyone in the team purses the same goal of proffering solutions to teaching and learning problems. The Japanese have made significant progress in the educational evolvement of this educational strategy. According to Cerbin, W. & Kopp, B. (2011), Lesson study involves a group of teachers coming together solely for the purpose of working as a team on a common discipline. The team usually work out a design, interpretation and evaluation of the design which may run through several weeks, months as the need may be. The composition of the team should be determined by instructors' interests and the focus of the lesson study. Typically, participants are from the same discipline and often teach the same course.

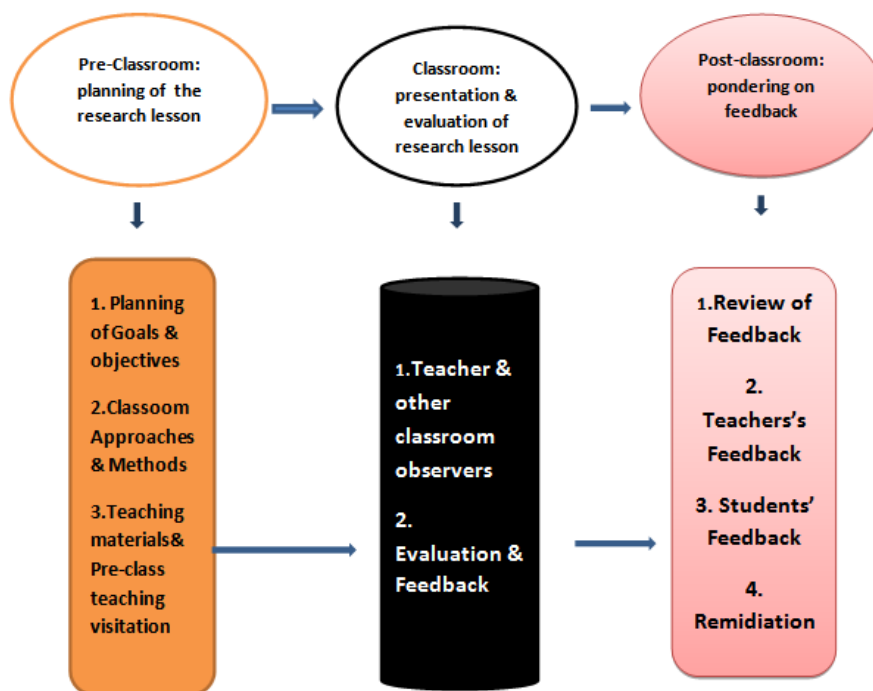
In this model, there could be a 7-Point-Process in a Lesson Study as itemised below.

- ❖ Planning of lesson goals
- ❖ Processes and approaches for achievement of goals
- ❖ Practical enhancement tools
- ❖ Presentation in the classroom
- ❖ Probing for goals realisation
- ❖ Possible problems encountered
- ❖ Proferring solutions to the problems

Tracy C. Rock & Cathy Wilson, (2005) listed the following as the components of Lesson Study's during classroom interaction.

- (a) focused on a specific teacher-generated problem, goal, or vision of pedagogical practice,
- (b) carefully planned, usually in collaboration with one or more colleagues
- (c) observed by other teachers
- (d) recorded for analysis and reflection, and
- (e) discussed by lesson study group members, other colleagues, administrators, and/or an invited commentator.

## II. A LESSON STUDY MODEL SHOWING PLANNING, EXECUTION AND EVALUATION OF THE COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH



(Akinwamide 2018)

There are 3 basic stages to a standard lesson study viz; the Pre-classroom, classroom and Post classroom stages. This is why Lesson Study Planning is time constrained. The activities in each of the stages are discussed below.

### Pre-classroom Activities.

This is the stage of conception of research lesson. The teachers form a group and identify which area of the syllabus needs much focusing and why. The 'why' is

1. Consideration of the goals and objectives of education
2. Consideration of the constraints inherent in teaching and learning of a second language.
3. Consideration of the attitude of some students towards learning some language skills
4. Consideration of the attitude of some teachers towards teaching some language skills
5. Consideration of peculiar needs of some students
6. Consideration of lopsided distributions of environmental demographics that may impact teaching and learning.
7. Consideration of Pre-classroom teaching visitation for interaction.

The Language Teachers may pick from any of the 4 basic skills of language, ie Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing Skills or from any of the sub-skills of language. The collaborating teachers plan what they want to achieve as goals and objectives of the research lesson. This is followed by the Classroom Approach for the pursuance of the goals and objectives. Appropriate illustrative materials, textbooks and functioning teaching auxiliaries are provided for the classroom interaction.

One issue that should be considered in the roles of the team is the presence of the other teachers as observers in the classroom. Cerbin, W et al (2011) ask a salient question here, 'Won't the presence of the observers negatively affect the students performance? They proffer the solution that, ' as part of informed consent, instructors should explain the roles of observers in the lesson and that the observers are there to help and facilitate understanding and not to evaluate for grading purpose. In this model, the pre-classroom teaching visitation is emphasized. The class teacher and the observers visit the class and interact with the students to remove suspicion and to familiarise with the students and the classroom setting.

### Classroom Presentation of Research Lesson

This is the execution stage where one of the teachers is saddled with the responsibility of teaching while the rest of the teachers are also in the classroom (a) to assist in the distribution, pasting, hanging and positioning of charts, items and other teaching auxiliaries, (b) to observe the following classroom variables.

1. Teaching and learning the contents
2. Attitude of the students
3. Disposition to answer or ask questions
4. Comportment of the students and
5. Illustrative prowess of the teacher

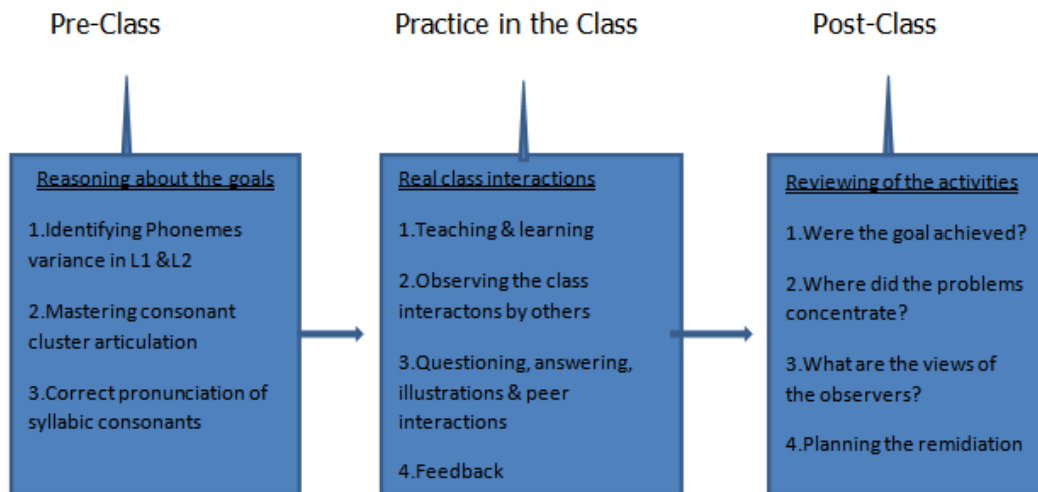
The research lesson is the treatment given to the students and after the presentation, evaluation must follow to ascertain how far the goals and objectives have been achieved. The writing of feedback from the evaluation of the students come last in the classroom.

**Post-class Stage:** the teachers are in the planning room again for consideration of the evaluation result which is usually subjected to thorough analysis. The whole processes are critically reviewed here. salient questions to be answered are listed as follow:

1. Were the goals of the lesson achieved?
2. What percentage of the student population are in distinction, average, and below average levels?
3. Which area of the lesson did the students find difficult?
4. What other illustrations can be employed to enhance better performance?
5. What are the observations of the other team members on the students, teacher and the teaching style?
6. What remediation package could be used for optimal performance?

The post class stage prepares the remediation package which is geared towards better performance of both the team and the students.

### III. RESEARCH LESSON FORMATION, EXECUTION & REMEDIATION



(AKINWAMIDE 2018)

**Pre-class:** this is the conception stage of the research lesson by the collaborating teachers. For example, the constraints of phonemes

swapping by second language speakers of English Language e.g

a. English (L2) \_\_\_\_\_ Yoruba (L1)

- ❖ /θ/ as in 'think' is replaced with /t/ 'tink'
- ❖ /æ/ as in 'back' , , , /a:/ 'ba:k'

b. Clustering of 2 consonants Clustering of 3 consonants

- ❖ stop /st/ **strip** /str/
- ❖ clash /kl/ **splash** /spl/

c. syllabic consonants

- ❖ little **fumble**
- ❖ simple **prism**
- ❖ apostle **scuttle**

#### **Practice in the Classroom**

This is the stage for the demonstrations of the reasearch lesson. All the collaborators as well as the students are active participants. Here, 'treatment' is applied for the expected behavioural change in the learners towards

achieving the stated objectives. One of the collaborating teachers is appointed as the research lesson teacher while others take positions in the class to monitor, observe and facilitate the progress of classroom interactions. The observers are to keep a well documented record of the classroom interactions. For examples, active and passive students, distributions of questions by the teacher and general attitude of the students to the interactions. The students are allowed to interact with one another before the evaluation of what been have been learnt.

#### **Post-classroom activities**

This is the stage where the feedback from classroom evaluation is reviewed, scrutinized and analysed. The observers' perspectives on the classroom presentations is discussed and better options are tabled for immediate remediation of students' errors. Appropriate remediation follows and the class is evaluated again for the expected positive feedback that is in harmony with the set goals /objectives.

#### **The inherent Dividends of Lesson Study**

Brian C & Kopp B (2006) identified the following four areas of dividends that are of great significant in Study Lesson

**Teachers' Advancement:** It is an ideal venue for teaching improvement. In contrast to common educational workshops, conferences and seminars where general teaching approaches and strategies are highlighted, lesson study looks directly at one's classroom. Teachers focus on how their students learn and what kinds of method and strategy can enhance student learning, teachers' confidence and critical thinking of both teachers and learners. It is possible with this arrangement for the team to concentrate on the teacher's personality and the teaching practice.

**Teaching Auxiliaries:** Lesson study results in a field tested lesson and materials that can be used and adapted by other instructors. The systematic, evidence-based approach makes it possible for teachers to build on one another's work. By the end of the lesson study process, teams produce knowledge about how students learn from instruction.

**Teaching Colligate:** The Lesson study process helps build communities of practice around teaching profession. Instructors report that collaborating with their peers is a particularly rewarding experience. Lesson study cultivates mutual understanding of goals, teaching practices and student learning among teachers.

**Coordinated Pedagogy:** Lesson study displays a well coordinated pedagogical practices. There is an undercurrent of a division of labour that runs through the team work. All necessary aspects of the content and classroom teaching are poised for attention.

### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The quest for pedagogical strategies that can facilitate understanding and enhance educational goals achievement will continue to be a matter of concern to all stakeholders in the field of education. The veracity of Lesson Study to equip teachers and fast track teaching and learning goals achievement are quite glaring in this presentation. Lesson Study's research lesson allows teachers to interact and identify possible solutions to personal professional limitations. Lesson Study builds a professional confidence in participating research lesson members in their individual class work. As a matter of fact, Lesson Study can be the right watershed for initiating new teachers into the teaching profession.

The post classroom evaluation and the remediation that follow could be a welcoming assurance for better academic performance that would be evidential in the anticipated behavioral changes of education.

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