

Stimulating teachers' reflections through a Lesson Study video-based approach

Improving teachers' practice is the strategy believed to have the best potential to increase students' benefit from education (European Commission, 2018). To improve practice, teachers need to collaborate with colleagues. However, the actual potential in teacher collaboration is debated, and collaboration in itself does not automatically lead to learning and improvement of practice (Horn & Little, 2010). In her meta-analysis of research on professional development, Ann Webster-Wright (2009) criticizes how the concept of professional development is defined in research and practice, and argues that instead of teachers' *development*, we must focus on their *learning*. She argues that many development processes are decontextualized and take place in a context outside the school and the classroom, creating challenges when teachers try to transfer new knowledge to their daily practice. Instead, she claims that learning must take place in authentic environments, and within a community that supports the learning processes.

The current paper focusses on the use of video to support teachers' professional learning in an authentic work environment. The context is a process where teachers cooperate to develop a module about fractions to be used in a so-called Newton room, a learning arena with state-of-the-art learning resources shared by schools in a geographical area. Two Newton-teachers took part, together with two researchers. A Lesson Study approach (Munthe, Helgevold og Bjuland, 2015) was employed. The teachers planned the module together, then one of the teachers taught the module while researchers videoed the activity, with a particular focus on students' group work with problem-based tasks, which was the area the teachers wanted to improve. Teachers and researchers then watched video excerpts from group work in the Newton-room. Teachers were stimulated to reflect on and analyze what happened during students' group work, and how activities might be adapted to further stimulate students' learning. In line with the Lesson Study approach, this process was repeated, so that the other teacher taught the revised module, followed by reflection to adapt and improve. Data used in the current paper comprises teachers' audio-recorded talk while watching the video, reflecting on what students are doing, and discussing changes to the module. Findings show that this approach resulted in teachers either directing their reflections outward, towards students and resources, or inward, towards themselves, and that these reflections differed between surface-level descriptions and more in-depth critical reflection about factors such as activities, learning resources, the students, aims etc. The process resulted in considerable revision of the module as well as ample opportunities for teachers' authentic professional learning.

References

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