

Collaborative lesson planning as a positive ‘dissonance’ to teachers’ individual planning practices: Characterizing the features through reflections-on-action

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ABSTRACT

In this study, collaborative lesson planning (CLP) was a positive ‘dissonance’ to the teachers’ individual lesson planning practices. Thirty teachers grouped into grade-level teams (five members) participated in the study. Data transcripts from audio- and video-recordings, formal and informal interviews, and written evaluation forms were qualitatively analyzed through the constant comparison method. Results showed that through reflections-on-action, CLP had positive impacts on the teachers’ instructional practices including the provision for: (1) continuous learning, (2) improvement of professional practice, and (3) reflective, affective, and professional support. Two stages of CLP were identified: the ‘dissonance’ stage and the refinement stage. The dissonance stage has three activities: (1) goal setting, (2) lesson implementation and observation, and (3) collaborative reflection and discussion. The refinement stage has four activities: (1) organization and reflection of prior knowledge, (2) reflection, organization, and development of new knowledge, (3) enhancement and enactment of the new knowledge, and (4) task accomplishment.

Acknowledging the empirically proven advantages of collaboration in teacher education, this research highlights collaborative lesson planning as a positive ‘dissonance’ to the traditional lesson planning in isolation. The lesson plan, which is the primary material for teaching, became the object of teacher professional learning. One important component of the professional learning activities is the reflective practice. Since all the teachers were engaged in the collaborative reflection after lesson observation, all their inputs were given consideration during the improvement of the lesson plan. Their commitment was established from the non-threatening interactions that exist in their professional community.

This study claims that collaborative lesson planning became a ‘dissonance’ to the teachers’ individual lesson planning practices. The collegial approach in their grade level teams established a mutual trust and friendly community which made it a positive ‘dissonance’ to their usual practices. Since each of the team members were involved in the classroom observation, their insights were evidence-based that were shared and reflected upon during their post-lesson discussions. In the process, they developed the skills of constructively critiquing their lesson plans. Thus, the study recommends collaborative lesson planning in future PD with full participation of teachers in the decision-making. Future PD efforts which focuses on lesson planning can adapt or modify the model formulated in this study to fit their school culture.