

Clarification of Key Components in Design of Lessons

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find more effective ways of designing lessons that can lead to students' acquisition of knowledge by analyzing seven presentation materials from a class in our master course. This is an interim report of the study which has been trying to find key components that should be focused when making lesson plans in the field of lesson study. Some of the students in seven practical groups made an original lesson plan which was aimed to encourage students' learning and carried out a lesson at Tennoji Elementary and Junior High Schools Attached to Osaka Kyoiku University. After practical lessons, presentation sessions took place to share ideas and findings in the all groups. The authors, therefore, managed to find some significant elements through practical lessons. We would like to suggest concrete ways to apply them to everyday lessons in doing future research.

Keyword: Lesson study, lesson plan, acquisition of knowledge

1. Introduction

According to the report of Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) in 2013, it has been found that Japanese teachers usually spend their time longer at work compared to teachers in other countries. The amount of time in engaging in extracurricular activities and desk work may be one of the causes of this result. Japanese teachers are also likely to be eager to prepare for their lessons even outside the school. Although teachers plan lessons within limited time, the quality of the lesson preparation differs due to school environment and their individual experiences of teaching. This situation tells us that lesson study will be more effective and encourage teachers to prepare lessons if they have a common set of key components which has to be considered in making lesson plans.

2. Methodology

2.1 Practical lessons before analysis

The authors took a class, named "Practical development in teaching," in the first semester of 2015 at The United Graduate School of Education in Osaka Kyoiku University. There

were 37 students in the class, including 22 in-service teachers. The students were formed into 7 practical teaching groups. Some of the students in each group made an original lesson plan which was aimed to encourage students' learning and carried out a lesson in the elementary and junior high schools attached with Osaka Kyoiku University. After practical lessons, presentation sessions were held to share ideas and findings that have been came from practical lessons with all groups. Each working group delivered a 10-minute presentation with power point slides and students in other groups asked several questions to members of the group giving a presentation.

2.2 Data Analysis

After the sessions, the authors collected all of the presentation materials and picked up some common words which were probably important from 7 presentation materials. The choice of picking-up words is mainly based on their frequency of appearance in powerpoint slides and presentation talks. The common words were classified and organized in Table. 1 by the authors.

3. Results and findings

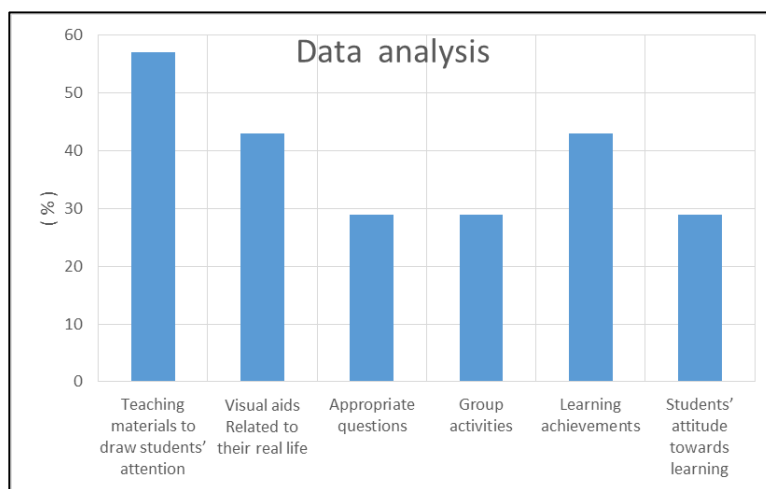


Table. 1

The authors found out four points from our analysis. The first point is that selecting teaching materials to draw students' attention in lead-in part is crucial. As more than half of our working groups referred to this word in their presentation (shown in Table. 1), the importance of teaching materials has been greatly highlighted. This is able to have a lot of things to do with visual aids as described in Table. 1. To bring real things into the classroom has a bigger effect on students' motivation rather than to give teacher's talk at the very first moment of class time. Another key is appropriate questions which are directly related to lesson goals. This kind of approaches in teaching is necessary to clarify what knowledge learned from former lessons students use and apply it to a new learning.

The next point is that all of the students in the class should be involved in pair or group activities. In the class, opportunities to output their acquired knowledge and to share a variety of ideas and thoughts among them are essential for them to deepen their learning. Finally, it may be noted that almost half of the groups tend to recommend that it should be better to review learning achievements in the last part of the lesson. The process of letting them recall lesson goals can lead to more acquirement of learning.

4. Conclusion and discussion

Through this research, the authors have found four key components to make lesson plans. We believe that each point can be useful for making our classes more interesting, proactive and dynamic, which is strongly connected with students' learning. It is, however, necessary to examine the effectiveness of our findings to see how much students' learning is enriched by applying key components that we found in further research.

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