

Basic idea of Workshop-oriented Training Programs as "Active Learning" for teachers

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ABSTRACT

My main area of expertise is educational engineering. The phenomenon of school education, in contrast, involves a variety of complex elements and factors which are intertwined with one another. For this reason, the field is by no means sufficient in terms of transmission, accumulation, and efficiency. I believe that educational engineering is a field that enhances the potential of education (which is a complex phenomenon) for transmission and accumulation and enhances educational efficiency. Educational technology should undoubtedly make contributions to the efficiency and invigoration of in-school training programs.

My other main area of expertise is curriculum development, and in particular, comprehensive learning. Comprehensive learning allows students to acquire a variety of qualities and skills – such as problem resolution skills, communication skills, and the ability to express their ideas – in the process of resolving specific problems in a collaborative effort.

From the perspectives of these two areas of expertise, I participate in in-school training programs by thinking of them as opportunities for enhancing the qualities and skills of teachers in the process of carrying out activities for resolving a variety of issues concerning their students or developing and improving their classes or teaching materials through a collaborative effort. I think it is important for teachers to learn actively. I report about part of developments on "Workshop-oriented Teacher Training Programs"

Classroom instruction is the most important element of school education. There is a limit to what a teacher can do through pure hard work. In recent years, many young teachers are being hired. Therefore, it is necessary to implement a system at schools that involves having teachers encourage one another to improve and polish their teaching skills.

There is a wide range of methods for conducting workshop-oriented Lesson Study programs. We encourage you to carry out in-school training programs in an effective manner by combining the different methods according to the needs of your school.

For instance, there are seven methods for conducting the class evaluations for the post-training evaluations. They include: the "KJ Method", the "Lesson Plan Enhancement Sheet," the "Matrix Method, "Conceptualization Sheets", and the "Tanzaku Method."

Keyword: Teacher Education, Workshop-oriented Teacher Training Programs ,Lesson Study

1. Methods for Workshop-oriented Lesson Study programs (☆:Merit,★:Demerit)

1.1 KJ Method

This is an effective method for summarizing unorganized or scattered ideas.

(1)Write down on post-it notes your observations, discoveries and thoughts from observing the class.

(2)Once the post-it notes have been gathered, sort them into groups. Group together post-it notes with similar ideas written on them, circle the groups, and create subheadings for the groups.

Do this on simili paper that does not have a frame.

(3) Examine the relationship between the groups (e.g. cause and effect or contradictions) and indicate the relationships by drawing arrows or other symbols.

★This process will take some time as you will need to get used to the task of organizing and sorting the post-it notes.

Glossary:”KJ method” is the very famous method to organize a lot of information acquired by fieldwork research and so on. Cultural anthropologist, Kawakita Jirou worked out it. This method is used at many field in Japan.

1.2 Lesson Plan Enhancement Sheet

Make copies of the lesson plans in their original size and distribute them to each group.

(1)Write down "Strengths" and "Weaknesses" on separate post-it notes, each post-it-note having a different color.

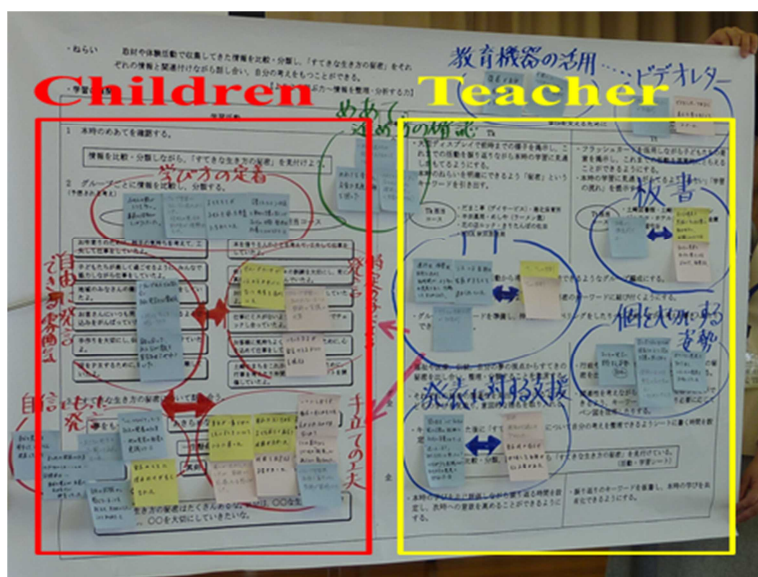
(2)Place post-it notes on appropriate places in the lesson plans.

(3)Once you progress with this process, try to organize your thoughts in a way that goes beyond the limits of the two categories.

☆Can carry out discussions from the perspective of students.

☆Allows participants to see how the instructor relates with the students in each step.

★The focus on the instructional class makes it difficult to make assessments and evaluations of the class in terms of how they relate to the unit as a whole or other subjects.



1.3 Matrix Method

For the spaces under A, B, and C, write down words that offer perspectives for evaluating the class that the school or subject places an emphasis on such things as "verbal activities," "classroom rules," and "motivation for learning."

- (1) Place the post-it notes (which you filled in) inside the appropriate cells.
- (2) Organize the post-it notes beyond the cells.
- (3) Each team suggests

methods that could be used by the instructor, rather than just stating issues or questions.

☆ Places an emphasis on having discussions. Discussions can be carried out on issues that apply to all subjects.

☆ You need to observe the class while being conscious of different perspectives.



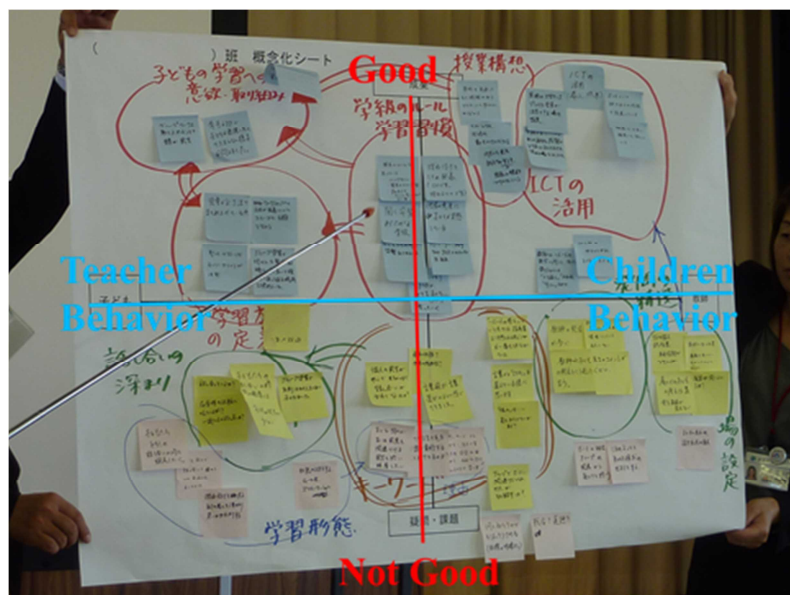
1.4 Conceptualization Sheets

Divide a sheet of simili paper into four sections by writing down "Strengths" (what you liked about the class and what you learned from the class) and "Weaknesses" (areas that need improvement and problem areas) along the vertical side and "Students" and "Teachers" along the horizontal side.

(1) On post-it notes, write down your observations, discoveries and thoughts from observing the class.

(2) Place post-it notes in the four sections while explaining what you wrote down.

(3) Try to organize the ideas in a way that combines the perspectives



of the two sides of the paper.

☆This method is less time consuming than the KJ Method. Many ideas will pop up in the process of organizing your ideas.

1.5 Tanzaku Method

This is a simplified version of the KJ Method.

(1)Write down on post-it notes your observations, discoveries, and thoughts from observing the class.

(2)Once the post-it notes have been collected, sort them into groups, and write down the main words or points on tanzakus (rectangular pieces of paper).

(3)All participants summarize the words and ideas that each team came up with. Divide the simili paper into three levels with the top level being "achievements and strengths," the middle level being "problem areas or areas that need improvement," and the bottom level being "suggestions, countermeasures, and improvement strategies." Then, each group sorts the tanzakus while they share what they wrote.

☆The relationship between the problem areas and countermeasures will become clear.

☆This is an effective method for summarizing the assessments made by multiple groups.

2. Basic Guidelines for Workshop-oriented Training Programs

2.1 Time to fill in the post-it notes

(1) Filling in the post-it notes while observing the class...

They need to be distributed in advance, and the rules for how to fill them in need to be explained.

There will be times when a large number of post-it notes will be necessary. Sometimes, you will write words that may seem to be a minute detail, but which may later turn out to be a significant issue. Since you will be writing while you observe the class, at times, you will be scribbling down words very quickly.

(2)Filling in the post-it notes after observing the class...

Jot down notes in the lesson plans (which were distributed) or in your own notebook and transcribe those notes onto post-it notes before the workshop begins. At this time, the post-it notes that will be used will be selected. This makes it possible to place a limit on the number of post-it notes that will be used, and to instruct the participants to write neatly. This method is recommended for the in-school training program.

2.2 How to fill in the post-it notes

Rules for how to use the post-it notes need to be decided in advance. (It is good idea to include the rules in the handouts or lesson plans.)

- (1) Color coded system for the ideas that are written down (Ex: what you liked-light blue; problem areas or areas that need improvement-yellow; advices or suggestions-pink)
- (2) Direction of writing (general rule: horizontal) or orientation of post-it notes (for rectangular post-it notes, the side with the glue must be at the top.)
- (3) Write down one idea per post-it-note.
- (4) Do not just write down words, but sentences that are specific and straightforward (e.g., the instructor used the blackboard to summarize what the students said in class.).
- (5) Use a black, a nonpermanent, felt-tip pen (Things written with ballpoint pens and mechanical pencils are hard to see.)

2.3 How to conduct the Lesson Study program

- (1) Provide a simple explanation of the aims of the training program, the procedures, as well as how the time will be organized. It would be best if the instructor writes up a proposal for the training program and distributes it in advance.
- (2) Before the workshop, the instructor provides an explanation of the background and facts without discussing mistakes that they made. They will discuss, for instance, "the theme of the class", "the current state of the students" and "parts of the class that I put extra thought into." The instructor shares the "areas for improvement and future aspirations" after the completion of the workshop and the presentations by each team.
- (3) It is a good idea to have the procedures and time allotment visible throughout the workshop.
- (4) During the workshop, it may be a good idea for the instructor to participate in the workshop by walking from table to table and answering questions (without discussing mistakes that they made) or by joining a team.

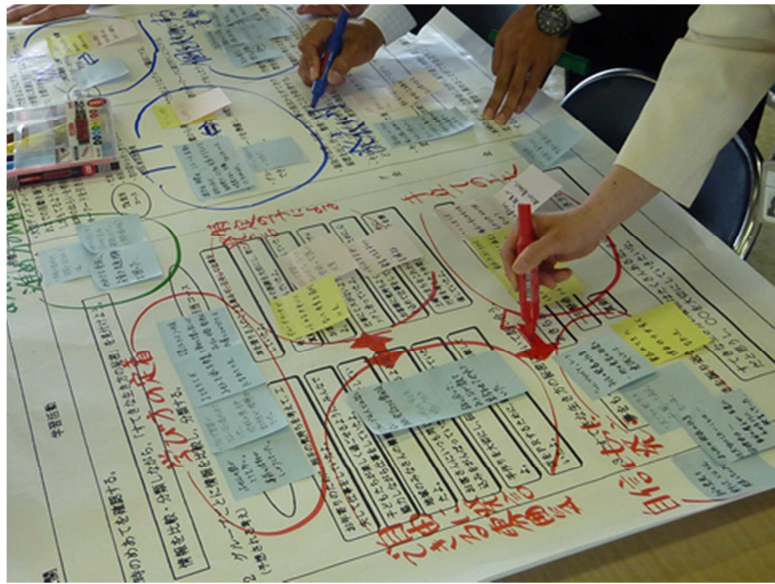
It is also recommended that the instructor conducts an independent workshop along with the teachers who helped them put together their teaching plan or other teachers who put together their own lesson plans.

2.4 How to organize all the post-it notes

- (1) Be sure to stick on the post-it notes, while reading and sharing what you wrote out loud. When you do this, if there are other post-it notes with similar ideas written on them, the process will go more smoothly if you place your post-it notes near those post-it notes. Sticking on post-it notes repeatedly will likely be a waste of time.
- (2) After the post-it notes have been organized to a certain degree, it would be a good idea to create subheadings for the post-it notes. If a subheading has not been established, jot down notes on a post-it-note with a different color and place those post-it notes close together. If subheadings have not been established when it comes time to circle the post-it notes or drawing lines between them, write the words lightly by using a pencil, and write over it with a marker

later.

(3) If a system of organization for the post-it notes has been established, make the post-it notes visually pleasing by using markers of many different colors. Creating bullet lists for areas that need improvement in the space where there is nothing written will also be effective.



2.5 How to present the achievements

(1) Be sure to leave enough time for the presentations, even if it is just a short amount of time, in the in-school training program as well. It will allow the participants to share their ideas with one another or have discussions in an informal setting later on.

(2) It is a good idea to have younger teachers be in charge of the presentations. Explaining (putting into words) what they did in the workshop will be a good learning experience for them.

(3) When making the presentations, all team members, not just the speakers, should stand in front of everyone.

(4) One person on each team should check on the time that their team will present and relay that information to the speaker.

2.6 How to take full advantage of the achievements

How the achievements of the Lesson Study program are put to use after the program is vital. At schools that are actively engaged in Lesson Study programs, participants draw up their own improvement plans and present them in front of everyone after referring to the results of the assessments conducted by each group or after listening to other presentations. In addition, the "post-program plans" concerning the Lesson Study program are visible throughout the training program.

Putting the achievements of the in-school training program in a place that is visible to the teacher in such a way is an effective method. This way, the teachers will be able to look back on the workshop-oriented training program after its completion, not only in terms of what they learned but how they felt during the program, which will likely raise their motivation.

3.Examples of Workshop-oriented Training Programs

Preparation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the aims of the training program and the methods that will be used. • Have the participants come up with their own opinions or ideas in advance. • Distribute the handouts that will be used in the training program in advance. • Have the participants bring any related materials they may have. • When introducing a new method, conduct a practice run for training program, take photographs of the practice run, as well as the things that are made, and create presentation materials. 	

Time Schedule for In-school Training Program		
Time / Format	Activities	Things to Keep in Mind
3:30 p.m. All participants	* Explain the aims and the methods that will be used in the training program.	☞ Use photographs of similar training programs or things that were made in practice runs for the training program and conduct a detailed presentation in order to provide the participants an image of the procedures and goals.
3:40 p.m. Individual	* Each participant writes down their opinions or ideas on post-it notes.	☞ Avoid abstract expressions and try to write concrete sentences as much as possible. Strictly obey the rule of writing one idea per sheet. Always write with a black, nonpermanent, felt-tip pen so that the sorting and presentations are carried out smoothly.
3:50 Groups	* Participants split up into groups and share their opinions or ideas. Then, they try to organize and sort out their ideas on simili paper.	☞ Prepare a sheet that is appropriate for the aims of the program and the methods that will be used. Do not put the post-it notes down without saying anything. Show each other your post-it notes while sharing what you wrote. Try to organize the categories by creating subheadings or drawing lines between related categories to indicate causal relationships or adversary relationships.
4:30 p.m. Groups / All participants	* Each group makes a presentation on what they achieved in the program, and answers questions whenever necessary.	☞ Leave enough time for each group to present what they achieved in the program, as well time for striving to understand one another, even if it is a limited amount of time. Ask questions and provide explanations whenever necessary.
4:45 p.m. All participants	* Go over the achievements of the training program.	
4:55 p.m. Individual	* The participants record what they learned in the training program.	
5:00 p.m. All participants	* End the program with closing remarks.	☞ Each participant writes down what they learned from the training program in their training program notes or notebooks. They clarify issues with their teaching that they were able to see after participating in the training program.

4.Conclusion

(1) The advantage of writing ideas on post-it notes is that ideas can be kept in the form of writing. The advantages of organizing the post-it notes are that comparing each

other's opinions or ideas and connecting the ideas together will help clarify the issues or materialize improvement strategies, and if it is a post-training evaluation, see the causal relationships that are present in the classes in a structural way.

(2) It is often the case that, when making improvements or revisions to annual teaching plans and event plans, enlarged copies of those plans are used for the training programs. The same method is used for the Lesson Plan Enhancement Sheet.

(3) When coming up with an action plan, if, for instance, the focuses— such as the time of year (e.g. first term, summer vacation, second term); the organizers (e.g. administrative staff members, teachers, people from outside the school) — are clear, matrix sheets — which have vertical and horizontal axes— are effective.

(4) Conceptualization sheets are effective for organizing and evaluating the state of the students, for instance at the start of the school year in terms of "academics" and "daily living" by organizing the ideas into strengths and weaknesses.

(5) The advantage of a workshop is that the participants are able to make an effort to understand one another through the activities of the workshop. The groups should consist of teachers who teach different subjects if the teachers are making evaluations by going beyond their areas of expertise. The groups should consist of teachers of different age groups in situation in which veteran or mid-career teachers share their views or philosophies to young teachers.

(6) If there are multiple issues to resolve, the members of a group should be chosen based on how much they are likely to contribute to the group rather than choosing the members randomly or on the interests of the participants. In other words, the teams are put together by having the participants choose the issues in which they will be able to come up with the best concrete ideas or improvement strategies. This is another reason that the issues should be presented in advance.

5. References

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