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(Hrsg.)

Unterrichtsforschung und Unterrichtspraxis im Gespräch

**Interkulturelle und interprofessionelle Perspektiven
auf eine Unterrichtsstunde**

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Mohammad Reza Sarkar Arani

Foreword

The main research questions addressed in this study are how cross-cultural analysis can lead to the identification of the cultural script and logic of teaching, and how the inter-professional perspective of teachers provides a supportive learning environment to reflect and transform their teaching script through a research-based transnational learning platform. The authors of this study have highlighted the lesson study/lesson analysis as an approach of teacher-researcher partnership to link theory and praxis and expand professional development in practice.

What is cross-cultural analysis from the perspective of lesson study/lesson analysis? How can it lead to the designing of customized teaching for personalized learning? How can it expand international dialogue among teachers and researchers for inspiring student learning? Finally: Why is such a specialized approach to research in practice necessary?

1 What is cross-cultural analysis from the perspective of lesson study/lesson analysis?

We are familiar with video study and videographic-reconstructive analysis of a lesson, however the cross-cultural analysis of a lesson differs from this especially because of the transcript-based analysis across cultures.

In video studies, we discussed what we imagined based on the images seen in the recording. Furthermore, discussion after the lesson is more oral-oriented whole lesson analysis. In the transnational and transcript-based analysis everything is meticulously recorded in *text*. Hence the discussion is based on detailed evidence and specific sequences of a lesson and a literal oriented analysis can be provided. Evidence here means the information that has been acquired by the application of, and response to the central questions, „how do we know what we know? Is our information reliable?“ (Newmann & Association 1966, p. 132).

Transcript as a text provides the opportunity to read, to interpret, or make an interpretation through a different theoretical lens. Biesta's observation also shows that „[b]y looking through a different theoretical lens, we may also be able to understand problems that we did not understand before, or even see problems where we did not see them before“ (Biesta 2010, p. 45).

A text transcript, is the foremost document with which to study and analyse a lesson culturally and to identify ‚the DNA of teaching‘. Through understanding more about the ‚DNA of teaching‘ we can debate about whether it’s a suitable way of teaching and if there is an alternative way of teaching at that point, which is the so-called reconstruction of teaching for more authentic learning.

As our conclusion about viewing the same lesson from different theoretical and praxis perspectives shows, if researchers have the opportunity to work with educators of varying nationalities as in this case-based lesson study/lesson analysis, the quality of research in this manner can be further advanced (Sarkar Arani et al. 2020). This is one of the reasons why this kind of international study is necessary to develop an effective research method „which aims to make explicit the beliefs and values that underpin and shape teaching and learning in different cultural contexts, and which teachers are largely unaware of“ (Elliott 2016, p. 279).

Transcript-based analysis of a lesson is *evidence-based, democratic* and focuses more on teaching *as a social justice mission*, and not just *as a professional practice*. In this approach each student is important and has the opportunity to express his/her ideas, because of the goal of teaching which is to guide students to maturity and foster humane understanding (being humane, Chen 2017; engaging mindfulness and developing mindful learning, Langer 1997).

To utilize transcripts rationally and culturally, we need to diligently transcript the observations of the students’ learning activities, interviews with the teacher and the group who designed the lesson plan, the whole lesson in practice, classroom interaction and teaching materials, and anything the teacher and students are using during the lesson (teaching-learning process).

After the lesson we have a group of interpreters with different professional and socio-cultural background and lenses. All have the same transcript and work together to produce an effective interpretation and reasonable argument. The argument is not related to the academic, cultural and social position of the person, but effective explanation of what is read, or written in the transcription, or what is found in the transcription (Gruschka 2018). This process (1. lesson analysis through different lenses, 2. lesson analysis in the same area and content with different lenses) helps us to understand teaching as a cultural and complex phenomenon.

2 How can it lead to the design of customized teaching for personalized learning?

Globally, many teachers take the opportunity to observe each other’s lesson. They then review what they have learned, analyse the data collected from their observation and reflect on their own lesson. In comparison, a cross-cultural and inter-pro-

fessional analysis of a lesson provides a different lens which can lead to deeper understanding of the logic of teaching and pedagogical reasoning.

A text transcript provides all participants with a common language and factual basis and through it different theoretical and praxis lenses to explain arguments and reasoning about the situation of teaching, teacher, learning and students. Therefore, through a cross-cultural analysis among teachers, researchers and nations, we can provide better understanding of the cultural script of teaching as well as revealing the autonomy of student learning more clearly. This contributes to a deepening understanding, a changing of view and paving the way for a new direction and variation of teaching and learning.

When we do cross-cultural analysis we find values of the different lens beyond the teaching. For example, what is important for Japanese and for German participants in a post-lesson discussion? From my research-based transnational learning platform (e.g. Japan and Iran), after a lesson discussion meeting, the Japanese educators' discussions are more focused on the learner. However, on the other side (Iran), when teachers come together after a lesson to discuss teaching and learning, they immediately focus on teacher behaviour. However, the way of designing the lesson is the same in both countries. You can find the content of the lesson and this discussion in my research paper, but look at the Japanese way to discuss and analyze the lesson and how they observe the learner and their reply to the teaching materials (*Kyouzai-kenkyu*) and learning tasks (Sarkar Arani 2017). In the case of Germany and Japan, this book clearly offers an in-depth intercultural dialogue between the profession and academic cultures mentioned to expand transnational learning, and as Stenhouse also claims, to help teachers to better understand his or her own classroom and generalize beyond their experience (Stenhouse, 1975). From the international dialogue perspective, transcript also provides us with an opportunity to open a dialogue with our data, so-called 'open ended dialogue with data' herein Lesson Study/Lesson Analysis Group of Nagoya University, (e.g. Sarkar Arani et al. 2020; Sakamoto 2016), layer by layer, time by time, or lens by lens, slice by slice like when we cut open an onion. This allows us to see each layer in different situations. Accordingly, this volume may be interesting for educators around the world to see how this international study provides an inter-professional collaboration between researchers and practitioners to build a theoretical framework of concepts that can re-examine the quality of teaching in practice, and as Elliott argues, re-define the relationship between 'knowledge' and 'action' in 'national', 'international' and 'global' contexts (Elliott 2018).

3 How can it expand international dialogue among teachers and researchers for inspiring student learning?

When we have an intercultural dialogue, a data transcript, and inter-professional analysis, the first step is to ‚acknowledge others‘, the second step is ‚to understand each other‘, the third step is ‚respect others‘, and finally the fourth step is ‚to recognize others while thinking about the process and the mechanism‘.

This means we embark on the interpretation (of what it means) not just to improve the situation of teaching, or the position of the participant (the other), but improve because of the logic of the participant and his/her interpretation. This process is very rational and provides an opportunity to learn how to design culturally responsive teaching and expand culturally appropriate research methodology.

It is important, because „changing [developing] teachers will not automatically produce [significant] changes in teaching“ (Stigler & Hiebert 2009, p. 16). The research hypothesis in this international project is also that teachers are developing through the process of improving the cultural script of teaching. Accordingly, the authors herein focus more on teaching rather than on the teacher.

Effective teaching depends not only on teachers' certification (qualification), years of experiences and age etc., but also is determined through dealing with real situation and problems in teacher's life and practice. Thus, teaching competence can be improved through daily observation-based teaching, reflection and study as well as collegial learning.

To expand inter-professional and international dialogue among teachers and researchers, we need to focus on the facets of learning and look at ‚comparison as a lens‘, not as a competition. Comparison must be for learning, not for ranking. As we can see from the specific analytical results of the researchers in this inter-cultural project, we need more analytical discourse on the potential of cross-cultural analysis for the development of science of teaching, transnational learning, international lesson study/lesson analysis and to theorize lesson study.

4 Why is such a specialized approach to research in practice necessary?

It is a really challenging and time-consuming task to produce an accurate transcription, and provide a cross-cultural analysis and discussion through a multi-epistemic lens for professional development. We need time to examine the multiple modes of communication in the classroom and we also need a lot of time to proceed on the path of interpretation. Sometimes we need a long time to look at

a specific utterance or reaction to gain a better understanding of our students and teaching script or facets of learning and how students learn.

However, it seems we need such an approach to conduct evidence-based research on the teaching and learning process. As our research review shows, many teachers and researchers are not aware of the DNA of teaching in detail and a cultural script of teaching cannot be extracted from practitioner reflection, after-lesson discussion and class microscopic observations alone (Sarkar Arani et al. 2020). For this reason, this inter-cultural and inter-professional collaboration for research on teaching has possibly the highest significance among many international lesson study projects. In addition, over decades schools and the cultural script of teaching in the classrooms have faced a lot of change without reform. For example, the observation of Hiebert and Stigler shows that „[t]he core of teaching in the United States has not changed much, at least in the past 50 years“ (Hiebert and Stigler 2017, p. 169). By reading this book it seems that we are now more familiar with the epistemology, the underlying epistemologies that are evidenced in daily practice and a way of change through reform in praxis. It also provides an alternative perspective for us to realize how it can be possible to recognize the ‚tacit‘ theory of knowledge underlying practice.

Through analysis of a lesson in this way (transcript-based analysis across cultures), we will gain a deeper understanding of the logic and cultural script of teaching due to different lenses, arguments and interpretations.

It provides a new experience to look inside the black box of classroom practice (e.g. Cuban 2013), and examines what teachers actually do in the classroom (e.g. Martin and Mulvihill 2017). It will also enhance our image, values and experiences to and extend our landscape of inquiry with a new science of education which means to focus more on evidence-based and specific sequence analysis to understand the culture and logic of the teaching and the process of practice (e.g. Thomas 2012). As Friedman enlightens „research *in* practice, not research *on* practice“ (Friedman 2006, p. 132).

Consequently, we will find more effective evidence, analysis, interpretation and explanation of what is happening in teaching;

- to obtain a better understanding of the students,
- to explain the relation between teaching and autonomy of learning,
- to better understand how teachers are teaching and learning,
- to argue on the logic of their pedagogical decision,
- to recognize the ways of communication, the body language and interaction in the classroom, and
- to describe the subject didactic (*Didaktik* in German) methodological approach of teachers with their students.

This book also provides a better understanding of our logic and goals of teaching, pedagogical reasoning and knowledge background, as it integrates teachers' and researchers' analyses, the teacher's reflection on the different researchers' perspectives and finally the mutual awareness of contrasting perceptions. Thus, we can reconstruct the cultural script of teaching through interprofessional interpretation and cross-cultural analysis of a specific lesson. As Gruschka stated (2017), „you have to justify for yourself why discipline is not a goal for itself, but a medium to bring pupils to maturity [humane or being human, humanity]“ (Gruschka 2017). This intercultural research project stimulates researchers to draw further hypotheses about how the quality of teaching can be improved, and provides collegial learning for generalizing findings in a case-based lesson study/lesson analysis. This book provides transnational input to contemplate on how international learning outcomes can be reflected in practice. It continues Gruschka's intention to „understand the inner logic of teaching as a pedagogical project, that is, understanding instead of measurement, related to the pedagogical function and meaning of teaching“ (Gruschka 2018, p. 86) and expands it with regard to inclusion of discourses between the teacher and the researchers from different research cultures. Doing so, this volume also spurs teachers and researchers to look at the limitations inherent in our professional, pedagogical and socio-cultural lenses. As Hargreaves highlighted, such studies help us to break down ‚the ideology of exceptionalism‘ (Hargreaves 2011). It is sometimes because of „[y]ou can only see what you have chosen to see“ (Lo 2016, p. 170). This also raises a further question of how we are limited by the pedagogical correctness, socio-cultural and theoretical lenses that surround us. In that critical quest, the authors in this volume try to expose, explore and establish the paths leading to more effective dialogue between nations on research *in* teaching practice and theory as designs for learning.

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Der vorliegende Band dokumentiert und reflektiert einen interkulturellen und interprofessionellen Austausch über Unterricht zwischen Schule und Unterrichtsforschung. Eine Lehrerin aus Deutschland öffnet ihren Unterricht für die videographischen Beobachtungen einer japanischen und einer deutschen Forschergruppe. Um Brücken zu schlagen zwischen den verschiedenen, auf denselben Gegenstand – den Unterricht der Lehrerin – bezogenen Arbeitsfeldern, eröffnen die Forscher:innen und die Lehrerin ihre analytischen Perspektivierungen von Unterricht füreinander. Der Band bildet diskursive Grenzgänge zwischen einer handlungsorientiert-didaktischen, einer qualitativ-rekonstruktiven und einer entwicklungsorientierten Betrachtung der japanischen Jugyo Kenkyu (Lesson Study) ab, in denen die unterschiedlichen Professionskulturen sich begegnen, ohne in die Felder der jeweils anderen transformierend einzugreifen. Die verschiedenen Perspektivierungen laden ein, Vorstellungen und Konzepte von Unterricht und dessen Erforschung mit anderen als den gewohnten Lesarten wahrzunehmen und damit verbundene Irritationen produktiv in die Debatten um die Erforschung und Entwicklung von Unterricht einzubringen.

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