

Research Article

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Lesson Study as a Catalyst for Enhancing EFL Teachers' Instructional Practice

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Abstract

Background/purpose. In many of the previous studies on Lesson Study, the achievement of the students was the main indicator of its success, and little attention was paid to the instruction provided by the teachers. This study will look into the instructional practices of EFL teachers as influenced by the implementation of lesson study. Expectedly, the findings will fill in gaps concerning existing research and shed light on the contributions of Lesson Study to ELT. The study explores how teachers with higher and lower levels of self-confidence modify their lessons, orchestrate group work, and provide feedback.

Methods. The study employed a qualitative multiple case study design. Data were collected from four participant groups: 8 lecturers, who participated in Lesson Study implementation, and the researcher who joined each group to facilitate the activities and observe teachers' practices in class. Observational protocol served as the primary data collection tool. The data were analysed using thematic analysis.

Results. The findings indicated that Lesson Study has had a great impact on practice in English lessons by teachers. Particularly, they showed an improved ability to choose and modify strategies during instructional delivery in a lesson study session, while reflecting on and evolving through peer feedback. Therefore, the multiplication of Lesson Study application in ELT would boost teachers' confidence in choosing and adapting instructional strategies and thus be helpful in their professional development.

Conclusion. Lesson Study has a positive influence on teachers' instructional practice in English classes. Therefore, the multiplication of Lesson Study application in ELT can help boost teachers' confidence in selecting and adjusting instructional strategies and thus be beneficial for teachers' professional development.

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1. Introduction

Professional development (PD) is put forth as a key element in improving the quality of teaching and increasing student success. In the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), which is in very diverse international settings, PD has its issues, which present despite its importance. Guskey (2000) reported that teacher professional development tends to be a top-down affair, which he said is disconnected, resulting in little change to what goes on in the classroom. Additionally, he noted that financial issues and inadequate administrative support contribute to the erosion of training benefits, which in turn do not influence classroom practices. Similarly, Taşdemir and Karaman (2022) reported that many PD programs are not aligned with the context and do not have the support of the institution. They also reported that although we saw an increase in funding for PD between 2006 and 2020, the approach is still very much top-down, underfunded, and out of touch with the realities of teaching. Also, Sadeghi and Richards (2021) highlighted that we face significant challenges of not enough time, money, and admin support, which are the main problems. Also, in very poorly funded areas, we see that basic teacher training is irregular or inaccessible.

Another recurring theme is the misalignment of PD models and local contexts. Ustuk and Çomoglu (2019) argued that international PD programs tend to overlook the unique cultural, institutional, and pedagogical norms that are often influential in local contexts. For example, lesson study, which is a powerful and collaborative professional learning framework developed in Japan, has found itself increasingly promoted in international contexts, where it struggles to become normalized as an activity in other educational cultures, unless they have contextual adaptations. This dissonance is exemplified in the work of Kuchah and Shamim (2019), which examined PD in constrained contexts such as Sub-Saharan Africa. They argue that while collaborative PD is endorsed, it rarely flourishes in practice due to support, deficiencies in infrastructure, high teacher workloads, and the lack of policy mechanisms to bolster such approaches to PD. Furthermore, they offer examples of professional development experiences that teachers often engaged in fell short of collaboration and more often than not were acts of compliance, rather than reflection and transformation.

The report by Wulyani (2017) indicated frictions associated with institutional obligations and personal teacher motivations. PD was sometimes perceived as bureaucratic, meaning that teachers felt that the PD did not significantly impact the practices of individual teachers in the classroom. Teachers also thought that PD programs were either irrelevant to their practice, or they could not gain access to the PD programs due to logistical and financial constraints. A lack of relevance is again supported by Crandall and Christison (2016). They noted that there was a gap between what PD offered and what teachers needed. Teachers' daily practices often fall outside of institutional priorities, limiting teachers from engaging and using their PD.

The content and delivery of professional development (PD) programs often fail to meet the pedagogical needs of teachers. Teachers report attending PD where the focus is on theory, or using standardized approaches requiring practical application (Sadeghi & Richards, 2021). Researchers find that many PD activities are not differentiated per teaching level, age of learners, or specific language learning needs. In addition, the emphasis on Western methodologies can alienate teachers working in other linguistic and cultural contexts. Ustuk and Çomoglu (2019) observe that even if strong international lesson study approaches exist conceptually, implementation of these approaches in the real world is likely to be ineffective or unsustainable without local modification.

Teacher agency is critical to PD success; however, many authors maintain that these programs often overlook it. Kuchah and Shamim (2019) described how demotivated teachers working in resource-constrained settings often see the PD as a mere duty and not a growth opportunity. Such PD does not bring lasting change in the absence of incentives, recognition, or concrete benefits. Wulyani (2017) similarly found that the interests of the individual teachers are usually put aside in PD

program designs. Teachers especially feel undervalued when PD is imposed externally rather than being co-constructed.

In a nutshell, professional development (PD) in English language teaching (ELT) across various countries has a mesh of intertwined constraints. Structurally, PD programs are engrossed with the perennial problems of funding shortages, time limitations, and lack of administrative support, especially in under-funded institutions (Sadeghi & Richards, 2021; Taşdemir & Karaman, 2022). Contextually, many PD paradigms utilize Western conceptualization without making the necessary adjustments to the local cultural, institutional, and pedagogical norms, thus affecting their sustainability and usefulness (Ustuk & Çomoglu, 2019). Institutional barriers further complicate matters as PD is frequently implemented as bureaucratic or compliance-driven activities, wherein the direct needs of teachers are disregarded (Wulyani, 2017). Pedagogically, programs often fail to address the diverse realities of classrooms, offering generalized or theoretical content that lacks relevance to specific learner contexts (Sadeghi & Richards, 2021). On the other hand, the lack of motivation to engage in meaningful PD activities stems from de-motivating factors such as a perceived lack of agency, recognition, or personal relevance (Kuchah & Shamim, 2019). Finally, many regions operate without a coherent PD policy, leading to fragmented, inconsistent, and poorly supported initiatives (Crandall & Christison, 2016).

Moreover, in most research on professional development, the publications related to the assessment of teacher professional development are still limited. More specifically, the question is how to measure whether teachers have professional development and what the possible benefits of this development are for student learning (Nguyen & Pham, 2023).

The rapid reforms of the educational system and its integration into global English language standards in Vietnam have gained increasing attention. Research has increasingly declared its value, but a myriad of systemic deficiencies within PD seem to persist. While educational reforms are often implemented top-down in Vietnam with PD programs put forth without adequate support structures, Truong (2017) critiqued this rigidity by arguing that centralized PD plans lack contextual flexibility and responsiveness to teacher needs. The main problem with a top-down approach is that teachers are passive recipients of professional development in their work, rather than engaged as active participants themselves, thus creating a superficial engagement. Dang (2021) mentioned an inefficiency caused by bureaucracy in the Mekong Delta, where PD programs are poorly coordinated across districts, attendance is not maximized, and very few benefits are gained in the long term. Hence, the perception among teachers regarding PD is that it is more of a mandatory task rather than an opportunity to grow.

One of the main ongoing difficulties is the lack of time and institutional encouragement for sincere involvement. Many educators at different levels list high teaching responsibilities and workloads as impediments to participation in professional development. Although university EFL teachers in Ho Chi Minh City felt Lesson Study projects were worthwhile, Nguyen et al. (2024) note that insufficient planning time and administrative facilitation made them unsustainable. Similarly, Tran and Nguyen (2019) noted that despite the promotion of cooperative PD in Ha Tinh province, there was no formal mechanism for peer mentoring or feedback. Teachers were expected to be innovative without organizational scaffolding, which caused inconsistency and aggravation.

PD programs often promote approaches that are incompatible with local classroom conditions. Hashimoto (2018) pointed out how Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is being promoted all over Asia, including Vietnam, notwithstanding structural impediments like large class sizes, inflexible curricula, and exam-oriented teaching. Vietnamese teachers question the feasibility of such imported approaches. This concern is reinforced by Tran (2018), who studied international language centers in Vietnam. While CLT is widely emphasized, many instructors feel unprepared to put it into practice

due to limited training and a lack of classroom resources. PD, therefore, fails to effectively bridge theory and practice.

Vietnam's acceptance remains unequal as online PD becomes more popular around the world. While they valued the flexibility of online PD, Truong and Murray (2019) found that Vietnamese EFL teachers found it difficult to deal with unreliable internet, technical proficiency, and the limited opportunity for interaction with peers and mentors. Teachers described isolation during their asynchronous learning sessions and a lack of interest. In another study, Truong and Murray (2020) emphasized the impact of teacher attitude toward technology and institutional expectation on online PD. Teachers who were pressured to attend sessions were most likely to disengage or withdraw from the sessions, while those motivated by intrinsic goals were more likely to continue with the sessions. In this way, online PD can potentially widen rather than close skill gaps.

Teacher motivation is probably the most important but the least valued element. The policy of the country on education says a lot about PD, but most of the instructors do not consider this to be a real opportunity for professional development; rather, they perceive it as more of a requirement. The author states that faculty members are preferably engaged for the fulfillment of institutional requirements rather than personal or educational objectives (Truong, 2015). Tran (2016) has reported that a few higher education institutions plan PD content or formats with teachers being part of the decision-making. This constitutes low teacher engagement and limited application of the results of PD within classrooms.

It is viewed that Vietnamese educational culture emphasizes hierarchical structures and respect for authority, and therefore creates barriers to free discussion and critical reflection in PD meetings. Nguyen et al. (2024) also found that, although Lesson Study encouraged collegial relationships among peers, younger teachers were unwilling to criticize older colleagues. Such a power dynamic stifled meaningful discussion and problem-solving. Fear of losing face further inhibits genuine feedback. Because PD participants typically repress experiences of confusion or dissatisfaction instead of expressing them, a disconnection exists between what instructors eagerly need and what facilitators think they need.

In essence, professional development for Vietnamese English teachers faces a range of interrelated obstacles. Top-down planning without contextual relevance inhibits the PD methodologically, therefore turning educators into passive rather than active professionals (Dang, 2021; Truong, 2017). PD lacks organized peer cooperation systems, insufficient managerial support, and insufficient time allocation institutionally (Nguyen et al., 2024; Tran & Nguyen, 2019). Pedagogically, a mismatch exists between the methods promoted in PD, like Communicative Language Teaching, and the realities of Vietnamese classrooms, which are often exam-driven and overcrowded (Hashimoto, 2018). The shift to digital platforms has presented new obstacles, including technology limitations, a lack of engagement, and low teacher digital literacy (Truong, 2020). Additionally, motivational issues persist due to limited teacher autonomy, with PD often seen as an imposed obligation rather than a self-directed opportunity (Truong, 2015). Cultural hierarchies and face-saving further restrict open discussion and critical reflection during PD sessions (Nguyen et al., 2024). Together, these constraints impede the efficacy and sustainability of PD programs in the ELT field of Vietnam.

The efficiency and suitability of lesson study had not been assessed for many years, despite its existence. Huynh and Nguyen (2021) studied the present state, reasons, and solutions for integrating lesson study into professional team meetings and research on the education of high school teachers from several different Can Tho City schools. Qualitative and quantitative studies combined with the survey findings show that LS has been used for more than six years, yet the high school instructors lack adequate knowledge about LS, particularly regarding its significance. Applying LS to professional

team meetings has not been conducted properly regarding the essential principles of training, lesson planning, class participation, observation, and feedback. The application of lesson study in professional team meetings has not completely realized its important components, such as training structure, lesson design, classroom interaction, observation, and feedback. Many meetings revealed weaknesses in pedagogical lesson study structure and content delivery, and these team members verified that the materials lacked depth, application, and connection to real teaching situations.

Saito (2022) claimed that lesson study has been introduced to Vietnam for more than 15 years. Beginning at several pilot schools in Bac Giang province, it is now followed nationwide. Although some pilot institutions came with good standards, the pace of change in practice remains slow. This is because, as the author has found, the following conceptions persist among policymakers, school leaders, and teachers. First, lesson study requires changing teaching techniques. Second, lesson study is a lesson demonstration. Third, lesson study is a one-day event. To go beyond these constraints, practitioners, researchers, and policymakers must have connections to share their knowledge, be informed about the practices and theories, and research lesson study more deeply, to even learn from the practitioners and researchers in other countries as well. According to Saito (2022), Lesson Study is not a new concept in Vietnam. It has been represented in this country for the past 15 years, since its initial implementation in selected pilot schools in Bac Giang province, and is now on a national scale. The transition to actual changes in classroom practice has not made significant progress. While it is true that pilot institutions and pilot schools were prepared to incorporate lesson study into their practice, the slow development can be attributed to misinterpretations of Lesson Study and resistance to the recommended changes to student-centric practices. This can be seen in distinguished stakeholders - policymakers, administrators, teachers - who understand lesson study primarily as a means to changing teaching technique, as only the demonstration of a lesson, or as simply a one-off event. These limitations generate reasons to create mediational space for stakeholders and benefit from collaboration, opportunities to access both practical and theoretical knowledge, further engagement with lesson study research beyond Vietnamese contexts, and deeper engagement with the theoretical underpinnings.

Many challenges and problems are said to arise from the implementation of lesson study model in Vietnam owing to consequences from several sources including the effect of the hierarchy in policymaking as well as the influence of Confucian culture, which emphasizes collectivism, particularly the habit of people to work traditionally, respecting each other and avoiding offending each other, hence affecting the contribution of ideas in a clear and straight manner (Nguyen & Jaspaert, 2021). For these reasons, it is imperative to investigate a professional development approach that fosters collaboration among teachers, where participants can give constructive feedback to each other.

The important step in teacher training, which is usually done in the classroom, is classroom observation, according to Truong and Murray (2019). Tran and Nguyen (2019) identified that both teachers and administrators believed that observing others and being observed were the most valuable PD activities educators could perform, as they involve a degree of reciprocal peer learning regarding decision-making about new content knowledge or pedagogic skills. However, these apply to the overload on teachers for time to observe, which has in many respects led observation in its trend of bureaucratic standardization and many teachers' views has simply become a perfunctory tool by which some teachers go through the motions of observing their peers because they have to and in much less instances because they are genuinely using it as a valuable professional development opportunity. This argument resonates with the critiques of observation and other countries' use of observation, whereby an excessive reliance upon assessment models of observation has fostered the use of observation as a tool, which ultimately diminishes the role of observation as a stimulus for teachers' development of their pedagogic thinking and practice. Tran and Nguyen

(2019) also observed that sometimes observations were conducted as highlight events for special occasions, such as the birthday of the Communist Party, Vietnamese Teachers' Day, and International Women's Day, rather than a continuous CPD throughout the academic year. For beginning teachers, watching experienced colleagues can be awkward, and they may find it difficult to engage in post-observation conversations without their input being shaped by the cultural hierarchies that underpin the Vietnamese context and make it hard for them to comment on their teaching. Beginning teachers are expected to learn a great deal from listening and respecting the golden knowledge that their more experienced senior colleagues have to offer.

Previous researchers have highlighted gaps in observation policy and practice. Consequently, lesson study has been proposed as a professional growth strategy with a major impact on observation policy and practice in Vietnam over the past few years. The following characteristics set the present study apart. First, other researchers have carried out earlier investigations on the influence of lecture study on teacher effectiveness, but some constraints persist. Sickles (2011), for instance, studied how K12 instructors perceived that their use of lesson study had affected their teaching. Because this study relied on a survey and did not gather thorough information from the participants, it had sampling bias restrictions. Schipper et al. (2018) investigated whether lesson study involvement impacted teaching behavior and teachers' self-efficacy using a quasi-experimental mixed technique with intervention and comparison group educators (N = 48). A tiny population could explain restricted external validity. More thorough sampling might have produced even more obvious patterns and variations between the two groups. Bayram and Bikmaz (2021) carried out a four-month investigation in a Turkish university with four English language instructors to better understand what instructors are experiencing in the planning, execution, examination, and reporting phases of lesson study and possible consequences for teacher professional development. The four-month length of this research may not be adequate to produce structural changes in teacher behavior. More data would result from extended inquiries. Second, studies on the impact of the lesson study on instructors' teaching behavior have varied; they were examined in other disciplines like math, biology, physics, and little research was done in the EFL environment. Third, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, most research on lesson study results was conducted in other nations; extremely little research was conducted in Vietnam, especially in the Mekong Delta. Most research focused on how lesson study affected students' learning; this study examines the impact on teachers' practice instead. This is why it is imperative to look at the effects on pupils of the lesson study approach that will assist teachers in enhancing their teaching, working with their colleagues to prepare their instruction, and assessing its influence.

The goal of the current study was to explore the role of lesson study in teacher education in order to fill this gap. In other words, this research investigates how Lesson Study impacts EFL teachers' teaching. To meet this goal, a qualitative multiple case study was carried out on four quasi-experimental Lesson Study teams. A better understanding of the role of Lesson Study in ELT is expected from the results, along with the suggestion of a professional development strategy including peer feedback and contribution to closing existing gaps in ELT research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Lesson Study

The term "lesson study" comes from the Japanese phrase "jugyou kenkyuu," which means "lesson" and "study". Cerbin and Kopp (2006) stated that lesson study is a method which developed in Japanese elementary education to improve instruction and build up collective knowledge. Teachers work in small groups to plan out, present, observe, analyze, and revise lessons which they term research lessons which in turn focus on the improvement of practices in the real class setting.

Research by Lewis (2006) showed that lesson studies change teachers' ideas and actions as a result of (1) more subject matter knowledge; (2) improved pedagogical content; (3) better capacity to go deep into student thought; (4) stronger collegial networks; (5) more connection of everyday practice to longterm objectives; (6) more motivation and sense of efficacy; and (7) better quality of lessons they give.

Desai (2007) stated that lesson study is designed to lead teachers to plan lessons and to reflect on how those lessons affect students' learning. Doing so through this partnership of inquiry leads to a shared inquiry of its characteristic features, which is educational professionals asking questions, searching for answers, problematizing to find expertise, and examining student answers. It operates as a continuous cycle of experimentation, observation, and adjustment, transforming schools into dynamic learning environments for both teachers and students.

Matoba et al. (2007) highlighted the importance of teacher collaboration in lesson study to enhance education and respond to differences in student needs. The work starts with the selection of a theme and the establishment of the learning objectives. Teachers formulate a research lesson plan in depth, which is the target of in-depth study and contemplation.

Perry and Lewis (2009) described lesson study as a way for teachers to develop professionally. In this process, educators work together to establish learning goals for their students, create research-based lesson plans, and observe how these lessons are taught in the classroom. The insights gathered about student engagement and learning help refine the lesson, ultimately enhancing both the units and teaching methods related to it.

Sims and Wahls (2009) considered lesson study a continual professional development activity embedded in classroom practice. In a constant loop, teachers are planning, teaching, observing, reflecting, and revising their lessons. In the lesson, one teacher teaches the lesson while the rest passively watch, and data is captured. The team discusses its strengths, weaknesses, and areas for potential improvement, and may draw on the expertise of external experts. Revised lessons may be retaught, with findings documented for future exploration.

Emphasizing lesson study as a kind of action research intended at improving professional development in the classroom using practical teaching skills, Dudley (2014) observes that this technique encourages a culture of cooperative investigation where teachers meet to study lessons, identify strengths and shortcomings, and improve their teaching methods depending on input from their colleagues. This approach's ultimate aim is to enhance teaching and learning techniques for the good of students (Fernandez & Yoshida, 2004).

Takahashi and McDougal (2016) noted that lesson study helps create a cycle of ongoing improvement. This process enables educators to enhance their grasp of teaching methods and how students learn.

According to Elliot (2019), repeated challenges in lesson study are an inherent classroom-based feature; teachers discuss the problem together as they solve it. In lesson delivery, a team of students listens, while another team of students observes the lesson, and a third team of students gives feedback on the lesson's effectiveness. Iterative revisions foster continuous improvement, making lesson study a distinctive approach to professional growth.

In this study, lesson study is understood as a collaborative process enabling teachers with diverse expertise to prepare, teach, observe, and reflect on lessons, fostering continuous instructional improvement.

2.2. Related Studies

Regarding international research, Matoba et al. (2007) explored the situation in Japan. They approached their investigation as a case study, utilising both quantitative and qualitative data to assess how lesson study influenced teachers' instruction in subjects like Japanese, social studies, science, mathematics, and English. To gather their findings, they collected data on students' academic performance, dropout rates, evaluation forms from both teachers and students about the school's educational quality, and teachers' reflections on their experiences with lesson study as part of their professional growth.

The results indicated that a majority of teachers viewed lesson study as a highly effective tool for professional development. By collaborating, sharing insights, and critiquing each other's lesson plans, they created a supportive work environment and enhanced their practical knowledge. Additionally, the students experienced a notable boost in their understanding, thanks to the improved teaching skills of their instructors. As a result, the learning environment became more effective, leading to a decrease in student absenteeism.

Sickle (2011) surveyed 59 K-12 science and math lesson study teachers working in science or math lesson studies at California Science Project sites. According to the study, lesson study facilitated teachers to use differentiated strategies catering to students' individual needs. Teachers stated higher levels of confidence and academic performance, which they attributed to teamwork.

In 2015, Nauerth investigated the impact of lesson study on self-efficacy and expectations in 13 (K-6) teachers by applying Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. Data from pre- and post-tests, diaries, and class notes revealed higher teacher efficacy and views of student learning.

Coskun (2017) used lesson study to teach English as a Foreign Language in a Turkish university. Teachers realised that student learning problems modified teaching methods and became more aware of classroom dynamics. However, challenges included increased workloads, limited classroom observation skills, and short study durations, highlighting the need for consistent application.

In 2018, Mihajlović studied the impact of lesson study with future kindergarten teachers. Although no statistically significant differences were detected, participants reported decreased anxiety in math teaching and children's work.

Bayram and Bikmaz (2021) investigated the experiences of four English language teachers in a Turkish university during different phases of the lesson study process. While teachers faced challenges in planning and data analysis, they also experienced professional growth, becoming more reflective and collaborative.

In a study focused on Vietnamese education, Nguyen (2013) looked into how four English teachers from a community college in the Mekong Delta perceived lesson study as a way to enhance their professional skills in teaching English. Through interviews, journals, and observation, the findings revealed that the teachers felt positively about the collaborative process. Working together to design, teach, and refine a research lesson fostered peer learning, helped align lessons with educational goals, and eased anxiety for less experienced teachers during peer observations.

Similarly, Tran (2014) explored how lesson study influenced math teaching, learning, and curriculum reform. Teachers emphasised that lesson study, which is based on observing and analysing authentic classroom experiences, enabled them to develop new and innovative ways to engage students in learning. The ongoing dialogue and repeated cycles of development empowered teachers to refine their methods, ultimately enhancing both student outcomes and their professional growth.

Le et al. (2021) presented an approach that merged the lesson study model with micro-lesson teaching to aid young chemistry teachers in Northern Vietnam. Their process included four stages: planning the lesson study, conducting and observing a demonstration lesson, reflecting on and discussing the session, and implementing the insights gained into their teaching. This research, which involved 62 teachers, demonstrated significant improvements in teaching practices. The average scores for lesson planning climbed from 2.54 to 3.28, while the scores for executing lesson plans increased from 2.48 to 3.18.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Question

To what extent does lesson study influence EFL teachers' instructional practice?

3.2. Design

Qualitatively planned, this study involved collecting data through classroom observation and videotaping. Used as complementary approaches, each method deepened the exploration of the subject matter while enhancing reliability through a triangulation of data approach.

Through participant observation, one can study actions or happenings that might not be openly revealed because of social or cultural sensitivities. It also enables straight witnessing of the described events to verify data obtained via interviews, which might expose inaccuracies or contradictions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). This method uses observation and interaction with events in a natural setting to learn about the subject of research. It helps one to better grasp the research context and could aid in the creation of descriptive records, theoretical frameworks, or hypothesis formation and testing (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2010).

3.3. Research Setting

The research was carried out at a university located in the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam, where the researchers had easy access to the site. The university offered two English training programs: One was General English, which was for students in non-specialised fields, and the other was Advanced English, which was for students in highly specialised programs. In the regular training plan, General English was a required course for all students.

The textbook used for the courses was Life Student's Book, level A1-A2, 2nd edition from National Geographic Learning, Cengage, and Marketing and Advertising Book by Oxford University Press. Each book included twelve units. In our study, however, we present a selection of the units, which is detailed in Table 1. Each lesson study project ran for 4 weeks. In total, the study lasted about three months. However, in the design of this study, the following units are taught, which are illustrated in Table 1. Each lesson study project was conducted in 4 weeks. Briefly, the study took place in roughly three months.

Table 1. Distribution of Units

Book	Unit	Lesson	Level	Teacher
Life Student's Book	2A: A place called home	General English	1	Teachers 1, 2
	3D: The city of Atlanta			
	3E: My favorite city			
Life Student's Book	4A: 100% identical	General English	1	Teachers 5, 6
	4B: Freetime in the Arctic			

Book	Unit	Lesson	Level	Teacher
Life Student's Book	10B: How good is your memory?	General English	2	Teachers 3, 4
	10C: Good learning habits			
	10D: Communication problems			
English for Marketing and Advertising	Unit 4: Creating ads	English for Marketing	B1	Teachers 7, 8
	Unit 5: Marketing tools			

3.4. Participants

In this study, eight participants were selected based on three criteria: (a) teaching in universities, and (b) three members from each lesson study team should teach the same subject. They have ages between 28 and 48. Both male and female participants were involved. They all possess a Master's degree in ELT. These teachers have no prior experience with lesson study. All participants signed permission forms for participation in the study. The researcher assured participants that their names would be kept confidential and would only be called as teacher 1, teacher 2, teacher 3, teacher 4, teacher 5, teacher 6, teacher 7, and teacher 8. Table 2 below provides a comprehensive overview of the participants.

Table 2. Information About the Participants

Number of teachers	Gender		Years of teaching experience	
	Male	Female	Less than 10 years	More than 10 years
8	1	7	2	6

3.5. Ethical Considerations

In conducting the study, ethical principles were respected. Firstly, participants were required to complete consent forms before becoming involved. Second, their personal information was kept confidential during the research. Finally, the research was endorsed by Can Tho University's Ethics Committee, Permit No. 2534/QĐ-ĐHCT, dated June 8th, 2023.

3.6. Instruments

There are structured and unstructured observation strategies that researchers can use. A structured observation focuses on certain forms of behavior. Observers can use focal questions, rubrics, or charts during the lesson to record certain types of responses and their frequency. Unstructured observations involve observers keeping a written record of student activity throughout the lesson (observers record what they see).

Depending on their objectives, researchers can select between organized and unstructured observation techniques. Usually employing instruments like guiding questions, rubrics, or tables to monitor how frequently particular responses happen during a lesson, structured observation targets particular activities. Unstructured observation, on the other hand, is more open-ended and consists of observers meticulously documenting student activities as they unfold without a defined framework, merely recording what they witness.

In the study, the researcher will use unstructured observations to observe the specific steps teachers conduct lesson study, observe the nonverbal expression of feelings, conflicts, arguments, and pressures, and grasp how teachers communicate with students during the period of lesson study implementation. Observation notes will be kept throughout the entire lesson study cycle.

Each non-teaching participant completed the classroom observation form. After the previously agreed-upon teacher had started the research lesson planned by the PLC group, the other attendees made use of this form in order to assist them in their observations of the lesson. The qualitative data from each member of the Lesson Study was then used during Group Reflection to find out the strengths and weaknesses experienced in the teaching of the lesson. This form focused on each component of lesson design that would give an observer an opportunity to reflect on what they saw happening related to the lesson, the interventions made, and suggestions for further development that were then brought back to the whole group. Throughout the study, data were collected using an observational protocol and Lesson Study-based lessons as intervention tools. The protocol was adapted from the classroom observation form designed by Yruegas (2022). It consisted of the detailed notes of the stages in the observed lessons, the observation notes of teachers' practices in each stage, the interventions the observed teachers used, and the suggestions the researcher made. Field notes were kept throughout the entire lesson study cycle. Table 3 below presents detailed information about the observation protocol.

Table 3. Observation Protocol for Teachers' Instructional Practice

Stages	Observations	Interventions	Suggestions
Warm-up			
Presentation			
Practice			
Production			
Closure			
Research lesson:			
Level:			
Code/number of lecturer:			
Skill:			

Directions: The purpose of this form is to record open-ended observations during the teaching of the research lesson. Please remember, the focus of Lesson Study is to create collaborative, research-focused lessons to ensure student achievement and success.

3.7. Descriptions of the Types of Lessons

The lessons in this study were selected based on the principles of the lesson study model. Lessons that contain important knowledge, are hard to understand, or may confuse students were prioritized to be chosen for the study. The selection must be agreed upon by all participants in the lesson study team. Each lesson had to go through the following stages: Jointly planning the lesson plan, teaching and observing, reflective discussion, revising, reteaching and observing, post-reflection discussion, and agreed-upon overall findings.

3.8. Data Collection Procedures

The pilot lesson study lasted for four weeks before the rollout of the main study. The pilot consisted of three members, and these were the researcher and two lecturers who taught English as a foreign language. In this arrangement, the researcher played observer and teacher roles. Following the pilot lessons, the researcher carefully went through observation notes and watched recorded videos repeatedly for the purpose of analysing the collected data. This was then followed by a detailed description being prepared for demonstrating how lesson study affected teaching practices for teachers of English as a foreign language. This description was then given back to each member for verification and the purposes of removing any possible biases from the gathered data. Once the pilot study ended, the actual study was conducted, and this involved eight participants who were grouped into four lesson study practice teams. Each practice team worked for four weeks, and the researcher ensured flexible scheduling, which allowed all three groups of practice teams to carry out lesson studying concurrently.

3.9. Data Analysis

The main data sources for this study were the researcher's observational notes. The collected data were transcribed and analysed following the six steps in thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2021). The coding of OB is observation, S is semester, L is lesson, and U is unit.

4. Results

4.1. The Effects of Lesson Study on EFL Teachers' Instructional Practice

This section presents the findings gained from exploring how lesson study influences teachers' instructional practice, particularly in their ability to implement and adapt different teaching methods. Each teacher's approach was analysed and discussed in detail, referencing the relevant notes from the observation.

Scenario 1 (Teacher 1)

Teacher 1's instructional practices demonstrated a profound influence of lesson study. His confidence was reflected in his consistent use of alternative strategies, ranging from audiolingual and communicative methods to group work, to meet students' varying needs effectively over four lessons. He showed the ability to differentiate instruction and use consistent scaffolding lesson after lesson to help students understand better.

In Lesson 1, the teacher used an audiolingual teaching method by asking students to listen and repeat vocabulary items such as sofa, armchair, television, desk, lamp, computer, picture, blinds, curtains, cupboard, and rug. He employed a communicative teaching method in instructing students to work in groups, looking at the pictures and discussing the differences among them. He pre-scaffolded the lesson by offering sample statements like "I can see a sofa in picture 1," or sentence structures like "There are no chairs in the picture" to enable students to work together in groups.

Example:

T: OK, now, listen and repeat after me, sofa.

S: Sofa

T: Armchair

S: Armchair

...

T: OK, finish? Now, I will show you how to group these items. Group all the items that you saw. For example, in picture 1, I can see a sofa, a chair, a television, a desk, a computer, some pictures, curtains, and cupboards. I don't see any armchair, blinds, bla...bla...bla...So you will say a list of items that you see and don't see.

(After 3 minutes)

S: In picture 2, I can see a sofa, an armchair, a television, a lamp, a picture, a rug, a lamp, carpets. I don't see any chairs, desks, computers, blinds, or carpets.

(OB.T1.S3.L1.U2A.1.30-2.15pm)

Teacher 1 maintained diversifying teaching techniques in Lesson 2, which highlighted a communicative approach and boosted students' creativity. He introduced a guessing game where students asked their partners questions using "Is there" or "Are there," which encouraged interactive engagement. He asked some students to go on stage and choose a picture in the book that he or she is thinking about. Other students asked, "Is there a...?", "Are there any..?" After listening to their partner's answer, the students guessed which picture was being described.

Example:

T: Alright, I would like to invite Mr. Huu Nhan (volunteer student) to come here. Everyone, please ask him.

S: Is there a computer?

Volunteer student: Yes

S: Is there a chair?

Volunteer student: No, there isn't.

S: Is it picture 1?

T: We haven't got enough evidence.

S: Is there a bli? (A student mispronounced the word.)

T: You mean blinds?

Volunteer student: No, there isn't.

S: Is it picture 1?

Volunteer student: Yes. (OB.T1.S3.L2.U2A.1.30-2.15pm)

In Lesson 3, the teacher demonstrated how to give directions from the School of Agriculture to the Sheraton Hotel (a nearby hotel). Then, he asked students to work in groups, giving directions from the School of Agriculture to the Luu Huu Phuoc Park. After that, he asked some groups to give directions to a real place in Can Tho city that they wanted to go to.

Example:

T: Now let's give directions together. Now I will choose. I will go to the Sheraton hotel. We are at the gate of the College of Agriculture. Then, we turn right. Go straight to gate B. Then, turn right at the traffic light. What's next? Turn left, go straight until you see the Sheraton on your left. Alright, now, we will work in groups. You work with your groupmates. Now, I would like you to go to Luu Huu Phuoc park. Groupwork please.

S: Work in groups.

(After a few minutes)

T: OK, are you done?. Alright, this group first. Now, show me the directions to Luu Huu Phuoc park. Stand up, please.

S: At the gate of the College of Agriculture, turn right and go straight up to gate B. Then, turn right and go straight until you see the traffic light. Make a U-turn, go straight to the crossroads. Keep going straight, and we will see a traffic light. Turn right, go straight, and you'll see it in front of you. (OB.T1.S3.L3.U3D.1.30-2.15pm)

In Lesson 4, Teacher 1 explained when students should use capital letters. Then, he asked students to circle incorrect letters and capitalise them. He asked students why some words need to be capitalised to check students' comprehension. Then, he demonstrated how to write a description of a city. He scaffolded students by replacing some keywords in the writing sample. After that, he asked students to work in groups to describe their favourite cities. When students finished, they stood up and read their descriptions.

Example:

T: Now, we move to a lesson about capital letters. Do we write in capital letters at the beginning of a sentence? Yes or no?

S: Yes.

T: How about the pronoun I?

S: Yes. Capitalize.

T: Next, names of people?

S: Yes.

T: Do we use capital letters for countries and nationalities? Parts of the day: morning, afternoon, evening?

S: No.

T: Days and months?

S: Yes.

T: Seasons?

S: No.

T: Streets?

S: Yes.

T: So, phrases number 5 and 7 are not capitalized. (OB.T1.S3.L4.U3E.1.30-2.15pm)

Scenario 2 (Teacher 2)

Teacher 2 showed a strong influence of lesson study on her instruction. It is reflected through her use of a wide range of instructional strategies, such as incorporating grammar translation, communicative methods, and peer feedback, that actively engage students and adapt to their varied needs. Her lessons consistently incorporated scaffolded activities through repetition and sample sentences, which highlight her confidence in addressing students' confusion. The field notes revealed that she moved from group descriptions to peer feedback and creative activity, which foster collaborative learning.

In Lesson 1, the teacher initiated the session by dividing the class into two groups and asking students to name the objects in the photos they saw. Next, she divided the class into 4 groups. Each group describes a photo, naming objects, numbers, and positions. This suggested she believed in her

ability to maintain structure and foster collaboration. She asked other groups to give feedback or comments to the group that presented. This suggested that the teacher believed in her ability to cultivate an interactive learning environment where students can learn from one another. At the end of the period, the teacher divided the class into groups and asked each group to describe their dream house. She hinted to students about what details they should include in their descriptions. This shows her confidence in supporting students' learning at the right level—neither too much nor too little.

Example:

T: You will think of your dream house. Each group has a house, and then chooses a student to describe their dream house. What must the house be described in? For example, it is in the countryside with many trees surrounding, or it can be in the city. If we talk about the shape of the house, it can be an aeroplane, or it can be a house with a very huge duck shape, or it can be the shape of a giant animal. You can think of anything to write. 3 minutes. (OB.T2.S3.L1.U2A.7.00-7.45am)

In Lesson 2, the teacher asked students to do Exercise 9 and choose the correct preposition to complete the description of Apartment 3. After a few minutes, she asked students to do exercise 10. Complete the description of apartment 1 with prepositions of place. Following this, the teacher called some students to answer and correct their mistakes. The teacher asked students to describe objects in the room, using there is or there are and prepositions of place.

Example:

T: Before taking a break, think about what we have in our classroom, describe it, use there is, there are and combine them with the preposition of place. What is the most obvious in our classroom? Just think about it, 1 sentence for each of you.

S: There is a television.

T: Where is it?

S: On the wall.

T: OK, thank you. One more, please.

S: There are people in the classroom.

T: One more, please.

S: There is a fan above...

T: Above what? What object?

S: Us, above us. (OB.T2.S3.L2.U2A.7.00-7.45am)

In Lesson 3, the teacher began by asking students to look at the map of Atlanta and then asked students what they saw in the photo, leading to board work where students wrote the names of places on the map. Then, the teacher introduced phrases that students can use to describe what they can do at these places, such as get tourist information, learn about history, look at sea life, and stay the night. After that, the teacher asked some students where they do something like “see a play or a musical, park a car, read a book”. The students answered and told the place for each function. After that, the teacher introduced phrases used for asking and giving directions, such as “Where is ...?”, “I’d like to go to ...”, “Is it near here?”, “Go past the...”, “Go across...”, “Go straight up...”. Finally, the teacher asked some students to give directions to a place on the map of Atlanta, without mentioning the name of the place for their friends to guess.

Example:

T: Now, look at the board, imagine you are in a visitor centre. Think of a place that you want to go to, any place on the map, and show your friends the way. Your friend will guess where you want to go. Discuss with your partner in 2 minutes.

S: Work with a partner.

(After a few minutes)

T: Please read your directions.

S: From the visitor centre, go to the intersection and turn right. Continue for about 10 minutes; you will see it on the left.

T: Do you see it on the left? Where is it? What do you see?

S: Shopping area?

T: Is it a shopping area? Is it right?

S: No.

T: Library, is it right?

S: Yes. (OB.T2.S3.L3.U3D.7.00-7.45am)

Finally, in Lesson 4, the teacher's practices reflected high efficacy through consistent use of differentiated tasks and assessments across lessons, which underscored confidence in her pedagogical expertise. The teacher explained the rules for writing capital letters, such as the word at the beginning of a sentence, the pronoun I, names of people, cities or places, countries, nationalities or languages, days and months, streets, roads, parks, and squares. Then, she asked all students to work in groups and describe their favourite city. Students worked in groups. After the preparation time, the teacher asked some groups to read their description and give comments to them.

Example:

T: Now your job is to describe your favourite city based on the content you learned. In addition, you can draw a picture. I will give you 2 sheets, write beautifully on one side, and draw a picture on the other side. After you finish your work, you will come up here to present your city and choose another city, and comment on your friend's favourite city.

S: Students work in groups.

(After 15 minutes)

T: Has your group finished yet? Please read the description of your favourite city.

S: Nha Trang city. There are many interesting places. People are very friendly and kind. Our favourite place is Nha Trang beach because it is the place where we can watch the sunrise and sunset. It is a great place to relax.

T: So the first group describes Nha Trang city. And one of their favourites is the beach. OK. Thank you. (OB.T2.S3.L4.U3E.7.00-7.45am)

Scenario 3 (Teacher 3)

Teacher 3 did not reflect the impact of lesson study on her instruction over the four lessons. She occasionally employed different strategies and scaffolding to convey knowledge to students. Although she modified tasks for students, sometimes she failed to provide challenges when possible.

Various teaching methods were employed in Lesson 1, such as the grammar-translation approach, communicative exercises, and pair work. The students were asked to work in pairs at the beginning of the lesson and talk about what they are good at remembering. The students were then asked to hear a news report about Nelson Dellis and reply to questions based on the audio that they had just heard. The teacher prompted the students to translate each question into Vietnamese for them to get a grasp of what questions were being asked. The students were then made to continue reading an article and check if the information was in the article. The students were called out in turn for them to respond and mark the errors for the entire class.

For example:

T: OK, which one are you good at remembering? People's names? Are you good at remembering people's names? Yes or no? People's faces? Directions and address? Telephone numbers? Dates and facts in history?.... Please tick the one you are good at remembering. Please choose one.

T: OK, talk to the person next to you. Please talk to the person in front of or behind you. You, turn back please, let's start.

S: Discuss with their partners and tick things they can remember well.

(After a few minutes)

T: OK, thank you. (Turns the wheel of names and calls some students.) Mr. Ngoc Thanh. Is he absent? Tuyet Nhi. Which things can you remember well?

S: I can remember the words of a song.

T: OK, how many songs can you remember?

S: Many.

T: Many. And what things do you often forget?

S: I usually forget the telephone number.

T: Telephone number. (OB.T3.S3.L1.U10B.7.50-8.40am)

The instructor introduced the distinctions between certain essential words, such as learn, study, pass, and fail, in Lesson 2. She then prompted students to select one accurate word from two words given in order to fill in each sentence. She then introduced them to the present perfect tense and then asked students 3 questions relating to the present perfect tense rules and usage. After this, I prompted students to fill in the sentences using present perfect forms of the verb words. Last, prompted students to fill in certain conversations, either has, have, or ever, and subsequently practised conversations in pairs.

For example:

T: Now, let's continue with an exercise about the present perfect tenses. 8 students will go to the board to write.

S: Go to the board and write their answers.

T: Please read the sentence that you wrote. Sentence 1.

S: I have passed all my exams. I'm so happy.

T: OK. Number 2.

S: Tim has studied mathematics at university, and he plans to teach it.

T: OK. Number 3.

S: There's nobody in school this week. All the teachers have gone on holiday.

T: Ok, 4.

S: We have not understood anything. Can you explain it again in the next lesson?

T: Understood. (OB.T3.S3.L2.U10B.7.50-8.40am)

For Lesson 3, students were paired up and were asked to generate three good and three bad learning habits. Next, they were then paired up again and were asked if some habits were good or bad. Next, students were asked to read the article and go to the board and write down their answers for each of the questions that came next. Last, pairs were instructed to complete questions with a verb phrase with up.

For example:

T: Now, I'd like you to work in pairs to talk about 3 good learning habits and 3 bad learning habits.

S: Work with their partner.

(After a few minutes)

T: Ky Duyen, can you tell me some good learning habits?

S: Always listening to hip-hop music.

T: Is it a good learning habit, everyone? Thanh.

S: I think it is not a good habit.

T: So, what is your good learning habit, Thanh?

S: My good learning habit is learning new English words, doing exercises, and sometimes reading the news. (OB.T3.S3.L3.U10C.7.50-8.40am)

Lastly, during Lesson 4, a teacher inquired about students' frequency for chatting with their friends and how often they communicated with their families. Some students responded through adverbs such as usually, often, or twice a week. Then, a teacher inquired if students faced any challenges while communicating with friends and family members. Some students said poor internet connection or it was expensive. Then, a teacher played an audio and told students to listen and respond to the questions about Richard Omar. Afterwards, a teacher instructed students to try practising a conversation between partners through scripts in a textbook and called some pairs to read aloud.

For example:

T: What does exercise 2 ask you to do? The student who sits next to Thai Hoang, please. What's your name?

S: Yes, Hoai Bao.

T: Exercise 2, how many questions are there?

S: Six.

T: Can you read them?

S: 1 Where is Omar?

2 What time is it?

3 What isn't working?

4 What is the name of Omar's hotel?

5 What is the number?

6 Where has Richard put the designs?

T: Please listen and answer these 6 questions. (Play the audio)

(After listening to the audio)

T: OK, thank you. Number 1, Thien Nhan. Go to the board, please. Number 2, Quoc Chan. 3, Minh Son. 4, Dang Khoa. 5, Phuong Nhi. 6, Tram. (OB.T3.S3.L4.U10D.7.50-8.40am)

Scenario 4 (Teacher 4)

Teacher 4 demonstrated moderate efficacy in instruction, which indicates that her teaching method was minimally influenced by the lesson study process. In her classroom practice, she did not adapt her lessons based on the needs of individual students. She followed the steps and activities in the book and the plan provided for them. Teacher 4's lessons were one-way instruction.

In Lesson 1, Teacher 4 showed the list of words on the screen on the TV and asked students how many they could remember, and then asked what they did to remember those words. Some students said that they visualise the pictures, others remembered the first letters, while other students grouped words with similar meanings. The Teacher then played the audio for the students to listen to the questions related to a man named Nelson.

For example:

T: Now, let's listen. What does the first question ask?

S: How many new names and faces can Nelson memorise?

T: How about question 2?

S: How many numbers can he hear and repeat?

T: What about question 3?

S: The year.

T: How many years? Pay attention to the word "years". What about question 4?

S: Sporting event.

T: Sporting event. Question 5?

S: What did he study?

T: The simple past tense, right? A few years ago. Question 6?

S: How much did he practise?

T: And who does he teach his techniques to?

T: (Plays the audio). (OB.T4.S3.L1.U10B.7.00-8.45am)

The teacher's methods in Lesson 2 focused on language mechanics. The lesson began with the teacher asking students to complete sentences with two forms of the verb - the present perfect and the past simple forms. The teacher corrected grammar and pronunciation errors for the students and explained carefully the simple, past, and past participle forms of verbs. She identified for students many exercises associated with past participles and past simple forms in the lesson. At the end of the lesson, the teacher reviewed the commonalities and differences between the present perfect and

simple past tenses. Finally, she allowed students to play an online game to review their grammar knowledge of the present perfect and simple past tenses.

For example:

T: Now, let me remind you. What are the similarities between the present perfect and the past simple tenses?

S: All of them describe actions in the past.

T: So, what is the difference?

S: There is no definite time in the present perfect tense.

T: Besides, there are some signal adverbs to help you recognise the present perfect tense, such as since, for, ever, never, already, and just. (OB.T4.S3.L2.U10B.7.00-8.45am)

In Lesson 3, the instructor led conversations related to personal routines and illustrated some phrasal verbs with "up", as was relevant to the lesson. Mostly, she used textbook questions to assess knowledge, which she seemed to have a slight sense of efficacy.

The lesson began with the instructor asking the students to look over the list of habits below and determine which were good and which were bad. Then the instructor had the students read an article and respond to a few questions about the habits of an athlete named Michael Phelps. Next, the instructor delineated some of the meanings and the use of phrasal verbs that include "up" and got students to connect the verb phrases to the provided meanings. The instructor then went through the pronunciation of various verbs in the present, past, and past participle forms. The instructor would say some verbs in present form, and the students would ring in their past and past participle forms. To conclude the lesson, the instructor reminded the students of the similarities and differences between the present perfect and simple past tenses.

For example:

T: We're going to learn some phrasal verbs. The verbs go with the word "up". For example, get up is to get up, sit up is to sit on a chair, give up is to give up, wake up is to wake up, go up is to increase, dress up is to dress well. Now, let's review the phrases with up. When you go out with friends, do you?

S: Dress up

T: In the morning, what time do you

S: Get up/ wake up

T: Which bad habits do you want to

S: Give up

T: How often does the cost of transport

S: Go up. (OB.T4.S3.L3.U10C.7.00-8.45am)

In the last lesson, the teacher used a more traditional style of lecture. At the start, she had students look at the man in the picture, then she asked them to answer a few questions about him. The teacher then asked them to listen to an audio, and while answering questions, only a few were able to answer. The teacher played the audio again and asked students to answer the questions again. Students found they could answer nearly all the questions after listening to the audio the second time. After this, the teacher divided the students into pairs. The teacher asked students to discuss with their partners some questions about their habits of using the Internet. Before she ended the

lesson, the teacher explained the meaning of some words used to describe personalities, like "introvert, extrovert, balanced". Students noted down these words.

For example:

T: Now, let's listen. Please read the questions.

T: Where is Omar? What time is it? The morning is a.m. or p.m.?

S: A.m.

T: How do you say 3.50 in British English?

S: Ten to four.

T: 3.45?

S: A quarter to four.

T: Plays the audio.

T: Where is Omar?

S: Columbia.

T: Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)

T: What time is it?

S: 3 p.m. (OB.T4.S3.L4.U10D.7.00-8.45am)

Scenario 5 (Teacher 5)

Teacher 5 reflected a modest influence of lesson study on her instructional strategies over all four lessons. She strived to employ various teaching methods—including the grammar translation method, communicative method, pair work, and group work—to engage students and transfer her knowledge.

In the opening lesson, Teacher 5 began the class by engaging students with a guessing game based on photos, asking them to determine if people in the photos are twins or not. Later, she explained some keywords in the reading passage and asked students to read the article on page 46 and complete the table with information about the twins. The teacher explained what a collocation is, its meaning, and its function. Finally, she asked students to discuss free time activities with their partners.

For example:

T: Now, we go to page 47. Look at the board, please. We have some phrases like go swimming, play computer games. We call them collocations. So, what do you think collocations are?

S: Dear teacher, I think they are noun phrases.

T: Collocations can be another type of phrase. You please

S: I think they are verb phrases.

T: Collocations are fixed phrases where words go together. For example, we say play computer games, not do computer games. Do you understand?
(OB.T5.S3.L1.U4A.9.50-10.40am)

In Lesson 2, Teacher 5 planned to integrate the grammar element into communicative tasks. She began the class with students reporting their interviews with partners. She then taught the grammar

of the structure "like/love + Noun/V-ing" and had students create sentences using the model. Then, she instructed four students to stand up, and each student read her sentences aloud. It was a good opportunity for pronunciation practice as students listened to and repeated verbs in the -ing form.

For example:

T: OK, you are going to interview about 2 friends in your class. If your friends say yes, tick in the box.

S: Interview their friends

T: Remember to write your friends' names.

(After a few minutes)

T: Alright, you please. Who did you interview?

S: Point to their friends

T: Two of them, OK. Which one do they say yes to? Which activities did your friend say yes to?

S: Watch movies and play games

T: OK, all of them?

T: Call 2 more students. What do you do in your free time?

S1: I play basketball.

T: Call another student. Do you play basketball?

S2: Yes.

T: Very good. (OB.T5.S3.L2.U4A.9.50-10.40am)

In Lesson 3, she started the lesson by asking the students, "What do they do every day?" She showed several pictures to let students make sentences based on the pictures. Then, the teacher asked the students about their free time activities. Some answers were: go for a walk, have a coffee, read a book, watch videos, text friends. Then, the teacher asked students to write two activities they do every day and one activity they never do. Then, the students work in pairs (Tell your partner about your three activities. They guess which two activities you do every day). After that, the teacher instructed the students to listen to part of a documentary about Norbert Rosing and answer the questions by saying yes, no, or we don't know.

For example:

T: You can see exercise 2. What are you going to do? Write 2 activities you do daily and 1 activity you never do. Work with your friends. Talk about those 3 activities. Guess what activities your friend does or doesn't do.

S: Write 3 activities for their friends to guess.

(After a few minutes)

T: Now, one student will read and the whole class will guess what activities he/she does every day and what activities he/she never do. OK. Can you read your sentences?

S1: I play online games. I use social media. I do online shopping.

T: So, can you guess? Which one does he never do?

S2: He never does online shopping.

T: Is it right?

S1: Nod his head.

T: Alright, correct.

T: You please.

S3: I play volleyball. I watch videos. I go to the cinema.

T: So, can you guess which one she doesn't do?

S4: Going to the cinema.

T: Is it right?

S3: Right.

T: OK. (OB.T5.S3.L3.U4B.9.50-10.40am)

In the final lesson, Teacher 5 urged the students to create sentences by using adverbs like "always, never, and sometimes." She further strengthened their comprehension by explicit grammar instruction and doing exercises on adverbs of frequency. The educator had the insistence that students first work on their own and then correct their work in groups, revealing her belief that she could indeed challenge her students effectively. The teacher adroitly scaffolded the students while using exercises for listening and for writing questions for "how often," and then gave prompt feedback in response to errors. Her feedback during corrections reflected her efficacy.

For example:

T: Please write a few sentences with adverbs "always, never, and sometimes" to talk about activities you always, sometimes, and never do.

S: Write their sentences.

T: OK, can you read your 3 sentences?

S: I always go to sleep before 9 p.m. I never play golf. I sometimes watch films.

T: OK, Tai, can you read your 3 sentences?

S: I always brush my teeth. I never smoke. I sometimes forget breakfast.

T: OK. (OB.T5.S3.L4.U4B.9.50-10.40am)

Scenario 6 (Teacher 6)

Teacher 6 revealed a strong influence of lesson study on her assured combination of varied teaching methods, flexible scaffolding, and regular application of instant assessments. Her classes showed a systematic yet adaptable approach that kept students interested and in line with their needs. This makes it clear how significantly lesson study affects her teaching.

The teacher instructed students to view the pictures and speculate at first if the two individuals there are twins. Some students guessed. Next, the teacher went over some important vocabulary in the reading passage and had students read the article on page 46 and fill out the table with data about the twins. The teacher asked students to discuss further questions regarding twins, including "Do you know any twins?", "Do they do the same job?", "Do they have the same hobbies and interests?". She summoned a few students to approach the board and recorded their responses. The teacher then reviewed and corrected the responses on the board. The teacher then defined a

collocation, its meaning, and its purpose, and he or she asked students to match the verbs (1–8) with the nouns (a–h) to create collocations.

For example:

T: So, look at the picture. Are they the same or different?

S: Same

T: They look similar. Thank you. They are twins. So, what does twin mean? What is identical? You can read the meaning of these two words in the footnotes. Identical means the same.

T: What does twin mean? Two children were born on the same day from the same mother. Can you guess what it means?

S: Dear teacher, twins. (OB.T6.S3.L1.U4A.9.50-10.40am)

In Lesson 2, Teacher 6 requested students to complete customised assignments and focused on grammar application (e.g., like/love + noun/V-ing). To encourage critical thinking, she, for instance, asked students to write three sentences about their hobbies—two true and one false. Her confidence in overseeing interactive and communicative activities was demonstrated by the incorporation of speaking exercises in which students wrote two true and one incorrect statement. She asked them to focus on verb-ing forms as she discussed grammar principles. She demonstrated her scaffolding by giving pupils phrase models, like "I love playing the guitar," to help them understand grammar.

For example:

T: OK, now we look at exercise 5, please. Complete the questionnaire with five free-time activities. What is the question? For example, "In your free time, do you go swimming?" First, write down 5 activities. You have 2 minutes to write 5 activities. After 5 minutes, you make questions for these activities. Then, in the first practice, you ask your partner 5 questions. Next, in the second turn, your partner will ask you 5 questions. Let's start now.

S: Interview their partners.

T: You need to tick the box.

(After a few minutes)

T: Are you done? I will call the first pair. Two of you, please.

S1: In your free time, do you play football?

S2: Yes, I do.

S1: In your free time, do you play badminton?

S2: Yes, I do.

S1: In your free time, do you go to the park?

S2: No, I don't.

S1: In your free time, do you go back to my hometown?

S2: No, I don't.

S1: In your free time, do you listen to music?

S2: Yes, I do.

T: OK, thank you. (OB.T6.S3.L2.U4A.9.50-10.40am)

In lesson three, the teacher recapped the previous grammar points and moved on to visual aids, going through pictures for sentence construction. For example, she displayed some pictures on the screen and asked students to create sentences from the pictures. This mixed-method approach-with partner discussion and oral reading-illustrated the confidence of the teacher in applying multiple intervention strategies in consolidating learning. She integrated real-world contexts, using pictures to elicit sentences like "He reads a book every day" or "They go for a walk every day". Vocabulary was reinforced through discussions between the students and listening activities. Her efficacy was demonstrated on a more complex task where students were to guess their peers' activities of daily living. She adapted the lesson by giving clear explanations about the documentary while ensuring students were primed before listening to the audio. This demonstrated her multifaceted guidance of the class through various stages of learning through exercises engaging students in writing daily activities and moving on to a listening task.

For example:

T: In exercise 4, we will have a listening exercise. Take a look at the instructions. Listen to part of a documentary. Underline the word documentary. Does anyone know what kind of movie it is? Documentary. You are going to listen to a documentary about Norbert Rosing. Answer the questions with Yes, No, or We don't know. First, we will have 10 questions. These 10 questions are all Yes-No questions. Question number 1. What does this ask you? Are Norbert's photographs published in National Geographic journals and on websites? How about number 2? Does Norbert photograph people or not? Question 3. Does he go to the North Pole in winter? Question 4. Are there roads in the Arctic? 5. The verb in number 5 is travel. Does he travel by snowmobile or boat? Question 6. Did he go to the North Pole with the others? Question 7. Does he take pictures of polar bears at night? Question 8. Does he sleep at night? Number 9. Does he play computer games? Question 10 is a question with to be, right? Is Norbert often bored? Now you will listen twice. Let's listen. (The teacher plays the audio twice.) (OB.T6.S3.L3.U4B.9.50-10.40am)

Focusing on adverbs of frequency, Teacher 6 directed students to construct 3 sentences using adverbs of frequency such as "often, sometimes, and never," and followed up by asking them to complete sentences with adverbs of frequency after playing an audio. She escalated difficulty by asking students to transform time expressions into frequency adverbs (e.g., "Tuesdays, Thursdays" → "three times a week"). Throughout the class, she explained the positions and usage of these adverbs. Her confidence in peer assessment was evident when she directed students to correct board work, fostering collaborative learning, and emphasising her clarity in communicating complex language rules.

For example:

T: Now, I want to invite 3 students to make 3 sentences about daily activities. In these 3 sentences, you use 3 adverbs. The first adverb is often, the second adverb is sometimes, and the last adverb is never.

S: I often play computer games with friends every day.

T: Good. Sometimes, Phuong, please.

S: I sometimes do online shopping with friends on Sunday.

T: Last sentence, never.

S: I never play cards.

T: OK. (OB.T6.S3.L4.U4B.9.50-10.40am)

Scenario 7 (Teacher 7)

Teacher 7's instructional strategies demonstrated a tremendous influence of lesson study. She demonstrated confidence in a variety of techniques from multimedia use to scaffolded group work to facilitate understanding and build communicative competence in her students, while challenging them to apply higher-order thinking skills in authentic contexts.

In the first lesson, the teacher incorporated various approaches: communicative methods, pair work, group work, and task-based learning. She started the lesson by showing ads on a video and asked students to guess what products were being advertised to activate their prior knowledge. Next, she introduced the lesson on creating ads by having the students analyse an ad using the AIDA model, which began scaffolding their critical thinking, beginning with structured analysis. She then continued to scaffold their understanding by having students arrange the steps for an advertising campaign, thereby building on their procedural knowledge. She corrected mistakes and scaffolded their understanding of the AIDA (attention, interest, desire, action) models with example scaffolds and care in explaining the key words used in the AIDA model. This process evidenced her confidence in guiding students through both acquiring and applying new knowledge. The Hangman game demonstrated her belief that gamification sustained engagement and ended with the students succeeding at a task. The teacher impressed me as strong in efficacy in using alternative strategies with her multiple methods of delivery: videos, board work, audio exercises and games, and interactive games like Hangman.

For example:

T: I want you to have a look at some videos and tell me what is being advertised.
OK

S: No idea.

T: No idea? Really? You want to watch again?

S: Suitcase

T: Not a suitcase.

S: Glass.

T: Let's say, the glass cleaning product or liquid. Good job, a bonus for him. The second one.

S: soft drink

T: Specific?

S: Pepsi

T: Alright, good job. (OB.T7.S1.L1.U4.1.30-2.20pm)

In Lesson Two, evidence of similar practices emerged. The teacher engaged the students through questions about having to adapt advertising for different cultures; this led the students into individual personal experiences, and the big picture ideas of marketing. She followed this with listening activities, asking the students to listen to some advertising channels from an audio dialogue. She demonstrated her effectiveness by scaffolding the listening activities, by playing the audio dialogue multiple times, and ensuring understanding first before having to do the group exercise of collaborative work. The teacher was tracking student understanding by asking students to complete

tables, match collocations, and in groups to discuss the campaign options. The teacher produced efficacy in the students and had them explain their reasoning; thus, the students took ownership of their learning, and it showed her self-assurance in her ability to take the students through multiple layers of complexity of assessment tasks. The teacher again expressed her self-assurance by asking for presentations by volunteers and entering extra marks into the grade book for their efforts. In this way, she holds students accountable but also acknowledges their motivation for bonus marks, demonstrating a trust in the students' understanding and decision-making skills.

For example:

T: OK, now let's move to activity number 9. How much do you have?

S: Laugh. How much, how much what?

T: OK, you want me to repeat the instruction.

Tracy and Justin, two colleagues at Red Arrow, meet to decide how to spend the advertising budget for Joys of Germany. First, look at the information below. Then take the role of Tracy or Justin and use your notes in the Partner Files to discuss the various opinions. Choose two options for the campaign.

Now, return to my question. How much money do you for advertising?

S: 50,000 euros.

T: OK, work in your group. I will go around, and I will observe you, and I will invite someone very silent to speak. (OB.T7.S1.L2.U4.1.30-2.20pm)

Teacher 7 kept showing quality practices in Lesson 3. She invited her students to talk about their favourite shopping websites and then challenged them to consider websites and audio materials, ensuring each one required critical thought that connected their personal experiences to the marketing ideas. She relied on repeated listening, as well as correcting the exercises, to ensure they understood, building their confidence in their abilities. Students were asked to critique kitchenware advertisements, developing their ability to be analytical. Her variety of assessments - True/False corrections, crosswords - suggested she was trying to accommodate different learning styles. Matching discounts to definitions was relevant to vocabulary, which indicated her attention to precision. By asking volunteers to share their views, she validated students, continuing to support them as active learners.

For example:

T: Now, look at this website listing for a range of kitchenware. Is this a good way for the manufacturer to promote and sell its goods? Let's have a review of it. 5 minutes for review. OK. Are you attracted to this website? This group and that group, please talk about the coffee maker. And the bigger one talks about the second item.

S: Discuss in groups.

(After a few minutes)

T: Time is up. Anyone volunteers?

S: Actually, I don't like this product.

T: Why?

S: Although I like coffee, I don't choose this product because it is expensive.

T: Expensive.

S: I like the traditional way to make coffee.

T: Any other reasons?

S: My home is not suitable for putting this item in.

T: Oh, yeah, OK, so you mean that it doesn't match with your home style. What else?

S: That's it.

T: Thank you. (OB.T7.S1.L3.U5.1.30-2.20pm)

Lastly, in Lesson 4, the teacher demonstrated a commitment to active learning. The teacher began the lesson by showing a clip of well-known worldwide brands and asked students to remember them and write down as many brands as they could. By using multimedia (clips), she reached visual learners, while the timed writing tasks made them think clearly and quickly. She then followed this up with students matching headings with website extracts and an email exercise. These tasks reflected workplace situations and continued the teacher's commitment to relevance. The teacher used group work when students presented, which further enabled the students' efficacy through collaborative learning and by providing different opportunities to articulate opinions. It combined critical thinking with personal expression. As a result of the limited time, the teacher decided to push the students' presentations to the next lesson. This showed her flexibility and her awareness of their time-management needs.

For example:

T: And, we go back to activity 5. Talk about your favorite shop or chain store. It can be 7-Eleven. You think 5 minutes is enough?

S: No

T: 10 minutes. Now start.

S: Discuss in their group.

(After 10 minutes)

T: Now, the first group. Ready? You can raise your hand.

S: Our group wants to talk about Itada. It is a food store. It sells spicy noodles, fried chicken, and many kinds of drinks. It has a lot of features like free booking and free ordering. If you have a large bill, you will have a discount or free dishes for your table. The reason why our group likes it is that the food is very tasty. It is everywhere, so it is convenient to eat at Itada.

T: OK. Thank you. (OB.T7.S1.L4.U5.1.30-2.20pm)

Scenario 8 (Teacher 8)

Teacher 8 showed a powerful impact of lesson study on her instructional approaches to foster active learning and student engagement throughout each of the four lessons. Her practice demonstrated a strong belief in students' abilities to learn and their ability to overcome or navigate challenges when there is strong guidance and scaffolding.

From the beginning of Lesson 1, the teacher engaged her students immediately to launch the learning. She showed the video of some advertisements and asked students to guess what products were being advertised. How she launched this lesson was interesting for students and situated them in an inquiry-based lesson from the start. It sparked interest and critical thinking. The lesson introduced was the lesson of creating ads by having students analyse an advertisement using the

AIDA (attention, interest, desire, action) model, and have them explain what each word meant. The approach to this lesson illustrated her comfort level with scaffolding complex concepts. It meant she had confidence in students' abilities to articulate and break down complex components and culturally conceptualise them. Teacher 8 illustrated her self-confidence through clear explanation of tasks, including asking a student to read aloud the instructions for the activity, and checking to see if students understood what they were being asked to do. Her students appeared motivated to engage in the tasks, and she demonstrated self-confidence in her ability to engage students within each of the lessons by explaining the task clearly and giving immediate feedback.

For example:

T: So, look at the screen. I have some videos for you to watch. Please watch the videos and tell me what product is being advertised.

S: Glass.

T: Do you want to watch again?

S: Building material.

T: Maybe a material cleaning product.

T: So what is being advertised?

S: Beer.

T: Thank you. (OB.T8.S1.L1.U4.1.30-2.20pm)

Lesson 2 shows teachers' incorporated methods that encouraged critical thinking and communication. The teacher prompted students to think about different countries when she asked them, "How do you think advertisements differ for countries? Read the opinions below. Were any of them surprising?" This question prompted students to consider different perspectives, which strengthened their analysis. Then, she increased student engagement by having them list advertising channels from an audio dialogue, then checking their answers on the board. By engaging students in a listening exercise with immediate feedback, she demonstrated confidence in her task management. Then she had students create a poster in groups, advertising either a food store or a café was an indication of her confidence in their ability to work together and the inherent potential they had for creativity. Her adaptive efficacy is evident. However, her abrupt end to the group task because of timing possibly indicates difficulties in time management as a minor area of growth for efficacy.

For example:

T: OK. So we have a project. Imagine that you want to open a food store or a café. Work in groups, and design a poster to advertise the food and drink that you want to sell. And then, we will use the poster to present the ideas of your business. First, we need to work in groups of four. So, make a group of four.

S: (Design their group's poster)

T: Listen again. We are going to open a store or café. Work in a group and design a poster to advertise the food and drink in your store or café. We have 10 minutes to do so.

S: (Continue designing their group's poster)

(After 10 minutes)

T: OK, class, please stop. At home, continue to design your poster and think about the plan to advertise your products.. Next time, when I see you again, you will present your plan. (OB.T8.S1.L2.U4.1.30-2.20pm)

The teacher engaged students in Lesson 3, as she asked them to refer to a mind map in the book and discuss distribution channels, enabling spoken output and peer-to-peer learning. In this lesson, the teacher was able to connect theoretical concepts with realities and demonstrate her ability to contextualise learning. The teacher asked students to underline keywords while listening to the teacher and then interactively correct the false statements that were presented; both strategies provided feedback during the lesson and also reinforced the teacher's belief in student capacity. The collaborative crossword puzzles further reinforced her belief in collaborative learning. The teacher demonstrated flexibility in the selection of modalities to promote learning; eclectically applying learning because she believed in the activities she chose and, more importantly, the belief in the potential of her students to learn by engaging in activities. However, the fact that this lesson was missing a difficult question may indicate that the tasks were not sufficiently difficult.

For example:

T: OK, so we start the lesson today, unit 5, marketing tools. Please look at page 37. We have a mind map. Can you tell me what they are?

S: They are distribution channels.

T: Yes. Discuss with your partner. Which is the most popular distribution channel in Vietnam?

S: Shopee, Lazada, TikTok shop, Tiki, Sendo

T: Can you tell me your ideas? What is the most popular distribution channel?

S: Some popular channels include TikTok Shop, Tiki, and Lazada. That is online stores.

T: Thank you. (OB.T8.S1.L3.U5.1.30-2.20pm)

Finally, in Lesson 4, the teacher asked the students to match types of shops with definitions, and then to listen to four comments and match the comments with the places on a web page. By routinely checking students' responses, correcting their mistakes, and having them work at the board during any opportunities to exercise the language, it was clear she was trying to encourage students to feel not only challenged, but that they were learning in a way that made them feel they could succeed. She would bring the listening tasks to a point of immediate feedback by requiring students to check the answers after each sentence, which encouraged groups to stay on task. Her guidance in the email writing task, with the requirement of using the words and phrases provided in the box to complete the email writing task, demonstrated her faith in her students' developing skills through practice.

For example:

T: Now, we have a small listening task. We have just 4 comments. Deborah Waters, a partner at Total Telemarketing, is giving a presentation on her company. Listen and match her comments with the sections of the web page above. So, just listen and choose the correct sections.

T: Plays the audio.

(After students listened to the audio.)

T: Have you got the answer? Yes or no?

S: Yes.

T: So, tell me, comment a.

S: Section 2. Test for Success

T: Comment b?

S: Section 4. Continual Assessment

T: Comment c?

S: Section 1.

T: Comment d?

S: Section 3

T: Know your Customers. (OB.T8.S1.L4.U5.1.30-2.20pm)

In summary, the study findings illustrated the extent teachers' practice was influenced by lesson study. Teachers 1, 2, 6, 7, and 8 with high efficacy consistently utilised a variety of strategies, scaffolded learning, adapted to students' needs, utilised formative assessments, etc. Teachers 3, 4, and 5 with moderate efficacy had a tendency to rely on textbooks, demonstrated one-way instruction, and were not adaptive or differentiated.

5. Discussion

Regarding the research question, there was both a strong indicator and a clear difference between the teachers who had high and moderate efficacies regarding their instructional practice, affected by the lesson study model focused on differentiated learning, flexibility, scaffolding, and active learning engagement. The research findings relate strongly to previous studies from the lesson study. Takahashi and McDougal (2016) indicated that lesson study promotes instructional change through reflection, which accommodates students' immediate responses as well as reform in practice. Takahashi and McDougal (2016) stated that lesson study promotes teaching enhancements by fostering introspection, thereby enabling teachers to modify their teaching methods over the long run and react to their students' live reactions. The evident teacher qualities of Teachers 1, 2, and 6 in the background resulted in constructing new identities when confronted with enriched examples of instruction as dynamic and student-responsive instead of static with dates, lessons, and exit slips. Lewis et al. (2010) also noted that lesson study supports teachers' capacity to examine student thinking while modifying their practice. This study supported this evidence by providing pieces that illustrate how high-efficacy teachers were able to emphasise their immediate form of assessment and adjust their methods within the lesson study experience. It was clear that the lesson study model benefited teachers' clear understanding and knowledge of their students' learning styles and cognitions. This is possible because of the opportunities teachers have to observe student interactions in a classroom space and collect evidence about student motivation, engagement, and responses to different instructional approaches. These observations provide an opportunity for teachers to develop their understanding of the level of student mastery of knowledge and skills. Previous research has suggested that lesson study is a viable approach for collecting evidence regarding students' learning in meaningful ways, such as through classroom observations, field notes, and reflective documentation (Matoba et al., 2007; Mon et al., 2016). This is consistent with the findings from Bozkurt and Ozdemir (2016) in their statement that lesson study helped to enhance teachers' understanding of how students learn. Observing other teachers affords teachers "a clearer view of how their students either actively or passively engage with learning tasks, to help them change their instruction. Consequently, policymakers should create and promote educational policies to increase widespread opportunities for classroom observation and the role of teacher learning communities. These policies need to be framed around collaborative professionalism, with a commitment to improving for both the observing and observed teachers.

The distinction between teachers with high and moderate confidence in instructional practice in this study is consistent with Rock and Wilson (2005), who found that the effectiveness of lesson study relies on teachers' level of openness to feedback and how much they can assess that feedback. Teacher 4 and Teacher 5 demonstrated routine-based or limited adapted practice, which suggests the lesson study experience itself does not transform practice, but the degree of transformational practice depends on the depth of participation and reflective capacity you have engaged in. The teachers in this investigation used a variety of teaching strategies (visuals, group, technology), which provided evidence of a move away from direct instruction and a more student-centred approach to learning. All of this aligns with Nauerth's (2015) description of lesson study and its conceptualisation as differential teaching and Tran's (2014) assertion that teachers have diverse strategies using teachers' levels of engagement as motivation to increase student engagement. Overall, this study indicates the effectiveness of lesson study stems from teachers' depth of engagement and critical reflection on their practice. Therefore, offering differentiated professional learning to teachers at varying efficacy levels could work to optimise the benefits of collaborative practices like lesson study.

6. Conclusion

This qualitative research study examined the impact of lesson study on the instructional practice of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers at a university in Vietnam. The researchers utilised a qualitative approach to examine how lesson study impacted the instructional practice of EFL teachers. The study comprised eight EFL teachers who were grouped into four lesson study teams based on teaching experience and course. Data was gathered through unstructured observations of the lesson study sessions. The findings were based on a thematic analysis of the observational data. The authors also employed a triangulation strategy by combining observation data and field notes to enhance the trustworthiness and validity of their findings.

The research indicated that lesson study had a very positive influence on teacher practice. Teachers participating in lesson study had greater skills in selecting and adapting frameworks to understand the many needs of learners. These teachers were able to employ many combinations of pedagogical practices under one large umbrella, including traditional audiolingual elements as well as interactive or learner-centred methods, while still managing an effective lesson and encouraging engagement from students. The study specifically highlighted the importance of teacher efficacy; teachers who expressed having more self-efficacy in a lesson were also the teachers who modified the lesson content, facilitated group work, and who was able to provide appropriate feedback in the moment. All of the above indicate that lesson study enhanced or changed pedagogical practice, management skills, and that overall teacher efficacy increased.

The findings of this study have significant implications for teacher professional development and reform in education, particularly in the area of EFL teaching in Vietnam. It was established that lesson study could be an avenue of teacher development and reform. The findings highlighted the importance of collaborative learning, reflective processes, and peer feedback in enhancing teacher efficacy. The study provided a foundation for implications for both educators and policy-makers wanting to improve EFL quality. In particular, it reflected the need for responsive professional development, focusing on providing a meaningful introduction to lesson study, ongoing support for engaging in lesson study, a collaborative learning space to promote collegial interaction, and an understanding of the logistical concerns faced to have ongoing success.

7. Limitations of the Study

The research had numerous limitations that should be noted. First, the sample size was limited to one university in the Mekong Delta area, thus restricting the applicability of the findings to broader contexts. Second, by nature, the research mainly collected qualitative data from unstructured classroom observations and recorded teaching videos, and while triangulation was used to help

inform the trustworthiness of the findings, it is unclear how the study affected students' learning, as no dependable quantitative measures exist. Third, the time allocated to the lesson study intervention was relatively short, and it is unclear what changes in teaching behaviour are sustained. Moreover, during the pilot period, participants were rather reluctant to participate, fearing judgment, loss of authority, or lack of confidence in their teaching. In addition, some have very heavy teaching loads along with many administrative responsibilities, hardly leaving any time for planning, observing, and reflecting. Furthermore, lesson study can be misinterpreted as peer observation or a demo lesson, and therefore, the researcher had to stick to the lesson study principles seriously. Last, the cultural context where hierarchical decisions are the norm and traditional ways of thinking may have impacted the integrity of the peer feedback, and teachers were willing to try new things.

8. Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings from the study, although teachers show the influence of lesson study on their instructional practice, future research could incorporate student perspectives and outcomes to provide a more holistic understanding of its effects. This research has important ramifications for the actual conduct of education. It draws attention to the crucial part school leaders and policymakers play in ensuring lesson study succeeds, particularly through the provision of the required support, including training, materials, and designated time for teachers to fully engage in the process. The study also provides a few practical suggestions for teachers regarding their role in action research. First, they should have a mind for mutual learning and shared responsibility, seeing peer feedback as growth, not criticism, to build trust and collegiality on the team to engender sincere discussions. Secondly, in planning and post-lesson discussion, the focus should be on how students learn rather than just about the research lesson. Finally, alternating positions of main teacher and observer will give a complete view of the lesson study process. After each cycle, the teachers need to reflect on what worked and what didn't. Finally, changing roles between the primary instructor and the observer helps to give the lesson study process more depth. Teachers have to consider what went well and what could be improved following every cycle.

The study was conducted in a short period over four lessons; therefore, longitudinal studies should be carried out to examine the effects of lesson study on teachers' instruction and behaviours over several semesters. Moreover, future studies should include a quantitative method that shows the teachers' scale of efficacy in instruction prior to and after participation in lesson study to clearly illustrate the extent to which lesson study influences teachers' instructional strategies.

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