Exploring Teachers’ Perceived Beliefs regarding Teaching Practice based on Lesson Study Context

CHANGSRI, Narumon*
Doctoral Program in Mathematics Education, Faculty of Education, Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, Thailand 40002; Email: changsri_creme@kku.ac.th

INPRASITHA, Maitree
Centre of Excellence in Mathematics, Commission on Higher Education (CHE), Si Ayutthaya Rd., Bangkok 10400, Thailand; Email: inprasitha_creme@kku.ac.th

PATTANAJAK, Auijit
Centre of Excellence in Mathematics, Commission on Higher Education (CHE), Si Ayutthaya Rd., Bangkok 10400, Thailand; Email: auipat@kku.ac.th

(Received February 16, 2011, Accepted March 21, 2011)

The aim of this study was to explore teachers’ perceived beliefs regarding teaching practice in the context of three-year Professional Development Project (ProDev) implementing lesson study incorporating Open Approach. The data were collected through questionnaire distributing to the teachers in three schools. Qualitative data were collected through participatory observation on teaching practice and interviewing members of lesson study team. The findings revealed that teacher’s perceived beliefs regarding teaching practice could be categorized into three categories according to 3 phases of lesson study as the followings:

1) Perceived beliefs related to collaboratively designing research lessons
2) Perceived beliefs related to collaboratively observing their friend teaching the research lesson
3) Perceived beliefs related to collaboratively doing post-discussion or reflection on the activities of the two phases

Keywords: teachers’ perceived beliefs, teaching practice, lesson study, and open approach

MESC Classification: C20, B50
MSC2010 Classification: 97C20, 97B50

* Corresponding author
1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching reforms cannot take place unless teachers’ deeply held beliefs about mathematics and its teaching and learning change (Ernest, 1988). It could be claimed that teachers’ beliefs influence their teaching practice (Thompson, 1992). Teachers’ beliefs could be changed when they had their opportunity to consider and challenge those beliefs (Wood & Sellers, 1999; cited in Wilson & Cooney, 2002). But change in teachers’ beliefs might not lead to change in their practice. The most lasting change would be the result from professional development experiences that provide teachers with opportunities to coordinate incremental change in beliefs with corresponding change in practice (Philipp, 2007). Opportunities to reflect on teaching practices seemed to enhance not only changes in teachers’ beliefs but also to promote a stronger congruence between teachers’ (changed) beliefs and their practices (Forgasz & Leder, 2008). Many researchers have been searching for more effective ways helping teachers to become conscious of their own beliefs and become to change (e.g., Ponte et al., 1999).

Caution with Wilson and Cooney’s and Philipp’s suggestions and in responding to Ponte et al.,’s demand, this study provides a new teaching practice based on lesson study. Inprasitha (2003) suggests that professional development must be a kind of classroom-based practice and be conducted continuously and regularly. This suggestion is a consensus to the central issues of Japanese professional development “Lesson Study”. Inprasitha and Loipha (2007) claimed that participating in each phase of lesson study provides the teachers an opportunity to collaboratively design a research lesson, to collaboratively observe their friend teaching research lesson, and to collaboratively do post-discussion or reflection on teaching. One of the obvious reasons is that it enhances collaboration between teachers to create a learning community (Yoshida, 2008).

Thus, in this study, teaching practice will be treated as an activity under an implementing lesson study incorporating Open Approach which provides a chance for participating teachers to reflect on their teaching practice and their existing beliefs.

2. LESSON STUDY INCORPORATING OPEN APPROACH

Lesson study refers to a process in which teachers progressively strive to improve their teaching methods by working with other teachers to examine and critique one another’s teaching techniques (Baba, 2007) and provided opportunity for the teacher to explore the students’ learning which could be understood from observation and classroom