

Different Views of Reflective Practice: Teacher Training in Japan and England

Andrew OBERMEIER • Mary BRIGGS* • Noriko SAKADE** • Kaoru NISHII

異なる観点からの「省察」 ー日本とイングランドにおける教員養成ー

Andrew OBERMEIER • Mary BRIGGS* • 坂出 義子** • 西井 薫

Accepted July 24, 2018

Abstract: Researchers from Kyoto University of Education (KUE) in Japan and Oxford Brookes University (OBU) in England conducted this research to understand the differences between teacher training in the two countries, and to see if insights leading to improvements at each institution could be gained by learning from the advantages and disadvantages of each system. For a better understanding of both institutions' systems, a qualitative study was conducted at primary schools in both settings to analyze practicum lessons, trainee reflections, and mentor advice. To follow up, two trainees and two mentors were interviewed. Results of the research offered insights that would be helpful for both institutions and contexts. At KUE, policies to improve practicum assessment and mentorship were implemented. At OBU, methods to foster reflective practice among groups of trainees working in one class to build a community of practice are being considered.

Key Words: teacher training, mentoring, reflective practice

抄録: 本研究は、日本の京都教育大学（KUE）とイングランドのオックスフォード・ブルックス大学（OBU）の研究者によって行われました。研究の目的は、両国の教員養成の違いを理解し、それぞれの方法の長所と短所について考え、その改善に役立てることができるかどうかを確認することでした。両大学の教員養成の方法をより良く理解するために、両国の小学校で実習授業の観察、実習生の省察、学級担任やメンターのアドバイスを分析する質的調査を行ないました。また、実習生、学級担任それぞれ二人に対するインタビューも行ないました。この研究の結果は、お互いの教員養成の方法やそのコンテキストに対する理解を深めるために有益なものでした。KUE では、実習評価と実習生の省察を促す指導を改善するための方針が導入されました。OBU では、実習生のグループが同じクラスで共に学び、実践コミュニティを築けるような方法を新しい学士課程のプログラムに取り入れることが検討されています。

索引語: 教員養成, メンター, 省察

* Oxford Brookes University;

** Institute of International Education in London

A collaborative research project focused on teacher training was conducted by researchers from Kyoto University of Education (KUE) and Oxford Brookes University (OBU) from 2013 to 2017. The purpose of this research was to understand the differences between teacher training in Japan and England, and see if insights leading to improvements at each institution could be gained by learning from each other's advantages and disadvantages. This collaboration consisted not only of academic symposiums, papers, and presentations, but was also founded in close classroom observations of teacher training practices and policies in Kyoto and Oxford. Researchers from both institutions gained valuable understandings by contrasting differences and seeking to reap benefits by understanding the best aspects of each other's settings. The research focused on the systems, policies, methods, and daily interactions between mentors and trainees within broadly defined frameworks of reflective practice. This paper presents insights gained from investigating two pairs of mentors working with trainees through classroom observations and follow-up interviews. Practical implications and institutional adjustments that have resulted at both KUE and OBU are also reported.

1. Group-oriented and Individualized Reflective Practice

The importance of reflective practice is concretely demonstrated by the Farrell's (2007) example of a woman cooking roast beef who routinely cuts a slice off the end before putting it in the pot. There seemed to be no logical reason for cutting the end off the large piece of beef being roasted, but the woman continued to do so because her mother had always done the same. When her mother was questioned, it is revealed that her mother had cut the ends off simply because in her day pots and ovens were much smaller. The woman's continuance of this meaningless and ineffective routine metaphorically reveals how established practices must be constantly questioned and re-examined. Reflection is especially crucial for teachers, whose work can dramatically influence children's lives. Edge (2011) shares well-known proverbs about non-reflective teachers: "We all have experience, but we don't all learn from it," and "Some teachers have ten years' experience, and others have one year's experience that they've repeated ten times" (p. 41). Indeed, teaching is a profession filled with daily, weekly, monthly, and annual routines. Because of the recursive nature of the teaching profession, the ability to effectively reflect on one's teaching and constantly improve are cornerstones to keeping one's profession on a trajectory of regular improvement.

The importance of teacher reflection was established by Dewey (1933), who called for teachers to persistently and actively consider any belief or assumed forms of knowledge, and critically explore routines and their consequences. He identified three important attributes of reflective teachers: they are open-minded, responsible, and whole-hearted. More recently, Schön's (1983) work was founded on the idea of teachers practicing intuitively and professionally to solve problems. He outlined 3 types of reflection: reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and reflection-for-action. When teachers reflect in-action, they think on their feet to address the situations that occur in every day work. When reflecting in-action, teachers rely mostly on tacit, habitual knowledge. However, after a situation has passed and teachers reflect on-action, they develop insights and understandings strengthen their responses in future similar occurrences. When teachers plan and develop simulations for future occurrences, teachers are said to be reflecting for-action. In this way, becoming skilled at

reflecting on one's practice is highly important for all teachers, and an essential part of any teacher training program. For this reason, researchers at KUE and OBU committed to focusing on how each institution fosters reflective practice amongst its trainees and mentors.

Researchers from KUE were most interested in the long-term, individualized nature of mentoring at OBU, and OBU researchers were most interested in the short-term group-oriented framework within which mentors and groups of students work as a team to foster reflective practice. This contrast between the community of practice in Kyoto versus the focus on individual experiential learning in Oxford revealed two very different approaches to mentoring trainees. The exciting aspect of these different approaches was that they opened opportunities for insights and improvements for research teams on both sides of the collaboration. This contrast between individually focused *transformative learning* and group-focused *communities of practice* became a solid theoretical reference point for the project.

Comparing the two, communities of practice is a more social theory of learning. This situated learning perspective has developed from an anthropological view of learning in specific contexts by Lave and Wenger (1991). Communities of practice are groups that come together regularly and learn collaboratively. There are three key elements of a community of practice, the domain, the community, and the practice. The domain is an indication of the connection between the members of the group, the community is the way in which members of the group interact, and the practice is the development of shared understandings, resources, and ways of working together. Other ideas associated with communities of practice are legitimate peripheral participation and situated learning. In legitimate peripheral participation, the members of the community move from peripheral involvement to full participation as they develop their competences. Situated learning focuses on the contextualization of knowledge and therefore new knowledge is constructed within the community of practice. This social theory of learning differs from other theoretical perspectives of learning as it "places learning in the context of our lived experiences of participation of the world" (Wenger 1998, p. 3). Wenger goes on to expand on the key components of this social theory of learning: meaning, practice, community, and identity. Meaning is how people talk about what they experience either individually or together as part of the community and how they make that learning meaningful. Practice is the discussion about people's shared perspectives built up over time which linked to the available resources will support the communities' participation in activities. Community allows value to be assigned to specific activities and those who are engaged in the activities as competent. The final component is identity and this relates to the way in which learning changes individual identities and how this situates the individual in the community.

Barab and Duffy (2000) link communities of practice with mentoring through a consideration of the role of teachers not just to impart the content but to facilitate, model, mentor, and scaffold the pupils' learning. They go on to discuss the same process for teacher trainees, where the mentors model for them so they can then be mentored towards the skills they will need to teach. Although communities of practice are seen as a situated, contextual way in which adults can learn, the direct use of this theoretical perspective for mentoring purposes is limited; mentoring is a key feature of how a community of practice develops. Wenger himself sees communities of practice as helpful for organizations to review how they operate and how they might become more effective in the way the community in the organization works together (Wenger & Synder, 2000). There is no explicit mention of mentoring in this article; the focus is predominantly on the learning organization concept. Although

the concept of the learning organization is useful, it does however suffer from an over-application in practice that distorts the underlying principles. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) continue to discuss the process of cultivating communities of practice again without reference to mentoring but select mentoring programs for their attention. Mentoring programs are seen to assist newcomers in making sense of the organization they have joined and seeing how they fit into the community of practice. To illustrate how this works they use the example of the consultancy firm McKinsey, where leaders within the community assist "junior members to identify development directions and steer them to projects that support that development" (Wenger et al, 2002, p. 108).

In contrast to communities of practice as a social theory of learning, transformative learning is more individually focused. Transformative learning was a concept initially suggested by Mezirow, who in 1978 drew his ideas heavily from Friere, Kuhn, and Habermas before the key distinctive elements of transformative learning emerged. Adult learning takes place when learners' frames of reference are fundamentally altered through critical reflection. These frames of reference consist of the habits of the mind and points of view. They are the habits people develop through experiences that become a general set of assumptions by which they interpret meaning, although they are often unaware of them and how they operate. Learning takes place through changes in frames of reference, or when learners establish new ones and thus change their points of view. Habits of the mind, Mezirow argues, are the most difficult to change as people are not always conscious of their influence on their own thinking. Frames of reference or meaning perspectives are also categorized as psychosocial, sociolinguistic, and epistemic. These are the ways in which adults learn, the paradigms that they use to facilitate learning and knowledge.

It is through critical reflection that the adult learner becomes more aware and makes meaning from their experiences. For critical reflection to take place there is a need for the learner to want to develop and change. Pietrykowski (1996) criticizes Mezirow's lack of acknowledgement of the power relationship between tutor and adult learning in an educational context and the impact that has on the functioning of the relationship. Not acknowledging who has the power in the relationship ignores who might be leading the process. In mentoring, the mentor sets out the scope for discussion. However, Mezirow suggests that it is not appropriate to set predetermined goals for learning with adults and working only towards them as this would be indoctrination. Taylor and Cranton (2013) suggest that Mezirow does not take account of the context for learning. An important aspect of what can be considered self-criticism is Mezirow's own view, that the mentor perspective that they are using to explore the mentee's own perspective is not value free and as such there is a layering of values within the relationship. Skilled questioning rather than assumption will lead to a shared understanding of both perspectives in order that effective learning within the context of the mentoring can take place.

2. Comparing Teacher Training at KUE and OBU

The investigation of how mentoring and training teachers are undertaken in each other's settings offered a unique opportunity for researchers from KUE and OBU to reflect on their own practices in teacher education. The contrast of one teacher working with a number of students at KUE as opposed to the majority of OBU students placed in a classroom on their own was immediately obvious. The visits to schools challenged the

visiting researchers to identify what was familiar and what was different between the contexts. The issue of individual versus group training and mentoring demonstrates the contrasting but underlying view of adult learning from transformational learning to developing a community of practice. At OBU, the individual trainee must mediate their role with the school and its staff across a wide range of different school contexts during their training. At KUE, the students are together as a group and welcomed into a community of practice at a small number of schools attached to the university.

The study revealed important differences between systems for teacher training. At KUE, trainees do their practical training at schools attached to the university, pass the teacher recruitment examination before they graduate, and become teachers. They are hired when they graduate. In contrast, the system at OBU allows for several different ways for people to become teachers. In addition to the undergraduate program, it is not unusual for professionals making a career change to do a teaching practicum around age 40. Another difference of the two systems is the difference in the length of the practicum. At KUE, the period of teaching practice at the affiliated school is much shorter than OBU: the main practicum is 5 weeks long and the secondary practicum is 2 weeks. On the other hand, at OBU the practicum consists of three 12-week sessions. In sum, teacher trainees at KUE engage in the practicum as short-term, practicing students. On the other hand, OBU trainees are immersed more fully into the role of teacher for a much longer time.

One crucial contrast that the study revealed was with regard to the standardization and documentation of the reflection process. At OBU, national guidance standards are extensively set, to the extent that some university professors and mentors complained that they feel too bound by documentation required. Nevertheless, classroom instructor guidance, and meetings with mentors all referred to the common standards and documentation as a base framework for discussions. Feedback on daily lessons was conducted with the mentor by closely following the process outlined in a feedback sheet. At KUE, there was no standard documentation to guide the process of reflection. Trainees received guidance through meetings with their classroom advisor. However, as objective criteria are not shown, these daily meetings are not bound to a certain format. The process varied from mentor to mentor and from day-to-day. At the end of the practicum, feedback and evaluation of their mentor training came in the form of their advisor's comments on a kind of portfolio that contains all their lesson plans, daily diaries, reflection reports. The first formal evaluation result is received well after the practicum has been completed, in the form of a grade on the trainee's transcript.

Another important contrast observed was the role of the mentor. At OBU, guidance during teaching practice is received from the mentors working with the trainees in school, but specialist university professors take on a role of visiting tutors who provide quality assurance of the placements, and the mentoring the trainee receives. The person who takes on the responsibility of the duties of the mentor varies in England, in some schools the mentor is the day-to day mentor as well as the assessor; in others the mentor takes on some of the responsibilities and the school mentor oversees all placements and mentoring of all trainees and newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in the school. In the latter case the mentor often takes more of an overview of the training and assessment. The role of mentor is supported by the England central government as a key role, and a clear framework of national standards has recently been established and documented, outlining mentor standards in areas such as “personal qualities”, “teaching”, “professionalism”, and “self-development and working in partnership” (Teaching Schools Council, 2016).

Thus, although the daily business of the practicum at OBU is carried out in the form of the mentor advising the teacher trainee, the mentor is an official occupation fully backed by the national government, with the University tutor as a third party that brings triangulation to the teacher training process. Seeing this, KUE researchers realized the essential necessity of firmly establishing support for the current role of mentor within its system. At KUE, the roles of university tutor and administering mentor are not emphasized or established, so the practicum experience depends almost entirely on the relationship between the classroom mentor and trainee.

Further differences related to class sizes in the two countries. In Japan, classes were usually around 40 students, but in the England they were about two thirds. In Japan, although students had their own desks, there was a variety of whole class, group, and individual work undertaken during the observed lessons. Another surprise for OBU visitors to Japan was the more limited use of technology in teaching and learning. Also, while in England there is a large emphasis on the management of low level disruption in the class during teaching time. The English team was surprised that Japanese teachers did not discipline students for activities engaged in by students such as fiddling with a pencil case that would result in intervention by teachers in England.

To compare how the Japanese and English institutions implement teacher training, the researchers conducted observations and interviews that were paralleled in both contexts. At primary schools in Kyoto and Oxford, two practicum lessons taught by trainees, and the mentor feedback sessions that followed them were observed, videotaped, and transcribed. The observations and interviews were conducted with the cooperation of four mentors (2 in Oxford and 2 in Kyoto), and the four trainees working with them. In addition, all 4 mentors and all 4 trainees were interviewed by members of the KUE and OBU research teams.

3. Findings from the Observations and Interviews at Kyoto University of Education

At Kyoto University of Education, groups consisting of several trainees are each allocated to the same class mentor during a two-week placement. The trainees took turns teaching the class. They observed each other's lessons and discussed together at the reflection sessions which took place every day after school, attended by a group of all trainees and the class mentor. There were four trainees in each group in the placement when this research was conducted. The following analysis is based on the interviews with two trainees and their respective class mentors and the observations of two lessons taught by the two trainees and the subsequent reflection sessions on these lessons.

3.1 Characteristics of a Reflection Session

A reflection session generally lasts between 30 minutes and 90 minutes, depending on whether there are any lessons taught by trainees. A session is chaired by a trainee and all thoughts, ideas and comments are shared, based on the trainees' observations of the pupils during the entire day, starting with morning assembly and including all lessons and the lunchtime break. After a reflection on the whole day, the group goes on to discuss the lesson taught by one of the trainees, ending with the mentor's comments and conclusion. This discussion of the lesson starts with a reflection by the trainee who taught it, such as what s/he thinks s/he did

well and did not do well, any issues of concern and any difficulties. This is followed by feedback from the other trainees who observed the lesson. Sometimes a reflection session also discusses certain themes, which are chosen by the trainees, for example, questioning, how to scold, how to deal with or how to instruct pupils.

3.2 The Content of Discussions

Both mentors believe that the emphasis of reflection sessions should be on the pupils and how they were in the lesson. For this reason, it is suggested that the trainees who are not teaching walk around the classroom to find out how the pupils are doing. Both mentors stress the need for trainees to consider pupils who do not understand, to empathize with them and to come up with possible solutions. Both mentors highlight the importance of instruction and questions to the whole class as well as interaction with the pupils, all of which may also help to consider how to reduce pupils' difficulties. The observations of both reflection sessions also found that there were more discussions about the pupils, including how the pupils were on the day, their learning and understanding, and how to deal with their behavior, rather than about subject matters.

Each mentor also raised a specific question for the trainee who taught the lesson (and for fellow trainees to consider). Both mentors, based on their own experience, regarded this question-specifying process as important. One mentor wanted the trainee to think about how to deal with pupils who do not find it easy to speak in class and how to get such pupils to play an active part. That mentor raised, as an example, an incident in which a pupil may have been disappointed (as the trainee cut the pupil short when the pupil could not read out her/his work as s/he was happy and giggling). This trainee commented that s/he became aware of the importance of paying more attention to individual pupils, not only to the whole class, and now has a better idea of how to deal with pupils in similar situations in the future.

The other mentor asked his/her trainee a question about how the lesson ended and how the lesson should relate to the next lesson. That mentor asked the trainee to clarify what the trainee wanted the pupils to learn and to consider how the lesson could have developed to achieve that aim. The trainee commented that the mentor's question ('what are you going to do next?') was difficult to answer as s/he had not previously considered it.

It was pointed out that once they become teachers, the trainees will need a variety of skills so it is important to learn how to interact with pupils and how to ask questions, rather than focusing on a subject or the content of a particular lesson. The trainees felt that reflection sessions were useful. While they cannot think of anything in particular to be improved, the trainees suggested having deep discussions or debates if there is more time available.

3.3 Working as a Team

One mentor said that s/he encourages the group of trainees to work as a team to improve their practices and to discuss together how to nurture the pupils and how to make the class better. By reflecting on their practices and pupils with fellow trainees rather than thinking alone, the trainees could understand the pupils from various observations and viewpoints. One of the advantages of having more than one trainee in the class is the sharing of information about the pupils, and that also provides the opportunity to develop the trainees' eyes for observing the pupils. The mentor also learns from the trainees, who provide the opportunity to

see different sides of pupils.

Both trainees said that the comments on their lessons from fellow trainees, and the information about the pupils during the lessons, were helpful for them to better understand the pupils' learning and would be useful for their next lessons. The feedback was particularly useful for making the trainees realize what they did not notice for themselves, including their own strengths and weaknesses. Each trainee could use not only the feedback, which s/he received, but also the feedback received by her/his fellow trainees. In this way, the trainees learned from each other's mistakes and benefitted from each other's good points to improve their own practices. As a result, the group could move forward together, rather than individually.

One mentor noticed that the trainees' reflections became more profound and that the ways which the trainees perceived points to be shared improved. That mentor wants the trainees to use the experience of working together as a team and of sharing concerns, thoughts and feelings, not only to better support the pupils but also to support each other as teachers in the future.

3.4 The Role of the Mentor

The mentors stated that the trainees mostly discuss among themselves and settle on the way forward together. The mentors make important points if necessary, otherwise they just listen to the trainees' discussions and make comments at the end. One mentor would only intervene if the discussion comes to a standstill. This mentor still finds it difficult to decide how much responsibility and how much support to give to the trainees, believing that the trainees would better understand once they do something by themselves. The other mentor said that while the trainees often ask her/him for an answer, s/he, rather than giving answers to the trainees, tries to put questions back to them for the trainees to think for themselves and to come up with their own answers.

As a result of feedback, one mentor wants the trainees, by gaining confidence by the end of the placement, to aspire to become teachers themselves. Furthermore, since not all trainees will want to become teachers, the trainees should learn something useful and necessary for when they go out into society. Overall, the mentors want the trainees to learn things that can be usefully applied in the future, so they choose to discuss issues that are common to all trainees.

One mentor thinks that the difference between mentors and trainees is in expertise in subject matter on which the mentor can advise trainees. The other mentor feels that the role of a mentor at future reflection sessions would be to think together with the trainees, rather than acting as a 'leader.' This is because the proportion of young teachers is increasing and these teachers, with only a few years of experience, would be supervising trainees.

3.5 The Benefits of the Mentor's Feedback

The trainees noticed that as the mentor has been observing the pupils throughout the entire year, the mentors have information about the pupils which the trainees cannot possibly acquire in the short time of the placement and so their respective viewpoints are different. One trainee felt that the comments from the mentor were more general rather than specific (e.g. the general atmosphere of the class, information about the pupils who need support) but also that the mentor, based on years of experience, offered concrete suggestions on better ways to support pupils. The other trainee found the mentor's suggestions about pedagogy useful (e.g. gestures

are particularly effective for younger pupils). Both trainees commented that advice given by mentors can be incorporated into a future lesson plan and a future lesson itself. Therefore, the trainees would remember and incorporate everything the mentors have suggested.

4. Findings from the Observations and Interviews at Oxford Brookes University

At Oxford Brookes trainees are predominately allocated to one class working on their own with the same mentor during their placements though some are in pairs. The trainees in this project were in their second year of an undergraduate program and on an eight-week placement in school. They observe the mentor teaching lessons and other teachers in other classes around the school. They have weekly one to one meetings with their mentor to discuss the teaching and learning during the week and set targets for the following week, this is entitled a ‘mentor meeting’. Their mentor observes their teaching of the class once a week and gives them both oral and written feedback against the Teachers standards. The school used for this study had a number of trainees from different programs and year groups during this term though all of them were in classes in their own. The following analysis is based on the interviews with two trainees and their respective mentors and the observations of two lessons taught by the two trainees and the subsequent reflection sessions on these lessons.

4.1 Characteristics of a Reflection Session

A mentor meeting session lasts about an hour and usually follows an observation of the trainee teaching the class. First, there is a review of the observed lesson, next there is a review of the trainee’s individual progress against the Teachers’ standards. Progress towards any previous targets set that are applicable to the recent observation is assessed. The session is directed by the mentor, but the trainee usually begins the meeting with their own initial reflections on the lesson observed. The standards tend to drive the content of the discussion as the trainees are graded against them at the end of each placement. Alongside these formal meetings the trainees gain feedback from the mentors informally on a regular basis.

4.2 The Content of Discussions

The mentors involved worked to the same patterns of meetings but varied the expectations of which lessons that the trainees would teach depending upon the trainees’ individual progress and agreed targets. Both mentors gave space for the trainees to reflect on the observed lessons rather than immediately offering their feedback. They both wanted the trainees to notice what had occurred in the lesson in relation to learning and to teaching and consider the impact of decisions made in their planning and in their teaching.

As the trainees are on their own in the class, they only observe the mentor teaching. As a consequence, one of the mentors suggested in her interview that she asked trainees to observe what was happening: ‘Right. I want you to stand back, stand with me’. So during the lesson, the mentor encouraged her observe students learning: ‘stand with me, I want you just to stop and do what I’m doing which is observing and scanning’. Her focus was on the pupils’ engagement and their learning and she described this as part of the on-going dialogue

about practice she has with trainees as an integral part of mentoring them for development. The question she raised with the trainee about the specific lesson observed was about the pace of the session and how the trainee would support the learning more effectively. The focus was more about classroom management skills including planning.

The other mentor focused on providing stretch and challenge for one very able pupil in the class and an incorrect explanation given right at the end of the lessons to a question about place value. In this lesson the focus of the conversation was very focused on learning and subject knowledge and less about the classroom management of the lesson. Both mentors felt it was important for the trainees to make mistakes and not to intervene unless absolutely necessary and they were aware that the trainees still have another year to complete before they would finish their training including another eight-week placement in another school and class. Though one mentor said if she was acting as a teaching assistant in the class and she had picked up misconceptions she might model a mini plenary for the trainee with the class. The majority of the discussions focus on classroom management. This includes the management of behavior and how to differentiate while keeping the pace effective for the learning of all pupils.

4.3 One on One Conversations

The one on one conversations between the trainee and the mentor offer an intense and dynamic context for teacher reflection. The mentor has all the power as they control the direction of the conversation and they are the ones making the judgments about the grading against the standards. Both trainees commented that the relationship they established with their mentor was an important determiner for their progress and grading. Both mentors suggested it was important to get to know the trainee, and indicated this by saying that he noticed 'How she responds to my reflections as well knowing sort of how sensitive you need to be with some things'. Again this illustrates the intensity of the relationship between the two people involved.

4.4 The Role of the Mentor

In the one to one relationship the mentors tend to work exclusively with one trainee. Where there are a number of trainees in the school at the same time an overall mentor may work with mentors who have a trainee in the class. In this study one of the mentors took an overview as the school mentor and provided some guidance for the other mentor who was mentoring for the first time. The mentors conducted joint observations of the trainees and discussed their observations as a means of moderation. As stated previously with this one to one conversation so much is dependent upon how this relationship is established so that the trainee has confidence in the mentor and their feedback but that the mentor knows the trainee sufficient in order to phrase the feedback in ways in which the trainee will take this on board to develop their practice. The judgments about how much responsibility the trainees have depends partly on which placement they are undertaking and for the second-year trainees on this placement they would be teaching about 60% of the time. This would be a build up from taking groups and parts of lessons to taking on whole lessons across the curriculum and particularly sequences of lessons in mathematics and English. Both the mentors see their role as supporting the trainees whilst ensuring that the pupils in their classes are progressing in their learning.

4.5 The Benefits of the Mentor's Feedback

The trainees valued both the formal feedback as part of the mentor meetings and the informal feedback that they received as they were working in the classroom each day. The informal feedback was considered more useful as changes could be made immediately as a result of the mentors' input. The trainees felt there was a balance in the feedback sessions between pedagogic knowledge and subject knowledge. One of the trainees said they felt they would have benefitted from more feedback on the planning process particularly in relation to teaching specific topics in this case in mathematics. The other trainee liked the detail of the feedback that she had been given and felt this helped her to be the best teacher possible.

5. Institutional Changes at KUE and OBU Resulting from the Collaboration

The researchers from both KUE and OBU found key aspects of the teacher training in each other's contexts that could lead to immediate and tangible improvements of their own. KUE researchers observed the strong role that assessment and standards documentation provided by the government and university. This added clarity and transparency to the mentoring and to the trainees' learning process. Although drastic systemic changes could not easily be made, KUE was able to make key adjustments to improve mentoring, trainee's reflection, and methods of practicum evaluation. As mentioned above, KUE informs students about the contents of evaluation of practical training at the practical training. Trainees do not have a comprehensive evaluation (excellent, good, adequate, inadequate) until after they have returned to university, when official grades are posted. At OBU, frequent review of the 10-page evaluation documents, item by item, seemed to provide a transparency and shared frame of reference for university tutors, mentors, and trainees. At KUE, where more than one trainee is assigned to each classroom, evaluation of such detailed items would be difficult. However, during the practicum there is no opportunity to reflect objectively, without receiving advice from the mentor in charge. KUE researchers realized this was a considerable problem and move forward with steps to improve the situation. As a result, a reflection sheet was introduced for students to use at the middle and the end of their practical training (see Appendix). This sheet enables students to evaluate themselves and receive advice from faculty members based on the evaluation incorporated system. Another purpose of the trainee's reflection sheet is to make it easy for university professors to give practical evaluation, as they are not as intimately involved in the day to day activities of the teaching practicum. The reflection sheet was created in cooperation with the attached schools. Although the area and reaching target are unified, the viewpoints for reflection differ depending on the practicum school type (kindergarten, primary, junior high school, high school, special needs school).

Another issue that became clear to the KUE researchers was the importance of developing a role outside of the trainee/mentor pairs. At OBU, the system and definition of roles enables for the university tutor to serve in this position much more strongly. At KUE, although theoretically school administrators and university professors can provide another perspective for trainee/mentor pairs, the short practicum term, lack of assessment and standard uniformity, and the group-oriented nature of the process would make complete implementation difficult. Therefore, to address this need, a Mentor Project Executive Committee was established and worked to

develop an atmosphere that fostered the improvement of mentorship called the Mentorship Development Program. In a series of lectures and classes, coaching ability, focusing ability, and facilitating ability were the three main themes in the 2017 Mentorship Development Program Trial Course, and then the 2018 Official Mentorship Program Course was taught by KUE professors and invited specialists. Held on Saturdays, audiences for the 6 annual sessions of the trial course consisted of 50 to 100 mentors from the KUE's attached schools, as well as other Kyoto public school teachers.

For the OBU researchers, a key area of difference between the two contexts is the number of trainees placed in one class. While OBU does use paired placements on a number of first placements on the undergraduate and postgraduate program, there are never any more than two trainees in one class. The undergraduate program is undergoing a revalidation process and so this gives an opportunity to consider including group placements as part of the new course structure. At this stage the likelihood is that this will remain a first year focus though possibly connected to specific teaching areas in other years. The main assessed placements will continue as solo practices. Classroom management of low level disruptive behavior was identified as a difference between the two contexts. Although not directly related to mentoring of trainees this does focus as a central concern against the teaching standards, which clearly stipulate that teachers must manage behavior effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment. The differences in handling this area of teaching has formed the basis of discussion at OBU about expectation of trainees in relation to behavior management and the balance of this standard and the teaching specific standards.

Although it was noted earlier that there was a difference in the use of technology in both contexts in KUE one mentor used photographs to great effect as part of the mentoring feedback. The mentor had taken pictures of the lesson and displayed them on the interactive white board as a prompt to stimulate discussion of specific points/incidents observed during the lesson. The trainee was encouraged to consider what was happening at this point in the lesson and reflect upon actions taken; reflection on action (Schön, 1983). The use of pictures as a stimulus for discussion has fed into the mentor training sessions at OBU to aid the reflective practice development for the trainees and to give the mentors another tool to focus discussion.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

Overall this project can be seen to have impacted in both contexts, though in different ways. Both contexts have benefitted from the observations and the opportunities to discuss teacher training procedures outside their immediate institutions. The observations in both cultural contexts resulted in raising a number of questions about how teacher training might and the mentoring process might be developed with future research to address some relevant questions.

Regarding whether the variations in training allow for the development of the trainee's identity as a teacher in different ways, from the findings, it seems that at KUE, the trainee's identity as a teacher develops as part of his or her group identity and part of the school community. At the same time, the trainee's individual development is influenced by his or her own experiences, decisions and values, as well as by the different perspectives of fellow trainees and the teacher mentor. At OBU, the development of the trainee's identity as a

teacher is likely to be more strongly influenced by their mentor as a role model in view of their close relationship. In addition, the trainee would inevitably be influenced by the government guidelines on what is expected of a qualified teacher. Thus, trainees at KUE gain a rather different teacher identity from their counterparts at OBU.

Another question was whether the group training in Japan fosters the overall development of a community of practice. At KUE, a group of trainees, a teacher mentor and class pupils are all involved in a collaborative learning process in the context of the school community. The trainees interact with each other, as trainees, to share their thoughts and feedback, together with some guidance from a teacher mentor. All that would prepare the trainees to participate fully in the school community in the future. This allows for a greater development of community of practice than the individual training at OBU between one trainee and one teacher mentor in which the trainee reflects under the guidance of the experienced teacher mentor alone. The collaborative way of working together as a team is required in full time teaching in schools in Japan. Because of this requirement, collegial learning and support as community of practice continues beyond the initial teacher training.

The solo experience at OBU may push some trainees to become self-reliant teachers far too quickly, especially if the process does not allow for trainees to progress at their own pace. This might contribute to the drop-out rate, especially if there is lack of support for trainees, but there are other factors, such as social issues, low salary and heavy workloads (Hillary, Andrade, & Worth, 2018), which should be taken into consideration. On the other hand, the solo experience can make trainees sufficiently well prepared for teaching from the first day of their work. By contrast, the trainees at KUE work as a group rather than individually so that all trainees can move forward together as a group by supporting each other. The downside is perhaps that not all trainees will be ready to be self-reliant teachers on their first day of work. The solo trainee in England gains autonomy from acting upon his/her own decisions and responsibilities. This contrasts with trainees at KUE who share decisions and responsibilities within the group. However, any autonomy of the solo trainee in England is limited by the standards set by the government against which that trainee is judged and evaluated. The autonomy of the trainee in Japan is not restricted in the same way since there are no corresponding government standards.

In sum, investigating teacher training, mentoring, and trainees experiences at OBU and KUE revealed important insights into the learning process in professional development. Researchers on both sides came away realizing that their training systems could benefit by adding elements from their counterpart's methodologies and policies. Constraints and traditions in both contexts determined the ways both systems developed, but thanks to insights gained from considering both contexts in depth, clear understanding that a strong training system should support processes that foster both group involvement and individual development. Reflecting on our own educational and cultural context has raised awareness and understanding on both sides, and resulted in important policy changes.

References

- Barab, Sasha A. & Duffy, T. (2000). From practice fields to communities of practice. *Theoretical Foundations of Learning Environments, 1* (1), pp. 25-55.
- Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Edge, J. (2011). *The Reflexive Teacher Educator in TESOL*. London: Routledge.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2007). *Reflective language teaching: From research to practice*. London: Continuum Press.
- Hillary, J., Andrade, J., & Worth, J. (2018). *Teacher retention and turnover research, Research Update 4: How do teachers compare to nurses and police officers?* Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research.
- Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mezirow, J. (2009). An overview on transformative learning, in Illeris, K. (Ed.) *Contemporary Theories of learning: Learning theorists...in their own words*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 90-105.
- Pietrykowski, B. (1996). Knowledge and Power in adult Education: Beyond Freire and Habermas. *Adult Education Quarterly, 46* (2), pp. 82-87.
- Schön, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action*. London: Temple Smith.
- Taylor, E. & Cranton, P. (2013). A theory in progress? Issues in transformative learning theory. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 4* (1), pp. 33-47.
- Teaching Schools Council. (2016). National standards for school-based initial teacher training mentors. Retrieved from: National Archives, London (www.gov.uk/government/publications).
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning Meaning and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wenger, E. & Snyder, W. (2000). Communities of practice: The Organizational Frontier. *Harvard Business Review, 78* (1), pp. 139-145.
- Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Synder, W. (2002). *Cultivating Communities of Practice*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

APPENDIX

Translated Reflection Sheet for Trainees at KUE

Main Subject	Year in the University	Student number	Trainee student name

Area	Item	Attainment Targets	Points for Reflection	Self-assessment
Teaching Skills	1	<Lesson planning> Acquire necessary knowledge and skills regarding subject content and teaching methods, and lesson planning.	• I understood the objectives and the content of the subject taught • I set suitable teaching objectives and learning content by understanding the students' present level. • I prepared, analyzed and researched teaching materials sufficiently • I created a lesson plan with questions for students and strategies to expand the content, considering possible responses from students	
	2	<Lesson implementation> Utilize teaching materials and tools in the actual lesson and take account of the needs of each individual student	• I gave clear instructions and advice to students within their level of understanding • I spoke clearly, chose appropriate language, and used a suitable volume of voice when teaching • I wrote lesson aims and content development systematically on the blackboard with neat and clear handwriting • I asked students questions that would encourage responses that promote learning • I aimed to interact with individual students attentively while taking the whole class into consideration • I prepared useful teaching materials and tools (cards, presentations, work sheets), and used them in suitable situations in order to meet the learning objectives • I integrated assessment activities complying with the lesson objectives and aimed to understand the level of learning each individual student has attained.	
	3	<Lesson evaluation> Know how to assess one's own teaching practice and to work improve.	• I reflected on my teaching and was able to identify strengths and points to be improved by assessing whether the students have learned anything from my lesson • I aimed to give students appropriate support by utilising assessment standards and assessment methods to understand the learning level the students have attained,	

Student Guidance and Counseling	1	<Understanding Individual Students> Acquire necessary knowledge and skills to understand and guide individual students.	• I aimed to understand the personality of each individual student and respond appropriately to their individual needs • I identified students' friendships within the class • I wrote concrete descriptions of students' behavior in the class observation record and the teacher training diary	
	2	<Understanding Student Groups> Acquire necessary knowledge and skills to identify characteristics of student groups	• I could understand the class dynamics by understanding the relationships between the students • I dealt with the students' behavior and actions that caused me concern.	
	3	<Motivating students individually and within the group> Interact with students positively and give them appropriate guidance and support according to the situation	• I interacted positively with the students and made efforts to support the relationships between students • I engaged actively on my own initiative in cleaning and lunch activities, and gave appropriate guidance to students • I observed the interaction of my class teacher with students, and learned and understood the methods of guidance	
Attitudes towards work/ placement; qualities required of a teacher	1	<Work ethics and practical competencies> Mind one's manners and follow rules as a member of society, uphold the code of conduct expected for a trainee, and follow given work and instructions for the placement	• I followed rules and instructions, understanding the importance of manners as a member of the society • I was punctual, not late or absent • I met the deadlines for the submission of the documents (attendance records with imprints, teacher training diaries)	
	2	<Desire to improve> Demonstrate an attitude to make effort to become a good teacher and acquire the ability to learn through practice	• I worked with enthusiasm, understanding the aims of teacher training • I actively performed roles and tasks in teacher training, and was able to identify outcomes and tasks • I reflected on my own abilities to teach and guide students, and aimed to improve these abilities based on guidance and advice from my class teacher.	
	3	<Interest in education and awareness of the teaching profession> Have a broad interest in education and demonstrate awareness of one's responsibilities as a teacher	• I attained common sense which is necessary for a teacher and aimed to demonstrate the attitudes and behavior to set examples for students • I valued the rapport with students through interaction and aimed to engage in dialogue with the students to understand each individual student	
	4	<Social and interpersonal skills> Understand the advice and guidance given by teachers and collaborate with other trainees to make the most of the placement	• I aimed to interact with students with empathy in order to nurture their enthusiasm and expectations carefully • I collaborated with other trainees during the placement I kept in touch frequently with my class teacher and other trainees for reporting and consultation during the placement • I aimed to build trustful relationships with teachers and students	
Guidance from Teacher				