

# Reconstructing Teacher Learning Through International Collaborative Practices: Insights from EDU-Port Japan Project Analyses

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# Professional Learning Community Network

## Tri-Country Collaboration: Japan–Malawi–Uganda (2024–2025)

- 1 Oct 2024 – Malawi **
  - Three teachers from Fukui University attached School and three Fukui University faculty members visited Malawi.. Lesson studies held at 2 public secondary schools.
- 2 Jan 2025 – Japan  (Fukui)**
  - Three educators each from Malawi and Uganda invited under EDU-Port.. Joined two Grade 7 social study lessons at Fukui University attached School.
- 3 Jun 2025 – Japan  (Fukui)**
  - Hosted an EDU-Port training with two educators from Malawi, one from Uganda.
- 4 Jul 2025 – Uganda **
  - Open lesson study conducted by two Japanese teachers at Kalinabiri secondary school.. Lesson study in Biology at King's college Budo (secondary school).

Through reciprocal visits and shared lesson studies, Japan, Malawi, and Uganda have moved from *observation* to *co-construction*, thereby building a sustainable tri-country network for teacher learning.

# What These Case Studies Reveal



**This study presents two main results:**

1.  **International outcomes** – collaborative transformation in teaching and learning across Japan, Malawi, and Uganda.
2.  **Domestic (Japan) outcomes** – A case of teacher-level transformation illustrating how international collaboration can be internalized under professional reflection.

# Outcome 1: Transformation in Teaching Focus: From Curriculum Delivery to Student Thinking



## Previous Focus

Curriculum implementation and time management



## New Focus

Supporting all learners, especially those often overlooked. This mirrors the core function of lesson study in enabling teachers to focus on students' thinking rather than only observable behaviors (Lewis, Perry, & Murata, 2006).



Teachers and observers began to observe students' thought processes, not just their behaviour.

*"We realised we had never really talked about what students were thinking.  
We had only been looking at whether they were listening."*

# Outcome 2: Reconstructing Teacher Identity through Collaborative Dialogue

## Increased Agency and Confidence

Teachers strengthened their agency over their own practice and became more open to critical dialogue.

## From Defensive Stance to Collaborative Learning

Their previous defensive attitudes shifted towards a collaborative learning approach.

## Dialogue Based on Mutual Respect

Dialogue based on mutual respect emerged, replacing hierarchical structures.

❑ **Specific Example:** Teachers began asking each other,  
*"How would you introduce this concept within your context?"*

## Outcome 3: Increased Student Engagement and Reflective Learning



### Questions after class

Students began to stay after class to ask further questions.



### Enjoyment of collaborative learning

Students in Malawi enjoyed group work and practical activities.



### Curiosity and joy

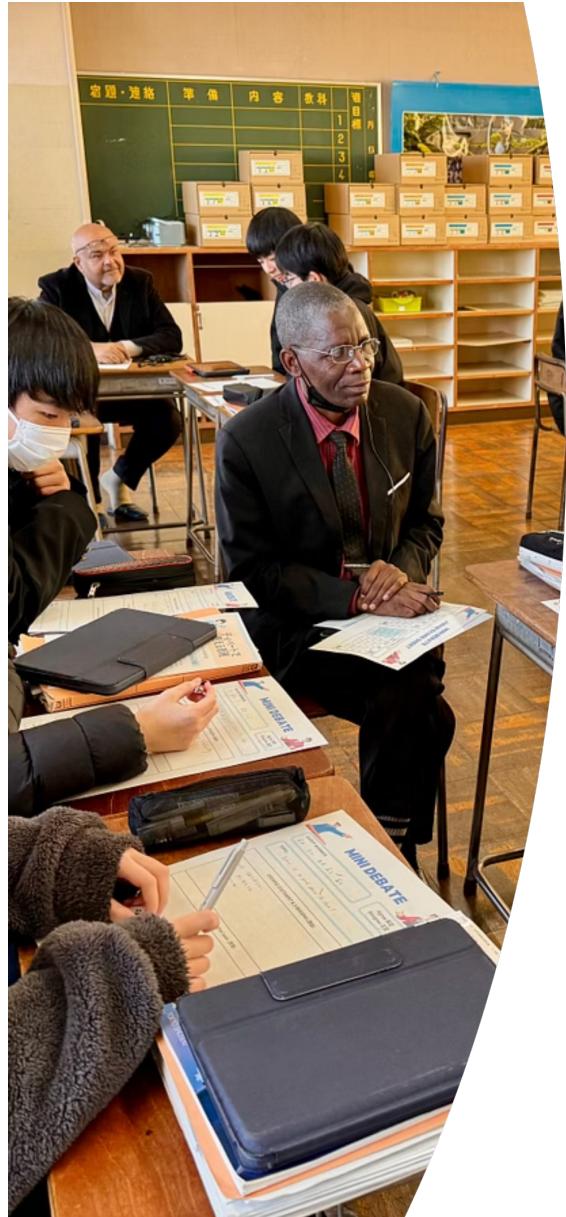
Learners in Uganda expressed curiosity and joy.



### Increased motivation and attendance

School administrators reported improved learning motivation and attendance.





## Outcome 4: School-Level Growth and Collaborative Networks

### School Administrators' Voice

*"Teachers are now more confident to share and try new things."*

### International Peer Support Networks

International peer support networks amongst teachers spontaneously formed.

### Collaborative Learning Space, Not Evaluation

Lesson study has become recognised as an inclusive learning space rather than an evaluative one.

# Challenges and Lessons Learned

## Challenges Faced

- Large Class Sizes
- Lack of Teaching Materials and Equipment
- Unequal Resource Environments



## Lessons Learned

- Importance of Building Relationships Before Evaluation
- Prioritising Co-creation Over Perfection
- Flexible Practices Responsive to Context

*"Lesson study is not a performance; it is a dialogue."*



# Implications and Future Developments

1

## Ensuring Sustainability

We will integrate into school organisations and develop local facilitators.

2

## Developing Tri-Country Exchange

We will develop a three-country exchange programme between Japan, Uganda, and Malawi.

3

## Student-Level Collaboration

We will connect student projects, such as a pen-pal programme.



*"This is not the end of a project; it is the beginning of a learning community."*

These efforts align with UNESCO's (2016) call for teacher learning models that integrate reflection, co-construction, and international collaboration for sustainable educational development.



## Case 1: Open lesson study at a school in Uganda by 2 Japanese teachers

### Participants

- 2 Japanese teachers (English and Science) from Fukui Prefecture, Japan.
- Teachers at Kalinabiri School and 2 educators from Makerere university in Uganda, and 1 lecturer from Nalikule College of Education in Malawi.

### Locations

- Uganda: Kalinabiri School and King's college Budo
- Malawi: Malika School and NCE attached secondary school

### Main Activities

- Mutual lesson observations
- Lesson study in English, biology, physics and mathematics
- Collaborative reflection after the lesson

# Summary of Changes of a Japanese teacher

Category	Before the Visit	After the Visit	Key Change
<b>Motivation</b>	Wanted to <i>observe African classrooms and reflect on Japanese education.</i>	Shifted to <i>co-learning through dialogue with Ugandan teachers.</i>	From <i>observation</i> to <b>collaboration.</b>
<b>Educational Environment</b>	Expected <i>underdeveloped settings</i> ; focused on limitations.	Recognized creativity and student-centered practices despite constraints.	From <i>deficit view</i> to <b>possibility view.</b>
<b>Teaching Perspective</b>	Worried about English and lesson effectiveness.	Saw learning as universal; valued student thinking time.	From <i>teacher-centered</i> to <b>learner-centered.</b>
<b>Intercultural Understanding</b>	Aimed to <i>understand Ugandan education and culture.</i>	Realized teaching and learning are <i>shared human practices.</i>	From <i>knowing culture</i> to <b>rethinking education through culture.</b>

# From Pre-Interview to Post-Visit Report

## (Focus on Domestic Application)

Focus	Key Points	Representative Quote
 Reflection	Shared Uganda experiences in school workshops; re-examined the purpose of English education as a way to understand others.	<i>“English is not only for communication—it’s for understanding people.”</i>
 Teaching Practice	Integrated global perspectives into English lessons; encouraged students to see English as a tool for empathy and cultural learning.	<i>“I began to teach English as something to be shared, not just taught.”</i>
 Exchange Initiative	Proposed a <b>pen-pal exchange</b> between Fukui and Uganda students to sustain real communication and intercultural understanding.	<i>“I want our students to learn through real dialogue, not just textbooks.”</i>

This case illustrates how an individual teacher's reflection **evolved from observation to co-learning through the international lesson-study process**.

The further post-interviews will be conducted in this month.

# Thank you for your kind attention

From observation to co-construction, from individual change to collective growth

— **lesson study as a model for sustainable international teacher learning.**

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Lesson study Google form



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## Reference

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