

## Identifying the Challenges and Opportunities of Using Lesson Study in English Language Teaching Through the Lenses of In-Service Ecuadorian EFL Teachers

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**Abstract :** This paper explores how EFL teachers understand the process of Lesson Study in Ecuadorian schools and the challenges and opportunities that it brings to the improvement of their teaching practice. Using a narrative research methodology, this study presents the results of the application of the four steps of Lesson Study carried out by seven teachers in four different schools located in the Southern part of Ecuador during four months. Before starting the implementation of the lesson study, 30 teachers were trained on this model. This training was opened to EFL teachers working in public and private schools without any charge. The criteria to select these teachers were first, to be minimum a one-year in-service teacher, second, to have a b2 level of English, and third, to be able to commit to follow the course guidelines. After the course, seven teachers decided to continue with the implementation of the Lesson Study in their respective institutions. During the implementation of the Lesson Study, data was collected through observations, in-depth interviews and teachers' planning meetings; and analyzed using a thematic analysis. The results of this study are presented using the lenses of seven EFL teachers that explained the challenges and opportunities that the implementation of Lesson Study conveyed. The challenges identified were the limited capacity of reflection and recognition of the activities that required improvement after the class, limited capacity to provide truthful peer feedback, teachers wrong notions about their performance in their classes, difficulties to follow a collaborative lesson plan; and, the disconnection between class activities and the class content. The opportunities identified were teachers' predisposition to collaborate, teachers' disposition to attend professional development courses, their commitment to work extra hours in planning meetings, their openness and their desired to be observed in their classes; and, their willingness to share class materials and knowledge. On the other hand, the results show that there is a disconnection between teachers' knowledge of ELT and its proper application in class (from theory to practice). There are also, rigid institutional conceptions of teaching that do not allow teaching innovations. The authors concluded that there is a disconnection between teachers' knowledge of ELT and its proper application in class (from theory to practice). There are also, rigid institutional conceptions of teaching that do not allow teaching innovations for example: excessive institutional paperwork and activities that are not connected to the development of students' competences.

**Keywords :** ELT, lesson study, teachers' professional development, teachers' collaboration

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