

## **Effectiveness of an Interschool Global Education Workshop in Reducing Instructional Anxiety Among Elementary School Teachers**

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The Asian Conference on Education & International Development 2026  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

This study examines the effectiveness of an interschool global education workshop in reducing instructional anxiety among elementary school teachers in Japan. As classrooms become increasingly diverse due to globalization, teachers are expected to implement global and intercultural learning; however, many report low confidence and heightened anxiety when designing and delivering such lessons. While previous research has examined school-based teacher training, little is known about the impact of interschool, dialogue-based professional learning. This study addresses this gap by analyzing a voluntary workshop involving teachers from multiple schools. A total of twelve teachers from eleven public elementary schools in Tokyo participated in a three-hour workshop that included an intercultural simulation activity, dialogue-based reflection, and collaborative lesson design. A pre-post questionnaire was used to measure instructional anxiety. The results indicated a statistically significant decrease in overall instructional anxiety, particularly in lesson design and instructional management anxiety, with a large effect size indicating substantial practical impact. Although English teaching anxiety showed a decreasing trend, the change was not statistically significant. In addition, participants' reflections suggested increased confidence, broader perspectives, and a greater willingness to implement global education. These findings suggest that interschool, dialogue-based professional learning can support teachers in diverse educational contexts. Furthermore, the findings provide preliminary evidence that short, structured, collaborative workshops may offer a practical and scalable approach to professional development in global education, although caution is required when generalizing due to the relatively small sample size. Future research should examine long-term effects and include larger, diverse samples across contexts globally.

*Keywords:* global education, teacher training, instructional anxiety, professional learning, intercultural education

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## Introduction

In recent years, classrooms in Japan have become increasingly diverse due to globalization. The number of students with foreign backgrounds has steadily increased, highlighting the need for inclusive education that respects cultural and linguistic diversity. Global education has been recognized as an important approach for addressing these challenges, as it aims to develop learners' global perspectives and intercultural understanding (Kasai, 2009).

Teachers play a central role in implementing global education. However, previous studies have shown that many teachers experience low self-efficacy when teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) reported that Japanese teachers demonstrate relatively low confidence in teaching multicultural classes (OECD, 2019). This finding has also been discussed in the Japanese context (National Institute for Educational Policy Research [NIER], 2019).

According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs in their ability to successfully perform tasks. Low self-efficacy may lead to increased instructional anxiety, which can discourage teachers from implementing new teaching practices. Previous studies have also suggested that teacher anxiety can influence instructional behavior (Hayashi, 2020).

Teacher training has been identified as a potential approach to reducing instructional anxiety. For example, previous research has explored teacher training programs designed to reduce anxiety through collaborative learning and reflection (Machida & Uchida, 2015). In addition, research on instructional anxiety in foreign language education has provided a useful framework for understanding teachers' concerns (Matsumiya, 2013).

However, most previous studies have focused on school-based programs involving teachers from a single institution. For example, Fujiwara (2025) examined the effects of a school-based workshop and suggested that such training may reduce teachers' instructional anxiety. However, the participants were limited to a single school, and the generalizability of the findings remains limited.

This study contributes to the literature by examining the effects of a voluntary, interschool, dialogue-based professional learning workshop, extending previous single-school research.

## Methodology

Participants in this study were twelve elementary school teachers from eleven public elementary schools in Tokyo, Japan. Their teaching experience ranged from three to over twenty years. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained. All data were anonymized to ensure confidentiality. Data were collected in mid-November 2025.

Instructional anxiety toward global education was measured using a ten-item questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. The instrument was adapted from a foreign language teaching anxiety scale developed by Matsumiya (2013), with the term "foreign language activities" replaced by "global education." The original scale was designed to measure instructional anxiety in early English education in Japan, drawing on previous research on teaching anxiety (Onogi & Miyakawa, 1996).

In this study, three subscales were used: lesson design anxiety (3 items), instructional management anxiety (4 items), and English teaching anxiety (3 items), for a total of 10 items. Participants responded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicate higher levels of instructional anxiety toward global education. The questionnaire items are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
*Items of the Global Education Instructional Anxiety Scale*

Subscale	Item number	Item
Lesson design anxiety	1	I feel anxious about creating teaching plans for global education.
	2	I feel anxious about preparing teaching materials for global education.
	3	I feel anxious about developing an annual curriculum for global education.
Instructional management anxiety	4	I feel anxious about classroom management in global education lessons.
	5	I feel anxious about my teaching skills in global education.
	6	I feel anxious about my ability to express ideas (e.g., language use) in global education lessons.
	7	I feel anxious about team teaching in global education.
English teaching anxiety	8	I feel anxious about my English pronunciation.
	9	I feel anxious about my English pronunciation when teaching global education.
	10	I feel anxious about my English grammar when teaching global education.

The workshop lasted approximately three hours and consisted of three main components.

The first component was an intercultural simulation activity using the card game BARNGA. BARNGA is an experiential learning activity designed to simulate intercultural communication. In this activity, participants learn the rules of a simple card game without verbal communication. After the initial round, players move to different tables, where slightly different rules are applied. Because participants are not allowed to speak, they must rely on observation and nonverbal communication. This often leads to confusion and misunderstanding, simulating intercultural situations in which individuals encounter different implicit rules and expectations. Through reflection, participants become aware of cultural differences and communication challenges.

The second component was a dialogue-based activity. Participants shared their experiences, concerns, and uncertainties related to global education. Through collaborative dialogue, teachers externalized their anxieties and reflected on their teaching practices.

The third component was a lesson design activity. This activity was based on backward design principles, which emphasize identifying learning goals before planning instructional

activities (Wiggins & McTighe, 2012). Participants collaboratively designed global education lessons by first clarifying desired student outcomes and then developing lesson plans aligned with those outcomes.

## Results

To examine changes in teachers' instructional anxiety toward global education, pre- and post-workshop scores were compared. The means, standard deviations, and paired-sample *t*-test results for overall instructional anxiety, lesson design anxiety, and instructional management anxiety are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Instructional Anxiety Before and After the Workshop (N = 12)*

	Pre <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	Post <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>	95% CI
Overall instructional anxiety	39.17 (9.93)	31.42 (9.01)	3.23*	.008	0.93	[0.05, 1.01]
Lesson design anxiety	12.42 (2.97)	9.92 (3.78)	2.86*	.02	0.83	[0.15, 1.47]
Instructional management anxiety	15.75 (3.91)	12.67 (3.96)	2.62*	.02	0.76	[0.10, 1.39]

Note. \* $p < .05$

As shown in Table 2, the mean score for overall instructional anxiety decreased from 39.17 before the workshop to 31.42 after the workshop. A paired-sample *t*-test indicated that this decrease was statistically significant at the 5% level. The effect size for this change was large ( $d = 0.93$ ), suggesting a substantial practical impact. Significant decreases were also observed in lesson design anxiety and instructional management anxiety, with moderate to large effect sizes ( $d = 0.83$  and  $d = 0.76$ , respectively). These results suggest that the workshop may have helped reduce teachers' anxiety related to both lesson planning and classroom instruction.

Next, English teaching anxiety was examined separately. The means, standard deviations, and paired-sample *t*-test results for English teaching anxiety are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*English Instruction Anxiety Before and After the Workshop (N = 12)*

	Pre <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	Post <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>	95% CI
English instructional anxiety	11.00 (4.69)	8.83 (4.41)	2.08†	.06	0.60	[-0.03, 1.21]

Note. † $p < .10$

As shown in Table 3, the mean score for English teaching anxiety decreased from 11.00 before the workshop to 8.83 after the workshop. Although this decrease did not reach the conventional level of statistical significance, a decreasing trend was observed. The effect size

was moderate ( $d = 0.60$ ), indicating a potential practical effect despite the lack of statistical significance. This result should be interpreted cautiously, as the workshop did not directly aim to improve participants' English language skills.

### Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that the interschool workshop contributed to reducing teachers' instructional anxiety toward global education. Significant decreases were observed in overall instructional anxiety, particularly in lesson design anxiety and instructional management anxiety. These results indicate that the workshop supported teachers not only in planning lessons but also in managing instruction in the classroom. Furthermore, the large effect size observed in overall instructional anxiety ( $d = 0.93$ ) suggests that the workshop had a meaningful practical impact, even with a relatively small sample size.

One possible explanation for this reduction is the role of collaborative dialogue. Through sharing experiences and concerns with teachers from other schools, participants were able to externalize their anxieties and reflect on their own teaching practices. The findings are consistent with previous research suggesting that collaborative professional learning and reflective dialogue can contribute to reducing teachers' instructional anxiety (Machida & Uchida, 2015). In this sense, the workshop may have functioned as a professional learning environment in which teachers could reframe their concerns through interaction with peers.

Another important factor may be the experiential nature of the workshop. The BARNGA activity allowed participants to experience confusion and misunderstanding in a simulated intercultural setting. Rather than learning about intercultural communication only at a conceptual level, teachers directly encountered the challenges of interacting under unfamiliar and implicit rules. This experiential component may have helped participants recognize the emotional and practical dimensions of intercultural understanding, thereby reducing uncertainty about implementing global education in their own classrooms.

The lesson design activity may also have contributed to the reduction in anxiety. Because the activity was structured around backward design principles, participants were encouraged to clarify learning goals before selecting classroom activities (Wiggins & McTighe, 2012). This process may have helped teachers organize their ideas more clearly and develop a stronger sense of direction in planning global education lessons. As a result, they may have felt more confident about both lesson preparation and classroom implementation.

In addition to the quantitative results, participants' reflections suggested positive changes in their perceptions. Some teachers reported increased confidence and a broader perspective, while others expressed a greater willingness to implement global education. These findings indicate that the workshop fostered both cognitive and emotional development.

At the same time, English teaching anxiety did not show a statistically significant decrease, although a decreasing trend was observed. One possible reason is that the workshop did not directly aim to improve participants' English language skills. In addition, because participation was voluntary, some teachers may already have had relatively low levels of anxiety about English instruction.

Overall, this study extends previous research conducted in a single-school context by demonstrating the potential value of interschool professional learning. However, the

relatively small sample size should be noted as a limitation, and caution is required when generalizing the findings.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the effectiveness of an interschool global education workshop in reducing instructional anxiety among elementary school teachers in Japan. The results indicated that participation in the workshop significantly reduced overall instructional anxiety, particularly in lesson design and instructional management. These findings suggest that a short, dialogue-based professional learning experience can have a measurable impact on teachers' confidence in implementing global education.

One important implication of this study is the potential value of interschool professional learning. By bringing together teachers from multiple schools, the workshop created opportunities for collaborative reflection, peer learning, and the sharing of diverse perspectives. Such opportunities appear to support teachers in reinterpreting their own practices and reducing feelings of uncertainty. In addition, the integration of experiential learning through the BARNGA activity and structured lesson design based on backward design principles provided both emotional engagement and practical guidance.

At the same time, the findings also highlight the complexity of instructional anxiety. While anxiety related to lesson design and classroom instruction was significantly reduced, English teaching anxiety did not show a statistically significant change. This suggests that different types of anxiety may require different forms of support. Professional development programs focusing on global education may therefore need to incorporate more targeted support for language-related skills.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The sample size was small and limited to elementary school teachers in one region, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the measurement scale was adapted from a foreign language teaching context, and further development of a scale specific to global education is needed. Moreover, the study focused on short-term changes immediately following the workshop, and long-term effects remain unclear.

Future research should expand the scope of participants to include teachers from different regions and school levels, and should examine the sustainability of the observed effects over time. In particular, further investigation of the role of dialogue and experiential learning in teacher professional development may provide deeper insights into how instructional anxiety can be effectively reduced.

In conclusion, this study provides evidence that voluntary, interschool, dialogue-based professional learning can support teachers in addressing the challenges of global education. As classrooms continue to diversify, such approaches may play an increasingly important role in promoting inclusive and globally oriented teaching practices.

## **Acknowledgements**

This study was partially supported by a research grant from the Alumni Association of Hyogo University of Teacher Education, awarded to Makoto Fujiwara. The authors sincerely thank all participating teachers.

### **Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process**

The authors declare that DeepL, an AI-assisted translation and writing tool, was used to support proofreading, refining the language, and improving the academic writing style of the manuscript. The use of this tool was limited to enhancing grammatical accuracy, clarity, phrasing, and overall readability. The authors further declare that, apart from DeepL, no other AI or AI-assisted technologies were used to generate or revise the manuscript. All ideas, research design, data collection, analysis, and interpretations are the original work of the authors.

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