

## The Main Idea's PD Suggestions for Introducing Lesson Study to Teachers

### I. Leadership Team Self-Assessment – Are we prepared to offer lesson study to our teachers?

Before introducing lesson study to your staff, you might want to discuss it with your leadership team. First, the leadership team will need to learn about lesson study – either through reading the book summary or perhaps visiting a school that has lesson study teams (see the website with a list of schools below). Then together, the leadership team should list the reasons you would want to introduce lesson study at your school and what you hope teachers will get out of it. Discuss whether or not you would have the essential ingredients – willing and interested teachers, the ability to be creative to create time for the team, and support in the administration. Furthermore, discuss whether your school has other attributes that would make lesson study effective: a high-quality curriculum, a school-wide responsibility for student learning, and an environment where feedback is accepted. Finally, to make sure lesson study will be truly effective, it should fit within a larger professional development topic the school is working on – is there a topic, such as differentiation, that the school is currently engaged in and which teachers could continue to study through lesson study?

### II. Introducing Lesson Study to an Interested Group of Teachers

After deciding to move forward, call a meeting for any teachers that might want to be involved. The book recommends starting with volunteers and not making it mandated school-wide. At the meeting discuss:

\* *What is lesson study?* Teachers can read the book summary or visit a school that uses lesson study (see a list of schools across the country that use lesson study <http://www.tc.edu/lessonstudy/lsgroups.html>)

\* *What are misconceptions about lesson study?* Make sure teachers know that it is not about perfecting a single lesson, that it is not just for science and math, that it can focus on affective as well as academic goals, and that it need not follow every step in the book – it can be adapted.

\* *How does lesson study compare to other models of professional development?* Create a chart to make comparisons:

Components of a one-day workshop

Components of lesson study

\* *What are the benefits of lesson study?* Ask teachers to list what they think might be the potential benefits. Mention that it integrates the components of effective professional development: it is collaborative, ongoing, focused on subject matter, centered around teachers' work with their students, hands on, and focused on student outcomes. Consider pulling out some quotations from teachers themselves about the impact of lesson study on their practice:

*The observation was really eye-opening. The first thing I noticed was how difficult it was for me to focus on the students and not on the teacher. That really says a lot about our culture as teachers and our focus on the teacher being at the center. That was powerful, but when I really started focusing on the students, really watching them and their interactions, I realized so clearly how much we are unaware of what's happening with the students when we are teaching.*  
–Kristy Krahl, elementary coordinator, p. 84

*Before, I wouldn't really look at my students' work until after I had collected it. Now I intervene, because I know how to be an observer. I walk around and look at what they're doing and listen to what they're saying. I'm an observer in my classroom, every day and every hour now that I know how to observe... So, what I've learned from lesson study about being an observer has affected how I teach every day.*  
–Vicki, p. 105

*A lot of times as teachers we think too much about what we're going to say and we don't think about what impact we're going to have on the students or what they're going to give back to us. Anticipating student responses is a powerful tool. Even when I plan my own lessons I ask myself, 'If I present it this way, what are the students going to get from this? What are they going to say? How is it going to impact their learning?' So I think that the whole lesson study process really retrains or reconditions your thinking process as a teacher."*  
–Brandon, p. 108

### III. Preparing the Lesson Study Team

At this point, the team should take the initiative to begin the process. Once they identify a facilitator, it should now be in the facilitator's hands to guide the process, not an administrator's. The facilitator should have a copy of the summary and ideally the book as well. The facilitator should take the next steps to assign roles on the team, create a schedule for meetings, and facilitate the process of creating group norms to guide the work of the team. Before the team begins, it would help for the facilitator to copy a full research lesson (see pp.163-186 in the book) to show the team so the team can see where their work is going.

### IV. Checking in with the Lesson Study Team

While lesson study teams are designed to work independently, a good place for an administrator to check in with them is when the team reflects after each of the five lesson study phases. If you get a schedule of these meetings, you can join a few to hear about their progress and even serve as a knowledgeable other.