

## 1. Introduction

Lesson study has been used by teachers in Japan since 1870 and is now widely used internationally. Lesson study has characteristics of effective professional learning for teachers including: a focus on pupil learning; practical relevance to teachers; high levels of collaboration and trust; sustained engagement over time; classroom experimentation and evaluation; and a focus on specific curriculum subject pedagogy (TDT 2015). Lesson study helps to surface the ‘tacit knowledge’ of teachers in collaboratively analysing the complexity of the classroom and helps to reveal impact on selected individual learners. Lesson study in the UK has been strongly influenced by the work of Peter Dudley and this overview below borrows heavily from his open access online guidance ([www.lessonstudy.co.uk](http://www.lessonstudy.co.uk)). Successful embedding of lesson study into school development processes and culture depends on the support of school leaders to prioritise time and to integrate lesson study with established school approaches to coaching. However, lesson study needs to be kept separate from performance management. The cycle normally repeats, for example once a term, until each teacher has taught a ‘research lesson’. If possible each ‘research lesson’ should be revised and re-taught to really embed the professional learning from lesson study.

## 2. Lesson study steps

This is a general description and lesson study might be amended depending on the school context. Sometimes a video of the lesson is made because it is not possible to release teachers for observation. Teachers normally work in lesson study teams of three, including a range of teaching experience and follow these steps:

1. Teachers agree a focus for pupil learning and progress, including aspects of dialogic teaching
2. Teachers meet for at least one hour to collaboratively plan a ‘research lesson’ – see planning prompts below
3. One or more ‘case students’ are identified
4. Teachers meanwhile may experiment with the lesson or task planned beyond the research lesson
5. The research lesson is taught by one teacher and captured on video
6. At least one ‘case student’ is interviewed immediately after the research lesson
7. All three teachers watch the lesson and make notes and collect data (e.g. student work)
8. The three teachers meet for an hour, minimum, to evaluate the lesson and plan how it may be enhanced
9. The team might re-teach the lesson or move on to another cycle of lesson study, each taking a turn to teach
10. The team reports back on their findings to a wider audience of teachers and share findings with learners

## 3. Lesson study protocol

In common with principles of dialogic teaching, it is important to develop an agreed protocol for lesson study discussions, for example as a starting point:

- Members of a lesson study team are equal as learners whatever their age, experience, expertise or seniority.
- We will listen, build on the ideas of others, make suggestions, and be willing to challenge.
- We will constantly refer to the lesson aims, our case students, lesson video and other research lesson data.
- We will focus on the impact of the lesson on student thinking and learning.
- We will treat all contributions to discussion with unconditional positive regard.
- We will use the post lesson discussion prompts, starting by discussing what each case pupil did compared with what we predicted and let the discussion flow from there.
- We will share what we learn – our new practice knowledge - with our colleagues as accurately and vividly as we can and in such a way that they can benefit from and try it out themselves.
- We will share the aims and outcomes of our Lesson Study with our students appropriately. Their views, ideas and perspectives will be treated with equal positive regard.

#### 4. Planning prompts for collaborative lesson design

- Plan the 'research lesson' including resources, timings and the intended impact on student thinking.
- Create a concise but written lesson plan because it will provide a framework for evaluation.
- Identify the longer term aims including the key concept and / or skill and / or aspect of 'learning to learn'.
- Agree the level that the case student(s) is operating at (identify a reserve in case of absence).
- Write down exactly what you want each student to be able to do by the end of the lesson.
- Plan each stage of the lesson with particular focus on aspects of dialogic teaching.
- Note down what you hope the response of each student will be. What will they do to show their progress?

#### 5. Case student post lesson interview prompts

- What did you enjoy most about that lesson?
- What did you learn? (What can you do now that you could not do. What can you do better? How is it better?)
- What aspect of the teaching worked best for you?
- If the same lesson is being taught to another group what would you change and why?
- The lesson included [the focus teaching activity] – how did you feel about that part of the lesson? What might help you to contribute more to that activity?

#### 6. Lesson study team discussion prompts for lesson observation and evaluation

Collaborative analysis of the research lesson focuses on the impact on learning and on learners:

- How did the case student(s) respond to the lesson?
- What evidence is there of progress the students made?
- What evidence is there of learning or of difficulties encountered by students?
- What aspect of the teaching worked best?
- How did the lesson engage students with a key concept in the curriculum subject discipline?
- What aspects of dialogic teaching were evident in the lesson?
- How did you feel about the dialogic teaching aspect of the lesson?
- What aspects of the lesson could be adjusted next time to improve the progress of students?

### Further Resources on Lesson Study

Prof Michael Jopling (2018) LED conference keynote slides on lesson study. <https://ma2m.org/page/>

EEF lesson study RCT report (2017) <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/lesson-study/>

Lewis, C.C. & Hurd, J. (2011) *Lesson Study: Step by Step. How learning communities improve instruction*. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann.