

Perspectives on Lesson Study Across the U.S.: An Outsider Speaks from Outside to Insiders



Laura Peterson, NIS (left) and Christy Braher, NIS (right) collaborate on a lesson study.



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Origins of Lesson Study

- ◆ 1872: M.M. Scott goes to Japan and demonstrates new teaching techniques, including what would become Japanese lesson study, at the first teacher training school in Tokyo. (Wilms, 2003: 610).
- ◆ 1999: Over 100 years later, lesson study begins to take root in the U.S.

What is Lesson Study?

- ◆ ..a collaborative, teacher-led instructional improvement cycle in which teacher's build from existing lessons to develop "research" lessons, teach, collect data, debrief and then revise lessons and re-teach, if desired.

- ◆ Let's see a clip

OR OUSD | American History Grant | Lesson Study Video
<http://www.teachingamericanhistory.us/video/part1.mov.html>

Why is Professional Development Receiving Increased Attention in the U.S.?

- ◆ International Studies (e.g. TIMMS)
- ◆ National task forces
- ◆ Professional organizations
- ◆ Policy makers
- ◆ Books (e.g. The Teaching Gap)

Lesson Study Changes Professional Development (PD)

Traditional focus: what teacher does

Lesson study focus: what students are learning; teachers examine their processes and research lesson content knowledge in order to be more effective teachers. Includes building on what teachers know.

-Also results in changes in learning.



C. Lewis: How does Lesson Study Work?

- ◆ "It really is about learning how children are learning. The lesson is a byproduct of the larger concern."
- ◆ "The Japanese say that lesson study develops the eyes to see children. I think that's the heart of this."

Source: <http://www.sowi-onlinejournal.de/2004-1/authors.htm>

Lesson Study Assists Teachers to..

1. be more reflective in their practice
2. distill from it useful teaching principles that stand on solid empirical grounds...
3. develop the critical skill of creating well connected learning trajectories for students...
4. move towards more student-centered instruction that does not lose sight of how students understand and engage with the mathematics.

(Fernandez, 2002:182)

The Nature and Extent of Lesson Study

	2003	2004
Number of States	29	32
Lesson Study Clusters/ Groups	142	150
Schools*	247	335
School Districts*	81	125
Teachers*	1100	2300
List Serve Members	575+	900+
Research Centres		2

**There are 3 million public school teachers, over 94, 000 public schools and 14,500 school districts in the U.S. (U.S. Department of Education. Digest of Educational Statistics.)

Source: Retrieved March 23, 2005, from <http://www.tc.edu/lessonstudy/lsgroups.html>). Compiled by S. Chokshi.

Diverse Lesson Study (LS) Initiatives

- ◆ Groups are not concentrated in a single type of school, state or district; ten universities report groups.
- ◆ Groups range from a few teachers to an entire state.
 - Over 80 % of the initiatives have under 30 members.
 - Most groups are in the same school and grade.
- ◆ Mathematics lesson study groups predominate, followed by science.
- ◆ Diverse collaborations supports these initiatives, especially researcher-teacher collaborations and critical friends.

A Lesson Study Learning Community: Weber Elementary School in Iowa City, IA



myweb.uiowa.edu/chlas/nctm04_session34/ - 4k -

1. Dubuque, Iowa-Loras College Pilot Lesson Study Project

- ◆ 30 public and parochial elementary school math teachers participated
- ◆ Met once a week for 90 minutes; emailed collaborators; everyone meet 4 times a year
- ◆ Videotaped lessons
- ◆ Shared “polished lessons” at a LS fair
- ◆ Pilot teachers trained new teachers.

Did Iowa Teachers Meet their Objectives?

1. Issues awareness	All students discussed LS issues in surveys & journals
2. Instill notion of ongoing consistent professional development as imperative & locally feasible and a personal professional responsibility	20 of the 23 completed Survey2 (3Q), yielding 60 answers: 16.7% Mixed answer, 73.3% YES, and a 10% = NO,
3. Initial exposure and experience in elements of Lesson Study	20 read <i>Teaching Gap</i> ; All discussed articles
4. Collaboration with peers	All collaborated w/peers in planning and revision of 2 or 3 plans and reflection
5. Opportunity to deepen understanding of math	Surveys did not ask this; many commented on awesome’ power of observing peers in action
Source: myweb.uiowa.edu/chlas/nctm04_session34/	

2. Bellevue, WA: School District Encouraged Lesson Study

- ◆ **Voluntary:** Teachers can meet with parents, attend workshops or participate in LS on Wednesday afternoons
- ◆ **Participants:** 900 teachers in all grades and subjects
- ◆ **Incentives:** Staff development time, financial incentives (e.g. \$1000 per lesson published), and teacher training.
- ◆ **Goals:** Improve instruction and student achievement as teachers become researchers who plan and teach rigorous lessons that are aligned with the curriculum.
- ◆ **Support:** Observation protocols, scoring guides, student work, lesson activities and guidelines; support from district specialists.
- ◆ **Lab school**

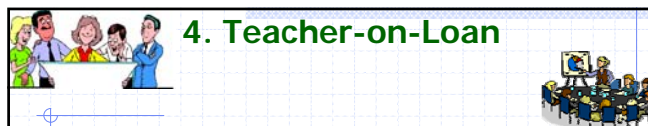
(Retrieved January 14, 2005 at <http://www.bsc405.org/lessonstudy.html>)

Teacher Narratives: Evidence of Success

- ◆ *Teachers are proud to be part of a district that values teachers as professionals and sees the value of teachers and staff working together to improve curriculum, instruction and student learning.*
- ◆ *A culture of improvement: "The first question I ask now is what do I want my students to learn instead of what do I plan to cover today."*

3. New York City Community School District 2 Mandated LS

- ◆ Lesson study is mandatory.
- ◆ Teachers were engaged in many ongoing PD collaborative initiatives.
- ◆ Teachers viewed lesson study as just another professional development tool. (Kelly, 2002).



4. Teacher-on-Loan

TEACHERS HELPING TEACHERS

TEACHERS AS RESEARCHERS

In 2001-2002, J. Itzel was the Christa McAuliffe teacher-on-loan in Lesson Study to build lesson study networks, share information and conduct and attend workshops, conferences, and open houses.

Source: www.doe.state.de_us/lessonstudy.htm

5. Delaware Writing Lesson Study Project : A State-wide Initiative

Formal structure for ten week initiative includes:

- Craft goals to focus on what students should know and be able to do with their writing or what teachers should know and be able to do in their writing instruction
- ◆ Focus on student understandings and misunderstandings
- ◆ Teach during week 4; revise and reteach in week 7
- ◆ Review, reflect, analyze and document the findings
- ◆ Videotape and conduct live observations with observers.
- ◆ No outcome data could be found.

Source: <http://www.doe.state.de.us/central/writing/lessonstudy.html>

6. University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Project: 2003-2004

- ◆ **Aims:** help faculty develop expertise and assist participants in developing scholarly products
- ◆ 30 instructors in 16 disciplines
- ◆ Instructors participate in a research seminar, develop, teach and revise research lessons
- ◆ Instructors supported with training and numerous online guides, resources and tools
- ◆ Reports form knowledge base for instructors.

Source: <http://www/uwlax.edu/sotl/lsp>

Sharing Knowledge Across Campuses Through Blogs

Aim: to study how to help students value and use complexity to construct understanding.

- ◆ They use planning blogs in lieu of face-to-face meetings
- ◆ Members post log entries, which anybody can read and comment on them.
 - help those new to Lesson Study understand the process
 - build a record of your team's progress
 - result in a draft manuscript for possible publication
 - allow others to make teaching improvements based on your lesson.

(See <http://lessonstudy.blogs.com/englishotl/>)

7. Patterson, N.J. School No. 2: LS is a Simple Idea but a Complex Process

- ◆ 16 5th and 6th grade math teachers, Japanese coaches, math facilitators and the principal formed 5 lesson study groups and met two hours per week.
- ◆ Planning: Japanese focused on long-term goals but **Americans** were more likely to adopt curriculum lenses.
- ◆ Observations: Japanese took copious notes while **Americans** preferred their practitioner roles.
- ◆ Debriefing: Japanese related grounded observations to goals and curriculum while **Americans** had holistic responses and less specific curriculum focus in regard to student learning.
- ◆ Revisions: **American** teachers tended to be reactive while Japanese tended to be proactive.

Sharing Knowledge, Tools, Lessons and Exchanging Ideas

- ◆ Reports/ Publications/Conferences/Books
- ◆ Collaborations with Outside Advisors and Experts
- ◆ Lesson Study Open Houses
- ◆ Web sites: Public and LS group
 - Sites come and go
 - Online professional development discussion forums
- ◆ Clearinghouses
- ◆ Blogs



Lesson Study is ..

- ◆ "really transforming; "You end up examining your personal beliefs around teaching, and you learn more about your role as a teacher (the San Mateo-Foster City (CA) School District)."

<http://www.teacherleaders.org/Resources/lessonstudy.html>

Conclusions

- ◆ *LS processes work in different ways and settings*
- ◆ LS motivates teacher's to improve their work collectively; teachers recount engagement and learning through collaboration, observation and reflection
- ◆ Development of LS skills and dispositions helps teachers to build sharable craft and content knowledge
- ◆ Flexible organizational structures support teachers
- ◆ Tools and processes are shared locally, on the web and in research journals
 - Few data bases of lesson study knowledge
 - Few teacher reports
 - Few lesson

Key Enablers

- ◆ Inside and Outside Collaborations
"It would be very difficult to transform the way your school does professional development without knowledgeable others."
- ◆ Narratives: Personal and Professional Growth
- ◆ Supportive School Culture
- ◆ Variety of Technologies
- ◆ Incremental Transformation → Snowball Effect
- ◆ Diverse Dissemination Mechanisms

Key Challenges

- ◆ Time to penetrate core practices of teaching and learning; change hearts and minds
 - Creation of a lesson study culture
- ◆ Bring together resources and build learning organizational
- ◆ Nurture teacher research and reflection skills or the spirit of LS
- ◆ Adapt long-term goals and focus
- ◆ Recognize and share short and long-term successes.

The Promise of Lesson Study

Lesson Study promotes authentication of knowledge and performance within the self as learner. There is no longer the sense of a static body of knowledge being delivered to learners, but rather a sense of guiding learners as they define and understand their own knowledge within the community. Lesson Study models the type of learning for teachers that it promotes for students.

Source: Finken, T. Matthews, M., HLas, C. & Schmidt, J. (2004) Integrating lesson study for pre-service and inservice teachers. Retrieved November 1, 2005 from http://myweb.uiowa.edu/chlas/nctm04_session34/

The Next Phases

- ◆ Continue to flourish and bloom
- ◆ Contribute toward redesigning the role of teachers in their PD and their understanding of how students learn.
- ◆ As sustainability increases, we will learn: what at the critical components, how lesson study gets incorporated into practices and which features best support teachers' learning.
 - Way to assess teacher and student outcomes will continue to be disseminated through new technologies, conferences and open houses.

THANK YOU

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