



FORMATS FOR PEER LEARNING GROUPS

DATA DIALOGUES:

“Teachers meet together and analyze results from standardized tests or teacher-created assessments. Together, they formulate what the evidence from the data tells them about student learning and discuss teaching approaches to improve student achievement. Teachers also may work on refining assessments to gather more useful student data.”¹

- For example, teachers may meet to analyze summary reports of GOLD data after the checkpoints and discuss teaching strategies to help students meet widely-held expectations for their age. In these data dialogues, teachers also may set goals for improvement that focus and structure their ongoing peer learning groups.
- For example, teachers may meet to analyze classroom observation data such as the ECERS or the CLASS. Teachers then use their analysis of this data to set goals for improving their interactions and instruction, which then help focus their ongoing peer learning groups.

STUDY GROUPS:

“In small groups or as a faculty, teachers generate topics for study related to school improvement goals or student data and then read and react to educational research or other literature on teaching and student learning. They engage in structured dialogue or discussion that explores issues deeply and considers the implications for school or classroom practices.”¹

- For example, teachers may form a study group to learn more about high impact instructional supports. They may study the CLASS manual and videos of exemplary practice to better visualize and understand the instructional supports.

¹ Formats descriptions were taken from: Croft, A., Coggshall, J., Dolan, M., Powers, E., & Killion, J. (2010). Job-embedded professional development. *Issue Brief: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality*, April (2010), Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED520830.pdf> .



CRITICAL FRIENDS GROUPS:

“Teachers meet and analyze each others’ work, including artifacts such as student work, a lesson plan, or assessment. They also may discuss challenges they are facing with presenting the subject matter or with meeting a particular student’s needs. See Norman, Golian, and Hooker (2005) for illustrative examples.”¹

- For example, teachers may share video of their interactions with students to gain feedback for improvement of their instruction.

EXAMINING STUDENT WORK/TUNING PROTOCOL:

“Examining student work enables teachers to develop a common understanding of good work, identify student misconceptions, and evaluate their teaching methods. Through the tuning protocol, teachers share student work (or their assignments and rubrics), describing the context in which the work is used; other teachers ask questions and then provide feedback on how the work may be fine-tuned to improve student learning. See Blythe, Allen, and Powell (1999) and Brown-Easton (1999) for more details.”¹

- For example, teachers may share evidence of child learning and development such as their written observations, work samples, photos, audio or video, along with the corresponding goals for the children in the activity. They may use the evidence to focus on better understanding learning and development standards and trajectories and the implications for teaching.
- For example, teachers may share evidence of child learning and development, along with the corresponding goals for the children in the activity, as in the example above. They may use the tuning protocol (or another like it) to seek feedback from their peers on how to improve their teaching in order to better advance student learning. This is like a critical friends group but the examples of work that are presented are children’s, rather than direct examples of teaching.

¹ Formats descriptions were taken from: Croft, A., Coggshall, J., Dolan, M., Powers, E., & Killion, J. (2010). Job-embedded professional development. *Issue Brief: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality*, April (2010), Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED520830.pdf> .

LESSON STUDY:

During sessions known as “research lessons,” teachers collaborate in preparing a lesson to demonstrate a specific teaching and learning goal (e.g., help a student master a mathematics concept, conduct a peer review of writing within groups). One teacher then implements the lesson while other teachers observe and document what they see. After the lesson, the teachers meet and discuss the strengths of the lesson and make suggestions for improvement. Sometimes, the lesson is revised and presented again by a different teacher. In the end, teachers create a summary of what they learned about teaching and learning through the lesson study. See Stepanek, Appel, Leong, Mangan, and Mitchell (2006) and Lewis, Perry, and Murata (2006) for practical implications.

- For example, teachers may create a research theme, such as to help students become confident learners who persist through challenges. They may choose the specific science learning goal of “Develop beginning skills in the use of science and engineering practices, such as observing, asking questions, solving problems, and drawing conclusions.¹” They decide to focus on an investigation in the Buildings study from Creative Curriculum, “What Makes Buildings Strong?” They meet several times to study the science learning standards, science curriculum and instruction resource materials and to prepare the instructional plan for the investigation in detail. One teacher volunteers to try the investigation first. Teachers observe in person or with video. They then meet to debrief and discuss the strengths of the investigation and instruction in engaging children and advancing their thinking, as well as ways it might need to be improved. They meet again to revise the lesson and instructional plan, and repeat the process of implementation and debrief. In the end, they create a presentation to share what they learned with the other faculty.

¹ Formats descriptions were taken from: Croft, A., Coggshall, J., Dolan, M., Powers, E., & Killion, J. (2010). Job-embedded professional development. *Issue Brief: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality*, April (2010), Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED520830.pdf> .