Lessons Learned From Lesson Study: Focusing on Differentiation for ELLs and Students with Special Needs

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Learning about...

Collaboration
• I learned various teaching styles from watching my fellow peer teaching the lesson.
• In this group project, I have learned that responsibilities must be decided early on and participation in regularly scheduled collaborative meetings is paramount.
• It’s a lot easier to teach math when working in a lesson study group, and having others to talk to.

Planning
• You can never be prepared enough.
• The most rewarding part of the process was writing a lesson, which was executed well. It’s one thing for the writer to teach what they’ve planned, it’s another to see someone else to and have it be equally as successful.
• I would say the most rewarding part of the LS process was learning what and what not to do when teaching (using manipulatives & visuals which are important to have in every math lesson).

Student Thinking
• I noticed that students needed visuals like the place value chart in order to read the number and state any individual digit’s value.
• Although some students can grab the concept right away, others will need the instruction clarified and simplified.
• Making assumptions about previous student performance does not predict future outcomes.
• Students are great observers and they know more than we think they do!

Focus on ELLs and Students with Special Needs:
Lesson Study allows groups of teachers to focus specifically on the instructional needs of diverse populations of students including ELLs, Students with Special Needs, and Gifted Students. Across several Lesson Study groups in Math UP, students focused their thinking on lessons to include the following:
• Modifications to vocabulary
• Encouraging of ‘math talk’ and students’ explanation of thinking
• Introducing multiple strategies

What is Lesson Study?
• Lesson Study is a collaborative, peer-led, professional learning approach. It requires on-going meaningful input from teachers, school administrators, and other education professionals.
• Lesson Study is the fundamental process that many Japanese teachers use annually to improve instruction across all content areas. It is a form of professional development.
• Lesson Study is conducted as a part of kōnai-kenshu or “whole-school research model” that begins with a research theme. Teachers conduct research around the theme, plan a research lesson, conduct the research lesson, and reflect upon the lesson. The process is then repeated.

Goal of Lesson Study:
To cultivate a strong school culture and practice of lesson and unit development through collaborative planning, continuous reflection and lesson revision to reveal significant data focused on lesson effectiveness and subsequent student learning.

How do candidates work together in groups and on educational projects to improve understanding and work with diverse populations?

References

Lesson Study Cycle
1. STUDY CURRICULUM & IDENTIFY A GOAL
   Consider long-term goal for student learning. Teach the lesson as usual. Annotate the lesson, noting which aspects of the teaching were successful, which were not.

2. PLAN
   Design or review lesson plans. Make an outline plan that includes: A) a written description of a problem or question for teaching; B) a list of teaching strategies or methods; C) a list of materials needed; D) a list of questions for the lesson; E) a list of sources of information. Make this plan as detailed as possible.

3. CONDUCT RESEARCH LESSON
   Design a lesson that includes the elements of teaching. Conduct the lesson. It is a collaborative teaching-learning experience.

4. REFLECT
   Record the lesson. Reflect on what went well and what could be improved. Discuss teaching methods that were used, and teaching materials used.

5. DOCUMENT RESULTS
   Write a report on the lesson. Discuss the experience with others. Summarize the experience and reflect on the lesson. Compare this report to the original plan.