Lesson Study

Lesson Study is a professional development programme that involves teachers working in small groups to plan lessons that address a shared learning goal for pupils. They then deliver these lessons while their peers observe, and refine the lesson plans based on feedback and review. The focus of peer observations is on the learning of particular pupils rather than the teacher. For this project, Lesson Study was used to deliver Talk for Literacy and Talk for Numeracy interventions.

EEF Summary

Lesson Study is a CPD approach originating in Japan that has become more popular in England in recent years. It involves many elements that are believed to be important for effective CPD, such as peer support and teacher observation, but its impact on pupil outcomes has not been robustly tested at this scale before, which is why we funded this project.

Classroom teachers in Year 4 and Year 5 took part in Lesson Study. We looked at attainment outcomes when their pupils reached the end of Year 6, and found no evidence of impact in this well-run, high-security trial.

This result does not show that all activities related to Lesson Study are ineffective. Some of the comparison schools in the trial were using lesson observations, for example. So what the results indicate is that this structured version of Lesson Study had no benefits over and above the status quo in the comparison schools.
Research Results

Were the schools in the trial similar to my school?

The trial involved 181 schools in the South West, East Midlands and North West.

The participating schools had higher than average proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals: 24% of students in the relevant year groups.

Could I implement this in my school?

A lesson study group involves 3 teachers.

Participating teachers attended 5 training sessions in the first year and Headteachers attended an introductory conference.

Teachers had timetabled sessions to co-plan and observe lessons.

A package similar to the programme delivered is available to buy from Edge Hill University. Elements of the programme are freely available online. Talk for Learning can be purchased separately.

How much will it cost?

Lesson Study cost each school £2,300 per year (or £54 per student per year) when averaged over three years.

Schools can now purchase Lesson Study training from Edge Hill University directly. Costs range from £1,800 to £2,400 per school. Costs can be reduced for groups of five or more schools.
Evaluation Conclusions

1. The project found no evidence that this version of Lesson Study improves maths and reading attainment at KS2.

2. There is evidence that some control schools implemented similar approaches to Lesson Study, such as teacher observation. This trial might, therefore, underestimate the impact of Lesson Study when introduced in schools with no similar activity. If that is the case, the results suggest that this version of Lesson Study had no impact over and above elements of the Lesson Study approach that were already widely used.

3. Teachers felt Lesson Study was useful professional development, valued the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues in a structured way, and reported several changes to their practice as a result of the programme.

4. Schools generally implemented the programme as the developers intended. Attendance at training was high and most schools implemented one Lesson Study cycle each term.