

How is Lesson Study Different?

This next part is a comparison between traditional professional development and Lesson Study.

Traditional PD usually begins with an answer: someone has this great new way of teaching students how to read, or they have this great idea—here's the answer to solve all your problems. Lesson Study differs because it begins with a question. Teachers look at the data, they look at or think about what topic might be difficult to teach, or a topic that students struggle with year after year, and they start with a question like, "How can we make this content more accessible to our students, and so that the information really sticks with them."

Traditional PD is usually driven by an outside "expert." With Lesson Study, it's driven by teacher, by their participants. They are the ones that are doing all of the work. We will have facilitators helping teachers through the process; however, they are just there to guide them through the process. They are not instructional coaches; they are not seen as THE expert; they are just a guide and a helpful tool or a helpful resource. Teachers are driving the process.

Communication flow in a traditional PD setting is from the trainer to the teacher. With Lesson Study, the communication flow is among teachers. Teachers are collaborating. There isn't a trainer. Teachers are working together and having discussions and collaborating.

Traditional PD usually has a hierarchical relation between the trainer and the learner. With Lesson Study, it's reciprocal relations among educators.

And research informs practice. Typically, there's research done to inform what type of professional development will occur. With Lesson Study, practice IS research.