

## BUILDING A LESSON STUDY GROUP

### RECRUIT LESSON STUDY GROUP MEMBERS

- Identify individuals who are leading a specific project/curriculum.
- Invite individuals by requesting participation from anyone interested in improving the learning of their 4-H youth members by becoming more effective educators.
- Determine group size: Consider approximately 4-8 lesson study group members.
- Describe the commitment: Lesson study will require a commitment to the process and involves:
  - reflecting on practice
  - providing formative feedback
  - considering ideas for improving activities/instruction
  - commitment to multiple meetings over time

### ESTABLISH GROUP NORMS

*Examples include:*

- ***Contribute positively; give 100 percent!***
- ***Communicate clearly and listen carefully – equal, open discussions are ideal.***  
Remember: Everyone, regardless of his/her level of experience, can make valuable contributions to the lesson study process.
- ***Shared ownership and responsibility.*** Lesson study is a collaborative process that is meant to improve learners' knowledge and skills through a joint effort among educators.
- ***Focus on refining lessons through data-driven decisions.*** Improved learning is the outcome.
- ***Be youth-focused: Emphasis is on youth learning and development.*** Lesson study's focus is on the learning and development of the target audience – 4-H youth. Lesson study focuses on the learners' "ah-ha" moments. Let the data "speak to you" to discover these "ah-ha" moments.
- ***Share your views willingly, but respect the views of others.***
- ***Ask and welcome questions for clarification.***
- ***Be open to new ideas and views.*** Change happens!
- ***Honor time commitments; honor time limits.***
- ***Remain on task.***
- ***Other???***

### AGREE UPON EXPECTATIONS FROM GROUP MEMBERS

- Determine a meeting schedule: One meeting every 2-3 weeks is recommended; no less than one meeting per month.
  - ***Note: Providing time between meetings is beneficial; it allows for individual reflection and the generation of ideas to bring to subsequent group meetings.***
- Determine meeting length: Well-organized meetings should run no more than 60-75 minutes.
- A facilitator\* works with the lesson study group members to establish an agenda, guides the lesson study group through the agenda, and helps to maintain group norms.
- A scribe\* keeps written notes for the meetings. Items to capture in notes include:

- Capture plus/delta (what worked well / what needs improvement) reflections from educators about their practice
- Capture key learnings of participants
- Suggested improvements for lesson preparation and delivery
- Identify themes that influenced outcomes (timing, group dynamics, etc.)
- Suggestions/recommendations for making this lesson more successful (e.g. different group management strategy)
- A timekeeper\* helps the facilitator keep to the agreed-upon agenda.

*\*Note: It is recommended that these roles rotate among lesson study group members; consider having different group members fill these roles each meeting.*

## RECOMMENDED MEETING STRUCTURE

### **Meeting #1: Introduction to Lesson Study (60-75 minutes)**

- Overview of lesson study as a form of professional development (what it is/is not).
- Introduce and review formative data collections tools (e.g., plus/delta for facilitators; clover reflection for youth; observations). Explain the importance of collecting formative data during/after the implementation of each curriculum activity.
- Establish group norms.
- Agree upon expectations from group members:
  - Review curriculum to be used
  - plan curriculum activity implementation timeline
  - plan lesson study group meeting schedule (How many lessons/modules?)
  - rotating roles for each meeting
  - agree to meeting dates and locations
  - set calendars accordingly

### **General Meeting Structure (60-75 minutes)**

- **Agenda:** Develop meeting agenda; reach consensus.
- **Check-in:** Short discussion on how previous lesson implementation; allow each lesson study group member to share briefly.
- **Formative Data Review:** A system to *monitor learning* which provides ongoing information for educators to improve their instruction and for participants to improve their learning.
  - Helps learners identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work
  - Helps educators recognize where learners are struggling to address problems immediately
  - Systematic review of formative data sources that are shared to compare data to identify trends and to look for unique opportunities to improve teaching and learning
    - Clover reflection sheets for youth participants
    - Plus/Delta reflection sheets for adult educator facilitators
    - Other data sources like observations and artifacts

- **Artifacts:** Learning artifact (or educational artifact) is a term used in educational psychology to describe an object created by students during instruction. To be considered an artifact, an object needs to be lasting, durable, public, and materially present. Under the constructionist theory of educational psychology, the concept of making knowledge visible is a central component. The creation of material artifacts is a technique used to allow students to display their knowledge in a public forum (usually the classroom). Artifacts can be in the form of paintings, drawings, sculptures, models, or anything else that is not erased after completion.

*Note: No reflection data will be available at first lesson study group meeting; group members should discuss who their learners are, the context where learning will be happening, materials they may need, logistics, and other salient information they may have available to help them plan their first lesson.*

- **Lesson (Activity) Planning:** Use interpretations of data from previous activity implementations to plan the subsequent activity implementation. Note specific changes to activities. **Goal:** Improved youth learning through improved practice informed by data!

*Note: Consider an Outside Expert. An outside specialist in subject matter, or how to teach a specific subject more effectively, can serve to enhance the work of any lesson study group at specific points in time. Although outside experts are not required for a lesson study group to function, discussing when and why your group might consider inviting one to a meeting could help advance what you are trying to accomplish. If you choose to invite an outside expert, however, make certain you (a) communicate with that person what his/her role will be, and (b) utilize this individual's expertise in a systematic and intentional manner. Specifically, include the expert as part of your meeting agenda, and ask that group members bring specific questions related to the curriculum being implemented.*

- **Meeting Wrap-up:** Chair summarizes meeting. Recommended transition to subsequent meeting: scribe will serve as chair for the next meeting; elect a new scribe and timekeeper for the subsequent meeting.

## Lesson Study Cycle: An Iterative Process to Advance Teaching and Learning

