

# Supporting schools in teacher learning and development

Education

Entertainment

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Continuing professional development is a central component of teacher learning. Consequently, schools are currently investing time to develop worthwhile learning programmes and collaborative opportunities for teachers.

Research shows that teachers learn best when they work collaboratively by sharing resources, discussing strategies for improving student learning, planning, observing and evaluating their own lessons. An effective model that supports teachers to do this is lessons study.

Originating in Japan, lesson study is a collaborative process that involves teacher-led research. In a lesson study, a group of teachers – usually not more than six – supported by teacher educators, work together to identify an area for development in their teaching and learning.

The process involves a collaborative study of curriculum materials that may help teachers to design a lesson that addresses the identified area. The lesson is taught by one of the teachers to a class of students, while the other members of the group observe and collect data about student learning. This data is then analysed to identify strengths and potential improvements in teaching.

Such lesson analysis is usually done during a post-lesson debriefing session during which teachers evaluate the extent to which their planning has achieved the desired goals. On the basis of this analysis, the lesson plan is refined and later re-taught by another teacher to another class.

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Lesson study offers teachers the opportunity to work collaboratively, placing teacher classroom practice at the centre of their ongoing professional conversations.

In order to assist schools in leading and engaging in lesson study, the University of Malta's Faculty of Education has recently launched the Collaborative Lesson Study Malta project. It is led by James Calleja, a lecturer in the Department of Leadership for Learning and Innovation, in collaboration with Michelle Attard Tonna, deputy dean and head of the same department, and Michael Buhagiar, a senior lecturer at the Department of Mathematics and Science Education.

The project aims to support schools at primary, secondary and post-secondary levels to learn about, initiate and sustain collaborative lesson studies. The work involves visiting schools to hold discussions with school leaders and teachers, introducing them to lesson study and eventually assisting them to lead lesson studies.

The project aims to:

- provide professional development for teachers and school leadership teams on the lesson study process;
- facilitate lesson study meetings with teachers;
- observe and provide constructive feedback on lesson studies;
- conduct research on lesson studies;
- organise events to disseminate collaborative lesson studies; and
- participate in conferences and meetings to present the research.

The project website below includes numerous free and downloadable resources that teachers may use. These resources include articles, website links, videos, sample lesson plans, observation sheets and lesson study reports drawn from the initiatives taken up by a number of local schools.

All those interested in lesson study are invited to e-mail [lessonstudymalta@gmail.com](mailto:lessonstudymalta@gmail.com)

[www.clestum.eu](http://www.clestum.eu)

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