

# Case Study

## ***What Is it?***

Case based professional development involves using carefully chosen, real world examples of teaching to serve as springboards for discussions among small groups of teachers. A good case is designed for instruction and poses fundamental issues that reach beyond the particulars in the case and motivate ongoing reflection and inquiry.

## ***Why is it important?***

Case based professional development is important because:

- Teachers have opportunities to engage in careful reasoning and to make judgments about what to do based on the predicaments presented.
- It can help teachers discover ambiguity, conflict and complexity within a deceptively simple teaching situation.
- It acknowledges that each person brings expertise and will contribute learning to the group.
- It allows teachers to see that there is always more than one answer to a classroom dilemma.
- It provides support that many teachers find difficult to obtain in the isolation of their classrooms.

## ***When is it useful?***

Case Studies are used:

- When educators want to learn and apply new teaching techniques in context.
- As a job-embedded practice for small groups of teachers to have practice in applying learned instructional theory and strategies.

## ***How is it used?***

- The case to be studied is chosen to either exemplify particular ideas or to provide the opportunity to examine and apply theories in context.
- In pairs, teachers read the case study and identify issues from the case and frame them as questions. Framing issues as questions stimulates discussion by inviting multiple points of view. Identified facilitator structures the discussion to ensure that the situation is examined to identify what =could be done to impact student learning.

To learn more about case study, examine Harrington, H.I. and Garrison, J.W (1992), *The Case for Education: a Dialogical Method of Teacher Preparation*. Go to the WestEd web site at [www.fwJ.org4vestedlresources.hfm](http://www.fwJ.org4vestedlresources.hfm)!