

Study Groups

What is it?

A study group is a collection of people who gather together to examine a topic they have agreed to study.

- It provides a forum for colleagues to pursue an ongoing examination of factors influencing classroom practices and student learning.
- It is a collaborative commitment among learners with a common vision.
- It promotes the construction of knowledge through research, interaction with selected materials and collegial discourse.
- It provides a forum for different perspectives and ideas.

Why is it important?

A study groups is important because:

- It is a creative method that promotes professionalization of teachers
- It addresses integral components of daily school life such as classroom practice, student outcomes, and the school as an organization.
- It develops ongoing meaningful dialogues between staff members in a respectful, mutually supportive environment.
- It acknowledges that each person brings expertise and will contribute learning to the group.
- It helps focus on priorities.
- It provides support that many teachers find difficult to obtain in the isolation of their classrooms.
- Committed participants create new knowledge that affects perspectives, practices and policies.

When is it useful?

Study groups are used:

- When educators want to learn and apply new teaching techniques.
- As a job-embedded practice for a school-wide community to study research on effective schools and teaching strategies to make decisions about how to impact student achievement.

How is it used?

- All participants agree upon and commit to the purpose of study.
- Select the content/topic to be studied.
- Establish a schedule of times and places to meet.
- Establish group norms.
- Make an action plan.
- Identify the group leadership.

To learn more about Study Groups refer to Gusky, T. and Huberman, M. (1995). *Professional Development In Education: New Paradigms & Practices*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.