Connecting Knowledge: Improving writing through lesson study

**What does the project involve?**

The project will involve engaging teacher participants with what is known about the effective teaching of writing. These teachers will then write a personal action plan (impact frame) to focus their thinking on what it is they want to improve about learning in writing for a small number of identified pupils in their class. These two experiences will enable the teachers to come up with research questions that link their own practice to the theory from research.

Teachers will then participate in sessions led by a UCL Institute of Education Consultant with expertise in lesson study so that they understand and feel prepared to participate in lesson study in their own schools.

Back at school, teachers will work in small groups (ideally three or four) with a Lead Lesson Study Teacher their own or another school. They will participate in at least two, and usually three ‘cycles’ of lesson study, each cycle involving:

* Half a day to collaboratively plan a research lesson;
* Half a day to observe pupils’ responses to this research lesson (taught by one of the teachers in the group) and to discuss what they have learnt in relation to the research question.

The UCL Institute of Education Consultant will also attend some of these in-school sessions to add their expert knowledge to the discussion.

The second cycle of lesson study will be ‘open house’, meaning that teachers from other schools will be invited to attend: to watch the research lesson and to participate in the post-lesson discussion. In this way, learning about the teaching of writing will be transferred across schools. Learning will also feed into a series of four professional development sessions for all teachers in participating schools, focused on the effective teaching of writing.

Ideally, teachers will then integrate this new learning into a third cycle of lesson study, which they will manage themselves.

Teachers will complete before and after confidence surveys and a simple questionnaire about the impact of lesson study on their practice. They will also provide the project with assessment data for the small number of focus pupils identified in their impact frame (no more than six).

A final conference will present findings about the teaching of writing to all participating schools.

**What does the school need to provide?**

At least three (and a maximum of four) teachers who are interested in taking part in the project. Release time for participating teachers to:

* Attend the two project face-to-face sessions (both full days)
* Participate in at least two cycles of lesson study (ie two times two days release)
* Attend a twilight data collection session
* Attend the final end of year conference

Some professional learning time (for example, a staff meeting) during the Summer Term 2017, in which participating teachers can present their findings and experiences to the wider school staff.

**How will the school benefit?**

The project will provide participating teachers with the knowledge and understanding to lead lesson study in their own schools. The project also aims to develop expertise in participating teachers in the teaching of writing. Other teachers from your school can also benefit from this by attending the four professional development sessions focused on the teaching of writing.

Teachers will not be expected to carry out burdensome tasks in their own time and should not expect the project to cause increased workload.

The school will also receive funding of £750 to cover some of the costs of release time for participating teachers.

**What expectations are there of the school and participating teachers?**

The school will be expected to prioritise participating teachers’ attendance at the face-to-face sessions and to facilitate release time for their participation in lesson study within the given timeframes of the project. They will also need to welcome visiting teachers to the second ‘open house’ cycle of lesson study, providing a suitable room and facilities.

Senior leaders should be made aware of the protocols for their participation in lesson study (as drawn up by teachers) attached.

All participating schools are required to send a member of the senior leadership team along to the first session on Wednesday 15 June, where they develop an understanding of lesson study and their role in supporting teachers throughout the project.

Participating teachers will be expected to respond to calls for data and to communicate with the project manager about the dates for their second ‘open house’ cycle of lesson study. They will be expected to attend each face-to-face session and ‘open house’ research lesson punctually. They will also be expected to communicate with their own senior leadership team about the learning from their lesson study project.