

**“Using Lesson Study to Examine Significant Historical Events:  
A Focus on the Constitution ”  
Planning Guide and Protocol (2005-2006)**

Improving something as complex and culturally embedded as teaching requires the efforts of all the players, including students, parents, and politicians. But teachers must be the primary driving force behind change. They are best positioned to understand the problems that students face and to generate possible solutions.

-James Steigler and James Herbert, *The Teaching Gap*  
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**I - Background and Context of the Lesson to Be Studied**

**1. Lesson Topic and Rationale**

- How does this lesson support student understanding of the specific constitutional issues raised by the event you are studying? How does this lesson help students understand the significance of the event you are studying?

**2. Preparing the “Lesson Study” Lesson**

- What is the lesson plan? What activities, readings, and questions, will help students achieve the goals you set for this lesson?

*Questions to consider:*

1. What do you want students to know and understand about the event you are studying?
2. What do you want students to know and understand about the relationship between this event and constitutional issues?
3. What academic skills, historical thinking skills, and understandings are essential to this lesson?
4. What do students currently understand about this topic?
5. What source document(s) will be used to focus the lesson?
6. How might students respond to the questions and activities in the lesson? What problems and misconceptions might arise? What might be the response?

**What question, about the topic of your lesson, do you want your students to answer?**

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**What question about teaching and learning will you studying through the lesson you are teaching?**

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## Lesson Study Protocol - Observing and Debriefing the Lesson

### II - Question to consider: How can we learn from Lesson Study

#### 1. Before teaching the lesson - planning for observation and discussion:

- What evidence do we need to collect in order to find out if our goals for the lesson were met? How will that evidence be collected? (Each observer should have a copy of the lesson on which they can make notes and a copy of the seating chart.)
- How will we know what students learned?

#### 2. After teaching the lesson - questions to consider:

- To what degree did we meet our goals?
- What are the implications for how we develop and teach other lessons?
- What instructional questions were raised that we did not anticipate?

### III - Working together during and after the lesson:

#### 1. Observing the lesson and taking notes:

- Use the space below (and additional paper) and the copy of the lesson plan to take notes on what you have observed during the lesson. Remember the focus is on how students respond. What did they learn? What did they come to understand? What areas were challenging?

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## 2. Before the debriefing discussion:

- The entire group should take a break to relax and gather their thoughts, instead of beginning to immediately discuss the lesson.
- The group who taught the lesson should assign roles among themselves in order to keep the discussion focused and on track. These roles include: moderator/ facilitator, timekeeper, and recorders.

## 3. Discussing the lesson:

- (5 - 10 minutes) The moderator/facilitator outlines the agenda for the discussion.
- The teacher who taught the lesson should have the first opportunity to comment on his/her reactions to the lesson, followed by the other planning group members. This format allows the teacher(s) who taught the lesson to begin by sharing insights about what was being studied, what worked, what did not work, what they would change about the lesson, etc. He/she will try to answer three questions
  - 1) What happened that you expected?
  - 2) What happened that you didn't expect and
  - 3) To what degree were the goals achieved?
- (15 - 20 minutes) The observers discuss what they saw happening in terms of the same three questions, using evidence they collected during the lesson. Each observer should give other observers the opportunity to comment on similar or related aspects of the lesson, so everyone who would like to comment has an opportunity to share their insights.
- (15 minutes) All participants read whatever student writing was collected during the lesson. For example, if the teacher asked students to write a log at the end of the period stating what they had learned that day, all participants would read the logs. During the reading, teachers should look to find evidence of the goals being achieved, or evidence that shows where students had problems in achieving the goals.
- (15 minutes) Discuss what everyone saw in the student work. Does reading the writing of students' change any of the original impressions of whether or not the goals of the lessons were met?
- (5 - 10 minutes.) The teacher who taught the lesson should wait until all feedback about a particular aspect of a lesson has been received before responding to the observers.
- (5-15 minutes) The group discusses how the lesson might be revised to be taught in another classroom. In this discussion you want to address these four questions
  - 1) What specific problems occurred in the lesson?
  - 2) Did the "flow" work? (For instance, did the sequence of reading, writing, speaking, seem to go in the right order?)
  - 3) How would you revise the lesson?
  - 4) What would be helpful to you in this revision? (For example, you would need to know more about reading strategies to do a better job.)