

Reflection prompts: Lesson study

Introduction

These reflection prompts have been developed to align with the research on Lesson Study. They are intended to support leaders of professional learning in thinking about how this approach might be adapted and applied within their own school or trust. The prompts highlight key areas to consider when shaping Lesson Study as a sustained, teacher-led model of professional learning focused on understanding pupil learning through collaborative inquiry.

The prompts are also informed by the Education Endowment Foundation's A School's Guide to Implementation (2024), which outlines how to adopt behaviours that drive effective implementation, attend to contextual factors, and follow a structured but flexible process. The questions are organised into the four implementation phases (Explore, Prepare, Deliver, and Sustain) to support leaders in managing change coherently and with impact. While school leaders may wish to refer directly to the EEF guidance, its principles have been embedded throughout these prompts.

Phase 1: Strategic Alignment & Awareness

- Which aspects of teaching and learning (such as questioning, scaffolding, or subject knowledge) might be strengthened through Lesson Study in our context?
- What professional learning needs or curriculum priorities suggest that Lesson Study would be timely and appropriate?
- What makes Lesson Study a good fit for our school right now, and what barriers might we need to anticipate together?
- How might we build a shared understanding among leaders and staff of what Lesson Study is – and what it isn't?
- What perspectives, data, or staff feedback will we draw on to ensure our decision to adopt Lesson Study is well grounded?

Phase 2: Design & Preparation

- Which team(s), subject(s), or year group(s) will we start with and how were these selected?
- How will we introduce the purpose of Lesson Study as an inquiry-based, teacher-led approach focused on learning, not performance?
- What structures will we use to support planning, observation, and post-lesson reflection (for example: templates, debrief protocols, journals)?

- How will we support teams to generate clear, focused inquiry questions that are tightly linked to teaching practices and pupil learning?
- Who will support each group, and how can we make sure their role is to guide rather than to direct?
- How will we position Lesson Study within our broader professional learning offer, so it's seen as core, not additional?

Phase 3: Launch & Communication

- How will we communicate Lesson Study to staff in a way that reduces fear of judgement and reinforces its developmental purpose?
- What will we do to establish routines that normalise deep professional dialogue, curiosity, and learning from what doesn't go to plan?
- Given the pressures on staff time, how might we protect the space needed for planning, observation, and reflection?
- How will we support facilitators to maintain reflection and curiosity over compliance or task completion?
- What early signs (for example: engagement, quality of inquiry, teacher reflections) will we look for to know that Lesson Study is taking root?

Phase 4: Evaluation & Iteration

- What outcomes do we hope to see in terms of teacher learning, instructional practices, and professional identity – and what signs might also suggest an impact on pupils?
- How will we evaluate the quality of professional dialogue and the depth of insight gained through the process?
- What qualitative indicators (for example: trust, agency, collaboration) will help us assess progress, beyond short-term pupil outcomes?
- How will we give teachers space to reflect on the experience of Lesson Study and propose refinements to future cycles?
- In what ways will we document and share insights from each cycle, so they inform broader school improvement?

Phase 5: Scaling & Embedding

- How will we review the first round of Lesson Study implementation before deciding whether and how to scale?
- What routines or supports will we use to maintain interest and energy; for example, rotating themes, new guiding questions, or cross-team sharing?

- What steps will we take to embed Lesson Study as a long-term part of our CPD, rather than a one-off pilot?
- How will we protect the core ingredients (for example: teacher-led inquiry, structured reflection, protected time) as the model evolves?
- How will we continue to build staff capacity and confidence to lead or facilitate Lesson Study in future cycles?
- As Lesson Study becomes embedded, how will we sustain the sense of trust, curiosity, and collaboration that makes it effective?