

Learning within the Video Study Group

A Collaborative Inquiry Model

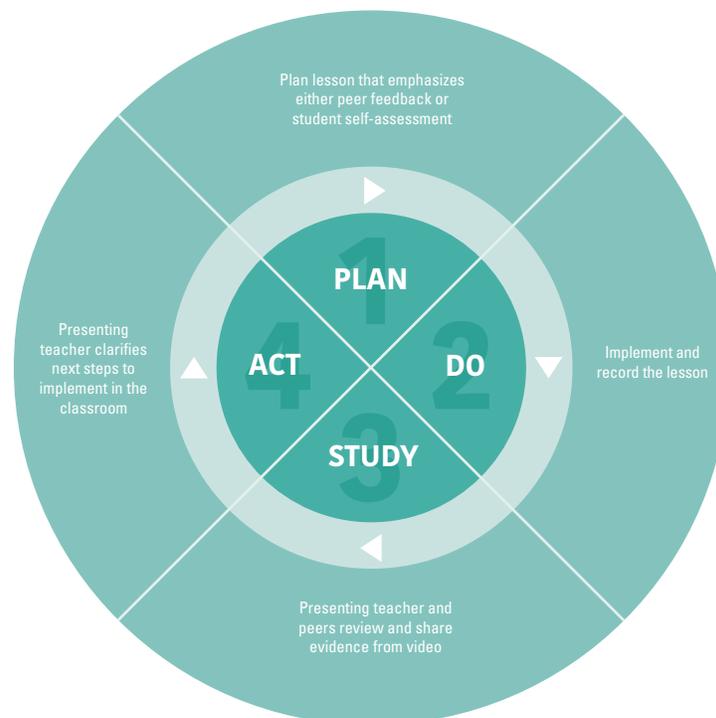
This project is a partnership among the WestEd team, teachers, and school leaders. Building on the knowledge and skills you have developed in formative assessment through the *Formative Assessment Insights* (FAI) Course, our primary goal is to learn together about what it takes to be on the leading edge of practice with respect to student agency in learning and assessment. As teacher researchers in this project, what you learn during this project will contribute to our collective understanding about how to develop instructional practices that support student agency.

The SAAL Video Study Groups are designed to promote collaborative learning by teachers with their peers. Teachers' involvement in collaborative discussions is predictive of positive changes to teachers' individual instruction (Parise & Spillane, 2010; van Es, 2012). The Video Study Group (VSG) design provides teachers with the time and structures to reflect on practice, gather feedback aligned to the dimensions of student agency, and give feedback that helps teachers explore next steps and identify actions they can pursue immediately in their classrooms.

The Video Study Group Process – Using the Plan, Do, Study, Act Cycle

The VSG process invites teachers to engage fully in their own professional learning through the use of a learning framework known as the PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) Cycle. The PDSA Cycle represents a series of four phases. When taken together, these four phases support continuous planning, implementing, and reflecting on learning.

Beginning with the Plan phase, teachers identify a focus for their learning, establish Success Criteria that clarify what they will be able to do as a result of this new learning, and plan a lesson to capture that learning on video. In the Do phase, the teacher implements the learning in the classroom. To complete the Study phase, teachers review the videotape of their lesson to reflect on their implementation of the new learning, first independently, and then with peers in the VSG environment. After review by self and peers, each teacher outlines action steps during the Act phase to integrate the new learning and identify next steps to further develop and fully integrate the new practice. The cycle begins again to support ongoing learning and improvement.



Using Video to Deepen Collaborative Dialogue

In the SAAL Video Study Groups, teachers self-select which video clips to share and post for group review. Teachers also provide specific guidance to peers about where to focus their observation. In this way, the presenting teacher has a role in framing the focus of inquiry and observation by peers.

Peer video review has been shown to provide a deeper opportunity for analysis of teaching. First, video allows teachers to see how all students are responding to learning. Also, as teaching happens quickly, video allows teachers to observe what might not be seen in real time. Having a video clip for review means that you can watch it, reflect on it, go back to it, and study it in a way that is supportive and can guide learning – not just of the presenting teacher, but of the other collaborating teachers as well. This allows for more targeted, specific feedback to the presenting teacher and examination of shared learning among peers.

Using Continua to Guide Evidence Collection and Next Steps

The SAAL continua are tools to deepen teachers' understanding of the key dimensions of peer feedback and self-assessment. The continua support teachers to share and discuss evidence that is aligned with key dimensions of practice as defined in the rows of each continuum. In addition, the columns of the continua help define how classroom practice in a particular dimension of the continuum develops over time. In this way, the continua can be used as an entry point for dialogue as teachers explore next steps for their own learning.

The continua used to guide VSG work are not rating scales. There are no representative numbers on the columns. Rather, the descriptions are provided in each row to guide self-reflection, feedback, and to help support shared inquiry about what next steps teachers might take to move their own practice forward.

Using Protocols to Advance Inquiry and Dialogue

Protocols support in-depth, insightful conversations about teaching and learning. Their structure permits a certain kind of dialogue to take shape that is atypical of how people generally engage in discussion. Protocols structure dialogue in specific ways to encourage reflection, thinking, and action. They also contribute to meaningful analysis, efficient communication, and learning. Protocols not only create a safe space for listening, but they also offer a *license for listening* since the protocols define when people can respond. They allow for all voices in the room to be heard and honored, and they offer a safe environment in which to explore new, and in particular, challenging ideas.

Teachers new to protocol use often ask why these tools are necessary, particularly if one feels that a group is doing just fine as is. There are three specific practices in most protocols that can be challenging to follow in the beginning. First, protocols are usually timed. This is both to focus the dialogue and to limit off-topic comments. Second, in many protocols, there are restrictions to when presenting teachers and peer reviewers can speak. And third, in review protocols, the presenting teacher is asked not to speak while the group is reviewing their work. Protocols are designed to build the skills—and culture—necessary to sustain collaborative work. In time they will begin to feel more natural as they become part of the VSG meeting norms.

Documenting Progress

During the project, teachers will be asked to consider how the VSG model and the specific tools are supporting their learning. We will also be interested to hear from you about what changes in practice you have made to support student agency. As you use the elements of the VSG model—use of the PDSA cycle, continua, video, and peer feedback protocols—consider and discuss how this work supports your learning, and what can be done to enhance teacher learning in this model.

References

- van Es, E. A. (2012). Examining the development of a teacher learning community: The case of a video club. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*(2), 182-192.
- Parise, L. M., & Spillane, J. P. (2010). Teacher learning and instructional change: How formal and on-the-job learning opportunities predict change in elementary school teachers' practice. *The Elementary School Journal, 110*(3), 323-346.