

# Getting Started with Peer Observation

## Lesson Study

### Interviewee

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Vice Principal

#### What is lesson study?

Lesson study is a methodology of encouraging teachers to work together to develop practice, but to have the focus at every stage on the needs of the youngsters that they are working with.

#### What difference has lesson study made?


So, in terms of lesson study developing specific aspect of teaching and learning is the ... I think the prime advantage is that we've now got a good idea of where we're at as a school which possibly 10, 12 years ago we thought we did, because like all schools we observe lessons, that nice little snapshot, you know, and is that characteristic and so on and so on. And by looking at and by giving freedom to Heads of Department, to teachers, to focus on what they want to focus on and that there's a context there, and then being able, when the [anthacology] is pulled together at the end of the year, and my colleague who actually collates and coordinates all of the lesson study during the year, we've got a very good idea, because it's explicit, of people are working on differentiation, or questioning, or starters or pupil resilience, okay, growth mindset. We've done a lot of work on growth mindset through lesson study.

And the ... I think that the ... there are a number of aspects of teaching and learning that we know have been improved - growth mindset, pupil resilience is such a huge issue in schools that the work on growth mindset that, for example, last year our PE Department, our Sociology and Psychology Departments, our History Departments were focusing particularly around that area. And in Science we weren't, in Science we were looking at developing the way in which we used our questioning in lessons particularly around the emerging 6,10-mark questions that were coming through in the new specifications and we wanted to make sure we got that right.

And how we know that the learning side of it, a difference was being made, is what youngsters were transferring. Youngsters were transferring from one part of the school to another. The growth mindset kind of ... their growth mindset confidence, and so they were they were more able to be engaging with something that was difficult, getting it wrong, but actually, instead of giving up being prepared to have another go.

#### What is the difference between peer observation and lesson study?

I think the best way to go forward on that one from my point of view is that peer observation is an essential part of lesson study. You cannot ... you cannot fully engage with what's happening in the classroom without effective peer observation except that it's kind of peer in direct observation because the observation of your colleague and what your colleague is doing is through the impact it has on pupils. And I think that that's the essential difference for me is that if the purpose of peer observation is to ultimately stimulate a dialogue around what has gone well, and areas where things might be changed, that it's very



easy I think in peer observation for one teacher to observe another and the value judgments that are put on that observation is the observer, it's the is the person watching - 'well I might not have done it that way' type of feedback.

And I know that's not characteristic of every peer observation, but that was certainly a dynamic in the peer observation activities that we've done over the years where if the peer observation has to be tempered through the kind of the vehicle of so what did the youngsters actually do, or engage, or change, or get frustrated by, then your peer observation and when you're feeding back and when you are having that dialogue as peer observers your focus is on actually what makes teachers excited I think, and that is the outcomes for the for the youngsters.



