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Review of Collaborative Lesson Study: ReVisioning Teacher Professional Development

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Book Review: *Collaborative Lesson Study: ReVisioning Teacher Professional Development*

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In an era of accountability and top-down reform in education, teachers are at the forefront of the implementation of policies aimed at improving education for all students. Many teachers, however, do not perceive that they have much control over their teaching despite their preparation and training. According to a survey of educators who left their public school teaching positions for other jobs, over 57% perceived that they had more autonomy over their work in their current positions than as teachers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014, Table 7). Calvert (2016) alludes to the importance of autonomy as an essential component of agency, which is “the capacity of teachers to act purposefully and constructively to direct their professional growth and contribute to the growth of their colleagues” (p. 52). Educators who perceive a lack of control, or agency, with their teaching could choose to leave the profession in search of greater autonomy over their work. Therefore, it is essential that schools offer professional learning opportunities to teachers that honor their expertise and give them the freedom to utilize their professional judgement in their teaching to reduce teacher attrition.

Collet’s (2019) book *Collaborative Lesson Study: ReVisioning Teacher Professional Development* describes one way to address this issue, and offers a comprehensive guide to implementing the professional development practice of Collaborative Lesson Study (CLS). CLS is a model of collaborative, inquiry- based professional development for preservice and inservice teachers that helps

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them build a sense of agency and efficacy with their teaching. At the same time, this model helps to improve instruction for students by helping teachers to plan instruction that is responsive to students' unique backgrounds and needs. Collet provides a description of the CLS process, discussion of teachers' experiences with this practice, and materials to use for implementation. With this scaffolding, Collet supports teachers, coaches, administrators, and professors with implementing CLS in their respective fields.

Introduction and Part I

In the introduction, Collet defines and describes CLS as a way to guide teachers in reVisioning their practice to ensure their lessons are beneficial for students when considering culture and context. She suggests drawing on a process of collaborative planning, teaching, and objective observation to revise lessons for improvement purposes. Instead of promoting a single best structure for lessons, she also emphasizes developing teachers' abilities to decide which instructional methods work best for their students. These decisions help teachers to "build pathways that enable continual growth of the knowledge, interpersonal resources, and motivation required to improve teaching and learning" (Collet, 2019, p. 3). Collet shares a helpful figure (i.e., 1.1) to show the cyclical nature of this process, in which teachers share responsibility for planning, observing, reflecting, reVisioning, reteaching, and studying individual lessons to create a bank of effective strategies for specific classes and students. Throughout the book, Collet also shares the experiences of several groups of teachers with whom she engaged in CLS, introducing the first group in chapter 1.

Part I of *Collaborative Lesson Study: ReVisioning Teacher Professional Development* distinguishes CLS from other forms of professional development. CLS is unlike the traditional general, short-duration trainings that some districts use for professional development for educators. As a classroom-level form of professional development, CLS focuses on forming a group of experts on specific classrooms and students, making it possible to create instruction that is tailored to their specific needs. As described by Collet, CLS values input from multiple perspectives, helps rejuvenate stale practices, reduces isolation amongst teachers when they share a common vision for their craft, and can help provide clarity about implementing various teaching practices. Collet also demonstrates how teachers of all experience levels can use this process by sharing vignettes of educators' experiences using CLS with the reader.

Teacher learning is also at the heart of this text. Drawing on the Japanese word *oshieru*, Collet describes the synergy that exists between teaching and learning. CLS positions teachers as both teachers and students in their classrooms. In this regard, CLS can make teachers feel vulnerable, in that they put their practice on display for their peers. CLS, however, also helps to broaden teachers' perceived limits on their practice, empowering them as responsive teachers for students. The use of this process can help promote a healthy perspective for teachers who hold themselves to impossible standards, humanizing a profession constantly tasked with doing better.

Part II

Part II of the text describes the CLS process and supports teachers in its implementation. Considering the needs of both teachers and students during instruction, Collet supports readers in planning a lesson to analyze through CLS, emphasizing the need for predictive planning of students' responses in order to make the lesson responsive to their needs. As the teacher teaches the lesson, other educators observe

and take non-evaluative notes of what occurs. Collet then describes how the team can debrief and reVision the lesson by taking note of strategies the teacher found effective and would want to use again, promoting ongoing development over time.

Part III and Conclusion

Part III takes the discussion of CLS deeper, discussing ways to make the process as meaningful as possible. Understanding the perspectives of students and other teachers can make teaching more personal. Collet proposes that flexibility, within the lesson plan and during the lesson, is a sign of expert instruction. She circles back to a discussion of responsive instruction, in which teachers consider and honor students' different ways of doing and funds of knowledge. By recognizing and planning for these differences, teachers can make their teaching relevant and important for all students.

Supports for Implementation

Throughout the text, Collet provides numerous supports for educators to implement CLS in their schools. Each chapter includes discussions of groups of teachers who implemented CLS and ends with "Reflect and Respond" prompts to inspire discussion between readers, bringing the process to life. Collet also provides several suggestions for navigating the practical challenges associated with implementing CLS, including lack of time to collaborate, establishing norms for collaboration, and the perception by some teachers of CLS as "extra work." Once readers are ready to dive into the process, the appendix of the text is filled with numerous materials needed to structure the process, including meeting agendas, lesson plan outlines, videos for observation practice, example lessons, and a student interest inventory. Using this text as a guide, educators will be well-prepared to implement CLS.

Final Thoughts

CLS is localized professional development that benefits educators and students alike. In her book *Collaborative Lesson Study: ReVisioning Teacher Professional Development*, Collet scaffolds teachers' use of this practice with the twin goals of improving their instruction and helping them develop their sense of agency in the classroom. Providing teachers with a framework of how to direct their own professional growth, as well as that of their colleagues, will likely help them feel a sense of efficacy with their teaching, showing they are trusted and valued as autonomous professionals. Collet's text can help to make this vision a reality.

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