



Professional Learning: The Book Study Tool Kit

Professional development doesn't have to be attendance at another meeting or implementing another initiative. It can be an opportunity to engage in real learning, the kind of learning that unfolds with a sense of purpose. It can connect to what teachers are currently doing in their classrooms through meaningful dialogue and social interaction.

Since teachers learn best from their colleagues, a collaborative book discussion is an important way to engage in critical conversation, enhance classroom repertoire, and increase student learning. Incorporating teachers' prior knowledge increases the effectiveness of the dialogue and allows for connections to new ideas. Teachers facilitate their own learning and become supportive collaborators with one another.

Book Study Steps:

1. **Invite participants.** Get the word out via an online or Evite invitation, hallway poster, mailbox flyer, etc.
2. **Select a book.** Think about student/staff needs and provide a few book choices for members to vote on.
3. **Determine goals.** What do participants want to gain from the book study? Effective discussion questions yield great discussions.
4. **Plan the reading schedule.** Determine where, when, and how long participants will meet. To determine how often to meet consider the number of chapters or sections. Aim to read one chapter/section per week.
5. **Take notes.** Use the "Reading Guide" to organize thoughts and reflections during reading.
6. **Determine discussion procedures.** For example, participants can,
 - Take turns sharing thoughts and reflections.
 - Use chart paper to add comments and reflections on a book "web."
 - Respond to a pre-determined set of questions. Use our discussion question bookmarks as a resource.
 - Pair-up with a partner to share findings, then report back to the group
7. **Share** Incorporate ways to share the book study's information with colleagues who did not participate. Present brief presentations at staff or team meetings, highlight a tip of the week via email, or share findings online.

Book Study Reading Guide

Use during reading

Title:

Interesting Idea/Message/Concept	Page #	How Can I Implement or Share It?	Questions I Still Have

Professional Development Book Club

Bookmarks for Thinking, Discussion, and Reflection

Use the Critical Thinking and Boost Dialogue questions to guide the discussion. Use the Self-Reflection questions after the discussion.

Critical Thinking

Who do you think needs to read this book? Why?

What facts and/or opinions did you agree/disagree with? Why?

How can this concept/strategy/idea improve your instruction, professional growth, students' needs, etc.?

What evidence does the author use to support her assertions?

What skills or knowledge did you learn that would help other teachers?

How has the author broadened your perspective about a particular theory, idea or practice?

Is there something the author addressed that you would like to learn more about?

What conclusions can you draw from the book? How can you apply these conclusions to your teaching?

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Boost Dialogue

Share a favorite idea, concept or strategy. What did it help you understand?

Did you learn anything about yourself and/or your students? Please share.

Were you surprised by any facts, evidence, or assertions? Please explain.

Did you agree or disagree with any statements or assumptions the author made? Are there other viewpoints?

What is the most creative idea you would pass along to others?

Was there anything the author did not address that would have been helpful?

How do your experiences as a teacher affect your reading of the subject matter?

What should the author research/write next and why?

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Self-Reflection

How did today's conversation help or change your thinking?

What discussion ideas, questions, or comments will keep you thinking?

Why did these ideas interest you?

How can you apply these ideas?

What small changes can you start now?

Did the discussion help you reflect on prior knowledge or past experiences?

What ideas are worth exploring with a colleague?

Was there anything that was confusing?

What is the next step to gain new skills or knowledge?

What kinds of support do you need?

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