



Professional Book Study Introduction

One type of professional learning is a professional book study or book talk. A book study can be a powerful way for educators to drive their own learning. Adult learning theory (Knowles, 2005) states that adults learn best when their learning is “self-directed and task-centered.”

A book study is an effective form of professional learning because new learning can be immediately applied in the classroom. Teachers are involved in multiple sessions over time where there is continuous discussion around a relevant topic that has arisen from school data. Remember, the goal for any professional learning is to have a positive impact on student learning!

What is it?

Professional book studies are (Ryley, 2012):

- Small groups of educators with similar interests and goals gathered together to engage in professional discourse around a specific topic of teaching and learning.
- Individuals committed to reading and discussing a selected book, guided by the question: "How will this book influence professional practices at both the classroom and school level?"
- Opportunities to build a shared knowledge base.

How is it used?

The professional book study process includes (Ryley, 2012):

- Identifying a topic, reviewing and selecting a book for study.
- Engaging in dialogues around specific content in the book, usually using professional protocols.
- Committing to trying out ideas and strategies from the book.
- Studying to make recommendations to impact instruction in order to promote student achievement.

How can our professional book study be successful?

A book study group is successful when:

- All group members are involved in the decision-making processes.
- Every member is involved because they have an interest in learning more about the topic.
- Norms and protocols have been established as a group.
- There is time for reflection and celebration.

