

Teaching Improvement Profile Template

Lesson Study is substantive professional work that should count in retention, promotion and tenure. The Teaching Improvement Profile Template is intended to help you write a coherent summary of your lesson study work that you could use as evidence of teaching improvement.

In the realm of research and scholarship there are clearly defined genres and stylistic conventions for documenting and sharing work. Not so in teaching. Consequently, campus review committees ask us to include all kinds of teaching artifacts in our files (e.g., course syllabi, assignments, exams, grade distributions, student evaluations, a teaching philosophy, etc).

What do all of these artifacts add up to—what do they say about your teaching? Seriously—who knows? It's what I call the “archaeological dig” approach where you put a bunch of artifacts on the table and try to figure out what they mean. The dig approach is not likely to be replaced anytime soon. But what if you could put in your file a Teaching Improvement Profile (TIP) that told a brief, coherent story about your teaching? The TIP is designed to do just that.

You can use the following template to develop a teaching improvement profile for your lesson study activities. Even though lesson study is inherently collaborative, the template allows you to tell an individual story of your experience. The template takes into account three important conditions:

- **Brevity.** The profile should be short so that others can read it quickly. In most cases you can write a well developed profile in 3-4 pages.
- **Coherence.** A well developed profile is a coherent story about teaching and learning. It is like a research report or case study that connects all the elements of teaching—vision and goals for student learning, instructional design, teaching practices and class interactions, learning outcomes, and analysis and revision of practices.
- **Complexity.** A well developed profile depicts the substance and complexity of teaching and learning including the goals for student learning, the rationale for one's instructional decisions, ways to observe changes in student thinking, how to evaluate the depth of their learning, and how to revise teaching to further support student learning.

The template is available online at www.uwlax.edu/sotl/lsp/tools.htm

Teaching Improvement Profile for (*your name here*)

What is a Teaching Improvement Profile?

Teaching, “like other forms of scholarship, is an extended process that unfolds over time. It embodies at least five elements: vision, design, interactions, outcomes, and analysis” (Shulman, 1998).

1. Vision: the instructor’s goals that specify what students ought to learn and develop.
2. Design: the design of assignments, exercises, and experiences intended to make the goals come to life.
3. Interactions: the enactment of teaching and learning in the classroom, engaging students with the subject matter through discussion, lecturing, problem solving, collaborative work, exercises and assignments.
4. Outcomes: The acts and products of student learning consisting of changes in understanding, skills, competencies, propensities and sensibilities.
5. Analysis: the interpretation and analysis of how and how well students learn from the experience.

Lesson Study is a teaching improvement process in which a small group of instructors jointly designs, teaches, observes, evaluates and revises a single class lesson—called a Research Lesson (Lewis & Tsuchida, 1998; Stigler, & Hiebert, 1999). Because it embodies all five elements of teaching—vision, design, interactions, outcomes and analysis—lesson study is an ideal context in which to document teaching improvement. This Teaching Improvement Profile provides evidence and analysis of, and reflection on Lesson Study activities.

Lewis, C., & Tsuchida, I. (1998). A lesson is like a swiftly flowing river. *American Educator*, 22(4), 12-17; 50-52.

Stigler, J.W., & Hiebert, J. (1999). *The teaching gap: Best ideas from the world’s teachers for improving education in the classroom*. NY: Free Press.

Shulman, L. (1998). “Course Anatomy: The Dissection and Analysis of Knowledge Through Teaching.” In Pat Hutchings (Ed.). *The Course Portfolio: How Faculty Can Examine Their Teaching to Advance Practice and Improve Student Learning*. Washington, DC: American Association for Higher Education.

This teaching improvement profile explains my lesson study experience during (*indicate time period*). Student handouts and other pertinent materials are attached in the appendix.

INTRODUCTION

In this section

1. *describe lesson study briefly*
2. *indicate your time commitment during the academic year and describe what you did in general terms*
3. *refer to completed work or work in progress (e.g., Research Lesson Report, article for publication)*

During 2004-2005 I participated in lesson study with (*names of team members*). Our group met (*number of meetings*) for a total of (*number of hours*) in fall and spring semester. In the first semester we designed and taught the lesson, collected evidence of student learning and used the evidence to revise the lesson. The second semester we repeated this cycle by teaching and observing the revised lesson, collecting additional evidence of student learning and revising the lesson a second time.

We completed a final Research Lesson Report which documents the lesson study in greater depth. A copy of the report is in the appendix, and is online at <http://www.uwlax.edu/sotl/lsp/gallery.htm>). **Or**

Currently our group is working on a final Research Lesson Report that will document the lesson study in greater depth and detail.

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

In this section

1. *describe the course and the lesson study topic*
2. *explain the rationale for selecting the topic (e.g., it's a particularly difficult topic for students; it's a new area of the curriculum)*

The course (*include a brief description and relevant information—number of students, why they take it, etc.*)

We developed a research lesson on the topic of . . . We chose this topic because. . .

The rationale will be more compelling if you characterize the lesson as a potential solution to a learning problem—e.g., students do not understand X, Y or Z. It will be even more compelling if you can document the nature of the problem with observations, data, or indicate it is a well known student learning problem in your field.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

In this section

1. *Describe the short and long term learning goals of the lesson. State these in terms of the knowledge, skills, abilities values, dispositions students should develop as a result of the lesson. Acknowledge that a single lesson cannot fully develop larger long term goals but that it can make a contribution to their development.*
2. *Point out any connections between the lesson's goals and departmental goals and objectives.*

The lesson is designed to foster short and long term learning goals. As a result of the lesson students should (*be able to . . . better able to . . .*). . .

A single lesson cannot fully develop these long term . . . (*identify the long term capacities, skills, attitudes, dispositions*). However, it is important to address these in individual classes.

LESSON DESIGN

In this section

1. *include a summary of the lesson plan with the approximate amount of time for each segment. Include a detailed lesson plan in the appendix.*
2. *indicate who does what, e.g., The instructor explained . . . Students worked in small groups on . . . (This helps the reader get a better sense of the lesson as a teaching and learning episode.)*
3. *refer to handouts and relevant materials, and include them in the appendix.*

RATIONALE FOR LESSON DESIGN

In this section explain the rationale for the lesson design—how and why do the specific instructional and learning activities support the desired changes in student learning and thinking?

The rationale should explain the relationship between teaching and learning, and should focus on how students learn from the specific activities and exercises. The following examples illustrate progressively more specific and substantive explanations of student learning.

- 1. Students worked in groups for part of the lesson. We chose group work because it actively involves students in learning. Students who are active are more likely to learn the material. (Generic—Active Learning is a good thing.)*
- 2. Students worked in groups for part of the lesson. The group task was designed so that students would apply course concepts to new problems. Students had the opportunity to think about how the material applies in “real life” contexts and not just as textbook information to memorize. They are more likely to think about the meaning of the ideas and not simply memorize the information. (More specific—the rationale appeals to “application” as a way to foster understanding.)*
- 3. Students worked in groups for part of the lesson. The group task was designed so that students used course material to explain several novel examples. Members of the group were obliged to give feedback and suggestions about how to strengthen one another’s explanations. We chose this task because developing an explanation involves students in trying to make sense of the material and establish relevant connections among ideas. Further, feedback from other students would, if nothing else, get students to question their understanding of the topic. (More fully developed—the rationale indicates that “explanation” is a sense making activity and that feedback can prompt students to question their level of understanding. These activities can be observed and analyzed during the lesson.)*

ANALYSIS OF THE LESSON

In this section

- 1. describe the types of evidence of student learning you collected including: 1) observations of student learning and thinking during the lesson and 2) evaluation of student learning before and/or after the lesson.*
- 2. summarize the results in terms of what students learned (based on any pre and post lesson evidence) and how they learned or did not learn what was taught (based on observational evidence from the lesson).*
- 3. explain the results. Based on the evidence, how did the lesson support (and not support) achievement of the learning goals. Explain other “interesting” findings even if they are not directly related to the lesson goals. Discuss the significance of the results and what they mean for improving the lesson.*

REFLECTION

In this section, tell the reader what you have learned from lesson study and how it has affected your classroom instruction and/or pedagogical thinking. Cite specific examples to illustrate changes in your practices or thinking.

Some prompts

- 1. Why did you become involved in lesson study? What are your teaching improvement goals?*
- 2. Discuss specific insights about student learning that came out of the lesson study.*
- 3. Discuss ways your teaching has changed or begun to change in terms of class planning, goal setting, classroom practices, assessment of student learning, use of assessment to improve teaching and learning, your understanding of how students learn the subject you teach.*

Lesson Study Bibliography

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Online Lesson Study Resources

Lesson Study Resources available from

- Mills College <http://www.lessonresearch.net/>
- Teachers College, Columbia University <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/lessonstudy/>
- UW-La Crosse <http://www.uwlax.edu/sotl/lsp/>

Teaching Improvement Profile Draft (May, 2005)