

# Lesson Study and the Teaching of Biography: Connecting Content and Practice

## Getting Started: An Overview of Goals and Procedures

Oakland Unified School District  
Teaching American History Grant  
Spring Semester, 2005

## **Lesson Study in American History: Translating Content into Practice**

How can the content and ideas presented by the historians and staff find their way into teacher lessons, and ultimately, how might this work support student learning and understanding of American History?

# Lesson Study and Research Lessons

## What is a Research Lesson?

1. Actual classroom lesson with students, watched by other teachers
2. Collaboratively planned
3. Brings to life a goal or vision of education
4. Recorded: video, audio, student work
5. Discussed by faculty and sometimes outside commentators

# Lesson Study



# Planning Phase

1. What is the topic of the lesson?
2. What do you want students to learn and understand?  
What question about the topic do you want students to answer?
3. What does the student work already generated about an individual tell us about what lessons need to be developed?

# Teaching the Lesson

1. What is the focus of the observation?
2. How will you know what students learned? What evidence will you collect to help answer your questions?
3. What student writing can be collected for analysis during the debriefing?

# Post-Lesson Activities I - Debriefing the Lesson

## Step 1

- Discuss research lesson. Focus on evidence of student understanding during the lesson.
- Discuss evidence of how the lessons promoted the long-term goals and lesson/unit goals
- Discuss possible revisions and refinements to the lesson before it is taught in another classroom.

# Connecting the Lesson and the Debriefing - Three Examples

1. Chinese Immigration – Can students use an immigration story to understand a bigger historical movement?
2. Nuances of Freedom – Can students understand and articulate multiple perspectives on questions of freedom?
3. Mexican-American War – Can students gather evidence from source documents to develop and support an argument?

## Post-Lesson Activities II- Debriefing the Lesson

### Step II

*(after teaching and observing the lesson)*

Collect and analyze the students' final  
pieces of writing on

“Why was \_\_\_\_\_ important?”

# Lesson Study Provides Opportunities to

1. Think Deeply About Long-term Goals for Students
2. Carefully Consider the Goals of a Particular Content Area, Unit, and Lesson
3. Study the Best Available Lessons
4. Plan Lessons that Bring to Life both Short-term and Long-term goals
5. Deepen Subject Matter Knowledge
6. Expand Instructional Knowledge
7. Build Capacity for Collegial Learning
8. Develop the “Eyes to See Students”

# What Makes Lesson Study Work?

- Teacher Leadership
- Collaboration
- Research Mindset
- Putting teaching and learning at the center, not the teacher