

3 Simple Steps to Create a Summer Book Study Group of Teachers, Administrators, or Principals

Step 1: Create volunteer book study groups for the summer (or spring) grouped by people who all want to read the same book, study the same topic, or by volunteer groups (such as the 6th grade team or middle school principals) who will later choose their book.

You can distribute the list of books that I have summarized if you want to use these (2 sentence descriptions are on my website) or distribute your own list:

<u>Literacy</u>
<i>Active Literacy Across the Curriculum: Strategies for Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening</i> by Heidi Hayes Jacobs <i>Teaching Adolescent Writers (Grades 4-12)</i> by Kelly Gallagher
<u>Teaching</u>
<i>Classroom Assessment for Student Learning</i> by Richard J. Stiggins et al. <i>The First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher</i> by Harry K. Wong and Rosemary T. Wong <i>Five Easy Steps to a Balanced Math Program (Primary, Upper Elementary, and Secondary School)</i> by Larry Ainsworth and Jan Christinson <i>Going with the Flow: How to Engage Boys (and Girls) in Their Literacy Learning</i> by Michael W. Smith and Jeffrey D. Wilhelm <i>The Skillful Teacher: Building Your Teaching Skills</i> by Jon Saphier and colleagues
<u>Leadership</u>
<i>Change Leadership: A Practical Guide to Transforming Our Schools</i> by Tony Wagner et al. <i>College Knowledge</i> by David T. Conley <i>Differentiated School Leadership</i> by Jane A.G. Kise and Beth Russell <i>Skillful Leader II: Confronting Conditions That Undermine Learning</i> by Alexander D. Platt and colleagues
<u>Professional Development Structures</u>
<i>Leading Lesson Study</i> by Jennifer Stepanek and colleagues <i>Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work</i> by Rick DuFour, et al. <i>Ready for Anything: Supporting New Teachers for Success</i> by Lynn F. Howard <i>The Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through: Changing School Supervisory Practice One Teacher at a Time</i> by Carolyn J. Downey et al.

Step 2: Choose a facilitator and order the books

If you are a principal or a superintendent, you can certainly facilitate the group yourself, but it would be a good leadership opportunity for someone else. The facilitator should choose a date to discuss the book and make sure the books get ordered with enough time for people to read them before that date. The facilitator can also look at the book summary to see if it is the right book for the group.

Step 3: Conduct a meaningful discussion about the book that leads to ideas for implementation

The facilitator can bring questions that are more specific to the book, but below are some general ideas. Everyone should be asked to write three discussion questions before coming to the meeting, preferably genuine questions about understanding how an idea might work at your school or how to adapt an idea to your setting.

1. Have members of the study group take some time to identify passages or ideas that were meaningful to them – helped them further or change their ideas or gave them suggestions for the classroom/their school.
2. Each member takes a turn sharing one of those passages and its significance to him or her. Others should feel free to ask clarifying questions.
3. Each member shares the three questions he/she brought and each is discussed and moderated by the facilitator.
4. As a group, brainstorm all the ideas we might be able to implement
 - * in individual classes (or individual schools if it's a group of principals)
 - * on a grade/department/school-wide basis (or district-wide)If the group is interested in bringing the book's ideas to a larger audience (for ex., the whole middle school), brainstorm ideas about how to do this and who would do this.
5. If individuals want to make a commitment to implement any ideas in the book, have them work on creating SMART goals for themselves (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, timebound). They should write down a specific goal, the results they hope to see, how they will measure those results, and create a time by which they hope to implement it.
6. At the end of the meeting, the facilitator should choose a follow-up date in the fall for the group to discuss their implementation of the book's ideas.

