

# Showcasing & Sharing Successful School Redesign Initiatives

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*Dr. Alice Lindsay, Director*  
Florida and the Islands Regional  
Comprehensive Center at ETS

Happy New Year from the Florida and the Islands Comprehensive Center (FLICC)! In this issue you will enjoy reading about the Lesson Study Institutes hosted by our center in partnership with the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE).

It was a privilege to welcome leaders from the Regional Assistance Centers who joined the Middle School Science Initiative (MSSI) and Secondary School Redesign (SSRI) schools and districts for this professional development experience. The combination of educational professionals made each of the seven institutes rich in diversity and purpose. Florida has been enriched by this comprehensive approach to supporting lesson study throughout the state.

Beginning in March, FLICC will provide one customized day of consultation to each SSRI district. These sessions will be facilitated by Executive Vice President of Performance Learning Systems, Steve Barkley. Barkley works extensively throughout the United States and in many foreign countries, and is no stranger to those working in the SSRI project. The day will be designed for each of the nine districts based on their district plans. The ultimate goal for the day will be to solidify strategies for expanding and sustaining the work that has been developed in each SSRI school. Several districts have indicated that their day will include district level administrators and members of school leadership teams from both SSRI and non-SSRI schools. We are proud of your continuing efforts in making Florida's secondary schools more successful for each student.

*Additional information on the initiatives of the Florida and the Islands Center may be found at <http://www.ets.org/flicc/initiatives.html>*

## LESSONS LEARNED in LESSON STUDY

In the fall of 2009, FLICC – in conjunction with the Florida Department of Education – designed and delivered a series of institutes across Florida focusing on lesson study. The idea was to take Professional Learning Communities to the next level by having regional personnel, district staff, and teachers trained in the art of lesson study (see sidebar).

The FLICC team, with the help of the Anchin Center at University of South Florida, set off to seven locations across the great state of Florida. The journey started in the rolling hills of Ocala, then proceeded to history-steeped St. Augustine, and continued to centrally located Orlando. The trip resumed along the beaches of the Tampa Bay area, Naples, and Boca Raton, and concluded in our capitol city, Tallahassee. It was a whirlwind tour to be sure!

Dr. Lois Brown Easton facilitated the sessions, tweaking the presentation as the series of institutes unfolded. Dr. Easton, of Colorado, was appreciative of



**Lesson study** is a potent embedded peer-to-peer professional learning strategy. It requires teachers and other educators to work collaboratively to strengthen a given lesson until it has been refined as much as possible and then teach it to get powerful data about how well the lesson works. In a colloquium after the lesson is taught, the teacher (who can be anyone in the lesson study group) reflects on the lesson first, and then the other members of the lesson study group share data they collected during the lesson. Lesson study groups make a decision about whether to revise the field-tested lesson and teach it again or simply apply what they have learned to another lesson.

the opportunity to serve the educators of Florida again (not to mention the warm winter weather!). She returned to Florida after providing summer training for the FLDOE's Regional Assistance Centers. That session was so well received that FLICC brought her back for this series of seven institutes. These encores extended the summer training to regional FLDOE personnel, district staff and secondary level educators.

The institutes were designed to cut to the chase and be a series of hands on experiences in lesson study. This was not a sit and get series of events. During the first experience, the unsuspecting participants were asked to teach a secondary math



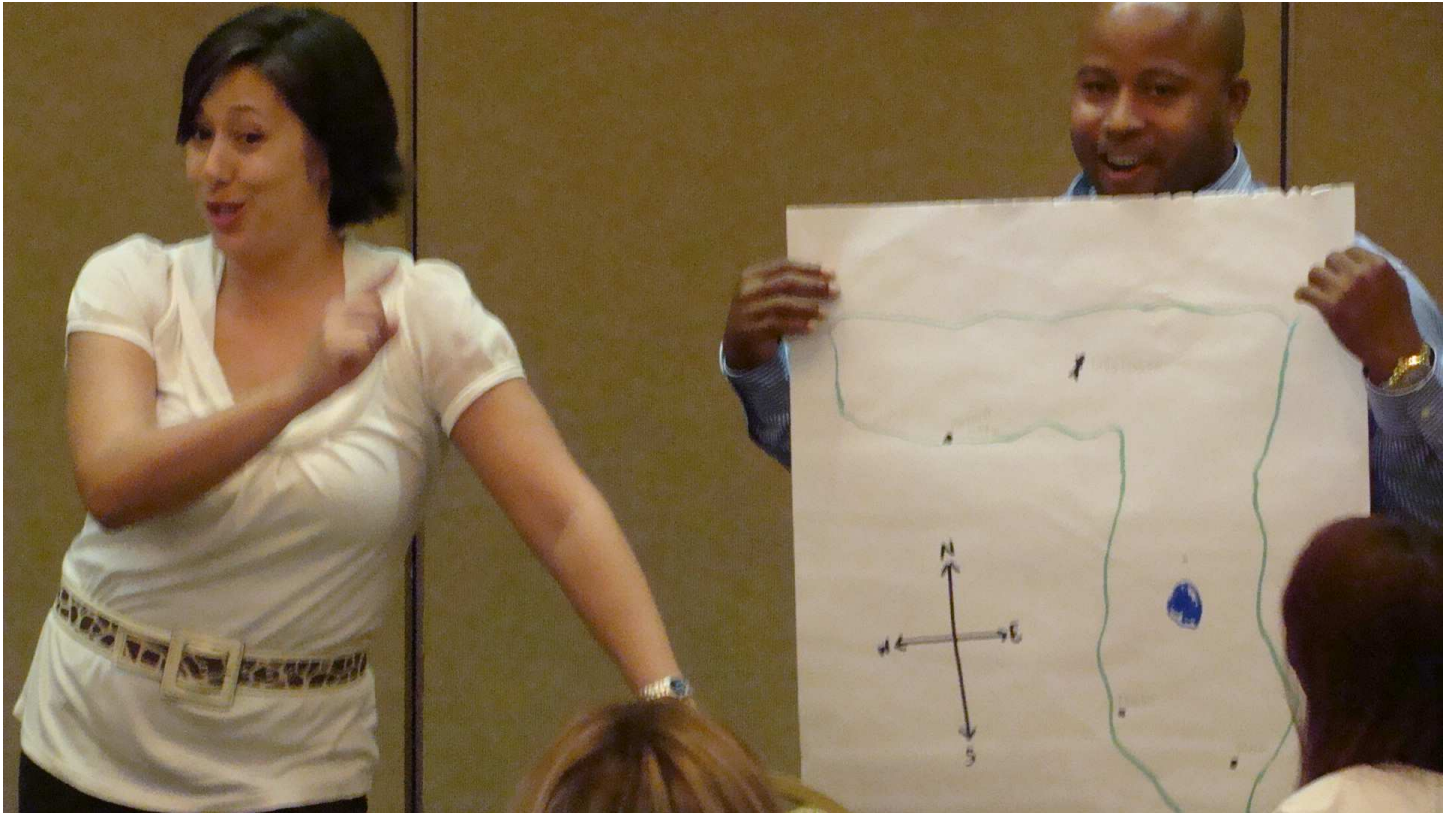
### LESSON STUDY

lesson provided by the FLICC team. This challenged comfort levels as Dr. Easton directed one team to teach the lesson to another team of “students.” This was a baptism by fire in lesson study!



After teaching the lesson, groups reconvened in a debriefing session of the lesson called a “colloquium.” In colloquium, teachers, students, and data collectors share their impressions of the lesson, focusing on the content of the lesson and the student reaction to it. The key is not to focus on the teacher, but the focus should be on the students’ engagement in the lesson and their potential for learning the standard or benchmark. Lesson study never focuses on the teacher.

The second experience with lesson study was somewhat more comfortable because educators worked on a provided lesson in their own area of expertise: science, mathematics, social studies, or English language arts. In



addition, participants engaged in a broader discussion of lesson study and the data to be collected during the observation of the lesson being taught. As the sun set on the first day, participants moved from their second colloquium to a networking reception with Dr. Easton and the FLICC team. Comfort food and conversation closed out the day.

It is said that it is always darkest before dawn and this seemed to be true for the lesson study groups. At the end of the first day, participants still had many questions about implementing lesson study in their regions, districts, and schools. How will we find the time to do lesson study? Is a lesson ever perfect? How many lessons should we work on during the school year? How do we start implementing lesson study?

Luckily, like the story of the shoemaker and the elves in which the shoemaker cut the leather and the elves came in dark of the night and made shoes, Dr. Easton expertly cut the leather of lesson study on the first day. On the second day, institute participants, like the elves, began to shape what was laid before them.



The third experience with lesson study came slightly after dawn on the second day. This lesson study experience was the group's first variation in that educators were given the opportunity to develop a lesson with like-minded content experts guided by a copy of Florida's Next Generation State Standards for each content area. Participants set about developing lessons in science, mathematics, social studies and English language arts. Like the previous day, the group was split between those who taught their lessons and those who acted as students, followed by colloquium.

Dr. Easton presented a variation of lesson study that focuses on the tuning protocol of Joseph McDonald and David Allen and the National School Reform Faculty. This is the classic protocol upon which most other protocols have been based. As noted in the participants' manual, "It features times when a presenter talks and is silent, and times when participants talk and are silent. It provides three levels of depth: presentation, participant discussion, and presenter reflection; finalized by a general debriefing that can extend the conversation."



After the tuning protocol activity, the practice of lesson study solidified for institute participants. This foothold provided the foundation to discuss the logistics and implementation of the lesson study process. Teams struggled with the issues for their districts and schools, suggesting solutions and planning the next steps to implement lesson study back home. This is when the lingering questions from the previous day were addressed and answers to the details of implementation were answered.

Over the busy two-day schedule, participants grew to understand the basics of lesson study by engaging in three lesson study experiences and learning about lesson study variations. Regional personnel, district staff and teachers also planned the implementation of lesson study in their respective regions, districts, and schools and discussed how they will work together to solve any issues related to lesson study implementation. The participants left the institutes edified and ready to implement lesson study wearing the new shoes their teams had cobbled.

The following materials from the lesson study institutes are available at [www.ets.org/flicc](http://www.ets.org/flicc).

- The Day One Packet
- The Day Two Packet
- A Guide to Facilitating Lesson Study
- A Rubric for Evaluating Lesson Study
- A Guide to Scheduling Lesson Study

*The tuning protocol can also be used for examining teacher/educator practice; classroom, school, district, and other policies and practice; plans and proposal; or ideas that are fairly well thought out and represented in something the participants can read.*

*Article and pictures were provided by John Lockwood, Ph.D., Florida DOE Liaison*

# Florida and the Islands Regional Comprehensive Center at ETS

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Florida and the Islands Comprehensive Center (FLICC) is operated by Educational Testing Service (ETS). The Center is one of 16 regional centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The mission of the regional technical assistance centers is to help build capacity of state departments of education to assist low-performing districts and schools close the achievement gap and meet the goals of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. FLICC, located in Tampa, FL serves the state of Florida and the territories of Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands.

The goals of the Center are focused on 5 priorities:

1. Improving teacher quality
2. Enhancing school and district leadership quality
3. Implementing data and research-based strategies to turn around low performing schools
4. Creating strategies to meet the needs of special populations
5. Increasing community and stakeholder involvement

The Center offers technical assistance in the following areas:

- Implementing school improvement efforts to help meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements
- Identifying and adopting instructional and assessment methods that have been proven effective through scientifically based research, especially for students with special needs
- Designing programs and strategies and allocating resources to recruit, train, and retain talented teachers and school leaders
- Enhancing assessment and accountability systems

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