

Planning Checklist for Open House With Research Lessons

An open house with research lessons requires some planning beyond that required for ordinary research lessons.

Months (or Even Years!) in Advance

1. Build consensus at your school that an Open House would be worthwhile, and make sure there is a team of educators willing to take on the extra work
2. Consider what your school hopes to gain from the Open House, for example:
 - a. Share what you are learning with other local schools
 - b. Share what you are learning with the education profession more broadly
 - c. Gain feedback from outside educators and researchers who may help you advance your vision
 - d. Help parents see your school's vision of education in practice
3. Decide how many people to invite and who to invite
 - a. How many people do we want to invite? The number of people who can observe students close-up is limited. Even if a lesson is held in a large space such as the gym, 1-2 adult observers per student is probably the maximum. Microphones to capture student and teacher voices can allow more observers (with headsets, or amplification in a separate room) to take part. Or you can designate some observers to watch the lesson from the periphery and have them rely on other observers to report on close-up observations of students.
 - b. Who is your priority audience? This will relate to your goals for the event. For example, you may want to reach out to teachers or administrators who you would like to see embrace your work, researchers you would like to exchange ideas with, and so forth.
 - c. How will you keep track of attendance? We recommend requiring an RSVP in advance. Announcing the time and place without requiring an RSVP could produce unexpected visitors at your school.
 - d. If you plan to include parents, be sure to think through the experience from their point of view. For example, we do NOT recommend including parents in the post-lesson discussion, when students may be discussed by name. Holding a separate prior public lesson just for parents can be a good way to help students and the school practice for the Open House public research lessons.

A Month in Advance

1. Consider logistics for visitors and students:
 - a. Choosing a space: A public lesson will likely will not fit in a classroom. Do you have another space you can use? A gym or auditorium? An off-campus space? (Remember, an off-campus space may require additional transportation decisions)

- b. Parking
 - c. Food, including set-up, serving ware, utensils, etc.
 - d. Participating students' schedule: In what ways will this event disrupt the normal schedule of the participating students? How can you make this experience as positive as possible for them, such as a small token of the day?
 - e. Sound: Consider microphones for the pre- and post-lesson discussions and the lesson, and test the sound system in advance
 - f. Copies: sign-in forms, agenda, lesson plan, seating chart, data collection templates, feedback forms, name-tags (for students, maybe for visitors); agree on what is needed, when it will be available, and who will copy
 - g. Students at the school not participating in the research lesson: arrange schedule and substitutes as needed for students whose teachers will observe the research lesson
2. Consider learning agenda for the participating educators
- a. Plan the schedule for the day: Pre-lesson discussion, Research Lesson, Post-Lesson Discussion and any other activities that will help the target audience learn about the school's vision of student learning, vision of professional learning, the target content, etc., depending on the purpose of the Open House. Some examples of additional activities include:
 - i. Student journal meet-up, in which students share their journals with a small group of educators, and informally answer questions
 - ii. Presentation of a content progression (e.g., mathematics content progression, by a district specialist or researcher)
 - iii. Panel Presentation on school-wide Lesson Study (for outside visitors) on issues like how to schedule it, grow it, make it effective
 - iv. Panel Presentation about the school's instructional focus (e.g., what has been learned about Teaching Through Problem-Solving, Argumentative Writing, Board Organization and Journal Use, etc.)

Weeks to Days in Advance

1. As you go through the preceding items create a checklist with dates and responsible persons. Check it off as items are completed, and designate someone to follow up on any items on the list that are not checked off.

After the Event

1. Hold a meeting to reflect on your event—what worked well and what would you want to do differently next time?
2. What items should be added to the checklist next time? Let us know!