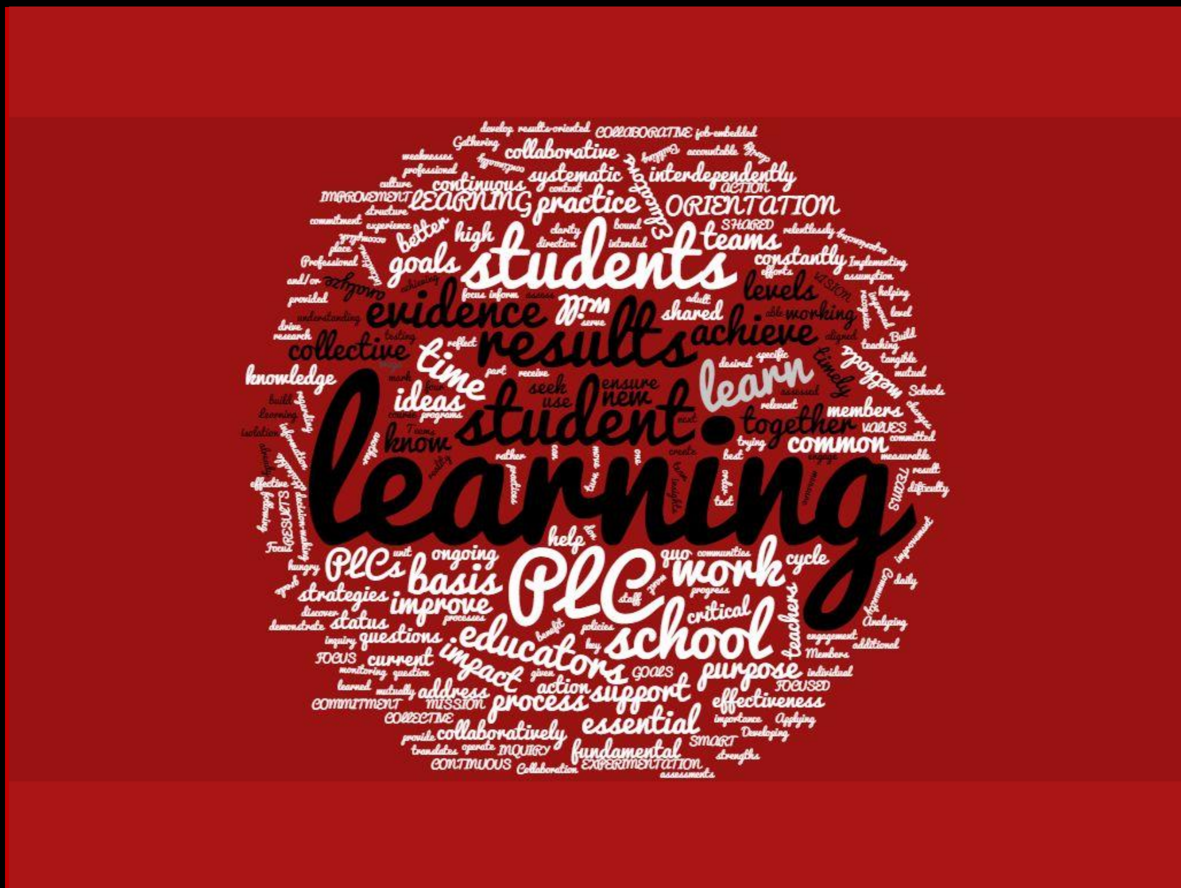


PLC Guidebook

Updated by the
PLC Joint Committee 2015-2016
Some information and resources adapted from All Things PLC, School Reform Initiative, and National School Reform Faculty – Harmony Education Center

Contents

Introduction

District 131 has a PLC Joint Committee to represent administrative and teacher voices in decision making regarding the effective implementation of Professional Learning Communities. The PLC Joint Committee has crafted this guidebook to provide a clear picture of PLC work in District 131. The guidebook contains theoretical, background information as well as practical tools to use in your PLC teams.

Questions? Comments? Interested in joining the PLC Joint Committee? Contact us at greatPLCs@d131.org.

What is a PLC?

"A Professional Learning Community (PLC) is educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. PLCs operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators." — adapted from *Learning by Doing* (2010)

Six Essential Characteristics of a PLC

1. Shared Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals
2. Collaborative Teams Focused on Learning
3. Collective Inquiry
4. Action Orientation and Experimentation
5. Commitment to Continuous Improvement
6. Results Orientation

Three Big Ideas of a PLC

Focus on Learning

1. *What do we want students to know and be able to do?*
2. *How will we know when they have learned it?*
3. *What will we do when they haven't?*
4. *What will we do when they already know it?*

Build a Collaborative Culture

Focus on Results

Why is District 131 a Professional Learning Community?

Research has shown that the structures and culture of high-performing PLCs improve student learning. By making the cultural shifts associated with true PLC work, we will be able to help our students be successful.

District 131 PLC Joint Committee

Mission – Why does the PLC Joint Committee exist?

We exist to provide guidance and support in effective PLC implementation.

Vision – What must our committee become to accomplish our purpose?

Our committee will include representation from both educators and administrators district-wide committed to improving student learning.

Values – How must we behave to achieve our vision?

The PLC Joint Committee values:

- Working collaboratively
- Keeping student learning at the focus
- Honoring multiple stakeholder voices
- Participating in the continuous cycle of improvement as it relates to district-wide PLC implementation

Goals – How will we mark our progress?

The PLC Joint Committee will provide guidance and support for effective PLC implementation by:		
Goal	**Action / Evidence**	**Timeline**
Recruiting from all stakeholder groups to include representative voices	Email: Union email calling for additional members	April 2016
Maintaining clear communication regarding PLC implementation expectations and support	Publish: District 131 PLC Guidebook	TBD
Designing and providing training for PLC facilitators	Publish: PLC Facilitator Professional Learning Schedule Offer: PLC Facilitator Professional Learning Sessions	TBD Ongoing
Building a shared understanding of Professional Learning Communities district-wide	Provide: Keynote and Touch-Base sessions during Institute and SIP Days	August 2016 January 2017 May 2017
Making PLC resources available	Create: PLC Resource Library on SharePoint	June 2016 – ongoing
Continually researching and sharing PLC best practices	Publish: Monthly articles in T&L Newsletter highlighting PLC best practices	-
Using data to identify next steps in the continual improvement process	Collect and Analyze: Implementation feedback data from all stakeholders	Ongoing

District 131 PLC Collective Commitments

The responsibility lies with all stakeholders to understand and embrace what it means to operate as a Professional Learning Community. The actions listed below are just a few examples of how we can make PLCs work for District 131.

Who?	Commits to…
PLC Joint Committee	• Recruit from all stakeholder groups to include representative voices • Maintain clear communication regarding PLC implementation expectations and support • Build shared understanding of Professional Learning Communities district-wide • Design and provide training for PLC facilitators • Make PLC resources available • Continually research and share PLC best practices • Use data to identify next steps in the continual improvement process
Central Office Administration	• Provide structured support to buildings that are struggling with PLC implementation • Participate in administrative PLC work to learn and grow in leadership roles that support educator growth and student learning
Building Level Administration	• Respect / protect PLC team time by not assigning additional, non-PLC related tasks • Provide structured support to PLC teams through regular communication • Participate in administrative PLC work to learn and grow in leadership roles that support educator growth and student learning
PLC Team Facilitators	• Participate in PLC professional learning opportunities to fully understand PLC best practices and develop / refine meeting facilitation skills
All Educators	• Participate fully in the PLC team learning process ○ Attend meetings as scheduled ○ Foster team interactions based on trust and respect ○ Focus on student learning ○ Embrace collective responsibility ○ Commit to continuous improvement

The Basics

Who is part of a PLC?

Everyone in the district is part of a professional learning community. Teams of educators may be formed at the building or district level to address student learning needs. Some examples of teams are provided below.

Grade-level teams: All of the teachers who teach the same subjects in the same grade level are on the same team. For example, the three eight grade Language Arts teachers make up the 8th grade LA Team.

Same-course teams: All of the teachers who teach the same course are on the same team. For example, 12 music teachers become the “music team”.

Vertical teams: Teachers are linked with those who teach the same content above or below their grade level or course. For example, in a small K–5 elementary school with only one teacher per grade level, the school could be structured into three vertical teams: K–1, 2–3, and 4–5. In a middle or high school, the vertical structure might be teachers from the same department. The vertical structure is often used in schools where students are grouped into multi-grade or combination classrooms. For example, the grade 2/3 teacher collaborates with the other second- and third-grade teachers on the grades 2 and 3 vertical team.

Logical links teams: Resource teachers, support teachers, and specialists can join grade level, same-course, and vertical teams that are pursuing outcomes linked to their areas of expertise. A logical link, for example, could be a reading specialist joining a kindergarten team to work with both the teachers and students in building a strong literacy foundation. A special education teacher could join a grade level team of teachers because the special education teacher shares mutual accountability with the other team members for the learning success of designated students assigned into the course or grade level. Very often, however, resource teachers and specialists serve students in multiple grade levels and courses, and therefore cannot be expected to contribute to every team. We recommend that these teachers select one or two teams each year to co-labor with on a regular basis and that schedules are built to accommodate their participation. They often make these team selections on the basis of caseload. For example, the special education resource teacher may have more designated students in second and fifth grades than any other grades this year; therefore, the special education teacher joins those two grade-level teams. Other times specialists may select a team because they would like to become more familiar with the content or because they feel they have particular expertise they could contribute to the team. We recommend that resource and specialist teachers participate in the decision

Electronic teams: Although vertical structures may provide a collaborative team for the *singletons* within a school (the sole teacher of a grade level or course), they do not provide grade-level or same-course collaboration. Electronic teams can address that void. Educators seeking teammates beyond their schools can turn to their district office for support.

When do PLC teams meet?

Professional Collaboration time, as it is referred to in the 2015-2018 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), will occur at the following times for the 2016-2017 school year.

Preschool and Benavides Kindergarten Center*: For preschool and BKC staff professional collaboration time includes PLCs and MTSS which will be up to two 40 minute periods per week on days established by the principal at the beginning of the school year in accordance with procedures established by the Administration. During weeks where there is a faculty meeting there will be only one forty minute period of professional collaboration time.

Elementary: For elementary staff professional collaboration time includes PLCs and MTSS which will be up to two 40 minute periods per week before students arrive on days established by the principal at the beginning of the school year in accordance with procedures established by the Administration. During weeks where there is a faculty meeting there will be only one forty minute period before students arrive for professional collaboration time. On days a teacher is scheduled for door duty they may be excused ten minutes early from professional collaboration time. If an elementary teacher, excluding pre-K, is unable to be scheduled for a sixth plan period, then the teacher may elect to exempt themselves from two PLC and two morning meetings a month.

Middle School: Middle school teachers will have eight (8) assigned periods which include six (6) periods of instruction, and one period for team professional collaboration which shall not be subject to regular assignment, and one individual preparation period.

High School*: High School PLC work will occur during late start times allocated every Tuesday of the school year. PLC team assignments should be arranged in coordination with Division Chairs to ensure manageable expectations for possible participation on multiple teams.

*****Not specifically referenced in the 2015-2018 CBA, but current practice.

As stated in the 2015-2018 CBA: “Upon ratification of this Agreement a joint committee shall be formed to review and propose changes for the conventional workday starting and end times, student attendance times, and professional learning community meeting times, such changes to be implemented, if possible, for the 2016-2017 school year but in no event later than the 2017-2018 school year.”

Where do PLC teams meet?
It is important to meet in a consistent location that allows the team to work, free of distractions or possible interruptions. Many teams will find it convenient to meet in a classroom at their home building. District-wide teams may want to find a location in the district that meets their needs for traveling back to their home building in time to meet students.

Ten Essential Elements of Healthy PLCs

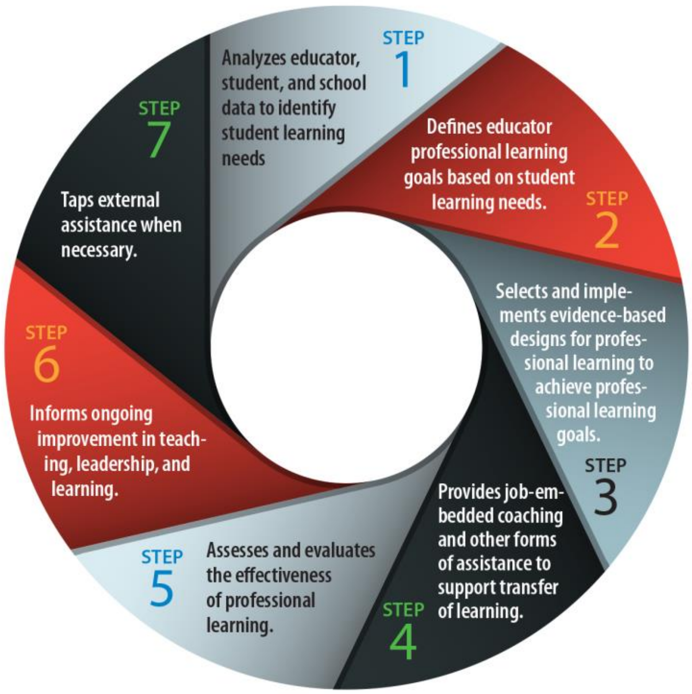
From The PLC Book (Fitchman Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2016)

1. Healthy PLCs establish a vision that creates momentum for their learning.
2. Healthy PLCs build trust among group members.
3. Healthy PLCs Understand and embrace collaboration.
4. Healthy PLCs encourage, recognize, and appreciate diversity within the group.
5. Healthy PLCs promote the development of critical friends.
6. Healthy PLCs pay attention to the work “in between” meetings.
7. Healthy PLCs hold the group accountable for and document their learning.
8. Healthy PLCs have a comprehensive view of what constitutes data and are willing to consider all forms and types of data throughout their PLC work.
9. Healthy PLCs understand change and acknowledge the discomfort it may bring to some PLC members.
10. Healthy PLCs work with their building administrators.

The Cycle of Continuous Improvement

PLCs work to assess progress toward goals within the cycle of continuous improvement. Some examples of cycles are:

Learning Forward



Deming Institute

Templates / Tools

In the following sections, you will find a variety of tools that your PLC team can use for planning and conducting successful meetings.

Preparing for Meetings

To ensure that meeting time is used to maximize the focus on student learning through results orientation, the PLC Joint Committee provides examples of meeting / agenda templates for your team's consideration.

The following templates and protocols are provided as options for your PLC:

- PLC Meeting Checklist (Adapted from Meeting Wise; serves as a guide for creating agendas)
- Group Agenda Planning (could be used to address questions 3 & 7 from the checklist)
- Connections (could be used to address question 2 from the checklist)
- PLC Meeting Agenda Template (addresses all questions on the checklist)
- PLC Agenda Template from EAHS

PLC Facilitator Skills Workshop

PLC Facilitators who wish to learn more about these templates and protocols and have an opportunity to practice using them are invited to attend a ***PLC Facilitator Workshops***. Please consult the district catalog in My Learning Plan for specific times and dates of the workshop.

Great PLC Meeting Checklist

		YES	NO
Purpose	1. Have we identified meeting **objectives** that contribute to the goal of improving learning?		
	2. Have we established a **connection** between the work of this PLC meeting and others (past and future)?		
Process	3. Have we incorporated **feedback** from previous meetings?		
	4. Have we chosen challenging and engaging **activities** related to the meeting objectives?		
	5. Have we assigned **roles**, including facilitator, timekeeper, and note taker?		
	6. Have we built in time to identify and commit to **next steps**?		
	7. Have we built in time for **assessment** of what worked and did not work in the meeting?		
Preparation	8. Have we gathered or developed **materials** that will help to focus and advance the meeting objectives?		
	9. Have we determined what, if any, **pre-work** we will ask participants to do before the meeting?		
Pacing	10. Have we put **time allocations** to each activity on the agenda?		
	11. Will the **primary objective** be addressed early in the meeting?		
	12. Can we **realistically accomplish** all activities on the agenda in the time allotted?		

Adapted from the Meeting Wise Checklist (Parker Boudett & City, 2015)

Great PLC Protocol

Group Agenda Planning

Developed by Sharon Allen-Spann and Debbie Bambino

What implications does our collaborative work/learning in this session have for our practice between this meeting and the next? What change will you make in your work with students, their families or your colleagues (see I-MAP)? How should we plan to use our time at our next session?

Group Goal: (What's our focus?)

Outstanding Questions (Is there a theme or pattern emerging? Are there questions we need to revisit? Are we asking ourselves the hard questions? What questions are we avoiding?)

Dilemma(s), Upcoming Events, Assignments or Assessments

Texts we're considering…and why?

Who will facilitate? *Which text-based protocol will we follow?*

Protocols/Activities we plan to use and why?
Who will facilitate, present?

What supports do we need to be successful?
Who can help us and what do we need from them?

How will we know if we've made progress?
What evidence will we review? How will we document our growth?

Possible supports, next steps to consider: peer visitations, consultation with external coaches local or national, online conversation with other group member(s), reflective journal writing…

Great PLC Protocol

Connections

Developed by Gene Thompson-Grove

What is Connections?
Connections is a way for people to build a bridge from where they are or have been (mentally, physically, etc.) to where they will be going and what they will be doing. It is a time for individuals to reflect — within the context of a group — upon a thought, a story, an insight, a question, or a feeling that they are carrying with them into the session, and then connect it to the work they are about to do. Most people engage in Connections at the beginning of a meeting, class, or gathering.

There are a few things to emphasize about Connections for it to go well…

- It is about connecting people's thoughts to the work they are doing or are about to do.
- Silence is OK, as is using the time to write, or to just sit and think. Assure people that they will spend a specific amount of time in Connections, whether or not anyone speaks out loud. Some groups — and people within groups — value the quiet, reflective time above all else.
- If an issue the group clearly wants to respond to comes up in Connections, the group can decide to make time for a discussion about the issue after Connections is over.

The "rules" for Connections are quite simple

- Speak if you want to.
- Don't speak if you don't want to.
- Speak only once until everyone who wants to has had a chance to speak.
- Listen and note what people say, but do not respond. Connections is not the time to engage in a discussion.

Facilitating the process is also straightforward. Begin by saying "Connections is open," and let people know how long it will last. A few minutes before the time is up, let people know that there are a few minutes remaining, so that anyone who hasn't yet spoken might speak. With a minute or so to go, let the group know that you will be drawing Connections to a close, and again ask if anyone who hasn't spoken would like to speak. Before ending, ask if anyone who has spoken would like to speak again. Then end.

Time: Ten minutes is usually enough time for groups of 10 people or fewer, 15 minutes for groups of 11-20 people and 20 minutes for any groups larger than 20 people. Connections generally shouldn't last more than 20 minutes. People can't sustain it. The one exception is when there is a group that has been together for a period of time doing intensive work, and it is the last or next to the last day of their gathering.

Some people will say that Connections is misnamed, since people don't connect to (or build on) what other people have said. However, the process is a connecting one; and powerful connections can still occur, even though they are not necessarily the result of back and forth conversation.

Great PLC Meeting Agenda Template

Meeting Agenda
Date, Start time – End time
Location

PLC Questions:

1. *What do we want students to know and be able to do?*
2. *How will we know when they have learned it?*
3. *What will we do when they haven't?*
4. *What will we do when they already know it?*

Topic	**Attendees:** **Facilitator:** **Note Taker:** **Timekeeper:**

Meeting Objective(s):

1.
2.
3.

To prepare for this meeting, please:

1. Read the agenda (optional: reply to (facilitator) with feedback by (date & time)
2. (other pre-work task – bring ____, read article, etc.)

Schedule (___ minutes)

Time	Minutes	Activity Description
7:45 – 7:50 (example)	5 (example)	Check-in and review how objectives of this meeting connect to ongoing work*
		Review next steps from previous meeting*
		Review plus/deltas from previous meeting*
		Objective 1 & protocol
		Objective 2 & protocol
		Objective 3 & protocol
		Review next steps from this meeting's work / support needed
		Assess what worked well in this meeting and we would have liked to change

*You may wish to consider providing this information as part of "pre-work" if the meeting time is limited, then condense into one brief meeting opener prior to starting Objective 1's protocol.

Great PLCs
Agenda & Minutes

PLC Essential Questions:

- What do we want our students to learn?
- How will we know if each student has learned it?
- How will we respond if some students do not learn it?
- How can we extend and enrich the learning for students who have demonstrated proficiency?

Title of PLC:
Date:
PLC Members Present:
PLC Members Absent:
Unit SMART Goal:
Semester SMART Goal:
Norms:

- Student oriented
- Open to new ideas
- Share the workload
- Stay on talk; stay focused
- No sidebars
- Keep moving forward

Topic for Discussion	Suggested Time	Who is Responsible?	Notes
Opening (Review norms, roles, last meeting, etc.)			
Observer Comments			
To Do/ Next Steps			
Draft Agenda for Next PLC			

Getting Started

Establishing a Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals is a great way to get your team started on the right path. Building trust and collegial relationships takes effort and time.

The following protocols are provided as options to get your PLC started:

- Forming Ground Rules (Creating Norms)
- Creating Metaphors
- Compass Points
- Group Juggle

PLC Facilitator Skills Workshop

PLC Facilitators who wish to learn more about these protocols and have an opportunity to practice using them are invited to attend a ***PLC Facilitator Workshops***. Please consult the district catalog in My Learning Plan for specific times and dates of the workshop.

Great PLC Protocol

Forming Ground Rules (Creating Norms)

Developed by Marylyn Wentworth

Gaining agreement around Ground Rules, or Norms, is important for a group that intends to work together on difficult issues, or who will be working together over time. They may be added to, or condensed, as the group progresses. Starting with basic Ground Rules builds trust, clarifies group expectations of one another, and establishes points of “reflection” to see how the group is doing regarding process.

Time: Approximately 30 minutes

Process

1. Ask everyone to write down what each person needs in order to work productively in a group, giving an example of one thing the facilitator needs, i.e. “to have all voices heard,” or “to start and end our meetings when we say we will.” (This is to help people focus on process rather than product.)

2. Each participant names one thing from her/his written list, going around in a circle, with no repeats, and as many circuits as necessary to have all the ground rules listed.

3. Ask for any clarifications needed. One person may not understand what another person has listed, or may interpret the language differently.

4. If the list is VERY long — more than 10 Ground Rules — ask the group if some of them can be combined to make the list more manageable. Sometimes the subtle differences are important to people, so it is more important that everyone feel their needs have been honored than it is to have a short list.

5. Ask if everyone can abide by the listed Ground Rules. If anyone dislikes or doesn’t want to comply with one of them, that Ground Rule should be discussed and a decision should be made to keep it on the list with a notation of objection, to remove it, or to try it for a specified amount of time and check it again.

6. Ask if any one of the Ground Rules might be hard for the group to follow. If there is one or more, those Ground Rules should be highlighted and given attention. With time it will become clear if it should be dropped, or needs significant work. Sometimes what might appear to be a difficult rule turns out not to be hard at all. “Everyone has a turn to speak,” is sometimes debated for example, with the argument that not everyone likes to talk every time an issue is raised, and others think aloud and only process well if they have the space to do that. Frequently, a system of checking in with everyone, without requiring everyone to speak, becomes a more effective Ground Rule.

7. While work is in progress, refer to the Ground Rules whenever they would help group process. If one person is dominating, for example, it is easier to refer to a Ground Rule that says, “take care with how often and how long you speak,” than to ask someone directly to stop dominating the group.

8. Check in on the Ground Rules when reflection is done on the group work. Note any that were not followed particularly well for attention in the next work session. Being sure they are followed, refining them, and adding or subtracting Ground Rules is important, as it makes for smoother work and more trust within the group.

Great PLC Protocol

Creating Metaphors

Adapted from The Courage to Teach, Parker Palmer, pp. 148-150, by Gene Thompson-Grove

Purpose

To use metaphors as a reflection tool and build community among participants through sharing professional metaphors.

Time: 65 minutes

Process

1. Fill in the blank: When I am at my best as a (teacher, administrator, librarian, counselor), I am ____________________________________. Write your metaphor on an index card.
2. (Optional) Underneath the written description, draw a picture, symbol, or some other graphic representation of your metaphor.
3. Respond in your journal: What guidance might this metaphor offer me in tough or sticky situations? What are the "shadows" of this metaphor? (10 minutes for Steps 1-3)
4. In triads, the colleagues discuss each of their metaphors in turn. The first presenter explains his or her metaphor (using the journal writing), and answers just a few clarifying questions from the rest of the group.

Then the presenter is silent and listens to the group members discuss what they heard. What did we hear? What are some additional strengths of this metaphor? What might be some additional shadows of this metaphor?

The presenter then comes back into the discussion, and talks with his or her colleagues about what especially resonated for him or her while listening to them.

Then, the next person presents.

(Each of the 3 presentation/discussion "rounds" takes about 15 minutes.)

5. Once all of the group members' metaphors have been discussed, they may want to return once again to their journal writing in response to the following prompt:

Parker Palmer says he uses his metaphor to "...return me in imagination to the inner landscape of identity and integrity where my deepest guidance is to be found" (page 150). How might your metaphor impact your future practice in a similar way? (5 minutes)

6. Debrief about the process as a group. What did we learn? What should we do differently next time? (5 minutes)

Great PLC Protocol

Compass Points: North, South, East, and West
An Exercise in Understanding Preferences in Group Work

Developed in the field by educators

Purpose

Similar to the Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory, this exercise uses a set of preferences which relate not to individual but to group behaviors, helping us to understand how preferences affect our group work.

Note: See the third page, Compass Points Explanations Expanded, for additional descriptions of the 4 preferences.

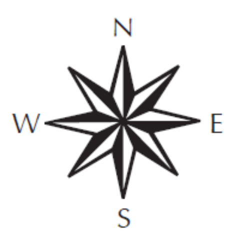
Time: Approximately 30 minutes

Process

1. The room is set up with 4 signs on each wall — North, South, East, and West.
2. Participants are invited to go to the direction of their choice. No one is only one direction, but everyone can choose one as their predominant one.
3. Each direction group answers the 5 questions (see next page) on a sheet of newsprint. When complete, they report back to the whole group.
4. Processing can include:
    a. Note the distribution among the directions: what might it mean?
    b. What is the best combination for a group to have? Does it matter?
    c. How can you avoid being driven crazy by another direction?
    d. How might you use this exercise with others? Students?

North
Acting — "Let's do it";
likes to act, try things, plunge in

West
Paying attention to detail — likes to know the who, what, when, where and why before acting



East
Speculating — likes to look at the big picture and the possibilities before acting

South
Caring — likes to know that everyone's feelings have been taken into consideration and that their voices have been heard before acting

North, South, East, and West

Decide which of the 4 directions most closely describes your personal style. Then spend 15 minutes answering the following questions as a group.

What are the strengths of your style? (4 adjectives)

1. ___________________________________
2. ___________________________________
3. ___________________________________
4. ___________________________________

What are the limitations of your style? (4 adjectives)

1. ___________________________________
2. ___________________________________
3. ___________________________________
4. ___________________________________

What style do you find most difficult to work with and why?

What do people from the other directions or styles need to know about you so you can work together effectively?

What do you value about the other 3 styles?

North, South, East, and West

Compass Points Explanation Expanded

Developed by Sue Horan, June, 2007

North

- You take charge.
- You run the daily operation.
- You have lists of things to do and you need to get started and get them done.
- You get assignments in early.
- You don't have to ask questions to begin your work or assignment.
- You drive the work and get it done.
- You teach our children a complete curriculum.
- You will stitch the mosaic together and do the work.

South

- You take in the information, slow us down, and make sure everyone has voice and is heard.
- You include everyone, and make sure the human side is nurtured.
- You take care of us and bring up our affective domain.
- You make sure the emotional side of our work is heard.
- You make sure we are all included.
- You teach our children with strong relationships and care.
- You add beauty to the mosaic, make sure everyone participates in the creation, and keep us all comfortable.

East

- You have the big picture, the frame that needs to be filled in.
- You need to see the final product and will work with the end in mind.
- You believe in working backwards, understanding by design.
- You don't get a project started until you are clear about the final product.
- You teach our children the big concepts.
- You know what the mosaic looks like in the end.

West

- You ask the hard questions.
- You live by inquiry.
- You challenge us to identify the details.
- You don't start a project until you are clear about the details.
- You make our picture more complete.
- You lead by inquiry and engage in thoughtful discourse.
- You make us think and teach detailed concepts to our children.
- You fill in the details of the mosaic.

Great PLC Protocol

Group Juggle

Developed in the field by educators

Purpose
To provide a playful opportunity to reflect on group dynamics and collaborative skills

Materials
A variety of soft objects to be used for juggling

Rules
1. Each person must throw to the same person and receive from the same person throughout the activity.
2. A toss has a low and high point. A toss is different than a pass or a hand off.
3. Objects that fall can be left alone or brought back into play.

Process
1. Ask the group to form a circle.
2. As the facilitator, explain that you want to create a pattern of tossing the ball as a team by calling out a person's name and then throwing the object to her/him.
3. After a person receives the ball, she/he thanks the thrower by name, then throws it to someone else in the group until everyone has thrown and received the ball only once.
4. Ask the group to remember the pattern and try the pattern again to make sure that they know to whom they throw and from whom they receive the ball.
5. After the object is passed through the group a second time, explain the notion of juggling multiple objects. Invite the group to try again and to see how many objects they can toss.
6. Let them know that when you count out loud, "1, 2, 3, STOP," the group needs to stop and see how many objects they have in play.
7. After 2 or 3 rounds, ask the group to set their own goal of what they believe they can accomplish and then invite them to try again.

Processing Questions
- How would you describe your feelings related to the juggle from the beginning, middle, and end?
- How would you describe the group's effectiveness from the beginning, middle, and end?
- What did it take for us to be successful as a group?
- As we work to strengthen our learning community as a staff, what should we keep in mind?
- What might we do differently with our students as a result of this experiment?
- What problems were we trying to solve?
- How did we solve the problems we faced?
- Was there any fear of failure minimized by the activity and/or the group?
- How did the establishment of a goal impact on our ability to work together and solve the problem?
- What kinds of reflection, intervention, staff development/remediation, or redirection took place to improve your effectiveness?
- Are there connections between group success in this activity and your work?

Establishing a PLC Direction

Once your PLC team has established norms and started to build (or re-establish) relationships, establishing a PLC direction for the year's work is the next step. "Establishing the direction of your professional learning community (PLC) consists of coming to consensus about the focus and direction of your work for the school year and formulating a guiding question" (Fitchman Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2016).

It is important to note that a PLC team may have the following question structures:

1. The whole PLC team focuses on the same question(s)
2. The PLC team establishes an overarching question with teachers each focusing on a related sub-question

Guiding questions may emerge from the following sources:

1. Collective reading of recent research
2. Continued focus on previous PLC team work
3. Data on student learning (see "Analysis of Student Data" protocols section)
4. Specific protocols designed to evoke questions of practice

Good guiding questions are questions that:

1. All PLC members are passionate about exploring,
2. Focus the PLC team on student learning and student work,
3. Explore the practice of PLC members (rather than trying to change others)
4. Are genuine (PLC team members do not already know the answer), and
5. Are open-ended and invite exploration.

The following protocols are provided as options to form your PLC team's guiding question(s):

- Chalk Talk (research-driven question)
- Save the Last Word for ME (research-driven question)
- Individual Monthly Action Plan – imap (continued focus on previous work)
- Passion Profiles Protocol (questions of practice)
- Fine-Tuning a Question – Group Feedback Protocol (for individual team members's questions)

PLC Facilitator Skills Workshop

PLC Facilitators who wish to learn more about these protocols and have an opportunity to practice using them are invited to attend a ***PLC Facilitator Workshops***. Please consult the district catalog in My Learning Plan for specific times and dates of the workshop.

Great PLC Protocol

Chalk Talk

Developed by Hilton Smith, Foxfire Fund; adapted by Marylyn Wentworth

Purpose

Chalk Talk is a silent way to reflect, generate ideas, check on learning, develop projects, or solve problems. It can be used productively with any group — students, faculty, workshop participants, or committees. Because it is done completely in silence, it gives groups a change of pace and encourages thoughtful contemplation. It can be an unforgettable experience. Middle level students absolutely love it — it's the quietest they'll ever be!

Time: Varies according to need; can be from 5 minutes to an hour

Materials

Chalk board and chalk, white board and dry-erase markers, or large roll paper on the wall and chart markers

Process

1. The facilitator explains very briefly that Chalk Talk is a silent activity. No one may talk at all and anyone may add to the Chalk Talk with words or graphics as they please. You can comment on other people's ideas simply by drawing a connecting line to the comment. It can also be very effective to say nothing at all except to put finger to lips in a gesture of silence and simply begin with Step 2.

2. The facilitator writes a relevant question in a circle on the board.
   Sample questions:
   - What did you learn today?
   - So What?, or Now What?
   - What do you think about social responsibility and schooling?
   - How can we involve the community in the school, and the school in community?
   - How can we keep the noise level down in this room?
   - What do you want to tell the scheduling committee?
   - What do you know about Croatia?
   - How are decimals used in the world?

3. The facilitator either hands a piece of chalk to everyone, or places many pieces of chalk at the board and hands several pieces to people at random.

4. People write as they feel moved. There are likely to be long silences — that is natural, so allow plenty of wait time before deciding it is over. Participants may write comments, ask questions, draw images/graphics, show connections between various comments.

Great PLC Protocol

Chalk Talk (cont.)

5. How the facilitator chooses to interact with the Chalk Talk influences its outcome. The facilitator can stand back and let it unfold or expand thinking by:
    - Circling other interesting ideas, thereby inviting comments to broaden
    - Writing questions about a participant comment
    - Adding her/his own reflections or ideas
    - Connecting 2 interesting ideas/comments together with a line and adding a question mark

Actively interacting invites participants to do the same kinds of expansions. A Chalk Talk can be an uncomplicated silent reflection or a spirited, but silent, exchange of ideas. It has been known to solve vexing problems, surprise everyone with how much is collectively known about something, get an entire project planned, or give a committee everything it needs to know without any verbal sparring.

6. When it's done, it's done.

7. The Chalk Talk can be considered complete at this point or it can become the basis for a further discussion. Questions to raise with the group might include:
    - What do you notice about what we wrote?
    - What do you wonder about now?
    - What was the Chalk Talk like for you?

Great PLC Protocol

Save the Last Word for ME

Developed by Patricia Averette.

Purpose
To clarify and deepen our thinking about a text

Roles
Timekeeper/facilitator, who both participates and keeps the process moving

Time - Approximately 30 minutes

Process

- The process is designed to build on each other's thinking, not to enter into a dialogue.
- Participants may decide to have an open dialogue about the text at the end of the 30 minutes.
- Timing is important; each round should last approximately 7 minutes.

1. Create a group of 4 participants. Choose a timekeeper (who also participates) who has a watch.
2. Each participant silently identifies what she/he considers to be (for her/him) the most significant idea addressed in the article, and highlights that passage.
3. When the group is ready, a volunteer member identifies the part of the article that she/he found to be most significant and reads it out loud to the group. This person (the presenter) says nothing about why she/he chose that particular passage.
4. The group should pause for a moment to consider the passage before moving to the next step.
5. The other 3 participants each have 1 minute to respond to the passage — saying what it makes them think about, what questions it raises for them, etc.
6. The first participant then has 3 minutes to state why she/he chose that part of the article and to respond to — or build on — what she/he heard from her/his colleagues.
7. The same pattern is followed until all 4 members of the group have had a chance to be the presenter and to have the "last word."
8. Optional open dialogue about the text and the ideas and questions raised during the first part of the protocol.
9. Debrief the experience. How was this a useful way to explore the ideas in the text and to explore your own thinking?

Great PLC Protocol

Individual Monthly Action Plan (i-map)

Developed by Debbie Bambino

What implications does our collaborative work have for your practice between this meeting and the next? What change will you make in your work with students, their families, or your colleagues?

Planned Change: (What will I do?)

Why am I planning to do this? What do I hope will happen as a result of this change in my practice?

How will I initiate this change? What am I going to do? What steps will I take and when will I take them?

What supports do I need to be successful? Who can help me and what do I need from them?

How will I know if I've made progress? What evidence will I review? How will I document my own growth? Improvements in student learning?

Possible supports, next steps to consider: peer visitation/observation, presenting work at an upcoming meeting, online conversation with other group member(s), reflective journal writing…

Great PLC Protocol

Passion Profiles

Adapted from Gene Thompson-Grove's, "Student Profiles," by Pedro R. Bermudez, Belkis Cabrera, and Linda Emm.

pas·sion (p²sh"…n) n. 1. A powerful emotion, such as love, joy, hatred, or anger. 2.a. Ardent love. 3.a. Boundless enthusiasm…

Read the passion profiles and identify the passion that most accurately describes who you are as an educator. If several fit (this will be true for many of you), choose the one that affects you the most, or the one that seems most significant as you reflect on your practice over time. (5 minutes)

Without using the number of the passion profile, ask your colleagues questions and find the people who chose the same profile you did. (5 minutes)

Directions for Small Groups:

1. Choose a facilitator/timer and a recorder/reporter.
2. Check to see if you all really share that passion. Then, talk about your school experiences together. What is it like to have this passion—to be this kind of educator? Each person in the group should have an opportunity to talk, uninterrupted, for 2 minutes. (10 min.)
3. Next, each person in the group privately identifies an actual student, by name, who has been affected by the group's profile. Write [in your journal]: (5 min.)
   - What have I done with this student?
   - What's worked? What hasn't?
   - What else could I do?
   - What questions does this raise for me?
4. Talk as a group about the questions that teachers who share this passion are likely to have about their practice. List as many of these questions as you can. (15 min.)

   Recorder/reporter should write on the newsprint, and should be ready to report out succinctly to the large group. Be sure to put your Passion Profile # at the top of the newsprint page.

5. Whole group debrief (after hearing from each Passion Profile group): (15 min.)
   - What strikes you as you listen to the passions of these educators? Listen for the silences. Where are they, and what do you make of them?
   - Which of the questions generated intrigues you the most? Why? How might you go about exploring this question with colleagues? What would you do first?

Passion Profiles

Passion 1: The Child

You became a teacher primarily because you wanted to make a difference in the life of a child. Perhaps you were one of those kids whose life was changed by a committed, caring teacher and you decided to become a teacher so that you could do that for other children. You are always curious about particular students whose work and/or behavior just doesn't seem to be in sync with the rest of the students in your class. You often wonder about how peer interactions seem to affect a student's likelihood to complete assignments, or what enabled one of you ELL students to make such remarkable progress seemingly overnight, or how to motivate a particular student to get into the habit of writing. You believe that understanding the unique qualities that each student brings to your class is the key to unlocking their full potential as learners.

Passion 2: The Curriculum

You are one of those teachers who are always "tinkering" with the curriculum in order to enrich the learning opportunities for your students. You have a thorough understanding of your content area. You attend conferences, and subscribe to journals that help you to stay up on current trends affecting the curriculum that you teach. Although you are often dissatisfied with "what is" with respect to the prescribed curriculum in your school or district, you are almost always sure that you could do it better than the frameworks. You are always critiquing the existing curriculum and finding ways to make it better for the kids you teach — especially when you have a strong hunch that "there is a better way to do this."

Passion 3: Content Knowledge

You are at your best in the classroom when you have a thorough understanding of the content and/or topic you are teaching. Having to teach something you don't know much about, makes you uncomfortable and always motivates you to hone up this area of your teaching knowledge base. You realize that what you know about what you are teaching will influence how you can get it across to your students in a developmentally appropriate way. You spend a considerable amount of your personal time — both during the school year and in the summer — looking for books, material, workshops, and courses you can take that will strengthen your content knowledge.

Passion 4: Teaching Strategies and Techniques

You are motivated most as a teacher by a desire to improve on and experiment with teaching strategies and techniques. You have experienced and understand the value of particular strategies to engage students in powerful learning and want to get really good at this stuff. Although you have become really comfortable with using cooperative learning with your students, there are many others strategies and techniques that interest you and that you want to incorporate into your teaching repertoire.

Great PLC Protocol

Fine-Tuning a Question

Developed by Nancy Fitchman Dana and Mickey MacDonald

Things to consider when providing feedback:

- Is the question something your colleague is passionate about exploring?
- Is the question focused on student learning?
- Is the question focused on your colleague's own practice?
- Is the question a REAL question (whose answer is not known)?

Time - Fifteen minutes per PLC member

Process

1. **Framing and Sharing the Question (3-4 minutes)** – The presenter shares the dilemma that led to his or her question and shares the question with the group.
2. **Probing Questions (6 minutes)** – Participant pose probing questions about the dilemma and the question. Probing questions are open-ended and designed to help the presenter think more deeply about the framing and articulation of his or her question as well as provide more information to the group about the presenter's thinking.

   Sample Probing Questions:
   - What is most important for you to learn related to your dilemma? In what ways does your question address what is important for you?
   - In what ways might your students benefit from your exploration of this question?
   - What do you already know about the topic of your dilemma? In what ways might gaining insights into your question enhance what you already know?
   - What aspects of your dilemma are within your control? Outside your control? In what ways does your question reflect what you can control?
3. **Fine-Tuning the Question (4-5 minutes)** – Based on what they heard in Steps 1 & 2, participants provide suggestions for fine-tuning the wording of or reframing the question.

   Tip: *Questions are generally not phrased in dichotomous (yes/no) fashion. If a question is phrased dichotomously, try rewording using the following question starters:*
   - In what ways does…?
   - What is the relationship between…?
   - How do students experience…?
   - What happens when…?
   - How does…?

4. **Presenter Thanks (1 minute)** – The presenter briefly shares insights he or she gained into his or her question and thanks group members for their support.

Developing a PLC Action Learning Plan

Once PLC guiding questions have been established, the team (or individuals) can develop an Action Learning Plan.

Analysis of Student Data

As part of the cycle of continuous improvement, PLC teams will engage in the collaborative analysis of student data. Below are examples of data analysis cycles. Notice there is some overlap with steps in the improvement cycle.

A template to track student growth is provided by EAHS.

The following protocols are provided as options for your PLC team to analyze student data:

- Data Mining
- Data-Driven Dialogue
- Atlas: Looking at Data

Data Wise

Dreambox Learning

PLC Facilitator Skills Workshop

PLC Facilitators who wish to learn more about these protocols and have an opportunity to practice using them are invited to attend a ***PLC Facilitator Workshops***. Please consult the district catalog in My Learning Plan for specific times and dates of the workshop.

Great PLCs

Unit Student Growth Map

Course: ____

PLC Members: ____

Unit: ____

Unit SMART Goal:

Semester SMART Goal:

Power Standard(s):

Data Used to Determine Student Initial Skill Level:

Source (previous summative assessment, pre-assessment, student work, etc.): Findings:

Assessment Timeline:

Assessment:	PLC Data Analysis Date:
Formative Assessment:	
(Optional) Formative Assessment:	
Summative Assessment:	

Data Tracking:

General Assessment Analysis/Review Questions:
(These are the questions that will guide your conversation when analyzing formative assessments and filling out this table.)

1. In what areas did our students do well on this assessment?
2. What instructional strategies helped our students do well?
3. What skill deficiencies do we see?
4. What patterns do we see in the mistakes, and what do they tell us?
5. Which students did not master essential standards and will need additional time and support? What intervention will be provided to address unlearned skills?
6. Do we need to tweak or improve this assessment?

Assessment:	Data Analysis Findings:
Formative Assessment:	Findings: Interventions: Enrichments:
Formative Assessment: (Optional)	Findings: Interventions: Enrichments:
Summative Assessment:	Findings: Future Focus:

Great PLC Protocol

Data Mining

Developed in the field by educators in City Schools of Decatur, Georgia.

To use with educators in illuminating two data sets. There is not a presenter in this process.

1. **Getting Started.** The facilitator reminds the group of norms and shares each step outlined below.
2. **Examining Data Set #1**. The facilitator distributes data set #1 and offers time to examine (length to be determined based on the volume of data). (5-10 minutes)
3. **Describing Data Set #1**. The facilitator asks, "What do you see?" In rounds, participants offer statements about the data, avoiding judgments and interpretations, using directionality words wherever possible (e.g., "on page 2, I see," "In the third column, I see"). (7 minutes)
4. **Interpreting Data Set #1**. The facilitator asks, "What wonderings do you have about the data?" In rounds, participants offer "I wonder statements" that can be charted. (7 minutes)
5. **Examining Data Set #2.** The facilitator distributes data set #2 and offers time to examine (length to be determined based on the volume of data). (5-10 minutes)
6. **Describing Data Set #2.** The facilitator asks, "What do you see?" In rounds, participants offer statements about the data, avoiding judgments and interpretations, using directionality words wherever possible (e.g., "on page 2, I see," "In the third column, I see"). (7 minutes)
7. **Interpreting Data Set #2**. The facilitator asks, "What wonderings do you have about the data?" In rounds, participants offer "I wonder statements" that can be charted. (7 minutes)
8. **Identifying Intersections and Dissonances**. The facilitator offers time for the group to talk together about what intersections are evident in the data and what dissonances arise from the data. This information can be charted. (10 minutes)
9. **Debrief** (3 minutes)

Facilitative Notes:

1. It is helpful if a process has already been determined regarding what will happen with the information that is gleaned from this process. For example, if a faculty is engaged in multiple Data Mining Protocols at the same time with the same set of data, notes could be charted in each meeting and offered to a Leadership Team to craft recommendations.

2. This process has been particularly enlightening to trouble observational data and perception data (e.g., results of classroom observations and teacher perception survey data).

Great PLC Protocol

Data Driven Dialogue

Developed by the Teacher Development Group, 2002.
Based on work presented by Nancy Love, author of "Using Data/Getting Results," 2002.

"Dialogue comes from the Greek word dialogos. Logos means 'the word,' or in our case we would think of the 'meaning of the word.' And dia means 'through' – it doesn't mean two. A dialogue can be among any number of people, not just two. Even one person can have a sense of dialogue within himself, if the spirit of dialogue is present. The picture or image that this derivation suggests is of a stream of meaning flowing among and through us and between us. This will make possible a flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which will emerge some new understanding. It's something new, which may not have been in the starting point at all. It's something creative. And this shared meaning is the 'glue' or 'cement' that holds people and societies together," (Bohm, D., 1990).

This protocol builds awareness and understanding of the participant's viewpoints, beliefs, and assumptions about data while suspending judgments. All participants have equal voice. The 3 phases of data-driven dialogue assist groups in making shared meaning of data. We encourage you to use this tool with your entire school staff and/or with your school leadership team at a special meeting on data. The dialogue tool helps to replace hunches and feelings with data-based facts, examine patterns and trends of performance indicators, and generate "root-cause" discussions that move from identifying symptoms to possible causes of student performance. In order to effectively use this tool, participants will need to have grade level, school, or district data reports.

1. **Phase I Predictions:** Surfacing perspectives, beliefs, assumptions, predictions, possibilities, questions, and expectations.
2. **Phase II Go Visual:** Re-create the data visually.
3. **Phase III Observations:** Analyzing the data for patterns, trends, surprises, and new questions that "jump" out.
4. **Phase IV Inferences:** Generating hypotheses, inferring, explaining, and drawing conclusions. Defining new actions and interactions and the data needed to guide their implementation. Building ownership for decisions.

Great PLC Protocol

Data Driven Dialogue: Phase I – Predictions

Phase I Predictions dialogue takes place before you see the data. During this time, you activate prior knowledge, surface assumptions, and make predictions, thus creating readiness to examine and discuss the data. You hear and honor all assumptions and ideas as "building blocks for new learning."

Private Think Time

Before beginning your Phase I Predictions dialogue, please reflect privately and record several of your preliminary thoughts about the data. One or more of the following thought-starters may be helpful.

I assume…

I predict…

I wonder…

My questions / expectations are influenced by…

Some possibilities for learning that this data may present…

Great PLC Protocol

Data Driven Dialogue: Phase II – Go visual

During Phase II Go Visual you re-create the data visually, on large sheets of paper, on a data wall, etc. Participants mark up the data so they better understand it (i.e., highlight trend lines in different colors, do math calculations and chart those, color code parts of the data that relate to each other). Participants might create visuals individually or in pairs or triads. Depending upon the amount of data, it might be helpful to divide it into subsets and identify who in the group will work with different subsets.

Great PLC Protocol

Data Driven Dialogue: Phase III – Observations

During Phase III Observations dialogue, you engage with the actual data and note only the facts that you can observe in the data. Conjectures, explanations, conclusions, and inferences are off-limits. You make statements about quantities (e.g., Over half the students…), the presence of certain specific information and/or numerical relationships between ideas (e.g., Over 90% of the students achieved below standard in Problem Solving; Compared to last year's data, the percentage of students performing at the advanced and on-standard levels in Skills increased by 8%…).

Private Think Time

Before beginning Phase III Observations dialogue, please study the data privately and record several of your observations.

Remember:

Just the facts! If you catch yourself using the following words, then stop.

~~Because…~~ ~~Therefore…~~ ~~It seems…~~ ~~However…~~

I observe that…

Some patterns / trends that I notice…

I can count…

I'm surprised that I see…

Great PLC Protocol

Data Driven Dialogue: Phase IV – Inferences

During Phase IV Inferences dialogue, you (a) generate multiple explanations for your Phase III Observations; (b) identify additional data that may be needed to confirm/contradict your explanations; (c) propose solutions/responses; and (d) identify data needed to monitor implementation of your solutions/responses.

Private Think Time

Before beginning Phase IV Inferences dialogue with your colleagues, please reflect privately, using one or more of the following thought starters to prompt your thinking:

I believe the data suggests… because…

Additional data that would help me verify / confirm my explanation is…

I think the following are appropriate solutions / responses that address the needs implied in the data…

Additional data that would help guide implementation of the solutions / responses and determine if they are working…

Great PLC Protocol

Data Driven Dialogue: Facilitation Plan

Developed by David Leo-Nyquist, revised 2013

Time: 60-90 minutes

1. **Review Protocol** (3 minutes)
2. **Presentation** (5 minutes)
   "Owner" of the data provides overview of the context and focus
3. **Clarifying Questions** (4 minutes)
4. **Phase 1: Predictions**
   a. Group fills out predictions sheet (3 minutes)
   b. Round-robin report-out of predictions (one item each person, one round only — 3 minutes) May be charted by the facilitator or other member of the group
5. **Distribution and Examination of Data** (7 minutes)
6. **Additional Clarifying Questions, if necessary** (3 minutes)
7. **Phase II: Go Visual** (10-30 minutes)
   Participants mark up and re-organize the data to better understand it.
   May be done individually, in pairs, or in small groups depending on group size and amount of data.
   Highlighters, chart paper, and calculators are helpful to have on hand.
8. **Phase III: Observations**
   a. Group fills out observations sheet (5 minutes)
   b. Round-robin report-out of observations may (one item each person, continue rounds until new ideas are spent — 5 minutes)
9. **Check in with Presenter** (2 minutes)
   Do we need to refocus our attention?
10. **Phase IV: Inferences**
    a. Group fills out inferences sheet (5 minutes)
    b. Round-robin report-out of inferences. May be charted (one item each person, continue rounds until new ideas are spent — 5 minutes).
11. **Response from the Presenter** — What new thoughts are you having about the data now? What are your next steps? (5 minutes)
12. **Implications for teaching and learning** (10 minutes)
13. **Debrief the protocol** (3 minutes)

Note: This protocol can be done in 2 sessions if desired, stopping after Step 8 between sessions. Participants can fill out the inferences sheet between meetings to allow for a fuller discussion of the results in the next session.

Great PLC Protocol

Atlas: Looking at Data

Learning from Data is a tool to guide groups of teachers discovering what students, educators, and the public understand and how they are thinking. The tool, developed by Eric Buchovecky, is based in part on the work of the Leadership for Urban Mathematics Project and the Assessment Communities of Teachers Project. The tool also draws on the work of Steve Seidel and Evangeline Harris-Stefanakis of Project Zero at Harvard University.

Revised November 2000 by Gene Thompson-Grove. Revised August 2004 for Looking at Data by Dianne Leahy.

1. **Getting Started**
   a. The facilitator reminds the group of the norms.
   b. The educator providing the data set gives a very brief statement of the data and avoids explaining what she/he concludes about the data if the data belongs to the group rather than the presenter.
   Note: Each of the next 4 steps should be about 10 minutes in length. It is sometimes helpful for the facilitator to take notes.

2. **Describing the Data (10 minutes)**
   a. The facilitator asks: “What do you see?”
   b. During this period the group gathers as much information as possible from the data.
   c. Group members describe what they see in data, avoiding judgments about quality or interpretations. It is helpful to identify where the observation is being made — e.g., “On page one in the second column, third row...”
   d. If judgments or interpretations do arise, the facilitator should ask the person to describe the evidence on which they are based.
   e. It may be useful to list the group’s observations on chart paper. If interpretations come up, they can be listed in another column for later discussion during Step 3.

3. **Interpreting the Data (10 minutes)**
   a. The facilitator asks: “What does the data suggest?” Followed by — “What are the assumptions we make about students and their learning?”
   b. During this period, the group tries to make sense of what the data says and why. The group should try to find as many different interpretations as possible and evaluate them against the kind and quality of evidence.
   c. From the evidence gathered in the preceding section, try to infer: what is being worked on and why?
   d. Think broadly and creatively. Assume that the data, no matter how confusing, makes sense to some people; your job is to see what they may see.
   e. As you listen to each other’s interpretations, ask questions that help you better understand each other’s perspectives.

Great PLC Protocol

Atlas: Looking at Data (cont.)

4. **Implications for Classroom Practice (10 minutes)**
   a. The facilitator asks: “What are the implications of this work for teaching and assessment?” This question may be modified, depending on the data.
   b. Based on the group’s observations and interpretations, discuss any implications this work might have for teaching and assessment in the classroom. In particular, consider the following questions:
   - What steps could be taken next?
   - What strategies might be most effective?
   - What else would you like to see happen? What kinds of assignments or assessments could provide this information?
   - What does this conversation make you think about in terms of your own practice? About teaching and learning in general?
   - What are the implications for equity?

5. **Reflecting on the ATLAS-Looking at Data (10 minutes)**

   Presenter Reflection:
   a. What did you learn from listening to your colleagues that was interesting or surprising?
   b. What new perspectives did your colleagues provide?
   c. How can you make use of your colleagues’ perspective

   Group Reflection:
   a. What questions about teaching and assessment did looking at the data raise for you?
   b. Did questions of equity arise?
   c. How can you pursue these questions further?
   d. Are there things you would like to try in your classroom as a result of looking at this data?

6. **Debrief the Process (5 minutes)**
   a. How well did the process work?
   b. What about the process helped you to see and learn interesting or surprising things?
   c. What could be improved?

Text-based Discussion

Part of learning together may involve reading research articles or other texts.

The following protocols are provided as options for your PLC team's text discussions:

- Three Levels of Text
- Four A's

Please note that the following protocols from earlier sections of this document can also be used for text discussion:

- Chalk Talk
- Save the Last Word for ME

PLC Facilitator Skills Workshop

PLC Facilitators who wish to learn more about these protocols and have an opportunity to practice using them are invited to attend a ***PLC Facilitator Workshops***. Please consult the district catalog in My Learning Plan for specific times and dates of the workshop.

Great PLC Protocol

Three Levels of Text Protocol

Adapted by the Southern Maine Partnership from Camilla Greene's Rule of 3 Protocol, November, 2003.

Purpose
This protocol is designed to deepen the understanding of a text and explore implications for participants' work. It asks participants to respond to 3 levels of the text: literal (level 1), interpretation (level 2), and implications (level 3)

Facilitation
Stick to the time limits. Each round takes up to 5 minutes per person in a group. Emphasize the need to watch air time during the brief group response segment. Do 1-3 rounds. Can be used as a prelude to a text-based discussion or by itself.

Roles
Facilitator/timekeeper (who also participates); participants

Process

5. Sit in a circle and identify a facilitator/timekeeper.

6. If participants have not done so ahead of time, have them read the text and identify passages that they feel may have important implications for their work.

7. Do 1-3 rounds. A round consists of:

    One person using up to 3 minutes to:

    Level 1: Read aloud the passage she/he has selected. If another participant has previously read one of your passages, select another to read.

    Level 2: Say what she/he thinks about the passage (interpretation, connection to past experiences, etc.)

    Level 3: Say what she/he sees as the implications for her/his work.

    The group responding (for a total of up to 2 minutes) to what has been said.

8. After all rounds have been completed, debrief the process.

Great PLC Protocol

Four “A”s Text Protocol

Adapted from Judith Gray, Seattle, Washington 2005.

Purpose
To explore a text deeply in light of one’s own values and intentions

Roles
Facilitator/timekeeper (who also participates); participants

Time
Five minutes total for each participant, plus 10 minutes for the final 2 steps.

Process

1. The group reads the text silently, highlighting it and writing notes in the margin or on sticky notes in answer to the following 4 questions (you can also add your own “A”s).
   a. What **Assumptions** does the author of the text hold?
   b. What do you **Agree** with in the text?
   c. What do you want to **Argue** with in the text?
   d. What parts of the text do you want to **Aspire** to (or **Act** upon)?

2. In a round, have each person identify one assumption in the text, citing the text (with page numbers, if appropriate) as evidence.

3. Either continue in rounds or facilitate a conversation in which the group talks about the text in light of each of the remaining “A”s, taking them one at a time. What do people want to agree with, argue with, and aspire to (or act upon) in the text? Try to move seamlessly from one “A” to the next, giving each “A” enough time for full exploration.

4. End the session with an open discussion framed around a question such as: What does this mean for our work with students?

5. Debrief the text experience.

Assessing Team Progress

While creating norms and establishing goals and guiding questions for your PLC team is critical in the beginning of your work together, it is equally important to assess the progress of your team in adhering to norms and meeting goals.

The following protocols are provided as options for your PLC team to assess progress:

PLC Facilitator Skills Workshop

PLC Facilitators who wish to learn more about these protocols and have an opportunity to practice using them are invited to attend a ***PLC Facilitator Workshops***. Please consult the district catalog in My Learning Plan for specific times and dates of the workshop.

Reflection and Sharing

Reflecting on and sharing your PLC team's accomplishments creates a ripple effect of learning for all. When others discover the strengths you have developed, they will know who to consult if they want to learn more themselves.

The following protocols are provided as options for your PLC team to reflect and share:

PLC Facilitator Skills Workshop

PLC Facilitators who wish to learn more about these protocols and have an opportunity to practice using them are invited to attend a ***PLC Facilitator Workshops***. Please consult the district catalog in My Learning Plan for specific times and dates of the workshop.